

AFRICA SOUTHEAST AREA LOCAL PAGES

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Fasting and Fast Offerings— The Lord’s Law of Finance that is Available to Everyone

Elder Kevin S. Hamilton

Second Counselor in the Area Presidency

One of the characteristics of the gospel in every dispensation of time has been the commandment to fast and pray. From the Old Testament Prophet Isaiah we read: “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?” (Isaiah 58:6).

In the time of the Savior, His disciples came to Him with concerns about their inability to heal certain sick people. Jesus himself healed these sick and then in response to questions from His disciples as to why they also could not provide the healing blessing, the Saviour gently taught, “This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting” (Mark 9:29).

In the Book of Mormon, the sons of Mosiah and the son of Alma (also called Alma) had a joyful missionary reunion after some seventeen years of missionary service. Alma was thrilled to see that his brethren were still faithful in the gospel. “But this is not all; they had given themselves to much prayer and fasting; therefore they had

the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation” (Alma 17:3).

In our day, the Lord counseled the Saints through the Prophet Joseph Smith to “organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith” (D&C 88:119).

Clearly, in every age and whenever the gospel has been on the earth, the Lord has asked his children to fast and pray for increased spiritual power and added blessings.

In the Church today, the first Sabbath day of each month is set aside for the purpose of fasting. During this time, Church members go without food and water for 24 hours. They then contribute to the Church the money that they would have spent on food for those meals. This money is called a fast offering. The Church uses the fast offerings to assist the poor and needy.

The law of the fast is a commandment that is available to every member of the Church, regardless of financial circumstances. The humblest to the most prosperous Latter-day



**Elder Kevin S.
Hamilton**

Saints can fast for two meals then give a fast offering of the cost of those two meals to their bishop to help the poor and needy. For those that have been given much, much is expected, and they should pay a generous offering, perhaps many times the actual cost of the two meals. For those that have little, the principle still holds; they can give the cost of the two meals from which they abstained to the bishop to assist the poor and needy.

Individual and family self-reliance are built upon principles such as work, thrift, industry, and education. In addition, the Lord has made it abundantly clear that our faith will be made manifest as we act and pay our tithes and offerings. The faithful practice of fasting each month and then offering a fast offering to the Lord through the bishop or branch

president will do much to bless the lives of our members and to help them to walk out of the shadow of poverty.

Many faithful members are able to join with us, the Area Presidency, in testifying to the power and truthfulness of this divine principle. We promise that the Lord will “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). We further promise that you will “find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge” (DC 89:19) as the Lord blesses you and your family with an increased measure of His spirit.

The law of the fast is a blessing from a loving Heavenly Father to

His children. It is accessible to every member and is a key that will help to unlock the door to spiritual and temporal self-reliance.

It is our deepest desire that all members of the Church in Africa may receive these great blessings through obedience to the law of the fast. May the Lord help us to do so is our prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

LOCAL NEWS

Church Now Registered in Rwanda, Africa

By Elder Brent and Sister Cheri Andrus

On October 24, 2013, the Church was officially registered and recognized by the Rwandan government. Rwanda is one of the last Sub-Saharan African countries to receive missionaries. This was in part due to the tragic genocide of 1994 that took the lives of one million people in 100 days, creating an unsettled environment. Fortunately, through the years, the country has become quite stable.

The first branch of the Church was organized in 2008. It consisted of 14 members who met in a member’s home. The same year the Rwandan government suspended church registrations due to internal problems with some local churches. As a result, the LDS Church was not able to be registered. However, the right to worship was protected, and the branch continued to meet.

Elder Holland dedicated the country of Rwanda in August 2009. Six months later Brent and Cheri Andrus were called to serve in the Uganda Kampala Mission and assigned to Rwanda as the first missionaries. They were given the charge of supporting the lone branch, administering humanitarian service,

and preparing for the time when the Church would be registered.

The Andruses were replaced in September 2011 by Brad and Karen Wilkes. During their tenure, the government enacted legislation that again provided for churches to register. LDS officials embarked on the registration process that took 20 months to complete.

Three branch presidents (L–R): William Akami, Kigali Second Branch; Joshua Opar, Kigali First Branch; Jean Paul Maniriho, Kigali Third Branch



SISTER CHERI ANDRUS

In the meantime, six young missionaries were sent to Rwanda but were limited to teaching only friends and family of members. Those member referrals kept the missionaries busy, and more than 100 people entered the waters of baptism in that first year.

Elder and Sister Andrus returned to Rwanda for six months, this time with the opportunity of working with young missionaries. They were recently succeeded by Steven and Kathi Palmer who are currently serving.

There are now three branches and nearly 200 members in Rwanda. With the registration complete, missionaries are free to openly proselytize. The growth of the Church will surely accelerate. ■

Helping Hands 2013— Africa Southeast Area

By Sister Pamela Larsen



Service to others is an important characteristic of the followers of Jesus Christ. This year, in the Africa Southeast Area, the service provided through

Helping Hands was designed to be a process rather than a one-day project. The priesthood leaders were asked by the Area Presidency to gather information about community needs, build relationships with community leaders, and develop partnerships within the community to provide necessary supplies. Members of the Church and friends supplied the manpower, wearing yellow Helping Hands vests, to help the community meet these needs and then invited local media and leaders in the community to a “handover” event on or around August 17, 2013. More than 100,000 people participated in Helping Hands projects, providing more than 300,000 hours of labor. Many local newspapers carried articles and



President Chatfield with Sister Olivia (Relief Society) and Elder Hansen (Public Affairs) welcome Minister Florence Mutyabule



Sisters of the Somerset West Ward with Jacqueline Abrahams, who gratefully accepted the donation

pictures of the Saints serving—blessing and improving their communities and building relationships. Here are just a few examples of what was accomplished throughout the Area.

In Uganda more than 700 volunteers worked on over a dozen projects, giving 3,000 man-hours of service together with 22 partners spanning the country. On August 30 in Kampala, 85 guests attended a large handover and appreciation dinner and ceremony held at the Kololo Chapel. In attendance were a cabinet minister, four members of Parliament, and the mayor of Bugembe, along with news and TV media personnel. Local priesthood leaders presided and participated. It



Happy Helping Hands participants in Madagascar



Helping Hands participants in the Lubumbashi area

was truly a celebration of partners and friends in community service.

In South Africa, many wards and branches participated in worthy projects such as planting vegetable gardens, organizing a community park, repairing community facilities, and building



Helping Hands participants in front of the refurbished Manda Hill police station, August 17, 2013

children's play areas. The Orange Farm Branch cleaned and painted the schoolhouse in which they meet on Sundays. Members in Tembisa spent the day cleaning the Thembinkosi Special Needs School. In Cape Town, after months of dedicated labor, the members of the Somerset West Ward donated 62 quilts to Girls & Boys Town in Macassar. The principal, Jacqui Abrahams, was quite tearful when she realized the amount of time, effort, and love that went into making the quilts. The ward members also fixed up the facility, cleaned, built bookshelves, collected books, and painted murals. Many materials and furniture were donated by partners.

Eighty-four members of the Witbank Branch in Pretoria successfully renovated the Nakekela Tlokomela Disabled Center in Kwa-Guqa under the direction of Bishop Jeremy Rakotomamonjy. They donned their yellow vests, grabbed paint rollers and shovels and got to work cleaning, washing, cooking to feed the children, and fixing appliances. Standard Bank, Bhp Billton, and Hub South Africa donated money and supplies. At the end, they all sang the hymn "God Be with You Till We Meet Again" with tears in their eyes.

In Swaziland members from Ezulwini, Mbabane, and Manzini Branches, along with full-time missionaries, other local churches, and community members gathered to begin construction of a bridge at Somnjalose. The poorly constructed old bridge was dangerous and inhibited development in that area. Over 145 people from the Church and community dug trenches, put dirt in bags, and formed a long line to pass rock to the bridge area. Women carrying cement on their heads was a common sight. Concrete pipes, 20 bags of cement, 8 concrete wire meshes, and 15 ring forces were donated. After a day of hard work, the proper foundation had been laid. There was more work to be done, but now the people knew they were going to have a solid, new bridge.

In Madagascar two branches from Tanambao painted the interior and exterior of l'Ecole Primaire Publique d'Ambovomaiky, an elementary school. Forty-three members and friends worked from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and were very satisfied that the school was well cleaned and embellished.

In Democratic Republic of Congo members of wards and branches in the Kananga Stake weeded, cleaned, swept, and made repairs around public buildings in their respective communities over a four-month period. About 1,000 members and over 200 non-members participated, including many city officials and government leaders. President Christophe Kawaya, president of the Kananga Stake, said, "We have fulfilled our priesthood objectives to strengthen families and build community relationships. There is a good rapport with the communities earned by the Church."

About 2,000 members and friends of the Katuba Stake cleaned, painted, and weeded health centers and other public buildings. They planted a garden for widows and distributed food and clothes to social service organizations. Much gratitude and many positive feelings were created by these acts of service over several months.

In Kenya members in Nairobi were asked to donate mosquito nets to residents of Kiambiu

Helping Hands in Mozambique—sweeping parking lot



Kenya Helping Hands

informal settlements. Prior to the donation at the Chief Camp in the area, the members cleaned the streets and unblocked drainages. Other projects in Kenya were held in Eldoret, Chyulu, Mtito Andei, Busia, Mombasa, Kisumu, Naivasha, Nakuru, and Nairobi.

In Zambia members of the Church, in conjunction with other partners in the Lusaka District, worked several weekends refurbishing the Manda Hill police post. Members skilled in carpentry, bricklaying, plumbing, and electrical maintenance were gathered and, donning their yellow vests, completed a wonderful work. On August 17, a hand-over event was held with police and community leaders present. This was covered by news media, and pictures were carried in several newspapers. Daniel Chisenga, mayor of Lusaka, said, "Our police officers at Manda Hill will be motivated. Other churches should emulate your example of carrying out works for the public."

In Mozambique groups from all five branches of the Church (more than 250 members and 25 non-members), using native Mozambican brooms handmade of palm leaves, swept the wide sidewalks and gutters and picked up litter, cleaning both sides and the median of about five long blocks each Saturday. They worked alongside weekend traffic, garnering thumbs-ups from passers-by and were even joined by pedestrians on occasion. Some asked the name of the group that was working to clean the city, giving the members an opportunity to explain about the Church. ■

Wheelchair Giveaway Provides a Lift in Durban

By Sister Patricia Kyle

Only one in a hundred can afford to purchase a wheelchair. To be mobile, people with disabilities often rely on family and friends to carry them from place to place. It can be extremely difficult just to leave home. Going to school or getting a job may be an impossible dream.

The Church partnered with Lotus FM radio station to help provide needed wheelchairs in Durban, South Africa. During May and June 2013, the station gave on-air announcements and received dozens of applications from deserving, disabled individuals and non-government organizations (NGOs). "Many of the applications were filled out by caregivers who were desperate for help," said Sister Patricia Kyle. "One lady said that her mother sat in a four-legged chair and had

to be pulled by the chair across the room to move to the bathroom or bedroom. She said that her mother was very depressed to have to stay indoors and sometimes in bed all day."

Durban South Skills Development, an NGO started by local residents, which caters to disabled women in the neighbourhood who want to learn how to sew in order to earn a living, received some of these desperately needed wheelchairs.

The Aryan Benevolent Home, another NGO run by donations, and which offers a home for the aged and orphaned, received twenty wheelchairs for its disabled individuals. The home also houses a nursing school on its premise. As part of the training, nursing students help care for those in the home for the aged and orphaned.

The Association for Persons with Physical Disabilities, also run entirely by donations, helps the disabled learn skills and provides them with opportunities to do small jobs as well. They received eight wheelchairs for various individuals who come to the center during the day to obtain training and working opportunities.

For phase 1 of the wheelchair contribution, Elder and Sister Kyle, senior missionaries, helped select applicants and gave away 36 wheelchairs at the Lotus FM/SABC studios in Durban on June 12, 2013.

Phase 2 was held at Chatsworth Youth Center on August 10, 2013, where Lotus FM distributed 44 wheelchairs. The recipients were asked to attend the wheelchair handover event in the afternoon and to be guests at a classical piano concert that evening presented by David Glen Hatch and seven other accomplished pianists from the United States. The concert was hosted by the Church. Lotus FM aired the event on their radio station and brought in one of their DJs, Clive Gounden, to conduct it. Deserving recipients lined the width of the gymnasium to receive their new wheelchairs. The Church Humanitarian Services had contracted with a local wheelchair provider to have them custom made for each recipient.

A wheelchair provider helps adjust the chair for its recipient

SISTER PATRICIA KYLE





Clive Pillay, director of the youth center, said, “This event was amazing. It was wonderful to see how happy these people were to get the new wheelchairs. I realized that the chair was where they spent most of

Missionaries and others helping the disabled with their new wheelchairs

their time and how important it was for them to be comfortable. The new wheelchairs looked very sturdy and comfortable and will make a big difference in their lives.”

Young missionaries of the Church were present at both these events to assist recipients

from the parking lot to the event. Lotus FM station manager, Alvin Pillay, expressed his thanks to the Church for providing the wheelchairs and helping the disabled improve their lives.

The Church has distributed more than 300,000 wheelchairs in 112 countries in 2013. ■

Let There Be Music!

By Sister Karen Belliston

In 1830 a revelation was given from the Lord through Joseph Smith to his wife Emma: “And it shall be given thee, also, to make a selection of sacred hymns, as it shall be given thee, which is pleasing unto me, *to be had in my church*” (D&C 25:11; emphasis added). Many of the hymns Emma selected are still used today in the Church’s book of Hymns.

The singing of hymns is an important part of our worship services, and it has always been so. Mention of musical instruments is made in the Old Testament—the psaltery, organ, harp, and others. We are fortunate today to have pianos and, many times, organs in our chapels to accompany our hymn singing. But we are not always so fortunate to have people to play these instruments. Many wards and branches are blessed to have senior missionaries who voluntarily teach members, usually on a keyboard, how to play the piano. In South Africa, as well as other African countries, many private and group lessons are being taught. It is expected that the students will progress and use their talent to accompany worship services in their own wards and branches.

Sister Margaret DaBell is serving a mission in Johannesburg. She teaches piano to five students. One student, Susan Nkomo from the Ennerdale

Branch, started learning from a former missionary and now travels to the Africa Southeast Area Office in Parktown nearly every week for a lesson. Four children in the Tshabalala family are also learning from Sister DaBell. They are in the Benoni Ward.

Saturday mornings find Sister Margaret Nielsen at the Area Office in Parktown teaching several women from the Alexandra Branch. They travel by taxi-bus at their own expense to these lessons. “Those music sessions are the highlight of my week!” exclaimed Sister Nielsen.

Sisters Ricki Klingler and Debra King are both teaching piano lessons to eager students, hoping the students will be able to play simple hymns for sacrament meeting. Sister King said, “It’s been fun seeing their enthusiasm for learning.” Sister Klingler’s student, Emelda, also wanted to learn how to direct music. After her first lesson, she led the music in her YSA branch.

Elder Kraczek teaching a keyboard class





(L-R) Young brothers Minenhle and Khumo Tshabalala

The Relief Society president in the Orange Farm Branch asked Sister Connie Rose if she could teach the sisters how to direct music. Each week in Relief Society, Sister Rose explains the time signature and then invites the sisters to lead the music along with her. After a few weeks, several of the women have felt comfortable enough to lead the music on their own. Instructions for beginning music directors are located in the back of the hymn book on pages 383–85. Sister Rose has gone on to teach several students basic piano skills, using a keyboard. The students are given a cardboard keyboard to practice on.

Elder Stanley and Sister Eileen Kraczek, assigned to the Pimville Ward in the Soweto Stake, teach a basic music conducting course along with a keyboard class to over a dozen students. They meet after church services each week. The couple also visits the KwaThema Ward near Springs every Thursday afternoon to work individually with students. Another group of students comes prior to the 4:30 p.m. seminary class and learns both conducting and keyboard. An adult student, Felly Bukasa, is being taught during his lunch hour. He commented that the only time the piano was played in his ward was when missionary couples were there. He wanted to be able to play every Sunday. “I really wanted to learn, and I am not just learning, but enjoying it.”

In 1998 the Harman Music Fund was set up to work in harmony with the Church’s Basic Music Course. The fund provides electronic keyboards for loan to students during the course. “At the completion of the course, budding musicians



(L to R) Patricia Tladi, Tinhiko Nkuna, Sinah Monoalibe, Sister Margaret Nielsen (instructor), and Theresa Motsheweme

without the resources to purchase their own keyboards can apply for help from the Harman Music Fund” (*Ensign*, Apr. 2009, 76).

The opportunity for willing students to develop their own talents is a blessing, as it increases self-esteem and gives them an opportunity to serve. It is also a blessing to the congregations, as church members can more easily sing the correct melodies when they have accompaniment. “The hymns invite the Spirit of the Lord, create a feeling of reverence, unify us as members, and provide a way for us to offer praises to the Lord” (*Hymns*, 1985, ix).

Members who acquire musical skills will be an asset to their units in the future wherever they live. On that happy note, those who are now students can become the teachers of tomorrow! Those wishing to learn to play the keyboard or direct music can inform their Church leaders or ask the missionaries to help them learn. They are here to serve! ■

Children’s Submissions Wanted for the *Liahona*

The *Liahona* needs children’s submissions for “Our Page.” Children ages 3 to 12 can submit drawings, photos, testimonies, and experiences. Drawings may be of their homes, families, the world around them, temples, scripture stories—almost any subject. However, no drawings of the Savior, please. Please include the child’s name, age, gender, and ward and stake or branch and district name.

Also, parental permission to publish the submission must be included (email is acceptable). Submissions may be made in any language, and can be made online at liahona.lds.org; by email to liahona@ldschurch.org with “Our Page” in the subject line; or by mail to:

Liahona, Our Page
50 E. North Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024,
USA ■