

MESSAGE FROM A MEMBER OF THE SEVENTY

Have They Accepted the Gospel?

By Elder Eduardo Gavarret

Area Seventy



Elder Eduardo
Gavarret

Our Area Plan encourages members to more actively participate in family history work and in temple ordinances as part of the process to develop a deeper faith in the Savior.

This objective is based on the invitation of President Russell M. Nelson:

“Now, to each member of the Church I say, keep on the covenant path. Your commitment to follow the Savior by making covenants with

Him and then keeping those covenants will open the door to every spiritual blessing and privilege available to men, women, and children everywhere.

“As a new Presidency, we want to begin with the end in mind. For this reason, we’re speaking to you today from a temple. The end for which each of us strives is to be endowed with power in a house of the Lord,

sealed as families, faithful to covenants made in a temple that qualify us for the greatest gift of God—that of eternal life. The ordinances of the temple and the covenants you make there are key to strengthening your life, your marriage and family, and your ability to resist the attacks of the adversary. Your worship in the temple and your service there for your ancestors will bless you with





A young woman holds a photo of her ancestors.

increased personal revelation and peace and will fortify your commitment to stay on the covenant path.”¹

I would like to tell you of an experience that strengthened my understanding of temple worship and the benefits it brings to us and our ancestors.

It was Holy Week. The traditional activities commemorating the last week

of the Savior were present everywhere. The Christian world joined the celebration, more motivated by tradition than by understanding.

At one point on that Good Friday, I stopped to reflect on the words that Christ expressed to Martha at Lazarus’ tomb. With deep attention and hope, she listened as “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he

that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

“And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”²

As the words of hope and faith nested in her heart, the reality of the miracle followed. Lazarus was called to life and to be among his own again.

“If I believe,” I told myself, “we will all live again after we die.”

Immediately, my thoughts turned to my ancestors and the words revealed to the prophet Joseph F. Smith, just weeks before his death, came to my mind in connection with the experience of Martha and Mary:

“While this vast multitude waited and conversed, rejoicing in the hour of their deliverance from the chains of death, the Son of God appeared, declaring liberty to the captives who had been faithful;

“And there he preached to them the everlasting gospel, the doctrine of the resurrection and the redemption of mankind from the fall, and from individual sins on conditions of repentance.”³

I thought about some of my family members I knew before they left this life. “Could it be that they accepted the gospel?” I wondered.

Reflection was followed by the impulse to go to the FamilySearch

site and look in my family tree, as if there I could find the answer I was looking for.

When I opened the site and saw that I could also search for information about my ancestors in other sites related to FamilySearch, I decided to try one of them.

When I checked it, I saw a family name on the site. Yes, it was the same name as my great-uncle, married to the sister of my maternal grandmother. It was not a common surname and it was not easy to pronounce.

The person with that last name was the administrator of a family tree. Upon entering that tree, I found a family treasure. Before my eyes appeared more than 50 names with photos, names, dates, professions, and even with the nicknames by which some of them were known.

The time passed very quickly. I did not want to stop recording the information that had miraculously appeared before me.

Until that moment, that surname and that branch of the family, were not on my agenda because I did not have enough information.

At the end of the day, my thoughts returned to the question: “And my ancestors, have they accepted the gospel?”

Tears ran down my cheeks as I said to myself, “Yes,” and again Martha’s

words to the Savior came to my mind as an echo, “Yes, I believe.”

As our family began to perform the ordinances for that family line, the tree began to bloom. There were no longer only 50 names as many more were found when the desire to know and do came to my mind and heart.

“Behold, the field was ripe, and blessed are ye, for ye did thrust in the sickle, and did reap with your might, yea, all the day long did ye labor; and behold the number of your sheaves! And they shall be

gathered into the garner, that they are not wasted.”⁴

I invite you to make temple worship and service a priority, to discover your ancestors, to register their names, to remember them, and to gather them in safety in the “garner” or temple of the Lord through the ordinances of salvation. ■

Caribbean Area Plan: www.caribbean.lds.org

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “As We Go Forward Together,” *Liahona*, April 2018, 4.
2. John 11:25–26.
3. Doctrine & Covenants 138:18–19.
4. Alma 26:5.

LOCAL PAGES

Elder D. Todd Christofferson Spoke to Missionaries of the Dominican Republic Santo Domingo West Mission

On a cool, sunny morning, the missionaries in the Dominican Republic Santo Domingo West Mission gathered in the San Geronimo chapel in Santo Domingo. This special occasion brought them together to listen to an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ and to other authorities of the Church and be “nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine” (1 Timothy 4:6).

Elder D. Todd Christofferson arrived early, accompanied by his beloved wife, Sister Katherine Jacob Christofferson, Elder José L. Alonso of the Seventy and his wife, Rebecca Salazar, and Elder Cándido Fortuna, Area Seventy and his wife, Sister Damaris Rosario. They were received by President José M. Santos, who presides over the mission, also accompanied by his wife, Madeleine Guzmán De Santos.



The meeting began with a beautiful prelude, after which Elder Christofferson and those who were with him greeted and shook the hand of each missionary.

A missionary choir performed a hymn in English and Spanish, creating an atmosphere of peace and preparing everyone present for this special gathering.

Elder Christofferson asked those who accompanied him to share a brief message. The messages focused on their feelings about the Book of Mormon, the restoration of the gospel,

missionary work, and the sacred mission of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

“A missionary must be constantly inviting people to act,” Elder Fortuna said while addressing the missionaries.

In his message, Elder Alonso made reference to the words found in 1 Nephi 3:7. He taught that Heavenly Father provides us with a way to fulfill what He has commanded us. When concluding his remarks, he thanked the missionaries for what they do in the work of the Lord.

Sister Christofferson addressed the missionaries, speaking both in English

and Spanish so that the message she shared was understood in its entirety by the new missionaries and those who already had spent some time in the mission field. She shared with them the scripture found in 2 Kings 4:1–7 and taught them that at that time it was customary for creditors to take the children of debtors as part of the payment of the debt as was the case in this scripture.

The woman in the scripture story obeyed Elisha and borrowed all the vessels she could from her neighbors. She filled them from her one pot of oil



and noted that the oil stopped flowing only when there were no more vessels to fill. It is interesting to note that not only was she given enough to pay the debt she had, but also to cover her living expenses in the future. “There are two important teachings here,” Sister Christofferson said. “First that the Lord will provide for those who have faith in Him and second that we must be prepared to receive what God wants to give us.” Sister Christofferson concluded her remarks by thanking everyone for their missionary service in this country.

In his concluding remarks as the keynote speaker, Elder Christofferson addressed the missionaries in Spanish. He highlighted the messages shared by each of those who preceded him. He told them: “As my wife indicated, we receive everything we are prepared to receive.” Then he asked the missionaries what things they could do to prepare themselves to receive the blessings that have been promised.

“Be obedient,” replied one of the missionaries, to which Elder Christofferson added that they can take advantage of what God has

already given them, that is, the commandments. He said, “The commandments are like stairs that help elevate us each step” to be closer to Him.

He continued by inviting the missionaries to fast once a month, as this will help them have the Spirit and open their minds and hearts to receive greater revelation. He also told them: “By studying the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon, I not only learn, but I also correct myself.” He indicated that one can be better when studying the scriptures. He stressed that also by sharing one’s

testimony, “we receive testimony. . . . The Spirit testifies to you that what you share is true.” He added that we should “ask in prayer” showing that we want more. “We can ask, according to His will, for more, for what we need,” he concluded.

At the end of his remarks, he left them with a special blessing. He told them: “I bless you so that you may have greater power in your teaching, by teaching the principles of the

gospel, greater capacity and greater convincing and persuasive power in your teaching. . . . May people feel that deep love that you have for them, whether members or nonmembers, that you get answers to your prayers.” He concluded his remarks sharing his testimony about the truthfulness of the gospel, that Jesus Christ directs His Church and, just like the Prophet Joseph Smith, President Nelson was also called by God. ■



“I bless you so that you may have greater power in your teaching, by teaching the principles of the gospel, greater capacity and greater convincing and persuasive power in your teaching. . . . May people feel that deep love that you have for them, whether members or nonmembers, that you get answers to your prayers.” — Elder D. Todd Christofferson

CALL FOR ARTICLES

Our local pages section is produced by members in our own area under the guidance of our Area Presidency so that it can address the needs and experiences of members where we live. The inclusion of the local pages in each issue depends on the availability of local content. We are invited to contribute our faith-promoting thoughts and experiences by contacting our editor:

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Rendering of the San Juan Puerto Rico Temple.



Artist Rendering Released for San Juan Puerto Rico Temple

Temple will be the third Latter-day Saint temple in Caribbean

An artist rendering of the San Juan Puerto Rico Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was released on January 12, 2019.

The rendering features a single-story temple with a spire reflective of the architectural styles in the area.

The temple will be located at 123 Calle Ronda Urb Villa Andalucía in the Trujillo Alto area of San Juan.

This will be the first temple in Puerto Rico and the third temple in the Caribbean (following the dedication of the Port-au-Prince Haiti Temple

later this year). The Puerto Rico temple was first announced October 7, 2018 by Church President Russell M. Nelson.

Construction on the temple with an adjacent meetinghouse is expected to begin in 2019 and will take about two years to complete. ■

Public Open House and Dedication Dates Announced for the Haiti Temple

The First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has announced dates for the open house, youth devotional and dedication for the Port-au-Prince Haiti Temple.

An updated schedule for the Port-au-Prince Haiti Temple open house, youth devotional and dedication has been announced.

According to Newsroom, the temple's open house will be held

from Aug. 3 through Aug. 17, every day except Sundays.

The temple dedication is planned for three sessions on Sunday, Sept. 1. A youth devotional will also be held on Aug. 31 and will be broadcast to meetinghouses throughout the temple district.

The announcement updates the open house, dedication and youth devotional dates originally announced

two months ago, which included the start of the open house in mid-April and a May 19 dedication.

The Haiti temple groundbreaking was held Oct. 28, 2018, presided over by Elder Walter F. González, General Authority Seventy and president of the Church's Caribbean Area. Counselors of the Caribbean Area presidency—Elder Claudio D. Zivic and Elder José L. Alonso—also participated.

“The temple groundbreaking ceremony was a wonderful spiritual experience,” said Elder Walter F. González in October 2018. “I can only think about everlasting joy and gratitude for all that the temple means in our lives. It is hard to express with words. This was a day of joy and gratitude when we start to build a portal to heaven as we come to better understand the importance of the covenants made in the temple and how they impact our daily lives, both in this time and eternity.”

The Port-au-Prince Haiti Temple will serve more than 17,000 Latter-day Saints in four stakes and three districts. In April 2015 general conference, President Thomas S. Monson announced the construction of the temple, which will open for ordinances on Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2019. It is the nation's first temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. ■

Source: www.thechurchnews.com



Port-au-Prince Haiti Temple rendering

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