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Guided by the Holy Spirit

Every one of us can be guided by the spirit of revelation and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

It has been 400 years since the publication of the King James Bible, with significant contributions from William Tyndale, a great hero in my eyes.

The clergy did not want the Bible published in common English. They hounded Tyndale from place to place. He said to them, "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou."¹

Tyndale was betrayed and confined to a dark, freezing prison in Brussels for over a year. His clothing was in rags. He begged his captors for his coat and cap and a candle, saying, "It is indeed wearisome sitting alone in the dark."² These were denied him. Eventually, he was taken from prison and before a large crowd was strangled and burned at the stake. But William Tyndale's work and martyr's death were not in vain.

Since Latter-day Saint children are taught from their youth to know the scriptures, they in a measure fulfill the prophecy made four centuries earlier by William Tyndale.

Our scriptures today consist of the Bible, the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ, the Pearl

of Great Price, and the Doctrine and Covenants.

Because of the Book of Mormon, we are frequently called the Mormon Church, a title we do not resent, but it is really not accurate.

In the Book of Mormon, the Lord revisited the Nephites because they prayed to the Father in His name. And the Lord said:

"What will ye that I shall give unto you?

"And they said unto him: Lord, we will that thou wouldst tell us the name whereby we shall call this church; for there are disputations among the people concerning this matter.

"And the Lord said . . . , why is it that the people should murmur and dispute because of this thing?

"Have they not read the scriptures, which say ye must take upon you the name of Christ . . . ? For by this name shall ye be called at the last day. . . .

"Therefore, whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name; therefore ye shall call the church in my name; and ye shall call upon the Father in my name that he will bless the church for my sake.

"And how be it my church save it

be called in my name? For if a church be called in Moses' name then it be Moses' church; or if it be called in the name of a man then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel."³

Obedient to revelation, we call ourselves The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints rather than the Mormon Church. It is one thing for others to refer to the Church as the Mormon Church or to us as Mormons; it is quite another for us to do so.

The First Presidency stated:

"The use of the revealed name, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (D&C 115:4), is increasingly important in our responsibility to proclaim the name of the Savior throughout all the world. Accordingly, we ask that when we refer to the Church we use its full name wherever possible. . . .

"When referring to Church members, we suggest 'members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.' As a shortened reference, 'Latter-day Saints' is preferred."⁴

"[Latter-day Saints] talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins."⁵

The world will refer to us as they will, but in our speech, always remember that we belong to the Church of *Jesus Christ*.

Some claim we are not Christians. They either do not know us at all or they misunderstand.

In the Church every ordinance is done by the authority of and in the name of Jesus Christ.⁶ We have the same organization as did the primitive Church, with apostles and prophets.⁷



Anciently the Lord called and ordained Twelve Apostles. He was betrayed and crucified. After His Resurrection, the Savior taught His disciples for 40 days and then ascended into heaven.⁸

But something was missing. A few days later the Twelve gathered in a house, and “suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house. . . . Cloven tongues . . . of fire [rested] upon each of them. And they were . . . filled with the Holy Ghost.”⁹ His Apostles were now empowered. They understood that the authority given by the Savior and the gift of

the Holy Ghost were essential for the establishment of His Church. They were commanded to baptize and confer the gift of the Holy Ghost.¹⁰

In time the Apostles and the priesthood they carried were gone. The authority and power to administer had to be restored. For centuries men looked forward to the return of the authority and the establishment of the Lord’s Church.

In 1829 the priesthood was restored to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery by John the Baptist and the Apostles Peter, James, and John. Now worthy male members of the Church are ordained to the priesthood. This

authority and the attendant gift of the Holy Ghost, which is conferred upon all members of the Church after baptism, set us apart from other churches.

An early revelation directs “that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world.”¹¹ The work in the Church today is performed by ordinary men and women called and sustained to preside, to teach, and to administer. It is by the power of revelation and the gift of the Holy Ghost that those called are guided to know the Lord’s will. Others may not accept such things as prophecy, revelation, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, but if they are to understand us at all, they must understand that we accept those things.

The Lord revealed to Joseph Smith a code of health, the Word of Wisdom, long before the dangers were known to the world. All are taught to avoid tea, coffee, liquor, tobacco, and of course varieties of drugs and addictive substances, which are ever present before our young people. Those who obey this revelation are promised that they “shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

“And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

“And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.”¹²

In another revelation, the Lord’s standard of morality commands that the sacred powers to beget life be protected and employed only between man and woman, husband and wife.¹³ To misuse this power is exceeded in seriousness only by the shedding of innocent blood and denying the Holy Ghost.¹⁴ If one transgresses the law, the doctrine of repentance teaches how to erase the effect of this transgression.

Everyone is tested. One might think it is unfair to be singled out and subjected to a particular temptation, but this is the purpose of mortal life—to be tested. And the answer is the same for everyone: we must, and we can, resist temptations of any kind.

“The great plan of happiness”¹⁵ centers on family life. The husband is the head of the home and the wife the heart of the home. And marriage is an equal partnership. A Latter-day Saint man is a responsible family man, faithful in the gospel. He is a caring, devoted husband and father. He reveres womanhood. The wife sustains her husband. Both parents nurture the spiritual growth of their children.

Latter-day Saints are taught to love one another and to frankly forgive offenses.

My life was changed by a saintly patriarch. He married his sweetheart. They were deeply in love, and soon she was expecting their first child.

The night the baby was born, there were complications. The only doctor

was somewhere in the countryside tending to the sick. After many hours of labor, the condition of the mother-to-be became desperate. Finally, the doctor was located. In the emergency, he acted quickly and soon the baby was born, and the crisis, it appeared, was over. But some days later, the young mother died from the very infection that the doctor had been treating at another home that night.

The young man’s world was shattered. As the weeks wore on, his grief festered. He thought of little else, and in his bitterness he became threatening. Today, no doubt, he would have been pressed to file a malpractice suit, as though money would solve anything.

One night a knock came at his door. A little girl said simply, “Daddy wants you to come over. He wants to talk to you.”

“Daddy” was the stake president. The counsel from that wise leader was simply “John, leave it alone. Nothing you do about it will bring her back.

Anything you do will make it worse. John, leave it alone.”

This had been my friend’s trial. How could he leave it alone? A terrible wrong had been committed. He struggled to get hold of himself and finally determined that he should be obedient and follow the counsel of that wise stake president. He would leave it alone.

He said, “I was an old man before I understood and could finally see a poor country doctor—overworked, underpaid, run ragged from patient to patient, with little medicine, no hospital, few instruments, struggling to save lives, and succeeding for the most part. He had come in a moment of crisis, when two lives hung in the balance, and had acted without delay. I finally understood!” He said, “I would have ruined my life and the lives of others.”

Many times he had thanked the Lord on his knees for a wise priesthood leader who counseled simply, “John, leave it alone.”

Around us we see members of the Church who have become offended. Some take offense at incidents in the history of the Church or its leaders and suffer their whole lives, unable to get past the mistakes of others. They do not leave it alone. They fall into inactivity.

That attitude is somewhat like a man being hit by a club. Offended, he takes up a club and beats himself over the head with it all the days of his life. How foolish! How sad! That kind of revenge is self-inflicting. If you have been offended, forgive, forget it, and leave it alone.

The Book of Mormon carries this warning: “And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ.”¹⁶

São Luís, Brazil





A Latter-day Saint is quite an ordinary individual. We are now everywhere in the world, 14 million of us. This is only the beginning. We are taught to be in the world but not of the world.¹⁷ Therefore, we live ordinary lives in ordinary families mixed in with the general population.

We are taught not to lie or steal or cheat.¹⁸ We do not use profanity. We are positive and happy and not afraid of life.

We are “willing to mourn with those that mourn . . . and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places.”¹⁹

If someone is looking for a church that requires very little, this is not the one. It is not easy to be a Latter-day Saint, but in the long run it is the only true course.

Regardless of opposition or “wars, rumors of wars, and earthquakes in divers places,”²⁰ no power or influence

can stop this work. Every one of us can be guided by the spirit of revelation and the gift of the Holy Ghost. “As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints.”²¹

If you are carrying some burden, forget it, let it alone. Do a lot of forgiving and a little repenting, and you will be visited by the Spirit of the Holy Ghost and confirmed by the testimony that you did not know existed. You will be watched over and blessed—you and yours. This is an invitation to come unto Him. This church—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth,”²² by His own declaration—is where we find “the great plan of happiness.”²³ Of this I bear witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. In David Daniell, introduction to *Tyndale's New Testament* (1989), viii.
2. In Daniell, introduction to *Tyndale's New Testament*, ix.
3. 3 Nephi 27:2–5, 7–8.
4. First Presidency letter, Feb. 23, 2001.
5. 2 Nephi 25:26.
6. See Moses 5:8; baptism: see 2 Nephi 31:12; 3 Nephi 11:27; 18:16; blessing the sick: see Doctrine and Covenants 42:44; bestowing the Holy Ghost: see Moroni 2:2; priesthood ordination: see Moroni 3:1–3; sacrament: see Moroni 4:1–3; miracles: see Doctrine and Covenants 84:66–69.
7. See Articles of Faith 1:6.
8. See Acts 1:3–11.
9. Acts 2:2–4.
10. See Acts 2:38.
11. Doctrine and Covenants 1:20.
12. Doctrine and Covenants 89:18–20.
13. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
14. See Alma 39:4–6.
15. Alma 42:8.
16. Title page of the Book of Mormon.
17. See John 17:14–19.
18. See Exodus 20:15–16.
19. Mosiah 18:9.
20. Mormon 8:30.
21. Doctrine and Covenants 121:33.
22. Doctrine and Covenants 1:30.
23. Alma 42:8.