

Cherishing Life

By Elder Neil L. Andersen
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Kuthamini Maisha

Na Mzee Neil L. Andersen
Wa Akidi ya Mitume Kumi na Wawili

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Life is a most precious part of our Father's perfect plan, and by His decree we cherish and preserve life.

Our Savior, Jesus Christ, taught us, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

A bishop in Utah recently shared with me an outpouring of love in his ward for a young woman and her family. Through a series of beautiful events, the parents determined to return to the Savior and His Church. During the time they were distant from the Church, their teenage daughter was involved with a young man. Returning, this precious daughter felt immense love from her Heavenly Father during a Young Women testimony meeting. She determined to more fully live the commandments. She wrote, "I began the repentance process with my bishop."

Soon after, she became ill. In her words: "[A] test showed ... I was pregnant. I ... began to cry. ... My dad wrapped me in his arms and assured me everything [would] be OK. ... My boyfriend ... asked me to get rid of the baby. ... I declined."

Care for Those in Need

She continued: "I have received so much love and support from our ward family. It has been overwhelming. [My] bishop and Young Women president have gone above and beyond to show their love and support. ... I have seen the Lord's hand ... guiding me and my family. ... A ward such as mine is the family everyone needs, espe-

Uhai ni sehemu ya thamani sana ya mpango mkamilifu wa Baba, na kwa amri Yake tunathamini na kuhifadhi uhai.

Mwokozi wetu, Yesu Kristo, alitufundisha, "Hivyo watu wote watatambua ya kuwa ninyi mmekuwa wanafunzi wangu, mkiwa na upendo ninyi kwa ninyi."

Askofu huko Utah alishiriki nami hivi karibuni kuhusu upendo mwingi katika kata yake kwa ajili ya binti na familia yake. Kupitia mtiririko wa matukio mazuri, wazazi waliniuia kurejea kwa Mwokozi na Kanisa Lake. Wakati walipokuwa mbali na Kanisa, binti yao kijana alijihusisha kwenye mahusiano na kijana wa kiume. Akirejea, binti huyu wa thamani alihisi upendo mwingi kutoka kwa Baba wa Mbinguni wakati wa mkutano wa ushuhuda wa Wasichana. Aliazimia kuishi amri kikamilifu zaidi. Aliandika, "Nilianza mchakato wa toba pamoja na askofu wangu."

Punde baadaye, alikuwa mgonjwa. Kwa maneno yake: "Kipimo kilionyesha ... nina mimba. Nilianza ... kulia. ... Baba yangu alinikumbatia katika mikono yake na kunihakikishia kwamba kila kitu [kingekuwa] SAWA. ... Yule kijana wa kiume ... aliniambia nitoe mimba. ... Nilikataa."

Kuwatunza wale wenye mahitaji.

Binti aliendelea: "Nimepokea upendo mwingi na msaada kutoka katika kata ya familia yangu. Hili ni jambo la kutia moyo sana. Askofu [wangu] na rais wa Wasichana wamefanya zaidi kwa kuonyesha upendo wao na msaada. ... Nimeuona mkono wa Bwana ... ukiniongoza mimi na familia yangu. ... Kata kama ya kwangu ni

cially a young woman in my position.”

She and her family, and her ward family, lovingly welcomed her baby boy this past February.

President Russell M. Nelson said, “A hallmark of the Lord’s true and living Church will always be an organized ... effort to minister to individual children of God ... [ministering with loving-kindness] to the one, just as He did.”

Helping Righteous Choices

When a single woman discovers that she is expecting an unanticipated child, health concerns, spiritual turmoil, embarrassment, financial worries, educational questions, marriage uncertainty, and the sadness of shattered dreams can, in a moment of pain and bewilderment, lead a thoughtful woman to take steps that will bring deep pain and regret.

For any listening who have experienced the deep pain and regret from having or participating in an abortion, please remember: Although we cannot change the past, God can heal the past. Forgiveness can come through the miracle of His atoning grace as you turn to Him with a humble and repentant heart.

Two words are often attached to the sanctity of mortal birth: life and choice. Life is a most precious part of our Father’s perfect plan, and by His decree we cherish and preserve life; and we choose the continuation of life once conceived. We also treasure the gift of choice, of moral agency—helping to strengthen righteous choices approved by God that bring eternal happiness.

When a woman and a man are in such a fragile time, facing a crucial choice, our words, our hands, our hearts—spiritually, emotionally, and financially—can bless them to feel the Savior’s love and, as President Henry B. Eyring has said, bring a clarifying adjustment to their spiritual eyes from “what they think they see” to “what they cannot yet see.”

The Doctrine of Mortal Life

familia ambayo kila mmoja anaihitaji, hasa binti katika hali yangu.”

Yeye na familia yake na kata ya familia yake kwa upendo walimkaribisha mtoto wake wa kiume mwezi Februari iliyopita.

Rais Russell M. Nelson alisema, “Sifa bainifu ya Kanisa la kweli na lililo hai la Bwana daima itakuwa ni jitihada zenye utaratibu ... zilizoelekezwa kuwahudumia watoto wa Mungu mmoja mmoja na ... [kuhudumia kwa wema wa upendo] kwa yule mmoja, kama Yeye alivyofanya.”

Kusaidia Chaguzi Njema

Pale mwanamke asiye na mwenza anapogundua kwamba anatarajia mtoto ambaye hakupanga kumpata, maswala ya afya, maumivu ya roho, aibu, woga wa kifedha, maswali kuhusu elimu, wasiwasi wa ndoa na huzuni ya ndoto zilizoharibika vinaweza, katika hali ya maumivu na majuto, kupelekea mwanamke huyo kuchukua hatua zitakazopelekea maumivu makali na huzuni.

Kwa yeyote anayesikiliza ambaye amepitia maumivu makali na majuto kwa au kushiriki katika kutoa mimba, tafadhali kumbuka: Ingawa hatuwezi kubadili yaliyopita, Mungu anaweza kuponya hayo yaliyopita. Msamaha unaweza kuja kupitia miujiza ya neema Yake ya upatanisho pale unapomgeukia Yeye kwa moyo mnyenyekevu na wa toba.

Mara nyingi maneno mawili huambatanishwa kwenye utakatifu wa uhai wa duniani: uhai na uchaguzi. Uhai ni sehemu ya thamani sana ya mpango mkamilifu wa Baba, na kwa amri Yake tunathamini na tunahifadhi uhai; na tunachagua mwendelezo wa uhai wakati wa ujauzito. Pia tunathamini zawadi ya chaguo la uhuru wa kujiamulia kimaadili—kusaidia kuimarisha chaguzi za haki zilizoidhinishwa na Mungu ambazo huleta furaha ya milele.

Pale mwanamke na mwanamume wanapokuwa katika wakati dhaifu kama huu, wakikabiliana na chaguzi muhimu, maneno yetu, mikono yetu, mioyo yetu—kiroho, kihisia na kifedha—tunaweza kuwabariki kuhisi upendo wa Mwokozi na kama Rais Henry B. Eyring alivyosema, kutoa marekebisho kwa macho yao ya kiroho kutoka “kwenye kile wanachodhani wanakiona” hadi “kwenye kile ambacho bado hawakioni.”

Mafundisho ya Maisha ya Duniani

President Dallin H. Oaks said: “Our attitude toward abortion is not based on revealed knowledge of when mortal life begins. ... It is fixed by our knowledge that ... all of the spirit children of God must come to this earth for a glorious purpose, and that individual identity began long before conception and will continue for all the eternities to come.”

The word of the Lord concerning the unborn, given voice through the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has never varied and echoes the words of prophets through the ages, giving divine clarity to what the Lord has asked of us.

“The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believes in the sanctity of human life. Therefore, the Church opposes elective abortion for personal or social convenience, and counsels its members not to submit to, perform, encourage, pay for, or arrange for such abortions.

“The [Lord] allows for possible exceptions ... when:

Pregnancy results from rape or incest, or

A competent physician determines that the life or health of the mother is in serious jeopardy, or

A competent physician determines that the fetus has severe defects that will not allow the baby to survive beyond birth.”

The First Presidency continues: “Abortion is a most serious matter. [Even in these rare situations] it should be considered only after the persons responsible have received confirmation through prayer” and counseled with others.

Thirty years ago, the Lord’s prophets issued a proclamation to the world. It includes these words:

“We ... declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

“We declare the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God’s eternal plan.”

Nurturing and protecting life that is yet unborn is not a political position. It is a moral law confirmed by the Lord through His prophets.

Rais Dallin H. Oaks alisema: “Mtazamo wetu kuhusu utoaji mimba haujajengwa kwenye maarifa yaliyofunuliwa ya ni lini uhai wa duniani huanza. ... Umejikita kwenye maarifa yetu kwamba ... wote wa watoto wa kiroho wa Mungu lazima waje kwenye ulimwengu huu kwa lengo tukufu, na utambulisho wa mtu huyo ulianza kitambo hata kabla ya kuwa mimba na utaendelea kwa milele zote zijazo.”

Neno la Bwana kuwahusu ambao hawajazaliwa, likipewa sauti kupitia Urais wa Kwanza na Akidi ya Mitume Kumi na Wawili, halijabadi-likamwe na hutoa mwangwi kwa maneno ya manabii kwa vizazi, likitoa uwazi wa kiungu kwa kile ambacho Bwana ametuomba sisi.

“Kanisa la Yesu Kristo la Watakatifu wa Siku za Mwisho huamini katika utakatifu wa uhai wa binadamu. Kwa hivyo, Kanisa linapinga utoaji wa mimba kwa hiari kwa sababu binafsi au za kijamii, na linawashauri waumini wake kuto-
kukubali, kutotekeleza, kutohimiza, kutolipia au kupanga utoaji wa mimba wa aina hiyo.

“[Bwana] anaruhusu dharura kadhaa yamkini... pale:

Mimba itokanayo na ubakaji au kujamiiana kwa maharimu, au

Daktari mtaalamu amegundua kwamba misha au afya ya mama iko katika hatari kubwa, au

Daktari mtaalamu anapoamua kwamba kijusi kina kasoro kubwa ambazo hazitaruhusu mtoto kuishi baada ya kuzaliwa.”

Urais wa Kwanza unaendelea: “Utoaji mimba ni jambo zito sana. [Hata katika hali hizi nadra] linapaswa kufikiriwa tu baada ya wahusika kuwa wamepokea uthibitisho kupitia sala” na kushauriana wao kwa wao.

Miaka thelathini iliyopita, manabii wa Mungu walitoa tangazo kwa ulimwengu. Hujumuisha maneno haya:

“Tunatangaza ... kwamba Mungu ameamuru kwamba nguvu takatifu za kuzaa ni lazima zitumike tu, kati ya mwanamume na mwanamke, ambao wameoana kihalali kama mume na mke.

“Tunatangaza njia ambayo maisha ya dunia yanaumbwa imechaguliwa kitakatifu. Tunathibitisha utakatifu wa uhai na umuhimu wake katika mpango wa milele wa Mungu.”

Kutunza na kulinda maisha ambayo hayajazaliwa siyo jambo la kisiasa. Ni sheria ya maa-dili iliyothibitishwa na Bwana kupitia manabii Wake.

Speaking More Openly

A statement by President J. Reuben Clark Jr., who served in the First Presidency, beautifully describes our youth today: “The youth of the Church are hungry for things of the Spirit; they are eager to learn the gospel, and they want it straight, undiluted. They want to know about ... our beliefs; they want to gain testimonies of [the] truth. They are ... inquirers, seekers after truth.” Let us speak more often with faith and compassion to our youth in our homes, and with each other in our Relief Society and elders quorum meetings, about the Lord’s law of chastity, the sanctity of life, and the care of the unborn and their mothers.

A dear sister wrote to me of an experience she had decades ago: “As a 17-year-old ... , I found myself pregnant with little to no support from my boyfriend. I felt ashamed and alone [but I] never considered [an abortion]. ... I [had] my loving family and my bishop, with whom I met regularly for guidance. ... I turned to God. I studied the scriptures ... and prayed [and] found strength through my Savior and the repentance process. ... I received an answer [to my prayers] that I could not deny. ... It was heartbreaking, but I knew I would be placing my daughter for adoption. ... I prayed for courage [and] felt the Savior’s love so clearly through repentance, I know that God ... answers prayers and strengthens us.”

A loving couple adopted the precious baby girl and taught her the gospel. She is now married with a beautiful family of her own.

At times, profoundly difficult and agonizing uncertainty can accompany the protection of life.

Recently a young couple whom Kathy and I love wrote me about the precious baby they were expecting.

The father wrote: “[When my wife was] 10 weeks pregnant we found out that our miracle baby has the genetic condition of trisomy 21, commonly known as Down syndrome. We felt the pressure ... from the medical field to consider termination. A few weeks later we discovered ... our unborn child ... would require multiple heart surgeries in her first year of life. Throughout this process as we prayed fervently for divine

Kuzungumza kwa Uwazi Zaidi

Kauli ya Rais J. Reuben Clark Mdogo ambaye alitumikia katika Urais wa Kwanza, kwa uzuri huelezea vijana wetu leo: “Vijana wa Kanisa wana njaa ya vitu vya Roho; wana hamu ya kujifunza injili, na wanaitaka moja kwa moja, bila kuzimuliwa.” Wanataka kujua kuhusu ... imani zetu; wanataka kupokea ushuhuda wa ukweli huu. Wao ni ... wadadisi, watafutaji wa ukweli.” Acha tuzungumze mara kwa mara kwa imani na huruma kwa vijana wetu katika nyumba zetu, na mmoja na mwingine, katika Muungano wetu wa Usaidizi na mikutano ya akidi za wazee kuhusu sheria ya usafi wa kimwili ya Bwana, utakatifu wa uhai, na matunzo kwa ambao hawajazaliwa na mama zao.

Dada mpendwa aliniandikia uzoefu alioupata miongo kadhaa iliyopita: “Kama binti wa miaka 17 ... , nilijipata nikiwa mjauzito bila ya msaa-da wowote kutoka kwa mpenzi wangu. Nilihisi kuaibika na mpweke [lakini] sikufikiria [utoaji mimba]. ... Nilikuwa na familia yangu pendwa na askofu wangu, ambaye nilikutana naye mara kwa mara kwa ajili ya mwongozo. ... Nilimgeukia Mungu. Nilisoma maandiko ... na kusali [na] kupata nguvu kupitia Mwokozi wangu na mchakato wa toba. ... Nilipokea jibu [la sala zangu] ambalo nisingeweza kulikana. ... Lilikuwa la kuvunja moyo, lakini nilijua ningemtoa binti yangu kwa ajili ya kuasiliwa. ... Nilisali kwa ajili ya ujasiri [na] kuhisi upendo wa Mwokozi kwa dhahiri kupitia toba, ninajua kwamba Mungu ... hujibu sala na kutuimarisha.”

Wenza wenye upendo walimuasili binti mto-to wa thamani na walimfunza injili. Sasa binti huyo ameolewa na ana familia yake nzuri.

Wakati mwingine, mashaka magumu sana na yaumizayo sana yanaweza kuambatana na ulinzi wa uhai.

Hivi karibuni wenza vijana ambao Kathy pamoja nami tunawapenda waliniandikia kuhusu mtoto mchanga wanayemtarajia.

Baba aliandika: “[Mke wangu alipokuwa] na ujauzito wa wiki 10 tuligundua kwamba mtoto wetu wa muujiza alikuwa na hali ya vinasaba ya trisomi 21, hali ijulikanayo kama shida kwenye ubongo. Tulihisi shinikizo ... kutoka kwenye kitengo cha afya la kutoa ujauzito. Wiki chache baadaye tuligundua ... mtoto wetu ambaye hajazaliwa ... angehitaji upasuaji wa moyo mara kadhaa katika mwaka wake wa kwanza wa uhai.

help, ... we have felt the Spirit give us comfort. We received revelation and understanding that our daughter is an elite child of Heavenly Father and has an immense desire to be in our family and to come to earth.”

The baby’s mother wrote: “[We] were completely shocked, confused, and honestly devastated by the news. ... When I was 14 weeks pregnant, we found out that our baby had multiple congenital heart defects, one that could be potentially fatal. We saw countless doctors and specialists from 10–18 weeks’ gestation. ... At each of our appointments, we were asked if we wanted to continue with the pregnancy or terminate. ... The Savior healed my heart and gave me a sense of peace and excitement about our baby girl. ... [Heavenly Father] has shown me time and time again that He has a perfect plan for me [and] I trust Him.”

They excitedly welcomed their baby girl exactly one week ago today. She is theirs and they are hers forever.

Undaunted faith and remarkable courage are hallmarks of disciples of Jesus Christ.

A Remarkable Example of Faith

Through the years, I have had the privilege of meeting with men and women who have humbly sought to return to the covenant path and to their priesthood and temple blessings many years after a loss of their membership.

On one occasion, I was to interview a man on behalf of the First Presidency for the restoration of his priesthood and temple blessings.

After his marriage in the holy temple, and after having three wonderful children, the man was unfaithful to his wife and his sacred covenants. A single woman became pregnant and wanted an abortion.

The husband’s saintly wife pleaded with the woman to have the baby and promised that she would raise the child, once he was born, with her own children.

The single woman thoughtfully agreed not to end the pregnancy.

It had now been 10 years. The humble sister sitting in front of me loved the boy as her own and told me of her husband’s efforts to make amends and to love and care for her and the family. The father wept as she spoke.

Kupitia mchakato huu kadiri tulivyosali kwa dhati kwa ajili ya msaada wa kiungu, ... tumehisi Roho akitupatia faraja. Tulipokea ufunuo na uelewa kwamba binti yetu ni mtoto makini wa Baba wa Mbinguni na ana hamu kubwa ya kuwa kwenye familia yetu na kuja duniani.”

Mama wa mtoto mchanga aliandika: “Tulish-tushwa, kukanganyikiwa na kwa kweli, kukatishwa tamaa kwa taarifa hiyo. ... Nilipokuwa na mimba ya miezi 14, tuligundua kwamba mtoto wetu alikuwa na madhaifu kadhaa ya moyo ya kuzaliwa nayo, ambayo yangepelekea kifo. Tulionana na madaktari wengi na wataalamu kutokea kipindi cha wiki 10–18. ... Katika kila moja ya miadi yetu, tuliulizwa kama tunahitaji kuendelea kuutunza ujauzito au kuuharibu. ... Mwokozi alitibu moyo wangu na kunipa hisia ya amani na furaha kuhusu mtoto wetu wa kike. ... [Baba wa Mbinguni] amenionyesha mara kwa mara na tena kwamba Yeye ana mpango mkamilifu kwa ajili yangu [na] ninamtumaini.”

kwa shangwe walimkaribisha mtoto wao mchanga wiki moja iliyopita siku kama ya leo. Binti ni wao na wao ni wazazi wake daima.

Imani isiyo na shaka na ujasiri mkuu ni alama mahususi za wanafunzi wa Yesu Kristo.

Mfano Mkuu wa Imani

Kwa miaka mingi, nimepata fursa ya kukutana na wanaume na wanawake ambao kwa unyenyekevu wametafuta kurejea kwenye njia ya agano na kwenye baraka zao za ukuhani na hekalu miaka mingi baada ya kupoteza uumini wao.

Katika tukio moja, nilitakiwa kumhoji mwanume kwa niaba ya Urais wa Kwanza kwa ajili ya urejesho wa ukuhani na baraka za hekaluni.

Baada ya ndoa yake katika hekalu takatifu, na baada ya kupata watoto wazuri watatu, mwanume hakuwa mwaminifu kwa mke wake na maagano yake matakatifu. Mwanamke mmoja alipata ujauzito na kutaka kuutoa.

Mke wa mume yule kitakatifu alimsihi yule mwanamke kumzaa mtoto na kumuahidi kwamba atamlea mtoto pale atakapozaliwa, pamoja na watoto wake mwenyewe.

Mwanamke yule alikubali kutotoa ujauzito ule.

Sasa imekuwa miaka 10. Dada mnyenyekevu akiwa amekaa mbele yangu alimpenda mtoto kama wake na kuniambia juhudi za mume wake za kurekebisha na kumpenda na kumjali yeye na familia. Baba alilia pale mke alipokuwa akiongea.

How could this noble woman of God take a child as her own who could be a daily reminder of the unfaithfulness of her husband? How? Because she found strength through Jesus Christ and she believed in the sacredness of life, the holiness of life. She knew the unborn child was a child of God, innocent and pure.

My dear brothers and sisters, the diminishing love for unborn children worldwide is a grave concern. God cherishes life. It is His work and His glory to bring immortality and eternal life to His children. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we cherish life. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." May we share our love even more abundantly with those who need us so desperately. I express my love for you and our Heavenly Father's love for His children coming to earth. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Ni kwa jinsi gani mwanamke huyu mwe-ma wa Mungu alimchukulia mtoto kama wa kwake ambaye angekuwa ukumbusho wa kila siku wa ukosaji uaminifu wa mumewe? Kivipi? Kwa sababu alipata nguvu kupitia Yesu Kristo na aliamini kwenye utakatifu wa uhai, utukufu wa uhai. Alijua mtoto aliyekuwa hajazaliwa alikuwa mtoto wa Mungu, bila hatia na msafi.

Wapendwa akina kaka na dada zangu, kupungua kwa upendo kwa watoto ambao hajazaliwa ni jambo kubwa ulimwenguni kote. Mungu anathamini uhai. Ni kazi Yake na utukufu kuleta kutokufa na uzima wa milele wa wadamu. Kama wanafunzi wa Yesu Kristo, tunathamini uhai. "Hivyo watu wote watatambua ya kuwa ninyi mmekuwa wanafunzi wangu, mkiwa na upendo ninyi kwa ninyi." Na tushiriki upendo wetu hata kwa wingi zaidi na wale wanaotuhitaji kweli kweli. Ninatoa upendo wangu kwenu na upendo wa Baba yetu wa Mbinguni kwa watoto Wake wajao duniani. Katika jina la Yesu Kristo, amina.