

Wednesday Evening Address
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Relief Society General Presidency

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President Camille N. Johnson

You are a glorious sight! You are women who are “distinct and different in happy ways”¹ –preparing yourselves and the world for the second coming of our Savior. Thank you for your goodness, your kindness, your courage, and your light!

On March 17, 1842, the day Relief Society was organized, Emma Smith’s counselors moved the Society be called “The Nauvoo Female *Relief* Society.”² Elder John Taylor offered an amendment that it be called The Nauvoo Female *Benevolent* Society. The minutes from that meeting tell us that Emma Smith “suggested that she would like an argument with Elder Taylor on the words Relief and Benevolence.”³

Emma and Eliza R. Snow explained that “benevolent” was a popular word—popular with the institutions of the day—but that popular should not be our guide.⁴ Emma expounded that the word *relief* better described their mission “we are going to do something extraordinary... we expect extraordinary occasions and pressing calls.”⁵

The sisters' explanation was compelling and so they were organized as the *Relief Society*.⁶ We remain the *Relief Society*. As President Dallin H. Oaks has taught. “[we are] not just a class for women but something [we] belong to—a divinely established appendage to the Priesthood.”

And so, as sisters and friends, we [and]... YOU stand ready to provide relief—“expect[ing] extraordinary occasions and pressing calls.”⁷

As members of the Relief Society, we point one another to the Savior for *relief* and follow the Savior's example in giving Christlike love. We provide *relief*—temporal and spiritual—through the power of the Savior—and in the process find our own relief. We find Jesus Christ. I am pleased to introduce you to my capable and consecrated counselors, my dear friends, Sister Anette Dennis and Sister Kristin Yee, who will teach us more about the relief offered by and through our Savior.

First, Sister Yee ...

Sister Kristin M. Yee

Sisters, what a gift it is to be with you this evening. We love you and pray for you, and we're so grateful to gather together.

Finding relief through our covenant relationship with God has been on my mind and heart for some time and has only intensified during this special season of service in Relief Society. As the prophet of the Lord has taught and exhorted us to learn about covenants, temples, and priesthood power, I've found myself searching, loving, and feasting upon the rejuvenating truths encapsulated in covenants.

Dear sisters, we were meant to partner with the Lord in a powerful way through our covenants. He desires to be with us in our concerns and our decisions. We need not navigate the challenges, sorrows, insecurities, and heartaches of life alone. He will be beside us. He has said: “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”⁸ President Russell M.

Nelson describes the character of God and His great love for us when he taught that “the covenant path is all about our relationship with God.”

He continued, “...all those who have made a covenant with God have access to a special kind of love and mercy. In the Hebrew language, that covenantal love is called *hesed*. Because God has *hesed* for those who have covenanted with Him, He will love them. He will continue to work with them and offer them opportunities to change. He will forgive them when they repent. And should they stray, He will help them find their way back to Him.

Once you and I have made a covenant with God, our relationship with Him becomes much closer than before our covenant. Now we are bound together. Because of our covenant with God, He will never tire in His efforts to help us, and we will never exhaust His merciful patience with us. Each of us has a special place in God’s heart. He has high hopes for us.”⁹

As a sister who has not yet married, this loving and merciful covenant relationship with my Father in Heaven and Savior has a powerful place in my life and has been and *is* my greatest source of relief and peace. It brings me unspeakable comfort, divine joy, and a deep abiding assurance that I am loved as His daughter, and that I belong to His eternal family. I know that He knows me and understands me *completely*.

No matter our marital status or background, the Lord desires us to partner with Him in a powerful way. To be “one”¹⁰ with Him in “all our doings.”¹¹

Our thoughts and actions reflect the relationships we value. Hence, the more we love God and value our covenant relationship with Him, the more we will become as He is. And we will receive of His joy, peace, purpose, and power.

As we cry unto the Lord for our support, and “*let* the affections of [our]

hearts be placed upon [Him] forever,”¹² our lives can be filled by this beautiful covenant bond.

Through our Savior Jesus Christ, we can receive relief from navigating the challenges of life alone.

We all have concerns and needs that we can feel alone in. He cares about our concerns no matter how great or small. I have felt the need for His help when worrying about seemingly small things like, the ever-present friend I call “house repairs.” Without a spouse to consult with, I can worry alone about the right contractor, fair costs, taking time away from work to be home, and being a good steward over my finances and home. It was a triumph the other day to get my garage door fixed! The Lord heard my concern. And though small in the grand scheme of things, He answered my prayer. How? Through a kind neighbor, the help of the Spirit, and a video on YouTube, I was blessed to know what to do to fix the door.

I have felt His love and relief in my personal needs and concerns. He has provided healing, wisdom, and strength beyond my own. Through the power of His Atoning Sacrifice, He has lovingly supplied help and compensatory blessings. And often He sends that help and relief through the hands of others.

If the Lord is attentive to the small needs, imagine His desire to bless and sustain us in the weightier matters of the heart and soul, which are not few in number—difficult family relationships, loss and disappointment, ongoing mental and physical health challenges, abuse, constant concern as a parent, or constant concern in caring for a parent, a wayward child or spouse, struggles with personal faith, financial distress, addiction. Our Father in Heaven knew we would need a Savior to provide relief. To save us from physical and spiritual death, sorrow and sin. And so, He sent His Beloved Son.

In Alma we read: “And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled

which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people..., that his bowels may be filled with mercy...that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities.”¹³

During the intensities and infirmities of life, I’ve ‘leaned heavily upon and held closely to my covenant relationship’¹⁴ with God. As I’ve trusted in His loving care and tried my best to consecrate my life to Him, He has provided relief through His priesthood power, and has been my Provider in my spiritual and temporal needs. He has provided relief from fear, relief from insecurities, relief from pride, relief from sin, relief from loneliness, relief from sorrow.

President Nelson taught with clarity and assurance that “The reward for keeping covenants with God is heavenly power—power that strengthens us to withstand our trials, temptations, and heartaches better.”¹⁵

Through Jesus Christ we *can* receive relief from navigating the challenges of life alone.

As I’ve been reflecting on the ‘blessings of the covenant bond’¹⁶ we have with God, I thought about my recent assignment to the Asia North Area.

I had the privilege of traveling to the small islands of Chuuk in Micronesia about 1,500 miles southeast of Japan. Chuuk had just reopened to missionaries last November after three years of Covid shutdown. Upon arrival, you could almost feel a tangible spirit of heaviness. Poverty was prevalent, along with violence, sorrow, and many other hardships. But amidst these difficult circumstances, there was the bright light of faith—a small band of saints that continued to strive to keep their covenants.

On one of the smaller islands without running water or electricity, a beautiful sister shared she has been a member 40 years since the missionaries found her. She is praying to one day have her husband, who

struggles with alcohol, attend the temple with her. She testified of the blessings of eternal marriage and the temple.

This sister knows her Heavenly Father and though “alone” on a little island of the sea, without access to all the messages, communication, and materials that we have, yet she was *not* alone. God has been with her. She has held fast to her covenants with Him. Her relationship with Him has carried her and has been a comfort to her.

This is the Relief Society presidency on Weno, Chuuk. Two of these sisters have given their lives to raise children that have been abandoned by their parents. These two sisters felt it was important to raise these children in the Gospel. One of these sisters is single and working full-time as a school counselor.

I shared with them President Nelson’s message to the sisters of the Church, which is that you sisters are ‘loved, necessary, and precious.’¹⁷

The beautiful single sister who is raising her nieces and nephews, broke down in tears and said she had not felt precious lately, she had felt forgotten. But she testified she felt of God’s love and awareness for her in the prophet’s words that she was indeed “precious,” and she knew it was true. She felt God’s healing love; she felt relief.

The Lord has said, “Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men, and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea.”¹⁸

These sisters are known to their Heavenly Father and Savior, they are not alone. And neither are you and I in our trials and challenges. The Lord sent me roughly 8,500 miles by plane, train, car, and boat to bring God’s love and relief to “the one”¹⁹ on the isles of the sea. And so, He will find you and I on our personal islands where we might feel alone in the concerns and the burdens we carry in our hearts. He is present and prepared to bless, guide, and comfort us.

Our covenant bond with Him is our strength and our joy. In the words of

Isaiah: “God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song...”²⁰

Sisters, I testify that He is aware of you and knows your heart. He loves you.

In 1 Nephi we read the Lord’s words from Isaiah:

14) *But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.*

15) *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.*

16) *Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.*²¹

Your concerns, your desires, your worries, and interests are continually before Him. He has ‘graven thee upon the palms of His hands.’²² There is never a time you are not on the forefront of His mind and in His heart. He sees you. And He *will* come to your aid. He will comfort your heart with His healing love and assurance.

President Gordon B. Hinckley once described the experience of a young divorced “mother of seven children then ranging in ages from 7 to 16. She said that one evening she went across the street to deliver something to a neighbor.” These are her words as he recalled them.

“As I turned around to walk back home, I could see my house lighted up. I could hear echoes of my children as I had walked out of the door a few minutes earlier. They were saying: ‘Mom, what are we going to have for dinner?’ ‘Can you take me to the library?’ ‘I have to get some poster paper tonight.’ Tired and weary, I looked at that house and saw the light on in each of the rooms. I thought of all of those children who were home waiting for me to come and meet their needs. My burdens felt heavier than I could bear.

“I remember looking through tears toward the sky, and I said, ‘Dear Father, I just can’t do it tonight. I’m too tired. I can’t face it. I can’t go

home and take care of all those children alone. Could I just come to You and stay with You for just one night?...’

I didn’t really hear the words of reply, but I heard them in my mind. The answer was: ‘No, little one, you can’t come to me now...But I can come to you.’”²³

“I can come to you.” He came to her, and He will come to you and I, just as the Savior came to the woman at the well where she labored and toiled through her days.²⁴ He came to her. He encouraged her, taught her, declared His Messiahship to her, and loved her when perhaps she didn’t love herself. To the woman at the well, to the young mother of seven, to you and I, Jesus Christ stands ready to provide relief. I testify that we can receive relief through our covenant bond with a loving God.

President Nelson shared, “Once we make a covenant with God, we leave neutral ground forever. God will not abandon His relationship with those who have forged such a bond with Him.”²⁵ I’m so glad He loves us the way He does.

As we trust in God, we will feel of His great love and care, and come to know Him in ways we would never otherwise know Him.

Sisters, perhaps like me, you have pled for help to not be left alone during some of the most emotionally, physically, and spiritually demanding seasons of your life. These intense seasons of growth have left what I call “spiritual stretch marks” on the soul. But I bear witness that He has carried me, and He will carry you. He has graven you upon the palms of His hands.²⁶ He has been there as you’ve sought “to be righteous in the dark.”²⁷ He has not forsaken me, nor will He forsake you.²⁸ And I will love Him forever for it.

Dear sisters, the source of pure love, healing, happiness, and relief *has been found* in Jesus Christ. I testify that Jesus Christ is relief.²⁹ We hope and pray that what we share will point you to Him. Point you to His great love for you and His ability to succor you through your covenants.

He desires to care for you, to bless and forgive you. He came for this very purpose, to provide you with the much-needed relief that you seek.

He is the Redeemer of the world and I testify that He lives, and that He loves you, and I do so in His name, even Jesus Christ, amen.

Sister J. Anette Dennis

Sisters, we love you! I am so grateful to be able to be with you today to speak about the emotional relief that our Savior Jesus Christ can provide.

Pres. Russell M. Nelson said: *“It is my conviction that our Savior can strengthen and enable us to reach our highest highs and be able to cope with our lowest lows. As an ordained Apostle of Jesus Christ, I invite you to seek to know for yourself that He is the Master Healer.”* (Russell M. Nelson, op-ed article, *Arizona Republic*, Feb. 10, 2019)

I have been a witness to the kind and gentle ways the Savior provides relief, as well as His power as the Master Healer, over the past five years of my daughter Sarah’s sacred healing journey.

Sarah began showing signs of anxiety before she was two years old. We thought the anxiety might be due to the medical tests she was put through because of the gastrointestinal reflux condition she had suffered with since birth. Through the years, we also noticed other things but just thought she was a highly sensitive child.

As she grew into adolescence, we blamed her distress on teenage hormonal changes and her highly sensitive nature. Because of her sensitive nature, she was always very attuned to the pain of others and often looked for ways to help others feel better, but she usually suffered her own pain alone.

In early 2018, while we were serving in the temple in Ecuador, Sarah’s distress became so intense that she became suicidal. This was a very

dark time for her, and especially difficult for us because we were so far away. She was taken to the hospital, and we flew home for several weeks to be with her. We seriously considered not returning, but in response to our prayers, the Lord's answer was that if we would just trust Him and return to Ecuador, He would be able to help Sarah much quicker than if we stayed.

It was one of the hardest things we've ever done to get on that plane and fly back to Ecuador. But because Sarah went to live with our son and his wife, who is a nurse, she observed things in Sarah she hadn't seen before and shared those observations with her mother, who was an AP Psychology teacher. Because of her background and knowledge, she had some very important insights that later led to the diagnosis of a condition my husband and I had never heard of.

This condition had caused Sarah to feel easily rejected and unloved by others. This often took the form of feeling rejected and abandoned by her Father in Heaven and the certainty she felt that He loved all His other daughters but didn't love her, evidenced in her mind by the perceived happiness they had in their lives and the pain and suffering in hers. Her self-rejection and self-hate were so painful to watch, and I cried to the Lord on many occasions, pleading with Him to take away her suffering.

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Soon after that diagnosis, we found a specialized therapy and, just four months after we had gotten on that plane to return to Ecuador, the Lord told us that now it was time to go home and walk beside Sarah on her journey of healing. Because of the great blessing of that early diagnosis, Sarah was able to begin learning skills that helped her deal with the overwhelming feelings of distress and strong emotions the condition caused her.

It has been a long and difficult journey, but over the years as she learned to deal with the emotional pain and distress in healthier ways, Sarah began to see the Lord's hand in her life. She began to feel her Heavenly Father's love for her and began to feel greater love and acceptance for

herself. We have watched in amazement over these past five years as we have witnessed the Lord's healing power in Sarah's life, gradually giving her much needed emotional relief.

During the most difficult times, there were particular verses of scripture that the Lord led me to that brought peace and relief to my heart each time I read them.

One of those was 2 Nephi 8:3: "For the Lord shall comfort Zion (and I replaced the name Zion with Sarah's name): "For the Lord shall comfort Sarah; he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody."

This is Sarah on her wedding day in May of 2021. This was one of those sacred occasions when her desert became like the garden of the Lord.

Recently I was invited to speak at a Family Services conference, and I asked Sarah if she would share her feelings about Christ's role in her ongoing journey of healing. What she wrote was so inspiring. I wish there was time to share it with you in its entirety, but with her permission I will read part of it :

[quote] *"In looking back over my journey of healing so far, I think I am only just now coming to better understand how present and actively involved Jesus Christ was in my life and experiences of suffering.*

"The Savior has been personally ministering to me throughout my whole life, yet in waiting for some grand and unusual witness of God's love for me, I neglected to see the signs of my Savior's love that were all around. It wasn't until late last year when I was taking an Institute class about symbolism and the Atonement that the reality of my Savior and His part in my healing journey and day-to-day life began to feel tangible to me.

“As we talked about the Savior and the symbols of His life and sacrifice, our Institute teacher turned us to the symbol of motherhood and to the idea of the Savior as a mother. Isaiah 49:15-16 [says]: ‘Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands...’

“As I came away from that class, the reality of my Savior’s role in my day-to-day life began to sink in more than it ever has.

“Oh, so my Savior is like my mom,” I thought. He is my defender, my advocate, my therapist, my comforter, my teacher, and in so many ways, my Healer. [Since understanding this], I have begun to feel that I can move forward in my life with more confidence... and I have looked into my past with new gratitude. -

“In all my days of suffering, my Savior had been right beside me, ministering to me through the people who loved me. He was there through my mother, who cried with me when neither of us knew what to do or what to try next and when I needed to feel covered by the wing of a parent’s love.

“He was there through my Primary teacher who spent extra time with me, answering my questions and visiting with me as an equal.

“He was there through my school counselor who, although not a mental health professional, let me spend countless hours in her office as a junior high student crying, sometimes having panic attacks, and doing classwork away from everyone else.

“He was there through my friend and my friend’s parents who came to visit me and minister to me before I was admitted to the hospital for the first time, and in the moment I would drop out of college because it was too much.

“He was there through my college math teacher, calling me to tell me that he’d noticed I was not in class and to let him know if there was anything I needed or that he could do, that he was willing to work with me and help me get caught up.

“He was there through my therapist and psychologist teaching me and sharing truth with me which set the wheels in motion for it to be possible for me to comprehend that [Christ] could love someone so flawed and so imperfect and small as I was.

“The truth of my Savior made tangible through the image and type of my own mother and through others in my life, has clarified for me how I act “in relationship with my Savior” on a day-to-day basis.

“It makes sense to me now that to know and to have a relationship with Jesus Christ is to know that I am safe to go and do whatever He asks of me. To know my Savior is to know help will always come. To know my Savior is to know that I can stand tall and be confident in whatever company I am in when I am truly repentant, and my heart is pure. To know my Savior is to know and take refuge in the knowledge that He can see my heart and my progress even when no one else can. To know my Savior means that I do not have to be ashamed for the mistakes and shortcomings of my past or hide myself in the shadow of others’ judgements. To know my Savior is to know that I am not and will never be alone.

“Christ is the embodiment of newness and rebirth and no matter how torn and tattered I feel from being knocked around in the rock tumbler of life, through Him I can be reborn and become new again, and I have. He has been with me every step of the way, and in knowing first that Christ is like a mother, I know now that He is there in every good thing that comes into my life and in every good person who offers a helping hand. He is all around us. Though none of us is THE Savior, all of us can participate in saving.

“I know my Savior because I know my mother...

...and I hope that one day, my children and others will know God and our Savior Jesus Christ because they knew me and others who chose to “take up His cross,” as we covenanted to do, and be reflectors of His light.” [close quote]

Sisters, Jesus Christ *is* the Master Healer and our greatest source of relief. Sarah has come so far because of the healing power of the Savior and His Atonement as well as His working through others to provide relief. What a blessing it is that we can partner with the Master Healer to help bring emotional, spiritual and physical relief to those around us.

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf said: *“The Savior is the worker of miracles. He is the great Healer. He is our example, our light, even in the darkest moments.”* (“Four Titles,” *Liahona*, May 2013)

Elder Neil L. Andersen: *“The Savior is our Good Samaritan, sent “to heal the brokenhearted.” He comes to us when others pass us by. With compassion, He places His healing balm on our wounds and binds them up. He carries us. He cares for us. He bids us, “Come unto me ... and I shall heal [you].”* (“Wounded,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2018)

I love reading from the book of Isaiah. Some of the most beautiful and healing words of and about the Savior are found in Isaiah. I would like to leave you with some of those words tonight which have often provided me with much needed spiritual and emotional relief:

“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; ...when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned. . .For I am the Lord thy God...thy Savior...Thou [art] precious in my sight...” (Isaiah 43:2-5)

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Isaiah 41:10)

“Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God...giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength...They that wait upon the Lord shall...mount up with wings as eagles.” (Isaiah 40:28-31)

“...[I am come] to comfort all that mourn...to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness...” (Isaiah 61:2, 3)

I witness from my own personal experience, that Jesus Christ is our ultimate source of relief. He knows each one of us intimately, He loves each one of us dearly and He desires to be a part of our lives and bless us with the divine relief we each so desperately need. I witness of His power and ability to strengthen us and give us that needed relief in His own time and in His own way, which will be the precise time and way He knows is best for each of us as we go through this learning and growing experience of mortality that will enable us to become like Him and return Home to our Heavenly Parents. I witness that He lives. He *is* the Master Healer. Jesus Christ *is* relief. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Camille N. Johnson

My counselors have testified about significant ways in which the Savior offers relief.

Sister Yee reminded us He provides relief through our covenants by never leaving us alone. He is willing to be at our side, lifting and helping us in the big things, and the small ones. He offers spiritual relief through His intimate Atonement.

Sister Dennis taught He is the Master Healer, that He can lighten the burden of our physical and emotional ailments. For her daughter, Sarah, the relief He provided, sometimes through others, was both spiritual and temporal.

I want to expand upon the temporal relief the Savior offers to us, and through us. Service, providing temporal relief, changes our natures and prepares us for the temple.

The Relief Society was organized to help prepare a people for the temple, both spiritually and temporally. Women, saints in Nauvoo, saw the temporal needs of those who were working to construct the temple and organized efforts to help. Consistent with our original charge, today, in 2023, we continue to address the temporal needs of Heavenly Father's children all around the globe.

I recently had the opportunity to travel to the northeast corner of Uganda, an area known as Karamoja. It is part of the broader Horn of Africa, stricken by years of drought. There, women build their homes of manure and mud. Every single day, they venture to a well—typically a thirty minute walk each way—to carry all the water their family will need for the day. They are also constantly gathering firewood and charcoal. They are tending to chickens if they are fortunate enough to have them. The women birth babies and nurse babies and—day after day—work to find or trade for food to feed their families. The labor required to live another day there is monumental.

It was the first time I had personally seen such dire physical circumstances. And yet, I felt hope. The temporal relief we brought in the name of the Savior's Church brought hope to the most vulnerable of Heavenly Father's children. I was so very proud to be representing all of you as the Church has partnered with UNICEF to provide outreach, education, food and RUTFs (Ready to Use Therapeutic Food) for children who are severely malnourished.

Much of the outreach and education happened under a tree as women came together to learn what to eat when they are pregnant, how to screen children for malnutrition, and how to safely prepare nutritious food. They were tested for malaria and provided with mosquito nets. And they loved being together! Through a system much like ministering, the women then took what they had learned and shared it with others.

In Karamoja I had the opportunity not just to look upon the people, but to look deeply into the eyes of the women and their children. It was then that I had a most profound manifestation of the love that our Heavenly Father and Savior have for them—each of them—and for each of us. The Good Shepherd’s flock is known and numbered. He knows His children even in a remote corner of Uganda.

I hope that those women and children felt the love of God. We danced and sang together, and through an interpreter I had the opportunity to talk with them. “You must wonder why we are here,” I said. “We are here and want to help because you are our sisters and brothers. We are all children of a loving Heavenly Father,” to which they all cheered.

Sisters, it is both a blessing and a covenantal responsibility for us to provide temporal relief to our sisters and brothers around the world.

My counselors and I have the privilege of working with the presiding bishopric in addressing the welfare needs of our members and the global community. We serve on the Welfare and Self-Reliance Executive Committee which oversees thousands of welfare projects every year. As reflected in the recently published Annual Report for 2022, the Church sponsored 3,692 humanitarian projects in 190 countries with expenditures totaling more than \$1 billion. Church members and our friends donated 6.3 million hours of volunteer work.³⁹ Sisters, your hours and your donations are represented in those grand sums. Thank you!

The global effort of which we are a part is an extraordinary occasion, a pressing call, just as Emma anticipated!

There are legions who mourn, many in need of comfort, countless who are weak, ‘hands hanging down with knees that are feeble.’⁴⁰ The need is significant, and I testify that it is important. The Shepherd is relying upon us to tend to the needs of his sheep.

Like the caregivers of the ‘man with palsy who brought him to the Savior,’⁴¹ it is important that we be the conduit through which the Savior

provides temporal relief in our own communities. It was a privilege and blessing to feed starving children in Africa. *And* there are malnourished children right here. There is housing insecurity, food insecurity, emotional distress, pain, grief, lack of education, and disappointment here, in our own back yards.

Sometimes I think it is easier to provide temporal relief to people we do not know. Do we prefer to send food to Africa or shoes to an orphanage in Peru—imagining in our minds how joyfully our donations will be received? Those are noble efforts and can and should be accomplished as we make humanitarian donations to the Church. But sisters, what about the disagreeable lady who lives around the corner from you? Does she need relief?

Perhaps the best humanitarian outreach is to reach across the fence, or across the street.

We often hear the phrases, “lift where you stand,”⁴² or “bloom where you are planted.”⁴³ What that means is that God puts you in a position to be a conduit through which He provides relief if you are willing. And when you provide relief to others, I testify that you will find the source of relief. You will find Jesus Christ.

Sisters, it is our covenantal blessing to partner with Jesus Christ in providing relief, both temporal and spiritual, to all of God’s children. Let us commit to being the conduit through which He provides relief. I know that in doing so we will find His relief, personally, and be blessed by the peaceful reassurance that we are never alone. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

¹ Spencer W. Kimball, “The Role of Righteous Women,” October 1979.

² “Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book: March 17, 1842,” www.churchhistorianspress.org.

³ The Joseph Smith Papers, “Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book,” pg. 10-13, www.josephsmithpapers.org.

⁴ The Joseph Smith Papers, “Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book,” pg. 12, www.josephsmithpapers.org.

⁵ Emma Hale Smith, “We Are Going to Do Something Extraordinary,” 1842-1844, www.churchhistorianspress.org.

⁶ See Gospel Topics, “Relief Society,” Gospel Library.

⁷ Dallin H. Oaks, “*The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood*,” April 2014.

⁸ John 14:18.

⁹ Russell M. Nelson, “The Everlasting Covenant,” October 2022.

¹⁰ See 3 Nephi 19:23.

- ¹¹ See Alma 37:37.
- ¹² See Alma 37:36.
- ¹³ See Alma 7:11-12.
- ¹⁴ Russell M. Nelson, “The Everlasting Covenant,” October 2022.
- ¹⁵ Russell M. Nelson, “Overcome the World and Find Rest,” October 2022.
- ¹⁶ Dale G. Renlund, “Accessing God’s Power Through Covenants,” April 2023.
- ¹⁷ Russell M. Nelson, “Sisters’ Participation in the Gathering of Israel,” October 2018.
- ¹⁸ See 2 Nephi 29:7.
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- ²¹ See 1 Nephi 21:14-16, Isaiah 49:14-16.
- ²² See 1 Nephi 21:16, Isaiah 49:16.
- ²³ Gordon B. Hinckley, “In the Arms of His Love,” October 2006.
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- ²⁵ Russell M. Nelson, “The Everlasting Covenant,” October 2022.
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- ²⁷ James E. Faust, *Ensign*, November 2005, p.21. Brigham Young’s quote comes from his Office Journal, Jan. 28, 1857.
- ²⁸ See Study Helps, “Forsake, Forsaken,” Index to the Triple Combination, Gospel Library.
- ²⁹ Camille N. Johnson, “Jesus Christ is Relief,” April 2023.
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