





The Temple as a Source of Blessing

President Ezra Taft Benson taught that temples are a source of blessing on at least two levels. Of course they have the greatest impact on those who enter to worship in them and receive ordinances of eternal significance. But, President Benson emphasized, the whole surrounding community is also “preserved” through the Saint’s faithfulness and temple attendance.¹ This certainly was true in Southern California where the Los Angeles Temple touched the lives of many individuals in a variety of ways.

This chapter is unique in that it is a collection of personal stories about the impact of the Los Angeles Temple, many related in the words of those who experienced them.²

The Temple as a Beacon

“I was just drawn to it”

Robert Conlee recalls how during the later 1950s he rode from his home in Alhambra to the beach and Pacific Ocean Park, at first as a boy with his parents and then later as a teenager with his friends. Santa Monica Boulevard was the route they took. They would drive past a beautiful building surrounded by palm trees at the top of a big grassy slope. Even though he was not a member of the Church at the time, he remembers: “Every time we drove by it, either going to or coming home from Santa Monica, I was just drawn to it. I couldn’t help feeling something about that building. I had no idea what it was. All I know is that when we drove by, I was attracted to it and loved to look at it.”

A few years later, when Robert was studying physical education at Los Angeles State College, a friend showed him a picture of Marianne Colt. “Her face just jumped out at me. It was a kind of spiritual experience. I knew that she was the girl for me. I told my friend, ‘I need to take her out.’ I still carry that picture to this day in my wallet.”

“Oh, you won’t like her,” Robert’s friend responded. “She’s a Mormon.” Actually Robert’s older brother had dated a Mormon girl. “She was one of the nicest girls I had ever met,” Robert reflected. Therefore, when his friend said Marianne was a Mormon, all Robert could think about was, “That is the best compliment you could give her!” She lived in nearby Monterey Park, and they began dating in April 1962.

She was a high school senior and invited Robert to go with her to her graduation party in June. Typically, that meant attending a dance and then spending the rest of the night unsupervised and often carousing. Robert recalled that night:

I had borrowed my friend's Thunderbird to take her out on that date. We first went to the dance, and then she said, "I have a special place where I want to take you." I had no idea what we would be doing for the rest of the all-night party, but by this time I just knew that she was the most special person I had ever met.

It turned out that we drove down Santa Monica Boulevard and onto the grounds of the Los Angeles Temple. Again, I didn't know what this building was until we got there. I think it was about 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning. By this time the other kids were out partying some place, probably doing what they were not supposed to be doing, but my sweetheart took me to the temple! We walked around the grounds, and it was so peaceful and quiet.

Behind the temple, they came to the more than life-size statue of *The Eternal Family*, showing a mother and father with their children around them. Robert read the plaque explaining about eternal families and how through temple ordinances families could be together forever. "When I read that plaque (and I have a picture of it in my computer today)," Robert reflected, "The Holy Ghost bore a deep witness to me in my heart that that doctrine was true. That witness was coupled with the feelings I had about that building. I just couldn't contain myself! I read it over and over and thought, 'Oh how I wish my family were like that.' Our family was just a typical family with its struggles, but I believed we do have eternal natures and so wished that doctrine could apply to my family. That affirmation was the beginning of my testimony or spiritual witness of the truthfulness of the Church and gospel."

Robert and Marianne continued to date through the summer. She invited him to firesides and other church meetings but didn't push the idea of his joining the Church. Before meeting Marianne, Robert had only attended about three religious meetings in his whole life. But although he had almost no formal religious background, he felt that "God was real."

In the fall Marianne went off to Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, and Robert continued his studies at Los Angeles State. He had filled out a referral card at one of the Latter-day Saint meetings he attended, and soon two missionaries came to his door. "Everything they taught about the gospel—I just knew it was



Robert and Marianne Conlee standing by the family sculpture.
(Courtesy of Robert Conlee)

true, and I loved what I was hearing,” Robert testified. In November, therefore, he chose to be baptized and to continue along a path of personal discipline that changed his lifestyle forever.

In May 1965 Robert Conlee and Marianne Colt were sealed for eternity in the Los Angeles Temple. “That temple has always been a special place for me,” Robert affirmed. “We went back several times over the years and stood by that same statue that meant so much to me.”

After finishing his graduate studies, Robert moved to Utah and became a member of the physical education faculty at Brigham Young University. He served as department chair for three years and ten years as dean of the college. He also became president of the Orem Utah Cherry Hill Stake. His beloved Marianne passed away in the winter of 2006 after forty-three years of marriage. After her passing, Robert married the former Connie Rae Jensen, and he and Connie served as second counselor and assistant to the matron in the Mount Timpanogos Temple presidency. He has also served as a sealer in both the Mount Timpanogos and Provo Temples.³

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“My beacon on a hill”

When Sandy was twelve, her family stopped attending church. A few years later, however, when her parents returned to church activity, Sandy had to decide which way she would go. At age seventeen or eighteen, she was making choices that weren’t consistent with the standards she had been taught. Her parents had moved away from her hometown, but her sister, who lived about forty-five minutes away, invited her to stay with them so she could babysit their daughters. She spent the weekdays with them, then on the weekends would drive back to her hometown to spend time with her old friends. She did not attend church for the four months that she lived with her sister.

“But the Spirit did not give up on me,” Sandy gratefully acknowledged. “Every Sunday evening when I would drive from our former hometown to my sister’s home I would see the Los Angeles Temple, all lit up. It spoke to my heart, helping me to remember what I really wanted not only in life but throughout the eternities. The temple was my beacon on a hill. I knew that it was calling me home—to the home that I really desired, the home I longed for. From that experience, forty-two years ago, I changed. I turned my back on any doubts, wrong choices, and poor decisions. I chose the temple. I chose Heavenly Father and the life I knew I was supposed to live. I have never looked back or regretted that decision.”

“I will forever be grateful,” Sandy affirmed, “as will my husband, our children, children-in-law, and grandchildren, that the Los Angeles temple was my beacon on a hill. It literally changed my life.”⁴

A Love for the Temple

A young member's experience

Even youth participated in temple excursions. Richard Cowan (the present author) participated in temple trips sponsored by the Los Angeles Stake to St. George, Utah, and Mesa, Arizona. He recalls his special feeling upon entering these hallowed temples and performing baptisms for the dead. This service took only two or three hours, so while the adults were participating in their longer temple sessions, the youth had plenty of time to become better acquainted with their peers from other wards in the stake. It was wonderful to make new friends with individuals who shared common ideals, including a love for temple service. Richard regards these experiences as the beginning of his interest in temples.

These experiences at other temples whetted Richard's desire for a temple nearer to his Los Angeles home. He was interested, therefore, when a member of the stake presidency expressed his feeling that the time was not far distant when a temple would be built in Southern California. A few years later, this same stake leader spoke in Richard's ward. After the meeting, Richard reminded the speaker of his statement five years earlier and asked if he thought the coming of the temple was any closer. “Yes,” the stake leader responded with a twinkle in his eye, “about five years closer.”

The long-anticipated announcement came early in 1949 when Richard was in high school: A temple will be built in Los Angeles! He anxiously waited for more information. It finally came in December of the following year when the weekly *Church News* published the architect's rendering of the future temple in full color on its cover. Being legally blind, Richard had to hold the paper close to his face in good light in order to examine the illustration. Then in his senior year, as just about the only Latter-day Saint in his school, Richard excitedly showed this issue of the *Church News* to classmates and even teachers. He was eager to share with them his enthusiasm about the new temple in the community.

Richard was attending a local college when ground was broken and construction finally started on the temple. As walls began to rise, he visited the site as often as possible to see what was going on. About this time, he left to serve a



Author Richard Cowan with the December 13, 1953 copy of the Church News. (Lee R. Cowan)

► *Richard Cowan watches as the first panel of grillwork is lifted into place. (Edith O. Cowan)*

Spanish-speaking mission in Texas and New Mexico. During the next two and a half years, Elder Cowan eagerly kept up on temple construction by means of letters from home. Paul Garns, a friend in Richard's home ward, also sent some

large photo prints showing construction developments. (Richard saved these cherished photographs until the present time, and many are used in this book.)

Eventually it appeared that the temple would be completed and dedicated just a few weeks before Richard was scheduled to be released as a missionary. He wondered if he could obtain permission to return home to attend the dedication, an event he had eagerly looked forward to for many years. Elder Cowan loved his mission and indicated that he would be pleased to go back and complete his commitment there. As things worked out, however, this would not be necessary. Delays in finishing the baptismal font and the mural in one of the ordinance rooms postponed the dedication. Richard completed his mission and was released on schedule. He reached home on Tuesday evening, March 6, 1956, and the temple was dedicated the following Sunday. He therefore was able to attend this eagerly anticipated event!

While serving his mission, Richard had met a sister missionary, Dawn Houghton. Upon her release, they were eager to get better acquainted. Many of their dates were attending endowment sessions in the newly dedicated Los Angeles Temple. Finally, they knelt together at one of the temple's altars and were sealed as husband and wife for time and all eternity. This glorious event represented a fitting high





Dawn and Richard Cowan at the temple now and fifty years ago. (Tricia Cowan and Jean Simpson)

► *Richard Cowan holding a model of the Los Angeles Temple. (Lee R. Cowan)*

point in Richard Cowan's long-standing interest in the Los Angeles Temple.

Dawn was a major help as Richard earned his PhD at Stanford University. After completing that milestone, they moved to Provo, Utah, to begin Richard's career as a professor in Religious Education at Brigham Young University. In the early 1990s he developed a new course on Latter-day Saint temples. To fulfill course requirements, a series of students produced replicas of selected temples. Fittingly, the first of these models was of the Los Angeles Temple. Richard's long-standing interest in temples resulted in four books on this topic. For him, writing this present book represents just a little additional "frosting on the cake."

Overjoyed at a temple being built nearby

The Johnson family had established its home in Inglewood, California. They were overjoyed with a temple being built only about ten miles away and eagerly gave to the building fund.



*The Los Angeles Temple
from Overland Avenue.
(Linda Gerber)*



Often after church services on fast Sundays, the family drove out to see how the work was progressing. Their young daughter Vicki recalled, “How well I remember these events! I was just in awe every time we progressed up Overland Avenue and saw our beautiful temple right in front of us on a great hill! We walked and talked and shared our feelings about this magnificent structure. It was so big!”

Of course the family attended the open house. “I had never been inside a temple before,” Vicki reflected.

I was nine years old. I remember walking behind my parents in the beautiful temple and looking and “feeling” the majesty of it all! I believe this is the first time I recall the Spirit being with me. I promised myself that this would be the temple for me. This is where I wanted to be married and sealed for time and all eternity! I promised myself that day that I would keep myself pure and clean before the Lord so that I could enjoy these blessings.

About two weeks before my tenth birthday, on Tuesday, March 13, 1956, I attended one of the dedicatory sessions with my father and my older sister, Gloria. I still have my temple recommend and my white handkerchief from that blessed event. I keep these in my Treasures of Truth Book. Indeed, it is a treasure and has made all the difference in my life’s decisions. I do not remember what was said during that dedication, but I do remember the Spirit I felt that day. I recall afterwards while we were leaving the temple that my father told me, “I saw the Prophet Joseph Smith on the stand with President McKay.” I will never forget that moment!

While in Mutual (Young Women), Vicki participated in baptisms for the dead. “I loved being in the temple, and I still remembered to keep my promise that it was there I wanted to be married to a special young man someday.” In the summer of 1967 when she was home from BYU, Woods Woolwine, also from Inglewood Ward, had just returned from his mission to Argentina. “We spent many wonderful dates walking around the temple grounds and sitting by the water fountains making our plans for the future. My ‘someday’ did come on July 3, 1968. Woody and I were married and sealed in the majestic Los Angeles Temple.” Vicki was grateful for the impact her parents’ commitment to the temple had in her life and that her own children had been endowed and sealed to their spouses in the temple.⁵

“The temple olive trees”

John Martz, first counselor in the temple presidency, shared this meaningful perspective on a prominent feature of the Los Angeles Temple landscaping. In front of the temple are two fountains, on the east side and on the west. From each fountain, olive trees border a path of alternating steps and inclines down to Santa Monica Boulevard. Brother Martz suggested that the rows of olive trees might represent the “Garden of Gethsemane where the Savior suffered for all of our sorrows, sickness, mourning, and every other grief in our lives as well as for our sins.” He thought it would be a meaningful, spiritual experience to walk down the path, thinking of how the Lord descended “into the pit of our woes.” Brother Martz then suggested that coming back up the sixty-one steps could represent “the many prices paid by our Lord in order to provide a way back to God.” All the way up, the temple seemed to be beckoning us back to the Savior, Brother Martz concluded. He then decided to do what he had been recommending to others.

This morning Dallas and I were fasting for one of our children. I took the Book of Mormon with me and went to the grove of olive trees at the temple. As I looked down from the top of the path, I was struck by the sense that Santa Monica Boulevard was the world. As I walked down the steps, I thought how this symbolized going toward the ways of the world with our back toward the temple and our back to God. At the bottom by the gate, I looked up the path at the temple, but the branches of the trees obscured the temple. This caused me to reflect—when we go toward worldly things, the eternally significant principles become obscured by things of little significance. The path still leads back up to God and the temple, but it is obscured. I sat on the wall at the bottom of the path and was considering all this when I was overwhelmed by the

sense of my own remorse that I feel for that which I have heaped upon my Lord and which he bore willingly for me. I cannot put into words the shame that came over me for the times that I have wronged God and others. I then read in Alma 7:10–13 of his Atonement, but especially verse 13, which said “blot out their transgression by the power of His deliverance,” and I wept.

Then a new thought came to me, “I would gladly take upon myself the sorrow, suffering, and sins of my children if it would assure their happiness and salvation. This is how God must love me. I apologized to God as I looked up the hill at the temple, noticing the symbols that are invitations for us to come back to him and receive all that he has. I then started up the hill, considering as I went that each step was a price paid by the Savior; this brought me back closer to God and the temple, cleared my vision that had been blurred by the trees, and put the world farther behind and elevated me closer to him.

I was overwhelmed by another emotion—gratitude and love for Jesus Christ. I counted the steps and felt that emotion all the way to the temple door. I wish I had words to express what I felt in this experience.⁶



An olive tree on the temple grounds. (David C. Moore)

“My temple, my temple; it’s my temple!”

During a family home evening, the Blair family of the Sierra Ward in the Lancaster California Stake decided to follow the counsel of President Spencer W. Kimball to have a picture of a temple in every bedroom so children from the time of

infancy could see it. The idea was that seeing the temple every day would remind them of the importance of the temple and how they should prepare to enter the house of the Lord. Each of the four children selected a different favorite temple. Cassie, the youngest, was quick to say she liked the Los Angeles Temple, which was where her parents had been married. Each picture was then framed and placed in a strategic place in their rooms. A few months later the family planned a trip to Los Angeles so the children could visit the temple there. Sister Blair recalled what happened after they had been driving for two hours or so:

We were laughing and talking as we turned off the freeway and headed down Santa Monica Boulevard for our planned evening on the temple grounds. It was already

night, and lights beamed brightly against a very dark sky. Soon the temple came into view. It was a view my husband and I saw regularly in our monthly sojourn to participate in temple worship, but it was new to our children. Our family laughter came to an immediate halt by the interruption of Cassie's excited screams. She pointed and pressed her face to the window next to her, "My temple, my temple; it's my temple!" We all quietly turned and with awe looked out the windows. There was the Los Angeles Temple in all its luminous glory glowing before us. It truly is a light upon a hill, majestic and magnificent, bearing witness to all the world and proclaiming, "Come, Come unto Christ." I was moved that night as I viewed the temple through the eyes of my child.

Years later, Cassie had become a young mother with a temple recommend, "endowed with power from on high." She hoped her own little boys would prepare to go to the temple to receive that same power. Sister Blair concluded that it had truly become Cassie's temple, "the house of the Lord, where he blesses her life and her family eternally."⁷

Eagerness and Sacrifice to Receive Temple Blessings

A young musician's sacrifice

Annette, who lived in the San Francisco Bay area, had studied the flute several years and looked forward to becoming a member of her highly regarded high school band. Following auditions at the beginning of the school year, she understandably was excited when she was selected to participate. She quickly learned why the band had such an excellent reputation when the band leader announced: "Band participation must take top priority in your life. There will be no excused absences from concerts or marching band activities, except for extreme illness or a drastic emergency." Band members eagerly participated in practices as they looked forward to their first performance.

At church, plans were moving forward for the youth excursion to the Los Angeles Temple, 450 miles distant. The plan was to leave Friday evening, travel overnight by bus, and then spend Saturday in the temple. After another overnight



*"My Temple" at night.
(David C. Moore)*



*The entrance to the baptistry.
(David C. Moore)*

trip on the bus, the youth would be back home in time for their Sunday meetings. Annette also eagerly looked forward to this spiritual event.

All was going well until the band director announced the date for the band's first performance—the same weekend as the temple excursion! Annette realized she had a difficult choice to make. “Mom, what will I do? I have to make a choice. It isn't a choice between good and evil, because both projects are good. But which one is more important?” Annette's mother wisely knew that her daughter would need to make this decision on her own.

The next morning, Annette announced that she would be fasting before going to tell the band director that she would be going to the temple. When she came home from school that afternoon, it was obvious that the conversation had not gone well. “Mother, he didn't understand at all. I tried to explain that as much as I valued my place in the band and appreciated what he had done for me, our religion comes first in our family. He was angry. ‘Make your choice, Annette,’ he said. ‘You can't be a member of my band if you go.’”

As Annette's mother pondered her daughter's decision, she powerfully felt the impression of the Spirit, and these words came into her mind: “It is necessary that

she go to the temple *under conditions of sacrifice*. The strength of her testimony will influence those for whom the baptisms are performed.”

Later, upon arriving at the Los Angeles Temple, Annette prayed that her service there would be a “blessing to those for whom the baptisms would be done.” As she entered the font, she “felt a sweet spirit of peace and joy. Then, suddenly, she experienced an overwhelming love—and a reaching out—as the one performing the baptisms exclaimed, ‘This person was born more than four hundred years ago!’” Annette trusted that her sacrifice was adding to the impact of the testimony she silently bore to the individuals for whom she was being baptized.

Back home, Annette returned to the band but was told that she would not be permitted to participate in any band concerts or marches. Subsequently, however, she would have other opportunities to receive instruction from highly qualified flutists. Then years later, she was married in the temple and had children of her own. She knew that her experience in choosing the temple excursion over the school band would give her perspective as she attempted to help them with their own difficult decisions.⁸

A couple from Colombia

In spring of 1985, a young married couple named Contreras from Colombia arrived at the Los Angeles International Airport. They had temple recommends and were planning to come to the Los Angeles Temple to be sealed. The young woman was five months pregnant. They arrived in this country with a one-way ticket but without a visa to stay and work. They had in their possession a letter from someone in Salt Lake City telling Brother Contreras that there was a job waiting for him there. When the immigration officials discovered this, they told the couple that they were suspected of trying to enter this country illegally and would consequently have to take the next plane back to Colombia. The couple tried to explain that they wanted to go to the temple before they returned to Colombia. They were told that permission to remain temporarily had to come from the court, if the judge allowed it. But they would have to be kept in jail until a court time was scheduled for them to appear. Their desire to come to the temple was so great they decided they would rather stay in jail with the hope of going to the temple rather than returning to Colombia without the sealing ordinance being performed.

After they stayed in jail for a week, sleeping on cement floors, having inadequate food, and receiving no information on their court appearance, one of their relatives called President Allen Rozsa at the temple, explained the situation, and

asked if he could help. President Rozsa called an attorney friend who arranged a court date for Friday, May 3, at 10:00 a.m. The president asked Brother Ego Gabasa, the temple recorder, who could speak Spanish, to go to the court and explain to the judge the meaning of a temple sealing. Brother Gabasa arrived at the court before the appointed time and was told that due to a delay, a different judge would see them at 2:00 p.m. When they walked into the courtroom that afternoon, Brother Gabasa started to tell the judge why the couple wanted to go to the temple before returning to Colombia. The judge interrupted and explained that he was also a Latter-day Saint, understood well why the couple wanted to go to the temple, and gave them permission to do so.

Brother Gabasa returned to the temple, informed the president of the events of the day, and reported that the couple planned to be at the temple in time to attend the 6:00 p.m. session, which meant they needed to be in the temple by 4:15 p.m. in order to avoid being rushed with registration procedures, initiatory ordinances, and so forth. At 5:00 p.m. the couple still had not arrived.

Finally, at 5:45 p.m., they came into the temple with two immigration security guards—a man and a woman. The guard was very aggravated about the situation and said the couple had to leave by 7:00 p.m. in order to make the 8:30 p.m. flight to Colombia. Furthermore, the guard informed the president that the law required personal constant surveillance of the couple. The president replied that this was impossible to do. The guard said that he would allow the couple to be in the temple without security guards only with a \$1,000 certified check. As he was concerned with schedules and legal immigration matters, the guard seemed uncooperative and upset as he explained the seriousness of his responsibility in following legal established procedures to insure departure and deportation. Arriving in the temple at that late hour made it impossible for the Contreras to complete the endowment and sealing sessions in time to meet the scheduled flight to Colombia. Consequently, President Rozsa inquired about the possibility of having them delay their flight until the following day. In reply, the guard explained that the request was possible, provided the temple paid for food and lodging accommodations until the next day. The president agreed to do this and agreed to arrangements to have the couple return the following day, Saturday, at 10:00 a.m. The guard reminded the president that the \$1,000 bond or certified check was still required prior to the couple receiving immigration permission to enter the temple without security accompaniment during the entire time.

Early the next morning, Sister Kay Welchman began making telephone calls in an attempt to locate a bank that was open and would issue a certified check. Problems ensued as the bank with which the temple did business was closed, and other financial institutions issued certified checks only to their own customers. Upon the president's suggestion, Kay called the post office, arranged to pay for a money order with a check, and arrived there only to find that a money order could be purchased only with cash. Meanwhile, because the temple presidency had gone to meet their sealing schedule, it became Sister Rozsa's responsibility to resolve the dilemma. After calling friends who were bank presidents but were not at home, it was decided that as much cash as was available would be given to the guard, and he would have to accept it! She prayed that the guard would have his heart softened and that the young couple would be able to accomplish that which they had come to the United States to achieve.

Brother and Sister Contreras arrived at the temple with the two guards about 11:00 a.m. Being an hour late was an additional concern to the temple personnel not involved in the situation. The couple was greeted at the recommend desk by Brother Gabasa. The change that had come over the guard in charge was unbelievable! He accepted the check that had been made out to the postal service as security and said he would return to the temple in about three hours. The guard further added that if they needed additional time, it would not be a problem. As the guards left, it was suggested to them that they might enjoy going to the visitors' center to become acquainted with the doctrines of the Church. They smiled as they left and said they would like to learn more.

"There was such a sweet spirit as the Contreras received the initiatory ordinance that the workers as well as the couple were in tears," temple matron Dawna Rozsa reported. "Many were very much aware of the sacrifice those young people had made to have the eternal sealing ordinance performed—his sacrifice of working to save enough money to make the trip from Colombia to the United States, the humiliation of being incarcerated for a week, sleeping on cement floors, receiving inadequate food or accommodations, worrying over what they thought was an inconvenience to the temple, embarrassed over the dilemma with the immigration service, and so forth—all this on top of Sister Contreras being pregnant."

Sacrifice does "bring forth the blessings of heaven." The sacrifices of Brother and Sister Contreras not only created a new celestial family, but, Sister Rozsa insisted, also enriched the lives of the temple workers who witnessed these sacred experiences.⁹

"There was such a sweet spirit as the Contreras received the initiatory ordinance that the workers as well as the couple were in tears. . . . Many were very much aware of the sacrifice those young people had made to have the eternal sealing ordinance performed"

There is always a way to attend the temple

Jan Dickson had a particularly difficult time attending the temple due to her having fibromyalgia, which didn't allow her to sit very long. "When I attended the temple, the pain blocked out the good feelings." She explained, "I was in pain for days afterwards."

Still, she loved to attend the Los Angeles Temple, but the suffering prevented her return. "I prayed for a way to open up so that I could go to the temple without suffering. I prayed for days, weeks, months." She poured her heart out to the Lord and then left the matter to him.

Six years later in 1992, she received a call from a ward member, Rosa Rice, who said while she was in the temple she felt prompted to reach out to Sister Dickson. They talked about Sister Dickson attending the temple, and she explained the medical reasons why she couldn't attend. Even this discussion brought back anguish. When she explained that the only way that she could attend was lying down, she thought that that would end the conversation.

Nevertheless, Sister Rice contacted the Los Angeles Temple. The presidency gave permission for Sister Dickson to attend lying down and affirmed that they would welcome her.

"I was dumbfounded," said Sister Dickson. "I almost didn't believe it."

Her husband took half a day off work to help her fulfill her dream. "I had trouble controlling the tears in my eyes," she acknowledged as she was entering the temple.

The temple provided a gurney, which eased the pain, allowing her to attend once a month. "I was so grateful." Each time she attended, she incredulously thought, "I'm here! Thank you, dear friend, for following the Spirit's prompting, for opening a door I didn't know could be opened."¹⁰

Jan Dickson's experience wasn't the only one like that. In a general conference talk, Elder Jeffery R. Holland spoke about meeting three sisters who were severely impaired by muscular dystrophy. Although having been confined to their beds since childhood, Debbie, Tanya, and Liza Avila "earn[ed] Young Women personal achievement awards, graduated from high school (including seminary), complet[ed] university correspondence courses, and [read] the standard works over and over and over again. But there has been one other abiding ambition these remarkable women were determined to see fulfilled," Elder Holland continued, "They vowed that somehow, some way, someday they would go to the house of the Lord to claim those eternal promises."

That goal was achieved in the Los Angeles Temple. “It was the most thrilling and fulfilling day of my life,” Debbie reflected. “I truly felt I was home. Everyone was so gracious and helpful with the innumerable and seemingly insurmountable arrangements that had to be made. Never in my life have I felt more loved and accepted.”

Tanya added: “The temple is the only place I have ever been where I felt truly whole. I have always felt I was a daughter of God, but only in the temple did I understand what that truly meant. The fact that I went through the experience lying horizontally with a respirator took absolutely nothing away from this sacred experience.”

Elder Holland concluded his account: “Elder Douglas Callister, who, along with the presidency and workers in the Los Angeles Temple, assisted these sisters in making their dream come true, said to me, ‘There they were, dressed in white, long black hair falling down nearly to the floor from their horizontal position, eyes filled with tears, unable to move their hands or any other part of the body except their heads, savoring, absorbing, cherishing every word, every moment, every aspect of the temple endowment.’ Debbie would later say of the experience, ‘I now know what it will be like to be resurrected, surrounded by heavenly angels, and in the presence of God.’”¹¹

Preparation before Temple Blessings

The first African-American couple sealed in the Los Angeles Temple

Robert Lang was born in Mississippi. His single mom was a Baptist, but she was so busy trying to make ends meet that she did not have much time for church activity. Still, she did plant in her son’s heart a love for the Lord. Robert’s future wife, Delores, grew up in Louisiana, where she was also a Baptist. She was active in church activities, attending Bible school and singing in the choir. She married her first husband at seventeen, and they had three children.

Moving to Southern California, Robert went into the appliance repair business. This vocation would directly lead to both Robert and Delores becoming members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When Robert went into a Hollywood shop to buy parts he needed, the subject of religion came up. “I started talking to this fellow that was running the store,” Robert recalled. “He answered questions I had been asking throughout my lifetime and nobody could answer. I got interested. I had some more questions, and he had more answers.

“I came to find out he was selling more than parts. He was actually selling the gospel”

The thing got to be pretty good, so I went back and visited him again. I came to find out he was selling more than parts. He was actually selling the gospel.” Robert began taking the missionary discussions, gave up smoking and drinking, and eventually was baptized on June 5, 1970. About that same time, he and his first wife were divorced.

Meanwhile, Delores had also moved to Southern California and was divorced in 1973. She needed a washing machine and bought it from Robert Lang. “I couldn’t understand why he didn’t smoke or do any of those type of things,” Delores reflected. “He was a very intelligent man. He came over each week to pick up the money for the washing machine. I would invite him over for dinner. He started talking about the Church and explaining it to me.” At first she didn’t want to attend church with Robert but did let her children go. She gave her son a quarter to put in the collection plate. When he returned home with the quarter, she thought the boy just wanted to keep it, but he insisted that they didn’t take up a collection at the Mormon Church. “Next week I am going to go to church and see,” she announced. She was amazed to find that there really was no collection nor paid ministry. “So I went back the next Sunday, and I got interested in the investigators’ class,” she acknowledged.

Then her seven-year-old daughter got burned severely and lived only another month. Delores didn’t understand that she could raise her daughter in the next life. “At the time, I thought when you are dead, that is it,” she lamented. But the investigators’ class instructor explained the plan of salvation to her from the scriptures. She was thrilled and was baptized June 28, 1974. Later that year, she and Robert were married. He became like a real father to her children.¹²

The Langs would live in the Inglewood Ward, but the missionaries who taught them were concerned because there were no other African Americans there. However, the Langs were well received, and both soon had callings in the ward. Since the early days of the Church, blacks had not been ordained to the priesthood. Still, the Langs made it a point to live the gospel as faithfully as they could. Robert became first counselor in the Sunday School presidency since holding the priesthood was not required for that calling. Dolores worked in the library, was Young Women secretary, and worked in the nursery.

Each Sunday in sacrament meetings, Robert and Delores sat with their two boys on the row right behind the deacons. The boys were dressed in their white shirts and ties and carefully watched what the deacons would do. One Sunday a ward member, Marilyn Mills, asked Brother Lang about this weekly routine. “Isn’t

this hard on you and your boys sitting behind the deacons each Sunday and not holding the priesthood?”

Brother Lang replied with strong conviction: “We are going to hold the priesthood someday. I want my boys to be ready.”

Marilyn’s husband, Dean, was teaching one of the youth priesthood quorums in the ward. The Lang boys attended regularly. Brother Mills asked them their feelings about the priesthood, and, like their father, they weren’t bothered about not holding it as they felt sure they would have it someday.¹³

Robert regularly attended meetings of the elders quorum. On one occasion, Larry Johnson was leading a discussion on using consecrated olive oil to anoint and bless the sick. Robert commented that he always carried a vial of this sacred oil with him. When asked to explain, Robert affirmed, “I learned when I first joined the Church that I had to be ready to back up the priesthood.”¹⁴

Meanwhile, general Church leaders prayerfully pondered the matter of blacks and the priesthood. On June 1, 1978, President Spencer W. Kimball, whom Latter-day Saints worldwide sustained as the Lord’s prophet and their president, met with his counselors in the First Presidency and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the Salt Lake Temple to consider this matter yet once again. In the most sacred of circumstances, he received an answer to these prayers. On June 9, the official announcement declared: “The long-promised day has come when every worthy, faithful man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing flowing therefrom, including blessings of the temple” (D&C, Official Declaration 2).

On that momentous day, Robert Lang happened to stop by his home and found his wife crying. He couldn’t imagine why. “I didn’t beat her before I left this morning,” he jokingly thought. Then she told him what she had heard. “Then it dawned on me what she had said. I guess I came home at the right time to get the news!” He received calls from many people: “Brother, you are the first one I thought of when I heard the news.”

He was ordained a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood two days later and soon was called to be the ward Young Men president. In September he was ordained an elder in the Melchizedek Priesthood. “I had a temple recommend before I held the priesthood,” Robert interestingly pointed out, “I could just go [to the temple] and do baptisms.

He and Delores were sealed as husband and wife for all eternity, the first African-American couple to receive this blessing in the Los Angeles Temple. “Of

course, we are quite proud of that,” Robert admitted. On that same occasion Delores’s two sons and her little daughter who died from burns were sealed to them. Joyce Ohlwiler from Inglewood Ward, who had lost an infant daughter, was invited to act as proxy for the Lang’s little girl.

Later, Robert was called to preside over the multiethnic Southwest Los Angeles Branch, and Delores became Relief Society president. Subsequently, he became a member of the stake high council, with responsibility for family history and temple work. Robert had received his patriarchal blessing about a year after joining the Church. It promised that he would be a leader, not just among his own people, but among all races in the Church. “How the patriarch ever knew that I do not know,” Robert reflected. “He must have been talking to somebody other than somebody on earth. He also said that at that particular time he saw me in a large building dressed in white. I did not know what he was talking about until I went to the temple. How did he know that? It gives you this great feeling that this is the true church.”

When Robert was asked what the priesthood had meant in his life, he answered: “Without the priesthood, my wife and I would not be sealed together for time and all eternity. I would not be able to hold the callings that I have held and that I hold without the priesthood. I would not be able to go and do the temple ordinances without the priesthood. I would not be able to bless the sick or people in distress. Anyone receiving the priesthood should feel ten feet tall immediately.”¹⁵

“The temple is our family’s home”

After Leighton Anderson had dated Diane Pawlowski for some time, he proposed marriage and she accepted. “It truly was the best decision I ever made,” he acknowledged. “But there was a problem that I didn’t even understand at that time. She was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and I was not.” In college, Leighton had begun to question his family’s born-again Christian faith. He even doubted the existence of God, believing that nothing could be known unless it could be measured scientifically. Still, he and Diane were married in 1982.

They had three children, but for the first fifteen years of marriage nothing changed for him religiously. “I used to joke that ‘CTR’ stood for ‘Can’t Take Religion.’ I used to think that there was no way I could go to church for three hours on a Sunday!” Nevertheless, as the years passed, his heart softened. “I know that the evident commitment of missionaries, and even more the love shown to me by

members of the Church, played an important role.” Furthermore, he could see how important his children’s faith was in their lives.

Then, in September 1997, Diane’s dad, Bob Pawlowski, suffered a massive stroke and died a few days later at an early age. “For our family, that became a moment that changed everything,” Leighton acknowledged. “Bob’s death was devastating for all of us.” During the week he was in the hospital, Leighton took care of the children as much as possible while Diane was spending time with her family. “I can remember being at home with the kids and talking with the bishop on the phone about how things were going. He was so kind and concerned that my heart was touched.”

Grandpa Bob’s brothers and sisters all came to the funeral. Leighton remembered meeting “Uncle Dick” in the parking lot after the service. “He is a very warm, very outgoing man, and he is someone who does not hesitate to express his opinions. He shook my hand and he said, ‘You’re patriarch of your family now. When are you going to get baptized and join the Church?’”

I have no idea what I said in response, but his words hit me like a slap in the face. I can picture speaking to Diane at home later that same day. I wanted her to know that I had a change of heart. I told her that I wanted to become a member of the Church. In truth, I had been thinking about it for several weeks. I had been thinking about how our children had *spiritual lives*, and that I was not a part of those lives. I had been thinking that I had always wanted to be a good father, by providing for their needs and by teaching them whatever I felt I could teach. *But it was dawning on me that, somehow, it was not enough.* Uncle Dick’s words were just the right words, at just the right time.



*Sculpture of a family group near the temple.
(Leif Erickson)*

To be baptized, he still needed to be taught and to gain a testimony. Therefore Diane and he contacted the sister missionaries assigned to their ward and said, “You’re the lucky ones.” As he took the discussions, his testimony grew, and on March 8, 1998, he was baptized.

After that, it was hard to wait a year before going to the temple,” Leighton acknowledged. “But in March 1999 I received my own endowment in the beautiful Los Angeles Temple. In another week after that, we returned to the temple as a family to be sealed.”

There has never been a more joyous and fulfilling moment in my life. The room was beautiful, and we were dressed in purest white. I had the opportunity to kneel across the altar in a sealing room while Diane and I were sealed together for time and all eternity. Then the doors to the room were pulled open, and our three children were led in, all dressed in white. They were crying, and we were crying, but the tears were tears of joy. We all knelt together as we were sealed as a family.

We all remember that day. Our children's lives were enriched by that experience, and they can all recall it well—a marriage that was sometimes fun, sometimes tense, became solid, committed, and eternal all because of covenants made in the Los Angeles Temple. We have been unified as a family, and as an eternal family. *That moment in the temple has meant everything to us.* It bonds us together more tightly than we were before. We call that date every year our family anniversary. There is no more spiritual division among us. There is no more “temporal dad,” with “spiritual dad” gone missing.

After the children were grown and married, Leighton and Diane made it a point to continue attending the temple monthly. “Now, our children are grown and married. Two of them have children of their own. Diane and I make a point to attend the temple once a month as a couple. This “strengthens us, and it strengthens our marriage,” Leighton testified. “It reminds us of the eternal nature of our relationship.” The Andersons had the blessing of being present when each of their children received the endowment and was sealed to an eternal companion. “Those sealings have not all taken place in Los Angeles (but two of three isn’t bad),” Leighton conceded, “but the Los Angeles Temple will always be our family’s home.”¹⁶

The Joy of Temple Service

A special experience for President Hunter

Howard W. Hunter, then president of the Pasadena Stake and one who played a key role in the construction of the Los Angeles Temple, had one of the great experiences of his life while this temple was still being built. On his forty-sixth birthday, November 14, 1953, he had led one of his stake’s last excursions to the Arizona Temple in Mesa. Unknown to him, his parents, who lived in Idaho and had not yet been endowed, quietly made arrangements with the temple president in Arizona to have their own temple ordinances performed that day as a special birthday surprise for their son.

As President Hunter addressed members of his stake assembled in the temple chapel, he got the surprise of his life. “While I was speaking to the congregation, my father and mother came into the chapel dressed in white. I had no idea my father was prepared for his temple blessings, although Mother had been anxious about it for some time. I was so overcome with emotion that I was unable to continue to speak.” He then had the special privilege of accompanying his parents as they received the endowment and other temple ordinances. “I had the privilege of witnessing their sealing, following which I was sealed to them.”¹⁷

A sterling silver gift for Betty

On her twelfth birthday, Betty Clark received a sterling silver charm of the Salt Lake Temple. “I knew my parents expected me to live worthy to be married in a temple,” just as they had been, Betty realized. “I really liked the well-crafted charm so much that I didn’t add it to my charm bracelet, popular in those days. I wore it as a necklace around my neck. I had been taught the meaning of a house of the Lord, even at the age of twelve.”

Years later, when Betty met the right person, Jack McEwan, she was endowed and sealed to him in the Salt Lake Temple. “Although I didn’t understand everything presented,” Betty reflected, “I felt a strong spirit of goodness, and I knew that I was a witness to light and truth. I could not deny that the Lord’s loving Spirit was present, and I knew I was where I was supposed to be. On that day, I desired to learn and to know more about the temple and about covenants. I had experienced something new in my life, and it was wonderful.”

In 1956, after the McEwans had three sons, the Los Angeles Temple was dedicated. “My husband and I desired to attend the temple monthly, and we did achieve our goal, together or with friends. We learned to leave every care outside the temple and to enter with our hearts and minds alert to concentrate on the meaningful presentation of the great gift of the endowment. We were ready to learn and to receive what the Lord would have us know and do. We have always left the house of the Lord with a renewed spirit and with courage for the days ahead and whatever they would bring.”

“In later life it was a joy to serve in the temple as ordinance workers and to observe the dedication and devotion of those who served the Lord there. When we had the humble honor of being in the presidency of the Los Angeles Temple, then serving as president and matron, we truly learned that the Lord is in charge. Being in a temple has truly blessed our lives in so many wonderful and helpful

ways throughout our many years, and it does to this day, even in the nineties of our lives.” The special silver charm still hangs in a gold frame in the McCunes’ home.¹⁸

“Families can be together”

Edward R. Ludloff, of the Long Beach East Stake, had a special experience in an endowment session: “I was seated next to two biological Korean brothers who had brought their families from Korea to attend the Los Angeles Temple. As I watched these brothers, you could tell their excitement as their faces were aglow, and they had wide smiles throughout the session. As their families came together in the celestial room at the end of the session, there were hugs, kisses, and smiles.” Brother Ludloff wanted to share the same experience with his own family.

When his grandchildren asked what he wanted for his birthday, it was simple—he wanted his family to go to the temple together on his birthday. On that special Friday, all the family, with the exception of one who couldn’t come, took time off from work and came from Bakersfield, Cerritos, Long Beach, and even Dallas as they joined together in the temple. “As we met in the celestial room, once again there were hugs, kisses, and a feeling of love and peace. We found joy to be together in the house of the Lord. We knew we would be together throughout all time and all eternity as a family.”¹⁹

“I walked today where Jesus walked”

*“I felt as though
I was truly
walking where
heavenly beings
came each
day to receive
their eternal
blessings. Those
are very sacred
memories never
to be forgotten”*

Joan Stott had a memorable experience when she attended an endowment session with her husband in the Los Angeles Temple, where members move as a company from room to room during sessions. As she was walking from the world room to the terrestrial room, an overwhelming impression came over her that Jesus Christ had walked that very hall. She could not deny that strong impression, which was “very moving and very personal.” After becoming an ordinance worker there, she had the privilege of walking down that same hall weekly. “I cherish the knowledge I gained that day. I testify that the Lord visits his temples, that it is his house, and that the work done there is of an eternal nature. The veil is thin in the temple and experiences like this are common among those who frequent it. The peace I feel inside the temple cannot be found anywhere else on the earth.”²⁰

Temple President Myrthus W. Evans expressed a similar feeling: “It was my special privilege many nights, after the temple was closed and the lights were out, to walk alone through all the rooms of the temple. The quiet, sublime stillness

which permeated that beautiful sacred edifice was heavenly, and I felt as though I was truly walking where heavenly beings came each day to receive their eternal blessings. Those are very sacred memories never to be forgotten.”²¹

Behind the scenes

“Here come our temple angels—we surely need them today!” That’s how Robert and Phyllis Anderson were often greeted as they arrived each week for another day’s service in the laundry room at the Los Angeles Temple. They were among the hundreds of volunteers who help with a variety of temporal tasks behind the scenes. For five years, they traveled in their motor home from Newport Beach fifty miles up the San Diego freeway to the temple where they helped launder the mountains of white clothing needed in temple service.

They originally came as part of a ward assignment, but they saw a need and continued to come. “When we walk into the Lord’s temple, we know we are where we belong,” Sister Anderson affirmed. “Bob and I both felt at home, and we felt inspired to continue. It has been a delight to have the associations we have here. We have come to love every one of those brothers and sisters we work with.”

“Every time we travel, we try to go to as many temples as we can,” Robert explained, “and we always stop in the temple laundry room and pick up ideas.”

Temple President Jack B. McEwan described the Andersons as “among the Lord’s workers who have discovered the happiness, joy, satisfaction, that comes to those who give service to others.”²²

Strengthening families

Soon after Christopher and Linda Haws moved to the Los Angeles area, they took their children to the temple grounds to let them see the beauty of the building and location. “Our children have enjoyed going to the visitors’ center to see the statue of Christ and hearing his words spoken to us through the audio recording of several scriptures.” They also enjoy what they call the “Jerusalem room,” where they could see the Old City in display and choose videos that teach of Christ and help express faith in our Savior.

“The temple also blessed our lives,” they testified, “by tying us to our eternal families, letting us be of service to those who need eternal ordinances, and reminding us of who we are, and whose we are. We were able to make this large and glorious building become a part of our worship as we took family names there to finish the ordinance work for them.”



*Sculpture of a family group
in front of the temple.
(Leif Erickson)*

Though they began their lives in Southern California “in awe of the large population,” Brother and Sister Haws felt that serving in the temple could bring “solitude, peace, and comfort. Here, our faith would grow. We’ve gone to the temple several times to pray and to receive answers to our prayers that would affect the direction of our eternal family. We’ve gone in times of distress, loss, and sorrow, and we have felt how much the Lord loves us even in our trials.” They believed that the majestic Los Angeles Temple served as a reminder of God’s plan and his endless love for them, its large size reminding them that God has great plans for them as they obey his commandments and desire to be with him.²³

A special moment in the youth center

For many years, Renae Rollo worked as a volunteer in the youth center of the Los Angeles Temple. “I really enjoyed my time there working with the children and preparing them to be sealed to their parents,” she reflected. “Having never had the blessing of being sealed to a spouse myself, it was a great blessing to see these families put their all into being sealed as a family.” One day, however, was quite a challenge.

Once I was assigned to a baby about six months old. He was going to be with us for about three hours before being sealed to his parents, who were being endowed and sealed as husband and wife first. This little boy was not happy to be there at the youth center. He screamed and cried pretty much nonstop for about an hour and a half. I took him into the crib room and turned off the lights and let him scream in the crib because if he even saw me out of the corner of his eye, he would scream louder. His little body was rigid and his fists were clenched. He was miserable.

I sat behind him, out of his sight, but sang Primary songs to him. He continued to cry. After a while I decided I would talk to him. I told him how grateful I was to be a part of this wonderful day when he would be sealed to his parents and what an honor it was to witness this great event. I said, “When we are in the spirit world and can talk as equals, I will be able to look you in the eye and both of us will know what we have shared. It will be a special moment.”

Immediately he stopped crying. I almost held my breath. Then he twisted himself around and looked directly at me. I felt the spirit so strong that we were communicating.

I then said, “You know what I’m saying, don’t you?” And then he smiled. From then on he was a happy little baby, not fussing at all. He remained in this happy state all the way through the sealing, and it was a beautiful, spirit-filled event.

I will never forget this little boy and look forward to meeting him in the spirit world. Working in the youth center of the temple has been a true blessing in my life.²⁴

Divine Assistance

A fireman comes to the rescue

As part of a sacrament meeting talk in his Newhall ward, David Grate related an experience he had not long before. On a stormy Saturday morning, he was heading off to begin his forty-eight-hour shift as a fireman. He planned to buy fuel for his tractor on his way home the following Monday morning. Instead of taking the accustomed shortest route to the freeway, however, he drove through town and stopped to buy the fuel right then, completely contrary to his anticipated plan.

As he pulled into the gas station, he noticed that a man was searching the trunk of his car and that the car had a flat tire. He described what happened.

I thought to myself, “That poor guy has a flat in this miserable weather. Too bad for him it is dark and chilly out there. Too bad Paul (my son) is on his mission. If he were here, I am sure he would have certainly jumped out and helped him while I filled up the diesel tanks.” Then I saw that there was a companion in the car, a gentleman with a cane or a walker.

I started to fill my fuel tank, but I couldn’t ignore the situation any longer, as much as I wanted to. I turned toward the stranger, walked across the driveway, and noticed immediately through the darkness he was wearing a white shirt. Then I noticed the white tie. “Who wears white ties?” I asked myself.

I forgot about the cold, the sprinkling rain, and my own fuel tanks. I offered my help and didn’t wait for an answer. The gentleman spoke in an Italian accent and had a perceptible, wonderful aura about him. I thought again, “Who would be here at this time in the morning dressed in a white shirt unless they were going to the temple?” He reluctantly allowed me to help him for fear that I might soil my hands removing the flat tire. I just looked at the car jack and said, “Brother, we need to get you to the temple.”

He heard me! He looked at me while I moved the car jack into place and said with surprise, “You know the temple? I am a Mormon; are you too?” I assured him that I was, and we changed the tire.

Brother Grate then closed his sacrament meeting talk with the admission that he had been too wrapped up in his own limited world and therefore almost missed this opportunity to help another person in need.

The Gospel Doctrine class following sacrament meeting was taught by Brian Sheffield, then an assistant recorder at the Los Angeles Temple. After an opening prayer, he began the lesson by announcing that there was a “rest of the story.” He explained that the temple worker with the flat tire had arrived late at the temple that morning. He told Brother Sheffield about the experience he had with a stranger who helped him with his car. Brother Sheffield said that the worker was in tears as he told him of the “angel” who had stopped to help him. “He didn’t know his name but knew that he had been sent from heaven. There wasn’t any other way that he would have been able to come that morning without his assistance.” Brother Sheffield announced that this was Brother Alberto Buccarelli, a faithful ordinance worker on the Saturday morning shift, accompanied by Brother Don Fee, who has probably done more ordinance work than any single individual in the area.

As Brother Grate reflected on this experience, he realized that “Brother Buccarelli did more for me that cold, wet, dark morning than I could ever do for him. He gave me, a stranger to him, a big, generous, sincere hug and said, ‘Thank you, brother, for coming to help us.’ He virtually lifted me up higher than any car jack ever could. I walked with joy the rest of that day because of his embrace.” Those who heard this story felt sure that the Lord had a part in Brother Grate’s unexplained departure from his planned route that stormy Saturday morning.²⁵

After hours

Two young brothers living in the Los Angeles Temple district were taught by the missionaries and converted to the gospel. They became very enthusiastic about family history and researched diligently to find one hundred of their ancestors for whom the temple work could be done. A few weeks before the temple work could be accomplished, one of the brothers was killed in an accident.

The surviving brother desired to have the temple work done for these family members all at the same time. He invited one hundred of his friends and other members in his stake to help him with the ordinances.

One afternoon, about 4:00, he arrived at the Los Angeles Temple with his friends. They were eager to have the work done. Shortly after their arrival, President Allen Rozsa “just happened” to be walking by the family file and heard the sister in charge say, “I’m sorry, there’s nothing I can do.”

President Rozsa asked what the problem was and was told the young man’s story. After doing the family history work to gather his one hundred ancestors, he had sent all the family names to the Church Genealogy Department and had received approval for the work to be done. However, the Los Angeles Temple had never received any information about his records. The genealogy department was closed for the day so could not be reached.

President Rozsa then instructed the family file sister to call the Salt Lake Temple to see if they had a number for the genealogy department that could be used after hours. The sister made the call and explained the situation. When she asked the operator if there was such a number she replied, “Just a minute, I’ll connect you.”

After the connection was made and the situation explained again, the family file worker in Los Angeles and the after-hours worker in Salt Lake compared all the names over the phone. The Los Angeles Temple was given permission to have the work done. The young man and his one hundred friends went into the temple and proceeded to complete the work for his family.

Shortly after the group began their work, President Rozsa went back to family file and asked them to call Salt Lake again and get the after-hours number. It could be a valuable resource in the future. However, when the call was made to the Salt Lake Temple, the answer was, “There is no such number!” President Rozsa persisted, stating that he had just called the number. However, the answer remained the same, “There is no such number.”

“When we do all we can do, the Lord does the rest,” President Rozsa reflected. “Those of us who were there that day were given a glimpse of the Lord’s power and the love that the Lord has for his children.”²⁶

“My keys still do not open the ground-floor baptistry door”

Brian L. Sheffield, the Los Angeles Temple assistant recorder, provided the following account:

I was called to the front desk to assist a sister who spoke only Spanish. [I had served my mission in Chile so could help.] I arrived at the desk and noticed three people who were anxiously looking for someone they could speak to. I was introduced to Cecilia, who, I was told, had just flown in from Argentina. She looked to be approximately

twenty years old, five feet tall, slightly built, and she possessed a countenance of purity. She was attended by two of her relatives, an aunt and a sister-in-law, also both from Argentina.

Cecilia, I found out, was a member of the church and a recent convert. The others were not members. Cecilia expressed to me that she had a great desire to participate in baptisms for the dead and that her highest priority in coming to the United States was to be in the temple. I noticed as I spoke to her that she was not looking directly at me, [so I suspected] that she might have some sort of visual impairment. It was confirmed to me that she was indeed blind. I told Cecilia that I would escort her to the baptistry and they would assist her while the other family members waited for her in the foyer area.

I took her by the hand and escorted her down the stairs, describing in advance the path that we were taking. When we arrived at the baptistry, I was told by the coordinator, Sister Cope, that they would be happy to gather some priesthood brethren to assist, but we had no baptizer and might not be able to find one for a while. There was only one approach that felt right. I told Sister Cope to take Cecilia to the locker area and that I would dress to be the baptizer.

After we were both dressed, I escorted Cecilia into the water. The brethren were there to assist, and the baptism extraction lists that were available happened to all be Spanish names. We participated in that great saving ordinance for twenty anxious waiting souls, and each time she came up out of the water, there was a radiant smile on her face. She then sat in proxy for the same names and was confirmed for each.

Upon dressing, the spirit became overwhelming. There was still something missing. Even though all of this eternal work had just taken place, I could feel that Cecilia had a longing for something more. She didn't want to leave. There was something else she needed to experience for the first time. I took her again by the hand, and we walked over to the font. There, I started to visually describe the room and our surroundings—the picture of the Savior being baptized by John the Baptist, the picture of Christ teaching on the American continent, those that might be witnessing the baptisms seated reverently to our left were all part of the descriptive detail.

As I scanned the remaining areas of the baptistry, my eyes came across the foundation of the font, which was one flight of stairs below us. I had never been in the ground floor area of the baptistry before but felt prompted that I should make an attempt to enter. I told Cecilia to wait for just a moment and I would return. I removed the keys from my pocket and tried to open the locked door. None of the keys I had would work.

I went back up the stairs to where Cecilia was standing and took her by the hand and walked down the stairs again. I removed the keys from my pocket and felt that I should try again. The door opened. We slowly entered the ground floor of the

baptistry. I started to describe what was in front of us and then gently took Cecilia's hand and placed it on the ear of the ox and said "oreja." We circled to our left and we touched the "ojo" [eye] and then the "boca" [mouth]. I started by counting each ox and when we got to "tres" [three], she continued out loud "cuatro, cinco," and "seis" [four, five, and six] until she had caressed each of the twelve oxen. Tears were streaming, and I now understood the reason and the need for a prolonged lingering in the house of the Lord.

I took Cecilia's hand one more time and went to greet her waiting relatives. They were in the process of asking her if she enjoyed her experience, but they were interrupted as she embraced each one of them with open arms and a glorious smile. They knew and could feel something special had just taken place.

My keys still do not open the ground-floor baptistry door.²⁷

Meeting the prophet

Veronica Martinez described an unforgettable experience at the Los Angeles Temple: "My husband and I had been saving money to be able to go to Utah and attend a conference to see the prophet. Every time something came up, however, we had to use our savings. Then my husband started working at the Los Angeles Temple as a security guard. He was so excited to be able to work at the temple. I had never seen him as enthusiastic as I saw him that day."

As time passed, plans were announced for President Gordon B. Hinckley to attend a meeting in the temple. "My husband was so happy," Veronica recalled, "because we would be able to see the prophet. We didn't need to travel to Utah—he was coming to us!" But then to their dismay, Brother Martinez was no longer needed as a security guard so was let go. "We were devastated," Veronica lamented. "We had been so close to fulfilling one of our wishes. We decided we weren't going to give up, however. We would continue to save our money to be able to fulfill our wish to attend a conference and meet the prophet. But a little later, to our great joy, my husband was called back to work. He was given an invitation letter so we could attend the special meeting with the prophet with all the employees from the temple. We could not believe it; our prayers had been answered!"

When the day came, Brother and Sister Martinez didn't want to be late. She was pregnant, however, so it took her a little longer to walk; her husband was so nervous and kept on rushing her. He was worried they wouldn't find a parking space. She told him, "We will be there on time; don't worry. Everything will be fine." As they entered the temple grounds, her husband exclaimed in exasperation,

"We decided we weren't going to give up, however. We would continue to save our money to be able to fulfill our wish to attend a conference and meet the prophet"

“I told you, no parking space.” She reassured him that they would find one. “As we passed the temple gates,” Veronica related, “there was one parking space just for us.”

There were temple escorts with a wheelchair for me. It still brings tears to my eyes as I recall that moment. I was not expecting having escorts and parking almost in front of the entrance. We were taken to an elevator and then all the way up to the special meeting room. It was packed, but we were escorted to the very aisle the prophet was going to walk through. The prophet was coming into the room. I remember the hymn “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet” playing in the background as President Hinckley walked down the aisle greeting and shaking hands. He went right past me, and all I did was freeze. He just continued walking about four to six steps more in front of me, then he turned back and looked straight into my eyes and smiled, and I knew he was a prophet of God. I felt the tears of joy coming down my face.²⁸

Meeting Brother Rubalcava

James T. Chase of the Torrance Stake had a remarkable experience in the Los Angeles Temple, which he was convinced was no coincidence. Rather than calling for volunteers, his high priest group leader had set up a calendar for the entire year according to which each member would participate in ward sealing assignments. So on a Saturday morning—not their usual time—James and his wife went to the temple to fulfill their commitment.

They arrived early and checked in with the sealing coordinator. Soon the others from their ward also came in. Meanwhile, one Hispanic brother came for a Spanish sealing session, but no others from his expected group had arrived. They also were waiting for the two sealers—one for English and one for Spanish. Brother Chase recalled:

After a brief wait, the Spanish sealer came in and was asked to conduct our English session since his Spanish group had not arrived. He was introduced to us as Brother Rubalcava. That rang a bell because I knew a Rubalcava family in the mission field in Mexico that I had often thought about, so I was thinking that I’d ask him after the session if he knew the family (although Rubalcava is a relatively common name, and he was too old to be a descendant). At the conclusion of the session, I went to shake the hands of the sealer and ask about the family I had known, and I read his name tag—Nefi Rubalcava. That first name Nefi (Nephi) is very uncommon and is the name of the member that I knew in Mexico. I asked him in Spanish if he was from Chihuahua,

Chihuahua, and, with a puzzled look, he answered, “Si?” (Yes). I then asked him if he had a sister named Friné. More puzzled he answered, “Si?” It had to be the same member I knew. I announced to him that he and I used to go missionary teaching and visiting together in Chihuahua. My companion and I would “split up” occasionally with the local branch missionaries or members to do visits.

I had no idea that he was now living in the United States and was a regular sealer in the Los Angeles Temple. He was scheduled to conduct a Spanish sealing session, but, because the other Spanish group had not shown up and the English sealer (who had always been there) had not shown up, he was transferred to our session. Had the entire Spanish group shown up he would have gone with that group and had our scheduled sealer shown up, we would have been with him. Also, had my assignment been for a different day or time, I would have missed that experience and still not known that he was here working as a sealer in the Los Angeles Temple. The Lord knows our schedules and makes the necessary adjustments.

A “coincidence”? Yes, the same kind of “coincidence” that occurred when the fishermen-disciples were unsuccessful catching any fish after a full night of fishing and were told by the Lord to cast their nets on the other side of the boat (John 21:3–6); they couldn’t pull all the fish in. Coincidences don’t exist with the Lord.²⁹

Sister Toro’s dream

For many years, Bobbi Toro of Thousand Oaks had a desire to learn more about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. But her husband, Frank, had not shared her interest. In 1981, after being away for some time creating special effects for movies, he returned home and learned that his wife had an appointment to listen to the Mormon missionaries in the home of their Latter-day Saint neighbors. This time Frank “felt impressed to follow her,” so he cleaned himself up and put aside his jug of wine.

“He listened, and this time the lessons took. His conversion was instantaneous,” his wife gratefully reported. “It was incredible to watch him change.” Bobbi, who had already attended Church meetings, was also ready for baptism, so they joined the Church together.

For a year and a half before their baptism, Sister Toro had been receiving some special spiritual impressions, feeling that her deceased grandmother was trying to talk to her. She was “standing with arms outstretched near a pool of water.” She seemed to want something, but Sister Toro didn’t know what it was.

A year after the Toros' baptism, they went to the Los Angeles Temple to be sealed. "As they came out of the temple enveloped in the serenity of that special experience," they stood in front of the reflecting pool. At that moment, Sister Toro realized the pool seemed familiar; it was what she had seen in her dream. She knew that "her relatives had been asking to have their temple work done." Consequently, for the next several months she gathered needed genealogical data and performed saving ordinances for these precious loved ones. "I had tears in my eyes when we came to my grandma's name." Bobbi Toro testified, "I look forward to the day when I can see my grandma again and thank her for helping my testimony to grow."³⁰

*The reflecting pool.
(Scott Cannon)*



Not lost in Los Angeles

In the fall of 1986, John Taylor relocated from Dallas to Los Angeles and moved into an apartment in Pasadena. He would be working with a large law firm downtown. He had suffered a broken engagement the year before and had no friends in Los Angeles, so he felt very sad and lonely. Furthermore, John's new job wasn't to start for two weeks, so he was very much at loose ends in a strange place and felt "God could lose me here." He described why that didn't happen:

"One day I felt impressed to drive to the Los Angeles Temple the following morning to attend an endowment session," John recalled.

I woke up quite early, fought the cross-town commuting traffic from Pasadena to Westwood, and entered the temple. In the large clothing rental room, I was surprised to see an old friend who had been the elders quorum instructor in the University Ward in Cambridge when I was attending law school. I had no idea he was living in the Los Angeles area, and he had no idea I had moved into town. We talked, and he mentioned how strange it was that he was at the temple on a workday at that time. He said that he had felt impressed that he needed to attend the temple that morning, and when he saw me there he believed that was the reason. He had gotten married since I'd known him in Cambridge, and he and his wife invited me over for dinner shortly afterward.

It was great that I had an opportunity to reconnect with my friend. But more importantly, it was a tender mercy that sent me a powerful message from the Lord. I felt that in the midst of a city of more than ten million people, he was telling me as clearly as possible that he was aware of me as an individual, that he was not going to "lose" me, and that whatever hardships lay ahead he would be with me. I had many very challenging experiences in Los Angeles to come after that, but many great blessings as well, and within three years I had purchased a house within a half mile of the Los Angeles Temple, and met and married my wife.³¹

In their own tongue

In the summer of 1990, several members of the Cambodian branch in the Long Beach area wondered about going to the temple. The Los Angeles Temple was contacted to see about the possibility of having a session in Cambodian. Officials at Church headquarters in Utah felt the translation could be available in November. With that in mind, the temple preparation class started, and several members were called to attend. After some delays, the translation was finally approved in

May, and President Wayne A. Reeves, the temple president, went to Salt Lake to personally pick up the film and the sacred material cards.

On the appointed day in June 1991, many members from the branch and the stake were at the Los Angeles Temple for the special occasion. This would be the first time in the Church that the Cambodian translation would be used, and they were all very excited. As the session was about to start, there was unusual activity among some of the ordinance workers. Earlier that morning, the new film had been tested, and everything had worked perfectly. The translation was coming on the headsets so that the Cambodian members would be able to hear it in their own language. As they prepared for the session, however, it appeared that the headsets would not work. The only way to hear the session in Cambodian would be over the speaker system in the room. The temple president decided that the session would be in Cambodian and that if anyone needed English, they would use the headsets.

As the session finished, President Reeves met the group in the celestial room and told them that they had witnessed a miracle that morning in the Los Angeles Temple. As soon as the group had left the session room, the workers again tried to get the Cambodian translation on the headsets, and everything was working just as it had done earlier that morning. The president told us with strong emotion that he was very sure that Heavenly Father had wanted this—that the very first time the temple ordinances were given in Cambodian that they would be given in such a way that everyone in the room could hear the ordinance.³²

Serving in the temple

As Scott Anderson was sitting at his work desk one day, he felt the distinct impression that he should become an ordinance worker in the Los Angeles Temple. He shrugged the prompting off and thought nothing of it. However, a short while later the same feeling returned, and he knew he should share this prompting with his wife, Katie. He texted her with his prompting, and she responded, “Yeah, with all your spare time.” (At that time, Scott was working more than forty hours a week, served in a Young Men presidency, and had four small children.) He told her that he was serious, and she assured him that she would support him.

Several weeks passed, and he still had not acted on the prompting, mainly because he had no idea how to proceed. “Should I speak with my bishop? Call the temple directly?” About that time he attended his stake conference, at which one of the speakers was Paul G. Moncur of the Los Angeles Temple presidency. He stood at the pulpit and pleaded with the members to find time to serve in the

temple because there was a severe shortage of temple workers. “I immediately felt like this was something I needed in my life and resolved to find a way to sign up,” Scott determined. “Thankfully the spirit had already softened my heart at work a few weeks earlier, as I felt ready to accept President Moncur’s message.”

Later that week, Scott and Katie were in the celestial room after a stake endowment session, and a member of the stake presidency asked Scott if he would be willing to be an ordinance worker. He quickly responded positively. With his bishop’s approval, Scott’s name was then referred to the temple.

Several weeks later, he interviewed with President Moncur, who explained that this assignment was a two-year commitment. Scott agreed and was set apart that day as an ordinance worker. “Looking back, I realize this was a *huge* commitment,” Scott acknowledged, “but while I was in his office, this did not matter. I knew this was something I had to do.” He selected the Saturday morning shift (6:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) because he felt this would impact his family the least. Several weeks later, he began his assignment as an ordinance worker. “I still remember my first morning. I walked in the front doors of the Los Angeles Temple, showed my recommend, and was greeted by my trainer, Brother Dane Nielsen of Ventura. He showed me to the locker room on the fourth floor. After I dressed in my temple whites, he took me to the chapel next to the baptistry for prayer meeting. I remember feeling nervous but welcomed by everyone. Brother Nielson continued to assist/train me for a month or so, until I was fully ready.”

Six months into his assignment, Scott was called to serve in his bishopric, which disqualified him from working any longer as an ordinance worker. He felt that his temple experience prepared him for this new calling. “I am grateful to have served in the house of the Lord, administering saving ordinances that bind families for eternity. I am grateful for the many wonderful individuals that I had a chance to serve with and learn from. I am also grateful for my wife, who never issued a word of complaint while I was gone. Lastly, I am grateful that I listened to the prompting to serve in the temple. There is no other experience in this world that compares to serving in the Lord’s house.”³³

“I am grateful that I listened to the prompting to serve in the temple. There is no other experience in this world that compares to serving in the Lord’s house”

“Sing, choirs of angels”

On a temple day for the Thousand Oaks Stake, Kathrine Zeedik’s sister Ginger and other stake members were in the Los Angeles Temple early to participate in sealings, initiatories, and endowment sessions. As Kathrine entered the temple in

the afternoon, Ginger and her husband beamed as they reported that they had already exceeded their goal of temple work for that day.

During the evening chapel meeting, Kathrine and her husband, Mark, sat with her parents, Roger and Kandy Zierenberg. Because by this point many stake members had gone home, the chapel was only half filled. The opening song was hymn no. 5, “High on the Mountain Top.” Kathrine reflected, “From the very first note on, I was struck with what sounded like ten choirs of angels loudly, triumphantly singing. It surprised me because I knew the voices could not have come solely from the small group of people present. I knew the singing was coming from on high. The Spirit of God was powerfully strong and overcame me like nothing I have ever felt before. I turned to my mother sitting next to me. Smiling with amazement, I asked her, ‘Do you hear the angels singing?’ She immediately nodded, smiled, and answered, ‘Yes, I’ve got chills.’ We knew we were hearing the Lord’s angels from on high right there in that very room in the temple that day. It was an experience I’ll never forget. I concluded the angels must be rejoicing from all the temple work performed that day. It was a most beautiful, exalting feeling.”

When Kathrine’s thirty-year-old sister Ginger unexpectedly died just three days later from a previously unknown heart condition, she saw that chapel experience in a different light. “I know the windows of heaven were opened to me and my mom as a gift from our Heavenly Father. I see it as a loving preparation for what was coming. It was a tender mercy for me to know that the Lord is always aware of me, and has placed his angels around me to strengthen me at times when I need it most.”

Exactly one week after Ginger’s passing, Kathrine sat in church, and that same hymn from the temple, “High on the Mountain Top,” was the closing song in sacrament meeting. “I was deeply grieving the loss of my sister and was very touched that the Lord was still aware of me and was letting me know. I didn’t hear angels that day in church, but it reminded me of that sacred, recent experience in the temple. This song will forever have new meaning for me, especially the last measure of the last verse, ‘And save ourselves with all our dead.’ I am so thankful for that beautiful and special experience in the Los Angeles Temple that day.”³⁴

Twins

Deidra and Sandra were twins. On a Saturday in about 2000, their families joined together to share in Sandra’s son receiving his endowment at the Los Angeles Temple prior to going on his mission. Deidra remembered that “there was an

element of chaos and excitement as each member of our families attended to the largest and smallest duties of simply arriving there on time.” Nevertheless, their hearts were full as they anticipated this occasion. After the hubbub of arriving at the temple, changing clothes, and acquiring the name of the deceased persons whom they would represent, the sisters sat next to each other and “decompressed in the session room.” Deidra continues her account: “When we had achieved enough serenity, we asked to see each other’s pink name slips out of routine curiosity. As we had each previously read the name on our own slip carefully and in full remembrance of the sister whose name we had been given, we (as if in slow motion) read and reread the other’s slip. We simultaneously looked at each other in disbelief and yet with a growing hope that the incredulous and wonderful had happened. Our sisters’ last names, birthplaces, and birth dates were identical. This had an element of portent that we struggled to understand.” It seemed so unlikely that twin sisters attending the temple would be given the names of twins for whom they would receive the endowment. “We concluded that Father in Heaven loved each of them as sisters to one another, and he recognized the unique sisterhood and bond between twins, such that he, through a tender mercy, made it possible for Sandy and me as twins, knowing this same love and bond, to perform their endowments at exactly the same time.”

“We marveled at the nanosecond timing which came into play to effectuate this marvel,” Deidra reflected. “We drove separately with our families. Every stoplight, the time it took to park, get dressed, take that drink of water (or not)—countless conscious and unconscious decisions contributed to the precise moment when we were given the name sequentially and learned the identity of the women we would represent. If any one of those decisions had been made differently or taken longer or shorter than they did, one of our twins would have been given to the sister preceding or following us. Thus no one would have shared their joy in the unique way that only we could.”

As the endowment session was ending, the twins spoke to the temple workers of the unique situation. “We wanted these precious twins to enter the celestial room together, just as they had already received the other parts of the endowment. The workers quickly embraced the significance of what we were asking and made the simple arrangement. We can only guess at the joy our co-twins felt as we entered the celestial room simultaneously.”

“We marveled at this miracle then, and still do. The love of Heavenly Father for these twins and their unique kind of sisterhood, and the multiples of circumstantial variables all testified as to the individual love of our Heavenly Father and

his power to bless. Sandy and I felt so privileged to be instruments in this blessing for them.”³⁵

“What are the odds?”

“I have since come to understand it was not a matter of ‘odds,’ but rather the workings of the Lord”

Three years after Jim Edmundson was baptized, he had not yet begun working on his family history. He tells how a ward sealing assignment in the Los Angeles Temple changed that. “Midway into the session, I was asked to be a proxy, and the temple sealer began to seal a husband and his wife for time and all eternity. The names of this couple were Thomas M. Edmundson and his wife, Mary E. Thacker. When he said Edmundson, I took note, thinking it was just a coincidence; but when he said Thacker, I was really excited and was pretty sure that they were my relatives.”

When Jim returned home and checked his family records, he confirmed that these people were a part of his family. “Wow! That morning I had helped to seal my great-grandfather and great-grandmother (on my father’s side) for time and for all eternity! I had not brought these names to be sealed that day, nor did I have any indication that those names would be there.” These names had been supplied from the Church’s extraction program.

When the head sealer at the Los Angeles Temple selected six or eight forms, he pulled them at random from a stack of about one hundred. What are the odds that the one with the names of my great-grandparents would be included in the few he gave to our group? What are the odds that I would be selected to be the proxy for the men when these names came up? What if I had decided not to do sealings that day? A more spiritual question: How long had my great-grandfather and great-grandmother been waiting to be sealed? And then by me? And on and on. I have since come to understand it was not a matter of “odds,” but rather the workings of the Lord. Since that time, I have been working on my family genealogy.³⁶

“Someone special for my dad”

“When I entered the temple for the first time,” Celia Gonzales reflected, “it was a heavenly experience—feeling the presence of heavenly beings, knowing that I had received many blessings, and being aware of the Lord’s presence.” She realized that she had to extend these same blessings to her ancestors, including her own deceased father. She described a special experience with his baptism:

I looked for a worthy person to be proxy for him. When the day arrived, the person I had chosen couldn't find his temple recommend. I was disappointed but knew well how God can work things out. Saddened, I went to the temple, not knowing who could be baptized for my dad. When I arrived at the temple, everybody was so helpful. When they realized I didn't have a proxy for my father, they explained that there were youth doing baptisms for the dead and one of them could be the proxy. Reluctantly I said that would be OK, but at the same time I was pleased that my father's baptism would be done.

They took me to where the youth were and pointed to one of them who would be next and would be baptized for my father. He had his back to me, but when he turned around and I saw him, it was my nephew! I couldn't believe it! I was greatly surprised. I hadn't seen him for a long time because we lived far apart from each other. I couldn't believe that he was there at the precise moment, on the exact day. I couldn't believe it. I cried as I saw my nephew baptized for my dad. All I knew was that my father had been baptized by a very special person as I had wished. This experience lives in my heart and makes me realize that work for the dead is true.³⁷

“I dreamed of a person I didn't know”

Before having an unusual experience, Fany Borjas had only gone to the temple to participate in baptisms. “The night before going to the temple I dreamed of a person I didn't know, but I clearly remembered her name. Great was my surprise when I was baptized for her the next day.” As a result of this experience, Fanny was convinced that she wanted to return to the temple, not just to do baptisms, but to participate in endowments and sealings as well.³⁸

Penetrating the Veil

“Her voice called ‘Grandma’”

Two years after her little five-year-old granddaughter Jennifer died as the result of an automobile accident, Louise Harkins Lents was seated for the 6:00 p.m. session. “I had just started to meditate when I heard her sweet voice call, ‘Grandma,’ and as I looked up, Jennifer was standing at the front of the room. She was a slender young woman who looked to be in her early twenties. Her skin was beautiful, and her eyes and face glowed with happiness. Her hair was darker and much heavier than it had been in her life here. She was standing so straight, and she looked so

beautiful. She looked directly at me and smiled. She did not speak again, but I could feel her love.”

It was such a marvelous feeling to see her again—to see her happy face. I was impressed with how beautiful she looked in her robe, and I was aware of every detail I was seeing. Jennifer was standing in front of a misty, gauze-like material, but everything about *her* was very clear. I remember thinking, “This is your imagination,” but as I continued to look at Jennifer, I knew that it was not my imagination—that I really was seeing her, and then she was gone.

Jennifer appeared three more times, and each time I could feel such a strong presence just before I saw her. She continued to smile at me, and her left arm was stretched out toward me each time.

The fourth time was very short, and it was different. I got the impression that she was very busy, and Jennifer was no longer clearly in front of the misty gauze; she was moving back into it, and I knew that she was leaving, but it was not sad.

I felt Jennifer was so happy and that she was happy to see her grandmother in the temple. What a choice blessing this has been and what peace it has brought me to see her happy face once more and to feel her love for me.³⁹

Working for the dead who are very much alive

“When we do temple work, we never get a pat on the back, but something happens, something so special that only people who work at it know what it means”

After Shirley Quickstrom’s husband died, she found helping other people very rewarding. This included performing temple ordinances for those who died without the blessings of the gospel. She would submit at least two hundred names to the Los Angeles Temple for ordinance work. “When we do temple work,” she noted, “we never get a pat on the back, but something happens, something so special that only people who work at it know what it means.” She felt this was especially so when performing ordinances for her own deceased loved ones.

She reported what happened when performing initiatory ordinances for eight of her deceased relatives: “A worker who was to assist me began, then stopped and was silent. She began again, then stopped again and asked, ‘Who was she?’ ‘She is my little cousin who died at age eight with diphtheria.’”

The worker had felt a special spirit. Reflecting on this experience, Sister Quickstrom and the temple workers “had a distinct spiritual impression that those for whom she had done the work had accepted the gospel and had been with them at the temple that day.” Sister Quickstrom affirmed: “Some people think that when others are dead, they are dead. But they are not dead. They are living!”⁴⁰

The correct pronunciation

When Priscilla G. Barron was performing initiatory ordinances, she was given the names for five individuals who were not related to her. When she was about to perform the initiatory ordinances for the last of them, she was unsure how to pronounce her name and prayed for guidance. “Then she came and sat down by me,” Priscilla related, “as clearly as a mortal and told me the correct pronunciation of her name, which was Josefa and not Hosefa. She followed me through the entire procedure. When the ordinance worker mispronounced her name, I corrected her, “It was Josefa.” She asked me how I knew that. I told her that she was standing next to me on my right side. She was very short, about 4 feet 10 inches, and had long black hair. She was dressed in a white gown. She told me that she was a young mother. She thanked me and told me she loved me. Then the worker told me to tell the temple matron about this experience.”⁴¹

My heart was turned

Kristin Hawkins felt she had witnessed in the Los Angeles Temple a fulfillment of the prophecy about Elijah’s keys. Her mother-in-law had provided some names of family members who needed temple ordinances completed. Kristin secured an apartment in patron housing, where her husband would stay with the children while she was in the temple. “As I was participating in the initiatory ordinances,” Kristin admitted,

I didn’t feel anything special. I was only happy I was there to help her get more of her family’s work done. When I was doing the work for the second woman, however, I realized she was the daughter of the woman I had just finished. As I looked through the names, I realized that it was a mother and four daughters! I felt the Spirit strongly and even got teary-eyed when doing a couple of those names, and the thought came into my mind that these women were really happy and grateful that more of their work had been done.

When she came out of the temple to swap places with her husband, she was looking over the six family names that he was going to do initiatory ordinances for and noticed that two of those names were brothers in this same family. “I thought once again how happy this entire family must be to have more of their ordinance work completed. This temple trip helped me realize that I feel different when I do work in the temple knowing that it’s for family members. I think this

was the first time I experienced having my heart turned to my fathers as promised in Malachi 4:6.”⁴²

“I want to be baptized too”

On July 3, 2013, Jeff and Stacey Sanders took their daughter Jessica to perform baptisms at the Los Angeles Temple for fifty members of their Shingledecker family. While Jeff was confirming Jessica for some of these people, he distinctly heard a voice say, “I want to be baptized too.” It was a female voice that was pleading. He just knew what her name was, so asked Brother Allan, who was recording, to write down the name Sophronia Ross. When they got home, Jeff discovered that Sophronia had married into the Shingledecker family, but he had not brought her name to the temple that day. They went back to the temple two days later and did her work.⁴³

“I could hear a baby crying”

A man and woman came to be sealed as husband and wife. Both were converts to the Church who had had previous marriages. They were accompanied by the woman’s two sons, ages about ten and twelve; she had also lost a baby years before. The wife’s sister was also present. Temple President Myrthus Evans would be the sealer:

I performed the sealing for the couple, then had the two boys brought into the sealing room to seal them, along with the deceased baby, to the parents. At the conclusion of the sealing, the sister spoke to me and asked, “President Evans, are you sure you performed the sealing of the children properly?” I replied that I had sealed the children correctly. I then said, “Why do you ask?” The sister then said, “All while you were sealing the children, I could hear a baby crying.” I again assured her that the sealing was proper. I bid them goodbye, and they left the temple.

Several days later, I received a letter from the sister in which she again asked if I was sure the sealing of the children had been done correctly. She informed me that she heard the same baby crying as they traveled home in the car. I immediately called my secretary and asked her to bring me the sealing records. I found that I had neglected to have a proxy for the baby while the three children were being sealed to the parents.

The crying of the baby, which was heard by the aunt, was the child’s way of letting us know that a serious mistake had been made. I immediately called the couple and they returned to the temple, and the baby was properly sealed to the parents.⁴⁴

“My grandparents were with us”

Gladys Hernández had “a beautiful experience” on the day she performed saving ordinances for her grandparents. “Two nights before, I saw them in a dream; they spoke to me and were smiling. As we received the endowment, I could feel that my grandmother was at my side. I felt at peace, as if she was embracing me. It was marvelous, and my heart was filled with joy. I knew that they were happy to have received their endowment and that I had been able to do it for them. When we left the temple and I was telling my husband what I had felt, he told me he didn’t know what it was, but he also had felt that someone was with him. I know that it was my grandfather. The blessing I have received from the temple is immense, and I feel happy and fortunate to have a temple nearby.”⁴⁵

A House of Revelation

Not a coincidence

“One of the most important and solemn duties of a stake presidency is to recommend names of new bishops to the First Presidency for approval,” affirmed President Scott A. Magnusson of the Arcadia California Stake.

Of course, it comes only after much discussion and study as a presidency, and then with fasting and prayer to seek the confirmation of the Spirit (D&C 9:8). When it became necessary to call a new bishop, a certain man soon became the focus of our discussion. As the stake president, I was feeling the responsibility of making the correct choice. As had been my practice, I determined to go to the temple to seek closer access to the Spirit with this matter. I did not tell my wife what was on my mind as we drove that day.

As we passed through the temple doors, I was surprised to see that the person directly in front of us, waiting in line with his wife to show their recommends, was [the one] whom we were considering for the office. “Is this a coincidence?” I immediately thought.

During the endowment session, I pondered and silently prayed that I could know the mind of the Lord. In the celestial room following the session, I joined my wife, who was seated on a sofa. We sat without speaking; she must have known that something was on my mind.

I then saw that the couple who was in line at the temple entrance was now seated about ten feet in front of us on another sofa. The man had his arm around his wife; they were smiling and quietly conversing.

I again silently prayed to receive a confirmation. A peaceful message then came into my mind: “The man was in front of you as you entered today. He’s now sitting right there.” I mentally expressed a brief *thank you* and told my wife that we could now leave.

The man was called as the bishop and has served his ward members faithfully. There were no coincidences in the temple that day.⁴⁶

“The sister missionaries can help”

George Escobar became a Latter-day Saint in 1975 but became less active for more than twenty-five years. Upon returning to activity at the end of 2001, he set to work at the task of bringing the gospel into his home. “My wife Alba was an excellent companion, but her beliefs were very strong toward another church that she had attended since her adolescence. I received each suggestion with love and tried to fulfill it totally. I prayed at all times, and I read the Book of Mormon twice in one year. Later in 2004 I was endowed, and I placed her name in the temple every time I went.”

One morning in April 2012, George went to the Los Angeles Temple to seek guidance. “In one of the ordinance rooms, I raised a prayer to God, and from the depths of my heart I asked him to help me to carry the gospel to my wife. I had not finished praying when I heard words that seemed to echo throughout the temple and that were affixed in my body and soul. At every moment I can still hear those words: ‘The sister missionaries can help you.’ A month later, two sister missionaries were assigned to my ward. That same day I invited them over, and they brought the light of the restored gospel into my home. In November of that same year, my wife was baptized, and we have been blessed greatly.”⁴⁷

Answer to a prayer

Verity and Rod Cushing had a huge, life-changing decision to make. They had the chance to move to Washington, DC, for a one-year temporary assignment, where he would work in the Pentagon. “Worried about uprooting our little family for a year, moving cross-country, figuring out what to do with our home while we were away, and most of all, wanting confirmation that it was the right thing to do, we drove down to the Los Angeles Temple,” Verity related. “While my husband and I

were serving in the temple that day, we both felt this great peace about the decision. There were no tears shed—just a very real, very calm assurance that we needed to go and that God would be with us every step of the way. We felt so happy and excited! We definitely felt his help through the entire process. Everything came together easily for the move, and that adventure on the East Coast was, and continues to be, an enormous blessing for our family! We have very fond memories of our time there, the friends we made, and the experiences we had. I am so grateful for the answer we got in the Los Angeles Temple before we went. It made all the difference!”⁴⁸

A pressing question

Branden and Ginger Rosser knew where to go for help in solving a life-changing question. “We drove two and a half hours from our home in Ridgecrest to the Los Angeles Temple seeking some answers to some very pressing questions we had. We had been trying to decide whether or not to go into business for ourselves. We knew the temple was the place to receive personal revelation. This was a decision we needed the Lord’s help with.”

After the session they sat in the celestial room for quite a while, praying for guidance. Even before leaving the parking lot, Branden had a “very clear plan” on how to start his business, even down to the names of people to contact.” By the time they arrived home, he had contacted these individuals, and his business was successfully launched. “It hasn’t always been easy, but we knew that going in. Since that time we have had many other questions answered through temple attendance. We are so thankful for the guidance the Lord gives us.” Eleven years later they were still going strong “with the Lord’s daily help.”⁴⁹

God is aware of me

In 1974, Spencer L. Mackay was newly married and in his last term at Art Center College of Design. His wife was expecting their first child. OPEC had just organized the first Arab oil embargo, which brought severe fuel shortages. There were lines of cars around the block at the few stations that had gas to sell, and most of the companies that usually came to interview graduating students at Spencer’s college had canceled their trips. Business owners were worried, and the economy was fragile.

“I was excited that we had started a new family,” Spencer explained, “but the weight of the responsibility that would fall to me to support our little family weighed heavily on my mind. Our graduating class was nervous, and there seemed

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the Spirit filled
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over us”*

to be very few companies hiring in our field. I had been praying sincerely about my concerns, and I decided that I should go to the temple to draw closer to Heavenly Father. As I sat in the Los Angeles Temple waiting for the endowment session to start, I offered up yet another prayer seeking to know what to do. As I prayed, the Spirit filled my heart, and I felt great comfort. I immediately felt that I would find employment and all would be well. I was given to know that Heavenly Father was mindful of me and my little family and he was watching over us.”

Armed with that knowledge, Spencer finished his classes at school, graduated, and set about trying to find work. “Back in those days,” he recalled, “we still used the phone book, and I called every design firm in the Los Angeles and Orange County books to see if they were hiring. No one was. I was fortunate to get a couple of interviews out of state, but those did not result in an offer.”

“I was again calling one Friday using the phone book,” Spencer recalled, “and I called a small company listing and got a voice recording. I almost hung up, but I got control of myself and left a terse message that I had graduated and was looking for a job. I thought no more about it until I received a call on Sunday from the owner of the firm I left the message with. His was a small design office and he hired me as his only employee, but it was a wonderful opportunity, and I learned so much as we grew to seven people over the next year.”

“Of the twenty-eight people in my graduating class, I was the only one who got a job that year,” Spencer gratefully acknowledged. “I will always treasure the Los Angeles Temple as a place of revelation and comfort where the Lord spoke peace to my mind and told me he was aware of my family and me and would watch over us.”⁵⁰

“You are the new Relief Society president”

Mary Louise Parks affirmed that her testimony has been increased greatly because of the blessings she had received “numerous times” in the Los Angeles Temple. She recalled a startling experience in May 1995 while sitting in an endowment session: “A voice came to me saying, ‘You are the new Relief Society president.’ I thought, ‘Where did that idea come from? That cannot be possible, I have only been a member of the church for eight years.’ Again a second time the voice said, ‘You are the new Relief Society president.’ I again thought, ‘No way, why is my mind hearing this? This cannot be possible.’ Finally, I said to myself, ‘My goodness, I think I am arguing with the Lord.’ A third time the voice said again, ‘You are the new Relief Society president.’”

When she got home, there was a message from the bishop. He wanted to meet with both Mary and her husband. They thought, “This is a little unusual for both of us to go.” The bishop did extend the calling of Relief Society president to her. When she related what had happened in the temple, he responded that it was a blessing for her to know the Lord had actually called her and that the call had not come just from him. “It truly was a blessing because I knew the Lord would guide me in my calling,” Mary acknowledged. “I loved all the sisters so much and enjoyed my calling so very much.”

In October 2007 Mary received a new calling. “While serving as the stake Relief Society president,” Mary explained, “I felt I really needed to teach the sisters what the Lord wanted them to learn. Many times after fasting and praying I felt I knew what I would teach them, but I wanted to make sure I was teaching what the Lord wanted them to know. So I would go to the temple and pray that the Lord would reveal what he wanted me to teach. I was so blessed by the Lord at these times because I would receive word for word what he wanted me to teach. I was afraid I would forget some of what he had revealed to me, and I always wished I had a paper and a pencil with me to write everything down. Many times I would rush out to my car and start writing, hoping I would not forget anything, but the Lord blessed me with the words just falling into place as I was writing. I was so grateful for this help. I was a willing servant to the Lord, but I definitely needed his guidance.”⁵¹

Impact of the Temple

An eternal hope

W. Christopher Waddell of Manhattan Beach and his three brothers, Glenn, Michael, and Scott, would be greatly influenced by the blessings of the temple. In 1951 his parents, Wayne and Joann Waddell, joined the Church as a young married couple in Los Angeles, where they were both born and raised. Soon after their baptism, however, Wayne stopped attending church and was not active for over ten years. Still, Joann continued to attend, first with their oldest son, Glenn, who was an infant when they were baptized; then with their next son, Michael; and finally with Chris when he came along in 1959. “During the entire time my father was not active,” Chris gratefully related. “Faithful visiting and home teachers kept my mother going strong and maintained a ‘lifeline’ with my father. Eventually, a new set of home teachers were able to connect with my dad and developed a good

relationship. A good bishop and his wife reached out and, with time, my father slowly returned to activity.”

In April of 1964, the family of five was sealed in the Los Angeles Temple, two years before their last son, Scott, was born. Chris, who was five years old at the time of this milestone, remembers the kind sisters who cared for him in the youth center, singing Primary songs with him while he was waiting to be sealed.

From that time forward both Wayne and Joann remained strong and solid in the faith, with Wayne serving twice as a bishop and both being involved in temple and family history work. Joann served at the Los Angeles Temple family history center for many years, and Wayne served for years as a temple worker in the San Diego Temple—after their move south—until the effects of age made it impossible for him to continue. In the meantime, their son Chris became president of the Del Mar California Stake, presided over the Spain Barcelona Mission, and served as an Area Seventy. In 2011 he became a General Authority Seventy, and four years later he was called as second counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

“When my mother passed away in 2010,” Bishop Waddell reflected, “my dad pulled me aside following her funeral and told me ‘Chris, I’m going to miss your mother terribly, but I’ll be okay. I’ll be okay because I know that I’ll see her again, and I know that because we were sealed in the Los Angeles Temple many years ago.’ That sealing has given my father and all of us great peace as he is now almost ninety-one and looks forward to being with my mom again.”⁵²

Perspective and peace

Wayne and Edith McIntire had passed through more than their share of challenging experiences. On one occasion they were robbed at gunpoint in their home by masked intruders. Their lives were threatened if they did not cooperate. The thieves took jewelry and other valuables but spared their lives. Despite the loss, they felt an unexpected “peace and calmness.”

Then for fifty-nine seconds on a frightening January morning in 1994, they were “tossed and thrown in all directions” by the powerful Northridge earthquake. Even though they could hear “sounds of furniture crashing and fragile items breaking,” they again were grateful to have “a feeling of inner peace.”

They later reflected: “As we looked at the broken pieces of glass, china, and crystal that lay in heaps, we were reminded of the fragile nature not only of our china, but of other aspects of this temporal existence and of life itself.”

Looking back on these experiences, they testified: “Our blessings have been added upon as we have gone to the temple not only to fulfill our callings as ordinance workers and a sealer, but to renew our own temple blessings as patrons and to receive much-needed spiritual infusions. We know that the voice of the Lord, telling us what to do, is a reality. And we know that the temple provides a spiritual perspective and power that allows the Lord to better guide us in overcoming life’s problems.”⁵³

“The temple redirects my life”

The temple has blessed Mits Matsusaka’s life in many different ways. “To start off, the temple is where my wife and I were sealed for eternity. How grateful I am for the knowledge and the blessings which come with eternal marriage. As with many other marriages, we have gone through some tough times on the way. Whenever we faced the challenges in our marriage, however, because of our temple marriage, we were able to resolve the issues since we focused on Heavenly Father’s will rather than our own. The temple marriage gave us the focus and solution.”

Mits’s appreciation for the temple was intensified as he passed it every morning. “As I drive by the temple, my thoughts are redirected to who I am and what is more important. After my thoughts are directed to spiritual matters, the daily temporal worries become so insignificant. How grateful I am for being worthy to enter the temple. The worthiness is the biggest accomplishment in my life. It is bigger than any of my career successes and even bigger than my hole-in-one. I will continue to work hard to be worthy to enter the temple and receive Heavenly Father’s blessings.”⁵⁴



The temple’s north entrance where families and friends wait for brides and grooms to exit the temple. (Nichole Sperry)

A source of protection

Edward and Monica Johnson were a young married couple who moved from the relatively sheltered environment of Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, to Glendale, California. They had one little son and were expecting their second baby. “Not realizing the costs of California and being somewhat naïve,” Edward admitted, “we were looking for an apartment management opportunity to help

pay the costs of rent.” They found an opportunity to be the onsite manager to help collect rents and perform other tasks the owner might need them to do. There were only eight apartments, and they could live in a small house in the back. The only drawback was that the neighborhood was known for gangs.

“Knowing that my wife was going to be home all day with two little boys and babysitting a couple other kids also while I was working in Los Angeles made me a little nervous,” Edward reflected, “a concern that I didn’t want to worry about.” He had always heard and known that regular temple attendance could bring the blessing of protection to one’s family. With that thought in mind, Edward decided to attend the early 5:30 a.m. session at the temple every Tuesday morning for the next year. “My wife and I went to the Lord with this commitment, and in exchange asked that the burden of worry or concern for our family’s safety be lifted from our minds and hearts.”

“As I followed through on that commitment for the following year, we never felt threatened; and my wife always felt she was cared for by the Holy Spirit and felt the spirit of protection in the apartment with the children.” The neighbors also became very helpful. “We were only there for a couple years,” Edward concluded, “but there was no doubt that we felt that the Lord cared and watched out for our small family during that time and especially helped me to feel good about leaving each morning knowing that mom and the kids would be fine.”⁵⁵

“A source of peace”

Shanna Steed found the Los Angeles Temple to be a place of peace and comfort. When her family relocated to Los Angeles because of a change in employment, she came about three months prior to the others. Being apart from her family made her feel lonely and sad. “Going to the temple provided a poignant reminder that families are eternal,” she realized, “and even though my family was 2,000 miles away, we would be together for eternity.”

Later, following an endowment session, she sat in the celestial room contemplating various things, including her declining health and even possible death. “I remember thinking,” Shanna related, “‘God, if you want me to finish my existence on this earth now, then I am ready to go.’ It sounds morbid now, but I thought my imminent death a real possibility. Still, I felt an overwhelming feeling of peace—that everything would be all right.”

“The next day as a group of coworkers and I walked to lunch, I collapsed and ended up in the hospital. I survived my bilateral pulmonary embolisms and the

blood clot in my heart through the grace of God and with the assistance of wonderful medical professionals. Throughout the ordeal, the peace I felt sitting in the celestial room at the temple enabled and strengthened me.”

Finally, Shanna’s daughter was sealed in the Los Angeles Temple. “She and her future husband chose this temple in part because they lived near it, but also because many years prior to his mother’s conversion she lived in Santa Monica near the temple. Although she did not know what the building was or anything about the gospel, she was frequently drawn to the beauty and peace she felt while walking on the temple grounds.”

“Surely,” Shanna affirmed, “the Los Angeles Temple is a beacon of peace and comfort to the community and members in this area.”⁵⁶

My leap of faith

Joni Grossman, a member of the Church for over forty years, was born on the same day the temple was dedicated. Her family typically drove to the beach each Sunday: “I remember very distinctly,” Joni recalled, “noticing the huge temple in West Los Angeles and asking my father if that was a Jewish temple. He explained that it wasn’t, and I remember wondering how that could be. Weren’t all temples Jewish? It was a very understandable thought, considering that I was Jewish.”

As a teenager, she thought of Temple Hill as a place of refuge. Later, a Latter-day Saint family introduced her to the restored gospel, and the road to her life was never the same. “How blessed I have been to live within five miles of the Los Angeles Temple all of my adult life. As soon as I could, I was endowed in that holy house, and then a generation later, my son also received his endowment there before going on his mission. I have many, many sweet memories of walking the grounds. My son and I even have a ‘sacred sitting place’ where we would go on occasion and just sit and talk.”

After forty years in the banking industry, Joni found herself unexpectedly unemployed. “I guess my bishop thought that I could utilize my time better than I had been, by becoming an ordinance worker,” Joni reflected. She had actually considered such a calling eight years before, but at that time she was working full time and did not have the flexibility to accept. “This time there was no excuse. I had unlimited time on my hands. My only problem was I just didn’t know for how long.”

In a meeting with President Paul G. Moncur, we talked about the calling, how my name was submitted and approved, and then I opened up about my job situation. I wanted to say yes but was concerned that once I found employment I would have to

give up my shift. It was then that I was given the following advice. President Moncur asked me how I thought the Lord could bless me if I wasn't willing to do my part. How could he show his hand if I wasn't going to exercise a bit more faith in his ability to give me what I needed? Not ever wanting to step aside from a challenge, I accepted the call and spent the next three months working as many days as I could to learn all about the important duties that would be assigned to me.

My regular shift was every Wednesday—the day shift. This responsibility gave me the opportunity to serve the patrons who came to the temple. I found great joy in learning parts of the gospel that reinforced my testimony of the plan of salvation. And, like so many years before as a little girl driving by Temple Hill, I better understood why I had such a profound feeling for the “non-Jewish temple.” I also came away with a renewed faith that I was not beyond learning new things, and when the opportunity came to take a job in a field very different from the one I was trained and skilled for, I took another leap of faith. And the best part is that I don't work on Wednesdays, so I can keep my weekly shift commitment.

My life has been deeply and truly blessed by living in the shadow of the Los Angeles Temple and serving in its sacred halls.⁵⁷

“What is this I am feeling?”

On one occasion a woman representing a local telephone company stopped at the California Mission home located adjacent to the Los Angeles Temple. Mission president Clarence R. Campbell recalled that the first thing she asked was “what it was she was feeling.” Though the mission president had a good idea of what she meant and what she was feeling, he asked her to explain.

She said that she had the radio on in her car, and as she drove through the gates onto the grounds, she had the feeling that she needed to turn it off. “I just feel something. What is it?” President Campbell told her that “she was responding to the Spirit present on Temple Hill.” A tour of the visitors' center was quickly arranged. Afterward, the telephone worker had just one question, “What do I have to do to keep that feeling with me?” She was invited to receive the missionary discussions.⁵⁸

“The temple changes lives”

A sister missionary had a special experience when she took two investigators to the visitors' center. “It was late in the evening, and before we went in, we walked

around the temple grounds. I will never forget the look on their faces; the spirit they felt was unlike anything they had ever experienced before. They both expressed how all their cares had melted away.”

As they walked up to the front entrance, the automatic doors opened, giving them a momentary glimpse inside. One of the investigators asked, “OK, what do I have to do to get there?” He was determined to make the changes necessary to qualify for those blessings. The spirit was so strong, and my investigators never wanted to leave! They got a taste of what an eternal family and never-ending happiness looks like. It pushed them to prepare for baptism. The temple changes lives!”⁵⁹

What of the Future?

Thus during the first six decades of its service, the Los Angeles Temple has impacted countless individuals for good in many diverse ways. This was in addition to the more than ten million persons who have been blessed vicariously through saving ordinances being performed in their behalf. This positive role will most certainly continue. As one of Southern California’s landmark edifices, the temple will go on enriching the cultural and spiritual quality of the community. Still, scriptural prophecies speak of increasing wickedness in the last days. Hence the temple’s role as a beacon of righteousness will become increasingly important.

Then, during an era of peace and righteousness that will follow the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, Latter-day Saint leaders have affirmed that temple service will accelerate. “When the Savior comes,” foresaw Elder Wilford Woodruff, “a thousand years will be devoted to this work of redemption; and Temples will appear all over [the] land.”⁶⁰ President Brigham Young declared that during the Millennium “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.”⁶¹ Undoubtedly, the large capacity of the Los Angeles California Temple will be utilized to the greatest extent possible.

Thus the future of the Los Angeles Temple is bright. The selfless and exalting service given within its walls as well as its influence on the broader community will assure its enduring place on the Southern California skyline.

Notes

1. John L. Hart, "12,000 Attend Temple Rites," *Church News*, August 22, 1981, 8.
2. Many of these items were contributed in response to a request by Marilyn Mills, the North America West Area Church History adviser, for personal stories that would be submitted to the Church History Department and could possibly be selected for use in this volume. These stories typically will be credited to an individual contributor, whose ward and stake may be listed. The source of other stories will be identified in the usual way. We have updated spelling, punctuation, and style as necessary.
3. Robert Conlee, interviewed October 26, 2016, recording in the possession of the author.
4. Submitted by Sandy Dell, Union Ward, Manteca California Stake.
5. Submitted by Vicki Lee Johnson Woolwine, Gardena Ward, Torrance North Stake.
6. John M. Martz, "The Temple Olive Trees," September 5, 2010, copy in possession of the author.
7. Submitted by Martha Reynders Blair, Sierra Ward, Lancaster California Stake.
8. Mary K. Leeding, "A Matter of Sacrifice," *Ensign*, October 1986, 60–61.
9. Contributed by Dawna Rozsa, Los Angeles Temple matron (1982–1986).
10. John L. Hart, "Temple Moments: I'm Here!," *Church News*, February 5, 1994, 16.
11. Jeffery R. Holland, "Miracles of the Restoration," *Ensign*, November 1994, 32–33.
12. Delores Lang interview, October 19, 1985, and Robert Lang interview, October 21, 1985, by Alan Cherry, LDS Afro-American Oral History Project, Charles Redd Center for Western History, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
13. Dean and Marilyn Mills (former members of the Inglewood Ward) reminiscences, contributed 2017.
14. Larry Johnson reminiscence, contributed to Marilyn Mills, 2017.
15. Robert Lang interview.
16. Leighton Anderson, bishop, Mar Vista YSA Ward, Whittier, California Stake, June 26, 2016.
17. Eleanor Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 135.
18. Contributed by Betty Clark McEwan, Arcadia Ward, Arcadia California Stake.
19. Contributed by Edward R. Ludloff, January 24, 2017, Atherton Ward, Long Beach East Stake.
20. Contributed by Joan Stott, Somerset Ward, Lancaster California Stake.
21. Myrthus W. Evans journal, 66, copy in possession of the author.
22. John L. Hart, "Beauty of Attitude," *Church News*, December 2, 1989, 16.
23. Contributed by Christopher and Linda Haws, Woodruff Ward, Long Beach East Stake, February 1, 2017.
24. Contributed by Renae Rollo, Moorpark First Ward, Thousand Oaks Stake, June 13, 2016.
25. Brian Sheffield, story in Los Angeles scrapbook, vol. 13, submitted March 24, 2011, copy in possession of the author.
26. Contributed by Dawna Rozsa, Los Angeles Temple matron (1982–1986).
27. Contributed by Brian Sheffield, assistant recorder, Los Angeles Temple, March 24, 2011.

28. Contributed by Veronica E. Martinez, Littlerock Branch, Palmdale Stake, translated from Spanish by author.
29. Contributed by James T. Chase, stake clerk, Torrance California Stake.
30. John L. Hart, "Special Spiritual Effects," *Church News*, June 29, 1986, 16.
31. Contributed by John A. Taylor Jr., Westlake Village Ward, June 26, 2016.
32. Contributed by Beverly Garlick, Long Beach East Stake.
33. Contributed by Scott Anderson, Woodruff Ward, Long Beach East Stake, January 21, 2017.
34. Contributed by Kathrine Zeedik, Moorpark First Ward, Thousand Oaks Stake, July 2016.
35. Contributed by Deidra (Dee) Boyack Jeffries, Wiley Canyon Ward, Valencia Stake, June 26, 2016.
36. Contributed by Jim Edmundson, Redondo Third Ward, Torrance CA North Stake.
37. Contributed by Celia Gonzales, Torrence North Stake, translated from Spanish by author.
38. Contributed by Fany Borjas, Templo de Los Angeles, California, 2006, translated from Spanish by author.
39. Shared with and contributed by Dawna Rosza, Los Angeles Temple matron (1982–1986).
40. John L. Hart, "They Are Living!," *Church News*, June 23, 1985, 16.
41. Contributed by Dawna Rozsa, Los Angeles Temple matron (1982–1986).
42. Contributed by Kristin Hawkins, Ridgecrest Second Ward, Ridgecrest Stake.
43. Contributed by Jeff Sanders, Valencia Ward, Valencia Stake.
44. Myrthus Evans journal, 66–67.
45. Contributed by Gladys Hernández, Torrence North Stake, translated from Spanish by the author.
46. Contributed by Scott A. Magnusson, Duarte Ward, Arcadia California Stake.
47. Contributed by George Escobar, Reseda Fourth Ward, San Fernando Stake, translated from Spanish by the author.
48. Contributed by Verity Cushing, Ridgecrest Second Ward, June 26, 2016.
49. Contributed by Branden and Ginger Rosser, Ridgecrest California Stake.
50. Contributed by Spencer L. Mackay, Agoura First Ward, Newbury Park California Stake.
51. Contributed by Mary Louise Parks, Valencia Ward, Valencia California Stake.
52. W. Christopher Waddell, emails to author October 2017.
53. "Los Angeles Temple," *Church News*, March 5, 1994, 10.
54. Contributed by Mits Matsusaka, Valencia Stake.
55. Contributed by Edward and Monica Johnson, Valencia Stake.
56. Contributed by Shanna Steed, Valencia Ward.
57. Contributed by Joanne Grossman, Santa Monica First Ward, Los Angeles Santa Monica Stake.
58. Roland Steadham, "Golden Growth of Gospel in California Area," *Church News*, January 12, 1986, 3.
59. Contributed by Sister Farnsworth, Torrence North Stake Mission.
60. Wilford Woodruff, September 16, 1877, in *Journal of Discourses*, 19:230.
61. Brigham Young, June 22, 1856, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:372; see also *Journal of Discourses*, 10:254.