

# Ensign

## General Conference Addresses

**New Seventies and  
Sunday School General  
Presidency Called**





*One Shepherd, by Howard Lyon*

*Here Jesus Christ visits the Nephites in the Americas in fulfillment of a prophecy He shared with those in Jerusalem:*

*“Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (John 10:16; see also 3 Nephi 15:21).*

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# Summary for the 184th Annual General Conference

## **SATURDAY MORNING, APRIL 5, 2014, GENERAL SESSION**

Presiding: President Thomas S. Monson.  
Conducting: President Dieter F. Uchtdorf.  
Invocation: Elder Carl B. Cook.  
Benediction: Elder W. Christopher Waddell.  
Music by the Tabernacle Choir; Mack Wilberg and Ryan Murphy, directors; Clay Christiansen and Richard Elliott, organists: “How Firm a Foundation,” *Hymns*, no. 85; “Press Forward, Saints,” *Hymns*, no. 81, arr. Wilberg, unpublished; “Lead, Kindly Light,” *Hymns*, no. 97, arr. Wilberg, unpublished; “Choose the Right,” *Hymns*, no. 239; “A New Commandment I Give unto You,” Gates, pub. by Jackman; “Come, O Thou King of Kings,” *Hymns*, no. 59, arr. Murphy, unpublished.

## **SATURDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 5, 2014, GENERAL SESSION**

Presiding: President Thomas S. Monson.  
Conducting: President Henry B. Eyring.  
Invocation: Elder Ian S. Arderm.  
Benediction: Linda K. Burton.  
Music by a combined choir from the Orem Utah Institute; Ryan Eggett, director; Bonnie Goodliffe and Linda Margetts, organists: “Glory to God on High,” *Hymns*, no. 67, arr. Manookin, pub. by Jackman; “I Lived in Heaven,” *Children’s Songbook*, 4, arr. Beebe, pub. by Larice Music; “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet,” *Hymns*, no. 19; “High on the Mountain Top,” *Hymns*, no. 5, arr. Duffin, pub. by Duffin.

## **SATURDAY EVENING, APRIL 5, 2014, PRIESTHOOD SESSION**

Presiding: President Thomas S. Monson.  
Conducting: President Dieter F. Uchtdorf.  
Invocation: Elder LeGrand R. Curtis Jr.  
Benediction: Russell T. Osguthorpe.  
Music by a priesthood choir from Brigham Young University–Idaho; Randall Kempton and Kevin Brower, directors; Andrew Unsworth, organist: “Saints, Behold How Great Jehovah,” *Hymns*, no. 28, arr. Kempton, unpublished; “Secret Prayer,” *Hymns*, no. 144, arr. Kasen, pub. by Jackman; “Rejoice, the Lord Is King,” *Hymns*, no. 66; “Abide with Me!” *Hymns*, no. 166, arr. Kempton, unpublished.

## **SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 6, 2014, GENERAL SESSION**

Presiding: President Thomas S. Monson.  
Conducting: President Henry B. Eyring.

Invocation: Elder L. Whitney Clayton.  
Benediction: Neill F. Marriott.  
Music by the Tabernacle Choir; Mack Wilberg, director; Richard Elliott and Andrew Unsworth, organists: “Come, We That Love the Lord,” *Hymns*, no. 119; “On This Day of Joy and Gladness,” *Hymns*, no. 64; “Let Us All Press On,” *Hymns*, no. 243, arr. Elliott, unpublished; “Teach Me to Walk in the Light,” *Hymns*, no. 304; “A Child’s Prayer,” *Children’s Songbook*, 12, arr. Perry, pub. by Jackman; “Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah,” *Hymns*, no. 83, arr. Wilberg, unpublished.

## **SUNDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 6, 2014, GENERAL SESSION**

Presiding: President Thomas S. Monson.  
Conducting: President Dieter F. Uchtdorf.  
Invocation: Bishop Dean M. Davies.  
Benediction: Elder Benjamín De Hoyos.  
Music by the Tabernacle Choir; Mack Wilberg and Ryan Murphy, directors; Linda Margetts and Bonnie Goodliffe, organists: “Sweet Is the Work,” *Hymns*, no. 147, arr. Murphy, unpublished; “I Stand All Amazed,” *Hymns*, no. 193, arr. Murphy, unpublished; “Hark, All Ye Nations!” *Hymns*, no. 264; “Come, Let Us Anew,” *Hymns*, no. 217, arr. Wilberg, unpublished.

## **SATURDAY EVENING, MARCH 29, 2014, GENERAL WOMEN’S MEETING**

Presiding: President Thomas S. Monson.  
Conducting: Bonnie L. Oscarson.  
Invocation: Emri Elizabeth Smith.  
Benediction: Ofa Kaufusi.  
Music by a combined Primary, Young Women, and Relief Society choir from stakes along the Wasatch Front; Emily Wadley, director; Bonnie Goodliffe, organist: “Hark, All Ye Nations!” *Hymns*, no. 264; “Daughters in His Kingdom,” Creamer, unpublished, accompanied by organ, flute, violin, and cello; “I Am a Child of God,” *Hymns*, no. 301, arr. DeFord, unpublished; medley, arr. Mohlman, unpublished: “Lord, I Would Follow Thee,” *Hymns*, no. 220, and “Love One Another,” *Hymns*, no. 308; “Let Us All Press On,” *Hymns*, no. 243, arr. Huff, unpublished.

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# Ensign

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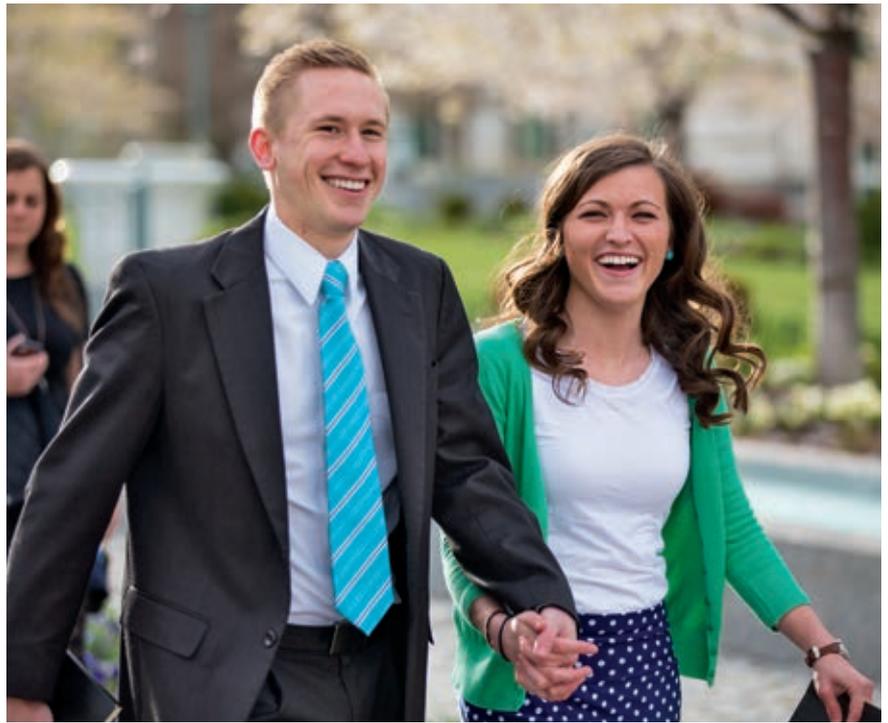
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By President Thomas S. Monson

# Welcome to Conference

*We are . . . united in our faith and in our desire to listen to and learn from the messages which will be presented to us.*

My beloved brothers and sisters, how pleased I am to welcome you to this worldwide conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are gathered together as a great family, more than 15 million strong, united in our faith and in our desire to listen to and learn from the messages which will be presented to us.

The past six months have gone by quickly as the work of the Church has moved forward unhindered. It was my privilege just over a month ago to dedicate the Gilbert Arizona Temple, a magnificent structure. The evening before the dedication, a cultural event was held at the nearby Discovery Park. Twelve thousand young people performed a 90-minute program. The dancing, the singing, and the musical performances were outstanding.

This area had been experiencing an especially dry season, and I believe many prayers had been sent heavenward over the preceding several weeks for much-needed rain. Unfortunately, it came just before the performance and stayed for the entire production!

Despite the fact that the youth were soaked through with the rain and chilled from the cool temperature, we all felt the Spirit of the Lord. The theme of the program, “Live True to the Faith”—think about that: “Live True to the Faith”—was portrayed magnificently by smiling and enthusiastic young men and young women. Despite the cold and the rain, this was a faith-filled and inspiring experience these young people will ever treasure and will be relating to their children and grandchildren in the years to come.

The following day, the dedication of the Gilbert Arizona Temple took place. It became the 142nd operating temple in the Church. Unlike the evening before, the day was beautiful and filled with sunshine. The sessions were truly inspiring. Attending with me were President Henry B. Eyring, Elder and Sister Tad R. Callister, Elder and Sister William R. Walker, and Elder and Sister Kent F. Richards.

In May the Fort Lauderdale Florida Temple will be dedicated. Other temples are scheduled to be completed and dedicated later this year.



In 2015 we anticipate completing and dedicating new temples in many parts of the world. This process will continue. When all the previously announced temples are completed, we will have 170 operating temples throughout the world.

Although we are currently concentrating our efforts on completing



the previously announced temples and will not be announcing any new temples in the immediate future, we will continue the process of determining needs and of finding locations for temples yet to come. Announcements will then be made in future general conferences. We are a temple-building and a temple-attending people.

Now, brothers and sisters, we are anxious to listen to the messages which will be presented to us today and tomorrow. Those who will address us have sought heaven's help and direction as they have prepared their messages.

May we—all of us, here and elsewhere—be filled with the Spirit of the

Lord and be uplifted and inspired as we listen and learn. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, amen. ■



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By **Elder Jeffrey R. Holland**  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

# The Cost— and Blessings— of Discipleship

*Be strong. Live the gospel faithfully even if others around you don't live it at all.*

**P**resident Monson, we love you. You have given your heart and your health to every calling the Lord has ever given you, especially the sacred office you now hold. This entire Church thanks you for your steadfast service and for your unflinching devotion to duty.

With admiration and encouragement for everyone who will need to remain steadfast in these latter days, I say to all and especially the youth of the Church that if you haven't already, you will one day find yourself called upon to defend your faith or perhaps even endure some personal abuse simply because you are a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Such moments will require both courage and courtesy on your part.

For example, a sister missionary recently wrote to me: "My companion and I saw a man sitting on a bench in the town square eating his lunch. As we drew near, he looked up and saw our missionary name tags. With a terrible look in his eye, he jumped up and raised his hand to hit me. I ducked just

in time, only to have him spit his food all over me and start swearing the most horrible things at us. We walked away saying nothing. I tried to wipe the food off of my face, only to feel a clump of mashed potato hit me in the back of the head. Sometimes it is hard being a missionary because right then I wanted to go back, grab that little man, and say, 'EXCUSE ME!' But I didn't."

To this devoted missionary I say, dear child, you have in your own humble way stepped into a circle of very distinguished women and men who have, as the Book of Mormon prophet Jacob said, "view[ed Christ's] death, and suffer[ed] his cross and [borne] the shame of the world."<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, of Jesus Himself, Jacob's brother Nephi wrote: "And the world, because of their iniquity, shall judge him to be a thing of naught; wherefore they scourge him, and he suffereth it; and they smite him, and he suffereth it. Yea, they spit upon him, and he suffereth it, because of his loving kindness and his long-suffering towards the children of men."<sup>2</sup>

In keeping with the Savior's own experience, there has been a long history of rejection and a painfully high price paid by prophets and apostles, missionaries and members in every generation—all those who have tried to honor God's call to lift the human family to "a more excellent way."<sup>3</sup>

"And what shall I more say [of them]?" the writer of the book of Hebrews asks.

"[They] who . . . stopped the mouths of lions,

"Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, . . . waxed valiant in fight, turned [armies] to flight . . .

"[Saw] their dead raised to life [while] others were tortured, . . .

"And . . . had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, . . . of bonds and imprisonment:

"They were stoned, . . . were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: . . . wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, [and] tormented;

"([They] of whom the world was not worthy:) . . . wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."<sup>4</sup>

Surely the angels of heaven wept as they recorded this cost of discipleship in a world that is often hostile to the commandments of God. The Savior Himself shed His own tears over those who for hundreds of years had been rejected and slain in His service. And now He was being rejected and about to be slain.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," Jesus cried, "thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!



“Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”<sup>5</sup>

And therein lies a message for every young man and young woman in this Church. You may wonder if it is worth it to take a courageous moral stand in high school or to go on a mission only to have your most cherished beliefs reviled or to strive against much in society that sometimes ridicules a life of religious devotion. Yes, it is worth it, because the alternative is to have our “houses” left unto us “desolate”—desolate individuals, desolate families, desolate neighborhoods, and desolate nations.

So here we have the burden of those called to bear the messianic message. In addition to teaching, encouraging, and cheering people on (that is the pleasant part of discipleship), from time to time these same messengers are called upon to worry, to warn, and sometimes just to weep (that is the painful part of discipleship). They know full well that the road leading to the promised land “flowing with milk and honey”<sup>6</sup> of necessity runs by way of Mount Sinai,

flowing with “thou shalt” and “thou shalt not.”<sup>7</sup>

Unfortunately, messengers of divinely mandated commandments are often no more popular today than they were anciently, as at least two spit-upon, potato-spattered sister missionaries can now attest. *Hate* is an ugly word, yet there are those today who would say with the corrupt Ahab, “I hate [the prophet Micaiah]; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always [prophesied] evil.”<sup>8</sup> That kind of hate for a prophet’s honesty cost Abinadi his life. As he said to King Noah: “Because I have told you the truth ye are angry with me. . . . Because I have spoken the word of God ye have judged me that I am mad”<sup>9</sup> or, we might add, provincial, patriarchal, bigoted, unkind, narrow, outmoded, and elderly.

It is as the Lord Himself lamented to the prophet Isaiah:

“[These] children . . . will not hear the law of the Lord:

“[They] say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not

unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:

“Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.”<sup>10</sup>

Sadly enough, my young friends, it is a characteristic of our age that if people want any gods at all, they want them to be gods who do not demand much, comfortable gods, smooth gods who not only don’t rock the boat but don’t even row it, gods who pat us on the head, make us giggle, then tell us to run along and pick marigolds.<sup>11</sup>

Talk about man creating God in his own image! Sometimes—and this seems the greatest irony of all—these folks invoke the name of Jesus as one who was this kind of “comfortable” God. Really? He who said not only should we not break commandments, but we should not even *think* about breaking them. And if we do think about breaking them, we have already broken them in our heart. Does that sound like “comfortable” doctrine, easy on the ear and popular down at the village love-in?

And what of those who just want to look at sin or touch it from a distance? Jesus said with a flash, if your eye offends you, pluck it out. If your hand offends you, cut it off.<sup>12</sup> “I came not to [bring] peace, but a sword,”<sup>13</sup> He warned those who thought He spoke only soothing platitudes. No wonder that, sermon after sermon, the local communities “pray[ed] him to depart out of their coasts.”<sup>14</sup> No wonder, miracle after miracle, His power was attributed not to God but to the devil.<sup>15</sup> It is obvious that the bumper sticker question “What would Jesus do?” will not always bring a popular response.

At the zenith of His mortal ministry, Jesus said, “Love one another, as I have loved you.”<sup>16</sup> To make certain

they understood exactly what kind of love that was, He said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments”<sup>17</sup> and “whosoever . . . shall break one of [the] least commandments, *and shall teach men so*, he shall be . . . the least in the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>18</sup> Christlike love is the greatest need we have on this planet in part because righteousness was always supposed to accompany it. So if love is to be our watchword, as it *must* be, then by the word of Him who is love personified, we must forsake transgression and any hint of advocacy for it in others. Jesus clearly understood what many in our modern culture seem to forget: that there is a crucial difference between the commandment to forgive sin (which He had an infinite capacity to

do) and the warning against condoning it (which He never ever did even once).

Friends, especially my young friends, take heart. Pure Christlike love flowing from true righteousness can change the world. I testify that the true and living gospel of Jesus Christ is on the earth and you are members of His true and living Church, trying to share it. I bear witness of that gospel and that Church, with a particular witness of restored priesthood keys which unlock the power and efficacy of saving ordinances. I am more certain that those keys have been restored and that those ordinances are once again available through The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints than I am certain I stand before you at this pulpit and



you sit before me in this conference.

Be strong. Live the gospel faithfully even if others around you don't live it at all. Defend your beliefs with courtesy and with compassion, but defend them. A long history of inspired voices, including those you will hear in this conference and the voice you just heard in the person of President Thomas S. Monson, point you toward the path of Christian discipleship. It is a strait path, and it is a narrow path without a great deal of latitude at some points, but it can be thrillingly and successfully traveled, "with . . . steadfastness in Christ, . . . a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men."<sup>19</sup> In courageously pursuing such a course, you will forge unshakable faith, you will find safety against ill winds that blow, even shafts in the whirlwind, and you will feel the rock-like strength of our Redeemer, upon whom if you build your unflinching discipleship, you *cannot* fall.<sup>20</sup> In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. Jacob 1:8.
2. 1 Nephi 19:9.
3. 1 Corinthians 12:31; Ether 12:11.
4. Hebrews 11:32–38.
5. Matthew 23:37–38.
6. Exodus 3:8.
7. See Exodus 20:3–17.
8. 2 Chronicles 18:7.
9. Mosiah 13:4.
10. Isaiah 30:9–11.
11. See Henry Fairlie, *The Seven Deadly Sins Today* (1978), 15–16.
12. See Matthew 5:29–30.
13. Matthew 10:34.
14. Mark 5:17.
15. See Matthew 9:34.
16. John 15:12.
17. John 14:15.
18. Matthew 5:19; emphasis added.
19. 2 Nephi 31:20.
20. See Helaman 5:12.



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**By Elder Ronald A. Rasband**  
Of the Presidency of the Seventy

## The Joyful Burden of Discipleship

*To sustain our leaders is a privilege; it comes coupled with a personal responsibility to share their burden and to be disciples of the Lord.*

**O**n May 20 of last year a massive tornado pummeled the suburbs of Oklahoma City, in the heartland of America, carving a trail more than a mile (1.6 km) wide and 17 miles (27 km) long. This storm, an onslaught of devastating tornadoes, altered the landscape and the lives of the people in its path.

Just a week after the massive storm struck, I was assigned to visit the area where homes and belongings were strewn across the flattened, ravaged neighborhoods.

Before I left, I spoke with our beloved prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, who relishes such errands for the Lord. With respect borne not only of his office but also of his goodness, I asked, "What do you want me to do? What do you want me to say?"

He tenderly took my hand, as he would have done with each one of the victims and each of those helping with the devastation had he been there, and said:

"First, tell them I love them.

"Second, tell them I am praying for them.

"Third, please thank all those who are helping."

As a member of the Presidency of the Seventy, I could feel the weight on my shoulders in the words the Lord spoke unto Moses:

"Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; . . .

"And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee [Moses], and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone."<sup>1</sup>

These are words from ancient times, yet the Lord's ways have not changed.

Currently in the Church, the Lord has called 317 Seventies, serving in 8 quorums, to assist the Twelve Apostles in carrying the burden placed on the First Presidency. I joyfully feel that responsibility in the depths of my very soul, as do my fellow Brethren. However, we are not the only ones assisting in this glorious work. As members of the Church worldwide,



we all have the wonderful opportunity of blessing the lives of others.

I had learned from our dear prophet what the storm-tossed people needed—love, prayers, and appreciation for helping hands.

This afternoon each of us will raise our right arm to the square and sustain the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This is not a mere formality, nor is it reserved for those called to general service. To sustain our leaders is a privilege; it comes coupled with a personal responsibility to share their burden and to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

President Monson has said:

“We are surrounded by those in need of our attention, our encouragement, our support, our comfort, our kindness—be they family members, friends, acquaintances, or strangers. We are the Lord’s hands here upon the earth, with the mandate to serve and to lift His children. He is dependent upon each of us. . . .

“. . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these . . . ,

ye have done it unto me’ [Matthew 25:40].”<sup>2</sup>

Will we respond with love when an opportunity is before us to make a visit or a phone call, write a note, or spend a day meeting the needs of someone else? Or will we be like the young man who attested to following all of God’s commandments:

“All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?”

“Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.”<sup>3</sup>

The young man was being called to a greater service at the side of the Lord to do the work of the kingdom of God on earth, yet he turned away, “for he had great possessions.”<sup>4</sup>

What of our earthly possessions? We can see what a tornado can do with them in just minutes. It is so important for each of us to strive to lay up our spiritual treasures in heaven—using our time, talents, and agency in service to God.

Jesus Christ continues to extend the call “Come and follow me.”<sup>5</sup> He walked His homeland with His

followers in a selfless manner. He continues to walk with us, stand by us, and lead us. To follow His perfect example is to recognize and honor the Savior, who has borne all of our burdens through His sacred and saving Atonement, the ultimate act of service. What He asks of each one of us is to be able and willing to take up the joyful “burden” of discipleship.

While in Oklahoma, I had the opportunity to meet with a few of the families devastated by the mighty twisters. As I visited with the Sorrells family, I was particularly touched by the experience of their daughter, Tori, then a fifth grader at Plaza Towers Elementary School. She and her mother are here with us today.

Tori and a handful of her friends huddled in a restroom for shelter as the tornado roared through the school. Listen as I read, in Tori’s own words, the account of that day:

“I heard something hit the roof. I thought it was just hailing. The sound got louder and louder. I said a prayer that Heavenly Father would protect us all and keep us safe. All of a sudden we heard a loud vacuum sound, and the roof disappeared right above our

heads. There was lots of wind and debris flying around and hitting every part of my body. It was darker outside and it looked like the sky was black, but it wasn't—it was the inside of the tornado. I just closed my eyes, hoping and praying that it would be over soon.

“All of a sudden it got quiet.

“When I opened my eyes, I saw a stop sign right in front of my eyes! It was almost touching my nose.”<sup>6</sup>

Tori, her mother, three of her siblings, and numerous friends who were also in the school with her miraculously survived that tornado; seven of their schoolmates did not.

That weekend the priesthood brethren gave many blessings to members who had suffered in the storm. I was humbled to give Tori a blessing. As I laid my hands on her head, a favorite scripture came to mind: “I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up.”<sup>7</sup>

I counseled Tori to remember the day when a servant of the Lord laid his hands on her head and pronounced that she had been protected by angels in the storm.

Reaching out to rescue one another, under any condition, is an eternal measure of love. This is the service I witnessed in Oklahoma that week.

Often we are given the opportunity to help others in their time of need. As members of the Church, we each have the sacred responsibility “to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light,”<sup>8</sup> “to mourn with those that mourn,”<sup>9</sup> and to “lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees.”<sup>10</sup>

Brothers and sisters, how grateful the Lord is for each and every one of you, for the countless hours and acts

of service, whether large or small, you so generously and graciously give each day.

King Benjamin taught in the Book of Mormon, “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God.”<sup>11</sup>

Focusing on serving our brothers and sisters can guide us to make divine decisions in our daily lives and prepares us to value and love what the Lord loves. In so doing, we witness by our very lives that we are His disciples. When we are engaged in His work, we feel His Spirit with us. We grow in testimony, faith, trust, and love.

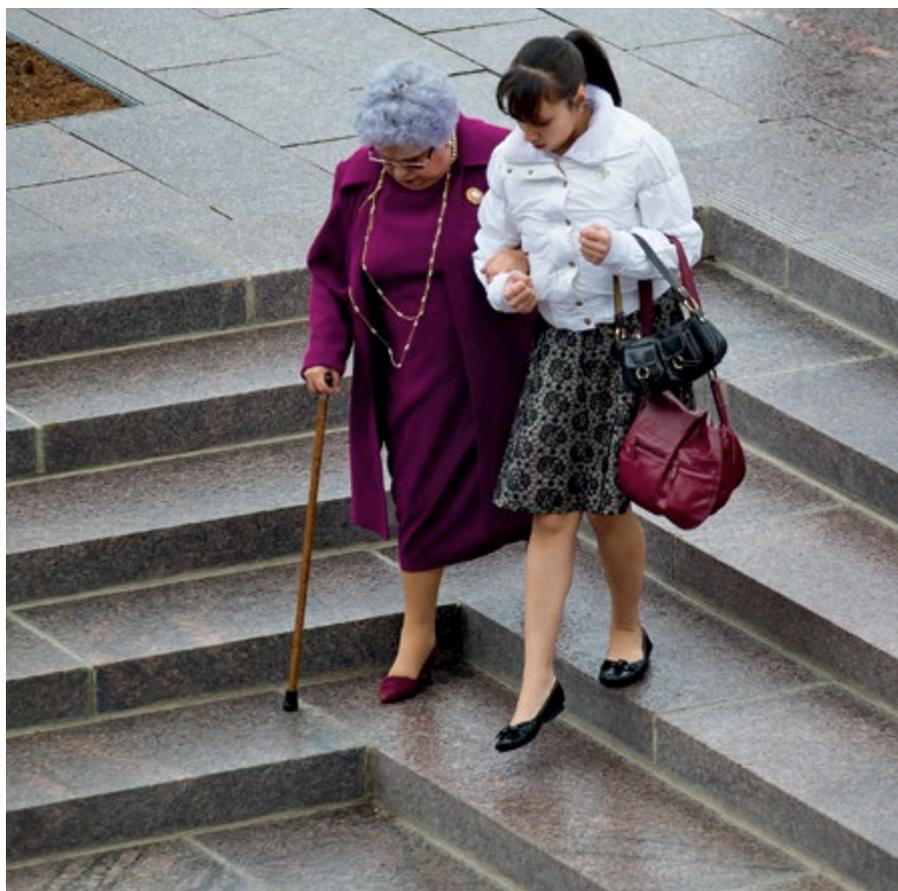
I know that my Redeemer lives, even Jesus Christ, and that He speaks to and through His prophet, dear

President Thomas S. Monson, in this, our day.

May we all find the joy that comes from the sacred service of bearing one another’s burdens, even those simple and small, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. Numbers 11:16–17.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “What Have I Done for Someone Today?” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 86, 87.
3. Matthew 19:20–21.
4. Matthew 19:22.
5. Matthew 19:21.
6. Experience of Victoria (Tori) Sorrels, recounted Jan. 16, 2014.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 84:88.
8. Mosiah 18:8.
9. Mosiah 18:9.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 81:5.
11. Mosiah 2:17.





By **Elder Carlos H. Amado**  
Of the Seventy

# Christ the Redeemer

*[The Redeemer's] sacrifice blessed everyone, from Adam, the first, to the last of all human beings.*

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was born and died in unique circumstances. He lived and grew up in humble conditions, without material things. He said of Himself, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head” (Luke 9:58).

He never received honors, favors, recognition, nor preferred treatment from the political leaders of the earth or from the religious leaders of His day. Neither did He sit in the highest seats of the synagogues.

His preaching was simple, and even though multitudes followed after Him, His ministry always consisted of blessing people one by one. He performed innumerable miracles among those who accepted Him as the One sent from God.

He gave His Apostles authority and power to do miracles “and greater works” than those He performed (John 14:12), but He never delegated to them the privilege of forgiving sins. His enemies became indignant when they heard Him say, “Go, and sin no more” (John 8:11) or “Thy sins are forgiven [thee]” (Luke 7:48). That right belonged only to Him because He is the Son of God and because He would pay for those sins with His Atonement.

## His Power over Death

His power over death was another divine attribute. Great Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, pleaded “that he would come into his house: for he had one only daughter, . . . and she lay a dying” (Luke 8:41–42). The Master heard his plea, and while they were walking, a servant came to Jairus and told him, “Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master” (Luke 8:49). After entering the house, Jesus asked for everyone to go out, and straightway, taking her by the hand, He said to her, “Arise” (Luke 8:54).

On another occasion, while He was traveling to the city of Nain, He came upon a funeral procession, a widow weeping for the death of her only son. Full of mercy, He touched the bier and said, “Young man, I say unto thee, Arise” (Luke 7:14). The people, upon seeing the miracle, exclaimed, “A great prophet is risen up among us; and . . . God hath visited his people” (Luke 7:16). This miracle was even more noteworthy because they had already declared the young man legally dead and were on the way to bury him. With two young people brought back to life, the evidence of His authority and power over death astonished the believers and filled the defamers with fear.

The third occasion was the most impressive. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus were siblings whom Christ would often visit. When people informed Him that Lazarus was sick, He remained two days before leaving to come to the family. In consoling Martha after her brother's death, He categorically testified to her, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (John 11:25).

When the Savior asked for the mourners to remove the stone from the sepulchre, Martha timidly whispered to Him, “Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days” (John 11:39).

Then Jesus lovingly reminded her, “Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?” (John 11:40). And having said this, He cried out with a loud voice:

“Lazarus, come forth.

“And he that was dead came forth” (John 11:43–44).

After Lazarus's four days in the grave, the enemies of the Son of God were faced with irrefutable evidence they could not ignore, diminish, or distort, and they senselessly and maliciously “from that day forth . . . took counsel together for to put him to death” (John 11:53).

## The New Commandment

Later on, the living Christ celebrated in Jerusalem, along with His Apostles, His last Feast of the Passover, established the ordinance of the sacrament, and gave them the commandment to love one another through sincere service.

## His Agony in Gethsemane

After that, in the most sublime show of His love for humankind, and



in the full exercise of His will, He walked bravely and determinedly to face His most demanding trial. In the Garden of Gethsemane, in utter loneliness, He suffered the most intense agony, bleeding from each pore. In total submission before His Father, He atoned for our sins and also took upon Him our illnesses and afflictions in order to know how to succor us (see Alma 7:11–13).

We are indebted to Him and to our Heavenly Father because His sacrifice blessed everyone, from Adam, the first, to the last of all human beings.

### **Condemnation and Crucifixion of the Savior**

Once His agony in Gethsemane was concluded, He voluntarily gave Himself up to His detractors. Betrayed by one of His own, He was hurriedly condemned, in a manner both unjust and illegal, in a trial both manipulated and incomplete. That same night He was accused of the crime of blasphemy and condemned to death. In their hatred and thirst for vengeance—because He testified to them that He was the Son of God—His enemies plotted for Pilate to condemn Him. To that end, they changed the accusation

of blasphemy to sedition so that His death would be by crucifixion.

His condemnation among the Romans was even more cruel: their mockings and scorn regarding His spiritual kingdom, the humiliating coronation with a crown of thorns, His painful scourging, and the prolonged agony of His public Crucifixion were all a clear warning for every person who might dare to declare himself or herself His disciple.

At each moment of His suffering, the Redeemer of the world showed exceptional self-control. He always thought of blessing others; with

kindness and tenderness, He pleaded for John to take care of His mother, Mary. He asked His Father in Heaven to forgive the executioners who crucified Him. With His work on earth fulfilled, He commended His spirit to God and breathed His last breath. The physical body of Christ was taken to the tomb and remained there three days.

### **The Work of the Redeemer among the Dead**

While His disciples were suffering from sadness, discouragement, and uncertainty, our Savior, in another phase of His Father's glorious plan, extended His ministry in a new way. In the short period of three days, He

worked untiringly to organize the immense work of salvation among the dead. Those days became some of the most hope-filled of all for the family of God. During that visit He organized His faithful followers so that they would bear glad tidings of redemption to those who did not in life come to know of the glorious plan or who had rejected it. Now they would have the opportunity to be freed from their captivity and to be redeemed by the God of both the living and the dead (see D&C 138:19, 30–31).

### **The Firstfruits of the Resurrection**

With His work completed in the spirit world, He returned to earth—

forever to unite His spirit with His physical body. Even though He had authoritatively shown His power over death, the scriptural accounts of those He brought back to life before His Resurrection demonstrate that they were only coming back to a life that had been miraculously prolonged; they would yet die.

Christ was the first to be resurrected and never die again, to possess forever a perfect, eternal body. In His resurrected state, He appeared to Mary, who as soon as she recognized Him, began to worship Him. Our Redeemer, with great tenderness, warned her concerning His new and glorious condition: “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father” (John 20:17)—providing an additional witness that His ministry in the spirit world was real and complete. Then, using language that confirmed the reality of His Resurrection, He said, “I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God” (John 20:17). After going to His Father, He returned again and appeared to His Apostles. “He shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord” (John 20:20).

### **The Redeemer Will Return**

I testify that Christ will return in a way very different from His first coming. He will come in power and glory with all the just and faithful Saints. He will come as King of kings and Lord of lords, as the Prince of Peace, the promised Messiah, the Savior and Redeemer, to judge the living and the dead. I love and serve Him with all my heart, and I plead that we may serve with joy and dedication and that we may remain faithful to Him until the end. In His name, Jesus Christ, amen. ■





**By Linda S. Reeves**  
Second Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency

# Protection from Pornography—a Christ-Focused Home

*The greatest filter in the world . . . is the personal internal filter that comes from a deep and abiding testimony.*

**D**ear brothers and sisters, today I am blessed to have my 13 oldest grandchildren in the congregation. This has caused me to ask, “What do I want my grandchildren to know?” This morning I would like to talk frankly to my family and to yours.

We as leaders are increasingly concerned about the destruction that pornography is causing in the lives of Church members and their families. Satan is attacking with unprecedented fury.

One reason we are here on earth is to learn to manage the passions and feelings of our mortal bodies. These God-given feelings help us want to marry and have children. The intimate marriage relationship between a man and a woman that brings children into mortality is also meant to be a beautiful, loving experience that binds together two devoted hearts, unites both spirit and body, and brings a fullness of joy and happiness as we learn to put each other first. President

Spencer W. Kimball taught that in marriage, “the spouse . . . becomes preeminent in the life of the husband or wife, and . . . [no] other interest [or] person [or] thing shall ever take precedence over the companion spouse. . . .

“Marriage presupposes total allegiance and total fidelity.”<sup>1</sup>

Many years ago one of our children was noticeably distressed. I stepped into her bedroom, where she opened up her heart and explained to me that she had been at a friend’s home and had accidentally seen startling and disturbing images and actions on the television between a man and a woman without clothing. She began sobbing and expressed how horrible she felt about what she had seen and wished she could get it out of her mind. I was so grateful that she would confide in me, giving me a chance to soothe her innocent and aching heart and help her know how to get relief through our Savior’s Atonement. I remember the sacred feelings I had as we knelt together, as mother and

daughter, and petitioned the help of our Heavenly Father.

Many children, youth, and adults are innocently exposed to pornography, but a growing number of both men and women are choosing to view it and are drawn back repeatedly until it becomes an addiction. These individuals may desire with all of their hearts to get out of this trap but often cannot overcome it on their own. How grateful we are when these loved ones choose to confide in us as parents or a Church leader. We would be wise not to react with shock, anger, or rejection, which may cause them to be silent again.

We as parents and leaders need to counsel with our children and youth on an ongoing basis, listening with love and understanding. They need to know the dangers of pornography and how it overtakes lives, causing loss of the Spirit, distorted feelings, deceit, damaged relationships, loss of self-control, and nearly total consumption of time, thought, and energy.

Pornography is more vile, evil, and graphic than ever before. As we counsel with our children, together we can create a family plan with standards and boundaries, being proactive to protect our homes with filters on electronic devices. Parents, are we aware that mobile devices with Internet capacity, not computers, are the biggest culprit?<sup>2</sup>

Young people and adults, if you are caught in Satan’s trap of pornography, remember how merciful our beloved Savior is. Do you realize how deeply the Lord loves and cherishes you, even now? Our Savior has the power to cleanse and heal you. He can remove the pain and sorrow you feel and make you clean again through the power of His Atonement.



**Raymond, Alberta, Canada**

We as leaders are also greatly concerned about the spouses and families of those suffering from pornography addiction. Elder Richard G. Scott has pleaded: “If you are free of serious sin yourself, don’t suffer needlessly the consequences of another’s sins. . . . You can feel compassion. . . . Yet you should not take upon yourself a feeling of responsibility for those acts.”<sup>3</sup> Know that you are not alone. There is help. Addiction recovery meetings for spouses are available, including phone-in meetings, which allow spouses to call in to a meeting and participate from their own homes.

Brothers and sisters, how do we protect our children and youth? Filters are useful tools, but the greatest filter in the world, the only one that will ultimately work, is the personal internal filter that comes from a deep and abiding testimony of our Heavenly Father’s love and our Savior’s atoning sacrifice for each one of us.

How do we lead our children to deep conversion and to access our Savior’s Atonement? I love the prophet Nephi’s declaration of what his people

did to fortify the youth of his day: “We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, [and] we prophesy of Christ . . . that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins.”<sup>4</sup>

How can we do this in our homes? Some of you have heard me tell how overwhelmed my husband, Mel, and I felt as the parents of four young children. As we faced the challenges of parenting and keeping up with the

demands of life, we were desperate for help. We prayed and pleaded to know what to do. The answer that came was clear: “It is OK if the house is a mess and the children are still in their pajamas and some responsibilities are left undone. The only things that really need to be accomplished in the home are daily scripture study and prayer and weekly family home evening.”

We were trying to do these things, but they were not always the priority and, amidst the chaos, were sometimes neglected. We changed our focus and tried not to worry about the less-important things. Our focus became to talk, rejoice, preach, and testify of Christ by striving to daily pray and study the scriptures and have weekly family home evening.

A friend recently cautioned, “When you ask the sisters to read the scriptures and pray more, it stresses them out. They already feel like they have too much to do.”

Brothers and sisters, because I know from my own experiences, and those of my husband, I must testify of the blessings of daily scripture study



and prayer and weekly family home evening. These are the very practices that help take away stress, give direction to our lives, and add protection to our homes. Then, if pornography or other challenges do strike our families, we can petition the Lord for help and expect great guidance from the Spirit, knowing that we have done what our Father has asked us to do.

Brothers and sisters, if these have not been practices in our homes, we can all begin now. If our children are older and refuse to join us, we can start with ourselves. As we do, the influence of the Spirit will begin to fill our homes and our lives and, over time, children may respond.

Remember that living Apostles have also promised that as we search out our ancestors and prepare our own family names for the temple, we will be protected now and throughout our lives as we keep ourselves worthy of a temple recommend.<sup>5</sup> What promises!

Youth, take responsibility for your own spiritual well-being. Turn off your phone if necessary, sing a Primary song, pray for help, think of a scripture, walk out of a movie, picture the Savior, take the sacrament worthily, study *For the Strength of Youth*, be an example to your friends, confide in a parent, go see your bishop, ask for help, and seek professional counseling, if needed.

What do I want my grandchildren to know? I want them and you to know that I know the Savior lives and loves us. He has paid the price for our sins, but we must kneel before our Father in Heaven, in deep humility, confessing our sins, and plead with Him for forgiveness. We must want to change our hearts and our desires and be humble enough to seek the help and forgiveness of those we may have hurt or forsaken.

I know that Joseph Smith saw God, our Heavenly Father, and our Savior, Jesus Christ. I testify that we have a living prophet upon the earth, President Thomas S. Monson. I also testify that we will never be led astray if we heed the counsel of the prophet of God. I testify of the power of our covenants and the blessings of the temple.

I know that the Book of Mormon is true! I cannot explain the power of this great book. I only know that, coupled with prayer, the Book of Mormon carries the power to protect families, strengthen relationships, and give personal confidence before the Lord.

I testify of these things in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 199–200.
2. See Clay Olsen, “What Teens Wish Parents Knew” (address given at Utah Coalition Against Pornography Conference, Mar. 22, 2014); [utahcoalition.org](http://utahcoalition.org).
3. Richard G. Scott, “To Be Free of Heavy Burdens,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2002, 88.
4. 2 Nephi 25:26.
5. See David A. Bednar, “The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 24–27; Richard G. Scott, “The Joy of Redeeming the Dead,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 93–95; Neil L. Andersen, “Find Our Cousins!” (address given at RootsTech 2014 Family History Conference, Feb. 8, 2014); [lds.org/prophets-and-apostles/unto-all-the-world/find-our-cousins](http://lds.org/prophets-and-apostles/unto-all-the-world/find-our-cousins).





**By Elder Neil L. Andersen**  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

# Spiritual Whirlwinds

*Don't let the whirlwinds drag you down. These are your days—to stand strong as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.*



I greet you this morning—especially the young people who are both here in the Conference Center and throughout the world. Yours is a chosen generation of destiny, and I speak especially to you.

Many years ago while we were visiting our family in Florida, a tornado touched down not too far from us. One woman living in a mobile home went into her bathroom for safety. The mobile home began to shake. A few moments passed. Then she heard her neighbor's voice: "I am here in the front room." Coming out of the bathroom, to her great astonishment, she discovered that the tornado had lifted and carried her mobile home through the air, landing it perfectly upright on the top of her neighbor's mobile home.

My young friends, the world will not glide calmly toward the Second Coming of the Savior. The scriptures declare that "all things shall be in commotion."<sup>1</sup> Brigham Young said, "It was revealed to me in the commencement of this Church, that the Church would spread, prosper, grow and extend, and that in proportion to the spread of the Gospel among the nations of the earth, so would the power of Satan rise."<sup>2</sup>

More concerning than the prophesied earthquakes and wars<sup>3</sup> are the spiritual whirlwinds that can uproot you from your spiritual foundations and land your spirit in places you never imagined possible, sometimes with your barely noticing that you have been moved.

The worst whirlwinds are the temptations of the adversary. Sin has always been part of the world, but it has never been so accessible, insatiable, and acceptable. There is, of course, a powerful force that will subdue the whirlwinds of sin. It is called repentance.

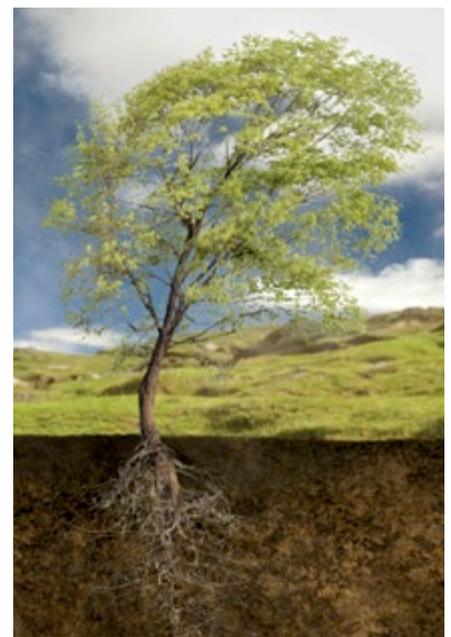
Not all the whirlwinds in life are of your own making. Some come because of the wrong choices of others, and some come just because this is mortality.

***Trees that grow up in a windy environment become stronger.***

As a young boy, President Boyd K. Packer suffered from the crippling disease of polio. When Elder Dallin H. Oaks was seven years old, his father died suddenly. When Sister Carol F. McConkie of the Young Women general presidency was a teenager, her parents divorced. Challenges will come to you, but as you trust in God, they will strengthen your faith.

In nature, trees that grow up in a windy environment become stronger. As winds whip around a young sapling, forces inside the tree do two things. First, they stimulate the roots to grow faster and spread farther. Second, the forces in the tree start creating cell structures that actually make the trunk and branches thicker and more flexible to the pressure of the wind. These stronger roots and branches protect the tree from winds that are sure to return.<sup>4</sup>

You are infinitely more precious to God than a tree. You are His son or His daughter. He made your spirit strong and capable of being resilient to the whirlwinds of life. The whirlwinds in your youth, like the wind against a young tree, can increase your spiritual strength, preparing you for the years ahead.





How do you prepare for your whirlwinds? “Remember . . . it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, . . . his shafts in the whirlwind, . . . when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power . . . to drag you down . . . because of the rock upon which ye are built.”<sup>5</sup> This is your safety in the whirlwind.

President Thomas S. Monson has said, “Where once the standards of the Church and the standards of society were mostly compatible, now there is a wide chasm between us, and it’s growing ever wider.”<sup>6</sup> This chasm, for some, stirs strong spiritual whirlwinds. Let me share an example.

This past month the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve published a letter to leaders of the Church across the world. In part it read: “Changes in the civil law do not, indeed cannot, change the moral law that God has established. God expects us to uphold and keep His commandments regardless of divergent opinions or trends in society.

His law of chastity is clear: sexual relations are proper only between a man and a woman who are legally and lawfully wedded as husband and wife. We urge you to review . . . the doctrine contained in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.”<sup>7</sup>

As the world slips away from the Lord’s law of chastity, we do not. President Monson said: “The Savior of mankind described Himself as being in the world but not of the world. We also can be in the world but not of the world as we reject false concepts and false teachings and remain true to that which God has commanded.”<sup>8</sup>

While many governments and well-meaning individuals have redefined marriage, the Lord has not. In the very beginning, God initiated marriage between a man and a woman—Adam and Eve. He designated the purposes of marriage to go far beyond the personal satisfaction and fulfillment of adults to, more importantly, advancing the ideal setting for children to be born, reared, and nurtured. Families are the treasure of heaven.<sup>9</sup>

Why do we continue to talk about this? As Paul said, “We look not at

the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.”<sup>10</sup> As Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have the responsibility to teach our Creator’s plan for His children and to warn of the consequences of disregarding His commandments.

Recently, I spoke with a Laurel from the United States. I quote from her email:

“This past year some of my friends on Facebook began posting their position on marriage. Many favored same-sex marriage, and several LDS youth indicated they ‘liked’ the postings. I made no comment.

“I decided to declare my belief in traditional marriage in a thoughtful way.

“With my profile picture, I added the caption ‘I believe in marriage between a man and a woman.’ Almost instantly I started receiving messages. ‘You are selfish.’ ‘You are judgmental.’ One compared me to a slave owner. And I received this post from a great friend who is a strong member of the Church: ‘You need to catch up with the times. Things are changing and so should you.’



**After declaring her belief in traditional marriage, a Laurel received several negative messages from friends.**

“I did not fight back,” she said, “but I did not take my statement down.”

She concludes: “Sometimes, as President Monson said, ‘You have to stand alone.’ Hopefully as youth, we will stand together in being true to God and to the teachings of His living prophets.”<sup>11</sup>

Of special concern to us should be those who struggle with same-sex attraction. It is a whirlwind of enormous velocity. I want to express my love and admiration for those who courageously confront this trial of faith and stay true to the commandments of God!<sup>12</sup> But everyone, independent of his or her decisions and beliefs, deserves our kindness and consideration.<sup>13</sup>

The Savior taught us to love not only our friends but also those who disagree with us—and even those who repudiate us. He said: “For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? . . . And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?”<sup>14</sup>

The Prophet Joseph Smith warned us to “beware of self-righteousness” and to enlarge our hearts toward all men and women until we feel “to take them upon our shoulders.”<sup>15</sup> In the

gospel of Jesus Christ, there is no place for ridicule, bullying, or bigotry.

If you have a question about counsel from the leaders of the Church, please discuss your honest concerns with your parents and leaders. You need the strength that comes from trusting the Lord’s prophets. President Harold B. Lee said: “The only safety we have as members of this church is to . . . learn to give heed to the words and commandments that the Lord shall give through His prophet. . . . There will be some things that take patience and faith. You may not like what comes. . . . It may contradict your political views . . . your social views . . . interfere with . . . your social life. But if you listen to these things, as if from the mouth of the Lord Himself, . . . ‘the gates of hell shall not prevail against you . . . and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you . . .’ (D&C 21:6).”<sup>16</sup>

Another powerful protection from the whirlwinds of life is the Book of Mormon.

When President Henry B. Eyring was a teenager, his family moved to a new city. He initially found the move

unpleasant and made few friends. He felt like he didn’t fit in with the students in his high school. The whirlwinds were swirling. What did he do? He threw his energy into the Book of Mormon, reading it many times.<sup>17</sup> Years later, President Eyring testified: “I [love to] go back to the Book of Mormon and drink deeply and often.”<sup>18</sup> “[It] is the most powerful written testimony we have that Jesus is the Christ.”<sup>19</sup>

The Lord has given you another way to stand firm, a spiritual gift more powerful than the whirlwinds of the adversary! He said, “Stand . . . in holy places, and be not moved.”<sup>20</sup>

When I was a teenager, there were only 13 temples in the Church. Now there are 142. Eighty-five percent of Church members live within 200 miles (320 km) of a temple. The Lord has given your generation greater access to His holy temples than any other generation in the history of the world.

Have you ever stood in the temple, dressed in white, waiting to do baptisms? How did you feel? There is a tangible feeling of holiness in





the temple. The peace of the Savior subdues the swirling whirlwinds of the world.

The way you feel in the temple is a pattern for how you want to feel in your life.<sup>21</sup>

Find your grandfathers and grandmothers and your distant cousins who have gone before you. Take their names to the temple with you.<sup>22</sup> As you learn about your ancestors, you will see patterns of life, of marriage, of children; patterns of righteousness; and occasionally patterns that you will want to avoid.<sup>23</sup>

Later in the temple you will learn more about the Creation of the world, about the patterns in the lives of Adam and Eve, and most importantly, about our Savior, Jesus Christ.

My young brothers and sisters, how we love you, admire you, and pray for you. Don't let the whirlwinds drag you down. These are your days—to stand strong as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>24</sup>

Build more firmly your foundation upon the rock of your Redeemer.

Treasure more completely His incomparable life and teachings.

Follow more diligently His example and His commandments.

Embrace more deeply His love, His mercy and grace, and the powerful gifts of His Atonement.

As you do, I promise you that you will see the whirlwinds for what they are—tests, temptations, distractions, or challenges to help you grow. And as you live righteously year after year, I assure you that your experiences will confirm to you again and again that Jesus is the Christ. The spiritual rock under your feet will be solid and secure. You will rejoice that God has placed you here to be a part of the final preparations for Christ's glorious return.

The Savior said, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."<sup>25</sup> This is His promise to you. I know this promise is real. I know that He lives, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 88:91.
2. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 72.
3. See Dallin H. Oaks, "Preparation for the Second Coming," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2004, 7–10.
4. See A. Stokes, A. H. Fitter, and M. P. Coutts, "Responses of Young Trees to Wind and Shading: Effects on Root Architecture," *Journal of Experimental Botany*, vol. 46, no. 290 (Sept. 1995), 1139–46.
5. Helaman 5:12.
6. Thomas S. Monson, "Priesthood Power," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 66.
7. First Presidency letter, Mar. 6, 2014; see also David A. Bednar, "We Believe in Being Chaste," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 41–44; Dallin H. Oaks, "No Other Gods," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 72–75; *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2011), 35–37.
8. Thomas S. Monson, *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 67.
9. Elder Russell M. Nelson said: "Marriage

is the foundry for social order. . . . That union is not merely between husband and wife; it embraces a partnership with God" ("Nurturing Marriage," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2006, 36). See also Matthew 19:5–6.

10. 2 Corinthians 4:18.
11. Personal correspondence and conversation, Mar. 17, 2014; see also Thomas S. Monson, "Dare to Stand Alone," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 60–67.
12. See Jeffrey R. Holland, "Helping Those Who Struggle with Same-Gender Attraction," *Ensign*, Oct. 2007, 42–45; *Liahona*, Oct. 2007, 40–43.
13. Even when the anti-Christ Korihor sought to destroy the faith of the people, the laws of God protected him against retribution: "There was no law against a man's belief; for it was strictly contrary to the commands of God that there should be a law which should bring men on to unequal grounds. . . . If a man desired to serve God, it was his privilege; . . . but if he did not believe in him there was no law to punish him" (Alma 30:7, 9). The eleventh article of faith reads, "We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may."
14. Matthew 5:46–47.
15. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 427, 429.
16. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* (2000), 84–85; see also Robert D. Hales, "General Conference: Strengthening Faith and Testimony," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 6–8.
17. See Robert I. Eaton and Henry J. Eyring, *I Will Lead You Along: The Life of Henry B. Eyring* (2013), 40.
18. Henry B. Eyring, *Choose Higher Ground* (2013), 38.
19. Henry B. Eyring, *To Draw Closer to God* (1997), 118.
20. Doctrine and Covenants 87:8; see also Doctrine and Covenants 45:32.
21. See Doctrine and Covenants 52:14.
22. See Neil L. Andersen, "Find Our Cousins!" (address given at RootsTech 2014 Family History Conference, Feb. 8, 2014); [lds.org/prophets-and-apostles/unto-all-the-world/find-our-cousins](http://lds.org/prophets-and-apostles/unto-all-the-world/find-our-cousins).
23. See David A. Bednar, "The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 24–27.
24. See Helaman 7:9.
25. John 14:18.



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**By President Henry B. Eyring**  
First Counselor in the First Presidency

# A Priceless Heritage of Hope

*When you choose whether to make or keep a covenant with God, you choose whether you will leave an inheritance of hope to those who might follow your example.*

**M**y dear brothers and sisters, some of you were invited to this meeting by missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Those missionaries may have already invited you to make the choice of covenanting with God by being baptized.

Others of you are listening because you accepted the invitation of a parent, a wife, or perhaps a child, extended to you in the hopes that you will choose to put the covenants you have already made with God back into the center of your lives. Some of you who are listening have already made the choice to return to follow the Savior and are feeling today the joy of His welcome.

Whoever you are and wherever you may be, you hold in your hands the happiness of more people than you can now imagine. Every day and every hour you can choose to make or keep a covenant with God.

Wherever you are on the path to inherit the gift of eternal life, you have the opportunity to show many people the way to greater happiness. When you choose whether to make or keep

a covenant with God, you choose whether you will leave an inheritance of hope to those who might follow your example.

You and I have been blessed with the promise of such an inheritance. I owe much of my happiness in life to a man I never met in mortal life. He was an orphan who became one of my great-grandparents. He left me a priceless heritage of hope. Let me tell you some of the part he played in creating that inheritance for me.

His name was Heinrich Eyring. He was born into great wealth. His father, Edward, had a large estate in Coburg, in what is now Germany. His mother was Viscountess Charlotte Von Blomberg. Her father was the keeper of the lands of the king of Prussia.

Heinrich was Charlotte and Edward's first son. Charlotte died at the age of 31, after the birth of her third child. Edward died soon thereafter, having lost all his property and wealth in a failed investment. He was only 40 years of age. He left three orphaned children.

Heinrich, my great-grandfather, had lost both of his parents and a great

worldly inheritance. He was penniless. He recorded in his history that he felt his best hope lay in going to America. Although he had neither family nor friends there, he had a feeling of hope about going to America. He first went to New York City. Later he moved to St. Louis, Missouri.

In St. Louis one of his co-workers was a Latter-day Saint. From him he obtained a copy of a pamphlet written by Elder Parley P. Pratt. He read it and then studied every word he could obtain about the Latter-day Saints. He prayed to know if there really were angels that appeared to men, whether there was a living prophet, and whether he had found a true and revealed religion.

After two months of careful study and prayer, Heinrich had a dream in which he was told he was to be baptized. A man whose name and priesthood I hold in sacred memory, Elder William Brown, was to perform the ordinance. Heinrich was baptized in a pool of rainwater on March 11, 1855, at 7:30 in the morning.

I believe that Heinrich Eyring knew then that what I am teaching you today is true. He knew that the happiness of eternal life comes through family bonds which continue forever. Even when he had so recently found the Lord's plan of happiness, he knew that his hope for eternal joy depended on the free choices of others to follow his example. His hope of eternal happiness depended on people not yet born.

As a part of our family's inheritance of hope, he left a history to his descendants.

In that history I can feel his love for those of us who would follow him. In his words I feel his hope that his descendants might choose to follow him on the path back to our heavenly home. He knew it would not be one



great choice to make to do so but many small choices. I quote from his history:

“From the time I first heard Elder Andrus speak . . . I have always attended the meeting of the Latter day Saints and the instances are very rare indeed, when I [have] failed to go to meeting, it being at the same time my duty to do so.

“I name this in my history that my children may imitate my example and never neglect this . . . important duty [to assemble] with the Saints.”<sup>1</sup>

Heinrich knew that in sacrament meetings we could renew our promise to always remember the Savior and have His Spirit to be with us.

It was that Spirit that sustained him on the mission to which he was called only a few months after accepting the baptismal covenant. He left as his

heritage his example of staying faithful to his mission for six years in what was then called the Indian Territories. To receive his release from his mission, he walked and joined a wagon train from Oklahoma to Salt Lake City, a distance of approximately 1,100 miles (1,770 km).

Soon thereafter he was called by the prophet of God to move to southern Utah. From there he answered another call to serve a mission in his native Germany. He then accepted the invitation of an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ to help build up the Latter-day Saint colonies in northern Mexico. From there he was called to Mexico City as a full-time missionary again. He honored those calls. He lies buried in a small cemetery in Colonia Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico.

I recite these facts not to claim greatness for him or for what he did or for his descendants. I recite those facts to honor him for the example of faith and hope that was in his heart.

He accepted those calls because of his faith that the resurrected Christ and our Heavenly Father had appeared to Joseph Smith in a grove of trees in the state of New York. He accepted them because he had faith that the priesthood keys in the Lord’s Church had been restored with the power to seal families forever, if only they had sufficient faith to keep their covenants.

Like Heinrich Eyring, my ancestor, you may be the first in your family to lead the way to eternal life along the path of sacred covenants made and kept with diligence and faith. Each covenant brings with it duties and promises. For all of us, as they were for Heinrich, those duties are sometimes simple but are often difficult. But remember, the duties must sometimes be difficult because their purpose is to move us along the path to live forever with Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, in families.

You remember the words from the book of Abraham:

“And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

“And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;

“And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate

shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever.”<sup>2</sup>

Keeping our second estate depends on our making covenants with God and faithfully performing the duties they require of us. It takes faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior to keep sacred covenants for a lifetime.

Because Adam and Eve did fall, we have temptation, trials, and death as our universal inheritance. However, our loving Heavenly Father gave us the gift of His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, as our Savior. That great gift and blessing of the Atonement of Jesus Christ brings a universal inheritance: the promise of the Resurrection and the possibility of eternal life to all who are born.

The greatest of all the blessings of God, eternal life, will come to us only as we make covenants offered in the true Church of Jesus Christ by His authorized servants. Because of the Fall, we all need the cleansing effects of baptism and the laying on of hands to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. These ordinances must be performed by those who possess the proper

priesthood authority. Then, with the help of the Light of Christ and the Holy Ghost, we can keep all the covenants we make with God, especially those offered in His temples. Only in that way, and with that help, can anyone claim his or her rightful inheritance as a child of God in a family forever.

To some listening to me, that may seem a nearly hopeless dream.

You have seen faithful parents sorrow over children who have rejected or who have chosen to break their covenants with God. But those parents can take heart and hope from other parental experiences.

Alma’s son and King Mosiah’s sons returned from fierce rebellion against the covenants and the commandments of God. Alma the Younger saw his son Corianton turn from gross sin to faithful service. The Book of Mormon also records the miracle of the Lamanites putting aside traditions of hating righteousness to covenanting to die to maintain peace.

An angel was sent to the young Alma and the sons of Mosiah. The

angel came because of the faith and prayers of their fathers and of God’s people. From those examples of the power of the Atonement working in human hearts, you can receive courage and comfort.

The Lord has given us all the source of hope as we struggle to help those we love accept their eternal inheritance. He has made promises to us as we keep trying to gather people to Him, even when they resist His invitation to do so. Their resistance saddens Him, but He does not quit, nor should we. He sets the perfect example for us with His persistent love: “And again, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, yea, O ye people of the house of Israel, who have fallen; yea, O ye people of the house of Israel, ye that dwell at Jerusalem, as ye that have fallen; yea, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens, and ye would not.”<sup>3</sup>

We can depend on that unfailing desire of the Savior to bring all of Heavenly Father’s spirit children back to their home with Him. Every faithful parent, grandparent, and great-grandparent shares in that desire. Heavenly Father and the Savior are our perfect examples of what we can and must do. They never force righteousness because righteousness must be chosen. They make righteousness discernible to us, and They let us see that its fruits are delicious.

Every person born into the world receives the Light of Christ, which helps us see and feel what is right and what is wrong. God has sent mortal servants who can, by the Holy Ghost, help us recognize what He would have us do and what He forbids. God makes it attractive to choose the right by letting us feel the effects of our choices. If we choose the right, we



will find happiness—in time. If we choose evil, there comes sorrow and regret—in time. Those effects are sure. Yet they are often delayed for a purpose. If the blessings were immediate, choosing the right would not build faith. And since sorrow is also sometimes greatly delayed, it takes faith to feel the need to seek forgiveness for sin early rather than after we feel its sorrowful and painful effects.

Father Lehi sorrowed over the choices made by some of his sons and their families. He was a great and good man—a prophet of God. He often testified of our Savior, Jesus Christ, to them. He was an example of obedience and service when the Lord called him to leave all his worldly possessions to spare his family from destruction. At the very end of his life, he was still testifying to his children. Like the Savior—and despite his power to discern their hearts and to see the future both sad and wonderful—Lehi kept his arms outstretched to draw his family toward salvation.

Today millions of the descendants of Father Lehi are justifying his hope for them.

What can you and I do to draw from Lehi's example? We can draw from his example by studying scripture prayerfully and by observation.

I suggest that you take both the short and the long view as you try to give the inheritance of hope to your family. In the short run, there will be troubles and Satan will roar. And there are things to wait for patiently, in faith, knowing that the Lord acts in His own time and in His own way.

There are things you can do early, when those you love are young. Remember that daily family prayer, family scripture study, and sharing our testimony in sacrament meeting are easier and more effective when children are



young. Young children are often more sensitive to the Spirit than we realize.

When they are older, they will remember the hymns they sang with you. Even more than recalling music, they will remember the words of scripture and testimony. The Holy Ghost can bring all things to their remembrance, but the words of scriptures and hymns will last the longest. Those memories will exert a pull that may bring them back when they wander for a time, possibly for years, from the pathway home to eternal life.

We will need the long view when those we love feel the pull of the world and the cloud of doubt seems to overwhelm their faith. We have faith, hope, and charity to guide us and to strengthen them.

I have seen that as a counselor to two living prophets of God. They are individuals with unique personalities. Yet they seem to share a consistent optimism. When someone raises an alarm about something in the Church, their most frequent response is “Oh, things will work out.” They generally know more about the problem than the people sounding the alarm.

They also know the way of the Lord, and so they are always hopeful about His kingdom. They know He is at its head. He is all-powerful and He

cares. If you let Him be the leader of your family, things will work out.

Some of Heinrich Eyring's descendants have seemed to wander. But many of his great-great-grandchildren go to temples of God at 6:00 in the morning to perform ordinances for ancestors they have never met. They go out of the heritage of hope he left. He left an inheritance that is being claimed by many of his descendants.

After all we can do in faith, the Lord will justify our hopes for greater blessings for our families than we can imagine. He wants the best for them and for us, as His children.

We are all children of a living God. Jesus of Nazareth is His Beloved Son and our resurrected Savior. This is His Church. In it are the keys of the priesthood, and so families can be forever. This is our priceless heritage of hope. I testify that it is true in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. See Henry Eyring reminiscences, 1896, typescript, Church History Library, 16–21.
2. Abraham 3:24–26.
3. 3 Nephi 10:5.



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Presented by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf  
Second Counselor in the First Presidency

# The Sustaining of Church Officers

It is proposed that we sustain Thomas Spencer Monson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Henry Bennion Eyring as First Counselor in the First Presidency; and Dieter Friedrich Uchtdorf as Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

Those in favor may manifest it.

Those opposed, if any, may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain Boyd Kenneth Packer as President of the

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the following as members of that quorum: Boyd K. Packer, L. Tom Perry, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Richard G. Scott, Robert D. Hales, Jeffrey R. Holland, David A. Bednar, Quentin L. Cook, D. Todd Christofferson, and Neil L. Andersen.

Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed may so indicate.

It is proposed that we sustain the counselors in the First Presidency and

the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators.

All in favor, please manifest it.

Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

At this time we release with sincere appreciation Elder Tad R. Callister as a General Authority and member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy.

Those who wish to join us in a vote of appreciation, please manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain Elder Lynn G. Robbins as a member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy.

All in favor, please manifest it.

Those opposed, if any.

It is proposed that we release the following as Area Seventies, effective on May 1, 2014: Pedro E. Abularach, Julio A. Angulo, Victor A. Asconavieta, Duck Soo Bae, Juan C. Barros, Colin H. Bricknell, Dennis C. Brimhall, Thomas M. Cherrington, Kim B. Clark, Wynn R. Dewsnup, Rodolfo C. Franco, G. Guillermo Garcia, Julio C. González, Mauro Junot De Maria, Larry S. Kacher, David E. LeSueur, Paulo C. Loureiro, Steven J. Lund, Abraham Martinez, Hugo E. Martinez, Sergey N. Mikulin, Christopher B. Munday, Hirofumi Nakatsuka, Chikao Oishi, Alejandro S. Patanía, Renato M. Petla, Anatoly K. Reshetnikov, Jonathan C. Roberts, J. Craig Rowe, Robert B. Smith, Warren G. Tate, Hesbon O. Usi, Taniela B. Wakolo, Randy W. Wilkinson, and Chi Hong (Sam) Wong.

Those who wish to join us in expressing gratitude for their excellent service, please manifest it.

It is proposed that we release with a vote of appreciation Brothers Russell T. Osguthorpe, David M. McConkie, and Matthew O. Richardson as the Sunday School general presidency.



Washington, Utah, USA



We likewise extend a release to all members of the Sunday School general board.

All who wish to join us in expressing appreciation to these brothers and sisters for their remarkable service and devotion, please manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain as new members of the First Quorum of the Seventy Chi Hong (Sam) Wong and Jörg Klebingat and as new members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy Larry S. Kacher and Hugo E. Martinez.

All in favor, please manifest it.

Those opposed, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain the following as new Area Seventies: Julio Cesar Acosta, Blake R. Alder, Alain C. Allard, Taiichi Aoba, Carlos F. Arredondo, Vladimir N. Astashov, Jorge T. Becerra, Michael H. Bourne, Romulo V. Cabrera, Jose Claudio F. Campos, Nicolas Castañeda, Walter Chatora, Fook Chuen Zeno Chow, J. Kevin Ence, K. Mark Frost, Mauricio G. Gonzaga, Leonard D. Greer, Jose Isaguirre, Michael R. Jensen, Adolf Johan Johansson, Tae Gul Jung, Wisit Khanakham, Serhii A. Kovalov, Sergio Krasnoselsky, Milan F.

Kunz, Bryan R. Larsen, Geraldo Lima, W. Jean-Pierre Lono, Tasara Makasi, Khumbulani Mdletshe, Dale H. Munk, Eduardo A. Norambuena, Yutaka Onda, Raimundo Pacheco De Pinho, Marco Antonio Rais, Steven K. Randall, R. Scott Runia, Alexey V. Samaykin, Edwin A. Sexton, Raul H. Spitale, Carlos Walter Treviño, and Juan A. Urra.

All in favor, please manifest it.



Those opposed, if any.

It is proposed that we sustain Tad R. Callister as general president of the Sunday School, with John S. Tanner as first counselor and Devin G. Durrant as second counselor.

Those in favor may manifest it.

Any opposed may so signify.

We note that Brothers Tanner and Durrant are both currently serving as mission presidents and are, therefore, not in attendance here in the Conference Center.

They will begin their official service in the Sunday School general presidency following their release as mission presidents in July 2014.

It is proposed that we sustain the other General Authorities, Area Seventies, and general auxiliary presidencies as presently constituted.

Those in favor, please manifest it.

Any opposed may manifest it.

Thank you, brothers and sisters, for your sustaining vote and for your continued faith and prayers in our behalf.

We invite the newly called General Authorities to come forward and take their places on the stand. ■

# Church Auditing Department Report, 2013

# Statistical Report, 2013

**Presented by Kevin R. Jergensen**  
Managing Director, Church Auditing Department

**Presented by Brook P. Hales**  
Secretary to the First Presidency

*To the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ  
of Latter-day Saints*

For the information of the members of the Church, the First Presidency has issued the following statistical report regarding the growth and status of the Church as of December 31, 2013.

Dear Brethren: As directed by revelation in section 120 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Council on the Disposition of the Tithes—composed of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the Presiding Bishopric—authorizes the expenditure of Church funds. Church entities disburse funds in accordance with approved budgets, policies, and procedures.

The Church Auditing Department, which consists of credentialed professionals and is independent of all other Church departments, has responsibility to perform audits for the purpose of providing reasonable assurance regarding contributions received,

expenditures made, and safeguarding of Church assets.

Based upon audits performed, the Church Auditing Department is of the opinion that, in all material respects, contributions received, expenditures made, and assets of the Church for the year 2013 have been recorded and administered in accordance with approved Church budgets, policies, and accounting practices. The Church follows the practices taught to its members of living within a budget, avoiding debt, and saving against a time of need.

Respectfully submitted,  
Church Auditing Department  
Kevin R. Jergensen  
Managing Director ■

## Church Units

Stakes .....	3,050
Missions .....	405
Districts.....	571
Wards and Branches .....	29,253

## Church Membership

Total Membership .....	15,082,028
New Children of Record.....	115,486
Converts Baptized .....	282,945

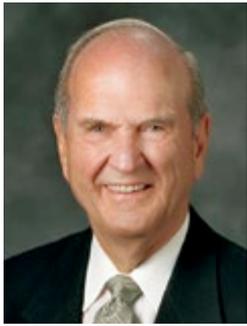
## Missionaries

Full-Time Missionaries .....	83,035
Church-Service Missionaries .....	24,032

## Temples

Temples Dedicated during 2013 (Tegucigalpa Honduras Temple).....	1
Temples in Operation at Year End....	141





**By Elder Russell M. Nelson**  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

# Let Your Faith Show

*Day after day, on your path toward your eternal destiny, increase your faith. Proclaim your faith! Let your faith show!*

**D**ear brothers and sisters, we express our deepest feelings of love and gratitude for you. We are grateful for our assignments among you.

On a recent flight, our pilot announced that we would encounter turbulence during our descent and that all passengers must fasten their seat belts securely. Sure enough, turbulence came. It was really rough. Across the aisle and a couple of rows behind me, a terrified woman panicked. With each frightening drop and jarring bump, she screamed loudly. Her husband tried to comfort her but to no avail. Her hysterical shouts persisted until we passed through that zone of turbulence to a safe landing. During her period of anxiety, I felt sorry for her. Because faith is the antidote for fear, I silently wished that I could have strengthened her faith.

Later, as passengers were leaving the aircraft, this woman's husband spoke to me. He said, "I'm sorry my wife was so terrified. The only way I could comfort her was to tell her that 'Elder Nelson is on this flight, so you don't need to worry.'"

I'm not sure that my presence on that flight should have given her any comfort, but I will say that one of the realities of mortal life is that our



faith will be tested and challenged. Sometimes those tests come as we face what appear to be life-and-death encounters. For this frightened woman, a violently rocking plane presented one of those moments when we come face-to-face with the strength of our faith.

When we speak of faith—the faith that can move mountains—we are not speaking of faith in general but of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith in

the Lord Jesus Christ can be bolstered as we learn about Him and live our religion. The doctrine of Jesus Christ was designed by the Lord to help us increase our faith. In today's vernacular, however, the word *religion* can mean different things to different people.

The word *religion* literally means "to ligate again" or "to tie back" to God.<sup>1</sup> The question we might ask ourselves is, are we securely tied to God so that our faith shows, or are we actually tied to something else? For example, I have overheard conversations on Monday mornings about professional athletic games that took place on the preceding Sunday. For some of these avid fans, I have wondered if their "religion" would "tie them back" only to some kind of a bouncing ball.

We might each ask ourselves, where is our faith? Is it in a team? Is it in a brand? Is it in a celebrity? Even the best teams can fail. Celebrities can fade. There is only One in whom your faith is always safe, and that is in the Lord Jesus Christ. And you need to let your faith show!

God declared in the *first* of His Ten Commandments, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."<sup>2</sup> He also said, "Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not."<sup>3</sup> Yet so many people look only to their bank balance for peace or to fellow human beings for models to follow.

Clinicians, academicians, and politicians are often put to a test of faith. In pursuit of their goals, will their religion show or will it be hidden? Are they tied back to God or to man?

I had such a test decades ago when one of my medical faculty colleagues chastised me for failing to separate my professional knowledge from my religious convictions. He demanded that I



*not* combine the two. How could I do that? Truth is truth! It is not divisible, and any part of it cannot be set aside.

Whether truth emerges from a scientific laboratory or through revelation, all truth emanates from God. All truth is part of the gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup> Yet I was being asked to hide my faith. I did not comply with my colleague's request. I let my faith show!

In all professional endeavors, rigorous standards of accuracy are required. Scholars cherish their freedom of expression. But full freedom cannot be experienced if part of one's knowledge is ruled "out-of-bounds" by edicts of men.

Spiritual truth cannot be ignored—especially divine commandments. Keeping divine commandments brings blessings, every time! Breaking divine commandments brings a loss of blessings, every time!<sup>5</sup>

Problems abound in this world because it is populated by imperfect people. Their objectives and desires are heavily influenced by their faith or lack of it. Many put other priorities ahead of God. Some challenge the relevance of religion in modern life. As in every age, so today there are

those who mock or decry the free exercise of religion. Some even blame religion for any number of the world's ills. Admittedly, there have been times when atrocities have been committed in the name of religion. But living the Lord's pure religion, which means striving to become a true disciple of Jesus Christ, is a way of life and a daily commitment that will provide divine guidance. As you practice your religion, you are exercising your faith. You are letting your faith show.

The Lord knew that His children would need to learn how to find Him. "For strait is the gate," He said, "and narrow the way that leadeth unto . . . exaltation . . . , and few there be that find it."<sup>6</sup>

The scriptures provide one of the best ways to find our course and stay on it. Scriptural knowledge also provides precious protection. For example, throughout history, infections like "childbirth fever" claimed the lives of many innocent mothers and babies. Yet the Old Testament had the correct principles for the handling of infected patients, written more than 3,000 years ago!<sup>7</sup> Many people perished because man's quest for knowledge had failed to heed the word of the Lord!

My dear brothers and sisters, what are we missing in our lives if we are "ever learning, [but] never able to come to the knowledge of the truth"?<sup>8</sup> We can gain great knowledge from the scriptures and obtain inspiration through prayers of faith.

Doing so will help us as we make daily decisions. Especially when the laws of man are created and enforced, God's laws must ever be our standard. In dealing with controversial issues, we should first search for God's guidance.

We should "liken all scriptures unto us . . . for our profit and learning."<sup>9</sup> Danger lurks when we try to divide ourselves with expressions such as "my private life" or even "my best behavior." If one tries to segment his or her life into such separate compartments, one will never rise to the full stature of one's personal integrity—never to become all that his or her *true* self could be.

The temptation to be popular may prioritize public opinion above the word of God. Political campaigns and marketing strategies widely employ public opinion polls to shape their plans. Results of those polls are informative. *But* they could hardly be used as grounds to justify disobedience to

God's commandments! Even if "everyone is doing it," wrong is never right. Evil, error, and darkness will never be truth, even if popular. A scriptural warning so declares: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness."<sup>10</sup>

After World War I, a rather risqué song became popular. In promoting immorality, it vowed that 50 million people cannot be wrong. But in fact, 50 million people *can* be wrong—totally wrong. Immorality is still immorality in the eyes of God, who one day will judge all of our deeds and desires.<sup>11</sup>

Contrast the fear and faithlessness so prevalent in the world today with the faith and courage of my dearly beloved daughter Emily, who now lives on the other side of the veil. As

mortal life was leaving her cancer-ridden body, she could barely speak. But with a smile on her face, she said to me, "Daddy, don't worry about me. I know I will be all right!" Emily's faith was showing—showing brightly—in that tender moment, right when we needed it most.

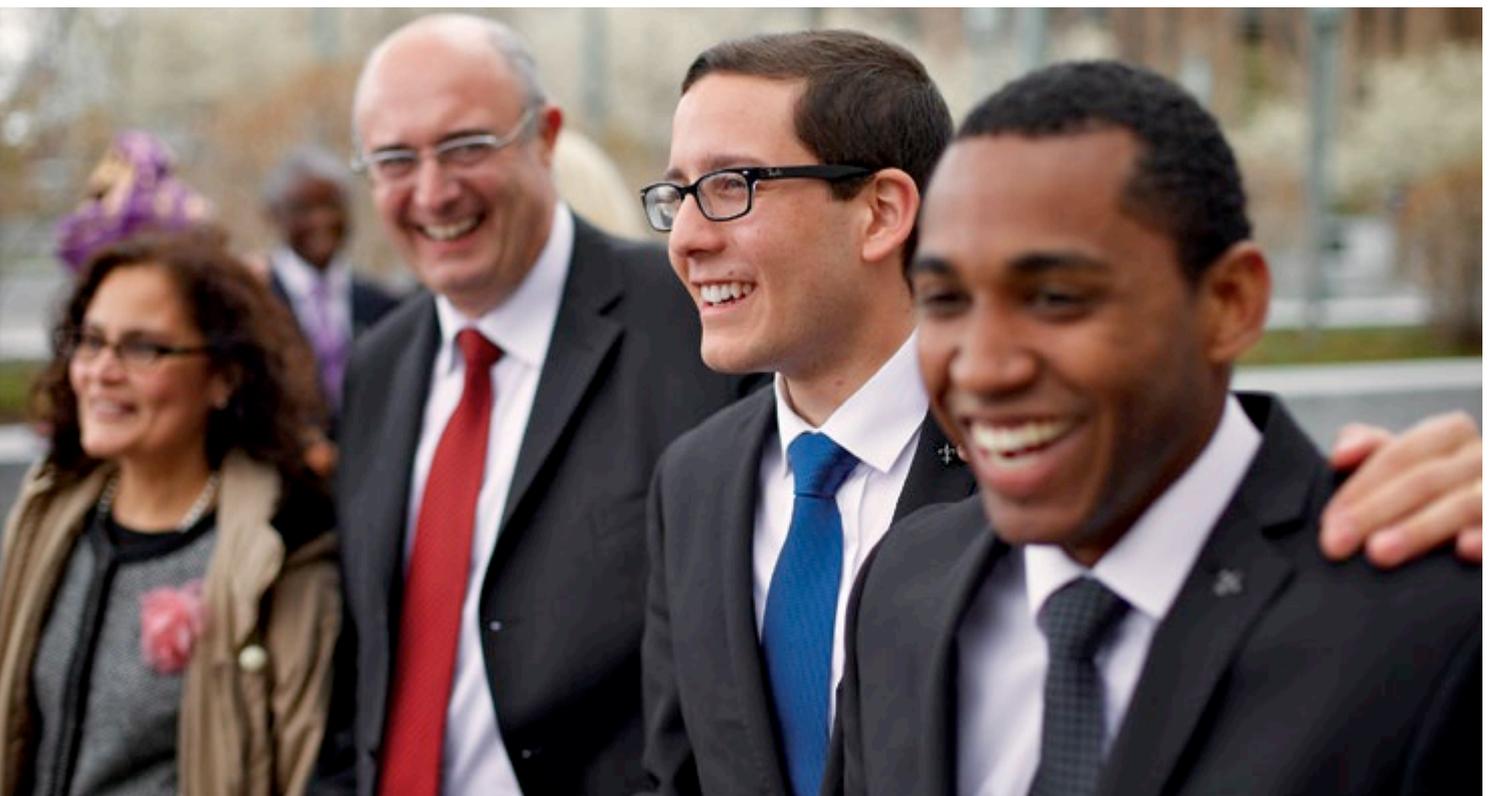
This beautiful young mother of five had full faith in her Heavenly Father, in His plan, and in the eternal welfare of her family. She was securely tied back to God. She was totally faithful to covenants made with the Lord and with her husband. She loved her children but was at peace, despite her impending separation from them. She had faith in her future, and theirs too, because she had faith in our Heavenly Father and His Son.

In 1986, President Thomas S. Monson said: "Of course we will face

fear, experience ridicule, and meet opposition. Let us have the courage to defy the consensus, the courage to stand for principle. Courage, not compromise, brings the smile of God's approval. . . . Remember that all men have their fears, but those who face their fears with [faith] have courage as well."<sup>12</sup>

President Monson's counsel is timeless! So I plead with you, my dear brothers and sisters: Day after day, on your path toward your eternal destiny, increase your faith. Proclaim your faith! Let your faith show!<sup>13</sup>

I pray that you will be securely tied back to God, that His eternal truths will be etched on your heart forever. And I pray that, throughout your life, you will let your faith show! In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



## NOTES

1. When a baby is born, the umbilical cord is doubly ligated and severed between those two ligatures. A ligature is a tie—a secure tie. The word *religion* comes from Latin roots: *re*, meaning “again” or “back to,” and likely *ligare*, meaning “to tie” or “to ligate.” Thus, we understand that religion “ties believers to God.”
2. Exodus 20:3. In addition, the Lord said, “Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn . . . from all your abominations” (Ezekiel 14:6).
3. Doctrine and Covenants 6:36.
4. See Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 391.
5. See Mosiah 2:41; Doctrine and Covenants 58:30–33; 82:10. This principle is true for everyone, for “God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34; see also Moroni 8:12).
6. Doctrine and Covenants 132:22.
7. See Leviticus 15:13.
8. 2 Timothy 3:7.
9. 1 Nephi 19:23.
10. Isaiah 5:20.
11. Scripture teaches: “Come unto the Lord, the Holy One. Remember that his paths are righteous. Behold, the way for man is narrow, but it lieth in a straight course before him, and the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name” (2 Nephi 9:41).
12. Thomas S. Monson, “Courage Counts,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 41. On another occasion, President Monson gave this inspiring admonition: “To live greatly, we must develop the capacity to face trouble with courage, disappointment with cheerfulness, and triumph with humility. . . . We are sons and daughters of a living God, in whose image we have been created. . . . We cannot sincerely hold this conviction without experiencing a profound new sense of strength and power, even the strength to live the commandments of God, the power to resist the temptations of Satan” (“Yellow Canaries with Gray on Their Wings,” *Ensign*, July 1973, 43).
13. “Deny yourselves of all ungodliness” (Moroni 10:32). Do not fear man more than God (see Doctrine and Covenants 3:7; 59:5).



By Elder Richard G. Scott  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

# “I Have Given You an Example”

*The greatest example who ever walked the earth is our Savior, Jesus Christ. . . . He invites us to follow His perfect example.*

As I have pondered my duty to share the gospel, I have reflected on loved ones whose tender influence helped me find the divinely appointed path that aided my spiritual progression. At vital times in my life, Father in Heaven blessed me with someone who cared for me enough to help guide my choices in an appropriate direction. They observed these words of the Savior: “For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.”<sup>1</sup>

When I was a young child, my father was not a member of the Church and my mother had become less active. We lived in Washington, D.C., and my mother’s parents lived 2,500 miles (4,000 km) away in the state of Washington. Some months after my eighth birthday, Grandmother Whittle came across the country to visit us. Grandmother was concerned that neither I nor my older brother had been baptized. I don’t know what she said to my parents about this, but I do know that one morning she took my brother and me to the park and shared with us her feelings about the importance of being baptized and attending Church meetings regularly.

I don’t remember the specifics of what she said, but her words stirred something in my heart, and soon my brother and I were baptized.

Grandmother continued to support us. I remember that anytime my brother or I was assigned to give a talk in church, we would call her on the telephone for some suggestions. Within a few days a handwritten talk would arrive by mail. After some time her suggestions changed to an outline requiring more effort on our part.

Grandmother used just the right amount of courage and respect to help our father recognize the importance of his driving us to the church for our meetings. In every appropriate way, she helped us to feel a need for the gospel in our lives.

Most importantly, we knew Grandmother loved us and that she loved the gospel. She was a marvelous example! How grateful I am for the testimony she shared with me when I was very young. Her influence changed the direction of my life for eternal good.

Later, as I was about to graduate from the university, I fell in love with a beautiful young woman named



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Jeanene Watkins. I thought she was beginning to have some deep feelings for me also. One night when we were talking about the future, she carefully wove into the discussion a statement that changed my life forever. She said, “When I marry, it will be to a faithful returned missionary in the temple.”

I hadn’t thought much about a mission before then. That night my motivation to consider missionary service changed dramatically. I went home, and I could think of nothing else. I was awake all night long. I was completely distracted from my studies the next day. After many prayers I made the decision to meet with my bishop and begin my missionary application.

Jeanene never asked me to serve a mission *for her*. She loved me enough to share her conviction and then gave me the opportunity to work out the direction of my own life. We both served missions and later were sealed in the temple. Jeanene’s courage and commitment to her faith have made all the difference in our lives together. I am certain we would not have found the happiness we enjoy without her strong faith in the principle of serving the Lord first. She is a wonderful, righteous example!

Both Grandmother Whittle and Jeanene loved me enough to share their conviction that the ordinances of the gospel and serving Father in Heaven would bless my life. Neither of them coerced me or made me feel bad about the person I was. They simply loved me and loved Father in Heaven. Both knew He could do more with my life than I could on my own. Each courageously helped me in loving ways to find the path of greatest happiness.

How can each of us become such a significant influence? We must be sure to sincerely love those we want



to help in righteousness so they can begin to develop confidence in God’s love. For so many in the world, the first challenge in accepting the gospel is to develop faith in a Father in Heaven, who loves them perfectly. It is easier to develop that faith when they have friends or family members who love them in a similar way.

Giving them confidence in your love can help them develop faith in God’s love. Then through your loving, thoughtful communication, their lives will be blessed by your sharing lessons you have learned, experiences you have had, and principles you have followed to find solutions to your own struggles. Show your sincere interest

in their well-being; then share your testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You can help in ways that are grounded in principle and doctrine. Encourage those you love to seek to understand what the Lord would have them do. One way to do this is to ask them questions that make them think and then allow them sufficient time—whether hours, days, months, or more—to ponder and seek to work out the answers for themselves. You may need to help them know how to pray and how to recognize answers to their prayers. Help them to know that the scriptures are a vital source of receiving and recognizing answers. In that way you will help them



prepare for future opportunities and challenges.

God's purpose is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."<sup>2</sup> That is fundamental to all we do. Sometimes we get so wrapped up in things that we find fascinating or become so consumed by mundane responsibilities that we lose sight of God's objectives. As you consistently focus your life on the most basic principles, you will gain an understanding of what you are to do, and you will produce more fruit for the Lord and more happiness for yourself.

When you focus your life on the basic principles of the plan of salvation, you will better concentrate on sharing what you know because you understand the eternal importance of the ordinances of the gospel. You will share what you know in a way that encourages your friends to want to be strengthened spiritually. You will help your loved ones want to commit to obey all of His commandments and take upon themselves the name of Jesus Christ.

Remember that the conversion of individuals is only part of the work. Always seek to strengthen families. Teach with a vision of the importance of families being sealed in the temple. With some families it may take years.

This was the case with my parents. Many years after I was baptized, my father was baptized, and later my family was sealed in the temple. My father served as a sealer in the temple, and my mother served there with him. When you have the vision of the sealing ordinances of the temple, you will help build the kingdom of God on earth.

Remember, loving them is the powerful foundation for influencing those you want to help. The influence of my Grandmother Whittle and my wife, Jeanene, would have been negligible had I not first known that they loved me and wanted me to have the best in life.

#### **Sydney, Australia**



As a companion to that love, trust them. In some cases it may seem difficult to trust, but find some way to trust them. The children of Father in Heaven can do amazing things when they feel trusted. Every child of God in mortality chose the Savior's plan. Trust that given the opportunity, they will do so again.

Share principles that help those you love to press forward along the path to eternal life. Remember, we all grow line upon line. You have followed that same pattern in your understanding of the gospel. Keep your sharing of the gospel *simple*.

Your personal testimony of the Atonement of Jesus Christ is a powerful tool. Accompanying resources are prayer, the Book of Mormon and the other scriptures, and your commitment to priesthood ordinances. All of these will facilitate the direction of the Spirit, which is so crucially important for you to rely upon.

To be effective and to do as Christ has done,<sup>3</sup> concentrate on this basic principle of the gospel: *the Atonement of Jesus Christ makes possible our becoming more like our Father in Heaven so that we can live together eternally in our family units.*

There is no doctrine more fundamental to our work than the Atonement of Jesus Christ. At every

appropriate opportunity, testify of the Savior and of the power of His Atoning sacrifice. Use scriptures that teach of Him and why He is the perfect pattern for everyone in life.<sup>4</sup> You will need to study diligently. Do not become so absorbed with trivial things that you miss learning the doctrine and teachings of the Lord. With a solid, personal doctrinal foundation, you will be a powerful source for sharing vital truths with others who desperately need them.

We best serve our Father in Heaven by righteously influencing others and serving them.<sup>5</sup> The greatest example who ever walked the earth is our Savior, Jesus Christ. His mortal ministry was filled with teaching, serving, and loving others. He sat down with individuals who were judged to be unworthy of His companionship. He loved each of them. He discerned their needs and taught them His gospel. He invites us to follow His perfect example.

I know that His gospel is the path to peace and happiness in this life. May we remember to do as He has done by sharing our love, trust, and knowledge of truth with others who have not yet embraced the brilliant light of the gospel. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. John 13:15.
2. Moses 1:39.
3. See John 13:15.
4. See, for example, Luke 22:39–46; John 8:3–11; Philipians 4:13; James 5:15–16; 1 John 1:7; 2 Nephi 1:15; 2; 25:17–30; 31; Jacob 4; Alma 7; 42; 3 Nephi 11–30; Moroni 10:32–33; Doctrine and Covenants 18:10–16; 19:13–19; 29:3; 88:1–13; 138:2–4; Moses 5:6–12.
5. See Matthew 22:35–40; Mosiah 2:17.



**By Elder Robert D. Hales**  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

# “If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments”

*Using our agency to obey means choosing to “do what is right [and letting] the consequence follow.”*

**B**rothers and sisters, of all the lessons we learn from the life of the Savior, none is more clear and powerful than the lesson of obedience.

#### The Savior’s Example

In the premortal Council in Heaven, Lucifer rebelled against Heavenly Father’s plan. Those who followed Lucifer ended their eternal progression—be careful who you follow!

Then Jesus expressed His commitment to obey, saying, “Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever.”<sup>1</sup> Throughout His ministry, “he suffered temptations but gave [them] no heed.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, “he [learned] obedience by the things which he suffered.”<sup>3</sup>

Because our Savior was obedient, He atoned for our sins, making possible our resurrection and preparing the way for us to return to our Heavenly Father, who knew we would make mistakes as we learned obedience in mortality. When we obey, we accept His sacrifice, for we believe that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws, ordinances, and

commandments given in the gospel.<sup>4</sup>

Jesus taught us to obey in simple language that is easy to understand: “If ye love me, keep my commandments,”<sup>5</sup> and “Come, follow me.”<sup>6</sup>

When we are baptized, we “take upon [us] the name of Christ” and enter “into the covenant with God that [we will] be obedient unto the end of [our] lives.”<sup>7</sup> Each Sunday we renew that baptismal covenant by partaking of the sacrament and witnessing that we are willing to keep the commandments. We seek forgiveness for any thoughts, feelings, or actions that are not in harmony with our Heavenly Father’s will. As we repent by turning away from disobedience and by beginning to obey again, we show our love for Him.

#### Types of Obedience

As we live the gospel, we progress in our understanding of obedience. At times we may be tempted to practice what I call “natural man’s obedience,” in which we disobediently reject God’s law in favor of our wisdom or our desires or even popularity. Because this is widely practiced by so many, this perversion of obedience



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diminishes God's standards in our culture and in our laws.

At times members may participate in "selective obedience," claiming to love God and honor God while picking and choosing which of His commandments and teachings—and the teachings and counsel of His

prophets—they will fully follow.

Some obey selectively because they cannot perceive all the reasons for a commandment, just as children do not always understand the reasons for their parents' counsel and rules. But we always know the reason we follow the prophets, for this is the

Church of Jesus Christ, and it is the Savior who directs His prophets in all dispensations.

As our understanding of obedience deepens, we recognize the essential role of agency. When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed three times to His Father in Heaven, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."<sup>8</sup> God would not override the Savior's agency, yet He mercifully sent an angel to strengthen His Beloved Son.

The Savior met another test on Golgotha, where He could have called upon legions of angels to take Him down from the cross, but He made His own choice to obediently endure to the end and complete His atoning sacrifice, even though it meant great suffering, even death.

Spiritually mature obedience is "the Savior's obedience." It is motivated by true love for Heavenly Father and His Son. When we willingly obey, as our Savior did, we cherish the words of our Heavenly Father: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."<sup>9</sup> And we look forward to hearing, upon entering our Heavenly Father's presence, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter . . . into the joy of thy lord."<sup>10</sup>

Using our agency to obey means choosing to "do what is right [and letting] the consequence follow."<sup>11</sup> It requires self-mastery and brings confidence, eternal happiness, and a sense of fulfillment to us and, by example, to those around us; and it always includes a deep personal commitment to sustain priesthood leaders and follow their teachings and counsel.

### **Consequences**

In choosing whether we will obey, it is always helpful to remember the





consequences of our choices. Did Lucifer and his followers understand the consequences of choosing to reject Heavenly Father's plan? If so, why did they make such a terrible choice? We might ask ourselves a similar question: why do any of us choose to be disobedient when we know the eternal consequences of sin? The scriptures provide an answer: the reason Cain and some of the children of Adam and Eve chose to disobey is because "they loved Satan more than God."<sup>12</sup>

Our love of the Savior is the key to Savior-like obedience. As we strive to be obedient in today's world, we declare our love and respect for all of Heavenly Father's children. Yet it is impossible for this love for others to modify God's commandments, which were given for our good! For example, the commandment "thou shalt not . . . kill, nor do anything like unto it"<sup>13</sup> is founded upon spiritual law that protects all of God's children, even the unborn. Long experience suggests that when we ignore this

law, immeasurable sorrow results. Yet many believe it is acceptable to terminate the life of an unborn child for reasons of preference or convenience.

To rationalize disobedience does not change spiritual law or its consequences but leads to confusion, instability, wandering in strange paths, being lost, and grief. As disciples of Christ, we have a sacred obligation to uphold His laws and commandments and the covenants which we take upon ourselves.

In December 1831 some of the brethren were called upon to help allay unfriendly feelings that had developed toward the Church. Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord directed them in an unusual, even surprising way:

"Confound your enemies; call upon them to meet you both in public and in private. . . .

"Wherefore, let them bring forth their strong reasons against the Lord.

". . . No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper;

"And if any man lift his voice against you he shall be confounded in mine own due time.

"Wherefore, keep my commandments; they are true and faithful."<sup>14</sup>

#### **Lessons in the Scriptures**

The scriptures are full of examples of prophets who have learned the lessons of obedience by their own experience.

Joseph Smith was taught the consequences for yielding to the pressures of his benefactor, friend, and scribe Martin Harris. In response to Martin's pleas, Joseph asked the Lord for permission to loan the first 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon so that Martin could show them to his family, but the Lord told Joseph to say no. Martin pleaded with Joseph to ask the Lord again. After Joseph's third request the Lord gave permission for five specific people to review the manuscript. "In a most solemn covenant Martin bound himself to this agreement.



When he arrived home, and pressure was brought to bear upon him, he forgot his solemn oath and permitted others to view the manuscript, with the result that by stratagem it passed out of his hands,<sup>15</sup> and it was lost. As a consequence, Joseph was rebuked by the Lord and was denied permission to continue to translate the Book of Mormon. Joseph suffered and repented of his transgression of yielding to the pressures of others. After a season, Joseph was allowed to resume his translation work. Joseph learned a valuable lesson of obedience that served him the rest of his life!

The prophet Moses provides another example. When Moses obediently took an Ethiopian wife, Miriam and Aaron spoke against him. But the Lord rebuked them, saying, “With [Moses] will I speak mouth to mouth.”<sup>16</sup> The Lord used this

incredible incident to teach members of the Church in our dispensation. In 1830 Hiram Page claimed to receive revelation for the Church. The Lord corrected him and taught the Saints, “Thou shalt be obedient unto the things which I shall give unto [Joseph], even as Aaron,”<sup>17</sup> “for he receiveth them even as Moses.”<sup>18</sup>

Obedience brings blessings, “and when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.”<sup>19</sup>

Obedience is taught by example. By how we live, we teach our children, “Learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God.”<sup>20</sup>

Obedience makes us progressively stronger, capable of faithfully enduring tests and trials in the future. Obedience in Gethsemane prepared the Savior to obey and endure to the end on Golgotha.

My beloved brothers and sisters, the words of Alma express the feelings of my heart:

“And now my beloved brethren, I have said these things unto you that I might awaken you to a sense of your duty to God, that ye may walk blameless before him. . . .

“And now I would that ye should be humble, and be submissive and gentle; . . . being diligent in keeping the commandments of God at all times.”<sup>21</sup>

I bear my special witness that our Savior lives. Because He obeyed, “every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess . . . that he is [our Savior].”<sup>22</sup> May we love Him so deeply and believe Him in faith so completely that we too obey, keep His commandments, and return to live with Him forever in the kingdom of our God is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. Moses 4:2.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 20:22.
3. Hebrews 5:8.
4. See Articles of Faith 1:3.
5. John 14:15.
6. Luke 18:22.
7. Mosiah 5:8.
8. Matthew 26:39; see also verses 42, 44.
9. Matthew 3:17; see also 3 Nephi 11:7.
10. Matthew 25:21.
11. “Do What Is Right,” *Hymns*, no. 237.
12. Moses 5:13.
13. Doctrine and Covenants 59:6.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 71:7–11.
15. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History* (1922), 65; see also Doctrine and Covenants 3.
16. Numbers 12:8.
17. Doctrine and Covenants 28:3.
18. Doctrine and Covenants 28:2.
19. Doctrine and Covenants 130:21; see also verse 20.
20. Alma 37:35.
21. Alma 7:22–23.
22. Mosiah 27:31.



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By **Elder Claudio D. Zivic**  
Of the Seventy

# Let's Not Take the Wrong Way

*I pray that we will not lose sight of the way so that we may always be connected with the heavens.*

A little boy was practicing the piano, and a salesman, upon seeing him through the window, asked, "Is your mother home?"

To which the child replied, "And . . . what do you think?"

Our five dear children play the piano, thanks to the motivation of my wife! When the teacher arrived at our home, our son Adrián would run and hide in order to skip his lesson. But one day something marvelous occurred! He began to love music so much that he continued practicing on his own.

If we could reach that point in the process of our conversion, it would be marvelous. It would be wonderful to have a desire deep in our hearts to keep the commandments without anyone constantly reminding us and to have a firm conviction that if we follow the right path, we will have the blessings promised in the scriptures.

Several years ago I went to Arches National Park with my wife; our daughter, Evelin; and a family friend. One of the most famous arches there is called Delicate Arch. We decided to walk about 1.5 miles (2 km), climbing the mountain in order to reach the arch.

We started off on our pathway with great enthusiasm, but after walking a short stretch, the others needed to rest. Because of my desire to get there, I decided to continue on alone. Without paying attention to the path I ought to take, I followed a man in front of me who seemed to be moving forward with great surety. The pathway became more and more difficult, and I had to jump from one rock to another.

Because of the difficulty, I was sure the women in my group would never make it. Suddenly I saw Delicate Arch, but to my great surprise, I saw that it was in an area inaccessible to me.

With great frustration, I decided to go back. I waited impatiently until we met up again. My immediate question was "Did you reach Delicate Arch?" They happily told me that they had. They explained that they had followed the signs showing the way, and with care and effort, they had reached their destination.

Unfortunately, I had taken the wrong way. What a great lesson I learned that day!

How often do we make a mistake about the right way, letting ourselves be led along by the trends of the world? We need to continually ask ourselves if we are being doers of the words of Jesus Christ.

A marvelous teaching is found in the book of John:

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more





can ye, except ye abide in me.

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:4–5).

Using this analogy, we can see the very close, transcendent relationship we have with Jesus Christ and the importance He places on each one of us. He is the root and the trunk that conducts the living water to us, the sap that will allow us to be nourished so that we can produce much fruit. Jesus Christ taught us in such a way that as branches—or beings dependent upon Him—we would never underestimate the value of His teachings.

There are some mistakes that may be serious, and if we do not correct them in time, they can permanently lead us off the right path. If we repent and accept correction, these

experiences will allow us to humble ourselves, change our actions, and once again draw closer to our Heavenly Father.

I want to give an example of this concept by making reference to one of the most dramatic moments that the Prophet Joseph Smith experienced. Through this experience, the Savior has given us invaluable teachings regarding principles that we ought to keep in mind throughout our lives. It happened when Martin Harris lost the 116 translated pages of the first part of the Book of Mormon.

After repenting for not following God’s counsel, the Prophet received the revelation that is found in section 3 of the Doctrine and Covenants (see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 69–71). From what is written in verses 1 to 10, I wish to highlight three principles that we should always remember:

1. The works and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated.
2. We must not fear man more than God.
3. There is a need of constant repentance.

In verse 13, the Lord teaches us four actions that we should never do:

1. Set at naught the counsels of God.
2. Break the most sacred promises made before God.
3. Depend upon our own judgment.
4. Boast in our own wisdom.

I pray that we will not lose sight of the way so that we may always be connected with the heavens, so that the currents of the world do not sweep us away.

If any one of you reaches the point of abandoning the Lord’s way—at any point along that way—with great

remorse you will feel the bitterness of having set at naught the counsels of God, of having broken the most sacred promises made before God, of having trusted in your own judgment, or of having boasted in your own wisdom.

If this is the case, I exhort you to repent and come back to the right way.

One time a grandchild called his grandfather to wish him a happy birthday. He asked him how old he was. He said that he had reached 70 years. His grandson thought for a moment and then asked, “Grandpa, did you start all the way back at 1?”

During childhood and youth, people think they will never become old; the idea of death never takes root—that is for very, very old people—and reaching that point is still an eternity away. As time goes on, months and seasons go by until the wrinkles begin to appear, energy is reduced, the need for doctor visits becomes more frequent, and so on.

The day will come in which we shall again meet up with our Redeemer and Savior, Jesus Christ. I plead that on that sacred and sublime occasion we can recognize Him because of the knowledge we have of Him and because of having followed His teachings. He will show us the marks in His hands and feet, and we will join together in a lasting embrace, weeping for joy at having followed His way.

I testify to the four ends of the earth that Jesus Christ lives. He exhorts us, “Hearken, O ye nations of the earth, and hear the words of that God who made you” (D&C 43:23). May we have the capacity to grasp, give heed to, comprehend, and correctly interpret the message of “that God who made [us]” so as not to stray from His way, I plead in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By Elder W. Craig Zwick  
Of the Seventy

## What Are You Thinking?

*I plead with you to practice asking this question, with tender regard for another's experience: "What are you thinking?"*

**F**orty-one years ago I climbed into the driver's seat of an 18-wheel semitruck with my beautiful wife, Jan, and our infant son, Scotty. We were taking a heavy load of construction materials across several states.

In those days there were no seat-belt restrictions or infant car seats. My wife held our precious son in her arms. Her comment “We sure are high off the ground” should have given me a clue about her feelings of apprehension.

As we made our descent over historic Donner Pass, a steep section of highway, the cab of the semi suddenly and unexpectedly filled with thick smoke. It was difficult to see, and we could hardly breathe.

With a heavy rig, brakes alone are not enough to rapidly decrease speed. Using the engine brakes and gearing down, I frantically attempted to stop.

Just as I was pulling to the side of the road, but before we had come to a full stop, my wife opened the door of the cab and jumped out with our baby in her arms. I watched helplessly as they tumbled in the dirt.

As soon as I had the semi stopped, I bolted from the smoking cab. With

adrenaline pumping, I ran through the rocks and weeds and held them in my arms. Jan's forearms and elbows were battered and bleeding, but thankfully she and our son were both breathing. I just held them close as the dust settled there on the side of the highway.

As my heartbeat normalized and I caught my breath, I blurted out, “What in the world were you thinking? Do you know how dangerous that was? You could have been killed!”

She looked back at me, with tears running down her smoke-smudged cheeks, and said something that pierced my heart and still rings in my ears: “I was just trying to save our son.”

I realized in that moment she thought the engine was on fire, fearing the truck would explode and we would die. I, however, knew it was an electrical failure—hazardous but not fatal. I looked at my precious wife, softly rubbing the head of our infant son, and wondered what kind of woman would do something so courageous.

This situation could have been as emotionally hazardous as our literal engine failure. Gratefully, after enduring the silent treatment for a



reasonable amount of time, each of us believing the other person was at fault, we finally expressed the emotions that were churning beneath our heated outbursts. Shared feelings of love and fear for the other's safety kept the hazardous incident from proving fatal to our cherished marriage.

Paul warned, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but [only] that which is good [and] edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29). His words resonate with a certain purity.

What does the phrase "no corrupt communication" mean to you? We all regularly experience highly charged feelings of anger—our own and others'. We have seen unchecked anger erupt in public places. We have experienced it as a sort of emotional "electrical short" at sporting events, in the political arena, and even in our own homes.

Children sometimes speak to beloved parents with tongues as sharp as blades. Spouses, who have shared some of life's richest and most tender experiences, lose vision and patience

with each other and raise their voices. All of us, though covenant children of a loving Heavenly Father, have regretted jumping headlong from the high seat of self-righteous judgment and have spoken with abrasive words before we understood a situation from another's perspective. We have all had the opportunity to learn how destructive words can take a situation from hazardous to fatal.

A recent letter from the First Presidency states clearly, "The gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us to love and treat all people with kindness and civility—even when we disagree" (First Presidency letter, Jan. 10, 2014). What a masterful reminder that we can and should participate in continuing civil dialogue, especially when we view the world from differing perspectives.

The writer of Proverbs counsels, "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Proverbs 15:1). A "soft answer" consists of a reasoned response—disciplined words from a humble heart. It does not mean we never speak directly or that we compromise

doctrinal truth. Words that may be firm in information can be soft in spirit.

The Book of Mormon contains a striking example of affirming language also given in the context of a marital disagreement. The sons of Sariah and Lehi had been sent back to Jerusalem to get the brass plates and had not returned. Sariah believed her sons were in harm's way, and she was filled with anger and needed someone to blame.

Listen to the story through the eyes of her son Nephi: "For [my mother] had supposed that we had perished in the wilderness; and she also had complained against my father, telling him that he was a visionary man; saying: Behold thou hast led us forth from the land of our inheritance, and my sons are no more, and we perish in the wilderness" (1 Nephi 5:2).

Now, let's consider what Sariah may have been thinking. She was filled with anxiety about her quarrelsome sons returning to the place where her husband's life had been threatened. She had traded her lovely home and friends for a tent in an isolated wilderness while still in her childbearing years. Pushed to the breaking point

of her fears, Sariah seems to have jumped heroically, if not rationally, from the height of a hurtling truck in an attempt to protect her family. She expressed legitimate concerns to her husband in the language of anger and doubt and blame—a language in which the entire human race seems to be surprisingly proficient.

The prophet Lehi listened to the fear that underpinned his wife’s anger. Then he made a disciplined response in the language of compassion. First, he owned the truth of what things looked like from her perspective: “And . . . my father spake unto her, saying: I know that I am a visionary man; . . . but [if I] had tarried at Jerusalem, [we would have] perished with my brethren” (1 Nephi 5:4).

Then her husband addressed her fears concerning the welfare of their sons, as the Holy Ghost undoubtedly testified to him, saying:

“But behold, I have obtained a land of promise, in the which things I do rejoice; yea, and I know that the Lord will deliver my sons out of the hands of Laban. . . .

“And after this manner of language did my father, Lehi, comfort my mother . . . concerning us” (1 Nephi 5:5–6).



There exists today a great need for men and women to cultivate respect for each other across wide distances of belief and behavior and across deep canyons of conflicting agendas. It is impossible to know all that informs our minds and hearts or even to fully understand the context for the trials and choices we each face.

Nevertheless, what would happen to the “corrupt communication” Paul spoke about if our own position included empathy for another’s experience first? Fully owning the limits of my own imperfections and rough edges, I plead with you to practice asking this question, with tender regard for another’s experience: “What are you thinking?”

Remember when the Lord surprised Samuel and Saul by choosing

a little shepherd boy, David of Bethlehem, as king of Israel? The Lord told His prophet, “For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

When our truck cab filled with smoke, my wife acted in the bravest manner she could imagine to protect our son. I too acted as a protector when I questioned her choice. Shockingly, it did not matter who was more right. What mattered was listening to each other and understanding the other’s perspective.

The willingness to see through each other’s eyes will transform “corrupt communication” into “minister[ing] grace.” The Apostle Paul understood this, and on some level each of us can experience it too. It may not change or solve the problem, but the more important possibility may be whether ministering grace could change us.

I bear humble witness that we can “minister grace” through compassionate language when the cultivated gift of the Holy Ghost pierces our hearts with empathy for the feelings and context of others. It enables us to transform hazardous situations into holy places. I testify of a loving Savior who “looketh on [our] heart” and cares what we are thinking. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■





**By Elder Quentin L. Cook**  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

# Roots and Branches

*Hastening family history and temple work in our day is essential for the salvation and exaltation of families.*

Just before his death from cancer in 1981, the controversial writer William Saroyan told the press, “Everybody has to die, but I always believed an exception would be made in my case. Now what?”<sup>1</sup>

The “now what” in the face of death in this life and the “now what” in contemplation of life after death are at the heart of the questions of the soul that the restored gospel of Jesus Christ answers so beautifully in the Father’s plan of happiness.

In this life we laugh, we cry, we work, we play, we live, and then we die. Job asks the succinct question, “If a man die, shall he live again?”<sup>2</sup> The answer is a resounding yes because of the atoning sacrifice of the Savior. Part of Job’s diverse preamble to the question is interesting: “Man that is born of a woman is of few days. . . . He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down. . . . There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease . . . and bring forth boughs like a plant.”<sup>3</sup>

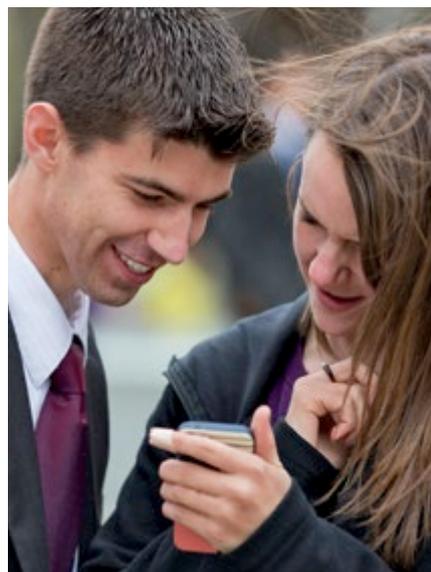
Our Father’s plan is about families. Several of our most poignant scriptures use the concept of the tree with its roots and branches as an analogy.

In the closing chapter of the Old Testament, Malachi, in describing the

Second Coming of the Savior, vividly uses this analogy. Speaking of the proud and wicked, he notes that they shall be burned as stubble and “that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.”<sup>4</sup> Malachi closes this chapter with the Lord’s reassuring promise:

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

“And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”<sup>5</sup>



At the dawn of the Restoration, Moroni reemphasized this message in his initial instruction to young Joseph Smith in 1823.<sup>6</sup>

Christians and Jews the world over accept the Old Testament account of Elijah.<sup>7</sup> He was the last prophet to hold the sealing power of the Melchizedek Priesthood before the time of Jesus Christ.<sup>8</sup>

## **Elijah Restores Keys**

Elijah’s return occurred in the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836. He declared he was fulfilling Malachi’s promise. He committed the priesthood keys for sealing families in this dispensation.<sup>9</sup> Elijah’s mission is facilitated by what is sometimes called the spirit of Elijah, which, as Elder Russell M. Nelson has taught, is “a manifestation of the Holy Ghost bearing witness of the divine nature of the family.”<sup>10</sup>

The Savior was emphatic about the necessity of baptism. He taught, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”<sup>11</sup> The Savior was personally baptized to set the example. What about the deceased who have not been baptized?

## **Doctrine of Temple and Family History Work**

On October 11, 1840, in Nauvoo, Vilate Kimball wrote a letter to her husband, Elder Heber C. Kimball, who with other members of the Twelve was serving a mission in Great Britain. The October general conference had been held a few days before.

I quote from parts of Vilate’s personal letter: “We had the largest and most interesting conference that ever has been since the Church was organized. . . . President [Joseph] Smith has opened a new and glorious subject. . . . That is, being baptized for the dead.

Paul speaks of it, in First Corinthians 15th chapter 29th verse. Joseph has received a more full explanation of it by revelation. He says it is the privilege of [members of] this Church to be baptized for all their kinsfolk that have died before this gospel came forth. . . . By so doing, we act as agents for them, and give them the privilege of coming forth in the First Resurrection. He says they will have the gospel preached to them in prison.”

Vilate added: “I want to be baptized for my mother. . . . Is not this a glorious doctrine?”<sup>12</sup>

The essential doctrine of uniting families came forth line upon line and precept upon precept. Vicarious ordinances are at the heart of welding together eternal families, connecting roots to branches.

The doctrine of the family in relation to family history and temple work is clear. The Lord in initial revelatory instructions referred to “baptism for *your* dead.”<sup>13</sup> Our doctrinal obligation is to our own ancestors. This is because the celestial organization of heaven is based on families.<sup>14</sup> The First Presidency has encouraged members, especially youth and young single adults, to emphasize family history work and ordinances for their own family names or the names of ancestors of their ward and stake members.<sup>15</sup> We need to be connected to both our roots and branches. The thought of being associated in the eternal realm is indeed glorious.

### Temples

Wilford Woodruff indicated that the Prophet Joseph Smith lived long enough to lay the foundation for temple work. By the last time he, Joseph Smith, ever met with the Quorum of the Twelve, he had given them their endowments.<sup>16</sup>



After the Prophet’s martyrdom, the Saints completed the Nauvoo Temple, and the sealing power was used to bless thousands of faithful members before the exodus to the Mountain West. Thirty years later, at the completion of the St. George Temple, President Brigham Young noted the eternal significance of saving

ordinances finally being available for both the living and the dead.<sup>17</sup>

This is simply stated by President Wilford Woodruff: “There is hardly any principle the Lord has revealed that I have rejoiced more in than in the redemption of our dead; that we will have our fathers, our mothers, our wives and our children with us in



the family organization, in the morning of the first resurrection and in the Celestial Kingdom. These are grand principles. They are worth every sacrifice.”<sup>18</sup>

What a great time to be alive. This is the last dispensation, and we can feel the hastening of the work of salvation in every area where a saving ordinance is involved.<sup>19</sup> We now have temples across much of the world to provide these saving ordinances. Attending the temple for spiritual renewal, peace, safety, and direction in our lives is also a great blessing.<sup>20</sup>

Less than a year after President Thomas S. Monson was called as an Apostle, he dedicated the Los Angeles Temple Genealogical Library. He spoke of deceased ancestors “waiting [for] the day when you and I will do the research which is necessary to clear the way, . . . [and] likewise go into the house of God and perform that work . . . that they . . . cannot perform.”<sup>21</sup>

When then-Elder Monson delivered those dedicatory remarks on June 20, 1964, there were only 12 operating temples. During the period President Monson has served in the senior councils of the Church, 130 of our 142 operating temples have had their initial dedication. It is nothing short of miraculous to see the hastening of the work of salvation in our day. Twenty-eight more temples have been

announced and are in various stages of completion. Eighty-five percent of the Church members now live within 200 miles (320 km) of a temple.

#### **Family History Technology**

Family history technology has also advanced dramatically. President Howard W. Hunter declared in November 1994: “We have begun using information technology to hasten the sacred work of providing ordinances for the deceased. The role of technology . . . has been accelerated by the Lord himself. . . . However, we stand only on the threshold of what we can do with these tools.”<sup>22</sup>

In the 19 years since this prophetic statement, the acceleration of technology is almost unbelievable. A 36-year-old mother of young children recently exclaimed to me, “Just think—we have gone from microfilm readers in dedicated family history centers to sitting at my kitchen table with my computer doing family history after my children are finally asleep.” Brothers and sisters, family history centers are now in our homes.

Temple and family history work is not just about us. Think of those on the other side of the veil waiting for the saving ordinances that would free them from the bondage of spirit prison. *Prison* is defined as “a state of confinement or captivity.”<sup>23</sup> Those

in captivity might be asking William Saroyan’s question: “Now what?”

One faithful sister shared a special spiritual experience in the Salt Lake Temple. While in the confirmation room, after a vicarious confirmation ordinance was pronounced, she heard, “And the prisoner shall go free!” She felt a great sense of urgency for those who were waiting for their baptismal and confirmation work.

Upon returning home, she searched the scriptures for the phrase she had heard. She found Joseph Smith’s declaration in section 128 of the Doctrine and Covenants: “Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad. Let the earth break forth into singing.

Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free.”<sup>24</sup>

The question is, what do we need to do? The Prophet Joseph’s counsel was to present in the temple “the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptance.”<sup>25</sup>

The leadership of the Church has issued a clarion call to the rising generation to lead the way in the use of technology to experience the spirit of Elijah, to search out their ancestors, and to perform temple ordinances for them.<sup>26</sup> Much of the heavy lifting in hastening the work of salvation for both the living and the dead will be done by you young people.<sup>27</sup>

If the youth in each ward will not only go to the temple and do baptisms for their dead but also work with their families and other ward members to provide the family names for the ordinance work they perform, both they and the Church will be greatly blessed. Don’t underestimate the influence of the deceased in assisting

your efforts and the joy of ultimately meeting those you serve. The eternally significant blessing of uniting our own families is almost beyond comprehension.<sup>28</sup>

In the worldwide membership of the Church, fifty-one percent of adults currently do not have both parents in the Family Tree section of the Church's FamilySearch Internet site. Sixty-five percent of adults do not have all four grandparents listed.<sup>29</sup> Remember, we without our roots and branches cannot be saved. Church members need to obtain and input this vital information.

We finally have the doctrine, the temples, and the technology for families to accomplish this glorious work of salvation. I suggest one way this might be done. Families could hold a

“Family Tree Gathering.” This should be a recurring effort. Everyone would bring existing family histories, stories, and photos, including cherished possessions of grandparents and parents. Our young people are excited to learn about the lives of family members—where they came from and how they lived. Many have had their hearts turned to the fathers. They love the stories and photos, and they have the technological expertise to scan and upload these stories and photos to Family Tree and connect source documents with ancestors to preserve these for all time. Of course, the main objective is to determine what ordinances still need to be done and make assignments for the essential temple work. The *My Family* booklet can be utilized to help record

family information, stories, and photos that can then be uploaded to Family Tree.

Family commitments and expectations should be at the top of our priorities to protect our divine destiny. For those who are looking for more fruitful use of the Sabbath day for the family as a whole, the hastening of this work is fertile ground. One mother glowingly tells how her 17-year-old son gets on the computer after church on Sunday to do family history work and her 10-year-old son loves to hear the stories and see pictures of his ancestors. This has blessed their entire family to experience the spirit of Elijah. Our precious roots and branches must be nourished.

Jesus Christ gave His life as a vicarious atonement. He resolved





the ultimate question raised by Job. He overcame death for all mankind, which we could not do for ourselves. We can, however, perform vicarious ordinances and truly become saviors on Mount Zion<sup>30</sup> for our own families in order that we, with them, might be exalted as well as saved.

I bear witness of the Savior's atoning sacrifice and the certainty of the Father's plan for us and our families. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

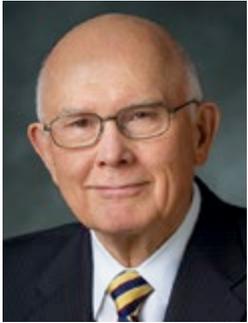
#### NOTES

1. William Saroyan, in Henry Allen, "Raging against Aging," *Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 31, 2011–Jan. 1, 2012, C9.
2. Job 14:14.
3. Job 14:1, 2, 7, 9.
4. Malachi 4:1. Recently several articles have reported that an increasingly significant number of people are choosing not to have children in order to improve their standard of living (see Abby Ellin, "The Childless Plan for Their Fading Days," *New York Times*, Feb. 15, 2014, B4). Many countries are decreasing in population as a result of these individual choices. This is sometimes referred to as the "demographic winter" (see *The New Economic Reality: Demographic Winter* [documentary], byutv.org/shows).
5. Malachi 4:5–6.
6. See *History of the Church*, 1:12; Doctrine and Covenants 2.
7. The Jews have been waiting for Elijah's return for 2,400 years. To this day, at their annual Passover Seders, or dinners, they set a place for him and go to the door hoping he has arrived to herald the coming of the Messiah.
8. See Bible Dictionary, "Elijah."
9. See Doctrine and Covenants 110:14–16; see also Doctrine and Covenants 2.
10. Russell M. Nelson, "A New Harvest Time," *Ensign*, May 1998, 34.
11. John 3:5.
12. Vilate M. Kimball to Heber C. Kimball, Oct. 11, 1840, Vilate M. Kimball letters, Church History Library; spelling and capitalization standardized.
13. Doctrine and Covenants 127:5; emphasis added.
14. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Fielding Smith* (2013), 68.
15. See First Presidency letter, Oct. 8, 2012.
16. See *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham (1946), 147.
17. Brigham Young stated, "All I want is to see this people devote their means and interests to the building up of the kingdom of God, erecting temples, and in them officiate for the living and the dead . . . that they may be crowned sons and daughters of the Almighty" (*Deseret News*, Sept. 6, 1876, 498). Baptisms for the dead commenced on January 9, 1877, and endowments for the dead were performed two days later. The joy of this was expressed by Lucy B. Young, who said that "her heart was full in the prospect of being received by [her dead relatives] with open arms, as all would be by those who could not do the work for themselves" (in Richard E. Bennett, "Which Is the Wisest Course? The Transformation in Mormon Temple Consciousness, 1870–1898," *BYU Studies Quarterly*, vol. 52, no. 2 [2013], 22).
18. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* (2004), 192–93.
19. President Wilford Woodruff (who is known to be one of the greatest missionaries of all time to the living), speaking of work for the dead, said: "I look upon this portion of our ministry as a mission of as much importance as preaching to the living; the dead will hear the voice of the servants of God in the spirit-world, and they cannot come forth in the morning of the [first] resurrection, unless certain ordinances are performed, for [them]." He also said, "It takes just as much to save a dead man . . . as a living man" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff*, 188).
20. President Howard W. Hunter invited Church members to go to the temple often "for the personal blessing of temple worship, for the sanctity and safety which is provided within those hallowed and consecrated walls. . . . It is holy unto the Lord. It should be holy unto us" ("The Great Symbol of Our Membership," *Ensign*, Oct. 1994, 5; *Tambuli*, Nov. 1994, 6).
21. "Messages of Inspiration from President Thomas S. Monson," *Church News*, Dec. 29, 2013, 2.
22. Howard W. Hunter, "We Have a Work to Do," *Ensign*, Mar. 1995, 65.
23. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (2003), "prison."
24. Doctrine and Covenants 128:22; see also Doctrine and Covenants 138:42. "Before [the] world was, the Lord ordained that which enables spirits in [prison] to be redeemed" (index to the triple combination, "Prison").
25. Doctrine and Covenants 128:24.
26. See First Presidency letter, Oct. 8, 2012; see also David A. Bednar, "The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 24–27; R. Scott Lloyd, "Find Our Cousins": Apostle [Neil L. Andersen] Counsels LDS Youth at RootsTech Conference," *Church News*, Feb. 16, 2014, 8–9.
27. One recent study indicated that a major emphasis for this generation is living a meaningful life where they "give to others, and orient themselves to a larger purpose" (Emily Esfahani Smith and Jennifer L. Aaker, "Millennial Searchers," *New York Times Sunday Review*, Dec. 1, 2013, 6).
28. See Howard W. Hunter, "A Temple-Motivated People," *Ensign*, Feb. 1995, 2–5; *Liahona*, May 1995, 2–7.
29. Statistics provided by Family History Department.
30. See Obadiah 1:21.



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**By Elder Dallin H. Oaks**  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

# The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood

*Priesthood keys direct women as well as men, and priesthood ordinances and priesthood authority pertain to women as well as men.*

**I.**

At this conference we have seen the release of some faithful brothers, and we have sustained the callings of others. In this rotation—so familiar in the Church—we do not “step down” when we are released, and we do not “step up” when we are called. There is no “up or down” in the service of the Lord. There is only “forward or backward,” and that difference depends on how we accept and act upon our releases and our callings. I once presided at the release of a young stake president who had given fine service for nine years and was now rejoicing in his release and in the new calling he and his wife had just received. They were called to be the nursery leaders in their ward. Only in this Church would that be seen as equally honorable!

**II.**

While addressing a women’s conference, Relief Society general president Linda K. Burton said, “We hope to *instill* within each of us a

greater desire to better understand the priesthood.”<sup>1</sup> That need applies to all of us, and I will pursue it by speaking of the keys and authority of the priesthood. Since these subjects are of equal concern to men and to women, I am pleased that these proceedings are broadcast and published for all members of the Church. Priesthood



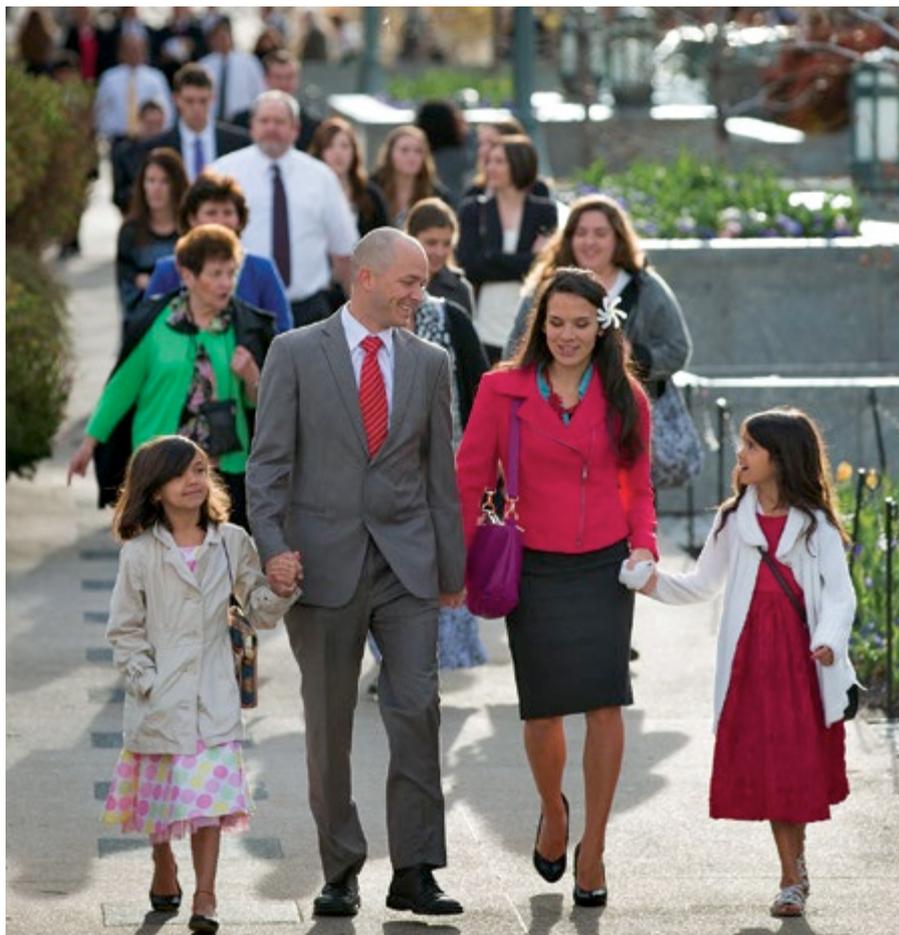
power blesses all of us. Priesthood keys direct women as well as men, and priesthood ordinances and priesthood authority pertain to women as well as men.

**III.**

President Joseph F. Smith described the priesthood as “the power of God delegated to man by which man can act in the earth for the salvation of the human family.”<sup>2</sup> Other leaders have taught us that the priesthood “is the consummate power on this earth. It is the power by which the earth was created.”<sup>3</sup> The scriptures teach that “this same Priesthood, which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also” (Moses 6:7). Thus, the priesthood is the power by which we will be resurrected and proceed to eternal life.

The understanding we seek begins with an understanding of the keys of the priesthood. “Priesthood keys are the authority God has given to priesthood [holders] to direct, control, and govern the use of His priesthood on earth.”<sup>4</sup> Every act or ordinance performed in the Church is done under the direct or indirect authorization of one holding the keys for that function. As Elder M. Russell Ballard has explained, “Those who have priesthood keys . . . literally make it possible for all who serve faithfully under their direction to exercise priesthood authority and have access to priesthood power.”<sup>5</sup>

In the controlling of the exercise of priesthood authority, the function of priesthood keys both enlarges and limits. It enlarges by making it possible for priesthood authority and blessings to be available for all of God’s children. It limits by directing who will be given the authority of the priesthood, who will hold its offices, and how its



rights and powers will be conferred. For example, a person who holds the priesthood is not able to confer his office or authority on another unless authorized by one who holds the keys. Without that authorization, the ordination would be invalid. This explains why a priesthood holder—regardless of office—cannot ordain a member of his family or administer the sacrament in his own home without authorization from the one who holds the appropriate keys.

With the exception of the sacred work that sisters do in the temple under the keys held by the temple president, which I will describe hereafter, only one who holds a priesthood office can officiate in a priesthood ordinance. And all authorized priesthood ordinances are recorded on the records of the Church.

Ultimately, all keys of the priesthood are held by the Lord Jesus Christ, whose priesthood it is. He is the one who determines what keys

are delegated to mortals and how those keys will be used. We are accustomed to thinking that all keys of the priesthood were conferred on Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple, but the scripture states that all that was conferred there were “the keys of this dispensation” (D&C 110:16). At general conference many years ago, President Spencer W. Kimball reminded us that there are other priesthood keys that have not been given to man on the earth, including the keys of creation and resurrection.<sup>6</sup>

The divine nature of the limitations put upon the exercise of priesthood keys explains an essential contrast between decisions on matters of Church administration and decisions affecting the priesthood. The First Presidency and the Council of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, who preside over the Church, are empowered to make many decisions affecting Church policies and procedures—matters such as

the location of Church buildings and the ages for missionary service. But even though these presiding authorities hold and exercise all of the keys delegated to men in this dispensation, they are not free to alter the divinely decreed pattern that only men will hold offices in the priesthood.

#### IV.

I come now to the subject of priesthood authority. I begin with the three principles just discussed: (1) priesthood is the power of God delegated to man to act for the salvation of the human family, (2) priesthood authority is governed by priesthood holders who hold priesthood keys, and (3) since the scriptures state that “all other authorities [and] offices in the church are appendages to this [Melchizedek] priesthood” (D&C 107:5), all that is done under the direction of those priesthood keys is done with priesthood authority.

How does this apply to women? In an address to the Relief Society, President Joseph Fielding Smith, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said this: “While the sisters have not been given the Priesthood, it has not been conferred upon them, that does not mean that the Lord has not given unto them authority. . . . A person may have authority given to him, or a sister to her, to do certain things in the Church that are binding and absolutely necessary for our salvation, such as the work that our sisters do in the House of the Lord. They have authority given unto them to do some great and wonderful things, sacred unto the Lord, and binding just as thoroughly as are the blessings that are given by the men who hold the Priesthood.”<sup>7</sup>

In that notable address, President Smith said again and again that

women have been given authority. To the women he said, “You can speak with authority, because the Lord has placed authority upon you.” He also said that the Relief Society “[has] been given power and authority to do a great many things. The work which they do is done by divine authority.” And, of course, the Church work done by women or men, whether in the temple or in the wards or branches, is done under the direction of those who hold priesthood keys. Thus, speaking of the Relief Society, President Smith explained, “[The Lord] has given to them this great organization where they have authority to serve under the directions of the bishops of the wards . . . , looking after the interest of our people both spiritually and temporally.”<sup>8</sup>

Thus, it is truly said that Relief Society is not just a class for women but something they belong to—a divinely established appendage to the priesthood.<sup>9</sup>

We are not accustomed to speaking of women having the authority of the priesthood in their Church callings, but what other authority can it be? When a woman—young or old—is set apart to preach the gospel as a full-time missionary, she is given priesthood authority to perform a priesthood function. The same is true when a woman is set apart to function as an officer or teacher in a Church organization under the direction of one who holds the keys of the priesthood. Whoever functions in an office or calling received from one who holds priesthood keys exercises priesthood authority in performing her or his assigned duties.

Whoever exercises priesthood authority should forget about their rights and concentrate on their responsibilities. That is a principle needed in society at large. The famous Russian



writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn is quoted as saying, “It is time . . . to defend not so much human rights as human obligations.”<sup>10</sup> Latter-day Saints surely recognize that qualifying for exaltation is not a matter of asserting rights but a matter of fulfilling responsibilities.

#### V.

The Lord has directed that only men will be ordained to offices in the priesthood. But, as various Church leaders have emphasized, men are not “the priesthood.”<sup>11</sup> Men hold the priesthood, with a sacred duty to use it for the blessing of all of the children of God.



The greatest power God has given to His sons cannot be exercised without the companionship of one of His daughters, because only to His daughters has God given the power “to be a creator of bodies . . . so that God’s design and the Great Plan might meet fruition.”<sup>12</sup> Those are the words of President J. Reuben Clark.

He continued: “This is the place of our wives and of our mothers in the Eternal Plan. They are not bearers of the Priesthood; they are not charged with carrying out the duties and functions of the Priesthood; nor are they laden with its responsibilities; they are builders and organizers under its power, and partakers of its blessings, possessing the complement of the Priesthood powers and possessing a function as divinely called, as eternally important in its place as the Priesthood itself.”<sup>13</sup>

In those inspired words, President Clark was speaking of the family. As stated in the family proclamation, the father presides in the family and he and the mother have separate responsibilities, but they are “obligated to help one another as equal partners.”<sup>14</sup> Some years before the family proclamation, President Spencer W. Kimball gave this inspired explanation: “When we speak of marriage as a partnership, let us speak of marriage as a *full* partnership. We do not want our LDS women to be *silent* partners or *limited* partners in that eternal assignment! Please be a *contributing* and *full* partner.”<sup>15</sup>



In the eyes of God, whether in the Church or in the family, women and men are equal, with different responsibilities.

I close with some truths about the blessings of the priesthood. Unlike priesthood keys and priesthood ordinations, the blessings of the priesthood are available to women and to men on the same terms. The gift of the Holy Ghost and the blessings of the temple are familiar illustrations of this truth.

In his insightful talk at BYU Education Week last summer, Elder M. Russell Ballard gave these teachings:

“Our Church doctrine places women equal to and yet different from men. God does not regard either gender as better or more important than the other. . . .

“When men and women go to the temple, they are both endowed with the same power, which is priesthood power. . . . Access to the power and the blessings of the priesthood is available to all of God’s children.”<sup>16</sup>

I testify of the power and blessings of the priesthood of God, available for His sons and daughters alike. I testify of the authority of the priesthood, which functions throughout all of the offices and activities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I testify of the divinely directed function of the keys of the priesthood, held and exercised in their fulness by our prophet/president, Thomas S. Monson. Finally and most important, I testify of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, whose priesthood this is and whose servants we are, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. Linda K. Burton, “Priesthood: ‘A Sacred Trust to Be Used for the Benefit of Men, Women, and Children’” (Brigham Young University Women’s Conference address, May 3, 2013), 1; [ce.byu.edu/cw/womensconference/transcripts.php](http://ce.byu.edu/cw/womensconference/transcripts.php).
2. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. (1939), 139.
3. Boyd K. Packer, “Priesthood Power in the Home” (worldwide leadership training meeting, Feb. 2012); [lds.org/broadcasts](http://lds.org/broadcasts); see also James E. Faust, “Power of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 41–43.

4. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 2.1.1.
5. M. Russell Ballard, “Men and Women in the Work of the Lord,” *New Era*, Apr. 2014, 4; *Liahona*, Apr. 2014, 48; see also *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 138.
6. See Spencer W. Kimball, “Our Great Potential,” *Ensign*, May 1977, 49.
7. Joseph Fielding Smith, “Relief Society—an Aid to the Priesthood,” *Relief Society Magazine*, Jan. 1959, 4.
8. Joseph Fielding Smith, “Relief Society—an Aid to the Priesthood,” 4, 5; see also *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Fielding Smith* (2013), 302.
9. See Boyd K. Packer, “The Relief Society,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 72; see also *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 138.
10. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, “A World Split Apart” (commencement address delivered at Harvard University, June 8, 1978); see also Patricia T. Holland, “A Woman’s Perspective on the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, July 1980, 25; *Tambuli*, June 1982, 23; Dallin H. Oaks, “Rights and Responsibilities,” *Mercer Law Review*, vol. 36, no. 2 (winter 1985), 427–42.
11. See James E. Faust, “You Are All Heaven Sent,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2002, 113; M. Russell Ballard, “This Is My Work and Glory,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 19; Dallin H. Oaks, “Priesthood Authority in the Family and the Church,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2005, 26. We sometimes say that the Relief Society is a “partner with the priesthood.” It would be more accurate to say that in the work of the Lord the Relief Society and the women of the Church are “partners with the holders of the priesthood.”
12. J. Reuben Clark Jr., “Our Wives and Our Mothers in the Eternal Plan,” *Relief Society Magazine*, Dec. 1946, 800.
13. J. Reuben Clark Jr., “Our Wives and Our Mothers,” 801.
14. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.
15. Spencer W. Kimball, “Privileges and Responsibilities of Sisters,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 106.
16. M. Russell Ballard, *New Era*, Apr. 2014, 4; *Liahona*, Apr. 2014, 48; see also Sheri L. Dew, *Women and the Priesthood* (2013), especially chapter 6, for a valuable elaboration of the doctrines stated here.



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**By Elder Donald L. Hallstrom**  
Of the Presidency of the Seventy

# What Manner of Men?

*What changes are required of us to become the manner of men we ought to be?*

As we visualize this worldwide meeting, we are reminded that there is nothing comparable to this gathering—anywhere. The purpose of the priesthood session of general conference is to teach priesthood holders what manner of men we ought to be (see 3 Nephi 27:27) and to inspire us to reach that ideal.

In my Aaronic Priesthood years in Hawaii half a century ago and as a missionary in England, we would gather in meetinghouses and (with intense effort) listen to the priesthood

session using a telephone connection. In later years satellites allowed broadcasts to selected Church locations with those enormous dish receivers so we could both hear and view the proceedings. We were in awe of that technology! Few could have imagined today's world, where anyone who has access to the Internet with a smartphone, tablet, or computer can receive the messages of this meeting.

However, this vastly increased accessibility to the voices of the Lord's

servants, which are the same as the Lord's own voice (see D&C 1:38), has little value unless we are willing to receive the word (see D&C 11:21) and then follow it. Simply stated, the purpose of general conference and of this priesthood session is fulfilled only if we are willing to act—if we are willing to change.

Several decades ago I was serving as a bishop. Over an extended period I met with a man in our ward who was many years my senior. This brother had a troubled relationship with his wife and was estranged from their children. He struggled to keep employment, had no close friends, and found interaction with ward members so difficult he finally was unwilling to serve in the Church. During one intense discussion about the challenges in his life, he leaned toward me—as his conclusion to our numerous talks—and said, “Bishop, I have a bad temper, and that’s just the way I am!”

That statement stunned me that night and has haunted me ever since. Once this man decided—once any of us conclude—“That’s just the way I am,” we give up our ability to change. We might as well raise the white flag, put down our weapons, concede the battle, and just surrender—any prospect of winning is lost. While some of us may think that does not describe us, perhaps every one of us demonstrates by at least one or two bad habits, “That’s just the way I am.”

Well, we meet in this priesthood meeting because who we are is not who we can become. We meet here tonight in the name of Jesus Christ. We meet with the confidence that His Atonement gives every one of us—no matter our weaknesses, our frailties, our addictions—the ability to change. We meet with the hope that





serve a full-time mission. In 1986 he was ordained an elder and called to serve in India. Walking was not easy—he did his best, using a cane in each hand, and he fell often—but quitting was never an option. He made a commitment to honorably and devotedly serve a mission, and he did.

When we met Brother Nulu, nearly 20 years after his mission, he cheerfully greeted us where the road ended and led us down an uneven dirt path to the two-room home he shared with his wife and three children. It was an extremely hot and uncomfortable day. He still walked with great difficulty, but there was no self-pity. Through personal diligence, he has become a teacher, providing schooling for the village children. When we entered his modest house, he immediately took me to a corner and pulled out a box that contained his most important possessions. He wanted me to see a piece of paper. It read, “With good wishes and blessings to Elder Nulu, a courageous and happy missionary; [dated] June 25, 1987; [signed] Boyd K. Packer.” On that occasion, when then-Elder Packer visited India and spoke to a group of missionaries, he affirmed to Elder Nulu his potential. In essence, what Brother Nulu was telling me that day in 2006 was that the gospel had changed him—permanently!

On this visit to the Nulu home, we were accompanied by the mission president. He was there to interview Brother Nulu, his wife, and his children—for the parents to receive their endowments and be sealed and for the children to be sealed to their parents. We also presented the family with arrangements for them to travel to the Hong Kong China Temple for these ordinances. They wept with joy as their long-awaited dream was to be realized.

our future, no matter our history, can be better.

When we participate in this meeting with the “real intent” to change (Moroni 10:4), the Spirit has full access to our hearts and minds. As the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, “And it shall come to pass, that inasmuch as they . . . exercise faith in me”—remember, faith is a principle of power and of action—“I will pour out my Spirit upon them in the day that they assemble themselves together” (D&C 44:2). That means tonight!

If you think your challenges are insurmountable, let me tell you of a

man we met in a small village outside of Hyderabad, India, in 2006. This man exemplified a willingness to change. Appa Rao Nulu was born in rural India. When he was three years old, he contracted polio and was left physically disabled. His society taught him that his potential was severely limited. However, as a young adult he met our missionaries. They taught him of a greater potential, both in this life and in the eternity to come. He was baptized and confirmed a member of the Church. With a significantly raised vision, he set a goal to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and to



What is expected of a holder of the priesthood of God? What changes are required of us to become the manner of men we ought to be? I make three suggestions:

1. We need to be priesthood men! Whether we are young men holding the Aaronic Priesthood or men bearing the Melchizedek Priesthood, we need to be priesthood men, showing spiritual maturity because we have made covenants. As Paul said, “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things” (1 Corinthians 13:11). We should be different because we hold the priesthood—not arrogant or prideful or patronizing but humble and teachable and meek. Receiving the priesthood and its various offices should mean something to us. It should not be a perfunctory “rite of passage” that automatically happens at certain ages but a sacred act of covenant thoughtfully made. We should feel so privileged and so grateful that our every action shows it. If we seldom even think about

the priesthood, we need to change.

2. We need to serve! The essence of holding the priesthood is to magnify our calling (see D&C 84:33) by serving others. Avoiding our most important duty to serve our wives and children, not accepting or passively fulfilling callings in the Church, or not caring about others unless it is convenient is not who we should be. The Savior declared, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Matthew 22:37) and later added, “If thou lovest me thou shalt serve me” (D&C 42:29). Selfishness is the antithesis of priesthood responsibility, and if it is a trait of our character, we need to change.

3. We need to be worthy! I may not have the ability of Elder Jeffrey R. Holland when he spoke in a priesthood session a few years ago to “get in your face . . . , nose to nose, with just enough fire . . . to singe your eyebrows” (“We Are All Enlisted,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 45); but, dear brethren, we need to wake up to how commonly accepted practices in the world choke our power in the priesthood.

If we think we can even flirt with pornography or violations of chastity or dishonesty in any form and not have it negatively affect us and our families, we are deceived. Moroni stated, “See that ye do all things in worthiness” (Mormon 9:29). The Lord powerfully directed, “And I now give unto you a commandment to beware concerning yourselves, to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life” (D&C 84:43). If there are any unresolved sins preventing our worthiness, we need to change.

The only complete response to the question posed by Jesus Christ “What manner of men ought ye to be?” is the one He succinctly and profoundly gave: “Even as I am” (3 Nephi 27:27). The invitation to “come unto Christ, and be perfected in him” (Moroni 10:32) both requires and expects change. Mercifully, He has not left us alone. “And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. . . . Then will I make weak things become strong” (Ether 12:27). Relying upon the Savior’s Atonement, we can change. Of this I am certain. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



**By Randall L. Ridd**

Second Counselor in the Young Men General Presidency

# The Choice Generation

*You were chosen to participate in His work at this time because He trusts you to make the right choices.*

**Y**oung men, you have probably heard before that you are a “chosen generation,” meaning that God chose and prepared you to come to earth at this time for a great purpose. I know this to be true. But this evening I would like to address you as the “choice generation” because never before in history have individuals been blessed with so many choices. More choices mean more opportunities; more opportunities mean more potential to do good and, unfortunately, evil. I believe that God sent you here at this time because He trusts you to successfully discern among the mind-boggling choices available.

In 1974, President Spencer W. Kimball said, “I believe that the Lord is anxious to put into our hands inventions of which we laymen have hardly had a glimpse” (“When the World Will Be Converted,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1974, 10).

And He has! You are growing up with one of the greatest tools for good in the history of man: the Internet. With it comes an elaborate buffet of choices. The abundance of choice, however, carries with it an equal portion of accountability. It facilitates your access to both the very best and the very worst the world has to offer. With it you can accomplish great things in a short period of time, or you can get

caught up in endless loops of triviality that waste your time and degrade your potential. With the click of a button, you can access whatever your heart desires. That’s the key—what does your heart desire? What do you gravitate toward? Where will your desires lead?

Remember that God “granteth unto men according to their desire” (Alma 29:4) and that He “will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts” (D&C 137:9; see also Alma 41:3).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: “In a real though figurative sense, the *book of*

*life* is the record of the acts of men as such record is written in their own bodies. . . . That is, every thought, word, and deed has an [effect] on the human body; all these leave their marks, marks which can be read by Him who is Eternal as easily as the words in a book can be read” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 97).

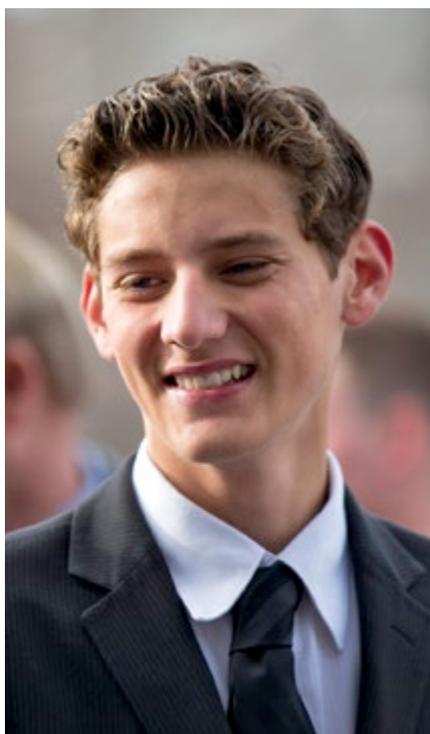
The Internet also records your desires, expressed in the form of searches and clicks. There are legions waiting to fill those desires. As you surf the Internet, you leave tracks—what you communicate, where you have been, how long you have been there, and the kinds of things that interest you. In this way, the Internet creates a cyber profile for you—in a sense, your “cyber book of life.” As in life, the Internet will give you more and more of what you seek. If your desires are pure, the Internet can magnify them, making it ever easier to engage in worthy pursuits. But the opposite is also true.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell put it this way:

“What we insistently desire, over time, is what we will eventually become and what we will receive in eternity. . . .

“. . . Only by educating and training our desires can they become our allies instead of our enemies!” (“According to the Desire of [Our] Hearts,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 21, 22).

My young brothers, if you are not proactive in educating your desires, the world will do it for you. Every day the world seeks to influence your desires, enticing you to buy something, click on something, play something, read or watch something. Ultimately, the choice is yours. You have agency. It is the power to not only act on your desires but also to refine, purify, and elevate your desires. Agency is your power to become.





Each choice takes you closer to or further from what you are meant to become; each click has meaning. Always ask yourself, “Where will this choice lead?” Develop the ability to see beyond the moment.

Satan wants to control your agency so he can control what you become. He knows that one of the best ways to do this is by trapping you with addictive behavior. Your choices determine whether technology will empower you or enslave you.

May I offer four principles to help you, the choice generation, educate your desires and guide your use of technology.

**First: Knowing Who You Really Are Makes Decisions Easier**

I have a friend who learned this truth in a very personal way. His son was raised in the gospel, but he seemed to be wandering spiritually. He frequently declined opportunities to exercise the priesthood. His parents were disappointed when he declared that he had decided not to serve a mission. My friend prayed earnestly for his son, hoping that he would have a change

of heart. Those hopes were dashed when his son announced that he was engaged to be married. The father pleaded with his son to get his patriarchal blessing. The son finally agreed but insisted on visiting the patriarch alone.

When he returned after the blessing, he was very emotional. He took his girlfriend outside, where he could talk to her privately. The father peeked out the window to see the young couple wiping away each other’s tears.

Later the son shared with his father what had happened. With great emotion he explained that during the blessing, he had a glimpse of who he was in the premortal world. He saw how valiant and influential he was in persuading others to follow Christ. Knowing who he really was, how could he not serve a mission?

Young men, remember who you really are. Remember that you hold the holy priesthood. This will inspire you to make correct choices as you use the Internet and throughout your life.

**Second: Plug In to the Source of Power**

Right in the palm of your hand you have the wisdom of the ages—more

importantly, the words of the prophets, from Old Testament days to President Thomas S. Monson. But if you don’t regularly recharge your cell phone, it is useless, and you feel lost and out of touch. You wouldn’t think of going a single day without charging your battery.

As important as it is to leave home every day with a full charge on your cell phone, it is far more important to be fully charged spiritually. Every time you plug in your phone, use it as a reminder to ask yourself if you have plugged in to the most important source of spiritual power—prayer and scripture study, which will charge you with inspiration through the Holy Ghost (see D&C 11:12–14). It will help you know the mind and will of the Lord to make the small but important daily choices that determine your direction. Many of us immediately stop whatever we are doing to read a text message—should we not place even more importance on messages from the Lord? Neglecting to connect to this power should be unthinkable to us (see 2 Nephi 32:3).

### Third: Owning a Smartphone Does Not Make You Smart, but Using It Wisely Can

Young men, don't do dumb things with your smartphone. You all know what I mean (see Mosiah 4:29). There are countless ways technology can distract you from what is most important. Follow the adage "Be where you are when you are there." When you are driving, drive. When you are in class, focus on the lesson. When you are with your friends, give them the gift of your attention. Your brain cannot concentrate on two things at once. Multitasking amounts to quickly shifting your focus from one thing to another. An old proverb says, "If you chase two rabbits, you won't catch either one."

### Fourth: The Lord Provides Technology to Accomplish His Purposes

The divine purpose of technology is to hasten the work of salvation. As members of the choice generation, you understand technology. Use it to accelerate your progress toward perfection. Because you have been given much, you too must give (see "Because I Have Been Given Much," *Hymns*, no. 219). The Lord expects you to use these great tools to take His work to the next level, to share the gospel in ways that are beyond my generation's wildest imagination. Where generations past influenced their neighbors and their town, you have the power through the Internet and social media to reach beyond borders and influence the whole world.

I testify that this is the Lord's Church. You were chosen to participate in His work at this time because He trusts you to make the right choices. You are the choice generation. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By President Dieter F. Uchtdorf  
Second Counselor in the First Presidency

# Are You Sleeping through the Restoration?

*There is too much at stake for us as individuals, as families, and as Christ's Church to give only a halfhearted effort to this sacred work.*

Nearly 200 years ago, the American short story "Rip Van Winkle" became an instant classic. The main character, Rip, is an unambitious man who is very good at avoiding two things: work and his wife.

One day, while wandering in the mountains with his dog, he discovers a group of strangely dressed men drinking and playing games. After accepting some of their liquor, Rip becomes drowsy and closes his eyes for a moment. When he opens his eyes again, he is surprised to find that his dog is gone, his rifle has rusted, and he now has a long beard.

Rip makes his way back to his village only to discover that everything has changed. His wife has died, his

friends are gone, and the portrait of King George III in the tavern has been replaced by a portrait of someone he does not recognize—by General George Washington.

Rip Van Winkle had been sleeping for 20 years! And in the process, he had missed one of the most exciting periods in the history of his country—he had slept through the American Revolution.

In May 1966, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. used this story as an illustration for his speech "Don't Sleep Through the Revolution."<sup>1</sup>

Today, I would like to take the same theme and propose a question to all of us who hold God's priesthood: are you sleeping through the Restoration?





### **We Are Living in the Time of the Restoration**

Sometimes we think of the Restoration of the gospel as something that is complete, already behind us—Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon, he received priesthood keys, the Church was organized. In reality, the Restoration is an ongoing process; we are living in it right now. It includes “all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal,” and the “many great and important things” that “He will yet reveal.”<sup>2</sup> Brethren, the exciting developments of today are part of that long-foretold period of preparation that will culminate in the glorious Second Coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

This is one of the most remarkable periods of the world’s history! Ancient prophets yearned to see our day.

When our time in mortality is complete, what experiences will we be able to share about our own contribution to this significant period of our lives and to the furthering of the Lord’s work? Will we be able to say that we rolled up our sleeves and labored with all our heart, might, mind, and strength? Or will we have to admit that our role was mostly that of an observer?

I suppose there are a variety of reasons why it is easy to become a

bit sleepy with regard to building the kingdom of God. Let me mention three major ones. As I do, I invite you to ponder if any might apply. If you see room for improvement, I ask you to consider what could be done to change for the better.

#### **Selfishness**

First, selfishness.

Those who are selfish seek their own interests and pleasure above all else. The central question for the selfish person is “What’s in it for me?”

Brethren, I am sure you can see that this attitude is clearly contrary to the spirit required to build God’s kingdom.

When we seek self-service over selfless-service, our priorities become centered on our own recognition and pleasure.

Past generations had their struggle with variations of egotism and narcissism, but I think today we are giving them serious competition. Is it any coincidence that the Oxford Dictionary recently proclaimed “selfie” as the word of the year?<sup>3</sup>

Naturally, we all have a desire for recognition, and there is nothing wrong with relaxing and enjoying ourselves. But when seeking the “gain

and praise of the world”<sup>4</sup> is a central part of our motivation, we will miss the redemptive and joyful experiences that come when we give generously of ourselves to the work of the Lord.

What is the remedy?

The answer, as always, lies in the words of Christ:

“Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.”<sup>5</sup>

Those who wholeheartedly turn their lives over to our Savior and serve God and fellowman discover a richness and fulness to life that the selfish or egotistic will never experience. The unselfish give of themselves. These may be small gifts of charity that have a grand impact for good: a smile, a handshake, a hug, time spent in listening, a soft word of encouragement, or a gesture of caring. All these acts of kindness can change hearts and lives. When we take advantage of the unlimited opportunities to love and serve our fellowmen, including our spouse and family, our capacity to love God and to serve others will greatly increase.



Those who serve others will not sleep through the Restoration.

### Addictions

Another thing that may cause us to sleepwalk through this significant season of the world is addiction.

Addictions often begin subtly. Addictions are thin threads of repeated action that weave themselves into thick bonds of habit. Negative habits have the potential to become consuming addictions.

These binding chains of addiction can have many forms, like pornography, alcohol, sex, drugs, tobacco, gambling, food, work, the Internet, or virtual reality. Satan, our common enemy, has many favorite tools he uses to rob us of our divine potential to accomplish our mission in the Lord's kingdom.

It saddens our Heavenly Father to see how willingly some of His noble sons extend their wrists to accept the chains of devastating addictions.

Brethren, we bear the eternal

priesthood of Almighty God. We are truly sons of the Most High and are endowed with unspeakable potential. We are designed to soar freely through the heavens. We are not meant to be shackled to the earth, imprisoned in straitjackets of our own making.

What is the remedy?

The first thing we must understand is that addictions are so much easier to prevent than to cure. In the Savior's words, "Suffer none of these things to enter into your heart."<sup>6</sup>

Several years ago, President Thomas S. Monson and I were offered an opportunity to tour Air Force One—the magnificent aircraft that transports the president of the United States. There were painstaking security checks by the Secret Service, and I smiled a little as agents searched our dear prophet prior to boarding.

Then the pilot in command invited me to take the captain's seat. It was a remarkable experience to again sit at the helm of a wonderful flying machine like the kind I had flown for

so many years. Memories of flights across oceans and continents filled my heart and mind. I envisioned exciting takeoffs and landings at airports all over the world.

Almost unconsciously, I placed my hands on the four throttles of the 747. Just then, a beloved and unmistakable voice came from behind—the voice of Thomas S. Monson.

"Dieter," he said, "don't even think about it."

I'm not admitting to anything, but it just may be that President Monson read my mind.

When we are tempted to do things we should not do, let us listen to the loving warning of trusted family and friends, our beloved prophet, and always the Savior.

The best defense against addiction is never to start.

But what of those who find themselves in the grip of addiction?

Please know, first of all, that there is hope. Seek help from loved ones, Church leaders, and trained

counselors. The Church provides addiction recovery help through local Church leaders, the Internet,<sup>7</sup> and in some areas, LDS Family Services.

Always remember, with the Savior's help, you can break free from addiction. It may be a long, difficult path, but the Lord will not give up on you. He loves you. Jesus Christ suffered the Atonement to help you change, to free you from the captivity of sin.

The most important thing is to keep trying—sometimes it takes several attempts before people find success. So don't give up. Don't lose faith. Keep your heart close to the Lord, and He will give you the power of deliverance. He will make you free.

My dear brethren, always keep far away from habits that could lead to addiction. Those who do so will be able to devote their heart, might, mind, and strength to the service of God.

They will not sleep through the Restoration.

### Competing Priorities

A third obstacle that prevents us from fully engaging in this work is the many competing priorities we face. Some of us are so busy that we feel like a cart pulled by a dozen work animals—each straining in a different direction. A lot of energy is expended, but the cart doesn't go anywhere.

Often we devote our best efforts in pursuit of a hobby, a sport, vocational interests, and community or political issues. All these things may be good and honorable, but are they leaving us time and energy for what should be our highest priorities?

What is the remedy?

Once again, it comes from the words of the Savior:

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

“This is the first and great commandment.

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”<sup>8</sup>

Everything else in life should be secondary to these two great priorities.

Even in Church service, it is easy to spend a lot of time just going through the motions without the heart or the substance of discipleship.

Brethren, we as priesthood bearers have committed to be a people who love God and our neighbor and who are willing to demonstrate that love through word and deed. That is the essence of who we are as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Those who live up to these principles will not sleep through the Restoration.

### A Call to Awaken

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from

the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”<sup>9</sup>

My dear friends, know that you are sons of light.

Don't allow selfishness! Don't allow habits that could lead to addiction! Don't allow competing priorities to lull you into indifference or detachment from blessed discipleship and ennobling priesthood service!

There is too much at stake for us as individuals, as families, and as Christ's Church to give only a halfhearted effort to this sacred work.

Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is not an effort of once a week or once a day. It is an effort of once and for all.

The Lord's promise to His true priesthood holders is almost too grand to comprehend.

Those who are faithful unto the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods and magnify their callings “are



sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies.” Therefore, all that our Father has will be given unto them.<sup>10</sup>

I testify that the cleansing power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the transformative power of the Holy Ghost can heal and rescue mankind. It is our privilege, our sacred duty, and our joy to heed the Savior’s call to follow Him with a willing mind and full purpose of heart. Let us “shake off the chains with which [we] are bound, and come forth out of obscurity, and arise from the dust.”<sup>11</sup>

Let us be awake and not be weary of well-doing, for we “are laying the foundation of a great work,”<sup>12</sup> even preparing for the return of the Savior. Brethren, when we add the light of our example as a witness to the beauty and power of restored truth, we will not sleep through the Restoration. Of this I testify and leave you my blessing in the sacred name of our Master, even Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. See Martin Luther King Jr., “Don’t Sleep Through the Revolution” (1966 Ware Lecture, Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly, Hollywood, Florida, May 18, 1966).
2. Articles of Faith 1:9.
3. See [blog.oxforddictionaries.com/press-releases/oxford-dictionaries-word-of-the-year-2013](http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/press-releases/oxford-dictionaries-word-of-the-year-2013).
4. 2 Nephi 26:29.
5. Mark 8:34–35.
6. 3 Nephi 12:29.
7. See, for example, [lds.org/topics/addiction](http://lds.org/topics/addiction).
8. Matthew 22:37–39.
9. Ephesians 5:14.
10. See Doctrine and Covenants 84:33, 38.
11. 2 Nephi 1:23.
12. See Doctrine and Covenants 64:33.



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**By President Henry B. Eyring**  
First Counselor in the First Presidency

## The Priesthood Man

*You can be a great model, an average one, or a bad model. You may think it doesn’t matter to you, but it does to the Lord.*

We all have heroes, particularly when we are young. I was born and grew up in Princeton, New Jersey, in the United States. The most famous sports teams near where we lived were headquartered in New York City. It was the home of three professional baseball teams in those faraway days: the Brooklyn Dodgers, the New York Giants, and the New York Yankees. Philadelphia was even closer to our home and was the home of the Athletics and the Phillies baseball teams. There were many potential baseball heroes for me on those teams.

Joe DiMaggio, who played for the New York Yankees, became my baseball hero. When my brothers

and my friends played baseball on the school grounds next to our house, I tried to swing the bat the way I thought Joe DiMaggio did it. That was before the days of television (this is ancient history), so I only had pictures from newspapers to use to copy his swing.

When I was growing up, my father drove me to Yankee Stadium. That was the only time I saw Joe DiMaggio play. As if I am still there, in my mind I can see him swing the bat and see the white baseball fly straight into the stands at center field.

Now, my baseball skills never came close to those of my childhood hero. But the few times I hit a baseball well, I copied the level of his powerful swing as closely as I could.





When we choose heroes, we begin to copy, consciously or unconsciously, what we admire most in them.

Happily, my wise parents put great heroes in my path as a boy. My dad took me to Yankee Stadium only once to observe my baseball hero play, but every Sunday he let me observe a priesthood man who became a hero. That hero shaped my life. My father was the branch president of the little branch which met in our home. By the way, if you came down to the first floor on Sunday morning, you were in church. Our branch never had more than 30 people in attendance.

There was a young man who drove his mother to our house for meetings, but he never came into the house. He was not a member. It was my father who succeeded by going out to him where he parked the car and inviting him into our home. He was baptized and became my first and only Aaronic Priesthood leader. He became my priesthood hero. I still remember the wooden statue he gave me as a reward after we had completed a project to cut firewood for a widow. I have tried to be like him whenever I give justified praise to a servant of God.

I chose another hero in that little branch of the Church. He was

a United States Marine who came to our meetings wearing his green marine uniform. It was wartime, so that alone made him my hero. He had been sent to Princeton University by the marines to further his education. But far more than admiring his military uniform, I watched him play in Palmer Stadium as captain of the Princeton University football team. I saw him play on the university basketball team and also watched him play as the star catcher on their baseball team.

But even more, he came to my home during the week to show me how to shoot a basketball with both my left and my right hand. He told me that I would need that skill because I would someday play basketball on good teams. I did not realize it then, but for years he was, for me, a model of a true priesthood man.

Each of you will be a model of a priesthood man whether you want to be or not. You became a lighted candle when you accepted the priesthood. The Lord put you on the candlestick to light the way for everyone who surrounds you. That is especially true for those in your priesthood quorum. You can be a great model, an average one, or a

bad model. You may think it doesn't matter to you, but it does to the Lord. He said it this way:

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

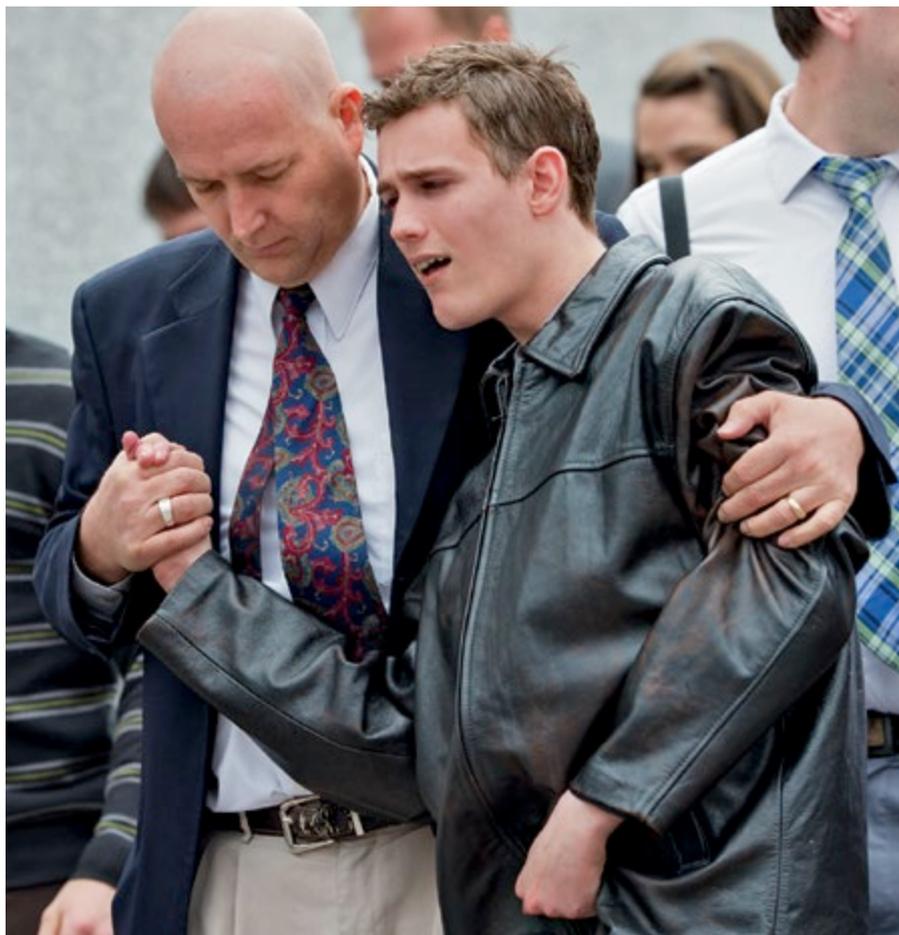
“Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”<sup>1</sup>

I have been blessed by examples of great priesthood holders in quorums where I was fortunate to serve. You can do what they have done for me by being an example for others to follow.

I have observed three common characteristics of the priesthood holders who are my heroes. One is a pattern of prayer, the second is a habit of service, and the third is a rock-hard decision to be honest.

We all pray, but the priesthood holder you want to be prays often and with real intent. In the evening you will get on your knees and thank God for the blessings of the day. You will thank Him for parents, for teachers, and for great examples to follow. You will describe in your prayers specifically who has blessed your life and



Just a few months ago he was not yet a member of the Church. Now there are missionaries teaching and a branch growing in numbers and strength because of him. But more than that, he is a light to others who will open their mouths and so hasten the Lord's gathering of the children of Heavenly Father.

As you pray and serve others, your knowledge that you are a child of God and your feelings about Him will grow. You will become more aware that He is saddened if you are dishonest in any way. You will be more determined to keep your word to God and to others. You will be more aware of taking anything that does not belong to you. You will be more honest with your employers. You will be more determined to be on time and to complete every task you are given by the Lord that you have accepted to do.

Rather than wondering if their home teachers will come, children in the families you are called to teach will look forward with anticipation to your visit. My children have received that blessing. As they grew, they had priesthood heroes help them set their own courses in serving the Lord. That blessed example is now passing into the third generation.

My message is also one of thanks.

I thank you for your prayers. I thank you for getting on your knees in recognition of the fact that you don't have all the answers. You pray to the God of heaven to express your gratitude and to invoke His blessings upon your lives and your families. I thank you for your service to others and for the times you felt no need for acknowledgment of your service.

We have accepted the Lord's warning that if we seek credit in this world for our service, we may forfeit greater blessings. You will remember these words:

how, during that day. That will take more than a few minutes and more than a little thought. It will surprise you and change you.

As you pray for forgiveness, you will find yourself forgiving others. As you thank God for His kindness, you will think of others, by name, who need your kindness. Again, that experience will surprise you every day, and over time it will change you.

One way you will be changed by such fervent prayer is, I promise you, that you will feel truly that you are a child of God. When you know that you are a child of God, you will also know that He expects much of you. Because you are His child, He will expect you to follow His teachings and the teachings of His dear Son, Jesus Christ. He will expect you to be generous and kind to others. He will be disappointed if you are proud and self-centered. He will bless you to have the desire to put the interests of others above your own.

Some of you are already models of unselfish priesthood service. In temples across the world, priesthood holders arrive before sunrise. And some serve long after sunset. There is no recognition or public acclaim in this world for that sacrifice of time and effort. I have gone with young people as they serve those in the spirit world, who are not able to claim temple blessings for themselves.

As I see happiness rather than fatigue in the faces of those who serve there early and late, I know there are great rewards in this life for that type of unselfish priesthood service, but it is only a token of the joy they will share with those whom they served in the spirit world.

I have seen that same happiness in the faces of those who speak to others about the blessings which come from belonging to the kingdom of God. I know of a branch president who almost every day brings people to the missionaries for them to teach.



“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

“Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

“But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

“That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.”<sup>2</sup>

Those who have been my models of great priesthood holders do not easily recognize that they possess heroic qualities. In fact, they seem to have difficulty seeing those things that I so much admire in them. I mentioned my father was a faithful president of a tiny branch of the Church in New Jersey. He later was a member of the Sunday School general board for the Church. Yet I am careful today to speak modestly about his priesthood service, because he was modest.

The same is true for the marine who was my childhood hero. He never spoke to me of his priesthood service or of his accomplishments. He

just gave service. I learned about his faithfulness from others. If he even saw the characteristics in himself that I admired, I could not tell.

So my counsel to you who want to bless others with your priesthood has to do with your life which is private to all but God.

Pray to Him. Thank Him for all that is good in your life. Ask Him to know what individuals He has placed in your way for you to serve. Plead that He will help you give that service. Pray so that you can forgive and so that you can be forgiven. Then serve them, love them, and forgive them.

Above all, remember that of all the service you give, none is greater than to help people choose to qualify for eternal life. God has given that overarching direction to us on how to use our priesthood. He is the perfect example of it. This is the example we see in small part in the best of His mortal servants:

“And the Lord God spake unto Moses, saying: The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine.

“And as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works, neither to my words.

“For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”<sup>3</sup>

We are to help in that work. Each of us can make a difference. We have been prepared for our time and place in the last days of that sacred work. Each of us has been blessed with examples of those who have made that work the overriding purpose of their time on earth.

I pray that we may help each other rise to that opportunity.

God the Father lives and will answer your prayers for the help you need to serve Him well. Jesus Christ is the risen Lord. This is His Church. The priesthood you hold is the power to act in His name in His work to serve the children of God. As you give your whole heart to this work, He will magnify you. I so promise in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. Matthew 5:14–16.
2. Matthew 6:1–4.
3. Moses 1:37–39.



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By President Thomas S. Monson

# Be Strong and of a Good Courage

*Let us—all of us—have the courage to defy the consensus,  
the courage to stand for principle.*

**M**y beloved brethren, how good it is to be with you once again. I pray for heavenly help as I respond to the opportunity to address you.

Beyond this Conference Center are additional thousands assembled in chapels and in other settings throughout much of the world. A common thread binds all of us together, for we have been entrusted

to bear the priesthood of God.

We are here upon the earth at a remarkable period in its history. Our opportunities are almost limitless, and yet we also face a multitude of challenges, some of them unique to our time.

We live in a world where moral values have, in great measure, been tossed aside, where sin is flagrantly on display, and where temptations to

stray from the strait and narrow path surround us. We are faced with persistent pressures and insidious influences tearing down what is decent and attempting to substitute the shallow philosophies and practices of a secular society.

Because of these and other challenges, decisions are constantly before us which can determine our destiny. In order for us to make the correct decisions, courage is needed—the courage to say no when we should, the courage to say yes when that is appropriate, the courage to do the right thing because it is right.

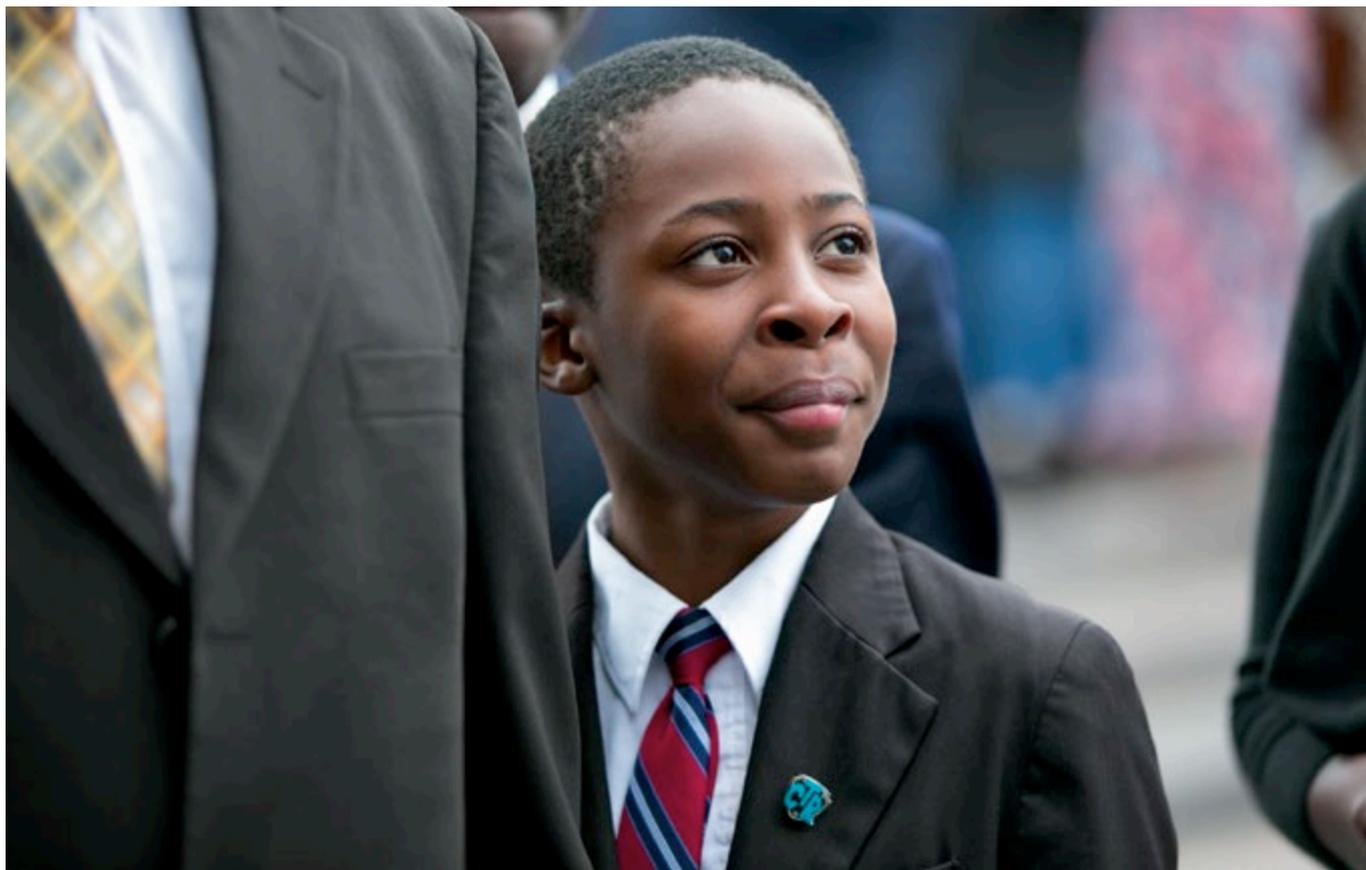
Inasmuch as the trend in society today is rapidly moving away from the values and principles the Lord has given us, we will almost certainly be called upon to defend that which we believe. Will we have the courage to do so?

Said President J. Reuben Clark Jr., who for many years was a member of the First Presidency: “Not unknown are cases where [those] of presumed faith . . . have felt that, since by affirming their full faith they might call down upon themselves the ridicule of their unbelieving colleagues, they must either modify or explain away their faith, or destructively dilute it, or even pretend to cast it away. Such are hypocrites.”<sup>1</sup> None of us would wish to wear such a label, and yet are we reluctant to declare our faith in some circumstances?

We can help ourselves in our desire to do what is right if we put ourselves in places and participate in activities where our thoughts are influenced for good and where the Spirit of the Lord will be comfortable.

I recall reading some time ago the counsel a father gave to his son when he went away to school: “If you ever find yourself where you shouldn’t





ought to be, get out!” I offer to each of you the same advice: “If you ever find yourself where you shouldn’t ought to be, get out!”

The call for courage comes constantly to each of us. Every day of our lives courage is needed—not just for the momentous events but more often as we make decisions or respond to circumstances around us. Said Scottish poet and novelist Robert Louis Stevenson: “Everyday courage has few witnesses. But yours is no less noble because no drum beats for you and no crowds shout your name.”<sup>2</sup>

Courage comes in many forms. Wrote the Christian author Charles Swindoll: “Courage is not limited to the battlefield . . . or bravely catching a thief in your house. The real tests of courage are much quieter. They are inner tests, like remaining faithful when no one’s looking, . . . like standing alone when you’re misunderstood.”<sup>3</sup> I would add that this inner courage also includes doing the right thing even though we may be afraid, defending our beliefs

at the risk of being ridiculed, and maintaining those beliefs even when threatened with a loss of friends or of social status. He who stands steadfastly for that which is right must risk becoming at times disapproved and unpopular.

While serving in the United States Navy in World War II, I learned of brave deeds, instances of valor, and examples of courage. One which I shall never forget was the quiet courage of an 18-year-old seaman—not of our faith—who was not too proud to pray. Of 250 men in the company, he was the only one who each night knelt down by the side of his bunk, at times amidst the jeers of bullies and the jests of unbelievers. With bowed head, he prayed to God. He never wavered. He never faltered. He had courage.

I listened not long ago to an example of one who surely seemed to lack this inner courage. A friend told of a spiritual and faith-promoting sacrament meeting she and her husband had attended in their ward. A young

man who held the office of priest in the Aaronic Priesthood touched the hearts of the entire congregation as he spoke of gospel truths and of the joys of keeping the commandments. He bore a fervent, touching testimony as he stood at the pulpit, appearing clean and neat in his white shirt and tie.

Later that same day, as this woman and her husband drove out of their neighborhood, they saw this same young man who had so inspired them just a few hours earlier. Now, however, he presented a completely different picture as he walked down the sidewalk dressed in scruffy clothes—and smoking a cigarette. My friend and her husband were not only greatly disappointed and saddened, but they were also confused by how he could so convincingly seem to be one person in sacrament meeting and then so quickly seem to be someone else entirely.

Brethren, are you the same person wherever you are and whatever you are doing—the person our Heavenly Father wants you to be and the person you know you should be?



courthouse in Richmond, Missouri. Parley P. Pratt, who was among those held captive, wrote of one particular night: “We had lain as if in sleep till the hour of midnight had passed, and our ears and hearts had been pained, while we had listened for hours to the obscene jests, the horrid oaths, the dreadful blasphemies and filthy language of our guards.”

Continued Elder Pratt:

“I had listened till I became so disgusted, shocked, horrified, and so filled with the spirit of indignant justice that I could scarcely refrain from rising upon my feet and rebuking the guards; but [I] had said nothing to Joseph, or any one else, although I lay next to him and knew he was awake. On a sudden he arose to his feet, and spoke in a voice of thunder, or as the roaring lion, uttering, as near as I can recollect, the following words:

*“SILENCE. . . In the name of Jesus Christ I rebuke you, and command you to be still; I will not live another minute and hear such language. Cease such talk, or you or I die THIS INSTANT!”*

Joseph “stood erect in terrible majesty,” as described by Elder Pratt. He was chained, without a weapon, and yet he was calm and dignified. He looked down upon the quailing guards, who were shrinking into a corner or crouching at his feet. These seemingly incorrigible men begged his pardon and remained quiet.<sup>9</sup>

Not all acts of courage bring such spectacular or immediate results, and yet all of them do bring peace of mind and a knowledge that right and truth have been defended.

It is impossible to stand upright when one plants his roots in the shifting sands of popular opinion and approval. Needed is the courage of a Daniel, an Abinadi, a Moroni,

In an interview published in a national magazine, well-known American NCAA basketball player Jabari Parker, a member of the Church, was asked to share the best advice he had received from his father. Replied Jabari, “[My father] said, Just be the same person you are in the dark that you are in the light.”<sup>4</sup> Important advice, brethren, for all of us.

Our scriptures are filled with examples of the type of courage needed by each of us today. The prophet Daniel exhibited supreme courage by standing up for that which he knew to be right and by demonstrating the courage to pray, though threatened with death were he to do so.<sup>5</sup>

Courage characterized the life of Abinadi, as shown by his willingness

to offer his life rather than to deny the truth.<sup>6</sup>

Who can help but be inspired by the lives of the 2,000 stripling sons of Helaman, who taught and demonstrated the need for courage to follow the teachings of parents, to be chaste and pure?<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps each of these scriptural accounts is crowned by the example of Moroni, who had the courage to persevere in righteousness to the very end.<sup>8</sup>

Throughout his life, the Prophet Joseph Smith provided countless examples of courage. One of the most dramatic occurred as he and other brethren were chained together—imagine, chained together—and held in an unfinished cabin next to the



or a Joseph Smith in order for us to hold strong and fast to that which we know is right. They had the courage to do not that which was easy but that which was right.

We will all face fear, experience ridicule, and meet opposition. Let us—all of us—have the courage to defy the consensus, the courage to stand for principle. Courage, not compromise, brings the smile of God’s approval. Courage becomes a living and an attractive virtue when it is regarded not only as a willingness to die manfully but also as the determination to live decently. As we move forward, striving to live as we should, we will surely receive help from the Lord and can find comfort in His words. I love His promise recorded in the book of Joshua:

“I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. . . .

“ . . . Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”<sup>10</sup>

My beloved brethren, with the courage of our convictions, may we declare, with the Apostle Paul, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.”<sup>11</sup> And then, with that same courage, may we follow Paul’s counsel: “Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”<sup>12</sup>

Catastrophic conflicts come and go, but the war waged for the souls of men continues without abatement. Like a clarion call comes the word of the Lord to you, to me, and to priesthood holders everywhere: “Wherefore,

now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence.”<sup>13</sup> Then we will be, as the Apostle Peter declared, even “a royal priesthood,”<sup>14</sup> united in purpose and endowed with power from on high.<sup>15</sup>

May each one leave here tonight with the determination and the courage to say, with Job of old, “While my breath is in me, . . . I will not remove mine integrity from me.”<sup>16</sup> That this may be so is my humble prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. J. Reuben Clark Jr., *The Charted Course of the Church in Education*, rev. ed. (1994), 7.
2. Robert Louis Stevenson, in Hal Urban, *Choices That Change Lives* (2006), 122.
3. Charles Swindoll, in Urban, *Choices That Change Lives*, 122.
4. Jabari Parker, in “10 Questions,” *Time*, Mar. 17, 2014, 76.
5. See Daniel 6.
6. See Mosiah 11:20; 17:20.
7. See Alma 53:20–21; 56.
8. See Moroni 1–10.
9. See *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. (1938), 210–11.
10. Joshua 1:5, 9.
11. Romans 1:16.
12. 1 Timothy 4:12.
13. Doctrine and Covenants 107:99.
14. 1 Peter 2:9.
15. See Doctrine and Covenants 105:11.
16. Job 27:3, 5.



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**By President Dieter F. Uchtdorf**  
Second Counselor in the First Presidency

# Grateful in Any Circumstances

*Have we not reason to be filled with gratitude, regardless of the circumstances in which we find ourselves?*

Over the years, I have had the sacred opportunity to meet with many people whose sorrows seem to reach the very depths of their soul. In these moments, I have listened to my beloved brothers and sisters and grieved with them over their burdens. I have pondered what to say to them, and I have struggled to know how to comfort and support them in their trials.

Often their grief is caused by what seems to them as an ending. Some are facing the end of a cherished relationship, such as the death of a loved one or estrangement from a family member. Others feel they are facing the end of hope—the hope of being married or bearing children or overcoming an illness. Others may be facing the end of their faith, as confusing and conflicting voices in the world tempt them to question, even abandon, what they once knew to be true.

Sooner or later, I believe that all of us experience times when the very fabric of our world tears at the seams, leaving us feeling alone, frustrated, and adrift.

It can happen to anyone. No one is immune.

## We Can Be Grateful

Everyone's situation is different, and the details of each life are unique. Nevertheless, I have learned that there is something that would take away the bitterness that may come into our lives. There is one thing we can do to make life sweeter, more joyful, even glorious.

We can be grateful!

It might sound contrary to the wisdom of the world to suggest that one who is burdened with sorrow should give thanks to God. But those who set aside the bottle of bitterness and lift instead the goblet of gratitude can find a purifying drink of healing, peace, and understanding.

As disciples of Christ, we are commanded to “thank the Lord [our] God in all things,”<sup>1</sup> to “sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving,”<sup>2</sup> and to “let [our] heart be full of thanks unto God.”<sup>3</sup>

Why does God command us to be grateful?

All of His commandments are given to make blessings available to us. Commandments are opportunities to exercise our agency and to receive blessings. Our loving Heavenly Father knows that choosing to develop a spirit of gratitude will bring us true joy and great happiness.

## Being Grateful for Things

But some might say, “What do I have to be grateful *for* when my world is falling apart?”

Perhaps focusing on what we are grateful *for* is the wrong approach. It is difficult to develop a spirit of gratitude if our thankfulness is only proportional to the number of blessings we can count. True, it is important to frequently “count our blessings”—and anyone who has tried this knows there are many—but I don't believe the Lord expects us to be less thankful in times of trial than in times of abundance and ease. In fact, most of the scriptural references do not speak of gratitude *for* things but rather suggest an overall spirit or attitude of gratitude.



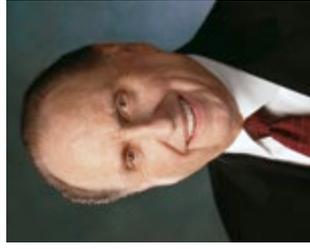


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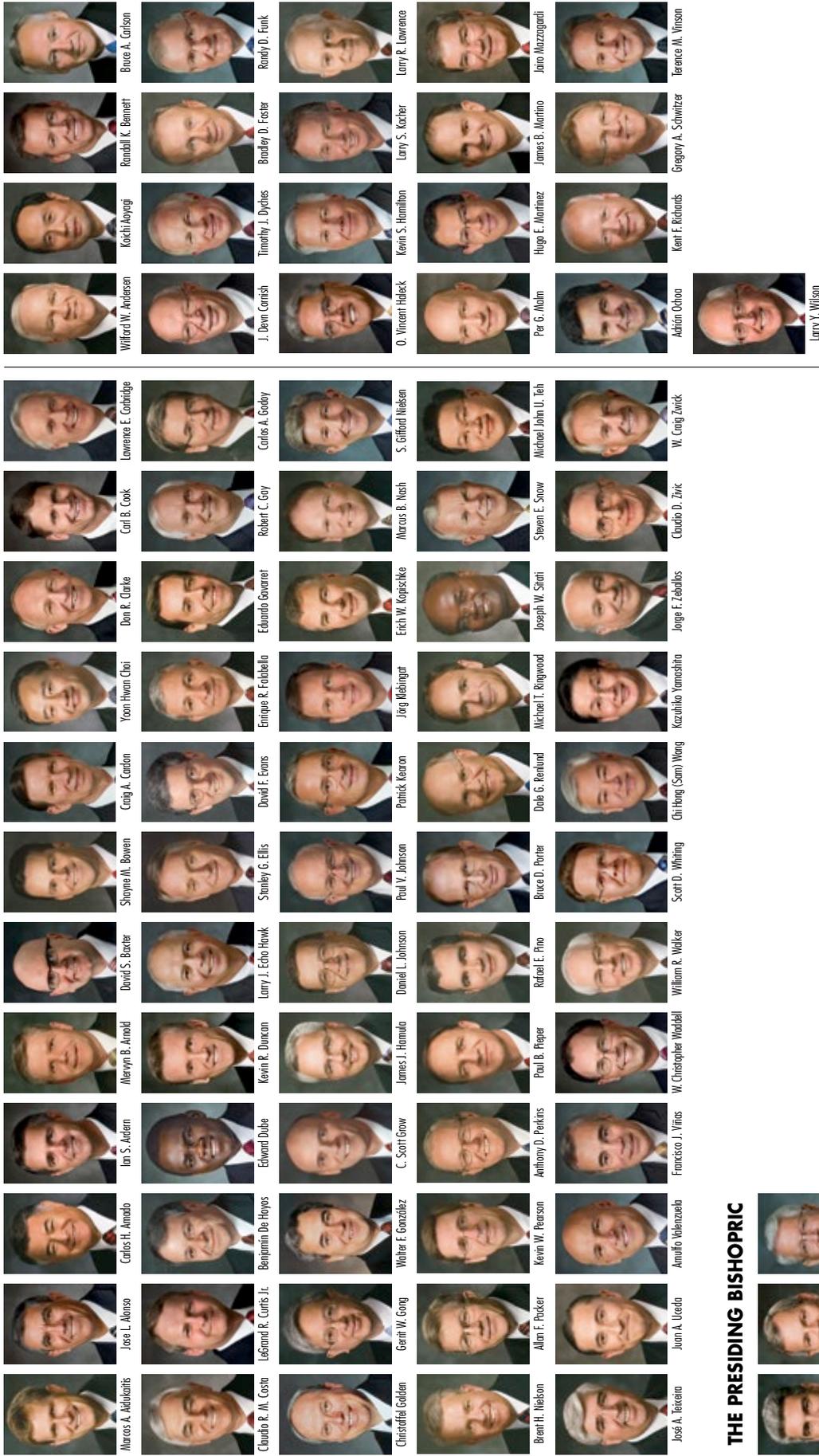
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***Latter-day Saints throughout the world gather for the 184th Annual General Conference. Pictured clockwise from top left are Church members and missionaries in Vienna, Austria; São Paulo, Brazil; Mexico City, Mexico; Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia; Highlands Ranch, Colorado, USA; Sydney, Australia; Saint Petersburg, Russia; and Norcross, Georgia, USA.***





It is easy to be grateful *for* things when life seems to be going our way. But what then of those times when what we wish for seems to be far out of reach?

Could I suggest that we see gratitude as a disposition, a way of life that stands independent of our current situation? In other words, I'm suggesting that instead of being thankful *for* things, we focus on being thankful *in* our circumstances—whatever they may be.

There is an old story of a waiter who asked a customer whether he had enjoyed the meal. The guest replied that everything was fine, but it would have been better if they had served more bread. The next day, when the man returned, the waiter doubled the amount of bread, giving him four slices instead of two, but still the man was not happy. The next day, the waiter doubled the bread again, without success.

On the fourth day, the waiter was really determined to make the man happy. And so he took a nine-foot-long (3-m) loaf of bread, cut it in half, and with a smile, served that to the customer. The waiter could scarcely wait for the man's reaction.

After the meal, the man looked up and said, "Good as always. But I see

you're back to giving only two slices of bread."

#### **Being Grateful in Our Circumstances**

My dear brothers and sisters, the choice is ours. We can choose to limit our gratitude, based on the blessings we feel we lack. Or we can choose to be like Nephi, whose grateful heart never faltered. When his brothers tied him up on the ship—which he had built to take them to the promised land—his ankles and wrists were so sore "they had swollen exceedingly," and a violent storm threatened to swallow him up in the depths of the sea. "Nevertheless," Nephi said, "I did look unto my God, and I did praise him all the day long; and I did not murmur against the Lord because of mine afflictions."<sup>4</sup>

We can choose to be like Job, who seemed to have everything but then lost it all. Yet Job responded by saying, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return . . . : the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."<sup>5</sup>

We can choose to be like the Mormon pioneers, who maintained a spirit of gratitude during their slow and painful trek toward the Great Salt Lake, even singing and dancing and

glorying in the goodness of God.<sup>6</sup> Many of us would have been inclined to withdraw, complain, and agonize about the difficulty of the journey.

We can choose to be like the Prophet Joseph Smith, who, while a prisoner in miserable conditions in Liberty Jail, penned these inspired words: "Dearly beloved brethren, let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed."<sup>7</sup>

We can choose to be grateful, no matter what.

This type of gratitude transcends whatever is happening around us. It surpasses disappointment, discouragement, and despair. It blooms just as beautifully in the icy landscape of winter as it does in the pleasant warmth of summer.

When we are grateful to God *in* our circumstances, we can experience gentle peace in the midst of tribulation. In grief, we can still lift up our hearts in praise. In pain, we can glory in Christ's Atonement. In the cold of bitter sorrow, we can experience the closeness and warmth of heaven's embrace.

We sometimes think that being grateful is what we do *after* our problems are solved, but how terribly

shortsighted that is. How much of life do we miss by waiting to see the rainbow before thanking God that there is rain?

Being grateful in times of distress does *not* mean that we are pleased with our circumstances. It *does* mean that through the eyes of faith we look beyond our present-day challenges.

This is not a gratitude of the lips but of the soul. It is a gratitude that heals the heart and expands the mind.

#### **Gratitude as an Act of Faith**

Being grateful *in* our circumstances is an act of faith in God. It requires that we trust God and hope for things we may not see but which are true.<sup>8</sup> By being grateful, we follow the example of our beloved Savior, who said, “Not my will, but thine, be done.”<sup>9</sup>

True gratitude is an expression of hope *and* testimony. It comes from acknowledging that we do not



always understand the trials of life but trusting that one day we will.

In any circumstance, our sense of gratitude is nourished by the many and sacred truths we *do* know: that our Father has given His children the great plan of happiness; that through the Atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ, we can live forever with our loved ones; that in the end, we will have glorious, perfect, and immortal bodies, unburdened by sickness or disability; and that our tears of sadness and loss will be replaced with an abundance of happiness and joy, “good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.”<sup>10</sup>

It must have been this kind of testimony that transformed the Savior’s Apostles from fearful, doubting men into fearless, joyful emissaries of the Master. In the hours following His Crucifixion, they were consumed with despair and grief, unable to understand what had just happened. But one event changed all of that. Their Lord appeared to them and declared, “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself.”<sup>11</sup>

When the Apostles recognized the risen Christ—when they experienced

the glorious Resurrection of their beloved Savior—they became different men. Nothing could keep them from fulfilling their mission. They accepted with courage and determination the torture, humiliation, and even death that would come to them because of their testimony.<sup>12</sup> They were not deterred from praising and serving their Lord. They changed the lives of people everywhere. They changed the world.

You do not need to see the Savior, as the Apostles did, to experience the same transformation. Your testimony of Christ, born of the Holy Ghost, can help you look past the disappointing endings in mortality and see the bright future that the Redeemer of the world has prepared.

#### **We Are Not Made for Endings**

In light of what we know about our eternal destiny, is it any wonder that whenever we face the bitter endings of life, they seem unacceptable to us? There seems to be something inside of us that resists endings.

Why is this? Because we are made of the stuff of eternity. We are eternal beings, children of the Almighty God, whose name is Endless<sup>13</sup> and



**Raymond, Alberta, Canada**

who promises eternal blessings without number. Endings are not our destiny.

The more we learn about the gospel of Jesus Christ, the more we realize that endings here in mortality are not endings at all. They are merely interruptions—temporary pauses that one day will seem small compared to the eternal joy awaiting the faithful.

How grateful I am to my Heavenly Father that in His plan there are no true endings, only everlasting beginnings.

### Those Who Are Grateful Will Be Made Glorious

Brothers and sisters, have we not reason to be filled with gratitude,

regardless of the circumstances in which we find ourselves?

Do we need any greater reason to let our hearts “be full of thanks unto God”?<sup>14</sup>

“Have we not great reason to rejoice?”<sup>15</sup>

How blessed we are if we recognize God’s handiwork in the marvelous tapestry of life. Gratitude to our Father in Heaven broadens our perception and clears our vision. It inspires humility and fosters empathy toward our fellowmen and all of God’s creation. Gratitude is a catalyst to all Christlike attributes! A thankful heart is the parent of all virtues.<sup>16</sup>

The Lord has given us His promise that those “who [receive] all things

with thankfulness shall be made *glorious*; and the things of this earth shall be added unto [them], even an hundred fold, yea, more.”<sup>17</sup>

May we “live in thanksgiving daily”<sup>18</sup>—especially during the seemingly unexplainable endings that are part of mortality. May we allow our souls to expand in thankfulness toward our merciful Heavenly Father. May we ever and constantly raise our voices and show by word and deed our gratitude to our Father in Heaven and to His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. For this I pray, and leave you my testimony and blessing, in the name of our Master, Jesus Christ, amen. ■

### NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 59:7; see also Ephesians 5:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Mosiah 26:39; Alma 7:23; Doctrine and Covenants 98:1.
2. Psalm 147:7.
3. Alma 37:37.
4. See 1 Nephi 18:10–16.
5. Job 1:21.
6. For examples of pioneers who maintained a cheerful attitude despite intense difficulty, see Andrew D. Olsen, *The Price We Paid: The Extraordinary Story of the Willie and Martin Handcart Pioneers* (2006), 10, 366–67.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 123:17.
8. See Alma 32:21.
9. Luke 22:42.
10. Luke 6:38.
11. Luke 24:39.
12. See Romans 5:3; 2 Corinthians 4:17; 12:10.
13. See Moses 1:3.
14. Alma 37:37.
15. Alma 26:13.
16. See Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Oratio Pro Cnaeo Plancio*, XXXIII, section 80; quoted in Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Live in Thanksgiving Daily,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2001, 8.
17. Doctrine and Covenants 78:19; emphasis added.
18. Alma 34:38.



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**By Elder M. Russell Ballard**  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

## Following Up

*We can all be more consistently involved in missionary work by replacing our fear with real faith.*

Sixty-four years ago this September, I returned home from my mission in England. Three days after returning, I attended a Hello Day dance at the University of Utah with a friend of mine. He told me about a beautiful sophomore named Barbara Bowen, whom he thought I ought to meet. He brought her over and introduced us, and we started to dance.

Unfortunately, this was what we used to call a “tag dance,” which meant that you got to dance with the girl only until somebody else tagged you out. Barbara was vivacious and popular, so I got to dance with her for less than a minute before another young man tagged me out.

That was just not acceptable to me. Having learned the importance of follow-up on my mission, I got her telephone number and called her the very next day to ask her out, but she was busy with school and social commitments. Thankfully, my mission taught me to be persistent even in the face of discouragement, and I was eventually able to make a date. And that date led to others. Somehow during those dates I was able to convince her that I was the only true and living returned missionary—at least as far as she should be concerned. Now, 64

years later, there are seven children and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren who stand as evidence of the significant truth that no matter how good your message is, you may not get a chance to deliver it without consistent, persistent follow-up.

This may be why I have felt the clear impression to follow up today on two of my previous general conference messages.

In the October 2011 conference, I urged that we remember these important words of the Lord: “For thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”<sup>1</sup>

With these words, the Lord makes clear that this is not only a formal title but also the name by which His Church is to be called. Given His clear declaration, we should not refer to the Church by any other name, such as “Mormon Church” or “LDS Church.”

The term *Mormon* can be appropriately used in some contexts to refer to members of the Church, such as Mormon pioneers, or to institutions, such as the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Church members are widely known as Mormons, and in interactions with those not of our faith, we may fittingly refer to ourselves as Mormons, provided we couple this with the full name of the Church.

If members learn to use the correct name of the Church in connection with the word *Mormon*, it will underscore that we are Christians, members of the Savior’s Church.

Brothers and sisters, let us follow up and develop the habit of always making it clear that we belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The second message that I feel I should follow up on was delivered just last general conference, when I



encouraged members to pray to be led to at least one person to whom they could extend an invitation to learn about the restored gospel before Christmas. Many Church members have shared with me some special experiences as a consequence of their asking the Lord for missionary opportunities.

One returned missionary, for example, specifically prayed to be led to “the one” he could reach. The name of a former college classmate came into his mind. He reached out to her over Facebook, and he learned that she had been praying for purpose and meaning in her life. He followed up just at the time she was searching for the truth, and in December she was baptized.

Many similar invitations were reported to me, but only a few people have followed up like this brother did.

I’m a great believer in the principle of follow-up. As it says in the missionary guide *Preach My Gospel*, “extending an invitation without following up is like beginning a journey without finishing it or buying a ticket to a concert without going into the theater. Without the completed action, the commitment is hollow.”<sup>2</sup>

*Preach My Gospel* teaches everyone not only how to invite but also how to follow up on our invitations. The purpose of missionary work is defined as inviting “others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.”<sup>3</sup>

Inviting is certainly part of the process. But notice that there is much more to missionary work for members than simply extending invitations to people to listen to the missionaries. It also includes follow-up with the



missionaries in the cultivation of faith, the motivation to repentance, the preparation for making covenants, and enduring to the end.

This follow-up principle is illustrated in the book of Acts:

“Now Peter and John went up together into the temple. . . .

“And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

“Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

“And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

“And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

“Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.”

That’s a powerful invitation from a servant of the Lord, isn’t it? But Peter

didn’t stop with the invitation. The scriptural narrative next tells us that “*he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up*: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

“And he leaping up stood, and walked, and *entered with them into the temple*, walking, and leaping, and praising God.”<sup>4</sup>

In other words, Peter didn’t simply invoke his priesthood authority and invite the man to rise up and walk. He also followed up on his invitation by reaching out to the man, taking him by the right hand, lifting him up, and then walking with him into the temple.

In the spirit of Peter’s example, may I suggest that we can all be more consistently involved in missionary work by replacing our fear with real faith, inviting someone at least once a quarter—or four times every year—to be taught by the full-time missionaries. They are prepared to teach by the Spirit, with sincere and heartfelt inspiration from the Lord. Together we can follow up on our invitations,

take others by the hand, lift them up, and walk with them on their spiritual journey.

To help you in this process, I invite all members, regardless of your current calling or level of activity in the Church, to obtain a copy of *Preach My Gospel*. It is available through our distribution centers and also online. The online version can be read or downloaded at no cost. It is a guidebook for missionary work—which means it is a guidebook for all of us. Read it, study it, and then apply what you learn to help you understand how to bring souls to Christ through invitation and follow-up. As President Thomas S. Monson has said, “Now is the time for members and missionaries to come together, to work together, to labor in the Lord’s vineyard to bring souls unto Him.”<sup>5</sup>

Jesus Christ taught His disciples:

“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

“Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”<sup>6</sup>



The Lord has answered that prayer in our day with the greatest number of full-time missionaries in the history of the world. With this new wave of faithful laborers, the Lord has given us another opportunity to assist Him in that great harvest of souls.

There are practical ways for members to help and support our remarkable missionaries. For example, you can tell the missionaries that you are studying *Preach My Gospel* and ask them to show you what they are learning in their studies. As you share with each other, increased confidence between members and full-time missionaries will surely develop, just as the Lord commanded:

“But that every man [and woman] might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world.”<sup>7</sup>

And “Behold, I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor.”<sup>8</sup>

Brothers and sisters, can you imagine the impact if family and friends included things they are learning from their personal study of *Preach My Gospel* in their letters and emails to their full-time missionaries? Can you picture the blessings that will come to families when they know and understand better what their sons and daughters will be studying and teaching on their missions? Can you

even begin to fathom the extraordinary outpouring of atoning grace that will be ours, individually and collectively, according to the Savior’s promise to all who bear testimony in the process of inviting souls to come unto Him—and then following up on those invitations?

“Ye are blessed,” the Lord said through the Prophet Joseph Smith, “for the testimony which ye have borne is recorded in heaven for the angels to look upon; and they rejoice over you, and your sins are forgiven you.”<sup>9</sup>

“For I will forgive you of your sins with this commandment—that you remain steadfast . . . in bearing testimony to all the world of those things which are communicated unto you.”<sup>10</sup>

If we follow up, the Lord will not let us down. I have seen the unspeakable joy that accompanies testimony-driven inviting and faithful follow-up among members of the Church the world over. While in Argentina recently, I encouraged members to invite someone to church before this general conference. An eight-year-old by the name of Joshua listened and invited his best friend and his friend’s family to an open house at their ward in Buenos Aires. Let me read from a letter I just received that explained Joshua’s invitation and his faithful follow-up:

“Every few minutes [Joshua] would run out to the gate to see if they were



coming. He said that he knew they would [come].

“The evening wore on and Joshua’s friend did not come, but Joshua did not give up. He faithfully checked the front gate every few minutes. It was time to start putting things away when Joshua started to jump up and down announcing, “They are here! They are here!” I looked up to see an entire family approaching the church. Joshua ran out to greet them and hugged his friend. They all came in and seemed to enjoy the open house very much. They took some pamphlets and spent lots of time getting acquainted with some new friends. It was great to see the faith of this little boy and to know that Primary children can be missionaries too.”<sup>11</sup>

It is my testimony that as we work together, seeking the one, inviting, and following up with trust and faith, the Lord will smile upon us and hundreds of thousands of God’s children will find purpose and peace in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. May the Lord bless all of us in our efforts to hasten the work of salvation, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 115:4.
2. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 200.
3. *Preach My Gospel*, 1.
4. Acts 3:1–8; emphasis added.
5. Thomas S. Monson, “Welcome to Conference,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 4.
6. Matthew 9:37–38.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 1:20.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 88:81.
9. Doctrine and Covenants 62:3.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 84:61.
11. Personal letter, Mar. 10, 2014.



**By Jean A. Stevens**

First Counselor in the Primary General Presidency

## “Fear Not; I Am with Thee”

*As we develop greater faith and trust in the Lord, we can access His power to bless and deliver us.*

Few feelings compare with the tender emotions of becoming a parent. There is nothing sweeter than receiving a precious baby, direct from heaven. One of my brothers experienced this feeling in an especially poignant way. His first little son was born prematurely and weighed only 2 pounds 14 ounces (1.3 kg). Hunter spent his first two months of life in the neonatal intensive care unit of the hospital. Those months were a tender time for all the family as we hoped and petitioned the Lord for His help.

Little Hunter was so dependent. He struggled to gain the strength necessary to live. The strong hand of his loving father often reached for his son’s tiny hand to encourage his vulnerable little child.

And so it is for all of God’s children. Our Father in Heaven reaches out for each of us with His infinite love. He has power over all things and desires to help us learn, grow, and return to Him. This defines our Father’s purpose: “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”<sup>1</sup>

As we develop greater faith and trust in the Lord, we can access His power to bless and deliver us.

The Book of Mormon weaves this beautiful theme of the Lord’s power to deliver His children throughout its pages. Nephi introduced it in the very first chapter of the book. In verse 20, we read, “Behold, I, Nephi, will show unto you that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance.”<sup>2</sup>

Many years ago I came to know in a very personal way the truths expressed in this verse. I came to know just how near our Father in Heaven really is and just how much He desires to help us.

One evening as night was falling, I was driving with my children when I noticed a boy walking along a lonely road. After passing him, I had a distinct impression I should go back and help him. But worried it could frighten him to have a stranger pull up beside him at night, I continued driving. The strong impression came again with the words in my mind: “Go help that boy!”

I drove back to him and asked, “Do you need some help? I had a feeling I should help you.”



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the pleadings of our hearts. He accomplishes His miracles one prayer at a time, one person at a time.

We can trust that He will help us, not necessarily in the way we want but in the way that will best help us to grow. Submitting our will to His may be difficult, but it is essential to becoming like Him and finding the peace He offers us.

We can come to feel, as C. S. Lewis described: “I pray because I can’t help myself. . . . I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn’t change God. It changes me.”<sup>3</sup>

There are many accounts in the scriptures of those who have put their trust in the Lord and who have been helped and delivered by Him. Think of young David, who escaped certain death at the hand of the mighty Goliath by relying on the Lord. Consider Nephi, whose pleadings to God in faith brought deliverance from his brothers who sought to take his life. Remember young Joseph Smith, who prayerfully sought the Lord’s help. He was delivered from the power of darkness and received a miraculous answer. Each faced real and difficult challenges. Each acted in faith and put his trust in the Lord. Each received His help. And still in our day, God’s power and love are manifest in the lives of His children.

I have seen it recently in the lives of faith-filled Saints in Zimbabwe and Botswana. In a fast and testimony meeting in a small branch, I was humbled and inspired by the testimonies shared by many—children, youth, and adults alike. Each conveyed a powerful expression of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. With challenges and difficult circumstances surrounding them, they live each day by putting their trust in God. They acknowledge His

He turned toward us and with tears streaming down his cheeks said, “Would you? I’ve been praying someone would help me.”

His prayer for help was answered with the inspiration that came to me. This experience of receiving such clear direction from the Spirit left an unforgettable imprint that is still in my heart.

And now after 25 years and through a tender mercy, I connected again with this boy for the first time just a few months ago. I discovered that the experience isn’t just my story—it is his story too. Deric Nance is now a father with a family of his own. He too has never forgotten this experience. It helped us lay a foundation of faith that God hears and answers our prayers. Both of us have used it to teach our children that God is watching over us. We are not alone.

On that night, Deric had stayed after school for an activity and had missed the last bus. As a young teenager, he felt confident he could make it home, so he started walking.

An hour and a half had passed as he walked the lonely road. Still miles from home and with no houses in sight, he was scared. In despair, he walked behind a pile of gravel, got on his knees, and asked Heavenly Father for help. Just minutes after Deric returned to the road, I stopped to provide the help he prayed for.

And now these many years later, Deric reflects: “The Lord was mindful of me, a skinny, shortsighted boy. And despite everything else going on in the world, He was aware of my situation and loved me enough to send help. The Lord has answered my prayers many times since that abandoned roadside. His answers aren’t always as immediate and clear, but His awareness of me is just as evident today as it was that lonely night. Whenever the dark shadows of life blanket my world, I know He always has a plan to see me safely home again.”

As Deric expressed, not every prayer is answered so quickly. But truly our Father knows us and hears



hand in their lives and often express it with the phrase “I am so much grateful to God.”

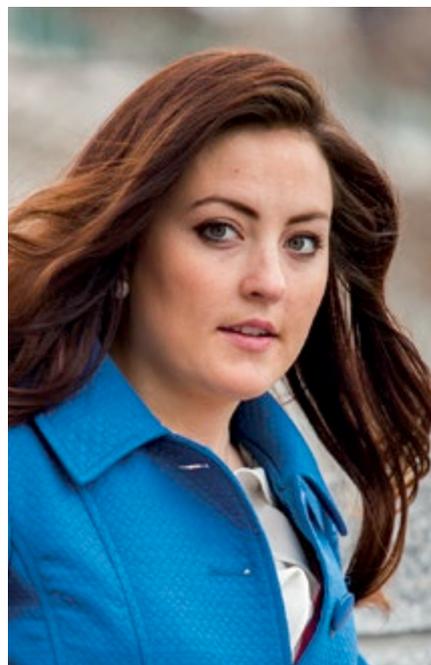
A few years ago a faithful family exemplified for members of our ward that same trust in the Lord. Arn and Venita Gatrell were living a happy life when Arn was diagnosed with an aggressive cancer. The prognosis was devastating—he had just a few weeks to live. The family wanted to be together one last time. So all the children gathered, some from distant locations. They had only 48 precious hours to spend together. The Gatrells carefully chose what mattered most to them—a family picture, a family dinner, and a session in the Salt Lake Temple. Venita said, “When we walked out of the temple doors, it was the last time we would ever be together in this life.”

But they left with the assurance that there is so much more for them than just this life. Because of sacred temple covenants, they have hope in God’s promises. They can be together forever.

The next two months were filled with blessings too numerous to recount. Arn and Venita’s faith and trust in the Lord were growing, as evidenced in Venita’s words: “I was carried. I learned that you can feel peace in the midst of turmoil. I knew the Lord was watching over us. If you trust in the Lord, truly you can overcome any of life’s challenges.”

One of their daughters added: “We watched our parents and saw their example. We saw their faith and how they handled it. I would never have asked for this trial, but I would never give it away. We were surrounded with God’s love.”

Of course, Arn’s passing was not the outcome the Gatrells had hoped for. But their crisis was not a crisis of faith. The gospel of Jesus Christ is not a checklist of things to do; rather, it lives in our hearts. The gospel “is not weight; it is wings.”<sup>4</sup> It carries us. It carried the Gatrells. They felt peace in the midst of the storm. They



held fast to each other and to temple covenants they had made and kept. They grew in their ability to trust in the Lord and were strengthened by their faith in Jesus Christ and in His atoning power.

Wherever we find ourselves on the path of discipleship, whatever our worries and challenges may be, we are not alone. You are not forgotten. Like Deric, the Saints of Africa, and the Gatrell family, we can choose to reach for God’s hand in our need. We can face our challenges with prayer and trust in the Lord. And in the process we become more like Him.

Speaking to each of us, the Lord says, “Fear . . . not; . . . I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; . . . I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”<sup>5</sup>

I share my humble but certain witness that God our Father knows us personally and reaches out to help us. Through His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, we may overcome the challenges of this world and be safely delivered home. May we have faith to trust in Him, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. Moses 1:39.
2. 1 Nephi 1:20.
3. Spoken by the character of C. S. Lewis as portrayed in William Nicholson, *Shadowlands* (1989), 103.
4. Harry Emerson Fosdick, *Twelve Tests of Character* (1923), 88.
5. Isaiah 41:10.



**By Bishop Gary E. Stevenson**  
Presiding Bishop

## Your Four Minutes

*The miracle of the Atonement can make up for imperfections in our performance.*

The recent Olympic Winter Games enthralled the world as athletes representing 89 countries competed in 98 different events. Remarkably, 10 of these athletes were members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 3 of whom earned medals recently highlighted in the *Church News*: Christopher Fogt, Noelle Pikus-Pace, and Torah Bright.<sup>1</sup> We offer our congratulations to all of the athletes who competed. Well done!

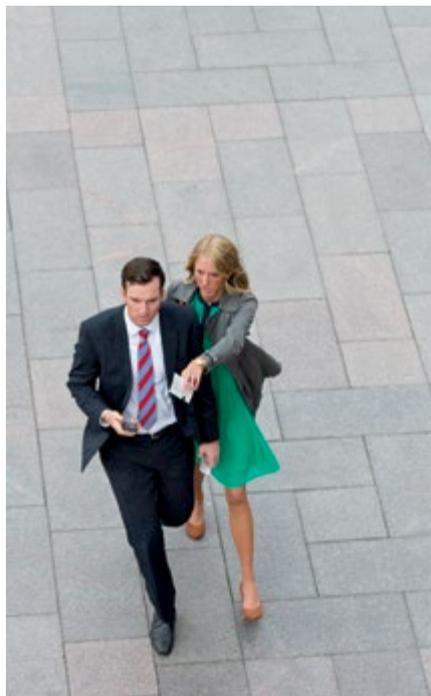
I speak of these games this morning directing my thoughts to young men, young women, and young single adults—you who are in your critical years which set the course for your life. I feel a great sense of urgency in addressing you.

For you to feel that urgency, I first share the story of Noelle Pikus-Pace, one of those Latter-day Saint athletes. In Noelle's event, the skeleton, athletes build momentum as they sprint and then plunge headfirst on a small sled. With their faces inches above the ground, they race down a winding, icy track at speeds that top 90 miles (145 km) an hour.

Remarkably, years of preparation would be considered either a success or a disappointment based on what happened in the space of four intense 60-second runs.

Noelle's previous 2006 Olympic dreams were dashed when a terrible accident left her with a broken leg. In the 2010 Olympics her dreams fell short again when just over one-tenth of a second kept her from the medal stand.<sup>2</sup>

Can you imagine the anxiety she felt as she waited to begin her first run in the 2014 Olympics? Years of preparation would culminate in only a sliver



of time. Four minutes total. She spent years preparing for those four minutes and would spend a lifetime afterward reflecting on them.

Noelle's final runs were virtually flawless! We will never forget her leap into the stands to embrace her family after crossing the finish line, exclaiming, "We did it!" Years of preparation had paid off. We saw her Young Women medallion around her neck as the silver medal was placed there beside it.<sup>3</sup>

It may seem unfair that Noelle's entire Olympic dreams hinged on what she did during just four brief minutes. But she knew it, and that is why she prepared so diligently. She sensed the magnitude, the urgency of her four minutes, and what they would mean for the rest of her life.

We also remember Christopher Fogt, a member of the team that won the bronze medal in the four-man bobsled race. While he could have given up after a devastating crash in the 2010 Olympics, he chose to persevere. After a fantastic, redemptive run, he won the prize he so diligently sought.<sup>4</sup>

Now, consider how your pathway to eternal life is similar to these athletes' "four-minute performance." You are an eternal being. Before you were born, you existed as a spirit. In the presence of a loving Heavenly Father, you trained and prepared to come to earth for a brief moment and, well, perform. This life is your four minutes. While you are here, your actions will determine whether you win the prize of eternal life. The prophet Amulek described, "This life is the time . . . to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day . . . to perform [your] labors."<sup>5</sup>

In a sense, your four minutes have already begun. The clock is ticking.



The words of the Apostle Paul seem so fitting: to run the race, that you may obtain the prize.<sup>6</sup>

In the same way that certain steps are essential in the very brief performance of an Olympic athlete—jumps or maneuvers for ice skaters and snowboarders, negotiating the turns of a bobsled run, or carving through the gates of a downhill slalom course—so it is in our lives, where certain things are absolutely essential—checkpoints which move us through our spiritual performance on earth. These spiritual markers are the essential God-given ordinances of the gospel: baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, priesthood ordinations, temple ordinances, and partaking of the sacrament each week.

“In the[se] ordinances . . . , the power of godliness is manifest.”<sup>7</sup>

And in the same way that the discipline of training prepares an athlete to perform elements in his or her sport at the highest level, keeping the commandments will qualify you to receive these saving ordinances.

Do you sense the urgency?

My young friends, wherever you are in your “four-minute performance,” I urge you to ponder, “What do I need to do next to ensure my medal?” Perhaps during this conference, the Spirit has whispered to you what that may be: to prepare more thoughtfully for an ordinance in your future or to receive an ordinance that you should have received a long time ago. Whatever it may be, do it now. Don’t wait. Your four minutes will pass quickly, and you’ll have eternity to think about what you did in this life.<sup>8</sup>

Self-discipline is needed. Daily prayer, scripture study, and church attendance must be the foundation of your training. A consistent pattern of obeying the commandments, keeping the covenants you have made, and following the Lord’s standard found in *For the Strength of Youth* is required.

Perhaps you’re aware of things in your life that are threatening to slow or stop your spiritual progress. If so, follow this scriptural counsel: “Let us

lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”<sup>9</sup>

It is not yet too late to repent. But it soon may be, because no one really knows when your four minutes will be over.

Now, you may be thinking to yourself, “I already blew it. My four minutes are already a disaster. I may as well give up.” If so, stop thinking that, and never think it again. The miracle of the Atonement can make up for imperfections in our performance. As Elder Jeffrey R. Holland has taught:

“To those of you . . . who may still be hanging back, . . . I testify of the renewing power of God’s love and the miracle of His grace. . . .

“ . . . It is *never* too late so long as the Master . . . says there is time. . . . Don’t delay.”<sup>10</sup>

Remember, you are not alone. The Savior has promised that He will not leave you comfortless.<sup>11</sup> You also have family, friends, and leaders who are cheering you on.



Although my remarks have been directed to the youth of the Church, for parents and grandparents, I offer the following:

Recently, Elder David A. Bednar described a simple way to conduct a family assessment to mark progress on the covenant path by essential ordinances. All that is needed is a piece of paper with two columns: “name” and “plan for next or needful ordinance.” I did this recently, listing each family member. Among them, I noted an infant grandson, soon to be blessed; a six-year-old grandson, whose preparation for baptism was essential; and a son turning 18, whose preparation for the priesthood and temple endowment was imminent. Everyone on the list needed the sacrament ordinance. This simple exercise assisted Lesa and me in fulfilling our role to help each member of our family along the covenant path, with an action plan for each of them. Perhaps this is an idea for you which will lead to family discussions, family home evening lessons, preparation, and even invitations for essential ordinances in your family.<sup>12</sup>

As a skier and a snowboarder myself, I was deeply impressed with the “four-minute” silver medal-winning

performance of Australian LDS athlete and snowboarder Torah Bright in the half-pipe competition. She dazzled the world as she finished a virtually flawless run culminating in a backside rodeo 720. However, even more impressive and surprising to the world was the way she reached out and demonstrated Christlike love to her competitors. She noticed that American snowboarder Kelly Clark, who had a bad first run in her final round, appeared to be nervous about her second run. “She gave me a hug,” Clark recalls. “She just held me until I actually calmed down enough and I slowed my breathing. It was good to have a hug from a friend.” Kelly Clark would later join Torah on the winners’ podium as a bronze medalist.

When asked about this unusual act of kindness toward her opponent, which could have put her own silver medal at risk, Torah simply said, “I am a competitor—I want to do my best—but I want my fellow competitors to do their best, too.”<sup>13</sup>

With that in mind, is there someone who needs your encouragement? a family member? a friend? a classmate or fellow quorum member? How can you help them with their four minutes?

Dear friends, you are in the midst of an exhilarating journey. In some ways, you are racing down the half-pipe or sled track, and it can be challenging to perform each element or navigate each turn along the way. But remember, you’ve prepared for this for millennia. This is your moment to perform. This is your four minutes! The time is now!

I express my utmost confidence in your abilities. You have the Savior of the world on your side. If you seek His help and follow His directions, how can you fail?

I conclude with my testimony of the blessing we have in a living prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, and of Jesus Christ and His role as our Savior and Redeemer, in His holy name, Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. See Christine Rappleye, “Mormons in the Olympics: 3 Medals for LDS Athletes at the Winter Games,” [deseretnews.com/article/865597546/Mormons-in-the-Olympics-3-medals-for-LDS-athletes-at-the-Winter-Games.html](http://deseretnews.com/article/865597546/Mormons-in-the-Olympics-3-medals-for-LDS-athletes-at-the-Winter-Games.html).
2. See Christine Rappleye, “Mormons in the Olympics.”
3. See Sarah Petersen, “Noelle Pikus-Pace Wears LDS Young Women Necklace throughout Olympics,” [deseretnews.com/article/865596771/Noelle-Pikus-Pace-wears-LDS-Young-Women-necklace-throughout-Olympics.html](http://deseretnews.com/article/865596771/Noelle-Pikus-Pace-wears-LDS-Young-Women-necklace-throughout-Olympics.html).
4. See Amy Donaldson, “Army, Faith Helped Push Mormon Bobsledder Chris Fogt to Olympic Success,” [deseretnews.com/article/865597390/Army-faith-helped-push-Mormon-bobsledder-Chris-Fogt-to-Olympic-success.html](http://deseretnews.com/article/865597390/Army-faith-helped-push-Mormon-bobsledder-Chris-Fogt-to-Olympic-success.html).
5. Alma 34:32.
6. See 1 Corinthians 9:24.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 84:20.
8. See Alma 34:31–33.
9. Hebrews 12:1.
10. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Laborers in the Vineyard,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 33.
11. See John 14:18.
12. David A. Bednar, conversation with the author.
13. Vidya Rao, “Snowboarder Kelly Clark: Hug from Competitor Helped Me Win Bronze,” [today.com/sochi/snowboarder-kelly-clark-hug-competitor-helped-me-win-bronze-2D12108132](http://today.com/sochi/snowboarder-kelly-clark-hug-competitor-helped-me-win-bronze-2D12108132).



**By Elder David A. Bednar**  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

# Bear Up Their Burdens with Ease

*The unique burdens in each of our lives help us to rely upon the merits, mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah.*

I have a dear friend who, in the early years of his marriage, was convinced he and his family needed a four-wheel-drive pickup truck. His wife was sure that he did not need but merely wanted the new vehicle. A playful conversation between this husband and wife initiated their consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of such a purchase.

“Sweetheart, we need a four-wheel-drive truck.”

She asked, “Why do you think we need a new truck?”

He answered her question with what he believed was the perfect response: “What if we needed milk for our children in a terrible storm, and the only way I could get to the grocery store was in a pickup?”

His wife replied with a smile, “If we buy a new truck, we will not have money for milk—so why worry about getting to the store in an emergency?”

Over time they continued to counsel together and ultimately decided to acquire the truck. Shortly after taking possession of the new vehicle, my friend wanted to demonstrate the utility of the truck and validate his reasons for wanting to purchase it. So

he decided he would cut and haul a supply of firewood for their home. It was in the autumn of the year, and snow already had fallen in the mountains where he intended to find wood. As he drove up the mountainside, the snow gradually became deeper and deeper. My friend recognized the slick road conditions presented a risk, but with great confidence in the new truck, he kept going.

Sadly, my friend went too far along the snowy road. As he steered the truck off of the road at the place he had determined to cut wood, he got stuck. All four of the wheels on the new truck spun in the snow. He readily recognized that he did not know what to do to extricate himself from this dangerous situation. He was embarrassed and worried.

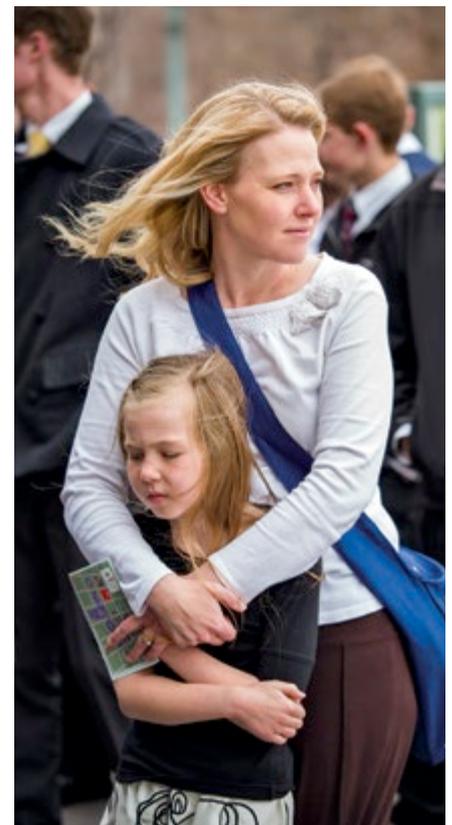
My friend decided, “Well, I will not just sit here.” He climbed out of the vehicle and started cutting wood. He completely filled the back of the truck with the heavy load. And then my friend determined he would try driving out of the snow one more time. As he put the pickup into gear and applied power, he started to inch forward. Slowly the truck moved out of

the snow and back onto the road. He finally was free to go home, a happy and humbled man.

## Our Individual Load

I pray for the assistance of the Holy Ghost as I emphasize vital lessons that can be learned from this story about my friend, the truck, and the wood. It was the load. It was the load of wood that provided the traction necessary for him to get out of the snow, to get back on the road, and to move forward. It was the load that enabled him to return to his family and his home.

Each of us also carries a load. Our individual load is comprised of demands and opportunities, obligations and privileges, afflictions and blessings, and options and





constraints. Two guiding questions can be helpful as we periodically and prayerfully assess our load: “Is the load I am carrying producing the spiritual traction that will enable me to press forward with faith in Christ on the strait and narrow path and avoid getting stuck? Is the load I am carrying creating sufficient spiritual traction so I ultimately can return home to Heavenly Father?”

Sometimes we mistakenly may believe that happiness is the absence of a load. But bearing a load is a necessary and essential part of the plan of happiness. Because our individual load needs to generate spiritual traction, we should be careful to not haul around in our lives so many nice but unnecessary things that we are distracted and diverted from the things that truly matter most.

### **The Strengthening Power of the Atonement**

The Savior said:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly

in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30).

A yoke is a wooden beam, normally used between a pair of oxen or other animals that enables them to pull together on a load. A yoke places animals side-by-side so they can move together in order to accomplish a task.

Consider the Lord’s uniquely individual invitation to “take my yoke upon you.” Making and keeping sacred covenants yokes us to and with the Lord Jesus Christ. In essence, the Savior is beckoning us to rely upon and pull together with Him, even though our best efforts are not equal to and cannot be compared with His. As we trust in and pull our load with Him during the journey of mortality, truly His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

We are not and never need be alone. We can press forward in our daily lives with heavenly help. Through the Savior’s Atonement we can receive capacity and “strength beyond [our] own” (“Lord, I Would Follow Thee,” *Hymns*, no. 220). As the Lord declared, “Therefore, continue

your journey and let your hearts rejoice; for behold, and lo, I am with you even unto the end” (D&C 100:12).

Consider the example in the Book of Mormon as Amulon persecuted Alma and his people. The voice of the Lord came to these disciples in their afflictions: “Lift up your heads and be of good comfort, for I know of the covenant which ye have made unto me; and I will covenant with my people and deliver them out of bondage” (Mosiah 24:13).

Note the centrality of covenants to the promise of deliverance. Covenants received and honored with integrity and ordinances performed by proper priesthood authority are necessary to receive all of the blessings made available through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. For in the ordinances of the priesthood, the power of godliness is manifest unto men and women in the flesh, including the blessings of the Atonement (see D&C 84:20–21).

Recall the Savior’s statement “For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:30) as we consider the next verse in the account of Alma and his people.

“And I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs” (Mosiah 24:14).

Many of us may assume this scripture is suggesting that a burden suddenly and permanently will be taken away. The next verse, however, describes how the burden was eased.

“And now it came to pass that the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, *the Lord did strengthen them* that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord” (Mosiah 24:15; emphasis added).

The challenges and difficulties were not immediately removed from the people. But Alma and his followers were strengthened, and their increased capacity made the burdens lighter. These good people were empowered through the Atonement to *act* as agents (see D&C 58:26–29) and *impact* their circumstances. And

“in the strength of the Lord” (Words of Mormon 1:14; Mosiah 9:17; 10:10; Alma 20:4), Alma and his people were directed to safety in the land of Zarahemla.

Not only does the Atonement of Jesus Christ overcome the effects of the Fall of Adam and make possible the remission of our individual sins and transgressions, but His Atonement also enables us to do good and become better in ways that stretch far beyond our mortal capacities. Most of us know that when we do things wrong and need help to overcome the effects of sin in our lives, the Savior has made it possible for us to become clean through His redeeming power. But do we also understand that the Atonement is for faithful men and women who are obedient, worthy, and conscientious and who are striving to become better and serve more faithfully? I wonder if we fail to fully acknowledge this strengthening aspect of the Atonement in our lives and mistakenly believe we must carry



our load all alone—through sheer grit, willpower, and discipline and with our obviously limited capacities.

It is one thing to know that Jesus Christ came to the earth to *die* for us. But we also need to appreciate that the Lord desires, through His Atonement and by the power of the Holy Ghost, to *enliven* us—not only to guide but also to strengthen and heal us.

### The Savior Succors His People

Alma explains why and how the Savior can enable us:

“And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people.

“And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities” (Alma 7:11–12).

Thus, the Savior has suffered not just for our sins and iniquities—but also for our physical pains and anguish, our weaknesses and shortcomings, our fears and frustrations, our disappointments and discouragement, our regrets and remorse, our despair and desperation, the injustices



and inequities we experience, and the emotional distresses that beset us.

There is no physical pain, no spiritual wound, no anguish of soul or heartache, no infirmity or weakness you or I ever confront in mortality that the Savior did not experience first. In a moment of weakness we may cry out, “No one knows what it is like. No one understands.” But the Son of God perfectly knows and understands, for He has felt and borne our individual burdens. And because of His infinite and eternal sacrifice (see Alma 34:14), He has perfect empathy and can extend to us His arm of mercy. He can reach out, touch, succor, heal, and strengthen us to be more than we could ever be and help us to do that which we could never do relying only upon our own power. Indeed, His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

#### **An Invitation, a Promise, and a Testimony**

I invite you to study, pray, ponder, and strive to learn more about the Savior’s Atonement as you assess your individual load. Many things about the Atonement we simply cannot comprehend with our mortal minds. But many aspects of the Atonement we can and need to understand.

For my friend, the load of wood provided life-saving traction. The



empty truck could not move through the snow, even equipped with four-wheel drive. A heavy load was necessary to produce traction.

It was the load. It was the load that provided the traction that enabled my friend to get unstuck, to get back on the road, to press forward, and to return to his family.

The unique burdens in each of our lives help us to rely upon the merits, mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah (see 2 Nephi 2:8). I testify and promise the Savior will help us to bear up our burdens with ease (see Mosiah 24:15). As we are yoked with Him through sacred covenants and receive the enabling power of His Atonement in our lives, we increasingly will seek to understand and live according to His will. We also will pray for the strength to learn from, change, or accept our circumstances rather than praying relentlessly for God to change our circumstances according to our will. We will become agents who act rather than objects that are acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:14). We will be blessed with spiritual traction.

May each of us do and become

better through the Savior’s Atonement. Today is April 6. We know by revelation that today is the actual and accurate date of the Savior’s birth. April 6 also is the day on which The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized. (See D&C 20:1; Harold B. Lee, “Strengthen the Stakes of Zion,” *Ensign*, July 1973, 2; Spencer W. Kimball, “Why Call Me Lord, Lord, and Do Not the Things Which I Say?” *Ensign*, May 1975, 4; Spencer W. Kimball, “Remarks and Dedication of the Fayette, New York, Buildings,” *Ensign*, May 1980, 54; *Discourses of President Gordon B. Hinckley, Volume 1: 1995–1999* [2005], 409.) On this special and sacred Sabbath day, I declare my witness that Jesus the Christ is our Redeemer. He lives and will cleanse, heal, guide, protect, and strengthen us. Of these things I joyfully testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



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By President Thomas S. Monson

# Love—the Essence of the Gospel

*We cannot truly love God if we do not love our fellow travelers on this mortal journey.*

My beloved brothers and sisters, when our Savior ministered among men, He was asked by the inquiring lawyer, “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?”

Matthew records that Jesus responded:

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

“This is the first and great commandment.

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”<sup>1</sup>

Mark concludes the account with the Savior’s statement: “There is none other commandment greater than these.”<sup>2</sup>

We cannot truly love God if we do not love our fellow travelers on this mortal journey. Likewise, we cannot fully love our fellowmen if we do not love God, the Father of us all. The Apostle John tells us, “This commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.”<sup>3</sup> We are all spirit children of our Heavenly Father and, as such, are brothers and sisters. As we keep this truth in mind, loving all of God’s children will become easier.

Actually, love is the very essence of the gospel, and Jesus Christ is our Exemplar. His life was a legacy of love. The sick He healed; the downtrodden He lifted; the sinner He saved. At the end the angry mob took His life. And yet there rings from Golgotha’s hill the words: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do”<sup>4</sup>—a crowning expression in mortality of compassion and love.

There are many attributes which are manifestations of love, such as kindness, patience, selflessness, understanding, and forgiveness. In all our associations, these and other such attributes will help make evident the love in our hearts.

Usually our love will be shown in our day-to-day interactions one with another. All important will be our ability to recognize someone’s need and then to respond. I have always cherished the sentiment expressed in the short poem:

*I have wept in the night  
For the shortness of sight  
That to somebody’s need made  
me blind;  
But I never have yet*

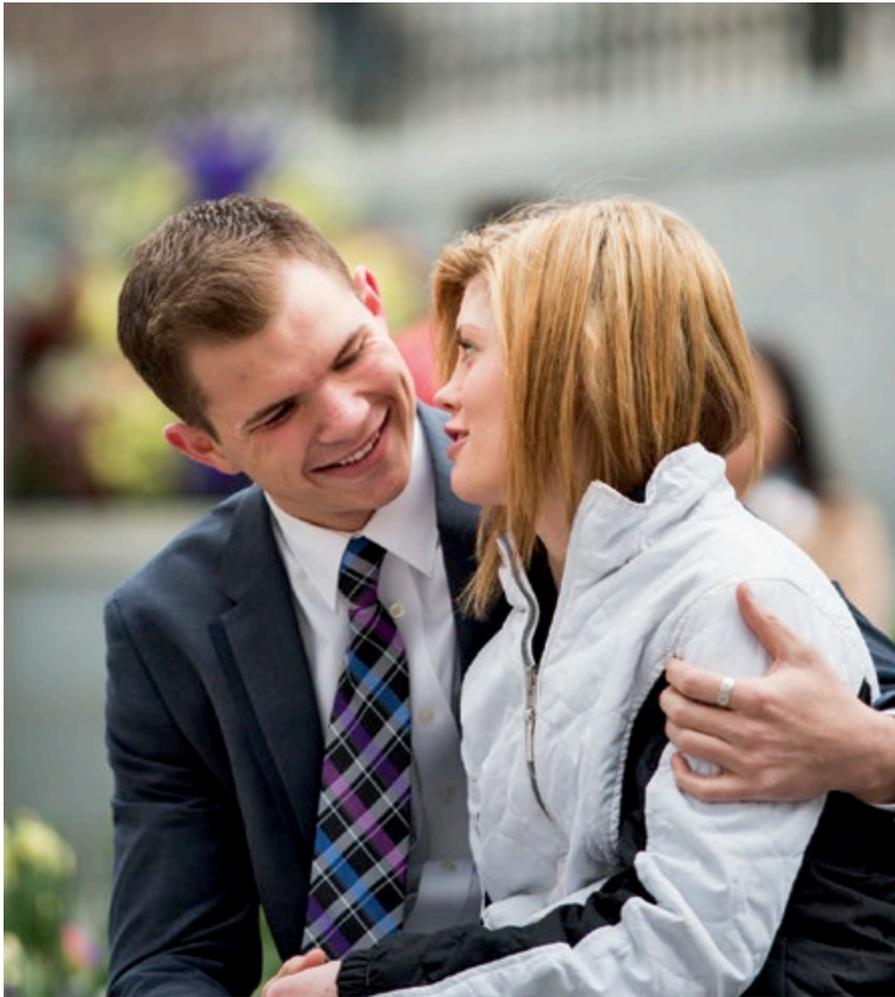
*Felt a tinge of regret  
For being a little too kind.*<sup>5</sup>

I recently was made aware of a touching example of loving kindness—one that had unforeseen results. The year was 1933, when because of the Great Depression, employment opportunities were scarce. The location was the eastern part of the United States. Arlene Biesecker had just graduated from high school. After a lengthy search for employment, she was finally able to obtain work at a clothing mill as a seamstress. The mill workers were paid only for each of the correctly completed pieces they sewed together daily. The more pieces they produced, the more they were paid.

One day shortly after starting at the mill, Arlene was faced with a procedure that had her confused and frustrated. She sat at her sewing machine trying to unpick her unsuccessful attempt to complete the piece on which she was working. There seemed to be no one to help her, for all of the other seamstresses were hurrying to complete as many pieces as they could. Arlene felt helpless and hopeless. Quietly, she began to cry.

Across from Arlene sat Bernice Rock. She was older and more experienced as a seamstress. Observing Arlene’s distress, Bernice left her own work and went to Arlene’s side, kindly giving her instruction and help. She stayed until Arlene gained confidence and was able to successfully complete the piece. Bernice then went back to her own machine, having missed the opportunity to complete as many pieces as she could have, had she not helped.

With this one act of loving kindness, Bernice and Arlene became lifelong friends. Each eventually married and had children. Sometime in the



1950s, Bernice, who was a member of the Church, gave Arlene and her family a copy of the Book of Mormon. In 1960, Arlene and her husband and children were baptized members of the Church. Later they were sealed in a holy temple of God.

As a result of the compassion shown by Bernice as she went out of her way to help one whom she didn't know but who was in distress and needed assistance, countless individuals, both living and dead, now enjoy the saving ordinances of the gospel.

Every day of our lives we are given opportunities to show love and kindness to those around us. Said President Spencer W. Kimball: "We must remember that those mortals we meet in parking lots, offices, elevators, and elsewhere are that portion of mankind God has given us to love and to serve. It will do us little good to speak of the general brotherhood

of mankind if we cannot regard those who are all around us as our brothers and sisters."<sup>6</sup>

Often our opportunities to show our love come unexpectedly. An example of such an opportunity appeared in a newspaper article in October 1981. So impressed was I with the love and compassion related therein that I have kept the clipping in my files for over 30 years.

The article indicates that an Alaska Airlines nonstop flight from Anchorage, Alaska, to Seattle, Washington—a flight carrying 150 passengers—was diverted to a remote Alaskan town in order to transport a gravely injured child. The two-year-old boy had severed an artery in his arm when he fell on a piece of glass while playing near his home. The town was 450 miles (725 km) south of Anchorage and was certainly not on the flight path. However, medics

at the scene had sent out a frantic request for help, and so the flight was diverted to pick up the child and take him to Seattle so that he could be treated in a hospital.

When the flight touched down near the remote town, medics informed the pilot that the boy was bleeding so badly he could not survive the flight to Seattle. A decision was made to fly another 200 miles (320 km) out of the way to Juneau, Alaska, the nearest city with a hospital.

After transporting the boy to Juneau, the flight headed for Seattle, now hours behind schedule. Not one passenger complained, even though most of them would miss appointments and connecting flights. In fact, as the minutes and hours ticked by, they took up a collection, raising a considerable sum for the boy and his family.

As the flight was about to land in Seattle, the passengers broke into a cheer when the pilot announced that he had received word by radio that the boy was going to be all right.<sup>7</sup>

To my mind come the words of the scripture: "Charity is the pure love of Christ, . . . and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him."<sup>8</sup>

Brothers and sisters, some of our greatest opportunities to demonstrate our love will be within the walls of our own homes. Love should be the very heart of family life, and yet sometimes it is not. There can be too much impatience, too much arguing, too many fights, too many tears. Lamented President Gordon B. Hinckley: "Why is it that the [ones] we love [most] become so frequently the targets of our harsh words? Why is it that [we] sometimes speak as if with daggers that cut to the quick?"<sup>9</sup> The answers to these questions may be different for each of us, and yet the bottom line is



that the reasons do not matter. If we would keep the commandment to love one another, we must treat each other with kindness and respect.

Of course there will be times when discipline needs to be meted out. Let us remember, however, the counsel found in the Doctrine and Covenants—namely, that when it is necessary for us to reprove another, we afterward show forth an increase of love.<sup>10</sup>

I would hope that we would strive always to be considerate and to be sensitive to the thoughts and feelings and circumstances of those around us. Let us not demean or belittle. Rather, let us be compassionate and encouraging. We must be careful that we do not

destroy another person's confidence through careless words or actions.

Forgiveness should go hand in hand with love. In our families, as well as with our friends, there can be hurt feelings and disagreements. Again, it doesn't really matter how small the issue was. It cannot and should not be left to canker, to fester, and ultimately to destroy. Blame keeps wounds open. Only forgiveness heals.

A lovely lady who has since passed away visited with me one day and unexpectedly recounted some regrets. She spoke of an incident which had taken place many years earlier and involved a neighboring farmer, once a good friend but with whom she and her husband had disagreed on multiple

occasions. One day the farmer asked if he could take a shortcut across her property to reach his own acreage. At this point she paused in her narrative to me and, with a tremor in her voice, said, "Brother Monson, I didn't let him cross our property then or ever but required him to take the long way around on foot to reach his property. I was wrong, and I regret it. He's gone now, but oh, I wish I could say to him, 'I'm so sorry.' How I wish I had a second chance to be kind."

As I listened to her, there came to my mind the doleful observation of John Greenleaf Whittier: "Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: *'It might have been!'*"<sup>11</sup> Brothers and sisters, as we treat others with love and kind consideration, we will avoid such regrets.

Love is expressed in many recognizable ways: a smile, a wave, a kind comment, a compliment. Other expressions may be more subtle, such as showing interest in another's activities, teaching a principle with kindness and patience, visiting one who is ill or homebound. These words and actions and many others can communicate love.

Dale Carnegie, a well-known American author and lecturer, believed that each person has within himself or herself the "power to increase the sum total of [the] world's happiness . . . by giving a few words of sincere appreciation to someone



**Vienna, Austria**

who is lonely or discouraged.” Said he, “Perhaps you will forget tomorrow the kind words you say today, but the recipient may cherish them over a lifetime.”<sup>12</sup>

May we begin now, this very day, to express love to all of God’s children, whether they be our family members, our friends, mere acquaintances, or total strangers. As we arise each morning, let us determine to respond with love and kindness to whatever might come our way.

Beyond comprehension, my brothers and sisters, is the love of God for us. Because of this love, He sent His Son, who loved us enough to give His life for us, that we might have eternal life. As we come to understand this incomparable gift, our hearts will be filled with love for our Eternal Father, for our Savior, and for all mankind. That such may be so is my earnest prayer in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. Matthew 22:36–39.
2. Mark 12:31.
3. 1 John 4:21.
4. Luke 23:34.
5. Author unknown, in Richard L. Evans, “The Quality of Kindness,” *Improvement Era*, May 1960, 340.
6. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 483.
7. See “Injured Boy Flown to Safety,” *Daily Sitka Sentinel* (Alaska), Oct. 22, 1981.
8. Moroni 7:47.
9. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Let Love Be the Lodestar of Your Life,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 67.
10. See Doctrine and Covenants 121:43.
11. “Maud Muller,” in *The Complete Poetical Works of John Greenleaf Whittier* (1878), 206; emphasis added.
12. Dale Carnegie, in, for example, Larry Chang, *Wisdom for the Soul* (2006), 54.



**By President Boyd K. Packer**

President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

## The Witness

*I wish to share with you those truths which are the most worth knowing.*

**T**imes of war or uncertainty have a way of sharpening our focus on things that really matter.

World War II was a time of great spiritual turmoil for me. I had left my home in Brigham City, Utah, with only embers of a testimony, and I felt the need for something more. Virtually our whole senior class in a matter of weeks was on its way to the war zone. While stationed on the island of Ie Shima, just north of Okinawa, Japan, I struggled with doubt and uncertainty. I wanted a personal testimony of the gospel. I wanted to *know!*

During one sleepless night, I left my tent and entered a bunker which had been formed by lining up 50-gallon fuel drums filled with sand and placed one on top of the other to form an enclosure. There was no roof, and so I crawled in, looked up at the star-filled sky, and knelt to pray.

Almost mid-sentence it happened. I could not describe to you what happened if I were determined to do so. It is beyond my power of expression, but it is as clear today as it was that night more than 65 years ago. I knew it to be a very private, very individual manifestation. At last I knew for myself. I *knew* for a certainty, for it

had been given to me. After some time, I crawled from that bunker and walked, or floated, back to my bed. I spent the rest of the night in a feeling of joy and awe.

Far from thinking I was someone special, I thought that if such a thing came to me, that it could come to anyone. I still believe that. In the years that have followed, I have come to understand that such an experience is at once a light to follow and a burden to carry.

I wish to share with you those truths which are the most worth knowing, the things that I have learned and experienced in nearly 90 years of life and over 50 years as a General Authority. Much of what I have come to know falls into the category of things which cannot be taught but can be learned.

Like most things of great worth, knowledge which is of eternal value comes only through personal prayer and pondering. These, joined with fasting and scripture study, will invite impressions and revelations and the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. This provides us with instruction from on high as we learn precept upon precept.



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The revelations promise that “whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection” and that “knowledge and intelligence [are gained] through . . . diligence and obedience” (D&C 130:18–19).

One eternal truth that I have come to know is that God lives. He is our Father. We are His children. “We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost” (Articles of Faith 1:1).

Of all the other titles that He could have used, He chose to be called “Father.” The Savior commanded, “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven” (3 Nephi 13:9; see also Matthew 6:9).

His use of the name “Father” is a lesson for all as we come to understand what it is that matters most in this life.

Parenthood is a sacred privilege, and depending upon faithfulness, it can be an eternal blessing. The ultimate end of all activity in the Church is that a man and his wife and their children can be happy at home.

Those who do not marry or those who cannot have children are not excluded from the eternal blessings they seek but which, for now, remain beyond their reach. We do not always know how or when blessings will present themselves, but the promise of eternal increase will not be denied any faithful individual who makes and keeps sacred covenants.

Your secret yearnings and tearful pleadings will touch the heart of both the Father and the Son. You will be given a personal assurance from Them that your life will be full and that no blessing that is essential will be lost to you.

As a servant of the Lord, acting in the office to which I have been ordained, I give those in such circumstances a promise that there will be nothing essential to your salvation and exaltation that shall not in due time rest upon you. Arms now empty will be filled, and hearts now hurting from broken dreams and yearning will be healed.

Another truth I have come to know is that the Holy Ghost is real. He is the third member of the Godhead. His mission is to testify of truth and righteousness. He manifests Himself in many ways, including feelings of peace and reassurance. He can also bring comfort, guidance, and correction when needed. The companionship of the Holy Ghost is maintained throughout our lives by righteous living.

The gift of the Holy Ghost is conferred through an ordinance of the gospel. One with authority lays his hands on the head of a new member of the Church and says words such as these: “Receive the Holy Ghost.”

This ordinance alone does not change us in a noticeable way, but if we listen and follow the promptings, we will receive the blessing of the Holy Ghost. Each son or daughter of our Heavenly Father can come to know the reality of Moroni’s promise: “By the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the *truth* of all things” (Moroni 10:5; emphasis added).

A supernal truth that I have gained in my life is my witness of the Lord Jesus Christ.



**Mexico City, Mexico**

Foremost and underpinning all that we do, anchored throughout the revelations, is the Lord's name, which is the authority by which we act in the Church. Every prayer offered, even by little children, ends in the name of Jesus Christ. Every blessing, every ordinance, every ordination, every official act is done in the name of Jesus Christ. It is His Church, and it is named for Him—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (see D&C 115:4).

There is that great incident in the Book of Mormon where the Nephites “were praying unto the Father in [the Lord’s] name.” The Lord appeared and asked:

“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 unto them: Verily, verily, I say unto you, 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, which is my name? For by this name shall ye be called at the last day;

“And whoso taketh upon him my name, and endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. . . .

“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” (3 Nephi 27:2–7).

It is His name, Jesus Christ, “for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

In the Church we know who He

is: Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He is the Only Begotten of the Father. He is He who was slain and He who liveth again. He is our Advocate with the Father. “Remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that [we] must build [our] foundation” (Helaman 5:12). He is the anchor that holds us and protects us and our families through the storms of life.

Each Sunday across the world where congregations gather of any nationality or tongue, the sacrament is blessed with the same words. We take upon ourselves the name of Christ and always remember Him. That is imprinted upon us.

The prophet Nephi declared, “We 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” (2 Nephi 25:26).

Each of us must come to our own personal testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. We then share that testimony with our family and others.

In all of this, let us remember that there is an adversary who personally seeks to disrupt the work of the Lord. We must choose whom to follow. Our protection is as simple as deciding individually to follow the Savior, making certain that we faithfully will remain on His side.

In the New Testament, John records that there were some who were unable to commit to the Savior and His teachings, and “from that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

“Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

“And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6:66–69).

Peter had gained that which can be learned by each follower of the Savior. To be faithfully devoted to Jesus Christ, we accept Him as our Redeemer and do all within our power to live His teachings.

After all the years that I have lived and taught and served, after the millions of miles I have traveled around the world, with all that I have experienced, there is one great truth that I would share. That is my witness of the Savior Jesus Christ.

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon recorded the following after a sacred experience:

“And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

“For we saw him” (D&C 76:22–23).

Their words are my words.

I believe and I am sure that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that He lives. He is the Only Begotten of the Father, and “by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God” (D&C 76:24).

I bear my witness that the Savior lives. I *know* the Lord. I am His witness. I know of His great sacrifice and eternal love for all of Heavenly Father’s children. I bear my special witness in all humility but with absolute certainty, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



**By Elder William R. Walker**  
Of the Seventy

## Live True to the Faith

*Each of us will be greatly blessed if we know the stories of faith and sacrifice that led our forefathers to join the Lord’s Church.*

I love Church history. Perhaps like many of you, my own faith is fortified when I learn of the remarkable dedication of our forefathers who accepted the gospel and lived true to the faith.

One month ago, 12,000 wonderful youth from the Gilbert Arizona Temple District celebrated the completion of their new temple with an inspiring performance, demonstrating their commitment to live righteously. The theme of their celebration was “Live True to the Faith.”

Just as those faithful Arizona youth have done, each Latter-day Saint should commit to “live true to the faith.”

The words of the hymn say, “True to the faith that our parents have cherished” (“True to the Faith,” *Hymns*, no. 254).

We could add, “True to the faith that our grandparents have cherished.”

I wondered if each of those enthusiastic Arizona youth knew their own Church history—if they knew the history of how *their* family came to be members of the Church. It would be a wonderful thing if every Latter-day Saint knew the conversion stories of their forefathers.

Whether or not you are a descendant of pioneers, the Mormon pioneer heritage of faith and sacrifice is

your heritage. It is the noble heritage of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

One of the most wonderful chapters in the history of the Church occurred when Wilford Woodruff, an Apostle of the Lord, was teaching the restored gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Great Britain in 1840—just 10 years after the establishment of the Church.

Wilford Woodruff and other Apostles had focused their work in the Liverpool and Preston areas of England, with considerable success. Elder Woodruff, who later became President of the Church, was constantly praying to God to guide him in this very important work. His prayers led to the inspiration to go to a different place to teach the gospel.

President Monson has taught us that when we get the inspiration from heaven to do something, we do it now—we don’t procrastinate. That is exactly what Wilford Woodruff did. With clear direction from the Spirit to “go . . . south,” Elder Woodruff left almost immediately and traveled to a part of England called Herefordshire—farming country in the southwest of England. Here he met a prosperous farmer named John Benbow, where he was welcomed “with glad hearts and thanksgiving” (Wilford



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Woodruff, in Matthias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors as Recorded in His Daily Journals* [1909], 117).

A group of over 600 people, who called themselves the United Brethren, had been “praying for light and truth” (Wilford Woodruff, in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* [2004], 91). The Lord sent Wilford Woodruff as an answer to their prayers.

Elder Woodruff’s teaching bore fruit immediately, and many were baptized. Brigham Young and Willard Richards joined him in Herefordshire, and the three Apostles had remarkable success.

In only a few months, they organized 33 branches for the 541 members who had joined the Church. Their remarkable work continued, and ultimately almost every one of the members of the United Brethren were

baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

My great-great-grandmother Hannah Maria Eagles Harris was one of the first to listen to Wilford Woodruff. She informed her husband, Robert Harris Jr., that she had heard the word of God and that she intended to be baptized. Robert was not pleased to hear his wife’s report. He told her he would accompany her to the next sermon given by the Mormon missionary, and he would straighten him out.

Sitting near the front of the assembly, with a firm resolve to not be swayed, and perhaps to heckle the visiting preacher, Robert was immediately touched by the Spirit, just as his wife had been. He knew the message of the Restoration was true, and he and his wife were baptized.

Their story of faith and devotion is similar to thousands of others: when they heard the gospel message, they knew it was true!

As the Lord says, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27).

Having heard the voice of the Shepherd, they fully committed their lives to living the gospel and following the direction of the Lord’s prophet. Responding to the call to gather to Zion, they left behind their home in England, crossed the Atlantic, and gathered with the Saints in Nauvoo, Illinois.

They embraced the gospel with all their hearts. While trying to get established in their new land, they assisted in the building of the Nauvoo Temple by tithing their labor—spending every 10th day working on the construction of the temple.

They were brokenhearted at the news of the death of their beloved prophet, Joseph Smith, and his brother



Hyrum. But they carried on! They stayed true to the faith.

When the Saints were persecuted and driven from Nauvoo, Robert and Maria felt greatly blessed to receive their endowments in the temple shortly before they crossed the Mississippi River and headed west. Although they were uncertain of what their future held, they were certain of their faith and their testimonies.

With six children, they slogged through mud as they crossed Iowa on their way west. They built for themselves a lean-to on the side of the Missouri River at what came to be known as Winter Quarters.

These intrepid pioneers were waiting for apostolic direction on how and when they would be heading further west. Everyone's plans were altered when Brigham Young, the President of the Quorum of the Twelve, issued a call for men to volunteer to serve in the United States Army in what came to be known as the Mormon Battalion.

Robert Harris Jr. was one of over 500 Mormon pioneer men who responded to that call from Brigham Young. He enlisted, even though it meant he would leave behind his pregnant wife and six little children.

Why would he and the other men do such a thing?

The answer can be given in my great-great-grandfather's own words. In a letter that he wrote to his wife when the battalion was on its way to Santa Fe, he wrote, "My faith is so strong as ever [and when I think of the things that Brigham Young told us], I believe it about the same as if the Great God had told me."

In short, he knew he was listening to a prophet of God, as did the other men. That is why they did it! They knew they were led by a prophet of God.



In that same letter, he expressed his tender feelings for his wife and children and told of his constant prayers that she and the children would be blessed.

Later in the letter, he made this powerful statement: "We must not forget the things which you and I heard and [experienced] in the Temple of the Lord."

Combined with his earlier testimony that "we are led by a Prophet of God," these two sacred admonitions have become like scripture to me.

Eighteen months after departing with the battalion, Robert Harris was safely reunited with his beloved Maria. They stayed true and faithful to the restored gospel throughout their lives. They had 15 children, 13 of whom lived to maturity. My grandmother Fannye Walker, of Raymond, Alberta, Canada, was one of their 136 grandchildren.

Grandma Walker was proud of the fact that *her* grandfather had served

in the Mormon Battalion, and she wanted all of her grandchildren to know it. Now that I am a grandfather, I understand why it was so important to her. She wanted to turn the hearts of the children to the fathers. She wanted her grandchildren to know of their righteous heritage—because she knew it would bless their lives.

The more connected we feel to our righteous forefathers, the more likely we are to make wise and righteous choices.

And so it is. Each of us will be greatly blessed if we know the stories of faith and sacrifice that led our forefathers to join the Lord's Church.

From the first time Robert and Maria heard Wilford Woodruff teach and testify of the Restoration of the gospel, they knew the gospel was true.

They also knew that no matter what trials or hardships would come to them, they would be blessed for staying true to the faith. It almost seems that they had heard the words

of our prophet today, who said, “No sacrifice is too great . . . in order to receive [the] blessings [of the temple]” (Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 92).

The two-pound coin of the United Kingdom has inscribed on its side “Standing on the Shoulders of Giants.” When I think of our great pioneer forefathers, I feel that we are *all* standing on the shoulders of giants.

Although the admonition came from a letter from Robert Harris, I believe that countless forefathers would send the same message to their children and grandchildren: First, we must not forget the experiences we have had in the temple, and we must not forget the promises and the blessings that come to each of us because of the temple. Secondly, we must not forget that we are led by a prophet of God.

I testify that we *are* led by a prophet of God. The Lord restored His Church in the latter days through the Prophet Joseph Smith, and we must not forget that we have been led by an unbroken chain of prophets of God, from Joseph to Brigham and through each succeeding President of the Church to our prophet today—Thomas S. Monson. I know him, I honor him, and I love him. I testify that he is the Lord’s prophet on the earth today.

It is the desire of my heart that, along with my children and grandchildren, we will honor the legacy of our righteous forefathers—those faithful Mormon pioneers who were willing to put everything on the altar to sacrifice for and defend their God and their faith. I pray that each of us will live true to the faith that our parents have cherished. In the holy and sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



**By Elder L. Tom Perry**  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

## Obedience through Our Faithfulness

*Obedience is an emblem of our faith in the wisdom and power of the highest authority, even God.*

The family home evenings Sister Perry and I have been holding each Monday night have suddenly increased in size. My brother, his daughter, Barbara’s brother, and a niece and her husband have moved into our condominium complex. It is the only time I have been blessed having family live near me since I was a boy. Then, my family lived on the same block with several members of my mother’s extended family. Grandfather Sonne’s home was next door to ours on the north, and Aunt Emma’s home was next door to ours on the south. On the south side of the block lived Aunt Josephine, and on the east side of the block was where Uncle Alma lived.

During my boyhood, we interacted with members of our extended family daily and shared moments of working, playing, and visiting together. We could not get in a great deal of mischief without a report reaching our mothers very rapidly. Our world is different now—the members of most families spread out. Even if they live relatively close to each other, they do not often live next door. Still, I have to believe that my boyhood and

my current situation are a little like heaven, with beloved family members living close to each other. It serves as a constant reminder to me of the eternal nature of the family unit.

When I was growing up, I had a special relationship with my grandfather. I was the oldest son in the family. I removed the snow from the walks in the winter and cared for the lawns in the summer for our home, Grandfather’s home, and the homes of my two aunts. Grandfather usually sat on the front porch as I mowed his lawn. When I had finished, I would sit on the front steps and visit with him. Those moments are treasured memories for me.

One day I asked my grandfather how I would know if I was always doing the right thing, given that life presents so many choices. As my grandfather usually did, he answered me with an experience from farm life.

He taught me about breaking in a team of horses so that they would work together. He explained that a team of horses must always know who is in charge. One of the keys to asserting control and directing a horse is a harness and bit. If a member of



the team ever believes that it does not need to obey the will of the driver, the team will never pull and work together to maximize their ability.

Now let's examine the lesson my grandfather taught me using this example. Who is the driver of the team of horses? My grandfather believed it is the Lord. He is the one who has a purpose and a plan. He is also the trainer and builder of the team of horses and, in turn, each individual horse. The driver knows best, and the only way for a horse to know it is always doing the right thing is to be obedient and follow the driver's lead.

What was my grandfather likening to a harness and bit? I believed then, as I believe now, that my grandfather was teaching me to follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost. In his mind's eye, the harness and bit were spiritual. An obedient horse which is part of a well-trained team of horses needs little more than a gentle tug from the driver to do exactly what he wants it to do. This gentle tug is equivalent to the still, small voice with which the Lord speaks to us. Out of

respect for our agency, it is never a strong, forceful tug.

Men and women who ignore the gentle promptings of the Spirit will often learn, as the prodigal son learned, through the natural consequences of disobedience and riotous living. It was only after natural consequences humbled the prodigal son that "he came to himself" and heard the whisperings of the Spirit telling him to return to his father's house (see Luke 15:11–32).

So the lesson my grandfather taught me was always to be ready to receive the gentle tug of the Spirit. He taught me that I would always receive such a prompting if I ever veered off course. And I would never be guilty of more serious wrongdoings if I allowed the Spirit to guide me in my decisions.

As James 3:3 states, "Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body."

We must be sensitive to our spiritual bits. Even with the slightest tug from the Master, we must be willing to completely alter our course. To succeed in life, we must teach our

spirit and body to work together in obedience to God's commandments. If we heed the gentle promptings of the Holy Ghost, it can unite our spirits and bodies in a purpose that will guide us back to our eternal home to live with our eternal Father in Heaven.

Our third article of faith teaches us about the importance of obedience: "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel."

The kind of obedience my grandfather described in his example of a team of horses also requires a special trust—that is, an absolute faith in the driver of the team. The lesson my grandfather taught me, therefore, also alluded to the first principle of the gospel—faith in Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul taught, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Then Paul used the examples of Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham to teach about faith. He dwelled on the story of Abraham, for Abraham is the father of the faithful:



“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

“By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country. . . .

“Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised” (Hebrews 11:8–9, 11).

We know that through Abraham and Sarah’s son, Isaac, a promise was given to Abraham and Sarah—a promise of posterity “so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable” (see verse 12; see also Genesis 17:15–16). And then Abraham’s faith was tested in a

way that many of us would consider unimaginable.

I have contemplated on many occasions the story of Abraham and Isaac, and I still do not believe I fully comprehend Abraham’s faithfulness and obedience. Perhaps I can imagine him faithfully packing up to leave early one morning, but how did he take all those steps alongside his son Isaac over the three-day journey to the base of Mount Moriah? How did they carry the wood for the fire up the mountain? How did he build the altar? How did he bind Isaac and lay him on the altar? How did he explain to him that he would be the sacrifice? And how did he have the strength to lift the knife to slay his son? Abraham’s faith empowered him to follow God’s lead with exactness up until the miraculous moment when an angel called out from heaven,

announcing to Abraham that he had passed his agonizing test. And then the angel of the Lord repeated the promise of the Abrahamic covenant.

I recognize that the challenges associated with having faith in Jesus Christ and obedience will be more difficult for some than others. I have had enough years of experience to know that the personalities of horses can be very different and, therefore, some horses can be easier or more difficult to train and that the variety of people is far greater. Each of us is a son or daughter of God, and we have a unique premortal and mortal story. Accordingly, there are very few one-size-fits-all solutions. And so I fully recognize the trial-and-error nature of life and, most importantly, the constant need of the second principle of the gospel, even repentance.

It is also true that the time during which my grandfather lived was a simpler time, especially regarding the choices between right and wrong. While some very intelligent and insightful people might believe our more complex time demands ever more complex solutions, I am far from convinced they are right. Rather, I am of the frame of mind that today’s complexity demands greater simplicity, like the answer my grandfather gave to my sincere question about how to know the difference between right and wrong. I know what I have to offer today is a simple formula, but I can testify about how well it works for me. I recommend it to you and even challenge you to experiment upon my words, and if you do, I promise that they will lead you to clarity of choice when you are bombarded with choices and that they will lead to simple answers to questions that confuse the learned and those who think they are wise.

Too often we think of obedience as the passive and thoughtless following of the orders or dictates of a higher authority. Actually, at its best, obedience is an emblem of our faith in the wisdom and power of the highest authority, even God. When Abraham demonstrated his unwavering faithfulness and obedience to God, even when commanded to sacrifice his son, God rescued him. Similarly, when we demonstrate our faithfulness through obedience, God will ultimately rescue us.

Those who rely solely on themselves and follow only their own desires and self-inclinations are so limited when compared to those who follow God and tap into His insight, power, and gifts. It has been said that someone who is all wrapped up in himself or herself makes a very small package. Strong, proactive obedience is anything but weak or passive. It is the means by which we declare our faith in God and qualify ourselves to receive the powers of heaven. Obedience is a choice. It is a choice between our own limited knowledge and power and God's unlimited wisdom and omnipotence. According to the lesson my grandfather gave to me, it is a choice to sense the spiritual bit in our mouths and follow the driver's lead.

May we become heirs to the covenant and the seed of Abraham through our faithfulness and by receiving the ordinances of the restored gospel. I promise you that the blessings of eternal life are available to everyone who is faithful and obedient. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



**By Elder Lawrence E. Corbridge**  
Of the Seventy

# The Prophet Joseph Smith

*The revelations poured out upon Joseph Smith affirm that he was a prophet of God.*

## The First Vision

A young boy reads the Bible, and his eyes pause on a singular passage of scripture. This is a moment that will change the world.

He is anxious to know which church can lead him to truth and salvation. He has tried almost everything else, and now he turns to the Bible and reads these words: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of

God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."<sup>1</sup>

He reflects on them over and over again. The first glimmer of light penetrates the darkness. Is this the answer, the way out of confusion and darkness? Can it be this simple? Ask God and He will answer? At length he decides he must either ask God or ever remain in darkness and confusion.

And yet as anxious as he is, he doesn't run to a quiet corner and rattle off a hurried prayer. He is only 14, but in his haste to know, he is not hasty. This is not to be just any prayer. He decides where to go and when to make the attempt. He prepares to talk to God.

And then the day comes. It is "the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring of [1820]."<sup>2</sup> He walks alone into the stillness of the nearby woods, beneath the trees that tower above him. He reaches the place where he previously designed to go. He kneels and offers up the desires of his heart.

Describing what happens next, he says:



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“I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

“. . . When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other— [Joseph,] *This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*”<sup>3</sup>

Only 24 years later, Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum will die because of what began here.

### Opposition

Joseph said that when he was 17, an angel told him that his “name [would] be had for good and evil among all nations, . . . among all people.”<sup>4</sup> This amazing prophecy is continuing to be fulfilled today as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has spread throughout the world.

Opposition, criticism, and antagonism are companions to the truth.

Whenever the truth with regard to the purpose and destiny of man is revealed, there will always be a force to oppose it. Beginning with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, down to the ministry of Christ, and on down to our day, there has always been and will ever be an effort to deceive, derail, oppose, and frustrate the plan of life.

Look for the biggest dust cloud billowing above the most dirt that is kicked at One who was most opposed, challenged, and rejected, beaten, abandoned, and crucified, One who descended below all things, and there you will find the truth, the Son of God, the Savior of all mankind. Why did they not leave Him alone?

Why? Because He is the truth, and the truth will always be opposed.

And then look for one who brought forth another testament of Jesus Christ and other scripture, look for one who was the instrument by which the fullness of the gospel and the Church of Jesus Christ were restored to the earth, look for him and expect to find the

dirt flying. Why not leave him alone?

Why? Because he taught the truth, and the truth will always be opposed.

### The Flood of Revelation

The revelations poured out upon Joseph Smith affirm that he was a prophet of God. Let’s just look at some of them—just look at some of the light and truth revealed through him that shines in stark contrast to the common beliefs of his day and ours:

- God is a personal, exalted being, an Eternal Father. He is our Father.
- God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost are separate beings.<sup>5</sup>
- You are more than human. You are a child of God the Eternal Father and may become like Him<sup>6</sup> if you will have faith in His Son, repent, receive ordinances, receive the Holy Ghost, and endure to the end.<sup>7</sup>
- The Church of Jesus Christ today is fundamentally the same Church He organized during His mortal ministry, with prophets and apostles, Melchizedek and Levitical

Priesthoods, elders, high priests, deacons, teachers, bishops, and the seventy, all as described in the Bible.

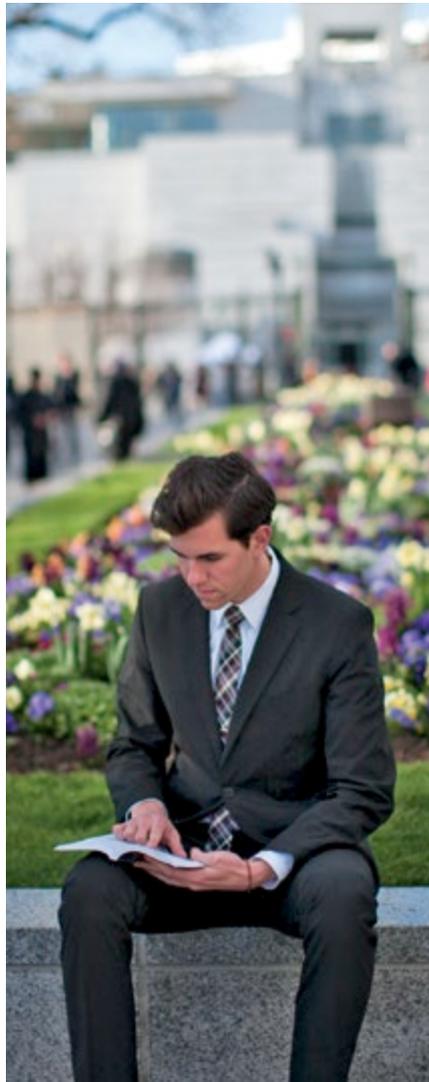
- Priesthood authority was withheld from the earth following the deaths of the Savior and His Apostles and was restored again in our day.
- Revelation has not ceased, and the heavens are not closed. God speaks to prophets today, and He will speak to you and me as well.<sup>8</sup>
- There is more after this life than only heaven and hell. There are degrees of glory, and it matters a great deal what we do in this life.<sup>9</sup>
- More than having a mere passive belief in Christ, we should “look unto [Him] in every thought,”<sup>10</sup> “do all that [we do] in the name of the Son,”<sup>11</sup> and “always remember him and keep his commandments . . . that [we] may always have his Spirit to be with [us].”<sup>12</sup>
- The billions who live and die without the gospel and the ordinances necessary for salvation are not lost. “Through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel,”<sup>13</sup> administered for both the living and the dead.<sup>14</sup>
- Everything did not begin at birth. You lived before in the presence of God as His son or daughter and prepared for this mortal life.<sup>15</sup>
- Marriage and family are not conventions of men until only death do us part. They are intended to be made eternal through covenants we make with God. The family is the pattern of heaven.<sup>16</sup>

And this is only a part of the flood of revelation poured out upon Joseph Smith. Where did it all come from, these revelations which give light to darkness, clarity to doubt, and which have inspired, blessed, and improved

millions of people? Which is more likely, that he dreamed it all up on his own or that he had the help of heaven? Do the scriptures he produced sound like the words of man or the words of God?

### Conclusion

There is no dispute about what Joseph Smith accomplished, only how he did what he did and why. And there are not many options. He was either pretender or prophet. Either he did what he did alone, or he had the help of heaven. Look at the evidence, but look at all of the evidence, the entire mosaic of his life, not any single piece. Most importantly, do as young



Joseph and “ask . . . God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given [you].”<sup>17</sup> This is not only how you may learn the truth about the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith; it is also the pattern to know the truth of all things.<sup>18</sup>

Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, as is Thomas S. Monson today. Through Joseph Smith, “the keys of the kingdom of God are [again] committed unto man on the earth, and . . . the gospel [will] roll forth . . . as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands . . . , until it has filled the whole earth.”<sup>19</sup>

God is our Eternal Father, and Jesus is the Christ. We worship Them. Nothing compares with Their creations, the plan of salvation, and the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God. In this dispensation, we fulfill the plan of the Father and partake of the fruits of the Atonement only by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel, restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. I bear testimony of Them—God the Eternal Father and Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. And I do so in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

### NOTES

1. James 1:5.
2. Joseph Smith—History 1:14.
3. Joseph Smith—History 1:16–17.
4. Joseph Smith—History 1:33.
5. See Doctrine and Covenants 130:22.
6. See Doctrine and Covenants 50:24.
7. See 2 Nephi 31; 3 Nephi 27.
8. See Moroni 10:3–5.
9. See Doctrine and Covenants 76.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 6:36.
11. Moses 5:8.
12. Doctrine and Covenants 20:77.
13. Articles of Faith 1:3.
14. See Doctrine and Covenants 76; 128; 138.
15. See Doctrine and Covenants 49:17; 138; Moses 3:5; 6:36.
16. See Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–2; 132:5–33.
17. James 1:5.
18. See Moroni 10:3–5.
19. Doctrine and Covenants 65:2.



By Elder Michael John U. Teh  
Of the Seventy

## Where Your Treasure Is

*If we are not careful, we will begin to chase after the temporal more than the spiritual.*

Shortly after general conference in October 2007, one of my brethren told me that it would be about seven years before I got this harrowing experience again. I was relieved and told him that I would consider it my “seven years of plenty.” Well, here I am; my seven years of plenty have come to an end.

Last January my sweetheart, Grace, and I received an assignment to visit the members in the Philippines who were devastated by a major earthquake and a super typhoon. We rejoiced because the assignment was an answer to our prayers and a testament to the mercy and goodness of a loving Father in Heaven. It provided some closure to our longing to personally express to them our love and concern.

Most of the members we met were still living in temporary shelters like tents, community centers, and Church meetinghouses. The homes we visited had either partial roofing or no roofing at all. The people did not have much to begin with, and what little they had was swept away. There was mud and debris everywhere. However, they were full of gratitude for the little help they received and were in good spirits despite their very difficult circumstances. When we

asked them how they were coping, everyone responded with a resounding, “We’re OK.” Obviously, their faith in Jesus Christ gave them hope that everything would work out eventually. Home after home, tent after tent, Sister

Teh and I were being taught by these faithful Saints.

In times of calamity or tragedy, the Lord has a way of refocusing us and our priorities. All of a sudden, all the material things we worked so hard to acquire do not matter. All that matters is our family and our relationships with others. One good sister put it this way: “After the water receded and it was time to begin cleaning up, I looked around my home and thought, ‘Wow, I have accumulated a lot of garbage these many years.’”

I suspect that this sister has gained a better perspective and henceforth will be very cautious in deciding which things are necessary and which ones she really can live without.



In working with many members over the years, we have been pleased to observe an abundance of spiritual strength. We have also seen both an abundance and a lack of material possessions among these faithful members.

Out of necessity, most of us are involved in earning money and acquiring some of the world's goods to be able to sustain our families. It requires a good part of our time and attention. There is no end to what the world has to offer, so it is critical that we learn to recognize when we have enough. If we are not careful, we will begin to chase after the temporal more than the spiritual. Our pursuit for the spiritual and eternal will then take a backseat, instead of the other way around. Sadly, there appears to be a strong inclination to acquire more and more and to own the latest and the most sophisticated.

How do we make sure that we are not drawn down this path? Jacob gives this counsel: "Wherefore, do not spend money for that which is of no worth, nor your labor for that which cannot satisfy. Harken diligently unto me, and remember the words which I have spoken; and come unto the Holy One of Israel, and feast upon that which perisheth not, neither can be corrupted, and let your soul delight in fatness."<sup>1</sup>

I hope none of us spend money for that which is of no worth nor labor for that which does not satisfy.

The Savior taught the following to both the Jews and the Nephites:

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:



"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."<sup>2</sup>

In another setting, the Savior gave this parable:

"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

"And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

"And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

"And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

"So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."<sup>3</sup>

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf gave the following counsel not too long ago:

"Our Heavenly Father sees our real potential. He knows things about us that we do not know ourselves. He prompts us during our lifetime to fulfill the measure of our creation, to live a good life, and to return to His presence.

"Why, then, do we devote so much of our time and energy to things that are so fleeting, so inconsequential, and so superficial? Do we refuse to

see the folly in the pursuit of the trivial and transient?"<sup>4</sup>

We all know that our list of earthly treasures consists of pride, wealth, material things, power, and the honors of men. They do not merit any more time and attention, so I will focus instead on the things that will constitute our treasures in heaven.

What are some treasures in heaven that we can lay up for ourselves? For starters, it will be well for us to acquire the Christlike attributes of faith, hope, humility, and charity. We have been counseled repeatedly to "[put] off the natural man and . . . [become] as a child."<sup>5</sup> The Savior's admonition is for us to strive to be perfect like Him and our Heavenly Father.<sup>6</sup>

Second, we need to put more quality time and effort into strengthening family relationships. After all, "the family is ordained of God. It is the most important unit in time and in eternity."<sup>7</sup>

Third, serving others is a hallmark of a true follower of Christ. He said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."<sup>8</sup>

Fourth, understanding the doctrine of Christ and strengthening our testimony is a labor that will bring real joy and satisfaction. We need to consistently study the words of Christ as found in the scriptures and the words

of living prophets. “For behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.”<sup>9</sup>

May I conclude with the story of a 73-year-old widow whom we met during our trip to the Philippines:

When the earthquake struck the island of Bohol, the home that she and her late husband had worked so hard to build crumbled to the ground, killing her daughter and grandson. Now alone, she needs to work to support herself. She has started taking in laundry (which she does by hand) and has to go up and down a good-sized hill several times a day to fetch water. When we visited her, she was still living in a tent.

These are her words: “Elder, I accept everything that the Lord has asked me to pass through. I have no hard feelings. I treasure my temple recommend and keep it under my pillow. Please know that I pay a full tithing on my meager income from doing laundry. No matter what happens, I will always pay tithing.”

I bear testimony that our priorities, tendencies, inclinations, desires, appetites, and passions will have a direct bearing on our next estate. Let us always remember the words of the Savior: “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” May our hearts be found in the right place is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. 2 Nephi 9:51.
2. Matthew 6:19–21; see also 3 Nephi 13:19–21.
3. Luke 12:16–21.
4. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Of Regrets and Resolutions,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 22–23.
5. Mosiah 3:19.
6. See 3 Nephi 12:48.
7. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 1.1.1.
8. Matthew 25:40.
9. 2 Nephi 32:3.



By **Elder Marcos A. Aidukaitis**  
Of the Seventy

## If Ye Lack Wisdom

*God will reveal truth to those who seek for it as prescribed in the scriptures.*

The other day my 10-year-old son was studying about the human brain on the Internet. He wants to be a surgeon one day. It's not difficult to note that he is a lot smarter than I am.

We like the Internet. At home we communicate with family and friends through social media, by email, and in other ways. My children do much of their schoolwork through the Internet.

Whatever the question is, if we need more information, we search it online. In seconds we have a lot of material. This is marvelous.

The Internet provides many opportunities for learning. However, Satan wants us to be miserable, and he distorts the real purpose of things. He uses this great tool to promote doubt and fear and to destroy faith and hope.

With so much available on the Internet, we must carefully consider where to apply our efforts. Satan can keep us busy, distracted, and infected by sifting through information, much of which can be pure garbage.

One should not roam through garbage.

Listen to this guidance, provided by the scriptures: “The Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto

you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know . . . it is of God.”<sup>1</sup>

In a real sense, we face the same dilemma that Joseph Smith faced in his youth. We too often find ourselves lacking wisdom.

In the kingdom of God, the search for truth is appreciated, encouraged, and in no way repressed or feared. Church members are strongly counseled by the Lord Himself to seek for knowledge.<sup>2</sup> He said, “Seek ye diligently . . . ; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith.”<sup>3</sup> However, how can we recognize truth in a world that is increasingly blunt in its attacks on the things pertaining to God?

The scriptures teach us how:

First, we can know the truth by observing its fruits.

During His great Sermon on the Mount, the Lord said:

“Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. . . .

“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”<sup>4</sup>

The prophet Mormon taught this same principle when he said, “By

their works ye shall know them; for if their works be good, then they are good also.”<sup>5</sup>

We invite all to study the fruits and the works of this Church.

Those who are interested in the truth will be able to recognize the difference that the Church and its members make in the communities where they are established. They will also note the improvement in the lives of those who follow its teachings. Those who examine these fruits will discover that the fruits of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are delicious and desirable.

Second, we can find truth by experimenting on the word ourselves.

The prophet Alma taught:

“We will compare the word unto a seed. . . . If ye give place, that a seed may be planted in your heart, behold,

if it be a true seed, [and] . . . if ye do not cast it out by your unbelief, . . . behold, it will begin to swell within your breasts; and . . . ye will begin to say within yourselves—It must . . . be that this is a good seed, . . . for it beginneth to enlarge my soul; yea, it beginneth to enlighten my understanding, yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me. . . .

“. . . And now, . . . will not this strengthen your faith? Yea, it will strengthen your faith. . . .

“. . . For every seed bringeth forth unto its own likeness.”<sup>6</sup>

What a superb invitation by a prophet of the Lord! This could be compared to a scientific experiment. We are invited to test the word, we are given parameters, and we are told the outcome of the test if we follow the instructions.

Thus the scriptures teach us that we can know the truth by observing its fruits or by experimenting with it personally, giving place for the word in our hearts and cultivating it like unto a seed.

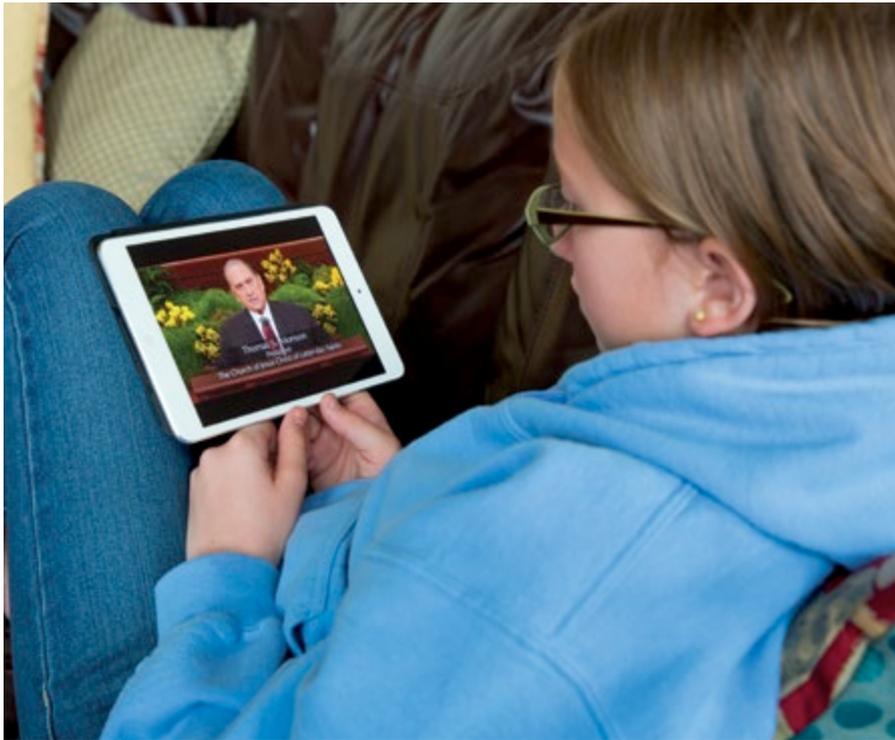
However, there is yet a third way to know the truth, and that is by personal revelation.

Doctrine and Covenants section 8 teaches that revelation is knowledge—“knowledge of whatsoever things [we] ask in faith, with an honest heart, believing that [we] shall receive.”<sup>7</sup>

And the Lord tells us how we will receive this revelation. He says, “I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart.”<sup>8</sup>

Thus we are taught that revelation can be obtained by asking in faith,





**Pleasant Grove, Utah, USA**

with an honest heart, and believing we will receive.

But notice that the Lord made it very clear when He warned, “Remember that without faith you can do nothing; therefore ask in faith.”<sup>9</sup> Faith requires work, such as studying it out in your mind, then asking in prayer if it is right.

The Lord said:

“If it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.

“But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong.”<sup>10</sup>

Faith without works is dead.<sup>11</sup> Thus, “ask in faith, nothing wavering.”<sup>12</sup>

I have a friend, not of our faith, who indicated to me that he is not a spiritual person. He will not study the scriptures or pray because he says he cannot understand the words of God, nor is he sure that God exists. This attitude explains his lack of spirituality and will lead to the opposite of revelation, as explained by Alma. He said, “And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word.”

But, Alma added, “he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full.”<sup>13</sup>

Alma and the sons of Mosiah are examples of the principle that faith requires works. In the Book of Mormon we read:

“They had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God.

“But this is not all; they had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation.”<sup>14</sup>

Asking with an honest heart is equally important in this process. If we are sincerely seeking the truth, we will do all in our power to find it, which can include reading the scriptures, going to church, and doing our best to keep the commandments of God. It also means that we are willing to do God’s will when we find it.

Joseph Smith’s actions when he was seeking for wisdom are a perfect example of what it means to have an honest heart. He said he wanted to know which of the sects was true so

“that [he] might know which to join.”<sup>15</sup> Even before he prayed, he was ready to act upon the answer he would receive.

We must ask in faith and with an honest heart. But that is not all. We must also believe that we will receive the revelation. We must trust the Lord and have hope in His promises. Remember what is written: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”<sup>16</sup> What a wonderful promise!

I invite all to seek truth from any of these methods but especially from God through personal revelation. God will reveal truth to those who seek for it as prescribed in the scriptures. It requires more effort than to just search the Internet, but it is worth it.

I bear my testimony that this is the true Church of Jesus Christ. I have seen its fruits in communities and in the lives of many thousands, including family members; thus I know it is true. I have also tried the word in my life for many years, and I have felt its effects on my soul; thus I know it is true. But most important, I have learned of its truthfulness for myself by revelation through the power of the Holy Ghost; thus I know it is true. I invite all of you to do the same. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. Moroni 7:16.
2. See Doctrine and Covenants 88:78.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 88:118.
4. Matthew 7:17, 20.
5. Moroni 7:5.
6. Alma 32:28, 30–31.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 8:1.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 8:2.
9. Doctrine and Covenants 8:10.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 9:8–9.
11. See James 2:17.
12. James 1:6.
13. Alma 12:10.
14. Alma 17:2–3.
15. Joseph Smith—History 1:18.
16. James 1:5.



**By Elder D. Todd Christofferson**  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

# The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

*Jesus of Nazareth is the resurrected Redeemer, and I testify of all that follows from the fact of His Resurrection.*

A crushing sense of defeat and despair enveloped His disciples as Jesus suffered and died on the cross and His body was placed lifeless in the tomb. Despite what the Savior had repeatedly said of His death and subsequent rising again, they had not understood. The dark afternoon of His Crucifixion, however, was soon followed by the joyous morning of His Resurrection. But that joy came only as the disciples became eyewitnesses of the Resurrection, for even the declaration of angels that He had risen was at first incomprehensible—it was something so totally unprecedented.

Mary Magdalene and a few other faithful women came early to the Savior's tomb that Sunday morning, bringing spices and ointments to complete the anointing begun when the Lord's body was hastily laid in the sepulchre before the approaching Sabbath. On this morning of mornings, they were greeted by an open sepulchre, the covering stone having been rolled away, and two angels who declared:

“Why seek ye the living among the dead?”

“He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

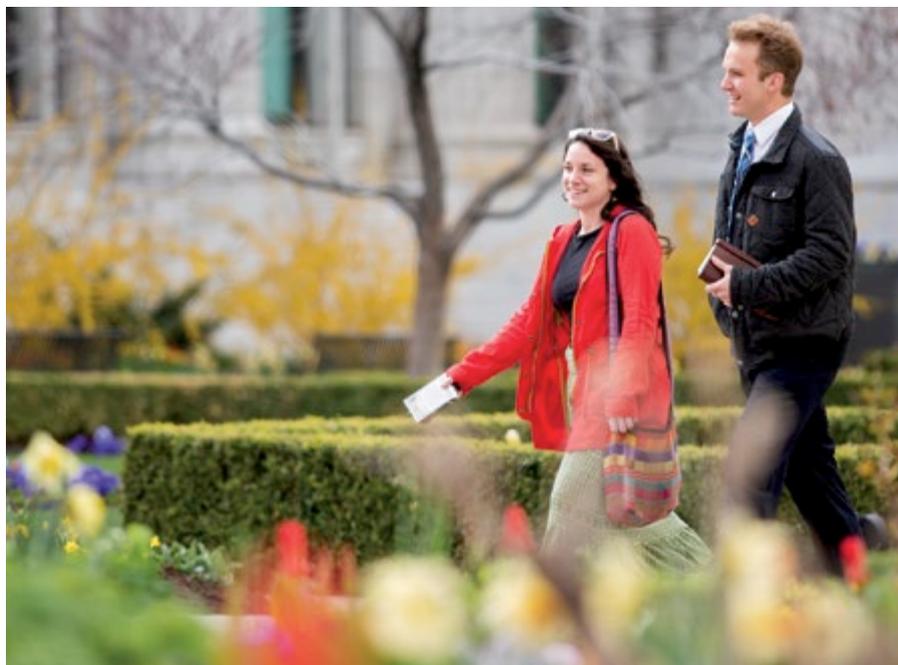
“Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.”<sup>1</sup>

“Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

“And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead.”<sup>2</sup>

As bidden by the angels, Mary Magdalene looked into the tomb, but it seems that all that registered in her mind was that the body of the Lord was gone. She hurried to report to the Apostles and, finding Peter and John, said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.”<sup>3</sup> Peter and John ran to the place and verified that indeed the tomb was empty, seeing “the linen clothes lying . . . and the napkin, that was about his head, . . . wrapped together in a place by itself.”<sup>4</sup> John apparently was the first to comprehend the magnificent message of resurrection. He writes that “he saw, and believed,” whereas the others to that point “knew not the scripture, that [Jesus] must rise again from the dead.”<sup>5</sup>

Peter and John left, but Mary remained behind, still in mourning. In the meantime the angels had returned





and tenderly asked her, “Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.”<sup>6</sup> At that moment the resurrected Savior, now standing behind her, spoke, “Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.”<sup>7</sup>

Elder James E. Talmage wrote: “It was Jesus to whom she spake, her beloved Lord, though she knew it not. One word from His living lips changed her agonized grief into ecstatic joy. ‘Jesus saith unto her, Mary.’ The voice, the tone, the tender accent she had heard and loved in the earlier days lifted her from the despairing depths into which she had sunk. She turned, and saw the Lord. In a transport of joy she reached out her arms to embrace Him, uttering only the endearing and worshipful word, ‘Rabboni,’ meaning My beloved Master.”<sup>8</sup>

And so this blessed woman became the first mortal to see and speak to the resurrected Christ. Later that same day He appeared to Peter in or near Jerusalem;<sup>9</sup> to two disciples on the road to Emmaus;<sup>10</sup> and in the evening to 10 of the Apostles and others, appearing suddenly in their midst, saying, “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me,

and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.”<sup>11</sup> Then to further convince them “while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered,”<sup>12</sup> He ate broiled fish and honeycomb before them.<sup>13</sup> Later He instructed them, “Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”<sup>14</sup>

Beyond these confirmed witnesses in Jerusalem, we have the incomparable ministry of the risen Lord to ancient inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere. In the land Bountiful, He descended from heaven and invited the assembled throng, some 2,500, to come forward one by one until they had all gone forth, thrusting their hands into His side and feeling the prints of the nails in His hands and in His feet.<sup>15</sup>

“And when they had all gone forth and had witnessed for themselves, they did cry out with one accord, saying:

“Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God! And they did fall down at the feet of Jesus, and did worship him.”<sup>16</sup>

Christ’s Resurrection shows that His existence is independent and everlasting. “For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.”<sup>17</sup> Jesus said:

“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

“No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.”<sup>18</sup>

The Savior is not dependent on food or water or oxygen or any other substance or power or person for life. Both as Jehovah and Messiah, He is the great I Am, the self-existing God.<sup>19</sup> He simply is and ever will be.

By His Atonement and Resurrection, Jesus Christ has overcome all aspects of the Fall. Physical death will be temporary, and even spiritual death has an end, in that all come back into the presence of God, at least temporarily, to be judged. We can have ultimate trust and confidence in His power to overcome all else and grant us everlasting life.

“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”<sup>20</sup>

In the words of Elder Neal A. Maxwell: “Christ’s victory over death ended the human predicament. Now there are only personal predicaments, and from these too we may be rescued by following the teachings of him who rescued us from general extinction.”<sup>21</sup>

Having satisfied the demands of justice, Christ now steps into the place of justice; or we might say He is justice, just as He is love.<sup>22</sup> Likewise, besides being a “perfect, just God,” He is a perfect, merciful God.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the Savior makes all things right. No injustice in mortality is permanent, even death, for He restores life again. No injury, disability, betrayal, or abuse goes uncompensated in the end because of His ultimate justice and mercy.

By the same token, we are all accountable to Him for our lives, our choices, and our actions, even our

thoughts. Because He redeemed us from the Fall, our lives are in reality His. He declared:

“Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

“And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works.”<sup>24</sup>

Consider for a moment the significance of the Resurrection in resolving once and for all the true identity of Jesus of Nazareth and the great philosophical contests and questions of life. If Jesus was in fact literally resurrected, it necessarily follows that He is a divine being. No mere mortal has the power in himself to come to life again after dying. Because He was resurrected, Jesus cannot have been only a carpenter, a teacher, a rabbi, or a prophet. Because He was resurrected, Jesus had to have been a God, even the Only Begotten Son of the Father.

Therefore, what He taught is true; God cannot lie.<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, He was the Creator of the earth, as He said.<sup>26</sup>

Therefore, heaven and hell are real, as He taught.<sup>27</sup>

Therefore, there is a world of spirits, which He visited after His death.<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, He will come again, as the angels said,<sup>29</sup> and “reign personally upon the earth.”<sup>30</sup>

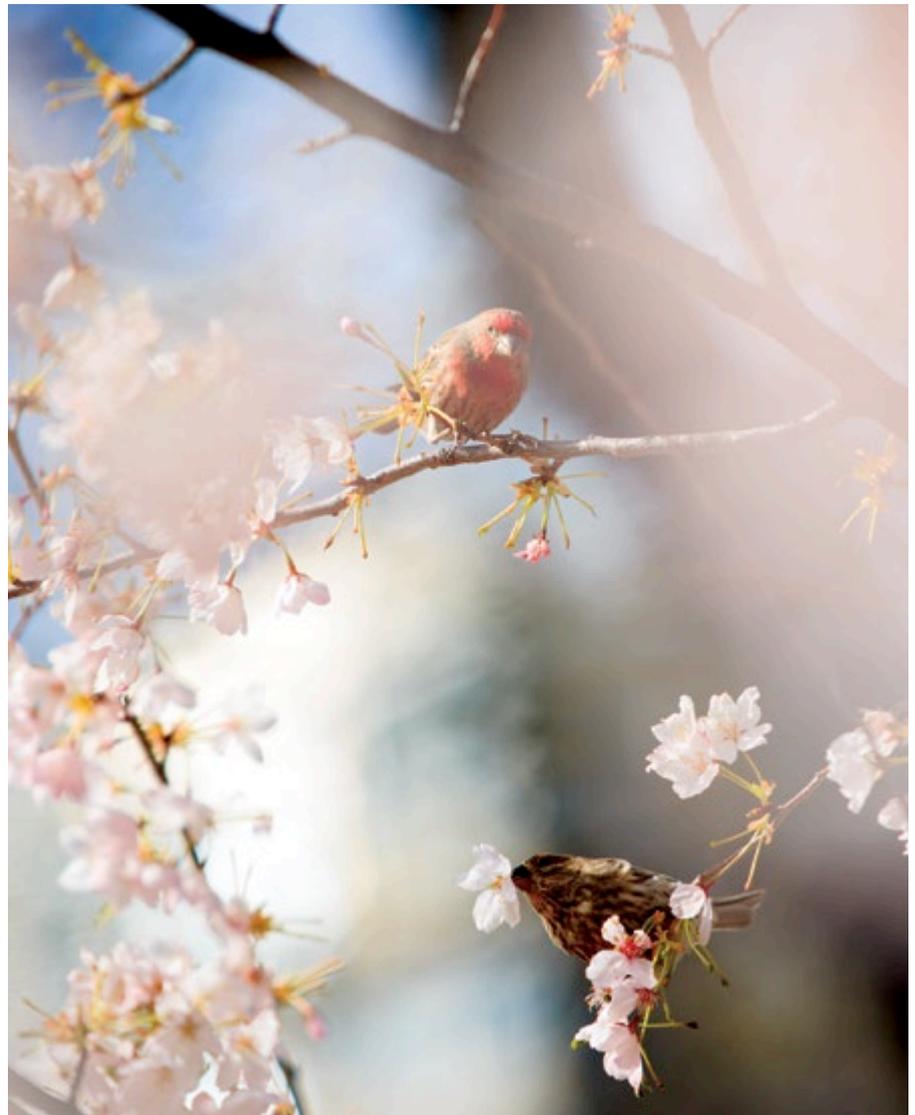
Therefore, there is a resurrection and a final judgment for all.<sup>31</sup>

Given the reality of the Resurrection of Christ, doubts about the omnipotence, omniscience, and benevolence of God the Father—who gave His

Only Begotten Son for the redemption of the world—are groundless. Doubts about the meaning and purpose of life are unfounded. Jesus Christ is in fact the only name or way by which salvation can come to mankind. The grace of Christ is real, affording both forgiveness and cleansing to the repentant sinner. Faith truly is more than imagination or psychological invention. There is ultimate and universal truth, and there are objective

and unchanging moral standards, as taught by Him.

Given the reality of the Resurrection of Christ, repentance of any violation of His law and commandments is both possible and urgent. The Savior’s miracles were real, as is His promise to His disciples that they might do the same and even greater works.<sup>32</sup> His priesthood is necessarily a real power that “administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the





Nazareth is the resurrected Redeemer, and I testify of all that follows from the *fact* of His Resurrection. May you receive the conviction and comfort of that same witness, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. Luke 24:5–7.
2. Matthew 28:6–7.
3. John 20:2.
4. John 20:5, 7.
5. John 20:8, 9.
6. John 20:13.
7. John 20:15.
8. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. (1916), 681.
9. See Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5.
10. See Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13–35.
11. Luke 24:39.
12. Luke 24:41.
13. See Luke 24:42–43.
14. Acts 1:8.
15. See 3 Nephi 11:14–15.
16. 3 Nephi 11:16–17.
17. John 5:26.
18. John 10:17–18.
19. See Exodus 3:14.
20. 1 Corinthians 15:21–22.
21. *The Neal A. Maxwell Quote Book*, ed. Cory H. Maxwell (1997), 287.
22. See 1 John 4:8.
23. Alma 42:15; see also Mosiah 15:8–9.
24. 3 Nephi 27:13–14.
25. See Enos 1:6.
26. See, for example, 3 Nephi 9:15.
27. See, for example, Doctrine and Covenants 76.
28. See Doctrine and Covenants 138.
29. See Acts 1:10–11.
30. Articles of Faith 1:10; see also Topical Guide, “Jesus Christ, Millennial Reign.”
31. See, for example, 2 Nephi 9:15.
32. See John 14:12.
33. Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–20.
34. Job 19:26.
35. Thomas S. Monson, “I Know That My Redeemer Lives!” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 23.
36. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 49.
37. See 3 Nephi 1:15–20.
38. Mosiah 27:31.
39. Doctrine and Covenants 76:22–23.

kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest.”<sup>33</sup> Given the reality of the Resurrection of Christ, death is not our end, and though “skin worms destroy [our bodies], yet in [our] flesh shall [we] see God.”<sup>34</sup>

President Thomas S. Monson tells of a Robert Blatchford who, 100 years ago “in his book *God and My Neighbor*; attacked with vigor accepted Christian beliefs, such as God, Christ, prayer, and immortality. He boldly asserted, ‘I claim to have proved everything I set out to prove so fully and decisively that no Christian, however great or able he may be, can answer my arguments or shake my case.’ He surrounded himself with a wall of skepticism. Then a surprising thing happened. His wall suddenly crumbled to dust. . . . Slowly he began to feel his way back to the faith he had scorned and ridiculed. What had caused this profound change in his outlook? *His wife [had] died*. With a broken heart, he went into the room where lay all that was mortal of her. He looked again at the face he loved so well. Coming out, he said to a friend: ‘It is she, and yet it is not she. Everything is changed. Something that was there before is taken away. She is not the same. What can be gone if it be not the soul?’”<sup>35</sup>

Did the Lord in reality die and rise again? Yes. “The fundamental principles of our religion are the

testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.”<sup>36</sup>

As the prophesied birth of Jesus drew near, there were those among the ancient Nephite and Lamanite peoples who believed, though most doubted. In due course, the sign of His birth arrived—a day and a night and a day without darkness—and all knew.<sup>37</sup> Even so today, some believe in the literal Resurrection of Christ, and many doubt or disbelieve. But some know. In due course, all will see and all will know; indeed, “every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess before him.”<sup>38</sup>

Until then, I believe the many witnesses of the Savior’s Resurrection whose experiences and testimonies are found in the New Testament—Peter and his companions of the Twelve and dear, pure Mary of Magdala, among others. I believe the testimonies found in the Book of Mormon—of Nephi the Apostle with the unnamed multitude in the land Bountiful, among others. And I believe the testimony of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon who, after many other testimonies, proclaimed the great witness of this last dispensation “that he lives! For we saw him.”<sup>39</sup> Under the glance of His all-seeing eye, I stand myself as a witness that Jesus of



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By President Thomas S. Monson

# Until We Meet Again

*May the Spirit we have felt during these past two days be and abide with us as we go about those things which occupy us each day.*

My brothers and sisters, what a wonderful conference this has been. We have been fed spiritually as we have listened to the inspired words of the men and women who have addressed us. The music has been superb, the messages have been prepared and delivered under the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and the prayers have drawn us nearer to heaven. We have been uplifted in every way as we have participated together.

I hope that we will take the time to read the conference messages when they become available on LDS.org within the next few days and when they are printed in coming issues of the *Ensign* and *Liahona* magazines,

for they are deserving of our careful review and study.

I know you join with me in expressing our sincere gratitude to those brethren and sisters who were released during this conference. They have served well and have made significant contributions to the work of the Lord. Their dedication has been complete.

We have also sustained, by uplifted hands, brethren who have been called to new positions of responsibility. We welcome them and want them to know that we look forward to serving with them in the cause of the Master.

As we ponder the messages we have heard, may we resolve to do a little better than we have done in the past. May we be kind and loving to

those who do not share our beliefs and our standards. The Savior brought to this earth a message of love and goodwill to all men and women. May we ever follow His example.

We face many serious challenges in the world today, but I assure you that our Heavenly Father is mindful of us. He will guide and bless us as we put our faith and trust in Him and will see us through whatever difficulties come our way.

May heaven's blessings be with each of us. May our homes be filled with love and courtesy and with the Spirit of the Lord. May we constantly nourish our testimonies of the gospel, that they will be a protection for us against the buffetings of the adversary. May the Spirit we have felt during these past two days be and abide with us as we go about those things which occupy us each day, and may we ever be found doing the work of the Lord.

I bear testimony that this work is true, that our Savior lives, and that He guides and directs His Church here upon the earth. I leave with you my witness and my testimony that God our Eternal Father lives and loves us. He is indeed our Father, and He is personal and real. May we realize how close to us He is willing to come, how far He is willing to go to help us, and how much He loves us.

My brothers and sisters, may God bless you. May His promised peace be with you now and always.

I bid you farewell until we meet again in six months' time, and I do so in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, amen. ■



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**By Rosemary M. Wixom**  
Primary General President

# Keeping Covenants Protects Us, Prepares Us, and Empowers Us

*We are covenant-making women of all ages walking the path of mortality back to His presence.*

Oh, sisters, we love you. While visiting Mexico recently, I had a glimpse of the sisterhood we are all feeling tonight. Imagine this scene: We had just finished Primary on Sunday morning, and the children, teachers, and I were spilling out into the crowded hallway. Just then the door to the Young Women class opened, and I saw the young women and their leaders. We all reached out for a hug. With the children holding onto my skirt and the women close around me, I wanted to express the feelings I felt at that very moment.

I do not speak Spanish, so only English words came into my mind. I looked into all of their faces and said, "We are daughters of our Heavenly Father, who loves us, and we love Him." Everyone immediately joined in, in Spanish. There we were in a crowded hallway, reciting together the Young Women theme as we said, "We will stand as witnesses of God at

all times and in all things, and in all places."

Tonight we gather together all over the world as His disciples, with a desire to defend and sustain the kingdom of God. We are daughters of our Heavenly Father. We are covenant-making women of all ages walking

the path of mortality back to His presence. Keeping covenants protects us, prepares us, and empowers us.

There are girls among us tonight who are Primary age. Some of you have recently taken that first step on the path to eternal life with the ordinance of baptism.

Look around you. The future is bright as you see women who have also made covenants and are ready to show you the way along the path ahead.

If you are 8, 9, 10, or 11 years old, whether in the Conference Center, in your home, or in a meetinghouse around the world, would you please stand up? Welcome to the general women's meeting. Now, please stay standing because we want to invite you tonight to participate. I am going to hum a Primary song. And as soon as you recognize the tune, will you begin singing with me? Now, you must sing out so all can hear.

*Teach me to walk in the light of his love;  
Teach me to pray to my Father above;  
Teach me to know of the things that  
are right;  
Teach me, teach me to walk in the light.*



**Mexico City, Mexico**

Stay standing, girls, while everyone 12 and older now sings the second verse.

*Come, little child, and together we'll learn  
Of his commandments, that we may return  
Home to his presence, to live in his sight—  
Always, always to walk in the light.<sup>1</sup>*

That was beautiful. You may sit down. Thank you.

As women of all ages, we walk in His light. Our journey on the path is personal and well lit with the Savior's love.

We enter the gate to the path of eternal life with the ordinance and covenant of baptism, and then we receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Elder Robert D. Hales asks us, "Do [we] understand and do [our] children understand that when [we] are baptized [we] are changed forever?"

He also explained that "when we understand our baptismal covenant and the gift of the Holy Ghost, it will change our lives and will establish our total allegiance to the kingdom of God. When temptations come our way, if we will listen, the Holy Ghost will remind us that we have promised to remember our Savior and obey the commandments of God."<sup>2</sup>

Each week as we partake of the emblems of the sacrament, we renew our baptismal covenant. Elder David A. Bednar said: "As we stand in the waters of baptism, we look to the temple. As we partake of the sacrament, we look to the temple. We pledge to always remember the Savior and to keep His commandments as preparation to participate in the sacred ordinances of the temple."<sup>3</sup>



Temple ordinances lead to the greatest blessings available through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. They are those ordinances necessary for our exaltation in the celestial kingdom. As we strive to keep our covenants, our feelings of inadequacy and imperfection begin to fade, while the ordinances and the covenants of the temple come alive. Everyone is welcome to walk that path to eternal life.

I am in awe at the strength of the girls, young women, and women I have met around the world whose feet are firmly planted on this path. Let me share some examples of covenant girls and women I have met.

Luana was 11 years old when I visited her family in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Because of a traumatic event in her childhood, Luana could not speak. She had not spoken for years. She sat silently as we all conversed. I kept hoping for even a whisper from her. She looked at me intently as if uttering words were not necessary for me to know her heart.

After a prayer, we stood up to leave, and Luana handed me a drawing. She had drawn Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. I then recognized her witness loud and clear. Luana had made a covenant at baptism to stand as a witness of God "at all times and in all things, and in all places."<sup>4</sup> She understood the Atonement of Jesus Christ, as witnessed through her drawing. Had she come to know that, through the strengthening and enabling power of the Atonement, she could be healed and speak again? Since that day three years ago, Luana has progressed in her effort to speak. She is now participating in Young Women with her friends. Faithful to the covenant she made at baptism, she continues to share her witness of the Savior.

Youth all over the world are drawn to temples. In Lima, Peru, I met a father and three of his daughters outside the entrance of the temple. I saw the light in their faces. Two of the daughters were severely disabled and sitting in wheelchairs. The third

daughter, while attending to her sisters' needs, explained she had two more sisters at home. They too were in wheelchairs. They were unable to travel the 14 hours to the temple. The temple meant so much to this father and his daughters that four of them had come to the temple that day—two of them simply to observe the one who could be baptized for the dead and perform that sacred ordinance. Like Nephi, they “[delighted] in the covenants of the Lord.”<sup>5</sup>

A single woman I know values the weekly ordinance of the sacrament

and its sacred promise “that [she] may always have his Spirit to be with [her].”<sup>6</sup> That constant companionship is a promise that softens the waves of her loneliness. It gives her strength to immerse herself in developing her talents and a desire to serve the Lord. She has discovered great joy in adoring all the children in her life, and when she seeks serene peace, you will find her in the temple.

Lastly, an elderly woman in her 90s has watched her children and grandchildren grow up and her great-grandchildren come into the world. Like

many of us, she has had a life filled with sorrows, afflictions, and incomprehensible joy. She confesses that if she were rewriting her life story, she would not choose to include some of the chapters that have been written. Yet, with a smile, she says, “I just must live a little longer and see how it all turns out!” She continues to hold fast to the covenants on the path.

Nephi taught:

“After ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay. . . .

“Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.”<sup>7</sup>

Each one of us is on that path. Tonight we sang about walking the path in the light. As individuals, we are strong. Together with God, we are unstoppable.

The Lord said to Emma Smith, “Lift up thy heart and rejoice, and cleave unto the covenants which thou hast made.”<sup>8</sup>

We do rejoice that through keeping our covenants, we may feel the love of our Heavenly Father and our Savior, Jesus Christ. I testify that They live. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. “Teach Me to Walk in the Light,” *Hymns*, no. 304; or *Children’s Songbook*, 177.
2. Robert D. Hales, “The Covenant of Baptism: To Be in the Kingdom and of the Kingdom,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 8, 7; *Liahona*, Jan. 2001, 8, 7.
3. David A. Bednar, “Honorably Hold a Name and Standing,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 98.
4. Mosiah 18:9.
5. 2 Nephi 11:5.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 20:77.
7. 2 Nephi 31:19–20.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 25:13.





**By Bonnie L. Oscarson**  
Young Women General President

# Sisterhood: Oh, How We Need Each Other

*We must stop concentrating on our differences and look for what we have in common.*

In that video we saw eight countries and heard nine different languages. Imagine how many more languages were added on that final verse. It is thrilling to know that as a worldwide sisterhood we were able to raise our voices in testimony of the eternal truth that we are daughters of a loving Heavenly Father.

What a great privilege it is to be here on this historic occasion and address all the women of the Church ages eight and above. There is tremendous strength in our unity this evening. As I see all of us gathered together in the Conference Center and contemplate the thousands of others who are viewing this broadcast from locations around the world, the combined power of our testimonies and faith in Jesus Christ surely constitutes one of the most faith-filled and powerful assemblies of women in the history of the Church, if not the world.

Tonight we rejoice in our many different roles as women in the Church. Though in many ways we are different and unique, we also acknowledge that we are all daughters of the same Heavenly Father, which makes us sisters. We are unified in building the

kingdom of God and in the covenants which we have made, no matter what our circumstances. This combined assembly is, without a doubt, the most glorious sisterhood upon the face of the earth!<sup>1</sup>

To be sisters implies that there is an unbreakable bond between us. Sisters take care of each other, watch out for each other, comfort each other, and are there for each other through thick and thin. The Lord has said, “I

say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine.”<sup>2</sup>

The adversary would have us be critical or judgmental of one another. He wants us to concentrate on our differences and compare ourselves to one another. You may love to exercise vigorously for an hour each day because it makes you feel so good, while I consider it to be a major athletic event if I walk up one flight of stairs instead of taking the elevator. We can still be friends, can't we?

We as women can be particularly hard on ourselves. When we compare ourselves to one another, we will always feel inadequate or resentful of others. Sister Patricia T. Holland once said, “The point is, we simply cannot call ourselves Christian and continue to judge one another—or ourselves—so harshly.”<sup>3</sup> She goes on to say that there is nothing that is worth us losing our compassion and sisterhood over. We just need to relax and rejoice in our divine differences. We need to realize that we all desire to serve in the kingdom, using our unique talents and gifts in our own ways. Then we



**Sydney, Australia**



can enjoy our sisterhood and our associations and begin to serve.

The fact of the matter is, we really and truly need each other. Women naturally seek friendship, support, and companionship. We have so much to learn from one another, and we often let self-imposed barriers keep us from enjoying associations which could be among the greatest blessings in our lives. For example, we women who are a little older need what you Primary-age girls have to offer. We can learn much from you about Christlike service and love.

I recently heard a wonderful story about a little girl named Sarah, whose mother had the opportunity to help another woman in her ward named Brenda, who had multiple sclerosis. Sarah loved to go with her mother to help Brenda. She would put lotion on Brenda's hands and massage her fingers and arms because she was often in pain. Sarah then learned to gently stretch Brenda's arms over her head to exercise her muscles. Sarah brushed Brenda's hair and visited with her while her mother took care of her other needs. Sarah learned the importance and joy of serving another person and came to understand that even a child can make a big difference in someone's life.

I love the example we have in the first chapter of Luke which describes the sweet relationship between Mary, the mother of Jesus, and her cousin Elisabeth. Mary was a young woman when she was informed of her remarkable mission to be the mother of the Son of God. Initially it must have seemed to be a heavy responsibility to bear alone. It was the Lord Himself who provided Mary with someone to share her load. Through the message of the angel Gabriel, Mary was given the name of a trusted and sympathetic woman to whom she could turn for support—her cousin Elisabeth.

This young maiden and her cousin, who was "well stricken in years,"<sup>4</sup> shared a common bond in their miraculous pregnancies, and I can only imagine how very important the three months they spent together were to both of them as they were able to talk together, empathize with each other, and support one another in their unique callings. What a wonderful model they are of feminine nurturing between generations.

Those of us who are a little more mature can have a tremendous influence on the younger generations. When my mother was just a little girl, neither of her parents was active in

the Church. Even at the young age of five, she would walk by herself to church and attend her meetings—Primary, Sunday School, and sacrament meeting—all at different times.

I recently asked my mother why in the world she did that week after week when she had no support or encouragement at home. Her answer was: "I had Primary teachers who loved me." These teachers cared about her and taught her the gospel. They taught her that she had a Father in Heaven, who loved her, and it was their concern for her that kept her coming week after week. My mother said to me, "That was one of the most important influences in my early life." I hope I can thank those wonderful sisters someday! There is no age barrier when it comes to Christlike service.

A couple of weeks ago, I met a stake Young Women president in California who told me that her 81-year-old mother had recently been called to be a Mia Maid adviser. I was so intrigued I gave her mother a call. When Sister Val Baker's bishop asked to meet with her, she was looking forward to being called as a librarian or ward historian. When he asked her to serve as a Mia Maid adviser to the Young Women, her reaction was, "Are you sure?"

Her bishop solemnly replied, “Sister Baker, make no mistake; this call is from the Lord.”

She said she had no other answer to that except, “Of course.”

I love the inspiration this bishop felt that the four Mia Maids in his ward have much to learn from the wisdom, experience, and lifelong example of this mature sister. And guess whom Sister Baker will go to when she needs help setting up her Facebook page?

I think of the great help that the sisters in Relief Society can be in welcoming young sisters who have recently been in Young Women. Our young sisters frequently feel as if they don’t have a place or anything in common with those in Relief Society. Before they turn 18, they need Young Women leaders and mothers who will joyfully testify of the great blessings of Relief Society. They need to feel enthusiastic about becoming part of such a glorious organization. When young women begin attending Relief Society, what they need most is a friend to sit next to, an arm around their shoulders, and an opportunity to teach and serve. Let us all reach out to help one another through the transitions and milestones of our lives.

Thank you to all the women of the Church who are reaching out across age and cultural lines to bless and serve others. Young women are serving Primary children and the elderly. Single sisters of all ages spend countless hours watching out for the needs of those around them. We recognize the thousands of young women who are giving up 18 months of their lives to share the gospel with the world. All of these things are evidence that, as our beloved hymn states, “The errand of angels is given to women.”<sup>5</sup>

If there are barriers, it is because we ourselves have created them. We



**Vienna, Austria**

must stop concentrating on our differences and look for what we have in common; then we can begin to realize our greatest potential and achieve the greatest good in this world. Sister Marjorie P. Hinckley once said, “Oh, how we need each other. Those of us who are old need you who are young. And, hopefully, you who are young need some of us who are old. It is a sociological fact that women need women. We need deep and satisfying and loyal friendships with each other.”<sup>6</sup> Sister Hinckley was right; oh, how we need each other!

Sisters, there is no other group of women in the world who have access to greater blessings than we do as Latter-day Saint women. We are members of the Lord’s Church, and regardless of our individual circumstances, we can all enjoy the full blessings of priesthood power through keeping the covenants we have made at baptism and in the temple. We have living prophets to lead and teach us, and we enjoy the great gift of the Holy Ghost, which serves as a comfort and guide in our lives. We are blessed to work hand in hand with righteous brothers as we strengthen homes and families. We have access to the strength and power of temple ordinances and so much more.

In addition to enjoying all of these magnificent blessings, we have each other—sisters in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have been blessed with tender and charitable natures which enable us to render Christlike love and service to those around us. As we look beyond our differences in age, culture, and circumstance to nurture and serve one another, we will be filled with the pure love of Christ and the inspiration which leads us to know when and whom to serve.

I extend to you an invitation that was issued once before by a Relief Society general president who said, “I invite you to not only love each other more but love each other *better*.”<sup>7</sup> May we realize just how much we need each other, and may we all love one another better, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. See Barbara B. Smith, “The Bonds of Sisterhood,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1983, 20–23.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 38:27.
3. Patricia T. Holland, “‘One Thing Faithful’: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1987, 29.
4. Luke 1:7.
5. “As Sisters in Zion,” *Hymns*, no. 309.
6. *Glimpses into the Life and Heart of Marjorie Pay Hinckley*, ed. Virginia H. Pearce (1999), 254–55.
7. Bonnie D. Parkin, “Choosing Charity: That Good Part,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2003, 106.



**By Linda K. Burton**  
Relief Society General President

# Wanted: Hands and Hearts to Hasten the Work

*We can offer hands to help and hearts to hasten Heavenly Father's wonderful work.*

**D**ear sisters, how we love you! As we watched that beautiful video, did you see your own hand reaching out to help someone along that covenant path? I was thinking about a young Primary girl named Brynn who has only one hand, and yet she uses that hand to reach out to bless her family and her friends— Latter-day Saints and those of other faiths. Isn't she beautiful? And so are you! Sisters, we can offer hands to help and hearts to hasten Heavenly Father's wonderful work.

Just as our faithful sisters in the scriptures, such as Eve, Sarah, Mary, and many others, knew their identity and purpose, Brynn knows that she is a daughter of God.<sup>1</sup> We too can know of our own divine heritage as beloved daughters of God and the vital work He has for us to do.

The Savior taught, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."<sup>2</sup> What do we need to know and do "to live with him someday"?<sup>3</sup> We can learn from the story of the rich young man who asked Jesus what

he needed to do in order to receive eternal life.

Jesus answered him, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

The young man asked Him which ones he should keep. Jesus then reminded him of several of the Ten Commandments we are all familiar with.



The young man responded, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?"

Jesus said, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me."<sup>4</sup>

Jesus called him to become a part of His work—the work of a disciple. Our work is the same. We are to "lay aside the things of [the] world, . . . cleave unto [our] covenants,"<sup>5</sup> and come unto Christ and follow Him. That's what disciples do!

Now, sisters, let's not start beating ourselves up because the Savior spoke to the rich young man about becoming perfect. The word *perfect* in this account was translated from a Greek word that means "complete." As we try our best to move forward along the covenant path, we become more complete and perfect in this life.

Like the rich young man in Jesus's day, sometimes we are tempted to give up or turn back because maybe we think we can't do it alone. And we are right! We cannot do the difficult things we have been asked to do without help. Help comes through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and the helping hands of others.

A faithful single sister recently testified that through the Atonement, she found strength to use her helping hands and willing heart to raise the four children her sister had left behind when she died of cancer. That reminded me of something Elder Neal A. Maxwell said: "All the easy things that the Church has had to do have been done. From now on, it's high adventure, and followership is going to be tested in some interesting ways."<sup>6</sup> You have been sent to earth in this dispensation of time because of who you are and what you have

been prepared to do! Regardless of what Satan would try to persuade us to think about who we are, our true identity is that of a disciple of Jesus Christ!

Mormon was a true disciple who lived in a day when “every heart was hardened, . . . and there never had been so great wickedness among all the children of Lehi.”<sup>7</sup> How would you like to have lived in that day? And yet Mormon boldly declared, “Behold, I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”<sup>8</sup>

Don’t you love Mormon? He knew who he was and what his mission was and was not distracted by the evil that surrounded him. In fact, he considered his calling to be a gift.<sup>9</sup>

Think what a blessing it is to be called to give our gift of daily discipleship to the Lord, declaring in word and deed, “Behold, I am a disciple of Jesus Christ!”

I love the story President Boyd K. Packer told of a dear sister who was ridiculed for following the prophet’s



**Gilbert, Arizona, USA**

counsel to store food. The one who criticized suggested that if times became desperate, her leaders would ask her to share her food storage with others. Her simple and resolute response as a true disciple was, “At least I will have something to bring.”<sup>10</sup>

I love the women of the Church, young and old. I have seen your strength. I have seen your faith. You have something to give and are willing to give it. You do this without fanfare or publicity, drawing

attention to the God we worship, not yourselves, and with no thought of what you will receive.<sup>11</sup> That’s what disciples do!

I recently met a young woman in the Philippines whose family became less active in the Church when she was only 7 years old, leaving her alone to walk a dangerous road to church week after week. She told how at age 14 she decided that she would stay true to her covenants so she would be worthy to raise her future family in a home “blessed by the strength of priesthood pow’r.”<sup>12</sup> The best way to strengthen a home, current or future, is to keep covenants, promises we’ve made to each other and to God.

That’s what disciples do!

A faithful Japanese sister and her husband visited our mission in Korea. She didn’t speak Korean and was limited in her ability to speak English, but she had a willing heart to use her unique gifts and helping hands to do the Lord’s work. That’s what disciples do! She taught our missionaries how to do a simple piece of origami—a mouth that could open and shut. She then used the few English words she knew to teach the missionaries to “open their mouths” to share the gospel—a lesson they will never forget, nor will I.





*We are cov'nant [daughters] with  
a gift to give.  
We will teach the gospel by the way  
we live.  
With each word and action, we will  
testify:  
We believe, and we serve Jesus Christ.<sup>14</sup>*

As true disciples, may we offer our willing hearts and our helping hands to hasten His work. It does not matter if, like Brynn, we have only one hand. It does not matter if we are not yet perfect and complete. We are devoted disciples who reach out and help each other along the way. Our sisterhood reaches across the generations to those faithful sisters who have walked before. Together, as sisters and in unity with living prophets, seers, and revelators with restored priesthood keys, we can walk as one, as disciples, as servants with willing hearts and hands to hasten the work of salvation. As we do so, we will become like the Savior. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. See "Brynn," [lds.org/media-library/video/2011-01-007-brynn](https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2011-01-007-brynn).
2. John 7:17.
3. "I Am a Child of God," *Hymns*, no. 301; or *Children's Songbook*, 2–3.
4. See Matthew 19:16–22.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 25:10, 13.
6. Neal A. Maxwell, "The Old Testament: Relevancy within Antiquity" (address to Church Educational System religious educators, Aug. 16, 1979), 4; [si.lds.org](https://www.lds.org).
7. Mormon 4:11–12.
8. 3 Nephi 5:13.
9. See Moroni 7:2.
10. In Boyd K. Packer, "The Circle of Sisters," *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 111.
11. See 2 Nephi 26:29–30.
12. "Love Is Spoken Here," *Children's Songbook*, 190–91.
13. M. Russell Ballard, "Women of Righteousness," *Ensign*, Apr. 2002, 70; *Liahona*, Dec. 2002, 39.
14. "Holding Hands around the World," *Friend*, July 2002, 44–45; *Liahona*, Oct. 2003, F12–13.

Visualize for a minute you and me standing together with the other millions of sisters and brothers in His Church, going forth boldly, doing what disciples do—serving and loving like the Savior. What does it mean to you to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Mormon Helping Hands vests and shirts have been worn by hundreds of thousands of selfless disciples of Jesus Christ who have embraced the opportunity to provide temporal service. But there are other ways to serve as devoted disciples. Imagine with me some of the possible spiritual "help wanted" signs related to the work of salvation:

- Help wanted: parents to bring up their children in light and truth
- Help wanted: daughters and sons, sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles, cousins, grandparents, and true friends to serve as mentors and offer helping hands along the covenant path
- Help wanted: those who listen to the promptings of the Holy Ghost and act on impressions received
- Help wanted: those who live the

gospel daily in small and simple ways

- Help wanted: family history and temple workers to link families eternally
- Help wanted: missionaries and members to spread the "good news"—the gospel of Jesus Christ
- Help wanted: rescuers to find those who have lost their way
- Help wanted: covenant keepers to stand firm for truth and right
- Help wanted: true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ

Years ago, Elder M. Russell Ballard issued a clarion call to the sisters of the Church when he said:

"Between now and the day the Lord comes again, He needs women in every family, in every ward, in every community, in every nation who will step forward in righteousness and say by their words and their actions, 'Here am I, send me.'

"My question is, 'Will you be one of those women?'"<sup>13</sup>

I hope each of us can answer with a resounding "Yes!" I close with the words of a Primary song:



**By President Henry B. Eyring**  
First Counselor in the First Presidency

# Daughters in the Covenant

*The path . . . we must take on our journey back to our Heavenly Father . . . is marked by sacred covenants with God.*

**W**e have been taught with spiritual power tonight. I pray that the words spoken by these great sister leaders will go down into your heart as they have into mine.

This is an historic meeting. All the women of the Church eight years of age and older have been invited to join with us tonight. Many of us have prayed that the Holy Ghost would be with us. That blessing was granted as we heard these sisters speak and listened to the uplifting music. I pray that the Spirit will continue to be with us as I offer some words of encouragement and testimony in addition to what has already been said—and particularly to testify that what we have been told is what the Lord would have us hear.

I will speak tonight about the path—which in such beautiful ways has been described today—that we must take on our journey back to our Heavenly Father. That path is marked by sacred covenants with God. I will talk with you about the joy of making and keeping those covenants and helping others keep them.

A number of you were baptized recently and received the gift of the

Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. To you that memory is fresh. Others were baptized long ago, so the memory of your feelings of that covenant experience may be less clear, but some of those feelings come back whenever you listen to the sacramental prayers.

No two of us will have the same memories of the day when we made that sacred baptismal covenant and received the gift of the Holy Ghost. But we each felt God's approval. And

we felt a desire to forgive and to be forgiven and an increased determination to do right.

How deeply those feelings went down into your heart was determined largely by the way you were prepared by loving people. I hope that those of you who came into the kingdom recently are blessed to be sitting near your mother. If you are, you might send her a smile of thanks right now. I can remember the feeling of joy and gratitude as I sat behind my mother on the drive home from my baptism in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

My mother was the one who had carefully prepared me for making that covenant and all the others that would follow. She had been faithful to this charge from the Lord:

“And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents.”



**Raymond, Alberta, Canada**



**Palmyra, New York, USA**

“For this shall be a law unto the inhabitants of Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized.

“And their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when eight years old, and receive the [Holy Ghost].”<sup>1</sup>

My mother had done her part. She had prepared her children with words much like those of Alma, as recorded in the Book of Mormon:

“And it came to pass that he said unto them: Behold, here are the waters of Mormon (for thus were they called) and now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light;

“Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, 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 that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life—

“Now I say unto you, if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him, that ye will serve him and

keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?

“And now when the people had heard these words, they clapped their hands for joy, and exclaimed: This is the desire of our hearts.”<sup>2</sup>

You may not have clapped your hands when you first heard that invitation to covenant by baptism, but you surely felt the love of the Savior and a greater commitment to nurture others for Him. I can say “surely” because those feelings are placed deep in the hearts of all of Heavenly Father’s daughters. That is part of your divine heritage from Him.

You were tutored by Him before you came into this life. He helped you understand and accept that you would have trials, tests, and opportunities perfectly chosen just for you. You learned that our Father had a plan of happiness to get you safely through those trials and that you would help bring others safely through theirs. This plan is marked by covenants with God.

It is our free choice whether we make and keep those covenants. Only a few of His daughters have the opportunity in this life to even learn of those covenants. You are one of the favored few. You dear sisters, each of you is a daughter in the covenant.

Heavenly Father taught you before you were born about the experiences you would have as you left Him and came to earth. You were taught that the way back home to Him would not be easy. He knew that it would be too hard for you to make the journey without help.

You have been blessed not only to find the way to make those covenants in this life but also to be surrounded by others who will help—who, like you, are covenant daughters of Heavenly Father.

You all have felt the blessing of being in the company tonight of daughters of God who are also under covenant to help and direct you as they promised to do. I have seen what you have seen as covenant sisters keep that commitment to comfort and help—and do it with a smile.

I remember the smile of Sister Ruby Haight. She was the wife of Elder David B. Haight, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. As a young man he served as the president of the Palo Alto stake in California. He prayed over, and worried about, the girls in the Mia Maid class in his own ward.

So President Haight was inspired to ask the bishop to call Ruby Haight to teach those young girls. He knew she would be a witness of God who would lift, comfort, and love the girls in that class.

Sister Haight was at least 30 years older than the girls she taught. Yet 40 years after she taught them, each time she would meet my wife, who had been one of the girls in her class, she would put out her hand, smile, and say to Kathy, “Oh! My Mia Maid.” I saw more than her smile. I felt her deep love for a sister she still cared for as if she were her own daughter. Her smile and warm greeting came



from seeing that a sister and daughter of God was still on the covenant path home.

Heavenly Father smiles on you as well whenever He sees you help a daughter of His move along the covenant path toward eternal life. And He is pleased every time you try to choose the right. He sees not only what you are but also what you may become.

You may have had an earthly parent who thought that you could be better than you thought you could be. I had such a mother.

What I didn't know when I was young was that my Heavenly Father, your Heavenly Father, sees greater potential in His children than we or even our earthly mothers see in us. And whenever you move upward on that path toward your potential, it brings Him happiness. And you can feel His approval.

He sees that glorious potential in all of His daughters, wherever they are. Now, that puts a great responsibility on each of you. He expects you

to treat every person you meet as a child of God. That is the reason He commands us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves and to forgive them. Your feelings of kindness and forgiveness toward others come as your divine inheritance from Him as His daughter. Each person you meet is His loved spiritual child.

As you feel of that great sisterhood, what we thought divides us falls away. For instance, younger and older sisters share their feelings with the expectation of being understood and accepted. You are more alike as daughters of God than you are different.

With that view, young women should look forward to their entry into Relief Society as an opportunity to enlarge their circle of sisters whom they will come to know, admire, and love.

That same capacity to see what we can be is increasing in families and in Primary. It is happening in family home evenings and in Primary programs. Little children are being

inspired to say great and marvelous things, as they did when the Savior loosed their tongues when He taught them after He was resurrected.<sup>3</sup>

While Satan may be attacking sisters at earlier ages, the Lord is lifting sisters to higher and higher levels of spirituality. For example, young women are teaching their mothers how to use FamilySearch to find and save ancestors. Some young sisters that I know are choosing to go early in the morning to perform proxy baptisms in temples without any urging beyond the spirit of Elijah.

In missions across the earth, sisters are being called to serve as leaders. The Lord created the need for their service by touching the hearts of sisters in greater numbers to serve. More than a few mission presidents have seen the sister missionaries become ever more powerful as proselyters and particularly as nurturing leaders.

Whether or not you serve as a full-time missionary, you can gain the same ability to enrich your marriage



and the capacity to raise noble children by following the examples of great women.

Consider Eve, the mother of all living. Elder Russell M. Nelson said this of Eve: “We and all mankind are forever blessed because of Eve’s great courage and wisdom. By partaking of the fruit first, she did what needed to be done. Adam was wise enough to do likewise.”<sup>4</sup>

Every daughter of Eve has the potential to bring the same blessing to her family that Eve brought to hers. She was so important in the establishment of families that we have this report of her creation: “And the Gods said: Let us make an help meet for the man, for it is not good that the man should be alone, therefore we will form an help meet for him.”<sup>5</sup>

We don’t know all the help Eve was to Adam and to their family. But we do know of one great gift that she

gave, which each of you can also give: she helped her family see the path home when the way ahead seemed hard. “And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient.”<sup>6</sup>

You have her example to follow.

By revelation, Eve recognized the way home to God. She knew that the Atonement of Jesus Christ made eternal life possible in families. She was sure, as you can be, that as she kept her covenants with her Heavenly Father, the Redeemer and the Holy Ghost would see her and her family through whatever sorrows and disappointments would come. She knew she could trust in Them.

“Trust in the Lord with all thine

heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”<sup>7</sup>

I know that Eve faced sorrows and disappointments, but I also know that she found joy in the knowledge that she and her family could return to live with God. I know that many of you who are here face sorrows and disappointments. I leave you my blessing that, like Eve, you may feel the same joy that she felt as you journey back home.

I have a sure witness that God the Father watches over you in love. He loves each of you. You are His daughters in the covenant. Because He loves you, He will provide the help that you need to move yourself and others upward along the way back to His presence.

I know that the Savior paid the price of all of our sins and that the Holy Ghost testifies of truth. You have felt that comfort in this meeting. I have a testimony that all the keys which bind sacred covenants have been restored. They are held and exercised today by our living prophet, President Thomas S. Monson. I leave these words of comfort and hope with you, His beloved covenant daughters, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 68:25–27.
2. Mosiah 18:8–11.
3. See 3 Nephi 26:14.
4. Russell M. Nelson, “Constasy amid Change,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 34.
5. Abraham 5:14.
6. Moses 5:11.
7. Proverbs 3:5–6.



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# Conference Story Index

The following list of selected experiences related during general conference can be used in personal study, family home evening, and other teaching. The number refers to the first page of the talk.

SPEAKER	STORY
Neil L. Andersen	(18) A Laurel stands up for traditional marriage despite being ridiculed and called names.
M. Russell Ballard	(78) M. Russell Ballard “follows up” with Barbara Bowen, whom he meets at a college dance, begins dating, and eventually marries. An eight-year-old boy invites his friend and his friend’s family to a ward open house in Buenos Aires.
David A. Bednar	(87) A truck gains traction in the snow after it is filled with a heavy load of firewood.
Linda K. Burton	(122) A young woman in the Philippines stays true to her covenants. A Japanese sister visiting Korea teaches the missionaries.
Quentin L. Cook	(44) Vilate Kimball writes her husband about the “glorious doctrine” of baptism for the dead, as revealed by Joseph Smith.
Henry B. Eyring	(22) Heinrich Eyring immigrates to America, joins the Church, serves three faithful missions, and leaves his family a heritage of hope. (62) Henry B. Eyring is shaped by boyhood heroes: his father, his Aaronic Priesthood leader, a U.S. marine, and baseball player Joe DiMaggio. (125) Forty years after being called to teach Kathy Johnson (future wife of Henry B. Eyring), Ruby Haight still showed love and concern for her.
Donald L. Hallstrom	(53) Despite physical limitations, a faithful man in India serves a mission and prepares with his family to be sealed in the Hong Kong China Temple.
Jeffrey R. Holland	(6) Two sister missionaries walk away without saying anything to a man who swears at them, throws food at them, and tries to hit one of them.
Thomas S. Monson	(66) An 18-year-old navy seaman prays nightly despite jeers from others in his company. A young man bears testimony during sacrament meeting but is seen later that day smoking a cigarette. (91) Two women become lifelong friends after one helps the other learn her job as a seamstress in a clothing mill. Passengers on an airline flight do not complain when their plane is diverted to pick up an injured boy and fly him to the hospital. A woman regrets not allowing a neighbor to take a shortcut across her property.
Russell M. Nelson	(29) Russell M. Nelson’s daughter Emily shows courage and faith as she is dying of cancer.
Bonnie L. Oscarson	(119) A young girl learns the joy of serving others as she and her mother care for a woman with multiple sclerosis. An 81-year-old sister is called to share her wisdom, experience, and example as the ward’s Mia Maid adviser.
Boyd K. Packer	(94) Boyd K. Packer receives a spiritual manifestation of the truthfulness of the gospel while praying in a bunker during World War II.
Ronald A. Rasband	(9) A fifth-grade girl is caught in a tornado and is protected by angels.
Linda S. Reeves	(15) Linda S. Reeves teaches her daughter how to obtain relief through the Savior’s Atonement after the daughter sees disturbing images on television.
Randall L. Ridd	(56) A young man decides to serve a mission rather than get married after he gains a glimpse of who he was in the premortal world.
Richard G. Scott	(32) The love and example of Richard G. Scott’s grandmother and his future wife aid him in his spiritual progression.
Jean A. Stevens	(81) Jean A. Stevens is prompted to offer a ride to a young man who had missed the bus home from school. Members of the Gatrell family hold fast to the gospel after Brother Gatrell is diagnosed with an aggressive cancer.
Gary E. Stevenson	(84) LDS Olympian Noelle Pikus-Pace wins a silver medal in the skeleton after years of practice and preparation. LDS Olympian Torah Bright shows Christlike love by hugging a nervous half-pipe competitor.
Michael John U. Teh	(106) A 73-year-old Filipino woman stays true to the gospel after an earthquake and a typhoon kill her family.
William R. Walker	(97) Robert and Maria Harris join the Church and remain true and faithful to the gospel despite hardship and separation.
Claudio D. Zivic	(39) Claudio D. Zivic takes a wrong path by following another hiker.
W. Craig Zwick	(41) W. Craig Zwick and his wife show love for each other after she jumps with their infant son from the smoke-filled cab of their semitruck.

# Making Conference Part of Our Lives

*Consider using some of these activities and questions as a starting point for family discussion or personal pondering.*

## For Children

- President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught that we can choose to be grateful no matter what hard things happen in our lives (page 70). Being grateful will help us be happier and kinder and have faith and trust in God. How do you feel when you are grateful? What can you do to feel gratitude each day?
- Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women general president, told about Sarah, a young girl who went with her mom to help Brenda, a woman

with multiple sclerosis. Sarah brushed Brenda's hair, put lotion on her hands, massaged her fingers and arms, and helped her stretch (page 119). Think about ways you can serve. Even when you're young, there are many things you can do.

- Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught about how a driver uses harnesses and bits to gently guide and lead a team of horses (page 100). The driver knows best, and the horse follows the driver's lead, just like the Lord knows what is best for us, and we

can be happy when we follow Him. The harness and bit are like the promptings of the Holy Ghost. When have you felt the Holy Ghost guide you? What did it feel like?

- Jean A. Stevens, first counselor in the Primary general presidency, told a story about a boy who had missed the last bus of the day and was walking home (page 81). With many miles left to go, he got scared and knelt to pray. Minutes later, Sister Stevens was prompted by the Spirit to stop and help him. Can you think of times when Heavenly Father answered your prayers? How have you helped answer someone else's prayer?

## For Youth

- President Thomas S. Monson taught that we need "the courage to say no when we should, the courage to say yes when that is appropriate, the courage to do the right thing because it is right." As you study his talk (page 66), think about the challenges you face. What plan can you make to develop this kind of courage?
- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminded us that if we love the Savior, we will keep His commandments and love others as He did (page 6). Even as we do so, we must stand ready to defend our beliefs "with courtesy and with compassion." Do you know anyone who disagrees with any of your beliefs? How can you be respectful as you discuss and defend those beliefs?
- Several speakers spoke directly to the youth. For example, Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave several suggestions to youth on how to





overcome “spiritual whirlwinds,” such as finding peace in the temple (page 18). As you read his and other general conference talks, consider writing down ideas on how to remain strong.

- One of the great evils of today is pornography. Linda S. Reeves, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, said the best filter against such evil is a deep and abiding testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ (page 15). How strong is your personal filter? What can you do to strengthen it?

#### **For Adults**

- President Thomas S. Monson taught that as we come to understand the “incomparable gift” of the Atonement, we are filled with love for Heavenly Father, the Savior, and all of God’s children (page 91). How can this knowledge improve your study of the Savior’s life and Atonement during personal and family scripture study and while in class at church?

- President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, said that he owes much of his happiness to a great-grandfather who joined the Church, served faithfully, and remained steadfast to the end, leaving his family a heritage of hope (page 22). Consider making a list of everyone in your family and writing down what covenants and ordinances they need to continue on the covenant path. Make a

plan to help your family members receive their next covenant. You could examine ways for your covenants to play a more significant role in your life so that you can give your family a heritage of hope.

- Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles declared that adversity can lead us to rely on “the merits, mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah,” who “will help us to bear up our burdens with ease” (page 87). As you read his talk and the talks beginning on pages 9, 18, 70, 81, and 106, look for ways the Savior and His gospel can help you face life’s challenges.
- The youth curriculum in May focuses on prophets and revelation. As part of your gospel discussions with youth at home and at church, consider studying the talks by Elders Lawrence E. Corbridge (page 103) and Marcos A. Aidukaitis (page 108) of the Seventy, looking for answers to the following questions: Why didn’t the detractors of Joseph Smith leave him alone? How can we recognize truth in a world that increasingly attacks gospel teachings? ■





## Progress on Temples Noted, New Officers Sustained at General Conference

During the past six months, “the work of the Church has moved forward unhindered,” President Thomas S. Monson said in his opening remarks at the Church’s 184th Annual General Conference.

Reminiscing about the dedication of the Gilbert Arizona Temple on March 2, 2014, looking forward to the upcoming Fort Lauderdale Florida Temple dedication, and anticipating the completion and dedication of temples in many parts of the world during 2014 and 2015, President Monson noted that when all previously announced temples are completed, the Church will have 170 operating temples throughout the world.

“Although we are currently concentrating our efforts on completing the previously announced temples and will not be announcing any new

temples in the immediate future,” he said, “we will continue the process of determining needs and of finding locations for temples yet to come. Announcements will then be made in future general conferences. We are a temple-building and a temple-attending people.”

During the conference, a new member of the Presidency of the Seventy, four new General Authorities, a new Sunday School general presidency, and 42 Area Seventies were sustained.

Elder Lynn G. Robbins was called to the Presidency of the Seventy.

Elder Jörg Klebingat of Kyiv, Ukraine, and Elder Chi Hong (Sam) Wong of Hong Kong, China, were sustained to serve in the First Quorum of the Seventy. Elder Larry S. Kacher of Midway, Utah, and Elder Hugo E. Martinez of Arecibo, Puerto Rico, were

sustained as members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Tad R. Callister, who had been serving in the Presidency of the Seventy and as a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, was sustained as the Sunday School general president, with John S. Tanner and Devin G. Durrant as first and second counselors.

See a complete list of sustainings and releases on pages 26–27, and find biographies of Elder Robbins, the newly called Seventies, and the Sunday School general presidency starting on page 141.

A week prior to general conference, the first general women’s meeting—for all women, young women, and girls eight years of age and older—was held in the Conference Center. This meeting takes the place of the previous general Relief Society and general Young Women meetings. All of the messages from the women’s meeting can be found on pages 116–28.

Also prior to conference, the Young Women general board was reorganized, with sisters called for the first time from locations in addition to Salt Lake City, including Peru; South Africa; Japan; Brazil; and Brooklyn, New York, USA. Read biographies and see photos at [lds.org/callings/young-women](http://lds.org/callings/young-women).

“The Savior brought to this earth a message of love and goodwill to all men and women,” President Monson said at the end of the general conference. “May we ever follow His example.” He assured Church members and others listening that “Heavenly Father is mindful of us. He will guide and bless us as we put our faith and trust in Him.” ■

## ARTISTS INVITED TO ENTER COMPETITION

The Church History Museum invites Latter-day Saint artists to create new works of art for the 10th International Art Competition. Artists are encouraged to use their talents to create art that reflects the exhibition theme, "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus." For this particular competition, works should focus only on stories from the New Testament.

Details and online registration are available at [lds.org/artcomp](http://lds.org/artcomp), and artists who register will receive information updates. Entries will be accepted from November 3, 2014, until February 27, 2015. All artistic media, styles, and cultural approaches are welcome. Participants must be age 18 or older. Entries will be juried, and the works that are chosen will be displayed at the Church History Museum and on the Internet starting October 2015. ■

## AUXILIARY LEADERSHIP TRAINING TO BE AVAILABLE ON LDS.ORG

To better meet the needs of a growing Church, the general presidencies of the Relief Society, Primary, Young Women, Young Men, and Sunday School intend to provide worldwide training annually via the Internet. It is anticipated that this training will be available on [LDS.org](http://LDS.org) mid-year each year in many languages.

Auxiliary leadership training meetings that were held in Salt Lake City in conjunction with April general conference have been discontinued. General auxiliary presidencies and their boards will continue to provide in-person training at multistake meetings, as assigned. ■

## New Movie Will Create Opportunity to Meet the Mormons

Do you sometimes find yourself wishing there was a simple way to let others know that Latter-day Saints are just normal people who find purpose and direction as they focus their lives on Jesus Christ? That's what a documentary movie soon to be released by the Church will help you to do.

*Meet the Mormons* starts with a lighthearted look at how members of the Church are often misperceived by others. Then it introduces six families, each sharing personal experiences and describing how the gospel helps them in their lives. Those featured include:

**The Bishop.** Jermaine Sullivan and his wife, Kembe, from Atlanta, Georgia, USA, work to create unity in a diverse community while raising their three young sons.

**The Coach.** Ken Niumatalolo, the head coach of the U.S. Naval Academy football team in Annapolis, Maryland, USA, and his wife, Barbara, with the support of their children and the coaching staff, keep the Sabbath day holy.

**The Candy Bomber.** Gail Halvorsen, a 93-year-old World War II veteran, and his wife Lorraine, 90, from Amado, Arizona, USA, remind children of the value of service. Still a pilot, Brother Halvorsen drops candy from an airplane as he did during the Berlin Airlift following the war.

**The Fighter.** Carolina Marin, a kickboxer from San José, Costa Rica, and her trainer and husband, Milton, balance their roles as spouses and



**At an open house for cast members, President and Sister Uchtdorf greet Carolina Marin of Costa Rica.**

parents of young children with their love of competition.

**The Humanitarian.** Bishnu and Mangala Adhikari, of Kathmandu, Nepal, honor the beliefs and heritage of their homeland. Brother Adhikari is an engineer who has built roads, schools, and clean water systems that have blessed many small communities.

**The Missionary Mom.** Craig and Dawn Armstrong and their son Anthony, from Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, tell how Sister Armstrong was a homeless single mother when she met the missionaries. The gospel they shared helped her to turn her life around. She later married Craig, and the story comes full circle when Anthony goes on a full-time mission to South Africa to share the gospel that so blessed his mother.

*Meet the Mormons* will be shown in the Joseph Smith Memorial Building in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, and at other locations yet to be determined. ■



## MORMON CHANNEL AUDIENCE GROWING

Millions of listeners and viewers worldwide enjoy the Mormon Channel, which is broadcast in English and Spanish 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA.

This official media channel for the Church was launched five years ago. Many Latter-day Saints enjoy sharing its content with fellow members and others. Content is commercial free and includes three talk-and-music radio streams and short Mormon Messages videos.

Find Mormon Channel at [mormonchannel.org](http://mormonchannel.org) and also on YouTube, iTunes, Roku, Tumblr, Facebook, and Twitter. Free mobile applications for iOS and Android users are also available. ■

## Teaching at Church Should Follow Christ's Example

"We are trying to follow in the Savior's footsteps of teaching," said the new Sunday School general president, Tad R. Callister, following general conference.

That means asking inspired questions that help people to become converted, he said. The goal is "to help them to understand and feel the Spirit of the gospel in their lives."

He said that he is impressed with *Come, Follow Me*, the online curriculum for youth that includes the latest talks from general conference as well as Church-produced media. Participation has replaced lectures, he said, and "there is a definite shift from just teaching a lesson to trying to customize it to

the needs of the students in the class."

He added that *Come, Follow Me* helps to bring about conversion and not just pass on information. "I think we're going to raise up a generation of youth that are the finest teachers in the world, the finest parents in the world," he said, "because they're now getting this experience as youth and not having to wait until [they are] adults . . . to find out how effective teaching and understanding can be."

Jesus Christ is the Master Teacher, Brother Callister said, and our teaching at church should bring people to Christ. Emphasizing the need to teach doctrine clearly and concisely, he said that "anytime that we try to emulate the Savior, we're on good ground." ■

## Teachings for Our Time

From May 2014 through October 2014, Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society lessons on fourth Sundays should be prepared from one or more talks given in the April 2014 general conference. In October 2014, talks may be selected from either the April 2014 or the October 2014 general conference. Stake and district presidents should choose which talks will be used in their areas, or they may delegate this responsibility to bishops and branch presidents.

Those attending fourth-Sunday lessons are encouraged to study the selected talks beforehand. Conference talks are available in many languages at [conference.lds.org](http://conference.lds.org). ■

# Technology and Social Media Expand Worldwide Reach of General Conference

In addition to the more than 100,000 who participated in the five sessions of the 184th Annual General Conference at the Conference Center in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, millions more viewed or listened to the sessions in 95 languages via television, radio, satellite, and Internet broadcasts.

While the Conference Center in Salt Lake City seats 21,000 people, the audience for general conference extends around the globe as millions of Church members and others tune in. For more than 50 years, the Church has interpreted the proceedings in

numerous languages. Today, technology makes live viewing possible in more than 200 countries around the world.

In addition to broadcasts in local chapels, the Church streams the conference live on LDS.org, BYUtv, BYUtv International, the Mormon Channel, Roku, Facebook, and YouTube. Online viewership during the October 2013 general conference increased approximately 30 percent compared to the previous conference.

Many also participate in general conference through social media.

A flood of tweets with the #ldsconf hashtag are posted on Twitter during each of the five conference sessions, making general conference one of the most discussed topics on Twitter at those times. For example, during October 2013, 155,000 tweets relating to general conference were posted. (Each tweet is an individual comment of 140 characters or less.)

Through its official social media channels, the Church posts messages live from the conference in multiple languages, and it encourages others to share those messages. During general conference in October 2013, many additional viewers watched or listened to general conference messages after seeing a post on social media. Posts have been shared in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Conference proceedings are now available to an ever-wider audience. ■

***Conference proceedings are now available to a wide audience, thanks to technology and social media.***



## Websites Tell of Service, Faith

Latter-day Saints provide service and share their faith all over the world. Reports about such activities appear on country newsroom websites, which are regularly summarized on [newsroom.lds.org](http://newsroom.lds.org), the Church's official resource for news media, opinion leaders, and the public.

In the Pacific area, Latter-day Saints supplied water, food, chain saws, water filters, generators, and other emergency supplies to help Tongans following the devastation of Tropical

Cyclone Ian. In Samoa, LDS youth joined in a two-day interdenominational event with spiritual encouragement, music, dance, and sports.

In Brazil, Church members wearing Mormon Helping Hands shirts assisted in cleanup efforts and distribution of supplies after flooding damaged local neighborhoods and businesses, leaving many homeless. Elsewhere, members assisted with distribution when the Church's Humanitarian Services donated 211

wheelchairs to individuals with special needs. The ongoing donation in Brazil now totals nearly 700 chairs.

In Africa, national and global organizations joined forces with LDS Charities, the humanitarian arm of the Church, in Ghana's first national campaign to eliminate measles and rubella by immunizing children from infancy up to age 14. In Nigeria and Ghana, a Helping Hands day benefited thousands of people in 100 communities as Latter-day Saints of all ages pitched in to build bridges, plant trees, weed, paint structures, and clean and beautify neighborhoods. In Zimbabwe, more than 60 LDS youth volunteered to donate blood. And in South Africa, Latter-day Saint Nozibele Makanda, the mother of six, was elected mayor of Queenstown, a city of 200,000.

In Central America, more than 500 LDS youth in Guatemala worked with the local government to plant 1,944 trees. In Costa Rica, LDS meetinghouses became collection points for milk, and 370 Church volunteers helped deliver it to supermarkets participating in an activity to provide for those in need.

And in Canada, Latter-day Saints worked with the Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Montreal (Quebec) to prepare video interviews prior to government hearings on values. Those interviewed spoke in support of community commitment to respect, understanding, tolerance, and religious freedom, stressing that religion remains important in the lives of many citizens of Quebec.

For a list of international country newsroom websites in various languages, see [mormonnewsroom.org/newsroom-country-sites](http://mormonnewsroom.org/newsroom-country-sites). ■

***In Guatemala, more than 500 LDS youth gather to help plant 1,944 trees.***



*The Mexico City Temple Visitors' Center features many displays that teach gospel truths to strengthen families.*



## Mexico City Temple Visitors' Center Reopens

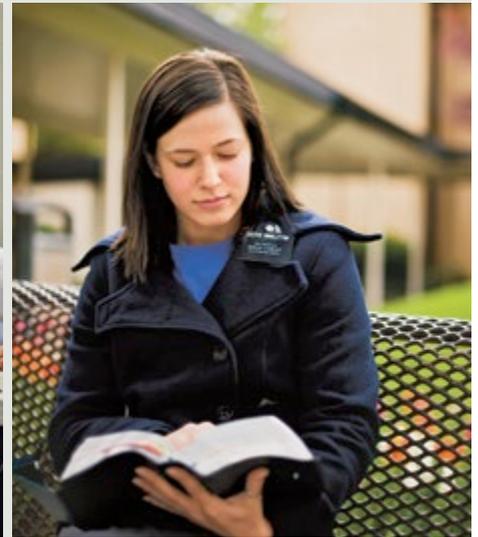
In the month following its reopening, more than 30,000 guests visited the Mexico City Temple Visitors' Center, which had undergone two years of remodeling and expansion. All exhibits are now in Spanish and include original media developed specifically for a Mexican audience. The remodeled center is also the first visitors' center to include an entire exhibit area designed specifically

for teaching gospel principles to children.

This visitors' center is the third largest of 17 such facilities, most of them located near a temple or a Church historic site. A visitors' center is currently under construction near the temple being built in Rome, Italy, and centers are found in England, New Zealand, Hawaii, and in nine states in the continental

U.S. The centers, designed to welcome active and less-active Latter-day Saints as well as those of other faiths, not only acquaint people with the Church but also help them to understand its beliefs and prompt a desire to learn more about the Savior and the Restoration of the gospel. They also provide messages to strengthen families.

Mexico is an anchor in the Church, with more than 1.2 million members, more than 200 stakes, and 12 temples. ■



*During their MTC experience, missionaries receive instruction about teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

## Missionary Training Centers Help Hasten the Work of Salvation

Throughout the world, 15 missionary training centers provide training for more than 85,000 missionaries from 143 countries. Collectively the missionaries learn 55 languages from 1,600 instructors, then serve up to two years in 405 missions across more than 150 nations.

With the growth in the number of missionaries since age requirements were changed in October 2012, the MTCs are accommodating a greater number of missionaries than ever before. With at least one MTC in every hemisphere, the sun never sets on training.

Missionaries generally arrive at an MTC with a foundation of

religious knowledge gained from instruction at home and in the Church. The centers provide additional training that includes how to teach in the manner that Jesus Christ taught and how to invite people to follow Him. Missionaries practice teaching situations, receive language training where applicable, listen to weekly devotional addresses from Church leaders and MTC staff, and participate in service opportunities.

The largest MTC is located in Provo, Utah, USA. It provides training for thousands of missionaries in 55 languages. The second-largest MTC is found in Mexico City, Mexico. In June 2013 it was relocated from a smaller

building to a 90-acre campus that previously housed a private Church high school, Benemerito de las Americas. The former location could accommodate around 125 missionaries at a time; the new location can accommodate more than 1,000.

Additional MTCs are located in Buenos Aires, Argentina; São Paulo, Brazil; Santiago, Chile; Bogotá, Colombia; Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; Preston, England; Accra, Ghana; Guatemala City, Guatemala; Auckland, New Zealand; Lima, Peru; Manila, Philippines; Johannesburg, South Africa; and Madrid, Spain. ■

## Church Applies Welfare Principles in Philippines Recovery

Months after Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines in November 2013, destroying nearly 1.2 million homes and killing more than 6,200 people, the Church continues to provide relief, shifting efforts from disaster response to longer-term relief. One particularly successful effort involves volunteers who have learned to build homes for those still without shelter.

The following community members affected by the storm are among many who expressed gratitude for help they received from the Church, even though they are not Latter-day Saints:

- A woman who took refuge in a Mormon chapel during the typhoon found out afterward that her home had been destroyed when coconut trees fell on it. She and her family did not have the means to fix it, but volunteers helped her to build a new house, and she is now helping another family to construct a home. “I learned to work together with those who are also in need here, so we can recover from [the typhoon] together,” she said.
- A man who lost his job when the business where he worked was destroyed is now learning to build homes for his family and others.



**Volunteers nail plywood to the frame of a new house in Tacloban, Philippines.**

“We know we need to help one another so that work can be completed quicker,” he said, adding that he is grateful for the Church’s relief efforts.

Presiding Bishop Gary E. Stevenson said that, along with caring for the poor and needy, “we are also seeing the principle of self-reliance in action right now, and it’s rather astounding.” He said, “One of the things that we’re trying to do is provide materials while [recipients] provide labor. Anyone who is receiving a shelter is also working to build that shelter themselves.”

Local Church leaders and humanitarian representatives are meeting with local community leaders to give vocational training and certification to people who have learned carpentry skills. Perpetual Education Fund resources have been used to bring in 20 master carpenters to assist with training, and 2,000 of 3,000 projected houses have already been completed.

Local trainees demonstrate their learning by building 10 shelters to receive government certification and a toolbox from the Church, enabling them to seek gainful employment. There is such an acute need for construction workers that Catholic Relief

Services has agreed to hire hundreds of carpenters trained by the LDS Church.

Bishop Stevenson said that 500 members of the Church attended a meeting where ecclesiastical leaders described the job training and certification, “and as this was described to them, they broke out in applause and tears, knowing that they could see a pathway . . . to provide for their families.”

The Church has also worked with several other charitable organizations as well as the Philippine government in a continuing effort to deliver food, water, medical supplies, hygiene kits, generators, shelter kits, cooking kits, fishing gear, and seeds for planting.

The Church has learned that the most effective way to respond to disasters is to work locally, purchasing needed supplies in the affected country, as near to the disaster as possible. Not only does this ensure that the goods are appropriate for the area, but it also helps build up impaired local economies.

Members worldwide are encouraged to pray for those in disaster areas distant from where they live, and to consider increasing their fast-offering donations or donating to the Church humanitarian fund. ■

## Clean-Water Initiative Aids Millions in Africa

For more than two decades, the Church has been involved in clean-water projects in more than 100 countries. In Africa alone, these projects have blessed the lives of more than four million people by providing wells, water storage and delivery systems, and water purification.

One such project took place on Idugo Island, off the coast of Mozambique. Most of the 15,000 people who live on the island work on family farms, fish the surrounding waters of the Indian Ocean, or work at evaporation ponds to gather salt from seawater. The island has no running water, electricity, roads, or vehicles. Access to the island is by handmade boats or dugout canoes.

For centuries, the only drinking water sources on Idugo have been shallow wells dug by hand. The wells are continually filled with silt and debris. They provide muddy, hard-to-access water. During the rainy season, water becomes polluted, causing cholera, diarrhea, and other diseases.

When Church humanitarian missionaries heard about the conditions on Idugo, they met with community leaders there. Together they worked out a plan for Church Humanitarian Services to provide materials, tools, and instructions to build 10 cement-lined wells with steel lids, each capable of serving 1,000 people. The missionaries



**On Idugo Island, Mozambique, villagers and local dignitaries attend a ceremony where official community use of a well begins.**

would provide hygiene and sanitation training, and villagers would provide all necessary labor for building and maintaining the wells.

From a staging point on the mainland, four dump truck loads of gravel, 300 bags of cement, two loads of sand, steel rebar, and custom-made steel cement forms were ferried over to the islands. Supplies were then carried across the island on foot or by handcart. Several Church members from Quelimane, Mozambique, camped out on the island for three months to help with teaching and construction.

Wells were designed to allow rainwater drainage, eliminating contamination. In some communities, residents built wooden fences and brick pathways around the wells, using brick they learned to make themselves with materials donated by the Church.

At official ceremonies, ownership of the wells was turned over to the people of each village. Several residents who had worked on the

wells expressed gratitude that their newly learned skills—making bricks, working with cement and reinforcing it with steel, and using tools—would enable them to find additional work. Others expressed appreciation for the opportunity to learn leadership skills.

Following the next rainy season, no waterborne diseases were reported in the villages with wells.

According to the World Health Organization, more than one billion people worldwide lack access to clean water. Thanks to the Church's clean-water initiative, that number is being reduced through a process that involves community members in planning and implementing projects, providing labor to build needed facilities, receiving training, and maintaining completed resources.

In addition to clean-water projects throughout Africa, the Church sponsors clean-water initiatives in Asia, Central America, Eastern Europe, India, Indonesia, the Pacific Islands, South America, Southeast Asia, and other locations around the world. ■



## Elder Lynn G. Robbins

*Presidency of the Seventy*

Since being called as a General Authority in April 1997, Elder Lynn G. Robbins has enjoyed the “sweet blessing of becoming acquainted with Saints all over the world.”

“You feel an immediate bond with people wherever you go,” he says.

Elder Robbins hopes to continue to meet Latter-day Saints across the globe while serving as a member of the Presidency of the Seventy.

Lynn Grant Robbins was born October 27, 1952, in Payson, Utah, to Joshua Grant and Evelyn R. Robbins. He spent his early life in Springville, Utah, where he met Jan Nielson, whom he has known since childhood. They married June 27, 1974, in the Manti Utah Temple and are the parents of seven children; they have 15 grandchildren.

Elder Robbins received a bachelor’s degree in Spanish and political science from Utah State University and an MBA in international management from American Graduate School of International Management in Glendale, Arizona, USA. He was the cofounder and senior vice president of Franklin Quest.

Elder Robbins was serving as president of the Uruguay Montevideo Mission when he received his call to the Second Quorum of the Seventy. Three years later he became a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He has served as president of the South America South Area, the Central America Area, and the North America West Area. He has also served in the North America Central Area.

A great blessing of this service was the chance to return to Argentina, where he served as a full-time missionary. While in Argentina as a young elder, he served in Jujuy, an area with one branch. When he returned to the area years later, he found a stake of the Church with a dozen units.

“You see that all over the world,” he says. “This is a day of miracles.” ■



## Elder Jörg Klebingat

*First Quorum of the Seventy*

Elder Jörg Klebingat has lived life with persistence. He believes in being obedient, keeping the commandments, and following the promptings of the Spirit.

Born December 19, 1967, to Klaus-Peter and Doris Elke Klebingat, Elder Klebingat grew up in Zweibrücken, Germany, without the influence of the gospel. As a teenager, he met a member of the Church at a music concert, and the two became friends.

“When I visited my new friend, I was impressed by his family,” he recalls. “I felt the Spirit in his home and wanted to attend church.”

It was at that first Church meeting that he heard of the Book of Mormon. His friend gave him a copy with his testimony that it was true, and Elder Klebingat left the meetings determined to find out for himself.

“I was somewhere in 1 Nephi when I got my witness that the book was true,” Elder Klebingat said. “Gaining a witness of the Prophet Joseph Smith was also a defining moment for me. On my mission, I always asked my companions if I could tell that part of the story.”

Prior to his full-time mission in the Colorado Denver Mission, Elder Klebingat served in the German army for 18 months. He was sealed to Julia Poltorak in the Salt Lake Temple on December 21, 1992. They have three children.

Elder Klebingat earned a degree in Russian language studies from Ricks College and later a master’s degree in organizational behavior from Brigham Young University. He worked as a business management consultant for Price Waterhouse and Arthur Andersen and in several capacities for the Church.

Prior to this call, Elder Klebingat served as a stake young single adult representative, elders quorum president, Young Men president, high councilor, branch president, and bishop. He will finish serving as president of the Ukraine Kyiv Mission in June 2014. He was sustained a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy on April 5, 2014. ■



## Elder Chi Hong (Sam) Wong

*First Quorum of the Seventy*

As a new convert and student at Brigham Young University-Hawaii, Elder Chi Hong (Sam) Wong gained much more than an education—he gained a sure knowledge that there is a God who knows “the details of our lives.”

Born on May 25, 1962, in Hong Kong, China, to Ngan Kan and Fat Wong, Elder Wong was one of seven children growing up in a small apartment.

At work he met Carol Lu, who introduced him to the gospel. The young investigator was baptized February 14, 1982.

A year later, on July 9, 1983, he married Carol. They moved to Laie, Hawaii, USA, so he could attend school. Because he was on a student visa, Elder Wong could work only 20 hours a week. “We had to really exercise our faith and prayers,” he said of what it took to sustain his family.

He worked hard to earn a scholarship, then he took as many credit hours as the university would allow. “It wasn’t easy,” he recalls. “Once we had that experience we knew we could always rely on the power of heaven.”

The Wongs were sealed in the Laie Hawaii Temple on August 9, 1984, and their first child was born; three more children would eventually join the family. “Those years were very special, very sacred,” Elder Wong said.

Elder Wong earned a bachelor of science degree in accounting and an associate of science degree in computer science; then he felt the need “to go back to Hong Kong to serve.”

He later received an MBA from the Hong Kong Open University. Elder Wong was the founder and partner of a business and quality consulting company and also worked at a materials testing and inspection group where he began as the senior accountant and left the company as the deputy managing director.

Prior to being sustained on April 5, 2014, as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, he served as a bishop, stake president, and Area Seventy. ■



## Elder Larry S. Kacher

*Second Quorum of the  
Seventy*

After many promptings during his young adult years, Elder Larry S. Kacher began to recognize a greater power guiding him in his life. At age 19, sensitivity to the Spirit led him to the gospel of Jesus Christ—a change that has made all the difference.

He was born on February 12, 1952, the second oldest of the five children born to Albert and Elaine Kacher; he grew up in Bloomington, Minnesota, USA.

After high school he went to Europe to ski, and after more than six months there he felt he needed to return home. Once home, he felt like he needed to go somewhere else but didn’t know where. A childhood friend planned to move to Utah, and Elder Kacher decided to move with him. While in Utah, Elder Kacher enrolled at Brigham Young University, learned about the Church, and was baptized.

“As the missionaries taught us, I felt it was true,” he says. “As I prayed, I felt that the Church was true.”

He decided to serve a mission and was called to the Tahiti Papeete Mission in 1973. After returning home, he went back to school at BYU, where he met Pauline Miller. They were married in the Manti Utah Temple on October 29, 1976, and are the parents of six children and the grandparents of 11 grandchildren.

Elder Kacher earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a master’s degree in organizational behavior—both from BYU. His career involved consulting to large companies nationally and internationally.

Prior to being sustained on April 5, 2014, as a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, Elder Kacher served as a branch president, elders quorum president, bishop, and stake president’s counselor. He presided over the Switzerland Geneva Mission from 2000 to 2003. A few years after his return from Switzerland, his work took him to Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, where he was called to serve as the first Area Seventy in the Middle East. ■



## Elder Hugo E. Martinez

*Second Quorum of the Seventy*

In 1982, Elder Hugo E. Martinez and his wife, Sister Nuria Alvarez de Martinez, were both in their medical residency training in Mississippi, USA, when an unexpected knock came at their front door.

There stood two Mormon missionaries.

“We opened our home to them, but we knew nothing about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We didn’t even know about the Mormon Tabernacle Choir,” Elder Martinez says, smiling.

Still, the gospel lessons shared by the elders immediately resonated with the young couple. They soon accepted the missionaries’ invitation to be baptized.

“And we have not looked back ever since.”

On April 5, 2014, Elder Martinez was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy, becoming the first General Authority from the Caribbean. He is understandably “overwhelmed” by his new assignment.

“But then a sweet sense of peace comes over me and lets me know that the Lord is in charge,” he says.

A year and one month after their baptism, Hugo and Nuria Martinez were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple on October 3, 1983. They are the parents of five children and have five granddaughters.

Elder Martinez was born on January 10, 1957, in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, to Hugo E. Martinez-Sandin and Daly Morales-Alamo de Martinez. While a young man, he chose to follow his father’s professional path and become a physician. He received his medical degree from the University of Puerto Rico (1981) and completed his residency at the University of Mississippi (1984). He practiced medicine until he retired in 2004.

A short time after his baptism, he was called to be a youth Sunday School teacher. He would later serve as a bishop, counselor in the stake presidency, district president, and counselor in the Puerto Rico San Juan Mission presidency. He also presided over the Guatemala Guatemala City Central Mission and was serving as an Area Seventy when he was called to be a General Authority. ■



## Tad R. Callister

*Sunday School General President*

Decades before his recent call as Sunday School general president, Sunday School played a pivotal role in the life of Tad R. Callister.

While Brother Callister was serving as Sunday School president in a ward at Brigham Young University, he got to know his future wife, Kathryn L. Saporiti, whom he married on December 20, 1968, in the Los Angeles Temple.

They are the parents of two daughters and four sons; they also have 24 grandchildren. “A lot of good things happen when you’re the Sunday School president,” Brother Callister says.

Born December 17, 1945, in Glendale, California, to Reed Eddington and Norinne Callister, he declares that he—like Nephi—was born of “goodly parents.”

“My father was my bishop when I grew up,” says Brother Callister. “He used to carry around little cards, and he would memorize vocabulary words and scriptures and Shakespeare.”

Like his father, Brother Callister pursued a legal career. After graduating in accounting from Brigham Young University, he attended law school at the University of California, Los Angeles, and earned a master’s degree in tax law from New York University. He was employed as a practicing attorney with the firm of Callister & Callister.

At the time of his call, Brother Callister had just been released from his calling in the Presidency of the Seventy and in the Second Quorum of the Seventy, where he had served since 2008.

Prior to that, he served as president of the Canada Toronto East Mission, Area Seventy, regional representative, stake president, bishop, stake mission president, elders quorum president and, as a young man, a missionary in the Eastern Atlantic States Mission.

Commenting on the upcoming changes in the adult Sunday School curriculum, Brother Callister says, “The curriculum is, of course, very important, but it’s not as important as the way people teach. The most important thing is that we teach in the Savior’s way, that we teach by the Spirit, and that we teach for conversion.” ■



## John S. Tanner

*First Counselor in the Sunday School General Presidency*

From his childhood, John Sears Tanner has found joy in learning.

That excitement has extended to his education, career, and his many opportunities to teach the gospel: first as a missionary in the Brazil South Mission and then as a bishop, stake president, high counselor, Gospel Doctrine teacher, president of the Brazil São Paulo South Mission (which concludes this summer), and now as first counselor in the Sunday School general presidency.

“When [teaching] happens right, the Holy Ghost is there and you feel the excitement of learning; you feel like you’re on sacred ground,” President Tanner says.

Born in Salt Lake City, Utah, on July 27, 1950, to William Coats Tanner Jr. and Athelia Sears Tanner, President Tanner grew up in South Pasadena, California, USA, as the fifth of 13 children. His parents created a rich educational environment in the home, including a strong gospel core. “I don’t remember learning anything at church that I hadn’t already learned at home,” he says. He also developed a love for literature that was nurtured as he pursued an English degree from Brigham Young University and a doctorate in English at the University of California, Berkeley.

While at BYU he met Susan Winder. The two developed a strong friendship from which they later built a romantic relationship. They were married in the Salt Lake Temple in 1974. Together they have raised five children.

President Tanner began his academic career as an assistant professor at Florida State University. He became a member of the faculty at BYU in 1982; he has worked there ever since as an assistant, associate, and full professor of English, and as department chairman and academic vice president.

The most important part of gospel teaching, he says, comes from something he learned early in his career: teaching must come not from a place of fear or ambition but from a place of love—from charity, the pure love of Christ. ■



## Devin G. Durrant

*Second Counselor in the Sunday School General Presidency*

When Devin G. Durrant was called as the second counselor in the Sunday School general presidency, it’s possible many Church members flashed back to his glory days in a Brigham Young University basketball jersey.

Sports, of course, have played an important role in President Durrant’s life. He even spent a season competing in the NBA against the top players in the United States. But he’s been much more than a star athlete: a missionary in Madrid, Spain, a husband, a father, a grandfather, an author, a businessman, a faithful member, and the Texas Dallas Mission president for the past two and a half years.

President Durrant, born October 20, 1960, in Brigham City, Utah, says his childhood home played a pivotal role in preparing him for each of those life roles. His parents, George and Marilyn Durrant, were gifted teachers.

“Certainly, they taught through their words—but really, the great teachings that I experienced in the home were by watching them live their lives.”

President Durrant and his wife, Julie Mink Durrant, know well the importance of strong teachers in preparing future missionaries.

“[Future missionaries] are being well taught by their parents in the home and by their teachers at church and in excellent seminary and institute programs.”

The Sunday School program, he added, allows instructors and students of all ages “to teach in the Savior’s way.”

President and Sister Durrant were married in the Salt Lake Temple on April 23, 1983, and are the parents of six children and have six grandchildren.

Prior to his calling as a mission president, he served as a bishop, stake presidency counselor, stake Sunday School presidency member, and institute instructor.

He earned an undergraduate degree in American Studies from Brigham Young University and an MBA from the University of Utah. He is the owner of a real estate investment company. ■



*Growing Light*, by Elspeth Young

*In 1830, Isaac Morley let 12-year-old Mary Elizabeth Rollins borrow his brand-new copy of the Book of Mormon. As this was the only copy of the Book of Mormon in Kirtland, Ohio, at the time, newly baptized Mary Elizabeth and her family took turns reading it late into the night. Early the next morning, she opened the book again and memorized the beginning lines of 1 Nephi. The light in the painting symbolizes the light that flooded Mary Elizabeth as she read.*



“As we ponder the messages we have heard, may we resolve to do a little better than we have done in the past,” said President

Thomas S. Monson during the closing session of the 184th Annual General Conference of the Church. “May we be kind and loving to those who do not share our beliefs and our standards. The Savior brought to this earth a message of love and goodwill to all men and women. May we ever follow His example.”

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