

life of each member and in the Church will increase. The Lord will pour out his Spirit upon us more abundantly. We will be less troubled, less confused. We will find revealed answers to personal and family problems without all the counseling which we seem now to need.

It was Nephi who taught: "Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.

"Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark.

"For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:3-5).

And in the spirit of reverence, I bear testimony that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that the Holy Ghost—our comforter, our teacher—will come to us if we will maintain a spirit of reverence, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Monson

Thank you, Elder Packer, for that much-needed counsel.

Elders Julio E. Dávila and Graham W. Doxey, who were sustained at April conference as members of the Seventy, will now address us.

## Elder Julio E. Dávila

### Elder Dávila's conversion

My beloved brothers and sisters, it is very significant for me to follow Elder Boyd K. Packer this afternoon because just twenty-three years ago, his son Alan, then a missionary in Colombia, arrived with his companion to our home in Bogotá. That was our first contact with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Today I want to pay tribute to the missionaries, their parents and supporters, and to the leaders and members of the Church who, with their love and patience, made it possible for my wife, Mary, and me to join the Church and who continue supporting us in the process of conversion.

At the time the missionaries came to teach us, I was going through some trials and had many sorrows and concerns, and I needed to make some important decisions in my life. However, at the beginning I was not aware that their message of the restoration of

the gospel of Jesus Christ and of his Church was the answer and solution to my needs. I didn't realize that those young messengers were sent to me by my Heavenly Father.

Now I understand his mercy because he sent to us his Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who through the miracle of his atonement sacrificed his life for our salvation, broke the bands of death, defied the grave, and invited us to follow him.

Somehow it was not easy for them to start teaching us, but after many visits and discussions I was touched by the Spirit, and I agreed to be baptized, as well as my beloved wife. But I established some "don'ts" or conditions: don't call me "brother"; I will not attend all the meetings; I don't want to be assigned to pray nor to give talks in the meetings; I will not accept any callings; and never ask me to talk to my relatives or friends about the Church; and so forth.

### Conversion is a process

I testify that conversion is a process. I am sure that the missionaries were praying and fasting for the change of my mind because as soon as we started to attend the meetings, I began criticizing many temporal things at the meetinghouse, such as the crooked pictures on the walls. The branch president, a fine and wise man, appointed me as the pictures supervisor, this being my first calling in the Church. Incidentally, I have never seen that position in the handbooks, but it served me very well to start my involvement in the service of the Lord.

My advice to leaders, members, and new converts looking for retention and reactivation is to let every man and woman participate in the preparation of this world for the second coming of our Savior; receive with joy the callings and releases that come from the Lord through inspired leaders; be co-workers with God in “bring[ing] to pass the immortality and eternal life of man,” as we learn in Moses 1:39. We must be sure that all the people are having the opportunity to give of their time, talents, skills, and facilities to help others find the truth.

My first encounter with preaching the gospel was also exciting. In a park near my office in Bogotá, I saw a multitude, and since I had some time, I went down to see what was happening. My surprise was great when I saw the missionaries with displays about the Church and with copies of the Book of Mormon. They recognized me and asked me to stand in the middle of the park with a banner saying, “Be happy; be a Mormon.” I stood for a while in that place. I was a Mormon, but at that moment I was not so happy! But I started to feel better about my ability as a missionary, losing my fear to talk with people about the Church. I let go of my own restrictions—so many “don’ts,”—and realized that this is the

Church of love and service, of sacrifice and blessings, of happiness and eternal life. My message to the missionaries, to the people that are investigating the Church at this time, and to the members is, “Don’t give up; continue looking for the best results in this wonderful work.”

After our baptism, many relatives, including our parents, several brothers and sisters and their families, followed our example and joined the Church, serving in priesthood and auxiliary leadership positions, serving full-time missions, and performing ordinances of salvation and exaltation for our kindred dead and for ourselves.

Eighteen years ago my wife and I were sealed in eternal marriage in the Salt Lake Temple, and the following year we were sealed as a family with our daughters, Liana and Maritza, in the Los Angeles Temple. For all these things, I express my gratitude to my Heavenly Father and his Son, Jesus Christ.

### Conversion is understanding truth

I can say with President Harold B. Lee: “As you can see, one is converted when he sees with his eyes what he ought to see; when he hears with his ears what he ought to hear; and when he understands with his heart what he ought to understand. And what he ought to see, hear, and understand is truth—eternal truth—and then practice it. That is conversion” (*Stand Ye in Holy Places* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], p. 92).

President Ezra Taft Benson, at an area conference in Sweden in 1974, said: “It is not on the pinnacle of success and ease where men and women grow most. It is often down in the valley of heartache and disappointment and reverses where men and women grow into strong characters” (in Conference Report, Denmark, Finland,

Norway, and Sweden Area Conference 1974, p. 70).

I know the meaning of repentance and forgiveness as part of the process of conversion through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. I have partaken of the blessings stated in Moroni, chapter 6, verses 1 to 4:

“And now I speak concerning baptism. Behold, elders, priests, and teachers were baptized; and they were not baptized save they brought forth fruit meet that they were worthy of it.

“Neither did they receive any unto baptism save they came forth with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and witnessed unto the church that they truly repented of all their sins.

“And none were received unto baptism save they took upon them the name of Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end.

“And after they had been received unto baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost, they were numbered among the

people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way, to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who was the author and the finisher of their faith.”

Brothers and sisters, I testify to you that God lives and loves us; that he sent to the world his Son, Jesus Christ, our Redeemer; that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God who was foreordained and raised up for the restoration of all things in this dispensation; that President Ezra Taft Benson is our living prophet, appointed by the Lord to guide us in the true Church, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and that the Book of Mormon and the Bible are testaments of Christ, the Messiah. That we may see, hear, and understand these things and practice them, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder Graham W. Doxey

My brothers and sisters, I am humbled as I face this new responsibility. However, I am encouraged with the warm and strong brotherhood I feel from these Brethren seated here.

My experiences include, like Nephi, “having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught” (1 Nephi 1:1). Next I was blessed to marry a beautiful wife, a queenly saint; therefore, I am receiving some secondary education. My internship training started as we were blessed with children. And our wonderful grandchildren have become our postgraduate education. It is my prayer and my trust in this regard that, once gained, “whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection” (D&C 130:18).

### The voice is still small

President Spencer W. Kimball, a man with unique experience in all levels of Church leadership, described the subject that has been on my mind since this speaking assignment came. I apologize to Elder Packer. I realize that I was prompted by the Spirit—I know that he is—and I have found my thoughts going in much the same direction that his went. President Kimball said:

“The burning bushes, the smoking mountains, . . . the Cumorahs, and the Kirtlands were realities; but they were the exceptions. The great volume of revelation came to Moses and to Joseph and comes to today’s prophet in