

AUSTRALIA LOCAL PAGES

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Enduring Well the Latter-day Storms of Mortality

By Elder James J. Hamula, Area President

On Sunday, August 28, 2005, I was in Houston, Texas, USA, on a Church assignment. In returning to my hotel that night, I found the parking lot filled with cars with Louisiana license plates. In the lobby, many guests of the hotel were talking with some anxiety about a hurricane approaching the Gulf Coast of the United States.

Early the next morning I flew from Houston to Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Prior to departure, I watched television monitors in the gate area broadcasting news reports of the expected landfall of what was characterized as a monstrous storm.

During my flight east, I observed that the entire southern horizon was consumed by a dark, menacing storm front. While I was more than a little troubled by the enormity of the storm, I did not appreciate its ferocity until images of its impact began to appear in the news media.

A week later, President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve visited Hurricane Katrina survivors. I will never forget a report of their observations. They reported that the overriding concern of the people was not the loss of their material things but the loss of connection to family members.

“The thing that kept going through my mind everywhere we were was the children,” President Packer said. “They don’t understand, and can’t understand, what has happened. And then there were the mothers with their little children; in many cases, the men were not there.”

Elder Ballard added: “One of the things that was so heart-wrenching were the people trying to get in touch with their own, people trying to find their families—their parents, children, siblings, cousins, grandparents, aunts and uncles. They were just trying to make some connection.”¹

These observations, coupled with an assignment I received to assist in locating displaced Church members and their families in the Houston area, gave me a vision of the anguish that awaits those who may lose their families in the eternities as a result of the storms of mortality.

In the last days, the storms of mortality seem to be particularly intense and seem to be gathering in scope and fury. Latter-day conditions were foreseen to come upon man “as a whirlwind” (D&C 112:24), to be vexatious (see D&C 97:23), perilous (see 2 Timothy 3:1), and calamitous (see D&C 1:17; D&C 45:50; 136:35), and to “not be stayed until the Lord come” (D&C 97:23). With no one knowing when the Lord will come (see Matthew 24:36; D&C 39:21; 49:7), and with all people enduring such difficult conditions, it is no wonder that the Lord’s disciples “were troubled” (D&C 45:34) at the hearing of such conditions prior to His Second Coming.



**Elder James J.
Hamula**

Ancient prophets who foresaw the last days also seemed to have been troubled. Referring to the Lord's latter-day coming, Joel asked, "Who can abide it?" (Joel 2:11). Similarly, Malachi exclaimed: "Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?" (Malachi 3:2; see also 3 Nephi 24:2; D&C 128:24). And after seeing the signs of the last days, John the Beloved cried out, "The great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Revelation 6:17).² These are expressions of concern about the ability of people to endure the calamities and perils of the last days. Fortunately, the Father and the Son have addressed these prophetic concerns.

Preparing for the Future

"Knowing the calamity" that was coming, the Father and the Son called upon the Prophet Joseph Smith and gave him—and through him, the rest of us—commandments (D&C 1:17). Perhaps the most important commandment was given by the Father when He and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith in the spring of 1820. Referring to His Son, the Father commanded Joseph, "Hear Him!" (Joseph Smith—History 1:17; see also Matthew 17:5; Luke 9:35; Mark 9:7). On that day and thereafter, Jesus Christ gave Joseph doctrines, covenants, and commandments to "prepare [all people] for that which is to come" (D&C 1:12; see also D&C 133:10). Only by receiving such doctrines, covenants, and commandments can the world be properly prepared for the Lord's coming and everything leading up to it. "If ye are prepared," the Lord has counseled, "ye shall not fear" (D&C 38:30).

Among the essential instructions given by the Lord to prepare for His coming is that we listen to and obey His voice. "Hearken and hear, O ye inhabitants of the earth . . . hear the voice of the Lord" (D&C 133:16). Significantly, "the voice of the Lord is unto all men" so that "all that will hear may hear" (D&C 1:2, 11). The Lord's voice is manifest to us in various ways. It is manifest in the voice of His servants: "Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same" (D&C 1:38; see also D&C 133:8–10, 16, 36–38, 71).³ It is manifest in the administration of His Spirit: "My voice is Spirit" (D&C 88:66).⁴ And it is manifest in the commotions of the earth: "After your testimony cometh the testimony of earthquakes. . . . And . . . the testimony of the voice of thunderings, . . . lightnings, . . . tempests, and . . . waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds" (D&C 88:89–90).

Regardless of the form of the voice, the substance of the Lord's message is the same. "Sanctify yourselves. . . . Go ye out from Babylon. . . . Hear the voice of the Lord; for he . . . commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (D&C 133:4, 5, 16). The call to repent and be sanctified is a call to prepare "to meet the Bridegroom" (D&C 133:10; see also D&C 133:19; 88:92; Matthew 25:1–13), who is Jesus Christ (D&C 65:3). When the Lord returns, he "shall stand in the midst of his people, and shall reign over all flesh" (D&C 133:25).⁵ To dwell with the Lord in that day, we must be clean, for no unclean thing can dwell in His presence (see 1 Nephi 10:21; 3 Nephi 27:19; Moses 6:57; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Ephesians 5:5).

Thus, there is no more essential preparation for the great day of the Lord than heeding His

call to repent and be sanctified, which we cannot accomplish without baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost (see 3 Nephi 27:19–20).⁶

Standing in Holy Places

It is important that we not only leave Babylon but also that we remain worthy of the companionship of the Holy Ghost. “For the Spirit of the Lord will not always strive with man” (2 Nephi 26:11; see also D&C 1:33; Moses 8:17; D&C 20:32). To ensure continued companionship of the Holy Ghost, the faithful must “stand in holy places” (D&C 101:22). “Wherefore, stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come; for behold, it cometh quickly, saith the Lord” (D&C 87:8). Among the holy places the faithful should stand are the temples of the Lord. It is in such places that the power to overcome the world is delivered to them. The nature and significance of this power should not be underappreciated.

Three years following the First Vision, Joseph Smith received another heavenly messenger, Moroni (see Joseph Smith—History 1:27–48). Moroni’s message included recitation of biblical prophecies concerning the latter-day coming of the Lord and the conditions leading up to it. Quoting Malachi, Moroni declared: “For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven,” leaving the proud and the wicked “neither root nor branch” (Joseph Smith—History 1:37). But “before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord,” Moroni continued, “I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet” (Joseph Smith—History 1:38). And Elijah “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” (Joseph Smith—History 1:39).

Moroni’s message was delivered three times in the night and once the next morning “without the least variation” (Joseph Smith—History 1:45). It was the first heavenly communication the Prophet Joseph Smith received since the appearance of the Father and the Son, which initiated the work of the Restoration. Clearly, Moroni’s message was important. The thrust of his message was that “great judgments . . . were coming upon the earth, with great desolations by famine, sword, and pestilence” (Joseph Smith—History 1:45) and that the power to avoid such judgments was coming in the priesthood keys that Elijah would help restore to the earth.

Thirteen years later, Elijah came as promised, bestowing upon Joseph in the Kirtland Temple the sealing power. By this power, “all covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations” have “efficacy, virtue, and force in and after the resurrection from the dead” (D&C 132:7). Without such power, every human undertaking has an end after death (see D&C 132:13–14). This, then, is the great waste that awaits the world unless Elijah comes and the children of men receive what he came to restore—not the physical destruction that accompanies war, pestilence, earthquake, and famine but rather that men and women are left alone, without root (connection to ancestry) or branch (connection to posterity).

In conclusion, they who will endure the storms of the last days and will stand when the Lord finally appears are they who know and obey His voice. As the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith: “They . . . [who] have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but *shall abide the day*” (D&C 45:57; emphasis added). Such persons will have sanctified themselves through receipt of the saving ordinances and obedience to the covenants associated with such ordinances, understanding that when the veil is rent and all men shall see Him, “he that is not purified *shall not abide the day*” (D&C 38:8; emphasis added). Such persons will be those who have availed themselves of the blessings of the temple and made such blessings available to their kindred dead (see D&C 128:24; Revelation 7:14–17). May we do as the Lord has instructed so that we may be built on solid foundations and endure successfully the raging storms of mortality (see Matthew 7:24–27; Helaman 5:12). ■

NOTES

1. “Church leaders tour devastation of three states,” *Church News*, September 10, 2005, 11.
2. The Lord posed a similar question to the people of our day: “Vengeance cometh speedily upon the ungodly as the whirlwind; and who shall escape it?” (D&C 97:22).
3. The voice of the Lord’s servants includes the “elders of my church” who are sent unto the nations of the earth (D&C 133:8–10, 16, 36–38, 71).
4. As prophesied by Joel and affirmed on the day of Pentecost, the Lord’s Spirit would be poured out upon all nations (see Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17–18).
5. See also Zechariah 14:4 (“his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives”); Revelation 1:7 (“every eye shall see him”); D&C 38:8 (“day soon cometh that ye shall see me”); D&C 76:63 (“he shall come . . . to reign on the earth”); D&C 88:95 (“face of the Lord shall be unveiled”); D&C 104:59 (“prepare my people for . . . when I shall dwell with them”).
6. See also Moroni 10:32–33 (sanctified “by the grace of God”); D&C 88:21 (sanctified through obedience to “the law of Christ”); D&C 84:33 (sanctified through “magnifying their calling” in the priesthood).

Youth Can Become Indexing Experts

By Sandra McLennan

Past prophets of the Church have remarked on the growth of technology and the Internet, and the benefit to come from these inventions certainly comes from Heavenly Father. The Spirit of Elijah must be jumping for joy at the way in which these inventions continue to grow.

Young Women and their mothers from the Tallai Ward, Gold Coast Australia Stake, have had their first look at the Church’s FamilySearch Indexing program by Gold Coast Stake indexing director Tammy Woolley. Super indexers Fiona Chikosh (family history consultant, Burleigh Ward) and Susan Donly (first counsellor in the Relief Society, Tallai Ward) were also on hand to provide one-to-one assistance with this training.

Our youth can do family history work to fill award requirements for Duty to God and Personal Progress. Sister Woolley is hopeful that these young women will include indexing as a 10- or 40-hour award requirement for Personal

Progress as they work toward their Young Womanhood Awards.

“As you involve the youth, their lives will be blessed. Their enthusiasm and skills will bless others. They typically have the computer skills needed to help their own family do family history work and to help other members of the ward,” commented Sister Woolley.

“It was wonderful to see the mothers of the young women at the training session and enjoying this just as much as their daughters. There is a much greater chance of indexing being done at home when parents can work together with their children,” said Kaye Hettig, Young Women president in Tallai Ward.

When we look at the file catalogues available for indexing (births, deaths, census records, immigration, etc.), it is easy to think of the document as just a long list of names of people who lived at another time. But that list is not just a collection of



Tara Langenberger, Emma Goldberg, Sophia Monroe, Olivia Monroe, Tammy Woolley (indexing director, Gold Coast Australia Stake), Holly Smibert, Emily Donly, Vicki Garland and Brooke Garland.

names—those names represent individual sons and daughters of God. They are His children, and He wants them to enjoy the same temple blessing that you can. Each time you type a name

into the FamilySearch indexing application, you're helping bring one person closer to his or her temple covenants. Many of the young women were surprised at the number of entries made on

behalf of people who could not read and write.

The girls did a wonderful job for their first exposure to reading the original documents. Deciphering handwriting styles



Lorraine Smibert, Brooke Garland, Vicki Garland, Holly Smibert and Fiona Chikosh.

from a different time and sometimes from a different country requires a little concentration, but it was well worth the effort. Help provided by Sister Woolley, Sister Donly, and Sister Chikosh really made a difference.

If every family indexes ONE NAME A DAY IN 2013, then by December 31, 160,000 souls could have their information available to find! Why? “To help those beyond the veil who can’t help themselves” (Richard G.

Scott, “The Joy of Redeeming the Dead,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 95).

To participate in indexing (or to find out what it is) please talk to your family history consultants or visit indexing.familysearch.org ■

Church Leaders Emphasize Missionary Work at Worldwide Broadcast

Salt Lake City—

In a recent worldwide broadcast, President Thomas S. Monson reminded members around the globe that there is “no proclamation more relevant, no responsibility more binding, no instruction more direct than the injunction given by the resurrected Lord” to “teach all nations” (Matthew 28:19) the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This comment from President Monson came nearly eight months after he announced lower age requirements for Mormon missionaries (men can serve at 18, women at 19)—an announcement that has generated a wave of new missionaries.

The Church, which has always followed Christ’s New Testament teaching cited by President Monson, announced more developments in its mission to fulfill this charge. During a two-hour worldwide June broadcast originating from the Marriott Center in Provo, Utah, Church leaders, missionaries and members were also encouraged to follow the Savior as they work together to bring others to Christ.

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, spoke about the importance of teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ effectively, counseling members to “decide to do it right; decide to be better.” And Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminded

Latter-day Saints that, in the words of Joseph Smith, the Church’s “greatest and most important duty is to preach the gospel.”

Fellow Apostle Elder Russell M. Nelson reminded members and missionaries to be concerned about each individual’s needs, saying, “When we follow Jesus Christ, we act as He would act and love as He would love. . . . Until you know a person’s name and face, the Lord cannot help you to know his or her heart.”

Developments announced in missionary work included a milestone for the number of missionaries serving and the news that missionaries will use the Internet and digital devices to reach out to others. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “there will continually be improvements in the way we perform missionary work.”

70,000 Missionaries Now Serving

The number of missionaries continues to rise since President Monson’s October 2012 announcement of lower missionary age requirements. At the time of the announcement, 58,500 missionaries were serving; as of the week of the broadcast, Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, more than 70,000 missionaries were serving—the most ever at one time in Church history.

Female missionaries comprise more than 20 percent of that number, with 14,650 serving. As the Church announced in April 2013, the increasing number of female missionaries has led to the creation of a mission leadership council that will include both men and women as missionary leaders. This council will consist of the mission president and his wife, assistants to the president,

zone leaders and sister training leaders—a newly created role.

As the Church reported in February 2013, 58 new missions were created to accommodate the influx of missionaries, bringing the total number of missions to 405. By year's end, the Church anticipates having 85,000 missionaries.

Using Technology to Invite Others to Follow Jesus Christ

Elder Perry also announced changes in how missionaries will spend their time finding people to teach. Because many people prefer to connect online, missionaries will use the Internet and digital devices in their ministry, Elder Perry said. He noted that missionaries will use “Mormon.org, Facebook, blogs, email, . . . text messages” and other platforms to reach out to people. “The Church must adapt to a changing world,” Elder Perry said.

Speaking earlier in the day to new mission presidents, Church leaders said that missionary use of the Internet and digital devices such as iPads will begin in phases, and only in designated missions for the rest of this year. The Church anticipates these tools will be available to missionaries throughout the world sometime next year.

Elder Perry said those who have interest in the Church often complain that they “stop by one of our buildings only to find it locked.” He said missionaries will be at meetinghouses when needed to greet interested individuals and guide them through our houses of worship.

In the worldwide broadcast viewed by hundreds of thousands of Latter-day Saints, Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles encouraged members and missionaries to “work together in faith and unity” with “a love for one another and for those we serve” as they invite others to follow Jesus Christ. ■

A 3,000-member choir of full-time missionaries and other Latter-day Saints provided the music for the Work of Salvation worldwide leadership broadcast in June 2013.



IMAGE COURTESY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS LIBRARY

AUSTRALIA