Introduction to
LDS Family History
(Genealogy)

Student Syllabus

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Doctrinal Foundation for Family History
Chapter 1

Introduction to Temple and Family History Work

Course Purpose:

Religion 261 at Brigham Young University is an introductory course designed to help you gain an understanding of temple and family history work, including covenants made in holy temples, the mission of Elijah, basic member duties, and the various opportunities for service. You will gain a variety of skills needed to help redeem the dead throughout your life.

By taking Religion 261 you will:

- Understand the important doctrines, principles, and prophecies that are the foundation for temple and family history service.
- Acquire a testimony of how regular temple worship can bring spiritual strength, peace, and hope for eternal life.
- Provide ordinances for your kindred dead.
- Use the family history research process to identify ancestors.
- Use the many computer family history resources provided by the Church and other organizations.
- Use Personal Ancestral File™ and FamilySearch™.
- Locate and use basic genealogical research sources.
- Understand how Family history centers, the Family Record Extraction Program, Ward Family History Consultants, and FamilySearch™ computer files work together under priesthood direction to accomplish the redemption of the dead.
- Write personal histories and journals.
- Understand the roles of immediate, grandparent, and ancestral family organizations.
- Understand how temple and family history services support the mission of the church—to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, perfect the saints, and redeem the dead.
- Participate in temple and family history service throughout your life.

Suggested Texts:

Reading assignments will be made from the following texts by your instructor and will correlate with class discussions. You should complete the reading assignments before the designated topic is presented in class and be prepared to ask questions or share insights about the topic.

Religious Education 261, Introduction to LDS Family History (Genealogy): Student Syllabus. (2004). Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, Center for Family History and Genealogy, Department of
Chapter 2: Families and the Plan of Salvation

Church History and Doctrine.


You will also use The Holy Bible, The Book of Mormon, The Doctrine and Covenants, and The Pearl of Great Price. Additional readings may be selected from the reference section found at the end of the syllabus.

Chapter 1 Objectives:

• Introduce you to temple and family history work.
• Understand how spiritual gifts are an important part of family history work.
• Understand how we each have a personal responsibility to do temple and family history work.

Chapter 1 Outline:

• What is Temple and Family History Work?
• Spiritual Gifts in Family History Work
• Accepting Personal Responsibility for Temple and Family History Work

What Is Temple and Family History Work?

Temple and family history work affects the living and the dead. President Howard W. Hunter described the central role of temple and family history work with these words:

... I invite the Latter-day Saints to look to the temple of the Lord as the great symbol of your membership. It is the deepest desire of my heart to have every member of the Church worthy to enter
the temple. It would please the Lord if every adult member would be worthy of—and carry—a current temple recommend. The things that we must do and not do to be worthy of a temple recommend are the very things that ensure we will be happy as individuals and as families.

Let us be a temple attending people. Attend the temple as frequently as personal circumstances allow. Keep a picture of a temple in your home that your children may see it. Teach them about the purposes of the house of the Lord. Have them plan from their earliest years to go there and to remain worthy of that blessing.

If proximity to a temple does not allow frequent attendance, gather in the history of your family and prepare the names for the sacred ordinances performed only in the temple. This family research is essential to the work of the temples, and blessings surely will come to those who do that work ...

In the ordinances of the temple, the foundations of the eternal family are sealed in place. The Church has the responsibility—and the authority—to preserve and protect the family as the foundation of society. The pattern for family life, instituted from before the foundation of the world, provides for children to be born to and nurtured by a father and mother who are husband and wife, lawfully married. Parenthood is a sacred obligation and privilege, with children welcomed as a “heritage of the Lord” (Ps. 127:3 [Hunter, 1994a, pp. 7-9]).

The Member’s Guide describes family history work as follows:

In the Church, doing family history work means identifying your ancestors and providing temple ordinances for them. This is not a onetime service. You should participate in some aspect of this work throughout your life. However, you should not attempt to do everything at once. Decide what to do by prayerfully considering your circumstances, resources, and abilities. (Mosiah 4:27 and Member’s Guide, 1993, p. 4).

Temple and family history work includes a variety of activities that assist with the redemption of the dead, our own ancestors and others. The following basic duties are just a few examples of how we can participate in the work.

Basic Duties:

- Receive our own temple ordinances and help our immediate family receive them as well.
- Attend the temple regularly, when possible.
- Provide ordinances for our ancestors whose names are readily available (usually the first three to five generations as a beginning).

Other Opportunities to Serve:

- Perform research to identify your ancestors.
- Serve in the Family Record Extraction Program.
- Contribute genealogical information to the Pedigree Resource File.
• Serve in local temple and family history callings, such as temple worker, family history consultant, or Family history center specialist.
• Serve as a missionary with an additional assignment in temple or family history work.
• Participate in a family organization.
• Keep a personal journal.
• Write a personal or family history.

**Spiritual Gifts in Family History Work**

Spiritual gifts are often an important part of doing temple and family history work. Frederick William Hurst’s story provides an example of revelation:

Frederick William Hurst and his brother Charles were New Zealanders who were baptized into the Church in Australia in 1854 and later emigrated to Utah. In 1875 they were called to return to New Zealand as missionaries. They tried to share the restored gospel with the rest of their family, but their efforts were rejected. No other family members ever joined the Church. Of this experience Fred wrote, “My heart was so sore I could not forbear shedding tears.” In 1892 Fred was called upon to use his talents as an artist, helping to engrave and paint the interior of the Salt Lake Temple. Although he was very ill at the time and “so sick with vomiting,” he believed the completion of the temple was of such importance that he never missed a day’s work until the project was finished. One of his last journal entries is a truly remarkable one and a testimony of the importance of every individual in family history and temple work. Fred recorded:

Along about the 1st of March, 1893, I found myself alone in the dining room, all had gone to bed. I was sitting at the table when to my great surprise my elder brother Alfred walked in and sat down opposite me at the table and smiled. I said to him (he looked so natural): “When did you arrive in Utah?” He said: “I have just come from the Spirit World, this is not my body that you see, it is lying in the tomb. I want to tell you that when you were on your mission you told me many things about the Gospel, and the hereafter, and about the Spirit World being as real and tangible as the earth. I could not believe you, but when I died and went there and saw for myself I realized that you had told the truth. I attended the Mormon meetings.” He raised his hand and said with much warmth: “I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart. I believe in faith, and repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, but that is as far as I can go. I look to you to do the work for me in the temple... We are all looking to you as our head in this great work” (Devitry-Smith, 1993, pp. 7–52).

Accordingly, Fred later arranged for the work to be done.

Here is another example of how someone received divine help in doing family history work:

In 1933, [my father] Collin L. Morse was courting his wife-to-be, Olivia Hatch, in Salt Lake City. The grip of the depression was solid, and jobs were few. To earn a little money to meet the necessities of life and work toward their future, Collin traveled to Clinton [Montana] to top sugar beets.

He located a small flat where he could stay in the town, shared by several other workers. Every few days, he would walk to a small store several blocks away to purchase enough supplies to meet his needs. The path took him past a very small family cemetery in an open alfalfa field. Each time he walked by the cemetery he felt impressed to stop. On his last trip to the store he stopped and recorded the names and
dates from each headstone. There were only five or six. They appeared to be from one family with the surname of Mitchell. He folded the paper and put it in his wallet.

He returned to Utah and on [December] 14, 1934, married his sweetheart in the Salt lake Temple. He and Olivia were blessed with four children. Over the next 22 years Collin worked to support his family.

On many occasions he cleaned out his wallet or replaced it. He always felt compelled to return the paper to his wallet. In 1954 Collin and Olivia moved their family to Independence [Oregon]. One Sunday, Collin was talking with a branch member who said he was eager to continue genealogical research but had encountered a roadblock. Collin listened intently to the member. He recognized the surname sought to be the one he copied from the gravestones years earlier. Collin pulled his wallet from his pocket and removed the folded list of names. He handed it to the branch member and asked if the information would help him. The man stared at the names in amazement and then responded that the names were precisely those he had been looking for.

Collin’s heart was filled with joy. He had listened to the still, small voice (Morse, 1993, p. 16).

Accepting Personal Responsibility for Temple and Family History Work

On March 26, 1907, the First Presidency stated:

Our motives are not selfish; our purposes not petty and earthbound; we contemplate the human race—past, present, and yet to come—as immortal beings, for whose salvation it is our mission to labor; and to this work, broad as eternity and deep as the love of God, we devote ourselves, now and forever (Improvement Era, 1907, p. 495).

Everybody can do something to assist with this work. When counseling leaders on how to promote temple and family history work, Elder Dallin Oaks said:

The first principle is that leaders’ efforts to promote temple and family history work should be such as to accomplish the work of the Lord, not to impose guilt on his children. Members of this Church have many individual circumstances—age, health, education, place of residence, family responsibilities, financial circumstances, accessibility to sources for individual or family research, and many others. If we encourage members in this work without taking these individual circumstances into account, we may do more to impose guilt than to further the work.

The second principle is that leaders should help members understand that in the work of redeeming the dead there are many tasks to be performed, and that all members should participate by prayerfully selecting those ways that fit their personal circumstances at a particular time. This should be done under the influence of the Spirit of the Lord, and with the guidance of priesthood leaders who issue calls and direct the Church-administered portions of this work.

There are many different things our members can do to help in redeeming of the dead, in temple and family history work. Some involve callings. Others are personal. All are expressions of devotion and discipleship. All present opportunities for sacrifice and service (Oaks, 1989, pp. 6–8).
Helping with the redemption of the dead begins with caring. Elder Boyd K. Packer wrote:

Sometimes this work may become a little discouraging. How can we seek out all of our progenitors—and all the others? One day while pondering prayerfully on this matter I came to the realization that there is something that any one of us can do for all who have died. I came to see that any one of us, by himself, can care about them, all of them, and love them. That came as a great inspiration, for then I knew there was a starting point.

Whatever the number, we can love them and desire to redeem them. Any one of us has within him the power to expand his concern to include them all. If a billion more are added, we can care about them also. At least we can do that (Packer, 1980, pp. 238–239).

The Holy Ghost guides and softens our hearts when we care for our ancestors. Daily prayer with pleas for help in blessing the lives of ancestors and other family members will bring answers. As we follow these inspired answers, we will find ways to bless ourselves and our families.
Chapter 2

Families and the Plan of Salvation

Latter-day Saints believe that life on earth is but one step in eternity. Before we were born, we lived as spirits with our Father in Heaven. After death, we will go to the spirit world to continue to prepare for the resurrection. This life is a probationary state—part of a plan presented by our Father in Heaven to his spirit children. The plan is known as the Plan of Redemption, the Plan of Salvation, or the Plan of Happiness. Both the family and the temple are essential elements in this plan.

Chapter 2 Objectives:

- Review the basic precepts of the Plan of Salvation, including our premortal existence, the creation of the world, the fall of Adam, our mortal lives, the atoning sacrifice of Christ, the spirit world, the resurrection, and eternal life.
- Gain a broader knowledge of the spirit world.
- Understand how the doctrine of the redemption of the dead fits in with the plan of salvation.
- Understand your role in the plan of salvation.

Chapter 2 Outline:

- Pre-Mortal Existence, Creation, and the Fall
- Mortality and the Atoning Sacrifice of Christ
- The Spirit World
- Resurrection and Eternal Life
- Your Role in the Plan of Salvation

The Pre-Mortal Existence, Creation, and Fall

Our Pre-Mortal Existence

In our pre-earth life before becoming spirit children of our Father in Heaven, we were “intelligence” or “the light of truth” (Doctrine & Covenants 93:29). President Joseph Fielding Smith explained this concept when he said:

There is something called intelligence which always existed. It is the real eternal part of man, which was not created or made. This intelligence combined with the spirit constitutes a spiritual identity or
individual (Joseph Fielding Smith, 1950, p. 11).

From intelligences, we became the spirit children of God. We had spirit bodies, in the form of our mortal bodies, but composed of spirit matter (Ether 3:16; D&C 131:7–8).

Our Father in Heaven presented the Plan of Salvation to his spirit children when we lived with him. The plan included the opportunity to become like God by making covenants, participating in ordinances of the priesthood, and using our moral agency to follow Jesus Christ, the Savior.

Jesus’ response to the Father’s plan was, “Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever” (Moses 4:2). Lucifer, which means son of the morning, countered, “Send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor” (Moses 4:1). Our Father in Heaven proclaimed, “I will send the first” (Abr. 3:27).

Angry at the divine decision, Lucifer rebelled against God and sought to destroy the agency of man. In the ensuing war in heaven, a third part of the “hosts of heaven” followed Lucifer (D&C 29:36). The battle raged until the victorious followers of Christ cast the rebellious leader and his disciples out of heaven (D&C 29:36; Moses 4:3; Rev. 12:7–12).

To the valiant spirit children, the gospel was taught in its fullness, covenants were made, and promises solemnly entered to keep the commandments of heaven. Many of the righteous were foreordained to the priesthood (Alma 13:1, 3).

**The Creation of the Earth**

The great plan of salvation was created by our Heavenly Father, to enable us to advance and progress and become like him. But salvation is centered in Christ. The plan called for the creation and peopling of this earth, so that we might come here and gain experiences that were not available in any other way (McConkie, 1972, p. 109).

The creation of the earth is described in the Books of Genesis, Moses, and Abraham. It is also explained in the temple endowment.

**The Fall: Its Necessity and Consequences**

The scriptures record that God created our first parents, Adam and Eve, and placed them in a garden. A tree, called the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, was placed before them, but they were commanded to not partake of it.

And I, the Lord God, took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it.

And I, the Lord God, commanded the man, saying: Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat,

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but, remember that I forbid it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.
And I, the Lord God, said unto mine Only Begotten, that it was not good that the man should be alone; wherefore, I will make an help meet for him.

And I, the Lord God, caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam; and he slept, and I took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in the stead thereof;

And the rib which I, the Lord God, had taken from man, made I a woman, and brought her unto the man.

And Adam said: This I know now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.

And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed (Moses 3:15–18; 21–25).

In response to Satan’s temptation, both partook of the forbidden fruit and were cast out of the Garden of Eden. They became mortal and fallen, and suffered spiritual death by being separated from our Father in Heaven (D&C 29:40–41; 2 Ne. 2:19). While the world teaches that the Fall of Adam was the result of sin, we understand through modern revelation that the actions of Adam and Eve were in accordance with the divine plan (Moses 5:10–11). The fall created the conditions we must endure to become more like God. Because those conditions include being subject to temptation, the divine plan includes a Savior who would redeem us from the effects of the fall.

And now, behold, if Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden. And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end.

And they would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin.

But behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things.

Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.

And the Messiah cometh in the fulness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall. And because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day, according to the commandments which God hath given.

Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself (2 Ne. 2:22–27).
Mortality and the Atoning Sacrifice of Christ

Our Mortal Existence

As spirit children of God we grew in understanding until we left the presence of God and were born to mortal parents. The scriptures teach us that those born into mortality kept their “first estate,” meaning they were faithful to our Father in Heaven in their pre-mortal existence (Abr. 3:26).

...“Who are you?” You are all the sons and daughters of God. Your spirits were created and lived as organized intelligences before the world was. You have been blessed to have a physical body because of your obedience to certain commandments in that pre-mortal state. You are now born into a family to which you have come, into the nations through which you have come, as a reward for the kind of lives you lived before you came here and at a time in the world’s history, as the Apostle Paul taught the men of Athens and as the Lord revealed to Moses, determined by the faithfulness of each of those who lived before this world was created (Lee, 1974, p. 5).

Mortality is measured by time—60 seconds in a minute, 60 minutes in an hour, 24 hours in a day and 365 days in a year. The length of our mortal life is not known; however, we do know “there is a time appointed for every man, according as his works shall be” (D&C 121:25). The scriptures assure us that each person has a mission in life and that each will be given an opportunity to complete his or her mission.

The doctrine of Christ teaches that the path to return to our Father in Heaven is strait, narrow, and direct. This path requires serving and worshiping God in mortality “with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of [our] sins, witnessing unto the Father that [we] are willing to take upon [us] the name of Christ (2 Ne. 31:13). We do this by repenting of our sins, being baptized, receiving the Holy Ghost, making sacred covenants in the temple, and enduring in faith (2 Ne. 31:13; 3 Ne. 27:13–21; D&C 63:20; 38:32).

King Benjamin said of his people, “because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters” (Mosiah 5:7). The covenants or promises between God and us, his mortal children, teach faith, repentance, and priesthood ordinances that qualify us to be “spiritually begotten” of Christ, and thus, we “are made free” (Mosiah 5:7–8).

The Atoning Sacrifice of Christ

Joseph Smith was asked, “What are the fundamental principles of your religion?” He answered:

The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it (J. Smith, 1978, 3:30).

Years later, President McConkie explained this central principle further.
That is to say, the atoning sacrifice of the Lord is the center of all things, as far as we are concerned. God our Heavenly Father created us, without which we would have no existence. And Christ the Son has redeemed us, without which there would be neither immortality nor eternal life (McConkie, 1972, p. 110).

We are free from the shackles of sin because we know that “there is no other name [save Christ] given whereby salvation cometh” (Mosiah 5:8). Through his suffering in Gethsemane and on the cross at Calvary, Jesus fulfilled the requirements of justice. His mercy is extended to all those who repent (Alma 7:12–13).

Regarding his sacrifice, Christ said:

Wherefore, I command you to repent, and keep the commandments which you have received by the hand of my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., in my name;

And it is by my almighty power that you have received them;

Therefore I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.

For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men (D&C 19:13–19).

I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me,
Confused at the grace that so fully he proffers me.
I tremble to know that for me he was crucified,
That for me, a sinner, he suffered, he bled and died.

(“I Stand All Amazed”, Hymns, no. 193)

Ordinances Necessary for Salvation

The gospel plan requires that all mankind receive the ordinances of the gospel to benefit from the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

We believe that through the atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel (A of F 3).

Two ordinances necessary for entrance into the Celestial Kingdom of God are baptism by immersion for the remission of sins and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. Regarding these,
Joseph Smith taught:

Every man lives for himself. Adam was made to open the way of the world, and for dressing the garden. Noah was born to save seed of everything, when the earth was washed of its wickedness by the flood; and the Son of God came into the world to redeem it from the fall. But except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. This eternal truth settles the question of all men’s religion. A man may be saved, after the judgment, in the terrestrial kingdom, or in the telestial kingdom, but he can never see the celestial kingdom of God, without being born of water and the Spirit. He may receive a glory like unto the moon [i.e., of which the light of the moon is typical] or a star [i.e., of which the light of the stars is typical], but he can never come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the Firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, unless he becomes as a little child, and is taught by the Spirit of God. Wherefore, we again say, search the revelations of God; study the prophecies, and rejoice that God grants unto the world Seers and Prophets (J. Smith, 1978, 1:283).

Immortality, a free gift through Christ, is sure; however, to obtain Eternal life, or life as God lives, we must qualify for the highest degree of the Celestial Kingdom. This depends on personal worthiness and covenants that bind us to our Savior (Mosiah 5:15). We must (a) receive the endowment, (b) be sealed to our parents, and (c) enter into an eternal marriage in order to enter the highest degree of the Celestial Kingdom. We must become part of a family. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught:

In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;
And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage];
And if he does not, he cannot obtain it.
He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase (D&C 131:1–4).

**The Spirit World**

At death, the spirits of all people enter the “spirit world” to await the resurrection. The terms “spirit prison,” and “paradise” pertain to different places in the spirit world. The Encyclopedia of Mormonism describes these places as follows:

The spirit world is the habitation of spirits. The earth itself and the living things on the earth have spirit counterparts that existed before the physical creation....Since spirits exist before mortality, as well as afterward, there is both a pre-mortal and a postmortal spirit world....

Concerning the postmortal place of human spirits, Alma sought an answer to the question “What becometh of the souls of men from this time of death to the time appointed for the resurrection?” (Alma 40:7) It was revealed to him by an angel that at the death of the body “the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life” (Alma 40:11). They are then assigned to a place of paradise or a place of hell and “outer darkness,” depending on the manner of
their mortal life (Alma 40:12–14).

President Joseph F. Smith discussed this subject further, talking more about the partial judgment that awaits us.

The spirits of all men, as soon as they depart from this mortal body, whether they are good or evil...are taken home to that God who gave them life, where there is a separation, a partial judgment, and the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they expand in wisdom, where they have respite from all their troubles, and where care and sorrow do not annoy. The wicked, on the contrary, have no part nor portion in the Spirit of the Lord, and they are cast into outer darkness, being led captive, because of their own iniquity, by the evil one.... (J. F. Smith, 1919, p. 448).

President Brigham Young declared:

When you lay down this tabernacle, where are you going? Into the spiritual world...Where is the spirit world? It is right here. Do the good and evil spirits go together? Yes they do.... Do they go beyond the boundaries of the organized earth? No, they do not... Can you see it with your natural eyes? No. Can you see spirits in this room? No. Suppose the Lord should touch your eyes that you might see, could you then see the spirits? Yes, as plainly as you now see bodies (Young, 1978, pp. 376–77).

The postmortal spirit world is a place of preparation and learning. In this sense, it is an extension of mortality.

The postmortal spirit world, then, is an actual place where spirits reside and “where they converse together the same as we do on the earth” (J. Smith 1938, 353). “Life and work and activity all continue in the spirit world. Men have the same talents and intelligence there which they had in this life. They possess the same attitudes, inclinations, and feelings there which they had in this life” (McConkie, 1966, p. 762).

The relative conditions and states of mind in the two spheres of the postmortal spirit world are further described by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

The spirits of the just are exalted to a greater and more glorious work; hence they are blessed in their departure to the world of spirits. Enveloped in flaming fire, they are not far from us, and know and understand our thoughts, feelings, and motions, and are often pained therewith” (J. Smith, 1976, p. 326).

In the other state—

“The great misery of departed spirits in the world of spirits, where they go after death, is to know that they come short of the glory that others enjoy and that they might have enjoyed themselves, and they are
their own accusers (J. Smith, 1976, pp. 310–11).

A statement regarding conditions in the spirit world among the righteous was given in 1856 by Jedediah M. Grant, a member of the First Presidency. He had related to President Heber C. Kimball a vision he had of the spirit world, which President Kimball subsequently discussed at Grant’s funeral a few days later on December 4, 1856. Although an unofficial statement, it represents concepts generally held by Latter-day Saints. A summary follows:

Jedediah Grant saw the righteous gathered together in the spirit world; there were no wicked spirits among them. There were order, government, and organization. Among the righteous there was no disorder, darkness, or confusion. They were organized into families, and there was “perfect harmony.” He saw his wife, with whom he conversed, and many other persons whom he knew. There was “a deficiency in some” families, because some individuals “had not honored their calling” on earth and therefore were not “permitted to...dwell together.” The buildings were exceptionally attractive, far exceeding in beauty his opinion of Solomon’s temple. Gardens were more beautiful than any he had seen on earth, with “flowers of numerous kinds.” After experiencing “the beauty and glory of the spirit world” among the righteous spirits, he regretted having to return to his body in mortality (H. C. Kimball 1856, 4:135–136).

**Spirit Prison**

In Latter-day Saint doctrine the “spirit prison” is both a condition and a place within the post-earthly spirit world. One “imprisons” himself or herself through unbelief or through willful disobedience of God. In such circumstances, one’s opportunities in the afterlife will be limited.

Another more far reaching definition of “spirit prison” is hell. In this sense, spirit prison is a temporary abode in the spirit world of those who were either untaught and unrighteous or were disobedient to the gospel while in mortal life (Alma 40:11–14; D&C 138:32).

Repentance of imprisoned spirits opens the doors of the prison, enabling them to loose themselves from the spiritual darkness of unbelief, ignorance, and sin. As they accept the gospel of Jesus Christ and cast off their sins, the repentant are able to break the chains of hell and dwell with the righteous in paradise.

**Paradise**

The Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants teach that paradise is the part of the spirit world where the righteous, those in mortality who obeyed God’s commandments and were faithful to their covenants, await the resurrection. Alma teaches that the spirits of the righteous “are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow” (Alma 40:12). It was in paradise that righteous spirits like Adam, Eve, and Abraham greeted the Savior on his appearance in the spirit world after his crucifixion (D&C 138:38–49). Paradise is a temporary condition. At the resurrection it “must deliver up the spirits of the righteous” (2 Ne. 9:13). Even though the righteous spirits attain to a greater state
of rest and happiness (Alma 40:12) than is possible in this life, they look “upon the long absence of their spirits from their bodies as a bondage” (D&C 138:50). As teaching and missionary work proceed in the spirit prison and ordinances for the dead are performed in temples on the earth, the once uninformed and the disobedient but now repentant and purified spirits may enter into paradise and enjoy association with the righteous and the blessings of the gospel.

Gospel Preached in the Spirit World

The Apostle Peter taught that after Christ was “put to death in the flesh” he “went and preached unto the spirits in prison.” In the same epistle, Peter also explained why those in the spirit world must receive the gospel.

For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit (1 Pet. 4:6).

President Joseph F. Smith, while pondering the meaning of these passages in 1 Peter received the following revelation (D&C 138):

And as I wondered, my eyes were opened, and my understanding quickened, and I perceived that the Lord went not in person among the wicked and the disobedient who had rejected the truth, to teach them;  
But behold, from among the righteous, he organized his forces and appointed messengers, clothed with power and authority, and commissioned them to go forth and carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness, even to all the spirits of men; and thus was the gospel preached to the dead.  
And the chosen messengers went forth to declare the acceptable day of the Lord and proclaim liberty to the captives who were bound, even unto all who would repent of their sins and receive the gospel.  
Thus was the gospel preached to those who died in their sins, without a knowledge of the truth, or in transgression, having rejected the prophets.  
These were taught faith in God, repentance from sin, vicarious baptism for the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands,  
And all other principles of the gospel that were necessary for them to know in order to qualify themselves that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit (D&C 138:29–34).

Note that spirits in the spirit world are taught the doctrine of “vicarious [or proxy] baptism for the remission of sins” (D&C 138:33). Joseph Smith explained the doctrine of proxy baptism for the dead with these words:

There is never a time when the spirit is too old to approach God. All are within the reach of pardoning mercy, who have not committed the unpardonable sin, which hath no forgiveness neither in this world nor in the world to come. There is a way to release the spirits of the dead; that is by the power and
authority of the priesthood—by binding and loosing on earth. This doctrine appears glorious, inasmuch as it exhibits the greatness of divine compassion and benevolence in the extent of the plan of human salvation.

The glorious truth is well calculated to enlarge the understanding, and to sustain the soul under troubles, difficulties, and distresses. For illustration, suppose the case of two men, brothers, equally intelligent, learned, virtuous and lovely, walking in uprightness and in all good conscience, so far as they have been able to discern duty from the muddy stream of tradition, or from the blotted page of the book of nature. One dies and is buried, having never heard the gospel of reconciliation; to the other the message of salvation is sent, he hears and embraces it, and is made the heir of eternal life. Shall the one become the partaker of glory, and the other be consigned to hopeless perdition? Is there no chance for his escape? Sectarianism answers “none.” Such an idea is worse than atheism. The truth shall break down and dash in pieces all such bigoted Pharisaism; the sects shall be sifted, the honest in heart be brought out.

This doctrine presents in a clear light the wisdom and mercy of God in preparing an ordinance for the salvation of the dead, being baptized by proxy, their names recorded in heaven and they judged according to the deeds done in the body. This doctrine was the burden of the scriptures. Those saints who neglect it in behalf of their deceased relatives, do it at the peril of their own salvation (J. Smith, 1978, 4:425).

Most of the people in the spirit world will eventually accept the gospel. Wilford Woodruff gives us this assurance:

There will be very few, if any, who will not accept the gospel. Jesus, while his body lay in the tomb, went and preached to the spirits in prison, who were destroyed in the days of Noah. After so long an imprisonment, in torment, they doubtless gladly embraced the gospel, and if so they will be saved in the kingdom of God. The fathers of this people will embrace the gospel... (Woodruff, 1969, p. 158).

However, those who have heard the gospel in mortality but procrastinated their repentance until the afterlife will not be able to fully compensate for this choice. Marion G. Romney said:

I have never found anything in the scriptures nor in the teachings of the prophets which encourages me to believe, that those who have the gospel taught to them here will be able to make up their loss if they choose to wait for the next life to obey it. I would not advise anyone to take that chance. As I understand the scriptures, taking such a hazard would be fatal (Romney, 1954, p. 134).

**Resurrection and Eternal Life**

We remain in the spirit world until our resurrection. Prophets have taught that every person who has lived on the earth or who will live on the earth will be resurrected into one of three kingdoms of glory or one kingdom of darkness (2 Ne. 9:22; D&C 76:33–38, 70–71, 81). Those resurrected into the kingdom of darkness are called Sons of Perdition because they denied the light and truth they received. They defied God and put Christ to open shame. The Sons of Perdition will remain with the devil and his angels, and “their worm dieth not...[their] fire is not quenched, which is their torment” (D&C
The Telestial Kingdom embraces those on earth who willfully rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ and committed serious sins, such as murder, adultery, and lying. They will spend one thousand years, the Millennium, in spirit prison preparing for the resurrection (D&C 76:81–85, 98–106; Rev. 22:15). Telestial inhabitants will come forth in the last resurrection and be “servants of the Most High; but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come” (D&C 76:112).

The Terrestrial glory is for those who lived honorable lives on the earth but “were blinded by the craftiness of men” and were “not valiant in the testimony of Jesus” (D&C 76:72–75, 79). They “obtain not the crown over the kingdom of God” (D&C 76:79). They “receive of the presence of the Son, but not of the fullness of the Father,” and their kingdom differs from the celestial “as the moon differs from the sun” (D&C 76:77–78).

Celestial glory comes to those —

who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial...and who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true (D&C 76:51–53).

Inhabitants of the highest celestial degree, who enter the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, inherit “thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers,” and dwell with God and Jesus Christ forever (D&C 76:54–70; 131:1–4; 132:19–20). About marriage, the Prophet Joseph Smith has taught:

In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; And if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase (D&C 131:1–4).

Applying the principles, covenants, and ordinances discussed in this syllabus can lead us to the Celestial Kingdom. They will prepare us and our kindred dead for the highest degree of that Kingdom, where husbands, wives, and children continue their personal relationship as families throughout eternity. There, they are together with grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins who have received all of the ordinances and kept the new and everlasting covenant.

**Our Role in the Plan of Salvation**

Our role in the plan of salvation includes providing the necessary ordinances of salvation and exaltation to our kindred dead and others. Elder John Widtsoe explained that assisting with the plan of salvation is not only the Savior’s work, but our work as well. He said:
In our preexistent state, in the day of the great council, we made a certain agreement with the Almighty. The Lord proposed a plan, conceived by him. We accepted it. Since the plan is intended for all men, we became parties to the salvation of every person under the plan. We agreed, right then and there, to be not only saviors for ourselves but measurably, saviors for the whole human family. We went into a partnership with the Lord. The working out of the plan became then not merely the Father's work, and the Savior's work, but also our work. The least of us, the humblest, is in partnership with the Almighty in achieving the purposes of the eternal plan of salvation.

That places us in a very responsible attitude towards the human race. By that doctrine, with the Lord at the head, we become saviors on Mount Zion, all committed to the great plan of offering salvation to the untold numbers of spirits. To do this is the Lord's self-imposed duty, this great labor his highest glory. Likewise, it is man's duty, self-imposed, his pleasure and joy, his labor, and ultimately his glory” (Widtsoe, 1934, 25:189–190).

How can we assist Christ with His work of providing salvation for mankind? First, we can qualify for and receive the ordinances and covenants of the temple for ourselves. Next, we can be bound as an eternal family in the temple with a spouse who has also received the ordinances of the gospel. As mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, and grandparents, we can prepare the youth in our family to receive all of the ordinances of the gospel. Then, in cooperation with other family members, we can provide ordinances for all of our kindred dead that we can find. In 1894 President Wilford Woodruff taught:

We want the Latter-day Saints from this time to trace their genealogies as far as they can, and to be sealed to their fathers and mothers. Have children sealed to their parents, and run this chain through as far as you can get it (Woodruff, 1969, p. 157).

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that salvation must be made available to all of our Father's children. To accomplish this, those of us who accept the gospel in mortality have an obligation to assist our kindred dead who did not have that opportunity in life. In his own words:

The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead. The Apostle says, “They without us cannot be made perfect,” (Heb. 11:40) for it is necessary that the sealing power should be in our hands to seal our children and our dead for the fulness of the dispensation of times—a dispensation to meet the promises made by Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world for the salvation of man.

Now, I will speak of them. I will meet Paul half way. I say to you, Paul, you cannot be perfect without us. It is necessary that those who are going before and those who come after us should have salvation in common with us; and thus hath God made it obligatory upon man. Hence, God said, “I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Mal. 4:5–6) (J. Smith, 1978, 6:313).

Most people who have come to the earth have not had the opportunity to receive their baptism or other sacred ordinances. The family is a divinely given vehicle for providing saving ordinances to all who have lived or will live on the earth. We can attend the temple to receive these ordinances by proxy on behalf of our kindred dead and others. President Kimball introduces this work for the dead as missionary work because missionary work is the work of saving souls—which is what fulfilling sacred ordinances by proxy is.
Missionary work is not limited to proclaiming the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people now living on the earth. Missionary work is also continuing beyond the veil among the millions and even billions of the children of our Heavenly Father who have died either without hearing the gospel or without accepting it while they lived on the earth. Our great part in this aspect of missionary work is to perform on this earth the ordinances required for those who accept the gospel over there. The spirit world is full of spirits who are anxiously awaiting the performance of these earthly ordinances for them. I hope to see us dissolve the artificial boundary line we so often place between missionary work and temple and genealogical work, because it is the same great redemptive work!" (S. W. Kimball, 1977, p. 3)

As we provide ordinances for our kindred dead and others in the spirit world, we become “Saviors on Mount Zion.” We become “saviors” because the proxy ordinances make it possible for the dead who are worthy to enter Paradise, come forth in the first resurrection, and inherit the Celestial Kingdom. Joseph Smith taught:

But how are they to become saviors on Mount Zion? By building their temples, erecting their baptismal fonts, and going forth and receiving all the ordinances, baptisms, confirmations, washings, anointings, ordinations, and sealing powers upon their heads, in behalf of their progenitors who are dead, and redeem them that they may come forth in the first resurrection and be exalted to thrones of glory with them; and there in is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, which fulfills the mission of Elijah (J. Smith, 1978, 6:184).

In an epistle to the Church on September 6, 1842, the Prophet Joseph Smith called us to action:

Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage brethren; and on, on to the victory! Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad. Let the earth break forth into singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free (D&C 128:22).
Chapter 3

The Ancient Order

Ancient prophet writings reveal the importance of covenants, temples, and the patriarchal order. Their importance has been re-emphasized with the restoration of the gospel in the latter-days.

Chapter 3 Objectives:

• Understand the patriarchal order, the Abrahamic covenant, and the promises made to the patriarchal fathers.
• Learn that the Lord reveals himself in temples, both in ancient times and in our day.

Suggested Readings:


Chapter 3 Outline:

• The Patriarchal Order
• The Abrahamic Covenant
• Ancient Temples
• Temples in Ancient America
• Latter-day Temples

The Patriarchal Order

The patriarchal order is a system of family government in which the father presides. The word “patriarch” is derived from the Latin pater, meaning father, and the Greek archos, meaning chief or ruler.

When God created the earth and placed man on it, he revealed his government, which is “patriarchal in nature,” and is based on the family as the fundamental unit of His kingdom. This government is a “perfect theocratic, patriarchal system” with Adam at the head (McConkie 1966, 559). From Adam to
Chapter 3: The Ancient Order

Jacob, holy prophets governed their people by the patriarchal order (D&C 107:39 also referred to in the Bible Dictionary, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, p. 742).

To Latter-day Saints, the patriarchal order of the priesthood is the organizing power and principle of celestial family life. It is the ultimate and ideal form of government. It answers the query of Elder Parley P. Pratt: “Who can endure to be forever banished and separated from father, mother, wife, children and every kindred affection and from every family tie?” (Pratt, 1932, 23:59)

In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints there are two priesthood divisions: the Aaronic and the Melchizedek. The highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood is patriarchal authority. The order was divinely established with father Adam and mother Eve. They are the fount and progenitors of all living and will appear at the head of the whole sealed family of the redeemed at the culmination of earth’s history. The promises given to Abraham and Sarah pertain to this same order.

Three principles underlie the patriarchal order. First, the primal parents of the race were in their paradisiacal state in Eden united in eternal bonds before death entered their lives. Second, the fall of man and the continual source of degeneration in this world have resulted in the estrangement of parents from God, from each other, and from their children. Third, the healing of this broken harmony is the essence of eternal life, as is the perpetuation of powers of creation and procreation—eternal increase.

The patriarchal order is, in the words of Elder James E. Talmage, a condition where “woman shares with man the blessings of the Priesthood,” where husband and wife minister, “seeing and understanding alike, and cooperating to the full in the government of their family kingdom” (Talmage, 1914, pp. 602–603). A man cannot hold this priesthood without a wife, and a woman cannot share the blessings of this priesthood without a husband, sealed together in the temple.

Concerning patriarchal authority, the Prophet Joseph Smith admonished the Saints: “Go to and finish the [Nauvoo] temple, and God will fill it with power, and you will then receive more knowledge concerning this priesthood” (J. Smith, 1938, 323; cf. D&C 107:18, 20).

Today dedicated husbands and wives enter this order in the temple in a covenant with God. The blessings of this priesthood are given only to husbands and wives together. Their covenants extend beyond this life (D&C 76:59, 60), beyond death (D&C 132:20 24), and into the resurrection, to eternal lives, the eternal giving and receiving of life.

Thus united, they work in love, faith, and harmony for the glorification of their family. If they are not united in obedient love, if they are not one, they are not of the Lord. Eventually, through this order, families will be linked in indissoluble bonds all the way back to the first parents, and all the way forward to the last child born into this world. This priesthood order will be both the means and the end of reconciliation, redemption, peace, joy, and eternal life (McKinlay, 1992, p. 1067).
Eternal Marriage (D&C 132)

Eternal marriage, or temple marriage, is patriarchal in nature. Patriarch Eldred G. Smith said:

Priesthood is patriarchal, which means “of the father.” A married man is the patriarch of his home and is responsible to bless members of his family. The exercising of this privilege could be a means of preventing many broken homes. We think of a priesthood holder as one who should bless or christen his children, baptize and confirm them, and perform the other ordinances of the gospel in behalf of members of his family. We forget that it is not required to have some other ordinance such as christening and confirming attached thereto to enable the father to bless members of his family. His responsibility is not only to bless his children, but his wife is an important member of his family too. Yes, we think of blessing the wife when she is sick, but if the relationship between husband and wife becomes a bit strained, wouldn’t it be a good thing for the husband to give his wife a blessing for the purpose of increasing the unity and love for each other? (E. G. Smith, 1965, p. 115)

When a man and a woman kneel at the altar of God in a holy temple, they are joined together in the bonds of priesthood and become one before God. They are united for eternity in the most basic unit of the Celestial Kingdom: a family. Blessings are bestowed upon the couple, giving them the divine right and responsibility for their family.

Patriarchal Leadership

The husband is the patriarch or head of the family. He is to preside in righteousness, guiding and directing his loved ones according to revealed principles:

That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.

That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man.

Behold, ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks, to persecute the saints, and to fight against God.

We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion.

Hence many are called, but few are chosen.

No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile—

Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth
afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy;
That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death.
Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.
The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever (D&C 121:36-46).

Elaborating upon the principle of eternal marriage, President George Albert Smith said:

In showing this relationship, by a symbolic representation, God didn’t say that woman was to be taken from a bone in the man’s head that she should rule over him, nor from a bone in his foot that she should be trampled under his feet, but from a bone in his side to symbolize that she was to stand by his side, to be his companion, his equal, and his helpmeet in all their lives together (Lee, 1972, p. 50).

This principle of patriarchal family leadership is different from that taught in the world. With this principle, women and men work together to nurture and strengthen their children.

We are told that each family in the Church is really a kingdom or government within itself. The father, by virtue of the priesthood of God that has been bestowed upon him, is the head of that government. This is what constitutes patriarchal office in the family. Originally it was the only government on the earth and was passed down from Adam to his descendants. Eventually, as society became more complex, the manner of governing the people of the earth had to change, but as far as the Church is concerned, the same order exists within the families as God set it up originally with Father Adam and this same order will extend into the eternities (Cullimore, 1973, p. 124).

It is useless to debate which parent is most important. No one would doubt that a mother’s influence is paramount with newborns and in the first years of a child’s life. The father’s influence increases as the child grows older. However, each parent is necessary at various times in a child’s development. Both fathers and mothers do many intrinsically different things for their children. Both mothers and fathers are equipped to nurture children, but their approaches are different. Mothers seem to take a dominant role in preparing children to live within their families (present and future). Fathers seem best equipped to prepare children to function in the environment outside the family. One authority states, “Studies show that fathers have a special role to play in building a child’s self respect. They are important, too, in ways we really don’t understand, in developing internal limits and controls in children.” He continues, “Research also shows that fathers are critical in establishment of gender in children. Interestingly, fatherly involvement produces stronger sexual identity and character in both boys and girls. It is well established that the masculinity of sons and the femininity of daughters are each greater when fathers are active in family life” (Faust, 1993, p. 35).

Honor your wife’s unique and divinely appointed role as a mother in Israel and her special capacity to bear and nurture children. We are under divine commandment to multiply and replenish the earth and to bring up our children and grandchildren in light and truth (see Moses 2:28; D&C 93:40). You share, as a loving partner, the care of the children. Help her to manage and keep up your home. Help teach, train, and discipline your children (Hunter, 1994, pp. 49–51).
The Patriarch Abraham

Abraham recognized that his ordination would come “according to the appointment of God” (Abr. 1:4). Eventually, he was blessed to receive the priesthood that:

...came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth, down to the present time, even the right of the firstborn, or the first man, who is Adam, or first father, through the fathers unto me (Abr. 1:3).

The authority Abraham received had been known as the “Holy Priesthood after the order of the Son of God,” but because of respect and reverence for deity, the name of the priesthood was changed in Abraham’s day to the Melchizedek Priesthood (D&C 107:3–4). Melchizedek was the great high priest from whom Abraham received the Higher Priesthood, and who, like Enoch, headed a people who sought to live close to the Lord (D&C 84:14; JST Genesis 14:25–40). This same priesthood was held by other holy men of antiquity.

When ancient Israel rejected God at Mount Sinai, the Lord withdrew the “greater priesthood,” including the patriarchal authority, from among them. The “lesser priesthood,” holding the keys to the “preparatory gospel” remained with the House of Israel from that time until John the Baptist (D&C 84:25–27). The Aaronic Priesthood, named after Aaron, does not “hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church,” as does the Melchizedek Priesthood (D&C 107:18–20).

From the Book of Moses, we learn that the Melchizedek Priesthood “which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also” (Moses 6:7). This priesthood was restored by the ancient Apostles Peter, James, and John in 1829 to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. The Old Testament prophet Elijah restored the sealing keys of this priesthood to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on 3 April 1836 in the Kirtland Temple (D&C 110:16).

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we receive many blessings from the restoration of priesthood keys, including the eternal marriage covenant. By receiving it, we “shall reap the full blessings of patriarchal heirship in eternity where the patriarchal order will be the order of government and rule” (McConkie, 1966, p. 559).

We are the Seed of Abraham

Our heritage as the seed of Abraham is confirmed through patriarchal blessings. Today, ordained patriarchs have the responsibility of giving these special blessings to worthy Church members. The First Presidency has explained that patriarchal blessings include “an inspired declaration of the lineage of the recipient, and also where so moved upon by the Spirit, an inspired and prophetic statement of the life mission of the recipient.” They may also include “such blessings, cautions, and admonitions as the patriarch may be prompted to give...the realization of all promised blessings is conditioned upon
faithfulness to the gospel of our Lord, whose servant the patriarch is.” Patriarchal blessings are recorded in the Church Archives, and “generally only one such blessing should be adequate for each person’s life” (McConkie, 1966, p. 558). Repeated personal reading of these sacred blessings will yield counsel, direction, and peace.

A father who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood is entitled to give a father's blessing, a type of patriarchal blessing. President Joseph Fielding Smith taught that a father who is the patriarch in his home has the divine right to declare lineage and to bless his children as moved upon by the Holy Ghost. However, the blessings given by a father are not recorded by the Church, but they may be recorded for private use by the participants (Joseph Fielding Smith, 1954–1956, 3:172).

**Your Patriarchal Blessing: A Liahona of Light**

*By President Thomas S. Monson*

Have you ever cleaned an attic or rummaged through an old storeroom? One discovers a bit of history and a whole lot of sentiment. A few weeks ago we emptied the attic of our mountain cabin. Seventy years of treasures, each with its own special memory, passed in review. Leading the parade was an old high chair with metal wheels. This was followed by glass milk bottles that once had pasteboard caps and by them a copy of Life magazine with a story from World War II.

Featured in the magazine was an account of a once proud airplane, a mighty bomber, found rather well preserved in an isolated corner of the vast Sahara Desert. The bomber and crew had participated in the famous raid over Rumania’s Ploiesti oil fields. The craft had been struck by antiaircraft fire, which completely destroyed its communication and navigational equipment. As the stricken plane turned toward its desert landing field, a sudden sandstorm obliterated familiar points of reference. The field’s landing lights were shrouded by sand. The plane droned on, even far beyond the landing field, into the desert wastes until, with fuel exhausted, it settled on the Sahara, never to fly again. All crew members perished. Home and the safety and shelter there to be found had been denied. Victory, hopes, dreams: all had been swallowed by the silence of the desert’s dust.

Centuries earlier, a righteous and loving father by the name of Lehi took his beloved family into this same desert wasteland. He journeyed in response to the voice of the Lord. But the Lord did not decree that such a “flight” be undertaken without heavenly help. The words of Nephi describe the gift provided on the morning of the historic trek:

“And it came to pass that as my father arose in the morning, and went forth to the tent door, to his great astonishment he beheld upon the ground a round ball of curious workmanship; and it was of fine brass. And within the ball were two spindles; and the one pointed the way whither we should go into the wilderness” (1 Nephi 16:10).

War and man made means of destruction could not confuse or destroy this curious compass. Neither could the sudden desert sandstorms render useless its guiding powers. The prophet Alma explained that this “Liahona,” as it was called, was a compass prepared by the Lord. It worked for them according to their faith and pointed the way they should go (see Alma 37:38–40).

The same Lord who provided a Liahona to Lehi provides for you and for me today a rare and valuable gift to give direction to our lives, to mark the hazards to our safety, and to chart the way, even safe passage—not to a promised land, but to our heavenly home. The gift to which I refer is known as your patriarchal blessing. Every worthy member of the Church is entitled to receive such a precious and
priceless personal treasure.

“Patriarchal blessings,” wrote the First Presidency in a letter to stake presidents, “contemplate an inspired declaration of the lineage of the recipient and, when so moved upon by the Spirit, an inspired and prophetic statement of the life mission of the recipient, together with such blessings, cautions and admonitions as the patriarch may be prompted to give for the accomplishment of such life’s mission, it being always made clear that the realization of all promised blessings is conditioned upon faithfulness to the gospel of our Lord, whose servant the patriarch is” (First Presidency Letter to stake presidents, 28 June 1958).

Who is this man, this patriarch, through whom such seership and priesthood power flow? How is he called? The Council of the Twelve Apostles has special responsibility pertaining to the calling of such men. From my own experience I testify that patriarchs are called of God by prophecy. How else could our Heavenly Father reveal those to whom such prophetic powers are to be given? A patriarch holds an ordained office in the Melchizedek Priesthood. The patriarchal office, however, is one of blessing—not of administration. I have never called a man to this sacred office but what I have felt the Lord’s guiding influence in the decision. May I share with you one treasured experience?

Many years back I had been assigned to name a patriarch for a stake in Logan, Utah. I found such a man, wrote his name on a slip of paper, and placed the note inside my scriptures. My further review revealed that another worthy patriarch had moved to this same area, making unnecessary the naming of a new patriarch. None was named.

Nine years later I was again assigned a stake conference in Logan. Once more a patriarch was needed for the stake I was to visit. I had been using a new set of scriptures for several years and had them in my briefcase. However, as I prepared to leave my home for the drive to Logan, I took from the bookcase shelf an older set of scriptures, leaving the new ones at home. During the conference I began my search for a patriarch: a worthy man, a blameless servant of God, one filled with faith, characterized by kindness. Pondering these requirements, I opened my scriptures and there discovered the slip of paper placed there long years before. I read the name written on the paper: Cecil B. Kenner. I asked the stake presidency if by chance Brother Kenner lived in this particular stake. I found he did. Cecil B. Kenner was that day ordained a patriarch.

Patriarchs are humble men. They are students of the scriptures. They stand before God as the means whereby the blessings of heaven can flow from that eternal source to the recipient on whose head rests the hands of the patriarch. He may not be a man of letters, a possessor of worldly wealth, or a holder of distinguished office. He, however, must be blessed with priesthood power and personal purity. To reach to heaven for divine guidance and inspiration, a patriarch is to be a man of love, a man of compassion, a man of judgment, a man of God.

A patriarchal blessing is a revelation to the recipient, even a white line down the middle of the road, to protect, inspire, and motivate activity and righteousness. A patriarchal blessing literally contains chapters from your book of eternal possibilities. I say eternal, for just as life is eternal, so is a patriarchal blessing. What may not come to fulfillment in this life may occur in the next. We do not govern God’s timetable. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.”

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Your patriarchal blessing is yours and yours alone. It may be brief or lengthy, simple or profound. Length and language do not a patriarchal blessing make. It is the Spirit that conveys the true meaning.
Your blessing is not to be folded neatly and tucked away. It is not to be framed or published. Rather, it is to be read. It is to be loved. It is to be followed. Your patriarchal blessing will see you through the darkest night. It will guide you through life’s dangers. Unlike the struggling bomber of yesteryear, lost in the desert wastes, the sands and storms of life will not destroy you on your eternal flight. Your patriarchal blessing is to you a personal Liahona to chart your course and guide your way.

In Lewis Carroll’s classic, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, Alice finds herself coming to a crossroads with two paths before her, each stretching onward but in opposite directions. She is confronted by the Cheshire Cat, of whom Alice asks, “Which path shall I take?”

The cat answers, “That depends where you want to go. If you do not know where you want to go, it doesn’t really matter which path you take.”

Unlike Alice, each of us knows where he or she wants to go. It does matter which way we go, for the path we follow in this life surely leads to the path we shall follow in the next.

Patience may be required as we watch, wait, and work for a promised blessing to be fulfilled.

One afternoon Percy K. Fetzer, a righteous patriarch, came to my office by appointment. He was weeping as we visited together. He explained that he had just returned from the land of Poland, where he had been privileged to give patriarchal blessings to our worthy members there. After a long pause, the patriarch revealed that he had been impressed to promise to members of a German speaking family by the name of Konietz declarations which could not be fulfilled. He had promised missions. He had promised temple blessings. These were beyond the reach of those whom he had blessed. He whispered how he had tried to withhold the promises he knew were unattainable. It had been no use. The inspiration had come, the promises spoken, the blessings provided. “What shall I do? What can I say?” he repeated to me.

I replied, “Brother Fetzer, these blessings have not come from you; they have been given of God. Let us kneel and pray to Him for their fulfillment.” Within several years of that prayer, an unanticipated pact was signed between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Polish nation which provided that German nationals trapped in Poland at war’s end could now enter Germany. The Konietz family, whose members had received these special patriarchal blessings, came to live in West Germany. I had the privilege to ordain the father a bishop in the Dortmund stake of the Church. The family then made that long awaited trek to the temple in Switzerland. They dressed in clothing of spotless white. They knelt at a sacred altar to await that ordinance which binds father, mother, brothers, and sisters not only for time, but for all eternity. He who pronounced that sacred sealing ceremony was the temple president. More than this, however, he was the same servant of the Lord, Percy K. Fetzer, who, as a patriarch years before, had provided those precious promises in the patriarchal blessings he had bestowed.

How far is Heaven?
It’s not very far.
When you live close to God,
It’s right where you are.

Your patriarchal blessing is your passport to peace in this life. It is a Liahona of light to guide you unerringly to your heavenly home. Of these sacred truths I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen (Monson, 1986, pp. 65–67).
The Abrahamic Covenant

According to the Bible Dictionary (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, p. 650), a covenant,

sometimes denotes an agreement between persons (1 Sam. 23:18) or nations (1 Sam. 11:1); more often between God and man; but in this latter case it is important to notice that the two parties to the agreement do not stand in the relation of independent and equal contractors. God in his good pleasure fixes the terms, which man accepts. The same word is sometimes rendered “testament.”

As a part of his covenant with Abraham, God made several promises based on Abraham’s worthiness, such as the following.

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among all nations, and thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations;

And I will bless them through thy name; for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shalt rise up and bless thee, as their father;

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) and in thy seed (that is thy Priesthood) for I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say the literal seed, or the seed of the body) shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal. (Abr. 2:9–11)

With regard to the Abrahamic covenant, the Bible Dictionary (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1979, 602) says:

Abraham first received the gospel by baptism (which is the covenant of salvation). Then he had conferred upon him the higher priesthood and he entered into celestial marriage (which is the covenant of exaltation), gaining assurance thereby that he would have eternal increase. Finally, he received a promise that all of these blessings would be offered to all of his mortal posterity (D&C 132:29–50; Abr. 2:6–11). Included in the divine promises to Abraham were the assurances that (1) Christ would come through his lineage, and (2) Abraham’s posterity would receive certain lands as an eternal inheritance (Gen. 17; 22:15–18; Gal. 3; Abr. 2). These promises taken together are called the Abrahamic covenant. It was renewed with Isaac (Gen. 26:1–4, 24); and again with Jacob (Gen. 28; 35:9–13; 48:3–4).

The portions of the covenant that pertain to personal salvation and eternal increase are renewed with each individual who receives the ordinance of celestial marriage (D&C 132:29–33). Those of non-Israelite lineage, commonly known as gentiles, are adopted into the house of Israel and become heirs of the covenant and the seed of Abraham, through the ordinances of the gospel (Gal. 3:26–29).

Being an heir to the Abrahamic covenant does not make one a “chosen person” per se, but does signify that such are chosen to responsibly carry the gospel to all the peoples of the earth. Abraham’s seed have carried out the missionary activity in all the nations since Abraham’s day (Matt. 3:9; Abr. 2:9–11).
To fulfill the covenant God made with Abraham—having particular reference to the fact that the literal seed of his body would be entitled to all of the blessings of the gospel (Abr. 2:10–11)—a number of specific and particular things must take place in the last days. The gospel must be restored, the priesthood must be conferred again upon man, the keys of the sealing power must be given again unto mortals, Israel must be gathered, and the Holy Ghost must be poured out upon the gentiles. All this has already taken place or is in process of fulfillment.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained how the promises made to the patriarchal fathers apply to us.

The promises are the provisions of the Abrahamic covenant whereby the seed of the ancient patriarchs are entitled to receive the priesthood, the gospel, and eternal life (including celestial marriage). We are the children, and after we receive these blessings for ourselves, our attention turns almost by instinct to the well-being of our ancestors who died without a knowledge of the gospel. We are Abraham’s seed, and they were Abraham’s seed—through Isaac, through Jacob, and through the house of Israel. It thus becomes our privilege, on the basis of salvation for the dead, to search out our ancestors—to whom the same blessings have been promised as have come to us—and to make these blessings available to them through the vicarious ordinances of the house of the Lord (McConkie, 1985, pp. 508–509).

Ancient Temples

Latter-day prophets have taught that Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Elijah, John the Baptist, and other holy men received promised blessings of exaltation through ordinances of the priesthood. These sacred contacts occurred in a variety of places. For example, God gave Adam priesthood instructions in the Garden of Eden, while Moses, Nephi, Elijah, and others received revelation from God on mountain tops. Jacob stopped at the place where his grandfather Abraham had offered sacrifices (Gen. 12:8; 13:3–4). There he had a remarkable dream in which he saw the Lord and a ladder connecting heaven and earth. When Jacob awoke he said, “Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not...this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven...And he called the name of that place Beth-el” (Gen 28:10–22). Bethel comes from the Hebrew beth, meaning “house of,” and the suffix el, meaning “God.” Elder James E. Talmage taught such sacred places may be thought of as “temples,” although today we generally think of a temple as an actual structure, reared by man, hallowed and sanctified for worshipful service to Deity (Talmage, 1976, p. 1).

Several ancient people revered temples as places where God would reveal himself. The Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans thought of their temples as meeting places where men attempted to make contact with divine powers. Hence they resembled sacred mountains which were also thought of as places of communication between heaven and earth. Our word “temple” comes from the Latin word templum, referring to buildings the Romans dedicated to their gods.

Elder Talmage explained that temples have a second and more specific function. These sacred structures are “characterized not alone as the place where God reveals Himself to man, but also as the House wherein prescribed ordinances of the Priesthood are solemnized” (Talmage, 1976, p. 15). While
explaining Facsimile No. 2 of Abraham’s writings, the Prophet Joseph Smith declared that certain sacred truths can be had only through sacred temple ordinances. Both functions of ancient temples would need to be restored as part of the latter-day restitution of all things.

The Tabernacle

About 3,300 years ago the Israelites built a portable temple known as the Tabernacle. There was an inner compartment and an outer compartment, surrounded by a courtyard. It served the children of Israel for many years and was used during their journeys in the wilderness. The book of Exodus describes how they were to construct it using the finest materials available. God promised to reveal himself to his people in the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:8, 22) and fulfilled that promise (Exodus 33:7–11). Housed in this structure was the Ark of the Covenant, which represented the presence of God and contained tablets upon which the ten commandments were written. The Ark was placed in the Holy of Holies, the innermost holy compartment. The Levites, priesthood bearers responsible for the Tabernacle, carried it whenever the Israelites moved (Exodus 28:2–6).

The Temple of Solomon

King David gathered precious metals and other materials needed for the construction of the temple at Jerusalem (1 Chr. 22:5–19, 28:1–8, 29:1–7). Construction began in 950–949 B.C. and took over seven years to build. It was built under the direction of his son, Solomon, who employed 3,300 overseers to carefully plan every phase of the temple construction:

And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer or axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building (1 Kings 6:7).

Solomon’s temple was patterned after the Tabernacle of the Congregation; however, its dimensions were twice as large. Just outside its front door was a large bronze font, the “molten sea,” on the backs of twelve oxen grouped in threes. The temple had a Holy of Holies, a veil, and held the Ark of the Covenant.

Shishak of Egypt robbed Solomon’s temple of much of its treasure during the reign of Rehoboam, Solomon’s son. During the following years, others plundered the temple treasures as well. Finally, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon burned the temple to the ground in 587 B.C.

The Temple of Ezekiel’s Vision

During the Babylonian captivity, the prophet Ezekiel had a heavenly vision of a magnificent temple in Jerusalem (Ezek. 40–43). The symmetry of its courts suggested an orderliness in God’s dealings with
man. Its thick walls symbolized the separation of the sacred area from the world.

The Temple of Zerubbabel

The Persian emperor Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Palestine after about fifty years of exile. While most stayed in their new home, many returned to the land of their ancestors. Under the direction of Zerubbabel, grandson of the exiled King Jehoiachin, a new temple was built about 517–515 B.C. Because the Ark of the Covenant had been lost, it was not housed in Zerubbabel’s Temple (Bible Dictionary, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, pp. 783–784), but the sacrifices continued as in Solomon’s temple.

The Temple of Herod

Herod the Great, king of Judea, the same who attempted to kill the baby Jesus, rebuilt the temple on a grand scale. Herod’s Temple, an architectural marvel, was widely known for its beauty. Its courtyards were larger than the size of two football fields. Although Jesus taught in its courts and regarded this temple as a sacred structure, he declared that the temple had been defiled and drove the money changers from it (John 2:13–17; Matt. 21:12–14). The New Testament disciples received their temple blessings elsewhere, notably in Galilee (Joseph Fielding Smith, 1954–1956, 2:165).

Herod’s temple stood for only a brief time. Although it had a Holy of Holies, it did not contain the Ark of the Covenant. The Roman general Titus and his soldiers destroyed Herod’s temple in 70 A.D. Much of the west wall is still standing today and is a sacred place for Jews.

Temples in Ancient America

The Book of Mormon mentions three temples constructed by the faithful in the Western Hemisphere. Each appears to have been the center of spiritual life.

Temple in the Land of Nephi

Nephi taught his people to “build buildings,” and under his direction they became artisans (2 Ne. 5:15). One of the structures built was a temple. “I did construct it after the manner of the temple of Solomon save it were not built of so many precious things; for they were not to be found upon the land...the workmanship thereof was exceedingly fine” (2 Ne. 5:16). Jacob, the brother of Nephi, “having first obtained [his] errand from the Lord,” taught in the temple during his ministry (Jacob 1:17). He wrote, “As I inquired of the Lord, thus came the word unto me, saying: Jacob, get thou up into the temple on the morrow, and declare the word which I shall give thee unto this people” (Jacob 2:2, 11).
Temple at Zarahemla

About four and a half centuries later, King Benjamin asked his son Mosiah to issue a proclamation commanding the people to gather to the temple at Zarahemla “to hear the words which his father should speak unto them” (Mosiah 1:18).

Temple in the Land of Bountiful

The resurrected Christ appeared and taught a multitude of righteous followers at the temple in the land of Bountiful. The Book of Mormon records that “while [the multitude] were thus conversing one with another” at the temple, they heard a piercing voice, which was audible, yet they did not understand. A second time they heard the voice, but again they did not understand it (3 Ne. 11:1–4). A third time the divine parental voice spoke, and this time the assembly understood: “Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name hear ye him” (3 Ne. 11:7). They gazed toward heaven to hear the words of God the Father and became witnesses of the glorious descent of Jesus Christ to the land of Joseph (3 Ne. 11:8). The Savior announced:

Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.

And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.

And it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words the whole multitude fell to the earth; for they remembered that it had been prophesied among them that Christ should show himself unto them after his ascension into heaven (3 Ne. 11:10, 11–12).

After the Savior instructed his people, they bore testimony. “They know that their record is true for they all of them did see and hear, every man for himself; and they were in number about two thousand and five hundred souls; and they did consist of men, women, and children” (3 Ne. 17:25).

Latter-day Temples

Ancient prophets were aware that there would also be temples in our day.

...Isaiah and Micah were both permitted to look down through the stream of time (3,000 years) to the Latter-days, and they named the Latter-days when the mountain of the Lord’s house would be established in the top of the mountains and all nations would flow unto it; and they would say, “Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths....” (See Isa. 2:2 3.) As far as I know there is no building in the history of this world that has gathered people from all nations like this temple, and many of you who are here today are no doubt descendants of some of those who have been gathered to this land (L. Richards, 1970, p. 70).
As the LDS Church grows, latter-day temples will be constructed throughout the earth. They stand as a witness that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored in its fullness.

As you know, temples are now or soon will be within the reach of many members in the Europe Area, from the Stockholm Sweden Temple in the north to the Johannesburg South Africa Temple to the south, with the London and Swiss temples in between. Many lands in the Europe Area are becoming the lands of temples. The Frankfurt Temple, located in a suburb named Friedricksdorf, which was an early settlement of the Huguenots, is nearing completion. The building of these temples in the Europe Area is a modern day miracle. Temple work is proceeding at an accelerating pace (Wirthlin, 1986, p.61).

It was now time to walk on the outside of the pegs in the ground marking the dimensions of that long awaited temple. I tried to imagine how high the front spire will be. At the same time I tried to contemplate the time when the short, stoic Indians from Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Paraguay will also come to that spot and gaze up at the same spire. I wondered if some of the men might not admire the fine craftsmanship in the building and compare it with the quality of the workmanship in the walls of the sacred buildings of their forbears, still standing in Cuzco, and Machu Picchu, and many other places in South America. They had their temples also (Faust, 1975, p. 56).

In 1856, Brigham Young taught:

To accomplish this work there will have to be not only one temple, but thousands of them, and thousands and tens of thousands of men and women will go into those temples and officiate for people who have lived as far back as the Lord shall reveal (Young, 1856, 3:372).

Lorenzo Snow instructed:

...this entire continent is the land of Zion, and the time will come when there will be Temples established over every portion of the land, and we will go into these Temples and work for our kindred dead night and day, that the work of the Lord may be speedily accomplished, that Jesus may come and present the kingdom to His Father (Williams, 1984:153–154).
Chapter 4

The Mission of Elijah

Elijah began his ministry during the reign of King Ahab, one of the most notorious monarchs of the Northern Kingdom. The King’s apostasy stemmed in part from his marriage to Jezebel, the daughter of Phoenician king Ethbaal, whose name means “Baal exists.” Jezebel and her father worshiped the forbidden god Baal. Elijah was sent by the Lord to bring Israel back and worship Jehovah.

Chapter 4 Objectives:

- Learn of Elijah’s ministry.
- Learn of Elijah’s appearances to Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration, and to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple.
- Understand the significance of Elijah’s mission and the keys of sealing power that he restored.

Suggested Readings:

- 1 Kings 16 to 2 Kings 2.
- Malachi 4.
- Doctrine and Covenants 2; 27:9; 110:13–16.

Chapter 4 Outline:

- Elijah’s Life and Calling
- Elijah’s Return and Mission in Our Day
- The Keys of Sealing Power

Elijah’s Life and Calling

Jezebel, a woman remembered for generations for her extreme wickedness, introduced her husband, King Ahab, to the worship of Baal, perhaps with the hope of ensuring prosperity for their kingdom. He complied with her request, an act that ridiculed righteousness and humility. Yet, though Ahab knelt before Baal, it is apparent that his bended knee did not represent a complete abandonment of faith in
Jehovah. When his wife conceived, he named their children Ahaziah, Jehoram, and Athaliah, their names “all of them formed with aspects of the divine name Yahweh [or Jehovah]” (Buttrick, 1985, p. 89).

His dual allegiance to Jehovah and Baal ended when he built an altar and a temple to the pagan deity. His construction of worship sites for Baal within the Northern Kingdom, Israel, was abhorrent to Jehovah. It is recorded in scripture that this “did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him” (1 Kgs. 16:33).

To combat the evil choices of King Ahab, the Lord did not send legions of destroying angels, an army of vengeful hosts, or a devastating plague. He commissioned just one righteous man, Elijah, whose name means “My God is Jehovah” (Keil 1965, 229). His name symbolizes his divinely appointed mission to “confess that Yahweh (Jah) is his God (Eli)” (DeVries 1985, 216). He was endowed by the Lord God with great priesthood power: he sealed the heavens (1 Kgs. 17:1), extended the widow’s food supply (1 Kgs. 17:10–16), and raised her son from the dead (1 Kgs. 17:17–23).

After three years of drought, the Lord commanded Elijah, saying, “Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth” (1 Kgs. 18:1). In obedience, Elijah appeared before the abominable king. The king queried, “Art thou he that troubleth Israel?” (1 Kgs. 18:17). Another biblical interpretation of this phrase states, “Is that you, O Israel’s hex?” (DeVries, 1985, p. 217). Such an understanding suggests that Ahab believed Elijah consorted with dark supernatural forces that rendered harm to his nation. Elijah responded to the false accusation with, “I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim” (1 Kgs. 18:18).

Elijah then directed Ahab to gather all of Israel and 450 prophets of Baal to Mount Carmel. This mountain was a sacred worship site for followers of both Jehovah and pagan gods and thus was familiar to people of both religious persuasions (Keil 1965, 243). In compliance with Elijah’s request, Ahab gathered his people and the priests of Baal to Carmel. On this holy mount, Elijah challenged the multitude, “How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him” (1 Kgs. 18:21). To resolve the double mindedness of the king and the house of Israel, he proposed a contest between Jehovah and Baal. Knowing that both ideologies believed their god had power over fire, Elijah invited the priests of Baal to call upon the name of their god. He, in turn, would call upon his God, Jehovah. The deity that “answereth by fire,” said Elijah, “let him be God” (1 Kgs. 18:24).

The false prophets confidently accepted the challenge. They slaughtered their bullock and prepared their sacrificial offering. They cried unto their god from morning until noon, saying, “O Baal, hear us” (1 Kgs. 18:26). They entreated their idol by whirling around the altar in a grotesque dance. It was after they began to leap upon the sacrificial altar that Elijah mocked their frenzy: “Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked” (1 Kgs. 18:27). Another biblical version of the mocking notes that Elijah chided, “perhaps he is meditating or had gone aside,” meaning he was in the privy or outhouse (Keil, 1965, p. 246). Although these reasons for silence were the most absurd possibilities for a god, the idolaters seemed
driven to drown out his mocking. They raised their voices even louder to awaken their slumbering deity and made their wild gyrations even more ludicrous. In their desperate appeal to pageantry, they cut themselves with knives and lancets until their blood mixed with that of their sacrificial offering. Continuing their desperate worship until midafternoon proved nothing except the futility of their efforts.

Around three o’clock in the afternoon, Elijah demanded attention. With commanding authority he said to the Israelites, “Come near unto me” (1 Kgs. 18:30). His invitation, “to come,” is now often used as we seek to come unto Christ. Thus in a very symbolic manner the Lord’s chosen prophet called Israel to repentance and to accept, again, greater truth. As they gathered near Elijah they watched as their prophet “repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down” (1 Kgs. 18:30). He took twelve simple field stones, symbolic of the twelve sons of Jacob, and rebuilt the neglected altar in the name of the Lord. He then dug a trench around the altar and arranged the wood in an orderly manner before laying the sacrificial bullock atop. He requested that four barrels of precious water be poured on the sacrifice, not once, but a second, and a third time (1 Kgs. 18:31–34). “And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water” (1 Kgs. 18:35). The conspicuous use of water at a time of extreme drought and famine was symbolic of the power of the living water found in the teachings of Jehovah.

With all the preparations complete, in humility the prophet prayed:

   LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.
   Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again (1 Kgs. 18:36–37).

In a glorious manifestation, the one and only true God sent fire from heaven, consuming not only the burnt offerings, but also the wood, the stones, the dust, and even the water in the trench. When the people witnessed this display of celestial power, no longer did they limp between the nebulous fertility power of Baal and the true endowment of power found in the worship of Jehovah. They immediately fell on their faces in worship, as their ancestors had done in a more righteous day (Lev. 9:24). They confessed, “The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God” (1 Kgs. 18:39).

The God of Israel, unlike the gods of their heathen neighbors, had answered decisively. His children had responded by humbling themselves in prayer and covenantal affirmation. Their acknowledgment of their past wrongs and their willingness to turn to the true God was instrumental in abating the famine. The drought ended as “a little cloud out of the sea, like a man’s hand” formed (1 Kgs. 18:44). As powerful as had been the fire from heaven, so was the end of the drought.

But, unfortunately, this display of Jehovah’s power did little to change the course of Israel’s history, for in due time, most of the Israelites returned to their pagan ways. Still, the story of Elijah single handedly
confronting hundreds of false prophets on Mount Carmel remains an epic undimmed by the passage of time.

The Mantle of Elijah

Toward the end of his ministry, Elijah selected Elisha as his successor. After laboring with and teaching Elisha, Elijah journeyed with him to the Jordan River. At the river he folded his mantle and smote the water. The water divided “hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground” (2 Kgs. 2:8). Then Elijah asked Elisha “what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me” (2 Kgs. 2:9). The meaning of Elisha’s request was not that he should be twice as important as Elijah, but that he should be his successor (Buttrick, 1985, p. 194). The double share is defined as the portion of the firstborn heir.

Elijah, knowing that only God could designate his prophetic appointee, said, “Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee” (2 Kgs. 2:10). Scriptural text affirms that Elisha did see the ascension of Elijah into heaven in a chariot of fire. As Elijah was lifted up in a whirlwind, his mantle fell before Elisha, who took it and returned to the Jordan River. There he smote the waters as Elijah had done, and the waters of Jordan divided as Elisha commanded. He then journeyed to meet the sons of the prophets who, upon recognizing that Elijah’s calling (the priesthood power) rested upon him, “bowed themselves to the ground before him” (2 Kgs. 2:15). Elisha demonstrated himself to be the divinely appointed successor of Elijah, “just as Joshua by the drying up of the Jordan proved himself to be the continuer of the work of Moses” (Keil, 1965, p. 233).

Elijah’s Return and Mission in Our Day

Elijah is not mentioned again in the Old Testament until 400 years later when Malachi prophesied that he (Elijah) would return prior to the second coming of Christ.

For behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch....

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse (Mal. 4:5-6).

These closing words became the effective climax of modern editions of the Old Testament. The promises of restoring the covenants that God had made with ancient Israel, along with divine priesthood power, were to give hope to a people estranged from their God. Even the mere thought that Elijah would return and restore the power he had shown forth against the priests of Baal, in raising the widow’s son, and many other miraculous events gave hope to the downtrodden as they looked forward to his return.
Elijah’s First Visitation

The scriptures record that subsequent to Malachi’s prophecy, Elijah visits twice, both times to restore priesthood keys. During His ministry, Christ promised Peter that he would receive the keys of the sealing power with these words: “And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:19). Shortly afterward, Moses and Elijah, as translated beings, appeared to Jesus Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. On this occasion, priesthood keys were conferred upon the Apostles Peter, James and John (Matt. 17:1–9). Under the topic, “Mount of Transfiguration,” The Bible Dictionary (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, p. 786) says:

This very important event in the New Testament occurred about a week after the promise made to Peter that he would receive the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16:13–18; 17:1–9). On the mount (probably Mount Hermon) the Savior, Moses, and Elias (Elijah) gave the promised keys of the priesthood to Peter, James, and John (HC 3:387), which enabled these brethren to carry forth the work of the kingdom on the earth after the departure of Jesus. These keys were later given to all of the twelve.

The transfiguration occurred in about October, some six months before the death of Jesus. The brethren saw the Lord in a glorified and transfigured state. They also saw a vision of the earth as it will appear in its future glorified condition (D&C 63:20–21; HC 1:283); saw and conversed with Moses and Elijah, two translated beings; and heard the voice of the Father bearing witness that Jesus is his beloved son, in whom the Father is pleased, and commanding the brethren to hear (obey) him. See also Mark 9:2–10; Luke 9:28–36; 2 Pet. 1:16–18.

The event is important in many ways. Necessary priesthood authority was conferred upon Peter, James, and John; the significance of the Savior’s work was emphasized; and the unity of various dispensations and the close relationship of Jesus and his prophets was demonstrated. Few events in the Bible equal it in importance. A similar event occurred on April 3, 1836, in the temple at Kirtland, Ohio, where the same heavenly messengers conferred priesthood keys upon the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery (D&C 110).

Moroni Foretells Elijah’s Return (D&C 2)

When Moroni appeared to the prophet Joseph Smith in 1823, he quoted several Old Testament prophecies. One of these was Malachi’s prophecy, given earlier in the King James Version of the Bible. However, Moroni did not give the King James Version of the prophecy. He gave Malachi 4:1 as follows:

For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble; for they that come shall burn them, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch (J. Smith, 1978, 1:37).

In 1967, Elder Theodore M. Burton shared an important insight into this verse in General Conference. He said:
Those who come are those righteous hosts of heaven and righteous persons caught up from earth who shall come and return with the glorified, resurrected Savior to cleanse the earth. But what is meant by the expression “that shall leave them neither root nor branch”? This expression simply means that wicked and indifferent persons who reject the gospel of Jesus Christ will have no family inheritance or patriarchal lineage—neither root (ancestors or progenitors) nor branch (children or posterity). Such persons cannot be received into the celestial kingdom of glory of resurrected beings, but must be content with a lesser blessing (Burton, 1967, p. 81).

After speaking of the “root” and “branch,” Moroni completed his version of Malachi’s prophecy in the following two verses:

Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming (JS–H 1:38–39).

Elijah’s Visitation: The Kirtland Temple

In the small agrarian community of Kirtland, Ohio, the Latter-day Saints were commanded in 1832 to “establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God” (D&C 88:119). In obedience to this command, the work on the Kirtland Temple began on 5 June 1833, when “George A. Smith hauled the first load of stone for the Temple, and Hyrum Smith and Reynolds Cahoon commenced digging the trench” (Joseph Fielding Smith, 1954–1956, 2:239) for the wall of the first house of the Lord in this dispensation.

Like the temple of King Solomon, the Kirtland Temple was built to the specific dimensions given by revelation (D&C 94:4–5). The Prophet Joseph Smith acted as foreman in the stone quarry and was known to say, “Come, brethren, let us go into the stone quarry and work for the Lord” (H. C. Kimball 1863, 10:165).

On 27 March 1836 the Kirtland Temple was dedicated to the Lord by the Prophet Joseph Smith (D&C 109). In his dedicatory prayer he petitioned, “And we ask thee, Holy Father, that thy servants may go forth from this house armed with thy power, and that thy name may be upon them, and thy glory be round about them...enable thy servants to seal up the law, and bind up the testimony” (D&C 109:22, 46). Benjamin Brown bore witness to the fulfillment of the Prophet’s petition. On this day of dedication, “the Spirit of the Lord, as on the day of Pentecost, was profusely poured out.... Hundreds of elders spoke in tongues...We had a most glorious and never-to-be-forgotten time. Angles were seen by numbers present, and the first endowments were received...” (Brown, 1853, p. 6).
Further testimony was given by Zebedee Coltrin:

In the Kirtland Temple I have seen the power of God as it was on the day of Pentecost, and cloven tongues of fire have rested on the brethren, and they have spoken in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. I saw the Lord high and lifted up. The angels of God rested upon the Temple and we heard their voices singing heavenly music” (Andrus, 1974, p. 29).

The congregation then sang:

The Spirit of God like a fire is burning!
The Latter-day glory begins to come forth;
The visions and blessings of old are returning,
And angels are coming to visit the earth.
(“The Spirit of God, Hymns, no. 2)

The heavens were opened to the Latter-day Saints, visions were seen, and the Saints shouted, “Hosannah, hosannah, hosannah, to God and the Lamb.” They then sealed their shout with a united “Amen, Amen, and Amen.” This is known, today, as the Hosanna Shout. It has been performed at every temple dedication since that day.

Following this glorious day of dedication Prescindia Huntington recorded:

There was poured out upon us abundantly the spirit of revelation, prophecy and tongues. The Holy Ghost filled the house; and along in the afternoon a noise was heard. It was the sound of a mighty rushing wind… A little girl came to my door and in wonder called me out, exclaiming, “The meeting is on the top of the meeting house!” I went to the door, and there I saw on the temple angels clothed in white covering the roof from end to end. They seemed to be walking to and fro; they appeared and disappeared. The third time they appeared and disappeared before I realized that they were not mortal men. Each time in a moment they vanished, and their reappearance was the same. This was in broad daylight, in the afternoon. A number of the children in Kirtland saw the same (Tullidge, 1877, pp. 207–208).

The glory that was once in the Tabernacle which housed the Ark of the Covenant and that was once in Solomon’s temple had, with great power, returned to the earth.

One week following the dedication, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote that on the afternoon of 3 April 1836, “I retired to the pulpit, the veils being dropped, and bowed myself, with Oliver Cowdery, in solemn and silent prayer” (J. Smith, 1978, 2:435). After they arose from prayer a glorious vision was opened to both he and Oliver (D&C 110). First, Christ appeared, accepting the Kirtland Temple as His house and promising that tens of thousands would be blessed. Following His appearance, Moses, Elias, and Elijah appeared in separate visions, and restored priesthood keys. Elijah restored the keys of the sealing power needed to accomplish the latter-day work promised by Malachi. This vision occurred
on the second day of the Jewish Passover, when many, “Jews had for the second time opened their doors for Elijah to enter,” but to them he did not come (Ricks, 1983, p. 485). Two humble servants testified:

After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us; for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said:

Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi—testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come—

To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse—

Therefore the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors (D&C 110:13–16).

The Mission of Elijah

Through the restoration of the gospel, we have received more understanding of Malachi’s prophecy and Elijah’s mission. His mission is to “bind” or “seal” our hearts to our families, that we will assist with the work of their salvation. The prophet Joseph Smith taught:

The Bible says, “I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

Now, the word “turn” here should be translated “bind” or “seal.” But what is the object of this important mission? or how is it to be fulfilled. The keys are to be delivered, the spirit of Elijah is to come, the Gospel to be established, the Saints of God gathered, Zion built up, and the Saints to come up as saviors on Mount Zion.

But how are they to become saviors on Mount Zion? By building their temples, erecting their baptismal fonts, and going forth and receiving all the ordinances, baptisms, confirmations, washings, anointings, ordinations, and sealing powers upon their heads, in behalf of their progenitors who are dead, and redeem them that they may come forth in the first resurrection and be exalted to thrones of glory with them; and there in is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, which fulfills the mission of Elijah.

The Saints have not too much time to save and redeem their dead, and gather together their living relatives, that they may be saved also, before the earth will be smitten, and the consumption decree falls upon the world.

I would advise all the Saints to go to with their might and gather together all their living relatives to this place, that they may be sealed and saved, that they may be prepared against the day that the destroying angel goes forth; and if the whole Church should go to with all their might to save their dead, seal their posterity and gather their living friends, and spend none of their time in behalf of the world, they would hardly get through before night would come, when no man can work (J. Smith, 1978, 6:183).

John Taylor explained the meaning of the term “Saviors on Mount Zion,” saying:

God is looking upon us, and has called us to be saviors upon Mount Zion. And what does a savior mean? It means a person who saves somebody.... Would we be saviors if we did not save somebody? I think not. Could we save anyone if we did not build Temples? No, we could not; for God would not
accept our offerings and sacrifices (Taylor, 1881, 22:308).

With regard to the mission of Elijah, President Harold B. Lee has said:

Now keep in mind this: that when the full measure of Elijah’s mission is understood, that the hearts of the children will be turned to the fathers, and the fathers to the children. It applies just as much on this side of the veil as it does on the other side of the veil. If we neglect our families here in having family home night and we fail in our responsibilities here, how could we feel that we are doing our full duty in turning the hearts of our children to their fathers?

How would heaven be if we lost some of those we love through our own neglect? The blessings in heaven won’t be ours until we have done everything we can to save those whom the Lord has sent through our lineage. So, the hearts of you fathers and mothers must be turned to your children right now, if you have the true spirit of Elijah, and not think that it applies merely to those who are beyond the veil. Let your hearts be turned to your children, and teach your children; but you must do it when they are young enough to be properly schooled. If you are neglecting your family home evening, you are neglecting the beginning of the mission of Elijah just as certainly as if you were neglecting your genealogy research work (Lee, 1974b, pp. 529–530).

Elijah’s mission was to restore the keys needed to fulfill the promises made to the patriarchal fathers. All members of the Church and their children are descendants of Abraham. Any who are not literal descendants are adopted. Our ancestors who accept the gospel when it is taught to them in the spirit world are also of the seed of Abraham. When we help make salvation available to our ancestors, members of our living family, and our descendants, we are helping to fulfill the promises made to the patriarchal fathers described in Chapter Three. In other words, the promises to the patriarchal fathers, now planted in our hearts by the return of Elijah, bring forth fruit as our hearts are turned to our kindred dead, our immediate families, and our descendants, and we assist with the work of their salvation. Elder John Widtsoe said:

Love lives by loving, faith comes from believing, the spirit of this latter-day work comes by obedience to it and the practice of its principles. The abounding love of the living for the dead comes to a person when he gives himself a little every day to thoughts of the dead and labor for the dead; and I suspect it can come in no other natural way. If we will proceed, throughout Zion, in every household, to give daily thought and labor in behalf of records and temple work, our temple work will be greatly encouraged, to more souls will be brought the possibility of salvation, and we ourselves would be to the temple more frequently and grow in spiritual power (Widtsoe, 1920, 11:102).

**The Keys of Sealing Power**

When the gospel was restored, priesthood keys were bestowed on Joseph Smith and others by heavenly messengers. To appreciate the significance of these heavenly visitations, you must first understand how priesthood keys function.
Keys of the Priesthood

In volume 2 of the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (1992) it states:

The keys of the priesthood refer to the right to exercise power in the name of Jesus Christ or to preside over a priesthood function, quorum, or organizational division of the Church. Keys are necessary to maintain order and to see that the functions of the Church are performed in the proper time, place, and manner. They are given by the laying on of hands in an ordination or setting apart by a person who presides and who holds the appropriate keys at a higher level. Many keys were restored to men on earth by heavenly messengers to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

The keys of the kingdom of God on earth are held by the apostles. The president of the church, who is the senior apostle, holds all the keys presently on earth and presides over all the organizational and ordinance work of the Church (D&C 107:8–9, 91–92). He delegates authority by giving the keys of specific offices to others (D&C 124:123). Only presiding priesthood officers (including General Authorities, stake presidents, mission presidents, temple presidents, bishops, branch presidents, and quorum presidents) hold keys pertaining to their respective offices. Latter-day Saints distinguish between holding the priesthood and holding keys to direct the work of the priesthood: one does not receive additional priesthood when one is given keys (Joseph F. Smith, IE 4 [Jan. 1901]:230).

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that “the fundamental principles, government, and doctrine of the Church are vested in the keys of the kingdom” (TPJS, p. 21). “The keys have to be brought from heaven whenever the Gospel is sent”; they are revealed to man under the authority of Adam, for he was the first to be given them when he was given dominion over all things. They have come down through the dispensations of the gospel to prophets, including Noah, Abraham, Moses, Elijah; to Peter, James, and John; and to Joseph Smith and the designated prophets of the Latter-days (HC 3:385–87). Keys to perform or preside over various priesthood functions were bestowed upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery by John the Baptist, ... by Peter, James, and John, ... and by Moses, Elias, and Elijah in the Kirtland Temple (see D&C 109–110).

Many types of keys are mentioned in the scriptures of the Church (MD, pp. 409–13). Jesus Christ holds all the keys. Joseph Smith received the keys pertaining to the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ (D&C 6:25–28; 28:7; 35:18), and through him the First Presidency holds the “keys of the kingdom,” including the sealing ordinances (D&C 81:1–2; 90:1–6; 110:16;128:20; 132:19... (Parrish, 1992, 2:780–781).

With the coming of Moses, Elias, and Elijah, all the keys of the priesthood that are necessary for exaltation were given to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. The same keys held by these men are held by modern prophets. President Spencer W. Kimball testified, “I hold the keys! We hold the real keys and we use them every day” (Packer, 1980, p. 83).

Keys of Sealing Power

Volume 3 of the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (1992) further informs us:

Signets and seals have been used from early antiquity to certify authority. The word “seal” appears many times in the scriptures. Jesus Christ was “sealed” by God the Father (John 6:27), and Paul reminded ancient Saints that God had anointed and sealed them (2 Cor. 1:21 22) and told others they “were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest [assurance] of our inheritance until the redemption” (Eph. 1:13 14). John spoke of the servants of God being sealed in their foreheads (Rev.
7:3). In the apocryphal Acts of Thomas (verse 131), Thomas prayed that he and his wife and daughter “May receive the seal” and “become servants of the true God.” Even today licenses, diplomas, legal documents, and the like bear seals that officially attest to their authenticity.

For Latter-day Saints, the ultimate sealing power is the priesthood power given to authorized servants of the Lord to perform certain acts on earth and have them recognized (sealed) or validated in heaven. They believe it is this authority the Lord Jesus Christ described when he said to Peter, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:19) (Yarn, 1992, 3:1288–1289).

With regard to these keys, the prophet Joseph Smith taught:

It may seem to some to be a very bold doctrine that we talk of—a power which records or binds on earth and binds in heaven. Nevertheless, in all ages of the world, whenever the Lord has given a dispensation of the priesthood to any man by actual revelation, or any set of men, this power has always been given. Hence, whatsoever these men did in authority, in the name of the Lord, and did it truly and faithfully, and kept a proper and faithful record of the same, it became law on earth and in heaven, and could not be annulled, according to the decrees of the great Jehovah. This is a faithful saying. Who can bear it (D&C 128:9)?

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained the nature of the power Elijah restored with these words:

Why was Elijah reserved? What keys did he hold? What keys did he bestow on Peter, James, and John? Exactly the same keys that he bestowed upon the heads of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. And what were they? Some of you may be saying the keys of baptism for the dead, No, it was not just that. Some of you may be thinking it was the keys of the salvation of the dead. No, it was not just that, that was only a portion of it. The keys that Elijah held were the keys of the everlasting priesthood, the keys of the sealing power ...and it is not confined to the living and it is not confined to the dead, but includes them both.

These keys of the binding, or sealing power...are keys which make valid all the ordinances of the gospel. They pertain more especially to the work in the temples, both for the living and for the dead. They are the authorities which prepare men to enter the celestial kingdom and to be crowned as sons and heirs of God.

These keys hold the power to seal husbands and wives for eternity as well as for time. They hold the power to seal children to parents...by which the family organization is made intact forever.... Through these keys the hearts of the children have turned to their fathers (Joseph Fielding Smith, 1954–1956, 2:111–112, 119).

President Smith explained that through Elijah’s ministry “whatever was done should be ratified, or sealed, in the heavens and recognized of full force by the Eternal Father. This power effects and vitalizes every ordinance performed by duly commissioned officers holding divine power on the earth (Joseph Fielding Smith, 1954–1956, 2:117).”
The Prophet Joseph Smith said further:

Now the great and grand secret of the whole matter, and the *sumnum bonum* of the whole subject that is lying before us, consists in obtaining the powers of the Holy Priesthood. For him to whom these keys are given there is no difficulty in obtaining a knowledge of facts in relation to the salvation of the children of men, both as well for the dead as for the living (D&C 128:11).

Explaining how the sealing keys are passed from prophet to prophet, president to president, Elder Boyd K. Packer wrote,

No one can get it [the sealing keys] except from the prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.... I am an Apostle and in company with fourteen other men now living hold all of the keys. I have the sealing power. It was given to me at the time of my ordination, as is true of all the Brethren who hold membership in the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve (Packer, 1980, p. 85).

God’s purpose in giving these keys and power to man is to further the work of bringing forth salvation. Not only the work of Christ and his apostles in ancient times, but the work of Elijah, Nephi, Joseph Smith, and living apostles and prophets who now hold these keys should be seen from that perspective. A central part of that work is accomplished in temples. With the keys of sealing power, the ordinances performed in temples continue to be valid in eternity. Without those keys and ordinances, our exaltation in the highest degree of the Celestial Kingdom would not be possible.

**The Sealing Power and Salvation for the Dead**

To secure our own exaltation we must receive temple ordinances from someone who holds the priesthood keys that Elijah restored. We must also participate in the work of providing the same ordinances for our kindred dead who lived before the keys were restored, or who otherwise did not receive the ordinances in mortality. Because God is no respecter of persons, and is just, He has decreed that those who came before us must have the opportunity for salvation in common with us. Hence, to secure our own salvation, we are obligated to help them, as the Prophet Joseph Smith once taught:

...It is necessary that those who are going before and those who come after us should have salvation in common with us; and thus hath God made it obligatory upon man. Hence, God said, “I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. (Mal. 4:5–6; McConkie, 1955, p. 149).

This is one of the principles to which the Prophet Joseph Smith was referring when he said:

And now, my dearly beloved brethren and sisters, let me assure you that these are principles in relation to the dead and the living that cannot be lightly passed over, as pertaining to our salvation. For their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation, as Paul says concerning the fathers—that they without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect (D&C 128:15).
The ancient prophets, from Adam on, looked forward with joy to our day—to the time when the priesthood keys would be again on the earth. Hence the significance to Adam of his prophecy, “...now this same Priesthood which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also” (Moses 6:7), signifying that the work of the Latter-days and the Millennium would result in salvation being made available to all of his descendants, including those who lived on the earth prior to the restoration. While we live in mortality, it is our great opportunity and privilege to participate in this work. John Widtsoe said:

The plan of salvation for eternal beings involves the principle that God’s work with respect to this earth will not be complete until every soul has been taught the Gospel and has been offered the privilege of accepting salvation and the accompanying great blessings which the Lord has in store for his children. Until that is done the work is unfinished....

We who travel the earth journey are working out an eternal problem. An endless journey is ours; the earth life is a fraction of it; the purpose is unending (Widtsoe, 1921, 12:54).
Since Elijah’s return in 1836, key doctrines related to temple and family history work have been revealed, temples have been constructed throughout the world, many governments have begun to require vital information registration, numerous family history societies have been organized, and interest in family history has grown substantially. Many people testify that they have received spiritual guidance in their search for their ancestors.

Chapter 5 Objectives:

- Understand that the Spirit of Elijah, the Holy Ghost, is directing this work. He assists and guides those who participate.
- Realize the impact that the return of Elijah has had on the Church, governments, institutions, and individuals.
- Gain a strong testimony of the importance of Elijah’s return.

Suggested Readings:

- Doctrine and Covenants 124, 127, and 128.
- Ephesians 1:10.

Chapter 5 Outline:

- Doctrines of Temple and Family History Work Revealed
- Family History Expands
- Family History Work by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- The Spirit of Elijah Today
Doctrines of Temple and Family History Work Revealed

Only a portion of the temple ordinances were given in the Kirtland Temple. It was not until the Nauvoo era that the fullness of the endowment and temple marriage were given to the Church membership.

Ordinance work in behalf of the dead began during the Nauvoo era also. This doctrine was revealed “line upon line.” The Prophet Joseph Smith first spoke publicly of baptism for the dead at the funeral services of Seymour Brunson on 10 August 1840. A few days later, 15 August 1840, the Prophet wrote to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

I presume the doctrine of “baptism for the dead” has ere this reached your ears, and may have raised some inquiries in your minds respecting the same. I cannot in this letter give you all the information you may desire on the subject; but aside from knowledge independent of the Bible, I would say that it was certainly practiced by the ancient churches; and St. Paul endeavors to prove the doctrine of the resurrection from the same, and says, “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?”

I first mentioned the doctrine in public when preaching the funeral sermon of Brother Seymour Brunson: and have since then given general instructions in the Church on the subject (see Joseph Smith 1978, 4:206). The Saints have the privilege of being baptized for those of their relatives who are dead, whom they believe would have embraced the Gospel, if they had been privileged with hearing it, and who have received the Gospel in the spirit, through the instrumentality of those who have been commissioned to preach to them while in prison (J. Smith, 1976, p. 179).

President Wilford Woodruff related his memory of first learning about baptism for the dead in Nauvoo as follows:

…When the Prophet Joseph had this revelation from heaven, what did he do? There are witnesses here of what he did. He never stopped till he got the fullness of the word of God to him concerning the baptism for the dead. But before doing so he went into the Mississippi River, and so did I, as well as others, and we each baptized a hundred for the dead, without a man to record a single act that we performed. Why did we do it? Because of the feeling of joy that we had, to think that we in the flesh could stand and redeem our dead. We did not wait to know what the result of this would be, or what the whole of it should be. Finally the Lord told the Prophet: “When any of you are baptized for your dead, let there be a recorder, and let him be eye witness of your baptisms; let him hear with his ears, that he may testify of a truth, saith the Lord; that in all your recordings it may be recorded in heaven; whatsoever you bind on earth, may be bound in heaven; whatsoever you loose on earth, may be loosed in heaven.” That was the beginning of this work (Woodruff, 1969, p. 153).

In January 1841, the Prophet Joseph Smith received the following revelation which gave further instruction regarding the purposes for the Nauvoo Temple.

And again, verily I say unto you, how shall your washings be acceptable unto me, except ye perform them in a house which you have built to my name?

For, for this cause I commanded Moses that he should build a tabernacle, that they should bear it with them in the wilderness, and to build a house in the land of promise, that those ordinances might
be revealed which had been hid from before the world was.

Therefore, verily I say unto you, that your anointings, and your washings, and your baptisms for the
dead, and your solemn assemblies, and your memorialis for your sacrifices by the sons of Levi, and for
your oracles in your most holy places wherein you receive conversations, and your statues and
judgments, for the beginning of the revelations and foundation of Zion, and for the glory, honor, and
endowment of all her municipals, are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house, which my people are
always commanded to build unto my holy name.

And verily I say unto you, let this house be built unto my name, that I may reveal mine ordinances
therein unto my people;

For I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation
of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times.

And I will show unto my servant Joseph all things pertaining to this house, and the priesthood
thereof, and the place whereon it shall be built (D&C 124:37–42).

In November 1841, the baptismal font was completed in the Nauvoo Temple so that baptisms for the
dead could be performed. “In May, 1842, Joseph Smith introduced the endowment ceremony to a
small group of specially selected Saints, including members of the Quorum of the Twelve, in an upper
room of his store in Nauvoo. Members of this group were thus prepared to administer the endowment
to other Church members once the temple was ready” (Allen, Embry, and Mehr 1995, 20). In
September, 1842, Joseph Smith wrote two epistles to the Church that contained significant
instructions regarding the doctrine of baptism for the dead. They are now recorded as Sections 127
and 128 of the Doctrine and Covenants. In July 1843, doctrines related to temple covenants and the
promises given to the patriarchal fathers were recorded as part of Doctrine and Covenants Section 132.
The Nauvoo Temple was sufficiently completed in 1845 so that some of the saints were able to receive
their endowments before migrating west.

Revelation regarding this important topic did not cease with the martyrdom of the prophet in 1844. In
October 1918, President Joseph F. Smith received a vision regarding the redemption of the dead,
which is now recorded as D&C 138.

**Family History Expands**

Since the return of Elijah, widespread interest in family history has stretched throughout the world.
Civil registration of births, marriages, and deaths began in England on 1 July 1837, one year after the
appearance of Elijah in the Kirtland Temple. By the early 1840s, many states in America began to
pattern themselves after the English civil registration by keeping records on a statewide basis. In 1841
Massachusetts became the first state to require statewide vital records.

The New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS), the oldest genealogical organization in the
western hemisphere, was founded in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1845. It began publication of The New
England Historical and Genealogical Register in January 1847. With over 20,000 members, the New
England Historic Genealogical Society (www.nehgs.org) is one of the largest genealogical societies in the world and houses a library of over 200,000 bound volumes, 40,000 items of microform, and two million genealogical manuscripts including compiled genealogies, Bible records, church records, maps, and etc.

The creation of other large genealogical societies in America and elsewhere soon followed. In 1869 the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society was organized in New York City. This society has published *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* quarterly since January 1870. The National Genealogical Society (NGS) was founded in Washington, D.C., in 1903 and currently has over 15,000 members. The National Genealogical Society began publishing the *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* (NGSQ) in 1912. The scholarly periodicals published by these societies include compiled genealogies of early American families and methodology articles. Both NEHGS and NGS loan selected volumes to their members from their lending libraries—a helpful service for those living some distance from a library with genealogical holdings.

Patriotic and lineage societies have been popular in America since the late nineteenth century. Foremost among these are the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) in Washington DC, Sons of the American Revolution (SAR), and the General Society of Mayflower Descendants.

The growth of genealogical and family history societies since the restoration events in Kirtland, Ohio, has been phenomenal.

Today, over 2,000 genealogical societies exist in North America and many more in other countries. Compiled genealogies, family histories, local histories, biographical compendiums, atlases, and other sources used by family historians have been published in large numbers. The keeping of family Bibles, diaries, photographs, and other familial memorabilia is taking on greater significance. Sources available on the Internet and on compact discs are increasing rapidly.

Two twentieth-century events have made tracing lineage a popular hobby in the United States: the Bicentennial celebration in 1976 and the book and television production of Alex Haley’s *Roots* in the 1980s.

**Evidence of Increased Interest in Family History**

- Increasing numbers of libraries housing genealogical collections
- Genealogical and historical societies
- Lineage and hereditary societies, surname associations, and family organizations
- Family reunions and family newsletters
- Genealogical periodicals, newsletters, and columns published in newspapers
- Ethnic and religious genealogical organizations
- Publishing of Compiled genealogies (family histories)
- The volume of records preserved in microform (microfilm and microfiche)
• Indexing of genealogical records, newspapers, and local histories
• Computers and genealogical software programs
• Restoration of cemeteries and transcribing gravestones
• Videotaping of oral history interviews and family reunions
• Publishing of methodology books and periodicals
• Genealogical sources on compact discs (CD-ROM)
• Genealogical sources on the Internet

Family History Work by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Throughout the nineteenth century, Latter-day Saints wrote in journals, diaries, letters, and other personal papers, preserving primary evidence of their conversion to the gospel, testimony, and pioneer experiences. In addition, records were kept of local meetings, membership statistics, immigration, patriarchal blessings, and biographical sketches of early Church leaders and others.

The Genealogical Society of Utah was founded on 13 November 1894 under the supervision of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Its purpose was to foster a genealogical library and to acquire records for ancestral research. The library has been known as the Genealogical Society Library and Genealogical Department Library. As of 1987, it is referred to as the Family History Library (FHL). It is staffed by professional and well-respected genealogists who oversee the microfilming and preservation of records. Service missionaries are also present to help assist patrons. The Church’s Family and Church History Department’s function, as declared in their June 2000 mission statement, is to “enable church members to readily identify, link, and provide temple ordinances for their ancestors, and preserve the official temple record.”

The Family History Department in Salt Lake City houses the largest collection of genealogical records in the world a big change from its modest beginnings in 1894. Its collection contains more than 2.4 million rolls of microfilm; 742,000 microfiche; over 300,000 books, serials, and other formats; and 4,500 periodicals gathered from throughout the world.

The microfilm collection at the Family History Library is equivalent to seven million, 300-page volumes and contains over two billion names. The collection grows at the rate of about 4,100 rolls of film and 700 books per month. Today, there are over 200 microfilming projects in over 40 countries, with 242 cameras filming records in the United States and Canada. While most microfilmed records are originals, some compiled genealogies, manuscript collections, Bible records, and published sources are also filmed.
Family History Centers

Family history centers (FHCs) are branches of the Family History Library in Salt Lake City that begun in 1964. Today, there are over 5,000 centers in over 60 countries serve Latter-day Saints and others. Through these centers, thousands have access to the massive microfilmed collections at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. An estimated two million patrons visit Family history centers annually. Approximately 60 to 65 percent of the visitors in the United States and Canada are not members of the Church. Over 16,000 volunteers staff the local centers.
Family Record Extraction

Thousands of people in hundreds of stakes throughout the Church are serving in Family Record Extraction (FRE). These individuals are serving as a result of a church calling or as volunteers. Some whose illnesses or disabilities prevent them from participating in other types of Church service gain a sense of fulfillment from this service. Members can labor in their own homes, at their own pace, extracting (recording) names or entering data into computers. Although record extraction is often a tedious process, filled with repetition designed to ensure accuracy, the spirit of the work is unmistakable. Many volunteers ask to continue serving beyond the time of their original assignment.

Inmates at the Utah State Prison also participate in a successful extraction program. They extract many thousands of names, and the spirit of the work has had a powerful impact in their lives. Many have developed a greater desire to live righteously and serve the Lord.

The Spirit of Elijah Today

The coming of Elijah and the keys he restored were necessary for the sealing ordinances and covenants to be administered again in righteousness upon the earth. The feeling associated with his appearance has been termed the Spirit of Elijah. This Spirit has moved upon the world since the coming of Elijah to the Kirtland Temple on 3 April 1836, and is most evident today as men and women seek to receive temple covenants and share the covenant blessing with their families. These covenant men and women “turn” or seal their hearts to their fathers. They pray that the Lord God will bless them and their loved ones to faithfully keep their eternal bond sacred.

The Spirit of Elijah has motivated thousands to invest money and time to search for records of their ancestors in genealogical libraries and research organizations throughout the world and to bring these records together to form family histories. Many conclude that in so doing they have the Spirit of Elijah. But the Spirit of Elijah entails more than this. It culminates in turning, binding, and sealing our hearts to our fathers by sacred ordinances in the house of the Lord. The Prophet Joseph Smith declared:

If you have power to seal on earth and in heaven, then we should be wise. The first thing you do, go and seal on earth your sons and daughters unto yourself, and yourself unto your fathers in eternal glory (J. Smith, 1978, 6:253).

As Latter-day Saints, we assist in the salvation of our kindred dead because the sealing power of Elijah joins families, generation to generation. When Latter-day Saints understand that the Spirit of Elijah has much to do with turning our hearts to the covenants of the fathers in the house of Israel, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they begin to glimpse the important blessings and the imperative responsibilities to bind and seal ourselves from one generation to another in eternal covenants.
Manifestations of the Spirit

Saints have felt the guidance of the Spirit as they participate in temple and family history work since the coming of Elijah. Some have had marvelous manifestations of the Spirit while others have simply received direction from the “still small voice.” The following account of Wilford Woodruff helps demonstrate the importance of this work to those who are on the other side of the veil.

I am going to bear my testimony to this assembly, if I never do it again in my life, that those men who laid the foundation of this American Government and signed the Declaration of Independence were the best spirits the God of Heaven could find on the face of the earth. They were choice spirits, not wicked men. George Washington and all the men that labored for the purpose were inspired of the Lord. Another thing I am going to say here, because I have a right to say it. Every one of those men that signed the Declaration of Independence with General Washington called upon me, as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Temple at St. George two consecutive nights, and demanded at my hands that I should go forth and attend to the ordinances of the house of God for them. Men are here, I believe, that know of this—Brothers J. D. T. McAllister, David H. Cannon and James C. Bleak. Brother McAllister baptized me for all these men, and I then told these brethren that it was their duty to go into the Temple and labor until they got endowments for all of them. They did it. Would those spirits have called upon me, as an Elder in Israel, to perform that work if they had not been noble spirits before God? They would not. I bear this testimony because it is true. The spirit of God bore record to myself and the brethren while we were laboring in that way (Lundwall, 1947, p. 87).

Why do temple work when we don’t always know if the dead accept the sacred ordinances? In partial answer to the question, let us review a journal entry written by Charles R. Woodbury after he had “witnessed 300 baptisms one day” in the Manti Temple:

As a name was called out for baptism, a voice said to me, “This person has had the Gospel taught them and is converted and is ready for baptism.” Another name would be called out, “This person’s never heard the Gospel yet.” Another name would be called, “This person’s heard the Gospel and is not converted.” I sat there in that condition and witnessed 300 baptisms. I knew everyone of them that had accepted it and those that didn’t...25 out of the 300 weren’t ready for it. They weren’t converted and ready for the work. The rest of them, the other 275 were prepared and rejoiced that their work was being done.

This is the testimony that I have to show people that the departed spirits know and appreciate when their work is done in the Temple, so they can enjoy the blessings of the Gospel (Woodbury, 1970, p. 19).

Through divine guidance deceased ancestors can be identified. Such was the case of Elder Melvin J. Ballard’s mother, who related:

My husband being a bishop, was very busy writing out recommends to all who wished to go through the temple, when my daughter, Ellen, came in and asked for her father. I told her that her father was busy and asked her to give the newspaper, which she had in her hand, to me so that I might give it to him. She said: “No, the man who gave the paper to me told me to give it to no one but Father.” I let the child take the paper to her father, and when he looked it over, he was greatly surprised for he saw that the paper had been printed in Berkshire, England, his birthplace, and was only four days from the press.... She said that she was playing on the sidewalk with other children when two men came down the
street walking in the middle of the road. One of them called to her, saying: “Come here, little girl.” She hesitated at first, for there were other little girls with her. Then he pointed to her and said: “You.” She went out, and he gave her the paper and told her to give it to her father.

This paper contained about sixty names of the dead acquaintances of my husband, giving the dates of their birth and death. My husband was baptized for the men, and I for the women, and all of the work was done for them (B. S. Hinckley, 1949, p. 18).

Divine help can be extended to family historians as they desire to assemble family records. Floy L. Turner related an experience that happened to her mother when she was organizing family records:

She very often would sit up late at night working for genealogy. Sometimes it would be two o’clock in the morning before she would get all of a certain line put down on the family group sheets before she could go to bed.

One night after she had gone to bed and was asleep she was awakened very suddenly—there by her bed stood two women. One of the women spoke to Mother and said, “I am not a blood relative of yours, but I married one of your relatives. You will find my name in a Washburn book in the Manti Temple on page 54 about half way down the page.” Then she gave her name. The two women disappeared.

About a month later, Mother went to the Manti Temple. Peter Poulson was the chief recorder there. Mother approached Bro. Poulson and asked if she could see this certain Washburn book (which she knew was not there, and so Bro. Poulson would say there was no such book there).

Bro. Poulson said, “O.K. Sis. Larsen—I was searching in the vault a week ago and I came to this Washburn book, and I thought you would like to see it, so I laid it aside for you when you came again.” He got the book and handed it to Mother. She was still doubtful as she turned to page 54. To her surprise, there she found it all as the woman had told Mother, and as she had written it down (Heinerman, 1974, p. 101).
Chapter 6

Sacred Temple Ordinances

Saving ordinances necessary for exaltation include baptism, confirmation, ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood for men, endowment, temple marriage, and sealing of children to parents (if the children are not born into the covenant). These ordinances are performed for the deceased by proxy in a temple. For the living, only the endowment, temple marriage, and sealing of children to parents are performed in the temple.

Chapter 6 Objectives:

- Understand the purpose of each of the ordinances performed in the temple.
- Know the importance of covenants made in holy temples.
- Recognize and appreciate the blessings that come from regular temple attendance.

Suggested Readings:

- D&C 109, 127, 128.

Chapter 6 Outline:

- Baptism and Confirmation
- Ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood
- Initiatory Ordinances
- The Endowment
- Eternal Marriage—Sealing Husbands and Wives
- Sealing Children to Parents
- Blessings from Temple Attendance

Baptism and Confirmation

Nephi saw in vision the mortality of Jesus Christ and prophesied that the Redeemer of mankind would be baptized by John the Baptist to fulfill the divine law of heaven (1 Ne. 11:27). Nephi taught:

For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost.

60
And then are ye in this strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life; yea, ye have entered in by the gate; ye have done according to the commandments of the Father and the Son; and ye have received the Holy Ghost... (2 Ne. 31:17–18).

Baptism is the gate for those who reach the age of accountability to enter the “strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life” (2 Ne. 31:18; D&C 76:51–53). Little children, who die before the age of accountability (age eight), are redeemed through the atonement of Jesus Christ and do not need to be baptized (Moro. 8:5–12; D&C 68:27; 137:10).

With regard to the ordinance of baptism for the dead, the prophet Joseph Smith taught:

Herein is glory and honor and immortality and eternal life—The ordinance of baptism by water, to be immersed therein in order to answer to the likeness of the dead, that one principle might accord with the other; to be immersed in the water and come forth out of the water is in the likeness of the resurrection of the dead in coming forth out of their graves; hence this ordinance was instituted to form a relationship with the ordinance of baptism for the dead, being in likeness of the dead.

Consequently, the baptismal font was instituted as a similitude of the grave, and was commanded to be in a place underneath where the living are wont [inclined] to assemble, to show forth the living and the dead, and that all things may have their likeness, and that they may accord one with another—that which is earthly conforming with that which is heavenly... (D&C 128:12–13).

Through the ordinance of confirmation, we become members of the Church and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

And whoso having faith you shall confirm in my church, by the laying on of the hands, and I will bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost upon them (D&C 33:15).

Those who are on the other side of the veil may also be confirmed by proxy. Through baptism and confirmation, they may join the Church and continue in their progression in the spirit world. In all cases, of course, the proxy ordinances are effective only if the recipients voluntarily accept them.

Fundamental to the doctrine of the salvation of the dead is the exercise of agency. When persons die, their spirits continue living in the postmortal spirit world and are capable of making choices. Latter-day Saints perform baptisms for the dead so that those who live as spirits may choose whether or not to accept baptism in the true Church of Jesus Christ in the spirit world. If they do not accept the baptism, it is of no effect. The same is true of the other saving ordinances that members perform in the temples in behalf of the dead (Fugal, 1992, 3:1258).

**Ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood**

The Melchizedek Priesthood is essential for a man to be exalted and be in the presence of God the Father. Women share in the blessings of the priesthood but are not ordained to an office in the priesthood.

[They] share the authority of the priesthood with their husbands, actual or prospective.... Nevertheless there is no grade, rank, or phase of the temple endowment to which women are not eligible on an
equality with men. True, there are certain of the higher ordinances to which an unmarried woman cannot be admitted, but the rule is equally in force as to a bachelor (Talmage, 1976, p. 79).

**Initiatory Ordinances**

Initiatory ordinances are part of the endowment. They consist of washing, anointing, and clothing in the temple garment. Elder Boyd K. Packer said:

The ordinances of washing and anointing are referred to often in the temple as initiatory ordinances. It will be sufficient for our purposes to say only the following: Associated with the endowment are washings and anointings—mostly symbolic in nature, but promising definite, immediate blessings as well as future blessings. Concerning these ordinances the Lord has said: “I say unto you, how shall your washings be acceptable unto me except ye perform them in a house which you have built to my name?” (D&C 124:37).

And again, “I say unto you, that your anointings, and your washings...are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house” (D&C 124:39).

In connection with these ordinances, in the temple you will be officially clothed in the garment and promised marvelous blessings in connection with it. It is important that you listen carefully as these ordinances are administered and that you try to remember the blessings promised and the conditions upon which they will be realized (Packer, 1980, pp. 154–55).

**The Endowment**

The endowment is a gift from God. “To endow is to enrich, to give to another something long-lasting and of much worth,” wrote Elder ElRay L. Christiansen (1971, p. 27). President Brigham Young taught:

Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell (Young, 1978, p. 416).

Elder Boyd K. Packer wrote:

The instruction given in the endowment provides a firm perspective, a point of reference by which a person may gauge all his learning and wisdom, both spiritual and temporal; by which he may gather things together, determine their true meaning and significance, and fit them into their proper places (Packer, 1980, p. 45).

The endowment is more than instruction. It includes the making of sacred covenants which must be kept if the promised blessings are to be received. The ordinances of the endowment embody certain
obligations on the part of the individual, such as covenant and promise to observe the law of strict virtue and chastity, to be charitable, benevolent, tolerant and pure; to devote both talent and material means to the spread of truth and the uplifting of the race; to maintain devotion to the cause of truth; and to seek in every way to contribute to the great preparation that the earth may be made ready to receive her King—the Lord Jesus Christ. With the taking of each covenant and the assuming of each obligation a promised blessing is pronounced, contingent upon the faithful observance of the conditions (Talmage, 1976, p. 84).

Many young people object to temple work because, “We must make covenants and promises, and we do not like to be tied; we want full freedom.” This objection rises from a misunderstanding of the meaning of covenants. Knowledge becomes serviceable only when it is used; the covenant made in the temple, or elsewhere, if of the right kind, is merely a promise to give life to knowledge, by making knowledge useful and helpful in man’s daily progress. Temple work, or any other work, would have no meaning unless accompanied with covenants. It would consist simply of bits of information for ornament; the covenant gives life to truth; and makes possible the blessings that reward all those who use knowledge properly; or the penalties that overtake those who misuse knowledge. That knowledge of itself is valueless, and that its use or misuse brings about inevitable results are the a b c of every scientific laboratory. The electric current properly used lights this building; improperly used, it may go through the body of the man and leave death behind. Unused, the electric current is to the man as if it were not. Penalties and rewards hang upon the use of knowledge (Widtsoe, 1921, 12:61).

Now, it is important to us parents to remember our responsibility in respect to all of these holy ordinances and covenants entered into in the temples of our God. We must keep them sacred, and do nothing to violate the provisions of these covenants, otherwise the blessings that are pronounced upon us, and all blessings are predicated upon our obedience, will not be ours to enjoy and perhaps we shall not bestow to our children the gifts and endowments they have a right to receive (Stapley, 1952, pp. 123–124).

**Eternal Marriage—Sealing Husbands and Wives**

The Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith:

In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;

And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage];

And if he does not, he cannot obtain it.

He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase (D&C 131:1–4).

The Brethren have taught continually of the sacred importance of temple marriage.

Bruce R. McConkie:

Now, how much do you love your husband or your wife? With what desire do you seek eternal exaltation in the mansions hereafter? Let it be remembered that love is measured in terms of obedience and of service, in accordance with the principle, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).
Accordingly, if we have in our hearts a love, born of the Spirit of Christ, for our families, and for that matter, for our own salvation, we will seek to do those things which will qualify us to gain recommends to the temple, there to be sealed in the eternal marriage union; and then having been so sealed, we will desire with all our hearts to walk in the light, to keep the covenant that we have made, so that it will be of full force and validity in the eternal world, having been bound on earth and sealed in heaven, having been ratified by the Spirit here, and made of full force and validity in the mansions hereafter. There is not any single thing, any single act or performance that any Latter-day Saint ever does in this world as important as marrying the right person in the right place by the right authority, because that kind of marriage is the gate to peace and contentment and happiness in this life, and it opens the door to the attainment of the fullness of the kingdom of the Father hereafter (McConkie, 1957, p. 406).

Spencer W. Kimball:

Civil marriage is an earthly contract, completed in the death of either party. Eternal celestial marriage is a sacred covenant between man and woman, consecrated in the holy temple by servants of God who hold authoritative keys. It bridges death; it includes both time and eternity (S. W. Kimball, 1964, 27).

Ezra Taft Benson:

No sacrifice is too great to have the blessings of an eternal marriage. To most of us, a temple is easily accessible, perhaps so conveniently that the blessing is taken too casually. As with other matters of faithfulness in gospel living, being married the Lord’s way takes a willingness to deny yourself ungodliness—worldliness—and a determination to do our Father’s will. By this act of faith, we show our love to God and our regard for a posterity yet unborn. As our family is our greatest source of joy in this life, so it may well be in the eternity (Benson, 1979, pp. 33–34).

**Sealing Children to Parents**

If parents are sealed as husband and wife, all of the children born to them after their sealing are “born in the covenant” and do not need to be sealed to them in the temple. However, any children born prior to the sealing of husband and wife need the ordinance of sealing to their parents done in order for the family to be together in eternity.

There is another matter to which I would like to call attention. I can only touch on it briefly. It is a matter, however, that emphasizes the need on our part of an understanding heart toward our children and also impresses us with this fundamental doctrine of the Church of eternal life, of living again. We have a glorious privilege given to us through the restoration of the Holy Priesthood by which we are permitted to go to the temples of the Lord and we may officiate in holy ordinances where parents may be sealed with their children for time and all eternity. Have you ever stopped to think what this connotes, my brethren and sisters? It is eternal life. The very gift that was made possible on that first
Easter morning through Jesus Christ, that we may live again, that we shall not only live, but that we shall also have those whom we love who are dearer to us than life itself. Think what that means. That is another of the blessings that have been vouchsafed to us through the ministry of Jesus Christ (Young, 1953, p. 67).

**Blessings from Temple Attendance**

Gordon B. Hinckley:

We shall continue the great work that goes on in our temples, an unmatched work of love reaching out even to those who have gone beyond the veil of death. Can there be a greater labor of love than this? It comes more nearly of partaking of the spirit of the Lord himself, who gave his life as a vicarious sacrifice for all of us, than any other work of which I know (G. B. Hinckley, 1982, p. 113).

Howard W. Hunter:

Several things are accomplished by our attendance at the temple—we comply with the instructions of the Lord to accomplish our own ordinance work, we bless our families by the sealing ordinances, and we share our blessings with others by doing for them what they cannot do for themselves. In addition to these, we lift our own thoughts, grow closer to the Lord, honor our priesthood and spiritualize our lives (Hunter, 1971, p. 100).

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 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 and 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 (Hunter, 1994c, pp. 2–4).

Ezra Taft Benson:

Many parents...are concerned about protection against a cascading avalanche of wickedness, which threatens to engulf the world. There is a power associated with the ordinances of heaven, even the power of godliness, which can and will thwart the forces of evil, if we will but be worthy of those sacred covenants made in the temple of the Lord. Our families will be protected, our children will be safeguarded as we live the gospel, visit the temple, and live close to the Lord (Benson, 1993, p. 7).

Spencer W. Kimball:

Implicit in the building of temples is the principle of regular temple attendance by the Saints. Nothing builds spirituality and our understanding of the priesthood principles more than regular temple attendance (S. W. Kimball, 1982, p. 4).
Harold B. Lee:

The temple ceremonies are designed by a wise Heavenly Father who has revealed them to us in these last days as a guide and a protection throughout our lives, that you and I might not fail to merit exaltation in the Celestial Kingdom where God and Christ dwell (Lee, 1967, p. 144).

Joseph Fielding Smith:

To all the families in Israel we say: The family is the most important organization in time or in eternity. Our purpose in life is to create for ourselves eternal family units. There is nothing that will ever come into your family life that is as important as the sealing blessings of the temple and then keeping the covenants made in connection with this order of celestial marriage (Joseph Fielding Smith, 1972, p. 27).

Theodore M. Burton:

As we understand this concept of going to the house of the God of Jacob to receive strength, we understand how important it is to attend the temple frequently. If members holding the priesthood reject the opportunity to go to the temple regularly, they reject the very God who made them and with whom they have covenanted to always remember him and to walk in his ways. The covenants we make in the temple of God are so important that we violate them at the peril of our eternal salvation. Therefore, as often as possible, the members of the Church who hold the priesthood should go to the temple as individuals, with priesthood quorums, and also with their wives, to have their spirits strengthened and their souls revived. Only by regular attendance at the temple can we remember the importance of the commitments we have made to serve the Lord with all our heart, might, mind, and strength (Burton, 1971, p. 83).

John Widtsoe:

In view of this great temple activity, we may well prepare ourselves for opposition. There never yet has been a time in the history of the world when temple work has increased without a corresponding increase in the opposition to it. Some three or four years after the pioneers came to this valley, President Brigham Young said that it was time to begin the building of a temple; and some of the old timers here will probably remember that thousands of the Saints dreaded the command, because they said, “Just as soon as we lay the cornerstone of a temple all hell will be turned loose upon us and we will be driven out of the valleys.” President Young thought that this was true, but that they also would have, if temple work were undertaken, a corresponding increase in power to overcome all evil. Men grow mighty under the results of temple service; women grow strong under it; the community increases in power; until the devil has less influence than he ever had before. The opposition to truth is relatively smaller if the people are engaged actively in the ordinances of the temple (Widtsoe, 1921, 12:51).
Chapter 7

Temple Worship

Through temple worship your understanding of God’s plan for our eternal progression deepens, your motivation and commitment to keep covenants grow, and the Spirit of the Lord attends you and your family. In the temple you gain a greater understanding of who you are and your individual worth before God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. You will learn that you were created in the image of God and will learn how to become like him. When you attend the temple regularly, you will feel closer to God the Father and Jesus Christ and will wish to be more like them.

Chapter 7 Objectives:

- Appreciate the ordinances of the temple more fully.
- Understand the principles of temple worship.
- Establish a life-long plan for temple service that includes:
  - Receiving your own temple ordinances.
  - Regular temple attendance.
  - Teaching your family about the temple.

Suggested Readings:

- Mosiah 2–5.
- Jacob 2.
- 3 Nephi 11–30.

Chapter 7 Outline:

- A Place Set Apart
- Preparing Spiritually for Temple Worship
- Elements of Temple Worship
- Blessings from Temple Worship
- From Temple Worship to Daily Living
- Commitment to Worship in the Temple
- Teaching Your Family About the Temple
- Sealing Eternal Families
Place Set Apart

We attend the temple to be in a place set apart from the world where we can focus our minds and hearts on contemplation, prayer, and worship.

The word temple comes from the Latin templum—which was the equivalent of the Hebrew “beth Elohim” and signified the abode of Deity; hence, as associated with divine worship, it meant literally the “house of the Lord.”

Temples have never been regarded as places of ordinary public assembly or public houses of worship, but as sacred enclosures consecrated to the most solemn ceremonials of religion... (E. G. Smith, 1957, p. 422).

We would not give our family dinners out of doors, in the crowd; why should anyone ask us to do our most sacred work in the face of the crowd? (Widtsoe, 1921, p. 60).

In the temple, where our minds can be more clear and focused, we may receive revelation and guidance to help us with our daily lives.

A temple is a retreat from the vicissitudes of life, a place of prayer and meditation providing an opportunity to receive inner peace, inspiration, guidance, and, frequently, solutions to the problems that vex our daily lives (F. D. Richards, 1986, p. 71).

The environment in the temple is intended to provide the worthy member of the Church with the power of enlightenment, of testimony, and of understanding. The temple endowment gives knowledge that, when acted upon, provides strength and conviction of truth.... The moment we step into the house of the Lord, the atmosphere changes from the worldly to the heavenly, where respite from the normal activities of life is found, and where peace of mind and spirit is received. It is a refuge from the ills of life and a protection from the temptations that are contrary to our spiritual well being. We are told that “he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:23; Haight, 1990, p. 61).

Preparing Spiritually for Temple Worship

Being Temple Worthy

We are continually preparing for temple worship as we keep the commandments. The worthiness and cleanliness of those who attend are essential parts of temple worship.

As you know, it is expected that everyone who applies for a temple recommend will be asked certain specific questions to determine his or her worthiness. It goes without saying that there must be total honesty on the part of those who are interrogated. The questions are not to cause embarrassment and should not do so. Bishops are cautioned against indiscreetly prying into highly personal and sensitive matters. But at the same time, the bishop must be assured that the applicant is worthy to enter the House of the Lord (G. B. Hinckley, 1990, p. 51).
Come with me inside the temple—modern temple in our day; a temple that has been dedicated to the Lord, just as ancient temples were; a special building where sacred ordinances are performed by those who have been commissioned with appropriate, divine authority. The temple is indeed a house of quiet worship—everyone speaks softly, usually in whispers. All who participate dress in white. All who come have been found worthy and clean (Simpson, 1980, p. 10).

God has declared that He will not enter a defiled temple, whether that temple be the body of a man or a dedicated grove or a mountain top, or a house, like the temple on these grounds. The Holy Spirit will withdraw from a defiled place. People who have no faith in temple worship, who desire simply as tourists to inspect unsympathetically our holy house, in spite of themselves defile it. We desire to present our temple ordinances to those who are believers (Widtsoe, 1921, p. 61).

**Going with A Worshipful Attitude**

What we experience in temple worship is affected by our attitudes and expectations when we enter the temple. It is helpful to set aside enough time to linger for quiet contemplation and prayer. Time spent in the temple can be more meaningful, more powerful, more spiritual if we are not in a hurry.

When we go to the temple because we want to go and not because it is an obligation; when we go with an attitude of worship and a reverence for God and for His son Jesus Christ, and with gratitude for the Savior’s sacrifice, when we spend sufficient time to leave the cares of the world outside, wonderful things happen which cannot be described. The Spirit of the Lord distills upon one’s soul in these holy houses, truly the most sacred places on earth. A new perception comes into focus of who we are, of what this life is really about, of the opportunities of eternal life, and of our relationship with the Savior (Brown, 1989, p. 77).

The holy endowment is deeply symbolic. “Going through the temple” is not a very good phrase; for temple worship implies a great effort of mind and concentration if we are to understand the mighty symbols that pass in review before us. Everything must be arranged to attune our hearts, our minds, and our souls to the work. Everything about us must contribute to the peace of mind that enables us to study and to understand the mysteries, if you choose, that are unfolded before us (Widtsoe, 1921, p. 60).

**Specific Suggestions**

The following suggestions can help you prepare for temple worship:

- Study the scriptures, especially those that focus on temple work and the doctrine of redemption for the living and the dead. Topical Guide headings might include the following: Jesus Christ, Creator; Jesus Christ, Redeemer; Temple, House of the Lord; Temple Marriage; Marriage, Celestial; Abrahamic Covenant; Chastity; Family, Eternal; Paradise; and Spirits in Prison.
• Read the temple sermons in Jacob 2–3, Mosiah 2–4, and 3 Nephi 11–18.
• Ponder the significance of solemn covenants made in holy temples and how you can better keep your covenants.
• Pray for the Spirit of the Lord to be with you as you seek to solve personal problems.
• Pray for guidance in the work of redeeming the living and the dead.
• Pray to feel the Spirit confirm that your life is pleasing to Heavenly Father.
• Read Boyd K. Packer, *The Holy Temple*.

**Elements of Temple Worship**

**Ordinances**

...A temple is a place where God will come; a place where the pure in heart shall see God; a place where baptisms for the dead are performed; a place where sealings for time and for eternity are done; a place where the endowment of the priesthood is given; a place where the keys of the priesthood are committed in abundance; and a place where many other wonderful things may occur and should occur and in fact do occur (Widtsoe, 1921, pp. 55–56).

The temple is a house of God where all of those declared worthy are extended the privilege of performing the sacred ordinances of the temple on behalf of their forebears, that in very deed the hearts of the children might be turned to their fathers, as foretold in the holy scriptures (see Malachi 4:6). Like all of Heavenly Father’s blessings for his children, the eventual realization is always on condition of faithfulness and conformity to priesthood principles (Simpson, 1980, p. 10).

Temple worship provides an opportunity to do ordinance work for our kindred dead and for others, an opportunity for us to serve the dead. This service is the source of eternal satisfaction. However, it is well to remember that vicarious service for the dead by the living does not affect the right of the dead to accept or reject such vicarious service (F. D. Richards, 1986, p. 76).

**Covenants**

Knowledge becomes serviceable only when it is used; the covenant made in the temple, or elsewhere, if of the right kind, is merely a promise to give life to knowledge, by making knowledge useful and helpful in man’s daily progress. Temple work, or any other work, would have no meaning unless accompanied with covenants. It would consist simply of bits of information for ornament; the covenant gives life to truth; and makes possible the blessings that reward all those who use knowledge properly; or the penalties that overtake those who misuse knowledge. That knowledge of itself is valueless, and that its use or misuse brings about inevitable results are the a b c of every scientific laboratory (Widtsoe, 1921, p. 61).

The temple is a house of revelation—yes, continuing revelation. Whether that revelation be to a prophet or a member who seeks after truth, all who come to the temple seeking are continually taught and edified.

The temple is a house of solemn covenant where one appropriately commits himself to live a more Christlike life. Oh, that four billion people on earth could enter into that kind of covenant (Simpson,
If we go into the temple we raise our hands and covenant that we will serve the Lord and observe his commandments and keep ourselves unspotted from the world. If we realize what we are doing then the endowment will be a protection to us all our lives...I have heard my father say that in the hour of trial, in the hour of temptation, he would think of the promises, the covenants that he made in the House of the Lord, and they were a protection to him...This protection is what these ceremonies are for, in part. They save us now and they exalt us hereafter, if we will honor them. I know that this protection is given for I, too, have realized it, as have thousands of others who have remembered their obligations (Joseph Fielding Smith, 1954–1956, 2:252–253).

Instruction

The temple is a place of divine instruction. Service in the temple will help you become perfected in the understanding of [your] ministry, in theory, in principle, and in doctrine, in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God on the earth, the keys of which kingdom have been conferred upon you (D&C 97:13–14).

The temple is a house of instruction—yes, even divine instruction—about God’s eternal plan for his children. In the temple one gains a superior perspective about his personal relationship with his Maker and with the Savior—yes, special knowledge about God and Jesus Christ, which is essential to the obtaining of life eternal. “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3) (Simpson, 1980, p. 10).

Regarding the role of symbolism in this instruction, Elder John A. Widtsoe taught:

To make the vast elements of the endowment clear and impressive to all who partake of it, every educational device is employed. Appeal is made to every faculty of man, to eye and ear, so that the meaning of the Gospel may be clear from beginning to end.

The essence of fundamental truth is not known to man, nor indeed can be. Things are known only so far as our senses permit. All knowledge is in reality known through symbols. Letters on a printed page are but symbols of mighty thoughts, easily transferred from mind to mind by these symbols. Clearly, the eternal truths encompassing all that man is or may be, cannot be expressed literally, nor does the temple ritual do this. On the contrary, the beautiful temple service is one of mighty symbolism. By the use of symbols of speech, action, color and form, the great truths connected with the story of man are made evident to the mind (Widtsoe, 1965, p. 126).
Prayer

The temple is a house of prayer, for Heavenly Father is glorified by every ordinance performed therein. He who enters for the first time receives a pronouncement of special blessings that are not available outside the temple (Simpson, 1980, p. 10).

A temple is a place where the divine spark in man, or the infinite in man, can seek the infinite in God (F. D. Richards, 1986, p. 71).

Blessings from Temple Worship

Personal Revelation

If we are correct in believing that the blessings obtained in the temples of the Lord are a partial fulfillment, at least, of the promise made when the Holy Ghost, which is a Revelator, is conferred upon man, it would be expected that temple ordinances would be in the nature of a revelation to those who participate. Certainly the temple is a place where revelations may be expected.

But, whether in the temple or elsewhere, how do men receive revelations? How did the Prophet Joseph Smith obtain his first revelation, his first vision? He desired something. In the woods, away from human confusion, he summoned all the strength of his nature; there he fought the demon of evil, and at length, because of the strength of his desire and the great effort that he made, the Father and the Son descended out of the heavens and spoke eternal truth to him. So revelation always comes; it is not imposed upon a person; it must be drawn to us by faith, seeking and working. Just so; to the man or woman who goes through the temple, with open eyes, heeding the symbols and the covenants, and making a steady, continuous effort to understand the full meaning, God speaks his word, and revelations come.

The endowment is so richly symbolic that only a fool would attempt to describe it; it is so packed full of revelations to those who exercise their strength to seek and see, that no human words can explain or make clear the possibilities that reside in the temple service. The endowment which was given by revelation can best be understood by revelation; and to those who seek most vigorously, with pure hearts, will the revelation be greatest. I believe that the busy person on the farm, in the shop, in the office, or in the household, who has his worries and troubles, can solve his problems better and more quickly in the house of the Lord than anywhere else. If he will leave his problems behind and in the temple work for himself and for his dead, he will confer a mighty blessing upon those who have gone before, and quite as large a blessing will come to him, as a revelation, the solution of the problems that vex his life. That is the gift that comes to those who enter the temple properly, because it is a place where revelations may be expected. I bear you my personal testimony that this is so (Widtsoe, 1921, pp. 63–64).

In the peace of these lovely temples, sometimes we find solutions to the serious problems of life. Under the influence of the Spirit, sometimes pure knowledge flows to us there. Temples are places of personal revelation. When I have been weighed down by a problem or a difficulty, I 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 (Benson, 1988, p. 251).
Do we return to the temple often to receive the personal blessings that come from regular temple worship? Prayers are answered, revelation occurs, and instruction by the Spirit takes place in the holy temples of the Lord.

Revelation also comes in receiving greater understanding of the endowment as one seeks to comprehend its meaning (Haight, 1990, p. 61).

Power

God’s definition of a temple is given over and over again in this good book, the Doctrine and Covenants. A temple is a place in which those whom he has chosen are endowed with power from on high. And what is power? Knowledge made alive and useful—that is intelligence; and intelligence in action—that is power. Our temples give us power—power based on enlarged knowledge and intelligence—a power from on high, of a quality with God’s own power (Widtsoe, 1921, p. 55).

Seeing the Lord

At Kirtland, the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph: “And inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon it; Yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God” (D&C 97:15–16).

It is true that some have actually seen the Savior, but when one consults the dictionary, he learns that there are many other meanings of the word see, such as coming to know Him, discerning Him, recognizing Him and His work, perceiving His importance, or coming to understand Him.

Such heavenly enlightenment and blessings are available to each of us (Haight, 1990, p. 61).

Unity

The requirements for temple attendance do not change from place to place. Where a temple is available, priesthood authority gives no greater or lesser blessings in one place than another. Temple worship is a perfect example of our unity as Church members. All of us answer the same questions of worthiness to enter the temple. All the men dress alike. All the women dress alike. We leave the cares of the world behind us as we enter the temple. Everyone receives the same blessings. All make the same covenants. All are equal before the Lord. Yet within our spiritual unity there is wide room for everyone’s individuality and expression. In that setting, all are heirs to the kingdom of God (Faust, 1995, pp. 62–63).

There were so many beautiful experiences and incidents that happened in connection with the dedication of the London Temple that perhaps one does not truly sense an experience like this unless he is actually in attendance, and it was a beautiful occasion. A rich outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord was present, and the spirituality of every session was outstanding. There was a spirit of love, a spirit of thanksgiving, a spirit of friendship, a spirit of brotherhood, and a true spirit of worship present. Many of
the Saints had made great sacrifices and effort to be in attendance for the dedication of this temple (Isaacs, 1958, p. 65).

**Eternal Life**

The greatest joys of true married life can be continued. The most beautiful relationships of parents and children can be made permanent. The holy association of families can be never-ending if husband and wife have been sealed in the holy bond of eternal matrimony (S. W. Kimball, 1964, p. 25).

The temple is a house of eternal relationships, a place where families can come for the purpose of transforming their family circle into an eternal family unit, where all of a sudden “together forever” becomes far more important than the next trivial family difference. You see, eternal families reason together in family council with dad at the head.

The temple is a house where young people are married for time and for all eternity. Thus, a common bond is formed, a bond that transcends the earthly pitfalls of misunderstanding, distrust, and, too often, divorce (Simpson, 1980, p. 10).

I am grateful for temples, where we can go to be sealed together as families for eternity. I am grateful for temples where we can go to pray and to worship, where we can call down the blessings of heaven upon our families. I am grateful for temples where we can go as families to strengthen the eternal bonds that will make us forever families, where we can go to do the great redemptive work for our forefathers who cannot do it for themselves...even as Jesus did for us what we cannot do for ourselves. I am grateful that God in his eternal wisdom has made these blessings available to all his children. Some, however, have to wait until the hereafter to enjoy these blessings. But all who live worthily will have every blessing. I testify that Jesus loved to go to the temple. Part of becoming more Christlike is to learn to love to go to the temple. I pray that we may become eternal families that we may have eternal life. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen (Washburn, 1995, p. 12).

**From Temple Worship to Daily Living**

We go to the temple to make covenants, but we go home to keep the covenants that we have made. The home is the testing ground. The home is the place where we learn to be more Christlike. The home is the place where we learn to overcome selfishness and give ourselves in service to others.

I hope you will not think it simplistic to suggest that it is the “little things” like family prayer and family home evening that are important. Little things like a father helping his children say their nightly prayers and telling them a bedtime story instead of watching TV. Little things like making time in the family schedule for reading the scriptures. Little things like a husband being big enough to say, “Sweetheart, I’m sorry. I should not have said that. I’m going to do better.” Or a mother saying to a child, “I’m sorry I became angry. Please forgive me.” Yes, it is the little things that we do each day and each week that make the difference.

By keeping the temple covenants, all of God’s children may be exalted. I say again that we go to the temple to make the covenants, but we go home to keep those covenants (Washburn, 1995, p. 12).
Commitment to Worship in the Temple

I rejoice in the temple work that is being done, and I wish to ask the Saints to try to shape their affairs so that they can occasionally go to the temple. For years I felt that I was too busy to find a day or an evening in which to go to the temple. A little over a year ago I made up my mind that by planning my affairs, by staying away from lectures or concerts or theatres or operas, I could go to the temple at least once every week and have ordinances performed in behalf of some of my loved ones who had passed away. By making up my mind that I could do this I had no difficulty whatever in going through the temple once a week during the entire year. Starting this year I had no difficulty in doing this. True, I have had to miss perhaps an opera or theatre or some other function at which I should have liked to be present, but I have had no difficulty whatever during the past three months in going to the temple twice a week. When I can do so I go more than twice a week, so as to make up for the time when I am absent from the city. Up to the first day of April, I had endowments to my credit of more than two a week for this year.

We can generally do that which we wish to do. A young man can find an immense amount of time to spend with his sweetheart. He can arrange affairs to do that. We can arrange our affairs to get exercise in the shape of golf and otherwise. We can arrange our affairs to have amusements. And if we make up our minds to do so we can arrange our affairs to do temple work, judging from my own experience of the last fifteen months (Grant, 1969, p. 33).

Teaching Your Family About the Temple

President Ezra Taft Benson emphasized the importance of teaching our children about the temple.

The temple is a sacred place, and the ordinances in the temple are of a sacred character. Because of its sacredness we are sometimes reluctant to say anything about the temple to our children and grandchildren.

As a consequence, many do not develop a real desire to go to the temple, or when they go there, they do so without much background to prepare them for the obligations and covenants they enter into.

I believe a proper understanding or background will immeasurably help prepare our youth for the temple. This understanding, I believe, will foster within them a desire to seek their priesthood blessings just as Abraham sought his (Benson, 1985, p. 8).

The complete text of President Benson’s address is included in Appendix B. This syllabus contains much of the instruction President Benson recommends. Begin now to prepare yourself to teach your children the importance of receiving temple ordinances for themselves and of worshiping regularly in the temple throughout their lives.
Elder Russell M. Nelson (1995, p. 80) has advised us: “Four transcendent events in the nineteenth century positioned the stepping stones upon which the great Latter-day work of sealing eternal families was founded.”

**Step 1: Manchester, New York.**
The evening of September 21, 1823. On that occasion the angel Moroni appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and said, “Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming” (D&C 2:1–3).

**Step 2: Kirtland, Ohio, April 3, 1836.**
There, one week after the temple was dedicated, the Lord came personally to accept His Holy House. Then under His direction, Moses, Elias, and Elijah restored specific keys of priesthood authority. Elijah did appear, precisely as promised, and conveyed to the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery the keys of the sealing power.

**Step 3: Nauvoo, Illinois, January, 1841.**
The Lord again commanded His saints to build a temple, this time with additional facilities because, He said, “A baptismal font there is not upon the earth that they, my saints, may be baptized for those who are dead—for this ordinance belongeth to my House” (D&C 124:29–30). Joseph Smith’s responsibility was to lay the foundation for this great work. Important details were to be revealed later.

**Step 4: April Conference, 1894.**
Then President Wilford Woodruff announced this revelation: “We want the Latter-day Saints from this time to trace their genealogies as far as they can and to be sealed to their fathers and mothers. Have children sealed to their parents, and run this chain through as far as you can get it. This is the will of the Lord to His people” (Woodruff, 1969, p. 157). That revelation in April led to the organization of the Genealogical Society of Utah, the following November 13, 1894. Its objectives were to establish and maintain a genealogical library, to teach members how to compile acceptable family records and to trace their pedigrees, and to foster temple ordinances.
Family History:
A Lifelong Pursuit
Chapter 8

*Personal, Family, and Oral Histories; Journals and Books of Remembrance*

We know about the lives of the ancient prophets only to the degree that we have their written accounts. Often the most precious family treasures are the personal journals of forebears. We can each leave records of our lives, including our testimonies, that our descendants will treasure. As we do so, our hearts are turned toward our children and we provide them with a means for turning their hearts to us.

**Chapter 8 Objectives:**

- Review the importance of record keeping to the ancient prophets.
- Learn purposes, benefits, and typical contents of personal histories, journals, and Books of Remembrance.
- Gain a conviction of the importance of record keeping.

**Suggested Readings:**

- Enos 1:13–16.
- Words of Mormon 1–11.
- Mosiah 1:1–8; 15–16.
- 4 Nephi 1:47–49.
- Moses 6:3–8, 43–46.
- Abraham 1:31.
Chapter 8 Outline:

- Ancient Record Keeping
- Purposes and Blessings of Writing a Personal History
- A Journal Benefits You and Your Family
- Quotes About Personal Histories and Journals
- Compiling a Book of Remembrance
- Documentation
- Oral History
- Tape Recording Personal and Family Histories
- Guides to Collecting and Preserving Oral Histories
- Outline of a Family History

Ancient Record Keeping

Seth, the son of Adam, “call[ed] upon the name of the Lord, and the Lord blessed [him]; And a book of remembrance was kept” written by “the spirit of inspiration” (Moses 6:4–5). His records and the records of his posterity were used by patriarchs to teach their children “to read and write...a language which was pure and undefiled” (Moses 6:6).

Many generations later Abraham gratefully acknowledged that “records of the fathers, even the patriarchs, concerning the right of Priesthood...were preserved in mine own hands” (Abr. 1:31). From reading these writings, Abraham learned of the rights of the priesthood and “sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same” (Abr. 1:2). He desired the priesthood, for he was a “follower of righteousness” and wanted “to possess a greater knowledge...to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace.” By receiving “instructions,” and by keeping “the commandments of God,” Abraham “became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers” (Abr. 1:2).

Abraham recognized that his ordination would come “according to the appointment of God” (Abr. 1:4). Eventually, he was blessed to receive the priesthood that

...came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth, down to the present time, even the right of the firstborn, or the first man, who is Adam, or first father, through the fathers unto me (Abr. 1:3).

The authority Abraham received had been known as the “Holy Priesthood after the order of the Son of God.” But because of respect and reverence for deity, the name of the priesthood was changed in Abraham’s day to the Melchizedek Priesthood (D&C 107:3–4). Melchizedek was the great high priest from whom Abraham received the Higher Priesthood, and who, like Enoch, headed a people who sought to live close to the Lord (D&C 84:14; JST Genesis 14:25–40). This same priesthood was held by other holy men of antiquity.
Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament, wrote that “a book of remembrance was written...for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name” (Mal. 3:16; 3 Ne. 24:16). To fear the Lord means to respect, honor, love, and obediently keep his commandments. The Lord looked upon the righteous as his “jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him” (Mal. 3:17; 3 Ne. 24:17).

The Book of Mormon prophets kept both secular and sacred histories on metal plates. Nephi claimed that he was commanded of the Lord to make the small plates, “for the special purpose that there should be an account engraven of the ministry of my people” (1 Ne. 9:3).

As was the case in former times, we have been admonished to keep sacred personal and family histories. We should follow the example of the ancient prophets by seeking inspiration as we make these records. In this way, our writings can become valuable resources for teaching and strengthening our posterity.

**Purposes and Blessings of Writing a Personal History**

James had an appointment with the president of his company. As he approached the executive office, the president was hurrying to an unexpected interview. As he rushed past he exclaimed, “I’ve been called out. Go in my office and read the personal history I just finished. Take it with you if you want and read it in your office.”

James found the personal history. It was written with pen and ink and had interesting photos appropriately positioned in the manuscript. As he began to read the account of the man’s childhood, he became deeply enthralled. An hour passed quickly as he read one exciting episode after another. He found his admiration and love for this dear friend soaring.

Part way through the personal history, James realized he needed to return to his own office and complete the “so-called” important tasks of the day. He decided to take the history with him until passing the secretary’s desk. “The president trusts me with many of his affairs, but this document is the most valuable of his possessions,” James announced to the secretary. “I must not take it from his office. I can’t be responsible for something so dear.”

Of all the tangible possessions we can leave as an inheritance, nothing—land, money, houses—is so valuable as leaving behind a written account of our life. Someone said, “A birth certificate proves that you were born, but a personal history proves that you lived—you really lived.” Another said, “Personal histories are so important that there should be a law passed that a person cannot die until writing a personal history.”
When you write your story, feel free to acknowledge that all has not been perfect. Mention your hardships and heartaches without going into detail. Emphasize how you bounced back and felt the Lord’s help in your life. Be positive in your approach. Remember, “It is not what happened to you that molded your life, but the attitude maintained throughout life,” that is important. Develop a theme to your personal history by writing those experiences that caused you to feel, “You are a most blessed person.”

It is better to have a brief history than none at all. If your history is too long, people may not read it. Strive for happy mediums. The most important message to you is WRITE SOMETHING! Whatever you write will be a family treasure.

Photograph Care

- Frequently viewed photographs should be placed in archival plastic folders in a notebook.
- To prepare photographs for storage, place them in acid-free envelopes or in acid-free boxes with the photos separated by acid-free paper. Store on metal shelving in a family living area.
- Create an index of photo negatives to avoid excessive handling.
- Do not file negatives with photograph prints.
- Write on back edges of each preserved photograph with a very soft (No. 1 or No. 2) pencil.
John started keeping an almost daily journal on his mission and continued to do so through the years. His wedding day, the birth of each of his children and other deeply sacred experiences were well-chronicled in his precious volumes. John, like all who keep personal journals, considers his writing to be beyond any material value. Others, who fail to keep a journal, often wish they had.

Why can’t all of us do as John did? Why can’t we write on a daily or at least weekly basis what happens to us as we journey through life?

The reasons for failing to record our lives vary with each individual. However, usually the greatest deterrent is that we don’t enjoy writing or we don’t know what to write. Or, as one lady said, “I don’t even have time to do everything I’m expected to do everyday, let alone write about it.”

We are busy. Therefore, for some of us, our journal entries need to be brief. If we try to do the task in a masterful manner, we may determine that we can’t do it at all. For most of us, too much detail will take too long to record and will soon cause us to ignore this great opportunity. Some, of course, are gifted writers and each entry is full and beautiful. But for others, here are some suggestions:

- Keep your journal in a readily, accessible place—near your bed, if you write just before retiring.
- Write how you felt about the day. “It was cold in our valley today. There is much excitement about Christmas. Kathryn came tonight with her children. I love to hold Katie on my lap and read her stories. I didn’t know when I was younger the joy grandchildren would bring. The business is struggling, but I feel in my heart all will be well.”
- If you don’t write daily, try to write at least weekly. But any entry, even once a month or once a year, is a treasure.

QUESTION: “But I don’t keep a journal. Where should I start?”

ANSWER: Get a notebook and start your journal tonight. Start by writing about today.

Every person can and should keep a journal. Even busy people can take brief moments to write, record, or tape an account of the meaningful happenings day by day, week by week, month by month, or even year by year. The best advice on journal keeping is “just do it.”

**Quotes About Personal Histories and Journals**

The prophets have encouraged members of the Church to keep journals, as well as personal and family histories.
President Spencer W. Kimball:

I urge all of the people of this church to give serious attention to their family histories, to encourage their parents and grandparents to write their journals, and let no family go into eternity without having left their memoirs for their children, their grandchildren, and their posterity. This is a duty and a responsibility (S. W. Kimball, 1978a, p. 4).

People often use the excuse that their lives are uneventful and nobody would be interested in what they have done. I promise you that if you will keep your journals and records, they will indeed be a source of great inspiration to your families, to your children, your grandchildren, and others, on through the generations.

Each of us is important to those who are near and dear to us—and as our posterity read of our life’s experiences, they, too, will come to know and love us. And in that glorious day when our families are together in the eternities, we will already be acquainted (S. W. Kimball, 1980, p. 60).

Those who keep a book of remembrance are more likely to keep the Lord in remembrance in their daily lives. Journals are a way of counting our blessings and of leaving an inventory of these blessings for our posterity (S. W. Kimball, 1978b, p. 77).

Every person should keep a journal and every person can keep a journal. It should be an enlightening one and should bring great blessings and happiness to the families. If there is anyone here who isn’t doing so, will you repent today and change—change your life (S. W. Kimball, 1979, p. 84).

Get a notebook, my young folks, a journal that will last through all time, and maybe the angels may quote from it for eternity. Begin today and write in it your goings and comings, your deepest thoughts, your achievements and your failures, your associations and your triumphs, your impressions and your testimonies. Remember, the Savior chastised those who failed to record important events (E. L. Kimball, 1984, p. 351).

President Wilford Woodruff:

There is one subject I wish to speak upon and that is the keeping of a journal with respect to the dealings of God with us... When the Prophet Joseph organized the Quorum of the Twelve, he counseled them to keep a history of their lives, and gave his reasons why they should do so. I have had this spirit and calling upon me since I first entered this Church...and from that day until now I have kept a daily journal. Whenever I heard Joseph Smith preach, teach, or prophesy, I always felt it my duty to write it; I felt uneasy and could not eat, drink, or sleep until I did write (Cowley, 1964, pp. 476–77).

Elder John A. Widtsoe:

As I view it, in every family a record should be kept... That record should be the first stone, if you choose, in the family altar. It should be a book known and used in the family circle, and when the child reaches maturity and goes out to make another household, one of the first things that the young couple should take along should be the records of their families, to be extended by them as life goes on.... Each one of us carries, individually, the responsibility of record keeping, and we should assume it (Widtsoe, 1920, 11: 100).
President Heber J. Grant lamented that his own father had not kept a journal,

I would be willing to pay any reasonable amount of money for a record of father’s life; but he never recorded any of his acts and there is today nothing worthy of mention on record regarding him (Gibbons, 1979, p. viii).

Of his own writings, President Grant added:

I sometimes feel almost like stopping the writing of a journal, as my grammar is so poor also my spelling that I dislike to leave any such a record as I have to make under the circumstances; but I am of the opinion that it is almost a matter of duty that I keep a journal and this is the main reason that I am willing to do so (Gibbons, 1979, p. vii).

**Compiling a Book of Remembrance**

Preparing a Spiritual Book of Remembrance

The Book of Remembrance

- What is it?
- Who should prepare such?
- Why should we compile a book?
- When should it be used?
- How can it be used?

Modern Day Scripture

- Standard Works
- Revelation on the Priesthood
- Family Proclamation
- Testimony of the Christ by the Twelve Apostles
- Declarations by the Prophet
- Conference Talks by the General Authorities

What is scripture? “And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation” (D&C 68:4).

What do the scriptures do for us? “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).
“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

The Book of Mormon is divided into two sections; the Large Plates of Nephi, which contain the secular history, and the Small Plates of Nephi, which contain the spiritual history. Both are considered to be books to be remembered.

Modern-day books can be likened to the Large Plates of Nephi. Examples of our own secular records that all have useful purposes are:

- Scrapbooks
- Photo albums
- School Records
- Baby Books
- Local Histories, etc.

Modern-day books can also be likened to the Small Plates of Nephi. Examples of our own spiritual records include:

- Church Records
- Inspired Writings
- Testimonies
- Genealogies
- Biographies, etc.

These records can be placed in a book to be remembered, or a Book of Remembrance.

**Content of a Book of Remembrance**

Members of the Church should be encouraged to make their books of remembrance a record of spiritual and ecclesiastical experiences as was done anciently. The book should never become a catchall for miscellaneous records. Pictures, portrait pedigrees, and the like may be added, but nothing should detract from the sacredness of this record (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (1966). “Genealogy: The Book of Remembrance.” *Improvement Era* (April): 294-5).

**Importance of the Book of Remembrance**

“The family books of remembrance in Latter-day Saint homes today should rate in importance second only to the standard works. These family records are supplements to the scriptures, aiding in teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to the posterity of faithful members of the Church” (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (1966). “Genealogy: The Book of Remembrance.” *Improvement Era* (April): 294-5).
Purpose of Content

“A knowledge of the written testimonies and spiritual experiences of family members and of the proved genealogies of the fathers serves to bind the hearts of the children to their fathers and helps them to understand the doctrines that pertain to the exaltation of the family” (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (1966). “Genealogy: The Book of Remembrance.” *Improvement Era* (April): 294-5).

Admonished to Make Records

Adam kept a book of remembrance, which contained a genealogy of the children of God. The pattern for preparing the book was given to Adam by the Lord himself. Continuing on down from generation to generation, the Lord has admonished His faithful servants to make records and to preserve them, in order to increase the knowledge and strengthen the faith of future generations (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (1977). *Improvement Era*).

Pattern for Keeping a Book of Remembrance

And a book of remembrance was kept, in the which was recorded, in the language of Adam, for it was given unto as many as called upon God to write by the spirit of inspiration. And by them their children were taught to read and write, having a language which was pure and undefiled. For a book of remembrance we have written among us, according to the pattern given by the finger of God; and it is given in our own language (Moses 6:5,6,46).

Write by Inspiration

Every faithful family should be diligently compiling a book of remembrance. In it should be found the story of the family, especially the story of its spiritual life, written by inspiration. It should also contain a genealogy of the family so that the children may have an opportunity to acquire knowledge of their fathers.

The book of remembrance should thus contain a spiritual history and a genealogy of the family.


The Purpose of Sacred Family Records

Sacred family records “bind the hearts” and teach love and appreciation.

For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do. And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission
of their sins.” (2 Nephi 25:23, 26)

The book of remembrance prepared in the true spirit, containing a record of the spiritual experiences and meaningful occurrences that have affected the lives of family members, will be instrumental in binding the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers” (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (1966). “Genealogy: The Book of Remembrance.” Improvement Era (April): 294-5).

Meaning, Purpose, and Direction

Our sacred family records will help bring family members to the gospel of Jesus Christ. With Jesus Christ as the foundation stone, we, our children, and our children’s children can be taught the true meaning, purpose and direction of life.

General Content

- Personal Records - “A personal record for each family member showing the highlights of his or her life....Each child should be encouraged to complete his own personal record” (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (1966). “Genealogy: The Book of Remembrance.” Improvement Era (April): 294-5).
- Biographies - Include biographies of immediate family members, direct-line ancestors (especially the first four generations, family members interviewed for oral histories, and relatives.
- Sacred Personal and Family Experiences - “Sacred personal experiences which would be faith promoting for future generations” (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (1966). “Genealogy: The Book of Remembrance.” Improvement Era (April): 294-5). Sacred personal and family experiences would include those faith promoting or spiritual experiences which have brought you and your family closer to the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Genealogies
  - Pedigree Charts (4 to 5 generations) - “A pedigree chart showing the direct ancestry of the family for at least four generations should be placed in the book. As additional information is gathered, it should be added to this chart to complete the family record as far back as the direct family ancestry can be traced.” (Priesthood Genealogy Program booklet, ca. 1975).
  - Family Group Records

What Should Be Included?

The Spirit of the Holy Ghost will dictate to you which of those spiritual experiences you may wish to share with family members to help increase their testimonies of the Gospel.
Spiritual and faith-promoting experiences could include the following types of principles, activities, or events: (1) your personal testimony of the Gospel, (2) your missionary experiences, (3) your conversion to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, (4) Inspirational experiences with spiritual leaders and friends, and (5) special blessings such as patriarchal blessings and father’s blessings.

Personal and family testimonies could include (1) Gospel Ordinances such as baptism, Confirmation of the Gift of the Holy Ghost, Ordination of the Priesthood, the Endowment, or Sealing Ordinances (2) work for the deceased.

Gospel principles can also be included, such as faith, repentance, love, service, prayer, tithing, obedience, and revelation, etc.

Include personal characteristics such as hope, patience, integrity, reverence, kindness, and honesty, etc.

Church-related experiences can also be included. For example, assignments, spiritual experiences, church positions held, church people with which you have worked, favorite scriptures, and notes you have taken from inspired speakers.

Testimonies such as your personal testimony of Jesus Christ, Gospel principles, and prophets can be included. Include talks from spiritual leaders who had an impact on your life, talks by general authorities which would be meaningful to family members, your own talks, and talks shared by family members.

Include your own personal writings such as poetry, prose, inspirational stories, thoughts, and ideas. Include inspirational writings of others.

Blessings can also be a great addition. Include patriarchal blessings, fathers blessings, the Abrahamic Blessing, blessings of life, people who have blessed your life, blessings of health related issues, and blessings of living the Gospel principles.

“Men should write down things which God has made known to them. Whether things are important or not, often depends on God’s purposes: but the testimony of the goodness of God and the things He has wrought in the lives of men will always be important as a testimony” (Wilford Woodruff).

**Documentation**

When compiling a genealogy or entering data into a genealogy program, be sure to cite the sources where you found ancestral information.

Use footnotes, endnotes, and references to cite sources used to write the family history or genealogy.
You may wish to also include a bibliography listing sources searched. See the standard style guides listed below for example source citations, and read Appendix C, Karen Clifford’s “Documenting Your Sources on the Computer.”

**Guides for Citing and Reference and Sources**


**Personal Ancestral File 5**

Personal Ancestral File 5 helps you keep track of sources and notes for each individual and marriage. Notes may include details regarding an individual’s birth, marriage, death, or other events. Biographical details may also be included.

Regular Notes may be written in narrative form in paragraphs in the Notes field for every person. You may also add source notes for every event and person in PAF.

**Oral History**

Many students have grandparents who are still alive—and some students even have living great-grandparents. It is important that you interview your family members and preserve their memories, either on tape (usually a cassette tape), on video, or on the computer.

When you write a history of someone else’s life, it is called a *biography*. Your own personal history is known as your *autobiography*.

An *oral history* is a recorded interview of another person. This is an opportunity for you to learn about their life experiences. Here are some oral history tips:

- Interview older members of your family, then interview your parents.
- Identify what goals you would like to accomplish before the interview.
- Prepare a list of questions.
• Avoid asking leading questions and closed questions that can be answered by just yes or no or a word or two, such as “What year were you born?” or “How many children do you have?”

• Ask open-ended questions that encourage commentary by the person being interviewed. Below are listed a few sample open-ended questions that you might ask:
  o Why did your family move to __________?
  o How did __________ affect your life? (The Great Depression, World War II, etc.)
  o Tell me about your school days.
  o What did you do for fun?
  o Who was your favorite teacher?
  o Where did you go on vacation when you were a teenager?
  o What role did religion play during your teenage years?
  o Where and how did you meet your spouse?
  o What are your favorite memories of your parents?
  o And any other open-ended questions you may think of asking.

**Tape Recording Personal and Family Histories**


I. Many people will not take the time to write out their life stories. An easier way to preserve a life story is to use a tape recorder. A person can simply tell their life story into the recorder’s microphone or permit someone to interview them and record the interview.

II. Four advantages to oral history:
  a. *Easier*: Writing is hard work. Talking is pleasant. Your relative can concentrate on remembering and not worry about punctuation, paragraphs, spelling, etc.
  b. *Fuller*: A phone call home gives a fuller account than does a letter. So with oral history: in conversation the colorful vignettes, episodes, and trivialities are told which rarely get into written accounts. One hour of talking produces (if recorded and transcribed) twenty double spaced pages; one hour of writing produces perhaps four pages.
  c. *Richer*: Along with history you preserve the voice, personality, emotions.
  d. *Rewarding*: Someone talking to an interested listener—a choice, moving, personal experience. Hearts draw close, relationships are deepened, generation gaps closed.

III. How to do it:
  a. *Select*
     i. A relative whose life story needs to be preserved. Contact him or her and make arrangements for you to come and interview.
1. If they are reluctant, stress the obligation they have to the rest of the family to share family history.
2. Let them know, giving a few details, what you want them to talk about.
3. If you start them talking about someone else—a long deceased relative they knew but you did not—they are less self conscious about being interviewed.

ii. A tape recorder and tape.
   1. Recorders under $60 usually have poor fidelity and durability.
   2. Test a recorder before buying it. You want good quality sound.
   3. Use name brand (BASF, Memorex, Scotch, Sony) tape.
   4. Use 60 minute cassettes (30 per side). Do not use 90 or 120 minute ones as their tape is too thin—sounds may “garble” on thin tape over time.

b. Prepare
   i. Background research: Consult available family records, talk to others, use common sense to come up with topics and questions. Make up a question sheet and take it with you and use it during the interview.
   ii. Appointment: Plan no more than 1–2 hour interview. The location needs to be fairly quiet so you can get a good recording—away from typewriters, TVs, children, street traffic, interruptions, etc.
   iii. Equipment: Practice with your recorder until you know how to use it easily. Then, just before going to the interview, double check the recorder to see that it works and that you have enough tape. Bring extra tapes as well. Other useful materials might include a writing pad and pencil in case the recorder malfunctions and a camera to photograph the person being interviewed, personal artifacts, and other things that relate to the life of the interviewee.

c. Interview
   i. You have 2 main purposes during an interview:
      1. Obtain a good quality recording: Do this by avoiding interfering noises by closing doors, avoiding fans and heaters and clocks. It is best to interview one person at a time. Position recorder and microphone within five feet of talkers, with record controls properly set.
      2. Have the interviewee do the talking, not you, on subjects you want discussed. Do this by asking open-ended questions (how? why? what was it like?). Rather than closed questions (when? what was his name? where?). Let them talk. Stifle your normal impulse to interrupt! When there is a pause, do not go to a new question, but comment on what was said and let them have a moment to think about what they said. Write down questions to ask later. Your question sheet will help you guide the conversation in the proper direction.
      3. General suggestions:
         a. At first use questions they will enjoy answering and that are easy to answer.
b. Save sensitive questions until later in the interview. Tell them what you know about the sensitive matter—knowing you know about it makes it easier for them to talk about it.

c. All during the interview check your recorder. If in doubt about how it is working, stop and listen to part of your recording.

d. Don’t be in a hurry. Let them talk at length. If they go on tangents, that’s okay. If you need four interviews instead of one, lucky you!

d. **Preserving the Interview**
   
i. **Tape:** Store at room temperature, in a container (to keep out dust). Punch out the little holes in back of cassette to prevent anyone rerecording over your recording. Make extra copies and spread them around among family in case your tape is lost or damaged.

   ii. **Transcript:** It’s an excellent idea to arrange for the tape to be transcribed. The transcript can read like conversation, or can be edited to read like an autobiography. One hour of tape produces about twenty pages of double spaced typed pages. Picture pages can be added. Transcripts make great gifts for family members. Transcripts may be bound, may include picture pages, genealogy charts, etc. It is a good idea, in any format, to distribute your interviews to family members or even consider donating it to a local historical society to preserve the record.

   iii. **CD-ROM or DVD:** Another option for preserving your interview, if you’re familiar with computers, is copying the interview onto a CD-ROM or DVD. These can be easily created and duplicated while using today’s computers which often come with a disc burner. Pictures and even video clips may be added as well.

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**Guides to Collecting and Preserving Oral Histories**

Capturing the Past: How to Prepare & Conduct an Oral History Interview.  
Online: http://www.kbyu.org/capturingpast/

Cyndi’s List, Oral History & Interviews.  
Online: http://www.cyndislist.com/oral.htm

Doing Oral History.  
Online: http://www.gcah.org/oral.html


*Oral History Workshop on the Web.*
Online: [http://www.baylor.edu/Oral_History/Workshop.htm](http://www.baylor.edu/Oral_History/Workshop.htm)


*Tips for Interviewers.*
Online: [http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO](http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO)

**Outline of a Family History**

The following outline is suggested for use in preparing a family history and is taken from the *Resource Guide: Preparing a Family History*, Salt Lake City: Intellectual Reserve (see Appendix D).

1. Title Page
2. Copyright Statement
3. Table of Contents
4. Other Preliminary Sections
   a. Dedication
   b. List of Illustrations
   c. Foreword, Preface, and Acknowledgments
   d. List of Abbreviations
   e. Introduction
   f. List of Contributors
   g. Chronology
5. Main Body of the Text
   a. Compiled genealogies, pedigree charts, biographies, photographs, copies of documents, maps, source references (footnotes or endnotes), and so forth
6. Final Sections
   a. Appendices
   b. Bibliography
   c. Index
Chapter 9

Family Organizations

Much of the instruction given to members of the Church related to temple and family history work is given to families rather than just to individuals. How and to what degree families organize to fulfill their role in temple and family history work will vary depending on many factors such as each family’s size, cohesiveness, commitment, and resources. We should each do what we can to strengthen our families so that they can more fully accomplish their divinely appointed missions.

Chapter 9 Objectives:

- Recognize when teachings of the prophets related to temple and family history work should be viewed from a “family” rather than just an “individual” perspective.
- Understand general guidelines for family organizations.
- Prayerfully determine how you might assist your “immediate,” “grandparent,” and where needed, “ancestral” family organizations.

Suggested Readings:


Chapter 9 Outline:

- Direction Given to Families
- The Role of the Immediate Family Organization
- The Role of the Grandparent Family Organization
- The Role of the Ancestral Family Organization
- Your Role in Your Family
- Helping Your Family Get Organized

Direction Given to Families

The family [is] the most important organization in time and all eternity; ... the preservation of family life in time and eternity takes precedence above all other interests.... Because of this confidence in the perpetuity of the home and family into the eternities, we build our most elaborate and expensive structures temples of God...so that man, woman, and their children may be bound together by covenant
in an everlasting union which will transcend all the limitations of this mortal sphere (Perry, 1982, p. 55).

When prophets teach about redeeming the dead they are often directing their instructions to families, rather than just to individuals. For example, consider the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith, quoted earlier in chapter four:

But how are they to become saviors on Mount Zion? By building their temples, erecting their baptismal fonts, and going forth and receiving all the ordinances, baptisms, confirmations, washings, anointings, ordinations, and sealing powers upon their heads, in behalf of their progenitors who are dead, and redeem them that they may come forth in the first resurrection and be exalted to thrones of glory with them; and therein is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, which fulfills the mission of Elijah.

The Saints have not too much time to save and redeem their dead, and gather together their living relatives, that they may be saved also, before the earth will be smitten, and the consumption decree falls upon the world.

I would advise all the Saints to go to with their might and gather together all their living relatives to this place, that they may be sealed and saved, that they may be prepared against the day that the destroying angel goes forth; and if the whole Church should go to with all their might to save their dead, seal their posterity and gather their living friends, and spend none of their time in behalf of the world, they would hardly get through before night would come, when no man can work... (J. Smith, 1978, 6:183).

Some of Joseph Smith’s instructions here are directed to the Church as an organization. Neither the individual Church member, or family, is expected to undertake the task of building temples and erecting baptismal fonts. And some of Joseph Smith’s teachings are directed to families. For example, the work of receiving ordinances for ancestors and gathering together living relatives should be coordinated among family members. If each individual member were to undertake these tasks without working with the rest of the family, confusion and massive duplication of effort would result.

Now consider President Wilford Woodruff’s instructions given in chapter two. He said:

We want the Latter-day Saints from this time to trace their genealogies as far as they can, and to be sealed to their fathers and mothers. Have children sealed to their parents, and run this chain through as far as you can get it (Woodruff, 1969, p. 157).

Each of us has an individual responsibility to follow President Woodruff’s instruction. Elder Boyd K. Packer has further taught:

All that I have learned from the revelations and from reading the statements of the prophets has fixed two things in my mind. First, we are individually responsible to seek after our kindred dead and see that the temple ordinances are performed for them. Second, once those names have been found, we are to establish family relationships. Genealogical and temple work is lineage-linked. We are linking the generations together (Packer, 1980, p. 225).
However, the Church does not teach that every individual member should shoulder total personal responsibility to trace the genealogies of all of his or her kindred dead. Instead, research in extended generations should typically be a cooperative effort among descendants. Over the years, the Church has provided tools, such as the Pedigree Referral Service, Family Registry, Pedigree Resource File, Ancestral File, and www.familysearch.org to help researchers coordinate with each other so they can prevent unnecessary duplication of effort.

Also, not all family members will necessarily assist with this effort by doing research in extended generations. There are many other things that family members can do to support the research effort, such as searching individual records under the direction of a researcher, entering data, providing funds, and so on. Any of these activities, to the degree that they are beneficial to the effort, can rightfully be considered “seeking after our kindred dead.” Every member of the family can assist in some way.

Because of the wide variety of personal and family circumstances, it is not possible to specify in detail how all families should be organized to coordinate their work and help accomplish the redemption of the living and the dead. The fundamental principle is that we should work together where possible, both Church members and non-Church members. No one individual should assume that everything rests on his or her shoulders. Instead, we should reach out to our families. Each family member can render a unique service, which varies over time as family needs and his or her circumstances vary.

Whether formally or informally organized as such, it is helpful to think in terms of three types of family organizations: “immediate,” “grandparent,” and “ancestral.” Insofar as possible, every member of the Church should belong to an “immediate family organization,” and a “grandparent family organization.” Where needed, “ancestral family organizations” could also be organized.

**The Role of the Immediate Family Organization**

The immediate family organization consists of parents and their children. Key temple and family history responsibilities of the immediate family include:

- Invite all family members to come unto Christ by learning the gospel, being active in Church, and receiving the ordinances and covenants of the temple.
- Ensure that ancestors whose names are readily available have received their ordinances.
- Support family history research.
- Turn the hearts of fathers to children and children to their fathers.
- Provide social and cultural activities that strengthen family ties.

The father and mother are leaders of the immediate family organization.
First, I would be certain that sufficient time was calendared each week for a family executive committee meeting to plan family strategy. The executive committee, composed of a husband and wife, would meet together to fully communicate, discuss, plan, and prepare for their leadership role in the family organization (Perry, 1980, p. 9).

As leaders of the immediate family, parents provide a secure and happy home where their children can bond with each other and their parents. They also encourage their children to reach out to extended family members. President Kimball taught:

Analysts of our modern time point out that in a fast changing world, people suffer a kind of shock from losing a sense of continuity. The very mobility of our society means that our children are often moved from place to place and lose close contact with the extended family of grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and longtime neighbors. It is important for us also to cultivate in our own family a sense that we belong together eternally, that whatever changes outside our home, there are fundamental aspects of our relationship which will never change. We ought to encourage our children to know their relatives. We need to talk of them, make effort to correspond with them, visit them, join family organizations, etc.(S. W. Kimball, 1974a, p. 112).

The Role of the Grandparent Family Organization

The grandparent family organization consists of the extended family to which President Kimball was referring. The grandparent family organization can assist with temple and family history activity in many ways, including:

- Submitting names of the family’s kindred dead to the temple and arranging for family members to receive ordinances.
- Providing social activities, cultural activities, and reunions that strengthen family ties among members of the grandparent family.
- Ensuring the Pedigree Resource File is complete and accurate in the first few generations.
- Preparing family histories and instructional aids that can be used by immediate families to teach children about their ancestors.
- Soliciting funds to support family history research.

With regard to the grandparent family organization, President Ezra Taft Benson counseled:

Provide leadership by building family togetherness. We urge all senior members, when possible, to call their families together. Organize them into cohesive units. Give leadership to family gatherings. Establish family reunions where fellowship and family heritage can be felt and learned. Some of the sweetest memories I have are of our own family reunions and gatherings. Foster wonderful family traditions which will bind you together eternally. In doing so, we can create a bit of heaven right here on earth within individual families. After all, eternity will be but an extension of righteous family life.
Each family’s individual circumstances will determine how they apply this counsel. Where circumstances prevent grandparents from initiating family activities, adult brothers and sisters, typically between the ages of 20 to 40, can still meet and make plans (This might be called a “brother/sister” family organization.) President Benson applied the principles in his family as follows:

In keeping with the principles which I have outlined to you, I have organized my family, as I’m sure scores of you have done—the Ezra Taft Benson Family Organization—as a grandparent family. Our children and married grandchildren are organizing as part of that organization and as individual, immediate family organizations.

Under my direction we are in the process of verifying our pedigree charts and supporting family group record forms in anticipation of submitting them to the Church as a family in 1979.

I have further commissioned the preparation of family histories by my immediate family members. My wife and I have tried to set the example by preparing and distributing a brief summary of our own personal histories to our posterity. Further histories have been prepared, or are in the process of preparation, on each of our ancestors on my lines and my wife’s lines as they appear on our first pedigree chart for four generations back. To our children this represents five generations of family histories; to the grandchildren, six; and the great grandchildren, seven.

In the preparation of these histories, we have sought to write them in a common style and follow a common format. They have been typed on genealogical size sheets so they might conveniently be included in the family book of remembrance. An effort has been made to keep them brief, with a goal that none of them would exceed ten genealogical size pages. We have taken pains to have them reproduced by offset press so that the quality of the print would encourage use and reading. It is also our intent to add pictures of each ancestor to his or her history. We have encouraged members of our family organization to use these histories as a basis for family home evenings, held in their immediate families, to teach their children appreciation, love, and respect for their ancestors (Benson, 1978 p. 30).

The grandparent family organization often takes responsibility for submitting family information after adult brothers and sisters compare their information, resolve discrepancies, and correct errors. Originally names were submitted to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints via Ancestral File, a DOS-based program. Now names are submitted to the Pedigree Resource File, a database available on multiple CD-ROMs and indexed at the website www.familysearch.org. New submissions to the Pedigree Resource File are released throughout the year as new material becomes available.

In 1990 Elder Richard G. Scott explained the purposes of Ancestral File, which are now fulfilled by the Pedigree Resource File:

Ancestral File comprises the “four generation” submittals from members and friends. These data have been carefully matched and coupled one with another, providing a powerfully rich source of family linked information that simplifies research and reduces duplication. It contains names and addresses, enabling coordination of research with other submitters. Means now exist that permit you or family organizations to enter all of your family-linked information for permanent preservation and use by
The Role of the Ancestral Family Organization

With regard to ancestral family organizations, President Benson taught:

Now may I say a word about ancestral type family organizations. Ancestral family organizations are comprised of descendants of a common ancestral couple. The major purpose for organizing or perpetuating an ancestral family organization is to coordinate genealogical activity on common ancestral lines. When ancestral family organizations deviate from this major objective and seek primarily to provide social, cultural, or other types of activities, they take over the legitimate domain of the immediate and grandparent organizations...

Another legitimate function of the ancestral organization is to provide resource material from which the immediate and grandparent family organizations can draw to complete family histories—especially on their first four generations. Thus the ancestral organizations may accumulate, properly file, catalog, and preserve histories, photographs, letters, manuscripts, diaries, journals, and published books.

...Ancestral organizations exist only for the coordination of genealogical activity, which includes family histories. Once this function has been accomplished the ancestral family organization might well be dissolved, or at least reduced in importance, in favor of the immediate and grandparent organizations (Benson, 1978, p. 30).

Your Role in Your Family

There are many ways you could assist with the efforts of your immediate, grandparent, and ancestral family organizations to redeem both the living and the dead. These may include organizing, leading, teaching, writing, doing research, donating funds, strengthening family ties, giving encouragement, and so on. What you do, and how much you do at any time in your life will vary depending on:

- Your circumstances, abilities, and resources
- Guidance from the Holy Ghost
- The needs of your family
- Direction from priesthood leaders

As you prayerfully determine what you can do, remember that the end result of your efforts should be to:

- Bring living relatives to Christ so they will receive the ordinances of the temple, and,
- Provide temple ordinances for your kindred dead.

Although our family circumstances vary considerably, most of us can do something to further the work
of Christ in and through the family organization. Elder Gene R. Cook taught:

At times when one speaks of home and family, some who are single, widowed, a single parent, or a
grandparent might be tempted to feel these teachings don’t apply to them. But may I remind all that
when the Lord sent us here for our individual growth, he sent us to live with and be nurtured spiritually
and temporally by a family. The Lord organized the whole earth this way. There is no other way to enter
mortality.

Yet some still say, “I don’t have a family. I’m all alone.” May I remind you that you always were and
ever will be a member of the family of God. You are his son or his daughter. It doesn’t matter if your
parents or spouse or brothers or sisters are members, nonmembers, living, or dead, they are still your
family. And if you are righteous and faithful to the end, no matter what your present status, you
ultimately will be blessed as part of a family unit.

Thus, it behooves all of us to learn and live, to the degree we can in our present situation, the
principles governing family life in preparation for exaltation, whether we’re a parent, grandparent,
brother, sister, uncle, aunt, or a child—whether we are single or married. This is the Lord’s pattern, His
expanded view of the word family.

Thus, hearken all ye families of the earth, immediate and extended families, yea, every living soul,
and the Lord will teach you of the sacredness of the heavenly organization called family, called home
(Cook, 1984, p. 31).

Elder James E. Faust said:

Some say families can’t do the job because so many people just do not have families. It is true that a
great many do not have a functioning family. Or it is said that too many families fail. Unfortunately,
that is also true. However, with all its shortcomings, the family is far and away the greatest social unit,
the best answer to human problems, in the history of mankind. Rather than further weaken family ties,
they need to be strengthened.... I would urge over burdened parents to accept every help. Cannot
grandparents, brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends also reinforce by example and
precept their love and concern for members of the extended family? (Faust, 1987, pp. 81–82)

**Helping Your Family Get Organized**

To build a foundation strong enough to support a family in our troubled world today requires the best
effort of each of us—father, mother, brother, sister, grandmother and grandfather, aunts and uncles,
cousins, and so on. Each must contribute energy and effort in driving piles right down to the bedrock of
the gospel until the foundation is strong enough to endure through the eternities. The Lord has
promised us in the Doctrine and Covenants that “he that buildeth upon this rock shall never fall”

Students can support efforts of parents, grandparents, siblings and others to work cooperatively for the
redemption of the living and the dead. Some specific things students might do include:

- Find out from family members if ordinances have been provided for ancestors in the first
few generations. If not, gather together any additional information needed to provide the ordinances and submit the names.

- Do research on an extended family line.
- Write a personal history that you can send to all members of your immediate and extended family at Christmas.
- Make a list of your uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces, and nephews. Are there any that you have not reached out to? Any that do not know of your love? Any that don’t know you? There is your opportunity to strengthen family ties.
- Offer to help organize an immediate or grandparent family reunion.
- Contact family members who are doing research. Offer to help by searching records, entering data, submitting information to Pedigree Resource File, and/or receiving temple ordinances.
- Organize a family temple trip to do baptisms for the dead.
Chapter 10

Family Record Extraction

Finding family history information can be a long and tedious task when the records are not indexed in any way. Through Family Record Extraction and other indexing projects, this task can be significantly reduced.

Chapter 10 Objectives:

- Understand how Family Record Extraction projects help redeem the dead.
- Gain a testimony of the spiritual blessings that come from participating in record extraction projects.
- Participate in Family Record Extraction.

Suggested Readings:


Chapter 10 Outline:

- What is Family Record Extraction?
- Spiritual Rewards from Extraction

What is Family Record Extraction?

Tens of thousands of Church members and nonmembers worldwide are participating in projects to extract data and enter genealogical information found in vital, church, census, and other records. With modern technology, the extracted data can be made available in easily searchable form on compact disc and the Internet. Information extracted in Church-sponsored projects is made available on resource files through FamilySearch, vital records indexes on CD-ROM, and the Internet.

History

Name extraction programs sponsored by the LDS Church are based upon the doctrine of salvation of the dead. Names, dates, and places are the key elements in precisely identifying individual ancestors. Name extraction consists of systematically transcribing this information from original vital records.
Church members perform temple ordinances for those whose names have been thus identified.

The Family History Department of the Church (formerly the Genealogy Department) initiated the first name extraction program, called Records Tabulation, in 1961. Department employees extracted data primarily from filmed copies of English parish registers. In 1978 the Church deployed name extraction to stake centers, the new program being called Stake Record Extraction. Since that date, name extraction is done by local Church members. Besides records of England, those of Mexico, Germany, Scotland, Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark have been heavily extracted. From 1961 to 1989, over 100 million names were thus copied.

The department increased its name extraction efforts in 1986 with the introduction of the Family Record Extraction Program. This differs from the older program in that a paper photocopy of the original record is given to extractors and they transcribe the information in their homes at their convenience (Mehr, 1992, 3: 979–980).

One of the first projects for the Family Record Extraction Program was the extraction of the official temple records. They were extracted and entered originally into the DOS-based Ordinance Index, (available only in Family history centers) which is now a closed database. This information and new information is now available to members of the Church in the International Genealogical Index online at www.familysearch.org. Clearing names for the temple can be accomplished quickly and accurately using TempleReady.

The Stake Record Extraction Program and Family Record Extraction Program have now been combined into one program, called Family Record Extraction. Thousands of people in hundreds of stakes throughout the Church are serving in this program. Some whose illnesses or disabilities prevent them from participating in other types of Church activity gain a sense of fulfillment from this service. An extractor for several years, Winona Palmer reports:

My day isn’t complete unless I spend a few hours in our stake center doing name extraction. I receive a sense of fulfillment from it. I have served in the Fort Macleod Alberta Stake program extracting French records since July 1986.

Most mornings I get to the building at about the same time as the young people who are coming for early-morning seminar. I work three or four hours and then go back home. After dinner, I usually go back to the library and work for another two or three hours. I am a widow, and I enjoy the work I do have....

I find family history work very satisfying. Every time I sit down at the microfilm reader, begin to read another film, and extract names, I am grateful for the opportunity to be involved in such a rewarding and valuable project (Dick, 1995, p. 38).

Members can now work in their own homes, at their own pace, extracting genealogical information from records or entering data into computers. Although extraction is often a tedious process, the spirit of the work is unmistakable. Many volunteers ask to continue serving beyond the time of their original assignment.
With the initiation of the Family Record Extraction Program, there was a change in the focus of the work. Now, instead of extracting names for direct submission to temples, the information is placed in a database. Example projects include Vital Records, 1880 U.S. census, Ellis Island immigration records, and others. This information is being made available on compact disc and on the Internet.

Other Extraction Projects

The Church has participated in other extraction projects in addition to Family Record Extraction. Many have been joint projects with genealogical and historical societies. As indicated the projects have resulted in extensive databases that are now available.

1. 1881 British Census Cooperative Indexing Project; completed in cooperation with the British Federation of Family History Societies. This census is online at www.familysearch.org
   a. 30.2 million records were transcribed, evaluated, and data entered.
   b. 8,000 British LDS Church members participated.
   c. 264 full-time LDS missionaries (couples) from Australia, Canada, England, Scotland, and 20 U.S. states participated.
   d. Over four million man hours of volunteer labor were donated.

2. Civil War Service Records Project; coordinated by the Federation of Genealogical Societies. This database can be accessed at www.itd.nps.gov/cwss
   a. Who: 3.5 million soldiers who served in 7,000 regiments.
   b. What: 5.5 million National Archives index cards, listing name, rank, unit, and home state unit.
   c. Other pertinent Civil war records (over time).

3. Vital Records
   a. Australian (available on CD-ROM)
   b. North American (available on CD-ROM)
   c. Mexico (online at www.familysearch.org)
   d. British Isles (available on CD-ROM)
   e. Western Europe (available on CD-ROM)
   f. Scandinavian (online at www.familysearch.org)

4. 1880 U.S. Census, online at www.familysearch.org
   a. Over 50 million persons are included
   b. Includes a nationwide index

5. Ellis Island Passenger Arrival Records (online at www.ellis島land.org)
   a. Index to information about 22 million immigrants
   b. Immigrants arrived between 1892 and 1924

6. Freedman’s Bank Records (available on CD-ROM)
   a. Includes 480,000 pedigree linked names
   b. Covers 29 of 37 branches of the Bank from 1865-1874
Inmates at the Utah State Prison also participate in the record extraction program. They extract many thousands of names and the spirit of the work has had a powerful impact in their lives. Many have developed a greater desire to live righteously and serve the Lord. The Freedman’s Bank Records CD-ROM was produced with the help of the inmates.

**Spiritual Rewards from Extraction**

The following experience, reported in the January 1987 *Ensign*, shows the importance of this work:

Brother Lauritz Petersen was called to be the director of the family record extraction program in the Camp Verde Stake in Arizona. The assignment was to work with records from Old Spain. Brother Petersen had the following experience:

The first year was tough. Despite the efforts of dedicated people, the fledgling program seemed doomed to fail. Lauritz Petersen was depressed and ready to quit. Sincere prayer, fasting, and soul-searching for days that stretched into weeks, then months, had brought no clear answers.

Finally one evening, after a particularly anguished prayer, Brother Petersen settled into bed, telling his wife, “That’s it, I’m quitting. This just can’t be worth what it is costing the members of this stake.” He finally drifted into an uneasy sleep.

“Lauritz, Lauritz.”

He was awakened hours later by a voice calling his name. He turned to check his still sleeping wife. Puzzled, he glanced toward the foot of the bed, but the bedroom wall had disappeared, and hundreds of people filled the room. A dark-complexioned man of medium height detached himself from the crowd and came toward him, repeating his name insistently.

“Lauritz, what do you see over here?” the man asked, gesturing to where the dresser should have been.

“Many people, singing, and dancing in a circle.”

“That’s right,” the man affirmed. “They are those whose names your stake has extracted. Because of your work, they have been able to have their temple work done. What do you see on this side?” he continued, gesturing to the left.

“People praying.”

“Can you hear what they are saying?” he prompted.

As he strained to hear the voices, suddenly the sounds became distinguishable. “Father please bless Lauritz Petersen,” they pleaded. “Bless him to carry on with this work and not quit.”

“These are the people whose names are on the records in your possession, but have not yet been extracted,” the man explained.

“Who are all of these people?” Brother Petersen questioned, pointing to the multitudes straight ahead, whose eyes stared into his own.

“Their names are on the records that will be sent to you if you carry on with the program,” the spokesman continued. “Lauritz, this is an important work. Please don’t quit.”

“I won’t,” Brother Petersen promised. Then the room was once more empty and he found himself gazing at the bedroom wall.

“I knew the Lord wanted the extraction program in this stake,” he says. “It didn’t matter who ran it...
or what problems we had; it would be successful.” Brother Petersen lay awake for the rest of the night, making plans to revamp the program (Rodriguez, 1987, pp. 14–15).

Because extraction is an unselfish service to others, participating in it can enlarge our soul and strengthen us spiritually. Elder Derek A. Cuthbert said:

...Service helps us generate love and appreciation. We come to know people by serving them—their circumstances, their challenges, their hopes and aspirations. My wife and I have the privilege of visiting some widowed sisters who have become dear friends. What a blessing for us to learn of their missions and temple service and now family record extraction service unselfishly performed, despite many trials and heartaches (Cuthbert, 1990, p. 12).

Others report receiving help from the Lord as they magnify their extraction calling. An extractor, Monreve Hardy reported:

Sometimes I have a real problem reading the names. I go home and fast and pray and when I come back, they are as clear as can be.... That happens often. There are a lot of people on the other side that I look forward to meeting, and I think they’re anxious to greet me too (Rodriguez, 1987, pp. 14–15).

Another extractor reported:

“My patriarchal blessing tells me I will be a Savior on Mount Zion,” says Dorcie Ball. “I feel that refers to this work. Sometimes I feel as though this room is filled with the spirits whose names we’re working on,” she adds. “We do more missionary work here in a single day than many others can do in a lifetime” (Rodriguez, 1987, pp. 14–15).

Richard Tice reported Elder Thomas Fyans, an Emeritus General Authority, saying:

The impact of the Family Record Extraction Program on the living is impressive. As Elder Fyans said, “This work is affecting in wonderful ways so many who cannot be reached by other Church programs. When unendowed members, for instance, get involved in recording the names of those who have been endowed, something happens to them. The Spirit of Elijah touches them, and they develop a desire to receive their own endowments” (Tice, 1990, p. 27).

Brother Tice concluded his *Ensign* article on the Family Record Extraction Program with this summary:

The Family Record Extraction Program affects the individual and the multitude. It reaches the living and the dead. It involves the less-active in Church activity. It allows the homebound to participate in the Lord’s work. It provides a chance for members and nonmembers to work together. It speeds up temple work. And it is a key to providing gospel ordinances for all those who have lived on this earth. It is one more fulfillment of the Lord’s promise: “By your hands I will work a marvelous work among the children of men, ... that they may come unto the kingdom of my Father (D&C 18:44)” (Tice, 1990, p. 27).
Chapter 11

Providing Ordinances for Ancestors Whose Names Are Readily Available

The focus of this chapter is on one of the basic duties of members of the Church—providing ordinances for those ancestors whose names are readily available. This focus is fundamentally different from beginning family history research because the emphasis is on providing ordinances. Providing ordinances for ancestors is a lifelong activity. As you prayerfully seek them, names may continue to become available throughout your life.

Chapter 11 Objectives:

• Begin gathering readily available family history information.
• Learn how to record and organize the information you have gathered.
• Learn the minimum information required for submitting an ancestor’s name to the temple.
• Learn how to find out which ancestors need temple ordinances.
• Learn how to make certain that the temple ordinances are performed.

Suggested Readings:


Chapter 11 Outline:

• Gather Information about Your Ancestors from Family Sources
• Gather Ancestor Information from LDS Church Resources
• Ancestral File and Data Privacy
• Recording Your Information
• Providing Information Needed for Ordinances
• Finding Out Which Ancestors Need Temple Ordinances
• Guidelines for Submitting Names to the Temple
• Make Certain the Ordinances Are Performed
Gather Information about Your Ancestors from Family Sources

If you are just getting started, complete a pedigree chart and a family group record for yourself. On the pedigree chart, list your name first, then your parent’s names, and so on. If you are married, complete two family group records — one showing you as a husband or wife, and the other showing you as a child.

After you have completed these forms for yourself and your immediate family, begin gathering information about the ancestors who are easiest to identify. Generally, this does not require skill in genealogical research. The most important thing you need is the desire to provide the saving ordinances of the gospel to those in the spirit world waiting to receive them.

Don’t forget the powerful influence the Spirit can have in helping you to identify your ancestors. As you exercise faith, names and information thought to be unavailable may come to you in unexpected ways and places. If you are not able to find information about an ancestor, be patient. In the meantime, ask the Lord to direct your attention to other ancestors whose information is more accessible.

For additional help in identifying your ancestors and providing ordinances for them, contact your ward family history consultant… (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993, p. 4).

The meaning of “more accessible” will vary, depending on each individual’s circumstances, resources, and abilities. Typically, family history information is readily available from sources such as the following:

- Memory
- Records in homes
- Relatives
- FamilySearch files and other databases
- Family histories and other compiled sources
- Government offices and churches

Records in Homes and From Relatives

You can begin identifying your ancestors by gathering information about yourself, your siblings, your parents, and your grandparents. Typically, information about these close relatives is readily available by simply talking to them. If you have not done so already, you should interview older close family members as soon as possible to obtain their life histories. To locate additional relatives, search Internet sites such as http://www.whitepages.com or http://www.peoplesearch.com. To increase your accuracy, ask family members if they have created or stored any documents containing family history information. You should compare memories and oral traditions with information from these other sources. Here is a list of records you or they may have:

- Bibles. Family Bibles may contain a few pages devoted to genealogical records of the family (births, marriages, and deaths). Information found in a family Bible should be carefully evaluated, and if possible, confirmed by other sources.
Diaries and Journals. From the standpoint of family history, diaries and journals are invaluable. They should be carefully studied for genealogical information.

Biographies. Often, unpublished biographies are found among the loose papers of a relative. Unscholarly, poorly written, and illogical as they may sometimes seem, they are still priceless to the family historian.

Letters. Old letters are the most informal and intimate family sources. Note the addresses, names of the correspondents, postmarks, and dates for useful information.

Memorial Cards and Funeral Programs. Genealogical data on funeral memorabilia includes date of birth, place of birth, date of death, place of burial, and age at death.

Church Records. These records include certificates of birth, baptism (or christening), marriage, advancement, death, and funeral notices.

Civil Records. Competent civil recorders prepared birth, marriage, and death certificates usually near the date of the event.

Citizenship Records. The records of immigrant ancestors may contain citizenship papers, dates of arrival, ports of embarkation and debarkation, and other details.

Fraternal Records. Freemasons, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, Knights of Columbus, etc., preserve biographical sketches of their membership.

Genealogical Records. Other family members and ancestors may have compiled genealogical records.

Histories. Occasionally, a manuscript history in the handwriting of an ancestor is found. Verification with supporting evidence is helpful in such instances.

Legal Papers. Family members may have preserved legal documents. Included in this category are wills, deeds, mortgages, and land grants. These are valuable because of the names, dates, and places mentioned.

Military Records. Search for discharge papers, pension records, service records, medals, ribbons, etc.

Newspaper Clippings. Many families have collections of newspaper clippings relevant to family history.

Occupational Records. Apprenticeship records, awards, citations, and other occupational achievements are often found in the home.

School Records. School attendance records and graduation certificates provide genealogical data.

Albums. Photograph albums are among the most cherished family records. Sometimes photos may not be labeled.

Gather Ancestor Information from LDS Church Resources

The Family and Church History Department of the Church provides genealogical resources containing information on approximately one billion deceased persons. Information about these persons is found on the Internet www.familysearch.org, at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, and in the many LDS Family history centers worldwide. One of the largest family history centers is the Utah Valley
Regional Family History Center in the BYU Harold B. Lee Library.

**How to Find Ancestors in Databases and Other Compiled Sources**

At [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) click on the “Search” tab and you will be taken to a page with the Research Guidance and Research Helps options. Research Guidance is designed to give the researcher a “Search Strategy” for their research. The “Search Strategy” is a list of sources to search, listed in a recommended searching order. Research Helps contains research guides, forms, letters, and lists to help you determine how to find ancestors as well as understand their languages. This website also provides an option for purchasing CD products (Order/Download Products) that provide research instruction as well as information about people who lived in several parts of the world.

**New FamilySearch**

The Family and Church History Department in Salt Lake City is developing the next version of FamilySearch.org that will be known as the New FamilySearch. This new Internet site will be released temple district by temple district. This new Web site is designed to:

1. Help families work together to find ancestors, organize their family history, link their ancestors, and share family history information
2. Reduce duplication of temple ordinances
3. Reduce duplication of family history research
4. Make family history research easier
5. Patrons can easily add and correct family history information
6. Patrons can collaborate with others working on the same ancestral lines
7. Preserve personal family histories

The New FamilySearch contains genealogical data combined from Ancestral File, International Genealogical Index (IGI), Pedigree Resource File (PRF), and several LDS Church databases (such as Church membership records).

The first phase of the New FamilySearch is for Church members only since it contains the temple submission process. Some features include:
• After logging onto the system, users will see their personal data. They begin with information the LDS Church already has on file—name of Church member, names of Church members’ parents, and names of other family members.
• Search results for names are ranked with the “star” method—five stars being a high probability search result. That is, the most probable matches are listed first.
• A family group record view is included (standard family group sheet).
• Users can combine genealogical data (previously known as “Match/Merge”).
• Users can dispute and “undispute” data.
• There will be the ability to upload GEDCOM files.
• A place (locality) will be available when searching for deceased ancestors, along with a personal name.
• Users will be able to share family history information on the Internet.

The New FamilySearch replaces the existing TempleReady software program available at family history centers (TempleReady has sixteen steps for submitting names of deceased ancestors for proxy temple ordinances). Church members no longer need to use the old DOS Ordinance Index found in family history centers.

The New FamilySearch is designed to lead members through the process of preparing names for temple ordinance work to be done by proxy. Five steps are needed to prepare a name for temple work and can be done from anywhere there is Internet access:

1. Add name(s) of ancestor(s) into the New FamilySearch (online)
2. Select individual(s) to do temple work for
3. Print a Family Ordinance Request form
4. Take the request form to an LDS temple (this form has a bar code that is read at the temple where a temple worker prints temple cards—males, females, and couples)
5. Perform temple ordinances approved for each individual

With this new method, Church members no longer need to take a floppy disk to the temple. Instead, a printout from the New FamilySearch from the member’s home computer (or computer at a family history center, relative’s house, etc.—anywhere there is an Internet connection) is taken to the temple where temple cards are printed. Church members doing temple ordinances are able to see the updated information soon after the ordinances are completed—it is anticipated that FamilySearch.org is updated daily in most situations.

Guidelines for temple name submission include: (1) you should wait at least one year after a person’s death before performing temple ordinances on their behalf, and (2) if the person was born within the last 95 years, you should obtain permission to perform the ordinances from the person’s closest living relative.
Four items are needed to perform proxy temple ordinances for an individual: (1) person’s name, (2) gender (male or female), (3) event date (at least a year), and (4) event place or locality (at least a country). The ideal situation would be to have the person’s full name, gender, date of birth or church baptism (christening), and place of the event (city, town or parish, county or province, and country). In order to have a person sealed to his (or her) parents, at least the father’s name is needed. An example entry might look like:¹

```
NAME:   John Jones
GENDER:   Male
EVENT AND DATE:  Born 25 May 1840
BIRTH PLACE:  Chardon, Geauga, Ohio
PARENTS’ NAMES:  Samuel Jones and Mary Smith
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Temple ordinance dates for living individuals are not shown in the New FamilySearch (see your ward or branch clerk for temple ordinance information for living individuals).

The New FamilySearch is not a replacement for Personal Ancestral File (PAF), other genealogical (personal data management) software programs, and will over time be merged with FamilySearch.org (www.familysearch.org) functionality.

Families should work together to identify the best sources available and verify the accuracy of their genealogical and family records. This helps reduce research efforts and helps reduce duplicate temple ordinances. A family representative should then upload the correct and verified information online into the New FamilySearch. This should insure accuracy of the database and reduce duplication. In summary:

- Enter names of people correctly
- Enter dates correctly
- Enter places (localities) correctly
- Add sources of information

Until the new FamilySearch is available, LDS Church members should register at FamilySearch.org. To do so, go to (www.familysearch.org), click on Register, and enter the information below:

- User name, address, etc.
- Password
- LDS Church membership record number (available from your ward or branch clerk)

¹ This is only an example; these are not real individuals.
• Confirmation date (available from your ward or branch clerk)

The general public (those who are not LDS Church members or Church members who have not registered with FamilySearch.org) will be able to use the New FamilySearch at a later time.

**FamilySearch**

Genealogy has long been associated with tedium, painstaking research, and musty books. But no more! Now we have available a modern miracle called FamilySearch. FamilySearch is a powerful, innovative computer system. In response to your typing in a name of one of your ancestors at a keyboard, FamilySearch, in just moments, races through millions of names and finds any that match what you typed. It knows how to match names that are spelled differently but sound the same. It can guide you from one small fragment of sketchy information to full screens of information—dates and places of birth, marriage, and death; and names of parents, children, and spouses (Haight, May 1991, p. 76).

FamilySearch should be the first source checked by genealogists beginning their research. It contains computer databases of special interest to genealogists, regardless of geographical interest—though most records date from the 1500s to the early 1900s.

FamilySearch is a computer system containing several genealogical databases that may help you identify your ancestors and offer clues for further research. It is a collection of genealogical databases and is available at many public libraries and at over 5,000 family history centers (branch libraries of the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah).

FamilySearch is available online via local network at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, at the Joseph Smith Memorial Building also in Salt Lake City, Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, and elsewhere. Some of the Family Search databases are available on the Internet at www.familysearch.org.

FamilySearch consists of the following databases:

- **Ancestral File** is a closed computer database containing over 35 million lineage-linked names. The majority of the lines extend back three, four, or more generations. Be aware that documentation is not included (such as source references), but that names and addresses of submitters and interested persons are included. It is a closed database, as submissions are no longer being accepted. Data was submitted to Ancestral File by using Genealogical Data Communications (GEDCOM) files as part of most genealogy software programs. Ancestral File is not available on microfiche, but can also be searched online at www.familysearch.org. This
version does not contain any information on living people or any LDS ordinance dates. Family group sheets and pedigree charts are now submitted via the Pedigree Resource File (explained later in this chapter).

International Genealogical Index (IGI) is probably the best known genealogical database in the world. It is an index to over 750 million names of deceased individuals found in birth (or baptism/christening) records and marriage records; this massive index is international in scope. The IGI is split into two files: a main file (up to 1993) and an addendum (up to 2000). Names are filed in a single alphabet in the computer version for those people listed in the United States and Canada. Names are listed alphabetically for other regions of the world. Family groupings may be established by searching a Parent Index, although multigenerational linkages, family group records, and pedigrees are not included. The IGI is also available in a microfiche edition. LDS Church members can also see ordinance dates on the online version of the IGI at www.familysearch.org. This is done by registering with FamilySearch and providing your membership number and confirmation date. This information can be obtained from your Ward Membership Clerk.

U.S. Social Security Death Index (SSDI) contains over 64 million names of deceased people who had Social Security numbers and whose deaths were reported to the Social Security Administration and died between the years ca. 1962 through 1996 (although the database contains some names as early as 1937). One valuable feature of this version of SSDI is that it includes a list of vital record offices with fees and addresses. SSDI can also be searched on the Internet at www.familysearch.org and www.ancestry.com; Ancestry.com is the most updated of the two, containing 72 million names up to February 2004.

U.S. Military Index is an index to individuals in the U.S. military service who died or were declared dead in the Korean and Vietnam conflicts only. It covers the time period 1950–1975 and lists over 100,000 names. In addition to the person’s name, it gives birth, death, service number, and other information.

Scottish Church Records identifies names of deceased individuals found in Scottish Church records, most records date from the 1600s through 1854 (some records date as early as the 1500s). It is available as part of the FamilySearch versions found at LDS facilities, such as family history centers. The Scottish Church Records database is also available on microfiche at family history centers.

Family History Library Catalog (FHLC) is an automated edition of the library catalog and describes records housed at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. There are many FHLC versions and the three most used are: (1) the DOS version, (2) the Internet version (www.familysearch.org), and (3) the CD-ROM version (with keyword searching produced in 2000). The DOS version of FHLC also identifies titles housed at some family history centers.
and, therefore, serves as a union catalog of library holdings. The library catalog is expanding rapidly as more sources are acquired and microfilmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah. FHLC is also available on microfiche.

**LDS Option:**

*Temple Ready* helps you prepare names of deceased ancestors for temple ordinances. Temple Ready is available in DOS and Windows formats.

*Personal Ancestral File (PAF)* is a Windows-based software program that can help you create and organize your own family records. PAF allows you to enter your genealogical information and also notes and sources for your ancestors. Photographs, sound and video clips can be linked to your files, and you can create multimedia slide shows and scrapbooks. PAF will be discussed further in this chapter.

**Learning Personal Ancestral File (PAF)**

**PAF Tutorial**

A free online tutorial is available to BYU students and others interested in using Personal Ancestral File (PAF). This online interactive tutorial is primarily intended for BYU’s Religion 261 students, but can benefit students in other family history courses as well, and is accessible to anyone with Internet access, including non-students. It is most helpful to those who haven’t used the PAF program before, or have had little experience with PAF and may only need help in certain areas. It is designed so users can pick and choose which areas of PAF they need to know more about. Click on either a step-by-step textual guide or an interactive demonstration for each point of reference in the menu. Because the interactive tutorial has audio components, speakers or headphones are needed to be able to listen to the demonstrations.

The tutorial covers the entire PAF program, from importing information from other family history programs to exporting your information. The Web site format displays a menu panel along the left side and a display panel for information and demonstrations on the right side. The top of the menu begins with *How to Use the PAF Tutorial*, followed by options describing how to install PAF, and continuing with a total of seventeen sections of tutorial instruction. The tutorial is based on lessons taught to Religion 261 students and focuses on the essential elements of PAF that are taught in this course.

For more information about PAF and family history, go to (http://familyhistory.byu.edu). The link for the PAF tutorial is accessible through this Web site by clicking the PAF Tutorial link under the Resources menu. The PAF tutorial is also directly available at (http://paftutorial.byu.edu).
Other useful Web sites for learning Personal Ancestral File:

- FamilySearch.org (www.familysearch.org/eng/paf/lessons/paf5.html)
- BYU Independent Study (http://prince.byu.edu/courses/univ/772626261012/secure/lesson3p1.htm)
- PAF Forum (http://genforum.genealogy.com/paf)

FamilySearch.org

**Search for Ancestors** provides a search of all www.familysearch.org databases at once for any ancestors whose information is provided on the search screen. The search results show which databases provided information about the person entered on the search screen.

*Ancestral File* does not contain the names of living persons, but contains all of the other information available in the family history center version.

*Census* contains the 1880 United States Census, the 1881 British Census, and the 1881 Canadian Census.

*International Genealogical Index* (IGI) contains the same information as the family history center version. Logging on as a Church member with your Church membership number and confirmation date will display the same ordinance information as the family history center version of the Ordinance Index and additional, updated ordinance information since 2000.

*Pedigree Resource File* contains only the index to the Pedigree Resource Files. The Index entries refer researchers to one of the 100 CDs containing full information about the individuals listed in the index. Pedigree Resource File CDs and the index can be purchased by selecting the “Order/Download Products” at www.familysearch.org, then clicking on “Software & Databases,” then “Pedigree Resource Files.” This file contains over 100 million names (with a little over 1 million names on each CD), many not found in Ancestral File. Church members and users of are encouraged to submit their genealogies to the Pedigree Resource File and the file continues to grow rapidly.

*U.S. Social Security Death Index* (SSDI) contains the same information as the family history center version.
Vital Records is a partial index of vital records around the world. It currently indexes records from Mexico and Scandinavia, but should soon include North America, the British Isles, and Western Europe.

Search Family History Web Sites provides access to more than 100,000 genealogical web sites.

Share My Genealogy allows users to transfer their digital genealogical files to the Pedigree Resource File as well as register their families to enable contact with other persons searching for the same ancestors.

Collaboration Email Lists permits visitors to the web site to coordinate their research with others seeking the same ancestors.

The Family History Library Catalog version available on the Internet provides additional searches when compared with the family history center DOS version. You can conduct an author search, call number search, title search, and subject search. The locality browse option found in the Family Search DOS version is not available with the Internet version. A CD version of the Family History Library Catalog can be ordered through www.familysearch.org (Order/Download Products). This version provides the same search options as the online version, with an additional keyword search option that enables researchers to search the entire catalog for any term that might be found in a book, record title or in the content notes librarians add to describe every item in the Family History Library’s collections.

family history centers will provide the addresses of family history centers near you.

Order/Download Products provides access to information about millions of persons described on CD products based censuses, vital records, and other sources that provide information about individuals. This option will also provide free downloads of Personal Ancestral File, a program for recording information about ancestors.

More information about FamilySearch, FamilySearch.org, and Personal Ancestral File are provided for students via the Internet, and for those who would rather have hands-on instruction, weekly lessons are taught in the Center for Family History and Genealogy’s family history computer lab. The online computer lessons are found at http://261.byu.edu. The link for the lab is http://familyhistory.byu.edu/labs/lab.asp where you can find more details about the lab, lesson schedules, and what family history materials are housed there.
Family Histories and Other Compiled Records

Compiled records are those based on research or investigation. Examples of compiled records include genealogies, obituaries, biographies, histories and family histories. Ancestral File, Pedigree Resource File, International Genealogical Index, and some other FamilySearch files are also compiled records.

Many compiled records are available through family history centers. Each center can provide access, through microfilm loan, to the records in the Family History Library collection in Salt Lake City. This collection contains numerous printed and manuscript family histories and other compiled sources. To begin, ask a family history center specialist to help you search the Surname portion of the Family History Library Catalog.

Records from Government Offices and Churches

Most original records are under the jurisdiction of government or ecclesiastical agencies. For example, the cemetery record of a person buried in the Provo, Utah cemetery is housed in the sexton’s office. The marriage license of a couple married in Provo is filed at the Utah County courthouse. The birth certificate of a child born in Provo is filed with the Utah State Bureau of Vital Statistics (many counties and city halls keep copies of vital records in courthouses and also have records predating state recordings).

If you know where a family member lived at the time of an event (such as birth, marriage, or death) official records may be readily available through two sources: The Family History Library Collection of microfilmed published original records or through correspondence with government or ecclesiastical agencies in the area in which ancestors lived. Names and addresses of places to write for family history information are available in reference materials at family history centers. For example, the center has research outlines for each state in the United States and many foreign countries. Ask a family history center specialist to help you. Other places to look for as original sources are census records, church records, and diaries.

Keeping Track of Your Searches

If you find a lot of sources of readily available information, you will need a good filing system for note keeping—one that reveals at a glance what has been done and allows easy access to the details of your findings. Begin your note keeping system by using a Research Log (see examples in Appendix E). On the Log write the name of your ancestor, the place where you obtain the information, the dates the records were searched, letters written or received, and any other activities completed. Since many people sporadically work on family history, a record of your activities is necessary to avoid repetitive
efforts. A pedigree chart is also included in Appendix E.

As you fill in the Research Log and gather documents, place all materials in a manila file folder labeled with the name of the ancestor you are searching. Also, include in the folder a family group record of the ancestor and a pedigree chart showing the relationship to you. Take time to frequently evaluate what you already know concerning this family.

**Ancestral File and Data Privacy**

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the producer of Ancestral File, is very sensitive to people’s privacy. Careful standards were established to ensure that privacy was protected when individuals contributed information to Ancestral File. All information that was submitted to Ancestral File was recorded in the file. Not all of it was displayed for users to see or to print out; however, information regarding living persons was handled as follows:

- When information submitted to Ancestral File included a birth date within the last 95 years, but did not include a death date or an LDS baptism date, it was assumed that the person was living and was not a member of the Church. Only the word “LIVING” appeared for that individual to protect his/her privacy.
- When information submitted included a birth date within 95 years and an LDS baptism date but no death date, it was assumed that the person was living and was a member of the Church. The person’s name appeared with the description “LIVING,” but no other information about the individual was available on Ancestral File.

**Recording Your Information**

Pedigree Charts and Family Group Records

Pedigree charts and family group records are standard forms you can use to record your information and organize your family records.

Pedigree charts are used to list your direct ancestors for several generations. Some pedigree charts include boxes you can mark to show which temple ordinances have been performed.

Family group records are used to list all members of an ancestor’s family along with information such as dates and places of births, marriages, and ordinances. You can use completed family group records to type information into computer programs, such as TempleReady or Personal Ancestral File.

Complete a family group record for each couple on your pedigree chart....

You can get copies of pedigree charts and family group records through a Church distribution
center or family history center. Your ward family history consultant may also have copies of the forms. (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993, p. 9).

Read pages 10–12 in A Member’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work (1993) to find out how to record names, dates, and places so that ordinances can be performed.

**Recording Information in Personal Ancestral File**

One of the best tools for recording family history information is the Personal Ancestral File (PAF).

Personal Ancestral File is a computer program that helps you organize your family history information into family groups and pedigrees. Using this program, you can identify areas where additional research is needed and keep track of ordinances that need to be completed. You can also prepare ancestors’ names for temple ordinances (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993, p. 9).

To download a free PC version of PAF to your computer, go to www.familysearch.org. Once you are at the web site, click on the “Order/Download Products” tab at the top of the page, then select “Software Downloads—Free” and you will be taken to a page of search results where you can download various versions of PAF. To purchase other versions (including a Macintosh version), click on the “Order/Download Products” tab, then select “Software and Databases,” then “Personal Ancestral File.” The information displayed on the computer screen for PAF 5 is located in Appendix E.

**Analyzing Information about Ancestors**

Occasionally, you will find conflicting information when recording information from various sources. A document prepared near to the event date or a document created by a reliable witness takes precedence over later records, tradition, and distant memories. However, you should be aware that although clerks made every effort to talk to informed witnesses, they relied on available information. Some errors have crept into original records because of forgetful or confused witnesses who described events many years after they happened. Resolving these discrepancies is an important part of correctly identifying your ancestors.
Establishing Linkage

As you begin to identify your ancestors, you may have difficulty establishing linkage. To make this task easier, think in terms of identifying your “kindred dead” rather than your direct-line ancestors only. Gather complete families as you extend your pedigree. Include non-ancestral spouses and half-brothers and sisters. Try to create “brother and sister” clusters before moving to the next generation. This will add context to your family records, and may reduce confusion. For example, if you have only the name of a great-grandfather, check records of his siblings. Did siblings witness his marriage or christenings of his children? Does his obituary name siblings? If the death certificate does not include the names of his parents, check siblings’ certificates. Complete a generation—a family—then move back to the next generation.

Keys to Correctly Identifying Your Ancestor

- Ancestors are commonly identified by their name, date and place of birth, relationships, and other events in their lives.
- Ancestors can be linked to a spouse, children, parents, brothers, and sisters.
- Ancestors can be identified by occupation, property ownership, and physical description.
- Does the ancestor live at the right time and in the right place?
- Is the ancestor married to the right person?
- Do the names of the ancestor’s children match the names you have gathered?
- The more identifying characteristics of an ancestor you find, the greater likelihood you have found your ancestor from among their neighbors with similar surnames.
Organizing Your Materials

If you are using pedigree charts and family group records, organize them so that they are easy to use. There are several effective ways to do this. The best method is the one that works best for you. Talk to others to see how they have organized their records. (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993, p. 9).

A simple method of organizing your materials is to arrange your family group records in alphabetical order by the surname, given name, and then date of birth of the husband. Cross references to pedigree charts can be written on them. Pedigree charts could be arranged numerically. Large amounts of information may be easier to organize using Personal Ancestral File or another genealogical software program.

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Analyze “Linkages” between the Generations

- Nominal linkage—are children named after grandparents, uncles, aunts, etc.?
- Chronological linkage—a child cannot be born before the parents, and a woman cannot bear children in her seventies or eighties.
- Geographical linkage—can claims that a family moved great distances be “proved” from census or other records?
- Ancestors sometimes moved in groups or “kinfolk clusters”—is there a “family plot” in the cemetery?
- Property—was a farm owned by the family for several generations?
- Social status/occupational—“rags to riches” assumptions are questionable. The further back you trace family lines, the more rigid the socioeconomic classification.
### Preserving Your Family Records

Where possible, store your family records in a safe place. You may want to send additional copies to relatives. In this way, your family information will be preserved even if your own copies are lost or destroyed.

One of the best ways to make certain that your family information is preserved is to contribute it to the Pedigree Resource File (PRF). Contributing your information to the PRF is also a good way to share it with others (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993, pp. 9–10).

### Providing Information Needed for Ordinances

You must have a minimum amount of information about an ancestor in order to submit his or her name for temple ordinances. In some instances this information can be estimated. A chart listing the minimum information required for each type of temple ordinance is found on page 10 of *A Member's Guide to Temple and Family History Work*. By limiting the amount of information required, the Church has simplified members’ efforts to provide ordinances for their kindred dead.

However, you should be aware that more than this minimum amount of information may be needed to distinguish your ancestors from others with the same name who lived in the same locality and time period. Information that is more complete and accurate than the minimal amount is usually needed to prevent duplication of temple ordinances, compile genealogies, and extend pedigree lines.

### Finding Out Which Ancestors Need Temple Ordinances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Family Group Records and Various Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Enter notes and sources into Personal Ancestral File.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Store originals in acid-free storage boxes or archival folders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Folder for a Specific Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Title the acid-free folder by the family surname</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Place a pedigree chart, a family group record, a Research Log, and copies of sources located in the folder.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After you have gathered and organized information about your ancestors, you should determine which ordinances need to be performed for them.

Seek the guidance of the Spirit as you determine whether you should do the ordinance work for an ancestor now or try to find more information first. Some members have found only limited information for a few ancestors and yet have felt inspired to do the ordinance work. Others have had what appeared to be complete information, yet they felt impressed to look for more information before submitting the names (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993, p. 13).

...Our expenditure of time, money, and effort in gathering and organizing the names and vital statistics of our ancestors is done to identify them properly. We only gather and correlate these genealogies for one purpose, so that we can do the necessary ordinance work for our kindred dead in the temples of God erected for that purpose. (Burton, 1964, p. 73)

If you have organized family history information on paper forms, you can find out which ones may need ordinances by looking for the blank ordinance spaces on the family group record. Marking the ordinance boxes on the pedigree chart will help you keep track. If you are using Personal Ancestral File software, you can find out which ordinances may be needed by printing out the “Incomplete Individual Ordinance” and “Incomplete Marriage Sealing” lists. Ordinance data can also be obtained from the International Genealogical Index.

Before submitting names to the temple, you should become familiar with the guidelines provided in A Member’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work (1993), pages 13–14, and also the following guidelines provided by the Church in April 1995, as follows.

**Guidelines for Submitting Names to the Temple**

All names submitted for temple ordinances are subject to the following guidelines:

1. The person must have been deceased for at least one full year.
2. If the person was born within the past 95 years, permission should be obtained from a living relative before the name is submitted.
3. In order to reduce duplication of names of persons who lived before A.D. 1500, names must be submitted to the Family History Department, Medieval Families Unit, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84150.
4. Names of non-related and non-lineage-linked groups should not be submitted for temple ordinance work, including personal extraction projects.
5. Ordinance dates for all temple work are available from the International Genealogy Index.
6. Normally only names with an established family relationship to the submitting family may be placed in the Family File.
7. When a family relationship is probable but cannot be verified because records are inadequate, the names of these persons may also be placed in the Family File. In many cases these include
persons of the same surname as the member’s ancestor who resided in the same geographic area.
8. Members submitting names to the Family File should plan to participate in the relevant ordinances or make arrangements for friends and family members to do so.
9. The ordinances for Family File names should be completed promptly.
10. The patron may request assistance from the temple personnel in arranging for others to help with Family File ordinances if the patron is limited by age, health, distance, or unavailability of family assistance.

Any previously circulated statements of policy that may be inconsistent with the foregoing are superceded by this document.

Direct any question to the ward or stake family history consultant or to temple personnel. (Quoted from a letter from Boyd K. Packer to Priesthood leaders, dated 6 April 1995.)

2001 family history center Support Letter

The following is a letter submitted by the Family Church History Department in Salt Lake City. They write specifically from their department to the family history center Director with instructions to disseminate the following information:

February 22, 2001

Family and Church History Department
50 East North Temple Street
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150-3400

Dear family history center Director:

Subject: Duplication of Temple Ordinance Work

family history centers help Church members fulfill their family history responsibilities by providing resources that assist them in identifying their ancestors and submitting names to the temple. Using TempleReady software on FamilySearch™ computers, Church members clear the names of their ancestors who need temple ordinance work performed.

Sometimes names are cleared even though the temple ordinance work has been performed previously. This duplication of ordinance work wastes valuable time and resources, is often discouraging to those who later find out they have duplicated work, and further delays work being done for those ancestors who have not yet received their temple ordinances.

TempleReady allows members to check for duplicate submissions in two ways: either they can check
each name they are submitting against the database of completed ordinances, or they can have the computer check all the names at once. Duplication is more likely to occur when the latter option is used, because the computer often does not recognize duplicates with slight variations that members would if they checked each name individually.

To reduce duplication of temple work, family history center directors should instruct members who wish to clear names for temple ordinances to do the following:

- Check names individually in International Genealogical Index (IGI) to see if temple work has been performed before attempting to clear the names in TempleReady.
- Discontinue using the automatic ordinance verification and name clearance option in DOS versions of TempleReady.
- Be sensitive to work that has been previously done. Ordinance work already listed in the International Genealogy Index that may include an error, such as a misspelling or a date that is off by a year or two, does not need to be redone. Even with some errors, if the person is clearly identified, the ordinance work is valid. Also, do not resubmit names of those whose work has already been done but is not yet listed as completed.
- Keep careful records of the names they have submitted. Members using Personal Ancestral File (PAF) should update their PAF databases with the term “submitted” when they create a GEDCOM file to take to TempleReady. (Significant duplication occurs because members resubmit names they previously submitted.)

A new, simplified Windows® version of TempleReady software will be sent to family history centers in mid-March. This version will require Church members to review each name they are submitting for possible duplication. We encourage you to load and use this software as soon as you receive it if you have a computer that is capable of running it.

The Church is striving to provide information on completed ordinances to Church members in a more timely manner. New technologies eventually will allow the Church to update temple ordinance data much more frequently than at present. In the meantime, please implement the foregoing practices.

Sincerely,

Family History Center Support

Unusual Circumstances

As you identify your ancestors and prepare their names for ordinances, you may discover some unusual circumstances. These include, for example, persons presumed dead, persons with mental handicaps, and couples who lived together as husband and wife for whom no marriage record can be found. Instructions on how to handle these and other circumstances are available wherever TempleReady is located. See your ward family history consultant for help (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993, p. 14).
Using TempleReady to Prepare Names for Ordinances

After you have identified which of your kindred dead may need ordinances, use TempleReady, a part of FamilySearch, to prepare their names. With TempleReady for Windows, you—

1. Open either a PAF or a GEDCOM file from Personal Ancestral File or another genealogy program.
2. Check to make sure the information is complete enough to qualify each person for ordinances.
3. Check the International Genealogical Index online to make sure the ordinance work has not already been completed.
4. Copy the names and information for of those kindred dead who need ordinances performed for them onto a diskette.

More information on this procedure is given in *A Member’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work* (1993), pages 14–15. Also, your ward family history consultant, or family history center specialist can help you.

*Make Certain the Ordinances are Performed*

Thus, those living today must perform the physical ordinance work on the earth that will qualify persons in the spirit world to receive that proxy work done for them, even as we living today receive the proxy work done for us by Jesus Christ. In other words, we work in partnership here on the earth with those missionaries in the spirit world who preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to those persons living in the spirit world, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh. This combination effort can free them from their spiritual prison and heal their bruised souls through Jesus Christ. This is why the members of the Church who can qualify through righteous living must go to the temple in ever increasing numbers and why they must attend the temple more frequently than they have ever done in the past. (Burton, 1970, p. 58).

The steps you should follow next to make certain that ordinances are performed for your kindred dead are in *A Member’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work* (1993), pp. 16–17.

1. Take or send your TempleReady diskette to the temple.
2. Prepare for your visit.
3. Schedule your visit.
4. Attend the temple.
5. Record the ordinance information.

Oh, what a world of labor that [the doctrine of baptism for the dead] has given us! What a joy it has imparted to us! Many felt that they would die cheerfully if they could give to their fathers and mothers
who were dead the blessings that they enjoyed in the Church of Christ. Yet there are many who have not yet put off the ways of the Gentiles, and have not come to this sensibility. We have only just begun with this labor, and perhaps some of us have not begun just right. I recollect when the Prophet Joseph first revealed the baptism for the dead, some went down in the river and were baptized, men for women and women for men. But the Lord soon gave to the Prophet Joseph to organize and systematize the whole thing, and so He will about this order of the fathers being turned and united, bound and sealed to the children, and the children to the fathers; and we will yet have the privilege of seeing our generations connected back. If we continue on and inherit eternal life, we shall see them connected clear back, no doubt, to ancient Noah and to our more ancient Father Adam. In the early days of tribulation in the Church the Lord encouraged the brethren by telling them that they were laying the foundation of a great and mighty work. I recollect how it used to cheer us up in the midst of our persecutions (F. D. Richards, 1987, p. 4: April 7).

Through the whole Gospel there runs the principle of vicarious atonement. Those who are living are redeemed through obedience to law, and the Lord led Paul to ask, “If the dead rise not, why then are ye baptized for the dead?” What a thrill of joy is caused by the invitation which God extends to us: “Come my son, enter the house of God, and thence receive for your fathers and kindred who are dead the ordinances of salvation which they had no opportunity to receive while living” (J. H. Smith, 1987, 1:103).
Chapter 12

Research in Extended Generations

Many members feel prompted by the Spirit to continue to do research beyond the first few generations. This involves searching in original sources, many of which are available in family history centers. This research is more difficult and requires knowledge and skills beyond what members as a whole are expected to acquire.

Chapter 12 Objectives:

- Understand the importance of research in extended generations.
- Learn the basic services and resources of a family history center™.
- Learn how to use the family history center reference collection.
- Learn the research process.

Suggested Readings:


Chapter 12 Outline:

- Research for Difficult-to-Find Ancestors
- Resources and Services of a family history center
- The Five-Step Research Process
- Two Types of Family History Sources
- Repositories of Family History Sources
Research for Difficult to Find Ancestors

Members of the Church are counseled to prayerfully seek for their kindred dead, focusing their efforts on those whose names are readily available.

Don’t forget the powerful influence the Spirit can have in helping you to identify your ancestors. As you exercise faith, names and information thought to be unavailable may come to you in unexpected ways and places. If you are not able to find information about an ancestor, be patient. In the meantime, ask the Lord to direct your attention to other ancestors whose information is more accessible (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993, p. 4).

However, those ancestors whose names are difficult to find also need temple ordinances. So that they may receive them, many members and nonmembers have been prompted by the Spirit to do research beyond readily accessible generations. Doing research for difficult-to-find ancestors is described in A Member’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work (1993) as an additional “opportunity to serve.”

What you do and how much you do at a particular time depends on guidance from the Spirit, your circumstances and abilities, what your family members have already accomplished, and direction from Church leaders (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993, p. 6).

This, and the following two chapters of the syllabus, will introduce you to family history research in original sources. As you learn more about this research, you are encouraged to seek guidance from the Lord and listen to the promptings of the Spirit regarding what extended research you should do.

I believe the youth are not only willing and able to do genealogical research, but they are a good means of giving life to the whole program. How often have the youth actually been driven away by those who would close the door on genealogy to them, or at the best, insist that they must “drink milk” when they are ready for the “meat” (Benson, 1988, p. 163).

Genealogy is not alone for the old but for the young as well. Young minds are keen and alert and resourceful, all of which is needed for research (E. G. Smith, 1962, p. 66).

Of course, the major reason why we do research is to provide ordinances for the dead.

...We are carrying forward a mighty undertaking of family history research so that a work of redemption might go forward in behalf of millions who have passed beyond the veil of death (Hinckley, 1993, p. 75).

In addition to providing more of your ancestors with the ordinances of the temple, extended family history research helps you become intimately acquainted with them. You may also find enough information to write a history of your family.
One of the most thrilling results of being involved in family research and genealogical research is
becoming intimately acquainted with our ancestors—their challenges and achievements—and then
showing our gratitude by performing for them the ordinances that will allow them to obtain the greatest
of all gifts—the gift of eternal life (Haight, 1991, p. 77).

Also, I seriously doubt that you will ever turn your own heart more to your own fathers than by writing
your family history. You must know a lot about them before you can write it. This will lead you to much
in depth research. I promise you will love them when you become acquainted with them. They were
noble people, and they sacrificed much to give you the heritage you have today. They deserve the best
you can give them, which of course is membership in the Church and the kingdom of God and the
sealing of their loved ones to them. (Rector, 1981, p. 74).

**Resources and Services of Family History Centers**

Family history centers are located throughout the world. Each has a basic collection of records and
research publications to assist researchers. Many of the centers have the FamilySearch computer files.
Most records available on microfilm or microfiche at the Family History Library may be ordered for use
at the centers (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1994, p. 2).

The Utah Valley Regional Family History Center is located in the Harold B. Lee Library. As you study
this chapter, you should visit this or another nearby family history center to become familiar with their
services and resources.

To your silent questions, Where should I begin? What should I do? we say, seek out those who are
called to direct this work in your ward or branch. Go to your family history center and the temple.
Identify those of your ancestors whose identity may be lost to human memory. Get started now, and the
Lord will help you (Tingey, 1991, p. 27).

In addition to family history centers worldwide, the Church has established a FamilySearch Center in
the Joseph Smith Memorial Building in Salt Lake City. Thousands of local residents and visitors to Salt
Lake use the FamilySearch Center each year.

More and more people are becoming excited about discovering their roots, and the Church is doing its
best to help them. The Church adopted the term family history to encourage this activity among all its
members, especially those who might be intimidated by the word genealogy. In addition, 2,150 busy and
productive family history centers have been established throughout the world. For example, the
FamilySearch Center in the Joseph Smith Memorial Building has served hundreds of thousands of
visitors, at least two thirds of whom have found something in the computer file about their ancestors
Microfilm Circulation

Patrons at family history centers use the Family History Library Catalog (FHLC) to identify records in the possession of the Family History Library. The Family History Library has a collection of over 2 million rolls of microfilms of original source materials from throughout the world. Patrons may request that microfilm copies of records they would like to search be sent to the center. A small circulation fee is charged. Microfilms must remain in the center for use until they are returned to the Family History Department.

Reference Collection

Most family history centers have a collection of reference materials in book, microfilm, and microfiche format. These include finding aids (e.g., indexes) and sources that provide background information (e.g., maps and gazetteers). When you use a center, you should become familiar with the reference tools for the locality you are researching. Some of the key reference tools you should be aware of are:

- **Directories**: Sources that list names and addresses in alphabetical order. They often list all adult residents of a city or area, or all residents that have telephones.
- **Gazetteers**: Sources that list geographical localities in alphabetical order, and give brief descriptions. A gazetteer is a geographical dictionary.
- **Indexes**: Sources that list key genealogical information in alphabetical order, such as census indexes.
- **Inventories, Registers, Catalogs**: Descriptions of the holdings of repositories, such as libraries.
- **Maps**: Sources that show geographic boundaries and features. Various types of maps are used in family history research, including:
  - Political maps that show national, state, county or other political boundaries.
  - Plat maps that show property boundaries.
  - Topographic maps that show physical and manmade features.
  - Land ownership or “cadastral” maps that show the names of land owners in an area.
Atlases: Historical atlases may show boundaries, migration routes, settlement patterns, military campaigns, Native American reservations, etc., for a period of history.

Research Outlines: Brief guides prepared by the Family History Department that describe the major sources and reference materials available for the United States, each individual state, and many foreign countries.

Guides, Textbooks: Sources that explain the key principles and procedures of how to do genealogical research. Textbooks for a given geographic area will also explain sources for that locality.

Ask a family history center specialist to show you what reference materials are available. Family history centers also have other books and compact discs.

Research Help

Family history center specialists can help you begin identifying your ancestors. When you start doing research in the center, ask the specialist what resources and services are available to help you. Some specialists may have background in research sources and procedures for the specific locality you are searching, or they may know of genealogists in the community who are willing to answer your questions and give suggestions. Even if there is little help available locally, you can still find answers to research questions by completing a Reference Questionnaire. The family history center will send it to the Family History Library in Salt Lake City.

Family history centers operate worldwide to permit access to our vast record resources. You will find them staffed with sensitive, understanding volunteers who want to help. Through research guides, telefax, and correspondence, these centers are fortified by the impressive capabilities of the Salt Lake City Family History Library (Scott, 1990, p. 6).

FamilySearch

We know that God our Father is our greatest teacher, and nothing that we might read or hear should quicken our attention like His instructions and counsel. These marvelous new technological developments have been revealed in this dispensation in greater fulness and greater plainness than ever before in the history of the world as far as we know so that his purposes might be speedily brought to pass. The Church, in establishing family history centers, is now bringing these marvelous developments directly to you (Haight, 1991, p. 77).
Many brilliant minds and sensitive hearts have harnessed advanced technology to provide personal computer helps to simplify family history work. Under the descriptive title of FamilySearch®, these powerful computer aided resources are now available in family history centers in the United States and Canada... (Scott, 1990, p. 6).

Copy Services

Check to see what copy services are available at your family history center. Many centers have equipment for making copies of microfilm and microfiche, as well as books. For a small fee, the Family History Library makes copies in its photoduplication unit for patrons who have access to microfilm readers but not copiers.

The Five-Step Research Process

As you do family history research, you will typically follow five steps. These steps, taken in sequence, are called the “research process.” These are:

**Step 1: Identify What You Know About Your Family**
This step includes filling out a pedigree chart and family group records with what you already know about your family, gathering additional information from home sources and relatives, and organizing your records for easy access. An ancestor chart is included in Appendix E.

**Step 2: Decide What You Want to Learn About Your Family**
This step involves selecting a specific ancestor about whom you would like to know more, determining what you would like to know about that ancestor, and preparing a research log.

**Step 3: Select Records to Search**
This step involves identifying the category of record you need to search to find out what you would like to know. This record category might be a compiled record, an original record, or a reference source. The step then involves identifying the specific record to be searched next, and describing it in your research log.

**Step 4: Obtain and Search the Record**
This step involves obtaining the record from the Family History Library, or another repository, searching it, and recording the results of the search on your log. You may also make an extract or photocopy of that information.
Step 5: Use the Information

This step includes submitting names for temple ordinances, submitting information to Pedigree Resource File, posting information on the Internet, writing family histories, sharing information with other family members and other uses of the information.

More complete information about the five-step research process is provided in A Guide to Research from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1994).

Two Types of Family History Sources

Sources of genealogical information about ancestors can be divided into two basic categories: compiled records and original records. Examples of compiled sources are Ancestral File and other genealogy computer databases (such as those found on the Internet), compiled genealogies (such as printed family histories), and biographies. Examples of original sources are birth certificates, marriage certificates, death certificates, census records, church records, and diaries.

Compiled records are:

Records of previous research on individuals and families already done by others, such as family histories, biographies, or genealogies with pedigree charts and family group records. Though compiled records are very helpful, some information may be inaccurate or incomplete.... Always carefully evaluate the information you find (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1994, p. 5).

Original records are:

created at the time of important events in your ancestors’ lives. For example, a local Church or the local government may have recorded your ancestors’ births, christenings, marriages, and burials (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1994, p. 5).

When doing genealogical research, you should check compiled sources first to determine what has been done by other people, then search original records. When doing genealogy, you should work from the known to the unknown.

The Family History Library has published a research help program called Research Guidance online at www.familysearch.org. This program is a step-by-step guide to doing research based on a specific research goal (i.e., locality and time period). It has information about history, particular sources, and links to Internet sites and the Family History Library Catalog.
Repositories of Family History Sources

Family history research requires the use of a variety of records that provide information about our kindred dead. Subsequent chapters will discuss many of the records available for research, and the content of those records. However, all of those records must “reside” somewhere, and in order to successfully use genealogical records, researchers must also learn about the places records are kept. The many places that house records are collectively called repositories. No one library or archive has all the records needed to locate ancestral families, so it is important to learn about the wide variety and different kinds of repositories, each with different rules and methods of access. The following are the most common repositories for North American records, as well as the records of many European countries.

Original Records Creator

Every record used in family history research was originally created by an individual, institution, organization, company or similar group. Some record creators are public organizations (such as local governments), while others are private persons or companies (such as a local funeral home). That creator may still be the custodian of the record. This is particularly the case with private organizations, where laws and regulations regarding the storage and preservation of records may not pertain. It is often useful, when seeking genealogical records, to determine who created the record of interest, and then contact that creator regarding access to the records of interest.

County Courthouse

In North America, many records of genealogical value were (and are) created at the local county level. Typically such records are housed in courthouses (and/or town halls for the six New England States). They may include land deeds, probate files, court cases, marriage records, birth and death records, and a wide variety of lesser-used records. These are the records created in the day-to-day operations of a county. They are generally considered public records, and can usually be obtained by visiting the local courthouse. Some more recent records, typically vital records, might be restricted to persons who are the subject of the records, for privacy reasons.

Archives

The primary purpose of an archive is to preserve records that have historical value. Typically, when the original record creator (usually a governmental agency, but also private organizations) determines that some of the records they created in the past are no longer needed for day-to-day operations, they seek a place to store those records, for possible future use. Usually these are the original records, such as marriage records or probate files, of government agencies. Therefore, governments at all levels (federal,
state, county) establish an archival system. Working in conjunction with archivists, the record creating agency determines which ones will be kept under what conditions and for how long.

The records are then transferred to the custody of the responsible archive, but are still considered the property of the agency/organization that created the record. Usually that agency will determine who can access the records, and under what conditions. After the records have been kept for the duration of their retention plan (often 20 to 70 years) they may be destroyed, discarded, or given to another organization with interest in the materials. Some records have permanent value and are kept forever. Typically in the United States, these include land transactions, probate files, census records, vital records, immigration documents, etc.

Archives usually store records based on the way in which they were created. Often this is chronologically, so indexes are usually needed to identify records pertinent to a specific person. The records themselves, with appropriate finding aids (indexes, guides, etc.) are described in collection inventories which identify the specific record group, box, shelf, collection number or other access number(s) assigned by the archive.

Often key records are copied on microfilm (or a comparable storage media). This aids in storage space issues, helps to preserve the record, while also providing reasonable access to all persons entitled to view the records. Once microfilmed, the retention schedule may call for the original documents to be destroyed. Currently, many original records, and printed sources, are being digitized.

Libraries

Libraries are the record repository most familiar to the beginning family historian. Typically considered a “home for books,” libraries are actually an incredibly designed system for sharing information. As such, they have a much different purpose than archives. Libraries primarily collect published materials, and in today’s world that includes books, magazines, journals, newspapers, some microfilm, and electronic media (CD-ROMs and DVDs). They also provide Internet access to the public.

The specific collection of a given library is determined by the audience the library serves. Most libraries are public libraries, operated by a city or county and serve the general population, including genealogists. Some public libraries, especially those serving larger populations, have excellent genealogical collections. Academic libraries (at colleges or universities) often have valuable material for family historians. Some special libraries (which may be privately funded) also have very good genealogical collections.

Among the genealogical materials at libraries, researchers will find published histories of families and localities, indexes to records, abstracts and extracts of key records (such as probate, cemetery, or tax records), periodicals, and a wide variety of reference materials. Like all the holdings of a library, these
materials are described in the library’s catalog, which describes material by the author, title, and subjects (content) of the publication. Most library catalogs are online.

**Historical Societies**

Historical societies exist for many counties, towns, and other local and state jurisdictions. These may be government or membership funded organizations whose objectives are to preserve and explore the history of the locality, or of a specific topic. They often serve as an archive for specific material pertinent to the institution’s mission. The collection will also include publications, making such societies a kind of mix of both library and archive.

**Publishers**

An often overlooked kind of “repository” for genealogical material are the publishers who provide both print and/or electronic versions of significant genealogical material. While many such works are self-published (by the author), most are published by a number of small publishers who focus on family history materials. In addition to selling copies to genealogical libraries, they sell to individuals through their own catalogs, Internet sites, and vendors.

**Internet**

The single largest repository for genealogical material today is the Internet. As discussed in a later chapter (see chapter 16), the Internet includes a vast number of genealogical websites with a wide variety of information. Although the amount of genealogical data on the Internet continues to grow at an accelerated pace, there is still only a small percent of available genealogical records on the Internet. All of the different kinds of records found in archives and libraries may appear on the Internet, including compilations of dubious quality. However, the ease of access, through general search engines along with major and minor genealogical websites, makes the Internet one of the first repositories to search for family history information. Remember to use the Internet with caution—especially compiled genealogies. Always verify your sources.
Chapter 13

Finding Your Ancestors in Census Records

Search census records to find information, names, ages, birthplaces, and residences of ancestral families.

Chapter 13 Objectives:

- Learn how to use the Family History Library Catalog (FHLC) to find information about your ancestors.
- Learn how to find information describing your ancestors in census records.
- Become familiar with the location of census records in the Utah Valley Regional Family History Center in the Harold B. Lee Library (HBLL) at BYU.
- Become familiar with census indexes.
- Learn how to use census reference materials in the Harold B. Lee Library.

Chapter 13 Outline:

- United States Census Records
- Foreign Census Records

NOTE: See Appendix Q of this syllabus for Soundex Instructions.
See Appendix R of this syllabus for the U.S. Census Data, 1790–1930, for content of the US census schedules.
See Appendix S of this syllabus for Websites with Free BYU Subscriptions.

United States Census Records

In 1790 the first United States census was compiled for the purpose of determining the number of delegates each state could send to the House of Representatives (one delegate for every 30,000 people). Federal census records have been compiled every ten years thereafter.
Information in Census Records

- Head of the household (1790–1840 census) and number of family members (male and female).
- Gender and approximate age of those in the household (beginning with 1850 census).
- All members of the household, with names, ages and birthplaces—state or country only (beginning with 1850 census).
- Parents’ birthplaces—state or country (beginning with 1880 census); relationship to head of household.
- For foreign-born persons, the year of immigration and naturalization (beginning with 1900 census). The 1900 census also contains the month and year of an individual’s birth.

Information in Indexes to United States Federal Census Records from 1790–1880

- Printed indexes and on CD-ROM, 1790–1860 (some for later years).
- 1880 US census available online at www.familysearch.org (also on CD).
- Indexed by name of head of household.
- Names of district/town and county of residence for each head of household.
- Provides volume/page numbers of the original census record.
- Soundex indexes for 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920 census schedules and 1930 for some southern states.
- Indexes are available at the Family History Library, HBLL, and other libraries.
- Indexes and 1790–1930 census population schedules are on line at www.ancestry.com and at www.heritagequest.com (see Appendix Q for a comparison chart between www.ancestry.com and www.heritagequest.com, along with instructions on how to access each web site.)
### State and Territorial Census Records

Research outlines for each state will tell if there are any state or territorial censuses.

- For those states that took a state census, they sometimes contain more information than federal census records:
  - County or town of birth
  - Number of years of residency in the state

### Information in Mortality Schedules from United States Census Records

- Taken for the years 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880
- Names of persons who died within the census year (usually from 31 May of the year preceding the census through 30 May of the census year)
- Birthplace (state or country only)
- Age at death
- Cause of death

The censuses taken in 1880 (partial), 1900, 1910 (partial), 1920, and 1930 (partial) have been Soundex indexed: Names that sound alike (Snydar, Snyder, Snider) have been grouped together for indexing purposes.

### Soundex Census Records

- U. S. Census 1880, only households with children age ten years old and under
- U. S. Census 1900 and 1920 are completely Soundexed
- U. S. Census 1910 for some states (Soundex index and Miracode)
- U.S. Census 1930 for some southern states

The 1890 federal census was almost completely destroyed by a fire in 1921.
To determine a Soundex code for a surname, use one of the following:

1. Personal Ancestral File under “Tools.”
2. Soundex computer in the Utah Valley Regional Family History Center (UVRFHC) at BYU.
3. Look in Appendix O in this syllabus for Soundex Instructions. These instructions are also included in census registers at the UVRFHC.

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**Helps for Finding Your Ancestor in Census Records**

- Check the appropriate census index and look for alternate spellings.
- Check the Family History Library Catalog (FHLC) locality section for your state (and country) under “Census records,” or use the census microfilm register at the Family History Library or the family history center in the HBLL.
- Write to the state historical societies or state archives for census information.
- Check the Family History Library Catalog (FHLC) topics “Military records” or “Schools” or “Taxation” for special census and tax rolls that served as census substitutes, especially for the 1890 census.
- See State Census Records (Lainhart, 1992) for a complete listing of state census records.
- Check every census schedule through 1930 in which a family appears. Note the family birthplaces, such as “Iowa” or “Ohio,” which may show a family’s migration.
- Look for all children of the ancestral family; elderly parents often lived with one of their children.

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Many censuses have been partially extracted and published on CD, in book form, or on the Internet. A complete survey by state and county has been published in Thomas Jay Kemp’s *The American Census Handbook* (2001).

**Foreign Census Records**

Most foreign countries kept census records. England and Wales began keeping census records in 1801, whereas Denmark began census records in 1769 and Norway in the 1600s. These records are described
in genealogical guidebooks found in the Family History Library Catalog (FHLC). If the census you need has not been filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, write to the national archives of the country and request the needed records. An archivist will respond and indicate where the records are housed and if they are accessible to the public. For an overview of census records in several countries, see The Handbook of National Population Censuses (Goyer 1992). Addresses of archives in other countries can be found on the Internet or in The World of Learning (Europa Publications 1994).

At www.familysearch.org the 1881 British Isles census is online along with the 1881 Canadian Census. They can also be purchased on CD.

Cautions in Using Census Records

- Children dying in infancy or children moving away from the parental home before the census was taken are not included
- What appears to be a child before 1880 may be a niece or nephew
- The wife in the census may not be the mother of the children in the household
- Ages and birthplaces are sometimes wrong and often inconsistent from one census to another
- Some families do not appear on the census records

Helpful Guides to Census Records


Chapter 14
Finding Your Ancestors in Civil and Church Records

Search civil and church records to find information about the births, marriages and deaths of your ancestors.

Chapter 14 Objectives:

- Learn how to use the Family History Library Catalog (FHLC) to find information on your ancestors.
- Learn techniques for corresponding within the United States and in foreign countries.
- Learn how to search in civil and church records for your ancestors.
- Become familiar with the location of civil and church records in the Utah Valley Regional Family History Center (UVRFHC) in the Harold B. Lee Library (HBLL).

Chapter 14 Outline:

- Using the Family History Library Catalog to Find the Locality of your Ancestor’s Residence
- Correspondence in the United States and Other Countries
- Vital Records
- Church Records

Using the Family History Library Catalog to Find the Locality of Your Ancestor’s Residence

The Family History Library Catalog (FHLC) locality search enables you to locate records the Family History Library has collected from various places. In the United States, records have been recorded on the town, county, state, and national levels. The following chart shows what types of records were kept on which level.
In most foreign countries the basic religious record-keeping unit was the parish. Each parish included
the inhabitants of villages and towns in its jurisdiction that gathered in one of the towns for Sunday
worship. Priests of the parish kept church books called parish registers, in which they recorded
christenings, marriages, burials, and other details relating to members of their congregation. Many
ancestors lived in rural areas or small villages in which no parish church existed. They traveled to a
nearby town to have children christened or marriages solemnized in the parish church there.

Civil jurisdictions that recorded biographical information in the past were manor courts, probate and
clerical districts, civil registration districts, archdeaconries, and bishoprics. In Denmark, for example, a
peasant’s land rental was filed with the lord of an estate or with district officials. In Germany, wills,
land records and similar documents were filed with a town or district clerk or a notary. To comply with
laws requiring registration of births, marriages, and deaths, people went to the vital records registrar in
their town. If their community had no registrar, individuals went to a nearby town whose registrar had
jurisdiction for their village.

When using the Family History Library Catalog to find civil records from an ancestor’s hometown,
refer to a gazetteer. A gazetteer is a geographical dictionary that describes the jurisdictions that kept
records about the people in a given community. Gazetteers can be found in public libraries and college
libraries. Most family history centers have microfiche or microfilm copies of gazetteers for most nations.
To find gazetteers for a specific country, use the Family History Library Catalog, go to “Locality
Search,” look under the name of the country and the topic “Gazeteers”. If the name of the parish town
or civil registrar’s office with jurisdiction over an ancestor’s village can be found in a gazetteer, it is easy
to find microfilmed church or civil records in the Family History Library that describe ancestral
families. Enter the name of the parish town—not the residence of ancestors—into the parish or town
search of the Family History Library Catalog. If no records are found under the parish town’s name, a
letter to the parish office should produce copies of forebears’ christening, marriage, and burial records. The same procedure works to find vital and other records for people who lived in communities that had no registrar. Write to the town listed in the gazetteer as the seat of the registrar of vital records if no records for the town appear in the Family History Library Catalog.

### Information in a Gazetteer

- Usually describes the county in which the city or town is located.
- Identifies jurisdictions of courts and vital records’ offices.
- Lists congregations/churches in the larger cities.
- Lists canals, mountain ranges, rivers, natural barriers to migration, and transportation networks.
- Note: If you are looking at records from the 1840s, a gazetteer printed in 1847 may prove more valuable than one printed in the twentieth century.

### Correspondence in the United States and Other Countries

Before beginning correspondence, check and double check the holdings of the Family History Library in Salt Lake City by selecting Family History Library Catalog in FamilySearch (DOS or online) or by searching the microfiche Family History Library Catalog. After you have reviewed the massive collection and identified missing information within the collection, begin correspondence. Addresses are easy to find. Consult *The Genealogist’s Address Book* (Bentley 1998) for a start. You will also find that many federal, state, and local government agencies as well as churches have Internet home pages. The book *World of Learning* (Europa Publications 1994) contains addresses of archives and libraries in all the countries of the world.

Modern research by correspondence may be made by telephone, FAX, or e-mail. A phone call to a mortuary or sexton’s office to ascertain the records that exist and whether employees can help with specific requests will speed your family history research.

As courtesies are appropriate for telephone or FAX communication, courtesies also apply to written letters. For example, enclose two or three international postal reply coupons when writing to a library or individual in a foreign country. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) with your correspondence within the United States.

Keep your correspondence brief and direct. Include a family group record or pedigree chart showing
your relationship to the ancestor and why the question of your ancestry is so important to you. Most frequently you will correspond with county officials responsible for courthouse collections of probates, deeds, and marriage records; sextons responsible for cemetery records; and state historical societies that preserve important historical and genealogical documents.

Correspondence Made Easy:

- U.S. state and country research outlines published by the Family History Department contain helpful addresses and information about sources and where these sources are housed in archives and repositories throughout the world.
- When seeking vital statistics for your ancestry, check *The Handy Book for Genealogists* (Everton 2002), *Ancestry's Red Book: American State, County & Town Sources*, or *International Vital Records Handbook* (Kemp 2000), and *The Genealogist’s Address Book* (Bentley 1998) found in the Center for Family History and Genealogy family history computer lab or in the BYU Harold B. Lee Library (HBLL).
- For genealogical societies in specific geographic area, search the *Directory of Genealogical Societies in the U.S.A. and Canada* (Meyer 1992) in the HBLL or *The Genealogist’s Address Book* (Bentley 1998) in the computer lab or the HBLL.
- Review back issues of genealogical journals/publications relating to your geographical area of research. Many of these are in the periodical collection in the HBLL. The Periodical Source Index (PERSI) on CD, at HeritageQuest.com, or Ancestry.com will guide you to articles about your ancestors and the towns in which they lived. PERSI is available in the computer lab and the HBLL.
- Look for articles pertaining to your family surnames or the times and places your ancestors lived. Contact authors of the articles by writing the editor or publisher.
- Place advertisements and inquiries in genealogical periodicals. Search the ads from other persons. Copy names of persons whose ads relate to your research interests. Ads or articles several years old can still be valuable. Often the individual who placed the ad is willing to correspond. Two popular genealogical periodicals are *The Genealogical Helper* and *Heritage Quest*. They can be found in most public libraries. The latest issues of both magazines are available in the HBLL periodical reading room.
- Join genealogical societies located in ancestral towns, counties, or states.
- An advertisement in a society journal may lead to relatives who have a family Bible, old letters, photos, deeds, naturalization records, research files, etc.
- Write to libraries in the towns where ancestors lived for a listing of local and family history materials in their collections.

You may need to hire a professional genealogist to help with foreign-language materials or difficult family lines. For a current list of genealogists and areas of their expertise, write to specific archives throughout the world. A good resource website for locating professional genealogists is the
International Commission for the Accreditation of Professional Genealogists site or ICAPGen found at www.icapgen.org/Programs/aglist.htm.

**Vital Records**

Vital Records are government records of births, marriages, and deaths.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information in Vital Records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Birth certificates—name, date and place of birth, parents’ names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Marriage certificates—date and place of marriage, name of bride and groom and their ages, places of residence, witnesses’ names, and sometimes parents’ names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Death certificates—name of deceased, date and place of death, age, residence, cause of death, spouse, parents, occupation, date and place of burial, and sometimes date and place of birth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Traditionally, counties kept birth, marriage, and death records prior to about 1900. In the twentieth century, states have kept the birth, marriage, and death records. Many of the state and county vital records have been filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah. For United States vital records, check Family History Library Catalog listings under “Vital Records.” Vital records in most counties in the United States began in the nineteenth century; however, New England towns began keeping records in the seventeenth century. For vital records of foreign countries, check the Family History Library Catalog under “Civil Registration.” Civil registration of births, marriages and deaths began in England and Wales in 1837, in France and western Germany in 1792, and in Scandinavia only recently. *The International Vital Records Handbook* (Kemp 2000) provides addresses of vital records offices in the United States and in many other countries.

There is always more information available in county courthouses than what has been filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah. If the vital records you are seeking have not been filmed, you may want to contact the Family History Library to see if the records are in their collection.

Family History Library
35 North West Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150
801-240-2331
Other Sources for Vital Record Information

- Cemetery and sexton’s records
- Mortuary records
- Newspaper notices of birth, marriage, and death
- Emigration/immigration records
- Military records
- Headstones—use the following methods to preserve the information found on headstones:
  - Take a flash photo at an angle using black and white film of the stone at night to reveal an inscription not immediately visible.
  - Make a gravestone rubbing—trace or rub the stone with leads (or dark shoe polish) on tracing paper. Using charcoal chalk on a white stone or white chalk on a dark stone can also “bring out” the inscription. Be sure to speak with the sexton first; many older headstones are quite fragile.
  - Squirt the stone with a 1:2 vinegar-water solution and wipe it clean with a soft cloth or knock off “barnacles” with a straw-bristled scrubbing brush.

Church Records

Ministers of various congregations recorded christenings (baptisms), marriages, burials, and other events in the lives of the people they served.

Dominant Religions in the United States

- Baptists and Episcopalians—North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, South Carolina, and Georgia
- Congregational—New England, Ohio, Midwest
- Roman Catholics—New York City, Chicago, and Boston
- Methodists
- Quakers—Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, New Jersey
- Lutherans—Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, and Washington
Traditionally, church records were preserved in a safe or strongbox in the local church. Some of the records are still in the local churches. Write to the church your ancestors may have attended—or to a nearby church of the same denomination—to learn where needed records are today.

Dominant Religions in Europe

- Anglican (Church of England)—England
- Presbyterian (Church of Scotland)—Scotland and northern Ireland
- Catholic—Ireland, France, Spain, Italy, Belgium and Germany
- Lutheran—Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Germany
- Reformed Church—the Netherlands, parts of Germany, and Switzerland

Information in Church Records

- Christenings—child's name, parents’ names, godparents'/witnesses’ names, date of christening
- Marriages—date of marriage, names of bride and groom, and sometimes the names of parents
- Burials—date of burial, deceased’s name and age, and sometimes residence

Check the Family History Library Catalog (FHLC) under your locality of interest and the heading “Church Records” to see if the records you need have been filmed. Search “Parish and Vital Records Listings” (on printout and microfiche at the Family History Library or local LDS family history center) to see if the records of interest have been extracted and processed for temple ordinances.
Chapter 14: Finding Your Ancestors in Civil and Church Records

Records of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Records of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are available on microfilm in the Family History Library and the Family and Church History Department (second floor, east wing of the Church Office Building) in Salt Lake City. These records include ward and branch records, patriarchal blessings, LDS census records, indexes, Church histories, temple books, and others. Besides these valuable records, check the Temple Index Bureau and the Family Group Records Collection (FGRC).

Temple Records Index Bureau

The Temple Index Bureau (TIB) is a 3 x 5-inch card index of endowments for both the living and the dead between 1842 through 1969. The TIB contains over 30 million index cards; they are on microfilm at the Harold B. Lee Library. Access to the TIB microfilms requires a temple recommend or letter of recommendation from your current bishop.

Searching On-Site Church Records

- Ask for absolutions (records of persons absolved for nonattendance at church, fornication, etc.)
- Ask to see pew rental and church account books
- Search confirmation registers (Lutheran children were confirmed at age 14)
- Search lists of paupers
- Search arrival and removal records
During the 1900s work was done for many individuals while they were still living, and even though they are now deceased, their names may not be included in the Ordinance Index or the International Genealogy Index. Your parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents may be included in these names, and you can check the TIB to find their ordinance dates.

Family Group Records Collection

The Family Group Records Collection (FGRC) is a collection of family group records submitted to the Family History Library between 1942–1969. Microfilm copies of the Family Group Records Collection are available in the Family History Library in Salt Lake City and in the BYU Harold B. Lee Library. An asterisk (*) beside any name on the family group record refers to another submission found in the same collection. The FGRC consists of a Main Section and a Patron Section. There are over 8 million family group records in the Family Group Records Collection.

Information on Temple Index Bureau Cards

- Name and gender of deceased
- Birth date and birthplace (sometimes just the state or country of birth)
- Date of death
- Parents’ names (sometimes father’s year of birth)
- Marriage date
- Spouse’s name
- Temple ordinances dates (information varies)
- Sometimes name of person who acted as proxy
- Name of temple, book and page numbers

Helpful Research Guides


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**Guides to Vital Records**


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**Guides to Church Records**


Genealogy. Baltimore: Genealogical.
Chapter 15

Finding Your Ancestors in Immigration, Probate, Land, and Military Records

To find additional information on your ancestors, search in immigration, probate, land, and military records. These records contain important vital statistics and biographical entries. Since 1938 the Church has acquired copies of these records on microfilm and microfiche. You can search on the Family History Library Catalog (FHLC) for records from areas where your ancestors lived. Any of the microfilms listed there are available to loan at any family history center.

Chapter 15 Objectives:

- Learn how to find biographical information in passenger arrival lists and naturalization records.
- Know the value of wills, administration papers, and probate records in family history research.
- Learn how to find genealogical information in land and military records.
- Become familiar with immigration, probate, land, and military records in the Utah Valley Regional Family History Center (in the HBLL).

Chapter 15 Outline:

- Immigration to the United States
- Passenger Arrival Lists
- Records in the U.S. National Archives
- Naturalization Records
- Probate Records
- Land Records (Deeds and Mortgages)
- Military Records
- War Pensions
- Service Records

Immigration to the United States

It is difficult to assess the number of immigrants that have come to America. From 1600 to 1776, statisticians conclude that 2 million people sought refuge in America. The predominant population
through these early years were from the British Isles. During 1783 to 1820 approximately 500,000 more immigrants arrived from Great Britain and Germany. From 1821 to 1880 over 10 million immigrants came to the United States from England, Ireland, and Germany. It was not until 1881 that large numbers of Italians, Poles, Jews, Greeks, Russians, Slavs, Turks, Armenians, Syrians, and Portuguese came to America, adding an additional 24 million people. Six million more immigrants came from Europe and Asia throughout 1921 to 1950. Ellis Island in New York was the largest port of immigration. New York passenger arrival records are on the Internet at http://www.ellisislandrecords.org. New York Arrivals lists are also available at www.ancestry.com.

### Numbers of Immigrants Arriving in United States Ports from 1820–1920

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>23,960,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>2,050,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>1,460,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>1,240,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Orleans</td>
<td>710,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key West</td>
<td>130,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland-Falmouth</td>
<td>120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galveston</td>
<td>110,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passamaquoddy</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Bedford</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providence</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charleston</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Passenger Arrival Lists

In 1820 the United States Customs Service began keeping a regular list of immigrants. On the compiled lists are written the place of origin and foreign port of embarkation. Customs passenger lists were not kept after the establishment of the Immigration and Naturalization Service passenger lists in 1891. Immigration passenger lists often provide an immigrant’s last place of residence and birthplace. Immigrants who entered the United States through Canadian ports from 1895–1954 may be found in indexes and passenger lists of the St. Albans, Vermont District. They are available on microfilm at family history centers. The films are found in the Family History Library Catalog under the locality: “Vermont—Emigration/Immigration” and “United States—Emigration/Immigration.”
Passenger arrival lists for most American ports exist as microfilm copies in the Family History Library and can be found in the Family History Library Catalog. Passenger embarkation lists for many non-American ports have been microfilmed and are also available in the Family History Library. To find passenger lists for any port, perform a locality or place search in the Family History Library Catalog using the name of the port city. If you are looking for Family History Library copies of emigration records kept by government officials in any county, perform a locality search in the Family History Library Catalog using the name of the country or the name of the state, province, or county within the country in which your ancestor lived. Remember that these records are found under the topic Emigration and Immigration in Family History Library Catalog entries for localities. Also remember that most of the microfilms in the Family History Library Catalog can be ordered for your use by any family history center.

**Records in the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration**

The National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D. C., has four major groups of genealogical records:

1. Federal census schedules, 1790-1930
2. Passenger arrival lists (immigration records) since 1820
3. Military records (pension applications, service records, etc.)
4. Federal land records (homestead records, bounty land records, etc.)

The National Archives also has census indexes, records for Native Americans and African Americans, federal naturalization records, and other federal records. See the *Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives of the United States* (Bruner and Kvasnicka 2000) for more information. Many of these records are available as microfilm copies in the Family History Library and can be loaned to any family history center.

**Naturalization Records**

Naturalization records include Declarations of Intention, Petitions for Citizenship, and Certificates of Naturalization. On the Declaration of Intention, the immigrant renounces allegiance to foreign rulers. Then, after fulfilling the residence requirements, he or she petitions for citizenship. Candidates for citizenship were required to live in the United States for five years. An individual must live at least one year in the state where they file their petition for citizenship. After being granted citizenship by a Court of Record, a Citizenship Certificate of Naturalization is issued. Each certificate is attached to a stub containing a summary of the new citizen’s personal information.
Naturalization applications were processed by district/federal, state, county, or other local courts. On 27 September 1906, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) began filing copies of all naturalization applications. To obtain a copy of your ancestor’s naturalization records after 26 September 1906, contact the INS District Office of the area where your ancestors lived or the INS Office in your community.

**Information on Naturalization Records**

- Petitioner’s age
- Name changes
- Birthplace
- Port of debarkation
- Marital status
- Mailing address
- Names of spouse and children

**Helpful Resources for Naturalization Records**

- The Works Progress Administration (WPA) inventories for U.S. counties describes county records; to find these inventories, search the Family History Library Catalog for the county in which ancestors lived under the topic “Archives—Inventories.”
- Search Family History Library Catalog listings under county and state for “Archives and libraries—Inventories” and “Naturalization and citizenship.”
- County courthouses and state archives maintain declarations, petitions, and naturalization certificate stubs that describe ancestors.
- *Guide to Naturalization Records of the United States* by Christina K. Schaefer (1997) includes information about naturalization records for each state and county, with addresses and phone numbers for repositories.
Probate records divide a deceased person’s estate among the heirs. Some of the most important probate records include wills and administrations (admons). If an individual dies after making a will, he or she dies “testate.” The estate of the “intestate,” or the individual who dies without a will, is probated according to the terms of a letter of administration (admon).
Chapter 15: Finding Your Ancestors in Immigration, Probate, Land, and Military Records

Information in a Typical Will

- Testator’s name
- Date of will
- Bequests to spouse and children of real estate and chattel (bedsteads, farm implements, etc.)
- Relationships
- Bequests to friends
- Instructions to the executor charged with overseeing the terms of the will
- Testator’s signature or seal
- Witnesses’ signatures

Information in Administration Papers

- Death date of person whose estate is under administration
- Name of the administrator, often the surviving spouse or eldest son
- Names of creditors or debtors
- Estate inventory
- Occupation of the deceased
- Seldom lists all of the children. Those who died before the testator or who previously received their inheritance may not be named.
- A testator’s wife may not necessarily be the mother of the children named. The term “cousin” often means “niece” or “nephew.” The term “in-law” is a catchall word for any degree of relationship. “Brother” or “sister” may not imply blood relationship.
Helpful Sources for Finding Probate Records

- In the United States, county courts have jurisdiction over probate matters.
- Check United States county listings in the Family History Library Catalog with a subject search for “Probate records.” If the matter involves orphans and guardians, search the Family History Library Catalog for records under the topic “Guardianship.”
- Ancestry’s Red Book, revised edition, edited by Alice Eichholz (1992), provides the correct name and year probate records commenced in the specific county probate court.
- In Great Britain, search ecclesiastical court records for probate records before 1858. After 1858 check the Principle Probate Registry. Refer to David Pratt’s (1992a) Researching British Probates for more information.

Research Tip

Many research methodology articles have been published in genealogical periodicals. The Periodical Source Index (PERSI) on compact disc, www.ancestry.com or www.heritagequest.com can be used to locate information. Methodology articles are also published online. Search www.ancestry.com and www.genealogy.com for examples or use a standard Internet search engine.

*The American Genealogist* (also contains scholarly compiled genealogies). New Haven, Conn.: D.L. Jacobus


*Genealogical Journal* (Utah Genealogical Association)

*Heritage Quest.* Orting, WA: Heritage Quest International Genealogy Forum.


Land Records: Deeds and Mortgages

Deeds and mortgages are land records that verify the title of a property purchased from a grantor (seller) and sold to a grantee (buyer). Search for deeds in the Family History Library Catalog under the county of residence in the United States or the state/province, manor, district or notary office having jurisdiction in Europe. The subject heading for all land records in the Family History Library Catalog is
“Land and Property.” Deeds and mortgages are usually indexed by grantor or grantee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information found in Deeds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The date the land was sold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name, residence, and occupation of grantor and grantee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The amount paid by the grantee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous owners of the property (sometimes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of grantor’s wife when she released her right to the property.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detailed description of the property, sometimes including names of nearby neighbors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The date the transaction was recorded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether the property was inherited under provisions of a will, military bounty, or homestead.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Valuable Land Records Available at County Clerk’s Offices or the Family History Library</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax lists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey maps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bounty land warrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land lotteries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mineral/mining entries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Military Records**

The most valuable U.S. military records for family historians are pension applications submitted by soldiers or their surviving spouse. The Family History Library has a large collection of pension records. They can be found in the Family History Library Catalog by searching under “United States Military Records.”
Information on Military Pension Applications

- Birth date and place
- Age at enlistment
- Regiment
- Physical description (hair, eye color, height, distinguishing marks)
- Military campaigns and battles
- Disabilities incurred through military service
- Testimonies of contemporaries
- Places of residence
- Marriage (if applied for by the surviving spouse)
- Occasional names and birth dates of heirs

War Pensions

War pension records can be found at the following locations:

- Revolutionary War pension applications (indexed) are on microfilm at the Family History Library.
- Extensive collections on Revolutionary War Soldiers and their descendants are housed at:

  National Society Daughters of the American Revolution
  1776 D Street NW
  Washington, D.C. 20006

  National Society Sons of the American Revolution
  1000 South Fourth Street
  Louisville, KY 40203

- Spanish–American War: See Family History Library Catalog listings under “United States—Military records—Pensions—Indexes”.
• Civil War: Confederate pensions were awarded by the southern states. Most of the applications for the Confederate pensions are microfilmed and available through the Family History Library. (If unavailable, write to the state.)

• World War I: Draft records are available on microfilm at the Family History Library or a local family history center. Search under “United States-Military Records-World War, 1914–1918.”

For a copy of a pension file, write to:
National Archives and Records Administration
700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20408

• Navy and Marine records: See Family History Library Catalog listings under “Military records.”

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### Information in Foreign Military Records

- Birth/christening records of children
- Marriage or death certificates
- Receipt of medallion for service
- Heirlooms and photos

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### Guides to Immigration Records


———. *Italians to America* (1880–, 1992–). Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources.


Stumpp, Karl. (1973). The Emigration from Germany to Russia in the Years 1763 to 1862. Lincoln, Nebr.: American Historical Society of Germans from Russia.


Guides to Probate Records


Guides to Land Records


Guides to Military Records

Powell, William Henry. (1967). *List of Officers of the Army of the United States from 1779–1900, Embracing a Register of All Appointments by the President of the United States in the Volunteer Service During the Civil War and of Volunteer Officers in the Service of the United States June 1, 1900*
Compiled from the Official Records. Detroit: Gale Research.
Chapter 16

Using the Internet for Family History

By using the Internet you may be able to locate names of your ancestors, and even details about living relatives as well. Genealogies, census indexes, and many other sources are available through the Internet, both for the United States and internationally.

Chapter 16 Objectives:

- If you are new to using the Internet for finding ancestors, there are numerous web sites. Here are two suggested sites to visit for information:
  - The Library of Congress’s site at www.lcweb.loc.gov. The Library of Congress is the nation’s oldest federal cultural institution and preserves a collection of nearly 121 million items, more than two thirds of which are in media other than books. These include the largest map, film, and television collections in the world.
  - The USGenWeb Project found at www.usgenweb.org consists of a group of volunteers working together to provide Internet web sites for genealogical research in every county and every state of the United States. The project is noncommercial, so access is free for everyone. Its organization is by county and state. This web site provides you with links to state web sites which, in turn, provide gateways to counties. The USGenWeb Project also sponsors important Special Projects at the national level. This web site provides an entry point to all of those pages as well.

Chapter 16 Outline:

- Internet Search Engines
- FamilySearch.org
- Other Internet Web Sites

Internet Search Engines

A search engine is used to locate details about a specific subject, such as ancestors’ names or locality records (where your ancestors resided). When using a search engine, it is useful if you use quotes (" ") around your ancestor’s name or search term; this procedure will help limit your search. For example, search for “Amos Smith” rather than Amos Smith. It is also useful to reverse names in a phrase search as well as regular order, such as “Smith Amos”, as many lists on the Internet present names in reverse
order.

You may be able to locate names of your ancestors in genealogies, pedigree charts or family group records, indexes to records, online public library catalogs, and other resources. A few of the web sites are listed below:

- About Genealogy (www.gensource.com)
- Alta Vista (www.altavista.com)
- Dogpile (www.dogpile.com)
- Excite (www.excite.com)
- Family Tree Maker (www.familytreemaker.com)
- GenSearcher: The All-in-One Genealogy Search Page (www.geocities.com/Heartland/Acres/8310/gensearcher.html)
- Google (www.google.com)
- HotBot (www.hotbot.com)
- Internet Family Finder (www.whowhere.lycos.com)
- Yahoo! (www.yahoo.com)

**FamilySearch.org**

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ web site, FamilySearch, found at two Internet addresses: www.familysearch.org or www.familysearch.com, is a free Internet genealogy service and is one of the world’s most popular genealogy sites. It makes family history research easier and is designed to help people find and share family history information. It is divided into three areas: “Search,” “Share,” and “Library.”

The following databases are available under “Search”:

1. **Ancestral File** containing over 35 million names lineage linked into families and pedigrees.
2. **Census Records** where you can choose the 1880 United States, 1881 British Isles, or the 1881 Canadian Census databases to search.
3. **International Genealogical Index** (IGI), a lineage linked index to over 750 million names of deceased individuals submitted to the Family History Department. It also includes names that have been copied (extracted) from vital records and other sources from around the world. Church members can access ordinance dates using the IGI with their membership number and confirmation date.
4. **Pedigree Resource File** (PRF), a lineage linked index. These genealogies are available on compact discs and many include sources and notes, and submitter information.
5. **U.S. Social Security Death Index** (SSDI) containing names of many deceased American citizens
who died after 1937.

6. Vital Records Index for various countries (also available on compact discs).

7. Search Family History Web Sites

At the top of the “Search” page there are also topic links to click for additional resources.

1. Research Guidance provides a “Search Strategy,” a list of records to search for a specific event, listed in a recommended order.
3. Web Sites are categorized by the following topics: Censuses and Lists, Court and Legal Records, Cultural and Religious Groups, Family Histories and Genealogies, Key Genealogical Sites, Land and Property, Libraries, Migration, Military, Places, Record Keepers, Research Support, Royalty and Nobility, Services and Tools, Surnames and Family Organizations, and Vital Records. This will lead the user to many different Internet sites for a particular subject.
4. Family History Library Catalog (FHLC) identifies over 2.4 million rolls of microfilm, 742 thousand microfiche, and over 300 thousand books and other sources available at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. FHLC serves as a guide to materials housed in the main library that can identify and link families. Users can search by author, locality, surname, and other options.

The following options are available under “Share.” To use them, you must first register for free online access, and if you are a Church member your member information is need the first time you register.

1. Share My Genealogy, where you can upload GEDCOM files to be added to the Pedigree Resource File or future church databases.
2. Collaboration Email Lists

The following information is available under “Library”:

1. Family History Library: The Salt Lake City library’s home page with hours, rules, services, and other library information.
2. Family History Centers: A list of over 5,000 family history centers located throughout the world where you can access microfilms, microfiche, books, and computer databases. Arranged by state, you will find the address, telephone number, and hours of each center.
3. Family History Library Catalog (FHLC)
4. Education: A list of opportunities for education and training in family history research. Some are sponsored by the Family History Library and others are available from outside sources.
Users are also able to give the developers feedback and offer suggestions about the site, learn more about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, order family history products, and download Personal Ancestral File (PAF) and PAF Companion (allows you to print with various format options not offered in PAF). A Glossary of terms and help pages are also available.

**Other Internet Web Sites**

When beginning to search Internet sites, one of the first web sites to start with for American genealogy, especially for locality records, is the US GenWeb Project home pages found at www.usgenweb.org. Students with international genealogical interests should use the WorldGenWeb page (www.worldgenweb.org). Cyndi’s List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet located at www.cyndislist.com is one of the best known and largest genealogical sites. On this site you will find more than 229,000 genealogy links listed in over 150 categories, such as Biographies, census sites, Canada, England, Germany, and many other localities and categories.

**A Selected List of Web Sites**

Listed below are a few of the major Internet web sites that may be of interest to students taking this course:

- Ancestry.com (www.ancestry.com). See the many indexes to records on this site.
- A Barrel of Genealogy Links (go to members pages) (www.cpcug.org/user/jlacombe/mark.html)
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Salt Lake City (www.lds.org)
- Cyndi’s List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet ( GOTOBUTTON BM_|_ www.cyndislist.com).
  Over 229,000 links.
- Everton Publishers ( GOTOBUTTON BM__ www.everton.com)
- Family Chronicle Magazine (www.familychronicle.com)
- Family History Library, Salt Lake City (www.familysearch.org)
- Family Tree Maker Online (www.familytreemaker.com)
- Genealogy Home Page (www.genhomepage.com)
- Genealogy.com (www.genealogy.com). See the many records indexed at this site.
- Genealogy Services Online (www.rootsforum.com/)
- Genealogy Toolbox ( _ www.genealogy.tbox.com)
- GeneaNet: Genealogical Database Network (www.geneanet.org)
- GenServ: Family History (www.genserv.com)
- Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) (http://geonames.usgs.gov/)
- HeritageQuest Online (http://heritagequestonline.com)
Kindred Konnections (www.kindredkonnections.com)
Library of Congress (www.loc.gov) or (www.lcweb.loc.gov)
MapQuest (www.mapquest.com)
National Archives and Records Administration (www.nara.gov)
North American Genealogy Resources (www.genhomepage.com/northamerican.html)
Online Genealogical Database Index (www.gentree.com)
RAND Genealogy Club (RAND employees) (www.rand.org/about/contacts/personal/Genea/)
Research Aids for the Family Historian (www.rootsweb.com/~genepool/ogsaids.htm)
Roots Web (www.rootsweb.com)
Surname Helper (http://surhelp.rootsweb.com/)
Surname Web (www.surnameweb.org)
U.S. Census Bureau (www.census.gov)
US GenWeb Project (www.usgenweb.org)
Utah Valley PAF Users Group (www.uvpafug.org)
Utah Valley Regional Family History Center (Harold B. Lee Library) (http://uvrfhc.lib.byu.edu)
World GenWeb Project (www.worldgenweb.org)
Yahoo’s Listing of Genealogy Sites (www.yahoo.com/arts/humanities/history/genealogy)

If you are looking for living friends and relatives, you may be able to find their name, address, telephone number, a map showing how to get to their house, and other details by searching for them on the Internet using one of these sites:

Yahoo! people search (http://people.yahoo.com/)
Switchboard: The People and Business Directory (www.switchboard.com)
The Ultimate Directory (www.infospace.com)

References


Chapter 17

Accomplishing the Redemption of the Dead

In this syllabus, you have been learning about various temple and family history resources and activities, both in and out of the Church. This chapter will help you gain a vision of how these fit together to help accomplish the entire mission of the Church, particularly the redemption of the dead. You will also learn how priesthood and family history leaders are organized in wards and stakes to direct family history work. Many aspects of temple and family history service are directed by priesthood leaders such as building and operating temples, and establishing and operating family history facilities.

Chapter 17 Objectives:

- Understand how temple and family history service helps accomplish each of the three goals that fulfills the mission of the Church: proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, perfecting the saints, and redeeming the dead.
- Understand the roles of local priesthood and family history leaders in accomplishing temple and family history work.
- Understand how family history centers, the Family Record Extraction Program, Ward Family History Consultants, and FamilySearch computer files work together under priesthood direction to help accomplish the redemption of the dead.

Chapter 17 Outline:

- Supporting the Mission of the Church
- Priesthood Leadership
- Family History Consultants
- Family Record Extraction
- Family History Centers
- Missionary Service

Supporting the Mission of the Church

The three-fold mission of the Church is to “invite all to come unto Christ” (D&C 20:59) “and be perfected in him” (Moroni 10:32). The three ways to fulfill this mission are: (1) proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, (2) perfecting the Saints, and (3) redeeming the dead. All of these ways lead to making and keeping covenants. Although the focus of this syllabus is on redeeming the dead, temple and
family history service also helps to proclaim the gospel and perfect the saints.

Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Contacting and Referrals. Many nonmembers want to learn more about where their families came from and who their ancestors were. Missionaries may talk about family history while contacting (e.g., tracting). Also, members may refer names of nonmember friends who are interested in family history. Missionaries may then introduce the nonmembers to FamilySearch, a family history center, or publications about family history. While helping them, missionaries may develop relationships of trust that lead to gospel discussions.

Convert Retention. Investigators may begin identifying their ancestors while they are still receiving the missionary discussions. Family history work provides an opportunity for new converts to enter the temple within weeks of their own baptism to be proxies for their ancestors. Attending the temple may help them become more motivated to remain active so they can receive endowments and sealings for themselves and their ancestors.

Temples and Temple Sites. Nonmembers can visit temples prior to their dedication, and temple sites with visitor centers after temples are dedicated.

Temples can have a powerful effect on missionary work, often prompting people to have an interest in gospel teachings. When they learn about the doctrines of eternal families and of the redemption of the dead, many people want to learn more about the restored gospel (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992, p. 1).

Perfecting the Saints

1. Receiving temple ordinances themselves and assisting immediate family members to qualify to receive them helps members grow closer to the Lord.
2. Members are perfected as they strive to live worthy of a temple recommend. As members live the gospel and keep their temple covenants, they may attain eternal life through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.
3. Attending the temple in behalf of their ancestors and others strengthens members spiritually.
4. Members feel the sanctifying influence of the Spirit, not only when they attend the temple, but also when they participate in family history service.
5. Less active members who are interested in family history may be encouraged to return to activity so they can receive ordinances for their ancestors.
6. By keeping journals and writing personal and family histories, members become more aware of the direction their lives are going. They may come to understand the importance of their mortal probation, and may be more motivated to live the gospel.
7. Temple and family history work helps members meet life’s challenges by:
   a. Strengthening marriages,
   b. Improving relationships between parents and children,
   c. Fortifying those facing serious personal problems,
   d. Providing comfort to those who are grieving, and
   e. Instilling Christlike attributes in all members as they become “Saviors on Mount Zion.”

Redeeming the Dead

As we consider again the redemption of the dead, it is important to remember that Christ is the Redeemer of all mankind—living and dead.

Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth. Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered.

Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise.

Wherefore, he is the first fruits unto God, inasmuch as he shall make intercession for all the children of men; and they that believe in him shall be saved.

And because of the intercession for all, all men come unto God; wherefore, they stand in the presence of him to be judged of him according to the truth and holiness which is in him... (2 Ne. 2:6–10).

Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you—I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil.

And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works. (3 Ne. 27:13–15)

Because Christ suffered in our behalf, those who qualify by obeying the laws of the gospel and receiving the requisite ordinances can be saved in the Kingdom of God. Christ has given us the great privilege of participating with Him in His work of redemption. We may do this by providing temple ordinances for those of our kindred dead who did not receive them in mortality. This work, which is Christ’s work and our work, will not be completed until every descendant of Adam has had the opportunity to accept the gospel and receive its ordinances.

How can the redemption of all of the dead be accomplished? There are no records available containing
names or other identifying information for most of the people who have lived on the earth. These people still need ordinances. The time will come when it will be possible to identify them through revelation. Brigham Young taught:

No man can enter the celestial kingdom and be crowned with a celestial glory, until he gets his resurrected body; but Joseph and the faithful who have died have gained a victory over the power of the devil, which you and I have not yet gained. So long as we live in these tabernacles, so long we will be subject to the temptations and power of the devil; but when we lay them down, if we have been faithful, we have gained the victory so far; but even then we are not so far advanced at once as to be beyond the neighborhood of evil spirits.

Those who have died without the Gospel are continually afflicted by those evil spirits, who say to them—“Do not go to hear that man Joseph Smith preach, or David Patten, or any of their associates, for they are deceivers.”

Spirits are just as familiar with spirits as bodies are with bodies, though spirits are composed of matter so refined as not to be tangible to this coarser organization. They walk, converse, and have their meetings; and the spirits of good men like Joseph and the Elders, who have left this Church on earth for a season to operate in another sphere, are rallying all their powers and going from place to place preaching the Gospel, and Joseph is directing them, saying, go ahead, my brethren, and if they hedge up your way, walk up and command them to disperse. You have the Priesthood and can disperse them, but if any of them wish to hear the Gospel, preach to them.

Can they baptize them? No. What can they do? They can preach the Gospel, and when we have the privilege of building up Zion, the time will come for saviors to come up on Mount Zion. My brother Joseph spoke of this principle this forenoon. Some of those who are not in mortality will come along and say, “Here are a thousand names I wish you to attend to in this temple, and when you have got through with them I will give you another thousand;” and the Elders of Israel and their wives will go forth to officiate for their forefathers, the men for the men, and the women for the women.

Then in the spirit world they will say, “Do you not see somebody at work for you? The Lord remembers you and has revealed to His servants on the earth, what to do for you.”

To accomplish this work there will have to be not only one temple but thousands of them, and thousands and tens of thousands of men and women will go into those temples and officiate for people who have lived as far back as the Lord shall reveal (Young, 1978, 3:371–372).

Between now and the time when names are provided through revelation, the Lord expects us to do all we can to provide ordinances for those whose names are available to us in existing records.

The glorious doctrine of vicarious service for our dead, is part of the doctrinal foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. To secure the names of our dead, as far back as the records go, a splendid genealogical organization has been created, perhaps the largest, in membership, in the world. Besides, there are thousands of individual workers in the field, throughout the Church.

The spirit of the work has gone beyond the Church itself. During the last hundred years, there has been a world-wide interest in genealogy, which has resulted in the publication of libraries of books giving the names and vital data of the dead, back to the beginning of record-keeping for the common people, about three hundred years ago. As for the records of the dead before that time, we wait for the day when all things shall be revealed. We do our duty now as far as is possible (Widtsoe, 1944, pp. 128–129).
We are now living in the time when the Lord expects us to provide ordinances for those dead who are listed in existing records. The steps to accomplishing this work are: (1) Record Family History Information, (2) Preserve Original Family History Records, (3) Copy Family History Records, (4) Provide Access to Family History Records, (5) Organize Family History Information, (6) Disseminate Family History Information, and (7) Provide Temple Ordinances.

1. **Record Family History Information.** Family history information such as names, dates, and places of key life events are recorded by governments, churches, schools, hospitals, families, etc. In the past, most of this information has been recorded on paper. (A “family history record” is any document that contains family history information, regardless of the reason why that information was originally recorded. There are family history records available for about six billion people, most of whom lived and died after 1500.)

2. **Preserve Original Family History Records.** The original paper copies of the documents have typically been preserved in libraries, archives, record offices, parish chests, and so on.

3. **Copy Family History Records.** To further ensure preservation of the information on the records, the records may be microfilmed, digitally recorded, or copied in some other way.

4. **Provide Access to Family History Records.** The information on the records can be made more widely available by distributing or circulating copies (e.g., paper, microform, or digital copies). Also, to facilitate access, the individual documents are cataloged by the archives, libraries, and other institutions that house them (or copies of them).

5. **Organize Family History Information.** The family history information in the records can be organized in two ways. First, the information in each document can be extracted or indexed. Second, the information can be lineage-linked into families. Obviously, it is usually more efficient to extract or index the data before endeavoring to lineage link it.

6. **Disseminate Family History Information.** Once the organized information on the records has been automated, it can be disseminated (e.g., on compact disc).

7. **Provide Temple Ordinances.** Members of the Church identify their kindred dead, submit their names to the temple, and receive ordinances in their behalf.

Contributing to any one of these seven steps is assisting with the redemption of the dead. For centuries, the Spirit of the Lord has influenced nonmembers worldwide to assist with family history work so that when the gospel was restored the ordinances could be provided. Although members assist with all aspects of this work, only the last step requires membership in the Church.

To assist with this process, the Church has made great strides in microfilming and providing access to records. Through Family Record Extraction and other indexing projects, a small percentage of the family history information in the records has been organized and automated. Much of this automated information has been disseminated via FamilySearch resource files. At family history centers and other libraries, member and nonmember researchers have been engaged in the challenging but rewarding task of linking names into family lines. Through Ancestral File, much of this lineage-linked
information is now being disseminated worldwide. Assisted by family history consultants, members of the Church are identifying those kindred dead whose names are readily available and providing their ordinances.

However, in comparison to what can and must be done with information in existing records, we have just begun. Here is a description of the roles of local priesthood and family history leaders who organize and give direction to the portion of temple and family history work assigned to local Church units. As you come to understand the above seven steps and the work being accomplished in wards and stakes to further the redemption of the dead, prayerfully consider how you might assist.

Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest (Luke 10:2).

Priesthood Leadership

Both at the general and local levels, family history work of the Church is accomplished under priesthood direction. This section briefly describes how local stake and ward priesthood leaders are organized to direct temple and family history work.

Priesthood leaders have a responsibility to lead and direct temple and family history work. Although others may help, priesthood leaders' personal leadership and visible direction can motivate others to do this important work (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992, p. 6).

Stake Presidency

The stake presidency directs temple and family history work in the stake.... One member of the presidency usually coordinates temple and family history matters (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992, p. 7).

High Council Adviser

The assigned high councilor, under the direction of the stake presidency, oversees temple and family history work in the stake.... He works with stake and ward priesthood leaders to see that the stake, wards, and quorums are organized to do temple and family history work (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992, p. 8).

Bishopric

The bishopric directs temple and family history work in the ward (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992, p. 8).
Priesthood Executive Committee

The bishopric directs the correlation of temple and family history work weekly through the ward priesthood executive committee meeting. In this meeting, leaders receive assignments and report on efforts to help members do temple and family history work (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992, p. 8).

High Priests Group Leader

The high priests group leader in each ward is assigned to supervise the ward family history consultant(s) and ward extraction director (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992, p. 8).

Temple and Family History Committees

Elders quorum presidents and high priests group leaders should organize quorum and group temple and family history committees to help them identify members’ needs and provide appropriate assistance (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992, p. 9).

All Stake and Ward Priesthood Leaders

- Through study and prayer, learn the doctrines related to temple and family history work.
- Learn how all members can participate in the work according to their circumstances.
- Fulfill their basic responsibilities and bear testimony from personal experience.
- Teach the doctrine and emphasize members' basic responsibilities.
- Provide the family history resources members need to succeed.

Family History Consultants

Family history consultants can be a great help to members doing family history work. Ward family history consultants help members begin identifying their ancestors and providing temple ordinances for them. Stake family history consultants train ward consultants in their duties. Both stake and ward consultants should be skilled in working with members and in communicating simply and should have some computer experience (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992, p. 11).

Ward Family History Consultants

The work of ward family history consultants is focused on helping members provide temple ordinances for those ancestors whose names are readily available (usually the first three to five generations). To do
this, ward consultants help members accomplish the three steps outlined in *A Member’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work* (1993). These are: (1) Identify your ancestors, (2) Find out which ancestors need temple ordinances, and (3) Make certain that the ordinances are performed.

Ward family history consultants assist members in three places: (1) in their homes, (2) in a meetinghouse classroom, and (3) at a FamilySearch web site.

When meeting with members in their homes, ward family history consultants assist members to follow the steps in *A Member’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work*, adapting the instructions to individual needs. Home visits are usually “working meetings,” where consultants help members accomplish whatever needs to be done to ensure that ancestors receive their ordinances. As members gain experience they become more self-reliant, and less assistance from the consultant is needed.

When teaching the family history Sunday School class, ward family history consultants rely on the information in the Section 9: Temple and Family History Work of the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders* (1998b) to meet local needs. Like the home visits, classes are working meetings where members receive help providing ordinances for their ancestors. The recommended six class periods can be reduced or extended depending on needs of class members.

When helping members at the FamilySearch site, ward family history consultants, as needed, show members how to:

- Identify ancestors on Ancestral File and other resource files.
- Locate family histories in the Surname portion of the Family History Library Catalog.
- Use Personal Ancestral File to organize family information, and prepare names for submission to the temple.
- Use TempleReady to submit names to the temple.

Priesthood leaders play a key role in helping ward family history consultants find members who need assistance. Bishoprics, quorum presidencies, and group leaders will often be aware of members who are ready to begin. Home teachers can identify people who need the assistance of the consultant.

Under priesthood direction, ward family history consultants may also:

- Assist with missionary work, convert retention, and activation, using family history.
- Give special classes, such as a family history mini-class to priesthood or auxiliary groups.
- Assist youth groups to identify and submit names of ancestors for baptisms and confirmations.
- Teach lessons on journal keeping, preparing personal and family histories, family organizations, preserving family memorabilia, or other topics that strengthen family ties.
and build interest in providing ordinances for ancestors.

- Give motivational presentations in sacrament meetings, firesides, quorum meetings, etc. about providing ordinances for ancestors. These meetings are more effective if leaders contact members individually afterwards.
- Contact new converts, who often have many names in the first few generations that can be submitted to the temple.
- “Advertise” their services in Sunday meeting programs, in a ward newsletter, on bulletin boards, and so on.
- Give short individualized Personal Ancestral File demonstrations to ward members.

**Stake Family History Consultant**

The stake family history consultant assists the high council adviser to train ward family history consultants.

**Training**

Students successfully completing Religion 261 have enough family history training to serve effectively as stake or ward family history consultants. Consultants may also receive training from local family history centers. All consultants should be thoroughly familiar with *A Member’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work* (1993).

**Family Record Extraction**

Through Family Record Extraction, members convert family history information found in...census documents, and other vital records to automated computer files. Members then have access to this information through the FamilySearch computer system, where they can search those files to identify their ancestors... *(The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992, p. 13).*

**An Opportunity to Serve**

In addition to making information available to members, Family Record Extraction provides opportunities for service. Parents can serve with their children while teaching them the importance of temple and family history work. Members who are less active, homebound, or elderly, can do extraction work in their homes. Youth can help redeem the dead by extracting names and information and typing it into computers. With the approval of the stake presidency, nonmembers may also participate.

As members extract names, many feel the Spirit of Elijah and begin identifying their own ancestors and providing temple ordinances for them *(The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992, p.*
Stake Family Record Extraction Director

The stake family record extraction director, with the help of assistants as needed: (1) distributes records to wards for extraction, (2) coordinates extraction efforts between wards, and (3) provides training.

Ward Family Record Extraction Director

The ward Family Record Extraction director assigns records for extraction and data entry, and trains extractors.

Family History Centers

The Church has established over 5,000 family history centers worldwide to help members identify their ancestors. Like ward family history consultants, family history center specialists help members provide ordinances for those ancestors whose names are readily available, following the instructions in A Member’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work (1993). In addition, many family history centers provide resources that help members identify ancestors in extended generations. Depending on the level of service offered, family history centers may provide any of the following:

- Reference consultation for beginning and advanced patrons
- FamilySearch
- Microfilm circulation
- Book, microfilm, and microfiche reference collection
- Photocopying
- Sources on compact disc (CD-ROM)

Missionary Service

Opportunities exist for couples and single sisters to serve as missionaries in temple and family history work. This service provides an alternative missionary assignment for individuals who are interested in temple or family history work. Both full-time and part-time assignments are possible.

Members interested in this type of assignment may serve as Church-service missionaries (usually a local assignment that is either full-time or part-time) or full-time missionaries with an additional assignment in either temple or family history work (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992, p. 19).
Chapter 18

A Lifetime Commitment to Temple and Family History Service

Although we must link together the family of man from existing records, not all Latter-day Saints need to become “expert” genealogists to fully participate in temple and family history work. There are many other ways saints can also serve. As Elder Dallin H. Oaks has said, “...in the work of redeeming the dead there are many tasks to be performed, and that all members should participate by prayerfully selecting those ways that fit their personal circumstances at a particular time... (Oaks, 1989, p. 6).”

Chapter 18 Objectives:

- Review the various ways described in this syllabus that you can assist with the redemption of the dead.
- Understand how all members of the Church can participate in meaningful temple and family history service throughout their lives.
- Make a lifetime commitment to temple and family history service.
- Prayerfully determine what you should be doing now, with your present circumstances, abilities, and resources, to assist with the redemption of the dead.
- Learn effective ways of encouraging others to participate in temple and family history service.

Suggested Reading:

  See Appendix F in syllabus.

Chapter 18 Outline:

- Everybody Can Do Something
- Prayerfully Determining What You Should Do
- Encouraging Others to Participate
- The Future of Temple and Family History Work
Everybody Can Do Something

The Church teaches that members’ family history duties are threefold. First, they must develop a desire to help redeem the dead. As members gain a testimony of the principle of salvation of the dead, they feel a personal responsibility to help. They also care about those in the spirit world who are waiting for temple ordinances to be performed.

Second, they must determine what to do. Every Latter-day Saint can do something to further the family history work. Dallin H. Oaks counseled, “Our effort is not to compel everyone to do everything, but to encourage everyone to do something” (Oaks, 1989, p. 6). Accordingly, Latter-day Saints are encouraged to participate in activities relating to the salvation of the dead. What and how much a member does depend on personal circumstances and abilities, what one’s family may have already accomplished, individual guidance from the Spirit, and direction from Church leaders.

Third, members must continue to serve. “The work...will not be complete until every name is recorded and every ordinance performed” (D. H. Pratt, 1992b, 2: 492–494).

A key guiding principle for your lifetime of temple and family history service was provided by King Benjamin when he said:

And see that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength. And again, it is expedient that he should be diligent, that thereby he might win the prize; therefore, all things must be done in order (Mosiah 4:27).

Our Basic Temple and Family History Duties

It’s “wisdom and order” to first consider your “basic temple and family history duties” when deciding what temple and family history work you should do. These are:

- Receive temple ordinances yourself, and help your immediate family receive them.
- Maintain a current temple recommend, and regularly attend the temple (where possible).
- Provide temple ordinances for your ancestors for whom information is readily available (often three to five generations as a beginning).

President Hunter’s invitation reminds us that we can provide names and ordinances for ancestors for whom information is readily available, and, where possible, we can regularly attend the temple. What and how much we do should depend upon personal circumstances and abilities, direction from Church leaders, and guidance from the Spirit. Throughout our lives, each of us can do something significant (Nelson, 1994, p. 86).
The meaning of “readily available information” varies according to the circumstances and abilities of each Church member. However, it generally includes information available from:

- Home sources
- Close relatives
- Correspondence with government offices for vital records
- FamilySearch databases
- Pedigree Resource Files and others on CD-ROM
- Family histories

Fulfilling these basic duties should be our first priority in temple and family history work. Providing ordinances for ancestors for whom information is readily available is an ongoing activity rather than a one-time service. We share our ancestors in common with others. As research is completed, names will become available to us that were previously inaccessible (e.g., through submission to Pedigree Resource File or publication of a family history).

Don’t forget the powerful influence the Spirit can have in helping you to identify your ancestors. As you exercise faith, names and information thought to be unavailable may come to you in unexpected ways and places. If you are not able to find information about an ancestor, be patient. In the meantime, ask the Lord to direct your attention to other ancestors whose information is more accessible (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993, p. 4).

I don’t need to tell you the details of where to go and who to see. When you determine you are going to succeed, you will find a way. You will discover those who can help you. I promise you the Lord will bless you in your efforts, for this is His work, and He will guide your prayerful efforts to bring the ordinances and covenants to your ancestors.

I have tasted enough of the fruits of this sublime work to know that the keys Elijah restored to Joseph Smith permit our hearts to be bound and each of us linked to those of our ancestors who are waiting for our help. Through our efforts in holy temples here on earth using the authority delegated by the Savior, our progenitors receive the saving ordinances that allow them to enjoy eternal happiness (Scott, 1990, p. 7).

Other Opportunities to Serve

In addition to your basic temple and family history duties, there are numerous other ways you can assist with the redemption of the dead—your own ancestors’ and others’—throughout your life. President Haight counseled:

Now, after you have accomplished the temple work for your immediate ancestors, identify the difficult to find ancestors, serve in Family Record Extraction, or create a computer version of your family records to share with family members and others.... All of these activities help provide the sacred ordinances of the temple for your ancestors. If you will do this, you will know the indescribable joy of being a savior on
Various activities related to the redemption of the dead are listed below. One problem with lists such as the one that follows, is that the reader may get the feeling that he or she should be doing ALL of the items listed. That is NOT the intent. The Members’ Guide wisely counsels, “you should not attempt to do everything at once.” (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993, p. 4). Which of these you should do, and how much you should do at a particular time, depends on:

- Guidance from the Spirit,
- Your individual circumstances and abilities,
- What has already been accomplished by your family, and
- Direction from local Church leaders. (Some of the opportunities to serve come only as Church callings.)

As you read the following paragraphs, prayerfully consider what you should be doing at this time in your life, with your current circumstances, abilities and resources to assist with this work.

**Help Identify Difficult-to-Find Ancestors**

Conspicuously missing from the description of members’ basic duties is performing research to identify difficult-to-find ancestors. “This usually involves coordination with more distant relatives and research in libraries or original records. In most stakes, you can go to a family history center for help with more difficult research (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993, p. 6).”

Although research to identify difficult-to-find ancestors is necessary to provide them with the ordinances of the temple, the Lord does not expect all family members to do it. Research is not the only way that members can fulfill Joseph Smith’s admonition to “seek after” their dead. However, many members and nonmembers feel directed by the Spirit, and many members have been counseled in their patriarchal blessings, to do this research.

As you seek the guidance of the Spirit to help you find your ancestors, you may be directed to do research in original documents such as those described in this syllabus. If you do this, you will learn the joy of becoming more familiar with the lives of your ancestors.

One of the most thrilling results of being involved in family research and genealogical research is becoming intimately acquainted with our ancestors—their challenges and achievements—and then showing our gratitude by performing for them the ordinances that will allow them to obtain the greatest of all gifts—the gift of eternal life (Haight, 1991, p. 77).

Through research in extended generations, you may be able to provide members of your family with a continuing flow of readily available names of their kindred dead, for whom temple ordinances can be
provided. Because of the importance of this work, you may also feel inspired to help others with their research.

In conclusion I want to tell of a remarkable personal experience that happened just recently. I learned indirectly of a young girl in Massachusetts who had been keeping a very remarkable genealogical record. I learned that this record was on the Dyer family. By contacting her I learned that she was not a member of the Dyer family, she was not a member of our Church, and yet she has done excellent research on more than 20,000 members of the Dyer family. I have written to her and obtained this record which is in three volumes and which has been microfilmed by our Genealogical Association and is available to all in the Church who are interested in this family line. I endeavored to learn why she did this. In a letter in reply to my inquiry, these are her words:

“The Dyer family is far more than a hobby. Please don’t think it foolish, Mr. Dyer, but I feel that somehow it was God’s will that I do this work. My whole life belongs to these people.” This girl is seventeen years old. She began researching at the age of fourteen. She is not a member of the Church and she is not a member of our family, but the spirit of Elijah has been upon her. We have learned where similar experiences have been had in many of the families of the Church, which indicates the power that is in the work of seeking for our kindred dead (Dyer, 1962, p. 13).

Serve in Family Record Extraction

If you would like to extract records, it is appropriate to ask your priesthood leaders if you may do so. Both active and less active members have found extracting to be a rich, spiritually fulfilling service.

In family record extraction, members transfer information from the vital records of many countries onto computers. This information then becomes part of the FamilySearch computer system. Members can use FamilySearch to quickly and easily identify ancestors and prepare names for temple ordinances. Most of the extraction work can be done at home and almost every member of the family can participate. Talk to your priesthood leader to see if the extraction program is available in your area (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993, p. 6).

Serve in Another Extraction or Indexing Project

Extraction, indexing, transcription and other projects are often sponsored by local history or genealogical societies. Whenever you participate in any project that helps simplify family history work, you are thereby assisting with the redemption of the dead. However, note that you should not participate in an extraction project that involves submitting names to the temple unless it is under the direct supervision of the Church.

Contribute Information

Ancestral File contains information about millions of deceased people from throughout the world. Information was formerly contributed to Ancestral File (it is now submitted to the Pedigree Resource
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File) and was combined with information added by others. Names, along with dates and places of birth, marriage, and death, were organized into pedigrees and family groups. The result was an extensive resource that you and others can use to see what research has already been done. Your ward family history consultant can explain more about Ancestral File and Pedigree Resource File.

Ancestral File™ ... is the heart of our effort to collect the genealogy of mankind and make that information readily available to others, to simplify their family history research, and permanently preserve family relationships.

Ancestral File comprises the “four generation” submittals from members and friends. These data have been carefully matched and coupled one with another, providing a powerfully rich source of family linked information that simplifies research and reduces duplication. It contains names and addresses, enabling coordination of research with other submitters. Means now exist that permit you or family organizations to enter all of your family linked information for permanent preservation and use by others (Scott, 1990, p. 6).

One of the most promising and helpful features of FamilySearch is Ancestral File. It has made the world much smaller because it has put total strangers with common ancestry in touch with each other. Suddenly, Church members and nonmembers alike are finding new cousins and thousands of deceased ancestors at the press of a computer key (Haight, 1991, p. 77).

Serve as a Temple Worker

I have witnessed the joy and satisfaction that come to those who serve in the temple. I recall on one occasion a sister coming through the temple door, her face bright with anticipation and her step quickened. She was a temple worker who had been back home for a visit. She grasped my hand and said, “It’s so good to be back. I love my service in the temple, and know I cannot be happy, really happy, away from it. It brings me a joy and satisfaction that is found in no other place. I feel a sense of accomplishment in doing something of eternal value. It’s a little like the work of the Savior, who did for mankind what they could not do for themselves. This work brings peace to my soul—yes, the peace that passeth understanding” (F. D. Richards, 1986, p. 71).

Among the ordinance workers I find devotion to duty that is seldom matched. I have often said that I have never seen a demonstration quite so wonderful as that which is shown by those who come as ordinance workers day after day, week after week, year after year, seldom if ever failing to meet their appointments, laboring and attending to the needs of those who enter those holy places (Christiansen, 1962, p. 116).

The capstone of all the experiences I have had in Church service was the blessing of serving in the Salt Lake Temple. There, Sister Brown and I, with the wonderful, devoted temple workers, had the privilege of associating daily with faithful members who came to the house of the Lord to perform sacred service. I had always intellectually understood and accepted the purposes and the ordinances of the temple, but now I know to the depths of my being the joyous, peaceful spirit of that service (Brown, 1989, p. 77).
Serve as a Family History Consultant

When members attend the temple, they find that temple workers have been placed in various locations to provide directions and give assistance. Like these temple workers, the role of the ward family history consultant is to help members, every step of the way, to provide ordinances for their ancestors. Some members may become confused by disorganized collections of family records, or by computer files. Ward consultants give members the information and individual assistance they need to dispel this confusion so they can provide ordinances for those ancestors whose names are readily available. It is their role to expand members’ comfort zones so they can do the family history work needed to submit names to the temple.

Serve on a Quorum or Group Family History Committee

Serving on a quorum or group family history committee can be an excellent opportunity to reach out to others and help them with their temple and family history work. The specific assistance given by committee members is determined by the needs of quorum or group members or their families.

Serve on the Staff of a Family History Center

With the exception of a few of the larger facilities, family history centers are staffed entirely by members who have been called and nonmembers who volunteer. If you are called to serve as a staff member, you may assist in a variety of capacities. Most staff members serve patrons for four hour weekly shifts. During their shifts, they help patrons—

- Begin their family history by providing ordinances for ancestors whose names are readily available.
- Use readers and photocopying equipment.
- Use collection materials.
- Request microfilms.
- Understand and use the five step research process for identifying ancestors.

Like ward family history consultants, family history center staff play a key role in helping members get started. In the United States, on any given day, one in every ten family history center patrons is visiting the center for the first time.

Staff members with the expertise may also help members solve difficult research problems. All work in family history centers helps further the redemption of the dead.

Serve as a Missionary with an Additional Assignment in Family History or as a Family History Church
Service Volunteer

Missionaries with additional assignments in family history serve throughout the world as workers in family history records acquisitions projects, family history service centers, family history centers, and other family history assignments. Church service volunteers assist with the work at the Family History Department.

Prepare by Taking Classes in Family History

One of the best ways you can assist with the redemption of the dead while a BYU student is by taking family history courses that broaden your background and strengthen your skills. You will be able to use what you learn to strengthen the Church throughout your life. Classes that you might consider include:

- RelC 262  LDS Family History
- RelC 263  United States and Canada Family History
- RelC 264  British Family History
- RelC 265  Scandinavian Family History
- RelC 266  Germanic/Slavic Family History
- RelC 267  Hispanic Family History
- RelC 268  Southern European Family History
- RelC 269  Native American Family History
- History 400  Family and Law in American History
- History 401  US/New England Family History Research
- History 402  US/Eastern States Family History Research
- History 403  US/Midwest Family History Research
- History 404  US/Southern States Family History Research
- History 405  US/Native American Family History Research
- History 406R  Canadian Family History Research
- History 408R  Scandinavian Family History Research
- History 409R  Germanic Family History Research
- History 410R  Southern European Family History Research
- History 411R  Latin American Family History Research
- History 412  England/Wales Before 1700 Family History Research
- History 413  England/Wales Since 1700 Family History Research
- History 414  Scottish Family History Research
- History 415  Irish Family History Research
- History 416  Slavic Family History Research
- History 420  Latin Language Handwriting and Documents
- History 421  English Language Handwriting and Documents
- History 422  Germanic Language Handwriting and Documents
- History 423  Slavic Language Handwriting and Documents
- History 424  Romance Language Handwriting and Documents
History 425  Scandinavian Language Handwriting and Documents
History 432  Oral History Interviewing and Processing
History 433  Writing Family Histories
History 434  Computers in Family History/History Research and Publication
History 480  Seminar in Professional Family History Research
History 481R  Directed Research in Family History
History 482  Professional Paths and Credentials in Family History
History 496R  Internship in Family History

English 220  Composing Personal History

Note that some of the religion and history classes have similar titles. While the religion classes focus on submitting names to the temple, the history classes prepare students for professional accreditation and discuss more in-depth methodology. These classes are available on campus at Brigham Young University. Many also are offered through independent study. In addition, the UVRFHC also offers classes in research methods and computer programs that are free and available to anyone.

Help Children Develop an Interest in Temple and Family History Service

Just as parents are helping to proclaim the gospel when they prepare their children to serve missions, so they are helping redeem the dead when they teach their children about temple and family history service and help them learn about their ancestors. Some of the things parents might do include:

- Give family home evening lessons about their ancestors’ lives.
- Help children keep journals and write personal histories.
- Give children records of their ancestors as gifts.
- Keep a photographic record of the lives of each child.
- Record key life events of children on audiotape or videotape.
- Attend the temple to perform baptisms for the dead as a family.
- Participate in record extraction as a family group.
- Attend extended family gatherings so children can become acquainted with grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, and nephews.
- Encourage children to participate in Church programs that include family history, such as the Boy Scout merit badge and the Young Women’s Personal Progress program.
- Keep a file of family history records for each family member, containing certificates of birth, blessing, baptism, and so on.

Write a Journal, Personal History, or Family History

I urge all of the people of this church to give serious attention to their family histories, to encourage their parents and grandparents to write their journals, and let no family go into eternity without having left their memoirs for their children, their grandchildren, and their posterity. This is a duty and a responsibility, and I urge every person to start the children out writing a personal history and journal (S.
One important thing to remember about journals and personal and family histories is that people like to read them. You can leave your testimony with your children and grandchildren through writing your history. Tell them the things about yourself that will help them become interested in you and in their ancestry. As their hearts turn, they will continue the multigenerational effort to provide ordinances for your (and their) ancestors.

I love to read my own grandfather’s missionary journal. His first entries are classics. He wrote: “Today I married in the Salt Lake Temple the girl of my dreams.” The very next night the journal entry read: “Tonight the bishop called at our house. I have been asked to return to Scandinavia for a two year mission. Of course I will go, and my sweet wife will remain at home and sustain me.” I am grateful for a missionary heritage (Monson, 1984, p. 41).

Serve in a Family Organization

You can assist with the redemption of the dead by serving in a family organization in a variety of capacities. Although families vary widely in the way they organize and the degree to which they organize, all family organizations need leaders and loyal followers who participate enthusiastically and help further the righteous purposes of the family. Support might include donating funds, participating in grandparent family gatherings, submitting completed personal histories for a family compilation, sharing research information, preparing aids for teaching children about the family, maintaining family memorabilia, fostering a righteous family culture, and so on.

Help Persuade Others to Do Temple and Family History Work

Almost all Church positions provide some opportunity to help further the redemption of the dead.

- Teachers of all ages give lessons related to some aspect of temple and family history service.
- Youth leaders may organize trips to the temple to receive baptisms and confirmations. Family history activities are included in the young women achievement program. There is a scouting merit badge on family history.
- Home teachers and visiting teachers can identify individuals who need help from the ward family history consultant or other family history service.
- Auxiliary leaders can do much to foster interest in temple and family history service in the regular course of fulfilling their duties.
If you are called to serve as a quorum or group leader, as a member of a bishopric, as a high councilor, or as a member of a stake presidency, you will be able to encourage and strengthen those for whom you have stewardship by:

- Continually teaching the doctrines related to the redemption of the dead.
- Fulfilling your basic temple and family history duties.
- Doing something regularly to assist with the redemption of the dead consistent with your circumstances, abilities, and resources; and encouraging others to do the same.
- Providing the resources members need to succeed, and encouraging members to take advantage of the resources provided.

**Prayerfully Determine What You Should Do**

**Personal Inventory**

Now that you have a picture of various ways that you could serve, take some time to make an inventory. Decide what you can be doing now. Then, as your life’s circumstances change, take another inventory, and modify your temple and family history service accordingly.

On the question of how much and what each member can do in individual efforts, in addition to his or her Church calling, we should be guided by the principle taught in King Benjamin’s great sermon. After teaching his people the things they should do to “walk guiltless before God,” including giving to the poor, he concluded, “And see that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength.” (Mosiah 4:27). Similarly, as the Prophet Joseph Smith struggled through adversity to translate the Book of Mormon, the Lord told him: “Do not run faster or labor more than you have strength and means provided to enable you to translate; but be diligent unto the end.” (D&C 10:4).

Guided by these inspired words, leaders should encourage members to determine, according to the promptings of the Spirit, what temple and family history work they can do “in wisdom and order” consistent with their own “strength and means.” In this way, if we are “diligent unto the end,” the work will prosper. The list of ways to further the work is long, and the consequences of a broad-based multitude of individual efforts by Church members are far-reaching (Oaks, 1989, p. 8).

The questions below are provided as aids to help you in the ongoing process of evaluation and recommitment.
What Are Your Circumstances?

- What are your current commitments? What additional temple and family history activities could you undertake?
- What are you doing with your time? Do you have more leisure time than you need? Could you sacrifice additional leisure time for temple or family history service?
- What is your current level of stress? Could you take on additional stressors? Are there temple or family history activities that could help you reduce stress?
- What is your life situation (e.g., marital status, employment)? What temple and family history service might be appropriate in your situation?
- What is your Church calling? How could you further temple and family history work in your current Church assignment?
- What temple and family history activities might bless your life at this time?

What Are Your Abilities?

- Could you be a researcher? writer? family leader? extractor? teacher?
- How could you use your talents and abilities to further temple and family history work?
- What family history training have you had? How could you use your training?
- How is your health? eyesight?

What Are Your Resources?

- Do you live near a temple, or have opportunities to attend a distant temple?
- Do you live near a family history center or have opportunities to travel to a center?
- Do you own or have access to a computer? Does it have PAF software? What could you do with a computer to further temple and family history work?
- Do you have access to FamilySearch?
- What family history classes or training opportunities are available to you? Could you take another class related to family history work at BYU?
- What are your financial resources that could or should be utilized to further temple and family history work?

What Does Your Family Need?

- What temple and family history service does your family need?
• Are any names of your kindred dead readily available to you? Could you identify them and submit their names to the temple?
• How far back has research been completed on your family lines? Could you extend the research on any line? Could you help identify “kindred dead” who are not direct line ancestors who may need temple ordinances?
• Could you do something to assist others in your family who are now doing temple and family history work?
• Are your immediate and/or grandparent families organized to further temple and family history work? What could you do to support a family organization?
• Are the hearts of your living relatives turned to their kindred dead? Could you play a role in helping them turn?

What Direction Have You Received from Priesthood Leaders?

• Have you been called to a position related to temple and family history service? How could you magnify your calling to help further the redemption of the dead?
• Have your priesthood leaders given any counsel or direction to you regarding what temple and family history service you should be doing now?
• What direction regarding temple and family history work was given in the last general conference? How does it apply to you?

What Guidance Have You Received from the Holy Ghost?

• Does your patriarchal blessing, or any other blessing you have received, mention temple or family history service?
• What personal guidance from the Spirit have you received regarding temple and family history service?
• How have your prayers been answered? What guidance do you receive from the Lord when you pray now?
• What could you do to receive additional guidance and direction from the Lord?

Deciding What to Do

In this class, you have learned the doctrines related to the redemption of the dead. You have also been given a taste of the various ways that members of the Church are assisting with the redemption of the dead throughout their lives. You have just reviewed those ways and completed an inventory of your current circumstances, abilities, resources, and family needs. You have also reviewed the direction from priesthood leaders and guidance from the Spirit that you have received. You should now be ready to decide what temple and family history service would be wise for you to undertake at this time in your life. Ultimately, this must be a personal decision that you make prayerfully. It is between you and the
Lord.

If we lose our emotional and spiritual independence, our self reliance, we can be weakened quite as much, perhaps even more, than when we become dependent materially. If we are not careful, we can lose the power of individual revelation. What the Lord said to Oliver Cowdery has meaning for all of us:

“Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me.

“But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.

“But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong (D&C 9:7–9).

Spiritual independence and self reliance is a sustaining power in the Church. If we rob the members of that how can they get revelation for themselves? How will they know there is a prophet of God? How can they get answers to prayers? How can they know for sure for themselves (Packer, 1978, p. 92)?

As you prayerfully determine what you can do to assist with this work, you follow the path that leads to spiritual maturity.

When Paul spoke of charity out of the “pure heart,” I believe he was talking about the sense of honest, unselfish concern for others that is the mark of moral and spiritual maturity. To accept the responsibilities as well as the benefits of loving, loyal membership in a family is a high challenge to a teenager tempted on all sides by other peer and worldly loyalties. To truly care about others, to be considerate and kind and responsible reflects true maturity.... Beyond the “give me...” and the “let me alone, don’t tell me what to do” stages is that level of life which leads us to say, “How can I help? What can I do to be useful? Where am I needed?” It is on this level, we bear testimony, that the real contribution and happiness of life can be found (Hanks, 1967, pp. 59–60).

Planning for the Rest of Your Life

Having just reviewed the many opportunities for temple and family history service, this is also a good time to look to the future—to project in your mind how you might continue to assist with the redemption of the dead when your circumstances change.

In mapping out our personal efforts in temple and family history work, we need to take a view that is not only broad in scope, but at least lifetime in duration. The total amount of time we can spend on the mission of the Church—what we can and should do at a particular time of our life—will change with time as our circumstances change. The relative amount of time we will spend in each of the three areas [proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the saints, and redeeming the dead] will also change.

We are all acquainted with the wise teaching that “to everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven; ...a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away...” (Eccl. 3:1, 6.).
Each member should think about the three dimensions of the mission of the Church—proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, redeeming the dead—as a lifelong personal assignment and privilege. Each should gauge his or her personal participation from time to time according to his or her own circumstances and resources, as guided by the Spirit of the Lord and direction of priesthood leaders (Oaks, 1989, p. 8).

Through what stages do you expect your life to progress? In each stage, what will your circumstances, resources, and abilities probably be? What will you probably be able to do, and what will you do to further the work of the redemption of the dead at each stage?

**Encouraging Others to Participate**

**Avoiding “Demotivators”**

Once you have tasted the joy of temple and family history service, you will naturally want to share it with others by encouraging them to participate as well. As you do this, be certain that you respect their right and responsibility to determine for themselves what temple and family history service they should be giving. There are pitfalls

- If you show them all of the ways they can serve, without clarifying that they should prayerfully select what they can do, they may feel overwhelmed.
- If you repeatedly emphasize only one aspect of this work, they may only gain a narrow vision of the many ways they could assist.
- If you ask them to do more than they realistically can do, they may feel discouraged.
- If you move them too quickly into technical aspects of research, they may feel confused, inept, or inferior.
- If you are usually casual about temple and family history work, or present it only as an interesting hobby, they may not come to understand its spiritual importance.
- If you overlook their personal circumstances, they may experience unnecessary (and unrelenting) guilt feelings.

Efforts to promote temple and family history work should be such as to accomplish the work of the Lord, not to impose guilt on his children. Members of this church have many individual circumstances—age, health, education, place of residence, accessibility to sources for individual or library research, and many others. If we encourage members in this work without taking these individual circumstances into account, we may do more to impose guilt than to further the work (Oaks, 1988, p. 5).

**Effective Motivators**

This syllabus and other readings for this course provide you with a rich resource of motivational and
instructional materials that you can use as you encourage others to participate. To further help you avoid the pitfalls of accidentally “de-motivating” people while you are trying to encourage them, here are some suggested principles for effective motivation.

Teach the Doctrines

As members learn the doctrines related to temple and family history work, they understand its importance. As they accept the reality of the world of spirits and the necessity of ordinances, they are more likely to care about their kindred dead.

Teach by the Spirit

Therefore, why is it that ye cannot understand and know, that he that receiveth the word by the Spirit of truth receiveth it as it is preached by the Spirit of truth?

Wherefore, he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together.

And that which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness.

That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day (D&C 50:21–24).

Teach Skills

Members who understand the doctrine, care about their ancestors, and have a clear vision of what needs to be done will still need specific skills if they are to succeed. Specialized workshops, classes, and demonstrations (e.g., of PAF or FamilySearch) play a key role in helping members succeed. Often, people may need individual assistance to learn a new skill.

Show the Value of Family History and Temple Work

Often, the most effective way to respond to objections to doing temple and family history work is to simply share more about the benefits and blessings that come to those who participate.

Both temple and family history service—

- Strengthen members spiritually, helping to fortify and protect them from the avalanche of wickedness now filling the earth.
- Help members become more Christlike, as Saviors on Mount Zion.
- Help fulfill the promises made to Abraham.
• Strengthen bonds of love in immediate and extended families.
• Help turn our hearts to our ancestors.
• Provide opportunities for personal growth and learning.
• Help us become more grounded in the things that matter the most—Christ, salvation, ordinances, covenants and family.

Foster Spiritual Self-reliance

We cannot easily appraise another person’s circumstances, abilities, resources, family needs, and spiritual promptings. We will not usually know what or how much temple and family history work the Lord wants someone else to do. Typically, family history leaders do not have, as part of their stewardship, the right to receive inspiration about what other members should be doing. When someone comes to you for guidance regarding what they should do, instead of telling them, you could—

• Explain the doctrines related to temple and family history work.
• Explain the basic member duties and other opportunities to serve.
• Show them the resources that are available to help them succeed.
• Share experiences, and your testimony of the blessings of participating in some way.
• Help them evaluate their circumstances, resources, abilities, and family needs.
• Help them identify direction they have already received from priesthood leaders.
• Encourage them to find out from the Lord what and how much they should do.

Christ Can Heal Our Guilt

Because of the large amount of temple and family history work that remains to be done, people may quickly grow to feel overwhelmed, discouraged, and guilty. Therefore, when encouraging others to do temple and family history work, it may be important to share with them the teachings of the Church on the importance of setting priorities and keeping our various responsibilities in balance. If we make sure people understand that the Lord only expects us to do what we CAN do, they are less likely to feel overwhelmed and guilty.

All of us must come to an honest, open self examination, an awareness within as to who and what we want to be.

As most of you know, coping with the complex and diverse challenges of everyday life, which is not an easy task, can upset the balance and harmony we seek. Many good people who care a great deal are trying very hard to maintain balance, but they sometimes feel overwhelmed and defeated.

A mother of four small children said: “There is no balance at all in my life. I am completely
consumed in trying to raise my children. I hardly have time to think of anything else!”

A young father, who felt the pressure of being the family provider, said: “My new business requires all of my time. I realize that I am neglecting my family and church duties, but if I can just get through one more year I will make enough money, and then things will settle down.”

A single parent said: “I find it next to impossible to accomplish all that I need to do to manage my home and lead my family. In fact, sometimes I think the world expects too much of me. Regardless of how hard I work, I never will live up to everyone’s expectations.”

Another mother of four remarked: “My struggle is between self esteem, confidence, and feelings of self worth versus guilt, depression, and discouragement for not doing everything I am told we must do to attain the Celestial Kingdom.”

Brothers and sisters, we all face these kinds of struggles from time to time. They are common human experiences. Many people have heavy demands upon them stemming from parental, family, employment, church, and civic responsibilities. Keeping everything in balance can be a real problem.

A periodic review of the covenants we have made with the Lord will help us with our priorities and with balance in our lives. This review will help us see where we need to repent and change our lives to ensure that we are worthy of the promises that accompany our covenants and sacred ordinances. Working out our own salvation requires good planning and a deliberate, valiant effort.

I have a few suggestions that I hope will be valuable to those of you concerned with balancing life’s demands. These suggestions are very basic; their concepts can easily be overlooked if you are not careful. You will need a strong commitment and personal discipline to incorporate them into your life.

First, think about your life and set your priorities. Find some quiet time regularly to think deeply about where you are going and what you will need to do to get there. Jesus, our exemplar, often “withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed” (Luke 5:16). We need to do the same thing occasionally to rejuvenate ourselves spiritually as the Savior did. Write down the tasks you would like to accomplish each day. Keep foremost in mind the sacred covenants you have made with the Lord as you write down your daily schedules.

Second, set short term goals that you can reach. Set goals that are well balanced—not too many nor too few, and not too high nor too low. Write down your attainable goals and work on them according to their importance. Pray for divine guidance in your goal setting (Ballard, 1987, p. 14).

Many members of the Church associate family history work with feelings of guilt. We may feel guilty because we have a misunderstanding of what temple and family history work the Lord expects of us individually. In some instances our basic temple and family history duties may have been exaggerated or misrepresented to us. We may feel guilty because we know we could have accomplished more than we have. Sometimes the feelings of guilt may come from a combination of these and other factors. Regardless of the cause, we should look to Christ now for comfort, guidance, and direction, rather than harbor guilty feelings throughout our lives.

Too often we seek bandages to cover the guilt, rather than removal of the thorn causing the pain. How much we resist the momentary pain of removing a sliver, even though it will relieve the longer lasting pain of a festering sore. Everyone knows that if thorns and briars and slivers are not removed from the flesh, they will cause sores that fester and will not heal.

One of the members of our family has a remarkable dog named Ben. A few years ago, on a beautiful fall day, some of us were walking in the fields. Ben was going back and forth in front of us, sniffing the
ground, tail wagging, and obviously enjoying himself. After a while we sat down on a ditch bank to rest and could feel the warmth of the autumn sun caressing us. Ben came limping up to his master and, with a pained look in his eye, held up his front paw. Ben’s master gently took his paw into his hands and examined it carefully. Between two of his toes was a thorn. The thorn was carefully removed, and Ben stayed long enough to wag his tail a little more vigorously and receive a few pats on his head. He then ran off, no longer limping nor bothered by the pain. I was amazed that Ben instinctively seemed to know that the thorn needed to come out to relieve the pain and to know where to go to have it removed. Like Ben, we also seem to instinctively look for relief from the thorns of sin that inflict us. In contrast, however, we do not always seek our Master for relief; and many do not yet know who their Master is.

As a carpenter, Jesus would have been familiar with slivers and thorny woods. As a child, he would have learned that one rarely gets a sliver when working the wood in the right direction. He would also have known more than any how slivers—small and painful—divert attention from important matters.... (Faust, 1991, pp. 68–69).

Enos’s concern for his brethren came after his “guilt had been swept away.” Likewise our feelings of guilt about temple and family history work may inhibit our innate ability to care about the needs of our kindred dead and dampen our natural enthusiasm.

And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens.

And there came a voice unto me, saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed.

And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away.

And I said: Lord, how is it done?

And he said unto me: Because of thy faith in Christ, whom thou hast never before heard nor seen. And many years pass away before he shall manifest himself in the flesh; wherefore, go to, thy faith hath made thee whole.

Now, it came to pass that when I had heard these words I began to feel a desire for the welfare of my brethren, the Nephites; wherefore, I did pour out my whole soul unto God for them (Enos 1:9).

The Future of Temple and Family History Work

If current trends in Family History continue, we may see the day when:

- The Spirit of Elijah will be felt in even greater measure throughout the world.
- Family history will become a popular family activity in all countries.
- Technological, automated tools will enable quick retrieval of family history information.
- Temples are spread across the earth, being conveniently located for every member of the
Church.

- Priesthood leaders will effectively use family history to proclaim the gospel, perfect the Saints, and redeem the dead.
- Church family history programs, publications, and other resources will be tailored to the culture, needs, and abilities of members in each country throughout the world.
- Family history will be truly a family activity, with family members choosing to search after their kindred dead and regularly attend the temple to provide ordinances for their ancestors.
- Redemption of the dead will bring families together in closer bonds of love and unity. Love and harmony will abide in Latter-day Saint homes, as family life is centered on the temple and its ordinances.
- Stake and ward priesthood leaders will focus on temple and family history in priesthood councils. They will have a firm testimony of temple worship and family history, and will value the refining influence.
- Community organizations will promote family history for the purpose of strengthening cultural, social, and family ties.

As people of every nation, kindred, and tongue turn their hearts to their fathers, and as the Lord hastens His work, the Spirit of Elijah will permeate the earth.

And your blessing—you are on the frontier of the future of family history. You will see the necessary advances in technology, the softening of hearts, and the quest to redeem the dead increase at a rapid pace.

The Lord has a role for you to play in this great effort. If you don’t know already, find out what He wants you to do and then do it.
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Family History: A Conversation with Elder D. Todd Christofferson

Ryan P. Christofferson

Elder D. Todd Christofferson is a member of the Presidency of the Seventy.

Ryan P. Christofferson is Elder Chrisofferson's son and was an employee of the Religious Studies Center when he conducted this interview.

In fall 2004, the Religious Educator asked Elder Christofferson to look back over his six years as executive director of the Family and Church History Department. During Elder Christofferson’s tenure, the Church History and Family History departments, previously separate organizations, were consolidated. At the end of July 2004, Elder Marlin K. Jensen replaced Elder Christofferson in the Family and Church History Department.

RSC: How has the family history program of the Church changed during your six-year tenure in the Family and Church History Department?

Elder Christofferson: Among other things, the past six years have seen a continuing move to the Internet. In the 1930s, the cutting-edge technology was microfilm. The Church used and, in some ways, pioneered the development of that technology. It moved the work of the redemption of the dead to a whole new level. Microfilm is now something of a dying technology, but it is still, and will be for many years yet, a crucial element of our program. Then came the computer, and now the Internet, which I believe was invented to facilitate and hasten the work of family history research and the redemption of the dead. Increasingly, people can access in hours or even minutes information that in the past would have taken many months and extensive travel to find. They can collaborate and share with one another as never before. This is the core technology that will move this work to a level that was only dreamed of and that will make it possible to accomplish what the Lord has directed.

The other major change I would cite is our emphasis on serving the ordinary member of the Church. The department started out as the Genealogical Society of Utah, an organization to collect and make genealogical information available to researchers. It has always been a goal to have a large percentage of adult Church members participating in family history research. Even in the best of circumstances, however, this research is time-consuming and difficult. So over the years, only a fraction of members have actively participated, and we have catered to the needs of that fraction with more and more specialized services. We certainly don’t want to abandon this relatively small but dedicated population of experts and professionals, but at the same time, we have been actively working toward being able to better help the novice as well.

RSC: Where do you see the Family and Church History Department headed in the future? What improvements or developments may be in store?
Elder Christofferson: Perhaps I could say a little more about the use of Internet
technology and helping the ordinary member to give you an idea about what may be in
store. When I became executive director of the department in 1998, the project to create
the familysearch.org site was already under way. Originally, it was envisioned simply as
a search engine to find genealogical information on the Internet. As it was developed,
however, the greater focus came to be providing access to and searching the Church’s
own extensive databases. Familysearch.org was launched in May 1999 by President
Gordon B. Hinckley and became a rousing success instantly. Even now, more than one
hundred thousand people use this site every day.

Since then, we have been adding new information and working to make family history
information and services on the Internet interactive. We envision a single database
combining the best of all our automated databases that people will not simply view but
will add to and correct in cooperation with others working on the same lines. Information
about temple ordinances will be available to members, showing temple work performed
as well as ordinances still needed. Names will be cleared for ordinance work online and
sent to the temple directly. If you want to do the work yourself, the names will be
reserved for some period so that others cannot clear the same names in the meantime and
duplicate what you will be doing. Once performed, temple ordinances will be recorded
with the person’s name within days so that you and all those interested in that person
have an accurate record. The system will then not clear that name again for ordinances
already performed, thus avoiding wasteful duplication.

With respect to what the family history experience will be in the future for the ordinary
member, let me say that we have been studying what it is like for members “on the
ground” in Guatemala and Ghana and Korea, all over the world in diverse circumstances
and cultures, to search out their roots and prepare names for temple work. We think we
better understand now the realities of their lives and situations, what their abilities are,
what is and is not available to them, and so on. Everything we are designing and doing
now takes that into account. You will see in the future that everyone, no matter their
circumstances or the record-keeping practices of their culture, will have access to the
simple resources they need to identify their ancestors and perform temple ordinances for
them. Whether they have or can use computers and the Internet or have only paper and
pencil or not even that, there will be a way for them to be involved and to have the
benefit of our sophisticated (but for them unseen) technological resources. Our goal is not
to make “every member a family history researcher” but to provide means so that all who
wish can, in fact, participate successfully in family history.

RSC: How has your service in family history strengthened your own testimony of this
work?

Elder Christofferson: I came to the department with admittedly limited experience and
expertise. The assignment has been a blessing to me and has opened my eyes to the vital
mission of redeeming the dead. When one considers that only a minority of those who
live prior to the Millennium will have been privileged to receive the essential ordinances
of the temple for themselves, the importance and significance of work for the dead comes into sharper focus. Added to that, of course, is the Lord’s declaration at the end of the Old Testament and at the beginning of the Restoration in Doctrine and Covenants 2 that the very creation of the earth and our experience here would be utterly wasted but for the eternal union of families that family history and temple work make possible.

Additionally, I have witnessed divine intervention in and guidance of the department’s work. That has been true in both the past and the present. As I have studied the history of family history in this dispensation, it is easy to see the hand of the Lord at work, especially at critical junctures when it was important for the next step to be taken. In the last few years, key people have been brought to us just as they and their unique skills were needed. These have been individuals who have joined the department and individuals within other organizations who, with their companies, came to our attention at just the right time. Resources, financial and otherwise, have been available as needed both from the Church budget and from donors. Insights have come in answer to prayer, particularly concerning the need for greater order in our records and processes. Keeping a “proper and faithful record,” as the Lord puts it in Doctrine and Covenants 128, is an essential part of the record “worthy of all acceptation” that must someday be presented to Him.

In 2000, I gave a talk in general conference titled “The Redemption of the Dead and the Testimony of Jesus.” My central thesis was that work for the dead is as powerful a statement and witness as we can make of the divinity of Jesus Christ and His mission. Our work for the dead, in essence, testifies of His Resurrection, of the infinite reach of His Atonement, that He is the sole source of salvation, that He has established the conditions of salvation through Him, and that He will come again. That is the testimony that has come to me in pondering the scriptures and through serving in this department.

**RSC: In your mind, how does the Church’s mission of redeeming the dead relate to the other missions of perfecting the Saints and proclaiming the gospel?**

**Elder Christofferson:** I think you could summarize the plan of salvation by saying that our obligation is to worthily receive those ordinances that the Lord has declared essential and then to keep the covenants that those ordinances entail. All those who do so are promised eternal life. That, in a nutshell, is the plan. So our whole effort in the Church is to teach faith in Jesus Christ so that people will repent, receive the ordinances, and keep the covenants. And that applies to everyone. For those who are not yet members of the Church, we start from scratch, proclaiming the gospel and offering the ordinances, beginning with baptism. With regard to members, we strengthen them in receiving all the ordinances and keeping the associated covenants, “enduring to the end.” The dead are taught in the world of spirits and the ordinances provided for them vicariously. So it is all one mission, the same work for everyone, whether, as the Prophet Joseph Smith said, they can attend “to the ordinances in their own propria persona, or by the means of their own agents” (see D&C 128:8).
RSC: What are some of the challenges that the Family and Church History Department faces as it continues to adapt to new technologies?

Elder Christofferson: One of the challenges with technology is ensuring that it does not become the master but remains the servant. Technology can be a marvelous tool, an essential tool. As I said earlier, I believe that microfilm, computer, and Internet technologies have been and will be crucial to our success in family history and temple work. I believe that the Lord has inspired their development and granted us access to these and other technologies to make it possible to do what He has commanded and to hasten His work in its time. That being said, however, we still have to be cautious that we develop and use the right technology for the right need. Just because something is possible doesn’t mean that we should do it or that we should adopt a certain technology because it is there. President Hinckley repeatedly cautions us not to let these things become “toys.” In other words, we must control technology, not be driven by it.

Another challenge, of course, is cost. It is difficult and costly to keep pace with major technologies that are changing at a dizzying pace. It seem like things that were cutting edge yesterday are obsolete today. Generally speaking, we cannot afford to be at the leading edge (or as some say, referring to the expense required, the “bleeding edge”) of technology. But we must be current with technology that is crucial for our mission, and in some cases, we must create the technology or software programs that will uniquely satisfy our particular needs. All of this costs money and could absorb limitless amounts if permitted. So we must be judicious and pace ourselves. For example, it makes sense now to acquire genealogical records with digital cameras rather than on microfilm so that the information can be shared via the Internet rather than through the somewhat cumbersome (and more costly) process of shipping rolls of film. The family history centers and many of our homes now have computers and Internet connections needed to share information digitally. But we have only limited experience with digital capture and preservation of records. So we are proceeding with a few digital cameras, gaining experience in the field in capturing and cataloging high-quality digital images. We are working with the industry to find ways of preserving and storing digital images that today may not last more than fifteen years. (By contrast, microfilm pictures are generally good for about one hundred years.) We are moving ahead at a measured pace, confident that with the Lord’s help, preservation and other problems will be solved and that when the time is right, we will be ready to make the shift to digital.

One other issue regarding technology that comes to mind is that while we will necessarily require some very sophisticated programs and tools, they must be largely invisible to users. This is a spiritual work, and we are anxious to keep the emphasis on hearts being turned to the fathers. Technology must not become a distraction. We have used the analogy of the telephone. The user does not need to understand or even be aware of the technology that allows him or her to place a long-distance call—the routers, switches, microwave antennas, and so forth. He or she just needs to know how to punch in the right number. We want it to be that way for ordinary members. They should not have to be
RSC: From time to time, the Church may face opposition from groups that oppose or misunderstand family history or temple work. What approach does the Church take in such situations?

Elder Christofferson: There is, in fact, as you suggest, a good deal of misunderstanding regarding the doctrine of redemption of the dead and vicarious ordinances. While many religions have prayers or ceremonies intended to benefit the souls of the dead, our understanding of life after death and the role of living proxies acting in behalf of the deceased is unique and therefore foreign to the understanding of others. As you know, some have even thought that we baptize the dead rather than perform baptisms for the dead. I ran across an article in a French paper that objected to a microfilming project we have under way in Corsica. In explaining to readers the Church’s interest in family history, the article said that we baptize the persons whose records are filmed by “plunging the microfilm rolls in water.”

I think the best approach is the one taken by President Boyd K. Packer in the late 1970s in Israel when he was assisting in negotiations for access to genealogical records there. He met with a group of archivists, scholars, and rabbis to explain our request for the particular records in question. Among other things, he was asked what the Church would do with the records. President Packer replied without equivocation that in addition to preserving and making the information available to persons searching out their roots, we would also send many of the names to the temple for vicarious ordinances. This caused some stir, but one Jewish official present, I believe one of the rabbis, noted that a person would have to believe Mormon doctrine to believe that vicarious baptisms had any meaning, and since he didn’t believe it, he had no basis for objecting. He did not state the corollary, but I suppose everyone realized that if our doctrine is valid, there again is no basis for objecting—how could anyone object to a vicarious baptism being offered to someone if it really does have merit? The final decision was that the Church was given access to most government records and also given permission to request other records held by nongovernment custodians.

Some Jewish groups, led by a Jewish Holocaust survivors’ organization, continue to object to proxy baptisms in behalf of any Jew who is not an ancestor of a Church member. There are some current discussions occurring on those issues, but it is important for all Church members and leaders to remember that the First Presidency has directed that we research our own family lines and not pursue what could be termed private extraction projects, submitting names of celebrities, Jewish Holocaust victims, or other unrelated groups or persons. Some claiming good intentions, but acting contrary to the First Presidency’s policy, have subjected the Church and vicarious ordinance work to unnecessary ridicule and opposition.

While some objections or misunderstandings may never be overcome, despite our best efforts, it is important always to emphasize that there is no element of coercion involved.
The moral agency of each individual is fundamental in our doctrine, and no one, either in life or after death, can be compelled to accept a baptism or any other ordinance. It is fundamental in the justice of God that everyone be offered the benefit of a baptism, if not here, then hereafter. But it is equally fundamental that everyone be free to accept or reject a proffered baptism. Without the unfettered right to choose, the entire plan of salvation falls. Therefore, a vicarious baptism is no baptism unless and until it is freely accepted as valid by the intended beneficiary. Contrary to the misunderstanding of some, we do not count persons for whom proxy baptisms are performed as members of the Church, and we do not create membership records for them. With a few exceptions, in my experience, once people understand this essential element of our doctrine, their concerns about work for the dead disappear.

**RSC:** You recently had an opportunity to visit China on behalf of the department. How is family history helping to open doors for the Church there and elsewhere?

**Elder Christofferson:** The Church has had particular success collaborating with Chinese authorities to microfilm records there. We have partnered with the national archives and with the extensive government libraries in Beijing and Shanghai to preserve records that are important to the Chinese and that we believe will be increasingly important to Church members in the years ahead.

As you know, ancestors and the records of ancestors have been important in Chinese culture for centuries. A significant exception was the Cultural Revolution in which, tragically, many records were destroyed. But by and large, the Chinese have preserved excellent records and documents useful for genealogical research, at least for portions of the population. The Shanghai Library has become the foremost institution in the country for family history research, and, among other things, we have supplied some equipment and film for a genealogical reading room in their new, very modern facility. They have a sign posted there expressing their gratitude.

During our visit we met with an official of the national archives in their offices just inside the wall of the Forbidden City complex. We discussed the value of historical and family history records. I suggested, as President Hinckley has stated, that a knowledge of our background helps us appreciate what we enjoy as a result of the sacrifices of our forebears and awakens a sense of obligation in us to honor their sacrifices in the way we live. Our Chinese host gave us an example from his own family. He said one of his ancestors served as a government official in a Chinese dynasty and was approached by someone offering him a bribe to do something improper. The party who wanted the favor stated, as part of his argument, “No one will know.” In refusing, the official responded, “You will know; I will know; the earth will know; and heaven will know.” This account had come down in his family through the generations, and they refer to it simply as “The Four Knows.” Our host said that they all know what that means and that it has inspired them to be honest men and women in all they do.

Family history and records gathering and preservation do engender goodwill. We have even been able to replace crucial vital records for island nations in the South Pacific.
when the originals have been destroyed by fire or storm. It is true that some record
custodians deny us access or resist partnering with us because they object to the possible
use of information for vicarious ordinances, but in most cases, our proffers to help have
opened doors.

**RSC:** From an educational perspective, how does the Family and Church History
Department approach the challenge of educating both those with little or no family
history experience and those family history experts who need to keep up to date with
newer methods that are being developed?

**Elder Christofferson:** The department has many capable staff who can deal with issues
in family history work from the simplest to the most advanced. They have prepared
instructional materials that help those all along the spectrum, and they continue to update
and simplify these helps. Additionally, the department has several employees whose job
it is to evaluate materials in all media and ensure that they are presented in an
understandable, useful, and appealing way. They make sure that they actually serve the
intended audience and are not just an academic exercise, so to speak.

Increasingly, department staff participate with, and in many cases are members of,
genealogical and archival organizations in the United States and internationally where
they both stay current and also contribute to the development of new technologies and
enhanced processes and procedures for record keeping and record preservation. It is a
very active field, and the Church and its representatives are recognized as having
valuable experience and expertise to offer. Happily, we are not alone, and many other
entities, private, public, and commercial, are also making valuable contributions that we
learn from as well.

One of the department’s main objectives at present is to find the best ways to make its
help readily available to members of the Church wherever they live. And we want to do it
through the priesthood line, not around it. A worldwide support organization is being put
in place that will help leaders help their members in family history. It will rely heavily on
high priests group leaders and ward family history consultants, among others, and will
provide them the training and backup they need to help members in their units. It will not
be a complex organizational structure, but it will for the first time reach across the
Church in providing assistance that fits the varying circumstances of members as they
strive to identify their kindred dead and offer them the ordinances of salvation.

**RSC:** What sort of counsel or advice would you give to those who may feel somewhat
overwhelmed by the task of doing family history work?

**Elder Christofferson:** That’s probably everybody. There is really no way not to be
overwhelmed, and family history work will always be work. The important things to
remember are that this is a spiritual work and that the Lord is behind it and through it.
Those who make the effort can count on divine assistance in one form or another. In fact,
no matter how good or expert we become, and despite all the technology and all the
records that still exist, it will never suffice. All of us have to rely on that divine help to
succeed in family history and temple work. As I said earlier, the redemption of the dead is a preeminent part of the mission of the Church, and the Lord will not let it fail, particularly since otherwise, as He Himself said, the earth would be utterly wasted at His coming.

That being said, my advice to anyone would be the advice President Hinckley has given at various times: “Do your best.” Start wherever you are with whatever you have. Begin by capturing on paper or computer what you know, and then gather information from family and extended family. Research in records comes only after this foundation is laid. In other words, first draw on living memory and then on recorded memory. You will learn as you go, and there will always be someone along the way, if you look for them, to help you take the next step. Whether your progress at a given moment is rapid or painfully slow, just keep going, doing what you can.

At certain stages in our lives, we can do a lot, and at other times, only a little. A young mother, for example, with all the demands of a growing family, may not be able to do more than keep a box with memorabilia and scraps of paper preserving information about the past that may come to her from time to time. At a different period in her life, she will have time to sort out what she collected, record her family’s history, and pursue research for information to fill the gaps. What we should remember is that we can all do something in family history during the different stages of our lives, and if we do our best, it will all work out in the end. We can rely on the Lord for that. So don’t worry overmuch about what remains; enjoy the experience as you go.

**RSC:** **At the stake and ward level, what should a well-run family history program consist of?**

**Elder Christofferson:** There are some changes coming in the *Church Handbook of Instructions* that will simplify somewhat and give greater clarity to the family history organization at the stake and ward levels. I think that will help, but the key to a well-run program will always be simplicity. I believe if I were a bishop again, my approach would be to charge the high priests group leader with the responsibility to lead out in the ward council on this subject. I would ensure that we had one or more (depending on resources) ward family history consultants who were “people persons” who could work under his direction. With the help of the ward council, we would guide the consultant or consultants to work individually with specific members or families to help them in taking their first steps or next steps in family history. The consultant might spend a few days or many days over several weeks helping. I imagine that in the course of a year we could help at least ten families. In five years, we could have a corps of fifty families active at some level in family history and its attendant temple work. That to me would be a successful, well-run program.

As suggested by my hypothetical situation, everything does not have to be accomplished in one year, and not everyone has to move at the same speed or be doing the same things. I think it is a mistake to try to move the whole ward at the same time and to expect everyone to dedicate the same time and resources to family history.
May I mention also that a well-run family history program will seek to involve new members early on in their Church experience. It immediately gives them a responsibility, as President Hinckley has counseled. The spirit of Elijah, the Holy Ghost, nurtures them, and they find at least one, sometimes many friends as they get involved in tracing their roots, preparing names for temple ordinances, and even going to the temple to perform vicarious baptisms for deceased ancestors. New members should be a high priority for the ward council and family history consultants. And the same can be said for less-active members. Family history involvement is a great reactivation tool.

RSC: What guidance would you give to those who are called to teach family history at the local level?

Elder Christofferson: I suppose I would reiterate what I said about helping people one by one or family by family. Take them where they are, and help them figure out what to do next and how to do it. To someone teaching the Sunday School family history course, I would also emphasize making it as practical as possible. People do need to understand the underlying doctrine, because, among other things, it provides context and motivation, but they also need some hands-on exercises; they need to get a little how-to experience.

Teachers and consultants should stay abreast, insofar as possible, of developments in technology relevant to family history and of developments in the Church program. I realize that conditions vary widely, and some will be lucky to have pencil and paper, let alone Internet access, but all should become as adept and competent as they can be. All should know how to prepare and submit names to the temple. That is the most important thing.

Let me add one more word about the spiritual underpinnings of our family history work. I mentioned that the doctrine of family history work gives context and motivation. We have been surprised in our research at the family history department to learn that a very significant percentage of Church members are not familiar with the doctrine or principles on which family history and temple work are based. Others have a limited understanding at best. That is troubling because these are fundamental concepts and are essential to our salvation, for we without our dead cannot be made perfect just as they cannot achieve salvation without us (see D&C 128:15). Joseph Smith declared that this plan that enables us, in this dispensation, “to redeem [the dead] out of their prison” was ordained or prepared even before the world was (D&C 128:22). The Prophet Joseph calls out to all of us, “Shall we not go on in so great a cause?” All Church leaders should understand and teach the doctrine of the redemption of the dead. It will lead to the same enthusiasm that gripped the Saints in Nauvoo when they first heard it preached and inspired them to rush to the Mississippi River and begin performing baptisms for their dead. Who can fault them for their joy or even the initial lack of order or proper record keeping? We need the order and we are getting that under control, but we also need the rush of enthusiasm and Spirit that only the doctrine brings.

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Appendix A

Section 9: Temple and Family History Work Church
Handbook of Instructions
Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders
Church Handbook of Instructions

Book 2
Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders

Section 9

Temple and Family History Work

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Introduction

The Lord admonished, "Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence" (D&C 107:99).

Church leaders should seek personal revelation to help them learn and fulfill the duties of their callings.

Studying the scriptures and the teachings of latter-day prophets will also help leaders learn their duties. As leaders treasure up the words of God, the Spirit will guide them in what to do and say (see D&C 84:85).

Leaders also learn their duties by studying the instructions in Church handbooks. These instructions can facilitate revelation if they are used to provide an understanding of principles, policies, and procedures to apply when seeking the guidance of the Spirit.

Introduction to the Church Handbook of Instructions

To reduce and simplify information on Church administration, most handbooks and other instructions have been consolidated into the Church Handbook of Instructions, which consists of two books:

- Book 1: Stake Presidencies and Bishoprics
- Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders

This publication of the "Temple and Family History Work" section is a duplicate of the section in Book 2. It is published for leaders who do not need the entire book. A list of the sections in Book 2 is provided below. All are available as individual publications except those marked with an asterisk (*).

1. Melchizedek Priesthood
2. Aaronic Priesthood
3. Relief Society
4. Young Women
5. Primary
6. Sunday School
7. Stake and Member Missionary Work
8. Spiritual and Temporal Welfare
9. Temple and Family History Work
10. Activities
11. Curriculum*
12. Church Materials*
13. Meetinghouse Libraries
14. Music
15. Public Affairs
16. Gospel Teaching and Leadership
17. Selected Church Policies*

Superseded Publication

Effective 1 January 1999, this section of Book 2 supersedes the Temple and Family History Leadership Handbook, which should be discarded.

Distribution of This Section

High council adviser(s) (1 each)
Stake family history consultant (1)
Stake family record extraction director (1)
Stake Family History Center™ director (1)
Stake family record extraction assistant(s) (1 each)
Assistants in the high priests group leadership (2)
Counselors in the elders quorum presidency (2)
Ward family history consultant (1)
Ward family record extraction director (1)
Meetinghouse Family History Center™ director (where approved) (1)

If leaders who receive the "Temple and Family History Work" section need access to other sections of Book 2, the stake presidency, bishopric, high priests group leader, and elders quorum president could make their copies of the book available temporarily.

Application in Branches, Districts, and Missions

In this section, the terms bishop and bishopric generally refer also to branch presidents and branch presidencies. The terms stake president and stake presidency generally refer also to district presidents and district presidencies. References to wards and stakes generally apply also to branches, districts, and missions.

Items Referenced in This Section

Administrative Guide for Family History Centers™ (36004)
Endowed from on High: Temple Preparation Seminar Teacher's Manual (35322)
Family History Center™ Operations Guide (34051)
Family Record Extraction Administrative Handbook (30985)
A Member's Guide to Temple and Family History Work (34697)
Temple Media Kit (32507)
9. Temple and Family History Work (Redeem the Dead)

Doctrines of Temple and Family History Work

The Lord has commanded His people in all ages to build temples so He "might have a place to manifest himself to his people" (D&C 109:5). Temples are built "unto [the Lord's] holy name" "for the glory, honor, and endowment" of the Saints (D&C 124:39; see also verse 40).

In temples, worthy Church members receive ordinances that are essential for exaltation. Each ordinance includes covenants and promised blessings. In this way members receive important knowledge of "things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world" (D&C 124:41).

Temples are places of safety and refuge from the world. They are sources of strength for righteous living. They strengthen families as members learn sacred truths and serve those who have died without receiving the ordinances of the gospel.

Temple Ordinances for the Living

Ordinances that living Church members may receive in temples include the endowment (including washing and anointing) and sealing ordinances.

The Endowment

The washing and anointing are the first part of the endowment. They are also called initiatory ordinances. They are administered to each person privately. They promise blessings in the present and the future (see D&C 124:39).

The endowment ordinance explains the purpose of life, the mission and Atonement of Jesus Christ, and Heavenly Father's plan for the exaltation of His children. Through this ordinance, Church members enter into covenants of sacrifice, consecration, and fidelity. They also receive a gift of power from God (see D&C 38:32, 38; 95:8; 105:12, 18, 33; 109:13, 22).

Elder James E. Talmage provided the following description of the endowment:

"The ordinances of the endowment embody certain obligations on the part of the individual, such as covenant and promise to observe the law of strict virtue and chastity, to be charitable, benevolent, tolerant and pure; to devote both talent and material means to the spread of truth and the uplifting of the race; to maintain devotion to the cause of truth; and to seek in every way to contribute to the great preparation that the earth may be made ready to receive her King, the Lord Jesus Christ. With the taking of each covenant and the assuming of each obligation a promised blessing is pronounced, contingent upon the faithful observance of the conditions.

"No jot, iota, or tittle of the temple rites is otherwise than uplifting and sanctifying. In every detail the endowment ceremony contributes to covenants of morality of life, consecration of person to high ideals, devotion to truth, patriotism to nation, and allegiance to God. The blessings of the House of the Lord are restricted to no privileged class; every member . . . may have admission to the temple with the right to participate in the ordinances thereof, if he comes duly accredited as of worthy life and conduct" (The House of the Lord, rev. ed. [1976], 84).

Sealing

The Prophet Elijah restored the priesthood keys of the sealing power to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple in 1836 (see D&C 110:13–16). Through this power, sealing ordinances can be performed that make it possible for families to be united eternally (see D&C 131:1–4; 132:19–20). These ordinances include (1) the sealing of husband and wife (temple marriage) and (2) the sealing of children to parents (see D&C 138:47–48).

For sealing ordinances to be effective throughout eternity, those who receive them must be true and faithful to the covenants associated with the ordinances.

For more information about sealing ordinances, see pages 73–76 in Book 1.

Temple Ordinances for the Dead

The ordinances of baptism, confirmation, Melchizedek Priesthood ordination (for men), and the temple endowment and sealing are required for exaltation for all accountable persons. Many people have died without receiving these ordinances. As part of His plan of salvation, Heavenly Father has prepared a way for the dead to hear the gospel and receive these ordinances. People who died without a knowledge of the gospel, but who would have received it, are promised that they will be heirs to the celestial kingdom (see D&C 137:7–10).
1. Receive Their Own Temple Ordinances and Help Immediate Family Members Receive Them

Normally, members receive their own endowment when they are called to serve full-time missions, married or sealed in a temple, or otherwise worthy and sufficiently mature to understand and keep the sacred covenants made in a temple. Leaders should help members understand that the purpose of the endowment is to prepare for exaltation, not merely to prepare for something else, such as marriage or a mission. Members should also be taught that keeping the covenants associated with the endowment can be the foundation for great joy in mortality.

Unendowed adults should be encouraged to prepare to receive the endowment. Temple preparation seminars and temple orientation classes can effectively aid in this preparation (see page 264).

2. Hold a Current Temple Recommend and Go to the Temple Regularly

Every adult member should hold a current temple recommend and, as circumstances allow, go to the temple regularly to participate in ordinances for the dead. Regular temple attendance helps members recall their own covenants, gain greater insight into the doctrines and ordinances of the gospel, and serve others (see D&C 76:5-10).

3. Participate in Family History Work

Members should identify their kindred dead, request temple ordinances if needed, and provide these ordinances by proxy if possible. As a beginning, members should try to identify three to five generations of their ancestors.

Deceased ancestors must be identified and their names submitted to a temple before the saving ordinances can be performed vicariously for them. As Church members serve their ancestors in this way, the promise of Elijah is fulfilled as their hearts are turned to their fathers (see D&C 110:15), and they become saviors on Mount Zion (see Obadiah 1:21).

Members should be considerate of the feelings of close family members when submitting names of recently deceased relatives.

Names of nonrelated persons should not be submitted, including names of celebrities or famous people, or those gathered from unapproved extraction projects such as Jewish Holocaust victims. For information about participating in extraction projects that are approved by the Church, see pages 267-68.

Members' Responsibilities

Three Basic Responsibilities

From the foregoing doctrinal teachings, it is clear that members should focus on three basic temple and family history responsibilities.

While Jesus' body lay in the tomb after His Crucifixion, His spirit went to the spirit world, where He preached the gospel to the spirits of the just (see 1 Peter 3:18-20; 4:6; D&C 138:11-19). While there, the Savior organized missionaries among these righteous spirits to preach the gospel to those in spirit prison:

"From among the righteous, He . . . appointed messengers, clothed with power and authority, and commissioned them to go forth and carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness, even to all the spirits of men; and thus was the gospel preached to the dead" (D&C 138:30). This great missionary effort in the spirit world continues today (see D&C 138:57).

The people in the spirit world may exercise faith in Jesus Christ and accept the gospel message, but because they do not have physical bodies, the gospel ordinances must be performed vicariously for them on earth. Church members have a responsibility to provide these ordinances for their own ancestral families. This work is performed in temples. Ordinances that have been performed for the dead are effective when the deceased persons choose to accept them and become qualified to receive them (see D&C 138:19, 32–34).

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught the importance of temple ordinances for the living and the dead in these words:

"Let me assure you that these are principles in relation to the dead and the living that cannot be lightly passed over, as pertaining to our salvation. For their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation, as . . . they without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect" (D&C 128:15).

Deceased ancestors must be identified and their names submitted to a temple before the saving ordinances can be performed vicariously for them. As Church members serve their ancestors in this way, the promise of Elijah is fulfilled as their hearts are turned to their fathers (see D&C 110:15), and they become saviors on Mount Zion (see Obadiah 1:21).
Additional Opportunities to Serve

In addition to the three basic responsibilities outlined above, members may participate in many other aspects of temple and family history work. The additional work a member does depends on guidance from the Spirit, personal circumstances and abilities, and direction from Church leaders. All members should be engaged in some aspects of temple and family history work throughout their lives.

Some additional ways for members to serve include:

- Doing research to identify ancestors beyond the first few generations.
- Serving in family record extraction or in a Family History Center™ (see pages 266–69).
- Contributing computerized family history information to the Church.
- Serving as missionaries in temple or family history work (see pages 88–89 in Book 1).
- Participating in family organizations.
- Keeping personal journals and preparing personal and family histories.
- Encouraging others (including nonmembers) to learn more about family history.

Involve Family Members in the Work

Family members should work together in doing temple and family history work. This helps them grow closer, develop greater love and harmony, focus on temple ordinances and covenants, and feel the Spirit of the Lord in greater measure. Bonds with extended family members can be strengthened as all participate in family organizations and work together to identify common ancestors and complete their temple work.

Teach Children

Parents should teach their children about temple and family history work, with its attending joys and blessings.

Parents should set an example by going to the temple regularly as circumstances allow. They also should teach that regular temple attendance helps them gain a stronger testimony of the Savior and His atoning sacrifice, feel the Spirit of the Lord, be strengthened to live righteously, feel comfort in adversity, and find answers to life’s challenges.

Parents should teach children that the temple is the right place to be married. They also should teach that only in temples can Church members receive the endowment and sealing ordinances, which are essential for their exaltation.

Parents should teach children the importance of temple ordinances and covenants in providing the foundation for joy in mortality and in eternity.

Parents should not discuss the ordinances and covenants of the temple in detail with their children. Instruction should be limited to the information in official Church publications.

Help Children Participate

Parents should seek ways to involve their children in temple and family history work. Suggestions include:

- Having children help identify the family’s ancestors and prepare their names to be submitted for temple ordinances.
- Helping children enter their ancestors’ names and other identifying information on pedigree charts and family group records or into computer records.
- Taking children ages 12 and older to a temple to participate in baptisms and confirmations for the dead (boys must hold the priesthood).
- Serving together in family record extraction, when called.
- Reviewing the lives and works of specific ancestors. Younger children may easily take part in this effort.
- Helping each child keep a journal and a book of remembrance. Children may also help prepare their personal history and family histories.
- Participating with children in family organizations and attending family reunions.

Resources

Members can use the following resources to help them do temple and family history work:

A Member’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work. This booklet provides instructions on how to start identifying ancestors and providing ordinances for them.

Ward family history consultants. Consultants can help members identify and submit names of ancestors.

Family History Centers™ (where authorized). These centers provide extensive resources to help members identify their ancestors (see pages 268–69).
**Temple Preparation Seminar**

The purpose of temple preparation seminars is to help members prepare to receive the ordinances and blessings of the temple. The bishop organizes these seminars as often as needed. The high priests group leader and elders quorum president help him.

Temple preparation seminars are helpful for new members, less-active members, and endowed members who have not renewed their recommends for an extended time. The bishop praysfully selects a few of these members to invite to each seminar. The bishop or another Melchizedek Priesthood leader issues each invitation personally. Active members who are fellowshipping may also be invited to attend.

The bishopry calls one or more teachers for the temple preparation seminar. Teachers may be husband and wife. Lessons are provided in *Endowed from on High: Temple Preparation Seminar Teacher’s Manual.*

When the seminar concludes, the bishop meets personally with each participant. He offers encouragement, bears testimony, and determines whether each person is prepared to receive temple blessings. He also discerns whether brethren are prepared for priesthood advancement.

**Stake Temple and Family History Leadership**

**Stake Presidency**

The stake presidency oversees temple and family history work in the stake. These responsibilities are outlined on page 4 in *Book 1*.

**High Council Adviser(s)**

The stake presidency assigns one or more high councilors who are members of the stake Melchizedek Priesthood committee to help oversee temple and family history work. This assignment includes the following responsibilities:

- He becomes knowledgeable in temple and family history work. This includes reviewing the publications that provide instructions for stake family history activities and resources.
- He supervises the stake family history consultant.
- He oversees family record extraction in the stake. This includes (1) supervising the stake family record extraction director and assistant directors, (2) ensuring that those who do record extraction have the necessary facilities and equipment, and (3) reporting regularly to the stake presidency on record extraction (see pages 267–68).
- He directs the operation of the stake Family History Center if such a center is established (see pages 268–69). This includes supervising the stake Family History Center director.
- He instructs elders quorum and high priests group leaders in their temple and family history responsibilities (see pages 265–66).
- He helps the stake presidency instruct other leaders and members in temple and family history work. He also works with priesthood leaders to ensure that
the stake, wards, and quorums are organized to do

temple and family history work.

He meets regularly with the stake presidency to
report on temple and family history work and to re-
ceive counsel.

He works with ward leaders to respond when in-
vitations are extended by a temple to participate in
baptisms for the dead, initiatory work, and sealings.

If assigned by the stake presidency, he uses the
Temple Media Kit to provide an orientation class for
members who will soon receive their own endow-
ment (see page 264). High councilors who teach this
class should become familiar with *Endowed from on
High: Temple Preparation Seminar Teacher’s Manual.*

**Stake Family History Consultant**

A member of the stake presidency or an assigned
high councilor calls and sets apart a stake family his-
tory consultant. A high council adviser supervises
the consultant and gives instruction and assistance.
The consultant’s main responsibility is to instruct
ward family history consultants under the direction
of the high council adviser(s).

The stake family history consultant should be a
skilled teacher who works and communicates well
with members. The consultant should become fa-
miliar with *A Member’s Guide to Temple and Family
History Work,* family history computer programs,
and the role of ward family history consultants. Ad-
vanced genealogical training and expertise are not
necessary.

If the stake has a Family History Center, the con-
sultant may receive instruction there in family his-
tory computer programs and in other services and
resources.

**Stake Family Record Extraction Director**

If the stake participates in family record extrac-
tion, a member of the stake presidency or an as-
signed high councilor calls and sets apart a stake
family record extraction director. A high council ad-
viser supervises the director and gives instruction
and assistance.

The director’s responsibilities include requesting
records to extract, distributing records to wards for
extraction, coordinating the use of equipment and
facilities in the stake, and instructing ward family
record extraction directors.

The director should have good management, in-
terpersonal, and communication skills. Some com-
puter experience is also helpful. The calling may
require a substantial amount of time.

Additional information is included on pages 267–68
and in the *Family Record Extraction Administrative
Handbook.*

**Assistant Stake Family Record Extraction Directors**

As needed, a member of the stake presidency or
an assigned high councilor may call and set apart
assistant family record extraction directors. These
members assist the stake director in activities such as
overseeing extraction of records in a nonnative lan-
guage and instructing ward directors.

**Stake Family History Center Director**

If a stake Family History Center is established,
a member of the stake presidency or an assigned
high councilor calls and sets apart a stake Family
History Center director. A high council adviser su-
pervises the director and gives instruction and assis-
tance. For additional information about Family
History Centers and directors, see pages 268–69, the
*Administrative Guide for Family History Centers™,* and
the *Family History Center™ Operations Guide.*

**Stake Family History Center Staff**

If a stake Family History Center is established, a
member of the stake presidency or an assigned high
councilor calls and sets apart members to serve as
staff in the center. With the approval of priesthood
leaders, community patrons may serve as volun-
teers in the center. At least two staff members must
be present when the center is open, and at least one
of these must be a Church member.

Those who serve as Family History Center staff
need not be expert genealogists. However, they need
to help patrons feel welcome, understand the basic
principles of family history research, and know how
to use the center’s resources.

**Ward Temple and Family History Leadership**

**Bishopric**

The bishopric oversees temple and family history
work in the ward. These responsibilities are outlined
on page 12 in *Book 1.*

**Elders Quorum and High Priests Group Leaders**

The elders quorum presidency and high priests
group leadership oversee temple and family history
work in the quorum or group. These responsibili-
ties are outlined on page 165 in the “Melchizedek Priesthood” section.

The high priests group leader coordinates temple and family history work in the ward. This includes supervising the ward family history consultant(s), ward family record extraction director (if the stake participates in family record extraction), and meetinghouse Family History Center director (if such a center is established). The high priests group leader meets regularly with these members to give instruction and assistance and to ensure that they have the resources they need to operate effectively. He reports on temple and family history work in ward priesthood executive committee meetings.

Ward Family History Consultant(s)

The bishop or an assigned counselor calls and sets apart one or more ward family history consultants. These consultants should have the same skills as the stake consultant. The high priests group leader supervises them. He, the stake family history consultant, and the high council adviser(s) give instruction and assistance.

The main responsibility of ward family history consultants is to help members identify ancestors for whom information is readily available and provide temple ordinances for them (often three to five generations as a beginning).

Ward family history consultants should become knowledgeable in temple and family history work. The stake family history consultant provides some of the instruction, but ward consultants also should study A Member’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work on their own. Where family history computer programs are available, consultants should learn how to use them. If a Family History Center is established locally, consultants may receive some of this instruction there.

Ward family history consultants should teach by example. They should seek to identify their own ancestors and provide temple ordinances for them. This will help them understand the needs of others.

Where possible, ward family history consultants meet with members in their homes. They should use A Member’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work as the outline for instruction and give members a copy of the booklet. Consultants can help members provide temple ordinances for ancestors who are easy to identify. If members need more specialized help in their research, consultants direct them to the local Family History Center.

Ward family history consultants should share success experiences. They assure members that they can, with no previous experience, provide temple ordinances for their ancestors. Members will increase their self-reliance as they complete the simple steps outlined in A Member’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work.

When assigned by the bishopric, ward family history consultants teach the family history class during Sunday School (see pages 269–70).

Ward Family Record Extraction Director

If the ward participates in family record extraction, the bishop or an assigned counselor calls and sets apart a ward family record extraction director. The ward director should have the same skills as the stake director (see page 265). The high priests group leader supervises the ward director. He, the stake family record extraction director, and the high council adviser(s) give instruction and assistance.

Responsibilities of this calling include (1) directing and instructing ward members who are called as extraction workers and (2) assigning family record extraction and data entry work.

Additional information is provided in the following paragraphs and in the Family Record Extraction Administrative Handbook.

Ward Family Record Extraction Workers

If the ward participates in family record extraction, the bishop or an assigned counselor calls and sets apart ward family record extraction workers. They work under the direction of the high priests group leader and the ward family record extraction director.

If the ward is extracting nonnative language records, family record extraction workers should be able to learn to read the records in the nonnative language. However, they do not need to be proficient speakers of the language.

Depending on the type of records being extracted, family record extraction workers may work in their homes or in a meetinghouse.

Meetinghouse Family History Center Director

If a meetinghouse Family History Center is established for a ward, the bishopric calls a member to serve as director of the center. The high priests group leader supervises the director. For additional information about Family History Centers and directors,
see pages 268–69, the Administrative Guide for Family History Centers™, and the Family History Center™ Operations Guide.

**Meetinghouse Family History Center Staff**

If a meetinghouse Family History Center is established for a ward, the bishopric calls and sets apart members to serve as staff for the center. With the approval of the bishopric, community patrons may serve as volunteers in the center. At least two staff members must be present when the center is open, and at least one of these must be a Church member.

Those who serve as Family History Center staff need not be expert genealogists. However, they need to help patrons feel welcome, understand the basic principles of family history research, and know how to use the center’s resources.

**Family Record Extraction**

Basic information about family record extraction is provided in the following paragraphs. Additional information about setting up and operating the program is provided in the Family Record Extraction Administrative Handbook.

Through family record extraction, members convert family history information found in documents such as census records, church registers, and vital records to automated computer files. This information is then made accessible through the Church's family history computer programs. Members can search these files to identify their ancestors and determine whether temple ordinances have been performed for them. Names from these files are also sent to temples to supplement the names that members provide for ordinance work.

In addition to making information available to members, family record extraction provides opportunities for service. Parents can serve with their children while teaching them the importance of temple and family history work. Members who are less active, homebound, or elderly can do family record extraction work in their homes. Youth also can help redeem the dead by extracting names and entering them into computers. With the approval of the stake presidency, nonmembers may also participate.

Those who participate in family record extraction should extract records that have been approved by the Church. Wards, quorums, other groups, and individuals should not undertake unapproved extraction projects to provide names for their own temple excursions or to provide names for the youth to do baptisms for the dead (see page 262).

**Priesthood Supervision of Family Record Extraction**

Family record extraction operates under priesthood direction at the stake and ward levels. Under the direction of the stake presidency, a high council adviser for temple and family history work oversees family record extraction in the stake. A stake family record extraction director and assistant directors are called as outlined on page 265. The stake presidency allocates budget funds for family record extraction.

As authorized by the stake presidency, the bishop establishes family record extraction in the ward. Under the direction of the bishopric, the high priests group leader supervises the ward family record extraction director and workers. A ward family record extraction director and workers are called as outlined on page 266.

**Requesting Family Record Extraction**

If members of the stake presidency would like the stake to participate in family record extraction, they submit a request to the Area Presidency. If the Area Presidency approves the request, it is sent to Church headquarters.

When determining whether a stake should participate in family record extraction, the stake presidency should consider the following questions:

- Are enough members available to do the work? The minimum suggested is one stake director, one director in each ward, and ten to fifteen workers in the stake who can devote two to four hours each week to family record extraction.

- Does the stake have a computer available for family record extraction, or do members have computers they can use for this work? Does the stake have a computer specialist who can help answer computer questions?

- Can the stake provide adequate space and security for the required equipment?

- The stake presidency also may want to consider how many computers can be made available for entering the information that is extracted. As the amount of family record extraction increases, more than one computer may be needed to handle the volume of data entry. Much of this can be done on members' computers.

- Records are available for extraction in many languages. If members are interested in extracting records in a language other than the local language, the stake presidency should consider whether enough members know or can learn to read the language of the records.
For More Information

For more information about family record extraction, stake presidencies in the United States and Canada should contact:

Family Record Extraction Support
50 East North Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3400
Telephone: 1-800-346-6044

Stake presidencies in other areas may contact the nearest family history service center.

Family History Centers

Basic information about Family History Centers is provided in the following paragraphs. Additional information is provided in the *Administrative Guide for Family History Centers™* and the *Family History Center™ Operations Guide*.

The Church has established Family History Centers in many locations. Centers are designed to help members identify ancestors, particularly those that require research assistance beyond that provided by family history consultants. Centers provide local access to microfilmed family history records of the Church and, where available, to Church family history computer programs.

Community patrons are also welcome to use resources available at centers. Stake and full-time missionaries may conduct a brief orientation for new patrons to explain the services of the center and the reasons why members do family history work. Missionaries may also invite investigators to the center and encourage members to invite their nonmember friends. As centers are used in this way, they should maintain their integrity as research facilities.

Family History Centers are effective to the extent that (1) all patrons are made to feel welcome to use the resources of the center, (2) members are providing temple ordinances for their ancestors, (3) nonmember patrons have opportunities to learn why members do family history work, and (4) patrons are contributing their family-linked records to the Church.

Establishing a Family History Center

If members of the stake presidency determine that a Family History Center is needed, they submit a Request for a Family History Center form to the Area Presidency. If the Area Presidency approves the request, it is sent to Church headquarters. The Church can establish only a limited number of Family History Centers each year. Requests for new centers are processed within budget limitations.

To determine whether the stake has sufficient needs and resources to establish a Family History Center, the stake presidency should consider the following questions:

- Have one or more high council advisers been assigned to help oversee family history work in the stake?
- Are ward family history consultants actively serving in all wards that would be served by the proposed center?
- Do members need to use microfilm from the Family History Library to do extended research?
- Does the stake have a secure location with the necessary space, staff, and finances to operate a family history center?
- Can the stake provide at least the basic level of service for the type of center requested? (See "Types of Family History Centers" below.)
- Can members’ needs be met through existing Family History Centers?

Types of Family History Centers

The stake presidency recommends the type of Family History Center that is needed. The three types of Family History Centers are meetinghouse, stake, and multistake. The stake presidency also determines, within budget guidelines, the services that will be available.

Meetinghouse Family History Center

A meetinghouse Family History Center serves those who reside near the building and sometimes an entire stake if only a small center is needed. The center has trained staff members who assist in family history research. The center’s services include microfilm ordering, access to family history computer programs (where authorized), research helps on microfiche, and a small collection of frequently used films and reference books.

Stakes that already have a Family History Center may request an additional meetinghouse center if the meetinghouse is more than thirty minutes’ travel time from the nearest center.

A meetinghouse Family History Center is open at least eight hours each week and has four or more staff members. It requires a small classroom that
should be available for other Church needs on Sunday. The equipment may be stored in the meetinghouse library or in a locked closet.

Stake Family History Center

A stake Family History Center normally serves one stake and sometimes more. It has trained staff members who assist in family history research. It offers the same services as the meetinghouse Family History Center but on a larger scale.

A typical center is open twenty hours each week and has ten or more staff members. The space required for the center, which should be available for other Church needs on Sunday, is shown in standard stake center building plans.

Multistake Family History Center

A multistake Family History Center serves three or more stakes where a high concentration of Church members exists and area leaders want to combine resources. Multistake centers can provide extended hours of operation, a wider range of reference help, multiple computers to run family history programs, and larger collections of frequently used microfilm, books, maps, and other resource materials.

Generally, a multistake Family History Center serves stakes within thirty minutes' travel time of the center. Participating stakes provide staff and financial support for the center. A multistake Family History Center may be housed in a Church-owned building that has available space. Normally, no new construction or purchase of additional facilities will be authorized.

Priesthood Supervision of Family History Centers

Family History Centers operate under priesthood direction.

The high priests group leader oversees a meetinghouse Family History Center under the direction of the bishopric. A center director and staff are called as outlined on pages 266–67.

A high council adviser for temple and family history work, under the direction of the stake presidency, oversees a Family History Center that serves a stake. A center director and staff are called as outlined on page 265.

For a multistake Family History Center, the Area Presidency organizes a board consisting of selected presidents of stakes that are served by the center and appoints one of them as chairman. The chairman and board coordinate the callings of members to work in the center and the supervision of the center.

Family History Service Centers

The Church has established family history service centers in many areas outside of the United States and Canada to provide instruction, assistance, and technical support to local Family History Centers. Service centers also support family record extraction projects and family history computer programs where available.

For More Information

For more information about Family History Centers, stake presidencies in the United States and Canada may contact:

Family History Center Support
50 East North Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3400
Telephone: 1-800-346-6044

Stake presidencies in other areas may contact the nearest family history service center or their area office.

Family History Computer Programs

Church family history computer programs help members identify their ancestors, organize ancestral information, and prepare ancestors' names for temple ordinances.

Where family history programs are installed on stake or ward computers, the stake presidency and bishopric ensure that the computers are available for members to use at reasonable times. Ward family history consultants and family record extraction directors can help schedule the computers and teach members how to use them. Members who use these computers for family history work should not have access to membership or financial information.

Leaders should encourage members and others to contribute their automated family history information to the Church.

Ward Family History Class

A ward family history class may be taught during Sunday School, as determined by local priesthood leaders. This class is under the direction of the bishopric rather than the Sunday School president.
The curriculum for the class is available through the Church distribution system. The instructor usually is a ward family history consultant assigned by the bishopric. He or she adapts the lessons to meet the needs of class members. Classes should include workshops where members actually complete family history work.

Volunteer Service

Many opportunities for Church service are available for members, including those who do not hold a current temple recommend, and for nonmembers. These individuals are volunteers rather than missionaries. They may serve in areas such as Family History Centers and family record extraction.

Church-Service Missionaries

Opportunities are available for members to serve as full-time missionaries in temple and family history work or as Church-service missionaries in family history work. For more information, see pages 88–89 in Book 1.
Appendix B

“What I Hope You Will Teach Your Children about the Temple”

President Ezra Taft Benson, Ensign, August 1985
(From an address given at the Logan Temple Centennial, 17 May 1984)

The last time I saw President Heber J. Grant was in the Church Administration Building when he was quite aged. President Grant’s chauffeur had driven him to the Church Administration Building where the chauffeur called for another brother to help him assist President Grant, one on each arm, to his office.

I was just entering the glass door opposite the Lion House in the Church Administration Building as President Grant was coming toward the door. He said to the two brethren assisting him, “Isn’t that Brother Benson coming?”

They replied, “Yes.”

He said, “Come here. Come here, Brother Benson.”

I walked over to him, and President Grant said, “Did I ever tell you about the mean trick Brigham Young played on your great-grandfather?”

I said, “No, President. I didn’t know Brigham Young ever played a mean trick on anyone.”

He responded, “Oh, yes, he did. I’ll tell you about it.”

I could see that these two brethren were practically holding President Grant up, so I said, “I’ll come to the house some time. I’d like to hear it.”

He replied, “No, I’ll tell you right here. These brethren can steady me while I tell you.”

He said, “You know where Zion’s Bank and ZCMI are over on the corner?”

I said, “Yes.”

He continued, “Your great-grandfather built the finest home in Salt Lake City on that corner, with the exception of Brigham Young’s home (which, of course, was the Lion House). He had it all finished. It was a beautiful home—two stories with a porch at both levels on both sides of the house. It had a white picket fence around it with fruit trees and ornamental trees and with a little stream running through the yard. He was all ready to move his families in from their log cabins when President Young called him into the office one day. “Brother Benson,” he said, “we would like you to go to Cache Valley and pioneer that area and preside over the Saints. We suggest you sell your home to Daniel H. Wells.”

“Now,” President Grant said, “Daniel H. Wells was Brigham Young’s counselor. Wasn’t that a mean trick? Come on, brethren, let’s go.”

In all the years that I had attended the Benson reunions I had never heard that story. So I had it verified by the Church Historical Department, and they assured me that the facts were as President Grant related them. They told me they had a tintype picture of the old home.
Since that time, I have been most grateful for the so-called “mean trick” of President Young, because were it not for that, the Bensons would not have their roots in Cache Valley.

I love Cache Valley, and I love the Saints in the area. And I am most grateful to be here on this anniversary of the Logan Temple centennial. This beautiful temple has truly been a beacon of light to Cache Valley. If our children and their children are taught well, this edifice will continue to be a symbol of special significance.

The temple is an ever-present reminder that God intends the family to be eternal. How fitting it is for mothers and fathers to point to the temple and say to their children, “That is the place where we were married for eternity.” By so doing, the ideal of temple marriage can be instilled within the minds and hearts of your children while they are very young.

I am grateful to the Lord that my temple memories extend back—even to young boyhood. I remember so well, as a little boy, coming in from the field and approaching the old farm house in Whitney, Idaho. I could hear my mother singing “Have I Done Any Good in the World Today?” (Hymns, no. 58.)

I can still see her in my mind’s eye bending over the ironing board with newspapers on the floor, ironing long strips of white cloth, with beads of perspiration on her forehead. When I asked her what she was doing, she said, “These are temple robes, my son. Your father and I are going to the temple at Logan.”

Then she put the old flatiron on the stove, drew a chair close to mine, and told me about temple work—how important it is to be able to go to the temple and participate in the sacred ordinances performed there. She also expressed her fervent hope that some day her children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren would have the opportunity to enjoy these priceless blessings.

These sweet memories about the spirit of temple work were a blessing in our farm home, our little rural ward of three hundred, and the old Oneida Stake. These memories have returned as I have performed the marriage of each of our children and grandchildren, my mother’s grandchildren and great-grandchildren, under the influence of the Spirit in the house of the Lord.

These are choice memories to me, and I have often reflected on them. In the peace of these lovely temples, sometimes we find solutions to the serious problems of life. Under the influence of the Spirit, sometimes pure knowledge flows to us there. Temples are places of personal revelation. When I have been weighed down by a problem or a difficulty, I 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.

I would like to direct my remarks to you parents and grandparents. I would like to share with you what I would hope you would teach your children about the temple.

The temple is a sacred place, and the ordinances in the temple are of a sacred character. Because of its sacredness we are sometimes reluctant to say anything about the temple to our children and grandchildren.

As a consequence, many do not develop a real desire to go to the temple, or when they go there, they do so without much background to prepare them for the obligations and covenants they enter into.

I believe a proper understanding or background will immeasurably help prepare our youth for
the temple. This understanding, I believe, will foster within them a desire to seek their priesthood blessings just as Abraham sought his.

When our Heavenly Father placed Adam and Eve on this earth, He did so with the purpose in mind of teaching them how to regain His presence. Our Father promised a Savior to redeem them from their fallen condition. He gave to them the plan of salvation and told them to teach their children faith in Jesus Christ and repentance. Further, Adam and his posterity were commanded by God to be baptized, to receive the Holy Ghost, and to enter into the order of the Son of God.

To enter into the order of the Son of God is the equivalent today of entering into the fullness of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which is only received in the house of the Lord.

Because Adam and Eve had complied with these requirements, God said to them, “Thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity.” (Moses 6:67.)

Three years before Adam’s death, a great event occurred. He took his son Seth, his grandson Enos, and other high priests who were his direct-line descendants, with others of his righteous posterity, into a valley called Adam-ondi-Ahman. There Adam gave to these righteous descendants his last blessing.

The Lord then appeared to them.

The vast congregation rose up and blessed Adam and called him Michael, the prince and archangel. The Lord himself declared Adam to be a prince forever over his own posterity.

Then Adam in his aged condition rose up and, being filled with the spirit of prophecy, predicted “whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation.” All this is recorded in section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants (D&C 107:53–56).

The Prophet Joseph Smith said that Adam blessed his posterity because “he wanted to bring them into the presence of God.” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938, p. 159.)

Here is an illuminating passage from Section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants which tells us how Adam was able to bring himself and his righteous posterity into God’s presence:

“The order of this priesthood was confirmed to be handed down from father to son, and rightly belongs to the literal descendants of the chosen seed, to whom the promises were made.

“This order was instituted in the days of Adam, and came down by lineage in [order] ... that his posterity should be the chosen of the Lord, and that they should be preserved unto the end of the earth.” (D&C 107:40–42; italics added.)

How did Adam bring his descendants into the presence of the Lord?

The answer: Adam and his descendants entered into the priesthood order of God. Today we would say they went to the House of the Lord and received their blessings.

The order of priesthood spoken of in the scriptures is sometimes referred to as the patriarchal order because it came down from father to son.

But this order is otherwise described in modern revelation as an order of family government where a man and woman enter into a covenant with God—just as did Adam and Eve—to be sealed for eternity, to have posterity, and to do the will and work of God throughout their mortality.
If a couple are true to their covenants, they are entitled to the blessing of the highest degree of the celestial kingdom. These covenants today can only be entered into by going to the House of the Lord.

Adam followed this order and brought his posterity into the presence of God. He is the great example for us to follow.

Enoch followed this pattern and brought the Saints of his day into the presence of God.

Noah and his son Shem likewise followed the same pattern after the flood.

Abraham, a righteous servant of God, desiring as he said, “to be a greater follower of righteousness,” sought for these same blessings. Speaking of the order of the priesthood, he said: “It was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time ...even the right of the firstborn, or the first man, who is Adam, our first father, through the fathers unto me.” (Abr. 1:2–3.)

So Abraham declared: “I sought for mine appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the fathers.” (Abr. 1:4.)

Moses taught this order of priesthood to his people and “sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God;

“But they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence; therefore, the Lord in his wrath, for his anger was kindled against them, swore that they should not enter into his rest while in the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory.

“Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also.” (D&C 84:23–25.)

We learn through the Joseph Smith Translation that the Lord further instructed Moses: “I will take away the priesthood out of their midst; therefore my holy order, and the ordinances thereof.” (JST, Ex. 34:1; italics added.)

This higher priesthood, with its attendant ordinances, was taken from Israel till the time of Jesus Christ.

My purpose in citing this background is to illustrate that this order of priesthood has been on the earth since the beginning, and it is the only means by which we can one day see the face of God and live. (See D&C 84:22.)

Between Moses and Christ only certain prophets possessed the right to the higher priesthood and the blessings that could bring men into the presence of God. One of these prophets was Elijah.

Elijah held the keys of the sealing power and did many mighty miracles in his day. He had power to seal the heavens, raise the dead, relieve the drought-stricken land, and call down fire from heaven.

He was the last prophet to hold the keys of the priesthood, according to the Prophet Joseph Smith. He was subsequently translated and taken up into heaven without tasting death.

He, as a translated being, restored the keys of this priesthood to the Savior’s chief Apostles—Peter, James, and John—on the Mount of Transfiguration. But within a generation, the Church was destroyed by a major apostasy, and the blessings of the priesthood were removed from the earth.

It took a new dispensation from heaven to restore this blessing to our day.
It is significant that the first revelation given in 1823, recorded as section 2 of the Doctrine and Covenants, gave this promise about the priesthood:

“Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

“And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers.

“If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.” (D&C 2:1–3.)

What priesthood was Elijah to reveal? John the Baptist restored the keys to the Aaronic Priesthood. Peter, James, and John restored the keys of the kingdom of God. Why send Elijah?

“Because he holds the keys of the authority to administer in all the ordinances of the priesthood,” or the sealing power. (Teachings, p. 172; italics added.) So said the Prophet Joseph Smith!

The Prophet Joseph said further that these keys were “the revelations, ordinances, oracles, powers and endowments of the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood and of the kingdom of God on the earth.” (Teachings, p. 337; italics added.)

Even though the Aaronic Priesthood and Melchizedek Priesthood had been restored to the earth, the Lord urged the Saints to build a temple to receive the keys by which this order of priesthood could be administered on the earth again, “for there [was] not a place found on earth that he may come to and restore again that which was lost ... even the fulness of the priesthood.” (D&C 124:28; italics added.)

Again the Prophet Joseph said: “If a man gets a fullness of the priesthood of God he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord.” (Teachings, p. 308.)

So the Kirtland Temple was completed at great sacrifice to the Saints.

Then, on 3 April 1836, the Lord Jesus Christ and three other heavenly beings appeared in this holy edifice. One of these heavenly messengers was Elijah, to whom the Lord said he had “committed the keys of the power of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, that the whole earth may not be smitten with a curse.” (D&C 27:9.)

Elijah brought the keys of sealing powers—that power which seals a man to a woman and seals their posterity to them endlessly, that which seals their forefathers to them all the way back to Adam. This is the power and order that Elijah revealed—that same order of priesthood which God gave to Adam and to all the ancient patriarchs which followed after him.

And this is why the Lord said to the Prophet Joseph Smith, “For verily I say unto you, the keys of the dispensation, which ye have received, have come down from the fathers, and last of all, being sent down from heaven unto you.” (D&C 112:32.)

In a later revelation the Lord explained:

“In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;

“And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage];

“And if he does not, he cannot obtain it.

“He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase.”
When our children obey the Lord and go to the temple to receive their blessings and enter into the marriage covenant, they enter into the same order of the priesthood that God instituted in the very beginning with father Adam.

This order entitles them to the same blessings of Abraham, of whom the Lord said that he “hath entered into his exaltation and sitteth upon his throne.” (D&C 132:29.)

Then He significantly added: “This promise is yours also, because ye are of Abraham.” (D&C 132:31.)

So again I emphasize: This order of priesthood can only be entered into when we comply with all the commandments of God and seek the blessings of the fathers as did Abraham by going to our Father’s house. They are received in no other place on this earth!

I hope you would teach this truth about the temple to your children and your grandchildren. Go to the temple—our Father’s house—to receive the blessings of your fathers that you may be entitled to the highest blessings of the priesthood. “For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.” (D&C 84:22.)

Our Father’s house is a house of order. We go to His house to enter into that order of priesthood which will entitle us to all that the Father hath, if we are faithful. For as the Lord has revealed in modern times, Abraham’s seed are “lawful heirs” to the priesthood. (See D&C 86:8–11.)

Now let me say something else to all who can worthily go to the House of the Lord. When you attend the temple and perform the ordinances that pertain to the House of the Lord, certain blessings will come to you:

- You will receive the spirit of Elijah, which will turn your hearts to your spouse, to your children, and to your forebears.
- You will love your family with a deeper love than you have loved before.
- Your hearts will be turned to your fathers and theirs to you.
- You will be endowed with power from on high as the Lord has promised.
- You will receive the key of the knowledge of God. (See D&C 84:19.)
- You will learn how you can be like Him. Even the power of godliness will be manifest to you. (See D&C 84:20.)
- You will be doing a great service to those who have passed to the other side of the veil in order that they might be “judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.” (D&C 138:34.)

Such are the blessings of the temple and the blessings of frequently attending the temple. So I say at this centennial commemoration of the Logan Temple: God bless Israel! God bless those of our forebears who constructed this holy edifice. God bless us to teach our children and our grandchildren what great blessings await them by going to the temple. God bless us to receive all the blessings revealed by Elijah the prophet so that our callings and election will be made sure.

I testify with all my soul to the truth of this message and pray that the God of Abraham, Isaac,
and Jacob will bless modern Israel with the compelling desire to seek all the blessings of the fathers in the House of our Heavenly Father.
Appendix C

Documenting Your Sources on the Computer

Karen Clifford

Background: Inadequate, incomplete, or non-existent documentation is the failing of most family historians, and even some professional genealogists. Good researchers must be familiar with methods and principles of documentation to increase their success, and the credibility of their research.

Synopsis: This discussion will identify proper and accepted methods of documenting genealogical findings, regardless of whether the researcher plans on publishing or not. Proper documentation is the only true defense when others take issue with your findings.

The Importance of Adequate Documentation

What you hope to get, you need to give to...

- Complete citations
- What was found and not found
- Your evaluation of the materials
- Suggestions of what to do next (optional)

Record What You have Done to Avoid Duplication of Research

Documenting your sources includes more than indicating the citations for materials found. It should also include what was searched and not found. There are various places to record what was searched and what was done.

- On a research calendar
- In a written report
- In the notes of the computer program you are using

Elements of Complete Citations

Think back to what information you hope to receive. You would like to know who wrote or gathered the information, what the information contained, when it was gathered or written, where it can be found, how it was put together, what information the documentation itself contained, and your
evaluation of the materials based on your previous research or experience.

Imagine if all of these questions were answered in the genealogies you have read? It would certainly speed up the process for others. In the past, space was a problem which is not the case due to computers today. We can pretty much put in all the information we need to adequately document our sources.

**There is Simplicity and Ease if you Document “as you go”**

Unfortunately, there is no universally accepted documentation format. However, even without a universal “standard” certain elements should always be included such as those indicated in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items covered</th>
<th>Description of items covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHO?</td>
<td>The author, compiler, publisher, and provider of the information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT?</td>
<td>Description of the source such as: title of the book, description of the collection, or an index to other records.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHEN?</td>
<td>A specific date or span of time covered by this record collection, book film or microfiche. Example: Wills: 1834–1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHERE?</td>
<td>The places covered by this book, collection, item, etc. and addresses of publisher, person providing information or a repository when necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW?</td>
<td>Format of the collection, book, or item (e.g., book, film, fiche, electronic media).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE DOCUMENT</td>
<td>May be a photocopied, scanned, transcribed, abstracted or extracted copy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHY?</td>
<td>The researcher’s evaluation, historical background, societal customs which may provide the evidence to prove a point, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In an ideal world, all facts and clues pertaining to an individual would be recorded with that individual as well. Imagine that everything you knew about grandfather, James, was recorded in Table 2.
### Table 2

**COMPUTER DOCUMENTATION SAMPLE**

1897 BIRTH: WI, Milwaukee Co., James M. Nelson entry, Milwaukee County Births, Vol. 1, page 346, microfilm no. 1275678, item 2, Family History Library [FHL], Salt Lake City, Utah.

James M. Nelson, son of George O. and Mary Elizabeth Nelson, of Milwaukee Heights, born 4 May 1897.

1900 CENSUS: WI, Green Co., Monroe Twp, George O. Nelson household, 1900 U.S. census, Greene County, Wisconsin, population schedule, township of Monroe, enumeration district [ED] 43, supervisor’s district [SD] 1 sheet 13A, line 14; National Archives micropublication T00, roll 32.

George O. Nelson, white, male, 40 years old, born Jun 1860 OH, father born OH, mother born BY, can read and write, owns home freely, occupation farmer; Ellie [Mary Elizabeth’s nickname was Ellie], white, female, wife, age 38, born OH, born NY, farmer, laborer, can read and write; Mary, 16, born Oct 1884 IL, father b. OH, mother b. NY, going to school...Monroe, son, age 3, born May 1897, WI, father b. OH, mother born Canada.

1905 LETTER: Letter from George O. Nelson to his wife, dated 14 June 1905 from Medicine Lodge, Kansas. Copy in possession of Mr. John Browning, 12566 How’d He Do It Drive, Hoe CA 98435:

“...Sweetheart, found a wonderful new farm outside of Medicine Lodge...will be there in two weeks with the boys to pick up the household goods...Jim Boy can even have a swing in the big tree we’ve found for him here...love George.”


James Monroe Nelson, age 22, and Sarah Marie Brown, age 19, both of Salinas, were married at the home of the bride, on 14 February 1920.

What does this tell you? Did you notice that:

- He was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on the 4th of May 1897, and lived in Milwaukee Heights which came off a vital record from the Family History Library.
- His family moved to Greene County, Wisconsin when he was 3 years old.
• He had two older siblings who were from a different mother than the wife, Ellie, who was born in Canada. His father was born in Ohio and his paternal grandparents were born in Ohio and New York. His father could read and write and was financially secure for he owned his own farm. His mother, Ellie, was born September 1862 in Canada, but her parents were born in New York. James had a middle name, Monroe.
• When James Monroe was eight years old his family moved to Kansas. James was called “Jim Boy” and he obviously liked to swing.
• By the time James Monroe was twenty-two years old, he had moved to California.
• He married Sarah Marie Brown in her home in Salinas, Monterey County, California where he too was a resident in 1920.

So, we can see that more can be read into a person’s life once documentation is adequately presented than if we were to say, “Oh, I found him in the vital records, on a census, and in family correspondence.”

Another marvelous miracle happens when we enter data into a computer. We think of other things we could be doing to solve our problem. We should keep track of ideas and unanswered questions which evolve as we enter our documentation. Try entering your TO DO notes at the end of your other notes as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TO DO:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Order death certificate in California, perhaps Monterey County for James Monroe Nelson. Maybe it will tell the year he moved to California.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Search the 1910 census index for California or Kansas for James Monroe Nelson via his father George.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The 1920 census would give Sarah’s birth place. Maybe her obituary that is in her mom’s scrapbook would tell me more. Ask mom to read it to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What happened to the brothers and sisters of James Monroe? Did he marry once before in Kansas?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Tip about Chronology

Notes entered in chronological order are most effective in the research process. The sequence may be a simple chronology or a complicated sequence of cause and effect. Time lines help us understand and remember sequential relationships. They act as visual aids to promote the mental arrangement of events in their proper order and help us to reconstruct history. If the document is torn, difficult to
read, missing parts, or in some way different from others in the same series, that should be noted as well. Many genealogy computer programs today allow an area to make a comment about the quality of the source as well as what the source contained. To be most effective as a research tool as well as a register, notes should be comprised of source citations and complete abstracts of what was included in those citations.

The Citation is Only the Beginning

The beginning genealogist is often surprised to find that a citation is not enough to document a family history. In electronic formats, the space limitations are not restrictive as short forms of the past. We are not only able to cite sources, but we can transcribe or abstract text, keep tract or sources searched, and include an individual skill, knowledge, and experience in a personal interpretation of the materials within our documentation.

All this should be entered in a format which would keep all three parts of the reference distinct: the citation, the document itself (in whatever format it is recorded) and the researcher’s evaluation. Transcripts, abstracts, and interpretations of the record should also be part of documentation as well as the citation. Abstracting, extracting, transcribing or copying the record cited provides a valuable service for the reader.

Fortunately, guidelines have also been provided for avoiding pitfalls when entering this second aspect of a complete documentation reference. For example, when extracting, only extraneous, redundant words are removed while all essential Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How elements remain. If something “unusual” is encountered, it is recorded as it was found. Names, dates, signatures, and punctuation are NEVER “corrected” and any needed explanatory remarks are included in the brackets. Ellipses (three dots, with spaces between) should be used to indicate that part of the original text is not being cited. Using ellipses will indicate that you are leaving out non-essential information such as legal verbiage or redundant sentences. Brackets [ ] are used to signify that material not found in the original is being added, such as a point of clarification or an alternative transcription or a hard-to-read word.

Evaluation, Impressions, Insights, and Working Notes

Besides including basic sources to substantiate the vital information entered in the individual data fields, notes fields can be used as a place to enter impressions about what records to search the next time you have an opportunity to go to a repository, or to identify conflicting or missing information. The evaluation of the document in light of the objective, or goal, for using that particular document to prove a point requires that the interpretation of a data be placed in either a separate report or at least separated from the citation to prevent confusion with the original document. Social customs and word terms have changed and a proper explanation would also be helpful.
Bibliography


Courtesy: Karen Clifford, AG
Appendix D

Resource Guide: Preparing a Family History

Family History Library
The following guidelines can help you prepare a family history to share with your family and others.

SECTION TO INCLUDE

Your family history may include one or more of the following sections.

Title Page

The title page is generally the first page after the cover. It contains the following information:

- The title and, if applicable, subtitle. An effective title reflects the content of your family history in as few words as possible.
- The edition number if there is more than one edition.
- Your name and the names of other authors and editors.
- The place and date of publication.

Copyright Statement

Copyright statements generally appear on the back of the title page. They generally include information that tells readers when the family history was published and who to contact for more information. A sample copyright statement is:

© 1998 by Thomas Alan Smith. All rights reserved.

Table of Contents

The table of contents lists the chapters and sections of your family history and gives their page numbers. It also serves as an outline of your family history and guides readers to the sections of most interest to them.

Other Preliminary Sections

Your family history may have one or more of the following sections before the main body of the text. If used, a dedication generally appears on a separate page before the table of contents. The other sections generally appear on separate pages after the table of contents.

- Dedication. A dedication contains the name of the person to whom you are dedicating your family history and a brief statement explaining why. It is usually written on the page after the copyright page.
- List of Illustrations. A list of illustrations contains the name and page number of each picture, map, or illustration in the family history.
- Foreword, Preface, and Acknowledgments. A foreword is a statement about the family history which is written by someone other than you or the editor. A preface is a statement written by you. Each of these sections may be written on separate pages and can serve many purposes. They:
  - Describe why the author wrote the family history.
  - Provide an overview of the family history’s scope, content, and organization.
  - Outline the research methods used.
  - Provide an address for readers who wish to contact the author.
  - Show gratitude to persons or institutions who helped. The acknowledgments may also be listed on a separate page.
- List of Abbreviations. A list of abbreviations contains the abbreviations you have used in your family history and their meanings.
- Introduction. The introduction contains background or historical information that may be needed to understand the family history.
- List of Contributors. A list of contributors names the people who helped write the family history.
- Chronology. A chronology provides dates and brief descriptions of key events in a family history.
It gives your readers an overview of the events that shaped the family and provide a quick reference to important events. Such a list is especially useful if your family history is not organized chronologically.

The Main Body of the Text

The main body of the text is usually divided into several sections or chapters. Family histories are often divided into chapters according to different family groups. Some histories are divided according to time period.

You may want to use divider pages to separate the chapters. Dividers may be different colors of paper or contain illustrations or photographs.

In your family history, cite the sources where you found your information. You can use footnotes, endnotes, or other documentation methods. A style guide can give you guidelines and examples of how to cite various types of sources. Thorough source citations give your work credibility and allow others to pursue further research on a topic.

If available, include illustrations; family photographs; maps; and photocopies of original documents such as birth records, census registers, naturalization papers, marriage certificates, and so forth. Such information makes the text come alive and helps the reader visualize the time and place where the people in your family history lived.

Final Sections

You may wish to include some or all of the following sections, after the main body of the text:

Appendices. An appendix contains information that is not essential to the main body of the text but that may be useful to readers who want more specific information about a topic.

Bibliography. A bibliography lists the sources of the information used in your family history. Use a style guide to find guidelines and examples of how to cite various types of sources in a bibliography.

Index. An index should list all of the individuals, place-names, and subjects mentioned in your family history.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Layout and Design

Computers allow you a wide variety of fonts and layout possibilities. Lay out your document in a style that makes the organization of the text clear. Use fonts that are easy to read and that photocopy well.

If you include family group information, choose a format that is simple and well established, such as family group records. Check other family histories for more ideas. Some software programs, such as Personal Ancestral File® Companion, allow you to import information from a computer file into your history.

If you do not have a computer, you can type or legibly handwrite your family history.

Printing and Binding

Copy your manuscript onto archival quality paper. Use double-sided printing to reduce paper costs and the thickness of the final book. Choose a sturdy binding that will wear well.

SHARING YOUR INFORMATION

After you have written your family history, you may want to allow others to use it. You may choose to print only a few copies to distribute to family members. Or, if the cost of creating your family history is high, you may consider selling it. You may also consider donating copies of your family history to libraries or other institutions or posting it on the Internet.

If you decide to make your family history available to others beyond your immediate family, please do not include information in it about people who may still be living. As a general rule, first obtain permission before publishing information about people who were born in the last 100 years for whom you have no death date.

Donating a Copy to the Family History Library™

If you donate your family history to the Family History Library™, please follow these guidelines:

- Give the library permission to microfilm your family history. This allows the library to circulate it to Family History Centers™ worldwide. To give the library this permission, please do one of the following:
  - Fill out a Permission to Duplicate form (available at the Family History Library or at Family History Centers).
  - Send a letter of permission with your manuscript.

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  - Fill out a Permission to Duplicate form (available at the Family History Library or at Family History Centers).
  - Send a letter of permission with your manuscript.
• If possible, donate an unbound copy of the manuscript, because unbound manuscripts are easier to microfilm. The library generally puts a hard cover on it after microfilming.

Please note that the library usually puts all new books on the shelf. However, space restrictions and other factors may require that some material be made available only on microfilm. The reference staff decides whether to put an item on the shelf.

Send your manuscript and the Permission to Duplicate form or permission letter to:

Family History Library—Gifts
35 North West Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3400
USA

Donating Copies to Other Institutions
Libraries and other institutions, such as historical or genealogical societies in the area where the family lived, may also appreciate having a copy of your family history.

You can find addresses and other information from one of the following reference books, which you can find at the Family History Library or at a public or university library:


Jaszczak, Sandra, ed. Encyclopedia of Associations. 31st ed. Detroit: Gale Research Co., (1997) (FHL book 973 E4gr, computer number 32244) This is a comprehensive list of national organizations. It includes names, addresses, and telephone numbers.

Wheeler, Mary Bray, ed. Directory of Historical Organizations in the United States and Canada. 14th ed. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, (1990) (FHL book 970 H24d 1990; computer number 531083.) This is a good book for finding names and addresses of obscure organizations; however, some names and telephone numbers may be outdated.

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USA
Fax: 801-240-2494

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Appendix E

Organizing Family Facts

(Research Logs, Ancestor Chart, Personal Ancestral File Screen Captures, Family Group Records, Correspondence Log)
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-Key

B - Born
PB - Place of Birth
M - Married
PM - Place of Marriage
D - Death
PD - Place of Death
Personal Ancestral File 5.2.18.0 - Multi-Language (9.7 MB)

Personal Ancestral File 5.2.18.0 - Multi-Language (9.7 MB)

Personal Ancestral File 5.2 (build 5.2.18.0) is a Windows®-based version of one of the most widely used genealogical management programs for home computers. The software program can be downloaded free from the Internet. PAF 5.2 does not provide genealogical data. Instead, it helps users organize their family history records. It can produce, either on screen or on paper, family histories, pedigree charts, family group records, and other reports to help users in their search for missing ancestors.

This version includes changes to the individual record to accommodate the wide variety of naming conventions used throughout the world. This version will convert PAF 3.0 and 4.0 data files to its improved file format. PAF 5.2 is also available on compact disc and includes Personal Ancestral File Companion which allows users to produce additional reports and charts.

Software on this disc is in English, German, Swedish, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Portuguese.

Access the PAF website for more information.

A list of changes, bug fixes, and feature enhancements from version to version is available.

Features allow users to:

- Type each person's information only once.
- Link individuals to families.
- New: Type names and places using characters from any language.
- New: Create templates to customize data entry.
- Print pedigrees, family groups, or lists.
- Track your research sources.
- Use photos, sound clips, video, and notes to add interest and value.
- Search, find, and correct information.
- View family information in different ways.
- Match/merge duplicate entries.
- Filter searches.
- Share your information with others.
- New: View screens and print reports in either English, German, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, or Swedish.
System Requirements:

- Windows® 95B, 98, ME, NT 4.0, 2000, XP or Windows® 95A with Microsoft Internet Explorer®
- Pentium PC or iMac with a Windows emulator
- 32 MB memory (64 MB recommended)
- 32 MB to 72 MB hard-disk space
- 256-color display adapter supporting at least 800 x 600 screen resolution
- Windows® compatible printer
- Optional: Internet access, mouse
## Family Group Record

### Husband: Abraham LINCOLN
- **Born**: 12 Feb 1809, Hodgeville, Hardin, Kentucky
- **Christened**: Place
- **Died**: 15 Apr 1865, Washington, District of Columbia
- **Buried**: 4 May 1865, Springfield, Sangamon, Illinois
- **Married**: 4 Nov 1842, Springfield, Sangamon, Illinois
- **LDS ordinance dates**:
  - **Baptized**: 21 Aug 1877, SGEOR
  - **Endowed**: 23 Aug 1877, SGEOR
  - **Sealed to parents**: 14 May 1963, SGEOR
  - **Sealed to spouse**: 12 Feb 1909, SLAKE
- **Father**: Thomas LINCOLN
- **Mother**: Nancy HANKS
- **Spouse**: Mary Ann TODD
- **Children**:
  1. **Robert Todd LINCOLN**: Born 1 Aug 1843, Springfield, Sangamon, Illinois
  4. **Thomas LINCOLN**: Born 4 Apr 1853, Springfield, Sangamon, Illinois

### Wife: Mary Ann TODD
- **Born**: 13 Dec 1818, Lexington, Fayette, Kentucky
- **Christened**: Place
- **Died**: 16 Jul 1882, Springfield, Sangamon, Illinois
- **Buried**: 1926, Springfield, Sangamon, Illinois
- **LDS ordinance dates**:
  - **Baptized**: 2 Feb 1909, SLAKE
  - **Endowed**: 10 Feb 1909, SLAKE
  - **Sealed to parents**: 25 May 1959, SLAKE
  - **Sealed to spouse**: 4 Aug 1998, SEATT
- **Father**: Robert Smith TODD
- **Mother**: Eliza Ann PARKER
- **Spouse**: Abraham LINCOLN
- **Children**:
  1. **Robert Todd LINCOLN**: Born 1 Aug 1843, Springfield, Sangamon, Illinois
  4. **Thomas LINCOLN**: Born 4 Apr 1853, Springfield, Sangamon, Illinois

### Children
- **List each child in order of birth.**
  1. **Robert Todd LINCOLN**: Born 1 Aug 1843, Springfield, Sangamon, Illinois
  4. **Thomas LINCOLN**: Born 4 Apr 1853, Springfield, Sangamon, Illinois
### Family Group Record

**Husband** Abraham LINCOLN  
**Wife** Mary Ann TODD  

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| 3. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, International Genealogical Index.  
| 5. Tombstone of Abraham Lincoln.  
| 8. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, International Genealogical Index.  
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| 10. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, International Genealogical Index.  
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| 12. Tombstone of Mary Ann Todd, Oak Ridge Cemetery, 1441 Monument Ave., Springfield, IL 62702.  
| 13. Tombstone of Mary Ann Todd.  
| 15. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, International Genealogical Index.  
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| 31. Tombstone of William Wallace Lincoln.  
| 33. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, International Genealogical Index.  
| 34. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, International Genealogical Index.  
| 35. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, International Genealogical Index.  
| 36. Tombstone of Thomas Lincoln, Oak Ridge Cemetery, 1441 Monument Ave., Springfield, IL 62702.  
# CORRESPONDENCE LOG

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Appendix F

“Family History: ‘In Wisdom and in Order’”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks
Ensign, June 1989

There is much each member can do toward redeeming the dead—and each can contribute according to individual circumstances and abilities.

The Lord God told Moses that his work and his glory was “To bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). The immortality of man has now been assured by the atonement and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Each of us is privileged to assist in the remaining work of bringing to pass the eternal life of man. This is the mission of the Church.

Our current efforts to accomplish the mission of the Church have been organized to include three dimensions: proclaim the gospel, perfect the Saints, and redeem the dead. As we know, these three dimensions are interlocking and inseparable.

I will suggest some general principles that should encourage all Latter-day Saints to receive their own ordinances and provide the ordinances of eternity for their ancestors. The linkage to ordinances is vital. In this Church we are not hobbyists in genealogy work. We do family history work in order to provide the ordinances of salvation for the living and the dead. “We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel” (A of F 3).

The first principle is that our efforts to promote temple and family history work should be such as to accomplish the work of the Lord, not to impose guilt on his children. Members of this church have many individual circumstances—age, health, education, place of residence, family responsibilities, financial circumstances, accessibility to sources for individual or library research, and many others. If we encourage members in this work without taking these individual circumstances into account, we may do more to impose guilt than to further the work.

The second principle is that we should understand that in the work of redeeming the dead there are many tasks to be performed, and that all members should participate by prayerfully selecting those ways that fit their personal circumstances at a particular time. This should be done under the influence of the Spirit of the Lord and with the guidance of priesthood leaders who issue calls and direct the Church-administered portions of this work. Our effort is not to compel everyone to do everything, but to encourage everyone to do something.

There are many different things our members can do to help in the redeeming of the dead, in temple and family history work. Some involve callings. Others are personal. All are expressions of devotion and discipleship. All present opportunities for sacrifice and service.

We think first of submitting names and going to the temple to perform proxy ordinances for those who are dead. But there is much more to this work. There are ward family history consultants,
missionaries in records centers, and workers in microfilming, libraries, data entry, and name extraction. There are temple missionaries, ordinance workers, clerks, and receptionists. And there are the unsung people who work behind the scenes in the kitchens and laundries and nurseries. Behind all of these are the family members and friends who facilitate the service of others by support and encouragement. For example, a young woman who babysits or a couple who provide overnight accommodations for those who are attending the temple should understand that they are also making an important contribution to temple work.

Some of the most important temple and family history work is done at home. I do not refer just to the important work of keeping family genealogies up-to-date and the much-needed verifying that all sealings have been performed. At home we can keep our journals and gather pictures and data for the books of remembrances of our family members. We can gather and record information available through living relatives. We can write family histories and share their great lessons with our children.

We know that some of the greatest work we will ever do will be within the walls of our own homes. President Ezra Taft Benson has taught: “The family is the most effective place to instill lasting values in its members” (Ensign, Nov. 1982, p. 59). Some of the most important efforts toward fulfilling the mission of the Church will be those of parents who teach their children the doctrines and practice of the Church by precept and example. Young parents who are fulfilling that responsibility ought not to feel guilty if they are not submitting as many group sheets or attending the temple as frequently as their parents who are retired.

Some members may feel guilty about not furthering the mission of the Church when they are actually doing so. This kind of guilt comes not from insufficient efforts, but from insufficient vision. For example, a mother with several young children may be furthering the mission of the Church most profoundly in all three of its dimensions in her own home when she helps her children to prepare for missions, when she teaches them to revere the temple and prepare to make covenants there, and when she shows them how to strive for perfection in their personal lives.

The third principle is that it would be desirable for each member of the Church to think about the work of proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead not only as an expression of the mission of the Church, but also as a personal assignment. Every member should have some ongoing activity in each of these three dimensions, with a total personal activity that does not exceed what is wise for his or her current circumstances and resources.

The three dimensions of the mission of the Church overlap and are inseparable. A person who invites another to come along to the temple helps perfect the Saints as well as redeem the dead. All who attend the temple will be strengthened by the personal associations and Spirit in the house of the Lord. Adult members should be encouraged to receive their temple ordinances and to keep the covenants they have made in the temples. And young people should be encouraged to prepare for missions and temple marriages.

On the question of how much and what each member can do in individual efforts, in addition to his or her Church calling, we should be guided by the principle taught in King Benjamin’s great sermon. After teaching his people the things they should do to “walk guiltless before God,” including giving to the poor, he concluded: “And see that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is
not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength” (Mosiah 4:27). Similarly, as the Prophet Joseph Smith struggled through adversity to translate the Book of Mormon, the Lord told him: “Do not run faster or labor more than you have strength and means provided to enable you to translate; but be diligent unto the end” (D&C 10:4).

Guided by these inspired words, leaders should encourage members to determine, according to the promptings of the Spirit, what temple and family history work they can do “in wisdom and order” consistent with their own “strength and means.” In this way, if we are “diligent unto the end,” the work will prosper. The list of ways to further the work is long, and the consequences of a broad-based multitude of individual efforts by Church members are far-reaching.

In mapping out our personal efforts in temple and family history work, we need to take a view that is not only broad in scope but at least lifetime in duration. The total amount of time and resources we can spend on the mission of the Church—what we can and should do at a particular time of our life—will change with time as our circumstances change. The relative amount of time we will spend in each of the three areas will also change.

We are all acquainted with the wise teaching that “to everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven; ... a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away” (Eccl. 3:1, 6). Leaders should teach this reality and apply it in their leadership decisions.

The nature of our Church callings at a particular time will obviously have a great influence upon what we do in our personal efforts to further the mission of the Church. For example, full-time missionaries will devote almost exclusive attention to the assignments of their missions. That is appropriate for a season, and then the balance should change.

When I was going to law school, we lived 1,400 miles from the nearest temple. We were poor in material goods and hard-pressed to pursue our schooling and care for our small children. My wife and I attended the temple each summer when we returned to Utah, but at no other time. I am glad my priesthood leaders did not make me feel guilty that I did not attend the temple more frequently. A few years later I worked in our Nation’s capital, accessible to its great library resources. During that year, I chose to concentrate my personal efforts (in addition to my Church calling) on family history research. When we moved to another city, I was called as a stake missionary, and my priorities shifted from family history research to missionary work.

The principle of encouraging members to prayerfully determine what they can do “in wisdom and order” in their present circumstances is an important principle of Church administration and individual growth. I remember how I felt in my first year out of law school (over thirty years ago) when the bishopric in our new ward sent us a budget letter in November asking us to pay seventy-five dollars before the end of the year. I was devastated that after paying our tithing and meeting our other obligations we could not pay more than fifty dollars. I explained to a member of the bishopric that my wife and I had three children, and we had just emerged from five years of student poverty and an expensive cross-country move. I told him I thought we could easily pay twice the requested amount in the following year, but fifty dollars was all we had before December 31. He said he was sorry the bishopric had assumed that all lawyers had a lot of money, and he restored my confidence in myself and my leaders by telling me that it would be all right if we just did what we could.
Quotas or per capita assignments violate an important principle. In the past, most of us have heard a person give an assignment for every member of a quorum or Relief Society to attend the temple a certain number of times per month. In the past, most of us have observed a local leader make assessments for each member of a ward to contribute exactly the same amount of money for a particular financial need. Such assignments or assessments take no account of individual circumstances or the spirit of voluntary offering. Head-tax assessments require some to do more than they are able, and they require others to do less than they should. Assessments deny everyone the blessing of making a voluntary offering.

King Benjamin did not say “all things should be done by mathematical division even if this requires some members to run faster than they have strength” (See Mosiah 4:27). The Prophet Joseph Smith did not say “I teach the people correct principles and then I give them an assessment” (See Journal of Discourses, 10:57–58).

In summary, we should understand and apply these principles:

1. All things should be done in wisdom and order. We should recognize that our members have many individual circumstances. Considering these, we should promote the mission of the Church in such a way as to accomplish the work of the Lord, not to impose guilt on his children.

2. There is a time to every purpose under the heaven. There are many tasks to be performed in temple and family history work. We should encourage our members to make prayerful selection of the things they can do in their individual circumstances and in view of their current Church callings, being “diligent unto the end.”

3. Each member should think about the three dimensions of the mission of the Church—proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, redeeming the dead—as a lifelong personal assignment and privilege. Each should gauge his or her personal participation from time to time according to his or her own circumstances and resources, as guided by the Spirit of the Lord and the direction of priesthood leaders.

There are family organizations to be formed, family projects to be planned, hearts to be touched, prayers to be offered, doctrines to be learned, children to be taught, living and dead relatives to be identified, recommends to be obtained, temples to be visited, covenants to be made, and ordinances to be received.

As we fulfill our responsibilities to teach and show our brothers and sisters how to help bring to pass the eternal life of man, we will all be blessed, for this is his work and his glory.
Appendix G

First Presidency Message
“The Great Symbol of Our Membership”

President Howard W. Hunter, Ensign, October 1994

At the time of my call to this sacred office, an invitation was given for all 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.

When I contemplate the temple, I think of these words:

“The temple is a place of instruction where profound truths pertaining to the Kingdom of God are unfolded. It is a place of peace where minds can be centered upon things of the spirit and the worries of the world can be laid aside. In the temple we take covenants to obey the laws of God, and promises are made to us, conditioned always on our faithfulness, which extend into eternity” (The Priesthood and You, Melchizedek Priesthood Lessons. 1966. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 293).

It is the Lord Himself who, in His revelations to us, has made the temple the great symbol for members of the Church. Think of the attitudes and righteous behaviors that the Lord pointed us toward in the counsel He gave to the Kirtland Saints through the Prophet Joseph Smith as they were preparing to build a temple. This counsel is still applicable:

“Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God” (D&C 88:119). Are these attitudes and behaviors indeed reflective of what each of us desires and seeks to be?

We have no record that temples were built in either the Old or New World during the long period of apostasy before the gospel of Jesus Christ was restored in these Latter-days. The priesthood, which is essential to temple ordinances, did not exist upon the earth. After the restoration of the gospel through a prophet of the Lord, raised up for that very purpose, and the establishment of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, temples were again erected according to divine commandment.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Quorum of the Twelve said:

“The inspired erection and proper use of temples is one of the great evidences of the divinity of the Lord’s work.... Where there are temples, with the spirit of revelation resting upon those who administer therein, there the Lord’s people will be found; where these are not, the Church and kingdom and the truth of heaven are not” (Mormon Doctrine, 2d ed., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, p. 781).

Temples are sacred for the closest communion between the Lord and those receiving the highest and most sacred ordinances of the holy priesthood. It is in the temple that things of the earth are joined with the things of heaven. In a letter written by Paul to the Saints at Ephesus, he made a very...
significant statement about the day in which we live, that there would be a gathering of all things in Christ that are on earth and in heaven:

“Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, ... That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth” Eph. 1:9–10).

The doctrine that all creation will ultimately be united in Christ is the major theme of Paul’s epistle. The things of earth will become one with the things of heaven. The great family of God will be united through the saving ordinances of the gospel. Vicarious work for the dead and ordinances for the living are the purposes of temples.

Commenting on how our lives are blessed by temple attendance, Elder John A. Widtsoe of the Quorum of the Twelve said:

“Temple work ... gives a wonderful opportunity for keeping alive our spiritual knowledge and strength.... The mighty perspective of eternity is unraveled before us in the holy temples; we see time from its infinite beginning to its endless end; and the drama of eternal life is unfolded before us. Then I see more clearly my place amidst the things of the universe, my place among the purposes of God; I am better able to place myself where I belong, and I am better able to value and to weigh, to separate and to organize the common, ordinary duties of my life, so that the little things shall not oppress me or take away my vision of the greater things that God has given us” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1922, pp. 97–98).

Let us consider some of the promises connected to the temple that the Lord has given us. Consider the lifestyle we must live in order to be beneficiaries of these promises:

“And inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon it;

Yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God.

“But if it be defiled I will not come into it, and my glory shall not be there; for I will not come into unholy temples.

“And, now, behold, if Zion do these things she shall prosper, and spread herself and become very glorious, very great, and very terrible.

“And the nations of the earth shall honor her, and shall say: Surely Zion is the city of our God, and surely Zion cannot fall, neither be moved out of her place, for God is there, and the hand of the Lord is there;

“And he hath sworn by the power of his might to be her salvation and her high tower.

“Therefore, verily, thus saith the Lord, let Zion rejoice, for this is Zion—THE PURE IN HEART; therefore, let Zion rejoice” (D&C 97:15–21).

What promises to us as a people! What a symbol for us—as individuals, as families, and as a people—to be known before the Lord as the pure in heart!

Consider the majestic teachings in the great dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple, a prayer the Prophet Joseph Smith said was given to him by revelation. It is a prayer that continues to be answered upon us individually, upon us as families, and upon us as a people because of the priesthood
power the Lord has given us to use in His holy temples.

“And now, Holy Father,” pleaded the Prophet Joseph Smith, “we ask thee to assist us, thy people, with thy grace ... that we may be found worthy, in thy sight, to secure a fulfillment of the promises which thou hast made unto us, thy people, in the revelations given unto us;

“That thy glory may rest down upon thy people....

“We ask thee, Holy Father, that thy servants may go forth from this house armed with thy power, and that thy name may be upon them, and thy glory be round about them, and thine angels have charge over them;

“And from this place they may bear exceedingly great and glorious tidings, in truth, unto the ends of the earth, that they may know that this is thy work, and that thou hast put forth thy hand, to fulfil that which thou hast spoken by the mouths of the prophets, concerning the last days. ...

“We ask thee to appoint unto Zion other stakes ... that the gathering of thy people may roll on in great power and majesty, that thy work may be cut short in righteousness....

“And may all the scattered remnants of Israel, who have been driven to the ends of the earth, come to a knowledge of the truth, believe in the Messiah, and be redeemed from oppression, and rejoice before thee....

“Remember all thy church, O Lord, with all their families, and all their immediate connections, with all their sick and afflicted ones, with all the poor and meek of the earth; that the kingdom, which thou hast set up without hands, may become a great mountain and fill the whole earth;...

“That when the trump shall sound for the dead, we shall be caught up in the cloud to meet thee, that we may ever be with the Lord” D&C 109:10–12, 22–23, 59, 67, 72, 75).

Has there ever been a people with such stirring and wonderful promises! No wonder the Lord desires that His followers point themselves toward His example and toward His temples. No wonder He has said that in His holy house, “I will manifest myself to my people in mercy” (D&C 110:7).

Truly, the Lord desires that His people be a temple-motivated people. It would be the deepest desire of my heart to have every member of the Church be 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 and 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.

It is pleasing to the Lord for our youth to worthily go to the temple and perform vicarious baptism for those who did not have the opportunity to be baptized in life. It is pleasing to the Lord when we worthily go to the temple to personally make our own covenants with Him and to be sealed as couples and as families. And it is pleasing to the Lord when we worthily go to the temple to perform these same saving ordinances for those who have died, many of whom eagerly await the completion of
these ordinances in their behalf.

But to have the temple indeed be a symbol unto us, we must desire it to be so. We must live worthy to enter the temple. We must keep the commandments of our Lord. If we can pattern our life after the Master, and take His teaching and example as the supreme pattern for our own, we will not find it difficult to be temple worthy, to be consistent and loyal in every walk of life, for we will be committed to a single, sacred standard of conduct and belief. Whether at home or in the marketplace, whether at school or long after school is behind us, whether we are acting totally alone or in concert with a host of other people, our course will be clear and our standards will be obvious.

The ability to stand by one’s principles, to live with integrity and faith according to one’s belief—that is what matters. That devotion to true principle—in our individual lives, in our homes and families, and in all places that we meet and influence other people—that devotion is what God is ultimately requesting of us. It requires commitment—wholesouled, deeply held, eternally cherished commitment to the principles we know to be true in the commandments God has given. If we will be true and faithful to the Lord’s principles, then we will always be temple worthy, and the Lord and His holy temples will be the great symbols of our discipleship with Him.
Appendix H

“The Roots of Family History”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson
BYU Family History Fireside, March 3, 2000

The subject of family history is increasingly popular. I am confident the world has never before seen the level of interest that exists today in tracing roots and discovering one's heritage. A Time magazine cover story of April last year titled “Roots Mania,” is but one example of the extensive media attention being given the subject of genealogy. The Time article observed that, “Once the hobby of self-satisfied blue bloods tracing their families back to the Mayflower, genealogy is fast becoming a national obsession” (Time, April 19, 1999, 55). As one piece of evidence to support that assertion, it noted that, “Each year 800,000 people visit the Mormons' Family History Library in Salt Lake City” (ibid. at 56). I have been interviewed about family history in the past few months by media outlets as diverse as CNN, Business Week, and the Canadian national news magazine, Maclean’s. Others in the Family History Department are asked to respond to many more inquiries by the media who recognize the widespread and growing interest among the general population. Even Wired magazine has covered the subject in its own irreverent way.

Part of this interest is generated by the availability of exciting new tools for family history research. The computer and now the Internet are increasing access, and the speed of that access, to vital information wherever it is found. They are also making possible a level of collaboration and cooperation among family members in learning about ancestors that was difficult or even impossible to achieve in the past. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Brigham Young University are at the cutting edge. The family history course work offered here is unexcelled. The KBYU/PBS Ancestors production of 1997 was a milestone, and as you know, BYU is planning an even more extensive second round of Ancestors coming soon.

The Church's web site, familysearch.org, continues to generate about 8 million hits a day. I can tell you in whispered voice that we have just added an index to the Pedigree Resource File, the lineage-linked family history information that people around the world are sending us via the Internet at the rate of a million names a month. I whisper because this is a "soft launch;" the official announcement will be made on March 13th. You may be aware that the Family History Department is currently publishing these pedigrees on CD.

Looking ahead, without predicting dates, we see an Ancestral File on familysearch.org that users can correct and add information to on-line. The Personal Ancestral File family history records manager is now available for download from the Internet in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and German. Next year, we expect to publish a PAF 5.0 version that will handle non-Roman languages such as Japanese and Russian.

At the same time, we are working to put in place the technology and processes at Church
headquarters that will work behind the scenes to make it possible for those with no access to computers to prepare names and perform ordinances for their ancestors. We wish to make it as simple as possible both for those with the most sophisticated technological tools and for those who consider themselves fortunate to have paper and pencil. When a temple is dedicated in Accra, we want to be ready to support family history research and temple ordinances in a culture that does not keep written records of birth dates and places, but rather identifies a person by his or her family relationships.

Now, having talked by way of introduction about these exciting developments and future possibilities, let me talk about what is really behind “roots mania.” I think you know. It is the Holy Spirit moving in the hearts of people across the earth, turning their hearts to their forebears. This divine influence leads people, in a spirit of love and without their fully understanding why, to prepare what will be needed to open the door to salvation for their predecessors. The fact that this influence is now being so widely felt simply means that the Lord is hastening His work in its time (see D&C 88:73).

It is vital that we maintain a firm doctrinal foundation in family history. Otherwise, we might focus only on tools and techniques and become simply hobbyists. The spirit and divine purposes that underlie family history must, for us, guide what we do and how we do it. By analogy, in archeology, the tools of the trade, the pick and shovel, trowels and brushes, have been supplemented with the camera (film, digital, and video), computers, infrared technology for looking under the surface, and satellite locating and mapping capabilities. Still, the fundamentals do not change. A dig must proceed with a certain order and care. A record must be kept. Artifacts as they are discovered, must be identified and labeled, their characteristics and location in relation to other things carefully noted. So in family history and temple work, the standard tools of pen and paper, heavy deed books and musty records, have been supplemented with microfilm and computers and the Internet and e-mail. Yet the fundamentals remain. There should be an order to research and a focus on one’s own progenitors. A careful record must be kept. Accuracy, insofar as humanly possible to attain, is essential to the integrity of our work. And the doctrines of redemption must be both our motivation and our control.

At the official launch ceremonies for familysearch.org last May, President Gordon B. Hinckley made some brief but profound comments that I would like you to listen to now:

From the very beginnings of this Church, its members have been under religious obligation to identify their ancestors. For Latter-day Saints, families do not end at death. They are the basis of society even in the world to come. With that understanding, members of the Church regard it as both a privilege and an obligation to seek out their forebears.

Recognizing the importance of accurate information to family history research, the Church began in 1894 more than a century ago to gather significant records. With the adoption of microfilm technology in 1938, it became possible for the Church to film records all over the world. We have worked with churches and governments in more than a hundred nations to gather and preserve this priceless part of the world’s heritage—the records of its diverse people.

The vast collection at this library is due in part to this painstaking process of microfilming over many decades. Microfilmed copies of most of these records can now be examined by anyone who wishes to see them at Family History satellite libraries throughout the United States and in many other nations.

In recent years, computer technology has made it possible to transfer genealogical records to large
databases and to publish the information on-line or on compact discs. Today, however, we take the long-awaited step of allowing home access via the Internet to some of the most significant materials in the Family History Library.

We began testing this Web site on April 1, and the response has been overwhelming. Users are profuse in expressing thanks. Since then, without any promotion or requested publicity, the site has had more than 200 million hits, making it one of the most sought-after sites on the Internet even before its formal launch.

Now let me emphasize that we did not get involved in this undertaking for monetary gain of any kind. Our motives are to help members of the Church and others find their roots. The doctrine of the eternal nature of the family is one of the most important and sacred teachings for us. As I learn more about my own ancestors, who worked so hard and sacrificed so much, it increases my sense of identity and deepens my commitment to honor their memory. Perhaps there has never been a time when a sense of family, of identity and self-worth, has been more important to our world.

Seeking to understand our family history can change our lives. It helps bring unity and cohesion to families. There is something about understanding the past that helps give our young people something to live up to, a legacy to respect. We're grateful to be able to make a significant contribution to that (FamilySearch.org Launch, Monday, May 24, 1999, unpublished remarks).

In these remarks, President Hinckley stated with elegant simplicity the fundamental principles of family history. He spoke of the importance of records, of careful research, and accurate information. He explained the efforts we have gone to as a Church to facilitate genealogical research including the microfilm acquisition of records around the world and the use of computer and other technologies to make information available. These are essential matters and relate directly to the skills and principles one can learn in the excellent family history courses offered at this university.

Then President Hinckley drew attention to the doctrines that underlie this effort, speaking not only of families as the basis of society "in the world to come," but also of the effect that a knowledge of our ancestors has upon us in the present. He is touching on the broader significance of being sealed in our marriages and linked in our generations. It is a doctrine that we know, but one that merits extended study. It is a doctrine that I have studied, but do not yet fully comprehend. It means something in the hereafter, in eternity, that few have had revealed to them in full. And as President Hinckley stated, it means something very significant here and now. Let's talk about this for a moment.

In his first appearance to Joseph Smith, Moroni quoted, with some revision from the Old Testament record, the statement of Malachi. Moroni said:

Behold, I will reveal unto you the priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers.

If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming (D&C 2).

Commenting on Malachi's statement years later, the Prophet wrote:
It is sufficient to know in this case, that the earth will be smitten with a curse unless there is a welding link of some kind or other between the fathers and the children, upon some subject or other—and behold what is that subject. It is the baptism for the dead. For we without them cannot be made perfect, neither can they without us be made perfect (D&C 128:18).

Baptism for the dead is used here to represent the doctrine that baptism, and all other essential ordinances, can be provided to those who did not receive them in mortal life—the “fathers.” These ordinances, required for salvation, can be effected for these ancestors by those who live in mortality—the “children.” This seems so evident to us now because most of us have grown up knowing it, but when first revealed, it was like turning on a great light. What excitement; what a beautiful doctrine! God has provided the way for those we love to be redeemed no matter where or when they lived and no matter what their circumstances. It’s so simple! We can do it for them. Think of all they did for us, and now we can do this for them, and we will be together in the kingdom of God. It is justice and mercy all wrapped together.

Wilford Woodruff remembered that when this doctrine first became known, but before it was fully understood, the Prophet Joseph and he and others rushed to perform baptisms for the dead in the nearest river, in their excitement not recording anything they did. He said:

When the Prophet Joseph had this revelation from heaven, what did he do?...

He never stopped till he got the fulness of the word of God to him concerning the baptism for the dead. But before doing so he went into the Mississippi River, and so did I, as well as others, and we each baptized a hundred for the dead, without a man to record a single act that we performed. Why did we do it? Because of the feeling of joy that we had, to think that we in the flesh could stand and redeem our dead. We did not wait to know what the whole of it should be. Finally the Lord told the Prophet: “When any of you are baptized for our dead, let there be a recorder, and let him be eyewitness of your baptisms; let him hear with his ears, that he may testify of a truth, saith the Lord; that in all your recordings it may be recorded in heaven; whatsoever you bind on earth, may be bound in heaven; whatsoever you loose on earth, may be loosed in heaven.” That was the beginning of this work (The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, ed. G. Homer Durham, Bookcraft, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1946, 153).

In due course, this doctrine of hearts turning to the fathers and doing for them what they could not do for themselves, was further elaborated. We learned that the gospel is taught to our ancient fathers and mothers in the world of spirits, making it possible for them to accept these ordinances (see D&C 138; 1 Peter 3:18–20; 4:6). And it was revealed that there was not only a baptism available, but a linking or sealing of dead and living to one another that bound them in love and loyalty through the eternities. Initially this was not fully understood. President Wilford Woodruff tells us that for many years people were sealed, or as they said in those days, “adopted,” to prominent people rather than to their own fathers and mothers, grandparents, and so on. Here is what he said about the revelation that came to him as president of the Church on this matter:

We have not fully carried out those principles in fulfillment of the revelations of God to us, in sealing the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers. I have not felt satisfied, neither
did President Taylor, neither has any man since the Prophet Joseph who has attended to the ordinance of adoption in the temples of our God. We have felt that there was more to be revealed upon this subject than we had received. Revelations were given to us in the St. George Temple, which President Young presented to the Church of God. Changes were made there, and we still have more changes to make, in order to satisfy our Heavenly Father, satisfy our dead, and ourselves. I will tell you what some of them are. I have prayed over this matter, and my brethren have. We have felt, as President Taylor said, that we have got to have more revelation concerning sealing under the law of adoption. Well, what are these changes? One of them is the principle of adoption. In the commencement of adopting men and women in the temple at Nauvoo, a great many persons were adopted to different men who were not of the lineage of their fathers, and there was a spirit manifested by some in that work that was not of God. Men would go out and electioneer and labor with all their power to get men adopted to them. One instance I will name here: A man went around Nauvoo asking every man he could, saying, “You come and be adopted to me, and I shall stand at the head of the kingdom, and you will be there with me.” Now, what is the truth about this? Those who were adopted to that man, if they go with him, will have to go where he is. He was a [participant] in that horrible scene—the Mountain Meadow massacre....

When I went before the Lord to know who I should be adopted to (we were then being adopted to prophets and apostles), the Spirit of God said to me, “Have you not a father, who begot you?”

“Yes, I have.”

“Then why not honor him? Why not be adopted to him?”

“Yes,” said I, “that is right.”

I was adopted to my father, and should have had my father sealed to his father, and so on back; and the duty that I want every man who presides over a temple to see performed from this day henceforth and forever, unless the Lord Almighty commands otherwise, is, let every man be adopted to his father. When a man receives the endowments, adopt him to his father; not to Wilford Woodruff, nor to any other man outside the lineage of his fathers. That is the will of God to this people... Elijah the prophet appeared unto Joseph Smith and told him that the day had come when this principle must be carried out. Joseph Smith did not live long enough to enter any further upon these things. His soul was wound up with this work before he was martyred for the word of God and testimony of Jesus Christ. He told us that there must be a welding link of all dispensations and of the work of God from one generation to another. This was upon his mind more than most any other subject that was given to him.

In my prayers the Lord revealed to me that it was my duty to say to all Israel to carry this principle out, and in fulfillment of that revelation I lay it before this people. I say to all men who are laboring in these temples, carry out this principle, and then we will make one step in advance of what we have had before.

Myself and counselors conversed upon this and were agreed upon it, and afterwards we laid it before all the apostles who were here..., and the Lord revealed to every one of these men—and they would bear testimony to it if they were to speak—that that was the word of the Lord to them. I never met with anything in my life in this Church that there was more unity upon than there was upon that principle. They all feel right about it, and that it is our duty. That is one principle that should be carried out from this time henceforth.

“But,” says one, “suppose we come along to a man who perhaps is a murderer.” Well, if he is a murderer, drop him out and connect with the next man beyond him. But the Spirit of God will be with us in this matter.

We want the Latter-day Saints from this time to trace their genealogies as far as they can, and to be
sealed to their fathers and mothers. Have children sealed to their parents, and run this chain through as far as you can get it. MS 56:335–339, May 28, 1894 (The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, Bookcraft, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1946, 154–157).

I do not claim fully to comprehend the significance of this order of things, but I rejoice in the assurance that I may always be with those now around me, those I have loved who are now gone, and others of the past, unknown in person, but deeply appreciated for the legacy they left me. Even more, I rejoice in the assurance of eternal association with my wife and my children and my grandchildren. When I think of those yet to come, who will be a part of me, I feel a deep yearning never to lose any of them.

Remember, President Hinckley referred not only of the significance of vicarious ordinances for ancestors. He gave particular emphasis to the influence of family history on us, the living, in mortality. He spoke of identity, a sense of self-worth, cohesion in families, and a legacy to respect and commitment to honor. I believe that it is, in fact, the influence of knowing our history, and then the impact of our family associations, here and now, that teaches us why the celestial order is a perfect family structure. This impels us to act in a way to protect and preserve that family structure.

Let me give you an example. I begin to understand a little more deeply this glorious doctrine when I consider the woman who stands with me. As you look at her seated here tonight, despite her being uncommonly lovely, you might suppose her to be an ordinary person. Yet she is to me exceptional. I see it more and more as time goes on. She studies almost constantly and thinks deeply. I can't tell you how many times she has asked me questions that have never occurred to me, and I have had to respond, “I don't know.” She has an intuitive sense of what is wise and sound, and what is dangerous. More and more she looks outward and does what is within her power to meet a need.

She has, a number of times, undergone the challenge, discomfort, and risks of pregnancy, followed in five instances by the extreme pain of delivery. I know I do not comprehend it. When women begin to talk about these things, I know I have nothing to contribute, so I leave as quickly as I can. Nevertheless, it has been my privilege to be present at the birth of each of our children. I cannot express it in words, but in each case it has been a sacred experience. Despite Kathy's suffering, perhaps because of it, I have felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. I am filled with awe and a sense of wonder by the miracle of life and my wife's unique role in it. I have felt a quiet and profound sense of reverence. The moment of birth is unique in all my experience, and this blessed woman is at the very center of it. I think I am only beginning to appreciate what she has done.

Not only has she given birth, but she has been a mother to these five children. She has dedicated her time and talents to caring for them and teaching them. She has been required to shoulder, at times, an unfair share of responsibility in raising and nurturing them, sometimes because of my negligence and sometimes because it simply could not be otherwise. She has known joy and grief. Her husband has sometimes been tender and appreciative, but has also at times been unthinking and insensitive. In all, she has loved the Lord and her family, and has never ceased to serve them.

With the passing of years and growing maturity, there is a growing peace about her that steadies all who come within her influence. Some of the old challenges are fading as children grow and leave home. New challenges have come such as travel and speaking assignments, things she would not
choose for herself. She must deal with living in places she does not select and with languages she does not always understand. As each year begins, she does not know where she will live the next; she can only plan one year at a time. Because her husband belongs to the Church, in the sense that his life is the “property” of the Church, she also largely belongs to the Church.

I know Kathy is not happy I am talking about her like this. She is likely thinking, “If you feel this way, why don’t you act better?” She would say, if I gave her an opportunity for rebuttal (which I will not) that others are more capable, more accomplished, or are called upon to face far greater challenges or make much greater sacrifices than she. She does not see herself as exceptional. Be that as it may, she is for me the woman of my dreams, and without her and her sacrifices, I would not be whole. In the Prophet Joseph Smith’s phrase, I without her could not be made perfect. I say again, I truly begin to understand the doctrine of sealing on earth and in heaven when I look at her. And as my bond with her becomes increasingly precious to me, so too do my links to family—past, present, and future.

There is one eternal relationship we must put first and work to establish above all others since it is the key to all the rest. It is our relationship with God through Christ. Concerning the Savior, Isaiah prophesied:

He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief' when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand (Isaiah 53:8–10).

Who are the seed of Jesus Christ; who are his generation? Abinadi answered this way:

And now I say unto you, who shall declare his generation? Behold, I say unto you, that when his soul has been made an offering for sin he shall see his seed. And now what say ye? And who shall be his seed?

Behold I say unto you, that whosoever has heard the words of the prophets, yea, all the holy prophets who have prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord—I say unto you, that all those who have hearkened unto their words, and believed that the Lord would redeem his people, and have looked forward to that day for a remission of their sins, I say unto you, that these are his seed, or they are the heirs of the kingdom of God.

For these are they whose sins he has borne; these are they for whom he has died, to redeem them from their transgressions. And now, are they not his seed (Mosiah 15:10–12)?

The great King Benjamin explained:

And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters (Mosiah 5:7).
This rebirth as the seed of Christ requires those essential ordinances by which we covenant with God to render obedience and by which God binds himself to each of us, separately and personally, to grant salvation. It has been so since the beginning. Herein is the beauty of that doctrine that permits all of humankind to be included, directly or by proxy, in the covenant.

And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam, our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and he was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water.

And thus he was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man.

And he heard a voice out of heaven, saying: Thou art baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost. This is the record of the Father, and the Son, from henceforth and forever;

And thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity.

Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God; and thus may all become my sons. Amen (Moses 6:64–68).

I bear witness that whatever tools we may have, the powers of heaven will attend us in all we do to link our families here and hereafter. It is for us first to receive the ordinances and keep the covenants that we may be reborn as the seed of our Savior. It is for us then to do what lies in our power to afford the same privilege to our family members here as well as those who live in the world of spirits. It is for us to offer the same blessings to all around us, including strangers, whomever we can touch and teach. Having done so, it will not matter if circumstances have not permitted us to be linked with a husband or wife or into a perfect family structure in this imperfect mortal world. Such blessings will be ours in eternity; they cannot be denied to one so qualified.

The great plan of the Father will not be frustrated. He has sent his Only Begotten Son to bring it to pass, and the Son has given His life to make it a reality. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Jesus Christ is the head of this Church. Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of the great family of man. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.
Appendix I

“Ordinances and Covenants”

Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander
BYU Family History Fireside, October 29, 2000

What a wonderful sight to see so many of you here on this Friday evening. When our boys entered BYU, I gave them a bit of advice which I will share with you. I counseled them to study every Friday evening in the library. When they asked why, I simply told them that the kind of girl they would find in the library Friday evening is the kind of girl they should marry. This is not the library, but I assume it will still be open for a few hours after the fireside.

We are all aware that the mission of the Church is “to help bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man by inviting all people to come unto Christ and be perfected in Him.”2 One of the most significant teachings given by the Savior to the Apostles just prior to His arrest is this one, as recorded in John: “Jesus saith unto him [Thomas], I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”3 This same doctrine was taught by King Benjamin in these words: “There shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.”4

These and many other scriptures, both ancient and modern, attest to the fundamental doctrine that Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice stand at the very center of the plan of salvation. For a Latter-day Saint this fundamental doctrine of salvation only in and through the name of Jesus Christ and the Church’s mission to invite all to come to Him pertain to all who have lived, or will ever live, on this earth. It is inclusive by its very nature and excludes or exempts no one. In answer to the question of how the Church accomplishes this mission to “invite all to come unto Christ,” we all quickly respond “by proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead.” We would not be wrong, of course. But in such a quick answer we miss some very critical pieces of information. The exact response to the question as set forth includes these statements:

Proclaiming the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people and preparing them to receive the ordinances and covenants of the gospel.

Perfecting the Saints by preparing them to receive the ordinances and covenants of the gospel and by instruction and discipline to gain exaltation.

Redeeming the Dead by performing vicarious ordinances of the gospel for those who have lived on the earth.

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2 The Mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
3 John 14:6.
4 Mosiah 3:17.
Participation in sacred ordinances, both live and vicarious, and fidelity or obedience to the covenants associated with those ordinances, are fundamental to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to the process of coming to Him and being perfected in Him. It is about this fundamental role of ordinances and covenants that I would like to say a few words this evening.

In a very broad sense, everything ordained and established by God’s authority with the intent that it be applied in the lives of His children may be referred to as His ordinances. Consequently, the commandments, statutes, decrees, and requirements of God are properly defined as the ordinances of God. Understood in a somewhat narrower sense, ordinances are also solemn acts or ceremonies that have very specific sacred and holy purposes, significance, and meaning. My reference to ordinances this evening will be in this more narrow application.

As I begin, I would like to make a few general observations concerning the role of ordinances in the modern Christian world. In Protestant denominations, grace and faith have gained ascendancy as the primary, or sole, requirements of salvation. The more singular the role of grace in the process of salvation, the less important is the role of ordinances in that process. That is, if I believe that God arbitrarily decides whether I will or will not be saved, then my participation in ordinances will have little overall effect. Likewise, if faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the primary or only requirement of salvation, there is again little need for personal participation in ordinances. Additionally, if faith alone is the determining factor in salvation, one must somehow deal with the billions of people who have never heard of Christ or had the opportunity to confess His name.

As personal participation in ordinances loses significance, the importance of divine authority also becomes less significant. If this is true, then one baptism is as good as another. Indeed, many churches accept the baptisms performed by other churches as valid. Consequently, the concept of divine authority and the importance of properly administered ordinances as requirements of salvation are completely lost.

There is a corollary observation. The more claim a church has on antiquity and apostolic authority, the more prominent the emphasis on sacred ordinances and upon divine authority to perform them. The Catholic Church in the Western development of Christianity and the Orthodox Church in the East, both assume this position. Each claims divine authority and teaches the importance of sacred ordinances referred to as sacraments in the Western tradition and mysteries in the Eastern. Of these, there are basically seven: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, repentance (including confession), holy orders, marriage, and anointing either of the sick or prior to death.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints also claims an ancient origin and thereby places exceptional importance on the role of both ordinances and covenants and on the necessity of divine authority to administer them. The third article of faith teaches that, “We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.”

The restoration of the gospel and the founding of the Church in 1830 were neither the beginning of sacred ordinances nor of the divine authority to administer them. The requirements of
salvation and exaltation, including the sacred ordinances of the gospel, for all men, “were instituted from before the foundation of the world.”6 Sacred ordinances have always been an immutable part of the gospel. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that, “Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the priesthood, for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles.”7

If this were not the case, salvation would indeed be a very arbitrary matter and would be restricted to those few who may have been fortunate enough to have heard of, and believed in, Jesus Christ. It is this principle of consistent and unalterable requirements that gives true meaning to the performance of vicarious ordinances in the temple. The Prophet wrote that baptism for the dead and the recording of such baptisms conform, “…to the ordinance and preparation that the Lord ordained and prepared before the foundation of the world, for the salvation of the dead who should die without a knowledge of the gospel.”8

Through time and apostasy following Christ's Resurrection and Ascension, however, the divine authority of the priesthood and the sacred ordinances which were instituted from before the foundation of the world for the salvation of all men were changed or lost, and the associated covenants were broken. The Lord revealed His displeasure over this situation in these words, “For they have strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant; They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god.”9

This situation required a restoration of knowledge pertaining to the importance, significance, and appointed administration of sacred gospel ordinances, both live and vicarious, as well as the divine authority of the priesthood and priesthood keys to administer them.

May we now turn our attention to a discussion of some of the factors that make personal and worthy participation in sacred gospel ordinances, properly administered, so significant in our determination to come unto Christ and be perfected in Him.

First, through personal participation in sacred gospel ordinances we come to know God. I refer to a couple of verses in the 84th section of the Doctrine and Covenants in which we read:

And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the Kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. Therefore, 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.10

Our participation in sacred ordinances teaches much about the order of God's kingdom and about Him. For example, it seems ludicrous to think that one could enter a temple to perform some of

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6 Doctrine and Covenants 124:33.
7 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 308.
8 Doctrine and Covenants 128:5.
9 Doctrine and Covenants 1:15–16.
10 Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–21.
the most sacred ordinances before submitting to baptism, which is one of the initial ordinances of the gospel. There is order in the kingdom of God and there is order in the way we learn about it. To Nephi the Lord said:

I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have.11

Elsewhere the Lord has stated that, “That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.”12

We do not receive everything at one time, but receive knowledge of holy things progressively and incrementally as we are worthy of, and obedient to, such knowledge. From the first ordinance of the kingdom, baptism, we progress through other ordinances such as confirmation and ordination to the priesthood, all of which lead to the most holy of ordinances which are performed in the temple. Our participation in the sacred ordinances of the gospel orders our knowledge of the kingdom and thereby reveals the nature of God to us.

Knowledge of God and sacred ordinances are closely related. Therefore, what are some of the things we learn about God by participating in His appointed ordinances? Let us take baptism as an example. Baptism by immersion is for the remission of sins. One who has fully repented of his or her sins with full purpose of heart and receives baptism, knows that God not only has the power to forgive and to take away the burden of guilt associated with sin, but that He does so. This person knows, through personal experience, something about God and His magnificent power and kindness. The only way to truly know these things is by participating worthily in the ordinance of baptism itself. Baptism opens the door to the kingdom of God, through which one now not only passes cleanly, but with a sure knowledge that God forgives. The same can be said of all other sacred ordinances of the gospel. Over time and with obedience, we progress into the ordinances of the temple, where we come to know that our most precious relationships are not affected by death. This knowledge we receive only by participating in the ordinances that are meant to teach us such things. Otherwise, they will not and cannot be known. The Prophet taught the following relating to knowing essential holy truth through our participation in sacred ordinances, “Reading the experience of others, or the revelation given to them, can never give us a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God. Knowledge of these things can only be obtained by experience through the ordinances of God set forth for that purpose.”13

As sacred ordinances reveal the order of the kingdom of God in a progressive manner, our participation in them reveals to us the personality and character of God that can be gained in no other way.

11 2 Nephi 28:30.
12 Doctrine and Covenants 50:24.
13 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 324.
Secondly, *sacred gospel ordinances are the gateway to solemn covenants with God.* Ordinances and covenants can hardly be understood apart from each other. By ordinance we enter into covenant and by covenant we receive the ordinance. Though there may be ordinances—such as blessing and naming of children, anointing the sick or blessings of comfort—that do not have an associated covenant, there is no eternal covenant that is not connected to an ordinance. All important steps toward God are introduced by sacred ordinances and are governed by the conditions of the covenants associated with those ordinances. Perhaps it would be good at this point to make just a comment on the nature of covenants. Eternal covenants are extended or offered to us only by God. He is the originator of all such covenants, as He is the only one who has authority and power to guarantee their validity beyond the grave.

“And everything that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be, that are not by me or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God.”

We cannot originate such covenants because we do not possess the power to guarantee them. Consequently, we can only enter into covenants that are offered to us by God and we can enter them only in the way He prescribes. Examples of this, of course, are obvious and numerous. The gospel itself is the New and Everlasting Covenant between God and man. We can enter into that covenant in only one way—baptism by immersion for the remission of our sins. Without obeying the ordinance, we can neither enter the covenant nor receive its blessings. God is the only one who can extend forgiveness of sins and bestow the blessings of membership in His kingdom that come through baptism. Such blessings, of course, include the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The ordinances of baptism and the sacrament are bound inseparably together. Through baptism we receive a remission of our sins. Through the sacrament we “retain a remission” of sins. By participating in baptism and the sacrament, we agree, or covenant, that we are willing to take the name of Christ upon us, to keep His commandments, and to always remember Him. In both instances, based upon our obedience to the ordinances, God extends the promise, or covenant, that we would have His Spirit to be with us. Understanding the nature of a covenant and living in accordance with its requirements give life and meaning to the ordinance itself.

The Lord asks this question: “...will I receive at your hands that which I have not appointed?”

The appointed authority in performing a sacred gospel ordinance is as essential to the validity of the ordinance as the ordinance itself is to the covenant that accompanies it. The Savior told Joseph in the initial visitation, “...they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a *form of godliness,* but they deny the power thereof.”

The “form of godliness” may have reference to ordinances common to most Christian churches, such as baptism, the sacrament, and marriage. These all may share similarity in their...
performance, but without the priesthood and the accompanying covenant, the power of the ordinance is denied. If we eliminate the covenant portion of an ordinance, we are left only with the “form of godliness”.

Thirdly, sacred ordinances provide an endowment of divine power in our lives. In His conversation with Pilate the Savior said, “My kingdom is not of this world.”

Numerous scriptures teach us that there is natural enmity between the world and the kingdom of God. One of the things that sets the kingdom of God apart is the sense of the holy that exists therein. The world can only have a sense of the secular. Worthy participation in sacred gospel ordinances changes our lives and brings blessings and power to us that we would otherwise not enjoy. The power of the Atonement itself is unlocked by sacred gospel ordinances which are performed under the keys of the priesthood. Remission of sins is extended through the ordinance of baptism. Confirmation brings with it the promise of the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. Ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood opens the way for “every man to speak in the name of God” by teaching, blessing, and comforting others. Worthy participation in the holy ordinances of the temple reveals our eternal possibilities and places us in a position to realize them. President Brigham Young taught of the temple endowment, “Your endowment is to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels.”

One of the most beautiful, yet most common of the gospel ordinances, is that of the sacrament. We participate in it literally thousands of times throughout our lives. Yet, because of its ever present nature in our sacrament meetings, we can easily miss its supernal significance. I would like to refer to a scripture which we normally quote in context of baptism, but it has wonderful application to sacrament meeting as well. Listen:

And it came to pass that he said unto them: Behold, here are the waters of Mormon (for thus were they called) and now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light; Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort…. What have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord.

Isn't this a perfect description of a sacrament meeting? Should we not all come to that meeting mourning for our sins and willing to mourn with others over this same matter? The Savior's promise in the Sermon on the Mount is that those who mourn will be comforted. This occurs during the administration of the sacrament. I think this is why we come to sacrament meeting. As we partake of the sacrament, we express our willingness to take the name of Christ upon us, to always remember Him, and to keep his commandments. For this God extends His covenant that we will always have His Spirit to be with us. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter. As we come to the sacrament mourning for our

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18 John 18:36.
19 Doctrine and Covenants 1:20.
21 Mosiah 18:8–10.
sins, so may we also leave comforted and forgiven of our sins. This is a weekly endowment of divine power in our lives that we can receive only by partaking worthily of the sacrament. Is it any wonder, then, that those who stay away from this sacred ordinance also estrange themselves from the covenant associated with it?

Sacred ordinances are ordained of God. They are essential to our salvation and exaltation. Through the sacred ordinances of the gospel, we learn of His kingdom and learn of Him, we enter into holy and eternal covenants, and we receive an endowment of divine power in our lives. All of these things bring us to Christ that we may be perfected in Him.

Brethren and sisters, I bear my witness that we can come unto Christ and be perfected in Him by our worthy participation in the sacred ordinances appointed by God and instituted from before the foundation of the world. I testify of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and to the saving power of His holy name. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.
The Law of Nature

We all understand that Sr. Isaac Newton’s treatise of universal gravitation, terrestrial mechanics, and color, explains why an apple or other fruits drop from a tree; why water from a high mountain stream flows, by river, down to the sea; why flowers blossom during spring and summer and in the fall their color will fade; why in the winter snow will come; and why the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. The law of nature, which Heavenly Father designed, has never changed in the past, and will never change in the future.

Obtain a Physical Body, Gain Earthly Experiences

Like the laws of nature, our Heavenly Father presented “the plan of holiness” in the great council of heaven to all of His children in the pre-earthly life. God, in this council, presented the law, the covenant, the ordinances, the principles, the rules, and His words and His will—called the divine plan of happiness. Heavenly Father placed His children here on earth so we, His children, could obtain a physical body and walk by “the shield of faith” to exercise our moral agency and gain earthly experiences. The Family: A Proclamation to the World solemnly states:

In the pre-mortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshiped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life. The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.

From this, we learn the following profound doctrines:

1. God is our Eternal Father and we worshiped Him.
2. We lived in the pre-mortal world.
3. We are His children—spirit sons and daughters.
4. In the pre-mortal world we accepted the divine plan of happiness.
5. We are here to obtain a physical body.
6. We are here to gain earthly experience.
7. We are here upon this earth to progress towards perfection.
8. Our divine destiny is to be an heir of eternal life.
9. Family relationships can be perpetuated beyond this life.
10. Sacred ordinances and covenants are available in the temple.
11. These ordinances and covenants make it possible for an individual to return to the presence of God.
12. Families can be sealed eternally in the temple.

Heavenly Father’s “great plan of our God” was expressed so beautifully by the Lord, and it says, “This is my work and my glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). “The Gods saw that...their plan was good” (Abraham 4:21). This is “the plan of salvation” of our Heavenly Father, designed for our everlasting joy and eternal happiness.

The Divine Plan of Happiness

We all accepted His “great plan of happiness” and “the plan of redemption,” so that we could gain our physical bodies and gain the earthly mortal experiences to progress toward perfection and “ultimately realize [our] divine destiny as heirs of eternal life.” “According to the great plan of the Eternal God, there must be an Atonement” (Alma 34:9) of the Lord Jesus Christ. His holy Atonement for His children, “enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave.” Sacred ordinances and covenants available in the holy temple make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united for eternity.

When we partake of sacred covenants and ordinances in the holy and dedicated sanctuary—the temple of the Lord, our family relationships will “be perpetuated beyond the grave.” When we receive the holy ordinances and covenants, and keep those covenants which we make in His holy house, then the promise of the Lord is that we will be able to return to His holy presence by His grace and mercy. Ultimately, our “family [may] be united for eternity.”

The way to receive the above-mentioned sacred purposes, temple ordinances, and finding our forefathers exists through FAMILY HISTORY WORK. Temple work and family history work are so important to provide the opportunity for our progenitors to also embrace “the divine plan of happiness.”

While we are enjoying our physical body, we should walk with solid faith in the Lord. We should continue to keep and obey His commandments. Then the Lord will help us to achieve this most important goal to become like Him and to be with Him as His family. In order to inherit the heavenly heritage and to accomplish this sacred and eternal goal, God has designed and given the great institution of marriage between a man and a woman. He has established the institution of the family for His children to obtain the utmost joy and everlasting happiness in this life and the life after death. This is the profound reason God gave His children the solemn and sacred responsibility of MARRIAGE and establishing a FAMILY.

“The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for
parenthood as husband and wife.”

Created Heavens and Earth

For this cause, “the great plan of salvation” was laid before the great council in heaven. Joseph Smith stated, “In the beginning, the head of the Gods called a council of the Gods; and they came together and concocted [prepared] a plan to create the world and people it.” For this glorious reason, Heavenly Father created the vast heavens and the earth. The Lord said, “Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are” (3 Nephi 9:15).

And our Heavenly Father Himself testified, “…by the word of my power, have I created them, which is mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth.

“And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them.

“For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man; but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them” (Moses 1:32-33).

Through His Only Begotten Son, the Father created this earth and then extensive, innumerable, and unnumbered galaxies and universes. “And the Lord God spake unto Moses, saying: The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine” (Moses 1:37).

To provide a true happiness in this life, the life after death, and throughout eternity, we have to keep His words, His law, His covenant, His doctrine, His teachings, and His commandments. To have true and everlasting joy and happiness, the family should be united so that “family relationships may be perpetuated beyond the grave.” This should include “every soul who belongs to the whole human family of Adam” (Mormon 3:20). This is the reason our sacred responsibility for family history work exists. As we organize our own eternal family, we will be blessed to return to the presence of our Heavenly Father to live with Him as the family of God. To receive the fulness of our Heavenly Father, God has commanded us to marry in His holy house, to keep His holy covenants, and organize our family in the Lord’s way. To His children, God solemnly stated through the First Presidency and His apostles, “…marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and the family is central to the creator’s plan.” Further they solemnly stated, “The FAMILY is ordained of God. MARRIAGE between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan.”

The eternal and unchanging institutions of marriage and the family are vital and essential for His children. Therefore, we should organize our eternal family and help our progenitors receive the same blessings. For this purpose, we do family history work.
We Abide the Law

To the living, to the deceased, and to those who are yet to be born to this earth—to all His children, God commanded that they obey His commandments. However, He bestowed upon us the power of the moral agency to choose between right and wrong. He said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye abide my law ye cannot attain to this glory” (D&C 132:21).

The Lord clearly stated that we must abide His law in order to attain His glory. The Lord was referring to Joseph Smith when He said, “...I have endowed him with the keys of the power of this priesthood, if he do anything in my name, and according to my law and by my word” (D&C 132:59).

The Lord said we must do all things in His holy name, by His law and by His word.

“...after ye have received my new and everlasting covenant, saith the Lord God; and he that abideth not this law can in nowise enter into my glory” (D&C 132:27).

The Lord has given us covenants and ordinances, so that we, His Children, can obey the LAW and His WORD. He repeatedly asks us to abide His law; otherwise we may not be able to receive His blessings.

“...the new and everlasting covenant, it was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof must and shall abide the law” (D&C 132:6).

When we “abideth not this law,” there is no promise and we cannot receive His everlasting blessing. No one can come unto the Father unless they abide His will, His word, the law, and His covenant.

“...whatsoever they may be, that are not by me or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection.

“I am the Lord thy God; and I give unto you this commandment—that no man shall come unto the Father but by me or by my word, which is my law...” (D&C 132:13;12).

To be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise for the living or the dead, we must totally abide the law of the Lord, the word of the Lord, and our covenants. Otherwise, there is “no efficacy, virtue, or force” (D&C 132:7) when we move onto the other side. This KEY and this POWER and this AUTHORITY were restored and given to the Prophet Joseph Smith. “And I will show unto my servant Joseph all things pertaining to this house, and the priesthood” (D&C 124:42).

For this reason, we search out our forefathers to provide for them the sacred blessings pertaining to the ordinances of the holy temple.

Promises and Blessings

When we receive sacred ordinances and keep the Lord’s covenants which we are honored to receive in the house of the Lord, our Heavenly Father makes a solemn oath. He promises us our exaltation when we abide His will, “Abraham...he abode in my law; as Isaac also and Jacob...they have entered into their exaltation, according to the promises” (D&C 132:37).

Heavenly Father will help us to progress toward exaltation when we follow Him. His promise is as follows: “...enter ye into my law and ye shall be saved” (D&C 132:32).
By way of promised blessing He said, “...they should continue; both in the world and out of the world should they continue as innumerable as the stars; or, if ye were to count the sand upon the seashore ye could not number them” (D&C 132:30). Even if we use modern technology, we would not be able to account for all the “sand” on the seashores of this earth.

The Lord’s blessings will be with us when we keep the Lord’s WORDS and His LAW. This is what the Lord spoke to Joseph Smith: “…my servant Joseph, that whatsoever you give on earth, and to whomsoever you give any one on earth, by my word and according to my law, it shall be visited with blessings” (D&C 132:48).

For each one of us—for our posterity and our progenitors—all must abide His word:

If a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise.... Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; and if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection; and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths—then shall it be written in the Lamb's Book of Life...and if ye abide in my covenant...to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever.

Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them. (D&C 132:19-20).

What a promise given by the Lord that our “glory shall be a fulness,” our blessing will be “a continuation of the seeds forever and forever,” and our blessings will be that we can live with our holy Father. There is “no end.” We will be blessed to live with Him, “everlasting to everlasting.” “All things are subject unto [us]” His children. We will be blessed to become gods and goddesses. What a glorious day to become so worthy as to inherit Heavenly Father’s inheritance. This is only possible because our Father will bless us with His holy power to become like Him.

What a truth. What an insight. What a knowledge. What a revelation. What a blessing of the Father. For this reason, Father sent His Only Begotten Son. I testify that this is true. I know that Jesus Christ is our Savior of the world. His holy Atonement makes it possible for us to be like Him and our Father.

The Lord said His way is the only way. He said, “strait is the gate” therefore, “receive me” (D&C 132:22). We have to accept His law and His word and abide His covenant. Heavenly Father sent His gospel through His servants to teach all of His children since the days of Adam so that all the human family—Heavenly Father’s children—may be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise.

How Many of His Children

How many times has the Lord tried to gather His sheep. When He was in Palestine, the Lord said:
O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, [thou] that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under [her] wings, and ye would not! (Matt. 23:37)

...how oft have I gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and have nourished you.

...how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, yea, O ye people of the house of Israel, who have fallen; yea, ...how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens, and ye would not.

O ye house of Israel whom I have spared, how oft will I gather you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, if ye will repent and return unto me with full purpose of heart (3 Nephi 10:4-6).

For, behold, I will gather them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, if they will not harden their hearts (D&C 10:65).

Let us consider another insight. Since the Adamic dispensation to this day, how many of Heavenly Father’s children have left His holy presence to be born and come to various countries on this earth, die, and then moved to the spirit world? It could be as many as 80 billion people! Let me give you another thought. Let us consider the gospel dispensation on this land of America. The Lord said:

Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ (Ether 2:12).

...this land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring (2 Nephi 1:7).

So anyone coming to this land—the land of promise—“shall serve him.”

1. **Adamic Dispensation.** In the LDS Bible Dictionary, on page 659, it says that according to the teachings of Joseph Smith, the Garden of Eden was in North America until Noah built his ark.

2. **Jaredite Dispensation.** Then the Jaredites returned to this land. That civilization went down and was destroyed because of the wickedness of the people.

3. **Nephite Dispensation.** The Lord brought another group to South America, the land of promise which “is choice above all other lands.” Led by Lehi, they were the Nephites who were descendants of Joseph who was sold into Egypt. Eventually, they colonized in South and North America which “the Lord hath covenanted” with Father Lehi.

Another Jewish group came led by Mulek, the son of King Zedekiah (B.C. 589) before Jerusalem was destroyed. Later these two civilizations (Nephite and Mulekite) merged. These God-believing people and their civilization went downhill because of their wickedness. These people are crying from the dust.

The Native American people, the people of Central and South America, and the Latinos are the descendants of Father Lehi, and are also part Jewish.
Pacific Islanders—Hawaiian, Samoan, Tongan, Maori, and Tahitian, and others—also are descendants of Father Lehi.

4. Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. Then God inspired European people to come to this “a holy land.” Through a gentile, a descendant of Joseph of Egypt, God once again restored His gospel to its fulness—with power, authority, ordinances and covenants—through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Other children of Heavenly Father are gathering to the Lord’s land. This land would also be the inheritance of others who “should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord” (2 Nephi 1:5). The Lord remembers us and Father Lehi prophesied, “…there shall none come into this land save they shall be brought by the hand of the Lord” (2 Nephi 1:6).

…the land of promise, which was choice above all other lands, which the Lord God had preserved for a righteous people…whoso should possess this land of promise, from that time henceforth and forever, should serve him, the true and only God…whatsoever nation shall possess it shall serve God…wherefore he that doth possess it shall serve God (Ether 2:7-10).

Many times throughout the four standard works of the Church, the Lord talks about the scattering and gathering of Israel, not only on this continent, the land of promise, but also other areas of the world. Since the Restoration, the gathering has commenced. The Lord said, “…When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob” (Ezek. 28:25).

**Millions and Billions of People Converted**

Beginning in the first gospel dispensation, there have been so many righteous people who have gone on to the spirit world. Additionally, in the last dispensation—Joseph Smith down to President Hinckley’s day—many righteous Elders of Israel have gone to the spirit world. There have been many missionaries who have served and moved on to the next world, plus many other worthy people who have received their sacred endowment since the Nauvoo Temple. They are all working in the spirit world preaching the gospel. The Lord organized His church in the spirit world, and sent His messengers to the prison, “...to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to [them that are] bound” (Isa. 61:1).

There must be millions even billions of people converted unto the Lord by these righteous messengers. How vast are the innumerable people in the spirit world who are waiting for us to perform their temple work. President Woodruff once stated, “The eyes of these millions of people are watching over these Latter-day Saints. Have we any time to spend in trying to get rich and in neglecting our dead? I tell you no.” How serious and grave a responsibility for Latter-day Saints to do temple work for these
people. Can you see why our Prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley, is building many temples?

**The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times**

God provided His children with the way and means to come back to His holy presence through the Atonement of the Lord, Jesus Christ, through the first principles of the gospel, ordination to the holy priesthood, receiving the endowment, and the blessing of sealing—husband to wife, children to their parents, and us to our forefathers.

Isaiah saw our day:

...take hold of my covenant;...I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, ...them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices [shall be] accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people (Isa. 56:4-5;7).

Our Heavenly Father provides for us His holy ENDOWMENT.

Therefore, verily I say unto you, that your anointings, and your washings, and your baptisms for the dead, and your solemn assemblies, and your memorials for your sacrifices by the sons of Levi, and for your oracles in your most holy places wherein you receive conversations, and your statutes and judgments, for the beginning of the revelations and foundation of Zion, and for the glory, honor, and endowment of all her municipals, are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house, which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name (D&C 124:39).

Isaiah saw our day:

...to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified (Isa. 61:3).

Isaiah saw temple worship in our day:

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh [himself] with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth [herself] with her jewels (Isa. 61:10).

Then when we are faithful and continue to wear the robes of righteousness and keep His covenants, then by the mercy of the Lord we may enter the holy presence of the Lord.

**Bring Those Precious Names to the Temple**

Family history work provides the greatest opportunity for us to trace our forefathers as far as we can, as wide as we can, and then bring those precious names to the temple to do the work for them.
and to build a “welding link” or in other words, to make “a whole and complete and perfect union,” with our progenitors and our posterity.

This is why the Lord once again restored His gospel, His truth, His Church, even His hidden knowledge back to the earth. Therefore, He said, “...let this house be built unto my name, that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people; For I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times” (D&C 124:40-41).

We must understand the essential, fundamental, and basic purpose of family history and temple work. “These are principles in relation to the dead and the living that cannot be lightly passed over, as pertaining to our salvation. For their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation, ... they without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect” (D&C 128:15).

May we seriously engage in this most important and exalting work. Thus, as we search for our forefathers and bring their names to the holy temple to perform required ordinances for them, we may be able to hear the voices of “...glad tidings for the dead; a voice of gladness for the living and the dead; glad tidings of great joy” (D&C 128:19). It is our responsibility to see that “the prisoners shall go free” (D&C 128:22). These people are living, just like you and me. If you had died 150 years ago, can you imagine that you would have been waiting for 54,750 mornings. If you died 200 years ago, 73,000 mornings. How long will they have to wait for their turn to accept the sacred ordinances of the temple?

When the pioneers were stranded on the cold plains of Wyoming, Brigham Young sent a rescue group. President Gordon B. Hinckley likened that rescue group sent by Brigham Young to our rescuing those prisoners who are awaiting ordinances. We have to send mighty, steady, and constant rescue groups to these people to do the work for them in the temple. They are anxiously waiting. “The eyes of these millions of people are watching over these Latter-day Saints.” We must therefore come to the temple often.

This [is] the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this [is] the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.

God bless you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.
Appendix K

“The Latter-day Saint Doctrine of Baptism for the Dead”22

Richard E. Turley, Jr.
BYU Family History Fireside, November 9, 2001

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”23 These words from the third chapter of John in the New Testament express God’s love for all mankind, which is manifest in His gift to the world of His Only Begotten Son in the flesh, Jesus Christ. In this same chapter of John, Christ responds to “a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews,”24 explaining to him a step believers must follow to receive this everlasting life. Christ said to Nicodemus, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”25

Nicodemus responded as though he missed the meaning of the Savior’s words. “How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “[C]an he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?”26 Jesus was more explicit the second time. “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit,” the Savior declared, “he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”27 A third time, Christ proclaimed, “Ye must be born again.”28 These verses make clear that God loves the world and wishes to save all who will believe, but with a condition: those who believe must be baptized.

Now consider that billions have been born to this earth who have lived and died here without an opportunity to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, let alone be baptized. Would this loving God who “sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” deny salvation to these individuals when they had no chance to be baptized? I testify that the answer to this question is no. Our loving Heavenly Father will not deny salvation to anyone who would accept it by keeping His commandments, including the commandment to be born again of the water and of the spirit. This is my testimony and the testimony of Latter-day Saints around the world who

22 Versions of this paper were previously delivered at the BYU Genealogy and Family History Conference, 5 August 1997, and at the Family History Department International Manager Seminar on 6 May 1999. Subsequently, I became aware of the works of two other scholars that coincide with portions of this paper. They are Richard P. Howard, Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development (Independence, Mo.: Department of Religious Education, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1969), 225-227; Alexander L. Baugh, “The Practice of Baptism for the Dead Outside of Temples,” Religious Studies Center Newsletter 13, no. 1 (September 1998): 3-6.
23 John 3:16-17.
24 John 3:1.
25 John 3:3.
27 John 3:5.
are beneficiaries of the word of God revealed through living prophets in these last days.

In the few moments we have together, I would like to review how the doctrine of baptism for the dead was revealed to a modern prophet, Joseph Smith, during his lifetime in the first half of the nineteenth century. In doing so, I will attempt to trace the thought processes of Joseph Smith as he received revelation regarding this work, line upon line and precept upon precept, insofar as these thought processes find place in the documentary record.

Joseph Smith came from a Bible-reading Christian family and probably understood the need for baptism into the true church. But he didn’t know which church was the right one. In the spring of 1820, after an impression he received while reading the scriptures, he went into the woods near his home to pray for guidance. “My object in going to inquire of the Lord,” he said, “was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join.” In response to his prayer, God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph and replied to his question. “I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong…. He again forbade me to join with any of them: and many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time.” Note the last statement, “and many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time.” Did these things include a preview of the work of redeeming the dead? We don’t know. We do know, however, that the subject was broached during Joseph’s second known vision, this one the visit of an angel called Moroni during the night of 21–22 September 1823.

Joseph recalled that Moroni quoted Bible verses to him, among them a hallmark scripture related to the redemption of the dead. Joseph described the event as follows: “He first quoted part of the third chapter of Malachi, and he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy, though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles. Instead of quoting the first verse as it reads in our books, he quoted it thus:

“For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble: for they that come shall burn them, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

“And again,” Joseph continued, “he quoted the fifth verse thus:

“Behold I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

“He also quoted the next verse differently,” Joseph added:

“And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers; if it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.”

Let’s stop and think about these passages for a moment. The verse from Malachi 3 told that the proud and wicked would be left without root or branch. What better way to say they would be left without connection to their ancestors or to their descendants? Malachi 4, on the other hand, promises (by means of a priesthood to be revealed by the hand of the prophet Elijah) to “plant in the hearts of

the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers.”

Yet these were not the only passages Moroni quoted to Joseph. He also quoted Isaiah 11, “saying that it was about to be fulfilled.” The eleventh chapter of Isaiah is a prophecy, the first five verses of which refer to the Savior. (One reason we know they refer to Christ is that Joseph Smith, in instructions that now make up D&C 113, told us so.) Interestingly, the description is given in genealogical terms. Verse one reads, “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.” Note once again we have root and branch language. As a result of Christ’s work, Isaiah 11 goes on to tell us, “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,” “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain,” and “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.” Clearly these verses refer to the last days.

Then we come to verse 10, which also uses genealogical terminology. It reads, “And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.” Section 113 of the Doctrine and Covenants tells us that “the root of Jesse spoken of in the 10th verse of the 11th chapter” is “a descendant of Jesse, as well as of Joseph, unto whom rightly belongs the priesthood, and the keys of the kingdom, for an ensign, and for the gathering of my people in the last days.”

Note the root language once again.

In light of this interpretation by Joseph Smith, the final six verses of Isaiah 11 quoted to Joseph by Moroni prove especially interesting since they refer to the gathering of the Lord’s people in the Latter-days. For example, verse 12 reads, “And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”

Joseph Smith would later tell us that “It was the design of the councils of heaven before the world was, that the principles and laws of the priesthood should be predicated upon the gathering of the people in every age of the world.... All must be saved on the same principles. It is for the same purpose that God gathers together his people in the last days, to build unto the Lord a house to prepare them for the ordinances and endowments, washings and anointings, etc. One of the ordinances of the house of the Lord is baptism for the dead. God decreed before the foundation of the world that that ordinance should be administered in a font prepared for that purpose in the house

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31 History of the Church, 1:12.
32 History of the Church, 1:12.
34 Isaiah 11:1.
36 Isaiah 11:9.
37 Isaiah 11:9.
38 Isaiah 11:10.
39 D&C 113:5-6.
40 Isaiah 11:12.
In short, Isaiah’s prophecy, quoted to Joseph Smith by an angelic messenger in 1823, foreshadowed that an ensign would be established and that a people would be gathered who would build temples wherein they would carry out the ordinances required to save the living and the dead.

The passages I have quoted from Malachi and Isaiah may not be the only ones relating to family history and temple work that the angel quoted to the prophet. Joseph tells us that Moroni quoted many passages of scripture to him and offered many explanations, only a few of which he specifically cited in his history. Nevertheless the passages we do know about tell us how significant this work is to the Lord. Referring to the passage from Malachi quoted to Joseph Smith, Church President Gordon B. Hinckley, while serving as a counselor in the First Presidency, said the following:

> [I]t is tremendously significant to me that this declaration, this repetition of the wondrous words of Malachi concerning the work for the dead, was given to the boy Joseph four years before he was allowed to take the plates from the hill. It was given before he received either the Aaronic or Melchizedek Priesthood, before he was baptized, and well before the Church was organized. It says much concerning the priority of this work in the plan of the Lord.

And to President Hinckley’s testimony, I add my own. The work of redeeming the dead is an important part of the Lord’s work of bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.

Joseph’s eldest living brother at the time Moroni appeared was named Alvin. Alvin was a tremendous physical specimen whom as an adult Joseph would later describe as “a very handsome man, surpassed by none but Adam and Seth, and of great strength.” Available evidence strongly suggests that the youthful Joseph loved and looked up to his brother Alvin, who set an example of diligence, faithfulness, and industry for his younger siblings. Nearly nineteen years after Moroni’s appearance, Joseph would record the following lines about Alvin in a record he kept to memorialize the righteous:

> He was the oldest, and the noblest of my father’s family. He was one of the noblest of the sons of men: Shall his name not be recorded in this book? Yes, Alvin; let it be had here, and be handed down upon these sacred pages, forever and ever. In him there was no guile. He lived without spot from the time he was a child. From the time of his birth, he never knew mirth. He was candid and sober and never

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41 Address of 11 June 1843, in History of the Church, 5:423-424, noting that the version in this history was compiled “from the journals of Elders Willard Richards and Wilford Woodruff.” For a transcription of these and other notes of the speech, see Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., The Words of Joseph Smith (Orem: Grandin Book Co., 1991), 209-216.
42 History of the Church, 1:13.
44 Moses 1:39.
45 History of the Church, 1:2.
46 History of the Church, 5:247.
47 See Mother Smith’s descriptions of how Alvin put himself out to work to get money for the farm and how we worked to build a house for his parents. Lucy [Mack] Smith, Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations (Liverpool: S.W. Richards, 1853), 70-71, 86-87.
would play; and minded his father, and mother, in toiling all day. He was one of the soberest of men....

Following the third appearance of Moroni to Joseph during the night of 21–22 September 1823, a cock crew, signaling it was morning, and Joseph arose to begin his daily labors. Being harvest time, Joseph, Alvin, and their father were, according to their mother’s later account, “reaping together in the field.” Mother Smith recounted:

[As] they were reaping Joseph stopped quite suddenly, and seemed to be in a very deep study. Alvin, observing it, hurried him, saying, “We must not slacken our hands or we will not be able to complete our task.” Upon this Joseph went to work again, and after labouring a short time, he stopped just as he had done before. This being quite unusual and strange, it attracted the attention of his father, upon which he discovered that Joseph was very pale. My husband, supposing that he was sick, told him to go to the house, and have his mother doctor him.

We know from Joseph’s own account, of course, that as he headed back to the house, the angel appeared to him a fourth time and commanded him to tell his father what had happened to him.

According to Joseph’s mother, after the angel left:

Joseph returned to the field, where he had left my husband and Alvin; but when he got there, his father had just gone to the house, as he was somewhat unwell. Joseph then desired Alvin to go straightway and see his father, and inform him that he had something of great importance to communicate to him, and that he wanted him to come out into the field where they were at work. Alvin did as he was requested, and when my husband got there, Joseph related to him all that had passed between him and the angel the previous night and that morning.

Regarding his conversation with his father about the angel’s visit, Joseph recorded, “He replied to me that it was of God, and told me to go and do as commanded by the messenger. I left the field, and went to the place where the messenger had told me the plates were deposited.” Then, according to Mother Smith:

The ensuing evening, when the family were all together, Joseph made known to them all that he had communicated to his father in the field, and also of his finding the Record, as well as what passed between him and the angel while he was at the place where the plates were deposited.

Sitting up late that evening, in order to converse upon these things, together with over-exertion of mind, had much fatigued Joseph; and when Alvin observed it, he said, “Now, brother, let us go to bed.

49 History of the Church, 1:14.
50 Lucy [Mack] Smith, Biographical Sketches, 81-82.
51 History of the Church, 1:14-15.
52 Lucy [Mack] Smith, Biographical Sketches, 82.
53 History of the Church, 1:14.
and rise early in the morning, in order to finish our day’s work at an hour before sunset, then, if mother will get our suppers early, we will have a fine long evening, and we will all sit down for the purpose of listening to you while you tell us the great things which God has revealed to you.”

Accordingly, by sunset the next day we were all seated, and Joseph commenced telling us the great and glorious things which God had manifested to him....

...we received them joyfully, never mentioning them except among ourselves, agreeable to the instructions which we had received from him.

From this time forth, Joseph continued to receive instructions from the Lord, and we continued to get the children together every evening, for the purpose of listening while he gave us a relation of the same.54

Just three weeks after Moroni’s first visits, tragedy disrupted the joy felt by Joseph and his family. Mother Smith recalled:

On the fifteenth of Nov.... about 10 o’clock in the morning, Alvin was taken very sick with the bilious colic. He came to the house in much distress, and requested his father to go immediately for a physician. He accordingly went, and got one by the name of Greenwood, who, on arriving, immediately administered to the patient a heavy dose of calomel. I will here notice, that this Dr. Greenwood was not the physician commonly employed by the family; he was brought in consequence of the family physician’s absence. And on this account, as I suppose, Alvin at first refused to take the medicine, but by much persuasion he was prevailed on to do so.

This dose of calomel lodged in his stomach, and all the medicine which was freely administered by four very skillful physicians could not remove it.

On the third day of his sickness, Dr. M’Intyre, whose services were usually employed by the family, as he was considered very skillful, was brought, and with him four other eminent physicians. But it was all in vain, their exertions proved unavailing, just as Alvin said would be the case—he told them the calomel was still lodged in the same place, after some exertion had been made to carry it off, and that it must take his life.55

Knowing he would die, Alvin called each of his siblings to his side and gave them some parting counsel. To Joseph, he said, “I am now going to die, the distress which I suffer, and the feelings that I have, tell me my time is very short. I want you to be a good boy, and do everything that lies in your power to obtain the [Book of Mormon] Record. Be faithful in receiving instruction, and in keeping every commandment that is given you. Your brother Alvin must leave you; but remember the example which he has set for you....”56

Last of all, Alvin asked his mother to bring to him his two-year-old sister Lucy, who in her childish speech used to call him “Amby.” At the time of Alvin’s request, little Lucy was asleep. Mother Smith recalled of Alvin:

54 Lucy [Mack] Smith, Biographical Sketches, 83-84.
55 Ibid., 87-88.
56 Ibid., 88.
He was always very fond of her, and was in the habit of taking her up and caressing her, which naturally formed a very strong attachment on her part for him. I went to her, and said: “Lucy, Alvin wants to see you.” At this, she started from her sleep, and screamed out, “Amby, Amby[”]; (she could not yet talk plain, being very young). We took her to him, and when she got within reach of him, she sprang from my arms and caught him round the neck, and cried out, “Oh! my Amby,” and kissed him again and again.

“Lucy,” said he, “you must be the best girl in the world, and take care of mother; you can’t have your Amby any more. Amby is going away; he must leave little Lucy.”

Alvin then kissed his little sister goodbye and asked the family to take her away as the little girl tried to hold on to him.57 Moments later on that 19 November 1823, Alvin passed away.58

Despite his having died, baby Lucy struggled to get back to her brother. Mother Smith recounted:

The child still cried to go back to Alvin. One present observed to the child, “Alvin is gone; an angel has taken his spirit to heaven.” Hearing this, the child renewed her cries, and, as I bent over his corpse with her in my arms, she again threw her arms around him, and kissed him repeatedly. And until the body was taken from the house she continued to cry, and to manifest such mingled feelings of both terror and affection at the scene before her, as are seldom witnessed.59

After years of reflection, Mother Smith described Alvin as “a youth of singular goodness of disposition—kind and amiable, so that lamentation and mourning filled the whole neighborhood in which he resided.” She also reported that “[a] vast concourse of people attend his obsequies, who seemed very anxious to show their sympathy for us in our bereavement.”60

And bereaved the family was. In his history, Joseph would describe Alvin’s death as a “great affliction” for the family,61 and in a funeral speech nearly two decades after the event, Joseph reminisced on the death of Alvin and another brother and said, “It has been hard for me to live on earth & see those young men upon whom we have leaned upon as a support & comfort taken from us in the midst of their youth[;] yes it has been hard to be reconciled to these things[,] I have some times felt that I should have felt more reconciled to have been called [away] myself if it could have been the will of God.”62 Even later, Joseph would record, “I remember well the pangs of sorrow that swelled my youthful bosom and almost burst my tender heart, when he died.”63

Joseph’s parents also left recorded impressions of Alvin’s death. Joseph Smith Sr. mourned that Alvin was “taken from us in the vigor of life, in the bloom of youth.”64 But it was Joseph’s mother

59 Lucy [Mack] Smith, Biographical Sketches, 89.
60 Ibid., 89.
61 History of the Church, 1:16.
who left the most poignant account of the family’s grief. Referring to the Book of Mormon record that Moroni had shown to Joseph just a few weeks before Alvin’s death, her history explained:

Alvin manifested, if such could be the case, greater zeal and anxiety in regard to the Record that had been shown to Joseph, than any of the rest of the family; in consequence of which we could not bear to hear anything said upon the subject. Whenever Joseph spoke of the Record, it would immediately bring Alvin to our minds, with all his zeal, and with all his kindness; and, when we looked to his place, and realized that he was gone from it, to return no more in this life, we all with one accord wept over our irretrievable loss, and we could “not be comforted, because he was not.”

Adding to the family’s grief was a statement made by a minister at Alvin’s funeral. William Smith, younger brother of Alvin and Joseph, recalled that the reverend “intimated very strongly that he [Alvin] had gone to hell, for Alvin was not a church member, but he was a good boy.” William also recalled that the statement particularly bothered their father, Joseph Smith Sr.

That this minister made such an insensitive statement at Alvin’s funeral may at least in part have been due to Joseph’s earlier recitation of what he had been told in his First Vision: that none of the existing churches was true and that he should not join any of them. “I soon found, however,” Joseph would recount, “that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution, which continued to increase; and though I was an obscure boy…and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution; and this was common among all the sects—all united to persecute me.”

Later on in his history, Joseph recounted that “rumor with her thousand tongues was all the time employed in circulating falsehoods about my father’s family, and about myself. If I were to relate a thousandth part of them, it would fill up volumes.” Although Joseph did not take the time to recount these rumors, we know from other sources about one in particular that deepened even further the family’s grief over Alvin’s death.

The sickening rumor was that the body of Alvin had been exhumed and dissected. If true, the rumor was revolting. If false, what malice prompted its spread? The rumor so wounded the family’s sensibilities that Father Smith was finally forced to take severe measures to quell it. Less than one year after Alvin’s death, he published the following notice for six successive weeks in a local newspaper:

Whereas reports have been industriously put in circulation, that my son Alvin had been removed from the place of his interment and dissected, which reports, every person possessed of human sensibility must know, are peculiarly calculated to harrow up the mind of a parent and deeply wound the feelings of relations—therefore, for the purpose of ascertaining the truth of such reports, I, with some of my neighbors, this morning repaired to the grave, and removing the earth, found the body which had not

67 History of the Church, 1:7.
68 Ibid., 1:19.
been disturbed.
This method is taken for the purpose of satisfying the minds of those who may have heard the report, and of informing those who have put it in circulation, that it is earnestly requested they would desist therefrom; and that it is believed by some, that they have been stimulated more by desire to injure the reputation of certain persons than a philanthropy for the peace and welfare of myself and friends. 69

Though Father Smith’s actions may have put to rest rumors of Alvin’s dissection, they would not have changed other statements about the Smiths—like the minister’s assertion that Alvin had gone to hell for not joining a church. So what was Joseph Smith Jr. thinking all this time? With the Aaronic priesthood and its authority to baptize not yet having been restored, Joseph may have wondered what would become of his beloved older brother, a man family members would remember as extraordinarily wholesome and righteous.

Some three years after Alvin’s death, when Joseph had fallen in love with Emma Hale of Harmony, Pennsylvania, he was still mourning his older brother’s death. One day, Joseph Smith Sr. was planning a trip to Harmony. Lucy Mack Smith recalled that their son Joseph Jr. “called my husband and myself aside, and said, ‘I have been very lonely ever since Alvin died, and I have concluded to get married; and if you have no objections to my uniting myself in marriage with Miss Emma Hale, she would be my choice in preference to any other woman I have ever seen.’ We were pleased with his choice, and not only consented to his marrying her, but requested him to bring her home with him, and live with us. Accordingly, he set out with his father for Pennsylvania.” 70 Joseph and Emma were married on 18 January 1827. 71

In September of that year, Joseph at last received the Book of Mormon plates from the heavenly messenger, and persecution eventually forced Emma and him to leave the Palmyra-Manchester area and return to Emma’s parents in Harmony. They were assisted financially in their travels by Martin Harris, who eventually joined them there to serve as scribe for the first 116 pages that Joseph would dictate from the plates. Martin, of course, eventually took the 116 pages back to New York to show them to acquaintances, and in the process he disobeyed the will of the Lord and lost the priceless pages. Shortly after Martin left for New York with the manuscript, Emma went into a difficult labor, finally giving birth to hers and Joseph’s first child, a boy who expired the day he was born. 72

Surely the death of this child must have caused the Prophet to reflect on the destiny of those who have passed beyond the veil. At this time, Joseph’s thoughts also returned to his deceased older brother. From the available evidence, it appears that Joseph and Emma, who buried their precious firstborn just yards away from their home in Harmony, named the child for Joseph’s brother Alvin. 73

Because Martin Harris lost the 116 pages containing the Book of Lehi, he also lost the privilege of serving as scribe for the Book of Mormon. Joseph prayed for another scribe, and on 5 April 1829,

70 Lucy [Mack] Smith, Biographical Sketches, 93.
71 History of the Church, 1:17.
Oliver Cowdery arrived at Joseph and Emma’s home in Harmony. Two days later, he began to write for Joseph as the Prophet dictated the Book of Mormon translation.74 The translation of the Book of Mormon was a rich educational experience for the young prophet as he absorbed important principles pertaining to the salvation of humanity.

As Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon, he came to know that baptism is most certainly required for eternal life. Many Book of Mormon passages make this point. Consider, for example, 3 Nephi 11:33–34, in which the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ says, “And whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God. And whoso believeth not in me, and is not baptized, shall be damned.” Or what about 3 Nephi 23:5: “And whosoever will hearken unto my words and repenteth and is baptized, the same shall be saved.”75

When Joseph and Oliver encountered passages—probably in 3 Nephi—regarding baptism, they went into the woods near Joseph’s and Emma’s home and there inquired of the Lord respecting baptism. In answer to their prayer, John the Baptist appeared to them and bestowed upon them the priesthood authority to baptize. With this authority, they baptized each other in the nearby Susquehanna River.76 Their authority to baptize, however, extended only to the baptism of the living. What of those who had already passed away?

In the case of those who die as young children, like Joseph and Emma’s firstborn, the Book of Mormon provided Joseph additional insight and comfort. Mosiah 3:16–18, for example, taught Joseph:

16 And even if it were possible that little children could sin they could not be saved; but I say unto you they are blessed; for behold, as in Adam, or by nature, they fall, even so the blood of Christ atoneth for their sins.

17 And moreover, I say unto you, that there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.

18 For behold he judgeth, and his judgment is just; and the infant perisheth not that dieth in his infancy; but men drink damnation to their own souls except they humble themselves and become as little children, and believe that salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.

And on the specific issue of whether infants should be baptized, the epistle of Mormon to Moroni that now makes up the eighth chapter of the book of Moroni answered resoundingly in the

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74 History of the Church, 1:32-33.
75 See also, e.g., Alma 7:14,16 (“Now I say unto you that ye must repent, and be born again; for the Spirit saith if ye are not born again ye cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore come and be baptized unto repentance.... And whosoever doeth this, and keepeth the commandments of God from thenceforth...shall have eternal life”; Alma 9:27 (“And behold, he [the Son of God] cometh to redeem those who will be baptized”); Mormon 9:23 (“And he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned”); Ether 4:18 (“he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”); Moroni 7:34 (“Repent all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me, and be baptized in my name, and have faith in me, that ye may be saved”).
76 History of the Church, 1:39-40.
negative. Consider for example the following verses from that chapter in which Mormon instructs his son:

7 …I inquired of the Lord concerning the matter. And the word of the Lord came to me by the power of the Holy Ghost, saying:

8 Listen to the words of Christ, your Redeemer, your Lord and your God. Behold, I came into the world not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance; the whole need no physician, but they that are sick; …little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin; wherefore the curse of Adam is taken from them in me, that it hath no power over them….

11 … little children need no repentance, neither baptism….

These verses would have ended all doubt in Joseph’s mind about the salvation of little children who die before the age of accountability, and later revelations would confirm this important principle. Thus, within roughly a year of the death of Joseph’s and Emma’s firstborn, they would have had the comforting assurance that their baby was alive in Christ and needed no baptism. But what about Joseph’s brother Alvin. Did the Book of Mormon shed any light on his circumstances?

Interestingly this same eighth chapter of Moroni provided a glimpse of a doctrine Joseph would understand more fully many years later. In verse 22 are these important words: “all little children are alive in Christ, and also all they that are without the law. For the power of redemption cometh on all them that have no law; wherefore, he that is not condemned…cannot repent; and unto such baptism availeth nothing.” This verse and the ones following explained that those who were without the law were not condemned, but they also confirmed the need for baptism on the part of those who had the law. Which was Alvin? He came from a God-fearing, Bible-reading family. Did he have the law or not? One thing was clear: He hadn’t been baptized.

As best scholars can determine at this point, after the loss of the Book of Lehi, Joseph and Oliver began translating from the Book of Mosiah and went to the end of Moroni, the title page, the small plates, and the Words of Mormon, in that order. If that is true, Joseph would have encountered 2 Nephi 9 probably after moving from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to Fayette, New York, to live with the Peter Whitmer family. In any case, 2 Nephi 9 is one of the richest doctrinal chapters in the entire Book of Mormon. Beginning with verse 23, we read:

23 And he commandeth all men that they must repent, and be baptized in his name, having perfect faith in the Holy One of Israel, or they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God.

24 And if they will not repent and believe in his name, and be baptized in his name, and endure to the end, they must be damned; for the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, has spoken it.

25 Wherefore, he has given a law; and where there is no law given there is no punishment; and where there is no punishment there is no condemnation; and where there is no condemnation the mercies of the Holy One of Israel have claim upon them, because of the atonement; for they are

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delivered by the power of him.

26 For the atonement satisfieth the demands of his justice upon all those who have not the law given to them, that they are delivered from that awful monster, death and hell, and the devil, and the lake of fire and brimstone, which is endless torment; and they are restored to that God who gave them breath, which is the Holy One of Israel.

27 But wo unto him that has the law given, yea, that has all the commandments of God, like unto us, and that transgresseth them, and that wasteth the days of his probation, for awful is his state!

These verses offer a bit more insight. All men must repent and be baptized; those who have not the law are not condemned; those who have “all the commandments of God...and transgresseth them,” wasting the days of their probation, find themselves in an awful state. So what about Joseph’s brother Alvin? He had some commandments, but did he have them all? He had not been baptized, but neither did he fritter away the days of his probation. Perhaps there was hope for Alvin here.

About the same time these verses were translated, Joseph received a revelation for himself, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer that now makes up Doctrine and Covenants section 18. It reiterated the requirements of repentance and baptism for “men, ...women, and children who have arrived at the years of accountability.”78 The following year when the Church was organized, a copy of the Articles and Covenants of the Church was read, a document we now call section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants.79 D&C 20:71 declares, “No one can be received into the church of Christ unless he has arrived unto the years of accountability before God, and is capable of repentance.”

Some few days before a conference held 26 September 1830 in Fayette, New York, the Lord gave a revelation we now know as D&C 29. Among other things, this revelation reviews the fall of Satan and adds:

39 And it must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves; for if they never should have bitter they could not know the sweet—

...  

46 But behold, I say unto you, that little children are redeemed from the foundation of the world through mine Only Begotten;  

47 Wherefore, they cannot sin, for power is not given unto Satan to tempt little children, until they begin to become accountable before me;

The revelation also speaks of those who have insufficient knowledge or understanding. Verses 49 and 50 read:

49 And, again, I say unto you, that whoso having knowledge, have I not commanded to repent?  

50 And he that hath no understanding, it remaineth in me to do according as it is written. And now I declare no more unto you at this time. Amen.

78 D&C 18:42.  
The final verse hints that more on the subject of those who died without knowledge would be forthcoming. And come it would.

Meanwhile, in early 1831, Joseph and Emma moved from New York to Kirtland, Ohio. Emma was pregnant with twins at the time. Not long after their arrival in Kirtland, Joseph continued work he had begun earlier on what we now call the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. During this period, Joseph translated Genesis 17, and his new translation condemns “the washing of children,” a phrase that apparently refers to infant baptism. Verse 11 of that chapter in the Joseph Smith Translation goes on to read, “And I will establish a covenant of circumcision with thee, and it shall be my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations; that thou mayest know for ever that children are not accountable before me until they are eight years old.”

Just weeks after these verses were translated, Emma gave birth to the twins. The children, a girl and a boy, lived just three hours. By the end of 30 April 1831, Joseph and Emma had lost all three of their children. To assuage their grief, they adopted the Murdock twins, who had lost their mother in childbirth. They named the adopted twins Julia and Joseph. Sometime around the birth of both these sets of twins, Joseph Smith was translating Matthew chapters 18 and 19. Under inspiration, he revised Matthew 18:10 and 11 to read:

10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.

11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost, and to call sinners to repentance; but these little ones have no need of repentance, and I will save them.

He also translated Matthew 19:13 as follows: “Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray. And the disciples rebuked them, saying, There is no need, for Jesus hath said, Such shall be saved.” What comfort there must have been for Joseph and Emma to have this additional confirmation that their three children who had died were not lost to the Lord.

When the adopted twins were less than a year old, Joseph reached the fifth chapter of John in his Bible translating. Verses 28 and 29 of that chapter in the King James Version read, “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” Inspired by this passage, Joseph and his scribe, Sidney Rigdon, inquired of the Lord and received a revelation known at the time as “The Vision.” Today we call it section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants. This stunning vision revealed that heaven included more than one kingdom.

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81 JST Genesis 17:6.
82 Youngreen, “Joseph and Emma,” 204-205.
It clarified that to become an heir of the celestial kingdom, a person must accept the testimony of Jesus, believe on his name, be buried in the waters of baptism, receive the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, keep the commandments, “overcome by faith,” and be “sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.”

The revelation also speaks of a terrestrial glory reserved for those “who died without law” and those “who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh.” The revelation is, I believe, deliberately ambiguous in its next verse, which reads, “Who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it.” At first, it seems to imply that both those who died without the law and those who rejected it in the flesh will inherit the terrestrial kingdom, and this appears to be the way Joseph took it at first. But it is susceptible of a more liberal interpretation, to which Joseph would come some three years later when he received another revelation about which I will speak later. It also leaves unanswered the question of which kingdom children would receive who died before the age of accountability.

Not long after this vision, more tragedy struck the Smith family. In late March of 1832, a mob broke into the John Johnson home in Hiram, Ohio, where an exhausted Joseph and Emma were caring for their measles-stricken adopted twins, still less than a year old. The mob carried Joseph from the house, choked him, stripped off all his clothing but his collar, scratched his body with fingernails, tried forcing a vial of caustic fluid down his throat (chipping his tooth), then tarred and feathered him, leaving him gasping for breath through tar-covered lips as he lay naked on the frozen ground. Trying to stand and then collapsing, he finally gathered strength enough to stagger back to the house, where friends spent the evening scraping the sticky tar and feathers, along with hair and skin that came off with it, from his beaten body. Yet this was only the beginning of the tragedy. Five days later, baby Joseph Murdock Smith, who was exposed to the elements during the mobbing, died, the fourth of the Smith children to do so.

Several weeks later, when Hyrum and Jerusha Barden Smith lost their daughter Mary, not quite three years old, Joseph, who was in Indiana, wrote Emma and observed, “I was grieved to hear that Hiram had lost his little Child I think we Can in Some degree Simpathise with him but we all must be reconciled to our lots and say the will of the Lord be done.” Joseph may not have been fully aware of what would happen to the loved ones who had predeceased him, but he had the faith to say, “the will of the Lord be done.”

As he patiently waited, Joseph struggled to keep his extended family worthy of whatever blessings the Lord had in store for the faithful. In a letter to his errant brother William in December

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84 D&C 76:50-53.
85 D&C 76:72-73.
86 D&C 76:74.
87 History of the Church, 1:261-64.
88 History of the Church, 1:265.
89 Joseph Smith Jr. to Emma Smith, 6 June 1832, in Dean C. Jessee, ed., The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 238.
1835, Joseph wrote:

And now may God have mercy upon my fathers house; may God take away enmity, from between me, and them and may all blessings be restored, and the past errors be forgotten forever, may humble repentance bring us both to see O God, and under thy power and protection, and to a crown to enjoy the society of father, mother, Alvin, Hyrum, Sophronia, Samuel, Catharine, Carloss, Lucy, the Saints and all the sanctified in peace forever, is the prayer of Your brother^90

Clearly the destiny of not only William, their parents, and living siblings, but also of the deceased brother Alvin, was high in the mind of Joseph at the time. Little did he realize that his long wonderings about the fate of Alvin would find a resolution in a little more than one month.

It came in the form of a vision on 21 January 1836 in the Kirtland Temple. As the headnote in the Doctrine and Covenants explains, “The occasion was the administration of the ordinances of the endowment as far as they had then been revealed.” This marvelous revelation was added to our standard works a quarter century ago, first as part of the Pearl of Great Price, then as section 137 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Consider the history we have reviewed here today as I read this short section in its entirety:

1 The heavens were opened upon us, and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof, whether in the body or out I cannot tell.
2 I saw the transcendent beauty of the gate through which the heirs of that kingdom will enter, which was like unto circling flames of fire;
3 Also the blazing throne of God, whereon was seated the Father and the Son.
4 I saw the beautiful streets of that kingdom, which had the appearance of being paved with gold.
5 I saw Father Adam and Abraham; and my father and my mother; my brother Alvin, that has long since slept;
6 And marveled how it was that he had obtained an inheritance in that kingdom, seeing that he had departed this life before the Lord had set his hand to gather Israel the second time, and had not been baptized for the remission of sins.
7 Thus came the voice of the Lord unto me, saying: All who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God;
8 Also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom;
9 For I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts.
10 And I also beheld that all children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven.

After years of waiting, Joseph finally had answers to the question of what fate awaited his brother Alvin and the children he and Emma had lost. Alvin would inherit the celestial kingdom because had he lived to see the gospel restored, he would have accepted it fully. And the children would be saved not

just in any kingdom of glory but in the celestial.

The vision that Joseph saw was of the future. His father, whom Joseph saw in the vision, was yet alive and in fact was in the temple with Joseph at the time he received this vision. His mother would live for many years after his own death. Other events would have to transpire before Alvin would make it to the celestial kingdom. After all, the requirement of baptism for those who had reached the age of accountability had not been abrogated, and Alvin had not been baptized. How could he be? The answer would come later. In the meantime, other important events had to unfold.

One of these was the dedication of the Kirtland temple on 27 March 1836. In the dedicatory prayer for that temple, recorded as section 109 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Prophet prayed:

4 And now we ask thee, Holy Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of thy bosom, in whose name alone salvation can be administered to the children of men, we ask thee, O Lord, to accept of this house, the workmanship of the hands of us, thy servants, which thou didst command us to build.

5 For thou knowest that we have done this work through great tribulation; and out of our poverty we have given of our substance to build a house to thy name, that the Son of Man might have a place to manifest himself to his people.

In fulfillment of this inspired dedicatory petition, the Lord did indeed manifest himself in the House of the Lord dedicated in Kirtland.

On 3 April 1836, a Sunday, Joseph helped pass the emblems of the Lord's flesh and blood to the congregation gathered in the Kirtland Temple. Afterward, he and Oliver Cowdery retired to the veiled pulpit and bowed in solemn, silent prayer. As recounted in D&C 110, here is what happened:

1 The veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened.

2 We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber.

3 His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

4 I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father.

Further instruction followed, after which the vision closed, and three others opened in succession. In the first of the three, “Moses appeared…and committed…the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north.” Next, “Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham.” Finally, the account relates:

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91 History of the Church, 2:379-80.
92 D&C 109:4-5.
94 D&C 110:11.
95 D&C 110:12.
13 After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us; for Elijah the
prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said:

14 Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi—testifying that
he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come—

15 To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole
earth be smitten with a curse—

16 Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know
that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors.

Twelve and a half years after Moroni first told Joseph that Malachi’s prophecy was about to be fulfilled,
Elijah the prophet did come and bestow the keys that would permit the tremendous task of doing
ordinance work for the dead.

That the Prophet began privately teaching the doctrine of redemption of the dead seems
apparent from such evidence as the ordination blessing that Zebedee Coltrin pronounced on the head
of Wilford Woodruff on 3 January 1837. According to Brother Woodruff’s journal, President Coltrin
declared “that I should visit...and Preach to the Spirits in Prison & that I should bring all of my
friends or relatives forth from the Terrestrial Kingdom (who had died) by the Power of the Gospel.”

In the July 1838 Elders Journal, an early Latter-day Saint periodical, the question is asked, “If the
Mormon doctrine is true what has become of all those who have died since the days of the apostles[?]”
The published answer was, “All those who have not had an opportunity of hearing the gospel, and
being administered to by an inspired man in the flesh, must have it hereafter, before they can be finally
judged.” These statements are glimpses of the unfolding revelation on this subject.

Yet as so often happens when temples are built, Satan raged and sought to prevent this
redemptive work from going forward. Before the work proceeded with much momentum, the saints
had to endure the great apostasy of Kirtland, the expulsion from Missouri, and for the Prophet and his
companions, the bitterness of Liberty Jail. Only when the saints became settled on the banks of the
Mississippi River in Illinois did they receive a brief respite that would allow the work to go forward.

Finally on 15 August 1840, Joseph Smith preached the doctrine of baptism for the dead
publicly for the first time in a sermon at the funeral of Seymour Brunson. Four months later, he
mentioned this sermon in a letter to the members of the Quorum of the Twelve who were serving
missions overseas. He wrote:

I presume the doctrine of “Baptism for the dead” has ere this reached your ears, and may have raised
some inquiries in your mind respecting the same. I cannot in this letter give you all the information you
may desire on the subject, but aside from my knowledge independant of the Bible, I would say, that this
was certainly practised by the antient Churches and St Paul endeavours to prove the doctrine of the
ressurrection from the same, and says “else what shall they do who are baptised for the dead[“] &c &c. I

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96 Wilford Woodruff, Journal, 3 January 1837, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt
Lake City, Utah.
97 Elders’ Journal 1 (July 1838): 43, question 16.
first mentioned the doctrine in public while preaching the funeral sermon of Bro Brunson, and have since then given general instructions to the Church on the subject. The saints have the privilege of being baptised for those of their relatives who are dead, who they feel to believe would have embraced the gospel if they had been privileged with hearing it, and who have received the gospel in the spirit through the instrumentality of those who may have been commissioned to preach to them while in prison.100

Less than one month after first preaching this doctrine publicly, Joseph was called to the bed of his aged father, who was rapidly declining in health. Joseph’s mother would later recall that during this bedside interview, Joseph “informed his father, that it was then the privilege of the saints to be baptized for the dead.” She would also remember that her dying husband “was delighted to hear [this fact], and requested, that Joseph should be baptized for Alvin immediately; and, as he expected to live but a short time, desired that his children would stay with him as much as they could consistently.”101 Before long, the baptismal work for Alvin would be completed, meeting the scriptural requirement and finally making possible what Joseph had seen in vision in 1836—that Father Smith and his son Alvin would be together in the celestial kingdom.102 The other ordinance work required for exaltation would await further revelation, the story of which we do not have time to recount here.

As he lay on his deathbed in September 1840, Father Smith called each of his children who were present to his bedside and gave them each a dying blessing. Within four short years, four of those children—Hyrum, Joseph, Samuel, and Don Carlos—would likewise pass beyond the veil. In the last moments of Father Smith’s earthly life, the veil was very thin and his thoughts turned to his family. He comforted his wife, saying:

“Mother, do you not know, that you are one of the most singular women in the world?” “No,” [she] replied, “I do not.” “Well I do,” he continued, “you have brought up my children for me by the fireside, and, when I was gone from home, you comforted them. You have brought up all my children, and could always comfort them when I could not. We have often wished that we might both die at the same time, but you must not desire to die when I do, for you must stay to comfort the children when I am gone. So do not mourn, but try to be comforted.”103

With these and other words to his wife, Father Smith exhausted his strength. He “paused for some time…. After which he said, in a tone of surprise, ‘I can see and hear, as well as ever I could.’” Then followed a “second pause, of considerable length” as the veil grew even thinner. At last he said, “I see Alvin.”104

Within a few minutes, he passed to a happy reunion with his son and other deceased loved

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100 Dean C. Jessee, ed., The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 486.
101 Lucy [Mack] Smith, Biographical Sketches, 265-266.
102 According to Joseph’s mother, Hyrum was with Joseph at the time Joseph made this statement. Lucy [Mack] smith, Biographical Sketches, 265. Nauvoo baptismal records show that Alvin was baptized at the instance of his brother Hyrum. Nauvoo Temple, Baptisms for the Dead 1840-1845, Book A, pp. 145, 149, Church Archives.
103 Lucy [Mack] Smith, Biographical Sketches, 269-270.
104 Lucy [Mack] Smith, Biographical Sketches, 270.
ones, there to await the arrival of the family members who would yet prove worthy of celestial glory.

And so we see in this story of the Prophet’s family both how the doctrine of redemption for the dead began to unfold and how it applied to the redemption of the Prophet’s own family. From that day until now, the glorious work of redeeming the dead has continued to go forward. What occurred with the family of Joseph Smith in doing the work for Alvin has since been repeated millions of times in temples that are rapidly spreading throughout the world, each of which is carrying forth the redemptive work of the Savior Jesus Christ. “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”105

In the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

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105 John 3:17.
Appendix L

“How Beautiful Thy Temples Lord”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson
BYU Family History Fireside, March 8, 2002

It is an honor to be invited to address you this evening at the winter semester Family History Fireside. It is always a pleasure to be on this campus that holds so many happy memories for me and my wife. I choose not to think about the unpleasant memories such as final exams. I would simply counsel you that life is good here; enjoy it while you can.

I have come to talk about family history, but in so doing I want to talk about the temple. We cannot talk about family history without the temple coming into view. If our family history efforts do not lead us directly there, we are off track—we may reap some benefit from our labors, but not the ultimate blessing God intends. I thank those who have just rendered so well this hymn, “How Beautiful Thy Temples, Lord.” It paints in poetry the vision God has granted us:

How beautiful thy temples, Lord!
Each one a sacred shrine,
Where faithful Saints, with one accord,
Engage in work divine.
How beautiful some aid to give
To dear ones we call dead,
But who indeed as spirits live;
They’ve only gone ahead.

How beautiful thy message, Lord,
The gospel, pure and true,
In these our days to earth restored
And taught to men anew.
How beautiful its faith and hope;
All mankind it would save,
Including in its aim and scope
The souls beyond the grave.

How beautiful thy promise, Lord,
That we may grow in truth,
And live, exalted by thy word,
In endless, glorious youth.
With loved ones sealed in holiness
By sacred temple rites,
Worlds without end we may progress
From heights to greater heights.

(“How Beautiful Thy Temples, Lord” Hymns, no. 288)

That the restored gospel should include within “its aim and scope the souls beyond the grave” is marvelous to contemplate. This doctrine is the embodiment of divine justice. As President Wilford Woodruff expressed it:

God is no respecter of persons; he will not give privileges to one generation and withhold them from another; and the whole human family, from father Adam down to our day, have got to have the privilege, somewhere, of hearing the Gospel of Christ; and the generations that have passed and gone without hearing that Gospel in its fullness, power and glory, will never be held responsible by God for not obeying it, neither will he bring them under condemnation for rejecting a law they never saw or understood; and if they live up to the light they had they are justified so far, and they have to be preached to in the spirit world. But nobody will baptize them there and somebody has got to administer for them by proxy here in the flesh, that they may be judged according to men in the flesh and have part in the first resurrection (Wilford Woodruff, Journal of Discourses, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1854–1886], 18: 191).

The news media representatives that visited Salt Lake City in connection with the just-concluded Winter Olympic Games showed real interest in our interest in family history. Beyond the games themselves, it was one of the main stories they pursued. Senior staff in the Family History Library and other Church officials gave numerous interviews, and you may recall that the First Presidency gave President George W. Bush and Mrs. Bush a multi-generational family history prepared by our people. I recall one particular interview I had with a reporter from a national newspaper. Her central question was why the Church cares so deeply about, and expends so many resources on family history. She seemed prepared to be offended about proxy ordinances performed for the dead, but when it was explained that this doctrine answers the age-old question about what happens to the billions who live and die without the gospel, the antipathy dissolved. A calming wave seemed to pass over as she grasped the simple, God-ordained solution to a perplexing dilemma. The divine offer of grace and salvation is, in fact, extended universally. It is truly a magnificent blessing just to have a knowledge of this doctrine.

But whatever our enthusiasm, we cannot go forward in the redemption of the dead without temples. The Lord Himself said that ordinances for the dead belonged to His house and could not be acceptable to Him if performed elsewhere (See D&C 124:29–30, 37).

Seeing the work beginning to gather momentum, President Joseph F. Smith began talking about not just a few, but many temples:

We hope to see the day when we shall have temples built in the various parts of the land where they are
needed for the convenience of the people: for we realize that one of the greatest responsibilities that
rests upon the people of God today is that their hearts shall be turned unto their fathers, and that they
shall do the work that is necessary to be done for them in order that they may be joined together fitly in
the bond of the New and Everlasting covenant from generation to generation. For the Lord has said,
through the Prophet Joseph, that this is one of the greatest responsibilities devolving upon us in this
Latter-day (President Joseph F. Smith., Conference Report, October 1902, 2–3).

Now, in our own time, we have a prophet who has not only seen the vision of a hundred and even
hundreds of temples, but who more than any other has made the vision reality and laid a foundation
for what is yet to come. This past weekend, President Hinckley dedicated the 108th operating temple
of the Church in Snowflake, Arizona.

President Brigham Young earlier had the same vision, but also expressed a special affection for the
Salt Lake Temple then under construction:

I want to see the [Salt Lake] temple built in a manner that it will endure through the Millennium. This
is not the only temple we shall build; there will be hundreds of them built and dedicated to the Lord.
This temple will be known as the first temple built in the mountains by the Latter-day Saints. And
when the Millennium is over, and all the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve, down to the last of their
posterity, who come within the reach of the clemency of the Gospel, have been redeemed in hundreds
of temples through the administration of their children as proxies for them, I want that temple still to
stand as a proud monument of the faith, perseverance and industry of the Saints of God in the
mountains, in the nineteenth century (Brigham Young, Discourses of Brigham Young, selected and

I share his feelings; it truly stands as a monument to the sacrifice and faith of the Saints of the
nineteenth century. I feel that each time I enter there. It was fitting that the image of the Salt Lake
Temple should be broadcast around the world almost continually during the Olympics.

There is another particular temple that comes to mind. With its approaching completion and
dedication, perhaps you, as I, have been reflecting on the singular significance and beauty of the
Nauvoo Temple. This was the first temple in the last dispensation where the saving ordinances were
made available to the dead. It is glorious to contemplate. There are some family history lessons to be
drawn from the original construction of that temple, two of which I would like to discuss with you
now. The first is that our diligence will be met with divine assistance. The second is that our task is
urgent, perhaps more so than we realize.

As regards the matter of our diligence in family history, even, or especially, in difficult
circumstances, consider the circumstances under which construction of the Nauvoo Temple was
begun. William Clayton described it this way:

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were expelled from the State of Missouri, under the
exterminating order of Governor Boggs in the fall and winter of the year of our Lord one thousand
eight hundred and thirty eight. Having been plundered and robbed of all their property and effects,
they settled down in this place then called Commerce, but since named Nauvoo, in a naked, destitute
and miserable condition. Nearly all the saints were sick and many died in consequence of their
hardships and exposure to the weather and lack of the comforts of life etc. There were but two or three houses in the place and consequently many had to dwell in their tents and some in the open air without any covering but the open canopy of heaven. Before the church was comfortably settled the authorities began to talk on the subject of building a Temple, wherein to administer the ordinances of God's house. Several councils were held and a place selected whereon the Temple was contemplated to be built. The matter was laid before the conference on the 6th day of October in the year 1840 and the church voted to commence the works immediately (James B. Allen, *No Toil Nor Labor Fear, The Story of William Clayton*, Brigham Young University Press, 2002, 415–416 [Appendix 2, William Clayton's “History of the Nauvoo Temple,” circa 1845]).

The brethren living in Nauvoo were called upon to tithe their time to build the temple:

On February 22nd the [temple] committee [appointed by the Prophet] organized the City into wards and called upon the brethren to come on to labor every tenth day. By this means they were enabled to rush on the works so that by the 6th day of April the walls were sufficiently high at the corners to lay the corner stones, and notwithstanding the extreme poverty of the church every thing moved on rapidly and the prospects looked very cheering and pleasing (Allen, 416).

The Saints faced constant harassment and, at times, problems created by their own discord, but the Lord consistently opened the way. Brother Clayton records one instance:

After the stone works ceased on the walls of the Temple in the fall of 1842 the stone cutters continued at their works calculating to get a goodly number of stone ready for the spring. Sometime in the month of November, a feeling arose amongst the stone cutters against the [temple] committee and they presented a charge to the first presidency against Ers Cahoon and Higbee for oppressive and unchristian conduct, and against the committee for an unequal distribution of provisions, Iron and Steel tools, etc, charging them with giving more to the committee's sons than the others. The trial commenced about 11 o clock A.M. and continued till 9 P.M. Henry G. Sherwood plead on the side of justice and the Patriarch Hyrum on the side of mercy. The decision was given by the president. He decided that the committee retain their standing and gave much good instruction to all parties, correcting the errors of both in kindness. The decision was marked by judgment and wisdom and cannot fail to produce a good effect (Allen, 424–425).

The martyrdom of the Prophet was a terrible blow, but just over a week later, the Lord brought a message of encouragement down the Mississippi River at the hands of brethren who had been sent out to get timber for the construction. Here's the story:

During this excitement [surrounding the arrest and martyrdom of the Prophet] the works on the Temple ceased for about 2 weeks, all the hands having to watch and stand on guard night and day. The works were suspended about the 20th of June. On the second sabbath after the murder the Temple was brought into consideration and the church voted to commence work again and finish it as speedily as possible. On the 8th of July the laborers resumed their works, although the committee had not so much as a bushel of meal, nor a pound of flour, nor a pound of meat to feed the hands with, but all seemed determined to go to work and trust in God for the means....
On Friday the 5th of July [1844] a large raft of Pine Lumber containing 87,732 feet was landed at the City for the Temple. The brethren turned out liberally with their teams to haul it to the Temple, where it was secured in a few days. In a few days afterwards another raft of 67,957 feet was also received, and hauled to the Temple. This gladdened the hearts of the saints (Allen, 429).

Not long afterward, the sisters in two outlying communities provided another boost:

About the middle of July [1844] the sisters of the branches of La Harpe and Macedonia sent word to the Temple Committee and stated their anxiety to see the building progress still more rapidly. They proposed if the committee would build another Crane they would furnish the means to build it with, and seemed wishful to go ahead with it immediately. The committee and Recorder councilled on the subject and it was decided to comply with the wishes of those sisters. Sister Clark, wife of Raymond Clark was authorised to collect the contributions. She immediately started and returned on the 29th with the money and other property amounting in the whole to $194—which was more than sufficient to build a new Crane. The Committee immediately set the Carpenters to work and on August 3rd the Crane was put in operation under the management of Joshua Armstrong, the setter and Horace Owens to back up, and Wm W. Dryer, Wm Austin, and Archibald Hill to attend to the Crane. They commenced work on the north side, and very soon satisfied the saints on the utility of the movement. The works now progressed rapidly (Allen, 430).

As 1844 drew to a close, the Lord even held back the winter long enough that a key stage in the construction of the walls could be completed.

The workman continued raising the Capitals until December, when on the 6th the last one was safely deposited in its place, which was a source of great joy to the saints. Many fears were entertained that brother Player would not be able to finish them before winter set in, but it seemed as though the Lord held up the weather untill this important piece of work was accomplished. About 2 hours after the [last] Capital was set it commenced snowing very brisk And at night the ground was covered about 4 inches deep and it froze very keen. There were then 12 of the Capitals without the Trumpet stones, and they remained in this state till the following spring (Allen, 431).

There is a poignant moment recorded in William Clayton’s journal when the corner capstone was set in place on May 24, 1845. This completed the construction of the walls. Brother Clayton reports:

At 8 minutes after 6 brother Wm. W. Player commended spreading his mortar perfect silence prevailing. Pres.’ Young stood on the wall immediately north of the corner stone, with Er H. C. Kimball at his right hand. When the mortar was spread, the stone was lift to its place by President Young [and others]…. President Young then stepped on to it and taking a large Beatle, began beating it to its place. He finished laying the stone with the assistance and direction of brother Player, precisely at 22 minutes after 6 o clock. The Band then struck up the “Cap Stone March” composed and arranged by Wm Pitt the leader, for the occasion. President Young then spoke to the congregation instructing them with regard to shouting the Hosanna etc. He then said the last stone is laid upon the Temple, and I pray the Almighty in the name of Jesus to defend us in this place, and sustain us untill the Temple is finished and we have all got our endowment. The whole congregation then following the motion of
president Young shouted as loud as possible Hosanna, Hosanna, hosanna to God and the Lamb amen, amen and amen. This was repeated a second and third time. The president concluded by saying, so let it be the Lord Almighty. He continued and said, this is the seventh day of the week, or the Jewish Sabbath. It is the day on which the Almighty finished his work and rested from his labors. We have now finished the walls of the Temple, and we may rest to day from our labors. He said he would take it upon him to dismiss the workmen for to day, and requested the people to hallow the day, and spend it in giving thanks to God. He then dismissed the congregation and in company with his brethren of the Twelve retired to the place of their retreat, where they can be safe from arrest by constables and other officers who are prowling around the City from Carthage (Allen, 434-435).

If our persistence and diligence match that of these Saints who lived and toiled to build a temple in Nauvoo, we may similarly expect the Lord’s help at crucial junctures in searching out and redeeming our dead. The accounts of such personal and individual help in family history are legion. Brigham Young once prophesied that as times goes on, assistance from the other side of the veil will become even more dramatic. He said:

You will enter into the temple of the Lord and begin to offer up ordinances before the Lord for your dead…. Before his work is finished, a great many of the Elders of Israel in Mount Zion will become pillars in the temple of God, to go no more out. They will eat and drink and sleep there; and they will often have occasion to say, “Somebody came to the temple last night; we did not know who he was, but he was no doubt a brother, and told us a great many things we did not before understand. He gave us the names of a great many of our forefathers that are not on record, and he gave me my true lineage and the names of my forefathers for hundreds of years back. He said to me, you and I are connected in one family; there are the names of your ancestors; take them and write them down, and be baptized and confirmed, and save such and such ones, and receive of the blessings of the eternal Priesthood for such and such an individual, as you do for yourselves.” This is what we are going to do for the inhabitants of the earth. When I look at it, I do not want to rest a great deal, but be industrious all the day long; for when we come to think upon it, we have no time to lose, for it is a pretty laborious work (Brigham Young, Discourses of Brigham Young, selected and arranged by John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], 409).

President Packer observed in 1977 that—

When the servants of the Lord determine to do as He commands, we move ahead. As we proceed, we are joined at the crossroads by those who have been prepared to help us. They come with skills and abilities precisely suited to our needs. And, we find provisions; information, inventions, help of various kinds, set along the way waiting for us to take them up. It is as though someone knew we would be traveling that way. We see the invisible hand of the Almighty providing for us....

When we are ready, there will be revealed whatever we need—we will find it waiting at the crossroads (Boyd K. Packer, “That They May Be Redeemed,” Regional Representative Seminar, April 1, 1977).

I can attest, as I have witnessed the technological developments brought to the fore in the last
several years and having a glimpse of what is yet to come, that indeed, so long as we are diligent, we are met at each crossroads with the divine help we need.

A second family history lesson drawn from the Nauvoo Temple regards the urgency of the work. I turn again to William Clayton’s journal for examples. We have cited the anxiety of the Saints and leaders of the Church to begin the temple even in their desperate circumstances. At the dedication of the corner stones, the Prophet Joseph expressed a sense of urgency:

The architects then, by the direction of the First Presidency, lowered the first (S.E. corner) stone to its place, and Pres’t Joseph Smith pronounced the benediction as follows, “This principal corner stone, in representation of the First Presidency, is now duly laid in honor of the great God; and may it there remain until the whole fabric is completed; and may the same be accomplished speedily; that the saints may have a place to worship God, and the son of man have where to lay his head” (Allen, 417).

On January 19, 1841, the revelation now reported in Section 124 of the Doctrine and Covenants was received, stating in part:

For there is not a place found on earth that he may come to and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fulness of the priesthood.
For a baptismal font there is not upon the earth, that they, my saints, may be baptized for those who are dead—
For this ordinance belongeth to my house, and cannot be acceptable to me, only in the days of your poverty, wherein ye are not able to build a house unto me (D&C 124:28–30).

William Clayton records that:

In conformity with the foregoing item of law [the verses from Section 124], in the summer and fall of the year 1841 the brethren entered into measures to build a baptismal Font, in the cellar floor of the Temple near the East end. Brother Wm Weeks the architect drew a draught which was accepted by President Joseph and on the 18th of August of the same year brother Weeks commenced to labor on it with his own hands; he labored six days on it and then committed the work to the Carpenters. On the 11th of August, brother Weeks commended carving the oxen, twelve in number on which the font were to stand. After carving six days he committed this branch to Brother Elijah Fordham the principal carver who continued till they were finished which was in about two months after the commencement.

On the 8th day of November 1841 the font was dedicated by president Joseph Smith at 5 o clock in the evening. After dedication brother Reuben McBride was the first person baptized under the direction of the president. He was baptized by President B. Young.

Brother Samuel Rolfe being present, and being seriously afflicted with a felon [inflamed sore or boil] on one hand, president Joseph instructed him to wash in the font, and told him he would be healed, although the doctors had told him it would not be well before spring, and advised him to have it cut. He washed his hands in the font and in one week afterwards his hand was perfectly healed (Allen, 420).

Baptisms for the dead then began and continued while construction on the rest of the temple
moved forward. Later, as you know, other ordinances were performed in dedicated portions of the building as it neared completion. Every effort was made to hasten the work, both the physical construction and the spiritual ordinances.

Those who have borne the prophetic mantle in our dispensation, beginning with Joseph Smith himself, have urged upon us in strong terms the need for us to proceed with all due haste as did the builders of the Nauvoo Temple. The Prophet Joseph declared:

I would advise all the Saints to go to with their might and gather together all their living relatives to this place, that they may be sealed and saved, that they may be prepared against the day that the destroying angel goes forth; and if the whole Church should go to with all their might to save their dead, seal their posterity, and gather their living friends, and spend none of their time in behalf of the world, they would hardly get through before night would come, when no man can work (Joseph Smith, Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith, compiled by Alma P. Burton [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977], 146).

President Wilford Woodruff was equally eloquent on this matter:

Oh, I wish many times that the veil were lifted off the face of the Latter-day Saints. I wish we could see and know the things of God as they do who are laboring for the salvation of the human family who are in the spirit world; for if this were so, this whole people, with very few, if any, exceptions, would lose all interest in the riches of the world, and instead thereof their whole desires and labors would be directed to redeem their dead, to perform faithfully the work and mission given us on earth; so that when we ourselves should pass behind the veil and meet with Joseph and the ancient apostles, and others who are watching over us and who are deeply interested in our labors, we might feel satisfied in having done our duty (Wilford Woodruff, The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, edited by G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], 152).

President Woodruff understood this, perhaps, as few others. You may be aware that he lost a son while he was serving as president of the St. George Temple and that this son’s death was connected to family history in a way that again reflects the importance and urgency of this work. He said:

While in the St. George temple I had a son, who was in the north country, drowned. He had a warning of this. In a dream he was notified how he would die. We had testimony of that after his death. I asked the Lord why he was taken from me. The answer to me was, "You are doing a great deal for the redemption of your dead; but the law of redemption requires some of your own seed in the spirit world to attend to work connected with this." That was a new principle to me; but it satisfied me why he was taken away. I name this, because there are a great many instances like it among the Latter-day Saints. This was the case with Brother Abrahama Cannon. He was taken away to fulfil that mission (Wilford Woodruff, The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, edited by G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], 292).

Joseph Smith gave an interesting interpretation to a verse in Matthew, suggesting that the saints in the Savior’s day neglected work for the dead at their peril as do we.
Hence it was that so great a responsibility rested upon the generation in which our Savior lived, for, says he, “That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation” (Matthew 23: 35, 36). Hence as they possessed greater privileges than any other generation, not only pertaining to themselves, but to their dead, their sin was greater, as they not only neglected their own salvation but that of their progenitors, and hence their blood was required at their hands (Joseph Smith, Encyclopedia of Joseph Smith’s Teachings, edited by Larry E. Dahl and Donald Q. Cannon [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997]).

This is a sobering thought.
In 1963, President David O. McKay stated:

In the spirit world, on the other side, the missionary work has greatly increased; increased tremendously and the membership of the Church over there is increasing. It is imperative, therefore, that we ourselves do something here to match what is being done there. On the other side of the veil the people there can only be prepared for baptism and the saving ordinances, therefore let us take more notice of the genealogical program of the Church (President David O. McKay, Remarks to General Church Genealogical Committee, 1963).

President Gordon B. Hinckley has been no less emphatic. In remarks to new temple presidents and matrons in October, 2000, he compared our work for the dead in temples to the rescue of the Willie and Martin Handcart companies. He noted that he was speaking on the anniversary of their last day of bread, still some 300 miles from the Salt Lake valley. They were in desperate circumstances, unable to help themselves. If Brigham Young had not suspended General Conference and dispatched the rescue parties, all of those in the handcart companies would have perished. President Hinckley then stated that those who wait beyond the veil for the ordinances of the gospel are in desperate circumstances analogous to the handcart pioneers. They need our help. Those who labor in the temples of the Lord are their rescuers, he said. We need to wake up the whole Church to their plight. He then quoted President Brigham Young’s powerful and moving declaration:

What do you suppose the fathers would say if they could speak from the dead? Would they not say, "We have lain here thousands of years, here in this prison house, waiting for this dispensation to come? Here we are, bound and fettered, in the association of those who are filthy?" What would they whisper in our ears? Why, if they had the power the very thunders of heaven would be in our ears, if we could but realize the importance of the work we are engaged in. All the angels in heaven are looking at this little handful of people, and stimulating them to the salvation of the human family. So also are the devils in hell looking at this people, too, and trying to overthrow us, and the people are still shaking hands with the servants of the devil, instead of sanctifying themselves and calling upon the Lord and doing the work which he has commanded us and put into our hands to do. When I think upon this subject, I want the tongues of seven thunders to wake up the people (Brigham Young, Discourses of Brigham Young, selected and arranged by John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], 403).
President Hinckley concluded with the admonition that we can expect people to do more than they are now doing. Temples have been multiplied to make this possible. Said he whom we sustain as prophet and president, “I have felt a compelling interest in this; it bothers me night and day.”

If it bothers him night and day, so it should us. I have pondered this at some length wanting to better understand the condition of spirits beyond the veil. I was given to understand that the situation of those who die without the gospel and its saving ordinances, even those who did their best and were decent people by our standards, is less than desirable. It cannot be paradise for any until they have accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ, repented of their sins insofar as they can, and entered into the covenant and received a remission of their sins through the baptisms of water and Spirit. Therefore, it is not a small thing where we have the means to provide them a baptism that we neglect or delay the opportunity.

May I quote one last time from President Wilford Woodruff whom I regard as the great advocate for the salvation of those beyond the veil. He gave this excellent summary of our mission:

Our mission is more extended and extensive than we realize.... We are bordering upon the millennium. We are living in the great and last dispensation, in the which the God of Israel expects us, his servants, his sons and daughters, to perform the work which has been left to our charge. It is our duty to build these temples. It is our duty to enter into them and redeem our dead. Joseph Smith is preaching to the spirits in prison; so are all the Elders who have died in the faith. There are millions of them there, and they must have the Gospel offered to them. Joseph Smith and others cannot baptize the spirits in water, it is not the law; but their posterity, their sons and daughters who are living in the last dispensation, are expected to go into these temples and there redeem their dead. This is a good work, and it is a great blessing for men and women to have this privilege.... Our forefathers are looking to us to attend to this work. They are watching over us with great anxiety, and are desirous that we should finish these temples and attend to certain ordinances for them, so that in the morning of the resurrection they can come forth and enjoy the same blessings that we enjoy. We are living in the flesh and have the privilege of receiving the Gospel of Christ for ourselves. Our forefathers had not this privilege; and as their posterity when we meet them in the spirit world we shall have the joy and satisfaction of knowing that we did our duty by them while here upon the earth. We occupy a position in this capacity towards them the same as we do to this generation. We occupy the position of Saviors upon Mount Zion (Wilford Woodruff, Journal of Discourses, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1854-1886], 23: 331).

I testify that the atoning grace of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Redeemer, our Resurrected Lord, is sufficient to grant salvation to all, both living and dead. I am grateful for the reminder and motivation that the reconstructed Nauvoo Temple will be regarding both the promise of divine intervention to assist us and the urgency of the work before us. How beautiful that temple is, and how beautiful are all thy temples, Lord, that permit us to act as saviors with Thee. Lead us on, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.
The Law of Nature

Years before the Prophet Joseph Smith announced the doctrine of baptism for the dead, glimpses of the glorious principle were revealed to him. In 1836 in an upper room of the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet exclaimed, “I [see] Fathers Adam and Abraham, and my father and mother, [and] my brother, Alvin, that has long since slept.” In reference to Alvin, he “marveled how it was that he had obtained an inheritance in that kingdom, seeing that he had departed this life before the Lord had set His hand to gather Israel the second time, and had not been baptized for the remission of sins.” When Joseph sought clarification as to how his beloved brother could have inherited celestial glory, the voice of the Lord declared, “All who have died without a knowledge of this Gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God;... for I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desires of their hearts.”

In July 1838, in reply to the query, “What has become of all those who have died since the days of the apostles?” Joseph answered, “All these who have not had an opportunity of hearing the gospel, and being administered unto by an inspired man in the flesh, must have it hereafter, before they can be finally judged.”

Two years passed before Joseph again spoke of the deceased hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ. The occasion was the funeral of Seymour Brunson, a high councilor and bodyguard of the Prophet. Forty-year-old Brunson died on 10 August 1840 in Joseph Smith’s home. “For awhile he desired to live and help put over the work of the Lord but gave up and did not want to live,” stated his descendants. “After calling his family together, blessing them and bidding them farewell,” he succumbed. Heber C. Kimball, witness to Brunson’s death, wrote to John Taylor, “Semer Bronson is gone. David Paten came

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3 Seymour Brunson, son of Reuben Brunson and Sarah Clark, was born 18 September 1798 in Orwell, Addison County, Vermont. He was baptized in January 1831 and ordained an elder on 21 January 1831. He served on the Far West and Nauvoo High Council. He was a major in the Far West Militia, a lieutenant-colonel in the Nauvoo Legion, and a colonel in the Hancock County Militia (see “A Short Sketch of Seymour Brunson, Sr.,” Nauvoo Journal 4 (Spring 1992): 3-5.
after him. the R[o]om was full of Angels that came after him to waft him home.

Five days after Brunson’s demise, on 15 August 1840, his funeral was held at the burial ground located on the bluff overlooking Nauvoo. According to Heber C. Kimball, the procession to the burial ground was “judged to be one mile long.” Once the processional reached the site, mourners listened as the Prophet eulogized his bodyguard. Although there is no known text of his discourse, the History of the Church states: “[Seymour Brunson] has always been a lively stone in the building of God and was much respected by his friends and acquaintances. He died in the triumph of faith, and in his dying moments bore testimony to the Gospel that he had embraced.”

Baptisms for the Dead

Although his statements were grand, it was the Prophet's announcement of the doctrine of baptism for the dead that captured the imagination of the mourners. According to Simon Baker, Joseph Smith read 1 Corinthians 15 and acknowledged that the Apostle Paul was "talking to a people who understood baptism for the dead, for it was practiced among them” (see John 3:5). Then, seeing among those assembled at the burial ground a widow whose son had died without baptism, the Prophet added, "This widow [had read] the sayings of Jesus 'except a man be born of water and of the spirit should pass away, but all should be fulfilled." He announced that the fulfillment of the Savior's teaching had arrived, that the Saints could now "act for their friends who had departed this life, and that the plan of salvation was calculated to save all who were willing to obey the requirements of the law of God."

Heber C. Kimball wrote of his wife's reaction to the new doctrine: "A more joyful Season [says] She never Saw before on the account of the glory that Joseph set forth." Jane Nyman, whom historians suggest was the widow Joseph saw at the funeral, did more. Following the funeral, she pleaded with Harvey Olmstead to baptize her in behalf of her deceased son, Cyrus Livingston Nyman. Her request was granted. Witnessing the first baptism for the dead in the dispensation of the fullness of times was Vienna Jacques. On horseback, she rode into the Mississippi River to hear and observe the ceremony. Although the witness, the proxy for the deceased, and the words pronounced by Harvey Olmstead are not acceptable today, Joseph Smith gave his approval of the baptismal ordinance in behalf of Cyrus Nyman.

From that time forward, Saints in Nauvoo waded knee-deep into the Mississippi River to be

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6 Ehat and Cook, The Words of Joseph Smith, 49.
7 HC, 4:179.
8 Journal History of the Church, 15 August 1840, as quoted in Ehat and Cook, Words of Joseph Smith, 49.
9 Journal History of the Church, as quoted in Ehat and Cook, Words of Joseph Smith, 49.
10 Journal History of the Church, as quoted in Ehat and Cook, Words of Joseph Smith, 49.
baptized as proxy for their deceased kindred and friends (see D&C 127; 128). And Joseph continued to receive revelations that clarified this glorious new doctrine. "The Saints have the privilege of being baptized for those of their relatives who are dead, whom they believe would have embraced the Gospel, if they had been privileged with hearing it, and who have received the Gospel in the spirit, through the instrumentality of those who have been commissioned to preach to them while in prison," declared the Prophet."

"I could lean back and listen. Ah what pleasure this gave me," penned Wandle Mace. "[The Prophet] would unravel the scriptures and explain doctrine as no other man could. What had been mystery he made so plain it was no longer mystery.... I ask, who understood anything about these things until Joseph being inspired from on high touched the key and unlocked the door of these mysteries of the kingdom." Brigham Young added, "[Joseph] took heaven, figuratively speaking, and brought it down to earth; and he took the earth, brought it up, and opened up, in plainness and simplicity, the things of God." "If the dead rise not at all, why are they then baptized for the dead?" Joseph asked his followers. "If we can, by the authority of the Priesthood of the Son of God, baptize a man in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, for the remission of sins, it is just as much our privilege to act as an agent, and be baptized for the remission of sins for and in behalf of our dead kindred, who have not heard the Gospel, or the fullness of it." Most memorable were Joseph's words, "Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory! Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad. Let the earth break forth into singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free" (D&C 128:22).

Of the Prophet's teachings, Wilford Woodruff penned, "I remember well the first time I read the revelation given through the Prophet Joseph concerning the redemption of the dead—one of the most glorious principles I had ever become acquainted with on earth .... Never did I read a revelation with greater joy than I did that revelation." So welcome had been Joseph's words that his admonition that those who neglect this great work for the dead "do it at the peril of their own salvation" was not disturbing.

12 Wandle Mace, Autobiography, typescript, 94, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
14 HC, 4:569; D&C 128:16.
15 Wilford Woodruff, Journal, 6 April 1891, Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.
16 HC, 4:426.
Baptisms in the Mississippi

Latter-day Saints from Nauvoo to Quincy, Illinois, and even as far away as Kirtland, Ohio, entered river waters to be baptized as proxy for departed loved ones. Bathsheba Smith recalled Joseph Smith "baptizing for the dead in the Mississippi River."\(^ {17} \) Aroet Hale wrote, "The Prophet set the pattern for the baptism of the dead. He went into the Mississippi River and baptized over 200. Then the apostles and other elders went into the river and continued the same ordinance. Hundreds were baptized there."\(^ {18} \) Wilford Woodruff wrote of that occasion, "Joseph Smith himself ... went into the Mississippi river one Sunday night after meeting, and baptized a hundred. I baptized another hundred. The next man, a few rods from me, baptized another hundred. We were strung up and down the Mississippi baptizing for our dead .... Why did we do it? Because of the feeling of joy that we had, to think that we in the flesh could stand and redeem our dead."\(^ {19} \)

Among those entering baptismal waters in August 1840 was William Clayton: "I was baptized first for myself and then for my Grandfather Thomas and Grandmother Ellen Clayton, Grandmother Mary Chritely and Aunt Elizabeth Beurwood."\(^ {20} \) Although he and others would question the lack of structured organization of these first baptisms, for the practice varied up and down the river and few recorded the events of the day, joy overcame any sense of neglect to properly regulate the ordinance.\(^ {21} \)

"We attended to this ordinance without waiting to have a proper record made," confessed Wilford Woodruff. He lamented, "Of course, we had to do the work over again. Nevertheless, that does not say the work was not of God."\(^ {22} \)

Latter-day Saints seemed to intuitively know that "the greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead" and were eager to comply.\(^ {23} \) A fury of letters were sent from hopeful proxies to distant relatives asking for genealogical information about kindred dead. Jonah Ball wrote, "I want you to send me a list of fathers relations his parents & Uncles & their names, also Mothers. I am determined to do all I can to redeem those I am permitted to."\(^ {24} \) Sally Carlisle Randall asked a relative to "write me the given names of all our connections that are dead as far back as grandfathers and grandmothers at any rate." She then added, "I expect you will think this [baptism for the dead] is a strange doctrine but you will find it is true."\(^ {25} \)

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\(^ {17} \) Bathsheba Smith, "Recollections," Juvenile Instructor 27 (1892): 344.  
\(^ {18} \) Aroet Hale, Autobiography, typescript, 7-8, L. Tom Perry Special Collections.  
\(^ {19} \) Wilford Woodruff, Journal, 6 April 1891.  
\(^ {20} \) William Clayton, Journal, 9 May 1841, Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.  
\(^ {21} \) Local congregations were granted much latitude in the performance of vicarious baptisms. The Quincy Branch, for example, met in November 1840 and appointed two brethren, James M. Flake and Melvin Wilbur, to officiate in all of the branch's proxy baptisms" (M. Guy Bishop, "What Has Become of Our Fathers? Baptism for the Dead at Nauvoo," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 23, no. 2 [summer 1990]: 87-88).  
\(^ {22} \) Wilford Woodruff, Journal, 6 April 1891.23. HC, 6:313.  
\(^ {23} \) Jonah Ball, letter to relatives, 19 May 1843 in Bishop, "What Has Become of Our Fathers?" 93.  
\(^ {24} \) Sally Carlisle Randall, letter to family, 21 April 1844, Ball, letter to relatives, in Bishop, "What Has Become of Our Fathers?" 93-94.  
\(^ {25} \) Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 308.
A Baptismal Font

Jonah Ball and Sally Randall knew of the important work for the dead, and they were eager to be proxies for loved ones in the Mississippi River. But it would not be long for them and others until the season of baptizing in the river ended. "God decreed before the foundation of the world that that ordinance should be administered in a font prepared for the purpose in the house of the Lord," Joseph explained.26 Then, on 3 October 1841, he declared, "There shall be no more baptisms for the dead, until the ordinance can be attended to in the Lord's House."27 The Lord explained, "This ordinance belongeth to my house, and cannot be acceptable to me, only in the days of your poverty, wherein ye are not able to build a house unto me .... And after this time, your baptisms for the dead, by those who are scattered abroad, are not acceptable unto me" (D&C 124:30, 35).

After thirteen and a half months (15 August 1840 to 3 October 1841), baptisms for the dead in the river halted while William Weeks, architect of the Nauvoo Temple, prepared drawings for a baptismal font for the Nauvoo Temple. Weeks drew twelve oxen shouldering a molten sea, symbolic of the encampment of the twelve tribes encircling the tabernacle during the days of Moses.

According to the Historical Record, "President Smith approved and accepted a draft for the font made by Brother Wm. Weeks."28 His acceptance led Weeks to stop other architectural activities and begin carving a set of twelve oxen to support the proposed font. After laboring six days, he assigned Elijah Fordham, a convert from New York City, to complete the carving. Elijah, assisted by John Carling and others, spent eight months perfecting the oxen and the font and completing the ornamental moldings for the baptistery area of the Nauvoo Temple.29

When their work was finished, Joseph Smith wrote a detailed description of the font:

The baptismal font is situated in the center of the basement room, under the main hall of the Temple; it is constructed of pine timber, and put together of staves tongued and grooved, oval shaped, sixteen feet long east and west, and twelve feet wide, seven feet high from the foundation, the basin four feet deep, the moulding of the cap and base are formed of beautiful carved wood in antique style. The sides are finished with panel work. A flight of stairs in the north and south sides lead up and down into the basin, guarded by side railing.

The font stands upon twelve oxen, four on each side, and two at each end, their heads, shoulders, and fore legs projecting out from under the font; they are carved out of pine plank, glued together, and copied after the most beautiful five-year-old steer that could be found in the country, and they are an excellent striking likeness of the original; the horns were formed after the most perfect horn that could be procured.30

26 HC, 4:426.
27 Andrew Jenson, The Historical Record (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson, 1889), in Dale Verden Boman, "The LDS Temple Baptismal Font: Dead Relic, or Living Symbol" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1985), 8.
28 Descendants of John Carling claim that he drew and carved the model for the first ox (see "John Carling" [n.p., n.d.], 2, Lands and Records Office, Nauvoo, Illinois).
29 HC, 4:446.
30 Nauvoo Neighbor, 12 June 1844, 3.
The font attracted the attention of newspaper reporters from Missouri to New York. A correspondent from the St. Louis Gazette wrote that "the idea of this font seems to have been revealed to the prophet, directly by the plan of the molten sea of Solomon's temple."31 A writer for the New York Spectator announced, "In the basement is the font of baptisms, ... one of the most striking artificial curiosities in this country."32 Graham's American Monthly Magazine published an engraving of the Nauvoo Temple, depicting the font outside the temple "so that it could be seen" by its readers.33

It wasn't just reporters who were attentive to the font. Visitors to Nauvoo often gazed upon the molten sea and the temple walls. Emily Austin wrote that "acquaintances and strangers ... were almost constantly coming to see" the font and the rising temple walls.34 Some of the visitors mused that the font was the "eighth wonder of the world."35 Reverend Moore wrote, "The basement of this temple is laid--and in the basement is the baptismal font, supported by 12 oxen. In this I learned that persons are baptized for the dead, and for restoration to health."36

Acknowledging the many curious speculations about the font, Joseph Smith stated to Brigham Young, "This fount has caused the Gentile world to wonder."37 Yet, for little children, the font was not a wonder but was wonderful. "The Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum lifted my sister Cynthia and myself up on the oxen which held up the fount, this pleased us very much and we thought it the most wonderful place we had ever seen," recalled Abigail Morman.38 But for adult members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, adulations were subdued, for they were inclined to speak in reverent whispers of the opportunities that awaited them in continuing their work of baptism for kindred dead. They knew that the wooden font was in its place on Temple Hill, water for the font was channeled from a nearby well, and the temporary frame walls and a roof were protecting the structure from gaping eyes. To them it was time again to resume their important work.

Baptisms in the Temple

On 8 November 1841, the baptismal font was dedicated by the Prophet Joseph Smith. Two weeks after the dedication, baptisms were performed in the font on Sunday, 21 November 1841. Acting as officiators on that date were Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and John Taylor. They baptized about forty persons in the presence of the Twelve, who had assembled to witness the ordinances.39 Reuben

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32 Graham's American Monthly Magazine 34 (1849): 257; see also Improvement Era, July 1962, 516.
33 Emily M. Austin, Mormonism; or Life among the Mormons, in Boman," The LDS Temple Baptismal Font," 6.
35 Excerpts from the diary of George Moore, 1, in Donald Q. Cannon, "Reverend George Moore Comments on Nauvoo, the Mormons, and Joseph Smith," Western Illinois Regional Studies 5 (Spring 1982): 6-16.
38 Willard Richards, George A. Smith, and Wilford Woodruff performed the confirmations (see HC, 4:454).
McBride was the first of the forty baptized that day. He was followed by Samuel Rolfe. Joseph instructed Rolfe to wash in the font and promised him that if he would do so, his hand, which had been seriously afflicted, would be healed. Rolfe followed the Prophet's admonition and dipped his hand in the font, and within a week his hand was healed.40

The blessing of healing in baptismal waters was to be repeated again and again in the wooden font, as was the baptismal ordinances for kindred dead. Joseph Hovey recalled one such incident: "I, Joseph, did prosper well in good health but my wife, Martha, was not so well as myself....She was very low. But she was healed by going to the baptismal font and was immersed for her health and baptized for her dead."41 That the Nauvoo Temple font was "for the baptism of the living, for health, for remission of sin, and for the salvation of the dead" was well known and accepted by the Saints.

That the font was in continual use in 1841 is clear. Historian M. Guy Bishop counted 6,818 baptismal ordinances completed in the river and the wooden font in 1841 (see table below).42

### Nauvoo Baptisms for the Dead, 1841

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex of Proxy</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3,715</td>
<td>54.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3,027</td>
<td>44.39</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>6,818</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baptisms for the Opposite Sex</strong></td>
<td>2,937</td>
<td>43.10</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship of Deceased to Proxy</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uncle/Aunt</td>
<td>1,667</td>
<td>24.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent</td>
<td>1,580</td>
<td>23.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>1,015</td>
<td>14.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sibling</td>
<td>969</td>
<td>14.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cousin</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>10.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-law</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>2.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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41 Bishop, "What Has Become of Our Fathers?" 88; Nauvoo Baptisms for the Dead, Book A, Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
42 HC, 5:141.
The Need for Order

As shown in these statistics, a major religious activity in 1841 in Nauvoo was serving as proxies for kindred dead. However, the religious activity is greater than noted. The statistics do not reflect those who were baptized for the dead but failed to have their proxy work recorded. In their enthusiasm to complete the ordinances, they failed to heed the Lord's directive, "Let all the records be had in order, that they may be put in the archives of my holy temple, to be held in remembrance from generation to generation, saith the Lord of Hosts" (D&C 127:9). The Prophet admonished the Saints: "All persons baptized for the dead must have a recorder present, that he may be an eyewitness to record and testify of the truth and validity of his record. It will be necessary, in the Grand Council, that these things be testified to by competent witnesses. Therefore let the recording and witnessing of baptisms for the dead be carefully attended to from this time forth. If there is any lack, it may be at the expense of our friends; they may not come forth."43

Even after this injunction, problems of recording baptismal work were still apparent. The wooden font on Temple Hill was in such demand that adult converts and children who had reached the age of eight years sought other locations in which to continue their baptismal work. They rationalized that the crowded font and the possibility of interfering with the manual labor on the temple opened the way for them to once again do baptismal work in the Mississippi River. On Monday, 30 May 1842, Wilford Woodruff wrote of being baptized for the dead in the river under the hands of George Albert Smith and added, "I also baptized brother John Benbow for six of his dead kindred and his wife for six of her dead friends."44 Harrison Burgess wrote, "Sabbath day in August [1843], I was called on to administer baptism in the Mississippi River. On this occasion I administered one hundred and sixty baptisms before I came out of the water."45

A visitor to Nauvoo, Charlotte Haven, observed these later river baptisms with a friend as they walked along the river bank. "We followed the bank toward town, and rounding a little point covered with willows and cottonwoods, we spied quite a crowd of people, and soon perceived there was a baptism. Two elders stood knee-deep in the icy water, and immersed one after another as fast as they could come down the bank. We soon observed that some of them went in and were plunged several

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43 Wilford Woodruff, Journal, 6 April 1891.
44 Statement of Harrison Burgess, Recorded 1 August 1845 by Bradford [W. Elliott], Lands and Records Office, Nauvoo, Illinois.
times. We were told that they were baptized for the dead who had not had the opportunity of adopting the doctrines of the Latter-day Saints.  

So frequent were river baptisms that William Marks, president of the Nauvoo Stake, convened a conference for the purpose of appointing recorders for baptisms for the dead wherever they occurred. Additional records still lacked proper recording, but this did not stop the Latter-day Saints from wading into the Mississippi. It was not until the death of Joseph Smith on 27 June 1844 that river baptisms stopped. As the Saints mourned his loss, even the wooden font on Temple Hill stood still.

Not until Brigham Young returned to Nauvoo in August 1844 was the question of resuming this great work for the dead raised. Brigham replied that he "had no counsel to give upon that subject at present, but thought it best to attend to other matters in the meantime." Other Apostles held differing views. In August 1844, Wilford Woodruff and his wife Phoebe went into the Mississippi River "to be baptized for some of our dead friends." On the afternoon of 24 August 1844, "several of the Twelve Apostles were baptized for their dead" in the font. The work of baptizing for the dead continued until January 1845. By this time 15,722 recorded baptisms for the dead had been performed.

The Stone Font

In January 1845, the wooden font was removed from the Nauvoo Temple site. Joseph Smith had expressed his premonition that the wooden font was only a temporary structure. He said to Brigham Young that "this fount has caused the Gentile world to wonder," and then he added that "a sight of the next one will make a Gentile fade away." It was Brigham Young who on 6 April 1845 announced the need for a new font: "There was a font erected in the basement story of the Temple, for the baptism of the dead, the healing of the sick and other purposes; this font was made of wood, and was only intended for the present use; but it is now removed, and as soon as the stone cutters get through with the cutting of the stone for the walls of the Temple, they will immediately proceed to cut the stone for and erect a font of hewn stone. This font will be of an oval form and twelve feet in length and eight wide, with stone steps and an iron railing; this font will stand upon twelve oxen, which will be cast of iron or brass, or perhaps hewn stone."

On 6 June 1845, nearly six months after Brigham's announcement, architect William Weeks was invited to meet with "the Twelve to discuss the work of replacing the wooden baptistery with a stone one." Weeks agreed with the plans, and Brigham Young agreed to supervise the font construction. "We have taken down the wooden fount that was built up by the instructions of Brother Joseph," said

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46 HC, 7:254.
50 HC, 7:358.
Brigham Young to an assemblage of the Saints. "This has been a great wonder to some, and says one of
the stone-cutters the other day, 'I wonder why Joseph did not tell us the fount should be built of stone.'
The man that made that speech is walking in darkness. He is a stranger to the spirit of this work and
knows nothing. In fact he does not know enough to cut a stone for the house of God. There is not a
man under the face of the heavens that has one particle of the spirit about him, but knows that God
talks to men according to their circumstances."53

The first stone for the new font was laid on 25 June 1845 by stone-cutters after they finished their
daily work on the temple.54 Through their combined labors, they erected a font that resembled the
discarded wooden structure—but with more intricate details. For example, their cutting of the stone
oxen was "perfectly executed so that the veins in the ears and nose were plainly seen."55 The "horns
were perfectly natural, with small wrinkles at the bottom." And each stone ox was painted white and
"had the appearance of standing in water half-way up to their knees." The craftsmen even constructed
an iron railing to protect the font from "the soiling hand of the curious visitor."56

Visitor Buckingham wrote a description of the stone font: "The font is of white limestone, of an
oval shape, twelve by sixteen feet in size on the inside, and about four and a half feet to five feet deep.
It is very plain, and rests on the backs of twelve stone oxen or cows, which stand immersed to their
knees in the earth. It has two flights of steps, with iron banisters, by which you enter and go out of the
font, one at the east end, and the other at the west end. The oxen have tin horns and tin ears, but are
otherwise of stone, and a stone drapery hangs like a curtain down from the font, so as to prevent the
exposure of all back of the four [fore] legs of the beasts."57

On 20 January 1846, the Times and Seasons reported that "the Font, standing upon twelve stone
oxen, is about ready."58 But a certificate dated 16 December 1845 in the Archives of The Church of
Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints suggests that Theodore Rogers had "privilege of the Baptismal Font"
prior to the newspaper announcement.59 This corresponds to the time in which the endowment was
being given in the upper story of the Nauvoo Temple. However, a question remains as to who used the
font and whether baptisms for the dead were actually performed there. We know that on one occasion,
"Young men and maidens came with festoons of flowers to decorate the twelve elaborately carved oxen,
upon which rested the baptismal laver," yet we are uncertain about whether baptisms were performed.60

53 The men selected to cut the stone for the font were William W. Player, Benjamin T. Mitchell, Charles Lambert,
William Cottier, Andrew Cahoon, Daniel S. Cahoon, Jerome Kimpton, Augustus Stafford, Ben Anderson, Alvin
Winegar, William Jones, and Stephen Hales Jr. Stone artisan Francis Clark, who arrived in Nauvoo in April 1841, did
much of the fine carving on the oxen.
54 Austin, Mormonism; or Life Among the Mormons, in Boman, "The LDS Temple Baptismal Font," 6.
55 L. O. Littlefield, letter from Nauvoo to the editor of the New York Messenger, 30 August 1845, in Arrington,
"History of the Construction of the Nauvoo Temple." See also Virginia Harrington and J. C. Harrington, Rediscovery
56 Harrington, Rediscovery of the Nauvoo Temple, 33.
57 Times and Seasons, 20 January 1846.
58 Harrington, Rediscovery of the Nauvoo Temple, 33.
60 Joseph Hovey, Journal, 1 December 1845, 26.
Preparations to Go West

If baptisms were not performed in the stone font, then the question should be asked, "Why did the Saints not continue with this important work?" The answer is not found in neglect but in a change of emphasis. The Saints had turned their energy to receiving their endowments in the upper story of the Nauvoo Temple and making preparations for the trek west. Perhaps stonecutter Joseph Hovey described it best on 1 December 1845: "I finished my work on the baptismal font and made arrangement to... put up a shop and go to work ironing wagons to go to California."61 The great work for the dead ended in Nauvoo in 1845. Only faded holographic baptismal records remain to tell of the unselfish deeds of the early Saints in behalf of their deceased loved ones. Saints of today should express gratitude for the deeds of the early Saints and for the records that reveal the first "ordinance remembrances" in behalf of the deceased in this dispensation.

61 Joseph Hovey, Journal, 1 Dec 1845, 26.
Appendix N

“Family: The Eternal Perspective”

Elder John H. Groberg
BYU Family History Fireside, February 27, 2004

I am happy to be with you this evening, and especially grateful to have my wife, Jean, with me. I commend you for the great work you are doing in Family History. I am aware of the technological advances that have been and are being made almost daily in many fields of endeavor, including Family History. I thank you for applying these heaven-inspired resources, to make this vital work more reliable, more accessible and more doable.

This evening, however, I have chosen to address my remarks not to the technological, but to the spiritual side of the work. We live in a physical world and have physical bodies, but it is our spirit that gives us life. It is the spirit that gives life to all things, including Family History. Without the spirit there is no existence, no understanding, no life. It is our spirit that can see beyond this mortal sphere and help us understand where we came from, why we are here and where we go after mortality. Only as we see beyond the limits of mortal life can we understand the real meaning of our existence and the eternal importance of family.

The world today is confused in their attempts to define and understand a family. Without, in any way, decrying the efforts of many good people who are sincere in their research, I submit to you that the only way anyone, anywhere, in any age can truly understand what a family is and what its ultimate purpose is, is through the teachings of God, as given through scriptures, prophets, prayer, and obedience to the same. Thus, I have titled my remarks: “Family: The Eternal Perspective.” Since God is eternal we could also title them: “The Family from God’s Perspective.”

The Bible says, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis. 1:1). After God created the earth and made it livable, He established a family, patterned after His family in Heaven. First he created Adam. But Adam alone was not a family. So he created Eve. She became not only a help-mate, but a soul-mate and completed the foundation for continuing families.

God gave Adam and Eve to each other in the Garden of Eden before death was part of the equation, so we know they were intended to be together forever. Through a series of events mortality came about, and the families of this earth began to be. They have continued and will continue until every spirit assigned to this earth has had a chance to be housed in an earthly “tabernacle of clay.”

As we come to earth we are taught to pray: “Our Father which art in Heaven. Hallowed be thy name” (Matthew 6:9). When we address “Our Father in Heaven,” we are reminded that He is the Father of our spirits and that we lived with Him in a family in Heaven before we came to this earth and became part of another family. Only here, our spirit would be housed in a mortal body which God gave our earthly father and mother power to produce. A veil of forgetfulness was drawn over us so we could better learn to live by faith. But we didn’t forget everything.
Deep inside each of us is an intense longing to experience the same joy, love, and security in our earthly family that we enjoyed in our Heavenly family. Individually we are part of God’s eternal family, but He wants to teach us how we can have our own eternal family. Part of that process is to come to this earth and link our earthly family; both those who came before us and those who come after us.

As near as I can tell we agreed to three essential responsibilities when we came to earth:

1. To live our lives according to God’s commandments so we can go to the temple and properly link the past to the future.

2. To teach our families and our neighbors the gospel, search out our ancestors and do vicarious temple work for them.

3. To have children and teach them gospel truths, especially about families so they will continue the linking process.

Let me illustrate these three parts with a symbol. Picture yourself as a couple looking into each other’s eyes. Now picture a mirror behind each of you, tilted so that the reflections bounce back and forth and go on forever down the stream of time and on into infinity. You, as husband and wife, are in the middle. The endless reflections on one side represent your ancestors, those who have gone before, making it possible for you to be here. The endless reflections on the other side represent your posterity, those to come who will continue the chain of your eternal family. But we are in the middle. Think of it. If we aren’t worthy, if we don’t do the work for our ancestors and if we don’t get married and have children, we will not have linked our generation! These endless images can only be seen by each spouse as he or she looks through the eye of the other spouse. In other words, we can’t do it alone. We need each other. Just as Adam needed Eve, so we need our spouses! In one sense, all eternity is focused on this one couple and waits for them to act. Thankfully they are not alone. Those who have gone before and those who are yet to come can have a mighty influence on us, if we will let them. I know something of these influences.

Let me give three personal examples of influences from the past, the present, and the future. First, the past: as a mission president in Tonga I needed to visit some elders on a distant island. The only boat available was old and dirty. Jean was nursing our three-month old daughter, Gayle, but she wanted to come along, so she made arrangements for someone to watch the older girls and we took passage on what the locals called “the rolling tub.”

I arranged for the only so-called room on the boat, which was nothing more than a small enclosure with two narrow planks against one wall called “bunks.” We stayed on deck as much as possible as the air was so bad in the tiny room.

The roughness of that voyage was unbelievable. The waves crashed across the deck, making it slippery and cold. Even though the air was much better on deck, for safety’s sake I felt we should stay in our bunks. Jean tried to lie down with Gayle on the lower board I tried to stay put on the upper one.
The rolling and jerking of the boat became so violent that we were often thrown out of our bunks and smashed against the floor and the opposite wall which was only a couple of feet away. I was afraid I might come crashing down on Jean and the baby if we were thrown from our bunks at the same time.

The best thing I could think of was for Jean and the baby to stay on the lower bunk and for me to sit on the floor with my back against their bunk, with my feet braced against the opposite wall. This way I could be somewhat stationary, and when Jean and the baby were pitched to the open side of the bunk they would roll against my back rather than onto the floor. The floor was hard, wet, and cold, and my legs and back were cramped from the constant strain. It was a long, miserable night.

Gayle clung tenaciously to Jean and was able to nurse and sleep on and off. I wondered how long I could hold out. All during that long dark night we were in constant turmoil. The pitching boat, the pounding waves, and the shrieking wind tore not only at my comfort but at my faith. Why is all this happening? I wondered.

At one point during the night I turned and looked at Jean and Gayle and felt the trauma and pain they were experiencing. I wanted to get them out of this situation, but there was nothing I could do. I asked: “Why did I bring Jean and the baby? Why is this happening? If the Savior calmed the Sea of Galilee, why not calm this sea?” On and on went the questions. I was hurting, and suddenly a wave of self-pity started to enter my mind.

At that precise moment, another influence flooded my mind. It was as though someone were talking to me who was close to me, someone I knew from somewhere. I couldn’t tell who, but I knew it was a faithful woman who knew me and loved me. Her influence filled my mind in a peaceful yet firm way, and I clearly felt the message: “Do not complain. You have no right to complain. You should be grateful for the opportunity to serve the Lord, to help build His kingdom. No sacrifice is too great for His sake. Think of what He did for you. Don’t complain. Don’t even think of complaining.”

These impressions filled my heart and mind. What a blessing and comfort they were! I was still terribly uncomfortable and seasick, my back and legs still hurt, the night was still dark and the sea was still rough, but for some wonderfully beautiful reason the thought of complaining left me entirely. Like a cloud of darkness, it had been chased away by a flood of goodness and light.

I knew I had been helped by an outside force. I closed my eyes and thanked God for His goodness and help and asked for His protection as we continued our voyage. I expressed my deep appreciation for whoever had influenced my thinking so positively that frightful night. We landed safely the next morning.

Years later I was reading a history of my great-grandmother, Elizabeth Susan Burnett Brunt. She was born in London but as a youth went to New Zealand, where she married and had several children. She and her husband heard the Latter-day Saint missionaries in Kaipoi, near Christchurch, around 1870 and were converted. As was the custom in those days, the missionaries asked them to gather to “Zion.” Accordingly she and her husband began making arrangements to leave New Zealand for Utah.

They had difficulty selling their farm so it was determined that she would take their four small children and go by boat to San Francisco and on to Salt Lake City. Her husband stayed to settle affairs
in New Zealand and followed a year later.

I pondered on the faith of that young mother with four small children heading out alone from New Zealand to her desert Zion in Utah. Who knows the hardships, the trials, the discouragements she passed through?

Then something really caught my attention. It was a brief comment that at one point on their voyage to San Francisco the boat encountered extremely rough seas and she and the children became very ill. The picture of that moment filled my mind. I could literally see them tossing, both physically and emotionally, on that merciless sea. She was alone and discouraged and almost felt to complain, but as she prayed she remembered that she was a member of God’s true church and was on her way to Zion. She was helped to realize that no problem was too big and no sacrifice too great as long as she attained her Zion. She promised herself she would never complain, or even think of complaining, and prayed that none of her posterity would either.

I was spellbound. I looked at a world map and traced the probable route of her ship. She would have been in almost exactly the same location on the same ocean as Jean and Gayle and I were, only she was there nearly a hundred years earlier!

I was so overwhelmed with gratitude for the faith of this good woman that I didn’t know what to do. I realized there really wasn’t anything to do except express my appreciation and increase my determination never to complain about anything I was asked to do in the Savior’s cause. I expressed those heartfelt feelings of gratitude through prayer. As I did I felt again some of the same love and peace I had felt on that turbulent ocean in Tonga those many years before.

Once again I saw Jean’s uncomplaining face through that tumultuous night. Then I saw her smile as she first stepped ashore the next morning. It melted me to tears. As I basked in its warmth I thought I detected a faint wisp of another smile and was confident it belonged to my great-grandmother Brunt.

I wondered: “Are there such things as spiritual genes? Are there spiritual pools of traits that can help shape us, similar to the way physical genes do?” I didn’t have an answer, but I was sure that the best thing we could do for our posterity is to be faithful ourselves. I know every person has his or her own moral agency and can accept or reject help offered them. But what a great blessing it is if the available “pool” of help contains much of faith and devotion and goodness. How important to build as much goodness and faith as possible in our lives! Not only will it help us now but it has the potential of being helpful to others down the stream of time.

Now let me move to a second experience on the influence of people in the present.

While serving as a young missionary in Tonga in the mid 1950’s, I was assigned to the small, distant island of Niuatoputapu. At one point a hurricane hit this island wreaking vast destruction. Because of its isolated location we were left on our own for over two months with no outside contact.

Food was scarce, but I had plenty of time to ponder. I reflected on the scripture, “Be still and know that I am God.” I had always thought of that scripture as a statement to watch for His salvation after we had done all we could. Now I looked upon it more as an invitation: “Be still (sit quietly, get rid of outside pressures, go to the temple, for example, don’t worry about this world) and know that I am God your Father.” Or: “Be still so you can know that I am God your Father. Study and learn of Me
and My ways.” If one of the purposes of life is to know and love God, then maybe one of Satan’s best weapons to keep us from that knowledge is to keep us so busy, even doing good things, that we don’t allow ourselves time to be still so we can know that God is our all-powerful and all-loving Father in Heaven!

The ninth week began with essentially no food and little outward change. There was, however, a great inward change. I started talking, or at least thinking to myself, saying, “Well, maybe my mortal life will end here.” It was not a panicky feeling, I was past that stage. It was a calm feeling, an assured feeling, a feeling that it really didn’t matter, because I knew all would be right.

I was pretty much skin and bones by now. I remember being aware of my ribs sticking out, of sensing my heart beating and my lungs breathing, and feeling a great wonderment for the miracle of the human body. What a marvelous mechanism the Lord has put together to house our equally marvelous spirit! The thought of a permanent union of these two elements, made possible through the Savior’s love, suffering, and resurrection, was so inspiring and satisfying that any small physical discomfort faded into nothingness. What a great blessing to know that things will be right! What a tremendous blessing faith is! Faith is the opposite of fear. We fear what we don’t understand. When we truly understand that God is our Father and we are His children, and that He loves us very much and has a plan for us which includes an eternal family, fear evaporates.

I was so weak by now that I often dozed. At times I wasn’t entirely sure where I was. Sometimes there is a very fine line between “here” and “there.” I didn’t know which side of the veil I would end up on, but it didn’t matter. All that mattered was that God was in His heaven, and He knew me and my situation; He would make sure that which was right was done, for as far as I knew, I had done all I could.

I jotted down a phrase, which undoubtedly is not original but which came at that time with the power of firsthand knowledge: “The only thing that is important is your standing in the sight of your Father in Heaven. If that is as it should be, nothing else matters. If that is not as it should be, nothing else counts.”

As I sat there, I realized more and more how much I had to learn. I was genuinely excited about getting on with that learning whichever side of the veil the Lord deemed most appropriate. I wish I could always have that zest for learning spiritual things. I understood clearly that the spiritual is more important and more powerful than the physical and, in fact, controls all physical things. I understood that both physical and spiritual elements are necessary and are in effect one when fully comprehended and perfected.

I learned a lot about relationships: our relationship to our Father in Heaven and to the Savior, Their relationship to us, our relationship to each other as members of God’s family, and the all-important role of the Holy Ghost in conveying and confirming the correct understanding of these relationships. I learned a little about our relationship to this earth, the earth’s relationship to this solar system, its relationship to the universe, and the relationship between systems, universes, stars, and also something about how they are governed. I know families were a major element of all this. I didn’t understand much, but I sensed the grand design. I understood that people unchallenged are largely people undeveloped, be it physically, mentally, or spiritually.
I realized that just as rockets must overcome the pull of gravity in order to roar into space, so we must overcome the pull of the world in order to soar into the eternal realms of understanding. That is where God is, that is where our eternal family is, and that is important!

There came a time when I realized I only had enough strength to write one more letter. I wondered who I should write to and what I should say. It would seem natural to write to my parents, but the impression came very strongly to me to write to Jean, to tell her of my love and ask her to comfort my parents if I did not make it.

As I finished this letter, a scripture filled my soul and I knew I had done what was right. “Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else” (D & C 42:22). Even though Jean was not yet my wife it was clear what I should do.

A boat arrived the next day with food on it. I remember taking my first bite of ma pakupaku (dried biscuits), closing my eyes, and crying. When I opened my eyes, those about me were crying as well. Some said how good it was to eat again and to feel this great gratitude to God for saving our lives. But I felt something deeper. I would never say I was unhappy with being able to eat again, and I was content that life here would go on as before. Still I had a wistful feeling, a subtle sense of postponement, as when darkness finally closes the brilliant colors of a perfect sunset and you realize you must wait for another evening to enjoy such beauty again. Fortunately, life can be colored by the memory of that brilliance which, while not always discernible, is always available and can be drawn upon, especially in times of great need.

Let me show a brief clip of an artist’s attempt to depict these events and these feelings.

Video Clip

For several weeks after the relief boat arrived, I had a series of special feelings and experiences, which were mostly family-oriented. I sensed that families are the important thing. I understood this was not only the nuclear family we tend to think of, such as mother, father, and children, but the broader family, often called multi-generational, extended family, clan, kin, tribe, or whatever. I knew for sure that all of us, married or single, male or female, old or young, light or dark, are part of this larger family unit and we need to understand it and appreciate it even more than we do. I felt that the Tongans may have a better understanding of the true eternal nature of family than some Westerners do.

As I thought of some in our society putting other things ahead of family, such as their own convenience, schooling, friends, or other conditions, I almost gasped with disbelief. We are here to do things for others that they cannot do for themselves, such as vicarious temple ordinances and having children. I remember thinking, “If we don’t search out and do work for our ancestors, who will? If we delay or refuse to have children, where will God send them?”

As I thought of the eternal consequences of putting worldly things ahead of God and family, I literally shuddered. I became firmly convinced that we should always look at the eternal perspective in all we do and say, for only by acting according to that perspective can we find safety and joy.

Reflecting on this experience, one of our daughters and her husband created a poster that captures the essence of those feelings. (There is a connection between Heaven and earth.)
Now, the third experience about the influences of the future.

While serving as a mission president in Tonga in the 1960’s, our first son was born. Our five daughters were as excited as we were. Unfortunately, it turned out that he was born with a congenital kidney defect which would not allow him to live unless corrected. There were no facilities or trained personnel in Tonga to do this. After much fasting and prayer by thousands of faithful Tongans, the Lord promised them He would preserve our son’s life long enough for Jean to take him to the Primary Children’s Hospital where he could get the care he needed.

I would stay in Tonga with our five young daughters and Jean would take our son to Utah. The only international flights were from Nadi, Fiji which at that time was part of our mission.

Let me explain some of my feelings as Jean and our son left on that late night flight from Fiji.

When they announced the flight departure, I held Jean and John Enoch for as long as I could before kissing them good-bye and watching them board the plane. When would I see them and hold them in my arms again? I knew we were doing what was right and the end result, whatever it was, would be right, but it was still hard.

I had a heavy feeling as I watched those precious souls board the plane. I watched the door close and the giant craft leave the terminal, taxi to the end of the runway, and prepare to begin its long flight to America.

I found a secluded spot where I could see the plane, which was now at the far end of the runway. It was the darkest hour of the night, not long before sunrise. Nearly everyone had left the airport, so I was virtually alone.

I watched the flashing red lights and the powerful white lights of the plane, as it sat there, probably waiting for take-off clearance, but in my heart I felt it was waiting to give us one last opportunity to say a final good-bye. And why not? After all, isn’t love the strongest force in the universe? I stood and cried out to the plane, to the sky, and to all eternity, “Fly safely! Do you know what a precious cargo of love, faith, fulfillment, and miracles you carry?” My family! Almost immediately I heard a quiet, loving even familiar response coming, not only from the end of the runway but also from the depths of eternity: “I know; I know.”

I’m not sure what being translated is like, but if it has anything to do with being removed from things physical and placed in a dimension or an understanding of things spiritual, including love, faith, family, and eternity, then I can relate. All was quiet, very quiet. My heart or soul, or whatever I was made up of then, was throbbing in a synchronized pattern of love and gratitude that came from beyond myself.

The roar of engines shattered the quiet, and I watched that giant machine thunder down the runway. Faster and faster it went until it dipped briefly out of sight, only to reappear above the runway moving upward and onward into the soft Fijian sky. I watched for a long time as it climbed higher and higher, then made a wide turn and headed back overhead on its way to America.

I focused on the blinking lights for as long as I could see them. Finally, even they melted into the night and I could no longer tell which was plane and which was star. As I struggled to distinguish between them, a peaceful realization came over me that it didn’t really matter, for they were in the
hands of God, and He was everywhere. The stars were His and they were His.

My heart, mind, and soul resonated to that simple thought. It seemed to fill my very being, as I saw and felt things that are sacred, true, and eternal. I wrote a lot that night but I share only these brief phrases, which are neither prose nor poetry but rather a rush of feelings hastily put on paper.

To Jean

I watched you leave
That starlit eve
Through the soft Fijian sky.

You held our son
Our only son
With love and faith to try.

I watched you climb
And take your place
Among the stars above.

Please help me Jean
Build up my faith
Send me your warmth and love.

I strain to see
But cannot tell
Exactly where you are.

Yet God is there
And you are there
A brilliant shining star.

Oh Jean, my love
Please hold my heart
And touch my clouded eye.

Where are you Jean?
I need to know
Please hear my lonely cry.

I want you here
I hurt so much
I need you by my side.

I search for you
But cannot see
Beyond the arching tide.

Yet what is that
So pure, so clear?
Oh Jean, I see, I see!

There you are!
That brilliant shining star
So what is a star?

It's you and me
And our family
Through all Eternity.

I know.
I know.
I know.

That vision of the future potential of a family has never left me completely. I am convinced that once we see it clearly, we will never be the same.

I hope these experiences, demonstrating help from the past, the present, and the future, have helped us understand the magnitude of eternal families as seen from God’s perspective.

Let me show a final clip which, to me, summarizes all we have talked about. On my first mission we traveled from island to island by sailboat. Usually we got through storms safely. However, one particular storm was so furious that we were thrown from our boat. I remember thinking: “This isn’t right. I’m a missionary. Where’s my protection? Missionaries aren’t supposed to swim.” I learned that complaining doesn’t help, only swimming does and I needed all my energy to swim. I tried to stay above water, but eventually my energy was gone. I never gave up, but at one point the strength in my arms and legs simply gave out.

As I went down for what could have been the last time a vision of Jean came into my mind. I felt her love and realized how much I loved her. I wanted to see her again. I wanted to marry her. I wanted her to be the mother of our children. The reality of the eternal nature of family became very clear to me even in this moment of despair. Suddenly I felt the power of Jean’s love reaching down and pulling me up from the depths of that tumultuous sea.

Let’s watch the artist’s depiction of that event. Then I will conclude with my testimony.
Video Clip

Is there power in love? Is there power in family relationships? I testify there is. I testify that we can be influenced and strengthened by those who have gone before, by those who are with us now and by those who are yet to come. I know it is so.

As surely as the power of my great-grandmother’s goodness could cross over 100 years of time and turn my fear to joy, as surely as the power of Jean’s love could travel over 8,000 miles and pull me up from the depths of death and despair into the light of life and future family, so surely can the power of the love of our ancestors, our spouses, and our posterity reach across any physical barrier and influence us for good. Where true love is, barriers crumble.

Only the barrier of a hard heart, an unbelieving mind or a non-caring attitude can stop or delay these influences. How important it is to be humble and to open our hearts, our minds, and our time to each other and to those on the other side of the veil.

I testify that love is the greatest power in the universe and that the greatest expression of that power and love comes in our families. The scriptures tell us that God is love. Since God is all powerful and since He is our Father in Heaven, love and family must be the essence of His power in the priesthood.

It is only as we see beyond the limits of this life that we understand the true meaning and importance of a family. The Proclamation to the World on the Family is as good a document as I know to explain this. I testify that if we are humble, work hard, and are believing, all things over all time will work for our good.

Brothers and sisters, I again commend you for all you do, and encourage you to do even more. We must do more to increase the effectiveness of our technology, but beyond that we must do more to increase our deep feeling for and spiritual understanding of the eternal nature of families. I promise you that by living worthy of spiritual guidance, far greater things will happen to help our families, both descendants and ancestors, than all the technological advances this world will ever see. Of course, technology and spirituality can and must work together, but remember it is always the spirit that gives life.

I testify that God lives. He is our Father in Heaven. I testify that Jesus is the Christ, the only Begotten Son of the Father. He is our Redeemer and Savior. Jesus is the head of this, His Church. The priesthood power to seal families on earth and in heaven is present in the Church today. I know that the temples we have are literally Houses of the Lord. Think of the physical meaning and spiritual significance of these word pairs: House and Family, Father and Son, Husband and Wife, Children and Parents, Time and Eternity.

I know Jesus lives and guides His Church through living prophets. I know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is His Kingdom on earth today.

I know that Joseph Smith is the prophet who ushered in this final dispensation and that Gordon B. Hinckley is God’s mouthpiece on the earth today. I know families are eternal and
important, so important that the whole earth would be wasted were it not for worthily sealed families! Let’s all do our part!

I have great confidence in you and leave my love and blessings with all of you. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.
The Family: A Proclamation to the World

The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

We, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.

In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshiped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life. The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.

The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

We declare the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan.

Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. “Children are an heritage of the Lord” (Psalms 127:3). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the
necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed.

We warn that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.

We call upon responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.

This proclamation was read by President Gordon B. Hinckley as part of his message at the General Relief Society Meeting held September 23, 1995, in Salt Lake City, Utah.
Appendix P

BYU Religious Education: Church History and Doctrine
Family History Classes

Religion 261. Introduction to LDS Family History (Genealogy). 2 hours credit.
Introduction to family history (genealogy) program of LDS Church; emphasizes identifying ancestors in
the first few generations for whom temple ordinances have not been completed; use of Church
resources to simplify temple and family history activities.

Religion 262. LDS Family History. 1 hour credit.
Using documents created by the LDS Church to identify ancestors and submit their names for temple
ordinances.

Religion 263. United States and Canada Family History. 1 hour credit.
Family history sources for the United States and Canada.

Religion 264. British Family History. 1 hour credit.
Using documents from the British Isles to identify ancestors and submit their names for temple
ordinances.

Religion 265. Scandinavian Family History. 1 hour credit.
Using documents from the countries of Scandinavia to identify ancestors and submit their names for
temple ordinances.

Religion 266. Germanic/Slavic Family History. 1 hour credit.
Using documents from the countries of central and eastern Europe to identify ancestors and submit
their names for temple ordinances.

Religion 267. Hispanic Family History. 1 hour credit.
Using documents from the countries of Central and South America and Caribbean countries, Spanish
U.S., and Spain to identify ancestors.

Religion 268. Southern European Family History. 1 hour credit
Using documents from the countries of Portugal, Spain, Andorra, France, and Italy to identify
ancestors.

Religion 269. Native American Family History. 1 hour credit
Family history for students of Native American descent.
As I’ve listened to and participated in conversations on “after death, what?” with students and family in various areas in the Church, I’ve nearly always found two feelings expressed: a great desire to know about the postearthly spirit world (hereafter referred to as the spirit world), and an apologetic feeling for having questions, as though the spirit world were a subject that we should not discuss.

My feeling is that caution in discussing a sacred subject is always proper, especially when much popular “information” in contemporary society about the spirit world involves sensational ghost stories, devil worship, and other problem areas. However, the desire to know is, in itself, a good one. Our beloved relatives who have passed on inhabit that world, and we will soon join them there. It is a healthy, holy subject and should be discussed in that tone.

Furthermore, the Prophet Joseph Smith declared that the Saints should study the purpose of life and death, in fact should study it “more than any other” subject—“study it day and night.” He observed that “if we have any claim on our Heavenly Father for anything, it is for knowledge on this important subject.” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 324; italics added.)

We have a right, then, to understand the true nature of our existence. We also have a responsibility to search it out, for the more aware we become that the spirit world is a real extension of our mortal existence, the less likely we are to fasten our hearts on the treasures of this world.

One of the most beautiful stories in our heritage, an experience of President Heber J. Grant’s, bears witness that a testimony about the right relationship between life, death, and the spirit world can comfort us in times of sorrow, help us understand God’s purposes, and teach us the true nature of our existence. President Grant writes:

“I have been blessed with only two sons. One of them died at five years of age and the other at seven. My last son died of a hip disease. I had built great hopes that he would live to spread the Gospel at home and abroad and be an honor to me. About an hour before he died I had a dream that his mother, who was dead, came for him, and that she brought with her a messenger, and she told this messenger to take the boy while I was asleep; and in the dream I thought I awoke and I seized my son and fought for him and finally succeeded in getting him away from the messenger who had come to take him, and in so doing I dreamed that I stumbled and fell upon him.

“I dreamed that I fell upon his sore hip, and the terrible cries and anguish of the child drove me nearly wild. I could not stand it and I jumped up and ran out of the house so as
not to hear his distress. I dreamed that after running out of the house I met Brother Joseph E. Taylor and told him of these things.

“He said: ‘Well, Heber, do you know what I would do if my wife came for one of her children—I would not struggle for that child; I would not oppose her taking that child away. If a mother who had been faithful had passed beyond the veil, she would know of the suffering and the anguish her child may have to suffer; she would know whether that child might go through life as a cripple and whether it would be better or wiser for that child to be relieved from the torture of life; and when you stop to think, Brother Grant, that the mother of that boy went down into the shadow of death to give him life, she is the one who ought to have the right to take him or keep him.’

“I said, ‘I believe you are right, Brother Taylor, and if she comes again, she shall have the boy without any protest on my part.’

“After coming to that conclusion, I was waked by my brother, B. F. Grant, who was staying that night with us, helping to watch over the sick boy. He called me into the room and told me that my child was dying. I went in the front room and sat down. There was a vacant chair between me and my wife who is now living, and I felt the presence of that boy’s deceased mother, sitting in that chair. I did not tell anybody what I felt, but I turned to my living wife and said: ‘Do you feel anything strange?’ She said: ‘Yes, I feel assured that Heber’s mother is sitting between us, waiting to take him away.’

“Now, I am naturally, I believe, a sympathetic man. I was raised as an only child, with all the affection that a mother could lavish upon a boy. I believe that I am naturally affectionate and sympathetic and that I shed tears for my friends—tears of joy for their success and tears of sorrow for their misfortunes. But I sat by the deathbed of my little boy and saw him die, without shedding a tear. My living wife, my brother, and I, upon that occasion experienced a sweet, peaceful, and heavenly influence in my home, as great as I have ever experienced in my life.” (Improvement Era, June 1940, pp. 330, 383.)

According to Latter-day Saint doctrine, the postearthly spirit world is the place of residence for all those who have died and are awaiting the resurrection’s inseparable connection of their spirits and bodies. Thus, it is not the place where God the Father, the resurrected Lord, and other resurrected beings dwell. Rather, it is an intermediate condition or state where people await the resurrection—a tangible sphere where disembodied spirits live in one of several conditions according to what their mortal lives have merited.

Speaking of those conditions, Alma declared to his son Corianton that an angel had made known to him “that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life.” (Alma 40:11.) Not that they are taken to the literal presence of God or the planet upon which he resides (see Joseph Fielding Smith, Answers to Gospel Questions, Deseret Book Company, 1958, 2:84–87), but rather into the spirit world. Alma continues: “The spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness,
which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow.” (Alma 40:12.) Shortly before his death, Moroni contemplated entering this same blessed condition in the spirit world. He wrote: “I soon go to rest in the paradise of God, until my spirit and body shall again reunite, and I am brought forth triumphant through the air, to meet you before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah, the Eternal Judge of both quick and dead.” (Moro. 10:34.)

But not all people will be entitled to rest and paradise. Alma clarified: “The spirits of the wicked, yea, who are evil—for behold, they have no part nor portion of the Spirit of the Lord; for behold, they chose evil works rather than good; therefore the spirit of the devil did enter into them, and take possession of their house—and these shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and this because of their own iniquity, being led captive by the will of the devil.” (Alma 40:13.)

Just as paradise is not the eternal abode of the righteous, hell in the spirit world is not the eternal abode of the wicked. Reporting his vision of the telestial world, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote: “These are they who shall not be redeemed from the devil until the last resurrection, until the Lord, even Christ the Lamb, shall have finished his work.” (D&C 76:85.) He added: “These are they who are cast down to hell and suffer the wrath of Almighty God, until the fulness of times, when Christ shall have subdued all enemies under his feet, and shall have perfected his work.” (D&C 76:106. See also Rev. 20:13.) Hell in the spirit world will end when all people have been resurrected. Because of the atonement of Christ, there is an eventual release. (See 2 Ne. 9:6–12.) Those who remain “filthy still” (the sons of perdition) will remain in hell, but it will be a place separate from the hell of the spirit world. (See D&C 76:43–49.) After the sons of perdition are resurrected, the spirit world will have no inhabitants. (Bruce. R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed., p. 762.)

Peter refers to the spirit world as “prison,” and it is for some. (1 Pet. 3:18–20, 1 Pet. 4:6.) However, it is chiefly a place of learning and waiting, not a place of suffering. Here those who did not have an opportunity in mortality to receive the gospel, and those who had a partial opportunity but rejected it will be taught. In 1893, President Lorenzo Snow, then president of the Quorum of the Twelve, declared in general conference his strong belief “that when the Gospel is preached to the spirits in prison, the success attending that preaching will be far greater than that attending the preaching of our Elders in this life. I believe there will be very few indeed of those spirits who will not gladly receive the Gospel when it is carried to them. The circumstances there will be a thousand times more favorable.” (Millennial Star 56:50.)

In short, the spirit world is the temporary home of the spirits of all mankind, be they good or evil. Thus Joseph Smith could declare that “the righteous and the wicked all go to the same world of spirits until the resurrection.” (Teachings, p. 310.) Yet some have wondered why Jesus promised the dying thief that after his death he would join the Savior in paradise. The Prophet Joseph taught: “King James’ translators make it out to say paradise. But what is paradise? It is a modern word: it does not answer at all to the original word that Jesus made use of. Find the original of the word paradise. You may as
easily find a needle in a haymow. Here is a chance for battle, ye learned men. There is nothing in the original word in Greek from which this was taken that signifies paradise; but it was—This day thou shalt be with me in the world of spirits: then I will teach you all about it and answer your inquiries. And Peter says [Jesus] went and preached to the world of spirits (spirits in prison, 1 Peter, 3rd chap. 19th verse [1 Pet. 3:19]), so that they who would receive it could have it answered by proxy by those who live on the earth, etc.” (Teachings, p. 309.) Moreover, the Prophet added: “Hades, the Greek, or Sheol, the Hebrew, these two significations mean a world of spirits. Hades, Sheol, paradise, spirits in prison, are all one; it is a world of spirits.” (Teachings, p. 310.) This clarification by the Prophet helps us understand the words of the Savior.

Latter-day revelation also helps us understand the nature of existence in the spirit world. For one thing, spirits are tangible entities. President Brigham Young said: “Spirits are just as familiar with spirits as bodies are with bodies, though spirits are composed of matter so refined as not to be tangible to this coarser organization.” (Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 379. See also D&C 131:7–8.)

In terms of location, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that the spirit world is very close to us. During a funeral sermon, he declared that the righteous spirits “are exalted to a greater and more glorious work; hence they are blessed in their departure to the world of spirits. Enveloped in flaming fire, they are not far from us.” (Teachings, p. 326.)

One sister who visited the spirit world and was recalled to mortality by President Lorenzo Snow had personal experience with what the Prophet taught: “Some inquired about their friends and relatives on the earth. Among the number was my cousin. He asked me how the folks were getting along and said it grieved him to hear that some of the boys were using tobacco, liquor and many things that were injurious to them.” (LeRoi C. Snow, “Raised from the Dead,” story of Ella Jensen, Improvement Era, October 1929, p. 974.) Indeed, our deceased loved ones are greatly concerned about our well-being and happiness and can be appointed, when there is need, to bring messages of warning, reproof, or instruction to us. (See Joseph F. Smith, Gospel Doctrine, p. 436.)

President Young confirmed that the spirit world “is on this earth.” (Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 376.) In a recent general conference, President Ezra Taft Benson declared that “the spirit world is not far away. Sometimes the veil between this life and the life beyond becomes very thin. Our loved ones who have passed on are not far from us.” (Ensign, June 1971, p. 33.)

Apparently the spirit world is incorporated with the physical world. The earth has a spirit in it just as our physical bodies have spirits in them. Elder Parley P. Pratt wrote that the spirit world “is here on the very planet where we were born; or in other words, the earth and other planets of like sphere, have their inward or spiritual spheres, as well as their outward, or temporal. The one is peopled by temporal tabernacles, and the other by spirits. A veil is drawn between the one sphere and the other, whereby all the objects in the spiritual sphere are rendered invisible to those in the temporal.” (Key to Theology, 9th ed., Deseret Book, 1965, pp. 126–27.)
Apparently, righteous people in the spirit world are organized just as they are here, arranged in families and quorums. Priesthood operates there as it operates here. President Brigham Young declared: “When the faithful Elders, holding this Priesthood, go into the spirit world they carry with them the same power and Priesthood that they had while in the mortal tabernacle.” (Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 132. See also D&C 124:130.) The blessings of the priesthood are thus present in the spirit world. One elder who passed beyond the veil and returned spoke of the order he saw there:

“While I was in the spirit world I observed that the people there were busy, and that they were perfectly organized for the work they were doing. It seemed to me a continuation of the work we are doing here,—something like going from one stake to another. There was nothing there that seemed particularly strange to me, everything being natural.” (Peter E. Johnson, Relief Society Magazine, Aug. 1920, p. 455.) Ella Jensen had a similar experience when she visited the spirit world. Elder Rudger Clawson, a late member of the Council of the Twelve who spoke of her experience, said that a “guide was there to meet her and by him she was conducted into a very large building where there were many people, all of whom appeared to be extremely busy, no evidence of idleness whatever.” (LeRoi C. Snow, Improvement Era, Oct. 1929, p. 977.) But it is possible that not all people in the spirit world are thus organized, since all have not received the ordinances necessary for exaltation.

President George Albert Smith, after an experience with the spirit world, described the part of that world he saw:

“One day … I lost consciousness of my surroundings and thought I had passed to the Other Side. I found my self standing with my back to a large and beautiful lake, facing a great forest of trees. There was no one in sight, and there was no boat upon the lake or any other visible means to indicate how I might have arrived there. I realized, or seemed to realize, that I had finished my work in mortality and had gone home. I began to look around, to see if I could not find someone. There was no evidence of anyone’s living there, just those great, beautiful trees in front of me and the wonderful lake behind me.

“I began to explore, and soon I found a trail through the woods which seemed to have been used very little, and which was almost obscured by grass.” President Smith followed the trail and after some time met his grandfather, with whom he conversed. (Improvement Era, March 1947, p. 139.)

Apparently, there are no infants or children in the spirit world. All who reside there possess the stature of adult men and women, the same appearance they possessed prior to mortal birth. If infants or children die, their spirits immediately resume their former adult stature while in the spirit world. However, when they regain their bodies during the resurrection, they naturally come forth as children to be raised to maturity by righteous and worthy parents. President Joseph F. Smith explained this concept:

“The spirits of our children are immortal before they come to us, and their spirits, after bodily death, are like they were before they came. They are as they would have appeared
if they had lived in the flesh, to grow to maturity, or to develop their physical bodies to
the full stature of their spirits. If you see one of your children that has passed away it may
appear to you in the form in which you would recognize it, the form of childhood; but if
it came to you as a messenger bearing some important truth, it would perhaps come as the
spirit of Bishop Edward Hunter’s son (who died when a little child) came to him, in the
stature of full-grown manhood, and revealed himself to his father, and said: ‘I am your
son.’

“Bishop Hunter did not understand it. He went to my father and said: ‘Hyrum, what does
that mean? I buried my son when he was only a little boy, but he has come to me as a
full-grown man—a noble, glorious, young man, and declared himself my son. What does
it mean?’

“Father (Hyrum Smith, the Patriarch) told him that the Spirit of Jesus Christ was full-
grown before he was born into the world; and so our children were full-grown and
possessed their full stature in the Spirit, before they entered mortality, the same stature
that they will possess after they have passed away from mortality, and as they will also
appear after the resurrection, when they shall have completed their mission.” (Gospel
Doctrine, 5th ed., Deseret Book Company, 1939, p. 455.)

Some worry because departed children have apparently lost the privilege of courtship,
marriage, and other opportunities. But revelations concerning the spirit world assure us
that normal relationships leading to eternal sealings are an ongoing part of that life. Elder
Melvin J. Ballard observed:

“You mothers worry about your little children [who have died]. We do not perform
sealings for them. I lost a son six years of age, and I saw him a man in the spirit world
after his death, and I saw how he had exercised his own freedom of choice and would
obtain of his own will and volition a companionship, and in due time to him, and all those
who are worthy of it, shall come all of the blessings and sealing privileges of the house of
the Lord. Do not worry over it. They are safe; they are all right.

“Now, then, what of your daughters who have died and have not been sealed to some
man? … The sealing power shall be forever and ever with this Church, and provisions
will be made for them. We cannot run faster than the Lord has provided the way. Their
blessings and privileges will come to them in due time. In the meantime, they are safe.”
(Bryant S. Hinckley, Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin J. Ballard, Deseret
Book Company, 1949, p. 260.)

In Joseph Smith’s Vision of the Celestial Kingdom he saw “that all children who die
before they arrive at the years of accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom of
heaven.” (D&C 137:10) Moreover, President Joseph F. Smith made the following
explanation:

“Joseph Smith taught the doctrine that the infant child that was laid away in death would
come up in the resurrection as a child; and, pointing to the mother of a lifeless child, he
said to her: ‘You will have the joy, the pleasure, and satisfaction of nurturing this child, after its resurrection, until it reaches the full stature of its spirit.’ There is restitution, there is growth, there is development, after the resurrection from death. I love this truth. It speaks volumes of happiness, of joy and gratitude to my soul. Thank the Lord he has revealed these principles to us.” (Gospel Doctrine, pp. 455–56. See also Teachings, pp. 196–97, 200, 368.) And so we should understand, in the words of Joseph Smith, that “the only difference between the old and young dying is, one lives longer in heaven [the spirit world] and eternal light and glory than the other, and is freed a little sooner from this miserable wicked world. Notwithstanding all this glory, we for a moment lose sight of it, and mourn the loss, but we do not mourn as those without hope.” (Teachings, p. 197.)

This does not imply that people should be anxious to leave mortality, but it does suggest that parents who have lost children can be comforted by the truths of the gospel. Indeed, we should be anxiously engaged in successfully completing life’s mission. For example, after Wilford Woodruff’s young wife Phoebe passed away, he was inspired to administer to her and rebuke the power of death. He wrote of the incident:

“Her spirit returned to her body, and from that hour she was made whole; and we all felt to praise the name of God, and to trust in Him and to keep His commandments.

“While this operation was going on with me (as my wife related afterwards) her spirit left her body, and she saw it lying upon the bed, and the sisters weeping. She looked at them and at me, and upon her babe, and, while gazing upon this scene, two personages came into the room. … One of these messengers informed her that she could have her choice: she might go to rest in the spirit world, or, on one condition she could have the privilege of returning to her tabernacle and continuing her labors upon the earth. The condition was, if she felt that she could stand by her husband, and with him pass through all the cares, trials, tribulations and afflictions of life which he would be called to pass through for the gospel’s sake unto the end. When she looked at the situation of her husband and child she said: ‘Yes, I will do it!’

“At the moment that decision was made the power of faith rested upon me, and when I administered unto her, her spirit entered her tabernacle. …” (Leaves From My Journal, 4th ed., The Deseret News, 1909, pp. 59–60.)

The Latter-day Saint view of the spirit world reveals that there is work being performed there. The most magnificent and extensive missionary program the mind can contemplate is centered in the spirit world. President Brigham Young declared: “Compare those inhabitants on the earth who have heard the Gospel in our day, with the millions who have never heard it, or had the keys of salvation presented to them, and you will conclude at once as I do, that there is an almighty work to perform in the spirit world.” (JD, 4:285.) How is this great work to be accomplished? Some sublime insights to this question are revealed in President Joseph F. Smith’s Vision of the Redemption of the Dead. (See especially D&C 138:29–37.)
Who will accept the message of this divine ministry? Joseph Smith’s Vision of the Celestial Kingdom provides the answer. Marveling how his dead brother Alvin could be entitled to celestial inheritance since he died before the restoration of the gospel, Joseph Smith heard the voice of the Lord saying:

“All who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God;

“Also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom;

“For I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts.” (D&C 137:7–9.)

And yet this ministry in the spirit world is not sufficient to achieve the ultimate salvation of the noble dead. Why? Because it takes as much to save a dead man as it does a living man. Joseph Smith declared that the “ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the priesthood, for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles.” (Teachings, p. 308.) Moreover, the Prophet declared that “if a man gets a fullness of the priesthood of God he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord.” (Teachings, p. 308.) Dead men and women are not excepted. We can only do the ordinance work for them. They must believe, repent, and obey the gospel for themselves.

In summary, the spirit world is the place where disembodied spirits go. It is a tangible, substantial sphere incorporated with our earth, the focal point of a massive missionary effort in which we share. It is a world closer than we realize, and tied to us by the family lines of many dearly beloved relatives.

*Gospel topic: plan of salvation*

[illustration] Illustrated by Del Parson
Appendix Q

Soundex Instructions

SOUNDEX INSTRUCTIONS

SAMPLE INDIVIDUAL CARD

SOUNDEX CODING GUIDE

The number Represents the Letters
1 B P F V
2 C S K G J Q X Z
3 D T
4 L
5 M N
6 R

Disregard the letters A, E, I, O, U, W, Y, and H.

The Soundex Coding System

Every Soundex code consists of a letter and three numbers, such as S-650. The letter is always the first letter of the surname, whether it is a vowel or a consonant. Disregard the remaining vowels and W, Y, and H and assign numbers to the next three consonants of the surname according to the Soundex coding guide. If there are not three consonants following the initial letter, use zeros to fill out the three-digit code.

Most surnames can be coded using the Soundex coding guide. Names with prefixes, double letters, or letters side by side that have the same number of the Soundex coding system are described below.

NAMES WITH PREFIXES

If the surname has a prefix, such as van, Von, De, Di, or Le, code it both with and without the prefix because it might be listed under either code. The surname vanDevanter, for example, could be V-531 or D-153.

Mc and Mac are not considered prefixes.

NAMES WITH DOUBLE LETTERS

If the surname has any double letters, they should be treated as one letter. Thus, in the surname Lloyd, the second L should be crossed out, in the surname Gutierrez, the second R should be crossed out.

NAMES WITH LETTERS SIDE BY SIDE THAT HAVE THE SAME NUMBER ON THE SOUNDEX CODING GUIDE

A surname may have different letters that are side by side and have the same number on the Soundex coding guide: for example, PF in Pfister (1 is the number for both P and F); CKS in Jackson (2 is the number for C, K, and S). These letters should be treated as one letter. Thus in the name Pfister, F should be crossed out; in the name Jackson, K and S should be crossed out.
U.S. CENSUS DATA, 1790-1930

Census of 1790
Name of head of family; number of free white males of 16 years and up, including heads; number of free white males under 16; number of free white females of any age, including heads; all other free persons; number of slaves.

Census of 1800
Name of head of family; numbers of free white males and females under 10 years of age, 10 and under 16, 16 and under 26, 26 and under 45, and 45 years and upward; all other free persons, except Indians not taxed; number of slaves.

Census of 1810
Name of head of family; numbers of free white males and females under 10 years of age, 10 and under 16, 16 and under 26, 26 and under 45, and 45+; all other free persons, except Indians not taxed; number of slaves.

Census of 1820
Name of head of family; numbers of free white males and females under 10 years of age, 10 and under 16, 16 and under 26, 26 and under 45, and 45+; number of free white males between 16 and 18; foreigners not naturalized; numbers of male and female slaves and free colored persons under 14, 14 and under 26, 26 and under 45, and 45+; all other free person, except Indians not taxes; number (including slaves) in agriculture, commerce, and manufacturing.

Census of 1830
Name of head of family; numbers of free white males and females in 5-year age groups to 20, 10-year age groups from 20 to 100, and 100+; number of slaves and free colored persons in six broad age groups; number of deaf and dumb under 14, 14 to 24, and 25+; number of blind; foreigners not naturalized.

Census of 1840
Name of head of family; numbers of free white males and females in 5-year age groups to 20, 10-year age groups from 20 to 100, and 100+; number of slaves and free colored persons in six broad age groups; number of deaf and dumb; number of blind; number of insane and idiotic; number of persons employed in each of seven occupations; number of scholars; number of white persons over 20 who could not read and write; name of military pensioners.

Census of 1850
Address (usually dwelling number and visitation number); name; age; sex; color (white black, or mulatto); whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane or idiotic; value of real estate owned; profession of each free male over 16; place of birth; whether married within the year; whether attended school within the year; whether unable to read and write for persons over 20; whether a pauper or convict.

Census of 1860
Address; name; age; color (white, black, or mulatto); whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane or idiotic; value of real estate owned; profession of each free male and female over 15; place of birth (state, territory, or country); whether married within the year; whether attended school within the year; reading and writing for persons over 20; whether a pauper or convict.

Census of 1870
Address; name; age; sex; color (including Chinese and Indian); citizenship for males over 21; profession; value of real estate and personal estate; place of birth; whether father and mother were foreign born; born within the year; attended school within the year; for persons 10 years old and over whether able to read and write; whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic.

Census of 1880
Address; name; relationship to head of family; sex; race; marital status; born within the year; married within the year; profession; number of months unemployed; whether sick or temporarily disabled; if so, what sickness or disability; whether blind, deaf and dumb, idiotic, insane, maimed, crippled or bedridden; attended school; ability to read and write; place of birth of person, father, and mother (usually state of country).

Census of 1890
[More than 99% destroyed.] The original 1890 population schedules were destroyed by a fire in Washington in 1921. Less than 1 percent of the schedules are extant. They are microfilmed on M407, 3 rolls. A card index to the 6,160 names on the surviving schedules is microfilmed on Index to the Eleventh Census of the United States; 1890, M496, 2 rolls.

Census of 1900
Address; name; relationship to head of the family; sex; race; age; marital status; number of years married; mother of how many children; number of children living; place of birth of person, father, and mother; if foreign-born, year of immigration, number of years in U.S., whether naturalized; profession of each person age 10+; months not employed during year; months attended school; ability to read, write, and speak English; dwelling rented or owned; if owned, whether or not free of mortgage; whether a farm or home; number of farm schedule.

Census of 1910
Address; name; relationship to head of the family; sex; color or race; age; number of years married; mother of how many children; number of children living; place of birth of person, father and mother; if foreign-born, year of immigration, whether naturalized or alien; whether able to speak English (or language spoken); profession; industry or particular work done; whether employer or employee; if employee, whether our of work 15 April 1910 and weeks out of work 1909; ability to read or write and whether attended school since 1 September 1909; whether dwelling is owned or rented; if owned, whether free of mortgage; whether a farm or home; number of farm schedule; whether a survivor of union or confederate Army or Navy; whether blind or deaf and dumb.

Census of 1920
Street name, house number, number of dwelling in order of visitation, number of family visited; name; relationship to head of family; whether home owned or rented; if owned, whether or not free of mortgage; sex; color or race; age; year of immigration to U.S.; naturalized or alien; if naturalized, year of naturalization; whether attended school since 1 September 1919; able to read or write; place of birth and mother tongue of person, person’s father and mother, whether able to speak English; profession; industry; whether employer, salary, or wage earner; farm schedule.

Census of 1930
Street name; house number, number of dwelling in order of visitation, number of family visited; name; relationship to head of family; whether home is owned or rented; value of home; if owned, whether or not free of mortgage; sex; color or race; age; marital status; born within the year; married within the year; profession; number of months unemployed; whether sick or temporarily disabled; if so, what sickness or disability; whether blind, deaf and dumb, idiotic, insane, maimed, crippled or bedridden; attended school; ability to read and write; place of birth of person, father and mother; native language, year of immigration to U.S., naturalized or alien; whether able to speak English; occupation; industry; class of worker; whether employed; line # if unemployed; whether veteran; is veteran, what war or expedition; farm schedule.
Appendix S

Websites with Free BYU Subscriptions
Websites with Free BYU Subscriptions

Students, faculty, and staff of BYU have free access to two major genealogical databases: www.heritagequestonline.com and www.ancestry.com

HeritageQuest

Contains ProQuest's Genealogy & Local History Online, a collection of over 25,000 family and local histories, many of the U.S. Federal Census 1790-1930 (many of which are indexed), vital records, military records, and other useful genealogical resources. The database is expanding and will soon include: newspaper obituaries, Revolutionary War records, Freedman’s Bank records, and more.

Access to this database is provided through the Harold B. Lee Library to both on and off-campus BYU students, faculty, and staff. From any computer, simply open an internet browser (such as Explorer or Netscape) and type in www.lib.byu.edu/hbll/. Under the title “Databases and Indexes”, click on the blue “Articles & Journals” link. Under “Articles”, click on the blue “Alphabetical List of All Databases”, click letter “G”, and look for “Genealogy & Local History Online.”

From an on-campus computer, simply click “Connect” to the right of “Genealogy & Local History Online”. This will open up the HeritageQuest page, where you can search either the Census Records or the Book Collection.

From an off-campus computer, click on the words “Available Off Campus” to the right of “Genealogy & Local History Online” to search HeritageQuest.

Ancestry.com

Contains the Ancestry World Tree database of family trees, the complete U.S. Federal Census 1790-1930 (many of which are indexed), U.K. Census Collection, vital records (births, marriages, and deaths), military records, immigration records, newspapers and periodicals, and many other helpful genealogical resources. The database is constantly expanding to include more vital records, newspapers, city directories, and other records from all over the U.S. and the world.

To access this database, simply open an internet browser (such as Explorer or Netscape) using any computer on BYU campus, type in www.ancestry.com, and search for your ancestors. No password is required on campus and you will be able to search all sections of the Ancestry site.

By: Christina Roseann Gale Borrowman, Family Historian
Appendix T

The Book of Remembrance

Roger C. Flick
The Book of Remembrance

Introduction

Using the plates of Nephi in the Book of Mormon as an illustration, we find that two sets of records were kept, the larger plates of Nephi and the smaller plates of Nephi. The larger plates of Nephi were devoted to the secular history of the peoples concerned, while the smaller plates were occupied mostly by sacred records. Both of these record collections are considered books of remembrance or books to be remembered.

In our day we keep a variety of records, or books to be remembered, which are secular in nature. They include such things as scrapbooks, tax records, journals, diaries, photo albums, school records, baby books, family and local histories, etc. These secular records serve useful purposes and are comparable to the large plates of Nephi in the Book of Mormon.

Another record, which is spiritual in nature, should also be prepared by the family. This record can be prepared separately or from the ongoing recorded activities in the secular records as mentioned. This is a spiritual record is generally referred to as a Book of Remembrance.

Sacred Family Records

“Members of the church should be encouraged to make their books of remembrance a record of spiritual and ecclesiastical experiences as was done anciently. The book should never become a catchall for miscellaneous records. Pictures, portrait pedigrees, and the like may be added, but nothing should detract from the sacrdness of this record.

“Church members should understand that each young person should compile a personal book of remembrance while in the Aaronic Priesthood or Young Women’s organizations. Upon marriage, the husband’s and the wife’s personal books of remembrance should be combined to form the foundation of their family book of remembrance. The individual book of remembrance of each of their children consists of the combined records of the parents plus his or her own personal record sheets, and so on.” (Priesthood Genealogy Program, pages 6, 7).

“Men should write down things which God has made known to them. Whether things are important or not, often depends on God’s purposes: but the testimony of the goodness of God and the things He has wrought in the lives of men will always be important as a testimony.” (Wilford Woodruff)

“the family books of remembrance in Latter-day Saint homes today should rate in importance second only to the standard works. These family records are supplements to the scriptures, aiding in teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to the posterity of faithful members of the Church. A knowledge of the written testimonies and spiritual experiences of family members and of the proved genealogies of the fathers serves to bind the hearts of the children to their fathers and helps them to understand the doctrines that pertain to the exaltation of the family.

“Adam kept a book of remembrance, which contained a genealogy of the children of God. The pattern for preparing the book was given to Adam by the Lord himself. Continuing on down from generation to generation, the Lord has admonished His faithful servants to make records and to preserve them, in order to increase the knowledge and strengthen the faith of future generations.

“The book of remembrance should thus contain a spiritual history and a genealogy of the family. Items of a scrapbook nature should be kept separate and apart so as not to detract from the book’s importance and significance.

“In the past, many members of the church have neglectfully allowed the family book of remembrance to become a catchall and have failed to give the book its due respect as a sacred record. In addition, many Saints have procrastinated the writing of a spiritual history of the family.

“Each family unit should prepare its own book with the participants of all family members. Individual growth comes through activity. Persons should not prepare books for others. In this regard, church members should give heed to the voice of Paul when he said, “...every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.” (1 Cor. 3:8)

“Church members are being urged by priesthood leaders to realize the importance of a book of remembrance in every home. Many families that have no book of remembrance justify this lack by claiming access to their parents’ book or to the complete record compiled by an aunt or some other relative. The genealogy of the family may well be gathered by others, but if a copy of the direct genealogy of the family is not in the home, there will be little interest evidenced by that family in its progenitors. Relatives are not responsible for recording the testimonies and spiritual experiences of families other than their own, and it is not common practice for them to do so. Generally, if a family fails to record its spiritual history, it is never written”. (The Book of Remembrance, The Improvement Era, April, 1996, pp. 294-5).

Purpose of Sacred Family Records

Scriptural background. In the words of a great spiritual leader, we read the following: “For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be
reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do. And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins.” (II Nephi 25:23,26)

“The book of remembrance prepared in the true spirit, containing a record of the spiritual experiences and meaningful occurrences that have affected the lives of family members, will be instrumental in binding the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers. The book of remembrance will create interest and love in the hearts of the children for their fathers by teaching them not only their family background, but also of the spiritual power that unites them to these loved ones. Thus, in the language of the fathers, the children will be taught to love and appreciate the things of the Lord.” (“the Book of Remembrance”, The Improvement Era, April 1966, pp. 294-5).

Our sacred family records will help bring family members to the gospel of Jesus Christ. With Jesus Christ as the foundation stone, we, our children, and our children’s children can be taught the true meaning, purpose and direction of life.

How to Prepare Sacred Family Records

“And a book of remembrance was kept, in the which was recorded, in the language of Adam, for it was given unto as many as called upon God to write by the spirit of inspiration. and by them their children were taught to read and write, having a language which was pure and undefiled. For a book of remembrance we have written among us, according to the pattern given by the finger of God: and it is given in our own language.” (Moses 6:5, 46).

We should also prepare our sacred family records by inspiration. As suggested from the Priesthood Genealogy Program booklet) a book of remembrance could well contain the following:

1. Personal Records
   “A personal record for each family member showing the highlights of his or her life. Each child should be encouraged to complete his own personal record.”

2. Family History and Biography
   “Family Group Records showing the complete families of all names listed on the pedigree chart and all temple ordinance work completed or in progress on the direct lines. A good beginning for this section of the book of remembrance would be the Four-Generation family group records.”

3. Pedigree Charts
   “A pedigree chart showing the direct ancestry of the family for at least four generations should be placed in the book. As additional information is gathered it should be added to this chart to complete the family record as far back as the direct family ancestry can be traced.”

4. Sacred Personal and Family Experiences
   “Sacred personal experiences which would be faith promoting for future generations.” Sacred personal and family experiences would include those faith promoting or spiritual experiences which have brought you and your family closer to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Spirit of the Holy Ghost will dictate to you which of those spiritual experiences you may wish to share with family members to help increase their testimonies of the Gospel.

Spiritual and faith promoting experiences could include the following types of principles, activities or events:

* Your personal testimony of the Gospel
* Your Missionary experiences
* Your conversion to the gospel of Jesus Christ
* Inspirational experiences with spiritual leaders & friends
* Special blessings such as patriarchal blessings and father’s blessings
* Personal and family testimonies of:
  o Gospel Ordinances
    Baptism
    Gift of the Holy Ghost
    The Priesthood
    The endowment and sealing ordinances
  o Gospel Principles/Personal Characteristics:
    Faith
    Repentance
    Love
    Service
    Prayer
    Integrity
    Tithing
    Obedience
    Baptism
    The Holy Ghost
    Revelation
    Gifts of the Spirit
    Hope
    Patience
    Reverence
    Well prepared talks
    Kindness
    Understanding

Church job/position related experiences
Interpretation of favorite scriptures

Roger C. Flick/Feb 19, 2003
Appendix U

“Hearts Bound Together”

Elder Henry B. Eyring

“Hearts Bound Together,” Ensign, May 2005, 77

My message is to those who are converts to the Church. More than half the members of the Church today chose to be baptized after the age of eight. So you are not the exception in the Church. To you I wish to say how much the Lord loves you and trusts you. And, even more, I wish to tell you how much He depends on you.

You felt His love at least to some degree when you were baptized. Years ago I took a young man, 20 years of age, into the waters of baptism. My companion and I had taught him the gospel. He was the first in his family to hear the message of the restored gospel. He asked to be baptized. The testimony of the Spirit made him want to follow the example of the Savior, who was baptized by John the Baptist even though He was without sin.

As I brought that young man up out of the waters of baptism, he surprised me by throwing his arms around my neck and whispering in my ear, tears streaming down his face, “I'm clean, I'm clean.” That same young man, after we laid our hands on his head with the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood and conferred on him the Holy Ghost, said to me, “When you spoke those words, I felt something like fire go down from the top of my head through my body, all the way to my feet.”

Your experience will have been unique to you, but to some degree you felt the magnitude of the blessing which came to you. Since then, you have felt the reality of the promises made to you and the promises you made. You have felt the cleansing that came from your baptism, because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. And you have felt the change in your heart as the Holy Ghost has become your companion. Your desires have begun to change.

When someone tells me that he or she is a convert to the Church, I ask, “Has anyone else in your family accepted the gospel?” When the answer is “Yes,” there follows an excited description of the happy miracle in the life of a parent or a brother or sister or a grandparent. There is joy in knowing that someone in his or her family is sharing the blessing and the happiness. When the answer is “No, so far I am the only member,” he or she will almost always speak of parents, saying something like this, “No, not yet. But I am still trying.” And you can tell from the sound in the voice that the convert will never stop trying, not ever.

The Lord knew you would have those feelings when He allowed you to receive the covenants which are blessing your life. He knew you would feel a desire for your family to share the blessings you felt coming into the Church. Even more, He knew how that desire would increase when you came to know the joy of the promises He makes to us in sacred temples. There, for those who qualify, He lets us make covenants with Him. We promise to obey His commandments. And He promises us, if we are faithful, that we may live with Him in glory in families forever in the world to come.
In His loving kindness, He knew you would have a desire to be bound forever to your parents and their parents. You may have had a grandfather like mine, who always seemed to treasure my visits. I thought I was his favorite grandchild until my cousins told me they felt the same way. He is gone now. All my grandparents and their ancestors have died. Many of your ancestors died never having the chance to accept the gospel and to receive the blessings and promises you have received. The Lord is fair and He is loving. And so He prepared for you and me a way for us to have the desire of our hearts to offer to our ancestors all the blessings He has offered us.

The plan to make that possible has been in place from the beginning. The Lord gave promises to His children long ago. The very last book of the Old Testament is the book of the prophet Malachi. And the last words are a sweet promise and a stern warning:

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

“And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

Some of those words are crucial to understand: The great and dreadful day of the Lord is the end of the world. Jehovah, the Messiah, will come in glory. The wicked will all be destroyed. We live in the last days. Time could be running out for us to do what we have promised to do.

It is important to know why the Lord promised to send Elijah. Elijah was a great prophet with great power given him by God. He held the greatest power God gives to His children: he held the sealing power, the power to bind on earth and have it bound in heaven. God gave it to the Apostle Peter. And the Lord kept His promise to send Elijah. Elijah came to the Prophet Joseph Smith on April 3, 1836, just after the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, the first temple built after the Restoration of the gospel. Joseph described the sacred moment:

“Another great and glorious vision burst upon us; for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said:

“Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come

“To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse

“Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors.”

As you came into the Church, you have felt your heart being turned toward family, both those who are living and those who are in the spirit world. The Lord provided another vision to help you know what to do with those feelings.

After Joseph Smith, the Lord called other prophets to lead His Church. One was Joseph F. Smith. He saw in vision what happened in the spirit world when the Savior appeared there between the time of His death and His Resurrection. President Smith saw the joy of the spirits when they learned that the Savior had broken the bands of death and because of His Atonement they could be resurrected. And he saw the Savior organize His servants among the spirits to preach His gospel to every spirit and offer the chance to choose the covenants and the blessings which are offered to you and which you
want for your ancestors. All are to have that chance.

President Smith also saw the leaders the Savior called to take the gospel to Heavenly Father’s children in the spirit world. He named some of them: Father Adam, Mother Eve, Noah, Abraham, Ezekiel, Elijah, prophets we know from the Book of Mormon, and some from the last days, including Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, and Wilford Woodruff. Think of the power of those missionaries to teach the gospel and to touch the hearts of your ancestors. It is not surprising that Wilford Woodruff said while he lived that he believed few, if any, of the ancestors of the Latter-day Saints in the spirit world would choose to reject the message of salvation when they heard it.

Many of your deceased ancestors will have received a testimony that the message of the missionaries is true. When you received that testimony you could ask the missionaries for baptism. But those who are in the spirit world cannot. The ordinances you so cherish are offered only in this world. Someone in this world must go to a holy temple and accept the covenants on behalf of the person in the spirit world. That is why we are under obligation to find the names of our ancestors and ensure that they are offered by us what they cannot receive there without our help.

For me, knowing that turns my heart not only to my ancestors who wait but to the missionaries who teach them. I will see those missionaries in the spirit world, and so will you. Think of a faithful missionary standing there with those he has loved and taught who are your ancestors. Picture as I do the smile on the face of that missionary as you walk up to him and your ancestors whom he converted but could not baptize or have sealed to family until you came to the rescue. I do not know what the protocol will be in such a place, but I imagine arms thrown around your neck and tears of gratitude.

If you can imagine the smile of the missionary and your ancestor, think of the Savior when you meet Him. He paid the price of the sins of you and all of Heavenly Father’s spirit children. He is Jehovah. He sent Elijah. He conferred the powers of the priesthood to seal and to bless out of perfect love. And He has trusted you by letting you hear the gospel in your lifetime, giving you the chance to accept the obligation to offer it to those of your ancestors who did not have your priceless opportunity. Think of the gratitude He has for those who pay the price in work and faith to find the names of their ancestors and who love them and Him enough to offer them eternal life in families, the greatest of all the gifts of God. He offered them an infinite sacrifice. He will love and appreciate those who paid whatever price they could to allow their ancestors to choose His offer of eternal life.

Because your heart has already been turned, the price may not seem high. You begin by doing simple things. Write down what you already know about your family. You will need to write down the names of parents and their parents with the dates of birth or death or marriage. When you can, you will want to record the places. Some of that you will know from memory. But you can also ask relatives. They may even have some certificates of births, marriages, or deaths. Make copies and organize them. If you learn stories about their lives, write them down and keep them. You are not just gathering names. Those you never met in life will become friends you love. Your heart will be bound to theirs forever.

You can start searching in the first few generations going back in time. From that you will identify many of your ancestors who need your help. Someone in your own ward or branch of the Church has been called to help you prepare those names for the temple. There they can be offered the covenants
which will free them from their spirit prisons and bind them in families—your family forever.

Your opportunities and the obligations they create are remarkable in the whole history of the world. There are more temples across the earth than there have ever been. More people in all the world have felt the Spirit of Elijah move them to record the identities and facts of their ancestors' lives. There are more resources to search out your ancestors than there have ever been in the history of the world. The Lord has poured out knowledge about how to make that information available worldwide through technology that a few years ago would have seemed a miracle.

With those opportunities there comes greater obligation to keep our trust with the Lord. Where much is given, much is required. After you find the first few generations, the road will become more difficult. The price will become greater. As you go back in time, the records become less complete. As others of your family search out ancestors, you will discover that the ancestor you find has already been offered the full blessings of the temple. Then you will have a difficult and important choice to make. You will be tempted to stop and leave the hard work of finding to others who are more expert or to another time in your life. But you will also feel a tug on your heart to go on in the work, hard as it will be.

As you decide, remember that the names which will be so difficult to find are of real people to whom you owe your existence in this world and whom you will meet again in the spirit world. When you were baptized, your ancestors looked down on you with hope. Perhaps after centuries, they rejoiced to see one of their descendants make a covenant to find them and to offer them freedom. In your reunion, you will see in their eyes either gratitude or terrible disappointment. Their hearts are bound to you. Their hope is in your hands. You will have more than your own strength as you choose to labor on to find them.

A few nights ago I had a dream. I saw a piece of white paper with a name on it I did not know and a date I could only partially read. I got up and went to the records of my family. The last name on the slip of paper is from a line which came into my mother's ancestry 300 years ago in a place called Eaton Bray. Someone is anxious for a long wait to end. I have not yet found that person. But I have found again the assurance that a loving God sends help in answer to prayer in this sacred work of redeeming our families, which is His work and His glory and to which we have pledged our hearts. I so testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.
Salvation for the Dead

(O-1) Introduction
According to the Prophet Joseph Smith, “The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead” (History of the Church, 6:313).

The Apostle Paul wrote that there are some doctrinal matters that are only “spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14). The subject of salvation for the dead is one of those subjects. Latter-day Saints’ knowledge of this vital doctrine is almost entirely dependent on the Doctrine and Covenants. It is a subject comprehended only by the spiritually minded, yet its scope is so great as to include all of Heavenly Father’s children, both living and dead.

(O-2) The World of Spirits
To understand the doctrine of salvation for the dead, one should understand where departed loved ones reside. President Brigham Young taught that when individuals die they “all pass through the veil from this state and go into the world of spirits; and there they dwell waiting for their final destiny” (Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 376). This world of spirits, as taught by President Young, is very close:

“It is not beyond the sun, but is on this earth that was organized for the people that have lived and that do and will live upon it. . . .

“Where is the spirit world? It is right here. Do the good and evil spirits go together? Yes, they do. Do they both inhabit one kingdom? Yes, they do. Do they go to the sun? No. Do they go beyond the boundaries of the organized earth? No, they do not.” (Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 376; italics added.)

President Young continued this theme:

“It no doubt appears a singular idea to you that both Saint and sinner go to the same place and dwell together in the same world. You can see the same variety in this world. You see the Latter-day Saints, who have come into these valleys,—they are by themselves as a community, yet they are in the same world with other communities. . . .

“When they are in the world of spirits, there is the Prophet and the Patriarch; all righteous men are there, and all wicked men also are there.” (In Journal of Discourses, 6:294.)

The wicked and the righteous live together in the spirit world much the same as they do in mortality, not that the righteous do the things of wickedness, nor that the wicked enjoy the blessings bestowed on the righteous, but that the righteous may preach the gospel to the wicked. If they accept it, they too may lay claim upon the blessings of the Lord through the Atonement. Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote:

“Although there are two spheres within the one spirit world, there is now some intermingling of the righteous and the wicked who inhabit those spheres; and when the wicked spirits repent, they leave their prison-hell and join the righteous in paradise. Hence, we find Joseph Smith saying: ‘Hades, sheol, paradise, spirits in prison, are all one: it is a world of spirits. The righteous and the wicked all go to the same world of spirits until the resurrection.’ (Teachings, p. 310.)” (Mormon Doctrine, p. 762.)

The state of wicked spirits is described in Alma 40:13–14 and Mosiah 2:38. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “The great misery of departed spirits in the world of spirits, where they go after death, is to know that they come short of the glory that others enjoy and that they might have enjoyed themselves, and they are their own accusers (History of the Church, 5:425).

The Doctrine and Covenants is the primary source of knowledge concerning what took place when the Savior entered the world of spirits. During the three days that His body lay in the tomb, Jesus visited the spirits in paradise. He appeared only to the righteous dead, to whom He taught the fulness of His gospel. From among this vast throng He organized and commissioned missionaries to proclaim the gospel to those in spirit prison (see D&C 138:18–20, 29–31).

The message of those who labor in the spirit world is the same as the message of those who labor in the flesh. With the Restoration of the gospel, the Lord told His servants that they should open their mouths and call upon people to repent, for the kingdom of heaven was at hand. They were to repent and be baptized of water and fire so that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against you” (D&C 33:13). That is exactly the message that is being preached by those in the spirit world, and in that realm the promise has particular poignancy. If “hell” refers to suffering the natural consequences of sin in the spirit prison, the promise is that through accepting the gospel and having their work done (vicarious baptisms, endowments, and so forth) on earth, the gates of hell shall not prevail against them. Spirit prison will not have power to hold those who accept the gospel in the world of spirits.

Those who never heard the gospel while in mortality are given that opportunity so that if they accept the gospel they might be heirs to the celestial kingdom (see D&C 137:7–9). Those who had an opportunity to hear the gospel while in the flesh but rejected it are again taught the gospel so that they might be redeemed from their misery, anguish, and captivity and come forth in the terrestrial kingdom. Otherwise they would inherit a telestial kingdom.
Righteous spirits, those who have been converted to the gospel in spirit prison, are still held in spirit prison until the ordinance work is done (see Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 2:230). These loyal believers are not able to fully progress because, while they can have faith and repent in their spirit state, such ordinances as baptism and confirmation must be done in mortality, if not by themselves, then by proxies. They too await a day of deliverance. Speaking on this delay President Spencer W. Kimball said: “Some of us have had occasion to wait for someone or something for a minute, an hour, a day, a week, or even a year. Can you imagine how our progenitors must feel, some of whom have perhaps been waiting for decades and even centuries for the temple work to be done for them?” (“The Things of Eternity—Stand We in Jeopardy?” Ensign, Jan. 1977, p. 7.)

(O-3) The Mission of Elijah the Prophet

The earliest recorded revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants occurred about seven years before the restoration of the Church. That revelation gives important information for understanding the purpose of the dispensation of the fulness of times (see D&C 2). The following promises were revealed by Moroni:

1. The priesthood was to be revealed by Elijah.
2. Elijah would plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to their fathers.
3. The whole earth would be utterly wasted at the Second Coming if the hearts of the children and the hearts of the fathers were not turned to each other (see D&C 27:9; 128:17).

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that Elijah would be sent “because he holds the keys of the authority to administer in all the ordinances of the Priesthood” (Teachings, p. 172). To this statement President Joseph Fielding Smith added: “In order that the binding power should come which is recognized in the heavens, and by which we pass by the angels and the Gods to exaltation, it had to come from Elijah, who held that power upon the face of the earth, for the Lord had given it to him” (Elijah the Prophet, p. 36).

President Joseph Fielding Smith also said: “The sealing power of Elijah makes it possible for this joining of the families, generation to generation, back to the beginning. Now, if these units of authority

If you have been a member of the Church for very long you are probably familiar with the phrase “saviors on Mount Zion,” which is often used in connection with family history and temple work. This is not just a phrase, but a very real description of the saving power of ordinance work for the dead.

Can you imagine the frustration you would feel if you had embraced the gospel in the spirit world but could not enter paradise because you had to wait until some of your descendants were motivated to do the ordinance work?

Imagine your own great-grandfather and great-grandmother who desire to unite their family but are helpless to do so because the saving ordinances have not been performed and they lack the power of priesthood. Thus they are unable to inspire, bless, and teach their family members. They are kept in spirit prison, which, as we have seen, is also called “hell.”

Do you sense now what the Doctrine and Covenants and the prophets are saying? You can actually save people from hell by performing their ordinance work for them. You cannot, of course, determine whether they will accept the gospel in the spirit world. But if they do, they become dependent on us in mortality to save them. We are the key to their salvation.

President Wilford Woodruff taught that we have the keys for their redemption and that neglect of that work will bring sorrow in the hereafter: “Every father and mother has a great responsibility resting upon them, to redeem their dead. Do not neglect it. You will have sorrow if you do. Any man will who neglects the redemption of his dead that he has power to officiate for here. When you get to the other side of the veil, if you have entered into these Temples and redeemed your progenitors by ordinances of the House of God, you will hold the keys of their redemption from eternity to eternity. Do not neglect this!” (In Conference Report, Apr. 1898, p. 90.)
were not here, then the work of sealing, by which the family units are preserved, could not be performed; then the binding power by which all blessings are sealed in heaven, as well as on earth, would be lacking. If this were so, the earth would be smitten with a curse.” (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:121.)

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith said that the promises made to the fathers were made to those who died without a knowledge of the gospel and without the opportunity of receiving the sealing ordinances of the Priesthood. According to these promises, the children in the latter days are to perform all such ordinances in behalf of the dead. (“The Promises Made to the Fathers,” Improvement Era, July 1922, p. 829.)

The earth would be wasted at the Second Coming “simply because,” said President Joseph Fielding Smith, “if there is not a welding link between the fathers and the children—which is the work for the dead—then we will all stand rejected; the whole work of God will fail and be utterly wasted. Such a condition, of course, shall not be.” (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:122.)

Before Elijah could come, however, a temple had to be erected. During a three-year period, from 1833 to 1836, the Saints labored at great sacrifice to construct a temple acceptable to the Lord. On 3 April 1836 Elijah came in fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy (see Malachi 4:5–6; D&C 110:14–16).

(O-4) How the Dead May Receive Ordinances of Salvation

When the Savior appeared in the world of spirits, He organized those who had been faithful and commissioned them to proclaim His gospel. They were to teach faith in Christ, repentance, vicarious baptism for the remission of sins, the Holy Ghost, and “all other principles of the gospel that were necessary for them to know in order to qualify themselves” as heirs of salvation (D&C 138:34).

In September 1842 the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote an epistle to the Saints detailing the doctrine of baptism for the dead and how it was to be accomplished (D&C 128).

It is the responsibility of mortals to vicariously perform the ordinances of salvation for those who are dead. According to the Prophet Joseph Smith, this work is important, not only for the dead but for the living Saints as well. He taught that the Saints must go forth “building their temples, erecting their baptismal fonts, and going forth and receiving all the ordinances, baptisms, confirmations, washings, anointings, ordinations and sealing powers upon their heads, in behalf of all their progenitors who are dead, and redeem them that they may come forth in the first resurrection and be exalted to thrones of glory with them; and herein is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, which fulfills the mission of Elijah... .

“The Saints have not too much time to save and redeem their dead, and gather together their living relatives, that they may be saved also, before the earth will be smitten, and the consumption decreed falls upon the world.

“I would advise all the Saints to go with their might and gather together all their living relatives to this place, that they may be sealed and saved, that they may be prepared against the day that the destroying angel goes forth.” (Teachings, p. 330.)

The Prophet further stated: “It is not only necessary that you should be baptized for your dead, but you will have to go through all the ordinances for them, the same as you have gone through to save yourselves” (History of the Church, 6:365; italics added). These ordinances include baptism, priesthood ordinances, endowments, and sealings. Elijah’s mission included, but was more than, vicarious baptism for the dead.

Once the revelation on baptism for the dead was received, the Saints knew that the work of their progenitors must be done. “At first they made no distinction as to who would be baptized for whom, and males were baptized for females and vice versa. That was... . corrected later.” (Packer, Holy Temple, p. 217.)

The Saints also knew that families needed to be united by sealings. Some of the Saints were sealed to the prophets, a practice changed by a revelation to President Wilford Woodruff: “When I went before the Lord to know who I should be adopted [sealed] to (we were then being adopted to prophets and apostles), the Spirit of God said to me, ‘Have you not a father, who begot you?’ ‘Yes, I have.’ ‘Then why not honor him? Why not be adopted to him?’ ‘Yes,’ says I, ‘that is right.’ I was adopted to my father, and should have had my father sealed to his father, and so on back; and the duty that I want every man who presides over a Temple to see performed from this day henceforth and forever, unless the Lord Almighty commands otherwise, is, let every man be adopted to his father.” (“The Law of Adoption,” Deseret Weekly, 21 Apr. 1894, p. 543.)

This revelation establishes that we should be sealed to our own progenitors. By so doing our heart will be turned to them, and their hearts will be turned to us.

(O-5) How One’s Heart May Be Turned to His Fathers

The salvation of the living depends to a large extent on the interest they show in their dead ancestors. The Doctrine and Covenants records that “they without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect” (D&C 128:15).

The ordinances on behalf of the dead can only be done when the dead are properly identified. This identification is a major purpose of family history research in the Church. Research is just a means to an end; the end is to submit the names of our ancestors to the temple so they can receive the ordinances. Researchers try to find (1) the name of each person, in full; (2) dates of birth, marriage, and
death; (3) places of birth, marriage, and death; and
(4) relationships to parents, brothers, sisters, spouses,
and children.

We can begin by recording information about
ourselves, our parents, our grandparents, and our great-
grandparents. We do this by obtaining information
from living parents and grandparents and then from
other sources. To help us gather this information, the
Church maintains the largest genealogical library in
the world, with branch libraries in many states and
mail order service available almost worldwide. In
1978 a name extraction program was inaugurated to
extract names from civil records for temple work to
be done.

President Wilford Woodruff said: “We want
the Latter day Saints from this time to trace their
genealogies as far as they can, and to be sealed to
their fathers and mothers. Have children sealed to
their parents, and run this chain through as far as
you can get it.” (“The Law of Adoption,” p. 543.)

Elder Mark E. Petersen taught: “We must trace
our own genealogy as far as we can. . . . Four
generations are not enough. We have the extraction
program and it will help, but it does not relieve us of
our own personal responsibility. Our own research
will tie in with the extraction program and that is
good, but it will augment our efforts only; it will not
replace our effort.” (General Authority Board Meeting,
7 Oct. 1980.)

Elder Boyd K. Packer wrote: “Name extraction
becomes an important part of genealogical work.
However, this does not relieve each member from
the responsibility to seek after his own kindred dead.
We are all responsible, individually, to link our
families in proper order.” (Holy Temple, p. 228.)

Because of life circumstances, individuals may
have adoptive parents or parents by sealing as well
as birth parents. Members are encouraged to research
and do temple work for ancestors on any or all of
these lines.

(O-6) Two Forces at Work

Elijah’s mission was to bind the hearts of living
children to those of their parents and the hearts of
living parents to those of their children. Evidence
of this binding can be seen as families are united by
the sealing ordinances of the temple, as families do
family history research for their departed loved ones,
and as families live together in love and unity. The
mission of Elijah commences with living parents
turning to their own children so that they are not lost
to the adversary’s influence.

But there are also other forces at work. Speaking
of these times, Jesus prophesied: “The father shall
be divided against the son, and the son against the
father; the mother against the daughter, and the
daughter against the mother; the mother in law
against her daughter in law, and the daughter in
law against her mother in law” (Luke 12:53). “And
a man’s foes shall be they of his own household”
(Matthew 10:36). Evidence of this opposing influence
is seen in families that are split apart by contention,
separation, and divorce. President Spencer W.
Kimball warned: “Many of the social restraints which
in the past have helped to reinforce and to shore up
the family are dissolving and disappearing. The time
will come when only those who believe deeply and
actively in the family will be able to preserve their
families in the midst of the gathering evil around us.”
(“Families Can Be Eternal,” Ensign, Nov. 1980, p. 4.)

The early brethren of this dispensation taught
that in the spirit world, as on earth, the righteous
live in family units (see Heber C. Kimball, in
Journal of Discourses, 4:135–36). Some families, however,
cannot dwell together because the ordinance work
has not been done for them. Many of the hearts of
those ancestors yearn over their living posterity
because they have yet to rise up and see that their
progenitors’ ordinance work is done. Those ancestors
remain powerless to unite their families.

Through our own neglect or diligence, we
contribute to the dissolution or uniting of our
own family. “Somebody,” said President Wilford
Woodruff, “has got to administer for them by proxy
here in the flesh, that they may be judged according
to men in the flesh and have part in the first
resurrection” (Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, p. 149).

(O-7) Summary

Vicarious ordinance work done by living proxies
enables them to be saviors to the dead. It is no
wonder that the Prophet Joseph Smith exclaimed:
“Shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward
and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on
to the victory! Let your hearts rejoice, and be
exceedingly glad. Let the earth break forth into
singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal
praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained,
before the world was, that which would enable us
to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners
shall go free.
“. . . Let us, therefore, as a church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; and let us present in his holy temple, when it is finished, a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptation.” (D&C 128:22, 24.)

If the work to be done here is of such urgency to those who have gone before, one would expect that these departed spirits would take a great interest in their posterity’s efforts to do family history work and perhaps even assist in certain cases where all efforts have been in vain. Elder Orson Pratt taught: “Do you inquire how we are to obtain the genealogies of our fathers, so as to do this work for them which they, when living, had not the opportunity of doing, and which they, as spirits in prison, cannot do? We answer, that it is the duty of all Saints among all nations to search out, as far as possible, their family records, and their genealogies, and their kindred, both the living and the dead; and when you have been diligent and procured all the information within your reach, and have gone into the holy Temple of the Most High, and done what is required of the living for the dead[,] then] God will show you, by his Prophets and Seers, and by holy messengers and angels, the genealogies of your fathers, back from generation to generation unto the beginning, or unto the time when the powers, and keys, and ordinances of the priesthood were upon the earth.” (“Celestial Marriage,” The Seer, Sept. 1853, p. 141.)

Elder Melvin J. Ballard said:

“I recall an incident in my own father’s experience. How we looked forward to the completion of the Logan Temple! It was about to be dedicated. My father had labored on that house from its very beginning, and my earliest recollection was carrying his dinner each day as he brought the rock down from the quarry. How we looked forward to that great event! I remember how in the meantime Father made every effort to obtain all the data and information he could concerning his relatives. It was the theme of his prayer night and morning that the Lord would open the way whereby he could get information concerning his dead.

“The day before the dedication while writing recommends to the members of his ward who were to be present at the first service, two elderly gentlemen walked down the streets of Logan, approached my two younger sisters, and, coming to the elder one of the two placed in her hands a newspaper and said: “Take this to your father. Give it to no one else. Go quickly with it. Don’t lose it.”

“The child responded and when she met her mother, her mother wanted the paper. The child said, ‘No, I must give it to Father and no one else.’

“She was admitted into the room and told her story. We looked in vain for these travelers. They were not to be seen. No one else saw them. Then we turned to the paper. The newspaper, The Newbury Weekly News, was printed in my father’s old English home, Thursday, May 15th, 1884, and reached our hands May 18th, 1884, three days after its publication. We were astonished, for by no earthly means could it have reached us, so that our curiosity increased as we examined it. Then we discovered one page devoted to the writings of a reporter of the paper, who had gone on his vacation, and among other places had visited an old cemetery. The curious inscriptions led him to write what he found on the tombstones, including the verses. He also added the names, date of birth, death, etc., filling nearly an entire page.

“It was the old cemetery where the Ballard family had been buried for generations, and very many of my father’s immediate relatives and other intimate friends were mentioned.

“When the matter was presented to President Merrill of the Logan Temple, he said, ‘You are authorized to do the work for those because you received it through messengers of the Lord.’

“There is no doubt that the dead who had received the gospel in the spirit world had put it into the heart of that reporter to write these things, and thus the way was prepared for my father to obtain the information he sought, and so with you who are earnest in this work, the way shall be opened and you will be able to gather data far beyond your expectations. I will tell you what will happen. When you have gone as far as you can go, the names of your righteous dead who have embraced the gospel in the spirit world will be given you through the instrumentality of your dead kindred. But only the names of those who have received the gospel will be revealed.” (In Hinckley, Melvin Joseph Ballard, pp. 249–51.)

Several years ago Sister Packer and I determined that we should get our records in order. However, under the pressure of Church responsibilities with my travels about the world, and the obligations with our large family and a home to keep up both indoors and outdoors, there just was not enough time. But we were restless about this family history responsibility, and finally we determined that somehow we would have to make more time in the day.

During the Christmas holidays when we had a little extra time, we started. Then as we moved back to a regular schedule after the holidays, we adopted the practice of getting up an hour or two earlier each day.

We gathered together everything we had, and in the course of a few weeks we were amazed at what we were able to accomplish. The thing that was most impressive, however, was the fact that we began to have experiences that told us somehow that we were being guided, that there were those beyond the veil who were interested in what we were doing. Things began to fall into place.

As I have traveled about the Church and paid particular attention to this subject, many testimonies have come to light. Others who assemble their records together are likewise having similar experiences. It was as though the Lord was waiting for us to begin.

We found things we had wondered about for a long time. It seemed as though they came to us almost too easily. More than this, things that we never dreamed existed began to show up. We began to learn by personal experience that this research into our families is an inspired work. We came to know that an inspiration will follow those who move into it. It is just a matter of getting started.

Once we started, we found the time. Somehow we were able to carry on all of the other responsibilities. There seemed to be an increased inspiration in our lives because of this work.

**Paths Open When We Start**

But the decision, the action, must begin with the individual. The Lord will not tamper with our agency. If we want a testimony of family history and temple work, we must do something about that work. Here is an example of what can happen when you do.

I once attended a conference in the Hartford Connecticut Stake. An assignment had been made three months earlier to all members of the stake presidency to speak on this subject of family history work. One had been a counselor in the stake presidency but became stake patriarch at that conference. He told this interesting incident.

He had not been able to get started in family history work, although he was “converted” to it. He just didn’t know where to start. When he received the assignment to prepare a life history from his own records, he was unable to find anything about his childhood and youth except his birth certificate. He was one of 11 children born to Italian immigrants. He is the only member of his family in the Church.

In fulfilling the assignment he tried to put together everything he could find on his life. At least he was starting, but there just didn’t seem to be anywhere to go. He could get his own life story put together from his own memory and from what few records he had.
Then a very interesting thing happened. His aged mother, who was in a rest home, had a great yearning to return once more to her homeland in Italy. Finally, because she was obsessed with this desire, the doctors felt nothing would be gained by denying her this request, and the family decided to grant their mother her dying wish. And for some reason they all decided that this brother (the only member of the family in the Church) should be the one to accompany his mother to Italy.

All at once, then, he found himself returning to the ancestral home. A door was opening! While in Italy he visited the parish church where his mother was baptized and also the parish church where his father was baptized. He met many relatives. He learned that the records in the parish go back for 500 years. He visited the town hall to look into the records and found people very cooperative there. The town clerk told him that the previous summer a seminarian and a nun had been there together looking for records of this brother’s family name, and they had said they were collecting the family history of the family. He was given the name of the city where they lived, and he now could follow that lead. He learned also that there is a city in Italy bearing the family name.

But this is not all. When he came to Salt Lake City to general conference he returned by way of Colorado, where many of his family live. There, with very little persuasion, a family organization was effected and a family reunion was planned, which soon afterwards was held.

And then, as always happens, some of his relatives—his aunts and uncles, his brothers and sisters—began to provide the pictures and information about his life that he never knew existed. And, as always happens, he learned that this is a work of inspiration.

The Lord will bless you once you begin this work. This has been very evident to my family. Since the time we decided that we would start where we were, with what we had, many things have opened to us.

On one occasion I took to the Genealogical Society eight large volumes, manuscript family history work, consisting of 6,000 family group records of very professional family history work, all on the Packer family. All of it was compiled by Warren Packer, originally from Ohio, a schoolteacher, a Lutheran. He has spent 30 years doing this work, not really knowing why. There are two more volumes now added to the others. He senses now why he has been involved in this work over the years and very much has the spirit of the work.

We have had the opportunity, too, of locating and visiting the ancestral Packer home in England. Many of the large manor houses in England in recent years have been opened to the public. This one is not. It is about a 15-minute drive from the London England Temple, and it is built on the site of an ancient castle, with a moat around it. It stands just as it was finished in the early 1600s. The portraits of our ancestors are hanging where they were placed nearly 300 years ago. On the estate is a little chapel. In it is a stained glass window with the Packer coat of arms, put there in 1625.

Things began to emerge once we got to work. We still are not, by any means, experts in family history research. We are, however, dedicated to our family. And it is my testimony that if we start where we are—each of us with ourselves, with such records as we have—and begin putting those in order, things will fall into place as they should.

**How to Begin**

It is a matter of getting started. You may come to know the principle that Nephi knew when he said, “And I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do” (1 Ne. 4:6).
If you don’t know where to start, start with *yourself*. If you don’t know what records to get, and how to get them, start with what you have.

There are two very simple instructions for those who are waiting for a place to begin. Here’s what you might do:

Get a cardboard box. Any kind of a box will do. Put it someplace where it is in the way, perhaps on the couch or on the counter in the kitchen—anywhere where it cannot go unnoticed. Then, over a period of a few weeks, collect and put into the box every record of your life, such as your birth certificate, your certificate of blessing, your certificate of baptism, your certificate of ordination, and your certificate of graduation. Collect diplomas, all of the photographs, honors, or awards, a diary if you have kept one, everything that you can find pertaining to your life; anything that is written, or registered, or recorded that testifies that you are alive and what you have done.

Don’t try to do this in a day. Take some time on it. Most of us have these things scattered around here and there. Some of them are in a box in the garage under that stack of newspapers; others are stored away in drawers, or in the attic, or one place or another. Perhaps some have been tucked in the leaves of the Bible or elsewhere.

Gather all these papers together and put them in the box. Keep it there until you have collected everything you think you have. Then make some space on a table, or even on the floor, and sort out all that you have collected. Divide your life into three periods. The Church does it that way. All of our programming in the Church is divided into three general categories—children, youth, and adult.

Start with the childhood section and begin with your birth certificate. Put together every record in chronological order: the pictures, the record of your baptism, and so on, up to the time you were 12 years of age.

Next assemble all that which pertains to your youth, from 12 to 18, or up until the time you were married. Put all of that together in chronological order. Line up the records—the certificates, the photographs, and so on—and put them in another box or envelope. Do the same with the records on the rest of your life.

Once you have done this, you have what is necessary to complete your life story. Simply take your birth certificate and begin writing: “I was born September 10, 1924, the son of Ira W. Packer and Emma Jensen Packer, at Brigham City, Utah. I was the tenth child and the fifth son in the family.”

It really won’t take you long to write, or dictate into a tape recorder, the account of your life, and it will have an accuracy because you have collected those records.

What then? After you’ve made the outline of your life history to date, what do you do with all of the materials you have collected?

That, of course, brings you to your book of remembrance. Simply paste them lightly on the pages so that they can be taken out if necessary from time to time, and you have your book of remembrance.

Once you begin this project, very interesting and inspiring things will happen. You cannot do this much without getting something of the spirit of it, and without talking about it, at least in your family circle. Some very interesting things will start to happen once you show some interest in
your own family history work. It is a firm principle. There are many, many testimonies about it. It will happen to you.

Aunt Clara will tell you that she has a picture of you with your great-grandfather. You know that cannot be so, because he died the year before you were born. But Aunt Clara produces the picture. There is your great-grandfather holding you as a tiny baby. As you check through the records you find that he died the year after you were born, an important detail in your family history.

That accurate data means something. The middle name written on the back of the picture means something too. You may not know it at the moment, but it is a key; the beginning of ordinance work in the temple for some of your ancestors.

You believe in the Resurrection. You must know that baptism for someone who is dead is quite as essential as baptism for someone who is living. There is no difference in the importance of it. One by one it must happen. They must do it here while living, or it must be done for them here after they die.

The whole New Testament centers on the Resurrection of the Lord. The message is that all are to be resurrected. Every scripture and every motivation that apply to missionary work have their application to ordinance work for the dead.

Now you have your own family history written, and you have your book of remembrance assembled. It sounds too easy—well it is, almost. But it does mean that you have to get started. Like Nephi, you will be "led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which [you] should do" (1 Ne. 4:6).

So find a cardboard box and put it in the way and begin to put things in it, and as the things unfold you will sense something spiritual happening and not be too surprised at that.

As the Heart Turns

Family history work has the power to do something for the dead. It has an equal power to do something for the living. Family history work of Church members has a refining, spiritualizing, tempering influence on those who are engaged in it. They understand that they are tying their family together, their living family here with those who have gone before.

Family history work in one sense would justify itself even if one were not successful in clearing names for temple work. The process of searching, the means of going after those names, would be worth all the effort you could invest. The reason: You cannot find names without knowing that they represent people. You begin to find out things about people. When we research our own lines we become interested in more than just names or the number of names going through the temple. Our interest turns our hearts to our fathers—we seek to find them and to know them and to serve them.

In doing so we store up treasures in heaven.

Family History Basics

There are several basic component parts to family history and temple work. Over the years, they may be rearranged somewhat in emphasis, or the approach in programming Church participation may change somewhat. But the responsibilities stay about the same.
1. Each of us is to compile his or her own life history.

2. Each of us is to keep a book of remembrance.

3. As individuals and families we are each to seek out our kindred dead, beginning first with the four most recent generations on each line, and then going back as far as we can.

4. We are each to participate in other programs such as name extraction when asked to do so.

5. We are to organize our families and hold meetings and reunions.

6. If we have access to a temple, each of us should go to the temple as often as possible to do ordinance work—first for ourselves, then for our progenitors, then for all the names that have been gathered by means other than our own.

Where would we be if Moses hadn’t written his history of the world, those first five vital books of the Old Testament? He had the background, the data, the record, and the inclination, and he has blessed us throughout the eternities for the service he rendered in writing the first five books of the Bible.

How grateful we are that Abraham wrote his own life story and that important segment of the history of the world and his own revelations, thoughts, feelings, and rich experiences.

The Lord Jesus Christ himself emphasized the great importance of record keeping to the Nephites and Lamanites.

“Behold, other scriptures I would that ye should write, that ye have not.

“And it came to pass that he said unto Nephi: Bring forth the record which ye have kept.

“And when Nephi had brought forth the records, and laid them before him, he cast his eyes upon them and said:

“Verily I say unto you, I commanded my servant Samuel, the Lamanite, that he should testify unto this people, that at the day that the Father should glorify his name in me that there were many saints who should arise from the dead, and should appear unto many, and should minister unto them. And he said unto them: Was it not so?

“And his disciples answered him and said; Yea, Lord, Samuel did prophesy according to thy words, and they were all fulfilled.

“And Jesus said unto them: How be it that ye have not written this thing, that many saints did arise and appear unto many and did minister unto them?

“And it came to pass that Nephi remembered that this thing had not been written.

“And it came to pass that Jesus commanded that it should be written; therefore it was written according as he commanded.” (3 Ne. 23:6-13. Italics added.)

I am glad that it was not I who was reprimanded, even though mildly and kindly, for not having fulfilled the obligation to keep my records up to date.

Early in the American life of the family of Lehi, his son, Nephi, said:

“Having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days. …

“And I know that the record which I make is true; and I make it with mine own hand; and I make it according to my knowledge.” (1 Ne. 1:1, 3.)

This great record included not only the movements of his people but events from his own personal life.

And then we must not forget or minimize the great efforts of our modern prophet, Joseph Smith, to write the history of the restoration of the gospel and also his own personal experiences in great detail. What a mass of confusion we would have without those authentic, personal, carefully written records!

Again, how happy we are as we find our grandparents’ journals and follow them through their trials and joys and gain for our own lives much from the experiences and faith and courage of our ancestors.

Accordingly, we urge our young people to begin today to write and keep records of all the important things in their own lives and also the lives of their antecedents in the event that their parents should fail to record all the important incidents in their own lives. Your own private journal should record the way you face up to challenges that beset you. Do not suppose life changes so much that your experiences will not be interesting to your posterity. Experiences of work, relations with people, and an awareness of the rightness and wrongness of actions will always be relevant. The
Royal Bank of Canada Monthly Letter made this point when it reported, “One famed bookman divided his big library into two parts—biography and ‘all the rest.’”

No one is commonplace, and I doubt if you can ever read a biography from which you cannot learn something from the difficulties overcome and the struggles made to succeed. These are the measuring rods for the progress of humanity.

As we read the stories of great men, we discover that they did not become famous overnight nor were they born professionals or skilled craftsmen. The story of how they became what they are may be helpful to us all.

Your own journal, like most others, will tell of problems as old as the world and how you dealt with them.

Your journal should contain your true self rather than a picture of you when you are “made up” for a public performance. There is a temptation to paint one’s virtues in rich color and whitewash the vices, but there is also the opposite pitfall of accentuating the negative. Personally I have little respect for anyone who delves into the ugly phases of the life he is portraying, whether it be his own or another’s. The truth should be told, but we should not emphasize the negative. Even a long life full of inspiring experiences can be brought to the dust by one ugly story. Why dwell on that one ugly truth about someone whose life has been largely circumspect?

The good biographer will not depend on passion but on good sense. He will weed out the irrelevant and seek the strong, novel, and interesting. Perhaps we might gain some help from reading Plutarch’s Lives, where he grouped 46 lives in pairs, a Greek and a Roman in each pair. He tried to epitomize the most celebrated parts of their stories rather than to insist upon every slightest detail of them.

Your journal is your autobiography, so it should be kept carefully. You are unique, and there may be incidents in your experience that are more noble and praiseworthy in their way than those recorded in any other life. There may be a flash of illumination here and a story of faithfulness there; you should truthfully record your real self and not what other people may see in you.

Your story should be written now while it is fresh and while the true details are available.

A journal is the literature of superiority. Each individual can become superior in his own humble life.

What could you do better for your children and your children’s children than to record the story of your life, your triumphs over adversity, your recovery after a fall, your progress when all seemed black, your rejoicing when you had finally achieved?

Some of what you write may be humdrum dates and places, but there will also be rich passages that will be quoted by your posterity.

Get a notebook, my young folks, a journal that will last through all time, and maybe the angels may quote from it for eternity. Begin today and write in it your goings and comings, your deepest thoughts, your achievements and your failures, your associations and your triumphs, your impressions and your testimonies. Remember, the Savior chastised those who failed to record important events.


His journal was 33 black binders on the shelves of his personal study when President Spencer W. Kimball was called to be President of the Church in 1973. Since then, he has counseled members of the Church to keep personal journals.

On a number of occasions I have encouraged the Saints to keep personal journals and family records. I renew that admonition. We may think them is little of interest or importance in what we personally say or do—but it is remarkable how many of our families, as we pass on down the line, are interested in all that we do and all that we say.

Any Latter-day Saint family that has searched genealogical and historical records has fervently wished their ancestors had kept better and more complete records. On the other hand, some families possess some spiritual treasures because ancestors have recorded the events surrounding their conversion to the gospel and other happenings of interest, including many miraculous blessings and spiritual experiences. People often use the excuse that their lives
are uneventful and nobody would be interested in what they have done. But I promise you that if you will keep your journals and records, they will indeed be a source of great inspiration to your families, to your children, your grandchildren, and others, on through the generations.

Each of us is important to those who are near and dear to us—and as our posterity read of our life’s experiences, they, too, will come to know and love us. And in that glorious day when our families are together in the eternities, we will already be acquainted.

Would every family, as they now hold their home evenings, train their children from young childhood to keep a journal of the important activities of their lives, certainly by the time they begin to leave home for schooling and missions?

From time immemorial the Lord has counseled us to be a record-keeping people. Abraham had a book of remembrance, and Adam had one. You may think of them as not being as highly educated as we are, but they were well-trained people. Adam spent much effort being the school teacher for his children. He and Eve taught their sons and daughters. He taught them the gospel in their home evenings, and he taught them reading and writing and arithmetic. And they kept their books of remembrance. How else do you think Moses, many hundreds of years later, got the information? These records had been kept, and he referred to them and got the history of the world, which wasn’t in any library other than that. Can you see your responsibility?

Early in the American life of the family of Lehi, his son Nephi said: “Having had a great knowledge of the goodness and mysteries of God, therefore, I make a record of my proceedings in my days. …

“And I know that the record which I make is true; and I make it with mine own hand; and I make it according to my knowledge.” (1 Ne. 1:1, 3.) This great record included not only the movements of his people, but his own personal life.

When the Savior visited this continent following his resurrection, he commanded the Nephites and Lamanites to bring their records up to date. He said to them: “Behold, other scriptures I would that ye should write, that ye have not.

“And it came to pass that he said unto Nephi: Bring forth the record which ye have kept.

“And when Nephi had brought forth the records, and laid them before him, he cast his eyes upon them and said:

“Verily I say unto you, I commanded my servant Samuel, the Lamanite, that he should testify unto this people, that at the day that the Father should glorify his name in me that there were many saints who should arise from the dead, and should appear unto many, and should minister unto them. And he said unto them: Was it not so?

“And his disciples answered him and said: Yea, Lord, …

“And Jesus said unto them: How be it that ye have not written this thing, that many saints did arise and appear unto many and did minister unto them?

“And it came to pass that Nephi remembered that this thing had not been written; therefore it was written according as he commanded.” (3 Ne. 23:6-13.)

I am glad that it was not I who was reprimanded, even though mildly and kindly, for not having fulfilled the obligation to write the records and keep them up to date.

And again in our day the Lord said to the Prophet Joseph Smith, “And again, let all the records be had in order, that they may be put in the archives of my holy temple” (D&C 127:9).

You should continue on in this important work of recording the things you do, the things you say, the things you think, to be in accordance with the instructions of the Lord. Your story should be written now while it is fresh and while the true details are available.

Your private journal should record the way you face up to challenges that beset you. Do not suppose life changes so much that your experiences will not be interesting to your posterity. Experiences of work, relations with people, and an awareness of the rightness and wrongness of actions will always be relevant. Your journal, like most others, will tell of problems as old as the world and how you dealt with them.
Your journal should contain your true self rather than a picture of you when you are “made up” for a public performance. There is a temptation to paint one’s virtues in rich color and whitewash the vices, but there is also the opposite pitfall of accentuating the negative. Personally I have little respect for anyone who delves into the ugly phases of the life he is portraying, whether it be his own or another’s. The truth should be told, but we should not emphasize the negative. Even a long life full of inspiring experiences can be brought to the dust by one ugly story. Why dwell on that one ugly truth about someone whose life has been largely circumspect?

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What could you do better for your children and your children’s children than to record the story of your life, your triumphs over adversity, your recovery after a fall, your progress when all seemed black, your rejoicing when you had finally achieved? Some of what you write may be humdrum dates and places, but there will also be rich passages that will be quoted by your posterity.

We hope you will begin as of this date. If you have not already commenced this important duty in your lives, get a good notebook, a good book that will last through time and into eternity for the angels to look upon. Begin today and write in it your goings and your comings, your deeper thoughts, your achievements, and your failures, your associations and your triumphs, your impressions and your testimonies. We hope you will do this, our brothers and sisters, for this is what the Lord has commanded, and those who keep a personal journal are more likely to keep the Lord in remembrance in their daily lives.

On the bookshelves in my office at home there are thirty-three large, well-filled journal books. In my journal, a year for each book, I have written daily and filed in this library. It records the trips to many of the nations in the world and all around the world and meetings held, people contacted, marriages performed, and all things of interest to my family, and, I hope, someday to the Church.

I urge all of the people of this church to give serious attention to their family histories, to encourage their parents and grandparents to write their journals, and let no family go into eternity without having left their memoirs for their children, their grandchildren, and their posterity. This is a duty and a responsibility, and I urge every person to start the children out writing a personal history and journal.