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HELPING OTHERS FIND Faith in Christ

*I challenge you to help God’s children return to their
Christian faith and to the strong religious foundation that is
so essential for peace of mind and real happiness.*

Pope Benedict XVI, lamenting the weakening of Christian churches in Europe, Australia, and the United States, said, “There’s no longer evidence for a need of God, even less of Christ.” He added, “The so-called traditional churches look like they are dying.”¹

We have moved away from traditional worship. More people say they are spiritual rather than religious. If a teaching fits their lifestyle, they accept it and it becomes part of their faith. If it does not, they develop their own man-made faith. Faith and spirituality are now viewed as consumer products. Materialism has taken over and replaced God.

As Latter-day Saints, our voices must be heard in opposition to these dangerous trends designed to destroy the faith of mankind. The Book of Mormon warns us over and over about replacing our trust in God with things that do not last. Describing a time when many Nephites were drifting from their faith, Mormon states: “They grew proud, being lifted up in their hearts, because of their exceedingly great riches; therefore they grew rich in their own eyes, and would not give heed to [the prophets’] words, to walk uprightly before God” (Alma 45:24).

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As you see the weakening of Christian faith in society, your own faith must become more firm and sure. Helaman declares: “Remember that 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, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure

foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall” (Helaman 5:12).

Nephi reminds us:

“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 . . . [and] that life which is in Christ. . . .

“ . . . For the right way is to believe in Christ” (2 Nephi 25:26–28).

Do we have a foundation to support such a claim?

The Symbols of Christ's Sacrifice

The best-recorded fact in all history is the account of the birth and mission of the Lord Jesus Christ on the earth. His mission was prophesied from the days of our first parents. In the book of Moses we read:

“And Adam and Eve, his wife, called upon the name of the Lord, and they heard the voice of the Lord from the way toward the Garden of Eden, speaking unto them, and they saw him not; for they were shut out from his presence.

“And he gave unto them commandments, that they should worship the Lord their God, and should offer the firstlings of their flocks, for an offering unto the Lord. And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord.

“And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me.

“And then the angel spake, saying: This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth.

“Wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore” (Moses 5:4–8).

Thus, sacrifices were instituted on the earth as a gospel ordinance, to be practiced and performed by the authority of the priesthood, typifying the coming sacrifice of the Son of Man, who would give His life for the sins of the world.

The form of the ordinance was arranged to make specific the points of the Lord's sacrifice when He would come in the meridian of time. The later offering of the Passover, for instance, stipulated that a male lamb of the first year, without spot or blemish, be chosen as an offering. The blood was spilled and care was taken that no bones would be broken—all symbolic of the manner of the Savior's death.

It is amazing that the offering of sacrifice continued through all ages from Adam until the time of the Savior. Even though the children of Israel went through many periods of apostasy, the hope that the Only Begotten Son would atone for the sins of mankind and that His atoning blood would

make immortality possible remained in many hearts.

The offering of sacrifices generally ended as a practice after the Savior's Atonement. The sacrament was instituted to remind His followers that He had been to earth and had performed His earthly ministry. We read in Luke:

“And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

“Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:19–20).

Once again I am amazed that this reminder, even through dark periods of apostasy, was practiced in many forms and in many ways throughout generations until the time of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, when priesthood power was restored to earth to perform this sacred, saving ordinance.

Through all periods of recorded history we find the constant reminder of the mission of our Savior. He came to earth as one who had a dual citizenship—one of God and one of man. This enabled Him to perform His great ennobling sacrifice for all of us through His Atonement. Could there be any stronger proof that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world, than by studying and living His saving doctrines, which He has revealed throughout the dispensations of the world? He has given us His gospel to guide and direct us during our earthly sojourn.

The Gospel Is the Solution

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) said:

“The responsibility of showing to the world that the gospel of Jesus Christ will solve its problems rests upon the men who make the claim. . . . I believe, too, that every *world problem may be solved by obedience to the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

“The solution of the great world problems is here in the Church of Jesus Christ. Ample provision is made not only for the needs of individuals, but also for the nation and groups of nations. . . . I grant that we may seem to

be arrogating to ourselves superior wisdom, but we are not. It is simply the application of God's plan to the world problems. You who hold the priesthood have greater responsibility today, now that you live in this creative moment in the world's history, than ever the Church has had before. I repeat it. If we make the claim to hold the truth, it is obligatory upon every Latter-day Saint so to live, that when the people of the world come, in answer to the call, to test the fruit of the tree, they will find it wholesome and good."²

The great message we carry to the world is that the gospel of our Lord and Savior has been restored to the earth. His Church is again on the earth with the power and glory of the holy priesthood.

To those so ordained is given power to act for Him as His agents to bring the doctrines, ordinances, principles, and powers to bind on earth as will be done in the heavens. This is the Savior's Church. He directs the affairs of His Church through His chosen prophets. His prophets in turn teach the gospel to others and testify of Jesus as our Savior and Redeemer. This day and age is the dispensation of the fulness of times, which has been spoken of by the prophets from the beginning of time. It is the time of fulfillment of all that has been spoken of by the Lord's prophets and recorded in the holy scriptures. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not a new church but the restored Church to the world in this day and age.

You are the generation the Lord has saved for this day. You came out of the waters of baptism with a covenant and a promise to the Lord to represent Him in helping people throw off their worldly ways and return to the blessings promised us if we would follow Him and live His gospel. You can help your Heavenly Father's children return to their Christian foundation, develop faith in Him, and return to His ways.

What You Can Do

You may ask, "What can I do?" Some months ago our stake president, speaking in sacrament meeting,

suggested four things we could do to bring others back to their Christian faith:

1. Pray daily.

President Thomas S. Monson has said: "To those within the sound of my voice who are struggling with challenges and difficulties large and small, prayer is the provider of spiritual strength. . . . Prayer is the means by which we approach our Father in Heaven, who loves us. Speak to Him in prayer and then listen for the answer. Miracles are wrought through prayer. . . . Remember to pray fervently."³

Hold your daily prayers and help others return to their Christian faith by encouraging them to get on their knees and pray to God.

2. Study the scriptures daily.

Could there be any stronger witness of Jesus Christ than the testimonies we find in the Book of Mormon? Of its 239 chapters, 233 mention the Savior.⁴ Isn't that amazing?

Be certain you have daily scripture study. Then help others return to their Christian faith by encouraging them to also study the scriptures daily.

3. Remain worthy to attend the temple.

Some of you have been to the temple; others have not. It is well to understand what is required to obtain a temple recommend. We understand clearly the process by which we go to a judge in Israel and confirm to him our worthiness to hold a temple recommend and then live by the standards required to keep that recommend.

Live in such a way that your righteous example will demonstrate how to be worthy of temple blessings.

4. Give daily acts of service.

Remember the words of King Benjamin: "And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiah 2:17). The Lord literally answers our prayers through the service we give to others.



Be an example of Christlike service, and help others return to their Christian faith by encouraging them to serve others.

Rise to a New Sense of Commitment

I know that God lives. I know that we are all His children and that He loves us. I know that He sent His Son to the world to be the atoning sacrifice for all mankind. I know that those who embrace His gospel and follow Him will enjoy eternal life, the greatest of all the gifts of God. I know that the Savior directed the Restoration of the gospel on earth through the ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith. I know that the only lasting joy and happiness we will ever find during our mortal experience will come by following Jesus Christ, obeying His law, and keeping His commandments.

I challenge you to rise to a new sense of commitment. I challenge you to help God's children return to their Christian faith and to the strong religious foundation that is so essential for peace of mind and real happiness in this period of mortal probation.

May God bless you with the courage, boldness, enthusiasm, and desire to restore faith in the gospel of our Lord and Savior. ■
From a Church Educational System fireside address, "We Were the Greatest Generation," delivered at Brigham Young University on March 6, 2011. For the full address, go to cesdevotionals.lds.org.

NOTES

1. Pope Benedict XVI, in Noelle Knox, "Religion Takes a Back Seat in Western Europe," *USA Today*, Aug. 10, 2005; usatoday.com/news/world/2005-08-10-europe-religion-cover_x.htm.
2. David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals* (1953), 5; emphasis in original.
3. Thomas S. Monson, "Be Your Best Self," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 68, 69.
4. See Robert J. Matthews, in *The Book of Mormon: The Keystone Scripture*, ed. Paul R. Cheesman and others (1988), 33.

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