

The Rising Generation and Mission Preparation

By Elder S. Mark Palmer

First Counselor, Africa Southeast Area Presidency



S. Mark Palmer

In the 2018 area plan, all of us are invited to help better prepare the rising generation to successfully serve full-time missions. It is our desire that every worthy and able young man serve a faithful mission and that many of our young women also choose to serve. We also hope many more older members will begin preparing for the time when they can serve as senior missionaries. Let us remember the following principles, especially as we help the rising generation prepare for missionary service.

1. The importance of GRATITUDE

Recently Sister Palmer and I met with all the missionaries serving throughout Madagascar. It was a time of rejoicing as they were returning to a land and a people they love after an extended absence. In November 2017 the missionaries were evacuated from Madagascar after a severe outbreak of the bubonic and pneumonic plague, so we were meeting them as they had just begun to return. These wonderful missionaries felt such gratitude to once again be serving where they were originally assigned and among members who had valiantly continued the missionary work without them. They were also grateful to have been able to continue to serve while assigned

to other missions. These missionaries understand in a very real way what a privilege and blessing it is to be a full-time missionary.

Why is gratitude so important? When missionaries return home full of gratitude for the privilege of being a missionary, they will recognize that thanks to all the resources of the Church (including mission presidents who have left home and employment to guide and teach them), they have learned how to set goals, work hard, and take personal responsibility for their spiritual and temporal well-being. If they are humble and grateful, they will never come home with the false idea that now the Church owes them anything. And as they serve with all their might, mind, and strength, they will come to learn the simple truth for the rest of their lives that as they lose themselves in serving others they will find themselves. They, like King Benjamin, will know that no matter how much they serve Him, they will always be in the Lord's debt (see Mosiah 2:20–22, 34).

2. The importance of SACRIFICE

All over the world we have missionaries, young and old, who make great personal sacrifices to serve the Lord. This has always been the case in the

history of the Church. In their desperate poverty, and in the midst of a time of terrible persecution, the early members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were commanded to leave their wives and children at home and depart from Far West, Missouri, to missions in the British Isles and other far-flung parts of the world. As a result of this enormous personal sacrifice, the faith of these early leaders was surely strengthened, and a foundation was laid that allowed the Church to begin to prosper as converts from Europe then began joining Zion (see D&C 112).

Our missionaries today are also asked to make significant and meaningful personal sacrifices by saving funds toward the cost of their missions, leaving behind family and all other personal affairs, and living a consecrated life “with an eye single to the glory of God” (D&C 4:5) for 18 or 24 months.

To ensure fairness across the variety of missions, young missionaries and their families throughout the world are asked to contribute a fixed cost equivalent to U.S. \$400 per month toward the cost of a mission (including housing and a modest allowance for food and essential living expenses). Where a missionary and his or her family have meaningfully sacrificed and done all in their power to contribute toward



Elder Rabemananjaina with other elders

this cost, if there is still a shortfall, the bishop will encourage the ward and quorums to assist and then may also request assistance from funds contributed by other members to the general missionary fund.

In a recent meeting with priesthood leaders in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was asked by a bishop what sacrifice was needed by prospective missionaries. His inspired response was: “These young men and young women should be prepared in such a way that they will feel gratitude all their lives for the privilege and opportunity given them by the Church to serve a mission. They should sacrifice enough that this is the result. There is not a fixed amount, and every situation is different. That is why you bishops are given the gift of discernment.”

I recently met a young missionary who is a great example of the sacrifice and gratitude Elder Bednar describes. Elder Rabemananjaina is from the town of Toamasina in Madagascar and is a very recent convert who was the only one to join the Church in his family. After his conversion, he desired to serve a mission and discussed this with his branch and district president.

Although it would have been easy for the branch president to simply submit this eager young convert’s mission papers once he expressed the desire, these wise leaders taught the good young man the importance of making a meaningful personal sacrifice of time as well as money. So they agreed on a personal goal for how much he would earn before submitting his mission application. He then diligently and very willingly spent the next year working hard in various jobs and was able to save the money needed to meet the goal. Elder Rabemananjaina’s mother is not a member of the Church but is very proud of her son and knows how hard he has worked for the privilege of serving the Lord on his mission. When the mission president visited her following a devastating cyclone which severely damaged her home, he was deeply touched to see that one of her remaining prized possessions was a copy of the area plan, proudly displayed on the wall alongside a photo of her missionary son.

This well-prepared missionary did not hesitate when his priesthood leaders told him he needed to wait and work to demonstrate meaningful sacrifice for the privilege of serving the Lord. Now he is full of enthusiasm

and gratitude to be sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in his own country.

3. The importance of CONSECRATION and INTEGRITY

Occasionally we hear of missionaries, or the families of missionaries, who misunderstand the purposes of a mission and instead of viewing this calling as a time to “give and serve,” see it as a time to “receive and take.” Rather than recognizing a mission as consecrated service, they mistakenly think of it more as a job and may even dishonestly use mission allowances for personal gain by purchasing unapproved items such as phones, cameras, or computers or by sending money home to families. Sadly, a few even save part of their mission allowance for use after their mission. But the living allowance received by every missionary is from sacred and precious tithing funds and is only to be used as specified in the missionary handbook. How could any missionary take “the widow’s mite” for his or her own selfish use, while at the same time teaching investigators the importance of obedience? The Book of Mormon condemns any such practice in the strongest possible language: “Priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion.

“Behold, the Lord hath forbidden this thing; . . .

“But the laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion; for if they labor for

money they shall perish” (2 Nephi 26:29–30, 31).

We are very thankful for many of the rising generation here in Africa who have faithfully prepared to serve the Lord as one of His missionaries. We now have nearly as many missionaries serving from the Africa Southeast Area as serving in the area. Each of these missionaries has their own story of sacrifice and preparation. Most are humble and obedient, faithful and hard-working. Many have non-member families and are recent converts, but as they return home from their missions full of the fire of testimony, we are confident they will continue to serve in the Church and will marry in the temple and establish gospel-centered homes.

4. The important example of PARENTS and GRANDPARENTS who also prepare to serve

We are also thankful to see many of our faithful members preparing to serve senior missions in the temples and missions throughout the area. With four new temples announced or under construction in our area, the need is great and we must no longer rely on senior couples coming from other continents. Local missionaries bring an understanding of the local cultures and languages that make them especially effective servants of the Lord. African senior missionaries serving within Africa also provide a powerful example to children and grandchildren of the importance of serving the Lord, even when it involves great sacrifice.



Elder and Sister Rakotovao with Elder Palmer

Elder and Sister Rakotovao are a delightful and dedicated couple who are natives of Madagascar and who cannot stop smiling while serving the Lord as senior missionaries in the city of Ansirabe, Madagascar. When they joined the Church 17 years ago, they were already married and too old to serve as young missionaries. But they are now showing the Lord their gratitude by serving their third mission as a senior couple. In 2010 they sold their land and everything in their house so they could serve as senior missionaries in the Johannesburg South Africa Temple. Of this experience they recently said, “Serving in the temple is serving others. While serving others we felt like we were serving our Lord God. It is this strong feeling in us that drives us to serve a mission again.” And so, after serving faithfully in the temple for two years, they returned home and began preparing for yet another mission. Earlier this year they once again left their home in Antananarivo to serve where needed under the direction of the mission president. They are grateful to be missionaries in the Lord’s Church and are an inspiration to all Latter-day Saints as they serve their third senior couple mission with great devotion and personal sacrifice.

5. The important example of RETURNED MISSIONARIES continuing to SERVE and SACRIFICE

Returned missionaries who have served successfully as consecrated missionaries come home full of faith and testimony and a powerful conversion to the gospel of Jesus Christ. They experience the “mighty change of heart” described by Alma (see Alma 5). They then become great blessings to their families and wards as they exemplify the Lord’s teachings that “when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32) and “where much is given, much is required” (see Luke 12:48).

Sister Dickie is a greatly loved senior sister missionary serving in the Harare Zimbabwe Mission. Her experience is a story of how generations are blessed by sacrifice, gratitude, and consecration in mission preparation. Fifteen years ago, while struggling to support a family, she helped financially support her son, Freeman, as he served in the Kenya Nairobi Mission. Each month her stake president, Eddie Dube, would check in with her to see if she was managing OK while making monthly contributions. She would simply tell him she was grateful for the many blessings she was



Stake President Freeman Dickie and his full-time missionary mom

receiving while supporting a missionary. Her son, who had contributed what he could, also felt gratitude for the very real sacrifices made by his mother. Now many years later, this returned missionary son, Freeman Dickie, serves as stake president in Beira, Mozambique. And this time it is Freeman Dickie and his brother and sister who are willingly and happily contributing the cost of their dear

mother's missionary service while she lovingly consecrates her time and effort. This is a wonderful example of how when missionaries and their families contribute in meaningful ways to their missions, they come home full of gratitude, recognizing what a privilege it is to be one of the Lord's missionaries. Then they gladly serve in callings and willingly sacrifice by helping other family members or by contributing to the ward or general missionary fund so that others can receive the same blessings from serving a mission that they have appreciated so much.

In this way, generations of future and returning missionaries can avoid the pride cycle described in the Book of Mormon, by replacing pride with

humble service and gratitude. We could instead call this the gratitude cycle.

Conclusion

May each of us consider how we can help prepare ourselves, our children, and the young people within our wards and branches to serve successful missions. The old proverb "It takes a village to raise a child" could be changed to "It takes a ward or branch to prepare a missionary." As we look to the future of the Church in Africa, its strength will not be found in the quality of its buildings but in the testimonies of its members and in our willingness to show our love and gratitude to God by humbly serving others. ■

LOCAL PRIESTHOOD LEADERS

Spiritual and Temporal Well-Being: Our Personal Responsibility

By **Elder Elie K. Monga**
Area Seventy



Elder Elie K. Monga

I believe that spiritual and temporal well-being are personal responsibilities of each and every one and can only be achieved through obedience to God's laws and commandments.

In 1984, as I was finishing high school, I was hit by a car and spent some weeks in the hospital. As I had no chance to complete my high school at the same time as my peers, I was

feeling my life becoming troubled, dark, and hopeless. I had a big question in my mind about who I was going to become.

Three years later I had a chance to read the Book of Mormon, and this helped me understand that men are created to reach the full purpose of their mortal existence. It reads, "Adam fell that men might be; and men are,

that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25). Those words gave me hope, and I started seeking the means to have that joy.

In pondering the scriptures, I have read from the Book of Mormon and discovered that the Lord was helping Nephi in every situation. This gave me hope that the Lord would also assist me if I take righteous decisions and

then act. Since then my life has completely changed to become better.

The Book of Mormon lightened my life, and I was able to take decisions that led me to complete my technical high school (even late), find a job, get married, and later pursue my education—which I am still continuing to do.

Here are some principles I learned through these experiences:

1. Study the scriptures, read the words of the living prophets, and pray with a real intent will invite God's power into your activities. Nephi and his people are a great and inspiring example to anyone who seeks a balanced life regarding spiritual and temporal well-being (see 1 Nephi 17:7–8). Seek the Lord's guidance in all that you do. Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, "The Lord does help when we go to Him in times of need, especially when we are committed to His work and respond to His will."¹

2. Have faith to follow and act diligently. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, "Please notice the requirement to ask in faith, which I understand to mean the necessity to not only express but to do, the dual obligation to both plead and to perform, the requirement to communicate and to act."² Faith is a principle of action. If we have faith, we become agents to act and not to be acted upon. Brigham Young instructed the Saints, saying, "Instead of searching after what the Lord is going to

do for us, let us inquire what we can do for ourselves."³ As our faith leads us to obey His commandments and turn to Him, He will be ready to assist where we are unable to progress (see 2 Nephi 5:10–11).

3. Set a plan of what you want to achieve. If we do not know what we can do—and if we cannot make a plan—we will never get out of the bondage of poverty and debt. It will be impossible to achieve self-reliance. A plan on what to do to get what we want in this life is the first step to becoming responsible for our own lives. Elder Robert D. Hales (1932–2017) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, "The welfare plan is an integral part of the plan of salvation; the scriptures provide the spiritual framework for the welfare plan."⁴

4. Take responsibility for your own situation and decide to work hard. President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988) taught, "The principle is the same in all the countries; we should strive to become self-reliant and not depend on others for our existence."⁵

Joseph Smith's family is a wonderful example of taking responsibility to work. He says, "As my father's worldly circumstances were very limited, we were under the necessity of laboring with our hands, hiring out by day's work and otherwise, as we could get opportunity. Sometimes we were at home, and sometimes abroad, and by continuous labor were enabled to get a comfortable maintenance" (Joseph Smith—History 1:55).

In the Book of Mormon, we read about the Jaredites who "were exceedingly industrious, . . .

"And they did work in all manner of ore, . . . and all manner of metals; . . .

". . . And they did work all manner of cloth, . . .

"And they did make all manner of tools to till the earth. . . .

"And never could be a people more blessed than were they, and more prospered by the hand of the Lord" (Ether 10:22–25, 28).

In *Handbook 2* we read:

"[During the worldwide Great Depression], the First Presidency outlined a welfare plan for the Church. . . . [To abolish] the evils of a dole. . . . [And to ask that] 'work . . . be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership.'⁶

Spiritual and temporal well-being are personal responsibilities of each and every one of us—and can only be achieved through obedience to God laws. We also see that the spiritual and temporal are inseparably connected but that we need to become spiritually self-reliant before temporal self-reliance can be reached. Just like the pedal—connecting to the rear wheel of a bicycle through a chain—produces the movement to speed up the front wheel, spiritual self-reliance gives all the efforts and strength to our temporal well-being. The Savior taught, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). To teach spiritual and

temporal self-reliance is to teach undiluted spiritual truth.

I have come to know by simply applying the gospel and the words of the living prophets that these principles are true. We have worked and are still working as a family to reach spiritual and temporal self-reliance, and the Lord has accomplished His promises to us. ■

NOTES

1. L. Tom Perry, "Becoming Self-Reliant," *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 64.
2. David A. Bednar, "Ask in Faith," *Liahona*, May 2008, 94.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 26; see also Marion G. Romney, "The Celestial Nature of Self-Reliance," *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 91.
4. Robert D. Hales, "Welfare Principles to Guide Our Lives: An Eternal Plan for the Welfare of Men's Souls," *Ensign*, May 1986, 28.
5. Marion G. Romney, "The Celestial Nature of Self-Reliance," *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 91.
6. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 6.1.

LOCAL PAGES

Kenneth's Faith Equals That of Moses

By Elder Lavar and Sister Phyllis Jensen
AFSE Humanitarian Missionaries

As humanitarian missionaries we are constantly looking for ways to apply resources in an attempt to solve basic problems in our area. And just like the proselytizing missionaries, who are guided by the Spirit to those who are searching for the truth, we too spend time on our knees in prayer as we seek the Lord's guidance for our own work.

Recently, we felt directed to the Association for the Physically Disabled of Kenya (APDK), a rehabilitation clinic, where we discussed their needs for clean water. We had heard that they were experiencing difficulties and had been forced to obtain their water supply in 20-liter bottles (as most of the communities do here). They were sourcing from a neighboring hospital where a sufficient supply was not always available.

We developed and received approval from LDS Area Authorities to pursue the project. We arranged for a hydrologist to survey the APDK property, but his report came back with a prediction of only a fair outcome. After reading the report, both of us talked about it and, because we believed the possibility of success was marginal, agreed to stop the project from any further development.

After making this decision, we met with Leah Mwachari, the APDK administrator—along with our LDS site monitor, Brother Kenneth Malahilu—to inform her that we would not proceed. But as soon as Elder Jensen announced our decision to her, Brother Malahilu spoke up boldly and reminded us all that in the Old Testament, "Moses struck a rock and the Lord brought forth water. The Lord loved the children of Israel as much as He loves His children here in Kenya, and He will do the same for us here." Kenneth then bore his testimony to the three of us about the need to have faith, and when he finished, no one stirred for quite a



while. The Spirit was intense. We then looked at each other and, smiling, both of us said, "I guess we will be drilling for water."

A few months passed before the hospital came up with their financial contribution, simply because Leah had a challenging time convincing her boss



Kenneth stands with some patients



Casts are being made.



Closing ceremony at APDK

tank in about 8 hours. But on his own, this driller put in a 16-inch borehole which substantially increased the output flow.

As the project reached its completion, we held a closing ceremony with the people at APDK to formally turn over the project to them. At that time, we were told that this borehole was the seventh drilling at APDK—none prior had succeeded in giving them water. We thought about Kenneth—and his profound faith—and realized just how the Lord can bring forth water from a rock and bless His children. We felt the sweetness of the Spirit, and Elder Jensen—who sensed a strong prompting—asked if he might bless the borehole. Leah quietly nodded her permission and Elder Jensen offered up sacred words.

The borehole has now been operating for over six months and is still filling the 10,000-liter tank, plus a 60,000-liter tank, in an 8-hour day—three times what the hydrologist expected. And today the people at APDK are still enjoying clean water to drink and with which to clean, garden, and use in the fabrication of their casts, splints, and treatments.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod . . .

“Behold, I will stand before thee . . . and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink” (Exodus 17:5–6) ■

to sign over any funds. They were apprehensive because of some past failures with boreholes on their land.

Nevertheless, the financial issues were eventually sorted out and the project was soon underway. And Kenneth’s testimony to us earlier would prove prophetic in a couple

of ways. Good, clean water was struck at 45 meters, instead of at the depth of 60 meters, which the surveyor had indicated in his report. Secondly, the contract with the driller was arranged for a 10-inch borehole, which the hydrologist estimated was sufficiently sized to fill the expected 10,000-liter

What I Wish I Knew When I Got Married: Budgeting Tips from the Pros

By **T. Ruth Randall**

Staff Contributor

When the last piece of the wedding cake has been eaten, you and your sweetheart walk off into the sunset hand in hand. It feels like nothing will ever go wrong again.

But the next morning, you wake up, and real life begins. As husband and wife, you're embarking on a journey in every sense of the word. Ultimately, it's a spiritual one, but there are temporal lessons to along the way. One of the biggest of these is how to successfully—and harmoniously—manage your finances. "The responsibility to manage family finances should be shared between husband and wife with an attitude of trust and openness," Church members are counselled (Gospel Topics, "Family Finances," topics.lds.org).

But that's easier said than done. Some eye-opening statistics attest to this: it's often said that financial strife is a leading cause for divorce, and a survey conducted in 2015 by SunBank found that money was the leading cause of stress in relationships.¹ More than one out of three people in a marriage or relationship said that "money problems" were creating strain.

We asked two married couples who are getting it right to share some advice for newlyweds. What has helped them make their finances work?

If you don't have it, don't spend it. For Laveck and Eugenia Nguni from Zimbabwe, sticking to the golden rule of "living within your means" has helped to guide them through 18 years of marriage. "Stick to your needs," says Eugenia. "If there's extra money left over at the end of

the month, then you can take care of your wants." This might take some proactive communication between husband and wife. After all, you've come from different backgrounds and probably have different ideas around what a "need" really is.

Don't compare yourself to others. "Your friends may have a house or a nice car," says Larry Kasaje from Uganda. But that makes no difference in your life. Forget about them, counsels his wife Jenny, from Madagascar. Focus on making your own money work for you. "Even if the money is little, you need to make sure that it is enough for you and do things to increase it." Getting distracted by trying to keep up with your neighbours will detract from that goal.

Consider cutting up your credit cards. This may sound daunting if you've become used to having an extra line of credit to smooth over the bumps, but for Laveck and Eugenia, no credit cards is a way of ensuring that you never spend money you don't have. Eugenia also cautions against being seduced by sales. "Resist every temptation not to buy every special offer from shops," she says. It may feel like you're "saving" money, but you're often exceeding your budget to do it.

Save up one extra month's worth of income. Larry, who is self-employed, says that abiding by this principle has given the family much financial peace. "There's less stress in the home" with the added security of money saved up, says Larry.

Faith and prayer apply to finances too. Eugenia and Laveck counsel that couples

and families should "pray together." Whether it's about finances or anything else, prayer will keep you both listening to the Spirit and focused on a common goal. And when it comes to making tough calls based on good gospel principles, "Just do it!" says Jenny.

"There were times when we thought that if we were to pay our tithes then we wouldn't have enough for everything," said Larry. "But we did pay our tithes, and miracles have happened—in small measures, but to us I think, they are great," he says. "We feel happy that the blessings that the Lord has given us, in this time, are the blessings that fill our needs." ■

NOTE

1. See Kelley Holland, "Fighting with Your Spouse? It's Probably about This," CNBC, Feb. 4, 2015, cnbc.com/2015/02/04/money-is-the-leading-cause-of-stress-in-relationships.html.

CALL FOR ARTICLES

Your local pages section is produced by members in your own area under the guidance of the Area Presidency so as to address the needs and experiences of members where you live. We would like to share YOUR story and invite you to contribute your faith-promoting thoughts and experiences by contacting your local editor through the Africa Southeast Area website africase.lds.org or by email africasecommunications@gmail.com ■