

Frederick William Hurst was working as a gold miner in Australia when he first heard Latter-day Saint missionaries preach the restored gospel. He and his brother Charles were baptized in January 1854. He tried to help his other family members become converted, but they rejected him and the truths he taught.

Fred settled in Salt Lake City four years after joining the Church, and he served faithfully as a missionary in several different countries. He also worked as a painter in the Salt Lake Temple. In one of his final journal entries, he wrote:

“Along about the 1st of March, 1893, I found myself alone in the dining room, all had gone to bed. I was sitting at the table, when to my great surprise my elder brother Alfred walked in and sat down opposite me at the table and smiled. I said to him (he looked so natural): ‘When did you arrive in Utah?’

“He said: ‘I have just come from the Spirit World, this is not my body that you see, it is lying in the tomb. I want to tell you that when you were on your mission you told me many things about the Gospel, and the hereafter, and about the Spirit World being as real and tangible as the earth. I could not believe you, but when I died and went there and saw for myself I realized that you had told the truth. I attended the Mormon meetings.’ He raised his hand and said with much warmth: ‘I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart. I believe in faith, and repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, but that is as far as I can go. I look to you to do the work for me in the temple. ... You are watched closely. ... We are all looking to you as our head in this great work. I want to tell you that there are a great many spirits who weep and mourn because they have relatives in the Church here who are careless and are doing nothing for them’”

*(Diary of Frederick William Hurst, comp. Samuel H. and Ida Hurst [1961], 204).*

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Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught that without the sealing power, “no family ties would exist in the eternities, and indeed the family of man would have been left in eternity with ‘neither root [ancestors] nor branch [descendants].’ Inasmuch as ... a sealed, united, celestially saved family of God is the ultimate purpose of mortality, any failure here would have been a curse indeed, rendering the entire plan of salvation ‘utterly wasted’ ”

*(Christ and the New Covenant, 297-98).*

For a period of time, President Woodruff served as president of the temple in St. George, Utah. It was in that temple that endowments for the dead were performed for the first time in this dispensation. While serving there, President Woodruff was visited by the spirits of many “eminent men” who had died. The following is an account by President Woodruff:

“The spirits of the dead gathered around me, wanting to know why we did not redeem them. Said they, ‘You have had the use of the Endowment House for a number of years, and yet nothing has ever been done for us. We laid the foundation of the government you now enjoy, and we ... remained true to it and were faithful to God.’ These were the signers of the Declaration of Independence [of the United States of America], and they waited on me for two days and two nights. ... I straightway went into the baptismal font and called upon Brother McAllister to baptize me for the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and fifty other eminent men, making one hundred in all, including John Wesley, Columbus, and others.”

*(The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, 1946, pages 160-61).*

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President Hinckley is another prophet who has expanded our understanding of temple work. When he became President of the Church in 1995, there were 47 temples in operation. About two and one-half years later, he made the following announcement:

“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, which are much higher than meetinghouse 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. ...

“... We are determined ... to take the temples to the people and afford them every opportunity for the very precious blessings that come of temple worship”

*(Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 68-69 or Ensign, Nov. 1997, 49-50).*

In April 1998, President Hinckley announced a goal to have 100 temples in operation by the end of the century. In the year 2002, we have 114 temples, with 12 more either announced or planned.

It is essential to obtain the sealing power of the holy priesthood so that whatsoever an authorized officiator shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever he shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. For in the sacred ordinances and through this sacred power come glory and honor and eternal life.

It is by this power that husband and wife are sealed in a never-ending bond of marriage. It is by this power that a welding link is forged between children and parents. This is the holy power that is exercised in the temple. It is the power that validates all ordinances in the Church. This is the consummate authority in the kingdom of God.

Without the authority and use of that power, in all ages of the world, none of our Heavenly Father's children can enter His presence or ever become like Him! And if this were not so, the whole purpose of existence would be useless. That is why the Lord said "the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming." (D&C 2:3)

(A. Theodore Tuttle, Quorum of the Seventy. Ensign, May 1982. Page 65)

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