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Temple ordinances give visible form to our covenants.

“Endowed with Power”

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Soon after my wife and I were married, we attended a ward fireside in which an older couple serving in the Manti Temple gave a warm and uplifting talk about temple service. At the end of their talk, they asked if anyone had a question. I asked, “What exactly is the endowment?” They answered simply, “It is a gift.” Their answer was true, but it did not satisfy me, and I thus began a search. My studies led to an observation: When people speak of the endowment, it is almost always in terms of (1) personal spiritual benefits (personal revelation, comfort, peace); (2) the joy of selflessly doing vicarious work for the dead; and (3) preparation for eternity (returning to the Father’s presence, sealing as eternal families). All of these are necessary and true, and I would not detract from them in any way. I would, however, add another important dimension to our understanding of the endowment.

Virtually all references to the endowment in the scriptures are in the context of missionary work, which suggests a more immediate purpose for the endowment. There is ample scriptural and apostolic authority for the proposition that the endowment is intended for the here and now, as preparation

for our ministry in fulfilling the mission of the Church—on both sides of the veil.¹ This is a very practical and direct purpose for the endowment.

Our Work as Mortals

While the world largely regards formal religious rites as meaningless or even ludicrous, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints esteem ordinances, especially temple ceremonies, as central to its mission. In the temple we see the gospel as an integrated, harmonious, unified whole.² Elder Bruce R. McConkie said that the temple “is the hub, as it were, the heart and core of what we do as mortals to work out our salvation.” Concerning “what we must do for our own salvation and for the salvation of all our brothers and sisters,” he said, “Where our labors and our work are concerned, it all centers in the temple.”³

Our fundamental goal as mortals is to “work out [our] own salvation” (Philippians 2:12; Alma 34:37; Mormon 9:27). This “work” is the work of faith, specifically faith in Christ, for we must rely on the “merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah” for salvation (2 Nephi 2:8). “We have access by faith into this grace” (Romans 5:2), and our covenants are a manifestation of faith. “But blessed are they who have kept the covenant and observed the commandment, for they shall obtain mercy” (D&C 54:6). Thus, we are to seek “first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (Matthew 6:33), which means, according to Elder McConkie, that we “seek the celestial kingdom and the state of righteousness in which God dwells.” But the Prophet Joseph Smith’s inspired revision of Matthew 6:33⁴ defines the means of reaching our goal. As Elder McConkie states, “The process by which this ultimate goal is attained is to devote oneself to building up the earthly kingdom, which is the Church, and to establish the Cause of Righteousness on earth.”⁵ The ordinances of the gospel relate directly to both the ultimate goal and the process by which it is achieved. The end is preserved in the means.⁶

The Mission of the Church

The prophets have emphasized that the mission of the Church “should be a part of the personal mission of every member.”⁷ Thus, if the Saints are to work out their own salvation, they must participate actively in fulfilling the mission of the Church. “We must not let the demands of the world divert us from this sacred mission.”⁸ Elder Dallin H. Oaks said: “It would be desirable for each member of the Church to think about the work of proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead not only as an expression of

the mission of the Church, but also as a personal assignment. Every member should have some ongoing activity in each of these three dimensions, with a total personal activity that does not exceed what is wise for his or her current circumstances and resources.”⁹

Recently, the prophets and apostles have refined the mission of the Church. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (section 2.2) states that the mission of the Church includes “helping members live the gospel of Jesus Christ, gathering Israel through missionary work, caring for the poor and needy, and enabling the salvation of the dead by building temples and performing vicarious ordinances.” An endowment of power prepares and enables the Saints to carry out these sacred forms of service.

The Law and the Endowment

Through the Restoration the Lord set in motion his plan for the salvation of God’s children. But how was the fledgling Church to be schooled and taught to carry out its divine mission to “bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39)?

In December 1830, the Saints were commanded to gather to a specific location—to “assemble together at the Ohio” (D&C 37:3). Shortly thereafter, on January 2, 1831, the Lord repeated the commandment (see D&C 38:32). He gave two vital reasons for gathering in Ohio: (1) “there I will give unto you my law;” and (2) “there you shall be endowed with power from on high.” These two conditions were necessary in order to gather Israel and establish the Kingdom of God. “And from thence, whosoever I will shall go forth among all nations, and it shall be told them what they shall do” (D&C 38:32–33, 38). The “law” defined the fundamentals of missionary work (see D&C 42:11–17); the endowment would empower missionaries to fulfill the law. Without the power, the law would be ineffectual.

The Ordinances of Salvation

The revelations call the first principles and ordinances of the gospel the “first ordinances” (see D&C 53:3, 6). Baptism, confirmation, and ordination to the priesthood (for worthy males) are ordinances of salvation. They encompass all gospel covenants and promises, and they are preparatory to higher ordinances. They seem to emphasize personal purity, or the redemptive power of the Atonement.¹⁰ For example, baptism is for the remission of sins, and the Holy Ghost sanctifies and purifies us.

After referring to the “first ordinances,” the Lord promised that the “residue” of the ordinances—the temple ordinances—would be made known at a future time, according to, or depending on, the Saints’ labor in the vineyard (see D&C 53:6). If the initial ordinances comprehend all covenants of salvation, what do the higher ordinances of the temple add? How do they help us advance spiritually? President Harold B. Lee showed how the baptismal covenant relates to the endowment: “The receiving of the endowment required the assuming of obligations by covenants which in reality are but an embodiment or an unfolding of the covenants each person should have assumed at baptism.”¹¹

Temple ordinances “embody” our baptismal covenants as a constituent, essential, or primary part. They “unfold” the initial ordinances, opening them to our view and making them clear by gradual disclosure. We gain greater spiritual insight into the central covenants of exaltation. The baptismal covenant relates to the endowment as the bud to the flower. Through symbolic representation, temple ordinances give visible form to our covenants. Although temple ordinances comprehend the same covenants as baptism, they seem to emphasize the principle of service, focusing especially on helping others come unto Christ through ordinances. They relate to the enabling power of the Atonement. The basic ordinances of the temple parallel the initial ordinances.

The most frequently cited definition of the endowment was coined by President Brigham Young: “Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell.”¹²

This definition emphasizes that phase of eternity after we have “departed this life.” In the same context, however, President Young hinted at a more immediate definition. “There are but few, very few of the Elders of Israel, now on earth, who know the meaning of the word endowment. To know, they must experience, and to experience, a temple must be built.”¹³ How does one “experience” the endowment? Obviously, receiving the formal ordinance is an experience, one that should be repeated often. In addition, however, the actual conferring of power that can be used daily is something one must experience to understand, for it dramatically changes the quality of one’s life. It directs one’s thoughts and actions to the type and quality of life that God lives—bringing salvation to others.

Washing

The ordinance of washing corresponds to the initial ordinance of baptism in that both are cleansing ordinances. Elder Bruce R. McConkie compared these two ordinances:

Baptism is called ‘the washing of regeneration’ (Titus 3:5), and it is the way non-members of the Church gain the Holy Spirit, by whose power they are cleansed and sanctified. But Paul is here [Ephesians 5:26] speaking of how the Lord sanctifies ‘the church,’ those who have already received the washing of regeneration. It would appear, thus, that he well may have had reference to those ‘washings’ which the Lord says are performed only ‘in a house which you have built to my name’ (D&C 124:37–40), and with reference to which he commanded: ‘Sanctify yourselves; yea, purify your hearts, and cleanse your hands and your feet before me, that I may make you clean; That I may testify unto your Father, and your God, and my God, that you are clean from the blood of this wicked generation’ (D&C 88:74–75).¹⁴

The phrase “clean from the blood of this wicked generation” refers to the “watchman” principle described by Ezekiel (3:17–21; 33:7–9) and alluded to by Jacob (2 Nephi 9:44; Jacob 1:19, 2:2); Paul (Acts 20:26–27); King Benjamin (Mosiah 2:27–28); Mormon (Mormon 9:35); and Moroni (Ether 12:37–38). This means that God will, on the one hand, hold us responsible for the sins of those whom we failed to warn when we had the knowledge, the commission, and the opportunity, and on the other hand, hold us guiltless for the sins of those who reject our warnings.

The same principle was established by the Lord in our dispensation. A few verses after the Lord commands the first laborers to sanctify themselves (D&C 88:74–75, 85), he says, “Behold, I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor. Therefore, they are left without excuse, and their sins are upon their own heads” (D&C 88:81–82; see also D&C 112:28, 33; 61:33–34; 88:138–39). President John Taylor reiterated this principle:

It is time we were waking up to a sense of the position we occupy before God. . . . If you do not magnify your callings, God will hold you responsible for those whom you might have saved had you done your duty. How many of you can say, My garments are clean from the blood of this generation? I speak in behalf of the nations and the people thereof, and the honest in heart who are ignorant of God and his laws. He has called upon us to enlighten them, and to spread forth the truth, and send forth the principles of the Gospel, and point out the way of life. . . . But we are careless and thoughtless.¹⁵

The early missionaries of the Church understood this principle. The three witnesses of the Book of Mormon stated, “We know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment-seat of Christ” (Book of Mormon, Testimony of the Three Witnesses).

President John Taylor taught: “When the [Kirtland] Temple was built, the Lord did not see proper to reveal all the ordinances of the Endowments. . . . It is true, our hands were washed, our faces and our feet. . . . What for? That the first Elder might witness to our Father and God, that we were clean from the blood of that wicked generation, that then lived. We had gone forth according to our best ability, to publish glad tidings of great joy, for thousands of miles, upon this continent. After this we were called in, and this washing of hands and feet was to testify to God that we were clean from the blood of this generation.”¹⁶

The command to purify and sanctify ourselves—to rid ourselves of sin through the Atonement—precedes the command to preach the gospel. Since the powers of godliness can be controlled or handled only upon the principles of righteousness (see D&C 121:36), the command is always, “Sanctify yourselves and ye shall be endowed with power, that ye may give even as I have spoken” (D&C 43:16). If we faithfully proclaim the gospel, we then receive the promise that we will be cleansed from the blood and sins of this generation. The revelations illustrate these parallel commands: “But purify your hearts before me; and then go ye into all the world, and preach my gospel unto every creature who has not received it. . . . Cleanse your hearts and your garments, lest the blood of this generation be required at your hands” (D&C 112:28, 33). Baptism cleanses us from our own sins; washings cleanse us from the sins of others. Our minds are thus directed to the salvation of our fellowmen.

Anointing

The ordinance of washing prepares us for the anointing, just as baptism prepares us for confirmation. Elder McConkie explained that “anointing” means “Literally, to pour oil upon one as part of a sacred rite; figuratively, as here [1 John 2:27], to receive an outpouring of the Holy Spirit; that is, . . . to receive a manifold outpouring of this greatest of all gifts, to actually receive the companionship of this member of the Godhead.”¹⁷

Thus, the anointing follows the cleansing ordinance of washing as the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost follows the baptism of water. Jesus himself

was anointed “with the Holy Ghost and with power” and “went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil” (Acts 10:38).

Elder John A. Widtsoe said that “the gift of the Holy Ghost which implies a promise of added intelligence is realized in part at least in the worship and ordinances of the temples of the Lord.”¹⁸ The anointing specifically relates to this gift of added intelligence. John wrote, “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 John 2:27).

The anointing also directs us toward the salvation of others. Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One, was anointed to “preach the gospel to the poor; . . . heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Luke 4:18). This means that he was “given . . . the endowment, the holy unction, the appointment, the mission, the power from on high ‘to preach good tidings unto the meek.’ (Isa. 61:1.)”¹⁹

Since we are to be even as Christ and do the works that we have seen him do (see 3 Nephi 27:21, 27), we too are anointed to do the same things he did—even to become the “saviors of men” (D&C 103:9–10). In the dedicatory prayer for the Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith prayed, “Let the anointing of thy ministers be sealed upon them with power from on high. Let it be fulfilled upon them, as upon those on the day of Pentecost. . . . Put upon thy servants the testimony of the covenant, that when they go out and proclaim thy word they may seal up the law, and prepare the hearts of the saints for all those judgments thou art about to send” (D&C 109:35–38).

The emphasis in the ordinance of anointing is on service, especially in fulfilling the mission of the Church. It gives us the capacity and assurance to use the gifts of the Spirit for the salvation of others.

Endowment

Elder James E. Talmage associated the endowment with receiving the priesthood. “Exaltation in the kingdom of God implies attainment to the graded orders of the Holy Priesthood, and with these the ceremonies of the endowment are directly associated.”²⁰

The endowment, therefore, parallels the ordinance of ordination to the priesthood. Temple ceremonies (for males) begin with ordination to the priesthood, a conferral of authority, and culminate with an affirmation of

priesthood, a bestowal of power—real power, God’s own power. In between the authority and the power is a presentation of the doctrine—the plan of redemption—and the covenants, the laws or commandments that qualify us to receive salvation, laws that we receive by covenant. “Therefore God gave unto them commandments, after having made known unto them the plan of redemption” (Alma 12:32). Thus, as the Prophet Joseph taught, “If a man gets a fullness of the priesthood of God he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord.”²¹

Rather than emphasizing the power of personal sanctification, however, the temple endowment emphasizes the power that enables one to work for the salvation of others.

In January 1831 the Saints were commanded to go to Ohio, where they would be “endowed with power from on high.” For what purpose? “And from thence, whosoever I will shall go forth among all nations, and it shall be told them what they shall do” (D&C 38:33, 38). This charge was reiterated three days later: “And inasmuch as my people shall assemble themselves at the Ohio, I have kept in store a blessing such as is not known among the children of men, and it shall be poured forth upon their heads. And from thence men shall go forth into all nations” (D&C 39:15). Again, the elders of the Church were told, “Ye are not sent forth to be taught, but to teach the children of men the things which I have put into your hands by the power of my Spirit; and ye are to be taught from on high. Sanctify yourselves and ye shall be endowed with power, that ye may give even as I have spoken” (D&C 43:15–16).

As noted earlier, the phrase “endowed with power” is almost always used in the context of preaching the gospel to the world or building the kingdom. Of particular importance are the passages in Luke 24:47–49, D&C 95:8–9, and 108:5. The “promise of the Father” referred to in these passages was to be sent upon the Apostles after they tarried in Jerusalem. This phrase occurs again in Acts 1:4, where we read that the apostles were “wait[ing] for the promise of the Father.” They were told that they would “receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me” (Acts 1:8). Then in Acts 2 we read how the Spirit was poured out on the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, and Peter states that they had “received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:33). The Apostles received power from on high to be witnesses of Christ. In our day the elders were told that the “promise of the Father” would be “fulfilled upon [them] in that day

that [they] shall have right to preach my gospel” (D&C 108:6). Commenting on these related passages, Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote:

It is common in Christendom to suppose that Jesus here [Luke 24:49] commanded his apostles to tarry in Jerusalem until the promised gift of the Holy Ghost was received, which gift would constitute an endowment of power from on high. Perhaps the statement can be so used, for certainly the disciples were marvelously and powerfully endowed when the Holy Spirit came into their lives on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2.)

But from latter-day revelation we learn that the Lord had something more in mind in issuing this instruction. In this dispensation, after the elders had received the gift of the Holy Ghost and as early as January, 1831, the Lord began to reveal unto them that he had an endowment in store for the faithful (D&C 38:22; 43:16), ‘a blessing such as is not known among the children of men.’ (D&C 39:15.) In June, 1833, he said: ‘I gave unto you a commandment that you should build a house, in the which house I design to endow those whom I have chosen with power from on high; For this is the promise of the Father unto you; therefore I command you to tarry, even as mine apostles at Jerusalem.’ (D&C 95:8–9; 105:11–12, 18, 33.)

Thus the apostles—or any ministers or missionaries in any age—are not fully qualified to go forth, preach the gospel, and build up the kingdom, unless they have the gift of the Holy Ghost and also are endowed with power from on high, meaning have received certain knowledge, powers, and special blessings, normally given only in the Lord’s Temple.²²

Alluding to these same scriptures, Joseph Smith succinctly described the purpose of the endowment: “When the apostles were raised up, they worked in Jerusalem, and Jesus commanded them to tarry there until they were endowed with power from on high. . . . The endowment was to prepare the disciples for their missions unto the world.”²³

Joseph Smith also noted that “the object of gathering . . . the people of God in any age of the world . . . was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation.”²⁴ The Lord gathers the Saints so they can be endowed in the temple; he endows them with power so that they can gather the Saints.

The nature of the ministry requires attributes and endowments beyond the capacity of the natural man. But, as President Boyd K. Packer observed, “We have priesthood authority planted nearly everywhere But distributing the *authority* of the priesthood has raced . . . ahead of distributing the *power* of the priesthood.”²⁵

The distribution of power is the urgent but often overlooked concern of the temple ordinances. Isaiah’s prophecy concerning the strength of Zion (see

Isaiah 52:1) referred to “those whom God should call in the last days, who should hold the power of priesthood to bring again Zion, and the redemption of Israel; and to put on her strength is to put on the authority of the priesthood, which she, Zion, has a right to by lineage; also to return to that power which she had lost” (D&C 113:7–8).

Sealing

The Spirit of the Lord moves upon the nations of the earth, rousing believing souls from spiritual doldrums. Without understanding the cause, the seed of Abraham in every corner of the earth is stirred and provoked to engage in a spiritual quest. “The Lord did pour out his Spirit on all the face of the land to prepare the minds of the children of men, or to prepare their hearts to receive the word” (Alma 16:16).

Those who hearken to the voice of the Spirit are enticed to come unto God. When they do so, “the Father teacheth [them] of the covenant,” which has been restored “for the sake of the whole world” (D&C 84:48). Faithful souls receive the covenant as those with the authority and power of the restored priesthood “preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof” (Articles of Faith 1:5). This covenant, as we have seen, includes the first principles and ordinances of the gospel as well as the temple ordinances. The ordinances are way stations or markers to guide the traveler.

The covenant people proceed on their epic quest, which is fraught with trials and hazards as well as that joy which is a foretaste of their immortal glory. Their ultimate destination is the temple, particularly the sealing ordinance, which unites a man and a woman in the patriarchal order of the priesthood and seals their posterity to them forever.

Thus, the culminating ordinances of the gospel are the sealing of husband and wife and their posterity into the patriarchal order of the priesthood, which is the fulness of the priesthood. This is the climactic point of the gospel—the apex for which all other ordinances are preparatory. President Boyd K. Packer said, “The very purpose for the Restoration centers on the sealing authority, the temple ordinances, baptism for the dead, eternal marriage, eternal increase—centers on the family!”²⁶ President Spencer W. Kimball said that “the most important . . . of all the ordinances are the sealing ones, and all the others lead up to them.”²⁷ Only by entering into “this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]” can a person obtain the highest degree in celestial glory (D&C 131:1–2).

While we enter the covenant quest one by one, we continue the journey together. Exaltation does not come in isolation. We assist our fellow travelers. The endowment is both the obligation and the enabling grace that empowers us to extend real and effective help to each other. As we meet strangers and pilgrims along the road, we invite them to travel with us. As we encounter stragglers along the wayside, we “succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees” (D&C 81:5). This obligation does not end when we arrive at the destination. The goal and the journey are one. The end is the same as the process. The essence of the pursuit is ministering to others, now and in eternity. Thus, even the sealing ordinance affirms our responsibility to serve one another. When we are sealed, we receive the blessings of Abraham, which were passed on to Isaac, Jacob, Ephraim, and all of the “lawful heirs,” with whom “the priesthood hath continued through the lineage of your fathers” (D&C 86:8–9). Abraham was given the blessings of the priesthood and told, “Thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations; and I will bless them through thy name; for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father” (Abraham 2:9–10). With this priesthood comes the commission to “continue in my goodness, a light unto the Gentiles, and through this priesthood, a savior unto my people Israel” (D&C 86:11). Elder John A. Widtsoe observed that “the covenant [of Abraham] is a call to individual obedience and cleansing, and to cooperation with the Lord in blessing, if they so permit, ‘all the nations’ of earth”²⁸

Teach According to the Covenants

The Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith during a troubled period that “the redemption of Zion must needs come by power” (D&C 103:15) but that this redemption must wait “until mine elders are endowed with power from on high” (D&C 105:11).²⁹ The Lord said that his “first elders” must “receive their endowment from on high”; they must be “chosen” and “sanctified,” and then they would “have power after many days to accomplish all things pertaining to Zion” (D&C 105:33–37). Zion is a community of believers; but it is also the “pure in heart” (D&C 97:21). The ideal, the power, of Zion exists in the hearts of individuals who “observe their covenants by sacrifice” (D&C 97:8).

The redemption of Zion must wait for the redemption of individuals. As President Spencer W. Kimball said, “The major strides which must be made

by the Church will follow upon the major strides to be made by us as individuals. . . . Our individual spiritual growth is the key to major numerical growth in the kingdom.”³⁰

The kingdom of God will progress when larger numbers of Church members come to appreciate that the house of the Lord is “a place of instruction for all those who are called to the work of the ministry in all their several callings and offices; That they may be perfected in the understanding of their ministry, in theory, in principle, and in doctrine, in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God on the earth” (D&C 97:13–14). Zion will progress when more Church members “quietly put an end to [their] reluctance to reach out to others” and “take those seemingly small steps forward which will, when compounded, mean major progress for the Church.”³¹

This concept directs priesthood leaders to their proper role: helping members make and keep covenants. Elder Boyd K. Packer said, “A good and useful and true test of every major decision made by a leader in the Church is whether a given course leads toward or away from the making and keeping of covenants.”³² Our covenants relative to building God’s kingdom are affirmative; they require active participation, not abstinence. These are the duties that require the attention of priesthood leaders. President Marion G. Romney taught priesthood leaders: “No man who comprehends, believes, and lives according to gospel covenants will be inactive in the Church. . . . I am persuaded that failure to appreciate the significance of the ‘new and everlasting covenant’ of the gospel is the root-cause for the inactivity of thousands of our Church members. If you presidents of elders quorums will ‘teach’ your inactive members ‘according’ to the covenant [see D&C 107:89] and convert them, you will have little trouble in teaching the covenants entered into in this life.”³³

Priesthood leaders are to teach members to make the basic decisions necessary to fulfill their covenants. The work of Church leaders focuses, as do the ordinances and the mission of the Church, on the making and keeping of covenants. President Gordon B. Hinckley said, “We are a covenant people. I have had the feeling that if we could just encourage our people to live by three or four covenants [sacrament, tithing, temple] everything else would take care of itself.”³⁴ We are endowed with power from on high so that such teaching will be effective.

Those who hold the keys and the powers of the holy priesthood have “no difficulty in obtaining a knowledge of facts in relation to the salvation of the

children of men, both as well for the dead as for the living” (D&C 128:11). Such knowledge is reflected in modern revelation and is encapsulated in the mission of the Church. The temple is the channel through which we receive power to fulfill that mission. **RE**

Notes

1. “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized by God to assist in His work to bring to pass the salvation and exaltation of His children. The Church invites all to ‘come unto Christ, and be perfected in him’ (Moroni 10:32; see also D&C 20:59). The invitation to come unto Christ pertains to all who have lived, or will ever live, on the earth. . . . In fulfilling its purpose to help individuals and families qualify for exaltation, the Church focuses on divinely appointed responsibilities. These include helping members live the gospel of Jesus Christ, gathering Israel through missionary work, caring for the poor and needy, and enabling the salvation of the dead by building temples and performing vicarious ordinances.” *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2010), 2.2.
2. “Every principle of the gospel when studied carefully reveals a harmony with truth that is simply sublime. Each seems to be all comprehensive, either leading into or embracing other principles. . . . This harmony, or rather this oneness of all fundamental principles of the gospel is indicative of their being elements of eternal truth. Truth being ‘the sum of existence’ is all comprehensive: . . . every . . . element of truth will of necessity show a close relationship not only to each other but also to the whole, of which they are a part.” David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1953), 12.
3. Bruce R. McConkie, “The Promises Made to the Fathers,” in *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 3: Genesis to 2 Samuel*, ed. Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 49.
4. “Wherefore, seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Joseph Smith—Matthew 6:38; see also D&C 6:6–7; 11:6; 12:6; Luke 12:31, fn a).
5. Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980), 2:158 (comment on Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:38).
6. “We lose our life by serving and lifting others. By so doing we experience the only true and lasting happiness. Service is not something we endure on this earth so we can earn the right to live in the celestial kingdom. Service is the very fiber of which an exalted life in the celestial kingdom is made.
7. “Knowing that service is what gives our Father in Heaven fulfillment, and knowing that we want to be where He is and as He is, why must we be commanded to serve one another? Oh, for the glorious day when these things all come naturally because of the purity of our hearts. In that day there will be no need for a commandment because we will have experienced for ourselves that we are truly happy only when we are engaged in unselfish service.” Marion G. Romney, “The Celestial Nature of Self-Reliance,” *Ensign*, November 1982, 93.
8. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “The Priesthood of God,” *Ensign*, November 1988, 37.
9. Dallin H. Oaks, “Family History: ‘In Wisdom and Order,’” *Ensign*, June 1989, 7.

10. David A. Bednar distinguished between the redemptive and enabling power of the Atonement: "I suspect that you and I are much more familiar with the nature of the redeeming power of the Atonement than we are with the enabling power of the Atonement. . . . Most of us clearly understand that the Atonement is for sinners. I am not so sure, however, that we know and understand that the Atonement is also for saints—for good men and women who are obedient and worthy and conscientious and who are striving to become better and serve more faithfully. . . . The enabling power of the Atonement strengthens us to do and be good and serve beyond our own individual desire and natural capacity." "In the Strength of the Lord," address given at Brigham Young University, October 23, 2001.

11. Harold B. Lee, *Youth and the Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), 140. "The temple endowment is seen as the unfolding and culmination of the covenants made at baptism." *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:455.

12. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, arr. John A. Widtsoe (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 416.

13. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, 416.

14. Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1970), 2:520. Ephesians 5:25–27 states, "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

15. John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1880), 20:23. "God's servants must, at the peril of their own salvation, deliver the message entrusted to them. (D&C 4:2.) If they raise the warning voice as directed by the Lord (D&C 88:81), they are free from the blood and sins of those to whom they are sent. If they fail to warn the wicked, the Lord holds them accountable for the sins of the unrepentant. (Ezek. 3:17–21; 33:7–9.)" McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 2:177. More recently, President Spencer W. Kimball said, "If we do not do our duty in regard to missionary service, then I am convinced that God will hold us responsible for the people we might have saved had we done our duty. . . . We must not slacken our hands in this work. Not only is our eternal welfare at stake, but also the eternal welfare of many of our brothers and sisters who are not now members of this Church." Spencer W. Kimball, "It Becometh Every Man," *Ensign*, October 1977, 5, 7.

16. John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 19:16.

17. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:383.

18. John A. Widtsoe, "Temple Worship," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 12 (1921):55.

19. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:161.

20. James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1968),

83. Elder Harold B. Lee stated, "To attain the highest degree of glory, or exaltation in the Celestial glory, there is required of each individual an attainment to the highest orders of the Holy Priesthood. It is with these ordinances, known as the holy temple endowment, by which the fulness of the blessings of the Priesthood may be received, that the ceremonies for the living in the temples are directly associated." *Youth and the Church*, 139–40.

21. *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1964), 5:424.

22. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:859.

23. *History of the Church*, 5:259.

24. *History of the Church*, 5:423.

25. Boyd K. Packer, "The Power of the Priesthood," *Ensign*, May 2010, 7; emphasis in original.

26. Boyd K. Packer, "The One Pure Defense," in *The Voice of My Servants: Apostolic Messages on Teaching, Learning, and Scripture*, ed. Scott C. Esplin and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2010), 104.

27. Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 502.

28. John A. Widtsoe, "A Covenant People," *New Era*, February 1976, 45.

29. Joseph Fielding Smith stated that "Zion was not to be redeemed until endowments were given." Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1955), 2:256.

30. Spencer W. Kimball, "Let Us Move Forward and Upward," *Ensign*, May 1979, 82.

31. Kimball, "Let Us Move Forward and Upward," 82–83.

32. Boyd K. Packer, "June Videoconference: 'Accomplishing the Mission of the Church,'" *Ensign*, September 1987, 74.

33. Marion G. Romney, "According to the Covenants," *Ensign*, November 1975, 72.

34. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 146.