

## D&C#40 "Finding Joy In Temple And Family History Work"

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### I. Introduction

Family History research or genealogy was one area of the Church that initially was not very important to me. Fortunately, I had both an uncle on my father's side and an aunt on my mother's side who were very interested in gathering names for the genealogical work of my family. As far as I was concerned, I was grateful for their interest. As time passed, my mother purchased a book that had been prepared by members of the Cardon family, who were part of my family tree. During a visit, I began to read about my ancestors and they began to come alive for me. My interest in family history was perked.

I learned they had settled in the Piedmont area of Northern Italy. They were a group of protestant members who had crossed the Alps from France in search of freedom from religious persecution. Life was extremely difficult for them, but the Alps provided a natural boundary of

protection. Unfortunately, their new area was under the control of the Catholic Church and as they were not Catholics, they continued to experience religious persecution. They had to adapt to the harsh conditions of the high mountains, with its short growing season, and form their own community. In order to ensure protection from outsiders, they held their religious services in deep caves, enlarged to accommodate the members of their community.

At the October 1849 General Conference, Brigham Young extended missionary calls to several members, including three apostles, Elder John Taylor to France; Elder Erastus Snow to Scandinavia, and Lorenzo Snow to Italy. They traveled across the ocean to England. While in England, Elders Snow and Toronto were joined by Elder T.B.H. Stenhouse. From England they traveled to Italy, and arrived in Genoa on the northwest coast of Italy.

Francis M. Gibbons states,

"Unlike the communities in Piedmont to the north, where missionaries would later find success, Genoa was dominated by the Catholic Church, whose iron discipline and pervasive influence made it almost impossible for the elders to make any headway.

"Learning through study and inquiry about the proud and stubborn independence of the Waldenses, a protestant sect that inhabited the valleys of the Piedmont, Lorenzo decided, soon after his arrival in Genoa, that this would be his main field of labor in Italy...He confided in a letter to Franklin D. Richards that the Spirit had revealed that the Lord had 'hidden up a people amid the Alpine Mountains' and that he would 'commence something of importance in that part of this dark nation.'...[H]e first sent Stenhouse and Toronto there to survey the situation and lay the groundwork for proselyting. Later he joined them, at which time the Italian missionary force was augmented by the arrival of Elder Jabez Woodward from the London conference." (*Lorenzo Snow: Spiritual Giant, Prophet of God*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982, 60-63).

Located in the northern mountains of Italy, lived a young family, who in spite of their poverty and persecution, were God-fearing and kind. The only book; my father had, the

daughter would record, was a Bible which was over two centuries old, handed down by his ancestors. [Marie writes], "I well remember the time when all our family would gather around my mother and father each night before retiring, and listen to him read a chapter in whole or part from the Bible. After having read he would review what he had read and explain to us little ones many good principles." (An Autobiography of Marie Madeline Cardon Guild, in *Piedmont Uinta County, Wyoming, Ghost Town*. Compiled by Susan Thomas Tibbets, 1995, 61).

When Marie was a child, about six or seven years old, in the year 1840 or 41, she states, "I received a very remarkable manifestation, one which changed the career of my whole life. I desire to tell it just as it happened so that you may realize how I felt:

*I was upstairs in bed. A strange feeling came over me. It appeared that I was a young woman instead of a mere child. I thought I was on a small strip of meadow close to our vineyard, keeping my father's milk cows from the vineyard. It seemed that I was sitting on the grass reading a Sunday School book. I looked up and saw three strangers in front of me. As I looked at their faces I dropped the book instantly, being very much frightened. Suddenly the thought came to me that I must look at them that I might remember them in the future. I raised my eyes and looked them straight in the face. One of them seeing that I was afraid said;*

*'Fear not for we are servants of God and have come to preach unto the world the everlasting gospel, which has been restored to the earth in these last days, for the redemption of mankind.'*

*"They told me that God had spoken from the heavens and had revealed His everlasting gospel, to the young boy Joseph Smith. That it should never more be taken away again; but that his kingdom would be set up and that all the honest in heart would be gathered together. They told me that I would be the means of bringing my parents and family into this great gathering..., moreover, the day was not far off when we would leave our homes and cross the great ocean. We would travel across the wilderness and go to Zion where we could serve God according to the dictates of our conscience.*

*"When they had finished their message to me they said they would return soon and visit us. They took some small books from their pockets and gave them to me, saying: 'Read these and learn,' They disappeared instantly.*

*"When I realized what had been said to me and what I had seen I became frightened. I took my clothes in my arms and ran downstairs to where my mother was preparing breakfast for the family and hired man. As I came in she saw that I looked pale. She asked me if I was sick. I said 'No.' Just at that instant I was not able to talk. My mother told me to sit on a chair and would soon see to me and learn what was wrong, soon father came in and my mother called his attention to me. She knew that if I was sick that something had happened which caused me to look so strange. My father took me up, dressed me, questioned me until I had to tell him all I had seen and heard. (An Autobiography of Marie Madeline Cardon Guild, in Piedmont Uinta County, Wyoming, Ghost Town. Compiled by Susan Thomas Tibbets, 1995, 61-62).*

Marie continues,

*"After a few years, I had received this dream or vision, King Charles Albert issued a decree granting freedom to the Vaudois and placing them on a footing equally to the others. This decree was issued 17 Feb. 1848. [Lorenzo Snow was called to serve his mission to Italy in October, 1849.] This enabled those who were living in the Alps to come down into Italy, where we were enabled to serve God as we wished. The King said that no people on earth could have suffered what we did and still be true to their religion and loyal to the laws of the land. My parents and family come down to Piedmont, Italy.*

*"I well remember my father coming home on Friday or Saturday afternoon and asking my mother to get his Sunday clothes ready. He had just heard of three strangers being at Palasis De La Tour [now Torre Pellice] preaching the same doctrine which the three strangers had taught me in my dream or vision when I was a child. I was now seventeen or eighteen years of age.*

"[My father] traveled over the mountains and through valleys and arrived on Sunday morning just in time to hear Elder Lorenzo Snow preach. My dear father was so happy to hear the pure truth so well and earnestly explained. His heart was full of joy.

"After the meeting my father approached those servants of God, shook hands and kindly invited them to come to our home where he desired them to make their headquarters. They kindly and willing accepted this hospitality.

"On the way home my father related unto them all about what I had seen and heard in my dream or vision. He had stored it in his memory and kept it in his bosom a secret until now.

"When the elders reached our home that Sunday evening they inquired of me, being interested in what my father had told them concerning me.

*"I was not at the house at the time but was out on a small strip of meadow land. It seemed to be an identical spot I had seen in that vision of childhood so many years before. I was sitting on the grass reading a Sunday School Book.*

I did not hear them until my father said to the Elders, 'This is my daughter who had the vision or dream concerning the strangers who told me to fear not for they were the servants of God.'

*Upon being introduced I shook hands with each of them. They took some tracts or small books from their pockets and spoke the same words I had heard in the dream or vision." (An Autobiography of Marie Madeline Cardon Guild, in Piedmont Uinta County, Wyoming, Ghost Town. Compiled by Susan Thomas Tibbets, 1995, 64-65).*

The dream or vision my great-great-grandmother received as a child was fulfilled exactly. She and her family joined the Church, later they sailed the ocean, and then crossed the plains by wagon train. The family initially settled at Brigham's Fort, near Ogden, Utah. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of February, 1855, Marie married Charles Guild. Their son, Joseph Phillip Guild, later married Lucy Barbara Eiden on February 14, 1884, at Piedmont, Uinta, Wyoming. The homestead was

named after their home in Italy. My grandfather, Robert Evan Guild, was their third child.

Marie, as a new convert, then assisted the missionaries.

She states,

"Elders Lorenzo Snow and those with him soon were called out of Italy and Elders J.R. Woodward and George D. Keaton were assigned to take their place. It seemed that people who were raised on the mountains were more susceptible to the truth than those who lived in the valleys. The humble mountaineers could neither speak English, French nor had they learned Italian. They had lived apart on the mountains so long that they had developed a dialect of their own. Thus it was almost impossible for the Elders to make themselves understood. It was my good fortune to be able to speak both French and Italian. I could also speak and understand the dialect of the mountaineers. I was, therefore, selected to travel with the Elders on their journeys and act as interpreter." (An Autobiography of Marie Madeline Cardon Guild, in *Piedmont Uinta County, Wyoming, Ghost Town*. Compiled by Susan Thomas Tibbets, 1995, 66).

I am indebted to my great-great-grandmother for recording this experience. It is a witness to me that young children do receive dreams or visions. She was greatly blessed, along with her family, to be guided to the gospel. They were a religious family and thus were sensitive to the whispering of the spirit. It was her father, Philippe Cardon, who upon feeling the spirit, initially invited the missionaries to his home. He was prompted by his memory of the dream or vision of his young daughter so many years ago. She was willing to act as an interpreter for the missionaries as well as, when directed, to leave her home in the valley of the Alps to cross the ocean and plains in order to gather with the Saints.

As I read her experience and journey to the Church, I had a strong desire to travel to Italy and to see the home in the mountains where she was born, as well as to visit some of the other sites in the valley which she referenced. It was a most memorable experience and served to strengthen my connection with my ancestors. It was through their records that I came to know them as real people.

## II. The Spirit Of Elijah Is Prompting People To Turn Their Hearts To Their Ancestors

During our last lesson [D&C#39], we addressed the visit of the Prophet Elijah to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple. It was on this occasion that he restored the keys of the sealing power of the priesthood to the earth. It is understood, however, by many members of the Church, the mission of Elijah did not end with his visit to Joseph and Oliver. He continues to yet influence the people of the world to be engaged in genealogical work or family history. This is exemplified by many individuals, who are not members of the Church, who have a strong desire to be engaged in gathering information and photos regarding their deceased ancestors. This interest is often referred to as the individual being affected by the "Spirit of Elijah."

Joseph Smith states,

"This is the spirit of Elijah, that we redeem our dead, and connect ourselves with our fathers which are in heaven, and seal up our dead to come forth in the first resurrection; and here we want the power of Elijah to seal those who dwell in heaven. This is the power of Elijah and the keys of the kingdom of Jehovah." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, [1977], 337-338).

\*What does the Spirit of Elijah influence members of the Church to do?

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"...it prompts us to receive temple ordinances for ourselves, do family history research, and attend the temple to receive priesthood ordinances for the dead." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 233).

Gordon B. Hinckley states,

"All of our vast family history endeavor is directed to temple work. There is no other purpose for it. The temple ordinances become the crowning blessing the Church has to offer." ("New Temples to Provide 'Crowning Blessings' of the Gospel," in *Ensign*, May 1998, 88).

\*What are some things that the Spirit of Elijah is guiding people to do throughout the world?

Genealogy has become a popular hobby throughout the world and technological advances are making genealogy research easier and more accessible to the average individual. Genealogical societies have begun since Elijah's appearance and the work of the Lord is going forward.

While others may be inspired to gather information regarding their ancestors, as important as this is, members of the Church must not forget that our charge regarding genealogical research is to prepare their names for the temple. We have been blessed with the understanding of the importance of temple work, and the meaning that it has for those who are in the Spirit World. Our family research and the gathering of names is only a means to this ultimate purpose.

### **III. Each Member Of The Church Can Participate In Temple And Family History Work**

Being blessed with the opportunity to personally serve in the temple, it has often been my privilege, to greet the youth of the Church who come to temple. They come as individuals, with family members, or in groups. Their purpose is the same. To participate in doing the preliminary work of performing baptisms and confirmations for names who have been submitted by others, or the names of their own deceased family members. They present their limited-use recommends, clean and pure, dressed in their Sunday best. They sacrifice their free time in order to participate in performing the essential ordinances for others.

As they conclude their service, and depart the temple, there is a notable difference in their countenances. There

is a spiritual compensation that comes when you unselfishly serve another.

Boyd K. Packer states,

"No work is more of a protection to this church than temple work and the genealogical work that supports it. No work is more spiritually refining. No work we do gives us more power." ("The Holy Temple," in *Ensign*, 1995, 36).

\*How has temple and family history work helped you feel increased spiritual refinement and power?

Just the simple process of qualifying for a recommend to serve in the temple, means that as an individual you have made a special covenant with your Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. You have made the decision to become like them in word and deed. As you do so, you set yourself apart from the world. You are also blessed to have the companionship of the Holy Ghost to guide and direct and protect you as you strive to be valiant in keeping the promises you have made.

Howard W. Hunter states,

"It is the deepest desire of my heart to have every member of the Church worthy to enter the temple. It would please the Lord if every adult [and youth] would be worthy of--and carry--a current temple recommend. The things that we must do and not do to be worthy of a temple recommend are the very things that ensure we will be happy as individuals and as families." ("Exceeding Great and Precious Promises," in *Ensign*, November 1994, 8).

Dallin H. Oaks states,

"In the work of redeeming the dead there are many tasks to be performed, and...all members should participate by prayerfully selecting those ways that fit their personal circumstances at a particular time...Our effort is not to compel everyone to do everything, but to encourage everyone to do something." ("Family History: 'In Wisdom and Order,'" in *Ensign*, June 1989, 6).

The following is a list, labeled from a-d, of suggested tasks for personal consideration.

A. Have A Current Temple Recommend And Attend The Temple Regularly

This is something that commencing with the age of twelve, all members of the Church can do. If for some reason you cannot qualify to receive a temple recommend, make it a personal priority. It will bless your life for you know that you have made sacred covenants with the Lord that you promised to keep sacred, regardless of where you live, your age, or circumstances.

Gordon B. Hinckley states,

"I urge our people everywhere, with all the persuasiveness of which I am capable, to live worthy to hold a temple recommend, to secure one and regard it as a precious asset, and to make a great effort to go to the house of the Lord and partake of the spirit and blessings to be had therein. I am satisfied that every man or woman who goes to the temple in a spirit of sincerity and faith leaves the house of the Lord a better man or woman. There is need for constant improvement in all of our lives. There is need occasionally to leave the noise and tumult of the world and step within the walls of a sacred house of God, there to feel His spirit in an environment of holiness and peace." ("Of Missions, Temples, and Stewardship," in *Ensign*, November 1995, 53).

For those who live close to a temple, I would encourage you to take your children when they are young, and let them touch the walls of the temple and the door that someday they will open. It is never too early to make the temple a matter of importance in the lives of our children. It is also a special blessing when you can take your children to a temple open house before it is dedicated. Here your children can personally experience the insides of the temple. As they come to know the importance of the temple in your life, it will also become important in theirs.

For those who do not live close to a temple, find a picture of the temple that someday you plan to attend and display it in a prominent place in your home. Begin now to prepare for the day when you can attend. It is worth you saving, sacrificing, and praying for. I have found that when the Lord has determined my sincere desire to do His will, He then open doors that have appeared to be closed. Remember

His words to Mary regarding her cousin Elizabeth conceiving in her latter years, "For with God nothing is impossible" (NT, Luke 1:37).

#### B. Prepare To Have Ordinances Performed For Deceased Relatives

Through the recent technology of the personal computer and the new Family History program, it is becoming even easier to search out our ancestors. We begin this process by identifying our deceased relatives. We can list those whom we remember, look through family records, and ask parents, grandparents, and other family members to tell us about our ancestors. We can also use Church-produced computer programs in our homes and in Family History Centers to help us in these efforts. Do not discount the powerful emphasis of the Spirit as you seek to identify your ancestors. As we exercise faith, names and information will come in unexpected ways and places.

It is important to talk to a Family History consultant in the ward, branch, or stake that can help you to prepare the information the temple will need to have before the ordinances can be performed. Church family history publications, local priesthood leaders, and temples should be able to advise you in this process.

As we learn about our ancestors, we should keep a record of this information on the forms the Church has produced. If an ancestor received any priesthood ordinances before death, it is helpful to record the dates when those ordinances were performed so we can know which ones still need to be done.

Richard G. Scott states,

"[As you are able] arrange to participate for deceased ancestors in the sealing and other ordinances...I find it helpful when receiving ordinances for another to try and relate to that person specifically. I think of him and pray that he will accept the ordinance and benefit from it. Do these things with a prayer in your heart that the Holy Spirit will enhance your understanding and enrich your life. Those worthy prayers will be answered." ("Receive the Temple Blessings," in *Ensign*, May 1999, 27).

### C. Learn About Ancestor's Lives

When was the last time you discussed with your children your experiences with your parents?, Grandparents? Aunts or Uncles? Many assume that the lives of their parents, family members, even grandparents may not interest our children. Recently, my grandson called me on the phone. He wanted to know if he could ask me some questions. I naturally said, "Yes." He then proceeded to ask me a series of questions designed to gather information regarding me as his grandfather. As we reached the last question, regarding special memories in my life, he thanked me and said that his Dad wanted to speak to me. I learned that the purpose of the phone call was in order to meet the requirements to receive the Genealogy Scout merit badge. As I hung up the phone, I was grateful to the Boy Scouts as I had never thought to share with him the information he had sought.

Dennis B. Neuenschwander adds,

"Not one of my children has any recollection of my grandparents. If I want my children and grandchildren to know those who still live in my memory, then I must build the bridge between them. I alone am the link to the generations that stand on either side of me. It is my responsibility to knit their hearts together through love and respect, even though they may never have known each other personally. My grandchildren will have no knowledge of their family's history if I do nothing to preserve it for them. That which I do not pass on to my posterity, they will never have. The work of gathering and sharing eternal family keepsakes is a personal responsibility. It cannot be passed off or given to another." ("Bridges and Eternal Keepsakes," in *Ensign*, May 1999, 83-84).

When we come to learn about our ancestors, as I shared in the introduction of this lesson, their lives become more personal to us. Even if all we do is to think about what their lives might have been like, it will serve to enhance our interest in coming to know them as people as we seek to provide them with their temple ordinances.

Another way in which we can participate in temple work is individually do the research in order to provide the ordinances to be performed for our deceased relatives. Even if others in your family are doing family history research,

you can often find deceased relatives who still need to have the temple ordinances performed for them. Without those we do the research, this sacred work would come to a halt. Those who do the research are equally as important to the final work being done as the service of those who perform their work in the temple. Both are important. Both will be blessed for their contribution.

#### D. Keep A Journal Or Prepare A Personal History Or Family History

If family research was near the bottom of my personal list, writing or keeping a personal journal was at the bottom. I rejoice in reading the writings of those who lived during the early history of the Church as they kept their journals. The collective members of the Church owe a debt of gratitude to Wilford Woodruff for the journal records that he kept throughout his life. Unfortunately, even as I repent, as a result of my failing memory, a complete record is lost, not only to me, but to those who will come after me. I hope, in the words of Moroni, "ye [they] may learn to be more wise than we [I] have been" (BM, Mormon 9:31). In this regard, only recently, my son asked me if I had kept a journal. I told him, I had not. He said, "Dad, you need to write of record of the events of your life, so that we, your children and grandchildren, may have a record of your life." I believe my time for repentance has come.

\*What are the blessing of keeping a journal or preparing a life history?

There is no question that if we fail to record the important events, memories, and lessons learned during our lives, they will be lost to our posterity. The lessons we have learned, and recorded, may serve to also bless their lives. Sometimes the words of the living are not seen to be very important, or even valued, however, after their death, and our own maturity, we come to learn that their words of wisdom can help us meet the challenges we are facing. How they met them and the blessings that came as a result of their perseverance are often a great value to us.

One afternoon, over sixty or so years ago, I was walking home from town with my grandfather. As we were walking, I shared with him some of my frustrations. He casually said to me, "I have learned that if you are going to do

something, it is important to give it your best." Those words were embedded in my memory. Thereafter, as I met difficult challenges, I remembered those words of my grandfather, and, no matter the effort required, I needed to give it my best. I doubt those words would have found a place in his journal, but they had been transcribed in my mind.

\*How can preparing a family history help turn our hearts to our family members?

Several years ago, the leaders of the Church encouraged the members to prepare a four generational family history sheet. At the time, my parents were alive, so it was easy to fill in the date of birth, marriage, with their death date being left blank. Next, it was to obtain the same information for each of my grandparents. My mom's parents were still alive as well as my father's mother so their information was relatively easy to obtain. Then came my Father's and mother's grandparents. Fortunately, the copy of the records we had received from both my uncle and aunt who had done the genealogical research for their respective families was important. We completed our four generation sheets, but for several years nothing happened. Recently, when I learned that taking your own family names to the temple was a special experience, did my heart then turn to my ancestors and doing their work.

#### **IV. The Church Provides Many Resources To Help Us Participate In Temple And Family History Work**

There are various computer programs available, however, the best source is to go to [www.lds.org/familyhistory](http://www.lds.org/familyhistory). For members, certainly; for non-members, the best place to start. You can open an account without charge, if you don't have one, which, if you are a member, it will requires your membership record number, a user name, and a password. [The membership record number is on your current temple recommend or you can get it from your ward membership clerk. If you are not a member, follow the directions, or call 1-866-406-1830, for assistance. I was told that FamilySearch and FamilyTree programs do not require church membership in order for one to use.

If at any time you need assistance, you can go to [www.familysearch.org/ask/help](http://www.familysearch.org/ask/help) or tel. 1-866-406-1830. There

are informed individuals who can answer your questions, from simple to complex, in order to get you started.

#### A. A Member's Guide To Temple And Family History Work

At present, [06/2017], the current PDF copy [2009] is available on line for download. The chapters include: The Purpose of Temple and Family History Work; Getting Started; Gathering Information from Home; Recording Family History Information; Gathering Information from Family; Gathering Information from Public Records, and Providing Temple Ordinances for members only. Also included in the Appendix are Forms; Questions for Interviewing Family Members, and, Record Selection Table. It is a great first step.

#### B. Important Terms

The following terms are defined. A *Research Log*. This is a record of where you have looked for family history information and what you have found. *Pedigree charts*. They show extended family relationships across generations. The pedigree chart shows the direct ancestors of a single person, whose name is recorded on the left side of the chart. *Family Group Records*. They are family records that show detailed information about a single family unit." (see *A Member's Guide To Temple and Family History Work*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2009, 15-16, 27.)

#### C. Family History Forms

The Member's Guide includes a copy of the following forms: Research Log; Pedigree Chart, page 1 and 2; Family Group Record for listing husband, wife, and children. One of the challenges is to get all the necessary information accurately, and to record the source where you found it. The source is essential for it serves to document where you located your information, for your records as well as for others who may have different information than you have for the same individual. Knowing the source can help resolve discrepancies.

#### D. Computer Programs

FamilySearch and FamilyTree are both available through lds.org without cost. The advantage of FamilyTree, I am

told, is the easy access to adding photo's and stories if you desire.

A popular program, many find helpful, is ancestry.com. It is available without cost if you have membership number. If not, you can access it through a free trial option, but remember the free period, or you will be charge. I understand the current yearly cost is \$300.00/year. As there are many computer programs, I would recommend you sign up for the free trial, and see if it meets your needs before you make your purchase. Remember, note precisely the date in your records, when the free trial ends.

#### E. Information On The Internet

The Member's Guide recommends: Vital records [civil registration records] found in government offices and the church; Census records of which thousands are available; Immigration records created when an individual or a family arrived in a new country; Newspapers which may include articles or obituary notices; Church records, and cemetery records, including tombstones.

#### F. Family History Centers

In many of the LDS Church meeting houses, there is a Family History Center. It is complete with computers and free assistance from knowledgeable individuals. There are also Stake Family History Centers which often have more resources than the meeting house center, but are not as easily accessible. When you call, 1-866-406-1830 or access [www.familysearch.org/ask/help](http://www.familysearch.org/ask/help), you will be able to obtain the nearest Ward meeting house or Stake Family History Center by providing your local address.

One concern my tech friend shared is be careful of virus infection when you use a computer other than yours. His recommendation was to take a notebook and pen, and write down the information you have accessed on the public computer. Another option is to see, if you pay a fee, if the information can be printed. If so, when you get home, you can then transfer it to your protected personal computer. Notebook and pen, or printed copies, are not as convenient as transferring data by a DataTraveler, but you may be bringing a virus home with you. The motto, "It is better to be safe, than sorry, has served me well.

It's now time to begin. Start with a Pedigree Chart or Family Group record and prayer. Prayer helps all the time, but especially when searching for your ancestors. As you proceed, you will find that you don't have to do this work alone. There are people here who are willing to help, as well as those you can't see, who are grateful for your efforts, and will assist you in miraculous ways.

## **V. Conclusions**

We have addressed the importance of genealogical research. Now is the time to bring this process on behalf of your own family. As you begin this adventure, you will come to know your kindred dead in a more personal manner. You will learn their names, where and when they lived. You will learn the names of their children, including those who died. They will become real people to you.

I realize that for some this adventure may seem uninteresting; for others even overwhelming. I would encourage you to proceed and not let your fear or anxiety overwhelm you. As you begin, you will be entering a world that previous was unknown to you. You will meet family members you never knew. You will learn the part they played in your ancestral chain and how they impacted your life. Don't be upset if you learn about some scalawags who are also your relatives. Learn from them and determine that you will make better choices in your life.

**The Spirit Of Elijah Is Prompting People To Turn Their Hearts To Their Ancestors:** It is not coincidental that after Elijah's appearance to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery that interest in genealogical work increased in the United States and elsewhere. The hearts of the children did begin to turn to their fathers. Many wanted to know more about their ancestors.

Some years ago, we had a neighbor. She had no interest in learning about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, but she knew a lot about their genealogy program. She had overwhelming desire to learn about her ancestors. She had traced them back several generations. Her walls were covered with old photos she had collected. I believe, she had the "Spirit of Elijah."

**Each Member Of The Church Can Participate In Temple and Family History Work:** As a youth, you must be at least twelve years of age, and hold a limited-use recommend, in order to perform ordinances in the temple. But anyone who has obtained the necessary skills from their home on their personal computer can assist in gathering names. The process take some prior training, but the skills can be learned, if the desire is present. As you participate in this process, you will gain an increased appreciation for your ancestors. You will learn about the challenges they experienced as they lived in a very different world from yours. Life was often hard and not very forgiving, and as you will note, their lives were often cut short. However, had it not been for their perseverance, often overcoming great obstacles, we would not have progressed to the point we have or enjoy the conveniences many of us take for granted. You will find that many gave their lives defending the freedoms we enjoy. As a family, find out where your ancestors are buried and go to the cemetery and remember their lives. Note the birth and death dates on their markers, and reflect on some of the events they may have experienced. These individuals are members of your family. Not just names on a slip of paper.

Besides having a current temple recommend, preparing the names to be taken to the temple yourself, and, along the way getting to know your ancestors as real people, consider keeping a journal regarding your own life events. This is the gift you will leave to those who will follow in your steps. They will read your personal record, noting both your challenges and successes. You will become a real person to them. Someone they will want to emulate as an example of faith and determination to do what is right.

**The Church Provides Many Resources To Help Us Participate In Temple and Family History Work:** The Church had gathered, stored, and made available the largest collection of names of individuals in the world. They have prepared resources to assist the novice who is interested to do family history research. To date, some of these resources include: *A Member's Guide To Temple Work and Family History*, Family History forms; Computer programs; Information on the Internet through lds.org, and Family History Centers staffed by knowledgeable individuals who volunteer their time to assist those who may need assistance. In some centers, classes are offered to assist individuals at all

levels of experience. As we commit our time and effort to take advantage of this great work, we will be blessed for our efforts.

The next lesson [D&C#41] addresses the challenge we have been given to take the gospel to all the world and to do our part in strengthening the new converts.