

President Monson

Elder Haight, you've not only done pretty well, you've done very well indeed as you have set the pace and established the tone for this conference session. We love you.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

Windows of light and truth

My beloved brothers and sisters, as President Hinckley walked into this meeting, he said, "We decided to come back." I replied, "Thank goodness." It's a privilege to speak on this occasion, and I pray for the Spirit of the Lord to be with me.

This is an age of digital information. Our computers have become windows through which we can gaze upon a world that is virtually without horizons or boundaries. Literally at the click of a button, we can browse through the digitized libraries of universities, museums, government agencies, and research institutions located throughout the world. A worldwide web of electronic connections now moves data at ever-increasing speed and volume along what we call the information superhighway. Through the windows of personal computer monitors in homes and offices, we can access this network of interconnected data banks to see texts, art, photos, maps, and charts and to hear music and speech that are stored in widely dispersed locations.

Likewise, instruments of many types give us insight that we would not have without them. Telescopes and microscopes bring to our view the otherwise unseen and unknown. Modern medicine uses imaging "windows" such as magnetic resonance imaging scanners to bring into view otherwise unseen vital information that skilled physicians can use for the benefit of their patients. The air traffic controller's radarscope is an-

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, also a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and he will be followed by Elder Lynn A. Mickelsen of the Seventy.

other example of a window that provides lifesaving vision of faraway objects that are invisible without this crucial instrument. A skilled controller can use the information on his radarscope to guide a pilot to safety.

Windows of revelation

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints declares boldly that through another type of window, the windows of heaven, we can access spiritual information from the Source of light and truth. "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."¹ In this dispensation of the fulness of times, the *revelation* superhighway has been carrying heavy traffic of eternal truth ever since that day in the spring of 1820 when the Lord answered a farm boy's fervent prayer in the Sacred Grove and ushered in the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We are blessed to live in these, the latter days, when a loving Heavenly Father has called a great leader, President Gordon B. Hinckley, as prophet, seer, and revelator. Through him the Lord opens windows of revelation to guide and bless all of our Father's children who will heed the words of the prophet. Today, as in ancient times, God opens windows of gospel light and truth by revealing "his secret unto his servants the prophets."² Those who have "eyes to see, and ears to hear"³ can learn eternal principles; view

majestic vistas of knowledge, foresight, and wisdom; and receive direction on how to live their lives.

If we configure our hearts and minds properly with faith, disciplined obedience, prayer, and scripture study, we can access the network of divine and eternal truths. We can receive the teachings and counsel of God's prophet, opening to us knowledge and revelation from our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

The Lord counsels us to become skilled in using these spiritual windows so we can seek and receive personal revelation for ourselves and our families. When the storms of life leave us confused, the windows of revelation can guide us safely home to our Heavenly Father. If we should yield to temptations of the adversary and find ourselves weakened spiritually, inspired bishops and other caring leaders can open the windows of revelation to provide spiritual direction. Well-prepared and inspired missionaries can open the windows of heaven to enlighten those "who are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it."⁴

Obedience opens the windows of heaven

The windows of heaven are open wide to the faithful and righteous; nothing closes them faster than disobedience. The unworthy cannot access fully the network of revealed truth. "The powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness."⁵ "Obedience is the first law of heaven."⁶ That is why Alma exhorted us to "be humble, . . . submissive and . . . diligent in keeping the commandments of God at all times."⁷

To open the windows of heaven, we must conform our will to God's will. Diligent, enduring obedience to God's laws is the key that opens the windows of heaven. Obedience enables us to be receptive to the mind and will of the Lord.

"The Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient"⁸ are those who receive the blessings of revelation through the open windows of heaven.

Missionary service

The Lord has commanded Church members to "proclaim . . . unto the world"⁹ the restoration of the fulness of the gospel, open the windows of light and truth to all of our brothers and sisters, and do so "with all [our] heart, might, mind and strength."¹⁰ Our Savior has told us that "the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of [his] disciples," who "shall go forth and none shall stay them."¹¹

Members of the Lord's church can joyfully echo these words of the prophet Mormon: "Behold, I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I have been called of him to declare his word among his people, that they might have everlasting life."¹²

We are the Savior's disciples who "shall go forth." All of us are "called of him to [be missionaries to] declare his word among his people." We may serve as full-time missionaries in young adulthood and as older couples. This window of opportunity is opened for a relatively short period of time. We should follow the counsel of President Spencer W. Kimball and "do it," and, he added, "Do it right now." Stake missionaries and loving neighbors have the opportunity of this divine service. We all have the sacred obligation and joyful opportunity to throw open the windows of light and truth by proclaiming the blessings of everlasting life to a darkened world. If we shy away from this responsibility, we should remember that the Lord has promised that "*none shall stay [us]*" and that "there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated."¹³ We can experience no greater joy than to see

the light of the gospel shine in the eyes and face of a newly baptized brother or sister who has "spiritually been born of God," who has "experienced [a] mighty change in [heart]," and who has "the image of God engraven upon [his or her countenance!]"¹⁴

If we are to fulfill the Lord's command to open the windows of heaven to all of our brothers and sisters, we must prepare to teach the gospel. With study of the scriptures, fasting, and prayer, we fortify our testimonies. We cultivate Christlike attributes of "faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, [and] diligence."¹⁵ Through exemplary obedience we can "let [our] light so shine before men, that they may see [our] good works, and glorify [our] Father which is in heaven."¹⁶ By keeping the commandments we can light our gospel candle and put it "on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto *all* that are in the house."¹⁷

The law of tithing

These words from the third chapter of Malachi have a familiar ring for Latter-day Saints:

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."¹⁸

Perhaps we tend to think of the law of tithing as a temporal commandment only and to see it from a material perspective. We would be shortsighted and ungrateful if we failed to see and acknowledge the great spiritual blessings that result from obedience to this divine law. When we are obedient, the windows of heaven are opened not just to pour out blessings of earthly abundance, but also to pour out blessings of spiritual

abundance—blessings of infinite and eternal worth.

President Hinckley has declared that the blessings from paying tithing "may not be always in the form of financial or material benefit." He explained that "there are many ways in which the Lord can bless us beyond the riches of the world. There is the great boon of health. The Lord has promised [in Malachi 3:11] that he will rebuke the devourer for our sakes. Malachi speaks of the fruits of our ground. May not that rebuke of the devourer apply to *various* of our personal efforts and concerns?"¹⁹

The Word of Wisdom

Beginning in 1833 the Prophet Joseph Smith taught the blessings of avoiding tobacco and other addictive substances when the Lord opened the windows of heaven and revealed "a Word of Wisdom, for the benefit of the . . . saints in Zion." The Lord gave this revelation as a warning against the "evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days."²⁰

One of the first articles to document a link between smoking and lung cancer appeared in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1950,²¹ 117 years after the Lord opened this window to His prophet.

The physical blessings of health and strength that are promised²² through obedience to the Word of Wisdom are now well known and well documented.²³ In addition, the spiritual blessings of "wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures,"²⁴ come to those who keep their bodies free from addictive substances. When we obey the Word of Wisdom, windows of personal revelation are opened to us and our souls are filled with divine light and truth. If we keep our bodies undefiled, the Holy Ghost "shall come upon [us] and . . . dwell in [our] heart[s]"²⁵ and teach us "the peaceable things of immortal glory."²⁶

Word of wisdom for the mind

Our Heavenly Father opened the windows of heaven and gave His children the Word of Wisdom to warn against consuming substances that can damage and destroy our physical bodies. He likewise has, through prophets, cautioned against consuming the steady diet of evil that is offered relentlessly in today's media, especially magazines, movies, videocassettes, video games, and television. The windows of computer monitors and television screens can bring to us very useful information, but they can also bring information that is evil, degrading, and destructive.

The Lord has warned repeatedly against the evils and designs of conspiring men in our day who would enslave us to our appetites and passions by tempting and tantalizing us with obscene images, words, and music. Through His servants the Lord has cautioned us strongly not to take into our minds thoughts that can harm our spirits.

Since 1950, Church leaders speaking in general conference have counseled us some seventy-five times against unhealthy media consumption. In recent years, as standards of public decency and morality have declined and as public media have reflected and often led that decline, these words of loving concern from inspired shepherds of the Lord's flock have come with more frequency and greater urgency. The watchmen on the tower have raised a warning voice.

I add my own voice. I suggest that we pay greater heed to voices of warning that our Father in Heaven has raised against the forces of Satan that come so easily and so pervasively into our homes through the media. I think of all the words of counsel and direction that we have received on this matter as constituting collectively a "word of wisdom for the mind." Just as we exercise great care about what we take into our bodies through our mouths, we should exert a

similar vigilance about what we take into our minds through our eyes and ears.

Gift of the Holy Ghost

The gift of the Holy Ghost may be likened to a sure, personal compass to provide lifesaving vision, wisdom, and insight as a spiritual window. The Holy Ghost gives us clear guidance and direction in a world of unanchored faith. President James E. Faust expressed his assuring testimony that "the Spirit of the Holy Ghost is the greatest guarantor of inward peace in our unstable world. . . . It will calm nerves; it will breathe peace to our souls. . . . It can enhance our natural senses so that we can *see more clearly*, hear more keenly, and remember what we should remember. It is a way of maximizing our happiness."²⁷

Worthy worship

Windows must be washed regularly to clean away dust and dirt. If left to accumulate without regular cleaning, thickening grime can block out light and darken the window. Just as earthly windows need consistent, thorough cleaning, so do the windows of our spirituality.

Weekly sacrament meeting attendance helps us strengthen our resolve to keep our personal windows of heaven free from the obscuring haze of earthly distractions and temptations. By partaking of the sacrament worthily to renew our baptismal covenants, we clarify our view of life's eternal purpose and divine priorities. The sacrament prayers invite personal introspection, repentance, and rededication as we pledge our willingness to remember our Savior, Jesus the Christ. This commitment to become like Christ, repeated weekly, defines the supreme aspiration of Latter-day Saint life.

Frequent temple attendance, as our circumstances allow, is another way to keep our spiritual windows clean. Worship in the house of the Lord will keep

our view of what matters most clear and sharp, focused crisply, and free from the dust of the world.

Testimony

I testify that the windows of heaven are indeed open. President Gordon B. Hinckley is the Lord's living prophet today. Joseph Smith is the Prophet of the Restoration. Jesus is the Christ, the Lord and Savior of all mankind. Our Heavenly Father lives and loves each of His children. The Lord has restored the network of eternal truth. We can open the windows of heaven to our personal view. Through these divine windows we can gaze with the Savior "upon the wide expanse of eternity,"²⁸ a universe without horizons, "worlds without end."²⁹ I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Articles of Faith 1:9.
2. Amos 3:7.
3. Deuteronomy 29:4.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 123:12.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 121:36.
6. Ezra Taft Benson, mission presidents' seminar, 21 June 1988; see *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), p. 26. See also S. Dilworth Young, in Conference Report, Apr. 1952, p. 29; Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978), p. 126; and *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), p. 539.
7. Alma 7:23; italics added.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 64:34.
9. Doctrine and Covenants 1:18.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 4:2.
11. Doctrine and Covenants 1:4, 5.
12. 3 Nephi 5:13.
13. Doctrine and Covenants 1:5, 2; italics added.
14. Alma 5:14, 19.
15. Doctrine and Covenants 4:6.
16. Matthew 5:16.
17. Matthew 5:15; italics added.
18. Malachi 3:10.
19. In Conference Report, Apr. 1982, p. 60; or *Ensign*, May 1982, p. 40; italics added.
20. Doctrine and Covenants 89:1, 4.
21. See "Milestones," *Time*, 24 July 1995, p. 19.
22. See Doctrine and Covenants 89:18-21.
23. See Russell M. Nelson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, pp. 87-88; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, p. 69. See also James E. Enstrom, "Health Practices and Cancer Mortality among Active California Mormons," *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, 6 Dec. 1989, pp. 1807-14; Edward Norden, "How to Live As Long As They Do," *Longevity*, Sept. 1990, pp. 72-73.
24. Doctrine and Covenants 89:19.
25. Doctrine and Covenants 8:2.
26. Moses 6:61.
27. In Conference Report, Apr. 1989, p. 41; or *Ensign*, May 1989, pp. 32-33; italics added.
28. Doctrine and Covenants 38:1.
29. Doctrine and Covenants 76:112.

Elder Lynn A. Mickelsen

Man is that he might have joy

President Hinckley, I feel that I can speak for the Saints throughout the world, that we were profoundly stirred by your prophetic charge to move the work forward with greater energy. We pledge our lives and our obedience to accomplish that purpose.

While teaching at BYU in 1978, Brother Dennis Rasmussen applied and was selected to study at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. In the opening session, as he gave his name and university, Rabbi Muffs boomed, "You're the Mormon! . . . Do you pay your tithing?"

"Yes," he answered.