

AFRICA SOUTHEAST AREA LOCAL PAGES

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

The Importance of a Name

Elder Kevin S. Hamilton

Second Counselor in the Area Presidency

As a General Authority of the Church, it is my privilege to travel throughout the Africa Southeast Area and meet many wonderful Latter-day Saints. The faithful members of the Church are always so kind and they help me to feel God's love for all of his children. I have found it fascinating to meet members with beautiful descriptive first names such as Happiness, Perseverance, Patience, Blessing, and Dieudonné (French for "Gift from God"). It is interesting to me that in many cases, these faithful members live up to their names: Happiness is truly happy, Patience is patient, and Blessing is a blessing in many people's lives.

Our parents gave us each a first name by which we are known to family and friends and also a family name by which our families are identified. This family name is so powerful that it inspires us to seek after our ancestors by doing family history work. The Savior taught that our longing to be part of a family would "... turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers . . ." (3 Nephi 25:6).

He also taught that we must create a permanent bond

through temple ordinances, what the Prophet Joseph Smith called a "welding link" between the fathers and the children. "For we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect" (D&C 128:18). Without this link, our very purpose on earth would be wasted. In other words, the plan of salvation would be frustrated (D&C 110:15).

Our Heavenly Father has also given us a name by which we should be called, the name of Jesus Christ. In the early days of the Church of Jesus Christ, during the time of the apostles, the members of the Church were known by the name of Jesus Christ. The earliest mention is in the Book of Acts where they were called Christians (Acts 11:26).

In our day we have been commanded to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ. In fact, a central part of our doctrine is that we "follow the Son, with full purpose of heart . . . with real intent . . . witnessing unto the Father that [we] are willing to take upon [ourselves] the name of Christ by baptism" (2 Nephi 31:13).

The actual requirement for baptism is really very simple:

"All those who . . . desire to be baptized . . . and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ . . . shall be received by baptism into his church" (D&C 20:37).

After having taken upon us the name of Jesus Christ through baptism as a symbol of our commitment to follow Him, then each week thereafter during our Sabbath worship we renew the covenant that we made at baptism. We partake of the sacrament where we promise that we "are willing to take upon [us] the name of thy Son, and always remember him." In return he promises us that he will give us his Holy Spirit, even the Comforter, which serves as a guide or companion and by which we can know that we are doing what our Heavenly Father would have us do (D&C 20:77).

The importance of a name can never be underestimated, neither our earthly name nor the name of Jesus Christ. President George Albert Smith was named after his grandfather George A. Smith, who was a cousin to the Prophet Joseph Smith and a



Elder Kevin Scott Hamilton
Africa Southeast Area Presidency

counselor to President Brigham Young. President George Albert Smith had severe health problems throughout his life and had to learn to be patient and bear up under the burdens placed upon him. “During this difficult time, George had a dream in which he saw a beautiful forest near a large lake. After he had walked some distance through the forest, he recognized his beloved grandfather George A. Smith coming toward him. George hurried forward, but as his grandfather drew near, he stopped and said, ‘I would like to know what you have done with my name.’ A panorama of his life passed through George’s

mind and he humbly replied, ‘I have never done anything with your name of which you need be ashamed.’ This dream renewed George’s spirit and physical stamina. Later, he often described the experience as a major turning point in his life” (George Albert Smith, *Sharing the Gospel with Others*, sel. Preston Nibley, 1948, 110–12).

Someday we will meet the Savior and, in essence, He will ask us the same question, “What have you done with my name?” We will hopefully be able to give the same response that President George Albert Smith gave, “I have never done anything with your name of

which you need be ashamed.”

Our earthly name is important. It defines us and binds families together by a family name. Temple ordinances make those feelings of unity and love permanent. The sacred name of Jesus Christ is important because it binds us to Him. We take His name upon us and follow Him. He, in turn, blesses us with the Holy Spirit.

Let us each learn to respect and reverence the name of Jesus Christ that we have taken. As we do so, we will come to know Him because we have tried to be like Him. May the Lord bless us to be ever faithful to His great and sacred name. ■

LOCAL NEWS

Called to Serve

By Elder Colin H. Bricknell

Africa Southeast Area Seventy

When I was serving as the mission president of the Idaho Pocatello Mission, I was introduced to Brother Clayton Bolander from Shelley, Idaho. During our first mission interview on August 24, 2003, he told me of the health challenges that he had throughout his life. He was born with kidney and bladder problems. Just before his 11th birthday, he had a kidney transplant. A week after he had applied for a mission, it was discovered that he had Lymphoblastic Lymphoma. He also told me of his very sincere desire to serve a mission for the Lord.

My heart went out to this young man. I wanted to help him realize his desire to serve a mission. After his cancer had gone into remission, I contacted the Missionary Department as well as our Area President, Elder Lynn Mickelsen. They agreed he could serve a proselyting mission with the full-time missionaries in the Idaho Pocatello Mission as a “service missionary.” He was elated at the news; it was a dream come true for him! His stake president, President Cutler, set him apart as a “service missionary” and he reported to the mission home with the newly-arriving missionaries from the MTC on September 2, 2003.

I’ll never forget the day I saw him standing with his parents at the mission home. He was wearing

his black name tag and a look of great happiness and excitement on his face. This was a lifelong desire being fulfilled. His parents said their goodbyes and took leave of him. They were also elated that their special son would now serve a mission.

He immediately integrated with the new missionaries. After the orientation meetings, interviews and dinner, we had a testimony meeting. It was all the more spiritual because of Elder Bolander. My journal entry noted, "There was a very special spirit in attendance when Elder Bolander bore his testimony."

He continued to serve with faithful companions as selected by the Lord for about fourteen months. During this period, he would see the doctors and go down to the transplant unit in Salt Lake from time to time as needed.

I interviewed him every six weeks. On October 22, 2004, I noticed he was getting weaker and suggested he take the next transfer period (six weeks) and spend time at home to regain his strength. When he was stronger, he could come back into the field. He went to the doctor and was admitted to the Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center in Channing Way, Idaho Falls, for medical tests.

On November 11, 2004, while at a zone conference that we held in Sugar City, I received a call on my cell phone from Elder Bolander, who was in the hospital. He said through his tears, "President, the cancer is back." He was devastated. I tried to console him the best I could. After the zone conference, my wife and I went to visit him in the hospital and I gave him a blessing. The whole mission fasted and prayed for him. He was in our prayers daily.

A few days later, we had another zone conference at the Lincoln Stake Center. After the conference, I had all three zones visit him in the hospital. It was a memorable occasion. Missionaries were



Sister and President Colin H. Bricknell visit Elder Clayton Bolander in Hospital



Idaho Pocatello Missionaries line up to visit Elder Bolander

everywhere you looked: in the elevators, on the stairways, and lined up in the hallways. One by one, they passed his bedside, shook his hand, gave him a hug and expressed their love and support for him.

Unfortunately, he took a turn for the worse. His physicians decided to life-flight him to the Primary Children's Hospital in Salt Lake City. While on the flight, his heart stopped beating twice and the paramedics had to resuscitate him. He spent the next few months undergoing further tests and chemotherapy. He finally had a bone-marrow transplant with bone marrow donated by his brother. His wonderful mother was at his bedside virtually 24 hours a day. She was a true Woman of Zion.

On April 10, Elder Richards presided at the Ucon Stake Conference. Afterwards, he followed us to Elder Bolander's home to visit with him and his family. Elder Bolander was in bed and was very weak. In fact, he had deteriorated a lot since we had seen him on Thursday. The doctor told him there was nothing more he could do. I knelt beside his bed, held his hand and spoke to him. I told him what an inspiration he was to me. I also told

him that dying is like being transferred and that he could carry on his mission on the other side.

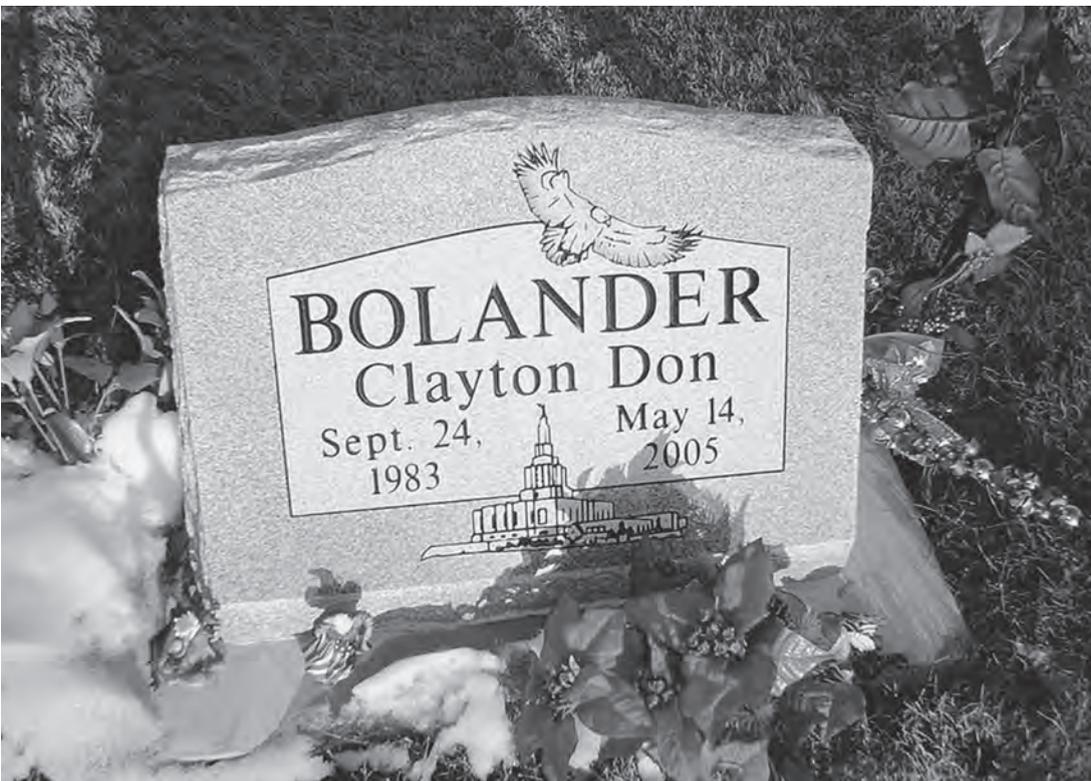
On May 14 at the meal following the Blackfoot South Stake Conference, I received a call from President Cannon that Elder Bolander had passed away. His funeral was held on May 18 and the service was absolutely beautiful. The speakers were uplifting, comforting, and inspiring. The missionary choir sang "I Know that My Redeemer Lives." The Spirit was strong and powerful. As the pallbearers took Elder Bolander's coffin out of the chapel, all the missionaries from the Idaho Pocatello Mission stood up in one accord and sang "Called to Serve."

At the graveside, the missionaries lined up, almost as guards of honor, from the hearse to the grave. As Sister Bolander requested, while the pallbearers carried the coffin to the grave, all the missionaries recited "Called of God," the mission slogan from 3 Nephi 5:13 which was also inscribed on the back side of his tombstone: "Behold, I am

a disciple of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I have been called of him to declare his word among his people, that they might have everlasting life." Just before the dedication of the grave by Elder Bolander's father, all the missionaries sang their mission song.

Neither my life, nor those of his fellow missionaries, will ever be the same. Many have since said how much Elder Bolander's life and service have inspired them to do better. He was never released as a missionary. Instead, he was transferred by a Higher Authority to a new area and a new zone; one beyond the veil. ■

**Headstone of
Elder Clayton
Bolander**



The Keystone of Our Religion

By Elder Jackson Mkhabela

When world leaders make statements, be it about economic concerns or social problems, pundits immediately express their opinions on that subject. Journalists quickly write and compose stories as well, often on Church history subjects well outside their areas of expertise, such as first vision accounts or race and the priesthood.

Their arguments may seem so confident and logical that some are persuaded that they are facts; not just opinions. In addition to pundits and journalists, there are tweeters and bloggers whose oft-copied opinions have a similar effect.

Recently the Church posted an update to the Topics page of www.lds.org entitled Race and the Priesthood which thoughtfully and thoroughly discusses the history of race as it relates to the priesthood of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. While generally positively received, this article generated significant world-wide comment and opinion in the media.

Amidst all this noise, however, the Saviour's voice remains constant and inviting: "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. The sheep follow [me]: for they

know [my] voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers" (John 10:14, 4–5).

We do know the voice of the Saviour as we study and ponder the scriptures, as we listen and obey the words of the living prophets, and as we invite the Holy Ghost to witness to us the truth of all things.

The staying power of our testimony of the restored gospel centers less on our Church history than in the Book of Mormon. Moroni explicitly invited those who receive it to "ask God, the Eternal Father in the name of Christ if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:4–5). I believe with all my heart that following Moroni's exhortation will steady our minds and keep us focused on the truth of all things.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth and the keystone of our religion, and



Elder Jackson Mkhabela

a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than any other book."¹ It is important to note that the prophet singled out the Book of Mormon as a powerful source for drawing closer to Heavenly Father; not Church History nor any other literature.

As a newly-called Bishop of the Soweto Ward, I presided over a baptismal service of an elderly man named Abe Ncala. At the conclusion of the service, brother Ncala bore testimony that left an indelible mark on my heart about the Book of Mormon. Brother Ncala picked up the Book of Mormon from the dumping area in the streets of Soweto.

After reading it, he felt moved to find the Church whose name was written on the book's spine.

He searched for the Church in Soweto without success. Finally, he found the Church in Sandton, Johannesburg. There he was given the address of the Church in Dobsonville, Soweto.

Missionaries taught him the gospel and he was baptized. As I reflected upon his testimony and my own experience in studying the book, I know that the truth he found in the book, its power and influence, moved brother Ncala to tirelessly search for the Church. Truth was revealed to him as he studied and pondered its message. Truth can be revealed to us in the same way in times of doubt.

In Ghana and Nigeria, thousands of people of African descent were converted to the gospel without the aid of missionaries after reading the Book of Mormon. These pioneers wrote to Church headquarters for more information and asked for baptism. Because the country did not have priesthood holders, they were asked to wait. Courageous and resolute, those unbaptized converts formed congregations so they could worship together and share their message with others while they waited.²



***The keystone
of our religion***

Many of these converts had to wait up to 14 years before they could join the Church. What induced the patience in them to wait, or their great desire to become members of the Church? Clearly, the answer is the Book of Mormon bore witness to them of Jesus Christ with power and clarity. It is still our keystone witness that Jesus Christ is our Lord; salvation and eternal life come only in and through Him. The book reveals truth and establishes peace in the hearts of those who study it.

Nephi had this to say about the purpose of the Book of Mormon: “Wherefore, the things that are pleasing unto the world I do not write, but the things which are pleasing unto God and unto those who are not of the world. For the fullness of my intent is to persuade men to come unto the

God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and be saved” (1 Nephi 6:5, 4).

As we navigate the oceans of opinions and the logic of men concerning our beliefs and our Church history, we need not be tossed to and fro. We cannot be thrust off course by every wind of speculation if we make the study of the Book of Mormon our lifetime

pursuit. The Book of Mormon proves that God inspires men and calls them to His holy work in our day and age. Our minds will not be darkened as we look unto God with firmness of mind; studying the Book of Mormon and following the teachings of his servants.

I testify that the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is true; it is perfect in its form and purifying in its effect. I bear witness that the Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ, written by holy men of God as moved upon by the Holy Ghost. I testify that man will get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts than any other book, and I do so in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. ■

NOTES

1. *History of the Church*, 4:461.
2. <http://globalmormonism.byu.edu/?pageid=30>.

The Book without a Cover

By Elder Ed and Sister Ruth Cinquini

Directors, South Africa Public Affairs

When Lwazi Mchunu was sixteen years old and visiting his mother in Durban, South Africa for the Christmas holidays, he came across a book without a cover. It had been given to his mother by his uncle, who was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons). His mother, who had to work every day, had never read it, but Lwazi was intrigued. As he read, he discovered it was a copy of the Book of Mormon.

It had an immediate impact upon him. He said, “I have always been interested in religion and attended the Catholic church as a child, but when I read that book I didn’t know what I felt, only that I had a special feeling.” He later identified it accurately: “I felt the Spirit.”

When he returned to his father’s home after the holidays, he took the book with him, and completed it in four months. He knew that the message within it was true. He didn’t know what to do with that knowledge, so he contacted his LDS uncle, who was thrilled for him. His uncle encouraged him to continue reading it, which Lwazi did. He waited for the household to fall asleep, and then he would read it quietly. He read the book three times.

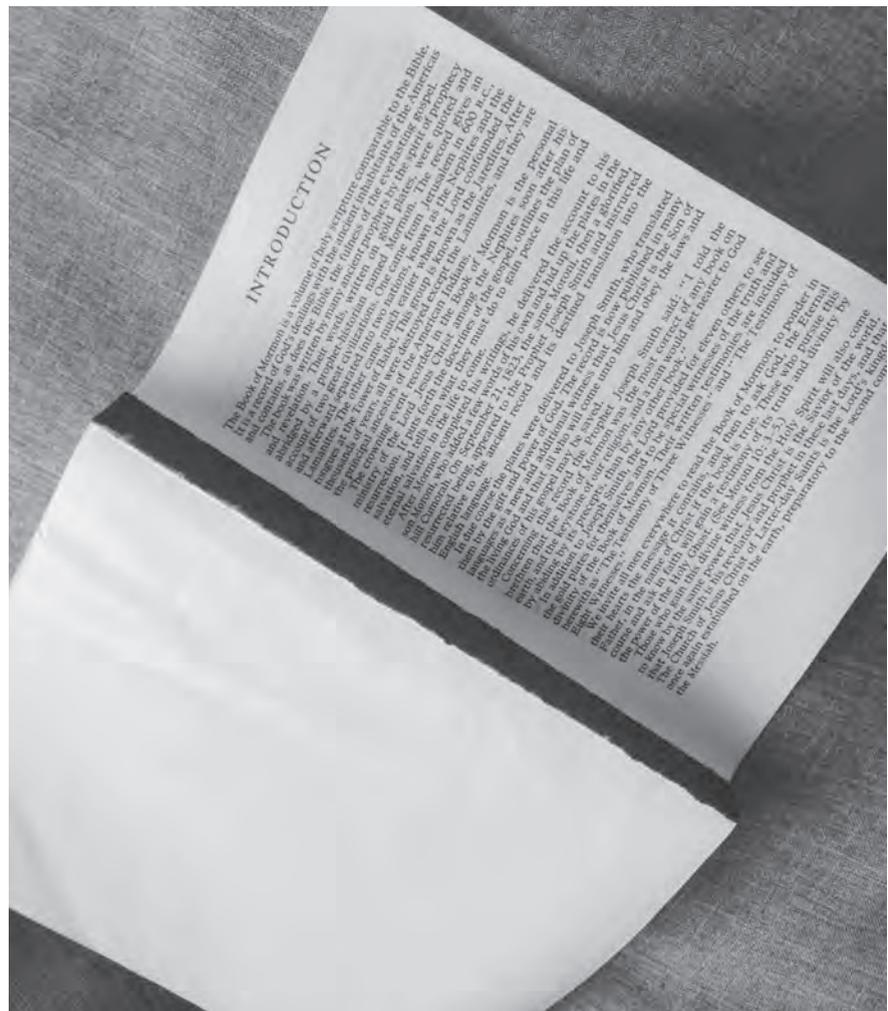
In 2007 his uncle moved to Pietermaritzburg, and Lwazi was finally able to attend an LDS chapel for the first time. Lwazi says, “I would go to my uncle’s house for the weekend, and that is where I met the missionaries.” Lwazi was baptized on March 18, 2007, two years after he first read the coverless Book of Mormon.

Lwazi finished his matric at the top of his class in 2007, and his parents expected him to enter college. As the oldest child in the family, he was

expected to set an example. He wanted to serve a mission, but his family thought going on a mission would be an “opportunity wasted.” After struggling with his family’s disapproval, Lwazi capitulated and went to college. In 2009 he accepted a teaching position at the school where he graduated. He later worked in sales at two large corporate companies where he worked his way up to manager. “The company had a vision to promote young black Africans and I was identified as one of those men,” said Lwazi, “They wouldn’t understand that I wanted to quit because of a mission.”

During this difficult time he was only able to go to Church once or twice a month because of his

The book without a cover





**Elder Lwazi
Mchunu**

work schedule, and it took three taxis just to get to his ward. He was surrounded by other temptations because of the type of people that he was living with in Durban. Worse, Lwazi was approaching age 24 and was running out of time. He said, “I knew the Church cut-off date for missionaries was 25 years old and I needed to do something, but I had many responsibilities. If I resigned, I would disappoint a lot of people.”

However, shortly afterwards, the company started to take a different direction. Lwazi remembers, “I think it was God that was preparing a way for me to quit. It was a good time for me to say that I didn’t think the company was going in the direction that would fit me. I quit my job in 2013 and began to spend my time preparing for my mission.”

All the same, he didn’t want to go to Church alone all the time. He approached his mother and

expressed his feelings. She said that she had been thinking about going to Church herself. The next Sunday they all went as a family. Since then, his mother and four siblings have been baptized.

Elder Mchunu is now twenty-four years old, and left for his mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints January 9, 2014, to serve in Kenya. When asked how he felt about serving a mission he said, “I have two feelings; first I am very excited because I always wanted to go. . . . I believe this will be the foundation for the rest of my life; and second, I am emotional that I’m able and worthy to pay my Heavenly Father back for His kindness to me.”

He also intends to offer hope to others who feel restricted because of their family’s beliefs or traditions. “I would tell them to continue doing right . . . and trust in God and His timing!” ■