

## AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

# Humility: The Misunderstood but Required Virtue

Elder Stanley G. Ellis

First Counselor in the Africa Southeast Area Presidency



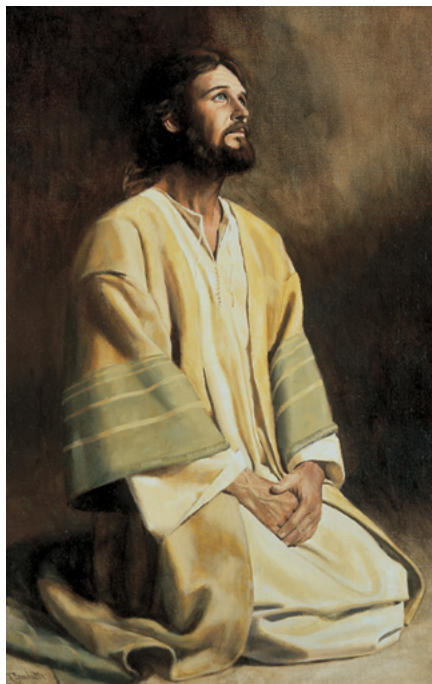
Elder Stanley G. Ellis

Humility has been defined as the condition of being meek and teachable (see Guide to the Scriptures). However, some have said that if you think you are humble, you are not. That makes it hard to work on. In my view, there are two aspects to humility that can be understood and used to seek and monitor our progress in acquiring and maintaining the attribute.

The first is the *vertical* dimension. It involves our attitude towards and relationship with God. To be humble in this respect is to recognize that with God's help, we can do or be anything that is needed (see Philippians 4:13). Without His help we will ultimately fail. "Humility includes recognizing our dependence upon God and desiring to submit to His will" (Guide to the Scriptures). *Preach My Gospel* puts it this way: "Humility is willingness to submit to the will of the Lord and to give the Lord the honor for what is accomplished. It includes gratitude for His blessings and acknowledgement of your constant need for His divine help. . . . You are confident that you can do whatever the Lord requires of you if you rely on Him" (120).

The second is the *horizontal* dimension: how we view and relate

to each other and human beings in general. In this respect I found a statement years ago that can guide our attitude towards others in a humble way: "I am just as good as anyone else, but no better." When we truly internalize that feeling for those around us, we



***"Yea, he that truly humbleth himself, and repenteth of his sins, and endureth to the end, the same shall be blessed—yea, much more blessed than they who are compelled to be humble" (Alma 32:15).***

will be humble. This is easy in some respects but hard in others. For an example, it may be easy for me to feel I am just as good as my neighbour, but what about the stake president or one of the Apostles? It may be hard to feel just as good as he is. On the other hand, it may be easy to feel no better than a friend, but what about the beggar on the street? It may be a challenge to not feel better than he is. But again, "I am just as good as anyone else, but no better." The closer we can get to that standard, the more humble we are on the horizontal dimension.

If this seems to be a lot of questionable effort, remember the words of Alma: "Yea, he that truly humbleth himself, and repenteth of his sins, and endureth to the end, the same shall be blessed—yea, much more blessed than they who are compelled to be humble" (Alma 32:15).

### How can we humble ourselves?

The scriptures teach us that one way is fasting (see Psalm 35:13). Our model is that of a little child (see Matthew 18:4). Prayer adds power to our fasting; further power comes from exercising our faith and yielding our hearts unto God (see Helaman



***“One of the greatest blessings of humility for us is the promise of President Ezra Taft Benson that humility is the antidote for pride.”***

3:33–35). Recognizing our weaknesses can add to our humility (see Ether 12:27).

### **What are some of the blessings promised to the humble?**

The Lord dwells with him that is humble (see Isaiah 57:15); “he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Matthew 23:12); “God . . . giveth grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5); our faith and humility allow the Lord to turn our weaknesses into strengths (see Ether 12:27); humility is one of the requirements for baptism (see D&C 20:37); “humble yourselves before me, . . . and you shall see me and know that I am” (D&C 67:10); if we are humble, “the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers” (D&C 112:10); humility allows learning

wisdom (see D&C 136:32) and invites enlightenment by the Spirit (see D&C 136:33).

Elder David A. Bednar has warned us that one of the gravest dangers we have here in the Church in the Africa Southeast Area as we move forward in living the gospel is the potential impact of the pride cycle described in the Book of Mormon. One of the greatest blessings of humility for us is the promise of President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) that humility is the antidote for pride (see “Beware of Pride,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 4).

May we seek to understand the Christlike attribute of humility and choose to humble ourselves. ■

## **LOCAL PRIESTHOOD LEADERS**

# The Restored Gospel and African Traditions

**Elder W. Jean-Pierre Lono**

**D**ear brothers and sisters, I would like to share with you on the subject of the culture of the gospel of Jesus Christ in relation to our cultures of Africa. Personally, I come from a traditional African family, where many good morals were upheld.

It makes us proud to be special spirits of our Heavenly Father on this continent. It is a wonderful part

of the earth to live in, even though some traditions are opposite to the culture of the gospel, which can make it difficult to find the truth (see D&C 123:12). Our African ancestors knew and prayed to God, as they understood that there is a Supreme Being who created all things and who rules over humankind. Our ancestors gave Him many different

names: the Almighty; the Sun and the Moon, the tall rooster that crows for the day to bring its light to His children. The people of Africa call Him by different names, but to them all, He is God the Father and Creator of humankind.

The Restoration brought the Book of Mormon, which is another testament of Jesus Christ. Our Heavenly



**Elder W. Jean-Pierre Lono**

Father so loved the world that He sent His Only Begotten Son to be the Savior of the world (see John 3:16). Christ came to restore all things and organize the Church of which He is the only head or leader.

Jesus Christ established His Church. He organized it, and He conferred the priesthood on His Apostles (see Ephesians 2:19–20). He taught His gospel and worked many miracles. Nowadays, He has called and ordained Apostles by inspiration and revelation (see Acts 10; Revelation 1:1). He has given them His authority to teach and to baptize (see Matthew 28:19–20; Luke 9:1–2). This authority is called the priesthood. So The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is led by Christ, not by men. This work shall cover the entire world, including the African continent.

Christ's gospel is contained in the Book of Mormon. This book corrects all false doctrines of the world and prepares men to meet with their Creator; it is the most complete of God's scriptures on earth. The Book of Mormon came to Africa in a divine plan to bring this people closer to their ancestors in accordance with the spirit of Elijah (see Malachi 4:5–6; D&C 128:8–18), because it would not be good for His people of Africa to remain in apostasy, in ancestral traditions alone. The fruit of the Restoration came to save the biblically historic people of the African continent.



**When Jesus Christ established His church He called and ordained Apostles.**

The coming forth of the Book of Mormon was a sign that God has started to gather His children. In this work, Africans participate in sacred temples for those on both sides of the veil. A temple is the greatest blessing that we could have. It helps to banish the traditions of men in favour of the culture of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Church is universal, and blessings of our Heavenly Father are given to His obedient and converted children, without distinction of race, gender, or social class.

However, some customs in Africa are hindering our progress to exaltation. Most of these are challenges related to poverty and poor morals. Poverty has an impact on the whole of Africa in the sense that people don't have access to quality jobs and good wages so that they may become self-reliant. Many of these people think that the Church will provide answers to their problems. However, *those who are truly converted find spiritual, rather than temporal, joy*

*from being worthy members of the Church.*

The main challenge of the restored gospel in Africa is that of inviting people to be converted and to fully change their lives because of the teachings therein. Africans are strongly attached to their families. Most are proud to be members of the Church, although some are torn between Church and family. We love both of them at the same time. This is one of the conflicts that leads some Saints to inactivity in the Church. The other challenge is to maintain the pureness of the doctrine of the Church amongst the African people.

The restored gospel does not belong to any race or continent but to people of faith within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to those who are repentant and truly converted to their Savior and His Atonement. Many of our leaders are now from our own African countries, and the Church is more visibly established in many places. Therefore, it is clear that the Lord is hastening His



*The Church is universal, and blessings of our Heavenly Father are given to His obedient and converted children.*

LOCAL PAGES

# Thrust in Your Sickles

By **Never Chikunguwo**

Country Church History Advisor for Zimbabwe

**N**ever and Everjoyce Chikunguwo are converts to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from a small, eastern border town of Mutare in the Manicaland Province of Zimbabwe. Soon after their baptism in 1991, they became excited about missionary work. In Doctrine and Covenants 33:7 they read that the “field is white and already to harvest.” They just needed to thrust in their sickles and reap with all their might, mind, and strength. They were trained as branch missionaries by a senior missionary couple who were serving in the Harare Zimbabwe Mission.



work among the people of Africa. When you combine both positive African traditions and the teachings of the gospel with a person, you will obtain an individual strongly committed to living the doctrines, someone who is unified with those around them.

Generally, for members in Africa the restored gospel is considered one of the gifts that inspire them to great things: purity of the soul, spiritual self-reliance, encouragement for our social activities, and gaining education to take care of ourselves. This is the unique message that the Saints of Africa are proud to share. On the other hand, there are people who do not understand who we are because of untruths told by third parties. Nevertheless, we can succeed

in defending our doctrine by living it daily.

Our mission is to find the opportunity to invite others to join with us in these words: “Come and participate with us in our church services. Come and see how the restored gospel may be a blessing in your life; come and discover the message that the Book of Mormon brings to humankind. Family is central to our religion; it can be eternal as we keep the covenants made with the Lord.” We as Africans have discovered this truth through heartfelt prayer (see Moroni 10:4; Moroni 10:20–23). I am proud to testify of these truths because the living prophet, seer, and revelator, Thomas S. Monson, leads us by revelation. I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, amen. ■

The newly created Dangamvura Branch had a total membership of 25 members. As new missionaries, they wanted to share the gospel with everyone, so they set an impressive goal of sharing the gospel with 100 people in that year.

The couple discovered that they had “hidden talents” in music, so they began to sing for and with their investigators as they met to teach them. The Spirit accompanied them as they sang sacred music, and the individuals were touched by their message of the gospel. They encouraged people to join the branch choir, and many entered the waters of baptism.

As they continued their missionary efforts, they began to fast and pray for their families, and the veil was removed from the eyes of the community as they watched them and were “reading the book of their daily lives”



*Never and Everjoyce Chikunguwo*

because of their righteous examples. More and more sisters invited them to come to teach their husbands and children, so their “teaching pool” was full of prospective members.

As a result of their teaching people about the gospel, the newly baptized couples became closer and more loving. They and their children were able to leave behind the traditional cultures that were not part of the gospel culture. They abstained from alcohol and tobacco. Many who had been worldly in the past were now able to accept callings in the Church, and they became a blessing to their branch and their community because of the mighty change in them brought about by the hand of the Lord.

There was great persecution in Mutare at that time, but that did not stop the growth of the Church. It seemed as though the more they were persecuted, the more people were added to their teaching pool. There were men from the national army who came in disguise to investigate the Church for wrongdoing, but they were touched by the Spirit and many were later baptized and ordained to the priesthood.

Never and Everjoyce had set a goal of teaching 100 people in their first year as branch missionaries. They exceeded that by teaching and baptizing 149! They were able to witness a mighty change in the lives of the whole community. As a result, there came an approval for a chapel to be built in Dangamvura. Their missionary efforts spread to additional areas in Mutare and opened the doors to other townships namely, Sakubva, Chikanga, and Hobhouse. By 1995, Dangamvura had four branches, giving Mutare a total of eight units, which qualified Mutare to be a district.

For Never and Everjoyce the missionary effort continued, and they ultimately taught and baptized 286 investigators. Although they have moved to Chtungwiza, which is part of the Harare Zimbabwe South Stake, they will forever be blessed for the missionary work that they did and the efforts they put forth to bring others to the gospel of Jesus Christ. ■



# Priesthood: More than Holding the Sacrament Tray

By Beatrice Ncube

Nick Jordan Moyo, a member of the Johannesburg South Africa Stake, received his Aaronic Priesthood ordination soon after he was confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on December 15, 2001. After being found worthy, he was ordained as a teacher, the office following that of a deacon. Nick shares some of his feelings about what this experience meant.

“It’s been long ago, but I still remember how happy I was, knowing that meant I was joining other young men in serving the sacrament. Important to me also was the awareness that I would be involved in helping members to renew their covenants with Heavenly Father. The ordination made me an instrument in His hands, which made me feel so good,” Nick said with a broad smile.

He went on to explain that this meant much more than holding the sacramental tray. “I also assumed other Godly responsibilities such as looking after the women and children, collecting members’ fast offerings, and honouring the priesthood in a more meaningful manner,” Nick said.

Nick went on to speak about the things he has done that have helped him to remain worthy of the priesthood through the years. He mentioned Duty to God for the young men, which

guides and leads them from one stage of the Aaronic Priesthood to another until the Melchizedek Priesthood ordination.

“At sixteen, I was ordained as a priest. I had been faithful in fulfilling the activities contained in the Duty to God pamphlet and was advanced as a requirement, but the bottom line is that you have to be willing to serve, and I was willing to serve,” said Nick boldly.

After serving in the Aaronic Priesthood, Nick was ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood when he turned eighteen. According to him, being ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood came after he tried to live

the gospel through faithful service with his Aaronic Priesthood duties.

“The activities we perform in those Duty to God booklets must all be fulfilled. This is when you become an elder and you can serve a mission, the best two years of a man’s life labouring in the Lord’s vineyard.”

“The Lord says, ‘And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father! And now if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will





Brother Nick J. Moyo with his son

be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!’ (D&C 18:15, 16).”

Nick recognises he couldn’t have done it on his own. “My sincere gratitude goes to my mother for being diligent in helping me receive the Duty to God Award,” Nick said thankfully.

One way he was able to put his Melchizedek Priesthood into action was when his young sister, Glory, was sick one day. In the morning before he left for school, his mother asked him to give her a blessing. “I quickly put on my white shirt and a tie, to look as formal as I possibly could be even though I was not going to church,” said Nick. “I laid my hands upon her head and prayed to Heavenly Father with confidence, knowing that He hears and answers prayers that are offered in faith.”

“When I came back from school in the afternoon, she was playing as if she never had been sick in the morning. My faith in the power of the priesthood was strengthened. That, and many other incidences, have helped me to always endeavour to be worthy of the priesthood: to keep the law of chastity, the Word of Wisdom and every other Godly attribute that will assist me to keep on the straight and narrow way,” he said. ■

## Trials before our Visit to the Temple

By Kabtemera Santos Fanuel

I joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Uganda after my friend told me about the Church. When we learned about the temple, the Lord prompted me that our family should take part in these sacred covenants and ultimately go to be sealed for time and all eternity.

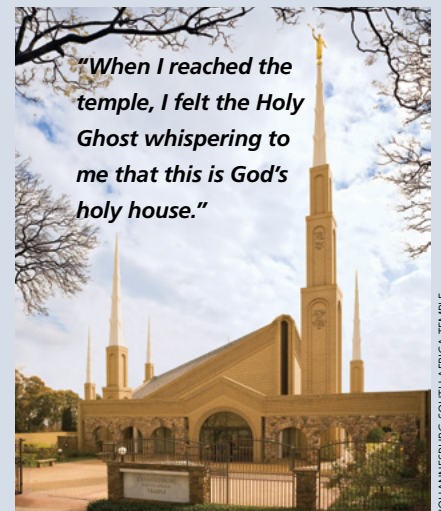
When the time came to go to the temple of God with my wife and our three children, we started preparations for the journey, but Satan brought challenges when my last born became ill with malaria. He began convulsing, so we took him to see the doctor, and the doctor said he should be admitted because his condition may worsen at any time, but I replied that he was not too bad, and if his condition worsened, I would bring him back. I took him back home and he became very ill again. I prayed that God would save the life of my son. He was taken to the hospital, given treatment, and admitted for the doctor to monitor the situation. I spent five days in the hospital with my son until he was discharged.

As the days drew near for our travel to the temple, other things went wrong. Three weeks before we were to leave, I was admitted to the hospital for surgery, which was successful. Two weeks before our trip to the temple, the mission office called to inform me that my two children’s visas were rejected because they lacked their birth certificates. At that time I was still weak from my surgery. I cried out to God, “This is the end of me. I need your mercy, God.” I finally got a priesthood holder to take the birth certificates

to Kampala for me. Prayers helped us through these difficulties.

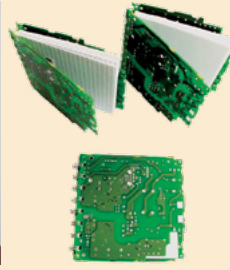
We boarded our plane safely to South Africa. When I reached the temple, I felt the Holy Ghost whispering to me that this is God’s holy house. The pain I came with from my surgery started subsiding. The days I spent at the temple changed me. My faith has increased. What makes me happy is having my wife and children sealed to me for eternity.

I testify that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a true church, the Book of Mormon is a true book, and the restored gospel is the true gospel. When reading the scriptures, we learn that the blessings of our Father in Heaven will abundantly be given to us. If it was not for our faith, prayers, obedience, and keeping the commandments, I could not have travelled to the temple of God. God bless my family and all people that attend the temple with the gift of listening to the Spirit. ■



*“When I reached the temple, I felt the Holy Ghost whispering to me that this is God’s holy house.”*

JOHANNESBURG SOUTH AFRICA TEMPLE



**Alex Mativo is greeted by Queen Elizabeth II.**

## Turning Electronic Waste into Art

By T. Ruth Randall

In August 2013 Alex Mativo, a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Kenya, began to notice that several industries were dumping electronic waste in the area he lived. As a result of the pollutants released when waste was disposed of incorrectly, life expectancy in the area was reduced and health complications were common.

"I began looking into ways to transform this hazardous waste," said Alex. These efforts led him to explore one of his talents: art. "Art has always been my way of expressing myself to my peers," he said. "I found out I could do some things with my abilities."

Alex founded E-lab, a company that makes artwork and sculptures out of electronic waste. "My artwork seeks to solve the rampant dumping of electronic waste globally and also fosters a culture of safe and responsible electronic waste disposal," he said. "I therefore turn this hazardous waste into useful works of art with the intention of helping people be more aware of the environment.

"I founded E-Lab because I believed that of all the unchangeable things in the world, our biological nature requires clean air, clean water, clean soil, clean energy," said Alex. "Protecting the planet should be our highest priority or else we sicken and die."

Alex says that E-Lab has helped to rethink the way products are created in developing countries. To reach this goal, they worked with artists to incorporate an "African heritage" into the products.

"Each item has a unique trademark directly from its maker. All the products are crafted in social projects in communities where high concentrations of toxins from electronic waste have devastating health effects," said Alex. "The projects are designed to empower local communities and create employment opportunities. E-Lab enhances collaboration among African creatives and provides sustainable livelihoods in affected communities while also addressing waste streams and development challenges."

Over the last year "E-Lab has had a tremendous impact," said Alex. The company has grown from a start-up to being fully operational within one year, mopping up 2000 tons of electronic waste from Kenyan households, dumpsites and industries in the process.

On June 24, 2016, the Queen of England presented Alex with the Young Leaders Award at a ceremony at Buckingham Palace. In the ceremony, Alex and others under the age of 30 were recognized for taking steps towards transforming their communities.

The Queen's Young Leaders program discovers, celebrates and supports exceptional young people (aged 18–29) from across the British Commonwealth who are taking the lead in their communities and using their skills to transform lives. In 2015 a search was launched to find exceptional young people to receive the first ever Queen's Young Leaders Awards. Winners of this prestigious award received a unique package of training, mentoring and networking.

Alex Mativo's efforts to use his skills to build communities in Africa is a powerful example of magnifying the talents we are blessed with. The *Gospel Principles* manual instructs us that "the Lord is pleased when we use our talents wisely. He will bless us if we use our talents to benefit other people and to build up His kingdom here on earth. Some of the blessings we gain are joy and love from serving our brothers and sisters here on earth." ■

### EDITOR'S NOTE

The Africa Southeast Area has a website that publishes messages from the Area Presidency as well as inspirational stories from members in Africa. Please visit us at [africase.lds.org](http://africase.lds.org). ■

### CALL FOR ARTICLES

Your local pages section is produced by members in your own area under the guidance of the Area Presidency so that it can address the needs and experiences of members where you live. The inclusion of the local pages in each issue depends on the availability of local content. We invite you to contribute your faith-promoting thoughts and experiences by contacting [africasecommunications@gmail.com](mailto:africasecommunications@gmail.com). ■