

THE CHURCH AND THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY

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Elder Cree-L Kofford, then an emeritus member of the First Quorum of the Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, presented this essay at “The Church and the Global Community,” the International Society’s twentieth annual conference, April 2009, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

The second-to-last verse of the book of Matthew gives what Matthew penned as the Savior’s last instruction to His Apostles. You have all heard it. He said, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”¹

The thing that draws our attention to the worldwide nature of the Church is that He didn’t bother, at that moment, to tell the Apostles why they were to go into all the world and baptize everybody. If you go back to His conversations with Moses, He told him, “This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”² We all know that immortality is a free gift that comes from the atoning sacrifice. What is not a free gift is the eternal life part. Eternal life means life in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom. And to get that, there are certain requirements, certain prerequisites that must be met.

There are, of course, the ordinances that must be obtained: All must receive the ordinances of baptism and confirmation. They must also receive the endowment and, thereafter, the sealing ordinance of the temple. And men must receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. Without those ordinances there cannot be eternal life. In addition to those ordinances, one other important thing is needed: obedience to the covenants that you have made.

The Lord has been very gracious in His administration of the world in essentially saying, “I won’t hold you responsible for something you don’t know anything about.” And that indicates the need to teach the people of the world. The link between the Book of Moses and the Book of Matthew is found in Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–2: “In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into . . . the new and everlasting covenant of marriage.”

All of that goes together to form a course of action the Lord wants for His children. We know He wants this not only for His children on this earth but for His children on all other earths that have been formed. Christ’s atoning sacrifice transcends this geographic sphere, and it brings forcibly to mind the fact that whether you and I like it or not, the Lord intends His gospel to go throughout the world. His gospel cannot effectively bless without the Church going throughout the world. When we speak of the Church and the global community, we are in reality speaking about the doctrine of the Lord. We are talking about the purpose and substance of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are talking about why all that we do is done. And it is within that framework that we begin to understand what we know about the Church around the world.

My frame of reference for today will be taken from Asia. Asia is a fascinating place. It covers over five million square miles of the earth’s surface. It has 3.4 billion people, which make up about 52 percent of the world’s population. Asia is an interesting assortment of seventeen major countries. There are more than that in terms of territories and minor kingdoms, but seventeen is enough to keep your mind going. It starts in the north with a country that I was taught to love by President Richard Cook—Mongolia. We’ll talk more about Mongolia later. Let your mind conjure up thoughts about that great country, and you’ll understand why it is with such affection that we speak its name.

South of Mongolia, you have China and all that China is and has the potential to become. A dot on China's geographic landscape is the beautiful international city of Hong Kong, which is where the administrative offices of the Church were located and where President Richard Cook, President H. Bryan Richards, and I spent three years of our lives together in the presidency, having previously served under the direction of President John H. Groberg.

To the east lies what I consider to be the heartbeat of Asia: Taiwan. It contains the largest assembly of Latter-day Saints of any place in this massive area. It is a family-oriented place where people live in relative democracy. It is also a place where the gospel has taken root and is progressing well.

South of there, we run into a series of countries that still have an attitude about the United States and about the Church (because the Church is part of the United States), derivative of the experiences that preceded historically. I speak of Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar (Burma), and, to a lesser extent, Bangladesh. All of those countries are relatively closed and relatively challenging in which to work. There have been some minor breakthroughs, and I am sure that the work will continue there.

The day I flew to Hanoi to talk to officials about the possibility of some kind of Church presence in Vietnam, it became clear that, while we may have at one time had a congregation there and may have at one time even owned a building there, those days would not return during these officials' time. So we waited. We also have exotic countries like Thailand, Cambodia, Singapore, and Sri Lanka—which was of course bathing in the blood of a long-term civil war—and India—so massive that I am not even sure its own people understand how big it is—and Pakistan and Afghanistan—although Afghanistan is never a place we spent any time because we were excluded from being there as a church.

There are other countries equally interesting: Nepal and the mountains of Tibet, Bhutan, and, not far from there, the giant country of Indonesia. I am told there are more Muslims in Indonesia than in any place in the world. And, if I haven't forgotten any, I think I have covered most of the countries that we had responsibility for.

Lumping them together, there is a great deal we can learn about the different areas of the Church. Had I served in other areas, I am sure they could just as easily be used as a model for the comments to be made, but Asia provides an almost perfect ground from which to learn various things for the simple reason that it is so diverse. Seventeen countries plus seventeen languages made it easy to salve our consciences when we said to ourselves that there is no way we can learn all of these languages, so let's not learn any. I was so grateful for that. If I had been sent to France, I probably would have had to learn French, but in Asia it was easy to excuse my ignorance.

Asia is an area filled with countries of significantly diverse governments; some are reasonably friendly to the US; others dislike us with an intensity that borders on hatred. This is not because we are members of the Church, I think, but because we are citizens of the US.

All that I am going to tell you comes from my own observations, my own experience, and my own opinion. That makes it subject to great fallibility. If I say something that is wrong, just chalk it up to the fact that I didn't learn very well, and I'll accept that. I made no effort, except for a call to President Cook, to find out if my memory of certain things was accurate or to triangulate my thinking with that of others. This is not a committee report. It is a report of one person's time. When I talk about what the Church is doing, I have to be candid and tell you I am talking about what I know the Church has been doing. You see, I always served in an atmosphere of "need to know." I was one of those who believed that if I didn't need to know, no one needed to tell me. I found over the years there was a great deal that others thought I didn't need to know, so there is a lot that went on that I didn't know about.

In addition to that, there is an enormous amount of work being done by those who operate independently of the Church. I say "independently" in the sense that they do not function under the umbrella of the administration of the Church. I speak with great admiration of such entities—for example, the Kennedy Center at Brigham Young University. I have long admired and watched the work that they do. The closest I got to understanding how the Kennedy Center operates was watching each year as the sixty or so Chinese teachers would migrate from China to Hong Kong for

what they called a summer break, which meant spending a week or so in Hong Kong. We were privileged to meet with them and feel of their spirit. I know the good they have done. Without being told of it or knowing officially what goes on, I have witnessed it and felt their presence. Yet, they are outside the pale of my knowledge. I think one of the reasons they function is because they are outside the pale. They are not perceived by the governments that allow them access to their countries as a church organization, at least not officially. The prohibition against churches coming into certain countries does not apply to organizations of this type.

Other organizations about which I know only by observation are the universities. BYU and other schools—particularly their performing groups—have had a great impact in various countries. Perhaps the most notable efforts have been those made by BYU–Hawaii; it has specialized in that part of the world and has taken the lead in a very aggressive and, in my mind, positive way in accomplishing good things in these countries. I will talk in a little bit about a time when we were with President Shumway, of BYU–Hawaii, and President Gordon B. Hinckley on a visit to Thailand to demonstrate what that university has done.

I offer these two illustrations of what is being done by the Church outside of my realm of experience and responsibility. We are grateful for what these entities do, and others could be named. I do not mention things on the legal side because they were attached by direct assignment to the area office, and we worked with them on an almost daily basis. The simple fact is that we could not have lived without them. I do not mention the humanitarian aid, although it was massive and essential. More good was done by the humanitarian aid program in the Asia Area the years I served there than you can possibly imagine. Natural disasters came with such regularity that there was no need to stage mock disasters to prepare; they could use real ones for training and learning. They were present in a large number of countries, many of which we could not get the organized Church into, and they were invited in to provide services.

I speak particularly of a country—and I am going to try to remember not to give you the names of any of the countries I speak of specifically, and that is because the Area President of Asia, upon learning I was going to address this subject, reminded me that there are many things

that are sensitive in that part of the world and that it would be appreciated if I would be less than totally revealing in terms of the countries about which I am speaking. I honor that request. I was there long enough to learn that losing face is one of the cardinal sins in that part of the world. I would not want to say anything that might upset a delicate balance now in process. Nevertheless, I think we can learn well from the illustration without knowing exactly which country is being illustrated. And so it is that the humanitarian aid program had missionaries performing aid work in countries where no other activity would be allowed. And they established a great base.

I arrived in Hong Kong in July 1997, a few days after the handover of that colony by the British to the mainland Chinese government. On the lips of everyone was wonderment about what would transpire. I would later learn that there was concern about the future of Hong Kong because many Hong Kong residents had disposed of their assets and had left to take up citizenship in other countries. Most of those, I am told, were members of the British Commonwealth. What that meant was not totally apparent for some time, until one by one we learned of former leaders of the Church who had left the area and were now residing in other places.

There was a second worry that was not expressed to me in those early days but which came to my attention later. There was among some an honest fear that the mainland Chinese government would invade Hong Kong. It turns out that was an unnecessary worry. The Chinese government has done all that it said it would do, as far as I am aware. The question on everyone's mind at that time was—and if I was asked one question more than any other, it was this one—“When is China going to open to missionary work?” Everyone wanted to know, and so did I. The honest truth was that we didn't know then, and we don't know now.

The impressive thing was that the base for sending the Church into countries has usually been laid by fine men, particularly businessmen and professionals who have lived in or at least had extensive business dealings in the country. We are blessed to have some outstanding men who have done that. We benefited greatly in a number of countries from businessmen who entered into contractual relationships, which they honored with great integrity and which brought honor to them—and vicariously to us.

I believe that in many of these countries the base that will be used as a springboard for our participation in a religious sense has already been laid by people like you who are engaged there. By way of background, that tells you a little bit about these countries. They are different, government-wise. I don't think it needs to be said, but just to be certain we are communicating, one can go from places as easy to live in as Taiwan to those that are governed by brutal dictatorships.

In that area, you have countries that have been at war with each other. One of the more interesting illustrations of that is in the tiny country of Cambodia, a gorgeous country. Arithmetically, it is the fastest growing country in terms of Church membership in Asia. It's a marvelous little place of great poverty and great concern for the future of the land. The problem is that it is not far removed from the country of Laos. Some of you will know where I am heading when I say "Khmer Rouge."

For those of you who don't know the history of that area, there was a time when a renegade band of individuals operating under the name Khmer Rouge came down out of Laos, which was their home base, to occupy Cambodia. They rolled into the capital of Cambodia and rounded up all of the citizens who were educated. They took the doctors, the lawyers, the teachers, and all others who had any education or could possibly be labeled as a leader; they put them in the backs of trucks and took them to a place that a journalist later described as "the killing fields." There they were murdered systematically, one by one, leaving the country devoid of any significant top leadership or top mental capacity. I had the opportunity of meeting a young man who was a child when this happened. He went in the same truck as his parents and siblings. He told me that he watched as his mother and father were shot or beheaded, and then they turned their attention to his brothers and sisters. In the confusion of that process, he slipped away into the underbrush and walked for weeks into the hinterlands of the country, where he was ultimately discovered by someone who helped him find a distant relative. He grew up in Cambodia and lives there today. He is a member of the Church and has a strong testimony. That leads to the purpose of the story.

We were in Cambodia one time to conduct a conference. We were preparing to build a new building there. Baptisms had gone extremely well,

and the people were progressing. We had rented a hall in a hotel since there were no church buildings anywhere that were near large enough to hold the several hundred members of the Church who were assembled. As we walked into the room, there was an interesting contrast. The room was divided down the center by a large aisle. On one side were all of the Cambodians, and on the other were all of the Laotians. It was very obvious that they had intended to sit that way. I wondered if there was great animosity between the two groups, but I was assured by local leaders that this was not the case, but the comfort level each had for the other was still tainted by the memory of what had happened some years before in the invasion. Our challenge, of course, was to build that diverse group into a common force, all as members of the Church. We started on that. We did not complete it before I left, but I have no doubt that in due course they will one day be sitting intermingled one with another.

That brings us to an interesting challenge in terms of the Church in the world. You see, except for during the War of 1812 and the Civil War, the US and Canada have always had a reasonably friendly relationship. About the worst that happens is that you have Democrats and Republicans talking to each other, or you have Brigham Young University and University of Utah graduates talking to each other, but aside from minor skirmishes of animosity, most of us get along reasonably well. That is not true in places like Asia. Nor is it true in other places of the world about which I know less than I do Asia. The Church, as it moves forward, has to be sensitive to these needs and circumstances. Even in the marvelous place of Taiwan there were vestiges of concern about the attitude and ambitions of the Chinese government in terms of that relationship. And so, sensitivity is needed, and sensitivity must exist.

What do we do in countries where in one place you are allowed to do missionary work and in another one you are not? The answer is simple. We do what we can. We go where we are allowed to go. We do as much as we are allowed to do, but we faithfully, scrupulously, and honestly obey the rules set down by local governments. Our opinion was that it was far better to wait and abide the time than it was to try to force a decision that was not ready to come. The Lord knows His purposes, and He knows His plan, and He said on more than one occasion: "I can do my own work."

Our responsibility was to be there to implement what needed to be implemented at the time the Lord saw fit to make it possible. And He did see fit to make many things possible. I think one of the greatest illustrations of what can happen in that circumstance is the country of Mongolia, about which only good things can be said.

Mongolia was opened to the gospel just a few years before we arrived in Asia. To my best recollection and best knowledge, we were somewhere near the first of the people to go into that magnificent country, and *magnificent* is a word that I use advisedly in the sense that I don't know that I would call it a beautiful country, unless you call rugged, vast loneliness beautiful, but it is a magnificent country. One of the first to have gone into that area is Brother Cook, about whom I have already spoken. He was the first mission president there. He did a marvelous work—actually Sister Cook did a marvelous work, and Brother Cook took care of her, but they accomplished a great deal. As a result, today Mongolia stands as a bastion of good members of the Church. They are intelligent, capable, and willing. Several beautiful buildings were built under President Cook's supervision and were dedicated by him. The gospel continues to roll forth, but to show you the challenge that we have when we go into the world, let me explain to you one problem with which we had to wrestle somewhat. It is not one you would imagine.

It had to do with missionaries. Some of you serving in other areas may have seen this situation. The question is that once you reach the point where young men and young women are prepared to serve missions, do you recommend that they serve where they can help their own people—stay in their own country and develop and go forward—or do you recommend that they be sent to foreign countries, preferably places like the US, where they can witness the full Church in action, experience living amongst a large number of members of the Church, and become better educated and better equipped to lead the people at home, with the possibility that they may not want to return home or will be dissatisfied with home when they get back? I do not presume to know the correct answer in all cases. However, I do understand the problem in all cases. That is something that must be examined by the Church, each country in turn as the Church goes through the process of spreading across the world. If it hasn't

happened yet in Africa, it will. In any country where there is poverty, lack of education, or lack of opportunity, that question is going to have to be addressed by priesthood leadership and probably by the First Presidency and the Twelve in making a decision. We learn from that experience.

What about the threefold mission of the Church? How does that work? Let me explain to you what we experienced there. The first mission of the Church is, of course, to preach the gospel. That means missionary work. Where we're not allowed to have missionaries, the answer is simple: we don't do missionary work. Last year, you heard Elder Wickman stand at a pulpit like this one and talk about the man with the stamp and the need for visas. That is indeed a lifeline for missionary work. What he may not have told you was that even getting the stamp doesn't solve the problem because countries can shrink or expand the stamp almost at their whim. You may be allowed to have forty missionaries in a country this week and fourteen next week. There is a constant juggling in some areas where that is an issue. That presents challenges for the missionaries and for the missionary work. It requires constant care and concern.

We had that experience in one country, which incidentally did not allow Americans. We had a number of missionaries there, but they were from Australia, Canada, and other countries besides the United States. A local religious group became exercised. You may have read about it. They accosted tourists in the hotels, particularly Western tourists. The government became concerned about the safety of the people, particularly Americans, and we were asked to withdraw all of the missionaries. And, if my memory serves correctly, for a short period of time we did pull all of the missionaries from the country. I point this out not as a fact in terms of this country, but as a principle that these are the kinds of issues that must be addressed.

Now to point out the challenge: What do you do with fifty missionaries when all of a sudden they can't be where they were called to serve? Where do you send them? How often do you move them? There was a mission that had this problem on a regular basis; it was composed of more than one country. The visas there allowed the missionaries to stay anywhere from a few weeks to a few months. That meant a rotating complement of missionaries who would first stay in country A until their visa

time ran out, then move to country B, then move to country C, then back to mission headquarters, and then start the process all over again. Try that if you are a mission president with 140 or 150 missionaries. That's a logistical nightmare, but it is a reality of life, and missionary work has the challenge of that. It is not at all unlike what the Saints experienced in Missouri. They couldn't stay in one place for very long either: Jackson County to Clay County to Caldwell County and finally across the frozen ground to Nauvoo, all in a period of a few years. I suspect they felt a little bit like some of these mission presidents, wishing they could stay in one place long enough to get the job done. That's one of the dangers, one of the challenges, and one of the characteristics of the global Church.

Incidentally, we have a good reputation in the United States. Among my early assignments, I worked in New York and Washington, DC, and saw firsthand the magnificent work of bridge building and working with ambassadors. I went to the Marriott farm picnic and shook hands with more ambassadors than I knew what to do with. I've been to the Christmas lighting ceremony at the Washington D.C. Temple Visitors' Center, where many bridges were built and foreign dignitaries were honored. I have watched the magnificent work performed by these "professionals." And I use quotation marks around professionals because they are people like you and me, graced by the Spirit and functioning in an outstanding way. Some of you will remember their names—Beverly Campbell, LaMar Sleight, Ann Santini, and the list goes on. They are marvelous people who perform a great work. The simple fact remains that while the Church enjoys a great reputation in most parts of the US and in many parts of the world, it is a fly on the wall in Asia. You take our 160 thousand members and put them up against 3.4 billion people and you can see that we do not by weight of numbers impress very much. In addition to that, we have the typical resistance from those who were there before us and who do not like the fact that we are taking people from their flocks. These all become challenges for those who serve in international areas as the Church grows more and more in the world.

Let me tell you what I consider the crux of the challenge of the Church moving out. We see ways of training people. We're a great training Church. The truth is, though, if you watch the way we train people in the North

American area, meaning both Canada and the US, we use techniques of training that work well with large groups. We use video and other mass communication means to do training. To have that work effectively, you have to have people near the same level of gospel growth so that you can teach. Admittedly, there are some places in the US where we're still teaching T-ball and others where we are teaching them how to hit a ninety-mile-an-hour fastball. But the truth is, in places like Asia, in one place we are teaching baseball, in another we are teaching soccer, and somewhere else we are teaching tiddlywinks—simply because it's that different. And so training is vastly different, and that is not understood until you have lived there and been responsible for the training. I preferred to train in the smallest possible group I could find because when you are dealing with translators, that is the only way you have any hope of knowing if the message that you said is the message that they heard. Let me illustrate the point I'm trying to make.

One of my first assignments when I arrived in Asia was to attend a week-long youth conference of young adults in Taiwan. They were holding the conference in the mountains of central Taiwan, and we were to spend a week with them. My wife, Ila, and I enjoyed a glorious week. It was absolutely marvelous. It was there that I saw my first Chinese handcart company, and they did a beautiful job of trying to emulate what the handcart pioneers would have looked and acted like. I had several spiritual experiences while there. Later in a conference in another part of Taiwan, using a translator—which was always the case—I wanted to express that experience, so I told the experience. I thought it went over very well. I watched the eyes of the audience and felt that they had received it reasonably well and that the point had been made. Months later when I went back, the translator who translated for me asked if he could see me. He said, "I need to repent." I had no idea what he had in mind, but I hoped it wasn't one or two things that quickly came to me. He proved that it wasn't. He said, "I need to tell you, do you remember the story that you told about . . ." and related the story I told. He said, "When you started to tell that story it sounded so farfetched that I didn't think they'd believe it, and I didn't want to tell them about it. So I just made up another story."

I learned something that day. Just because I said it, didn't mean they heard it. I also learned that you need to do some checking to see what people have heard. I may have given the best talk of my life, meaning the one he gave, if I just knew what it was I had said. I got to the point that I would get into a room with the people I was trying to teach, express the principle, and then stop and try to find some way to determine whether or not they had learned the principle. One way of doing that is simply to say, "Now, what did I just teach you?" and then listen as they try to return the message. That works to some extent. There are a variety of other ideas that I am sure you have, but somehow as we go into the world with the Church, we need to make sure that the messages we are delivering are the messages that they are receiving.

That challenge is compounded by another problem, and that is that words, even English words, do not mean the same in all languages. Sometimes words do not convey the thought. You have the challenge of knowing if the people you're teaching understood the principle in their minds or if they have yet to understand it in their hearts. Let me tell you another story that illustrates the point I am trying to make:

I spent a lot of time teaching about the principle of love. There were evidences in one particular country that they were having challenges with loving one another, loving families, loving husbands and wives, and so on. I taught the same kinds of things you would have taught, trying to get them introduced to the principles of love and caring. After I had been particularly eloquent at one conference, after we had finished, a contingent of sisters asked if they could see me. I thought, "Yes, certainly you may." We retired to a room off the stage of the building where we had held the meeting. What they said was, "Brother Kofford, we've heard what you have said about love, but do you realize that is contrary to the way we are culturally? We just don't go around expressing love to each other." One of them said, "For a fact, my husband has never told me that he loves me. I've never heard him say that." I later asked if she had ever told him, and she said, "No. I have never told him I love him."

So there we were. I had been teaching "love one another" and "husbands and wives loving each other" for weeks in that country—obviously, they had heard the words because I had asked them and they would say, "You have

taught us to love one another and to express love.” That seemed to me to be clear. *Express* means to say it, but it didn’t mean “say it” to them. You see the problem? You end up in a situation where as you train, you want to take their face in your hands, look them in the eye, and say, “Now, let’s be sure what I’ve said is what you’ve heard”—and don’t let them get away with just the words because these people are very bright and they’ve learned to recite. They can tell you what you have said better than you can say it. Whether they understand it is a totally different experience. Typically, at least in my limited experience, their deductive or inductive reasoning abilities are very limited. They are masters at math and science and other such disciplines because they require heavy memorization and regurgitation. But when you try to connect the dots and analytically apply one principle in situation A to situation B, they have challenges. And that’s not bad; it’s just human nature. The reason I mention it is for those of you engaged in all of these things, you may want to consider worrying about that happening in your experience.

The other thing that becomes an issue in the world has to do with understanding where these people are spiritually. I think back on Joseph Smith’s challenge of doing that in the Kirtland and Nauvoo era. You remember that Joseph was anxious to get a temple. The Lord was anxious to get a temple built. He kept telling Joseph, “Build me a temple.” They were supposed to build one in Jackson County, and then He said, “I want one in Kirtland.” Joseph was building the temple because they wanted the ordinances of the temple. Joseph, just prior to or while they were building the Kirtland Temple, had a meeting with the Quorum of the Twelve in which he said something. Keep in mind that this is the Quorum of the Twelve that presided over The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Kirtland era. These are the men who gave their lives, as well as their fortunes, to building the Church. Men who served missions when they were destitute and who were obedient and thoughtful and kind. I am trying to draw a picture of a good, faithful Latter-day Saint. Joseph said to the Twelve, “I know you are anxious about receiving the endowment”—and I am going to paraphrase here—“but you are not yet ready.” What he said was, “Nor could even Gabriel explain it to the understanding of your dark minds.” They were not ready.

The Twelve were not ready in the 1830s to receive the ordinance of the endowment. What makes us think, then, that there are not people in

foreign countries, especially emerging countries, who do not have that same challenge? We must temper our teaching to their ability to learn.

It was not until twenty years after his first vision that Joseph finally began to unfold the principles of the temple. It was 1840 when he first gave the doctrine relating to baptisms for the dead, which the Doctrine and Covenants tells us is the welding link necessary to save the world.³ Two years later in 1842, Joseph finally felt that they were ready as leaders—and I am talking now about Brigham Young and Hyrum Smith among others—to be taught the endowment. It was yet another year later before he announced sections 131 and 132, which are the sections relating to the celestial principle of sealing. The Lord waited in that circumstance until the people were ready. Sometimes we go into foreign countries, into areas of the world, and we dump the whole thing on them and expect them to take it and run with it. We need, as leaders, to be as wise as the Lord was with Joseph by saying, “Wait to teach until the people are ready to learn.” That’s not an easy thing. I think Asia is a perfect place to use as an example for what I am trying to say because we had all levels of learning, which makes it even harder. As you go out, you must teach in some countries on a significantly more elementary level than in others, and even within the same country you have the same disparity.

Let me go on now to the third mission of the Church, which is to redeem the dead. That requires sensitivity regarding the conditions of the country. In Asia we had some unusual circumstances. Among other things, the records of the dead had in some countries been destroyed, systematically and purposefully. There were no records. How then do you do family history research? You teach as much as you can teach. You teach what has to be taught. You teach them about personal histories. You teach them about working with relatives who are still alive. You teach about the temple, and you teach them about preparing themselves to hold a recommend even though the temple is so far away that in their lifetime there is little chance they will ever get to one—again, sensitivity to the needs of the people.

Now we could compound illustrations for the rest of the day, but that would be counterproductive. Hopefully, what I have done is give you enough words from which you can draw a picture of what it is like to go throughout the world with the Church. What you see working well along

the Wasatch Front does not always work well along other mountain ranges in other parts of the world. Leadership and membership of the Church must be cautious not to take people beyond the place where they can be. It is our responsibility to provide the kind of leadership that will bring people along as rapidly as they can come but no more rapidly than that, with compassion, understanding, and love.

Incidentally, if I don't add one more word, I will have trouble with two good friends, John Carmack and Richard Cook. I have not said anything about the Perpetual Education Fund, which negligence is a cardinal sin. The reason is that program wasn't active when I was in Asia. They were just getting it started, so we didn't see it. But I know this: I've watched it since, and it is a powerful force accomplishing great good.

I promised I would tell you about BYU–Hawaii and the trip with President Hinckley. We were visiting a country in which relationships had been good, although there had been one incident that had seriously damaged it. President Shumway was there to distribute a series of scholarships to high school seniors who were graduating, some of whom were nonmembers of the Church. That program had been going on for several years and was extremely well received by the government. We were simply beneficiaries of the prior goodwill that someone had introduced into that country, and so again I applaud the efforts of them as I do many of you.

I have been talking about all of you in some way or another, particularly those who live in and who are involved in other lands in business, education, or other functions. Thank you for what you do. Thank you for understanding what we as General Authorities who work in these areas try to do, and thank you to those who function so beautifully who are not under the umbrella of the Area Presidency. I pray that my words, though many, may have conveyed a few simple thoughts that will let you understand and build into your lives a knowledge of what going into the world means when we talk about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

NOTES

1. Matthew 28:19.
2. Moses 1:39.
3. See Doctrine and Covenants 128:18.