



By President Thomas S. Monson

The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World

The all-important and crowning blessings of membership in the Church are those blessings which we receive in the temples of God.

My beloved brothers and sisters, I extend my love and greetings to each of you and pray that our Heavenly Father will guide my thoughts and inspire my words as I speak to you today.

May I begin by making a comment or two concerning the fine messages we have heard this morning from Sister Allred and Bishop Burton and others pertaining to the Church's welfare program. As indicated, this year marks the 75th anniversary of this inspired program, which has blessed the lives of so many. It was my privilege to know personally some of those who pioneered this great endeavor—men of compassion and foresight.

As both Bishop Burton and Sister Allred and others mentioned, the bishop of the ward is given the responsibility to care for those in need who reside within the boundaries of his ward. Such was my privilege when I presided as a very young bishop in Salt Lake City over a ward

of 1,080 members, including 84 widows. There were many who needed assistance. How grateful I was for the welfare program of the Church and for the help of the Relief Society and the priesthood quorums.

I declare that the welfare program of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is inspired of Almighty God.

Now, my brothers and sisters, this conference marks three years since I was sustained as President of the Church. Of course they have been busy years, filled with many challenges but also with countless blessings. The opportunity I have had to dedicate and rededicate temples has been among the most enjoyable and sacred of these blessings, and it is concerning the temple that I wish to speak to you today.

During the October general conference in 1902, Church President Joseph F. Smith expressed in his opening address the hope that one day we would "have temples built in

the various parts of the [world] where they are needed for the convenience of the people."¹

During the first 150 years following the organization of the Church, from 1830 to 1980, 21 temples were built, including the temples in Kirtland, Ohio, and Nauvoo, Illinois. Contrast that with the 30 years since 1980, during which 115 temples were built and dedicated. With the announcement yesterday of 3 new temples, there are additionally 26 temples either under construction or in preconstruction stages. These numbers will continue to grow.

The goal President Joseph F. Smith hoped for in 1902 is becoming a reality. Our desire is to make the temple as accessible as possible to our members.

One of the temples currently under construction is in Manaus, Brazil. Many years ago I read of a group of over a hundred members who left Manaus, located in the heart of the Amazon rainforest, to travel to what was then the closest temple, located in São Paulo, Brazil—nearly 2,500 miles (4,000 km) from Manaus. Those faithful Saints journeyed by boat for four days on the Amazon River and its tributaries. After completing this journey by water, they boarded buses for another three days of travel—over bumpy roads, with very little to eat, and with nowhere comfortable to sleep. After seven days and nights, they arrived at the temple in São Paulo, where ordinances eternal in nature were performed. Of course their return journey was just as difficult. However, they had received

the ordinances and blessings of the temple, and although their purses were empty, they themselves were filled with the spirit of the temple and with gratitude for the blessings they had received.² Now, many years later, our members in Manaus are rejoicing as they watch their own temple take shape on the banks of the Rio Negro. Temples bring joy to our faithful members wherever they are built.

Reports of the sacrifices made in order to receive the blessings found only in temples of God never fail to touch my heart and bring to me a renewed sense of thankfulness for temples.

May I share with you the account of Tihi and Tararaina Mou Tham and their 10 children. The entire family joined the Church in the early 1960s, when missionaries came to their island, located about 100 miles (160 km) south of Tahiti. Soon they began to desire the blessings of an eternal family sealing in the temple.

At that time the nearest temple to the Mou Tham family was the Hamilton New Zealand Temple, more than 2,500 miles (4,000 km) to the southwest, accessible only by expensive airplane travel. The large Mou Tham family, which eked out a meager living on a small plantation, had no money for airplane fare, nor was there any opportunity for employment on their Pacific island. So Brother Mou Tham and his son Gerard made the difficult decision to join another son who was working in the nickel mines of New Caledonia, 3,000 miles (4,800 km) to the west. The employer provided his employees paid passage to the mines but provided no transportation back home.

The three Mou Tham men labored for four years in the tropical nickel mines, digging and loading the heavy ore. Brother Mou Tham alone returned home for a brief visit once a year, leaving his sons in New Caledonia.

After four years of backbreaking

labor, Brother Mou Tham and his sons had saved enough money to take the family to the New Zealand Temple. All went, except for one daughter. They were sealed for time and eternity, an indescribable and joyful experience.

Brother Mou Tham returned from the temple directly to New Caledonia, where he worked for two more years to pay for the passage of the one daughter who had not been at the temple with them—a married daughter and her child and husband.

In their later years Brother and Sister Mou Tham desired to serve in the temple. By that time the Papeete Tahiti Temple had been constructed and dedicated, and they served two missions there.³

My brothers and sisters, temples are more than stone and mortar. They are filled with faith and fasting. They are built of trials and testimonies. They are sanctified by sacrifice and service.

The first temple to be built in this dispensation was the temple at Kirtland, Ohio. The Saints at the time were impoverished, and yet the Lord had commanded that a temple be built, so build it they did. Wrote Elder Heber C. Kimball of the experience, “The Lord only knows the scenes of poverty, tribulation and distress which we passed through to accomplish it.”⁴ And then, after all that had been painstakingly completed, the Saints were forced to leave Ohio and their beloved temple. They eventually found refuge—although it would be temporary—on the banks of the Mississippi River in the state of Illinois. They named their settlement Nauvoo, and willing to give their all once again and with their faith intact, they erected another temple to their God. Persecutions raged, however, and with the Nauvoo Temple barely completed, they were driven from their homes once again, seeking refuge in a desert.

The struggle and the sacrifice began once again as they labored

for 40 years to erect the Salt Lake Temple, which stands majestically on the block just south of those of us who are here today in the Conference Center.

Some degree of sacrifice has ever been associated with temple building and with temple attendance. Countless are those who have labored and struggled in order to obtain for themselves and for their families the blessings which are found in the temples of God.

Why are so many willing to give so much in order to receive the blessings of the temple? Those who understand the eternal blessings which come from the temple know that no sacrifice is too great, no price too heavy, no struggle too difficult in order to receive those blessings. There are never too many miles to travel, too many obstacles to overcome, or too much discomfort to endure. They understand that the saving ordinances received in the temple that permit us to someday return to our Heavenly Father in an eternal family relationship and to be endowed with blessings and power from on high are worth every sacrifice and every effort.

Today most of us do not have to suffer great hardships in order to attend the temple. Eighty-five percent of the membership of the Church now live within 200 miles (320 km) of a temple, and for a great many of us, that distance is much shorter.

If you have been to the temple for yourselves and if you live within relatively close proximity to a temple, your sacrifice could be setting aside the time in your busy lives to visit the temple regularly. There is much to be done in our temples in behalf of those who wait beyond the veil. As we do the work for them, we will know that we have accomplished what they cannot do for themselves. President Joseph F. Smith, in a mighty declaration, stated, “Through our efforts in their behalf their chains of bondage will fall from them, and the darkness surrounding them will clear

away, that light may shine upon them and they shall hear in the spirit world of the work that has been done for them by their children here, and will rejoice with you in your performance of these duties.”⁵ My brothers and sisters, the work is ours to do.

In my own family, some of our most sacred and treasured experiences have occurred when we have joined together in the temple to perform sealing ordinances for our deceased ancestors.

If you have not yet been to the temple or if you *have* been but currently do not qualify for a recommend, there is no more important goal for you to work toward than being worthy to go to the temple. Your sacrifice may be bringing your life into compliance with what is required to receive a recommend, perhaps by forsaking long-held habits which disqualify you. It may be having the faith and the discipline to pay your tithing. Whatever it is, qualify to enter the temple of God. Secure a temple recommend and regard it as a precious possession, for such it is.

Until you have entered the house of the Lord and have received all the blessings which await you there, you have not obtained everything the Church has to offer. The all-important and crowning blessings of membership in the Church are those blessings which we receive in the temples of God.

Now, my young friends who are in your teenage years, always have the temple in your sights. Do nothing which will keep you from entering its doors and partaking of the sacred and eternal blessings there. I commend those of you who already go to the temple regularly to perform baptisms for the dead, arising in the very early hours of the morning so you can participate in such baptisms before school begins. I can think of no better way to start a day.

To you parents of young children, may I share with you some sage advice from President Spencer W.

Kimball. Said he: “It would be a fine thing if . . . parents would have in every bedroom in their house a picture of the temple so [their children] from the time [they are] infant[s] could look at the picture every day [until] it becomes a part of [their lives]. When [they reach] the age that [they need] to make [the] very important decision [concerning going to the temple], it will have already been made.”⁶

Our children sing in Primary:

*I love to see the temple.
I'll go inside someday.
I'll cov'nant with my Father;
I'll promise to obey.*⁷

I plead with you to teach your children of the temple's importance.

The world can be a challenging and difficult place in which to live. We are often surrounded by that which would drag us down. As you and I go to the holy houses of God, as we remember the covenants we make within, we will be more able to bear every trial and to overcome each temptation. In this sacred sanctuary we will find peace; we will be renewed and fortified.

Now, my brothers and sisters, may I mention one more temple before I close. In the not-too-distant future as new temples take shape around the world, one will rise in a city which came into being over 2,500 years ago. I speak of the temple which is now being built in Rome, Italy.

Every temple is a house of God, filling the same functions and with identical blessings and ordinances. The Rome Italy Temple, uniquely, is being built in one of the most historic locations in the world, a city where the ancient Apostles Peter and Paul preached the gospel of Christ and where each was martyred.

Last October, as we gathered on a lovely pastoral site in the northeast corner of Rome, it was my opportunity to offer a prayer of dedication as we prepared to break the ground. I felt impressed to call upon Italian

senator Lucio Malan and Rome's vice-mayor Giuseppe Ciardi to be among the first to turn a shovelful of earth. Each had been a part of the decision to allow us to build a temple in their city.

The day was overcast but warm, and although rain threatened, not more than a drop or two fell. As the magnificent choir sang in Italian the beautiful strains of “The Spirit of God,” one felt as though heaven and earth were joined in a glorious hymn of praise and gratitude to Almighty God. Tears could not be restrained.

In a coming day, the faithful in this, the Eternal City, will receive ordinances eternal in nature in a holy house of God.

I express my undying gratitude to my Heavenly Father for the temple now being built in Rome and for all of our temples, wherever they are. Each one stands as a beacon to the world, an expression of our testimony that God, our Eternal Father, lives, that He desires to bless us and, indeed, to bless His sons and daughters of all generations. Each of our temples is an expression of our testimony that life beyond the grave is as real and as certain as is our life here on earth. I so testify.

My beloved brothers and sisters, may we make whatever sacrifices are necessary to attend the temple and to have the spirit of the temple in our hearts and in our homes. May we follow in the footsteps of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who made the ultimate sacrifice for us, that we might have eternal life and exaltation in our Heavenly Father's kingdom. This is my sincere prayer, and I offer it in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ the Lord, amen.

NOTES

1. Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, Oct. 1902, 3.
2. See Wilson Felipe Santiago and Linda Ritchie Archibald, “From Amazon Basin to Temple,” *Church News*, Mar. 13, 1993, 6.
3. See C. Jay Larson, “Temple Moments: Impossible Desire,” *Church News*, Mar. 16, 1996, 16.
4. Heber C. Kimball, in Orson F. Whitney, *Life of*

Heber C. Kimball (1945), 67.
 5. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 247.
 6. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 301.
 7. Janice Kapp Perry, "I Love to See the Temple," *Children's Songbook*, 95.

Teachings for Our Time

Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society lessons on fourth Sundays will be devoted to "Teachings for Our Time." Each lesson can be prepared from one or more talks given in the most recent general conference. Stake and district presidents may choose which talks should be used, or they may assign this responsibility to bishops and branch presidents. Leaders should stress the value of Melchizedek Priesthood brethren and Relief Society sisters studying the same talks on the same Sundays.

Those attending fourth-Sunday lessons are encouraged to study and bring to class the latest general conference issue of the magazine.

Suggestions for Preparing a Lesson from Talks

Pray that the Holy Spirit will be with you as you study and teach the talk(s). You may be tempted

to prepare the lesson using other materials, but the conference talks are the approved curriculum. Your assignment is to help others learn and live the gospel as taught in the most recent general conference of the Church.

Review the talk(s), looking for principles and doctrines that meet the needs of class members. Also look for stories, scripture references, and statements from the talk(s) that will help you teach these truths.

Make an outline of how to teach the principles and doctrines. Your outline should include questions that help class members:

- Look for principles and doctrines in the talk(s).
- Think about their meaning.
- Share understanding, ideas, experiences, and testimonies.
- Apply these principles and doctrines in their lives.

MONTHS	FOURTH-SUNDAY LESSON MATERIALS
May 2011–October 2011	Talks published in the May 2011 <i>Liahona</i> *
November 2011–April 2012	Talks published in the November 2011 <i>Liahona</i> *

*These talks are available (in many languages) at conference.lds.org.



By President Henry B. Eyring
First Counselor in the First Presidency

Opportunities to Do Good

The Lord's way to help those in temporal need requires people who out of love have consecrated themselves and what they have to God and to His work.

My dear brothers and sisters, the purpose of my message is to honor and celebrate what the Lord has done and is doing to serve the poor and the needy among His children on earth. He loves His children in need and also those who want to help. And He has created ways to bless both those who need help and those who will give it.

Our Heavenly Father hears the prayers of His children across the earth pleading for food to eat, for clothes to cover their bodies, and for the dignity that would come from being able to provide for themselves. Those pleas have reached Him since He placed men and women on the earth.

You learn of those needs where you live and from across the world. Your heart is often stirred with feelings of sympathy. When you meet someone struggling to find employment, you feel that desire to help. You feel it when you go into the

home of a widow and see that she has no food. You feel it when you see photographs of crying children sitting in the ruins of their home destroyed by an earthquake or by fire.

Because the Lord hears their cries and feels your deep compassion for them, He has from the beginning of time provided ways for His disciples to help. He has invited His children to consecrate their time, their means, and themselves to join with Him in serving others.

His way of helping has at times been called living the law of consecration. In another period His way was called the united order. In our time it is called the Church welfare program.

The names and the details of operation are changed to fit the needs and conditions of people. But always the Lord's way to help those in temporal need requires people who out of love have consecrated themselves and what they have to God and to His work.

He has invited and commanded us to participate in His work to lift up those in need. We make a covenant to do that in the waters of baptism and in the holy temples of God. We renew the covenant on Sundays when we partake of the sacrament.

My purpose today is to describe some of the opportunities He has provided for us to help others in need. I cannot speak of them all in our brief time together. My hope is to renew and strengthen your commitment to act.

There is a hymn about the Lord's invitation to this work that I have sung since I was a little boy. In my childhood I paid more attention to the happy tune than to the power of the words. I pray that you will feel the lyrics in your hearts today. Let's listen to the words again:

*Have I done any good in the world
today?
Have I helped anyone in need?
Have I cheered up the sad and
made someone feel glad?
If not, I have failed indeed.
Has anyone's burden been lighter
today
Because I was willing to share?
Have the sick and the weary been
helped on their way?
When they needed my help was I
there?
Then wake up and do something
more
Than dream of your mansion
above.
Doing good is a pleasure, a joy
beyond measure,
A blessing of duty and love.¹*

The Lord regularly sends wake-up calls to all of us. Sometimes it may be a sudden feeling of sympathy for someone in need. A father may have felt it when he saw a child fall and scrape a knee. A mother may have felt it when she heard the frightened cry of her child in the night. A son or a daughter may have felt sympathy for someone who seemed sad or afraid at school.

All of us have been touched with feelings of sympathy for others we don't even know. For instance, as you heard reports of the waves rushing across the Pacific after the earthquake in Japan, you felt concern for those who might be hurt.

Feelings of sympathy came to thousands of you who learned of the flooding in Queensland, Australia. The news reports were mainly estimates of numbers of those in need. But many of you felt the pain of the people. The wake-up call was answered by 1,500 or more Church member volunteers in Australia who came to help and to comfort.

They turned their feelings of sympathy into a decision to act on their covenants. I have seen the blessings that come to the person in need who receives help and to the person who seizes the opportunity to give it.

Wise parents see in every need of others a way to bring blessings into the lives of their sons and daughters. Three children recently carried containers holding a delicious dinner to our front door. Their parents knew that we needed help, and they included their children in the opportunity to serve us.

The parents blessed our family by their generous service. By their choice to let their children participate in the giving, they extended blessings to their future grandchildren. The smiles of the children as they left our home made me confident that will happen. They will tell their children of the joy they felt giving kindly service for the Lord. I remember

that feeling of quiet satisfaction from childhood as I pulled weeds for a neighbor at my father's invitation. Whenever I am invited to be a giver, I remember and believe the lyrics "Sweet is the work, my God, my King."²

I know those lyrics were written to describe the joy that comes from worshipping the Lord on the Sabbath. But those children with the food at our door were feeling on a weekday the joy of doing the Lord's work. And their parents saw the opportunity to do good and spread joy over generations.

The Lord's way of caring for the needy provides another opportunity for parents to bless their children. I saw it in a chapel one Sunday. A small child handed the bishop his family's donation envelope as he entered the chapel before the sacrament meeting.

I knew the family and the boy. The family had just learned of someone in the ward in need. The boy's father had said something like this to the child as he placed a more generous fast offering than usual in the envelope: "We fasted today and prayed for those in need. Please give this envelope to the bishop for us. I know that he will give it to help those with greater needs than ours."

Instead of any hunger pangs on that Sunday, the boy will remember the day with a warm glow. I could tell from his smile and the way he held the envelope so tightly that he felt the great trust of his father to carry the family offering for the poor. He will remember that day when he is a deacon and perhaps forever.

I saw that same happiness in the faces of people who helped for the Lord in Idaho years ago. The Teton Dam burst on Saturday, June 5, 1976. Eleven people were killed. Thousands had to leave their homes in a few hours. Some homes were washed away. And hundreds of dwellings could be made habitable only through effort

and means far beyond that of the owners.

Those who heard of the tragedy felt sympathy, and some felt the call to do good. Neighbors, bishops, Relief Society presidents, quorum leaders, home teachers, and visiting teachers left homes and jobs to clean out the flooded houses of others.

One couple returned to Rexburg from a vacation just after the flood. They didn't go to see their own house. Instead, they found their bishop to ask where they could help. He directed them to a family in need.

After a few days they went to check on their home. It was gone, swept away in the flood. They simply walked back to the bishop and asked, "Now what would you like us to do?"

Wherever you live, you have seen that miracle of sympathy turned to unselfish action. It may not have been in the wake of a great natural disaster. I have seen it in a priesthood quorum where a brother rises to describe the needs of a man or a woman who seeks an opportunity to work to support himself or herself and his or her family. I could feel sympathy in the room, but some suggested names of people who might employ the person who needed work.

What happened in that priesthood quorum and what happened in the flooded houses in Idaho is a manifestation of the Lord's way to help those in great need become self-reliant. We feel compassion, and we know how to act in the Lord's way to help.

We celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Church welfare program this year. It was started to meet the needs of those who lost employment, farms, and even homes in the wake of what became known as the Great Depression.

Great temporal needs of the children of Heavenly Father have come again in our time as they have and as they will in all times. The principles at the foundation of the Church welfare

program are not for only one time or one place. They are for all times and all places.

Those principles are spiritual and eternal. For that reason, understanding them and putting them down into our hearts will make it possible for us to see and take opportunities to help whenever and wherever the Lord invites us.

Here are some principles that guided me when I wanted to help in the Lord's way and when I have been helped by others.

First, all people are happier and feel more self-respect when they can provide for themselves and their family and then reach out to take care of others. I have been grateful for those who helped me meet my needs. I have been even more grateful over the years for those who helped me become self-reliant. And then I have been most grateful for those who showed me how to use some of my surplus to help others.

I have learned that the way to have a surplus is to spend less than I earn. With that surplus I have been able to learn that it really is better to give than to receive. That is partly because when we give help in the Lord's way, He blesses us.

President Marion G. Romney said of welfare work, "You cannot give yourself poor in this work." And then he quoted his mission president, Melvin J. Ballard, this way: "A person cannot give a crust to the Lord without receiving a loaf in return."³

I have found that to be true in my life. When I am generous to Heavenly Father's children in need, He is generous to me.

A second gospel principle that has been a guide to me in welfare work is the power and blessing of unity. When we join hands to serve people in need, the Lord unites our hearts. President J. Reuben Clark Jr. put it this way: "That giving has . . . brought . . . a feeling of common brotherhood as men of all training and occupation have worked side

by side in a Welfare garden or other project."⁴

That increased feeling of brotherhood is true for the receiver as well as the giver. To this day, a man with whom I shoveled mud side by side in his flooded Rexburg home feels a bond with me. And he feels greater personal dignity for having done all he could for himself and for his family. If we had worked alone, both of us would have lost a spiritual blessing.

That leads to the third principle of action in welfare work for me: Draw your family into the work with you so that they can learn to care for each other as they care for others. Your sons and daughters who work with you to serve others in need will be more likely to help each other when they are in need.

The fourth valuable principle of Church welfare I learned as a bishop. It came from following the scriptural command to seek out the poor. It is the duty of the bishop to find and provide help to those who still need assistance after all they and their families can do. I found that the Lord sends the Holy Ghost to make it possible to "seek, and ye shall find"⁵ in caring for the poor as He does in finding truth. But I also learned to involve the Relief Society president in the search. She may get the revelation before you do.

Some of you will need that inspiration in the months ahead. To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Church welfare program, members worldwide will be invited to participate in a day of service. Leaders and members will seek revelation as they design whatever the projects will be.

I will make three suggestions as you plan your service project.

First, prepare yourself and those you lead spiritually. Only if hearts are softened by the Savior's Atonement can you see clearly the goal of the project as blessing both spiritually and temporally the lives of the children of Heavenly Father.

My second suggestion is to choose as recipients of your service people within the kingdom or in the community whose needs will touch the hearts of those who will give the service. The people they serve will feel their love. That may do more to make them feel glad, as the song promised, than will meeting only their temporal needs.

My last suggestion is to plan to draw on the power of the bonds of families, of quorums, of auxiliary organizations, and of people you know in your communities. The feelings of unity will multiply the good effects of the service you give. And those feelings of unity in families, in the Church, and in communities will grow and become a lasting legacy long after the project ends.

This is my opportunity to tell you how much I appreciate you. By the loving service you have given for the Lord, I have been the recipient of the thanks of people you have helped as I have met them across the world.

You found a way to lift them higher as you helped in the Lord's way. You and humble disciples of the Savior like you have cast your bread upon the water in service, and the people you helped have tried to give me a loaf of gratitude in return.

I get that same expression of appreciation from people who have worked with you. I remember one time standing next to President Ezra Taft Benson. We had been talking about welfare service in the Lord's Church. He surprised me with his youthful vigor when he said, pumping his hand, "I love this work, and it is work!"

For the Master I extend thanks for your work to serve the children of our Heavenly Father. He knows you, and He sees your effort, diligence, and sacrifice. I pray that He will grant you the blessing of seeing the fruit of your labors in the happiness of those you have helped and with whom you have helped for the Lord.

I know that God the Father lives and hears our prayers. I know that Jesus is the Christ. You and those you serve can be purified and strengthened by serving Him and keeping His commandments. You can know as I know, by the power of the Holy Ghost, that Joseph Smith was God's prophet to restore the true and living

Church, which this is. I testify that President Thomas S. Monson is the living prophet of God. He is a great example of what the Lord did: going about doing good. I pray that we may seize our opportunities to "lift up the hands [that] hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees."⁶ In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. "Have I Done Any Good?" *Hymns*, no. 223.
2. "Sweet Is the Work," *Hymns*, no. 147.
3. Marion G. Romney, "Welfare Services: The Savior's Program," *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 93.
4. J. Reuben Clark Jr., in Conference Report, Oct. 1943, 13.
5. See Matthew 7:7-8; Luke 11:9-10; 3 Nephi 14:7-8.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 81:5.