

ASIA AREA LEADER MESSAGE

“Our Need to Repent”

By Elder Wisit Khanakham

Of the Seventy



Elder Wisit
Khanakham

Not long after my baptism, I was assigned to record part of a Thai translation of a filmstrip called “The Restoration,” since there was no advanced technology in those days. A sentence that I had to read was “I am a sinner, I need the Lord.” I had pondered why I was selected to read that line. How did the Lord know what I needed? That sentence echoed in my ears silently. I knew the Lord had chosen me as one who really needed Him. He said, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”¹ The Lord “awakened them out of a deep sleep, and they awoke unto God.”² I am one of those now awakened. As time goes by, I realize that repentance is a process of learning, growing and improving. Whenever I look back, I see myself as one who has been changed for the better. President Nelson taught repentance with hope, joy and love, saying, “The word for *repentance* in the Greek New Testament . . . means ‘change’ . . . ‘mind,’ ‘knowledge,’ ‘spirit’ . . . Thus, when Jesus asks you and me to ‘repent,’ He is inviting us to change our mind, our knowledge, our spirit . . . He is asking us to change the way we love, think, serve, spend our time, treat our wives, [and] teach our children.”³ I feel deep gratitude for Church

activities that can be implemented in the home as home-centered and Church-supported gospel learning is emphasized. It helps me run to repentance and not away from it.

- **The scriptures:** “Come Follow Me” is the perfect program of daily scripture study that opens my heart to the words of God. “Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.”⁴ The doctrine of Christ has never led

me to darkness but has turned my heart to the Lord.

- **Personal and family prayer:** Daily prayers soften my heart, allow me to counsel with God, and help me to do good things as prompted by the Spirit. “Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good.”⁵
- **Family home evening:** Our family enjoys spending time together by singing, praying, sharing the words of God, having fun, eating, and laughing together.





- **Family history and temple work:** Finding the names of our ancestors and sending them to the temple for temple ordinances is crucial in our family. It leaves us with a feeling of love and a deeper relationship with our family on both sides of the veil.
- **Family council:** It is the most effective tool to help our family have better communication, coordination, participation, and understanding towards each other. Everyone can share, “but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege.”⁶
- **Watching general conference:** Every talk inspires and reminds

me of what I need to change so my actions and thoughts can be in accordance with the will of the Lord. I know our leaders are called of God, and He speaks through them. “My word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.”⁷

- **Repentance** leads me to be converted and produces faith that inspires actions.
- **Keeping God’s commandments:** As a human being, I have room to improve. Keeping His commandments helps me to change my behavior. For example, paying a full tithe makes me less selfish, donating fast offerings helps me to be kind and humble, and keeping the Sabbath day gives me joy.

- **Magnifying my callings** grants me opportunities to progress spiritually. It is a tender mercy of the Lord that He opens doors for me by giving me various responsibilities. The more that I do, the more faith I have, including a stronger testimony and a more positive attitude.
- **Ministering and missionary work:** I visit those I minister to once a week in person. It helps me to better observe the two great commandments: to love God and to love thy neighbor.⁸

“When we choose to repent, we choose to change! We allow the Savior to transform us into the best version of ourselves. We choose to grow spiritually and receive joy—the joy of redemption in Him. When we choose to repent, we choose to become more like Jesus Christ!”⁹ I know the restored gospel is true, Jesus is our Savior, and His Atonement is the source of my hope. Both the Bible and the Book of Mormon are true witnesses of The Lord, Jesus Christ. Joseph Smith was called of God, and Russell M. Nelson is our living prophet. ■

NOTES

1. Luke 5:32.
2. See Alma 5:7.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” *Liahona*, May 2019, 67.
4. 2 Nephi 32:3.
5. Alma 37:37.
6. Doctrine & Covenants 88:122.
7. Doctrine & Covenants 1:38.
8. See Matthew 22:36-40.
9. Russell M. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” 67.

LOCAL PAGES

Hyderabad India Stake Youth Conference 2019

On May 24 and 25, nearly 70 youth of the Hyderabad Stake gathered at the Pragati Resort for a youth conference themed, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Attendees strengthened each other with love and fellowship while making commitments to strengthen their faith, testimonies and devotion as disciples of Jesus Christ.

President Manohar Mekala, first counselor in Hyderabad Stake presidency presided over the conference. In his opening remarks he counseled the youth to honor their parents, work hard to obtain secular education and prepare to serve missions. The conference was directed by President Peter Bushi, second counselor in Hyderabad

Stake presidency who urged the youth to enroll in seminary.

Participants enjoyed getting acquainted by participating in games and water sports on the first day. Later, a talent show featuring singing, dancing and instrumental performances provided entertainment and allowed the youth to showcase their talents and abilities. These, in addition to a dance, allowed the attendees to create and strengthen friendships.

The two-day conference also involved workshops where participants learned how to overcome addictions by finding hope and strength in Christ. Other topics included the

Young Women values, as well as temple and priesthood duties.

This was the first youth conference and an excellent experience for Jenice Sumarajan of the West Marredpally Third Ward. “The workshops were well thought out,” she said. “And I have learned how important it is to recognize addictions and overcome them and to make and keep sacred covenants in the Lord’s holy temple and the blessings of temple attendance. We were also taught about scripture study and to record our impressions in a journal and I felt the Spirit as I did it.”

Abhi Rayudu from Madinaguda First Ward was also inspired by the





Another very popular activity was a session with a panel consisting of members of the stake presidency, stake Young Men, Young Women and Primary presidents, as well as members of the high council who answered questions posed by the youth related to doctrine, sharing the gospel with others, and missionary work. The panelists taught the youth in a way they could understand and learn.

Susheel Meda from West Marredpally Ward said, “The session taught me many things such

workshops. “I simply can’t forget these days in my life,” she said. “I will apply what I have learned at youth conference to live in a righteous path and serve my mission with much stronger courage.”

Keerthana from West Marredpally First Ward agreed, “We have learned many things about the gospel through the workshops that will help us to go on missions and be united with others in the gospel.”



as how to prepare for a mission and build friendship. Knowing these things helps me see how the world is. It gave me strength and a lot of courage.”

The youth conference also strengthened the Young Men and Young Women leaders who attended. According to Swarnalatha Sapuri, Young Women president of the A S Rao Nagar Ward, “The conference was a great opportunity to work with the Young Women and Young Men presidencies from different wards and to be

able to help and support each other.”

Each committee member brought his or her individual talents, personalities, skills, experience and spirit to make the youth conference a success. Ramesh Turala, Young Men president from the Madinaguda First Ward was impressed by the results of these combined efforts. “I saw how leaders and committee, or chairpersons have worked hard in making it a huge success,” he said. “I really hope to have similar well organized, spiritual activities in the future.”

Reflecting on the event, President Bushi remarked, “It has been a great privilege to oversee this youth conference. It was well organized by the dedicated team. Our sincere appreciation goes to the stake Young Men and Young Women presidencies and all those who have supported them in making it so successful. The youth behaved so well, they were obedient to their leaders, asked great questions, and participated in every workshop. The Church in Hyderabad has a strong future as these youth grow in the gospel.” ■

An Apostle's Visit

By **Melissa Beesa**

Noida Branch, New Delhi

Our stake in Delhi was blessed to have an Apostle visit us. It was amazing to see how God is mindful of his children all around the world. In the past one and a half years there have been incredible things taking place in India—the temple announced in Bengaluru, the visit of President Russell M. Nelson and Elder Jeffrey R. Holland with their wives, as well as visits from Elder David A. Bednar and then Elder M. Russell Ballard. I know for sure that great things are going to take place for the saints in India.

The special stake conference was a delight. It was incredible to hear and feel such spirit-filled messages and to see how each message related to the others. The main focus was missionary work, families, prayer and treasures of eternities.

There were so many wonderful counsels given. The following are some that touched my heart. I loved how Sister Evans described prayer in such a beautiful way. She said, “as we pray, we will have our own magic moment in which our Heavenly Father is communicating with us.” I thought about how prayers are truly magical whether it be us talking to God or God talking to us. Everything about prayers is heavenly and divine. How lucky we are that Heavenly

Father is eagerly waiting for us to talk to him and also to help us. Our part is to seek his help.

Focusing on things that will actually matter when we go back to heaven and how being submissive is not a weakness, but a strength, were counsels given by President and Sister Hansen, which followed an invitation to ask God “What lack I yet?”

President Evans talked about how we can share the gospel with the

people around us. It doesn't have to be forced on them. The only thing that we need to do is to testify of our beliefs and as we look for opportunities to share the gospel, it will become natural and normal. I know that this is something that our Heavenly Father expects from each one of us: to share the fruit with those who haven't tasted it so that the happiness that we feel can be theirs too.

Elder Ballard testified of the truthfulness of the plan of salvation. When talking about his wife who passed away last year, he beautifully put his words together and said, “I know where Barbara is, I know who she is, I know she will be mine and I will be hers.” Hearing that, I felt so blessed to have this gospel of hope in my life. I felt how much Elder Ballard loves his wife. Such a simple truth but so important, we will see our families again. Mortality is only for a small moment. He invited us all to feed our spirits by seeking that which is righteous because our spiritual selves are our real selves. He talked about how the Church will continue to grow because it is true.

I am so grateful for this gospel in my life and I know without a doubt that it is true and that this life will only be better if we walk on the path that Jesus has shown. We all are of such great worth and can achieve so many things because God created us for nothing less than greatness. ■



The Blessings of Missionary Service

By Elder Srikanth Gola

India New Delhi Mission

Many people have helped me arrive at the place where I am today, serving as a missionary in the India New Delhi Mission. I was not born a member of the Church or even a Christian. It was a childhood friend who introduced me to the gospel.

After I was baptized, I had an institute teacher who nourished me with the word of God every week and he helped me to always have a desire to go on a mission. Whenever I didn't attend institute class, he came to my home to find out why and to be sure I was at the next class. I also had a bishop who always kept me busy with a calling and with Church activities. Back then, I felt they were little pushy, but because of them, today I am happy, gaining a lot of experience helping many people to come unto Christ as a missionary!

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said: “We must make an increasingly substantial effort to assist [new members] as they find their way. Every one of them needs three things: a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing with ‘the good word of God’”.¹

This was true in my life. I had all three of those things. It was very easy to stay active even though I was the only member in my family. I never felt alone. My ward members took care of me. It's been six years since I started

following Jesus Christ. He has always helped me very much through my ward members.

It's been 21 months since I have been on my mission and time is just flying by! The other night I was reading my journal entries for this time last year. I was in Lajpat Nagar and I was going through some experiences that I viewed as problems. I have realized that problems are always with me but now I have changed. I remember complaining about life and some of the people around me but now those things don't bother me anymore. My mission is shaping me to become a better person in life. I am glad that I made a choice to come on a mission. I can really see how it has blessed my life.

Another great blessing which I received after coming on a mission is a better understanding of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. As I have relied upon the Atonement, I have received strength to face life's challenges.

I know that the Book of Mormon is true, and I know that the Church is true. I love the work that I am doing, and I love Jesus Christ.



Remember, hard is always good because hard makes you become strong! ■

NOTE

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Gordon B. Hinckley*, [2016], 301.

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