

Women and the Priesthood

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said:



“In an address to the Relief Society, President Joseph Fielding Smith, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said this: ‘While the sisters have not been given the Priesthood, it has not been conferred upon them, that does not mean that the Lord

has not given unto them authority. . . . A person may have authority given to him, or a sister to her, to do certain things in the Church that are binding and absolutely necessary for our salvation, such as the work that our sisters do in the House of the Lord. They have authority given unto them to do some great and wonderful things, sacred unto the Lord, and binding just as thoroughly as are the blessings that are given by the men who hold the Priesthood’ [‘Relief Society—An Aid to the Priesthood,’ *Relief Society Magazine*, Jan. 1959, 4].

“In that notable address, President Smith said again and again that women have been given authority. To the women he said, ‘You can speak with authority, because the Lord has placed authority upon you.’ He also said that the Relief Society ‘[has] been given power and authority to do a great

many things. The work which they do is done by divine authority.’ And, of course, the Church work done by women or men, whether in the temple or in the wards or branches, is done under the direction of those who hold priesthood keys. Thus, speaking of the Relief Society, President Smith explained, ‘[The Lord] has given to them this great organization where they have authority to serve under the directions of the bishops of the wards. . . . looking after the interest of our people both spiritually and temporally’ [‘Relief Society—An Aid to the Priesthood,’ 4–5]. . . .

“We are not accustomed to speaking of women having the authority of the priesthood in their Church callings, but what other authority can it be? When a woman—young or old—is set apart to preach the gospel as a full-time missionary, she is given priesthood authority to perform a priesthood function. The same is true when a woman is set apart to function as an officer or teacher in a Church organization under the direction of one who holds the keys of the priesthood. Whoever functions in an office or calling received from one who holds priesthood keys exercises priesthood authority in performing her or his assigned duties” (“The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 50–51).

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