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The choir sang “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet.”

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### President Monson

Thank you, President Hinckley, for your inspiring remarks. Thank you, El-

der David B. Haight, for that sweet and sincere greeting. The whole church loves you.

The choir has sung “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet.” We will now be pleased to hear from Elders Sheldon F. Child and Lynn A. Mickelsen of the Seventy.

## Elder Sheldon F. Child

### Build testimonies on a sure foundation

Several years ago a severe storm hit the area in which we were living. It began with a torrential downpour, followed by a devastating easterly wind. When the storm was over, damages were assessed. Power lines were down, property had been damaged, and many of the beautiful trees that grew in the area had been uprooted. A few days later I was talking to a friend who had lost several trees in his yard. The trees on one side of his home were standing straight and tall. They had weathered the storm well, while the trees that were in what I considered the prime spot on his property had not been able to withstand the heavy winds. He pointed out that the trees that survived the storm were planted on firm ground; their roots had to sink deep into the soil to receive nourishment. The trees he had lost were planted near a small stream, where nourishment was readily available. The roots were shallow. They were not anchored deeply enough to protect them from the storm.

Our testimonies, like those trees, must be built on a sure foundation and deeply rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ, so that when the winds and rains come into our lives, as they surely will, we will be strong enough to weather the storms that rage about us. Helaman counseled his sons:

“And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Re-

deemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall.”<sup>1</sup>

In the Book of Mormon, the prophet Jacob, in his encounter with Sherem the anti-Christ, asked this question:

“Deniest thou the Christ who shall come? And he said: If there should be a Christ, I would not deny him; but I know that there is no Christ, neither has been, nor ever will be.

“And I said unto him: Believest thou the scriptures? And he said, Yea.

“And I said unto him: Then ye do not understand them; for they truly testify of Christ. Behold, I say unto you that none of the prophets have written, nor prophesied, save they have spoken concerning this Christ.

“And this is not all . . . ; it also has been made manifest unto me by the power of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>2</sup>

### Sources of truth for building testimony

Jacob points out three sources of truth—the scriptures, the prophets, and the Holy Ghost—that testify of Christ.

They will help us build “upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God.”<sup>3</sup>

### *The scriptures*

The Savior Himself said, “Search the scriptures; . . . they are they which testify of me.”<sup>4</sup> When the Lord directed Lehi to take his family and flee into the wilderness, He knew they would need a strong foundation upon which to build in the new land. So important were the scriptures that in order to obtain the records, the voice of the Spirit directed Nephi to slay Laban, saying, “It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief.”<sup>5</sup>

About this same time in history, the Lord led another group of people out of Jerusalem to the promised land. Many generations later, King Mosiah discovered their descendants. They were known as the people of Zarahemla. Their spiritual condition was poor. In Omni we read, “Their language had become corrupted; and they had brought no records with them; and they denied the being of their Creator.”<sup>6</sup> Without scriptures, not only nations perish, but families and individuals dwindle in unbelief. Daily scripture study helps us anchor our faith in Christ. The scriptures truly testify of Him.

### *The prophets*

Several years ago I was assigned to reorganize a stake presidency. At the Sunday session of the conference, the wife of the newly called stake president related this story. She stated that she had been raised in a good Christian home. Her parents gathered their family together every day to read and study the Bible. As they read about the prophets of old, she asked her parents why there were no prophets on the earth today. They didn’t have an answer that satisfied her, nor did her teachers or her religious leaders.

One day, as a university student, she noticed two young men wearing white shirts and ties. She could read the name “Jesus Christ” on the black name tags they wore. She spoke to them and asked if they were ministers. “Yes, we are! We are missionaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”

“Then may I ask you a question?” she said. “Does the Lord love the people today as much as He loved the people of olden times?”

“Yes, He does!” was their reply.

“Then why do we not have prophets on the earth today?”

Can you imagine the excitement of two young missionaries being asked a question like that? They said, “We do. We do have prophets on the earth today. Can we tell you about them?”

Our message to the world is the same: We do have prophets on the earth today. This very afternoon we will raise our hands to sustain President Gordon B. Hinckley, his counselors, and the Quorum of the Twelve as prophets, seers, and revelators. They are special witnesses of the name of Jesus Christ. In the document “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,” they state:

“We bear testimony, as His duly ordained Apostles—that Jesus is the Living Christ, the immortal Son of God. . . . He is the light, the life, and the hope of the world. His way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come.”<sup>7</sup>

Brothers and sisters, if God loves us enough to send us prophets, then we need to love Him enough to follow them. Following the prophets will help protect us against the storms of life and lead us to Christ.

### *The Holy Ghost*

When Christ met with His Apostles in the upper room prior to His Crucifixion, He said: “If ye love me, keep my com-

mandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.”<sup>8</sup>

When hands are laid upon our heads after baptism, we are confirmed members of His Church and then given the gift of the Holy Ghost. If we live righteously and remain worthy, we are promised His constant companionship; He will guide our lives, teach us truths, and testify to us that Jesus is the Christ. As covenant members of the Lord’s Church, we promise to serve Him and keep His commandments “that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon [us].”<sup>9</sup>

### Pouring out of the Spirit in West Africa

In West Africa, where we are currently serving, we feel His Spirit being poured out in rich abundance upon the faithful Saints. In 1989 a storm hit Ghana—not a storm of wind or rain but a storm of persecution, slander, and misunderstandings. It was a trying time; the Church was new there. All our non-African missionaries were required to leave the country. Our meetinghouses were locked and guarded so they could not be used by the members. The Saints could not gather together, so they worshiped as families in their own homes. Some members were arrested and even imprisoned.

This period of time is referred to as “the freeze.” Members had little contact or support from the outside Church, but they were not left on their own to weather the storm. They had the scriptures and the

words of the prophets; they put their trust and faith in the Lord, and He poured out His Spirit upon them. One member of the Church said, “We had the Spirit of the Lord with us; we could feel Him guiding and directing us. We drew closer to one another, and we drew nearer to the Savior.”

For 18 months the Saints fasted and prayed for the day when the freeze would end. In November of 1990 the ban was lifted. The worst of the storm had passed, but it had taken its toll. There were those who had fallen away. Their roots had been shallow and their foundation weak. The foundation of the Church in Ghana today is built on the faith of those who weathered the storm. They were deeply rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Brothers and sisters, the scriptures, the living prophets, and the Holy Ghost all testify of Christ. They will help us build on “a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall.”<sup>10</sup> Of this I humbly testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### NOTES

1. Helaman 5:12.
2. Jacob 7:9–12.
3. Helaman 5:12.
4. John 5:39.
5. 1 Nephi 4:13.
6. Omni 1:17.
7. “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2000, 3.
8. John 14:15–16.
9. Mosiah 18:10.
10. Helaman 5:12.

## Elder Lynn A. Mickelsen

### Do not wash dirty linen in public

While driving through a small town in Mexico, a man ran over and killed a dog that darted in front of him. From that day on he was known in the village as *mata-*

*perros*. No consideration or thought was given to the origin of the name; he was simply the “dog killer.” For those who came along later, not knowing the circumstance, their minds conjured up a terrible image of what he had done.