

Witnesses, Aaronic Priesthood Quorums, and Young Women Classes

By President Russell M. Nelson

The adjustments we will now announce are intended to help young men and young women develop their sacred personal potential.

Dear brothers and sisters, it is wonderful to be with you again in general conference. Earlier this week, announcements were made to members of the Church about changes in policy regarding who may serve as witnesses to baptism and sealing ordinances. I would like to highlight those three points.

1. A proxy baptism for a deceased person may be witnessed by anyone holding a current temple recommend, including a limited-use recommend.
2. Any endowed member with a current temple recommend may serve as a witness to sealing ordinances, living and proxy.
3. Any baptized member of the Church may serve as a witness of the baptism of a living person. This change pertains to all baptisms outside the temple.

These policy adjustments are procedural. The underlying doctrine and covenants are unchanged. They are equally efficacious in all ordinances. These changes should greatly enhance family participation in these ordinances.

I also wanted to speak with you at this time to introduce adjustments that pertain to our youth and their leaders.

You will remember that I have invited the youth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to enlist in the Lord's youth battalion to participate in the greatest cause on earth today—the gathering of Israel.¹ I issued this invitation to our youth because they are unusually gifted in reaching out to others and sharing what they believe in a convincing fashion. The cause of the gathering is an essential part of helping to prepare the world and its people for the Second Coming of the Lord.

In each ward, the Lord's youth battalion is led by a bishop, a dedicated servant of God. His first and foremost responsibility is to care for the young men and young women of his ward. The bishop and his counselors direct the work of the Aaronic Priesthood quorums and the Young Women classes in the ward.

The adjustments we will now announce are intended to help young men and young women develop their sacred personal potential. We also want to strengthen Aaronic Priesthood quorums and Young Women classes and provide support to bishops and other adult leaders as they serve this rising generation.

Elder Quentin L. Cook will now discuss the adjustments that relate to the young men. And tonight, at the general women's session, Sister Bonnie H. Cordon, Young Women General President, will discuss the adjustments that relate to the young women.

The First Presidency and the Twelve are united in endorsing these efforts to strengthen our youth. Oh, how we love them and pray for them! They are the "hope of Israel, Zion's army, children of the promised day."² We express our complete confidence in our youth and our gratitude for them. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.