

ASIA AREA LOCAL PAGES

ASIA AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Rescuing the Less Active

By **Elder Larry Y. Wilson of the Seventy**

Second Counselor in the Asia Area Presidency

Some people join the Church and participate for a period of time but reach a point where they do not continue down the gospel path. There are a variety of reasons why this happens. Sometimes they are offended by something someone says or does. In other cases, old habits return and they are embarrassed about not living by gospel standards. In some situations, they encounter conflicts with work and fall out of the habit of attending church. There are many other reasons why people become less active.

Most of us know someone who has travelled this road. The Lord had these people in mind when He told His parable of the lost sheep. In this parable, the Lord made it clear that He left the ninety and nine in order to rescue the one sheep that was lost.¹ He has asked us to do the same.

We have heard this theme from President Thomas S. Monson throughout his ministry. Not long ago he said: “Throughout my years as a General Authority I have emphasized a need for the ‘rescue’ of our brothers and sisters from many different situations which may be depriving them of all the blessings the gospel can provide. Since becoming President of the Church I have felt an increased urgency for us to be engaged in this rescue effort. As faithful members of the Church have reached out with love and understanding, many have returned to full activity and are enjoying added blessings in their lives. There is yet much to do in this regard, and I encourage all to continue to reach out to rescue. Said the Lord, ‘When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren’” (Luke 22:32).²

This process of rescuing occurred with my own parents. It was through the efforts of a good home teacher and other loving members that my parents were brought back into full activity in the Church. As I talk to members of the Church in various parts of the world, I invariably discover many who have been “rescued” in the same way that my parents were. Someone had the courage and made the effort to reach out to them.

As a teenage boy I had the opportunity to observe how to rescue someone as I served as my father’s home teaching companion. We were assigned to a less-active family in our ward. It had been many years since they had come to church. I remember how cold the reception was when we first visited them. At some point during the visit, my father saw the vegetable garden they had in their back yard and asked what they were growing in it. They offered to take us outside and walk us through the garden.

As they showed us what they were growing, I could sense that a relationship was beginning to develop between this couple and my father. In subsequent visits, I noticed that a feeling of warmth began to develop with them that soon blossomed into a relationship of trust and love. It enabled my father to invite them back into activity in the Church. They responded to his invitation and became wonderful friends of his. Having been rescued themselves, my parents knew how to help others in similar circumstances.

Recently I had a conversation with one of our bishops in Bangkok about the efforts he and others



Elder Larry Y. Wilson

in his ward are making to rescue others. He emphasized to me that our efforts will be most effective when we visit others out of love and find ways to show our love to them. That's what occurred as my father showed his interest in this family by asking about something they cared about, namely, their garden.

Another bishop in Bangkok shared a valuable perspective with me about how to go about rescuing others. He commented that we not only need to invite people to come back to church but we also need to help them understand why they should do so. We need to bring the Savior's message of eternal hope and joy to them. This bishop emphasized the importance of teaching them about the good that comes into our lives through the power of renewing our covenant with God as well as the strength that comes from our association with people who are striving to live according to the Savior's teachings. When we explain the blessings that come from Church participation, we are more likely to see those who are less active responding to our invitation.

As we go about the work of rescuing others, we should keep in mind some of the key principles that President Monson has stressed about how to do so. When he has spoken in the meetings of the General Authorities of the Church, he almost always talks about the importance of seeking the Lord's lost sheep. He has likewise shared certain keys that he thinks we need to include in our approach to the rescue. I have often heard him say that, in addition to inviting people back, we also need to give them something meaningful to do. It should be something that is meaningful without causing them to feel overwhelmed.

Additionally, he has stressed that we need to help them to be successful with the responsibility or assignment we have given them.³ There is great wisdom in following this counsel from President

Monson. Someone who is coming back to church can be called to assist with an activity, to teach a small part of a lesson or to serve as the assistant to a teacher or leader where they can gain experience and learn by observing the way a more experienced member carries out his or her calling.

Finally, members of the Church who are coming back into activity should know that we need them. Their participation will add strength to the community of Saints in any ward or branch. Their faith and service can make a positive difference in the lives of others. All will be enriched and blessed as we grow together into a people who are worthy to receive the Savior at His Second Coming.

The Lord tells us in the Doctrine and Covenants, "And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father! And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me in the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!" (D&C 18:15–16).

It may seem like a daunting challenge to bring back those who are less active. However, as with everything in life, the Lord opens the way for those who approach Him in faith. They find Him giving them the words to say, the right timing for sharing gospel messages, the courage to extend direct invitations and the vision to see what can happen as they follow His example to rescue the lost sheep. I pray that we may heed the counsel of our living prophet and be among those that "go to the rescue." ■

NOTES

1. See Luke 15:4–5.
2. "Reach Out to Rescue," <http://www.lds.org/prophets-and-apostles/unto-all-the-world/monson-encourages-members-to-reach-out?lang=eng>.
3. See Thomas S. Monson, "See Others as They May Become," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 68–69.

Public Affairs Council Set to Move Forward in India

By Elder and Sister Black, India New Delhi Mission

At the New Delhi District conference held on June 8, 2013, the first public affairs council in New Delhi was sustained and set apart. President Suvarna Kumar Katuka was sustained as the public affairs director with President Kartik Radhakrishnan as assistant director—government relations and President Srimanarayana Siva Prakash Boddu as assistant director—media relations.

The first Mormon missionaries arrived in Calcutta in 1851, and today India boasts over 10,000 members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in almost 40 wards and branches. In that time, New Delhi has never had a public affairs council to assist in moving the mission of the Church forward. Since its inception in 1935,

this vital priesthood program has built bridges of friendship and understanding wherever the Church is found. This new council in the north of India along with its sister council in the south will bring the goodwill and works of the Church out of darkness into the bright Indian light of day.

Along with their new callings, President Katuka will continue to serve as president of the Pitampura Branch, President Radhakrishnan will continue to serve as second counselor in the New Delhi Second Branch presidency and President Boddu will continue to serve as first counselor in the New Delhi District presidency. All the brethren have long and extensive experience in Church leadership. ■

From left to right: Kartik Radhakrishnan, Suvarna Kumar Katuka and Srimanarayana Siva Prakash Boddu.



Reach Out . . .

By Rohini Krishnan

Whitefield Branch, Bangalore

President David O. McKay said, “Home teaching is one of our most urgent and most rewarding opportunities to nurture and inspire, to counsel and direct our Father’s children. . . . It is a divine service, a divine call. It is our duty as home teachers to carry the divine spirit into every home and heart”.¹

We were assigned to visit teach a sister, a mother of two children who were in Primary. She was a very kind and sweet sister and was new to the gospel. She shared her concerns about how she doubted herself—whether she could teach her children the gospel from the scriptures. She was worried whether or not she could teach her girls as they did in Primary. We encouraged her to use the resources the Church has provided, to use the CDs or the picture manuals that would make great teaching material to teach her children, and we suggested that she continually read the scriptures and fast and pray for the guidance of the Lord.

After I moved to a different branch, I happened to meet that sister again at a conference. I learned from her that she had been called as the Primary teacher in her branch; I was so excited to hear that from her. I was so happy for this sister and the way she had grown in the gospel. It made me realize how our few words of love and example can influence others’ lives and make a difference.

All members are responsible for each other. We are brothers and sisters in the gospel, and it becomes our responsibility to reach out to those who are away from the truth. Every soul is precious in the sight of our Lord. We as His followers must treat every soul with great respect and love, because that’s what our Heavenly Father would have expected from us.

**Rohini Krishnan**

In the parable of the lost sheep, the shepherd went back looking for the one lost sheep when he had found 99 of them. This is one of the greatest examples our Savior has set. He watches over us and protects us from danger. He does not give up on us when we make mistakes. He rejoices when we repent and return to His gospel. That is why the scriptures call Him the Good Shepherd.

In the Book Of Mormon, I love the story of the prophet Alma's mission to Ammonihah. The people were so wicked that they did not let him preach the gospel, but the Lord provided a way by showing him Amulek. Though Alma and Amulek had many difficulties in convincing the people in his city, they never gave up. Instead they continued teaching. They were even sent to prison for teaching the gospel, but the Lord helped them by breaking the walls of the prison. Many listened to their teaching and repented of their sins, and the wicked were killed by the Lamanites.

Another great example was set by the sons of Mosiah—Ammon and Aaron. During their mission they preached the gospel to the kings and asked them to repent of their sins. They even risked their lives to preach the gospel.

These rescue operations happen in the Church as well. Church leaders work in coordination with

the quorum presidents, and they in turn with the home and visiting teachers. The members of the Church put in a combined effort to rescue the less active. Leaders check on them and provide them all the support that they require in activating the less-active members. Branch and district presidents make visits to the less-active family and help them with their requirements.

Some ideas to help us rescue are as follows:

- If you are a parent, set a good example for your children. Teach them to walk in the righteous path in the early years of their lives—pray for them, talk to them about the Church, and encourage them to make righteous choices.
- Do your regular visiting and home teaching.
- Invite less-active members to attend a Church activity.

The reasons why some members become less active are many, and they differ from person to person. Some reasons could be that someone offended them, someone did not invite them to an activity or someone did not consider them important. Some might have a busy schedule and can't make it to church. In some instances a member might be affected emotionally or personally hurt.

We need to take steps to make things right! One way that I can think of doing this is to STOP being JUDGMENTAL. It is not our responsibility to judge others. Once we start judging others we start to gossip, and that leads to many other things. This could be one of the reasons members get offended. I remember the line from a hymn, "Who am I to judge another, when I walk imperfectly".²

In Matthew 7:1–5 it says, "Judge not, that ye be not judged.

"For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?”

“Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?”

“Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”

I would like to share a quote by President Thomas S. Monson: “My brothers and sisters, we are surrounded by those in need of our attention, our encouragement, our support, our comfort, our kindness—be they family members, friends,

acquaintances, or strangers. We are the Lord’s hands here upon the earth, with mandate to serve and to lift His children. He is dependent upon each of us”.³

As it says in Doctrine and Covenants 18:16, “And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!” Let us let our hands be the Lord’s hands and experience the joy in being His instrument in bringing His children unto Him. ■

NOTES

1. David O. McKay, *Priesthood Home Teaching Handbook*, rev. ed. (1967), ii–iii.
2. “Lord, I Would Follow Thee,” *Hymns*, no. 220.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “What Have I Done for Someone Today?” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 86.

Simple Acts of Love Lead to Spiritual Conversion

By President Alwyn Kilbert

Second Counselor, District Presidency, Coimbatore

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said, “Every [convert] needs a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing with ‘the good word of God’” (“Converts and Young Men,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 47).

I was baptized in March 2001 along with my mother and three younger sisters. A couple of weeks after my baptism I did not find the urge and desire to follow my newfound beliefs. I had left behind dozens of friends in my previous church, and found only one or two brothers and sisters of my age, and I was shy to make new friends immediately.

I slowly stopped attending church and began to go after my old friends and my old interests. Life wasn’t easy for my mother and sisters, who saw me not attending church with them. In their struggling family condition, they were sad to see me being unwilling to embrace unlimited happiness and joy which was promised in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

However, my mother and sisters never gave up on me or on the gospel. They continued to attend Church meetings, and kept the commandments. They set the example for me to follow at home.

On the other hand, my branch president, along with the priesthood leaders, started visiting my home consistently each Sunday after their meetings, until I returned to church several months later. Instead of giving up after a couple of visits, they were determined to bring me back to their fold.

At first I started attending CES Institute. This played a crucial role in me returning to the Church. Since I did not have the courage to face so many members at once and answer their common and uncomfortable question, “Where were you all this time?” I chose to attend the

institute class instead of a sacrament meeting. It was easier to face 15–20 members than to face 60–70 members. Only after gaining the confidence to face more members did I attend sacrament and other meetings. Though this was not the ideal way to return to activity, it helped me with my personal fear and discomfort, and I gained friendships and was nurtured by the “good word of God”.

A week after I returned to activity, my caring branch president extended me the calling as a counselor in the branch Sunday School presidency. He did not wait until I was fully active in the branch; I am sure that they had already planned

to extend me a calling as soon as I returned to church. It is that care and the Christlike love that has helped me have the desire to serve a full-time mission and accept any calling that has been extended to me.

During the time of our baptism, we covenant with God to do what is written in the scripture below:

Mosiah 18:8–9 says, “And it came to pass that he said unto them: Behold, here are the waters of Mormon (for thus were they called) and now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light;

“Yea and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life.”

In order to keep our covenant, we need to care for our less-active brothers and sisters.

Doctrine and Covenants 18:10 says, “Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God.”

I know that if we seek to do God’s will, He will definitely help us in His miraculous ways. ■

President Allwyn Kilbert along with his wife, Sonia Gupta Kilbert, and sons Jared Kilbert and Joel Kilbert.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF ALLWYN KILBERT

I Know God Lives and We Can Hear His Voice

By Elder Venkatesh Thanniru

Not only missionaries or Church leaders can receive personal revelation—every worthy member can have a great opportunity to receive personal revelation. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “Salvation cannot come without revelation” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*, 195).

The Savior taught, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

“For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Mathew 7:7–8).

In the Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 15:11, Nephi took opportunity to teach his brothers how to receive personal revelation. He said, “Do ye not remember the things which the Lord hath said?—If ye will not harden your hearts, and ask me in faith, believing that ye shall receive, with diligence in keeping my commandments, surely these things shall be made known unto you.”

Revelation comes as a feeling with an accompanying conviction in two separate ways: “I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart.

“Now, behold, this is the spirit of revelation” (D&C 8:2–3).

Answers to the mind and heart are messages from the Holy Ghost to our spirits. The Spirit of the Lord always communicates with us as a “still, small voice”.

If we need to get personal revelation, we need to:



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1. Pray with faith.
2. Obtain the word of God, receive the word by the Spirit, treasure them up.
3. Purify ourselves by repentance.

Prayer is the first and most important key to unlock heaven to get revelation from our Father in Heaven. A sincere prayer of faith with real intent, with all energy of heart and by being obedient unto His commandments helps us to see all things that our Father in Heaven wants us to know, learn and follow.

I am really grateful to be a full-time missionary. As a missionary I speak to our Father in Heaven many times a day. I feel I am very close to Him each and every time I pray, and He always communicates with me through the Holy Spirit.

I have realized that the gift of the Holy Ghost has become increasingly important as I have

Brother Suresh and Sister Vijaya Shanthi along with their children on the day of their baptism.

grown. I have experienced the gift in many ways since the time I received it as an 11-year-old boy.

Having served my mission for 19 months now, I have learnt that personal revelation is vital for our work. When I got transferred to my second area (Coimbatore), I met my new companion and was excited to know more about the new area, but soon realized the challenges that we had to face.

One day, when I was praying to God, I was inspired to fast. I let my companion know regarding my inspiration. We fasted and prayed together to help us find people who are prepared to receive the gospel of Jesus Christ. As we acted on the inspiration we received, we met Brother Suresh's family. They invited us, and we taught them about Jesus Christ and about His restored gospel and Church. After teaching them, we invited them to be baptized. They accepted to be baptized a month later.

Today, Brother Suresh serves as the Young Men president and Sister Vijaya Shanthi serves as the first counsellor in the Relief Society Coimbatore 2nd Branch!

The above mentioned is just one of the incidents when I received personal revelation. I have always relied on personal revelation to see success in my mission.

The second most important key to receiving personal revelation is reading scriptures and pondering them. When I read the scriptures, it touches me deep inside my heart and I get personal revelation.

As a missionary I start my day with prayer and scripture reading. We need to obtain His word to declare His word. His words enlighten my mind and tell me how to face each day. Doctrine and Covenants 11:21 says, "If you desire, you shall have my spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men".

In order to receive revelation, we need to obtain His word, and there is power in His word. It

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF ELDER VENKATESH THANNIRU



Elder Venkatesh Thanniru is serving in the India Bangalore Mission.

is not my words that convince but it is the powerful words of God that reveal His will.

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said, "You recognize the promptings of the Spirit by the fruits of the Spirit, that which enlighteneth, that which buildeth up, that which is positive and affirmative and uplifting and leads us to better thoughts and better words and better deeds is of the Spirit of God" (*Preach My Gospel*, "How Do I Recognize and Understand the Spirit?").

When we live worthily and our choices are consistent with the Savior's teachings, when we put our trust in God in everything we do, we can feel the great peace of God, our bosoms will burn, we will be able to feel His great love with us all the time and enjoy the spirit of revelation. I know God lives and we can hear His voice. ■