

THE ETERNAL FAMILY THROUGH CHRIST

"The Eternal Family through Christ," *Ensign*, Dec. 1988, 24

When you walk into the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, the first thing you see is a huge mural of the Lord Jesus Christ surrounded by a multitude of families. Seven feet by twenty-three feet, the oil and gold-leaf painting covers one entire wall. *The Eternal Family through Christ*, by Judith Mehr, reflects the main theme of family history—Families are forever—and its primary call: come unto Christ through genealogical and temple work.



The Eternal Family through Christ, by Judith Mehr

Lower left side: Individuals in the pre-earth life press forward, anticipating mortal life. In fulfillment of prophecy, Elijah the prophet extends his hand to confer power upon the Prophet Joseph Smith. (See D&C 110.) The keys Elijah holds symbolize priesthood keys. Joseph, in turn, shares his vision of an eternal family with a contemporary family. The books near the Prophet represent the worldwide interest in family history resulting from Elijah's visit.

Upper left side: Deceased ancestors, who abide in the spirit world after their earthly lives, look forward to the modern-day work of salvation. Like the living, they are moving from darkness to light because of Christ and his gospel. Through faith in the Savior's plan of redemption for them, they reach out joyfully to a contemporary family to form lasting relationships.

Left center: The contemporary family is gathered together, rejoicing in their ancestral heritage. Their interest in family history has brought parents, children, and grandchildren together. The family reaches out to those who have gone before and to Christ, forming a link between them and him. The continents behind the family suggest the spread of the gospel to all the world.

Right center: Jesus Christ, with the temple behind, stands at the intersection of two circles, symbolizing mortal and heavenly worlds joining together. His saving power extends to all generations of time. The temple and its holy ordinances, which he, the Redeemer, established for the exaltation of both the living and the dead, enable family units to continue eternally. Throughout the painting, the light that penetrates the darkness emanates from the Savior.

Right side: In the hereafter, the Lord's disciples continue to progress in family groups. The window patterns and mirrors extending from the temple suggest the temple's influence on the eternities. The Savior holds his hand out to those in the spirit world, linking them with the families in mortality.

The painting contains seventy-four figures, and much of it is overlaid with gold leaf to enhance its richness and warmth. Sister Mehr spent two and a half years painting the mural.