

# It's True, Isn't It? Then What Else Matters?

ELDER NEIL L. ANDERSEN

Of the Presidency of the Seventy

*Our conviction of the Savior and His latter-day work becomes the powerful lens through which we judge all else.*



**I** take as my subject today something President Hinckley said in general conference in April of 1973.

I had just returned home from my mission. So much seemed ahead of me. Would I be able to consistently make the right choices throughout my life?

Then-Elder Gordon B. Hinckley spoke of meeting a young naval officer from Asia. The officer had not been a Christian, but during training in the United States, he had learned about the Church and was baptized.

He was now preparing to return to his native land.

President Hinckley asked the officer: “Your people are not Christians. What will happen when you return home a Christian, and, more particularly, a Mormon Christian?”

The officer’s face clouded, and he replied: “My family will be disappointed. . . . As for my future and my career, all opportunity may be foreclosed against me.”

President Hinckley asked, “Are you willing to pay so great a price for the gospel?”

With his dark eyes moistened by tears, he answered with a question: “It’s true, isn’t it?”

President Hinckley responded, “Yes, it is true.”

To which the officer replied, “Then what else matters?”<sup>1</sup>

Through the years, I have reflected on these words: “It’s true, isn’t it? Then what else matters?” These questions have helped me put difficult issues in proper perspective.

The cause in which we are laboring is true. We respect the beliefs of our friends and neighbors. We are all sons and daughters of God. We can learn much from other men and women of

faith and goodness, as President Faust taught us so well.

Yet we know that Jesus is the Christ. He is resurrected. In our day, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the priesthood of God has been restored. We have the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Book of Mormon is what we claim it to be. The promises of the temple are certain. The Lord Himself has declared the unique and singular mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to be “a light to the world” and “a messenger . . . to prepare the way before [Him]”<sup>2</sup> even as “the gospel roll[s] forth unto the ends of the earth.”<sup>3</sup>

It’s true, isn’t it? Then what else matters?

Of course, for all of us, there *are* other things that matter. When I heard President Hinckley’s talk as a 21-year-old, I needed to be serious about my studies; I needed employment to keep me in school; somehow I had to figure out how to convince a special young lady that she should take a chance on me; and I enjoyed other worthy activities.

How do we find our way through the many things that matter? We simplify and purify our perspective. Some things are evil and must be avoided; some things are nice; some things are important; and some things are absolutely essential. The Savior said, “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”<sup>4</sup>

Faith is not only a feeling; it is a decision. With prayer, study, obedience, and covenants, we build and fortify our faith. Our conviction of the Savior and His latter-day work becomes the powerful lens through which we judge all else. Then, as we find ourselves in the crucible of life, as Elder Oaks explained, we have the strength to take the right course.

President Hinckley said it this way: “When [an individual] is motivated by great and powerful convictions of

truth, then he disciplines himself, not because of demands made by the Church but because of the knowledge within his heart.”<sup>5</sup>

Are we sufficiently motivated by “great and powerful convictions of truth”? Do our choices reflect this motivation? Are we becoming who we want to become? It’s true, isn’t it? Then what else matters?

We know what is right. A few years ago my wife, Kathy, was with our grandchildren while their parents were away. Our four-year-old grandson gave his little brother a strong push. After consoling the crying child, she turned to the four-year-old and thoughtfully asked, “Why would you push your little brother?” He looked at his grandmother and responded, “Mimi, I’m sorry. I lost my CTR ring, and I cannot choose the right.” We need to be careful because excuses can impede our progress.

“Great and powerful convictions of truth” are found in the hearts of Latter-day Saints in nations across the world. This strength of faith carries the work of the kingdom forward.

Many years ago my wife and I stood by a courageous sister in France as her husband, still in his 30s, passed through the veil. The responsibility to righteously teach and guide her four young children alone seemed overwhelming. Yet 16 years later, her three sons have returned from missions, and her daughter is sealed in the temple.

I know a brother in Brazil who joined the Church as a 16-year-old, the only member in his family. When it was time for his mission, his parents objected. He heard nothing from them during his mission and returned home to his bishop’s house. The story, however, has a happy ending as he now has a beautiful family, works as a dental surgeon, and his parents wish he could interest his brothers in the Church.

I know a brother in a Latin American



country who, after his baptism, determined he would not only be honest in his tithing but would also fully pay his taxes, something his competitors did not do. The Lord blessed him for his honesty.

Many sacrifices are quietly accomplished: returned missionaries not delaying the responsibility of finding their eternal companion; righteous women desiring children and investing their lives in rearing them in love and truth; families carefully restricting the media and Internet influences that would tarnish their spirits; husbands and wives finding more time to be in the temple together.

Children can also develop this lens of faith. I recently met youth in Seoul, Korea, who, because of a rigorous school schedule, do not arrive home until very late each night yet attend early-morning seminary at 6:00 a.m. five days a week. I know an eight-year-

old baseball player, a star of the team, who on his own explained to his coach that he could not participate in the final playoff game because it was to be held on Sunday.

Many of the quiet acts of deep faith are known only to God. But they are recorded in heaven. It’s true, isn’t it? Then what else matters?

The Savior said, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”<sup>6</sup>

I testify that it is true and that it does matter. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. “It’s True, Isn’t It?” *Tambuli*, Oct. 1993, 4; *Ensign*, July 1993, 2; see “The True Strength of the Church,” *Ensign*, July 1973, 48.
2. D&C 45:9.
3. D&C 65:2.
4. John 17:3.
5. *Tambuli*, Oct. 1993, 4; *Ensign*, July 1973, 49.
6. Matthew 6:33.