

AFRICA WEST AREA LOCAL PAGES

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

The Book of Mormon—Echoes of Familiar Sound

Elder Edward Dube

Second Counselor in the Africa West Area Presidency

One Sunday morning early in 1983, I got up, showered, got dressed, and had breakfast. Since my friends were out of town I was compelled to break the routine schedule. As I thought about what to do, I reluctantly picked up the Book of Mormon, which had lain in my room for nearly two years, and walked out the door. I went over to a railroad line outside the township, sat down, and began reading. During that time my English comprehension was very limited. As I got inside the Book of Mormon, I would start dozing, but I would go back and re-read Joseph Smith's testimony. I felt a good impression as I continued reading Joseph Smith's testimony. Although my reading and comprehension of the contents in the Book of Mormon were limited then, I felt the echoes of a familiar sound.

In the proceeding weeks and months as I continued reading, I saw things much more clearly. I felt such a burning desire to continue reading. What I didn't know then is that the Book of Mormon carries a certain spirit, which is part of conversion process—conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ. I felt a familiar sound. The words were soothing to me, and more than that, I felt the reality of what I was reading. It was as if somewhere I had experienced this feeling of excessive joy before, somewhere in a distant but still very real past.

One of the passages which touched me was an account in 3 Nephi of Jesus Christ's appearance to the Nephites. I was touched by how the Savior had come down and reached out lovingly to the surviving people of the Nephites. I felt the comfort and

peace they might have felt as He let them thrust their hands into His side and feel the nail prints. I marveled that He had come to comfort the Nephites who had gone through such upheaval:

“And it came to pass that he stretched forth his hand and spake unto the people, saying:

“Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into world.

“And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which

the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.

“And it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words the whole multitude fell to the earth: for they remembered that it had been prophesied among them that Christ should show himself unto them after his ascension into heaven.

“And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto them saying:

“Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel,



Edward Dube

and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world” (3 Nephi 11:9–14).

These words flowed with a warm feeling, enlightening my mind. I felt close to the Lord Jesus Christ; I felt as though as I was among those whom the Savior had retrieved from the human heap of despair. This knowledge and experience gave me a calm sense of worth. I was discovering the simple good news of Jesus Christ. The Book of Mormon, with the echoes of familiar sound, has helped me make lasting changes which required strong commitment to a future vision of myself and my posterity. This is one reason why I am compelled to write this article.

As you take time to read the Book of Mormon, you will be capable of thinking anew and acting anew as you get in touch with the basic assumptions and deeply held inner values, in realizing who you are. You will discover, as I have discovered over the years, that your whole being will undergo some sort of transformation. You will know for yourself that the Book of Mormon is exactly what it says it is. I am convinced that the teachings from this book will lead you closer to God than any other literary work.

Invitation:

I extend an invitation to you who are reading this message to read the Book of Mormon and experience what I and millions of people throughout the world have experienced. To those who have read and stopped or those who read casually, I invite you to fully immerse yourself in the Book of Mormon. The best way of doing this is to apply the counsel of President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95):

“It is certain that one who studies the scriptures every day accomplishes far more than one who

devotes considerable time one day and then lets days go by before continuing. Not only should we study each day, but there should be a regular time set aside when we can concentrate without interference” (“Reading the Scriptures,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 64).

I share Nephi’s promise in the Book of Mormon: “Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3). President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988) captured it well in defining how the Book of Mormon will bless us in our homes and in our individual lives: “I feel certain that if, in our homes, parents will read from the Book of Mormon prayerfully and regularly, both by themselves and with their children, the spirit of that great book will come to permeate our homes and all who dwell therein. The spirit of reverence will increase; mutual respect and consideration for each other will grow. The spirit of contention will depart. Parents will counsel their children in greater love and wisdom. Children will be more responsive and submissive to the counsel of their parents. Righteousness will increase. Faith, hope, and charity—the pure love of Christ—will abound in our homes and lives, bringing in their wake peace, joy, and happiness” (“The Book of Mormon,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2005, 67).

I know that the Book of Mormon echoes a familiar sound to all those who will take time to read it. It is the word of God. It has drawn me close to my Father in Heaven and helped me feel the love which the Savior Jesus Christ has for me through His Atonement. Will you read the Book of Mormon and make it your lifelong pursuit? I promise you that you will find peace, comfort, and the true meaning and purpose of this life. ■

The Book of Mormon: My Hero!

By Eeno Ndeshimona Kalola

WHO AM I?

*Please allow me to introduce myself:
I speak from the earth,
Written under the hands of inspiration
on gold plates,
Buried centuries ago in Hill Cumorah,
I came forth, was translated into English
By the gift and power of God.
Today I can speak many other
languages,
I'm the Book of Mormon.*

*Truth is my other name,
I contain nothing but pure truth,
I teach nothing but truth,
I offer nothing but truth,
I rejoice in nothing but truth,
So truth is who I have been
And who I will forever be,
I'm truth from the earth.*

*I bring men closer to God,
I have answers to all their life's questions,
I comfort and strengthen them,
I'm the witness and evidence
That God speaks to all nations.
I'm the most needed doctor to heal souls,
I'm the correction to life's errors,
I'm your Liahona in the time of Lehi,
So allow me to direct your paths.*

*I have greater power,
Power to reveal false doctrines,*

*Power to help you overcome temptations,
Power to protect you from the devil,
Power to transform you completely,
Power to feed your soul,
Power to set you free,
I'm more powerful than a sword.*

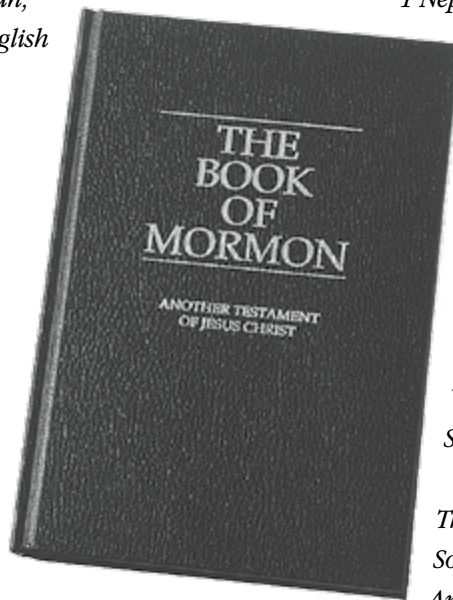
*I have 15 children,
They are real heroes inspired by God,
1 Nephi is my firstborn*

*And Moroni is my last born.
Together they testify of Christ,
They tell men what they must do
To gain peace in this life
And eternal salvation in the life to come.
They are the heroes that you should never
forget!*

*The Holy Bible is my companion,
We work together perfectly.
Sadly, many think I'm not needed
at all,
They see me as an enemy to my companion,
Some say I'm mammon, some say I'm
An evil spiritual book.*

*This is not surprising to me
My second son best explains it
That not all will accept me (see 2 Nephi 29)*

*I have a special mission
In these latter days
To bring all men unto Christ,
To show them the straight and narrow way,
To shower blessings upon them,
To defend the kingdom of God,
To unite all men in one faith,
To convince men that Jesus is the Christ.*



*Now you know who I perfectly am,
Study me to gain wisdom,
Abide by my precepts to have joy in life,
Handle me well to protect you,
Search me daily, diligently to be blessed,
Testify of me to become righteous,
Be with me always to stand forever,
God be with you till we meet again.*

From: Your faithful friend, the Book of Mormon ■

PRIMARY

My Favorite Scripture Passage

Benjamin K., age 11

Christiansborg Ward, Christiansborg Stake,
Accra Ghana

One of my favorite scriptures is Alma 34:1–20. This teaches me about salvation and gives me direction.

I know that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ see what I do so I need to make right choices.

I know that Christ died for my sins, so when I do something wrong I need to repent. He has given me the time and opportunity to repent. I want to live with Him again, so I will keep the commandments. ■



Benjamin

Wheel Cap Church

By Charles Obinna

Charles Obinna lived in the early years of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Nigeria. His uncle, Anthony Obinna, was instrumental in bringing the Church to the area. Many people were ready for baptism before the white missionaries even arrived to this African country. It all started when Anthony had a dream. A man came and showed him a building with tall white spires. The man showed him the inside and outside of this building. A short time later, Anthony saw this exact structure in a *Reader's Digest* book and found out it was the Salt Lake Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He was amazed that he saw this exact place in a dream and began writing Church authorities.

The time was not right for the Church to enter Nigeria, but pamphlets, copies of the Book of Mormon, and other literature arrived. Anthony and others waited and prayed for the missionaries to arrive. While they were waiting, they conducted their own church meetings. To start the meeting they would use

a large rock to hit the wheel cap of Uncle Anthony's car to let everyone know that church would start at eight o'clock. Everyone would get dressed up and go to Anthony's house to have church. He would read out of the Book of Mormon and tell stories about the scriptures in the book. He also taught from the Doctrine and Covenants and the Bible. Charles loved to hear the wheel cap ring, because he knew that church was about to start. Their favorite song was "I Am a Child of God" (*Hymns*, no. 301). They loved to sing it. Charles's father, Raymond, was Anthony's brother, and together they brought the Church to Nigeria, Africa.

In 1978 the Church sent missionaries to Nigeria. Elder Maybe and Elder Cannon were the first white missionaries to come to Nigeria and Ghana. Everyone was excited to see them. Nineteen people were ready for baptism when the missionaries arrived. Charles Obinna, along with his uncle, Anthony, and father, Raymond, with many of their family members were among the first to be



A large rock was used to hit a wheel cap to call everyone to church.

baptized. The wheel cap church had helped bring in those first African saints.

Charles Obinna shares this testimony, "I testify that the Church

is true. The Church has blessed my life and blessed my dad. We have a living God. The Church has blessed the Obinna family. We are very happy." ■

FOLLOW THE PROPHET

Provident Living: Following the Wise Counsel of the Prophets

The fridge was full, the storeroom was packed, and the kitchen shelves were well stocked; Sister Pauline Konu, Achimota Ward Relief Society president, stood in amazement. She could not determine what additional supplies the sisters could provide to assist Sister Yvonne Ansah-Arthur and her four young children, who had just lost their father.

William Ansah-Arthur had been the bishop of Achimota Ward for some years when he decided to focus on encouraging his members to make a serious effort to obey the prophets' counsel to *stay out of debt* and to *keep a year's supply of food at home*; advice that has been difficult for many members in West Africa to keep. "How does one store enough for a year

when there is barely enough for the month?" many wonder; but Bishop Ansah-Arthur was not deterred. He determined that to motivate the members to obey this directive, he first had to set the example by living that principle himself.

At a family home evening activity, the Ansah-Arthur family prayed to the Lord for guidance. That year, they were inspired to double their Christmas expenditure on food. Instead of purchasing two bags of rice they bought four. Instead of 10 kilos of sugar, they bought 20. Three cartons of tomato paste instead of two, three gallons cooking oil instead of one. On and on the list went until they had a well-stocked store of provisions and essential victuals.

While they stored food, they also kept some livestock in the backyard and planted a little

Sister Ansah-Arthur with her four children.





Sister Ansah-Arthur stands in front of her food storage.

garden of vegetables and basic spices. The twin girls, Maame Badu and Naa Lamiokor, helped their mother to blend and freeze tomatoes that had earlier been cooked; while their brother, Amuakachie, and sister Ekuba helped dad to feed the goats and sheep.

That Christmas, the children did not have any presents but

they were still happy and thankful that they had helped their parents follow the teachings of the prophets. “We do not have much spare cash,” Bishop Ansah-Arthur said, “but we sure do have enough food to last several months!” Beaming with smiles, Yvonne and the children nodded in agreement.

As fate would have it, weeks

after this inspired activity, Bishop Ansah-Arthur fell ill and died on January 9, 2012. This sudden and tragic incident brought much pain and anguish to the young family. Many Church members, friends, and relatives were there to console and comfort them. The Lord was merciful and quickly healed their broken hearts. Words of

kindness and encouragement echoed through their minds and souls. Some that Sister Ansah-Arthur fondly remembers are those of a sister who remarked “Bishop did not just instruct us to follow our prophets; he actually lived by the words of the prophets.”

On the principle of staying out of debt, Bishop Ansah-Arthur taught his members to avoid borrowing and to live within their means. He went a step further by asking them to cultivate the saving habit and encourage their kids to do the same. “Get piggy banks for the children and urge them to save all spare coins. No amount is too small to be saved!” he would stress.

The bishop and his wife decided to set aside 5 cedis (about \$2.50 USD) for each child every month on top of each child’s own savings. After years of consistency, the children soon realized that their coins had grown into sizable amounts that could be invested in treasury bills! Years have passed and their dear dad has gone into eternity, but his precious teachings on provident living continue to impact their lives for the better. It certainly pays to live the principles of the gospel. ■

I Am Free from Debt

Elder Alexander Yaw Okyere

Nigeria Benin City Mission

Several months ago while serving with my first companion, we had the opportunity of teaching one of our female adult investigators at her workplace. Each time we met with her, we had a very spiritual and uplifting discussion about the gospel of Jesus Christ, and she seemed to enjoy every bit of it. However, something kept bothering us. For us, nothing really seemed to change about her life, though we tried our best to extend several commitment invitations and help her keep those commitments. One of such invitations we extended was to read and pray about the Book of Mormon, which she willingly committed to.

We also knew through our frequent conversations with her that she had been attending one of the orthodox churches in the area and that she had a problem with keeping the Word of Wisdom. Due to this, as a new missionary, I wasn’t really sure if she was going to accept our invitation to worship with us.

One fateful day as we prayerfully thought about her situation,

we courageously determined that the best way to help her experience a mighty change of heart and to know for herself that what we were teaching was true was to invite her to attend church and also to invite her to live the Word of Wisdom.

In one of our subsequent visits on November 27, 2012, we taught her the Word of Wisdom and the reason why we were inviting her to worship with us. Without hesitation, she committed to attend church the following Sunday and to live the Word of Wisdom.

Though she lived far from our proselyting area, she had a shop in our area, so we had the opportunity to visit and teach her as often as her working time allowed. At the same time, we would call and ask the missionaries in her area to visit and teach her at home, which they did. Much to our surprise, we learned from our fellow missionaries that she was able to attend church that Sunday. We actually didn’t know what made the difference this time, but all the same, we were grateful to God.



Elder Okyere

Later, on December 18, 2012, my companion and I decided to follow up on her progress. Her response to our follow up was positive and affirmative. As she began to explain to us how she felt while at church, tears nearly dropped down my cheeks. I noticed a feeling of joy which I thought she had long been yearning for. She shared with us how she has been feeling uncomfortable all this while because she had promised her pastors huge sums of money, which she had not been able to pay. She also told us how she managed to put some money in her bag, thinking that the Church was going to demand money from her, as her pastors are fond of doing in her former church. In her own words she said, “During the service I was

waiting for someone to demand money but no one seemed to be interested in that. I was surprised. Everybody was lively. Your church is different.”

I shall never forget how she exclaimed perhaps one of her sweetest feelings of joy with laughter and with her arms outstretched as if to hug both of us in her bosom, the words, “I AM FREE FROM DEBT.” This lovely woman gave up drinking, and soon she got baptized. A few months later, she was called to be a counselor in the Young Women presidency, and she was able to visit the Aba Nigeria Temple with her ward. After tireless efforts on her part to introduce her family to the gospel, she was able to bring her mother into the fold. Her old, feeble, but sensitive mother of about 90 years of age confessed that the very first time she entered the chapel, she felt strongly that she was in the right church.

I know by the Holy Ghost that the restored gospel that we preach and teach has the power to liberate both body and soul from spiritual and physical bondage, if we accept it and practice it. I know without a single doubt that this is true! ■

UPCOMING AREA EVENTS

October 4–5, 2014

General Conference

October 21–24, 2014

Mission Presidents
Seminar

November 4, 2014

General Conference
Rebroadcast

STAKE/DISTRICT CREATION/ REORGANIZATION

May 17–18, 2014

Umuahia Nigeria Stake
Created
Asaga Ohafia Nigeria
District Created

May 31–June 1, 2014

Niangon North
Cote D’Ivoire Stake
(Renamed)
Niangon South Cote
D’Ivoire Stake Created

June 28, 2014

Enugu Nigeria Stake
Created