

O Youth of the Noble Birthright

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Ee Vijana wa Haki Tukufu ya Uzaliwa

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Mshauri wa Kwanza katika Urais Mkuu wa Wavulana

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God trusts you, the children of the covenant, to help with His work of bringing all His children safely home to Him.

Elder Stevenson, this is a conference never to be forgotten.

Our family has always enjoyed a little book called *Children's Letters to God*. Here are a few:

“Dear God, instead of letting people die and having to make new ones, why don't you just keep the ones you've got right now?”

“How come you only have ten rules, but our school has millions?”

“Why did you put the tonsils in if you're just going to take them out again?”

Today there isn't time to answer all these questions, but there is another question I often hear from young people that I would like to address. From Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, to Thomas, Idaho, the question is the same: “Why? Why must Latter-day Saints live so differently from others?”

I know it's hard to be different—especially when you are young and want so badly for other people to like you. Everyone wants to fit in, and that desire is magnified to unhealthy proportions in today's digital world filled with social media and cyberbullying.

So, with all that pressure, why do Latter-day Saints live so differently? There are many good answers: Because you are a child of God. Because you have been saved for the last days. Because you are a disciple of Jesus Christ.

But those answers don't always set you apart.

Mungu anakutumainieni ninyi, watoto wa agano kusaidea katika kazi Yake ya kuwaleta watoto Wake wote nyumbani Kwake salama.

Mzee Stevenson, huu ni mkutano usiosahaulika.

Familia yetu daima ilifurahia kitabu kidogo kilichoitwa *Barua za Watoto kwa Mungu*. Hapa ziko chache:

“Mungu mpendwa, badala ya kuwaacha watu wafe na kuwamba wengine wapya, kwa nini usiwe tu na hawa ulio nao sasa?”

“Inakuaje wewe una sheria kumi tu, lakini shule yetu ina mamilioni?”

“Kwa nini uweke ugonjwa wa mafindo findo ikiwa utayatoa tu tena?”

Leo hamna muda wa kujibu maswalihayayote, lakini kuna swali lingine ninalosikia mara kwa mara kutoka kwa vijana ambalo ningependa kulishughulikia. Kutoka Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, hadi Thomas, Idaho, swali ni lile lile: “Kwa nini? Kwa nini Watakatifu wa Siku za Mwisho wanaishi tofauti sana na wengine?”

Ninajua ni vigumu kuwa tofauti—hasa wakati wewe ni kijana na unataka sana watu wengine wakupende. Kila mtu anataka kukubalika na wengine, na hamu hiyo inakuzwa hadi kuwa uwiano usio na afya katika ulimwengu wa leo wa kidigitali uliojaa mitandao ya kijamii na uonevu wa mtandaoni.

Kwa hiyo, kwa mashinikizo hayo yote, kwa nini Watakatifu wa Siku za Mwisho wanaishi tofauti sana hivi? Kuna majibu mengi mazuri: Kwa sababu wewe ni mtoto wa Mungu. Kwa sababu ulihifadhiwa kwa ajili ya siku hizi za mwisho. Kwa sababu wewe ni mwanafunzi wa Yesu Kristo.

Lakini majibu hayo daima hayakutofautishi

Everyone is a child of God. Everyone on earth right now was sent here in the latter days. And yet not everyone lives the Word of Wisdom or law of chastity the way you strive to. There are many valiant disciples of Christ who are not members of this Church. But they do not serve missions and perform ordinances in houses of the Lord on behalf of ancestors like you do. There must be more to it—and there is.

Today I would like to focus on an additional reason that has been meaningful in my life. In 1988 a young Apostle named Russell M. Nelson gave an address at Brigham Young University called “Thanks for the Covenant.” In it, then-Elder Nelson explained that when we use our moral agency to make and keep covenants with God, we become heirs of the everlasting covenant God has made with our forebearers in every dispensation. Said another way, we become “children of the covenant.” That sets us apart. That gives us access to the same blessings our forefathers and foremothers received, including a birthright.

Birthright! You may have heard that word. We even sing hymns about it: “O youth of the noble birthright, carry on, carry on, carry on!” It’s a compelling word. But what does it mean?

In Old Testament times if a father passed away, his birthright son was responsible for the care of his mother and sisters. His brothers received their inheritance and left to make their way in the world, but the birthright son did not go anywhere. He would marry and have his own family, but he would stay until the end of his days to govern the affairs of his father’s estate. Because of this added responsibility, he was given an added measure of the inheritance. Was leading and caring for others too much to ask? Not when you consider the additional inheritance he was given.

Today we are not talking about your birth order in earthly families or Old Testament gender roles. We are talking about the inheritance you receive as a joint heir with Christ because of the covenant relationship you have chosen to enter with Him and your Father in Heaven. Is it too much for God to expect you to live differently than His other children so you can better

wewe. Kila mmoja ni mtoto wa Mungu. Kila mmoja ulimwenguni sasa hivi alitumwa katika siku za mwisho. Lakini sio kila mtu anaishi Neno la Hekima au sheria ya usafi wa kimwili kama vile wewe unavyojitahidi kufanya. Kuna wanafunzi wengi shupavu wa Kristo ambao si waumini wa Kanisa. Lakini hawahudumu mishehi na kufanya ibada katika nyumba za Bwana kwa niaba ya mababu kama vile ninyi mnavyofanya. Lazima kuwe na zaidi kuliko hilo—na lipo.

Leo ningependa kuzingatia sababu ya ziada ambayo imekuwa na maana sana katika maisha yangu. Mnamo 1988, Mtume kijana aliyetwa Russell M. Nelson alitoa hotuba katika Chuo Kikuu cha Brigham Young iliyoitwa “Asante kwa Agano,” Ndani yake, wakati huo Mzee Nelson alielezea kwamba wakati tunapotumia haki yetu ya kujiamulia kufanya na kushika maagano na Mungu, tunakuwa warithi wa agano la milele la Mungu analofanya na watangulizi wetu katika kila kipindi. Ikisemwa kwa njia nyingine, tunakuwa “watoto wa agano.” Hiyo inatufanya kuwa wa tofauti. Hiyo inatupatia sisi kufikia baraka zile zile mababu na mabibi zetu walizopokea, ikijumuisha haki ya kuzaliwa.

Haki ya uzaliwa! Yawezekana umeshasikia neno hilo. Tunaimba hata wimbo kulihusu hili: “Ee Vijana wa haki tukufu ya uzaliwa, songeni, songeni, songeni!” Ni neno la kuvutia sana. Lakinini linamaanisha nini?

Katika nyakati za Agano la Kale ikiwa baba angefariki, mwana mwenye haki ya uzaliwa alikuwa na jukumu la kumtunza mama yake na dada zake. Kaka zake walipokea urithi wao na kuondoka ili kujitafutia ulimwenguni, lakini mwana mwenye haki ya mzaliwa wa kwanza hakwenda popote. Angeoa na kuwa na familia yake mwenyewe, lakini angebakia mpaka mwisho wa siku zake kutawala shughuli za shamba la baba yake. Kwa sababu ya hili jukumu lililoongezwa, alipatiwa kiasi kikubwa cha urithi. Je, kuongoza na kuwatunza wengine ilikuwa jambo kubwa kuombwa? Sivyo ukifikiria urithi wa ziada aliopatiwa.

Leo hatuongeti kuhusu utaratibu wako wa kuzaliwa katika familia ya ulimwenguni au kazi za jinsia za Agano la Kale. Tunaongea kuhusu urithi unaopokea kama mrithi mwenza na Kristokwa sababu ya uhusiano wa kimaagano uliochagua kuwa nao pamoja Naye na Baba yako aliye Mbinguni. Je, ni jambo kubwa Mungu kukutarajia wewe kuishi tofauti na watoto Wake

lead and serve them? Not when you consider the blessings—both temporal and spiritual—that you have been given.

Does your birthright mean you are better than others? No, but it does mean you are expected to help others be better. Does your birthright mean you are chosen? Yes, but not chosen to rule over others; you are chosen to serve them. Is your birthright evidence of God's love? Yes, but more important, it is evidence of His trust.

It is one thing to be loved and another thing entirely to be trusted. In the *For the Strength of Youth* guide, we read: “Your Father in Heaven trusts you. He has given you great blessings, including the fulness of the gospel and sacred ordinances and covenants that bind you to Him and bring His power into your life. With those blessings comes added responsibility. He knows you can make a difference in the world, and that requires, in many cases, being different from the world.”

Our mortal experience could be compared to a cruise ship on which God has sent all His children as they journey from one shore to another. The voyage is filled with opportunities to learn, grow, be happy, and progress, but it is also full of dangers. God loves all His children and is concerned about their welfare. He does not want to lose any of them, so He invites those who are willing to become members of His crew—that's you. Because of your choice to make and keep covenants, He offers you His trust. He trusts you to be different, peculiar, and set apart because of the important work He trusts you to do.

Think of it! God trusts you—of all the people on the earth, the children of the covenant, His crew members—to help with His work of bringing all His children safely home to Him. No wonder President Brigham Young once said, “All the angels in heaven are looking at this little handful of people.”

When you look around on this cruise ship called earth, you might see other people sitting in lounge chairs drinking, gambling in casinos, wearing clothing that is too revealing, scrolling endlessly on cell phones, and wasting too

wengine ili uweze kuwaongoza na kuwatumikia vyema? Sivyo ukifikiria baraka—zote, kimwili na kiroho—ambazo wewe umepatiwa.

Je, haki yako ya uzaliwa inamaanisha wewe ni bora kuliko wengine? Hapana, lakini inamaanisha wewe unatarajiwa kuwasaidia wengine kuwa bora. Je, haki yako ya uzaliwa inamaanisha wewe umeteuliwa? Ndiyo, lakini hukuteuliwa kuwa-tawala wengine, umeteuliwa kuwatumikia wao. Je, haki yako ya uzaliwa ni ushahidi wa upendo wa Mungu? Ndiyo, lakini muhimu zaidi, ni ushahidi wa tumaini Lake.

Ni jambo moja kupendwa na ni jambo lingine kabisa kuaminiwa. Katika mwongozo wa Kwa Ajili ya Nguvu kwa Vijana, tunasoma: “Baba yako aliye Mbinguni anakuamini wewe. Amekupa baraka kuu, ikijumuisha utimilifu wa injili na ibada takatifu na maagano ambayo yanakuunganisha wewe Kwake na kuleta nguvu Yake ndani ya maisha yako. Pamoja na baraka hizo huja ongezeko la majukumu. Anajua unaweza kuleta tofauti katika ulimwengu, na hiyo inahitaji, katika hali nyingi, kuwa tofauti na ulimwengu.”

Uzoefu wetu wa duniani ungeweza kulinganishwa na meli ya kuvinjari ambapo Mungu amewatuma watoto Wake wote wanaposafiri kutoka pwani fulani hadi nyingine. Safari iliyojawa na fursa nyingi za kujifunza, kukua, kuwa na furaha na maendeleo lakini pia iliyojawa na hatari. Mungu anawapenda watoto Wake wote na ana shauku kuhusu ustawi wao. Yeye hataki kumpoteza ye yote kati yao, kwa hiyo Yeye anawaalika wale walio tayarikuwa mabaharia Wake—huyo ni wewe. Kwa sababu ya chaguo lako la kufanya na kushika maagano, Yeye anakupa tumaini Lake. Yeye anaamini wewe utakuwa tofauti, wa kipekee, na uliyesimikwakwa sababu ya kazi muhimu anayokutumainia wewe ufanye.

Fikiria hilo! Mungu anawatumainieni ninyi—kati ya watu wote duniani, watoto wa agano, mabaharia Wake—kusaidia katika kazi Yake ya kuwaleta watoto Wake wote nyumbani Kwake salama. Si ajabu Rais Brigham Young wakati mmoja alisema, “Malaika wote mbinguni wanawaangalia wadogo hawa wachache walio kati ya watu.”

Wakati unapotazama ndani ya meli hii ya kuvinjari inayoitwa ulimwengu, unaweza kuona watu wengine wameketi kwenye viti vya kupumzika wakinywa, wakicheza kamari katika kasino, wamevaa nguo ambazo hazifichi mwili

much time playing electronic games. But instead of wondering, “Why can’t I do that?” you can remember that you are not an ordinary passenger. You are a member of the crew. You have responsibilities that passengers do not have. As Sister Ardeth Kapp once said, “You can’t be a life[guard] if you look like all the other swimmers on the beach.”

And before you become discouraged by all the extra obligations, please remember that crew members receive something the other passengers do not: compensation. Elder Neil L. Andersen has said, “There is a compensatory spiritual power for the righteous,” including “greater assurance, greater confirmation, and greater confidence.” - Like Abraham of old, you receive greater happiness and peace, greater righteousness, and greater knowledge. Your compensation is not merely a mansion in heaven and streets paved with gold. It would be easy for Heavenly Father to simply give you all that He has. His desire is to help you become all that He is. Thus, your commitments demand more of you because that is how God is making more of you.

It’s “a lot to ask of anyone, but you’re not just anyone”! You are youth of the noble birthright. Your covenant relationship with God and Jesus Christ is a relationship of love and trust in which you have access to a greater measure of Their grace—Their divine assistance, endowment of strength, and enabling power. That power is not just wishful thinking, a lucky charm, or self-fulfilling prophecy. It is real.

As you fulfill your birthright responsibilities, you are never alone. The Lord of the vineyard labors with you. You are working hand in hand with Jesus Christ. With each new covenant—and as your relationship with Him deepens—you hold each other tighter and tighter until you are firmly clasped together. In that sacred symbol of His grace, you will find both the desire and the strength to live exactly how the Savior lived—differently from the world. You’ve got this because Jesus Christ has got you!

In 2 Nephi 2:6 we read, “Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth.” Because He is

wao, wakipitia bila kusita kwenye simu zao za mkononi, na kupoteza muda wao mwingi wakicheza michezo ya kieletroniki. Lakini badala ya kushangaa, “Kwa ninimimisiwezi kufanya hivyo?” unaweza kukumbuka kwamba wewe sio abiria wa kawaida. Wewe ni baharia. Una majukumu ambayo abiria hawana. Kama Dada Ardeth Kapp wakati mmoja alivyosema, “Hauwezi kuwa mwokozi kama unafanana na waogeleaji wengine ufukweni.”

Na kabla haujavunjwa moyo na wajibu wote wa ziada, tafadhali kumbuka kwamba mabaharia wanapokea kitu fulani ambacho abiria wengine hawapati: malipo. Mzee Neil L. Andersen alisema, “Kuna nguvu za kiroho za kufidia kwa ajili ya wenye haki,” ikijumuisha “hakikisho kuu, uthibitisho mkuu na kujiamini kwa hali ya juu,” Kama vile Ibrahimu wa kale, wewe unapokea furaha nyingi sana na amani, haki kuu, na maarifa mengi sana. Malipo yako sio tu nyumba huko mbinguni na njia zilizotengenezwa kwa dhahabu. Ni rahisi kwa Baba wa Mbinguni kukupatia tu vyote alivyo navyo. Hamu Yake ni kukusaidia wewe kuwa kama Yeye alivyo. Basi, kujitoa kwako kwa dhati kunadai mengi zaidi kutoka kwako kwa sababu hivyo ndivyo Mungu anavyokufanya wewe kuwa zaidi.

Ni “mengi kuyataka kwa yeyote, lakini wewe sio mtu yeyote”! Ninyi ni vijana wa haki tukufu ya uzaliwa. Uhusiano wenu pamoja na Mungu na Yesu Kristo ni uhusiano wa upendo na uamini-fuambao kwao unaweza kufikia kipimo kikubwa cha neema Yao—usaidizi Wao wa kiungu, endamenti ya nguvu, na nguvu zenye kuwezesha. Nguvu hizo sio ndoto ya mchana, hirizi ya bahati au unabii wa kujiridhisha. Nihalisi.

Unapotimiza majukumu ya haki yako ya uzawa, kamwe hauko peke yako. Bwana wa Shamba la Mizabibu anafanya kazi shambani pamoja na wewe. Wewe unafanya kazi bega kwa bega na Yesu Kristo. Kwa kila agano jipya—na uhusiano wako na Yeye unapokuwa wa kina—mnakumbatiana kwa nguvu na kwa nguvu zaidi mpaka mnaposhikamana pamoja. Katika hiyo ishara takatifu ya neema Yake, utapata vyote viwili hamu na nguvu ili kuishi sawa sawa na jinsi Mwokozi alivyoishi—tofauti na ulimwengu. Umpata hili kwa sababu Yesu Kristo amekupata wewe!

Katika 2 Nephi 2:6 tunasoma, “Kwa hivyo, ukombozi unakuja kupitia Masiya Mtakatifu; kwani amejaa neema na kweli.” Kwa sababu

full of truth, He sees you as you really are—flaws, weaknesses, regrets, and all. Because He is full of grace, He sees you as you really can be. He meets you where you are and helps you repent and improve, overcome and become.

“O youth of the noble birthright, carry on, carry on, carry on!” I testify that you are loved—and you are trusted—today, in 20 years, and forever. Don’t sell your birthright for a mess of pottage. Don’t trade everything for nothing. Don’t let the world change you when you were born to change the world. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Yeye amejaa ukweli, Yeye anakuona jinsi vile ulivyo—mapungufu, udhaifu, majuto, na yote. Kwa sababu Yeye amejaa neema, Yeye anakuona vile unavyoweza kuwa. Yeye anakutana na wewe pale ulipo na kukusaidia kutubu na kuwa bora, kushinda na kuwa.

“Ee Vijana wa haki tukufu ya uzaliwa, songeni, songeni, songeni!” Ninashuhudia kwamba mnapendwa—mnaaminiwa—leo, katika miaka 20, na milele. Msiuze haki yenu ya uzaliwa kwa chakula cha dengi. Msibadilishane kila kitu kwa kitu bure. Msiache ulimwengu uwabadilishe wakati ninyi mlizaliwa ili muabadilishe ulimwengu. Katika jina la Yesu Kristo, amina.