

Hanks, Robert L. Backman, James M. Paramore, J. Richard Clarke, Rex D. Pinegar, and Carlos E. Asay. All in favor may manifest it. Any opposed.

At the October 1978 general conference, several of the General Authorities were given emeritus status. At that time the announcement was also made that additional members of the General Authorities would be so designated from time to time.

Today, in consideration of factors of age and health, it is proposed that we sustain the following as emeritus members of the First Quorum of the Seventy with a vote of thanks for their faithful and effective service: Elders Theodore M. Burton, Robert L. Simpson, Victor L. Brown, Paul H. Dunn, J. Thomas Fyans, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Royden G. Derrick, and Rex C. Reeve. Those in favor, please manifest it.

When the Second Quorum of the Seventy was established in April 1989, the initial membership of the Second Quorum of the Seventy was composed of General Authorities currently serving under a five-year call. It is accordingly proposed that we release with sincere appreciation for their devoted service the following members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy: Elders Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, and Keith W. Wilcox. Those in favor of an expression of gratitude to these Brethren, please indicate by the uplifted hand.

It is proposed that we release with a vote of thanks Elders Robert L. Simpson,

Devere Harris, and Derek A. Cuthbert as the Sunday School General Presidency. Those in favor, with an expression of appreciation, may indicate.

It is proposed that we sustain Elders Hugh W. Pinnock, Derek A. Cuthbert, and Ted E. Brewerton as the Sunday School General Presidency. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we release with a vote of thanks Elder Rex D. Pinegar as First Counselor and Elder Robert B. Harbertson as Second Counselor in the Young Men General Presidency. Those who wish to voice their appreciation may so indicate it.

It is proposed that we sustain Elder Jeffrey R. Holland as First Counselor and Elder Monte J. Brough as Second Counselor in the Young Men General Presidency. All in favor may manifest it. Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain the other General Authorities and general officers of the Church as presently constituted. All in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed may manifest it.

President Benson, it appears that the voting has been unanimous in the affirmative.

### **President Monson**

Elder Russell M. Nelson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker at this session. He will be followed by Elder W. Eugene Hansen of the Seventy.

## **Elder Russell M. Nelson**

Words are inadequate to express the gratitude we feel for these brethren who have just been released from active assignment as General Authorities of the Church. We appreciate their marvelous ministry and powerful influence for good in the world.

Our privilege of sustaining leaders is granted by the Lord (see D&C 20:63-66;

26:2; 28:13; 38:34; 93:51; 104:21; 124:144). Sustaining makes known to the Church who has authority (see D&C 42:11) and enables each of us to show support. We honor all our leaders, both men and women, and are grateful for brothers and sisters so united in this kingdom of God on earth.

### Woman — of infinite worth

At a recent news conference in an Eastern European country, I was asked about the potential for women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I replied that perhaps the Church does more to enlighten understanding about and to lift the cause of women than any other institution on earth. It provides the path to her eternal destiny.

A worthy woman personifies the truly noble and worthwhile attributes of life. A faithful woman can become a devoted daughter of God — more concerned with being righteous than with being selfish, more anxious to exercise compassion than to exercise dominion, more committed to integrity than to notoriety. And she knows of her own infinite worth.

Each faithful young woman in the Church proclaims that *individual worth* is one of her most cherished values. She declares, "I am of infinite worth with my own divine mission which I will strive to fulfill" (*Personal Progress* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989], p. 7). Each daughter of God is of infinite worth because of her divine mission.

Important lessons about her divine mission may be learned from women of the scriptures. Mother Eve was a great example. She labored beside her husband as a partner. They both knew the plan of salvation. They both heeded commandments of obedience to God. Likewise, she prayed for divine guidance. She bore children. She taught the gospel to them (see Moses 5:1–12; D&C 138:38–39).

Sarah, in becoming the mother of Isaac in her advanced years, verified that nothing is "too hard for the Lord" (Genesis 18:14).

Mary, mother of our Redeemer, was the perfect example of complete submission to the will of God (see Luke 1:38). She kept confidences (see Luke 2:19). In faith, she endured grief (see John 19:26–27).

The stories of these and other scriptural heroines show that women are

essential in God's plan for His children. Likewise, men have important but different assignments. We learn from the scriptures that men are to hold priesthood responsibilities and, as husbands and fathers, provide for and protect their families (see Romans 12:17; 1 Timothy 5:8; D&C 75:28; 83:2, 4; 134:6, 11). From the beginning, the priesthood has been conferred only upon men, coming through the "lineage of the fathers" (see D&C 84:6–16; 86:8; 107:40–41; Abraham 1:3–4).

### Equal blessings and opportunities

Blessings of the priesthood are shared by men and women. All may qualify for baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost. All may take upon themselves the name of the Lord and partake of the sacrament. All may pray and receive answers to their prayers. Gifts of the Spirit and testimonies of the truth are bestowed regardless of gender. Men and women receive the highest ordinance in the house of the Lord together and equally, or not at all (see D&C 131:1–3).

Opportunities for development of spiritual and intellectual potential are equal. Masculinity has no monopoly on the mind, and femininity has no exclusive dominion over the heart. The highest titles of human achievement — teacher, educated professional, loyal employee, faithful friend, student of the scriptures, child of God, disciple of Christ, trusted companion, loving parent — are earned under a uniform requirement of worthiness.

### The great role of mother

Loving parent. What a noble title! There are no greater roles in life for a man than those of husband and father. Likewise, there are no greater roles for a woman than those of wife and mother.

As I have watched my beloved companion and our dear daughters stretch to meet the challenging demands of these sacred roles, I have truly been inspired.

I have marveled at Mother's forecast that a child would break out with measles or chicken pox well before my trained medical eye would have so predicted. I have watched the incredible calm of Mother when her child experienced a convulsive seizure.

So much is expected of a mother. Often she is a detective; she must search for lost articles and solve on a daily basis baffling "who done it" mysteries.

Frequently, her eager audience requests her talent as a musician by calling on her to sing — any time, any place. She is an artist, using crayons and coloring books, needles and thread, or other means to create works of art by her own hands (see Psalm 90:17; D&C 42:40).

During the early life of most children, a woman is the principal disciplinarian. She treads the tightrope of judgment between being too strict or too permissive.

Mother is "secretary of labor" for her home. She teaches the work ethic with its responsibilities and rewards. Father, too, shares that duty. I remember a hot Saturday afternoon years ago when one of our little daughters heard the chimes of an approaching ice-cream wagon. She asked me for some money. A bit heartlessly, I replied, "Sweetheart, why don't you *earn* your money like everyone else does?" I'll never forget her reply.

"But, Daddy," she said, "I don't like to work!" (Things are different now with four children of her own.)

A woman is a master communicator. And she communicates best in humble prayer. How many of us first learned to pray beside the bended knees of our mothers? Surely she knows that her children can walk alone only when they have found their pathway to Father in Heaven through prayer.

Certainly, a woman is a teacher. Someone said, "When you teach a boy, you teach an individual, but when you teach a girl, you teach a whole generation."

J. Edgar Hoover said that "the cure of crime is not the electric chair but the

high chair" (in Emerson Roy West, comp., *Vital Quotations* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968], p. 78).

### **Honor for women who are not mothers**

I honor women who are not mothers. They know that motherhood is but one of the realms of womankind. The virtue and intelligence of women are uniquely applicable to other realms as well, such as compassionate service and teaching.

I am indebted to so many wonderful men and women who were my teachers. From grade school I remember Miss Crow, Miss McLean, Miss Starr, and others. Later, Miss Bradford, Miss Cunningham, and Miss Snow were among my favorites. They were modest, gracious, and moral examples. They were not concerned with what I was to acquire, but with what I was to become. These marvelous unmarried teachers exerted an influence distinct from that of my angel mother. Their gleaming hopes, vicarious ambitions, and exacting demands were vitally important to my preparation for life.

### **Wise and righteous women**

A wise woman renews herself. In proper season, she develops her talents and continues her education. She musters the discipline to reach her goals. She dispels darkness and opens windows of truth to light her way.

A woman teaches priorities by precept and example. Recently I watched a television program in which a female lawyer was being interviewed. She was at home with her child on a full-time basis. When asked of her decision, she replied, "Oh, I may go back to the law sometime, but not now. For me, the issue is simple. Any lawyer could take care of my clients, but only I should be the mother of this child."

Such a decision is made not in terms of rights but in terms of obligations and responsibilities. She knows that as she

rises to meet responsibilities, rights will take care of themselves.

The Prophet Joseph Smith was taught this lesson while unjustly incarcerated in Liberty Jail—scene of so few rights, so little freedom, and so much abusive authority. As the Master tutored His Prophet regarding rights, those instructions were surrounded by schooling about obligations and responsibilities (see D&C 121).

A righteous woman is a student of the scriptures. Many apply uniquely to her life (see Genesis 27:46; Psalm 113:9; Proverbs 31:10–31; Ephesians 5:22–33; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:3–5; Jacob 3:7; D&C 25). In the scriptures she finds “great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures” (D&C 89:19).

She need not have majored in physics to know divine truths, as “there is no such thing as immaterial matter” (D&C 131:7). She need not have graduated in astronomy to learn lessons taught by God to Abraham—the relation of the earth to the sun, the sun to the planets, the planets to the center of the universe, and more (see Abraham 3). When she sings “Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are,” she knows scriptural answers.

Well do I remember attending an important international symposium. The speaker was one of the world’s leading scholars, addressing a learned society with faculty representatives from major universities near and far. He said, in effect, that libraries of the world are being filled with case histories and anecdotal research. He pled for a significant change in direction. “What we need,” he said, “is research in things that *really* matter. We need to learn more about why we are here, where we have come from, and where we are going!”

That unforgettable address comes to mind each time I hear teachers at Primary and mothers at home enlighten children with revealed answers to these same questions. While so doing, they bear firm testimonies of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Feeling a sense of infinite worth

Of course, there are times when a woman’s ability to endure is taxed to the limit. A teacher may have had enough of childish pranks, or a mother might be heard to say she’s “ready to resign.” She could become discouraged, especially if comparing herself unrealistically to others or focusing on what she is to do instead of on what she is to be.

Her self-esteem cannot be based on physical features, possession or lack of a particular talent, or comparative quantities of anything. Her self-esteem is earned by individual righteousness and a close relationship with God. Her outward glow is generated by goodness within. And her patience is much more apparent than any imperfection (see D&C 67:13).

Sweet serenity is found in fervent prayer. Then, we forget ourselves and remember the reaching hands of the Savior, who said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). As our burdens are shared with Him, they do become lighter.

Feelings of worth come when a woman follows the example of the Master. Her sense of infinite worth comes from her own Christlike yearning to reach out with love, as He does.

When her husband, children, grandchildren, nieces, or nephews return from a day marred by the world’s rude realities, a loving woman can say, “Come unto me. I will give you rest.” Wherever she is can become a sanctified place, safe from the storms of life. Refuge is there because of her ability to nurture and to love unconditionally.

Sometimes this true love necessarily takes the tone of tough love. Her lessons of obedience and accountability must resemble those of her Master, who said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15; see also Exodus 20:6; Deuteronomy 5:10; Mosiah 13:14; D&C 46:9; 124:87).

### In partnership with God

The Good Shepherd said, “Feed my lambs” (John 21:15). So a woman feeds

her loved ones, providing succor and sustenance just as the Savior would do. Her divine gift is to nurture, to help the young, to care for the poor, to lift the brokenhearted.

The Lord said, "My work and my glory [is] to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). So His devoted daughter-disciple may truly say, "My work and my glory is to help my loved ones reach that heavenly goal."

To help another human being reach one's celestial potential is part of the divine mission of woman. As mother, teacher, or nurturing saint, she molds living clay to the shape of her hopes. In partnership with God, her divine mission is to help spirits live and souls be lifted. This is the measure of her creation. It is ennobling, edifying, and exalting.

#### **Satan's efforts to demean women**

Her saintly calling is opposed by Satan. He would shatter the family unit and demean the worth of woman. He would triumph if one man would offend or fail to honor her, or if one woman would deny her infinite worth and behave beneath her dignity. The vulgar portrayal of her beauty as an object of lust, the vile invasion of her private purity, should provoke righteous indignation from all caring people.

The gospel has been restored in these latter days so that the light of the Lord can

prevail over efforts of the adversary. This day has long been prophesied. The Lord has promised worthy Saints of our time, "Upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit" (Joel 2:29).

#### **Women's divine potential**

A woman's richest rewards will come as she rises to fulfill her destiny as a devoted daughter of God. To all faithful Saints He has promised thrones, kingdoms, principalities, glory, immortality, and eternal lives (see Romans 2:7; D&C 75:5; 128:12, 23; 132:19). That is the potential for women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is exalting, everlasting, and divine.

God bless us to honor each woman in her divine mission as a woman of infinite worth, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### **President Monson**

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

Elder W. Eugene Hansen, who was sustained last conference as a member of the Seventy, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, also sustained last conference as a member of the Seventy.

## **Elder W. Eugene Hansen**

My beloved brothers and sisters, since this is my first opportunity to address you since the call to this new assignment, I want you to know how grateful I am for the privilege of serving the Lord and dedicating my life to the building of the kingdom.

#### **The Savior's mission of love**

There is no single word that better characterizes the life and mission of the Savior than the word *love*.

The Savior's mission was begun out of love which the Father had for His children. In John we read, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Thus, the greatest mission in the history of the world was ordained and begun because of the love of our kind and caring Eternal Father.