

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Love and Serve One Another

By Elder S. Mark Palmer

First Counselor, Africa Southeast Area Presidency

All around our area we see faithful members with a copy of the area plan on a little card in their pockets or tucked in their scriptures. One of the three priorities in the area plan is that we “love and serve one another.” Those five words beautifully describe *what* it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and *how* we can follow Him. The area plan gives us two specific goals for how to show our love for others and serve them.

They are:

1. Reach out to other members of the Church, one by one, rescuing those who are less active.
2. Share the gospel with those not of our faith.

These goals are simple, and I have a testimony that the Lord will bless us as we make them a part of our prayers and our daily lives. Here is a personal example.

Sharing the gospel with those not of our faith

I love to take pass-along cards with me and invite people to come to church or meet with the missionaries. Several months ago, I was eating dinner at a fast food place and got talking to a fine young man who was serving our table. Collin is from Zimbabwe

and so I mentioned that I had recently been to church in Harare and invited him to learn more about the Church. He said he had a brother, who years ago had taken him to the LDS Church in Harare, and that he would be pleased to meet with the missionaries. His brother had since passed away, and Collin clearly has an ache in his heart and soul that only the gospel will fill. The next time I met Collin he was excited to tell me about his visit with the missionaries and had a wonderful light in his countenance.



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Rescuing those who are less active

Collin then shared that over 10 years ago when he came to church, he had actually become a member. He had attended with his brother for a season but had not been back for many years and did not remember a lot about the teachings. In other words, he was what we sometimes call a less-active member. We invited him to attend church the following Sunday and with great anticipation met him outside the meetinghouse so he would have someone to sit with during sacrament meeting. The members of the ward were friendly and welcoming, the classes well taught and full of the Spirit, and Collin expressed a desire to return.

Reaching out one by one

The next week, Collin came dressed in his Sunday best. He was welcomed by a wonderful ward mission leader who waited outside especially for him, greeted him warmly, and began introducing him to others. Many ward leaders and members reached out to Collin with love and kindness, and he is now progressing on his journey to full activity, lifted and buoyed by participating in the ordinance of the sacrament and supported by loving members and leaders

in his ward. He is also being greatly blessed by the knowledge of the plan of salvation, which assures us of the eternal nature of families and that he and his brother will be together again.

This simple experience is repeated every week all over our area as members reach out, one by one, to both less-active members and those not of our faith. The Lord is putting people in each of our paths and will use us as His hands if we do our part. Through these seemingly ordinary experiences, many lives can be blessed in extraordinary ways. For example, after his second time at church, Collin decided to share the gospel himself by reaching out and inviting a friend to also come.

In his beautiful book *One by One*, Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles speaks of experiences that were “divinely orchestrated by a loving Lord.” He says, “I believe that in the work of the Lord there is no such thing as a coincidence. . . . I [was] blessed to deliver tender mercies to many individuals—because the worth of souls is great in the sight of God.” So it is that I believe with all my heart that meeting Collin was not a coincidence but a tender mercy from the Lord because of His great love for one of His precious sons who had slipped into inactivity and become lost.

One year ago, President Thomas S. Monson gave the Seventies this charge:

“As you meet with members, emphasize the importance of reaching out to those who, for whatever reason, have slipped into partial or complete inactivity. I am confident many will welcome the invitation to come back. As individuals are brought back to the joy of the gospel of Jesus Christ, lives will be blessed, and souls will be saved.

“The catalyst in this process of helping them return has always been—and will continue to be—the principle of love. We desire that all who are stranded in inactivity be provided the

sacred, spiritual blessings that await them as they return.”

We invite you to follow the Savior by reaching out one by one, sharing the gospel with those not of our faith and rescuing those who are less active. We know that you will also see tender mercies as the Lord orchestrates His work and blesses others through you. Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God. And how great shall be your joy with one soul that repents and returns unto Him. ■

LOCAL PRIESTHOOD LEADERS

An Attitude of Love and Service

By Elder Daniel P. Hall

The 2018 Africa Southeast Area plan has as one of its key goals to “love and serve one another.” As we love and serve one another, we become like the Master whose mortal life was filled with love and service. The ultimate expression and manifestation of His love was His infinite and eternal sacrifice for all of us.

One of the best ways to show our love not only to Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, but also to our brothers and sisters throughout the world is to share the gospel. The

gospel is the Atonement of Jesus Christ.¹ It is the good news spoken of in the scriptures.² The gospel gives us joy and happiness, peace and comfort, direction and hope. The gospel gives us an abundant life in this life and eternal life in the world to come.³

Lehi in his sermon to his son Jacob professes just how important sharing the gospel is.

“Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh



Elder Daniel P. Hall

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that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah” (2 Nephi 2:8).

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “After all that has been said, the greatest and most important duty is to preach the Gospel.”⁴

Often when we think of sharing the gospel, we become discouraged, having feelings of guilt and fear, wondering if our efforts are good enough. Whilst a desire for improvement is good, Heavenly Father does not want us to see sharing the gospel as a burden. Rather, it should be viewed as a great blessing, an honor to be able to share with others the pearl of great price, the greatest of all the treasures we have received. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “Sharing the gospel is not a burden but a joy. What we call ‘member missionary work’ is not a program but an attitude of love and outreach to help those around us. It is also an opportunity to witness how we feel about the restored gospel of our Savior.”⁵

One thing we can all do to share the gospel is to sincerely pray and ask Heavenly Father to help us be able to find the people that He has prepared to hear the gospel message. Recently, Elder S. Mark Palmer, First Counselor in the Africa Southeast Area Presidency, invited the Area Seventies to do just this. I remember going home after receiving this invitation, entering

my study and asking the Lord to help me to talk to someone who was ready. A short time later, I was attending a district conference in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and got into conversation with Raymond, the driver who took me from the airport to the hotel I was staying at. As we spoke about the gospel, He mentioned to me that it was strange but just the day before he had met another member of our Church, Ephraim Msane, the Kenya Nairobi Mission president, and he too had helped him feel something special as he spoke about the Church. I remarked to Raymond, “Don’t you think the Lord is trying to tell you something?” He agreed. I believe that Raymond was prepared by the Lord to hear the gospel message and that Heavenly Father had answered my prayer to find someone ready to hear the truth.

We should remember that sharing the gospel is more than just talking about the Church. Sharing the gospel is giving of ourselves to those in need. It is having faith that the Lord knows and loves all His children and that He will use us as His instruments in blessing their lives. On one occasion, my wife and I were selecting the airplane seat I would travel in to a Church assignment and felt impressed to move the seat from the preselected option to a seat toward

the front of the aircraft. The next day as I boarded the plane and took my seat, I sat next to a woman who told me she was traveling to a funeral of a family member who had committed suicide. She was heartbroken. I felt thrilled at the opportunity to share with her sacred principles of the gospel that would comfort her and give her peace. It was no coincidence that in my family I too had recently lost a loved one to suicide and so was uniquely qualified to provide this comfort and direction she needed. I know the Lord sent me to comfort one of His daughters at an extremely difficult time in her life.

I invite each of us to prayerfully ask God to help us find someone to share the gospel with. I testify that as we do so, God will answer our prayers and lead us to those ready to hear the gospel message. I testify that sharing the gospel brings great joy and is one of the best ways to love and serve others. I know that as we seek to be His servants, He will lead us to the very people that we are uniquely positioned to assist and in so doing, both will find true happiness and joy. ■

NOTES

1. See 3 Nephi 27:13–15, 20–21.
2. See Guide to the Scriptures, “Gospels,” scriptures.lds.org.
3. See John 10:10; 2 Timothy 1:10; Doctrine & Covenants 10:50; 14:7.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 330.
5. Dallin H. Oaks, “Sharing the Restored Gospel,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 60.

Picking Up the Oars: An Experiment in Problem-Solving

By T. Ruth Randall

You wouldn't get into a rowboat and expect the Lord to push you across the river; you have to pick up the oars and do your part too," the self-reliance course tells us.¹

So, as part of my year-long experiment with implementing each of the 12 self-reliance principles, I decided to bring "solve problems," the Church's problem-solving wisdom, into the home and implement it together with my husband.

The first thing that I realised is that this needs buy-in from everyone involved. It took my husband and I four days to find the time to sit down and discuss our "challenge," *after* making the decision to do so. Our biggest problems seep up our energy and monopolize our thoughts—but how often do we set aside dedicated time to actively focus on defining our problems and coming up with positive solutions to solve them?

In **step one** of the process, we are asked *not* to call our problem a problem. Instead, "it's a challenge to overcome," the self-reliance course tells us. I admit I groaned inwardly when I first read that. Semantics, right? Then I read the definition of the word *challenge*—to "invite to prove or justify something."² Brigham Young (1801–77) observed, "God never bestows upon



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his people, or upon an individual, superior blessings without a severe trial to prove them."³ After reading that, seeing a problem as an opportunity to prove myself—or the Lord, for that matter—began to make sense.

We spent some time on **step two**: clearly defining the challenge. In our family, this was to address a pervasive negativity that many around us were feeling about our country. South Africa is wracked with political difficulties, socioeconomic challenges, a high crime rate, and much unemployment. Because of this, many of our friends had become discouraged about their prospects and had begun to emigrate. We wanted to decide on a suitable

course of action for our family facing these difficulties and negative emotions.

This led us to **step three**: brainstorming solutions. Here we are instructed to "challenge assumptions, and write down even outrageous solutions." For my husband, brainstorming was a reminder to suspend his personal judgments.

"It helps you to focus on the other person's ideas," he said. "Each person needs to feel empowered in the process. It takes encouragement." Our possible solutions included: stop listening to the news, explore our options for moving to another country, and keep a ready supply of chocolate in the pantry (my husband suggested the chocolate!).

Steps four and five asked us to consider each of the solutions and ask ourselves “what if?” What might happen if we implemented that particular solution? At this point, the chocolate idea pointed to a “weighty” outcome and was discarded. Instead, we decided on actions that would help us feel positive and motivated in the country we love.

In **step six** we identified an action plan, with deadlines and accountability. In the end, we decided we would feel better about our country if we were more actively involved in uplifting it. As a family we committed to pray to find a charity in our community that we can become meaningfully involved with on a regular basis. We also committed to arming ourselves with plastic bags to pick up litter every time we go out for a walk. By implementing these steps, we anticipate that we will not only feel more positive about our land but will also be able to instill a culture of meaningful service within our home.

We’re excited for the new year as we implement **step seven**—pray about it. With the Lord’s hand guiding us, we feel confident that this can become a new, powerful pattern for our family to overcome many challenges in His way. ■

NOTES

1. Self-Reliance Blog, “Self-Reliance Principle 6: Solve Problems,” lds.org/topics/pref-self-reliance/live/solve-problems.
2. *The Oxford Desk Dictionary and Thesaurus, Second American Edition* (2002), “challenge,” 123.
3. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 338.

“It’s True, It’s True, It’s True”

By **Muanda David Muanda**

Kananga First Ward, Kananga Stake

As a young man, I wanted to know for myself if the Book of Mormon was true. I believed that it was. I hoped that it was. I advanced from Primary to the Aaronic Priesthood, having faith that it was true. Even though I walked around telling people, in my poor French, that I had a testimony of this book, I did not really *know* it for myself. In a talk, I could testify that the Book of Mormon is the word of God because my Primary teacher had told me so, but in my heart I did not understand what it meant.

During the school year-end holidays in the dry season, I would concentrate on reading and studying the Book of Mormon. Having already studied it in seminary, I knew Moroni’s promise that said if I would read, ponder and pray, I might know it was true. I read for days and weeks, but nothing happened. No light, no angel, no voice, nothing but a feeling of peace while I was reading. I finally stopped reading the Book of Mormon.

On October 16, 2015, I studied Exodus 11 to 19 in the Old Testament. As I got to Exodus 16:16, I noticed that they speak of a common capacity measurement of that time called *omer*. Due to the lack of food, the Israelites had murmured against Moses and his

God. Manna was sent to them, and each one was to take an omer a day. In my Old Testament study guide, I saw a picture of an omer—it was a clay vessel used to measure things.

The scripture in 1 Nephi 3:7 came to mind, in which the prophet Nephi says that “the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of



Muanda David Muanda

men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.” I realized that God had commanded the Israelites to leave Egypt, and so He gave them manna from heaven to provide for their hunger. This scripture from the Book of Mormon enlightened my understanding of the Bible and, on the spot, I knew in my heart that the Book of Mormon, being another testament of Jesus Christ, is the word of God.

As Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained, it was more like the sunrise than the sudden lighting when a switch is pressed (see “The Spirit of Revelation,” *Liahona*, May 2011, 87–90). A light gradually filled my mind and heart. I began to see the Book of Mormon in a different way. The best way I can describe this experience is to say that my mind was illuminated. During the weeks and months that followed, I knew more surely than ever that the Book of Mormon was the word of God. The impression I felt time and time again through the voice of the Spirit was “it’s true, it’s true, it’s true!” I still have the same testimony. I read the Book of Mormon almost every day, and every time, I hear those words: “It’s true.”

Even if this testimony is slow to come into your life, continue to read the Book of Mormon and one day

you will have it. That happened in my life. I was baptized on January 7, 2007, and it was on October 16, 2015, that I learned in my heart that the Book of Mormon is true, that Joseph Smith is the true prophet of the Restoration, and that The Church of Jesus Christ

of Latter-day Saints is the only true and living Church on earth. My testimony is nourished and strengthened every time I study the Book of Mormon. That is when these words echo in my mind saying: “It’s true, it’s true, it’s true.” ■

Serving as He Would

Conslate Ochieng lives in the Kayole Second Ward area, in Nairobi, and has been a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-day Saints for almost 10 years. One Sunday she sat next to a deaf sister who confided in her that she had a male interpreter and a man for a bishop, but who could she talk to about sister problems? Conslate knew she could help, even if only by just being her friend.



Stake President Ndivo conducts meeting with Elder David A. Bednar and his wife, Susan; Elder Joni Koch and his wife, Michele.

One Sunday the interpreter did not show up for meetings, which was unusual as he usually did not want to miss out on anything. Conslate found herself sitting in front of the group of nine. Though she was a bit anxious, as she had never done any signing or had any class in it, she began interpreting. “It was a gift—that of the Holy Ghost,” she said, “as ‘he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak’ (Mark 7:37).”

From that day on, she began signing for the group of deaf people in her ward without being asked. She says she is never late because she doesn’t want them to miss out on what’s going on. Conslate is a very busy mom of four children—first a daughter, then a set of twins, and one son. She also adopted a daughter and has taken in orphans.

Both her eldest and her adopted daughter served missions and her youngest son is now preparing to serve. The children are on their way to careers with education/degrees in fields such as international business, sociology, cosmetology, and veterinarian medicine. She also has four grandchildren.

“I love serving others, and there is always a blessing. Last year I took one of the deaf sisters to the temple. If it were not for her, I could not have gone because of the timing and cost, and I had already attended the temple for my own endowment,” she said.

On October 22, 2017 at stake conference, Conslate helped the deaf to hear the words of an Apostle of the Lord, Elder David A. Bednar. “Will a small group like this ever again have the opportunity to be blessed with an Apostle, five members of the Seventy, and a member of the Presiding Bishopric—all with their wives—attending a stake conference?” ■

Teaching My Children, as I Was Taught

By Maria Musi
Bloemfontein Ward

In Proverbs 22:6 we read, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” We also see this in the story of Enos in the Book of Mormon. The teachings of his righteous father stayed with him and had such an impact on his life spiritually.

He wrote, “I went to hunt beast in the forests; and the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart. And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all

the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens” (Enos 1:3–4).

Through the words that his father taught him, Enos knew that God our Eternal Father would hear his prayer and that He would answer him. Enos acted in faith, fearing nothing. He wanted to be free of the burden of sin and to feel peace.

The answer he received was, “Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed” (verse 5). Enos bore his testimony that “I, Enos, knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away” (verse 6). Enos was assured by the Lord, “Wherefore, go to, thy faith hath made thee whole” (verse 8).

The story of Enos reminded me of my own experience before I became a member of the Church. I grew up in a good family and was raised by loving parents. Growing up, I really did not like going to church. I remember one Sunday my father came to me and asked me why I wasn’t going to church. I told him that it was because I prepared lunch for the family so that the food would be ready when they arrived home from church.

My father then taught me a lesson I will never forget—his voice was not harsh nor hard, it was so soft that it penetrated my heart. He told me that it was very important that we all go to church as a family. He taught me that

Sunday is a very special day that has been set apart from every other day. He said that God created the heavens and the earth and all His creations in six days and that He rested on the seventh day, so the Sabbath is the day where we go to church and worship the only true and living God. The next Sunday I was at church, and from that time until now I never miss attending church. My father was able to lay a foundation of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ in me. I knew from that time that indeed God is real and that He lives.

I began preparing everything I could on the Saturdays so that I

could be more reverent on Sundays. I am eternally thankful for the lessons I learned when I was growing up. I am thankful for my parents, for the example that they set for me. Later in my life, I met missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and my husband and I were taught the gospel. It was not difficult to accept the restored message of the gospel of Jesus Christ because the foundation of faith was already laid by my wonderful parents. We immediately felt that we belonged at church.

Our son, Kagiso Mmusi (almost 23 now), grew up in the Church

and, with the help of my husband, I have tried to do exactly what my parents did for me and teach him to trust in the Lord at all times. He served his mission faithfully for two years in Sierra Leone and the South Africa Cape Town Mission. In the scriptures we read, “trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:4–5). Trusting in the Lord means having complete faith in Him. As I strive to do this, I see the hand of the Lord in my life, and I have felt His love in return. ■

• **WANTED** •

A LATTER-DAY SAINT
WHO SHOWS:

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GROWTH**

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