

# Africa Southeast Area Local Pages

## AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

### A 90-Day Invitation

By Elder Carl B. Cook, Second Counselor in the Area Presidency

**T***est, try, and prove* are interesting words, particularly when they appear in the scriptures.

A recent review of the topical guide revealed 47 references in which the Lord used the terms *to test, to try, or to prove* us during our probationary period here on earth. He tests us to see if we have faith to do what He asks. As we obey Him, we receive blessings.

Following are a few of my favourite references:

- “I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law” (Exodus 16:4).

- “We will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things” (Abraham 3:25).
- “Ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith” (Ether 12:6).
- “When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).
- “Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart” (Psalm 26:2).

These references, along with nearly all of the scriptures I found on testing, trying, and proving are directed from God toward man. However, I



**Elder Carl B. Cook**

only found one scripture that invites man to test or prove God. “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and *prove me* now herewith, saith the

### The Barasa Family Testifies of Tithing

By Shadrack and Dorice Barasa, Kitale—Kenya

**W**e are so grateful for the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and the happiness it has brought to our family. The law of tithing is a commandment from our Heavenly Father. Ever since we got married we have been striving to pay our tithing fully. However, a time came when we failed to do it.

We planned to pay our tithing, but we kept procrastinating until we ran out of cash completely and we were unable to pay! We had to travel 40 kilometres to apply for a job, yet we did not have any cash. We had to borrow some cash to travel. On our way home, our motorbike broke down two times. We had no alternative but to walk while pushing the motorbike, on empty stomachs. At the

end of it all we were rescued by a Church leader who was passing that road and gave us a lift back home.

At home we lacked almost all the necessities. As if that was not enough punishment for us, sickness struck, beginning with our youngest son, then the twins, and then myself. We started asking ourselves, “Why all the suffering?” We came to realize that we had not paid our tithing that month, and that explained our suffering.

The Lord told us plainly in Malachi to try Him and see if He will not open the doors

of heaven and pour out a blessing until there will be no room for us to receive the blessings! What else do we need the Lord to promise us so that we can honestly pay our tithing? We know that if we try God in this commandment, He is not going to fail us. He is an unchangeable God and He will always keep His promise. We know that the Lord will be able to open the ways and means no matter our circumstances in life. The law of tithing is not a matter of finances but one of faith. We believe in these words.

*From our prophet: In speaking about God’s laws, President Thomas S. Monson stated: “Violate them and we suffer lasting consequences. Obey them and we reap everlasting joy” (Pathways to Perfection: Discourses of Thomas S. Monson [1973], 126).*

Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10; emphasis added).

**Ponder the blessing:** I will open the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing, that there shall not be room to receive it.

**Ponder the requirement:** Bring all the tithes into the storehouse.

**Ponder the invitation:** Prove me if I will open you the windows of heaven. Do you believe that God keeps His

promises? The Lord invites us to demonstrate our trust in Him, exercise a particle of faith, and pay our tithing. He promises to bless us. If you are not currently paying your tithing I invite you to *prove* the Lord. Young and old, rich and poor, new convert and fifth-generation member, keep this commandment and reap the blessing He has in store for you.

**Task:** Bring the tithes into the storehouse.

I invite you to pray and ask Heavenly Father for confirmation that

He would have you pay your tithing. Plead for faith and courage to do it. Seek inspiration on how you can pay the Lord one-tenth of your increase. If you have money, pay with money. If your increase is in fruits, vegetables, crops, cattle or some other commodity, take one-tenth of your increase and sell it to obtain currency. Use the money you receive to pay your tithing to your bishop or branch president. Be diligent and timely in delivering your tithe to the storehouse.

**Time:** If you currently pay a full

## The Promised Blessing of Tithes

By Gabriel Chinomwe, Blantyre District—Malawi

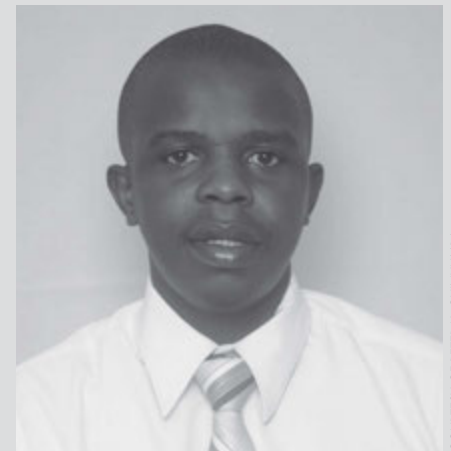
Soon after I joined the Church I had to make a serious commitment to the Lord. It was to give back a tenth portion to the Lord. My siblings and I had little money income, which barely managed to last us a month. Thinking of how little our income was and how little our tithes would be, I searched the topic of tithing in the scriptures, looking for exceptions to our circumstances.

As I was searching my topic I remembered the circumstances of the Nephites when the resurrected Savior visited them. They had lost almost everything due to the physical upheavals attesting to His Crucifixion and were very poor. Regardless of their circumstances the Savior commanded them to write what Heavenly Father has commanded by the mouth of

Malachi the prophet (see 3 Nephi 24:1–3). Then I knew that even in our circumstances we are not exempt from obeying His commands. I did seek for His forgiveness for not acknowledging His divine provision to all those who seek to come unto Him. Through that commitment we managed our daily needs. Through that experience, and others over the years, I have learned many gospel principles attached to the law of tithing.

I have learned that the important moment to show our trust in Heavenly Father and prove Him is by obeying His commandments when circumstances seem very hard to comply with. I am very grateful for the wonderful blessings of tithing. I know that obedience to the law of tithing can help us focus on our temporal and spiritual welfare.

I know that our Heavenly Father is



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**Gabriel Chinomwe**

mindful of each one of us in our difficult circumstances. He wants to bless us as we find joy in giving our skills, time and resources to help build His kingdom here on earth and walk uprightly with a clear conscience before Him, looking up for His promised blessings.

*From Preach My Gospel: “Tithing is an ancient, divine law. . . . It is a privilege to contribute to the growth of the kingdom of God through paying tithing. . . . The blessings we receive from paying our tithing may be temporal or spiritual, but they will come to those who obey this divine law. . . . Our tithes are holy to the Lord, and we honor Him by paying tithing. . . . Those who do not pay tithing rob God (see Malachi 3:8). They keep for themselves something that rightfully belongs to Him. . . . Paying tithing is an expression of our faith. It is an outward sign of our belief in God and His work” (pages 78–79).*

tithe of one-tenth of your increase, exercise increased faith that your prayers will be answered as you continue faithfully paying your tithing. If you have not been consistently paying your tithing, donate your full tithe to the Lord during the months of October, November and December of 2012.

**Report:** Share your experiences with your bishop or branch president during tithing settlement.

I know as you pray you will receive confirmation that it is God's will to pay tithing. As you see the windows of heaven open and blessings pour out upon you, I know you will be committed in your heart to continue faithfully paying your tithing.

As we keep this commandment, the Lord will not only bless us and our families, but He will also bless the communities and countries in which

we reside. Referring to the Lord's promises in Malachi, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated, "I believe these promises apply to the nations in which we reside. When the people of God withheld their tithes and offerings, God condemned the 'whole nation' (see Malachi 3:9). Similarly, I believe that when many citizens of a nation are faithful in the payment of tithes, they summon the blessings of heaven upon their entire nation" ("The Gospel Culture," *Liahona*, March 2012, 25–26).

I invite priesthood leaders to assist in extending the Lord's invitation to pay tithing to the members within your stewardship. Share your testimony of tithing with them. Help them develop the faith necessary to pay their tithing. Counsel with members of your ward, branch, district, or stake council

regarding how to best help members pay their tithing. I know all will be blessed and many of the challenges and problems you are facing will be resolved. (For more information, see Henry B. Eyring, "The Blessings of Tithing," *Liahona*, June 2011, 4).

I have witnessed the blessings that come to those who consistently pay an honest tithe. I know the Lord will open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing upon us, that we will not have room enough to receive it. I sincerely extend to you an invitation to accept this 90-day challenge. For the months of October, November, and December, pay your tithing. I know your testimony will grow and the Lord will provide a way for you to continue to keep your commitment to pay tithing in the future. I testify of this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

## LOCAL NEWS

### Four New Mission Presidents Arrive in the Africa Southeast Area

**A** warm welcome to each newly arrived mission president and his wife! Heartfelt thanks are extended to those mission presidents who magnified their calls and now have returned to their homes and families. You will be missed, but you leave a lasting legacy on this great African continent. ■



**Phillip W. and Joy McMullin—**  
**Democratic Republic of Congo**  
**Lubumbashi Mission—replacing**  
**President and Sister Packer**



**David R. and Anna Adams—**  
**Madagascar Antananarivo**  
**Mission—replacing President**  
**and Sister Donnelly**



**Adriana and Paulo V. Kretly**  
**—Mozambique Maputo**  
**Mission—replacing President**  
**and Sister Spendlove**



**Janice H. and Bryson C.**  
**Cook—Zimbabwe Harare**  
**Mission—replacing President**  
**and Sister Dube**

# A Busload of Faith

By Sister Kathy Wilson

**O**n April 2, 2012, “a busload of faith”—exhausted Saints filled with smiles and optimism—arrived at Johannesburg to receive the blessings of the temple. Their journey from the Likasi District, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) had really commenced over a year earlier when Gary L. Packer, president of the DRC Lubumbashi Mission, encouraged temple-worthy members in the outlying areas of the mission to attend the temple for the first time.

The Likasi District consists of eight branches and more than 1,000 members under the leadership of Bonaventure Katanga, district president. The small group who arrived at Johannesburg included some of the district presidency and their families, who are paving the way for

hundreds more preparing for the temple.

Visa approvals were obtained just one day before the planned April departure date. President Katanga was asked if the members could be ready on such short notice. The willing Saints gave an excited “Yes!” They dropped everything and boarded the bus in Likasi the next day.

The trip included police inspection stops, difficult border crossings, a broken-down bus, five bus changes, and a 14-hour overnight layover. Nothing could get in the way of the Saints’ desire to go to the temple. Fifty-eight exhausting hours on the bus was “a small sacrifice for the privilege of attending the temple,” said President Katanga.

The biggest highlight was the evening of the first day in the temple, when families and couples were sealed for eternity. Tears flowed freely as the many tiny hands of the Kassongo family of 10 linked across the sealing room altar. This intense

*Saints from the Likasi District, DRC, attended the Johannesburg South Africa Temple.*



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF ELDER AND SISTER WILSON

feeling of joy was repeated with the Kabamba family of 9 members.

“Now, my duty is to follow all these principles for the rest of my life,” pledged President Kabamba.

“We are so thankful to be sealed to our parents. The temple made me realize how much Heavenly Father loves us,” commented branch President and Sister Lutsha.

President Kassongo said, “I give thanks to God for giving us this opportunity.”

The group had 15 children, including 11 under 12 years of age. There was quite a bit of time when the parents were in the temple and unable to care for their children. It was heart-warming to see the older children patiently caring for the younger ones for long periods of time. Tending many young children was “a way I can help serve,” said 15-year-old Evodie Kabamba.

Entering the patron housing dining area on the first morning, everyone was delighted to be greeted with Primary songs and hymns. The children sang for an hour. Even the three-year-olds knew the words to the hymns.

With the Saints filled with the eternal perspective of the temple, the long, difficult trip back to Likasi seemed a little easier. ■

## Helping Babies Breathe

By Elder and Sister Louthan, Public Affairs, Zambia Lusaka Mission

Newborn infants in Zambia now have a better chance at life than ever before, because 94 nurses and midwives participated in Helping Babies Breathe training. Worldwide, 1 in 10 babies is born with a breathing difficulty. Rapid intervention to stimulate breathing in the “golden minute” after birth can save a life or greatly reduce damage done by lack of oxygen. Many babies born with a blocked airway will benefit from neonatal resuscitation procedures and equipment taught in the Helping Babies Breathe training sessions.



PHOTOGRAPH BY SISTER VONDA LOUTHAN

Nurses and midwives from throughout Zambia gathered in Lusaka and Kabwe for two days of training in techniques and procedures to help newborn infants breathe within the first minute of life. Helping Babies Breathe training was done by a volunteer team including a doctor and two nurse practitioners—members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Church donated training kits and neonatal resuscitation equipment for 60 hospitals or clinics. Each trainee committed to train several others in their hospitals or clinics. The six-month goal is to train more than 2,000 people across Zambia in neonatal resuscitation techniques.

At the Helping Babies Breathe opening ceremony in Lusaka, Minister of Health Dr. Joseph Katema talked about the importance of reducing high infant mortality rates. Dr. Elwyn Chomba, Secretary of the Ministry of Community Development and Mother and Child Health, said that sometimes a mother—fearing her infant will not survive—will wait six to eight weeks before giving the baby a name. The most crucial time is in the first 48 hours of life.

At the opening ceremony Harrison Lumbama,

**Health workers receive Helping Babies Breathe training in Lusaka, Zambia.**



**Enthusiastic  
“Helping Babies  
Breathe” partic-  
ipants receive  
training in  
Kabwe.**

president of the Lusaka District, said that Church members value every individual as a child of a loving Heavenly Father. “We are all brothers and sisters,” he stated.

Following training, participants in Kabwe gathered to sing a song celebrating a baby’s

birth. The traditional tune had words changed reflecting what was taught during Helping Babies Breathe. These health workers sing for the babies to breathe. There will be more happy times to sing this song in the days ahead because of the Helping Babies Breathe programme. ■

## Young Single Adults in Botswana Aim for Temple Marriages

By Bishop Clement Matswagothata

About three years ago I was called to serve as bishop of the Gaborone West Young Single Adult (YSA) Ward in Gaborone, Botswana. I thought, “This is such a problematic group—will we cope?” Some of the YSAs had strayed from the straight and narrow path and broken covenants made earlier. They were feeling discouraged and disheartened.

Inspired leaders invited them to come back. On return, their first concern was, “Bishop, I have been too far to come back.” Some, for reasons of cultural traditions, had decided to cohabit. We then assisted them to follow the right path—to get married. With encouragement, Church activity was reestablished, and they prepared to go to the temple.

### Leaving the Young Single Adults through Marriage

I met with one brother last year who was sealed to his bride in the temple. He is now an elders quorum president. He said one thing that I will forever remember: “Bishop, you will never know how much of a strength the young single adult ward was for me during some of the most defining times in my life.”

Another brother was sealed to his wife a year ago. Now they are the parents of a little daughter, and he is a counsellor in his elders quorum presidency. Most

importantly, they broke old traditions and set a new tradition—the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### **Father in Heaven Answers Our Prayers**

I have a testimony that Heavenly Father answers prayers. Families have confronted me at church for performing marriages for their children without their blessing. After many prayers and meetings, these very families have become my friends.

One family reported me to the Magistrate Court. On the way to meet the Magistrate, I felt impressed to stop by the meeting-house for a copy of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.”

As I walked into the meeting, the Magistrate asked, “Why do you marry young people without their parents’ consent?” I handed a copy of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” to the family and another to the Magistrate. Then the Magistrate asked, “Can I hand these out to couples who come to my office for marriage counselling? This document of yours wraps it all up!”

The family, the Magistrate and I discussed the family proclamation and spoke about the Church and family. An hour later we walked out of the meeting in agreement—the potential for contention concluded with better understanding of the Church and its doctrine.

The Magistrate invited me back for a follow-up meeting and asked for more copies of the “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” She asked more about our faith and the Church in Botswana.

### **Young Single Adults Get Involved in the Ward**

Young single adults go on missions, come home and get involved in the ward. They move into other wards and continue to serve faithfully. This is what makes the gospel so exciting.

Younger people are moving forward with great faith, changing and challenging the “old ways” not in harmony with the teachings of Jesus Christ. They

are preparing a better way for those coming through the ranks.

In February two couples got married. Three weddings in March were on the same weekend. One Thursday in April I performed a civil wedding for a couple who were sealed for time and all eternity on Friday. In May we witnessed another sealing. It is such an exciting time to be alive and to be involved in this great work.

My heart is filled with gratitude. This divine work brings joy beyond words—we love the sacred opportunity to be used as instruments in His hands at this special time. Like them of old we too proclaim, “These are days never to be forgotten”. ■

***Onnalenna Gasafete and his bride, Gabalape, members of Bishop Matswagothata’s ward, were sealed at the Johannesburg Temple in April this year.***



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CLEMENT MATSWAGOTHATA

## Why I Am Thankful for My Temple Sealing

By Gorata Tahla

**M**y husband and I were sealed on 4 June 2011 at the Johannesburg Temple.

During the trip to the temple, we were excited for the sealing to take place. Before going to the temple, we struggled to help extended family members understand why we wanted a temple wedding.

Finally we were on our way to the temple to be sealed for time and all eternity. Our beliefs and what we stand for were all going to be sealed in our hearts in the presence of God and angels in His holy house.

We both felt so sure that we were doing the right thing—there was no shred of doubt in my heart. Although I did not understand what happens during an endowment or sealing session, I knew what I needed to know. To this day I know that it is the best thing that I ever did in my life as a Latter-day Saint woman.

From the time my husband and I started seriously dating, our goal was eternal marriage. We did not have much. Some of our relatives wanted a glamorous traditional wedding that we could not afford.

It was not easy going against the counsel of those who have guided us for so long in our lives. We prayed. We fasted. We made a decision to do what we knew the Lord was telling us to do. We had faith that all else will fall into place when we are obedient.

We obeyed, and we have been blessed with all we have needed. Our relationships with extended family members are improving steadily. They are learning to respect how we feel about our beliefs.

Every temple trip reminds us of our sealing. When we plan to go to the temple, we remember how carefully we had prepared for our sealing and how spiritual and edifying it was.

We strive to do the things to keep our home a

sanctuary from the world. We were told during our sealing session that our house, no matter how humble, is a castle, and we are the prince and princess in that castle.

After my husband and I were sealed for all time and eternity, I felt more literally than ever before that Heavenly Father and our Saviour Jesus Christ love us more than we will ever comprehend.

They are never far away from us. They whisper through the Holy Ghost which way we should go. When we listen we become happier people, and we influence others around us positively. Having had the privilege to be married in the temple is a blessing my husband and I will be forever grateful for. It is a blessing we wish for all our brothers and sisters who have not enjoyed it yet.

We know without a doubt that marriages were never meant to be temporal, but were always meant to last throughout the eternities. This indeed is the true gospel, for that is the only way it can give such happiness. ■

***Tebogo Tahla and his bride, Gorata, following their sealing in the Johannesburg Temple.***



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF BISHOP CLEMENT MATSWAGOTHATA