

# AFRICA WEST AREA LOCAL PAGES

## AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

### The Foundation of Apostles and Prophets

Elder LeGrand R. Curtis, Jr.

Africa West Area President

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians about some of the structure of the one true Church in the days of the apostles: “And he gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers” (Ephesians 4:11).

That organization was important to the Church which Jesus formed and that the apostles carried forward after His death and resurrection. In the following verses Paul explained why there was a need for such organization:

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

“Till we all come to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

“That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Ephesians 4:12–14).

Earlier, in the same epistle, Paul taught of the pivotal role to be played by the apostles and prophets in the Church organization:

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow

citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*” (Ephesians 2:19–20).

Under the leadership of Peter, the chief apostle and prophet, the Church in ancient times grew and flourished. He and the other apostles and prophets taught the gospel with authority and power as only apostles could do. (See, for example, Acts 2:14–47; Acts 3; and Acts 13–14). They resolved disputes and concerns of the Church. (See, for example, Acts 15). All were blessed by the direction of the apostles and prophets. If an apostle was

lost by death or apostasy, another was called and ordained in his place. (See, for example, Acts 1:12–26)

But, as time went on, persecution came from outside the Church and apostasy occurred inside the Church. The apostles warned the members of that terrible combination. (See, for example, Acts 20:28–30). Eventually the wickedness of those within the Church caused the Lord to remove the apostles from the Church. Apostles were killed and not replaced. One writer from the early days of Christianity wrote:

“The Church continued until then as a pure and incorrupt virgin. . . . But when the sacred choir of the apostles became extinct and the generation of those that had been privileged to hear their inspired wisdom had passed away, then also the combinations of impious error arose by the fraud and delusions of false teachers.” (Eusebius [AD 270–340], quoting Hegesippus, *Ecclesiastical History Book*, XXXII, 118.)

Without the apostles and prophets, Christianity plunged into confusion and apostasy. Eventually many churches emerged, none of which had apostles and prophets and the true authority and power of God.

But, consistent with ancient prophecy, God’s plan called for a restoration



Elder LeGrand R. Curtis, Jr., Africa West Area President



“FROM PAUL’S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS: ‘UNITY OF THE FAITH.’ BIBLE VIDEO TITLE ON LDS.ORG

of the one true Church on the earth. God called Joseph Smith to be an apostle and prophet and reestablished the one true Church on the earth in 1830. Other apostles and prophets were called, and in 1835 the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was reestablished as part of this restored Church. From that time to the present we have been blessed with apostles and prophets leading the Church. The Church, with apostles and prophets, will continue. The one true Church, with apostles and prophets, will be on the earth with Christ returns to earth to rule and reign.

For many years we have been blessed by the teaching and service of President Boyd K. Packer, Elder L. Tom Perry and Elder Richard G. Scott as apostles and prophets. Their teachings and service have not only affected the Church, but also our individual lives. As a member of the Church I have been affected by what they have done and what they have taught. As a Seventy, I have had the opportunity to be in many meetings with them, and to go as a junior companion with each of them on conference assignments. I bear my witness to the apostolic and prophetic calling that is theirs and that they blessed us with during their long lives. But, in the last nine months, each of them has passed away and moved on to service in the Spirit World. I miss them and their positive influence on the Church and on me.

But, consistent with the Lord's pattern, other apostles and prophets

have now been called to take their places. Elder Ronald A. Rasband, Elder Gary E. Stevenson and Elder Dale G. Renlund have been called, sustained, ordained and set apart to fill the vacancies in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles caused by the deaths of President Packer, Elder Perry and Elder Scott. I know and respect Elders

Rasband, Stevenson and Renlund. More importantly, the Lord knows these men and has called them to be His apostles. I bear my witness that the important roles of apostles and prophets in the Church continues with the current First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, including these three new apostles. ■

#### LATTER-DAY VOICES

## The Hymns of Faith, Our Personal Challenges and Our Commitment to Living the Gospel Principles

*"Hymns play an essential role in spirituality, revelation, and conversion." (Jay E. Jensen, "The Nourishing Power of Hymns," Liahona, May 2007, 11)*

**By Elder M. T. Ben Davis**

Area Seventy

The words of hymn #96, "Dearest Children God is Near You", make one marvel at our heritage which we may sometimes take for granted. It is comforting to know that Heavenly Father delights to own and bless us if we strive to do the right.

In President Thomas S. Monson's article "Be Strong and of a Good Courage" he said: "Let us have the courage to defy the consensus, the courage to stand for principle, the courage to say no when we should, the courage to say yes when it is appropriate, the courage to do the right thing because it is right". We need to put our trust in Him.

As we go through our daily activities, we must be mindful of our thoughts, deeds and actions—we need to cherish virtue because God blesses the pure in heart.

As children of God, we must remain open and sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Ghost in all aspects of our lives so that our Father in Heaven can



**Elder M.T. Ben Davis**



teach us by His Holy Spirit's voice. As we enter a new year and make our resolutions, may we find the confidence to have faith in the whispering of the Spirit.

In hymn #188 (*Hymns*) the Saviour was called upon to save our world of sin by love. He said: "Thy will, o Lord be done". The Saviour's attitude of strict obedience to Heavenly Father in all things and throughout His mortal life is reechoed when He said: "Thy will, o God, not mine be done".

The Saviour just like us has His agency but He taught by personal example the need to align our will to that of our Heavenly Father. We should be willing and able to go where the Lord wants us to go, to propound His gospel and be what He wants us to be. However, we sometimes make excuses not to do our home and visiting teaching all under the guise of moral agency.

My humble appeal dear brothers and sisters, is to ponder the words of the hymns and commit to live the gospel principles beautifully crafted therein. I know that our lives would be blessed as we follow this counsel in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ■

## CHURCH HISTORY COLUMN

### The Genesis of Church History Work

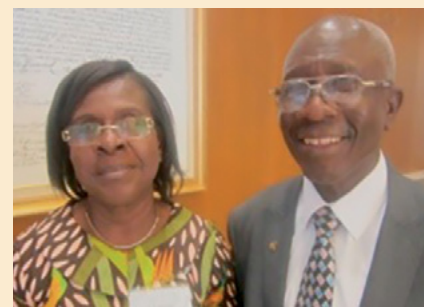
By Charles and Mercy Sono-Koree

On April 6, 1830, the day the Church was organized, the Lord commanded the Prophet Joseph Smith, "Behold, there shall be a record kept among you" (D&C 21:1). This is the revelation upon which the office of Church historian and recorder is based and for that matter, the department of Church History was established.

On that day the Prophet learned how important it is to the Lord for a history of the Church to be kept, and he soon called Oliver Cowdery to be the first Church historian and recorder. In the beginning Oliver recorded minutes of meetings, patriarchal blessings, membership information, and certificates of priesthood authority. He also began what might be called a narrative history of the Church.

Record keeping began with a commandment from God and continues to the present day. It includes the gathering and preserving of Church history sources, the collection of histories in Zion, including events that draw men unto God. The scriptures also suggest there is a responsibility to ensure the records are used "for the good of the Church, and for the rising generations" (D&C 69:8).

The primary purpose of Church history is to help Church members build faith in Jesus Christ and keep their sacred covenants. In fulfilling this purpose, we are guided by three main considerations:



**Charles and Mercy Sono-Koree**

First, we seek to bear witness of and defend the foundational truths of the Restoration.

Second, we desire to help Church members remember the great things God has done for His children.

Third, we have a scriptural charge to help preserve the revealed order of the kingdom of God. This includes the revelations, documents, procedures, processes, and patterns that provide order and continuity for the exercising of priesthood keys, the proper functioning of priesthood quorums, the performance of ordinances, and so on—those things that are essential to salvation.

This work has now been decentralized. Look out for our next message which will discuss the decentralized model.

Let us all embrace this great work of the Lord assigned to us as members and leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

I testify of the truthfulness of this great work. ■

# Asante King, His Majesty Otumfuo Nana Osei Tutu II, Meets with Church Leaders

Adapted from Mormon Newsroom, Ghana



*His Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II with LDS Church leaders.*



*His Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II greets Elder Terence M. Vinson at the Manhyia Palace*



An historical meeting between the Asantehene Osei Tutu II and leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints took place on September 11, 2015 at the palace in Kumasi. During a formal welcome the King and Elder Terence M. Vinson, Elder Allan F. Packer, Bro. Osei-Agyeman Bonsu and other Church leaders shared thoughts about areas of mutual interest and concern, including the preservation of historical documents, ancestral records and the importance of strong families.

His Majesty, well known for his kindness, courtesy and tact, expressed his feelings regarding the people of the Asante Kingdom and Ghana. He would like to see more

opportunity for females in education and encourages young people to seek productive skills that will benefit society. Elder Packer said the Church desires to help build strong families. He also said the Church wants to help people live lives based on the teachings of Jesus Christ.

His Majesty and the Church leaders expressed interest in record keeping and the preservation of history and ancestries. They also expressed their desires to explore areas in which Asante authorities and the Church might be able to help each other.

At the end of the meeting, His Majesty authorized a tour of the Palace film library and Manhyia

Archives for Church leaders. The Archives contain records important to the Asante Kingdom dating back to 1926. Following the tour, His Majesty and Church leaders participated in a luncheon.

The Asante Kingdom is the largest and most powerful tribe in Ghana with nearly 70 percent of the population. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a worldwide church with more than 15 million members, including more than 62,000 in Ghana. An organization sponsored by the Church, Family Search, gathers ancestral records and histories from all around the world. 4,861 Family History Centers have been established in 134 countries worldwide. ■

# Self-Reliance Event Offers Ideas for Generating Income

Adapted from Mormon Newsroom, Nigeria

Entrepreneurs from many different backgrounds taught approximately 180 adults and youth to open their eyes and use their innate abilities to improve their economic situation – part of a resource program organised by the Self-Reliance Services of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

“Discover Your Hidden Treasure” was the theme of the annual event, held at the Lagos Nigeria Stake meetinghouse.

Elder Frederick Akinbo, a leader of the Church in Lagos who presided at the event, said Latter-day Saints try to follow the example of Jesus Christ by looking after the temporal and spiritual well-being of those in need. He challenged participants to “hear more than what is said” and put into practice what they learn from the carefully-chosen facilitators. The entrepreneurs who served as facilitators offered a wide range of income-producing possibilities.

Mr. Fred Attah of Suncraft Energy Centre explained that solar energy is a new avenue for those seeking to be self-employed. “There are solar installations all over Nigeria, but we don’t have people to maintain them.” He noted that the transfer of the technology to those who have the desire to learn would fill the skills gap in the solar industry.

Titilayomi Binta Odigbo of Saint Binta Creations advised jobseekers to

think of things they can do by themselves, noting that most successful businesses have humble beginnings. She explained that her company started making shoes, bags, and other leather accessories in a single room at her home.

Christie Odesola of Angel Monograms, and Maureen Ngozi Ojiego of TMC Interiors—both members of other faiths—taught principles of self-reliance. They said this was their first encounter with a church that had a dedicated self-reliance centre. They urged participants to maximise their potential by taking every opportunity to improve their knowledge and skill base.

Sade Olubajo of Workforce Training Solutions also referred to increased knowledge and skills. She encouraged participants to obtain International Vocational Qualification (IVQ) from global certification institutes such as City and Guilds. She said this would enable them to get better jobs and add value to whatever they do.

Other income-generating possibilities highlighted during the resource program included shoe and bag making, monogramming, tailoring, fashion design, interior decorating, solar energy installation and maintenance and workforce vocational training.

Participants enjoyed in-depth interaction with the entrepreneur facilitators during breakout sessions. ■



*Some of the participants*



*Sections of the participants in discussion*



*Church Leaders and Resource Persons*

President Cudjoe and President Abankwah presenting Bishop Appianti of Tema 3rd Ward with certificate and prize



Aboakyire Festival by Nungua 2nd Ward

unity among members. Their efforts paid off with a full house, interesting dances, recitals and drama depicting some well-known and lesser known festivals and customs in various parts of Ghana.

The gospel serves as a bridge to our various backgrounds and cultures and unifies us as God's children with different gifts and talents to improve the world. Working together, learning

## A Day of Colour and Dance

*"Many African traditions are consistent with the gospel culture and help our members keep the commandments of God. The strong African family culture is superior to that of many Western countries, where family values are disintegrating. We hope the examples of love and loyalty among members of African families will help us teach others these essential traditions in the gospel culture. Modesty is another African strength. We plead with youth elsewhere to be as modest as most of the young people we see in Africa."* (Dallin H. Oaks, Regional stake and district conference broadcast to Africa on November 21, 2010)

By Komeokor Y. Tay

It was one of diverse culture, well-rehearsed performances and anxious members waiting to enjoy the well-orchestrated cultural festival. Saturday, 10th October brought members of the Tema Ghana Stake, their family, friends, investigators, non-members, cultural instructors and passer-bys to the stake center to feast on the rich display of the culture and heritage of their country Ghana. Among the audience was Elder and Sister Terence Vinson and a number of couple and young missionaries.

The stake Presidency of the Tema Ghana Stake has undertaken this annual event for the past seven years. What started out as a stake choral competition in 2007, evolved into a cultural event in 2009 and has since

seen tremendous improvement, excitement and increased participation. In President Isaac K. Abankwah's own words: "this year has been the best so far. A lot of planning went into it and I am happy everything turned out well."

The theme for the program "OUR CULTURE, OUR HERITAGE—THE LORD'S WAY" is to reinforce the good of our culture and traditions with the truthfulness of the restored gospel thus merging the best of the two factors that form our ideals and lifestyles.

The eight member committee put in a lot of work by following up with the various units to ensure the necessary preparations were being made and the event was being used as a tool for reactivation and fostering



Performance by Tema 2nd Ward



and embracing other cultures helps foster the acceptance of the gospel and its spread. Being tolerant of another culture is accepting God's infinite wisdom and developing the desire to be like Him.

Nine wards participated in this year's competition and though Tema 3rd Ward was adjudged winners with their Kabube performance from the Upper West Region-Nandom, it was obvious everyone else felt Victorious due to the energy and excitement they exhumed.

The testimonies some members shared attest to the truthfulness of the gospel that gives us the desire to embrace our cultural heritage as well as the Gospel culture to enable us be our best selves and return to our Heavenly Father. ■

## YOUTH

# Personal Progress Project of Faith, Diligence and Achievement

By Hannah Ganyo and Dansoa Ewudzie

At the beginning of the year 2015, young women in Madina 1st Ward of the Accra Ghana Adenta Stake, decided to have a special personal progress project. They had had



*The Young Women of the Madina 1st Ward and their leaders*

some successes in previous years but challenged themselves to do some more creative and innovative.

After careful prayer, the presidency was inspired to take on the bead project. Sister Hannah Ganyo (Ward Young Women President) had knowledge on bead work from over 30 years ago and taught the leaders to work on the young women torch, whilst the young women worked on the value symbols.

"We often see people do bead work on slippers, bags and other ornaments and accessories and the general public are generally interested in acquiring them, so we thought about doing something relevant to us as



*The Madina 1st Ward Young Women presidency*

young women of the Church by using our young women symbols," Sister Ganyo stated.

One young woman said: "Our knowledge about the various classes and what we stand for as young women has been deepened. Our testimonies have increased because at a point when it became very difficult and we thought we could not do it anymore, our Heavenly Father strengthened us and we were able to finish it at the planned time"

Through this project participants learnt how to work as a team to achieve a common goal, look out for each other and lend a helping hand. They agree on having acquired patience, kindness and reliance on the spirit and above all, greater love for each other and for our Saviour.

We love the Lord and we are grateful for the opportunity we have had to learn new things as we attempt to rise and shine forth to all generations. The programs of the Church instill in us the desire to unearth and share our talents and we are grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the Lord's kingdom in this part of the world. ■

## Youth Testimonies



**T**hrough the teachings of the Church and especially in young women, I have learnt a lot. In our recent mutual, we were excited to know that our project

was on bead work. Knowing its complexity, we were very prayerful and confident in the Lord and our instructors.

When we were challenged to consider the significance of the young women values, I took it very seriously and spent the week thinking and praying about it. I settled on integrity after I had spent time to read about it. I learnt that Integrity is about righteousness, Perfection and Sincerity. I longed for such attributes and I have developed a daily quest to be honest in all my dealings especially in school and at home. I believe that being honest will open doors of opportunity for me now and in future.

I'm grateful for my time in young women class and the teachings of the gospel in my life. Amen.

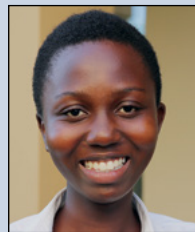
*Nana Ama O., 12 Years  
Madina Ward 1, Adenta Stake*

**P**atience and cleanliness are two of the most important traits I have acquired in my participation in the young women beads project in my ward. You cannot present a neat work when you work with dirty hands. You need the patience you require with a baby to advance in the work. The more patience you have, the better your work and the faster your progress.

I have also felt the need for inspiration and calm in order to minimise the errors which require undoing and redoing hours of hard work.

I love the Church, I know of its truthfulness and sustain its leaders. I know the programs in young women help us to be a better people and most especially helps us to be what the Lord wants us to be. Amen.

*Mary K., 15 years  
Madina Ward 1, Adenta Stake*



**B**eing a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has really changed my life. I used to be very shy but because of various assignments at church, I have overcome it. I look forward to being a missionary because I love the gospel and wish to share it with others. I have already started my missionary work in my own home and hopefully other members of my family will join me.

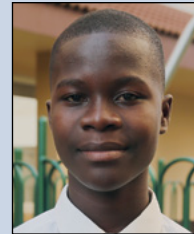
I love Seminary. It has helped me set a goal to marry in the temple to a worthy member of the Church. When I first saw the picture of a temple, I thought I would never have the opportunity to be there, but my God's grace, my ward organised a trip and I got to go. My first experience at the temple is one I would never forget. I felt I was in Heaven. It's so peaceful and beautiful. I wish to visit the Salt Lake City Temple someday.

I know the Church is true and Jesus Christ is our redeemer. I know of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon as another testament of Jesus Christ. I know if I keep the commandments, God's will for me will come to pass.

I know the Church is true and Jesus Christ is our redeemer. I know of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon as another testament of Jesus Christ. I know if I keep the commandments, God's will for me will come to pass.

*Sandra S., 16 years  
Nkawkaw Branch 1, Nkawkaw District*

**M**y favourite scripture is 1 Nephi 3:6-7: "Therefore go, my son, and thou shalt be favored of the Lord, because



thou hast not murmured. And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father: I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the

Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them."

My fondest memories of the Church was my daily visits to my Primary teacher's home to listen to the Book of Mormon Stories. I loved the stories but I could not read so every day, I would go to her house to have a read and explain to me in my local dialect. After a year of attending primary, I could read. I learnt to read and speak good English by being in the Church and it has helped me in my secular education as well.

I love the temple. I was amazed at its beauty and I felt inadequate the first time I was there. The inscription: "Holiness to the Lord" made me question myself. I wondered if I was truly worthy to be in the Lord's house. I knew I was really nervous but with kind encouragement from my quorum president, I entered and I was very happy. I felt peace and calm but I couldn't take my eyes off all the beautiful things in there. I always look forward to trips to the temple to perform baptisms.

I am determined to serve a full time mission in a couple of years because my father and I are the only members of the Church in my family. The gospel makes me happy and I want everyone to be happy. ■

*Osei Bright B., 16 years  
Nkawkaw Branch 1, Nkawkaw District*