

AFRICA WEST AREA LOCAL PAGES

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

A Man or Woman in Whom There Is no Guile

By Elder Terence M. Vinson

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Elder Terence M. Vinson

One of the accounts in the Bible that has always fascinated me is the meeting of the Saviour and Nathanael, as found in John 1:43–47:

“The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

“Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

“Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

“And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

“Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!”

The verses which follow describe a tender, spiritual experience for Nathanael as he receives a personal witness of the Saviour’s divinity. However, it is not that experience on which I wish to focus today. Instead, let’s look at the verses above, which are interesting for several reasons, but I will here mention just two. The first is Philip’s initial, immediate action. Once

Jesus has met him, Philip immediately finds and lifts another. In other words, he applies the “one take one” principle, the charge given to each of us in D&C 84:106, 108:

“And if any man among you be strong in the Spirit, let him take with him him that is weak, that he may be edified in all meekness, that he may become strong also. . . . Behold, this is the way that mine apostles, in ancient days, built up my church unto me.”

This is the scripture with which all members of the Church in West Africa should not only be familiar but are hopefully also applying regularly. This is the impact that the Saviour should have on the way we act and go about our work in His Church. Because of His teachings and His love for each of us, we are immediately motivated to share this “good news”, this “gospel”.

Philip is to become one of the twelve apostles, and Nathanael also becomes an apostle, as indicated by the Bible Dictionary entry “Nathanael”:

“*God has given.* His friendship with Philip and call to be a disciple are found in John 1:45–51; see also 21:2, where we learn that he belonged to Cana in Galilee. He is generally identified with Bartholomew, on the ground that Nathanael is always mentioned along with Apostles, as though of apostolic rank, and that whereas the Synoptists (Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14) mention Bartholomew (associating him with Philip) and never Nathanael, John mentions Nathanael and never Bartholomew.”

The second reason that this incident is interesting is in the description given by the Saviour to Nathanael. Nathanael had never previously seen the Saviour, but Jesus knows the character of

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Nathanael upon meeting him. He describes Nathanael as a man “without guile”.

This word “guile” is defined in the dictionary as “insidious cunning, or deception, or duplicity”. So Nathanael is “without deception”. In fact, this quality of being without deception is sometimes called “integrity” or “trustworthiness”. It is a most God-like characteristic. In fact, the name “Nathanael”, according to the Bible Dictionary, means “God has given”. Indeed He has. He has given this quality to His true sons and daughters. And it is a quality He Himself both possesses and is well known for.

“And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no evil, **neither was any deceit in his mouth**” (Mosiah 14:9).

Because He has this quality, we can have absolute confidence and trust in Him. In the words of the brother of Jared, “. . . Yea, Lord, I know that thou speakest the truth, for thou art a God of truth, and canst not lie” (Ether 3:12).

If He holds this quality so dear and precious, should we not emulate Him and do the same? Should we not cultivate this in ourselves and teach it with diligence in our families? Should we not practise it daily? But

it is not a matter of having integrity because we are told to. We must possess it **because we have chosen** to embrace it, come what may.

Karl Maeser is regarded as the founder of Brigham Young University. He was a man of great honour, a man of integrity. He is quoted as saying: “I have been asked what I mean by ‘word of honor.’ I will tell you. Place me behind prison walls—walls of stone ever so high, ever so thick, reaching ever so far into the ground—there is a possibility that in some way or another I might be able to escape; but stand me on the floor and draw a chalk line around me and have me give my word of honor never to cross it. Can I get out of that circle? No, never! I’d die first” (quoted in Emerson West, *Vital Quotations*, 1968, 167).

Such a thought would be laughable to most nowadays, but not to disciples of Christ. We are charged to be men, women, and children of honour and integrity, for that is what our Saviour expects.

Our prophets and apostles have emphasised the importance of cultivating the qualities that comprise being a man or woman “without guile”. A counsellor in the First Presidency gave this counsel over 40 years ago:

“From this very pulpit and by some of the greatest religious leaders of modern time, we have heard sermons and exhortations upon **honesty**,

LOCAL NEWS

Clean Water Gushes at Agulu

Adapted from Mormon Newsroom

After failed attempts by several organizations, clean water gushed from a 600-foot-deep borehole,



▲ **President Chima Udeichi addresses guests and dignitaries.**

▼ **Water gushes from the borehole.**



trust, righteousness, dependability, truthfulness, kindness, justice, mercy, love, fidelity, and many other principles of right living. When one has integrated all of these attributes within his being, when they become the moving force of all his thoughts, actions, and desires, then he may be said to possess **integrity**, which has been defined as ‘a state or quality of being complete, undivided, or unbroken, moral soundness, honesty, and uprightness’ (N. Eldon Tanner, “Integrity,” *Ensign*, May 1977, 14).

Such a commitment to honour and integrity is contrary to that practised by most in today’s society. That integrity would be lost in our age was prophesied in the Saviour’s time. Paul wrote: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Timothy 4:1–2).

Such people are prepared to trade their souls for temporal gains, status, recognition, or perceived wealth. Shakespeare put it profoundly this way:

*What win I, if I gain the thing I seek?
A dream, a breath, a froth of fleet-
ing joy.*

*Who buys a minute’s mirth to wail
a week?*

Or sells eternity to get a toy?

(William Shakespeare, “The Rape of Lucrece,” 211–214)

But we can be different if we decide to live with honour and integrity as true disciples of our Saviour and Redeemer. We must be different! Such was the case with the people of Ammon who decided that they would be just that.

“And they were among the people of Nephi, and also numbered among the people who were of the church of God. And they were also distinguished for their zeal towards God, and also towards men; for they were **perfectly honest and upright in all things**; and they were firm in the faith of Christ, even unto the end” (Alma 27:27).

As members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we should stand as beacons of honour, virtue, and integrity to the world. Many members in West Africa are already distinguished from other men and women because of their perfect honesty and uprightness. Will our God be content with anything less from any member of His Church, and from any who take His name upon them?

Let us, then, be as Nathanael and receive a similar response from our Saviour when we come to stand before Him, as we surely will. Let us hear our name spoken in that great day as He, hopefully, says to you and to me: “Behold, a man [or woman] in whom there is no guile”. ■



◆ **Fetching point for water.**

◆ **Guests await the commissioning ceremony.**



donated by LDS Charities to the community of Agulu Obeleagu Umunna. The project in Enugu State is one of

many completed by LDS Charities, the humanitarian arm of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

During the commissioning ceremony, Dr. C.O.C. Egumgbe, Commissioner for Water Resources, representing State Governor, the Right Honorable, Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi, thanked LDS Charities for their contributions to the development of the State.

“Water is life,” said Egumgbe. “Whoever brings water to the people, brings life and joy to the people.”

President-General, Victor Udeani, of Agulu Umuna Development Union, expressed gratitude to LDS Charities for serving his community through the provision of clean water.

Engineer Udeani recounted the various failed attempts at constructing a functional borehole saying, “We have seen today, that with God, nothing is impossible. We thank LDS Charities for their tireless work.”

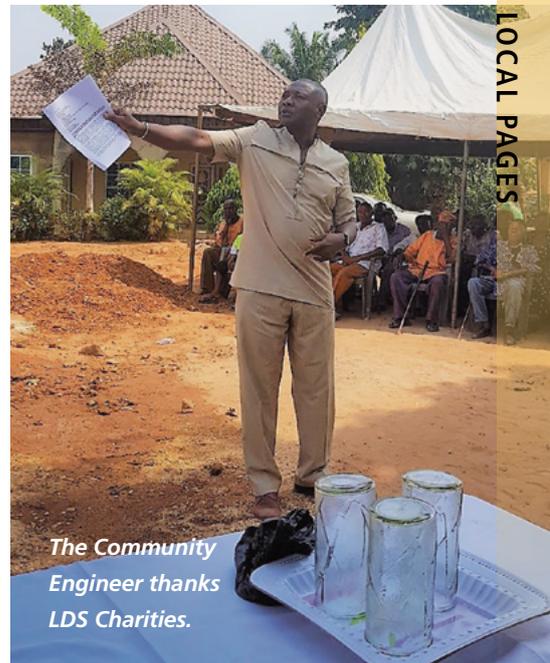
“This is a miracle!” said Mrs. Jidefor Angelina, a 73-year-old resident of Agulu, who danced and sang throughout the ceremony. She could not believe that in her lifetime, clean water would flow from taps in her community. She recounted how, due to lack of water, many of the villagers had to make do with just washing their legs, hands, and faces instead of taking a full bath.

The provision of potable, clean water for communities is part of the major projects by LDS Charities for rural communities throughout Nigeria. ■



◆ Dignitaries cut the ribbon at the water project.

◆ Residents begin to fill water jugs at the fetching point.



The Community Engineer thanks LDS Charities.



Clean water is served to the guests.



“Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile” (Psalm 32:2).

Young Single Adults

Festac Ward, Lagos Nigeria Festac Stake

“Resolve to be honest at all events, and if in your own judgement you cannot be an honest lawyer, resolve to be honest without being a lawyer. Choose some other occupation.”—Abraham Lincoln

Most of us may have experienced deceptive or manipulative behavior in others at some point in our lives, be it at our place of work, among family and friends, and even in religious organizations we belong to. We may even have displayed such behavior ourselves. The tendency to be deceptive stems mostly from selfishness and secrecy. Most people who live a life of deception may appear sincere, but in reality are only pretending with the intention of ensnaring another.

Living a life of deception makes you lose your credibility. You are considered unworthy of trust. We lose our sense of right and wrong and find it hard to trust others because we ourselves cannot be trusted.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “To be without guile is to be free of deceit, cunning, hypocrisy and dishonesty in thoughts and in action” (“Without Guile,” *Ensign*, May 1988, 80).

Psalm 34:13 says, “Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.”

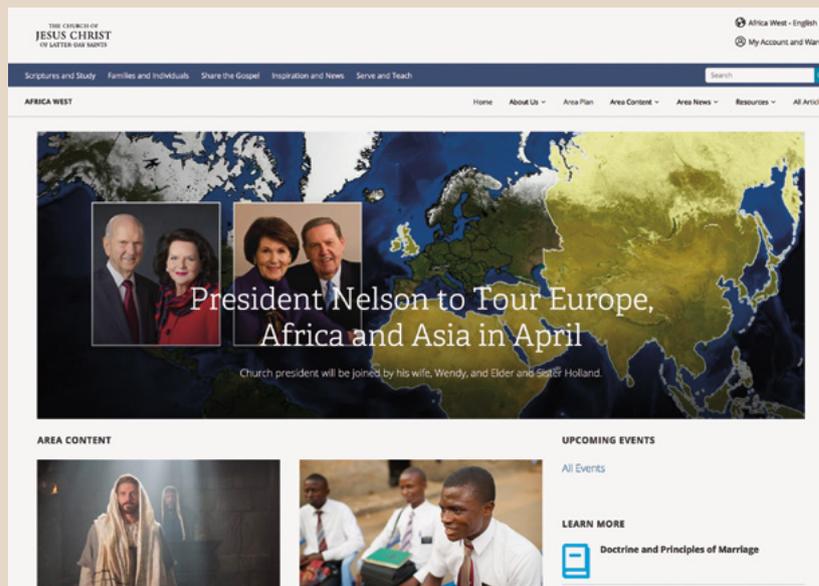
When you are honest, backing up your sincere words with actions, you show respect for things that are right. Honesty takes you places and

endears you to the right people.

Transparency leaves you happier, more fulfilled, free and at peace with yourself.

When we choose to be without guile, we uphold our moral integrity. ■

VISIT AREA WEBSITES!



Africa West Area Websites:

English: africawest.lds.org

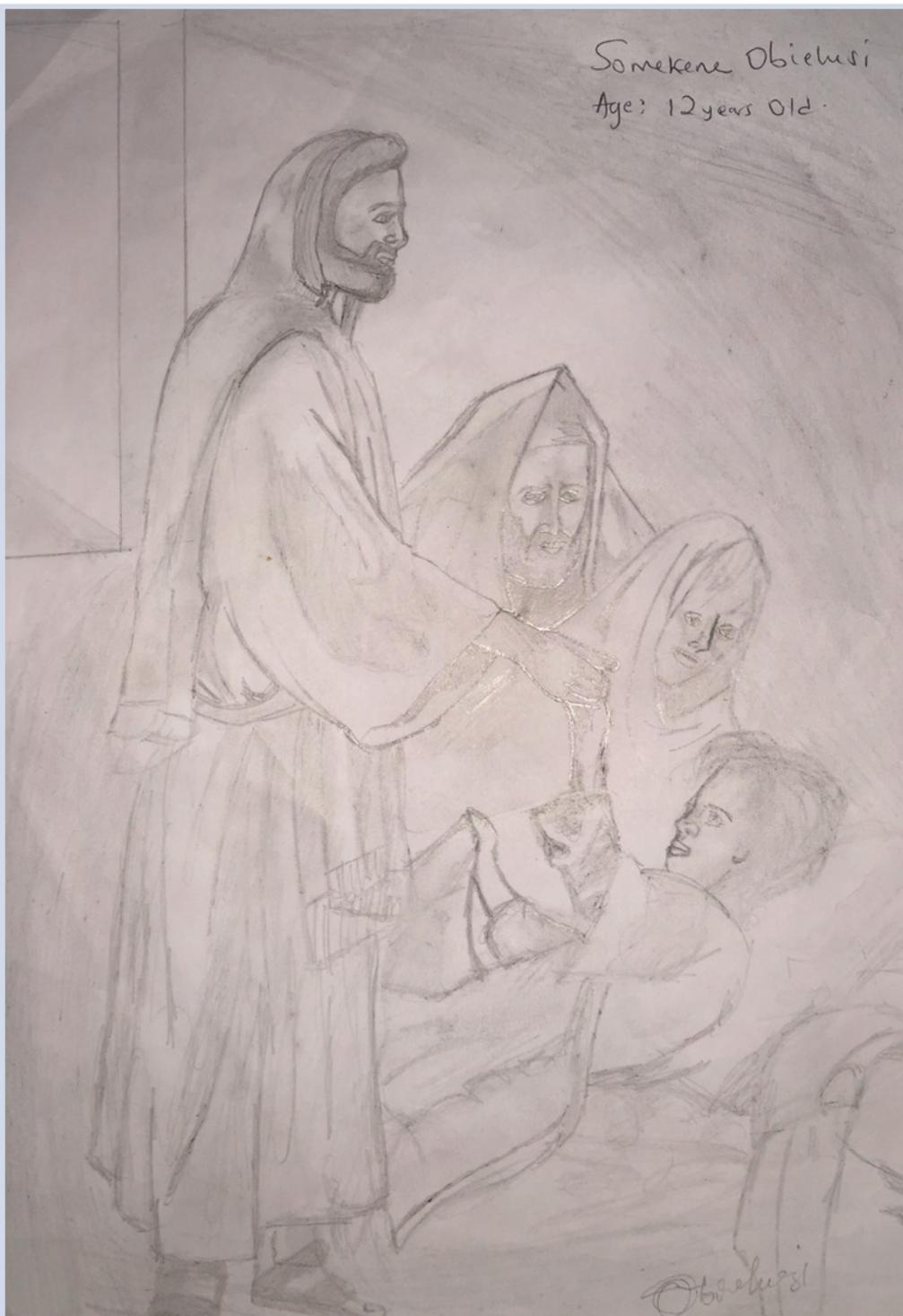
French: afriquedelouest.lds.org

Mormon Newsroom Ghana:

www.mormonnewsroom.com.gh

Mormon Newsroom Nigeria:

www.mormonnewsroom.org.ng ■



Speaking without Guile

Young Women

Festac Ward, Lagos Nigeria Festac Stake

A person without guile is a person of innocence, honest intent, and pure motives whose life reflects the simple practice of conforming his daily actions to principles of integrity. As young women, we should always follow the Savior's example. According to the scriptures, Jesus Christ lived without guile and has commanded us to do same. He even promises us blessings when we strive to live without guile (see 1 Peter 3:10).

Elder Wirthlin said, "If we are without guile, we are honest, true and righteous" ("Without Guile," *Ensign*, May 1988, 80). He further stated that all these attributes are of Deity and are required of the Saints. Those who are honest are fair and truthful in their speech; straightforward in their dealings; and free of deceit, stealing, misrepresentation, or any other fraudulent actions.

To speak without guile as young women, we must be truthful to our parents, friends, teachers, brothers and sisters, and everyone around us. We need to do everything possible to employ the virtues that are found in being a person without guile.

For us to be able to achieve this, we must pray for the gift or ability to be totally honest in our lives and with others. It will bring peace and joy in our lives today and in the future, so we can be counted among the true followers of Jesus Christ.

Our love for the Savior has indeed increased as we have learnt that our thoughts and actions are more important than speaking. As we strive to improve, Heavenly Father will bless us, and we will live a happy and healthy life. ■

PRIMARY CORNER

John 1:1-4: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men." ■

Divine E.G., Badagry Branch, Lagos Nigeria Festac Stake

