

ASIA AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

The Plan of Salvation

Elder David F. Evans

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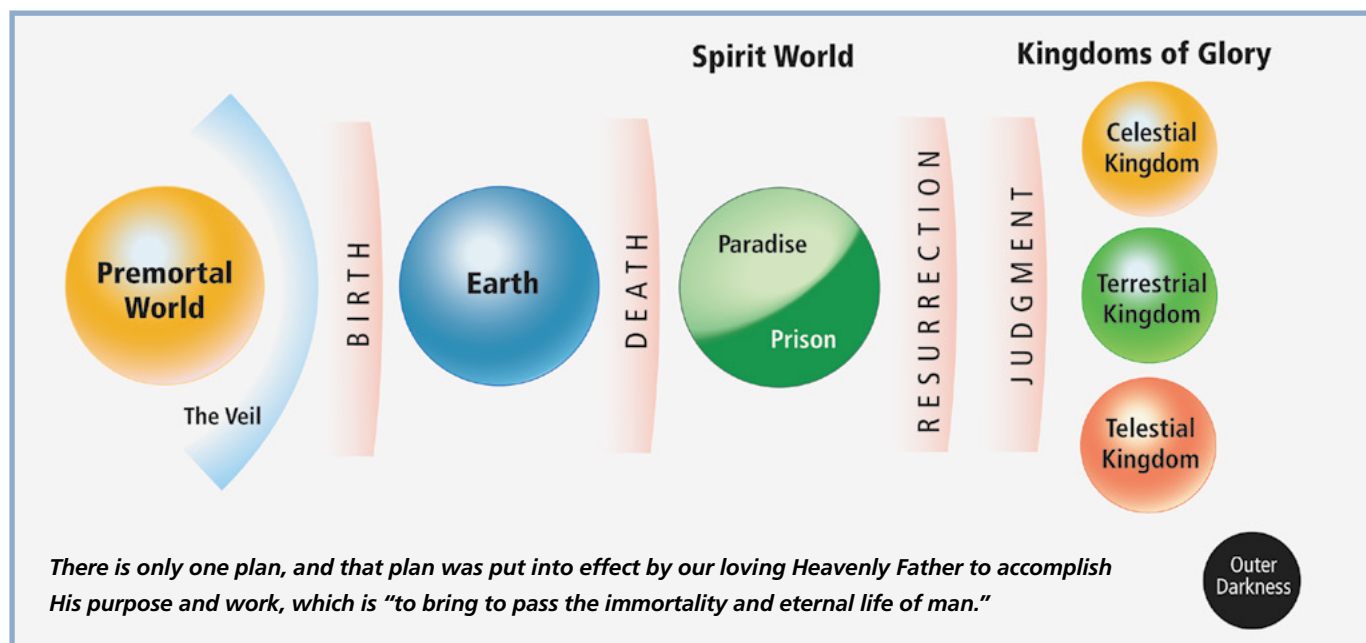
During my mission to Japan as a young man, the only audio-visual presentation we had was a slide show entitled *Man's Search for Happiness*, which had a soundtrack that was played on a tape recorder. Today, most people have never seen a photographic slide and have never listened to a cassette tape. However, in the business, traffic, technology, and commotion of today's world mankind is still searching for happiness, and most of the world has yet to learn of our Heavenly Father's great plan of

salvation. Despite great advances in knowledge and worldwide access to vast amounts of information through the internet and other technologies, mankind's greatest questions remain the same: "Who am I, and where did I come from?" "What is my purpose in being here?" and "What happens after death?"

The answers to these questions are what we know as the plan of salvation. This plan has also been called the plan of redemption, the plan of mercy, and the plan of happiness.

Whatever it is called, there is only one plan, and that plan was put into effect by our loving Heavenly Father to accomplish His purpose and work, which is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

In answer to the question "Who am I, and where did I come from?" we know that we are literal spirit children of God. God is our Father. We are His children. The Apostle Paul declared, "We are the offspring of God" (Acts 17:29). The Lord told





Jeremiah, “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee” (Jeremiah 1:5). The Lord has taught that “man was also in the beginning with God” (D&C 93:29) and that we “received [our] first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth in the due time of the Lord” (D&C 138:56). We came from God to earth to learn to follow His plan and to have joy, regardless of

the economic or other circumstances of our life.

As children of God, we have the greatest potential and purpose. By keeping God’s commandments and doing the works of righteousness during our lives, we know that not only will we have joy, but we will also receive “peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:23). In *Man’s Search for Happiness*, an Apostle of the Lord

narrates that “life offers you two precious gifts—one is time, the other freedom of choice.”¹ Another prophet taught that “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25), but Jesus Christ came to do the will of the Father and perform the Atonement, “that he may redeem the children of men from the fall” (2 Nephi 2:26). Because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we are “free forever, knowing

good from evil; to act for [ourselves] and not to be acted upon ... And [we] are free to choose liberty and eternal life” or “to choose captivity and death” through our unrighteous choices (2 Nephi 2:26–27). In this life, we strive and learn to “choose eternal life” (2 Nephi 2:28) and happiness, and not choose sin and those things that will bring unhappiness and even spiritual death. A fundamental part of the plan of salvation is that we each have our moral agency. We are free to determine how we will use our time in this life. It is through choosing righteousness that we prove ourselves able to choose good over evil, righteousness over sin, happiness over the grief that comes from sin. We also know that each will receive an eternal reward according to those choices, for as President Thomas S. Monson has taught, our “decisions determine destiny.”²

Just as you lived before mortal birth, just as you live in this life, so you will continue to live after death. After death, we know that “the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life” (Alma 40:11). These spirits will be received either into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, or into a condition

where they will be taught and have the opportunity to accept the gospel and repent. We are taught that “the dead who repent will be redeemed, through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God. And after they have paid the penalty of their transgressions, and are washed clean, shall receive a reward according to their works, for they are heirs of salvation” (D&C 138:58–59).

We also know that in the Lord’s time, all will be resurrected. “The soul shall be restored to the body, and the body to the soul; yea, and every limb and joint shall be restored to its body;



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yea, even a hair of the head shall not be lost; but all things shall be restored to their proper and perfect frame” (Alma 40:23). Not only will every son and daughter of God be resurrected, but each will also receive a reward according to their works.

The righteous who have been valiant in following the Savior and who have received needed temple ordinances and kept the associated covenants will receive God’s greatest gift, even eternal life, which is to live with God and even become as He is.³ This is why we urge every individual and every family to make every effort to qualify for a temple recommend and to make whatever sacrifice is needed to qualify to go to the temple and receive those ordinances.

I bear testimony of the Savior and of our Heavenly Father’s great plan of salvation. We are God’s children, and we are here to learn to choose Him and His commandments. Just as we live now, we will be resurrected and we will each receive a reward according to our works in this life. Let us choose the happiness and joy that comes from keeping His commandments and receiving His ordinances. ■

NOTES

1. *Man’s Search for Happiness* (pamphlet, 1969), 4 (narrated by Richard L. Evans).
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Follow the Prophets,” *Liahona*, Jan. 2015, 53.
3. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.

The Joy of Living the Word of Wisdom

Andrew Simon Gomes

Chennai

I am Andrew Simon Gomes from Chennai. My family and I have been baptized into the only true and living church—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The truth has totally changed me from the inside out; it's even changed the way I eat, sleep, drink, and even work.

From a very early age, I learned to drink tea, as it is a traditional drink everywhere, and often it is a must to serve good quality tea for visitors. I used to drink both tea and coffee and when I grew up I also used to drink alcohol occasionally.

I was never a heavy drinker, nor did I have any problem with drinking, but I saw many people doing horrible things in the middle of night when I was working for a very posh pub in Chennai. My job was to serve alcohol of all sorts to our customers, many of whom are well-known professionals and public figures of Chennai. My aim is to give witness of the true gospel which works amazingly and powerfully and offers life, love, and hope.

A group of missionaries dedicated their time and committed to teach me and my family. I continued to explore

the Church independently. The hunger to know the truth continued to grow and is still growing stronger.

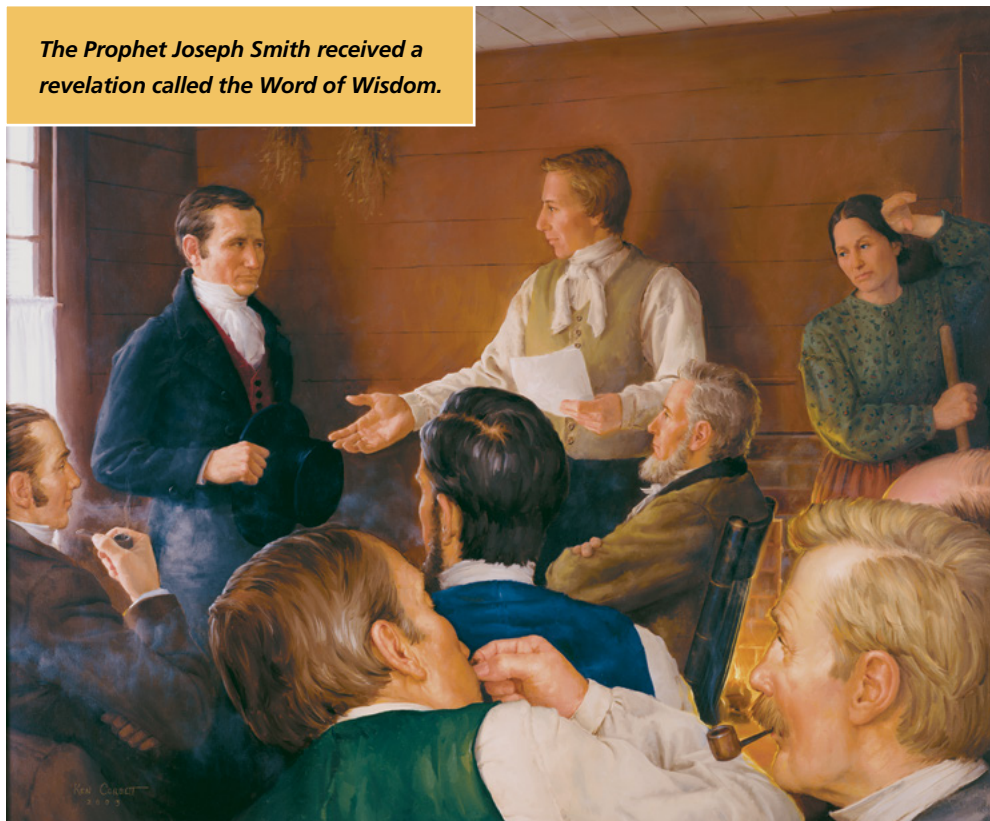
I am not an expert, but I do know that as members of the Church, we do not drink tea, coffee, or alcohol because it's part of a revelation received through the Prophet Joseph Smith called the Word of Wisdom. It is a commandment that everyone must follow.

In middle of the night when many people go hungry to bed or live on the streets, not knowing what they will do to earn bread and butter for their families tomorrow, I witnessed a group of rich, influential people rushing to drink alcohol. Many of them drink alcohol like water and spend a lot of money on alcoholic drinks.

When I started learning the truth that the Lord revealed in the the Word of Wisdom, this added a new dimension and it became clearer to me as to why we are told to not drink alcohol.

As I am writing this, I'm trying to imagine that moment when President

The Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation called the Word of Wisdom.



Brigham Young (1801–77) stood up and proposed that all the Saints formally covenant to abstain from tea, coffee, tobacco, whiskey, and “all things mentioned in the Word of Wisdom” (“Minutes of the General Conference,” *Millennial Star*, 1 Feb. 1852, 35); I keep thinking of that wonderful moment and how that wisdom is more valuable than silver and gold.

I have served hundreds of customers who came to the pub looking for joy but left at dawn still unhappy and also drunk and directionless about their way home. Joy was not there. They continued to come, trying to buy joy by drinking alcohol, but none of them ever found joy in it.

Before learning about the Word of Wisdom, I used to believe that alcohol might be good sometimes, but in the process of becoming a Mormon, I’ve come to realize and know that it is not good at all!

What should we do to receive a fulness of joy? What could my customers have done to receive a fulness of joy in their lives? The answer is loud and clear: “In order to receive a fulness of joy, we must strive to be clean and pure, both in mind and in body. Some of the temporal benefits resulting from obedience to the Word of Wisdom are better health and vitality, strength, and endurance (see Brigham Young’s promise in *Journal of Discourses*,

12:156); greater strength to avoid such physical sins as unchastity (see Grant, *Gospel Standards*, p. 55); a savings in money not spent on harmful substances (see Grant, *Gospel Standards*, pp. 50–52); and greater resistance to many of the diseases that attack the body” (*Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual* [Church Educational System Manual, 2002], 207).

Who knows better than me that “drink has brought more woe and misery, broken more hearts, wrecked more homes, committed more crimes, filled more coffins than all the wars the world has suffered”? (J. Reuben Clark Jr., in Conference Report, Oct. 1942, 8; see also Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, 55–57). I stopped drinking when I started learning the truth. I do not drink coffee or tea anymore, but the question remained: after knowing the truth, should I serve those people?

As a person of faith who knows the truth, I was morally fighting within myself. On one hand, my job was the only means of providing food for my two small children, my wife, and myself, but on the other hand, how could I serve alcohol to others when I knew it was not right? I left my job. After leaving the job, I have peace in my mind. I know that Heavenly Father will show me a way to take care of my family with another job. ■

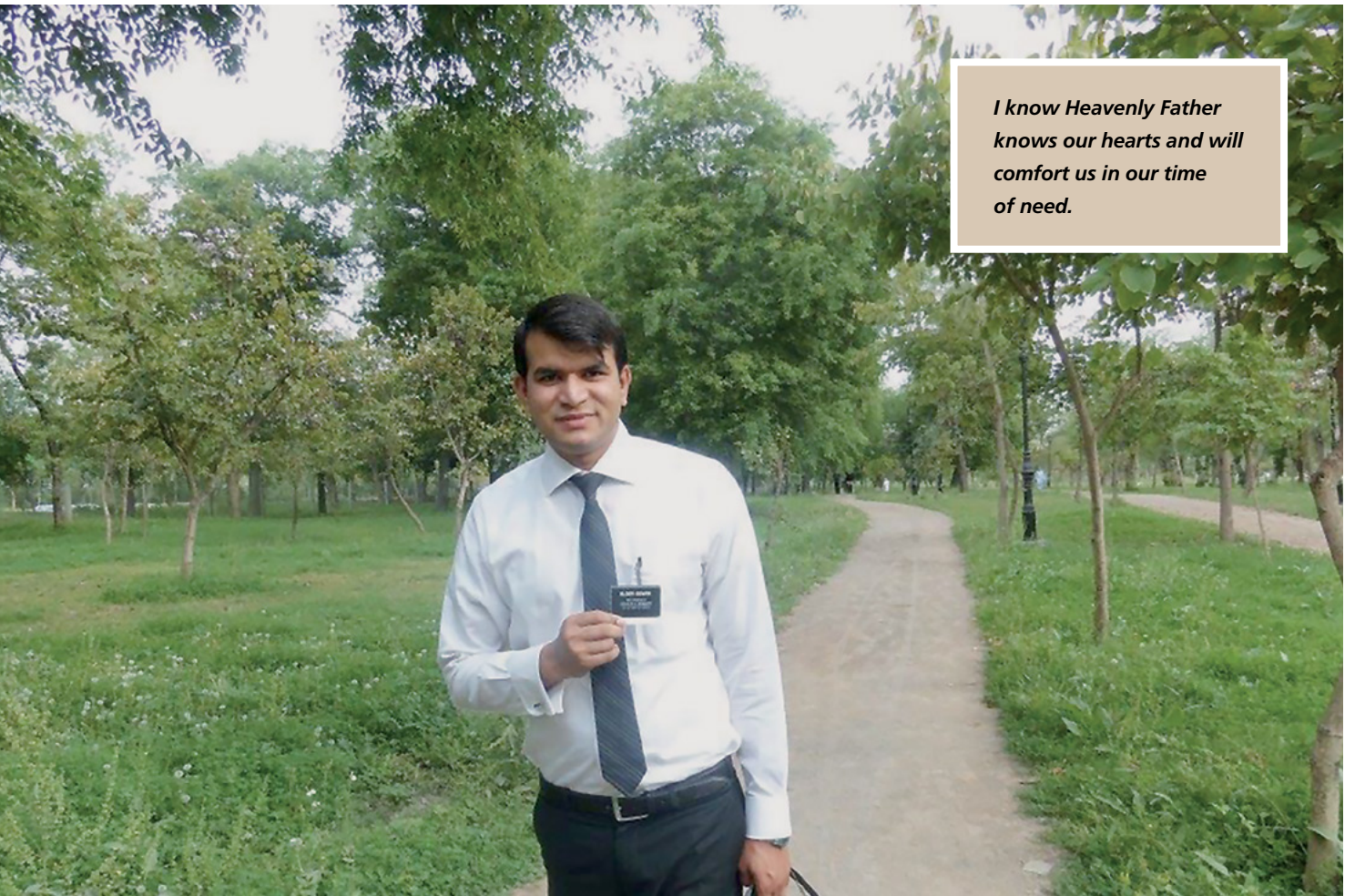


Elder Zohaib Dewan

I Will Take Care of You

Elder Zohaib Dewan
India New Delhi Mission

Three months after I began serving in the India New Delhi Mission, I received a call from our mission president. He told me that my father had passed away. When I left on mission, my father had been very healthy. I was shocked hearing the news and



I know Heavenly Father knows our hearts and will comfort us in our time of need.

asked the mission president four times if he was sure that this was true and had really happened. He told me to hang up with him and call my home. I did as he said, and my uncle told me it was true.

Three or four days later, my companion noticed I was not eating and was feeling tense. He asked me many times if I wanted to eat something,

but I did not feel like eating. For three or four days, it was difficult for me to read the scriptures or visit the members, and I could not teach. Members would try to give me something to eat, but I would decline.

On about the fourth evening of feeling heartbroken and confused about my father's death and wondering how my mother, sister, and brother

could go forward, I sat down to think. Eventually, with tears streaming down my face, I knelt and prayed in my mind, "Heavenly Father, how can my family live, and how can I complete my mission when they need me at this time?" My father was loving, humble, kind, and a hard-working woodcutter, and I felt they could not survive without him and with me gone.

I went back to my room and saw my Bible on my study table. I took the scriptures in my hands and thought, “Heavenly Father, what is in this book for me?” I opened the book and the pages fell to the book of Romans chapter five. Although several scriptures on the two pages were colored from my previous readings, the only verses that my eyes rested upon were verses three, four, and five.

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

“And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”

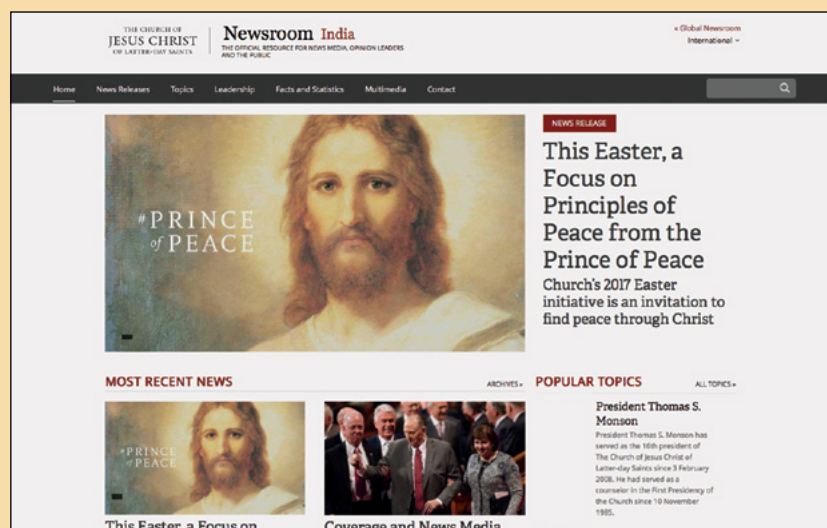
I read the verses once, but I did not understand them. I read them a second time, and the Spirit opened my mind to the message Heavenly Father had for me through His scriptures. I learned that I needed to be patient like my Savior, Jesus Christ. I learned that trials and tribulation will make me better and help me grow. I learned that I did not need to worry for myself or my family; the words “I will care for you” came into my mind, and I felt peace.

I was then reminded of Alma 26:27, “Now when our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back, behold, the Lord comforted us, and said: Go amongst thy brethren, the Lamanites,

and bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success.”

I know that Heavenly Father knows our hearts and will comfort us in our time of need. ■

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Asia Area Stake Conference: February 2017

Babit Powell

The Asia Area stake conference broadcast has left so many things in our hearts to ponder about and put our lives in order.

We felt so inspired to listen to the words of Elder Gary E. Stevenson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Presidency of the Seventy; Sister Neill F. Marriott, Second Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency; servants of the Lord.

It is indeed priceless to be able to share a few inspirations that have helped us and will still help us climb the steps to eternal life.

Sister Neill F. Marriott quoted 1 Nephi 11:1, where Nephi had the desire to know. She beckoned us to dedicate time each week to studying everything that Jesus Christ taught.

Read and ponder “The Living Christ” (*Liahona*, Apr. 2000, 2) and “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (*Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129), for these are inspired documents.

She invited each of us to read daily from the Book of Mormon. It



has power to open ways for the Holy Ghost to guide us.

Elder Donald L. Hallstrom also insisted on character and its importance; it's needed to be a covenant-keeper. He invited us to make our temple recommend current. He asked us to make every sacrifice necessary to go to the temple.

I felt so inspired and edified in looking upon the face of Elder Gary E.

Stevenson; radiance shone around him while he bore his testimony and gave counsel on nurturing our children and inculcating them with gospel truths.

I loved this stake conference and the opportunity we had to hear the voice of the Lord through His inspired servants (see D&C 1:38).

With these words I close in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■