

in so many other ways blessed my life: a noble father, a blessed mother, grandparents, great-grandparents, extended family, and mentors and friends both in and out of the Church. My children cannot yet fully understand how deeply they bless my life by their loyalty to the Savior and his gospel. I honor them for that. Those who know my Kathy have observed that I married much above myself, a conclusion I heartily agree with. Our marriage is a gratifying thing, and I have not adequate words to express my love.

### **“I know in whom I have trusted”**

As I have agonized in recent hours over the acceptability and adequacy of my offering upon the altar of him who gave his all, it has come to me that I must focus outwardly, that as I seek the interest of his flock and lose myself in their service, his grace shall be sufficient for me. I so commit myself unreservedly.

I readily attest to the reality and greatness of our God, to his goodness and grace, to his justice and mercy, to the truth of his gospel and the power of his priesthood and the authenticity of the calling of his latter-day seers. At the outset of this ministry, I acknowledge that anything I may achieve will be by virtue of the power and the grace and the gift of God. I am not, in Isaiah’s words, “the axe [that

shall] boast itself against him that heweth therewith”; I am not the saw that shall “magnify itself against him that shaketh it” (Isaiah 10:15). With Nephi, “I know in whom I have trusted” (2 Nephi 4:19).

I am particularly gratified, and it is of great significance to me, that I may at any moment and in any circumstance approach through prayer the throne of grace, that my Heavenly Father will hear my petition, and that my Advocate, he who did no sin, whose blood was shed, will plead my cause (see D&C 45:3–5). I rely heavily on that access to God, which he gives to all his children, for he is indeed no respecter of persons, and he that asks shall receive. I so witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Monson**

We have heard from Elders Neil L. Andersen and D. Todd Christofferson, new members of the First Quorum of the Seventy. It’s wonderful to hear the testimonies of these two Brethren.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet.” Sister Chieko N. Okazaki, first counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, will then speak to us.

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“We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet.”

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## **Sister Chieko N. Okazaki**

### **Cat’s cradle—a network of kindness**

My dear brothers and sisters, aloha! Today I want to share some thoughts with you about how Christian service connects all of us in a network of kindness that is strong and beautiful. As the Apostle Paul promised the Colossian Saints, our hearts can be “knit together in love” (Colossians 2:2).

Do you see this piece of string? It’s just an ordinary piece of string—not very

interesting. When I was growing up on the big island of Hawaii, all of us kids used to keep a piece of string like this handy to play with. Now a string doesn’t look like much, but look what you can do with it!

This particular cat’s cradle pattern is called four-eyes. Do you see how complex and beautiful it is? Do you see how each part supports the other parts and is connected to them? You cannot pick one

part out without destroying the whole pattern. It is the same with our lives. We meet many people. With some, the association lasts for years. With others, the association is very brief. But in either case we can make the pattern a beautiful one by making our encounter a kindly one, filled with the desire to serve.

### **Our small thread in a great tapestry**

President Hinckley said something that I just love about our patterns of interconnectedness in the Church. He said: "To those of the Church, all within the sound of my voice, I give the challenge [to] . . . never lose sight of the whole majestic and wonderful picture of the purpose of this, the dispensation of the fulness of times. Weave beautifully your small thread in the grand tapestry, the pattern for which was laid out for us by the God of heaven" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1989, p. 71; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, p. 54).

We may not know what contribution our small thread makes to the great tapestry. We may not understand the pattern that our lives make as they intersect, connect, separate, and intersect again—but God does. Of course it was no accident that the angel who rebuked the erring Alma the Younger in a "voice of thunder" was the same angel who returned to Alma, now twenty years a missionary, to say, "Blessed art thou, Alma; . . . for thou hast been faithful" (Mosiah 27:11; Alma 8:15). Their lives made a shining pattern.

### **Sister Rosetta Colclough Stark**

Let me tell you about a woman who has woven her strand of kindness and compassion into my life. Sister Rosetta Colclough, a missionary in Hawaii, came to my junior high when I was eleven and invited all the students to a special religion class taught at the little Mormon chapel near the school. Three other Japanese girls and I, all Buddhists, accepted the invitation. That was the

beginning of my Christian instruction, and four years later I joined the Church.

Last March I received a letter from Rosetta Colclough Stark, now living in Arizona. She enclosed in her letter a little article she had written for her ward newsletter in 1978, fifteen years ago, describing those religion classes:

"One day on the eleven o'clock period, only four [Japanese girls] came to class. I was very disappointed there were so few. . . . [But] near the close of the period, we stood in the little chapel with bowed heads and closed eyes, repeating in unison the Lord's Prayer. The soft Hawaiian sun filtered through the windows. As we prayed, I suddenly felt a bright light envelop us, coming from above like an inverted cone. A wonderful feeling of peace and joy filled my heart. I led the prayer very slowly as the bright light enfolded us. I was sure the girls felt it also, as their faces shone with an expression of deep reverence. We almost whispered 'good-bye' so as not to break the spell, and they tiptoed out. I thought, 'One or more of those girls will join the Church and become a great influence for good.'"

She continued: "[After] I returned home, often the sweet faces of those four girls passed before my inward eyes, and I wondered about them. There was one, Chieko Nishimura, that lingered in my mind, and I often looked at the picture I had taken of them.

"Ten years later, my husband and I were attending our sacrament meeting in the Imperial Ward, Salt Lake City, when it was announced that a young Japanese couple from Hawaii would be the speakers. . . . My heart nearly jumped up into my throat. Yes, it was my little Chieko. . . . Chieko and I had a joyous reunion after the meeting. We marveled that out of all the many wards in that big city, they should have come to speak at my ward. We were sure the Lord had a hand in it."

Rosetta lost track of me after my husband and I moved to Colorado but was

surprised and delighted, when she was watching the Relief Society sesquicentennial broadcast on March 14, 1992, to hear my name announced. That afternoon she sat down at her typewriter in Arizona and began her letter to me. She said:

"[When] I heard your name announced by Sister Jack . . . I sat up straight and watched the TV screen eagerly and saw your name appear on the screen. Then you started to speak. The dark hair has turned to silver, but that sweet face was easily recognized. Yes, this is my little Chieko whom I taught at the Honomakau chapel in Kohala so many years ago. As I listened to your voice, tears of joy ran down my cheeks. . . .

"I thank my Heavenly Father that I had the privilege of teaching you about Jesus Christ our Savior in that little chapel. . . . I have been blessed three times because of it; first, that I was there to experience that light from heaven with you; second, that you came to my ward in Salt Lake City to speak; and today, when I heard you speak to the women of the world via satellite."

Rosetta says she was blessed, but Rosetta did not know how she was blessing me with her kindness. Even while she was writing that letter, my husband, Ed, was being taken to the hospital, stricken down by a cardiac arrest on the afternoon of the sesquicentennial broadcast. Her letter reached me with a special compassion and love when my sons and I were struggling to accept the fact that Ed would not recover. I did not see the light she felt while we four little Buddhist girls repeated the Lord's Prayer with her, phrase by phrase. But I know the Spirit whispered to me during that experience, reminding me of my true identity as a daughter of God and prompting me to let those teachings sink deep into my heart so I could also become a daughter of Christ in the waters of baptism.

Rosetta's life has touched mine only three times, but the Savior's love was in

each encounter. Rosetta brought me the gospel, she rejoiced with Ed and me after our baptisms, and she brought me great comfort by reminding me of Heavenly Father's profound love for me when I was suffering such pain while Ed lay dying. I needed that reassurance and love. I needed to remember that Heavenly Father, fifty years earlier, had reached down and laid his hand on a skinny little Buddhist girl and said, "You are my beloved child."

### **"Knit together in love"**

I've shared this story with you because it illustrates so beautifully how our lives weave together in ways we cannot guess or plan. Because Rosetta acted with faith, with kindness, and with love, the pattern created by her life encountering mine is a beautiful one. I know that she has woven shining strands into the lives of many others.

Brothers and sisters, we never know how far the effects of our service will reach. We can never afford to be cruel or indifferent or ungenerous because we are all connected, even if it is in a pattern that only God sees. I am part of the pattern. Rosetta is part of the pattern. You are part of the pattern. And the Savior is part of the pattern. In fact, I like to think that the Savior is the spaces in the pattern, for there would be no pattern at all without them.

May we all deal kindly with one another, seeking in our lives the blessing of the Apostle Paul, that our "hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love" (Colossians 2:2), I pray humbly and sincerely in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Monson**

Sister Chieko N. Okazaki, first counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, has spoken to us. And in your behalf I'd like to extend a gift to her. All through the years, Sister Okazaki, I have heard our beloved prophet and president,

Ezra Taft Benson, sing praises to your name and to the name of your late husband, Eddie. I'm sure he would wish me to express that again today.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elders Kwok Yuen Tai and Lowell D. Wood, who were called as members of the Seventy since last April conference.

## Elder Kwok Yuen Tai

### The view from Victoria Peak

There is a popular tourist spot in Hong Kong known as Victoria Peak. On a clear day one can stand on the peak and enjoy a panoramic view of the bustling harbor together with the beautiful waterfront lined with skyscrapers and ferry piers. From that peak, if one looks carefully, it is possible to see the distant airport with its busy air traffic and its runway extending to the sea. At night the view from the peak is even more breathtaking. The harbor is ablaze with countless lights glittering like diamonds. It is a glorious scene!

The picture, however, is not always the same. On a foggy day the scene can be dark, gloomy, and quite a disappointment. Life is so much like that for many of us. At times it can be glorious but other times gloomy.

### Growing up with Aunt Gu Ma

In my early childhood I lost both my parents. Aunt Gu Ma, a spinster sister of my father, kept my brother and me together. She brought us up in a little farming village where she grew vegetables for a living. Every morning she would carry the produce to the market in two big baskets, one on each end of a long pole resting on her shoulders. Then she would bring home rice and meat purchased with the proceeds of her vegetable sales.

I can remember cooking rice in a huge wok on top of a reed-burning stove. I was then six years old. The wok was so big that my brother and I had to lift it together, each standing on a stool while grasping a handle on opposite sides. Our

occasional dinner special was either half-cooked or burnt rice, or both.

Aunt Gu Ma was a wonderful person. Although she had no formal education, she had a noble philosophy of life. She instilled in us correct principles, stern self-reliance, and the value of hard work. We are forever grateful for her love and sacrifice in our behalf.

### Seek divine guidance

I remember especially one occasion. My brother and I were returning from school during the aftermath of a severe tropical storm. The trail that we usually followed had been covered by a mud slide. Being the resourceful young boys that we were, we decided that nothing could keep us from going home. On a nearby steep hillside was a drainage pipe situated quite high above the rocky ground. If we were to get to our village, we would need to walk along that pipe. The pipe was suspended over a stream which, although normally small, had turned into a rushing torrent of mud and water. Carrying our school bags, we went up the hill and continued our expedition.

We both began cautiously treading along the narrow, slippery drainage pipe. As I approached the other side, I looked back to see how my brother was doing. I was startled to see that he had made his way only halfway and had come to a complete stop. He, being older and wiser, had realized what a precarious perch we were on and had instinctively frozen in his tracks, unable to continue. It was a terrifying moment for us as we realized the danger he was in, paralyzed by fear and perched there on a slippery, narrow