

ASIA AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

The Miracles of Forgiveness

Elder Jui-Chang Juan
Of the Seventy

When I was a kid, my father had a dispute with his brother. Offended, he stopped all contact with his brother and forbade us to

visit him too. Not until much later when my mother fell seriously ill and was on her death bed did my father finally allow his brother and his wife to come to visit us again.

In junior high, I had a dispute with my next door best friend. I stopped talking to him and alienated him in order to “punish” him. Later, a Church member brought him to Church. I saw him but I refused to talk to him so I could continually “punish” him. To this day, I still feel terrible for my behavior. Oh how I wish that I could find him and tell him that I am sorry!

The Lord said, “He that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.”¹ I could not comprehend this verse when I was young. I couldn’t figure out why, being a victim, my sin should be greater than the perpetrator if I didn’t forgive him. How could this be fair? I simply did not get it!

As I grew older, more experienced, and have put in much thought into this scripture; I



Elder Jui-Chang Juan

finally “got” it! It was because God loves us so much! Being offended itself is hurtful, but if we do not forgive those who offend us, we will get hurt even deeper and longer. Our loving Heavenly Father wants us to leave the justice to Him. “I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of [us] it is required to forgive all men.”² By so doing, we will not suffer the additional damage by hurting our own souls.

One wise sister understood this principle. She said, “When you forgive others, you are only being kind to yourself.” President Brigham Young also taught by



“Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.” (Luke 15:31–32)

***“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”
(Luke 23:34)***

giving the example of a person when bitten by a rattlesnake, one common reaction would be to quickly find a stick to strike the snake to death, while the right thing to do is to go to a hospital immediately to seek help to survive.³ In other words, when we are offended (bitten by a snake), choosing forgiveness (getting a blood transfusion) is far more important and urgent than seeking revenge.

I am grateful that I had the

opportunity to read President Spencer W. Kimball’s book *The Miracle of Forgiveness* when I was young. From it, I learned that forgiveness has no exceptions.⁴ I also learned that with God’s power we can forgive everyone, even ourselves.⁵

Christ is our ultimate example. During His mortal ministry, He constantly expounded this gospel principle by both words and deeds. Even when He was on the cross, He said, “Father,

forgive them; for they know not what they do.”⁶ I testify that God loves us so much that He sent His beloved son to atone for our sins to satisfy the demands of justice. He wants us to live with inner peace. He doesn’t want any “venom” left in our hearts. I firmly believe that through the miracle . . . of forgiveness, we can become true disciples of Christ. Just like what Prophet Joseph Smith said before he left for Carthage Jail, “I am calm as a summer’s morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men.”⁷

Brothers and sisters, if any of you are having difficulties in forgiving others, please remember what Elder Bednar taught that the enabling power of the Atonement of Christ can strengthen us to do things we could never do on our own.⁸

I know this true principle is from God. We all can do it! ■

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 64:9.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 64:10.
3. As reported in Marion D. Hanks, “Forgiveness: The Ultimate Form of Love,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, 21.
4. See Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (1969), 262, 282.
5. See Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (1969), 298–300, 339, 344.
6. Luke 23:34.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 135:4.
8. See David A. Bednar, “In the Strength of the Lord,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2004, 77.



My Missionary Experiences in India 1965

By President John Aki, Hong Kong China Temple, 2010–2013

SUMMARY OF BEING REASSIGNED TO INDIA

In 1965 I was a young missionary serving in the former Southern Far East Mission. The mission consisted of the Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the Philippines, as well as the rest of Asia except for Japan and Korea, which were part of the Northern Far East Mission.

In January 1965 Elder Gilbert Montano and I were reassigned to serve on a special assignment in India. We were to go to the city of Coimbatore

in the state of Madras and teach a man, Paul Thiruthuvadoss, and his family. He had found a missionary tract on a bus in Coimbatore and had written a letter to the Church expressing interest in learning more. He explained that there were several other friends who might also be interested in learning about the Church.

After several visits to India by my mission president, Jay Quaelly, and Elder Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), the Apostle responsible for Asia at that

Coimbatore, Madras, India (about February 1965)—back row, left to right: President Quaelly, Elder Aki, Elder Montano; middle row: Sister Thiruthuvadoss with her baby daughter, Brother Thiruthuvadoss, three investigators, Brother Thiruthuvadoss’s father; front row: daughters of Brother and Sister Thiruthuvadoss



PICTURES OF INDIA BY ELDER JOHN AKI

time, it was decided that missionaries would be sent to India to teach the family and others who might be interested. We were to be there for six months. A small branch was to be formed under the leadership of Brother Thiruthuvadoss.

We arrived in India in on Saturday, 6 February 1965. We stayed at the English Club in Coimbatore, where historically the English would stay. President Quaely had told us how special India was to him; his grandfather was a doctor with the British Army in India. He and his wife were baptized by English missionaries in India before leaving the army and immigrating to America.

President Quaely asked that I teach the lesson on Sunday. In the afternoon, we would hire taxis and travel to a lake outside of the city to baptize the Thiruthuvadoss family.

On Sunday, 7 February 1965, while traveling to the lake, we came across a farmer who was about to drain his large well to water his crops. The well was large enough to baptize someone. President Quaely gave the farmer some money to use his well for about 30 minutes. After completing the baptism, the farmer drained the well to water his crops.

President Quaely baptized Brother Thiruthuvadoss, Elder Montano baptized Sister Thiruthuvadoss and I baptized a Brother Stanley Pan Raj, a friend of the family.

A week later we baptized Brother Thiruthuvadoss's parents and his oldest son. We baptized five from Brother Thiruthuvadoss's family and two others for a total of seven during the six months that we were there.

We met every Sunday at Brother Thiruthuvadoss's home for church services. We had only English hymn books so only Elder Montano, I and Brother Thiruthuvadoss would sing. The many friends that



Lake about two hours away from Coimbatore: Elder John Aki, Brother Paul Thiruthuvadoss's mother and son, Brother Thiruthuvadoss, prior to the baptism of Sister Thiruthuvadoss

Brother Thiruthuvadoss had, eventually stopped coming to meetings. They were warned by their church pastor not to learn about this new religion.

We had instructed Brother Thiruthuvadoss the best we could on how to run a small family branch and how to continue to do missionary work on his own until the Church could send more missionaries to India. It was not until 1987, 22 years later, that missionaries were finally sent.

I did meet Brother Thiruthuvadoss again in Hawaii in about 1977. One of his daughters was accepted to attend BYU-Hawaii. I found out that one daughter served a mission in India, and his son had been a member of the branch presidency in Coimbatore at one time. Brother Paul Thiruthuvadoss passed away in about 2007.

EXCERPTS FROM ELDER JOHN AKI'S JOURNAL

25 January 1965

“We received a telegram today from President Quaely telling me to call him. I found that I will be



Baptism of Sister Thiruthuvadoss (Brother Paul's mother) by Elder Aki

sent to India along with Elder (Gilbert) Montano to open up the mission in India. I've been having butterflies all day in my stomach. Going with Elder Montano would be a good chance because he works hard. I want to read all that I can on India, but there are no books in Macau."

Sunday, 14 February 1965

"There was no convenient baptismal place near the city of Coimbatore, South India. So we baptized the Thiruthuvadoss family in a large well that was used to irrigate the nearby lands. I baptized Brother Stanley Pan Raj. I could feel the little golf fishes in the well nibbling at my feet. This is how we spent our first Sunday in India. For Elder Montano and I this was to be the first of many strange but wonderful experiences we were to have in the sub-continent of India."

(No date)

"Three nights a week we would journey out to a little village, 15 miles (24 km) outside of the city. We would take with us a lantern. As the farmers and shepherds returned from their days of labor,

they would gather around the bright lantern. The mud huts, goats and sheep, the villagers clad in their loincloths impressed me as to what the Savior must have taught under similar conditions."

Monday, 24 May 1965

"Received a cancelation note from one of our investigators, 'My wife and I have discussed this matter of religion and we each feel that we have our own way of communing with God and that you should respect our way as much as we do yours. You have given us our idea of your beliefs which was very interesting but that was all. We would like to politely inform you that we are not interested in converting to your religion and hence we should not like to waste your time.

—*Lieut. and Mrs. Misa*'" ■

Muslim Orphans Say "Shukran"

By Elder and Sister Black

Public Affairs—India

Nestled away in a quiet, secluded part of Dwarka Marg, stands the Muslim Boys Hostel. It is a place you would never find unless someone gave detailed directions. But to 50 young Muslim orphans, it is the most important place on earth and the very center of their universe. Through contributions of the Indian Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, these young children now

have a warm place to sleep with comfortable beds and bedding rather than sleeping on a hard concrete floor. They also now have a much-needed washing machine, clean water filters, warm clothing, nutritious food, and a hygiene kit for every child. All totaled, over 2,200 separate items were donated for the welfare and benefit of the orphans.

Following the Muslim evening call to prayer, these items



were presented to the Imam E Asr Boys Orphanage (Muslim Boys Hostel) at a ceremony attended by prominent leaders in the Muslim, Hindu, and Christian faiths. And even at the very young age of the orphans, they showed sincere, heartfelt appreciation by singing songs and gathering around the guests

to say “*Shukran*,” the Arabic word for “thank you”. Mumtaz Ali Murtazavi, founder and chairman of the orphanage, counseled the children to recognize the good that is done in the world by other people. He said that The Indian Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was a good example



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ELDER AND SISTER BLACK, PUBLIC AFFAIRS

of people who truly love others regardless of differences in religion or race. He then added that Muslims and Mormons share many common values.

Other dignitaries present were Vikram Dutt, President of the Manovikas Charitable Society, Fazalur Rehman, President of Rehamaan’s and a prominent Muslim community leader; and President Peyton of the Dwarka Branch. Following speeches of gratitude and admonitions, everyone present sat on the floor in a traditional Muslim meal and a true thanksgiving feast. There is a tradition in India that if you share a meal with someone, they become your friend and brother for life. At the Imam E Asr Boys Orphanage, many lifelong friendships were made that night. ■

Prophet Thomas S. Monson—My Testimony Reaffirmed

By Samson Putturaj

Just a day before Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was to visit Bangalore on 28 February 2014, I was impressed upon to visit a newly baptized single adult brother to invite him to attend the single adults devotional addressed by Elder Holland. He had moved to Bangalore for work and did not have any friends in the area. I tried putting off the inspiration but it persisted. I then knew it was important for me to visit this brother. I took two ties with me, as he had none. I visited him at his workplace. We had a good talk and then I gave him the ties and invited him to come to the devotional. This brother attended the devotional, and rejoiced to see an Apostle of the Lord and to meet other single adults.

My ability to follow inspiration was reaffirmed and strengthened when I was reading articles to find inspiration to speak at a branch. I was looking at some old *Ensign* magazines when I saw a page titled: “President Thomas S. Monson: Man of Action, Man of Faith, Always ‘on the Lord’s Errand,’” by Jeffrey R. Holland.

I was elated at the two names Thomas S. Monson and Jeffrey R. Holland. Today, Thomas S. Monson is the prophet and president of the Church and Jeffrey R. Holland an Apostle. I enjoy their writings and talks. My interest to read the article intensified.

I started to read. I was captivated from the very first word. I couldn’t put the *Ensign* down as I raced to complete the inspirational article. I read one of the most sobering incidents in the life of president Monson, especially as it was the turning point in his life to listen to the Holy

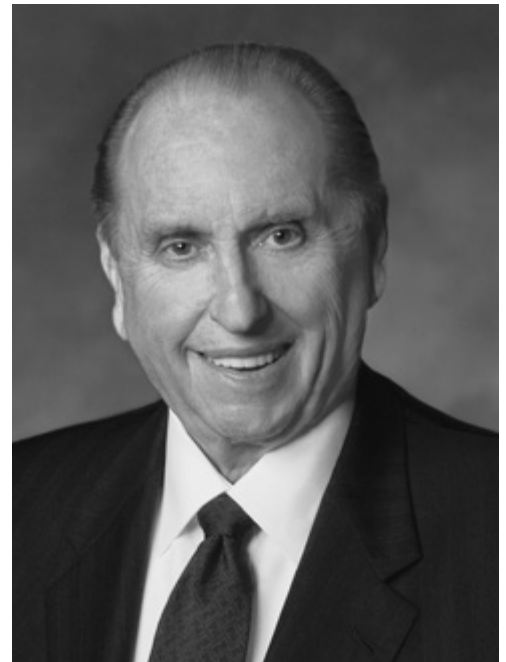
Ghost and the decision he made to act upon the promptings of the Holy Ghost immediately rather than to wait. It was a lesson for me as I sometimes postponed when I felt the impressions of the Holy Ghost.

A spirit of confirmation flowed into my heart. My testimony grew and I had an overwhelming conviction that I followed a prophet who was close to the Spirit and that I was privileged to be a member of the Church. My faith in President Monson was strengthened. Armed with a firm conviction, I started to share this with many of my Church friends, letting them know that our prophet was a spiritual man, one who followed the promptings of the Holy Ghost; in whom we can trust easily.

I wish to share below a part of the article that gave me a new perspective and appreciation of our prophet:

President Thomas S. Monson: Man of Action, Man of Faith, Always “on the Lord’s Errand” (*Ensign*, Feb. 1986)

Twenty-three-year-old Tom Monson, relatively new bishop of the Sixth-Seventh Ward in the Temple View Stake, was uncharacteristically



**President
Thomas S.
Monson**

restless as the stake priesthood leadership meeting progressed. He had the distinct impression that he should leave the meeting immediately and drive to the Veterans' Hospital high up on the Avenues of Salt Lake City. Before leaving home that night he had received a telephone call informing him that an older member of his ward was ill and had been admitted to the hospital for care. Could the bishop, the caller wondered, find a moment to go by the hospital sometime and give a blessing? The busy young leader explained that he was just on his way to a stake meeting but that he certainly would be pleased to go by the hospital as soon as the meeting was concluded.

Now the prompting was stronger than ever: "Leave the meeting and proceed to the hospital at once." But the stake president himself was speaking at the pulpit! It would be most discourteous to stand in the middle of the presiding officer's message, make one's way over an entire row of brethren, and then exit the building altogether. Painfully he waited out the final moments of the stake president's message, then bolted for the door even before the benediction had been pronounced.

Running the full length of the corridor on the fourth floor of the hospital, the young bishop saw a flurry of activity outside the designated room. A nurse stopped him and said, "Are you Bishop Monson?"

"Yes," was the anxious reply.

"I'm sorry," she said. "The patient was calling your name just before he passed away."

Fighting back the tears, Thomas S. Monson turned and walked back into the night. He vowed then and there that he would never

again fail to act upon a prompting from the Lord. He would acknowledge the impressions of the Spirit when they came, and he would follow wherever they led him, ever to be "on the Lord's errand."

You cannot understand President Thomas S. Monson, newly called Second Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, without understanding the repetition of such promptings in his life and the absolute loyalty with which he has kept that early promise to obey them. Indeed, his life seems something of a sacred manuscript upon which the Holy Ghost has written—and is still writing—one remarkable spiritual message after another. . . .

Surely no stake patriarch has been more prophetic than was Brother Frank B. Woodbury that fifteenth day of March, 1944, when he placed his hands on 16-year-old Tom Monson's head and began to speak:

"The Holy Ghost has been conferred upon you to be your inspiration and your guide, to direct you in your labors, and to bring to your mind the things that have passed and to show unto you things to come. . . .

"You shall be indeed a leader among your fellows. . . . You shall have the privilege of going into the world to proclaim the message of the gospel . . . and you shall have the spirit of discernment. . . .

"Seek the Lord in humility to guide and direct you, that you might know the proper course to pursue . . . in the high and holy callings unto which you shall be called." ■

You can read rest of the article at www.lds.org/ensign/1986/02