

Sacred Scriptures—the Foundations of Faith

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Maandiko Matakatiifu—Msingi wa Imani

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We cannot underestimate the significance of sacred scriptures both in conversions and in remaining faithful in the gospel.

My wife, Mary, and I recently saw a T-shirt with the picture of a book and a message on the front which read, “Books: The Original Handheld Device.”

I thought about this interesting message and how significant handheld devices of all kinds have become. Upon further contemplation, I realized that any device or even one equipped with artificial intelligence will never be as important or significant as the spiritual guidance that comes from divine revelation.

Whether handheld or digital, the Holy Bible and the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ provide spiritual guidance and teaching from Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. We treasure these books for their profound role in documenting God’s direction to ancient prophets and people and the guidance they provide for our own personal lives.

Combined with the teachings of living prophets, these sacred scriptures provide doctrinal direction for us in today’s world. These scriptures are most powerful when they give instruction, correction, comfort, and consolation to individuals and families who seek guidance from the Lord.

The scriptures, combined with spiritual inspiration from the Holy Spirit, continue to be the primary source that facilitates the conversion of those who have broken hearts and contrite spirit— and desire to follow Jesus Christ. The scriptures

Hatuwezi kudharau upekee wa maandiko matakatiifu kote katika uongofu na katika kubaki waaminifu katika injili.

Mimi na mke wangu, Mary, hivi karibuni tuliona fulana yenye picha ya kitabu na ujumbe upande wa mbele ambao unasomeka, “Vitabu: Vyombo Halisi vya Kushikwa kwa Mkono.”

Niliwaza kuhusu ujumbe huu wa kupendeza na jinsi ambavyo vifaa vya kushikwa mkononi vya kila aina vimekuwa muhimu. Baada ya kutafakari zaidi, nilitambua kwamba kifaa changu au hata kile ambacho kimewekewa akili mnemba kupitia programu kamwe havitakuwa muhimu au vya kipekee kama mwongozo wa kiroho ambao huja kutokana na ufunuo wa kiungu.

Iwe cha kushikwa mkononi au kidijitali, Biblia Takatifu na Kitabu cha Mormoni: Ushuhuda Mwingine wa Yesu Kristo vinatoa mwongozo wa kiroho na mafundisho kutoka kwa Yesu Kristo, Mwokozi wa ulimwengu. Tunavithamini vitabu hivi kutokana na kazi yake muhimu kwenye kuweka kumbukumbu ya Mwongozo wa Mungu kwa manabii na watu wa kale na mwongozo viutoao kwa ajili ya maisha yetu binafsi.

Vikiungana na mafundisho ya manabii walio hai, maandiko haya matakatiifu yanatoa mwongozo wa kimafundisho kwa ajili yetu sisi katika ulimwengu wa leo. Maandiko haya ni yenye nguvu zaidi yanapotoa maelekezo, usahihihaji, faraja, na tulizo kwa watu binafsi na familia ambao wanatafuta mwongozo kutoka kwa Bwana.

Maandiko, yakiungana na msukumo wa kiungu toka kwa Roho Mtakatifu, huendelea kuwa chanzo cha msingi ambacho kinawezesha uongofu wa wale walio na mioyo iliyovunjika na roho iliyopondekana wenye nia ya kumfuata

help build a foundation that can withstand the adversary's constant efforts to undermine faith.

New converts have blessed and been the lifeblood of the Church throughout its history. One example is particularly precious to me. When I was a young bishop, two marvelous sister missionaries were teaching the William Edward Mussman family. The father, a very capable lawyer, was general counsel of a major corporation. His devoted wife, Janet, was helping the family strive to live a more Christlike life.

Their exceptional son and daughter, both in their early 20s, were also being taught. All four had received the lessons and were attending church. The sister missionaries had emphasized reading the Book of Mormon and praying for a testimony of that sacred scripture. Remarkably, the family prayerfully read the entire Book of Mormon in a short time.

The stake missionaries, both of whom were prior ward Relief Society presidents, accompanied them to sacrament meetings.

As the family was nearing baptism, they received a barrage of literature critical of the Church. This was before the internet, but the material filled a large cardboard box.

The sister missionaries invited me as a recently called 34-year-old bishop to help answer the questions being raised. When we gathered in their living room, the large box of pamphlets critical of the Church was in the middle of the room. I had prayerfully approached this assignment. During the opening prayer, the Spirit whispered to me, "He already knows it is true." This was important. The sisters believed that the rest of the family already had a testimony. They were unsure about the father.

I immediately informed him that the Spirit had prompted me that he already had a testimony. "Was that true?" He looked at me intently and said that the Spirit had confirmed the truth of the Book of Mormon and the Church to him.

I then asked whether it would be necessary to review the pamphlets, if they already had a

Yesu Kristo. Maandiko yanasaidia kujenga msingi ambao unaweza kustahimili jitihada endelevu za adui za kudhoofisha imani.

Waongofu wapya wamebarikiwa na wamekuwa uhai wa Kanisa kote katika historia yake. Mfano mmoja ni wa thamani ya kipekee kwangu mimi. Nilipokuwa askofu kijana, akina dada wawili wamisionari wa kustaajabishawalikuwa wakiifundisha familia ya William Edward Mussman. Baba huyu, mwanasheria mwenye uwezo mkubwa, alikuwa mshauri mkuu wa sheria wa shirika kubwa. Mke wake mwenye kujitua kwa dhati, Janet, aliisaidia familia hii kujitahidi kuishi zaidi maisha kama ya Kristo.

Mwana na binti yao wenye uwezo wa kipekee, wote wawili wakiwa katika miaka ya mwanzoni ya umri wao wa miaka ya 20, pia walikuwa wakifundishwa. Wote wanne walikuwa wakipokea masomo na walikuwa wakihudhuria Kanisa. Wale akina dada wamisionari walikuwa wamewahimiza kusoma Kitabu cha Mormoni na kusali kwa ajili ya ushuhuda juu ya maandiko hayo matakatifu. Cha kushangaza familia ilisoma Kitabu cha Mormoni chote kwa muda mfupi tu.

Wamisionari wa kigingi, ambao wote wawili hapo kabla walikuwa marais wa Muungano wa Usaidizi kwenye kata, waliongozana nao kwenye mkutano wa sakramenti.

Familia ilipokuwa ikikaribia ubatizo, walipokea mfululizo wa maandiko mbali mbali yenye kukosoa Kanisa. Hii ilikuwa kabla ya intaneti, lakini makaratasi yenye maandishi hayo yalilijaza boksi kubwa.

Akina dada hao wamisionari walinialika kama askofu aliyekuwa na umri wa miaka 34 kusaaidia kujibu maswali yaliyokuwa yameibuliwa. Tulipokusanyika katika sebule yao, boksi kubwa lenye vipeperushi vya ukosoaji wa Kanisa lilikuwa katikati ya chumba. Nililiendea jukumu hili kwa sala. Wakati wa sala ya ufunguzi, Roho alininong'oneza kwamba "Yeye tayari anajua kwamba ni kweli." Hii ilikuwa muhimu. Wamisionari waliamini kwamba wanafamilia wengine waliobaki walikuwa tayari na ushuhuda. Walikuwa hawana uhakika kuhusu baba.

Mara moja nilimwambia kwamba Roho ameniambia kwamba tayari anao ushuhuda. "Je, hii ilikuwa kweli?" Alinitazama kwa umakini na kusema kwamba Roho alikuwa amemthibitisha ukweli juu ya Kitabu cha Mormoni na Kanisa.

Kisha nikamuuliza kama ingekuwa na ulazima wa kurejelea vipeperushi vile, kama wame-

spiritual confirmation.

The father replied that it would not be necessary. The rest of the family concurred with his answer.

He said he did have a significant question: One reason they had received so much literature opposing the Church was that they were members of another faith. In addition, he had made a large pledge to help build a new chapel for that faith. He informed me that the sister missionaries had taught him about the importance of tithing, which he gratefully accepted, but he wondered if it would be wrong to also honor the pledge he had previously made. I assured him that payment of the pledge would be both honorable and appropriate.

The Mussmans with their son, daughter-in-law, and daughter.

The entire family was baptized. One year later they were sealed as a family in the Oakland California Temple. I was privileged to be present. The son completed law school, passed the California Bar Exam, and immediately served a faithful mission in Japan. I have watched over the years as the succeeding generations have remained faithful to the gospel. I was privileged to officiate at the sealing of one of the granddaughters.

The conversions that are occurring in our day are equally remarkable. Last June, Coach Andy Reid, head football coach of the Kansas City Chiefs, and I, along with others representing our faith and other faiths, spoke in a multifaith event at the Riverside Church in New York City. Coach Reid emphasized second chances and responding to invitations and opportunities, which is what the gospel of Jesus Christ is all about. The next morning, with our wives, Tammy Reid and Mary, we attended the sacrament meeting at the Manhattan Second Ward. It was a spiritual service. There were many new converts in the congregation. Five recently baptized members, four men and one young man, were among the Aaronic Priesthood members passing the sacrament. I am happy to report that a similar influx of new members is happening throughout the Church.

We are grateful for the noticeable increase in those who respond to sacred invitations, change

kwisha kuwa na uthibitisho wa kiroho.

Baba alijibu kwamba isingekuwa na ulazima. Wanafamilia wengine walikubaliana na jibu lake.

Alisema alikuwa na swali la kipekee: Sababu moja ya wao kupokea maandishi mengi yanayopingana na Kanisa ilikuwa kwamba wao walikuwa washiriki wa imani nyingine. Cha ziada, alikuwa ameweka ahadi kubwa ya kusaidia ujenzi wa jengo jipya la ibada kwa dhehebu lile la awali. Aliniambia kwamba akina dada wamisionari walimfundisha kuhusu umuhimu wa kulipa zaka, jambo ambalo kwa shukrani alilikubali, lakini alijiuliza kama ingekuwa siyo sahihi kuheshimu pia ahadi aliyofanya kabla. Nilimhakikishia kwamba kuitimiza ahadi itakuwa ni heshima na ni sahihi.

Familia ya Mussman pamoja na mwana wao, binti mkwe na binti yao.

Familia yote ilibatizwa. Mwaka mmoja baadaye waliunganishwa kama familia katika Hekalu la Oakland California. Nilipewa heshima ya kuwepo. Kijana wa kiume alimaliza shule ya sheria, akafaulu mitihani ya Uwakili ya California, na mara moja akahudumu misheni kwa uaminifu nchini Japan. Nimeangalia kwa miaka mingi kadiri vizazi vinavyofuatia wanavyobaki waaminifu katika injili. Nilipewa heshima ya kufanya uunganishaji wa mmoja wa wajukuu wao wa kike.

Uongofu unaotokea katika siku zetu ni wa kushangaza vile vile. Juni iliyopita Kocha Andy Reid, kocha wa Kansas City Chiefs pamoja nami, pamoja na wengine tukiwakilisha imani yetu na imani nyinginezo, tulizungumza katika tukio la imani mbalimbali katika Kanisa la Riverside huko jijini New York. Kocha Reid alisisitiza juu ya nafasi ya pili na kuitikia mialiko na fursa, ambacho ndicho kile injili ya Yesu Kristo husisitiza. Asubuhi iliyofuata, tukiwa na wake zetu Tammy Reid na Mary, tulihudhuria mkutano wa sakramenti katika Kata ya Manhattan. Lilikuwa ni tukio la kiroho. Palikuwa na waongofu wengi wapya katika mkusanyiko ule. Waumini watano waliobatizwa karibuni, wanaume wanne na mvulana mmoja, walikuwa miongoni mwa washiriki wenye Ukuhani wa Haruni waliopitisha sakramenti. Ninayo furaha kuripoti kwamba kumiminika huku kwa waumini wapya wa Kanisa vilevile kunatokea kote katika Kanisa.

Tunashukuru kwa ongezeko hili linaloonekana kwa wale wanaoitikia mialiko hii mitakatifu,

their lives, and accept the opportunity to follow Jesus Christ. They enter the covenant path through faith, repentance, baptism, and confirmation as taught in the Holy Bible and the Book of Mormon.

We cannot underestimate the significance of sacred scriptures both in conversions and in remaining faithful in the gospel. The ancient prophets described in the Book of Mormon knew about the mission of Jesus Christ and taught His gospel. The Book of Mormon helps us draw closer to God as we learn, understand, and apply its teachings. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “A man [or woman] would get nearer to God by abiding by [the book’s] precepts, than by any other book.”

To know that the Book of Mormon is the word of God, we need to read, ponder, and pray about it and then act according to its precepts. The prophet Moroni promised that God will reveal the truth of the book to us as we pray with a sincere heart, with real intent, and with faith in Christ. Studying the Book of Mormon is essential for enduring conversion.

As we contemplate the relationship between the Bible and the Book of Mormon as handheld devices, one might ask a question. How useful and complementary do you think two books would be if the Lord declared they would be joined together and “become one in thine hand”? That is what the Lord declared concerning the “stick of Judah,” the Bible, and the “stick of Joseph,” the Book of Mormon.

In many significant respects, the Book of Mormon provides fundamental doctrine that enhances and builds upon the Bible. The doctrine of the Atonement of Jesus Christ is a profound example.

The Bible provides an accurate account of the mortal ministry of Jesus Christ, including His death and Resurrection. The Book of Mormon is more explicit about the Atonement of Jesus Christ, something prophets explained in detail prior to His death.

The heading to Alma chapter 42 reflects the doctrinal significance of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

It reads: “Mortality is a probationary time to enable man to repent and serve God—The Fall brought temporal and spiritual death upon all mankind—Redemption comes through repen-

wanaobadili maisha yao, na kukubali fursa ya kumfuata Yesu Kristo. Wanaingia kwenye njia ya agano kupitia imani, toba, ubatizo na uthibitisho kama ilivyofundishwa katika Biblia Takatifu na Kitabu cha Mormoni.

Hatuwezi kudharau upekee wa maandiko matakatifu kote katika uongofu na katika kubaki waaminifu katika injili. Manabii wa kale katika Kitabu cha Mormoni walijua kuhusu kazi ya Yesu Kristo na walifundisha injili Yake. Kitabu cha Mormoni kinatusaidia tusogee karibu zaidi na Mungu kadiri tunavyojifunza, kuelewa na kutumia mafundisho yake. Nabii Joseph Smith alifundisha “mwanamume [au mwanamke] angesogea karibu zaidi na Mungu kwa kuishi kanuni za [kitabu] kuliko kitabu kingine chochote.”

Ili kujua kwamba Kitabu cha Mormoni ni neno la Mungu, tunahitaji kukisoma, kutafakari, na kusali kukihusu, na kisha kutenda kulingana na kanuni zake. Nabii Moroni aliahidi kwamba Mungu angefunua ukweli juu ya kitabu hiki kwetu sisi pale tunaposali kwa moyo wa dhati, kwa kusudi halisi na kwa imani katika Kristo. Kujifunza Kitabu cha Mormoni ni muhimu kwa ajili ya uongofu wa kudumu.

Tunapotafakari uhusiano kati ya Biblia na Kitabu cha Mormoni kama kifaa kishikwacho mkononi, mtu angeweza kuuliza swali. Unadhani ingesaidia na kuleta ufafanuzi kiasi gani kwa vitabu viwili kama Bwana angetamka kwamba vingeanishwe pamoja na “kuwa kimoja mkononi mwako”? Hicho ndicho Bwana alichotamka kuhusiana na “kijiti cha Yuda,” Biblia, na “kijiti cha Yusufu,” Kitabu cha Mormoni.

Katika nyanja nyingi za kipekee, Kitabu cha Mormoni kinatoa mafundisho ya msingi ambayo yanaimarisha na kujenga juu ya Biblia. Mafundisho juu ya Upatanisho wa Yesu Kristo ni mfano muhimu.

Biblia hutoa maelezo sahihi juu ya huduma ya duniani ya Yesu Kristo, ikijumuisha kifo Chake na Ufufuko. Kitabu cha Mormoni kiko wazi zaidi kuhusu Upatanisho wa Yesu Kristo, kitu ambacho manabii walikielezea kwa kina kabla ya kifo Chake.

Kichwa cha habari cha Alma mlango wa 42 kinakisi mafundisho ya kipekee juu ya Upatanisho wa Yesu Kristo.

Kinasomeka: “Maisha ya duniani ni wakati wa majaribio kumwezesha mtu kutubu na kumtumikia Mungu—Anguko limeleta kifo cha kimwili na cha kiroho kwa binadamu wote—

tance—God Himself atones for the sins of the world—Mercy is for those who repent—All others are subject to God’s justice—Mercy comes because of the Atonement—Only the truly penitent are saved.”

President Russell M. Nelson has said, “I promise that as you prayerfully study the Book of Mormon every day, you will make better decisions—every day.” He also promises that if “you daily immerse yourself in the Book of Mormon, you can be immunized against the evils of the day.”

As I mentioned, I was impressed with the concept of the original handheld device—a book. However, I recognize the incredible significance of the internet in the world today. One modern handheld device can provide the information that historically has filled a major library. We are grateful to live in such a time as this. I am particularly grateful that it allows sacred books and Church materials to be available digitally. The internet is a powerful tool for studying the gospel. Today, many people share scriptures with friends using technology. The Book of Mormon app, for example, is a wonderful way to introduce friends to the Book of Mormon and can easily be shared in normal and natural ways wherever you may be.

While the internet provides many blessings, unfortunately, like the written pamphlets critical of the Church I described earlier, it has also been used to create doubt and undermine faith in precious gospel principles. It can be part of the “evils of the day” that President Nelson mentioned.

The adversary and those who assist him, knowingly or unwittingly, have created on the internet the equivalent of the box full of written material critical of the Church I described earlier, intended to draw you away from God’s truth.

The issues raised to create doubt over the years have been remarkably similar. This is especially true when you compare our day with the 1960s, when I was in my 20s.

The scriptures teach us to use judgment and be wise in all things. The internet can be used in a positive way or a destructive way.

Both long-term members and those new-

Ukombozi huja kupitia toba—Mungu Mwenyewe hulipia dhambi za ulimwengu—Rehema ni kwa wale ambao wanatubu—Wengine wote wako chini ya hukumu ya Mungu—Rehema huja kwa sababu ya Upatanisho—Ni wale tu wenye toba ya kweli wanaokolewa.”

Rais Russell M. Nelson amesema, “Ninaahidi kwamba unaposoma Kitabu cha Mormoni kwa salakila siku, utafanya maamuzi mazuri—kila siku.” Yeye pia anaahidi kwamba kama “kila siku utajizamisha mwenyewe kwenye Kitabu cha Mormoni, unaweza kukingwa dhidi ya maovu ya siku.”

Kama nilivyosema, nilivutiwa na wazo la kifaa cha asili kishikwacho mkononi—kitabu. Hata hivyo, ninatambua upekee wa ajabu wa intaneti katika ulimwengu wa leo. Kifaa kimoja cha kushika mkononi kinaweza kutoa taarifa ambayo kihistoria imejaza maktaba kubwa. Tunayo shukrani kuishi katika wakati kama huu. Kipekee ninayo shukrani kwamba kinaruhusu vitabu vitakatifu na taarifa za Kanisa kupatikana kidijitali. Intaneti ni zana yenye nguvu kwa ajili ya kujifunza injili. Leo hii, watu wengi hushiriki injili na marafiki kwa kutumia teknolojia. App ya Kitabu cha Mormoni, kwa mfano, ni njia ya kupendeza ya kuwatambulisha marafiki kwenye Kitabu cha Mormoni na kuweza kwa urahisi kushiriki katika njia za kawaida na za asili mahali popote uwapo.

Wakati intaneti inatoa baraka nyingi, kwa bahati mbaya, kama vipeperushi vilivyoandikwa vinavyokosoa Kanisa kama nilivyoeleza awali, pia imekuwa ikitumiwa kutengeneza mashaka na kudhoofisha imani katika kanuni za injili zenye thamani. Inaweza kuwa sehemu ya “uovu wa siku yetu” ambao Rais Nelson ameutaja.

Adui na wale wanaomsaidia, kwa kujua ama kwa kutokujua, wametengeneza katika intaneti, kitu kilicho sawa sawa na lile boksi lililojaa makaratasi yaliyoandikwa taarifa zenye kukosoa Kanisa nilizoeleza hapo awali, zikikusudiwa kukuweka wewe mbali na ukweli wa Mungu.

Maswala yaliyoibuliwa ili kutengeneza mashaka kwa miaka mingi yamekuwa yale yale. Huu ni ukweli maalumu unapolinganisha siku yetu na miaka ya 1960 nilipokuwa katika miaka yangu ya 20.

Maandiko yanatufundisha kutumia maamuzi na kuwa na hekima katika mambo yote. Intaneti inaweza kutumika kwa njia chanya au njia ya uharibifu.

Kwa wote waumini wa muda mrefu na wale

ly studying the gospel need to be intentional about what they view. Do not entertain immoral, dishonest, or unrighteous material. If you do, algorithms can lead you down a path that destroys faith and impairs your eternal progression. You can be acted upon positively or negatively. Seek righteousness and avoid dark internet rabbit holes and doomscrolling. Fill your life with positive, righteous ideas; be joyful; have fun but avoid foolishness. There is a difference. The thirteenth article of faith is a marvelous guide. Above all, immerse yourself regularly in the Book of Mormon, which will draw the Spirit into your life and help you discern truth from error.

My counsel for those who have in any way deviated from the covenant path is to return to the sacred scriptures, prophetic guidance, religious observance in the home, and the music of faith. Every soul is precious to the Lord. We need you! The Lord needs you, and you need Him! You will always be welcome. During my many years of Church service, I have cherished the wonderful people who returned to the covenant path and then served and blessed everyone they loved or with whom they came in contact.

The sacred scriptures and living prophets are a major way a loving Heavenly Father makes His plan of happiness available to all His children.

I bear my sure witness of the divinity of Jesus Christ and the reality of His Atonement, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

wapya wanapojifunza injili wanahitaji kuwa wenye kusudi kuhusu kile wanachotazama. Usifurahie ukosefu wa maadili, kukosa uaminifu au taarifa zisizo za uadilifu. Ukifanya hivyo, mkusanyiko wa taarifa unaweza kukuongoza kwenye njia ambayo inaangamiza imani na kuharibu maendeleo yako ya milele. Unaweza kutendewa kwa njia chanya au hasi. Tafuta uadilifu na epuka intaneti hasi yenye uraibu ambayo itachukua muda wako na kukuacha na hisia mbaya. Jaza maisha yako na mambo chanya, mawazo mema, kuwa mwenye shangwe, burudika lakini epuka upumbavu. Kuna tofauti. Makala ya imani ya kumi na tatuni mwongozo wa kustaajibisha. Juu ya yote, jizamishe wewe mwenyewe mara kwa mara katika Kitabu cha Mormoni, jambo ambalo litamvuta Roho katika maisha yako na kukusaidia kutambua ukweli na uongo.

Ushauri wangu kwa wale ambao kwa njia yoyote ile wamechepuka kutoka kwenye njia ya agano ni rudini kwenye maandiko matakatifu, mwongozo wa manabii, heshima kwenye mambo ya dini nyumbani na muziki wenye kujenga imani. Kila nafsi ni ya thamani kwa Bwana. Tunakuhitaji! Bwana anakuhitaji wewe, na wewe unamhitaji Yeye. Daima utakaribishwa. Wakati wa miaka yangu mingi katika huduma ya Kanisa nimewapenda watu wema ambao walirudi katika njia ya agano na kisha kuhudumu na kumbariki kila mtu waliyempenda au waliyekutana naye.

Maandiko matakatifu na manabii walio hai ni njia kuu ambayo Baba wa Mbinguni mwenye upendo hufanya mpango Wake wa furaha kupatikana kwa watoto Wake wote.

Ninatoa ushahidi wangu wa uhakika juu ya uungu wa Yesu Kristo na uhalisia wa Upatanisho Wake, katika jina la Yesu Kristo, amina.