

## AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

### “Sacrifice Brings Forth the Blessings of Heaven”

By Elder Kevin S. Hamilton

Second Counselor, Africa Southeast Area Presidency

As a young man growing up, I aspired to be an Olympic athlete. I trained and worked hard to reach my goal of competing in the Winter Olympics. This meant everything to me. However, the Lord had other things in mind and I felt prompted that I needed to prepare for and serve a mission. I was called to serve in the Switzerland Geneva Mission, and I have never looked back. My small sacrifice to serve the Lord changed my life and provided so many blessings for which I will be forever grateful.

From the Guide to the Scriptures, we read that “in ancient days, *sacrifice*

meant to make something or someone holy. It has now come to mean to give up or suffer the loss of worldly things for the Lord and his kingdom. Members of the Lord’s Church should be willing to sacrifice all things for the Lord. Joseph Smith taught that ‘a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has the power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation.’ In the eternal perspective, the blessings obtained by sacrifice are greater than anything that is given up.”<sup>1</sup>

Each of us has a sacrifice to make. We all have challenges and obstacles in life that require us to make sacrifices. The Lord said, “We will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them” (Abraham 3:25).

#### Sacrifice for Temple Worship

One of the ways that we offer sacrifice is to make every effort to come to the temple to worship and make sacred covenants. Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve has said,

“Each member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is

blessed to live in a time when the Lord has inspired His prophets to provide significantly increased accessibility to the holy temples. With careful planning and some sacrifice, the majority of the members of the Church can receive the ordinances of the temple for themselves and for their ancestors and be blessed by the covenants made therein.”<sup>2</sup>

Temple worship can sometimes be a significant sacrifice for families and individuals. It was President Thomas S. Monson who shared this touching story of a family’s sacrifice to go the temple in a conference address in April 2002:



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Richard G. Scott (1928–2015)



“In 1957, four months before the dedication of the New Zealand temple, Donald Cummings . . . was the president of the member district in Perth [Australia]. He and his wife and family were determined to attend the dedication of the temple, although they were of very modest financial means. They began to pray, to work, and to

save. They sold their only car and gathered together every penny they could, but a week before their scheduled departure, they were still 200 pounds short. Through two unexpected gifts of 100 pounds each, they met their goal just in time. Because Brother Cummings couldn’t get time off work for the trip, he decided to quit his job.

“They traveled by train across the vast Australian continent, arriving at Sydney, where they joined other members also traveling to New Zealand. Brother Cummings and his family were among the first Australians to be baptized for the dead in the New Zealand temple. They were among the first ones to be endowed in the New Zealand temple from far-off Perth, Australia. They prayed, they prepared, and then they went.

“When the Cummings family returned to Perth, Brother Cummings obtained a new and better job. He was still serving as district president nine years later when it was my privilege to call him as the first president of the Perth Australia Stake. I think it is significant that he is now the first president of the Perth Australia Temple.”<sup>3</sup>



*Many Elders and Sisters have sacrificed greatly to serve missions for the Lord.*

## LOCAL PRIESTHOOD LEADERS

## Full and Complete Repentance

By Elder Jacques A. Van Reenen

Africa Southeast Area Seventy

Outdoor sports like running, skiing, or hiking can bring rewards of hard work and physical challenges.

But disregarding the rules of safe

sporting practic-

es like warming up and stretching can bring pain and suffering. Often injuries can linger for months or years. Sometimes we seek help from healthcare professionals without any success, or the injury subsides after long and hard rehabilitation. Other times we are forced to seek the skills of a surgeon because the help needed is beyond what we can do on our own. A surgeon may be needed to cut deep to remove the damaged cartilage or tissue in order to start the long road to full and complete recovery.

So it is when we have sin in our lives. In some cases we can resolve matters on our own by making minor corrections to the course of our lives. But unresolved sin will cause pain and suffering. For serious sins we need the help of a bishop or stake president to get to the deeper underlying issues that we cannot resolve on



Jacques A.  
Van Reenen



Elder Sedrick Tshiambwe  
and Elder Hamilton in the  
DRC Kinshasa Mission

### Sacrifice for Missionary Service

Our young missionaries are asked to make a significant sacrifice to pay for the cost of their missions. Each individual circumstance is different. Some pay the entire cost of their missions from savings and the sacrifice of family members. Others are able to pay less than the full cost, but all pay everything that they can—a true significant sacrifice.

Recently, I met Elder Sedrick Tshiambwe who is serving in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Kinshasa Mission. Elder Tshiambwe comes from very humble circumstances, but he wanted to serve a mission. He worked for four years to save money earned by hauling bananas to the local markets on his bicycle. The work was hard and the heat was sometimes oppressive, but after four years he had saved enough money to be able to contribute and today he is a faithful missionary.

His story has been captured on video and can be found at [lds.org/media-library](https://lds.org/media-library).

### Personal Sacrifice

Perhaps the ultimate sacrifice is one that no one ever sees, that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. It was the great English poet Rudyard Kipling who wrote these lines:

*The tumult and the shouting dies;  
The captains and the kings depart.  
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,  
An humble and a contrite heart.*<sup>4</sup>

The Savior taught us in the Book of Mormon that our personal sacrifice will be to “offer . . . unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost” (3 Nephi 9:20). May we each develop the spirit of sacrifice as we sacrifice to serve missions, sacrifice to worship in the holy temple, and sacrifice to be humble followers of Jesus Christ. I promise that “in the eternal perspective, the blessings obtained by sacrifice are greater than anything that is given up.” ■

#### NOTES

1. Guide to the Scriptures, “Sacrifice.”
2. Richard G. Scott, “Temple Worship: The Source of Strength and Power in Times of Need,” *Liahona*, May 2009, 43.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “They Pray and They Go,” *Ensign*, May 2002, 49–50.
4. “God of Our Fathers, Known of Old,” *Hymns*, no. 80.



*“God cares a lot more about who we are, and who we are becoming, than about who we once were.” (Dale G. Renlund, “Latter-day Saints Keep on Trying,” Liahona, May 2015, 56.)*



our own. We are always in desperate need of the Great Physician, our Savior Jesus Christ. Through proper use of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can be made whole again. Our appointed judges are there to nurture us back to good standing before our Heavenly Father.

I have seen many brothers and sisters humble themselves before the Lord and walk the steady path of repentance, to enjoy the freedom and peace that it brings. But I have also seen how others ignore the invitation by the Savior to “come unto Him” and fall into depression, despair, and hopelessness.

As we consider the cleansing principles of repentance, it is important to highlight the necessity of *full* and *complete* repentance in order to claim

the blessings of the Atonement of the Savior in our lives. We need to make the commitment and put in the hard work it takes to be clean and whole again, even though Satan will do his utmost to derail our efforts and have us believe his lies.

The first principle of repentance is to **acknowledge** and admit that there has been wrong doing. Without this very important step, there is denial and justification. Alma taught his son

Corianton this very important principle. He said, “Do not endeavour to excuse yourself in the least point because of your sins” (Alma 42:30). The Savior taught, “Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts” (Luke 16:15).

The second principle is to feel true godly **sorrow for the sin**, for it is Him whom you have offended. Many feel a worldly sorrow, worrying more about what others will think or say about them. In 2 Corinthians 7:9–11, Paul highlights the importance of humbling ourselves before our Father in Heaven.

The third principle is to **forsake the sin**, to turn completely away therefrom and to never look back down that path again. Doctrine and Covenants 58:43 helps us to identify those who are on the path of repentance—“[they] will confess [their sins] and forsake them.” To forsake is to abandon, leave permanently, and renounce. We leave behind the old and put on the new.

The fourth principle is often overlooked. Many think that they can resolve their sins on their own. We have been blessed with judges to help us when we repent. They allow us the opportunity to **confess our sins** to bring closure and gain a deeper understanding of the seriousness of the sin. In Doctrine and Covenants 61:2 we are reminded how the Lord is merciful to those who confess their sins. When we confess, the burden is lifted and we find relief



and allow our bishop to help us work our way to happiness. They do not offer repentance, rather they determine how repentant we really are. Neither do they offer forgiveness, as this was done a long time ago when our Savior took upon Himself our pain, suffering, and sin.

The fifth principle highlights the importance of making every effort to **make restitution**, or right the wrong. When we repent we need to return the item we stole, apologize to the person we wronged, and make every effort to restore the damage we inflicted. It is especially clear how much we need the Atonement as we realize that there are some things we can never restore or repair on our own. Only the law of compensation through the Savior’s Atonement can completely help us make restitution.

The sixth principle brings the vital healing power of **forgiveness**. It holds the key to be able to forgive others and to forgive ourselves. We often hold grudges or have feelings of hatred or resentment. As we cling to these feelings, it is as if we take poison every day hoping someone else will die, but in reality we are the ones who slowly die a spiritual death, even affecting our physical health. We have need to forgive, for we shall be judged with the same judgements we mete out (see 3 Nephi 13:14–15).

The seventh principle is difficult because the natural man is an enemy to God. This principle is what invites the calming, cleansing, and sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost to take full effect in our lives as we walk in faith and **keep all the commandments**. When we fully and completely repent, we show by a Godly talk and a Godly walk that we have

become new. I have seen how some repent of a sin but injure themselves by committing other sins, making a mockery of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. To complete the repentance process, we walk in faith and avoid wrongdoing at all cost. A promised blessing of living the commandments gives us hope of forgiveness

from a loving Father in Heaven (see D&C 1:32).

I testify of the reality of the blessings of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. I testify that He lives and that only through *full* and *complete* repentance can we walk the straight and narrow to enjoy true happiness. By keeping our sights set firmly on the Great Physician, we

can have hope to receive forgiveness from our Father in Heaven.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

*To see the video, go to [www.lds.org/media-library/video/2012-06-2350-godly-sorrow-leads-to-repentance?lang=eng](http://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2012-06-2350-godly-sorrow-leads-to-repentance?lang=eng)*

## LOCAL NEWS

# My Work in the Temple

By Alan van der Vyver

“Why do they baptize for the dead if the dead rise not at all?” (see 1 Corinthians 15:29) was a scripture that bothered me as a teenager when I belonged to another church. Eventually I left that church and studied various other beliefs, but none could fill the void I felt. When the missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints called

at our home and spoke about baptism for the dead, I almost immediately wanted to join the Church. My family and I were baptised in 1973.

I was overjoyed when it was announced that we would have a temple in South Africa, especially when I realised that the temple would be only six miles (9 km) from my home. I was the elders quorum president in my

ward at the time and kept the members updated on the progress of the building of the temple through a publication, *Quorum News*, which I edited.

When it came time for the temple to be dedicated, I was part of the “Chair Parade”—we were assigned to transport chairs to the temple for the dedication. During the dedication we were assigned chairs in the baptistry where we had a good view of President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) as he dedicated the temple. What I felt cannot be expressed in words. The significance of my seating arrangement became apparent to me only when I was assigned to work in the baptistry from 1989 to 2009.

I would have liked to serve a temple mission, so I promised the Lord that I would attend the temple every week. I have been able to do that for the most part for the last 30 years. I have been an ordained temple worker



**Johannesburg  
Temple**



Alan van der Vyver

## There Is Always Sunshine after Rain

Excerpted by Collette Burgoyne

for 26 years and have been performing sealings for the past 19 years. For the last 15 years, I have been preparing the baptistry every Saturday morning before the members come to perform baptisms for the dead. This equates to working in the temple for more years than I have lived! Many years ago I was privileged to meet President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) in the temple when he held a meeting for all the temple workers.

The feelings I have had and the miracles I have witnessed in the temple have left me without doubt that this is the true Church and the Lord's work. As we officiate in our callings in the temple, we are open to the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. When working in the baptistry, we need a certain number of endowed priesthood holders. Often we would not have the required number of brethren to help us, and yet brethren would just arrive and ask if they could help in the baptistry, so we always had sufficient workers. The temple is the Lord's house. He knows when we need assistance and sends it. Faith always precedes the miracle.

The temple ordinances are the only way we can fulfill the words, "We without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect" (D&C 128:18). ■

Jean-Marie Nyilimbilima and his family were prosperous middle-class citizens of Rwanda. He was a civil servant and his wife was in an importing business. Even when a civil war broke out in 1990, Jean-Marie and his family were doing okay. Then in 1994, a presidential jet was shot down, killing the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi. Regular activities came to a sudden halt, and everyone stayed in their homes. Bombs dropped and killings escalated. Jean-Marie and his family were afraid to leave their home, and soon they ran out of food and water. They wanted to leave the city, but the roads were not safe and they had no vehicle. Finally, a family friend helped them escape.

After many difficult experiences, they made it across the border to the Democratic Republic of Congo, running for their lives with hundreds of thousands of other refugees. They had no possessions, no documents, and nowhere to go. Finally, a pastor let them stay in a home that was still under construction, with no windows or doors. Refugees by the thousands were dying from hunger, cholera, and other diseases. Jean-Marie decided to go find a job in a refugee camp 10 miles (16 km) away and move his family there. He felt very blessed

to get a job as a security guard for \$10 a month because it came with a 25-pound (11 kg) bag of cornmeal and 2.5 pounds (1 kg) of biscuits—enough for his family to stay alive, start some food storage, and help others.

The refugee camp had 500,000 people living in it, and Jean-Marie's family built a shelter out of plastic sheeting provided by the United Nations, which was hot and muggy to live in and during the rainy season, the plastic would leak or be blown away. When the camp leaders discovered that Jean-Marie was educated and had studied in Europe, they had him send for proof of his qualifications, and he was promoted to manager, making \$180 a month.

But after a year in the refugee camp, security began to deteriorate, and people were being killed mysteriously. The Nyilimbilimas decided to go to Kenya, and with the help of Jean-Marie's friends in Europe, they were able to make it. In Kenya, they still had no money and no documents, and they were refugees again, but Jean-Marie, along with other concerned parents, started a school for the refugee children.

Eventually, the government in Kenya ordered all refugees to leave within 30 days. Jean-Marie discovered that in South Africa the government



*Jean-Marie Nyilimbilima and his wife, Marie-Louise, with their daughter Pamela Paradis, and sons Samuel and Alain-Mercy.*

gave refugees asylum status, so they would have legal documentation. But to get to South Africa, they had to travel across many country borders without documents, and their children caught malaria from sleeping on the side of the road in Mozambique.

The Nyilimbilima family finally arrived in South Africa, sick and penniless. Through many miracles and the help of many good Samaritans, they were able to survive, living on corn-meal, beans, and peanut butter. They went from begging to guarding cars to managing a restaurant, and it was in Pretoria that they discovered The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and were baptized.

Jean-Marie's family had always been religious and had relied on God to help them through their trials. After being baptized, they prayed for a better job for Jean-Marie so that he could attend

Church, and eventually he got a job working in the Africa Southeast Area office as a translator. All through their travels and trials, Jean-Marie had kept one small piece of paper that had 17 of his ancestors' names on it, so he was able to do the temple work for them.

Jean-Marie explained how he felt the hand of the Lord leading them along throughout their trials. He said, "Being who we are today was not a result of our strength, but was through the grace of the Lord. The ups and downs we experienced were for our good; they helped to shape our character and put us on the right path to achieve our full potential in this life. Through this experience, I felt endowed with supernatural power that helped me overcome the natural man's tendency to complain when facing dark times. We must remember that there is always sunshine after rain!" ■

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**EDITOR'S NOTE**

The Africa Southeast Area has a website that publishes messages from the Area Presidency as well as inspirational stories from members in Africa. Please visit us at [africase.lds.org](http://africase.lds.org). ■



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The Setswane scriptures can be read online here: [www.lds.org/scriptures?lang=tsn](http://www.lds.org/scriptures?lang=tsn) ■

