

That is why Lucifer is so concerned. In addition, he is aware of the large number of Africans who have accepted the gospel on the other side of the veil and are anxiously awaiting their proxy baptism and temple endowment, as well as being sealed to their families. When a temple is dedicated, the dam in the spirit world will break and there will be a flood of humanity who have lived on the African continent flow into the temple of the Lord as their descendants do their work for them. We should not be surprised that Lucifer is using every means at his disposal to keep a temple from these people.

A temple in West Africa

Through centuries of suffering, the people in general have not become bitter. They are humble, teachable, and God-fearing. They know the scriptures, and they recognize the Shepherd's voice.

I have faith in their faith. I know the Savior loves the African people. Therefore, to paraphrase verse 33 of the 121st section of the Doctrine and Covenants, "As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the [Congo] river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from [building a temple for the African Latter-day Saints]."

As the Savior has said, "I will not suffer that [the enemy] shall destroy my work; yea, I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil" (D&C 10:43).

It has been inspiring to see the Lord's hand in bringing the forces together

which will lead to an inevitable victory. There will be a temple in West Africa.

Don't take temple blessings for granted

Last week we were driving from Provo to Bountiful again. As we left Provo, we could see the temple up on the hill. Before it was out of sight, the Mount Timpanogos Utah Temple came into view, and then the Jordan River Utah Temple appeared, followed by the Salt Lake Temple. And immediately thereafter we could see the Bountiful Utah Temple standing like a jewel above that city.

I thought back to my daughter's question, "Dad, when you see the temple, do you get a good feeling inside?" I realized the overwhelming answer is, "Yes, when I see a temple I have a wonderful feeling inside." However, my heart aches for our African brothers and sisters who have never seen a temple in their whole life.

It is my hope and prayer that we will never take temple blessings for granted. I also have a prayer in my heart for West Africa and any other place in the world where outside influences are preventing the Saints from enjoying the blessings of a temple.

I testify to the divinity of this work. Jesus is the Christ. He stands at the head of this Church, and He is orchestrating the building of His kingdom here on earth. We are witnessing miracles, and therefore I can testify that they have not ceased. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Jay E. Jensen

Words cannot describe the feelings of inadequacy associated with this holy calling, especially the responsibility to be

an especial witness of Jesus Christ in all the world (see D&C 107:25). I seek an interest in your faith and prayers.

Keep an eternal perspective

A truth about which I want to speak comes from Alma: "Therefore God gave unto them commandments, after having made known unto them the plan of redemption" (Alma 12:32).

The sequence in the teaching process from this verse is that our Heavenly Father first taught Adam and Eve the plan of redemption; then He gave them commandments. All commandments have their eternal importance in the context of the great plan of happiness (see Alma 42:8; 34:9).

I know that this truth is a key to conversion, retention, and activation. If we can help people first understand the plan, they will find a deeper and more permanent motivation to keep the commandments.

Another way of saying what Alma taught came from an experience one of the General Authorities shared. He related how he spoke with a sister he knows who years earlier went through a divorce. She approached him to thank him for the counsel he gave her during her darkest hours. She reminded him what he had told her: "Now sister, don't lose your eternal perspective. Always keep an eternal perspective." She said that truth became her pillar of strength.

When we understand the great plan of happiness, we are gaining an eternal perspective, and the commandments, ordinances, and covenants, and the experiences, trials, and tribulations can be seen in their true and eternal light.

Efforts to dim our eternal perspective

Remember, however, that Satan will dim the brightness of hope and eternal perspective by the dark, compelling urgency of now. Such is the case with those mentioned in the Book of Mormon who "turned out of the way" (Helaman 6:31) and "became for themselves" (3 Nephi 1:29).

Laman and Lemuel turned out of the way and complained of their sufferings because they did not have their possessions, with which they said they "might have been happy" (1 Nephi 17:21). It was so with the prodigal son. With the urgency to receive his mortal inheritance, he said to his father, "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me," which he took and "wasted his substance with riotous living" (Luke 15:12-13).

Still others are described by Nephi, who said that the devil will "stir them up to anger against that which is good . . . and lull them away into carnal security" (2 Nephi 28:20-21).

Overcoming a mortal perspective

Those without an eternal perspective, or those who lose sight of it, make their own standards to benefit themselves and their own selfish interests. Their mortal perspective becomes their standard and for some their god.

Ammon taught King Lamoni, who had always lived by the light of his mortality, about God, a divine power higher than the king. The king "supposed that whatsoever [he] did was right" (Alma 18:5). But Ammon's example and message touched his heart, and he "began to fear exceedingly, with fear lest he had done wrong" (Alma 18:5). Ammon then "expounded unto them the plan of redemption" (Alma 18:39).

After the prodigal son had lost all, "he came to himself, [and] he said, . . . I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee" (Luke 15:17-18). It is significant that he acknowledged his sin against heaven, for there really is a heaven and a merciful and a just God who reigns there. He revealed a divine plan that includes the Final Judgment by His Son, who "employeth no servant there," and where we will all stand someday (2 Nephi 9:41).

How to gain an eternal perspective

I am eternally thankful for wonderful parents and home-centered gospel learning where I first obtained an eternal perspective. That perspective was reinforced through my youth by leaders and teachers as I attended Church and seminary.

The most significant decision I made in my life to gain an eternal perspective and a firm understanding of the great plan of happiness was a full-time mission. By daily study of the Book of Mormon and as I taught the missionary discussions, I experienced the truth the Apostle Paul taught: "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" (Romans 2:21). I learned the plan of happiness by teaching it again and again.

Importance of hymns in conversion

While prayer, scripture study, and service in the Church helped me to learn the Father's plan and gain and develop an eternal perspective, I have an increased appreciation for the contribution that sacred hymns bring to conversion.

During my childhood and youth and especially in Primary, the hymns of the Restoration, written by true servants of God, played a profound role in my conversion to the gospel and an understanding of His plan. President Packer has said, "If we will listen, they are teaching the gospel, for the hymns of the Restoration are, in fact, a course in doctrine!" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 29; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 22).

In the First Presidency preface of the current hymnal, we are reminded that "inspirational music is an essential part of our church meetings. . . . Some of the greatest sermons are preached by the singing of hymns. Hymns move us to repentance and good works, build tes-

timony and faith, comfort the weary, console the mourning, and inspire us to endure to the end" (*Hymns*, ix).

Many hymns reveal the doctrines of the great plan of redemption. Some hymns came as a result of great sacrifice, the ultimate being death, and they communicate a spirit of holiness and consecration to lead us to conversion to the Father and His plan.

With the teacher improvement emphasis this year, parents, teachers, and missionaries will improve gospel teaching by ensuring they understand the plan themselves and sing the hymns that carry the same spirit. Sing them—hopefully not in a perfunctory way, rather with purpose—to begin and end meetings and as part of lessons or to introduce or summarize ideas in the lessons.

I conclude with the words from this beautiful hymn:

I know my Father lives
And loves me too.
The Spirit whispers this to me . . .
And tells me it is true.

He sent me here to earth,
By faith to live his plan.
The Spirit whispers this to me . . .
And tells me that I can.
["I Know My Father Lives," *Hymns*,
no. 302]

I testify that the great plan of the Eternal God is true. God lives. Jesus is His Divine Son. Joseph Smith is a true prophet, and this work is directed by the Lord through 15 prophets, seers, and revelators. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Faust

Elders Glenn L. Pace and Jay E. Jensen of the Seventy have just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now sing "Now Let Us Rejoice." Following