



THE WORLD IS A GREAT PLACE

YES, WE FACE CHALLENGES TODAY. BUT LOTS OF THINGS ARE LOOKING UP TOO.

By Hadley Griggs

Do you sometimes feel afraid of growing up in today's world? We hear all the time that the world is getting worse, that it's never been more dangerous, more corrupt, or more immoral. It may get to the point that it feels hard to enjoy life.

If you start to feel like that—*stop it right now!* President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, explained in the April 2017 general conference that it's Satan who wants to get us “dwelling upon and even exaggerating the evil in the world.”

He also said, “The corruption and wickedness in our day are unique and alarming. But in spite of all this, I wouldn't trade living in this time with any other time in the history of the world. We are blessed beyond measure to live in a day of unparalleled prosperity, enlightenment, and advantage. Most of all, we are blessed to have the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”¹

So while it's true that we face unique challenges today, this world is still a great place—and getting better in many ways! Don't believe it? Check out this list.



The world is more educated than ever before, and literacy worldwide has risen from 12% in 1820 to 83% today.²



In 2016, the Book of Mormon was voted as the fourth most influential book from America.³



For the first time ever, less than 10% of the world is living in extreme poverty.⁴



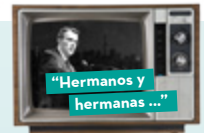
Most countries' forests have more trees now than they did 30 years ago, and there are an estimated 3.04 trillion trees on the earth today—that's 422 trees for every one person. (But we still need more. Keep planting!)⁵



LDS.org, which debuted in 1996, now gets over 25 million visits every month.⁶



Teen birthrates in America are at an all-time low.⁷



In 1961, general conference was interpreted into four languages: Dutch, German, Samoan, and Spanish. Now, general conference (or portions thereof) are interpreted into 93 languages!⁸



Violent crimes are declining worldwide.⁹



Between 15,000 and 18,000 new plant and animal species are discovered each year—from Moroccan cartwheeling spiders to New York City frogs!¹⁰



The Book of Mormon has now been translated into 111 languages.¹¹



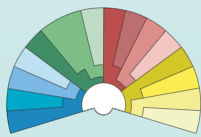
In 1965, almost half of all Americans smoked cigarettes; now it's down to just 15%.¹²



In 2015, the world gave \$28 billion in humanitarian efforts—the highest ever recorded.¹³



From 1950 to 1990, life expectancy increased by three years per decade worldwide; since 2000, it's increased by five years.¹⁴



Genealogy is a very popular hobby online.¹⁵



Renewable energy now accounts for almost 22% of the world's electricity production.¹⁶



The Church now has at least 6,066 satellite dishes installed in Church buildings in 83 countries for showing broadcasts like general conference and firesides.¹⁷



The divorce rate in the USA is the lowest it's been in 40 years.¹⁸



In the April 2017 general conference, 5 new LDS temples were announced. That brings the total of dedicated, under construction, or announced temples to 182!¹⁹

THINGS ARE PRETTY AMAZING

So the next time you start to feel a little overwhelmed, remember that the world *is* a great place—and with your help, it can be even better. Keep in mind the words of President Thomas S. Monson: “Fear not. Be of good cheer. The future is as bright as your faith.”²⁰ **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Perfect Love Casteth Out Fear,” Apr. 2017 general conference.
2. See ourworldindata.org/global-rise-of-education; ourworldindata.org/literacy.
3. See lds.org/church/news/elder-d-todd-christofferson-speaks-of-the-book-of-mormon-at-library-of-congress.
4. See worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/10/04/world-bank-forecasts-global-poverty-to-fall-below-10-for-first-time-major-hurdles-remain-in-goal-to-end-poverty-by-2030.
5. See journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0019577; cnn.com/2015/09/04/world/trees-earth-three-trillion-study-feat.
6. See lds.org/church/news/ldsorg-improvements-make-site-more-user-friendly.
7. See cdc.gov/media/releases/2016/p0428-teen-birth-rates.html.
8. See mormonnewsroom.org/article/general-conference-interpretation-fact-sheet.
9. See slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/foreigners/2014/12/the_world_is_not_falling_apart_the_trend_lines_reveal_an_increasingly_peaceful.html.
10. See atlasobscura.com/articles/new-animal-species.
11. See lds.org/church/news/celebration-commemorates-translation-of-the-book-of-mormon-into-nepali.
12. See cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6544a2.htm?s_cid=mm6544a2_w.
13. See globalhumanitarianassistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/GHA-report-2016-full-report.pdf.
14. See who.int/gho/publications/world_health_statistics/2016/EN_WHS2016_Chapter3.pdf?ua=1.
15. See usatoday.com/story/opinion/article/genealogy-americans-technology-roots-porn-websites-column/9019409.
16. See iea.org/about/faqs/renewableenergy.
17. See mormonnewsroom.org/article/technology-used-by-church-from-early-years.
18. See bgsu.edu/ncfmr/resources/data/family-profiles/anderson-divorce-rate-us-geo-2015-fp-16-21.html.
19. See lds.org/church/temples/find-a-temple.
20. Thomas S. Monson, “Be of Good Cheer,” Apr. 2009 general conference.

DO IT RIGHT

Even the Apostles, as youth, sometimes felt like “everything around [them was coming] apart.” When President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, was 17, the United States joined World War II. When he heard the news, he thought, “The end of the world is going to come before I get to where I should be” (Oct. 2011 general conference).

His counsel to us? Don’t think that way! “You can look forward to doing it right—getting married, having a family, seeing your children and grandchildren, maybe even great-grandchildren.” For more, check out the video “Enemy Territory” on youth.lds.org.

