

# AFRICA SOUTHEAST LOCAL PAGES

## AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

### “How Did He Do That?”

By **Elder S. Mark Palmer**

President, Africa Southeast Area

*My personal spiritual experiences have affirmed to me the divine nature of the calling held by those we sustain as prophets, seers and revelators. Time and time again I have watched as they are clearly moved on by the power of the Spirit of the Lord.*

Several years ago, I went on my first assignment as a newly called General Authority Seventy. Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was my senior companion and it was a chance for me to observe and to learn as he presided over a stake conference in Minnesota. On Saturday, we had a meeting with many wonderful sisters from the auxiliaries in the stake. The chapel and cultural hall were filled as these sisters came, anxious to be taught and edified by an apostle of the Lord. The teaching by Elder Rasband was inspired and focused on Christ. At a certain point, while Elder Rasband was conducting this session in a question-and-answer format, I felt a strong spiritual impression as a sister asked a question, recalling a personal experience that would have been a perfect response. At that very moment, while Elder Rasband was standing at the pulpit, he turned to me and asked, “Elder Palmer, is there

something you want to say?” I marveled and asked myself, “How did he do that?”

A couple of years later while in a question-and-answer session with leaders and wives in Johannesburg—led by Elder David A. Bednar, of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles—I once again had the exact same experience. A long time after the meeting had started and while sitting quietly some distance away, I again felt a spiritual prompting regarding a question asked and felt an impression that it should be shared but did not want to interrupt. At that precise moment Elder Bednar turned to me and asked if there was something I wished to add. Once again, after giving my response, I silently asked myself, “How did he know to do that? How did he know at the very instant an impression had been received by someone else, that he should turn to them and invite them to share it?” The next day I told Elder Bednar what had

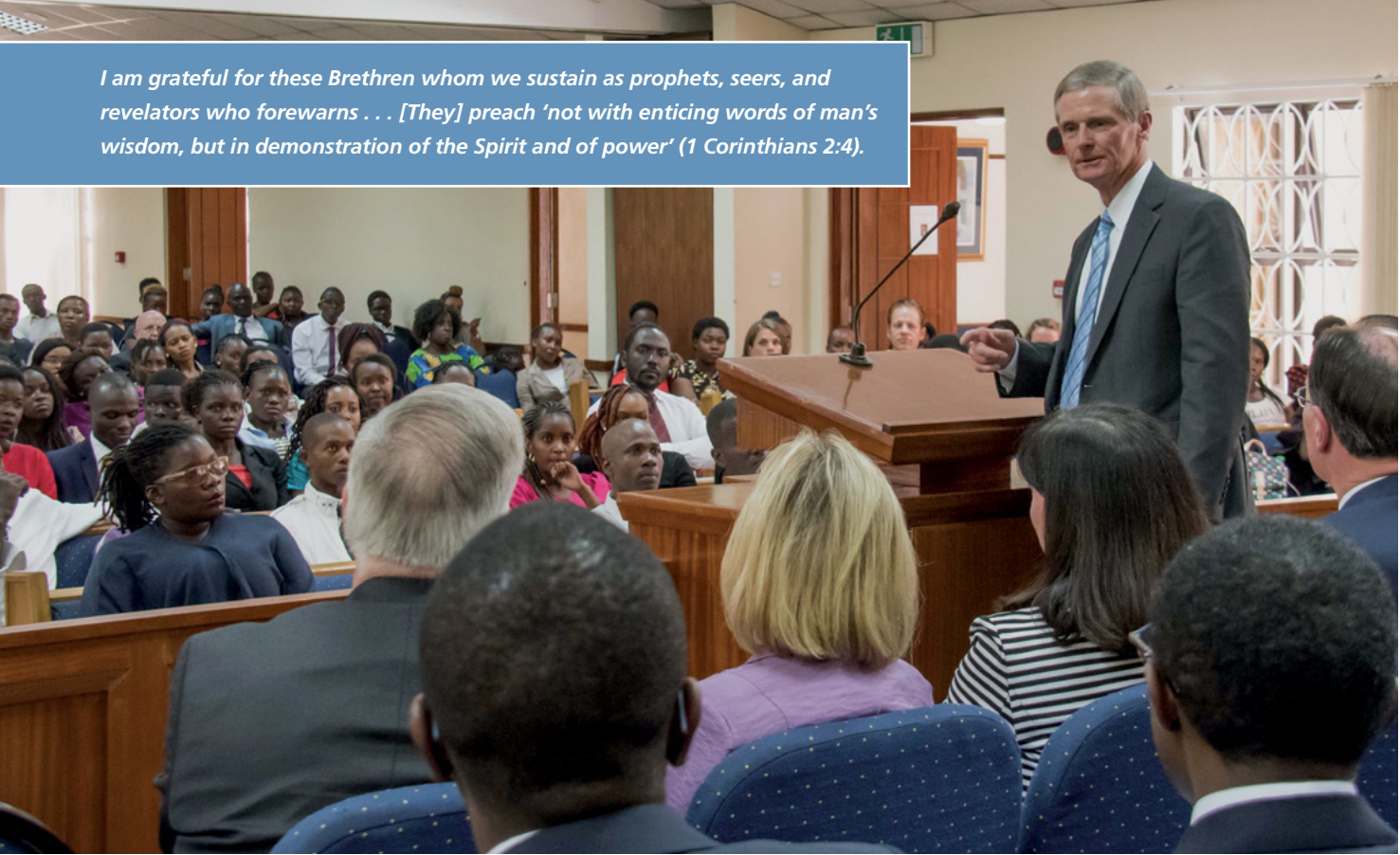
happened and asked, “How did you do that?” He simply smiled and said, “You know the answer.”

Earlier in the week, we had been together in Kinshasa for an amazing young adult meeting, which filled every room in the stake center and overflowed into a large outdoor seating area. The questions were excellent and the teaching so inspired. I was sitting off to one side when—during the second hour of the meeting—Elder Bednar came over and quietly whispered for me to go into one of the other rooms where young adults were watching by broadcast, and ask if anyone had a question they would like to ask Elder Bednar. I entered one of the rooms where they were reverently watching, and as I began to ask if anyone had a question, they pointed to a bishop who was walking up to me and who then handed me half a dozen pages of questions he had already collected from all the rooms. I was astonished and asked why he did



*Elder S. Mark Palmer*

*“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken and ... my word ... shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same”  
(Doctrine & Covenants 1:38).*



*I am grateful for these Brethren whom we sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators who forewarns . . . [They] preach 'not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power' (1 Corinthians 2:4).*

that (knowing no one had told him to do so). He simply said he knew we would be coming and felt it was the right thing to do. The Lord is in charge and through His Spirit clearly orchestrated all aspects of that extraordinary experience with thousands of excited young adults so anxious to see and learn from an Apostle of the Lord.

These personal spiritual experiences and many others have affirmed to me the divine nature of the calling held by those we sustain as prophets, seers and revelators. Time and time again I have

watched as they are clearly moved on by the power of the Spirit of the Lord. I am thankful for this personal witness.

This personal witness is available to each of us as we listen to the words of our prophets and apostles in general conference and read and study what they have prepared for us under the influence of the Spirit. I invite all to gain this witness and promise that the Spirit will confirm that their teachings, their warnings, their invitations and their promises are from the Lord. After all, it was He who said: "What I the

Lord have spoken, I have spoken and . . . my word . . . shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, *it is the same*" (D&C 1:38, emphasis added).

Several years ago, for a couple of months I had the privilege and blessing of almost daily associating with His chosen servants in various councils and assignments, so I found myself thinking often of the sacrifices and great service given by these humble servants and their families. At that time, I remember coming across this powerful testimony

## MEMBER VOICES

## More Important than a Certificate

By Achille Kalonji

*“My mother said, ‘I would rather lack a certificate than the knowledge of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.’”*

In September 2013, a few weeks after I was baptized and confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I was called as a ward missionary. During the interview, my bishop told me, “Brother Achille, your duty is to preach the gospel and defend the truth before the world.” Then he asked, “Achille, are you ready?” I answered, “Yes, but I have a concern.” I told him that I did not have much understanding of missionary lessons and he advised me to make institute a priority.

So I began attending institute and the Old Testament was the course of study. It was my first time to study using the *Old Testament Institute of Religion Manual*, and it was a great joy.

One day after class, I met with a young brother, a member of the Church who was less active. I asked him why he was no longer coming to Church; he said that because in the Church not everyone is treated equally. Asking why he thought that, he told me that while he had



given by Elder Spencer J. Condie of the Seventy in 1993. This testimony moved me deeply as it so beautifully describes the feelings of my heart as I have come to know, respect, love and revere our prophets and apostles:

“I am grateful for these Brethren whom we sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators who forewarn us . . . [They] preach ‘not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power’ (1 Corinthians 2:4). Their motives are pure as they strive to build the

kingdom of God and to uplift and edify the Saints of God. In the words of the Apostle Paul, they have become ‘prisoners of Christ’ (see Ephesians 3:1, 4:1; Philemon 1:1, 9; 2 Timothy 1:8), whose only desire is to do the Lord’s will. Nothing more. Nothing less. And nothing else. *These are men of God!* May we heed their warning voices”.<sup>1</sup> ■

*S. Mark Palmer was named a General Authority Seventy in April 2016. He is married to Jacqueline Ann Wood; they are the parents of six children.*

#### NOTE

1. Spencer J. Condie, “A Mighty Change of Heart,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 17.

attended institute classes throughout the year, he never received his certificate. I asked him if that was really what weakened his faith.

As I was thinking about what I could tell him regarding his situation, the Spirit prompted me to tell him about two older, remarkable, and courageous sisters: my mother, H el ene Kapinga, (62) and Sister Charlotte Nsamba (56). I told my friend that these women had set wise goals to better learn the gospel by joining with us every year at institute class. (In 2017, it was their fourth year attending institute!)

As I taught this young brother, I compared these two women to

the strong women in the Book of Mormon who taught their children to fight against the enemies of their freedom, religion, families, and country. I gave this brother a reference from the Book of Alma, an epistle sent by Helaman to inform Moroni what the two thousand young men had told him about the source of their courage to fight against the Lamanites. These young men always knew that if they trusted in God they would be sustained in all things; and they had been taught by their mothers that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them. “We do not doubt our mothers knew it” (Alma 56:48). Even

nowadays our mothers know the importance of the institute.

I also told this young brother that one day I asked my mother what she feels at the end of each year of institute when she does not receive a certificate: “Mom, don’t you feel bad when they don’t award you a certificate?” I told my young friend that I was surprised by her answer when she said, “My son, know that what I receive in these institute of religion classes is more important to me than the certificate.” And then she added, “Some young people come to institute just to get a certificate, but they forget what is important. I would rather

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lack a certificate than the knowledge of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.” I thanked my mother for her inspired words.

I explained to the young brother that—like the two thousand young warriors told Helaman I have no doubt my mother, Hélène, and Sister Charlotte both know the importance of institute.

Today, my older brother and I are both serving in the mission field. I am serving in the Kinshasa Democratic Republic of the Congo Mission, while my brother is serving in the Mbuji-Mayi Democratic Republic of the Congo Mission.

I testify to you that institute is an inspired program—and has changed my life. I testify to you that because of institute I had the desire to serve a full-time mission, and today I have the courage to defend the truth wherever I find myself. I am not afraid to testify of the Book of Mormon to anyone because I am well prepared; and he who is “prepared . . . shall not fear” (Doctrine and Covenants 38:30).

I know that I am well equipped with knowledge of the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ acquired in institute. Today I am a missionary, authorized to preach the gospel to the world, and an official representative of Jesus Christ and of his Church because I made institute a priority in my life before going on mission. ■

## Playing for the Team

By Vicky Levannresky Kamlemo

*“I took three long days to think about the coach’s offer; but on the first day, I knew I already had the answer to my prayer—and that answer was to serve the Lord.”*

As a young boy growing up in Cameroon, Vicky Levannresky Kamlemo loved playing football. He found himself frequently on the football pitch and the game was a major part of his life—even when he was studying in school.

He played for the Galaxy Football Club at the age of 14, and by 16 he was playing at a professional level. Upon receiving his baccalaureate, he was presented with an opportunity to travel and play professionally in Saudi Arabia, North Sudan, and Iran.

But football is a difficult profession—especially for young men who do not have financial means. Playing abroad is also not very easy, and Vicky’s living conditions were not what he wanted, so he decided to return home.

It was then that he became acquainted with the restored gospel of Jesus Christ through his Aunt, Hortense Dajeu, who was visiting from Virginia, USA and through his close friend, Yannick Njampou. Later, Vicky saw his return to Cameroon and baptism into the Church as a way through a great trial; and he believes all this happened by the grace of the Lord.



Today, he has found a greater and more wonderful passion than football as he serves a full-time mission in Cote d’Ivoire.

“I left everything to serve a mission,” Elder Kamlemo says. “Many people think of me as someone who does not know what he is looking for in his life since I decided to leave my football career behind. But I am proud to have made this decision to devote these next two years of my life to serving the Lord. Even my coaches did not appreciate my decision to serve a mission because they are not members of the Church. They want to see me playing for big teams and signing a professional contract.

“I also received criticism from my paternal family, who were at first opposed to my mission choice. But today, my father has accepted my decision and has given me his blessing—this to my great delight.”

He continued: “I know that Jesus Christ saved me by giving His life for me. Giving part of my life to do this work is the most important thing for me to do right now. Today, my joy is so great being able to serve a mission, and there is no other work that can bring greater joy at this moment.

“The Savior instructed his disciples, ‘But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness’ [Matthew 6:33]. I feel am serving a mission because my duty is to love and serve my Savior, for I am an instrument in His hands. If God has chosen you, do His will; don’t seek anything else.

“After making the decision to serve a full-time mission—and as I was waiting for my mission call—I received an opportunity from a well-known coach who wanted to send me a plane ticket and a visa so I could go play in Iran. I took three long days to think about the coach’s offer; but on the first day, I knew I already had the answer to my prayer—and that answer was to serve the Lord.

“I can truthfully say that I believe in my future and that serving a mission will help me make the dream come true.” ■

## Washed Clean by the Rains

By Augustus Waithaka Kamau

*“There was the Book of Mormon sitting right on the very top, rinsed clean by the rains. The pages had been washed and were fluttering dry in the breeze. At that moment it struck me that this book was in some way ‘self-preserving’.”*

I was born and brought up in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya. As a young child, my family and I attended church and I was an altar boy. (This is where I learned to speak English.) We attended regularly, but over time I became discouraged with religion and promised myself that I would never be a part of an organized religion again.

As an adult I lived on the streets. I ate and clothed myself from items I found in rubbish bins. I worked at recycling but became deeply involved in the slum culture of drugs—selling and smoking marijuana on a regular basis. I married but struggled to care for and provide for my wife.

One day, as I was going through the recyclables, I came across a book. It was the Book of Mormon. It was dirty and soiled, so I threw it back into the bin and went on with my work. Sometime later, I was going through a different recyclables bin and came upon the very same book. It was still in poor shape, but I thought it might have some value if I were to sell it to

someone—so I threw it in with my pile of recyclables.

Then the rainy season came—and one day, when returning to my pile of goods, there was the Book of Mormon sitting right on the very top, rinsed clean by the rains. The pages had been washed and were fluttering dry in the breeze. It was in much better condition than I had first found it. At that moment it struck me that this book was in some way “self-preserving”—especially since it had crossed into my life now three times.



Augustus

I decided to take it home, where I put in on a small shelf in my shack. There it sat for almost a year.

One day as I was spraying insecticide in my shack, I moved a few items and again noticed the book. This time I opened it and read the cover page. Then the next page and the next and the next. I was intrigued by the story of the angel Moroni appearing to the young boy Joseph Smith. I read a little further and found myself completely engrossed. For the next ten days I read the book, and for some curious reason I felt a strong urge to stop smoking marijuana. Reading the book took my mind off my need for the drug. My skin started itching and burning—and I could not sleep. But as I read the Book of Mormon, this agony was relieved, and I kept reading.

I got to 3 Nephi 27 and read: “Therefore, whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name; therefore ye shall call the church in my name; and ye shall call upon the Father in my name that he will bless the church for my sake.

“And how be it my church save it be called in my name? For if a church be called in Moses’ name then it be Moses’ church; or if it be called in the name of a man then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel” (3 Nephi 27:7–8).

That’s it I thought! I must look for a church that goes by the name of Jesus Christ. But no matter how long I searched, I could not find it. For seven years, I continued my quest. My friends kept trying to get me to return to my old lifestyle and smoke with them, but I refused—for I had given that life up for good!

By this time, I had become employed as a security guard. One Sunday—on election day—I went to vote during my lunch hour. As I got to the Catholic Church building where the voting was being held, I noticed a placard directing members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to meet at a certain location for transport to a

conference some distance away. I literally ran to this place and caught the last man getting on the bus. “Where is this church?” I asked him. “I want to be a member!” The man gave me contact information for the missionaries and took my telephone number. He said he would pass my information along to the elders.

A few days later, I received a call from a good missionary, Elder Egbert Brandin. He and his companion came and taught me about the plan of salvation—and I knew immediately that this is the true Church of God. Shortly afterward, I entered the waters of baptism and was washed clean—just like my copy of the Book of Mormon. ■

#### HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN AFRICA SERIES

## History of the Church in Africa: Did You Know?

By Africa Southeast Area Church History Department



*Did you know who is the first sister missionary to serve from Malawi?*

**Y**amikani Ntakwile was introduced to the Church by her brother after their mother died in 1997. Her brother, George Ntakwile Shongwe, had joined the Church and was living in South Africa. He returned to Malawi for the

funeral, bringing with him a copy of the Book of Mormon and other Church literature. He also shared the doctrine of the plan of salvation with the family, helping them understand that their family could be together eternally.

Yamikani stopped attending her childhood church and waited for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day



Yamikani

Saints to come to Malawi. Each night she would read from the Book of Mormon—the one her brother had given her. She said, “Even though I did not understand much of what was written because of poor English abilities, I continued each night to read the book. It was always under my pillow. I had hope that the true Church would come to Malawi someday”.

In 2000, Church leaders officially opened Malawi and missionaries began to work in the city of Blantyre. Yamikani was among the first to be baptized there. She was so committed

to the teachings of the restored gospel that a year later, she was sealed to her parents in the South Africa Johannesburg Temple, and in 2002 she was called to serve as a full-time missionary in the Johannesburg, South Africa Mission—becoming the first sister missionary to be called from Malawi.

Upon return from her mission, Yamikani encouraged her friend Peter Kidian Chinyumba to listen to the missionaries. He was baptized in the year 2004, and—a year later—Peter received his temple endowment. When Peter returned to Malawi from the temple, Yamikani realized that he was as committed to the gospel as she was. “That’s when I fell in love with him, I wanted him to be committed first to the gospel before he commits to me,” she said.

Shortly afterward, Peter and Yamikani were married—and later sealed in the Johannesburg Temple. Peter was called as the first district president in Malawi and as such, the couple welcomed and hosted Elder Russell M. Nelson on October 25, 2011 when he came to dedicate the country of Malawi for the preaching of the gospel.

Yamikani continues faithfully in the gospel—she has served as a seminary teacher, district Young Women’s President—and currently serves as Young Women’s president of the Blantyre 1st Branch. ■

## CALL FOR ARTICLES

At the October 2018 General Conference, Church members were encouraged “to hold home evening and to study the gospel at home on Sunday—or at other times as individuals and families choose. A new resource, *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families*, provides ideas for personal scripture study, family scripture study, and home evening”.

As you adapt your Sabbath activities to the new 2-hour meeting schedule—and increase the depth of your personal and family study—we invite you to contribute your experiences and feelings about the new Sabbath program and tell us how you and your family are being blessed.

You can submit your manuscript—or just a few thoughts—by email at: [africasoutheast-communications@ChurchofJesusChrist.org](mailto:africasoutheast-communications@ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

Please include your full name and the name of your ward and stake. ■

