

AFRICA SOUTHEAST AREA LOCAL PAGES

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Peace on Earth, Good Will toward Men

By Elder Kevin S. Hamilton, Second Counselor in the Area Presidency

As we approach this Christmas season, we think back to that eventful night over 2,000 years ago when shepherds watched over their flocks in the foothills outside of Bethlehem. They must have truly been astonished and perhaps a bit frightened when an “angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them.” The angel instructed them not to be afraid and that he had a wonderful message of “good tidings of great joy” for all the people of the earth. He shared with them the good news that “a Savior, which is Christ the Lord” was born that very day in nearby Bethlehem and gave them a sign by which they could recognize Him: He would be a “babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”

When the angel had finished declaring this wonderful message, there then appeared “a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”¹

This was the message from heaven: peace on earth and good will to all men. Yet even as the Prince of Peace was born, King Herod was making plans for

the slaughter of all male infants in Bethlehem, a terrible act of destruction and wickedness that was almost unthinkable, yet true.²

Today we see these same extremes. On the one hand, we have the restored gospel of Jesus Christ with its marvelous message of faith, hope, and optimism. This is the last and greatest of all gospel dispensations, the “fulness of times”³ of which Paul prophesied. We have much to be hopeful about.

On the other hand, we live in an increasingly wicked and violent world. We hear of acts of war, terror, and crime on an almost-daily basis. As the world becomes less peaceful, the children of our Heavenly Father look with ever-increasing anxiousness for peace. It’s as if they are being “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness.”⁴ They seem to be “ever learning, [yet] never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”⁵

We are all searching for peace: peace in our personal lives, peace in our families, and peace in the world in which we live. Ironically, most of the world’s solutions fail to provide real peace. Media

and entertainment in all of their various forms rarely provide real peace. Wealth and power do not provide peace. Political upheaval robs peace. The pace and intensity of modern life robs peace. Technology can destroy peace.

Sometimes our choices and actions rob peace. Acts of terror by others can take away peace. The Book of Mormon is filled with examples of wickedness, wars, and contentions that robbed peace. Occasionally the Lord would use these challenges to remind the people to remember their God:

“And thus we see that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions, yea, except he doth visit them with death and with terror, and with famine and with all manner of pestilence, they will not remember him.”⁶

So then, as the hymn asks, “Where can [we] turn for peace?”⁷ How do we find true peace? Not just temporary or transitory peace, but whole-souled, heart-filling peace.

It was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give



Elder Kevin S. Hamilton

I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”⁸

True, lasting, fulfilling peace comes only through Jesus Christ—His teachings, His ministry, His example, and His Atonement. Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught:

“We earnestly hope and pray for universal peace, but it is as individuals and families that we achieve the kind of peace that is the promised reward of righteousness. This peace is a promised gift of the Savior’s mission and atoning sacrifice.”⁹

The good news is that there is hope and we have cause to be optimistic. The message of that first Christmas proclaimed by the angels to the shepherds in the hills of Bethlehem is that Jesus Christ—His gospel with its

ordinances and teachings—can bring peace into our lives. It was the Savior who promised that “he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come.”¹⁰

As we pattern our lives after the Savior and do all in our power to live the gospel and keep our Heavenly Father’s commandments, He has promised us personal peace:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”¹¹

This Christmas, as we turn our hearts to the Savior of the world, we can come to know peace in our lives, peace in our families, and even peace in our nations. This is the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He is the Prince of Peace. As angels proclaimed at the birth of Christ, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”¹² ■

NOTES

1. Luke 2:8–14.
2. See Quentin L. Cook, “Personal Peace: The Reward of Righteousness,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 32.
3. Ephesians 1:10.
4. Ephesians 4:14.
5. 2 Timothy 3:7.
6. Helaman 12:3.
7. “Where Can I Turn for Peace?”, *Hymns*, no. 129.
8. John 14:27.
9. Quentin L. Cook, “Personal Peace: The Reward of Righteousness,” 33.
10. D&C 59:23; emphasis added.
11. Matthew 11:28–30.
12. Luke 2:14.

New Counselor in Africa Southeast Area Presidency

Elder Kevin S. Hamilton has been called to be Second Counselor in the Africa Southeast Area Presidency beginning August 1, 2013. He was sustained a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on April 6, 2013, at age 58. At the time of his call he was serving as a public affairs director in Southern California, USA.

Elder Hamilton received a bachelor’s degree in marketing from Brigham Young University in 1979. In 1982 he received a master’s degree in finance from the University of Washington. His career was in mobile telecommunications.

Elder Hamilton has served in numerous callings including full-time missionary in the Switzerland Geneva Mission, bishop’s counselor, bishop, high counselor, stake president, and president of the Belgium Brussels/Netherlands Mission.

Kevin Scott Hamilton was born in Wenatchee, Washington, USA, in March 1955. He married Claudia Keysor in July 1978. They are the parents of six children and reside in Agoura Hills, California, USA. ■



Elder Kevin S. Hamilton,
Second Counselor in the
Africa Southeast Area
Presidency

New Meetinghouse to Be Built in Ezakheni

By Sister Patricia Kyle

On June 9, 2013, Church members and leaders in Ezakheni Township of South Africa picked up shovels and turned over the soil to officially announce the lot where their new meetinghouse would be built.

Plans for the new building were on display, and construction was due to start immediately after the ceremony.

Former branch president Amos Moloi spoke about the history of the branch that originally met in Lady Smith. Members had to take a *kombi* (taxi) from Ezakheni to Lady Smith, a 15-minute drive, each Sunday to attend Church services, a financial hardship for many. The members longed for a place to meet in Ezakheni and were eventually able to rent another church facility on Sundays, because that church had its services on Saturday. President Moloi recalled the time when officials of that church told them they could no longer meet in their building. They had nowhere else to meet and were faced with having to go to Lady Smith again in *kombis* for their Sunday service.

Members prayed to be able to stay in Ezakheni, and the leaders went back to plead for the opportunity to continue meeting in that building. Their prayers were heard, as they were granted permission. They met there until another building became available (a former butcher shop/slaughterhouse). Although the building was not ideal, the members gave thanks for a place to call their own. As the Ezakheni Branch continued to grow, the Church finally granted them permission to have their own building, and all activities of the branch would be held in it.

Elder Craig Miller, priesthood leader of the New Castle District, said that he hoped that they



PHOTOGRAPH BY SISTER KYLE

Leaders in attendance, left to right: Elder Craig Miller; Elder David Wilding; Titus Egwuatu, Ezakheni branch president; Amos Moloi, former Ezakheni branch president; Mthenjwa S. Gamede, New Castle District first counselor; Samuel Mbhele, New Castle District second counselor; Thamsanqa Ngubane, New Castle district president.



PHOTOGRAPH BY SISTER KYLE

felt the Spirit in their souls as they sang “The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning,” and that they would reach out to the community and serve them. Pointing out that it would not be long before the youth of the Church would be teachers and missionaries, Elder Miller asked the members to think of this building as a beacon to all the people who live in Ezakheni. He encouraged the members to continue doing activities that would help the branch grow, such as creating strong families,

Ezakheni Branch members do the ground-breaking for their new meetinghouse.

doing community service, and inviting others in Ezakheni to come to Church services.

Elder and Sister Wilding, along with Elder and Sister Miller (senior couples serving as missionaries in South Africa), were instrumental in hurrying this new building along. Sister Wilding and Sister Miller expressed a deep love for the people they worked with.

With construction due to start on the building directly after the groundbreaking ceremony, the mood was one of appreciation and excitement. Everyone wanted to have a part in breaking ground with the shovels. ■

South Africa Missionary Training Centre Open House

By Sister Karen Belliston

To commemorate the 10-year anniversary of the South Africa Missionary Training Centre, an open house was held on Saturday, July 20, 2013, hosted by MTC president Kenneth Reber and Sister Janet Reber.

The English-speaking MTC opened its doors on July 24, 2003. It provides living quarters for 38 young missionaries along with a friendly entry foyer, a glass-domed study court, several classrooms, a cafeteria, and a laundry room. The walls are adorned with maps, pictures of past mission presidents, “before and after” pictures of the young missionaries, and religious paintings. Two world maps depict where each missionary is from and where each missionary is going. New missionaries enter the MTC every two weeks.

The singing of birds and of MTC elders greeted the guests as they arrived Saturday morning. Visitors representing churches, governments, and various organizations, as well as the general public, were shown through the MTC by elders currently serving missions throughout Africa. Guests were taught about the Church, its belief in Jesus Christ, and its missionary effort. They also learned about the many Church programs which strengthen members in their knowledge of Christ.

As guests left the MTC building, mission president S. Craig Omer and Sister Catherine Omer greeted them outdoors. There the Church’s humanitarian program and ideas for emergency preparedness were displayed and explained by senior missionaries.

*Visitors
arrive at the
Missionary
Training Centre
for the open
house.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY SISTER BASSCO





From left to right: Elder and Sister Leavitt, full-time missionary couple; Sister Reber; Elder Rakotomalala and Elder Rakotoarimanana from Madagascar, serving in Johannesburg; and MTC President Reber waiting to describe Church missions in Africa to the guests.

Visitors were then greeted by Soweto Stake president Thabo Lebethoa at the Roodepoort Institute of Religion where classes and activities for students are held. Local Church members explained the institute program and showed guests the tools used for instruction: manuals, DVDs, the Old and New Testament, and the Book of Mormon. Pamphlets

President and Sister Omer, Johannesburg Mission, conversing with guests at the MTC open house.

were available for guests to take home. Temple marriage was highlighted in the institute as two young couples—dressed in wedding apparel—explained our doctrine of eternal marriage.

Next, guests visited the Roodepoort chapel. Attractive displays were exhibited in each classroom, including family history, priesthood, and the auxiliaries of the Church—Relief Society, Young Women, Young Men, and Primary. Senior missionaries as well as local Church members were on hand to visit with the guests and answer questions. Mark Mocke, director of the MTC, expanded the tour to include the life of a missionary after his mission: being released by his stake president, meeting with his bishop, attending institute, gaining an education, marrying in the temple, providing a loving home for his family, and serving in the Church and community.

Finally, guests entered the cultural hall where they enjoyed a light lunch and were entertained by a women's trio—Gloria Zulu and her two daughters, Brenda and Sharon—who sang a tribute to Africa and the Johannesburg mission song. From the first of the tour to the last bite of frosted cupcake, all of the 529 visitors were edified. ■



Church Assists in Family History in South Africa

By Sister Tina Murdock

The Genealogical Society of Utah was established in 1894 to encourage Church members to research their family history.

The Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, is the largest genealogical library in the world. It provides access to many collections of records containing more than two billion names of deceased people. Recognizing that millions of people throughout the world have their own reasons to be interested in family history, the Church makes its collections of microfilmed and digitized records freely available to everyone.

The Church also operates one

of the most popular genealogical services on the Internet at www.familysearch.org free of charge. The site contains a billion names from over 110 countries and territories including the 1880 United States Census, the 1881 Canadian Census, the 1881 British Census, the Ellis Island database, and the Freedman's Bank Records. However, most of the Church's vast collection of genealogical resources is yet to come online. The Church is undertaking a massive digitization project to bring most of the additional collection of the Family History Library, worldwide, online over the next few years.

Family history presentation at the House of David Jewish Centre in Johannesburg.



PHOTOGRAPH BY SISTER MURDOCK



PHOTOGRAPH BY SISTER OLSON

Dr. Mathole Motshekga speaks at the Family History Conference in Bloemfontein.

Recently the Church actively participated in two events to help the people of South Africa understand the importance of family history.

The first event was a Family History Conference held in Bloemfontein on April 6, 2013. Nontuli Makhetha hosted the event. President Moroole, second counselor in the Bloemfontein District of the Church, stated that the objective of the Family History Conference was for those attending to know what family history is all about, why we should do it, and how we can get started. Knowing who you are and where you came from is like finding a piece of a puzzle—it gives you identity.

Another speaker was Dr. Mathole Motshekga, African National Congress's Chief Whip, and member of the African National Congress's Department of Legal and Constitutional Affairs.

He said, "What you are doing as a church [namely family history] is something we should be doing as a nation and a continent as a whole." He stated that many wars have been fought because of problems of identity.

Vicky Heunis from the War Museum in Bloemfontein thanked the Church for helping them digitize their records. Full-time senior missionaries worked in the museum for four months digitizing records and photographs.

The black role in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899 was discussed by Rodney Constantine. He compiles records of those who served in wars, including records from century-old African cemeteries.

The second event was a presentation held at the House of David Jewish Centre in Johannesburg on June 2, 2013. Sister Naylor led a discussion and showed family history slides and a video. She was assisted by Sisters Taylor and Kraczek. They informed the participants about the Church's website, www.familysearch.org. The presentation was very well received, with a question-and-answer period following.

Those wanting more information on researching family history can call the Family History Centre at +27(11) 645-1461 or visit the centre at 5A Jubilee Road in Parktown. ■



PHOTOGRAPH BY SISTER REBER

Three Mission Calls from the Nyambita Home

By Sister Janet Reber

Sister Nyambita is the third child in the Nyambita family to serve a mission from the Mwanza Branch in Tanzania.

The branch was created on March 27, 2011, at a sacrament meeting under the direction of Kenya Nairobi Mission president Steven H. Broadbent. Eleven people were confirmed members of the Church at that meeting, including Sister Nyambita's mother, her brother (Benedictor), and herself. They had been baptized the day before. Sister Nyambita's father is the first branch president.

The Nyambita children were

eager to be missionaries and started preparations for serving their missions. The first son, Phinias Nyambita, entered the South Africa Missionary Training Centre (SAMTC) on November 15, 2012, called to serve in the Kenya Nairobi Mission. He was baptized when he was studying in Dar es Salaam. The second son, Benedictor Kawira Nyambita, entered the SAMTC on February 7, 2013, called to serve in the Zimbabwe Harare Mission. Sister Magreth Nyambita entered the SAMTC on April 4, 2013, called to serve in the South Africa Johannesburg Mission. ■

Sister Magreth Nyambita points to her brothers' photos on the "Wall of Honor" at the MTC.

Christmas at the South Africa Missionary Training Centre

By Sister Janet Reber

Christmas at the SAMTC is focused on the Savior—His birth, His life and His Atonement. Missionaries may be far away from home during this time, but they will always feel at home with their new companions and MTC leaders. Their day is filled with study and preparation for the mission field, yet there is still time for singing Christmas hymns, playing chimes, and acting out the Christmas story. ■

Missionaries act out the story of Jesus's birth.



The missionaries hold their Christmas stockings.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SISTER REBER

PHOTOGRAPH BY DONAVAN REEDER

ENGLISH—AFRICA SOUTHEAST