

Ray Thornley's Perception of the Lord's Injunction as it Relates to new.FamilySearch

Injunction – D&C 127:9, 128:24

“And again, let all the records be had in order, that they may be put in the archives of my holy temple, to be held in remembrance from generation to generation, saith the Lord of Hosts.” ...
“Let us, therefore, as a church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; and let us present in his holy temple, when it is finished, a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptance.”

As I see it we, as members of the church, each have an individual responsibility to God and also a personal obligation to the church pertaining to the records of our dead. (See Conclusions)

new.FamilySearch

It would be well to review the makeup of the new.FamilySearch (n.FS) data base (Family Tree):

Ancestral File – Many years ago members of the church were requested to submit, on a time bound goal, four generations of our ancestors for future reference. Due to procrastination, the importance of the goal, the lack of accurate information, misunderstanding of intended coordination effort, and other personal reasons, much inaccurate information was submitted. An attempt was made to combine the information. It was published as the Ancestral File (AF) with the directive to be used only as a clue for research. We were given the opportunity to correct our mistakes and add additional information. Due to our continued lack of knowledge and difficulty in finding better information, combined with inconvenience and/or unwillingness to coordinate with others only a portion of the file was improved. For obvious reasons the Ancestral File was closed for making corrections and additions, but open to read.

Pedigree Resource file – With the closure of the AF we were given the opportunity to submit to a new file – the Pedigree Resource File (PRF) – where we would not be able to correct nor add to our submission. We were given an injunction to **get it right** without a **time bound goal**. That seemed like a good approach, however word got out with a presumed requirement to submit and some arbitrary time restraints. Many members did not realize the necessity to get it right. With the desire to be obedient many members made a vigorous effort to get it right. Many others, with the same desire, copied from the AF. Some of those, realizing their mistake, made an effort to get it right by resubmitting, sometimes more than once.

Temple Ordinance Records – For many years we have been encouraged to increased temple attendance. With increased temple attendance there has been an increased need for temple submissions. Members were being pressured to come to the History Center to get names to submit. Upon finding that the History Center did not have any such supply they turned to the AF and the PRF. Being over zealous to comply with the request for names and misunderstanding the conditions of those files they used them directly. Other zealous individuals deliberately submitted names from those sources without even checking to see if the work had been done, so the names were being done over and over again. (The Temple Ready program made it ease to check for completed ordinances.)

The Extraction program was announced as a resource file, presenting a minimum of information about a person and the source from whence it came, so a researcher could go to that source and find more identifying information. Much of the extracted information was supplied to temples and work was done with the minimum data. Because many extracted christening and marriage records contain little identifying information it is often hard to identify them without the source.

Membership Records – Membership records have proven to be very good with a few exceptions of duplication and wrong gender.

Combined Records – All of the above records are included in the Family Tree and may be combined by members to show all of the available data together for any individual. Records may also be separated where they have been combined in error. Some erroneous combinations are very subtle, for example two men are obviously the same, but one has no wife and the other has an erroneous wife. Combining all records seems to be a noble but impossible task because often correct individuals have incorrect relationships.

Submitting Names – At present all names submitted to the temple must be processed through n.FS. With all the ordinance data included there, it is possible to submit names directly in n.FS. However it is often difficult to submit names directly with assurance that you are not duplicating ordinances or missing needed ones. The difficulty arises mainly because you have to type the name in with the identifying data to search on, and in addition the search capability is weak and dependent on just what data is typed in.

Conclusions

Research Tool – Since n.FS is a mixture of records which range from very good to very poor, it should be used as a research tool only as a clue.

Acceptable Record (See D&C 128:24 above.) – n.FS is a faithful record of almost all ordinances performed in our holy temples, whether or not they were done correctly. I know that God is patient and understanding, but I believe that n.FS in its present condition is not acceptable. I hope that we, as a church and a people, will work together to present to Him a record worthy of all acceptance.

Personal Records – Some members are using n.FS as a place to keep personal records. That is not recommended because n.FS is in a state of flux. I believe that we as individual Latter-day Saints can have an acceptable record to present to the Lord. With all the research tools becoming easily available I believe that we, with the help of God, can find the names with necessary identifying data. With available computer programs I believe we can find, in n.FS, all the available ordinance data of our deceased ancestors to include in those records. It is important to have such a record in order to know what names still need to be submitted to the temple.

Submitting Names to the Temple – Some of the difficulties and uncertainties in submitting names directly with n.FS may be overcome by using computer programs now available to work with n.FS. Names, in a personal computer file, may be searched for in n.FS to add data to your file, and to move data from your file into n.FS as necessary. Some computer programs which can aid you are: Ancestral Quest, Family Insight, Legacy and Roots Magic. I have focused my attention mostly on using Family Insight with PAF. For the procedure see, “Submitting names to the temple, Using Family Insight with PAF”.