

AFRICA SOUTHEAST AREA LOCAL PAGES

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Don't Worry . . . Load the Wagon

By Elder Carl B. Cook, Second Counsellor in the Africa Southeast Area Presidency

I learned many important lessons from my Grandma Jenny. She was the youngest of 17 children and lived through many challenging times. She had a unique gift for communicating in colourful and poignant ways. In her later years she called herself a “tough old bird.” When asked how she was doing she replied, “Oh, I’m in pretty good shape for the shape I’m in.” One of her catchphrases I learned most from was, “Don’t worry about the mules going blind, just load the wagon!” In other words, “Don’t let your anxiety about the future stop you from moving forward in faith.”

Grandma Jenny’s father was Lyman Skeen, a pioneer. When there were obstacles in life, real or perceived, Lyman taught his children that the best way to overcome those challenges was to press forward. There was no whining, complaining or idleness—only action! No doubt he had a significant influence on Grandma and contributed to her “toughness.”

The first action emphasized in Grandma’s advice was, “Don’t worry.” Worry can be characterized by fretting over the unknown or over problems that

are unlikely to occur. Worrying can freeze our faith and bring life to a standstill. It can lead to discouragement and depression. Our seven-year-old granddaughter was asked during family home evening to define *faith*. After thoughtful pondering she replied, “Faith is just not worrying.” When we have faith we don’t worry and we move forward with our lives.

Faith in Jesus Christ Inspires Action

In order for our faith to have power and invite the Lord’s blessings it must be grounded in Jesus Christ. Several years ago there was a popular clothing logo with the words “No Fear.” The slogan encouraged spontaneity without worrying about future events or consequences. It also implied that the wearer had the capacity to face any challenge. To me this logo represented the world’s answer to not worrying. Moving forward because we have confidence in ourselves will not bring the same degree of success as when our faith is centred in Jesus Christ and His ability to bless our efforts. The Savior promises us, “If ye will have faith in me ye



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shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me” (Moroni 7:33).

There are things we can do to build our faith in Jesus Christ and help us avoid worrying. We can attend church weekly and partake of the sacrament worthily. We can offer meaningful personal prayers and participate in daily, focused scripture study. Each of these activities invites the Spirit and helps us maintain an eternal perspective by nurturing our faith. As we pray and study topics in the scriptures relating to our specific needs and challenges, we find answers and receive revelation to guide our actions. In addition, our efforts help us qualify for blessings the Lord desires to give us.

Blessings of Work

Joseph Smith taught that faith in Jesus Christ is a principle of power and the moving cause of all action (see *Lectures on Faith* 1:10, 13, 15). When we are filled with faith we have positive thoughts and faith in our future. This faith inspires diligence and work. As Grandma Jenny would say, we move forward and “load the wagon,” trusting that things will work out.

Work acts as a healing balm and quells rising doubts within us. It serves as an outlet for pent-up anxieties and brings a feeling of comfort and well being. In the movie *Out of Africa*, when Karen Blixen faced devastating heartache, her response was to go into the field with the farm labourers. She went to her farm supervisor and said, “Give me work.” She used physical labour to calm her soul until she could find courage to move forward with life.

Our Church leaders past and present demonstrate the power of faith and work. When President David O. McKay (1873–1970) was a young boy his two older sisters both died within days of each other, one of rheumatic fever and the other of pneumonia. One year later his father was called to serve a mission in Scotland. David was only eight years old and the oldest child in the family. His mother was expecting a baby. David’s father was concerned about accepting the mission call because it would mean leaving his wife

alone with the responsibilities of the family and the farm. However, when hearing of the call, his faithful wife, Jennette, was firm in her response: “Of course you must accept; you need not worry about me. David O. and I will manage things nicely!” (Llewelyn R. McKay, *Home Memories of President David O. McKay* [1956], 6).

David O. McKay learned a valuable lesson from his parents regarding moving forward with faith and depending on the Lord. The heavy responsibilities he carried as a young boy when his father was away helped prepare him for challenges he would later face as a prophet of God.

There Are Many Forms of Work

The work the Lord requires often involves sacrifice. Paying our tithing in difficult economic times when we have little income may test our faith. But when we pay our tithing our faith in the Lord increases and we are blessed with strength and courage. We find ways to obtain an education, pursue job opportunities, and accomplish other goals.

Working to qualify for blessings may involve physical labour as well as mental, spiritual, or emotional effort. Individuals seeking an eternal companion often find it challenging to find a person they want to marry. It requires faith to attend activities, go on blind dates and pursue

“There is no substitute under the heavens for productive labor. It is the process by which dreams become realities. It is the process by which idle visions become dynamic achievements” (“I Believe,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1992, 4).

“The best antidote I know for worry is work. The best medicine for despair is service. The best cure for weariness is the challenge of helping someone who is even more tired” (Gordon B. Hinckley, “To Single Adults,” *Ensign*, June 1989, 74).

relationships that at the outset may not appear to hold much promise. But it is often through exercising faith and doing this “work” that goals and aspirations are realized. The Lord expects us to do our part. His blessings are given in His own time, but we can do much to facilitate those blessings. We can stay actively involved while waiting patiently for desired conditions or events to unfold in our lives.

For some it requires faith to marry when there are seemingly insurmountable challenges and obstacles, such as barriers related to finances, education and employment. It required faith for Sister Cook to proceed to marry me when I lost my job and we were not sure how we would make it financially. We carried a load of “the unknown” for a period of time as we pressed forward and married. I have witnessed countless other couples do the same. Eventually the Lord’s hand is manifest in our lives, and we treasure the decision we made to move

Life in the South Africa Missionary Training Centre (SAMTC)

By Sister Edy Howes

When President Thomas S. Monson announced the new missionary eligibility ages (18 for young men and 19 for young women) in the October 2012 general conference, a ripple effect—perhaps the size of a tsunami—swept through the missionary system. Missionary Training Centres (MTCs) are on the front line receiving the sudden increase of new missionaries.

Since opening its doors in July 2003, the South Africa Missionary Training Centre (SAMTC) in Johannesburg has received new missionaries every three weeks. The smallest of the 15 MTCs in the Church, it has beds for 38 young missionaries, who arrive from throughout the world.

Missionaries trained at the SAMTC will serve in eight of the eleven missions of the Africa Southeast



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELDER RAULPH HOWES

Welcome to the South Africa Missionary Training Centre (SAMTC)!



A bedroom at the SAMTC

“Most of us are inherently lazy. We would rather play than work. We would rather loaf than work. A little play and a little loafing are good. But it is work that spells the difference in the life of a man or woman. It is stretching our minds and utilizing the skills of our hands that lift us from mediocrity. It is work that provides the food we eat, the clothing we wear, the homes in which we live. We cannot deny the need for work with skilled hands and educated minds if we are to grow and prosper individually and if our nation is to stand tall before the world” (Gordon B. Hinckley, “I Believe,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1992, 4).

forward in faith. His love for us sinks deep into our hearts and strengthens our resolve to faithfully follow Him in all things.

Our missionary daughter met a less-active man who returned to church after not attending for many years. He was so joyful that she asked him what had kept him from attending previously. He related that his job kept him from church for over five years, but he felt prompted to quit his job in order to attend. He rejoiced in the blessing of being with the Saints, attending every Sunday and never missing an activity. He was without work for a time, but he was eventually blessed with a new job that allowed him to continue worshipping on the Sabbath. His courage, faith and works were rewarded with blessings, including a job.

Faith and Work Bring Joy

Exercising faith and overcoming obstacles can be a joyful process. It invites God into our lives and allows us to feel of His all-mighty power and love for

us. We witness the blessings He showers upon our heads as we trust Him and work to qualify for His atoning power. As He helps us with our struggles we are blessed with increased hope, which is an abiding trust that He will always fulfil His promises to us in the future (see *Preach My Gospel*, 117). We are free from worry.

The older I get the more I appreciate the advice of my parents and grandparents. When I was young I thought my grandmother’s advice only related to life in our small country town of Plain City, Utah. Little did I realize that 50 years later I would be in Africa facing a multitude of new challenges, but still applying the principles she taught me: “Don’t worry about the mules going blind, just load the wagon.”

I know the gospel of Jesus Christ is true. I know it provides answers to our questions and direction in our lives. Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer. May we follow Him and experience increased peace and joy in our lives. ■



President Kenneth D. Reber in his office at the SAMTC.



Sister Reber at the front door of the SAMTC.

Area. The missions include Kenya; Madagascar; South Africa’s missions in Cape Town, Durban, and Johannesburg; Uganda; Zambia; and Zimbabwe. Occasionally missionaries who are having difficulty getting visas to the Ghana and New Zealand MTCs arrive at the SAMTC.

President Kenneth D. Reber currently presides over the SAMTC with his wife, Sister Janet Reber. They will now be welcoming a new group of missionaries every two weeks. Training which used to be done in three weeks must be honed to be effective in two weeks—two-thirds of the time.

Programmes in each of the MTCs worldwide are tailored for their particular area but follow the same general schedule.

Arrival Day at the South Africa Missionary Training Centre

Arrival mornings at the SAMTC are exciting and busy. Missionaries who arrive by plane are met at

President and Sister Reber greet arriving missionaries.



the airport and taken to the SAMTC. Those from local areas arrive throughout the morning via private car or public transport.

Missionaries are greeted warmly by President and Sister Reber, receive missionary name tags, take personal items to their bedrooms, and have a brief tour of the MTC.

They then go to a central classroom area where volunteers assist with reviewing passports, visas, and other necessary information; completing forms concerning health and requirements of each mission; establishing an email account to send and receive email; and ordering necessary items from the Distribution Centre. A nurse reviews all health forms and gives required immunizations.

By this time missionaries are hungry and ready for lunch, which is served in the cafeteria. Everyone sits down together to meet and exchange greetings. Missionaries are guaranteed not to go hungry as they have three all-you-can-eat meals each day—plus snacks.

After lunch and the preliminaries are completed, missionaries meet their assigned

A volunteer assists a new missionary completing forms.



companions. Districts and district leaders are announced. Missionaries then receive an orientation and learn what will be expected of them in the SAMTC program. Each missionary receives a packet of literature and supplies, including *Preach My Gospel*, the Missionary White Handbook, a study journal, and a daily planner.

Arrival day is the day to settle in, receive orientation, address problems, and take care of paperwork. The next day—the first full day in the SAMTC—is when training begins in earnest.

A Day in the South Africa Missionary Training Centre

From the 6:30 a.m. “arise and shine forth” wake-up call until the 22:30 bedtime prayers and lights out, the SAMTC is designed to prepare missionaries for daily activities while serving in their respective missions. The Spirit of the Lord is present all day, every day, as these elders and sisters prepare for full-time service spreading His gospel.

Each missionary is part of a district in the SAMTC. The members of each district spend time in classrooms together and as companionships. The instructor in each district is a returned missionary who has a wealth of experience upon which to draw. Every instructor helps the missionaries-in-training learn a variety of skills including effective study and anticipation and preparation for discussions with investigators.

Personal study, companion study, planning for teaching investigators, and learning the basics of the first three chapters of *Preach My Gospel* are incorporated into classroom study. In addition, the missionaries are instructed in the eight fundamentals from *Preach My Gospel* which are:

1. The Doctrine of Christ—The Missionary Purpose.
2. The Role of the Holy Ghost in Conversion.
3. Revelation through Prayer.
4. Revelation through the Book of Mormon.
5. Revelation through Church Attendance.
6. Teach People, not Lessons.



Missionary companions study in a classroom.



Missionaries enjoy lunch together at the cafeteria.



Daily choir practice at the SAMTC.

7. We Invite, They Commit, We Follow Up.
8. How to Begin Teaching.

There are even sitting rooms where “investigators” meet with the elders and sisters in a simulated home-like teaching environment. About eight hours each day Monday through Saturday are devoted to classroom study.

One of the favourite hours of the day is “sports time.” The outdoor sand volleyball court is always popular as impromptu teams form with seven or eight to a team—no score is kept. While an animated volleyball game is underway, other missionaries may be honing their soccer, basketball or ping pong skills or even playing rugby or cricket.

President Reber, a former coach, often gives pointers to those who want to improve their skills. Sister Reber sometimes joins the volleyball game as a very capable, active participant.

Another favourite activity is choir practice at the end of each day. Every SAMTC group of missionaries forms a choir which practices at 9:20 p.m. for ten minutes singing the hymns of Zion. In order to become more proficient, the missionaries shadow President Reber's conducting, taking turns leading the choir as Sister Reber accompanies—unless a missionary plays piano.

On the Sunday before departing for their fields of labour, the SAMTC choir sings at the Roodepoort Ward, the Florida Ward, and the Rumisig Ward which meet in the building next to the SAMTC. Members of all three wards—especially children and youth—look forward to SAMTC choir Sunday.

For many missionaries, the journey to the Johannesburg Temple is the first temple experience in their lives. It is a highlight of the week for missionaries and for the temple workers. Missionaries often have the opportunity to participate in all of the ordinances of the temple as they do baptisms,



President and Sister Reber (front, far right) with missionaries at the Johannesburg Temple.

initiatory work, endowments, and sealings for their deceased relatives.

If you feel a little tired after going through a day with SAMTC participants, you can be sure that the missionaries do too. ■

Testimonies and Farewell Messages from Departing Mission Presidents

Five of the 11 mission presidents in the Africa Southeast Area will be returning to their homes in early July 2013. A warm, heartfelt thank you is extended to each of these mission president couples for their devoted service in Africa. Their farewell messages follow.

President Brent and Sister Lorraine Jameson: Democratic Republic of Congo Kinshasa Mission

We have been privileged to serve among some of the Lord's choicest spirits the last two years in the Kinshasa Mission on the heels of our first call to serve in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Lubumbashi Mission.

We will love these missionaries forever.

We have seen sincere seekers of truth receive baptism and confirmation, accept callings, and begin to take on key roles in the various Church units, with their eye on the temple. It has been a blessing for us to observe them as they catch the vision that they "mourn with those that mourn;



President Brent and Sister Lorraine Jameson

PHOTO COURTESY OF PRESIDENT AND SISTER JAMESON

yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God." Their lives have changed, but not as dramatically as ours. We will never be the same as we recognize, in some small measure, what the Lord has done for us and for our family as we have served Him.

We marvel at the dedication of so many couples who leave

everything to come to Africa to do whatever is asked of them. We recognize the strong leadership of the Area Presidency and the support of Church employees in Kinshasa and South Africa who have made our service possible and enjoyable.

We realize that the Lord is moving across Africa and that His plan is sure and steady. We know it is His work and not ours and count ourselves blessed to have had the opportunity to participate in it.

President Steven H. and Sister Julie P. Broadbent: Kenya Nairobi Mission (2010–2013)

As we conclude our missionary service as mission president and companion in the Kenya Nairobi Mission (KNM), we express our deep gratitude to Heavenly Father and His Son for this cherished opportunity and blessing. We have learned to depend completely upon Him and to seek His will and guidance in all things.

We love the Kenya Nairobi missionaries: we have served with them loved them and encouraged them to “CHOOSE THE RIGHT” because it will make them HAPPY. We are grateful for senior couples who have served diligently in Kenya and Tanzania with enthusiasm and love in their callings. We are grateful for priesthood leaders and beloved members in the many KNM branches, districts and stake. We know that our prayers have been answered and will continue to be answered



PHOTO COURTESY OF PRESIDENT AND SISTER BROADBENT

as we seek the Lord’s will and His peace.

We testify that the ways of the Lord are manifest through pure and simple things: “faith, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost and enduring” with JOY to the end.

We testify of the reality of the Restoration; that we are led by a living prophet today; and we know that it is through the merits, mercy and grace of Jesus Christ that we can receive eternal life. We share our testimony that this is “His work and His glory.” Certainly, the future is bright.

“Wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you” (D&C 68:6).

President Jim and Sister Reenie Von Stetten: South Africa Durban Mission

It was never in our plan, nor was it on our “radar” to be in Africa at this time in our lives. But the Lord works in mysterious ways, and what a blessing it has been for Reenie and myself. We have been in Africa since December 2008 and have enjoyed the experience beyond measure. We have grown to love the land and the people of Lesotho, Swaziland and South Africa, and

President Steven H. and Sister Julie P. Broadbent

have made friendships among the people here that will last into the eternities, we are sure.

We have discovered that the best way to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ is to apply it through genuine service to others, and that there are few assignments where that opportunity is greater than as a mission president and his wife.

We have had the pleasure to serve our young elders and watch them blossom into men as they gave their best two years. We have served alongside many senior missionary couples and witnessed the value of their consecrated service to the branches and local communities, and we have served with you, the faithful members of the Bloemfontein, Newcastle, Swaziland and Richard’s Bay Districts and the Hillcrest and Durban Stakes, only to say that words cannot adequately express our love and appreciation for your support.

We know God lives and that His Son Jesus Christ is our Redeemer. We know the Book of Mormon and the Bible to be the word of God. We will miss you and always treasure our association.



President Jim and Sister Reenie Von Stetten

PHOTO COURTESY OF PRESIDENT AND SISTER VON STETTEN

President Eric C. and Sister M. Kaye Jackson: Uganda Kampala Mission

We are humbled by the opportunity to bear our testimonies to you today about the things we know to be true. For the past 16 years we have been involved in almost full-time missionary and public affairs work. We have seen the miraculous unfolding of the plan of salvation into many parts of the world and most especially on the African continent.

It is our testimony and sure witness that the teachings of the prophets of this dispensation and those from the Book of Mormon provide a full and comprehensive understanding of the fulness of times to all who are paying attention. The Lord's hand is stretched out over all of the world as this true and everlasting gospel unfolds.

Christ's atoning sacrifice to fulfil all righteousness and His Resurrection to break the bands of death has set the stage for this last great gathering of the elect of God. Jesus Christ is the Creator, the Saviour, the Redeemer, and very soon will be the Judge of this world.

We encourage all men everywhere to repent of their sins, keep all of the commandments, attend all of their meetings, fulfil all of their callings, pay an honest tithing, and devote their lives to the service of the Saviour and to their fellow man.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PRESIDENT AND SISTER JACKSON



We testify that in our Father's house are many mansions. Through our faith, obedience, diligence and endurance, we may become heirs with Christ to a heavenly home. This is our desire for ourselves and for all those who sincerely seek salvation in the kingdom of heaven.

Peter, the great chief Apostle at the time of Christ, said we were a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people" (1 Peter 2:9). We believe these words to be true of each of you who read our testimony and believe our words. We humbly bear witness that these things are true in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Mikele R. and Sister Arlene L. Padovich: Zambia Lusaka Mission

What a marvellous opportunity to share our thoughts. Our mission song states, "Zambia

PHOTO COURTESY OF PRESIDENT AND SISTER PADOVICH



President Eric C. and Sister M. Kaye Jackson

President Mikele R. and Sister Arlene L. Padovich

Lusaka Mission is the place I want to be." And we believe that with all our hearts.

Over the past two years we have watched this great work unfold. We have witnessed the Spirit change the lives of the wonderful people who live in Zambia and Malawi. The gospel has added a peace to their lives.

We have watched as they have grown in their callings and have become leaders in their branches. We could not have accomplished anything here without the tireless efforts of our young missionaries and senior couples. Without the senior couples we would have been lost. They are the backbone of our mission. We would follow them anywhere.

It is our testimony that the Lord lives. He knows His children. He loves us. He hears and answers our prayers. Together we have increased our testimonies. We have witnessed the blessings of service.

We have been blessed as a family. We will miss you all. We are thankful for your love and prayers. Until we meet again. ■

Did you accept the 90-day challenge?

Did you accept Elder Carl B. Cook's 90-day challenge to pay a full tithing? Please tell us your experience accepting the challenge which was issued in the September 2012 *Liahona*. Send your story to editorsa@ldschurch.org. ■