

# Africa Southeast Area Local Pages

## AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

### Collecting, Preserving, and Sharing

By **Elder Carl B. Cook**

Second Counselor in the Area Presidency

**O**n May 26, 1844, the Prophet Joseph Smith made a statement that demonstrates the importance of record-keeping: “For the last three years I have a record of all my acts and proceedings, for I have kept several good, faithful, and efficient clerks in constant employ: they have accompanied me everywhere, and carefully kept my history, and they have written down what I have done, where I have been, and what I have said” (in *History of the Church* 6:409).

We all benefit from the records kept by Joseph Smith, as well as the priceless records kept by other early Church members. Our faith is strengthened as we learn how the Lord fortified these Latter-day Saints during their times of trial and adversity. Our hope and confidence increase when we understand the obstacles they were able to overcome with the Lord's help. Historical records are particularly poignant if they were written and preserved by our ancestors. They give us an increased sense of identity and heritage.

Just as we benefit from the records of prior generations, those who follow us will benefit from our records. We must collect, preserve, and prepare to share our history with future generations. They will want to know how we lived and what we felt. They will want to know that we were true to our covenants and testimonies in the face of many challenges, for they will have many challenges to face in their day.

The history of the Church and its members is unfolding at an accelerating rate throughout the

world. In order to effectively capture significant events, the work of Church history is being decentralized. As an Area Presidency, we have been given the responsibility to collect, preserve, and share the history of the Church in the Africa Southeast Area. We are committed to gathering historical records, implementing a system for capturing and preserving current events as they unfold, and sharing the records with current and future generations. We extend an invitation to each member to assist in this undertaking. Each of us can contribute in some way, and we invite you to prayerfully consider what you can do to preserve the history of the Church.

Oliver Cowdery wrote of his remarkable experiences with the Prophet Joseph Smith, “These were days never to be forgotten” (Joseph Smith—History 1:71). Thankfully the days of Joseph Smith have not been forgotten—because they were recorded! Thank you for your assistance in recording, collecting, and preserving Church history records for our time, for these are also days which should never be forgotten. I know the Lord would have us preserve our history, and I pray that each of us will be blessed as we do. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### Church History Tips

There are a number of ways to be involved in preserving Church history. The simplest way is by keeping a personal journal. Personal and family histories with relevant dates are also valuable, as well as preservation of other personal items. You may want to begin by writing about your conversion to the Church.



**Elder Carl B. Cook**

Documents related to Church meetings and activities can also be preserved. Church history advisers are being called in each unit. They will be trained later this year and will be able to assist and answer questions.

The Africa Southeast Area is collecting branch, ward, district, stake, mission, and country histories. Country history advisers are assembling records of the history of the Church in each country of the Africa Southeast Area that has over 1,000 members. Wherever you live, begin now collecting and preserving your records for the future.

In the coming months a Church history archive will be established in the Africa Southeast Area offices, conveniently located near the temple in Johannesburg, South Africa, where historical records of the Africa Southeast Area will be made available to the public. We are currently gathering items and histories for display.

With the special help of Clive Nicholls, who has

worked tirelessly throughout his life to collect and preserve Church historical records, many records are available from the beginning of the Church in South Africa, the first country of our area to have the gospel preached. We are grateful to Brother Nicholls for his inspired leadership and work in this area.

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, taught the Church in a general conference address how he was schooled by the Spirit in record-keeping: “. . . just as I got to the door, I heard in my mind—not in my own voice—these words: ‘I’m not giving you these experiences for yourself. Write them down’ (‘O Remember, Remember,’ *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 66).

Elder Marlin K. Jensen, Church Historian and Recorder, said, “Remembering the past gives us needed perspective as God’s children to have faith in our future destiny and thus to live more faithfully in the present” (“There Shall Be a Record Kept among You,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2007, 28–33). ■

## The Words Came Right from Their Hearts and Not Their Mouths

By Elder K. Tusey Kola, Area Seventy

I was assigned to preside over the conference at one of our districts two years after being called as an Area Seventy.

That Sunday the day appeared serene to me; we all hoped to have good weather. Soon it looked a beautiful day with bright sun. The sky was almost cleared, there were no clouds, and the sky was blue. We felt a cool wind that began to wonderfully blow in this city of Kananga.

We were refreshed with a fortifying spirit from a good Saturday evening session. We felt a good spirit throughout the sessions for priesthood leaders and adults. We taught them about their duties and urged them to have faith in Jesus Christ, and I constantly focused on family. Our congregation was edified. We were with the mission president and his wife, for whom I keep good memories of

their love and their effort during their valiant call. The stake president was very young, called a year ago.

We arrived at the venue well before the members came. The stake president checked if everything was in place. We were at the door waiting to welcome members. They came in numbers, and we could read on their faces enthusiasm and joy, and we warmly greeted them. This passage in 1 Nephi 22:24 comes back again to my mind: “And the time cometh speedily that the righteous must be led up as calves of the stall, and the Holy

One of Israel must reign in dominion, and might, and power, and great glory.”

What wonderful Saints who came to attend the conference! Our hearts were full of joy. And there was no doubt that in the next two or three years this district would become a stake. The scriptures teach us, “But, behold, I, the Lord, will hasten the city in its time, and will crown the faithful with joy and with rejoicing” (D&C 52:43).

That day all new converts were invited into a room. As usual we took a few minutes and asked them how they joined the Church. Personally, I will never forget the spiritual words that I heard. They did not come out of the mouth, but from the bottom of the heart of each one. Listening to the stories of converts caused much emotion, and our cheeks were streaming with tears. Their experiences were touching; what humility we noticed! What faith that nourishes them! They displayed obedience and sacrifice. The gospel that we live is about love; it prepares the human family for eternal salvation and gives people joy as eternal families. *The Family: A Proclamation to the World* is the essence of a model and generous life and of a special life.

One of the spiritual expressions that touched me most

was that of a young woman—I cannot remember the name. As she took the floor to talk about her experience, I felt the love of God for giving her peace in Christ; His perfect love now abides in her home. Indeed, she said she had long sought to be happy. Her story was touching. She said:

“The Lord came into our home to save our family. I was an unhappy woman due to the behavior of my husband. I meditated and often asked myself what was the use of living under a roof where marriage is based on a tradition that stifles women, for the woman is a precious creature of God. I had nothing to say to my husband. And every reply that I brought to make him understand the right direction, he became furious. I lived in fear in my home that I loved so much. I was considered a prisoner because I could not do otherwise than comply with his bad-mannered commands, as if I was the cause of the failure of his life. I am a respectful woman and by nature, beautiful. Maybe it’s because of our two children that the Lord has given us he dared not repudiate me.

One day, I noticed something surprising. When coming back from work, he sat next to me and read his book as long as he could. His tone had completely changed, and this went on for

a week. Curiously, he spoke to me politely. Sometimes he did it without disturbing me in my work. The days that followed, he was no longer the same man I had known. I could not understand how he became humble, kind, and calm. Who advised him to change his behavior? But I saw him always stuck to his book, which was the Book of Mormon.”

The story of Lehi had changed him to acquire such a feeling. “And as I partook of the fruit therefore it filled my soul with exceedingly great joy; wherefore, I began to be desirous that my family should partake of it also; for I knew that it was desirable above all other fruits” (1 Nephi 8:12).”

The sister, in her history said: “My husband has changed. My heart is at peace, the conversation is no longer the barrier between us. Two Sundays in a row, he went to church with his book and children. One day he told me that he would like us to go to church of his choice that changes people by its doctrine. I asked him which church he wanted us to go to, and he replied, ‘The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.’ Frankly I cried out with astonishment, ‘You, to go there! Don’t you know that we are poor? What do we have to be able to give this church? People

there are rich and we have no money.’”

We listened to about 20 converts; it was wonderful. When her husband spoke, he said that what has been said was truth: “I became a different person

from who I was in the past. I almost lost my family because I was far from the restored gospel that changed my way of being. It saved my family. It is the tree of life that attracted us, and I could not eat alone! What an

experience! And what a perfect model of God, of hope that our families find peace in our homes, thanks to the restored gospel and the teachings of prophets that strengthen each family.” ■

## LOCAL NEWS

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF AFRICA SOUTHEAST PUBLIC AFFAIRS



*A large crowd of youth gathered in Beira, Mozambique, to hear the message given in Portuguese by Elder Ulisses Soares of the Africa Southeast Area Presidency.*

# Youth in Mozambique Encouraged to Be a Light to the World

By Sister Julie Jensen

**S**unday, November 27, 2011, was the date of the first fireside held in Beira, Mozambique, having a Portuguese-speaking General Authority. The mission president, Loren B. Spendlove, his wife, Tina W. Spendlove, and the

whole new district presidency were present.

A large crowd of about 150 young men and young women were privileged to hear the message given in Portuguese by Elder Ulisses Soares of the Area Presidency. He spoke about their

responsibility to be a light to the world. Then he gave them the opportunity for questions and answers. Many questions were asked about how to overcome the temptations of the world. Elder Soares commented, “All the questions were very mature and spiritually oriented. A large number of the youth made a tremendous sacrifice to attend that fireside, including some who walked about three to four hours coming and returning to their homes.”

Nathalia, Elder and Sister Soares’s youngest daughter, spoke on how to overcome the challenges to keep the gospel standards as we live in this evil world. Elder Soares and his wife, Rosanna, shared their testimonies about Jesus Christ and His gospel. A beautiful and inspiring choir added to the spirit of the meeting.

In referring to the young people who attended, Elder Soares commented, “It was amazing to see how faithful they were and how much desire they have to follow the Lord’s path.” ■

## Lifesaving Wells of a Different Kind

By Sister Julie Badger Jensen

*Matthew 25:35: "I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink."*

Small, hand-dug, shallow wells are blessing and saving lives in Kenya and other areas in Africa. Missionaries Elder Bruce and Sister Judy Godfrey saw this firsthand as they directed humanitarian affairs for the Church in Kenya. The Godfreys, along with previous missionaries, have been instrumental in planning and supervising hundreds of these lifesaving wells. Each well serves about 30 families. The total beneficiaries in Kenya are more than 25,000 people and their cattle. Many lives have been changed, and in some cases, saved. A funeral was recently held for a child who died from drinking polluted water in an area without the benefit of a well.

Elder Godfrey explained: "These wells are of a different kind. They are generally from 20 to 100 feet deep. They serve areas where a large bore hole is not practical. A technician determines the location, and the digging begins. Most are dug by families."

The Godfreys, accompanied by contractor and guide David Maluti and public affairs missionaries Elder David and Sister Julie Jensen, travelled to remote areas of Kenya for an evaluation and impact excursion. Arriving at the Mulei Meleu Well Project, the group met a young mother, Jacinta Mueli, who is chair lady for several families who share the well. She was anxious to demonstrate and enthusiastically pumped clean, clear water. Her vigor and bright smile were worth a thousand words. When asked through an interpreter how her life was before the well, she answered, "Every night [we] carried water from the river

while children slept. Women [went] in big groups for protection to scare away beasts . . . am grateful from the first time I saw the project. Children very happy now—[they have] water; not sick anymore. Don't ever take [it] away!"

In the Thange village of Kibwezi District, water chair Damaris Syombus, a graceful mother carrying baby Judy on her back, proudly announced: "We drink clean water now. Because well is covered, children won't fall in. Since [having] clean water, we save one-third of our shillings each month because children are well—they do not need medicine. Also, we have trees and garden and drinking trough for small animals and insects. I do not have to walk five miles every day for water."

At another remote location, the Ungani Community Project, a shallow well was being dug. The process could be seen firsthand. As we

***Elder Bruce and Sister Judy Godfrey, humanitarian missionaries, join with locals for well evaluation.***



PHOTOGRAPH BY ELDER DAVID JENSEN



*Damaris Syombus, carrying baby Judy, pumps clean water. She is water chair for Thange Village in Kibwezi District.*

looked into a dark hole about eight feet across, we heard hammering below. Shortly a young man, Wambua Kithome, could be seen skillfully pulling himself upward on a thick, sisal rope. Holding a bucket filled with small pieces of rock in one hand, he maneuvered himself out of the opening. His strong, sinewy arms and legs told a story of strength and courage. He emptied his bucket and was soon on his way back into the dark, brick-lined opening.

A village bystander commented, “We make bricks and burn them to make them hard, then hire a mason to put bricks for 12 feet down to hold the soil to make it safe to dig a hole.”

The digging can sometimes take months or even years. When the well is deep enough, LDS Charities steps in and provides wire, mesh, a technician, cement rebar, and a pump. Elder



*Wambua Kithome lowers himself into opening, where he chips rock and digs a future well.*

Godfrey stated, “We require the people of the village to work. When they sweat and invest in the well, they will appreciate and take care of it. These wells can last for 50 years supplying clean, clear water. They are affordable and promote self-reliance. No permits are necessary. Those of small means can get cheap or free water. Though the process is long and hard, these wells are needed.”

Small, hand-dug wells are blessing and saving lives in Kenya. Many more are needed. Contractor David Maluti said, “People are astonished at the good works of LDS Charities.” Elder Godfrey commented, “The hardest question in humanitarian work is ‘Who do we help?’ The conclusion is that this is the Lord’s work. He will direct the humanitarian missionaries where they need to go.” ■

## Sipho Khomo, Zulu Man of Faith

By Elder Howard and Sister Sharlene Heninger

**S**ipho Khomo was baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the 16th of November, 1980. He is considered to be the first Zulu man from South Africa to go on a mission for the Church. He was called to the London England Mission in November 1984. He loved the work. It was the norm, then, to go for 18 months. Toward the end of his mission, he decided that because he had taken six months to understand the English language, he would extend for six months more. This made it a two-year mission. Brother Khomo worked under two mission presidents, President Harold Goodman from 1984 to 1985, and President Wendell J. Ashton from 1985 to 1986.

Brother Khomo is grateful that he was able to go on a mission, even though it presented many challenges. Just convincing his parents that he should join the Church took some time. He was only 17 years old. His parents were struggling with the danger of him becoming a target of civil unrest if he joined. If the militants thought that he was involved with supporting the government or their programs in any way, they would kill him. At the time, people in South Africa

were calling the Church *Isondo Labe Lungu*, meaning “Church of the Whites.”

President Jenkins was the district president at the time. He sent Josiah Nxumalo, who had been one of the original missionaries sent to the Kwamashu Township where the Khomo family lived, to meet with Brother Khomo’s parents. They were not too sure about their son joining the Church. Brother Nxumalo talked to them about giving their consent. As it turned out, his parents became receptive, and his mother decided that the Church offered a better way of life for her son. She knew that he would be safe in the Church and would not be caught up in drugs and alcohol, which were the other major problems in the area along with civil unrest. They gave their consent, and Brother Khomo was baptized.

He tells about some of the further challenges he faced:

“After joining the Church, I was asked by President Jenkins to bless the sacrament. I was scared. But he said, ‘Don’t worry, you’ll read the prayer’. I blessed the bread and water. A few weeks later I was asked to give a talk. I spoke about ‘How can we withstand temptation?’

Then, President John Meunford was introduced to the branch. He asked me to go on a mission. I refused, because thoughts came to my mind of what others were saying—“These *Mlungus* (whites) are here to steal our children to make them soldiers to fight for Apartheid Regime.’ I did not tell President Meunford the reason for refusing to go. Later, I finally agreed to go. My parents gave their consent.”

Brother Khomo served his mission knowing that his family could be harassed or even killed while he was away. He went in faith, knowing all would be well with them. His family was blessed while he was away and remained safe, although many of his friends were killed. His employer in a construction

*Sipho Khomo*



PHOTOGRAPH BY WICKI DAVIS



PHOTOGRAPH BY HOWARD HENINGER

business was the stake patriarch, Vic Rawlings. Patriarch Rawlings and Don Wilson supported him on his mission.

“I am glad I went on my mission,” Brother Khomo says. “It helped make me strong. I followed the counsel given in section 4 of the Doctrine and Covenants. I served the Lord with all my “heart, might, mind and strength” so that I would “stand blameless before God at the last day” (verse 2).

Brother Khomo relates, “One old man who was a highlight in my mission was Brother Ted Brewmime. He lived by himself, always watching TV. He seemed like he was waiting for his death. When my companion, Elder Scott McKimmen, and I approached him, he showed

no interest, and we felt like we were wasting his time. We asked him to give us only 15 minutes. He agreed. Those 15 minutes became one and a half hours. We taught him the plan of salvation. When we were talking, I could see the light in his eyes and excitement. A few weeks later he was baptized. He was very active and participated in all Church activities. The gospel made him a very happy man.”

Even though Brother Khomo had some challenges with the Cockney accent, he very much enjoyed the English people. “They were very kind, and many accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ,” he said. He tried always to apply “faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness,

charity, humility, diligence” (D&C 4:6). His efforts were rewarded, and he was very successful in the work of the Lord. While he was on his mission, his mother, sister, and two brothers were baptized members of the Church.

Brother Khomo resides in Kwamashu Township with his wife, Tholakeke, and their daughters, Nobuhlele, Zama, and Nondumiso and their son, Limdokuhle, which means “expecting good.” Brother Khomo adds, “Heavenly Father is watching over me and my family. The Lord is directing my life. I sometimes wonder where I would be without The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” Expecting good has been a positive theme in Brother Khomo’s life. ■

**Left to right:**  
**Graham Sabela**  
**stands with**  
**Sipho Khomo.**