

# AFRICA SOUTHEAST LOCAL PAGES

## AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

### Is It Pride?

By **Carl B. Cook**

Africa Southeast Area President

I played American football when I was a boy. For many years I was one of the stronger, faster players, and I enjoyed recognition as I played in the back field. However, as time passed, some of the other boys' abilities developed and exceeded mine. At the beginning of my senior year of high school, my coaches pulled me aside for a private talk about my position on the team. They asked how I would feel about playing on the line instead of in the backfield. I was somewhat offended. I had played five years in the backfield, and they were asking me to play a position I viewed as inferior. I declined their invitation and promised them I would work harder.

I regret that decision. I understand now that the coaches were trying to put together the best team—a winning team. Unfortunately, I was so focused on what I wanted that I shrugged off their invitation. Ironically, I broke my collar bone in a preseason game and missed the rest of the season. The young men I could have played with on the line excelled

in their positions and received acclaim and recognition.

When I look back at my decision and the disappointment I experienced, I ask myself, “Was it pride that kept me from playing on the line?” The answer is, “Yes, it was.”

Recognizing the negative effect of pride in that situation, and in other aspects of my life, motivates me to try to better understand pride and its influence in my life.

#### What Is Pride?

In his landmark address on pride, President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) described many aspects of pride. One central feature of pride is being in “a state of opposition.” The opposition may be to other people or to God.<sup>1</sup> President Benson also taught:

“Pride is a very misunderstood sin, and many are sinning in ignorance.”

“Pride is essentially competitive in nature.”

Pride is a “very prevalent sin.”

“We are tempted daily to elevate ourselves above others and diminish them.”

“Pride is a sin that can readily be seen in others but is rarely admitted in ourselves.”

“Pride is the great stumbling block to Zion.”<sup>2</sup>



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

Pride truly is a stumbling block. Nowhere is pride more destructive than in our families. When we seek to gratify our pride, it constrains our relationships with our loved ones and with God. It inhibits change and progress. It inhibits peace and happiness. Pride is also a stumbling block in the Church. As we serve together in callings, pride can hinder unity as well as our spiritual growth. It is a stumbling block to establishing the kingdom of God on the earth.

President Benson said, “The proud cannot accept the authority of God giving direction to their lives.”<sup>3</sup> He referenced Helaman 12:6: “Behold, they do not desire that the Lord their God, who hath created them, should rule and reign over them; notwithstanding



his great goodness and his mercy towards them, they do set at naught his counsels, and they will not that he should be their guide.”

President Benson made this penetrating statement: “Think of what pride has cost us in the past and what it is now costing us in our own lives, our families, and the Church. Think of the repentance that could take place with lives changed, marriages preserved, and homes strengthened, if pride did not keep us from confessing our sins and forsaking them.”<sup>4</sup>

### The Antidote for Pride

The antidote for pride is putting God’s will above our own. Recognizing and overcoming pride requires humility. We must be willing to see ourselves in our carnal state, plead for forgiveness, and let go of our pride. We must be willing to put “the team” (our Father in Heaven and His will for us) before our own selfish desires.

When I lose the Spirit and feel I am in a state of opposition

against God or other people, I find it helpful to ask myself, “Is it pride?” When there is tension in a relationship, “Is it pride?” When someone shares an inspired idea but I don’t like it, “Is it pride?” When I resent someone else’s success, “Is it pride?” When I am not getting along with my leader, “Is it pride?” When I am not getting along with those I am called to lead, “Is it pride?” When I shrink from correction, “Is it pride?” I have found that inevitably when I ask myself the question, “Is it pride?” . . . *it is*.

I am grateful for the Lord’s mercy and kindness in helping us overcome our pride. It is not easy to ask ourselves the question, “Is it pride?” but recognizing pride for what it is can be the first step towards removing pride from our lives. As we humble ourselves and pray for forgiveness and help, the Lord can bless us with insights and power to overcome our own personal tendencies toward pride, and we can be blessed in our relationships with God and

with others. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has said, “Pride is a switch that turns off priesthood power. Humility is a switch that turns it on.”<sup>5</sup>

The Savior taught by word and example that the greatest among us should be the least,<sup>6</sup> that we should not elevate ourselves or seek for the honors of men<sup>7</sup> or for riches,<sup>8</sup> but that we should seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.<sup>9</sup> He taught us that the greatest blessings come when we are unified with God, with His purposes, and with each other.<sup>10</sup>

I know as we focus on following the Savior, we can overcome many of the pitfalls of pride and experience the fruits of the Spirit—peace, joy, and love.<sup>11</sup> We can experience the happiness and success that we seek in our lives and in our relationships with others. We can help build Zion in our personal lives, in our families, in the Church, and in our communities. ■

### NOTES

1. Ezra Taft Benson, “Beware of Pride,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 4.
2. Ezra Taft Benson, “Beware of Pride,” 4, 5, 7.
3. Ezra Taft Benson, “Beware of Pride,” 4.
4. Ezra Taft Benson, “Beware of Pride,” 6.
5. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Pride and the Priesthood,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, November 2010, 57.
6. See Matthew 11:11; Luke 9:48; 22:26.
7. See 3 Nephi 13:1, 18; Moroni 7:6.
8. See Alma 39:14.
9. See Matthew 6:33; 3 Nephi 13:33.
10. See Doctrine & Covenants 38:27.
11. See Galatians 5:22–23.

# Am I of the Chosen Generation?

By Elder Alfred Kyungu  
Africa Southeast Area Seventy

There is a legend told of a bat who wanted to be a bird. The bat joined the birds because it had wings and could fly like they did. Despite having the ability to fly, though, the bat didn't have feathers, nor a beak like all birds have. Instead, it had a mouth full of teeth, and it had hair. Consequently, the birds rejected it.

The bat decided to join the beasts of the field, and said to them, "I am an animal like you, with my hair and my mouth full of teeth." After examining the bat however, the animals decided that it didn't belong with them because they walk on all fours, and they don't fly. As the bat didn't have four legs, it couldn't live with them.

The bat was similar to the birds because it could fly. It was similar to the beasts because it had teeth and hair. But that was not enough for it to be a bird or a beast. There were many things it still did not have in order to belong to either group.

As members of the Church, we are counted among the Saints because of our sincere repentance, our baptism, and our confirmation. Our bishops, branch presidents, and leaders know us; so do the members of our quorums and the various auxiliaries. We have callings at church. We attend meetings and activities organized by the Church. Our neighbors and the people around us know that we belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

However, the fundamental question is whether this is sufficient to be a member of God's chosen generation, to be joint heirs with Christ. For that distinction, our hearts need to be turned away

from worldly matters and turned towards principles of righteousness, such as the following:

## Faith in God and Jesus Christ

Faith in the Lord is essential for salvation. It is a principle of action and power that should motivate our lives and drive us to act in hope. There is no faith without action. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "I am not asking you to pretend to faith that you do not have. I *am* asking you to be true to the faith you *do* have."<sup>1</sup>

"If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me" (Moroni 7:33). "By faith one obtains a remission of sins and eventually can stand in the presence of God."<sup>2</sup>

## Humility

The Holy Ghost comes to those who are meek and lowly in heart. "None is acceptable before God, save the meek and lowly in heart" (Moroni 7:44), and without humility we cannot see God, for at the Second Coming of Christ, the proud and the wicked will be burned as stubble (see D&C 29:9). President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said: "We must put aside our pride, see beyond our vanity, and in humility ask, *'Lord, is it I?'*"<sup>3</sup>

## Love for Others

Among those whom we can love and who need our succour are less-active members, widows, and orphans. "A feeling of responsibility for others is at the heart of faithful priesthood service," said President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in



**Alfred  
Kyungu, Africa  
Southeast Area  
Seventy**

the First Presidency.<sup>4</sup> President Thomas S. Monson said: “There are those who struggle every day with challenges. Let us extend to them our concern, as well as a helping hand.”<sup>5</sup>

We also need to love our dead ancestors, “for their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation, . . . neither can we without our dead be made perfect” (D&C 128:15). Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “I encourage you to study, to search out your ancestors, and to prepare yourselves to perform proxy baptisms in the house of the Lord for your kindred dead.”<sup>6</sup>

### Personal and Family Prayer

Rather than merely reciting the usual phrases in our prayers, we must communicate with our Heavenly Father. It is through prayer that we will be victorious. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught this: “Choose to converse with your Father in Heaven often. Make time every day to share your thoughts

and feelings with Him. Tell Him everything that concerns you.” He also gave this recommendation: “Parents, help safeguard your children by arming them morning and night with the power of family prayer. . . . Family prayer should be a nonnegotiable priority in your daily life.”<sup>7</sup>

### Scripture Study

One of the best ways to avoid the evils of this world is to nourish our spirits with the truths contained in the scriptures. The scriptures, including the teachings of the prophets, tell us how to be a part of the chosen generation and how to inherit eternal life. “And the scriptures shall be given, even as they are in mine own bosom, to the salvation of mine own elect” (D&C 35:20).

The scriptures teach that when we pay an honest and full tithe, God blesses us. “I will rebuke the devourer. . . . All nations shall call you blessed” (Malachi 3:11–12). By paying fast offerings, we relieve the suffering of the hungry, the sick, and the afflicted. “Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, . . . the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward” (Isaiah 58:8).

I conclude with the words of President Monson: “May we resolve to do a little better than we have done in the past.”<sup>8</sup> I know that if we follow the living prophet, Thomas S. Monson, we can be part of the chosen generation. ■

### NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Lord, I Believe,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 94.
2. “Faith,” Bible Dictionary.
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Lord, Is It I?” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 58.
4. Henry B. Eyring, “Man Down!” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2009, 63.
5. Thomas S. Monson, “Until We Meet Again,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 111.
6. David A. Bednar, “The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 26.
7. Richard G. Scott, “Make the Exercise of Faith Your First Priority,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 93.
8. Thomas S. Monson, “Until We Meet Again,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 115.



# Faith in Every Footstep

Taken from an article by Edith and Dan Baker

Most members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are familiar with the paintings of early pioneers who trudged across the American plains. It is hard to forget the images of handcart pioneers struggling through snow, mud, and sleet. In Africa, the first temple trip for the Saints of Cameroon has become a legendary example of faith in every footstep as well.

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) dedicated the Aba Nigeria Temple in August 2005. Just a week later, a group of 42 dedicated Saints from two branches in Cameroon left to attend the new temple. They were unsure of the route but had great faith in God. They prayed for strength and guidance that they might arrive safely and receive the blessings of the temple.

The Saints originally took

**Members from Cameroon struggle to get to the temple.**



**Cameroon Saints**

two small buses to a city about 120 kilometers away. They had arranged to have three vans waiting for them, but when they arrived the vans were nowhere to be found. Finally, after many hours of searching and prayer, they contracted two mini vans and drivers who were willing to take them to Aba. The members packed 42 people into space made for 36 and started off at 1:00 a.m. on the 190 kilometer trip to the Nigerian border.

Unfortunately, the roads were not paved, and it had been a very rainy season. For 25 hours, the temple group endured driving through mud bogs that made the way almost impassable. In order to lighten the load in the vans, the Saints had to get out and walk all night and all the next day. Nobody suggested turning back; nobody gave up. They resolutely moved forward with faith in every footstep.

Nobody walked very quickly,



because great time and effort were required to push the buses out of mud holes and scoop the mud away from the wheels. Sometimes the mud along the side of the road was actually higher than the van windows. The men soon discovered that going barefoot was the best way to progress. At each mud hole, someone had to wade in to test the depth. Everyone helped, and they always found a reason to smile, even though by that time, everyone's Sunday-best clothing was covered in mud. They finally approached the Nigerian border.

The senior missionary couple accompanying the group were the only previously endowed people on the trip. They had looked forward to serving the others as guides and escorts, but they were stopped at the Nigerian border. Not allowed to enter the country, they encouraged the rest to go on without them. The Cameroon Saints continued on into the unknown country of Nigeria, basing all their faith in God and praying that He would protect them and help them arrive at the temple safely.

After 65 hours of traveling through numerous road blocks, they arrived at the temple in peace. It is difficult to picture how they must have looked: tired, muddy, and yet triumphant. They were received with gladness,

and were well-taken care of. In time, they all received food, clean clothing, and best of all, their temple blessings. Many were able to be sealed as families and do work for their kindred dead.

The return trip was about 12 hours shorter because they hired a pickup to help pull the vans out of the mud bogs. Still, it was not easy, but they joyfully reunited with the senior missionary couple waiting for them by the Nigerian border. Everyone was able to recount with excitement the blessings of the temple and the kindness of the Lord.

The Cameroon temple trip is a story of faith in every footstep just as surely as any pioneer story from the past. It infused new strength into the Yaoundé Branch. Before the trip, it was averaging 40–50 people at sacrament meeting. Soon after the trip, they were seating up to 250, and the branch was divided the following October. Since their original trip to the temple, the branches in Cameroon have continued to grow and multiply, and the Saints have continued to plan additional temple visits.

A video of the original temple trip can be viewed at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=As2\\_wm6u5GY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=As2_wm6u5GY). ■

*Excerpted by Marnae Wilson from the article "Pioneers of Cameroon," by Edith and Dan Baker, 2009.*

## Too Nervous to Speak

By Pamela Akinyi Obaro



*Sister Obaro was afraid to speak in front of a group.*

When members first join the Church, they are often terrified at the possibility they may be asked to speak in front of a congregation. Even contributing ideas and opinions in a classroom setting may be frightening. It takes a great deal of courage for these new members to share their feelings and their testimonies out loud.

Sister Pamela Obaro from Nairobi, Kenya, had been particularly shy, even before she joined the Church. She says, "Shyness and nervousness have always made my life difficult. High school and college were trying because I was too afraid to answer questions verbally. Job interviews were equally hard, and it was difficult for me to secure employment."

After she joined the Church, Sister Obaro sometimes skipped church meetings for fear she would be asked to offer a prayer. "I felt badly having a testimony and not sharing it with my fellow brothers and sisters, but I was too nervous to speak up," she admits. One Sunday, she was asked to offer a spiritual thought the next week, and the assignment seemed overwhelming. She confesses, "As I walked home after church that Sunday, I thought seriously of never returning."

That afternoon she decided to take a nap. Before she dozed off, her six-year-old son, David, walked

into the bedroom holding a copy of the Pearl of Great Price. He had opened the book to Moses, chapter 6, and he asked Sister Obaro to read it to him. She told him she was tired, and she closed the book. But David pleaded, "Please, Mommy, just read here." Again he opened to Moses, chapter 6, and pointed to verse 31. Sister Obaro began to read about Enoch:

"He bowed himself to the earth, before the Lord, and spake before the Lord, saying: Why is it that I have found favour in thy sight, and am but a lad, and all the people hate me; for I am slow of speech; wherefore am I thy servant?"

"And the Lord said unto Enoch: Go forth and do as I have commanded thee, and no man shall pierce thee. Open thy mouth, and it shall be filled, and I will give thee utterance, for all flesh is in my hands, and I will do as seemeth me good" (Moses 6:31–32).

Even before David asked his mother to explain these verses, she had a new feeling inside. In their native tongue, Kiswahili, she explained that

the Lord promised to help Enoch and to make his weaknesses his strengths. Satisfied, David smiled and told his mother to continue her nap.

However, she did not go to sleep. She spent her nap time pondering the realization that she is a special child of God and that He had a purpose in sending her to earth.

"The next Sunday I was nervous," Sister Obaro reports, "but I gave the spiritual thought. I was later called as a Relief Society teacher, and with the help of the other sisters and my loving Heavenly Father, I was able to teach the lessons. I was subsequently called as first counselor in the branch Relief Society presidency."

Indeed, with the help of our Heavenly Father, each of us is able to overcome our weaknesses and fears. Like Sister Obaro, our fears can become faith; our weaknesses can become our strengths as we serve Him and our brothers and sisters in the gospel. ■

*Excerpted by Marnae Wilson from "Too Nervous to Speak Up," Pamela Akinyi Obaro, Ensign, August 2000.*

## Soccer on Sundays?

Taken from an article by Elder Ray and Sister Susan Hansen

Like most African boys, Lungelo Nyoni loved soccer, and he was an unusually good player. By the time he was 13, he was training with a team. His mother was a high school teacher and didn't want him to waste his time with sports, so he began sneaking out to practices.

When he came home with grass in his hair, though, she figured out what was going

on. She talked to the high school coach and got permission for him to play with the team even though he wasn't in high school yet, and she became his biggest fan.

While Lungelo was still in high school, he got invited to play with a professional team and was chosen to be their anchor player. In order to play with the team, however, Lungelo had to move away from home

and attend boarding school. Just as he was returning home from boarding school for vacation, he saw two missionaries being chased by a neighbor. He felt something telling him to call to the missionaries.

In Lungelo's words, "Little did I realize the effect my actions would have on my life. That was the beginning of my family being converted to the Church. We listened, we prayed about their message, and the very next Sunday, my entire family attended Church.



“I read the Book of Mormon, every single chapter. I prayed to know for myself, and my belief turned to a perfect knowledge that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was true, that Joseph Smith was a prophet, and that the Book of Mormon was true. However, because I returned to boarding school and couldn’t attend sacrament meetings there, I wasn’t baptized with my family.”

After he finished high school, Lungelo took the lessons from the missionaries again and was baptized in 2011. He continued playing professional soccer until a returned missionary friend told him about keeping the Sabbath day holy. With great faith, he told his team he would play every day of the week except Sunday. He reports, “It wasn’t easy, but it was something I had to do because it was not from

my friend but was a commandment of the Lord.”

When he was playing with the team, the team won, but when he wasn’t there on Sundays, they lost. So the coach suspended him. Then the team lost every game for a long time, so the coach said if he would come back, Lungelo wouldn’t have to play on Sunday.

Eventually, his coach informed him that the National Soccer Team of Swaziland wanted him to play for them. He reported to their first training and told them he couldn’t play because he was leaving the country to serve a mission in Uganda. Besides, the team trained on Sundays, and Lungelo knew that wouldn’t work for him.

Lungelo is now Elder Nyoni, serving the Lord in Uganda, honoring the Sabbath day, and looking for a new career after his mission. ■

*Excerpted by Marnae Wilson*



**Elder Lungelo Victor Nyoni**

**AN EASTER GIFT FOR YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS**

This Easter season, the Church will be releasing a video and website on March 29 that focuses on the Resurrection of the Savior and the importance His Atonement has in our lives. We invite all to *discover His sacrifice, embrace His teachings, and share His joy* by visiting [easter.mormon.org](http://easter.mormon.org). ■