

# AFRICA WEST AREA LOCAL PAGES

## AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

### “A Wise King Once Said . . .”

By Elder Terence M. Vinson

Africa West Area President

Elder Terence M.  
Vinson



Just as the birth of the Savior inspired the Wise Men to bring gifts for the newborn King, we often exchange gifts at Christmas in memory and honor of the Savior's birth. But the gifts we have received as a consequence of this wonderful event far outweigh anything we might give to another. In fact, our gifts really should be to that King, the Savior of the world, our Redeemer Jesus Christ, before any gifts we give to family and friends.

A wise king once said: “I say unto you that if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another—I say, if ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants” (Mosiah 2:21).

So, how do we give a gift to Him who has given us everything? Well, let us see what He has asked us to give!

“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” (D&C 84:106, 108).

As you can see, we have clearly been told, and we have been given the method—His method. In fact, we learned this almost a year ago in the Africa West Area broadcast.

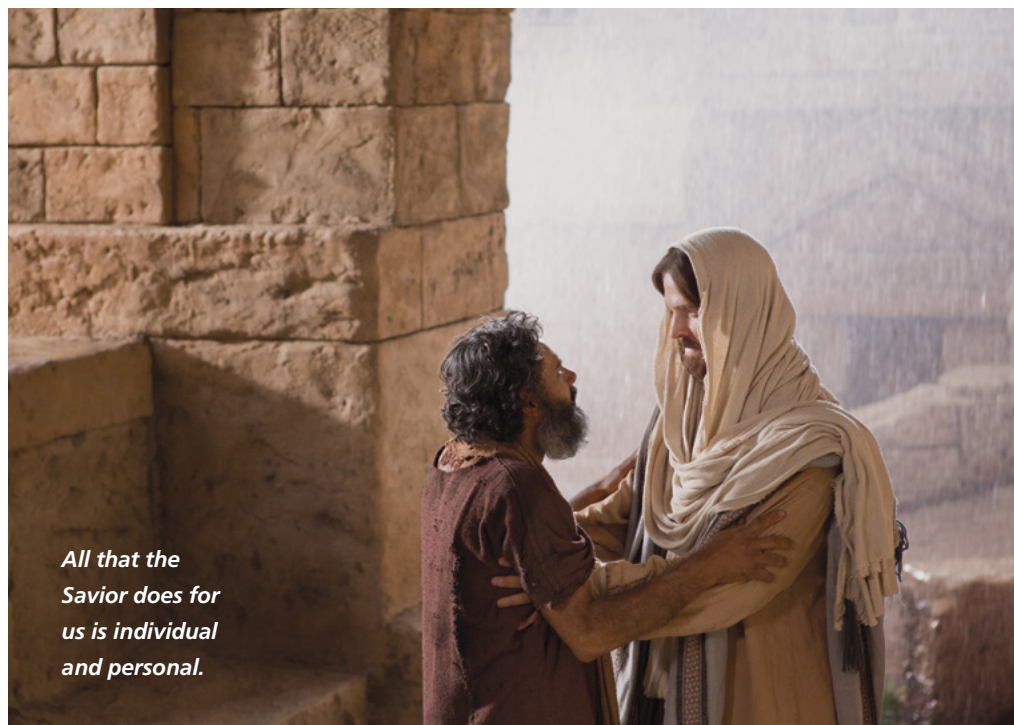
But have we done anything about it?

After all, “One (the Savior) takes one (us).” That is His gift to us, just as He has requested it should be ours to Him, where “one (us) takes one (some other person who needs our help) to lift them.”<sup>1</sup>

All that the Savior does for us is individual and personal. Our conversion is personal and customized. Each of us

is a member of His Church because the Holy Spirit has witnessed to us individually of the truth of His gospel. The revelation and inspiration we receive as we study the scriptures is personal. I learn things for myself as I study the scriptures that are tailored to my past experiences and are very personal. In all these things, He is lifting us individually.

He did the same (see John 1) with Andrew and John the Beloved (verse 39), then with Peter (verse 42), then Philip (verse 43), and then Nathanael (verses 47–49). He did the same with



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Saul (who became Paul) and with Alma and Alma the Younger, with Lehi and Nephi, and with Enos and Enoch. In each case, the “lifting” was personal and individual, including with Zacheus and with Mary Magdalene, with Martha and with Thomas, and with Joseph Smith. All these, and yet every instance and every person was individual and unique to them. And we must do the same.

In Luke 10 as He finishes His parable of the good Samaritan, a story of one taking one, He simply says: “Go, and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:37).

He ministered always in like manner. When He visited the Nephites, His interaction was, “And ye see that I have commanded that none of you should go away, but rather have commanded that ye should come unto me, that ye might feel and see; even so shall ye do unto the world” (3 Nephi 18:25).

Just a few verses later, He gives instructions for us in relation to those who have sinned: “for unto such shall ye continue to minister; for ye know not but what they will return and repent, and come unto me with full purpose of heart, and I shall heal them; and ye shall be the means of bringing salvation unto them” (3 Nephi 18:32).

We must be motivated by love and do what He did in order to become like Him. “But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him. Wherefore, my beloved

brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him” (Moroni 7:47–48).

A Church scholar and current Sunday School General President, Tad R. Callister, suggests that the Savior’s crowning act in His mission was probably done in the same way. In *The Infinite Atonement*, we read, “This was a personalized, not a mass atonement. Somehow, it may be that the sins of every soul were *individually* (as well as cumulatively) accounted for, suffered for, and redeemed for, all with a love unknown to man. Christ tasted ‘death for *every* man’ (Hebrews 2:9; emphasis added), perhaps meaning for each individual person. . . . Just as the Savior blessed the ‘little children, one by one’ (3 Nephi 17:21); just as the Nephites felt his wounds ‘one by one’ (3 Nephi 11:15); just as he listens to our prayers one by one; so, perhaps, he suffered for us, one by one.”<sup>2</sup>

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, together with others, was even more definite in stating that the Atonement was the ultimate act of one taking one. “If we truly understood the Atonement and the eternal value of each soul, we would seek out the wayward boy and girl and every other wayward child of God. We would help them to know of the love Christ has for them. We would

do all that we can to help prepare them to receive the saving ordinances of the gospel.

“Surely, if the Atonement of Christ was foremost in the minds of ward and branch leaders, no new or reactivated member would ever be neglected. Because every soul is so precious, leaders will counsel together to see that each one is taught the doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ. . . .

“ . . . The irony of the Atonement is that it is infinite and eternal, yet it is applied individually, one person at a time. . . .

“ . . . Brothers and sisters, never, never underestimate how precious is the *one*.”<sup>3</sup>

This is happening in many wards and branches of West Africa. But if we truly value the Savior’s gifts to us, it will be happening in EVERY ward and branch and family in West Africa. Let us follow the counsel of the Savior Himself and do His work in His way. We invite every member of the Church this December to begin and then to continue to give our gifts to Him—gifts of “one who is strong taking one who is weak” and helping and lifting, so that we may all be edified together. I invite you to discuss this and act on it until it becomes second nature to you. ■

#### NOTES

1. See “2017 Africa West Area Plan Presentation by Area Presidency,” Feb. 26, 2017, [africawest.lds.org/2017-area-plan-presentation-by-area-presidency](http://africawest.lds.org/2017-area-plan-presentation-by-area-presidency).
2. Tad R. Callister, *The Infinite Atonement* (2000), 141.
3. M. Russell Ballard, “The Atonement and the Value of One Soul,” *Liahona*, May 2004, 86, 87.

## CHURCH HISTORY COLUMN

# By Small and Simple Things

By Liz Liljenquist

Senior Missionary

*“Now ye may suppose that this is foolishness in me; but behold I say unto you, that by small and simple things are great things brought to pass” (Alma 37:6)*

## Part 2

In 2004, Brother and Sister Balch received a call to serve a mission in the office of the mission president of the Canada Vancouver Mission. As part of her duties there, Sister Balch forwarded the referrals that came into her office to the other missions of the Church. Now was her chance!

She knew that the missionaries would need something more than a post office box to find the Amankwah home, so she wrote to Jonathan asking him for the nearest landmark. He replied that they should look for “Unity Gardens.” Sister Balch emailed the referral, along with a little information about Jonathan, to the Ghana Accra Mission, and then waited.

By this time, Jonathan was 20 years old. While the family members were attending various churches in the area, they studied the Book of Mormon and the other literature Diane sent their family over the years. They became convinced of its truthfulness and believed the doctrine they found there—particularly the teachings of baptism, and the significance of the sacrament as an acceptance of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Sometime after sending in the referral, Diane received an email from



Elder Tanner Ainge, a missionary serving in the Ghana Accra Mission, letting her know that he and his companion, Elder Richard Koomson, had visited with the Amankwah family. He wrote, “Allow me to tell you our side of the story of how we met your friends over here. One day, I was planning on going out to proselyte with the elders in our most rural area of the mission—Abomoso. As I was leaving, I remembered the referral you sent that was in Nkawkaw, so I brought it along. We went to Nkawkaw and asked around and sure enough—found Unity Gardens. Then, sure enough, as we were asking around, a young boy says, ‘Yes, I know Jonathan Amankwah, he’s my older brother.’

So, we went to the house, and the whole family was there. We got to know them, had a first discussion and a family prayer. We knew, and they knew, that there was something very special about our meeting. We came back the next day, and had another discussion. Jonathan told us what he had read from the Book of Mormon you sent, and all of them said they want to be baptized. As I went home, I could not stop thinking about how wonderful that family is.”

Meanwhile, the Lord was working with others to bring the gospel to Nkawkaw. Robert C. Gay, president of the Ghana Accra Mission at the time, was traveling from a zone conference in Kumasi back to Accra, which took him through Nkawkaw, when he received a “very deep and very clear impression” that they should open this area. After making inquiries, he learned that members Clement and Doris Owusu and their three children had moved into the area, and coincidentally, the mission office received a few phone calls inquiring about the Church in Nkawkaw. After sincere prayer concerning the matter, President Gay received powerful confirmation that Nkawkaw was ready and that Elders Ainge and Koomson should be the ones to establish the Church there. The missionaries eagerly accepted the assignment, even though for Elder Ainge it required him to extend his mission an additional two months. They eagerly set about finding housing for themselves, locating a school in which to meet, and then teaching the

## Sacrifice of Service

Anonymous

President Frederick Ndah Igweh, the stake president of the Port Harcourt North Stake, spoke as I had never seen, heard, nor felt him speak. It was the second Sunday of July. The sacrament meeting of the Rukpokwu Ward began right on schedule.

I had been saddened by the recent economic downturn, particularly as it affects our country, Nigeria, and because of its hostile effects on my family and the people around me. I had often tried to lift my spirit by pondering on the grand plan of God for His children, gospel truths about trials amongst others, so I could take solace in the truth that trials and hard times are a necessary part of our mortal existence.

On that inspiring Sabbath morning, the stake president spoke of a Book of Mormon prophet named Abinadi. He spoke of fearlessness, obedience, and commitment. He spoke of sacrifice and how Abinadi stood up to the wicked King Noah and warned him and his cabinet about the wickedness and abominations in their kingdom and of the need to repent. Reminding them about how the Lord rescued their fathers and brought them to the land of promise . . .

Abinadi was burned alive for simply saying what the Lord commanded. Of all who listened to Abinadi, Alma alone was converted. And Alma's conversion

restored gospel of Jesus Christ to the Amankwahs, the Owusu children, and several investigators.

On Saturday, October 16, 2004, the missionaries held baptismal interviews with seven members of the Amankwah family, Doris Boakye (a relative who was staying with them at the time), Sandra Koufie (a neighbor), and the three Owusu children—Mercy, Mormon, and Jennifer. Then they all traveled in a hired bus 18 kilometers to the Pra River where they were baptized by Elder Ainge and Elder Koomson.

The next day, Sunday the 17th, they were confirmed members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the Nkawkaw Branch was organized. Clement Owusu was sustained as branch president, with Augustine Amankwah as first counselor. Sister Amankwah served as Relief Society president. From that day on, the branch has continued to grow.

Six months later, Elder and Sister Paul and Bibi Moncur were assigned to serve as MLS (member leader service) missionaries in Nkawkaw. Jonathan's sister, Georgina (Gina) was called to work with the Moncurs as a branch missionary. She proved to be so effective that President Gay later called her to serve full-time in Accra.

On September 12, 2006, Augustine and Grace were endowed and then sealed to their children Georgina, Mercy, Samuel, and Frederick. The Amankwahs were the first people from Nkawkaw to receive their temple

endowment. Jonathan was away at school at the time but later received his endowment and was sealed to his family, along with the remaining siblings. He served in the Nigeria Enugu Mission and was followed four years later by Samuel, who served in the same mission. When it came time, Frederick, the youngest, also served a mission, in the Nigeria Port Harcourt Mission.

The little Nkawkaw Branch, which started out with just those first few members in 2006, has now grown into the Nkawkaw District, with two branches in Nkawkaw and a third in the neighboring town of Mpraeso. Augustine served first as a counselor, then as branch president for five years. He is currently serving as the first counselor in the district presidency.

After his mission, Jonathan left Nkawkaw to go to school in Tarkwa, another town in Ghana where there were no Church members or missionaries. Determined to have the Church there, he began sharing message of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ with everyone he met, and now there are two thriving branches of the Church in Tarkwa.

A woman's kindness and a small slip of paper pinned on a quilt are such small things, and yet with God they became the means of bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ into the lives of so many. The thriving congregations of Nkawkaw, Mpraeso, and Tarkwa are a testament that "by very small means the Lord . . . bringeth about the salvation of many souls" (Alma 37:7). ■

brought about the conversion and baptism of many. And what simple act led to these marvelous things?

It is simply OBEDIENCE to the Lord's commandments. It is the righteous fruit of selfless service, and of sacrifice, of the prophet Abinadi and then the prophet Alma.

Afterwards, pondering about the courage of these righteous men, I began to wonder if there exists such bravery in our time and place. I do not wish to compare times. Nevertheless, I have

observed that in times past, when the righteous prospered in the land, this prosperity often came as a blessing after obedience to God's commandments.

I know that commitment to the things that matter most, which are the things of God, and courageous and righteous service brings great blessings. Therefore, in order to qualify to obtain blessings, there should be men and women who keep the Lord's commandments today.

I remembered the bravery of the high councilors of our stake, who

despite the fighting and killings going on at Omoku town, found courage to attend the ward conference to fulfill their sacred assignments.

Walking in strict obedience to the Lord while enduring affliction may not seem easy, let alone when such obedience exposes us to endanger our very lives. But it is in such circumstance such as Abinadi faced that faith is tested and rewards of great blessings are obtained. ■

## LOCAL NEWS

# Ghana Accra MTC Open House Tour

By Samuel Agyei Amankwah

The newly expanded missionary training center (MTC) in Accra, Ghana, was officially opened for members and nonmembers to tour and ask questions about the MTC and the restored gospel. Tours were available from August 8–12, 2017.

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles visited the MTC. "As we walked through the halls and went into the classrooms, we sense already a real profound spirit that comes from those that have planned and built it" he said. "It will be a phenomenal place for missionaries to learn about the Savior and to learn how to share His gospel."

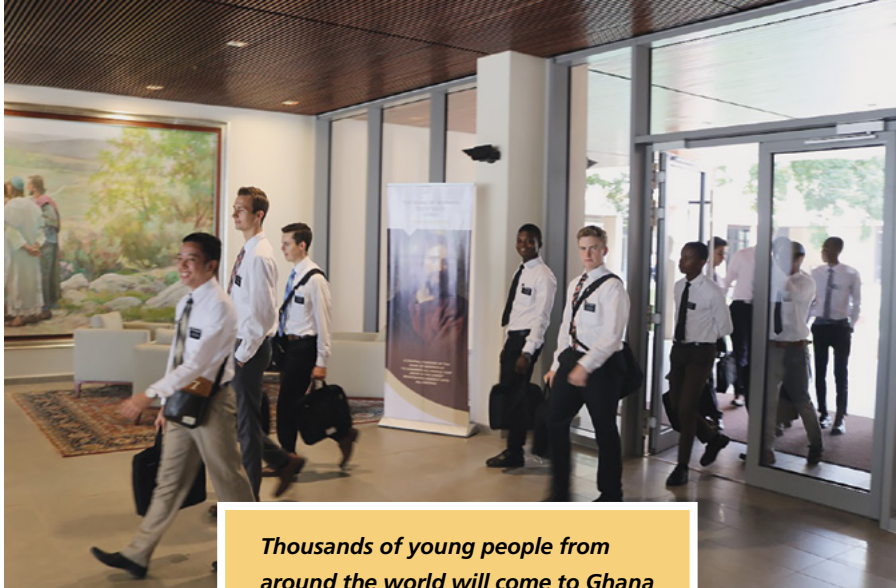
"The new MTC will create a learning environment that allows the missionaries to fully understand their missionary purpose," said Elder Terence M. Vinson, President of the Africa West Area. "The existing facility in Tema was planned for up to 100 missionaries, and we have outgrown it. This beautiful building can house 320 and is designed to grow and expand. It will enable us to prepare for the future. Thousands of young people from around the world will come to Ghana and prepare to go forward in serving their God and the peoples of Africa," Elder Vinson averred.

Construction of the Ghana MTC began in 2014. The facility includes a



five-story residence hall with 80 dormitories. There are 28 classrooms, 18 practice teaching rooms, and 7 computer labs where missionaries receive training before they are sent to their assigned areas around the world.

The facility also houses areas to provide for the daily needs of missionaries such as a cafeteria, laundry facility, athletic fields, and large meeting rooms.



**Thousands of young people from around the world will come to Ghana and prepare to go forward in serving their God and the peoples of Africa.**



Ebenezer Coleman, site project manager for the Ghana MTC, said the project had been a highlight of his construction career. “One of the workers told me he felt something different about this building than other sites where he had worked. He felt peace while working here. I explained this building was being constructed so young people could prepare to teach the word of God to people across Africa.”

President Scott Brubaker, President of the Ghana MTC also admonished that, “The principles and the doctrines they will learn here will not only develop a foundation for them to go out and

be good missionaries, but will provide life skills which will help them the rest of their lives.”

Several members added their voice on expectations and experiences they had after touring the MTC.

“This is a great opportunity for us to be responsible for making this building look more attractive and beautiful all the time. We would clean with all our heart because we know cleanliness is next to godliness.”

—Africa West Area Special Project Department

“This MTC is very beautiful and reminds me of my mission days. As

I walked through the corridors, I felt the Spirit was here. The serenity of this MTC would inspire the missionaries to study diligently and invite the companionship of the Holy Spirit as they go about preaching the gospel.” —*Esther Korantemaa Abuyeh (Darkuman Ward, Kaneshie Ghana Stake)*

“When we first got there, I thought I would see the same things found in the old MTC, but I was surprised to see big things. I felt like going on a mission again.” —*Kouakou Jean Koffi Donald (Jean Folly Second Ward, Grand Bassam Stake Ivory Coast)*

“Our assignment as tour guides has really ignited our passion to serve the Lord. As we walked members and nonmembers through the unique areas in the MTC, we realized their faith had increased, and that gave us joy.” —*Sister Okeke and Sister Djibre (Ghana Accra West Mission)*

“We had the privilege to hear parents whisper to their children to serve the Lord as they toured this new edifice which would house missionaries before they are sent out to preach the gospel. Our hearts were filled with joy by the invitation from parents to the young ones, and we have been blessed as tour guides.” —*Elder Ekhasomi and Elder Herrod (Ghana Accra West Mission)*

“My wife and I have been blessed by this opportunity to help and

guide people through this new MTC building. We were really touched to see smiles on members and non-members. We were thrilled to hear parents advising their children to serve a mission”. —*The Hadleys (senior missionaries, public affairs Africa West Area)*

“We never had the intention of serving full-time missions, but after the tour we have been prompted by the Spirit to serve the Lord. We will surely come back as missionaries.” —*MaaKotsiaba and Nelda A.G. (Kasoa Ward, Kasoa Stake)*

“We can’t wait to be full-time missionaries—this place is awesome. The Spirit was really felt when we toured with our parents.” —*Marjorie, Marjorieta, and Barbara (Tema Second Ward)*

“This is one of the many ways Heavenly Father directs and blesses His children. Having the privilege as returned missionaries to assist in the new MTC open house was a blessing to us and to those we guided through the building.” —*Diana and Freeman (volunteers)*

“This building reminds of a Primary song that says, ‘I want to be a missionary now’ (*Children’s Songbook*, 168). I think I want to be a missionary now, and I pray for all missionaries around the world.” —*Edikhan G.A. (Kasoa Ward)*



***Clockwise, from top: Africa West Area Special Project Department; the Kouakous; Elder Herrod and Elder Ekhasomi; Maakotsiaba and Nelda; the Hadleys; Sister Okeke and Sister Djibre; Esther***



**Clockwise, from top: Marjorie, Marjorieta and Barbara; Freeman; Caroline; Edikhan; Diana**

“The MTC building is very beautiful and I like the glasses. I really felt the presence of the Spirit of God as I walked through. It has really inspired my desire to serve a mission.” —*Caroline K. (Knust Ward, Asokwa Stake, Kumasi)* ■

**CHILDREN’S CORNER**

