

## “Be of Good Cheer”

[A portion of Elder Ashton's talk]

Just a few weeks ago, while in Bangkok, Thailand, our hearts were touched by a young lady now living in a state of good cheer she never realized possible. Meaningful change has brought great joy and happiness to her and her family. Let me share this message of good cheer as told in her own words.

“In 1975 there was a family who lived near the main road in a small village. My parents were rather poor. My father worked at the local post office, while my mother stayed home caring for the children.

“As time passed by, my mother became bored with her life as a housewife and set out to find a more exciting way of life. She turned to drink, tobacco, and gambling. Many times she would play cards all day and all night and not return to care for her children.

“Meanwhile, my father was working hard to support his family. Things at home were not going well, and many times my father and my mother would argue violently.

“One day my father came home and told my mother that if she continued on with her gambling and didn't care for the children, he would have to divorce her. The family faced a crisis. At that time I was helping care for my three younger brothers. My parents asked each child who he or she wanted to live with, Mom or Dad. It was a very difficult decision to have to choose between my mother and my father. It was a time of much suffering and sorrow.

“It was during this time that my oldest sister first met some missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She studied about the Church and came to accept the teachings and adopt them into her life. She asked me to go to church with her. I was very sad and angry at first to think she had changed religions. I had only known the teachings of Buddha and had come to love the customs.

“But I noticed a change in my sister. She was more loving and kind and did many things to help our family. I decided to study with the missionaries. My mother listened also. Before very long, we both realized that we had done things wrong and needed to change our lives. We repented of our sins and were baptized. When my father and two older brothers saw the change in us, they decided to study also. My father had been an important officer and teacher in the Buddhist church. He spent much time studying and reading the standard works. He prayed often and sincerely to know the truth. At last his humble prayers were answered. He knew, as we did, that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was true.

“The true gospel changed our lives and restored happiness to a nearly devastated home and family. We are all very grateful and happy to now be a part of the Lord’s church and become familiar with and obey his commandments.”

Today this young lady is a missionary for the Church. She and her family are living witnesses that when people come to realize that “I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you,” a whole family can change their despair to good cheer.

In contrast to this family in Bangkok, some of us who have the happiness and good cheer of the gospel can lose it by becoming involved in iniquity and deceit. One of the most destructive forms of deceit is self-deceit.