

ASIA AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Open Windows of Heaven: Tithing and Self-Reliance

By Elder Peter F. Meurs

Second Counselor in the Asia Area Presidency

I returned to Melbourne in January 1978 after serving in the Auckland New Zealand Mission. One year later, Maxine and I were sealed for time and eternity in the New Zealand Hamilton Temple. Just prior to our marriage, Maxine had graduated as a teacher. I had two years of study left to complete my engineering degree.

As a happily married young couple, we moved into a small rented

apartment. We had a foam mattress on the floor for a bed and little else. Maxine provided our income for most of that year until our beautiful daughter Kate was born in October. We then lived on a very meager income for the next 15 months. I coached some high school math students and we both taught piano lessons. I also repaired and serviced old cars for Church and family members.

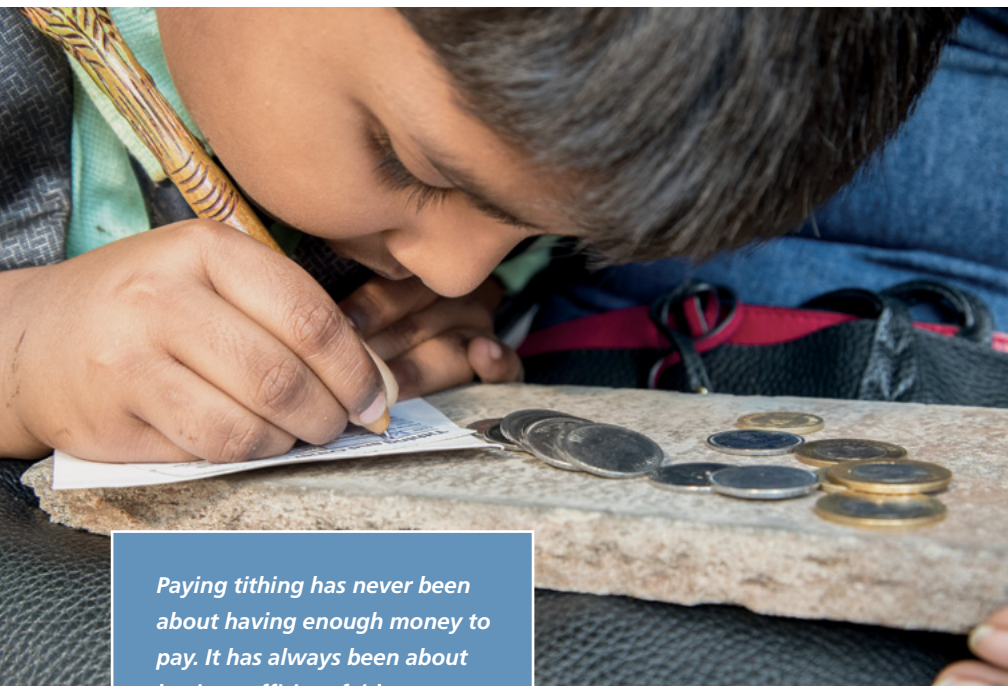


Elder Peter F. Meurs

We used a simple envelope budgeting system to manage our money. The first envelope was for tithing. We needed the Lord's help and put 10% of all the money we earned into this envelope. We had other envelopes for fast offerings, rent, utilities, food, and other expenses. We lived simply and happily. With the Lord's help and blessings, we always managed to have sufficient income for our needs.

My first job after graduating was with the oil company Esso. Maxine and I still remember the feeling we had when I received my first pay cheque. While my income as a new graduate was modest, we were able to start saving for some additional furniture for our growing family.

As we look back on our early married years, we recognize the significant blessings that flowed as we remembered the sacred law of tithing. Heavenly Father has given us the law of tithing because He loves us and wants to bless us. As we put our trust in Him and give back just one-tenth of the increase He has blessed us with, He can help us to live within our means.



Paying tithing has never been about having enough money to pay. It has always been about having sufficient faith.

Through the prophet Malachi, the Lord declared:

“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10).

Tithing funds are always used for the Lord’s purposes—to build and maintain temples and meetinghouses, to sustain missionary work, to provide seminary and institute for Church members, and to carry on the work of the Lord throughout the world.

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, taught that there are three ways the Lord blesses us as we pay an honest tithing:

“First, when we pay our tithes to the Church, our Heavenly Father pours out blessings upon us. Anyone who has consistently paid a full tithe knows that is true. The blessings are sometimes spiritual and sometimes temporal. They are given in the Lord’s time and according to what He knows is best for us . . .

“Second, all of us who have paid a consistent full tithe *feel* greater confidence in asking God for what we and our families need. . .

“Third, those who pay tithing *feel* an increase in their love of God and of all God’s children” (“The Blessings of Tithing,” *Liahona*, June 2011, 5).

My wife and I are delighted to be assigned to this wonderful area of Asia. We know that many struggle to have

enough money for basic necessities. Paying tithing has never been about having enough money to pay. It has always been about having sufficient faith. I testify that as we trust in the Lord and pay tithing as a first priority, He will bless and sustain us in miraculous ways. ■

LOCAL PAGES

Miracle on Mission

By Sister Shyam Kumar, Sandhya

India New Delhi Mission

I grew up being very close to my grandma. Through her righteous example I learned how a woman filled with Christ’s love can be a great influence to all those around her. She raised wonderful children. One of her sons (my uncle) who was the member of the Church introduced me to the gospel, and through subsequent

visits by the missionaries, my two younger sisters and I were baptized on December 6, 2009, a day I will never forget!

Ever since I joined the Church I have had a desire to serve the Lord by serving His children. I desired to go on a mission, but I had to go through so many challenges before entering into the field as a full-time missionary. Since my parents were not members, they were reluctant to send me off for 18 months, but through constant



fasting and prayers, my parents' hearts were softened.

I soon received a call to labor in the India New Delhi Mission. My joy was full! The time was nearing to leave behind everything. I was very happy to be a part of one of my younger sister's wedding—she got married to a member of the Church, and they both helped me to be the best I can be. Finally the day arrived for me to leave on my mission. Tears filled my eyes as I waved goodbye to my family. Because the India New Delhi Mission needed more sister missionaries, I entered the field much earlier than I expected. I received letters after letters from my family—even my parents, who were hesitant to send me on mission, now told me that I must be strong enough to face the challenges on my mission and not give up. They told me that I made the right decision to be on mission, and I found out that my dad, who never spoke a word to the missionaries, now lets them in. My grandma wrote to me saying that even her death should not stop me from completing my mission. It was a miracle indeed for me to be on my mission with all my family members supporting me. I was glad for this blessing.

My faith in Christ has been strengthened tremendously. Being the first missionary from my family, I hold a

great responsibility to stay strong in the gospel. On my mission I am learning things that would have otherwise gone unlearned and I am truly grateful for all that Heavenly Father is teaching me. On Easter Sunday morning, my companion and I headed out to pick up a member who is around 70 and cannot travel on her own. When we arrived there we found her very sick, and she requested that we take her to the nearest hospital. We soon reached the hospital, the doctors examined her, and she was given the needed treatment.

My companion and I were worried because we did not know how to pay the doctor since the member was too sick to be asked for the money at that time. We said a prayer and asked Heavenly Father to help us. To our surprise, we did not have to pay any money—the medicines and the treatments were free of cost for senior citizens only on that particular day. Tears of gratitude filled our eyes. We knew that Heavenly Father was looking after us, we felt closer to heaven, and it was the best Easter ever!

I know that Jesus Christ is risen and that He lives. I know of no missionary who has gone home without experiencing or witnessing a miracle on their missions. I am experiencing many, and the above is one that is close to my heart.



Sister Shyam Kumar

I know that missionary work is true and that God is mindful of every soul—their needs and pains. His love will never fail. In the words of President Thomas S. Monson, “doubt destroys, faith fulfills” (“Great Expectations” [Brigham Young University devotional, Jan. 11, 2009], 4). I know these things to be true, in the name Jesus Christ, amen. ■

My Mission—a Source of Strength

By **Vinitha Appusamy**

Coimbatore Second Branch

I have been a member of the true Church for 12 years, and I am enjoying the blessings of the restored gospel. Recently I came home after successfully completing my missionary service in the India New Delhi Mission. My 18-month mission was a great time to continually experience the Spirit and to show others the love of the Savior. Oh! What a great time it was to serve Him!

Before my mission, I had a hard time recognizing and following the Spirit. But during the mission, I felt the guidance of the Spirit in carrying the message to the hearts of the people, even though I had difficulty in speaking the Hindi language.

It is not easy for someone to leave the religion they practice to accept the true gospel. But my companions and I witnessed all our converts being immensely blessed

after accepting the true gospel in their lives. Their testimony strengthened me personally to know that Heavenly Father loves us and is mindful of us in knowing our needs and fulfilling them at the right time.

I know that only through the Atonement of Christ, even if I'm disappointed with my challenges, it is the only source of strength to me. As I worked on my weaknesses, they became my strengths. I know that Joseph Smith and the work that he did in bringing forth the Book of Mormon is true because I can recognize the Spirit when I study the book and ponder about it.

The foundation of the gospel became very strong to me on my mission. Now the gospel has become a part of my life. I am grateful for the testimony that I hold, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

I know that only through the Atonement of Christ, even if I'm disappointed with my challenges, it is the only source of strength to me.

The Time to Show Gratitude

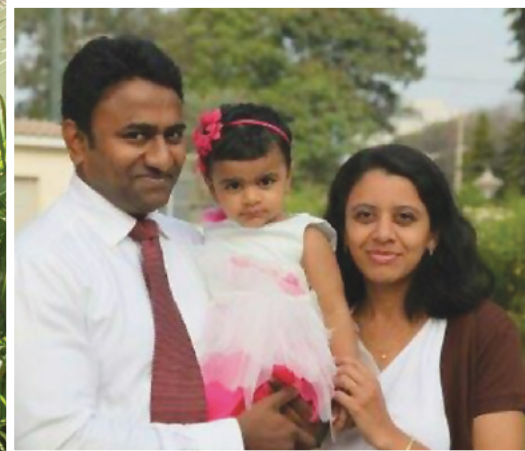
By **Vinitha Appusamy**

Coimbatore Second Branch,
Coimbatore District

I was born and brought up in a non-Christian family. Our family consists of four members. We were strict in following the principles of our religion. In this condition, true and living Christ touched us in the year 2002.

My sister had difficulties and we looked all around to find solution. Even the God that we worshipped all our lives was not able to answer. During this time, my mom's friend was a Christian. We asked her help and she rendered a support of prayer to us. We love the prayers of Christians. Little by little she was out of the problem. From that time we did not turn back to our religion but we started to go to churches and welcomed Christ into our hearts.

Years passed by, we searched and prayed for a proper denomination. We met the missionaries and found The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. We accepted this church and also the gospel. The four of us got baptized on 27 March 2005. We were sealed as a family for time and eternity in the Hong Kong China Temple



on 17 March 2007. Even my sister got married to a church member and both were sealed in the temple. God blessed them and gave a beautiful princess. As my family dedicated ourselves to Him and apply His teachings in our life blessings started to shower.

Because of us accepting Christ, a division erupted between my family and my mom's family. They disowned us. We fasted and prayed but answer to our prayers did not come immediately. Even we did not shrink our faith but we strongly believed that God will answer our prayers in His time. Our prayers were answered in the year 2013. Meanwhile, my father met with an accident causing head injury. Doctors said to us that he may or may not get his memory back. But we believed that "Faith will bring miracles". Slowly he got back his memory. Now he is actively participating in all Church activities.

For all the miracles that had happened to my family, saying to my God a word of thanks no way equalizes it. So I made a righteous decision to serve Him as a full time missionary for a period of 18 months. Now I got a call to serve in "India New Delhi

Mission". These 18 months are not a sacrifice, it is a time to show gratitude to Him by bringing souls unto Him. I believe that this gospel is having

power to heal all our problems. I believe that He is always mindful of us and loves us. I am happy for the seed of faith, as it is said in Alma 32:28, has grown in my life. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

Faith and Happiness

By **Pravallika Kollu**

Rajahmundry Third Ward

My greatest test as a youngster is to guard against Satan's influences. We all have that one point in life where we may lose our integrity and virtue, but

in my life the Holy Ghost has been a constant companion to me. The Holy Ghost has guarded me with whisperings every time. When I face a situation, I always ask myself, "Do I have faith enough to solve this problem?" Or if it is not solved, "Do I continue to maintain the same faith in the Lord?"

Yes! I ask myself the question "If things don't work out even if we have faith in God, what then?" This life is a gift from God and we are tested. We need to have faith in the Lord and move forward in faith. Faith always helps us to maintain our Light of Christ. Seeing the Light of Christ shine within us will help those who see us to know we live an exemplary life and thereby make them feel the love of God.

Moving forward with faith in difficult situations is the most beautiful task given by our Heavenly Father! I can truly complete those tasks when I love God with all my heart, might, mind, and strength! And I will move forward with faith until the end of my life. ■



Faith

By Priyadarshini Manay

Mumbai Branch

What a time to be called upon to write about faith, the pillar upon which stands every religion on earth.

I had to fill out certain forms at work today. In the space left blank for religion, I wrote “Christian.” It is the first of many more such opportunities I am going to have to prove that I have taken on His name. I shall remember today most vividly for that moment. Coincidentally, today also marks the end of a poignant period of my life that has spanned the last two weeks. While the details of what transpired are hardly worthy of mention, this period has been a great test of my faith in His plan. I do not know if I passed in His eyes. What I do know is that I haven’t deserted the path I promised to follow the day I was baptized. This makes me happy today. Although I expect a period of greater trials in the coming weeks and months, I welcome this period of uncertainty in my mortal life by being entirely faithful to the life which is to come beyond it.

Why do we need faith?

As a person who at one point in her life not long ago lost faith in all



traditional belief systems, I testify that being faithless makes us hard, unloving, suspicious, and selfish. Now that I

have walked out of the darkest period of my life and known the Light of Christ, I do not wish to go backward.

What cultivates faith?

Love. Love that another person may shower on us unconditionally and unexpectedly or love that we feel for someone without expecting it in return. It softens us, gives us hope, leads us to charity, and inculcates kindness. In short it makes us human.

It is a psychologically proven fact that human beings have always felt a need to believe in something beyond themselves. Science, democracy, and karma are a few examples of the expression of that human need. We have never needed proof to believe in ideas which in themselves do not always have all the answers to our questions. But ask man to believe in God and he will at least once in his life search for proof. This is particularly ironic because I think the need to believe in something higher than ourselves is a gift from God. Why else would only human beings feel this need that animals and plants don't?

Why has He given us this gift?

So we may believe that He exists. For His ability to perform miracles is directly proportional to our faith in His existence and His ability to perform them. But trust man to start thinking for himself and feel the need to create abstract ideas to satisfy this need.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58).

We all have a personal sense of identity. When God created us in His physical likeness, He hoped we would also be like Him in action. But when we rely too much on ourselves, instead of becoming like Him, we become a slave to our pride and eventually Satan.

The innate need to believe in a higher force helps us to keep our pride in check.

Faith is a matter of choice. People can choose to see God in a tree or a rock. We can choose not to believe in Him. He gave us choice because He has faith in our ability to choose right over wrong, good over evil, every single day. He has given us specific instructions—His gospel. If we lose our way, He believes in us being able to choose correctly at the very next opportunity.

Why do I choose to have faith in God, in Christ, and in the gospel today?

As I went about reading my scriptures, there was one person in those scriptures that I most identified with. Whether it was His words, His actions, or His unfailing obedience to God's

will till the end, I knew at once that He had lived. Through the difficult choices I had made in my life, I knew that He still lived. At different times in my life, I have been subject to similar emotions, questions, and decisions that He experienced. I couldn't have made the right choices without His light to guide me.

I followed the Word of Wisdom for 26 years without actually knowing that it existed. I only started consuming coffee and tea due to a work schedule that did not permit a meal in the cafeteria before meal-times closed, and coffee and tea were available 24/7. The day I heard what the Word of Wisdom entailed was the day I left those two substances behind forever. That spiritual knowledge could not have been poured into my soul by anyone other than God, just as it had been ingrained into Christ that He had been sent for one purpose alone. The only difference is that I have been given a duty different from that given to Christ. I have known my duty since I was a child and then a young woman. No matter that circumstances made me lose faith in ever being able to fulfill it for a while, I hope to share my testimony of the fulfillment of that sacred duty given me one day.

I have followed a path all my life without proof that it was right.

Christ, the gospel, and the Word of Wisdom came to me as proof after 35 years of being temporarily ignorant of them. Give a blind woman sight and she can never doubt again.

In my Savior's footsteps I follow with faith and shall guide my family to follow. "Come, follow me" (Luke 18:22), He said. Here I come, my Lord and Savior. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

VISIT THE WEBSITE

The screenshot shows the Newsroom India website. At the top, it says "THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS" and "Newsroom India THE OFFICIAL RESOURCE FOR NEWS MEDIA, OPINION LEADERS AND THE PUBLIC". Below this is a navigation bar with links for Home, News Releases, Topics, Leadership, Facts and Statistics, Multimedia, and Contact. The main content area is divided into "TOP STORIES" and "RECENT NEWS".

TOP STORIES

Rajahmundry Stake Holds Open House for the Community
 An open house for the new-formed Rajahmundry Stake, Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh, India, was held for the community on Saturday, May 13th 2017. The Rajahmundry Stake is the third Stake formed in India after the Bengaluru Stake and Hyderabad Stake.

RECENT NEWS

An Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ visits Asia with other leaders
 NEWS RELEASE - 9 JUNE 2017 —
 An Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ visited countries in Asia with other leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Dr. Richard Bell and LDS Charities tour facilities in Gujarat India
 NEWS RELEASE - 25 APRIL 2017 — GUJARAT INDIA
 On April 17, 2017 Richard Bell, MD and LDS Charities, the humanitarian arm of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, toured two facilities in the Indian state of Gujarat.

LDS Charities and UNICEF tour Mumbai suburb
 NEWS RELEASE - 24 APRIL 2017 —
 On April 13, 2017, representatives of UNICEF India and LDS Charities toured the community of Bhiwandi, a northern suburb of Mumbai.

www.mormonnewsroom.in

CALL FOR ARTICLES

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. ■

EMAIL: indiablrces@yahoo.com

The image shows two examples of "ASIA LOCAL PAGES" articles. The top article is titled "Choosing Faith" and features a photo of a man in a white shirt. The bottom article is titled "Forgiveness and Gratitude" and features a photo of a group of people in a desert setting. Both articles include text and small images.