

## #40: Temple and Family History Work

Monte F. Shelley, 22 Nov 2009

**Boyd K. Packer:** “The ultimate purpose of every teaching, every activity in the Church is that parents and their children are happy at home, sealed in an eternal marriage, and linked to their generations” (*Ensign*, May 1994, 19)

Sources: Richard E. Bennett, “Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept,” *BYU Studies* 44, no. 3 (2005)

1. Church History institute manual (institute.lds.org)
2. Beardall (<http://beardall2000.com/gospdoct.shtml>)

Quiz: When did modern temple work begin?

1. Baptisms for living? 1829; For dead 1840, Nauvoo
2. Washings and anointing? 1836, Kirtland (washing feet too)
3. Living endowments? 1842, Red Brick Store, Joseph
4. Marriage sealings for living? 1843 May, Nauvoo
5. After Nauvoo, where were next living endowments done?
6. Sealings of living to dead spouse? 1855, Endowment House
7. First endowments for the dead? 1877, St. George
8. Genealogy and sealings to own ancestors? 1894

### Timeline of Events Related to Temple Work

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| 1823 | Sept 21. D&C 2. Moroni appeared to Joseph the first time and quoted Malachi 4:5–6 about Elijah.<br>Repeated several times that night.<br>Nov 19. Alvin Smith died at age 25.<br>Minister implied at funeral that Alvin “had gone to hell” for he was not a church member. (TPC:JS 401–2)<br>Joseph said Alvin ““was ... the noblest of my father’s family. He was one of the noblest of the sons of men. ... In him there was no guile. ... He was one of the soberest of men, and when he died the angel of the Lord visited him in his last moments” (HC 5:126–27).  |
| 1829 | May 15. D&C 13. John the Baptist restores Aaronic Priesthood. Joseph and Oliver baptize each other.  |
| 1830 | Mar 26. Book of Mormon (account of Jesus and temple)<br>Jun–Feb 1831. Book of Moses (JST of Gen 1–6)<br>Major part of temple endowment message.  |
| 1831 | Feb 16. D&C 76. Three kingdoms.  |
| 1835 | Jul 6. Joseph bought Egyptian papyri (book of Abraham)<br>Contained temple message concepts  |
| 1836 | Jan 21. D&C 137. Joseph saw Alvin in celestial kingdom<br>Jan. 21–Mar. 30: Washings and anointings in the temple initiatory ordinances. Like Moses, with Aaron & sons<br>Mar 27. D&C 109. Solemn Assembly, temple dedication<br>Apr 3. The Lord, Moses, Elias, and <b>Elijah</b> restore keys.   |
| 1837 | Great Britain passed laws to preserve records of dead.<br><b>Martin Van Buren</b> , US President (1837–1841).  |
| 1838 | Missouri governor issues Mormon extermination order.   |
| 1839 | Van Buren “Your cause is just, but I can do nothing for you”   |
| 1840 | Aug 15. Joseph mentioned B4D in funeral sermon for Seymour Brunson. He referred to 1 Cor 15 and 15:29.<br>Baker recalled the Prophet saying that the Saints “could now act for their friends who had departed this life, and that the plan of salvation was calculated to save all who were willing to obey the requirements of the law of God.” (Baugh)<br>Sept. First Presidency said time to build temple (HC 4:186; TPC:JS 415)<br>Sept 12. First documented baptism. A mother was baptized for her son in the Mississippi River.<br>Sept 13–14. Joseph’s dying father asked him to be baptized for Alvin immediately. |

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|      | Sept. Hyrum was baptized for Alvin (TPC:JS 403)<br>Oct. Conference. Joseph taught B4D and need for temple.<br>“During the conference there were some times from 8 to 10 elders in the river at a time baptizing.” (Harper 466)<br>Temple committee appointed. Joseph approved drawings of architect William Weeks. Excavation began later. Similar to Kirtland temple.  |
| 1841 | Jan 19. D&C 124. Baptism for dead to be done in Temples<br>Apr 6. Cornerstones of Nauvoo temple laid.<br>Oct 3. Joseph: no B4D out of temple. Saviors of Mt. Zion.<br>Joseph “presented baptism for the dead as the only way that men can appear as saviors on Mount Zion ... by actively engaging in rites of salvation substitutionally. ... [Joseph said,] ‘There shall be no more baptisms for the dead, until the ordinance can be attended to in the Lord’s house.’” (TPJS 191, 193)<br>Oct 15. Permission granted for Nauvoo chapter of Masons<br>Nov 8. Basement rooms and wooden font were dedicated.<br>“Brigham Young dedicated a temporary wooden baptismal font in the basement of the unfinished temple. ... Sometime in late 1845, a stone font replaced the wooden one.” (Baugh; HC 4:446–447)<br>Nov 21. First baptisms were performed in the temple.<br>Less than two weeks later, on 21 November, the first baptisms for the dead were performed in the temple by Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and John Taylor, who performed the ordinance for approximately forty deceased persons. Willard Richards, George A. Smith, and Wilford Woodruff performed the confirmations.”<br><b>6,818 B4D</b> done out of temple in 1841 (Baugh) |
| 1842 | May 4. First endowments in Red Brick Store (HC 5:1–3)<br>Joseph gave endowment to 9 men. During next 2 years, 38 men and 29 women received endowments.<br>Jul–Aug. Book of Abraham published.<br>Joseph Smith indicated that more would be forthcoming, but he was unable to continue the translation after 1842. What the Church received—five chapters of the book of Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price—is only a portion of the original record.<br>Enemies accused Joseph of being an accessory to Porter Rockwell in the attempted murder of former Missouri Governor Boggs in May. He went into hiding. Porter Rockwell said if he had tried, he would have succeeded. (McC 1021)<br>Sept 1. D&C 127. Keep records of baptisms in archives<br>Sept 6. D&C 128. Local and general recorders to keep records. Symbolism of baptism for the dead. Referred to visits from Moroni, Michael (Adam), Gabriel (Noah), Raphael (Enoch?), Peter, James, John, & “divers angels ... all declaring their dispensation, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their priesthood; giving line upon line”  |
| 1843 | May 16–17. D&C 131. Need for temple marriage<br>May 28. Joseph sealed to Emma; Brigham to Lucy, ...<br>Jun 11. Joseph: Saints gather to receive ordinances (TPC:JS 417; HC 5:423–7)<br>Jul 12. D&C 132. New and everlasting covenant, marriage.<br>Sept 28. Second anointing (HC 6:39)  |
| 1844 | Jan 21. Joseph said saviors on Mt. Zion build temples with fonts and receive “ordinances, baptisms, confirmations, washings, anointing, ordinations, and sealing” for selves and dead. (HC 6:184)   |

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|      | Apr. Joseph: When the temple is done and “the worthy are washed, anointed, endowed and ordained,” you must do “all the ordinances for” your dead friends also. “I expect it will take at least a thousand years.” (RB 45)<br>Jun 27. Joseph murdered in Carthage Jail.<br>New England Genealogical Society organized in Boston.   |  | instructed Wilford Woodruff and others to write out the revised temple ceremony from beginning to end. <b>Wilford Woodruff</b> : “When I had finished it to the satisfaction of the President, he said ... ‘Now you have before you an ensample to carry on the endowments in all the Temples until the coming of the Son of Man.’” (RB 61–62)  |
| 1845 | Dec 10– Feb 7. Brigham gives 5634 endowments. <b>15626 b4d; 5583 end (or 5634 Baugh); 1303 seal; 603 2<sup>nd</sup>; 294 adopt from 1842–1846 (<i>The Nauvoo Endowment Companies</i>, xxvii)</b>  |  | Wilford Woodruff presided over most sessions, instructing ... on topics from wording to clothing.   |
| 1846 | Feb–Sept. Saints leave Nauvoo   |  | Feb 1. Woodruff “arrived dressing in pure white ... from head to foot., white pants and vest, ‘the first example in any Temple of the Lord in this last dispensation.’” (RB 64)   |
| 1847 | Jul 24. Brigham arrives in Salt Lake Valley.<br>Jul 28. Brigham said, “Right here will stand the temple.”   |  | Mar 1. Wilford Woodruff received a revelation that non-family members could act as proxies.   |
| 1848 | Apr 4. B4D <b>by Wilford Woodruff</b> and sealings at Winter Quarters   |  | Apr 6. St George Temple dedication and General Conference <b>in St. George.</b>   |
| 1851 | Apr 16–1854. Endowments (2,200) in Council House  |  | Apr 16. Brigham left St. George for Salt Lake City.   |
| 1853 | Apr 6. Salt Lake Temple cornerstones laid.  |  | Brigham broke ground for the Manti and Logan temples.   |
| 1854 | Aug 4. Foundation laid for Endowment House.   |  | Aug 21–24. Woodruff vision of founders. Baptisms and <u>endowments</u> for them and other eminent men & women.  |
| 1855 | May 5–1889. Endowment House used for B4D, living endowments and sealings, sealings of living to dead. 134,053 B4D; 68,767 sealings; 54,170 living endowments  |  | Before vision, Woodruff said temple work focused on “our immediate friends and relatives.” (RB 65–66; JD 19:229) <b>[Broadens temple work beyond family.]</b>   |
| 1856 | Jul 22. <b>Brigham</b> : “To accomplish this work there will have to be not only one temple but thousands of them, and 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.” (DBY, 394; JD 3:372)  |  | <b>In Salt Lake City, in Sept. 1877, when he reported on his labors, Elder Woodruff said, “For the last eighteen hundred years, the people that have lived and passed away never heard the voice of an inspired man, never heard a Gospel sermon, until they entered the spirit-world. Somebody has got to redeem them, by performing such ordinances for them in the flesh as they cannot attend to themselves in the spirit.”</b> He declared, “The Lord has stirred up our minds, and many things have been revealed to us concerning the dead. . . . The dead will be after you, they will seek after you as they have after us in St. George. They called upon us, knowing that we held the keys and power to redeem them.” Wilford Woodruff then announced that the signers of the Declaration of Independence had appeared to him for two days and nights, inquiring why no ordinance work had been done for them, even though they had established the United States government and remained true to God. |
| 1857 | <b>James Buchanan</b> , US president during “Utah War”  |  | Elder Woodruff immediately was <u>baptized</u> by J. D. T. McAllister for these men and for fifty other prominent individuals, including John Wesley and Christopher Columbus. He then <u>baptized</u> Brother McAllister “for every President of the United States, except three [ <b>Martin Van Buren, James Buchanan, and Ulysses S. Grant</b> ]; and when their cause is just, somebody will do the work for them.” <sup>20</sup>   |
| 1869 | New York Genealogical Society (Many others followed.) <b>Ulysses S. Grant</b> (US President 1869–1877) sent federal marshals to Utah in 1870s to arrest polygamist Mormons. <b>Brigham Young ... was St. George's first snowbird. As Young aged and began suffering from arthritis, he found that St. George's warm, dry and snowless winters eased his discomfort. The original portion of his home was begun in 1869 and completed in 1871. The front addition—what most would call the main part of the house—was completed in 1873.</b>   |  | <b>Under the administration of President Heber J. Grant the work for these three men was finally done.</b>  |
| 1871 | St. George Temple construction began  |  | Aug 29. Brigham died. Twelve led Church for 3 years. By end of 1877, 30384 B4D, 1166 living endowments, 13,160 endowments for the dead,   |
| 1872 | Wilford Woodruff: I seem a marked victim for the devil from the day I was born. ... The devil knew if I got into the Church ... I would write the History ... and leave on record the doings, works and teachings of the prophets and Apostles, Elders and Saints in the latter days, and that I would attend to the ordinances of the house of God for my father’s household and friends, both for the living and the dead. (RB 58)  |  | <b>1880</b> Oct – Jul 1887. <b>John Taylor</b> , president*   |
| 1876 | Jun 20. Wilford Woodruff: My family and I were baptized for 949 dead relatives in the Endowment House. (RB 59)  |  | <b>1884</b> May 17. Logan Temple dedication   |
| 1877 | Jan 1. Wilford Woodruff dedicated part of the St. George Temple and became the first temple president.<br>Jan 9. Susa Young Gates did first B4D. <b>Susa Young Gates (1856–1933) was Brigham’s 41<sup>st</sup> child. She became a temple worker and recorder.</b><br>Jan 11. Lucy Bigelow Young (Susa’s mother) was first <b>proxy endowment</b> . First endowments for the dead and sealings of dead women to dead men <b>were done in St. George Temple.</b> “Not long before, [Brigham] had told some temple workers that he had just learned by revelation ‘that it takes as full and complete a set of ordinances for the dead as for the living.’” <sup>1</sup><br>Brigham supervised temple work almost daily and |  | <b>1888</b> May 21. Manti Temple dedication   |
|      |   |  | <b>1889</b> Apr – Sept 1898. <b>Wilford Woodruff</b> , president*   |
|      |   |  | <b>1893</b> Apr 6. Salt Lake Temple dedicated. (40 years)   |
|      |   |  | <b>1894</b> Apr. Woodruff tells of revelation about the law of adoption<br>Nov 13. Genealogical Society of Utah established.  |
|      |   |  | <b>1898</b> Sept – Oct 1901. <b>Lorenzo Snow</b> , president  |
|      |   |  | <b>1901</b> Oct – Nov 1918. <b>Joseph F. Smith</b> , president*   |
|      |   |  | <b>1918</b> Jan 20. Death of Joseph F. Smith’s oldest son.  |

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|      | Oct 3. D&C 138. Missionary work in spirit world<br>Nov – May 1945. <b>Heber J. Grant, president*</b>  |
| 1927 | HJG assigned committee to revise endowment (1919–1927).   |
| 1951 | Apr – Jan 1970. <b>David O. McKay, president*</b>   |
| 1953 | GBH chaired endowment film committee (Swiss temple)<br>The filmed endowment, originally developed in the 1950s for use in the Swiss and New Zealand temples, fit the bill: it required only two rooms instead of five, allowed for simpler interior decoration, and obviated the need for temple workers to commit the lengthy ceremony to memory. The first filmed versions of the endowment were literally that: temple workers performing the live ceremony before a camera in the upper room of the Salt Lake Temple. There was no scenery or costuming, though shots of nature scenes and clips from the Rite of Spring sequence in Disney's <i>Fantasia</i> were used to represent the Creation. Different casts were used for versions in English, German, French, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, and Finnish. A year later additional casts produced Samoan, Tahitian, Tongan, and Maori films, for use in the New Zealand temple. In the 1960s, filmed versions of the endowment began to take on a theatrical quality, with costumes, sets, music, and special effects. For obvious financial reasons, these theatrical films were made in English and then dubbed into other languages (as opposed to making a different film for each language, as had been done in the 1950s). |
| 1966 | Second endowment film produced (used in Oakland).   |
| 1970 | Jan – Jul 1972. <b>Joseph Fielding Smith, president</b>   |
| 1971 | Nov. Third film was used in new Provo and Ogden temples (Satan with beard. 90 min. Made at BYU studio. Started 1969) Primarily because of President Harold B. Lee's discomfort with the long hair and beards of a few cast members in the third film, a <b>fourth</b> endowment movie was produced at BYU during the early to mid 1970's. A major goal for this production was to create foreign sound tracks without re-filming that did not look obviously dubbed.  |
| 1972 | Jul – Dec 1973. <b>Harold B. Lee, president*</b>  |
| 1973 | Dec – Nov 1985. <b>Spencer W. Kimball, president*</b>   |
| 1975 | Garments: Daily garments to be worn in temple   |
| 1979 | Garments: Two piece garments  |
| 1985 | Nov – May 1994. <b>Ezra Taft Benson, president</b>  |
| 1988 | Aug. Over 100,000,000 endowments for the dead (RB 68)   |
| 1990 | Current temple films made in 1990 and 1991. Some changes made in endowment.   |
| 1994 | May – Mar 1995. <b>Howard W. Hunter, president</b>  |
| 1995 | Mar – Jan 2008. <b>Gordon B. Hinckley, president</b>  |
| 1997 | Oct. GB Hinckley announced building of small temples.   |
| 1999 | Garments for military in green. In 2005, tan garments with marks in inside of garments for military.  |
| 2005 | Jan 18. Initiatory changes made.  |
| 2009 | 130 temples operating   |

### 1. The Law of Adoption

Saints were eager to do endowments and sealings for the dead. Also, many “adoptions” were performed. Men, women, and children were “sealed not to their own ancestral families—for fear that they had rejected the gospel—but to leading General Authorities, living or dead. ... Between 1877 and 1894, [over 13,000] ... chose to be adopted into the families of general

authorities or temple presidents, living or dead. Many sought adoption into Joseph Smith's family.

**Wilford Woodruff** (Apr 1894 conference): “We have not got through revelation.” Brigham “accomplished all that God required at his hands. But he did not receive all the revelations that belong to this work; neither did President Taylor, nor has Wilford Woodruff. There will be no end to this work until it is perfected. ... Revelations were given to us in the St. George Temple. ... Changes were made there, and we still have more changes to make. ... One of them is the principle of adoption. Now, what are the feelings of Israel? They have felt that they wanted to be adopted to somebody. ... When I went before the Lord to know who I should be adopted to (we were then being adopted to prophets and apostles), the Spirit of God said to me, 'Have you not a father, who begot you?' 'Yes, I have.' 'Then why not honor him? Why not be adopted to him?' 'Yes,' says I, 'that is right.' I was adopted to my father, and should have had my father sealed to his father, and so on back; and the duty that I want every man who presides over a Temple to see performed from this day henceforth and forever, unless the Lord Almighty commands otherwise, is, let every man be adopted to his father. When a man receives the endowment, adopt him to his father; not to Wilford Woodruff, nor to any other man outside the lineage of his fathers. That is the will of God to this people. ... We want the Latter-day Saints from this time to trace their genealogies as far as they can, and to be sealed to their fathers and mothers. Have children sealed to their parents, and run this chain through as far as you can get it. This is the will of the Lord to his people, and I think when you come to reflect upon it you will find it to be true." (*Messages of the First Presidency*, 255)

## 2. Prophecy about Elijah

I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: <sup>6</sup> And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. (Mal. 4:5–6)

**Angel Gabriel to Zacharias after saying his wife would have a son.** <sup>17</sup> And [John the Baptist] shall go before [Jesus] in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. (Luke 1:17)

1. In searching for Christian commentary on this verse [in Malachi], I found this statement: "This verse may be viewed as containing a simple promise; but I prefer to regard it as including what is between an exhortation and a promise. The first thing is, that God reminds the Jews for what purpose he would send John, even to turn the hearts of men and to restore them to a holy unity of faith. It must therefore be noticed, that not only the Redeemer would come, but that after some intermission, as it has been said, had taken place, the doctrine of salvation would again have its own course, and would be commenced by John." (Calvin's Commentaries at: [Christian Classics Ethereal Library](#))
2. The author of the above commentary seems to conclude that the "Elijah" spoken of by Malachi is none other than John the Baptist and that his mission was to restore Israel to a "holy unity of the faith." This concept is reaffirmed somewhat in Easton's Bible Dictionary: "He was a type of John the Baptist in the sternness and power of his reproofs (Luke 9:8). He was the Elijah that 'must first come' (Matt. 11:11, 14), the forerunner of our Lord announced by Malachi. Even outwardly the Baptist corresponded so closely to the earlier prophet that he might be styled a second Elijah. In him we see 'the same connection with a wild and wilderness country; the same long retirement in the desert; the same sudden, startling entrance on his work (1 Kings 17:1; Luke 3:2); even the same dress, a hairy garment, and a leathern girdle about the loins (2 Kings 1:8; Matt. 3:4)!'." (quoted at the [Christian Classics Ethereal Library](#))
3. Neither commentary speaks of the actual Elijah coming prior to the second coming, "*the great and dreadful day of the LORD.*" The Jewish people are not looking for a type of Elijah to return in anticipation of the Lord, but are looking for Elijah himself. At Passover, many Jews sing the following song when the Cup of Elijah is poured and the door is opened in anticipation of his return:  
Elijah the Prophet, Elijah the Tishbite,  
Elijah, Elijah, Elijah the Gileadite  
Speedily and in our days, come to us,  
with the messiah, son of David,  
with the messiah, son of David. (see [Judaism 101](#))

**Moroni to Joseph** (Sept. 21, 1823)

<sup>38</sup> He quoted the fifth verse thus: *Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.* <sup>39</sup> He also quoted the next verse differently: *And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.* (JS—H 1:38–39)

Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. <sup>2</sup> And he shall plant in the hearts of the children

the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. <sup>3</sup> If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming. (D&C 2:1–3)

**Aug. 1830**

<sup>7</sup> And also John the son of Zacharias, which Zacharias he (Elias) visited and gave promise that he should have a son, and his name should be John, and he should be filled with the spirit of Elias; <sup>8</sup> Which John I have sent unto you, my servants, Joseph Smith, Jun., and Oliver Cowdery, to ordain you unto the first priesthood which you have received, that you might be called and ordained even as Aaron; <sup>9</sup> And also **Elijah**, unto whom I have committed the keys of the power of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, that the whole earth may not be smitten with a curse; <sup>10</sup> And also with **Joseph and Jacob, and Isaac, and Abraham, your fathers**, by whom **the promises** remain;

**Children of Abraham by lineage or adoption**

<sup>11</sup> And also with Michael, or Adam, the father of all, the prince of all, the ancient of days; <sup>12</sup> And also with Peter, and James, and John, whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles, and especial witnesses of my name, and bear the keys of your ministry and of the same things which I revealed unto them; (D&C 27:7–12)

**Aug. 1833:** <sup>16</sup> Therefore, renounce war and proclaim peace, and seek diligently to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children; <sup>17</sup> And again, the **hearts of the Jews unto the prophets**, and the **prophets unto the Jews**; lest I come and smite the whole earth with a curse, and all flesh be consumed before me. (D&C 98:16–17)

**Apr. 1836:** Elijah commits "the keys of this dispensation."

<sup>13</sup> After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us; for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said: <sup>14</sup> Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi—testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come—<sup>15</sup> To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse—<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors. (D&C 110:13–16)

### 3. Redeeming the dead

**Dallin H. Oaks:** I will suggest some general principles that should encourage all Latter-day Saints to receive their own ordinances and provide the ordinances of eternity for their ancestors. ...

The first principle is that our efforts to promote temple and family history work should be such as to accomplish the work of the Lord, not to impose guilt on his children. Members of this church have many individual circumstances—age, health, education, place of residence, family responsibilities, financial circumstances, accessibility to sources for individual or library research, and many others. If we encourage members in this work without taking these individual circumstances into account, we may do more to impose guilt than to further the work.

The second principle is that ... in the work of redeeming the dead there are many tasks to be performed, and that all members should participate by prayerfully selecting those ways that fit their personal circumstances at a particular time. ... Our effort is not to compel everyone to do everything, but to encourage everyone to do something.

There are many different things our members can do to help in the redeeming of the dead, in temple and family history work.

Some involve callings. Others are personal. All are expressions of devotion and discipleship. All present opportunities for sacrifice and service. We think first of submitting names and going to the temple to perform proxy ordinances for those who are dead. But there is much more to this work. There are ward family history consultants, missionaries in records centers, and workers in microfilming, libraries, data entry, and name extraction. There are temple missionaries, ordinance workers, clerks, and receptionists. ... Some of the most important temple and family history work is done at home. I do not refer just to the important work of keeping family genealogies up-to-date and the much-needed verifying that all sealings have been performed. At home we can keep our journals and gather pictures and data for the books of remembrances of our family members. We can gather and record information available through living relatives. We can write family histories and share their great lessons with our children. ... In mapping out our personal efforts in temple and family history work, we need to take a view that is not only broad in scope but at least lifetime in duration. The total amount of time and resources we can spend on the mission of the Church—what we can and should do at a particular time of our life—will change with time as our circumstances change. The relative amount of time we will spend in each of the three areas will also change. (Dallin H. Oaks, "Family History: 'In Wisdom and in Order'," *Ensign*, Jun 1989, 6)

#### Conclusion

Since the time of Joseph, the Lord has revealed his will "line upon line" concerning temple ordinances to his servants the prophets. Most of these revelations are not in our scriptures. Some people feel that changes are a sign of a fallen prophet. Brigham asked Saints not to apostatize because the SLC temple would have six spires not one like Nauvoo. Changes rejected by members who wanted to follow a dead prophet: polygamy, priesthood to all, changes in initiatory, endowment, garment, Book of Mormon; ... I like many others believe that these changes are evidence of modern revelation to those I sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators.

Between 1836 and 1877 there were no endowments for the dead. Unless you helped with living endowments, there was no opportunity for you to re-experience the endowment. Since 1877 when endowments for the dead began, worthy church members have been able to go to the temple as often as their circumstances

permit. As more temples are built around the world, it is easier to attend the temple. Computers have made it easier to do genealogy and family history work.

**Elder Oaks:** In the work of redeeming the dead there are many tasks to be performed, and that all members should participate by prayerfully selecting those ways that fit their personal circumstances at a particular time. ... Our effort is not to compel everyone to do everything, but to encourage everyone to do something.

#### Quotes

**Howard W. Hunter:** "It would be the deepest desire of my heart to have every member of the Church be temple worthy. I would hope that every adult member would be worthy of—and carry—a current temple recommend, even if proximity to a temple does not allow immediate or frequent use of it.... Let us go not only for our kindred dead, but let us also go for the personal blessing of temple worship, for the sanctity and safety which is provided within those hallowed and consecrated walls." (Ensign, Jul 1994)

**John A. Widtsoe:** "Labor in the temples brings much joy. The temple endowment if properly understood is a great blessing to him who receives it. It becomes an interpreter and protector of life. The temple endowment may be received by every faithful member of the Church. It may be taken also for the dead. Thereby an opportunity is given to keep the meaning of the endowment fresh in our minds. Temple service for the dead is wholly unselfish and consequently has a marvelous refining influence upon those who engage in it. To approach a fulness of spiritual joy, the privileges of the temple must be used as often as possible. (John A. Widtsoe, *Program of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1937], 109)

**Spencer W. Kimball:** "On a number of occasions I have encouraged the Saints to keep personal journals and family records. ... We may think there is little of interest or importance in what we personally say or do, but it is remarkable how many of our families, as we pass on down the line, are interested in all that we do and all that we say. Any Latter-day Saint family that has searched genealogical and historical records has fervently wished its ancestors had kept better and more complete records. On the other hand, some families possess some spiritual treasures because ancestors have recorded the events surrounding their conversion to the gospel and other happenings of interest, including many miraculous blessings and spiritual experiences." (President Kimball Speaks Out, 54)

**Gordon B. Hinckley:** "In a spirit of love and consecration, we must extend ourselves in the work of redemption of the dead through service in the temples of the Lord." (*Ensign*, May 1983)

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<sup>1</sup> Richard O. Cowan, "Brigham Young: Builder of Temples," in *Lion of the Lord: Essays on the Life and Service of Brigham Young*, eds., Susan Easton Black and Larry C. Porter, 240; Cowan's source, "Brigham Jarvis to Susa Young Gates, 8 Nov 1926, Susa Young Gates papers, Utah State Historical Society"