

## Temples

Temples dedicated during 2001 . . . . .	5
(Montevideo Uruguay, Winter Quarters Nebraska, Guadalajara México, Perth Australia, Columbia River Washington)	
Temples in operation . . . . .	107

## Prominent members who have passed away since last April

*Elder Loren C. Dunn*, an emeritus General Authority and president of the Boston Massachusetts Temple at the time of his passing; *Elder Merlyn R. Lybbert*, a former member of the Seventy; *Elder*

*George R. Hill III*, a former member of the Seventy; *Phyllis Nielsen Reeve*, wife of Rex C. Reeve Sr., an emeritus General Authority; *Avanelle Richards Osborn*, wife of Spencer H. Osborn, a former member of the Seventy; *Naomi Ward Randall*, a former counselor in the Primary general presidency and author of the words of the hymn "I Am a Child of God."

## President Faust

We shall now hear from Elders Richard G. Scott and Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, followed by Elder R. Conrad Schultz of the Seventy.

## Elder Richard G. Scott

### Insights from Peter about true conversion

Each of us has observed how some individuals go through life consistently doing the right things. They seem happy, even enthusiastic about life. When difficult choices are to be made, they seem to invariably make the right ones, even though there were enticing alternatives available to them. We know that they are subject to temptation, but they seem oblivious to it. Likewise, we have observed how others are not so valiant in the decisions they make. In a powerfully spiritual environment, they resolve to do better, to change their course of life, to set aside debilitating habits. They are very sincere in their determination to change, yet they are soon back doing the same things they resolved to abandon.

What is it that makes the difference in the lives of these two groups? How can you consistently make the right choices? The scriptures give us insight. Consider enthusiastic, impetuous Peter. For three years he had served as an Apostle beside the Master, observing miracles and hearing transforming teachings and private explanations of parables. With James and

John, he experienced the glorious Transfiguration of Jesus Christ with the accompanying visitations of Moses and Elijah.<sup>1</sup> Yet with all of this, the Savior could see that Peter still lacked consistency. The Master knew him very well, as He does each of us. In the Bible we read:

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you . . . :

"But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art *converted*, strengthen thy brethren.

"And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death."<sup>2</sup>

Certainly these were not, from the perspective of Peter, idle words. He sincerely meant what he said but would act otherwise.

Later, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus prophesied to His disciples, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." Peter again responded, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I." Then the Master soberly prophesied, "Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before

the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice," to which Peter responded more vehemently, "If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise."<sup>3</sup>

For me, one of the most poignant passages of scripture describes what then occurred. It is a sobering reminder to each of us that knowing to do right, even ardently desiring to do right, is not enough. It is often very hard to actually do what we clearly know we should do. We read:

"But a certain maid beheld [Peter] . . . and said, This man was also with him. And he denied . . . , saying, Woman, I know him not. . . . Another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. . . . Another confidently affirmed, . . . Of a truth this fellow also was with him: . . . And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, . . . and . . . went out, and wept bitterly."<sup>4</sup>

As painful as that confirmation of prophecy must have been for Peter, his life began to change forever. He became that unwavering, rock-solid servant essential to the plan of the Father after the Crucifixion and Resurrection of the Savior.

This tender passage also illustrates how very much the Savior loved Peter. Although He was in the midst of an overpowering challenge to His own life, with all the weight of what was to transpire upon His shoulders, yet He turned and looked at Peter—the love of a teacher transmitted to a beloved student, giving courage and enlightenment in time of need. Thereafter Peter rose to the full stature of his calling. He taught with power and unshakable testimony despite threats, imprisonment, and beatings. He was truly converted.

#### What it means to be truly converted

Sometimes the word *converted* is used to describe when a sincere individual de-

cides to be baptized. However, when properly used, *conversion* means far more than that, for the new convert as well as the long-term member. With characteristic doctrinal clarity and precision, President Marion G. Romney explained conversion:

"Converted means to turn from one belief or course of action to another. Conversion is a spiritual and moral change. *Converted* implies not merely mental acceptance of Jesus and his teachings but also a motivating faith in him and his gospel. A faith which works a transformation, an actual change in one's understanding of life's meaning and in his allegiance to God in interest, in thought, and in conduct. In one who is really wholly converted, desire for things contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ has actually died. And substituted therefore is a love of God, with a fixed and controlling determination to keep his commandments."<sup>5</sup>

#### How to become truly converted

To be converted, you must remember to apply diligently in your life the key words "a love of God, with a fixed and controlling determination to keep his commandments." Your happiness now and forever is conditioned on your degree of conversion and the transformation that it brings to your life. How then can you become truly converted? President Romney describes the steps you must follow:

"Membership in the Church and conversion are not necessarily synonymous. Being converted and having a testimony are not necessarily the same thing either. A testimony comes when the Holy Ghost gives the earnest seeker a witness of the truth. A moving testimony vitalizes faith. That is, it induces repentance and obedience to the commandments. Conversion is the fruit or the reward for repentance and obedience."<sup>6</sup>

Stated simply, true conversion is the fruit of *faith*, *repentance*, and *consistent obedience*. *Faith* comes by hearing the word of God<sup>7</sup> and responding to it. You

will receive from the Holy Ghost a confirming witness of things you accept on *faith* by willingly doing them.<sup>8</sup> You will be led to *repent* of errors resulting from wrong things done or right things not done. As a consequence, your capacity to *consistently obey* will be strengthened. This cycle of *faith, repentance, and consistent obedience* will lead you to greater conversion with its attendant blessings. True conversion will strengthen your capacity to do what you know you should do, when you should do it, regardless of the circumstances.

### Conversion and the parable of the sower

The parable of the sower taught by Jesus is generally considered to describe how the word of the Lord is received by different individuals as it is preached. Consider for a moment how the same parable may apply to you in different circumstances in your life, as you face challenges or come under strong influences. The word, or teachings of the Savior, can come to you in many ways: as you observe others, or through your own prayer or pondering the scriptures, or through the guidance of the Holy Ghost. As I repeat the explanation that Jesus gave His disciples of the parable of the sower, mentally examine your life. See if there are periods when correct teachings find in you conditions unsuitable to receive them and consequently the promised fruits of happiness, peace, and progress are lost.

"The sower soweth the word.

"[Some are sown] by the way side, . . . but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts."

Could that happen to you, in the wrong environment, with the wrong friendships?

"[Some] are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;

"And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when

. . . persecution ariseth . . . , immediately they are offended."

Have you ever been in a circumstance when someone proposed something inappropriate and you did nothing to resist it?

"[Some] are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,

"And the cares of this world . . . and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful."

Have there been times when you wanted something so badly that you justified an exception to your standards?

"[Some] are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."<sup>9</sup>

I know this is the way you want to live your life. How completely you willingly embrace the teachings of the Savior determines how much fruit, as blessings, you will harvest in your life. This parable illustrates that the degree to which you willingly obey those things you know you should do, resisting the rationalization to do otherwise, will determine how truly converted you are and, therefore, how fully the Lord can bless you.

### Blessings of true conversion

True conversion yields the fruit of enduring happiness that can be enjoyed even when the world is in turmoil and most are anything but happy. Of a group of individuals in difficulty, the Book of Mormon teaches, "They did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God."<sup>10</sup>

President Hinckley has declared that it is true conversion that makes the difference.<sup>11</sup>

To receive the blessings promised from true conversion, make the changes

that you know are needed in your life now. The Savior said:

“Will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?

“. . . If ye will come unto me ye shall have eternal life.”<sup>12</sup>

I bear testimony that as you pray for guidance, the Holy Ghost will help identify the personal changes you need to make for full conversion. The Lord can then bless you more abundantly. Your *faith* in Him will be fortified, your capacity to *repent* will increase, and your power to *consistently obey* will be reinforced. The Savior lives. He loves you. As you do your best, He will help you. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## NOTES

1. See Matthew 17:1–3; see also 1 Kings 17:1; Doctrine and Covenants 110:13.
2. Luke 22:31–33; italics added.
3. See Mark 14:27, 29–31.
4. Luke 22:56–62.
5. In Conference Report, Guatemala Area Conference 1977, 8.
6. In Guatemala Area Conference 1977, 9.
7. See Romans 10:17; Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. (1939), 99.
8. See Ether 12:6.
9. Mark 4:14–20.
10. Helaman 3:35.
11. See Regional representatives' seminar, 6 Apr. 1984, quoted by W. Mack Lawrence, in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 103; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 75.
12. 3 Nephi 9:13–14.

## Elder Henry B. Eyring

### Our promise at baptism to be a friend

Each year, hundreds of thousands of the children of our Heavenly Father come into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For most it requires a great change in their lives. All of them have made a sacred covenant with great promises and with a solemn pledge to endure. That covenant is so important that our Heavenly Father described the blessing and the challenge to the prophet Nephi:

“And I heard a voice from the Father, saying: Yea, the words of my Beloved are true and faithful. He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.

“And now, my beloved brethren, I know by this that unless a man shall endure to the end, in following the example of the Son of the living God, he cannot be saved.”<sup>1</sup>

The Savior warns that if we start along the path and go far enough and then fail and deny Him, it would have been better if we had never begun.<sup>2</sup>

I think of that each time I visit with new members of the Church. I get that opportunity often, across the world. I see their trusting faces, and often they tell me about some trial of their faith, and then, with urgency in their voices, they whisper, “Please pray for me.” At those moments I feel again the weight of the charge to each of us from the Lord’s living prophet. It is to keep the promise we made in the waters of baptism “to bear one another’s burdens.”<sup>3</sup> It is to be a friend.

### Friendship brings young man to the gospel

These words of President Hinckley energize me: “I hope, I pray, I plead with you, every one of you, to embrace every new member of the Church. Make a friend of him or her. Hold on to them.”<sup>4</sup>

President Hinckley can’t be there as a friend for every new member. But you can be there for at least one. All it takes is to feel something of what they feel and something of what the Savior feels for