

ASIA AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

He Lives—So We Will Live

By Elder Randy D. Funk

Of the Seventy, Asia Area President



Elder Randy D. Funk

While on a mission tour late last year, on a Wednesday evening, I met the faithful parents of a newer missionary serving in that mission. On Friday, I met the fine young missionary. He was born in the covenant and raised in the Church by those goodly parents. Early on Saturday morning, the mission president informed me that the father had died and the mother was critically injured in a car accident the night before.

With the approval of the Area Presidency, the mission president arranged for this young elder and his companion to attend the funeral of his father. As travel arrangements were being made and while still dealing with the tragic news, the young elder said, “I want to be a missionary; can I come back?” His question and subsequent actions reflected his desire and determination to press forward in faith and continue his service. For him, with faith in the Resurrection and the sealing ordinances of the temple, his father’s death was not the end, though it was such a hard thing for any young person to bear. He knew that his father was alright and that, regardless of what happened with his mother, their family could be together again. Following the funeral, he promptly

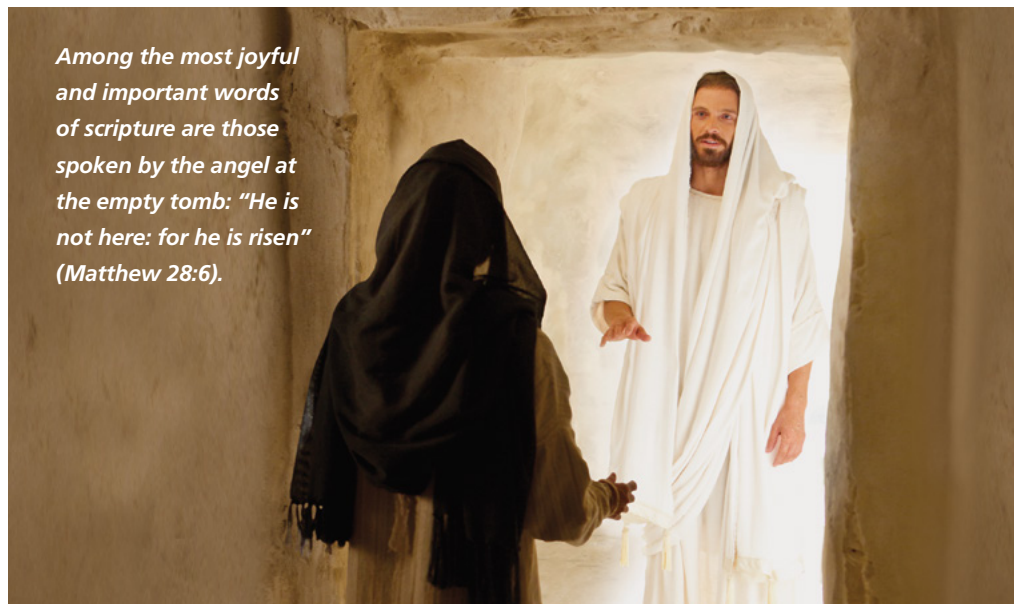
returned to his missionary work and is serving with the faith and hope found in message of the restored gospel that he teaches every day.

Each of us might ask, do I really believe in the Resurrection? When faced with the death of one I dearly love, will I feel hopeless or hopeful? Will I press forward with steadfast faith in Christ? Will I feel like Jacob who proclaimed, “O how great the goodness of our God, who prepareth a way for our escape from the grasp of this awful monster; yea, that monster, death and hell, which I call the death of the body, and also the death of the spirit” (2 Nephi 9:10).

Among the most joyful and important words of scripture are those spoken by the angel at the empty tomb: “He is not here: for he is risen” (Matthew 28:6). Contained in that simple phrase is the affirmation of two comforting doctrines that are central to our Heavenly Father’s plan of happiness: first, Jesus Christ is a living, resurrected Being; and second, because He lives, so will all of us be resurrected and live again.

During His ministry, Jesus taught His disciples that He would be killed and be raised again on the third day.¹ Though they heard it taught, it was difficult for some of these disciples

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to comprehend the reality of Jesus's Resurrection. They had seen Jesus heal the sick and raise the dead, but then it all seemed to come to a tragic end. He was crucified. He was gone.

Even after hearing the testimony of other Apostles that they had seen the living Christ, Thomas did not believe until he saw the Savior and felt the prints in His hands and side. Jesus, noting that Thomas believed because he had seen, stated, "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29; see verses 19–29).

As I attend funerals, I see in the faces of loved ones the sorrow and grief they feel deeply at the passing of one they love dearly. At the same time, however, I am grateful to see hope among those who understand and believe in the plan of happiness. Among those who trust in the reality of the Resurrection, who truly believe that Christ overcame death, there is peace. They know the separation from loved ones that seems so hard to bear is only temporary.

Faith in Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and in Their infinite love and sure promises, gives us the strength to move forward during times of adversity. During this month when we celebrate the Resurrection and Atonement of our Savior, Jesus Christ, may we have faith in that incomparable act of love. May we find comfort in the knowledge that He laid down His

life and took it up again. May we trust in the promised Resurrection for all and in the healing, cleansing power of the Atonement for those who repent.

I add my witness to that of the Prophet Joseph Smith, "And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give

of him: That he lives!" (D&C 76:22). I join in the expression of gratitude of living Apostles, who have declared, "God be thanked for the matchless gift of His divine Son."² ■

NOTES

1. See Matthew 16:21, John 10:17.
2. "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," *Liahona*, May 2017, inside front cover.

LOCAL PAGES

He Is Risen—because of This, I Can Be Comforted

By Reshmi A.

Chennai First Branch



"I feel my Savior's love in all the world around me" (*Children's Songbook*, 74). Even though I am not yet eight years of age, I am filled with the eagerness and desire to enter into the waters of baptism. I know life is becoming hard for me when I think of my dearly beloved father whom I recently lost.

Despite the fact that my parents are nonmembers, they have never stopped me going to church, for they very well knew I love the Church so much. My happiness is theirs. I know for sure that I will see my father again through the promised blessings of the Savior's Resurrection. I comfort my mother with this truth which means to me so much. I testify these in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

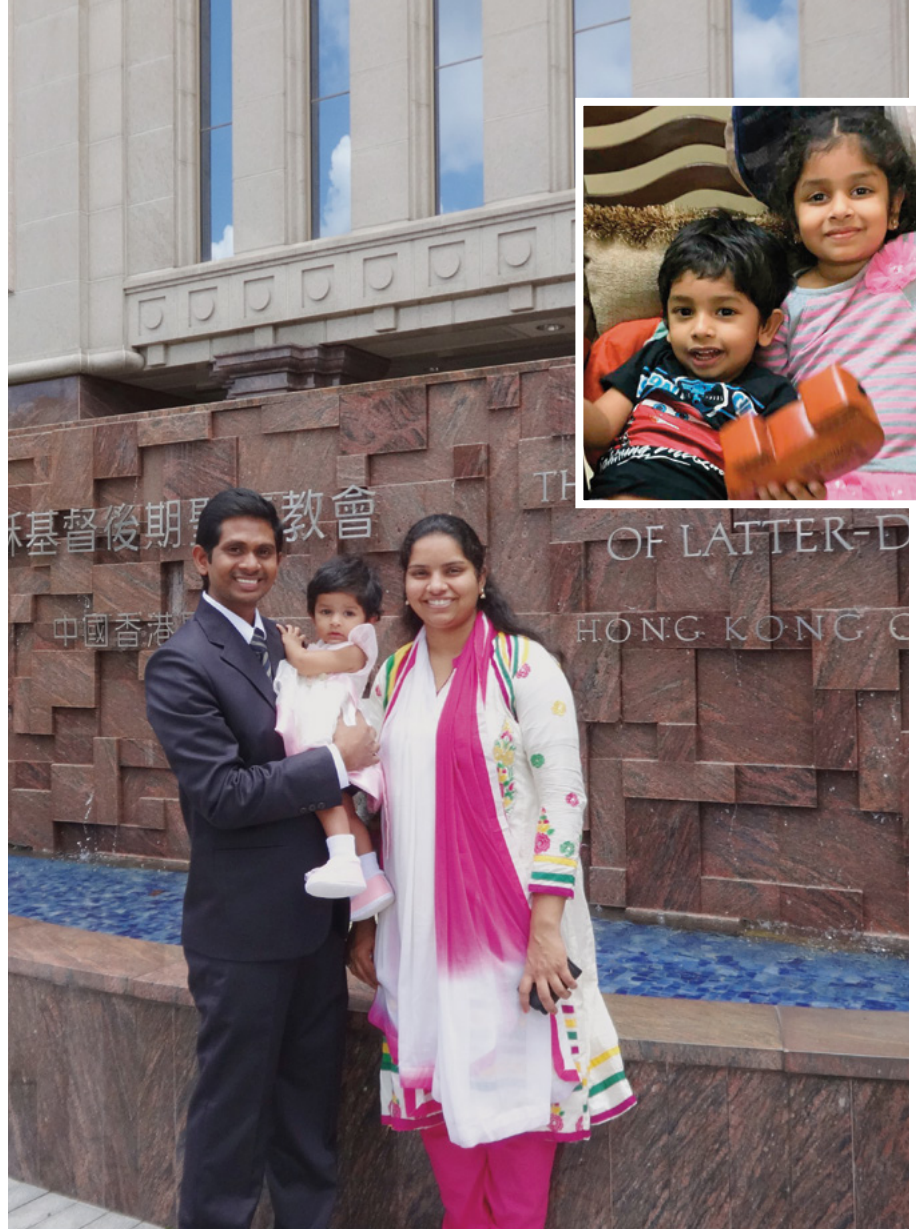
He Is Risen!

By Sandeep Swarna

Mumbai Branch

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we are very familiar with the words that Jesus is the Son of God. His birth, life, death, and Resurrection; everything was done as part of God's great plan of salvation. We need to follow Him in order to return back to our Father in Heaven. Sometimes we take these words for granted because we are used to hearing them repeatedly, and we forget to envisage that IT is THE best part of HIS plan. But remembering God's plan and Jesus's Resurrection each day is as important as we've heard it the first time and how excited we were. The importance of this reality can be very well understood when we live in a diversified environment. India is one of such places. It is notable for its religious diversity with Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam, Christianity, and Jainism among the nation's major religions. Almost all the members of our Church in India are converted from other communities, including me. I am Sandeep Swarna from a family of four; father, mother, sister, and me.

I was born Christian and did prayers and attended church every week. However, I could not imagine the love of God and Jesus's great sacrifice until I came across one incident.



Sandeep Swarna with his wife and children

This was on January 11, 2006, when I was 22 years old. All our families were gathering to commemorate the first death anniversary of my grandfather. So I was busy arranging things necessary for the families who would be attending the event. I had no sleep for almost three days. Still, I was assigned to bring the priest from another town to solemnize the event with a gospel message and prayer. Despite my tiredness, I had agreed to bring him.

In the snowy cold winter season, I got ready after showering early in

the morning. I started driving but felt drowsy. I saw one town at a distance and thought that I could make it there and have tea. However, my eyes were so heavy that unconsciously I closed my eyes. Within a fraction of seconds, my high-speed car hit a tree beside the road. My snoozy eyes could see the car colliding with the tree. After a few minutes, I opened my eyes and found that I had had a major accident. I immediately stopped the running, smoky car engine. I found that the front glass was smashed and

“The Resurrection of the Savior proves that He is the Son of God and that what He taught is real. . . . There could be no stronger proof of His divinity than Him coming forth from the grave with an immortal body.

– Elder Paul V. Johnson

had fallen into pieces on me. But not even a single fragment of it pierced my body. I was thankful to God for that. Later, I discovered blood flowing from my mouth. I cupped my hands to get it and threw it out the window. But I realized it was not going to stop so I kept a big cloth in my mouth to overcome the blood loss. My legs were stuck underneath. While I was trying to get them free, my right leg got dislocated at femur (thigh bone) joint. So I could not move. As it had happened early in the morning, and I could hardly find people to help. After a little while, I found someone and asked for help, but he was scared and ran away. Later, two people came and helped me get out of the car.

The car was totally crushed at the front side. It became completely useless. Eventually, people started surrounding me. Everyone was amazed at what had happened and wondering that I was still alive! I took someone's mobile as mine was lost during mishap and phoned my father to explain the situation and urged him to take me to the hospital. My father was very much grieved when he saw me lying on the road. However, so great was God's comfort upon me that I was able to recover very fast and started walking again in just one-and-a-half months.

That day, I was reminded of God's gentle love when I heard the words from Psalms 119:50:

“This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.”

He truly protected me. Whenever I recall that situation, I would try to speculate how Heavenly Father must have been suffering while His beloved Son was crucified on the cross! How great was the pain Jesus bore for all of us to prepare a path so that we could all return back to our heavenly home! My heart is overwhelmed with gratitude for Him and Heavenly Father and Their unconditional love. My soul rejoices whenever I think of the truth that JESUS IS RISEN and that His divine role is successfully accomplished.

As time passed, I inclined more towards God. I was diligent in reading the scriptures, attending church, and doing prayers. However, my fiancé, who was a recent convert, requested that I visit the Mormon Church. With lots of struggles in my life as well as being a longtime investigator, I finally became a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Later, we got married in the Hong Kong China Temple. Today, I am blessed with a happy family with a wife and two beautiful children.

We always try our best to follow the teachings of the Church. My parents used to observe us. After a while, I invited my parents to come to church with us. Following many discussions, my mother became a member of the Church.

Every time, I truly feel that He is alive and watching over us. As Elder Paul V. Johnson of the Seventy said in April 2016 general conference, scriptures and latter-day revelations demonstrate that Christ is living. He said, “The Resurrection of the Savior proves that He is the Son of God and that what He taught is real. ‘He is risen, as he said.’ There could be no stronger proof of His divinity than Him coming forth from the grave with an immortal body.

“We know of witnesses to the Resurrection in New Testament times. In addition to the women and men we read about in the Gospels, the New Testament assures us that hundreds actually saw the resurrected Lord. And the Book of Mormon tells of many hundreds more: ‘The multitude went forth, and thrust their hands into his side, . . . and [they] did see with their eyes and did feel with their hands, and did know of a surety and did bear record, that it was he, of whom it was written by the prophets, that should come.’ . . .

“To those ancient witnesses are added witnesses in the latter days. In fact, in the opening scene of this



**Sister Jothi
and her family**

General Conference Message Inspired Me about My Worth as a Homemaker

By Sister Jothi

Chennai First Branch

I drive my thoughts back to the general conference message shared by sister Linda K. Burton, former Relief Society General President, which made me feel that I am worth enough in the eyes of the Lord and helped me see how He esteems me for the responsibilities I carry, however small they may be at home and outside.

She quoted President Russell M. Nelson, “We need women who know how to make important things happen by their faith. . . . Women who know how to call upon the powers of heaven to protect and strengthen children and families” (“A Plea to My Sisters,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 96).

General conference messages have given me immense strength and increased enormous faith in me. I feel happy when I learn new things such as this from the Lord through the conference, in the way the Lord wanted me to learn. I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

dispensation, Joseph Smith saw the resurrected Savior with the Father. Living prophets and apostles have testified of the reality of the resurrected, living Christ. So we may say, ‘We also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.’ And each of us can be part of a cloud of witnesses who know through the power of the Holy Ghost that what we celebrate on Easter actually happened—that the Resurrection is real” (“And There Shall Be No More Death,” *Liahona*, May 2016, 122).

Also, my wife shared one incident that helped her testimony. She had to write a government entrance test on a Sunday. She said that she went to the exam center along with her colleagues. They insisted on visiting one temple before attending exam. She accompanied them. She saw people coming to the temple elegantly dressed with things needed for worship their God. Everybody was following a queue to worship. But, the security as well as the priests there were not giving time, not even a minute, to stand and pray. When she was watching all these things, each and every second she was reminded of God’s plan for each of His children and how Jesus is crucial in the plan. She mentioned that every second she was seeing this she was feeling the living nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. These people reminded her of what the Lord uttered

in His mortal ministry as written in Matthew 9:37:

“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few.”

Even though she was away from church that Sunday, she heartily felt the Holy Spirit witnessing her that Jesus is risen. He is the living Christ for all mankind. This testimony made the foundation of our faith even stronger.

I would like to accentuate that remembering that Jesus is the living Christ each day is as important now as it was when we knew at the very beginning.

I sustain the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles’ testimony about the living Christ:

“We solemnly testify that His life, which is central to all human history, neither began in Bethlehem nor concluded on Calvary. He was the Firstborn of the Father, the Only Begotten Son in the flesh, the Redeemer of the world.

“He rose from the grave to ‘become the firstfruits of them that slept’ (1 Corinthians 15:20). As Risen Lord, He visited among those He had loved in life. He also ministered among His ‘other sheep’ (John 10:16) in ancient America. In the modern world, He and His Father appeared to the boy Joseph Smith, ushering in the long-promised ‘dispensation of the fulness of times’ (Ephesians 1:10).”

In the name of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the world, amen. ■

A Match of Faith

Violet and Ram

Convent Road Ward, Bengaluru Stake

“Let’s prepare ourselves to go to the temple” were the words uttered by my husband when I was washing the dishes. I was astonished. Being in the Church for almost two decades and like every other young women, I too dreamt of getting married to an active, worthy, temple-loving returned missionary.

My husband and I knew each other for almost 12 years, and on September 2009, we decided to get married. I had a strong desire to get married in the temple, and when I shared my feelings, my husband insisted that we work together to be strong enough to enter into His holy place. We committed ourselves that we would go to the temple and get sealed in the house of the Lord in three months. The initial days were blissful. But life wasn’t like something

that floats around and lands on you like a lucky butterfly. It needs to be tended, like a fire in your heart, by breathing life into a spark over and over again.

Years came and went in a blur of working hard and spinning our wheels. We filled our days with what we thought we had to do. We were careless with our love, sending out sharp words and criticisms and then rushing out the door to our next obligation. We thought we were building



Ram and Violet outside the Hong Kong Temple

a life for our future. But we didn't see the cracks in what we were building.

Whenever we thought of going to the temple, we became conscious of our failings and felt uncomfortable at the thought of approaching the Lord. We felt unworthy of the Lord's love and were fearful of His disapproval. We knew that preparation to enter the temple and covenant-making doesn't happen quickly. It began with baptism, confirmation of the gift of the Holy Ghost, and then it has to grow every day with prayer, scripture study, obedience, repentance, partaking of the sacrament, keeping the commandments, etc.

The day dawned when my husband was called by Bishop Daniel Michael and stake president Nithyakumar to be the second counsellor in the Convent Road Branch. That puzzled us greatly, for we had supposed that someone called to such an office would have an unusual, different, and greatly enlarged testimony and spiritual power than my husband.

My husband denied initially and said he is not worthy enough to accept the call. It was a great challenge, and after two months he made up his mind. A few days later, my husband felt something strong in his heart that we must prepare ourselves to go to the temple. Temple ordinances are the most exalted ordinances that have been revealed

to mankind. We wanted to receive the temple ordinances, make solemn covenants with our Father, feel His Spirit, and receive additional revelation and understanding. As we have heard many temple-returned members bear their testimonies, we wanted to experience that same understanding and assurance of the eternal existence and the unending power of the covenants made. If we are not eternal beings, the temple would have no significance. We wanted to enter the temple and make covenants because we know that we will exist eternally and we wanted to be with our Heavenly Father and our family in "never-ending happiness."

We slowly started to resolve our marital differences and felt that it was worth our best efforts. We started to prepare wisely and foresaw the need for adjustment. We started listening to each other and each moment of listening piled up until we could start climbing right up and out of our hole. We added laughter and that made the climbing lighter. We let things go, saw with new eyes, and stood in the each other's shoes. Serving family, Church members, and friends became enjoyable. All these years we were trying to find happiness by hunting for it, not realising that we will find it as the old woman did her lost spectacles, safe on her nose all the time.

Our understanding of our eternal perspective helped us both to love

and respect each other and overcome selfishness as we worked through our differences together. We partook of the sacrament, sought for forgiveness, strived to keep the Lord's standards, and felt proud to worthily carry a temple recommend. The more we stood for true principles, the more we felt the Lord's help to overcome temptation.

We started preparing spiritually, mentally, and financially. We worked on our family tree. We knew that our ancestors were waiting and praying for hundreds of years for their ordinances to be performed. We felt great and awesome to do that part of work for them. We were able to collect 42 names. On May 14, 2017, we went to the temple. We did not understand much when we did our own endowments and got sealed. I was taken in disbelief when I saw my dream come true where I dreamt of sitting in a room on a chair and a person with white dress speaking to me. I saw the same room, the same chair in which I was sitting during my initiatory and a person in white dress speaking to me. I went back to the patron house and reflected on my dream as though it happened just few days back. When we did baptisms for our ancestors and began to seal them, we felt the Spirit so strong in us. My husband didn't serve his mission but was blessed to baptize nearly 60 people who are dead. When we did

endowments for our ancestors and as we entered into the celestial room, we both held our hands together, prayed for few minutes. There were scriptures lying next to us. When we randomly opened the page, it turned to Doctrine and Covenants 38:7–15. We were overjoyed to see the promised blessings.

I know that Heavenly Father wants to bless us. His greatest blessings come when we enter the temple to receive sacred ordinances and when we make and keep sacred covenants. We feel we have reformed ourselves. Our hearts are full of thanks for the Saviour's Atonement that assures us that 'though [our] sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool' (Isaiah 1:18). I am grateful for my family. We are really blessed to live in a time when the Lord has inspired His prophets to provide significantly increased accessibility to the holy temples worldwide and invite each of you to have a current temple recommend and visit the temple more often. All of the ordinances which take place in the house of the Lord become expressions of our belief in that fundamental and basic doctrine of the immortality of the human soul. As we redouble our efforts and our faithfulness in going to the temple, the Lord will bless us. We leave you this testimony that when

you prepare, "set specific goals, considering your circumstances, of when you can and will participate in temple ordinances. Then do not allow anything to interfere with that plan. This pattern will guarantee that those who live in the shadow of a temple will be as blessed as are those who plan far ahead and make a long trip to the temple" (Richard G. Scott, "Temple Worship: The Source of Strength and Power in Times of Need," *Liahona*, May 2009, 43).

Finally I quote from President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95): "Let us be a temple-attending and a temple-loving people. Let us hasten to the temple as frequently as time and means and personal circumstances allow. Let us go not only for our kindred dead, but let us also go for the personal blessing of temple worship, for the sanctity and safety which are provided within those hallowed and consecrated walls. The temple is a place of beauty; it is a place of revelation; it is a place of peace. It is the house of the Lord. It is holy unto the Lord. It should be holy unto us" ("The Great Symbol of Our Membership," *Ensign*, July 1994, 5).

May the Lord continue to bless you and your families when you prepare to enter his holy House as He did ours. I strongly bear this testimony in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, amen. ■

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