

AFRICA WEST AREA LOCAL PAGES

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Houses of the Lord

by Elder LeGrand R. Curtis, Jr.

Africa West Area President

We are in the middle of celebrating the coming of two houses of the Lord to West Africa. Last year we celebrated the tenth anniversary of the dedication of the Accra Ghana Temple. This year we are celebrating the tenth anniversary of the dedication of the Aba Nigeria Temple. It is a great blessing to have these two temples in our midst. There are blessings that come to individuals, families, and the nations of Africa because of these temples. These blessings extend not just to those who are living now, but to those who have passed on and to children not yet born. Blessings extend to those who have passed away as important ordinances are performed for them in these temples. Blessings extend to those not yet born as couples are sealed in these temples, allowing their children to be born in the covenant and have eternal family relationships through the actions of their parents.

We reverence our various meetinghouses. It is to these houses of worship that we go each week to partake of the sacrament. It is there that we are taught the gospel in our meetings and classes. It is there that we gather for ward and branch activities. It is there, in most cases, that new converts and children of record are baptized and confirmed.

But the temples are more sacred than just a meetinghouse. The temple is the only place on the earth where a man and a woman can be married, or “sealed,” for all eternity. It is the only place where children can be sealed to their parents, extending their relationship beyond the grave. It is the only place where persons can receive the blessings of the endowment, preparing them to return to the presence of Heavenly Father when they complete their time on this earth. And the temple is the only

place where these ordinances, as well as baptism, confirmation, and priesthood ordination, can be performed for our deceased relatives.

In the 124th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord explained to His people that there were sacred things, including sacred ordinances, that He wished to bestow upon them, but that He could not bestow until they built a temple—a “house” “unto [His] name” (see D&C 124:28–41).

He promised that if they would “labor with all [their] might” to build the temple in the appointed place, He would “consecrate that spot that it shall be made holy” (D&C 124:43, 44). The people did as they were commanded and built the Nauvoo Temple. It was, as promised, a holy spot to those early members of the Church. Some of my ancestors received their endowments in that holy house of the Lord.

But some of my deceased relatives have received their endowments not in that temple, but in the Accra and Aba temples. As I have done family history work here in West Africa, I have had the blessing to go to the temple in Accra and in Aba to receive endowments and perform other ordinances for my deceased family members. As I have done so, not only have those deceased relatives received these saving ordinances, but I also have felt closer to God and have been blessed with His Spirit. God has made these two spots holy, just as He promised to do with the temple in Nauvoo.

Brothers and sisters, the Lord has blessings waiting for us in these two temples. If you have not yet received your endowment or been sealed



Elder LeGrand Curtis, Jr.

to your family in the temple, please meet with your bishop or branch president and find out what you need to do so. If you have already been to the temple, please return as often as possible to do work for the dead and to receive the spiritual blessings that you will find there. This may not be possible for those who live in places far from the temples, but please see what is possible. Let us all,

wherever we live, prepare family history records and either take them or send them to the temple so that temple ordinances are made available to our deceased relatives.

Please join in celebrating the anniversaries of the dedications of these two temples by renewing your commitment to the house of the Lord. Receive the blessings waiting there for you. ■

OUR HERITAGE

Translator of Truth and Example of Service

By David William Eka

David Eka was living and attending school in Britain when he received a letter from his uncle who was then in California, USA. In this letter, the uncle informed David about the new church that he had found and had joined—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Although David wanted to know more, he waited until he arrived back in Nigeria to meet with some senior missionaries. He offered to travel with them from village to village and translate into the native language the gospel as the missionaries taught. As he did this, David learned many things about the Church and gained a testimony that what he was hearing and learning was true.

On September 8, 1979, David was baptized by Spencer Palmer of BYU who was visiting with senior missionaries, Elder and

Sister Cannon, in Nigeria at the time. He was confirmed a member of the Church and was given the Melchizedek Priesthood. He immediately started his service to the Lord. Because he was a translator, many opportunities opened for him to serve the

*Sister and
Brother Eka*

Church. His callings were many, and he served the Lord with all his might.

During the next few years, Brother Eka valiantly served in many Church capacities—first as the district clerk and subsequently as a counselor to four



different mission presidents. He was then called to be the district president of Aba, Nigeria. When the first stake was created, he was asked to be the first stake president in Western Africa. At this time, regional representatives were established, and he was next called to serve in that position for Western Africa for five years.

At the conclusion of those five years, Brother Eka imagined that he might have a little time to relax. However, he was then called to be an Area Authority Seventy, followed by his service as the mission president for Lagos, Nigeria for three years. When he returned from his mission, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) called him to be a sealer in the new Aba Nigeria Temple. His work still wasn't done. He was called back to be an Area Seventy again for the second time. He has served the Church valiantly since his baptism.

David Eka bears a strong testimony: "I know that God lives, very strong and firmly. I know it in everything that I do on the road, wherever I go, I know that I am governed by the influence of God. And I know that Jesus Christ is His Son. I'm also His son, but Jesus Christ is His Begotten Son and my Elder Brother. I trust Him; I rely on Him, and I call on Him every time to be with me and assist

me in all that I'm doing. I'm so impressed with the scriptures that I have come to cherish, and I trust the Book of Mormon. It is another testament of Jesus Christ. It highlights all the hidden details of things in this life and exposes hidden knowledge, the mysteries of heaven. I am so grateful to be associated with and know the prophets. These are great souls,

and whatever they tell me to do, I believe. I pray that I can use the remaining days of my life to tell people about Christ, to bring them to Christ, and show them the way forward. I know if they do these things, their lives will change, and they will be blessed. I testify to the truthfulness of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." ■

TEMPLE EXPERIENCES

Once in a Lifetime

"I am so happy!"

"I am very much grateful!"

"I love the temple!"

With such words, Saints from Liberia expressed their feelings following four days of participating in temple ordinances in the Accra Ghana Temple. They were especially heartfelt and tender feelings because for many of these Church members, this would be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Two civil wars had devastated their country and left them a desperately poor people. They were not likely to return to the temple in this life.

The journey: Sixty-eight of them—men, women, youth, and children—had traveled four days on two buses through Eastern Liberia, Ivory Coast,

and Western Ghana. The buses arrived at the temple complex at about 9:00 p.m. on Monday, 27 February 2012. Though they were old and loud and rickety, the buses had not broken down. As they approached and then passed through the gates, the weary travelers could be heard all across the temple grounds, singing hymns.

At the end of each long, tiring day of the journey, the group had stopped for the night. Since the wars, it had become too dangerous for Liberians to cross Ivory Coast in the dark. Besides, the roads are too rough for travel at night; the drivers—one per bus—needed to rest, and the Saints prepared their food. They slept in the buses or on the road, and under the buses when it rained.

Along the way there were people who offered them a peaceful place to rest. President Matthew Wantoe of the Sinkor Branch said, “The Lord brought us.”

Men, women, mothers, fathers, widows, youth, and children planned and worked and saved—some for as long as eight years—to make their dream of entering the temple come true. In spite of working very hard and putting aside all they could, they needed to draw upon the General Temple Patrons Assistance Fund to complete payment for their passage. Each had to procure travel documents and temple recommends. Many had gathered names and records of their deceased relatives in order to receive the saving ordinances on their behalf. Coming to the temple had been the focus of their lives.

Forty-one of the Liberian Saints came from the Monrovia District and 27 from the Bushrod Island District. One brother, Moses Gweh, had been all ready to come, but suddenly, two weeks before the departure date, he fell ill and died.

The Way the People Lived: The Liberian Saints had arranged to stay in the temple ancillary building rooms that are set aside for temple patrons. When the buses had parked, the men began to unload the bags, cases, and boxes that contained their

belongings. The women and children tried to carry their luggage upstairs to the first floor cafeteria where they were to wait for their room assignments. They did not know the silver doors on each floor could open to an elevator that would carry them upward. One of the missionary couples living in the building helped them.

Among these people with so little in worldly goods, the missionaries reported, “There was no sound of complaint or even impatience. No child was fussy or crying. Clearly they had all decided in advance to pay whatever price was needed in order to obtain the blessing that awaited them and they considered it a bargain.”

The Saints had not only brought their own food and water for the trip; to the extent they could, they also brought enough supplies to prepare some very spare meals each day—although toward the end of the week some began to run out of food. The women prepared the food in the communal kitchen and the Saints ate together in the large dining room.

The most vivid recollection of the missionaries who observed these Saints is of their happiness. During the entire week, they saw no discontent or contention, only high spirits and very warm smiles. “They brought *us*

as much as they took away,” the missionaries said. “We will never forget them.”

The night before the Saints departed, on Friday evening, some of the temple workers and missionaries provided cakes and ice cream for a celebration held in the communal dining room.

The Temple Work: Except for one who had already been to the temple, all of the adults received his or her endowment during this temple trip. Many were married for eternity and with their children, sealed as families. Youth performed baptisms for the dead.

Many attended multiple initiatory or endowment sessions each day. Margaret B. Mbree, a widow from the Paynesville Branch, was one of these. Despite her slight stature, delicate features, and humble circumstances, she carried herself with great poise and quiet assurance. When asked about her temple experience, she said that she did four or five temple sessions every day so she could “obtain the instruction.”

The children and youth were sealed to their parents. When they were asked about their experience in the temple, they said, “It was beautiful!” “I love it!” “I am so happy!”

Testimonies: After returning to Liberia, Gormah N. Kollie, a 72-year-old widow from the



Matadi Branch of Monrovia District, said that the journey, though difficult, was not harder than her life in Liberia. But the hardship, she said, was not what she remembered. “The only thing I remember now is the order of the temple ordinances and blessings.” She had returned to her home with peace and good feelings and now she was thinking of her family reunion in the next world.

When she first learned of the temple trip, Rozinnah Konnah,

a 44-year-old single adult from the Matadi Branch, Monrovia District, was struggling financially to sustain herself. She questioned why her leaders would encourage her to go such a long distance. How could such a sacrifice be so important? But she followed her leaders’ counsel. Reflecting on the experience she said, “From the time I entered the temple, I got to know the difference between salvation and prosperity. I know if we listen to the teachings and the

**Accra Ghana
Temple**

counsel of our leaders and go to the temple and do all ordinances required of us, we will accumulate eternal blessings.”

President Wantoe, who is 43, served in the military for 14 years during the long civil wars. Though he suffered terribly because of this and has almost nothing of this world’s goods, his smile is larger than life and transforms his worn face. Everything about him speaks peace. He wrote:

*As a boy in my early teens
I had a dream. In this dream*

I remember when I was among a group of people to heaven to meet Jesus Christ. In the process I saw myself climb a very high mountain which some people were unable to climb. Then I heard a voice that welcome me to heaven. This is the only dream I can remember from my childhood. When I received my endowment, I remembered my dream and the reason why I survived the Liberian crisis. From this point I was motivated to do other ordinances that are required of me. I know that the temple is the most holy place on earth. . . . I know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the true Church. Missionaries never visited me—the Spirit led me to this Church, and my faith in the doctrine is firm.

Emmanuel Tarphe from Monrovia wrote: *I am grateful to our Heavenly Father for His blessings and protection upon our lives through those difficult route of travel and to our brothers and sisters the world over who contribute to the temple assistance funds. . . . I testify that Heavenly Father will bless them in abundance. One year, three months, and three days after I became a member of the Lord's Church, I had the opportunity to travel with my wife and three children to the closest temple, in Accra, about 729 miles (1,173 km) from Monrovia. We*

journeyed over bumpy roads, with little children, including little Patricia and Xan, who have just turned two and 12 months old, and with nowhere comfortable to sleep or take a shower. We arrived at the temple with much fatigue. For me, the fatigue was soon washed away by my presence in front of the temple with my wife and children. My mind reflected to a family home evening where I displayed a photo of the Accra temple and explained the little I had read about the Lord's temples. We became filled with the Spirit and with gratitude for the blessings we were about to receive. My testimony of the divinity of the temple ordinances cannot be shaken because I know they are true. I must remind all of us who were blessed to make this trip that we will obtain the blessings the Lord promised us if we will keep the commandments He gives us during these short but unforgettable days spent at the temple.

On Saturday, March 3, 2012, the Liberian Saints loaded up and boarded the buses again for the journey home. This time the trip lasted five days. As far as they were concerned, their once-in-a-lifetime experience was well worth all the years of sacrifice and saving and the long days of arduous travel that made it possible. ■

The Spring Box at New England Ville

By Elder Robb Seader
Freetown, Sierra Leone

New England Ville is a community located in Freetown, Sierra Leone, within the Dwarzak Ward boundary. There are no well-constructed roads—only crooked footpaths between buildings, rocks, and trees. Approximately 1,000 people live in this community, about 50 of whom are members of the Church. The people in the community are mainly traders who leave their homes early in the morning and return late in the evenings. They leave the house chores to be done by their children and dependents.

The most felt need of this community was clean and safe drinking water. In fact, water of any kind was difficult to get, especially during the dry season. People would queue for hours in line to scoop water from the ground between rocks.

Moses Shaka Kargbo, Bassey Conteh, Alusine Turay, Aminata Kamara, Karim Kamara, Paul Sieh, Ibrahim Samura, and Sorieba Bangura are all seminary-aged members of the Church who live in this community.

New England Ville residents help with the spring box.





Since 2011, several attempts have been made to get the seminary program started there as traveling to the Berlia Park chapel in the morning poses a challenge because of the terrain. An additional stumbling block explained by both the parents and the potential students was that they have to fetch water in the morning and evening.

In 2013, Elder and Sister Burns, the humanitarian missionary couple in Freetown, received approval to construct a spring box in New England Ville. Soon after the construction of the spring box, Brother Abdulai Conteh, who hails from this community, returned from his mission. He was invited to teach seminary in the area, and with the approval of the ward bishop, one of the ward members offered his own place for classes to be held.

When asked about the impact the spring box has created in their community, Aminata Kamara, a seminary student, said, “It is really a blessing to just pick up a bucket, walk to the spring box, and within minutes, the bucket is full. We used to wake up at 5:00 a.m. to go and fetch water but now it is easier. Now we have time to do so many other things, including attending seminary.”

Paul Sieh, another seminary student, said, “Waking up early to fetch water was my preparation for early morning seminary. So coming to seminary at 5:00 a.m. is not a problem at all.”

Another seminary student, Bassey Conteh, said, “As for me, I am so proud to belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Each time I hear nonmembers expressing gratitude for this gift (the spring box), I feel like telling them it is *my* Church.”

This spring box at New England Ville has made it possible for eight potential students to be enrolled

in seminary, and they are bringing their nonmember friends to class. It is wonderful how the different activities of the Church come together to bless the sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father. ■

RELIEF SOCIETY

Testimony from Lagos

By Ogunrinola Patience

The gospel has truly blessed my life in so many ways. Just a few days before I had my daughter, I became so scared and apprehensive. I had been told earlier by the doctor that I would have to undergo a caesarean section. Initially, I was fine with that, but all of a sudden I became so scared. I tried to remain calm by singing hymns and praying, but the fear persisted.

As I sat wondering what to do next, I noticed a *Liahona* magazine by my side. I picked it up and saw that the back page had the picture of a palm and a scripture which

read, “Can a woman forget her suckling child . . . ? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee, O house of Israel. Behold, I have engraved thee upon the palms of my hands” (1 Nephi 21:15–16; see also Isaiah 49:15–16).

Those words calmed me down immediately as I was reassured that God will not forsake me. On the scheduled day, the operation was carried out successfully—my baby and I left the hospital healthy. I know God loves His children and will do what is best for them if they call on Him. ■

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. ■

PRIMARY

Favorite Scripture

Frandyia E-M., 6 years, Gbawe Branch Kasoa Stake, Ghana



My favorite scripture is: Alma 17:2, "Now these sons of Mosiah were with Alma at the time the angel first appeared unto him; therefore Alma did rejoice exceedingly to see his brethren; and what added more to his joy, they were still his

brethren in the Lord; yea, and they had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were men of a sound understanding and they had searched the scriptures diligently that they might know the word of God."

I like this scripture because it tells us that when the sons of Mosiah were missionaries. They read the scriptures and knew the word of God. I will search the scriptures now and I will continue to do that when I become a missionary so that I will know the word of God.

Mark R., 6 years, Gbawe branch, Kasoa Stake, Ghana

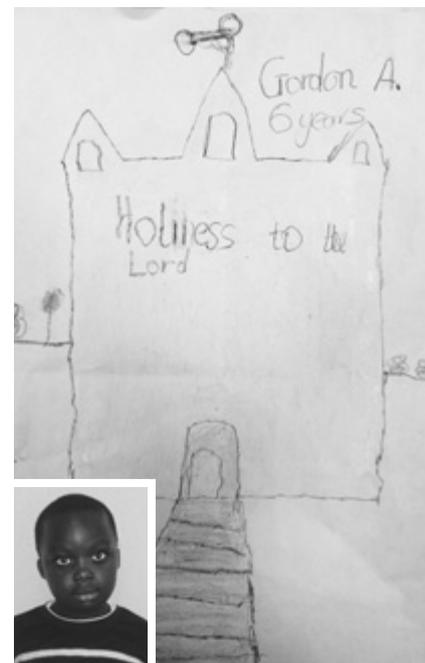


My favorite scripture is Mark 6:48–50.

"And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked

Prince R., Gbawe Branch, Kasoa Stake, Ghana



Gordon A., Kasoa Ward 1, Kasoa Stake, Ghana

with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid."

I like this scripture because Mark is my name. Also I like that Jesus walked on water because He is wonderful. When I get scared I think of Jesus's words, "Be not afraid," and it makes me happy.

I love to see the temple. ■

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE LIAHONA INSERT PAGES AND AREA WEB PAGES

We invite you to write and submit faith-promoting or testimony-strengthening stories or events that will be of general interest to the Saints in West Africa that we can use in the *Liahona* inserts or on the Area websites. Please email them to: africawestwebsite@ldschurch.org

Please include the following information:

- The name of the person who wrote the article
- Your contact information (telephone number and e-mail address)
- A high-resolution photo ■



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Africa West Area Website: africawest.lds.org

Mormon Newsroom Ghana: www.mormonnewsroom.com.gh

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