

Welfare Services

Persons assisted by LDS	
Social Services	84,069
Persons placed in gainful	
employment	26,116
Man-days of labor donated to	
Welfare Services	277,754
Bishop's orders from	
storehouses	345,498

Prominent Members Who Have Passed Away Since Last April

Elder G. Homer Durham, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who was Church Historian and Recorder; Ethel D. Stapley, widow of Elder Delbert L.

Stapley, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles; Neil D. Schaerrer, former general president of the Young Men organization; and Emily Higgs Bennett, former counselor in the YW-MIA presidency.

President Benson

Thank you, Brothers Edling and Gibbons.

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Elder John Sonnenberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder L. Tom Perry

To Bishop Brown, Bishop Peterson, Bishop Clarke, I just want to express my deep love and appreciation for your great devoted years of service. To Bishop Hales, Bishop Eyring, Bishop Pace, I want you to know that I'm ready to assist in any way that you may desire.

Pavilion foundations

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:24-27).

Years ago I had the privilege of serving on the New York World's Fair

Committee. I remember that after months of planning we were ready to start construction. It was a clear and beautiful day as we gathered at the fair site for our groundbreaking event. All around us was a flurry of activity as the fair buildings were taking shape. The fair was being constructed on a lush meadowland. Instead of the traditional groundbreaking ceremonies of turning over soil with shovels, we were using a pile driver because of the lack of a solid foundation. Big wooden piles about the size of those used for telephone poles were being driven into the ground to form the foundation of our pavilion.

After a prayer and two or three responses, it was time to drive the first pile. Everything was in place. The driver was ready for action. There was a big puff of steam and a loud thud. The pile driver started its work. Then the second puff and the second thud—the pile was on its way into the earth. Then the third puff and the third thud—suddenly the earth swallowed up the pile, and it sank completely out of sight. We learned a great deal that day about foundations.

The days and weeks passed, and many piles were driven into the meadowland soil until a foundation was established that was strong enough to support our beautiful pavilion.

Foundation in the gospel

How often do we consider or think about our own personal faith and our foundation in the gospel? On what are they built? How strong is our house? our household? our family? Helaman taught his two sons:

"I desire that ye should remember to keep the commandments of God. . . . Behold, I have given unto you the names of our first parents who came out of the land of Jerusalem; and this I have done that when you remember your names ye may remember them; and when ye remember them ye may remember their works . . . that they were good.

"Therefore, my sons, I would that ye should do that which is good" (Helaman 5:6-7).

Then Helaman continued to teach his sons "to lay up for yourselves a treasure in heaven, yea, which is eternal . . . that precious gift of eternal life" (Helaman 5:8).

Then he said to them, "My sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation . . . which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall" (Helaman 5:12).

Rock of eternal truth

We have been taught by the prophets concerning foundations. President Joseph F. Smith has said: "But the men and the women who are honest before God, who humbly plod along, doing their duty, paying their tithing, and exercising that pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, which is to visit the fatherless and the widows in their afflictions and to keep oneself unspotted from the world, and who help look after the poor; and who

honor the holy Priesthood, who do not run into excesses, who are prayerful in their families, and who acknowledge the Lord in their hearts, they will build up a foundation that the gates of hell cannot prevail against; and if the floods come and the storms beat upon their house, it shall not fall, for it will be built upon the rock of eternal truth" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], pp. 7-8).

Eternal nature of family unit

One of those great eternal truths which the gospel anchors to a sure foundation is the doctrine of the eternal nature of the family unit. It was to the prophet Malachi the Lord declared:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

"And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (Malachi 4:5-6).

Can we think of anything more important than residing in an eternal family unit with parents loving children, and children loving parents? It begins, of course, with a husband and wife married in the holy temple of God for all eternity by those holding priesthood authority. For we know that "in the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]" (D&C 131:1-2).

There is no other way to start an eternal family unit than to be married in the proper place, at the proper time, by the proper authority, receiving the proper instructions that will lay the proper foundation. President David O. McKay said in his infinite wisdom:

"The exalted view of marriage as held by this Church is given expressly in five words found in the 49th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, 'Marriage is ordained of God.' . . .

"It is said that the best and noblest lives are those which are set toward high ideals. Truly no higher ideal regarding marriage can be cherished by young people than to look upon it as a divine institution. In the minds of the young such a standard is a protection to them in courtship, an ever-present influence inducing them to refrain from doing anything which may prevent their going to the temple to have their love [sealed] in an enduring and eternal union. It will lead them to seek divine guidance in the selecting of their companions, upon the wise choice of whom their life's happiness here and hereafter is largely dependent. 'Our home joys . . . are the most delightful earth affords, and the joy of parents in their children is the most holy joy of humanity. It makes their hearts pure and good; it lifts them up to their Father in heaven.' Such joys are within the reach of most men and women if high ideals of marriage and home be properly fostered and cherished" (*Gospel Ideals* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953], p. 462).

Goodly parents

As a marriage is blessed with children, we realize even more the necessity of teaching and training in the family. We recall the words of Nephi at the beginning of the Book of Mormon as he said, "I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents" (1 Nephi 1:1).

What a blessing it would be to have it said of all fathers and mothers that they were goodly parents, righteous parents, active parents, faithful parents, exemplary parents, celestial parents. Then Nephi goes on further to say, "I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father" (1 Nephi 1:1).

Nephi was taught in the ways of the gospel by his father, Lehi. It was this good father, Lehi, who in a dream saw the tree of life whose fruit was most desirable to make one happy. When he partook of the fruit of the tree, he knew

it was desirable above all other fruit. After partaking, his first thought was of his family. And he said, "I began to be desirous that my family should partake of it also" (1 Nephi 8:12).

Lehi wanted more than anything else for his family to partake of the blessings of life—eternal life.

We have another good example in Enos, the son of Jacob, for he also came from a good home:

"I, Enos, knowing my father that he was a just man—for he taught me in his language, and also in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. . . .

"And the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart.

"And my soul hungered" (Enos 1:1, 3-4).

Praise be to the father and mother who bestow the blessings of a good name, a noble heritage, and a testimony of the gospel, and who teach their children obedience to the Lord.

Family foundations

We have just enjoyed two special events in our family this year. The first was the privilege of participating in a priesthood ordinance as our first grandson received the Aaronic Priesthood. How proud I was of Terry as he presented himself fully prepared for this occasion.

The second was just a few weeks ago when a new little granddaughter was blessed. As the circle formed, I looked down on bright, beautiful, little Cami and thought how precious and sweet she is.

On both occasions I listened to beautiful blessings pronounced by my two sons-in-law. They were blessings of love, gratitude, faith, understanding, and hope, using the power of the priesthood, which each is worthy to hold.

In the circles which were formed to participate in these events were relatives who had made a great effort by traveling many, many miles over snow-

covered roads to be with us for these occasions.

To build a foundation strong enough to support a family in our troubled world today requires the best effort of each of us—father, mother, brother, sister, grandmother and grandfather, aunts and uncles, cousins, and so on. Each must contribute energy and effort in driving piles right down to the bedrock of the gospel until the foundation is strong enough to endure through the eternities. The Lord has promised us in the Doctrine and Covenants that “he that buildeth upon this rock shall never fall” (D&C 50:44).

To strengthen family

Build traditions in your families that will bring you together, for they can demonstrate your devotion, love, and support for one another. For each of the members of your family, these events would include blessings of children, baptisms, other priesthood ordinances, graduations, missionary farewells, homecomings, and, of course, marriages. If distance, missions, or ill health prevent personal reunions, write one of those special letters that will be treasured in family histories. Sharing these occasions as a family will help us build a foundation established upon a rock.

Does this not lend great strength in any family? It is so essential that we build homes that are strengthened by the support of an extended family. “Honour thy father and thy mother” (Exodus 20:12). If we show love for our parents, we will, in turn, be teaching our children love and respect in the family unit.

Continue building lasting, loving relationships for all family members. Listen to one another, be united, work together, play together, pray together, study together. Live celestial principles together, serve the Lord together. Find those precious teaching moments with one another. Don’t let them slip through your fingers, but feed and nur-

ture these special occasions. Never let golden opportunities go by in your relationships with your family members that will help build eternal principles.

Work and search and train

The Lord has declared in the Doctrine and Covenants, “I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth” (D&C 93:40).

Jesus, as He appeared to the Nephites, instructed them to “pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed” (3 Nephi 18:21).

“And if ye shall always do these things blessed are ye, for ye are built upon my rock.” (3 Nephi 18:12.)

These are wise words from the book of Proverbs: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). If we want an eternal family, we must work for it. It does not come by chance.

Let us each day search from the scriptures and from the prophets that which it takes to make an eternal family. The scriptures that are never read will never help us. If read, the words of God will nourish our souls and carry us to great heights in our endeavors to build and excel in our family life. Oh, how I desire that every Latter-day Saint child could say as Nephi of old, “Having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught.”

Yes, I was taught in the ways of my father the gospel of Jesus Christ, taught to obey the commandments of God, taught to walk in the ways of an eternal family, taught to walk in light and truth, taught to build my life on a sure foundation as a child of God.

Brothers and sisters, God lives! Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the sure foundation upon which all else is built, for He is the cornerstone. Of this I bear solemn witness to you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.