

Brothers and sisters, we must not fail to do the simple and easy things that the gospel requires and thereby deny ourselves and our families the great blessings that the Lord has promised.

In general conference just last April, Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve asked: "Given the gravity of current conditions, would parents be willing to give up just one outside thing, giving that time and talent instead to the family?" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, p. 121; or *Ensign*, May 1994, p. 90).

Charles Francis Adams, grandson of the second president of the United States, was a successful lawyer, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, and the U.S. ambassador to Britain. Amidst his responsibilities he had little time to spare. He did, however, keep a diary. One day he wrote, "Went fishing with my son today—a day wasted!"

On that same date, Charles's son, Brooks Adams, had printed in his own diary, "Went fishing with my father today—the most wonderful day of my life" (quoted in Scott Walker, *Daily Guide-*

*posts: 1994* [Carmel, N.Y.: Guideposts, 1993], p. 67).

President Hunter has said, "Frequently it is the commonplace tasks that have the greatest positive effect on the lives of others" ("What Is True Greatness?" p. 115).

I pray that we will heed the counsel of our prophet and have the faith to follow the Savior by doing the simple things His gospel requires. For if the Lord's prophet had bid us do some great thing to receive the Lord's great blessings, who among us would not do it? In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### President Monson

Thank you, Elder Rex D. Pinegar, for that wonderful sermon. Elder Pinegar is a member of the Presidency of the Seventy.

Elder Lance B. Wickman, who was sustained as a Seventy at April conference, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

## Elder Lance B. Wickman

### Leaving for Vietnam

I shall never forget one night almost three decades ago. My bride, Patricia, and I had been married for two years. We lived in a small duplex on Oahu's north shore. I was an army infantry officer, a platoon leader, assigned to a unit at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. Our brigade had been ordered to war in Vietnam. My plane was scheduled for departure after midnight, and a good Latter-day Saint friend had agreed to take me to the airfield at 11:00 P.M.

All through that long evening, Pat and I sat on the sofa in our tiny living room with our fingers intertwined, watching the hands of the clock approach the fateful hour and listening to

the soft lapping of the surf against the shore. The ticking of the clock seemed a metronome of mortality in painful contrast to the muffled rushing of the eternal sea. At last the hour of parting arrived. Inside the doorway to our little home, I clutched my bride to my bosom and kissed her one last time, and then I was gone. As I closed the door, I wondered if I had seen my sweetheart for the last time in mortality. It was truly night.

My friend and I drove silently in the darkness through the sugarcane and pineapple fields of Oahu. My heart felt as though it would break. Then as we passed Schofield, an unseen infantry unit on night maneuvers fired a flare. Its brilliance momentarily lit the inky

darkness and seemed to ignite a spiritual flame in the blackness that invested my soul. My thoughts were drawn away from this saddest of days to the very happiest: back to that beautiful December day when Pat and I had entered the holy temple and there were sealed to each other, not just for this life only but for all eternity. I thought of the eternal covenants we had made. Like the sunrise, it dawned on me that no matter what happened in the uncertain future just ahead, Pat would always be mine. When I reached the air base, I telephoned her. In the spirit of a renewed hope and peace born of faith and understanding, we talked and laughed softly before once more bidding each other good-bye. It was only midnight, but for me the sun was already rising.

#### **"Stand ye in holy places"**

On another day in another place, however, the sun was setting on the mortal ministry of the Messiah as he departed the temple at Jerusalem for the last time. Climbing atop the Mount of Olives with his disciples, the Savior prophesied the cataclysmic events that would precede the destruction of Jerusalem and his second coming. He then issued this portentous admonition to his disciples, ancient and modern: "Then you shall *stand in the holy place*; whose readeth let him understand" (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:12; italics added; see also Matthew 24:15). Latter-day revelations provide understanding. They teach that in our day, amidst strife and catastrophe and pestilence, there are two kingdoms locked in grim struggle for the souls of men—Zion and Babylon. More than once they repeat the injunction to "stand in holy places" for a refuge from these storms of latter-day life (D&C 45:32; see also D&C 87:8; 101:16–23). Prominent among such holy places, and key to all the others, is the temple of the Lord.

The words *Zion* and *temple* belong in the same sentence together. In August 1833, as Saints attempted against much persecution to establish a geographic Zion in Jackson County, Missouri, the Prophet Joseph Smith was counseled in revelation to build a house unto the Lord "for the salvation of Zion" (D&C 97:12). The temple is the key to salvation, it said, because it is a place of thanksgiving, a place of instruction, and a place of understanding in all things (see D&C 97:12–14). Then comes this glorious promise: "Yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it *shall see God*. . . . Therefore, . . . let Zion rejoice, for this is Zion—THE PURE IN HEART; therefore, let Zion rejoice, while all the wicked shall mourn" (D&C 97:16, 21; italics added). For Zion, the pure in heart, the temple holds the key that unlocks holy places—places of rejoicing—while those in Babylon's byways are condemned to mourn.

#### **The temple helps us through difficulty**

I was to bid my dear wife good-bye twice more during the tumultuous years of the Vietnam War. In a later year we would stand together and say farewell as a five-year-old son slipped from this world across the veiled threshold into the next; and later still we would welcome a handicapped daughter into mortality. Life has brought us its challenges, as it does to all. But through the years I have come to appreciate the wisdom of a dear friend, a patriarch and temple sealer. "Lance," he said, "the joy I receive is more than just being in the temple. *The temple is in me!* And when I leave the temple, its peace goes with me."

So it can be for every righteous soul. When we visit the temple as often as distance and individual circumstance permit, *the temple will be in us*. Then,

despite the buffetings of life, we will always be in a holy place. The house of the Lord beckons to all who would be numbered with Zion: "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths" (Isaiah 2:3).

### Peace in the San Diego temple

The day of the San Diego California Temple dedication attended by our stake, I came into the celestial room a few minutes early, accompanied by my daughter and one of my sons. My dear Pat was directing the choir. As though joined by angels, they rehearsed these magnificent words from a beloved Latter-day Saint hymn—a hymn we sang only moments ago:

High on the mountain top  
A banner is unfurled.  
Ye nations, now look up;  
It waves to all the world.  
In Deseret's sweet, peaceful land,  
On Zion's mount behold it stand!  
["High on the Mountain Top," *Hymns*,  
no. 5]

Pat's eyes met mine. For a brief moment I was transported back across the years, past the challenges and the heartaches to that wonderful day when together we had entered the house of the Lord. I drew my children close. In that instant a wonderful, celestial feeling swelled my breast. I *knew* I was in a holy place. I felt a peace as I had on that dark night so many years ago—and again I rejoiced. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder Russell M. Nelson

### The Spirit of Elijah

Within the past year, four of our beloved General Authorities have concluded their mission in mortality. The passing of President Ezra Taft Benson and Elders Marvin J. Ashton, Sterling W. Sill, and Clinton L. Cutler has prompted a great outpouring of love to their families. Their departure has also underscored a scriptural explanation of activities on the other side of the veil: "The faithful elders of this dispensation, when they depart from mortal life, continue their labors in the preaching of the gospel . . . in the great world of the spirits of the dead."<sup>1</sup>

President Spencer W. Kimball taught that "our great part in this aspect of missionary work is to perform on this earth the ordinances required for those who accept the gospel over there."<sup>2</sup>

These thoughts, coupled with the fact that next month marks the one hun-

dredth anniversary of the Genealogical Society of Utah, highlight the great importance and influence of "the spirit of Elijah."<sup>3</sup> Happily, the date of this centennial closely coincides with the birthday of President Howard W. Hunter, who once presided over that society and who now beckons us to the house of the Lord.

### Baptism is essential to enter the kingdom of God

Basic to all Christian understanding is the timeless statement made by Jesus: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."<sup>4</sup>

Following His crucifixion, Jesus ministered in the spirit world, setting in motion missionary work among those who had died without hearing the gospel.<sup>5</sup> Baptism for these souls would logically be expected. Yet only one verse