

# New Zealand Local Pages

## Teaching Our Children True Doctrine

By Elder Kevin W. Pearson

The words to a popular Primary song read: “Teach me to walk in the light of His love; Teach me to pray to my Father above; Teach me to know of the things that are right; Teach me, teach me to walk in the light” (“Teach Me to Walk in the Light,” *Children’s Songbook*, 177). Prophetic counsel to parents throughout the ages has been to love and care for their children (see, for example, “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129) because “children are an heritage of the Lord” (Psalm 127:3).

We often think of our children as being *our* children, when, in fact, they are the very children of God our Eternal Father. They were in the beginning His children. It is easy to forget they still belong to Him. He knows and understands them infinitely better than do we. His love for them is perfect, and each one has infinite worth to Him. It is, therefore, not surprising He has commanded that “parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness” to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God, warning that they will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World”).

In the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord makes more specific what we are to teach our children so that they understand doctrine. “And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that **teach** them not to **understand** the **doctrine** of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and

of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents” (D&C 68:25), “And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord.” (D&C 68:28). What does it mean to **teach** our children to **understand doctrine**?

To *teach* is to impart knowledge of, or skill in. Teaching is not the same as telling. It requires a transfer of knowledge and skill. To *understand* is to comprehend; be thoroughly familiar with or grasp the significance of; to learn or to accept as true; to believe. Understanding is more than knowing the “what”; it is also knowing “why”. *Doctrine* refers to principles or teachings, in this context, of Jesus Christ and His gospel. Our task is to help our children acquire a personal knowledge of the Savior, His teachings and gospel principles, and the desire and ability to use those principles to follow Him and to become His disciples.

Let me provide a simple example. Young children can be taught to give a simple prayer and be told they are supposed to pray. But to keep the commandment to pray always unto the Father in His name, children need to personally come to know Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ. This includes understanding their divine nature and relationship to God and understanding who the Holy Ghost is and how it feels to have the influence of the Holy Ghost as we teach them to pray.

Prayer is an appointed means for us all to receive personal revelation from God, which requires us to align our will with His. Praying in the name of Christ means that we have the mind and words of Christ in our hearts.



Elder Kevin W. Pearson

The children will need to understand the importance of being virtuous; in feeling comfortable in the presence of our Heavenly Father. They will need to learn the importance of studying and pondering the scriptures, to have the influence of the Holy Ghost in their thoughts and prayers. They will need to learn to recognize the Holy Ghost and how answers to prayers come. They will need daily examples to show them how and daily personal experience to know and understand the power of personal prayer, to develop their personal ability to pray in faith.

As parents we can provide our children with experiences to grow and learn, to develop talents and abilities physically, socially and academically; all of which are important. However, unless we help them develop personal faith in Jesus Christ and a commitment to follow Him, it will not matter what else we have given them. That is a very sobering reality.

Teaching our children to understand the doctrines is one of our single most important responsibilities in life. It can also be one of our most challenging. Without the scriptures and the Holy Ghost this would simply not be possible. President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has often taught: “true doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behaviors” (“Little Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 17). So, what doctrine or principles, if better understood, would help us to be the powerful teachers of doctrine we need to be? I suggest five principles that might help.

In our premortal existence each of us knew and worshipped God as our Eternal Father and accepted His plan. There each of us learned the essential principles and ordinances of the gospel. Our spirits still have perfect knowledge of these things. Because mortality by divine design introduces us into a state of forgetfulness, we need the Holy Ghost to remind us of things we have always known to be true.

The Holy Ghost is the perfect teacher. He knows us and understands how we learn, and what we need to know and feel. The influence of the Holy Ghost will remind us of all things and, “by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:5); “the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:5).

The scriptures contain a fullness of the gospel and key doctrines that we need to understand. They provide a witness through the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ and that His teachings are true.

Our Heavenly Father always answers the righteous prayers of His children, especially prayers of humble parents pleading for direction in teaching and rearing His children in righteousness.

Heavenly Father loves each of His children and has promised to bless us as we keep His commandments and exercise faith in His Son.

These principles help us understand that we have divine resources available to help us rear our children in truth and righteousness, and a compelling truth becomes evident. Spiritual truths must be taught and learned according to a divine pattern—through the influence of the Holy Ghost. Our responsibility to teach our children to understand doctrine goes well beyond merely telling them, or exposing them to the truth. We are under sacred obligation to help them *feel* the truthfulness of these doctrines and principles by the power of the Holy Ghost.

As we prayerfully seek divine help and learn to listen for direction, the Holy Ghost will help us to know which doctrines and principles our children need most and how to reach their hearts with the same conviction we feel in our hearts. Shared spiritual feelings and experiences create strong lasting bonds in marriages and families. As we share our personal testimonies about sacred spiritual truths with our children and spouses, we will draw closer to one another, and they will feel our conviction.

Faith is kindled by hearing the testimony of those who have faith.

May we more deeply and fully understand our divine responsibility to teach our children to understand and embrace true doctrine. As we do, we have the promise that the Holy Ghost will become

the true teacher and will, with power, teach them the truth of all things. I bear witness of the power of true doctrine to change and bless our lives. We are not alone in raising our children. It is never too late to begin. We always have the promise of heaven's help. ■

## LOCAL PAGES

# It's about Attitude: The Prime Minister's Advice to Youth

**O**n Sunday, 11 September 2011, approximately 2,000 youth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints attended a special evening with the Rt. Hon. John Key, Prime Minister of New Zealand. The meeting, held at the Pah Road, Mt. Roskill meetinghouse, was an opportunity for the youth of the Church to meet with the leader of the nation and be inspired by him regarding education and success in life.

Along with telling jokes about the Rugby World Cup, the Prime Minister spoke of his experiences in entering politics, of growing up without a father, struggling with finances, and pursuing his goals. He reminded the youth that success is not so much determined by ability as it is by one's attitude and determination to achieve one's goals.

The Prime Minister also encouraged the youth to excel in education. "I encourage you to get the best education you can,"

he said. "Make sure you finish your studies in whatever area you're interested in." He told them not to worry too much about what they are studying, but be more concerned with finishing their studies.

Elder James J. Hamula, Pacific Area President, echoed this counsel, and then told the youth that missionary service, education and marriage in the temple are "three pillars to a great life."

Elder F. Michael Watson, of the Pacific Area Presidency, told the youth to be the best they can

be, and to "make the sacrifice, do the service, and the Lord will bless you."

Area Seventy Elder Michael Roberts said, "We're excited for our youth to have an opportunity to meet the Prime Minister, and we're equally excited for the Prime Minister to have an opportunity to feel the spirit, strength, enthusiasm and virtue of our youth. The Church encourages its youth, as followers of Christ, to seek the best education they can so that they can be meaningful members of their community."



IMAGE COURTESY OF KAREN LARSEN

***New Zealand Prime Minister John Key meets with youth after a fireside.***

Mt. Roskill stake president Adolf Johansson added, “As a Church we reach out to the community and local leaders of the nation. We want to introduce the youth to these government and community leaders. We need to encourage our youth to continue with their education.”

Francis Vehikite, 17-year-old Head Girl at Aorere College, said, “I’m really excited to meet the Prime Minister. It’s such a privilege to have been selected from the youth in our stake to meet him.”

Angelique Tuaputa, a head prefect at Waitakere College and the youth speaker at the event, said, “I’m so excited and nervous to meet the Prime Minister. I want to hear about what he thinks about Church

youth, because we’re a global church.” Angelique also encouraged her fellow youth to continue with their education. “Press on with your studies! Nothing is impossible!” she told them.

Local Member of Parliament Sam Lotu-iga was also present at the youth meeting.

At a special function prior to the meeting, Elder Hamula presented the Prime Minister with a record of his family history. The Prime Minister expressed gratitude for the gift.

The Church has given family histories to former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark, former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, U.S. President Barack Obama, and other world leaders. ■

## Elder Ian S. Ardern Urges Wise Use of Time

New Zealand-born General Authority Elder Ian S. Ardern, Second Counselor in the Philippines Area Presidency, encouraged a worldwide audience of members and friends of the Church this month to “focus attention on the wise use of time.”

“With the demands made of us, we must learn to prioritize our choices to match our goals or risk being exposed to the

winds of procrastination and being blown from one time-wasting activity to another,” he said in the Saturday afternoon session of general conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, on 1 October, 2011.

“We are well taught about priorities by the Master Teacher when He declared in His Sermon on the Mount, ‘Wherefore, seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to



***New Zealand-born General Authority, Elder Ian S. Ardern of the Seventy, Second Counselor in the Philippines Area Presidency, spoke in October 2011 general conference.***

establish his righteousness.’”

Elder Ardern continued: “The poor use of time is a close cousin of idleness. As we follow the command to ‘cease to be idle’ (D&C 88:124), we must be sure that being busy also equates to being productive.

“For example, it is wonderful to have the means of instant communication quite literally at our fingertips, but let us be sure that we do not become compulsive fingertip communicators. I sense that some are trapped in a new time-consuming addiction—one that enslaves us to be constantly checking and sending social messages and thus giving the false impression of being busy and productive.” (“A Time to Prepare,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 31–32.) ■

# Expert Says Genealogy Brings Perspective and Understanding

**"F**amily history can be a life-changing experience," said a leading US genealogist who visited New Zealand. "Learning about your ancestors can bring perspective and understanding to your own life."

Judy A. Jones, a genealogist from FamilySearch based at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, met with Christchurch genealogists at the Cashmere meetinghouse. This was the eighth such meeting she has attended in New Zealand.

She provided updates on genealogical trends and developments and outlined simple steps for beginners to get started.

FamilySearch began in 1894 under the name Genealogical Society of Utah and is today the largest genealogical organization in the world. Its records, resources and services are available to all, free of charge. The organization assists millions of people worldwide in learning more about their family history.

Sister Jones told guests that there are more than 2.4 million rolls of microfilm, more than 1 million microfiche, and more than 3.5 billion images of family history records stored in a vault deep inside a granite mountain on the outskirts of Salt Lake City, Utah, in the United States. Efforts to securely store important family records will make sure they are preserved. The vault itself is designed to withstand a nuclear attack.

In 1998 FamilySearch began digital imaging of records, and on 1 May 1999 the FamilySearch website was opened to the public. Just four months later the website surpassed 1.5 billion hits. Over two billion historical records are now available free of charge to anyone in the world on [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org).

Sister Jones explained the latest technological advances that are making FamilySearch easily accessible over the Internet on [FamilySearch.org](http://FamilySearch.org) and demonstrated how to use the site. There are nine major links to help find records, tools, training or information that will help people discover their family history. Historical records such as census, birth, marriage and death records



*Visiting genealogist Judy A. Jones with Michael Higgins, Pacific Area manager for FamilySearch.*

IMAGE COURTESY OF KAREN LARSEN

have been collected from around the world and have been microfilmed or digitized and indexed. These are now available on the Internet. In addition, there are online catalogues of more than two million rolls of microfilm and hundreds of thousands of books and maps from around the world located in the Family History Library collection in Salt Lake City, Utah.

FamilySearch.org offers a variety of free online classes, as well as a collection of family history

articles to aid with family history education and training.

Sister Jones says it is easy to get started with four step-by-step videos available to teach the basics. Additionally, for those who want to learn more about how to use these extensive resources, there are some 4,500 FamilySearch Centres operating in more than 100 countries, staffed by volunteers who are ready to help answer questions and assist with research. ■

## New Zealand Latter-day Saints Respond to Children's Needs in Fiji

**A**s a young girl growing up in rural Fiji, Ledua Kollinisau had few books at her school. Today, she said, children's reading books are still scarce in the remote parts of Fiji.

"Because my village is on a remote island, the supply ships that bring essential educational materials arrive very infrequently," Ms. Kollinisau said.

Thanks to generous donations from New Zealanders across the lower North Island, children in rural Fiji have received a lot more books—45,000 to be exact.

The books were collected for Fiji's children during a month-long community book drive called Books for Fiji, organized by Mormon Helping Hands of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Mormon Helping Hands

program brings together Latter-day Saints and their neighbours to provide community service. This program reflects the desire of Mormons to follow the example of Jesus Christ by serving others.

When Ms. Kollinisau, who now lives in New Zealand, heard about the project, she remembered her own childhood village and was inspired to participate. Culling donations from friends, neighbours and her own personal library, she designated the books she gathered for her old elementary school in Fiji, stressing that "it is very important for the schools to receive reading books like these."

Slightly less than 30 percent of Fiji's total population is under the age of 14, and these

books will fill a great need for children's reading material, said Eileen Mueller, Books for Fiji's project director.

"Many school facilities and resources have been affected



IMAGE COURTESY OF KAREN LARSEN

**Native Fijian Ledua Kollinisau knows firsthand what life was like growing up with few books.**



*An estimated 27,000 books were sorted in Wellington, New Zealand.*

by natural disasters in recent years,” she said. “Some of these schools have no reading books. The donated books and magazines will establish libraries in schools and give children the opportunity to increase their reading skills and knowledge.”

Mere Tora, acting head of the Mission for the Fijian High Commission, couldn’t agree more.

“The donated books will be greatly appreciated by children of rural schools in Fiji, where competing demands on limited financial resources often place other education needs ahead of reading books,” she said. “[The] generosity will indeed go a long way in creating a love for reading

in these children and an awareness of a world outside their own villages.”

Nineteen Latter-day Saint meetinghouses and 27 additional churches, schools, businesses and community centres served as locations where people could donate their new and used books. Community members, local civic leaders, religious organizations and even members of New Zealand’s parliament all joined in the Books for Fiji effort.

“I’m delighted to support this project and help children in a vulnerable situation,” said Peter Dunne, a member of Parliament representing Ohariu, whose

two offices served as donation centres for books. “This is a practical way to assist in their education, and I’d like to congratulate the Church for this initiative.”

When the drive ended the books filled 350 boxes, weighing some 18 tons.

Shipments of books arrived in Fiji in November—which made Rahui Katene, a Latter-day Saint and a member of Parliament for Te Tai Tonga, very excited.

“A love of reading is a fantastic start to life,” she said. “When children learn to enjoy education, it influences their entire family for generations.” ■



*Kiana Butters, Alani Butters, Mika Butters and Ikuko Muir were volunteers at the Books for Fiji project.*

## Three Generations Believe in Serving Others

Ikuko Muir, her daughter Mika Butters, and her granddaughters Kiana and Alani were volunteers at the recent Books for Fiji project, where thousands of donated books were sorted, labelled, packed and shipped to Fiji.

Children's books were donated and collected over several months

by many people and organizations in Wellington and surrounding communities, in partnership with Mormon Helping Hands. The books were sent to isolated areas in Fiji where reading resources are few and many children have no books at all.

Kiana, age 10, said, "You just assume that everyone has

books to read. It makes me feel bad that some kids don't. That's why I wanted to donate some books and help out." Kiana's mum, Mika, commented, "Often my kids don't fully understand why we are going to a service project. By the end, they know they made a difference and you can tell they are proud they were able to help. They seem to learn so much more when they get opportunities to help others."

Helping out is a way of putting beliefs into action and making a difference for this grandmother, her daughter and granddaughters. As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, they are following Jesus Christ by being good neighbours and serving others. ■

## Leadership Changes

BISHOPS AND BRANCH PREIDENTS		
Auckland New Zealand Harbour Stake		
David J. Clarke	Albany Ward	Bishop
Dunedin New Zealand District		
Samuel D. Weepers	Dunedin 1st Branch	Branch President
Stephen E. Smith	Dunedin 2nd Branch	Branch President
Auckland New Zealand Mt. Roskill Stake		
Heber James Ahmu	Onehunga Ward	Bishop