

The Lord Is Hastening His Work

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Bwana Hakika Anaharakisha Kazi Yake

Na Mzee Quentin L. Cook
Wa Akidi ya Mitume Kumi na Wawili

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As the Lord hastens His work, we should love, nurture, and serve those who accept His gospel.

Charles Dickens famously began his classic novel *A Tale of Two Cities* with the assertion that “it was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” In a sense, this is true in our day.

We live in a turbulent time when “the whole earth [is] in commotion.” President Russell M. Nelson’s admonition to be peacemakers, as followers of Jesus Christ, was emphasized beautifully this morning by Elder Gary E. Stevenson. This is an essential part of fostering unity, peace, and healing for “the worst of times.”

We also live in “the best of times,” which will be my emphasis. The Lord, in the preface to the Doctrine and Covenants, section 1, declared the fulness of the gospel would “be proclaimed ... unto the ends of the world.” The Lord is truly hastening His work in our time. We should be profoundly grateful for the hastening, which has occurred and is occurring despite these challenging times. We live in a day when the Lord’s followers are privileged to hear His voice and respond with open hearts and minds. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who are committed to the Savior and His commandments, are finding purpose and profound personal peace.

At various times in the history of the Church, there has been a significant increase in those who have entered the covenant path. One such period occurred between 1837 and 1850. Some of the early Apostles in the Lord’s restored

Bwana anapoharakisha kazi Yake, tunapaswa kuwapenda, kuwalea, na kuwatumikia wale wanaokubali injili Yake.

Charles Dickens alianzisha riwaya yake ya kitambo Hadithi ya Miji Miwilikwa madai kwamba “zilikuwa nyakati bora zaidi; zilikuwa nyakati mbaya zaidi.” Kwa maana fulani hii ni kweli katika siku zetu.

Tunaishi katika wakati wenye msukosuko ambapo “dunia yote [iko] katika machafuko.” Wasaa wa Rais Russell M. Nelson wa kuwa wapatanishi, kama wafuasi wa Yesu Kristo, ulisitizwa vizuri sana asubuhi ya leo na Mzee Gary E. Stevenson. Hii sehemu muhimu ya kujenga umoja, amani, na uponyaji kwa ajili ya “nyakati mbaya zaidi.”

Sisi pia tunaishi katika “nyakati bora zaidi,” ambazo zitakuwa msisitizo wangu. Bwana, katika dibaji ya Mafundisho na Maagano, sehemu ya 1, alitangaza, utimilifu wa injili “utatangazwa ... hata miisho ya ulimwengu.” Bwana kwa kweli anaharakisha kazi Yake katika wakati wetu. Tunaapaswa kushukuru sana kwa uharakishaji, ambao umeshatokea na unatokea licha ya nyakati hizi zenye changamoto. Tunaishi katika siku ambayo wafuasi wa Bwana wanabahatika kusikia sauti Yake na kuitikia kwa mioyo na akili iliyo wazi. Waumini wa Kanisa la Yesu Kristo la Watakatifu wa Siku za Mwisho, ambao wamejitolea kwa Mwokozi na amri Zake, wanapata kusudi na amani kuu ya kibinafsi.

Katika nyakati mbalimbali katika historia ya Kanisa, kumekuwa na ongezeko kubwa la wale ambao wameingia katika njia ya agano. Kipindi kimoja kama hicho kilitokea kati ya 1837 na 1850. Baadhi ya Mitume wa mapema kati-

Church served missions in the United Kingdom. These missions resulted in thousands joining the Church, and by 1850 there were more members of the Church living in the United Kingdom than in the United States. At that time, the Lord directed these Saints to gather to Utah. A mass emigration occurred, some supported by loans provided through the Perpetual Emigrating Fund.

I love the account of the arrival to the Salt Lake Valley of a large number of converts from England and Wales in 1852. The group was met by the First Presidency at the mouth of Emigration Canyon, accompanied by Captain Pitt's Band. The Deseret News described them as "a band of pilgrims [including] sisters and children, walking, sunburnt, and weather-beaten, but not forlorn; their hearts were light and buoyant, which was plainly manifest by their happy and joyful countenances."

As they "passed the Temple Block, ... thousands of men, women, and children, gathered, from various parts of the city, to unite in the glorious and joyful welcome." President Brigham Young addressed them: "May the Lord God of Israel bless you. ... We have prayed for you continually; thousands of prayers have been offered up for you, day by day, to Him who has commanded us to gather Israel, save the children of men by the preaching of the gospel, and prepare them for the coming of the Messiah."

In the spirit of that joyful occasion, let me once again assure all new converts and those returning to the Lord's Church: We love you; we need you; the Lord needs you. We may not welcome you with marching bands, but we pray the blessings of heaven will attend your efforts to progress along the covenant path that leads to God the Father and Jesus Christ in the celestial kingdom.

There is clear evidence that faith in Jesus Christ is increasing in our day. In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, there has been a remarkable increase in converts and convert participation. In the last 36 months, nearly 900,000 converts have joined the Church. These converts constitute approximately 5 percent of the total Church membership. We welcome new members with open arms and deep appreciation for the path you have chosen.

These 900,000 converts in the last 36 months

ka Kanisa la Bwana lililorejeshwa walihudumu misheni nchini Uingereza. Misheni hizi zilisababisha maelfu kujiunga na Kanisa, na kufikia 1850 kulikuwa na waumini wengi wa Kanisa wanaoishi nchini Uingereza kuliko Marekani. Wakati huo, Bwana aliwaelekeza Watakatifu hawa kuku-sanyika Utah. Uhamaji wa watu wengi ulitokea, baadhi yao wakiungwa mkono na mikopo ilitolewa kupitia Mfuko wa Kudumu wa Kuhama.

Ninapenda maelezo ya kuwasili huko Salt Lake Valley kwa idadi kubwa ya waongofu kutoka Uingereza na Wales mnamo 1852. Kikundi hicho kilikutana na Urais wa Kwanza kwenye kinywa cha Emigration Canyon, ukiandamana na Bendi ya Kapteni Pitt. Deseret News lililwaeleza kuwa "kundi la walowezi [wakiwemo] akina dada na watoto, wanaotembea, kuchomwa na jua, na kupigwa na hali ya hewa, lakini hawakukata tamaa; mioyo yao ilikuwa miepesi na yenye kuchangamka, jambo lililodhihirishwa waziwazi na nyuso zao zenye furaha na shangwe."

"Walipopita Uwanja wa Hekalu, ... maelfu ya wanaume, wanawake, na watoto, wakikusan-yika, kutoka sehemu mbalimbali za jiji, kuungana katika makaribisho matukufu na ya furaha." Rais Brigham Young aliwahutubia: "Bwana Mungu wa Israeli na awabariki. ... Tumewaombeeni daima; maelfu ya maombi yametolewa kwa ajili yenu, siku baada ya siku, kwa Yeye aliyetuamuru tuwakusanye Israeli, tuwaokoe wana wa watu kwa kuhubiri injili, na kuwatayarisha kwa ujio wa Masiya."

Katika roho ya tukio hilo la furaha, acha niwahakikishie tena waongofu wote wapya na wale wanaorudi katika Kanisa la Bwana: Sisi tunawapenda; tunawahitaji; Bwana anawahitaji. Tunaweza tusikaribishwe na bendi ya kutembea, lakini tunaomba baraka za mbinguni zitashughulikia juhudi zenu za kuendelea katika njia ya agano inayoongoza kwa Mungu Baba na Yesu Kristo katika ufalme wa selestia.

Kuna uthibitisho wazi kwamba imani katika Yesu Kristo inaongezeka katika siku zetu. Katika Kanisa la Yesu Kristo la Watakatifu wa Siku za Mwisho, kumekuwa na ongezeko la ajabu la waongofu na ushiriki wa waongofu. Katika miezi 36 iliyopita karibu waongofu 900,000 wamejiunga na Kanisa. Waongofu hawa wanajumuisha takriban asilimia 5 ya jumla ya waumini wa Kanisa. Tunawakaribisha waumini wapya kwa mikono miwili na shukrani za kina kwa njia mliyochagua.

Waongofu hawa 900,000 katika muda wa

exceed the total membership of the Church at its 110th anniversary in 1940, which was just over 860,000 members. This was the year Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf, and I were born.

These wonderful new converts come from every part of the world. In the first six months of this year, conversions have risen by more than 20 percent over the previous year in Europe, Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and Latin America. In North America we have seen a 17 percent increase. The Lord's work continues to move forward in powerful ways. These rising numbers are a clear witness that the gospel is touching hearts and changing lives everywhere.

In our day, these precious converts no longer gather to a central location. Because of the faith and consecration of the members of the Church, resources are available to support congregations—with the construction of chapels and temples—across the entire world. With the necessary priesthood keys and the resources provided, saving ordinances are now available in most parts of the world.

Regardless of where we live, current members need to welcome hundreds of thousands of new members as we did the English and Welsh Saints I described from our early history. I loved Elder Gerrit W. Gong's talk in this session where he taught us that no one should sit alone either emotionally or spiritually.

Our sacred duty is to accept and welcome new and returning members. As the Lord hastens His work, we should love, nurture, and serve those who accept His gospel. We can help build a Zion people, where we are “of one heart and one mind, and [dwell] in righteousness.” To be one with the Lord, we must be one before the Lord. All members, regardless of baptism date, share a responsibility to welcome others.

My counsel to the members of the Church is to wrap our arms around these precious, elect people who have accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ.

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught us that a new convert needs “a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing with ‘the good word of God’

miezi 36 iliyopita walizidi jumla ya washiriki wa Kanisa katika maadhimisho yake a 110 katika 1940, ambao walikuwa zaidi ya waumini 860,000. Huu ulikuwa mwaka ambao Mzee Jeffrey R. Holland, Mzee Dieter F. Uchtdorf, na mimi tulizaliwa.

Waongofu hawa wapya wa ajabu wanatoka kila sehemu ya dunia. Katika miezi sita ya kwanza ya mwaka huu, watu waliooongoka wameongezeka kwa zaidi ya asilimia 20 kuliko mwaka uliopita katika Ulaya, Afrika, Asia, Pasifiki, na Amerika Kusini. Nchini Amerika Kaskazini tumeona ongezeko la asilimia 17. Kazi ya Bwana inaendelea kusonga mbele kwa njia zenye nguvu. Idadi hii inayoongezeka ni ushuhuda wa wazi kwamba injili inagusa mioyo na kubadilisha maisha kila mahali.

Katika siku zetu, waongofu hawa wa thamani hawakusanyiki tena katika sehemu moja. Kwa sababu ya imani na kuwekwa wakfu kwa waumini wa Kanisa, rasilimali zinapatikana kusaaidia mikusanyiko—kwa ujenzi wa makanisa na mabekalu—kote ulimwenguni. Pamoja na funguo za ukuhani muhimuna rasilimali zinazotolewa, kanuni za kuokoa sasa zinapatikana katika sehemu nyingi za dunia.

Bila kujali tunaishi wapi, waumini wa sasa wanahitaji kukaribisha mamia ya maelfu ya waumini wapya kama tulivyofanya kwa Watakatifu wa Kiingereza na Wales niliowaelezea kutoka historia yetu ya awali. Nilipenda hotuba ya Mzee Gerrit W. Gong katika kipindi hiki ambapo alitufundisha kwamba hakuna mtu anayepaswa kuketi peke yake aidha kihisia au kiroho.

Wajibu wetu mtakatifu ni kuwakubali na kuwakaribisha waumini wapya na wanaorejea. Bwana anapoharakisha kazi Yake, tunapaswa kuwapenda, kuwalea, na kuwatumikia wale wanaokubali injili Yake. Tunaweza kusaaidia kujenga watu wa Sayuni, ambapo sisi ni “wa moyo mmoja na nia moja, na [kukaa] katika haki.” Ili kuwa wamoja na Bwana, ni lazima tuwe kitu kimoja mbele za Bwana. Waumini wote bila kujali tarehe ya ubatizo, wanashiriki jukumu la kuwakaribisha wengine.

Ushauri wangu kwa waumini wa Kanisa ni kuwakumbatia kwa mikono yetu hawa wateule wa thamani, ambao wamekubali injili ya Yesu Kristo.

Rais Gordon B. Hinckley alitufundisha kwamba mwongofu mpya anahitaji “rafiki, wajibu, na kulishwa kwa ‘neni jema la Mungu’

(Moroni 6:4).”We can be among the friends who assure these new converts that they belong and are not just guests. We can help them understand that they are disciples of Jesus Christ who can minister to others and accept callings to serve. Young converts should consider serving a full-time mission. All should be determined to strive to live a Christlike life.

Many join the Church at great personal sacrifice and desperately need the love and support of their fellow Saints.

To those of you who are new or returning to the faith, there are challenges you may face. Be patient with yourself. The missionaries have taught you the essential doctrine and explained the covenants and ordinances of the kingdom, which are set forth in the scriptures and in Preach My Gospel.

Receiving the ordinances and covenants and living the commandments are essential. Focus on the covenants necessary for exaltation. The gospel makes exaltation possible, which requires the making and keeping of sacred covenants with God. Except for baptism, confirmation, and the conferral of the Melchizedek Priesthood for men, the covenants we enter are performed in the temple. For the dead, each of these saving ordinances is performed only in the temple. Accordingly, preparing yourself for the temple should be an immediate goal.

You will at times feel inadequate about what you know. Gospel knowledge is a great blessing obtained incrementally over time, but it is not a saving ordinance. The gospel is not a test of knowledge. However, as President Nelson has promised: “As you prayerfully study the Book of Mormon every day, you will make better decisions—every day. ... As you ponder what you study, the windows of heaven will open, and you will receive answers to your own questions and direction for your own life.”

In addition, each year in rotation the Church curriculum in Sunday meetings covers the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants. Over time you will feel more confident as your gospel knowledge grows. Regular study of the scriptures will bless and enrich your life by deepening your conversion to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Learning the pure doctrine of Jesus Christ is

(Moroni 6: 4). Sisi ni miongoni mwa marafiki wa-naowahakikishia waongofu hawa wapya kuwa ni wa kanisa na si wageni tu. Tunaweza kuwasaidia kuelewa kwamba wao ni wanafunzi wa Yesu Kristo ambao wanaweza kuwahudumia wengine na kukubali miito ya kuhudumu. Vijana walioongoka wanapaswa kuzingatia kutumikia misheni ya muda wote. Wote wanapaswa kuazimia kujitahidi kuishi maisha kama ya Kristo.

Wengi hujiunga na Kanisa kwa kujitolea sana na wanahitaji sana upendo na usaidizi wa Watakatifu wenzao.

Kwa wale ambao ni wapya au wanaorudi kwenye imani, kuna changamoto unaweza kukutana nazo. Kuwa na subira kwako mwenyewe. Wamisionari wamekufundisha fundisho muhimu na kuelezea maagano na ibada za ufalme, ambazo zimewekwa wazi katika maandiko na katika Hubiri Injili Yangu.

Kupokea ibada na maagano na kuishi amri ni muhimu. Zingatia maagano yanayohitajika kwa ajili ya kuinuliwa. Injili inawezesha kuinuliwa, ambako kunahitaji kufanya na kuweka maagano matakatifu na Mungu. Isipokuwa kwa ubatizo, uthibitisho, na utoaji wa Ukuhani wa Melkizedeki kwa wanaume, maagano tunayofanya yanafanywa hekaluni. Kwa wafu, kila moja ya ibada hizi za kuokoa hufanyika tu hekaluni. Ipasavyo, kujitayarisha mwenyewe kwa ajili ya hekalu kunapaswa kuwa lengo la haraka.

Wakati fulani utahisi kutostahili kuhusu kile unachokijua. Maarifa ya injili ni baraka kuu yanayopatikana kidogo kidogo kwa muda mfupi, lakini sio ibada ya kuokoa. Injili sio kipimo cha maarifa. Hata hivyo, kama Rais Nelson alivyohidhi, “Unapojifunza Kitabu cha Mormoni kwa maombikila siku, utafanya maamuzi bora—kila siku. ... Mnapotafakari kile mnachojifunza, madirisha ya mbinguni yatafunguka, na mtapata majibu ya maswali yenu na mwongozo kwa ajili ya maisha yenu.”

Kwa kuongezea, kila mwaka kwa mzunguko mtaala wa Kanisa katika mikutano ya Jumapili hujumuisha Agano la Kale, Agano Jipya, Kitabu cha Mormoni, na Mafundisho na Maagano. Baada ya muda utajisikia kujiamini zaidi kadiri maarifa yako ya injili yanavyokua. Kusoma mara kwa mara kwa maandiko kutabariki na kuimarisha maisha yako kwa kuimarisha uongofu wako kwa injili ya Yesu Kristo.

Kujifunza mafundisho safi ya Yesu Kristo ni

a lifelong pursuit, both in understanding doctrine and living a Christlike life. Essential covenants provide a framework which we describe as the covenant path. These principles have been powerfully taught by President Nelson. All members, especially new and returning ones, would be blessed by studying and adopting his prophetic messages on covenants and the covenant path.

If you set a goal of worthily receiving each covenant necessary for exaltation, you will be on the path that leads to the celestial kingdom. The temple and the ordinances of the temple should be our focus. Most covenants are available to each individual. One covenant, eternal marriage, involves uniting your efforts with a companion. Our goal should be to find that eternal companion.

However, do not get discouraged if eternal marriage is not possible at this time. Prophets have taught that no blessing will be withheld from faithful members who keep the commandments. One Book of Mormon prophet, King Benjamin, said it beautifully: “Those that keep the commandments of God ... are blessed in all things, ... and if they [are] faithful to the end ... they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness.”

You will find, if you have not already, that the members are not perfect. Revealed doctrine makes it clear that in our sojourn here on earth, we will make mistakes. We live in an imperfect and fallen world, not a celestial world. This life is a time of testing, with constant opportunities to repent and prove ourselves.

All of us feel inadequate as we strive to become like Jesus Christ. His Atonement allows us to repent daily as we fall short. As Nephi, another Book of Mormon prophet, said: “[We] must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.”

As we contemplate the challenges of our day, we must remember that the Savior, during His earthly ministry, also lived in turbulent and violent times. His focus was not on the political challenges of the day; it was on the perfection of

harakati ya maisha yote, katika kuelewa mafundisho na kuishi maisha kama ya Kristo. Maagano muhimu hutoa mfumo ambao tunaelezea kama njia ya agano. Kanuni hizi zimefundishwa kwa nguvu na Rais Nelson. Waumini wote, hasa wapya na wanaorejea, wangebarikiwa kwa kujifunza na kukubali jumbe zake za kinabii kuhusu maagano na njia ya agano.

Ukiweka lengo la kupokea ipasavyo kila agano linalohitajika kwa ajili ya kuinuliwa, utakuwa kwenye njia inayoongoza kwa ufalme wa selestia. Hekalu na ibada za hekalu zinapaswa kuwa lengo letu. Maagano mengi yanapatikana kwa kila mtu binafsi. Agano moja, ndoa ya milele, inahusisha kuunganisha juhudi zako na mwenzi. Lengo letu linapaswa kuwa kumpata mwenzi huyo wa milele.

Walakini, usivunjika moyo ikiwa ndoa ya milele haiwezekani kwa wakati huu. Manabii wamefundisha kwamba hakuna baraka itakayozuiliwa kutoka kwa waumini waaminifu wanaoshika amri. Nabii mmoja wa Kitabu cha Mormoni, Mfalme Benjamini, alisema hivyo kwa uzuri: “Wale wazishikao amri za Mungu ... wamebarikiwa katika mambo yote, ... na kama wao [ni] waaminifu hadi mwisho. ... wanaweza kuishi pamoja na Mungu katika hali ya furaha isiyo na mwisho”

Utapata, ikiwa bado, kwamba waumini si wakamilifu. Mafundisho yaliyofunuliwa yanaweza wazi kwamba katika ugeni wetu hapa duniani, tutafanya makosa. Tunaishi katika ulimwengu usio kamili na ulioanguka, sio ulimwengu wa selestia. Maisha haya ni wakati wa majaribu, yenye fursa za mara kwa mara za kutubu na kujithibitisha wenyewe.

Sisi sote tunajihisi kuwa hatufai tunapojitahidi kuwa kama Yesu Kristo. Upatanisho Wake huturuhusu kutubu kila siku tunapokosea. Kama vile Nephi, nabii mwingine wa Kitabu cha Mormoni, alivyosema: “[Lazima] tusonge mbele kwa uthabiti katika Kristo, tukiwa na mng’ao mkamilifu wa tumaini, na upendo wa Mungu na wanadamu wote. Kwa hivyo, kama mtasonga mbele, mkila na kusherekea neno la Kristo, na mvumilie hadi mwisho, tazama, hivyo ndivyo asemavyo Baba: Mtapokea uzima wa milele.”

Tunapotafakari changamoto za siku zetu, lazima tukumbuke kwamba Mwokozi, wakati wa huduma Yake duniani, pia aliishi katika nyakati za misukosuko na vurugu. Fokasi Yake haukuwa kwenye changamoto za kisiasa za wakati huo;

the Saints.

Following the Savior and His doctrine and teachings has never been easy in a world that is constantly in commotion. It was not easy for the Savior in the volatile world during His mortal sojourn, it was not easy for our early leaders and members, and it is not easy for us. Fortunately, living prophets provide the guidance we specifically need for our day. President Dallin H. Oaks will continue that spiritually powerful legacy.

I testify that the doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ is eternal and true. I bear my sure and certain witness that Jesus Christ lives and because of His Atonement, we can be one with Him. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

ilikuwa juu ya ukamilifu wa Watakatifu.

Kumfuata Mwokozi na fundisho Lake na mafundisho Yake haijawahi kuwa rahisi kati-ka ulimwengu ambao daima una msukosuko. Haikuwa rahisi kwa Mwokozi katika ulimwengu wenye hali tete wakati wa kukaa Kwake duniani, na haikuwa rahisi kwa viongozi wetu na waumini wa mapema, na si rahisi kwetu sisi. Kwa bahati nzuri, tuna manabii waliohai ili kutupa mwongozo tunaohitaji hasa kwa ajili ya siku zetu. Rais Dallin H. Oaks ataendeleza urithi huo wenye nguvu kiroho.

Ninashuhudia kwamba fundisho la Kanisa la Yesu Kristo ni la milele na la kweli. Ninatoa ushuhuda wangu wa hakika na kweli kwamba Yesu Kristo anaishi, na kwa sababu ya Upatanisho Wake, tunaweza kuwa na wamoja pamoja naye. Katika jina takatifu la Yesu Kristo, amina.