

Australia Local Pages

Joseph Smith Jr.— Prophet of the Restoration

By **Elder F. Michael Watson**

Second Counselor in the Area Presidency

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are part of history—an eternal heritage!

“The Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing, persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done.”¹

This eternal truth did not die on June 27, 1844 when the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were martyred in Carthage, Illinois. What earthly clocks do not permit time for, the restored gospel of Jesus Christ can show us the path that reaches beyond time and through the veil.

Testaments continue to validate what young Joseph

learned for himself in the spring of 1820 when the Father and the Son appeared and declared to him what he had sought after in humble prayer.

“In the same way that I know Jesus is the Christ—and that is by revelation from the Holy Spirit—I know that Joseph Smith is and was and everlastingly shall be a Prophet of God. In a spirit of testimony and thanksgiving, as set forth in the Doctrine and Covenants: ‘Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it.’” (D&C 135:3)²

President Joseph Fielding Smith

“Joseph Smith, the young man not schooled in theologies of the day, not schooled in the high schools of learning of his day, . . . [was] one who could be submissive to the teachings and whisperings of the Spirit. Joseph Smith could not have established this Church. He could not have brought forth the work

of the Lord, the Book of Mormon. Joseph by the power of God did perform the miraculous service of bringing forth the kingdom out of obscurity in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.”³

President Harold B. Lee



Elder F. Michael Watson

“That new day dawned when [a] soul with passionate yearning prayed for divine guidance. A spot of hidden solitude was found, knees were bent, a heart was humbled, pleadings were voiced, and a light brighter than the noonday sun illuminated the world—the curtain never to be closed again.”⁴

President Spencer W. Kimball

“The Prophet Joseph Smith was not only ‘one of the noble and great ones,’ but he gave and continues to give attention to important matters here on the earth even today from the realms above. For in the eyes of the Lord . . . it is all one great eternal program in which the Prophet Joseph plays an important role—all through the eternal priesthood and authority of God.”⁵

President Ezra Taft Benson

I am grateful . . . [for] my testimony of the simple story of the lad under the trees kneeling and receiving heavenly visitors—not one God, but two separate, individual personages, the Father and the Son, revealing again to the earth the personages of the Godhead. . . . I bear witness that . . . it is one of the greatest single events in all history.”⁶

President Howard W. Hunter

The story of Joseph’s life is the story of a miracle. . . . In the brief space of 20 years preceding his death, he accomplished what none other has accomplished in an entire lifetime. He translated and published the Book of Mormon, a volume which has since been retranslated into scores of languages and which is accepted by missions across the earth as the word of God. . . . He established an organization which . . . has withstood every adversity and challenge and is as effective today in governing a worldwide membership . . . as it was in governing a membership of 300 in 1830. . . . Joseph Smith set in motion a program for carrying the gospel to the nations of the earth. . . . Members gather in [nations of the earth twice a year] and are the flowering of the vision of Joseph Smith, the prophet of God. He was indeed a mighty seer who saw this day and greater days yet to come as the work of the Lord moves over the earth.”⁷

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Volumes have been written concerning the life and accomplishments of Joseph Smith. In the course of his ministry he was visited by John the Baptist, Moses, Elijah, Peter, James, and John, that the Restoration of all things might be accomplished. He endured persecution; he suffered grievously, as did his followers. He trusted in God. He was true to his prophetic calling. He commenced a marvellous missionary effort to the entire world, which today brings light and truth to the souls of mankind. At length, Joseph Smith died the martyr’s death, as did his brother Hyrum.”⁸

President Thomas S. Monson

The Prophet Joseph Smith’s counsel to President Brigham Young given in a dream President Young had after the Prophet’s death: “Be sure to tell the people to keep the spirit of the Lord and it will lead them right. Be careful not to turn away the small still voice; it will teach you what to do and where to go; it will yield the fruits of the kingdom.”⁹

With the exception of the Prophet Joseph, seven of the prophets of God heretofore referenced I have known and worked with personally. Alongside each, I wish to add my own witness.

Over the span of many years in personal study, and of time to ponder and pray, the promises of

our Lord and Savior have been realized through personal spiritual confirmations. There has come a conviction that God our Father in Heaven lives and loves us, and His Son, Jesus the Christ, is our Savior and Redeemer. Joseph Smith was the Prophet of the Restoration. This assurance, through the whisperings of the Spirit, even the Holy Ghost, provides the polar star of direction toward all that is desired in the eternal glories.

The timeless events and experiences with our latter-day prophets of God, whom we sustain, cause us to remember that we are children of a loving Father in Heaven and that we should act accordingly. The significance of the life and history of the Prophet Joseph Smith and those who followed continue to provide the Standard of Truth. May we ever look toward the gifts of the Atonement and Resurrection, made possible by His Son, Jesus the Christ, with the eternal promise of life everlasting in the highest realms of the celestial kingdom. ■

NOTES:

1. Joseph Smith Jr., *History of the Church*, 4:540.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 541–555.
3. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 541–555.
4. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 541–555.
5. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 541–555.
6. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 541–555.
7. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 541–555.
8. “Led by Spiritual Pioneers,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Aug. 2006, 7.
9. *Manuscript History of Brigham Young 1846–1847*, comp., Eldon J. Watson (1971), 529.

A Week of Miracles

Kendall and Chantal Pitman

In January this year 1,200 youth from across Queensland, along with 180 counsellors, attended the Brisbane Special Multi-Stake Youth Conference that was held at the University of Queensland. The conference theme was “Believe. Hope. Endure” (from the thirteenth article of faith).

Many of the youth were scheduled to attend the conference last year, but sadly it was postponed due to the 2011 Brisbane flood disaster.

Session directors and “parents” for the week, Chantal and Kendall Pitman, along with Elder F. Michael Watson and Sister Jolene Watson, of the Pacific Area Presidency, and Elder Jeffrey D. Cummings, Area Seventy for Brisbane, shared many inspired messages with the youth during the week. President and Sister Wheelwright of BYU–Hawaii also attended and spoke to the youth about the importance of education.

The counsellors shared their powerful testimonies of the Saviour and taught the youth how they could develop their own testimonies. Lessons and workshops encouraged participants to follow the Saviour, listen to the prophet, and pray about serving missions, as well as preparing to be married eternally in the temple. For some youth it was the first time they had opened and read the scriptures and asked questions about the gospel.

Since the conference Brother and Sister Pitman have received numerous calls, emails and messages from youth, counsellors, parents and leaders who have shared stories and experiences about how this event has affected them. One father shared that his son phoned him during the conference and asked him to forgive him, and expressed his desire to now serve a mission for the Lord. Another father commented that his daughter had felt the Spirit so strongly that she wanted to go on a mission and be married in the temple. A mother told of how her daughter returned home, threw out all her immodest



Brisbane youth listen to Elder Will Hopoate, an Australian rugby league hero, talk about his decision to serve a mission.



Brisbane Especially for Youth conference.

clothes and asked if she could purchase more modest clothing. Another member of the Church spoke about how her daughter returned home and asked if they could have family home evening so that she could share her testimony with them. The conference taught and encouraged the youth to love the Lord and to feel the Spirit and to “take it home”!

Many youth shared their testimonies in their own wards and branches after the conference, saying how they now felt differently about the Church and its teachings, and how glad they were to have made many new friends who had the same standards. Many know the Lord loves them and hears their prayers. Many youth stated that the testimony meeting in their companies was the spiritual highlight

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of the event. They shed many tears of love and joy about finding the Lord and making good friends.

The session directors for the Brisbane conference have been planning for this event for the last three

years. They know that this special program was inspired of the Lord and would be the answer to

the prayers of some parents and leaders and would help rescue and save our rising generation. ■

Standing Up for Their Convictions

By Linda Hawkins

Public speaking in front of 700 people would be a daunting task for most; however, Darcey Pilkington (age 10) and Lyndon Yip (age 14) handled the task with the aplomb of seasoned professionals.

The occasion was the semi-annual conference of the Perth Australia Southern River Stake of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, held at Thornlie, in February this year.

Three State politicians were amongst the audience: Peter Abetz (Liberal, Southern River), Tony Buti (ALP, Armadale) and Bill Johnston (ALP, Cannington). Elder James J. Hamula, Pacific Area President, travelled especially to Perth to be the presiding

priesthood leader and guest speaker at the conference.

Darcey captured the audience's hearts as she spoke about how she knew that Jesus loved her. She read a story about a little girl who wanted a bicycle but didn't have enough money to purchase it. Her father encouraged her to do her best to earn pocket money; however, after doing all she could, she was still far below achieving the full price for the bike. Her father then said if she would give him all she had saved, he would make up the difference and buy the bike for her. The story is symbolic of what the Saviour does for us through the Atonement. If we strive to be like Him, His grace

Peter Abetz, Elder James J. Hamula, William Johnston, Antonio Buti, and President Mark Pemberton at the Southern River stake conference.

makes up the difference so we can have eternal life.

Lyndon also touched the audience as he shared his goal of embarking on a mission when he turns 19, just as his three older brothers have done.

Lyndon was also asked to stand at the pulpit (as a visual aid) while Elder Hamula related a true story about a young man who had made a commitment, and kept it, even though it put his life at risk. Elder Hamula encouraged everyone to also take a stand for their convictions when gospel principles or our religious rights are attacked or threatened.

Prior to the Sunday morning meeting, Peter Abetz and Tony Buti were guests at a breakfast with local Church leaders. During the breakfast, various social issues were discussed as well as some of the challenges which face Australian families. Elder Hamula highlighted some of the Church's programs which provide solutions to these challenges, such as family home evening and the welfare and self-reliance programmes. He also expressed gratitude to the politicians for the service they gave to their community, often at personal sacrifice to themselves and their families. ■



A Sea of Yellow—Helping Hands Helping Hearts

By Teri Milner

Around 200 members from the Melbourne Australia Braeside Stake in Victoria, with \$5,000 worth of materials and tools funded by their stake, recently went to work painting, building, landscaping, and restoring the facilities of the Mornington Peninsula Youth Enterprises.

The two-hectare work site was started by a local, Russell Ardley, to help his son find direction in his life. Today it provides a range of educational, training, and support services to youth from the Mornington Peninsula area and surrounding communities. The facility has been running for 19 years, and about 400 youth participate in the programmes annually. The youth are referred by courts or job networks, or they sign up voluntarily to learn life skills.

With limited funding, it is a constant struggle to maintain the site. The service provided by the Church members was gratefully received as they worked hard to restore the buildings and facilities. The spirit of love and service was strong as everyone did their part, from the little children to the elderly.

Jess O’Riordan, age 18, said, “I’m happy to help other people, and it was great to be doing something for these youth.” Hannah M., age 13, agreed, saying, “Even though there was a lot of work to be done, it was a great opportunity to help other youth, and we had the best fun!”

Russell Ardley spoke to the volunteers at the end of the day and expressed his gratitude and appreciation for everyone’s help. He was thankful for all the work that had been accomplished. He said it took a lot to maintain the site and they don’t get a lot of funding, so to have the Mormon Helping Hands group come in and do the work for them was wonderful.

For Russell it’s all about helping the kids. He laughingly added, “Everyone did so much work, they wore me out! It was fantastic. We got so much done it was unbelievable.” ■

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The Mormon Helping Hands group from the Braeside Stake worked to refurbish the facilities of the Mornington Peninsula Youth Enterprises.



Michael U., Melissa M., Hannah M., Russell Ardley, Zac W., Emmitt C., Mark Hope, Shenae K., and Sophie E. enjoy the Helping Hands service project.

Ten Ideas for Faith-Strengthening and Fun Family Home Evenings

By Holly Atkinson

The most important ingredient in producing happiness at home for members of the Church is a deep religious commitment to God and His gospel” (James E. Faust, “Enriching Our Lives Through Family Home Evening,” *Ensign*, June 2003, 2).

Family home evening is one of many great tools the Lord has given parents to help them rear their children in righteousness and to solidify family bonds. Members of the Church are encouraged to set aside one night a week to spend time together, teaching and learning, and having fun as a family.

It is never too late to begin this family activity. The following ideas and suggestions are just a few of the things to consider when planning family home evenings tailored specifically for your family:

1. Be prepared! Often time can slip away from us during the week. Set aside a specific block of time weekly to prayerfully consider which lesson would best serve your family for the coming week. Seek the Spirit’s inspiration as you ponder different topics. Ask the question: “What would the Lord have me teach?”

Families can grow closer by regularly spending time together in activities such as family home evening.

2. Cultivate a spirit of love in the home. Family members will participate more if they feel loved, calm, and comfortable with one another. If a conflict has arisen, seek to resolve it prior to family home evening if possible, so that the spirit of love can abide and hearts can be more fully turned toward the Lord.
3. Keep it simple and sweet. Family home evening is a time to learn and to create memories of good feelings. Often in families there are many different age groups to cater to if children are involved. Use the resources available on Church websites and in magazines to help span the gaps.
4. Make it inclusive. A family home evening that has elements each family member can engage in is likely to be more successful. Encourage older children to help the younger children with reading scriptures or completing other small tasks. This helps them to bond and provides an opportunity for the older children to give service.
5. Have fun! Sometimes a sermon doesn’t serve the purpose you hope it will. By abandoning the lecture and keeping it fun—with a physical activity if possible, or getting out of the house—family members will have a more positive experience.
6. Mix it up a little. Having an object lesson to start the evening and letting the family guess what the topic is going to be is a great way of getting their attention and setting the tone for family home evening.
7. Keep the love in it. Sometimes family home evening can get rowdy. It’s usually held at the end of the day and people (especially little ones) can be tired. Try to keep a loving tone even if someone needs reminding to stay on task in family home evening.
8. Some of the best family evenings are spent in service to others. Prayerfully select families you can serve. Going outside of the comfort



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zone of a plate of cookies is exciting for everyone. Weed someone's garden, walk their dog, rake their leaves, shovel their paths, clean for them, make a meal, fold their laundry, etc.

9. Get specific. Sometimes we take for granted things like the plan of salvation or the concept of the Atonement. These are timeless topics that can be covered in family home evening, helping to keep them uppermost in the minds of parents and children.
10. Be practical. One of the most fun lessons our children enjoyed was when we cleaned the house. My husband drew a basic plan of our house, we got into teams, wore a team "costume", played some upbeat music and speed-cleaned the house. Each person raced to tidy and clean rooms in the house and tick them off the plan. At the end we relaxed and ate sherbet in the back yard. ■

Exploring Trees with Grandma

By Caroline McIlwaine

Hannah S., aged 12, spends a lot of her free time at the family history centre of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints situated in Firle, South Australia. Ancestral research is a hobby she is learning from her grandmother, Ruth Pryor, who has been a genealogist for 40 years. "I'm learning about the branches of our family tree," explains Hannah. "I'm really enjoying finding out who my ancestors are."

Ruth Pryor says family history research is a passion she is delighted to pass on to her children, and now grandchildren. "It's amazing to see their eyes light up with interest as they get to know something about an ancestor who lived more than a century ago," she says. "And they realise that while those people's lives and experiences were so different, we're all linked. We are all family. That's what it's

all about—getting to know your family."

Along with encouraging family members in carrying out family research, Sister Pryor also assists patrons at the family history centre. "For members of the Church, linking their family together is a religious responsibility. But it's not a chore—most of us love it," she explains. "And that need to discover one's roots is a much bigger

trend these days than when I started out. Now countless people have the genealogy bug."

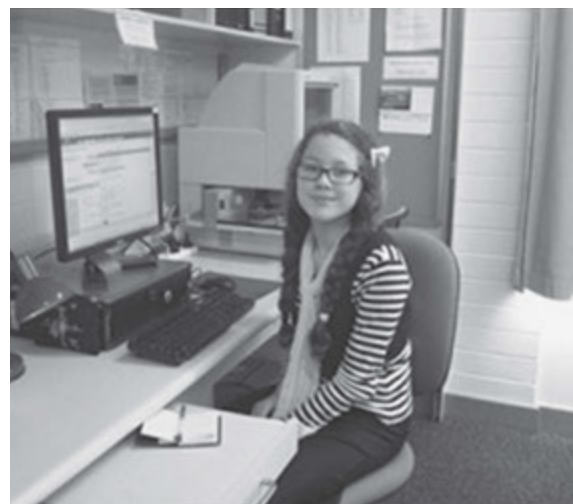
At the Firle centre, patrons can access online information free of charge via the FamilySearch.org website—including birth, marriage, and death records; censuses; probates and wills; and land records.

Research used to involve studying microfiche or microfilm records and writing to or visiting records offices or parish churches for information—and that still happens—but now FamilySearch.org has more than one billion names in its searchable databases.

Many people nowadays research using their home Internet, which has resulted in 10 million hits a day on the FamilySearch.org site.

Sister Pryor has researched some lines back further than the 1500s. With her own family tree incorporating more than 4,500 names, the challenge and interest for her now is finding out more about their lives.

"Someone has said that genealogy, meaning the names on our pedigree, equates to the branches of a family tree, but family history—finding out about an ancestor's life and times—that's the leaves. We'll always be filling in the gaps and finding more leaves." ■



Hannah S. learns research skills at the family history centre.

Correction of Australian Leadership Changes

Assgn Person Name	Org Official Name	Parent Org Official Name	Country	Concatenated
Anthony R. Lawless	Glenroy Ward	Melbourne Australia Deer Park Stake	Australia	Anthony R. Lawless, Glenroy Ward, Melbourne Australia Deer Park Stake
David J. Kerwin	Croydon Ward	Melbourne Australia Maroondah Stake	Australia	David J. Kerwin, Croydon Ward, Melbourne Australia Maroondah Stake
Dildar S. Jassar	South Harbour Ward	Sydney Australia Harbour Stake	Australia	Dildar S. Jassar, South Harbour Ward, Sydney Australia Harbour Stake
Esera S. Faalogo	Hampton Park Ward (Samoan)	Melbourne Australia Pakenham Stake	Australia	Esera S. Faalogo, Hampton Park Ward (Samoan), Melbourne Australia Pakenham Stake
Francis Iva	Loganholme Ward	Eight Mile Plains Australia Stake	Australia	Francis Iva, Loganholme Ward, Eight Mile Plains Australia Stake
Graham F. Smith	Pakenham Ward	Melbourne Australia Pakenham Stake	Australia	Graham F. Smith, Pakenham Ward, Melbourne Australia Pakenham Stake
Gregory J. Nethercott	Mount Gambier Ward	Adelaide Australia Marion Stake	Australia	Gregory J. Nethercott, Mount Gambier Ward, Adelaide Australia Marion Stake
Hartmut G. Skibbe	Churchill Park Ward	Melbourne Australia Pakenham Stake	Australia	Hartmut G. Skibbe, Churchill Park Ward, Melbourne Australia Pakenham Stake
Lukas Appleby	Cleveland Ward	Brisbane Australia Stake	Australia	Lukas Appleby, Cleveland Ward, Brisbane Australia Stake
Michael J. Stone	Windaroo Ward	Eight Mile Plains Australia Stake	Australia	Michael J. Stone, Windaroo Ward, Eight Mile Plains Australia Stake
Ray B. David	Greenvale Ward	Melbourne Australia Deer Park Stake	Australia	Ray B. David, Greenvale Ward, Melbourne Australia Deer Park Stake
Sione F. Lavaka	Dandenong Ward	Melbourne Australia Pakenham Stake	Australia	Sione F. Lavaka, Dandenong Ward, Melbourne Australia Pakenham Stake
Thane L. Mandin	Mandurah Ward	Perth Australia Rockingham Stake	Australia	Thane L. Mandin, Mandurah Ward, Perth Australia Rockingham Stake
Wade J. Milne	Brassall Ward	Ipswich Australia Stake	Australia	Wade J. Milne, Brassall Ward, Ipswich Australia Stake
J. Keith Sadler	Coffs Harbour Branch	Coffs Harbour Australia District	Australia	J. Keith Sadler, Coffs Harbour Branch, Coffs Harbour Australia District
Malcolm Dearden	Warrnambool Branch	Melbourne Australia Wyndham Stake	Australia	Malcolm Dearden, Warrnambool Branch, Melbourne Australia Wyndham Stake
Steven R. McMurray	Wangaratta Branch	Wangaratta Australia District	Australia	Steven R. McMurray, Wangaratta Branch, Wangaratta Australia District
Timothy M. N. Thornton	Murray Bridge Branch	Adelaide Australia Marion Stake	Australia	Timothy M. N. Thornton, Murray Bridge Branch, Adelaide Australia Marion Stake
Dirk Smibert	Australia Perth Mission	Pacific Area	Australia	Dirk Smibert, Australia Perth Mission, Pacific Area
Mark R. McNamee	Ipswich Australia Stake	Pacific Area	Australia	Mark R. McNamee, Ipswich Australia Stake, Pacific Area
Barry Lee	Adelaide Australia Temple		Australia	Barry Lee, Adelaide Australia Temple,
Peter R. Barr	Sydney Australia Temple		Australia	Peter R. Barr, Sydney Australia Temple,

For regular updated information on leadership changes within Australia, please go to lds.org.au
Please contact Catherine Vaughan at: vaughancm@ldschurch.org for information about submitting stories or articles to the *Ensign* insert pages. ■