

It's a Miracle

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If you're not a full-time missionary with a missionary badge pinned on your coat, now is the time to paint one on your heart—painted, as Paul said, “not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.”

The mortal life of Jesus Christ was filled with miracles: a virgin mother, a new star, angels appearing to shepherds, the blind seeing, the lame walking, angels in Gethsemane and at the tomb, and the greatest miracle of all—His glorious Resurrection.

Can you imagine the scene of the eleven Apostles on the mountain near Galilee when the risen Lord came to them and said: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”?¹ “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”²

“All nations”? “All the world”? “Every creature”? Was it possible? Although Jesus reassured them, they must have wondered if miracles really would accompany them in spreading the gospel.³

Faith overcame doubt, and Peter lifted his voice, saying:

“All ye that dwell at Jerusalem, ... hearken to my words: ...

“... Jesus of Nazareth, ... [whom] ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: ...

“This Jesus ... God [hath] raised up, [and] we all are witnesses.”⁴

There was an undeniable spiritual outpouring that day, and 3,000 souls were baptized. As Jesus promised, signs and miracles were following the faith of the believers.

As the Church of Jesus Christ was restored to the earth 183 years ago, the Lord's charge to His small band of disciples echoed His words spoken centuries before: “The voice of warning shall be unto all people.”⁵ “For, verily, the sound must go forth ... into all the world, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.”⁶

“All people”? “All the world”? “The uttermost parts of the earth”? Was it possible?

The Savior reassured His Latter-day Saints,⁷ but could they foresee the reach and destiny of this marvelous work? They must have wondered if miracles really would accompany them in spreading the gospel.

Again, faith overcame doubt, and thousands were baptized. In England, Elder Wilford Woodruff found an entire community awaiting his arrival. The Spirit of the Lord fell upon them, and he baptized 45 preachers and several hundred members during his first month at Benbow farm.⁸

Our day is no different. When Elder David A. Bednar and I were missionaries approximately 40 years ago (and I can assure you that we are not the oldest of the returned missionaries sitting in the red chairs), there were 16,000 missionaries. As President Thomas S. Monson reported yesterday, we now have 65,000—more than ever before. There were then 562 stakes. Today there are more than 3,000. At that time, our wards and branches were in 59 countries. Today we have congregations in 189 of the 224 nations and territories of the world. We are few in number, just as Nephi foretold.⁹ But at the same time, you and I are eyewitnesses of Daniel’s prophetic words: the “stone ... cut ... without hands ... [is filling] the whole earth.”¹⁰

Our day is a remarkable time of miracles. Six months ago as President Monson announced the age change for young men and young women desiring to serve missions, there was an undeniable spiritual outpouring. Faith overcame doubt, and young men and women moved forward. The Thursday following conference, I was assigned to recommend missionary calls to the First Presidency. I was amazed to see the applications of 18-year-old men and 19-year-old women who had already adjusted their plans, visited their doctors, been interviewed by their bishops and stake presidents, and submitted their missionary applications—all in just five days. Thousands more have now joined them. It’s a miracle.

We are grateful for the energizing faith of our sisters, the growing number of missionaries from countries across the world, and the increasing number of couples ready to serve. Fifty-eight new missions have been announced, and our bulging missionary training center in Provo has amazingly found a new companion in Mexico City.

President Thomas S. Monson has said: “We take most seriously the Savior’s mandate ... , ‘Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’”¹¹ “This ... cause ... will continue to go forth, changing and blessing lives. ... No force in the entire world can stop the work of God.”¹²

We are witnessing the miracles of the Lord as His gospel is spreading across the world.

Brothers and sisters, as surely as the Lord has inspired more missionaries to serve, He is also awakening the minds and opening the hearts of more good and honest people to receive His missionaries. You already know them or will know them. They are in your family and live in your neighborhood. They walk past you on the street, sit by you in school, and connect with you online. You too are an important part of this unfolding miracle.

If you’re not a full-time missionary with a missionary badge pinned on your coat, now is the time to paint one on your heart—painted, as Paul said, “not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.”¹³ And returned missionaries, find your old missionary tag. Don’t wear it, but put it where you can see it. The Lord needs you now more than ever to be an instrument in His hands. All of us have a contribution to make to this miracle.

Every righteous member of the Church has thought about how to share the gospel. Some share the gospel naturally, and we can learn a lot from them.¹⁴ Some struggle and wonder how to do better, wishing that guilty feeling we sometimes feel would find somewhere else to go.

Our desire to share the gospel takes all of us to our knees, and it should, because we need the Lord’s help.

President Monson has asked that we pray for “those areas where our influence is limited and where we are not allowed to share the gospel freely.”¹⁵ As we earnestly and unitedly petition our Father in Heaven, the Lord will

continue to open important doors for us.

We also pray for our own opportunities to share the gospel. The Apostle Peter said, “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh ... a reason [for] the hope that is in you.”¹⁶

With the confusion¹⁷ and commotion¹⁸ of today’s world, it’s not surprising that fewer people are attending their places of worship. Although many want to be closer to God and to better understand the purpose of life, they have unanswered questions. Many have hearts open to the truth, but as the prophet Amos described, “they [are running] to and fro [seeking] the word of the Lord, and [cannot] find it.”¹⁹ You can help answer their questions. In your everyday conversations you can add to their faith in Christ.²⁰

The Savior said: “Hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up.”²¹

I promise you, as you pray to know with whom to speak, names and faces will come into your mind. Words to speak will be given in the very moment you need them.²² Opportunities will open to you. Faith will overcome doubt, and the Lord will bless you with your very own miracles.

The Savior taught us how to share the gospel. I like the story of Andrew, who asked, “Master, where dwellest thou?”²³ Jesus could have responded with the location of where He lived. But instead He said to Andrew, “Come and see.”²⁴ I like to think that the Savior was saying, “Come and see not only where I live but how I live. Come and see who I am. Come and feel the Spirit.” We don’t know everything about that day, but we do know that when Andrew found his brother Simon, he declared, “We have found ... the Christ.”²⁵

To those who show an interest in our conversations, we can follow the Savior’s example by inviting them to “come and see.” Some will accept our invitation, and others will not. We all know someone who has been invited several times before accepting an invitation to “come and see.” Let’s also think about those who once were with us but who now we rarely see, inviting them to come back and see once more.

We respect each person’s choice and timing. The Lord said, “Let every man choose for himself.”²⁶ A person’s lack of interest need not diminish our bonds of friendship and love. Whether or not the invitation is accepted as you invite others to “come and see,” you will feel the approval of the Lord and, with that approval, an added measure of faith to share your beliefs again and again.

For those using the Internet and mobile phones, there are new ways to invite others to “come and see.” Let’s make sharing our faith online more a part of our daily life. LDS.org, Mormon.org, Facebook, Twitter—all provide opportunities.

To share the gospel, young members in Boston started several blogs.²⁷ Those who joined the Church began their learning online, followed by discussions with the missionaries. This experience also helped the youth have greater faith in talking about the gospel in person. One of them said, “This isn’t missionary work. This is missionary fun.”²⁸

We are all in this together. With fellow ward members and missionaries, we plan and pray and help one another. Please keep the full-time missionaries in your thoughts and prayers. Trust them with your family and friends. The Lord trusts them and has called them to teach and bless those who seek Him.

President Paulo Kretly of the Mozambique Maputo Mission shared this experience: “It is common in Mozambique [for] couples to live their lives together [without being married because] African tradition require[s] an expensive dowry to marry, a dowry most couples can’t afford.”²⁹

Members and missionaries thought and prayed about how to help.

The answer to their prayers was that they would emphasize the law of chastity and the importance of marriage and eternal families. And while helping couples to repent and legally marry, they would teach of the happiness that only comes through following Jesus Christ.

This is a picture of couples from two different cities in Mozambique. Married on Friday, they were baptized with their older children on Saturday.³⁰ Friends and family were invited to “come and see,” and hundreds did “come and see.”

Following the baptism, one sister said, “We needed to choose whether to follow the traditions of our fathers or to follow Jesus Christ. We chose to follow Christ.”³¹

You may not live in Mozambique, but in your own way, in your own culture, you can share the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

Pray to your Heavenly Father. This is His sacred work. He will guide you in what to do. He will open doors, remove roadblocks, and help you overcome obstacles. The Lord declared, “The voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, ... and none shall stay them.”³²

I testify that “the voice of the Lord [shall be] unto the ends of the earth, that all that will hear may hear.”³³ It’s a miracle. It is a miracle. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. Matthew 28:19.

2. Mark 16:15.

3. See Matthew 28:20; Mark 16:17–18.

4. Acts 2:14, 22–23, 32.

5. Doctrine and Covenants 1:4.

6. Doctrine and Covenants 58:64.

7. See Doctrine and Covenants 1:5.

8. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* (2004), 89–92.

9. See 1 Nephi 14:12.

10. Daniel 2:34–35.

11. Thomas S. Monson, “Welcome to Conference,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 5.

12. Thomas S. Monson, “As We Gather Once Again,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 4.

13. 2 Corinthians 3:3.

14. See Clayton M. Christensen, *The Power of Everyday Missionaries: The What and How of Sharing the Gospel* (2013).

15. Thomas S. Monson, “Welcome to Conference,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 6.

16. 1 Peter 3:15.

17. They observe long-held truths being redefined or ignored; see Doctrine and Covenants 1:16; see also Doctrine and Covenants 132:8.

18. See Doctrine and Covenants 45:26; 88:91.

19. Amos 8:12.

20. The Prophet Joseph Smith said: “Have the Presbyterians any truth? Yes. Have the Baptists, Methodists, etc., any truth? Yes. ... We should gather all the good and true principles in the world and treasure them up” (*History of the Church*, 5:517). “We don’t ask any people to throw away any good they have ... ; we only ask them to come and get more. What if all the world should embrace this Gospel? They would then see eye to eye, and the blessings of God would be poured out upon the people, which is the desire of my whole soul” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 155). President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “Let me say that we appreciate the truth in all churches and the good which they do. We say to the people, in effect, you bring with you all the good that you have, and then let us see if we can add to it. That is the spirit of this work. That is the essence of our missionary service” (“Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1998, 72; “Words of the Living Prophet,” *Liahona*, Apr. 1999, 19). “We must be a friendly people. We must recognize the good in all people. We don’t go about tearing down other churches. We preach and teach in a positive and affirmative way. We say to those of other faiths, ‘you bring with you all the good that you have and let us see if we can add to it.’ That is essentially the essence of our great missionary program and it yields results” (“Messages of Inspiration from President Hinckley,” *Church News*, Nov. 7, 1998, 2; see ldschurchnews.com).

21. 3 Nephi 18:24.

22. See Doctrine and Covenants 84:85; 100:6.

23. John 1:38.

24. John 1:39.

25. John 1:41.

26. Doctrine and Covenants 37:4.

27. See, for example, youngandmormon.com.

28. Telephone conversation with Jackson Haight on March 22, 2013.

29. Personal email from President Paulo V. Kretly, March 6, 2013.

30. Photos provided by President Paulo V. Kretly. The first group was from Maputo; they were married on November 30, 2012, and baptized on December 1, 2012. The second group was from Beira; they were married on March 1, 2013, and baptized on March 2, 2013.

31. Personal email from President Paulo V. Kretly, March 6, 2013.

32. Doctrine and Covenants 1:4–5.

33. Doctrine and Covenants 1:11.