

ASIA AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Being a Light to Others

By Elder Siu Hong Pon of the Seventy

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Elder Siu Hong Pon

The word *light* was one of the most commonly used term in the teachings of the gospel. The Apostle John declared that his mission was “to bear witness of the Light” (John 1:7) “which was the true light, which lighteth every man who cometh into the world” (Joseph Smith Translation John 1:9).

Our Lord Jesus Christ declared that “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). Such a declaration had been prophesied as a sign to be given

when He was born; a new star would appear in the east that would direct the Wise Men to Jerusalem to find Him (see Matthew 2:2). Samuel, the Lamanite prophet, also prophesied that at the time of His coming to the earth, “there shall be great lights in heaven, insomuch that in the night before he cometh there shall be no darkness, insomuch that it shall appear unto man as if it was day.

“Therefore, there shall be one day and a night and a day, as if it were

one day and there were no night; and this shall be unto you for a sign; for ye shall know of the rising of the sun and also of its setting; therefore they shall know of a surety that there shall be two days and a night; nevertheless the night shall not be darkened; and it shall be the night before he is born.

“And behold, there shall a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign unto you” (Helaman 14:3–5).



We need to become the wise virgins that would carry enough oil in their vessels for their lamps to prepare to meet with the bridegroom (see Matthew 25:1–13).





Our Lord Jesus Christ showed us His great example of being the light, and in return, we are asked to also become lights to the world.

Nevertheless, the most important message from the Light of the World is that “he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

In His earthly ministry, our Lord Jesus Christ showed us His great example of being the light, and in return, we are asked to also become lights to the world. He asks us to “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

The word *light* has also been quoted in many scriptures and teachings of prophets and apostles when referring to the gospel, the knowledge, and inspiration from the Holy Spirit. We can easily understand the meaning of these teachings when light is used as an example, particularly when comparing light to darkness.

We understand that light represents guidance, direction, hope, safety, and understanding. Light is the source that we always look for in darkness so as to escape from unsafe, anxious,

confused, and disoriented feelings. We all hope that we can carry strong lights or we can strongly reflect the light when lights fall upon us. To become such, we need to be cleansed and pure so that we are worthy of carrying or reflecting light. In other words, we need to develop the spiritual strength within ourselves that can become the source of our light. This spiritual strength come through our faith, keeping the commandments and our covenants, and living a virtuous life. We need to become the wise virgins that

would carry enough oil in their vessels for their lamps to prepare to meet with the bridegroom (see Matthew 25:1–13). We cannot become a stained mirror that cannot reflect the light.

Sometimes in life we may rely upon the light of others, but we do need to become the source of light on our own. The Lord teaches us, “Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (D&C 88:63). We need to act so that the Lord’s promise can be fulfilled in us and help us develop our own source of light.

Today, it may not be easy to be the light of the world when we are surrounded by temptations that the evil one has placed before us, as he attempts to confuse us and then ensnare us. Once we are caught by these temptations, sometimes it is nearly impossible to relinquish, and our light diminishes. To be safe and able to maintain our light, we must recognize what these temptations are and then we need to be unwavering in our determination to avoid them.

We can easily see nowadays that there are those who would have us believe that what once was considered unrighteous is now acceptable. I hope we would remember the scripture, “Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness” (2 Nephi 15:20). We need to

remember the wise teaching of the Apostle Paul when we face temptation: “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles recently taught, “As evil increases in the world, there is a compensatory spiritual power for the righteous. As the world slides from its spiritual moorings, the Lord prepares the way for those who seek Him, offering them greater assurance, greater confirmation, and greater confidence in the spiritual direction they are traveling. The gift of the Holy Ghost becomes a brighter light in the emerging twilight.”¹ Our worthiness to allow the Holy Spirit to accompany us will become the powerful source of our light to others.

Bearing Christlike attributes will allow us to become a strong reflection of light in our life. Our Lord Jesus Christ has extended His “come, follow me” invitation (see Luke 18:22) to all of us. Our discipleship should really reflect who we are as indicated in the Apostle Paul’s Epistle to Timothy: “be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12). We need to act upon these teachings.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said in the general priesthood session of the April 2015 general conference: “The Church is not an automobile showroom—a place to put ourselves on display so that others can admire our spirituality, capacity, or prosperity. It is more like a service center, where vehicles in need of repair come for maintenance and rehabilitation.”² President Thomas S. Monson has given a powerful teaching in the October 2015 general conference to explain how we can be examples in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity to others.³ May I extend my invitation to all of you to read again and again this prophetic message so that we can learn and remember how we can be an example and a light.

Let us all strive to become clean and pure so that we can be a light and a strong reflection of light. I know that the Lord Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer and that He is our advocate with Heavenly Father. He is our example and our strength. May we all commit to follow Him to become a shining light to the world. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Neil L. Andersen, “A Compensatory Spiritual Power for the Righteous” (Brigham Young University Education Week devotional, Aug. 18, 2015), 3, speeches.byu.edu.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “On Being Genuine,” *Liahona*, May 2015, 83.
3. See Thomas S. Monson, “Be an Example and a Light,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 86–88.

LOCAL NEWS

Being an Example

By the Primary children from Indiranagar Ward, Bangaluru India Stake



⇐ **Nicholas:** I can listen to God to give good help to others and to learn to be a good boy.

Precilla: I can be an example by attending church regularly and by reading the scriptures. ⇒



⇐ **Catherine:** Attend church regularly, read the scriptures every day. Follow the Ten Commandments.

Rock: I can help others. I can teach the things that the Lord has taught me. ⇒



⇐ **Maegan:** Being a light to others is going to church regularly and reading the scriptures. I can teach the gospel to others. Other ways are:

- Keeping the commandments
- Helping others when they are in trouble
- Sharing love
- Showing kindness
- Attending all church meetings on Sunday
- Partaking of the sacrament



⇐ **Cameron:** I was just pondering on how I can be a light to my friends. I came to the conclusion that:

- I can teach them to do good work.
- I can tell them how much God loves them.
- I can teach them the gospel.
- I can help by going with missionaries to their homes. ■

Getting to Know the Truth

By Elder Muthyam

From my childhood, I attended many churches, and being a non-Christian I went to many places of worship. I saw the different concepts of God and beliefs observed by different groups of people, but all these concepts confused me. As I attended churches, I learned some Bible stories and I learned much from my faithful mother. Seeing all this brought a lot of questions to my mind.

*Who am I in this great universe?
Once I die, what happens?*

These questions bothered me a lot as I could not find answers.

Another question that troubled me was about prophets. I learned stories from the Bible about prophets. I used to think, “Why has God left us today without prophets when there are a lot of people with different religions and different concepts of God?”

I found myself helpless because no one could answer all these questions I had in my mind. Eventually, I stopped attending churches and started practicing my religion. I diligently continued for many years.

After I completed grade 12, I came to Rajahmundry to pursue my graduation. On the way to my

college every day, I used to see The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I never attended this church because my friends told me that it was an American Church and that people speak only English there. I completed my first year BCA course and I was working part-time at Reliance Mart.

One fine morning I went to my job and the Mart wasn't very busy. I observed two young men shopping, searching for something on the shelves. I went and offered help. As we conversed, they told me they were from the Church and invited me to learn from them. They gave one invitation card on which I found questions that I had had in my mind for the last 18 years. I was surprised to see they were so confident to give answers to these questions:

Where did I come from?

What is the purpose of my life?

What happens when I die?

Later, I took discussions from the elders. They answered every question that I had. They gave me a copy of the Book of Mormon and asked me to read and pray to Heavenly Father to know if the book is true. For the first time in my life, I sincerely prayed to God to know for myself that all that these elders had taught me was true. I felt His love. I learned how the still, small voice feels like. It was a great feeling that I had never



Elder Muthyam

had in my life. I never thought that my questions would be answered until I met those wonderful messengers of the truth. It was great to know that we have a living prophet of God today to help us walk in the right way in this world of confusion and changing values.

I was later baptized. From the time I was baptized, I started seeing great changes in my life. Even my family was surprised to see me changing myself for the better. Later, I brought my brothers and friends to church and they too received the restored gospel and were baptized in the Church.

Initially, I never thought of serving a mission. I have seen the help and support from the Lord through the members in every step of my journey in the Church. At one point I strongly

decided to go on a mission, and from that time everything worked well. My branch members supported me, and their encouragement was tremendous. They were there for me all the time to help me. I finished my graduation in 2014 and I applied for my mission. I received a call to serve in the India New Delhi Mission. I had been baptized on June 17, 2012. Exactly two years after my baptism I left my family to serve a two-year mission.

My branch continually supported my family and helped my brothers and my friend also go on missions. They recently started serving in the India Bangalore Mission.

Christ taught us to “love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matthew 19:19). One of the best ways to show our love to our fellow brothers and sisters is to invite them to come unto Christ

and help them to receive the restored gospel in their life, where they can find true happiness just as we found. Every time I do “finding,” I always feel like all these people around us have invisible question marks on their head. Now it is a great opportunity and obligation as members of the Church to help others know the truth and find the true purpose of their life. All because two young men sacrificed two years of their life to help me find the true Church. This gospel has filled my life and the lives of my family members with happiness. That is the very reason my family and I decided to serve the Lord.

I know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true Church and the Lord’s kingdom upon the whole face of the earth. I know that the Book of Mormon is the word of God. I am so grateful for the gospel in my life, which changed the destiny of my and my family members’ lives. I know that the Lord lives and that He loves us. He is no stranger to those who seek Him diligently. I know that Christ’s Church and gospel were restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. I know this is true in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

Elder Muthyam is currently serving his mission in the India New Delhi Mission

Peace, Be Still

By Monica Gupta

Patience is a virtue.

I had to repeat this phrase to myself many times over this past year. Challenges come to us in many ways: A difficult child, physical limitations, financial struggles, mental illness, and other assorted trials come in the form of learning to teach us how to deal with life on earth. Regardless of the quality of life we might be living, trials and challenges have never spared anyone. People from every walk of life find themselves saying the same thing to themselves as they seek to find joy in the journey. In the same way, this mortal life inflicts many great trials upon us that we must confront and endure. And in such situations, we find questioning to ourselves; What did I do to deserve this? Can I ever be happy again? Has God forgotten me? Will these hard times ever end? Why can’t I find peace and comfort anywhere? Why does not this pain just go away?

So it’s no wonder that I found myself standing in the same complaining category (which I am not so proud about).

In such tough times, the blessed words of our living prophet, Thomas S. Monson, brought peace and comfort to my troubling heart:

“At times there appears to be no light at the tunnel’s end—no dawn to break



Elder Muthyam’s brothers and friend

the night's darkness. We feel surrounded by the pain of broken hearts, the disappointment of shattered dreams, and the despair of vanished hopes. We join in uttering the biblical plea, 'Is there no balm in Gilead?' [Jeremiah 8:22]. We are inclined to view our own personal misfortunes through the distorted prism of pessimism. We feel abandoned, heartbroken, alone.

"To all who so despair, may I offer the assurance of the Psalmist's words: 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning' (Psalm 30:5).

"Whenever we are inclined to feel burdened down with the blows of life's fight, let us remember that others have passed the same way, have endured, and then have overcome" ("Meeting Life's Challenges, *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 68).

This very quote reminds me of Savior and the agony that He went through in the Garden of Gethsemane when He took upon Himself the sins and afflictions of all mankind that is beyond any description. The agony was so much that Savior, the perfect Son of our perfect Father in Heaven, cried out to the heavens to let the bitter cup pass, for He could not take it anymore (see Matthew 26:39). Then a merciful, loving Father sent divine help in the form of an angel to His suffering Son (see Luke 22:43). Strengthened, He surrendered His will to His loving Father who had sent

Him to atone for us and to pave a way for mankind to be reunited with our Heavenly Father only if we follow the Savior. Similarly, when afflictions sour our souls and we feel that pain is too much for us to bear, in those crucial hours, if we call upon Heavenly Father in the name of our Savior, putting our complete trust in Him that the succor will be provided to comfort our troubled hearts, divine help will be provided. It's a sure promise from a loving Heavenly Father who loves us beyond measures, and He is the ultimate epitome of love. God is love and He never leaves us alone.

When tragedy struck my life, I felt so dark inside and lost hope to ever smile again. Every day I found myself buried in my own darkness, a world which was alien to light, hope, and even faith. Every night my eyes watered my pillow with tears that never seemed to cease. I felt as if I was being punished greatly for a mistake that I did not even commit. The pain was too much to bear. In those dark hours of my life when I did not feel like reading the word of God, I pushed myself to do it. Misery was speaking in my head not to pray, for what had I gained from it after all, that I was still suffering? So it's not worth it. But I pushed myself to pray, knowing that Satan was trying to have me and that I should never let him do that. I knew that if I lost the gospel I would be finished, so quitting was

never an option for me. As I went on my knees and prayed for comfort and understand, the Spirit brought these words of the hymn "Master, the Tempest Is Raging" (*Hymns*, no. 105) in my mind:

*The winds and the waves shall obey
thy will:*

Peace, be still.

*Whether the wrath of the storm-
tossed sea*

*Or demons or men or whatever it be,
No waters can swallow the ship
where lies*

*The Master of ocean and earth and
skies.*

*They all shall sweetly obey thy will:
Peace, be still; peace, be still.*

*They all shall sweetly obey thy will:
Peace, peace, be still.*

And suddenly all the anger and anguish melted away and a feeling of comfort and peace overpowered me from top to bottom. I knew the Savior was there. Tears started flowing from my eyes and I felt as if the Savior Himself was telling me, "Dear Daughter, I won't let you suffer this pain alone. Please know that I am here and that I understand perfectly what you are going through because I have been there before you and I have felt it. I am giving my peace to you, so let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid. Be of good cheer. Do not doubt but be believing



**Monica
Gupta with
friends**

for it too shall come to pass. Hold on a little longer; keep holding my hand and I will lead you along.”

Though even today I do not understand perfectly why it happened and why I had to go through all that I went through, I have learned that I do not need to understand everything. The things that I do not understand I should leave to the Lord and He will make sure that I get that understanding when the right time comes. And till that time comes, I must hold on to the iron rod because quitting is never an option. I am learning that trusting God in all things is the highest form of worship I can extend to Him, especially in the things I do not understand.

I am learning that God is never hidden, yet sometimes we are covered by a pavilion of motivations that draw us away from God and make Him seem distant and inaccessible. God is not unable to see us or communicate with us, but we may be unwilling to listen or submit to His will and His time.

Every day God is teaching me that life does not have to be perfect to be wonderful, and just as with faith, happiness too is a choice that we make every day regardless of our present circumstances. I know His plans for my life are eternally better than what I have planned for myself. I am learning that there is always a silver lining in every unpleasant situation because all things work together for our good

according to the eternal purposes of God the Father who is omniscient and has the ultimate charge of our very lives (see D&C 122:7).

Through these difficult times, God is teaching me to be patient with others, with Him, and even with myself. The Savior is the perfect example in all situations and is teaching me that as I reach out to others to comfort and help them, my own burdens are made light. I have felt that innumerable times in my life’s journey. God will not always take away our pains even when we desperately want them to be removed, but He will always provide us the comforting peace that will sustain us in tough times as we humbly reach out to Him in sincere prayer.

So in turbulent times when all seems dark and you might feel that nothing is left and you can’t move forward even a step further, remind yourself that God’s loving, divine arms are always extended to you and will not let you fall if only you trust Him and do all that He asks you to do. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of true joy, which does not mean a life without pain but a life where we can feel inner peace and the assurance that we are never alone. The sun will always rise, flowers will still bloom, and light will always triumph over darkness because whether or not we know it, God is in control. In the sacred name of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, amen. ■

Sister Monica Gupta lives in New Delhi