

ASIA LOCAL PAGES

ASIA AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Rescue in Unity

Elder Chi Hong (Sam) Wong of the Seventy

Second Counselor in the Asia Area Presidency

As we have been invited by our prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, to reach out and rescue, an account in the New Testament comes to my mind. In my opinion, it is a perfect illustration of how members and missionaries could work together in unity through ward councils to reach out and rescue. The story is found in Mark 2:1–5.

Jesus was in Capernaum and His fame at that time caused people to gather themselves in a large crowd to see Him. There were so many people gathered in the room that it was extremely crowded. Jesus took the opportunity to teach those people.

I find that the accounts Jesus used to teach us certain doctrines or principles are always most ideal. One of the characters in this account was a paralytic, someone who was not able to move without assistance. He had to wait at home for help, wherever that might be. His home could well be in an isolated corner of a back street. Carried by four others, he came to the place where Jesus was.

Here is what I envision to be the scenario: these four people arranged a home visit to this man who was sick of palsy. They were fulfilling an assignment given by the bishop. I can almost visualize one of them coming from Relief Society, one from the elders quorum, one from the Aaronic Priesthood and, last but not least, a full-time missionary. In the last ward council, after counseling together about the needs of certain individuals, the

bishop gave out “rescue” assignments. These four were assigned to help this man who was a paralytic. They could not wait for him to come to church by himself. They had to make a home visit. They had to seek him out by going out to find him and they did. Then they brought him to Jesus: “And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four” (Mark 2:3).

However, the room was too crowded. They could not get in through the door. I am sure they had tried very hard but just could not get through. Things did not happen as smoothly as planned. There were obstacles along their way of “rescue.” But they did not give up. They did not leave the man with palsy by the door. They counseled together on what to do next; how they could bring the man unto Jesus Christ for healing. The work to assist Jesus Christ in saving souls, at least for them, was never too demanding. They came up with a plan, not an easy one, but they acted on it: “And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay” (Mark 2:4).

They brought him up to the roof. Assuming no outside staircase was there for them to climb, it would have taken them quite some time to all get onto the roof. I think this might have happened: the young man from his ward climbed up to the roof first. Being young and full of energy,



**Elder Chi Hong
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it should not have been too difficult for him. His senior home teaching companion from the elders quorum and the tall full-time missionary from the United States would have pushed really hard from down below. The Relief Society sister would have reminded them to be careful and given them words of encouragement. The men would then uncover the roof while the sister continued to comfort the man as he waited to be healed—to be able to move by himself and to be free.

This rescue assignment required everyone working together. At the crucial moment, it would take careful coordination to lower the palsy from the roof—the four would have to work in unity and in perfect harmony. There could not be any discord among them. They would have to lower the man at the same pace. If someone released the rope faster than the other three, the man would fall out of his bed. He just could not hold on by himself due to his disability. In order to assist Christ, we have to work together in unity and in perfect harmony. Everyone, every position, and every calling is important. We have to be united under our Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, the sick man was laid before Jesus: “When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee” (Mark 2:5). Jesus showed mercy on him and healed him. Not only physically, but also spiritually—“Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.” Isn’t that wonderful? Wouldn’t we like that to happen to us all too? Certainly I would.

Do we know anyone in our life that could have a spiritual palsy, someone who just could not come back to the Church by him or herself? He or she could be one of our children, one of

our parents, a spouse, a relative, or a friend.

With so many more full-time missionaries now available in each Church unit, it will be wise for bishops and branch presidents to make better use of their ward and branch councils. The bishop can invite each member of the ward council to come with a list of names of those who may need assistance. Members in the ward council will counsel together carefully on how they might best help. Bishops listen attentively to the ideas and make assignments at the end. Full-time missionaries are great resources to the wards in these rescue efforts. They are young and full of energy. They love to have a list of specific names to work with. They enjoy working together with ward members. They know these are great “finding” opportunities for them. They are devoted in establishing the Lord’s kingdom. They have a strong testimony that they will become more Christlike as they participate in these rescuing efforts.

In conclusion, may I share with you one more hidden treasure found in these scriptures. It is in verse 5: “When Jesus saw *their* faith” (emphasis added). I did not notice this in the past—*their* faith. Our combined faith will also affect the well-being of others. Who were those people that Jesus was mentioning? It could well include the four who carried the man with palsy, the man himself, the people who had prayed for him, and all those who were there listening to the preaching of Jesus and cheering quietly in their hearts for the soon-to-come miracle. It could also include a spouse, a parent, a son or a daughter, a missionary, a quorum president, a Relief Society president, a bishop, or a faraway friend. We can all help one another. We should always

be anxiously engaged in seeking out to rescue those in need.

I testify that Jesus Christ is a God of miracles. He loves us all and has the power to save and

heal, both physically and spiritually. When we assist Him in His mission of saving souls, we too will be rescued in the process. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

LOCAL NEWS

Scriptures—A Source and a Resource for Life

President John Gutty

Hyderabad Stake

I recollect the scripture mastery verse, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

This scripture has influenced many lives in this world of the love of God. I wonder what would have been the condition of people in the world if they did not believe in the scriptures. The importance and significance of scriptures in the life of many has tremendous influence in converting them to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

My maternal grandfather was a strong follower of Jesus Christ. He preached the gospel of Jesus Christ in a remote village in the state of Andhra Pradesh, and my

grandmother was a teacher who also was a great missionary in the village. During summer vacation, all of us used to travel to the village and spend time with them. I remember every evening my grandmother used to make us sing hymns, read scriptures, and gave every one of us an opportunity to pray. Though we did not know how to read and write in our mother tongue, we learned from every scripture that was read. This was a great example to all of us, which influenced our lives very much as we grew.

During one of our stake conferences, we visited a member’s home. The family included a father, a mother, and a son. The family had scriptures in their hands. We inquired what they were reading. Their answer was

they were reading scriptures to find answers to their questions. They were reading Doctrine and Covenants 101:6–8:

“Behold, I say unto you, there were jarrings, and contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires among them; therefore by these things they polluted their inheritances.

“They were slow to hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God; therefore, the Lord their God is slow to hearken unto their prayers, to answer them in the day of their trouble.

“In the day of their peace they esteemed lightly my counsel; but, in the day of their trouble, of necessity they feel after me.”

A few years ago I saw that most of the Primary children were asked to carry their own



John Guty

scriptures in the Church. I knew that some were so young that they could not read yet, but they still carried their scripture bags. I praised their Primary teachers who taught them the importance of scriptures at that tender age. The gospel and the Church are helping this generation to grow with an attitude that will surely lead them to God.

As the scriptures teach:

“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39).

Three years ago, there was a fear in my heart that my son would not be able to read English well, especially the scriptures

because biblical words were tough to pronounce. Then my wife and I decided that we would read scriptures with him each night. To our surprise my son was very comfortable in reading the scriptures within no time.

I still remember the first scripture he memorized:

“. . . Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3). He presented this scripture during a Primary program.

My daughter had the same difficulty and today I enjoy when they read scriptures during family scripture study.

Stephen R. Covey said, “An effective way to achieve integrity and unity is to prayerfully study the scriptures. It will replace confusion with clarity and exhausting tension with worthy goals. . . .

“Prayerful study fortifies us against temptation and gives us inward security so we can afford the risks of loving unconditionally, freely, and spontaneously without fearing or demanding response” (“Likening the Scriptures unto Ourselves,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1974, 78).

According to 1 Corinthians 2:10, the scriptures are given

by revelation and can only be understood by revelation: “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

But when we study and ponder the scriptures, we will be recipients of personal revelations. Prayerful study of scriptures will not only lead to revelations but also to knowing Jesus Christ personally. Knowing Jesus Christ means a lot to many members, as they have a miraculous, memorable, and meaningful testimonies of Him. But many members have difficulty in reading scriptures daily. My testimony and that of many others is that “a page a day of Book of Mormon reading will keep the Satan away.”

As advised by many leaders, do not think that you should start reading the scriptures from the beginning. You can always start from cross references or you may choose to read by topic. If you want to know and love Jesus Christ, read the scriptures.

It might have been ten years ago when we had a challenge to read the entire Book of Mormon in 30 days. I know many members in the Church who read the Book of Mormon and testified

that it was certainly another testament of Jesus Christ. I remember when I was serving in a district presidency as the first counselor, Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave us an assignment to write one page on the Atonement of Jesus Christ. I took this opportunity to know personally that He is my Savior and Redeemer. I did not know the purpose behind the assignment, but I truly knew after completing it that I had come closer to the Savior.

“Ask, and it shall be given you; . . . knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7). Let every man learn this principle of the gospel, let everyone be a true follower of Jesus Christ by applying all the gospel principles. Counsel with God in all your doings, so as to be a recipient of heavenly blessings. I pray that every man will learn and live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I testify, brothers and sisters, that as we have taken the name of Jesus Christ upon us and have known Him as our Savior and Redeemer, we have a greater responsibility in sharing His gospel with others. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

The Miracle of Eternal Marriage

Jayganesh and Tamanna Jones

Let me begin by saying that our God is a God of miracles and “He doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world” (2 Nephi 26:24). The Lord will bless us with what we need and desire, if it is right in His sight. For us, having the desire to marry in the temple was right, and the Lord blessed us with it. I testify that the Lord does answer prayers and is bound to bless us when we do as He commands (see D&C 82:10).

As a young woman I often sang the hymn “Families Can Be Together Forever” (*Children’s Songbook*, 188) and while singing the following lines: “While I am in my early years, I’ll prepare most carefully, so I can marry in God’s temple for eternity,” they seemed like a fairy tale.

Right marriage begins with right dating. My husband and I started to get to know each other in 2012. Even though we had not met officially, we

**Tamanna and
Jayganesh Jones**



JAYGANESH JONES

both knew that the Lord had brought us together for a purpose. My husband is a convert to the Church and has been a member for the past five years. I was raised in the Church and served as a missionary in the Philippines. My husband is from the heart of South India, Chennai, and I was raised in the capital city, New Delhi. Even though we come from different backgrounds and cultures, the restored gospel of Jesus Christ defines our lives. From the beginning of our courtship, we prayed and kept the Lord first in all our decisions. We both had the righteous desire of a temple marriage, and we continually prayed and fasted about our decision. We decided to meet in February 2013.

We both liked each other and thought of getting engaged and going to the temple. My husband had the courage to talk to my family and get things moving for us. We prepared ourselves spiritually and physically to marry in the temple. On October 2, 2013, we entered the Hong Kong China Temple and were sealed as husband and wife for all time and eternity. Was it easy? No, but it was worth the effort.

We both had learned from our past and knew that the Lord would never fail us if we incline our will to His. We believe in marriage, and what more can one ask for when it is forever? The foundation of an eternal marriage is the Savior, Jesus Christ. When built upon the rock of our Redeemer, marriage will face the tests and trials of temporal life but will stand firm and prevail.

We encourage the youth of the Church to not lose sight of this single most important dream of their life: temple marriage. Marrying in the temple has brought us closer to the Lord and to each other. Let me reiterate the reasons for a temple marriage as stated by Elder John A. Widtsoe (1872–1952) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

- It is the Lord's desire and will.
- It is in harmony with the sacred nature of the marriage covenant.
- It tends to insure marital happiness.
- It permits the association of husband and wife for time and for all eternity.
- It provides the eternal possession of children and family relationship.

- It acts as a restraint against evil.
 - It furnishes the opportunity for endless progression.
 - It places the family under the protection of the power of the Priesthood.
 - It provides a God-like destiny for human beings.
- (“Why Marry in the Temple?”
Eternal Marriage Student Manual [2003], 178–180.)

We plead with you young men of the Church to keep yourselves worthy to enter the house of the Lord with someone whom the Lord has approved to be your companion for time and all eternity. To the young women, we encourage you to have faith and know that there will always be someone who can take you to the temple. ■

Jayganesht Jones serves as the branch president of Chennai Second Branch.

Becoming Christlike

Elder Pydimalla

I entered the Philippines Missionary Training Center on August 11, 2012. While there I was able to go through the Manila Philippines Temple. It was a great spiritual experience to me as I prepared to serve in the India Bangalore Mission.



Elder Pydimalla Swaroop

I was first assigned to serve in the Chennai Second Branch. I had a great experience serving there with my trainer. According to mission rules, we should wake up at 6:30 a.m. every morning. At first I was not able to get up so early. My companion taught me about obedience. I learned that it is the first law of heaven and that all blessings flow through obedience to God's commandments. I then started to wake up and get ready for the day on time. It was still difficult to me. Every day I was so tired and felt that I wanted to go home.

In my personal study, I read about the Atonement of Jesus Christ and His divine mission.

I learned that He was obedient to the will of Heavenly Father. I also started to communicate with God through prayer. Every morning and before going to bed every night, I prayed. I always remember the scripture Ether 12:27, "And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them."

I started to strengthen my faith by obeying and doing things more exactly. As I did so day by day,



I developed my testimony of Jesus Christ, and relying on His Atonement each day went on like the twinkling of an eye.

I also learned to love people and my companions. When I got transferred to different areas, I noted that sometimes people in that area and or my companions were different. I learned from scriptures the two great commandments:

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

“This is first and great commandment.

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

“On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:37–40).

Every day I remember these two commandments in my mind—love all people and love all my companions. Life has been easier for me when I try to understand people and love everyone just as Jesus did.

I have served in Chennai, Coimbatore, and many branches in Bangalore. I have loved each area and loved serving the members, leaders, and people I meet there.

While I was serving in the Coimbatore First Branch, my companion and I worked with members. We brought one less-active family back to Church. Through this family we were able to teach and baptize six people. In Coimbatore my converts expressed their gratitude for receiving the restored gospel in their life and the happiness they felt.

Another important part of my mission was learning Christlike attributes. And it’s something I am still learning. *Preach My Gospel* tell us that these attributes are gifts from God. My great desire is to be a Christlike missionary. It requires me to do more than missionary things. Changing and becoming like Christ requires faith, repentance, keeping the commandments, an increased influence of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.

My favorite hymn is “Count Your Blessings” (*Hymns*, no. 241), where we are encouraged to name our blessings “one by one.” My greatest blessing has been to be in the temple. I am grateful to be a missionary. On my mission I have had the opportunity to meet Apostles, become more like Christ, and serve in the India Bangalore Mission with the pure love of Christ. ■

Elder Pydimalla serves his mission in Bangalore