

Former heart surgeon, 93, set to become next Mormon president

By BRADY MCCOMBS
Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — The man set to become the next Mormon church president is a 93-year-old former heart surgeon whose conservative track record on the religion's leadership panel has led Mormon scholars to predict he won't make any major changes.

Russell M. Nelson is likely to be formally named to the post in the coming days under longstanding church protocol designed to ensure a smooth handover by giving the post to the longest-tenured member of the governing Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Nelson has been on the panel for three decades.

President Thomas S. Monson died Tuesday night at his home in Salt Lake City after leading the church for nearly a decade. He was 90.

Nelson would become the second-oldest person to be named president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Only Joseph Fielding Smith was older, by one month, when he became church president in 1970.

Expect more "continuity than change" from Nelson, who seems to maintain a conservative interpretation of church doctrine while trying not to alienate anyone, said Patrick Mason, associate professor of religion at Claremont Graduate University in California and the Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies.

"He has a generous impulse within him, but it coexists alongside a fierce commitment to orthodoxy,"



AP Photo/Rick Bowmer, File

In this Sept. 30 photo, Russell M. Nelson, right, president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, greets members of the Quorum, before the start of the morning session of the two-day Mormon church conference, in Salt Lake City.

Mason said. "There's no indication from his previous service that Nelson sees himself as a reformer."

Scholars don't expect Nelson to deviate from the church's current stance on LGBT issues. The faith has opposed gay marriage and homosexual activity amid widespread social acceptance while trying to foster an empathetic stance toward LGBT people.

In a 2016 speech, Nelson defended the religion's decision the year before to adopt new rules banning children living with gay parents from being baptized until age 18 and clarifying that people in same-sex relationships are considered apostates, meaning they can be kicked out of the religion.

That policy drew harsh criticism from gay church members and their supporters, who considered

it a major setback from recent progress.

Nelson said in the speech that the new rules came from a revelation that Monson and other leaders received that gave them "spiritual confirmation" that it was the right thing to do after many states legalized gay marriage.

Presidents of the Utah-based faith are considered prophets who lead the church through revelations from God in collaboration with two top counselors and members of the Quorum of the Twelve.

Born in Salt Lake City in 1924, Nelson became a doctor by 22. He served a two-year Army medical tour of duty during the Korean War before resuming a medical career that included being director of thoracic surgery residency at the University of Utah.

In the spring of 1984, he was called to join the religion's Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and left behind his medical career.

Nelson still uses the precision mentality that made him a successful surgeon, said Richard Bushman, a Mormon historian and emeritus professor at Columbia University.

"He likes exactitude. He likes good order," Bushman said. "I think we'll see that."

Nelson also has a soft side and loves his family, Bushman said. He and his first wife, Dantzel White, had 10 children together. After she died in 2005, Nelson remarried Wendy Watson in 2006.

The first chance to gauge Nelson's intentions could come when he chooses his two counselors from the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

LIMEY PASTOR

The God who wishes to bestow

Our God is a God who wishes to be lavishly giving with us. He wants us to have every good thing, especially himself.

He is not a selfish God who wants our praises like a hungry pauper wishes for snatches of food. He monitors us at each moment to see what it is we need. He knew us before we were knit together in the womb and he genuinely is trying to find out what it is we want and how we can be most happy, most fulfilled in our specific and curious designs. Our God is our parent. His desires are written into the core of our souls. He knows us.

The enemy of man likes us to think we are accidental and not really wanted, the enemy of man has been at this game for a long time, crushing the light joy of the believer, tempting him or her into despair.

Why does the enemy of man do this? I really don't know ... jealousy or envy? Maybe.

It is a way of removing ourselves from the spotlight that our Lord wants to shine on us, perhaps — a disbelief that we are truly the Father's sons and daughters. I think that might be it.

After all, what a fantastic world we would live in if we embraced our true inheritance. We are loved, wholeheartedly and are children of the most high. We are that which we can hardly dream of being. We can love others as God loves us. His blood moves in our veins. This is true despite our quavering belief.

So, knowing this, what is our plan for the new year? What does the brother or sister of Jesus Christ (you, that is) plan to do to alleviate the Father's burdens and his adventures? Knowing that you are equipped with the creator's love and his power also,



COLIN BROWN
Faith

what will you do this year?

Think of the needs of creation. Think of the children who have not received love from those they should. Can we step forward and embrace the little ones, the foster children who need

a place in a family of hearts? Can we find a team of others to partner with to bring the forces of joy and care to those who are desolate? Can we turn our churches into hearth-fires of comfort for half-frozen souls? Can we stock our churches with a hatchery of loved people?

God has created an army of lovers for each world, each one poised to use unique skills and to step forward when the divine call comes. In 2018, across our land, let us perceive the net of calls that has been cast into our world and act as if the starting pistol has been fired in a race for souls.

My former pastor told me the story about a little boy in his congregation who was asked what it meant when the curtain of the temple was torn at the time of the crucifixion. The little boy thought, only briefly, and said that it meant that God was out and on the loose.

I think that this is exactly right, and this year in 2018 we should think of God invading his own creation to bring blessing to each living being, every boy and girl, every man and woman, each creature of his creation. God is on the loose and he has come to gather his flock into his kingdom in joy and triumph, and nothing can thwart him.

May God bless you every day! Happy New Year!

Amen.

Colin Brown is former pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Boardman.

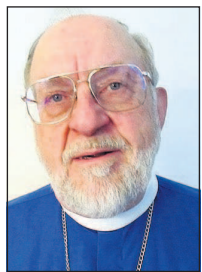
HERMISTON

Former hospital administrator to be ordained

East Oregonian

The public is invited to the ordination of Rev. Deacon Chuck Barnes in Hermiston.

Barnes will be ordained to the Sacred Order of Priests by the Rt. Rev. Patrick Bell, bishop of the Diocese of Eastern Oregon, Saturday, Jan. 13 at 1 p.m. at St. John's Episcopal Church, 665 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston.



Bell

In addition to clergy from the diocese, the service will involve a number of local church members who have sponsored Barnes in the continuation of his ministry. Afterwards, a reception will be held at the Hermiston United Methodist Church/Grace and Mercy Lutheran Church, 191 E. Gladys Ave.

Beginning his theological preparation at Northwest Christian College

in Eugene, Barnes completed additional training at the Oregon School of Theology, and holds a master's degree from Portland State University. The Rt. Rev. Rustin Kimsey, former bishop of the Diocese of Eastern Oregon, ordained Barnes to the diaconate in 1996.

Barnes had a lengthy career in healthcare, retiring as assistant administrator at Trios Health in Kennewick. In addition to the departments that he directed, Barnes was responsible for the construction of the new

hospital and clinic buildings.

Barnes originally moved to Hermiston from western Oregon to assist with opening Good Shepherd Hospital (1985) where he worked for 15 years. He's also a musician and served as assistant marching band director for a number of years at Hermiston High School. His wife, Robin, is a nurse practitioner in the area.

For more information, contact Barnes at chuckb@eotnet.net, 541-567-6674 or visit www.facebook.com/stjohnshermiston.

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