

AFRICA WEST AREA LOCAL PAGES

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Teaching in the Savior's Way

By Elder LeGrand Curtis, Jr.

President, Africa West Area Presidency

When Nicodemus visited Jesus early in the Savior's ministry, he began by acknowledging that Jesus was "a teacher come from God" (John 3:2). Jesus was that, and much more. Part of His role as our Savior and Redeemer was to teach us the way to eternal life, made possible by His atoning sacrifice for us.

We see in the Gospels the accounts of Christ's life, and in His ministry among the Nephites recorded in 3 Nephi, the work of the Master Teacher. He taught with parables,

inspired questions, scriptural quotations, similes, metaphors, and a variety of other effective teaching tools. He loved those whom He taught, and He taught them with words and examples that they could understand. He taught large groups, small groups, and even one person at a time. He taught those who loved Him dearly and those who hated Him and sought to take His life. He taught on the land, on the sea, indoors, outdoors—wherever there were people to teach. Underscored all of His teaching was

His magnificent perfect example—His most effective teaching method of all.

As members of His Church, we are also called upon to be teachers. The most important teaching that we do is within our families as parents who teach their children on a daily basis, and as we teach each other in our family home evenings. As Relief Society members and priesthood holders, we also are assigned to go into the homes of members and teach as visiting teachers and home teachers. As we are asked to speak



Elder LeGrand
Curtis, Jr.





Teaching in the Savior's Way

The goal of every gospel teacher—every parent, every formally called teacher, every home teacher and visiting teacher, and every follower of Christ—is to teach the pure doctrine of the gospel, by the Spirit, in order to help God's children build their faith in the Savior and become more like Him.

in sacrament or other meetings, we are also called upon to teach. Leaders of auxiliaries, quorums, and other Church organizations also have opportunities to teach both in formal settings and in one-on-one counseling.

Almost all of us will also have the opportunity, at different times in our service in the Church, to be called as teachers in the different organizations of the Church. When called, we are typically given instruction, a class roll, and teaching materials to help us get started. A new, important resource for those called to such teaching positions has just been introduced in the Church. Each month, each teacher in an auxiliary or priesthood quorum

or group will be invited to a teacher council meeting. This meeting will be held during the block time in the hour that the teacher is not teaching. That is, the Sunday School teachers will attend a teacher council meeting during the third hour of the block, and the priesthood, Young Women, and Relief Society teachers attend a teacher council meeting during the second hour of the block. The Primary teachers will attend whichever of these teacher council meetings do not conflict with their teaching time. Means will be provided to help care for the children while they are in opening exercises and sharing time so that the teachers can miss sharing time the week that they have a teacher council meeting.

These teacher council meetings will typically be conducted by the ward or branch Sunday School presidency. The meetings will provide opportunities for teachers to discuss successes and challenges in their teaching experiences. Time will be provided in the meetings to learn and practice new teaching skills. Discussion materials for these meetings are provided in a new booklet, *Teaching in the Savior's Way*, which will be provided to all teachers and leaders. This booklet, in addition to being helpful for the conduct of the teacher council meetings, is also a great resource for teachers to study to improve their teaching. It also has helps for leaders in orienting new teachers. There is also a website, teaching.lds.org, where a digital version of the booklet, helpful videos, and other materials may be found.

This new effort to support teachers and help them teach even more effectively will be a blessing to all of the members of the Church, including those in West Africa. We will never completely be able to teach as the Savior did, but as we use these new tools and participate in teacher council meetings, we will mirror, better and better, Christ's way of teaching. The Lord said, "Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you" (D&C 88:78). Part of our diligent teaching will now include participating in these very helpful teacher council meetings. ■

CHURCH HISTORY COLUMN

Church Announces a New Africa West Area Presidency

Adapted from an article in Mormon Newsroom, Ghana

The First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints announced that the new Africa West Area Presidency of the Church will be Elder Terence M. Vinson, President; Elder Marcus B. Nash, First Counselor; and Elder Vern P. Stanfill, Second Counselor.

Elder Vinson succeeds Elder LeGrand R. Curtis Jr., who has served alongside his wife, Jane, for the last five years in the Africa West Area. Elder Curtis will move to Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, and become the Assistant Executive Director of the Priesthood and Family Department and assistant in the supervision of the Utah areas.

The changes will take effect on August 1, 2016.

Members of Latter-day Saint Area presidencies are witnesses of Jesus Christ who teach the gospel and

administer ecclesiastical and temporal affairs for the Church in various parts of the world.

The Africa West Area includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Maritius, Niger, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, and Western Sahara. There are more than 273,000 Latter-day Saints in the Africa West Area—part of a worldwide membership approaching 16 million.

Members, missionaries, and congregations of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have been in the Africa West Area since 1978.

Elder Vinson has been serving as the First Counselor in the Africa West Area.

In 1974, Elder Vinson received a bachelor's degree in mathematics and

statistics from Sydney University with an education and teaching diploma from Sydney Teachers College. In 1990, he received a financial planning diploma from Deakin University and a master's degree in applied finance in 1996 from Macquarie University. His career has involved teaching math, as well as training and lecturing at universities. His main occupation for the last 23 years has been as a financial adviser. He recently retired as joint CEO and chairman of Northhaven Wealth Management.

Since joining the Church in 1974, Elder Vinson has served in numerous callings, including bishop's counselor, bishop, high councilor, stake president's counselor, regional representative, mission president's counselor, temple ordinance worker, and Area Seventy.



Elder Marcus B. Nash, First Counsellor



Elder Terence M. Vinson, President



Elder Vern P. Stanfill, Second Counsellor

Terence Michael Vinson was born in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, in March 1951. He married Kay Anne Carden in May 1974. They are the parents of six children.

Elder Marcus B. Nash was sustained as a General Authority Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on April 1, 2006.

At the time of his call he had been serving as a member of the Fifth Quorum of the Seventy in the North America Northwest Area. He has served as President of the South America West and South America Northwest Areas and as assistant in the North America Northeast and North America Southeast Areas. He has also served as an Assistant Executive Director in the Church History and Correlation Departments and as the Executive Director of the Correlation Department and as a member of the Boundary and Leadership Change Committee.

Elder Nash graduated from Brigham Young University with a bachelor's degree in international relations and earned a law degree from the J. Reuben Clark Law School at Brigham Young University. He was a partner in a major Seattle law firm at the time of his call as a Seventy.

Elder Nash has served in many Church callings, including full-time missionary in the El Salvador San Salvador Mission, stake president, bishop, ward Young Men president, elders quorum president, and Gospel Doctrine teacher.

Marcus Bell Nash was born in Seattle, Washington, USA, on March 26, 1957. He married Shelley Hatch in May 1979. They are the parents of five children.

Elder Vern P. Stanfill was sustained as a General Authority Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on April 4, 2015, at age 57. At the time of his call he had been serving as a member of the Sixth Quorum of the Seventy in the North America Central Area. He is currently serving as a member of the Africa West Area Presidency.

Elder Stanfill received a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics from Brigham Young University in 1981. He started his career in managing the family ranch in large cattle, hay, and grain operations. He sold this business in 1998 and became involved in managing family assets and trusts.

During this time he was involved in managing a portfolio of real estate and financial instruments, as well as structuring philanthropic and estate matters. Elder Stanfill holds both commercial fixed wing and rotorcraft ratings and has been involved in aviation for both business and pleasure.

Elder Stanfill has served in a number of Church callings, including full-time missionary in the France Toulouse Mission, executive secretary, elders quorum president, bishop's counselor, bishop, high councilor, stake president's counselor, high priests group leader, and stake president.

Vern Perry Stanfill was born in Townsend, Montana, USA, on August 8, 1957. He married Alicia Cecile Cox in 1980. They are the parents of four children. ■

LOCAL NEWS

Elder Rasband Testifies to the Faithful in West Africa

From an article contributed by Gerry Avant

Members in the Takoradi Ghana Stake line up to shake hands with Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on March 19 after the Saturday evening session of their stake conference.

Elder Ronald A. Rasband took spiritual nourishment to Latter-day Saints in the West African nations of Nigeria and Ghana as he fulfilled an assignment March 10–21 to a part of the world where many of the gospel's pioneers are spoken of in the present tense.



Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gives counsel to missionaries serving in the Ghana Accra and Ghana Accra West Missions on March 14, 2016.



Members in the Takoradi Ghana Stake line up to shake hands with Elder Ronald A. Rasband on March 19 after the Saturday evening session of their stake conference.

Elder Rasband joined a few of the Apostles who have been able to visit the Aba Nigeria Temple site since President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) dedicated the temple on August 7, 2005.

“The members were thirsty for the word of the Lord. They were thirsty and hungry for one of the leaders of the Church to come and tell them that

they are loved and appreciated,” Elder Rasband said.

Elder LeGrand R. Curtis Jr. of the Seventy and President of the Africa West Area accompanied Elder Rasband on his assignment to Nigeria. Elder Terence Vinson of the Seventy and a counselor in the Africa West Area Presidency accompanied him in Ghana.

Sister Melanie T. Rasband, Sister Jane C. Curtis, and Sister Kay Vinson traveled with their husbands and addressed various groups of members.

In Nigeria, Elder Rasband addressed members in a combined conference for the three stakes in Aba on March 13. The conference was held in the stake center on the grounds of the Aba Nigeria Temple complex.

“The members filled the stake center and a tent outside with closed circuit TV. There were as many members outside as there were inside,” Elder Curtis said. “Elder Rasband went to the conference early; people were there an hour ahead of the meeting. Elder Rasband shook hands and talked to the people. There was a great feeling of love that went both ways—from Elder Rasband to the people and from the people to Elder Rasband.

“It rained very hard that day, yet people came in great numbers to receive the blessing of having a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles come and spend time with them.”

Elder Curtis said, “They are a remarkably faithful people. We have a hard time scheduling all the visits to the temple that the members throughout Nigeria wish to make.”

Elder Rasband said after traveling the roads to the temple he regarded the site as an oasis. “It’s just beautiful. We walked through the temple and then met with missionaries serving in



Missionaries from the Ghana Accra and Ghana Accra West Missions attend a meeting over which Elder Ronald A. Rasband presided on March 14, 2016.

the Nigeria Port Harcourt Mission in the stake center on the grounds of the temple complex.”

After they left Aba, Elder and Sister Rasband went to Accra, Ghana, where they were met and accompanied by Elder and Sister Stanfill.

On March 14, they held a devotional in the Ghana Missionary Training Center and then, in the stake center on the Accra Temple complex, met with missionaries serving in the Ghana Accra and Ghana Accra West Missions. Elder Rasband presided over the Africa West Area Interim Mission Presidents’ Seminar March 15–16. They also met with Accra Ghana Temple workers and attended a temple session.

Elder and Sister Rasband and Elder and Sister Vinson then traveled on March 17 to Cape Coast, Ghana. “We

had a little meeting with some of the original pioneer Saints who were there at the time of the organization of the first branch in Ghana,” Elder Rasband said.

The branch members were taught the gospel by William “Billy” Johnson before he was baptized. In the early 1960s, having received some literature about the Church, he wrote to Church headquarters requesting more information and asking for missionaries to be sent to Ghana. Then-Church President David O. McKay (1873–1970) wrote back, saying that in the Lord’s own due time, missionaries would be sent. Brother Johnson studied the Book of Mormon and the LDS publications he had received. He began preaching the gospel, even holding meetings before missionaries arrived in Ghana in late

1978. After he was baptized that year, he taught the people whom he had unofficially baptized that they needed to have the ordinance performed by those holding priesthood authority, which had then become available to all worthy males in the Church.

“We could see how happy they are,” Elder Rasband said. “That was a priceless experience, to meet with those early Ghanaian Saints who began this whole wonderful expansion of the Church in Ghana.”

On March 20, Elder Rasband and Elder Vinson divided the Takoradi Ghana Stake to create the Mpintsin Ghana Stake. The day before, they interviewed 30 leaders in preparation to calling one as the new stake president.

“I asked them a question I typically ask: ‘Do you love your wife?’ Time



Sister Melanie T. Rasband, right, Sister Tamara Vinson, and Sister Kay Vinson (far left) pose for a photo with women who are among early converts to the Church in Ghana.

Elder and Sister Ronald A. Rasband, seated at center; Elder and Sister LeGrand Curtis Jr., seated at right; and Nigeria Port Harcourt Mission President and Sister Anthony M. Kaku pose with missionaries in the Nigeria Harcourt Mission on March 12, 2016.



after time, they would look at me and say, ‘Well, I love her, yes.’ Then I asked, ‘Do you tell her you love her?’ And they would say, ‘Well, we don’t really do that here in Ghana. We’re not a verbally loving people.’ And I would respond, ‘Will you let me teach you part of Latter-day Saint culture?’”

Elder Rasband taught for spouses to say “I love you” to reinforce the daily kindness that stems from love.

“In the adult session of stake conference I said from the pulpit, ‘Brethren and sisters, I don’t know you that well, but I can tell you that I love you.’ I told them that President Thomas S. Monson wanted them to know he loves them. I quoted John 15:12, ‘That ye love one another, as I have loved you.’ Afterward, every time I shook a hand or spoke to the members, they would say something like, ‘Elder Rasband, I love you,’ or ‘Dear Apostle, I love you.’ We deemed it the ‘I love you conference.’”

While the Brethren were meeting with priesthood leaders, Sister Rasband and Sister Vinson met with some of the women pioneers in the area. “We heard about their dreams and finding the Church and their faith. Throughout so much of the trip there was this amazing feeling of these valiant Saints who were very happy [and who] love the Lord, the Church, and the gospel—and they are willing to defend it and live by it.

“We learned that the whole area of West Africa is a very church-going people. . . . I was on the verge of tears everywhere we went. I was amazed at their gratitude, love, and humility. They were beautiful. . . . They came to meetings

beautifully groomed with the brightest smiles.”

Sister Rasband said the youth in Ghana performed a program of dance and music. “They performed with joy and gladness, holding on to their culture.” ■

The Potter’s Village Receives Donation from Accra Ghana Adenta Stake

Adapted from a Mormon Newsroom, Ghana

A congregation of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Accra donated supplies to residents of the Potters Village over Easter weekend last March.

The donation, from the Accra Ghana Adenta Stake, included clothing, bedding, food items, writing materials, toiletries, water, and other supplies.

The Potter’s Village, comprised of 127 residents, mostly children, is

a safe haven for victims of domestic violence and homelessness. Residents receive holistic training and become better prepared to seize future opportunities for a better life.

Local Church leader Daniel Kabason thanked Dr. Mrs. Jane Irina Adu, founder of The Potter’s Village, for “bringing these children together and training them to be great people in society and in the nation.” He said



The Potter’s Village students perform during the presentation program.



Students of The Potter's Village show appreciation.



The founder of The Potter's Village, Dr. Mrs. Jane Irina Adu, accepts the donations.



Donations made to The Potter's Village by the Adenta Stake of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

that the donation is a demonstration of love, similar to the great love Christ has for us. He advised the children to “depend on our Heavenly Father” in everything they do.

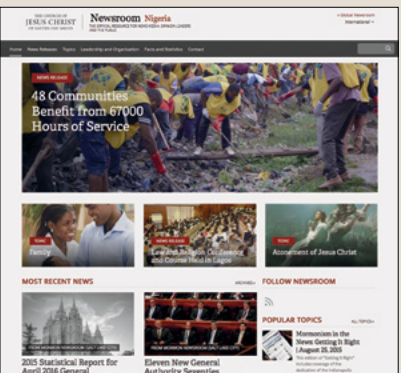
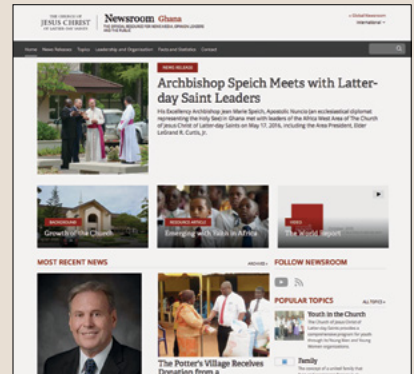
Mrs. Adu thanked the Church for the support and assured the donation

will go a long way to help the children. She reminded everyone that the first donation The Potter's Village received, 16 years ago, came from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She then expressed her love and appreciation for the Church. ■

VISIT AREA WEBSITES!



Africa West Area Websites:
 English: africawest.lds.org
 French: afriqueedelouest.lds.org



Mormon Newsroom Ghana:
www.mormonnewsroom.com.gh
 Mormon Newsroom Nigeria:
www.mormonnewsroom.org.ng ■