

# AFRICA SOUTHEAST LOCAL PAGES

## AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

### “Be Ye Doers of the Word!”

By Elder Stanley G. Ellis

First Counselor, Africa Southeast Area Presidency



Stanley G. Ellis

Few directions are more clear than the one we find in James 1:22: “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” In other words, it is not enough to hear, understand, know, enjoy, teach, or even have a testimony of the gospel, we must do our very best to live it. In fact, the test of this life is “to see if [we] will do all things whatsoever the Lord [our] God shall command [us]” (Abraham 3:25).

Most of the Lord’s promises are conditional on our *doing*. “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:10). All who receive the priesthood receive “the

oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood” (D&C 84:39). Part of that agreement is that we “shall *live* by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God” (D&C 84:44; emphasis added). The most consistent promise of the Book of Mormon is that “inasmuch as ye shall *keep* my commandments, ye shall prosper” (1 Nephi 2:20; emphasis added; see also 1 Nephi 4:14; Mosiah 2:22).

According to James, hearing is not bad, but we deceive ourselves when we are “hearers only.” We should have “ears to hear” (Matthew 13:9). But throughout the scriptures, the Lord often uses the word *hearken*. What is the difference between *hear* and

*hearken*? The Guide to the Scriptures says that *hearken* means “to hear and obey the voice or teachings of the Lord” (“Hearken”). So the right thing is to *hear and do*.

What are the consequences of doing?

Many of us have realized that we *learn* much more *by doing* something than by hearing about it, thinking about it, or even studying it. We may make some mistakes, but often these help us learn even more.

The scriptures teach us that we can *know by doing*. John promises that “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself”

**“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”**



# An Olive Tree Analogy for Africa

By Elder Jean Claude Mabaya

For centuries, the olive branch has been associated with the idea of peace. The dove came to Noah in the ark with an olive leaf in her mouth to symbolize that the earth was again at peace with God.<sup>1</sup>



## Jesus Christ Is the Prince of Peace

Today, the true source of peace is Jesus Christ. Peace comes from obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “*The Savior is the source of true peace.* Even with the trials of life, because of the Savior’s Atonement and His grace, righteous living will be rewarded with personal peace.”<sup>2</sup>

Peace is needed by people who do not feel well. Some are physically injured; others suffer spiritually because of the loss of loved ones or other emotional trauma. Peace can be given to you if you build your faith upon the Prince of Peace.

Christ said, “Have ye any that are sick among you? Bring them hither. Have ye any that are lame, or blind, or halt, or maimed, . . . or that are afflicted in any manner? Bring them hither and I will heal them.”<sup>3</sup>



*Doers of the Word*



(John 7:17). I gained my testimony that God lives by acting on His invitation to “prove me now herewith” and paying my tithing first not knowing how I would survive financially (see Malachi 3:10).

When we begin to live the gospel, we signal the Lord that we *want to learn*, we are willing to try, we are exercising our faith, and we want to be guided. He will respond with His help and bless us with even more guidance. (See D&C 50:24.)

What we do, much more than what we say, *shows what we really are*,

what we really feel, and what we really know. The Lord said, “By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:20; 3 Nephi 14:20). The goal, as President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has taught, is to “become a living ‘epistle’ of Christ” (seminar for new mission presidents, June 25, 2015).

Can we really do what we need to do and should do? It is an exercise of faith. Then we can declare as did the Apostle Paul, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). ■

Peace can be given to people who carry heavy burdens. “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”<sup>4</sup> Peace can be given to the afflicted. The Lord said, “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.”<sup>5</sup> When we experience the death of a loved one, the promptings of the Spirit can fill us with the Lord’s peace. “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”<sup>6</sup>

The olive tree is unique in the way it begins to grow. An uncultivated olive tree turns into a tangle of branches producing only a small worthless fruit.<sup>7</sup> To become the “tame” olive tree that bears good fruits, we must completely cut the main stem of the wild tree and then graft a branch of a tame olive tree onto the stem of the wild tree. By pruning it and carefully nourishing it, we see the tree starting to bear its first fruits after about seven years; it would take nearly 15 years for it to reach its full maturity.

The growth of the Church in Africa can be compared to the allegory of the tame and wild olive trees. The Church has been in Africa for at least 20 years in South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As olive trees take nearly 15 years to reach their full maturity and then to bear fruit for centuries, Church members in Africa have now reached maturity and can sustain the growth of the work of God for years or even centuries.



### **I Am the Vine, Ye Are the Branches**

When we enter into the waters of baptism, we pledge to remain faithful to the covenants we have made. We do the same when we partake of the sacrament every Sunday. In this way, our commitment to follow the highest principles of the gospel shows our attachment to Christ.

The Savior said, “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot

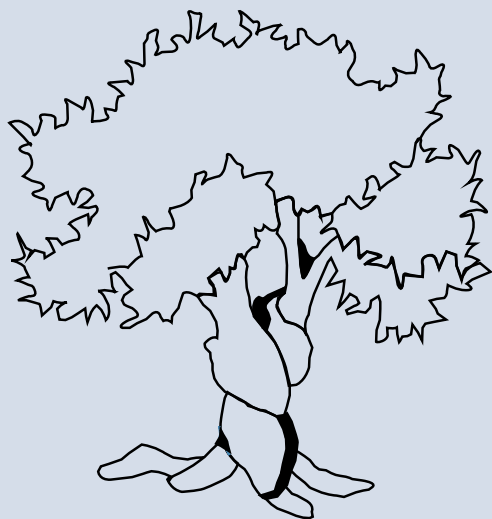
bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”<sup>8</sup>

The blessings of the temple help us stay attached to the vine. At the groundbreaking of the Kinshasa Democratic Republic of the Congo Temple, Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “The erection of a holy temple takes place only when the Lord reveals to His prophet that there are righteous people prepared and ready for its sacred purposes. The erection of this temple means that God’s kingdom will be established here in Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, until the Lord comes back to earth, and that there will be a covenant people here to greet Him when He returns.”

The Church will grow in Africa as the members attach themselves to the blessings of the temple, participate in family history work, sustain their leaders, and forsake false traditions in order to adopt the “gospel culture.”


### **Multigenerational Families Will Be Born into the Church in Africa**

Another amazing quality of the olive tree is that when it eventually grows old and begins to die, the roots put forth new green shoots. If they are grafted and pruned, they become real olive trees. So whilst the tree itself



*“As olive trees take nearly 15 years to reach their full maturity and then to bear fruit, for centuries members of the Church in Africa have now reached maturity and can sustain the growth of the work of God for years or even centuries.”*



 **Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace**

may bear fruit for centuries, its roots can continue to produce fruits and new trees for thousands of years.

In Africa, the wars and their accompanying disasters—destruction, looting, hatred, and death—were hardly suitable for the cultivation of the Church, or olive groves, that require many years of care to reach full maturity.

But now future generations in the Church will be supported by their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents whose testimonies are rooted and founded upon Jesus Christ and His gospel. They will be a source of inspiration and admiration for their

faith and courage. They will follow their example by keeping faith in Christ and by performing all the priesthood ordinances. In doing so, many generations after, multigenerational families, will be born into the Church in Africa. ■

**NOTES**

1. See Genesis 8:11.
2. Quentin L. Cook, “Personal Peace: The Reward of Righteousness,” *Liahona*, May 2013, 35.
3. 3 Nephi 17:7.
4. Matthew 11:28.
5. Matthew 5:4.
6. John 14:27.
7. See Harold N. and Alma L. Moldenke, *Plants of the Bible* (1952), 159.
8. John 15:4–5.

## Sabbath Day Lessons in Madagascar

Name withheld

Joining the Church some years back required a complete shift in my way of thinking. One of the ways that having the fulness of the gospel changed my perspective was how to view the Sabbath day.

Keeping the Sabbath day holy in my home country of Madagascar is a

difficult task. I attended my Sabbath day meetings during the three months I was an investigator. From that time onward, I attended without fail, except once. That particular day, I skipped class. Afterwards, I felt a lot of regret for not keeping that day holy. I repented of what I had done.

When Elder Donald L. Hallstrom, a member of the Presidency of the Seventy, came to visit Madagascar near the end of last year, he taught us the importance of keeping the Sabbath day holy. I was very happy because I needed this lesson and felt that some other members did too.

We can learn and hear about Sabbath day observance every Sunday, but I really felt the love Elder Hallstrom has for me and the Malagasy people as he spoke. I could tell that he knows about the cultures we have in our country and why keeping this commandment would be difficult. He told us we needed to adopt the culture of God. He added that we needed to do all things in six days and that on the seventh day—Sunday—we should come to church and attend all the meetings. I know he is right.

After skipping that one class, I learned and know that what Nephi taught us is true in 2 Nephi 8:7: “Hearken unto



**President and Sister Hamilton, President and Sister Cook, Elder and Sister Bednar, Elder and Sister Hallstrom, and President and Sister Ellis at the Africa Southeast Area Office during a recent visit to Africa**

ORIGINAL WATERCOLOR BY SISTER MARGARET BLAKE. MOTHER AND HER CHILDREN OFF TO SUNDAY SCHOOL.



*For a good and glorious  
purpose  
Thus we meet each  
Sabbath day,  
Each one striving for  
salvation  
Thru the Lord's appoint-  
ed way.*

*Earnest toil will be  
rewarded;  
Zealous hearts need not  
repine.  
God will not withhold  
his blessings  
From the eager, seeking  
mind.*

*Chorus: Then away,  
haste away!  
Come away to the  
Sunday School!  
Then away, do not  
delay!  
Come away to the  
Sunday School!*

("Come Away to the Sunday School," *Hymns*, no. 276)

## Becoming a Master Teacher

### Tips from the local Saints

By T. Ruth Randall

When you became a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, you took on an immediate assignment: to be a teacher. It doesn't matter whether you're called as a Young Women advisor, a stake president, a music leader in Primary, or as a home teacher. In fact, once you have entered the waters of baptism, you will begin to fulfill the divine role of teacher even with no calling at all. Our mandate to share the gospel through word and deed as parents, children, siblings, colleagues, friends, and in our more formal "calling" capacities means that we have a mandate to teach others the things we know.

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) once said, "No greater responsibility can rest upon any man [or woman] than to be a teacher of God's children" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1916, 57).



*President  
David O.  
McKay  
(1873–1970)*

me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart I have written my law, fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings." Elder Hallstrom confirmed this during our conference as he counseled us not to pay attention to what people may think about you as you try to keep the Sabbath day holy. He encouraged us to put the Lord's culture first in our lives.

I'm so grateful for the privilege I had to hear from Elder Hallstrom. I know I'm still going to face sickness, affliction, and adversities, but every Sunday as I attend church I feel the love of God and a power that helps me carry on. I know that as we live His laws, Heavenly Father will pour all His blessings upon us and that one day we will see Him again. ■



*The Savior teaching his followers*

The introduction to *Teaching, No Greater Call: A Resource Guide for Gospel Teaching* says: “As you think of the role of gospel teaching in the salvation and exaltation of God’s children, can you imagine a duty more noble or sacred? It calls for your diligent efforts to increase your understanding and improve your skills, knowing that the Lord will magnify you as you teach in the way He has commanded” ([1999], 4).

On our Facebook page, we asked members of the Africa Southeast Area to tell us some ways to become better teachers. Here’s what they had to say:

**Seek the power of the Holy Ghost as you teach.**



“Invite the spirit, and teach by the Spirit,” said Bangi Henry Tshabalala.

Pam Cerff said, “A lesson from Elder Bednar is to ask the Spirit what part he would like you to take in the lesson, then listen and do what he says.”

According to President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972), the Spirit teaches more powerfully than any other medium on earth. “The Spirit of God speaking to the spirit of man has power to impart truth with greater effect and understanding than the truth can be imparted by personal contact even with heavenly beings,” he said. “Through the Holy Ghost the truth is woven into the very fibre and sinews of the body so that it cannot be forgotten” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Fielding Smith* [2013], 183–84).

**Invite the Spirit by preparing early and thoroughly, but don’t be fixated on covering all the material in the lesson.**



Fitzgerald Kagiso Sidumo said, “Start preparing the lesson as early as possible. Sunday afternoons

are always a good time to start, and then add on to that during the week as time permits.”

Anne Beck added that we qualify to teach with the Spirit “by being prepared.”

Colleen Keyes echoed that sentiment: “Prepare in advance, let the Spirit do the teaching, speak from the heart, and don’t try to cover everything in the lesson.”

**Love those you teach.**



Lastly, our members admonished teachers to develop genuine love for those they shepherd.

Marcelle Amstrong said, “Get to know and love those you teach. If that seems like a formidable task, do it anyway—one person at a time. It makes all the difference.”

Charle Willers agreed. “You have to love the ones you teach,” he said, “and that love will only come if you serve them.”

For Reabetswe Maitseo Sethaelo, that effort is summed up by one word: “fellowshipping.”



*Fred Ojienda doing research for his family in the Johannesburg Family History Center*

And for Melissa Molema, the starting point is learning the names of everyone in your class. From there, she suggests, “invite participation by asking questions relevant to the class you teach.”

As we prepare thoroughly, seek the Spirit’s guidance and truly love those whom we teach, we will become more powerful teachers and instruments in the hands of the Lord. We will begin to see firsthand the miracles contained in a promise made by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “If we have the Spirit of the Lord to guide us, we can teach any person, no matter how well educated, any place in the world. The Lord knows more than any of us, and if we are his servants, acting under his Spirit, he can deliver his message of salvation to each and every soul” (“Teaching and Learning by the Spirit,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1997, 7). ■

## A Grandmother’s Help from Beyond the Grave

By Fred Ojienda, Nairobi Kenya Stake

As a young child I began to grow a strong bond with my grandmother Elizabeth. The reason for this, many said, was that I take after her. Before I left for boarding school, she prayed for me so fervently that I could see tears streaming down her face. I also became a little emotional trying

to imagine her feelings. I knew that she loved me and cared for me.

In 1989, I finished high school and a few months later she became ill and died. I had nothing to be happy about as I had lost my grandmother who had been a great friend in my life. My cousin, Joshua, who was working in Eldoret, Kenya, was the only one in our family who could help with the funeral expenses. Having been the best friend to my grandmother, I was the one who needed to go look for Joshua, even though I had never been to that place before.

I took a passenger van to Eldoret. As I traveled, I kept praying that I would be able to find my cousin. The weather was bad and it started raining heavily, which left me very little hope. It had grown late when I arrived at the town where Joshua lived. I knew only that I needed to look for the registration number of a certain commuter van that would take me to my destination.

As we traveled I was in the last seat next to the door where the conductor sits. I was asked to move over for a certain passenger who had reached his destination. I prayed harder for this stranger, thinking about how he would soon be stepping into the darkness.

Then to my great surprise, there was my cousin Joshua! He had been prompted to come to the passenger stop to meet a friend who had not turned up. After talking to each other for a short time, I said to the conductor, “My journey is over.” He asked me, “Are you not the one who kept asking me where you should

go to find someone in your family?” I said, “Yes, but he is the one I was searching for”, as I pointed to Joshua. Overwhelmed with tears of happiness, we both hugged each other and started the journey to his house together.

When I broke the bad news that our grandmother had passed, he was left with no words. He then said to me, “Fred, my uncle’s son, I know that our grandmother is no longer living with us, but she is helping us, for finding each other tonight did not happen by accident.”

I believe that our ancestors love us and help us in ways that we cannot even comprehend. They in turn need our help too. I bear my solemn testimony that our departed loved ones are in our midst waiting for our help. Temple work is vital to help these loved ones continue to progress and to gain the ordinances that we can provide for them in the temple. We can show our love for them by sealing them to us so we can be families into the eternities. ■

# The Book of Mormon in the Rubble

By Tania Lombardi

Mpumelelo Victor Miti, or Victor as he is known, was born and raised in Munsieville, a township about 45 minutes from Johannesburg. He was raised in the home of his grandfather, who was a reverend in the Baptist church, but Victor attended a school that was influenced by another Christian faith. In this school, only the priest was allowed to read the scriptures. But Victor always had a desire to read the word of God, so he stopped going to church. One day in 1990 while walking to work, he saw a book in a pile of rubble. Even though it was dusty and wet, Victor felt drawn to it. Gold writing titled it *The Book of Mormon*.

“On the cover there was an emblem of the angel Moroni,” said Victor. “That is what attracted me to the book. I thought it was about things that had happened long, long ago.” He dusted off the book and took it home. He read it and said that all the “-ites” were interesting. He noticed on the title page the words written, “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” Victor made several attempts to find this mysterious church but was unable to do so.

“The address on the book was in Utah and I thought there was no such church near me,” said Victor. “I really wanted to be part of the genuine church that was serving Heavenly Father in the right way. But I couldn’t find anything, so I just gave up.”

Ten years later, while walking to his spaza shop, two young men in white shirts approached Victor. They told him they wanted to talk to him about God. Victor invited them to come to his home, and the teaching began. During the discussion, he noticed the words on their name tags: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Suddenly, he remembered the book that he had found 10 years earlier with those words on the cover page. Victor retrieved the book from its shelf and showed it to the missionaries. His decade-long search for the Church had finally been brought to an end! “That was a moment of great excitement between us and the missionaries,” said Victor. “It didn’t take long to decide that I wanted to get baptized. We met in December 2000 and my baptism date was set for the next month.”

Since that day, he has never missed a Sabbath day at church. He watched Munsieville grow from being part of a ward to being its own branch that met at a school. Later, Victor was called as branch president and accepted the challenge from his priesthood leaders to help make the branch into a ward. Two years later this vision was achieved.

But this is not the end to the miracles witnessed by Brother Miti.

While paging through the Book of Mormon he had found, Victor saw a name written on one of the pages: Elizabeth Mosime. Victor had never met Elizabeth, but assumed from the



**Brother Victor Miti with the Book of Mormon he found in the rubble**

inscription that she had once owned the book. Years later, Victor’s second son dated a young lady named Tshelofelo Vinolia Mosime. A baby boy was born of that relationship. The tiny child was named Kamogelo Victor Mosime. When the baby was nine months old, Vinolia suddenly died of a heart problem. Brother Miti and his wife lovingly took the infant into their home to raise. Some time later, Victor discovered that Elizabeth Mosime—the same lady who had once owned his Book of Mormon—was the great-aunt of his grandson. Miraculously, Victor was connected to the original owner of his beloved book through the child who had unexpectedly come into his home.

Brother Miti says he will one day bestow this special Book of Mormon on his grandson Kamogelo. “I will be the custodian of this book for him. After my grandson goes on a mission, I will give it to him as part of his heritage,” said Brother Miti. Kamogelo is now five years old and loves going to Primary! Heavenly Father has a master plan—Elizabeth Mosime, Victor Miti, and little Kamogelo are all part of it. ■