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## Moving Forward

**By President Russell M. Nelson**  
*President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

The work of the Lord is steadily moving forward.

My dear brothers and sisters, what a *joy* it is to be with you as we begin the 190th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I love joining with you in your homes or wherever you are to listen together to the messages of prophets, seers, and revelators and other Church leaders.

How grateful we are for the technology that allows us to be connected as one great worldwide gathering of disciples of Jesus Christ. General conference last April was viewed by more people than any preceding it, and we have every expectation that will happen again.

During the past few months, a global pandemic, raging wildfires, and other natural disasters have turned our world upside down. I grieve with each of you who has lost a loved one during this time. And I pray for all who are currently suffering.

Meanwhile, the work of the Lord is steadily moving forward. Amid social distancing, face masks, and Zoom meetings, we have learned to do some things

differently and some even more effectively. Unusual times can bring unusual rewards.

Our missionaries and mission leaders have been resourceful, resilient, and truly remarkable. Although most missionaries have had to find new, creative ways to do their work, many missions have reported doing *more* teaching than ever.

We had to close temples for a time, and some construction projects were briefly delayed, but now they are all moving forward. In the calendar year 2020, we will have broken ground for 20 new temples!

Family history work has increased exponentially. Many new wards and stakes have been created. And we are gratified to report that the Church has provided pandemic humanitarian aid for 895 projects in 150 countries.

Increased gospel study in many homes is resulting in stronger testimonies and family relationships. One mother wrote: “We feel much closer to our children and grandchildren now that we gather on Zoom every Sunday. Each takes a turn giving their thoughts on *Come, Follow Me*. Prayers for our family members have changed because we better understand what they need.”

I pray that we as a people are using this unique time to grow spiritually. We are here on earth to be tested, to see if we will choose to follow Jesus Christ, to repent regularly, to learn, and to progress. Our spirits long to progress. And we do that best by staying firmly on the covenant path.

Through it all, our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, love us! They care for us! They and Their holy angels are watching over us.<sup>1</sup> I know that is true.

As we gather to hear the words the Lord has inspired His servants to deliver, I invite you to ponder a promise the Lord made. He declared that “*whosoever will* may lay hold upon the word of God, which is quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning ... and the wiles of the devil, and lead the [disciple] of Christ in a strait and narrow course.”<sup>2</sup>

I pray that you will *choose* to lay hold upon the word of God as it is declared during this general conference. And I pray that you may feel the Lord’s perfect love for you,<sup>3</sup> in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.