

# AFRICA SOUTHEAST LOCAL PAGES

## AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

### “It Is My Purpose to Provide for My Saints”

By Elder Stanley G. Ellis

Africa Southeast Area Presidency

We often quote Moses 1:39, in which the Lord declares His spiritual goal for us—our “immortality and eternal life.” He describes the efforts “to bring to pass” that wonderful result as “my work and my glory.”

What are His temporal goals for us? And what is the process He uses to achieve them? We read about that in Doctrine and Covenants 104:

“I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine. And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine” (D&C 104:14–15).

In a part of the world where many are in poverty, how comforting it is to know that the Lord’s intent is that all of us are provided for. However, in the very next verse, He gives us a clear warning: “But it must needs be done in mine own way . . .” (verse 16).

He then explains His way: He gives “every man his stewardship” (verse 11). Then He declares, “For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves” (verse 17).

So the Lord has blessed each of us with our little piece of this world and its goods. He considers our part to be our stewardship. We have been given our agency to use it wisely, and He will hold us accountable for what we do with it.

What should we do with what we receive? How do we use it wisely? What does He expect of us? How can He bless us?

Two things He has commanded us to do seem to be very important to Him. He taught them in Malachi 3 and repeated them to the Nephites in 3 Nephi 24. Listen to His words:

“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation” (Malachi 3:8–9).

It is very easy to feel from these words how offended He is when we receive anything and do not pay our tithing first. We all know that tithing is one tenth of what we receive. If we receive ten, then as a wise steward, we first pay one in tithing. Consider all that flows from that simple act of faith and obedience:

1. He generously blesses us: “I will . . . open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10). Those blessings can be of all kinds—spiritual, temporal, physical, emotional, etc. (see David A. Bednar, “The Windows of Heaven,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 17–20).
2. He rebukes the devil to keep him from thwarting our efforts to progress. “And I will rebuke



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the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 3:11).

3. He promises to bless our whole community, economy, and nation. “And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 3:12). How would it be to have more jobs and a better economy in the area where we live?

What about offerings? As we learned above, the Lord expects His wise stewards to use part of whatever they receive to give offerings. We are expected to be generous. We can give to whatever worthy cause or people we choose (see D&C 58:27–28). But we are expected to live the law of the fast and to pay a fast offering of at least the cost of the meals we did not eat. If able, we can pay much more.

This is the Lord’s marvelous way of providing for the poor and the needy, and it allows Him to generously bless us (see Isaiah 58:6–12).

A collateral blessing is that helping others in need changes our hearts. It makes us more grateful. It helps us develop self-reliant hearts.

How important is this to the Lord and to our salvation? Returning to D&C 104:18, we read, “Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment.”

He takes fast offerings very seriously.

The beautifully arranged thing about this is that we all can pay our full tithing and fast offerings. Even the poorest of the poor can do these because we only pay part of what we have. If we have received ten then we pay one in tithing. We only pay in the basic fast offering the cost of the meals we did not eat. Neither is something extra.

Another great promise we all have is the one taught throughout the Book of Mormon that if we keep the commandments of the Lord, we shall prosper in the land (see 1 Nephi 2:20).

I learned a lesson about tithing as a young missionary in Brazil. We taught a poor family. When we came to tithing, they reminded us that they were poor. Ten percent of what they received was a big part of what little they had to live on. They said that if they were rich it would be more money in tithing, but they would have a lot left over to live on. But they had the faith to pay their tithing and were baptized. Later we taught a very rich family. When we taught them the law of tithing, they reminded us that they were rich and that ten percent of their income would be a lot of money to have to pay to the Church. They said that if they were poor it would not be a problem. The tithing would be so

small, they wouldn't even miss it. Fortunately they had the faith to pay tithing and were baptized. The lesson I learned is that we don't pay tithing with money; we pay it with faith. Rich or poor, ten percent is ten percent. It is a matter of faith.

One danger is that we rationalize our way out of paying tithing and fast offerings. We think that because we don't have a real job with a salary, we don't have to pay tithing. We just do a little here or there and receive just a small amount, so we assume we don't have to pay tithing. Or, we just receive a handout from someone, so we don't have to pay. Whenever we receive any money,

for whatever reason, we pay one tenth in tithing. Every month we fast and pay our fast offering. Even if we are unemployed, we pay tithing on what we received to live on. If we grow fruit, we sell one of each ten and pay our tithing. If we are self-employed, we pay tithing on what we take out to live on. That is how the Lord can bless us and our whole community.

The Lord's ways are always better than our ways (see Isaiah 55:8–9). This is His way for us to receive His blessings, to help the poor, and to become self-reliant. This is the word of the Lord for us in the Africa Southeast Area. ■

## AREA AUTHORITY MESSAGE

# Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

By Daniel P. Hall

Roodepoort South Africa Stake President

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the first principle of the gospel. Many see faith as simply believing that God lives or believing in something that we cannot see that is true. While these definitions are correct, they are far from the real essence of faith. Even these simple interpretations of the principle are used less and less in a world that is becoming ever-increasingly focused on the here and now, on instant gratification, and on self-serving

appetites and desires. Yet the Lord, knowing the conditions of the last days and the waning of true faith, brought forth the gospel of Christ, living prophets, and inspired scriptures, "that faith also might increase in the earth" (D&C 1:21).

Sometimes, however, we become discouraged and despondent when we feel that faith is not operating as it should in our lives. Understanding this principle of faith a little better and

knowing what we should have faith in will help increase our faith, which will be a blessing not only to us but ultimately to all the earth.

## We Have Faith in His Role as Savior and Redeemer

Having faith in Jesus Christ's role as our Savior and Redeemer means that we have an assurance that He lives, that He is the Son of God, that He atoned for us, and that through His Atonement, all can be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel (see the third article of faith).



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It means that we believe not only in His Atonement and His infinite mercy and grace as it applies generally to all mankind, but also that this Atonement can and will specifically save each of us individually as we repent and live obediently before Him.

This faith then causes us to walk in His ways and keep His commandments. This continued state of repentance and obedience leads us to know that we are right before Him, that He has forgiven us, and that we are on the path He would have us tread. This knowledge further

increases our faith until eventually it is perfected.

### **We Have Faith in the Words He Speaks to Us**

In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord says, “What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).

The Lord speaks to us as individuals in two ways: either specifically through the ministry of the Holy Ghost, or generally through the words of ancient and modern prophets and apostles. In either case, we are expected to have full confidence and trust that whatever He has said to us will come to pass. Two examples in the Book of Mormon are helpful in teaching this principle. “And now if Christ had not come into the world, speaking of things to come as though they had already come, there could have been no redemption” (Mosiah 16:6). Abinadi here describes his faith or assurance that Christ would come to the earth and atone for

us as if it had already happened, although it was at least 148 years before the Savior would be born.

“But behold, I have obtained a land of promise, in the which things I do rejoice; yea, and I know that the Lord will deliver my sons out of the hands of Laban, and bring them down again unto us in the wilderness” (1 Nephi 5:5). Here Lehi declares that he has already obtained the promised land, even though he and his family were still in the desert on the Arabian peninsula and had yet to cross the treacherous waters.

To both Lehi and Abinadi, the Lord’s promises were true and faithful and would be fulfilled. They received the assurance of things hoped for and consequently believed them to be so. The Lord’s word was good enough for them; they trusted Him completely. Like Enos, they knew that God could not lie; therefore their souls did rest (see Enos 1:17). What a blessing; what a boon to the soul. To know that when the Lord speaks, it shall be so—this is confidence and faith in the road ahead.

In order for us to have the assurance of things hoped for, we must look forward “with an

eye of faith” (Ether 12:19). Such an eye of faith is fixed firmly on the desired and promised outcome and does not avert its gaze simply because the path ahead is strewn with obstacles and roadblocks. No, the eye of faith is resolute. The gaze remains fixed because the belief is that the promise will be realized.

### **We Have Faith as We Remember the Experiences in Our Lives**

Perhaps one of the most widely used words in the holy scriptures is *remember*. Prophets throughout the ages have taught the people to remember. King Benjamin declared, “And now, O man, remember, and perish not” (Mosiah 4:30). Paul teaches, “[Remember] without ceasing your work of faith” (1 Thessalonians 1:3). Nephi thunders, “Ye are . . . slow to remember the Lord your God” (1 Nephi 17:45). Even Jesus declares, “[Remember] unto the Father my body which was laid down for you” (D&C 27:2).

I believe that one of the reasons we are given faith-promoting experiences is to help us remember those experiences in our hour of need and trial.



The more we remember God’s dealings with us, the more likely we are to remain true to Him and to walk in the ways of faith.

Recently, a dear friend of mine and his wife decided that they would take their children to see the snow in the Drakensberg Mountains. They saved diligently for the occasion, and of course the entire family was excited about their pending vacation. One day in a priesthood class, my friend heard about the importance of storing food and reserves for a rainy day. He went home and discussed this

### ***Snow in Johannesburg, South Africa***

teaching with his wife, and they jointly agreed that they should take the money they had saved for their holiday to see the snow and use it to purchase food and other reserves. The family was disappointed, but they knew that they should do the right thing, and they had the courage to follow through. They went ahead and purchased the food.

As time went by, the family forgot about the holiday they would have had and went on with their daily lives. One morning my friend woke up in his Johannesburg home and

saw that it was snowing outside. He realized that this snow in Johannesburg (a very rare thing indeed) had happened on the exact day that he and his family would have been in the Drakensberg Mountains. He shared this incident with me and declared a profound truth: “Daniel, I know that Heavenly Father can move heaven and earth for me and my family and that He did.”

What a wonderful lesson. The faithfulness of this brother and his family caused the very heavens to hearken and to open, providing the blessing they had hoped to receive. This experience will be such a blessing to this family for generations to come as they reflect and remember the goodness of the Lord in their lives.

I testify that our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can be strengthened as we rely on His Atonement, firmly believe on all His words, and remember the spiritual experiences we have had throughout our lives. I know that He lives and that He loves us with a perfect, infinite, and eternal love. May we show our love for Him by our faith and by our faithfulness. ■

## Listening to the Holy Ghost

By Trihani Ngomane

I have often thought back to the birth of each of my four children. My husband and I anticipated the joy they would bring to the family each time. All the same, I remember how overwhelmed I felt that Heavenly Father trusted me with the responsibility to bear and raise His children on earth. I will always be grateful for the extra help the Lord provides through the Holy Ghost to help me care for and look after them. However, I learned I must also be open to the promptings of the Holy Ghost. One day I almost ignored those promptings.

I had just wanted to sit down to finalize a talk I had been assigned to give. It was not coming together properly. I had started with my old standby—definitions from the Bible Dictionary—but that wasn't producing anything

*The Ngomane Family. Left to right: William Ngomane, Nkateko, Nyiko, Nkhesani, Akani, and Trihani Ngomane*

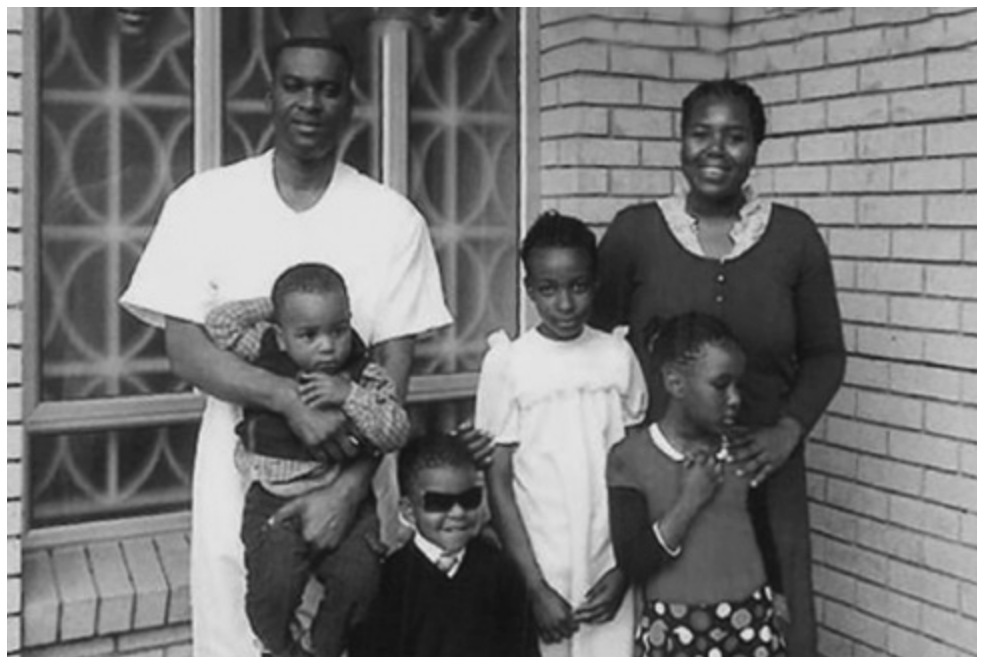


PHOTO PROVIDED BY TRIHANI NGOMANE

new. I considered inserting something from the *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* manual or maybe some quotes from a general conference talk, when my children started chasing each other through the house. I needed a little solitude!

My sons, Nyiko, age four, and Nkateko, age two, asked if they might play outside, and I gratefully agreed. We had a fenced yard and a family rule that all outside activities were to remain inside the gate. I knew that if they played their noisy games outside, I would finally have a chance to review my thoughts in peace.

They hadn't been outside very long before I felt a voice instructing me, "Call the boys in." I had planned to let them stay outside a little bit longer. There was still plenty of daylight, so I ignored the impression. Then I got it again, even more forcefully.

This time I responded, telling my daughters, Nkhesani, age nine, and Akani, age seven, "Call your brothers, please. I want them inside."

They started shouting out the window, "Hey, Nyiko! Mama is calling you!" They had obviously just seen their brothers and sounded convinced the boys were coming in.

I suddenly stood up. The warning thought came again, this time with far more power.

I asked my girls, who were looking out the window into the yard, "Can you see the boys?"

They both said, "No."

"But when you called them, did you see them?"

Again they said, "No."

Running for the kitchen door as fast as I could, I passed by the kitchen window and glanced out. The gate was open. My heart started pounding.

As I approached the gate, I saw my boys across the busy main street holding hands. They were scared and crying, like they were trying to decide how to cross that street again to get back home.

I shouted, "Don't move!" as I watched for an opening in the traffic to cross over to them. Once there, I held each of their little hands and helped them cross back to safety. Both terrified and relieved, they kept sobbing, "Sorry, Mama! We will never do it again!"

I was feeling the relief and anger that comes only when a child nearly scares you to death. But as I shut the gate firmly and then looked at their tearful faces, my anger melted. Instead of giving them the stern rebuke I had in mind, my thoughts unexpectedly returned to the talk I had been preparing and the words of Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "Sometimes the spirit of revelation will operate immediately and intensely, other times subtly and gradually, and often so delicately you may not even consciously recognize it. But regardless of the pattern whereby this blessing is received, the light it provides will illuminate and enlarge your soul, enlighten your understanding (see Alma 5:7; 32:28), and direct and protect you and your family ("The Spirit of Revelation," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 87–90).

I had first been warned of my sons' danger "so delicately" I didn't even consciously recognize it, then "subtly and gradually" enough to respond half-heartedly, and finally "immediately and intensely." I know those promptings saved my little boys' lives. That day I gained a personal testimony of the power of the Holy Ghost. I shall never forget it nor forsake it. ■

## Picture a Family

Submitted by Sifiso Madel

Excerpted by Midge W. Nielsen

When Sifiso and Neo Madela's only daughter, Kuthula, was born, they discovered that she had a heart condition that needed to be controlled through medication for a long time. Brother Mandela recalls, "We wanted to make sure, so we took her to a super specialist who was a pediatric cardiologist. He too, confirmed the diagnosis and the medication as being the best treatment."

The couple started little Kuthula on the medication.

Unfortunately, they discovered not long after that "the medication had a negative effect on her," Brother Madela says. "She wasn't thriving, and she seemed listless and tired. We called the doctor and he assured us that this was normal, but that maybe we needed to decrease the strength of the dosage. We did that, but there was no difference.

"After much prayer about the situation, my wife and I both got the strong impression that we should take her off that medication. My wife looked at me and said, 'You have the priesthood. Please bless her.'"

Brother Madela recalls, "The following morning I held her and gave a blessing. We did not give her the medication from that day onward. After three months we took her for a checkup, but that time we took her to a different pediatric cardiologist. The doctor ran a few tests, including an electrocardiogram (ECG) on her heart. He then confirmed that the baby was 'perfectly fine!' That day we went home very happy that God had heard our prayers and healed our daughter. We were grateful that we had the companionship of the Spirit, who reveals truth and direction. He really '[spoke] peace' (see D&C 6:23) to our hearts and minds when we needed to

make a decision.

"Today we know without a doubt that the Spirit is there and works. Priesthood authority was indeed restored. We can bless people, and they can be healed." The proof of their testimony is found in the wonderful family photograph, in which everyone assembled is "the picture of health!" ■

*The Madela Family: Sifiso, little Kuthula, and Neo Madela*



PHOTO PROVIDED BY SIFISO MADELA