

grant unto you even according to my words” (Alma 42:31).

Corianton joined his brothers, Helaman and Shiblon, who were among the priesthood leaders. Twenty years later in the land northward, he was still faithfully laboring in the gospel. (See Alma 49:30; 63:10.)

### **Satan’s lie that sinners cannot repent**

It is a wicked, wicked world in which we live and in which our children must find their way. Challenges of pornography, gender confusion, immorality, child abuse, drug addiction, and all the rest are everywhere. There is no way to escape from their influence.

Some are led by curiosity into temptation, then into experimentation, and some become trapped in addiction. They lose hope. The adversary harvests his crop and binds them down.

Satan is the deceiver, the destroyer, but his is a temporary victory.

The angels of the devil convince some that they are born to a life from which they cannot escape and are compelled to live in sin. The most wicked of lies is that they cannot change and repent and that they will not be forgiven. That cannot be true. They have forgotten the Atonement of Christ.

“For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him” (D&C 18:11).

Christ is the Creator, the Healer. What He made, He can fix. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the gospel of repentance and forgiveness (see 2 Nephi 1:13; 9:45; Jacob 3:11; Alma 26:13–14; Moroni 7:17–19).

“Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God” (D&C 18:10).

### **Account of Alma and Corianton a type**

The account of this loving father and a wayward son, drawn from the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ, is a type, a pattern, an example.

Each of us has a loving Father in Heaven. Through the Father’s redeeming plan, those who may stumble and fall “are not cast off forever” (Book of Mormon title page).

“And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!” (D&C 18:13).

“The Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance; nevertheless” (D&C 1:31–32), the Lord said, “he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more” (D&C 58:42).

Could there be any more sweeter or more consoling words, more filled with hope, than those words from the scriptures? “I, the Lord, remember [their sins] no more” (D&C 58:42). That is the testimony of the Book of Mormon, and that is my testimony to you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## **Elder David A. Bednar**

### **Companionship of the Holy Ghost**

Today, I speak by way of reminder and admonition to those of us who are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I pray for and invite the

Holy Ghost to now assist me and you as we learn together.

Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins “is the introductory ordinance of the gospel” of Jesus Christ and must be preceded by faith in the Savior and by sin-

cere and complete repentance. “Baptism in water . . . must be followed by baptism of the Spirit in order to be complete” (see Bible Dictionary, “Baptism,” 618). As the Savior taught Nicodemus, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). My message this afternoon focuses on the baptism of the Spirit and the blessings that flow from the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

### **The ordinance of and covenant associated with baptism**

As each of us was baptized, we entered into a solemn covenant with our Heavenly Father. A covenant is an agreement between God and His children upon the earth, and it is important to understand that God determines the conditions of all gospel covenants. You and I do not decide the nature or elements of a covenant. Rather, exercising our moral agency, we accept the terms and requirements of a covenant as our Eternal Father has established them (see Bible Dictionary, “Covenant,” 651).

The saving ordinance of baptism must be administered by one who has proper authority from God. The fundamental conditions of the covenant into which we entered in the waters of baptism are these: we witnessed that we were willing to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ, that we would always remember Him, and that we would keep His commandments. The promised blessing for honoring this covenant is *that we may always have His Spirit to be with us* (see D&C 20:77). In other words, baptism by water leads to the authorized opportunity for the constant companionship of the third member of the Godhead.

### **Confirmation and the baptism of the Spirit**

Following our baptism, each of us had hands placed upon our head by those with

priesthood authority and was confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the Holy Ghost was conferred upon us (see D&C 49:14). The statement “receive the Holy Ghost” in our confirmation was a directive to strive for the baptism of the Spirit.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “You might as well baptize a bag of sand as a man, if not done in view of the remission of sins and getting of the Holy Ghost. Baptism by water is but half a baptism, and is good for nothing without the other half—that is, the baptism of the Holy Ghost” (*History of the Church*, 5:499). We were baptized by immersion in water for the remission of sins. We must also be baptized by and immersed in the Spirit of the Lord, “and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost” (2 Nephi 31:17).

As we gain experience with the Holy Ghost, we learn that the intensity with which we feel the Spirit’s influence is not always the same. Strong, dramatic spiritual impressions do not come to us frequently. Even as we strive to be faithful and obedient, there simply are times when the direction, assurance, and peace of the Spirit are not readily recognizable in our lives. In fact, the Book of Mormon describes faithful Lamanites who “were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and they knew it not” (3 Nephi 9:20).

The influence of the Holy Ghost is described in the scriptures as “a still small voice” (1 Kings 19:12; see also 3 Nephi 11:3) and a “voice of perfect mildness” (Helaman 5:30). Thus, the Spirit of the Lord usually communicates with us in ways that are quiet, delicate, and subtle.

### **Withdrawing ourselves from the Spirit of the Lord**

In our individual study and classroom instruction, we repeatedly emphasize the importance of recognizing the inspiration and promptings we receive from the Spirit

of the Lord. And such an approach is correct and useful. We should seek diligently to recognize and respond to promptings as they come to us. However, an important aspect of baptism by the Spirit may frequently be overlooked in our spiritual development.

We should also endeavor to discern when we “withdraw [ourselves] from the Spirit of the Lord, that it may have no place in [us] to guide [us] in wisdom’s paths that [we] may be blessed, prospered, and preserved” (Mosiah 2:36). Precisely because the promised blessing is *that we may always have His Spirit to be with us*, we should attend to and learn from the choices and influences that separate us from the Holy Spirit.

The standard is clear. If something we think, see, hear, or do distances us from the Holy Ghost, then we should stop thinking, seeing, hearing, or doing that thing. If that which is intended to entertain, for example, alienates us from the Holy Spirit, then certainly that type of entertainment is not for us. Because the Spirit cannot abide that which is vulgar, crude, or immodest, then clearly such things are not for us. Because we estrange the Spirit of the Lord when we engage in activities we know we should shun, then such things definitely are not for us.

I recognize we are fallen men and women living in a mortal world and that we might not have the presence of the Holy Ghost with us every second of every minute of every hour of every day. However, the Holy Ghost can tarry with us much, if not most, of the time—and certainly the Spirit can be with us more than it is not with us. As we become ever more immersed in the Spirit of the Lord, we should strive to recognize impressions when they come and the influences or events that cause us to withdraw ourselves from the Holy Ghost.

Taking “the Holy Spirit for [our] guide” (D&C 45:57) is possible and is essential for our spiritual growth and sur-

vival in an increasingly wicked world. Sometimes as Latter-day Saints we talk and act as though recognizing the influence of the Holy Ghost in our lives is the rare or exceptional event. We should remember, however, that the covenant promise is *that we may always have His Spirit to be with us*. This supernal blessing applies to every single member of the Church who has been baptized, confirmed, and instructed to “receive the Holy Ghost.”

### **The Liahona as a type and shadow for our day**

In our day the Book of Mormon is the primary source to which we should turn for help in learning how to invite the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. The description in the Book of Mormon of the Liahona, the director or compass used by Lehi and his family in their journey in the wilderness, specifically was included in the record as a type and a shadow for our day and as an essential lesson about what we should do to enjoy the blessings of the Holy Ghost.

As we strive to align our attitudes and actions with righteousness, then the Holy Ghost becomes for us today what the Liahona was for Lehi and his family in their day. The very factors that caused the Liahona to work for Lehi will likewise invite the Holy Ghost into our lives. And the very factors that caused the Liahona not to work anciently will likewise cause us to withdraw ourselves from the Holy Ghost today.

### **The Liahona: purposes and principles**

As we study and ponder the purposes of the Liahona and the principles by which it operated, I testify that we will receive inspiration suited to our individual and family circumstances and needs. We can and will be blessed with ongoing direction from the Holy Ghost.

The Liahona was prepared by the Lord and given to Lehi and his family after they left Jerusalem and were traveling in the wilderness (see Alma 37:38; D&C 17:1). This compass or director pointed the way that Lehi and his caravan should go (see 1 Nephi 16:10), even “a straight course to the promised land” (Alma 37:44). The pointers in the Liahona operated “according to the faith and diligence and heed” (1 Nephi 16:28) of the travelers and failed to work when family members were contentious, rude, slothful, or forgetful (see 1 Nephi 18:12, 21; Alma 37:41, 43).

The compass also provided a means whereby Lehi and his family could obtain greater “understanding concerning the ways of the Lord” (1 Nephi 16:29). Thus, the primary purposes of the Liahona were to provide both direction and instruction during a long and demanding journey. The director was a physical instrument that served as an outward indicator of their inner spiritual standing before God. It worked according to the principles of faith and diligence.

Just as Lehi was blessed in ancient times, each of us in this day has been given a spiritual compass that can direct and instruct us during our mortal journey. The Holy Ghost was conferred upon you and me as we came out of the world and into the Savior’s Church through baptism and confirmation. By the authority of the holy priesthood we were confirmed as members of the Church and admonished to seek for the constant companionship of “the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:17).

As we each press forward along the pathway of life, we receive direction from the Holy Ghost just as Lehi was directed through the Liahona. “For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the

way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:5).

The Holy Ghost operates in our lives precisely as the Liahona did for Lehi and his family, according to our faith and diligence and heed.

“Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God. . . .

“The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth” (D&C 121:45–46).

And the Holy Ghost provides for us today the means whereby we can receive, “by small and simple things” (Alma 37:6), increased understanding about the ways of the Lord: “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).

### **Inviting the Holy Ghost into our lives**

The Spirit of the Lord can be our guide and will bless us with direction, instruction, and spiritual protection during our mortal journey. We invite the Holy Ghost into our lives through meaningful personal and family prayer, feasting upon the words of Christ, diligent and exacting obedience, faithfulness and honoring of covenants, and through virtue, humility, and service. And we steadfastly should avoid things that are immodest, coarse, crude, sinful, or evil that cause us to withdraw ourselves from the Holy Ghost.

We also invite the ongoing companionship of the Holy Ghost as we worthily partake of the sacrament each Sabbath day: “And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day” (D&C 59:9).

Through the ordinance of the sacrament we renew our baptismal covenant and can receive and retain a remission of our sins (see Mosiah 4:12, 26). In addition, we are reminded on a weekly basis of the promise *that we may always have His Spirit to be with us*. As we then strive to keep ourselves clean and unspotted from the world, we become worthy vessels in whom the Spirit of the Lord can always dwell.

In February of 1847 the Prophet Joseph Smith appeared to Brigham Young in a dream or vision. President Young asked the Prophet if he had a message for the Brethren. The Prophet Joseph replied: “Tell the people to be humble and faithful, and be sure *to keep* the spirit of the Lord and it will lead them right. Be careful and not turn away the small still voice; it will teach them what to do and where to go; it

will yield the fruits of the kingdom” (see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 41; italics added). Of all the truths the Prophet Joseph might have taught Brigham Young on that sacred occasion, he emphasized the importance of obtaining and keeping the Spirit of the Lord.

My beloved brothers and sisters, I testify of the living reality of God the Eternal Father and of His Son, Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost. May each of us so live *that we may always have His Spirit to be with us* and thereby qualify for the blessings of direction, instruction, and protection that are essential in these latter days. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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

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## Elder David F. Evans

It has been a year since I was sustained in general conference. I am grateful for this year and for all that I have experienced. I love the Lord and am so very grateful for His sacrifice and for His gospel. I love President Hinckley and sustain him as the Lord’s prophet on the earth. Together with faithful Saints everywhere, I testify of prophets and apostles in our time and pledge my life to His cause.

### Appreciation for missionaries

A few years ago, I was interviewing missionaries. A winter storm was blowing in as missionaries came and went throughout the day. The storm changed from icy rain to snow and back again. Some missionaries arrived by train from nearby cities and walked to the church through the storm. Others rode their bicycles. Almost without exception they were cheerful and happy. They were the Lord’s

missionaries. They had His Spirit and felt joy in His service regardless of their circumstances.

As each companionship concluded their interviews, I will never forget watching them go back out into the storm to preach the gospel and do what the Lord had called them to do. I could see their commitment and dedication. I could feel the love they had for the people and for the Lord. As I watched them leave, I felt an overwhelming love for them and for what they were doing.

Later that night I attended a priesthood meeting in the same city. The storm had continued and was now mostly snow. During the opening song, the branch president of the smallest and farthest branch and his two missionary counselors, Elder Warner and Elder Karpowitz, came into the chapel. As they got ready to sit down, these two wonderful missionaries took off their winter hats and gloves. They took off