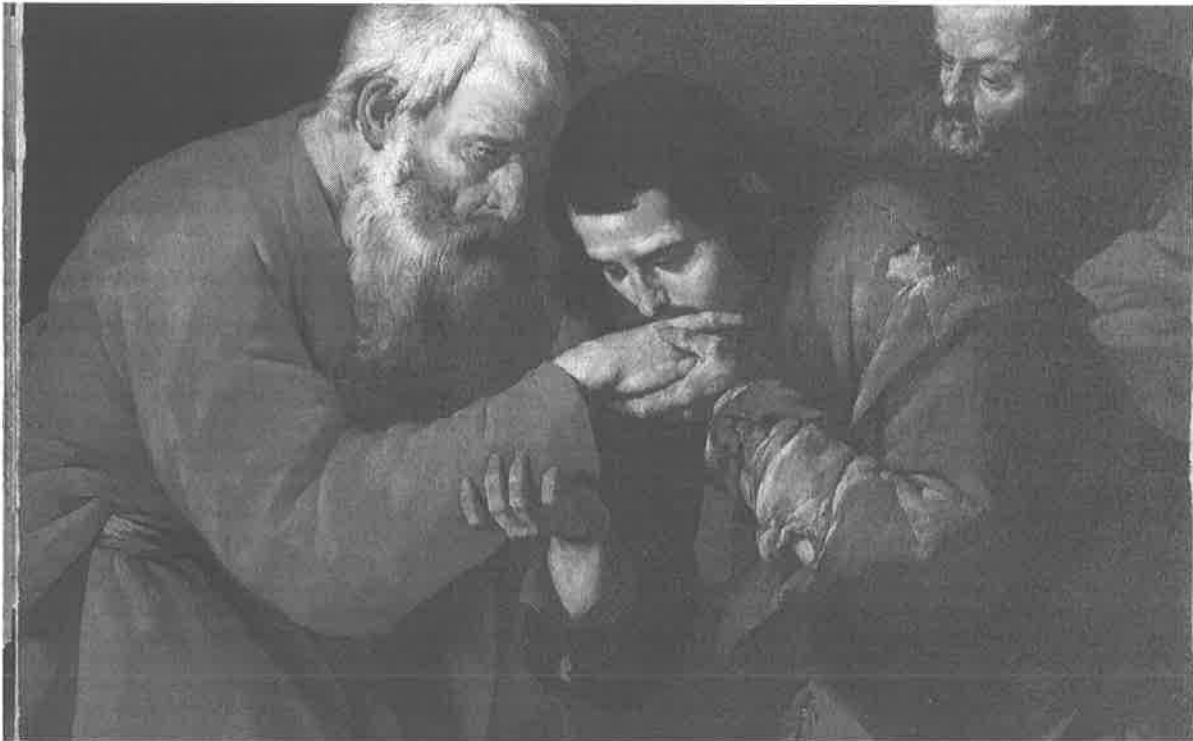


## Return or Renewal

by Kyle Anderson | Sep 5, 2017 | Empowerment, Featured, Goodness, Mindfulness, Revelation  
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By now, Facebook loiterers and magazine subscribers will have all read the *LDSLiving* article on Thomas Wirthlin McConkie's journey back to the church.

Writer Katie Lambert draws from McConkie's May 22 interview with KUER's *Radiowest* to describe McConkie's search for truth that led him away and eventually back to the LDS fold.

Following a poignant moment of enlightenment, Thomas realized it was time to reconsider the faith of his fathers:

"Within a matter of days [...], McConkie says he was back in a Mormon church. And after almost 20 years, McConkie found himself coming back to the religion of his childhood, blending traditional mindfulness, journaling, and introspective questions with his faith."

McConkie's story is a remarkable one. His experience easily picks up on that cherished, familiar narrative thread originating in the parable of the prodigal son, weaving its way through the

loom of every parent and family member's tortured hopes that their prayers may help loved ones who have strayed from the faith.

However, if "return" is all we take from the recent press on McConkie's conversion, we're missing a much more powerful lesson...

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In describing the revelatory moment that sparked his desire to return to the church, McConkie details a contemplative, meditative process that offers infinitely more to all of us than just a new version of an ancient moral tale.

"Everything became really simple, everything became illuminated," McConkie says. "Like the world itself, everything felt like it was bathed in light and all was well and all matter of things will be well."

The spiritual comfort and profound revelation he experienced arose during a meditative practice while he sat in a Zen monastery.

This is the piece of the story we as listeners and readers are eager to race over to get to what we perceive to be the story's happy resolution: the prodigal son's return to his father's embrace.

I'm convinced, however, that the part most illuminating and potentially useful from McConkie's experience is what precipitated his personal revelation and eventual return.

At the end of the day, our ultimate goal is not solely to be one of the masses that follow on Christ's heels, but to become His true disciples, constantly reconverted and regenerated.

By cultivating powerful contemplative and meditative moments in our daily lives, embedded in and alongside regular prayer and worship, we foster opportunities for more meaningful (and likely) communion with others and God.

Meditation (and similar mindfulness practices) is an extremely helpful way to generate greater love, empathy, care, self-awareness, self-regulation, contentment and general well-being. When we are settled, clear and calm, we are more fit receptacles for the Lord's inspiration, finer instruments for his winds to play upon.

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Thomas is now taking steps to bring these insights to the Mormon community with his *Mindfulness* + podcast and other publications.

Many others have discovered similar benefits for themselves and are working to translate contemplative work to complement and to strengthen LDS faith and practice: John Kesler (SLC attorney and health professional), author Cathy Thomas, Phil McLemore (former Air Force chaplain and meditation instructor), Adam Miller (professor of philosophy at Collin College), Jacob Hess (psychologist and author of the upcoming book *Mindfully Mormon*), and others.

Much more will soon be shared on this topic...

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## Kyle Anderson

Kyle Anderson is the Director of the Center for Global Citizenship at Centre College in Danville, Kentucky. He holds degrees in comparative literature from Brigham Young University and The Pennsylvania State University. He is a married father of three brilliant girls and currently serves as a primary teacher in his ward.

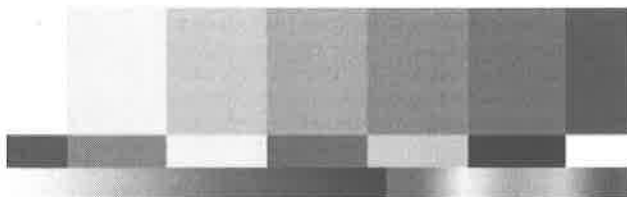
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