



**By Elder  
Anthony D.  
Perkins**  
Of the Seventy



PHOTOGRAPH OF KANSAS CITY MISSOURI TEMPLE BY ALAN FULLMER



# The Greatest Cause in History

---

I invite you to be inspired by  
and consecrated to the cause of Christ.

I begin with a war story from the ancient Americas. You might remember the confrontation between 25-year-old Captain Moroni and Zerahemnah. The Nephite dissenters and Lamanite armies who followed Zerahemnah fought to gain power (see Alma 43:5–8). In contrast, the Book of Mormon records, “The Nephites were inspired by a better cause, for they were not fighting for monarchy nor power but they were fighting for their homes and their liberties, their wives and their children, and their all, yea, for their rites of worship and their church” (Alma 43:45).

“Inspired by a better cause,” Captain Moroni and his people eventually won the battle.

## **Causes versus Institutions**

When my son came home from his mission, he started a business with the support of his sister. As they were getting ready to launch their product, they asked me, “What cause should we support?” Unwittingly, I asked, “Why does a cause matter?” They chided me and said, “Dad, every successful business today must have a cause that it supports.”

Researchers have found that 91 percent of millennials will pay more for a product if it supports a cause.<sup>1</sup> As much as millennials are committed to causes, researchers have found that they distrust institutions—including organized religion.<sup>2</sup> Some young people may think that an institution cannot be dynamic and change the world the way a cause can, but history shows that most causes fade away after an initial period of excitement. The causes that survive are those that get organized as institutions.<sup>3</sup>

I recognize that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has institutional attributes, but I testify that the Church is more than just an institution. Our standardized approach to ward organization, meetings, ministering, lesson manuals, hymnbooks, handbooks, family home evening, and so forth serves a purpose.

That purpose, explained Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, is “to preach the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ and administer the ordinances of salvation—in other words, to bring people to Christ.”<sup>4</sup> Elder Christofferson has also taught that the Savior works through His Church “to achieve needful things that cannot be accomplished by individuals or smaller groups,” such as dealing with poverty, taking the gospel to all the world, and building and operating temples.<sup>5</sup>

The Church is more than just an institution—it was organized by Jesus Christ to fulfill the Father’s cause to gather His family on both sides of the veil! This is the greatest cause in the history of the earth. I invite you to be inspired by and consecrated to this “better cause”—the cause of Christ and His Church—for the rest of your life.

## The Cause of Zion

In the spring of 1829, Joseph Smith received several revelations that included this admonition: “Keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion” (Doctrine and Covenants 6:6; 11:6; 12:6). By 1842, Joseph himself said concerning the cause of Zion: “The building up of Zion is a cause that has interested the people of God in every age; it is a theme upon which prophets, priests and kings have dwelt with peculiar delight; they have looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we live; and fired with heavenly and joyful anticipations they have sung and written and prophesied of this our day; but they died without the sight; we are the favored people that God has made choice of to bring about the Latter-day glory; it is left for us to see, participate in and help to roll forward the Latter-day glory.”<sup>6</sup>

How exciting is that? Prophets and kings yearned for the time in which we now live. In our day there are more Church members and more temple-worthy people than in any other dispensation. Every other dispensation ended in apostasy. In our day, a people will be prepared for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

The cause of building up Zion to which Joseph Smith and the Lord referred is set forth in the description of the holy city of Enoch: “And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them” (Moses 7:18).



*Ministering is reaching out to serve as the Savior did. Some of that ministering will take place within the Church, but we hope that some of your ministering will take place among those not of our faith, motivated by the pure love of Christ.*

Unity, righteousness, no poor—that is the cause of Zion that will prepare a people for the Savior’s return! That is what you and I are called to embrace, starting in our own families and then going to the world! Wisely, Elder Christofferson has taught, “We cannot wait until Zion comes for these things to happen—Zion will come only as they happen.”<sup>7</sup>

### 1. Unity

The first characteristic of a people prepared for the Second Coming is unity. Pride, inequality, and contention are enemies of a united society and were “the cause of much affliction” (see Alma 4:6–13) throughout the Book of Mormon. The Lord has spoken clearly: “Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (Doctrine and Covenants 38:27).

Ironically, group unity begins with personal repentance. If we are at war with God, we can never be at peace with our fellowman. As we turn





to the Savior, align our will with God, and plead for mercy, the burden of sin can be lifted, peace of conscience comes (see Mosiah 4:3), and—as with Enos—our thoughts naturally turn outward to our family, friends, acquaintances, and community (see Enos 1:2–9).

During a landmark general conference in April 2018, President Russell M. Nelson announced, “We will implement a newer, holier approach to caring for and ministering to others.”<sup>8</sup>

Ministering is reaching out to serve as the Savior did. Some of that ministering will take place within the Church, but we hope that some of your ministering will take place among those not of our faith, motivated by the pure love of Christ.

The Savior taught, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). As Latter-day Saints and disciples of Jesus Christ, we need to love more and judge less. We must shun bigotry of every kind. There is room in the Church for everyone.

That said, the Lord does set behavioral standards, as we see in His interaction with the woman taken in adultery. To fully repent and be

forgiven, she needed to believe in His name, forsake the sin, and change her nature (see John 8:3–11). Like the Savior, we too need to love more and judge less while people make needed changes in their lives—especially members of our own families and wards.

The 450 souls who departed with Alma into the wilderness had “their hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another” (Mosiah 18:21). Starting now, help shape a ward culture of love and unity.

## 2. Righteousness

The second characteristic of a people ready to greet the Savior is that they dwell in righteousness. The Lord revealed, “Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness” (Doctrine and Covenants 58:27). True disciples of Jesus Christ go about lifting people to a higher spiritual plane, beginning in their own homes.

In recent years, a new word has emerged: *clicktivism*. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *clicktivism* as “the practice of signalling support for a political or social cause by means of the Internet, through social media, online petitions, etc.”<sup>9</sup> While such causes may be good, the Lord expects more of His disciples than a mouse click.

A graduation speaker at Brigham Young University once observed: “The easiest thing to do is to support great causes, sign stirring petitions, endorse grand philosophies. The hardest thing to do—and it is getting harder all of the time—is to be a good husband or wife, a strong father or mother, an honorable friend and neighbor.



“The truly good deeds are the small, everyday actions of ordinary life.”<sup>10</sup>

Dwelling in righteousness requires each of us to both do and become. Of course, we must do the basics—read the scriptures and pray daily, attend sacrament meeting weekly, and worship regularly in the temple. These basics qualify us for the companionship of the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit enables us to push aside temptation and live God’s commandments.

But we must also strive to become righteous and holy, “a saint” (Mosiah 3:19), “in process of time” (Moses 7:21). President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught: “The Final Judgment is not just an evaluation of a sum total of good and evil acts—what we have *done*. It is an acknowledgment of the final effect of our acts and thoughts—what we have *become*. It is not enough for anyone just to go through the motions.”<sup>11</sup>

As you consecrate your God-given gifts and unique talents to bless others, you will become more saintly and will meaningfully contribute to a righteous society, no matter your circumstances.



### 3. No Poor

The third characteristic of a people worthy to welcome the Savior’s Second Coming is that there are no poor among them. Caring for the poor and needy has always been in the heart of the Savior and His prophets (see Proverbs 31:9). In our day, the Lord gave a newly called bishop this instruction: “And let him lift up his voice long and loud, in the midst of the people, to plead the cause of the poor and the needy” (Doctrine and Covenants 124:75).

You might be thinking, “What can I do to care for those in need outside of my own family?” First, you can participate in the work of the





Church. You can contribute fast offerings to help Church members in need who live in your ward, stake, and area (see Isaiah 58). You can donate to the humanitarian fund, which enables the Church to do things members cannot do on their own. The Church provides millions of dollars annually, for example, to serve starving people and to build schools and medical facilities that bless refugees. Second, you can participate in community service opportunities through JustServe—a website the Church has established to match volunteers with organizations that need help.

A few years ago, serious flooding occurred in Louisiana. Our daughter stayed home in Houston while her husband went to Louisiana to help muck out houses. The next weekend he stayed home with their three small children while she went to Louisiana to muck out houses. One year later, that training became practical when Houston was hit by devastating Hurricane Harvey. In her role as Relief Society president, our daughter coordinated relief efforts within her ward boundaries. People wept as they saw Church members in yellow Helping Hands T-shirts come to assist.

Following the example of the Savior, we each need to have our eyes open to those who are in need and reach out to help them.

## A Consecrated Life

I now return to where I began. Like Captain Moroni of old, I urge you to be inspired by a better cause than the many good causes that surround you in mortality. I invite you to consecrate your life to the cause of Christ and His Church.

Some Latter-day Saints mistakenly believe that because the Church no longer practices an economic form of the United Order, we are somehow exempt from living the law of

consecration. But Elder Christofferson has taught: “The Lord’s law of consecration . . . is an application of celestial law to life here and now (see D&C 105:5). To consecrate is to set apart or dedicate something as sacred, devoted to holy purposes. True success in this life comes in consecrating our lives—that is, our time and choices—to God’s purposes. . . . In so doing, we permit Him to raise us to our highest destiny.”<sup>12</sup>

The Lord does not esteem the Apostle over the deacon, but He does favor those who consecrate their all, whether 2 mites or 10 talents, to His cause (see 1 Nephi 17:35; Mark 12:41–44; Matthew 25:14–30). I testify that as you consecrate your time and choices to the cause of Christ and His Church, God will pour out greater blessings than you can imagine.

## We Are His Cause

Have you ever considered that you, individually, are also the cause of our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son? Their work and glory is to bring about your immortality and eternal life! (see Moses 1:39).

On Judgment Day, you and I will be lifted up to stand before the Savior to be judged for our works (see 3 Nephi 27:15). That thought can be scary because of our sins (see Romans 3:23), but I am comforted that Jesus Christ is not only our judge but also our advocate. I am so grateful that He will plead my cause before the Father. He will point to His sinless life and infinite Atonement as a recompense for the sins I have repented of (see Doctrine and Covenants 45:3–5; see also Psalm 119:154; Moroni 7:28).

I testify of Jesus Christ, “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). I invite all of us to consecrate our lives to His cause and His Church. I pray that by so doing, we will prepare ourselves, our families, and our neighbors for His return. ■

*From a devotional address, “Inspired by a Better Cause,” delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho on May 22, 2018. For the full address, go to [web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches](http://web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches).*

## NOTES

1. See “2015 Cone Communications Millennial CSR Study,” Cone, [conecomm.com](http://conecomm.com); see also Christine Barton, Jeff Fromm, and Chris Egan, “The Millennial Consumer: Debunking Stereotypes,” The Boston Consulting Group, Apr. 2012, 7, [bcg.com](http://bcg.com).
2. See Kipp Jarecke-Cheng, “Millennials and the Age of Distrust,” Feb. 24, 2017, [mediapost.com](http://mediapost.com).
3. See Greg Satell, “Why Some Movements Succeed and Others Fail,” May 31, 2015, [digitaltonto.com](http://digitaltonto.com); see also Greg Satell and Srdja Popovic, “How Protests Become Successful Social Movements,” *Harvard Business Review*, Jan. 27, 2017, [hbr.org](http://hbr.org).
4. D. Todd Christofferson, “Why the Church,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 108.
5. See D. Todd Christofferson, “Why the Church,” 110.
6. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 186.
7. D. Todd Christofferson, “Come to Zion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 38.
8. Russell M. Nelson, “Ministering,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 100.
9. *Oxford English Dictionary*, [oed.com](http://oed.com), “clicktivism.”
10. James Q. Wilson, “The Moral Life,” *Brigham Young Magazine*, Aug. 1994, 55.
11. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Challenge to Become,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 32.
12. D. Todd Christofferson, “Reflections on a Consecrated Life,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 16.