

# Families Can Be Forever



**THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS** The Church teaches that we all lived in a premortal state as children of heavenly parents. Each person comes to earth to gain a physical body and learn through the mortal experience. By obedience to God's commandments, each of us may return to His presence, where we will live eternally in a family organization.

A distinctive Latter-day Saint teaching is that marriage can be for eternity. Such marriages must be performed in a temple by authority from God, called priesthood. Latter-day Saint temples are not places of regular Sunday worship. They are sacred buildings for family-centered

sacraments and ceremonies, or ordinances. For these ordinances to remain in effect, a husband and wife must love and be faithful to each other throughout their marriage and continue to follow a course of Christian service and commitment throughout their lives.

**TEMPLES AND FAMILY HISTORY** For millions of people who lived before the time of Christ or during the intervening centuries between the death of the Apostles and the Restoration of Christ's Church, these ordinances were not available. Even today, millions live and die without ever hearing the name of Jesus Christ or learning and accepting the saving principles and ordinances of the gospel He taught.

Provision must be made, then, for those who have died without the opportunity to receive those temple ordinances. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that all saving ordinances are performed on earth on behalf of the dead. Latter-day Saints stand as proxies for their own deceased ancestors in these sacred ceremonies, which include baptism, sealings of husbands and wives, and sealings of parents and children in eternal family units. These ordinances are only binding if willingly accepted by each individual.

Temples are central to Latter-day Saint belief. Members are taught that they have an obligation to trace their family tree and perform temple ordinances for their deceased ancestors.

