

Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, Bernard P. Brockbank, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, John H. Vandenberg, O. Leslie Stone. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

Sustaining of general officers of the Church

Sister Patricia T. Holland, who has served as first counselor in the general presidency of the Young Women, is the wife of President Jeffrey R. Holland of Brigham Young University. The many demands upon her time incident to her husband's responsibilities, as well as her family responsibilities and the burden of traveling to and from Provo, have made it advisable to extend to her an honorable release. We likewise release Sister Maureen J. Turley, second counselor in the Young Women presidency. All who wish to join in an expression of gratitude for the devoted service of these sisters in these respective callings may indicate by the uplifted hand.

Sister Ardeith G. Kapp, president of the Young Women, has asked Sister Maureen J. Turley to serve as her first counselor and Sister Jayne Broadbent Malan to serve as her second counselor. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain all other general officers and board members as presently constituted, together with all Regional Representatives who at present are serving. All in favor, please indicate it. Any opposed.

With hearts, faith, and prayers

President Benson, insofar as I have been able to observe, the voting in the Tabernacle has been unanimous in favor of the proposals made. Any negative votes in any other assemblies will be noted and brought to our attention.

Thank you, brothers and sisters, for your sustaining vote. We feel that you have sustained us not only with your hands but also with your hearts and your faith and prayers, which we so urgently need, and pray that you will continue to do so.

We shall ask now that Elders Andersen, Cannon, Gibbons, and Russell come forward and take their places with the First Quorum of the Seventy, and we invite Sister Malan also to come forward and sit with Sister Kapp.

President Hinckley

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." Following the singing of that number, we have just a few minutes, perhaps about seven minutes before we go forward with the rest of the scheduled program, and we shall ask Brother Gibbons, who has served as secretary to the First Presidency over a long period of time, to come and make a brief expression in behalf of all of these Brethren whom we have sustained in these responsibilities this day.

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for Prophet."

Elder Francis M. Gibbons

Essence of life is change

My beloved brethren and sisters, the essence of life is change. It was just sixteen years ago this day that I sat in the audience as a bishop and sustained

President Joseph Fielding Smith as the President of the Church along with his Counselors, President Harold B. Lee and President N. Eldon Tanner. Sustained at that conference also was Elder Boyd K. Packer, sustained as a member

of the Twelve; from the position he now occupies on the stand, you can see the enormous change that has taken place in that short period of sixteen years.

Also sustained at that conference were Elders William Bennett, Joseph Anderson, and David B. Haight as Assistants to the Twelve. Elder Bennett, of course, has passed away. Elder Haight, now a member of the Twelve, and Elder Anderson are still with us. Elder Anderson is in his ninety-seventh year.

Meeting with prophets of God

Elder Anderson, who had been the secretary to the First Presidency for almost fifty years, was a member of the ward of which I was bishop at the time, and through an extraordinary series of circumstances that I will not mention here, three days after his call I found myself in the first meeting of the First Presidency that I was privileged to attend. Since that day sixteen years ago, it has been my blessing to have met on almost a daily basis during the work week with the prophets of God. Each of them has shown special qualities. Each of them has filled a special role. Each of them we have loved and sustained and appreciated. I can today without any qualification raise my hand in full support and love for President Ezra Taft Benson, President Gordon B. Hinckley, and President Thomas S. Monson. These are truly prophets, seers, and revelators of the living God. And what a blessing it is for us to be members of a church that is directed through direct revelation from God on high.

I suppose at a time like this one naturally reflects about his roots. My great-great-grandfather, Vinson Knight, was a member of the bishopric of the Kirtland Ward, the first ward in the Church. He served under Bishop Newel K. Whitney. He later served as the bishop pro tem, as it was called at the time, of the ward at Adam-Ondi-Ahman. His daughter, Rizpah, my great-grandmother, tells of having

picked berries on the banks of the Grand River, as it flows by Adam-Ondi-Ahman.

Vinson Knight later became the bishop of the lower ward in Nauvoo, the ward in which both President Joseph Smith and President Brigham Young resided. His wife, Martha McBride Knight, was one of the charter members of the Relief Society.

I think of these stalwart people, their dedication, and their faith. The daughter of Vinson and Martha married a young man named Andrew Smith Gibbons. They were teenagers in Kirtland. After they married, Rizpah gave birth to her first child, my grandfather Andrew Vinson Gibbons, in Council Bluffs, Iowa, near Winter Quarters. Andrew was assigned as one of the members of Brigham Young's pioneer company that arrived in the Salt Lake Valley July 24, 1847, and ended up across the river in Arizona, where I was born in the little town of St. Johns. I have told my friends over the years that if you can't spot it on the map, St. Johns is fifteen miles east of Concho. To many, it's the end of the earth; but to those of us who were born there, it's the center of the earth. I pay honor and respect to these ancestors, as well as to my dear wife and children and grandchildren, to all of our friends and relatives, and to the many associates with whom we have been privileged to labor over the years.

Witness of the Spirit

As you can appreciate, I accept this assignment with trepidation. I accept it with humility. I accept it without qualification. I desire to serve faithfully and with diligence. I pledge to President Benson and his Counselors that they will never make a call upon me but that I will strive to fill it to the very best of my ability.

As a young man in the mission field over forty years ago, I received a witness of the Spirit. From that experience I learned by spiritual means that God lives, that Jesus Christ is his son,

that he is the head of the Church, that the Church is lead by prophets, seers, and revelators. I therefore sustain all of those who have preceded this incumbent First Presidency, and I certainly sustain and support them as prophets, seers, and revelators.

As one final word I would say that I came to the position of secretary to the First Presidency sixteen years ago with a full knowledge of the significance of the Church and of the status of its leaders. I have seen nothing in those intervening years that would cause me to question in any respect either the doctrines of the Church, the practices of the Church, and most assuredly the integrity of those who head it. I am their witness. I testify that they are honorable, upright, dedicated men of integrity committed to teaching the principles of the gospel, who strive with all of their might to prepare a people ready for the return of the head of the Church, Jesus Christ, at his second coming. Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

I should say that Brother Gibbons has served as a bishop, a stake president, he is a patriarch, he was an attorney by profession, and for sixteen years was secretary to the First Presidency.

Brother Cannon could bear similar testimony, as could Brother Andersen, and Brother Russell. Brother Cannon has served as bishop, a mission president, a patriarch, and is now serving as a stake president; he is a grandson of President Heber J. Grant. Brother Andersen served in a stake presidency, is now serving as a patriarch, has served three missions, is an accounting instructor (a CPA), and an attorney with degrees in law from two great law schools of Stanford and Harvard. Brother Gardner has served as a distinguished business leader, as a mission

president, as a Regional Representative. All well-qualified men.

Beverly Benson Walker, daughter of President Benson, accompanied by Robert Cundick at the organ, will sing "O Divine Redeemer."

Before hearing her, we should like to express appreciation and our sincere gratitude to all who have provided the music for this great conference—to the Tabernacle Choir, the combined institute choir from Northern Utah, the returned missionary choir from Brigham Young University, their conductors, and organists.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference, the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render service, and the ushers and interpreters.

We express appreciation to the local and national press representatives for the coverage given to the conference and to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have given public service time to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

Sister Walker will now sing for us, following which we shall be pleased and honored to listen to President Ezra Taft Benson, who will be the concluding speaker of the conference.

The Tabernacle Choir will then sing "How Firm a Foundation, Ye Saints of the Lord." The benediction will be offered by Elder Spencer H. Osborn of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then stand adjourned for six months. Thank you, brethren and sisters, for all that you have done to make of this a truly glorious occasion.

Sister Beverly Benson Walker sang "O Divine Redeemer."
