

## A GLORIOUS REUNION

By Susan L. and C. Terry Warner

*Decades of separation and heartache ended when the Lord brought a father and a son together in the temple.*

It was a beautiful morning in April 2012 when John Ekow-Mensah entered the Accra Ghana Temple. The elderly brother, now in his 80s, had made the trip with a group of Saints from Nkawkaw, where he lived alone. The group planned to stay the night in nearby rooms for temple patrons and spend two days serving in the temple.

Seated inside the temple, Brother Ekow-Mensah was waiting to participate in initiatory ordinances when a younger man sat down beside him. The younger man, age 54, had planned to go through an endowment session that morning with his wife, but arriving too late for that session, he decided to do initiatory ordinances.

“Where are you from?” Brother Ekow-Mensah asked.

“Sekondi,” the man replied.

“What part of Sekondi?” Brother Ekow-Mensah asked.

“Ketan,” the younger one answered, “in the area where the schools are located.” As the conversation continued, the men both sensed where



these questions might be leading.

Moved by a growing sense of recognition, the younger man looked at Brother Ekow-Mensah. “You are my father,” he announced. “What is your name?”

“John Ekow-Mensah.”

“That is my name too,” the son replied.

After serving in the temple, the two men sat for a long time in the celestial room, reconnecting their lives and rekindling their love. Though everything Brother Ekow-Mensah



Jr. said and did was respectful and proper, he seemed not quite ready to embrace his father wholeheartedly—until he learned why his father had to leave and why he could not contact his family.

Nearly 50 years ago Brother Ekow-Mensah Sr. had married a woman whose grandmother—the oldest matriarch at that time—held sovereign power in their tribe. Sadly, the matriarch had been opposed to John's marriage to her granddaughter. At her insistence the couple ultimately separated when their oldest son, John Jr., was just four or five years old. John Jr. had known

his great-grandmother as a strong, hard-working woman, not as the power that had deprived him of all association with his natural father for nearly 50 years.

Expulsion from the family essentially severed all ties.

Because of the lack of telephones or mail service, John Sr. had no way to keep contact with his family. His search for work took him many hours away. He lived in Mankessim from about 1963 to 1989, where he operated a small paint shop. From there he moved to Ada, where a woman whose building he was painting introduced him to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Brother Ekow-Mensah Sr. joined the Church in 1991.

Because Brother Ekow-Mensah Jr. was so young when his parents' marriage dissolved, he didn't know much about his heritage. Occasionally his mother remarked that he was a "carbon copy" of his father, but that was the extent of his knowledge.

After he grew up and married, John and his wife, Deborah, decided to find a church they could join. John was at the University of Ghana in Accra when he saw a *Liahona* magazine on a shelf. He picked it up and found himself interested in what it had to say. John noted the publisher: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

When John returned from school to his home in Sekondi, his wife was anxious to tell him of a church she had

learned about from a friend. She told him the name was The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. John told her this was the church he had read about in a magazine at the university.

John and Deborah were taught the gospel and baptized in 1999. A decade later they were sealed in the Accra Ghana Temple, and the three youngest of their five children were sealed to them.

Then in the temple in April 2012, tears came as the father and son recognized each other. Their joy was compounded by their understanding that they had separately joined the Church and found their way into the temple that beautiful morning. ■

*The authors live in Utah, USA, and served in the Ghana Accra Mission.*



**Father and son, reunited at the temple after nearly 50 years of separation**