

Lesson 51: The Family: A Proclamation to the World, "The Family is Central to the Creator's Plan"

The Family

I would like to approach this lesson by quoting extensively from two talks that were given specially to teach us about this proclamation:

Boyd K. Packer, "Proclamation on the Family," Worldwide Leadership Training Broadcast, 9 Feb. 2008

Claudio R. M. Costa, "Don't Leave for Tomorrow What You Can Do Today", Conference Report, 7 Oct. 2007

Pres. Packer explains the power and authority behind the proclamation

Boyd K. Packer

"A proclamation in the Church is a significant, major announcement. Very few of them have been issued from the beginning of the Church. They are significant; they are revelatory. And at that time, this was a little more than 10 years ago, the Brethren issued 'The Family: A Proclamation to the World.' It is scripture-like in its power." (Worldwide Leadership Training Broadcast, 9 Feb. 2008)

How would you classify the significance that Pres. Packer places on the Proclamation?

(They are revelatory... It is scripture-like in its power)

Boyd K. Packer

"When you wonder why we are the way we are and why we do the things we do and why we will not do some of the things that we will not do, you can find the authority for that in this proclamation on the family." (Worldwide Leadership Training Broadcast, 9 Feb. 2008)

What do you think he means by, "you can find the authority for that in this proclamation on the family"?

The proclamation explains our doctrine with the authority of the Twelve.

Elder Costa emphasises that we need to make time for our families.

Claudio R. M. Costa

"On September 23, 1995, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles introduced to the Church and the world a document called 'The Family: A Proclamation to the World.' I quote from the paragraph which reads, 'Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children.' We live in a day and age in which this counsel is indeed very important. Many parents argue they don't have time for their families. The fast-paced lifestyle of modern-day life and excessive amounts of work are curbing parents' attention from

what is most important: to give time, to give of oneself to one's family.” (CR, Oct. 2007)

What is our first priority?

(to give time, to give of oneself to one's family)

How can our time be best spent on our families?

It is the parents responsibility to provide for the family

Claudio R. M. Costa

“The Lord taught us that every man has the responsibility to provide for his family, but that does not mean solely to store up the house with food and other items which are needed or desired....

“In the family proclamation we also learn that ‘by divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners.’” (CR, Oct. 2007)

What is the fathers primary responsibility?

(preside over... provide the necessities of life and protection)

D&C 75:28

And again, verily I say unto you, that every man who is obliged to provide for his own family, let him provide, and he shall in nowise lose his crown; and let him labor in the church.

What is the fathers primary responsibility?

(the nurture of their children)

David O. McKay

“Motherhood is the greatest potential influence either for good or ill in human life. The mother’s image is the first that stamps itself on the unwritten page of the young child’s mind. It is her caress that first awakens a sense of security; her kiss, the first realization of affection; her sympathy and tenderness, the first assurance that there is love in the world.”

Claudio R. M. Costa

“The Lord instructed us how to take care of our families when He told us through His prophets in the proclamation to the world, ‘Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God

and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live.” (CR, Oct. 2007)

Other than provide for their physically wellbeing, what are other responsibilities that parents have for their families?

(rear their children in love and righteousness, spiritual needs, to teach them...)

Pres. Packer talks about how the Gospel of Christ is the one place that has everything we need to “rear their children in love and righteousness”

Boyd K. Packer

“When you young people who now look forward to marriage and a family life look around and see the dangers, there is only one place on this earth where the family can be fully protected, and that’s within the ordinances and the doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Live the gospel, and you’re going to be all right.

“The world isn’t a very pleasant place to live in, and there are challenges and disorders and patterns of life and death and all of the problems that come to us, and yet the answers are found in understanding that the family is the fundamental unit of the Church. All of the activities of the Church are calculated to strengthen the family.

“Sometimes we may move a little away from our position of supporting families to having the families responsible to support the Church. Local leaders need to use care in organizing activities and programs of the Church to bring the young men and young women forward and prepare them for married life and then help them in their early marriage years and on to old age.” (Worldwide Leadership Training Broadcast, 9 Feb. 2008)

What do we need in our lives to truly give our families all that they require?

(the ordinances and the doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ
All of the activities of the Church are calculated to strengthen the family)

Children must learn and develop testimonies at home. The Church is here to help support the family to that end.

Elder Costa talks about what is required in the home to guide children to Christ

Claudio R. M. Costa

“It is in the home that the family learns and applies gospel principles. Great love is necessary in order to teach and guide a family. Loving fathers and mothers will teach their children to worship God in their home. When a worshipping spirit permeates the home, that spirit is extended into the life of each family member. This will prepare them to make whatever sacrifice is necessary to be able to return to God’s presence and stay together as a family for all eternity.” (CR, Oct. 2007)

What is required in the home to teach children and help them develop a testimony of Christ?

(Great love... worshipping spirit)

What are some activities that naturally take place in our homes if we have great love and a worshipping spirit?

Family prayer, scripture study, Family Home Evening, take advantage of teaching opportunities...

Practicing the gospel of Christ within our home can protect our children from the attacks of the adversary

Claudio R. M. Costa

"We know God has taught us for centuries how to protect and take care of our families. We also know and can see that the adversary has been attacking the family. Now is the time to use all those teachings. Now is the time to perform our God-given duties concerning the family." (CR, Oct. 2007)

David O. McKay saw this attack on the family coming...

"The home is the first and most effective place to learn the lessons of life: truth, honor, virtue, self control, the value of education, honest work, and the purpose and privilege of life. Nothing can take the place of home in rearing and teaching children, and no other success can compensate for failure in the home."

"The poorest shack in which love prevails over a united family is of greater value to God and future humanity than any other riches. In such a home God can work miracles and will work miracles."

"The greatest work we will ever do will be within the walls of our home."

"There should be no yelling in the home unless there is a fire."

Boyd K. Packer

"I don't think it's called for members of the Church to live in fear, to see all that's going on around us and say, 'How can we ever raise a family when all of this temptation and difficulty is about us?'"

"Well, you can, because you can be guided and you can teach your children to be guided. In all of that you can live a happy life and find in the consummation of all of this, in the next existence, that the family can be together....

"So I extend my blessings to all of you across the Church as you enjoy family life, either as parents or as children or in any pattern that is your pattern, that you'll be blessed and watched over, that the power of the Holy Ghost will be present in your

life and the guarding power of the priesthood ever present will be there to correct you, to bless you, to boost you, and to confirm in you a testimony." (Worldwide Leadership Training Broadcast, 9 Feb. 2008)

How can we overcome the effects of the attacks that the adversary is making on our families?

(you can be guided and you can teach your children to be guided)
(the power of the Holy Ghost will be present in your life)
(the guarding power of the priesthood ever present will be there to correct you)

We need to follow the example of our Savior's love when it comes to our families

Claudio R. M. Costa

"The family proclamation helps us understand much of the love the Savior referred to when He told us we must 'love one another.' He gave us the supreme example of love when He declared, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' He later atoned for all our sins and finally gave His life for all of us.

"We can lay down our lives for those we love not by physically dying for them but rather by living for them—giving of our time; always being present in their lives; serving them; being courteous, affectionate, and showing true love for those of our family and to all men—as the Savior taught." (CR, Oct. 2007)

How should we "lay down [our] life for" our family?

(giving of our time; always being present in their lives; serving them; being courteous, affectionate)

Spencer W. Kimball

"The stripling sons of the former... Lamanites were superior because 'they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them.' (Alma 56:47.) This teaching is not a single sermon but a lifetime of example and precept. Here were mothers who loved their sons more than themselves, more than clothes, or entertainment, or social life, or business life, or luxuries. Here were women who gave themselves to their families—time, energy, effort, mind, and soul. Then came the dividends: a whole community of righteous, noble sons to sire generations of people so full of goodness and faith that it was to carry over through centuries." (Relief Society Magazine, Jan. 1958, pg. 7)

Continuing Revelation

Gathering to the Salt Lake Valley
- The End of Plural Marriage

Establish the Genealogical Society of Utah
Fully Implement the Principle of Tithing
Church-Wide Welfare Program
Emphasize the Importance of Strengthening the Family
Church Correlation Program
- Priesthood Available to Every Worthy Male Members
- Two Revelations Added to the Standard Works
Fully Implement the Quorums of the Seventy
- "The Family: A Proclamation to the World"
Greatly Increase the Availability of Temples
Lower the Age of Missionaries Able to Serve
Change in High Priests Quorums and Groups
Family Focused Gospel Teaching (Two Hour Meeting Block)

Gathering to the Salt Lake Valley

D&C 136

1) The Word and Will of the Lord concerning the Camp of Israel in their journeyings to the West:

10) Let every man use all his influence and property to remove this people to the place where the Lord shall locate a stake of Zion.

We discussed this Several weeks ago. Many early Saints made great sacrifices to be obedient to this command meant and immigrate to the Great Basin area.

Is this commandment still in effect? Why not?

Why does the Lord sometimes have commandments that only apply to a specific circumstance?

Establish the Genealogical Society of Utah

Russell M. Nelson

"There were many Church members who did not fully understand the responsibility for their own kindred. President Wilford Woodruff was so concerned that he made the issue a matter of fervent prayer. Then, at April 1894 general conference, he presented a revelation to the membership of the Church. From it I quote: 'We want the Latter-day Saints from this time to trace their genealogies as far as they can, and to be sealed to their fathers and mothers. Have children sealed to their parents, and run this chain through as far as you can get it.... This is the will of the Lord to his people.'

"Later that year, the First Presidency and the Twelve established the Genealogical Society of Utah. From modest beginnings in an upstairs room of the Church Historian's Office, its collection and facilities have grown. Today the Family History Library occupies a modern five-story building with access to 280,000 books, 700,000 microfiches, and more than 2 million rolls of microfilm, making it the largest library of its kind in the world. (Conference Report, April 1998)

Note how Elder Nelson describes President Woodruff:
at April 1894 general conference, he presented a revelation to the membership of the Church.

His description of the growth of the Genealogical Society is 20 years old. Consider how much more it has grown since then.

Fully Implement the Principle of Tithing

On Wednesday, 17 May 1899, at the opening session of the conference in the St. George Tabernacle

LeRoi C. Snow (son of the President Snow)

“All at once father paused in his discourse. Complete stillness filled the room. I shall never forget the thrill as long as I live. When he commenced to speak again his voice strengthened and the inspiration of God seemed to come over him, as well as over the entire assembly. His eyes seemed to brighten and his countenance to shine. He was filled with unusual power. Then he revealed to the Latter-day Saints the vision that was before him.

“God manifested to him there and then... the great work for which God had prepared and preserved him, and he unveiled the vision to the people. He told them that he could see, as he had never realized before, how the law of tithing had been neglected by the people, also that the Saints, themselves, were heavily in debt, as well as the Church, and now through strict obedience to this law—the paying of a full and honest tithing—not only would the Church be relieved of its great indebtedness, but through the blessings of the Lord this would also be the means of freeing the Latter-day Saints from their individual obligations, and they would become a prosperous people” (Improvement Era, July 1938)

What revelation did President Snow have while he was addressing the Saints at this conference?

(he could see, as he had never realized before, how the law of tithing had been neglected)

In this revelation, what did he realize would be a result of the Saint's living the law of tithing?

(freeing the Latter-day Saints from their individual obligations, and they would become a prosperous people)

Church-Wide Welfare Program

On 20 April 1935 (during The Great Depression) President Grant assigned stake president Harold B. Lee to introduce the welfare program Church-wide. President

Lee later recalled:

Harold B. Lee

“I was astounded to learn that for years there had been before them [Church leaders], as a result of their thinking and planning and as the result of the inspiration of Almighty God, the genius of the very plan that is being carried out and was in waiting and in preparation for a time when in their judgment the faith of the Latter-day Saints was such that they were willing to follow the counsel of the men who lead and preside in this Church.” (Conference Report, Apr 1941)

The welfare program was introduced during a time when it was greatly needed –
The Great Depression

But, according the President Lee, was that when the Church leaders conceived of the plan?

(the genius of the very plan that is being carried out and was in waiting)

What were they waiting for?

(preparation for a time when in their judgment the faith of the Latter-day Saints was such that they were willing to follow the counsel of the men who lead and preside in this Church)

It took the Great Depression to happen before the Saints were ready to receive it

Emphasize the Importance of Strengthening the Family

David O. McKay

“No other success can compensate for failure in the home.... The poorest shack of a home in which love prevails over a united family is of greater value to God and future humanity than the richest bank on earth. In such a home God can work miracles and will work miracles... Pure hearts in a pure home are always in whispering distance of heaven.” (Conference Report, Apr. 1935, p. 116)

Note the date (while McKay was a Counselor to Pres Grant)

Emphasis on strengthening the family would become a hallmark of the Church and become central to many programs, including the next one.....

Church Correlation Program

Harold B. Lee

"The key to the whole correlation movement, which has been given us by our present leaders, in defining the place of the auxiliaries and the home and the priesthood, is set forth in this statement made by the Presidency a few years ago. I quote:

""The home is the basis of a righteous life and no other instrumentality can take its place nor fulfil its essential functions, the utmost the auxiliaries can do is to aid the home....

""We would therefore commend to you Brethren of the General Priesthood Committee the beginning of an exhaustive, prayerful study and consideration of this entire subject, with the cooperative assistance of the Auxiliaries themselves so that the Church might reap the maximum harvest from the devotion of the faith, intelligence, skill and knowledge of our various Auxiliary Organizations and Priesthood Committees."" (Conference Report, April 1963)

So the purpose of the Correlation Program was to emphasis that
“the home is the basis of a righteous life and no other instrumentality can take its place nor fulfil its essential functions, the utmost the auxiliaries can do is to aid the home”

and to have the different Auxiliaries work together so
“the Church might reap the maximum harvest from the devotion of the faith, intelligence, skill and knowledge of our various Auxiliary Organizations and Priesthood Committees”

Fully Implement the Quorums of the Seventy

D&C 107:25,34

25 The Seventy are also called to preach the gospel, and to be especial witnesses unto the Gentiles and in all the world—thus differing from other officers in the church in the duties of their calling.

34 The Seventy are to act in the name of the Lord, under the direction of the Twelve or the traveling high council, in building up the church and regulating all the affairs of the same in all nations, first unto the Gentiles and then to the Jews—

Spencer W. Kimball

"[The First Presidency] felt inspired to call all of the Assistants to the Twelve into the First Quorum of the Seventy.... With this move, the three governing quorums of the Church defined by the revelations,—the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, and the First Quorum of the Seventy,—have been set in their places as revealed by the Lord [see D&C 107:22–26]. This will make it possible to handle efficiently the present heavy workload and to prepare for the increasing expansion and acceleration of the work, anticipating the day when the Lord will return to take direct charge of His church and kingdom." (Conference Report, Oct. 1976)

So having 7 quorums of 70 was part of the restoration of the priesthood but full implementation didn't begin until the size of the Church needed it

Greatly Increase the Availability of Temples

Gordon B. Hinckley

"I believe that no member of the Church has received the ultimate which this Church has to give until he or she has received his or her temple blessings in the house of the Lord. Accordingly, we are doing all that we know how to do to expedite the construction of these sacred buildings and make the blessings received therein more generally available....

"But there are many areas of the Church that are remote, where the membership is small and not likely to grow very much in the near future. Are those who live in these places to be denied forever the blessings of the temple ordinances? While visiting such an area a few months ago, we prayerfully pondered this question. The answer, we believe, came bright and clear.

"We will construct small temples in some of these areas, buildings with all of the facilities to administer all of the ordinances. They would be built to temple standards.... They would accommodate baptisms for the dead, the endowment service, sealings, and all other ordinances to be had in the Lord's house for both the living and the dead". (Conference Report, Oct 1997)

While visiting such an area a few months ago, we prayerfully pondered this question. The answer, we believe, came bright and clear.

Lower the Age of Missionaries Able to Serve

Since President Monson's appeal for more full-time and couple missionaries two years ago, during October 2010 general conference, the response by Church members has been great—the number of full-time elders serving has increased by six percent; the number of sisters by 12 percent, and the number of couples by 18 percent. "Church Leaders Share More Information on Missionary Age Requirement Change", (Church News, 6 Oct 2012)

Conclusion

Spencer W. Kimball

"We testify to the world that revelation continues and that the vaults and files of the Church contain these revelations which come month to month and day to day. We testify also that there is, since 1830 when The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, and will continue to be, so long as time shall last, a prophet, recognized of God and his people, who will continue to interpret the mind and will of the Lord....

"Expecting the spectacular, one may not be fully alerted to the constant flow of revealed communication. I say, in the deepest of humility, but also by the power and force of a burning testimony in my soul, that from the prophet of the Restoration to the prophet of our own year, the communication line is unbroken, the authority is continuous, a light, brilliant and penetrating, continues to shine. The sound of the voice of the Lord is a continuous melody and a thunderous appeal. For nearly a century and a half there has been no interruption." (Conference Report, Apr. 1977)

“We testify to the world that revelation continues and that the vaults and files of the Church contain these revelations which come month to month and day to day”

Earlier we discussed how the Welfare Program had already been prepared but they were waiting for the Saints to be ready to receive it

“Expecting the spectacular, one may not be fully alerted to the constant flow of revealed communication.”

A few weeks ago we all had a chance to attend a fireside where we were admonished to actively defend religious liberty....