

The Temple and Eternal Family Organization

Truman G. Madsen

This address was given, April 1-2, 2004 at the BYU Family Expo Conference

© 2004 by Brigham Young University,
Division of Continuing Education
All rights reserved.

For further information write:

BYU Family Expo,
136 Harman Continuing Education Building,
Provo, Utah 84602.
(801) 422-3559
E-mail: conferences@byu.edu
Home page: <http://familyexpo.byu.edu>

Brigham Young had a revelatory dream in which he conversed with Joseph Smith. He was told over and over in relation to family matters and temple sealings to “follow the Spirit; keep the Spirit of the Lord”—to teach the Saints to keep their hearts open to that Spirit that whispers peace and joy.

“Joseph then showed me the pattern, how they were in the beginning. This I cannot describe, but I saw it, and saw where the Priesthood had been taken from the earth (and then restored) and how it must be joined together, so that there would be a perfect chain from Father Adam to his latest posterity. Joseph again said, ‘Tell the people to be sure and keep the Spirit of the Lord and follow it, and it will lead them just right’” (*Journal History*, February 23, 1847).

Then this promise:

“If they will, they will find themselves just as they were organized by our Father in Heaven, before they came into the world. Our Father in Heaven organized the human family, but they are all disorganized and in great confusion” (*Journal History*, February 23, 1847. Published in Preston Nibley’s *Exodus to Greatness*, Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News Press, 1947).

The veil has been drawn and we have all become little children. “But,” as President Joseph F. Smith wrote, “by the power of the Spirit, in the redemption of Christ, through obedience, we often catch a spark from the awakened memories of the immortal soul, which lights up our whole being as with the glory of our former home” (*Gospel Doctrine*, Deseret Book Co., 1949, p. 14). There are tuggings and flashes of recognition (re-cognition).

As Elder George Q. Cannon said of family kinships, “There are instances which all of us doubtless have known which have proved to us that there has been a spiritual acquaintance

existing between us. . . . We are drawn together by this knowledge and this acquaintanceship which, I have no doubt, was formed anterior to our birth in this state of existence” (*Gospel Truth*, vol. 1, Deseret Book Co., 1974, p. 4.)

TEMPLE PROMISES

President Ezra Taft Benson

“I testify that temples are places of personal revelation. There have been times when I have been weighed down by problems or difficulties and have gone to the house of the Lord with a prayer in my heart for answers. These answers have come in clear and unmistakable ways.

“Now, by virtue of the sacred priesthood in me vested, I promise you that, with increased attendance in the temples of our God, you shall receive increased personal revelation to bless your lives as you bless those who have died” (Frankfurt Germany Temple Dedication, Cornerstone: August 28, 1987; *Ensign*, May 1987, p. 85).

President Howard W. Hunter

“I invite the members of the Church to establish the temple of the Lord as the great symbol of their membership and the supernal setting for their most sacred covenants. It would be the deepest desire of my heart to have every member of the Church temple worthy. I would hope that every adult member would be worthy of and carry a current temple recommend, even if proximity to a temple does not allow immediate or frequent use of it.

“Let us be a temple-attending and a temple-loving people. Let us hasten to the temple as frequently as time and means and personal circumstances allow. Let us go not only for our kindred dead, but let us also go for the personal blessing of temple worship, for the sanctity and safety which is provided within those hallowed, consecrated walls. The temple is a place of beauty, it is a place of revelation, it is a place of peace. It is the house of the Lord. It is holy unto the Lord. It should be holy unto us” (*Church News*, June 11, 1994, p. 3).

The purpose of the temple is to reunite the human family.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“If every man in this church who has been ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood were to qualify himself to hold a temple recommend, and then were to go to the house of the Lord and renew his covenants in solemnity before God and witnesses, we would be a better people.

- There would be little or no infidelity among us.
- Divorce would almost entirely disappear.
- So much of heartache and heartbreak would be avoided.
- There would be a greater measure of peace and love and happiness in our homes.
- There would be fewer weeping wives and weeping children.
- There would be a greater measure of appreciation and of mutual respect among us.

And I am confident the Lord would smile with greater favor upon us.”
(General Conference, October 1995.)

PERSONAL TEMPLE PURPOSES

“For behold, I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here; and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house” (D&C 110:7).

“For a place of thanksgiving for all saints . . . for a place of instruction for all those who are called to the work of the ministry in all their several callings and offices” (D&C 97:13).

“ . . . in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest. And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh” (D&C 84:20–21).

“ . . . for the offering up of your most holy desires unto me, saith your Lord” (D&C 95:16).
“This will bring you out of darkness into marvelous light” (Joseph Smith to Mercy R. Thompson as she received her temple blessings in Nauvoo). (JI 27:400).

“ . . . figures are reduced to reality, and realities are exhibited by figures; and those who have the Spirit and understand, derive great comfort and consolation from that source” (Brigham Young, Conference, April 8, 1852).

“That thy glory may rest upon it; that thy holy presence may be continually in it; that it may be the abode of thy Well-Beloved Son, our Savior; that the angels who stand before thy face may be the hallowed messengers who shall visit it, bearing to us Thy Wishes and Thy Will” (Prayer of Wilford Woodruff at dedication of Salt Lake Temple; *Contributor* 14:292).

“Temple work brings power to us, because the unseen world about us has greater power than we possibly can possess. Do we wish strength to walk amidst the troubles of life? Do we want the power to stand in the presence of God, to do his will and to invite his blessings? Let us remember this fundamental work that God has given to his latter-day children. There comes out of this work an eternal joy, a contentment without which life has little value, as out of no other activity that men can engage in” (John A. Widtsoe, UG&HM, Vol. 11:97).

“I believe there are few, even temple ordinance workers, who comprehend the full meaning and power of the temple endowment. Seen for what it is, it is the step by step ascent into the Eternal Presence. If our young people could but glimpse it, it would be the most powerful spiritual motivation of their lives” (President David O. McKay, Los Angeles Temple Meeting, 1952; cited in *House of Glory*).

“ . . . you need an endowment, brethren, in order that you may be prepared and able to overcome all things” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* 91).