

ACTIVISM VS. DISCIPLESHIP: A Message for Chaplains of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Imagine a battalion of valiant spirits in the premortal world! Their hearts are brim with the love of God, their Father. They trust Him and His plan for His children. The countenances of their spirit faces radiate the resplendent light of Jesus Christ, who smiles upon them. They bask in the brilliance of God's attributes and principles, including love, truth, obedience, faith, loyalty, mercy, fairness and equity. In the war in heaven, they actively follow our great Advocate with the Father to bring to pass the eternal life of their brothers and sisters and themselves. These noble and great spirit sons and daughters of God are destined to similar godly purpose and power in this world. Ultimately, they overcome Satan who "is cast down to earth, and his angels are cast down with him."¹

Now, think of these same spirits as today's youth and young adults in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in that continued war. A veil of forgetfulness over their minds, they perhaps only faintly feel their purpose and too often doubt their great capacity to carry it out. President Russell M. Nelson has said, "My beloved younger brothers and sisters, you are among the best the Lord has ever sent to this world. You have the capacity to be smarter and wiser and have more impact on the world than any previous generation."² He called them to be "the Lord's youth battalion to help gather Israel"³ before the Savior's Second Coming. If we are to help the rising generation and all God's valiant children realize their divine potential, it is imperative that we understand the stratagems of their enemy, Satan. Thirty years ago, President Dallin H. Oaks helped the youthful of that generation understand the importance of anticipating this enemy. He warned, "Satan uses every possible device to degrade and enslave every soul[,] including "camouflaging that which is evil" and "attacking us where we think we are strong[.]"⁴

Today, I would like to address an especially effective tactic Satan is using to blind and mislead the young, those transitioning from other religious traditions and cultures, and even long-time and life-time members of the Lord's restored church. In my humble view, it is one of the great mists of darkness of our time. I speak of our enemy's effort to transform disciples of Jesus Christ into activists *towards or against the Lord's church – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints – and its leaders*. It is a three-step maneuver that is genius in its simplicity and

effectiveness: (1) focus the rising generation and the valiant generally away from the doctrine of Christ and onto real or imagined unfairness or injustice in the Lord's church and the imperfections of its leaders; (2) use this shift in focus to stir up feelings of disillusionment, annoyance, resentment, anger and hatred toward church policies, declarations, proclamations, principles, doctrines and eventually leaders; and (3) manipulate these negative impulses to instigate the use of worldly or secular activism or advocacy rather than the doctrine of Christ to effect change in the Kingdom of God. You may be thinking these tactics seem to match and leverage the feelings of equity, justice, love and sense of gathering mission inherent in the souls of the premortal valiant. You are wise to think so.

What do I mean by activism toward the Church? "Activism" has been defined as "the policy or action of using (campaigning or) vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change"⁵ "especially in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue."⁶ Thus, activism or advocacy directed toward or against The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a secular, worldly device misapplied in a spiritual, otherworldly context. To be sure, righteous change is needed in our church. For example, members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve have spoken out against prejudice in any form.⁷ The Savior organized His church in large part to effect positive change of many kinds in God's children. But change in the Kingdom of God is not accomplished in the same way as change in, say, government. The faulty assumption is that because some of the same social ills in secular society occasionally rear their ugly heads in the Lord's church⁸ the same remedial methods and manners should be used in both contexts.

Is Brother Corbitt saying activism and advocacy are bad? Not at all. Like all Americans, and arguably most people on earth, you and I and our families are beneficiaries of activism. The United States was founded on and through activism and advocacy by activists. The Boston Tea Party, the formation of the Continental Congress, and the Revolutionary War were all forms of activism. The United States Constitution's Bill of Rights specifically permits activism and prohibits government from abridging forms of it, such as "the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."⁹ "When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another..."¹⁰ is the solemn preamble of one of the most activist yet revered and celebrated documents ever

conceived by humankind. The Declaration of Independence continues, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”¹¹ This was an activist statement and a noble and courageous one. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. famously quoted many of these venerated words as he led the *activist* movement for justice and equality for black Americans. Calling on America to live up to its founding creeds, He *advocated* for the just and universal application of these same constitutional principles. You and I are, of course, also beneficiaries of this activism, as well, since the Lord inspired the United States Constitution “for the rights and protection of all flesh.”¹²

However, when activism or advocacy is directed *at the Kingdom of God on earth or its leaders*, especially prophets and apostles, it is the wrong tool for the wrong job in the wrong place. Why? Because it effectively but subtly undermines the doctrine of Christ, which is God’s plan for changing, saving and exalting His children. How *timely* is the recent declaration of the Lord’s prophet, “There has never been a time in the history of the world when knowledge of our Savior is more personally vital and relevant to every human soul. ... The pure doctrine of Christ is powerful. It changes the life of everyone who understands it and seeks to implement it in his or her life.”¹³ As I speak further on the threat to the doctrine of Christ, may I humbly suggest you, as chaplains, and your families, consider the following three points:

(1) We must be especially sensitive to the more vulnerable.

As you know, our brothers and sisters in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have various backgrounds. Some are too young or too focused on church culture to adequately understand what the doctrine of Christ is. Some will have lost sight of the Church’s purpose to administer the ordinances of salvation and exaltation and will see it as more of a social organization to be distrusted, like worldly institutions, generally. Those who have a critical or faultfinding nature are especially susceptible to this deception. Some who come from other faiths, as I did, will not have doctrinally transitioned enough to understand the doctrine of Christ or its importance. They will likely only know and trust the telestial tools they’ve seen used in the world. We will have to help them see why the doctrine of Christ should have priority over all other causes, why it should always govern our

methods and manners, and why it is our only real hope to accomplish any righteous change or cause.

(2) We must recognize who these our brothers and sisters are or they tend to be.

Among the many important lessons I take from the Book of Mormon is the principle that we cannot always judge others' premortal righteousness by their current state of confusion or even rebellion. Although foreordained to lead and gather among their civilization, Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah, during their younger years, allowed Satan to misdirect their inherent capacity and possibly an innate sense of purpose. Once converted, they engaged in their true purpose, the work of salvation and exaltation, including the gathering of Israel. Their experience, and that of their parents, also teach us that our examples and prayers of faith on behalf of those who are vigorously misguided can be powerful and effectual.¹⁴ This story of redemption of the errant valiant makes the Prophet's call to today's rising generation to help gather Israel more timely and urgent. The same is true of his teaching them of their true identities, about which I will say more.

Recognizing valiant spirits can be misguided in these ways, I will separate them from their method to show love and respect for them. Therefore, I will speak not of individuals but of activism toward The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as if it were an entity, much like Paul and Mormon discuss charity, which "thinketh no evil and is not puffed up[.]"¹⁵ To further distinguish this method from our valued brothers and sisters, as I speak of this entity, I will give it its own initials, ATC – activism toward The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.¹⁶

(3) We must focus those we serve and ourselves on the doctrine of Christ and help them see how ATC can be seriously harmful.

For most of this talk, I will address just *some* of the ways in which ATC undermines the doctrine of Christ, in my view by design. As you know, this fundamental doctrine consists of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost and enduring to the end. Although ATC militates against every one of these principles, time allows for discussion of only *some* of its impacts on the first, faith in Jesus Christ. In my view, all subsequent aspects of the doctrine of Christ flow from and are powered by faith in Christ anyway. Therefore, as ATC weakens faith, it undermines all the others.

In my experience, ATC rarely starts by saying, “Don’t have faith in Jesus Christ.” Rather, it diminishes faith in Christ and trust in God indirectly. Its pattern is to first undermine faith in Church leaders. Here’s how I’ve seen this work. Activism rightly recognizes the popular truism that power corrupts. Activists tend to naturally suspect the powerful. The United States Constitution, with its multiple checks and balances, is a monument to distrust of human nature as it relates to government or popular power and authority. Such distrust is often essential to gaining or retaining basic freedoms.¹⁷

But this distrust is the very opposite of the faith the Lord requires of His covenant people in Himself, His prophets and apostles, and those they direct. He established His apostles as an extension of Himself. Jesus prayed, “that (His apostles) may be one, even as we are one: *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one*; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”¹⁸ Elsewhere He revealed, “[H]e that receiveth my servants receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth my Father.”¹⁹ “Wherefore, meaning the church,” the Lord said, “thou shalt give heed unto all (the Prophet's) words and commandments ... For his word ye shall receive, *as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith.*”²⁰ He said, “Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.”²¹ ATC’s criticism of the Lord’s prophets is actively working in the minds of some to decouple prophets from the prophetic line that runs from Joseph Smith to President Nelson. The Lord further declared the First Presidency should be “upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church.”²² Naturally, this same sustaining faith applies to the Twelve apostles who “officiate in the name of the Lord, under the direction of the Presidency of the Church, agreeable to the *institution of heaven*; to build up the church, and regulate *all* the affairs of the same *in all nations*...”²³ The Lord calls upon His covenant children to sustain other general and local church leaders called under the direction of the First Presidency and the Twelve. Thus, any activism or advocacy that could weaken one’s own or another’s “confidence, faith or prayer” in or on behalf of church leaders or diminish one’s ability to “give heed to the words of the prophets and apostles”²⁴ is obviously not of God. In my observation, such lack of faith inevitably leads to letting go of the Church entirely and losing the testimony of Jesus. Hence ATC often indirectly undermines faith in Jesus Christ.

Heavenly Father knew only an infinitesimal fraction of His mortal children would meet the Savior of the world in person. Therefore, most would learn of Jesus and His doctrine through the witness of others. Chief among these mortal witnesses are His prophets and apostles or “special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world.”²⁵ Joseph Smith taught, “the fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets concerning Jesus Christ...”²⁶ Yet focusing on their imperfections, ATC opposes their testimony by undermining their credibility in the eyes of its followers. Masquerading as a higher and nobler cause, ATC instigates distrust of these leaders. In these ways, it weakens faith in them and their messages and potentially inhibits their ability to “regulate all the affairs of the (Church) in all nations[.]” As you can see, Lucifer gets a very efficient two-for. By seemingly customizing this deceptive approach to the valiant, he cleverly diminishes their real power (faith) and robs them of their true mission (the gathering). He effectively turns the gatherers into scatterers.

Let us also help our friends see that ATC is, therefore, a perfect strategy to lure them into not sustaining Church leaders. President Henry B. Eyring counseled the Church to ask ourselves, “Have I thought or spoken of human weakness in the people I have pledged to sustain?”²⁷ He reminded us, “These are imperfect human beings, as are you. Keeping your promises (to sustain them) will take unshakable *faith* that the Lord called them.”²⁸ But ATC focuses precisely on their human weakness rather than their strengths and mantles. In doing so, it subtly gives permission and justification for murmuring, backbiting and evil speaking of the Lord’s anointed, all deceptively cloaked as principled. Let us also be aware that ATC takes advantage of some of our newer or converting brothers and sisters who may not be used to this principle. Those who, contrary to President Nelson’s counsel, “rehearse their doubts with other doubters”²⁹ will be especially vulnerable to not sustaining their leaders and to ATC. But with our help, Isaiah’s insightful prophecy will come to pass in their lives: “they that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.”³⁰

Because ATC rejects Church leaders and their counsel, usually openly, it must somehow preserve a sense of religious sincerity or authenticity to effectively influence others. Thus, it produces catchphrases such as: “I don’t follow the Brethren, I follow Jesus Christ” or even “I am holding the Brethren accountable to do what’s right.” But these dangerous claims are as counter to Jesus’s own teachings as they are confused. “He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth

me.”³¹ “If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.”³² By contrast, discipleship of Jesus Christ builds and expresses “confidence, faith and prayer” on behalf of Church leaders. It fulfills Abinadi’s prophecy that “every nation, kindred, tongue, and people shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion....”³³ Seeing eye to eye, especially with the Lord’s anointed, is vital to our salvation and necessary to fully and truly follow Jesus Christ.

Please do not misunderstand. I am not at all saying ATC’s causes are not important or good or often pursued in good faith. I tend to agree with many of ATC’s underlying causes as I’m sure you do. A light bulb must be changed to avoid darkness and restore light. My simple point is a hammer is not the right tool for that job. **(PICTURE)** **All needed and appropriate changes in the Kingdom of God are God’s work to bring to pass.** **REPEAT.** And He has stated plainly, “Behold, ... no one can assist in this work except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope and charity, being temperate in all things, whatsoever shall be entrusted to his (or her) care.”³⁴ This higher, holier approach is the very opposite of ATC’s manners, methods and attributes. Also, ATC often claims the need to occasionally turn over tables, cast out money changers and cleanse the inner vessel. It misses that these vigorous actions of Jesus’s, in fulfillment of prophecy, were not *toward the Lord’s church or its leaders*. Rather, they were directed at movements that opposed the Church of Jesus Christ and His apostles. It was actually those not of His faith whom He called to repentance who became misguided activists toward His church. And we know the rest of that tragic, if necessary, outcome.

The Lord also said, “...I will give unto you a pattern in all things, that ye may not be deceived; for Satan ... goeth forth deceiving the nations— ... He (or she) that speaketh, whose spirit is contrite, whose language is meek and edifieth, the same is of God if he (or she) obey mine ordinances. ... And again, he that is overcome and bringeth not forth fruits, even according to this pattern, is not of me. Wherefore, by this pattern ye shall know the spirits in all cases under the whole heavens.”³⁵ This standard also makes us wary of ATC’s worldly phrases like “your truth/my truth” which insulates ATC from “the truth.” Let us help those we serve apply this revealed pattern to all public or private actions and statements relating to the Church, including social media posts, media quotes and so on. Discipleship also recognizes that fundamentally, as Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught, “faith is always pointed toward the future.”³⁶ Borrowing Alma’s language,

discipleship “look(s) forward with an eye of faith and view(s)”³⁷ the Lord’s promises of “perfect peace and harmony”³⁸ among all God’s children fulfilled. It then acts in faith to bring to pass such a vision. We might say ATC looks backward with an eye of judgment and condemns or looks sideways with an eye of scorn and finds fault. Because it “watch(es) for iniquity,”³⁹ ATC sits on the trash heap of disappointing history⁴⁰ recycling others’ real or imagined sins and shortcomings. Because it lacks faith, it does not easily forgive. It also finds fault with *current* attempts to regulate the affairs of the Church, chaining everyone involved to the past or present. I have personally seen examples where ATC has impeded needed progress in the Church by doing more harm than good, a result that often occurs when the wrong tool is used for a particular job. ATC generally ignores Church leaders’ positive features and accomplishments. So long as its ends are not achieved or its means embraced, there is nothing to acknowledge or for which to be grateful. By nature, ATC will always drive its followers to find other issues.

In diminishing faith, ATC effectively gaslights our dear brothers and sisters who engage in it – not in the sense that it manipulates them to question their own sanity, but in that it **narrows minds, enlarges beams and blind spots, and invites judgmentalism all at once**. Whereas discipleship says, “Lord is it I?” or “Help thou mine unbelief,” ATC rarely seeks to humbly understand others’ perspectives or experience or to meekly introspect. Because it has all the information it requires, there is no need for questions. Let me share a personal story. I don’t share it to be mean at all; it makes the point so keenly. Not long ago I received a letter from a sister who has been a dear friend since we were 18-year-old freshmen in college. As a brand-new convert, I admired and looked up to her as an example of gospel light and living, which she learned growing up in her suburban, Salt Lake City home and from her pioneer parents and forebears. After some catching up, she, incredible as it may seem, directed her letter to lecturing me about positions and actions I should be taking against the Church as a black man (in America.) Yes, ATC had gotten to her. Naturally, I was disappointed, saddened and worried. My friend’s mind was as closed and her judgment as certain as her blind spot was evident. She had no questions about my perspectives or experience; for ATC and its narrative had provided all the information she needed. Therefore, experiencing housing projects, poverty, race riots, running for my life from black gangs, from white gangs, dangerous public schools, family and friends victimized by violence, the Nation of Islam, the black church, the suburbs, thousands of criminal cases as a lawyer, legal work on racial profiling and fair housing – all facts, perspectives

and experience were simply not inquired about by this very sweet person – so powerful is the might and so deceptive the allure of ATC.

Also, you are very likely aware of how President Nelson recently taught young adults (and the rest of us) that our primary identities as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are child of God, child of the covenant, and disciple of Jesus Christ.⁴¹ He said that other identifiers can be very important, but none should be elevated above these three.⁴² ATC, on the other hand, cleverly plays on cultural identities and seeks to elevate them above all else in the minds and hearts of its followers. It substitutes culturally familiar voices for divine ones. It also tends to increasingly segregate itself from others who think differently – especially the saints – and isolate itself in its own echo chamber. Chaplains, delicate though it is, you and I must help those to whom we minister avoid allowing their social identities to consume them. Their identities must not become the lens through which they see everything – or what Elder Gary E. Stevenson called a “spiritual eclipse.”⁴³ ATC fashions such lenses to obscure spirituality and calcify the beams that blind our friends.

Amazingly, even when ATC directly and publicly criticizes an apostle or prophet – modern-day verbal stoning – it often does not see itself as opposing the Kingdom. This mindset helps us understand how ancient Israel similarly rejected the prophets. For like reasons, Activism toward the Church dismisses prophetic priorities. When the Prophet declares the gathering of Israel “is the most important thing taking place on earth today,”⁴⁴ or that the doctrine of Christ is vital, ATC convinces its followers that’s just not true. When it comes to defending the United States Constitution and religious freedom, ATC says, “That’s not my issue” and “The prophets, seers and revelators just don’t get it.” Worse, ATC sometimes resents them for emphasizing other than its own issue. It misses the titanic issues of our time. Or, we may say ATC is like thrashing in quicksand. In either analogy, its methods sink the faith of its followers because, again, this approach undermines the doctrine of Christ.

Two more reasons why activism toward the Lord’s church is not of God. One obvious one is it almost invariably fosters contention. Jesus taught with great emphasis and clarity, “Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away.”⁴⁵ He famously taught contention “is of the devil.”⁴⁶ This obviously

applies to all God's children in any age and without regard to culture. The Lord also commanded, "Contend against no church save it be the church of the devil."⁴⁷ Given this prohibition one can hardly justify a contentious approach toward the Lord's own church. Yet ATC not only foments such contention but justifies it as noble.

Because ATC takes counsel from the world rather than Church leaders, it is easily influenced by similar secular movements or causes. ATC "teaches for doctrine the commandments of men, having a form of godliness but (denying) the power thereof."⁴⁸ We must find ways to help our beloved brothers and sisters see that ATC is the world's approach not the light of the world or a city on a hill. In my view, ATC is one of the most masterful deceptions of our time astutely spun by the "liar from the beginning"⁴⁹ who "deceiveth the whole world[.]"⁵⁰ He now has many thousands of years of practice and experience craftily and carefully overthrowing faith in Jesus Christ and in His servants. ATC is eerily similar to the premortal rebellion against God's plan. That rebellion also apparently had a relentless focus on whether others were wrong. "[T]he accuser of our brethren is cast down, which did accuse them before our God day and night."⁵¹ It, too, was supposedly in the interests of a greater good (our assured salvation). Like ATC, it was very effective, deceiving a third part of our Father's spirit children in His presence.

How should we counsel church members who encounter injustice or mistreatment? The Lord has made much provision for accomplishing His work.⁵² These include making an appointment with local leaders, humbly and lovingly expressing concerns, sharing observations, even lodging formal complaints. Indeed, the Lord's revealed system of sustaining and common consent invite and encourage such righteous approaches in the face of misconduct. As a local priesthood leader, I was the recipient of complaints regarding leaders at every level of Church government. When such complaints were properly approached, the complaining party and I were mutually edified, and we saw effective resolution of the issues legitimately raised. I can think of only one occasion when ATC got involved. A recently activated brother protested my teaching of *The Family: A Proclamation to the World*. He very publicly and obviously walked out of sacrament meeting during my talk. He also failed to sustain his leaders at various levels. As his stake president, I counseled him about the impropriety of his method and helped him understand the prophetic principles he had

misunderstood. I might add that although his conduct was inappropriate, Church leaders continued to help him financially support his family and regain employment. We recognized who he really was, overlooked his lapse in judgment and taught him.

Additionally, as you know, the Lord has even established procedures for the discipline and/or removal of leaders who mistreat others or offend in other ways. President Eyring quoted President George Q. Cannon who warned: “God has chosen His servants. He claims it as His prerogative to condemn them, if they need condemnation. (But) He has not given it to us individually to censure and condemn them. No (one), however strong ... in the faith, however high in the Priesthood, can speak evil of the Lord’s anointed and find fault with God’s authority on the earth without incurring His displeasure. The Holy Spirit will withdraw himself from such a (person), and he (or she) will go into darkness...”⁵³

The Lord has brought about significant change in His church through appropriate means and methods. Although these changes have affected all members of the body of Christ,⁵⁴ time permits brief mention of just a very few. Without fanfare, some have encouraged the removal of folklore about people of African descent from among the literature of the Kingdom. More recently, an appropriate and important effort was made to recognize the contributions of great black pioneers including motion pictures and the dedication of statues and memorials. President M. Russell Ballard, Elder D. Todd Christofferson and Brother Mauli Bonner, who appropriately and skillfully guided the Church to this important recognition, and others all attended this historic event. **PICTURE** The First Presidency’s Be One program commemorating the 40th anniversary of the revelation on priesthood **PICTURE**, President Nelson’s call for all of us to “lead out in abandoning attitudes and actions of prejudice”⁵⁵ against any of God’s children, and President Oaks’s counsel to “root out racism”⁵⁶ are all examples. **PICTURE** In this last regard, we see that each instance of bigotry or prejudice in God’s kingdom not only spreads its obvious harm, it also opens the door to ATC to overthrow the doctrine of Christ among our children and our children’s children. I am a personal witness of significant changes of many kinds brought about by people of various backgrounds, all in the Lord’s way in council and often without credit. As Brother Marcus Martins once said in my presence: “We don’t need activism, we need activity.”

In conclusion, ATC is the wrong approach in the wrong setting applied in an over-the-top way. We have discussed (1) being sensitive to those who are more vulnerable to activism toward the Church, (2) recognizing that ATC's followers are or tend to be very valiant souls, and (3) some of the perils of ATC, including how this enemy cleverly and effectively undermines the doctrine of Christ, especially faith in Jesus Christ. Let us help our valiant friends consider the following questions as they decide whether to pursue a cause or follow a particular approach: Does it promote the doctrine of Christ in our lives? Does it build faith in Christ, His atonement, His gospel and His promises? Does it lead others to trust God and be confident in the teachings and leadership of His servants? Is it faultfinding or critical of church leaders? Does it generate feelings of love for all others, or some form of anger? Does it foster harmony in Christ among all God's children, or does it tend to divide? Does it seem more geared to advancing a narrative rather than the cause of Christ? In some cases, there is need to warn and urge change; does it do so consistent with gospel principles and methods or does it tend to rely on worldly wisdom or secular sayings and approaches? Is it contentious or does it introduce peace, unity and healing? Does it advance prophetic priorities?

May we all be effective and divinely guided in helping the rising generation and all our members use the higher, holier methods – especially faith in Christ – that the Lord, Himself, prescribed for changing hearts, minds and behavior, and to build a unified covenant people. I testify of Jesus Christ, His doctrine and its power to change us all and to return us all to Their presence in the Celestial Kingdom exalted as God's children. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

¹ Revelation 12:10

² *Hope of Israel*, Russell M. Nelson, June 3, 2018

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Our Strengths Can Be Our Downfall*, Dallin H. Oaks, BYU Devotional, June 7, 1992

⁵ Siri

⁶ Merriam-Webster online

⁷ See footnotes 54-55; see, also, *Be One Commemoration*, Russell M. Nelson and Dallin H. Oaks, June 1, 2018; and *Be Not Weary in Well-doing*, Elder Quentin L. Cook, August 24, 2020, *The Doctrine of Belonging*, Elder D. Todd Christofferson, General Conference, October 2022, *The Need for Greater Kindness*, Gordon B. Hinckley, General Conference, April 2006.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ First Amendment, United States Constitution

¹⁰ United States Declaration of Independence

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Doctrine and Covenants 101:77; also, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. famously said, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

¹³ *Pure Truth, Pure Doctrine, and Pure Revelation*, Russell M. Nelson, General Conference, October 2021

¹⁴ See, generally, Mosiah 26-29

¹⁵ Moroni 7:45, 1 Corinthians 13:4-5

¹⁶ In using these initials, I am not replacing the name of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Rather, this is a literary device to help those who use activism toward the Church not take offense.

¹⁷ *Going Forward in the Second Century*, Dallin H. Oaks, BYU Devotional, September 13, 2022

¹⁸ John 17:22-23

¹⁹ Doctrine and Covenants 84:36-37

²⁰ Doctrine and Covenants 21:4-5

²¹ Doctrine and Covenants 1:38

²² Doctrine and Covenants 107:22

²³ Doctrine and Covenants 107:33

²⁴ Doctrine and Covenants 1:14

²⁵ Doctrine and Covenants 107:23

²⁶ Elders’ Journal of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1838, Question 20th

²⁷ *The Power of Sustaining Faith*, Henry B. Eyring, General Conference, April 2019

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ *Christ is Risen, Faith in Him Will Move Mountains*; Russell M. Nelson, General Conference, April 2021

³⁰ Isaiah 29:24 2 Nephi 27:35

³¹ John 13:20

³² John 15:20

³³ Mosiah 15:28-29; 16:1

³⁴ Doctrine and Covenants 12:8

³⁵ Doctrine and Covenants 52:14-19

³⁶ “Remember Lot’s Wife”; *Faith Is For The Future*, Jeffrey R. Holland, BYU Devotional, January 13, 2009

³⁷ Alma 5:15-16

³⁸ Be One Commemoration, closing remarks, Russell M. Nelson, June 1, 2018.

³⁹ Doctrine and Covenants 45:50; Isaiah 29:20

⁴⁰ Learning, recording and citing history is of utmost importance. Even the Lord counsels to “obtain a knowledge of history[.]” However, He makes the context and purpose for doing so clear: “and all this for the salvation of Zion.” Doctrine and Covenants 93:53. The salvation of Zion is accomplished by the doctrine of Christ, including increasing faith in Christ.

⁴¹ Worldwide Devotional for Young Adults with President and Sister Nelson, May 15, 2022

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ *Spiritual Eclipse*, Gary E. Stevenson, General Conference, October 2017

⁴⁴ *Hope of Israel*, Russell M. Nelson, June 3, 2018

⁴⁵ 3 Nephi 11:30

⁴⁶ 3 Nephi 11:29

⁴⁷ Doctrine and Covenants 18:20

⁴⁸ Joseph Smith History 1:19

⁴⁹ Revelation 12:9

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Revelation 12:10

⁵² 2 Nephi 27:21

⁵³ *The Power of Sustaining Faith*, Henry B. Eyring, General Conference, April 2019

⁵⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:12-26

⁵⁵ *Let God Prevail*, Russell M. Nelson, General Conference, October 2020

⁵⁶ *Love Your Enemies*, Dallin H. Oaks, General Conference, October 2020; see, also, *Racism and Other Challenges*, BYU Devotional, October 27, 2020.