FIT FOR THE KINGDOM: LIVES OF THE LATTER DAY SAINTS

This series is designed to illustrate and accomplish what we take to be the primary aims and obligations of the documentary film. These are as follows:

- To portray and appreciate ordinary people in their ordinary circumstances, to the end that we do not mistake fantasy for reality, celebrity for substance, escapism for anxious engagement; to affirm that in enduring to the end and embracing the everyday we will find the key to and see the patterns of our improvement and exaltation.

- To lift up the hands that hang down and strengthen the feeble knees, to insure that the seats and centres of power provide means through which the silent can speak and the obscure be acknowledged; to create through such exchanges the compassion and the conscience and the humility that counter pride and leaven privilege, that the teacher may learn and the learner may teach, that equality and mutual edification be our aim and our ultimate accomplishment.

- Though our concentration on everyday lives will sometimes seem only to prove that man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards, though our best attempts to succour or share will often founder or even fail, documentary demonstrates that tribulation is a blessed lot, because it is only in passing through it that we find transcendence.

If these aims seem lofty and even abstract, then this series will embody and illustrate them in the most direct, accessible way. Our broadcast culture is inclined to celebrate counterfeit substance and compromised virtue. For our part, we wish to resist exaggeration in what we say and avoid compulsory means in the way we say it. We wish to look for quiet, exemplary latter-day-saintly lives, and to document them in the most direct and unadorned fashion that we can.

We are very mindful of the importance of method. Documentary consists of more than just the subjects that serve and bring to pass the aims that we have enumerated above. As with any other communication, the classic documentary brings message and manner together; the way that the idea is presented is inextricably linked with, and should be supportive of, the idea itself. Although the non-fiction film is as diverse as can be imagined, for our purposes we propose a more restricted stylistic palate, one that is in harmony with the subjects we are contemplating. The scriptures provide prescription for our own artistic practice.

- I Corinthians 14: 40
  Let all things be done decently and in order.

- I Corinthians 1: 26-29
  For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, the weak things of the world to confound the things which are
mighty...and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; That no flesh should glory in his presence.

- **I Corinthians 12: 18-26**
  But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him...And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary...And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

- **Ephesians 4: 1-2**
  I therefore...beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.

- **Isaiah 53: 1-2**
  Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

- **Luke 2: 12**
  And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

- **I Peter 3: 3-4**
  Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of...wearing of gold, or of putting on apparel; But let it be...in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

- **D&C 42: 40-41**
  And again, thou shalt not be proud in thy heart; let all thy garments be plain, and their beauty the beauty of the work of thine own hands; And let all things be done in cleanliness before me.

- **I Corinthians 5: 8**
  Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

- **Matthew 5: 37**
  But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

- **Romans 12: 8**
He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

- Mark 4: 37, 39
  And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full…And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

- Matthew 6: 26-33
  Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, [shall he] not much more [clothe] you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

- D&C 101: 16
  Be still and know that I am God.

- John 11: 35
  Jesus wept.

- D&C 6: 22-23
  …Cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things. Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?

- I Kings 19: 11-12
  And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; [but] the LORD [was] not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; [but] the LORD [was] not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; [but] the LORD [was] not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

In our media production it has often been our impulse to sound the brass and tinkle the cymbal, betraying in our excess a lack of confidence both in our audiences and in our message. A true lily need not be gilded, though without the glitter the insensitive, or those starved for more honest representations, may miss its beauty. We can change this.
Her finely-touched spirit had still its fine issues, though they were not widely visible. Her full nature…spent itself in channels which had no great name on the earth. But the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive: for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.

(George Eliot, *Middlemarch*)

With our proposed documentary visits, as we listen to those who fear the Lord speaking quietly with us, we look to see extraordinary ordinariness, to feel the weight of voices too often deemed peripheral, to find trials that distill into the transcendent. As we meet latter-day-saints from every location and of every circumstance and description, we will learn of the loveliness to be found in simply doing your best, the satisfactions contained in unheralded discipleship. There will be dramatic stories, but in addition to relating these, we will also seek to do something less conventional, and finally more profound. We wish to reveal. Instead of the *becoming* that is prerequisite to conventional narrative, we seek subjects that demonstrate righteous *being*. These will show us the diversity that makes us interesting, and the common ground that will circumscribe difference into one mind, one heart, and one great whole.

- Galatians 6: 9
  And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.