

# ASIA LOCAL PAGES

ASIA AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

## Receiving Guidance from the Scriptures

By Elder Larry Y. Wilson of the Seventy  
First Counselor in the Asia Area Presidency

It has often been said in the Church that we speak to God in prayer and He answers back through the scriptures. As we read, we are privileged to hear Him speaking to us through His Spirit. Doctrine and Covenants 18:34–36 teaches us: “These words are not of men nor of man, but of me. . . . For it is my voice which speaketh them unto you; for they are given by my Spirit unto you . . . ; wherefore, you can testify that you have heard my voice, and know my words.” As we pray and feel the Spirit directing us, we can truly say that we have heard the voice of the Lord.

My wife is a convert to the Church. She grew up in a home with no religious influences. At the age of 11, she learned about the restored gospel of Jesus Christ from her grandmother, who had been a convert to the Church years before. My wife has fond memories of seeing her grandmother sitting on her bed every night reading the scriptures before she went to sleep. Her grandmother knew the voice of the Lord was available to her as she opened the scriptures and began to read, and she set a wonderful example for her granddaughter.

Just over a year ago, I had the opportunity of visiting a member’s home in Mongolia. As we entered the home, I noticed the scriptures were open and also the *Liahona* magazine. I asked the Sister who welcomed us into her home to tell



**Elder Larry Y. Wilson**

me what she had been reading. She picked up her scriptures which were open to Alma 27:27, and read the following: “And they were among the people of Nephi, and also numbered among the people who were of the church of God. And they were also distinguished for their zeal towards God, and also towards men; for they were perfectly honest and upright in all things; and they were firm in the faith of Christ, even unto the end.” This sister told me how inspired she was

by the description of these people in the Book of Mormon.

I thought to myself that she was very much like the people described in that verse. Her zeal towards God was demonstrated by her diligence in reading the scriptures. When I asked her what she had been reading in the *Liahona*, she indicated it was the most recent general conference address of Elder Russell M. Nelson and she proceeded to summarize it for me. I thought to myself, “Here is a woman who is hearing the voice of God as He speaks to her through the scriptures and through living prophets. He is guiding her to become more Christlike through the messages she finds in them.”

Many years ago, I had a friend who was hiking with a group of boys from the Church in the Grand Canyon area of the western United States. As they were hiking deep into the canyon below, he carried a very heavy backpack. The weight caused injury to his knees and he couldn’t continue. They had to arrange for a rescue team to bring him out of the canyon area. As he was being carried out by the rescue team, he opened his Book of Mormon to a randomly selected page, which was 2 Nephi 4:20, and read: “My God hath been my support; he hath led me through mine afflictions in the wilderness; and he hath preserved me upon the waters of the great deep.” This scripture filled his heart as he felt the rescuing power of His Savior near him.

Nephi wrote these words to describe his own experience in trials, yet my friend heard the voice of the Lord say the same thing to him in trying circumstances. Part of the key to hearing the Lord

speak to us through the words of the scriptures is learning the skill of likening. Nephi explains: “And I did read many things unto [my family] which were written . . . ; but that I might more fully persuade them to believe in the Lord their Redeemer I did read unto them that which was written by the prophet Isaiah; for I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning” (1 Nephi 19:23).

When people become new members of the Church or as children grow up in the Church, they generally do not know how to liken scriptures to themselves. One of the best ways to learn to do this is by reading with someone who does know, typically a more experienced member of the Church. Many people are not accustomed to reading scripture. They need help from someone who can guide them, if they are to learn to hear the voice of the Lord as they read.

There is a story in the 8th chapter of Acts in which Philip encounters a man who is having difficulty reading and understanding the scriptures. Philip was one of seven men chosen to assist the Twelve Apostles (see Acts 6:2–6). On this occasion, he encountered a man referred to as an Ethiopian eunuch. Philip sees that his scriptures are open to Isaiah and asks if he understands what he is reading. The man says, “How can I, except some man should guide me?” (Acts 8:31).

Most of our new members and youth find themselves in this same position. Unless someone guides them, how will they learn to liken the scriptures to themselves and hear the voice of the Lord speaking to them? They need a scripture reading companion or mentor. All of us who are members

need to watch for and help those who need a helper, like Philip, to teach them to read the scriptures so they can draw personal spiritual strength and guidance from them.

A few years ago, my wife and I hired a contractor to do remodeling work on our home. He had no religious background. We began having occasional discussions with him about the gospel as he worked in our home. After a few months, we gave him a copy of the Book of Mormon and invited him to attend church with us. Soon he began meeting with the missionaries and was baptized. However, I noticed that he was not comfortable reading from the scriptures in Sunday School class. So I asked him about it. He told me that he did not read well and had not read a book in 30 years. I could see that it was unlikely he would read the Book of Mormon on his own, or ever learn to liken it to himself. So, I offered to read with him.

That began one of the most rewarding experiences I have had in my many years of membership in the Church. We met in my home two times a week and would spend about an hour reading together. Sunday afternoons following Church was a convenient time, and he would also come to my home one other evening in the week. As we read together, we would pause often to discuss things he did not understand and talk about the personal application of what we were reading. I could see his spiritual roots growing deeper every time we read. Today, he is a strong member of the Church with a deep testimony and understanding of the Book of Mormon. He knows how to liken the words of

scripture to himself, and he hears the voice of the Lord speaking to him from its pages.

This is our opportunity every time we open the scriptures. There is no greater source of guidance than from God Himself. He will give us the answers to our daily needs if we read the scriptures and liken them to ourselves. I pray that we will especially seek opportunities to be scripture reading companions and mentors with those who are just beginning their own journey in the scriptures. Then we may all say together, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). ■

## LOCAL NEWS

# Time to Share the Truth

By Genesis John

New Delhi 4th Branch, India

It began as a very busy day with not enough time to fit everything in that needed to be done. As my mom and I hurriedly got ready to go shopping, there suddenly came a knock at our door. When I opened it I saw two people, who said they were from a different church than mine and had come to share a message. At first, I didn't want to take the time to let them in, but then something told me that I should.

My mother and I welcomed them in and invited them to sit down. They brought out some books and a copy of the Bible and said they wanted to share the word of God. Following a prayer, they talked about Sunday worship and quoted some scriptures from the Bible that conflicted with our belief of how we observe the Sabbath day.

After hearing everything they had to say, my mother and



**Genesis John**

I testified that we knew The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was the true Church of Jesus Christ on the earth today. We told them about truths found in our Church and then gave them a Book of Mormon. We bore our testimony of its truthfulness and invited them to read it and to visit our Church sometime in the future to see what it had to offer.

After they left I felt the Spirit of the Holy Ghost telling me that I did a great job. I feel confident that those two very nice people will read the Book of Mormon and visit the Church

someday. When they do, they will feel the Spirit of the Holy Ghost and know, as I do, that it is true. I am glad that I listened to the Spirit and took the time to let them in and share the truth of the gospel. ■

## The First Golden Minute

**By Elder and Sister Black**

India New Delhi Mission

**E**ach year tens of thousands of newborn babies across India are saved from death or serious medical problems because of neonatal resuscitation training

sponsored by LDS Charities. In an infant’s “first golden minute” of life this training equips doctors and medical personnel to help a baby that is born not breathing to take that first breath of life and then to breathe on its own. This miracle of life is due, in large part, to the partnership formed by the Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP) and LDS Charities.

Over the last six years LDS Charities has been involved in providing “train the trainer” instruction and expertise from prominent LDS pediatricians. These trainers then pass their newfound skills on to others in the medical field throughout India. In that time almost 138,000 medical professionals have been trained in the government and private sector through this program. Of the 27 million babies born in India each year, this program has resulted in hundreds of thousands of infant lives saved.

This year the training took place in the central India city of Indore. Three prominent LDS pediatricians—Dr. Richard Bell from California, Dr. David Denton from Idaho, and Dr.

Ronald Stoddard from Utah—conducted the training of over eighty Indian pediatricians who will now serve as trainers to thousands more throughout the country.

Dr. Naveen Thacker, past president of the Indian Pediatric Association and member of the International Pediatric Association Standing Committee, said, “The roll of LDS Charities in the success of the neonatal resuscitation program in India is immense. Without their help and support, India would not be at the milestone we are today.”

Dr. Vikram Datta, NNF secretary and professor of Neonatology, echoed this sentiment by saying, “So many lives can be saved through this program, and LDS Charities has and will continue to be a very important part of it. We need them here and look forward to a strong continued partnership.”

The birth of every newborn is a potential medical emergency. As India becomes a leader in having medical personnel trained to handle such situations, more and more of these emergencies will end in babies taking those first breaths



on their own and starting off to a healthy life. This is what the Indian Academy of Pediatrics and LDS Charities partnership in India is all about.

As this strong partnership and the training go forward,

the Indian Academy of Pediatrics’ goal is to have one person at every delivery trained in neonatal resuscitation. With many of the deliveries being conducted in small rural villages, even larger

numbers of trainers in each of the 611 districts in India will be required. Over the next five years the objective is to train an additional 200,000 health personnel in neonatal resuscitation. LDS Charities will be instrumental in the attainment of this goal. ■



## Youth Activities Website Created for Families, Youth, and Leaders

**Samson Putturaj**

The Priesthood Department of the Church has newly created a youth activities website: [www.lds.org/youth/activities](http://www.lds.org/youth/activities).

Elder Paul B. Pieper of the Seventy says, “One challenge that youth leaders often have is planning a youth activity program that has variety and balance. To prepare for the work Heavenly Father has for them, our youth need experiences that will help them grow spiritually, physically, intellectually, and socially. The variety of activity categories on the website—from ‘Spiritual Strength’ and ‘Missionary Work’ to ‘Sports, Camping, and Outdoors’ to ‘Arts, Music, and Dance’—reinforce the many opportunities we should be providing our youth.”

The site features over 165 activity ideas in 10 different categories so leaders and youth can find a

variety of activities that will meet the needs and interests of youth in their ward or branch. Activities that are scheduled from the site can automatically link to ward and stake calendars on LDS.org.

The site can be used by families, youth, and leaders who are looking for activity ideas. The site also provides training on how to plan effective activities.

Sister Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women general president, says, “One of the best aspects of these activities is that they are linked to and support the Sunday lessons as well as the Personal Progress and Duty to God programs. We have always encouraged leaders to plan activities with a specific purpose in mind, and this resource makes that goal easier to attain.” ■

# Returned Missionaries Reunion: Bangalore District

By Samson Putturaj

“It was heavenly,” recalled Brother Thambi when asked, “How was your mission?”

“We did not have air conditioners in our apartments. The roof was asbestos sheet. The summer in Hyderabad was so hot and humid. We used to wet towels and clothes and put them on windows and doors so cool air could come in,” recalled President Babu Abel to a similar question.

“I was not a member of the Church when my son went on his mission. It was a tough decision to send him on a mission, as he was the only son. Priesthood leaders helped me understand the importance of a mission. I sent him on his mission. Six months on his mission, I was baptized,” recalled Charles Thangaraj’s mother in response to the question, “Dad/Mom speak about their son/daughter going on a mission.”

“I felt uncomfortable sending my son on a mission. Members comforted me, saying good things about serving God and building His kingdom. He came back successfully completing his mission. Today, he is my branch president and conducting this meeting. I am happy,” recalled Suresh Ramakrishna’s mother in response to the question, “Dad/Mom speak about their son/daughter going on a mission.”

It was a time of reflection, moments to recall, feeling grateful, being happy and joyous to bond in the missionary reunion. There was the oldest missionary, Samson Putturaj, released in 1988, and Sister Usha Prasad, released two days prior to this event. There were missionaries from other

states who made Bangalore their home. Some came with their old missionary attire still looking good in it, some outgrowing it. Some had their missionary name tags. There were missionaries who served in other parts of the world. All who met shared one name—returned missionary.

The Bangalore district presidency organized the returned missionary reunion on 15 February 2014 at the Whitefield branch. The theme, “Lengthen Your Stride and Quicken Your Pace,” was to give vision to the returned missionaries to strengthen their branches wherever they were serving. The Bangalore district has been working to become a stake; therefore the need for returned missionaries to lengthen their stride and quicken their pace was a clarion call to help and sustain the stake when created.

Brother Suresh Ramakrishna and Rakesh Roshan together conducted the proceedings of the meeting. They planned very well. Videos of former mission presidents speaking for this event were shown. A slide show of pictures of missionaries then and now was viewed. They both took us on a journey of lightheartedness and fun, for a happy, uplifting time.

The gathering began by reciting the “The standard of truth” quote by the Prophet Joseph Smith. The power of the quote was evident as all were able to recite it with zest and energy. Sister Prema Nixon spoke (Philippines Tacloban Mission) on the theme that the returned missionaries should roll up their sleeves, repent, and put all their

efforts, as when they were on their missions, into building the kingdom.

Some great and humbling experiences were shared. Devaraj served two ten-month missions in the same branch. When he asked the mission president why, the answer was, “I do not know, Elder, but the Lord requires you to be in that branch.”

Brother Raja Krishnan told his MTC companions, “I will hang myself if I am sent to Rajahmundry village. When we finished our MTC and returned to India, Mission President Solomon met me at Chennai airport and said I was going to go to

Rajahmundry. My MTC companions looked at me. I was speechless. I had to humble myself. I loved Rajahmundry and its people. It became my second home.”

“My MTC was in the couple missionaries’ home. We did not go to the temple to receive our endowments,” said President Babu Abel.

“I enjoyed being in the temple for the first time at the MTC in the Philippines. I loved the food and ate everything they served while my companions were complaining about the food,” said Sister Christina Anthony Sunderraj. ■

**Go Ye Therefore, and Teach All Nations, by Harry Anderson**

