

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

What Does the Temple Teach Us?

By Elder Stanley G. Ellis

First Counselor, Africa Southeast Area Presidency



Stanley G. Ellis

Part of the 2015 Area Plan is to “accelerate the number of members who have access to temple ordinances,” recognizing that “family history and temple work will bring the spirit of the Holy Ghost into the lives of all



Johannesburg
South Africa
Temple



The Chitio family at the temple

members, youth, and adults, thus increasing faith and testimony.”

We know the temples are “holy buildings in which worthy Saints perform sacred ceremonies and ordinances of the gospel for themselves and for the dead. The Lord visits His temples, and they are the most holy of all places of worship” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Temples”).

What does the temple teach us?

1. Only God, through His living prophet, decides when and where a temple is to be built. Anyone may suggest a place and give good reasons for it, but the decision is never delegated—not even to the Quorum of the Twelve, the Seventy, or the Temple Department specialists. Truly it is the **Lord’s house!**
2. We build temples with the very best materials and workmanship. The contractors must build to the highest specifications. We give the Lord **our very best.**
3. When we attend the temple, we learn that **we are all equal in God’s eyes.** Inside the temple you cannot tell who is a professor or a plumber. We all leave our cars—whether a Mercedes or a “clunker”—in the parking lot. We leave our

street clothes—whether designer or threadbare—in the locker. Everyone dresses in white temple clothes for the ordinances. We are equally loved by our Heavenly Father and our Savior Jesus Christ. God is “no respecter of persons” (D&C 38:16).

4. Attending the temple involves **sacrifice.** It is not open on Sunday. Going there requires that we take time from our work, our studies, or our personal time and activities. We must make an effort and incur an expense in travel and commitment to go.
5. Temple worship requires **reverence.** There the Spirit is the teacher. If we must communicate with each other, we are asked to whisper. We learn that even unkind feelings hinder the Spirit.
6. We gain an **eternal perspective** in the temple. We learn that Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and Satan are real. We are taught the Lord’s plan and direction for us—the plan of salvation and the goal of eternal life.
7. The importance of commitments and **covenants** are emphasized. We actually have the opportunity to make covenants with the Lord and learn the importance of keeping them.
8. The teaching is focused on the **basics**—obedience, sacrifice,

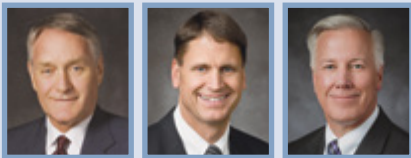
the gospel of Jesus Christ, chastity, and consecration.

9. We learn how critical our **faithfulness** is. In fact, the many promises we receive in the temple ordinances are conditional on our faithfully keeping our covenants.

With all of this, it is easy to see why the enemy does not want us to attend the temple. Usually when we have decided to go on a certain date, many obstacles arise to hinder us or even prevent our going. Our suggestion is to prayerfully consider

the situation and the means we have and make our own temple plan for how and when we will attend the temple. Then write it down and live that plan. The promises we receive in the temple are wonderful and real. ■

A Message from the Area Presidency



The Africa Southeast Area Presidency

President Thomas S. Monson has said, “Until you have entered the house of the Lord and have received all the blessings which await you there, you have not obtained everything the Church has to offer. The all-important and crowning blessings of membership in the Church are those blessings which we receive in the temples of God” (Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 93).

A key focus of the Africa Southeast Area Presidency is to increase the number of members who have access to temple ordinances. We are blessed to be able to utilize both the Johannesburg South Africa Temple and the Accra Ghana Temple, as needed, in this endeavor.

In the past there has been a waiting list for temple patron housing at the Johannesburg Temple. However, recently

the waiting list has been reduced and nearly eliminated. We currently have space at the temple for families, groups, and individuals. The Temple Patron Assistance Fund is also available for those who meet the guidelines. We invite each of you to come to the temple. Please meet with your bishop or branch president to begin the process and make the necessary arrangements.

President Monson has reminded us, “The world can be a challenging and difficult place in which to live. We are often surrounded by that which would drag us down. As you and I go to the holy houses of God, as we remember the covenants we make within, we will be more able to bear every trial and to overcome each temptation. In this sacred sanctuary we will find peace; we will be renewed and fortified. . . .”

“ . . . Those who understand the eternal blessings which come from the temple know that no sacrifice is too great, no price too heavy, no struggle too difficult in order to receive those blessings. There are never too many miles to travel, too many obstacles to overcome,

or too much discomfort to endure. They understand that the saving ordinances received in the temple that permit us to someday return to our Heavenly Father in an eternal family relationship and to be endowed with blessings and power from on high are worth every sacrifice and every effort” (“The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World,” 93, 92).

It is our hope and prayer that you and your family will set goals and make plans to attend the temple, that you may receive all of the sacred blessings that await you. ■



◀ **Johannesburg South Africa Temple**



▶ **Accra Ghana Temple**

LOCAL NEWS

Dreams of Granny

By Tlhalefang Kgosiemang

Throughout the scriptures we find that the Lord uses teenagers to further His work and strengthen His kingdom. David was just a teenager when he fought Goliath. Mormon was only 15 when he was asked to lead the Nephite army. And Joseph Smith was just a teenager when he received the First Vision. Even today, young people are pioneers as they join the Church and then help their families and friends find the truth.

Tlhalefang Kgosiemang discovered the Church when she was only 13 years old. She recalls, “The members were so welcoming, I thought, ‘This is a good place to be.’ I went by myself, though my parents were very supportive. They figured that if a teenager wanted to go to church, that was a good thing. When I asked my father for permission to be baptized, he said, ‘My child, I can choose some things for you, but I can never choose your religion.’ Eventually Tlhalefang’s example and testimony led to her mother, brother, and sister also joining the Church.

Recently, Tlhalefang’s father asked her to come to his shop, saying, “I need to speak to you.”

“What is it? Are you dying?” she joked back.

Then she reports, “Our chat was so sweet. He said to me, ‘I just wanted

to thank you. Your decision to join the Church was such a blessing for our family. It has made my life so peaceful and happy. When you were a teenager, I never worried about where you were or what you were doing. And then your mother and brother and sister joined. A wife that is a member of the Church is an absolute blessing. And your brother has served a mission and your sister plays the piano beautifully. Thank you for blessing our family.’”

But Tlhalefang’s faithfulness also blessed her extended family. She was very close to her grandmother, who passed on in November 2001. In Tlhalefang’s words, “I thought of her often and dreamed of her almost every night. We would be sitting side by side near a pool of water, and it seemed so real that I was surprised when I woke up and it was just a dream. This went on for about five years. Finally I spoke to my mother about it, and she said, ‘You know what this means, right?’ And I said, ‘I think I do.’ So on December 20, 2006, we came to the temple to do her work, even though I was about seven months pregnant.

“My mom was doing the baptismal ordinance, but somehow the ordinance was incomplete. After trying



Tlhalefang Kgosiemang

five times, my mom finally said, ‘You know, I think your gran wants you to do this for her.’ When I went in with my huge belly, it only took one try to do the baptism. And after we finished all the other ordinances, I never dreamt about my granny again.”

Tlhalefang closes with her testimony, “The experience with my grandmother strengthened my testimony about the importance of family history and temple work.”

Like the valiant teenagers of ancient scripture, when this one teenager chose to follow the path of righteousness, many generations of both the living and the dead were blessed. Through one young person, many souls can find the gospel and receive the ordinances of salvation. ■

“I Accept You as My Son”

By Michelle A. Lizon

When young people want to join the Church, they frequently encounter opposition from friends, relatives, or parents. It takes a great deal of faith to leave your family

and join with Christ in His restored Church. So it was with Bishop Kofi Sosu of Kumasi, Ghana.

Sosu was baptized as a young adult, despite his parents' severe opposition. Shortly after he became a member, the government initiated a “freeze” on the Church, forbidding members from worshipping. The Ghanaian mission was closed, and all

the missionaries were sent to other missions or sent home. Sosu tried to show devotion inside his home, but he was hindered in his efforts to study the gospel and nurture his faith by his parents' threats to inform the police.

After the freeze ended, Sosu began to meet with the Saints again. Soon he became determined to serve a mission. However, his parents threatened him again, promising to disown him if he chose to don the suit and nametag for two years. Sosu chose his faith and was renounced by his family.

While serving in Nigeria, Sosu sent a letter to his family once a week, but not one was answered. After two years he arrived home with no one to contact but his branch president, who found him a place to stay temporarily. Unsure of where to go next, Sosu

prayed and fasted. Despite his apprehension, he felt he should return to his father's house. As Sosu approached the gate, his father saw him and asked who he was.

“I am your son,” Sosu replied.

“My son?” his father said.

“Yes—your son, Kofi.”

Tears came suddenly to his father's eyes. No longer able to subdue his emotions, Sosu's father embraced him.

“Oh, my son, my son. I am so sorry,” he said, pulling away for a moment to look at Sosu's face. “I have not had a moment's peace since I disowned you. I know you did the right thing, and I accept you as my son.”

As they mature and grow in the gospel, many young people are able to heal broken family relationships. Their parents see the growth these young people have experienced and can appreciate the great blessings that come to those who live the gospel. Similarly, Bishop Kofi Sosu was able to renew his relationship with his father and feel the joy of being accepted by his family.

But for some of those who choose to leave their families and follow Christ, there is no joyful reconciliation in this life. For those faithful Saints, though, their loving Heavenly Father embraces them and comforts them as they follow the Savior in faith. ■

Excerpted by Marnae Wilson from “Faithful Portraits,” Michelle A. Lizon, BYU Magazine, Spring 2008



Painting “Bishop Kofi Sosu and His Father: Forgiveness of Father and Son,” by Emmalee Glauser Powell, Ensign, July 2009, p. 42.



◀ Wendy Hayes Wrench as a flower girl in 1951

Help from Beyond the Veil

By Ian and Wendy Wrench

Most members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are aware of the admonition to seek out our kindred dead through genealogical research and provide temple ordinances for them. Elder John A. Widtsoe (1872–1952) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote: “Whoever seeks to help those on the other side receives help in return in all the affairs of life. . . . Help comes to us from the other side as we give help to those who have passed beyond the veil (Elder John A. Widtsoe, *The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, vol. 22 [1931], 104).

Unfortunately, many members do not quite know how to begin, and therefore postpone family history

research until “later.” This was the case with Wendy Hayes, who in her patriarchal blessing was admonished to seek out her ancestors. If she would do so, her blessing promised, “doors would be opened.”

Twenty years passed, and Wendy had done very little family history research. She was happily married to Ian Wrench and busy raising a family and fulfilling her Church responsibilities.

Then one day the phone rang. An unfamiliar voice said, “I’m Yvonne Hayes Kemp. You probably don’t remember me, but you were the flower girl at my wedding when you were just four or five. I’m the daughter of George Benjamin Hayes, who was

the brother of Joseph George Hayes, your grandfather.”

Wendy knew enough of her family history to recognize her paternal grandfather’s name. She also had a black and white photo of herself as a child in a wedding party, but she had never known who the family was. Her heart jumped. The phone call sparked an interest in meeting these long-lost relatives, and Wendy and Ian made plans to visit Aunt Yvonne and her husband John on their farm near Queenstown in the Eastern Cape.

During that trip they visited the family farm and a cemetery in the area, where many of the tombstones had family names. Wendy further discovered that a member of another family had married into the Hayes family back in the 1800s. This relative had compiled a family history and published it. Wendy returned home with several pages copied from the book, which included stories of the arrival of her ancestors to South Africa in 1820 and also detailed the genealogy of the Hayes family for the past 150 years.

Wendy and Ian found the stories about her family fascinating, and they felt a great desire to do the temple work for those ancestors. The doors had opened wide, and Ian and Wendy entered with joy. They began making visits to the Johannesburg South Africa Temple to do the family members’ work, just as Wendy had been charged to do in her patriarchal blessing.

They went even further, visiting the National Archives in Cape Town to verify the information in the family history book and to search for more information on the Hayes family. It was as if they were on an exciting detective hunt, turning up death notices, wills, and family connections. They learned about the FamilySearch

website and methodically checked their way through the extended family names listed on the site. They were even able to fill in many gaps, adding to the information available.

In one instance they found a record of twin girls who had apparently died as infants. However, when Ian was browsing a death notice

index, he was struck with the name of one of the twins, who actually had died when she was nearly 11 years old, in 1899, not 1889 as previously recorded. They completed the young girl's ordinances during a visit to the temple, having listened to the help from beyond the veil. ■

Excerpted by Collette Burgoyne

He Threw the Book Back

Excerpted by Sister Midge Nielsen

Edward M. Ngindu from Kananga, Democratic Republic of the Congo, never expected to become a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Born in 1963 and christened in the French catholic tradition, he married Suzanne Kanulondi in 1984. However, in September 20, 1987, his life changed.

He met a man named Mutshipai Kayembe, who was some kind of a leader from some kind of a Church. He was holding an intriguing blue book. Edward explains, "At the time I was a student at the department of French language and African linguistics, so naturally I had a penchant for reading. This book intrigued me, so I asked Mr. Kayembe to let me look at it.

"He handed it to me without hesitation. I read the title: 'The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus

Christ.' Then I looked through the title page and the testimony of the three and eight witnesses. I decided then and there that the book was an invention of Americans. I figured Americans were capable of any mischief, so I returned the book to its owner.

"To my surprise, Mr. Kayembe replied with energy, 'Guard this book, and read it in full. This one is written in a language I cannot read (French), but I know it is the word of God. If you read it, it will enrich you and your family.'"

Edward admits, "In my pride and conceit, I wrote him off as a fool. I decided he must be illiterate if he couldn't read a book but said it promised riches. I threw the book in his face and turned on my heel.

"After I had walked two steps, he called me by name and said, 'Edward,

I beg you to take this book. I promise you will receive great blessings from it.'

"Suddenly a peaceful feeling, sort of like a warm breeze, enveloped me. Ashamed, I returned to Brother Kayembe and humbly accepted his book. That night as I knelt in prayer with my wife and two small children, just one and two years old, I prayed that the Lord would help me understand the contents of the Book of Mormon.

"During the night I had a dream wherein I was visited by an unknown personage standing in my room. I will never forget his voice as he spoke: 'The book you have is not an invention of the Americans as you think. It is the word of God. It is intended for the whole world. If you read, and especially if you believe in its message, you will be happy in your life and you will discover God's purpose for mankind. Your life will change.'"

Edward continues, "The dream closed, but my eyes would not. Sleep left me, and I was wide awake

thereafter. I started reading the book. The more I read, the more I desired to read. I learned about the trip of Lehi and his journey in the wilderness with his family. I followed how Nephi behaved compared to his brothers, but I still couldn't grasp what it all meant."

He was scheduled to meet with missionaries from this new church in the evening but had to instead swap places with his wife, Suzanne. She listened to what they said, and quickened by the Spirit, she believed immediately. She remarked, "Ever since the death of my father, I had never felt such hope that we would meet again with the departed who are dear to us." She promised the missionaries that their family would attend church the following Sunday, where Brother Mutshipayi was branch president.

Edward remembers, "That Sunday morning she began getting the children ready very early and we headed out, crossing the creek on a flexible iron rail bridge. I suffered a spectacular fall and was thrown in the mud along the creek. My right knee was bleeding and my trousers were torn. I suggested to my wife that maybe this was a sign from God that we should return with the family and go to mass instead.

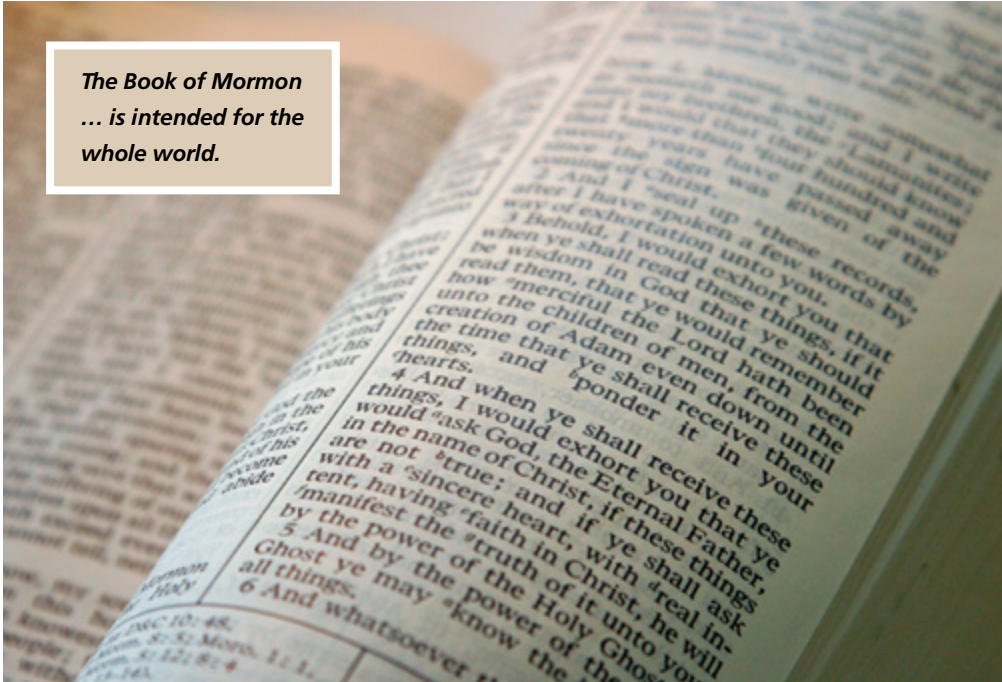
"My wife objected strongly. 'No, Edward' she said. 'It is Satan who wants to keep us from the truth. We need to meet Brother Mutshipayi at the church, where he is waiting for us.'"

Instead of meeting at a large cathedral, the Ngindu family found themselves arriving late to join a small group of around twenty members meeting in a bare room. They were sitting on dusty benches held together by large nails. Though the surroundings left much to be desired, Edward was impressed with the way everyone was discussing the book in question. At the end of the meeting, he was greatly surprised and touched, remembering, "Everyone rushed to embrace us, men and women alike. Each expressed great love and the desire that I teach them more about the Book of Mormon the following week."

The group leader handed him plenty of documents of the Church

to take home and study for the next week. Edward, the avid reader, devoured all the publications given to him. His testimony grew as he read and prepared to teach. Not only were he and his family baptized soon thereafter as some of the first members in Kananga, but he subsequently served as branch executive secretary, branch president, Abdallah Stake president, national consultant for the Area history of the Church, and supervisor of Seminaries and Institutes.

Though Brother Ngindu's service is impressive, Brother Kayembe also deserves credit for beseeching him *one more time*, after the Book of Mormon was thrown in his face. When on the Lord's errand, it's best to overlook offenses and persevere. ■



**The Book of Mormon
... is intended for the
whole world.**

The Book Was Calling to Me

Courtesy of Mormon Newsroom

Philibert Rasolo had spent years studying the Bible and searching for a meaningful religion to call his own. After 27 years of looking for a faith in his home of Madagascar, he became discouraged and vowed to end his quest. Instead, Philibert put all his energy into building a large brick house—three storeys—much too large for his family, who occupied only the top floor. Philibert said it would prove later to meet a need he had not yet imagined.

During that time, Philibert's daughter Zarlice brought home an unusual religious book while on break from her studies at the university. At first Philibert was not dissuaded from his original vow to cease his search for religion, but he remembers being drawn toward the pages of the Book of Mormon. "I felt like the book was calling to me," he remembered.

Unable to ignore his feelings, he began reading the Book of Mormon and had a realization. "The Bible and the Book of Mormon complete each other mutually," said Philibert. "[The Book of Mormon] speaks about how to be happy and not be in misery."

Philibert wanted to know more about the church behind the book



Philibert Rasolo reads the Book of Mormon with daughter Raorinefa Tsiresy.



The Rasolo Family in Madagascar

but did not know where to find it. He wrote a letter simply addressed to "The president, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Antananarivo," the capital city of Madagascar. The letter eventually found its way to the Church's mission home in Madagascar, about 175 miles (282 km) from Philibert's remote rural village of Fokontany Andalona.

By the time missionaries arrived, Philibert and eight members of his family were ready to be baptized into the Church. The baptisms took place

in a river near his village on June 16, 2009. "I am happy he joined," said his daughter Tsiresy. "His spirit is open. I can see that the Church has sent divine help to the family."

Initially there was no meetinghouse in Philibert's village, but the home he had felt compelled to build so large turned out to be ideal for their worship services. Now a new meetinghouse has been built to meet the needs of more new members. ■

From "Mormons in Africa: Stories of Hope and Faith," Feb. 22 2011, mormonnewsroom.org.