

I testify that the spirit of Elijah is touching the hearts of many of Father's children throughout the world, causing the work for the dead to accelerate at an unprecedented pace.

But what about you? Have you prayed about your own ancestors' work? Set aside those things that don't really matter in your life. Decide to do something that will have eternal consequences. Perhaps you have been prompted to look for ancestors but feel that you are not a genealogist. Can you see that you don't have to be anymore? It all begins with love and a sincere desire to help those who can't help themselves.

This is a spiritual work, a monumental effort of cooperation on both sides of the veil where help is given in both directions. It begins with love. Anywhere you are in the world, with prayer, faith, determination, diligence, and some sacrifice, you can make a

powerful contribution. Begin now. I promise you that the Lord will help you find a way. And it will make you feel wonderful.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "What Glorious Scenes Mine Eyes Behold" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us, followed by the Mormon Youth Chorus singing "What Glorious Scenes Mine Eyes Behold."

Bishop Glenn L. Pace, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Eduardo Ayala, who was sustained last April as a member of the Seventy.

Bishop Glenn L. Pace

I've told you a thousand times

How many of you parents have had an experience similar to this: You are relaxing for the first time at the end of a long day. Suddenly, the silence and serenity of the moment are shattered by the piercing scream of one of your children. You bolt out of your comfortable chair and meet your child who is running hysterically up the front steps. It is obvious there is a cut that will require stitches. In a fraction of a second you form an opinion of what took place. Consequently, the first words out of your mouth, rather than words of sympathy and comfort, are, "Oh, son, why can't you be more careful? When are you going to learn to mind me? I've told you a thousand times not to play on the garage roof!" Our children will testify that none of us ever claims to have told them two, three, nine, or fifteen times.

We always claim to have told them a thousand times.

The Lord's warnings

Just as earthly parents have issued warnings, the Lord has warned His children. "And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days" (D&C 1:4).

And after their testimonies "cometh the testimony of earthquakes, that shall cause groanings in the midst of [the earth]. . . .

"And also cometh the testimony of the voice of thunderings, . . . lightnings, . . . tempests, and . . . waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds" (D&C 88:89-90).

"And in that day shall be heard of wars and rumors of wars. . . .

"And the love of men shall wax cold, and iniquity shall abound" (D&C 45:26-27).

“And plagues shall go forth” (D&C 84:97).

“And the whole earth shall be in commotion” (D&C 45:26).

It may be an understatement to say the Lord’s warnings have begun. How are we responding to the cries for help from God’s children? Do we ask, “Why don’t you be more careful?” “Why don’t you mind the Lord?” “Our Church leaders have told you a thousand times to change your behavior.”

Overcome fatalism

Prior to discussing how we should respond, I would like to suggest, in today’s vernacular, two attitude adjustments. First, we need to overcome fatalism. We know the prophecies of the future. We know the final outcome. We know the world collectively will not repent, and, consequently, the last days will be filled with much pain and suffering. Therefore, we could throw up our hands and do nothing but pray for the end to come so the millennial reign could begin. To do so would forfeit our right to participate in the grand event we are all awaiting. We must all become players in the winding-up scene, not spectators. We must do all we can to prevent calamities and then do everything possible to assist and comfort the victims of tragedies that do occur.

Lehi set an excellent example for us in the way he handled his knowledge relative to the future of Laman and Lemuel. Early in their lives, Lehi had a vision that disclosed Laman and Lemuel would not partake of the fruit of the tree of life. Immediately after the vision, however, “he did exhort them . . . with all the feeling of a tender parent, that they would hearken to his words, that perhaps the Lord would be merciful to them” (1 Nephi 8:37). During the remainder of Lehi’s life, Laman and Lemuel’s actions gave him little hope that they would repent. However, he never gave up but labored with them and loved them even with his dying breath (see 2 Nephi 1:21).

The great prophet Mormon set another example worthy of emulation. He lived at a time that was hopeless. Imagine this: “There were no gifts from the Lord, and the Holy Ghost did not come upon any, because of their wickedness and unbelief” (Mormon 1:14).

In spite of this hopeless situation, Mormon led their armies, for, in his words, “Notwithstanding their wickedness I . . . loved them, according to the love of God which was in me, with all my heart; and my soul had been poured out in prayer unto my God all the day long for them” (Mormon 3:12).

This prophet had Christlike love for a fallen people. Can we be content with loving less? We must press forward with the pure love of Christ to spread the good news of the gospel. As we do so and fight the war of good against evil, light against darkness, and truth against falsehood, we must not neglect our responsibility of dressing the wounds of those who have fallen in battle. There is no room in the kingdom for fatalism.

Do not rejoice when the wicked suffer

The second attitude adjustment is to not allow ourselves to find satisfaction in calamities of the last days. Sometimes we tend to take joy in seeing the natural consequences of sin unfold. We might feel some vindication for being ignored by most of the world and persecuted and berated by others. When we see earthquakes, wars, famines, disease, poverty, and heartbreak, we may be tempted to say, “Well, we warned them. We told them a thousand times not to engage in those activities.”

We should take these proverbs to heart:

“He that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished” (Proverbs 17:5).

“Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth” (Proverbs 24:17).

On this subject Job said:

“For I should have denied the God that is above.

"If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him" (Job 31:28-29).

King Benjamin addressed the sin of judging a person in need very clearly:

"Perhaps thou shalt say: The man has brought upon himself his misery; therefore I will stay my hand, and will not give unto him of my food, nor impart unto him of my substance that he may not suffer, for his punishments are just—

"But I say unto you, O man, whosoever doeth this the same hath great cause to repent" (Mosiah 4:17-18).

We know many wounds are self-inflicted and could have been avoided simply by obeying gospel principles. However, to shrug it off as "their problem" is not acceptable to the Lord. He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Although He does not condone sin, His arms are always open to the repentant sinner. In modern revelation the Lord has asked us to go one step further: "I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men" (D&C 64:10).

Our forgiveness must be manifest by reaching out to help mend wounds even when they are the result of transgression. To react in any other way would be akin to setting up a lung cancer clinic for nonsmokers only. Whether the pain has come to someone who is completely innocent or is something of his own making is irrelevant. When a person has been hit by a truck, we don't withhold our help even when it is obvious he didn't stay in the pedestrian lane.

While some of the world's suffering can be traced to an individual's disobedience or lack of judgment, there is wholesale suffering taking place that is not the result of anyone's own mistakes. Millions of people around the world go to sleep hungry. In their waking hours, they are racked with disease and other afflictions. The causes are many, varied, and complex. Also, natural disasters fall on the righteous as well as the wicked.

Responding to suffering

Now that we have discussed some attitude adjustments concerning fatalism and having any joy in calamities, what action should we take? What should we be doing as a church and as individuals in response to the mammoth need in the world?

Our numbers are few. For every member of the Church in the world, there are approximately a thousand who are not. Our resources are limited, and the needs of the world are vast. We cannot do everything, but we must do everything we can.

The Brethren closely monitor the multitude of crises throughout the world and give assistance to a wide range of countries. The assistance is given where the need seems to be the greatest, without consideration to the political or religious ideologies that exist in each country.

On this subject, Joseph Smith, in response to the question "What is required to constitute good [Church] membership?" said, among other things, "He is to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to provide for the widow, to dry up the tear of the orphan, to comfort the afflicted, whether in this church, or in any other, or in no church at all, wherever he finds them" (*Times and Seasons*, 15 Mar. 1842, p. 732).

More recently President Hinckley said, "Where there is stark hunger, regardless of the cause, I will not let political considerations dull my sense of mercy or thwart my responsibility to the sons and daughters of God, wherever they may be or whatever their circumstances" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1985, p. 72; or *Ensign*, May 1985, p. 54).

As Church members read accounts or see graphic pictures of human suffering, they are touched and ask, "What can we do?" Most of us will not be in a position to help on a person-to-person basis when the need is many miles away. However, every member of the Church can pray for peace throughout the world and for the well-being of all its inhabitants. Also, members may fast

and increase their fast offerings when they are able and thus enable the Church to do more.

Reach beyond the Church

As far as person-to-person assistance is concerned, the greatest compassionate service each of us can give may be in our own neighborhoods and communities. Wherever we live in the world there is pain and sorrow all around us. We need to take more initiative as individuals in deciding how we can best be of service.

The fact that a particular activity is not sponsored by the Church does not mean it is not worthy of a Church member's support. As individuals, we should become knowledgeable of the opportunities around us. I fear some members suffer from action paralysis, waiting for the Church to put its stamp of approval on one organization or another. The Church teaches principles. Use those principles and the Spirit to decide which organizations you would like to support.

The Lord said, "Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will" (D&C 58:27). Good things can be done through the Church organization, community organizations, and very often through no formal organization at all.

We must reach out beyond the walls of our own church. In humanitar-

ian work, as in other areas of the gospel, we cannot become the salt of the earth if we stay in one lump in the cultural halls of our beautiful meetinghouses. We need not wait for a call or an assignment from a Church leader before we become involved in activities that are best carried out on a community or individual basis.

When we get emotionally and spiritually involved in helping a person who is in pain, a compassion enters our heart. It hurts, but the process lifts some of the pain from another. We get from the experience a finite look into the Savior's pain as He performed the infinite atonement. Through the power of the Holy Ghost, a sanctification takes place within our souls and we become more like our Savior. We gain a better understanding of what was meant when He said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

As the last days unfold, we will see all the prophecies fulfilled. We will see today's problems compounded, and we will see new challenges scarcely imaginable at this time. We must reach out to those who are suffering from these events. We must not become fatalistic or judgmental—even if we warn the people in the world of something a thousand times and they heed us not. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Eduardo Ayala

Dear brothers and sisters, throughout my life I have known men and women who keep the commandments of the Lord with diligence and joy and who have, through their examples, edified and blessed the lives of those around them. Some of them now occupy prominent, challenging positions in their personal and professional lives. In the midst of their success, they are not afraid of recognizing that they are

where they are because of the blessings of the Lord.

A faithful physician

Allow me to share the experience of a faithful member of the Church who occupies a prominent position among the world's microneurosurgeons. This is a position he has obtained, according to his own testimony, with the help of the Lord and through obedience to the Word of Wisdom. He joined the Church