

- David B. Haight, "Couple Missionaries—'A Wonderful Resource,'" *Ensign*, Feb. 1996, 6–12; Vaughn J. Featherstone, "Couple Missionaries: 'Too Wonderful for Me,'" *Ensign*, Sept. 1998, 14–17; "There Is Work for Us to Do," *Ensign*, Oct. 1993, 36–41; "The Impact of Couple Missionaries," *Ensign*, Apr. 2003, 60–63; John L. Hart, "Working Miracles in Mission Field," *Church News*, Dec. 22, 1990, 3, 7.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 4:2–3; italics added.
 15. Doctrine and Covenants 4:5.
 16. Additional information can be found on the Church Web site www.lds.org under "Service Opportunities for Senior Missionaries" (click on "Other Resources" on the home page, then on "Church-Service Missionary Opportunities").
 17. See Bible Dictionary, "Gospels," 682–83.
 18. 3 Nephi 27:13–14.
 19. 3 Nephi 27:21.
 20. See Doctrine and Covenants 33:6–12; 39:6.
 21. Doctrine and Covenants 107:23.
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- The choir sang "Still, Still with Thee."
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President Hinckley

The choir has just sung "Still, Still with Thee."

It will now be my pleasure to address you. Following my remarks, the choir will sing "Come, Ye Thankful People." Elder Spencer V. Jones of the Seventy will then offer the benediction.

The concluding session of this conference will begin at 2:00 this afternoon.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Reflections on Sister Hinckley's passing

My brethren and sisters, at the outset, if you will bear with me, I wish to exercise a personal privilege. Six months ago, at the close of our conference, I stated that my beloved companion of 67 years was seriously ill. She passed away two days later. It was April 6, a significant day to all of us of this Church. I wish to thank publicly the dedicated doctors and wonderful nurses who attended her during her final illness.

My children and I were at her bedside as she slipped peacefully into eternity. As I held her hand and saw mortal life drain from her fingers, I confess I was overcome. Before I married her, she had been the girl of my dreams, to use the words of a song then popular. She was my dear companion for more than two-thirds of a century, my equal before the Lord, really my superior.

And now in my old age, she has again become the girl of my dreams.

Immediately following her passing there was a tremendous outpouring of love from across the world. Great quantities of beautiful floral offerings were sent. Large contributions were made in her name to the Perpetual Education Fund and her academic chair at Brigham Young University. There were literally hundreds of letters. We have boxes filled with them from many we know and from very many we do not know. They all express admiration for her and sympathy and love for us whom she left behind.

We regret that we have been unable to respond individually to these many expressions. So I now take this occasion to thank you every one for your great kindness toward us. Thank you so very, very much, and please excuse our failure to reply. The task was beyond our capacity, but your ex-

pressions have shed an aura of comfort in our time of grief.

I am grateful to be able to say that in our long life together I cannot remember a serious quarrel. Small differences occasionally, yes, but nothing of a serious nature. I believe our marriage has been as idyllic as anyone's could possibly be.

I recognize that many of you are similarly blessed, and I compliment you most warmly, for when all is said and done there is no association richer than the companionship of husband and wife, and nothing more portentous for good or evil than the unending consequences of marriage.

I see those consequences constantly. I see both beauty and tragedy. And so I have chosen to say a few words today on the women in our lives.

Eve's creation was the grand summation

I begin with the Creation of the world.

We read in the book of Genesis and in the book of Moses of that great, singular, and remarkable undertaking. The Almighty was the architect of that creation. Under His direction it was executed by His Beloved Son, the Great Jehovah, who was assisted by Michael, the archangel.

There came first the forming of heaven and earth, to be followed by the separation of the light from the darkness. The waters were removed from the land. Then came vegetation, followed by the animals. There followed the crowning creation of man. Genesis records that "God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31).

But the process was not complete.

"For Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

"And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

"And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman" (Genesis 2:20–23).

And so Eve became God's final creation, the grand summation of all of the marvelous work that had gone before.

Great women in the scriptures

Notwithstanding this preeminence given the creation of woman, she has so frequently through the ages been relegated to a secondary position. She has been put down. She has been denigrated. She has been enslaved. She has been abused. And yet some few of the greatest characters of scripture have been women of integrity, accomplishment, and faith.

We have Esther, Naomi, and Ruth of the Old Testament. We have Sariah of the Book of Mormon. We have Mary, the very mother of the Redeemer of the world. We have her as the chosen of God, described by Nephi as "a virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins" (1 Nephi 11:15).

She it was who carried the child Jesus into Egypt to save His life from the wrath of Herod. She it was who nurtured Him in His boyhood and young manhood. She stood before Him when His pain-wracked body hung upon the cross on Calvary's hill. In His suffering He said to her, "Woman, behold thy son!" And to His disciple in a plea that he care for her, He said, "Behold thy mother!" (John 19:26–27).

Crossing through His life we have Mary and Martha, and Mary of Magdala. She it was who came to the tomb that first Easter morning. And to her, a woman, He first appeared as the resurrected Lord. Why is it that even though Jesus placed woman in a position of preeminence, so many men who profess His name fail to do so?

Duality of the sexes is God's design

In His grand design, when God first created man, He created a duality of the

sexes. The ennobling expression of that duality is found in marriage. One individual is complementary to the other. As Paul stated, “Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 11:11).

There is no other arrangement that meets the divine purposes of the Almighty. Man and woman are His creations. Their duality is His design. Their complementary relationships and functions are fundamental to His purposes. One is incomplete without the other.

I recognize that we have many wonderful women among us who do not have the opportunity of marriage. But they too make such a tremendous contribution. They serve the Church faithfully and ably. They teach in the organizations. They stand as officers.

I witnessed a very interesting thing the other day. The General Authorities were in a meeting, and the presidency of the Relief Society were there with us. These able women stood in our council room and shared with us principles of welfare and of helping those who are in distress. Our stature as officers of this Church was not diminished by what they did. Our capacities to serve were increased.

Do not demean women

There are some men who, in a spirit of arrogance, think they are superior to women. They do not seem to realize that they would not exist but for the mother who gave them birth. When they assert their superiority, they demean her. It has been said, “Man can not degrade woman without himself falling into degradation; he can not elevate her without at the same time elevating himself” (Alexander Walker, in *Elbert Hubbard’s Scrap Book* [1923], 204).

How very true that is. We see the bitter fruit of that degradation all about us. Divorce is one of its results. This evil runs

rampant through our society. It is the outcome of disrespect for one’s marriage partner. It manifests itself in neglect, in criticism, in abuse, in abandonment. We in the Church are not immune from it.

Jesus declared, “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:6).

The word *man* is used in the generic sense, but the fact is that it is predominantly men who bring about the conditions that lead to divorce.

Solution to the problem of divorce

After dealing with hundreds of divorce situations through the years, I am satisfied that the application of a single practice would do more than all else to solve this grievous problem.

If every husband and every wife would constantly do whatever might be possible to ensure the comfort and happiness of his or her companion, there would be very little, if any, divorce. Argument would never be heard. Accusations would never be leveled. Angry explosions would not occur. Rather, love and concern would replace abuse and meanness.

There was a popular song we sang many years ago, the lyrics of which said:

I want to be happy,
But I won’t be happy
Till I make you happy, too.
[Irving Caesar, “I Want to Be Happy”
(1924)]

How true this is.

Achieving harmony and peace at home

Every woman is a daughter of God. You cannot offend her without offending Him. I plead with the men of this Church to look for and nurture the divinity that lies within their companions. To the degree that happens, there will be harmony, peace, enrichment of family life, nurturing love.

Well did President McKay remind us that “no other success [in life] can compensate for failure in the home” (quoted from J. E. McCulloch, *Home: The Savior of Civilization* [1924], 42; in Conference Report, Apr. 1935, 116).

Likewise, the truth of which President Lee reminded us: “The [greatest] work you will ever do will be within the walls of your own home” (“Maintain Your Place as a Woman,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1972, 51).

The cure for most marital troubles does not lie in divorce. It lies in repentance and forgiveness, in expressions of kindness and concern. It is to be found in application of the Golden Rule.

It is a scene of great beauty when a young man and a young woman join hands at the altar in a covenant before God that they will honor and love one another. Then how dismal the picture when a few months later, or a few years later, there are offensive remarks, mean and cutting words, raised voices, bitter accusations.

It need not be, my dear brothers and sisters. We can rise above these mean and beggarly elements in our lives (see Galatians 4:9). We can look for and recognize the divine nature in one another, which comes to us as children of our Father in Heaven. We can live together in the God-given pattern of marriage in accomplishing that of which we are capable if we will exercise discipline of self and refrain from trying to discipline our companion.

“You have always given me wings to fly”

The women in our lives are creatures endowed with particular qualities, divine qualities, which cause them to reach out in kindness and with love to those about them. We can encourage that outreach if we will give them opportunity to give expression to the talents and impulses that lie within them. In our old age my beloved companion said to me quietly one eve-

ning, “You have always given me wings to fly, and I have loved you for it.”

I once knew a man who has since passed on but who insisted on making all of the decisions for his wife and children. They could not buy a pair of shoes without him. They could not take a piano lesson. They could not serve in the Church without his consent. I have since witnessed the outcome of that attitude, and that outcome is not good.

My father never hesitated to compliment my mother. We children knew that he loved her because of the way he treated her. He deferred to her. And I shall ever be profoundly grateful for his example. Many of you have been blessed likewise.

We are all necessary in God’s plan

Now I might go on, but it is not necessary. I wish only to give emphasis to the great, salient truth that we are all children of God, both sons and daughters, brothers and sisters.

As a father, do I love my daughters less than I love my sons? No. If I am guilty of any imbalance, it is in favor of my girls. I have said that when a man gets old, he had better have daughters about him. They are so kind and good and thoughtful. I think I can say that my sons are able and wise. My daughters are clever and kind. And “my cup runneth over” (Psalm 23:5) because of this.

Women are such a necessary part of the plan of happiness which our Heavenly Father has outlined for us. That plan cannot operate without them.

Show gratitude for women

Brethren, there is too much of unhappiness in the world. There is too much of misery and heartache and heartbreak. There are too many tears shed by grieving wives and daughters. There is too much negligence and abuse and unkindness.

God has given us the priesthood, and that priesthood cannot be exercised, “only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; by kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile” (D&C 121:41–42).

How thankful I am, how thankful we all must be, for the women in our lives. God bless them. May His great love distill upon them and crown them with luster and beauty, grace and faith. And may His

Spirit distill upon us as men and lead us ever to hold them in respect, in gratitude, giving encouragement, strength, nurture, and love, which is the very essence of the gospel of our Redeemer and Lord. For this I humbly pray, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang “Come, Ye Thankful People.”

Elder Spencer V. Jones offered the benediction.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The fifth session of the 174th Semiannual General Conference convened in the Conference Center at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 3, 2004. President Thomas S. Monson conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir. Craig Jessop and Mack Wilberg directed the choir, and Bonnie Goodliffe and Linda Margetts were the organists.

President Monson opened the meeting with the following remarks.

President Thomas S. Monson

We welcome you this afternoon to the fifth and concluding session of the 174th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. President Gordon B. Hinckley, who presides at this conference, has asked that I, Brother Monson, conduct this session.

We extend our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, the Internet, or satellite transmission.

The music for this session will be by the Tabernacle Choir, under the direction

of Craig Jessop and Mack Wilberg, with Bonnie Goodliffe and Linda Margetts at the organ.

The choir will open these services by singing “High on the Mountain Top.” The invocation will then be offered by Elder Val R. Christensen of the Seventy.

The choir sang “High on the Mountain Top.”

Elder Val R. Christensen offered the invocation.

The choir sang “Adam-ondi-Ahman.”

President Monson

The choir just sang “Adam-ondi-Ahman.”

We will now be pleased to hear from President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He will be followed by Sister Elaine S. Dalton, second counselor in the Young Women general presidency. Elder Richard J. Maynes of the Seventy will then address us.