

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Honesty and Integrity

By Larry S. Kacher

Second Counselor, Africa West Area Presidency

As a young boy, I went on a family outing to a park where an entrance fee was required for each person in the car. The amount of the fee was dependent on the age of each occupant. I was about 13 years old. I noticed that if I said I was 12, then my father could pay less for a ticket. So, I said something like, "Dad, why don't you tell them that I am 12?" thinking I was doing him a favor. His response is one I have never forgotten as he said, "Why would I do that? You are

13!" The message was clear. In no way would my father call into question his honesty or integrity by saying something that was not true to save money. I am grateful for that example of my father shown to me 52 years ago. It is one that I will never forget.

The Lord said of Hyrum Smith, "I, the Lord, love him because of the integrity of his heart, and because he loveth that which is right before me" (D&C 124:15). What does it mean to be loved because of the integrity of

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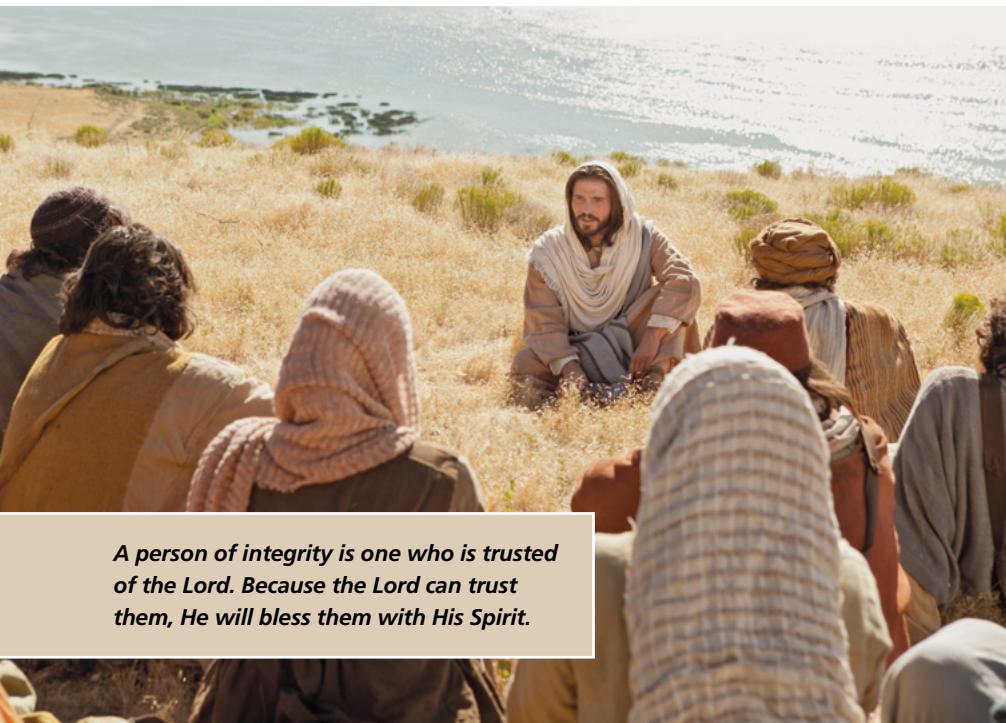


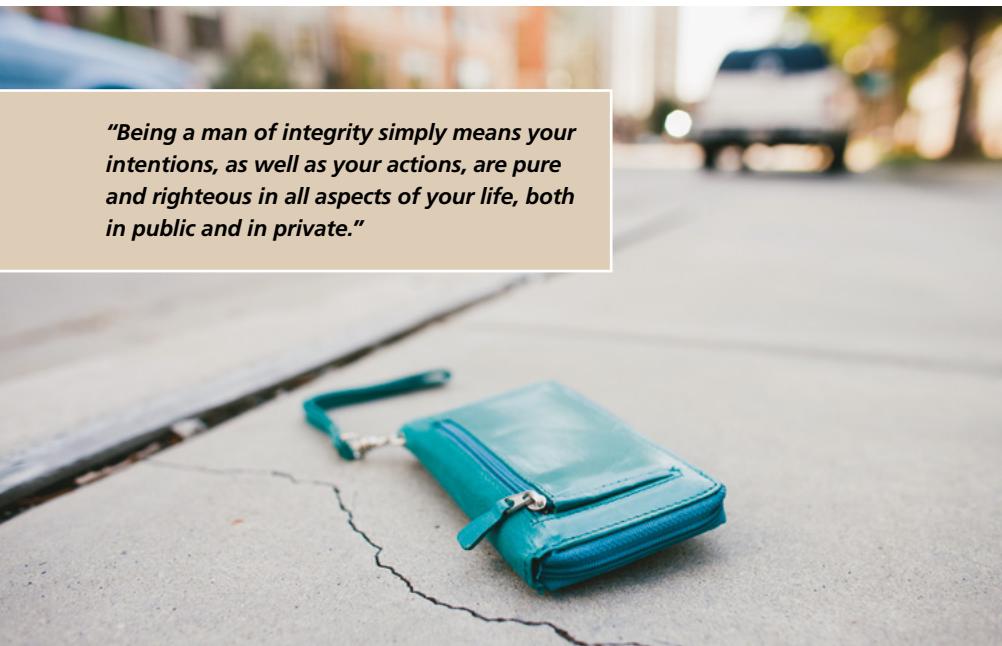
one's heart? Elder Richard J. Maynes of the Seventy defined integrity this way, "Being a man of integrity simply means your intentions, as well as your actions, are pure and righteous in all aspects of your life, both in public and in private" ("Earning the Trust of the Lord and Your Family," *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 75).

A person of integrity is one who is trusted of the Lord. The Lord knows what that person will do in any circumstance. The Lord knows that he or she will always make decisions that are honest and consistent with gospel principles. Because the Lord can trust them, He will bless them with His Spirit. His Spirit cannot dwell in unholy temples, but when we live a life of honesty and integrity, we are promised that His Spirit will be with us. As we live according to the principles of honesty and integrity, we will receive the blessings promised to us through the covenants we have made with the Lord.

Sometimes we think we can justify unrighteous actions because of our circumstances. Such was the case with Ananias and his wife, Sapphira. They had committed to live the law of consecration. In this case, that meant

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to consecrate any gain obtained by the selling of their possessions to the Lord. After having sold some land, they gave only part of the proceeds to Peter but claimed they had given all. Why did they hold back? Did they think the Lord did not know? Where were their hearts? Peter asked Ananias the question, “Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?” (Acts 5:3). Ananias and Sapphira paid a heavy price for their lack of integrity and dishonesty as they both were struck dead. (See Acts 5:1–10.)

It is unlikely that we will pay such an immediate price for our misdeeds. But if we do not learn from wrongdoing, then one day, we will pay the ultimate price when the day of judgment comes. Rather than stand in humble confidence gazing into the Savior’s eyes, we will want to shrink from His presence. Remember the words of Alma to Zeezrom, “Our words will condemn us, yea, all our works will condemn us; we shall not be found

spotless; . . . and in this awful state we shall not dare to look up to our God; and we would fain be glad if we could command the rocks and the mountains to fall upon us to hide us from his presence” (Alma 12:14). We know that He cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance (see D&C 1:31). He cannot. Nor should we.

Sometimes, because of the environment we have been raised in, the line between right and wrong, between honesty and integrity and dishonesty and a lack of integrity, appears unclear. We may seek to justify our own actions because of what we have seen others do. There is no justification for wrongdoing. The Lord taught Joseph Smith, “When we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, . . . behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved” (D&C 121:37).

Take the case of an elders quorum president or a Relief Society president that has been given money by the bishop to purchase food for a needy

member. After purchasing these items and finding money leftover, what if the leader decides to keep the change, justifying the decision by saying that valuable time was taken purchasing these items? Perhaps subconsciously saying to themselves, “I have seen others do it. Surely no one will care.”

What if a Church member finds himself in a position to personally benefit because of his Church calling? For example, what if a Church leader who has his own construction or excavating business is able to influence work contracts to be directed to him? Is that honest? How can that person know he can stand before the Lord at the last day “with a pure heart and clean hands”? (Alma 5:19). What good does it do us if we “gain the whole world” (Matthew 16:26) only to lose our right to eternal life?

The story is told of a professional driver who applied for a job driving high level government officials to their various destinations often on dangerous winding mountain roads. The interviewer asked each applicant the following question: “How close can you drive a car to the edge of a dangerous mountain road and remain safe?” The first applicant responded, “I can get within ten centimeters and still be safe.” The second said, “I can get on the edge and still be safe.” The third driver stated, “I can get one wheel over the edge and still protect

the passenger." Finally, the last driver said, "I will stay as far from the edge as possible." It is he who got the job.

So it is with us. When dealing with issues of honesty and integrity, there is too much at stake. We must stay as far from the edge as we possibly can. Risking our eternal salvation or that of our family is not worth any earthly benefit we might gain.

Parents, what do our children learn from our examples of honesty and integrity? Do we realize that they are always watching us? Do we understand the impact of our examples on the eternal destiny of our children?

I take two contrasting examples. First, the words of Enos, "I, Enos, knowing my father that he was a just man—for he taught me . . . in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Enos 1:1). Because of the example of Jacob, Enos's father, Enos was able to turn to the Lord in mighty prayer. To know Him. And to pattern His life after Him.

The second example is also instructive, but in a different way. We remember the wicked priests of King Noah in the Book of Mormon. His priests, when faced with danger, abandoned their wives and children to save their own lives. Years later, when their children had escaped and had been led to the righteous followers of Alma, we read, "the children of Amulon . . . were displeased with

the conduct of their fathers, and they would no longer be called by the names of their fathers, therefore they took upon themselves the name of Nephi, that they might be called the children of Nephi" (Mosiah 25:12).

We must never forget the power of parental example. Consider the words of the Savior, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 5:19). And so it is with our children.

Why is it that we follow the footsteps of Jesus? Because that is the sure way by which the Father will lead us, His children, back to Him. For it is His work and His glory to give us the sacred opportunity to live with Him again. To receive eternal life. (See Moses 1:39.) May our lives follow those sacred principles of honesty and integrity that will qualify us and our posterity to have the Holy Ghost with us at all times. That we may be led back to Him whose desire it is to give us all that He has. ■

AFRICA WEST AREA PLAN 2018



Marcus B. Nash
First Counselor



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President



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Second Counselor

The Africa West Area Presidency presents the Africa West Area plan for leaders and all adult and youth members of the Church for the year 2018. Every person who follows the Africa West Area plan will be fortified in his or her faith, grow closer to God, and experience greater happiness.

We invite families, quorums, councils, presidencies, and auxiliary organizations to review and discuss the plan periodically throughout the year.

Find the Area Plans for Leaders and Members in West Africa Area on the next two pages. ■



AFRICA WEST AREA **PLAN 2018**

The Lord builds up His Church by encouraging every person who is strong in the Spirit to take with him him that is weak that he may be edified in all meekness, that he may become strong also. (D&C 84:106) Church leaders in West Africa encourage each person to grow in faith, to participate in priesthood ordinances, and to strengthen the rising generation. So, every council in the Church should prayerfully identify, discuss, and decide:

- Who will take who to read daily from the Book of Mormon?
- Who will take who to sacrament meeting?
- Who will take who to receive the next saving ordinance of the gospel, including those of the temple?
- Who will help who to take a name to the temple?



AFRICA WEST AREA **PLAN 2018**

Our Heavenly Father wants each of His Children to be like Him. So, He invites each of us to follow the example of His Son and act in doctrine and principle in order to qualify for eternal life, the greatest of all the gifts of God.

PRAYERFULLY DECIDE WHAT YOU WILL DO TO:

- Take your family with you to read daily from the Book of Mormon.
- Take a person who is not a member, or is not active in the Church, to Sacrament Meeting.
- Receive the ordinances of the temple, and take the name of one of your kindred dead to perform vicarious ordinances for him or her in the temple

Twenty-third Stake Organized in Ghana: 95th Stake created in Africa West Area

Adapted from Mormon Newsroom Article

Elder Marcus B. Nash, First Counselor in the Africa West Area Presidency, presided over the semi-annual conference of the Accra Ghana Adenta Stake held on January 20 and 21, 2018.

As part of the conference, the Adenta Stake was divided due to an extraordinary growth in membership.

Daniel Kabason was released as president of the Adenta Stake, as were his counselors. With the leadership reorganization of the Adenta Stake, the Accra Ghana Madina Stake was created. The new Madina Stake is the 23rd stake created in Ghana. It is also the 95th stake organized in West Africa

since the Church was introduced in 1978.

The newly called Adenta Stake president is Michel Djimedo Avegnon, with first counselor James Belale Yeri, and Richard Paapa Dadzie as second counselor. Samuel Enos Eghan was called as president of the Madina Stake. Yaw Adjin Danso will serve as first counselor, with Edwin Kobina Ewudzie as second counselor of the Madina Stake.

Elder Marcus B. Nash commented on the historic Sunday morning event. “This conference was a sweet confluence of the faith of the pioneer members, current members, as well as the faith of the rising generation,” Elder Nash said.

“We enjoyed the simple and powerful testimony of Brother Opare, the first stake president in Accra,” said Elder Nash. “As a result of the humility and faith of those who have gone before, the faithful labors of inspired and capable leaders today, and with the help of parents and children who choose to obey the Lord, the Adenta and Madina stakes will contribute in miraculous ways to the Church, both in Africa and throughout the world.”



◀ *Young man smiles broadly before conference began.*

Families and friends gather for the Adenta Stake conference. ▶





▲ *More than 2,500 Latter-day Saints gathered for the Adenta Stake conference.*

◀ *Elder Marcus B. Nash (left) and Elder Anthony Quaisie (right) with Emmanuel Ohene-Opare, the first stake president in the Accra Ghana Stake.*

▶ *Elder Anthony Quaisie greets a friend from Adenta.*



Elder Nash was accompanied by Elder Anthony Quaisie, Area Seventy for the Church, who resides in Accra, Ghana.

On April 21, 1991, the first two stakes of the Church were created in Ghana. There were approximately 8,000 members of the Church in the country at that

time. Twenty-seven years later, Church membership in Ghana has grown to 78,295, as of January 15, 2018.

Emmanuel Ohene-Opare, an Adenta resident and president of the first stake in Ghana attended the conference on Sunday, as did many other early Church pioneers.

“It is hard to imagine in the short space of 25 years the Church in Ghana has grown so much,” said Emmanuel Ohene-Opare.

“Ghanaians believe in God. When they hear the truth, it sounds in their souls and they are moved to action.” Opare said. ■



Leaders from the Adenta and Medina Stakes. President Daniel Kabason (center) was released as the Adenta Stake president on Sunday.

Church Announces Mission Adjustments: New Missions in Africa West Area

Five new missions will open in 2018; 19 others will merge with other missions.



Mormon Newsroom reported in October that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would adjust the number of its 421 missions to better fit the needs of each region of the world. Today, the Church announces boundary realignments for 19 missions, as well as the creation of five new missions. With the following changes there will be 407 missions.

The following five missions will open in July 2018:

- Brazil Rio de Janeiro South
- Cote d'Ivoire Yamoussoukro
- Nigeria Ibadan
- Philippines Cabanatuan
- Zimbabwe Bulawayo

Changes to mission boundaries are common. Since President Thomas S. Monson announced in 2012 the change in the ages for missionary service, the Church has created 76 new missions

to accommodate a surge of growth in only a few years, from 58,000 to 88,000 missionaries. The initial wave of missionaries has since receded to about 68,000 missionaries, as anticipated.

Fewer missionaries means that not only are fewer missions needed but also a heightened importance of a more strategic placement of missionaries in areas of need around the world; thus, the creation of five new missions.

"We want missionaries to be in the best possible place and position to help people, whether through sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ or community service," said General Authority Seventy Elder Brent H. Nielson, Executive Director of the Missionary Department. "The pattern established by the Savior is to make a difference in individual lives, one by one, all over the world, which requires continuous planning and organizing." ■

AFRICA WEST AREA

MISSION	NEW PRESIDENT AND COMPANION
Cote d'Ivoire Yamoussoukro	Kirk D. and Jacqueline D. Sherman
Ghana Kumasi	Stephen C. and W. Rosely Webster
Nigeria Calabar	Emmanuel A. and Adiza Nelson
Nigeria Ibadan	Patrick and Elizabeth Appianti-Sarpong