

CARIBBEAN LOCAL PAGES

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Christmas: A Divine Gift

By Elder Hubermann Bien-Aimé

Of Seventy

When I was a little boy, Christmas was not as meaningful to me as it was to other children because of the very modest economic situation of my parents. In our country, Haiti, it was, and still is, a tradition for parents with the financial means to place one or more gifts under the pillow of their children on Christmas Eve. When the morning came, my brothers, my sisters and myself would read the joy on the faces of other children while sadness was clearly on ours. Personally, I used to wonder if Santa favored those

children more than he cared for us. He gave more toys, I thought, to those who already had while he forgot about us poor children who never received a gift during this special time!

But as I grew up, I realized that Christmas was more than just gifts. By becoming a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I have instead learned that Christmas is a time of sharing, joy, love, compassion, gratitude and charity. For it is in the true spirit of Christmas that Our Heavenly Father, in His divine love,

has given us His precious Son, Jesus Christ, as a gift for the well-being of all mankind.

This divine gift had long been predicted both on the Asian continent as well as on the American continent. For example, we clearly remember Samuel the Lamanite in the Book of Mormon who prophesied concerning the visible signs such as light and the appearance of a new star during the Savior's birth.

My dear brothers and sisters, the birth of Jesus brings us light which is hope and indescribable joy. Can



Elder Hubermann
Bien-Aimé

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"And it came to pass also that a new star did appear, according to the word."

you imagine people waiting for their Redeemer, then one day this hope becomes a divine reality? Could you describe the happiness that flowed in the hearts of this people? I like the way the Book of Mormon describes this event:

"And it came to pass that there was no darkness in all that night, but it was as light as though it was mid-day. And it came to pass that the sun did rise in the morning again, according to its proper order; and they knew that it was the day that the Lord should be born, because of the sign which had been given.

"And it had come to pass, yea, all things, every whit, according to the words of the prophets.

"And it came to pass also that a new star did appear, according to the word" (3 Nephi 1:19–21).

We learn that in the ancient world the shepherds were visited by an angelic choir that came to celebrate

the coming of Christ here below.

Then the three wise men saw a star and followed it to worship the Son of God. While in the American continent, there was a night without darkness, and this was a sign of the coming of Christ. The story in the new world is truly extraordinary.

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I invite you to rejoice in this admirable light, and then begin and continue to share it with each person in need through ministering so that you can all literally benefit from this invitation received directly from Him:

"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

Today, as an adult, I no longer have to look for a gift under my pillow on Christmas Eve because, thanks to the restored gospel of the Lord Jesus

Christ, I am constantly blessed with this gift that illuminates each of my steps and those of my family. Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles invites us to follow Christ and to become His disciples: "During this Christmas season and throughout the entire year, may we seek with our hearts and souls our beloved Savior, the Prince of Peace, the Holy One of Israel. For this desire, in large part, defines not only who we are as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but even more who we really are as Christ's disciples.¹"

My dear brothers and sisters, may we develop greater faith in Jesus Christ which will generate a greater light of hope and peace in this world, and knowledge that through His Atonement we can inherit eternal life. ■

NOTE

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Seeking Christ at Christmas," *Liahona*, Dec. 2017, p. 6.

LOCAL PAGES

Worldwide Children and Youth Effort on Track for 2020

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is moving forward on its new global effort for children and youth that will become available to millions of Latter-day Saint children and youth beginning in 2020. The effort will provide children, youth, families, and leaders with personalized opportunities to grow spiritually, socially, physically, and intellectually through meaningful activities, service, gospel learning, and inspired goal setting.

“This is going to be an exciting, wonderful enhancement to everything we have done before,” said Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “This new initiative is not only going to point them all

to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, it’s going to give opportunities for large gatherings and personal development through goals and achievement of goals.”

On May 8, 2018, the First Presidency announced that a new effort is being developed to replace existing children and youth programs within the Church, including Boy Scouts of America, Personal Progress, Duty to God, and Faith in God.

“For years, Church leaders have been preparing a new initiative to teach and provide leadership and development opportunities to all children and youth, to support families, and to strengthen youth everywhere as they develop faith in our Lord and

Savior, Jesus Christ,” stated the First Presidency in the May announcement.

The new effort will allow local leaders and families to customize their weekday activities, service opportunities, camps, and other outdoor activities to meet the needs of children and youth rather than prescribed requirements.

The new effort is being tested in locations around the world. “It kind of brings every aspect to be more spiritual and closer to Heavenly Father,” said Maribelle, a young woman who has been participating in the effort. “We can bring school activities or other activities—sports, art classes, music—it kind of ties it all together.”



*Details about the global effort for children and youth will be shared at **ChildrenAndYouth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org**.*

“We want to see who you want to become, who you desire to become, and what you desire your life to look like,” said Debbie, a Young Women president. “I think offering them that freedom helps them feel the responsibility of it but also makes them feel that this is their choice.”

“You can determine your spiritual and temporal destiny and your ability to access the power of the Savior’s Atonement and to follow Him in His example,” said Amie, a Young Women president.

“We are thrilled with what we are learning and so excited in the future

of this new initiative,” said Elder Rasband. “It focuses on what really matters, helping our children and youth discover their eternal identity and develop skills and talents unique to them. As the Church continues to grow and the world continues to change, the time is right for a simplified, personalized approach to helping children and youth.”

Details about the global effort for children and youth will be shared at **ChildrenAndYouth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org** as the implementation date approaches. ■

to increase the Christmas spirit is to reach out generously to those around us and give of ourselves.”²

Decorating trees and giving gifts are ways to celebrate Christmas, but the key to feeling the spirit of Christmas is to minister to others.

And good news! There are many wonderful ways to minister to others at Christmastime. Try some of these out, and in no time, you will feel the warmth of the Spirit and feel closer to the Savior—the true spirit of Christmas!

Visit the lonely.

Think about those you know who might not have family and friends to spend the holidays with. Consider visiting someone who is elderly or someone who just moved to your neighborhood. Reaching out to just one lonely person can be powerful. As Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles pointed out,

Seven Ways to Catch the Christmas Spirit

By **Charlotte Larcabal**
Church Magazines

“It just doesn’t feel like Christmas.” Have you ever thought something like that? Maybe you feel like that right now: No matter how loudly you blare Christmas songs or how many Christmas cookies you snarf down, you’re just not feeling the Christmas spirit.

If that sounds like you, or if you’re just looking to feel that Christmassy glow a bit more this year, read on!

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) made it pretty simple: “The

Christmas spirit is the Christ spirit, that makes our hearts glow in brotherly love and friendship and prompts us to kind deeds of service.”¹ Bonnie L. Oscarson, former Young Women General President, agrees: “The way



Christ “ministered to the ‘ones,’” by helping people one by one.³ We can do the same.

Go caroling.

Did you know that our prophet loves Christmas carols? Whether it’s belting out the “whimsical ditties about Santa” or reverently singing your favorite hymns about the Savior, President Russell M. Nelson believes that sharing music with others is a wonderful way to “truly feel the real spirit of Christmas.”⁴

Look around before you look at your phone.

You don’t have to keep your phone in your pocket the whole day but being present and focusing on those around you is a great way to get back in touch with the Christmas spirit.

“Instead of picking up your phone to see what your friends are doing, stop, look around, and ask yourself, ‘Who needs me today?’” said Sister Oscarson. “You may be the key to reaching out and touching the life of a peer or to giving encouragement to a friend who is quietly struggling.”⁵

Do some extra chores.

Can cleaning the house, offering to babysit, or doing any other extra housework really help you feel the Christmas spirit? If you do it with the right attitude, you bet it will! As you’re scrubbing or tidying up, think about the person you’re serving. Think about



how much your family or friends will love the gift of your hard work!

Deliver some Christmas treats!

Speaking of those Christmas cookies you snarfed down earlier,

why not whip up a batch of your favorite Christmas treats? You should probably taste a few (or more) yourself, but the key to feeling the Christmas spirit here is to give them away.



Share a Christmas video.

Share a Christmas message on social media. Check out the Christmas Mormon Messages for some ideas. You

might also brighten someone's day just by sharing the Church's Christmas video on Mormon.org. You can send it to a friend or share it on your own page.

Be sneaky about it.

How much secret service can you do without getting caught? You could leave groceries or gifts on someone's doorstep, slip a kind note into a coat pocket, shovel snow, or rake up leaves—but make sure no one knows it was you! Remember: let thine alms be done in secret (see Matthew 6:4).

Ministering at Christmas

Twinkling trimmings and festive fanfare can bring wonder and fun to your holidays, but when it comes to feeling the true Christmas spirit, merry ministering is the key.

“To truly honor [the Lord's] coming into the world, we must do as He did and reach out in compassion and mercy to our fellowmen,” said Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “This we can do daily, by word and deed. Let this become our Christmas tradition, no matter where we are—to be a little kinder, more forgiving, less judging, more grateful, and more generous in sharing our abundance with those in need.”⁶ ■

NOTES

1. David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals* (1953), 551.
2. Bonnie L. Oscarson, “Christmas Is Christlike Love” (First Presidency Christmas Devotional, Dec. 7, 2014), broadcasts.lds.org.
3. David A. Bednar's Facebook page, video posted on Jan. 22, 2017, facebook.com/lds.david.a.bednar/videos.
4. Russell M. Nelson, in “Christmas Memories from Prophets and Apostles”, *New Era*, Dec. 2015, 10.
5. Bonnie L. Oscarson, “The Needs before Us”, *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 26.
6. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Scatter Your Crumbs” (First Presidency Christmas Devotional, Dec. 3, 2017), broadcasts.lds.org.

The University Hospital of the West Indies Expresses Appreciation for Gift

The Humanitarian Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints donated a state-of-the-art Natal Care LX incubator to the University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI) on July 10, 2019. The intensive care incubator will be used in the special care nursery, and is accompanied by two infusion pumps, three Edan IM70 monitors and NIBP cable, four Baum Neonates cuff with oxygen wrap sensors, an Edan ECG cable and three Edan temperature probes. The equipment is valued at

over JM \$3.3 million dollars, or over US \$24,000.00 dollars and greatly increases the capacity of the NICU in treating critically ill newborns.

Mr. Kevin Allen, chief executive officer of the University Hospital, expressed gratitude for the support of the Church. He mentioned that the donation will assist the medical staff and students to provide optimized patient care for the vulnerable newborns that the unit serves. He added that a very good maintenance program is in place at the hospital, therefore

they expect to get maximum use from the machine to meet the healthcare needs of the people of Jamaica.

The Church humanitarian representative, Elder Arrington, explained that the funds used to purchase the equipment are from donations made by members of the Church to the Humanitarian Fund which is used for charity.

Andrew Lue, president of the Kingston Stake (Kingston, St. Andrew and St. Catherine congregations of the Church), also spoke about the



Mr. Kevin Allen, CEO (UHWI), shakes hands with Elder Arrington, Humanitarian Missionary of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints during the presentation of the machine. Others in the picture from left to right: Dr. Carl Bruce, Dr. Roxanne Melbourne-Chambers, Sister Arrington, President Andrew Lue and Dr. Shalini Banhan.



Dr. Roxanne Melbourne-Chambers, Head of Child Adolescent Department (UHWI), speaks on the long-standing partnership of the Church and the Hospital and also expresses appreciation for the Incubator.



***Natal Care LX Incubator
for Intensive Care***



***Mr. Kevin Allen, CEO
(UHWI), addresses
the audience at the
handing-over ceremony.***



***Dr. Carl Bruce, the Chief of
Staff (UHWI), speaks about the
importance of having modern
technology in hospitals.***

significance of the machine. He said that it will impact lives for generations to come as staff members become experts at using the machine.

Dr. Shalini Banhan, junior resident, EMD, and a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints explained that the incubator is used to keep the baby in a neutral environment with the needed temperature and moisture to maintain normal body temperature for medical care. The machine is also used to provide oxygen, protects against infections and diseases, monitors blood pressure and heart rate levels, and for feeding through the infusion pumps.

Appreciation was expressed by Dr. Roxanne Melbourne-Chambers, head of the Child & Adolescent Health Department, who remembers when the Church donated wheelchairs to the hospital years ago. During the handing over ceremony of the incubator, she thanked the Church for lending Dr. Banhan to the hospital, as she took on the project to secure this invaluable machine for the special care nursery of the NICU.

Mrs. Helena Thompson, senior director of nursing at UHWI, also expressed appreciation by explaining how the machine would make a difference to the neonates within the

unit. She also thanked The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-days Saints for its support over the years in ophthalmology and in critical care.

In closing, Dr. Carl Bruce, the chief of staff at the hospital, spoke about the importance of having modern technology. He said, “The University Hospital is the last stop for most of the critical patients not only in Jamaica, but across the English-speaking Caribbean.” He expressed the further need of the University Hospital in being equipped with those technologies to support hospitals in the rural areas of Jamaica, who are not able to provide specialized care. ■