

## AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

### Prophets Have Spoken

Elder Carl B. Cook

Africa Southeast Area President

What message did you receive from our living prophets when they spoke to us during the satellite broadcast to the Africa Southeast Area on November 23, 2014? Did it change what you think or the things you do? What blessings have you received as a result?

Prophets speak the mind and will of the Lord. It is as if they shine a bright light on the path that leads back

to our Father in Heaven. They guide us through perilous times and help us find peace, happiness, and success.

When investigators of the Church discover that there are living prophets upon the earth, they often ask: “What has the prophet said recently?” “What was his message from the Lord?” They are anxious to benefit from the messages of God. Hopefully those of us who receive frequent messages from

our prophets never take them for granted or view prophets as men who share their own ideas, but acknowledge them as God’s representatives on earth.

Sometimes the words of prophets challenge our ideas and desires, and even test our faith. We may listen to and accept some of their messages more easily than others. Each of us chooses how we respond, but whenever we follow their counsel, we are blessed. When we disregard their messages and follow our own wisdom or the wisdom of the world, we forgo the



Elder Cook



“NOAH’S PREACHING SCORNED,” BY HARRY ANDERSON

*Hopefully those of us who receive frequent messages from our prophets never take them for granted.*



“ABINADI APPEARING BEFORE KING NOAH,” BY ARNOLD FRIBERG

opportunity to benefit from the Lord's direction in our lives.

In General Conference, our prophets often speak on wide-ranging topics applicable to all members of the Church. However, during our recent satellite broadcast, we received words from our prophets specifically for the people of Africa and the neighboring islands. As I listened to them speak, the spirit of truth rested upon my mind and penetrated my heart. I know that their messages were inspired of God for us in our area.

I was particularly stirred by the teachings regarding adopting the gospel culture, specifically concerning bride price. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf and Elder David A. Bednar both addressed the subject in their messages. Elder Dallin H. Oaks has spoken previously on the subject.<sup>1</sup>

The counsel is very clear regarding bride price. President Uchtdorf stated, "We urge our young people, our fathers and mothers, all our leaders and members of the Church to discontinue this practice. Our young people should follow the Lord's pattern of marriage as practiced in the holy temple and not follow traditions that undermine God's sacred plan. By following the Lord's way, families will move close together for time and for all eternity and not be limited by

unnecessary worldly traditions of our fathers. The Lord's way is the real path to bring families together forever" (Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Into a Bright Future," Africa Satellite Broadcast, November 23, 2014, 13).

I have pondered and prayed about these teachings from our prophets. I know that they are true. I also know that each of us can receive a spiritual confirmation of the truthfulness of their words if we humbly and prayerfully seek it.

I was inspired by the faith of one of our young single adult sisters who commented on the prophets' teachings on lobola (bride price). She said, "Today it is lobola we are trying to overcome. Tomorrow it will be something else. There will always be changes we need

to make. We just need to follow the prophets and do what they say. It is more about obedience than about any specific cultural practice."

I invite each of us to prayerfully consider what the Lord would have us do related to our personal or family traditions, including bride price. I know that the Lord can guide us and strengthen us to do whatever is necessary to draw nearer to Him by abandoning false traditions. I know that through that process we can also eventually draw nearer to our family and loved ones, for that is God's plan for us. ■

#### NOTE

1. David A. Bednar, "Our Whole Souls as an Offering Unto Him," Africa Satellite Broadcast, November 23, 2014; Dallin H. Oaks, "The Gospel Culture," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, March 2012.

## LOCAL PRIESTHOOD LEADERS

### Trust in His Timing

Elder Mervyn C. Giddey

Africa Southeast Area Seventy

As a young man in my mid-teens, I became aware of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints through a pretty young lady. After two years of missionary lessons, I was still not interested in membership. I had

only one focus—the pretty young lady! Realizing that I was not serious in my investigation of the Church, she decided to end the relationship. I was devastated. I decided that the only way to win her back was to embark



Elder Giddey

The First Vision, by Kenneth Riley



on a personal study of the restored gospel. The institute program had just started in South Africa, and I was invited by a wise institute teacher to study the Book of Mormon and put to the test the promise given by Moroni.<sup>1</sup>

After three months of studying the Book of Mormon, I began to believe that it was indeed scripture. The feelings were strong, but I needed to *know!* Having read of the prophet Joseph's experience in the Sacred Grove, I wanted the same. I went up to Rhodes Memorial, which is situated on Table Mountain in Cape Town, and walked into the forest, out of sight of any people. I knelt down and asked Heavenly Father for a witness of the truthfulness of what I had studied. I expected much, but I received no answer. I repeated my prayer, but the result was the same. I'd felt so sure that I would receive an immediate response. Why had I not been given an answer to a righteous request? Surely if this was the truth, I should have received something. Dejected, I left the forest and rode home with tears of frustration blurring my vision.

Despite the feelings of disappointment and frustration, I continued to attend institute and read the Book of Mormon. In subsequent weeks, on two other occasions, I repeated my journey to Rhodes Memorial, and

each time I returned home saddened and disappointed. Why was the Lord not answering my righteous request? Maybe no answer was, in fact, my answer. But I could not stop reading the Book of Mormon. Something compelled me to continue reading.

One day, many months after first seeking a witness of the truth, I sat on the floor in my bedroom with the Bible in one hand and the Book of Mormon in the other. In my mind were the same questions: Is what I've learnt of the restoration true? Is the

Book of Mormon true? I felt it should be, but I really needed to *know!* I knelt next to my bed and once again asked Heavenly Father to provide me with a witness. Language cannot describe the feeling that came over me, the assurance that permeated my soul. Every fibre of my being knew that what I had been pursuing and studying was indeed a key aspect of the restored gospel of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. The Book of Mormon is holy scripture. I'd had no vision, no angel appeared, I'd heard no voice, but I

knew, as well as Joseph knew, that a marvellous work had come forth and that I could have a part in it.

So why did I have to “struggle” to get to know the truth? I believe one of the reasons is that I’d made light of sacred things. I had challenged the missionaries on every point of doctrine, and only continued with the discussions because I had wanted to continue my relationship with the young lady. Yet, despite my lack of sincerity, there were times when the Spirit had witnessed to me the truth of the missionaries’ teaching, but I had set these confirmations aside. In effect, I had turned my back on the Holy Ghost. Then when I decided that I really wanted to know for myself, I had to demonstrate, through extra effort, that my intent was pure. Further, I needed to “study it out in [my own] mind; then [I needed to] ask if it be right, and if it is right,” as I found that it was, “your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.”<sup>2</sup> That sure witness, obtained in the quiet of my bedroom, has been the foundation upon which many other witnesses of the truth have been added over the years. Each witness has required faith and effort, but each has built upon and strengthened the others. Each was a merciful and tender gift from a loving Heavenly Father.

How grateful I am for this experience. I learned first-hand to “trifle not with sacred things.”<sup>3</sup> I had not valued the missionaries’ messages, and I had not given heed to the witnesses I had received from the Holy Ghost. I’ve learned that the Lord will answer “in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will.”<sup>4</sup> What a blessing this has been as I have on many occasions waited in faith for answers to prayers. And I have learned to trust Heavenly Father enough to trust His plans for me and for my family. Elder Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “The issue for us is trusting God enough to trust also His timing. If we can truly believe He has our welfare at heart, may we not let His plans unfold as He thinks best?”<sup>5</sup>

Too often in life we expect immediate answers to our prayers. The moment a problem arises, we expect a solution. But the pattern of revelation is different. Revelation and answers *will* come, but “in the Lord’s way and according to the Lord’s timetable.”<sup>6</sup>

Today the young lady from my teen years is my eternal companion and the mother of our four children. Together we continue to learn through faith and trials that His timing and plans for us are always better than ours. ■

#### NOTES

1. Moroni 10:3–5.
2. Doctrine & Covenants 9:8.
3. Doctrine & Covenants 6:12.
4. Doctrine & Covenants 88:68.
5. Neal A. Maxwell, *Even As I Am*, (1982) p. 93.
6. Dallin H. Oaks, “In His Own Time, in His Own Way,” *Ensign*, August 2013.

#### LOCAL NEWS

## Terrified of Exams

Submitted by Duduzile Ndlovu

Many members of the Church have fears and challenges that interfere with their lives and prevent them from progressing. Personal determination and effort in overcoming these challenges are important, but they

are often not sufficient. Thankfully, through the mercy of the Savior and the power of the Holy Ghost, we can receive the additional help we need to overcome our weaknesses.

Duduzile Ndlovu was born in Zimbabwe and joined the Church in 1990. When she was growing up, school exams were so stressful that



*Sister Duduzile Ndlovu*

they invariably triggered migraine headaches. As she recalls, “These huge headaches would blind my eyes and make me so sick that I had to be taken home. And of course, I never passed my exams. Everyone in my family was always worried on exam day.”

Several years after Duduzile moved to South Africa, she got an opportunity to enroll in an adult center to finish high school. Studying the material was fine, but when exam day

approached, she could feel the fear begin. She reports, “I told my family and Church members about the headaches, and they helped me fast for three days before writing my exams.

“When I got to the hall to write my exam, though, I felt the headache start. I prayed fervently, and when I opened the exam pad to start writing, the headache went away. For the first time in my life, I finished an exam.”

The series of seven exams continued for a week, and Duduzile’s family

kept fasting and praying for her. Even the Primary children in her ward said they were praying for her. Finally, the day of her last exam, Accounting, arrived. She brought four tested pens with her, just in case one didn’t work, but to her great dismay, as she began to write, none of the four worked. She asked the test moderator for another pen, but the one he provided didn’t work, either. She recalls, “Tears started running down my cheeks. I didn’t know what to do. I prayed for help and then began to write with a pencil, even though it was written on the examination paper that we must use black or blue ink. I used a pencil on the first three questions, and then one of the pens decided to work, and I finished off the rest of my questions with a pen. I couldn’t go back because time was up.

“I had to wait three months to get my exam results back, and I was scared to go pick them up because of that last exam. But I built up my courage and picked them up. I got the surprise of my life when I saw that I had passed all seven exams. Then I saw the Accounting exam results. I had received an A!”

Duduzile testifies, “First God had blessed my headache to go away, and then He had helped me excel in accounting. God is there. He is listening,

and He watches over us. I will never give up, because I have Him to thank. He sends good people to help us when we are in need. I am not lucky, but I am blessed for sure.”

Whether our weaknesses be physical, mental, or emotional, Heavenly Father loves His children and will bless them. He wants us to work hard to solve our problems, but as He reminds us in Ether 12:27, “I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me.” And in 2 Nephi 25:23, “. . . it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.” ■

## About Your Previous Job

By Edith and Dan Baker

Sometimes people who join The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have to make great sacrifices to do so. Families might reject them, friends may abandon them, or neighbors can harass them. Sometimes they even lose their jobs. Despite such opposition, new converts faithfully answer Christ’s invitation to “Come, follow me.”



**Brother Kemle when he was a pastor**

Pierre Kemle is such a stalwart. He had been a pastor in his church for 25 years and leader over all of Cameroon, and he had been invited to expand his church into Nigeria. He had heard that the Mormons were bad people, but when he encountered the missionaries, he learned differently. He recalls, “Before I could totally open the door to Elder Badger and his wife, when I was in the middle of a conversation with them, I heard an audible voice telling me to follow these people and allow them to guide me. I knew that it was the Lord speaking to me and telling us to join this Church.”

This new Church had no paid clergy, and Pastor Pierre wondered how he could support his family if he left his pulpit. Then, to complicate matters, another church in England contacted him and offered him a great deal of money to help them set up their own church in Cameroon. Brother Kemle explains, “I had three choices before me:

1. Stay with my old church, where I was paid 10% of the tithes of Central Africa as well as a steady income every three months
2. Take the considerable amount of money to establish the new English church, or
3. Go where the Lord had commanded me, regardless of the cost. This last choice would mean that after having been a pastor for 25 years, I would need to be baptized again simply to become a faithful member.

“After a time of prayer and great reflection, I realized that it was the adversary who wanted to distract me by promising me ‘heaven on earth’ to disobey the voice of the



**Pierre Kemle had been a pastor for 25 years before he met the missionaries.**

Lord. All of my family and I decided to join The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”

He acknowledges that his decision was followed by many persecutions. He says, “My former colleagues let me know I had disappointed them greatly. I received letters from my wife’s family demanding that we abandon this new Church . . . having lost everything!”

However, Brother Kemle never looked back and does not believe he has lost anything of value. He says, “At present, I am a taxi driver in order to feed and support my family. I give thanks and bear testimony that I am in a Church led by the Savior himself. Jesus Christ supports my family, and each one of them believes that we are in the true Church.”

Any family would agree that is a great blessing. Yet some who make sacrifices in order to follow Christ would expect to be prospered in return. Brother Kemle’s example reminds us that God will indeed bless us for following him, even if those blessings do not include position, wealth, or status. The blessings He showers on us contain peace, hope, faith, and family joy. ■

*Excerpted from Pioneers of Cameroon, Edith and Dan Baker, August 2009.*

## Never Postpone a Prompting!

By Elder Mkhululi Gacula

Uganda Kampala Missionary

In April of 2012 the youth and Young Single Adults in the Pimville Ward, South Africa were invited to collect, compile, and submit a four generation pedigree chart to the Family History Consultant in their ward so that the ordinances of salvation could be performed for those ancestors.

Brother Mkhululi Gacula accepted the invitation and gathered as much information as he could from various sources including living grandparents, relatives, tombstones, etc. Within a week or two he had gathered what was necessary and submitted it, knowing that temple work for his ancestors could now be done in temples throughout the world.

The next couple of months passed quickly because he received his mission call and was busy with mission preparations. His family history project became a fading memory.

On July 6 he was able to go to the temple for his own endowment. He states, “It was a beautiful experience for me. I felt as though I had learned from on High and my understanding



Elder Mkhululi Gacula

of the Plan of Salvation had been greatly enhanced.”

Then something very unusual happened. He reports, “The following morning I woke up with a strong feeling I should attend the early morning session at the temple. However, the morning was cold, and I was tempted to wait and attend the afternoon session, as it would be a little warmer by then. At the same time the Spirit of the Lord came so forcefully that I thought I could touch it. It came time and time again telling me, ‘Get UP and attend the morning session.’ Without further delay, I got out of bed, got ready, and within the next 45 minutes I was at the temple, dressed, and ready to do a session.

“Immediately after the session, I bid farewell to those inside and started

my walk in the chilly weather to the taxi park. As I neared the gate of the temple grounds, I met Brother Slater, a counselor in my bishopric. With him were some of the young single adults from my ward. I had been out of town for a full month and was unaware that a YSA temple trip had been planned for that day.

“After chatting with Brother Slater, I started to walk away when I heard him call after me, ‘Hold on! Could you help us with confirmations? We are missing an endowed priesthood holder to help assist with confirmations.’”

Elder Gacula replied, “I wouldn’t deny that opportunity!” and headed back into the temple with the group to change into temple clothing and report to the baptistry.

His assignment to perform the confirmations placed him near the font, where he could also hear the baptismal prayers clearly. Unexpectedly, he heard his uncle’s name stated in the prayer. He recalls, “For a moment, I thought I was imagining it!” Soon after his uncle’s name, he heard his father’s name stated in a prayer, then his grandfather’s

name, followed by the names of his siblings, their children, and his great-grandparents. He was stunned, remembering, “There I stood, my eyes filled with tears, my voice choked with emotion, and my heart filled with joy and solace. I thought, ‘Wow. It’s a miracle!’ I was able to witness all of their baptisms and was privileged to perform all their confirmations.”

On the way out of the temple he remembered how tempted he had been to stay in bed, and the compelling unseen force that had urged him to get up and attend the morning session. He says, “As I reflected on the experience, I was so grateful that I had given heed to the Comforter. From that experience alone I learned *never* to postpone a prompting!” ■



Salt Lake Temple baptistry

