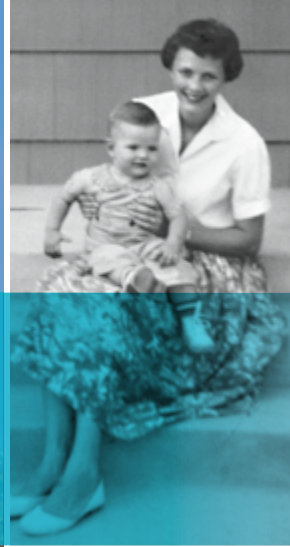




ANSWERS WILL COME

Elder Stevenson, a new member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, knows that patience and hard work enable us to see God's hand in all things.



“The Japan Fukuoka Mission! I knew the call came from God, but how was I ever going to learn the language?” That question ran through the heart of Gary E. Stevenson, who was in his first year of college when he received his mission call.

“I felt anxious about learning Japanese,” he recalls. “And my concern continued to mount in the missionary training center. I knew I would have to rely on the Lord, and I hoped I could be equal to the challenge.”

After about six weeks, fervent prayer and diligent study led the young elder to a sense of peace that the Lord would bless him to learn Japanese—but not without hard work. “This taught me that the gift of tongues is like faith and works and other gospel principles,” he says. “After you have done all you can do, *then* you are endowed with the blessing.”

With time and effort, his language ability increased. He served faithfully, learned to communicate well, and developed a love for the culture and the people. Today he sees many reasons why he was called to serve in Asia and to learn Japanese.

ANCHORED IN THE GOSPEL

Gary Evan Stevenson was born on August 6, 1955, and raised in Cache Valley, Utah, USA. One of four children, he says, “My mother and father anchored our home in the teachings of the gospel. It was the foundation of our lives.”

The children also learned to work and to do so without complaining. Elder Stevenson recalls, “I remember my father saying more than once, ‘Don’t you realize a shovel isn’t something to lean on?’”

As an Aaronic Priesthood bearer, young Gary regularly joined with quorum members to assist the widows in the ward. His father was the bishop, and Gary often accompanied him on visits to the widows. “I always felt good afterward because we had helped someone,” he remembers.

FAITH AND WORK GO TOGETHER

After his mission, Gary met Lesa Jean Higley during an Old Testament class at the Logan Utah Institute of Religion at Utah State University. “She is the sunshine in and of my life,” he says. They were married in the Idaho Falls Idaho Temple in 1979 and became the parents of four sons: Craig, Bryan, Brett, and Kyle. The family shares a love for outdoor activities and water sports.



As a university student, Gary also developed a passion for Church history, studying the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants and delving into historic journals and family histories. He took particular interest in Joseph Smith and his family, the Whitmer family, Oliver Cowdery, and Martin Harris. He researched the translation and publication of the various editions of the Book of Mormon.

Once again he learned that faith and hard work go hand in hand. “Every answer to every gospel question does not come immediately,” he counsels. “The Lord expects us to read, study, ponder, and pray. And when we do this with faith and a righteous desire, over time a sweet witness will come.”

While at the university, Gary and two lifelong friends started selling gift accessories imported from Asia. This evolved into a business that sold fitness products and that eventually employed more than 2,500 people. Gary continued using his language skills, and his business required regular travel to Asia, which he now refers to as his “second home.”

CONTINUED SERVICE

In 2004, Elder Stevenson was called as president of the Japan Nagoya Mission. In 2008, he was called to the

Seventy and assigned to the Asia North Area Presidency. In March 2011, an earthquake and tsunami struck Japan, killing 20,000, displacing thousands, and destroying 550,000 homes. Elder Stevenson, as Area President, worked closely with local priesthood leaders and community officials to provide help and comfort. “Over and over again our hearts were touched as we witnessed the healing balm of our Savior’s love,” he says.

Called as Presiding Bishop in 2012, he continued to “succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees” (D&C 81:5).

Then, just before the October 2015 general conference, President Thomas S. Monson extended a call from the Lord to Gary E. Stevenson to serve in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Elder Stevenson felt overwhelmed, but President Monson calmly told him: “The Lord will qualify those whom He calls.”¹ And because Elder Stevenson has learned to see the hand of the Lord in all things, he is prepared to be a “special [witness] of the name of Christ in all the world” (D&C 107:23). **NE**

NOTE

1. Gary E. Stevenson, “Plain and Precious Truths,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 91.

FAMILY PHOTOS: COURTESY OF ELDER STEVENSON; PHOTOGRAPH OF FUKUOKA BY THINKSTOCK; FROM LEFT: FUKUOKA, JAPAN, WHERE HE SERVED A MISSION, 1974-1976; WITH HIS MOTHER, JEAN HALL STEVENSON, 1957; AS PRESIDING BISHOP, 2015; WITH CHILDREN IN ZIMBABWE, 2014; AS A NEW APOSTLE, OCTOBER 3, 2015; AT DESERT INDUSTRIES AS PRESIDING BISHOP, 2013; WITH HIS WIFE, LESA, JEAN HIGLEY, 2011; AS A YOUNG FATHER, 1996; ON HIS WEDDING DAY, APRIL 20, 1979; AT THE IDAHO FALLS IDAHO TEMPLE; WITH HIS FATHER, EVANN N. STEVENSON, 1966; AS A MISSIONARY, 1975.