

# AFRICA SOUTHEAST LOCAL PAGES

## AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

### Preparing Leaders

By Carl B. Cook

Africa Southeast Area President

One of my first assignments as an Area Seventy was to accompany Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve on a stake conference assignment. He was a great teacher, and I was anxious to learn from him. As we traveled to the assignment, he surprised me when he asked, “Elder Cook, what do you think we should we teach this weekend?” I replied, “Oh, whatever *you* think, Elder Wirthlin.” I knew he was a man of experience and would have things in mind for us to teach. But he persisted, “What thoughts and impressions have you had?” I realized he sincerely wanted to know, so I shared a few of my thoughts. We discussed the concepts, and he said, “I like your ideas. I feel they are inspired. Let’s address those topics.” And we did.

In addition to Elder Wirthlin’s genuine interest in my thoughts and impressions, he was also preparing me for future stake conference assignments when I would preside. He was helping me become a more effective leader and teacher by taking the time to counsel with me and help me grow.

This experience, and others I had with Elder Wirthlin, left an indelible impression on me. His example and tutoring influenced my life significantly. He lifted and strengthened me. He inspired me to want to do better and to be better.

Elder Wirthlin has since passed away, but his influence lives on through the service of the countless men and women he mentored. He helped prepare many leaders to continue the work of salvation after his service on earth was over.

Jesus Christ established this pattern of leadership when He lived upon the earth. He knew His time on earth with His disciples was limited, and He did all He could to prepare them to carry on His work.

#### Jesus Christ Prepared Leaders

To help prepare them, Jesus spent time with His disciples.<sup>1</sup> He taught them the gospel.<sup>2</sup> He set an example for them in all things.<sup>3</sup> He trusted them. He gave them assignments and encouraged them.<sup>4</sup> He was patient.<sup>5</sup> He helped them when needed.<sup>6</sup> He loved them.<sup>7</sup>

Shortly before His Atonement and crucifixion, Jesus instituted the sacrament to help His disciples remember Him and His Atonement. Prior to leaving, He admonished Peter, “And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32). Jesus strengthened Peter, and then asked him to strengthen others.

This continues to be an important part of Christ’s Church today. The Savior looks to each of



**Carl B. Cook, Africa Southeast Area President**



**Joseph Bitner Wirthlin**  
June 11, 1917–December 1, 2008

*Elder Wirthlin prepared me to preside.*

us to reach out to others, as He would if He were here. He invites us to strengthen each other.<sup>8</sup>

### **Preparing Leaders Requires Effort**

Our daughter told us of her efforts to help her young children learn how to work while they were home for summer vacation. She provided each of them with a chart listing the jobs they were to accomplish each morning before they could play. She tied a colorful ribbon to each chart to add some fun to the work.

She showed the children how to do each of the jobs and encouraged them to do their best. Often the children were reluctant. Some wanted to play instead of work. But she held firm in her expectations. Sometimes, if a couple of her children were having a particularly difficult time, she worked alongside them. Each morning she spent about two hours encouraging them in their simple work assignments.

She said she could have finished their work in about 20 minutes if she did it herself, but she wanted them to grow up to become capable and responsible. She knew learning to work would eventually bring them happiness, and also help them become successful adults. It was worth it to her to spend extra time to help them learn to do their jobs.

This is similar to what Elder Wirthlin did for me, and what Jesus did for His disciples. Helping others rise to new levels of commitment and responsibility requires effort, but it is necessary if we are to prepare the next generation of leaders. It is necessary if we are to prepare effectively for the Savior's return. He would have each of us do our part to lift and strengthen each other. He said, "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). King Benjamin emphasized, "And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may

learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiah 2:17).

### **Delegating Service Opportunities**

Our handbook emphasizes the importance of preparing others to be leaders and teachers. "Individual leaders cannot and should not do everything themselves. . . . Leaders should delegate service opportunities to others" (*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 3.3.4).

Delegating often requires patience, particularly when people do not do things the way we would do them. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) spoke of this, saying, "They may make some mistakes. You might wish that they would do better. Do not worry. Help them to do the right thing, and then let them do it" ("To the Bishops of the Church," *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, June 2004).

It may require faith to extend service opportunities to new members, members who are returning to Church activity, and young single adults. We learn in our handbook, "As presiding officers prayerfully consider members to fill leadership and teaching positions, they should remember that the Lord will qualify those He calls. Members do not need to be highly experienced before serving as teachers and leaders. They can learn from experience, by exercising faith and working diligently, and by receiving instruction and support from their leaders" (*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 3.3.3).

Our handbook also cautions, "In some wards, leaders rely repeatedly on a small group of people to give service in priesthood and auxiliary organizations. This can overburden the faithful few, and it can also deprive others of experiences that could help them learn and grow. Effective leaders give all members opportunities to serve" (*Handbook 2*, 3.3.3).

I once asked a branch president how many men were prepared to lead the branch if he were released. He replied, “No one, just me.” I suggested that he begin earnestly preparing others to lead. In Christ’s Church, a leader is a servant, and a true servant does not limit others’ opportunities to serve (see Matthew 23:11; John 13:16).

### A Leader is a Servant

One branch president served for many years, nurturing a branch until it was prepared to become a ward. When the landmark day arrived, the branch president was not called to be the bishop of the new ward. Some men in this situation may have become offended or embarrassed and stopped attending church. But this faithful brother accepted a call to serve as the ward mission leader.

During the fast and testimony meeting following the creation of the ward and the sustaining of three young, relatively inexperienced members

of the new bishopric, the former branch president bore his testimony and endorsed the new leaders. He committed to do all in his power in his role as ward mission leader to help the ward grow and prepare to be divided.

His service is described in the Doctrine and Covenants: “And all this for the benefit of the church of the living God, . . . Every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God” (D&C 82:18–19).

I pray that each of us might consider how we might lift and strengthen others and help prepare leaders who will help hasten the work of the Lord. ■

#### NOTES

1. See John 1:38–39; 4:40.
2. See Matthew 11:1; Mark 4:1–2; Luke 21:37.
3. See Matthew 3:13–16; John 13:12–16.
4. See Matthew 10:5–24; 28:19.
5. See Matthew 26: 36–45; Luke 22:47–51.
6. See Matthew 17:15–21; Luke 9:13–17.
7. See Mark 10:21; John 13:1, 23.
8. See Doctrine and Covenants 31:7–8; 81:5; 108:7.

## LOCAL NEWS

# Harare Youth Temple Trip

By Sister Midge Nielsen

An exhilarated busload of young people, all from Harare, Zimbabwe, arrived at the Johannesburg South Africa Temple grounds on Monday, June 26. All from the Highlands Ward, they numbered 23 including their adult leaders. They all had worked, saved, and prepared for months for the opportunity to attend the temple and perform baptisms for their kindred dead.

Simply obtaining the required passports and permissions was difficult enough. Because the passport office was closed on weekends, the young people had to use school time to go to the passport office and then keep checking back to see if their passports had arrived. Sister Peterson, Young Women advisor, said, “Some of the passports did not arrive at

all for 19 more of our youth, who we had to leave behind.” Gillian Chazika, 17, was nearly left behind on the day of departure. Though she had received her passport, she did not have the required permission affidavit signed by her mother, who was working out of town in Mbare. To make matters worse, her mother was not answering her cell phone.

“When everybody else got on the bus and the engine started, I began to cry,” she said.



**Group of youth and their leaders from Harare, Zimbabwe take trip to Johannesburg Temple**



**Gillian Chazika**

“I watched as the bus pulled away and left me standing there with my luggage.”

However, Bishop Spencer also stayed behind, determined to get this young woman on the temple trip. Using different cell phones, he managed to get through to her mother, who was en route. They all agreed to meet at the road port where the bus would be waiting. Gillian explained, “We met my mom and she signed the papers. Everyone cheered when I finally boarded the bus!”



**Russel Manashe Nyasocha**

One of the young men on the bus was Russel Manashe Nyasocha, 15, who nearly missed the trip on purpose. He reported feeling “stressed and moody” as he prepared for the temple trip and wondered if it would

be worth it. Finally he asked Bishop Spencer to give him a blessing. He just made the request, without mentioning any of the concerns that had him so agitated. He says, “As he was giving me the blessing, he mentioned all the things I was feeling. I know that it was the Holy Spirit speaking through him. This strengthened my faith in the gospel and my testimony.

I know Heavenly Father knows me and loves me. I’m so glad I came on this trip!”

From Tuesday through Thursday, the young people visited the family history centre, the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, had Mutual with the Johannesburg 1st Ward youth, and had a youth devotional with Elder Chatora in the Johannesburg chapel. Most importantly, they participated in baptisms at the temple. Their responses to their experience were profound: “There is such a spirit of love there,” said one young woman. Another said, “I was baptized today for my grandmother. When they pronounced her name, I felt *her* happiness and peace.” One young man

said, "I feel good, because I now have hope. I know where I came from, why I am here, and where I'll be going after this life. I've received a better understanding of who I am."

The 19 youth who did not make the trip because they had not received their passports have them now. They also have dedicated youth leaders who not only made the first trip possible, but never forgot the ones left behind. They explain, "We've already planned another temple trip for August!" ■

## I Found Them!

Recounted by  
Grace Dywili Modiba

Ever since Grace Dywili Modiba and her mother and sisters were baptized in 1984, Grace was drawn to family history work. "I gathered what I could from my aunts, uncles, and other relatives," says Grace, a member of the Atteridgeville Ward, Pretoria South Africa Stake. "However, I became frustrated at every turn as I tried to find leads about my great-great-grandparents."

The answer to her prayers began to unfold one Monday morning in 2001 when her mother called to tell her about a cousin who had passed away. They made arrangements to

travel to the funeral, which was in the area where her parents were born. Since it was approximately 120 miles (200 km) north of Atteridgeville, near the border of Botswana, they had seldom visited that area.

Sister Modiba remembers, "I left with my mum and two sisters on Friday, the day before the funeral. When we arrived at my aunt's house late that night, we found the house filled with family members and friends. After finishing the arrangements for the funeral, we were tired, but there was no place for us to sleep. One of my cousins graciously invited us to stay at her place, if we didn't mind a long walk. We agreed to go. It was a very dark night, but the road was quiet, safe, and peaceful. When we arrived, everyone quickly fell asleep.

"The next morning I was the first of the visitors to awaken,

and I found my cousin already up and busy. She gave me water to wash with, and after I finished, I experienced a prompting that I should go outdoors.

"As I walked a few meters away from the house, I was surprised to see two tombstones in the yard. I slowly went to them and was astonished and thrilled to find that they were the tombstones of my great-great-grandparents. They had the names and dates I so urgently needed! I ran back into the house and excitedly told my cousin of my discovery and how long I had been searching for these ancestors.

"Now, as I reflect on these events, I know that things happen for a purpose. I know that God lives and that Jesus is my Savior, and I am thankful to them for leading me to this information." ■

*Taken from "I Found It!" Ensign or Liahona, Aug. 2005, 12.*

***A seeming coincidence helps Sister Modiba locate information on her great-great-grandparents.***



# A Jewish Boy Finds the Gospel

Excerpted by Sister Marnae Wilson

Growing up in an Orthodox Jewish home in South Africa, Roy Swartzberg knew about the Old Testament prophets like Moses and Elijah, and he knew of the miracles they performed. When he heard about Moses parting the Red Sea or Elijah calling down fire from heaven, he marveled at the things these men could do for the people and wondered why there were no prophets on the earth today.



**Roy Swartzberg wanted to know why prophets like Moses and Elijah were no longer on the earth.**

It was shortly after his bar mitzvah (at age 13) that Roy first heard about the Prophet Joseph Smith. At the time he was living with his Jewish grandparents. His mother had passed away, and his father had remarried and joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

One afternoon, Roy's older brother, Mark, sat down with him and told him that he, too, had joined the Church. He then told Roy about Joseph Smith, the First Vision, and the Restoration of the gospel and prophets to the earth. Something felt very right as Roy listened to his older brother bear testimony, and he already had faith in Heavenly Father and in prophets. To him, this was glorious news! There were prophets on the earth, and people once again spoke with God. He felt himself wishing it to be true.

After sharing his testimony with his younger brother, Mark invited Roy to pray about it. But as a Jewish boy, Roy had prayed only in Hebrew, standing up and facing the direction of Jerusalem, the Holy City. Mark explained how Latter-day Saints pray: kneeling, with arms folded to show reverence. This was new to Roy, but he knelt to offer his first personal prayer. Although the news about prophets felt right to Roy and he had a good feeling after his prayer, he wasn't ready to listen to the missionaries right away.

Not long after that, he and his brother were sent to live with their step-grandparents, who were members of the Church. On Sundays the family would attend their Sabbath meetings, but Roy continued to go to the synagogue every Friday night and Saturday morning to observe the Jewish Sabbath day.

He also began to attend Mutual activities with his brother, and when the seminary program was introduced in South Africa, he went to that, too. There he learned about the Book of Mormon. The first scripture he ever memorized that wasn't in Hebrew was 1 Nephi 3:7: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them."

The missionaries were diligent in visiting Roy once a week, and after a while he started attending sacrament meeting in addition to his synagogue meetings. Finally, as he gained a testimony of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, he decided to listen to the missionary lessons. Roy was baptized on Christmas Day in 1973—the first time he celebrated the Savior's birth. ■

*Excerpted from Jade Swartzberg, "A Prophet on the Earth," Liahona, Dec. 2007, 38.*

# The *Liahona* Was My Guide

Excerpted by Marnae Wilson

In 1988 Filipe S. Zavale left his home in the southeastern African nation of Mozambique to seek education and work opportunities in what was then the German Democratic Republic. While in a store he met two missionaries who asked him if he had ever heard of Jesus Christ. He said that he had heard of Him but that he didn't really know who He was. In fact, he didn't really believe in God. The missionaries gave him a German Book of Mormon and asked him to read from it and to pray about it. Then, because Filipe had never seen anyone pray before, they explained how.

After their visit, Filipe read and prayed as they had suggested. "A marvelous feeling of peace entered into my heart," he remembered. At the same time he wondered, "What is this?"

When the missionaries visited him again, they explained that the peace he felt was the answer to his prayer. "I knew then that the book was from

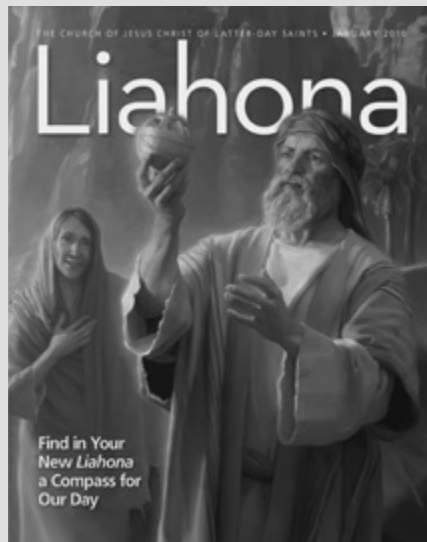
God. Still, I was fearful about being baptized because I thought my father might no longer accept me as his son." However, Filipe kept attending Church and learning more about the gospel.

In 1991, when his work contract in Germany expired, Filipe returned home to Mozambique. The country was at war, and the Church was not yet established there. "Still, I was happy in the hope that one day the Church would come to my homeland and I could be baptized," Filipe remembers. "Whenever anyone would invite me to attend a church, I would tell them I already had one."

"Which one?" they would ask.

"It doesn't exist here," I would answer. "But it will come." Of that he was certain.

It was eight years before Filipe found the Church again, but during all those years, he had a guide. "When



I left Germany, the branch president there subscribed to the *Liahona* magazine in Portuguese for me. Each month for eight years, the *Liahona* came to me, and each month it encouraged me and gave me hope. Whenever I read it, I felt as if I were with other Latter-day Saints. The magazine oriented me, filled me with great emotion, brought humble words to my mind, and fed my spirit. Often in the 'Questions and Answers' section, I found answers to my own questions. For eight years, the *Liahona* guided me."

Then one day in 1999, full-time missionaries walked into the post office where Filipe's brother worked—the same post office where his copy of the *Liahona* had always arrived.

Filipe recalls, "When my brother saw Elder Patrick Tedjamulia's name tag, he recognized the name of the Church from my magazines and asked the elder who he was. My brother explained that he had a family member in the same church, and Elder Tedjamulia asked to meet me.

"When my brother told me about meeting the missionaries, I was amazed. Could it really be that the Church was

here in Mozambique?"

Filipe soon learned that the Mozambican government had recognized the Church way back in 1996. He says, "It was marvelous to meet with the elders again. I remembered the things the missionaries had taught me in Germany, and I felt that same peace come into my heart."

In January 2000, Filipe was finally baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He testifies, "I feel the Lord's Spirit in all the work of the Church. How grateful I am for the *Liahona*. I am thankful that Heavenly Father provided a guide for me, so I could continue to believe and to have hope until I could find His Church again." ■

*Taken from Filipe S. Zavale, "The Liahona Was My Guide," Ensign or Liahona, Oct. 2002, 34.*

# A Congregation of One

Excerpted by Sister Marnae Wilson

Those who join the Church first in an area are often isolated from friends, family, and even the rest of the Church. But if they seek it, they are never isolated from the Spirit.

Among the first to accept the gospel in Tanzania was Robert Israel Muhile. Robert attended his first LDS meeting in Egypt, where he was working and studying. At Church, he met a missionary couple who taught him the discussions and baptized him. In May 1991, he was ordained an elder and decided to take the gospel to his family in Tanzania. But when he returned to his village—1,000 miles (1,609 km) and three days by bus from Tanzania’s capital, Dar es Salaam—his efforts went without success.

After six months, Robert traveled to Nairobi, Kenya, and secured permission from the mission president to administer the sacrament to himself. “I know how important those emblems are,” Robert says. “I didn’t feel whole spiritually [without them].” Back home, Robert continued to invite his family to join him for worship service. They continued to turn him down, so he held his own services alone. He describes the service simply:

**Robert Israel Muhile couldn’t attend Church in Tanzania; he was the Church.**



“I prepared water and bread, more water to clean my hands, and a small towel. I had my hymn book, so I sang an opening hymn out loud. After that, I offered an opening prayer. Because I was alone, I didn’t have any ‘ward business’ to conduct, so I sang the sacrament hymn and prepared the sacrament. Then I knelt and blessed it and partook of it. After the sacrament, I covered it, as we respect it always. Then I offered myself to give a talk—my testimony. Afterwards I sang as in Sunday School and then read from *Gospel Principles*. I finished with a prayer. I then ‘attended’ priesthood. After singing a hymn, I’d offer a prayer, then read from the priesthood manual the lesson I had chosen for that day. After that, I finished by singing a closing hymn and then offered the closing prayer.”

After being home for two months in his congregation of one, Robert received a letter from Lervae and Joyce Cahoon, the first missionaries sent into Tanzania. They requested his services as a translator. He accepted and traveled to Dar es Salaam to join them. While there, he met and married Joy Nassiuma, a convert from Nairobi. In July 1993, Robert and Joy had their marriage sealed in the Johannesburg South Africa Temple.

Like Brother Muhile, other early members of the Church in Africa have valiantly gone forward alone. Their faith and persistence has paid off. Many, like Brother Muhile, eventually came to enjoy having their own family in the Church, and many other members in their congregations. ■

*Taken from E. Dale LeBaron, “Gospel Pioneers in Africa,” Ensign, Aug. 1990, 40; Liahona, May 1994, 36.*