

mission, President Hinckley was also discouraged and admitted as much to his father. He even courageously shared his father's brief response: "Dear Gordon, I have your recent letter. I have only one suggestion: forget yourself and go to work."⁵ Over 70 years later, we are all witnesses to how earnestly President Hinckley took that counsel to heart. His sterling character and prophetic wisdom provide persuasive proof for the benefits of remembering the Church's history as well as our own.

Remembering the Savior

There is much more to say about memory and remembering in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We often speak of remembering our sacred covenants and God's commandments and of remembering and performing saving ordinances for our deceased ancestors. Most importantly, we speak of the need to remember our Savior Jesus Christ and not just when convenient, but always, as He asks.⁶ We witness always to remember Him as we partake of the sacrament. In return, we are promised His

Spirit will always be with us. Interestingly, this is the same Spirit sent by our Heavenly Father to "bring all things to [our] remembrance."⁷ Thus, by worthily receiving the sacrament, we are blessed by the Spirit to enter into a wonderfully beneficial circle of remembering, returning again and again in our thinking and devotion to Christ and His Atonement.

Coming unto Christ and being perfected in Him is, I believe, the ultimate purpose of all remembering.⁸ Therefore, I pray that God will bless us always to remember, especially His perfect Son, and perish not. I gratefully testify of Christ's divinity and saving power. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. See 2 Nephi 1:12; Mosiah 6:3; Helaman 5:14.
2. Mosiah 4:29–30.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 21:1.
4. Joseph Smith—History 1:16–17.
5. In Gordon B. Hinckley, *Faith: The Essence of True Religion* (1989), 115.
6. See 3 Nephi 18:7, 11.
7. John 14:26.
8. See Moroni 10:32–33.

President James E. Faust

Rededication of the Tabernacle

It is a great honor and privilege to be part of the rededication service of this great edifice, the Salt Lake Tabernacle, which stands west of the Salt Lake Temple. We acknowledge any and all who have had anything to do with the great work that has been done in this building. We especially thank the Presiding Bishopric—Bishop H. David Burton, Bishop Richard C. Edgley, and Bishop Keith B. McMullin—for their excellent leadership in directing the work of updating and restoring the Salt Lake Tabernacle.

I have fond memories as a boy coming to this Tabernacle. I was baptized

here. When I became a deacon, my father brought me here to attend general priesthood meeting. We came 15 minutes early and were easily able to get a seat in the balcony.

Meeting places in early days of Church

In the early days of the Church, the only two buildings built specifically for worship were the temples in Kirtland and Nauvoo. Both were built according to revelation. The first recorded Church-constructed building designated as a meetinghouse was also intended to be used as a schoolhouse. It was built of logs in Missouri in 1831.¹

By the time the Kirtland Temple was dedicated in 1836, it was already too small to hold all the Saints who wanted to attend the dedication. The Prophet Joseph Smith regretfully recorded that the building would not accommodate more.² However, as violence against the Saints and their leaders escalated in Kirtland, the main body of the Church moved to Missouri in 1838, leaving this precious building behind.

The Nauvoo Temple followed essentially the same pattern as the Kirtland Temple with respect to the assembly rooms on the first and second floors. However, before the Nauvoo Temple was completed in 1846, the Saints would meet outside, often near the temple, to hear Joseph and the other Church leaders speak. Sometimes thousands attended those meetings.

As George A. Smith observed in his humorous way, “In the days of the Prophet Joseph . . . Mormonism flourished best out of doors.” This was because “we failed to erect a building big enough to hold the Saints previous to the death of the Prophet.”³

Occasionally bad weather would interrupt those outdoor services, and both the speakers and congregation were uncomfortable. President Joseph F. Smith, who remembered well the discomfort of those outdoor meetings held near the temple in Nauvoo, said:

“My first recollection of a place of worship was in Nauvoo. It was in a little grove of trees near the site of the temple. In company with my mother I listened here to such men as Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, the Prophet Joseph and the Patriarch Hyrum. I remember quite well attending one meeting in this grove, that a wagon had been drawn up in front of the audience and the Prophet Joseph stood in the box speaking, when it began to rain. Some one or two persons got up and held umbrellas over him, to shield him from the wet. Many of the people had no umbrellas,

and it was very annoying and disagreeable to sit there, but I remember very well, though but a little boy, that there was no one went away from the ground while he spoke.”⁴

Plans for a canvas tabernacle

Before his death, the Prophet Joseph directed that a canvas tabernacle be built to shelter the Saints during large meetings. In 1845, as the temple was nearing completion, Elder Orson Hyde of the Quorum of the Twelve was sent back East to raise funds and to buy “about four thousand yards” of canvas to build what Brigham Young referred to as “the Tabernacle of the congregation in Zion.”⁵

Brother Orson Pratt outlined the proposed location and design of the canvas tabernacle in a letter written on August 30, 1845:

“It is intended to erect a tabernacle of canvass in front of, and joining the Temple on the west. The form of this tabernacle will be that of an ellipse. . . . The area of its base will be sufficient to contain eight or ten thousand persons; its seats will gradually rise one above another in the form of an amphitheatre.”⁶

The brethren the next day began to clear the ground for the construction of the canvas tabernacle. However, because of the intense persecution from their enemies, the Saints had to leave Nauvoo, so the canvas tabernacle was never built. Orson Hyde “loaded the canvas into wagons in 1846 and headed west with it.”⁷ Some have speculated that “the canvas was put to good use for such things as tents, tent ends and wagon covers” for the Saints in the exodus to the Salt Lake Valley.⁸

The finished Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City has dimensions roughly similar to the canvas tabernacle contemplated for Nauvoo, and like the proposed Nauvoo tabernacle, it also was situated just west of the temple. As with other matters, such as the great migration

to the West, Joseph Smith envisioned a great tabernacle, and Brigham Young made it a reality.

Meeting the needs of members

So the tabernacle contemplated for Nauvoo, although never built, was a prototype for this historic building. When I was a boy, we listened to general conference on the radio; now with the use of satellites and modern electronic equipment, we broadcast from Salt Lake City to whole countries worldwide at one time—as we’re doing now—using downlinks to buildings all over the world. This came about because of the inspiration that came to the Brethren to meet the needs of the people in our day and time. This is a good example of how the Lord makes it possible to meet the needs of the members of the Church. I testify that the Lord will continue to reveal through His prophet, Gordon B. Hinckley, the ways and means to meet the needs of all members in an ever-growing Church.

I am grateful this magnificent building has been strengthened and renewed so

it can continue to be used to instruct and edify the children of God. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. See Richard W. Jackson, *Places of Worship: 150 Years of Latter-day Saint Architecture* (2003), 16.
2. See *History of the Church*, 2:410–11.
3. *Deseret News*, Aug. 29, 1855, 194.
4. “The Spirit of Worship,” *Improvement Era*, June 1910, 749–50.
5. Brigham Young to the Saints Abroad, June 17, 1845, in *New York Messenger*, Aug. 16, 1845, 52; see also *History of the Church*, 7:427; Elden J. Watson, “The Nauvoo Tabernacle,” *Brigham Young University Studies*, spring 1979, 416.
6. Orson Pratt to Reuben Hedlock, Aug. 20, 1845, in *New York Messenger*, Aug. 30, 1845, 67; see also *Brigham Young University Studies*, spring 1979, 420.
7. Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* (2002), 480.
8. *Brigham Young University Studies*, spring 1979, 421; see also William Smith claim in Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 754, note 86.

President Thomas S. Monson

My brothers and sisters, both here in the Tabernacle and listening by various means throughout the world, it is a joy for me to stand before you once again in this magnificent building. In this setting one cannot help but feel the spirit of the early Saints who constructed this beautiful house of worship, as well as all those who over the years have labored to preserve and beautify it.

I have been thinking recently of the many significant events in my life which are associated with the Salt Lake Tabernacle. Although there are far too many for me to mention today, I would like to share just a few.

Baptism in the Tabernacle

I recall the time I approached baptism, when I was eight years of age. My mother talked with me about repentance and about the meaning of baptism; and then, on a Saturday in September of 1935, she took me on a streetcar to the Tabernacle baptistry which, until recently, was here in this building. At the time it was not as customary as it is now for fathers to baptize their children, since the ordinance was generally performed on a Saturday morning or afternoon, and many fathers were working at their daily professions or trades. I dressed in white and was baptized. I remember that day as though it