

Following Christ

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Manara-dia an'i Kristy

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Mpanolotsaina Voalohany ao amin'ny Fiadidiana Voalohany

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As followers of Christ, we teach and testify of Jesus Christ, our Perfect Role Model. So let us follow Him by forgoing contention.

This year millions have been inspired by the gospel study plan known by the Savior's invitation "Come, follow me." Following Christ is not a casual or occasional practice. It is a continuous commitment and way of life that should guide us at all times and in all places. His teachings and His example define the path for every disciple of Jesus Christ. And all are invited to this path, for He invites all to come unto Him, "black and white, bond and free, male and female; ... and all are alike unto God."

I.

The first step in following Christ is to obey what He defined as "the great commandment in the law":

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

The commandments of God provide the guiding and steadying force in our lives. Our

Amin'ny maha-mpanara-dia an'i Kristy antsika dia mampianatra sy mijoro ho vavolombelona momba an'i Jesoa Kristy, ilay Ohatra fakan-tahaka tonga lafatra ho antsika isika. Koa dia aoka isika hanara-dia Azy ka hisoroka ny fifandirana.

Amin'ity taona ity dia olona an-tapitrisany maro no entanim-panahy avy amin'ilay drafitra fandalinana ny filazantsara fantatra amin'ilay fanasana nomen'ny Mpamonjy manao hoe "Avia, hanaraka Ahy." Tsy zavatra ataotao fahatany na tsindraindray ny fanarahana an'i Kristy. Fanolorantena tsy tapaka sy fomba fiaina izay tokony hitarika antsika amin'ny fotoana rehetra sy amin'ny toerana rehetra izany. Mamaritra ny lalana ho an'ny mpianatr'i Jesoa Kristy tsirairay avy ny fampianarany sy ny ohatra nasehony. Ary ny rehetra no voasa handeha amin'ny lalany, satria asainy avokoa ny rehetra hanatona Azy, ny "mainty sy fotsy, andevo sy olon'afaka; lahy sy vavy; ... ary mitovy ny rehetra amin' Andriamanitra."

I.

Ny dingana voalohany amin'ny fanarahana an'i Kristy dia ny mankatò ilay nofaritany ho "ny didy lehibe ao amin'ny lalàna":

"Tiava an'i Jehovah Andriamanitrao amin'ny fonao rehetra sy ny fanahinao rehetra ary ny sainao rehetra.

"Izany no didy lehibe sady voalohany.

"Ary ny faharoa, izay tahaka azy ihany, dia izao: Tiava ny namanao tahaka ny tenanao.

"Izany didy roa izany no ihantonan'ny lalàna rehetra sy ny mpaminany."

Ny didin' Andriamanitra dia manome hery fitarihana sy mampiorim-paka ho an'ny fiain-

experiences in mortality are like the little boy and his father flying a kite on a windy day. As the kite rose higher, the winds caused it to tug on the connecting string in the little boy's hand. Inexperienced with the force of mortal winds, he proposed to cut the string so the kite could rise higher. His wise father counseled no, explaining that the string is what holds the kite in place against mortal winds. If we lose our hold on the string, the kite will not rise higher. It will be carried about by these winds and inevitably crash to the earth.

That essential string represents the covenants that connect us to God, our Heavenly Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ. As we honor those covenants by keeping Their commandments and following Their plan of redemption, Their promised blessings enable us to soar to celestial heights.

The Book of Mormon frequently declares that Christ is “the light of the world.” During His appearance to the Nephites, the risen Lord explained that teaching by telling them: “I have set an example for you.” “I am the light which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do.” He is our role model. We learn what He has said and done by studying the scriptures and following prophetic teachings, as President Russell M. Nelson has urged us to do. In the ordinance of the sacrament, we covenant each Sabbath day that we will “always remember him and keep his commandments.”

II.

In the Book of Mormon, the Lord gave us the fundamentals in what He called “the doctrine of Christ.” These are faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, enduring to the end, and becoming as a little child, which means to trust the Lord and

antsika. Ireo zavatra iainantsika eto amin'ny fiainana an-tany dia toy ny zazalahy kely sy ny rainy mampanidina papango mandritra ny andro mandrivotra iray. Rehefa manidina avo kokoa ilay papango, dia ahilangilan'ny rivotra mba hisintona ilay tady mifandray amin'ny tanan'ilay zazalahy kely. Noho ny tsy fananany traikefa momba ny herin'ireo rivotra eto amin'ny fiainana an-tany, dia nanolotra izy ny hanapahana ilay tady mba hanidinan'ilay papango avo kokoa. Nanoro hevitra azy ny rainy feno fahendrena hoe tsia, tamin'ny fanazavana fa ilay tady no miha-zona ny papango mba hijoro manoloana ireo rivotry ny fiainana an-tany. Raha mamotsotra ilay tady isika, dia tsy hiainga avo kokoa ilay papango. Hampitambolimbohenin'ireo rivotra ireo ilay izy ary hianjera amin'ny tany amin'ny farany.

Izany tady tena manan-danja izany dia maneho ireo fanekempihavanana izay mampifandray antsika amin' Andriamanitra ilay Raintsika any An-danitra, sy i Jesoa Kristy Zanakalahiny. Rehefa manaja ireo fanekempihavanana ireo amin'ny alalan'ny fitandremana ny didin'Izy Ireo sy ny fanarahana ny drafitry ny fanavotana napetrak'Izy Ireo isika, dia mamela antsika hamakivaky ireo haavo selestialy ny fitahiana nampanantenain'Izy Ireo.

Manambara ombieny ombieny ny Bokin'i Môrmôna fa i Kristy no “fahazavan'izao tonto-lo izao.” Tamin'Izy niseho tamin'ny Nefita dia nanazava izany fampianarana izany ny Tompo efa nitsangana tamin'ny maty tamin'ny filazana tamin'izy ireo hoe: “Efa nanome ohatra ho anareo Aho.” “Indro, Izaho no fahazavana izay haingainareo ambony—izay efa hitanareo fa nataoko.” Izy no ohatra fakan-tahaka ho antsika. Mianatra ny zavatra nolazainy sy nataony isika amin'ny alalan'ny fandalinana ny soratra masina sy ny fanarahana ireo fampianaran'ny mpaminany, araka ny niangavian'ny Filoha Russell M. Nelson mba ataontsika. Ao amin'ny ôrdônansin'ny fanasan'ny Tompo dia manao fanekempihavanana isika isaky ny andro Sabata ny “hahatsiaro Azy mandrakariva ary ny hitandrina ny didiny.”

II.

Manome antsika ao amin'ny Bokin'i Môrmôna ireo singa fototra indrindra ny Tompo, izay antsoiny hoe “ny fotopampianaran'i Kristy.” Izany dia ny finoana ny Tompo Jesoa Kristy, ny fibebahana, ny batisa, ny fandraisana ny fanomezana ny Fanahy Masina, ny faharetana hatramin'ny fara-

submit to all He requires of us.

The Lord's commandments are of two types: permanent, like the doctrine of Christ, and temporary. Temporary commandments are those necessary for the needs of the Lord's Church or the faithful in temporary circumstances, but to be set aside when the need has passed. An example of temporary commandments are the Lord's directions to the early leadership of the Church to move the Saints from New York to Ohio, to Missouri, and to Illinois and finally to lead the pioneer exodus to the Intermountain West. Though only temporary, when still in force these commandments were given to be obeyed.

Some permanent commandments have taken considerable time to be generally observed. For example, President Lorenzo Snow's famous sermon on the law of tithing emphasized a commandment given earlier but not yet generally observed by Church members. It needed reemphasis in the circumstances then faced by the Church and its members. Recent examples of reemphases have also been needed because of current circumstances faced by Latter-day Saints or the Church. These include the proclamation on the family, issued by President Gordon B. Hinckley a generation ago, and President Russell M. Nelson's recent call for the Church to be known by its revealed name, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

III.

Another of our Savior's teachings seems to require reemphasis in the circumstances of our day.

This is a time of many harsh and hurtful words in public communications and sometimes even in our families. Sharp differences on issues of public policy often result in actions of hostility—even hatred—in public and personal relationships. This atmosphere of enmity sometimes even paralyzes capacities for lawmaking on matters of importance where most citizens

ny, ary ny fiovana ho toy ny ankizy madinika, izay midika hoe matoky ny Tompo ary manoa ny zavatra rehetra izay takiany amintsika.

Misy karazany roa ny didin'ny Tompo: ny mitoetra, toy ny fotopampianaran'i Kristy, ary ny tsy maharitra. Ireo didy tsy maharitra dia ireo izay manan-danja ho an'ireo filàn'ny Fiangonan'ny Tompo na ny mahatoky ao anatin'ny toe-java-misy mandalo fotsiny, fa tsy arahina intsony rehefa tsy misy intsony ilay filàna. Ohatra iray amin'ny didy tsy maharitra dia ny fitarihan'ny Tompo ireo mpitarika ny Fiangonana tany am-boalohany mba hamindra ny Olomasina avy any New York hankany Ohio, ho any Missouri, ary ho any Illinois, ary farany, ny hitarika ny fifindran'ireo mpamaky lay ho any amin'ireo faritany feno tendrombohitra any andrefana. Na dia tsy naharitra aza izany, dia natao hankatoavina ireo didy ireo rehefa nanan-kery.

Ny didy mitoetra sasany dia nitaky fotoana ela ny nankatoavan'ny rehetra azy. Ohatra, ny lahateny nalaza nataon'ny Filoha Lorenzo Snow momba ny fahafolonkarena dia nanantitrantitra didy iray izay efa nomena teo aloha saingy tsy mbola notandreman'ny mpikamban'ny Fiangonana amin'ny ankapobeny. Nila fanantitranterana indray izany teo anatrehan'ny toe-draharaha nanjo ny Fiangonana sy ny mpikambana tao aminy. Nilaina vao haingana ny famerenana fanantitranterana vitsivitsy noho ny toe-javatra ankehitriny atrehan'ny Olomasin'ny Andro Farany na ny Fiangonana. Ao anatin'izany ilay fanambarana momba ny fianakaviana navoakan'ny Filoha Gordon B. Hinckley taona maro lasa izay, sy ny antso avo nataon'ny Filoha Russell M. Nelson vao tsy ela ny mba hahalalana ny Fiangonana amin'ilay anarana nanambarana azy, dia Ny Fiangonan'i Jesoa Kristy ho an'ny Olomasin'ny Andro Farany.

III.

Ny fampianaran'ny Mpamonjy anankiray hafa koa dia toa mila fanantitranterana indray manoloana ny zava-misy amin'izao androntsika izao.

Izao dia fotoana ilazan'ny olona teny mahery sy mandratra maro eo amin'ny sehatry ny fifandraisana ifanaovana ampahibemaso ary indraindray eny amin'ny fianakaviansika mihitsy aza. Ny tsy fitovian-kevitra goavana eo amin'ny olana mahakasika ny lalàna arahin'ny besinimaro dia matetika miteraka fifandirana—fifankahalalana mihitsy—eo amin'ireo fifandraisana amin'ny

see an urgent need for some action in the public interest.

What should followers of Christ teach and do in this time of toxic communications? What were His teachings and examples?

It is significant that among the first principles Jesus taught when He appeared to the Nephites was to avoid contention. While He taught this in the context of disputes over religious doctrine, the reasons He gave clearly apply to communications and relationships in politics, public policy, and family relationships. Jesus taught:

“He that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another.

“Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away.”

In His remaining ministry among the Nephites, Jesus taught other commandments closely related to His prohibition of contention. We know from the Bible that He had previously taught each of these in His great Sermon on the Mount, usually in precisely the same language He later used with the Nephites. I will quote the familiar Bible language:

“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”

This is one of Christ’s best-known commandments—most revolutionary and most difficult to follow. Yet it is a most fundamental part of His invitation for all to follow Him. As President David O. McKay taught, “There is no better way to manifest love for God than to show an unselfish love for one’s fellowmen.”

hafa sy amin’isika samy isika manokana. Izany tontolon’ny fifandrafiana izany indraindray dia manakana mihitsy ny famoahana lalàna momba ny raharaha tena manan-danja izay tena ilain’ny ankamaroan’ny olom-pirenena mafy ny andraisana andraikitra ho tombontsoan’ny besinimaro.

Inona no tokony hampianarin’ny mpanaradia an’i Kristy sy hataony eo anatrehan’izao tontolon’ny fifandraisana manapoizina izao? Inona avy ireo fampianarana sy ohatra nasehony?

Tena manaitra fa anisan’ireo fitsipika voalohany nampianarin’i Jesoa rehefa niseho tamin’ny Nefita Izy dia ny fisorohana ny fifandirana. Na dia hoe tao anatin’ny sahan-kevitra ny tsy fifankahazoana eo amin’ny lafiny fotopampianarana ara-pivavahana aza no nampianarany izany, dia mazava fa ireo antony nomeny dia mihatra tsara amin’ny fifaneraserana sy fifandraisana eo amin’ny lafiny pôlitika, ny lalàna ho an’ny besinimaro, ary ireo fifandraisana ara-pianakaviana. Nampianatra i Jesoa hoe:

“Izay manana ny fanahin’ny fifandirana dia tsy Ahy fa an’ny devoly kosa, izay rain’ny fifandirana, ary mamoky ny fon’ny olona izy mba hifanditra amim-pahatezerana izy samy izy.

“Indro, tsy fotopampianarako ny mamoky ny fon’ny olona ho tezitra ka hifanohitra izy samy izy; fa izao kosa no fotopampianarako dia ny hampitsaharana ny zavatra toy izany.”

Rehefa namaramparana ny fanompoany teo anivon’ny Nefita i Jesoa dia nampianatra didy hafa mifandray akaiky amin’ily fandràny tsy hifanditra. Fantatsika avy amin’ny Baiboly fa efa nampianariny ny tsirairay avy tamin’izany tao anatin’ily Lahateny teny an-Tendrombohitra malaza, izay araka ny fiteny nampiasainy ihany ho an’ny Nefita taty aoriana. Ilay fiteny nampiasainy tao amin’ny Baiboly izay tsy zoviana amin-tsika no indramiko:

“Tiava ny fahavalonareo, tsofirano ireo izay manozona anareo, manaova soa amin’ireo izay mankahala anareo, ary mivavaha ho an’ireo izay ratsy fitondra anareo sy manenjika anareo.”

Io no anisan’ny didin’i Kristy fanta-daza indrindra—mahery vaika indrindra ary sarotra arahina indrindra. Kanefa dia singa fototra indrindra ao anatin’ny fanasany ho an’ny rehetra ny mba hanara-dia Azy. Araka ny nampianarin’ny Filoha David O. McKay hoe: “Tsy misy fomba tsara kokoa hanehoana fitiavana ho an’ Andriamanitra mihoatra noho ny fanehoana fitiavana feno fahafoizan-tena ho an’ny mpiara-belona

Here is another fundamental teaching by Him who is our role model: “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.”

Peacemakers! How it would change personal relationships if followers of Christ would forgo harsh and hurtful words in all their communications.

In general conference last year, President Russell M. Nelson gave us these challenges:

“One of the easiest ways to identify a true follower of Jesus Christ is how compassionately that person treats other people. ...

“... True disciples of Jesus Christ are peacemakers.

“... One of the best ways we can honor the Savior is to become a peacemaker.”

Concluding his teachings: “Contention is a choice. Peacemaking is a choice. You have your agency to choose contention or reconciliation. I urge you to choose to be a peacemaker, now and always.”

Potential adversaries should begin their discussions by identifying common ground on which all agree.

To follow our Perfect Role Model and His prophet, we need to practice what is popularly known as the Golden Rule: “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.” We need to love and do good to all. We need to avoid contention and be peacemakers in all our communications. This does not mean to compromise our principles and priorities but to cease harshly attacking others for theirs. That is what our Perfect Role Model did in His ministry. That is the example He set for us as He invited us to follow Him.

In this conference four years ago, President

amin’ny tena.”

Ity dia fampianarana fototra hafa avy Aminy izay ohatra fakan-tahaka ho antsika: “Sambatra ny mpampihavana, fa izy no hatao hoe zanak’ Andriamanitra.”

Mpampihavana! Diniho ange fa tena hiova ny fifandraisana eo amin’isika samy isika raha toa ireo mpanara-dia an’i Kristy ka mahafoy ireo teny mahery sy mandratra amin’ireo fifandraisana rehetra ataon’izy ireo.

Nandritra ny fihaonamben’ny Fiangonana maneran-tany tamin’ny herintaona dia nanome antsika ireto fanamby ireto ny Filoha Russell M. Nelson:

Ny iray amin’ireo fomba mora indrindra hamantarana nympanara-dia marina an’i Jesoa Kristy dia ny fangorahana asehony eo amin’ny fitondrany ny olona hafa. ...

“... Ny mpianatra marin’i Jesoa Kristy dia mpampihavana.

“... Ny iray amin’ireo fomba tsara indrindra ahafahantsika maneho voninahitra ny Mpamonjy dia ny fahatongavana ho mpampihavana.”

Nofaranany ny fampianarany tamin’ny hoe: “Safidy ny fifandirana. Safidy ny mpampihavana. Manana ny fahafahanao hisafidy ny fifandirana na ny fampihavanana ianao. Mamporisika anareo aho mbahisafidiny ho mpampihavana amin’izao fotoana izao ary mandrakariva.”

Ireo izay mety hifanohitra dia tokony hanomboka ny fifanakalozan-kevitra ataon’izy ireo amin’ny famantarana ireo lafin-javatra ahitana marimaritra iraisana izay samy eken’ny rehetra.

Ho fanarahana ilay Ohatra fakan-tahaka tonga lafatra ho antsika sy ny mpaminaniny, dia mila mampihatra ilay fantatry ny maro amin’ny hoe ilay Fitsipika Volamena isika: “Ny zavatra rehetra na inona na inona ka tianareo mba hataon’ny olona aminareo, dia ataovy toy izany aminy koa, fa izany no lalàna sy ny mpaminany.” Mila mitia sy manao ny tsara amin’ny rehetra isika. Mila misoroka ny fifandirana ary mpampihavana amin’izay fifandraisana rehetra ataontsika isika. Tsy midika izany fa mampandefitra ireo fitsipika sy laharam-pahamehantsika isika, fa atsahatsika kosa ny fanafihana amin’ny fomba mahery ny hafa noho ny azy ireo. Izany no nataon’ily Ohatra fakan-tahaka tonga lafatra ho antsika fony Izy nanompo tety an-tany. Izany no ohatra napetrany ho antsika, raha nanasa antsika hanara-dia Azy Izy.

Tamin’ny fihaonambe toy ity efa-taona lasa

Nelson gave us a prophetic challenge for our own day:

“Are you willing to let God prevail in your life? Are you willing to let God be the most important influence in your life? Will you allow His words, His commandments, and His covenants to influence what you do each day? Will you allow His voice to take priority over any other?”

As followers of Christ, we teach and testify of Jesus Christ, our Perfect Role Model. So let us follow Him by forgoing contention. As we pursue our preferred policies in public actions, let us qualify for His blessings by using the language and methods of peacemakers. In our families and other personal relationships, let us avoid what is harsh and hateful. Let us seek to be holy, like our Savior, in whose holy name I testify and invoke His blessing to help us be Saints. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

izay, dia nanome antsika fanambin'ny mpaminany ho an'ny vaninandrontsika ny Filoha Nelson:

“Vonona veianaohamela an' Andriamanitra hanjaka eo amin'ny fiainanao? Vonona veianaohamela an' Andriamanitra ho ny hery mitaona anao indrindra eo amin'ny fiainanao? Moa ve ianao hamela ny teniny sy ny didiny ary ny fanekehavanany hitarika ny zavatra ataonao isan'andro? Moa ve hoavelanao ho lohalaharana eo amin'ny zavatra hafa rehetra ny feony?”

Amin'ny maha-mpanara-dia an'i Kristy antsika dia mampianatra sy mijoro ho vavolombelona momba an'i Jesoa Kristy, ilay Ohatra fakan-tahaka tonga lafatra ho antsika isika. Koa dia aoka isika hanara-dia Azy ka hisoroka ny fifandirana. Rehefa miady ho an'ireo lalàna tiansika eo amin'ny sehatry ny fifampiraharahana amin'ny hafa isika dia andeha isika ho mendrika ireo fitahiany amin'ny alalan'ny fampiasana ny fiteny sy fomba fiasan'ny mpampihavana. Ao amin'ny fianakaviansika sy ireo fifandraisana manokana hafa misy eo amin'ny fiainantsika, dia aoka isika hisoroka izay mety ho zavatra mahery sy feno fankahalana. Aoka isika hikatsaka ny ho masina, toy ilay Mpamonjy antsika, ka amin'ny anarany masina no ijoroako ho vavolombelona sy hangatahako ny tsodranony mba hanampiana antsika ho tonga Olomasina. Amin'ny anaran'i Jesoa Kristy, amena.