

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

That Thou Mayest . . . Keep Thyself Unspotted from the World

By Elder Kevin S. Hamilton

Second Counselor, Africa Southeast Area Presidency

“And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day” (D&C 59:9).

One of my earliest memories as a young boy growing up in the Church is going to sacrament meeting with my mother and father. In those days, sacrament meetings were 90 minutes—an unbelievably long period of time for a small boy. My mother and

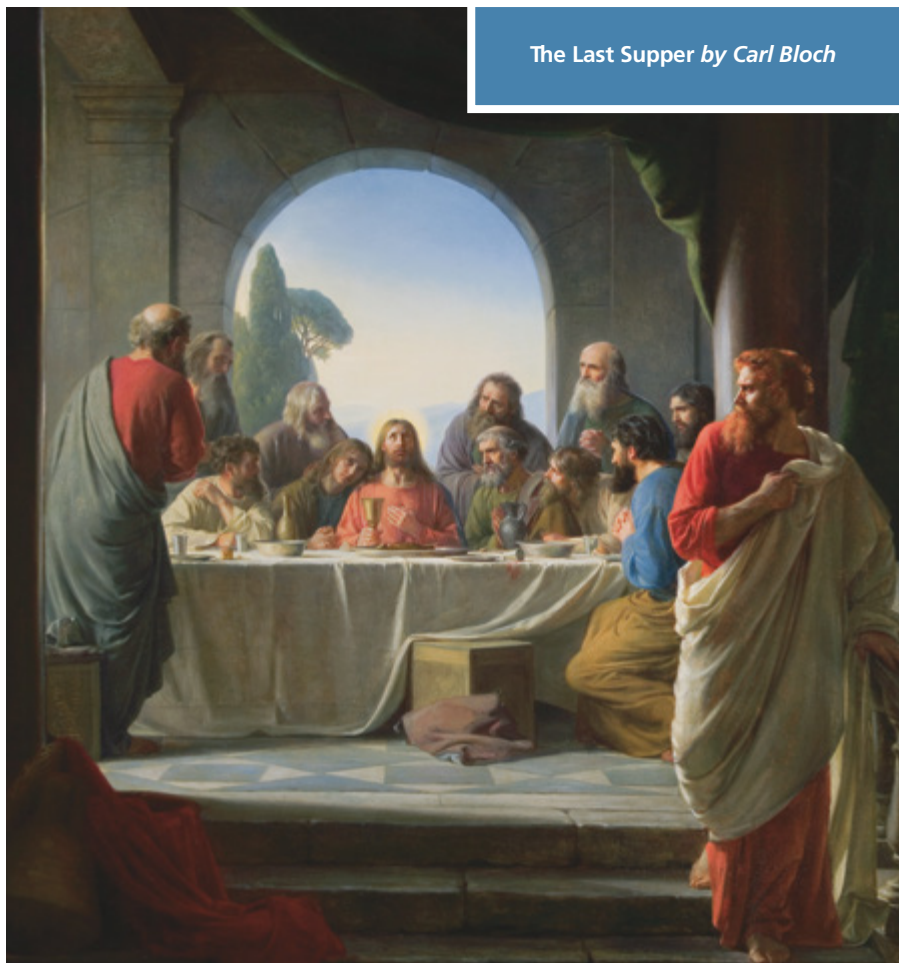
father would sit with us children on the bench, and we would do our very best to be reverent during the meeting. I remember the Aaronic Priesthood holders as they administered the sacrament. How I wanted to be like them when I was old enough! They



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seemed so mature and dignified. But most of all, I remember a feeling of awe and reverence as the emblems of the sacrament, the bread and the water, were passed down our row. I didn't fully understand it then, but I now know that this was the Spirit of the Lord testifying to me that I was participating in a holy and sacred ordinance.

As I think about other sacrament meetings that I have attended, my mind goes back to a small apartment in France, where my companion and I were authorized by our mission president to hold Sunday meetings for our one and only member and any investigators that we could find. We lived in a sparsely furnished apartment with just two chairs, so we pondered how we could seat more people in our small living room for a sacrament meeting. We finally decided to purchase a few concrete blocks and some long wooden planks, which we fashioned into low benches. It wasn't great, but it was better than sitting on the floor! That first Sunday, we had four investigators, one member, and two missionaries, for a total of seven people in attendance. We sang the hymns of Zion (without a piano or keyboard, of course), prayed, administered the



The Last Supper by Carl Bloch



Keeping the Sabbath day holy, attending our church meetings, and participating in the sacrament ordinance will enable us to be “sanctified in Christ by the grace of God . . . unto the remission of [our] sins, that [we] become holy, without spot (Moroni 10:33).

sacrament, and shared our testimonies. Each Sunday thereafter, a few more people would show up, until after a few weeks we were averaging some 30–35 people in attendance in our small apartment, and we had to find another location that was more suitable. I will never forget sacrament meetings in those humble surroundings, and I will also never forget the powerful spirit that we felt. Our investigators, some of whom eventually became members of the Church by way of baptism, also felt the power of the Spirit in that small missionary apartment.

The Sabbath day is one of God’s great gifts to His children. It is a powerful tool that helps us as we prepare to return to His presence. This is what President Thomas S. Monson has taught: “Our goal is eternal life in the

presence of our Father in Heaven” (“Till We Meet Again,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 112). Sabbath day worship and the sacrament ordinance help us to “prepare to meet God” (Alma 34:32).

This lifelong process of journeying back to the presence of the Father is the very essence of God’s plan for His children. But in order to enter back into His presence, we must become clean and pure, like our Heavenly Father, for “no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom” (3 Nephi 27:19). It is through

the Atonement of Jesus Christ that we are able to become clean enough to return to God’s presence. “But behold, the resurrection of Christ redeemeth mankind, yea, even all mankind, and bringeth them back into the presence of the Lord” (Helaman 14:17).

Unfortunately, as we live day by day in the world, we slowly take on the characteristics of the world. In September 1995, when he spoke to the women of the Church, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) talked about “tak[ing] on the slow stain of the world.” He then went on to read for the very first time “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.”

In our day-to-day lives, we see things, we hear things, we say and do things that make us unclean, or in the language of scripture, “spotted.” No matter how hard we try, we are all imperfect. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). In other words, we are imperfect people trying to become more perfect. Thus the commandment given by the Savior during His ministry, “Therefore I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect” (3 Nephi 12:48).

But an all-loving, all-knowing Father in Heaven has given us a way to help keep ourselves unspotted from the world, a way to become clean, and over time to become like He is. He has given us the Sabbath day. Keeping

the Sabbath day holy, attending our Church meetings, and participating in the sacrament ordinance will enable us to be “sanctified in Christ by the grace of God . . . unto the remission of [our] sins, that [we] become holy, without spot (Moroni 10:33).

The great modern-day revelation on Sabbath day worship is contained in section 59 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

“And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day;

“For verily this is a day appointed unto you to rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High;

“Nevertheless thy vows shall be offered up in righteousness on all days and at all times;

“But remember that on this, the Lord’s day, thou shalt offer thine oblations and thy sacraments unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord.

“And on this day thou shalt do none other thing, only let thy food be prepared with singleness of heart that thy fasting may be perfect, or, in other words, that thy joy may be full” (D&C 59:9–13).

In order to become “unspotted from the world,” we go to our ward or branch meetinghouse and participate in Sabbath day worship, including

the ordinance of the sacrament. This opportunity to become clean and pure, or unspotted, is God’s great gift to His children as He helps them prepare to return to His presence.

As an area presidency, we encourage all members of the Church in our area to more faithfully and diligently hallow the Sabbath day. Keep it holy in word and in deed. Go to “the house of

prayer” and partake of the sacrament. Receive the blessing of becoming more “unspotted from the world.” As we do this, we will gradually, steadily, and surely become more like our Savior, and ultimately be able to return, clean and pure, to our Heavenly Father’s presence. This is the great gift of the Sabbath that has been given us by a loving Father in Heaven. ■

LOCAL PRIESTHOOD LEADERS

I Love to See the Temple

By Elder Tasara Makasi

Africa Southeast Area Seventy

A few months ago my wife took our three children to the temple grounds and they walked around and took some photographs. As I talked to my children about this experience, I was reminded of the words of the song “I Love to See the Temple,” found in the *Children’s Songbook* (95). Part of the first verse reads:

*I love to see the temple.
I’m going there someday
To feel the Holy Spirit,
To listen and to pray.*

My children were filled with a deep longing to go inside the temple someday. The simple truths taught in this song are profound. The holy temple

is a house of God, and we feel the Holy Spirit when we prepare ourselves, go there, and listen and pray to Heavenly Father.

In this and other dispensations, the Lord has commanded His people to build temples so that He could dwell among them. Moses was told, “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8). Joseph Smith was instructed, “It is my



**Elder Tasara
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will that a house should be built unto me in the land of Zion” (D&C 97:10), and then the Lord gave this special promise: “My glory shall rest upon it . . . and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it” (D&C 97:15–16).

Soon after separating themselves from the Lamanites, the Nephites “did build a temple” (2 Nephi 5:16) and worshipped their God. Nephi knew very well that with a temple among them, God would be with them.



The Makasi children

Throughout the Book of Mormon, we see people gathered at the temple and having wonderful spiritual experiences. King Benjamin addressed his people at the temple, and they made covenants with the Lord. He said to them, “And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ” (Mosiah 5:7). Is it any wonder then that when the Lord appeared to the Nephites, He chose to appear to those who were gathered

at the temple in the land Bountiful?

Concerning the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, Elder Orson Pratt (1811–81) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote the following in his journal: “God was there, his angels were there, the Holy Ghost was in the midst of the people, the visions of the Almighty were opened to the minds of the servants of the living God; the veil was taken off from the minds of man; they saw the heavens opened; they

beheld the angels of God; they heard the voice of the Lord, and they were filled from the crown of their heads to the soles of their feet with the power and inspiration of the Holy Ghost. . . . In that temple, set apart by the servants of God, and dedicated by a prayer that was written by inspiration, the people were blessed as they never had been blessed for generations and generations.”¹ Such are the blessings of regular temple worship and service.

When the Prophet Joseph Smith was in Carthage Jail, knowing the challenges which were waiting for the Saints, he said to them, “Go to and finish the temple, and God will fill it with power, and you will then receive more knowledge concerning this priesthood” (*History of the Church* 5:555). Indeed the Saints finished constructing the Nauvoo Temple, received their endowments, and were sealed to their families. They were then driven away from their homes. During the long and difficult journey West, many lost their family members along the way. They did not give up, knowing that death was not the end, because they had been sealed in the temple for all eternity. Their participation in the ordinances of the temple was essential to their testimonies as they faced these hardships. Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “The ordinances and covenants of the temple are the protection for us in our trials and tribulations in our day and for what we will face in the future. It is our heritage. It is who we are.”²

The Savior is the ultimate example to all of us. In the scriptures we see Him going again and again to the temple. John recorded that “Jesus went up into the temple, and taught” (John 7:14). He would go to the temple early in the morning, and the people would also come early in the morning to be taught by Him. “And early in the morning he came again

into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat them down, and taught them (John 8:2). Luke recorded that the Savior “taught daily in the temple” (Luke 19:47) and also that “all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him” (Luke 21:38).

Members who live far from a temple and cannot attend it often can still “see” the temple every day by being worthy, possessing a current temple recommend, and displaying a picture of the temple in their homes. Despite being far away from a temple, which can limit regular attendance, you and I can still connect to the temple by engaging in the work of gathering and submitting the names of our deceased loved ones to the temple.

I think Isaiah was referring, among other things, to the blessings of the temple when he made this passionate plea: “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Isaiah 55:1).

Elder John A. Widtsoe (1872–1952) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that “spiritual power is generated within temple walls, and sent out to bless the world. Light from the house of the Lord illuminates every home within the Church fitted for its reception by participation in temple privileges. The path from the temple to the home of man is divinely brilliant.

Every home penetrated by the temple spirit enlightens, cheers, and comforts every member of the household. The peace we covet is found in such homes. Indeed, when temples are on earth, the whole world shares measurably in the issuing light.”³

Of temple work, President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: “No work is more spiritually refining. No work we do gives us more power. No work requires a higher standard of righteousness.

“Our labors in the temple cover us with a shield and a protection, both individually and as a people.”⁴ Consider the question, “How far do I live from the temple?” The answer is not in kilometres, minutes, hours, or days, because someone living thousands of kilometres from a temple who honors the covenants made in the temple

may live “closer” than someone who lives across the street. At the end of the day, the distance to the temple is not measured in kilometres or minutes, but in priorities, commitment, and preparation.

May we reflect upon the words of the Primary song “I Love to See the Temple” and share our love and commitment to the Savior and His gospel by making temple worship our priority. Let us take our children there in our conversations and in our prayers so that we may attend with them when their special “someday” comes is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 18:132.
2. Robert D. Hales, “Temple Blessings” (devotional given at Brigham Young University, Nov. 21, 2005), 4.
3. John A. Widtsoe, in Richard O. Cowan, *Temples to Dot the Earth* (1989), 222.
4. Boyd K. Packer, “The Holy Temple,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Oct. 2010, 35.

LOCAL NEWS

A Time for the Temple

Submitted by the John Jadwong Family

After nine years of planning and taking several temple preparation classes, the Jadwong family from Tororo, Uganda, was recently sealed in the Johannesburg South Africa Temple. Brother John Jadwong feels that their patience was significantly

tested during the years of waiting, and he often worried that something would happen to one of their children before he was able to get his family to the temple.

As they approached the time to leave, he thought of postponing the



The Johannesburg Temple

trip yet again, since it was a crucial time for his school-aged children to be at school. However, when he compared his circumstances to those of Abraham, who was asked to sacrifice the son he had so patiently waited for, Brother Jadwong asked himself, “Who was I to resist the Lord’s time? I knew by the Spirit that these were the Lord’s children, and I was only their caretaker.”

Looking back, he realized that “the Lord had actually prepared a time for my family to be sealed that was unknown to me. It was when our last born was able to travel with us.” However, there were still hurdles to be crossed as they applied for their temple recommends.

As Uganda Kampala Mission president Robert Chatfield reviewed the recommends for the family of eight waiting outside his office and scheduled to depart in just a few hours for Johannesburg, South Africa, he realized he did not have the membership numbers for the three youngest children. They had traveled a great distance to obtain his signature, and he was afraid he was going to disappoint them. After struggling with this dilemma, he dropped to his knees and asked the Lord for His help. He arose and stepped out to the family and asked to see all of their papers. There, stuck between several other records, was a year-end donation summary listing all the family

members' names and membership numbers. It was a miracle! The way was opened, and the family proceeded with the interview. President Chatfield marveled, wondering, "How often do you carry a copy of your donation summary with you?"

The moment the Jadwong family began their actual travel to the temple, everything started to proceed more smoothly. Brother Jadwong finally began to relax. His family was given priority at Uganda Immigration, then again upon boarding their flight, and finally at customs in South Africa. Fellow travelers were kind and everyone allowed the family priority.

At the temple, the Jadwongs experienced a second miracle. They were able to be sealed to their son, Bernard Okotel, who was born in 1987 and passed away in 1990, before the family had joined the Church.

Later, at the family history center, they learned of more ancestors whose names were available at the temple, some of them family members they had never known before. The time was ripe for them to receive their blessings as well.

When the Jadwongs returned home to Uganda, the family held a testimony meeting with their small in-home group of members, sharing the joy of their trip to the temple. In the words of those who attended the meeting, "We were treated to a family that was full of the Spirit!" ■

The Johannesburg Temple: Three Photos, Three Miracles

By Reed J. Webster

In 1989, the Johannesburg South Africa Temple had been in operation for four years, yet there had never been an official picture taken that showed its real beauty. The front view was blocked by trees, while aerial photos showed only the roof.

After many frustrating attempts to capture an appropriate picture of the temple, President Canfield, the temple president, decided to hire a professional. A very talented young Jewish photographer named Trevor Simon just happened to have one of only two specially designed cameras in South Africa that could handle the challenge, which required three pictures of the

temple: one at midday, one at dusk, and one at night with the temple lights shining.

Since this was before panoramic cameras, in order to get the entire temple in one shot, they had to build a special platform 20 feet (6 m) high on the neighbor's property just over the back wall. The day arrived for the actual shooting.

This was also before programs like Adobe Photoshop, so Trevor's comment to President Canfield seemed impossible: "The only thing that could improve this scene would be to have a few clouds in the sky behind the temple."



One of the first official photos of the Johannesburg Temple



*The two other
official photos of the
Johannesburg Temple*



The sky was completely clear and had been for almost two months, yet President Canfield remarked, “If the Lord wants clouds in the picture of His house, they will be there.”

Trevor shrugged and made some final adjustments on his camera. Then, as he looked through the range finder, everything was perfect, including the appearance of a few soft clouds in the sky. “What a stroke of luck! Clouds are there!” Trevor exclaimed. President Canfield didn’t say a word, and Trevor didn’t notice the smile on his face.

The next shots were to be taken just before sundown to capture the glow of the sky against the structure of the temple. Trevor was on the platform making final adjustments, and the sun was beginning to sink in the west. There were still a few clouds in the sky,

and Trevor mentioned, “The only thing that would improve this shot would be no clouds. Then I could pick up the total reflection of the sun on the dust particles in the sky.” President Canfield responded, “If the Lord doesn’t want clouds in this picture of His house, they won’t be there.” This time Trevor didn’t laugh, but he smiled as he continued his final adjustments on the camera.

As he looked through the range finder, the picture was coming together perfectly—the special lighting in the garden, the glow behind the arches on the side of the temple, and all the other details an artist sees.

Then President Canfield turned to Trevor. “Look, Trevor, no clouds.” Trevor didn’t say a word. He was creating a photographic masterpiece, and he knew it.

The final pictures were to be taken after dark with the spotlights reflecting off the spires into a black sky. Trevor began checking all the details. The lights on the angel Moroni were fine-tuned. The lighting on the gardens even brought out the green color of the grass and the glow of the natural rock.

Trevor marveled the light on the temple seemed to be coming from above rather than from below, and President Canfield smiled. “Trevor, you wanted clouds, and the Lord gave you clouds. You wanted a clear sky, and the Lord gave you a clear sky. The light IS shining down on this temple. How many signs do you need?” ■

Excerpted by Marnae Wilson from an original account by Reed J. Webster, Second Counselor in the Johannesburg Temple Presidency, 1992.