



By President
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HASTENING THE WORK

Do you realize that the restored Church was 98 years old before it had 100 stakes? But less than 30 years later, the Church had organized its second 100 stakes. And only eight years after that the Church had more than 300 stakes. Today we are more than 3,000 stakes strong.

Why is this growth taking place at an accelerated rate? Is it because we are better known? Is it because we have lovely chapels?

These things are important, but the reason the Church is growing today is that the Lord indicated it would. In the Doctrine and Covenants, He said, “Behold, I will hasten my work in its time.”¹

We, as spirit children of our Heavenly Father, were sent to earth at this time that we might participate in hastening this great work.

The Lord has never, to my knowledge, indicated that His work is confined to mortality. Rather, His work embraces eternity. I believe He is hastening His work in the spirit world. I also believe that the Lord, through His servants there, is preparing many spirits to receive the gospel. Our job is to search out our dead and then go to the temple and perform the sacred ordinances that will bring to those beyond the veil the same opportunities we have.

Every good Latter-day Saint in the spirit world is busy, said President Brigham Young (1801–77). “What are they

doing there? They are preaching, preaching all the time, and preparing the way for us to hasten our work in building temples here and elsewhere.”²

Now, family history work is not easy. For those of you from Scandinavia, I share your frustration. For example, on my Swedish line, my grandfather’s name was Nels Monson; his father’s name was not Monson at all but Mons Okeson. Mons’s father’s name was Oke Pederson, and his father’s name was Peter Monson—right back to Monson again.

The Lord expects you and me to perform our family history work well. I think the first thing we must do if we are to perform our work well is to have the Spirit of our Heavenly Father with us. When we live as righteously as we know how to live, He will open the way for the fulfillment of the blessings that so earnestly and diligently we seek.

We are going to make mistakes, but none of us can become an expert in family history work without first being a novice. Therefore, we must plunge into this work, and we must prepare for some uphill climbing. This is not an easy task, but the Lord has placed it upon you, and He has placed it upon me.

As you pursue family history work, you are going to find yourself running into roadblocks, and you are going to say to yourself, “There is nothing else I can do.” When you



come to that point, get down on your knees and ask the Lord to open the way, and He will open the way for you. I testify that this is true.

Heavenly Father loves His children in the spirit world just as much as He loves you and me. Regarding the work of saving our dead, the Prophet Joseph Smith said, “And now as the great purposes of God are hastening to their accomplishment, and the things spoken of in the Prophets are fulfilling, as the kingdom of God is established on the earth, and the ancient order of things restored, the

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Think of a favorite story from your family history and share this story with those you visit. You may want to use the questions in the children’s section of the First Presidency Message (page 6) to encourage those you visit to share their stories. Consider reading Doctrine and Covenants 128:15 and discussing the importance of performing temple ordinances on behalf of our ancestors.

Lord has manifested to us this duty and privilege.”³

Regarding our ancestors who have passed on without a knowledge of the gospel, President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) declared, “Through our efforts in their behalf their chains of bondage will fall from them, and the darkness surrounding them will clear away, that light may shine upon them and they shall hear in the spirit world of the work that has been done for them by their children here, and will rejoice with you in your performance of these duties.”⁴

There are millions upon millions of spirit children of our Heavenly Father who never heard the name of Christ before dying and going into the spirit world. But now they have been taught the gospel and are awaiting the day when you and I will do the research necessary to clear the way so that we can go into the house of the Lord and perform for them the work that they themselves cannot perform.

My brothers and sisters, I testify that the Lord will bless us as we accept and respond to this challenge. ■

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 88:73.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 280.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 409.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 247.