

EMMANUEL OHENE OPARE

PIONEERING THROUGH PERSECUTION

PIONEERING CHURCH GROWTH AND STABILITY



Born: 26 June 1950 to Nathan and Comfort Opare

Married: Monica Naa Bersah four times! (Finally sealed in Johannesburg). She joined the Church in America as an exchange student, then helped convert Emmanuel.

Character: Calm amidst the Storm. Patient. Slow to anger. Very caring.

Family: Five children. One grandchild.

Profession: Government official (Ministry of Industries, Assistant Commissioner of Customs), school director (380 students)

Church: Patriarch (present), Temple Worker (present), Area Presidency, Stake President

Service: Humanitarian work

As branch president, Elder Opare stimulated growth and leadership such that he divided his branch three times. As a member of the district presidency, he won the reputation of not compromising on principle. The Church was so new, members wanted to try different approaches. Elder Opare tenaciously followed the General Handbook of Instructions. The members gained confidence because with him there was no double standard. His motto: “My yea is a yea and my nay is a nay!”

Because of his moral courage, soon the district became a stake, with Elder Opare as president. He worked on growth, retention and leadership development all at the same time. He was close to the people and was loved of them. He matured the stake sufficiently that in just six years, his stake became two stakes. As a member of the Area Presidency, he helped lay the groundwork for the Ghana Temple and helped multiply stakes, as over 1,000 people per month joined the Church in West Africa.

In 1990, 12 years after missionaries were finally sent to West Africa, the government of Ghana put padlocks on Church buildings and stationed guards with guns on Church property. This moratorium on Church activity lasted two years and was called “The Freeze.”

Persecution and opposition just strengthen the spine of the Oparens, who are indelibly committed to the gospel. Elder Opare told the members to obey the government, but to continue meeting in individual homes. As an Area Authority Seventy and member of the Area Presidency, he helped priesthood brethren to take charge of these home meetings. Senior missionary couples assisted by visiting and strengthening members. The family, as the basic unit of the Church, was intact and testimonies continued to grow. Eventually governmental officials came to appreciate the Church and the principles for which it stands.