

The Atonement of Jesus Christ Provides the Ultimate Rescue

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Upatanisho wa Yesu Kristo Hutoa Uokoaji wa Msingi

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As we turn to Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, He rescues us from the storms of life through His Atonement.

The Atonement of Jesus Christ provides the ultimate rescue from the trials we face in this life. President Russell M. Nelson assigned me to dedicate the Casper Wyoming Temple late last year. It was a profound, emotional, and spiritual experience. It brought into clear focus the role temples play in rescuing God's children through the Savior's Atonement.

The stakes in the Casper Wyoming Temple District include a portion of the overland trail used by Latter-day Saint pioneers between 1847 and 1868. In preparation for the temple dedication, I reread some of the history of the trail along the Platte River near Casper and continuing to Salt Lake City. The trail had been a thoroughfare for hundreds of thousands of western emigrants. My primary emphasis was the more than 60,000 Latter-day Saint pioneers who traveled the trail.

Most of our pioneers came by wagon, but about 3,000 crossed in 10 handcart companies. Eight of these handcart companies made the monumental trek with remarkable success and few deaths. The Willie and Martin handcart companies of 1856 were the exception.

I reviewed the accounts of the Willie and Martin handcart companies from the time

Tunapomgeukia Yesu Kristo, Mwokozi wa ulimwengu, Yeye anatuokoa kutokana na dhoruba za maisha kupitia Upatanisho Wake.

Upatanisho wa Yesu Kristo hutoa uokoaji wa mwisho kutokana na majaribu tunayokabiliana nayo katika maisha haya. Rais Russell M. Nelson alinipangia kazi ya kuweka wakfu Hekalu la Casper Wyoming mwishoni mwa mwaka uliopita. Lilikuwa tukio kubwa, la kihisia na la kiroho. Lilileta katika fokasi ya wazi kazi inayofanywa na mahekalu katika kuwaokoa watoto wa Mungu kupitia Upatanisho wa Mwokozi.

Vigingi katika wilaya ya Hekalu la Casper Wyoming hujumuisha sehemu ya njia ya nchi kavu iliyotumiwa na waanzilishi Watakatifu wa Siku za Mwisho kati ya 1847 na 1868. Katika kujiandaa kwa ajili ya uwekaji wakfu, wa hekalu, nilisoma upya baadhi ya historia ya njia hii kando ya Mto Platte karibu na Casper kuendelea kwenda Jijini Salt Lake. Njia hii ilikuwa njia ya kupita kwa mamia ya maelfu ya wahamiaji wa magharibi. Msisitizo wangu wa msingi ulikuwa kwa zaidi ya waanzilishi Watakatifu wa Siku za Mwisho 60,000 waliosafiri katika njia hii.

Waanzilishi wetu wengi walikuja kwa mikokoteni ya kukokotwa na farasi au maksai, lakini takribani watu 3,000 walivuka katika kombania kumi za mikokoteni ya kusukumwa kwa mkono. Kombania nane za mikokoteni hii ya kusukuma kwa mikono walipita njia hii ya kukumbukwa kwa mafanikio na vifo vichache. Kombania za mikokoteni ya kusukuma kwa mkono za Willie na Martin za mwaka 1856 zili-kuwa za kipekee.

Nilirejelea hadithi za kombania za mikokoteni hii ya kusukuma kwa mkono za Willie na

the terrible weather conditions commenced. I became intimately aware of the challenges they faced at the crossing of the Sweetwater River, Martin's Cove, Rocky Ridge, and Rock Creek Hollow.

Between Storms, by Albin Veselka

I had not been inside the Casper Temple prior to the dedication. When I entered the foyer, my attention was immediately drawn to an original handcart painting titled *Between Storms*. The painting was clearly not intended to depict the tragedies that had occurred. As I gazed at it, I thought, "This painting is correct; the vast majority of handcart pioneers did not experience tragedies." I could not help feeling that this is like life in general. Sometimes we are between storms and sometimes between clouds and sunshine.

Heaven's Portal, by Jim Wilcox

When I turned to the original painting on the other wall, titled *Heaven's Portal*, I realized that this beautiful summer painting of what was called "Devil's Gate," with the calm and clear Sweetwater River flowing through it, presented the beauty of the Lord's creation, not just the challenges the pioneers faced in that horrible winter season.

Then I looked forward, behind the recommend desk, and saw a beautiful painting of the Savior. This immediately invoked overwhelming feelings of gratitude. In a world of great beauty, there are also enormous challenges. As we turn to Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, He rescues us from the storms of life through His Atonement in accordance with the Father's plan.

For me, the foyer was a perfect preparation for the temple ordinance rooms that allow us to receive the ordinances of exaltation, to make sacred covenants, and to fully accept and experience the blessings of the Savior's Atonement. The Father's plan of happiness is based on the Savior's atoning rescue.

The pioneer experience provides Latter-day Saints with a unique historical tradition and a powerful collective spiritual legacy. For some, the migration had been years in the making after being forcefully driven from both Missouri

Martin kuanzia wakati ule hali mbaya ya hewa ilipoanza. Nikawa nafahamu kwa undani changamoto waliyokabiliana nayo kwenye kuvuka Mto wa Sweetwater, Ghuba ya Martins, Rocky Ridge na Rock Creek Hollow.

Between Storms, na Albin Veselka

Sikuwahi kuingia ndani ya Hekalu la Casper kabla ya uwekaji wakfu huu. Wakati nilipoingia kwenye ukumbi, umakini wangu ulivutwa mara moja kwenye picha ya kuchorwa ya mkokoteni halisi wenye jina *Between Storms*. Kwa uwazi kabisa mchoro ule haukukusudiwa kuonyesha majanga yale yaliyotokea. Nilipoitazama kwa karibu, nilifikiria, "Mchoro huu wa rangi ulikuwa sahihi; idadi kubwa ya waanzilishi wa mikokoteni hawakupitia majanga haya." Sikuweza kujizuia kuhisi kwamba hii ni kama maisha kwa ujumla. Wakati mwingine tunakuwa katikati ya dhoro-ba na wakati mwingine katikati ya mawingu na mwangaza wa jua.

Heaven's Portal, na Jim Wilcox

Wakati nilipogeukia ile picha halisi kwenye ukuta mwingine, iliopewa jina la *Heaven's Portal*, nilitambua kwamba picha hii nzuri ya kiangazi ya kile kilichoitwa "Devil's Gate," yenye Mto Sweetwater mtulivu na msafi ukitiririka kupitia hapo, uliwasilisha urembo wa uumbaji wa Bwana, siyo tu changamoto ambazo waanzilishi walikabiliana nazo katika yale majira ya kutisha ya baridi.

Kisha nilitazama mbele, nyuma ya dawati la vibali vya hekaluni, nikaona picha nzuri ya kuchora ya Mwokozi. Hii mara moja ilizua hisia nyingi za shukrani. Katika ulimwengu wenye uzuri mwingi, pia kuna changamoto nyingi. Tunapomgeukia Yesu Kristo, Mwokozi wa ulimwengu, Yeye anatuokoa kutokana na dhoro-ba za maisha kupitia Upatanisho Wake kulingana na mpango wa Baba.

Kwangu mimi, ukumbi ule ulikuwa maandalizi kamili kwa ajili ya vyumba vya ibada za hekaluni ambavyo huturuhusu sisi kupokea ibada za kuinuliwa, kufanya maagano matakatifu, na kikamilifu kukubali na kuonja baraka za Upatanisho wa Mwokozi. Mpango wa furaha wa Baba umejikita kwenye uokoaji wa Mwokozi wa kulipia dhambi.

Tukio hili la waanzilishi linawapa Watakatifu wa Siku za Mwisho desturi ya kihistoria ya kipekee na urithi wa pamoja wenye nguvu za kiroho. Kwa baadhi, uhamiaji umekuwa kwa miaka mingi baada ya kufukuzwa kwa nguvu kutoka

and Nauvoo. For others, it began after President Brigham Young announced the handcart plan, which was intended to make emigration more affordable. The handcarts cost much less than wagons and oxen.

A missionary in England, Millen Atwood, said that when the handcart plan was announced, “it ran like fire in dry stubble, and the hearts of the poor Saints leapt with joy and gladness.” Many had “prayed and fasted day after day, and night after night, that they might have the privilege of uniting with their brethren and sisters in [the] mountains.”

Most of the handcart Saints experienced hardship but avoided major adverse events. But two handcart companies, the Willie company and the Martin company, experienced starvation, exposure to freezing weather, and many deaths.

Most of these travelers sailed from Liverpool, England, in May of 1856 aboard two ships. They arrived at the handcart outfitting site in Iowa City in June and July. Despite warnings, both companies departed for the Salt Lake Valley too late in the season.

President Brigham Young first became aware of the perilous situation of these companies on October 4, 1856. The next day he stood before the Saints in Salt Lake City and said, “Many of our brethren and sisters are on the plains with handcarts, ... and they must be brought here; we must send assistance to them ... before the winter sets in.”

He asked the bishops to provide 60 mule teams, 12 or more wagons, and 12 tons (10,886 kg) of flour and proclaimed, “Go and bring in those people now on the plains.”

The combined number of pioneers in the Willie and Martin handcart companies was approximately 1,100. Some 200 of these precious Saints died along the trail. Without the timely rescue, many more would have perished.

The winter storms began nearly two weeks after the first rescuers left Salt Lake City. The accounts of members of the Willie and Martin

kote Missouri na Nauvoo. Kwa wengine ulianza baada ya Rais Brigham Young kutangaza mpango wa mikokoteni ya kusukuma kwa mkono, ambao ulikusudiwa kufanya uhamiaji kuwa wenye kuwezekana. Mikokoteni ya mkono ina gharama ndogo kuliko mikokoteni ya farasi na madume ya ng'ombe.

Mmissionari huko Uingereza, Millen Atwood, alisema wakati mpango huu wa mikokoteni wa mikono ulipotangazwa, “ulikimbia kama moto kwenye makapi makavu, na mioyo ya Watakatifu masikini iliruka kwa shangwe na furaha.” Wengi “walikuwa wamesali na kufunga siku hadi siku, na usiku hadi usiku ili wapate nafasi ya kuungana na kaka zao na dada zao huko milimani.”

Wengi wa Watakatifu wa mikokoteni ya mkono walipitia magumu lakini waliepuka matukio mabaya makubwa. Lakini kombania mbili za mikokoteni ya mikono, kombania ya Willie na kombania ya Martin, zilipitia baa la njaa, kupigwa na hali ya hewa ya baridi kali na vifo vingi.

Wengi wa wasafiri hawa, walisafiri kwa njia ya bahari kutoka Liverpool, Uingereza, mwezi Mei 1856 wakipanda meli mbili. Waliwasili kwenye eneo la kuvalia nguo za mikokoteni huko Mji wa Iowa mwezi Juni na Julai. Licha ya maonyo, kombania zote mbili ziliondoka kwa safari ya Bonde la Salt Lake wakiwawamechelewa sanakata msimu huo.

Rais Brigham Young alikuja kujua kwa mara ya kwanza juu ya hali hiyo hatarishi ya kombania hizi mbili mnamo Oktoba 4, 1856. Siku iliyo-fuata alisimama mbele ya Watakatifu wa Siku za Mwisho na kusema, “Wengi wa kaka zetu na dada zetu wako mbugani wakiwa na mikokoteni ya kusukuma kwa mkono, ... na ni lazima waletwe hapa; lazima tutume usaidizi kwao ... kabla ya majira ya baridi kuanza.”

Aliomba maaskofu kutoa timu 60 za nyumbu, magari 12 ya kukokotwa na farasi au zaidi, na tani 12 za unga, na kutangaza, “Nendeni na muwalete wale watu ambao sasa wako mbugani.”

Idadi ya jumla ya waanzilishi waliokuwa katika kombania za Willie na Martin ilikadiriwa kuwa watu 1,100. Watu wapatao 200 kati ya Watakatifu hawa wa thamani walifariki wakiwa njiani. Pasingelikuwa na uokoaji huu wa wakati muafaka, wengi zaidi wangeangamiana.

Dhoruba hii ya majira ya baridi ilianza wiki mbili baada ya waokoaji wa kwanza kuondoka Jiji la Salt Lake. Hadithi za washiriki wa kombania

companies describe devastating challenges after the storms began. These accounts also depict the great joy when the rescuers arrived.

Describing the arrival scene, Mary Hurren said: “Tears streamed down the cheeks of the men, and the children danced for joy. As soon as the people could control their feelings, they all knelt down in the snow and gave thanks to God.”

Two days later, the Willie company had to travel the most difficult part of the trail, going over Rocky Ridge, in a freezing storm. The last of them didn’t reach camp until 5:00 the next morning. Thirteen people died and were buried in a common grave.

On November 7, the Willie company was nearing the Salt Lake Valley, but that morning there were still three deaths. Two days later, the Willie company finally reached Salt Lake, where they had a marvelous greeting and were welcomed into the homes of the Saints.

That same day, the Martin company was still 325 miles (523 km) back on the trail, continuing to suffer from cold and inadequate food. A few days earlier, they had crossed the Sweetwater River to reach what is now called Martin’s Cove, where they hoped to find protection from the elements. One of the pioneers said, “It was the worst river crossing of the expedition.” Some of the rescuers—like my great-grandfather David Patten Kimball, who was just 17 years old, along with his young friends “George W. Grant, Allen Huntington, Stephen Taylor, and Ira Nebeker—spent hours in the frigid water,” heroically helping the company make the Sweetwater crossing.

While this event has received much attention, as I learned more about the rescuers, I realized that all of them were following the prophet and played critical roles in saving the stranded Saints. All the rescuers were heroic, as were the emigrants.

Studying their story, I appreciated the precious relationships and the long-term eternal vision among the emigrants. John and Maria Linford and their three sons were members of the Willie company. John died hours before the first

nia za Willie na Martin zinaelezea changamoto mbaya baada ya dhoruba kuanza. Hadithi hizi pia zinaonyesha shangwe kubwa pale waokoaji walipowasili.

Wakielezea mazingira ya kuwasili kwao, Mary Hurren alisema: “Machozi yalitiririka mashavuni kwa wanaume, na watoto walio cheza dansii kwa shangwe. Watu walipoweza kudhibiti hisia zao, wote walipiga magoti chini kwenye barafu na kutoa shukrani kwa Mungu.”

Siku mbili baadaye, kombania ya Willie ilipaswa kusafiri sehemu ngumu zaidi ya njia hii, kuvuka Rocky Ridge, katika dhoruba ya baridi kali. Mtu wa mwisho hakufika kambini hadi saa 11:00 alfajiri ya siku iliyofuata. Watu kumi na watatu walikufa na wakazikwa katika kaburi la pamoja.

Mnamo Novemba 7, kombania ya Willie ilikuwa inakaribia Bonde la Salt Lake, lakini asubuhi ile, bado kulikuwa na vifo vitatu. Siku mbili baadaye, kombania ya Willie mwishowe iliwasili Salt Lake, mahali ambapo walipata mapokezi ya kupendeza na kukaribishwa katika nyumba za Watakatifu.

Siku hiyo hiyo, kombania ya Martin ilikuwa bado maili 325 (km 523) nyuma njiani, wakien-delea kuteseka na baridi na upungufu wa chakula. Siku kadhaa baadaye, walivuka Mto Sweetwater ili kufikia kile ambacho sasa kinaitwa Ghuba ya Martin, mahali ambapo walitumaini kupata ulinzi kutokana na hali mbaya. Mmoja wa waanzilishi alisema, “Ilikuwa ni uvukaji mbaya zaidi wa mto katika safari yao.” Baadhi ya waokoaji, kama vile babu wa baba yangu, David Patten Kimball, ambaye alikuwa na umri wa miaka 17 tu, sambamba na marafiki zake vijana, “George W. Grant, Allen Huntington, Stephen Taylor na Ira Nebeker, walitumia saa nyingi ndani ya maji yaliyoganda,” kwa ushujaa wakiwasaidia kombania kuweza kuvuka maji ya Sweetwater.

Wakati tukio hili limepokea umakini mkuu wa sana, kadiri nilivyojifunza mengi kuhusu waokoaji hawa, niligundua kwamba hawa wote walikuwa wakimfuata nabii na kufanya kazi muhimu katika kuwaokoa Watakatifu waliokwama. Waokoaji wote walikuwa mashujaa, kama walivyokuwa wahamiaji hao.

Kwa kujifunza hadithi yao, ilinifanya nithamini uhusiano wao wa thamani na ono la milele la muda mrefu miongoni mwa wahamiaji John na Maria Linford na wanao watano walikuwa washiriki wa kombania ya Willie. John alifariki

rescuers arrived. He had told Maria that he was glad they had made the journey. "I shall not live to reach Salt Lake," he said, "but you and the boys will, and I do not regret all we have gone through if our boys can grow up and raise their families in Zion."

President James E. Faust provided this marvelous summary: "In the heroic effort of the handcart pioneers, we learn a great truth. All must pass through a refiner's fire, and the insignificant and unimportant in our lives can melt away like dross and make our faith bright, intact, and strong. There seems to be a full measure of anguish, sorrow, and often heartbreak for everyone, including those who earnestly seek to do right and be faithful. Yet this is part of the purging to become acquainted with God."

In His eternity-shaping Atonement and Resurrection, the Savior broke "the bands of death, having gained the victory over death" for everyone. For those who have repented of sins, He has "taken upon himself their iniquity and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice."

Without the Atonement, we cannot save ourselves from sin and death. While sin can play a significant role in our trials, life's adversities are compounded by mistakes, bad decisions, evil actions by others, and many things outside of our control.

Preach My Gospel teaches: "As we rely on Jesus Christ and His Atonement, He can help us endure our trials, sicknesses, and pain. We can be filled with joy, peace, and consolation. All that is unfair about life can be made right through the Atonement of Jesus Christ."

During this Easter season, our focus is on the Savior and His atoning sacrifice. The Atonement provides hope and light at a time that for many seems dark and dreary. President Gordon B. Hinckley declared, "When all of history is examined, ... [there is] nothing ... so wonderful, so majestic, so tremendous as this act of grace."

I share three recommendations which I think are particularly relevant for our day.

First, do not underestimate the importance

saa kadhaa kabla ya waokoaji wa kwanza kuwasili. Alikuwa amemwambia Maria kwamba alikuwa amefurahi kwamba walifanya safari hiyo. "Mimi sitakuwa hai kufika Salt Lake," alisema, "lakini wewe na wavulana mtafika, na sijutii yale yote tuliyoyapitia kama wavulana wetu wataweza kukua na kulea familia zao katika Sayuni."

Rais James E. Faust alitoa muhtasari huu wakupendeza "Katika juhudi za kishujaa za waanzilishi wa mikokoteni ya mkono, tunajifunza ukweli mkuu. Wote lazima wapitie moto wa msafishaji, na visivyo na maana na visivyo na umuhimu katika maisha yetu vinayeyuka kama dongo la chuma na kufanya imani yetu ing'ae, kamili na imara. Kunakuwepo na kipimo kamili cha uchungu, huzuni na mara nyingi kuvunjika moyo kwa kila mtu, ikijumuisha wale ambao kwa dhati wanatafuta kufanya vyema na kuwa waaminifu. Ndiyo hii ni sehemu ya kusafishwa ili kumjua Mungu."

Katika Upatanisho na Ufufuko Wake wenye kutengeneza umilele, Mwokozi alikata "kamba za kifo akiwa amepata ushindi dhidi ya mauti" kwa ajili ya kila mtu. Kwa wale walio tubu dhambi, Yeye "amejitwika mwenyewe maovu yao na makosa yao, baada ya kuwakomboa, na kutosheleza madai ya haki."

Pasipo Upatanisho, hatuwezi kujiokoa wenyewe kutokana na dhambi na kifo. Wakati dhambi inaweza kufanya kazi ya kipekee katika majaribu yetu, shida za maisha zinachangiwa na makosa, maamuzi mabaya, matendo maovu ya wengine na mambo mengi yaliyo nje ya udhibiti wetu.

Hubiri Injili Yanguinafundisha: "Tunapomtegemea Yesu Kristo na Upatanisho Wake, Yeye anaweza kutusaidia kuvumilia majaribu yetu, magonjwa na uchungu. Tunaweza kujawa na shangwe, amani na faraja. Yale yote ambayo si haki juu ya maisha yanaweza kufanywa kuwa sahihi kupitia Upatanisho wa Yesu Kristo."

Wakati huu wa majira ya Pasaka, fokasi yetu ni juu ya Mwokozi na dhabihu Yake ya kulipia dhambi. Upatanisho unatoa matumaini na nuru wakati ambapo kwa wengi huona giza na woga. Rais Gordon B. Hinckley alitamka, "Wakati historia yote imechunguzwa, ... hakuna kitu kilicho cha ajabu sana, kikuu sana na kikubwa zaidi kama kitendo hiki cha neema."

Ninashiriki mapendekezo matatu ambayo nafikiri yanahusika kipekee kwa siku yetu.

Kwanza, usidharau umuhimu wa kufanya

of doing what we can to rescue others from physical and especially spiritual challenges.

Second, gratefully accept the Savior's Atonement. We all should strive to exhibit joy and happiness even as we face the challenges of life. Our goal should be to live optimistically on the sunny side of the street. I have observed my precious companion, Mary, do this her entire life. I have appreciated her sparkling, uplifting approach even as we have faced problems throughout the years.

My third counsel is to set aside consistent time to faithfully contemplate the Savior's Atonement. There are many ways to do this in our personal religious observance. However, attending sacrament meeting and partaking of the sacrament are especially significant.

Equally important is regular attendance in a temple where possible. The temple provides a continuing remembrance of the Savior's Atonement and what it overcomes. And, even more important, temple attendance allows us to provide a spiritual rescue for our deceased loved ones and more distant ancestors.

President Russell M. Nelson, at our last conference, emphasized this principle and added, "[Temple] blessings ... help to prepare a people who will help prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord!"

We must never forget the sacrifices and examples of prior generations, but our adulation, appreciation, and worship should be centered on the Savior of the world and His atoning sacrifice. I testify that the key to the Father's plan of happiness is the Atonement wrought by our Savior, Jesus Christ. He lives and guides His Church. The Atonement of Jesus Christ provides the ultimate rescue from the trials we face in this life. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

kile tunachoweza ili kuwaokoa wengine kutokana na changamoto za kimwili na hususani za kiroho.

Pili, kwa shukrani kubali Upatanisho wa Mwokozi. Sisi sote tunapaswa kuonyesha shangwe na furaha hata kama tunakabiliwa na changamoto za maisha. Lengo letu linapaswa kuwa kuishi kwa matumaini kwenye upande wa jua wa mtaa. Nimemwangalia mwenzi wangu wa thamani, Mary, akifanya hili katika maisha yake yote. Nimethamini njia yake inayong'ara, yenye kuinua hata pale tulipokabiliwa na matatizo miaka yote.

Ushauri wangu wa tatu ni kutenga muda endelevu wa kutafakari kwa uaminifu Upatanisho wa Mwokozi. Kuna njia nyingi za kufanya hili katika maadhimisho yetu binafsi ya kidini. Hata hivyo, kuhudhuria mkutano wa sakramenti na kupokea sakramenti ni muhimu hasa.

Lililo na umuhimu sawa ni uhudhuriaji wa mara kwa mara hekaluni pale inapoweze-kana. Hekalu linatoa kumbukumbu endelevu ya Upatanisho wa Mwokozi na kile upatanisho ilichoshinda. Na, hata la muhimu zaidi, uhudhuriaji hekaluni unaruhusu sisi kutoa uakoaji wa kiroho kwa ajili ya wapendwa wetu waliofariki dunia na mababu zetu wa mbali zaidi.

Rais Russell M. Nelson, katika mkutano wetu wa mwisho, alisisitiza kanuni hii na kuongeza, baraka za "[hekalu] ... husaidia kuwaanda watu ambao watasaidia kuuandaa ulimwengu kwa ajili ya Ujio wa Pili wa Bwana!"

Lazima tuisahau ile dhabihu na mifano ya vizazi vilivyotangulia, lakini kusifu kwetu, kuthamini na kuabudu kunapaswa kulenga kwa Mwokozi wa ulimwengu na dhabihu yake ya kulipia dhambi. Ninashuhudia kwamba muhimu kwenye mpango wa furaha wa Baba ni Upatanisho uliofanywa na Mwokozi wetu Yesu Kristo. Yeye yu hai na analiongoza Kanisa Lake. Upatanisho wa Yesu Kristo hutoa uokoaji wa mwisho kutoka kwenye majaribu tunayokabiliana nayo katika maisha haya. Katika jina la Yesu Kristo, amina.