

Africa Southeast Area Local Pages

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Let Us Make Good Choices

Elder Ulisses Soares of the Seventy

Jacob, Nephi's brother, was known as a man who had a lot of faith in the Lord and that, despite the trials he faced, had a positive, constant and firm reaction and could not be shaken. Jacob was born in the desert, after his family left Jerusalem, and developed his faith in the Lord thanks to the influence of his parents and his brother Nephi. Because of that he received many revelations and the ministering of angels, and heard the voice of the Lord during his lifetime (see Jacob 7:5).

Due to the choices he made in his life, he could perform that which was assigned to him—to record the history of his people so that all who would read it in the future could benefit from his faith and would be blessed.

Recently, during a conversation with a former missionary, I heard him tell about his [missionary] experiences. He said that during his mission he had to constantly exercise faith to make good choices [in order] to be able to reach his objective as a missionary. “I feel extremely blessed; I know the mission was good training for

life. As I practice faith to make good choices I can determine my future and have a life full of happiness”, he added.

As part of a special generation that lives in the threshold of times, we face difficult choices in our daily living—especially in this world that is so troubled, with ethics and values being attacked more and more every day. According to our living prophets, our problems are not new, but they are more intense nowadays than they were in the recent past.

If we remember Jacob's experience when his values and faith were explicitly attacked by Sherem, we can inspire ourselves to choose what is right when we face our daily challenges. Although Sherem was educated and had a perfect knowledge of the language of the people, and could use much flattery and much power of speech to persuade, he didn't believe in God nor in the future.

Sherem made his choices influenced by the power of evil; he even said that he had been deceived by the enemy. Before his death he declared:



Elder Ulisses Soares

“I fear lest I have committed the unpardonable sin, for I have lied unto God; for I denied the Christ, and said that I believed the scriptures; and they truly testify of him. And because I have thus lied unto God I greatly fear lest my case shall be awful; but I confess unto God” (Jacob 7:19; see also verses 1–18).

We represent the future of the Church in this continent, and the enemy wants to harm us; he wants to destroy our faith and take us by illusory and attractive ways that are

deadly and will bring much misery to our lives.

Speaking of the mists of darkness in Lehi's dream, Nephi told his brothers: "The mists of darkness are the temptations of the devil, which blindeth the eyes, and hardeneth the hearts of the children of men, and leadeth them away into broad roads, that they perish and are lost" (1 Nephi 12:17).

Nephi was trying to say that when we let ourselves be carried away by the temptations of the enemy, by not doing what is right, we become blinded by the consequences of our wrong decisions and we become proud and not teachable. There lies the great danger, for it is at that moment that we make wrong decisions which can lead us to spiritual death.

On June 2, 2008, in a meeting with the members of the Church in Brazil, President Thomas S. Monson said, "We become what we choose. Our choices determine our destiny".

And he added: "I trust that we will listen to the advice of our leaders, who are inspired to guide us in the way we should choose. . . . I hope you will listen to those who love you and have the best intentions in their hearts. . . . May we hearken to the whisperings of the Holy

Ghost. I promise you that if you hearken to the Holy Ghost, if you have a righteous desire in your heart and your behavior reflects that desire, you will be guided by the Holy Ghost".

What a wonderful promise we heard in our days from a living prophet! We can count on this precious help when we make our daily choices.

Elder W. Craig Zwick of the Seventy once said, "As we make little right choices daily, the Lord will strengthen us and help us choose the right during difficult times."

In Doctrine and Covenants 58:27–28 we read: "Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;

"For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in no wise lose their reward".

I bear my testimony that as we make good choices today, we will be building a future full of joy that will strengthen our faith and righteousness. I know that as we partake of that joy, we will be strengthened to continue to persevere in the road that will lead us back to the presence of our Heavenly Father. ■

The Rains Stopped

By Elder Ronald Pugmire

On November 29, 2011, in the village of Mautuma, Kenya, the rains stopped. It was a beautiful day, thanks to the heartfelt prayers of a handful of Saints. At least that is how the senior missionaries felt. For days the rain had been steady. (In fact, the rain became so heavy the next day that the River Nzoi flooded, and several people in the area were displaced, including a member of the Mautuma Branch whose house was swept away.) As branch member and project monitor Evance K. Busolo stated, "Immediately [after] you left, there was much downpour. It rained dogs and cats!"

For three months humanitarian missionaries Elder Dick and Sister Janet Tuttle had worked on the Mukuyu Primary School project, and this day was the greatly anticipated "Hand-Over Day". On that day 30 new latrines, a shallow well fitted with a hand pump, and two new washing stations would be officially turned over to the more than 700 students and the school headmaster, Phestus Afesa. Rain had been a problem for days, and knowing the children and parents would be sitting out in the open for the ceremony, the senior missionaries prayed for a break in the weather, especially for the children. And as stated, Tuesday, November 29, 2011, was a beautiful day in the village of Mautuma!

At the conclusion of the ceremony local dignitaries, children, their parents and LDS missionaries (Elders Munyoro, Ramananaivorison, Tucket, Motaung, Cele, and Mutaduba) mingled with each other as they toured the new facilities and expressed their joy at having such



An honor student at Mukuyu Primary School expresses thanks on behalf of students, faculty, and parents for the generosity of LDS Charity Services.



Students, who received the certificate of completion of the new latrine facilities, present the framed document to the Mautuma Branch president, Peter Kadji, and school headmaster, Phestus Afesa, while humanitarian missionaries, Elder and Sister Tuttle, look on.

modern features at their school. The parents of the children were in awe at the willingness of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to provide new sanitary latrines and clean water. Brother Busolo stated: “Now, the entire area has a positive [view of] the Church due to the ceremony

we had. The majority of people knew the Church to be true, but they could not imagine how much the Church cared [about] humanitarian issues. Missionaries since then have no time to rest. They teach a lot of discussions in a day. On Sunday, December 4, 2011, the chapel was full.” ■

Golfers with Hearts of Gold

By Sister Julie Badger Jensen

Three friends, all LDS professional golfers, are helping to make the world a happier, kinder place. They are beautiful women with hearts of gold. Their numerous, far-reaching projects bless many lives. Clearly remarkable women, they serve as powerful examples of goodness.

The strong friendships of Reeve Nield, Laurette (Lolly) Maritz, and Cecilie (CC) Lundgreen began on the golf course. Reeve met Laurette in 1994 and became her golf coach, caddie, and manager. Then in 2001, Cecilie's mother recruited Reeve to help Cecilie with her putting, and they have been together as coach and player ever since.

The service of this trio in the Church and community is inspirational. Their main area of focus is Eyes for Zimbabwe, an organization that is giving sight, through surgery, to those who are blinded by cataracts.

Other projects the women are involved in include providing medical equipment and supplies, wheelchairs, and eyeglasses; promoting neonatal initiatives, which are saving the lives of the newborn;

and providing Atmit (food source) to children, birthing mothers, and those who are dying of HIV.

They hand-pack containers with soap, hygiene items, and newborn kits that bless the lives of those mothers in the rural areas who have nothing to give to their newborn babies. Fundraising for the schooling of orphans and providing books is also an important focus. The motto, "Give a book, give a life" sums up the vital importance of education. Reeve commented, "Seeing the expressions on the faces of those we help keeps us going".

These women are dedicated to visiting and serving in the temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout the world. With determination, they are working to reach high goals set in this long-term endeavor.

Reeve Nield

Born in Harare, Zimbabwe, Reeve Nield is the daughter of Reginald Joseph Nield and Iris Merle Nield, well-loved and respected members of the Church. Her father is a

national sports hero who captained Rhodesian rugby. As a professional golf coach, Reeve has coached many players on the Ladies European Tour and other tours for the past 19 years. She is well respected throughout the world and is willing to share what she knows about golf and the gospel of Jesus Christ. A native of Zimbabwe, she delights in helping others wherever she can—something she learned from her father and mother.

When Reeve isn't coaching on the golf course, she is often found spending time with her family in Zimbabwe or raising funds for a charity called Eyes for Zimbabwe with the help of Laurette and Cecilie. The charity began 16 years ago when Reeve met a 12-year-old girl who was blinded at the age of 8 because of bilateral cataracts. The only thing that kept this young girl from receiving her sight was \$20 worth of medical supplies, a surgeon, and a 15-minute operation. At that moment, Reeve knew she wanted to do something to help. In 1996, Reeve and Lolly started Eyes for Zimbabwe, a nongovernmental organization that raises money and collects medical supplies to host eye

clinics throughout Zimbabwe, where volunteer doctors and nurses help restore sight to thousands of babies, children and adults each year.

Reeve served a full-time mission in Provo, Utah, USA, from 1992 to 1993.

Laurette Maritz (“Lolly”)

Fondly known as “Lolly”, Laurette Maritz is a household name in her native country of South Africa and has millions of fans cheering her on. Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, she started playing golf at the age of 11. At 17 she was a +2 handicap and was South Africa’s top amateur golfer; she represented her country on numerous occasions worldwide.

Lolly was offered a fully paid golf scholarship in the United States at the International University in San Diego, California. During her time at university, she won numerous competitions and awards, including the title United States Player of the Year. In 1988 Lolly turned professional and joined the Ladies European Tour. Her first week on tour she won the Spanish Open, and has won many tournaments since. She has been a tremendous example to many, including young aspiring golfers. Television

commentators have called her “Laurette Maritz, the Lady of Golf!”

Over the past 16 years Lolly has been instrumental in the charity Eyes for Zimbabwe, which she and Reeve initiated. Through organizing golfing events worldwide, they have raised money to purchase the much-needed medical equipment and supplies to perform these life-changing operations.

Laurette loves the Lord and enjoys attending Latter-day Saint temples as she works worldwide. Her favorite reading materials are her scriptures.

Cecilie Lundgreen (“CC”)

Born in a small town in Norway called Sarpsborg, CC began playing golf at age 11. Her grandfather was her great inspiration and coach. Over the years she represented Norway in Nordic, European and World championships and was ranked as their top female golfer. Although CC’s focus was on becoming a professional golfer, her mother always let her know that education was vital. In 1993 CC moved to the United States and attended Florida Atlantic University, where she received a golf scholarship. After turning

professional, she joined the Ladies European Tour in 1999. CC has had great years on the golf course and continues to grow and learn every week. She is grateful for this talent, which takes her to every corner of the world.

Sadly, in 2002 her mother passed away, and CC’s life changed. She was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and has found peace and direction within the gospel. She loves Africa and spends much of her time in Zimbabwe helping with Eyes for Zimbabwe alongside coach Reeve and fellow golf professional, Lolly. She finds joy in serving in the Young Women presidency in her ward and really enjoys teaching the youth. She comments, “They are amazing!” She loves to attend the house of the Lord wherever in the world she might be.

Reeve, Lolly, and CC have “hearts of gold” and are powerful examples of goodness. “Teach what you live, live what you teach” is a motto they live by. What can be said of one can be said of all. They are gifted golfers who love the Lord and are ready and anxious to serve wherever they are needed. ■

An Absolute Miracle

By Joanne Steveson and Mirtha Rasmussen

Reeve, Lolly, and CC visited the Utah Sandy Alta View Ward Relief Society on Sunday, October 9, 2011. After the meeting I [Joanne Steveson] asked if they needed help the next day at the Humanitarian Centre. [The Humanitarian Centre of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints collects used clothing to be distributed to people in need throughout the world.]

CC said there was a need for missionary clothing for young missionaries in Zimbabwe. She asked me to collect whatever missionary clothing I could to be packed in the next day or two. We were told that for every missionary who serves, there are 12 or more in Zimbabwe who want to go on a mission but can't afford to purchase appropriate missionary clothing. I was concerned about getting enough missionary attire, but CC assured me, "It can be done, you know."

By Monday morning I had only collected two suits, complete with tie, belt and shoes. Mirtha Rasmussen and I went to the Humanitarian Centre. As more donations arrived, a few more suits, white shirts, ties, and dress shoes came in.

When we left for the day, we passed Reeve, who thanked us for helping, and asked us to stop by Deseret Industries (D.I.) to buy all the white shirts they had for the missionaries in Zimbabwe. [In some areas, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has retail stores which sell used clothing and other items at low prices. Deseret Industries is the name of those stores.]

We stopped at one D.I. which had only a few white shirts and suits—all too expensive. As we

left, I remembered a nearby missionary store, The Liahona, but I wasn't sure of the exact location. Within a minute or two, however, we both saw the sign, "The Liahona," and stopped.

We spoke to the owner and told him our situation—we needed white shirts for prospective missionaries from Zimbabwe. We shared some of the Zimbabwe stories we had been told by Reeve, Lolly, and CC. He said that he'd be willing to sell to us a very good brand of new white shirts for R35 each—an excellent price. We ended up with 90 new white long-sleeve shirts!

Then we asked about suits. We had noticed that he had some suits on clearance for R375, but we knew we couldn't get very many for that price. We wanted to clothe missionaries and we needed to be able to get more than one or two suits.

He asked if we would take odds and ends—brand new wool blend suit coats and suit pants that were separate, but that we could match up later. He said he'd give the suit coats to us for R7,50 each, and each pair of slacks for R7,50 each. Mirtha and I looked at each other in amazement! "Absolutely!" we told him. So we spent the next hour and a half sorting through trousers and coats. They were beautiful, brand new, wool suits!

I told him we didn't want him to lose money on this and he got teary-eyed and assured us it was for a good cause. In the end, that day we ended up with 90 long-sleeved white shirts, 106 suit coats and 103 suit pants! We thanked him again and again for his generosity. He seemed very touched by the opportunity to help the missionaries in Zimbabwe. After we left, we realized that he had never even asked



Kathy Aiken, CC Lundgreen, Joanne Steveson, Lolly Maritz, Reeve Nield, Mirtha Rasmussen

our names. He didn't ask what the name of the organization was that we were representing, for a phone number, for an e-mail address, nothing! We thought that was odd, but didn't think much more of it.

On Tuesday Mirtha and I drove in to the Humanitarian Centre with my van filled literally from floor to ceiling with white shirts, suit coats, and suit pants. Reeve, Lolly, and CC were amazed beyond words. They kept referring to it as a miracle. Truly it was! We were so thankful for the inspiration to stop at The Liahona on Monday. We celebrated that day as we worked at the centre.

At lunchtime we asked Reeve if she would go with us to The Liahona to thank this man herself. She, too, felt like she needed to meet him and thank him in person. When we got there we saw workers changing the whole outside of the store. The Liahona sign had been taken down.

If we had waited one more day to go there, we would never have found the store, because the sign was gone.

We went in to the now nameless store where Reeve met David and thanked him for his generosity. She shared a few more stories of the young men in Zimbabwe, and again we could tell he'd been very touched by the Spirit.

Later in the conversation, he asked, "So, did you decide you wanted any shoes?" Yesterday, in the excitement of the suits and shirts, I had forgotten that David offered some high-quality missionary shoes. He said he had many pairs in small sizes and large sizes that probably would not sell. He also had some shoes whose boxes were water damaged, but the shoes were still great. He said he'd sell them to us for R37.50 a pair! Reeve said, "We'll take everything you're willing to sell! We'll take anything else you have that would be helpful for missionaries, too."

We ended up with over 100 pairs of shoes, over 100 ties (for R7.50 each), eight missionary coats, some hats, ear muffs, and pyjamas. David's mother brought some of the shoes from her home where they had been stored. David went to the office to total up the cost while we spoke with his mother.

We told her how this was such an answer to prayer and how so many young men in Zimbabwe were going to be thrilled to have clothes to serve a mission. As we expressed our gratitude she whispered, "I have an amazing, wonderful son!" We agreed with her and said that it was inspiration that brought us to him. She replied, "It was an answer to prayer on both sides."

David's mother eventually returned to her home. We paid David the small amount he had asked for the shoes and other items. Again we told David that we had felt inspired to stop at his store. He got tears in his eyes and echoed what his mother had said, "It was an answer to prayer on both ends. We have wanted to do something with our extra inventory that would be of benefit to people in need. You actually answered our prayers." Mirtha then realized why David had never even asked our names when we first came into the store on Monday. He recognized that we were the answer to his prayers and there was no need to quiz us and see if our story was indeed true. He just trusted that we were sent in answer to his prayers.

Mirtha and I are so thankful that we got to be part of a real modern-day miracle. It confirmed in our minds that Heavenly Father is aware of all of us, and if we are willing to serve and then listen to His promptings, we can be blessed to be a part of the rolling forth of the gospel across the world. ■



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