

Cheering Each Other On

By Sister J. Anette Dennis

First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency

Kushangiliana

Na Dada J. Anette Dennis

Mshauri wa Kwanza katika Urais Mkuu wa Muungano wa Usaidzi

October 2025 general conference

Only the Lord fully knows our individual limitations and capacity, and because of that, He is the only one fully qualified to judge our performance.

Recently I read of an experience that touched me deeply. It took place at the USA Masters Track and Field National Championship—a competition for seniors.

One of the participants in the 1,500-meter event was 100-year-old Orville Rogers. The author writes:

“When the starter pistol fired, the runners took off, with Orville settling immediately into last place, where he remained alone for the entire race, shuffling along very slowly. [When] the last runner besides Orville finished, Orville still had two and a half laps to go. Nearly 3,000 spectators sat quietly watching him slowly make his way around the track—completely, silently, and uncomfortably alone.

“[But] when he began his final lap, the crowd rose to their feet, cheering and applauding. By the time he hit the homestretch, the crowd was roaring. With the cheering encouragement of thousands of spectators, Orville called on his last reserves of energy. The crowd erupted with delight as he crossed the finish line and was embraced by his competitors. Orville humbly and gratefully waved to the crowd and walked off the track with his new friends.”

This was Orville’s fifth race of the competition, and in each of the other events, he had also taken last place. Some might have been tempted to judge Orville, thinking that he shouldn’t have even competed at his age—that he didn’t belong

Ni Bwana pekee anafahamu ukomo na uwezo wetu binafsi, na kwa sababu ya hilo, ni Yeye pekee aliyestahili kikamilifu kuhukumu utendaji wetu.

Hivi karibuni nilisoma juu ya uzoefu ulionigusa kwa kina. Ulitokea kwenye Shindano la Riadha na Michezo ya Ndani ya Marekani—shindano la wazee.

Mmoja wa washiriki kwenye tukio la mita 1,500 alikuwa Orville Rogers mwenye miaka 100. Mwandishi anaandika:

“Mwanzishaji alipotoa ishara, wakimbiaji walipiga mbio, Orville akiwa karibu kabisa na mwisho, ambapo alibaki peke yake kwa muda wote wa mbio akiburuza miguu taratibu. [Wakati] mkimbiaji wa mwisho pembeni ya Orville alipomaliza, Orville bado alikuwa na mizunguko miwili na nusu ya kukamilisha. Takriban watazamaji 3,000 waliketi kwa utulivu wakimtazama akizunguka taratibu—kwa ukamilifu, kimya kimya na peke yake.

“[Lakini] alipoanza mzunguko wake wa mwisho, umati ulisimama wima, wakishangilia na kupiga makofi. Wakati alipofikia sehemu ya kuhitimisha, umati ulikuwa ukipiga kelele za shangwe. Kwa ushangiliaji wa kutia moyo wa maelfu ya watazamaji, Orville alivuta pumzi yake yote ya akiba. Umati ulilipuka kwa shangwe pale alipovuka mstari wa mwisho na alikumbatiwa na washindani wake. Orville kwa unyenyekevu na shukrani aliwapungia umati na kutembea kutoka uwanjani akiwa na rafiki zake wapya.”

Hizi zilikuwa mbio zatanoza mashindano ya Orville, na kwenye kila tukio lililopita alishikapianafasi ya mwisho. Baadhi wangejaribiwa kumhukumu Orville, wakidhani kwamba hakupaswa kushindana katika umri wake—kwamba

on the track because he greatly prolonged his events for everyone else.

But even though he always finished last, Orville broke five world records that day. No one watching him race would have believed that possible, but neither the spectators nor his competitors were the judges. Orville didn't break any rules, and the officials didn't lower any standards. He ran the same race and fulfilled the same requirements as all the other competitors. But his degree of difficulty—in this case, his age and limited physical capacity—was factored in by placing him in the 100-plus age division. And in that division, he broke five world records.

Just as it took Orville great courage to step out on that track each time, it also takes great courage for some of our sisters and brothers to step into the arena of life every day, knowing they may be judged unfairly even though they're doing the best they can against daunting odds to follow the Savior and honor their covenants with Him.

No matter where we live in the world, no matter our age, it is a basic human need for all of us to feel a sense of belonging, to feel that we are wanted and needed and that our lives have purpose and meaning, no matter our circumstances or limitations.

On the last lap of the race, the crowd overwhelmingly cheered Orville on, giving him the strength to keep going. It didn't matter that he finished last. For the participants and the crowd, this was about far more than a competition. In many ways, this was a beautiful example of the Savior's love in action. When Orville finished, they all rejoiced together.

Just like the Masters Championship, our congregations and families can be gathering places where we cheer each other on—covenant communities fueled by the love of Christ for one another—helping each other overcome whatever challenges we face, giving each other strength and encouragement without judging one another. We need each other. Divine strength comes from unity, and that is why Satan is intent on dividing us.

Unfortunately, for some of us, attending church can be hard at times for many different

hakustahili kuwa uwanjani kwa sababu alifanya matukio yake yawe marefu sana kwa kila mtu mwingine.

Lakini japokuwa siku zote alikuwa wa mwisho, Orville alivunja rekodi tano za ulimwengu siku hiyo. Hakuna aliyemtazama angeamini hilo lingewezekana, lakini si watazamaji wala washindani wenzake walikuwa majaji. Orville hakuvunja sheria yoyote, na viongozi hawakushusha kiwango chochote. Alikimbia mbio zilezile na kutimiza vigezo sawa kama washindani wengine wote. Lakini kiwango chake cha ugumu—katika hali hii, umri wake na uwezo wa kimwili wenye ukomo, vilizingatiwa kwa kumweka katika kipengele cha wenye umri wa miaka 100+. Na katika kipengele hicho, alivunja rekodi tano za ulimwengu.

Kama vile Orville alivyobeba ujasiri wa kuingia kwenye uwanja ule kila mara, inahitaji ujasiri mkubwa kwa baadhi ya dada zetu na kaka zetu kuingia kwenye changamoto za maisha kila siku, wakijua wanaweza kuhukumiwa pasipo haki hata ingawa wanafanya kila wanaloweza dhidi ya vikwazo vya kumfuata Mwokozi na kuheshimu maagano yao na Yeye.

Popote tunapoishi ulimwenguni, licha ya umri wetu, ni hitaji la msingi la mwanadamu kuhisi kwamba tunatakiwa na kuhitajika na kwamba maisha yetu yana lengo na maana, licha ya hali zetu na ukomo wetu.

Kwenye mzunguko wa mwisho wa mbio, umati bila kuchoka ulimshangilia Orville, wakimpa nguvu ya kuendelea kukimbia. Hai-kujalisha kwamba alimaliza wa mwisho. Kwa washiriki na umati, hili lilikuwa zaidi ya shindano. Katika njia nyingi, huu ulikuwa mfano wa kupendeza wa upendo wa Mwokozi katika matendo. Wakati Orville alipomaliza, wote wali-furahia pamoja.

Kama vile Mashindano ya Riadha, mikusan-yiko yetu, na familia zinaweza kuwa mahala pa kusanyiko ambapo tunashangiliana—jumuiya ya maagano inayotiwa ari kwa upendo wa Kristo kwa kila mmoja—inayosaidiana kushinda changamoto zozote zinazotukabili, tukipeana nguvu na kuhimizana bila kuhukumiana. Sote tunahitajiana. Nguvu ya kiungu hutokana na umoja, na ndiyo maana Shetani ana nia ya kututenganisha.

Kwa bahati mbaya, kwa baadhi yetu, kuhudhuria kanisani nyakati zingine inaweza kuwa

reasons. It could be someone struggling with questions of faith or someone with social anxiety or depression. It could be someone from a different country or race or someone with different life experiences or ways of seeing things who may feel they don't fit the mold. It could even be sleep-deprived and emotionally stretched parents of babies and young children or someone who is single in a congregation full of couples and families. It could also be someone mustering the courage to return after years of being away or someone with a nagging feeling that they just don't measure up and will never belong.

President Russell M. Nelson said: "If a couple in your ward gets divorced, or a young missionary returns home early, or a teenager doubts his testimony, they do not need your judgment. They need to experience the pure love of Jesus Christ reflected in your words and actions."

Our experience at church is meant to provide vital connections with the Lord and with each other that are so needed for our spiritual and emotional well-being. Inherent in the covenants we make with God, beginning with baptism, is our responsibility to love and care for each other as members of the family of God, members of the body of Christ, and not just to check off a box on a list of things we're expected to do.

Christlike love and care are higher and holier. The pure love of Christ is charity. As President Nelson taught, "Charity propels us 'to bear one another's burdens' [Mosiah 18:8] rather than heap burdens upon each other."

The Savior said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." And President Nelson added: "Charity is the principal characteristic of a true follower of Jesus Christ." "The Savior's message is clear: His true disciples build, lift, encourage, persuade, and inspire. ... How we speak to and about others ... really matters."

The Savior's teaching on this is very simple. It's summed up in the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. Put yourself in that person's place and treat them the way you would want to be treated if you were in their shoes.

Christlike treatment of others goes far beyond

jambo gumu kwa sababu kadha wa kadha. Yaweza kuwa mtu anapambana na maswali ya imani au mtu ana wasiwasi au msongo wa mawazo. Yaweza kuwa mtu kutoka nchi tofauti, au mbari, au mtu mwenye uzoefu tofauti wa maisha au jinsi ya kuona mambo ambaye anahisi yuko tofauti na wengine. Yaweza kuwa wazazi waliokosa usingizi na wanaopambana na hekaheka za malezi ya watoto wadogo au mtu ambaye ni mseja katika mkusanyiko uliojaa wanadoa na familia. Yaweza kuwa pia mtu anajipa ujasiri wa kurudi baada ya miaka mingi ya kuwa mbali au mtu mwenye hisia za hofu kwamba hawastahili na kamwe hawatakuwa sehemu ya.

Rais Russell M. Nelson alisema: "Kama wanandoa katika kata yako wakitalikiana, au mmissionari akirejea nyumbani mapema, au kijana akiwa na wasiwasi na ushuhuda wake, hawahitaji hukumu yako. Wanahitaji kupata upendo msafi wa Yesu Kristo unaoakisiwa katika maneno na matendo yako."

Uzoefu wetu kanisani umekusudiwa kutoa miunganiko muhimu na Bwana na kila mmoja wetu ambayo inahitajika sana kwa ajili ya ustawi wetu kiroho na kihisia. Yenye asili katika maagano tunayofanya na Mungu, tukianza na ubatizo, ni jukumu letu la kupendana na kujalianakama washiriki wa familia ya Mungu, washiriki wa mwili wa Kristo, na si tu kuweka vema ndani ya kisanduku cha mambo tunayotarajia kufanya.

Upendo kama wa Kristo na kujaliana ni mambo ya juu na matakatifu. Upendo msafi wa Kristo ni hisani. Kama Rais Nelson alivyofunza, "Hisani hutusukuma 'kubebana mizigo' [Mosiah 18:8] badala yakurundikiana mizigo juu ya kila mmoja."

Mwokozi alisema, "Hivyo watu wote watatambua ya kuwa ninyi mmekuwa wanafunzi wangu, mkiwa na upendo ninyi kwa ninyi." Na Rais Nelson aliongeza: "Hisani ni tabia ya msingi ya mfuasi halisi wa Yesu Kristo." Ujumbe wa Mwokozi uko wazi: wanafunzii Wake wakwelihu-jenga, huinua, huhamasisha, hushawishi na kutia moyo. ... Jinsi tunavyozungumza na wengine na kuhusu wengine ... ni muhimu sana."

Fundisho la Mwokozi juu ya hili ni rahisi sana. Limefupishwa katika Sheria ya Dhahabu: Watendee wengine vile ambavyo wewe ungetaka utendewe. Jiweke kwenye nafasi ya mtu yule na watendee jinsi ambavyo wewe ungetaka utendewe ikiwa ungekuwa kwenye nafasi yao.

Kutenda kama Kristo kwa wengine huen-

our families and congregations. It includes our sisters and brothers of other faiths or no faith at all. It includes our brothers and sisters from other countries and cultures, as well as those of different political persuasions. We are all part of the family of God, and He loves all His children. He desires that His children love Him and also one another.

The Savior's life was an example of loving, gathering, and lifting even those who society had judged as outcasts and unclean. His is an example we are commanded to follow. We are here to develop Christlike attributes and eventually become like our Savior. His is not a gospel of checklists; it is a gospel of becoming—becoming as He is and loving as He does. He wants us to become a Zion people.

When I was in my late 20s, I went through a period of deep depression, and during that time, it was as if the reality that God existed was suddenly gone. I can't fully explain the feeling other than to say I felt completely lost. From the time I was a young child, I had always known that my Father in Heaven was there and that I could talk to Him. But during that time, I no longer knew if there was a God. I'd never experienced anything like that before in my life, and it felt like my whole foundation was crumbling.

As a result, it was hard for me to attend church. I went, but it was partly because I was afraid of being labeled "inactive" or "less faithful," and I was afraid of becoming someone's assigned project. What I really needed during that time was to feel genuine love, understanding, and support from those around me, not judgment.

Some of the assumptions I was afraid people would make about me, I myself had made about others when they didn't regularly attend church. That painful personal experience taught me some valuable lessons about why we've been commanded not to judge one another unrighteously.

Are there those among us who suffer in silence, afraid for others to know their hidden struggles because they don't know what the reaction will be?

Only the Lord fully knows the actual level of

dambalizaidi ya familia zetu na mikusanyiko yetu. Kunawajumuisha akina dada na kaka zetu wa imani zingine au wasio na imani kabisa. Kunawajumuisha akina kaka na dada zetu kutoka nchi zingine na tamaduni zingine, vile vile wale wa mreno mwingine kisiasa. Sisi toteni sehemu ya familia ya Mungu, na Yeye anawapenda watoto Wake wote. Yeye anatamani kwamba watoto Wake wampende Yeye napia wapendane.

Maisha ya Mwokozi yalikuwa mfano wa kupenda, kukusanya, na kuinua hata wale ambao jamii iliwahukumu kama waliokataliwa na wachafu. Mfano Wake ndiyo tulio amriwa kuu-fuata. Tuko hapa kukuza sifa kama za Kristo na hatimaye tuwe kama Mwokozi wetu. Injili Yake si injili ya kuweka vema; ni injili ya kuwa—kuwa kama Yeye alivyo na kupenda kama Yeye ana-vyopenda. Yeye anatutaka tuwe watu wa Sayuni.

Nilipokuwa mwishoni mwa miaka ya 20, nilipitia kipindi cha msongo wa mawazo, na katika kipindi hicho, ilikuwa kana kwamba uhalisia kwamba Mungu yupo ulikuwa umepotea. Siwezi kuelezea hisia kwa ukamilifu zaidi ya kusema tu kwamba nilihisi kupotea kabisa. Tangu nikiwa mtoto, daima nilikuwa nimejua kwamba Baba yangu wa Mbinguni alikuwepo na kwamba ningeweza kuzungumza Naye. Lakini kipindi hicho, sikujua tena ikiwakulikuwana Mungu. Sikuwahi kupitia chochote kama hicho kabla katika maisha yangu, na ilikuwa kama msingi wangu wote ulikuwa ukiporomoka.

Kama matokeo, ilikuwa vigumu kwangu kuhudhuria kanisani. Nilienda, lakini ilikuwa kwa sehemu tu kwa sababu niliogopa kubandikwa jina la "asiyeshiriki kikamilifu" au "asiye mwaminifu sana," na nilihofia kuwa mtu wa kufuatiliwa na mtu mwingine. Kile hasanilichokihi-taji wakati ule kilikuwa kuhisi upendo wa dhati, ulelewa wa dhati, na usaidizi kutoka kwa wale walio karibu nami, si hukumu.

Baadhi ya mawazo niliyohofia watu wangekuwa nayo kuhusumimi, mimimwenyewenimeyawaza kuwahusu wengine wakati wa o-walipokosa kuhudhuria kanisa kila mara. Uzoefu binafsi mchungu ulinifunza baadhi ya masomo ya thamani kuhusukwa ninitumea mriwa kutohu-kumupasipo haki.

Je, kuna wale kati yetu wanaoteseka kimya kimya, wakiho-fia wengine kujua mapambano yao yaliyofichika kwa sababu hawajui mwa-tikio utakuwaje?

Ni Bwana pekee ajuaye kikamilifu kiwango

difficulty with which each of us is running our race of life—the burdens, the challenges, and the obstacles we face that often cannot be seen by others. Only He fully understands the life-changing wounds and trauma some of us may have experienced in the past that are still affecting us in the present.

Often we even judge ourselves harshly, thinking we should be much farther ahead on the track. Only the Lord fully knows our individual limitations and capacity, and because of that, He is the only one fully qualified to judge our performance.

Sisters and brothers, let's be like those spectators in the story and cheer each other on in our journey of discipleship no matter our circumstances! That doesn't require us to break rules or lower standards. It's actually the second great commandment—to love our neighbor as ourselves. And as our Savior has said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these ... , ye have done it unto me," for good or for ill. He has also told us, "If ye are not one ye are not mine."

There will be times in each of our lives when we will be the ones who need help and encouragement. Let's commit now to always do that for each other. As we do, we will develop greater unity and facilitate a space for the Savior to do His sacred work of healing and transforming each of us.

To each one of you who may feel you have lagged far behind in this race of life, this journey of mortality, please keep going. Only the Savior can fully judge where you should be at this point, and He is compassionate and just. He is the Great Judge of the race of life and the only one who fully understands the level of difficulty with which you are running or walking or shuffling. He will take into account your limitations, your capacity, your life experiences, and the hidden burdens you carry, as well as the desires of your heart. You may actually be breaking symbolic world records as well. Please don't lose hope. Please keep going! Please stay! You do belong! The Lord needs you, and we need you!

Wherever you live in the world, no matter how remote it may be, please always remember that your Father in Heaven and your Savior know you completely and love you perfectly. You

cha ugumu ambacho kupitia hicho tunakimbia mbio zetu za maisha—mizigo, changamoto, na vikwazo vinavyotukabili ambavyo mara nyingi wengine hawavioni. Ni Yeye pekee anaelewa majeraha ya kubadili maishana wasiwasi ambao baadhi yetu tumeupata katika kipindi kilichopita ambao bado unatuathiri sasa.

Mara nyingi hata tunajihukumuenyewe kwa ukatili, tukidhani tunapaswa kuwa mbali sana kwenye mbio. Ni Bwana pekee anafahamu ukomo na uwezo wetu binafsi, na kwa sababu ya hilo, ni Yeye pekee anayestahilikikamilifukuhukumu utendaji wetu.

Akina dada na akina kaka, hebu tuwe kama wale watazamaji katika hadithi na kushangiliana katika safari yetu ya ufuasi bila kujali hali zetu! Hilo halituhitaji tuvunje sheria au kushusha viwango. Hakika ni amri ya pili iliyo kuu—kuwapenda jirani zetu kama nafsi zetu. Na kama Mwokozi wetu alivyosema, "Kadiri mlivyomtendea mmojawapo wa hao ndugu zangu walio wadogo ... mlinitendea mimi," kwa mema au mabaya. Yeye pia ametuambia, "Kama hamna umoja ninyi siyo wangu."

Kutakuwa na nyakati katika maisha ya kila mmoja wetu ambapo tutakuwa watu tunaohitaji usaidizi na kutiwa moyo. Hebu tuweke ahadi sasa yadaimakufanya hivyo kwa kila mmoja. Tunapofanya hivyo, tutajenga umoja mkuu na kuruhusu nafasi kwa ajili ya Mwokozi kufanya kazi Yake takatifu na kumbadilisha kila mmoja wetu.

Kwa kila mmoja wenu anayeweza kuhisi amebaki nyuma katika mbio hizi za maisha, safari hii ya duniani, tafadhali endelea kusonga. Ni Mwokozi pekee anayeweza kuhukumuni wapi unapaswa kuwa katika wakati huu, na Yeye ni mwenye huruma na mwenye haki. Yeyeni Mwamuzi Mkuu wa mbio za maisha, na ni Yeye pekee anaelewa kikamilifukiwango cha ugumu ambacho kupitia hicho unakimbia au kutembea au kuburuza miguu. Yeye atazingatia ukomo wako, uwezo wako, uzoefu wako wa maisha, na mizigo iliyojificha unayoibeba, vilevile matamano ya moyo wako. Wewe vilevile kiuhalisia unaweza kuwa umevunja rekodi za kiishara za dunia. Tafadhali usipoteze tumaini. Tafadhali endelea kusonga! Tafadhali baki! Weweniwa mahala hapa! Bwana anakuhitaji, nasisitunakuhitaji!

Popote unapoishi ulimwenguni, bila kujali ni mbali kiasi gani, tafadhali daima kumbuka kwamba Baba yako wa Mbinguni na Mwokozi wako wanakujua na kukupenda kikamilifu.

are never forgotten to Them. They want to bring you home.

Keep your eye on the Savior. He is your iron rod. Don't let go of Him. I testify that He lives and that you can trust Him. I also testify that He is cheering you on.

May we all follow the Savior's example and cheer each other on. This is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Wewe kamwe haujasahaulika Kwao. Wanataka kukuleta nyumbani.

Weka macho yako kwa Mwokozi. Yeyeni fimbo yako ya chuma. Usimwache Yeye. Ninashuhudia kwamba Yeye yu hai na wewe unaweza kumtumaini Yeye. Ninashuhudia pia kwamba Yeye anakushangilia.

Na wote tufuate mfano wa Mwokozi na kushangiliana, ni sala yangu katika jina la Yesu Kristo, amina.