

## THE TEMPLE FUND

March 18, 2017

My name is Karen Strong. I am one of three women that put together a website called **thetemplefund.net**. The other two women are Janette Van Leer and Elaine Henderson. They are in attendance today. The lot fell upon me to be voice for the three of us today. It was requested by the organizers of this conference that I share a little more about what we are doing; including brief answers to the following questions:

1. Why build a temple?
2. Why have a general means to aggregate funds?
3. How did the idea to establish a fund originate?

### SO WHY BUILD A TEMPLE IN ZION?

To answer this, I want to briefly touch on just *some* of the things Joseph Smith had to say concerning the necessity of a temple in Zion. Joseph was called in the spirit of Elias to prepare the way, and like many of you, I have been attempting to return to a more thorough understanding of what we actually received from him to prepare us for what is being offered now. We can discover important patterns pertaining to the establishment of Zion that are still relevant today in what he gave us. Paramount within Joseph's revelations is the clear fact that an actual temple built with hands (not just the temple of our physical body) is a *necessary* hallmark of Zion.

Section 97:10-16 is a clear statement on the what, how, and why pertaining to a temple being required in Zion. Paraphrasing, it states in part:

*"...it is [the Lord's] will that a house should be built unto [Him]*

*...by the tithing of [His] people...*

*for the salvation of Zion...that they may be perfected in principle, and in doctrine, and in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God on the earth ...and promises that [the Lord's] glory shall rest upon it; Yea, and [His] presence shall be there, for I WILL COME INTO IT, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it **shall see God.**"*

Through Joseph, we also have Section 124 that teaches us that:

- The fulness of the priesthood requires a temple that has been accepted by the Lord in order to be restored to us
- He reveals His ordinances therein, as well as hidden things from before the foundation of the earth
- It is the only place to perform baptism, washing and anointing for the dead required to be prophesied Saviors on Mount Zion, and
- That God's people are ALWAYS required to build a house unto Him

Joseph also taught that a temple must be built in order to make all things ready for the return of the Lord. In one of his last sermons he stated:

*“The spirit of Elias is first, Elijah second, and Messiah last. Elias is a forerunner to prepare the way, and the spirit and power of Elijah is to come after, holding the keys of power, BUILDING THE TEMPLE TO THE CAPSTONE, placing the seals of the Melchizedek Priesthood upon the house of Israel, and **making all things ready**; then Messiah **comes to His Temple**, which is last of all.” (TPJS p. 340)*

This statement was made by Joseph in a sermon given March 10, 1844, just months before his death and well after Kirtland. While an entire discourse of truths is found within the words of this talk, I point out only that Joseph clearly taught that a temple *must be built to the capstone* as part of what is required to *make things ready for the Messiah to return*, and that the Lord will clearly **come** to the Temple that has been built for Him. It will be HIS Temple. This is a work yet to be accomplished and was not completed in Joseph's day. This is the work to which prophesy has pointed. It requires a temple **to prepare for and enable** the Lord to return and take His place as rightful King. It is His invitation to come.

In addition to building a temple to invite the Lord to return, the prophecies and revelations of the last days foretell the establishment of a city of peace called the New Jerusalem where the temple will be built. The necessary land to build the temple and establish this city is actually part of the promised inheritance to those who obtain God's covenant as kings and queens.

Looking again to the pattern given through Joseph, we learn more about how God wants this required inheritance to be obtained. The Lord told him in Section 58 that the *gathering of funds was required to obtain* an “inheritance for the children of God” so that the land could be obtained **through purchase** rather than by shedding of blood. (D&C 58:51-53) Then in Section 63 he further elaborated:

“Behold, the land of Zion---I, the Lord, hold it in mine own hands; Nevertheless, I the Lord, render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s. Wherefore, *I the Lord will that you should purchase the lands*, that you may have advantage of the world, that you may have claim on the world, that they may not be stirred up unto anger. For Satan putteth it into their hearts to anger against you, and to the shedding of blood. Wherefore, *the land of Zion shall not be obtained but by purchase or by blood, otherwise there is none inheritance for you. And if by purchase, behold you are blessed.* And if by blood, as you are forbidden to shed blood, lo, your enemies are upon you, and ye shall be scourged from city to city, and from synagogue to synagogue, and but few shall stand to receive an inheritance.” (D&C 63:25-31)

I share this because understanding the requirement to build a temple and have the necessary land surrounding it *purchased with money for an inheritance* gives the foundation to answer the next question we were asked to answer.

### **WHY HAVE A GENERAL FUND WHERE PEOPLE CAN DONATE? AND WHY DO IT BEFORE WE EVEN KNOW WHERE ZION WILL BE?**

We’ve just seen that the Lord gave the requirement to purchase the land of inheritance with money through the gathering of funds and the same pattern applies today. While nothing is too hard for the Lord, if something *can* be accomplished with the simple methods already established within the world that we live, He favors accomplishing it through those means.

Some feel that our Lord would not use a method so simple as organizing a financial fund-raising effort to accomplish gathering the required means to do this work. They expect something out of the ordinary. Yet, the Lord commanded the Saints in Joseph’s day to use the ordinary process of gathering their funds so that they might purchase an inheritance without the shedding of blood. He used a

bishop and church organization to do the collecting in their day (D&C 58:51). By design, we have no such organization and so He has provided a variation to the same concept to enable the necessary collection of funds in order that the *purchase of an inheritance* may be made. In His wisdom, He is allotting us a time of preparation to make thing ready.

In Section 101 the Lord tells His people this preparation time is necessary and that they are not to gather in haste, nor by flight, but to *let all things be prepared before them* (D&C 101:68) This preparation included to *purchase the lands with money* (v. 70). In all these revelations we see that money is clearly one of those “needful things” **required and approved of** to do the work. To build a city, even a very small city, requires significant acreage. It must be able to stand self-sufficient and independent from the world; including proper sanitation, power and space for food production and animals. An architect will eventually be needed to ensure proper building standards when the design is revealed; and the materials required to actually construct a temple will also be needed. All of this will require a significant amount of money. It is a reality of the conditions of the world in which we live. If these things can be accomplished in a time of plenty and peace while we have time to plan and prepare, we will be fortunate.

The one thing the Lord repeatedly told the Saints in Joseph’s day is that things were *not* to be done in haste. Haste brings pollution and loss of blessings. Proper preparation must always be given; and while the most important preparation is always our individual *spiritual* preparation, these scriptures clearly show a need for, and approval of, group monetary preparation as well. Thus, the reason the creation of a means whereby funds from all over the world can be aggregated has now been provided to enable us to follow in the Lord’s approved pattern of accomplishing this work.

**Which leads to answering the second part of the question concerning the timing of establishing this fund.**

Many already understand the need for a temple, the need for a land of inheritance and the need for and collection of the money; but may still wonder why collection of funds would begin now, without yet knowing through revelation exactly where Zion will be. In Joseph’s day, the Lord actually commanded the Saints to begin collecting money to purchase their inheritance as a preparation

*BEFORE any revelation had been received revealing the exact location for Zion and the temple, too.*

*In March 1831 the Lord told the Saints:*

*“And with one heart and with one mind, gather up your riches that ye may purchase an inheritance which shall **HEREAFTER** be appointed unto you. And it shall be called the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God.” (D&C 45:65-66).*

Later in the same month the Lord again tells them:

*“It must needs be necessary that ye **SAVE ALL THE MONEY THAT YE CAN**, and that ye obtain all that ye can in righteousness, that **IN TIME** ye may be enabled to purchase land for an inheritance, even the city. **The place is not yet to be revealed...**” (D&C 48:4-5).*

Signs have been given showing the Lord has set His hand again to bring about His strange act. If true repentance is manifested by some few of us Gentiles turning back to the Lord, then all the prophecies will be fulfilled within one generation. This means it will be soon enough, and perhaps according to our preparation, that the Lord *will* eventually give the long awaited revelation and command that “in time,” after “saving all the we can,” we will be enabled to act according to His coming command.

We should be grateful the Lord in His mercy, is giving us an opportunity to “*prepare every needful thing*” (D&C 88:119) prior to giving a command to begin, for one thing is made clear in the pattern through Joseph Smith---once the Lord reveals the place of inheritance and commands a house to be built, the time for preparation is basically ended and the clock begins ticking to complete the work. The failure of the early Saints *cannot* be repeated in our generation. Thus, one can see the *wisdom and mercy* of the Lord in allowing us to establish a means whereby the required monetary preparation can be made now, *prior* to the location being known and the command to build being given.

It is possible that there are some hearing this talk that acknowledge the necessity of everything I’ve stated thus far, but may be concerned that we three women are

coming up with this idea of financial preparation of our own accord; taking things into our own hands and moving forward without the Lord's directive. The concern is that such a course could result in jeopardizing what the Lord has laid up in store pertaining to the establishment of Zion, by acting in unauthorized zeal.

This is a fair concern and leads to the final question I was asked to answer.

**HOW DID THIS IDEA FOR CREATING A GENERAL FUND COME ABOUT? WAS IT MERE PERSONAL INITIATIVE IN AN ATTEMPT TO DO GOOD, OR DID YOU RECEIVE INSTRUCTION FROM THE LORD TELLING YOU TO DO SO?**

In order to answer this, I will have to get a little personal, so I ask you to pardon me for doing so.

I attended 8 of the 10 talks given by Denver Snuffer in 2013 and 2014. At the talk on Zion, in Colorado, the concept of paying tithes directly to the poor as a group effort with others who shared a common belief was introduced. He also said, *"There will probably be excess funds from your collections. The excess can be used to prepare a place, but not in haste. Whether there will be a place prepared depends entirely upon whether you prepare."* I knew the "place" being referred to was the New Jerusalem and her temple. (Preserving the Restoration p. 264)

Like many of you, I knew the request to give tithes to the poor was an invitation inspired from the Lord and responded by finding a group of about 10 families who wanted to participate together in this tithing experiment. For the next couple of years, I frequently contemplated exactly what constituted helping the "poor among you" and how it could be possible to have an excess afterward, that could be saved toward a temple and establishing Zion. This topic never ceased being in my mind and heart to some degree or another. It was a personal matter of prayer, discussion, study and fasting on numerous occasions, as well as unitedly with various individuals. Perhaps it was this serious degree of inquiry that was the catalyst for what happened a little more than two years after the Zion talk.

On July 9, 2016, while again contemplating the matter of what the Lord wanted done next in regard to excess funds being saved toward a future temple; I heard the voice of the Lord speak very directly telling me that the time had come to make further financial preparations toward this end and that a means was now

needed to allow for a collection of the excess tithing funds that individuals and fellowships had acquired, or would yet acquire; and that the excess needed to be gathered into a united fund so that when the time came to do the required work, there would be an immediate access available in order to respond without delay. It was impressed upon my mind that the faith of people would be tried, but that this would also enable *any and every* individual that desired to show their faith and respond to the invitation. This united pooling of our excess tithes was the very means designed by the Lord to now move things forward *in preparation*. It was made clear to me that two other women were to be involved, making three witnesses. I had previous but limited acquaintance with these women, but saw their faces at the time I received the instruction and knew without a doubt who was to be involved. Together, we were to figure out a way to make a general fund available and to manage it. While I did not necessarily welcome this instruction when it came, and was quite taken back by the very thought of what was being asked, the direction was very clear and came in a manner that I knew through experience was the voice of the Lord speaking to me.

The three of us communicated, and each of these women also received a personal witness that this assignment was the will of the Lord, as well as each of our husbands----none of us would go forward in such a monumental undertaking without complete support and approval of our companions. We hoped we could do this anonymously, but the answer we each received was a definite “no.” We knew that moving forward on this request by the Lord would not only cause the loss of our names and reputation among opponents of this work, but would even cause feelings of doubt or accusation among many of those we had come to consider “kindred spirits” in our quest for greater light and truth. False motives would certainly be attached to our names as a result of obeying what the Lord had asked. Additionally, we knew the public nature of our involvement would potentially result in ecclesiastical discipline for each of us.

We did not want this to be deemed, in any way, as a rogue self-ascribed mission that could jeopardize what the Lord is doing with this generation in offering us a chance to gather. Thus, before we began any of our efforts, we consulted with Denver Snuffer, as he explained in his talk in Boise. His encouragement of the things I’ve explained above gave us added personal confidence of our course and confirmed our independent witness that we had the Lord’s blessing and direction in these efforts; as these things pertain significantly to furthering the work that

the Lord is now engaged in. We three women, proceeded thereafter with diligence according to our best ability.

Things were very difficult, and what we thought was going to be able to be announced in September, turned into months of research and legal analysis, as well as prayer and fasting to do this according to our best understanding of the Lord's criteria and intent for it.

Time does not permit me to go into the details, suffice to say that after exhausting every possible avenue we knew of and finding enormous stumbling blocks with every option, the Lord miraculously opened the door to accomplish everything He asked within the parameters that needed to be met. Pertaining to Quentina Adolpho's work, I will only say this: it was made very clear to me that in relation to these matters she is like unto a latter-day Esther---raised up to the kingdom for such a time as this.

So some may quietly ask, "Why you three women? You look pretty ordinary."

Yes, we concur that we are about as ordinary as it gets and then some. I do not know for certain the answer to why the Lord asked us. Perhaps He asked us because we had *all* been inquiring about the matter in a serious way, and because He needed something done, He knew we would hear Him and respond. I can say in hindsight, that the Lord maneuvered things in our lives prior to making this request of us, that allowed us the enormous amount of time required to be devoted to getting this work done.

I want to summarize and reiterate a few things in closing concerning this work:

1. The creation of a general means to collect funds was in obedience to the Lord's instruction to us and not an idea of our own making; we are not acting as self-selected volunteers.
2. We do not consider the money anything other than 100% sacred funds, consecrated wholly to the purposes of the establishment of the New Jerusalem, or Zion, and the building of a temple.
3. Because it was the Lord who asked us to collect these excess tithes, we consider ourselves to be under strict accountability to Him for every penny gathered. We take this obligation seriously. We realize some people fear



temptation will come to us to cheat the Lord and reserve some of the gifts to ourselves. We can only say we realize what happened to Ananias and Sapphira in the Book of Acts when they held back a portion of sacred funds and consider the same consequences relevant to ourselves in discharging this responsibility.

4. Standard means have been set up to secure the law of witnesses is involved in everything concerning the funds.
5. Full disclosure will ultimately be given on all gifts received and expenditures made to the very detail. Please keep a record of your gifts so that you may reckon the truth of these things when the time comes.
6. This is preparation only. No announcement has been made nor revelation received pertaining to the location of Zion or building the temple. Nor will we three women be receiving that revelation.
7. There is no anticipated time-frame that is set to complete the collection of funds, or any exact dollar amount required. The 5 million dollar request on Go Fund Me is just a starting point.
8. Any contributions are considered gifts to the cause of Zion and not to be construed to guarantee the giver any place or right to dwell on the land purchased or participate in building or entering the temple. According to scripture, it is the angels who will gather people to Zion and the temple will belong to the Lord.
9. As a corollary to the above, our participation in collecting these funds does not give any of us three women or our husbands any guarantee of participation either. We, like all of you seek to qualify through obedience, sacrifice, meekness, and becoming pure in heart.
10. No portion of any of this money will be used for the support of any person or persons, to any degree. There is and will be NO priestcraft involved. If money is leftover, it will be used to maintain the temple and then assist the poor who come to Zion after it is established. As an aside: I would like to directly address a statement I heard on a podcast this month that associated the existence of this temple fund with the belief that people are now supporting and sustaining Denver Snuffer monetarily. This is a falsehood and a lack of understanding of the purpose and intended use of these funds.

In closing, I would like to say that like many of you, I know through a witness of the spirit and deep personal experiences that God has begun to move His hand

again for the second time to complete His strange act. I have witnessed numerous evidences that testify to that reality. As a very small part of this work, He has asked three ordinary women to spear head this preparatory aspect of the larger work yet to come. This is a clear reminder that He works with the weak and simple, and the unexpected. If it caught you off-guard that He did so; I can assure you, we were more surprised than any of you. But still, I declare to you that we have indeed been asked by the Lord to do this, and invite you to go to the Lord and inquire of Him if this is true. If the answer comes to you that this fund is authorized by Him, then we invite you to give of your excess after helping the poor among you, as directed by the spirit; with no expectation in return except as an offering to the Lord in faith.

Zion will be a place where those who are qualified will come---it will not be a place where we come to then qualify. (PTR) We qualify by learning the will of the Lord and then doing it. The greatest thing any of us can do right now is to become worthy to be gathered by standing watch and giving heed to every instruction given us by the Lord. This is all we three women have attempted to do-- listen and give heed---despite the consequences to self. Because of our love for the Lord and desire to follow Him, we could do nothing other than obey. It is our hope that all of us will grow in our ability to hear His voice and our resolve to conform our lives accordingly so that we may each qualify to be gathered by the Lord. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.