

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

The Plan of Salvation, the Church, and Belonging to the Household of God

By Elder Marcus B. Nash

First Counselor in the Africa West Area Presidency

Paul wrote to members of the Church in his day: “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19). What does it mean to be of the household of God? The following story will help us understand what this means.

Once there was a father who invited his son and daughter who were at boarding school to return to the village to receive a great gift. Knowing that his son and daughter were young and not sure of the way home, the father sent a map to guide them safely home. When the boarding school session was over, the son and daughter started walking the long way home. They endured much thirst, hunger, pain, and hardship on the way home. It was a hot, dusty, and difficult journey. After many days, they got lost and did not know which trail to take.

Their father had been worried about them, so he sent an older brother and sister to help them. Imagine the joy they all felt when the older brother and sister found the lost younger siblings, ran to them, and gave them a big hug! The older brother and sister held their hands and took them with them, walking with them all the way back to

the village. When these four children arrived home, their father was overjoyed, for he loved them very much and had been worried about them. He loved the older brother and sister more deeply because they had helped their younger siblings find the way home, where they would all receive the great gift the father has prepared for them.

The father in this story represents our Father in Heaven. The map represents the plan of salvation. The brother and sister at boarding school trying to

find their way home represent all the people of the earth. The older brother and sister represent you and me as members of the Church and therefore of the household of God. The task to take another person with us to return home represents what it means to belong to the household of God. Our Father in Heaven has sent each member of the Church—as part of His household—to take another sibling (whether a member or non-member) with us back to our Father to receive His great gift of eternal life.



Elder Marcus B. Nash



Each of us is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents.

The Plan of Salvation Is Our Map Home to Heavenly Father

Each of us is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents.¹ Even before this world was created, our Heavenly Father instituted His plan whereby we could receive the greatest of all the gifts of God: eternal life (see D&C 14:7). Eternal life is God's life, and to receive eternal life is to become like Him and to live the kind of life that He lives.² In order to receive this greatest of all gifts, we needed to come to earth and live in mortality where we would have the opportunity to grow and progress by obtaining a physical body, gaining experience, living by faith, and learning to choose good over evil.

Our Heavenly Father knew that we would sin and make mistakes while on earth. Because everyone (except children under eight years of age) would be made impure by sin, none of us could dwell in the presence of God without a Redeemer to save us from death and the effects of sin. So our Heavenly Father anointed Jesus, His Firstborn Son, to be our Savior. The Lord suffered for our sins so that justice could be satisfied and mercy could be given to those who exercise their faith unto repentance (see Alma 34:11–17).

As part of the plan of salvation, when our mortal life ends, we will be judged of our works. If we have done what is necessary to receive the blessings made available to us by the

Savior's Atonement, we will be found spotless, guiltless, joyous, and pure at the time of judgment and receive eternal life (see 3 Nephi 27:13–22). The only way to receive these blessings available through the Savior's Atonement is to put the doctrine of Christ into practice in our lives: we must exercise faith in Christ unto repentance, be baptized, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and endure to the end in receiving all essential priesthood ordinances and keeping the associated covenants (see 2 Nephi 31:5–21).

The Church Is the Household of God

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was restored so that Heavenly Father's children—living and dead—would have the opportunity to receive all essential priesthood ordinances. The ordinances are important because it is only through the ordinances performed by the authority of the priesthood that the power of godliness is manifest in people's lives (see D&C 84:19–22). This power to make men and women godly (and thus fulfill the purpose of Heavenly Father's plan of salvation for us to become like Him) comes only to those individuals and families who exercise faith unto repentance, receive all essential priesthood ordinances, and keep the associated covenants.

It is not enough to just receive the ordinances, we must also keep the covenants associated with the ordinances. This is because the covenants give life

to the ordinances, just like a motor gives life to a motorcycle. So the Lord established His Church not only to give His children the opportunity to receive all essential priesthood ordinances but also to help them endure to the end in keeping the associated covenants.

For this reason, the Lord's Church is commanded to record the name of every person who has received the ordinances so that he or she may be remembered, nourished by the good word of God, and be kept in the right way (see Moroni 6:4). In short, the Church is the household of God. It exists to help God's children help each other receive all essential priesthood ordinances, keep the associated covenants, and qualify for exaltation and eternal life.³ In short, our Heavenly Father expects those who are of His household to help each other and those not yet in His household to walk the path home to Him.

To Belong to the Household of God Means That We Will Help One Another: One Will Take One

Our Heavenly Father's children need help to make it home, just like the younger son and daughter in the story. Sometimes they forget about the map and get lost. Sometimes they are hungry, thirsty and tired, spiritually or physically. To belong to the household of God means that we will help one another, as we promised to do when we were baptized.



The Lord expects a person who is strong in the Spirit to take another person with him on the straight and narrow path to receive ordinances.

There are two very important tools the Lord has given to help us to help each other. If we use these tools under the direction of the Holy Ghost, we will experience great success, so much so that we will be astonished at what the Lord can do! These important tools are: (1) the principle of “one take one;” and (2) councils.

The Lord gave us a fundamental principle on how to build up His Church when He commanded: “And if any man among you be strong in the Spirit, let him take with him that is weak that he may edified in all meekness, that he may become strong also” (D&C 84:106; see also verses 107–8). The Lord expects a person who is strong in the Spirit to take another person with them on the straight and

narrow path to receive ordinances and to keep the associated covenants.

For this reason, our Area Presidency invites each member to bring another person to the waters of baptism if they are not yet a member. Or take another member, or a non-member, with you to sacrament meeting. Or take a member with you to participate in the ordinances of the temple. Or take the name of one of your kindred dead to the temple to perform vicarious ordinances for him or her. If we apply the principle of “one take one,” we will grow stronger and stronger as a Church and a people.

In our councils, we coordinate our efforts as a Church to receive the revelation we need to facilitate that one who is strong in the Spirit takes with him that is weak, so that

he may be edified in all meekness, that he may become strong also. So we have invited each Church council to prayerfully consider the following question together: “Who will take whom to receive ordinances or to keep the covenants that he or she has made with God?” For example, “Who will take whom to read the Book of Mormon?” “Who will take whom to sacrament meeting?” “Who will take whom to be baptized?” “Who will take whom to participate in the ordinances of the temple?” “Who will take whom to research family names and bring them to the temple?” or “Who will take whom to be prepared and worthy to serve a full-time mission?”

Once we ask and answer these questions in our Church councils with reference to the names that are recorded (either as members or investigators), we will have someone in place to be a friend to help one other person to receive or participate in all essential priesthood ordinances and keep the associated covenants. This will please God. After all, we are commanded to remember the members of the Church, nurture them with the word of God, and help keep them in the right way! We invite you to do this in every council of the Church. In this way we will work together, lifting one another: “I lift thee, and thee lift me, and we shall ascend together!”⁴

Our pioneer Saints in Ghana have demonstrated the power and joy that

comes to those of the household of God who live this principle. On June 15, 1989, the government of Ghana announced that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints could no longer function in Ghana. Shocked, Richard Kwesi Ahadjie (president of the Koforidua Branch) rushed to Accra to find out from the mission president what to do. When he found him, a military man was escorting the mission president away, who called out: “President Ahadjie, go back to Koforidua and take care of the Saints!” Upon returning to Koforidua, President Ahadjie was arrested by two policemen, interrogated at the police station, and then locked away in jail for many days.

After being released from jail, President Ahadjie and his counselors decided to meet with their wives


each Sunday to discuss how to help the members of the branch. Each Sunday they arose early in the morning and walked several hours into the forest to have sacrament meeting. Following sacrament meeting, the brethren would pair up and visit all the members in that area. These days would start at 4:30 a.m. and finish at 11:00 p.m. Throughout the day they would visit each member, one by one. They would leave blessings, build faith, and express love and testimony.

When the freeze ended 18 months later, all the members of the branch rejoiced when they met together again for sacrament meeting. Yes, all of them. Each one. In fact, the attendance in their sacrament meeting that happy day was 120% of the actual membership of the branch. By one taking one, they had not only

protected the faith of each member of the branch, but they had also grown the branch—even when the Church could not meet.

After the area plan broadcast in February, many members in the Africa West Area have used the principle of “one take one” to bring another person to the household of God. They have helped them to participate or receive all essential ordinances, keep the associated covenants, and qualify for eternal life. Our young people who attend seminary and institute have had many successes. Agape Brown Dodoo of the Nungua First Ward brought an investigator to seminary and now her friend attends seminary. Charles Obeney Adjei of the Sangonaa Ward visited a less-active member in his home and invited him to come to seminary—and was so happy when his friend came to seminary the next day!

Bassey Abasido Victoria of the Ikpa Road Ward used to be less active, but a fellow institute student came to her and invited her to come and took her with him—and she now rejoices at being active in the Church. She says that she wanted to come back but did not know how and is so grateful that her friend came and took her with him. Erasmus Anthony Pontoe Jr. visited Sister Roneal Korlu Paiibo of the Matadi Ward. She at first did not want to come but decided to do so, and today says that she had missed a lot by not being active in the Church.



You and the one you bring will come to better know the Savior.

YOUNG SINGLE ADULTS

One Take One: An Invitation to Act

By **Tubo-Oreriba Joseph Elisha**

Gbawe Ward, Accra Ghana Kaneshie Stake

Earlier this year, in a sacrament meeting, I watched for the first time the area goal presented by the Area Presidency. As I reflected on the message and the invitation that was extended, I rejoiced because as an elders quorum president and a stake seminary and institute supervisor, I felt that this was exactly what I needed to do in my quorum and with the stake seminary and institute program.

I invited Brother Frank Anno Ekwam over and talked with him about my feelings regarding the area goals and the invitation extended. One Saturday morning, Frank and I embarked on a movement we called “accounting to the people tour.” We visited with as many members as we could. We began the visiting at 9:00 a.m and went until 9:00 p.m. It was tiring, but we were exceedingly glad to have spent the day visiting.

We invited those we visited to also visit at least two people and encourage others to do same. We asked for specific names from those we visited for follow-ups. Many of the people we reached came for sacrament meeting. During our ward conference, we were thrilled to see a brother we had not seen at church for a long time.

When Christ showed Himself unto the people of Nephi, He invited them: “Have ye any that are sick among you? Bring them hither” (3 Nephi 17:7). Please note that He did not ask them to go and invite another to come; nor did He ask them to go and visit and then report on the visit. No, the clear wording of His gentle, sweet command was to “bring them hither.” He continued: “Have ye any that are lame, or blind, or halt, or maimed, or leprous, or that are withered, or that are deaf or that are afflicted in any manner? Bring them hither and I will heal them, . . .

“And it came to pass that . . . all the multitude . . . did go forth with their sick and their afflicted, and their lame, and with their blind, and with their dumb, and with all them that were afflicted in any manner; and he did heal them every one as they were brought forth unto him.

“And they did all, both they who had been healed and they who were whole, bow down at his feet, and did worship him” (3 Nephi 17:7, 9–10). A great truth is subtly taught here: both the whole and the once-infirm together ended up at the Savior’s feet!

When one takes one to the Savior through the ordinances and covenants, both friend and befriended draw close to the Savior and His redeeming, healing power. This is what will happen to each one of you who accepts and diligently acts on the invitation to bring another to the Savior. You and the one

you take with you to receive ordinances and keep the associated covenants will draw closer to the Savior through the process. You and the one you bring will come to better know the Savior.

The plan of salvation is a map to guide us home, and the way home is to receive essential priesthood ordinances and keep the associated covenants to qualify for eternal life. The Church is the household of God where we can receive the ordinances and help each other keep the covenants we have made with God. And to belong to the household of God means that we will help one another. One who is strong in the Spirit will take another with him or her on the path that will help us return home to our Heavenly Father.

As a fellow citizen of the household of God, I invite each one of you to join with me taking one with you to receive all essential priesthood ordinances and keep the associated covenants. I promise that as you do this, you will draw closer to the Savior, be protected from the wickedness of the world, and be filled with peace and joy. ■

NOTES

1. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona*, Apr. 2000, 2.
2. See Harold B. Lee, “Eternal Life,” *Instructor*, 101, no. 10 (October 1966): 378; see also Bruce R. McConkie, in Conference Report, Apr. 1970, 26.
3. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 3.4.
4. See Linda K. Burton, “We’ll Ascend Together,” *Liahona*, May 2015, 30; see also Robert D. Hales, “Strengthening Families: Our Sacred Duty,” *Liahona*, July 1999, 40.

I felt so happy seeing the smile on the faces of these lovely brothers and sisters during Sunday service.

Brother Frank and I extended this to the institute students in our ward. Institute enrollment increased through the “one take one” invitation by the Area Presidency. Sisters especially would call, text, or send other messages reminding others of institute class. We also extended the “one takes one” to chapel cleaning, temple attendance, and stake programs.

I am happy for the spiritual guidance of the Area Presidency. I feel much joy in my heart being a modern good Samaritan, binding up the broken hearts of ward members and pouring in joy. Obeying our leaders does bring blessings—something I have witnessed in this “one take one” invitation. ■



*Tubo-Oreriba
Joseph Elisha*

MEMBER'S VOICE

Repentance, a Renewal of Trust

By Justin N'kpeavo

Doumassesse Ward, Lomé Togo Stake

Life on earth is a period of experience. We are going through situations we want and other situations outside of our will. We make choices and act. These choices and actions in this mortal condition must be in accordance with the commandments of God. This is to show our love to

our Father and to our Redeemer Jesus Christ, who said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

As a very young boy, after the rain in the village, I had been sent by my father to see if it rained at our farm. That evening we had a football match where I was one of the main players.

I did not go to the farm. I played in the match, but the score was against us. That night, I just reassured my father that it would be better that we take the hoes of stopping. It is easier to weed with the hoe than to work with weeding hoes.

The next day he came to the field before my brothers and me. He noticed that it had rained a lot and that I had not given him the real information. At my sight, my father

Like this father, God receives us again if we repent of our sins.



was silent, with a stormy, angry air.

He moved us to another farm where we had to do some work. We needed a day and a half of work to finish this farming. Usually, he would give me instructions at the beginning of the work since I always take the lead. That day, he took the lead without saying a word. I was following him with fear. Nevertheless, I was thinking about how to merit his trust again. After the first line, I took the front. My workforce and my pace were unheard of. I worked that day more than ever. I was armed with extraordinary strength. We made the lines one after the other. The rhythm of the sounds of the hoes increased. Before the break for lunch, we had only about three lines each to finish, whereas we usually needed a day and a half.

We were all surprised by our dad's attitude at lunchtime in the farm. He was looking at me from time to time, and my brothers were watching him. When our eyes met, we burst into laughter. It was the day our dad showed us the largest of his smiles.

We could see that the atmosphere relaxed and his face beamed with joy again.

Before the end of the day, we had completed a job of more than a day. On my return home, I was summoned to his room. I had prepared to take the retaliatory blows. But just

at the beginning of our interview, I had forgotten that he was unhappy with me in the morning. He congratulated me on the good work and exhorted me to always follow his instructions. As a reward, he offered



Justin N'kpeavo

me a nice T-shirt that I've used for a long period of time. Trust was again established between my father and me. Like my father, we offend God if we disobey His commandments. Our Heavenly Father is not proud of us. But when we acknowledge our errors in repenting, He forgives us, as He said: "Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more" (D&C 58:42).

We may be ashamed to repent from indecisive behavior in the face of God's commandments. He is not concerned with the act but with our attitude after these acts.

"And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

"But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

"And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

"For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry" (Luke 15:21-24).

Like this father, God receives us again if we repent of our sins. He listens to our prayers; He blesses us. His grace abounds in every sense of our life. It restores us. We renew again with God. ■

PRIMARY'S CORNER

One Take One

By Liah Annette K.

Cantonment Ward, Christiansborg Stake



Name: Liah Annette K.

Ward: Cantonment Stake: Christiansborg



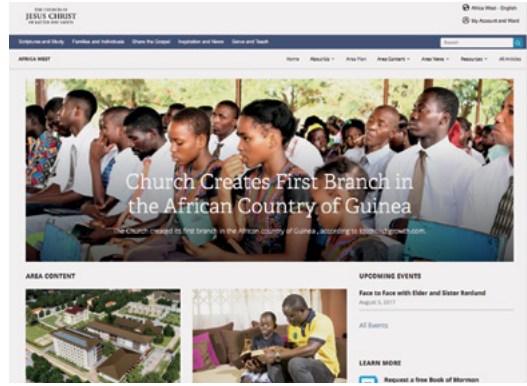
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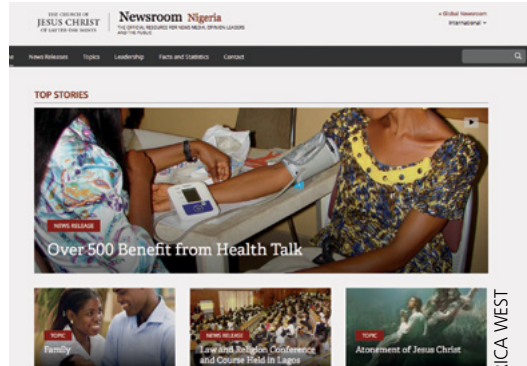
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