

CARIBBEAN LOCAL PAGES

MESSAGE FROM A MEMBER OF THE SEVENTY

The Joy of Sharing the Gospel

By Elder José L. Alonso

Of the Seventy

During the 2013 worldwide broadcast on the work of salvation, President Thomas S. Monson said, “Now is the time for members and missionaries to come together, to work together, to labor in the Lord’s vineyard to bring souls unto Him. He has prepared the means for us to share the gospel in a multitude of ways, and He will assist us in our labors if we will act in faith to fulfill His work.”

It excites me to hear the words of President Monson because not

only does he invite us to work together as members and missionaries, but he tells us what promises there are for us. One promise is that the Lord has prepared the means, and another is that He will help us as we strive to share the gospel with faith. Those are fabulous prophetic promises!

In the parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15:4–6, the Savior teaches some principles that have helped me to participate more actively in missionary

work. I know they work and bring great happiness. They are:

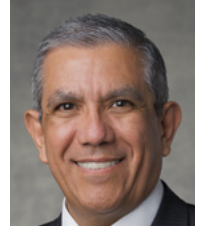
1. Identify.
2. Search until you find.
3. Invite.
4. Help.
5. Ask others to get involved.
6. Feel joy as you help them receive the saving ordinances.

Identify

This principle can be applied in many ways, but one of these would be to list all of the friends, neighbors, and relatives you know who are not yet members of the Church. Then think about who would be most receptive or most needs the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Your list might be long, but in a spirit of prayer you might be inspired to start with just a few.

Seek until you find

It often happens that the name that comes to mind is of someone whom you have not seen or lived near for a long time. Remember that if the impression is very strong, it will be necessary to do what the Savior did: look until



Elder José L. Alonso



you find him or her. Remember that by applying these principles, many of the ones you know can be blessed. Act with great faith and patience.

Invite

Once you have identified a person or family, extend an invitation to them to learn something about the gospel. It does not always begin with inviting them to listen to the missionaries. You can start by giving them something to read, listen to, or see. Or invite them to a devotional, social activity, or service project. Use technology and all the resources available in social media to invite as well. Once you are more comfortable, you can invite them to listen to the missionaries.

Help

Not everyone will accept the gospel right away, and many of them may need help. Providing help is not complicated—the principles of love and service give very good results.

Ask others to get involved

We all need to be involved with more people when we are learning something new. Living the gospel of Jesus Christ is a tremendous blessing, but for many people it represents a huge or challenging change. When others get involved in helping people

learn and accept the gospel, it encourages them to move forward.

Feel joy

The Savior said, “Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God. . . . And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him

in the kingdom of my Father!” (D&C 18:10, 15).

I fully rely on the promises that President Monson has expressed, and I am excited that all of us can be involved in this great work. I love being a missionary. I love sharing the gospel, and I love thinking of the joy we bring to our Heavenly Father and to His Son, Jesus Christ, as we are doing our part in this great work. ■

CARIBBEAN LATTER-DAY SAINT VOICES

Anxiety Breaks You Only to Refine You!

By Stacey Ann Richardson

Kingstown, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

In July 2015, while serving as a missionary in the Florida Fort Lauderdale Mission, my mind received an unexpected visit from a stranger called anxiety. There are many ways to describe what anxiety is and why it shows up almost suddenly in our lives. Many say it’s an automatic alarm clock that goes off when one feels threatened or under pressure. Was I threatened or under pressure? Why was I getting this visit?

I remember suddenly experiencing a lot of physical pain in my chest and shortness of breath. I visited the doctors many times, but no amount

of checkups could pinpoint what was causing me to feel ill.

As the months went on, I began to feel less and less energetic in the missionary work. That spark that I had seemed to have disappeared. I felt so alone and so lost. I couldn’t seem to get my feet on the ground. I felt like I had lost balance and purpose, and I couldn’t find any explanation as to what really happened to me. Everything I did felt like it was an effort even when I would give it my all.

I began to panic when doing even the simplest things. Opening my

mouth to preach the gospel was so difficult because I had lost confidence in myself. I began to run away from everything that made me feel pressured or in danger. I remember days when I didn't feel peace or hope. My mind would go on and on and would not stop. I had so much anger and frustration inside. I was strapped between two walls that were closing in on me, and I was suffocating but no one knew it. My thoughts all consisted of "What ifs." What if I had lost my true self forever? What if other people found out about me? What will they think? What if I had changed forever? What if this is the way I will spend the rest of my life?

No one understood what was going on inside my head. As a matter of fact, I felt like everyone was against me. I felt like Heavenly Father was punishing me for something I did. I felt alone and abandoned by my Savior. This feeling went on for about three months, and after much prayer and consideration, I decided that the best thing for me to do was to return home. I knew it would be difficult. I knew a lot of questions would be asked and I knew that going home would be just as hard as staying.

After returning home, I battled for months to adjust to everything. My family did not know what it meant for me to have anxiety, so I knew I was on my own in figuring



Stacey Ann Richardson

it out. They interpreted it as fear, but I knew anxiety isn't entirely fear but is a result of it. I remember telling someone I had anxiety, and they said to me, "How come you have anxiety when you're serving God?" Just imagine how that made me feel. I was basically told that I was not supposed to have anxiety or fear because I was serving God. Truly, I felt like a broken alarm clock that could never be put together again. I felt broken physically and mentally.

I finally came to the conclusion that I was either going to remain

how I was or do something about it. I went down on my knees feeling broken as ever and poured out my whole soul to God. I expressed to my Heavenly Father that I was going to put all my trust in Christ and His Atonement to heal me from this mental illness. I knew that if I did my best to help myself, my Savior would meet me halfway. After that prayer, I have felt a peace that I hadn't felt in a long time. I felt a new sense of belonging and purpose. I had to truly access that healing power.

I went on a journey to learn everything I could about anxiety. I began to study about the different causes and treatments of anxiety. My road to healing began when I was able to figure out what type of anxiety I had. I came to realize that I have generalized anxiety disorder and panic attacks. I could now give a name to my persistent worrying and intense fear and usual shaking and nervousness. I learned that I had to make a lot of lifestyle changes. Among other things I began to exercise every day, sleep more, eat less sugar, and drink more water.

One of the greatest things I had to do was to learn how to control my thoughts. I had to have a period where I worried; I called it "My worry period." I learned about the different types of therapy, including one called cognitive

behavioral therapy. In this type of psychotherapy, negative patterns of thought about oneself and the world are challenged in order to alter unwanted behavior. With this new knowledge, I had more power to control how I felt.

Today, I have never felt more alive. I still have days when I feel panicky, anxious, and worried, but I know how to control my thoughts and not allow the fear of the unknown to overtake me or cause me to be thrown back into that place. I know who I am now as a person and what my purpose is as an individual. I want to help others overcome what I overcame. I have never been more alert, strong, and optimistic about the future.

My anxiety keeps me alert from mental and physical danger. It keeps me humble because I know my limitations. I know I can't run faster than I have strength.

The person I am today did not exist two years ago. I have received new eyes. I see the world so differently now. I can now behold those who are suffering from mental illness. I know what it feels like and I have developed the empathy that I needed to help others. The Lord did not take away the anxiety, but He gave me the strength to live with it. He healed my heart. My healing

came in the form of me being able to understand why it happened and how I can use it to help others.

I believe more than I have ever before that Heavenly Father will never give us more than we can bear. He loves us and it is always out of love that He allows certain things to happen in our lives. They make us stronger, and they are a stepping stone for others who are struggling. I believe that if we embrace our trials, if we embrace whatever the Lord gives us to carry, and if we look at life with an eternal perspective, they will become easier to bear. He knows better than we do, and sometimes that means that He will change our paths so that we can be who He wants us to be. ■

Blessings of Studying the Gospel Faithfully

By Royce Britton

Carlton Collins is a very active seminary student. He and two of his sisters are taught in their home five days per week in the early morning.

In Jamaica, there is an annual major high school competition



called "Schools' Challenge Quiz". In this competition, 64 high schools from around the island compete in answering questions pertaining to the fields of sciences, the arts, English, math, current affairs, and religious education.

Carlton Collins represented his high school and helped his team (three other students) to the finals. Competing against last year's winners, they trailed for most of the match,

CARIBBEAN AREA NEWS

Book of Mormon Reading Chart

The chart on the next pages is to help you record your Book of Mormon reading. We encourage you to read The Book of Mormon both personally and as a family.

In a letter dated August 25, 2017, the Caribbean Area Presidency invited all members of the area to follow President Thomas S. Monson's invitation in the April 2017 general conference.

"At the last general conference, our President Thomas S. Monson invited us to 'prayerfully study and ponder the Book of Mormon each day'. Additionally, he promised us that 'as we do so, we will be in a position to hear the voice of the Spirit, to resist temptation, to overcome doubt and fear and to receive heaven's help in our lives'. No doubt these promises of our beloved prophet increase the faith and conversion of our members. For this reason, we would like everyone in the area to receive an invitation to read the Book of Mormon this year."

We invite you to study and ponder on the teachings of the Book of Mormon, to discover the principles of happiness, family unity, God's love, peace, and hope, and to live righteously to receive the blessings promised us in this book as another testament of Jesus Christ and His ministry.

Share what you discover at #readTheBookOfMormon and share a copy of the Book of Mormon with someone who needs these blessings in their life. ■



Carlton led his team to victory.

but towards the very exciting final segment of the match, a question on religious education was asked. It was the buzzer section where either team could press the buzzer and be given a chance to win the competition. No one knew the answer except for Carlton Collins. This was a question that he knew from seminary about one of the stories in the New Testament. Carlton pressed the buzzer and answered

correctly, leading his team to victory.

As a result of their victory, the school and the members of the team won many wonderful prizes.

The school is requesting that Carlton stay with them another year, but he has declined as he plans to serve a mission at age 18. What a great blessing to see how his life is being blessed in all things because of his faithfulness to the Lord. ■





CHURCH NEWS

The *Liahona* is for the Whole Family!

We invite all Caribbean members to have a printed copy of the current *Liahona* in their homes each month.

Within its pages, every family member will find a message that will bless their home and strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ. In the printed issue of the *Liahona* you will also find messages from local leaders, stories of faith from Saints in the Caribbean, and the most important Church news of the area.

Additionally, the *Liahona* will be a fundamental part of the 2018 Relief Society and Melchizedek Priesthood curriculum. It will contain the topics for the second, third, and fourth Sunday lessons.

Subscribing is very easy. If you live in the Dominican Republic, you can do so by calling 809-731-2022 or through the online store at store.lds.org. Members outside the Dominican Republic can subscribe through the online store at store.lds.org. Your copy of the magazine will then be delivered each month to the ward or branch where you attend Church. ■

THE LIAHONA IS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Bless your home and your family by receiving the *Liahona* each month and sharing the inspiring messages of our leaders.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY BY CALLING:
1-809-731-2022
OR THROUGH THE ONLINE STORE AT:
STORE.LDS.ORG



'COME, FOLLOW ME' FOR ADULTS

The *Liahona* will be a fundamental part of the new 2018 Relief Society and Melchizedek Priesthood teaching program. Now, the **second and third Sunday** lessons will come from the recent General Conference and the **fourth Sunday** topic will be announced in the May and November Issues.