

Mom + Dad

Women's Conf  
Bruce Hafen's talk

April Hallmanack:

Dear Family:

Enclosed is a copy of Bruce Hafen's talk at the recent women's conference.

It so exactly mirrors my own thoughts on the women's movement versus the church's attitude towards women that I felt every one of you should have a copy. It is amazing that someone has at last put my thoughts and feelings so elegantly into word. I hope you will all (especially the men) read it and digest it.

I don't think we have a problem in our family. My sons (as far as I can tell) and my sons-in-laws (as far as I can tell) are raising their families and treating their wives as the Lord would have them do. They are encouraging their wives to develop their talents and reach out into the community and church for service and development. I think they're great. If any of you are ever required to give a talk on the subject at hand, this is the best resource material I have ever seen in one talk.

He treats the subject in three sections (if I can remember it right) (I have just finished reading it, and was so pleased with it that I wanted you all to have copies). Charlotte attended the talk and got a copy. She copied it for Sherlene and I, and I bless her for it.

All of the grandsons should read it, and the granddaughters who are old enough, as well.

It is Wednesday, and I have not received any letters, so I guess this is it for the month.

Love and Kisses.

Mom.

Bruce Hafen's Talk

"Women, Feminism, and the Blessings of the Priesthood"

BYU Women's Conference

March 29, 1985

Bruce C. Hafen

Some years ago, a young couple planning a temple marriage came to my office for recommend interviews. At the conclusion of my private interview with the young woman, I asked if she had any questions. After thinking a moment, she said, "Well, there is one question--is it alright to marry someone you don't really love?" That was a puzzling question, coming from someone planning to be sealed in the temple in just a few days. As we talked further, she told me the story of their courtship. When, after fasting and prayer, she had been unable to feel that she should marry the young man, he told her that he felt the proposed marriage had the Lord's approval. Then she told me she was a recent convert to the Church and that she had great respect for the priesthood. "So," she said, "he and I both decided that because he held the priesthood, he had the authority to receive the correct answer to my prayer. And now I am willing to marry him, if that is what I am supposed to do. But, in all honesty, I must admit I don't love him." Well, that was a difficult moment for me. I asked to talk again with the young man. I explained to him that he had no priesthood authority over his fiancée. I then asked if he knew her true feelings and suggested the two of them might want to take a little more time to be sure of themselves. As far as I know, they never did marry.

This experience left me wondering how intelligent members of the Church could have become so confused about the role of priesthood authority. When I wondered aloud about my question to a Relief Society leader in our stake, she told me she was not at all surprised. She said she had once had the understanding that a woman must go through a man to reach God. I told her that sounded like false doctrine to me, similar to the erroneous teaching of some churches that people must go through a minister or a departed Saint to reach God. Of course, neither a man nor a woman can receive exaltation in the celestial kingdom without being sealed in marriage, but that does not mean that either women or men must go through some other person to have access to God through prayer.

I believe these engaged students were experiencing a confusion that has been showing up with increasing frequency the last several years, as members of the Church have reacted to the women's rights movement. At one extreme are those so concerned about threats to the traditional role of women that they have literally leaned over backward. I have heard some of these people sincerely question whether women should take education seriously, whether female officers of a Church auxiliary organization may make decisions when a priesthood leader is not present, and whether a divorced or widowed mother is authorized to preside in her home.

At the other extreme are a few Church members who have publicly opposed the First Presidency's position against the Equal Rights Amendment. The media coverage given to this opposition has led some incorrectly to regard the Church and its leaders as enemies of equality for women.

Today I would like to attempt some clarification of these important but sometimes complicated issues by talking about three questions.

First, what is the women's movement--what is good about it and what is bad about it? Second, how do women--especially single women--enjoy the blessings of the priesthood? And third, why should women seek a college education?

The American women's movement actually began nearly 150 years ago, in reaction to what we now call the Industrial Revolution. For hundreds of years, fathers, mothers, and children had worked together in a rural, agricultural, and family-centered environment that made the work place the same as the home place. The 19th century changed all that, as American families began moving to the cities and American fathers began leaving home to work in the factories. Ideas about mothers being needed at home were reinforced by the increasing absence of working fathers. At the same time, the changing climate also created a need for women to give leadership outside the home to such new social movements as reforming the child labor laws, establishing temperance societies, and performing needed charitable service. Our own Relief Society, organized by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo in 1842, became one of the finest charity-oriented women's organizations in the entire country. Its leaders (with the endorsement of the General Authorities) later vigorously supported what became the single biggest women's issue of the day--the right of women to vote in public elections. When three-fourths of the states finally adopted the constitutional amendment guaranteeing women's right to vote in 1920, the nation was finally catching up with the Utah territory, which had established women's voting rights fifty years earlier, in 1870.

The Equal Rights Amendment was first introduced in Congress in 1923, but with the matter of voting rights settled, there was little additional interest in the subject. Susan B. Anthony and Eleanor Roosevelt opposed the ERA in those early days, fearing it would deprive women of needed protection. As recently as 1962, a majority of U.S. women in a public opinion poll believed they were not the victims of sex discrimination. But things began to change in the later 1960's. The civil rights movement for black Americans aroused the nation's conscience to a new awareness of many existing social inequalities. That movement also showed what minority groups could accomplish with an effective public campaign. Economic patterns were changing, as more and more women found it necessary to enter the labor force. Widespread public reaction against the war in Viet Nam and against the Watergate affair made it more acceptable to question established institutions and authority figures. Worries about a worldwide population explosion gave support to those who already felt that legal protection for abortion and birth control was necessary to free women from biological bondage. And then, as if some strange creature from the dark underside of life had somehow broken loose, there came in to the public mind a new willingness to question moral norms and social taboos which had prevailed as long as anyone could remember. This assault on traditional values led to frightening increases in the use of mind-destroying drugs, increased homosexuality, pornographic literature and movies; and a sexual revolution that attacked society's right to limit sexual experience to marriage. (Interestingly, the nation's recent increases in the incidence of premarital and extramarital sexual activity are accounted for almost totally by higher rates among women. The rates among men, historically much higher than among women, have remained about the same.)

In the midst of this bewildering upheaval, a new women's rights movement was born. It is impossible to tell which of the other recent developments I have mentioned are related to the women's movement. Many of these things are all tangled together in a hopelessly confused pattern. Whatever the relationships, this time there was something truly revolutionary in the women's movement. As described by political philosopher Robert Nisbet, "Earlier women's rights movements were . . . efforts to achieve for women a larger share of economic, educational, and cultural benefits--but within the family structure; or at least without seeking to alter that structure seriously. What gives present manifestoes, political actions, and movements toward legal reform their revolutionary character is the degree to which the substance of the family is changed. For with sure revolutionary instinct, the women's liberation movement--at least in its radical expressions--goes right to the heart of the matter, which is the historical nature of the role of each of the sexes." (Twilight of Authority, 82-83)

To put the present feminist movement into more exact perspective, I wish to identify three different points along the complex spectrum of views about the nature and place of women. The first view is that women are innately inferior to men and should not participate in matters outside the home. Many of today's writers about feminism believe this was the dominant view in American society until very recently. According to these writers, Western society has regarded women as mentally and physically inferior ever since Plato and Aristotle. They say the early Christian thinkers believed that Eve showed typically evil female character in deserting divine law in the Garden of Eden. They add that the English and American legal systems regarded a wife as the property of her husband. Some have drawn strong analogies between slavery and the

wife's role as a perpetual servant. So it is no wonder, these writers conclude, that early 20th century society stereotyped women as sexy temptresses, nagging witches, useless stage props who watch while men solve all problems, or insipid housewives whose "brains and character are [daily] soaked in dishwater." (Ward, From Adam's Rib to Women's Lib, p. 16) I suppose if one came to believe that this view of women really had been dominant in American attitudes over the years, it would be understandable that some are now outraged enough to insist that children playing a certain wild West game should be required to call it "cowpersons and Indians."

My own reading of American legal and social history, however, casts serious doubt on the innate inferiority position. Consider, for example, the judgment of that celebrated French observer of American life, Alexis de Toqueville, who wrote in 1830 that "In the United States men . . . constantly display an entire confidence in the understanding of a wife, and a profound respect for her freedom; they have decided that her mind is just as fitted as that of a man to discover the plain truth, and her heart as firm to embrace it. . . . I do not hesitate to avow that, although the women of the United States are confined within the narrow circle of domestic life, and their situation is, in some respects, one of extreme dependence, I have nowhere seen women occupying a loftier position; and if I were asked . . . to what the singular prosperity and growing strength of [the American] people ought mainly to be attributed, I should reply, to the superiority of their women." (Democracy in America, p. 247) When you think of the restrictions on the liberty of women even today in the Arab world, the Orient, and most other cultures, it is not hard to sense why de Toqueville seemed to think America was so remarkable in its treatment of women.

I might add that our culture and its legal system have had very sound reasons over the centuries to protect the domestic arena of marriage and family life from the wild ravages of political and economic warfare. We have understood (even if intuitively) for a long, long time the thesis of George Gilder's book, Sexual Suicide, that the mothering instinct of women has been a crucial force in encouraging long-term patterns of social stability, and that a hallmark of civilized society is when men learn from women to identify with their children. Without this taming of the male wanderlust, many men, like the males of the animal species, might still be off on hunting parties, neither knowing nor caring for their offspring. Some men have, fortunately, always had a natural affection for their children, but in the typical division of male and female labor since the earliest origins of our culture, women have been the primary developers of our domestic values--those moral, aesthetic, religious, and social concerns that enable and nurture the ultimate human aspirations. The "dependence" of women in this pattern has been primarily a need for physical protection, economic sustenance, and cooperation in the sharing of domestic tasks.

It is this same domestic commitment to the rearing and education of children that has eternally claimed the highest priority of God himself; for, as He has said, it is "my work and my glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." Of all the things he could have chosen to do, our Father in Heaven is not off in some exotic corner of the universe in a cosmic corporate jet working on his professional "career." Rather, his attention is riveted first of all on us, his children. That is why men or women who find no joy in helping their children learn and grow are not likely to be very happy in the celestial kingdom. That is why Elder Neal A. Maxwell said of today's faithful



Latter-day Saint mothers, "You rock a sobbing child without wondering if today's world is passing you by, because you know you hold tomorrow tightly in your arms." (Ensign, May, 1978, p. 10)

The second view of women's nature and role is in significant part a strong reaction against the innate inferiority view. This view, held by the most ardent feminists today, is not only that women are the equal of men, but that there are no innate distinctions between males and females significant enough to justify any differences in role, whether those roles are in the domestic, political, or economic spheres. In its most extreme and angry form, this unisex philosophy of the "absolutely equal" woman has declared war on every social convention that in any way assumes there is such a thing as a "female role." Thus, the most vocal feminists condemn laws against abortion and contraception because unwanted pregnancies chain their bodies to the "slavery" of a childbearing role. They condemn traditional forms of marriage, because they believe our laws and social customs about marriage make wives subservient to husbands. They condemn the value of childrearing, because they believe the social ethic of motherhood is just another way to keep women from pursuing career goals. They condemn our laws against homosexuality and our concept of illegitimate children on the grounds that these ideas are designed to force women into marriages with men as the condition of allowing them to have children.

They condemn institutional religions, particularly those which have a strong patriarchal tradition, because religion exerts such potent force in defining roles for men and women. In the words of Elizabeth Stanton, a prominent 19th century feminist, "The religious superstitions of women perpetuate their bondage more than all other adverse influences." This hostility toward religion is not confined to our own Church, but includes

the entire tradition of the Old and New Testaments, which reflect strong assumptions about the role of women in family life as well as in church organization.

When the dust settles in all these objections to traditional patterns, the unisex feminist appears to believe that all of our social institutions were designed primarily to perpetuate male power. It is true that the institutions of our culture have not always been fair to women, and some men have exploited the trust placed in them by others. But there is more to the total social fabric than any single-issue focus will ever account for. Moreover, to seek a remedy for existing inequities primarily through a warlike determination to seize the reins of institutional power suggests an adoption by women of the least desirable elements of traditional male role identity. This quest for power also undermines, among men and women, the pursuit of those civilizing, domestic qualities which have been the lifeblood of love and peace in our culture.

There is yet a third way of looking at women, a way which rejects both the innate inferiority view and the unisex view. This is the view I believe the scriptures and the prophets have consistently taught: namely, that women are unquestionably the equal of men, having talents and interests that extend well beyond the home; yet, there are some God-given differences between the sexes that should be both appreciated and preserved. According to this view, Mother Eve's initial partaking of the forbidden fruit was neither stupid nor tragic; rather, what she and Adam did was, in the words of Elder John A. Widtsoe, an act of "sacrifice and courage," making Adam and Eve the "greatest and noblest of the human race." (Evidences and Reconciliations, p. 171) Even though the serpent "beguiled" Eve, she and Adam could have had no children had they remained

in the Garden. (See 2 Nephi 2:23) Thus, Elder Widtsoe wrote that God's commandment against eating the forbidden fruit was primarily a warning about the hazards and the sorrow that would accompany the choice to bear children in the lone and dreary world of mortality. (Evidences and Reconciliations, p. 193) From the very beginning, then, the "mother of all living" showed that heroic maternal instinct that is willing to walk down into the valley of the shadow of death, not only to bring forth children but also to bring forth understanding and joy to the parents.

It is this view of women that appreciates and emulates the way Jesus regarded women during his earthly ministry, even at a time when Jewish traditions tried to preclude the active participation of women in discussing religious doctrine with him. I believe it is no coincidence that such women as Mary and Martha were among the Savior's closest friends and followers. Mary Magdalene was "the first mortal to see a resurrected person." (Ensign, January 1979, p. 63) And it was Mary and other women who went to the apostles, those special witnesses of Christ, to first tell them that the Savior's body was gone from the tomb. Closer to our own day, the women of pioneer times were among the great figures of Church history. The women of Utah were the first in the nation to exercise the right to vote. Utah women were the nation's first woman state senator, the first woman mayor, and the first editors of a women's magazine West of the Mississippi.

Joseph F. Smith, sixth president of the Church, described this third attitude in these words: "Man and woman are begotten of the same father, are born of the same mother, possess the same life, . . . exist by the same means, both bear the divine image and possess the same divine nature. . . . Then why shall one enjoy civil rights and the other be denied them? Why shall one be admitted to all the avenues of mental and

physical progress and prosperity and the other be prohibited . . . ?  
Shall a man be paid higher wages than is paid to a woman for doing no  
better than she does the very same work? Shall the avenues for  
employment be multiplied to men and diminished to women by the mere  
dictum or selfishness of men?"

Similarly, President Kimball and his counselors have said,  
"Latter-day Saint women . . . know how deeply the Church encourages them  
to exercise their free agency. . . . (They) are strongly encouraged to  
develop their individual talents, to broaden their learning and to expand  
their contributions to activities such as religious, governmental,  
cultural, educational, and community pursuits." (First Presidency  
Reaffirmation on ERA, Aug. 24, 1978) Yet at the same time, the modern  
prophets have consistently taught that because "mothers who have young  
children in the home should devote their primary energies to the  
companionship and training of their children and the care of their  
families," these mothers "should not seek employment outside the home  
unless there is no other way that the family's basic needs can be  
provided." (Dallin Oaks Statement on the Education of Women at BYU)  
(italics added.)

One reason I am so grateful for this balanced view about women's  
role is that it puts the role of men in a sound perspective as well.  
"Consider the implication of [the cliché] 'A woman leads with her heart,  
a man with his head.' This essentially says that a woman can't think and  
a man can't feel." (Ward, p. 107) One of my fears about the momentum of  
the feminist movement toward identity with male tendencies is that our  
society has sometimes stereotyped men as unfeeling beasts having charac-  
teristics undesirable in either sex. If the Virginia Slims tobacco ads  
have come such a long way, baby, that you can't tell a Virginia Slim from

a Marlboro, we may have larger problems than an increase of lung cancer among women. The Marlboro ads have always made a big thing out of being "macho" men. Before they discovered the cowperson in his big sheepskin, the Marlboro folks liked to make their customers think of themselves as sailors. (You know, of course, about the stereotype of swearing like a sailor.) One of their early ads showed the tanned and rugged figure of a big he-man out cruising around in his yacht, the wind gently whipping the handsome smiling face, with one big hairy arm wrapped around the waist of a cuddly blonde and the other arm draped casually over the steering wheel of the yacht, sporting a monstrous underwater sailor's watch on the wrist and holding in the first two fingers (of course) a Marlboro cigarette. I think the idea was, if you gon' be Macho, man, you gon' smoke Marlboro. There is something about that macho image of the nicotine stains on the sun-tanned fingers which suggests that the hands of a "real man" would be out of place in holding the hand of a child, or soothing the fevered brow of a sick wife, or being placed on someone's head to give a religious blessing. We live in a world that works hard to convince men that it is not "cool" to be kind, tender, refined, or spiritually sensitive. But when I think of the hands of Joseph Smith or Brigham Young, Moses, or Peter, or the Savior himself, I can imagine manly hair on the arms, but I think more of strong hands in the posture of blessing, serving, and loving in gentleness and tenderness. Or I think of the hands of a Dr. Russell Nelson, and feel a deep gratitude for hands so finely trained that they can skillfully perform surgery on the heart of a Prophet of God and also be worthy to be placed on that same prophet's head in a blessing of the priesthood. Those are the kind of trained, masculine yet gentle hands I pray my own sons will have.

Just as it is good for a man to have tender feelings, it is good for a woman to have a thoughtful, probing, and well-educated intellect. Masculinity has no monopoly of the mind, and femininity has no monopoly of the heart. There are many desirable characteristics that have nothing to do with gender. Consider some words that might describe a person who is living as he or she should live, and see if you can tell which of these words are masculine and which are feminine: teacher, child of God, loving parent, trained professional, student of the scriptures, faithful follower of Christ, devoted companion, loyal employee, trusted friend. They aren't dependent on gender in any sense, are they?

Consider further that noble word, "parent." There is no greater role in life for a woman than that of wife and mother, just as there is no greater role for a man than that of husband and father. Many of today's extreme feminists totally underestimate the value of parenthood, for men or women, because they have become so caught up in the materialistic and self-centered assumptions of careerism and competitive getting ahead. As Hugh Nibley said in his masterful talk on "Patriarchy and Matriarchy," careerism for men as well as for women represents the "determination to rule in hell rather than be ruled in heaven."

A study was done at Stanford University a few years ago among a sample group of male scientists, educators, and corporation presidents. These men, very successful by typical standards, were asked about the sources of greatest satisfaction in their lives. To the surprise of those conducting the research, the men said their families had been more important than their professional careers as a source of lifetime satisfaction.

Thomas DeLong has summarized other research showing that men commonly report that their families are their most important priority.

Yet, says Professor DeLong, the behavior of most men is inconsistent with this attitude, as work and career demands constantly take priority over family interests. Moreover, fathers who do devote themselves more fully to the nurturing of their own children are likely to discover "what women have known for years: there are few societal rewards for spending time with children."

One of the most unfortunate effects of the feminist preoccupation with careers has been the growing public attitude that unless society places some tangible economic value on such domestic tasks as childrearing, the labor is of questionable worth. Thus, both women and men increasingly believe they should measure the meaning of their lives in terms of career achievements. As stated by Merlin Myers, "The begetting, bearing, and caring for children does not produce gain in the currently accepted sense of the word. Rather, (childrearing) may put strain on what gain is available, or may impede the freedom and mobility of a person in his or her quest for gain. Women are thus caught in the very unenviable position of having the most decisive attributes of their femininity, or womanhood, denigrated by the society in which they live as being an obstacle to their achieving worth. . . . Day-care centers and old people's homes . . . free those who would be responsible for children and parents in societies where kinship norms prevail, to pursue personal gain in one form or another. . . . (Compare this with the statement of the heart-rent Rachel to her husband, Jacob, 'Give me children, else I die!')" ("The Morality of Kinship," delivered at BYU, Nov. 15, 1983)

This contemporary attitude not only confuses women, it also discourages men from developing their own nurturing instincts. As a result, too many men are denied the sweet joys that come from rich and meaningful communication with their children. And too many women are

denied the reassurance of feeling that their husbands recognize and value their often backbreaking work as mothers and homemakers. When a husband honestly appreciates what his wife does at home, I don't suppose it matters much to her whether the government quantifies her labor in computing the gross national product. President Harold B. Lee used to say, the greatest work men and women will ever do will be within the walls of their own homes. Work of that kind is not meant to be done in full view of an outside audience. The service rendered, the children taught, and the attitudes shaped by devoted fathers and mothers are not likely to be really appreciated by outside observers. The principles of love and human commitment, and the silent satisfactions that flow from them, are private matters of the heart, known only to those who practice them. Yet for men or for women, there are no more meaningful satisfactions in all of life.

Well, what about the women's rights movement? In general, it seems to me that if the movement helps people to not believe in the innate inferiority of women, that is good. If the movement will encourage men to have more sensitive feelings, that is good. But when the radical extreme in the movement ignores fundamental distinctions between men and women, or attacks marriage, family life, religion, the value of children, or other true principles, that is bad.

My second question is, how do women enjoy the blessings of the priesthood? I realize that the first blush answer to that question might be--by marrying a worthy priesthood holder. But there is more to the question than that. In a priesthood session of general conference a few years ago, Elder Bruce R. McConkie gave a provocative sermon entitled, "The Ten Blessings of the Priesthood." As I have thought about those ten blessings of the priesthood, I have realized that almost all of them are



available to women, and most are available to single women. There is one fundamental concept that makes this statement possible: through the restoration of the gospel in its fullness, the Church itself has the power, authority, and blessings of the priesthood. Therefore, all worthy members of the Church receive many blessings of the priesthood simply by virtue of their Church membership--and in this respect men and women have the same privileges. The best way to illustrate my point is to paraphrase briefly the blessings discussed by Elder McConkie and then to note how many of these blessings are fully available to all worthy members. Here is his list of the ten blessings of the priesthood:

First, being members of the true Church and receiving the fullness of the everlasting gospel.

Second, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost and the other gifts of the Spirit.

Third, becoming sanctified by the Spirit, thereby becoming fit to dwell with God.

Fourth, representing Jesus Christ in administering salvation to mankind.

Fifth, becoming children of God in the family of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sixth, having the opportunity of eternal marriage, without which there is no exaltation in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom.

Seventh, having the power to govern all spiritual and temporal things.

Eighth, having power to gain eternal life, the greatest of all the gifts of God.

Ninth, having power to make one's calling and election sure while yet in mortality.

Tenth, having the power and privilege, if pure in heart, to see the face of God while yet in mortality.

Note how many of these blessings are of the personal, spiritual kind, relating to spiritual gifts and the process of personal perfection. At the 1978 dedication of the Relief Society's beautiful Monument to Women in Nauvoo, Elder McConkie quoted Alma 32:23, which states that the Lord "imparteth his words by angels unto men, yea, not only men, but women also." He then said, "Where spiritual things are concerned, as pertaining to all of the gifts of the Spirit, with reference to the receipt of revelation, the gaining of testimonies, and the seeing of visions, in all matters that pertain to godliness and holiness and which are brought to pass as a result of personal righteousness--in all these things men and women stand in a position of absolute equality before the Lord. He is no respecter of persons nor of sexes, and he . . . delights to honor [all] those who serve him in righteousness to the end--both male and female. It is to them that he promises to reveal all the hidden mysteries of his kingdom." (January 1979 Ensign, p. 61)

One of the greatest of the priesthood blessings is the opportunity of eternal marriage--and unless we obtain this blessing, either in this life or in the hereafter, we cannot receive exaltation in the celestial kingdom. In some sense, I suppose exaltation is the ultimate priesthood blessing, because it finally includes all other blessings. But this glorious privilege--even though it is a blessing of the priesthood--is not available to a worthy priesthood holder unless he is sealed in eternal marriage to a worthy woman. How significant for our understanding of the interdependence and equality of men and women before the eyes of God to know that neither can achieve exaltation alone. "Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man,

in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman." (1 Cor. 11:11-12) And when both finally receive eternal life and exaltation, they will live and stand together forever, with all the blessings and powers of the priesthood. They will stand side by side, as did Adam and Eve, with neither behind the other.

The one category of blessings in which the role of women is not the same as that of men holding the priesthood is that of administering the gospel and governing all things. Yet even in this area, women have tremendous opportunities and make great contributions. They may be called and set apart as missionaries, fully authorized to preach the gospel and cry repentance unto the world. They may be called and set apart to preside over important Church organizations, such as the Relief Society, Primary, or Young Women. In those callings, local women leaders have all the presiding authority--including the right to inspiration--regarding their organizations that a male Sunday School president has for his organization. All Church members and leaders at every level and in each organization are subject to the presiding direction of the ecclesiastical line running from the President of the Church to the ward bishop, and in that respect men and women are treated the same. For instance, a father living in an organized ward who holds the priesthood may not baptize his own child without authorization from his bishop.

Consider for a moment the family, which is the most basic organizational unit of the Church. We know it is the pattern of the priesthood for fathers to preside over their families. But suppose a father should die, leaving a widow and three children, with the oldest child being a 13 year old boy who holds the Aaronic Priesthood. Who presides in that home? Is it the young Deacon because of his priesthood? Of

course not. The head of that church unit is the mother, and she has every right to pray for and receive revelation for the spiritual guidance of her children. When her children need priesthood blessings and ordinances, she will call upon the grandfather of her children, or perhaps on her home teachers. But she presides in her home through her membership in the Church and through her natural calling as a Mother in Israel.

This reference to motherhood brings me to one final comment about the blessings women enjoy. We noted earlier that the work and glory of God is in bringing to pass the eternal life of his children. There is one sacred blessing intimately associated with the divine power of bringing forth life which is reserved solely and exclusively for women--and that is the gift of conceiving and giving birth to children. I have long felt that in this wondrous and miraculous area of life's experience, mothers feel a special oneness with God that men may never fully understand.

Now my third and final question: why should LDS young women obtain a college education?

Even with our primary commitments to family life, there are some very important facts that young women must understand before they just drop out of school at the first marriage proposal that comes along. Recent research conducted for the Church has revealed some sobering statistics about the circumstances of LDS women. According to these findings, 90% of all young women will work for some portion of their lives, especially after their children are grown. Fully half of them will be the primary family breadwinner at some time in their lives, because that many will have been single for some period prior to reaching age 60. About 11% will lose their husbands in death, 35% will experience

a divorce, and 3% will not have married. When you women students here today are fifty, you will still have a life expectancy of at least thirty more years. So, whether you like it or not, whether you plan for it or not, most of you will be necessarily employed at one time or another. And the chances are that when you need to work, you will have dependents to house and feed, so you will need much more money than you need today. And I know first hand that many of you are becoming well acquainted with the grim reaper of poverty already. But unless you prepare now for better paying jobs, you will be right out there stocking shelves and waiting tables for minimum wages, competing with naive and unskilled 19 year olds who won't need the money a fraction as much as you do. Should you plan for a career? Yes, you should--not because a career is equally valuable with marriage and children, because it isn't as valuable; rather, you should prepare for a career since the chances are you will need it, whatever comes of your hopes for marriage.

There are two other reasons beyond career preparation why young women should take education seriously. We don't have time now to explore these reasons fully, because they are interesting enough and important enough to be worth a good long talk all by themselves. Stated simply, the first other reason is that education will make of you a far better mother and person. The second other reason is that you will have a richer, fuller life of your own. I know of no better way to give you a feeling for what I am talking about than to quote Carol Lynn Pearson's poem, "On Nest Building."

Mud is not bad for nest building.  
Mud and sticks  
and a fallen feather or two will do  
and require no reaching.

I could rest there  
with my tiny ones,  
sound for the season, at least.

But--  
If I may fly awhile--  
If I may cut through a sunset going out  
and a rainbow coming back,  
color upon color sealed in my eyes--  
If I may have the unboundaried skies  
for my study,  
Clouds, cities, rivers for my rooms--  
If I may search the centuries  
for melody and meaning--  
If I may try for the sun--  
I shall come back  
bearing such beauties,  
gleaned from God's and man's very best.  
I shall come filled.

And then--  
Oh, the nest that I can build.

And now just a word to young men about encouraging young women to take school seriously. I was surprised recently at some statistics from a survey of BYU students which revealed that men don't understand the real reasons why women attend a college or university. The vast majority of women in the survey said they were at college to prepare for a career and to gain a college education. "Finding a spouse"--a subject of obvious interest for college men and women--was not their primary reason for attending college. But, when men were asked why they thought women attended college, most of them listed personal rather than educational reasons. Perhaps college women hesitate to tell men their real motivations for fear of being teased or put down. Of greater concern to me is the possibility that if men--both students and faculty men--don't take women seriously as college students, they may unintentionally discourage women from pursuing a serious education. Anyone who uses Church teachings as an excuse for thinking women should not wholeheartedly seek education does not understand what the Church teaches.

I noted earlier that both of today's extreme views of women are wrong. It is wrong to regard women as being innately inferior to men and having no place outside the home. It is also wrong to put careers permanently ahead of marriage and parenthood and to believe there are no important differences between men and women. In between these two erroneous extremes is a large middle ground within which boys will be boys and girls will be girls. Yet those girls not only have the right, they are expected by the prophets of God to "develop their talents, broaden their learning, and expand their contributions to religious, governmental, cultural, educational, and community pursuits."

I began with a story about a young couple needing answers to their prayers. I will conclude by telling you about another man and woman who prayed for help. When Joseph Smith first called upon his trusted friend, Heber C. Kimball, to accept the principle of plural marriage, the prophet informed Heber that God would not allow him to tell his wife, Vilate, either about the principle itself or about the woman Heber was to marry. Heber Kimball was thunderstruck. He and his wife had been unusually close over many years of married life. He prayed earnestly for some way to spare his dear Vilate the risk of hearing rumors she could never understand. His faith was being tried beyond even his well established endurance. Vilate saw from his strange behavior that something was seriously wrong, but that he was not free to talk to her about it. She wanted to understand, in order to help and sustain him in his obvious grief. He could neither eat nor sleep, as he paced the floor and pleaded with the Lord all night long. Finally, as her husband was praying in one room, Vilate Kimball went to another room of their home and knelt to ask for understanding. After a time, I think because of the mature relationship she had previously established with the Lord, the heavens

were opened to her. She was taught the principle of plural marriage through direct revelation and was even shown in vision the woman her husband had been asked to marry. She then rose to her feet, went to the room nearby, and knelt next to her husband. She told him tenderly, "Heber, it's alright. I understand. The Lord has shown me." She then described her vision and covenanted to stand by her husband and to honor the Lord's request of them. (Whitney, Life of Heber C. Kimball, p. 327)

Our Father in Heaven "delights to honor all those who serve him in righteousness . . . both male and female. It is to them that he promises to reveal all the hidden mysteries of his kingdom." May each of us be given the strength to live our lives to our full potential as sons and daughters of God; and may we be given the wisdom to understand what it is to be a man or a woman in the difficult but promising years that lie ahead.

Brothers and sisters, we all need to think more deeply about this subject. The nation in which we live is bewildered to the point of being at war with itself over the matters we have discussed today. We must deal with these issues constructively for social as well as personal reasons. It will not do for us to respond with superficial ideas or raw emotion. That simply will not do, not today. I pray that we may be an example and an influence for good, both in preserving the ideals of family life and in honoring the dignity and equality of women.



April Hallmanack:

Dear Family:

Enclosed is a copy of Bruce Hafen's talk at the recent women's conference.

It so exactly mirrors my own thoughts on the women's movement versus the church's attitude towards women that I felt every one of you should have a copy. It is amazing that someone has at last put my thoughts and feelings so elegantly into word. I hope you will all (especially the men) read it and digest it.

I don't think we have a problem in our family. My sons (as far as I can tell) and my sons-in-laws (as far as I can tell) are raising their families and treating their wives as the Lord would have them do. They are encouraging their wives to develop their talents and reach out into the community and church for service and development. I think they're great. If any of you are ever required to give a talk on the subject at hand, this is the best resource material I have ever seen in one talk.

He treats the subject in three sections (if I can remember it right) (I have just finished reading it, and was so pleased with it that I wanted you all to have copies). Charlotte attended the talk and got a copy. She copied it for Sherlene and I, and I bless her for it.

All of the grandsons should read it, and the granddaughters who are old enough, as well.

It is Wednesday, and I have not received any letters, so I guess this is it for the month.

Love and Kisses.

Mom.