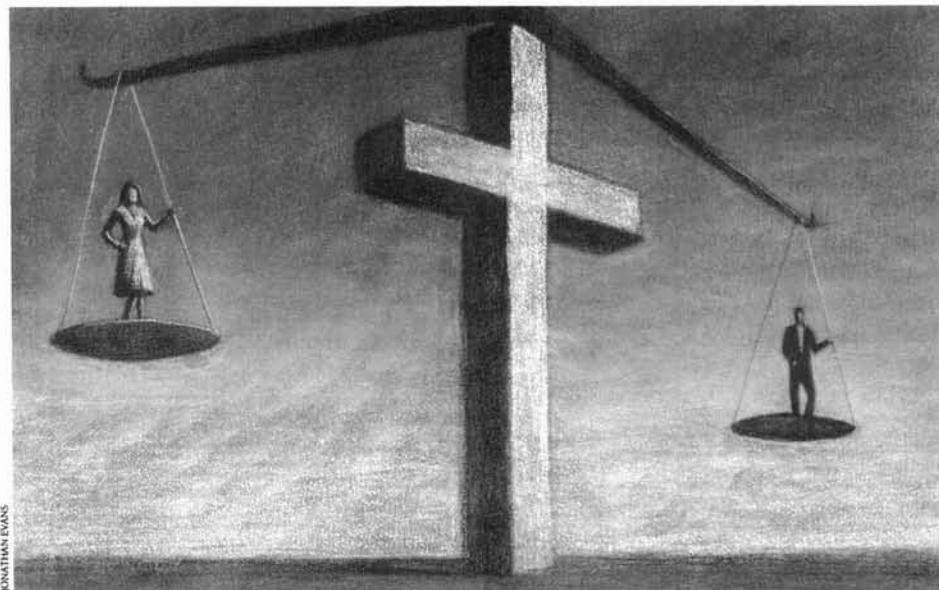


GIVE AND TAKE

THIRTEEN FAVORABLE CONSEQUENCES OF ORDAINING WOMEN

By M. Scott Fisher



JONATHAN EVANS

Despite the current firm resistance of the Church, I think the ordination of women is more viable than we may realize. We have a strong theological basis for asserting the equality of all persons and considerable institutional flexibility.

INTRODUCTION

Growing up as an active male in the LDS church, I have been comforted by knowing I could invoke the priesthood to bless my child.

Every parent and every child deserves that same comfort.

THE WINTER Edna Corn Arrington was pregnant with her fourth child, the 1918–19 influenza epidemic struck Twin Falls County, Idaho, hard. The entire family was stricken; one daughter

died, the father hovered between life and death, and the baby, a one-and-a-half-year-old boy, contracted pneumonia on top of the flu. The overworked doctor told Brother Arrington that the child could not live more than twenty-four hours and warned Sister Arrington not to expend her little remaining strength in trying to save him; pregnant women were particularly susceptible to the killing disease. Acting in love and faith, Sister Arrington and Hannah Bowen, a Relief Society volunteer nurse who had recently

M. SCOTT FISHER is a consulting psychologist in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He and his wife, Marjorie England Fisher, are the parents of four children. Earlier drafts of this paper were presented at Sunstone symposiums in Salt Lake City (August 1993), Chicago (October 1993), and Boston (November 1993). In response to his paper, Karen Farb Tullis and Marni Asplund have written the articles that follow.

moved there from Tooele, anointed and blessed the infant as they had been taught to do in their Relief Society. He was Leonard J. Arrington, later LDS Church Historian.¹

Two generations later, another mother, married to an inactive priesthood holder, woke to find her son, who suffered severe croup attacks, struggling to breathe. She carried him into the bathroom and turned on the shower, hoping the steam would help, while someone called the ambulance. But the steam wasn't helping, and he was turning blue.

My son was sitting on the toilet seat and I sat in front of him on the bathtub edge. Suddenly, in a natural, instantaneous response, I laid my hands on his head and said, "As E—'s mother, I call on the power of the Melchizedek Priesthood . . ." and I blessed him. I had always prayed desperately for him during these attacks, but this was the first time I had ever laid my hands on him and invoked the priesthood. While I was speaking, his head slipped forward from under my hands and fell on my lap. He was asleep!²

Growing up as an active male in the LDS church, I have been comforted by knowing that in similar situations I could invoke the priesthood to bless my child. Every parent and every child deserves that same comfort. We feel the joy and relief of the mother with the asthmatic child. Each of us who has heard Leonard Arrington speak, read his works, or been influenced by the historians he has trained feels the poignancy of the doctor's dismissiveness and the strength of Edna Arrington and Hannah Bowen. However, only 20.9 percent of Mormon families in the United States fit the traditional profile of a temple-married couple with children in the home.³ And even in such homes, many husbands are absent on business or in the service. The benefits of equal access to priesthood blessings by hundreds of thousands of women and children—who are as deserving as those in homes with active priesthood holders—become even more apparent in light of these statistics.

Yet empowering Mormon mothers to act authoritatively in calling down blessings of health on their children is only one of the positive consequences of women's ordination to priesthood. As I have thought soberly and realistically about this controversial and sensitive topic, I have seen many ways in which women's ordination would positively influence individuals, the Church, and even the world.

Empowering Mormon mothers to act authoritatively in calling down blessings of health on their children is only one of the positive consequences of women's ordination to priesthood.

I regret that this topic is controversial and seen by many as the domain of women and general authorities. The issue of ordination concerns men as much as women. Men obviously have the power to do something about it and, less obviously, have much to gain from the change.

A PERSONAL ODYSSEY

I have come to believe that it is important to state what I genuinely think, feel, and see.

FOR many years, I thought little about the issue of women's ordination. When I did, I dismissed the topic quickly as one of balance: Did not God assign priesthood to men so that they could develop the gifts that women had naturally? The turning point came when I responded to an invitation to write an article on the use of authority in Church settings.⁴ When I began thinking systemically about priesthood, I realized I could not defend the exclusion of women from such authority: men and women are too tightly woven together in life's tapestry.

It was a paradigm shift. The benefits of ordaining Mormon women to the priesthood overwhelmed me. I have spent the intervening months reading widely on related topics, discussing the matter intensively with thoughtful people both in and out of the Church, and making it the matter of private meditation and prayer. My first insight has been consistently and repeatedly confirmed. Continued study and contemplation have yielded only greater clarity and certainty. I gain more peace daily regarding the positive consequences of women's ordination.

Why am I sharing this private inspiration? Two experiences illustrate my motivations: In my Detroit ward in the 1960s, an African-American brother served as Sunday School secretary. He worked on his records while the rest of us went to priesthood meeting. I became uncomfortable walking past him every Sunday morning on the way to my high priests group. I genuinely yearned for his full participation as a brother in all aspects of the Church, but especially in priesthood meeting. So I determined, along with a friend who felt as I did, to write a letter to Church leaders expressing our feelings and respectfully requesting a change in policy.

But I never wrote that letter. When I mentioned the idea to my father, he said it would be crazy to write such a letter. I was working for the Church Educational System at the time, and I simply lost my nerve. When I related this experience to a general authority a couple of years later, but prior to the 1978 revelation, I wondered aloud if such a letter could have done any good. He said, "It might have!"

In the second experience, Elder Bruce R. McConkie, then a member of the First Council of the Seventy, endeared himself to me forever when he spoke at the Salt Lake Institute in 1966 and cited an Old Testament story that had escaped my attention. When Moses was meeting with the "seventy elders" he had chosen, they prophesied under the influence of the Spirit. Two of their number were still in the camp, not with Moses, but the Spirit also touched them and they prophesied. When a young man came running with the news, Joshua exclaimed, "Moses, my lord, stop them!" The record continues: "But Moses replied, 'Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!'" (Num. 11:26–29, New International Version.) The message of Brother McConkie's remarks was that we should all speak as we are moved to do so. I also note now and appreciate the fact that Moses said, at least in this English translation, "all the Lord's people," not "all the Lord's men."

I now see my earlier hesitation as insensitivity and a lack of courage. In this essay, I say what I think and see and feel according to how I have been touched about making God's blessings available to all of his children—daughters and sons.

**THIRTEEN POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES
OF ORDAINING WOMEN TO THE
PRIESTHOOD**

THE list that follows comes from my observations and experiences as a husband and father, an active Church member with many callings, including leadership capacities, and my work as a consulting psychologist trying to maximize the effectiveness and personal growth of individuals and groups.

1. ORGANIZATIONAL EQUALITY

The first and greatest advantage of ordaining women to the priesthood is to make them structurally equal with men in exercising personal priesthood authority, equal in growth opportunities, and equal in access to administrative offices in the Church. The Book of Mormon tells us emphatically, "All are alike unto God"—and then categorizes the most obvious groups of differentiated humanity to stress that God sees no such differences: "black and white, bond and free, male and female." (2 Ne. 26:33.) God is concerned with fairness and justice—and, hence, with equality. Equality is an irreducible value; the most powerful mechanism the Church has to make women equal to men is to give them the voice of priesthood authority.

After Rosa Parks's refusal to give up her bus seat triggered a two-month bus boycott, negotiations for a compromise slowly bared the unacceptable assumptions underlying segregated seating. It became evident to the organizers that the solution did not lie in negotiating more seats for blacks or finding an answer to questions like "What if a black man sat next to a white woman and their knees touched?" Instead, they decided to press for an end to discriminatory seating laws. When people were given their basic rights, the freedom of equality, then the principle was simple: "People could sit anywhere there was a seat."⁵

We might ask, "What would it be like if anyone could give a blessing, be a bishop, or be Primary president?" I think it would be like it was in Jesus' church.⁶ A change of policy would not change attitudes in the Church overnight any more than attitudes in Montgomery, Alabama, changed immediately. But forty years later, attitudes have changed. In the meantime, those who were discriminated against have increasingly enjoyed the blessings of freedom and the exercise of their basic human rights. Changing the priesthood policy won't suddenly solve all of the problems of discrimination, insult, and abuse that women sometimes receive in the Church—witness the experience of RLDS women⁷—but it will help. Ordination will build a better bridge over which we can pass to address other structural problems; meanwhile, it will make all of the gifts accessible to all who might benefit from them.

2. DEBUNKING HARMFUL MAN-MADE JUSTIFICATIONS

The ordination of women would eliminate the harmful justifications of exclusion, a pattern that parallels folk beliefs that evolved to justify the exclusion of blacks from the priesthood. A friend who is both faithful and brilliant found himself speechless when his six-year-old asked why she would not be able to hold the priesthood. Painfully, he realized that every answer he thought of but one would send a message of inferiority. The most honest and the most helpful answer he could give her was to say, "We don't know why women cannot hold the priesthood." I take particular umbrage at two damaging and illogical arguments currently used against ordaining women. The first is the easy formula: men have priesthood and women have motherhood. This argument seriously damages men as well as women. It makes either fatherhood or priesthood a consolation prize and denigrates both. As a father, I would never choose "priesthood" over "fatherhood," nor would I consider priesthood more important than fatherhood. Elder M. Russell Ballard took a valuable small step toward eliminating this equation by pointing out, in the General Relief Society Meeting on 25 September 1993, that men have "priesthood and the responsibilities of fatherhood" while women are assigned only "the responsibilities of motherhood."⁸ Still, the fact that many experience pain at this illogical comparison should not go unnoticed.

A second damaging and fallacious argument is that the prayer of faith is fully effica-

cious in healing; therefore, devout women don't need the priesthood. This argument detracts from our faith that priesthood can be a power in our lives beyond its use in such ordinances as baptism and confirmation. If priesthood is useful for men in calling on the powers of heaven, then it would certainly be useful for women as well. Ordination—and eliminating the need for illogical rationalizations—could make the priesthood more powerful for all.

3. REMOVING MESSAGES OF WOMEN'S INFERIORITY

The ordination of women would lessen, and in some cases eliminate, the message of inferiority frequently sent to women in the Church. For example, in one ward a successful ongoing service program was designed by both men and women; however, the bishop referred to the program in a public meeting as having been developed by "the priesthood." (When the omission was called to his attention, he promptly corrected himself.)

More blatantly, women's opinions are dismissed, and they are told they cannot perceive and interpret facts as well as men. Veda Anderson, a friend and one of the most able people I know, once summarized her experience with men in the Church: "I'm always wrong because I am a woman." Veda holds a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Michigan and is former president of the National Kidney Foundation. My experience is consistent with hers. Mormon men frequently do not listen to the ideas of women

as seriously as they listen to those of men. And because a woman's leaders are all ultimately male priesthood holders, women are rendered unequal, less powerful, and inferior; their voices are weakened by this unequal treatment and the separation and injury that it imposes.

A friend who is as psychologically healthy as any human being I know says, "I don't have the priesthood because God hasn't revealed it. Maybe it's because I'm not worthy or can't handle it in God's opinion. God didn't give me the priesthood. I'm inferior in his eyes." *It is the denial itself that is damaging to her.* When a woman sees herself as theologically inferior, she will lack strength in social self-assertion. If she wants to assert her opinion, she may hesitate, paralyzed by questions like, "Am I just being selfish? Shouldn't I be more self-sacrificing?" If she yields to such questions, she diminishes her self-esteem by diminishing her voice, and she must deal with the resultant guilt and frustration of her silence herself. In my opinion, buttressed by my professional observations, *self-silencing always diminishes self-esteem and increases perceptions of inferiority.*

In a tragic reversal of the heroic story of Helaman's warriors, who expressed their faith in the words given to them by their mothers (see Alma 57:46–48), we learn through a Harvard study of adolescents by Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan that American girls are taught to relinquish their voices, not by men but by older women—often by their mothers. The systematic stifling of the female voice in and out of the Church produces in me simultaneous feelings of grief and anger. Brown and Gilligan wrote:

It was with a sense of shock and then a deep, knowing sadness that we listened to the voices of the girls tell us that it was adult women in their lives that provided the models for silencing themselves. . . . We wept. Then . . . we could recall the controlling, silencing women with clarity and rage, but we could also gratefully recall the women who had allowed our disagreement and rambunctiousness in their presence and who made us feel whole.⁹

The tendency for self-silencing is endemic in the organizations I work with and no less frequent or less present in Church settings. The Church could do much to remove this damaging cultural "fact of life." That women acquiesce in being silenced is not evidence of a healthy system; rather, it is evidence of how thoroughly they have been trained and often



"It says, 'Stop going to R-rated movies.'"

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damaged by millennia of unequal treatment. As Gerda Lerner has pointed out, "The structuring of society in such a way that women were for millennia excluded from the creation of the cultural product has more decisively disadvantaged women in their economic and political rights than any other factor."¹⁰ If women had the priesthood, the absence of women's voices in the decision-making process at all levels and in leadership handbooks would be ameliorated.

4. BETTER DECISIONS FROM MORE PERSPECTIVES

The Church needs the vitality and strength that comes from women's voices. The Church would benefit by bringing the gifts of women into the public arena. A substantial body of current research suggests that men and women often speak for different values and perspectives in open discussions. Men tend to focus on the values of separateness, autonomy, status, rules, hierarchy, and accomplishment. Maintaining these institutional markers gives them much of their identity. Women tend to focus on relationships, connectedness, and care-giving. Much of their identity comes through these processes.¹¹ When there are problems, if we listen to both women and men, we will hear both voices, to the benefit of all.

5. IMPROVED GENDER COMMUNICATION
Women's ordination would help men and women communicate more freely with each other. The problem of gender-related communication is certainly not one on which Mormons have a monopoly, but the rigidity and exclusiveness of Mormon patriarchal structures exacerbate both the cultural manifestations and their consequences. In my work with groups, I have found that unequal status almost always makes communication within the group more difficult and seriously limits the ability of the group to become a cohesive unit.¹² Alice Eagly, writing on *Gender and Social Influence*, reports differential influence between men and women in the family as a result of the higher status that men ordinarily have in organizations. She quotes psychologist Stanley Milgram: "The individual higher in the hierarchy is believed to have the right to exert influence by virtue of his or her position . . . and the individual lower in the

hierarchy is believed to have the obligation to comply with the demands that are made."¹³ Disadvantaging women in this way has negative effects on the husband-wife relationship and the family.

6. IMPROVED MARRIAGE PARTNERSHIP

If women were ordained equally, husbands and wives would feel a stronger and sweeter sense of equality in their partnership. We would bless each other more. It's hard for a woman or a man to ask for a blessing when the request bears within it implications of inferiority and dependence. Equality in ordination would also contribute to the quality of parent-child relationships. Wives have not been able to participate freely in giving children parents' blessings. This exclusion has damaged mothers and daughters. What does the daughter sense when her mother can't give her a desired blessing? What does it teach her about her voice, about herself as a woman? The limitation of parental blessings to fathers has, I believe, helped fathers create special bonds with their children, but the inclusion of the mother would not weaken those bonds. How has the present practice contributed to special bonds between mothers and daughters? Spiritual leadership in the home is a joyful responsibility, yet hundreds of men feel burdened and "nagged" by it. Sharing the burden would draw husband and wife closer together in mutual blessing and would provide a model of equality for the children.

7. STRENGTHENED SINGLE PARENTS

The ordination of women would strengthen the hundreds of thousands of LDS women who are or who will be single parents. Knowing that they can bless their children, dedicate their homes, and ask for revelation, women will feel a reduction in the disorientation, intimidation, fear, and inadequacies that frequently accompany single parenthood. When a woman has felt dependent upon a husband—often a negligent or even an unfaithful one—for spiritual leadership for herself and her children, when she feels that his priesthood provides significant security and protection, then its removal through death or divorce can be bewildering. The message and the injustice belittle and damage the woman. Transferring that depen-

dence to a home teacher or a busy bishop can be humiliating, especially if the woman is somehow blamed in the event of a divorce. Nowhere is our unequal treatment of women more evident than in withholding from single women and mothers the blessings of priesthood.

8. GREATER RECOGNITION OF THE FEMININE DIVINE

If women were ordained, both men and women would benefit wonderfully by more readily recognizing and validating aspects of the feminine divine. Women would become more sensitive to their identification with the feminine divine in them. Women's having the priesthood would affirm the partnership of the feminine in the divine, or women's equality in the creative process, and confirm for women their share in the divine nature.

I also see ordination as performing the equally valuable function of making men more cognizant of feminine aspects in a divinity, of relating to a Heavenly Mother, and of accepting "feminine" aspects in themselves. They can be more fully themselves, accept and increase all positive dimensions of their selves, and be free from the implied and stated superiority that goes with male-only priesthood. What is wanted is not for men and women to be the same, but for men to be both sensitive *and* strong, and for women to be as strong as they are sensitive.

9. PRIESTHOOD RESPONSIBILITIES WOULD BE SHARED

Men would also benefit directly from sharing the responsibility for ecclesiastical duties. Although men have benefitted psychologically and emotionally from the status and visibility of Church leadership (as well as spiritually from broader opportunities to serve), such duties can also weigh heavily as a burden, especially in time spent away from families. Ecclesiastical leadership is an area men and women can share and feel good about. Neither would be usurping; neither would be dominating, as we share in decision-making, question-asking, and answer-knowing.

10. PROTECTION AGAINST SEXUAL ABUSE

Ordination would enhance women's ability to protect themselves and their daughters

against sexual abuse in the home. Although women's ordination to the priesthood would not stop marital rape, wife-battering, or emotional abuse, it would help to eliminate the patriarchal male's rationale: "Do what I say; I have the priesthood." It would also, by reducing structural inferiority, make women more assertive and less codependent in abusive situations.

In the case of incest and child sexual abuse, the present patriarchal structure leaves young women clearly more vulnerable than young men to seduction and abuse from parents and relatives.¹⁴ If the perpetrator holds a priesthood calling, the victim's powerlessness is increased, and her ability to take steps to stop the abuse is minimized. Shared priesthood would help to change the power relationship from one of inequality and implied inferiority to one in which the priesthood itself would be a force protecting the safety of women and children.

11. FEWER CASES OF ECCLESIASTICAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Women's ordination would reduce the incidence of sexual exploitation by Church officers. Bishops who are required by policy to conduct "searching interviews" of the sexual behavior of all of the young women in a ward are constantly exposed to temptations of voyeurism or worse. Not all bishops can resist this temptation, and the more "righteous" the girl, the more compliant she is likely to be to show her good faith and cooperation. Adult women can also be victimized in interview situations. With women's ordination,

the interview process could readily change so that men could conduct the interviews of men, and women could do the same for women.¹⁵

Women, especially young women, should not be expected to go to men with sexual issues. Men who don't see this problem might ask themselves how comfortable they would feel discussing sexual issues with the Relief Society president, or if they would like the Young Women's president asking their son about his sexual experiences. A couple having marital difficulty could seek counseling from the Church authority, male or female, with whom they feel most comfortable. Zion, as well as the home, would be a safer place if women had the priesthood.

12. GREATER SELF-ESTEEM AMONG YOUNG WOMEN

Young women would particularly benefit from priesthood ordination through the increase in feelings of dignity and self-worth. Equality in priesthood ordination would significantly impact the rising rates of inactivity among young Mormon women, now higher than the inactivity rates among young men of the same age.¹⁶ I believe these young women are going elsewhere for what they need. Ordination would communicate, instantly and directly, a powerful message about their value.

Ordaining young women to the Aaronic priesthood would reduce sexism, gender stereotypes, and the lack of respect for girls and women evinced by far too many teenage boys. A young man would have a different at-

titude toward a young woman if he sat next to her at the sacrament table. Boys would be more likely to stop their callous assertions that they are better than girls, reduce their efforts to subordinate them, and indulge in less sexual objectification.

13. AN ENSIGN OF EQUALITY

Women's ordination would provide a divinely inspired model for the world—one that recognizes the full status and worthiness of womanhood. Held up against this standard, a whole range of humiliating, destructive, and debasing cultural practices would be even less defensible. Professional limitations, impingements on speech, genital mutilation, murder, and infanticide are ongoing atrocities. Thousands of women live in physical, mental, and/or spiritual degradation, simply because they are female. How can we refuse to take any step that might help to reduce such monstrous evil?

A chilling consequence of subjugating women is that men have learned the pleasures of domination. When men can regard their mothers, their wives, and their daughters as inferiors, it is easy for them to subjugate and dehumanize other men and whole groups. I believe that peace between men and nations will be first facilitated by peace, justice, and equality between men and women.

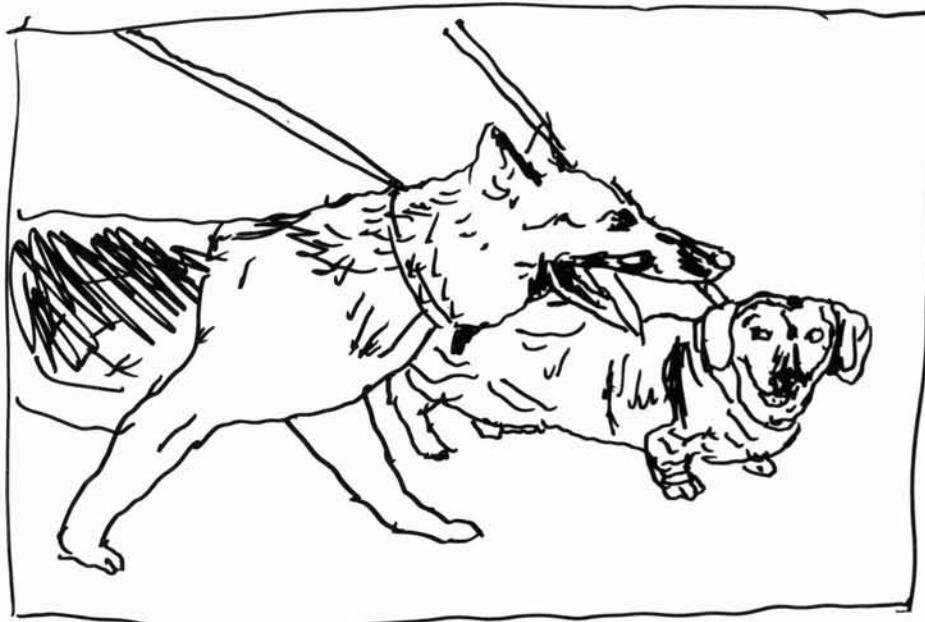
This prospect may seem grandiose, but the goals of the restored Church have always been large in their purposes. And there is power in a minority. It is thrilling to contemplate the good that could be done if the Church could lead the fight for the right to decent life. The Church can be a powerful influence beyond what its numbers indicate, and a message of equality between men and women would greatly expand its message of hope.

MECHANISMS OF CHANGE

The ordination of women is more viable than we may realize.

HOW reasonable is it to assume that ordination for Mormon women is a possibility? Despite the current firm resistance of Church leadership and much of the membership, I think it is more viable than we may realize. We have a strong theological basis for asserting the equality of all persons, and considerable institutional flexibility.

The model of the 1978 revelation granting priesthood to all worthy males is a strong one. President Gordon B. Hinckley, speaking at the 1985 women's meeting, sug-



"My owner's a Mormon. We're going to be together forever."

gested such a model:

All of us rejoice in the enlargement of opportunities for women. Under the law, there are few opportunities afforded to men that are not now also open to women. With this enlargement of opportunity, a few Latter-day Saint women are asking why they are not entitled to hold the priesthood. To that I can say that only the Lord, through revelation, could alter that situation. He has not done so, so it is profitless for us to speculate and worry about it.¹⁷

Although this approach does not encourage members to pray for such a revelation, it does not assert that priesthood is denied to women because of their eternal nature or because of eternal law, both positions that would be much harder to modify.¹⁸

If there is the will to change and the goodwill to accommodate the discomfort inherent in any transition, the ordination of women will proceed more smoothly than we may envision. With some trepidation, I sent this manuscript to my wife's selfless and sweet (Ronald Reagan Republican-conservative) mother. She responded, "I am not comfortable with the idea of women in the clergy, but I guess that's just what I'm used to. It's custom." And quietly, at the age of eighty-eight, she assumes, as she has for all of her adult life, that her temple endowment conferred priesthood upon her. She is not an advocate for women's ordination to the priesthood, but she describes what may be the largest part of the problem—our need to remain within our comfort zone.

The dialogue about women and the priesthood has already begun. It is probable, given the time we are in, that it will continue and increase—among women, among men, in mixed-gender groups, in families, and in councils. I would suggest, first, that all parties try to speak without rhetorical posturing and, second, that we focus on issues rather than on whether we have a right to have issues. As committed members of the Church, we have the right to explore our thoughts mutually with any who wish to listen and/or participate, "that all may be edified of all." (See D&C 88:122.) We should be able to articulate our beliefs without suspicion or criticism. Most of us who have consecrated ourselves and our talents accept our responsibility to be anxiously engaged where the way is not always clear. (See D&C 58:26–27.) We belong to a church that believes that any impingement on free speech comes of evil. (See D&C 98:6–10.) I hope that discussion

will go forward and be respected in that spirit. Gender equality is one of the central issues of our time. It is no less relevant or less important in the Church and deserves our most careful attention and discussion.

CONCLUSION

Ordaining women would enhance our relationship with God.

THE ordination of women would enhance the caring, love, justice, and mercy in our relationships with each other and with God. It would help us all to be more capable of finding deity, of finding deity in each other, and of nurturing the divine within ourselves. Contemplating the issue of women's ordination has had this effect for me, and has been an important step in building my relationship with God.

Not only are the benefits of female ordination utterly compelling in benefiting women, but there are also equally compelling consequences for men, for children, for the Church, and for the larger community. ☐

NOTES

1. Leonard J. Arrington, "The Role of Women in Mormon History," address delivered at the Northeast Sunstone Symposium, Boston, November 1993 (audiotape available, tape order #NE93-001); supplemented by personal conversation.

2. Quoted anonymously in Bettina Lindsey, "Woman As Healer in the Modern Church," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 23 (fall 1990): 63. This woman's bishop had counseled her "to call upon the power of the Melchizedek Priesthood to bless my family and those whom I loved and served."

3. Tim B. Heaton, fig. 16, "Vital Statistics," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991), 1533.

4. M. Scott Fisher, "By Virtue of Authority: A Bishop's Perspective," *Exponent II* 17 (1993): 5.

5. See Taylor Branch's chapter, "The Montgomery Bus Boycott," in his *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954–63* (New York: Touchstone, 1988), 129–63.

6. I continue to come across sources that indicate the involvement of women in priesthood duties in the early church. See Karen Jo Torjesen, *When Women Were Priests: Women's Leadership in the Early Church and the Scandal of Their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity* (San Francisco: Harper, 1993).

7. William D. Russell and two RLDS women, Carolyn McCracken and Jean Danielson, ordained to the priesthood in that church, reported the impact of women's ordination in a session at the 1993 Chicago Sunstone Symposium, 23 Oct. 1993 ("Women and the Priesthood—The RLDS Experience" [tape order #CH93-007]). Despite hopeful and healthy developments, there is much continuing bias against women among the leadership and the membership of the RLDS church.

8. M. Russell Ballard, "Equality through Diversity," *Ensign* Nov. 1993, 90.

9. Lyn Mickel Brown and Carol Gilligan, *Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girls' Development* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992), 221, emphasis is added.

10. Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-Seventy* (Oxford University Press, 1993), 272.

11. In addition to the sources cited elsewhere in this essay, I would also recommend Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) and her *The Creation of Feminine Consciousness*; Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (1982; reprint ed., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); and Carol Gilligan, *The Mismeasure of Women: Why Women Are Not the Better Sex, the Inferior Sex, or the Opposite Sex* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992). For a dramatic treatment of the same subject, see Carol Lynn Pearson's performance, video, or published script of *Mother*

Wove the Morning, available at 1384 Cornwall Court, Walnut Creek, CA 94596 (510/906-8835).

12. See the chapter on "Techno-Structural Strategies of Social Intervention" in *Social Intervention: A Behavioral Science Approach*, ed. Harvey A. Hornstein, et al. (New York: Free Press, 1971).

13. Alice H. Eagly, "Gender and Social Influence," *American Psychologist* (Sept. 1983): 971–72. The Milgram quotation is on 971.

14. I acknowledge and lament the rates of abuse against boys, and also acknowledge that adult women are also sometimes sexual abusers of both male and female children. The focus of my concern, however, is that victims are overwhelmingly female and perpetrators overwhelmingly male.

15. I also urgently recommend that "worthiness" interviews shift from the "checklist" approach, which is inherently intrusive and sexually explicit, to a broader-based discussion format in which the emphasis is on supportiveness which will prevent use of priesthood authority in any way that is the least bit coercive (see D&C 121) or invades a person's privacy.

16. According to a 1991 study released by Church headquarters in August 1992, only 32 percent of boys baptized at age eight go on to serve missions at age nineteen. Mark Hurst, assistant to Elder Jack H. Goosland, general Young Men's president, commented, "The data could be generalized for the young women—it's very similar. In fact, data show that the number of young men remaining active is slightly higher." Hurst said this was the first time statistics had indicated the Church was losing more young women than men (Brian Kagel, "Church Losing Youths, Report Says," *Daily Universe*, 31 August 1992, 1).

17. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Ten Gifts from the Lord," *Ensign* Nov. 1985, 86.

18. See Eugene England's address, "No Respecter of Persons: A Mormon Ethics of Diversity," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 27 (winter 1994): 79–100.

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