

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Including the Savior in Our New Year's Resolutions

Elder Joni L. Koch

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Joni L. Koch

When I was serving as a stake president, there was a wonderful senior couple who came to me and expressed that they had just made a resolution to go on a mission. I then rejoiced with their decision and indicated that I would start helping them fill out the papers to begin the process. “We can’t go now,” they said. “We still need to help more of our children and grandchildren. Also, we want to finish our second home so we can rent it and have another source of income.” I felt that was OK and told them that they could plan on going the next year.

A new year came, and the couple still had the objective of serving a mission but with the old justifications, plus some added ones for not going. This made them postpone for one more year and then one more till they almost reached a decade of showing good intentions. Suddenly the wife passed away, being followed by him not long after.

When a new year comes, almost everyone sets New Year’s resolutions with very good intentions, but as the year passes, most of these resolutions become only wishes which then become good intentions for the next year. Perhaps the root cause

for such a pattern resides in the fact that most objectives are established without consulting with the Lord, not remembering that the Savior and His Atonement are able to take us to the next level if we’re also willing to act and not just wait to be acted upon.

In the Book of Mormon, we learn: “And the Messiah cometh in the fullness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall. And because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon” (2 Nephi 2:26).

Therefore, in order to have the Atonement of Jesus Christ be effective in our lives, we must be willing to act,

and that should reflect in our objectives for the year.

A goal such as “Lose 10 Kg” sounds like the desire of an object which wants to be acted upon and makes no effort to achieve the desired result. That objective will not draw the powers from heaven to cause change! But if the goal is stated as “I will obey the Word of Wisdom by eating properly, exercising, and getting proper rest in order to lose 10 kg”, that is more likely to have the expected outcome.

The way we conceive and write down our aspirations will denote how much we are exercising faith in the Savior and His Atonement and are willing to act. Expressing, “Be more spiritual this year” will not necessarily



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bring more spirituality, but “Pray three times a day and study the scriptures 20 minutes every morning” will.

Nephi had the commandment and objective of building a ship and was confident he could learn the skills to make the tools and build this ship. Unfortunately, he didn’t know where to find the minerals to make the tools, so he prayed, “Lord, whither shall I go

that I may find ore to smelt, that I may make tools to construct the ship after the manner which thou hast shown unto me?” (1 Nephi 17:9). His faith in the Lord and desire to act made him successful in achieving the objective of making the tools and building the ship which would take them to a new land.

As we ponder about the New Year’s resolutions, let us include the

Lord in setting and establishing our objectives. We do that by exercising faith in the Savior and His Atonement, thus believing that we can actually change and improve. May we also express in our goals our willingness to act. Through this faith, associated with action, we’ll be empowered to achieve our highest dreams and experience full joy! ■

LOCAL PRIESTHOOD LEADERS

Following the Prophet Increases Faith

Elder Khumbulani D. Mdletshe

Area Seventy

When I entered the mission field, my testimony of living prophets was still standing on shaky ground. It all changed early on the mission. We were invited to a zone conference and told that Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of Twelve would be visiting. Prior to the conference, the mission president had asked us to prepare well for this visit. Included in those preparations was practicing singing hymn 19, “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet.” We were also told that when he entered the chapel, we should all stand and sing this hymn. Indeed, the day arrived. I was seated on an aisle seat. The mission president led the delegation as they entered the chapel. We stood and sang at top of our voices “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet”. As Elder

Maxwell passed to the stand, the Spirit was very strong and it testified to me, the man standing on the stand was indeed a prophet, a seer and a revelator. That confirmation, received in 1985, has been a great blessing to me over time.

Here are a few examples of how the knowledge of the living prophets has blessed my life. In 2001, speaking of tough economic times, President Hinckley gave the following counsel to members of the Church:

“Occasions of this kind pull us up sharply to a realization that life is fragile, peace is fragile, civilization itself is fragile. The economy is particularly vulnerable. We have been counseled again and again concerning self-reliance, concerning debt, concerning thrift. So many of our people

are heavily in debt for things that are not entirely necessary. When I was a young man, my father counseled me to build a modest home, sufficient for the needs of my family, and make it beautiful and attractive and pleasant and secure. He counseled me to pay off the mortgage as quickly as I could so that, come what may, there would be a roof over the heads of my wife and children. I was reared on that kind of doctrine. I urge you as members of this Church to get free of debt where possible and to have a little laid aside against a rainy day.”¹

As a young husband and a father, I listened carefully to the prophet, and I obeyed that counsel. I can write a book relating how over the years that this counsel has blessed me and my family. I am a teacher by profession,



**Khumbulani D.
Mdletshe**

which means my income is limited, but President Hinckley's counsel has blessed our family greatly. We are not rich, but we have been afforded the basic necessities of life by simply avoiding debt.

In August 2005, President Gordon B. Hinckley issued a challenge to the entire membership of the Church: "I offer a challenge to members of the Church throughout the world and to our friends everywhere to read or reread the Book of Mormon. If you will read a bit more than one and one-half chapters a day, you will be able to finish the book before the end of this year."²

As a family, we accepted the invitation. We knew it came from a living prophet. The spirit of the truthfulness of the book was increased among the members of our family. Besides just completing the book, new insights on doctrines and principles contained in the Book of Mormon were reconfirmed.

Blessings come because one has faith that modern prophets speak the mind and will of Heavenly Father. These prophets have been placed on earth to guide us. The story of Naaman as recorded in 2 King 5 tells of the tragedy that could result from not following the living prophets. Naaman had leprosy and wanted to be healed. The prophet of his day asked him to, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times". A promise given was that his "flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean" (verse

10). Disappointed that the prophet did not come out and call on the name of the Lord, Namaan did not follow the counsel. He was wroth and went away without the expected healing.

To believe in a living prophet helps us to establish the gospel in our hearts on a sure foundation. That knowledge

is developed through faith and hard work. I am grateful I have this knowledge, and I recognize the associated blessings. ■

NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Times in which we Live," *Liahona*, Jan. 2002, 83.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, "A Testimony Vibrant and True," *Liahona*, Aug. 2005, 3.

LOCAL PAGES

Five Moms and the #TimeWise Experiment

T. Ruth Randall

"Time is all the capital stock there is on the earth."

Brigham Young's words, as recorded in the Church's self-reliance programme, struck me with sudden force. I had seldom thought about time as "capital stock"—something over which I had stewardship and for which I would need to account to God. As a working mother with two small children, I generally try to use my time productively; but how could I improve that by implementing the suggestions offered by the Church's self-reliance programme?

I decided to embark on a week-long experiment by implementing the five step process suggested by the Church:

1. **List the tasks** you'd like to accomplish every morning. Add the names of people you can serve.

2. **Pray for guidance;** and then
3. **Set priorities.** Number the most important task 1 and so forth.
4. **Set goals.** Listen to the Spirit, and start with the most important task on the list.
5. **Report each night to Heavenly Father.** Ask questions. Listen. Feel His love. Repent.

I called it the #TimeWise experiment and invited four friends to join me. All are working mothers who have several competing demands on their time. How would the way we viewed our time and our faith change as we implemented these steps to become #TimeWise?

For Candice Holmes, the act of praying as she planned her day led to shifting priorities. "I found that as

I prayed for the Spirit to guide me, I was led to do planned things differently. This resulted in me achieving more,” she said.

Rosanne Scarth (not pictured) said that following the process helped her feel more focused and peaceful. “Any anxious, worried or fearful feelings completely go away when I prepare my day this way,” she said.

Personally, I found myself distinguishing between what was “productive” and what was “wise”. For example, spending half an hour playing with my two-year old may not be seen as productive. But, in light of my goals as a mother, it was indeed wise. I began planning my day with my overall purpose in mind. I slotted in times for “mindful one-on-one time” with each of my kids. No matter what else I didn’t achieve during the day, I found that I could inevitably tick that one off. It made me feel good to acknowledge this meaningful use of time, even though there was nothing tangible to show for it.

We all found that implementing these five steps helped us feel closer to the Lord. I realised that becoming self-reliant in many ways means becoming more reliant on God. Instead of allowing other people or external factors to dictate which activities were completed, I was asking Him which things to do. I was inviting Him to become the ‘boss’ of my time—and no one can do that job better than He can!

For Chanel Bester, this process meant ensuring that she put first things first: “I found that when I started my



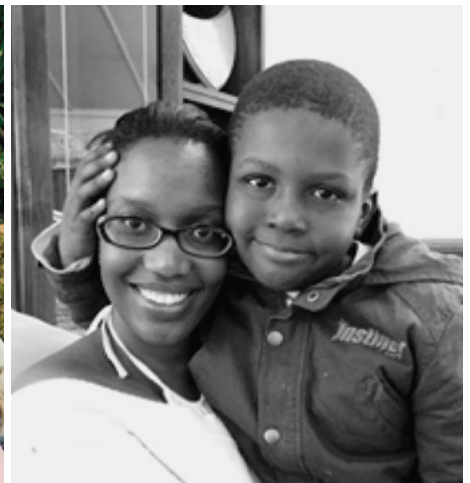
▲ **Candice Holmes with daughters Mikayla (left) and Cayleigh (right)**

▼ **T. Ruth Randall with Avelyn and Amelia**



▲ **Chanel Bester with Carter, Ella, Ava and Lincoln**

▼ **Phemelo Molefe and son Kitso**



day right by praying and reading just a verse or two—that’s as much as time would allow having to get four young children up and ready—I felt that the Lord was invited into my day. I was able to receive and recognise more of the heavenly help I need as a busy mother.”

Rosanne said that “reporting back to the Lord has made my prayers way more meaningful and effective. Days after continuing this, I feel spiritual promptings come a lot clearer and I recognise them a lot easier than on the days that I don’t follow the steps.”

Phemelo Molefe said: “I started reporting to myself what I had done right just to help elevate my mood, and to get rid of the thought that I was not enough. I have not, before seeing this exercise, thought of prayer as a time to report to Heavenly Father before. Adding the element of reporting to Him makes the relationship even more personal, and I think I will begin to incorporate this into my daily prayers.”

One of the most lasting impacts of the experiment for me came in step one: to write down the names

of people I can serve that day. This small action acts as a daily reminder of my real purpose on earth. I'm not here to tick off a long list of to-dos. I'm here to be a disciple of Christ, to be an instrument in His hands and to serve those He would have me serve. The #TimeWise principles help me feel like I am doing what I should to "go on in so great a cause"! (D&C 128:22). ■

From Full-time to Lifelong Missionary

Elder and Sister Jensen

Humanitarian Missionaries in Mombasa

For Kenneth Ingoi Malahilu, the admonition to help spread the gospel is not hard. "Behold, I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor" (D&C 88:81).

As a young man, he had three things going for him: he didn't smoke, he didn't drink, and he was chaste. After being baptized in 1990 when working in Nairobi, Kenya, thru the fellowshiping of his American boss, Kenneth, he served a mission in Nairobi, Tanzania, and Uganda. He returned, found employment again and put himself thru university by working two jobs and studying hard. He was in a branch presidency when his job at the airport

transferred him to Mombasa. Every weekend for six months he flew back to Nairobi to fulfill his calling.

When the mission president found out about his situation, he authorized Kenneth to have the sacrament in his home but encouraged him to find someone else to help. A former missionary companion moved to Mombasa, then two more friends which all helped for a time but didn't stay long. About this time Kenneth's sweetheart came home from her mission. They married, saved and paid their own way to the Johannesburg Temple in 2001.

In January 1999, the Malahilus taught a Muslim family the gospel and a year later they were baptized. This family is still in the Church. Leadership from Nairobi came down, interviewed, then witnessed this baptism as well as all others.

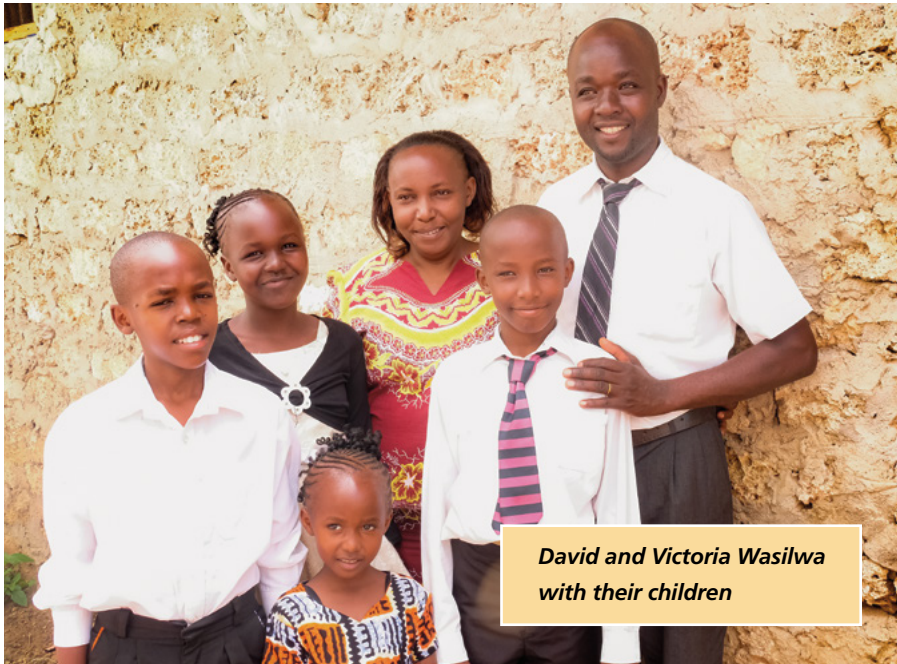
By the end of 2000, membership in the area had grown to 48.

Meetings were held in Kenneth's living room for many years with the numbers continually growing, until Mombasa became a branch in July 2002. Kenneth became Mombasa's first branch president. Together he and his wife, Caroline, continued to find investigators with Kenneth being instrumental in the first 100-plus members in Mombasa; the majority of those he personally baptized. Many of his baptisms are still active in the Church, such as the Jack and Beatrice Oricho family. Brother Oricho is the Mormon Helping Hands coordinator. Another investigator that Kenneth baptized was David Wasilwa, who then baptized his wife, Victoria. David serves as councilor in a branch presidency and his wife as district Young Women president.

Today we are fortunate to have Kenneth assist us in doing humanitarian projects. He is very prayerful



Kenneth and Caroline Malahilu with Jack and Beatrice Oricho and their three youngest children



*David and Victoria Wasilwa
with their children*

Preparing for My Mission

Ngonidzashe Leon Joseph Marange lives in Harare, Zimbabwe. He is the fourth son of Margaret Marange, a single mom and faithful member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who encouraged her sons to learn about and love the Lord. His brother Simba served a mission in Nairobi, Kenya. Ngonidzashe also has a great desire to serve a mission, and this has been his experience:

“Whom the Lord calls, He qualifies.” This statement is so true. God never loses sight of our eternal potential, even when we do. One of the greatest life lessons I’ve learnt is that when you do your part, the Lord adds His power to your effort. He knows us better than we know ourselves.

During the first days when I started preparing for my mission, things were hard. I didn’t know if I would be able to go on a mission; my hope was getting shattered. But I made the decision to believe and exercise faith in my Saviour, Jesus Christ, and this opened my spiritual eyes to splendours I could scarcely imagine.

I started off by working at a t-shirt printing shop, which did not really work out. I left that shop very disappointed and stressed about how I was going to earn the mission commitment fund amount and the other necessities to get me going.

in where we go. His faith amazes us. We found a hospital where we wanted to put a borehole in, but the hydrologists report came back with only a fair outcome. The project was approved, but when we met with the contact person, Elder Jensen and I both felt like we should not proceed and had already made up our minds to stop. Kenneth immediately told us about how Heavenly Father loved these people and how they needed water. “Moses struck a rock, and God brought forth water for the children of Israel, and He will do the same here,” he said. We went ahead with the project. Months later the hospital has plenty of good drinking water, unusual for the area.

We have not met anyone who does not love Kenneth. Even the less-active greet him with open arms. Kenneth is

quick to respond to duties wherever possible, even with a bad back from a near-fatal accident. We have seen humility in him when we have felt the need to correct him on certain Church procedures. He gladly accepts direction. These are all characteristics of a successful missionary.

Most Sundays he fulfills his goal of visiting three less-active families. As we have walked the streets of Mombasa, we have seen him talk about the gospel with strangers or invite a member who is less-active back to church. The young missionaries have been blessed many times with referrals from Kenneth, with three more baptisms forthcoming. Kenneth will always be a missionary-warning and testifying, for he is “not ashamed of the gospel of Christ” (Romans 1:16). ■

I prayed, trusted in the Lord, and waited for an answer. Then one afternoon as I was relaxing at the stake offices, a lady whom I've never met before, walked into the office. When I explained that I was trying to earn money for my mission, she immediately offered to employ me to work for her NGO as a photographer and labourer, and everything started working.

From that day on, I obtained a testimony that the Lord has a great plan for each and every one of us here on the earth. He waits for us to use our initiative and not get “acted upon” as if we are objects. He treats us as agents.

One of the things that helped me to hold on was the eternal perspective I gained. What usually limits our vision is that we focus on the here-and-now problems. If we would take time to be alone and think of our eternal potential and perspective, we would endure every trial, challenge, and tribulation knowing that these things are there for a season but will one day come to an end. They are for our own good and help us to learn and grow away from the adversary.

I bear testimony that if we develop an eternal perspective—not the current ones that limit our visions—we will be able to go forward with faith and hope.

Alma 35:35–37 is one of my favourite scriptures, especially verse 37, which talks about counselling with the Lord in all thy doings. I've learned to put God first regardless of the trials I face—to love Him with all my heart, might, mind and strength, to have

faith in Christ and entrust myself to Him in all things.

For a long time, I thought my life would be changed only on my mission, not knowing I was misinterpreting it. I learned a life lesson which changed the motive I had for going on mission.

Going on mission for two or one and a half years doesn't mean it starts and ends when you are released. Personally, I've taken it as two years of training by the Lord on how to become a life-time missionary. I'm grateful for this opportunity to serve in the South Africa Cape Town Mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

I started on the 7th of September 2017. I'm willing to do what the Lord would have me do, go where He wants me to go, say what He wants me to say and become the person He wants me to become.

And now my goal is to see others gaining the same kind of vision: to be enlightened and go forward with faith and hope. “The future is as bright as your faith,” taught President Thomas S. Monson, our prophet.¹

I know that missionary work is real and true, and if you are on the Lord's errand, you are entitled to His blessings. I testify Heavenly Father lives, He loves me, and I am His child. Jesus Christ is His Son and my Saviour and Redeemer. He died for my sins. I know this is His Church and that as long as we keep the commandments, our lives will be more fulfilling and less complicated.

I know that the Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ, and if we study it every day, we can reach our divine potential. I also know that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of the Restoration. I bear witness that the temple is the greatest school on the earth and as we visit it often, we can feel our Father's love for us. ■

NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Be of Good Cheer,” April 2009 general conference.

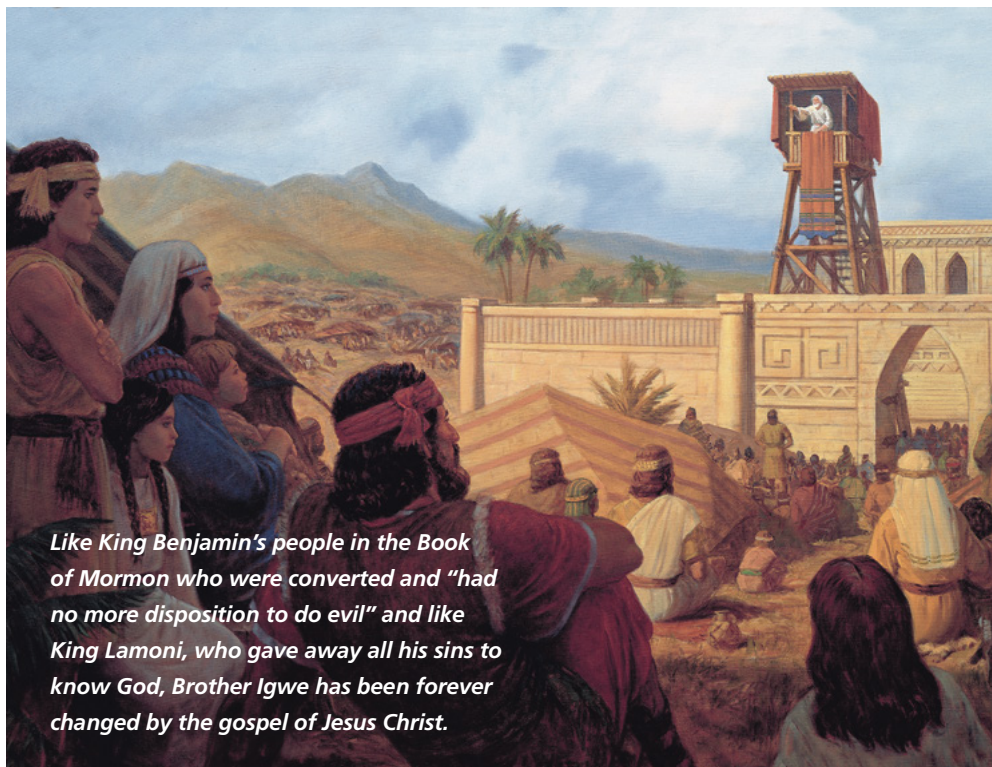
Conversion Story

Brother Chukwuemeka Igwe was a young man when he first learned about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His conversion story is reminiscent of some of the conversion stories in the Book of Mormon and those in the early days of the restored Church.

In March of 1992, while traveling on an early morning bus, Brother Igwe met a missionary who was having a religious discussion with the people sitting behind him on the bus. The missionary had a copy of the *Church News*, which he gave to Brother Igwe to read. Going through it, he read the Articles of Faith of the Church. He asked the missionary if the Church taught people how to receive personal revelation. When the missionary responded yes, Brother Igwe's interest in the Church grew, and he requested the address for the Church.

Many times he thought of visiting the Church, but his attention was constantly diverted one way or the other. On observation of this trend, he decided to make the visit, which he did. At the distribution center he collected a copy of the Book of Mormon and two copies of the *Ensign* magazine. The *Ensign* answered most of the questions that had come to his mind. Brother Igwe read the Book of Mormon day and night and finished it in about three or four days. By the time he was done, he had become as a new person. His disposition changed for good, and all desire to break the commandments of God was gone. He began writing his history and the history of his ancestors as he observed and as was told to him by his late father.

By the time he went back to the Church office, he was fully converted and ready for baptism. He told Brother Christian Ugo, the distribution center supervisor, that he was ready for baptism. Brother Ugo asked Brother Igwe if he had read and received a testimony of the Book of Mormon. Brother Igwe replied in the affirmative and related to Brother Ugo how he had even documented his own history and that of his ancestors because of reading the book. After being told that he would still have to have the six missionary discussions before being baptized, he insisted on visiting the missionaries to hasten the process and be baptized as soon as possible. Elder Chukwe and Elder Olajuwon taught him the lessons, and on July 19, 1992, he was baptized a



Like King Benjamin's people in the Book of Mormon who were converted and "had no more disposition to do evil" and like King Lamoni, who gave away all his sins to know God, Brother Igwe has been forever changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Like King Benjamin's people in the Book of Mormon who were converted and "had no more disposition to do

evil" (Mosiah 5:2) and like King Lamoni, who was willing to give away all his sins to know God (see Alma 22:18), Brother Igwe has been forever changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. ■

• **WANTED** •

A LATTER-DAY SAINT
WHO HAS:

FAITH

Share your story and send us your picture on Facebook [@LDSAfrica](#) or Twitter [#LDSmostwanted](#) or email it to africasecommunications@gmail.com