

New Zealand Local Pages

The Power and Significance of the Resurrection

By Elder James J. Hamula, Pacific Area President

The Resurrection is central to the faith of all Christians. As Paul said to the Corinthians, “If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain” (1 Corinthians 15:13–14). Significantly, such Christian faith was not limited to the Old World. In the New World Moroni wrote: “And what is it that ye shall hope for? Behold, I say unto you that ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal, and this because of your faith in him according to the promise” (Moroni 7:41).

To appreciate the scope and power of the Resurrection, one must understand the scope and consequences of the Fall of Adam. Adam’s Fall resulted in the physical and spiritual death of all mankind (see Moses 4:25, 29). Physical death is the separation of man’s eternal spirit from his physical body. Spiritual death is the separation of man from God. These two deaths are the universal consequences of Adam’s transgression. They befall every one of the children of Adam—every man, woman and child who enter into this world.

For all mankind to bear the burden of physical and spiritual death due to the transgression of Adam, however, would not be just. Justice requires that each receives the consequences of his own actions, not those of another (see Alma 41:2–5). To address the injustice of all of us bearing the burden of our first father’s transgression, it was necessary that the price of that transgression be paid in behalf of all of us. It was necessary



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that the effects of spiritual and physical death that befall all mankind be overcome. The Resurrection does just that. “For as death hath passed upon all men, to fulfil the merciful plan of the great Creator,” Jacob taught, “there must needs be a power of resurrection, and the resurrection must needs come unto man by reason of the fall” (2 Nephi 9:6; see also Mormon 9:12–13).

Resurrection reverses the effects of the Fall by the reuniting of the body and the spirit of man,

never to be divided again, and the restoring of man to the presence of God. As Amulek taught concerning the Resurrection, “The spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame, even as we now are at this time; and we shall be brought to stand before God” (Alma 11:43). Only one had the power in Himself to resurrect Himself—and that one was Jesus Christ. He effectuated the Resurrection for Himself and all others of our Father’s children following His own death, and in so doing became the “firstfruits” of the Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:23).

That Jesus Christ did resurrect Himself is beyond doubt for those who accept the scriptural records of His life. Following his death and burial, Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene at the sepulcher (see John 20:11–18). He appeared to “the other Mary,” Salome, Joanna, and others, as they returned from the sepulcher (see Matthew 28:1–10). He appeared to Simon Peter alone on the day of the Resurrection (see Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5). He appeared to the two disciples (Cleopas and his companion) on the way to Emmaus (see Luke 24:13–35). He appeared to the 10 disciples (Thomas being absent) and others “with them” at Jerusalem (see John 20:19–24). He later appeared to the disciples again (Thomas being present) at Jerusalem (see Mark 16:14–18; Luke 24:33–40; John 20:26–28). He appeared to the disciples when they were fishing at the Sea of Galilee (see John 21:1–23). He appeared to the 11, and above 500 brethren at once, at an appointed place in Galilee (see 1 Corinthians 15:6). He appeared to James, the Lord’s brother (see 1 Corinthians 15:7), and to the Apostles before the Ascension till “a cloud received him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9; see also verses 1–8).

Significantly, His appearances were not limited

to Jerusalem. He appeared to the people of Bountiful in the Americas, allowing each one there to “see with their eyes” and “feel with their hands” and “know of a surety” that He was the resurrected Christ (3 Nephi 11:15). And in our day He appeared with the Father to the Prophet Joseph Smith near Palmyra, New York, in the spring of 1820 (see JS—H 1:17–18).

Significantly, Christ’s Resurrection was not limited to just Him. It unlocked the power to resurrect all the children of God. Because of Christ’s Resurrection, “by the power of God,” all men shall come forth from the grave (see Mormon 9:13). Indeed, Christ’s Resurrection unlocked the power to restore the entire creation of God. Thus saith the Lord:

“And the end shall come, and the heaven and the earth shall be consumed and pass away, and there shall be a new heaven and a new earth.

“For all old things shall pass away, and all things shall become new, even the heaven and the earth, and all the fulness thereof, both men and beasts, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea;

“And not one hair, neither mote, shall be lost, for it is the workmanship of mine hand” (D&C 29:23–25).

Nothing is more absolutely universal than the Resurrection. Truly did Paul write, “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22).

As universal in scope as the Resurrection is, its application in the lives of individuals should not be misunderstood. While the Resurrection of Christ overcomes the effects of Adam’s transgression, it does not overcome the effects of our own transgressions. It restores everything, but only to its “proper order” (Alma 41:4). When we come forth from the grave, it must be remembered that we come forth with the same spirit that we had

prior to the Resurrection. We are therefore “raised to good, according to [our] desires of good” or “to evil according to [our] desires of evil” (Alma 41:5). And in this spiritual state the Resurrection returns us all to the presence of God, wherein no unclean thing can dwell (see 3 Nephi 27:19).

This universal fact—that all men from the beginning to the end of time are returned to the presence of God in the same spiritual condition they possessed before the Resurrection—leads Jesus Christ and all of His servants to declare to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people the conditions upon which men may remain in the presence of God and dwell with Him forever. As Jesus taught the people of Bountiful prior to His departure, “no unclean thing can enter into [God’s] kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.

“Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel; and ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do; for that which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do;

“Therefore, if ye do these things blessed are ye, for ye shall be lifted up at the last day” (3 Nephi 27:19–22).

May we cherish the gift of the Resurrection that raises us all back to the presence of our Heavenly Father, as well as the gift of time to prepare to meet Him in a manner that will allow us to remain with Him forever. ■

Looking Forward to General Conference

By Terry Pearce

Next month members and guests throughout the Pacific and worldwide will gather in meetinghouses to participate in the April 2012 general conference of the Church.

Proceedings will be available via satellite, the Internet (at www.lds.org), iTunes and in the *Ensign* and *Liahona* magazines. Talks will be translated into Samoan, Tongan, Tahitian, French, Fijian, Kiribati, Marshallese, Bislama, Hindi, and many other languages. (Go to www.ldschurch.org.nz or www.lds.org for details.)

The following Church members from across the Pacific Area recently shared some of the reasons why they were preparing now to take full advantage of general conference.

Kalilimoku Hunt:

During the sessions we take notes and prepare ourselves for discussion of our favourite talks and new ideas that we learn from the Apostles and General Authorities of the Church—but especially from the prophet of the Lord. We are all edified by the prophets and feel recharged and rejuvenated by the Holy Ghost, having received affirmation that the messages that we heard are from the Lord Jesus Christ. This strengthens our resolve to keep all the commandments and to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, might and strength.

Motisha Solo:

General conference reminds me that my Heavenly Father loves me so much as



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***The First
Presidency
prepare for the
start of general
conference.***

He continues to inspire our living and loving prophet. The messages always answer my prayers and never fail to meet my needs.

Grace H., age 7:

It's where you can get more parts of your testimony. Then you'll get one big testimony.

Lavenia Taufalele:

General conference is my opportunity to be taught and be given the latest counsel from the Lord through His prophet, seer and revelator.

Emma D., age 13:

I can go with my family and hear the prophets speak about important things I need to hear.

Joshua Shaw:

I have never come away from conference without a number of very personal reminders of how I need to do better, and without a greater resolve to grasp more firmly to the iron rod. That resolve does not always translate to an immediate change of heart and of habit, and too often come the next conference I am in need of the same reminders. But my hope is that the necessary improvement will come, line upon line and reminder upon reminder.

Scott Giles:

For me general conference feels like going to the spiritual "well." I get answers to my personal questions and feel specific revelation for my family and for my calling. Without fail there are always one or two talks that seem to be written specifically for me because they touch my heart deeply. ■

The Book of Mormon as a Cornerstone in the Lives of Latter-day Saints

By Catherine Vaughan

In March 1830 5,000 copies of the Book of Mormon were printed in the E. B. Grandin print shop in Palmyra, New York, USA. From that humble beginning, today the Church prints over three million copies a year. By the end of 2011, more than 150 million copies had been distributed worldwide. In its first 100-year history (1830–1930), the Book of Mormon was translated into 16 languages. Today, all or part of the Book of Mormon has been translated into 108 languages, including 11 Pacific languages, bringing to pass the challenge and vision of President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) in 1988, when he declared that the world would be flooded with this additional testament of Jesus Christ.

Speaking in general conference in 1988, President Benson said, “This sacred volume of scripture has brought more souls to Christ, both within and without the Church, than ever before. . . .

“We commend you leaders and teachers of the various Church organizations for your inspired use of the Book of

Mormon in helping to rear a generation that can redeem Zion. . . .

“We commend that vast number of faithful Saints who individually and as families are changing their lives, cleansing the inner vessel, through the daily reading of the Book of Mormon. . . .

“This sacred volume of scripture needs to become more central in our preaching, our teaching, and our missionary work. . . .

“We need to read daily from the pages of the book that will get a man ‘nearer to God by abiding by the precepts, than by any other book.’”

He continued, “My beloved brothers and sisters, I have a vision of the whole Church getting nearer to God by abiding by the precepts of the Book of Mormon. Indeed, I have a vision of flooding the earth with the Book of Mormon” (“Flooding the Earth with the Book of Mormon,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 4, 6).

Reading of the trials and suffering of ancient prophets and faithful followers of Christ in the Book of Mormon has helped Naomi Mera from Harbour stake

to understand that at times bad things can happen to good people, and we may not always appreciate that Heavenly Father may have something else in mind for us. She recalls reading how Alma and Amulek were captured and bound, and forced to watch as the faithful members of the Church were thrown into a fire and burned. Amulek wanted to use their priesthood power to save the righteous people from burning, but they were constrained, and Alma was inspired to say that they were not to do so, “for behold the Lord receiveth them up unto himself, in glory . . . that the people may do this thing unto them, according to the hardness of their hearts, that the judgments which he shall exercise upon them in his wrath may be just; and the blood of the innocent shall stand as a witness against them, yea, and cry mightily against them at the last day” (Alma 14:11). As Naomi ponders on events and challenges in her own life, she has learned that we don’t always understand that the Lord may have another purpose for us, and some of the blessings we seek may not come until the next life. Understanding this has given her peace.

The Poleo family from Papakura stake wanted to feel

the Spirit in their home more and develop closer unity as a family. They decided to regularly set aside time to read the Book of Mormon together every day. Vanessa Poleo reported that the changes were obvious very quickly. Together with her husband and two daughters they read two verses each, pausing to discuss the stories they were reading to gain a better insight into the spiritual meaning behind the words. She said, “As we continued to read together every day, our scripture study time

became special to us. When we talked about the Saviour’s teachings I saw a spark in my daughters’ eyes, as they truly understood the gospel truths. As an added bonus, their school teachers also commented that their reading ability and comprehension had increased dramatically as well.”

Andrew Vaughan, who was baptised over 30 years ago, said, “I have read the Book of Mormon many times during my time as a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-day Saints, but one of the most poignant moments happened just recently. While reading the story of the conversion of King Lamoni, I realised my own conversion to the gospel of Jesus Christ bore a similarity to his. When Ammon taught Lamoni the gospel he was ‘caught away in the spirit’ and fell to the ground as if dead.

“My conversion wasn’t quite as dramatic, but nevertheless there was a definite enlightening that superseded time. As the missionaries taught me about



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The Book of Mormon invites us to come closer to Christ.

the gospel I was so caught up in the Spirit that what seemed to be but a few seconds was almost an hour. As I have studied the account in Alma the similarities have been striking to me. I hold these verses dear and exhort all others to put the words in the Book of Mormon to the test ‘with real intent.’”

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified, “In the Book of Mormon, we see how parents taught faith in Christ and

obedience to God’s commands both to children who were obedient from their childhood and to children who had to find their way—sometimes in the very same family. It is a lesson for our day, for our children, for our families. . . .

“There are many worldly influences that pull us and our families from this most vital faith. The Book of Mormon invites us and our families to embrace faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and it shares the principles that will

help our families succeed.

“I testify that the Book of Mormon is true and that in very fact it was delivered to the Prophet Joseph Smith by the angel Moroni, under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is for our day, for our children and grandchildren. As we open it daily with faith, I promise the Lord’s Spirit will be upon us and our families will be blessed forever” (“The Book of Mormon: Strengthening Our Faith in Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2011, 43). ■

Relief Society Service Is the Gospel in Action

By Catherine Vaughan

This year we are celebrating the 170th anniversary of the Relief Society organization, which was organized in Nauvoo, Illinois, on March 17, 1842. In the initial meetings of Relief Society, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that the society “is not only to relieve the poor, but to save souls” (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:25).

“To save souls opens the whole field of human activity and development,” Elder John A. Widtsoe later declared. “Relief of poverty, relief of illness; relief of doubt, relief of ignorance—relief of all that hinders the joy

and progress of woman. What a magnificent commission!” (*Evidences and Reconciliations* [1987], 308).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “The Relief Society has great significance for every member of the Church. All of us have been blessed through the example and service of its members (“The Relief Society and the Church,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 34).

Andria Lamb has been the beneficiary of Relief Society service many times, both in New Zealand, where she raised her family, and now in Australia,

where she currently lives in Perth.

“Being a single parent with a chronic illness has been extremely hard at times”, she said.

“I knew that the sisters in Relief Society were always there willing to help. A roster was even written up so on the days that I could not make it to church—which was often in the first few years of my illness—someone would pick up my children for me and take them. If I was unable to get my children to youth activities there was always a sister in my ward who would be there for transport or anything else I might need. My visiting teachers came

without fail every month bringing with them a beautiful message, a sincere caring for myself and my children, and the most delicious baking! I feel blessed to be part of such a wonderful group of Christlike women, and have been on the receiving end of their service many times.”

Karen Dell from Auckland recalled a time when, in the midst of a family crisis, her visiting teachers were a beacon of hope. “My visiting teachers have been a real blessing to me,” she said. “When one of my oldest sons had to have repeated head surgery, one of my visiting teachers not only looked after my younger children during the day, taking them swimming and helping them to not worry, but she took them in overnight and

made them feel so welcome and loved. I was able to stay at the hospital and concentrate on my sick son, and at no point did I worry about what was going on at home. Her compassion and understanding of what I needed to do gave me such peace. A great weight was lifted, as I felt she knew exactly what to help with. It is hard to express how grateful I am for her love towards my children in a time of need.”

Opportunities to return that service to others ensure that both the givers and receivers are blessed. Sister Dell goes on to say, “A family in our ward lost their youngest and their oldest daughters in separate tragic circumstances. In the midst of all the heartache, it was such a blessing to see the Relief Society

‘army’ jump into action and do what Relief Society sisters do best. Meals were prepared, and the Relief Society president sewed some beautiful clothes for the little girl to be buried in. When the family faced their second loss, another sister in the ward donated her white wedding/temple dress for the older girl to wear as she was laid to rest. It was often difficult to know what to say to help the family in their grief, but we found we didn’t have to say anything. Just hugging them and crying with them was enough. The mother frequently remarked that the unconditional love and service helped so much to ease the heartache, and the family learned the true meaning of Alma’s words when he taught the people who were desirous to come into the fold of God that they should be willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light; they should be willing to mourn with those that mourn, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort” (see Mosiah 18:8–9).

As members of one of the oldest and largest women’s organizations in the world, wherever they may be, Relief Society sisters are united as they strive to live the motto “Charity Never Faileth.” ■



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