

We do not have to defend the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ will defend him for us. Those who reject Joseph Smith as a prophet and revelator are left to find some other explanation for the Book of Mormon; and for the second powerful defense, the Doctrine and Covenants; and

a third, the Pearl of Great Price. Published in combination, these scriptures form an unshakable testament that Jesus is the Christ and a witness that Joseph Smith is a prophet.

And I join the millions of others who have that testimony, and bear it to you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Bishop Richard C. Edgley

### **A professor's excitement for the gospel**

In 1995 I was invited to give a welcome and some opening remarks at a scientific seminar in Salt Lake City on the subject of child nutrition. Ninety-six scientists from 24 countries attended. As I surveyed the audience during my remarks, I was impressed by the many nations represented, as evidenced by their dress, skin color, language, and other distinguishing features.

Three or four months later I attended a stake conference on the East Coast of the United States. As I sat on the stand in preparation for the priesthood leadership session, an African man entered the chapel and sat down by the aisle. He looked vaguely familiar, but I couldn't remember where I might have seen him. I leaned over and asked the stake president who the man was. The stake president answered, "Oh, he is not a member of the Church. He is a visiting professor from Africa teaching at a prestigious university in the area. A few months ago he attended some kind of scientific seminar in Salt Lake City. He picked up a pamphlet about the Church, which led him to read everything he could find about the Church. He now attends every meeting possible." Half in jest, the stake president then said, "I would be surprised if he were not attending Relief Society meetings."

After the priesthood leadership meeting, I reintroduced myself to the visiting professor. He affirmed his excitement for this newly discovered source of truth. He explained that his family, still in Africa, was studying with the missionaries and would be joining him in America in about four weeks, at which time they would all be baptized together.

At the conclusion of the Saturday evening adult session, this man came rushing to the podium and, thumping his chest, excitedly declared, "My heart is throbbing just like this. I can hardly contain it in my body. I don't know if I can wait the four weeks for my family to be baptized." I suggested he ought to slow down his heart and wait for his wife and children so all could be baptized together.

### **A still, small voice and a throbbing heart**

When Elijah was fleeing for his life from the wicked Phoenician princess Jezebel, the Lord directed him to a high mountain, where he had a most unusual experience. As Elijah stood upon the mount before the Lord, he felt "a great and strong wind . . . ; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice" (1 Kings 19:11–12).

*Reasons the Church grows*

I am occasionally asked by those not of our faith why it is that our Church grows so rapidly, in both membership and activity, while other churches are reportedly declining in both. The answer to that question is simply a still, small voice and then a throbbing heart. In this busy, tumultuous, and noisy world, it is not like a wind, it is not like a fire, it is not like an earthquake; but it is a still, small, but very discernible voice, and it causes a throbbing heart. It is a quiet burning within that this is the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, with all of its doctrine, priesthood, and covenants that had been lost through the many centuries of darkness and confusion. Yes, it is a still, small voice and a throbbing heart that testifies of the miracle of the Restoration.

*Motivation to serve and sacrifice*

It is a still, small voice and a throbbing heart that motivates millions of members to emulate the life of Jesus in word, deed, and service. It is a still, small voice and a throbbing heart that motivates thousands of retired couples to serve missions, usually for 18 months or longer. They put aside the comforts of life to go into the world, serving others at their own expense and at what some would consider substantial sacrifice, often serving in remote parts of the world where a hot shower and a comfortable bed are luxuries that linger only in their memories.

It is a still, small voice and a throbbing heart that causes hundreds of thousands of young men and women to leave promising professions, put off their education (sometimes leaving athletic and other scholarships), or delay romances to serve the Lord at their own expense to declare the Restoration of the gospel.

*Motivation to keep the commandments*

It is a still, small voice and a throbbing heart that gives our young people the desire and courage to stand for purity, honesty, and principle, even at the expense of sometimes being ridiculed and rejected. It is a still, small voice and a throbbing heart that motivates one to joyfully keep God's commandments and share the burdens of those less fortunate. Yes, there is power in a still, small voice and a throbbing heart.

Alma had his way of asking about the spiritual condition of our hearts. He asks, "Have ye spiritually been born of God?" And then: "Have ye received his image in your countenances? *Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts?*" (Alma 5:14; italics added). In other words, is your heart throbbing with a testimony of Jesus Christ?

**Three things that make a heart throb***Knowledge that Jesus is the Savior*

May I tell you just three things of many that cause my heart to throb? First, my heart throbs with the knowledge that Jesus Christ is my personal Savior and that His love for me was sufficient that He would suffer unimaginable pain and even death. My heart throbs when, in the solitude of my deep thoughts, I realize I can be cleansed, purified, and redeemed through the blood of Jesus Christ. My heart throbs when I contemplate the price that was paid—the suffering incurred to spare me from similar personal suffering for my sins and transgressions.

*Restoration through Joseph Smith*

Second, my heart throbs with the knowledge that a young boy only 14 years of age went into a grove of trees—and from a simple, humble prayer the heavens

opened, God and Christ appeared, and angels descended. And thus the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ was restored with all of its priesthood, covenants, and purity of doctrine. My heart throbs when I consider what this boy prophet endured to bring about the fulness of the restored gospel. While heavenly angels were descending, Satan's angels were also at work. The persecutions began, and like the lives of prophets of old, Joseph's life culminated in his martyrdom. Throughout all his trials and persecutions, the young prophet remained steadfast and determined.

Because of the Prophet Joseph Smith, I understand more fully the magnitude of the Atonement. Because of the Prophet Joseph, I better understand the significance of the Garden of Gethsemane—a place of great suffering as Christ assumed our personal suffering not only for our sins but also for our pains, infirmities, trials, and tragedies. I understand the infinite and eternal nature of His great and last sacrifice. I better understand the love our Savior exemplified in His last redeeming act. Because of Joseph Smith, my love and gratitude for the Savior is magnified and my worship more meaningful. Among the many hymns in our hymnbook written by W. W. Phelps is the familiar song with the words “Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah!” (“Praise to the Man,” *Hymns*, no. 27). My heart throbs as I sing that song.

Yes, because we sing with enthusiasm and gusto, “Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah!” we sing about the Savior with even more reverence, emotion, and gratitude with the words “Oh, it is wonderful that he should care for me / Enough to die for me! / Oh, it is wonderful, wonderful to me!” (“I Stand All Amazed,” *Hymns*, no. 193). My heart throbs because of the enlightenment the Prophet Joseph brought to my life regarding the personal effect of the Atonement of my Savior.

### *Truths revealed in the Book of Mormon*

Third, my heart throbs as I study and ponder the sacred scriptures in the Book of Mormon, as it complements the Bible and further testifies of the divinity of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Redeemer and Savior of the world. Because of this sacred companion to the Bible, my understanding of Christ's doctrine is expanded; thus many of the questions left unanswered in the Bible are explained to my full satisfaction. The Book of Mormon is tangible evidence that Joseph is a prophet of God, Christ did in reality appear to him, and the gospel has been restored in its purity and its fulness.

My heart throbs just to contemplate the miracle of the Book of Mormon's existence—the laborious job of engraving on metal plates, the careful custodianship through the centuries by God's chosen, and the miraculous translation. Truly it fits the perfect definition of holy writ. Because of God's majestic love for us, He provided this evidence that we can handle, we can peruse, we can study, and we can even challenge. But, most important, God loves me enough that He will give me and anyone else who sincerely seeks a personal revelation of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon—the tangible evidence of the Restoration and that Joseph Smith was a true prophet.

### **Seek a testimony of sacred truths**

In speaking of this sacred knowledge, the Book of Mormon prophet Alma testifies:

“Do ye not suppose that I know of these things myself? Behold, I testify unto you that I do know that these things whereof I have spoken are true. And how do ye suppose that I know of their surety?”

“Behold, I say unto you they are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. Behold, I have fasted and prayed many

days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit; and this is the spirit of revelation" (Alma 5:45–46).

Like Alma of old, each of us, members and sincere investigators alike, can know with surety that these things are true. It is our great privilege to know. It is more than a privilege; it is our responsibility to know. It is our enormous loss to not know when such a privilege is given. The Lord has said, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7). The Book of Mormon

prophet Jacob says, "Come with full purpose of heart" (Jacob 6:5).

We do not need to rely upon intellect or our physical senses. We study, we pray, and, like Alma of old, we may even fast, and then comes a still, small voice and a throbbing heart. Imagine a personal revelation from God that these things are true. The very thought of it makes my heart throb. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The choir and congregation sang  
"Come, Ye Children of the Lord."

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## Sister Coleen K. Menlove

### **All thy children shall be taught of the Lord**

Recent disasters around the world have touched our hearts. The suffering children, who are innocent victims, weigh particularly heavy upon us. We have seen children without family members to provide, protect, and love them. Our hearts desire to reach out and help in some way—any way that would relieve their suffering and bring hope to their lives. We are grateful for the opportunities we have to give assistance. We are encouraged by the efforts of many who are helping these children.

However, we do not need to look far to find children who live in different yet challenging circumstances. Unknowingly, we may look beyond the children in our own midst. Are we really aware of the perilous circumstances surrounding our own children? We can usually determine if their physical needs are met, but what about their spiritual needs? Do they know of the light and peace of the gospel of Jesus Christ? The scriptures teach, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children."<sup>1</sup>

Children need the peace that comes from knowing they have a loving Heavenly Father, who sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to bring light and hope into the world. It is up to us as adults to direct children to that peace and light.

### **Helping children know what matters most**

The spiritual plight of some children in the world today is depicted in a painting by the Danish artist Carl Bloch. This painting beautifully illustrates a scriptural account found in John, chapter 5. Christ, the healer and comforter, is the focus of the painting. He is lifting a covering from a man who has had infirmities since birth. The man is waiting for the miracle of healing in the pool of Bethesda, but he has no one to assist him. As the man waits, hoping for a miracle, Christ stands in his presence with the power to heal him.

The painting includes several figures in the background, none of whom are looking directly at Christ. The Lord is in their midst, yet only one man sees Him as such. All the others appear to be going about