
Teaching the Doctrine of the Family

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It's a great blessing for me to be with you, my wonderful friends in the seminary and institute program. Thank you for the service that you give throughout the Church in the world. As I have traveled in my Church responsibilities, I've met so many of you. You are ecclesiastical leaders and

also the leaders and teachers of the rising generation. Thank you for all you do.

A few of your number are here in the studio with me today representing the rest of you. These are seminary and institute teachers from the Ogden, Utah, area. We are so grateful to them for coming with their wives and husbands to share this experience together.

It is a blessing for us to have the quality of teachers and leaders that you are helping our rising generation. You have a great responsibility, and you have a position of influence in the kingdom. We know that we couldn't teach the rising generation with such effectiveness without you—those who are full-time and those who are volunteers. Thank you, thank you, thank you. My heart swells with gratitude for all that you do.

I've served on the Board of Education and on the Executive Committee of the Board of Education for almost two and a half years now, and I've seen that every single teacher who is recommended for employment and every leader in Church education passes through a review process that goes all the way to the First Presidency. How blessed we are to have that process.

We are very interested in who is teaching the rising generation. A major financial commitment of the Church's education program is to the seminaries and institutes of religion. I've been studying again your *Teaching*

the Gospel: A Handbook for CES Teachers and Leaders (2001) and hope that you are reviewing this also. This is a marvelous resource for you in all that you do. In the front section it says, "Religious education is education for eternity and requires the influence of the Spirit of the Lord" (p. 1). I pray that we will have that influence with us as we review some things today.

I've mentioned how carefully the First Presidency worries about every detail of Church education. I know how much money they spend on the rising generation. I know how many people are employed to take care of the rising generation. Why do they invest so much?

As I've met with young single adults around the world, I ask these questions: Why does the First Presidency care so much about the youth of the Church, and why do they invest so much? In their focus groups and their firesides, these are the answers I get, and you should be interested in these answers. You might ask your own students these questions. They say: "Well, we are the future Church leaders." "Education is the key to success." "We need training so we can stay strong." "Our testimonies are strengthened in our classes." "We need to meet other great Latter-day Saint youth." "We are the hope of the future." One said, "We appreciate it." Another one said, "Well, they spend so much money on us because we're worth it."

I was very interested in those answers. You have to know that after pushing hard and receiving response after response, I have rarely heard, "So I will someday be a better father, or a better mother, or a better family leader." Family is rarely on their minds. Their responses are generally about self, and of course we know this is the time of life they're in. They're living in a very self-interested time of life, but they aren't thinking about family.

The Objective

You have some revised seminary and institute objectives. When you got these objectives, family was mentioned in them. It says that your purpose is “to help the youth and young adults understand and rely on the teachings of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, qualify for the blessings of the temple, and prepare themselves, their families, and others for eternal life with their Father in Heaven.” That’s your objective. So, you’re going to do that through your purpose of living the gospel, of teaching students the gospel, and administering in such a way that you will be strengthening parents in those families. There are a couple of places where references to the family were added.

We’re here to help with the Lord’s purpose, as it says, to help them achieve “eternal life.” In Moses 1:39 we learn, “For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.” We know that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ our immortality has been taken care of, but to receive eternal life we have some responsibilities. There are certain things that we have to do.

President J. Reuben Clark Jr. said, “Your chief interest, your essential and all but sole duty, is to teach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as that has been revealed in these latter days” (“The Charted Course of the Church in Education” [address to seminary and institute of religion leaders, Aug. 8, 1938], 6, www.ldsces.org; see also *Teaching the Gospel*, 4). So, what is that gospel, and what is essential to achieve eternal life?

We know that we cannot achieve eternal life without the ordinances and covenants of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. We find other teachings about living the commandments, serving, and giving away all we have to the Lord, but all of those things are based on the covenants we make. Without those covenants, we cannot achieve eternal life. That’s why we share the gospel and prepare missionaries—because Heavenly Father says, “All my children need to be taught and given an opportunity to make the covenants that will save them.” That’s

why we build temples—because Heavenly Father says, “All my children need an opportunity to make these covenants.” So, we do vicarious work for those who have died. Heavenly Father wants every one of His children to have an opportunity. That’s why we teach the gospel to our youth—so they will understand and make and keep the covenants that they need to receive eternal life.

My purpose today is to talk to you about why the Board of Education wanted an emphasis on family in your objectives. Why would we want you to talk about family or understand family when you’re teaching a generation of unmarried people? We will review the theology of the family, threats to the family, and what we hope the rising generation—your students—will understand and do because of what you will teach them about the family.

The Theology of the Family

Let’s talk, first of all, about the theology of the family and why seminary and institute teachers need to understand and teach this. In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have a theology of the family. It’s based on the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement. I don’t know how well your students understand that. They may be able to recite the facts about the Creation, but do they know that this is a theology of the family? The Creation of the earth was the creation of an earth where a family could live. It was a creation of a man and a woman who were the two essential halves of a family. It was not about a creation of a man and a woman who happened to have a family. It was intentional all along that Adam and Eve form an eternal family. It was part of the plan that these two be sealed and form an eternal family unit. That was the plan of happiness.

The Fall provided a way for the family to grow. Through the leadership of Eve and Adam, they chose to have a mortal experience. The Fall made it possible for Adam and Eve to have a family, to have sons and daughters. They needed to grow in numbers and grow in experience. The Fall provided that for the family.

The Atonement allows for the family to be sealed together eternally. It allows for families to have eternal growth and perfection. The plan of happiness and the plan of salvation was a plan created for families. I don't think very many of the rising generation understand that the main pillars of our theology are centered in the family.

When we speak of qualifying for the blessings of eternal life, we mean qualifying for the blessings of eternal families. This was Christ's doctrine, and this is some of what was restored that had been lost—understanding and clarity about family. Without these blessings, the earth is wasted. When did we learn that? Let's turn in our scriptures to Doctrine and Covenants 2. Section 2 in the Doctrine and Covenants is the only part that we have in the Doctrine and Covenants that Joseph Smith recorded from his visits with the angel Moroni. This is what section 2 says:

“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 at his coming” (vv. 1–3).

How early did the Prophet Joseph Smith understand that this was going to be a theology about the family? He understood it when he was 17 and he began to be taught. What are the promises made to the fathers? Who were the fathers? The fathers were Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Noah—those ancient prophets who understood the doctrine of eternal families. The promises of the children made to the fathers was that their hearts would turn to their fathers. Their hearts would be turned to the blessings of eternal life that they could have. This is talking about temple blessings—temple ordinances and covenants without which “the whole earth [is] utterly wasted.”

So, if we teach about what is in every section of the Doctrine and Covenants, if we teach so that our students know all the rivers in the Book of

Mormon, if they can name all the prophets of the Old Testament, if they can describe to you the pioneer trek and the history of the Latter-day Saints in the restored times but they don't understand the promises made to the fathers and their part in it, it is “utterly wasted.” I would submit that all of our teaching is utterly wasted if they don't understand the context that all of this is taught within.

The proclamation on the family was written to reinforce that. It reinforces the family being central to the Creator's plan. Without the family, there is no plan; there is no reason for it. I'm not certain that everyone of the rising generation understands that with clarity.

Threats to the Family

Let's review some of the threats to the family. We have to know what we're fighting against. If our young people don't understand what they're fighting against, then they can't prepare for the battle, and neither can you. We see evidence all around us that the family is not important. It's becoming less important in all societies. We know that because marriage rates are declining, the age of marriage is rising, divorce rates are rising, and more than a fourth of all births are out of wedlock. We see lower birth rates, and they're dropping every year worldwide. Abortion is rising and becoming increasingly legal around the world. We see unequal relationships with men and women, and we see a lot of cultures that still practice abuse of some kind within family relationships. Many times a career is gaining importance over the family.

We know, from our studies here at Church headquarters concerning the rising generation, that our youth are increasingly less confident in the institution of families. They are less confident in their ability to form a successful eternal family. Because they are less confident in families, they're placing more and more value on education and less and less importance on forming an eternal family.

We know, from visiting with them and conducting studies, that they show a lack of faith in their ability to be successful in families. They don't see forming families as a faith-based

work. For them, it's a selection process much like shopping. They don't see it as something that the Lord will bless them and help them to accomplish. They also distrust their own moral strength and the moral strength of their peers. Because temptations are so fierce, they aren't sure they can be successful in keeping covenants. They also have insufficient and underdeveloped social skills, which are an impediment to them in forming eternal families.

They all have cell phones. I haven't been to a country in the world in the last three years where every young person doesn't have a cell phone. They all have a cell phone, and they all have an e-mail address. They're getting increasingly adept at talking to somebody 50 miles away and less and less able to carry on conversations with people in the same room. That makes it difficult for them to socialize with each other.

We also have the problem that we read about in Ephesians 6:12: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

This is the world our young people are growing up in. They are in this world where there is "spiritual wickedness in high places." Public policies are being made every day that are antifamily, and the definition of family is changing legally around the world. Concerning spiritual wickedness, we could call attention to pornography, which is rampant. The use of pornography among our youth is growing. The new target audience for those who create pornography is young women. There are media messages everywhere that are antifamily, and our young people are very connected with media—Internet, television, the things they receive on their phones, all electronic devices are delivering antifamily messages to them every day. Increasingly, our youth are seeing no reason to form a family or get married in spite of all the teaching you give them. They are being desensitized about the need to form eternal families.

Let's read about how this is happening. Let's turn to Alma 30. This is Korihor. Let's put the

family lens on this to see how this stacks up with what you're hearing today about family messages. Korihor, who in verse 12 was described as an anti-Christ, said in verses 13–14:

"O ye that are bound down under a foolish and a vain hope, why do ye yoke yourselves with such foolish things? Why do ye look for a Christ? For no man can know of anything which is to come.

"Behold, these things which ye call prophecies, which ye say are handed down by holy prophets, behold, they are foolish traditions of your fathers."

This is what our rising generation is starting to think about families.

Continuing in Alma:

"How do ye know of their surety? Behold, ye cannot know of things which ye do not see; therefore ye cannot know that there shall be a Christ.

"Ye look forward and say that ye see a remissions of your sins. But behold, it is the effect of a frenzied mind; and this derangement of your minds comes because of the traditions of your fathers, which lead you away into a belief of things which are not so.

"And many more such things did he say unto them, telling them that there could be no atonement made for the sins of men, but every man fared in this life according to the management of the creature" (vv. 15–17).

Have you heard that in the world's messages? "You are the one who will get yourself ahead. It's because of your skills and your intelligence that you will be successful." That's the media message young people are getting every day.

Another message: "Therefore every man prospered according to his genius" (v. 17). Get your education. Be the best. There are TV shows they are watching that are competitive shows—they are seeing *American Idol*, *So You Think You Can Dance*, lots of competition shows. The more of a genius you are, the more famous you will be. These types of shows are popular among our youth.

“And that every man conquered according to his strength; and whatsoever a man did was no crime” (v. 17). That’s what they’re hearing every day. “Live the life that’s going to make you happy.” That’s the media message that they are getting.

I’m finding verse 18 interesting: “Thus he did preach unto them, leading away the hearts of many, causing them to lift up their heads in their wickedness, yea, leading away many women, and also men, to commit whoredoms.” A lot of the antifamily messages that you are hearing are targeting young women. Satan knows that he will never have a body; he will never have a family. He will target those young women who create the bodies for the future generations and who should teach the families. They don’t even know what they’re being taught in the messages. It’s just seeping in, almost through their pores. Because Satan can’t have it, he’s luring away many women, and also men, and they’re losing confidence in their ability to form eternal families.

Korihor was an anti-Christ. Anti-Christ is antifamily. Any doctrine or principle our youth hear from the world that is antifamily is also anti-Christ. It’s that clear. They need to know that if it’s antifamily, it’s anti-Christ. An anti-Christ is antifamily.

We are in danger of getting a generation like we see described in Mosiah 26, where many of the rising generation don’t believe in the traditions of their fathers, and they become a separate people as to their faith and remain so ever after. Despite all the money, all the effort you put in, they could be led away if they don’t understand their part in the plan.

Teaching the Rising Generation

Let’s go to the question “What is it we hope this rising generation will understand and do because of what you will teach them?” Teach so they don’t misunderstand that every doctrine, every principle, everything you’re teaching leads them to the fulness of the gospel. And the fulness of the gospel is found in the temples—in temple ordinances and covenants and their eternal role. That is the full gospel.

In the Church, a primary concern is to teach the saving principles of the gospel, and the saving principles are those that are the family principles, the principles that will teach them to form a family, to teach that family, and to prepare that family for ordinances and covenants. Then teach it to the next generation, and the next. Your students have that responsibility.

Let’s be very clear on key elements of doctrine. I hope every one of your classrooms has a copy of the proclamation on the family in it and that all of your students have a copy of the proclamation with them. Then, when you are teaching them, you can tie back teachings to key statements and phrases that are in the proclamation on the family. The proclamation is not a standalone lesson. If you’re teaching in the Old Testament, the proclamation should be a partner piece that they are circling and underlining and finding where the Old Testament families understood these principles. If you’re teaching in the Doctrine and Covenants, you can tie it back to the proclamation. This also applies to the Book of Mormon. If they have the proclamation with them in their scriptures, they will be learning and tying it together as you work.

President Hinckley said in 1995, when he read the proclamation on the family in a general Relief Society meeting and revealed it to the Church, that the proclamation was “a declaration and reaffirmation of standards, doctrines, and practices” that this Church has always had (“Stand Strong against the Wiles of the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 100). This is not new doctrine from 1995. It was a reaffirmation of understanding that was there since Joseph Smith understood it at age 17.

One of those doctrines is the understanding of parents, sons, and daughters. President Spencer W. Kimball said this: “From the beginning, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has emphasized family life. We have always understood that the foundations of the family, as an eternal unit, were laid even before this earth was created! Society without basic family life is without foundation and will

disintegrate into nothingness" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1980, 3; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 4).

Elder Robert D. Hales said this about marriage: "The family is not an accident of mortality. It existed as an organizational unit in the heavens before the world was formed; historically, it started on earth with Adam and Eve, as recorded in Genesis. Adam and Eve were married and sealed for time and all eternity by the Lord, and as a result their family will exist eternally" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," in Dawn Hall Anderson, ed., *Clothed with Charity* [1997], 134). That's very clear, isn't it?

President Ezra Taft Benson said this:

"This order is ... described in modern revelation as an order of family government where a man and woman enter into a covenant with God—just as did Adam and Eve—to be sealed for eternity, to have posterity, and to do the will and work of God throughout their mortality. ...

"... This order of priesthood has been on the earth since the beginning, and it is the only means by which we can one day see the face of God and live. (See D&C 84:22.)" ("What I Hope You Will Teach Your Children about the Temple," *Ensign*, Aug. 1985, 9).

Elder David A. Bednar taught us in his wonderful message "Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan." (I recommend this to you for your study; it is from the *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting: Supporting the Family* held February 11, 2006. There are other foundational messages there—one from President Thomas S. Monson, one from Sister Bonnie D. Parkin, and another one from Elder L. Tom Perry.)

Elder Bednar talked specifically about two important reasons why we have the family, why we have marriage. "Reason 1: The natures of male and female spirits complete and perfect each other, and therefore men and women are intended to progress together toward exaltation" (p. 3). Do your students understand that with clarity? "Reason 2: By divine design, both a man and a woman are needed to bring children into mortality and to provide the best setting for the rearing and nurturing of

children" (p. 4). Wonderful principles taught there.

Students also need to understand that the command to "multiply, and replenish the earth" (Genesis 1:28; Moses 2:28) remains in force. It's okay for them to bear children. Bearing children is a faith-based work. President Kimball said, "It is an act of extreme selfishness for a married couple to refuse to have children when they are able to do so" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1979, 6; or *Ensign*, May 1979, 6).

The media messages that are coming at your youth are antichildren. Motherhood and fatherhood are eternal roles and responsibilities. I don't know if they understand that. Each carries the responsibility for either the male or the female half of the plan. They are preparing in this life for those eternal roles. They're not just preparing their testimonies—they are preparing for eternal responsibilities.

What we're really preparing them for is the blessings of Abraham. We can review that in Abraham 1 of the Pearl of Great Price. Let's read this and ask ourselves some questions. (When I'm talking to young adults, I say, "How do we know Abraham was a young adult male?" It says that Abraham "saw that it was needful for [him] to obtain another place of residence" [v. 1]. So they can think of themselves: "It is needful for me to obtain another place of residence. I don't need to live with my father forever.")

In verse 2, Abraham said: "Finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers." We often call Abraham the father, so who were Abraham's fathers? Adam, Noah, Seth, and the ancient prophets; those were the fathers he knew about, and he knew about the plan and their responsibilities. What were the blessings? He wanted "the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the

commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers" (Abraham 1:2).

Where do we learn about these things in our day, and where do we receive these blessings? He wanted the blessings of the temple that were available to him so he could become "a rightful heir," "a father of many nations." That blessing only comes to those who have a temple sealing and marriage. You cannot be a father of many nations without a wife that you are sealed to. He could not hold the right belonging to the fathers without a wife who had the rights belonging to the mothers.

Abraham wanted and sought the temple blessings that we learn about in section 2 of the Doctrine and Covenants, that same priesthood. So, who were the mothers? Do your young women know who the mothers were? Do they know that their ancestral mothers were Eve and Sarah and Rebekah and those other important women? The scriptures call Eve "our glorious Mother Eve" (D&C 138:39). And why was she glorious? Because she understood her responsibility in the formation of an eternal family.

I love the story of Abraham and Sarah and of Isaac and Rebekah that is found in Genesis. If Abraham wanted these blessings, his wife was pretty important. Abraham and Sarah had one son—the golden son, Isaac. If Abraham wanted these blessings—to be the "father of many nations"—how important was Isaac's wife? Isaac's wife was pivotal in Abraham being able to receive his blessings. She was so important that he sent his servant on a mission to find the right girl—a girl who would keep her covenants, a girl who understood what it meant to form an eternal family and have those same blessings. (It's a great study to just see what Rebekah's qualities were. You can start in Genesis 24:15 and read through sometime with your students and learn what some of her qualities were. Ask: What do we learn about Rebekah? What was she like? What was her character that made her the kind of person to qualify to be the wife of the one golden child who was then going to pass on these blessings?)

In verse 60 we come to the point where Rebekah was blessed by her brothers. It says, "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions." Where do you get those kinds of blessings? You get those in the temple. And Rebekah was blessed and wanted these blessings. So Rebekah left all her family and her former life. She wanted those blessings so much that she said, "I don't need to wait. I will go now" (see Genesis 24:61). And she and Isaac formed an eternal family. They had two boys. One of their boys chose to marry out of the covenant.

We learn from Rebekah that she was weary of her life because of the daughters of Heth. Those were the women who were not in the covenant. This is in Genesis 27:46 where she said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?" Now, Rebekah gave up everything—she left her family and her homeland to go form an eternal family because she wanted these blessings. And of her two sons, she had one left; and of the daughters of the land, there was not one who could form an eternal marriage with her son. She needed to see that her righteous son got the blessings. Rebekah used her influence to see that the priesthood blessings and keys passed to the righteous son. It's a perfect example of the man who has the keys and the woman who has the influence working together to ensure their blessings.

Now we had Isaac and Rebekah, who knew about the promises to "be ... the mother of thousands of millions" or the "father of many nations." How important was the wife of Jacob? Very important. Because of Rebekah's influence and Isaac's priesthood keys, we have the twelve tribes of Israel, who now people the earth. That story of Isaac and Rebekah is pivotal. Everything depended on a man and a woman who understood their place in the plan and their responsibilities to form an eternal family, to bear children, and to teach them.

So, what I submit to you as one of your responsibilities—besides teaching those doctrines so your students don't misunderstand—is send Isaac and Rebekah forth from every

classroom. We need every one of your students to understand his or her role in this great partnership—that they are each an Isaac or a Rebekah. Then they will know with clarity what they have to do.

Live the Hope of Eternal Life

Next, I would have you live in your homes, in your families, in your marriages so your students have the hope of eternal life from watching you. Your objective is to live the kind of a home life that your students want to have—have that kind of a family. They won't get that message from many other places. Live it and teach it with so much clarity that what you teach will cut through all the noise they are hearing and pierce their hearts and touch them. You don't need to compete in volume; you don't need to compete in the number of words; you just need to be very clear in your examples. You are the ideal for them.

Live in your home so that you're brilliant in the basics, so that you're intentional about your roles and responsibilities in the family. You think in terms of precision, not perfection. (Perfection is difficult to obtain in this life, but live your family life with precision.) If you have your goals and you're precise in how you go about them in your homes, your students will learn from you. They learn that you pray, you study the scriptures together, you have family home evening together, you make a priority of mealtimes and teach your family during those times. You are constantly teaching your families the same things that you're teaching your students. You speak respectfully of your marriage partners. Then from your example the rising generation will gain great hope and will understand—not just from the words you teach, but from the way you feel and emanate the spirit of family.

Review

The seminary and institute objective is to prepare our youth for the blessings of eternal life. You are preparing your students for the temple; you are preparing them for eternal families, without which the earth is “utterly wasted.” There are many threats that are coming at the rising generation—threats to

them forming an eternal family—and they are being hit with those and losing confidence in their ability to form eternal families. In a lot of ways they're similar to Abraham, living in a land where there's idolatry and wickedness, and they need to mentally take themselves out of that into the land where the Lord can bless them to receive the covenants.

Your role in this is to teach them so they don't misunderstand, to be very clear on key points of doctrine, which you find in the proclamation on the family. This is prominent in your teaching, prominent in your classrooms, prominent in what they're learning. You are preparing them for the blessings of Abraham in everything you are teaching. You are preparing them for the temple. You are seeking to send forth from every classroom an Isaac and a Rebekah. You're living so they have confidence in you, and through your example they know they can form eternal families.

Oftentimes with young adults I'll tell the story about the day my husband and I were married. We had three dollars. Even worldwide, that's not very much money nowadays. It was a faith-based work when we got married. We didn't get married because of money, or because our education was complete, or because we even had a place to live. We lived with Grandpa and took care of him for the first season of our marriage. We went to school and worked hard, but we entered that relationship as a faith-based work. We knew that we had made a covenant with the Lord and that He would bless us. It didn't take money; it took faith. Those are messages they need to have and get confidence in because of you.

This generation will be called upon to defend the doctrine of the family as never before in the history of the world. If they don't know it, they can't defend it. They need to understand temples and priesthood. If you don't know that they are meant to be fathers and mothers, then they won't know that they are meant to be fathers and mothers. Your effort will be wasted.

President Kimball said this in 1980, so this is almost 30 years ago, and I find it prophetic and very applicable to us:

“Many of the social restraints which in the past have helped to reinforce and to shore up the family are dissolving and disappearing. The time will come when only those who believe deeply and actively in the family will be able to preserve their families in the midst of the gathering evil around us.

“... There are those who would define the family in such a nontraditional way that they would define it out of existence. ...

“We of all people, brothers and sisters, should not be taken in by the specious arguments that the family unit is somehow tied to a particular phase of development a moral society is going through. We are free to resist those moves which downplay the significance of the family and which play up the significance of selfish individualism. We know the family to be eternal. We know that when things go wrong in the family, things go wrong in every other institution in society” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1980, 3–4; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 4).

My brothers and sisters, my wonderful friends and partners in this work, “we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ” and His full doctrine (2 Nephi 25:26), His doctrine which is based on the theology of the family. We are “not ashamed of the gospel of [Jesus] Christ” (Romans 1:16) or His doctrine. We are willing to defend it and teach it with clarity. And we know that as we do so we will have heavenly help. Our covenants make it possible for us to live with Heavenly Father eternally. That is our great blessing.

I leave with you my testimony that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true, that it was restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. We have the fulness of the gospel this day. I bear you my testimony that we are sons and daughters of heavenly parents, who sent us forth to have this earthly experience to prepare us for the blessing of eternal families. I bear you my testimony of our Savior Jesus Christ, that through His Atonement we can become perfect and equal to our responsibilities in our earthly families, and that through His Atonement we have the promise of eternal life in families.

I bear you my testimony of the power of the Holy Ghost to be with us and guide us in all of our teaching. And if we call upon that power, that power will pierce the hearts and souls and minds of this generation, which are hungry to learn the truth. They will recognize it because they did receive their first lessons in the world of spirits. It will ring true to them. We are led today by a living prophet, President Thomas S. Monson. I also thank each of you for your dedicated service, your lives of faith and consecration, and your living examples of the truthfulness of this gospel. I pray the Lord’s blessings to be with you in all that you do, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.