

Days Never to Be Forgotten

By Elder Gary E. Stevenson
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

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Introduction

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My dear brothers and sisters, the history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in this dispensation is resplendent with divine experiences that demonstrate how the Lord has guided His Church. There is one decade in our history, however, that stands strikingly supreme above any other—the decade from 1820 to 1830. Beginning with the Prophet Joseph Smith’s experience in the Sacred Grove in the spring of 1820, when he saw God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and continuing until April 6, 1830, that decade is unlike any other.

Consider these remarkable events! The young prophet conversed with the angel Moroni, translated the gold plates, and published the Book of Mormon! He was the instrument through whom the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods were restored, and then he organized the Church! Oliver Cowdery described that era well: “These were days never to be forgotten.” Miraculous events have continued to this very day.

May I be so bold as to suggest that this year we have commenced a decade that may prove to be as momentous as any that has followed that unparalleled founding decade almost two centuries ago.

Our Decade

Let me explain. Between now, 2024, and 2034, we will experience seminal events that will

result in extraordinary opportunities to serve, to unite with members and friends, and to introduce The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to more people than ever before.

We just witnessed the power of a truly historic moment as we celebrated with tens of millions the 100th birthday of President Russell M. Nelson.

Reporting on President Nelson's birthday, *Newsweek* wrote a headline that read, "World's Oldest Religious Leader Turns 100." They then listed the world's 10 oldest faith leaders—with President Nelson first on a list that included Pope Francis and the Dalai Lama.

This statement from a *New York Times* article represents the spirit of much of the international coverage: "In a [United States] presidential election cycle that has prompted soul-searching about aging and leadership, Mr. Nelson's milestone suggests that, at least in his church, a triple-digit birthday does not merit much hand-wringing. He remains a popular figure among church members, who view their president not just as an executive but as a 'prophet, seer, and revelator.'"

How grateful we are that President Nelson's landmark birthday gave us an opportunity to introduce a global audience to a prophet of God, a celebration never to be forgotten.

Earlier this spring, a refurbished plaza on Temple Square—featuring a display of international flags representing countries where the Church is recognized—was unveiled. The plaza entrance is marked by a granite monument with these prophetic words: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it."

Surely, the monumental events that will occur during the next 10 years constitute one manifestation this prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled.

Contemplate the unprecedented number of temple open houses and dedications that are planned to take place over the next decade, even the potential of 164 temples and counting. Imagine tens of millions of you and your friends walking through a house of the Lord. The symbolic center of these events will be the rededication of the Salt Lake Temple and the activities associated with it. These certainly will be days never to be

forgotten.

The year 2030 will bring opportunities worldwide to commemorate the bicentennial of the organization of the Church. Although it is too early to say how the Church will recognize this milestone, it will certainly allow us to invite family, friends, colleagues, and distinguished guests to “come and see” and to better understand the powerful impact the Church has in the lives of Church members.

In 2034, thousands of dignitaries, visitors, and athletes from around the world will flood the streets of Salt Lake City, the stage for the Winter Olympic Games. There is perhaps no greater demonstration of worldwide unity than that embodied in the Olympic Games. The eyes of the world will be upon the Church and its members, affording a multitude of opportunities to volunteer, serve, and share glad tidings through kind deeds—an event never to be forgotten.

These upcoming moments will provide members of the Church everywhere with increased opportunities to share the glad tidings of the gospel of Jesus Christ through word and deed, a decade never to be forgotten.

Glad Tidings

In a meeting just weeks before his birthday, President Nelson shared the reason he cherishes the phrase “glad tidings.” On the face of it, he noted, the phrase rings of joy and happiness. But “glad tidings” conveys much more than that. He explained that this phrase comes from the original Greek word *euangelion*, which literally means the “good news” or the “gospel.” Happiness and joy in this life and the next are always linked with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus the phrase “glad tidings” captures this double meaning in a wonderful way.

“Men [and women] are, that they might have joy.” Heavenly Father has provided the plan of happiness that enables joy through His blessings. These include living in His presence eternally as families. The Atonement of Jesus Christ is central to God’s plan to redeem us. To receive eternal life, we must come unto Christ. As we do so “and help others do the same, we participate in God’s work of salvation and exaltation.”

This message of the glad tidings of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the most important message on earth. And that is where the youth and young adults of the Church come in.

For the Strength of Youth

Now, while this upcoming decade may be filled with days never to be forgotten for every member of the Church, this especially can be true for you of the rising generation. You are here on earth now because you were selected to be here now. You have the strength and capacity to be disciples of Christ in an unprecedented way.

President George Q. Cannon taught, “God has reserved spirits for this dispensation who have the courage and determination to face the world and all the powers of the evil one [and to] ... build up the Zion of our God fearless of all consequences.”

To that end, I wish to speak to you of the rising generation, to invite you to imagine how exciting this next decade, one never to be forgotten, can be for you. I also offer a few simple words of counsel and encouragement that may empower you during this coming decade.

Like many of you, I have a smartphone that, on occasion and without any prompt, pulls together a reel of photos showing what I was doing on a certain day. It is always surprising to see how much things have changed for me and my family in just a few years.

Picture the photos your phone will serve up 10 years from now! You may see yourself graduating from high school or college, receiving your endowment, going on a mission, getting married, and having your first child. For you personally, this will be a decade never to be forgotten. But it will be doubly so if you actively strive to become a light unto the world of how the glad tidings of the gospel of Jesus Christ can enrich and enhance not only your lives but also those of your family, friends, and social media followers.

You may be wondering how to do this.

Prophets of God have taught us this is done through four simple activities, referred to as divinely appointed responsibilities: first, living the gospel of Jesus Christ; second, caring for those in need; third, inviting all to receive the gospel; and fourth, uniting families for eternity. Remarkably, each can be done in the most normal and natural ways.

Divinely Appointed Responsibilities

I promise you this will be a decade never to be forgotten for you if you embrace these four divinely appointed responsibilities. Let's consider

what this might entail.

First, live the gospel of Jesus Christ. Study the words of the prophets, and learn to love your Father in Heaven. Incline your hearts to Him, and strive to walk in His way. Be lifted by the “covenant confidence” that Elder Ulisses Soares has described. This confidence comes from making covenants to follow Jesus Christ, knowing that the Savior will in turn strengthen and support you.

Let your friends see the joy you feel in living the gospel, and you will be the best gospel message they ever receive.

Second, reach out in compassion to care for those in need. Your generation is unusually mindful of the less fortunate. Whenever disaster strikes and Church members rush to help clear away debris and comfort the afflicted, it seems the majority wearing “Helping Hands” T-shirts are teenagers and twentysomethings. It is in your nature “to bear one another’s burdens” and “comfort those that stand in need of comfort.” By doing this we “fulfil the law of Christ.”

Evan, a young Primary-age boy, decided to spend his summer vacation from school gathering supplies for peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to donate to his local food bank. He found the project on the JustServe website. Young Evan enlisted his entire school class to help collect over 700 jars of jelly! Let the people you serve know that your concern for them is rooted in your love of God and your desire to treat your neighbor as yourself.

Third, invite all to receive the gospel. This year we opened 36 new missions worldwide to accommodate all who desire to serve full-time missions. In an era when many youth are opting out of formal religious activity altogether, this is remarkable and speaks to the magnificent nature of your testimonies. Whether serving full-time or not, please realize your immense capacity to influence your peers as you love, share, and invite them to explore the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Fourth, unite families for eternity. As I visit temples around the world, I marvel at the standing-room-only crowds of youth waiting at the baptistry and the increased numbers of young adults serving as ordinance workers. Recently a group of over 600 youth from Scotland and Ireland traveled to the Preston England Temple, performing over 4,000 ordinances, many of which were for their personal deceased ances-

tors! I urge you to become engaged in family history, spend time in the temple, and carefully prepare yourself to be the kind of man or woman ready to marry an equally worthy companion in the temple. Develop a pattern in your life now to make the temple a regular part of your lives.

Conclusion

My beloved brothers and sisters, my dear young friends, there will likely be difficulties for each of us in the days ahead. However, as we enter this coming decade of unprecedented moments, may we share glad tidings through the simple activities of living, caring, inviting, and uniting. As we do so, the Lord will bless us with experiences never to be forgotten.

I testify that those who approach the Lord with a sincere heart and real intent, those who have the name of the Savior upon their lips and the Holy Spirit in their souls, those who embark upon this grand and glorious pilgrimage will discover and experience bounteous celestial blessings and receive a witness that God hears you, knows you, and loves you. You will experience days never to be forgotten. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.