

Asia Area Local Pages

ASIA AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Holding a Current Temple Recommend—Our Duty

Elder Victor Chen of the Seventy

During one of our recent Sunday ward priesthood meetings, our bishop invited all the priesthood bearers to learn of our duties. I believe his wise counsel includes understanding our priesthood responsibilities, seeking personal revelation by studying the scriptures and the teachings of latter-day prophets, and studying instructions from the handbooks.

As I think of our bishop's invitation to learn of our duties, I am reminded of the revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith in Doctrine and Covenants section 107 in the year 1835. We read in this revelation on priesthood the importance of learning our duties. In the revelation, priesthood holders are commanded to magnify their callings by serving diligently. They are to lift, strengthen and nurture convictions of righteousness in the lives of those for whom they have responsibility. The Lord has commanded, "Let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence."¹ Though this commandment was given specifically to priesthood holders, I truly believe this commandment to learn our duty and to act accordingly applies to all members of the Church.

Duty of the Members of the Church

As members of the Church, we have many duties to perform—some are routine and others are more important and meaningful. Elder Claudio R. M. Costa of the Seventy quoted President Gordon B. Hinckley's teaching to the priesthood holders in the June 21, 2003, worldwide leadership training

meeting on our fourfold responsibility: "Each of us has a fourfold responsibility. First, we have a responsibility to our families. Second, we have a responsibility to our employers. Third, we have a responsibility to the Lord's work. Fourth, we have a responsibility to ourselves."²

We also have other important duties, such as daily striving to be Christlike by setting good examples and seeking opportunities to help others each day. We can do this with an encouraging word, a compliment or by any simple act of kindness. We are reminded that doing our duty to God is not only a very serious responsibility but also a remarkable privilege. One of our many important duties as adults is to hold a current temple recommend and to visit the temple often where time and circumstances permit.

President Thomas S. Monson reminded us about the importance of holding a current temple recommend and visiting the temple often during last April general conference when he said, "If you have not yet been to the temple or if you have been but currently do not qualify for a recommend, there is no more important goal for you to work toward than being worthy to go to the temple. Your sacrifice may be bringing your life into compliance with what is required to receive a recommend, perhaps by forsaking long-held habits which disqualify you.



**Elder Victor
Chen**

It may be having the faith and the discipline to pay your tithing. Whatever it is, qualify to enter the temple of God. Secure a temple recommend and regard it as a precious possession, for such it is.”³

There are many reasons why members may not be renewing their temple recommends. In many cases, some of the members forget to renew their expired temple recommends. Some do not renew their temple recommends due to the lack of understanding of the doctrine, blessings and importance of temple ordinances and having a temple recommend. There may be some who may be struggling with commandments such as tithing, the Word of Wisdom, not attending priesthood and sacrament meetings, etc. There may be some who may feel that they live far from the temple and may have no opportunity to go so they don’t see a need to renew their temple recommends.

I remembered a story shared by Anne J. Pingree on how faithful African Saints understand that holding a current temple recommend pleases the Lord. She related how she and her husband had to travel to remote locations to conduct temple recommend interviews with members in southeastern Nigeria during their mission. Some of these members lived about 5,000 kilometers away from the nearest temple in Johannesburg, South Africa. Many of them had been Church members for less than two years. These members knew the appointed day each month that President and Sister Pingree would come to their district for the interview, but no one knew the exact time they would arrive. Making phone calls was not possible, because telephones were rare in West Africa then. The committed African Saints would come early in the morning, and many would have to wait the whole day for the temple recommend interview, knowing that they would probably never have the privilege of using

the recommend. Sister Pingree said that these faithful Nigerian Saints believed in the counsel of President Howard W. Hunter: “It would please the Lord for every adult member to be worthy of—and to carry—a current temple recommend, even if proximity to a temple does not allow immediate or frequent use of it.”⁴

Duty of Priesthood Leaders and Ward Council Members

Priesthood leaders and all other members of the ward council have the duty to lovingly encourage every endowed man and woman without a current temple recommend to qualify for a renewed recommend, and to use it regularly if they are living close to a temple. They are to teach, counsel, and train the members and their families, so that they will live worthily to hold a current temple recommend and to go into the house of the Lord to receive these ordinances and blessings that lead to family exaltation. In addition, they should be encouraged and counseled to return often to the temple for the spiritual uplift such temple attendance will give those who attend. When we return to the temple to perform vicarious work for others, we receive a renewal of spiritual strengthening which brings us closer to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I know that as leaders, we have a sacred duty to God to help lift, strengthen and bless the lives of the members. I am reminded of what President John Taylor (1808–87) taught regarding the importance of performing our duties as leaders. He said, “If you do not magnify your callings, God will hold you responsible for those whom you might have saved had you done your duty.”⁵ I know that our Heavenly Father will help us if we prayerfully seek His guidance and inspiration as we magnify our callings in fulfilling our sacred duty.

I am grateful for holy temples and to know that families can be together forever. I am grateful for the Atonement of Jesus Christ, who makes temple blessings available to all of us. May we live worthily to have a current temple recommend and return to the temple as often as our circumstances permit. May we give our kindred dead the opportunity to receive the ordinances of exaltation. May we enjoy the spiritual strength and the revelation we receive as we attend the temple regularly. May we remain faithful in making and keeping temple

covenants to receive the full blessings of the Atonement. May we follow the wise counsel of my bishop and all our leaders to seek to learn and to do our duty well. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 107:99.
2. Claudio R. M. Costa, "Priesthood Responsibilities," *Liahona*, May 2009, 56–58.
3. Thomas S. Monson, "The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World," *Liahona*, May 2011, 93.
4. Anne C. Pingree, "Seeing the Promises Afar Off", *Liahona*, November 2003, 13–15.
5. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: John Taylor* (2001), 164.

LATTER-DAY VOICES

Act in All Diligence: Bangalore Third Branch Elders Quorum Service Project

Bangalore Third Branch Presidency

“Our lives of service and sacrifice are the most appropriate expressions of our commitment to serve the Master and our fellowmen”—Elder Dallin H. Oaks

Service is not an activity, but is intrinsic to the faith. Elder Stephen L Richards explains that a quorum is three things: first, a class; second, a fraternity; and third, a service unit. The elders quorum has a mandate to serve and lift people in need. The Bangalore Third Branch elders quorum service project was coordinated by the

elders quorum presidency and Raja Doraiswamy. The invitation to participate was extended by the elders quorum presidency to all the helping hands willing to volunteer for a service project, a service project to cheer up children suffering from cancer and also to clean up their ward, which is now their home.

The spirit of brotherhood and love was felt in the early morning hours of Friday, 6 April 2012, as the men of the Bangalore Third Branch gathered at the meetinghouse. The

elders quorum presidency member, Brother Prince, introduced the activity with a presentation of videos and talks. The elders quorum president, President David, quoted President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, when he spoke about service. He said, “Preaching is fine, but sermons that do not lead to action are like fires without heat or water that cannot quench thirst” (“The Why of Priesthood Service,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2012, 60). The introduction helped everyone understand the meaning, purpose and need of service. The elders quorum presidency’s presentation gave a sense of direction to the activity.

The group of priesthood

Members of the elders quorum of the Bangalore Third Branch serve in the Kidwai cancer hospital, Bangalore.



PHOTOGRAPH BY RAJAKUMAR PITCHHIKA

brethren set out to the Kidwai Hospital Paediatric Ward. The men and young men were divided into two groups: first, a group to play with and cheer up the children suffering from cancer; and second, a group to tidy up the premises.

The first group went into the ward to meet the anxiously waiting children. The children were full of energy and enthusiasm. Among them were some children with a comic sense of humour, some smart, some keen to learn and some witty. The priesthood brothers had planned to play some fun games. The first activity was an action song, “The Boogie-Woogie.” The children

laughed away as they saw all the brothers jig and dance to the lyrics. Among the children was one boy named Bheema, the name of a mythological character, a man known for his physical strength. This boy, like his namesake, was both strong and intelligent. The next activity was “dumb charade.” The children did not take much time to guess the animal from the actions of the priesthood brothers. Bheema wanted to enact a character for the other children to guess; the character given to him was “The Lion.” Bheema made a ferocious lion!

As the first group of brothers were keeping the children

engaged in interesting games and activities, the second group were toiling hard to clear the garbage and dirt from the children’s play area. Brother Van-Wellen and President Nithya used their mechanical skills to repair the seat on the swing. Elder Mattes had a young assistant to help him in watering the dry earth and in cleaning. Brother Devaraju showed how the grass needs to be cut, and he and some other brothers cleared lot of wild plants grown in the backyard of the ward. The backyard was now clean and fit to be used to dry clothes on the line without the shrubs and plants underneath. Elder Sampara,

Elder Kant, Elder Massey and Brother Vidhyadhar filled bags with dirt, dried leaves and debris removed from the play area.

The elders quorum presidency had also requested that everyone bring some fruits for the children, and many brethren of the quorum did bring packets of fruits.

The children had to retire to their beds for their midday siesta and rest. The children clapped and thanked all the priesthood brothers for the good time they had. The fruits were distributed among the children, who received the packets with smiles on their faces. The smile and joy of these little ones brought a sense of happiness and contentment to everyone's hearts. These tender moments reminded us of President Henry B. Eyring's quote: "The more faithful service you give, the more the Lord asks of you. Your smile is a happy one because you know that He increases our power to carry the heavier load."

The day of activity was drawing to a close as we gathered for a photo with the teachers, helpers and doctors of the ward. The day was meaningful as everyone served with love, and the investment of time brought a blessing of joy and contentment. ■

Let Every Man Learn His Duty

**Victor Vinod, Branch President,
West Marredpally Second Branch**

I would like to use a story concerning trust, honor, and duty which was narrated by President Thomas S. Monson at one of the general conferences to help us remember our duty.

[Young] Rupert stood by the side of the road watching an unusual number of people hurry past. At length he recognized a friend. "Where are all of you going in such a hurry?" he asked.

The friend paused and said, "The King has lost his royal emerald! . . . Everyone is searching, for the king has offered a reward to the one who finds it. Come, we must hurry."

"But I cannot go without asking Grandmother," faltered Rupert.

"Then I cannot wait. I want to find the emerald," replied his friend.

Rupert hurried back to the cabin at the edge of the woods to seek his grandmother's permission.

But his grandmother shook her head. "What would the sheep do?" she asked. "Already they are restless in the pen, waiting to be taken to the pasture, and please do not forget to take them to



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF PRESIDENT VINOD

**Victor Vinod, West Marredpally
Second Branch President**

water when the sun shines high in the heavens."

Sorrowfully, Rupert took the sheep to the pasture, and at noon he led them to the brook in the woods. There he sat on a large stone by the stream. "If I could only have had a chance to look for the King's emerald!" he thought. Turning his head to gaze down at the sandy bottom of the brook, suddenly he stared into the water. "What was it? It could not be!" He leaped into the water. . . . "The King's emerald!" he shouted.

With shining eyes Rupert ran to his grandmother's hut to tell her of his great find. "Bless

you, my boy” she said, “But you never would have found it if you had not been doing your duty, herding the sheep.” And Rupert knew that this was the truth.

The lesson to be learned from this story is found in the familiar couplet: “Do [your] duty; that is best; Leave unto [the] Lord the rest!”

Let us learn our duties. Let us ever be worthy to perform those duties and, in so doing, follow in the footsteps of the Master. When to Him came the call of duty, He answered, “Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever” (Moses 4:2). May we do likewise. (See “True to Our Priesthood Trust,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 56.)

The priesthood is usually simply defined as “the power of God delegated to man.” President Thomas S. Monson, President of the Church, has described the priesthood as “the perfect plan and . . . an instrument of service . . . and the man who fails to use it is apt to lose it, for we are told by revelation that he who neglects it shall not be counted worthy” (“To Learn, to Do, to Be,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 62).

President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973), the eleventh President of the Church, said, “When one

becomes a holder of the priesthood, he becomes an agent of the Lord. He should think of his calling as though he were on the Lord’s errand” (*Stand Ye in Holy Places* (1974), 255; quoted in “To Learn, to Do, to Be,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 62).

Whenever we feel shy and consider that we are inadequate to respond to a calling, remember that this work is not yours and mine alone. It is the Lord’s work, and when we are on the Lord’s errand, we are entitled to the Lord’s help. Remember that the Lord will shape the back to bear the burden placed upon it.

Each one of us has a calling to serve, to put forth our best efforts in the work assigned to us. No assignment is menial in the work of the Lord, for each has eternal consequences. President John Taylor (1808–87) warned us, “If you do not magnify your callings, God will hold you responsible for those whom you might have saved had you done your duty” (“Discourse,” *Deseret News*, Aug. 7, 1878, 2; quoted in “To Learn, to Do, to Be,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 62). And who of us can afford to be responsible for the delay of eternal life of a human soul? If great joy is the reward of saving one soul, then

how terrible must be the remorse of those whose timid efforts have allowed a child of God to go unwarned or unaided so that he has to wait till a dependable servant of God comes along.

The old adage is ever true: “Do your duty, that is best; leave unto the Lord the rest.”

The Apostle Paul said in the book of Timothy: “Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).

I would urge everybody to pray concerning our assignments and to seek divine help so that we might be successful in accomplishing that which we are called to do. By so doing, the blessings of heaven will attend. We will know that we are not alone. He who notes the sparrow’s fall will, in His own way, acknowledge us.

I want to bear my testimony that we as priesthood holders are on the Lord’s errand. We are engaged in the work of our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, and this is true. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord’s Church on this earth. May we magnify the callings that we have been called, is my humble prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

The Uncomparable Blessings of the Sacrament

**Muniswamy Arumugam, Branch President,
Kolar Gold Fields Branch, Bangalore India
District**

As we sing the sacrament hymn, participate in the sacrament prayers, and partake of the emblems of the Savior's flesh and blood, we prayerfully seek forgiveness for our sins and shortcomings. We think about the promises we made and kept during the previous week and make specific personal commitments to follow the Savior during the coming week.

Parents and leaders, you can help youth

*President
Muniswamy
Arumugam and
his family enjoy
the blessings of
the gospel.*

experience the uncomparable blessings of the sacrament by providing special opportunities for them to study, discuss, and discover the relevance of the Atonement in their lives. Let them search the scriptures for themselves and teach one another from their own experiences.

Fathers, priesthood leaders, and quorum presidencies have a special responsibility to help Aaronic Priesthood holders earnestly prepare to perform their sacred sacrament duties. This preparation is made throughout the week by living gospel standards. When young men prepare, bless, and pass the sacrament in worthiness and reverence, they literally follow the example of the Savior at the Last Supper and become like Him.

I testify that the sacrament gives us an opportunity to come to ourselves and experience “a



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF PRESIDENT MUNISWAMY ARUMUGAM

mighty change” of heart to remember who we are and what we most desire. As we renew the covenant to keep the commandments, we obtain the companionship of the Holy Ghost to lead us back into our Heavenly Father’s presence. No wonder we are commanded to “meet together oft to partake of the bread and water” and to partake of the sacrament to our souls.

Our desire to return to our Heavenly Father increases as we, in addition to taking the sacrament, become worthy to obtain a temple recommend. We become worthy by steadily and steadfastly obeying the commandments. This obedience begins in childhood and intensifies through experiences in the Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women during the years of preparation. Then, hopefully, priests and Laurels set goals and specifically prepare themselves to be endowed and sealed in the temple.

When I joined this Church, by the time I had been ordained as a priest, I had seen so many experiences and so many blessings which I can’t explain in my words. After a couple of days I was called as first counselor in the home group. After that I have been called for several callings.

By the grace of our Savior, my family and I had the privilege to attend the Hong Kong China Temple.

Not only that, we have seen so many blessings. One of my daughters is on her mission now. I’m so grateful to my Heavenly Father for helping me to learn and fulfill my duty as a branch president.

I testify that my Heavenly Father lives and loves me, and I know Jesus is the only one who died for my sins. I know that Joseph Smith is the true prophet who restored this true church. I know what I have shared is true, and I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

Exercising Our Priesthood Helps Us Remain Worthy

Michael Johnson J., teachers quorum president, KGF Branch, Bangalore India District

As I come early to church and prepare the sacrament, the Spirit overwhelms me. As I exercise my priesthood, the bond or the relationship with my Father in Heaven and me has grown stronger. He guides me through all my afflictions.

By exercising the priesthood and learning our duties, we are accounted as worthy in the last days. I testify to you that through Joseph Smith the Church was restored, and the priesthood keys were given to him. I have a strong testimony of the Savior and His teachings. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MICHAEL JOHNSON J.

Michael Johnson J. finds strength in exercising his priesthood.