

Africa Southeast Area Local Pages

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Establishing the Temple of the Lord as the Great Symbol of Membership: Let's Get Going!

By Elder Dale G. Renlund, Area President

Several years ago my wife and I were invited to a social gathering. Imagine my surprise when we were seated across the dinner table from President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), then President of the Church, and his wife, Marjorie. As we were eating, President Hinckley began telling us about his recent trip to Anchorage, Alaska, USA, where he had dedicated the 54th temple of the Church.

I do not know what possessed Sister Renlund, but she blurted out, “President Hinckley, I just have to tell you that you are making it difficult for my husband to keep a promise he made to me when we were first married.” President Hinckley looked at me suspiciously and then asked my wife, “Oh, what’s that?” Sister Renlund replied, “When we were married, my husband promised to take me to all of the temples in the world.” President Hinckley chuckled, and knowing of the future increase in the number of temples, looked at us both intently, smiled, and said, “Well, you better get going!”

Since that conversation more than 80 additional temples have been built. Nonetheless, President Hinckley’s direction has never been more relevant. When it comes to temples and temple worship, we had better get going.

Currently we have only one temple in the Africa Southeast Area—the Johannesburg South Africa Temple.¹ But no matter how far away we live from the temple, we are not prevented from participating in meaningful temple worship and receiving temple blessings. The distance to the Johannesburg South Africa Temple does not affect

our ability to claim temple blessings by:

1. Paying a full tithing and being worthy of and holding a temple recommend.
2. Identifying our ancestors.
3. Submitting the names of our ancestors to the temple so that vicarious temple ordinances can be performed for them.
4. Attending the temple as frequently as time, means, and personal circumstances allow.

President Thomas S. Monson has said, “Until you have entered the house of the Lord and have received all the blessings which await you there, you have not obtained everything the Church has to offer. The all-important and crowning blessings of membership in the Church are those blessings which we receive in the temples of God.”² We had better get going to claim those wonderful, promised blessings.

Some insights into the importance of the temple come from a vision received by the prophet Ezekiel over 2,500 years ago. He was one of the captives carried away from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. During the 22 years that he prophesied (592–570 B.C.), Ezekiel must have longed for Jerusalem and his beloved temple. It must have been this longing that led to his recorded vision.³

In the vision, a heavenly ministrant shows Ezekiel a city wherein is the temple. He is shown the form and size of the temple and its various



Elder Dale G. Renlund

rooms, including the Holy of Holies. He sees the glory of God fill the temple and the ordinances that are performed. Then he sees something inexplicable: water coming out from under the threshold of the temple. There are two unique features about the waters. First, as the distance from the source increases, the waters themselves increase. Ezekiel expresses this by saying that as he goes downriver, the level of the water, though at first just up to his ankles, goes thereafter up to his knees, then to his waist, until it is so large a river that he cannot cross it.

Another feature of the water is that everywhere the water touched became alive or was healed. This healing included the Dead Sea. We read: “And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live . . . for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.”⁴

The water issuing forth from the temple multiplies itself and has the capacity to heal. The waters clearly represent the blessings of temple worship. One way the blessings of the temple multiply themselves is through the sealing authority. As a member

does temple work for his parents, grandparents, etc., the logarithmic progression is evident: 2 to 4 to 8 to 16 to 32, etc. A similar progression occurs if one assumes that a member had two children who each, in turn had two children. The sealing authority, going both forward and backward, blesses both ancestors from the past and children of the future.

Just as the water coming from the temple enlivens and heals all that it touches, temple blessings also heal and enliven. These temple blessings include enabling us to change, enabling us to receive clear inspiration, enabling us to bear trials, and enabling us to help our loved ones. Modern-day prophets have promised these blessings to those who qualify for the temple.

Enabling Change

President Gordon B. Hinckley said, “I am satisfied that if our people would attend the temple more, there would be less selfishness in their lives. There would be less absence of love in their relationships. There would be more fidelity on the part of husbands and wives. There would be more love and peace and happiness in the homes of our people. There would come into the minds of the Latter-day Saints an increased awareness of their relationship to God our Eternal Father and of the need to work a little harder at the matter of living as sons and daughters of God.”⁵

Enabling Clear Inspiration

Answers, even to secular questions, come more readily. In *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple* we read, “Sometimes our minds are so beset with problems, and there are so many things clamoring for attention at once, that we just cannot think clearly and see clearly. At the temple the dust of distraction seems to settle out, the fog and the haze seem to lift, and we can see things that we were not able to see before and find a way through our troubles that we had not previously known.”⁶

Aerial view of Johannesburg South Africa Temple in the springtime.



WYNNE ADJARD

Enabling Us to Bear Our Trials

Temple worship enables us to bear our trials, at least in part because we have a clearer understanding of the promise of our own, personal eventual triumph. President Thomas S. Monson has said, “As you and I go to the holy houses of God, as we remember the covenants we make within, we will be more able to bear every trial and to overcome each temptation. In this sacred sanctuary we will find peace; we will be renewed and fortified.”⁷ President Boyd K. Packer has said, “When you come to the temple and receive your endowment, and kneel at the altar and be sealed, you can live an ordinary life and be an ordinary soul—struggling against temptation, failing and repenting, and failing again and repenting, but always determined to keep your covenants. . . . Then the day will come which you will receive the benediction: ‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.’”⁸

Enabling Us to Help Our Loved Ones

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said, “There is a power associated with ordinances of heaven, even the power of godliness, which can and will thwart the forces of evil if we will but be worthy of those sacred [covenants made in the temple of the Lord]. . . . Our families will be protected, our children will be safeguarded as we live the gospel, visit the temple, and live close to the Lord.”⁹

Is it any wonder that the First Presidency has counseled us: “We . . . invite adult members to have a current temple recommend and visit the temple more often. Where time and circumstances permit, members are encouraged to replace some leisure activities with temple service. Millions of our ancestors have lived upon the earth without receiving the benefit of temple ordinances. We particularly encourage newer members and youth of the Church who are 12 years of age and older to

live worthy to assist in this great work by serving as proxies for baptisms and confirmations. We request that local priesthood leaders encourage temple-worthy members to consider ways in which more frequent daytime temple attendance could occur. Home and visiting teachers may wish to arrange transportation for those who need it, particularly during the daytime. All of the ordinances which take place in the House of the Lord become expressions of our belief in that fundamental and basic doctrine of the immortality of the human soul. As we redouble our efforts and our faithfulness in going to the temple, the Lord will bless us.”¹⁰

Paraphrasing President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95), as an Area Presidency we wish to invite the members of the Church in the Africa Southeast Area to establish the temple of the Lord as the great symbol of their membership and the supernal setting for their most sacred covenants. Our hope is that every adult member would be worthy of—and carry—a current temple recommend. We encourage us all to become a temple-attending and a temple-loving people and to attend the temple as frequently as time, means, and personal circumstances allow.¹¹

When it comes to the temple, we “better get going!” ■

NOTES

1. Two other temples have been announced and will be built: one in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and another in Durban, South Africa.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 93.
3. Ezekiel 40–47.
4. Ezekiel 47:9.
5. Gordon B. Hinckley, regional representatives’ seminar, April 6, 1984.
6. *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple* (2002), p. 36; Boyd K. Packer, “The Holy Temple,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2010, 35.
7. Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 93.
8. See “Lesson 4: Receiving Temple Ordinances and Covenants,” *Endowed from on High: Temple Preparation Seminar Teacher’s Manual* (2003); Matthew 25:21.
9. Ezra Taft Benson, Atlanta Georgia Temple cornerstone laying, June 1, 1983.
10. First Presidency Letter, March 11, 2003.
11. See President Howard W. Hunter, press conference, June 6, 1994; Howard W. Hunter, “The Great Symbol of Our Membership,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 2.

Church Works to Help Young Women Stay in School

By Sister Sharlene Heninger, Area Public Affairs, Durban, South Africa

On January 14, Concelia Ntshalintshali, district Relief Society president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, presented Stella Lukhele, director of Khulisa Umntfwana, a Swazi Royal initiative, with 74 sewing machines.

The initiative came about because Elder Thomas and Sister Dianna Blackburn, a senior missionary couple in the Durban South Africa Mission, recognized the need to help young Swazi women stay in school. From the time they are in their early teens, many young women in Swaziland miss school for up to a week each month. Then they fall behind in their classes and have difficulty catching up. This results in many very capable young women dropping out of school.

Elder and Sister Blackburn, partnered with a humanitarian missionary couple, Elder Burt and Sister Charla Nielson from the Africa Southeast Area, to come up with a simple program for sewing washable, reusable hygiene pads. As a result, young Swazi women need not miss school on a recurring basis.

Stella Lukhele said, “[Khulisa Umntfwana’s] objective is to build character in youth and to build skills and thus self-esteem. We strive to help parents build

character in their children, and become in his or her life.” because it is character that will determine what a person will do What does a sewing machine have to do with building

Phenduliwe Mthethwa, Swaziland District Relief Society president; Ntfombiyembuso Tfwala, district Member of Parliament; and Stella Lukhele, director of Khulisa Umntfwana, standing by 74 sewing machines presented to Swaziland communities by the Church.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ELDER H. HENINGER



PHOTOGRAPH BY ELDER H. HENINGER

Concelia Ntshalintshali, Manzini Branch Relief Society president, presents Stella Lukhele, director of Khulisa Umntfwana, with one of 74 sewing machines.

character. These machines will be used to teach a valuable skill and help keep young women in school, where they can become better educated and grow in self-esteem.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has provided the sewing machines and all of the necessary notions and materials. The Church also trained teachers at Khulisa Umntfwana, who will orchestrate the making of the pads in their facilities by the young women and will take responsibility for the care and upkeep of the machines.

Jerome Shongwe, first counselor in the district presidency, said that “seventy percent of the people of Swaziland live below the poverty line.” Many do not have electricity. The sewing machines are hand operated and will not only fulfill a need but will teach a skill that can be used for other projects.

Sister Ntshalintshali said, “The Church is very much interested in strengthening families. Our Relief Society sisters have been trained to help with this initiative and will continue to follow our mandate, ‘Charity Never Faileth.’ Family is very important for the success of any community or country. Strong morals and values are a must if the family is to succeed.”

Proverbs 22:6 says, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not



PHOTOGRAPH BY EIDER H. HENINGER

From left: Jerome Shongwe, first counsellor in the in the Swaziland District presidency; Siphso Dlamini; Prince Ngisane Dlamini, representing the King of Swaziland; Lucky Maseko, second counsellor in the Swaziland District presidency; George Dlamini, Swaziland national public affairs director for the Church; Musa Themba, public affairs assistant.



PHOTOGRAPH BY EIDER H. HENINGER

Dianna Blackburn and young friend with women who trained others to use sewing machines.

depart from it.” Stella Lukhele agreed with Sister Ntshalintshali and said, “It is the parents that need to teach values and good morals that develop a strong character in their children so that they can withstand the ills of the world. They will need to develop

a strong moral backbone.”

The future mothers of the children in Swaziland need all the support they can glean. They will be the ones who will nurture future generations and be instrumental in developing the character of youth and of nations. ■

Four Church Members in Zambia Hold Government Positions

By Brother Bruce and Sister Vonda Louthan, Public Affairs, Zambia

Zambia currently has four members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints serving in significant government positions—Alfrieda Mwamba, Bob Sichinga, Patrick Chikusu, and McBride Sekeleti. Of the total population of Zambia, which numbers some 13.9 million, only a small percentage are members of the Church. It is amazing that four Church members would be elected or chosen for high public office at the same time.

The Honourable Alfrieda Mwamba: Deputy Minister of Justice, Zambia



The Honourable Alfrieda Mwamba's family was one of the first to join the Church in 1993 in Zambia. She and her husband raised five children in the Church. Now they have a grandchild who is a third-generation member of

The Honourable Alfrieda Mwamba in Lusaka.

the Church in Zambia.

In 2006 Sister Mwamba was elected to Parliament by a large margin. She served briefly as Deputy Minister of Finance. She is now in her second term in Parliament. Sister Mwamba has a law degree and has just been named Deputy Minister of Justice.

Sister Mwamba always wanted to speak for the poor, as they were unable to speak for themselves.

She is working to improve conditions in the country to benefit all of the people. She sees the Church Welfare Services programme as a good model for the nation.



The Honourable Robert K. Sichinga, right, and his family. From left, Brother Sichinga's wife, Phosile; daughter, Mercy Sphelele Nachinga; and sons Khumbo Kaponda and Luwani Paul. Brother Sichinga's niece, Christine Chilufya Mwenda, is in front center. Brother Sichinga's two sons have both served missions in South Africa.

The Honourable Robert Sichinga

The Honourable Robert Sichinga has been involved in politics since before he and his family joined the Church in 1998. His political career began in his home area, Mafinga. After moving to Kafue, he won election again. Brother Sichinga was recently appointed by Zambia's President to be the Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry, where he currently serves.

Brother Sichinga hopes to address the challenge of high unemployment in the country. His goal is to create jobs which will develop greater

self-reliance and self-worth among the people. In turn, stable new jobs could lead to a stronger economic base for Zambia.

Being a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has motivated Brother Sichinga to do better. He is inspired by something bigger than just the job. He also sees the opportunity to improve and correct people's impressions of the Church. Recently Brother Sichinga participated on a radio broadcast in Lusaka and was able to clarify previous misconceptions about the Church. Brother Sichinga serves in his branch as Gospel Doctrine teacher. He has also been a member of the national public affairs committee for the Church.

The Honourable Dr. Patrick Chikusu, Zambia's Deputy Minister of Health

PHOTOGRAPH BY SISTER VONDA LOUTHAN



The Honorable Dr. Patrick Chikusu and his wife, Edah, in front of Lusaka chapel.

The Honourable Dr. Patrick Chikusu has been a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints since 1996. Following his election to Parliament in 2011, Brother Chikusu was appointed

Deputy Minister of Health. A pharmacist by profession, Brother Chikusu was a consultant to the Worldwide Health Organization (WHO) prior to entering politics.

In 2001 Brother Chikusu wanted to run for Parliament and went to the temple to ask of the Lord. The answer was a clear "No". But he stood for election anyway—and lost. Later he went

to the Lord again and was told, "Not yet." Then in 2011 he went to the temple in prayer about seeking government office. This time the Lord answered, "Go ahead."

Brother Chikusu's ethics and high standards are making an impact in the government. He requested that the women working in his office wear modest, professional office attire. He soon noticed women in the other offices in the ministry had adopted similar dress standards. He returned extra money that was not used when he travelled for the government. Sister Chikusu says people appreciate her husband's honesty and are learning from his good example.

Ward Councilor MacBride Sekeleti

MacBride Sekeleti is an energetic young businessman who volunteers his time as a ward councilor (member of the city council) for Lusaka City. He has served in many positions for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, including four years as a branch president and four years as a member of the district high council.

Brother Sekeleti started in politics in 2011. He was motivated by a desire to help people in the community with their problems, especially improving the lives of the poor. He currently serves as one of 10 ward councilors for Lusaka City.

He works directly with the country's national vice president to oversee delivery of public services and promote honesty in government. Completion of several utility projects is a high priority for Brother Sekeleti. His goal is for the benefits of government to reach all levels of society, including the very poor. ■



MacBride Sekeleti and his wife, Idah, in front of Lusaka chapel.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SISTER VONDA LOUTHAN

Faithful Parents Sacrifice to Serve

By Sister Phyllis Evanson, Public Affairs; and Mbidi Ilunga, regional public affairs director for the Democratic Republic of Congo Lubumbashi Mission

If I agree to leave today on a mission and not attend the wedding of my daughter, the only one I have among all of my sons, it is because I know it is the work of our Heavenly Father and that by our missionary service our whole family will be blessed,” testifies Sister Jeanne Kalume Kimbo Ilunga. She and her husband, Elder Fridon Nkulu Kishi Ilunga, departed for the Missionary Training Center in Ghana just six days prior to the marriage of their only daughter, Consolatrice.

Elder and Sister Ilunga are members of the Upemba Ward, Katuba Stake, Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). They have been called to serve a full-time mission in the DRC Lubumbashi Mission. Elder and Sister Ilunga have been

PHOTOGRAPH BY DALE EVANSON



Senior missionary couple, Elder Fridon Nkulu Kishi and Sister Jeanne Kalume Kimbo Ilunga.

faithful, dedicated members of the Church for many years. They look forward to the blessings and challenges of missionary service.

Elder Ilunga feels that he and his wife have been prepared for this time by the many Church callings they have received through the years. As a member

Elder and Sister Ilunga (standing, second and third from left) with children and grandchildren.

of the high council, Elder Ilunga was responsible for overseeing and training the new branch leaders in Kasumbalesa, 90 kilometers from Lubumbashi. He said that these experiences would help him to successfully cope with the various tasks assigned to him by his mission president. The Ilungas are presently serving in the remote city of Luputa, DRC, working with 10 elders and the members and leaders of the newly organized Luputa stake.

Through their proselyting efforts the Ilungas have been instrumental in “bringing many souls unto Christ.” They follow in the missionary footsteps of their six children who have completed full-time missions and one son who is currently serving. One of the Ilungas’ greatest joys was receiving the honorable mission release certificates of their children. Release letters from their children’s mission presidents expressed gratitude to the Ilunga parents for preparing their children so well to serve.

Elder and Sister Ilunga desire to complete an honorable, useful mission and to be an example of missionary service to their 16 grandchildren. The Illungas’ dedication to the Lord, shown by their entering missionary service a mere six days before the wedding of their only daughter, is an example of faith and obedience. ■

PHOTOGRAPH BY MBIDI ILUNGA

