

Finding a Refuge from the Storm

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The first half of the year 2002 has been exciting in the history of the Church. In President Gordon B. Hinckley's pioneer commemoration address, given July 21 at the Conference Center, he said: "From my childhood I have had an appreciation for the pioneers. And that initial respect has been enhanced tremendously—far beyond my own expectations—by two recent events."

President Hinckley went on to say that the two events this year were the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics and the dedication of the Nauvoo Temple. He talked about the miracle that "has come to pass from that pioneer day to our own" ("What a Miracle! Pioneer Day in Light of Recent Events," *Church News*, 27 July 2002, 3). I most heartily agree!

The Winter Olympics were wonderful. It was an exciting time to be in Salt Lake City. How we enjoyed mingling with the throngs of people from near and far, feeling the spirit of the Olympics. It was a time of great cooperation and unity in our city. Special care was taken to see that the Olympics did not become a "Mormon event." Church leaders worked very carefully so that the public did not observe proselyting as they came to visit. Visitors were warmly received by friendly, helpful volunteers.

The scriptures have declared that the "gospel might be proclaimed . . . before kings and rulers" (D&C 1:23). This surely occurred at the 2002 Winter Olympic Games. "Kings and rulers" came from around the world asking for an audience with the First Presidency. The days were filled with such visits during the Olympic period. We had greater coverage from newspapers, television, radio, and the Internet than has ever been experienced before in the history of the Church.

We were exposed to the world. That exposure was almost completely positive. Many felt these were the best Olympic Games ever. Surveys taken following the Games showed a marked increase in public understanding of who we are and what we believe in. There was a remarkable increase in those who recognize us as Christians but different in our beliefs from the other Christian denominations.

The second event occurred in June with the dedication of the Nauvoo Temple. The sacrifice of the early Saints in building the Nauvoo Temple can never be forgotten. They

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were faithful in their tithes and participated in additional donation requests—which they gladly provided, though they were living in poverty. They also donated one day in 10 laboring to construct the beautiful building.

The Saints were driven from their beautiful homes in Nauvoo more than 150 years ago. After they left, the centerpiece of their beautiful city, the temple, was desecrated and burned to the ground. You can imagine their feelings as they crossed the Mississippi and took one long, last look at their beautiful city and the temple on the hill. Realizing they probably would not see it again, they turned their faces west to go into a desert wasteland and start all over again.

The Saints journeyed west to a land isolated from the world. Here they organized themselves and built a foundation of strength. With time and the blessings of the Lord, the gospel has flourished, and membership has expanded to almost all corners of the world.

Now there is a new dedicated temple in Nauvoo on the same spot where the original temple stood. To the communities that once had forced the Saints from their homes, thousands returned during the Nauvoo Temple open house. Visitors were curious about the temple, and others welcomed us back into their presence. The rebuilt temple has become a vital part of the community from which the Saints were once driven.

These two events mark the new era of understanding and acceptance of the Church by peoples of the world. With this new image of the Church come new and added responsibilities for the members of the Church. We must demonstrate by the way we live that we truly believe in the revealed doctrines concerning the gospel of our Lord and Savior. These two events were not staged for world acceptance, but they are truly representative of who we are and what we stand for.

In contrast with these two wonderful happenings this year, two other occurrences deeply trouble me. These are in addition to

the “wars and rumors of wars” that are perpetuating themselves in most corners of the world (1 Nephi 14:15).

The first is in my esteemed profession of accounting. It has taken a big hit in what I thought were the very roots of this profession—integrity. Now we find that some of the most highly respected accounting firms have violated their dedicated trust. These firms have caused the reputation of this once-honored profession to be in question. They have bowed to corporate greed and have issued audit statements that have been found to be misleading and outright dishonest.

Imagine having to create a public “accountability board” to see that the integrity of the accounting profession is being upheld. The purpose of this board would be to address accountants’ ethical lapses or competency deficiencies. U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission chair Harvey L. Pitt has declared: “This model . . . sends a loud and clear message that the era of self-regulation of the accounting profession is over” (“Proposed Rules to Create a Framework for a Public Accountability Board,” 20 June 2002; <http://www.sec.gov/news/speech/spch569.htm>). Furthermore, Mr. Pitt went on to imply that the auditing standards are not a problem; rather, the problem lies with compliance and execution according to the standards of this profession. For years the profession has signed statements that the audit report represents fairly and accurately the information contained therein. Now the validity of that statement has to be clearly questioned because men have violated the standards of integrity that are so vital to public confidence in the credibility of the audit.

What a sad, sad commentary on the integrity of those we depend on for reliable information regarding the businesses of our nation. Unfortunately it is just a symptom of what is going on. People have become so possessed with the desire to achieve worldly recognition, power, and wealth that they have lost their sense of

what is right. They have violated the standards that must be upheld for the sake of our nation or any other nation.

Brigham Young taught the Saints in his day:

We want the Saints to increase in goodness, until our mechanics, for instance, are so honest and reliable that this Railroad Company will say, "Give us a Mormon elder for an engineer, then none need have the least fear to ride, for if he knows there is danger he will take every measure necessary to preserve the lives of those entrusted to his care." I want to see our elders so full of integrity that they will be preferred by this Company for their engine builders, watchmen, engineers, clerks and business managers. If we live our religion and are worthy [of] the name of Latter-day Saints, we are just the men that all such business can be entrusted to with perfect safety; if it can not it will prove that we do not live our religion.
[Brigham Young, JD 12:300]

Perhaps we need to paraphrase the words of Brigham Young and say: "I want to see our elders so full of integrity that they'll be preferred by corporate America as their accountants, auditors, clerks, business managers, and corporate executives."

President Nathan Eldon Tanner gave us this challenge:

There is far too much immorality, dishonesty, and lack of integrity in the lives of those who are leading and guiding the affairs of our nations, our schools, and our communities. Somehow we must get back to the lofty ideals and high-minded principles which characterized the lives of those who fought and died for truth, religion, and freedom. [N. Eldon Tanner, "Remember Who You Are," Ensign, January 1983, 3–4]

The second major concern that troubles me is the decline of those who desire to affiliate with a Christian religious denomination. Although they continue to profess a faith in Christian principles, many no longer have confidence

in the structured organization that is supposed to help them retain that faith. Recently it was reported that confidence in the religious organization has declined since the early 1990s from 60 percent to 42 percent (Frank Newport, "Americans' Confidence in Military, Presidency Up; But Business, Organized Religion Drop," Poll Analyses, Gallup News Service, 28 June 2002).

We now face the challenge of almost standing alone in declaring to the world that the heavens are not closed. The Lord continues to reveal His will to mankind through the structure He has established to bring order, unity, and consistency in building His gospel kingdom.

Remember how early in His ministry He called 12 others to assist Him? As the work expanded, 70 more were called to declare their witness of our Lord and Savior to the world. After His death, we find Paul declaring the need for such a structured organization:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. [Ephesians 4:11–16]

So here we are, in a world of turmoil but with the Church stronger than it has ever been. We have come to this place to be spiritually lifted and motivated so that we will not be taken in by the worldliness, the violence, and

the lack of morals, ethics, and integrity that we see all around us. It is a time to strengthen and prepare ourselves for the future.

Having never attended Campus Education Week except as a speaker, I have often wondered what is the mystique that has you traveling so many miles to come each year. I have always attempted to get my brothers and sisters to get together during July, when I am free from travel assignments. Before my brother Bob passed away, he would never join us in July for family gatherings. His whole year's plans revolved around his August trip to Utah to attend Education Week. If we wanted him to attend a family gathering, it had to be in August, before or after Education Week.

There must be something of great therapeutic value or refuge from the trials of life that draws you to this conference each year. Is it here you come to find refuge from the storm?

I have asked two regular attendees to join me to see if I can discover the magnetic draw that brings so many to the Brigham Young University campus each August. First, Ada May Griffin from Garland, Utah, would you please join me?

How long have you been coming to Education Week?

"For 35 years."

Why do you come?

"I love to learn, and I don't retain it, so I have to keep coming back."

Do you bring anyone with you?

"Yes. I bring my husband and I brought my daughters. I bring my grandchildren now, and it's wonderful."

So it's not only a time of coming to learn, it is a time of gathering, to be together with wonderful people and experience the opportunity of being here and enjoy the warmth and love of friendly relationships. Thank you, Ada.

Now I would like to tell you about a great family experience we had just earlier this month that I think all of us can learn from.

The first part of August I reached a major milestone in my life. I was passing from middle age to old age with my 80th birthday. To celebrate it, I decided to take my children and grandchildren on a tour of Logan, my hometown, to share with them the impact this city has had on my life.

First we stopped at the Maddox Ranch House restaurant in Perry, Utah, for an early dinner. Perry is a significant city in our family history. After dinner we caravanned over to Logan, where I had designated nine stops that I wanted my family to see. With each stop I selected a scripture to teach a lesson on the importance that particular location had for me in my life.

1. Logan High School

Lesson: Live Up to Your Potential

For they will not open their mouths, but they hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man. [D&C 60:2]

I was very shy in high school and did not take advantage of the opportunities that were there to enlarge and build my talents. I was afraid to try. The lesson I wanted to teach my family is to live up to your potential. Don't be afraid to try. Have confidence in yourself. You won't succeed the first time on anything you do, but successive attempts will bring confidence and the development of new talents.

2. The Logan Tabernacle

Lesson: The Joy of Gospel Service

That ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God. [Mosiah 2:17]

My father had served in the presidency of the Cache Stake in Logan for some 20 years. It seemed appropriate to stop at the tabernacle, where we held our stake conferences, to teach the lesson that Church service brings great joy and is a sure way of developing your skills in

human relationships. You enter Church service with the pure intent to build our Father in Heaven's kingdom. The Lord more than compensates you for your time and effort with blessings that increase your talents and abilities to be used in further service. It is impossible to stay even with the Lord.

3. My Father's Law Office

Lesson: Select Your Profession Early

For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. [1 Timothy 6:10–12]

I related to my family how I had prepared myself for the banking profession. Dad was the bank attorney. From my newspaper delivery earnings I saved enough to buy 10 shares of First National Bank stock. Dad insisted that I attend the stockholders' meetings and vote my 10 shares. He thought that was a way of introducing me to the banking profession. A job offer came after graduation that was much more lucrative than banking. I thought I would accept the position for a few years and then return to banking. I never did become a banker. I tried to teach my grandchildren that the selection of a major in college is not as important as integrity, ethics, developing good study habits, and building character as a person of faith, confidence, and industry.

4. My Birthplace

Lesson: The Value of Our Heritage

Behold, I have given unto you the names of our first parents . . . ; and this I have done that when you remember your names ye may remember them;

and when ye remember them ye may remember their works; and when ye remember their works ye may know how that it is said, and also written, that they were good. [Helaman 5:6]

I was given the name of my father. I honored my father and wanted to retain the same values he had established. Our heritage gives us those enduring values that will be with us now and through all the eternities.

5. The Old Family Home

Lesson: The Blessing of Good Parents

I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father. [1 Nephi 1:1]

I tried to teach my family that the credit for the success you achieve in life really belongs to the parents who have given you a wonderful start. My father was a hard worker, good provider, and a sterling example of service, honor, and integrity. He loved his family and made time for us in his busy life.

Mother was always there to teach and encourage us. She was a great homemaker, a careful housekeeper, an excellent manager of household finances, and a wonderful cook. How I honor and love my parents.

6. The Comfort Inn

Lesson: Accept the Challenge of Change That Occurs in Your Life

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 the perfect day. [D&C 50:24]

We checked in at the motel. After checking in, I told my family, "Tonight you will sleep in the place that used to be our old cow pasture." This is where the motel had been built. My, how times have changed! I will always be grateful that I grew up in an age when we plowed, planted, tended, irrigated, and

harvested. These activities were very important in our lives.

Future generations will have little opportunity to enjoy those same blessings we received. We live in a world of rapid change. Somehow we must find a way to hold onto the basic unchanging values and yet be ready for additional revealed light that will lead us to greater opportunities.

7. Aggie Ice Cream Store

Lesson: The Value of Traditions

And that same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy. [D&C 130:2]

Having an Aggie ice cream cone on every trip to Logan has become one of our many traditions. More important are traditions of Church activity, Church service, family loyalty, and so forth. Special traditions we establish here with members of our family will endure. We should build traditions that will be strong in our remembrance, that will last even into the eternities.

8. Utah State University

Lesson: The Value of Taking Time to Have a Happy, Successful Courtship

And again, verily I say unto you, that whoso forbiddeth to marry is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man. [D&C 49:15]

I explained that most of my courtship had occurred on the USU campus. Dances, ball games, meeting in the halls between classes, walking across the quad to the library, studying in the library, attending institute classes, taking special walks around the campus, etc., all gave time to becoming better acquainted and enjoying the richness of the relationship that was being developed. It became the most important thing in my life at that time. When this time comes to you, it affects all that you do. Make it precious and special.

9. The Logan Temple

Lesson: The Importance of the Temple

In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;

And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage];

And if he does not, he cannot obtain it.

[D&C 131:1–3]

The center of our lives must be the holy temple. We must always be worthy to enter therein. If we live worthy of the covenants we make with the Lord in His house, we literally bind the Lord to give the blessings He has promised us. The Lord will fulfill His promises if we will be faithful to the covenants we make with Him.

We ended the tour later in the evening at the old Logan Ninth Ward building. We had arranged for a room there in which the family could gather. My secretary had prepared a PowerPoint presentation of my life. There were pictures starting with my grandparents, parents, and on through my early life. Then there were pictures from my marriage and of the blessings of children, followed by a collage of pictures of the events we have enjoyed together as a family.

On Sunday morning we attended church services in the Ninth Ward chapel. This building was constructed under the supervision of my father while he served as bishop. He was the bishop for only 18 years. I had opportunity that morning to bear my witness and testimony of the blessings of the gospel in my life.

We then drove to our home in Salt Lake City. However, before letting them enjoy a delicious birthday dinner prepared by my wife, I quizzed the family on what they had learned. I again bore witness to the divinity of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I am absolutely convinced that the greatest refuge we will find in our life will be those wonderful, close associations we have with our immediate family members.

Now let's interview another attendee. Frank Margiotta from Long Island, New York, will you please join me?

Why do you come here?

"For spiritual rejuvenation and learning."

How long have you been coming to Education Week?

"Perhaps 19 or 20 years."

What do you retain out of these experiences?

"Well, I, too, like Sister Griffin, have to come back because I forget, but I retain quite a bit. I seek after particular classes I might be interested in."

Do you see the secret here? If you're going to learn the gospel of Jesus Christ in this eternal study, you have to repeat and repeat and repeat so that you can find the glories that come from the gospel of the Savior. Frank, study hard this time. Thank you.

So you come to Education Week to learn the beauties of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which will enrich your life and give you the greatest refuge you can possibly find. The gospel will give you the peace and assurance of the eternal blessings waiting for those who live righteously.

One year as we were preparing instructions for the newly called General Authorities, different members of the Twelve were assigned to prepare a statement on each of the important essential doctrines. One statement was given on the great plan of happiness. Years have passed and I cannot remember who had this assignment, but I have kept his statement in my binder. It explains what we're all seeking. It reads:

Our Heavenly Father has made available to all His children the same plan, system, and grand design by which He himself became God. It is called the great plan of happiness, the plan of salvation, the gospel of Jesus Christ. It consists of infinite, eternal, absolute, unchanging principles. The plan is complete in every particular, capable of reaching without compulsion to every phase of man's existence from premortal life through mortality and to the resurrection of the body and into eternity. There is

no condition of intelligence existing to which the plan cannot be applied if individuals willingly obey. There is no extraneous proviso, nothing to be added or taken away. Although individuals can be blessed through the gospel, the fullness is realized only in the family. The plan is the Father's. Jesus made it His by total obedience to the Father's will. The Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement are essential to the implementation and fulfillment of the plan.

Those profound words can cause us to strive through our mortal life to understand the blessings the Lord has given to us. The Lord has prepared a way for us to stay abreast of His glorious gospel. We come to learn and need to leave with a desire to continue our studies. If we are able to seek a refuge from the storm, we must progress as far as we can in an understanding of the great wealth of information available to us. This should include both spiritual and secular knowledge. We must again remind ourselves to seek knowledge "out of the best books" and from television, satellites, the Internet, and radio. We must "seek learning, even by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118) and share it with our children and grandchildren.

President David O. McKay warned us:

The peril of this century is spiritual apathy. As the body requires sunlight, good food, proper exercise and rest, so the spirit of man requires the sunlight of the Holy Spirit; proper exercise of the spiritual functions; the avoiding of evils that affect spiritual health, that are more ravaging in their effects than typhoid fever, pneumonia, or other diseases that attack the body. [David O. McKay, CR, October 1907, 62]

Our refuge from the storm must be based on a foundation of the gospel of our Lord and Savior, which is to be understood, lived, and taught. Perhaps the comforting words of assurance from Helaman will give us comfort in the refuge we are seeking:

And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall. [Helaman 5:12]

I add my witness to you today. The gospel of Jesus Christ is true. It will not fail you in your life. It is the only hope for individual salvation and refuge from the storms that descend as we journey through mortality. May God continue to bless you with the desire to learn more of His ways and to be obedient to His law is my humble prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.