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ASSOCIATION OF  
MORMON COUNSELORS  
AND PSYCHOTHERAPISTS

**AMCAP**  
2500 East 1700 South  
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- a) To promote fellowship, foster communication, enhance personal and professional development, and promote a forum for counselors and psychotherapists whose common bond is membership in and adherence to the principles and standards of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, both in their personal lives and professional practice.
- b) To encourage and support members' efforts to actively promote within their other professional organizations and the society at large the adoption and maintenance of moral standards and practices that are consistent with gospel principles.

Article 1, Section 2. AMCAP by-laws (as amended Sept. 30, 1981).

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Authors should keep a copy of their manuscript to guard against loss. Send three copies of your manuscript to the editor:

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## Editorial

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This issue of the *AMCAP Journal* is unique. We have tried to collect all of the talks given to our organization by general officers of the Church. When we first contemplated this special issue of the *Journal*, I had no idea of how many addresses we would find or if there would be common themes. However, in discussing this issue with the AMCAP Executive Board, we all felt like it would be most worthwhile. Perhaps you will remember a talk or two that's not included in this compilation. Although, we wanted to publish all such addresses delivered to our Association, we did not obtain permission to publish some talks.

In preparing this issue, I wrote to each author telling them what we were planning, giving them an opportunity to revise or withdraw. They have all been most gracious in their responses, and I have to say that this correspondence has been one of the most enjoyable tasks I have undertaken as editor. I am very delighted with the result and I think you will be also.

The talks are arranged in chronological order. When the date of delivery is unknown, the year of first publication is supplied.

And just as a reminder: We welcome manuscripts at any time. As always, we welcome your comments.

Paul F. Cook, Editor





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## Transgression

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Bishop Vaughn J. Featherstone  
Of the Seventy  
1975

**T**oday I have been asked to talk to you about transgression. One of the good brothers asked me if they could ask questions and that reminded me of the fellow up in Idaho who had a wooden leg and he moved into a new ward. He had only been there a short time and two or three ladies wanted to know what happened; you know, how did he lose his leg and they talked among themselves until finally one of them said, "Well, I'm going over and ask him." So she went over to him and said, "Do you mind if I ask you a question?" And he said, "That's all right, if you promise to ask only one." And she said, "Very well then, how did you lose your leg?" And he said, "It was chewed off." So, what I'll do is, I'll let you ask questions at the end if you promise to ask only one.

How many members of stake presidencies and bishops do we have here? I see we have a great many of them. I won't be teaching you anything new, but I might for those who aren't aware of the probing which we do as priesthood leaders. Let me tell you some of the reasons for this. We had an Aaronic Priesthood worker, a man who was also a stake mission president, in one of our areas and he got involved in a homosexual experience and very soon he was the carrier. (I don't know what the right term is, but I've used carrier.) Anyway, by the time they finally took action on

him, he had had homosexual relations with many, many Aaronic Priesthood boys in that stake. And it absolutely made me sick inside to suppose that priesthood leaders would go that long without handling the transgressor appropriately. Now, your stewardship is different in that you do work with them and labor diligently and use your professional expertise in solving the problem. Ecclesiastically, we approach it from a little different standpoint. Hopefully, most of our bishops are good counselors; they know how to counsel; they have had experience; and more important, they are living a pure life so that they may counsel in the way the Lord would have them counsel: I mean by direct revelation and inspiration.

A young man came to me at one time and we discussed many things. He broke down emotionally, and told me of serious problems he had encountered. Simply stated: He and his wife had met. She had come from Michigan and had wanted to marry a fine LDS returned missionary. She met him and they were married in the temple. They were active in their ward, and then moved to another ward and decided that, "We've been too active in the Church. We don't need to be that active anymore." They had decided not to get involved in church work. By the time the membership records did come and were read in the new ward and contact was made, they had fairly well determined that this inactivity in the Church was the kind of life they wanted. He said, "I have started to smoke, and I drink coffee, and I have an occasional alcoholic beverage. We don't go to church. My wife doesn't live the commandments either, and she has fallen in love with a particular man (and he named the name). I know that it bothers her because she has driven up the canyon two or three times with the idea of driving off a cliff somewhere and ending it all. She doesn't know how to get out of it." With as strong as any impression I have ever had I said to him, "Well, really there is no reason she ought to stay with you. You know, you are really not much of a man. She came out to Salt Lake and married a returned missionary with all the fine qualities one would expect. All that's left of the fine specimen she married is the hollow shell of a man. All those fine qualities you had have been cast aside. Why should

she stay with someone like you?" Well, that shocked him a little bit and I got his attention, and then I said—I am cutting an hour interview down to five minutes for you—"I'll tell you what you do. You decide right now that you'll never smoke again, and you give me the cigarettes, and then you promise me you'll never drink a cup of coffee, that you will never drink another alcoholic beverage. You pay your tithing this Sunday at church and I'll give you a special blessing to help you with all these problems. The Lord will bless you, if you will make a commitment." And then I said, "You go home and tell your wife this, and I would tell you the same thing if you were on the other end fooling around with some other woman." I said, "You tell your wife this, to put on her temple garments, and that if I were the bishop, and she saw this man again, I would hold a church court on her for conduct unbecoming a Latter-day Saint and possible eventual family abandonment. This is simply what she is doing." Well, it was like taking a two-by-four and hitting him. He listened, committed, stopped smoking that instant and went home. He and his wife stayed up late through the night and I guess they had quite a talk deciding that though they were not in love, they would make some real adjustments. The next night about 6:00 the boyfriend called, and she was already to go. In fact, she went upstairs and took a shower and decided, I've just got to go. Although she had not committed adultery, there had been some necking going on and indiscretions that a married woman never should have with anyone other than her husband, and they had fallen in love with each other. In spite of what they had talked about the night before, her commitment ebbed away, and she took a shower to get ready to go. After she climbed out of the shower and dried off, she put her garments on, and when she put her garments on she said, "Then I knew that I could not go." I think that is significant.

A couple of months ago, I attended a party on Labor Day. The wife of this man slipped up beside me, took hold of my hand and said, "I really do love my husband now, and he is worth loving. I want to tell you what you have done as far as our marriage is concerned." She told me, "I really had considered suicide, and now to be able to go back to church again and have family prayer, and

family home evening, well. . .” What I am saying then is that we must be guided by the Spirit in our interviews. If I were that bold and came on that strong with someone else, I would probably drive him right out of the church, or maybe even further into the problem. That’s why I say an ecclesiastical leader must be pure in heart and must be guided by inspiration and revelation.

Another thing, as you know, you can never discuss certain things with individuals without them thinking, “I wonder if he has a hang-up, too.” If you start going beyond the laws of propriety in your discussion, for example, if you would say something like, “Have you had sexual relations?” “Yes.” “How many times?” “40.” “What was it like? Give me an idea.” You really don’t need to know that. You don’t need to go beyond the laws of propriety. If you find out in homosexual relations what they have done basically, you don’t need to ask about the experience itself, because they will think, “Maybe he has his hang-up.” Maybe you do, if you have to ask those kind of questions. I think there is a very delicate balance in probing wisely and deep enough to get the facts but not to the point where you may be accused of fantasizing.

Let me discuss a couple of other things with you. First, what do you do when someone reports to your boss that you have mishandled a problem, say in counseling or in an adoption. We had a case like this. I’ll try to change it enough so no one will recognize it. A lady went to a General Authority and said, “We’ve had our name on the baby list to receive a baby-adoptive parent list for possibly three or four years, but we haven’t been able to get a baby. We understand that the waiting period is 24 to 26 months. Is there something wrong? Why can’t we get a baby?” And the counselor said, “Well, in the first place, these babies are given by inspiration, and I’ll tell you something, you’ll never get a baby.” The wife was shocked, and, of course, as she told her husband later, he was shocked. “Why, why wouldn’t we get a baby?” “Well, you are over age, and you’ll never get a baby.”

Well, she went to a General Authority and said, “Is that possibly true? Will we not ever had a baby?” The General Authority checked with us and we found out who the social worker was, so they counseled that social worker. The social worker went

right back and just raked this couple over the coals for going to a General Authority. Well, whose hang-up is it? Certainly, the adopting parents might have had a hang-up, and now it becomes the social worker who has to save his or her ego for some reason I don't understand. The social worker should be mature and stable, and secure. I wouldn't think that he or she would need to defend himself/herself to someone who was having problems. I am not just talking about adopting parents. It happens in many areas, where you counsel and word gets back to your boss that you said such and such. I would tell you here that I really believe that your employers will not misjudge you. If you have had a traditional history of being competent, I don't believe they will misjudge you in any way. I think they will simply call you in and question it, and they will stand by you.

Another thing about which I feel very keenly in your work, and in anyone's work who does the type of thing you do, is please don't take everyone's problems home with you. I have a personal conviction that you can interview people with problems most of the day. You take it off of their heart, and I believe you can also lift it off of your heart. I can interview a person with a problem and they will leave, then someone else will come in with a problem—a different problem—and I can listen, and cry with them if the Spirit moves that way and I am deeply moved. When they leave, then someone else can come in, and when I leave to go home from work, I can actually leave my briefcase there, cast everything behind, and go home and just lead a normal life. I think we must do that. I don't think we can carry on our hearts all of these problems.

Occasionally, as we interview homosexuals, adulterers, fornicators, and others, we need to be very careful to remember that homosexuality, fornication and adultery are equal in seriousness: I have heard from two of the prophets of the Church that they are. If that is true, then how can we say that we handle the homosexual differently because it is not so serious, because he is not tampering with life's process. He is tampering with life's process, and in fact, he is involved in a perverted love experience, if you can use the word "love" in that context. He or she has problems. We listen to

their rationalization and very soon we start thinking, "Well you know, he is right, it isn't as serious," and so we start teaching it. I have heard several of our social workers really start to compromise the standards of the Church because they had interviewed enough people who had rationalized and justified, that they, our workers, started sliding over into a position of compromise. When this happens you have just lost your effectiveness.

Let me suggest the way that I think we ought to interview as ecclesiastical leaders. You, as counselors and psychotherapists, would interview much differently. We have a right to interview this way and everyone has a right to be interviewed in depth to find out what kind of life they are living. We had 1384 temple recommend holders in the stake in which I served as stake president and I interviewed 500 people personally. I would meet them at the door and say, "How are you?" "Fine." "Your family's fine?" "Yes." "Your children are well?" "Yes." "Even your boy on his mission is doing well?" "Yes." Anyway, I would come across the floor and be very warm to them and then sit, not behind the desk but across the corner of the desk or out in front. Then I would say something like this, "Now, before this interview begins, if there has been a major transgression in your life, that has not been confessed and adjusted—and President Kimball said that it is critical to say 'and adjusted'—then I'd like to know about it before this interview ends—not that I need to know but that I want to take it off of your heart. If I can close it, I will close it, and you need not open it again and if not, we can take the appropriate action and help you to repent." Now, with that introduction almost immediately I could tell whether the person I was interviewing had a problem. It comes back to their mind and they think, "Finally now, am I going to be able to tell? Does he really want to know? Will I have enough courage? Is he going to ask the questions so that it will come out?" So I ask the next question, "Is there any problem with the Word of Wisdom? tea? coffee? liquor? tobacco? and so forth," and I am not going to attend to those particular questions, but we need to go slow enough to get a response to each one. If they have been to the temple, I talk about wearing their temple garments properly, and keeping the Sabbath day holy. I talk about whether

they are affiliated with an apostate church, or whether they are full tithe payers, and sustaining the bishop and so forth. Now, I hurry so that I can get to this part and say, "Are you morally clean?" You know in all the interviews I have ever conducted, I have never had anyone say no. I can ask everyone in this room and I know what you would say. Every single person in this room would say, "Yes, I am morally clean." Why do we say yes to that question? Because most people justify and rationalize their conduct. Elder Stapley, when I traveled with him once, said, "When you ask about masturbation, don't ask 'do you?,' but ask 'how long has it been?'" Do you see the difference? If a fellow did it a week ago, or had a problem or a young lady did, they say, "Heavenly Father, I'm going to promise that I'll never do that again." A week later you see them in the interview, you ask "Do you have a masturbation problem" and they answer no. In their minds they think, "Well, I've prayed about it and I won't do it anymore." They are answering honestly, but the next night after the interview is over, they know they will not be interviewed for another year. Satan will come tempting and there is a tendency to slip. If we ask them how long has it been, then you find out, and you can find out if it has been a week, or two weeks, or six years. If it has been six years, go on to the next question. If it has been two weeks, then let me suggest how you can help them overcome the problem. Give them a special blessing. I think ecclesiastical leaders who do not take the opportunity to give special blessings really miss a sweet experience and miss the opportunity to bless the lives of the persons they are interviewing. Also, always promise them by the power of the priesthood that they will have the power to overcome the temptations.

Then the next question is, "Have you ever had sexual relations outside of your marriage that have not been confessed and adjusted?" Anyone who has confessed can say, "No, I have not," even if they have had the problem 100 times, if they have confessed and adjusted it, they can say, "No, I have not," and that's the way to do it. A stake president or bishop who would say, "Have you ever had sexual intercourse outside of your marriage?" really is unfair. The person who has confessed thinks, "Do I have to open

it again? I've told the president about it and my bishop. Do I have to start all over again, and get somebody else's approval to be forgiven?" Sometimes people don't understand doctrine and church government like they should. So out of the honesty of their heart they will say, "Yes, I did have, but I have confessed it to the bishop or stake president." Well, that isn't fair for us to even know that much. If they have closed it, it ought to be closed. A priesthood leader exercises unrighteous dominion if he opens it again. In fact, he is teaching by example that previous priesthood leaders did not have the exceptional qualities to judge which he possesses. If a transgression has been confessed and adjusted, we ought to let it rest. There may be circumstances related to callings in the Church which will require a reopening.

That brings me to another point: we need to be very careful in our relationships with the sisters, that we don't flirt—that we mentally don't flirt. Someone has said there are 600,000 ways of communicating, and if you just think or flirt in your heart, communication is going to take place that your standard is subject to compromise. You need to be very, very careful and hold your own marriage together. I believe you can do it. Great priesthood leaders, including the Brethren, can listen to the story, make an accurate judgment—a determination, and exercise whatever decision they would, and then move on to the next one, but they are not affected by the transgression. In other words, do not suppose that listening to the transgression will pollute your mind. In the 20th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the 22nd verse, the Savior gives us the solution. He said, "Though he (the Savior) suffered temptation, he gave them no heed." I believe the Twelve Apostles probably face the same kinds temptations each of you have faced, but have given them "no heed." One of the Brethren, as a young man, came back from his mission, walked down the main street of Salt Lake City and he lusted after several women that he saw on the street. So, he said he went back to his office, as a young man, and knelt down and said, "Heavenly Father, I don't want to lust anymore." He finished the fervent prayer and went out and walked down the street and he lusted a second time. So he went back to his office, knelt down again and said, "Heavenly Father, please, I



need some strength.” A third time he went out and still he said he lusted. Finally after the fourth time, he went out and he said he overcame the problem. Sometimes it takes fasting, prayer and determination. He gave temptation no heed, and since that time, he said, “I have never had a problem in my life.” Well, I believe that is the solution to part of it.

I visited a stake about a year ago. A couple came to my office within the past week who said, “You were in our stake and we heard what you said, and we want to repent. We went to our stake president and we told him part of the problem. We were just fishing to see how he would react, and he just brushed it off. So we thought that, ‘Well, we can’t go to this stake president, he’ll just brush it off.’ We went to our bishop and he really wasn’t interested in listening.” Members have the right in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints of having a transgression taken off of their heart, and they must confess a major transgression and submit to priesthood leaders for appropriate action before the transgression can be lifted from their hearts. So ask the question, watch carefully and be guided by the Spirit. I believe, as priesthood leaders again, you really have the right, whether you call it inspiration or intuition, until you feel a peace in your heart, don’t move. It may be well to say something like, “There’s something wrong in this interview, I can’t tell you what, it is, I just know that I do not feel at peace with the Spirit. Would you mind going home and fasting for twenty-four hours and then coming back and telling me why I cannot feel at peace.” Twenty-four hours is a long time for them, if there has been something wrong. But I don’t think I ever remember saying this to someone and they didn’t come back and say, “I know what it is. This is what the problem is.” Then you can help them solve it.

The next question is, “Has there ever been a major transgression in your life that has not been confessed and adjusted?” Now, there is no room to hide. I interviewed one man, who was in a fairly high place in his stake and he said, “I really believe that you can sleep with a woman overnight, but actually not commit adultery. In fact, I have done it.” He said, “I have slept with my secretary three different times, five and six hours. We’ve done every other

thing, but we have not actually committed adultery. We have not had sexual relations.” Who is he fooling? He may not have had sexual relations, but he committed adultery just as surely as anything in this life. And yet, there is something in the minds of members in the Church that says if we go to this point and we don’t go beyond that point we will always be able to answer the questions just right, so we are safe. Members who come like that have deceived themselves and they are able to get by, but they have a withdrawing of the Spirit. If we can bring the problem to the surface then I believe we are on the road to resolution. We have a right to be directed by the Spirit and have the powers of our calling in the Church.

There was a man up in our area that when I asked, “Has there ever been a major transgression in your life that has not been confessed and adjusted?” He said, “Would you call premeditated murder a major transgression?” I was shocked and said, “Of course, it is,” and tears came to his eyes. I said, “Who was it?” And he said, “It was my brother-in-law. He is the meanest, dirtiest, orneriest human being that ever walked the face of the earth. I planned to shoot him and take his body up to Dry Creek and bury it by a big rock, and no one would ever find him, and no one would ever miss him.” And he said, with tears streaming down his cheeks, “Can I ever be forgiven?” Trying to get a handle on it, I said, “Did you kill the man?” He said, “No, but I planned to.” I said, “Why didn’t you do it?” And he said, “Well, I thought about my sister and decided she deserved him.” Well, I told him the issue was closed and need not be opened again. The very same man was in his fifties and he had a personal abuse problem. When we take a burden off of a man’s heart and he walks out of the office, my heart is lighter and I know he feels better. Whether the priesthood leaders know about it or not, an unconfessed transgression is there, the burden is there. As the sinner or transgressor repents and takes it off of his heart, it is lifted off the heart of the priesthood leader also. I really believe that principle, and it is just one of Vaughn Featherstone’s opinions. In fact, this whole talk is Vaughn Featherstone’s opinion. It is not doctrine. I’m just giving you some thoughts that I felt were very effective as we use them in our stake

in interviewing. I think they comply with everything I've read in *The Miracle of Forgiveness* and everything I've heard in our meetings with the First Presidency.

A critical time is after the confession and adjustment comes. For example, we need to teach across the Church, and as counselors you need to know, that the presiding authority, the ecclesiastical leader, the bishop or stake president, has the right to close that particular case forever on behalf of the Church and it need not be opened again during a normal worthiness interview. There are a few exceptions as previously mentioned. Many priesthood leaders do not say that, and then the member doesn't really know that the incident is closed. We need to teach our members that if they transgress again, then all of the former sins return, and then they would need to be confessed also (Doctrine and Covenants 82:7). There are four courses of action open to a priesthood leader to take. The first course of action—that it may be closed forever and need never be opened again under normal circumstances.

Second, put them on probation between the priesthood leader (bishop or stake president) and the individual. And I think that's a very critical action. We oftentimes don't use this enough. We should use it more with our youth. Fornication, adultery, and homosexuality are equal in seriousness. Handling the transgressor is different. With fornication, they are young, unmarried, and usually they have had very little experience. Their testimonies aren't solid and so a priesthood leader may choose to handle it a little differently, with more lenience. Bend over backward to convert and teach our youth in the repentance process. Now, the adulterer, the man who has been through the temple is different. He knows far too much and should be handled with much greater firmness and Church discipline. The 42nd section of the Doctrine and Covenants says, "But he that has committed adultery and repents with all his heart, and forsaketh it, and doeth it no more, thou shalt forgive." (D&C 42:25) President McKay said, "No act is ever committed without having first been justified in the mind." If a person transgresses, he has justified it in his mind first. These are the consequences for sin and the sinner must be willing to

accept the punishment. I think the idea of probation is for those who are inexperienced in the Church.

We had a letter just this past week from a stake president who sent in two court cases. One was a bishop and one was a high councilor. One was three months ago and one was just recently. The bishop who had committed adultery more than once was disfellowshipped. The high councilor had an extramarital affair over a period of years. He also was disfellowshipped. I'm convinced that the priesthood leader will have to take further action later. One of the cruelest things he could do is not to take appropriate action, to be too soft, and I think that was too soft. I think the bishop in his high position knew far too much to simply have his hands slapped gently. It was not suffering or punishment equal to the serious nature of the transgression. I wonder if a person can really repent unless he or she has suffered enough, hurt enough and desires to repent enough. President Kimball said it isn't how much time passes bringing about repentance, but how much actual repenting. Some people can repent more in twenty-four hours than others may do in twenty-four months. I am convinced that is true. I have seen it and you have seen it.

The third course of action that we may take as a priesthood leader is disfellowshipment. Disfellowshipment is, of course, a temporary state and it is just pending further court action. Either you refellowship them if they repent, or if they haven't, you reconvene a court and take further action. When the shock hasn't been severe enough, and a change hasn't taken place in their lives, then a further court to excommunicate them is held. The fourth action we may take is excommunication.

As President Lee came into the First Presidency, you recall that there was quite a weeding-out process take place. The questioning and personal worthiness interviews took on a great dimension. This policy has not changed with President Kimball. I believe, as I mentioned in my priesthood talk last time, there is a purging. Many people who have been involved in Church court action will tell you that one of the great blessings of their lives was excommunication, which enabled them to make a change and adjustment in

their lives. However, others it may have destroyed. We need to develop that sensitivity to the Spirit. Don't suppose that the priesthood leader doesn't receive revelation and inspiration. I have seen farmers who had very little or no experience in counseling who, with the Lord's help, have been exceptional counselors. I have seen bishops who were truck drivers to earn a livelihood, and had hardly any human relations training and little or no college experience. And yet they interview members and change their lives.

There is yet another case of a homosexual in a distant city who came down with his wife to see President Kimball. President Kimball interviewed them and outlined a program for this man to overcome his problem. When they finished the interview, the homosexual said President Kimball did not understand. He felt the Brethren were old-fashioned about their counsel to the "homosexual." So the man and his wife went to a psychiatrist here in Salt Lake, and as they visited with him, he also made the same statement, that the Brethren aren't up-to-date on this particular problem. He suggested how to work with it, and outlined a different course of action. The man followed the psychiatrist, the professional. The homosexual went back home, lost his wife and the four daughters, was excommunicated from the Church, and lives now with his homosexual friend. I really believe and will bear my witness that if he had done what President Kimball told him to do, he would still be a high priest in the Church. I believe he would still have his wife, and children and the homosexual problem would be behind him. I am convinced that when a Prophet speaks—and let me include our stake presidents and bishops also—with very, very few exceptions, they always speak for the Lord.

I don't know how I am going to relate this, but I want to tell you because it is significant to you who work so hard. It hardly relates to the subject. It is this: when you go home, you need to really be home—you need to really be a father. I knew a mission president who told a group of bishops the following story:

When I was called to be the mission president, I went out and just put my heart and soul into the work. For about the first three months that we were out there, I really bent my back and the work started

moving up. I set up a mission tour and my wife came to me and said, "You set up the zone conference the same time we have back-to-school night. Can't you cancel your zone conference?" He said, "I had a real process trying to determine whether I'd cancel the meeting or not." I finally decided I'd cancel my zone conference and go to "back-to-school" the next night. I went, and as I went to the first class everything was all right. I went to the second class and everything was all right. I went to the third class and as I was looking at some of the paintings and sketches the children had done on the wall, I looked over at my wife who was standing by the desk of our little boy, crying. I walked over and stood by her and asked what the problem was. She couldn't even speak, she just pointed down at the paper on the desk. I looked down and read these words in an essay. "I am a dumb boy. I live in a dumb home. This is a dumb town. I have a dumb family, and I belong to a dumb church."

Sometimes we as social workers, bishops, stake presidents, and General Authorities are so involved with others, that we can't see a little boy whose soul is crying out for some attention. This great mission president said, "I spent many years since my mission trying to remove the word 'dumb' from the boy's vocabulary. And now he is a fine young man." What a heartrending story. Now, that really doesn't tie in to all the rest of this except with one principle. Please make certain when you are home, you really have the same empathy, understanding, kindness, consideration, tolerance, and sensitivity that you have when you are interviewing someone professionally.

I'd like to share one more short example. I had a woman come into the office at work and she said, as she leaned across the desk, "Bishop Featherstone, I have a burden on my heart that I can't carry one more step in this life. I know how tender you are and I wouldn't add one featherweight of burden to your heart, but I just cannot live one more day." I said, "You misunderstand. When you take it off of your heart, you take it off of my heart also. So you tell me the problem." She said, "Thirty-four years ago I had an abortion before my husband and I got married. Can I ever in this life or in eternity be forgiven? Must I be cast out forever? Is there any hope?" Then she said, "I am remarried to another man. He was a Catholic and now he has joined the Church and is presently the Elders Quorum president. Can we ever go to the temple where

I can be sealed to him?" This soul, for thirty-four years, every waking minute of her life, kept thinking of this dreadful transgression. I said, "I really don't know. Let me check with President Kimball (who at that time was the president of the Quorum of the Twelve)." So I wrote the letter, got a response back about two weeks later. I called her, and I said, "Can you meet me after work? I'd like to talk to you about this." So I met her after work at the stake office and when she came, she was pale and her eyes were bloodshot. She must have been down on her knees a dozen times during the day, saying, "Heavenly Father, whatever it is, I'll accept it, but please be merciful." I said, "Let me not keep this from you one second longer than I have to." And I picked up the letter and read, "Dear President Featherstone: You inquired about a woman who had committed an abortion 34 years ago. From the way you describe her—and I had told him about her, the kind of woman she was; there wasn't a more Christ-like woman in our stake: she baked bread and cookies for neighbors, and I never heard her gossip; she was the one that would get down on her hands and knees and scrub the Relief Society floors: I guess supposing she wasn't even worthy to do the dishes—it sounds like she has long since repented. You may tell her on behalf of the Church, she is forgiven." Well, when I said these words, it was like I had taken a 1000-pound burden off her shoulders. She just burst into tears and sobbed. And I said, "Let me read you the second paragraph. 'After a thorough and searching interview, you may issue this sweet sister a temple recommend.'" If I had been in the presence of the Savior that day, I wouldn't have felt any closer to Him than I did after I had that experience, because I believe that's what Jesus would have done had He been there.

In the 32nd chapter of Exodus, verse 32, is a verse that I think expresses what our attitude should be as we serve in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Moses comes down out of the mountain to find the children of Israel along with Aaron, worshipping the golden calf. You recall the terrible destruction that took place. Many of the wicked children of Israel were slain as the earth opened and swallowed them. Finally, those who had been spared were called to repentance by Moses, and in this verse Moses goes back before

the Lord and says, "Yet now, If thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee out of thy book which thou hast written." As I tell the brethren each Sunday morning, that is the way I pray. As I have interviewed hosts of members who have repented, when the interview ends, I sit down behind my desk and say, "Heavenly Father, if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee out of thy book which thou hast written. I don't want to be where they aren't." These are some of the most Christ-like people I know. Many of us have walked that hairline. Fortunately, we have been able to somehow, miraculously, to escape a major transgression. Others haven't gotten so close, but those who do slip, maybe just one step makes the difference, or one circumstance against which they did not have the integrity to stand, must experience repentance. I believe in "the miracle of forgiveness" with all my heart and soul. I don't think we need to have what some call a "hanging bishop." I believe that when the right thing to do is to excommunicate to save the soul, we do it. When the right thing is to disfellowship, we do it. When the right thing to do is to close it so it need not be opened, we do it. In many, many cases, that is the course of action we ought to take, we do it.

Well, God bless you. I am grateful to be here with you. I have been very frank, maybe more so than I should have been. I hope that you just sift these thoughts through your mental processes. They invited me to express my opinion and so I have given it on these things, but I want you to think very carefully about them. Now again, the Lord bless you in your assignments. You have an awesome responsibility. I believe He will hover as close to you as any workers in any profession on the face of the earth, because you are doing probably what the Savior spent his whole life doing, in just a little different way. You are healing souls. God bless you. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.



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## Keeping the Kingdom Clean

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Elder Hartman Rector, Jr.  
Of the Seventy  
1976

**I**t's a great honor, and privilege, to greet you this morning in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, because those who comprise your group, an association of Mormon counselors and psychotherapists have met in His name. The fact that you say you're a Mormon means that you represent the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord's programs are calculated to make the children of our Heavenly Father happy. You see, He's been given the responsibility to save all of the Father's children, every one. He's done everything that's godly possible to save his brothers and sisters and we are privileged to assist in the great work. There are basic programs in the Church, as you well know, primarily, four basic programs. There's priesthood genealogy work, there's priesthood missionary work, there's priesthood welfare work, and there's priesthood home teaching. All four of these basic programs fit together in a very cohesive manner.

You, by your selection of a profession, have decided that you want to help people to overcome their problems, their sins; and I presume there's nothing that could be more godly than to help a man overcome his sins. That's what the Lord Jesus Christ has done. In fact, he has paid the price of our sins, every one of them; and if we will accept what he has done and follow the path that he marked for us, then all things will work together for our good and

we will be the recipients of what is known as eternal life—eternal life meaning the power to procreate after your own kind eternally. That is a purely Mormon description of that term and no one else could really understand that. It has nothing to do with immortality. That comes as a free gift to everyone, but eternal life is the greatest gift of God. But it isn't a gift in the true sense of the word. It isn't a gift as resurrection is a gift. That comes to everyone. Whether you want it or not you're going to get it. There are going to be a lot of people resurrected that don't want to be resurrected. They're going to get it anyway. And those who are filthy will be filthy still. Those that are righteous will be righteous still. Resurrection comes to all.

But eternal life comes only to those who have prepared themselves to receive it. The Lord cannot give us gifts that we're not in condition to receive. Condition comes through obedience. It doesn't come any other way. If we would receive eternal life, we'll have to obey. We must learn obedience. Obedience is the first law of heaven. It's also the first law of this earth, and we must teach obedience. As a matter of fact, everything we do in the kingdom of God gets down to the business of teaching obedience to the children of our Heavenly Father because without it there is no exaltation. There won't be any disobedient spirits in the celestial kingdom. They wouldn't be happy there.

We face very difficult times. I presume there have been no more difficult times. Maybe back in Noah's time we were about the same because we've been told that in the day that the Lord comes again, in his second coming, it will be like unto the time of Noah when they were eating and drinking and giving in marriage until the flood came and took them all away. That's the same condition that we're going to face with his second coming.

Paul speaks of our day and he speaks specifically of the things that are going on today. I think I ought to give you Paul's statement on the subject. You'll find it in the third chapter of 2 Timothy. "This know that in the last days, perilous times shall come."—last days, perilous times we are there—"For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy without natural

affection,”—could there ever be a more perfect fulfillment to that statement—“trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent,”—it’s all around us—“fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: From such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women,”—what an interesting comment—“laden with sins, lead away with diverse lusts,”—I don’t want you to think that we think all the sisters are silly; we don’t. Some of the things that are going on: some of the problems that come to me relating to those who are trying to practice polygamy when the Lord has forbidden it—any woman that would get involved in this would be classified as silly—“Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. But they shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be manifest unto all men,” as there was also those who opposed Moses back in his time, “But thou has fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience,”—Paul’s talking about himself here—“persecutions, afflictions which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, but out of them all, the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” Now, that’s a promise to you. If you keep the commandments, you should expect persecution, because you’ll get it. “But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou has learned and has been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

We have here a statement of conditions as they exist today. They are all around us and you in your profession know what I’m talking about. But we also have the way out, the answer. He says that the scripture is the answer and it is. But we have to follow it, we have to live it, we have to make it the central part of our

counseling and of our teaching. When I was called as a member of the First Council, I'd never been a bishop, I'd never been a stake president, never been a mission president. I was a seventies president. All I knew was how to bring people into the Church. I'd never given any counsel to anybody. I came to Salt Lake and they showed me where my desk was and the instructions were, "Here's the handbook of instructions" They handed me the Church Handbook of Instruction Number 20, which you probably are familiar with. There's not enough information in there to take care of you for five minutes.

The next thing I knew, a stream of people who had the worst problems I've ever heard in my life began to file into my office. I really was naive. I didn't know that the kind of problems that we have in the Church existed. But, I've had a great experience. I've found that most people have two reasons for doing things, one that sounds good and the real one. If I could find out what the real problem was—and as you know that's not always easy—I had no problem at all with giving an answer. It came right out of the scriptures. If you know the scriptures, you've got the answer. They're there, and they work. They work every time and I think it's the only way that you can help people. You've got to help them out of the scriptures because they are given by inspiration of God and they are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Follow the scriptures and I guarantee you will succeed. You cannot succeed any other way, and if you get involved in the philosophies of men, mingled with scripture, you'll be in serious trouble. It will not work.

President Kimball is traveling the Church over today, holding what we call solemn assemblies. That's where we have the presiding priesthood in an area come together with President Kimball and the First Presidency. President Kimball is making it very plain that there is presently a horrendous surge of evil sweeping the world and the Church in particular. That's just what Paul said was going to happen. And so President Kimball is substantiating precisely what Paul has said. And then he proceeds to give instructions on specific problems, and every one of those instructions comes directly out of the scriptures.

I'd like to give you just a few items this morning to illustrate what I'm saying. We have 250 young men every week come into the missionary home here in Salt Lake. Of that 250, approximately 70 to 80 have to have an interview. They've been interviewed by their stake president, but they did not confess all of the things they needed to confess. Many times they have blatantly lied to their bishops and stake presidents. They receive a lecture when they come into the mission home that kind of lays it on the line to them and 70 or 80 or them out of every 250 decide that there are some things they better confess.

Now, perhaps all but maybe ten or fifteen of those didn't really need to be confessed. I mean, they've had bad thoughts, they've mouthed off to their parents, they haven't treated their brothers and sisters with kindness, this kind of thing. Of course, if they feel like they ought to confess it, then they ought to confess it. But they are not serious problems. But ten to fifteen of those confessions definitely should have been confessed and usually two or three of them have to go home because they have committed fornication after they have been set apart as missionaries or after they've been to the temple; and if those two conditions exist, then they must be sent back to their priesthood leaders to be handled. Now, these are the cream of the crop. This is the best that the Lord has. But this is a problem that we face today. So obviously bishops and stake presidents, we're really not getting down to cases in our interviews to the extent that we should be.

We've had some changes in emphasis in handling transgressors in the not too distant past. For years we lived by the 42nd section of the Doctrine and Covenants, verses 24–26, where the Lord says: "Thou shalt not commit adultery, and he that committeth adultery and repenteth not, shall be cast out." Cast out, means you'll be handled for your membership—either temporary or permanent casting out—that's either disfellowshipment or excommunication. "But he that has committed adultery and repents with all his heart and forsaketh it, and doeth it no more, thou shalt forgive, But if he doeth it again, he shall not be forgiven, but shall be cast out." That sounds like you get a second chance and you do.

We have lived by this for years. I am convinced that prophets of God don't have any new ideas. That may sound a little sacrilegious. But I think that the Lord, in preparing His prophet, gives the man the idea years before. He's had it so long that he's lived with it, he's prayed about it, he's fasted over it, he's worked on it, he's expounded it, he's been criticized because of it, but he's got it to where it's in the correct context, it is correct in its interpretation, and when the Lord wants that particular thing done in the Church, he puts that man in the position. What is he going to do? Just what he's been living with for years.

In my opinion President Kimball has had no new ideas on missionary work. I have seen him struggle with trying to get things done in missionary work in this Church that he knew desperately needed to be done, but could not do because he was not in position to do it. So when he becomes President of the Church what happens? Well, we embark on the greatest missionary effort that we have seen since Joseph Smith and we're going to hear it again today, I know we are. I know what he's going to say because he has said precisely the same thing five times to us, and when we stand in conference on Friday as we begin this new conference of the Church, I know precisely what he's going to say again. I've got it right here. He's said it five times previously and he's going to say it again. You'll find it right here, recorded in the first talk that he gave, "God will not be mocked." And here he gives us specific commandments. That's a little more plain than the scriptures. The Lord has already said it. I find that living prophets never say anything the Lord hasn't already said. They don't get out on a limb by themselves. Sometimes the elders of Israel do, but prophets don't. They don't do it, and you shouldn't either. You ought to be sure that what you say to the people is couched in scripture, that it's found in the scriptures, that it is the word of the Lord, because you can't improve on that.

So when President Lee became president of the church, he gave us a new interpretation of the scripture I just quoted from the forty-second section of the Doctrine and Covenants. He said, "Brethren, that scripture does not apply to people who make covenants across the altar of the temple. When you have made a

covenant at the altar of the temple and you violate that covenant and the Lord tells you that violation of this covenant will bring upon you the judgment of God for God will not be mocked, then we've got to keep the Lord from being mocked and that means we're going to have to handle transgressors"—that's exactly what it means.

I believe there have been more courts held in the last four years than were held in the forty years previous. That's an estimate on my part, but I'm pretty sure it's true. In the past we have been "winking" at transgressors. So we have to handle transgressors. We don't structure what the verdict is, but we say the court should be held.

What happens if you don't handle a transgressor? We have perfect evidence of what happens. Here's a statement by John Taylor which makes it very plain: "Furthermore, I've heard of some bishops who had been seeking to cover up the iniquities of men. I tell them, in the name of God, they'll have to bear them themselves and meet that judgment, and I tell you that any man who tampers with iniquity, he'll have to bear that iniquity, and if any of you want to partake of the sins of men or uphold them, you'll have to bear them. Do you hear it, you bishops, you presidents, God will require it at your hands. You are not placed in the position to tamper with the principles of righteousness nor to cover up the infamies and corruptions of men." That says that a judge in Israel who fails to act when there is clear indication to do so will have to answer for that sin himself. Most of us have enough sins of our own. We don't need anybody else's to answer for. But that's what will happen unless you do act. That's how serious the Lord is about this.

What happens in the kingdom if we don't act? George Q. Cannon, then a member of the First Presidency of the Church, made this very pointed statement on the law of chastity: "The spirit of God would undoubtedly be so grieved that it would forsake not only those who are guilty of these acts, but it would withdraw itself from those who would suffer them to be done in our midst unchecked and unrebuked. And from the President of the Church down throughout the entire ranks of the priesthood there would be

a loss of the Spirit of God, a withdrawal of his gifts and blessings and his power because of their not taking the proper measures to check and expose their iniquities.”

Now, I think that’s about as plain as it can be said: If we fail to handle the transgressor in the Kingdom of God, we let the Church fill up with fornicators and adulterers, the Lord will disown it. He’s done it five times previous to this dispensation. We’ve had six dispensations of the gospel. That’s a dispensing to the earth of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ with authority to administer the ordinances. Five times it was lost. Why? Because of iniquity! Inside the Church, or outside? Inside! There’s always been iniquity outside of the Church. That hasn’t changed. I don’t think it will ever change. That’s the reason we call people out of the world into the marvelous light of Christ, and it’s got to change their lives; and if it doesn’t happen, then they don’t become saints.

Paul and his brethren could not get together to handle transgressors. They tried. I don’t know how long it took Paul to get from his hometown of Tarsus to Jerusalem, headquarters of the Church at that time. I guess he went home sometimes. It probably took him weeks. It could have taken months. He had to walk all the way. Sister Rector and I made that trip not long ago in forty minutes. That’s how long it took in a DC-8 Jet. We flew from Tel Aviv to Adana, Turkey. Adana is twenty miles down the road from Tarsus, and Tel Aviv is about a forty minute bus ride out of Jerusalem. That’s all it took. You see, for the first time in history of the world, we have transportation and communication facilities sufficient to allow us to keep the kingdom clean. And we must keep it clean. It’s what his letters are all about. He was trying to call people to repentance by writing letters. Did you ever try that? I tried that one time. It didn’t work. I was a mission president. I wrote this man a letter, called him to repentance. It was just as though he hadn’t gotten it. You’ve got to have a face-to-face confrontation. You’ve got to sit across the desk facing the man or the woman, or the young man or the young woman, it’s all the same. Many times you know much more by what you feel than what they say, anyway. I have sat for hours—I mean literally hours—to get the kind of confession that I knew had to come



before a man can be helped. You've got to get it broken right down to the bedrock. You've got to get it all out or you cannot help people.

The Prophet Joseph said one time, "I told the brethren that a man should confess all of his sins and not hold back a part." Partial confessions will never clear you with the Lord. You've got to lay it all out, every bit. "By this you may know if a man repenteth of his sins. Behold, he will confess them and forsake them." That's a vital part of repentance.

And so, we're not going to lose the kingdom today because we're going to handle transgressors. Daniel saw our day. It's very plain that he did. He was looking at our time: "And in these days," he said. "the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break into pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as thou sawest the stone that was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it break into pieces, the iron, the brass, the clay and the silver and the gold, the great God hath made known unto the king what shall come to pass hereafter and the dream is certain and the interpretation thereof is sure." Nebuchadnezzar had seen our day. Daniel explained it to him. He said in the last days the Lord God is going to set up a kingdom that will never again be thrown down and will not be left to other people. No, we're going to do it. We're going to handle it, because we're going to handle transgressors. We have to. We have no option. Is there no other way? No, I'm afraid there's no other way.

This is not all, of course. The Lord has given some specific interpretations today that we need to be aware of. Here's a statement by President McKay at the April 4, 1969 conference. He said, "A man who has entered the sacred covenants in the House of the Lord to remain true to the marriage vow is a traitor to that covenant if he separates himself from his wife and family just because he has permitted himself to become infatuated with a pretty face and a comely form of some young girl who has flattered him with a smile. Even though a loose interpretation of the law of the land would grant such a man a bill of divorcement, I think he

is unworthy of a recommend to consummate his second marriage in the temple." Do you hear what that's saying? I've had young men come to me—in fact I've had six—I keep track of these because they're kind of special cases—and tell me they want to divorce their wives. Why?

One young man came in. He'd been married for fifteen years and wanted to divorce his wife. Why did he want to divorce his wife? "Oh, she's sloppy," he said. "She doesn't keep herself nice. The house is a mess." "Has she just changed, did this just start?" I asked. "Oh, she's always been this way," I said, "Was she this way before you married her?" "Yeah, she was this way before we were married." "What did you marry her for?" "Because I thought she'd be a good mother for my children." "Is she a good mother?" "Oh yeah," he said, "she's a good mother." I said, "You got just what you asked for, so what are you complaining about?" Well, he wanted to divorce his wife, that's what he wanted to do. She had worked and put him through law school. She had literally dressed him. They had a little girl—a lovely little girl. She was expecting a new baby and he wanted to divorce his wife. "Has she been unfaithful to you?" "No." "Well, then you've got to have a reason. Let's find out what the reason is." And it took a while. We finally found out that he'd fallen in love with his secretary. He didn't have any right to fall in love with his secretary. I said, "Just what right do you have to fall in love with your secretary? You have no right to do that."

You see, when a man gets in the 40-50 year age category, he's in a very, very dangerous set of circumstances. Someone said, "If you're not handsome at twenty, strong at thirty, rich at forty, or wise at fifty, you'll never be handsome, strong, rich, or wise." There are certain ages that seem to fit these categories. You see, when a man gets to be forty to fifty years of age, if he is not financially sound, he's probably not going to do too well in this life. Many of our young professional men are pretty well fixed by the time they get to forty or forty-five and by the very nature of their work they spend more time with their secretary than they do with their wife and maybe their four or five children. Now, she doesn't look like she did when she was twenty years old. Age makes a

change in people. She's probably more beautiful, if he could see it. On the other hand, the man looks good to the secretary: in fact, he looks awfully good to her and she wants him and that's very flattering when a man gets to this age category to have a young woman that wants him. But if you understand what the Lord has said, you're not going to have that young lady. Not and be sealed in the temple, you're not, That's not going to happen. And if you get involved this way, you can forget eternal life. That's really what we're saying. If you want to give up eternal life, you go ahead and divorce your wife and take this young lady. Now, of course, if there are transgressions involved on the part of the wife, it's a different matter. It's not only just young men, but young women, too. President David O. McKay said, "Any woman who will break up her home because of some selfish desire or who's been untrue to her husband is also untrue to the covenants she's made in the House of the Lord."

And so the President of the Church has given us a plain statement of this. You'll find it right in the new Handbook of Instructions. If a person who has been sealed to his spouse commits adultery which is the cause of the divorce, that person cannot be sealed to the one with whom the adultery occurred.

Is there no exception to this? Well, all exceptions would have to be approved by the President of the Church. A modification to the handbook of instructions states if a person has been sealed to the spouse and commits adultery which is the cause of the divorce or which results in the breaking up of the home or homes, such person cannot be sealed to the one with whom the adultery occurred. If any exception is made to this rule, it must be authorized by the First Presidency of the Church.

President Kimball has said: "Never will they be sealed, never." Not as far as he's concerned, they won't be. Now, we know that this has been violated in the past, but it isn't violated today. Therefore, if you want to give up eternal life, you just get involved in this, because I'll tell you, this is serious.

Now, that sounds like we're getting rather strict, doesn't it? As a matter of fact, we are. The Lord is very, very strict, and if you

want to know how he really feels, this is the latest scripture. You'll find it in the *Ensign* magazine. It appears that this is what the Lord is going to judge us by today, through a living prophet of God.

President Lee said that pretty plainly and I think we ought to be aware of it. It says: "Through these generations the message from our Father has been safeguarded, carefully protected, and mark you likewise that in this day the scriptures are purest at their source. Just as the waters were purest at the mountain source, the purest word of God and the least apt to be polluted is that which comes from the lips of a living prophet who is set up to guide Israel in our own day and time. You will get direction and guidance from a prophet of God today." That is scripture. It is the scripture that is the most appropriate and applicable to you and to me and to those people that you're counseling. I don't think it makes any difference whatsoever whether the person you're counseling is a member of the Church, but whether or not these principles are true. As you follow, you'll be blessed.

Now, we haven't said everything we can say on the subject, that's for sure. Abortion is abroad in the land and it is a horrendously grievous sin to the Lord. You can have an abortion for any reason up to the twentieth week of pregnancy in California, twenty-six weeks in Hawaii. That's five months in California, six-and-a-half months in Hawaii. That means you are literally destroying the body of the child. The Lord has been very specific on this subject. If you'd like to know how the Lord feels about it, President Lee's statement, I think, is just as pointed as it can be. He said, "May we say here that we in the Church are unalterably opposed to abortion. The only exception would be in cases where the doctors find it necessary to perform an abortion to save the life of the mother. We reaffirm that the first purpose of marriage is to bring children into the world and they ought to be welcome." We as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints must take a stand against the horrendous tidal wave of evil that is sweeping over this earth and it is in the Church too. And we must handle transgressors. We've got to get people in condition so the Lord can bless them. You see, if a man violates his covenants—those we have been talking about here—he's no longer an

heir to the celestial kingdom. We don't do him any favor to leave him in the Church if he can't get the ultimate reward for his membership in the Church. The best thing we can do for him would be to "handle" him. Get him outside the Church where he can repent. And you can repent of anything, except murder wherein you shed innocent blood, or the sin against the Holy Ghost—the Lord will not let us repent of that. Anything else, we can repent of. Of course, it takes time, you bet it does. Sin takes time, repentance takes time. But you can repent of it so completely that you could come back in the Church and be rebaptized—for what?—for the remission of sins, and then when you receive a restoration of your blessings, you've become an heir to the celestial kingdom again.

The Church exists strictly to get people in condition so the Lord can bless them. The Lord wants to bless his children, but they must be in condition to receive the blessings. You are specifically devoting your life to this great task. It's a noble cause to help people repent so they can get themselves in condition to receive the Lord's blessings,

I pray that you might be tremendously successful in what you set forth to do and that you will take a stand on the side of the Lord in these issues, because there are many in your profession who know not God and those who know not God cannot please him. You've got to have faith in Him if you're going to please Him, so said Paul, and I believe that. May you exercise your faith and may you be successful, and may you be happy in what you do. It's not enough just to be good. You have to be good for "something." You see, it's not enough just to pay your tithing. You've got to feel good about it. It's important that you help people, that you feel good about it, that they feel good about it, then I know the Lord will feel good about it too. If the Lord feels good about it, you'll know it.

I bear witness that this is the Church and Kingdom of God on earth, that we're led by a living prophet of God today and the decisions made in the Kingdom of God today are those that the Lord wants made, for this Prophet acts under the direction of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, whose Church it really is and who

has given all of the scripture himself for the good of his brothers and sisters all. May we follow him, I pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

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## Our Greatest Challenge: Honesty

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Elder Marvin J. Ashton  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
October 1977

I'm grateful to be with you tonight and to share in this worthy seminar. And I know that I'm being recorded and it's a little different for me than you have on the back of your brochure that "an independent professional organization which is not sponsored by, nor does it speak for the Church or its leaders." I wanted to put you on notice that I do not have that same freedom. I'm speaking for the Church, and I'm speaking for the leaders.

I commend you for this worthy program you have put together for today. I had wished that I had been able to attend the discussions. As I read the topics that are going to be presented tomorrow, I'm envious that you will be here and some of us will be trying to instruct the Regional Representatives from around the world. I want it to go on record as saying that I endorse your worthy reason for existence. I commend you for uniting in a cause that's worthy and a cause that's just, and uplifting as you associate with each other in a common bond of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I hope that your association will not only endure, but fulfill the dreams and hopes that you have for it.

I've tried to think over the last number of weeks things that are in keeping with the current issues facing Mormon counselors and psychotherapists. Just for a few moments tonight I thought that I would share with you what I think is the greatest challenge that

you and I have as we sit here tonight concerned with the profession that we are engaged in. However, I want to digress just long enough to say that we used to have a Welfare Program in the Church. It's been going now for forty years—a great welfare program concerned with the food and clothing needs of the membership of the Church. I hope that you have been impressed the last number of months that the name of the Welfare Program has been changed, and now we talk about Welfare Services which includes, if you please, the supplies and the skills for social and emotional difficulties, as much as it does for food, clothing, and shelter. And this is a great breakthrough for people in your profession. It wasn't too long ago that if someone had an emotional problem in the Church, we felt sorry for them or wondered about them, and then sent them on their way with nothing more tangible than "why don't you wake up or wise up, or get with it." Emotional problems are as real as physical problems and medical problems, and no one knows that more than I do. I'm glad for that experience, and that conviction, and that knowledge. So I just wanted to say in passing that we do not have a Welfare Program in the Church today—we have Welfare Services that include treatment and commodities for the total person. And I'm happy to be a member of the Church, and one of the leaders in the Church that is so concerned about the total individual.

Now, back to the topic—I suppose that the greatest challenge that we have is to teach clients, friends, and families honesty. I think that's the greatest need that we have is to teach honesty—total honesty, and this can best be taught by individuals who are committed to the lofty principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So first, I'd like to say a few words about honesty in our personal lives. The greatest resource, the greatest tool, the greatest weapon that you have in your power to thwart evil and conduct the truth is living an honest life, totally and completely—in your image, in your conduct, and in your daily example. What a disappointment it is to be counseled by someone who is unreal, untrue, and unfaithful.

Just the other day I was visiting with Warden Smith of the Utah State Prison, and he said: "One of the things we have to be



constantly reminded of is the fact that we have rules here and then honestly enforcing them.” And then he said: “If we don’t honestly enforce the regulations that are established all hell breaks loose.” In prison or outside of prison, honesty is important even for people who do not believe in it. As you go forward as Latter-day Saints first, and as professional counselors and psychotherapists second, the greatest thing you can do is to be honest in your personal lives and not appear to be something that you are not.

How can you know if you’re accomplishing this? What are the guidelines? I love this scripture in the Doctrine and Covenants 124:15. I like to read what you have to be and what you have to do to have the Lord love you: “And again, verily I say unto you, blessed is my servant Hyrum Smith, for I the Lord love him because of the integrity of his heart, and because he loveth that which is right before me, saith the Lord.” Each time I read that, I’m more impressed with the fact that the Lord loves him because “he loveth that which is right before me.” Not that which is right before his client, or his supervisors, or his associates, but those things that are right before the Lord. What a guideline this should be for all of us.

Number two—honesty in responding and reporting. Are you honest in your counseling? Are you honest with your associates? You might say, If I’ve told my clients honestly and directly what they should hear, it would kill them. And I will say to you, don’t tell them honest things that would kill them. Tell them honest things that will cure them. We have that choice, and we have that training.

Just two examples that honesty in reporting and responding is important. A boy 14 years of age. He said he went into a grove of trees to pray. And they said: “What happened, Joe?” He was just good old Joe in those days, not Joseph Smith, the Prophet. He was just a 14-year old boy. The reason Joseph Smith’s story, the reason his vision is true—one of the reasons in my mind—is because he honestly reported what had happened. Can you imagine anything as shocking as to come out of a grove and say: “I saw God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, personages.” That takes honesty to report such a “blasphemous” thing—that God is separate. Jesus

Christ is separate. They appeared to me, and that even though it costs me my life I'm going to be honest in reporting, because that is what I saw. I heard them. They spoke to me. And as the month went on and as things got a little more difficult, some of his friends came to him and said: "Joe, old buddy, you'd better give it up or it's going to cost you your life. They're moving in on you." And in total honesty, he said: "I don't care if they take my life. I've seen God and I know that I've seen God and His Son Jesus Christ, and though they take my life, I will never deny it." He put honesty in reporting ahead of life. I wish we could have a little bit of that.

I love President Kimball. I had the opportunity of spending seven hours with him today, and his counselors and the other eleven members of the Twelve who are all here for conference. President Kimball is honest. The other day after President Kimball had been ill because of an infection in his ear, he was out of the hospital on Thursday and was visiting with his counselors, and President Tanner said to him: "I don't think you'd better go to Canada Saturday. You're just out of the hospital. Why don't you listen to us? Sometimes it seems that you don't listen to us when we try to tell you what to do." President Kimball turned to him and said: "President Tanner and President Romney, I want you to know that I hear you. What time does the plane leave for Canada?" Totally and completely honest with his associates, with himself, and with his Heavenly Father.

The third item in honesty tonight that I just want to touch upon is honesty in interviewing, honesty in listening. I have a feeling that one of the main reasons that Joseph Smith's prayer was answered is because he said: "God, wherever you are, whoever you are, I have a problem. I don't know which church to join." And he honestly said: "Could you help me." It was the first time he had ever prayed. "I'm confused. I need answers." Honesty in interviewing, honesty in his pleas, honesty in the yearnings of his heart. Why was he prompted to go to a grove of trees? I suppose the only reason that he went there was because it was private, and how important that is in our interviewing and our listening to set the stage, so that we can listen and we can question. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally,

and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him” (James 1:5). I challenge you tonight that if you lack wisdom in your daily life and in your personal lives and in your professional lives that you ask God.

Honesty in interviewing—let me just give you an example of what I think is dishonesty in interviewing. Do we have any bishops here tonight? May I see your hands? Thank you. Do we have some chaplains here? Could I see your hands? Great. How many members of Stake Presidencies do we have here? Thank you. Quite a number. This is what I consider to be dishonest interviewing. Do you keep the Word of Wisdom? As somebody sits across the table and goes like this (nods yes). Do you sustain the General Authorities? (nods yes). Do you love your wife? (nods yes) Are you morally clean? (nods yes). So we conduct an interview, and all someone has to do is sit across the side of the table and nod six or seven times. Some people could say, “Well Elder Ashton, that’s what it says on the interview sheet.” Well of course we want those questions covered, but how much better for a counselor, for a bishop, for a stake presidency member, or for one of you to say: “What does it mean to you to pay a full tithing?” And then listen. You might learn. What does it mean to you to be morally clean? What does it mean to you to sustain the authorities of the Church? And then take the time to listen. I’m doing nothing more than recommending open-ended questions that can’t be answered with a nod or a yes or no. I hope I’m not misunderstood. When we interview we should give people an opportunity to honestly respond to honest questions.

Number four, honesty in counseling. We touched upon that. Help others in their goal setting. Give honest encouragement, honest reinforcement, and I say to you tonight: Are you courageous enough to counsel honestly? Share and recommend amounts and portions that are reasonable and possible.

I had the opportunity during the late days in July to go to Sacrament meeting. This is a rarity because every weekend we go to a stake conference. The only exceptions are a few weeks in July and a few weeks in December. After I attended this Sacrament

meeting, I reported to some of my associates what had happened there.

After I reported the happenings, some of my associates said: "Why don't you write that up so that we can use it in one of the Church magazines." And so I wrote it up. I entitled the report: "After Six Years." It has to do with this point about honesty and counseling. I sat in the meeting with Sister Ashton and a member of the bishopric stood up and he introduced me in this peculiar and lengthy way. "Brothers and sisters, Elder Ashton is going to be disappointed in what I say now, because once I heard him say at the Utah State Prison to a group of prisoners, 'when you're released and go back into society, don't brag about being an ex-convict. Just go on from where you are.'" He paused and he then said:

You people in the congregation tonight don't know it, but I'm an ex-convict from the Utah State Prison. About six years ago when I first met Elder Ashton, he was in charge of the program at the prison. After I became better acquainted with Elder Ashton on the second visit, I told him I was a pretty fair runner. I said to him, I wonder if you can arrange to get me out of prison so that I can run in the competition for the 24th of July Twenty-Five Mile Deseret News Marathon Race. Elder Ashton said to me, "I'll see what I can do." So Elder Ashton went to the warden and said, "Would you let XYZ out of prison?" (I have to say XYZ, because I'm going to say a little bit about confidences in a minute.) Elder Ashton told me later that the warden said that you can have him out of prison for the marathon if you will guarantee that he won't run away. Elder Ashton took the responsibility for that. I was out of prison for a day, and I went up to the top of Emigration Canyon and started the race with three or four hundred others. I wanted to run but I wasn't in too good of shape because the only place I had to train was on free time running around the prison yard. But after I'd run about half the distance my legs were aching, my body was sore, there were blisters all over the soles of my feet, and I just felt that I couldn't go on any longer. I felt like I was entitled to quit. All of a sudden a thought came to my mind, "You can't let Elder Ashton down, can you? You'd better keep going." And with that impression, I ran the rest of the way and I made it to Liberty Park.

After the race was over, Elder Ashton told me that he was proud of me. He was happy to have me for a friend. For one of the few times of my life I want you to know that I was proud of myself, too. It's the first thing I'd ever done in my life that I started and finished. I went back to the prison that day and about six months later, I was released from

the prison. Two or three months after that I found a lovely young lady and about eight months later we went to the Temple with Elder Ashton and he sealed my wife and me for time and all eternity in the temple. Now I'm a member of your bishopric.

And his chin quivered as he said, "Now Elder Ashton will speak with you."

I just share that with you to let you know that if you're going to be honest with people in counseling, you have to become part of their lives. I suppose the bridge, the handle upon which this man and I could grasp and move forward together was the fact that both he and I like to run, and from that we've made a good friendship.

Number five. Honesty in keeping confidences! I wish that you could teach us as members of the Church the importance of keeping confidences and trust. Teach us this great value. Set the example for us. Help us to realize that loose words or loose comments are character assassination tools. Oh, that we could redeem those people who have been hurt because some people haven't had the judgment and the wisdom to maintain a confidence. Trust with ourselves, trust with our members, trust with our wives and our husbands and our children. It certainly is greater to be trusted than to be loved. It's a great compliment to be trusted, but what a responsibility.

Finally, confidence in facing current issues. Be honest enough to be up to date. Avoid the tendency and convenience of working with yesterday. I don't know how often it crossed your mind, but we have a gentleman 82 years of age, president of the greatest organization in the world, and Eldon Tanner, 79 years of age. A week ago Marion G. Romney was 80. What's that—about an 81-year average for a presidency? Eighty-one? Why do I mention this? They are successful because they are honest in facing current issues. They are up to date. Spencer W. Kimball isn't living in 1943. He tells us to lengthen and quicken our stride and every time we do he gets that much further ahead of us. I think it's a great virtue to face current issues in an honest way. Keep up to date with truth. Keep up to date with God. Honesty with self makes all of this possible.

I leave you my blessings, I bear you my witness that Jesus is the Christ, and the conference that we are going to hold Saturday and Sunday is not anything but a conference of The Church of Jesus Christ! It's His Church. It's His kingdom. That's a reality. It's not the church of Spencer W. Kimball, or David O. McKay. It's the Church of Jesus Christ. I was pleased to hear that Brother Bergin this morning had for his theme, "We Have The Truth." Let's not be ashamed or hesitant in sharing that. With all honesty of my heart and soul I bear special witness to you that Jesus is the Christ and that He lives, that He's aware of His kingdom, that He wants us to be honest with ourselves and honest with our associates and honest with Him.

These thoughts I leave you humbly and in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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## “Things As They Really Are. . . ”

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Elder Neal A. Maxwell  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
1979

**B**rothers and sisters, my first, and perhaps my most important, statement to you tonight is one of appreciation. I am very conscious that I speak to a group of individuals who have done much to blend the truths of the gospel with their professional training, so that correct concepts and proper principles are employed in your professional efforts. Next, I want to thank you for enduring the travail that is often yours as you attempt to help others to better their lives whether in improved decision making concerning career choices, in saving or enriching a marriage or, in some cases, in moving people away from the edge of self-destruction. I salute you for those contributions and want you to know that you have my personal gratitude as you “succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees.” (D&C 81:5.)

Because you are who you are and because of your loyalty to the Kingdom, it is possible to talk to you about a few basic principles that bear upon your discipline as, indeed, upon each of our lives.

I need not inform you that one of the vital things which a healthy person does is to recognize reality and to cope with it. Unfortunately, in recent years the word “reality” has been appropriated in large measure by disbelievers. Further, “reality” has come to mean only the “here and now” things, when actually it includes ultimate as well as proximate reality. Since the well-being of any

human turns upon his or her understanding of, and acceptance of, and adjustment to reality, we as Latter-day Saints must recognize, more than we sometimes do, that we are in possession of some overwhelmingly important truths about ultimate reality.

I have taken as my text a statement by the poet-prophet, Jacob, in which he speaks of how the Spirit teaches us the truth of “things as they really are, and of things as they really will be” (Jacob 4: 13). So far as I know, this declaration is the only time in all of scripture where the adverb “really” is used: and herein it is used twice within one sentence for exceptional emphasis by Jacob.

In 33 A.D. when Pilate asked Jesus, “What is truth?” no answer was given. But an answer was given in 1833 A.D. when the Savior told the Prophet Joseph Smith, “And truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come” (Doctrine and Covenants 93: 24). That is the same consistent, basic message as in the text for this evening from Jacob about the reality of “things as they really are, and things as they really will be.” It is the same basic message given to us by Paul who noted that the Spirit of God searcheth “the deep things of God” (1 Corinthians 2: 10). The “deep things of God” give us deep and spanning knowledge which is emancipating and makes us intellectually free. Without the perspectives of the gospel, the universe becomes a prison or an unfathomable maze, causing some to act out through hedonism and others to sink into despair.

No therapy or counsel will be lastingly successful which does not turn upon the truth or which does not recognize reality and does not prepare people to deal with the implications of reality. It is vital for us all to recognize the existence of the central realities—the reality of the living God and His Son, Jesus Christ. No wonder George MacDonald said that while men are “always struggling to make our home in the world, we have not yet succeeded. We are not at home in it, because we are not at home with the Lord of the house, the father of the family, not one with our elder brother, who is his right hand” (*George MacDonald Anthology*).



We must also accept the supporting realities such as the living prophets and the living Church, and the living scriptures.

Likewise, so far as human behavior is concerned, it becomes exceedingly important for us to take account of the reality of the resurrection and the judgment, for these two realities are among the things that “really will be” in a coming day of unavoidable accountability for all mankind.

When we can read and accept the scriptures about that judgment day, then we have taken a major step forward in understanding the nature of this life. Alma said of the impending drama facing the unrepentant wicked:

For our words will condemn us; we shall not be found spotless; and our thoughts will also condemn us; and in this awful state we shall not dare to look up to our God: and we would fain be glad if we could command the rocks and the mountains to fall upon us to hide us from his presence.

But this cannot be; we must come forth and stand before him in his glory, and in his power, and in his might, majesty, and dominion, and acknowledge to our everlasting shame that all his judgments are just; that he is just in all his works, and that he is merciful unto the children of men, and that he has all power to save every man that believeth on his name and bringeth forth fruit meet for repentance (Alma 12: 14, 15).

By way of contrast, Enos wrote of how the righteous would stand before God and “see God’s face with pleasure.” (Enos 27.)

To nonbelievers, of course, the basic truths about reality are disregarded; some are, in fact, contemptuous of such ultimate realities. But these realities will not go away simply because we refuse to recognize them.

To appreciate even in part how incredibly important these absolute truths are, all one needs to do is to look at the personal and societal consequences of disbelieving in divine, unchanging standards, and, therefore, of a society which does not live by such standards. How can a society set serious priorities if there are no basic standards to guide by? Are we to make our calculations using only the arithmetic of appetite?

A society not based upon key values like loving our neighbor will inevitably subsidize selfishness; it will also place a premium

upon an apostate form of individualism at the expense of community. If we do not see ourselves as more than temporary, biological brothers, our behavior changes. When we repudiate our traditional relationships with God, it is so much easier to repudiate our relationships with man, to repudiate debt and relatives.

If self-interest were the final determinant, why should we be inconvenienced by the needs of others? If there were no God and we were merely mortal transients, then what is wrong with governments pushing us around? Indeed, what is really wrong about anything at all? Remember Korihor's culture in which "whatsoever a man did was no crime?" (Alma 30: 17).

Once society loses its capacity to declare that some things are wrong *per se*, then it finds itself forever building temporary defenses, revising rationales, drawing new lines—but forever falling back and losing its nerve. A society which permits anything will eventually lose everything! Liberated lemmings who continue the march to the sea may proudly think what they like, but soon the watery grave will envelop them.

Take away a consciousness of eternity and see how differently time is spent. Take away an acknowledgment of divine design in the structure of life and then watch the mindless scurrying to redesign human systems to make life pain-free and pleasure-filled. Take away regard for the divinity in one's neighbor, and watch the drop in our regard for his property. Take away basic moral standards and observe how quickly tolerance changes into permissiveness. Take away the sacred sense of belonging to a family or community, and observe how quickly citizens cease to care for big cities.

Our awareness of "things as they really are" must bear in upon proximate things like lifestyle. Take, for instance, the truth given to us by the Savior which says to us all—quite simply and straightforwardly—"he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 10: 39). Personal development through unselfish service to others *for Christ's cause*—not just any cause—is a fundamental orientation to life; it sends us, as believers, in an entirely opposite

course from the paths taken by those for whom self-fulfillment is basically self-indulgence.

Therefore, when you and I counsel or teach people that they must reach outward and be interested in others, as well as in themselves, we should be encouraged in such efforts by knowing that this approach is grounded in the absolute truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ! Such an approach is not just another form of transitory therapy. We as Latter-day Saints, more than others, should be able to understand the terrible implications of the growing selfishness in the world and what it costs the individual as well as society.

Unselfishness, however, creates in us attitudinal space and frees our time and talent for noticing the needs of others. It even permits us to develop a proper sense of humor. President Kimball, for instance, is so unselfish and so unconcerned with his own needs that his quick mind sees mirth and incongruity in situations which a selfish person would not even see because of the latter's intense concern with himself. We see so much more when we look outward. G. K. Chesterton observed:

How much larger your life would be if your self could become smaller in it; if you could really look at other men with common curiosity and pleasure. . . . You would begin to be interested in them, because they were not interested in you. You would break out of this tiny and tawdry theatre in which your own little plot is always being played, and you would find yourselves under a freer sky, in a street full of splendid strangers (*Orthodoxy*).

Unselfishness is closely tied to humility. It frees us and emancipates us in so many ways. For instance, in group situations the unselfish person is not caught up in conversational ping-pong and point-making but is tilted toward genuine listening.

If we could but get it through our heads and our hearts that God loves us perfectly, then we would have ultimate security and recognition and could ride out the proximate snubs and the mortal slights. Mortal peck orders are so transitory anyway—like the place among peers derived from the numbered plastic cards which determine when we will be waited upon in a store. If the person with the Number 1 card in the store assumed he had everlasting

preeminence over his peers even when he left that store, we would see him as vain and foolish! Think for a moment back to some episode in your life such as in elementary school days when someone crowded in ahead of you or stole some recognition that belonged to you. My, how maturity can squeeze such things into insignificance.

The unselfish person emerges as a relaxed, warm, open, secure individual who will go on contributing and serving with or without recognition. Indeed, the individual who seriously strives to keep the first and second great commandments will find the other commandments no great struggle. Sydney Harris, in contrasting winners and losers, noted a certain generosity of spirit: "A winner tries to judge his own acts by their consequences, and other people's acts by their intentions; a loser gives himself all the best of it by judging his own acts by their intentions, and the acts of others by their consequences."

Unselfishness makes room in our minds and hearts for appreciation of God, of life, of others, of nature. Unselfishness makes it possible for us, using Alma's phrase, "to give place" in our lives, so that we can experiment with the goodness in applying the principles of the gospel. Unselfishness is the only form of yielding which is also gaining. It is the only surrender which is also a victory. Because genuine unselfishness is so atypical, it will be inevitably misunderstood by some. Unselfishness then must be a tough virtue, or it will be abandoned because of the shame of the world. Only when we understand "things as they really are" will we become convinced that *me* is not the center of the universes; the gospel is a gospel of *we*.

In this celebration of selfishness, sex has become the secular religion. The secular religion uses the word *love* but not in a way that has anything to do with the first and second commandments or the other eight. Selfishness shouts, "Forget your parents if they slow down your pleasure-taking!" "Covet another's marriage partner and take that person if you can!" "Use the Sabbath Day for pleasure—besides you have worked hard and you deserve a little-relaxation!"

Selfishness is really self-destruction in slow motion; it is like taking a horse, lathered from a long ride, and letting him drink all the ice-cold water he wants—just because he wants to. Selfishness replaces empathy with self-pity; it is like complaining of one's sore finger while calling on someone who is dying of leukemia.

Each spasm of selfishness narrows one's universe that much more. Selfishness causes us to settle for so much less than that which we are capable of as it relentlessly shrinks our supply of self-esteem. C. S. Lewis once wrote:

We are halfhearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in the slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by an offer of a holiday at the sea. . . we are too easily pleased (*A Mind Awake*).

Selfishness, by shutting down our awareness of others, makes us more and more alone. As we are thrown back upon ourselves, there is the terror which comes with this isolation. In this, the solitary confinement of the soul, sensations are desperately sought for in order to reassure one that he is still alive and that he is a distinguishable part of the universe. The calisthenics of Christian service, however, are such that we not only increase our capacity but we feel better. It is like the sick Prophet Joseph Smith rising from his sickbed to go to bless others on a riverbank. He both healed and was healed.

Someone said that the only true slavery is service without love. True, but duty will often precede delight as we develop. As we practice our love, we increase our reach, finally touching those with whom we would not have previously bothered. Deep down, for instance, inside the grumpy and grumbler who are encrusted with selfishness is bruised love trying to come out. Buried inside the hypocrite are redeeming qualities which need recognition and encouragement. But those who have become hardened, tight knots of self-concern have to be reached and helped by unselfish souls who fortunately have not allowed themselves to be preoccupied with themselves. Thus the disciple must be different in order to make a difference in himself and in the lives of others. It is so vital that we let the light of the gospel shine through us. In one of His

marvelous prayers, Jesus said of Himself while speaking of his disciples, “Father, for their sakes do I sanctify myself” (John 17:19).

Only when we understand the reality of who we are and why we are here will we sense both our possibilities and our duties. Disciples especially must see others not only for what they now are but for what they have the power to become. When we take the first step in serving others without waiting for them to make the first move, we not only emancipate ourselves but others. It is all very much like a freed prisoner first unlocking the cells of others.

For me, at least, the Latter-day Saint psychiatrist, psychologist, and counselor is to play (as we all must do in different ways) a contributing role in helping others do that which Jesus said all of us should seek to do *first*. In Matthew 6:33 we read, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” In the inspired translation of the Bible, the Prophet Joseph Smith gave us some significant additions to that scripture. “*Wherefore, seek not the things of this world: but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you*” (Matthew 6:38). Notice that we are, brothers and sisters, to *seek not* the things of this world but to build up the kingdom of God and to establish His righteousness.

To do these things first is a challenge in a wayward world—even when we know what we do about the ultimate realities of “things as they really are and of things as they really will be.” Without the precious perspective of the gospel to follow, that taxing admonition of the Lord’s is exceedingly difficult. The deep problems individuals have can only be solved by learning about “the deep things of God,” by confronting the reality of “things as they really are and things as they really will be.” Hard though this process may be, painful though it may be, it is the one true course for human happiness here and everlasting joy in the world to come. Whatever we do in our individual lives and through the influence we have on the lives of others must move us and others to come to terms with these ultimate realities. To move in another direction is folly and misery.

Knowing some of the truths about things as they really were helps us to understand the present better. I cannot, for instance, ever see mortal power grabs without thinking of the drama in our earlier experience when Lucifer sought ascendancy at the cost of our agency. Likewise I cannot see selfishness in myself or others without thinking of Satan who is truly swollen selfishness—at the end of its journey. Moreover, when we try to impose our misery on others, I think of what a prophet said of Lucifer, “for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:27) and “he sought also the misery of all mankind” (2 Nephi 2:18).

Because you believe in these ultimate things and apply them in appropriate ways to your efforts to help others, doing this will put you at variance with colleagues who have other value systems and other priorities. Latter-day Saint professionals in a variety of fields will come to know what it means to bear “the shame of the world” and yet to despise it. While we are given several scriptures concerning this irony of our interface with others, one will suffice: “Wherefore, we would to God that we could persuade all men not to rebel against God, to provoke him to anger, but that all men would believe in Christ, and view his death, and suffer his cross and bear the shame of the world” (Jacob 1:8).

For us to endure, knowingly and deliberately, either the disapproval or even the contempt of others is a difficult thing indeed, but it is often necessary. In fact, it is imperative as a statement of what the Savior has told us about life. We simply cannot turn aside from these realities because of the peer pressures that may come in upon us. Revelations are not accommodations; they are directions. We may disregard them but we cannot amend them. We may fail to follow them, but we cannot erase them.

We do what we do not only for our own spiritual preservation but for the sake of others who have lost their way. Others must know that there is but one alternative to anarchy and chaos. Not several alternatives, just one. As custodians of those concepts, as keepers of those truths, we must therefore remember, as George MacDonald wisely said, “A candle is not lighted for itself, neither is a man.” The illuminated individual who really believes that the Light of Christ “lighteth every man” will go on trying—long after

other helping agents have surrendered to the darkness. His light may be a little one, but lights have a way of being seen, especially in the darkness.

Please deepen your personal scriptural scholarship, for in it will be truth, relevancy, renewal and reassurance. Remember that at the very center of the deepest doctrines are the pearls of greatest price! Remember that in the Inspired Translation of the Bible the Savior's phrase, "the key of knowledge," is defined as "the fulness of the scriptures."

God bless you with the increasing light of the gospel, for it is by that light that you and I will see everything else—"things as they really are and things as they really will be!"



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## Psychotherapists: Love Your Wives

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Elder James E. Faust  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
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**I**t is a little frightening for me to come before this august body whose academic qualifications in the areas of human behavior so greatly exceed my own. Just the title of this conference is imposing. I want you to know that as I approach presuming to speak to you, I do so with much humility and some reservation.

What I have to say will not be academic, nor erudite, nor sophisticated, but hopefully laced with some concepts in which you will find some verities. Some of what I will have to say will be very personal, oversimplified, and probably not very interesting.

When I was a very young bishop, a middle-aged single sister in my ward disagreed with something I said and straightened me up by saying, "Bishop, your just saying something doesn't make it true." I have that concept well in mind this evening.

To begin with, I have the feeling that the Lord God intended that all of his children become sufficiently adequate to meet their own challenges of life and to reach close to their potential. He no doubt wants all of us to function responsibly so that ultimately we are not a burden upon others and make some useful contribution to humankind. The Psalmist's definition of "What is man?" states, "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have

dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.” (Psalms 8:4–8) And this is not all. Each of us was made in the image of God, and has inherited gifts and talents from the Divine.

You would not need to be reminded that psychotherapy is not an exact science; just how inexact a science it is may be left to your own pondering, experience and wisdom.

You usually begin with a basic value structure or assumptions of norms of patients.

Surely the work of any Mormon psychotherapist should be to not tamper with, but support the values of faith of those he is trying to help. The psychotherapist can then be more supplemental to and reenforcing of priesthood leaders. Any professional behavioral scientist should recognize and respect the values of any faith, whether it be Catholic, Protestant, Mormon, or whatever.

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he. (Proverbs 23:7.) But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. (Matthew 5:28.)

I am impressed by the trend toward the linking of the benefits of cognitive therapy with behavioral therapy. Cannot those available to be counselors and teachers deal more effectively with depression and faulty behavior by helping their patients to gain control of their thoughts? Surely anyone can be made stronger by eliminating wrong or weak thoughts.

To suggest that lives cannot change, that habits cannot be overcome, that we are what we are, that we cannot change because we were born one way or another is profane and blasphemous to God who is the Father of us all. A definition of self-reliance might include the following: Reliance upon our own efforts, powers and achievement. Inherent in this is that one realizes that he is the one responsible for his own actions, his own health, and his own well-being.

So, do you not have a responsibility to encourage independence, industry, thrift and self-reliance, and strengthen emotional and

spiritual self-reliance? You also have a responsibility not to make your patients worse by being off balance yourselves by, as President Kimball says, "proclaiming the gospel of error." The gospel of error comes about by confusing the doctrines of men for the doctrines of God. It is sound philosophy as well as doctrine that basic strength can be summed up with four words, two of which begin with self: (1) Self-reliance, (2) Self-discipline and (3) Personal righteousness. We question with Jeremiah: "Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" (Jeremiah 8:22).

I would warn against the feeling that unless a man has been professionally trained he has no competence. By this I mean having those of us with doctors' degrees take over emotional guidance from those ordained and set apart to teach and counsel such as fathers and mothers, bishops, stake presidents and other priesthood leaders.

None of us seem to be able to become completely adequate and function responsively without any help from others, such as family and friends. At the same time, too much help, or the wrong kind, stifles and is counter-productive to human adequacy. You all know that at the heart of human inadequacy is the lack of self-esteem which is fed by the streams of lack of achievement. The life-giving milk of self-esteem is having someone who ministers the rich life-giving love, the confidence, and the caring we need. In fine, this support comes richly from loving grandparents, fathers and mothers who love and discipline, from siblings and collaterals as well as children and grandchildren. But for men it comes mostly from wives.

As you are also well aware, one of the saddest social problems of the day is the inadequacy of men. In their failure they default in their responsibility as husbands and fathers, heads of family, as providers, as teachers, as stabilizers in public and private life.

You would all be aware of more current statistics on the number of families in our society who are crippled because there is not an adequate, providing, functioning father in the family. The whole segments of our society in which this circumstance obtains

seem to be widening. The train of social consequences seems endless and the cost is staggering. There is no higher social commitment for any man than to be loyal to his commitment to his God and faith, to his wife and family. The reciprocating fruits of having kept that commitment will usually give to him the boundless sustaining love and the challenge to reach deep down inside him and call forth the seeds of the finest of his gifts for their full flowering. He will enjoy a place of honor, dignity and respect.

While I was serving as stake president, we had a forthright bishop who said, "A returned missionary is not worth the powder and shot to blow him to hell until he marries." This was, of course, an overstatement, but nothing short of marriage seems to settle a man fully into the discipline he requires to meet his potential.

I now arrive at one of the dominant themes of my remarks. It can be summed up in this: "Psychotherapists: Love Your Wives." I say this not because you are psychotherapists, but because you are first and foremost men. My plea is simply that we put our professional lives in order by putting our personal lives in order. How can we be an adequate doctor or counselor of anything without being an adequate man? We professional men often shortchange those who mean most to us. The professional man syndrome often is that because of our special training and special knowledge, others have a greater claim on our time and concern than our own families. I fully recognize that the work my wife did in my home was more important to me than any work I did in the courtroom, or the office, and at the Church.

It was recently said of the family:

We now know that the quality of attention given by parents to children effects their I.Q. We now know that the psychological context of trust, love, and care given by parents to children—or the lack of such things—profoundly effects the psyches of their children. In a word, the family provides benefits, bodies, psyches, skills, morals, and spirit which no other institution in society provides so cheaply, so well, and with so much loving care. In some ways, families are the original departments of health, education, and welfare—far less costly, far more effective than a governmental H.E.W. Indeed, H.E.W. is mainly needed to pick up the pieces when families fail, and H.E.W. finds it very hard and very

expensive to put such pieces back together if it ever can. (Michael Novak, "Intellectuals Focusing on Family," *Deseret News*, July 31, 1979).

I would like to emphasize and narrow down this dominant theme in the family relation in terms of how we ought to strive to treat our wives. Lest our wives expect perfection too soon, you notice I use the word "strive." The relationship between husband and wife is the linchpin, if you please, in the whole family relationship. I am sorry that I have come so late to a fuller appreciation of the extent of the needs of our wives and women folk for love, appreciation, companionship and recognition. These needs are great, they are constant, and they need to be frequently met.

I am also sorry that I have not sooner appreciated the great sublime, unique gifts which our wives inherit from divinity. I speak of their womanly intuitions and their six senses, and their steadfast faith and capacity to love. Properly nurtured, the eternal relationship of a husband and wife flowers into a love of consummate beauty. It is an unrighteous exercise of priesthood authority for a man, as a conduit through his priesthood office, to withhold or limit blessings which should flow through the priesthood to his wife and family. The priesthood is not just male- or husband-centered, but reaches its potential only in the eternal relationship of the husband and the wife sharing and administering these great blessings to the family. Our wives have priesthood blessings, though not priesthood offices. These blessings are the keys to eternal life, salvation, and exaltation through obedience.

I now ask for your indulgence and forgiveness for the somewhat intimate matters I will discuss, and ask you to remember that I am speaking to the concept of what a wife means to a man and a priesthood leader in the fullest sense, including a professional man, and how she deserves to be treated. What I will say will not be academic; it will be very personal, for we should be striving to be adequate as a man, a husband, a father before we strive to be adequate as a highly trained or specialized doctor and servant of God. Kindness and courtesy does not begin in the professional office—it begins at home.

Elder Boyd K. Packer recently asked me a very penetrating question, "What would you have been without Ruth?" I could have answered immediately, "Not much," but he already knew that. I took him seriously and spent the next 24 hours thinking about what I would have been without the loving sweet support and the discipline of Ruth Wright in my life. It shocked me a little to even think about what life would be and would have been without her. I would have to answer honestly that without my wife I would have been pretty much of a failure. I do not claim to be an expert in marriage. I have only been married once, but thanks to my good wife it took. I do not claim to have a better marriage than anyone, but I do claim to be married to a great companion.

I am still moved by what President Romney said to the Twelve in the first meeting in the temple a few days after the death of Sister Ida Romney, which with his permission I share. Said President Romney, "When Ida died, something went out of me. The holding force was gone." At the graveside president Romney said to Ruth and me, directing his remarks to me, "Be good to your wife, take her with you everywhere you can. The time will come when you will not be able to be together."

To begin with, we all realize that the most sacred, intimate and blessed relationship of life is between husband and wife. I do not love anybody like I love my wife. My Mother has Father, and my children have their companions, but Ruth is me. Our wives become part of us, and they become like our own flesh, and as Paul counseled, we should love them as such. The simple truth is that it is not good for man to be alone. The greatest sustaining influence in my mature life has been the constant supporting, unqualified, unreserved love I have felt for my wife. The sacred relationship with my wife, like your relationship with your wives, has been the supreme benediction of my life. I just can't imagine what my life would have been like without having had that blessing.

As a part of that, and overarching and undergirding all else, without our wives we would never have been privileged to be fathers, grandfathers, and all that that entails. This relation just has to come first in all of our relationships with other people. It is the

glue, if you please, that brings together all of the parts of the jigsaw puzzle of eternal joy and fulfillment and happiness.

Maybe what we are talking about here with respect to the blessing of having a good wife is that most basic of all human needs, that of love. Women seem to have a greater capacity to love than we men. The greatest unreserved love that I have received in my life has been from the good women in my family, my wife, my mother, my mother-in-law, my grandmothers, my daughters, and my sweet granddaughters.

The example of how to be a man came from others, my father, my grandfather, my uncles, my older brother Gus, and the examples of many Church leaders, good bishops, stake presidents, as well as the general authorities.

If I hadn't married Ruth, I would not have known her mother. Her name was Elizabeth Hamilton Wright. She was one of the twenty-two children of Bishop James C. Hamilton, bishop of the Millcreek Ward for over twenty-five years. She only went to the third grade. Because she had a special gift for teaching children she was taken out of school to tend and teach the younger children in the family. It used to break my heart to see her struggle to write a simple note, but she had a spiritual maturity, wisdom, insight, and faith like my own mother. I loved her for her greatness and goodness and because she taught my wife so well, who in turn has taught our children and grandchildren. She understood things completely by the Holy Spirit.

One of the areas that our wives perform a very great service is in their loving discipline of us. Ruth can discipline me like nobody else in the world. In their discipline, they keep us closer to what we ought to be in our holy callings. In their discipline they teach us. It is part of the polishing we need to fill in the holes in our character and smooth the rough edges and make us more adequate. Together we are a team—we are one.

President Tanner's daughter, Isabel, says about her father, which with his knowledge I share, "When Mother married Daddy he was just a farm boy." But she went on to say that when Sister Tanner would give him a loving suggestion, unlike many of us who would

bridle or argue at being told something that was good for us by our wives, he would simply say, "If you think that's what I should do, I'll do it." Listening to Sister Tanner and listening to the Lord has made a very great man out of President Tanner.

I am grateful for the example of many of our Brethren in terms of the examples of kindness and thoughtfulness and solicitude that ought to be shown to our wives. I should like to pay a tribute to Elder S. Dilworth Young:

When I was in the stake presidency, Brother Young came to our stake conference. At that time his wife, Gladys, was an invalid, having suffered from a cruel stroke. As you may know, she remained that way for years. Brother Young made the extra effort to dress her and bring her and feed her and care for her. In all my life I have not seen a greater example of gentleness, kindness, and solicitude than Brother Young showed to Gladys. It was an example of perfect love. In obtaining his permission to tell of this he said, "It was the worst thing in the world that could have happened to Gladys and the best thing for me. It made me decent. I learned what love really should be."

Perhaps in these times of great stress we can become what we ought to be in terms of our relationship with our wives, in terms of a focus, but perhaps the eternal "every day" causes some of us to be more casual than we ought to be. Of course, we love our wives, but perhaps sometimes we also take them for granted too much of the time. Perhaps too often we fail to express our appreciation to them in little ways. I know I do. We could certainly show more affection and always look upon our companions with love and respect. We can surely be polite and courteous if we try. We can nourish and cherish them. The simple fact is that few of us could function nearly as well without the support of a gracious and loving wife. They make our homes the heaven on earth which they are. How can I expect God to honor me and be pleased with my service if I do not honor and cherish my very own companion?

In the scriptures we are told that we should not be unequally yoked together. I fear that in terms of our total person, our wives more often do a better job than we do; that is, being Christlike, thoughtful, kind, gracious, and loving. I feel that Ruth deserves a



better me. We have the responsibility to be instruments to impart righteousness and excellent professional care to the world. Unless we impart a full measure of righteousness to our wives and families we will be blunted instruments to the rest of the world.

In conclusion, in its simplest form, my humble message is that we can do nothing more worthwhile than reinforce the values to make fathers—including ourselves—more stable, function better, and come to a meeting of obligation. That, of course, begins first with us. Ultimately, I think it would be well if we would strive for greater spirituality in our relationships, and especially in our homes. Literally taking the Lord into partnership with us will bring the full measure of peace, happiness, unity, and contentment that we need to seek in our lives to be what we ought to be so that we can be more adequate vessels for the work which we have been commissioned to do. We have the responsibility to bless the lives of others. If our own lives and spiritual batteries are not full and complete, can we expect to touch the world and bless others with the skills we have and the other sacred work which the Lord has entrusted to us?

I know the gospel is true, and I know a substantial part of that gospel is how I treat my Ruth on an hour-to-hour, day-by-day ongoing basis. I believe that none of us would have or can come into full possession of all of our powers without an eternal companion. I suggest the ultimate judgment will come to us in terms of what kind of a person we have been, what kind of a husband we have been, what kind of a father we have been, and what kind of a family we have raised, and this will be above all else that we have done: "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else." That we may do so, I pray humbly in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.



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## However Faint the Light May Glow

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Vaughn J. Featherstone  
Of the Seventy  
4 April 1980

I am delighted to be here. I have a son who is in Scotland: in fact, just arrived in Scotland. I understand that over there on the golf courses they have a little sign as you drive in that says, "Please do not pick up any loose golf balls until they stop rolling."

I also heard recently about the young man who was dutifully, dullfully practicing the piano. A salesman came down the street, knocked on the door and said, "Young man, is your mother home?" The boy replied, "What do you think?" At this early hour we may be dutifully gathered, but I hope not dullfully.

I'm here this morning and I'd like to spend some time and share some things—a couple of philosophies. The first one is by President J. Reuben Clark, whom I admire. I suppose for sheer pleasure reading, I enjoy his writings. I've taken the title of this talk, "However Faint the Light May Glow" from his quote I will now give. You will find that it is packed with things that I think are very applicable to you in your profession.

Every human being is born with the light of faith kindled in his heart as on an altar and that light burns and the Lord sees that it burns, during the period before we are accountable. When accountability comes then each of us determines how we shall feed and care for that light. If we shall live righteously that light will glow until it suffuses the whole body, giving to it health and strength and spiritual light as well as bodily health. If we shall live unrighteously that light will dwindle

and finally almost flicker out. Yet it is my hope and my belief that the Lord never permits the light of faith wholly to be extinguished in any human heart, however faint the light may glow. The Lord has provided that there shall be there a spark which, with teaching, with the spirit of righteousness, with love, with tenderness, with example, with living the Gospel, shall brighten and glow again, however darkened the mind may have been. And if we shall fail so to reach those among us of our own whose faith has dwindled low, we shall fail in one of the main things which the Lord expects at our hands.

As I have thought about this and thought about my own position, I think both in your profession and in our priesthood assignments we have received some pretty strong direction in these matters.

Joseph Addison, in a modern day parable, took the following ideas somewhat from the thoughts of Socrates. The parable is entitled "The Mountain of Miseries." He had been pondering over the celebrated thought of Socrates that if all of the misfortunes of mankind were cast into a common stock and then equally distributed to everyone, those who now think themselves the most unfortunate would be even more miserable with their allotment of new troubles. Socrates contended that the hardships and misfortunes that so concern us now would be far more agreeable than those we would get if we traded with any other person.

Mr. Addison says that as he was turning this idea over in his mind he fell asleep and dreamed that Jupiter issued a great proclamation that every mortal should bring his griefs and calamities to a great plain appointed for this and throw them down together in a common pile. In his dream, Mr. Addison was stationed in the center of the plain where he could observe everything that took place. His heart was melted as one by one he saw the whole human species marching by, groaning, and moaning under their burden of griefs and miseries. Then, in obedience to the decree and with great joy they threw down their various loads of care in the place appointed.

The resulting pile grew quickly into a prodigious mountain. One man threw down his poverty, another laid down his ill health, and another dropped his unsavory reputation. There was a multitude of old people who with great delight threw down their

wrinkles and their aches and pains. Many put down disabling worries, haunting fears, and distracting guilt complexes. A most interesting part of this procedure, Mr. Addison observed, was that many of the problems disposed of by this vast throng were more imaginary than real. Some threw down occupations which they despised, and some used this opportunity to get rid of an incompatible spouse, a dominating parent, or a disobedient child.

Mr. Addison was greatly surprised to learn that the largest part of this growing mountain was made up of bodily deformities. In the pile were great heaps of red noses, large lips, rusty teeth, crooked backs, protruding stomachs, glass eyes, and wooden legs. But he was even more greatly astonished by the fact that there was not a single vice or folly thrown into the heap. He had assumed that everyone would take this opportunity to get rid of his passions, his prejudices, and his various moral frailties. One profligate fellow came loaded down with his crimes, but upon searching into his bundle it was found that instead of throwing away his guilt, he had merely laid down his memory. Another worthless rogue flung away his conscience but hung onto his ignorance.

Mr. Addison tries to describe the delight with which each relieved himself of the burden that had so long oppressed him. There was another peculiar thing about this ordeal. When the sufferers were free from their own burdens they surveyed the heap of the miseries of others with great interest. When they discovered the kind of things that the others were discarding, they could not understand why the owners had looked upon these things as burdens or grievances at all. Each sufferer regarded his own miseries as immense and almost insufferable, though he usually felt that the problems of others were so much smaller in size that they were fairly insignificant.

But while this confusion of miseries and chaos of calamities was taking place, Jupiter issued a second proclamation in which it was ordered that each one should now pick up his exchange affliction and return to his habitation. A poor galley slave who had thrown down his chains now replaced them with a case of the gout. Some exchanged their sickness for poverty. Some traded their hunger for

a lack of appetite. Some traded care for pain, and some traded pain for care.

The females in the group were busily engaged among themselves bartering for figures and features; one was exchanging her grey hair for a carbuncle; another was taking over a short waist for a pair of round shoulders; and a third was trading in a homely face for a bad reputation. But strangely enough as soon as the blemishes were in the possession of their new owners somehow they also became very unsatisfactory. The sufferers now seemed to think that their new misfortunes and calamities were more disagreeable than the old ones had been.

I would like to suggest to you that vanity may possibly be—and I'm talking outside of the Holy Ghost, the Church, and spirituality in our lives—the great motivator. For vanity's sake, people even have surgery performed which they feel will change their image. We deal with people in our professions and hopefully relieve them of their burdens. We've got to get right into the heart, soul, and character and change lives. You see, the thing that really makes a man with a poor self-image happy, contented, and carefree, is service. We find in President Kimball the greatest example of service. When we talk about solving problems, I'm not sure we'll really solve anything for anyone unless they serve others. Dr. Carlton Malz talks about the great change that comes to patients who have plastic surgery, and that great change is in their confidence. When we really want to bring about a behavioral change, I believe it is through increasing integrity and strengthening character that we can help them obtain confidence.

As I mentioned, this is an extremely difficult group to whom we speak, because we realize you are very professional and talented. We wonder how we may add more to what you have done. As we think about you and your profession, there are some things that may deserve some counsel from those who walk in high places as we do. We do a great deal of counseling and suggest some things that might be important to you.

I would like to share three different verses with you. Please think of them not from the standpoint of listening to the rhyme or

to the words, as they are all beautifully constructed, but listen to them from a counseling standpoint. In a very real sense the great musician, the great poet, the great writers are all dealing from a great depth of understanding of the needs of men and women. The first 100 pages of *Les Miserables* by Victor Hugo has been as powerful an influence for good in my life as anything outside of the scriptures. Although in most cases they do not have your professional backgrounds, the poets may have an insight to human nature and other things that may help in counseling and dealing with people. Rudyard Kipling has written a beautiful poem entitled "If."

If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or, being hated, don't give 'way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;  
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;  
If you can meet triumph and disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same;  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
And never breathe a word about your loss;  
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone.  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on;"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with kings—nor lose the common touch;

If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;  
 If all men count with you, but none too much;  
 If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
 With sixty seconds' worth of distance run—  
 Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
 And—which is more—you'll be a man, my son!

Now, from my point of view, every single line of that is great counsel and becomes a healing experience when put into practice. The second verse I would like to discuss with you I share quite often. It is by Francis Loveland and is entitled "Opportunity."

Who do you walk through the field with gloves  
 Missing so much and so much?  
 Oh, thoughtless woman whom nobody loves,  
 Who do you walk through the field with gloves  
 When the grass is as soft as the breast of doves  
 And shivering sweet to the touch?  
 Why do you walk through the field with gloves  
 Missing so much and so much?

The first time I heard this I was deeply impressed. I analyzed my own life and the poet blessed me with her counsel. Last week a special birthday party was held in the tabernacle for President Kimball. As I sat there I was deeply impressed. When it finally concluded and President Kimball walked out we were all standing. It was impressive to me that no one hurried for the doors to leave. It also impressed me that everyone must have felt somewhat as I did, all of a sudden it was over and we didn't want it to end. It was really a great spiritual experience as well as being informative about President Kimball. Then the following night at the special evening prepared by the community leaders to honor President Kimball at the Hotel Utah we heard Norman Vincent Peale speak. He told a story that happened in the Chicago Airport. The planes had been grounded and a woman who had somehow missed her plane was trying to get another. She was many months pregnant and the doctor had told her not to carry her other child who was not very old. As she stood in the long line she just pushed her baby up with her foot as we often do with our bags. Mr. Peale said



no one seemed to notice the plight of this poor woman. The baby was dirty and unkempt because of all the traveling. Finally, one man noticed her condition. Norman Vincent Peale said this man walked over and picked up the baby and held it. He then talked to the people in the line to see if this woman could move to the front of the line. They got to the front of the line and he assisted this woman in getting her tickets. He walked with her out to the gate and helped her get on the plane and then went about his business. That man was President Kimball. This touched me deeply. Mr. Peale was talking about President Kimball and all he represents.

This next verse went through my mind over and over again as I sat in the banquet for President Kimball. It is written by Ella Wheeler Wilcox and is entitled "Gethsemane."

All paths that have been, or should be  
 Pass somewhere through Gethsemane.  
 All those who journey, soon or late,  
 Must pass within the garden's gate;  
 Must kneel alone in darkness there,  
 And battle with some fierce despair.  
 God pity those who cannot say,  
 "Not mine, but thine," who only pray,  
 "Let this cup pass," and cannot see  
 The purpose in Gethsemane.

If someone had a heavy heart and was going through a trial in life, I think a wise thing would be to hand them a copy of a poem such as this. It may give them a little different perspective to life.

When we are dealing with problems on a constant basis, it may be easy to develop an attitude that most everyone has that problem to some greater or lesser degree. This may not be true. Someone said that if you walk with a lame man for a year you'll walk with a limp. I met a psychiatrist back east who was also on the high council. His wife wanted an interview with me. She asked, "How do you feel about masturbation?" I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "How serious is it in the Church?" I told her, "It is serious. The Spirit withdraws," and I went on to explain. She said, "I disagree with you and so does my husband. He's a psychiatrist and

he says that most everyone does it.” She must have been about fifty years old and she herself had been involved in the practice and she didn’t feel one particle of guilt. Her husband came and I talked with them together. I asked him if this was the kind of counsel he was giving and he told me that it was. I said, “That is not according to the Church standards, let’s talk about it.” So, we talked about it. At that time I had not yet been a mission president, but later on when I was called to preside over a mission I saw that nearly 80% of the missionaries literally go through their entire mission and do not have the problem. Yet this woman and her husband would not think it possible. Maybe they were too close to those few who have the problem. Those that he interviewed, that came to his office, those he dealt with all day long were so involved with the problem that he “lost his perspective.” Let me suggest to you that we ought to be careful when we start coming across problems in our counseling. As recent as last night, I heard someone talking about homosexuality and how rampant it is in the Church. Of course, there are far too many cases, but of all the men I’ve interviewed (and they ask us every time we interview a bishop, high councilors, stake presidencies, or prospective stake presidents to ask that question), and all that we’ve interviewed to serve missions (approximately 30,000), few have ever been involved in homosexuality. If we went on that basis we would hardly find any in the Church. I realize there are a lot undercover and there are far, far too many in the Church, but there aren’t as many as people would lead us to believe.

When I was twelve I was ordained a deacon. My older brother was ordained a teacher. He was ordained first. I had come from a background, as many of you know, where my folks were inactive. My mom wasn’t even a member of the Church and my dad was an alcoholic. I don’t think we had prayer in our home until after I was eighteen. So, I went to the ordination appointment. I had been involved in Primary and I felt like if ever a little kid of twelve was tempted, I was tempted. I thought there has been no one that has been as tempted as I have. I sat there and listened. The fellow that ordained my brother gave him a blessing and promised him that he would have the power to overcome temptation. That

absolutely thrilled me. I plead in my heart, "Dear God, please give me the same power to overcome temptation." The man who ordained me did not say those words. I went home and thought, "Well, he was right, he really knows I do not deserve that blessing." I went through the next two or three years feeling that I might fall at any moment. At that age the problems were not all that serious, but later on it could have led to something really serious. Then I came across the verse by Paul. I don't remember whether someone quoted it to me or whether I just happened to read it, but I do remember it was just like clear, crystal water to parched earth. Paul said, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able" (I Corinthians 10:13). I knew I was included in the deal. All of a sudden, I realized that I had the power that God would never let Satan tempt me more than I could withstand. I can't tell you what that did for me. I guess because of that verse, whenever I bless someone, I always bless them with the power to overcome temptation, knowing that I have a right. I think it's important for us to know that, as Longfellow said, "Give what you have to give, for to someone it may be more important than you would ever dare to suppose." Now, if I could have had that assurance three years earlier it would have made a lot of difference. Thank goodness I understood when I did and not after I had committed some great transgression feeling that I didn't have enough will power to withstand the temptation.

We have impressions come to us. I interviewed a homosexual just this past week who is just beginning college and is living with a returned missionary. They have sexual relations three times a week. His father has been active in the Church. He came to me in agony and despair, having pled with the Lord literally for six months. He wondered if I would help them. I interviewed the young man for one hour and fifteen minutes. May I suggest to you that during the past six months I have not had more direct revelation than I did in this hour and fifteen minutes. I do not have the talents and skills you have, but I know that the God of heaven, because the father was doing everything he could, poured into my mind words and knowledge and understanding and

rebuttals. I of myself do not have the ability to do or the knowledge to say what I said. I don't know whether we turned him around or not, but at least I knew that all of the powers of heaven for that moment seemed to rest on me to try to bless him. We do have our free agency, that cannot be taken away from us. Worlds without end, free agency will not be taken from us. It is impressive to me how the Lord does bless us with revelation.

Now, to turn to your theme today, "Oh, that cunning plan of the evil one, oh the vainness and the frailties and the foolishness of men. When they are learned they think they are wise and they harken not to the counsels of God, for they set it aside supposing they know of themselves, wherefore their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not and they shall perish." What a blessing when you meet together as you do and have the wisdom of the world along with the kind of power of which I have a testimony. When you combine those, professionalism and inspiration, then everything is right.

President Lee was in Southern Utah some years ago, possibly in the early sixties or the late fifties. He went to a stake and they told him of an incident that occurred in their area. They had not had rain for months and they just had to have rain. So, the whole community, all of the members of the Church, came together and fasted and prayed on a particular Sunday. It was the whole objective of the stake and even of the community to pray for the needed water. They spent the whole day fasting and praying Sunday and the rain didn't come; and Monday, the rain didn't come; and Tuesday. So, the community leaders and some of the Church leaders got together and hired a plane and all of the facilities to seed the clouds. After they did that, the rains came. The stake president said to President Lee, "I don't know if the rain that came was the rain we prayed for or the rain we paid for." I wonder, too. I wonder just how much faith we really have. I wonder if they couldn't have just turned it over to the Lord and left it with Him, after all the fasting and prayer. The whole Church united in prayer for rain a couple of years back. The prayers and fasting were answered and before the year was over we had more rain than normal.

In Part II, Chapter XXII of Cervantes' *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, Sancho Panza has just listened to Quixote discuss the divinity of man. Now, I'm not very good at Spanish, but I want to use his words: "Bien predica quien bien vive y no se otras tiorogias." A loose translation would be, "He teaches well who lives well."

This past week I've done some research and study so that this Sesquicentennial year will mean a little more to me. I want to share with you one incident that I have read. Edward Partridge had been taken into the town square and had been bedaubed with tar and feathers and ridiculed. He, along with five other men, had offered themselves as a ransom for the Church. They had said they would give their lives for the Church and for the Prophet Joseph, anything to stop the cruel punishment the Church was receiving. "Leave our people alone, do with us as you may, punish us, take our lives, anything. We offer ourselves as ransom for the Church." I cannot tell you the feeling I had as I read that. I read it a second time and then closed the book to do some serious thinking. Elder Faust offered his life for two missionaries who had been kidnapped in Uruguay and taken across the border into the jungles of Paraguay. When the ransom note and letter from the kidnappers was received, Elder Faust and the mission president contacted these men and said, "Would you turn those two young men loose? They are just missionaries, let us take their place." They would have been willing to give their lives.

What I am saying is that this is a magnificent church, the teachings are true, and we are guided by a prophet. Again, the light is there in every single soul who is born into this life. The light is there through their early years until they are accountable. The Lord makes certain it does not go out during this time. When we are accountable we each are responsible for what we do with that light.

Think about President Kimball and his light and all that he has done in this life for you and for me with the service he renders. I don't think we even begin to understand it. The other night, following the conclusion of the special Tabernacle program honoring him, I thought about him. During the half an hour it

takes me to drive home, I thought that I am a disciple of Christ. I love Him with every particle of my heart and soul. I thought about the great and noble thing Edward Partridge was willing to do for the Church. I am also a disciple of President Kimball. He has literally given his life for the Church in a different way. I would really like to be filled with the kind of love, care, and concern which he has. I am a disciple of President Tanner. I suppose no man I've ever met exemplified integrity like President Tanner does. I am a disciple of President Romney, who has the greatest faith. I've never known anyone, save the Prophet himself, with greater faith. I am a disciple of each one of the members of the Twelve. President Benson is a man of great courage, great conviction, and absolute humility.

God bless you that you will see things within the appropriate parameters that the Lord has set and follow those principles. When anyone gets outside of those boundaries, their counseling may be questionable. Someone questioned Elder McConkie the other day about a certain policy. He said, "If you will just follow the present practice of the Church, that is the interpretation of that scripture."

Again, know that I know with all my heart and soul that this is the Lord's work. God bless you for the great care you have and the wonderful rehabilitation you give to heavy hearts, minds that are clouded and dimmed, and to those who really need. I believe you are in the most Christlike service, because yours is a healing service. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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## **“Ever Follow That Which is Good, Both Among Yourselves and To All Men.”**

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Elder L. Tom Perry  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
1 October 1981

I appreciate that type of introduction. I have to keep looking to see who they're introducing. We're just delighted to have this opportunity of being with you today. It's such a beautiful day to be with this group. Many of you have assisted me many times as we've had opportunities to travel throughout the Church. We respect you, and know of the great service you give in our Father in Heaven's Kingdom.

I'm fully aware today that this is probably an opportunity that I've seldom had—to stand before a group that has such professional knowledge, skill, training, and experience. I'm sure that I should take advantage of that, and I intend to. You see, doctor, I have a problem. I realize we cannot have a normal counseling session today. I'm not in the privacy of your office. We can't sit one-to-one and talk things over. Of course I'm at an advantage because you can't charge me today either. I stand behind a pulpit and you sit as a congregation, so of course this is of necessity a one-way communication. However, the results of the time we spend here must determine a course of action, which will assist us in solving problems.

Before I get into my problem, I want to set the stage and give you a little of my background. I guess that's what you normally do. I've never had a session with any of you, but I imagine that's what

occurs first. You see, I grew up in a Utah surrounding, born of goodly parents, as Nephi would say. My father was from a rural background, reared on a farm that he and his father had homesteaded in Idaho around Rexburg. My father was a fourth generation member of the Church. The first progenitor had moved to Utah in Box Elder County. When they decided to name the community, all the families put their names in a hat, and they drew out the name of "Perry" so they named it Perry, Utah. He was called to be the bishop of that ward, and he had a son who was called to be a bishop, and he had a son who was called to be a bishop. And my father was called to be a bishop.

My father's professions were first a farmer, then a teacher of history and English. He taught school until he had three daughters in a row. He was teaching in the winter and farming in the summer. With three girls he could see that no help was coming on the farm, so he sold out and started working on his law degree, and became a lawyer. The latter part of his life was spent as a lawyer and a judge.

My mother was a second generation member of the Church. Her father had left Denmark to escape the draft. He didn't want to go into the Navy, so he came over here planning to settle in California. He ran out of money in Utah, and because he didn't know the language, a couple of those good Scandinavian people matched him up with a young lady and got him married before he really knew what was happening. So he settled down in Utah. He became a great leader, and was a farmer, a strong man, who was respected in his community. Mother was also a teacher. She had my father as her first principal. He was just a young man, and when they married she became a homemaker. She was a good homemaker, and devoted her life to her family.

All my friends in the community I came from were about the same. In my high school class there was only one non-member of the Church. We converted her in the ninth grade, and that made it complete. Everyone was from similar circumstances.

In our home we were taught a most unique doctrine. We were taught about the worth of a soul. Scriptures were commonly



brought to the breakfast, dinner, and supper table and discussed. We would hear our parents read, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3: 16). They were interested in imbuing in us the fact that our family was an eternal family. They used to tell us that the worth of a soul is great in the eyes of God, and that we had potential, and we should use that potential.

Mother, with her teaching ability, trained every child before they reached the age to go to school to write and to read. In fact, two members of our family walked into the first grade and the teacher had them for a half day, patted them on the head, and sent them on to the second grade. Every one of them was taught and trained before entering school to write and to read and do simple arithmetic—that is, except me. The concepts changed when I came along, and they told my mother she shouldn’t train the children before they started to school because the concepts were different. I was the only one who ever had a struggle in school. All the rest of them brought home straight “A” report cards all of the time. At the end of every semester I’d sneak into the barn after school was over. Dad would have to come out and review my report card with me in the barn. He had a way of doing that very effectively when we were alone, too. But our parents taught us to try to achieve. “Don’t be afraid to try” is the doctrine we were taught. My parents followed the theme you have here today, “Ever follow that which is good, both for ourselves and for our fellowmen” (1 Thessalonians 5: 15). That was basic.

And, of course, fundamental in this home was the teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was paramount. We spent many hours in scriptural study. We were just like Lehi’s family where the scriptures delighteth our souls. We pondered and profited from them as we were trained and grew in understanding in our home. We were taught to seek diligently the Kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all things necessary would be added thereunto. We were taught that the laborer is worthy of his hire.

We were given great examples of service. I remember one time asking Dad why he spent so much time in Church service. What

did he do but open the scriptures and turn to the 13th chapter of the Book of John, to that very great lesson the Savior was trying to teach His Twelve as He departed from them, when He knew it was His last period on earth, and He would have to leave them after such a short time of training. He was trying to imbue in them a desire to carry on the work and to accomplish all that they should accomplish. Then as the supper ended, He girded Himself with a towel. It was unique to me that this was before Judas had been excused, and He went to the feet of each of them. There He washed their feet and wiped them with a towel. When He came to Simon Peter, Peter said, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" And Jesus answered and said unto him, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Then Peter said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." And the Savior, wanting to teach a lesson, said, "If I wash thee not, thou has no part with me." Then Simon Peter wanted to be washed all over, not only his feet, but his hands and his head also. Then the Savior went on to say, "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is no greater than his lord; neither is he that is sent greater than he that sent him." Father taught us that lesson, and then by example reinforced it.

I was six months old when my father was ordained a bishop. He called me to go on my mission when I was eighteen. Between the time that he called me and the time I left, they changed his calling in the Church. Attending stake conference one Sunday, without talking to him, they put him in the stake presidency. So after completing my mission papers as my bishop, he sat down with me and signed them as my stake president and sent them on to Church headquarters. He served in the stake presidency for the next twenty years. So you see, I never knew my father in any other role than bishop and stake president. All the time my father served as bishop my mother served as 1st counselor in the Ward Relief Society. We learned how to serve people through their example. I

remember so often the love my father had for those he served, and for those who served with him.

There was an old man who lived in our ward who had lost his wife many years before and was not completely mentally-balanced. Every time he'd get a little lonely, he'd show up at our place. He'd ring the doorbell usually about 4:00 o'clock in the morning. I remember how kind my father was to him, never sending him away, but usually inviting him to come in and rest until the family was up and then have breakfast with us. Then Dad would drive him over to his home as he would go to work. Often I have gone with Mother as she has taken supplies to nourish those in need. We grew up with the spirit of service.

Now it was only natural as I started to establish my own home, that I wanted to establish the same value system that I had grown up with. I had learned the value of a family. I knew that the family is an eternal unit. It is important! It must be preserved! I've pondered many times over the second section of the Doctrine and Covenants, where it states, "Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the Prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And He shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted as His coming."

You see, without that family there would be no reason for the Lord to return to rule and reign among His people. For He will govern by family units—a family is essential. So I desired to be a good husband and tried to train myself that way. I desired to be a good father and be close to my children, and grew to love and cherish each one of them as they grew and matured. We tried to teach them honesty in their lives. We found the same thing happening in our generation that happened before. I remember when I stole my first package of gum, and Dad caught me. Oh, how I had to work to pay back that nickel for that package of gum. My son did the same thing, and I followed that practice, and you know, it worked! It imbued in him honesty.

We would have projects to teach them industry, to work around home. The dating age was sixteen, and they were taught chastity and morality in the home. They grew up to appreciate and grow towards that. I had a comfortable life. How I enjoyed it!

Then suddenly my life changed. I was a stake president in Boston in October 1972 when we made plans to come to general conference. My oldest daughter had just been married, so we flew to Arizona and visited her. Then we rented a car and drove to Salt Lake for conference. It was a day like this, everything was so beautiful. When I'd gone to rent the car, I'd asked for a small Chevrolet which they didn't have, so they'd given me a Cadillac for the same price as a Chevrolet. They argued a little, but they finally gave in. We took the car, and on the way I got on the wrong road. When my wife awakened she said, "Do you go through Delta when you go to Salt Lake?" And I said, "Oh no, Delta's clear over on the west end of the state." She said, "Well, the sign back there said we're on our way to Delta." And I said, "Oh, you can't be right."

Soon we arrived at Delta. We had to spend an extra night. We got up the next morning and drove into Provo where my son was going to school. And when I drove onto the campus, a security guard pulled right behind me. You know what that does to you. I checked everything out and all seemed to be all right. I pulled over to the curb and looked in the rear view mirror. There sat my son next to the security officer. I thought, "My goodness, home from his mission a month and already in trouble with the law." I got out a little disturbed. He got out of the security car and was just trembling. I said, "What's the matter with you?" He said, "They've had me up all night looking for you. Where have you been?" So I told him what had happened, and he said, "You're to call the office of the First Presidency. They've been looking for you since yesterday." Suddenly I started to tremble.

We went into his room there at Deseret Towers, and called the office of the First Presidency. They said, "How fast can you come to Salt Lake?" I said, "Well, I can leave right now if that's your wish." He said, "Can you be here by 1:00 o'clock?" And I agreed to meet in the office of the First Presidency at 1:00 o'clock. We

went out, got in the car, and started to drive to Salt lake. A terrible feeling came over me on the way. I had a colored shirt on, and I was going to see the First Presidency! So I drove very rapidly and ran into Z.C.M.I. and bought a white shirt, then ran across the street to keep my appointment. They ushered me into Arthur Haycock's office, and he said, "Step in this door." As I stepped in, the door closed right behind me. There I was—alone in the office with President Lee. No one else there! I guess it's a good thing they closed the door behind me, or I'd have fallen right back out. But President Lee was so kind and gentle. He got up and seated me at his side, and then started asking all sorts of questions. It was the most thorough interview I've ever had in my life. After about half an hour he leaned back in his chair and said, "Would it be very difficult for you to leave Boston and move to Salt Lake City?" I was a little thunderstruck at that—I was in business back there. But I said, "Well, if that's what you want me to do, President, I'd be happy to do it." Then we talked about a time interval. And then he called me to be a general authority. The shock was overwhelming! I don't remember what happened after that. I know that I found my family and explained it to them, and we finally made it to conference the next day. A general authority! What a shock!

Now I've had nine years of that calling, and I feel the burden of the responsibility. We belong to an ever growing, rapidly-expanding Church. At my birth the Church had only 560,000 members. At the time of my call, 3,200,000. During the nine years I've been a general authority, it's increased 40% to 4,900,000. It is now worldwide, and most of the growth is coming from outside the comfortable environment I knew all of my life. As I travel around the Church, I see a struggle occurring with a new type of people joining the Church. As I've thought about them, and studied them, and been with them, I can see they are very different. And this is what my problem is about.

I asked Val MacMurray to send me over a few statistics, and as I look these over, I can see a major change occurring in the population of the Church. It's very different from what I knew—very different from this comfortable environment of growing up in Utah where your friends, your family, your associ-

ates all have common backgrounds, common purposes, and are very similar in their desires and ambitions. These statistics concern me because in this body that is coming into the Church is a different mix than we've ever known before.

Current statistics suggest that the traditional family we've known in the past is continuing to change. Greater stress is being placed on both the parent and the child. These statistics are alarming. The marriage rate is decreasing with more and more couples delaying marriage. Between 1970 and 1980 the marriage rate dropped 17%. In 1980 over 50% of all U.S. women between 20 and 24 years of age remained single, compared with 36% in 1970. Among women 25 to 29 years of age, the percent of unmarried women doubled from 10% to 21% in the decade of the 70s. Divorce continues to increase. Divorce in the last ten years has increased 65% to a record high of 1,200,000 in 1980. Divorce is now so rampant that one marriage in every two terminates. That's making a dramatic change in the family composition. More children are being reared in single-parent families. They state now that 18,000,000 live in what I knew to be "broken homes." We'd never use that term today. It's a "single-parent family." There's been a 40% increase in the number of children living with one parent between 1970 and 1980. The number of couples who live together without being married has dramatically increased. Two million, seven hundred thousand are living together unmarried, which is 154% increase during the 70's.

The traditional family consisting of a working father, stay-at-home mother, and one or more children is now in the minority, only representing 13% of all the U.S. families. More and more women are working, and I think being forced to it. It's just a way of life now. Thirty million American children now have homes that are different than the one I knew. Forty-three percent of the women who are working have children under six. Sixty-four percent of all children between the ages of three and five spend part of their day in a day-care facility.

As I stated, this is different from what I knew, and we're starting to see some trends occur because these traditional values have been changed. Marriage as an institution is breaking down.

The importance of religion is becoming less dominant in people's lives. Thrift and savings seem not to be a part of the American family. Patriotism and hard work for its own sake are losing their appeal. We find parents who are not willing to sacrifice for their children, unwilling to push their children, believing that children should be free to make their own decisions. These parents are permissive. They question authority. They believe that children have no future obligations to parents. They believe that having children is an option, not a social responsibility. An outgrowth of this is starting to occur in the number of battered wives, physically- and sexually-abused children, vandalism in our schools, the soaring number of pregnancies among unmarried teenagers, elderly people living alone without the solace of an extended family.

Do you see what is developing? The composition of those who are coming into the Church today is very different. Of the 251,000 converts we're bringing into the Church—if these statistics are a sample of those coming in—only 2,800 of them will be from the traditional home—only 2,800. One hundred thousand of them will be from homes that have had divorces. One hundred and forty thousand of them will have spent most of their pre-school time in day-care centers.

I think that poses all sorts of challenges to us. Certainly the Church can be a great source of inspiration and comfort to these people who need it. But think of the burden that will fall on Priesthood leaders. Most of them, like myself I guess, have grown up in the traditional-type home and are completely unfamiliar or unaccustomed to the challenges they will be facing and the types of problems that will be coming before them. And these problems will come in greater numbers.

We'll find that preparing young people for marriage will be a great problem, because they haven't known what a traditional home is, or what it means to live in the type of surroundings we were accustomed to. Yes, there is a great change occurring. I think your profession is very secure. I can't believe you're going to run out of clientele in the future. If anything, it is going to increase.

There is professional help available. Some of it is not the caliber we think people should be using. Some of this so-called help believes we should cast aside time-honored, proven institutions, that the people who come to them should not be inhibited at all. They prescribe tranquilizers and other drugs in abundance to keep them under control. They have the people create their own value system, not something that has existed for generations. They try to get them to think only of themselves, to shed responsibility. Then, unfortunately, many professionals get so caught up in what they're doing in dealing with problems continually that they can't leave it alone. Soon they find themselves becoming part of the problem.

Then on the other side, there are many, many humble and dedicated men and women who believe in the worth of a soul, who have their roots firmly established in gospel principles, who have faith in the Lord and His system that has brought great joy and happiness for over 6,000 years to His children. They're receptive to counsel of Priesthood leaders. And most important of all, they live what they teach.

Now doctor counselor, you see we do have a problem. Can you help? I think there are many things you can do. With these problems descending on Priesthood leaders, I think you'd be a tremendous resource to them—not to sit and counsel in the place of a bishop. His role is defined and established. But I think you can do a great service in helping bishops understand how to deal with some of these great problems that will be coming to them in numbers we've never known before because of the lack of stability of some of our converts—not because of their problems, but because of generation after generation not being taught the right way, and not being in a position to understand.

Then, of course, you can accept positions of service and responsibility on a stake level, ward level, or quorum level as home teachers, and as exemplary fathers and mothers, an exemplar in your own profession. Yes, I think the complexion of the Church is changing dramatically. We see it as we travel to the stakes and wards. We feel it in the distress of Priesthood leaders pleading for help to have better understanding in a field that is unfamiliar to them and different than the environment they've grown up in. I



think you, as a body, can offer great service and help in assisting those Priesthood leaders understand some of the complexities that they'll be facing.

We challenge you to be the type of counselor who can be trusted completely in your dealings with those that need your help and counseling. Oh, how the Gospel of Jesus Christ will lift a soul! We see it so often. For you to help them on that road will be of great benefit. Be careful, so that the problems will not weigh you down and you can be fresh every time in your approach to helping others. Be careful that you do not carry the burdens with you always, that you learn how to shed them and free yourself and live a balanced life, and not let the problems of the world that you deal with so often weigh you down to the point where you become discouraged. Have that vitality, that enthusiasm for life that you should have. Radiate a goodness as your profession touches lives, and I think you will make a major, major contribution to the world we live in today.

Now may God bless you that you will remain close to Him, that you will seek His guidance, that you will plead for His spirit to guide you as you do your part in helping to deter the terrible decay that is occurring in the lives of so many families. The next generation will have hope, because we are there with a helping hand, with a willing heart, with a firm faith to lift and to reach out, and to help them build the bridge that will lead to their eternal life.

I give you my witness that Jesus Christ is the Christ, that His gospel is on the earth to bless our lives, and that a Prophet of the Lord is very close to the Savior, and his word can be trusted completely as a foundation on which to build our lives.

Again, may God bless you in all that you have to do. We rely on you, trust you, and have confidence in you. I leave my blessings with you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.



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## The Power of Love

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Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi  
Of the Seventy  
3 April 1981

I am indeed grateful for the opportunity to stand before you. It is an honor and privilege to do so. English is not my native tongue, so I pray that the Spirit of the Lord will guide me. I am also, as yet, a “greenie” as a general authority, so I am still frightened to serve the Lord in this capacity. I won’t try to preach to you; however, I would like to share some spiritual experiences of the last few months that have blessed my life. I have more specifically selected spiritual experiences that touched our Japanese society so I can show you how our Japanese members are affected by the gospel.

### **“President Kimball Kissed Me and Hugged Me”**

About five months ago I had the privilege of traveling with President and Sister Kimball to attend area conferences in the Philippines, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, and Japan for the dedication of the Tokyo Temple and area conferences in Tokyo and Osaka. This covered almost a three-week period. I had the privilege of becoming well acquainted with President and Sister Kimball. On that trip President Kimball touched many lives through his love, among them an unknown boy. I believe your knowing of this experience will help you in your work.

Because we were staying at hotels during the area conferences, local members were asked to watch over us. Every morning, usually between 6:45 and 7:00, President Kimball would come out of his room. He would come out in the hallways and express his love to the security people and to the local brothers who were helping to watch over us during the night. He would kiss and hug and embrace them. At 86 years of age he is tireless in his service and in expressing himself to other people. He is unbelievable. He hugged and kissed them. He loves them unconditionally. He has “charity . . . the pure love of Christ.” (Moroni 8: 47)

At the Keio Plaza Hotel in Tokyo, President Kimball came out of his room at about 6:45 a.m. with bare feet and without a tie. He hugged a young man. This young man had completely lost his direction in life. His family situation was unstable, and he was insecure. Although he had been baptized when he was 17 years of age, he was uncertain about what he wanted from life. Just a week prior to the area conference he walked into church and, expressing himself to his bishop, said, “I want to be a good member. What can I do?” His bishop told him to come to Priesthood Meeting and Sunday School, read the scriptures and continue to pray, and keep the commandments of our Heavenly Father. Then he told him that that week they needed to supply one young brother to assist with the night security for President Kimball and his party. So on that particular morning he was there when President Kimball came out. This young man, 20 years of age, couldn’t stop his tears. Later he said, “In the Celestial world, is it like that? When President Kimball kissed me and hugged me, I felt so strongly that the Spirit testified to me that our Heavenly Father is just like he is.” And he said, “Oh, I was almost going to miss the glorious opportunity to stay in the Church! And I wouldn’t have stopped wandering. I almost missed the total picture, the panorama, the beauty of the gospel.” This young man is now saving his money to go on a mission. He felt strongly that the Spirit testified to him that he could help his parents and could share the gospel with them. The people must feel the true love of Christ, unconditional love. This love can heal any concerns of our lives. “Wherefore,

my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love.” (Moroni 7: 48)

### **“I Was Inspired”**

I want to share another beautiful story. Right before I left Tokyo, a young boy walked into my room. He handed me a letter which said:

My family consists of three members now, and we are living in our grandparents' home because my parents were divorced two years ago. Since that time, my grandfather and mother started working. Sometime in October of 1979, I met the young missionaries at Shibuya Station. I studied and was baptized within three weeks. Although I received baptism, I became totally inactive for about seven months. Since my family was not stable, I wasn't happy. I had been wondering about my life and the future, even about my life hereafter. I wandered around every day and didn't go to school because I had lost sight of my objectives. With a feeling of depression and emptiness, I walked to church one day without consciously thinking of going there. I met with the missionaries again and with the members. I attended a beautiful baptismal service which impressed me greatly; in fact, I was inspired. I decided to attend church after that. I learned the importance of the gospel teachings and the importance of missionary work. I was called as a branch missionary and assisted the full-time missionaries almost every day. I went to street meetings with them and contacted many, many people. The Lord helped me. Within two months I brought many people to the full-time missionaries. I, myself, taught seven people and had the privilege to baptize them.

As you can see, the people must feel the Spirit of the Lord. Once a person feels the power of the Holy Ghost, he or she can overcome any obstacles. It is the greatest prescription to resolve any human concerns, mental or spiritual.

The letter continues:

One day as I was praying, I received a strong feeling that I should teach the gospel to my own family. I prayed and prayed and then introduced the missionaries to my mother first. I felt that it was very important to convert my family in order for us to obtain eternal life as a family. My mother was attending another Christian church and had many friends. Because she was afraid of losing these friends, at first she refused to be baptized. However, with the help of the missionaries and through the cooperation of the members, within about a month she was

baptized. Many members came to her baptismal service. It was a beautiful baptismal service. It is a testimony to me that I could baptize her with the help of the Lord. Everyone at the service cried and cried because of the Spirit we felt in that room. When we went through the Tokyo Temple open house and saw the sealing room, my mother started to cry because she felt the Spirit so strongly. I explained to her, "Mom, this is the place we have to come back to be sealed for time and all eternity." We decided at that moment, in that sacred spot, that we would come back.

My sister was baptized September 11, 1980. I performed her baptism also. I am sure that there are more wonderful Latter-day Saints who can bring their families into the Church. This I know.

Although my mother and sister joined the Church, I forgot to tell my grandparents about the gospel. I regretted this so much. This January my grandfather had a heart attack while he was on a business trip. I was very shocked. I thought that I might not be able to baptize him by my own hands. I earnestly prayed to my Heavenly Father at ten minute intervals for a period of three or four days. I prayed so hard. I had never prayed so hard in my whole life. The doctor had given up and then the miracle happened. Eventually my grandfather's health was restored. Heavenly Father blessed him. After two months he was out of the hospital. The first part of March I called our good missionaries and asked them to come to our home, where I introduced them to my grandparents. They were so receptive. They received the discussions and believed in the gospel. Elder Kikuchi, this week after stake conference I will baptize them. I thank God from the bottom of my heart because he has blessed me so much. I am 17 years old. When I am 19 I plan to go on a mission. I will live righteously. [And he went on to say,] With the help of the Lord, can I bring my father back to my home?

As you can see, Japan is no longer the place of family stability. Every three seconds, somewhere in Japan, a divorce is happening. A lot of children are suffering because of that. As far as I understand, this is second to the United States and Russia. The divorce crime is unbelievable. How can we save and protect our families and prevent this? I say that only the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ can heal and protect families and prevent this great crisis. This young boy's story can teach us that the gospel of the Lord, the Spirit, the power, the light, the life and love is the only solution to the world's problems.

### **“That Food was Life Eternal”**

I want to share another story with you. In Japan, in the spring and the fall we have what we call Undokai, which is a sports festival for kindergartens, elementary schools, and junior high schools. Many mothers prepare a lunch and the families spend the day at school watching the children participate in sports events. On just such a day a Japanese sister, Sister Asada, had prepared a lunch, and she and her family went to the kindergarten sports festival. As lunchtime approached Sister Asada began to spread her food before the family. Sitting next to her was a mother, grandmother and three children. The mother had forgotten to bring a lunch, and after a few minutes she said she must go home to get their lunch. Twenty minutes passed and this woman had not returned, so Sister Asada offered to share with the grandmother and the children the lunch she had prepared. They refused, saying they would have their lunch soon.

Well, they waited almost an hour and still the mother didn't return. Sister Asada found out later that this mother had forgotten to prepare a lunch, and it took her about an hour for preparation. Meanwhile, Sister Asada again offered to share her lunch because she could tell that the children were hungry. This time they graciously accepted. From this experience, the mother and Sister Asada developed a warm friendship.

One day Sister Asada invited this woman to a Church fireside. At the fireside a missionary sat down next to the woman, and she asked, “What is this Gaijin doing here?” (Gaijin is what we call foreigners.) “They are missionaries of our church,” Sister Asada said. “They serve two years without receiving any money from the Church.” The woman asked if she could study with them. This was a shock to Sister Asada, who quickly replied, “Of course, please do.”

This woman began to take the discussions from the missionaries. The most difficult part for her was when she was taught the discussion on the Word of Wisdom: at that time she was smoking about 5 packs of cigarettes a day and was drinking alcohol pretty heavily. When her husband found out that she was taking lessons

from the Mormon missionaries he said, "You won't be able to give up your alcohol and cigarettes. I know some LDS people in our company and they are really strict about living the teachings. If you can join their church, I'll join with you."

At this time the family had been having many problems. The woman was baptized, and as she bore her testimony she said, "Brothers and sisters, my family has been unhappy and our life meaningless. But because of Sister Asada's kind food offered to my family at the kindergarten sports festival, she was a life saver for my entire family." And she expressed with tears in her eyes, "Do you know something, brothers and sisters? That food at Undokai was life eternal to our family." Now her three children have been blessed and her husband is taking the discussions from the missionaries.

I am trying to show through these three stories how people are brought together by the gospel. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only solution and preventive medicine for our problems. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail" (Moroni 7: 46)

### **"I Felt Your Love"**

I would like to share another experience with you. Three weeks ago one of our mission presidents called me. "Elder Kikuchi," he said, "help me. There is a young missionary in my office who says that he wants to go home. How can I help him? I have spent three hours with him, but he says he wants his ticket and passport and wants to leave." "I suppose you went over everything with him?" I asked. "President, could I just speak to him?"

He put the missionary on the phone and I said, "Elder, I understand you want to go home." "Yes, Elder Kikuchi, just give me my ticket. I don't want to stay here." "Well, I understand, but I want to know the reason why you want to leave." "Oh, I explained everything to my president." "Well, Elder, I don't want to force you to stay here, but I would like to visit with you before you leave us." "Oh, you don't need to come here. I just spent a



lot of time with the president.” “Elder, we need you here. This is where the Lord sent you to do His work. I need you. I love you. The Lord is extending His hands to you to be the savior for the Japanese people. Are you refusing the Lord’s invitation? Are you going to leave us alone? Could you kindly spend even ten minutes with me? I’ll come up this afternoon. I’ll catch the first plane. I don’t want to force you to stay, but at least let me talk to you before I say it is okay for you to go.” “Oh, you are a busy man. You don’t need to come up here and you don’t need to spend the time with me.” “Elder, I tell you, you are more important than my paperwork. You are important enough for me to come up to spend the time with you.” And he said, “Okay.”

But before I hung up I said, “Elder, tell me why you want to go home.” And I could sense the tears. “Elder Kikuchi, my parents got a divorce. I’ve lost my track.” “Did you talk to your president about it?” “No.” I said, “Well, would you tell him about it, and I will come up. Just wait 24 hours and then you can leave tomorrow.” Then I just hung up. Within 30 minutes he called back. “Elder Kikuchi, you don’t need to come up. I felt your love. I will stay.” Truly our service to others must consist of the same love that Moroni described as personifying the Lord Jesus Christ: “And now I know that this love which thou hast had for the children of men is charity; wherefore, except men shall have charity they cannot inherit that place which thou has prepared in the mansions of thy Father.” (Ether 12: 34)

### **“Someone Loves Me”**

Another experience: A mission president from another mission at the south end of Japan called me. One of his missionaries wanted to go home. This missionary had been born and grew up in the western part of the United States. For some reason, when he was sixteen he left his home and went to another area. A couple of years later he met the missionaries and was baptized. A year after his baptism—when he turned nineteen—he became a missionary. He was a stake missionary first, and he worked and saved his money so that he could serve a full-time mission. Now

while on his full-time mission he wanted to go home. I told the mission president I would come and talk to the young elder.

I spent two hours with this young man. He just talked and talked and talked. I just listened while he stated all the reasons he wanted to go home. After two hours I said, "Elder those are not your real reasons for wanting to go home. Is there something else that is wrong?" And he started to cry. He explained about his family situation and the problems his parents had. He received no mail at all from home. He said, "My companions get letters almost every week. I started to get lonesome, you know? I need to feel that someone loves me." I gave him a hug and told him that I love him. The Lord loves him. Heavenly Father loves him. Of course he stayed. The Lord said, "Behold, my bowels are filled with compassion towards you." (3 Nephi 17: 5) We ought to have this compassion.

### **Listening is a Dimension of Love**

I believe we can learn something from these stories. I have also learned a great deal from these experiences.

I believe we ought to listen more with our hearts than with our ears, with deep love and concern for others. We in the Church should listen—in Priesthood, in Primary, in Sunday School, in Sacrament Meeting and any other meeting. Leaders in the Church, such as bishopricks, stake presidencies, youth leaders, elders quorum presidencies, counselors, parents—even in your professions—I firmly believe that as Elder Richard L. Evans put it, "listening is a dimension of love." I also believe that the art of listening is an eternal quest. I believe that listening has a healing power and is the most curable medicine. I feel so strongly that we need to have good listening ears in the Church. I also believe that listening is the best preventive medicine. Listening to a child, a husband, wife, missionaries, students, patients—I believe listening is the most precious expression of your love and concern. I believe we need to listen more carefully to our people. We need to do better.

I believe it was John Raskin who once stated, "Give a little to your children and you get a great deal back." I believe this

principle can be applied in our ministry. I am concerned about one thing in the Church: we don't listen enough. We need to listen more carefully to our people and we especially need to listen to the whispering of the Holy Spirit, the still small voice. We need to do better.

### **The Power of Prayer**

President Hugh B. Brown shared a story of something which once happened to a ship's captain down in the South Atlantic. He had run out of fresh water and his crew was athirst. Another ship came into sight and he signalled, "Send us water. Send us water." And the signal came back, "Let down your bucket. Let down your bucket. There is fresh water all around you. All around you. You are in the Gulf Stream." They let down their buckets and found that this was true. They had not realized that the course of the Gulf Stream as it was driven out had maintained its pure water—its virtue, so to speak. President Brown said they were able to save themselves by that which was all around them, yet they did not know it. He said:

"Brethren and sisters, there is available to you wherever you are, blessings and opportunities, the privilege of teaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ if you let down your buckets, which is your own prayer, into the gulf stream of the Holy Spirit, which is everywhere."

To help find the solution to those who have problems, in any situation we ought to rely upon the true source of power—the power of prayer.

### **The World Needs You**

Thank you for your great service. The world needs you. I am proud of you—the way you use the basic principles of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in helping others. I wish we could have ten, twenty, or fifty thousand LDS psychotherapists like you, or counselors or professional people such as you, because there is a tremendous need in the world today.

Perhaps you don't know, but in Japan when they take care of mentally dysfunctional people often they simply give them a shot. That's all. They don't have any basic or fundamental understanding of the gospel, so they cannot help effectively. I have a friend whose daughter had this experience. I told him not to take her to the hospital. We went to an LDS psychotherapist and within six months he was able to help her return to normal. We must have the pure love of Christ and pray always when we face the problems of our professions.

I am expecting a lot from you because the Church is going to need you, especially the LDS professional people. We will need you.

### **On Service**

Lastly, could I just leave a few of my thoughts with you on service. I believe Man's joy and his sufferings are the reflection of his daily habitual thinking. Whether he is happy or satisfied with his life is the product of what he thinks all day long—whether he is thinking of happiness for others. Our character mold is the sum of our feeling and thoughts. I believe the beauties in life come from betterment of service to others, with Christlike attributes. Elder Neal A. Maxwell once stated, "Celestial criteria measure service, not status." His expression gives us a tremendous inspiration. J. Reuben Clark, Jr. thought King Benjamin had an everlasting impact on us. "It is not important where we serve, but how we serve."

I strongly believe that the happiness of the human soul lies in humble service to others. What is the most beautiful thing you can see in life? The answer is someone who really serves others. The greatest symbolic beauty of our lives is simply to serve others, to give of ourselves. The eternal joy within us is a reflection of our hearts in thinking of other children of our heavenly Father. As we serve others it is so important that we have a pure heart—and a pure heart without a prejudiced mind. I believe the law of a pure heart and mind works like chemistry. Christlike pureness is truly celestial chemistry. It works so miraculously. If we have pure

vision and a pure heart, they will deeply affect the soul of that person, and it will expand.

Of this the Lord said, "But no man is possessor of all things except he be purified and cleansed from all sin. And if ye are purified and cleansed from all sin, ye shall ask whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done" (Doctrine and Covenants 50: 28–29). He has said that when we purify and cleanse ourselves, whatsoever we will ask in the name of the Lord we can accomplish. Because the greatest healing power comes from above, like dew from heaven it will touch the hearts of all of us. It shall be done.

Another thought: I believe that we will go as far as we believe we are able to go. You cannot get something from nothing without effort. In the same sense, you cannot get anything from negative thinking. We ought to be always sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Yes, you can go just as far as your vision.

You know, I shouldn't take the time, but I would like to leave you my testimony. Three and a half years ago President Kimball called me and asked me to come to Salt Lake. As I arrived and went into his room, he said, "The Lord has called you to serve in this capacity. Will you accept?" I could hear, and I understood what he said, but I just could not comprehend it. I said, "President Kimball, could you kindly say it again for me?" With his husky voice he said, "The Lord has called you to be a general authority." Then my wife and I just started crying—not because I was happy—I wasn't! I wasn't ready! I never thought in my whole life that I would be a general authority.

We cried for a long time, and finally President Kimball asked, "Are you there, you folks? Do you want to go back to the hotel to pray about it? Do you think you can accept?" I just couldn't answer. Finally he said, "You folks stay here. I will go out." He started walking out the door and said, "You folks talk and then tell me." After about 30 minutes I said, "President Kimball, please, I just cannot accept this. I know the gospel is true. I know you are a prophet of the Lord." And then he said, "Let me tell you

something. The Lord revealed to me that I should extend the call to you from the land of Japan. Is that a sufficient answer for you?"

My brothers and sisters, I hope and pray humbly that in a small way, a very small way, that I can serve the members of the Church and this great kingdom. I know that this gospel is true. I know that Jesus is the Christ. I know it. I know it. I love Heavenly Father. I know he lives. There is no name under the heavens whereby we might be saved, other than Jesus of Nazareth. And this is His Church and we are His disciples. Thank you very much for your patience. I humbly pray this morning in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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# **Views on Marriage Counseling and Making Church Member Marriages Work**

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Elder Hugh W. Pinnock  
Of the Seventy  
1982

**I** am deeply committed to the concept that the Lord, because of the love he has for his people, has revealed to us the principles, concepts, and techniques needed to make a marriage succeed and has given ways to counsel people whose marriages are in trouble. We are to find which principles will work in each situation and then communicate to the counselee his or her responsibilities in the therapy procedure.

My own counseling at the present time is limited to people who are referred to me by other ecclesiastical leaders, following the proper line of authority, and to a few close friends after they have talked with their bishops and stake presidents. However, my views come from twenty years of marriage counseling that began when I was called as a bishop many years ago.

I deeply respect the insights and skills of many professional counselors. I hope that a few of the concepts I offer might prove helpful in what you are doing. I am deeply committed to the concept, when we are dealing with members of the Church of coordinating counseling between the professional counselor and bishop.

Let me share with you some of the techniques that I have found to be effective and enduring. Let us begin with the initial interview. Whenever possible, I ask both the husband and wife to be present

while I explain to them that during our interviews I will be talking with each of them privately. This lets them know that they will have an opportunity to speak freely about anything that would be too sensitive in the presence of their mate. I also let them know that I will listen with empathy to what they say and will hold the conversations in strictest confidence.

I generally ask the one who appears to be least verbal to communicate his or her feelings first and to explain why the marriage is not meeting their expectations. I ask the other person to remain quiet. I then ask the other one to explain why he or she feels the marriage is not successful. A brief discussion of what they expect from their marriage is usually helpful at this time. Sometimes I observe a little therapy taking place during this period. Often—and unfortunately—even the most primary objectives between them have not been verbalized until now. We also talk about the husband's and wife's professions and education; the names, ages, and accomplishments of the children; and other items to help me assess what each party wants to do to make the marriage succeed.

I then excuse either the husband or wife and interview the remaining person briefly. I use an ecclesiastical approach to learn whether their lives conform to the laws and commandments of God, and whether they accept the divine, eternal truths we have been given by revelation.

I ask if the person would like to express anything confidential during the initial interview. I explain that I can help only to the extent that they are honest with me, and want to live the commandments, are willing to conform to the principles we are discussing, and want to lead the marriage to a healthy position. I let them know, if they haven't already discovered it, that I am their friend and am also a friend of their mate. I ask the person I am talking with to take notes as we talk, and provide paper and pencil if they do not have them. I have learned that we have much better results when those being counseled take notes. I then repeat the solo interview with the other marriage partner.



The three of us then review together the gospel principles of personal responsibility, the immense importance of our earthly life in the eternal perspective and, if applicable, the fact that the eternal family relationship is to continue because of the children that have been born to that union. They learn at this time that the success of the marriage is pretty much up to them.

We then often talk about the principles of forgiveness. Assigning blame is a characteristic that retards any progress toward healing, helping, and building relationships. I sympathize with the difficulty of erasing past feelings and memories that are evil or negative but I encourage them to assess their ability to do so at this time. Usually, an extensive amount of time is spent discussing the need to forgive and be less judgmental. It is within this context that much of the therapy seems to take place. If they are comfortable with advice found in the scriptures, we turn to section 121 of the Doctrine and Covenants and borrow freely from it.

Fortunately, if we are in tune in our counseling, we are endowed with the companionship of the Holy Ghost. While listening to the couple I often find myself praying for enlightenment to find the way to help each of them want to conform with the gospel principles that will save their marriage.

While preparing this article, I have considered how much of the interview time I spend listening and how much time they are listening to the ideas I want to share with them. My leaning is towards a directive approach in counseling. It happens to fit my own style better than a more passive system that has become popular since Carl Rogers did his fascinating work a number of years ago. An ideal ratio would be to have them do the talking about eighty percent of the time and for me to speak for the remainder of an hour. I believe counseling sessions generally should last no longer than one hour. In fact, most sessions, after the initial confrontation, seem to require about thirty minutes.

I ask each of them to use the notes they have taken during our interviews and give each an assignment to complete before we talk again. Because I often take a few notes also, we can compare to see if we are on the same track. If I observe problems that seem quite

easy to solve during the first interview—and I usually do—I assign them to decide how they can eliminate those difficulties. I also ask them to bring back in writing the steps they are willing to take to work toward a solution of the total problem. I want them to begin experiencing success at this point, even if it is minor. Often, writing out what they are willing to do begins to reduce the stress.

The reason for each of these steps usually is obvious to those being counseled. When people accept the responsibility to use eternal principles to make their marriage succeed, it almost always produces dramatic results. I remind them often of my concern for the success of their marriage and for their own wellbeing. At the same time, I strongly impress upon them the necessity for them to exert tremendous energy to take the action that is necessary. I inform them of the fact that rarely is a problem unsolvable or a condition impossible.

I have learned by sad experience that only those who seriously want to make their marriage and families succeed will complete the assignments and use the principles I suggest. Their response to the initial interview lets me know whether to continue counseling or to terminate it.

Let me give some examples. If either partner is committing unwholesome and unholy sexual practices, dignity, self-confidence, and the the guidance of the Holy Spirit are lost from their marriage until they change their behavior. If they are unwilling to make the change, that unwillingness signals to me that the time is not right for solving their marriage problems. If the family is in financial difficulty but is unwilling to set up a family budget and will not respond to my advice, then I can be of little help to them.

If I were to title this procedure I would simply call it Therapy by Participation: it includes being candid with each other (or self) and with me.

For a period of seven to eight months, I gave an address titled, "Making a Marriage Work." I had never had as large a number of requests for a talk or an article I had given or written as I had for this particular presentation. Even though people found a number of the principles to be helpful, I believe the real reason for so many

requests is that so many marriages are in trouble. I have not included in this address some of the stories and examples that I used in that presentation, but I have retained the key points. I altered the eighth principle to include language that conforms with my expanding feeling I have about the principles and advice it contains. Obviously, many people do not go to their bishop in the first place, but seek counseling sometimes from incompetent people elsewhere. That is why I have stated that point as I have. Otherwise, the basic content of that talk is what follows.

The first idea I suggest is fundamental: Bring the Savior and his teachings into our hearts and homes. To really succeed, an eternal marriage must be Christ-centered. Though directed to priesthood bearers, the principles in Doctrine and Covenants section 121 apply to both husbands and wives. Beginning with verse 41, “No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood”—and here are the characteristics by which power and influence can be maintained—“only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; by kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile.”

Going to verse 45, “Let thy bowels also be full of charity. . . to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.”

Just as a building must have a strong foundation if it is to endure, a family needs the sure foundation of the Savior and his teachings. We are a spiritual people, believing in spiritual principles. But first and foremost we are to use the Spirit in solving problems and in receiving personal revelations that will guide us. Obviously praying together often—at least daily and hopefully at least twice daily—will lead to this success.

Second, do not feel that an intense disagreement in a marriage indicates that it cannot succeed. If we are to really communicate, we must be honest when we disagree. We must express hurts and let our feelings show. We can do this without becoming angry or

inconsiderate. People who keep things bottled up inside are candidates for a variety of illnesses. And equally serious, that approach does not solve problems.

Serious disagreements between marriage partners do not mean that the two are becoming allergic to one another or that the situation is hopeless. It merely means that they are human and that they are not yet perfect. If they acknowledge their differences in a mature way, they will recognize that their marriage is okay. They simply have, in this situation, failed to communicate. They can work out their differences without jeopardizing their relationship.

Third, never make your mate the object of jokes either in private or in public. Partners who poke fun at their mates may think of it as good-natured humor. It is not. It is degrading and dangerous. To make a joke about private things a husband or wife did at home is a form of ridicule and is a way of demeaning him or her. Too often the laughter conceals a spirit of malice or anger and can cause hurt feelings. Couples who respect each other do not resort to such degradation.

Fourth, do not smother one another with excessive restrictions. A loving wife of many years shared with me one of the secrets of her beautiful marriage. She told me, "It is my duty to maintain an atmosphere in our home in which my husband can reach his full potential. And you know, he is a busy businessman, bishop, and father. In turn, he helps me reach my potential." With her encouragement, he was an outstanding bishop. She later served as a counselor in two auxiliary presidencies and then as president of the stake Relief Society. She had her own room where she sewed, painted, and wrote lovely poetry. He felt comfortable in going fishing, doing some painting, and growing in ways that interested him. Neither of these marriage partners was being smothered by a selfish mate. Both respected the other's needs and goals.

The most fulfilling of all marriages seem to be those in which the husband and wife together commit their lives to the Savior's keeping. They are interested in one another, and yet set each other free to grow and mature; never free to flirt but free to take on new challenges and to pursue new interests. Jealousy is a subtle form of

bondage and is the most smothering of human passions. Husbands and wives who fear the loss of a partner's love weaken their relationship by holding on too tightly. A husband who thinks to himself, "I won't let her out of my sight," is actually expressing a fear that might push her away. Husbands and wives should allow each other plenty of room for personal growth and expression. When both marriage partners are able to develop their talents and interests, the marriage is less likely to suffer from boredom and narrowness.

Fifth, compliment each other sincerely and often. A middle-aged wife once told me, "Somebody has to keep my husband humble. He gets so much attention from others that he needs to be brought down a peg or two. He gets too big for his britches." How sad. Every husband needs a wife who will build him up. Every wife needs a husband to honor and respect her. Building each other with sincere compliments is never a sign of weakness; it is the right thing to do. Anyone who can kneel before a sacred altar with a partner and exchange vows for eternity surely can see enough good in that partner to emphasize the good when talking with others. So often in counseling situations, a divorced woman or man will say, "John has been gone now for three years. How I wish he would come back. The loneliness is unbearable. I neglected to tell him so many things." Or they will say, "If only I had let her know how good she was in so many ways. What a fool I was. I could never learn to compliment her. I was always pointing out her mistakes. When I see how some husbands and wives treat each other so coldly and with such indifference, I want to scream at them to wake up before it is too late. I want to tell them to quit their sarcasm and, instead, to encourage each other."

Wives and husbands tend to become the persons described in the compliments their spouses pay them. They will do almost anything to live up to the compliments and encouragement of a proud wife or husband.

Sixth, never resort to the silent treatment. Always be open and straightforward with each other. Too often, we may respond to marital tension by "clamming up" or "taking a walk." A young wife from the southwest corner of Salt Lake County asked me to "talk

some sense into her husband” saying, “All he does is clam up when we disagree. He won’t communicate. He just walks out the door. When he cools down, he comes home, but he is like ice until I make up with him. He can go on for days or even a week or two without saying a word.” I have learned that we are wrong even to say to our mate, “Just leave me alone. I am going through a rough time. Let me work it out by myself. I just don’t want to be around anybody right now.” That not only is unfair and a genuine insult, but it is stupid. What is marriage if it is not sharing and helping one another through crises? We have heard all of the excuses: “I am going through the change of life; I am not feeling well; things are tough at the office; it’s that time of the month; I have had a bad day at the ward; I lost a big case; my nerves are bad.” But none of these excuses gives the moral right to shut out someone who loves you. Keep the door to your heart open. The times when we shut others out often are the times when we need their help the most. Of course we all need times of privacy, time to think things out, meditate, and pray. We should understand and respect this need in others. However, we should never be inconsiderate or unappreciative of a concerned husband or wife who is trying to help.

Seventh, say “I am sorry,” and really mean it. Contrary to a popular saying, love, in part, means learning how to say, “I am sorry.” So often when we make mistakes, sometimes innocently, damage has been done and an apology is in order. Along with learning to say, “I am sorry,” husbands and wives must learn to say, “I forgive.” Jesus taught that to be forgiven by our Heavenly Father depends, in part, on our ability to forgive those who trespass against us. Even when a husband or wife has cheated, we should be willing to accept their true repentance. Some of the strongest marriages of which I am aware have been between partners who could say, “I am sorry,” and who forgive. In addition to saying they are sorry and really meaning it, husbands and wives must avoid bringing up the past. Thousands of marriages have survived the most critical problems and have been successful only because godly sorrow for sin was followed by Christ-like forgiveness.

Eighth, never turn to a third party in a time of trouble, except your bishop. In sensitive and inspired ways, he will direct you to a competent Latter-day Saint counselor if that is needed. Someone is always ready and eager to console a hurting wife or husband and to side with them. And when marriage partners have no one to talk with at home, unfortunately, too many seek a friend elsewhere. That is where almost all adultery begins. It can happen in the neighborhood, in a ward choir, at the office, or almost anywhere else. Secret affairs begin innocently enough—just by talking about mutual hurts. But then comes a dependency period that too often ends in transferring loyalty and affection, followed by adultery. Never confide your marriage troubles to a third party, no, not even to the closest friend of your own sex. He or she may be the first to tell your troubles to another, becoming the one to hurt you most severely. Lean on the Savior, and rely upon your bishop or stake president. This system, which the Lord has given us, is simple but it works so well.

Ninth, retain the joy in your marriage. God intends us to find joy in life (see Nehemiah 8:10 and 2 Nephi 2:25). Most marriages begin with joy, and those that succeed retain it. When a marriage loses its happiness, it becomes weak and vulnerable. Find a happy home and you will find a joyful couple at the helm. Husbands and wives who no longer laugh and play together are losing their love for each other and their capacity to stay together. True love includes a joyful, almost childlike quality. In other words, have fun.

Tenth, pray often. Adam and Eve, during a period of insecurity, compounded their brief rebellion by hiding from God's presence. God does not hide; only man does. God was vitally involved with that first marriage, and he is just as concerned and involved in every marriage today. Ideally, husband and wife and their children will kneel together in prayer. But, when that is impossible, you husbands and wives be sure to pray for a strong marriage and for the insight needed to be sensitive and caring.

These are common sense and simple ideas. In many ways and for several reasons, they might be considered inappropriate for a professional journal such as this. Simply ask this question: "If

people would incorporate these principles in their relationship with their spouse, would not the results be positive?"

A loved and most practical doctor friend of our family, who became legendary as a "healer and builder of people," was often asked why his brand of medicine was so universally helpful. Yes, he was well-read and kept amazingly up to date, but his answer caused a depth of understanding beyond past experiences when he simply replied, "I attempt to conform my practice to the healing procedures and counsel of the Great Physician." Perhaps each of us will become more effective if we consistently in our practice follow this enduring principle: that when eternal truth is communicated simply it provides the power to make well those who are sick and confused.



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## “The Good Part”

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Barbara B. Smith  
Relief Society General President  
2 April 1982

Following the story of the Good Samaritan in which Jesus instructed us to be of service to those in need, we read in Luke, chapter 10, verses 38–42 about the visit of Jesus to the home of Martha and Mary:

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister named Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, Dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she should help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

This scripture suggests a number of things, but I should like to direct your attention to the phrase “and Mary hath *chosen* that *good part*, which shall not be taken away from her.” I am impressed each day with the responsibility I have to help women choose that good part which shall not be taken away from them, and as I consider your contributions to troubled clients I suspect that you are most successful when you help those who seek your guidance to come to an understanding of that most human of all activities: choosing.

I do not believe that you or I can give the good part to anyone else. I believe that they must choose it for themselves. Yet I am equally certain that we have an obligation to help others make meaningful choices.

How do we help? You know ways that I do not know, but I do know that as an individual and as Relief Society President there are at least three areas in which I can have an influence.

First of all, in the Relief Society curriculum and programs we try, as the Church does in all of its programs, to help people understand that each one has a choice to make and that choice is a God-given privilege. The ancient prophet, Joshua, declared to the Jews “choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15). In later times the prophet, President David O. McKay, explained to us, “Next to the bestowal of life itself, the right to direct our lives is God’s greatest gift to man.” Knowing that she has a choice, each woman—and I think it equally true for each man—then needs to understand why choices are important and how to recognize them.

A second area in which the Relief Society is very significantly involved is helping women to enlarge their understanding of the process that must be followed in order to make good choices. I think I can help women with whom I have considerable personal interaction to better understand this principle. I know that you spend your professional hours helping the sick to come to a place from which they can begin to make choices again.

A third challenge that we in Relief Society try to respond to is to give instruction and understanding to help individual women recognize that choosing is an everyday, lifelong process. It is never a thing fully achieved. This is particularly true if a woman is to choose “the good part” that will not dissipate or be taken away.

Each woman has a choice. From time to time I hear someone say that Mormon women do not have the right of choice or I read that Mormon women have no opportunity to choose the direction of their own lives. But I am absolutely certain that Mormon women, like all women in America today, have never enjoyed an environment so filled with options as the one in which we are

privileged to live. We have the right to vote, the right of legal entity, the right to sue and to be sued, the right to education—in fact, I cannot think of a single fundamental right of citizenship that has not been extended to women. I know that there is inequity in the world of work and I am sure there are state laws which may need modification. But the truth is that a woman in today's world has more access to the nation's opportunities and resources than any other generation of women. This means that a woman may be part of the process of problem-solving in a very direct way. This means that she can enter into the mainstream of life from many, many doors.

I study the gospel constantly and I am more and more aware of the Law of Agency. There is no more profoundly important doctrine than this in our whole structure of gospel teachings. It is not only a privilege; it is a right, if you will, but it is also a responsibility for each human being to have the divinely-given and guaranteed option for agency. One of the fundamental reasons for being in mortality is to have the right to make responsible choices regarding good and evil. Therefore, it becomes critically important for each of us to understand that we have choices and also to understand the meaning of those choices. The gospel teaches us that there is responsibility in choice, and that the essential elements of choice which lead us to a oneness with eternal things are available to all no matter what the circumstances of their life.

Too often it is suggested that choice wants to be accompanied by freedom from consequences. It is no service to perpetuate such a notion. One great contribution of the gospel teachings to our lives lies in helping us understand that we do not belong to a capricious world of mere chance. Rather, we belong to a universe governed by law. Natural happenings and human behavior are both subject to the rule of law. If we throw a ball into the air, it will come down in response to the law of gravity. If we give love, love will be returned to us—perhaps in ways we least expect, but nevertheless it will come back to us. Knowing this, we recognize that there is an undergirding to human experience which is based upon laws and the natural consequences of those principles of truth, and it helps us to understand the nature of choice.

I believe most of the sisters in Relief Society receive great strength from their knowledge of eternal principles, especially when circumstances become enormously stressful. Let me share with you a few experiences and letters.

Recently, I returned from a trip where I met a young mother in an airport who had a three-year-old child in a stroller. Before our conversation concluded, this vivacious mother told me about the day she and her then two-year-old were out in their yard. The little girl ran over to the neighbor's just as they backed out of the driveway in their station wagon, and they ran over her. Doctors determined that the baby would never walk again because of the injury done to her spinal cord. I couldn't hold back the tears; yet, the mother was hopeful, happy and vibrant. She had one child at home and was expecting another. I could see that her choice would have been either to mope around helplessly or to do all that she could to bring happiness to that child, to live worthy of the blessings of the Lord, and to have peace in her own heart. This is the path she had chosen.

Recently I received a letter from a sister who lost a child in a drowning accident. She wrote to tell me about her experiences as a mother. She said that after the birth of her first child she worked full-time, doing extremely well in her chosen work and having great opportunities in that area. Her first little girl was raised, in the mother's own words, "largely by a babysitter." Then she gave birth to another daughter, and decided to stay home with the two little girls. She described the fun and laughter the three of them had together as she learned to be a mother and a homemaker and won anew the love and companionship of her first daughter. Now let me quote a few paragraphs:

Then July 1980 came, that awful day. Our little daughter left our yard and in a matter of seconds fell into our neighbor's ditch. We searched and searched for her. My husband found her and pulled her out of the ditch and tried to breathe the breath of life back into her. I felt that her spirit had left her body. The shock was terrible. All I could think was that God would not take her. She was too hard to get here and he had already taken a teenage boy from our neighborhood just [the] week [before]. The doctor, being a neighbor, got there right away. He worked on her at the hospital for an hour.

I feel that her spirit suffered pain to re-enter her body just because of her love for us. I felt her respond when I would touch her and talk to her. All night we stayed with her, and silently prayed for her life.

My husband and I went the next day for a walk. I knew his pain was great. We talked. I told him I did not know what to do anymore. I didn't want her to suffer, yet I couldn't give her up. I guess it was in the park that day that we finally faced reality and were willing to let God's will be done. When we went back it seemed as though her life was slipping quietly away from her. She no longer responded. Her heart rate was dropping. The doctor came and he told us that she had very severe brain damage. They called him away and when he came back he said, "She is gone." I shall always remember him, with tears in his eyes, saying those words. . . . We then went to her room. I picked her body up in my arms and held her for the last time. I felt her spirit next to me and I shall always remember that feeling I had when it left. We came home to face our house empty without her. I thought of the poor older daughter. She had not held her little sister. There was a deep pain within her.

Through the love and support of family, friends, neighbors, and ward members, we survived this most difficult time in our lives. But I now know the joys of being a mother, a supportive wife. I also know the pain of losing my child and longing to pick her up in my arms once more.

I have grown even closer to Chantell now. I tell her constantly that I love her. I hug her often and sometimes cradle her in my arms to comfort her. No matter how old a child gets, it still needs that love that only a mother can give them.

I am thankful that Heavenly Father gave us such an important role in life, and I will always strive to better myself as a mother and helpmate to my husband.

Let me share one more of last week's letters. This sister describes her problem in these words:

When my High Priest husband suddenly left us—his family—and announced he wanted a divorce, I was heartbroken. I was also in big trouble. He left me five confused teenagers and \$50.00. The only job I'd had was as a part-time custodian at the meeting house and I'd never been allowed to learn to drive!

My only recourse was prayer and after the necessary soul searching and realization and confession of my own flaws I got up from my knees one evening knowing that everything would be "OK," and also that somehow this was an opportunity for me. My life had been put in my own hands in order that I might become what my Heavenly Father

wanted me to be. I didn't stop being devastated; I just charged ahead anyway!

Let me tell you how the Lord and the Relief Society prepared me and helped me through all this.

As a Stake Board Member (welfare, homemaking), I had worked with young special interests for two years. I knew the program and the pitfalls. It really helped.

A whole year before my separation I had worked hard to complete a project for Relief Society. It had been very spiritually lifting. I made some commitments to the Lord and discussed my eternal goals with Him. At this time it was continually impressed upon me that there would be a change in my life and that I should be ready. I know Relief Society prepared me spiritually to want this progress.

My testimony was tried. It was life's darkest hour. I didn't doubt the Church or the gospel but my place in it. I clung and struggled and passed the test.

My calling in the Church was to teach the Spiritual Living lessons. The first lesson's purpose was: "The latter-day saint woman is comforted to know that all things work together for good for she who is righteous." I have never forgotten that principle.

I drove. I didn't learn first, I just drove. I knew my job was too lonely, too low paying and not offering enough growth so I went to the employment office and took some aptitude tests. Then I went to the junior college for academic counseling. They offered me a job teaching time management, a seminar I'd taught in Relief Society. Armed with confidence I managed to persuade DuPont to hire me as an artist. I had only a high school education, no work experience, and no training. In place of a portfolio I took my orientation chart from, you guessed it, Relief Society and some program covers! The motto among the sisters was "keep your knees warm:" we literally prayed me into that job. I'd been single two months.

I struggled, how I struggled with the kids, the house, the car-broke down eleven times in three months, and money. I lost a fender one midnight picking up a young man from work. I prayed for strength. One Sunday in sacrament while listening to a talk on prayer I realized I was wrong. I was praying for strength! I immediately bowed my head and prayed for relief. Three weeks later I was in the hospital. I had had some trouble focusing my eyes and the eye doctor sent me on to a neurologist. I walked out of his office that sunny January afternoon with the words brain tumor ringing in my ears. I stood on the sidewalk and literally didn't know what to do. I wanted to run to my husband—he didn't exist! In that moment my marriage ended. In the car was a

teenage boy who needed me. Who could I lean on? The Savior. My Savior.

After I had been examined and tested they discovered, not a tumor, but multiple sclerosis. I was paralyzed on one side of my face, it left. In March, two months later, I went slowly blind in one eye. It took six months altogether but it came back quite a bit.

Now look at the Lord's hand in this part. My job was temporary and had no benefits, no insurance, no sick leave. I was uninsurable and the day my divorce was final, I would be unprotected. The day before my divorce I was offered another job with full benefits. I took it. The work is not as satisfying—I do book and video illustration and whatever else—nor as challenging—but I was insured! I had to wait until January 8th to be actually covered so for five months I stayed well. In January we were offered an additional benefit—long term disability! It took effect on February 1st. On February 10th I went into the hospital and February 11th my left eye went blind. Sometimes a door must close before another may open. I can see enough to read and write and get around. Unless more vision returns I will have to seek a new career. (After a month it has finally started to return.) I'm sure my Heavenly Father and Relief Society will turn out to have prepared me for it! All that I am and all that I have I owe to the Church.

Yes, sometimes I am lonely. And I know that the answer is to do something about it myself. There aren't a lot of single women here my age—I'm 41—and no men. I'm very careful about where I go and what I do and that is limiting, but it's also protecting and I value that. I have a constant struggle to get them to let me serve. The priesthood worries about my time and my car and my strength. I was directing a play last fall and was asked if it was over-tiring me. I told them "Never you mind I need this." There's always more ways to not be lonely than to have a date.

And I don't always get all the services I need. My washer has been on the fritz for a year. My home teacher has forgotten. But he never forgets me. I believe it is not the service we need so much as the emotional support. And, of course, the easiest and best cure is to go and help someone else. Single doesn't have to mean selfish. Let me serve.

I could go on and on but I'm embarrassed already at the length of this letter. Now I've been single for 22 months. How I've grown. And Relief Society and my Father and the priesthood are always there. They always will be.

Then she ends it with this paragraph:

I hope this letter sounds as nice as I mean it to. I know life has challenges. We knew that when we came. Don't worry about me, my

patriarchal blessing promises me good health until I'm content to be called home. And I'm too busy to go!

Both of these letters attest that we have problems—problems that are both grave and ongoing and problems that may never be solved completely. But I wanted you to hear how these two sisters have found great strength in gospel teachings. They have chosen to invite the Spirit of the Lord into their problem-solving and they have found peace. Their problems have not gone away, but they are comforted. They have courage to go forward. I believe that women who know and understand the truth of their relationship with their Heavenly Father can have this great peace.

There are angry letters which come to my desk too. There are bitter women who come into my office and berate the Relief Society for not solving their problems. Some men and women tell me that God should not allow suffering. Others are constantly defensive and justify themselves as they play the role of martyr or victim. There are those who find flaws in someone else's life to justify their own bitterness.

I only want to reaffirm that making choices in relationship to eternal principles will bring comfort and peace to the troubled soul who can and does turn to God and seeks comfort. I know there are some who feel they cannot turn to God and I am grateful that there are people like you who can help them come to a wholeness sufficient to let them take hold of their own lives and direct its course again.

We approach the problems of the women of the Church from different perspectives. I have been called by my Heavenly Father through His prophet to do a very special work among the women of the Church, and I want very much to help them improve their health and enrich the quality of their lives through Relief Society. You as professionals learn of the needs of women from your training and your clinical, listening ear. I learn of the needs of women from my experienced but not-so-trained ear and I learn of them through Relief Society women around the world. Still, I know we must work together for the good of Latter-day Saint women. We should help each other and not perform in such a way



as to take over for each other. Both of us have a responsibility to them.

Let me suggest some ways that I see us working together to meet the needs of the individual women. I want you to know that I welcome dialogue with any of you that will help me improve my understanding of their needs and increase my vision of how to be more helpful to them as they meet their great challenges.

I know that you see women who need to have the ability to cope with life-threatening situations. At some point they will have to rely on themselves to adapt to the circumstances of their lives over which they have no control. This development can happen through Relief Society. The Relief Society can provide information and experience in disaster response as well as emotional support and companionship. If a woman accepts these opportunities, she can develop the ability to cope with life-threatening situations. She can deal with them personally, becoming strong enough to direct herself through the very difficult circumstances of her life, as my young friend from Texas wrote.

The experiences of cooperative effort in meeting emergencies outside her own life also have great value. Relief Society sisters have rallied together from the very beginning of the organization. The first challenge was to relieve the suffering of the poor. Later responses have helped sisters through long-term illnesses or sustained them during earthquakes and floods.

You see women who cannot cope with being able to provide for others or take care of themselves. At some point in time they will have to learn to be decisive in planning and resourceful living. The Relief Society provides teaching and training in homemaking, career planning, multiple skills, and application of gospel principles. Perhaps some of these encouragements can be of help to you as you find others to support these women.

You see women who need esteem through recognition for their accomplishments. At some time they will have to gain emotional stability and congruency. Relief Society may be the only opportunity for some to give to others, or to provide leadership in a setting outside of the home.

You see women who need to go beyond themselves. We both know that at some point they will have to take risks and extend themselves to others beyond their family. The Relief Society provides an arena for risking themselves. Within its programs lie encouragement and multiple opportunity for giving compassionate service.

You see women who need feelings of self-worth. We know that at some point they will have to strengthen their sense of self. The Relief Society provides the means to acquire attitudes and gain skills of mastery over environment. We have lessons teaching the principles of managing temporal matters. We study the scriptures to gain an insight into attitudes.

You see women who need to love someone and to be loved. They will have to learn to give selflessly to another person and build loving relationships with others. Relief Society provides a truly remarkable opportunity to give to others through compassionate service and provides many opportunities to build friendships by working together.

You see women who need to belong and to be a part of something greater than themselves. We both know that they will have to enter the human community at some point in time both as a receiver and as a giver. Relief Society provides callings, opportunity, encouragement, and stimulation to give to others. There is, for instance, the visiting teaching program in which, by assignment, we go out to call upon others to become aware of their needs and then to give creative ideas on how to meet those needs.

You see women who need to experience congruency between belief and behavior. At some point in time they will have to come to a test of faith. Relief Society provides a support system for each woman and conveys a value for her, accepting her as she is.

You see women who need faith in the possibility of something better. At some point in time these women will have to make a commitment to covenants and gain assurance of an eternal process. Relief Society teaches of eternal potential in the midst of everyday realities. More than that, Relief Society offers opportunities to

expand each sister's knowledge and experience in new areas of knowledge—areas having to do with eternal concepts.

I know I have not exhausted the list of things you see, and by listing a few of the ways in which Relief Society is capable of responding I have not intended to suggest that Relief Society can do it all. I only wanted to suggest to you a few of the possibilities in Relief Society. Hopefully, you can see ways in which Relief Society and Relief Society sisters might become part of the environment which helps the individual women you work with.

Hopefully, also, we will be able to better understand needs and on occasion the malfunctioning of our program. Such awareness might help us to provide more effective help to the women we serve and to the women you are helping.

I am aware of the importance of confidences. I respect your professional, confidential relationship with clients and I would not expect you to break ethical privacy to share information with the Relief Society president without the permission of the client. On the other hand, I hope you understand that a Relief Society president also has a confidential relationship with a woman when she perceives apparent concerns. The Relief Society President, under the responsibility of her calling, should not divulge those confidences to you although she should divulge them to the Bishop because of his divine calling. Obviously this means we have to learn how to become accessible to the individual woman.

I am extremely aware of the importance of agency. I know that a woman's agency is of critical importance to her as she seeks to work out her own salvation and exaltation. I would hope that neither you as professionals nor we as called Relief Society workers would ever forget our responsibility in this matter. We must not deny a woman her agency. We must not seek to remove agency from women. We must not confuse a woman's agency.

I pray that we may both have wisdom and judgment in giving help when we can, striving always to help those we serve become independently able to take on their own challenges and successfully address them.

I think Relief Society has a long and distinguished history of urging women to take a positive attitude toward the problems they face. Sometimes people have suggested that this was an unrealistic position which brought more harm than good. It was never intended that way. From the long-term vision of gospel teaching, such a positive position is really only designed to help our sisters to believe they can meet their challenges and to give them encouragement to keep that positive thrust. The gospel is a gospel of hope. Living the principles of this divine good news helps human beings rise above the circumstances of their lives and become more perfect.

We can seek wisdom and knowledge. We can learn truth. We can give service. We can give love. We can be loved. It is our choice. Agency, when exercised, gives us freedom to become what we have within us to become. Through the use of agency the authentic self emerges. The scriptures attest that the power is in us to do much good, for we are agents unto ourselves. God grant us the vision to live accordingly—to choose the “good part, which shall not be taken away.”

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## Truth is the Best Treatment

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Elder Rex D. Pinegar  
Of the Presidency of the Seventy  
30 September 1983

I appreciate the honor of being with you this morning to talk with you about some things that I hope will be useful as you look at your professional opportunities and the Church. I cannot talk about anything that we do in education, family or civic matters without referring to the Church because to me the Church is the vehicle through which the gospel of Jesus Christ reaches the lives of people and permits them the full advantage of the gospel. Family, education, and civic matters depend upon the gospel of Jesus Christ for their full significance.

As professional people you have at least two things that are very important in your lives. These two things are, first, the gospel and, second, your experiences-your training in the professions of the world that relate to dealing with people and their problems. I commend you for your acceptance of both of these great responsibilities.

You have accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ not only in principle but also as a way of life. You cannot separate what you do from that commitment. You have had some discussions about the challenges that that represents. I believe the real life we are hoping to become a part of is life in the gospel of Jesus Christ, for that is life eternal. Therefore, all that we do needs to have eternal life as our objective.

There is no group of people that I admire more than you. It is very difficult these days to get anyone to be interested in solving problems. People come to you hoping to find a way to resolve the conflicts that are in their lives. The training you have had should enhance your ability to do that. And it will, so long as that training is utilized within the framework of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now let me differentiate between the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Church of Jesus Christ. Some years ago, we were with Elder Boyd K. Packer at a mission presidents' seminar. He asked the mission presidents and their wives this question: "Tell me what is wrong with this quote, 'Go ye therefore unto all the world and teach the Church to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.'" The error was obvious. We do not go out to teach the Church. We go out to teach the gospel. In your professions, you are not going to the people that come to you or going out among the people of your profession to teach them the Church. Yet, while you may not be required to lead your clients to the Church, by your own profession of a testimony of Jesus Christ and acceptance of this gospel, you are committed to lead them to the truth. You realize that until your clients recognize the truth in its many facets of living, they will not be helped in eternal ways. If we do not teach them, counsel them according to true principles, we will only add to their confusion.

Now what are some of those truths? First, the greatest truth that we will ever learn is that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true. It is true that man is created in the image of God, that is what gives man his eternal value. For if man were but a creation of men, he would have value only so long as men viewed him as someone of worth. But, when individuals come to understand that they are children of God, that their being is an eternal being and therefore has eternal value, that places within them a sense of belonging to something greater than the experiences of living here in the earth. Then, any single experience need not overwhelm them or destroy their sense of self-worth.

In the 1962 October general conference of the Church, President David O. McKay gave a talk about the most satanic and destructive instructions that mankind had ever faced. He described

these as instructions that had come into the educational systems since the turn of the century. He said these doctrines, if followed, could destroy man.

Now what were those doctrines? Those doctrines were doctrines which said that man is good and, therefore, it is his environment that makes him bad. If that were true, and we are to help men, then what must we focus on? His environment. By manipulating the environment, then, we would change man from being something bad or experiencing whatever is wrong with him to being something good. Such false teachings would place man as the ultimate in authority. If man is the ultimate good, and all else is bad, then man makes the decision as to that which is of the greatest and highest value. If we contrast that with the gospel of Jesus Christ, we discover the fallacy that man is the ultimate authority. Man can do and does good things and bad things.

The gospel of Jesus Christ says that man is fallen. And therefore, in order for man to realize his greatest potential, he must look up to that condition from which he fell—the condition of an acceptable relationship with God. When man returns to that condition, then his environment takes on those same characteristics. Our correct focus, then, should be on the improvement of man and let man improve his environment. Otherwise, man becomes so involved in the activities of his environment that the resulting entanglement causes him to lose the perception of himself as being free to act for himself rather than to be acted upon. So first, man is a child of God who has “fallen” from His presence.

Second, man has agency. The only way for an individual to accept his responsibilities is to understand that he is free to act for himself. If man were not free to act for himself, then he would be subject to others and their direction. He would have no control over his own future and therefore, no possibility of freedom—freedom to be what he really desires to be. (When I say man, I hope you understand I am talking about woman as well. Each of us is more than just a nondescript person, each is somebody—an individual.) When we recognize there is agency in our lives, we rejoice that we are free to act. We can face any problem, any

challenge with confidence for we are in a very real sense in control of what we will be, for the decisions are ours.

A number of years ago I was working in a reading clinic at the University of Southern California. There was a young man, about fourteen years of age, who came to this clinic. His difficulty was not reading, but that was the expression of his problems and the reason he came to the clinic. When I looked at Richard, I realized that we had a little bit of a challenge. He was a little bit larger than I. I said, "Richard, I'm really glad you're here." "Umm." I was hoping he would speak. He looked at me as if to say, "Okay, I'm here, now what" or almost as if to say, "so what?" "So Richard, let me find out a little bit about yourself. What do you like to do?" Nothing. After a few more hardly audible replies from Richard a question hit pay dirt: "If you could be anyone in this world that you wanted, who would it be?" He said, "I want to be like my dad." "Why is that, Richard?" There was a softening that came almost immediately. He said, "I want to be like him because my mother loved him."

You need to know a little bit about Richard and his dad. Richard was fourteen. His father had been in prison for eleven years. But he wanted to be like his dad. Why? Because his mother loved his father. What did Richard want? The love of his mother. Richard wanted an identity with someone that he knew loved him. Richard was a big kid who was supposed to know a lot of things, but he had a little bit of a problem. He never had quite been able to reconcile the loss of his father. His mother always talked about his father, and Richard felt trapped. He didn't realize he could act for himself in some positive ways that would change his circumstance and, especially, would change his perception of himself.

I discovered that Richard had already learned to read. What he hadn't learned was how to deal with success. When a person is successful, certain things are expected of him. It was that expectation level that he was unable to maintain. Again, he did not realize that he was free to act, that he could act for himself and that the very things that he did made a difference not only in his life but in the lives of everyone around him. A new concept for Richard



was that the reaction others had toward him was based upon his own actions.

Yes, to understand that we are free to act is a very important thing. It is an important part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Heavenly Father has said that men are free to act for themselves. They are agents unto themselves. When we meet with our clients, this truth may be a hard thing for them to understand. The truth is that we must want the consequences of what we want. All actions bring with them consequences. Consequences are sometimes things that we discover we don't want. It is like a man who just purchased a new car. He really wanted that new car. He loved that new car. He got in it. He drove it. He liked it, and he wanted it. What didn't he want? The payments. He didn't want to make the payments. After two or three months he didn't like the payments, but he wanted the car. He quit making the payments, and he soon discovered he couldn't keep the car without them. He lost the car and then what happened? He began to feel like everyone was against him.

Life is filled with consequences. The scriptures teach us that we were placed here in the earth to accomplish a grand purpose: "And we will prove them herewith to see if they will do whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them." We are in the earth with the great consequence. The consequence is to see if we will do whatsoever God, not man, will command us. Our consequences then are the result of our actions. If we want the right consequences, we must want to do what our Heavenly Father wants us to do, and we must not let ourselves become bound by what men want us to do. Joseph Smith's experience with Martin Harris is a prime example of this.

You will recall that Martin Harris, being married, wanted to please his wife. But Martin wanted to please his wife so much so that when he went to Joseph and asked Joseph if he could show the materials they had translated to his wife, he was very disappointed when Joseph said no to him. Joseph told Martin the Lord had told him He would tell him who he could reveal the translated materials to, and it just happened to be that Martin Harris' wife was not one of them. So Martin, I suppose, went back to his wife

and told her she could not view the materials. She must have said “yes” with some authority because Martin went back to Joseph to ask him a second time. Joseph agreed to ask the Lord again. The Lord said no the first time, and He said no the second time. Joseph told Martin no a second time. Martin went back and told his wife. His wife must have said, “Yes, I want to see the translated materials. If I don’t get to see them you don’t get the money. I won’t let you mortgage the farm.” Martin consented to ask Joseph a third time. Joseph asked the Lord a third time. The answer from the Lord is very interesting on the third request. First He said no, and then He gave conditions under which a “yes” could be given. Joseph then took His answer as meaning it’s alright Joseph; sure you go right ahead. So Joseph went back and gave the conditions to Martin Harris and made very explicit the instructions which he gave. Martin said, “Yes sir, I’ll do it.”

Well you know the story—the translated materials were lost or stolen. At least they were put away. Joseph was in such a state of frustration that he could not be calmed. How did the Lord counsel Joseph? In the third section of the Doctrine and Covenants, we have a tremendous description of what most people face in the world today when they discover that their lives are out of harmony with truth. There, the Lord speaking to Joseph said, “Remember, remember that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men.” Now why wasn’t the work of God frustrated? Because He does not vary. The Lord does not vary from that which He has said. Neither does He turn to the left hand nor to the right hand, but his course is one eternal round. Therefore, He is not frustrated, but who was frustrated? Joseph.

Now what that teaches me is that if we desire to keep from being frustrated, we must make certain that there is more of the Lord in our work than there is of ourselves. We must want to be in harmony with the truth which the Lord speaks. The Lord said to Joseph on that occasion, that he should not have gone on in the persuasions of men, “You should have been faithful; and he [God] would have been with you in every time of trouble.” Now the Lord didn’t promise Joseph that he wouldn’t have any troubles. He did promise him, however, that if he would listen to the promptings of

the Lord, and seek after those consequences that were in harmony with what the Lord wanted, then he would loose his frustrations, and he would become strong.

How do these three things apply to you? From my perspective of you as counselors, I think they apply in almost everything you do. Today, we face a world that is trying to get rid of guilt for doing that which is out of harmony with the Lord, and there are no shortcuts to repentance. Therefore, we cannot remove guilt from people. Individuals are the only ones who can do that. They do it by repenting. The Lord has said that if we will repent, He will forgive us. Repenting removes our guilt.

One of the best examples of this in the scriptures, that I know of, is the experience of Enos. Enos said he went into the woods to hunt. (Enos became one of my favorites when I learned he loved to wrestle.) Enos wrote, "I will tell you of the wrestle which I had before God, before I received a remission of my sins." He then tells how he went out, and he prayed. He said the reason he prayed was because the teachings of his father sank deep in his heart, and he considered what God expected of him. He knelt down and prayed all day long. ". . . Yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens. And there came a voice unto me, saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed." Enos continues, "And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away." And he says at that point he turned to the Lord and said, "How did you do that? How did that happen?" Notice the Lord's reply was: "Because of thy faith in Christ, whom thou hast never before heard nor seen." There are no shortcuts to repentance.

Guilt is a positive influence, or ought to be viewed as such, in the lives of every individual whether they be members of the Church or not. What does guilt represent? Guilt represents the divine within man. When we are sensitive enough to feel guilt, we have just become aware that we are greater than the problem that we face. We are greater than the weakness that we have. The presence of a feeling of guilt may say there is still a sense within us of that which is right. So let us not be too quick to get people to shy away from a sense of guilt, but let us encourage them to use

their awareness to change their lives. That is the only way they can get rid of righteous guilt. The scriptures indicate that when men come to the Lord he will show them their weaknesses. It is an awareness of these weaknesses that reveals the power behind the feelings of righteous guilt. Righteous guilt is caused by our own willing rebellion against the commandments of the Lord. One cannot do wrong knowingly and be free from this guilt. I recognize that the use of the term "righteous" may seem antithetical to guilt, but I use that distinction to indicate that such guilt, if utilized properly, will bring about a righteous result. Through this approach, our Heavenly Father enables us to do as the scriptures say, "judges ourselves," that is, we are literally agents unto ourselves. Therefore, progress through our lives here in mortality and eternity is of our own making. This makes it very important that we have the proper understanding of the power of guilt.

If we simply say to a client, "Oh, you shouldn't feel guilty about that," we may have a result that we are not looking for. We may have a consequence that we do not desire. Oh yes, we want them to be rid of the guilt, but what is the consequence that we desire?—that they change their behavior for the better so that the guilt will not return. The change to behavior consistent with the principles of righteousness brings an assurance of self-worth.

Some years ago, I sat in a counseling session with a young man who wanted to go on a mission. As we sat together in the office, he said some things to me about his life that were almost unbelievable. I said, "Well, what should we do about it?" He said, "Well, I have got to go on a mission because the prophet said every young man should go on a mission." He was feeling guilty that he wouldn't be able to go on the mission. "But do you feel guilty about what you have done to keep you from going on a mission?" "No," he replied. He then told me who would not let him go. Was it his actions? No. It was the bishop or the stake president or else I, who was doing the final interview: we were the ones who were keeping him from going. "You won't let me go will you?" I said, "Of course I will. Do you want to go? Do you want the consequences of going on a mission?" He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "You tell me. What are you going to be doing on a mission?"

He began to talk about what he thought he would be doing—teaching people about Jesus Christ and the principles that He taught, the blessings of the atonement, faith and repentance. I said, “What was that last word?” “Repentance.” “And then what? And then baptism for what? The remission of sins.” “Well,” he said, “I want to go anyway.” I asked, “Do you *really* want to go?” He said, “I do. I can’t go back and face my parents. I can’t go back and face my bishop or my stake president, because they will know that I lied to them.” I said, “Do you know that you did?” He said, “Yes, but I still want to go.” I said, “You can’t go.” He replied, “You can’t keep me from going.” “That’s right,” I said, “I’m not keeping you from going. Your own unworthiness is keeping you from going, but I *am* telling you that you can’t go.” “We’ll see about that,” he said, and he went to his father. His father called someone that I worked for, and the boy went.

Before he was to leave, I had one more interview with him. I informed him that if he was going he had to stay there. It was made clear to him that once his mission began he would be required to see it through. He said, “Well, I don’t intend to come home.” I repeated, “Well, you just remember that I am not going to let you come home.”

He went into the mission field and was there almost a week when he went to his mission president and said, “I can’t stay here. I am not worthy to be here. I have got to go home.” The mission president said, “Well, I have word that you can’t go home.” The young man said, “Have you been talking to Elder Pinegar?” “No, but there is a little note here that says, ‘this young man is not to come home.’” Well, he was fabricating that. I found out he used that with all of his missionaries. The young man said, “Well, I’ll call Elder Pinegar.” The mission president said, “Well, if you insist on leaving I guess you can, but I’ll have to call first.” The president called me and told me who the young man was and told me the circumstances. I then spoke to them while both were on the line. The young man got on the line, and we talked for a moment. He said, “I want to come home.” I said, “What did I tell you when you were in my office?” “I know what you told me, but I want to come home.” “I’m not going to let you come home. You put

yourself in that position and you are going to endure the consequences of that decision.”

We said a few other things and then he said, “Alright, I’ll stay.” So he stayed almost a month. He called again. He said, “Things are getting worse, not better.” I said, “Do you really want the consequences of coming home?” No, he didn’t want that. I said, “Alright then you are going to stay.” So he stayed. He completed his mission. When he came home, he said, “I have never had such a hell in my life.” I asked, “What do you mean?” He said, “I discovered that I couldn’t teach what I did not do.”

I want you to consider that. We can only really teach what we are and what we do, not what we believe. To teach our beliefs if we are not living in harmony with them is to fool ourselves; we are not fooling those we teach/counsel.

In your positions you have great opportunities. People come to you seeking relief from the consequences of their actions. You, of all of the counselors, of all of the therapists in all of the world, have the greatest opportunity because you can put into the counseling the gospel of Jesus Christ. You of all counselors are the ones people can come to and know that you are not afraid to be what you are—a son or a daughter of God, one who is willing to exercise his own agency, agency to choose to do right, to be honest, virtuous and to obey God’s commandments. As you do that, then your own sensitivity to the needs of your clients will be increased immeasurably. You were given a gift when you became a member of this Church. It was called the gift of the Holy Ghost—intended as a gift to lead you and me and all others who are willing to receive it to all truth, not just to some. This means to all truth, including the truth of knowing the true spirit of the person you are counseling with—to be able to perceive their real needs, not just those you see on the surface.

I was mentioning to Dr. Carlfred Broderick the dilemma of going into a classroom in the middle of the year and taking over a sixth grade class of 36 youngsters. I had echo in my mind the statement of Sister Young, one of my professors at Brigham Young University. She said, “Now, Rex, when you get in the classroom,

if you really want to do something for those children, you find out where they are and you take them from there.” I looked at those 36 youngsters, and I thought, well this is great. I’ll find out where they are. You know the three regular groups, the high, medium and low; well, I found out there were 36 groups—each of them at a different place in each subject; and each of them not only in a different place as far as the academic world was concerned, but in a different place in their own social development, their own physical development, their own emotional power. I was in a dilemma.

What do you do? I can honestly say to you there wasn’t anything that my training could do except encourage me to find out. So, as I sat with them, one by one, the prayer in my heart was that I would know the child and somehow be able to see what the relationship between that child and me ought to be. I felt that until that relationship was established, I couldn’t help the child.

One day my principal came over to see my lesson plans. After about a week and a half we sat down in his office and he said, “There is something wrong with your plans.” “What do you mean?” I asked. He said, “Well, looking at your plans I cannot see where you are having reading and where you are having math and where you are having English.” I said, “Oh it’s there.” I took out my plan and I said, “You see we have reading all day long; we have English all day long; we have math all day long.” He said, “You don’t do that.” I said, “I don’t know what you mean; that is what we are doing.” It took him a full six months to get me trained that you don’t do that. You have to have a low, medium and high group—three groups, three reading groups, etc. I put them in three reading groups in 36 different places.

Not too long after that I had the opportunity to come to Brigham Young University and meet some of the greatest people I have ever known. They are called students. Students have problems and challenges—opportunities to change their lives. I discovered the very same thing. The only thing that was different was their ages. It isn’t only the student who has a problem, there are people of every age and background. They all have challenges. But you, bless your hearts, have a gift that will enable you to reach into their

individual lives to discern their needs. That gift is the Gift of the Holy Ghost which can lead you to all truth. I am grateful for you. I empathize and sometimes sympathize with the challenges that you face.

Walking down the hall at the University of Southern California some years ago, one of my professors, a professor of statistics, came to me. He said, "Pinegar, I understand that you are a Mormon." I thought these were the golden questions in reverse and was all set to give him the answers. I said, "Yes, sir, I am." He said, "But you are in psychology." I said, "Yes sir." He said, "Do you feel that you can do that and still be a member of your Church?" I said, "Why of course." "We'll see," he said.

I shall be ever grateful to the Lord for that experience. From that moment on, everything that came to me I measured against the gospel of Jesus Christ, and if it didn't fit, then I had two choices—I could put it into one of two categories, the "discarded" category or the "set it over here" category—the latter category because I may not quite have been able to understand yet. But I did not adopt it until after I found out where it fit, and if it didn't fit, I found myself absolutely free to discard it. You are free too. Just as we have been talking about your clients being free to act for themselves, so are you. And that's how it fits with you.

Now what shall be the consequences? I think the consequences will be everything that you would like. You will feel good about yourself. You will not have to look back with dread about the counsel you have given your clients. You will be able to look at them, squarely and honestly, because you will not feel you have betrayed yourself. Those are the consequences that we all desire. You need not be ashamed to have something that the world does not enjoy in that "gift." In the third section of the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord told Joseph that except he repent, he would be delivered up and become as other men, having no more gift. That is not a consequence that you and I can afford. We cannot afford to give up that gift. We have to remain true to it. And that is the joy of it.



In closing may I just say to you, that we pray for you. There are many people who will come to you who will not come to the ecclesiastical leaders of the Church, whether it be a bishop, a stake president, an elder's quorum president, a home teacher, or even a general authority. They come to you because their guilt sometimes will not permit them to come to us. And you sometimes have the opportunity to assist well before we do. Sometimes they never come to us after having come to you because they have set things straight in their own hearts and minds.

Now the Lord bless you for what you do. You are needed desperately. There are those in the world who will only have you as their contact with the gospel. Now I shall say as I did in the beginning—while you have no obligation or responsibility to lead your clients to the Church, you must lead them to the truth. When they begin to deal with the truth, they begin to make changes that will last, that will endure hardships, challenges, setbacks and will bring them forward victoriously. Let me close with this brief experience.

Speaking with a group of missionaries, I asked them this question, and I would like you to respond in the same way. "Have any of you ever participated on a championship athletic team of any kind? What kind would that be—football, track, swimming, wrestling, basketball?" You know when I said this, this young fellow sitting right in the front jumped up with his hands straight in the air. His excitement lifted his feet right off the floor. I knew he was the one I wanted. I had him come up and stand by me. He was barely five feet tall. I put my arm around him and said, "Champion athletic team?" "Yes sir, basketball," he replied. The shock was all over my face. I said, "Basketball?" He said, "Yes sir, state champions." I said, "State champions. Tell us about your most exciting game." "It was the championship game." He continued, "One of those games where we made a basket, they made a basket, we made a basket, they made a basket, we made a basket—it went like that the whole game. With four seconds to go we were three points behind. We made a basket. Time out was called with three seconds left on the clock." He said, "The team came off the floor, and we got up off the bench, and we really gave

it to them.” Now you know where he was playing. He said, “We patted them on the back and said, ‘Come on gang, we know you can win this game. You are going to win this game. We know you can do it.’” He said, “It was at that point that the coach turned to me and said, ‘Fred get in there.’ ‘Yes sir.’ I walked out towards the court, and the coach put his arm around me and instructed me, ‘Now look, Fred, I want you to do just one thing, get the ball.’ ‘Yes sir.’ I walked out on that court when that referee’s whistle blew. In my heart all I could think was get the ball, get the ball, get the ball.” So he said, “I did. I got the ball. I threw it to John, and we won. I guess you know who they carried off the floor—John. No one had to carry me off the floor—I was already walking three feet off the floor. I was taller than I had ever been.” I said, “Why is that?” He said, “I am a champion.” What was it that made him a champion? “When did you learn you were a champion?” “When we won.” Now, how did he win. By getting the ball. You cannot score in the game of life without the ball. And the ball we are talking about is the spirit of the gospel of Jesus Christ. If we want to win, both we and our clients must somehow get that into our lives. Of this I bear witness, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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## **Priesthood and Partnerships: Some Thoughts for LDS Marriages**

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Elder Marion D. Hanks  
Of the Presidency of the Seventy  
4 October 1984

**T**here are a few stories that seem so absolutely appropriate that they must inevitably be told. I have one of those that was dredged up as I spent a busy week between necessary involvements preparing to speak to the priesthood meeting Saturday night for just a few minutes on substantially the subject I have come here to talk to you about at a little greater length. This story I heard years ago. The president of a railroad was on a hunting expedition out in the boondocks and got lost. He almost froze, but fortunately found his way to a little weigh station of his own railroad. Inside he found a young man in a cubby hole sending out wires. The small waiting room was freezing. Not identifying himself and in his rough hunting clothing, he tried to persuade the young man to start a fire in the stove. The young man, not knowing, of course, that he was talking to the president of the railroad, declined. He said, "I am too busy sending wires to start fires." The president then said, "Please send one wire to my office." He wrote, "By return wire, fire the man who runs this weigh station," and signed it with his name and title. The young man looked at it, burst quickly from the room, grabbed the coal bucket, and said, "Sorry, sir, I am too busy building fires to send wires."

I have felt like that this week, trying to distill into a few moments so significant a subject as marriage and what relates to it, but it has been enjoyable.

I think I have probably heard substantially every problem you have had to listen to. In the last two years in the temple, I have had a graduate course in trouble. It is a remarkable place to be and it needs no exposition of its beauty and joyfulness, but it also is a collection point for problems, particularly if one is willing to listen, and I am as occasion permits. It is also a marvelous place for sanctuary from coarseness and crudity and the minimization of institutions we know about which is too much with us on every television set and all about us. Walking through the airports of Asia is an education in itself in avoiding moral pollution. We are all susceptible, and the effort has to be calculated, deliberate, persistent, and consistent. The temple is a real sanctuary.

For what I have to say today, I offer as a kind of support, a letter I received 12 years ago from a psychiatrist, a strong and noble fellow with whom I was exchanging, as it were, referrals. In those times, there were few who would listen and few who believed in what some of these experts have to offer, and I both was interested and believed in some of them whom I knew well. They would send people to me to be taught the fundamental principles of faith and repentance, and I would send people to them when I felt that people needed the kind of special help they could give—which, in a sense, was also faith and repentance, but from their expert and highly qualified point of view. I have great respect for people who are in your professions, not because you are in them, but because sincere and earnest people are desperately needed in them, and I assume you are both professionally competent and sincere. If you are not, you shouldn't be doing what you are doing. The doctor wrote, and I simply read what he wrote without pride or apology, what he felt was needed:

The need for wide dissemination throughout the Church of your observation on marriage is becoming more critical each day. You have indicated in the past you may write a book on the subject. Even a booklet would help. The inundation of professional offices by families in trouble is a tragedy because it is preventable if an adequate education program can be installed to identify marriage for what it is: one of the hardest jobs for any individual to undertake, requiring tolerance, patience, and planning as well as love instead of the romanticized concepts which are found even in many of our Church publications. It

is heartbreaking to see so many fine young people destroyed on false illusions of what marriage should be. A book or booklet would be real helpful. I hope it will be available soon.

Your perceptions of my sense of inadequacy will be supported by the fact that the book was never written nor was the booklet. In a sense, I am sorry for that. Many good books and booklets have been written, and the library in my house has a suitable store. The fundamentals of which I will speak may be, in some sense, found much as they are treated elsewhere, but I would hope I may speak them with some special sense of what people in the Church can and should learn, and also of the resources available to us. I keep thinking of what Conrad Hilton said when someone asked him his biggest problem in the hotel business: "Getting people to put the curtain inside the tub." That may almost capture the homely nature of what I wish to say to you.

Let me also share a few lines from Ogden Nash at his height. He defines marriage:

Just as I know there are two Hagens, Walter and Copen [for you younger people, Walter Hagens was a great golfer], I know that marriage is a legal and religious alliance entered into by a man who cannot sleep with the window shut and a woman who can't sleep with the window open. Also, he can't sleep till he has read the last hundred pages to find out whether his suspicions of a murdered eccentric's recluse secretary were right. And she can't sleep until he puts out the light which, when he finally does, she's still awake. . . . That is why marriage is so much more interesting than divorce because it is the only known example of the happy meeting of the immovable object and the irresistible force. I hope husbands and wives will continue to debate and combat over every thing debatable and compatible because I believe a little incompatibility is the spice of life, particularly if he has income and she is patible. (*I Do, I Will, I Have: Selected Poems of Ogden Nash*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1975, p. 248.)

Let me also note from a recent issue of *U.S. News and World Report*: "Despite the risks, Americans remain the marrying kind. Eventually more than 90 percent of the population will marry. Even those who have endured the trauma of divorce usually make at least one more attempt to achieve wedded bliss," says sociologist Jerry Talley of Stanford. "Although people may be disappointed in

a marriage partner, they are not generally disappointed in marriage." There are other and many interesting things. J.P. Marquand is quoted as saying, "Marriage is damnably serious business, particularly around Boston."

Well, it is serious business, and it is the basis for much that is meaningful in our religion as in our lives. I start by noting what a good man, Sir Arthur Bryant, said, extracted from a London newspaper: "Though life in this transitory world can never, for anyone, as in fairy stories, be free of threat and trouble, the companionship of two partners, tried in the fires of life and brought together by true and lasting love can be and is the best thing by far that life offers a man and a woman." My wife, Maxine, and I were once at the home of Robert Burns in Scotland. Under glass on his desk was a little single-sentence note he wrote to a friend in 1789: "That you may have a safe journey and a happy meeting with that dearest of all connections, your fireside circle, is the sincerest wish of your obliged humble servant, Robert Burns." I have had that in mind ever since, "That dearest of all connections, your fireside circle." In a beautiful sealing room in the temple one day, I talked with a little boy dressed in white ready to join his parents and brothers in the sacred ordinance. I said to him, "Why is your family here in the temple?" He said, "To be sealed." I said, "What does it mean to be sealed?" He said, "To be a forever family." Oh, I said, "You're going to be a family forever? You must have a good family, a happy family, if you want to be with them forever. Do you have a happy family?" (His parents and brothers and sisters and others were there.) "Yes, sir." This fine lad had already begun to understand two of the most important principles anyone could ever know: (1) That our Heavenly Father has provided for marriage and family ties which may be established permanently, to endure forever, and (2) That a marriage that we can joyfully look forward to forever must be a good marriage here. Such a marriage is the heart of a happy home and family.

There is another truth of which I also would wish to testify: that the principles of the gospel, particularly those of the temple, are the best possible basis on which to build a strong marriage and that such a marriage never just happens. The sealing ceremony in

the temple is to us beautiful and indispensable, but it does not automatically assure a successful marriage. Such a marriage is brought about, not by circumstance or chance, but by two mature, loving adults who are able and willing to learn the principles upon which a genuine and durable marriage may be fashioned and who, day-by-day, year-by-year, earnestly make the effort, building on the solid foundation of the covenants of the temple.

I note these five basics: (1) temple marriage as the basis for (2) a happy eternal union, (3) built on the solid foundation of gospel covenants (4) by two mature adults who are learning and growing together, and (5) with the priesthood as the authority through which these covenants are administered and as a commission for leadership in the home in the spirit and after the pattern of the principles which were central in the life of the Savior. The "Holy priesthood after the order of the Son of God," I am saying, is not a commission to superiority or dictatorship or domination. It is a commission in one instance to seal by God's authority, and it is—and for all of us ought to be understood to be—a commission for leadership in the home, in the spirit and after the pattern of the principles and life of Jesus Christ—"The Holy priesthood after the order of the Son of God."

As to temple marriage, I believe deeply that honorable marriage with honorable people involved, wherever and however performed, is acceptable to God. I believe God honors honorable marriage and blesses it with His love and spirit. But He Himself has established and made available to some, and given them the responsibility to teach others, a more excellent way, a more excellent hope. There is a best way to start such a significant and demanding enterprise as marriage. He would like us all to know about that and choose it. That is the reason for missionary work. That is the reason for the expansion of temples. Of eternal marriage, the scriptures teach us that marriage is ordained of God for His children, and we who truly love a husband or wife and live in some kind of a respectable, respectful, growing, developing relationship could not contemplate an eternity without marriage and family. Much of everything lovely and eternally significant relates to those who are closest and dearest to us, and we could not really think of heaven absent their

association and their love. This week, I chanced upon some Whitman lines that I will share: "Oh, to make the most jubilant song. It is not enough to have this globe or a certain time. I will have thousands of globes and all time."

The Lord declared that whatsoever He does shall be forever. His way of everlasting marriage is filled with hope and promise and is designed to lead to happiness here and to an eternal stewardship like that of God himself. In the beginning after the earth was prepared, God brought man and woman together in the garden, and the first wedding occurred. They were not yet mortal. Death had not entered into the world, and no time limitations were placed upon their marriage. God declared, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). When Christ lived among men, he quoted this commandment and added, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not men put asunder." (Matthew 9:6) He gave his disciples power to bind in heaven that which is bound on earth. It was later declared by Paul that "neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 11:11) In the time of the restoration of the gospel came a renewed understanding of temples and temple worship. The power to bind and seal in heaven has again been entrusted to chosen servants of God. Eternal marriage, temple marriage, marriage of the highest promise, is again performed for time and all eternity by authorized officiators in the holy temples of the Lord. Thus, the more excellent way is given its base, and that which can weld, blend, and build and bless with an eternal marriage is indispensable to our eternal happiness. Parley Pratt said that Joseph Smith had influenced him in a way he could not have imagined.

It was from him that I learned that the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and all eternity; and that the refined sympathies and affections which endeared us to each other emanated from the foundation of divine, eternal love. It was from the Prophet that I learned that we might cultivate these affections, and grow and increase in the same through all eternity. (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938, pp. 297–98).



But an eternal marriage will have to be a happy marriage, creative, progressive, gracious. Sometimes the distinctive elements of temple marriage are thought of as resting exclusively in duration and authority. Of course, everyone who comes to the temple to be married understands that it is by God's authority for time and eternity. But the remarkable revealed ceremony at the altar in the temple contemplates much more than this. Wonderful promises are sealed upon a man and a woman in a temple marriage, blessings related to the solemn commitments the two make to each other, and the promises that they make individually and as a couple to the Lord. The commitment of each with the other is total and permanent, the whole person "as is" for the whole journey.

Now, of course, neither will remain as he or she is. That is not meant to be. They will grow and develop in a multitude of ways—or can; but the pledge they make to each other is without condition or reservation. On this solid foundation, the newly formed family undertakes to build a strong and loving union that will grow more wholesome and more glorious forever.

How will they do this? The personality and the individuality and uniqueness of each partner to marriage must be understood, accepted, protected, and preserved if there is to be happiness; but this liberty must be enjoyed in the spirit of a deep commitment to the building of the union, not chiefly in the spirit of self-concern, self-satisfaction, self-determined expectations. You are probably acquainted with the Daniel Webster saying that to me has more to do with marriage than with politics, though it has a lot to do with both. Said he, "Liberty and union, one and inseparable, now and forever." Emerson with all of his mighty intellect didn't quite understand that or at least unbalanced it with all the emphasis on the individual's needs and expectations and rights of fulfillment. Lincoln understood it better. Lincoln understood that unless there is a strong union there cannot be any independence and liberty. Now, he too, of course, was talking politically, but his great mind and great heart would have understood that, like the states of the union over which he presided, unique, separate, special, individual human beings brought together in this most total, intimate, and close relationship are not obligated to surrender. They make an alli-

ance. They do give up some freedoms in order to establish and perpetuate a union, and that union becomes the base upon which their individuality may truly be accepted, appreciated, and expressed in the sense God intended it to be because each of us has been around a lot longer than the total of our birthdays. We are eternal persons and this personality is eternal. "Liberty and union, one and inseparable, now and forever."

Ibsen's, *The Doll House*—surely in your memories—has a scene when Nora, self-sacrificially, has done something to sustain Torbin, but he, bland and inconsiderate, doesn't really appreciate that. Indeed at the height of that dramatic moment he says to her, "I want you to understand that before all, you are a wife and mother." Her answer is, "I believe that before anything else, I am a human being." Now, nothing I know of in eternal marriage—and certainly not in the temple where those covenants are made—in any sense mitigates or vitiates that critical truth. You who know what you should know about marriage—and perhaps have been married long enough to get philosophical and a little whimsical—will be aware that, indeed and in fact, you have not plumbed the depths of this other individual. You'll have that interesting day when your heart and your tear ducts and your center of exultancy and the smile muscles and all the rest will just kind of mingle in a high, holy moment when you will look at her or him and marvel. You will have learned how much deeper and better and decent and full of faith she is than you are or will ever be. And there will come the marvelous recognition that you, knowing all you know, have not penetrated the depths of this person.

A human being is sacred, for one reason, because he or she is always more than a human being, an eternal child of God.

Two human beings, as they are married in the House of the Lord, have a new life open to them with many relationships and unities which can and are meant to develop into a union.

Among the new relationships—in the sense they never have existed before—is a *partnership* which the two entering bring assets to and in which they recognize a need to grow with the problems, challenges, and conflicts; but the two become partners in the warm,

sweet, wonderful, sharing, learning, growing sense of marriage. Partners. Real partners. Equal partners. Sharing, valued, respected, admired partners. They become companions in a special sense, whether they are in the same room or a world apart. They are married 24 hours a day. They care about the whole person and the whole future of each other with good humor, good dispositions, and a genuine consideration of the other's needs and desires. They set out to make it a happy life. They laugh a lot and cry a little. They are warm, considerate, and thoughtful. The note, the telephone call, the kind word, the sensitive response, the tremendous excitement of heading home to her when the work is done or the trip is over—back home to her and them and your place. And the wonderful excitement in them when you are coming home.

You get a group of grown children with their own children together and listen to what they remember and watch how they behave when their partner is arriving. Matthew Cowley wrote a beautiful little piece on the “eternal triangle: the triangle is man, woman, and God. My companion wife is one with whom I break bread, that being the very meaning of the word. The root of the word *companion* is bread,” and the implication obviously is that the experience will be warm, rewarding, exciting, pleasing, and thoughtful in its preparation and sharing.

Through a few words of covenant the basis is laid, but the job is not accomplished, for the two to become *sweethearts*. Married people are sweethearts in a special creative union, blessed with a powerful chemistry that draws them together, sometimes from next door, sometimes from a world away. The sexual union is one of the many unions or unities in marriage which is critical and significant, a divinely bestowed blessing. It is not the only flower in the garden. It must be sustained by other fundamental qualities—by respect, integrity, and loyalty to be what it is meant to be. To be able to give oneself with a complete confidence and trust and to receive the other joyfully and gratefully is a blessing that grows in meaning forever.

One of the saddest, heartbreaking moments of many hours of counseling—mostly listening, trying to help a little—came when a beautiful woman, the wife of one of my closest and best-loved

friends, sat across the desk from me—well-groomed, well-dressed—and asked me to speak to her as if she were a bride. She was desperate. The marriage had no meaning. They were not really partners although they had made a lot of money, and she could spend it, but there was no sense of sharing, nothing left of their beautiful months in one-room with a let-down bed. “We are not companions really,” she said. “He has his shotgun, his golf clubs, his friends, his handball gloves. We are not really sweethearts anymore, either. We have nothing left to express.” I swallowed a tear, and I feel like crying now. Married all those years, beautiful children, everything anyone could want, and they had ceased sharing, ceased being companions, ceased being sweethearts.

I never apologize for a personal example, although this one comes with some unease because it requires a great deal of trust in your good sense. Christmas Day—sometime since when all our children were still at home (we had four teenage daughters, the oldest about to move into her own life, and a little brother), I gave their mother a beautiful white nightgown and said to them, “Now, I don’t know that you are able to understand this, but you will remember it, and one day you will understand it. Your mother and I have been married many years and have been blessed with you five and some whom we have lost along the way. A marriage of this most intimate and total and close relationship has brought us our own prize. Having been through all of this together and knowing each other as we do, she is more pure and more beautiful to me today than she was the day I met her or the day I married her.” I repeated, “I don’t think you will understand that, but I wanted you to hear it and remember it. She is more beautiful and more pure to me than the day we met or the day we married.”

The sweetheart relationship is appropriately sustained by character, quality, consideration, the capacity to repent, and the capacity to forgive. The complete trust that a few have the capacity to have—and others don’t deserve—that beautiful sweet thing—minimized, maligned, and tragically imposed upon through centuries—is a plant established by God’s good grace which ought to flower and grow with all that sustains and blesses it.

The two become *friends* in the special way that married people should be best friends. The little kindnesses and constancies that are expressed will endure—the cherishing, the kindness, the thoughtfulness, and support. Married people should be best friends, because, in truth, no relationship on earth needs friendship as much as marriage.

As I walked up the aisle in the auditorium at a university recently, I stopped and said to a young man sitting on the edge of the row, “Who is that beautiful girl sitting by you?” “My best friend,” he said, right off the top of his head. “Oh, and is she also your wife?” “Yes.” I spoke to her, “Is that true? Are you his best friend?” “Yes.” “And is he your best friend?” “Yes.” I said, “Do you know how lucky you two are to be married to your sweetheart who is also your best friend?” They said, “We know.”

Friendship blows away the chaff, rejoices in the uniqueness of the other, listens patiently, gives generously, forgives freely, and is loyal. Friendship may indeed motivate one to cross the room to say, “I’m sorry, I didn’t meant it,” or “I didn’t understand. I love you.” Friendship will be more important than winning an argument or proving something. Friendship will endure our immaturity and our callousness. We are all adult and child, so much of our response is childish in a nonconstructive sense. Friendship will not pretend at perfection nor demand it. It will not insist that both respond exactly the same way in every situation in thought and feeling; but it will be understanding and supportive, repentant, and forgiving, respectful, trusting, and trustworthy. Friendship will say, “I am your husband, I love you. We are married. I am often responsible for behavior that isn’t quite consistent with the level of my understanding, but I love you and I am proud of you. I’ll speak well of you, and I will not betray your trust. I will delight in your uniqueness. I am your best friend.”

A good marriage doesn’t just happen. Temple marriage is not isolated. It serves both as a culmination of other ordinances and as the foundation for family and eternal future. Some of you may not know that no one can enter into a temple marriage until he or she has been to the temple previously to receive their own blessings, to personally make sacred covenants with the Lord. These covenants

center in principles that are basic in a truly Christian life and in the formulation of good marriage and family. The covenants we make in the temple, like the other sacred covenants of the gospel, commit us to the Lord Jesus Christ and His loving example. In the temple—think now of your experience—we make commitments to follow Christ in doing God's will and keeping his commandments, in valuing others and unselfishly serving them, in loving God and our fellowman. We pledge complete fidelity to moral principle, self-control, devotion to the cause of righteousness and truth; and all of this happens through the priesthood, the holy priesthood after the order of the Son of God.

A thoughtful understanding of this single reality should automatically eliminate any false perceptions of superiority or inferiority. Men and women are of equal value before God and must be equally valuable in the eyes of each other. A true devotion in following the example of the Son of God will never permit notions of domination or dictatorship or possession or control. It will never justify unrighteousness, abuse, or foul talk, or discourtesy. Christ's way is the way of persuasion, long-suffering, meekness, kindness, love unfeigned, pure knowledge, unselfishness, gentleness, mercy.

It is simple to see, isn't it, that the kind of marriage we are talking about doesn't just happen. Nobody can pronounce happiness. No one can pronounce the quality that forgives and thus expresses real love. These are elements in lives that have to be brought to the union by those involved, grown in and developed in—through the course. The foundation can be laid in the House of the Lord. The marriage can be pronounced by the authority of God, but it must be fashioned by two who are wholesome, prepared emotionally and practically, and who are honest. It requires being *ready* to go to a temple, being mature enough to *make* and *keep* promises and to *receive* holy promises and *qualify* for their fulfillment.

Wherever one is with respect to marriage—years from it, deep in it, close to it—the same basic principles should be understood. Keep the commandments. Be honest. In this most close and intimate relationship one is committed in the most serious and

sacred decisions of life. Temple marriage is much more than the experience of the temple, the sacred ceremony, the authority by which it is performed, and the wonderful promises sealed upon us. It involves our attitudes towards God and each other, toward marriage, toward children, toward family. It involves our preparations, our worthiness, our ability to learn and grow and graciously endure.

The inspiration for all of us is the assurance, deeply impressed upon the hearts of decent people who live as they should, that heaven will be heaven for us because this one we love the best will be there. A few days ago, we sat in a room with our five children and their eternal partners and their 16 children. Twenty-eight of us were joined in a circle of affection and appreciation. That circle established at an altar in the holy house of the Lord only a few short years ago has expanded miraculously. I sat marvelling. Now, I don't know what you may know, but I know enough to be aware that when a magnificent phrase like "eternal lives" is repeated, it refers to that kind of life which exaltation expresses—that is, a creative life, a Godlike life on a God-like level with the Almighty. I looked at 27 other people, realized that we haven't had a child for 24 years and will not again in this world. Yet, 28 of us were in the room with children yet to come. If God is willing, we may even live long enough to see the next generation. This stewardship of ours is expanding eternally, like the stars of the heavens and sands on the seashore. We little specks, 28 of us, are important individuals, producing life.

One who never knew his father begins to get excited about that. One who loves a mother appreciates that. I get interested in a 13-year-old boy who joined the Church—a drover, a roughneck, with crude language and all the rest who became a grandfather to me; an 18-year-old girl who stood on a street corner knowing what the elders were saying was true and also knowing her father would never permit her name to be said again in his house when she joined the church.

What an exciting remarkable vision to perceive continuity into the past and into the future: that all of us will find a place, ultimately, a loving place under the holy influence of Him whose

spirit children we are and whose holy life and sacrifice brought us the blessings of these excellent hopes.

Now, I must finish by sharing three other things very briefly. I have to say to you that of course the plan of God will be fair altogether, as He is fair. Those who earnestly desire the eternal blessings of marriage and family, but through no fault of their own are deprived of this blessing here, will ultimately have an opportunity to enjoy it. The Holy One of Israel standeth at the gate and “employeth no servant there.” The judgments and decisions of eternity will be stamped with his approval, his justice, and blessed with his influence. It is my absolute conviction that no one will be forced into an eternal relationship that is not wholesome and desirable, nor deprived of a joyful, eternal relationship which they desire and have done their part to qualify for. The plan provides for vicarious blessings to those who have no opportunities to enjoy them in this world. So also will it provide for those who are deprived of the blessing they deserve and desire.

The last thing is to just say that the glorious promises of God are summarized in a magnificent verse of scripture: “Then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God, . . . the doctrine of the priesthood shall distill upon thy soul as the dews from heaven. The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion” (Doctrine and Covenants 121: 45–46).

What is the doctrine of the priesthood? Is it the doctrine of command, of domination? This morning we went through the temple with all the General Authorities and their wives. I listened with you in mind, especially, saw the drama, but was a little uneasy. Will someone perceive from this something more than a magnificent and needed instruction on the inevitability and beauty of free agency? Is it a lesson of hierarchial value? Who will observe the kneeling at the altar of two who take each other by the hand and look to the Lord Jesus Christ and who will make covenants—every one of which looks to Him as the holy exemplar—and think it gives some kind of domination? No one with any sense in my judgment.



I get the privilege of looking young men in the eye, and I do it regularly, and charging them to understand that simple thing: that the priesthood is a called commission to serve in the spirit and after the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ applied to your home in all the challenges you have. The doctrine of the priesthood is a doctrine of agency, of learning, teaching, blessing, receiving, storing, acting in the ordinances, becoming a Savior to our people.

I testify to you that God is fair, good, and just, and that we don't fool him any. We are dealing with realities—the people who walk through the temple with their broken hearts or with whom I sit every day if there is time. Their problem is not understanding law. Their problem is that they do not know who they are, or they have met and been involved with someone who doesn't know who he is or she is. The fundamentals of the gospel are real and true and applicable and appropriate for all of God's children.

My prayer is an earnest one for you. Either personally or counseling, repentance and forgiveness all important—so important that your life depends upon it, as mine does. And so I urge you if you have real reservations, consider the simple sweet truths in an excellent way that doesn't remove responsibility from the individuals involved, but indeed gives them a base upon which to build, formulate, and fashion. This can be done by two mature adults who really want to and who can learn—not being blessed with perfection. There are no perfect marriages, but there are some very good ones, and they are always the product of fundamental principles.



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# Gospel Power in Troubled Homes

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Elder J. Thomas Fyans  
Of the Seventy (Emeritus)  
5 October 1984

**M**y dear brothers and sisters, this is an honor and responsibility being with you this morning, recognizing that you perform such a vital function.

I understand that the speaker following me will instruct us on self-esteem. As my self-esteem becomes battered during my talk, I plan to remain for the next speaker to build my self-esteem back up. So if you will just bear with me, then we will look forward to the next speaker who is going to help all of us.

There is great collective power for good in this room in your commitment to increase righteousness. You have an overwhelming challenge being laborers in a vineyard where your assignments are at least as much to fight the weeds that are choking good growth as they are to nurture the fruitful vines.

## **Flooding Down from the Mountains**

We experienced extreme flooding earlier in 1984 along the Wasatch Front. The heavy snowfall melted, sending its waters cascading down into our valleys. We were deeply concerned. A call went out for volunteers and several hundred responded. There was a vitality of neighborliness that existed. Sandbags were filled and placed into position to control the flow of water and provide

protection for the homes, schools, churches, and other valuable property. Occasionally, water surged beyond its prescribed bounds, causing a great deal of damage and inconvenience.

What was the attitude toward the snow in the mountains and its potential danger to homes and loved ones as warm temperatures brought devastation surging into our valleys? Were fists shaken in anger, expending valuable strength on meaningless motions that consumed energy but produced no positive results? No, we drew from the resources of the human mind in man's ability to control his environment. Areas of potential weakness were anticipated and defenses shored up to withstand the onslaught.

Now suppose we have a different kind of intrusion upon our comfort. This time we are not the objects of physical duress, but there flows into our presence a besmirching of things we hold sacred. Should we not shore up our defense? Is this a time to build channels of control for the ill winds that may blow? Should we not store in our reservoirs great spiritual resources to absorb and neutralize this onslaught?

### **Statistics on Family Violence**

May we review some statistics on family violence given to me by Brother Val MacMurray which will provide a context for our discussion:

1. Nearly six million wives are physically abused by their husbands annually in the United States. Between 2,000 and 4,000 of these women are beaten to death.
2. Over one-third of these battered women say that they have also been raped or otherwise sexually abused by their husbands or cohabitating partners.
3. One in four husbands slap their wives, one in ten beat them with their fists, and one in 18 threaten them with weapons.
4. One million children are abused or neglected annually. Every year about 2,000 of them die as a result.
5. Between 25% and 38% of girls under 18 are sexually abused. Almost half of these sexual incidents occur within the

family, where the girl is abused by a relative. Father-daughter incest is the most common form, with the average age for such incidents starting at about ten. In your minds these statistics become part of your week's work.

### **The Latter-day Saint and Family Violence**

No matter where such cases occur, they are cause for serious concern. The fact that these statistics are gathered in the United States, where people are relatively well-educated and affluent, intensifies that concern. Even more serious is the fact that Latter-day Saints don't escape such grievous sins. Cases have come to our attention of husbands and fathers appearing to be active and responsible members of the Church, who are or have been involved in incidents of abuse and violence.

As professionals in providing therapy, with particular stewardship for our own latter-day Saints, you are aware that the Church does not, at whatever level, view sexual or physical abuse with any degree of lightness. It accepts no excuses for such behavior. Any man participating in such activities has placed his priesthood in jeopardy, for the Lord's instructions are extremely clear on this point:

The rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.

That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man. (Doctrine and Covenants 121:36–37)

### **Righteous Use of Priesthood**

Even though ample cases exist to indicate that women are sometimes the abusers as well as the abused, and that children have also, many times, been the abusers of other children, may we consider primarily those situations in which men who are husbands

and fathers have failed to provide the kind of example in the home that their families could expect from one holding the priesthood. In so doing, I echo the expression of concern pronounced by a loving Father in Heaven in Doctrine and Covenants 121: 41: “No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood. Only by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned.”

### **Put Your Own Oxygen Mask on First-Spiritual Air**

A couple of weeks ago an assignment took me to South America. As the plane was about to take off in Salt Lake, the Western flight attendant gave these instructions: “In the event of an emergency, oxygen masks will fall down automatically. Place your own mask firmly over your nose and mouth and breathe normally; then assist others in the placement of their masks.” In Los Angeles I changed from Western to Varig, a Brazilian airline. As we took off, this same announcement was made: “In the event of an emergency, oxygen masks will fall down automatically. Place your own mask firmly on your nose and mouth and breathe normally; then assist others in the placement of their masks.” This instruction was given in English and then in Spanish because our destination was Lima, Peru. This same instruction was then given in Portuguese for the Brazilians on board, and finally in Japanese because the plane that just landed had come from Tokyo and many Japanese were also continuing their flight to South America.

Our bodies require a constant supply of air. We can go without food for a week or more, but oxygen must be available constantly. Recently, my wife and I visited La Paz, Bolivia, high in the Andes Mountains of South America. La Paz is at an altitude of approximately 13,000 feet. As we landed and descended from the plane, those who met us were very solicitous. We were told that because of the extremely thin air, we should walk slowly to the lounge. Once there, we were invited to sit down. I insisted I felt fine—but in a moment or two I became light-headed and needed to sit down. They supplied me with oxygen. I needed help.

### **Spiritual Air: How Obtained**

After several minutes of oxygen deprivation, we lose consciousness and life leaves us. Each spirit is housed in a physical tabernacle. There is a spiritual air upon which it is dependant for sustenance.

Do we ever find ourselves in a situation where our spirits are deprived of spiritual air? In such a spiritually threatening situation, where can we go to renew the quality of our spiritual air? Activities of fasting, prayer, scripture study, love, service, and sharing the gospel are bathed in their own atmosphere of spiritual air. This life-giving oxygen permeates our souls and we are sustained spiritually.

### **Results of Breathing Spiritual Air**

What are the results of breathing spiritual air? In Mosiah 5:2, we read about such a circumstance: “because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually.” Each moment love—the pure love of Christ—flows from us to others, we are generating this spiritual air within us to the point that we cannot contain its influence and we reach out to others. The process brings an automatic restoration within ourselves; we are renewed.

We partake of proper foods, acquire sufficient rest, and participate in some form of physical exertion to tone our physical bodies. Following these rules for good health brings a feeling of physical well-being.

In our daily routines we also study and internalize the scriptures; we accept certain covenants and participate in sacred ordinances. We spiritually meditate and ponder and attune ourselves to the power of heaven through prayer. This brings a feeling of spiritual well-being.

This isn't the end—it is but the beginning. Now we are ready to serve. Having our spiritual oxygen masks in place, now we reach out to others and do for them what they can't do for themselves.

### **Dual Responsibility as Latter-day Saint and as a Therapist**

You have a dual responsibility: to put on your own mask first and then reach out to others, or, in other words, first as a Latter-day Saint and secondly as a therapist. As Latter-day Saint men and women, your personal and family lives are examples for the troubled individuals and families who come to you for help—tangible evidence of the effects of fasting and prayer, scripture study, love, service, and sharing the gospel. In dealing with friends and associates, our love needs to reflect the love and respect due the individual as a child of God. Our behavior toward our family and friends communicates the commitment of love that initially brought us together and the continuing commitment toward the attributes of godliness in which we sustain and support each other.

Do we consider and appreciate the needs of each individual and strive to meet these needs appropriately? Do we regard their activities to be equally as important as our own? Do we expend special effort to assure that our families receive the same special treatment as those with whom we associate in our dealings away from home?

The Apostle Paul, in giving advice to the youthful bishop, Timothy, counseled, "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith." (1 Timothy 5: 8) This "providing for" includes not only economic and material needs but those tender needs, needs pertaining to their self-esteem and the renewal of love that are so necessary to the emotional stability of us all. In this way we create a firm launching pad from which we can accelerate to our second responsibility and role as a therapist in counseling troubled individuals and families.

In addition to your role as a Latter-day Saint, you have a second responsibility in your role as a therapist in counseling troubled individuals and families. As you know, your task is not to assign guilt or pronounce judgments. The ecclesiastical systems of the Church and the legal systems of the state have judgment responsibilities. They can label and bring consequences for the offending behavior.



### Counseling Responsibility Three-Fold

In counseling, it would appear your responsibility is three-fold. First, there must be cooperation with authorities in preventing further damage to innocent parties. Of particular concern are children who are dealing with feelings of love for a parent, and may be confused by inappropriate activities. As a result, these children may have been forced to assume responsibilities in a relationship that can only be asked of mature people. The redemption of Christ is available to everyone, but many people have put themselves in a position where they can no longer experience the light of Christ in a way that influences their behavior significantly. Nephi in chastising Laman and Lemuel tells them, "Ye have seen an angel, and he spake unto you; yea, ye have heard his voice from time to time, and he hath spoken unto you in a still small voice. *But ye were past feeling* that ye could not feel his words." (1 Nephi 17: 45, italics added). Some offenders can no longer do works of righteousness without help. Until such help can be provided, nothing is more important than to prevent them from inflicting further damage upon their victims or from seeking new victims.

Second, you must help the victims to understand what has happened, to resolve any feelings of confusion or guilt that may, if not treated, have a crippling impact upon themselves and upon their future families, and to provide these victims with the skills to protect themselves against further recurrences. In many cases, they need to know where they can receive help. They need someone with whom they can talk, if necessary over a period of several months. They need models of appropriate adult behavior. In many cases they have had both mothers and fathers who have been strangely passive in crucial personal matters. They need to know that there are appropriate ways to take charge of their lives, to deal with situations, to identify their own feelings, and to meet their own needs.

It is unfortunate that these children have been thrust into circumstances where they must acquire understanding and skills that would normally come over a long period of time in a safe environment where they could be tested and refined. It is urgent

that they not be left vulnerable again to the persuasions of an adult, or prey to their own confused feelings.

Third, you must help the perpetrators of these crimes. I think of President Kimball, whose love is a deep-flowing well. Even in the black-and-white words of the printed text of a speech, or in his image projected on a television screen, President Kimball's love touches everyone. When in his presence, whether in a crowded conference hall or in a private meeting, no one can leave the room without feeling the refreshment and joy of that freely given love.

For some that human need to give and express love has been damned up, turned on itself, forced to find strange and torturous channels in the troubled individuals who would offer violence or sexual abuse to their own wives and children. As therapists, your professional training and skills will indicate to you the best way to approach these deficiencies so that these individuals may claim the promise of the Savior to those who understand and use their priesthood correctly: "Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distill upon thy soul as the dews from heaven. The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion." (Doctrine and Covenants 121:45–46)

Obviously, these troubled individuals have a great deal of experience with compulsion. Many of them, from what I understand, have been the victims of sexual and physical abuse themselves. Many of them no doubt have never had the experience of being touched by the Holy Ghost in ways that they have been able to understand, or of feeling the redeeming love of the Savior. Your profession often provides opportunities for you to use your skills as a lifeguard.

### **You Can Recognize Someone Drowning in Emotional Distress**

On my return flight from Tacna, Peru, as I boarded the airplane in Dallas, Texas, I found myself seated alone. Following dinner a trainee flight attendant came and sat by me and we had the following conversation:

"I'm not a quitter," she said.

Surprised with this expression, I looked at her and said, "You don't look like a quitter."

"I don't like the way people are treating me."

"What is causing you that concern?"

"I just don't like it."

Not knowing exactly what was happening, I asked, "Where are you going? How are you enjoying your flight attendant experience?"

"I am not enjoying it."

"Wasn't it wonderful that Sharlene Wells was made Miss America?"

"Well, I was in the Miss Utah Pageant, a contestant against her."

"Oh, is that right? That is wonderful! What talent do you have?"

"I played the piano."

"How long have you played the piano?"

"Oh, for about 12 years."

"You don't look that old to me." I was trying to cheer her up.

We talked about her schooling at Utah State University and her desire to travel. The conversation so far was not making any sense. All of a sudden, she said she had work to do. As she stood up I observed that she looked completely lost. She soon returned and we resumed our conversation.

"I don't like the way people treat me," she said.

"Well, then, you just sit here, and we'll chat."

It was obvious that she was really depressed. I tried to express positive things about her and complimented her on being qualified to be in the Miss Utah pageant and having attended a university. There was very little intelligent response, very little response at all.

By this time the "fasten seat belt" sign came on. She said, "The fasten seat belt sign is on; I wonder if I should go up and announce that?" I said, "Why don't you just sit here and take care of

me?” By this time I was getting knowing looks from the flight attendants. The plane started down, and she indicated she did not want the plane to come down.

I offered to be of help to her when we landed and indicated my wife would be there to meet me. She assured me her parents were coming and that she would like to meet my wife. I told her I would wait just outside the plane while she got her things together. She said, “Oh, don’t leave me.” So we sat back down and waited until every passenger left the plane. When she went to find her luggage she came back with the wrong suitcase. As she went to the back to look for her own luggage, one of the other flight attendants thanked me for my help. They may have been grateful for my help, but I was wishing some of you people could have been there with your professional insight—you see, I did not even recognize the symptoms under which this young lady was operating so that I might address her needs more directly. We then walked to the front door of the plane, where the father and mother of the girl were waiting for her. The mother had extreme anxiety on her face. They were shocked to see her. I had given her a card on the plane but she asked if I could give her another card. My reply was that she could have as many cards as she wanted. Introductions were made to Helen and we bid farewell. I was able to determine where her parents lived and after a couple of days had passed, I called and talked to her mother. The mother began to apologize. She had thought I was an employee of the airline who was responsible for her daughter’s release from flight attendant school. Her mother related other disappointments in her daughter’s life. The daughter and her parents came to Salt Lake and had lunch with me.

When my daughter Suzanne, an R.N., came down to visit with us this morning, I related this story of the girl on the airplane. Then I asked her if I could share some ideas on the talk I was planning for Mormon counselors. She said, “Dad, you have just had an experience that you ought to make part of your talk.” I asked her what she meant. She said, “You were trying to deal with someone who had lost contact with reality and apparently her having been rejected as Miss Utah and as a flight attendant, and

probably another rejection in her love life, caused her to snap. And that was what you had beside you.”

You counselors and psychotherapists have the capability to recognize emotional distress. You can pull such victims from troubled waters and help them remove the restraining entanglements. You can place them on the beach where the warm rays of heavenly light will raise the temperature and the blood will flow more freely and begin to nurture the brain. You can help unclutter their minds and point them in the direction of all power.

After such help, these individuals will be in a position to be receptive and influenced by ecclesiastical leaders who have the responsibility and mandate to give them experiences with fasting, prayer, reading of the scriptures, and priesthood blessings. As they continue to gain strength and their thinking processes become more clear, a greater susceptibility to the Spirit will occur, thus opening the conduit to that divine source which can be relied upon to change feelings most directly, most powerfully, and most permanently—healing can then take place.

You will face a special challenge in those situations where you are dealing with an individual who has somehow been able to define “priesthood” to include his inappropriate activities as a legitimate exercise of patriarchal authority. Helping such a person to create an image of reality that corresponds to the Father’s view of love and sacrifice will be a particular part of your challenge.

Such individuals need a reminder that they are willfully distorting the teachings of the Church. Some of these individuals will have done harm to their families and removed themselves so far from the steady light of Christ that they may never be able to take their place in that family circle again. It may appear that the violation of their temple covenants has been so severe as to forfeit their sealings to their wives and children. However, we do not know about their eternal status. It is not for us to exclude them from the larger family that constitutes the family of God, our Eternal Father.

Just as priesthood brings great power, so it also brings great responsibility. Those who have proved themselves unworthy of that

responsibility will also be denied its power, no matter what claims they make. But this determination lies with the ecclesiastical leaders of those individuals and ultimately in the hands of the judge we all must face to account for our stewardships. As the Savior reminded us, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. . . . I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Matthew 9: 12–13) "The worth of souls is great in the sight of God" (Doctrine and Covenants 18: 10). Our responsibility is to reach out and help.

### **I Have No Hands But Yours**

As the residents of a small community in France surveyed the damage caused by bombing during World War II, it was concluded the rebuilding should begin at the central plaza where fragments of a statue of the Christus lay scattered amidst the rubble. Piece-by-piece the statue once again took shape. The form stood complete except for the hands. Disappointment brought the suggestion that the statue be removed from the square but traditional feelings would not allow its removal. After much consideration a plaque was constructed and attached to the base of the Christus which read, "I have no hands but yours."

May the Lord bless you as your hands are instrumental in reaching out, in touching and lifting—pointing the right direction to his sons and daughters. May you be blessed to work beyond your natural means, being receptive of knowledge but commissioned at our educational institutions, and be touched by the Spirit and be lifted to help others needing your support, support that can be extended through your outstretched hands.

I bear you my witness that Jesus is the Christ. This is his church. The gospel principles to which all the scriptures contribute are not something conceived in the minds of men. They are principles that are eternal, and as we attach ourselves to those principles and put on our own spiritual oxygen masks, then we can reach out with our hands and touch and inspire and love others who may need enrichment in this pursuit. This is a most wonderful contribution you can and are making. I say these things humbly, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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## A Road Map to Hope

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Elder John K. Carmack  
Of the Seventy  
3 October 1985

I approach you in a humility born of struggle. My life as a lawyer, a people's lawyer, brought me into daily contact with people from all walks of life—people with legal problems and people with emotional problems. Some were serious! One of my first cases after I went into the private practice of law was straightening out a mess left by a friend whose pain finally led him to commit suicide. He made one last try to pay his mounting gambling debts by a trip to Lake Tahoe, then took his life leaving a note to his wife that she should bring her problems to me, and I would solve them. There were enough problems to go around, but eventually, as is true with most problems, we saw them through together. I think I shall always be haunted by the memory of Karl coming to the Westwood Ward, gazing steadily at me as I was involved in an activity with other ward members, then leaving suddenly—the night before his suicide.

Years later another client, unable to withstand the pain of loneliness caused by the hospitalization of his wife due to a severe stroke which took from his wife the ability to speak, put a bullet through his head leaving a similar note directing his heirs to me to handle the problems remaining. He was probably a typical passive, dependent personality type. Emotional pain, whether caused by financial distress, loneliness, or dozens of other dirty tricks which life plays on us, is real. In extreme cases, it is life threatening.

One of my close Los Angeles friends, a man of high ambitions and ideals, was married to a woman who worshipped him. When he restlessly sought excitement through female companionship outside the home, she tried every way she could to let him know that she could not stand the pain and shattered ego brought about by his infidelity and rejection. Finally, in despair, she apparently used the only weapon she felt was available to her which was to take her life. In effect, by her suicide she was saying, "John, I told you I was deeply hurt and you continued right on doing what I couldn't accept. Maybe you will now realize that I meant what I said!" These are some of the more sobering experiences of my twenty years of practicing law in Los Angeles. One learns a lot, but there is also a growing humility and a tendency to abandon the feeling that you or your philosophy is preeminent and that you have all of the answers to people's painful struggles.

I struggled as a lawyer to help people in trouble. Usually, the solution to people's problems was not entirely legal, but required spiritual and psychological human assistance as well. The most difficult part of practicing law was dealing with the complexities of human nature. It was also the most rewarding. Getting a number of business partners to come together in a common cause to solve a legal partnership dispute against another equally complex set of humans with varied objectives is often how a law suit is settled or won after a court battle. Some of the most satisfying experiences of my life have been assisting and guiding human beings in their struggle to find peace, meaning, and success in their relationships with other human beings.

But I also experienced pain myself and learned humility when I discovered that I had insufficient tools or wisdom to solve a particularly thorny case, or when I failed in an attempt to understand and help another human being. Additionally, when one's motives are impugned, more painful lessons are learned. Apparently, there is no other way to truly grow, evolve, and develop but by actual experience under the loving tutorship of a God committed to the principles of free will or free agency. We learn only incrementally. We find a piece of the puzzle here and a piece there. The Lord put it well when he said:



For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: for with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. . . . [Not to imply that He is deficient in language, but He has to use words we understand.]

But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken! [Which is how we often react as He tries to guide and inspire us by telling us things we should know (Isaiah 28: 10, 11, 13).

But in this tutorial experience, we should not be too hard on ourselves and others. We will often be clumsy and fail, but if we stop and think about it, we will realize that the lord has not been successful with all of his children either, at least in this life. Some are rebellious, others disobedient, weak, full of unruly appetite; some cannot bring into their lives discipline while others are disciplined but intolerant. Some are even influenced by evil forces in their actions and in their choices. I know of no one to whom God has entrusted all of the answers to the questions we of the priesthood and we of the professions represented here grapple with. But we keep learning and never stop trying. Progress is apparent in knowledge of the principles and tools which can help, but the number in need of such assistance is multiplying.

There is a nice theological debate about whether God gains new knowledge. I know the answer theologically, but I wonder if even God, Himself, having created this world in which to test his children and tutor them through experience, sometimes feels like shaking his head in wonder at the reaction of men and women to circumstances they face.

We get some hint of God's work in the great Moses 1:39 statement that God's work and glory is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man!" How patient and kind he must be as we stumble and fall and grow from gracelessness to grace. Since we are partners in that work, that also becomes our work and glory.

Just when I thought I knew something about mankind, I was sent out into the mission field and was given 450 missionaries to work with over a three year span of time. These missionaries were mostly young adults, but also included brothers and sisters of all ages. This taught me in a more intense way about man, his complexity and varying nature.

One could easily be overwhelmed with the variety of circumstances one faces in the environment of a mission. People “ooh” and “ah” at the exotic geographical assignment a couple is given in the mission fields of the Church, but the geography has little to do with the real work of a mission president. It is the inner workings of men and women which form the grist and become the essence of a mission. The glory of a mission is not just in the number of converts baptized and confirmed having obtained a testimony and hope in Christ, although that is very important, but the glory is in the growth and development of the missionaries who are placed in the charge of the president. It becomes a “bully” laboratory for a committed couple. And that growth is incremental—here a little and there a little. Fortunately, one begins to gain a perspective of human needs and those needs begin to fit into recurring patterns after a time. This makes possible a more intelligent and effective approach to the challenges faced daily in a mission. About the time your education fits you for the challenge you are released to return home, probably never to be called upon in a similar challenge again. Such are the ironies of life.

Nevertheless, so individual and varied is the growth which the missionaries experience that one almost becomes sympathetic to the existentialist school of thought which, in its religious dimension, holds that religion involves a decision which must be made separately and individually by each person, usually without conclusive evidence.

I am not an existentialist philosophically, but I have tried to understand that movement built upon pioneer thinkers such as Søren Kierkegaard, a Danish protestant theologian and philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, the great German philosopher, and others. I particularly like the notion widely held by existentialist thinkers that man is free because he makes choices and that he is responsible

for those choices. Therein lies growth and development. Man does seem to be “condemned to be free.” And with that freedom comes variety. The variety of problems seems to be increasing as our families undergo turmoil, separation, and as roles of father and mother become blurred and confused.

In a great talk given in Washington, D.C. by Harold M. Voth, M.D., senior psychiatrist and psychoanalyst at the Menninger Foundation in Kansas, he asserted that:

The crucible from which all life springs is the family. The events within the family can make or break the individual and collectively, civilization ... not only must the family survive, but its internal workings must function in ways that turn out strong men and women—not weak ones who eventually become casualties of one form or another or who may work actively against the best values and traditions of our country.

Dr. Voth continued by analyzing the means by which families lead children to maturity. He also observed that often a child born biologically a male or female does not receive the resources, development, and shepherding to bring harmony between the biological and psychological sides, “thereby developing a solid sense of maleness and femaleness!” Of course, malfunctioning homes bring these and a variety of other problems into the lives of missionaries who enter into the Lord’s service. Many of their problems can be worked out by the individual, but we must assist a growing number towards maturity and spiritual health. My term as a mission president has allowed me a peek into a cross section of our homes. That squinty peek into our homes has basically warmed my heart and left me optimistic. But there is also a dark corner or two which is worrisome.

Perhaps it is a miracle that we turn out as many maturely functioning men and women as we do both now and throughout our history, but this is an alarming time when the civilization we love and the values we have held dear in the past are in grave danger. Such studies as *New Rules* by Yankelovich and *Megatrends* by Naisbitt document some of the enormous changes in the principles accepted as the norm by people today. A mission president and his wife, receiving a sampling of presumably our best youth, nevertheless encounter a seemingly endless stream of

problems faced by young and old. Our bishops have much the same experience. The glory comes as they see so many triumph and grow in ways which are so subtle that they can only truly share their feelings with someone having like experiences. The roles of spiritual father, leader and counselor become, to a mission president and bishop, laboratory training not unrelated to that which professional psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors and therapists experience. All of us marvel at man's capacity to grow, his complexity, and the endless opportunities to tutor, treat, rescue, assist, and serve.

I now borrow from a concept articulated by M. Scott Peck, M.D. in his splendid book *The Road Less Traveled*. We are constantly trying to help each other along life's road by a number of means such as teaching people to delay gratification thus allowing them to experience greater good, helping people establish personal discipline, teaching them to give and receive love, and gently leading people to bring reality into their lives. To help us along that road of life it is essential to have a true road map—a map which is constantly being made more accurate and true and which must be kept current. As the world changes, our map must be updated.

To illustrate, suppose you are a tourist who wants to explore Salt Lake City. Suppose you have a twenty-year-old map of the city. None of the high-rise buildings we see in Salt Lake City today even existed twenty years ago. To tour Salt Lake City with an outdated map which does not show the new buildings would be confusing and unhelpful. We need to see things as they are. We would insist that our map of the city be up-to-date and accurate.

The Lord through the Prophet Joseph Smith gave us this definition of truth: "truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come!" (Doctrine and Covenants 93:24). That definition is simple, but profound.

Henry Eyring told his son as he was about to start his study of mining engineering at the university:

I'm convinced that the Lord used the Prophet Joseph Smith to restore his church. For me, that is a reality. I haven't any doubt about it. Now,

there are a lot of other matters that are much less clear to me. But in this church you don't have to believe anything that isn't true. You go over to the University of Arizona and learn everything you can, and whatever is true is a part of the gospel. The Lord is actually running this universe (Henry Eyring, *Reflections of a Scientist*, pp. 6–7).

This is a virile kind of religion. It is constantly being updated with new knowledge and is made more and more accurate and true. This is the gospel in which I can believe and which I trust.

President Kimball taught:

The gospel is true beyond all questioning. There may be parts of it we do not yet know and fully understand, but we shall never be able to prove it untrue for it includes all truth, known and unknown, developed and undeveloped. (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 24.)

I feel a person is healthier if he has a road map for life which is basically true. The more fairy tales and the more out-of-date myths there are on one's road map, the more it will be like the rocky or sandy soil of Jesus' parable of the seeds, or as the jelly-like understructure of Mexico City, which made conditions so much worse for people during the earthquake. On our road map leading to health and ultimately back to God, we must have truth and reality.

We inherit so much excess baggage from homes where love, discipline, and faith do not sufficiently exist. This hurts us. It is not easy to correct a map created by years of cynicism, hypocrisy, cruelty, indulgence, or indifference in a home. And in a home in which unwittingly faith is undermined, faith often does not appear on our road map.

Now, I would like to broaden the perspective of my remarks, building on the Peck analogy. If our road map ends at the state line, we are ill-prepared to move beyond the boundaries of our state. We become a prisoner of those boundaries. Our planning for a nation-wide road trip is severely handicapped under those circumstances. Our road map is deficient. We don't even know which road within the state to take which will lead us toward our destination, whether it be east, or west, or north or south.

Paul said it well: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable!" (I Corinthians 15: 19). It helps to know where we are going and whether there are roads with which we need to connect in an adjacent state. There is power in a more complete map. Author Robert Bolt, in his *Man For All Seasons*, had Sir Thomas More say to his executioner as he put on the black mask before the terrible axe was raised aloft, "Friend, be not afraid of your office. You send me to God!" A more complete road map coupled with faith in Christ casts out fear and cowardice. In our work we need to remember that our road map should include events guiding principles before our birth and after our death, to the extent these events and principles are known, and quietly build it into our system.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, with a solid and correct road map, gave his last ounce of strength in preparing and presenting that great faith promoting sermon last April. He was a bright and living example of one who followed his road map into the next life. We can call what he became a living example of "hope," which he once defined as "the desire of faithful people to gain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God hereafter!" He added that "hope is always centered in Christ!"

If our road map contains a look at the next world, somehow it helps bring perspective and reality to this one. C. S. Lewis once said, "If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next." He added, "Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in; aim at earth and you will get neither!" (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*).

Some amazing and wonderfully constructive things happen when people get this perspective which we sometimes call a testimony. It is the work of prophets and missionaries to carry this message so that it changes the hearts and road maps of all inhabitants of this world who will not harden their hearts.

Yet it is not always possible for missionaries, prophets, and even the constant and loving service of parents to help those hard cases where neuroses, character disorder, and psychoses are deeply rooted.

All can benefit from the sympathetic interest and love of another man or woman and from the administrations of the priesthood. But some of the people are so sorely afflicted that their problems can only be helped by “fasting and prayer!” and many require highly trained and skillful professional experts in rebuilding horribly distorted and damaged maps. Many will never be well until released from the damaged conditions created or inherited in this life, despite all church leaders and counselors can do. We have constant need of those who develop professional expertise in helping with these harder cases.

No particular school of thought in your world is preeminent in my experience. Effective professionals can come out of any number of disciplines and often the doctrine of a particular discipline merges into experience and thus becomes unique to that person. A great and wise bishop can often do more than a professionally trained person. Bishops can and do handle most of the problems brought to them. This should continue to be so. However, a professionally trained person who is humble and caring can often be of great assistance to a priesthood leader, and can provide help to suffering individuals which is not readily available even from a righteous priesthood leader.

I well remember an elder serving with us who would have the equivalent of a seizure at every zone conference as he was confronted with the example of great missionaries performing brilliantly which heightened his own anxiety and affirmed his low self-esteem. It took a counselor, a psychiatrist, a social worker, love from home, Sister Carmack teaching him how to read and overcome the effects of dyslexia and the power of the priesthood to see him through a mission. No one part of the puzzle was preeminent and any missing part would have resulted in failure. Added to all of that was fasting, prayer and faith.

A sister with a severe psychosis could not stand the rigors of a mission. Relief from its burdens and responsibilities could bring respite from pain. Professional help and ecclesiastical caring combined to help with that decision and a caring home was the peaceful setting needed for healing to begin. Perhaps she will never

be psychologically right until the Savior Himself takes her into his arms.

Again, C. S. Lewis captured the thought well: "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world!" One can keep a proper perspective and avoid discouragement in working with people if one keeps in mind that death does not end life and that a great physician will sometimes have to complete work commenced here.

I have a few suggestions for your consideration as we humbly approach the task of assisting the Lord in bringing joy to people in place of sorrow and misery, in helping to bring to pass man's immortality and eternal life:

*1. Build into people the ability to solve problems and meet life's challenges with courage and hope, knowing that a better life exists beyond the borders of this one.*

Joseph F. Smith once said:

After we have done all we could do for the cause of truth, and withstood the evil that men have brought upon us, and we have been overwhelmed by their wrongs, it is still our duty to stand. We cannot give up; we must not lie down. Great causes are not won in a single generation. To stand firm in the face of overwhelming opposition, when you have done all you can, is the courage of faith. The courage of faith is the courage of progress. Men who possess that divine quality go on. They are not permitted to stand still if they would. They are not simply the creatures of their own power and wisdom; they are instrumentalities of a higher and divine purpose.

I think President Smith said it even better than Winston Churchill's famous speech to his school, Harrow, in which he had experienced so much pain and failure. He came back heroically as a great world leader and told the students eagerly waiting for the world famous orator, "Never give in; ... never never, never, never give in!" People need that message, and it seems more effective if a road map of hope is built into their program.

I saw a sister in Los Angeles Stake last June with whom I had spent many hours helping in a small way with a major psychosis when I served as Los Angeles Stake President. She was measurably



better than I remembered her being five years earlier. She had never stopped trying and many others had never given up on her.

2. *Be humble, which is easy in this business of working with people, and let us be wise enough not to put all of our eggs in one basket.* The Lord works through many agencies, and people, and wise priesthood leaders. While putting primary faith in the holy priesthood, know that fasting, prayer, therapy, proper use of drugs, medical help, psychology, and every available assist will sometimes be needed. Trained people should never succumb to the tendency to think they are wiser than everyone else, especially Church leaders assigned to help. A great attitude is one of humbly and professionally contributing as circumstances allow.

I don't know what I would have done without the medical and counseling assistance given the missionaries in my charge. On the other hand, I thank the Lord for the agency of the priesthood which was of primary help day in and day out. In the hard cases it was a combination of every kind of assistance we could find which finally opened the door.

3. *Let's remember that good homes and mature, loving parents are the salvation of our society and work toward building them.* Without them, civilization and mankind as we know them are doomed. This is the great problem of our age. Interestingly, the prophets saw this fact and launched extensive family help long before it became apparent that this would be our great need. How blessed we are to have prophets! Let us never be weary of following them, even when we know them as men with human weaknesses. And let us build parents and sound marriages and let us assist children to become mature adults and loving, wise parents. If we don't, the whole earth will be utterly wasted at His coming.

4. *Finally, let us build road maps of truth and reality, including in those road maps the content of life as it existed before we came here and after we leave.* Let us build hope in Christ, and a testimony of things as they are both by reason of our earthly senses and by reason of our spiritual senses.

I testify that life is eternal and that there is a gospel road map which will bring us home again. I applaud those of you who are

humbly striving to help people with their distorted and cruelly deficient road maps, which often they inherited as a consequence of being placed in disastrous homes by a loving God who valued an environment of freedom of choice in which difficult problem solving would build us. Most humbly, we are grateful that He sent His Son to accept our burdens and to give us hope and in due course freedom from pain, promising that special peace which passeth all understanding. In the end, as Corita Kent observed, "to believe in God is to believe that the rules are fair, and there will be wonderful surprises!" Without that assurance, this life would appear to promise only a continuation of unfairness and cruelty which seems to be a necessary part of the marvelous process of growth in this life.

Thank you for your crucial and enormously useful part in the road map to hope and the process of healing.

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## “My Peace I Give Unto You”

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Elder Dean L. Larsen  
Of the Presidency of the Seventy  
2 October 1986

**I**t is good to be with you today. I appreciate the invitation. Before I go further, I must make a comment regarding something that happened yesterday. Apparently, some little notification appeared in the local newspapers yesterday about the program today, and, I presume, as a result of that, the Church Public Communications Department called and asked if I would share with them the text of my talk. I had to confess I didn't have a text. And I confess it to you. That is not to imply that I have not given considerable thought to what I would like to share with you today, but I felt that I would like to have a little more freedom than a prepared text would give me. I hope this will not be a disappointment to you, and if it is, I give my apologies in advance. If it is necessary that some kind of report be made of what I say today, and if anything occurs of sufficient value to warrant such a report, perhaps someone could make notes and afterwards compile some kind of recapitulation of the proceedings. I hope to be rather informal and perhaps even involve some of you in a discussion of shared areas of concern. And I hope that will not be inappropriate. I sincerely hope that what we do will be useful to you. The chalkboard here suggests something of a classroom atmosphere, but it isn't that I intended to be the teacher today. I was hoping to be able to use this to construct a simple representation of some ideas that we might discuss.

On the opposite ends of this chalkboard I am going to construct two simple rectangles that will represent the spectrum between the conditions that we call "health" and "sickness." I will connect these two rectangles with three lines that are to represent three basic areas of our lives in which we experience degrees of health or sickness. These representations will be oversimplifications, but I hope they will be useful in our discussion. I will let these three connecting lines represent the spiritual, emotional, and physical aspects of our lives. All of us have an interest in these three areas. Some of us might be considered as professional practitioners who have an interest in helping others enjoy a healthy condition in these areas.

As Latter-day Saints we should have no difficulty in recognizing the interrelationships among the spiritual, emotional, and physical elements in our lives. We really can't isolate one from the others. I don't think there is any question, for example, that there is a direct relationship between one's physical condition and his emotional stability, and often the reverse might also be true. Certainly both of these have bearing upon the spiritual condition, and one's spiritual condition may well have an effect upon his physical and emotional health. I mention this to lay a foundation for some of the observations I would like to share with you today.

In my role as a spiritual adviser, I sometimes encounter those who are suffering from emotional problems and, not infrequently, those who have physical difficulties. At times those of us who have ecclesiastical responsibilities are asked to administer to those who have emotional and physical problems. All of us have had experiences of this kind in which we have observed the results of prayer and faith. Sometimes these results are almost miraculous. The Lord, in some instances, responds to prayers and to the exercising of faith to intervene in all three of these areas of our lives. But frequently he does not.

I have to recognize as a spiritual adviser, or as a spiritual leader, that conditions may exist in an individual's life that I may not be able to deal with effectively without the kind of help that you can give, or without the help that those who practice medicine can give. By the same token, I would sincerely hope and trust you will

recognize that people have profound spiritual needs that may not be fulfilled by the professional expertise you may bring to bear. Does anyone want to comment on or disagree with this premise?

One other idea, then, might be represented by this very simple graph. I will draw a vertical line that intersects the three parallel horizontal lines which we have said represent the spiritual, emotional, and physical aspects of our lives. It will be somewhere between the two poles that we have identified as sickness and health. This vertical line will represent the arbitrary point at which certain symptoms appear in the life of an individual which cause us to speak of that individual as being sick. To illustrate further, at some point along this range that represents the emotional part of our lives there can emerge some kind of behavior that we consider to be abnormal and that requires treatment in a particular way. The same thing can be true in a spiritual sense. That is, we may find people living in such a way that their lives appear to be out of harmony with spiritual principles, and we express the same kind of concern and anticipate something of the same kind of special need on their behalf. Certainly this can be true in the physical part of our lives as well.

Most of you, I suspect, devote the major part of your time professionally dealing with people in this area, along the “emotional” line beyond the point where it verges toward “sickness.” Is that correct? One of the things I would like to suggest to you today is that in the area along this range of emotional and spiritual health where we generally think of people, as being well, or adjusted, or healthy, there are many who are experiencing difficulties and needs that often go unobserved. In this environment of complexity and diversity and stress we need to become more aware of these needs that are not always overtly observable in people’s lives and that may be pushing them toward the “sickness” pole. *We* need to be increasingly alert to the needs, not only here where abnormality begins to surface, but increasingly here in this area where people may appear to be dealing successfully with the challenges and problems they are faced with. There are needs that are peculiar to our own time, and they probably will not diminish in our lifetime.

I have attempted to discover some scriptural terms that might represent these two points that I have described as “health” and “sickness.” The best term that I have been able to discover relating to “health” is the term *peace*. The Savior said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14: 27).

The Savior himself is a source of peace, of reassurance. He is an anchor, a refuge; and one who accepts him as the Son of God and recognizes in him all the possibilities and opportunities in an eternal sense that he extends to us finds a principal source of peace. That idea is repeated in another way, interestingly, in section 39 of the Doctrine and Covenants in which the Savior says, “And this is my gospel—repentance and baptism by water, and then cometh the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, even the Comforter, which showeth all things, and teacheth the peaceable things of the Kingdom” (Doctrine and Covenants 39: 6).

I would have to interpret from this statement that there is, in the proper understanding of the gospel and in our living in compliance with its principles, a source of peace, of emotional and spiritual strength. We need to recognize this in our attempts to help others.

The opposite of peace is a little harder to come by in specific scriptural terms. *Contention* comes close, but it’s not altogether satisfactory. Yet, if it’s considered broadly as representing conflict and stress, then it serves better. The scriptures make it clear that noncompliance with gospel principles is destructive of peace. “Wickedness never was happiness.” This is difficult for some people to believe as they observe the apparent pleasure with which so many live dissolute lives. This apparent paradox is sometimes disconcerting.

A week or two ago I was seated next to a young woman on a flight from the East. She was going to Denver, she said, to conduct a training seminar for people of the company she represented. I asked her how she enjoyed her work. She was very fulfilled. She was enjoying the alcoholic beverages that the flight attendants

brought to her as we conversed. Then she told me, "Really, I have everything. I have more than I ever dreamed of having." She talked of her work and then said she had found the man of her dreams. They were just completing decorating and furnishing a beach-front condominium. She said it was just what they wanted. There was no intention of marriage. She told about their traveling together in Europe and what an enjoyable time they had had, and how thrilled her mother and father were with him and with their relationship. All of this seems in direct contradiction to what I have just represented regarding the relationship between peace and compliance with gospel principles. Yet it is not difficult for us to predict from all we have observed in our lives that inevitably this young woman is headed for some disillusionment and unhappiness.

Now, let me come back to the often-concealed needs of so many who appear to be, by surface observation, spiritually and emotionally healthy. The observations that follow will not surprise most of you, because you encounter people in your daily professional work who reflect the kinds of difficulties that I am going to point to now. I believe we must become more wise and more sensitive in dealing with these problems than we have ever been before, both ecclesiastically and professionally. I seem to be encountering more and more frequently in my circulation among the membership of the Church, people who are honestly trying to avoid sin, who are really doing their best, as they understand, to live in accordance with the principles of the gospel but who are unhappy, frustrated, and disillusioned to a considerable degree. Let me use extractions from several letters that have come to me from such people to illustrate the nature of the problem to which I refer:

Please understand, we are trying. We know that these are the last days, and so much needs to be done. We do not want to be numbered among the inactives, but for the first time it is beginning to look better and better.

Have you ever run into people like that? Here is another:

Is it really a matter of piling it on to see how much one can take? A survival of the fittest? I can't imagine Heavenly Father wanting it to be this way.

There is some anguish in that serious question. These are not all from the same individual. Here is another:

Life has ceased to have any meaning for me. I cannot see any way out except to quit. I just wish I could walk away from all of it—sometimes from everything.

There is some desperation expressed here—in the life of one who is obviously a member trying to do what's right. How do you account for that? Is this something you need to be prepared to come to grips with in your profession? What might be done to help these people? What are some of the things that may be happening in the lives of these people, things that would not be readily apparent, but might be contributing to their frustrations?

*Comment:* There are so many expectations that are generated for people today.

*Elder Larsen:* Is there anyone who wants to comment on that and expand on it, to become a little more specific?

*Comment:* There is a guilt complex reflected in these letters—"God does not love me. . ." "I'm not measuring up. . ."

*Elder Larsen:* Does it relate to the magnitude and diversification of the expectations these people feel are imposed on them or that they generate for themselves?

*Comment:* It relates to perfection.

*Elder Larsen:* And achieving perfection is a correct principle, isn't it? But it is apparently a source of great frustration to many who don't feel they are achieving it as quickly as they feel they should, or as somebody else feels they should.

*Comment:* When the gospel is misunderstood, it seems to be a source of contention.

*Elder Larsen:* We need to be particularly careful in our ecclesiastical and professional roles that we don't raise expectations so broad and so numerous that people can't cope with them. Let me share with you one other comment that came in another letter—this one in response to the printing in the *New Era* (February 1986, pp. 4–9) of a talk I had given at a Brigham Young University Fireside (3 February 1985). I spoke on the subject "The Peaceable



Things of the Kingdom.” I believe I received more response to and reaction from what I tried to say on that occasion than I have on any other thing I have said or done since I came into this position ten years ago—more letters, more telephone calls, more personal visits, sometimes from people whose names you would readily recognize. Here is one I have chosen because the woman is very articulate and has said well what others with less ability to put their feelings into words have tried to say: “How grateful I am to you for bringing these things out in the open.” That in itself is interesting.

I fit so closely with the emotionally and spiritually burned-out person you describe. For the first time I can see the reason why I have never felt peace, even though I try so hard to do what’s right. Your message has done more for me than all the anti-depressants and psychiatrists’ visits I have made. It’s like you have given me permission to enjoy the road back to Heavenly Father, instead of beating myself frantically toward Him.

There is some real pathos in this. Now, this is not an isolated reaction. I don’t think that is an isolated feeling or condition among our own people today, and I believe sincerely it is one of the significant challenges that you and I and those with whom we are associated are going to have to deal with in this stressful, challenging time. How do we do it successfully so that people don’t become disillusioned about the gospel, or lose faith in the Savior and the refuge and source of peace that he represents?

Let me quote a few lines from the talk I gave at BYU to which this last correspondent reacted:

Some of us create such a complexity of expectations for ourselves that it is difficult to cope with the magnitude of them. Sometimes we establish so many particulars by which to evaluate and rate ourselves that it becomes difficult to feel successful and worthy to any degree at any time. We can drive ourselves unmercifully toward perfection on such a broad plane. When this compulsion is intensified by sources outside ourselves, the problem is compounded. Confronting these demands can bring mental and emotional despair.

Everyone needs to feel successful and worthy in some ways at least part of the time. The recognition of our frailties need not propel us to try to achieve perfection in one dramatic commitment of effort (p. 6).

That to me seems to be particularly important.

The best progress sometimes comes when we are not under intense duress. Overzealousness is at least as much to be feared as apathy. Trying to measure up to too many particular expectations without some sense of self-tolerance can cause spiritual and emotional "burn-out."

In order to avoid the effects of too many external and internal pressures, it is not necessary nor wise to withdraw from all of life's challenges. This would only compound our difficulties. To enjoy the "peaceable things of the kingdom," we must find warm acceptance, love, and understanding from those who have the most direct influence on our lives (p. 6).

Here is another quotation from the same talk:

Another factor that has a bearing upon whether or not we experience peace in our lives has to do with our being able to realistically respond to expectations that others have for us and the demands they sometimes make of us. In responding to these expectations, we must successfully evaluate between fundamentally important values and sometimes superficial or outward performances that others may expect from us. This requires that we recognize real truth and demonstrate integrity to it. Peace of mind comes when we know we are doing the right thing for the right reasons.

For some reason one of the most common methods many of us use to motivate is to develop feelings of guilt within ourselves or in others for whom we have a responsibility (pp. 7–8).

Have you been to a church meeting lately where you were made to feel that way? If we play upon the guilt of people who are earnestly striving to become perfect with an almost unending diversification of expectations which seem to come simultaneously, we can overwhelm them and cause them to feel as if their eternal prospects are hopeless. One additional quotation:

Guilt feelings are a natural product of an injured conscience. When we willfully violate a valid code of conduct, we suffer the consequences of our infraction in the internal conflict that occurs within our souls. Such feelings, painful and remorseful though they may be, can generate the desire to repent and improve. They can be useful, constructive emotions that propel us forward to greater perfection.

But purposefully generating feelings of guilt over some shortcoming as a means of motivating action or promoting more compliant behavior is rarely productive (p. 8).

I suggest to you today, brothers and sisters, that this is one of our great challenges—how we motivate and encourage without intensifying so greatly the pressures and stresses that our efforts become counterproductive. Is it possible to do that? I would earnestly hope and pray so and suggest to you that that's one of the areas we will have to deal with increasingly on both of these levels—the spiritual and the emotional. There are some today who feel the Church is a great insatiable, demanding institution—cold, impersonal, and unyielding. And to the degree we have made it appear that way to others, shame on us. We have a responsibility to represent the Lord and His work in a way that will not bring those results.

Have I said that in an acceptable way? I hope so.

In the past several years, studies have been made and are being made among some segments of the Church population primarily to determine what things seem to have the greatest impact or influence in people's lives to help them become spiritually mature and at peace. I have not had an opportunity to go through some of those studies carefully, but I have reviewed virtually all of them to some degree, and some of them I have reviewed very closely. It is interesting to me that in all of these studies three things seem to emerge regularly as having tremendous importance in the acquiring and maintaining of spiritual health and well-being. These may not be surprising to you, and yet may be because they are so standard and foundational to the gospel we don't give them as much attention as we need to. One is *prayer*. People who will pray regularly and out of the genuine recognition of the source of peace, comfort, and security that Deity represents have a tremendously powerful and stabilizing influence in life. The second thing is the *study of the scriptures*—regular study. There is something about scripture study that is tremendously significant, more so, it seems, than we have ever realized before, even though attention has been given to this in the past. Its effect upon stability and spiritual and emotional health is very potent. The third thing is *a disposition to do something good for someone else*, an inclination to forget self in a concern for someone else. Now, I'm not just talking about church service. Assigned church service is important, but I refer more to an

attitude or a disposition to be alert to the needs of others and then the determination to make an effort in some way to respond to those needs. There is apparently something so very Christ-like about that attribute that it represents a tremendously strong underpinning of emotional and spiritual strength. I share that with you simply to suggest that maybe this disposition is something we all need to consider as we counsel with people. The more we can help to turn them outside themselves and to become conscious of and anxious to help others, the more we may be able to help them overcome their own problems. Those three things are of tremendous importance.

I hope that I have not understated or given too little attention to the importance of the real source of spiritual strength in our lives, which is, of course, a belief in and reliance upon our Heavenly Father and the Savior, Jesus Christ. They are the most secure refuge that we have. I know that, and I know from my own experience and my experience with others.

Generally, when we are invited to stake conferences we spend Saturday evening in the home of the stake president with whom we visit. That's not always the case, but generally it is. And those are always rich experiences, as we have the opportunity to meet with some truly great people of the world. Sometimes these are interesting experiences. I was recently in a stake in the Midwest and stayed with a stake president who had rather modest means and a large family. They lived in a home that was an older home—not spacious, with only one bathroom and one bedroom downstairs, and that was the one used by the parents. There were eight children. When we got to their home Saturday night we had a little refreshment, and I had an opportunity to meet with the children; then the children all hurried upstairs to bed. The stake president and his wife insisted that I use their bedroom. I protested. I said that I could sleep on the couch or anywhere. I protested until I could tell I was beginning to offend them and hurt their feelings, so I proceeded to their bedroom downstairs, and they went upstairs somewhere with the children. About midnight the door to the bedroom opened and I heard a little boy's voice call, "Daddy." In an instant, before I was fully awake, their little two-year-old son

was in bed with me and had his arms wrapped around my neck. He said simply, "I had a dream about a monster." And I didn't want to add to his trauma, so I didn't say anything. I put my arm over him and patted him and in an instant he was asleep. I drifted off again, but sometime later I was awakened. In the darkness of the room the youngster was sitting up in bed, running his fingers over my face. He sensed something was wrong. I said, "Would you like to go where your Mommy and Daddy are?" He said, "Uh, huh." I led him over to the door, and by that time his father had heard our voices and was standing at the head of the stairs waiting for his son. There was something almost symbolic in that experience. As I lay awake for awhile and thought about the experience, I realized that in that bedroom, in that home, that little boy knew he had sanctuary. There was security there. There was safety and acceptance and love. I thought how tremendously important that is. He instinctively knew where to go for that support and reassurance. It seems to me that each one of us has to have that kind of place to go. Prayer and a relationship with our Heavenly Father and the feeling we have for the Savior, those things are tremendously important to us. The principles of the gospel and our understanding of them can help. But we need to help one another as well.

The Lord says in the Doctrine and Covenants:

If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal (Doctrine and Covenants 42: 61).

There is more to learn as we seek to help one another, and we must learn more, particularly in today's stressful environment. Life will probably become more complicated, more difficult. The challenges will increase. But as we earnestly and honestly pray to understand and do our tasks better, we have the promise that inspiration will be available to us.

May I share one more thing with you before I conclude. I came home this past Monday night, after traveling from a stake conference outside the country. I was concerned about the preparation for this meeting with you as well as the events of a general conference

week. In an effort to relax a little before retiring, I pulled from a bookshelf a book of poetry by Edgar A. Guest. I found these verses:

The happiest nights  
 I ever know  
 Are those when I've  
     No place to go,  
 And the missus says  
     When the day is through:  
 "To-night we haven't  
     A thing to do."  
 Oh, the joy of it,  
     And the peace untold  
 Of sitting 'round  
     In my slippers old,  
 With my pipe and book:  
     In my easy chair,  
 Knowing I needn't  
     Go anywhere.  
 Needn't hurry  
     My evening meal  
 Nor force the smiles  
     That I do not feel,  
 But can grab a book  
     From a near-by shelf  
 And drop all sham  
     And be myself.  
 Oh, the charm of it  
     And the comfort rare;  
 Nothing on earth  
     With it can compare;  
 And I'm sorry for him  
     Who doesn't know  
 The joy of having  
     No place to go.

("No Place to Go," *A Heap O' Livin'*, p. 110–11)

I think we all need that sometimes, too, and we shouldn't feel guilty.

May the Lord bless us and help us in our attempts to be service-able to others. I express to you my personal, deep apprecia-

tion for the great good that you do in your own ecclesiastical service in the Church and in the professional service that you give as well.

May the Lord bless you in all you do, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.





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## **“Thank God for Scarlet Fever”**

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Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone  
Of the Seventy  
1 April 1988

**T**his is my third experience of joining with you at general conference time. It is not an easy adjustment to work an additional assignment in during this “oh, so busy week.” However, the good your organization is doing is of such mighty import, I felt constrained to accept your kind invitation to speak and share some of my feelings, attitudes, and experiences as one now described in the modern vernacular as an “adult child of a dysfunctional family.”

It probably goes without saying that most in this room are aware of my background. My father was an alcoholic and my parents were divorced. We received no child support nor alimony from my father after the divorce. To my knowledge he smoked about two-and-a-half packages of cigarettes a day until he died. Eventually, through Alcoholics Anonymous, he overcame his drinking. He lived the last five years of his life without drinking once. He never could, or at least he never did stop smoking. His death was caused from cancer, liver, and kidney problems. He was only 60 and he suffered excruciatingly before his death.

My mother, on the other hand, died in her 79th year with a smile on her lips and not one particle of pain. It seemed only just that this magnificent woman died without suffering. She lived without companionship for 43 years, raised seven children, worked nights while we were young, and gave her all for her children. No

one will ever know the extent to which she suffered through those long years of unpaid bill collectors, worrying about food for her children, or clothes for her family. Somehow I cannot ever recall her complaining about her lot. I know she must have, but it must not have been in front of us, the children.

When I was about 10 or 11 some of the family came down with scarlet fever. In those days that meant we were quarantined, unable to leave the premises. Dad must have stayed with a relative so he could continue to work. Mother was quarantined in the home from late winter to early spring with seven children. We were quarantined for four weeks. When the doctor came to the house to lift the quarantine, two of my other brothers were not feeling well. The doctor examined them, and they were just coming down with scarlet fever. He quarantined the family for an additional three weeks. It's a good thing they were sick. As you can imagine they were not all that popular.

Something happened during that seven week period that was more priceless than rubies or diamonds. A family otherwise fragmented by drink, unmet needs, unconsidered feelings, low self-esteem, and embarrassment—we were compelled to be together. A miracle happened. We were not a religious family but we had a mother who was idealistic and had great integrity. With five boys and two girls all cooped up, it's a wonder the house was still standing at the end of seven weeks. As I recall, it was from about the second week in February through the first week in April. I do not really remember exactly, only that it was cold and the season changed.

We got up together, had breakfast together, we did the dishes, and cleaned the house every day. Then our oldest brother—who was in junior high school—taught us all the exercises he had learned in his gym class. By the time our quarantine ran out I was doing 74 push-ups, 13 chins, and dozens of other athletic skills. I came to love and respect my older brother during those seven weeks. He filled a masculine role in our lives. You cannot believe how fast we could do the dishes. Every day we would time ourselves after almost every meal.

Mother would read to us. We listened to the old Philco Radio and could hardly wait for programs like “Jack Armstrong, the all American boy,” “I love a Mystery,” “Jack Benny,” and “Amos and Andy.” We gathered around the radio and drew close to each other.

Even poor families can become very selfish. Often, in fact, their poverty turns them inward where self-esteem is so low they are constantly concerned with what others are thinking about them.

Every night mother sang us to sleep. We may have sung along. But she always turned out the light. We would listen as she sang. Despite the darkness, I do not think any of us ever had a concern about safety as long as she was there.

During those seven weeks I grew to love and respect my mother, my brothers and sisters, and prize them as the dearest of friends. We turned to each other and found qualities and talents we did not know existed. We learned some of the most important lessons in life during that period of quarantine—lessons which reach down through the decades to today with profound impact. I thank God for what scarlet fever did for our family.

Many years ago—about thirty years ago—I read a book entitled *Dynamic Leadership* by Lynn Fluckinger. As I prepared this talk, I returned to the bookshelf in my office and extracted this book. It has been a constant reference for me over the years. For my purpose today I want to use just one quote from it.

Any excuse for nonperformance, however valid, softens the character. When a man uses an excuse he attempts to convince both himself and others that unsatisfactory is somehow acceptable. He is perhaps unconsciously attempting to divert attention from performance, the only thing that counts, to his own want for sympathy. The user is dishonest with himself as well as with others. No matter how good or how valid, the excuse never changes performance. (Wilford Lynn Fluckinger, *Dynamic Leadership* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1962], pp. 53–54.)

In light of this statement, consider the following—no one else possesses us. We have God-given traits as well as the endowment of free agency both of which have come trailing down through the eternities. Eleanor Roosevelt said, “No one else can make you feel

inferior without your consent.” Things are never hopeless until our minds have surrendered. Possibly one of the great principles to be shared with children or adults from dysfunctional families is a statement made by President Hugh B. Brown. Perhaps he was responding to a statement made by Ridgwell Cullum in his book *The Men Who Wrought* ([Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs Company, 1916], p. 25) where he stated, “Night claims from the overburdened soul the truth which daylight is denied.” President Brown said, “Yes, but no matter how dark the night, the dawn is irresistible.” All of us who occupy space on this great planet will be tested in one way or another. We are continually engaged in a sifting process. Robert Louis Stevenson expressed his own trials of life in these words:

For fourteen years I have not had a day of real health. I have wakened sick and gone to bed weary, yet I have done my work unflinchingly. I have written in bed and out of bed, written in hemorrhages, written in sickness, written torn by coughing, written when my head swam for weakness—and I have done it all for so long that it seems to me I have won my wager and have recovered my glove. Yet the battle still goes on: ill or well is a trifle so long as it goes. I was made for contest, and the Powers-That-Be have willed that my battlefield shall be the dingy, inglorious one of the bed and the medicine bottle. (Robert Louis Stevenson, cited in O. C. Tanner, *Christ's Ideals for Living* [Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Sunday School Union Board], 1955, p. 204.)

As adult children of dysfunctional families, we cannot hide behind our peculiar testing and justify our conduct on the basis of someone else's failure—whether parent or child. I am not referring to extreme cases tied to incest or severe physical abuse. Rather, I am referring to the many who are content to lay the blame for their lack of “mature balance” in life at the feet of their parents who were drinkers or involved in drugs.

For 16 years now I have traveled all over the Church as a General Authority. I have shared my story even though it embarrasses me. There are many hundreds and thousands over the years who have related to my story and background. They have quietly whispered in my ear, “my background is just like yours, my father or mother is an alcoholic.” Every week I speak to the youth 12 to 25 in each stake I visit. Always several of them will whisper similar

things in my ear. Mothers seem to gain hope that because I came from a family with an alcoholic father, their children can also be normal and well adjusted and may serve in high places in the Church.

Some may think because I talk about it a great deal that I still have some hang-ups. I think I do not. I loved my father, but I did not respect him. Now some of you are psychiatrists and some psychologists. What I have just said reminds me of the psychiatrist and some psychologists. There was a psychiatrist walking through a park with a friend. They met a psychologist coming the other way; the psychiatrist said to the psychologist, "Hello," to which the psychologist responded, "How are you?" As they walked on the psychiatrist said to his friend, "Now, what do you suppose he meant by that?"

Also, I heard about two psychiatrists who met on the street and the one said to the other, "I passed your house the other day." The other man said, "Thanks."

One psychiatrist answered the door and there was a man standing there with a duck perched on his head. The psychiatrist said, "You do have a problem." The duck responded, "Yes, how do I get this guy off my fanny?"

As I say, I feel well adjusted, but some trained in psychiatry may feel differently.

I do not resent my father, but rather feel sorrow for all the things which I prize in my life that are important, that he did not have.

We have in the teachings of the Church profound truths to which we subscribe. In one of the great sermons delivered by President Spencer W. Kimball—one which he entitled "Absolute Truth"—he made the following statement.

God, our Heavenly Father—Elohim—lives. That is an absolute truth. All six billion of the children of men on the earth might be ignorant of him and his attributes and his powers, but he still lives. All the people on the earth might deny him and disbelieve, but he lives in spite of them. They may have their own opinions, but he still lives, and his form, powers, and attributes do not change according to men's

opinions. In short, opinion alone has no power in the matter of an absolute truth. He still lives. And Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Almighty, the Creator, the Master of the only true way of life—the gospel of Jesus Christ. The intellectual may rationalize him out of existence and the unbeliever may scoff, but Christ still lives and guides the destinies of his people. That is an absolute truth; there is not gainsaying.

The watchmaker in Switzerland, with materials at hand, made the watch that was found in the sand in a California desert. The people who found the watch had never been to Switzerland, nor seen the watchmaker, nor seen the watch made. The watchmaker still existed, no matter the extent of their ignorance or experience. If the watch had a tongue, it might even lie and say, "There is no watchmaker." That would not alter the truth.

If men are really humble, they will realize that they discover, but do not create, truth. (*Ensign*, [September 1978]: 2–7.)

Sometimes it may be easy to blend the philosophies and the principles of the scholars with the doctrines and principles of the church to the point that we lose a firm hold on the absolute truths.

We are God's spiritual children and that is an absolute truth. He has eternal and unconditional love for us. He would not consign his children to an eternity of sorrow, sadness, remorse and despair. His work and glory is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.)

There is hardly anything more sad in this world than abandonment of or by those we once loved. An absolute truth is that God could not or would not abandon us. We may be tested to the limit, but to those who trust in him, He, through his Son gives this assurance.

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28–30.)

What an important concept it is to have faith in the fidelity, kindness, love and compassion of a God who is our eternal Father. Sometimes as counselors we bury our own lack of faith behind the philosophies and teachings of the so-called "experts." Even after an angel had appeared to the four brothers Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and

Nephi—Laman and Lemuel again began to murmur. But Nephi who had faith declared to his brethren, “Let us be faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord; for behold he is mightier than all the earth, then why not mightier than Laban and his fifty or even than his tens of thousands?”—an absolute truth. (1 Nephi 3:31, 4:1).

“Is anything too hard for the Lord?” (Genesis 18:14). As counselors we need all the professional training possible, then in addition we need to live clean, sweet, pure lives so that the Spirit will strive with us. We must have faith in miracles. We must plant our feet in the concrete of absolute truth and not be ashamed of those who mock and frown from the “great and spacious building.” (1 Nephi 8:26.)

Victor Hugo wrote a great truth which might well be considered by this group. Said he,

For there are many great deeds done in the small struggles of life. There is a determined though unseen bravery, which defends itself foot to foot in the darkness against the fatal invasions of necessity and baseness. Noble and mysterious triumphs which no eye sees, which no renown rewards, which no flourish of triumph salutes. Life, misfortunes, isolation, abandonment, poverty, are Battlefields which have their heroes; sometimes greater than the illustrious heroes. Strong and rare natures are thus created; misery, almost always a stepmother, is sometimes a mother; privation gives birth to power of soul and mind; distress is the nurse of self-respect; misfortune is a good breast for great souls. (*Les Misérables*, p. 573.)

We have in this Church the principles, teachings, disciplines, and answers far above those in the outside world. We are the best in the world in many things. We have the answers for all who will listen regarding dysfunctional families or any related problems. The world may not believe, and the professionals may mock, but it will ever be thus. Albert Einstein said, “Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds.”

And Voltaire said something that aligns itself with these principles, “Nothing can stand the assault of sustained thinking.” As we consider and apply the teachings and principles formed in the Church we will find opposition, but when we consider

sustained, inspired thinking as it relates to social problems in the world, we are the leaders.

Now may I share five principles which I think apply to this topic.

*1. Charity and purity bring peace; indulgence and transgression bring ill consequences.*

A man and woman came to my office. They appeared to be a lovely couple. Over 40 years ago while he was in the military in a distant land she committed adultery with a member of the Church who had recently returned from a mission. Whether it was the lust of the flesh, loneliness, or need for companionship, she made some foolish mistakes. Upon his return from duty and after an anonymous phone call or two, she confessed her indiscretion. The husband took 20 minutes to tell all of the details and background leading up to her unfaithfulness.

He told of his own purity and his personal standard during that period. He had remained faithful to his wife. She sat in my office with her head bowed as he told this story of her unfaithfulness. He wept and sobbed with emotion as he told what she had done. I asked if he had been faithful all of those years since they were married. He went into a circuitous explanation of his own conduct. He was a man of many words. I felt like I was being verbally manipulated to keep from getting to the truth. I kept asking questions which he kept skirting. I knew that in order to help I must have him come clean. Every time he tried to go into a long explanation and digress, I pulled him back by direct questions about his involvement.

Finally, I found that he had been sexually abused by an older cousin. After his military career he had been homosexually involved with several partners over a long period of time. He had been involved as recently as three years ago. After I felt that I had a full and complete confession, then I could exercise ecclesiastical judgment on behalf of the Church.

It was interesting to me that he seemed to draw more sorrow out of her unfaithfulness than his own. When I questioned her I



felt an absolute and total repentance. She was submissive, sorrowed greatly, bitterly ashamed and found no fault in anyone but herself. I felt a great spirit of forgiveness sweep over me in her behalf. It was interesting that I did not have feelings of peace with the Spirit that he was equally repentant. He seemed to have a hard time forgiving his wife, which almost led me to believe that he felt she was responsible for his transgressions.

Charity and purity bring peace, and transgression and indulgence only bring a troubled heart. I believe both had repented, she to a full and total degree, he to a lesser point. Each will feel the relief and peace in direct proportion to his or her degree of repentance.

*2. We lose much of value and precious time when we let our dysfunctional family affect our service and utility.*

One missionary in the mission field was a wonderful young man. However, every time I received a weekly letter it stated the same thing, "President, I don't like myself. I haven't liked myself since I was in 4th grade." (I have often wondered what happened in fourth grade or at that age.) He said he did not know how his companion or the missionaries in the district could like him. He thought "negatively about himself the whole of the day . . . every day."

Finally, during one personal interview with him I said, "Elder, you are the supreme egoist. How dare you think about yourself all the time. I know it is all negative, but you do not have a right to spend the two years you have committed to the Lord to think about yourself. From this time on I want you to think about the Lord and others, investigators, missionaries, members, your family, but not about yourself." I was pretty forceful with him. Now that may not have been an appropriate way to approach his problem, but it worked. He stopped thinking about himself and went on to become a great zone leader. A short time after I counseled with him, in his weekly letter he said, "President Featherstone, you have saved my very life."

Francois René de Chateaubriand said, "In the days of service all things are founded, in the days of special privilege they deteriorate,

and in the days of vanity they are destroyed.” Adult children of dysfunctional families do not have the right to be endlessly thinking about themselves. It is a type of supreme selfishness.

Another way of saying this comes from the prophet Ezekiel. There was a saying that was common in Israel and offensive to God. The Lord gave strong counsel in these words, “As I live, saith the Lord, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel.” What was the proverb or saying: “The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children’s teeth are set on edge” (Ezekiel 18:2–3). It sounds like the Lord was tired of ancient Israel hiding behind an excuse.

*3. God is a worker of miracles, even when it seems that he has withdrawn his blessings.*

The greatest miracle in our lives may come at the moment of our darkest trial. In 2 Kings 4:8–36 we read the following account of Elisha.

And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.

And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither. And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there.

And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him. And he said unto him, say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain for the host? and she answered, I dwell among mine own people. And he said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old. And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door. And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid.

And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life. And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers.

And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.

And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out. And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again.

And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? it is neither new moon, nor Sabbath. And she said, It shall be well. Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee.

So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, yonder is that Shunammite: Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband: is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well.

And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her; and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me. Then she said, Did I desire a son of my Lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me? Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way; if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again; and lay my staff upon the face of the child.

And the mother of the child said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her. And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice, nor hearing.

Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked. And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord. And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him; and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.

As President Hugh B. Brown said, "Death is not the end, it is putting out the candle because the dawn has come."

#### 4. *Love is essential.*

The French scientist, Chardin, stated, "Someday after we have mastered the winds and the waves and gravity, we will harness for God the energies of love and then for the second time in the history of the world man will have discovered fire."

Urie Bronfenbrenner, a noted family specialist, has observed that "every child should spend a substantial amount of time with somebody who's crazy about him . . . there has to be at least one person who has an irrational involvement with that child, someone who thinks that kid is more important than other people's kids, someone who's in love with him and who he loves in return . . . you can't pay a woman to do what a mother will do for free." (*Psychology Today*, May 1977, p. 43)

I have a grandson named Joseph. He is totally deaf. My daughter, Jill, has this "irrational involvement" with him. She is crazy about him, and he loves her. One day I was sitting in the living room reading; I was all alone. Joseph came into the room. Above our stereo we have a picture of Jill in her wedding gown. She is a beautiful woman, and I am crazy about her. Joseph walked over to the stereo and put his hands up on the stereo, like we might do with a pulpit. He stared almost without moving at this 24" x 30" framed picture of Jill. He must have stood there for nearly five minutes while I watched. It was almost like I had a little window into his mind and I could see inside. I imagined what that little 3-year-old boy was thinking.

Many people will find the hope and help they need when they find that someone who is absolutely nuts about them.

There are shepherds in the land and "the shepherd does not recoil from the diseased sheep." In the book of Ezekiel 34:2–6, 12, 16 we read:

Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves: should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock.

The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken,

neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.

And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.

As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

There are shepherds for every flock. We do well to consider the righteous consequences of a leader who functions under the full mantle of his or her ecclesiastical responsibility.

5. *Gethsemane may be our Prayer Garden as well.*

Ella Wheeler Wilcox wrote these magnificent words in her poem which she entitled "Gethsemane."

Gethsemane

In golden youth when seems the earth  
 A Summer-land of singing mirth,  
 When souls are glad and hearts are light,  
 And not a shadow lurks in sight,  
 We do not know it, but there lies  
 Somewhere veiled under evening skies  
 A garden which we all must see—  
 The garden of Gethsemane.  
 With joyous steps we go our ways,  
 Love lends a halo to our days;  
 Light sorrows sail like clouds afar,  
 We laugh, and say how strong we are.  
 We carry on; and hurrying, go  
 Close to the border-land of woe,  
 That waits for you, and waits for me—  
 Forever waits Gethsemane.

Down shadowy lanes, across strange streams,  
     Bridged over by our broken dreams;  
 Behind the misty caps of years,  
     Beyond the great salt fount of tears,  
 The garden lies. Strive as you may,  
     You cannot miss it in your way,  
 All paths that have been, or shall be,  
     Pass somewhere through Gethsemane.  
 All those who journey, soon or late,  
     Must pass within the garden's gate;  
 Must kneel alone in darkness there,  
     And battle with some fierce despair  
 God pity those who can not say,  
     "Not mine but thine," who only pray,  
 "Let this cup pass," and cannot see  
     The purpose in Gethsemane.  
 (Ella Wheeler Wilcox, *Poems of Power*  
 [Chicago: W. B. Conkey Co.], pp. 147–48.)

All of humanity must face a Gethsemane. The comforting thought which we might want to consider is this. Jesus, in that brief agonizing moment in Gethsemane, went through every conceivable type of suffering. It is my understanding that he not only suffered for the transgressor, but for all. Every feeling of despair and loneliness which the widow feels he has felt. The abandonment and devastation which comes to every orphan, those who are unemployed or desperately ill, those who are homely or beautiful, rich or poor all have feelings which he has felt. He descended below all, that he might ascend above all. Every hurt or ache or sorrow we feel he has experienced to a degree that not one of us can comprehend.

There are numerous principles of the gospel that tie directly to the solving of social and emotional problems. I think in time we will find that every true principle, every positive therapeutic benefit, all healing ties back to the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ and to his ministry. So my testimony today is, whether it be a woman with an issue of blood, a Shunammite widow, a quarantined family with scarlet fever, an incest victim, or an adult child of a dysfunctional family, we can, and we will minister.

I love the Lord. He is my King and I am his subject—subject to all he would demand of me. He is my liberator and I am free, he can and will set the world free. He is not only the Son of God, He is God. He is compassionate, kind, long suffering, meek and lowly, and He is the magnificent obsession of my life. He is my very dearest friend. I bear witness that He lives and is the center of all faith, hope, and charity. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.





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## The Eternal Verities and the Helping Professions

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Elder Richard P. Lindsay  
Of the Seventy  
29 September 1989

**I**t is an honor to be asked to speak to your fine organization though I am among the least of the least and the last ordained. Neither do I possess an intimate knowledge of your respective helping professions. In earlier years, I was exposed somewhat to your respective disciplines first while serving as administrator of Utah's Juvenile Court System, then as Director of Utah Family Services, and later as Director of State Social Services which twenty years ago included Health, Corrections, Mental Health, Welfare, Drugs, and Alcoholism, and assorted other public agencies focused on human problems. In those roles I also came to understand somewhat the wide range of personal tragedy and human pathology that impacted so many served by these public agencies and which your professions seek to alleviate.

If my understanding of current social indicators is correct, the breadth and depth of such human suffering and personal tragedies you face as professionals have only greatly intensified in the intervening twenty years. I would assume at times to some of you these problems seem beyond the pale of human wisdom and of your professional skills and training. Indeed, we live in a world whose challenges require our collective best efforts and especially the blessings and influence of God Almighty. To paraphrase President Kimball, God loves us all, but it is usually through the service of another of His children that He meets our needs.

I have read and been lifted by reading the remarks made by Church general authorities in earlier conference meetings of your group. Two things about your organization strike me as especially significant. First, the letter *M* of your organization implies a special fellowship tied to a belief in basic religious truths and core values of the Church that bind your helping professions together. This seems to me to represent a positive statement of your own faith and belief structure. The second fact is that you meet at general conference time. This suggests that many of you also hold significant ecclesiastical responsibilities in the Church. In both instances, I salute you for what your name and meeting scheduling imply. I would be particularly negligent if I did not express my deep gratitude to those of you who have significantly assisted me when I served as Bishop and Stake President. Your service was invaluable and indispensable.

Lacking in specific professional credentials and as a humble servant of the Lord, I would like to speak to you about a few simple experiences that have been helpful to me in my personal odyssey and which I pray will be in the Spirit of your gathering together to edify and strengthen each other in these meetings.

My mother, who was a widow for 47 years, was almost 96 years of age when she passed away in our home a few years ago. She was a daughter of humble Church converts from the British Isles. Her mother was a young orphan when she joined the Church and emigrated to this valley about the same time as her husband-to-be, my grandfather, also joined the Church as a boy in England. They met and married here well over a century ago. My mother was only seven years of age and one of several children when her father suddenly became ill and died working at the granite quarry cutting stone for the Salt Lake Temple.

Despite the challenges and deprivation of her early years, mother had a great desire to be led into opportunities for growth and service consistent with her faith. In her late teens she was called to take a special nurse training course sponsored by the Church General Relief Society Board. She was set apart to this calling by B.H. Roberts who promised her “that the Spirit of nursing would be with her from that day forward.”

The Relief Society training course whet her appetite to receive more professional preparation. In those years at the turn of the century there was no accredited program for registered nurses in this state. She traveled to Chicago where she was denied acceptance to a major nurse training facility because of her Mormon faith. She then went to Battle Creek, Michigan, where the newly established Kellogg Sanitarium operated by the Seventh Day Adventists admitted her. Upon graduation three years later, she was invited to remain as a member of the faculty. Fortunately for me and my five siblings, she returned to Salt Lake where she married my father. He was thirty-five years old, and she was thirty-three. But in 1932, after six children and fifteen years of marriage—and at the height of the great depression—my father died suddenly. My oldest brother died 10 days later.

I recount her history to make the point that she felt throughout her life—including 47 years of widowhood—that her chosen field of professional training was an extension of her religious belief. In my judgment that commitment never wavered. She passed away in my home a few years ago with a large picture of the Savior in constant full view at the front of her bed. She watched with satisfaction the improvements in medical and nursing care over her lifetime.

She was an honored guest as the oldest registered nurse in Utah when the University of Utah's new college of nursing building was dedicated several years ago. After inspecting the wonderful new facilities from her wheelchair, she responded, "This is all very wonderful, I just hope that it is not a substitute for the true spirit of nursing and serving which should characterize the profession."

I am comforted by the inspired teaching in our faith that all truth can be circumscribed into one great whole. A faithful believing Latter-day Saint should be equally at home in the temples of our Lord or academies of secular learning if his or her life is grounded in what Elder Richard L. Evans use to call the "eternal verities." To me these eternal verities include the recognition of man's identity as a Son of God and that the spiritual gifts of faith, courage, hope, humility, kindness, repentance, forgiveness should characterize and be the bedrock of our professional practice.

As professionals, I believe you can take heart in this latter-day scripture, "Intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; wisdom receiveth wisdom; truth embraceth truth; virtue loveth virtue; light cleaveth unto light" (Doctrine and Covenants 88: 40). Also, "That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until that perfect day" (Doctrine and Covenants 50: 24).

Some time after he was called to the Twelve, Elder Russell M. Nelson taught a great truth to Church educators. During an interview during a Church Education System Symposium in Elder Nelson while responding to a question, thoughtfully described the interactive process and intimate relationship of the practice of his own medical profession and his personal faith and testimony. The question posed to Elder Nelson on that occasion was "What are your feelings about healing by faith?" He responded:

All blessings are predicated upon law (see Doctrine and Covenants 130: 21). Faith is part of that law. The power of the priesthood is real, being the power by which worlds have been created and the dead restored to life. The interrelation of these forces may best be illustrated by relating an experience I had with President Kimball that he has given me permission to relate.

About three weeks after I had implanted a pacemaker in President Kimball, his personal physician telephoned me to say that it was working only intermittently. We tried everything we could to make adjustments without another operation but to no avail. So President Kimball was readmitted to the hospital, and again I stood before him in my green operating clothes. After giving me his usual greeting of warmth and love, he asked me for a priesthood blessing. After that blessing was pronounced under the promptings of the Spirit, he replied, "Now you may proceed to do the things that you must do in order to enable that blessing to be realized."

We reoperated, found the flaw in the insulation of the electrical wire, and repaired it. Now the pacemaker functions as it should. He knew and I knew that not even for God's prophet can exceptions be made to the eternal laws of the universe. Not even for God's Son could divine law be broken. Faith, priesthood power, and work necessary to comply with law were combined to bring the blessing the prophet needed at that critical hour. (From an address to Religious Educators, 13 September 1985, published by the Church Educational System.)

Elder Nelson was then asked, "Do you really have a testimony?" His answer:

Emphatically, irrevocably, and positively, yes! I know that my Redeemer lives. I know that he is the Son of the living God. I know that this is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which he directs by prophecy and revelation through his divinely appointed priesthood authority. For this testimony, I am willing to work, to live, and to die (Ibid).

As I was reflecting on this assignment, I read an interesting interview that I believe uniquely framed the issue of the relationship of the use of gospel principles in a professional treatment setting by a well-known Latter-day Saint therapist who at the time was serving as a stake president (Carlfred Broderick). He was asked, "Do you use gospel principles in your counseling?" His answer:

I do, first, because gospel principles are subconsciously integrated into my thinking, and second, because they are principles other people can accept and act upon even though they don't understand the ultimate source. Many nonmembers have discovered the truth of them independently. I'm impressed with how many people in my profession are using the same principles of therapy the gospel would dictate: If you're nice to each other, that works better; if you're true to each other, that works better. Those are universal principles and Mormons have no copyright on them. I also employ gospel principles that are not in general use. For example, I've often said to patients: "There's a Mormon scripture that may help you. It says, 'There is a law irrevocably decreed before the foundations of this world upon which all blessings are predicated, and whenever you receive any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.' Now, you're just not obeying the laws of getting well. And you're not going to get well until you do." And they say, "That's a neat scripture!" I've never had anybody resist it yet. I have on occasion given blessings to nonmembers. I have given them to members more often. When I give a blessing as part of the therapy, I don't charge for the session, because I would consider it simony. I've given nonmembers blessings in situations where I've felt they were of a mind to appreciate and receive them. Because they're not used to the experience, the blessing often sticks with them more than it does with a member. Those who are not accustomed to the spirit remember and later quote the blessings back to me, saying they were turning points in their therapy. So I use the gospel more directly if I think it'll be received (*Dialogue* 13 [Summer 1980]: 59–60).

A decade ago Elder Neal A. Maxwell was asked to address this same *AMCAP*. A bit of counsel that he gave on that occasion resonated to the center of my heart as I read it.

Notice that we are, brothers and sisters, to seek not the things of this world but to build up the kingdom of God and to establish his righteousness (Matthew 6: 38).

To do these things first is a challenge in a wayward world—even when we know what we do about the ultimate realities of “things as they really are and of things as they really will be.” Without the precious perspective of the gospel to follow, that taxing admonition of the Lord’s is exceedingly difficult. The deep problems individuals have can only be solved by learning about “the deep things of God,” by confronting the reality of “things as they really are and things as they really will be.” Hard though this process may be, painful though it may be, it is the one true course for human happiness here and everlasting joy in the world to come. Whatever we do in our individual lives and through the influence we have on the lives of others must move us and others to come to terms with these ultimate realities. To move in another direction is folly and misery.

Revelations are not accommodations; they are directions. We may disregard them but we cannot amend them. We may fail to follow them, but we cannot erase them.

We do what we do not only for our own spiritual preservation but for the sake of others who have lost their way. Others must know that there is but one alternative to anarchy and chaos. Not several alternatives, just one. As custodians of those concepts, as keepers of those truths, we must therefore remember, as George MacDonald wisely said, “A candle is not lighted for itself, neither is a man.” The illuminated individual who really believes that the Light of Christ “lighteth every man” will go on trying—long after other helping agents have surrendered to the darkness. His light may be a little one, but lights have a way of being seen, especially in the darkness.

Please deepen your personal scriptural scholarship, for in it will be truth, relevancy, renewal and reassurance. Remember that at the very center of the deepest doctrines are the pearls of greatest price! Remember that in the Inspired Translation of the Bible the Savior’s phrase, “the key of knowledge,” is defined as “the fulness of the scriptures.” God bless you with the increasing light of the gospel, for it is by that light that you and I will see everything else—“things as they really are and things as they really will be!” (*AMCAP Journal* [February 1979]: 5).

I should like to conclude my comments with the final conference testimonies of Elders Bruce McConkie and Ted Tuttle. Both messages were final valedictories and testimonies of faith to the entire Church. Both at the time of their final messages were suffering from terminal cancer. I shall not forget their impressions upon my soul as I looked into their faces as they gave their inspiring counsel. The first is from Elder McConkie in the April general conference session of 1985.

And now, as pertaining to this perfect atonement, wrought by the shedding of the blood of a God—I testify that it took place in Gethsemane and at Golgotha, and as pertaining to Jesus Christ, I testify he is the Son of the Living God, who was crucified for the sins of the world. He is our Lord, our God, and our King. This I know of myself independent of any other person.

I am one of his witnesses, and in a coming day I shall feel the nail marks in his hands and in his feet and shall wet his feet with my tears. But I shall not know any better then than I know now that he is God's Almighty Son; that he is our Savior and Redeemer; and that salvation comes in and through his atoning blood and in no other way.

God grant that all of us may walk in the light as God our Father is in the light so that, according to the promises, the blood of Jesus Christ his Son will cleanse us from all sin. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen (*The Ensign* [April 1985]: 11).

And finally from Elder A. Theodore Tuttle in the October 1986 conference.

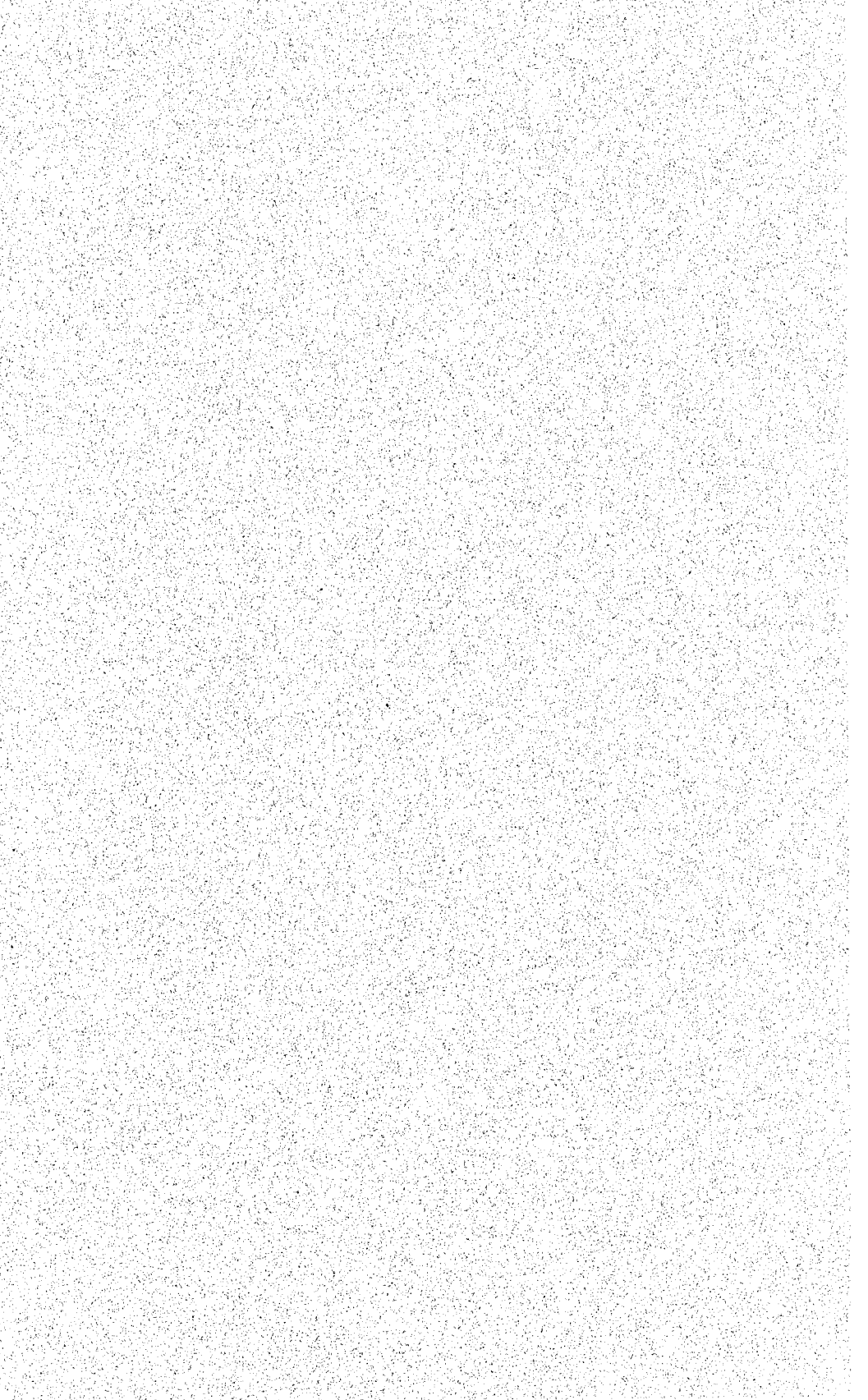
I am a product of a household of faith. I learned faith in my home. I was taught it. It was drilled into me. I need that faith now as much as I ever did. I think we all do. We're not going to survive in this world, temporally or spiritually, without increased faith in the Lord—and I don't mean a positive mental attitude—I mean downright solid faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the only thing that gives vitality and power to otherwise rather weak individuals.

I bear you my humble witness that I know that God lives. I know that he lives, that he is our Father, that he loves us. I bear witness that Jesus is the Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer.

I understand better what that means now. I am grateful for his atonement in our behalf and for knowing something about our relationship to him and to our Heavenly Father and about the meaning and purpose of the gospel of Jesus Christ (*The Ensign* [November 1986]).

God bless you dear brothers and sisters as you seek to perfect your professional skills with the help of him who understands all suffering. I don't presume to counsel you in the professional side of your helping professions. I do suggest, however, the nearer you draw to the Spirit of Him whose life and atonement brings the hope of unspeakable eternal joy to each of us, the more you will bless the lives of so many you will touch. That God will grant you this desire and blessing in your lives is my humble prayer.





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