

## COMING FROM NAUVOO

*Alyn B. & Gloria Andrus—Retired Faculty & Administration*

As Gloria and I waited for the Nauvoo Temple dedication to begin on Thursday afternoon, June 27, we experienced feelings of profound emotion. Cameras panned the Mississippi River, the “flats,” and the temple inside and out. I endeavored to see through tear-filled eyes. Again on Sunday morning, June 30, we saw and listened, with wondering awe, the Tabernacle Choir presentation on the lawn across Wells Street, with the Temple rising in majestic splendor behind. For thirty minutes we sniffed and wiped tears while gazing upon that beautiful building and hearing messages of salvation in the choir’s musical presentation.

Then, with hearts full of feeling and testimony filling our minds, we delivered a presentation on temples and temple work to the young men and women in Rexburg Ninth Ward. Forty of them, with their leaders, listened intently while we told the story of God’s people and temples from Adam to Joseph Smith in Nauvoo. What we felt in the dedication and on the following Sunday can hardly be expressed in words.

I have wondered why the temple in its Nauvoo setting can evoke such powerful feelings. Of course a testimony of temple work is fundamental to such feelings. The work that goes on in Latter-day Saint temples is the gospel’s core. The gospel would mean little, almost nothing, nothing more than gospels taught by sectarian ministers, if we did not have temples in which to unite us as families under the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood. After all, that is what the gospel is about. It is about family exaltation—preparing families to live with God. And the ordinances that help prepare us for that are conducted in temples.

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But the Nauvoo Temple, more than any other, has a special and profound effect upon me. Why? I’m not quite sure, but to me it is physical proof that Satan’s victory in driving the Saints from Old Nauvoo was only transitory. In the long run, in the big picture, God will triumph. Satan and all who choose to follow will be defeated decisively. Right will prevail. Good will overcome evil.

Joseph and Hyrum were murdered before the temple was finished. But today they rejoice with other faithful Saints who gave all they had to give, even their own lives when necessary, to build a temple to their God as they were commanded. In this they followed the example of their prophet and his brother. Perhaps this thought, more than any other, is what moves me so powerfully. Our predecessors were absolutely devoted to God, and obedient to Him as instructed through His prophets. My admiration of Joseph and Hyrum is a given. But I also admire, almost beyond ability to tell, faithful, insightful, forward-moving Brigham

Young and all who followed him as they left their beloved Nauvoo, with its temple overlooking both city and river. They had labored so hard for seven years to build both; now in response to God's call through His prophet and leader, they left with almost nothing—only to start over in another wilderness far removed from their Beautiful City.

God's people have always sought refuge from enemies in wilderness areas. They go. They build. They give up what they build only to go elsewhere and start over. God requires much of His people, but His blessings accompany obedience, sacrifice, and hard work. After all, look at His saints today. Have they not prospered? Interestingly, God's enemies have failed to learn that they cannot destroy His people. They cannot stop His work. They can kill His leaders. They can drive His people from homes, businesses, farms, and sacred edifices, but they cannot destroy that which is at the very core of our souls—the will to do.

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All of this is what I think when I see the Nauvoo Temple and city in the process of resurrection. That's why I cry. My tears express a reverence of pioneer ancestors, happiness, joy, peace of mind, and satisfaction in the thought that Christ is in His place. He directs the work. And His work moves forward.

Gloria and I are thrilled to be a part of God's work, especially as it relates to Nauvoo. We have great-grandparents who were in Nauvoo and worked on the original temple. They participated in the incipient gathering, which is characteristic of this last dispensation of time. We are thrilled to be a part of that gathering as it extends itself in our own time.

Not only do we gather souls throughout the world to the gospel, but we gather inside the temples and there unite the living with the dead. This may be the greatest gathering of all. Of course, most of the gathering, according to our understanding, will occur during the Millennium. By then temples will cover the earth like freckles on a sunburned face. Moreover, communion between living and dead will be frequent and regular—a way of life. Perhaps completion of the Nauvoo Temple signifies nearness of the Millennium and its great work of gathering. May we all remain worthy to participate in the gathering.

*Editor's Note: Here follows a reduced version of the presentation by Alyn and Gloria Andrus to the young men and women of the Rexburg Idaho Ninth Ward, Sunday, 30 June 2002.*

TEMPLES ANCIENT AND MODERN:  
LEADING BACK TO NAUVOO

On June 27, President Gordon B. Hinckley dedicated the Nauvoo Temple. In world history, this was a significant event. It provides physical evidence that God will prevail over Satan in these last days.

You see, the original Nauvoo temple was built with extraordinary sacrifice between 1841 and 1846. Before the early Saints were forced to evacuate Nauvoo, they were able to receive their endowments and be sealed as families in the temple. This fortified them spiritually to face hardships and incessant trials as they crossed the plains, founded new settlements and built other temples. Soon after the Saints left Nauvoo, their temple was destroyed by fire and wind. It had served its immediate purpose, so God permitted its destruction rather than have it used by other people for other purposes.

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But before the Saints left their beloved city, Brigham Young predicted that one day they would return. In fulfillment of that prediction, modern Latter-day Saints have returned to Nauvoo. They have built a new temple patterned after the first one. And Moroni stands atop this temple with trumpet in hand, facing west across the Mississippi River and Iowa farmlands, calling others to come back, to resurrect the city, to engage in temple ordinances which will unite living descendants with dead ancestors. At first when the Saints were forced to leave Nauvoo, Satan seemed to have triumphed. But today, with Saints returning to their city, and rebuilding the temple, Satan's victory is seen as only temporary.

God has had temples on Earth all the way back to Adam. A temple in its broadest meaning can be a sacred place such as the Garden of Eden (*Genesis* 2:8-10,15-25 and chapter 3), or the Sacred Grove (*Joseph Smith* 1:15-17). It can be a sacred spot of ground such as that on which Moses stood when he was commanded by God to remove his shoes (*Exodus* 3:1-6). It can be an altar such as those erected by Abraham and Jacob to mark where God appeared to them to bless and teach them (*Genesis* 12:6-8,28:10-22). Or it can be a mountain on which the Brother of Jared, and later, the Prophet Nephi were instructed by God (*Ether* 3, *I Nephi* 17). But when God's people are sufficiently established and organized to build a temple, God expects them to do so (*Doctrine & Covenants* 124:25-44). He wants His work to be done inside holy structures. So typically, God's people have been temple-builders.

FROM ANCIENT TEMPLES TO THE DISPENSATION OF JOSEPH

Our houses keep us warm and dry, give privacy, keep our families together, and protect us from pests and dangers. Temples provide these

same benefits. They provide the warmth and comfort that comes from the Holy Spirit. They provide the privacy necessary for God to talk with prophets and teach His people about eternal life and exaltation. And just as houses bring earthly families together, so God's temples bring eternal families together. Finally, temples provide refuge and protection from the world.

While the Israelites wandered in the desert, God told Moses to build a temple, the movable temple called the Tabernacle. After the children of Israel settled in the land of Canaan, God instructed Solomon to build a temple of wood and stone. It, and later temples built in its place, served the children of Israel for hundreds of years.

During Christ's ministry, King Herod's temple served the Jews till it was destroyed by Romans in 70 AD. Meanwhile, in America descendants of Nephi built temples. Then as apostasy spread throughout America and the rest of the world, the gospel was corrupted, the priesthood was lost, and temple-building ceased. For about 1400 years, the world groped through spiritual darkness—there were no temples in which God could reveal Himself and His ways to mankind.

But then God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, visited Joseph Smith in the sacred grove in New York. Joseph was instructed to help restore The Church of Jesus Christ to Earth. Part of the restoration included building temples. Like Moses and Solomon, the prophet Joseph obeyed God, and the first temple built by him and the Saints was in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1836. The Kirtland temple is still standing, but is owned by the Community of Christ, formerly the RLDS Church.

The second temple built by Joseph and the Saints was located in Nauvoo, Illinois, and was completed in 1846. However, even before it was finished and dedicated, the Saints were driven from their city, leaving the temple behind in the hands of anti-Mormons. In time, the temple was destroyed. All that was left where it stood was a depression in the ground indicating its dimensions.

Both the Kirtland and Nauvoo Temples were built with considerable material sacrifice. In both places, the Saints were poverty stricken. In dedicating the Kirtland Temple, Joseph said to the Lord: "Thou knowest that we have done this work through great tribulation; and out of our poverty we have given of our substance to build a house to thy name, that the Son of Man might have a place to manifest Himself to His people" (*Doctrine & Covenants* 109:4-5).

Sister Eliza R. Snow wrote about the Saint's poverty: "At the time, the Saints were few in number, and most of them very poor; and had it not been for the assurance that God had spoken, and had commanded that a house should be built to His name... an attempt toward building the Temple, under the then existing circumstances, would have been, by all

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concerned, pronounced preposterous.” (Talmage, *House Of The Lord*, 64). The story is told that women in Kirtland gave up their precious pottery that it could be ground up and mixed with plaster so the temple’s outside walls would glisten in the sunlight. If this is true, it indicates that these women thought more of God than the precious things of the world.

Two stories will exemplify sacrifices made while building the Nauvoo Temple. First, the temple was built with tithing money, or work contributed as tithing. But many temple workers went far beyond expectations and gave much more than a tithe. An excellent example of such sacrifice was the contribution of Joseph Toronto. He was a native of Sicily and as a convert came to Nauvoo during the Spring of 1845. He heard appeals of President Brigham Young for additional funds to finish building the temple. He responded by giving his life’s earnings, which were \$2,500 in gold. He told President Young that he wanted to give “himself and all he had to the upbuilding of the church and kingdom of God” (*History of the Church*, Vol. VII, 433).

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Six-year-old Ben Driggs loved the big wagon shop across the road from his home in Nauvoo. It was such a busy place with the song of saws, hammers, planes, and other tools making music all day long as the workers labored.

“Don’t get too close to these workmen,” Ben’s father would keep warning him. “And leave the shop tools alone.”

“But I want to make me a wagon, Daddy. Why can’t I do it?” His pleading usually got Ben some boards, a few tools, and a place out of the way where he could hammer to his heart’s content. This happened a number of times, and then came the joyous day. Ben’s father promised to make Ben a small wagon for his 7th birthday.

The small wagon was made in the evenings after regular working hours when all was quiet at the shop. Young Ben had to promise his father not to bother the workers or tease his father while it was being made. Ben could hardly contain himself looking forward to have a really true wagon all his own. He planned to use his wagon to take his baby brother for rides and to bring things home from the store for his mother.

When Ben’s 7th birthday came on May 13, 1844, the wagon was ready. It was beautifully made. The little wagon received its final coat of paint a day before the birthday. As Ben awoke on that beautiful May morning, there in the living room was his wagon. Tears were in his parents’ eyes as their happy son gave them both a loving squeeze. Then, out he went to run up and down the street and show his friends the wonderful gift. Ben trained his dog, Bones, to pull the wagon, and he and Bones became a familiar sight around the streets of Nauvoo. One of Ben’s favorite errands for his mother was to go west down Mulholland Street, through the business part of town, past the lot where the great temple was being

built, and on to the store where his mother shopped. It was a stirring sight to see the workmen shaping and placing the stones to make the beautiful temple rise.

As Ben passed near the temple one day on his way home from the store, he was so interested in watching the carving of the stones that he didn't notice two of the workmen pause to look intently at his little wagon. Suddenly, he heard one of the men say, "That wagon would be a mighty handy thing to haul tools and materials about the yard." Then, to the startled boy, he said, "Son, how would you like to let us have your wagon to help build the temple?"

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"Oh, no, I couldn't do that," replied Ben.

"Isn't your father the boss of the big wagon shop?" Ben nodded his head. "Well, we'll talk to him about it."

Frightened at the thought of losing his precious wagon, Ben sped for home with Bones at his heels. Bursting into the kitchen, he exclaimed, "Mother, you won't let them take it away, will you?"

"What are you talking about, son?" his mother asked.

"Some men at the temple asked me for my wagon to haul their tools, and when I said I couldn't give it to them, they said 'We will see your father.'"

"Perhaps they were just joking, Ben." Finally, his father came in and before Ben could tell what happened, the two men appeared at the front door.

In the kitchen with his mother, Ben heard one of them say, "It would be a great help, Brother Driggs, to keep some of our best tools together and move things around quickly from place to place."

"Well, let me talk it over with Ben," replied his father. "He's mighty proud of that little wagon, but perhaps he will give his consent if he sees things as we do."

That night Ben and his parents had a heart-to-heart talk. "You see, Ben, every one is giving something to help build the temple," said his father. "I know just how you feel about your wagon and I'm not going to force you to part with it. You think about it, and, tonight when you say your prayers, ask Heavenly Father to help you decide what to do. It is the house of the Lord that is being built. Perhaps even a little boy like you can help."

As Ben's mother took him to his bed, she kissed his tear-stained face, patted his head, and said, "I know you will do what is right." And she left him to say his prayers alone.

The next morning Ben, drawing his wagon and followed by his faithful dog, Bones, made his way down Mulholland Street and over to the temple lot. Walking up to the man who seemed to be the foreman, he said simply, "I've brought you my wagon to help the men build the temple."

Looking into Ben's face, the kindly man replied with feeling, "God bless you, Boy. I know what this means to you. No one has made a greater sacrifice to help build the Nauvoo Temple. Your gift will truly help us. God bless you." Ben bravely held back his tears as he walked home with Bones by his side.

#### DEDICATION OF THE KIRTLAND AND NAUVOO TEMPLES: ACCEPTABLE OFFERINGS

With regard to the Kirtland Temple, we read in Joseph's dedicatory prayer (*Doctrine & Covenants* 109:34-37): "Jehovah, have mercy upon this people, and as all men sin, forgive the transgressions of Thy people, and let them be blotted out forever. Let the anointing of Thy ministers be sealed upon them with power from on high; Let it be fulfilled upon them, as upon those on the day of Pentecost, let the gift of tongues be poured out upon Thy people, even cloven tongues as of fire, and the interpretation thereof, And let Thy house be filled, as with a rushing mighty wind, with Thy glory."

In these verses, Joseph asked for mercy. Then he requested another day of Pentecost. And his request was granted. Following the benediction in the dedicatory service, "Brigham Young gave a short address in tongues, and David W. Patten interpreted, and gave a short exhortation in tongues himself," after which Joseph "blessed the congregation in the name of the Lord."

That evening Joseph met with the priesthood quorums and instructed them in the ordinance of washing of feet. He also talked to them about the spirit of prophecy and advised the brethren not to "quench" the Spirit. At that point, "Brother George A. Smith (a nineteen year-old priesthood holder) arose and began to prophesy, when a noise was heard like the sound of a rushing mighty wind, which filled the Temple, and all the congregation simultaneously arose, being moved upon by an invisible power; many began to speak in tongues and prophesy; others saw glorious visions; and I (Joseph Smith) beheld the Temple was filled with angels, which fact I declared to the congregation. The people of the neighborhood came running together (hearing an unusual sound within, and seeing a bright light like a pillar of fire resting upon the temple), and were astonished at what was taking place" (*History Of The Church*, Vol. II, 428).

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This Pentecostal outpouring of divine power continued for several weeks following the temple's dedication. This, of course, was an appropriate sign indicating God's acceptance of the temple, and the beginning of a "restitution of all things."

God's spirit can still be felt in the Kirtland Temple. The following is from our journal, which describes a visit to the Kirtland Temple with Joseph Smith Academy students during April 2002.

The first evening we arrived in Kirtland, the group met in the local stake center. One of the local church leaders and historians, Karl Anderson, talked to the students about the Kirtland Temple. Brother Anderson is the author of *Joseph Smith's Kirtland*, an excellent book. He has been around Kirtland and talked with enough people to gain insights into attitudes of those persons visiting the Kirtland Temple. His purpose in addressing the BYU students was to help them dispel any negative attitudes they might have developed about the RLDS (Community of Christ) church owning and maintaining the Kirtland Temple, and about the temple itself, before visiting the temple on the following day.

Then Brother Anderson gave two anecdotes from in and around the Kirtland Temple. In 1993, Elder M. Russell Ballard received permission from the RLDS church leaders in Independence, Missouri, to hold a priesthood training and sacrament meeting in the Kirtland Temple. A member of the RLDS church in Kirtland, named Al, objected to having Utah Mormons using “their temple,” saying that they had plenty of temples of their own to use for such purposes. He wrote a letter of objection to church headquarters in Independence. He received back a letter telling him that they had already given permission and asking Al to trust their decision. They then placed a greater burden on poor Al—he was assigned to be present in the temple as an observer during that meeting. Al later reported to Brother Anderson what happened to him that evening. “According to Al, during the three-hour testimony meeting, he experienced a heavy, dark feeling, including some chest constrictions. Al felt he was having a heart attack. Then came Al’s life-changing experience. He heard a voice which told him three things: (1) Al, this is not your temple; this is not their temple; it is my temple; (2) These are also my Saints; (3) This sacrament meeting is an appropriate thing to take place in my temple.

The second anecdote involved a young LDS priest from a branch in Michigan. In 1994, this branch scheduled a youth conference in the Kirtland area. Ethan, like Al, was having trouble with another church being in “our” temple. He refused to go into the temple on the guided tour. While sitting in the gardens brooding, Ethan heard a voice. According to Ethan, who reported this to his stake president, the voice told him three things: (1) Ethan, this isn’t your building; it isn’t their building; it’s my building; (2) Humble yourself, and learn what you can from them; (3) Have faith and accept my decision.

I’m sure you can imagine the shift in attitudes of our students as they sat in the stake center listening to Brother Anderson. When we toured the temple the following day, the RLDS guide was very knowledgeable and gracious, and the spirit was strong there. Later that same day, we spent three hours in the Kirtland Temple.

We prepared for an evening meeting in the Kirtland Temple scheduled to start at 7. Before leaving Nauvoo, Larry Dahl (director of the Joseph Smith Academy)

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had paid \$100 to rent the temple for a three-hour service. We met in the first floor assembly room. Students and others sat facing the Melchizedek Priesthood pulpits. Those speaking during the service sat behind the bottom tier of pulpits.... This was within the air space where the Savior and other heavenly visitors appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, which appearances are recorded in *Doctrine & Covenants* 110. We sang a hymn, had an invocation, and heard presentations from Cal Andreason, David Willmore, myself, and Larry Dahl.

I presented the dedicatory prayer. Actually, I read a ten-page analysis and commentary on the prayer that I had composed in Nauvoo. I worked on it for the better part of three days, then spent parts of three more days refining what I had composed. I felt comfortable and satisfied with the document.... The paper required 35 minutes to read. This corresponded pretty well to the 30 minutes Joseph took to read the dedicatory prayer.

We all stood and sang six verses of “The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning,” singing the chorus after each verse. I’ve never heard it sung with more sincerity, meaning and alacrity. If there had been six more verses to sing, we’d have sung those with relish. Singing this hymn was certainly a fitting climax to a spiritual service in this venerable old temple.

Following the meeting, no one wanted to get up and leave. We all sat still for another fifteen minutes, enjoying the afterglow and tuning our spiritual senses. The atmosphere was pregnant with feeling. Most of the students wiped tears from eyes whose gaze hardly left the Melchizedek Priesthood pulpits. I developed the impression that if they thought hard enough, perhaps they could enjoy a heavenly vision as did the Saints of old. I wanted to tell them that we don’t need heavenly manifestations as our predecessors did. We are an established people. Many, if not most of us, have been born under the covenant. We have never doubted. Our testimonies are strong. We have more than our ancestors had. They needed something to energize them spiritually, something to which they could anchor their lives. They had given all they could give to build the temple. The heavenly manifestations they received were their reward and an impetus for future well-doing.

Being in the Kirtland Temple during this special service, presenting, analyzing and commenting on the dedicatory prayer given by Joseph, was a highlight in my life, a choice spiritual experience, a rare privilege.

Of the Nauvoo Temple, we read that “many Saints” in Nauvoo experienced a spiritual “Night of Pentecost” during the evening of March 15, 1846:

“[a] small group of Saints gathered in the temple to partake of the sacrament. As they were overcome by the Spirit, some of the brethren spoke in tongues and others prophesied. While one brother described a vision, a light was seen

over his head. The face of another brother [shone] with great brightness. Two heavenly beings were seen in the northeast corner of the room and the Holy Ghost was felt by all present. This spiritual meeting continued until midnight. Thomas Bullock said it ‘was the most profitable, happy, and glorious meeting I had ever attended in my life.’

While this sacred meeting was taking place in the temple, Chester Loveland was called out of bed by his mother-in-law, who cried out with alarm that the Temple was again on fire! He dressed “as quick as lightning” and ran outside, seeing the temple all in a blaze. He studied it for a few seconds and realized that the flames were not consuming the temple. He also didn’t see anyone else running to the rescue and concluded it was the glory of God...

Another brother saw the belfry on fire at 9:45 PM. He ran as fast as he could, but when he reached the temple, he found it dark, secure and unharmed. At about this time, Sister Almira Lamb, with others in her room, saw a vision of her dead child. It appeared to her in great glory and filled the room with light. Others dreamed inspired dreams that night. It was truly a night of spiritual feast” (crockett@ldsworld.com *Nauvoo Temple History: Part 2*).

#### THE TEMPLE IS RESTORED

In 1845, Brigham Young, after having dedicated the partially completed Nauvoo temple “as a monument of the Saints,” prophesied, “we shall come back here.” (*Nauvoo Journal*, 1999). Well, we’ve come back. And symbolic of a resurrection, the temple has risen again like a phoenix from its ashes. Moreover, as it has risen, Saints world-wide have watched. It has stimulated the thought, perhaps, that God’s work at Nauvoo, as President Young implied, is not finished. Hearts of the children shall once more be turned to the fathers, and the fathers to the children, in sacred rooms, as saving ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood materialize for the eternal blessing of all. Those ordinances, not the physical building in which they occur, are the central focus—the great expectation. The building is but the house in which God’s work unfolds.

Nevertheless, the building itself draws people together. It reunites those living here in Nauvoo with others throughout the Church, just as Priesthood ordinances exercised within its walls reunite the living with the dead. In this sense, then, the Temple itself exudes a remarkable power. To be in Nauvoo is to experience the miracle of that power. I thank God for the privilege and pray each night that I can instill even a part of what I feel into the minds and hearts of my students. ☺

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