

Africa Southeast Local Pages

Meet the New Africa Southeast Area Presidency



Elder Dale G. Renlund, Area President

Elder Dale G. Renlund has been called as President of the Africa Southeast Area. He assumes the position previously held by Elder Paul Koelliker, to whom he served as a counselor from 2009 to 2011.

Elder Renlund was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy in April 2009. A former Area Seventy in the Utah Salt Lake City and Utah North Areas, President Renlund has also served as a stake president,

high councilor, bishop, ward mission leader, and full-time missionary to the Sweden Stockholm Mission.

He attended the University of Utah, where he received a bachelor's degree in chemistry and a doctorate in medicine. He then completed a six-year residency programme at Johns Hopkins University. A cardiologist by profession, Elder Renlund is an emeritus professor of medicine at the University of Utah. He is married to Ruth Lybbert. They have one daughter.



Elder Ulisses Soares, First Counselor

Elder Ulisses Soares is the First Counselor to President Renlund in the Africa Southeast Area Presidency. Elder Soares served as President of the Brazil South Area prior to coming to Africa.

Called to the First Quorum of the Seventy in April 2005, Elder Soares previously served as president of the Portugal Porto Mission (2000–2003), stake president, regional welfare agent, stake high

councilor, bishop's counselor, elders quorum president, and full-time missionary in the Brazil Rio de Janeiro Mission.

Elder Soares received a bachelor's degree in accounting and economics and later an MBA. He was an accountant and auditor before becoming a director of temporal affairs in the Church area office, São Paulo, Brazil. Elder Soares married Rosana Fernandes. They are the parents of three children, one of whom is with them in Africa.



**Elder Carl B. Cook,
Second Counselor**

Elder Carl B. Cook is the Second Counselor in the Africa Southeast Area. This is his first area assignment since being called to the First Quorum of the Seventy in April 2011.

Prior to his call, Elder Cook served as an Area Seventy, president of the New Zealand Auckland Mission, stake

president and counselor, bishop, and full-time missionary in the Germany Hamburg Mission.

Elder Cook earned a bachelor's degree in business marketing and then an MBA. His professional career was in real estate development. Elder Cook is married to Lynnette Hansen. They are the parents of five children. ■

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

This Way Please!

By Elder Colin H. Bricknell, Area Seventy

As a young boy growing up in a mining town, things were financially tough for us as a family. So I went to work at the bioscope (movie house) as an usher at the age of about 13 or 14 years old to earn some money. I would work in the evenings after school and on Saturdays. In those days the inside of the cinema was pretty dark, so the patrons needed an usher with a torch to show them to their seats. As the patrons came through the door the head usher would take their tickets, then tear the one part off, and hand the other to us ushers. We in turn would say to the patrons, "This way please," and we would shine the torch on the ground in front of them for them to follow the spot of light to their seats. We would then give them their part of the ticket and go back to the main door

to usher other patrons to their seats.

Now the key to being a very good usher was to have a very bright torch (flashlight). If your light wasn't bright the patrons wouldn't be able to follow you, so you had to constantly be aware of the brightness of your light. And if necessary you would regularly change the batteries to ensure that your light shone brightly. Only when your light shone brightly could you truly say, "This way please".

This is also the key to being a true disciple of Christ. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Spiritually speaking, as we go through life we all need to constantly have our batteries recharged, like we do when we attend sacrament services and partake of the holy emblems of the Atonement; like we do when we fast and pray; like we do when we read the holy scriptures; like

we do when we live the Sabbath day; like we do when we pay our tithing; like we do when we focus on our Saviour.

Sometimes we need to replace our batteries to get our “lights” burning brightly again—or we may even need to change the globe (lamp), should the old one be fused. When we fail to recognize that our lights are fading, we can eventually lose our “spiritual light” totally, and we are left in darkness, to be buffeted by the evil one and to kick against the pricks.

The Saviour says in Doctrine and Covenants 6:21, “I am the light which shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.” It is to Him we must look for a renewal of our lights. It is He who constantly says to us, “This way please!” with a hope that we will follow His light through the mist of darkness and with full faith in Him.

Lloyd D. Newell, in the April 4, 2010, broadcast of *Music and the Spoken Word*, said the following: “Something within us loves light. We need light for life. Both physically and spiritually, we thrive when we see and feel the light. Who doesn’t feel drawn to a window, not just for the view it affords, but especially for the light it invites?”

The natural world shows how essential light is to life. Delicate flowers push their way through the darkness of the cold, hard soil just to drink from the sun’s warm light. Spring’s bold display of blossoms is a direct response to longer days or more direct light.

In ancient times, people were more dependent on natural light than we are today. When the sun went down, they could not simply flip a switch or press a button to illuminate their dwellings.

Long ago, early on that first Easter morning, “it was yet dark” when Mary went to the garden tomb (see John 20:1). The darkness in the world



Elder Colin H. Bricknell

around her was likely easier to bear than the darkness and emptiness she felt in her heart. Soon the sun would rise, however, and soon the Light of Life would illuminate her soul.

In a sense, each of us walks a part of life’s journey in the dark. But each step of faith leads to more light, more reason to believe, greater cause to hope—until we finally find the Light of Life. As the Psalmist said, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

The more we yearn for the Light of Life, the more our spirits, like flowers of spring, blossom with the fruits of faith: peace, joy, love, and hope. Without the light that shines in the darkness, we could not gather “fruit unto life eternal” (John 4:36). We could not feel the light of everlasting life.

I remember being on the stand in the Krugersdorp chapel one Sunday morning, when a “lady bird” beetle landed on my suit sleeve. I was worried that it would fall onto the floor and be tramped on. So I cupped my left hand and put the lady bird beetle into the cup of my hand and closed my fingers tightly to form a hollow fist to protect the lady bird from being squashed. During the singing of the sacrament hymn I looked down and noticed that the lady bird beetle was back on the sleeve of my suit. I wondered how this tiny insect could ever have escaped my tight grip?

Well, I put the lady bird back into the hollow of my hand and again squeezed tightly so that she could not escape this time. I then took a moment to watch to see if she would get out again, and how she would do this. I realized that in the hollow of my hand it must have been pretty dark for the little lady bird. I then noticed that her tiny little head was trying to burrow through the gap between the end of my ring finger and my little finger, the tops of which were squeezed against the palm of my hand, and that her body was too large to get through the tiny gap.

It occurred to me that the only light that was penetrating into the hollow of my fist was coming through this gap that I have mentioned. This little lady bird beetle obviously saw this shaft of light and was drawn to it, and was fighting with all her might to get her body through this gap to get into the greater light, out of the darkness.

As I pondered this little insect’s situation, and particularly the will, determination, and focus that she was applying to get to the Light, I thought about what we as members are doing to “get to the Light” and whether or not our focus on the Saviour is what it ought to be? I really believe that we can all do a little better in getting closer to the

Saviour and His Light. I believe that we can do better in getting to know the Saviour on a more personal and spiritual level.

The unspoken sermon that this little lady bird delivered to me was amazingly powerful. She did all in her power to get to the light. She fought like crazy and tried to get her head and then her body through the gap in my fingers . . . that was her only chance to get to the light—there was no other way.

The words of hymn number 304 come to mind:

*Teach me to walk in the light of his love:
Teach me to pray to my Father above:
Teach me to know of the things that are right;
Teach me, teach me, to walk in the light.*

*Come, little child, and together we’ll learn
Of His commandments, that we may return
Home to His presence, to live in His sight—
Always, always, to walk in the light.*

*Father in Heaven, we thank Thee this day
For loving guidance to show us the way.
Grateful, we praise Thee with songs of delight!
Gladly, gladly, we’ll walk in the light.*

Brothers and sisters, we too have to do all in our power to walk in the Light. We must do more—much, much more to allow the Light of the Saviour to distil upon us, so that we in turn can be a light for others to follow. As each of us struggle with whatever challenges that come our way, remember this: “No darkness in all the world has the power to put out the light of a single candle.”

May we live our lives in such a way that we will hear and heed the invitation from the Lord as He holds out His hand and says, “This way please,” is my humble prayer in the sacred and holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen. ■

Humanitarian Youth Project in Ethiopia

Sixty-five young adults and youth gathered together in Ethiopia at the Meganagna chapel to assemble hygiene kits for Ethiopians affected by the severe drought in the Horn of Africa. Some 4,000 kits were assembled. Missionaries in the Ethiopian District were also present to help with the assembly.

“It is so great for the youth to come together and serve their fellow Ethiopians,” Elder Dana and Sister Robin O’Crowley, humanitarian country directors for Latter-day Saint Charities (LDSC), explained. “We are so pleased to see them work so hard, and with such happy faces.” The youth worked together in the hot sun for four to five hours.

This project is part of the Church’s effort to help the people living within the Ethiopian borders affected by the Horn of Africa drought. LDSC is trucking water to drought-affected areas and filling 10,000-liter tanks in 15 villages on the Somalia border. Many Somalians are coming across the border to fill their water cans. “We planned to bring water to 22,000 beneficiaries, but when the trucks



Young adults in Ethiopia assemble hygiene kits for drought victims.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SISTER ROBIN O’CROWLEY



started delivering the water, 31,000 beneficiaries came,” Elder O’Crowley said. “We are helping more people than we imagined.”

LDSC is also funding 200 latrines for the Kobe Refugee Camp in the Dolo Odo, Ethiopia area. Eight community nutrition centers with latrines and showers are funded by LDSC in the

Kobe and Melka Dida refugee camps. These nutrition centers are the designated place where Somali women who are pregnant or nursing and children under the age of five go to receive an extra ration of food for malnutrition. “We saw many women and children in great need of this food when we visited the refugee camps”

Sister O’Crowley shared.

LDSC currently has other projects in process for the refugee camps and for the people living in the host communities outside of the camps. Thanks to the members of the Church this donation is possible for the Somali refugees and the Ethiopians living in the surrounding areas. ■

How Could This Happen To Me?

By Stephen Kyalo

My tears and screams were too much for me to bear. I remember even wishing to die rather than to stay in this condition.

That morning I had awakened early, prepared my son to go to school, and gave my loving wife a big hug. I had told her that when I returned I would take her for a special treat, not knowing what was awaiting me.

I reached my work place and carried on with my duties as usual—driving vehicles for service. On that day, because of circumstances, I was forced to use a motor bike as a taxi to help get through the Nairobi traffic jams.

I vividly recall directing the motor bike driver to take a right turn about 100 metres prior to my destination. At this spot the worst imaginable happened—something that left me with so many questions, like, Does God really exist? And if the answer is yes, where was He when this was happening?

I found myself in the middle of the road, my head covered with blood and my left hand looking as if it had been butchered. I tried to stand, but I felt

as if my left leg was carrying 1,000 kilograms. Some good Samaritans helped me out of the road to let a presidential escort speed past. As I gained full consciousness, I saw the driver of the motor bike screaming in pain. Then about 20 metres away, I saw a Toyota van with shattered glass—the driver was speechless.

I was taken to hospital. X-rays were taken, and I was told that my left femur had been broken. I have always tried to be good. How could this happen? Even now as I write this story, tears are flowing down my cheeks! I cannot recall all that followed, but as days passed by I wanted to die rather than live.

I'm happy that doctors can treat people and most grateful that God cures. I was operated on and I now have a metal plate grafted in my body, though for months my system struggled to accept it.

Moving from wheelchair to crutches and then to a walking stick was a horrific process. Watching people walking about without any additional support looked like a miracle. I sometimes wondered, "Will I

ever walk like they do?" Being a professional driver, I needed my legs to drive. I lost my job. During the period I was walking on two crutches, I experienced low self-esteem, unworthiness, distress and all manner of humiliations.

I read these words of encouragement in the scriptures: "For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment but with ever-lasting kindness I will have compassion on you." And, "If you suffer for doing good and endure it, this is commendable before God."

The biggest change in my life since my accident is in how I act towards other people. I am kinder, more loving and I share. I find that I don't have any evil feelings towards anyone.

When I had finished with my wheelchair, I was approached by a friend to sell it to him in behalf of someone he knew who needed it. I said, "No, I can't sell it. Please let your friend use it, as I guess he needs it more than me." When I stopped using the two crutches, I gave them to my neighbour's father, who was also involved in an accident.

My only condition was that when he finished with them he would not sell them but in

turn donate them to somebody else in need.

I have learned that only a life

lived for others is a life worth living, and I have gained more than I have given. ■

Stephen Kyalo and his wife and family now reside in the Kayole Ward, where he serves as elders quorum president and is a respected woodcarver.



PHOTOGRAPH BY EIDER DAVID JENSEN