

ASIA AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Inviting the Spirit into our Lives

By Elder Benjamin Mingzhe Tai
Of the Seventy

Elder Benjamin
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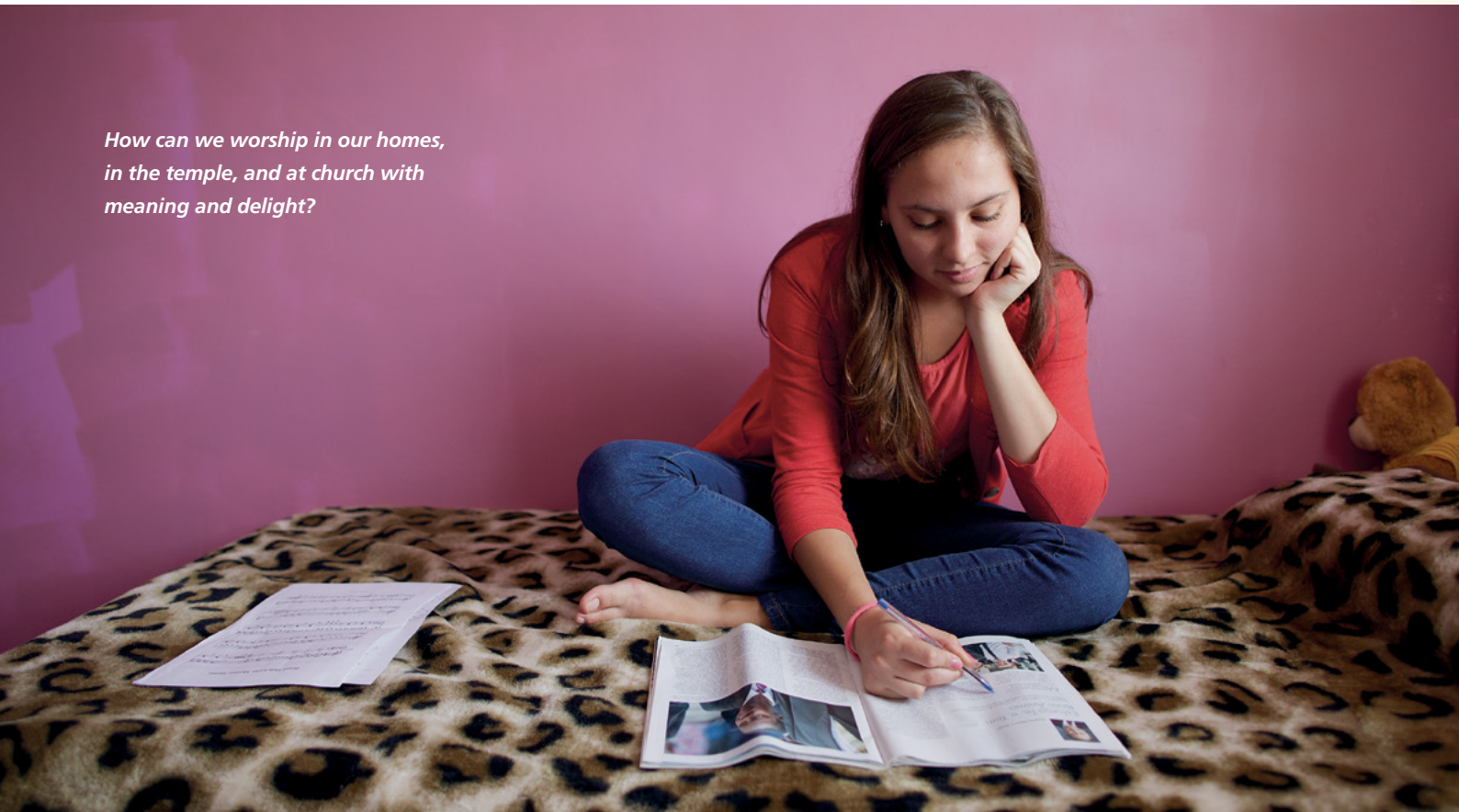


One morning, I dropped off my son at seminary and was driving home when smoke started to emanate from the hood of my car. I was on a two-lane mountain road. There was nowhere I could pull over to stop, and the road would soon be full of commuting cars and buses. I knew that if my car was to

break down on this road, it would cause severe traffic congestion at the busiest time of day and it would be impossible for a tow truck to reach me. I needed to decide whether to stop where I was and wait for help or to continue forward or turn back, not knowing how much further the car could go.

In our life's journey, we will face unanticipated challenges and difficult decisions. Our options may seem limited with no clear right answer. As disciples of the Savior, we find comfort in knowing that throughout our lives and especially during times of duress, that "[He] will not leave [us] comfortless" and we need "let not [our] heart

How can we worship in our homes, in the temple, and at church with meaning and delight?





be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:18, 27). This comfort, peace, and confidence is granted by the Holy Ghost, who is given to all worthy individuals as a constant companion.

We receive the gift of the Holy Ghost after baptism by the laying on of hands when we are confirmed as members of the Church. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

“As we receive this ordinance, each of us accepts a sacred and ongoing responsibility to desire, to seek, to work, and to so live that we indeed ‘receive the Holy Ghost’ and its attendant spiritual gifts. ‘For what doth it profit a man if a gift is bestowed upon him, and he

receive not the gift? Behold, he rejoices not in that which is given unto him, neither rejoices in him who is the giver of the gift’ (D&C 88:33).” (David A. Bednar, “Receive the Holy Ghost,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 95.)

The companionship of the Holy Ghost comes as we consistently invite Him into our lives.

The scriptures contain examples of special blessings that come only after we invite. In the Bible, the resurrected Savior, after conversing with two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus, revealed His true identity to them after they invited Him, saying, “Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in

to tarry with them. . . . And their eyes were opened, and they knew him” (Luke 24:29, 31).

In the Book of Mormon is recorded the Lord’s appearance to the people and the miraculous administration to the sick and children that took place only after the Lord “cast his eyes round about again on the multitude, and beheld they were in tears, and did look steadfastly upon him as if they would ask him to tarry a little longer with them” (3 Nephi 17:5).

How do we invite and receive the Holy Ghost in our lives? May we ponder the following questions as individuals and as families:

- How do we prepare for and honor covenants?
- How can we make individual and family prayers more inviting to the Spirit?
- Do we act upon the impressions we receive when we diligently search the scriptures?
- How do we guard our thoughts, actions, and language in a world that does not share our standards?
- Which relationships and friendships can we strengthen?
- How can we worship in our homes, in the temple, and at church with meaning and delight?

As we strive to invite and receive the Holy Ghost, His influence becomes pervasive in our lives.

On that morning on the mountain road, I prayed for guidance. Despite the desperation of the moment, I was granted a moment of calm and clarity in which I knew that I needed to drive forward to a bigger road where I could stop and seek assistance. As I drove, the smoke intensified and the car began to lose power. At the

point where it felt like the car could go no further, the road began to slope downwards and I was able to coast to the main road where I rolled to a gentle stop on the driveway of a fire station, where the car stopped functioning. I am grateful for the peace, clarity, and confidence that the Holy Ghost granted me that day.

During this joyous Christmas season, may we choose to draw closer to the Savior by inviting the Holy Ghost into our lives. May we invite others to partake of the same privilege so that the Spirit of the Lord will “guide [us] in wisdom’s paths that [we] may be blessed, prospered, and preserved” (Mosiah 2:36) throughout our lives. ■

LOCAL PAGES

Young Women of Indiranagar Ward, Bengaluru Stake Share: The Best Christmas I Ever Had

My best Christmas experience was when we were surprised by our parents saying we were going to Kerala, our parents’ native home. We live in Bengaluru and were excited to go see all our relatives. So we hopped on the train and off we went. When it was midnight, my sister and I shouted loudly, “Merry Christmas!” All the passengers in the train were amazed at our wishing. We cut cake and shared with other passengers to help them have joy for the birth of Jesus Christ. It was very exciting to celebrate Jesus’s birth on a train and that too with total strangers. Oh! How joyful we felt in sharing the spirit of Christmas. We were so blessed with peace and joy.



Nancy

When we reached our destination, I was able to see my entire family together for the first time. Our relatives showed great love and cared for us. We participated in activities and games together. Our family took

the lead to ask for prayers. We also conducted scriptural games, which they all enjoyed. My little heart was filled with peace as we celebrated Christmas with my extended family. I wish this would be an enduring tradition where love is shared at Jesus’s birth. Merry Christmas!

— Nancy Diana Johnson

The best Christmas happens for me every year. My family tradition is that we gather at one of our aunt’s or our house on the 24th of December. When we gather we first have dinner and my mom always prepares a simple food of rice, sambhar, and fish fry. The food is always appreciated by all as the



Whitney



Suchitra



Satabdika

best. The food is unlimited, especially the fish, and everyone has more than two. We then have skits that we children put up on the birth of Jesus or something connected to it, we sing Christmas songs, and then each member of the family shares what blessings the Lord has given to them in the year. All the families share their testimonies. I love the moment after this because we open the gifts placed secretly under the Christmas tree. I am excited to receive gifts from my parents as well as my relatives. I wonder what gifts are there for me.

I always wait for Christmas season because it is a time to love, share, and forgive. I am waiting for this Christmas to arrive soon because I enjoy celebrating Jesus's birth. What a joyful season it is! I wish a joyful Christmas celebration to all of you.

— Cameron Whitney Samson

December 24, 2015, was my first time spending time in church. Youth and families joined for Christmas Eve. We played games, sang songs, and watched videos. We talked and came to know each other better. At midnight, we wished each other a Merry Christmas. We shared food and enjoyed each other's companionship.

It was the best Christmas I have had so far. Merry Christmas!

— Suchithra

On December 24, 2015, I had my greatest Christmas ever because I was with my cousins and we all enjoyed going to a beautiful place to spend time together. We had a wonderful time. On the 25th we were returning home by car and one of the cousins said it was the worst Christmas she ever had because we were in the car and not able to enjoy the day. I said to

her, "Why are you saying this? We went to such a beautiful place and had a wonderful time, and that is a gift." She said that is not a gift. I said, "It is a gift. Being all together is a gift. We should be happy for being together and that is a gift. We should be happy that we got this day as it is the birth of Jesus and that is a gift." My cousin understood the significance of the "gifts," and she exclaimed, "Ah! That is wonderful." I was so happy for making her feel good on Christmas day. Merry Christmas! ■

— Satabdhika

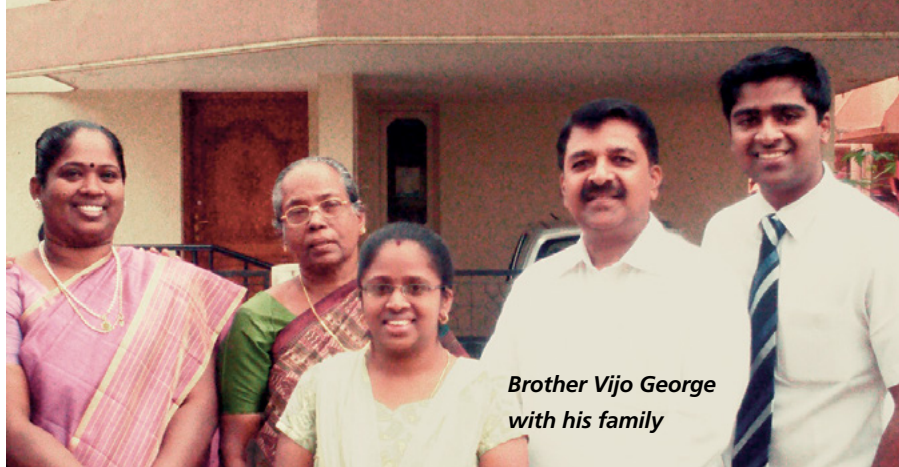
"What gift can I give to my Savior on Christmas?"

From my childhood I had this question in my mind: "What gift can I give to my Savior on Christmas?" I did not find the answer to my question until I was on my mission.

Previously, every Christmas we would go out as a family. I would enjoy the time with my family. While I was serving my mission, on Christmas day I woke up and my companion came and said, "Merry Christmas, Elder." When he said these words I was thinking, "If I was at home, I would be

with my family on our outing." I asked my companion the same question that I'd had for long time: "What gift can I give to my Savior on Christmas?" He said, "Elder, by the end of this day, you will find out the answer to your question." When he said this I was thinking, "How will I receive an answer?" As missionaries we began our day with a word of prayer, and we left the apartment to preach the gospel.

As we were walking, we felt that we needed to go to a specific area.



**Brother Vijo George
with his family**

We went there and met a family of five. We began asking them questions to find out their interests. We felt that we needed to teach them the plan of salvation. Soon after the discussion, my companion and I shared our testimonies about the plan of salvation, and we could see tears in the eyes of the father who was listening to us. At that moment, I remembered these words from D&C 18:10, “Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God.” It really

helped me understand that if we bring one soul unto Christ, it would be the most precious gift, which we can give to Christ.

I know that heaven would rejoice if a soul repented and came unto Christ. Heavenly Father wants us to become an effective tool in His hands so that we can help ourselves and others enter into His presence to live with Him forever. ■

— *Brother George Vijo, Coimbatore
First Branch*

“Jesus is our Savior. Believe in Him.” We prayed for them to believe in Jesus Christ.

During job interviews, some interviewers would ask me why I was a Christian. Some would argue with me. This hurt me but I did not mind it because I believed in Jesus.

I was once working in a director’s house of a private company as an administrator and secretary. When they found out that I’d found Christ, they were angry, saying, “Why did you do this? You should not have done this.” The matriarch of the house told me that I had to come in to do the daily rituals. This was very difficult for me because if I said no I would lose my job, and if I said yes my job would be stable but I would be denying my beliefs. But I believed in Jesus Christ, so I prayed earnestly to be able to keep my job and not have to do the rituals. I shared this with my brothers and sisters at church, asking them to pray for me. So they also joined in praying for me and my job. I saw a miracle—the matriarch did not ask me to do rituals anymore. This was a great relief for me. My testimony of the Savior grew solid.

Just when I thought my problems were solved with that same job, I started having more problems with the staff. When I sat with them, they all talked about me finding Christ.

My Way to Jesus Christ

Six years ago I did not know Jesus Christ properly. I was facing so many problem in my life. I was struggling to find a job every 3–4 months. I did not have a stable job, which caused financial problems for my family. Sometimes my wife and I would fight with each other. My kids were very sick, especially my son Aryan Chauhan. I had to take out a loan for my family’s needs. I went searching for answers as I was having so many problems. One day I was sitting with my sister-in-law’s husband, and I shared my problems with him. That day he told me about the gospel and

Lord Jesus Christ. After I heard that, I felt so good and decided that I would go to church.

So I went to church. I felt so good. And from that day on, I never looked back. I was able to get a good job with a good salary which helped me to pay off all my loans.

Enduring for Christ’s Sake

After I found Christ, I faced many challenges in my family, with relatives, and at work. My family and relatives spoke behind my back, saying that I had done wrong. They used abusive language, but I kept saying to them,

They always used abusive language with me, and I always forgave them and told them about Jesus, but they did not understand my words. This problem continued and I was very disturbed because I was the only person who was a Christian in the company. I felt very depressed. I was alone. No one would sit with me to eat. No one would talk with me properly, but I continued to believe that Jesus Christ is my personal Savior. I know that if you believe and follow the commandments, He will open the doors of blessings. I know this because of the blessings I received.

Thank God my job continued there for three more years.

The Protecting Hand of God

One day the school van driver left my kids far away from home and my three kids did not remember the way home because they were too young. My kids were crying on the road. One person stopped and asked them why they were crying, and they told him about not knowing the way home. He then told them to come along with him. While the kids were walking with him, one cloth shopkeeper stopped them and asked the kids why

they were crying. So my daughter told him that they couldn't find their home as the van driver had left them there. Then the shopkeeper told the man, "You can go. I will see that the kids reach home." He found my number from my kids' ID card and called me, and I sent my wife to pick them up from him. This was God's grace that my kids were in safe hands. We thanked God that He kept safe our kids at that time and always.

My Way to the True Church of Jesus Christ

Three years back I was working in the same service lane where the church building was. And whenever I would pass by the church, I would always think that one day I will join this church. I prayed about wanting to join this church, and my prayer was answered and now I am here. On March 23, 2016, I met Mrs. Asha James and Mr. Robin James, and they shared with us about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith, and the temple. They invited us to attend church with them. We went to church on May 1, 2016. We felt very good in the church, but we had a problem with the English language, especially my wife and kids. They were unable to understand the language. We told Asha and Robin about this problem, as well as the



**Amit
Chauhan,
New Delhi
First Branch
with his
family**

branch president. We were thinking if we couldn't understand the language, then how were we going to survive in this church? The branch president shared with us his testimony, which encouraged us to continue going to church. I thank him for sharing his testimony with us.

After that we started meeting with Elders Dayam and Asya. We were learning about the Word of Wisdom. One challenge for us was to give up tea and coffee forever. Elder Dayam taught us that tea and coffee contain substances that are harmful to our bodies. He explained that our body is the temple of God, so we have to give up tea and coffee. But we could not accept this. We told Elder Dayam to please give us time to think about it and to postpone our baptism date. Elder Dayam told us to pray and ask God for help in giving up tea and coffee. He also told us that he would call us every day to follow up with us. Monday he called, but my wife had taken tea in the morning. Then he called on Tuesday, and I had taken tea. We were not happy and we felt very bad that he called every day. We decided firmly we would not take tea or coffee anymore. We are grateful to Elder Dayam, Elder Asya, and Sister Asha James for everything. And we are thankful for Jesus Christ. I have learned a lot from the Lord and His gospel.

Change

*Before I was very short-tempered,
but now I am no more
short-tempered.*

*Before I was not scared to sin,
but now I am scared to sin.*

*Before I used to lie in so many
things, but now I don't lie.*

*Before I did not forgive anyone,
but now I will forgive all.*

*Before I did not help anyone,
but now I help others.*

*Before I would love my family
only, but now I have love for
others also.*

*Now still I am learning from the
Lord Jesus Christ.*

I know this Church is true and all scriptures are true. All the prophets of the Church are true prophets. The Lord Jesus Christ is my life. Without Him I am nothing and He is my Savior. ■

— Amit Chauhan, New Delhi First Branch

Feed My Sheep with a Little More of Your Time and Energy

On many occasions throughout the scriptures, the Lord asks us to feed His sheep (see, for example, John 21:15–17). It is an important commandment for each and every one of us as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to feed the Lord's sheep.

But who are these sheep? The sheep mean many of our Heavenly Father's children who are our brothers and sisters waiting for the wonderful gospel—whether they are non-members, inactive, or less active, they need to be taught because we truly have knowledge of the Lord's plan of happiness.

Feeding the Lord's sheep means:

1. Teaching them to pray so that they can receive the restored gospel and happiness in their lives.
2. Reading scriptures with them.
3. Inviting them to the church so that they can continually be taught the gospel of Jesus Christ and learn to follow His example in their lives.

These are some ways we are feeding His sheep, and this is our responsibility as a member of the Church, as a priesthood holder, and as a missionary.

When I was serving in Visakhapatnam Third Branch, I met a brother who was a returned missionary. He was also handicapped and could not walk properly. There



were some members from the Visakhapatnam Third Branch who moved to Vijayawada, and this brother was assigned to home teach those families in Vijayawada. Every time he went to do home teaching, he would take his companion and travel all the way down to Vijayawada from Visakhapatnam. It was a 6-hour journey, but he would still do his home teaching to those families.

He inspired me so much. I understood that he knew how important it is to feed the Lord's sheep, and he never complained about going all the way to Vijayawada from Visakhapatnam because he said that it was his responsibility as a member of the Church, as a priesthood holder, and as a disciple of Christ.

When Jesus Christ was on the earth, He never gave up in feeding

His sheep. Though He faced many trials and tribulations, He didn't stop feeding His sheep because He loved them. We are all His sheep. He suffered all pain for us with patience (see 1 Nephi 19:9). As disciples of Christ, why should we give up in serving our fellow beings or non-members? The restored gospel gives us peace and comfort in our lives.

Heavenly Father trusted His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, so He sent Him to earth. While on earth, Christ did His Father's will in feeding God's sheep through His wonderful missionary work. Jesus Christ trusted His 12 Apostles, and He gave them His priesthood power and authority in order to feed His sheep. In the same way, Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ trusted Joseph Smith and chose him as a prophet

in this last dispensation. And now they trust each one of us. That's why, if we're worthy, we can receive priesthood power and authority from Them in order to feed the Lord's sheep.

Missionary work is not a sacrifice of two years or 18 months, and home teaching or visiting teaching is not sacrifice of one hour a month, but they are the evidence of our love for our Heavenly Father and our Savior Jesus Christ.

So we have a work to do as priesthood holders and as members of the Church, especially you and I. Let's roll up our sleeves and do the Lord's work by putting our trust in the Lord. If we will be prayerful and faithful, we can do it! We can do it better than we have ever done before.

The Church needs our strength, our love and loyalty, and a little more of our time and energy.

So you and I can go with a determination to try little harder to be a little better. Then one day we will receive the blessings of the temple.

I know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true church on the earth.

I know that the Prophet Joseph Smith was chosen by God. I know that President Thomas S. Monson is a prophet of God, a seer, and a revelator. I know that the Book of Mormon is true. I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■