

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

SPOKANE WASHINGTON NORTH STAKE

January 2, 2011

(To Be Read in Sacrament Meeting)

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Spokane Washington North Stake:

The stake presidency is aware that members of our stake and their families are facing ever-increasing challenges in their lives. Trials of every kind are prevalent and cause many to feel disconnected from their Heavenly Father. The source and purpose of these struggles may not be readily apparent. However, we are confident that our Heavenly Father loves us and seeks to bless us and strengthen us during our trials. We are also confident that he seeks to deliver us from our trials according to his timeline and purposes. We are confident that as a stake unified in faith we can help families and individuals weather these storms and be prepared to receive the blessings of the Lord.

The writings of Alma teach us that the efficacy of our prayers for temporal and spiritual help is dependent on our efforts to help the poor (see Alma 34:28). We also learn from Alma that as we do missionary work we are supported in all of our trials (see Alma 36:26-27). We know that these promises are extended to all who act in faith. As a stake presidency, we have felt deeply impressed that the Lord would have us respond to our trials by increasing our faith with regard to helping care for those in need, and by making a more active effort to share the gospel with others.

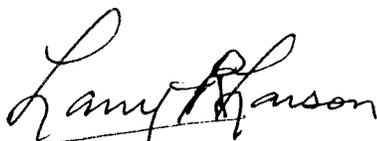
To help accomplish this, first, we invite and encourage all members to prayerfully consider their tithes and offerings. Seek the inspiration of the Lord. If you are not currently taking the opportunity to pay tithes and offerings, we invite you to increase your faith and prove the Lord now herewith if the blessings of heaven are not poured out upon you (see Mal. 3:10). If you are currently paying tithes but not fast offerings, we invite you to start paying fast offerings as well. If you are currently paying fast offerings, we invite you to review your efforts with the Lord. Seek his inspiration for what is a generous fast offering given your individual circumstances. Blessings associated with keeping the law of the fast include closeness to the Lord, increased spiritual strength, temporal well-being, greater compassion, and a stronger desire to serve.

Second, we desire that all members increase their faith and prepare spiritually to be stronger missionaries in the Kingdom. To accomplish this, we are asking that individuals and families read and study the Book of Mormon with greater emphasis—completing it during 2011. Study should begin and end with prayer. In each prayer, ask to know how you can share the gospel with others. These prayers combined with our study of the Book of Mormon will lead to great missionary experiences. We invite each family to prayerfully prepare a family missionary plan as part of this effort.

President Hinckley promised that as we read the Book of Mormon there will come into our lives and into our homes an added measure of the Spirit of the Lord, a strengthened resolution to walk in obedience to His commandments, and a stronger testimony of the living reality of the Son of God.

With all of the love we possess we invoke the Lord's blessings upon you. We promise that as this counsel is followed, individuals and families will be provided with great blessings in sharing the gospel. We will become great tools in the Lord's hands. These efforts will be miraculous. We further promise that the Lord will bless and sustain us in our trials. He will provide us with inspiration, clear direction, confidence and comfort as we stand firm in righteousness against the world. He will lighten our loads until deliverance is achieved. We promise that your children will be more protected from temptation and there will be greater harmony in your home. We invite all to prayerfully prepare to receive the Lord's blessings.

Sincerely,
Spokane Washington North Stake Presidency



Larry R. Larson
President



Peter A. Martin
First Counselor



Christopher M. Grimes
Second Counselor