

Following Christ

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Mulimuli ia Keriso

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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 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

I le avea ai o ni soo o Keriso, tatou te aoao atu ma molimau atu e uiga ia Iesu Keriso, lo tatou Faataitaiga Atoatoa. O lea ia tatou mulimuli ia te Ia e ala i le lafoaiese o finauga.

O le tausaga lenei ua faitau miliona i latou ua musuia e le fuafuaga o le suesueina o le talalelei ua lauiloa i le valaaulia a le Faaola "Sau, mulimuli mai ia te au." O le mulimuli ia Keriso e le o se faiga faasamasamanoa pe na o nisi taimi. O se tautinoga faifaipia ma o se ala o le olaga lea e tataua ona taialaina ai i tatou i taimi uma ma i nofoaga uma. O Ana aoaoga ma Lana faataitaiga ua maioio ai le ala mo soo uma o Iesu Keriso. Ua Ia valaaulia tagata uma e o mai i lenei ala, aua ua Ia valaaulia tagata uma e o mai ia te Ia, "uliuli ma le pa epa e, e pologa ma le saoloto, o tane ma fafine; ... ua tutusa tagata uma i le Atua."

I.

O le uluai laasaga e mulimuli ai ia Keriso o le usitai lea i mea ua Ia faamanino mai "o le poloaiga sili i le tulafono":

"E te alofa atu i le Alii lou Atua ma lou loto atoa, ma lou agaga atoa, ma lou manatu atoa.

"O le poloaiga muamua lena ma le sili.

"E faapena foi lona lua, E te alofa atu i le lua te tuaoi, ia pei o oe lava ia te oe.

"O na poloaiga e lua ua autu ai le tulafono uma ma le au perofeta."

O poloaiga a le Atua ua saunia ai le malosia-ga taiala ma le mautu i o tatou olaga. O o tatou aafiaga i le olaga nei, e faapei o le tamaitiiti ma lona tamā na faalele se la maua i se aso matagiā. A o lelelele maua luga aē le maua, o le malosi o

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 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

savili sa lavea ma fili faatasi ai ma le manoa sa uuina i le lima o le tamaitiiti. O le leai o se poto masani i le malosiaga o matagi o le olaga nei, sa ia fautua atu e ooti le manoa ina ia mafai ai ona lele maua atu le maua. Sa fautua atu lona tamā poto e leai, ma faamalamalama i ai o le manoa o le mea lena o loo taofiofia lelei le maua mai matagi o le olaga. Afai e ta te faamamulua le manoa, o le a le lele maua atu le maua. O le a feavea'iina e matagi nei ma i'u ai ina patatu i le elele.

O lena manoa taua ua faatusa i feagaiga o loo fesootai ai i tatou i le Atua, lo tatou Tama Faalelagi, ma Lona Alo o Iesu Keriso. A tatou faamalamalama na feagaiga e ala i le tausia o a La'ua poloaiga, ma mulimuli i la La'ua fuafuaga o le togiola, o a La'ua faamanuiaga folafolaina e mafai ai ona tatou felelei atu i mauga faaselesitila.

Ua tautino soo mai e le Tusi a Mamona e faapea o Keriso “o le malamalama o le lalolagi.” I le taimi na faaali atu ai o Ia ia sa Nifae, sa faamalamalama atu ai e le Alii toetu lena aoaoga i le ta'u atu ia te i latou: “Ua ou faia se faataitaiga mo outou.” “O A'u o le malamalama lea e tatau ona outou tuu i luga—mea ia na outou vaai ua ou faia.” O Ia o lo tatou faataitaiga. Ua tatou aoaoina o mea sa Ia fetalai i ai ma fai e ala i le sutesueina o tusitusiga paia ma mulimuli i aoaoga faaperofeta e pei lava ona faamanatu mai e Peresitene Russell M. Nelson ia i tatou e fai. I le sauniga o le faamanatuga, tatou te osifeagaiga ai i aso Sapati taitasi o le a tatou “manatua pea o ia ma taus i Ana poloaiga.”

II.

I le Tusi a Mamona, na tuuina mai ai e le Alii ia i tatou mea faavae autu ua Ia ta'ua “o le mataupu faavae a Keriso.” O ia mea o le faatuatua i le Alii o Iesu Keriso, salamo, papatisoga, mauaina o le meaalofo o le Agaga Paia, tumau e oo i le iuga, ma le ave e faapei o se tamaitiiti, o lona uiga ia faalagolago i le Alii ma usiusitai i mea uma ua Ia manaomia mai ia i tatou.

O poloaiga a le Alii e lua ituaiga, e tumau e faapei o le mataupu faavae a Keriso, ma le tumau. O poloaiga le tumau, o mea ia e tatau ai mo manaoga o le Ekalesia a le Alii po o le au faamaoni i tulaga le tumau, ae e ao ona faataatia ese pe a uma le manaoga. O se faataitaiga o poloaiga le tumau mo na o sina taimi o faatonuga ia a le Alii i le taitaiga i popofou o le Ekalesia e ave le Au Paia mai Niu Ioka i Ohaio, i Misuri, i Ilinoi, ma

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 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.

faaiu ai ina taitai le malaga umi a paionia i Atumauga i Sisifo. E ui ina e lē tumau, ae i le taimi e faamalosia ai, o nei poloaiga na tuuina mai ina ia usita'ia.

O nisi o poloaiga tumau e matuai tele le taimi e ao ai ona tausia lautele. Mo se faataitaiga, o le lauga lauiloa a Peresitene Lorenzo Snow e uiga i le tulafono o le sefuluai na faamamafaina ai se poloaiga na tuuina mai muamua ae e lei tausia lautele e tagata o le Ekalesia. Na moomia ona toe faamamafa i tulaga na feagai ma le Ekalesia ma ona tagata i lenei taimi. O faataitaiga talu ai nei o mea e faamamafa ua manaomia ona o tulaga o loo tutupu nei o loo feagai ma le Au Paia o Aso e Gata Ai po o le Ekalesia. O nei mea e aafia le folafolaga i le aiga na tuuina mai e Peresitene Gordon B. Hinckley i se tupulaga talu ai, ma le valaaulia talu ai nei a Peresitene Russell M. Nelson mo le Ekalesia ua lauiloa nei i lona igoa na faaalua, O Le Ekalesia a Iesu Keriso o le Au Paia o Aso e Gata Ai.

III.

O se tasi o aoaoga a lo tatou Faaola ua foliga mai e manaomia ai le toefaamamafa i tulaga o o tatou taimi.

O se taimi lenei o le tele o upu mamafa ma faatiga i talanoaga faitele ma o nisi taimi ua oo lava i o tatou aiga. O eseese o manatu malolosi e uiga i mataupu o aiaiga faalauaitele e tele ina taunuu i faatinoga o le fe'aina'i—o le faitaga'i—i nofoaga faitele ma sootaga patino. O lea siosiomaga o le faitaga'i o nisi taimi e oo ai lava ina faigata i le au faitulafono ona fai ni faaiuga faaupufai i ni mataupu taua ia e iloa e le toatele o tagatanuu o se manaoga faananati mo se faaiuga ona e aafia ai tagata lautele.

O a mea e tatau i soo o Keriso ona aoao atu ma fai i le taimi lenei o fesootaiga ma talanoaga le lelei? O a Ana aoaoga ma faataitaiga?

E taua tele o se tasi o muai mataupu faavae na aoao atu e Iesu ina ua faaali atu o Ia ia sa Nifae, o le aloese lea mai finauga. E ui sa Ia aoao atu i le matalalaga o feeseeseaiga i aoaoga faavae faalelotu, ae o mafuaaga na Ia tuuina atu ma le manino e faatatau i fesootaiga ma sootaga i upufai, aiaiga faitele, ma sootaga faaleaiga. Na aoao mai e Iesu:

“O le e i ai le agaga o le finauga ua le mai ia te au o ia, ae ua mai le tiapolo ia, o le o le tamā o le finauga, ma ua faaoso e ia loto o tagata ia fefinauai ma le ita, o le tasi i le isi.

“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 spitefully 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.”

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.

“Faauta, e le o la’u mataupu lea, le faaoso o loto o tagata i le ita, o le tasi e faasaga i le isi; ae o la’u mataupu lenei, ia aveesea mea faapena.”

I le toega o Lana misiona ia sa Nifae, sa aoao atu ai e Iesu isi poloaiga e fesootai lelei ma Lona faasaina o finauga. Ua tatou iloa mai le Tusi Paia sa Ia aoao mai muamua e uiga i nei mea i Lana Lauga maoae i luga o le Mauga, e masani i le gagana lava e tasi na Ia faaoga mulimuli ane ia sa Nifae. O le a ou sii maia le gagana ua masani ai i le Tusi Paia.

“Ia outou alolofa atu i e ua ita mai ia te outou, ia outou faamanuia atu i e ua fetuu mai ia te outou, ia outou agalelei atu i e ua inoino mai ia te outou, ia outou tatalo foi mo e ua tuuaifua mai ma faasaua mai ia te outou.”

O se tasi lenei o poloaiga sili ma lauiloa a Keriso—sili ona fou ae sili foi ona faigata ona mulimulita’ia. Ae o se vaega sili ona taua o Lana valaaulia mo tagata uma e mulimuli ia te Ia. E pei ona sa aoao mai e Peresitene Tavita O. MaKei, “E leai se isi auala e sili atu e faaali atu ai lo tatou alolofa i le Atua nai lo le faaali atu o se alofa e le faapito i o tatou uso a tagata.”

O se isi lenei aoaoga autu a Ia, o lo tatou faaitaiga atoatoa: “Amuia e faatupuina le filemu: aua e ta’ua i latou o fanau o le Atua.”

O e faatupuina le filemu! E ma’eu se suiga o le a i ai sootaga patino pe afai o le a lafoai e soo o Keriso upu malolosi ma faatiga i a tatou talanoaga ma fesootaiga uma.

I le konafesi aoao i le tausaga ua mavae, sa tuuina mai ai e Peresitene Russell M. Nelson ia lui nei:

O se tasi o ala aupito faigofie e faailoa ai sesoo monio Iesu Keriso o le ala e taulima ai ma le agaalofo e lena tagata isi tagata. ...

“... O soo moni o Iesu Keriso o ni tagata e faatupuina le filemu.

“... O se tasi o auala pito sili e mafai ai ona tatou faamamaluina le Faaola o le avea lea ma sē e faatupuina le filemu.”

I le faaiuina o ana aoaoga: “O finauga o se filifiliga. O le faatupuina o le filemu o se filifiliga. Ua ia te oe lau faitalia e filifili ai ia finauga po o le faaleleiga. Ou te uuna’ia outou ia filifilie avea o sē e faatupuina le filemu, nei ma aso uma.”

I talanoaga, e ao i ē ono tupu ai finauga ona amata i le faailoa o itu masani e malilie uma i ai.

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 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.

Ina ia mulimuli i lo tatou Faataitaiga Atoatoa ma Lana perofeta, e manaomia ona tatou faata'ita'ia le mea ua lauiloa nei o le Tulafono Faaauuro: “O mea uma foi tou te loto i ai ia faia e tagata ia te outou, ia faapea lava ona outou faia ia te i latou: aua o le tulafono lea ma le au perofeta.” E manaomia ona tatou alolofa ma faia mea lelei i tagata uma. E manaomia ona tatou aloese mai finauga ma ia avea o ni e faatupuina le filemu i a tatou fesootaiga po o talanoaga uma. E le faapea ai e fetuunai a tatou mataupu faavae ma mea e faamuamua, ae ia tuu le osofa'ia ma le pa'a o isi ona o a latou mataupu. O le mea lena na fai e lo tatou Faataitaiga Atoatoa i Lana misiona. O le faataitaiga lena na ia faia mo i tatou a o Ia valaaulia i tatou e mulimuli atu ia te ia.

I lenei konafesi i le fa tausaga talu ai, sa tuuina mai ai e Peresitene Nelson ia i tatou se lu'i faaperofeta mo o tatou lava aso:

“Pe uaeloto e faamuamua le Atua i lou olaga? Oeloto e avea le Atua ma faatosinaga sili ona taua i lou olaga? Pe o le a e faatagaina Ana afioga, Ana poloaiga, ma Ana feagaiga e faatosinaina mea e te faia i aso taitasi? Pe o le a e faatagaina Lona siufofoga ia faamuamua i lo o se isi lava leo?”

I le avea ai o ni soo o Keriso, tatou te aoao atu ma molimau atu e uiga ia Iesu Keriso, lo tatou Faataitaiga Atoatoa. O lea ia tatou mulimuli ia te Ia e ala i le lafoaiese o finauga. A o tatou tulitulimatagauina a tatou aiaiga tatou te fialia i ai i faatinoga lautele, ia tatou agavaa mo Ana faamanuiaga e ala i le faaagaina o le gagana ma metotia a i latou e faatupuina le filemu. I o tatou aiga ma isi sootaga patino, ia tatou aloese mai mea pa'a ma le inosia. Ia tatou saili ia paia, e faapei o lo tatou Faaola, o le o Lona suafa paia ou te molimau atu ai ma talosagaina Ana faamanuiaga e fesoasoani ai ia i tatou ia avea ma Tagata Paia. I le suafa o Iesu Keriso, amene.