

## ASIA AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

### Happy and Eternal Families

By Elder Randy D. Funk of the Seventy  
Asia Area President



Elder Randy D. Funk

Following a stake conference in India last year, an eight-year-old girl handed me a note. In beautiful handwriting it read, “Asia Area Vision: That all may increase in faith in our Heavenly Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and enjoy happy, eternal families.” This young girl had memorized the area vision and had written the note during the conference.

I know her family well. During the long flight back to Hong Kong, I thought of how blessed she is to have such fine parents who are teaching her and their other children important gospel truths. One of those truths is that our family can be both eternal and happy. Families can be eternal by receiving the ordinances and keeping the covenants of the temple and they can be happy by living the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

#### Eternal Families

When Moroni visited 17-year-old Joseph Smith, one of the first things he taught him was that the hearts of the children would turn to their fathers. Moroni referred to the words recorded in Malachi and explained that Elijah would restore the sealing power to the earth (see Joseph Smith—History

1:36–39). On April 3, 1836, in the Kirtland Temple, Elijah bestowed the sealing power upon the Prophet Joseph Smith (see D&C 110:13–16). Today that sealing power is used in temples throughout the world to unite families forever.

In “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (*Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129), we learn that “marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal

destiny of His children.” The uniting for eternity of husbands and wives, and of children to parents, are among the most treasured blessings of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the reason families eagerly look forward to attending the temple.

Last year the First Presidency announced changes in the use of the General Temple Patron Assistance Fund that make it possible for more members of the Church, including those in Asia who often live far from a temple, to attend the temple sooner and more often than they might have in the past. Though some sacrifice is still needed, the First Presidency does not want members to wait as long as they have in the past. For some, the sacrifice that may be needed is keeping the commandments and paying a full-tithe.

In addition to using the General Temple Patron Assistance Fund to assist members to receive their own ordinances, such funds may now be used to enable members to attend the temple when immediate family members receive their ordinances. For example, faithful parents who raise their children righteously are now able to join them in the temple



The Kumar family, after being sealed in the Hong Kong Temple



*"Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ."*

to witness the sealing of their children at the time of their temple marriage. While we look forward to the day when temples will be closer to more of our members in Asia, we are grateful that all are able to receive the blessings of an eternal family as they live worthy of a temple recommend.

### **Happy Families**

Heavenly Father desires not only that our families be eternal but that they also be happy. In the family proclamation, we also learn how our family can be happier. It states: "Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of

the Lord Jesus Christ." When we live in a way that is pleasing to our Heavenly Father and His Son, we find our conduct also pleases our earthly family.

The family proclamation states that successful families are "established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities." Through faith and prayer, we draw nearer to our Heavenly Father. With respect, love, and compassion, we draw closer to those in our earthly family. And through work and wholesome recreational activities, we help and support one another and have fun together.

Sister Funk and I have lived in Asia for seven years now, far away from our children and grandchildren. We have noticed how much our children enjoy getting together with each other and how happy they are when they do so. They have respect, love, and compassion for each other, and they help each other while we are serving here. We are very grateful for our family and for the sealing ordinance that unites us.

Whatever your own present circumstances, strive for a family that is both eternal and happy. I pray you will work for and experience the joy of that blessing in your life. ■

# Not by Chance, but According to His Will

By Amrita Kundu

Kolkata, India

I have been a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for about seven months. The first time I heard about the Church was from my elder brother (who's a graduate student currently residing in Texas, USA, and has been a member for almost two years), when he bore his testimony and gave my mom and I a copy of the Book of Mormon in Bengali, while visiting Kolkata. Around this same time, we learned about a branch here in Kolkata. In the subsequent visits to the church as an investigator, I started learning more about the fascinating gospel of Jesus Christ. As we have no missionaries in Kolkata currently, it took us some time before we could get in touch with some. But two months in, my mother and I were already taking lessons from the Elders from the India New Delhi Mission through weekly Skype sessions. We had many wonderful discussions with them—we talked about our lives on earth, life before we came to the earth, and life after we will leave this earth. We learned about the Savior and His

Atonement and prophets and the Restoration in this dispensation. Our Heavenly Father has sent us here on this earth and at this time as He has plans for all of us, His children, whom He loves so much. I came to know about a lot of things that I never knew before but made so much sense. I realized that it was His plan to shepherd me to the true gospel, and it wasn't by chance but according to His will.

My decision to be baptized didn't come without concerns. I was hesitant and a little confused if it was the right one. The Elders always inspired me and invited me to pray because through prayers, we receive direction and answers, just as the Prophet Joseph Smith did. I was uncertain

whether I would receive my answers, but I still tried. It seemed logical and worth giving a shot, because unless I tried, I realized, I would never know. And just like Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles had promised that when we try, "we will then recognize that regardless of perceived differences, all of us are in need of the same infinite Atonement" (*Liahona*, May 2015, 57–58). I had my answers and couldn't have been more certain about that. June 18, 2016, was a memorable day in my life, as my mother and I were baptized on that day and confirmed on the next.

Our Kolkata Branch is a small branch, consisting of 12 members and frequent visitors, but it is growing. When we were there for the first time, it felt so good receiving the warm welcome from all the members. Being a small branch, we are very connected with each other like a family. The sacrament meetings and Sunday School classes are always an experience to acquire spiritual and temporal know-how that propels me to keep my testimony strong. It provides me with an opportunity to learn and share more about the gospel and the teachings of the Presidents of the Church.

The most amazing thing is that God loves us all equally. He wants us to have faith in Him. In our earthly life, we all have to face challenges.



Amrita  
Kundu



But by having faith in Him and by praying, we can receive counsel when we need it the most. Our Heavenly Father wants us to be His witness at all times, obey His commandments, and endure till the end so that all our families can return back and can live forever with Him.

I testify that Heavenly Father lives and has plans for all of His children,

whom He loves so much. I have faith in Him and I know that He loves me. I am very grateful for His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and for Christ's Atonement in our lives. I'm a witness to the blessings that it brings in my life and the promises that it upholds. I sustain all our prophets and Presidents of the Church. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

One day as I was reading the scriptures, I came across 3 Nephi 18:19–20:

“Therefore ye must always pray unto the Father in my name;

“And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you.”

With these promises in my mind and heart, I started leading my life. Years passed, and I was working before my mission. I was on a notice of leaving my job. On the last day, I finished my work and left the office at 2:30. I started to my home on my bike. It had a break-down on my way. I felt frustrated and tired, stuck in the middle of the road all alone. I felt lost and angry. I decided to tow my bike home, which was 25 kilometers (15 miles) away. After a while, I gave up, feeling helpless. I was reminded of the scriptures that I had read.

I said a word of prayer asking for Lord's help. I saw a young man arriving with his bike. He offered me help by saying that I could use his bike to reach my destination. Before I could thank him for his kindness, the boy left. At this very moment, I felt that God heard my prayer *and* sent help at the right time.

I know that God does answer our prayers, no matter how long it takes. If we have patience and faith, God will answer our prayers. ■

## God Answers Our Prayers

By Elder Thomas Selwyn Aloysios  
India Bengaluru Mission

**T**his life is a gift given to me by God. God has blessed me to know the gospel when I was very young. At the age of 12, I was baptized along with my family into the restored Church. From my childhood, I was taught to follow Jesus Christ by my loving parents. My brother, Avinash, and sister, Beena Thomas, have set good examples to me.

While I was growing up, I heard my friends and people around me saying that their prayers were answered. I always wondered, “Does God listen to our prayers? Will He answer mine too?” With these questions, I started saying my prayers and reading the scriptures.

*I know that God does answer our prayers, no matter how long it takes.*



## A Witness after a Trial of Faith

By **Sister Kajal Mahana**

Pitampura Branch, India New Delhi

It was a warm summer evening in 2015. I felt like I was completely lost in my life. The case of my divorce was in process. The case was progressing to my favor, but I felt like a complete loser because my family would no longer be together. That thought troubled

me. I shared this with a friend of mine. He comforted me by saying that God will be with me, but it was hard for me to believe considering the challenges I was facing.

The result of the case did not really matter to me, but the thought

that bothered me was: what would happen to my two daughters? They should not have to go through this at such a tender age!

My friend listened to my problems patiently and then invited me to church. Seeking for answers and support, I was willing to attend church to find some peace. I wanted my family to be together, and I was willing to go anywhere for that.



*Sister Kajal with her family*

I attended church. Someone gave a talk on faith and repentance. That sparked an interest in me. I felt inspired to try this thing called repentance. And so, for the first time, I prayed, having faith that God would help me. I felt so good, like a burden was lifted. I felt very positive about life. I decided to withdraw the case. All my friends and family suggested not to do so and encouraged me to go ahead with the divorce, but I decided not to pursue it.

Next Sunday was a fast Sunday, and my branch president helped me understand what fasting was and how it could bring great blessings into my life. I decided to fast. A sister bore her testimony on baptism that day and I could feel the Spirit. I felt that I needed that in my life as well.

I expressed that desire to the Elders; they told me that they would love to help out. As I had no home, I asked them if they could teach me at the church. They gladly accepted. I learned and progressed, and we set my baptism date for the second of August.

Throughout this learning process, I used to pray with my daughters for Heavenly Father to repair my life and unite my family again.

A few days later, my husband came to visit me and my daughters, and when he saw us he hugged us and cried. He pled for us to forgive him. The dark and dreary past did

not matter anymore, for I beheld a miracle in my life. For a moment, I got a glimpse of the bright and glorious future that Heavenly Father had prepared for me.

I told him about my baptism and he agreed to come. Slowly he joined in the missionary discussions. And now my whole family is in the

Church. The Lord has truly been merciful in blessing me and my family abundantly. We go to church every Sunday because I know the Lord will bless us even more when we strive to keep the commandments. I share these things in the name of my Savior and Redeemer, the true Healer of all life's problems, Jesus Christ, amen. ■

## Convent Road Ward Activities

By **Bishop Daniel D. Michael**

Convent Road Ward, India Bengaluru

**E**ach and every member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints meets in groups for Church



**Bishop Daniel Michael**

activities. We members feel that we are a big family; we might even say it's a family reunion among the members of the Church.

It is good to gather in this inspiring setting in the presence of many members who come together for these activities.

As members, we still have trials and tribulations in our lives, but when we join for activities in the Church, we forget about these trials and tribulations and happily enjoy these activities in the Church.

We gather strength when we meet in groups. While participating in ward activities, we learn in groups what is important. We at the Convent Road Ward of the Bengaluru India Stake of The Church of Jesus Christ of





*Participating in ward activities, members enjoy the association—more than fun and games.*

Latter-day Saints always feel encouraged, loved, and motivated when we participate in ward and stake activities.

The happiest moment for a member is that every Sunday we gather as a group for sacrament meeting and Sunday school, Relief Society, elders quorum, youth Sunday School, and Primary classes. Some Sundays we

watch and listen to the prophets, apostles, and other leaders in the rebroadcasting of general conference and in stake conferences. We also participate in activities from individual quorums and the stake. As we participate in these gatherings as a group, we feel very happy, motivated, and edified.

On Indian Independence Day, members of the Convent Road Ward participated in many different activities, beginning with a national flag hoisting. A cooking competition was held, with the members divided into four teams: Team Lehi, Team Nephi, Team Alma, and Team Mosiah. In the blood donation camp, members

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cheerfully donated blood. In the sports activity, both the young and the old participated enthusiastically. “Book of Mormon mania,” service projects, a Christmas activity, and several trainings for teachers and leaders took the members to happier moments.

Activities are planned with the spiritual and temporal needs of the members in mind by the leaders seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit to determine what kind of activity would help meet those needs and accomplish gospel-centered purposes.

Leaders in the ward ensure that activities strengthen the family rather than compete with it. Some activities are family-centered, giving families opportunity to participate together. Activities support parents by teaching their children to be faithful followers of Christ. These activities encourage members to use their gifts, skills, and talents.

Our service activities provided opportunities for members to show love for those in need, not minding if

they are members of the Church or not, but feeling the joy of helping them.

All these activities help the members not only learn new things but also feel good about being members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the only true, restored Church on the whole face of the earth.

I testify that this is the only Church that has temples for the salvation of righteous men and women. I testify

that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ live and love us. The Savior Jesus Christ is the light and way of our life. The Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ that helps us come closer to God. The Prophet Joseph Smith restored the true gospel and the true Church. President Thomas S. Monson is our living prophet. I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

### LOCAL NEWS SUBMISSIONS

Your local pages section is produced by members in your own area under the guidance of the Area Presidency so that it can address the needs and experiences of members where you live. The inclusion of the local pages in each issue depends on the availability of local content. We invite you to contribute your faith-promoting thoughts and experiences by contacting your local editor.

Send your articles to:  
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