

AUSTRALIA LOCAL PAGES

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Priesthood Power in the Home—Brethren, It's Time to Step Up

By Elder Kevin W. Pearson, First Counsellor
in the Area Presidency

My message is for all men everywhere, both young and old. It's for fathers and husbands present and future in particular, but also for the faithful women of the Church who love and sustain those men and desire to have the blessings of the priesthood in their homes.

Brethren, I invite you to give serious consideration to your divine calling and responsibility to worthily receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, and to magnify your priesthood calling as a father and husband. Your own spiritual destiny and the eternal future of your marriage and family depend on how you respond to this divine calling.

The family is ordained of God and is central to Heavenly Father's plan for the eternal destiny of His children. It's the most important unit in time and eternity. Our Heavenly Father's work and glory is to bring immortality and eternal life to all His children. Exaltation in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom can be attained only by those who have faithfully lived the gospel of Jesus Christ and are sealed as eternal companions. The sealing, known as temple marriage, is a sacred privilege and obligation that all should strive to receive. It's the foundation of an eternal family, and the crowning covenant in Heavenly Father's new and everlasting covenant (*Handbook 2: Administering the Church*, 1.3.1). The new and everlasting covenant is the way exaltation comes

to each of God's children. It contains all the doctrines, principles, ordinances, ordinations and covenants necessary for each of us to become worthy and have the power to return home as eternal families. Through our faithfulness in receiving and honouring these covenants, we receive power through the priesthood to become eternal companions and families.

How Do We Qualify for These Blessings?

A man must first be baptized and receive the Holy Ghost. Faithfully keeping this covenant brings spiritual power into one's life. Second, he must continue to increase in personal righteousness, receiving the Aaronic Priesthood and preparing to worthily receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. The Melchizedek Priesthood is received with a covenant to magnify the priesthood through greater personal righteousness and selfless service. Magnifying the priesthood through increased personal righteousness and service brings priesthood power into one's life. Third, he must worthily prepare to enter the holy temple and receive the temple endowment. This sacred covenant worthily kept brings additional priesthood power. Finally, temple marriage completes the new and everlasting covenant, sealing a husband and wife for time and eternity by the authority of the priesthood.

A new eternal family is created and the foundation for a fullness of joy is established. With this blessing comes the sacred duty to have children and to rear those children in love and



**Elder Kevin W.
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righteousness. Both parents have a divine calling to teach their children to understand the doctrine and to love and serve one another, observe the commandments of God, and prepare to receive the same sacred ordinances and covenants. The authority and the power of the priesthood are essential throughout these saving ordinances.

The Key Is Personal Righteousness

Brethren, we have a sacred duty and responsibility as husbands and fathers. Our own personal righteousness is the very key to receiving and securing these blessings for ourselves and our families. What level of personal righteousness are you choosing? What evidence exists in your life, in your marriage, and in your home that you are living worthy to exercise the power of the priesthood? What prevents us from having greater spiritual power in our lives? Priesthood power, like spiritual power, comes through personal righteousness and personal spirituality. You get what you consistently focus on. So, what are you focused on?

Personal righteousness is the quality of living that comes from obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. It is the degree to which our life is on an undeviating course toward God. This type of living leads to a level of spirituality which enables us to enjoy the near-constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. The greater the level of spirituality, the greater the clarity to see, discern and understand—the greater the power to love, teach and lead.

Where Do We Begin?

Everything begins with a vision. You are a beloved son of God who was “called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to

the foreknowledge of God, on account of [your] exceeding faith and good works . . . having chosen good and exercising exceedingly great faith” (Alma 13:3). You were foreordained to receive and to magnify the Melchizedek Priesthood. That’s your divine self. It’s who you really are!

Heavenly Father’s plan of happiness promises a fullness of joy that is lasting—everlasting. Your greatest joy will come as you magnify the priesthood in your life, your marriage and your home. This is your greatest potential; it’s your divine potential. But sadly, “there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honours of men, that they do not learn this one lesson—that the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness” (D&C 121:34–36).

Start by focusing on personal righteousness. Obedience to God is the first law of heaven. “The great task of life is to learn the will of the Lord and then do it,” said President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994; “The Great Commandment,” *Ensign*, May 1988, 4). “The natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord” (Mosiah 3:19).

A willingness to put off our own natural self begins with humility, meekness, patience and love. Begin by committing yourself to personal daily scripture study—everyday, everyday, everyday. Make a commitment to start today. Ponder

deeply about what you are reading and learning. Associate what you are learning with what you are doing in your life. Ask questions: “What does Heavenly Father want me to understand and do?” There is great power in daily scripture study. This step alone will have an insightful impact on your perspective. It will change the way you see yourself, your eternal companion and your children.

Make sincere personal and family prayer a daily part of your life. Personal daily scripture study will increase your desire to make your prayers more meaningful, and will provide you with the opportunity to ask important and inspired questions, which will make your prayers more meaningful and lead to greater personal revelation.

Seek to serve, inspire and love more—especially at home. Begin with your lovely eternal companion. Show her more patience, kindness and love. Seek her happiness. As you increase in personal righteousness and spirituality you will be drawn to her and she will be drawn to you, as will your children. They will want to be closer to you, and your love for each other will increase. As we draw closer to God we draw closer to pure love, and the vision of His promises for each of us and for our marriages and families becomes clearer and more compelling. The power and blessings of the priesthood become a reality in our homes.

The power of the priesthood, by divine design, should be most evident in our homes and marriages. For this to be so it must first be present in our own lives as holders of the holy Melchizedek Priesthood. Brethren, it's time for each of us to step up; to live lives more worthy of this divine power and privilege. This is our work and the great task of our lives. ■

Always a Missionary

By Beth Smith

Jolea Rogers and her brother Kirk, of Windaroo Ward, Coomera Stake, Qld, are both currently serving missions. Jolea is in the Japan Nagoya Mission, while Kirk is in the Indonesia Jakarta Mission. The two eldest of Brad and Joanne Rogers's nine children, they knew they would need to finance their missions, and both worked part time to do so. They also completed as much education as possible. Jolea gained a BA in Music and Japanese, while Kirk did 18 months of his Computer Science and Electrical Engineering course before they entered the mission field.

Focus on missionary work for Jolea and Kirk began while they were still in the youth program, as they gave heed to the counsel of their bishop to invite friends to activities. Jolea talked about her beliefs to her school friend, Katie Grewar, who accepted various invitations to attend youth activities. Jolea would share EFY songs with Katie who later said, “As I listened my heart filled with a peace that I was longing for

—to know I had worth, that I was loved, and that I could be someone special to my Heavenly Father.” After completing school, the girls went their separate ways, but at one stage Katie was praying for help in her life and had a distinct impression to contact Jolea. Katie obeyed this prompting and began attending church, institute and YSA functions with Jolea. Katie was baptised in July 2010.

Jolea Rogers and Katie Grewar were in the MTC at the same time.



IMAGE COURTESY OF JOLEA ROGERS AND USED WITH PERMISSION.



IMAGE COURTESY OF KIRK ROGERS AND USED WITH PERMISSION.

Jason Matthew and Kirk Rogers at Jason's baptism.

Kirk had also invited his friend, Jason Matthew, to many youth activities, including a ward road show, where Jason enthusiastically acted the part of a full-time missionary. Once the boys left school, they found they had elected to do the same degree at university. Jason began attending institute and YSA activities with Kirk. He read the Book of Mormon, participated in missionary trade-offs, and even gave a talk in sacrament meeting. Then, with his family's full support Jason was baptised by Kirk in September 2011.

While Jolea and Kirk were preparing for their missions, both Katie and Jason felt that they also should serve and began to prepare for their

own missions. Katie was called to serve in the Paris France Mission, and Jason to the Samoan program in the Auckland New Zealand Mission. All four would be serving a foreign language mission; that required all of them to attend the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah, USA.

Jolea entered the MTC in April 2012 and Katie followed 10 days later. Kirk entered the MTC on 28 August 2012, while Jason arrived one week later. Once the news became known of the missionary work that Kirk had done with Jason, the two elders were asked to speak to all of the missionaries at the MTC. ■

Linking Generations Together

By Peggy Bogar

I was excited about this temple trip, which was a special birthday gift from my husband, Steve, who is not yet a member of the Church. It was especially significant on this occasion to be accompanied by Jacqueline Lockhart and Allison Carr, the sisters who loved me into the gospel 22 years ago, when we were at university studying nursing in Launceston, Tasmania.

Previously, Noel Wheeler and his wife, Margaret, had shown me how to use the family history programmes on my computer to process the names of my ancestors. Margaret was an old

Peggy Bogar at the Melbourne temple.



IMAGE COURTESY OF GILLIAN SHAW AND USED WITH PERMISSION.

hand at family history and her encouragement rapidly built my confidence. I loved finding my ancestors, and had now completed a second lot of family names to take to the temple.

Another member, Nick Triffitt, had previously helped me with my family names last time I submitted them for temple work, and he agreed to assist again.

With warmth in my heart for the assistance of temple workers, visiting youth who were baptised for my ancestors by proxy, along with some members of the Devonport Australia Stake, many of my family received the saving ordinances that day.

I may not have any living relatives who are members of the Church yet, but I know there are many family members who have passed through the veil, been taught the gospel principles, and have said “Yes please” and accepted the work that has been done on their behalf. I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this sacred work for my ancestors, and also grateful to all who have helped in any way to bring this service to fruition. ■

Articles of Faith

By Thomas Wayne Fox

One of the most important issues for the early religious fathers was not only to establish the various beliefs of the new church but also refine them in a way that the average member could understand. The first of these creeds as they became known was agreed upon at the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325 and modified in A.D. 381 at the Council

of Constantinople. This document became known as the Nicene Creed and is still accepted by most traditional Christian faiths today.

Two other such creeds are the Apostles’ Creed (written sometime between the fourth and sixth centuries), and the Athanasian Creed, originally thought to have been written by a bishop of Alexandria named Athanasius. More recent studies tend to indicate it was more likely written sometime in the fifth century, long after his death.

Whilst claiming to represent the beliefs of Christendom, each of these creeds has been amended by one group or another. The Catholic Church has changed one word in the Nicene Creed three times; some protestant versions have inserted the words “Christian Church” with little regard to their incorrect translation of the original “Catholic” meaning “universal” Church. The Orthodox faiths do not accept the Apostles’ Creed—not because of content but on principle.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints “announce no such creed . . . for they accept the principle of continuous revelation as an essential feature of their belief”.¹

In 1842 the Prophet Joseph Smith was approached by a Mr. John Wentworth, owner and editor of the *Chicago Democrat*, who was seeking Joseph’s collaboration in writing a sketch of the history and beliefs of the restored Church. He also sought permission to share the information with



IMAGE COURTESY OF CHURCH MEDIA LIBRARY.

a Mr. George Barstow who was compiling a history of New Hampshire.

While Mr. Barstow finally decided not to use the material in his history because of a change in his timeline, Joseph's letter turned out to be one of the best-known documents of the Church, known as the Wentworth letter.

When describing the letter in the *Times and Seasons* issue dated 1 March 1842, the prophet outlined the request he had received and his reason for responding before going on to write, "I have written the following sketch of the rise, progress, persecution and faith of the Latter-day Saints, of which I have the honor, under God, of being the founder."²

The Wentworth Letter "has immense value to Latter-day Saints. It is an original account by Joseph Smith testifying of his sacred call from God, his visions, and his ministry and teachings."³

Towards the conclusion of the letter the prophet notes 13 tenets of belief which have become known as the Articles of Faith. While these 13 articles include fundamental and characteristic doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ as taught by the Church, they make no claim to be a definitive creed (refer to article of faith 9, which clearly speaks of ongoing revelation).

"From the time of their first promulgation, the Articles of Faith have been accepted by the people as an authoritative exposition; and on 6th October 1890, the Latter-day Saints, in general conference assembled, readopted the Articles as a guide in faith and conduct."⁴ ■

NOTES

1. James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 6.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*, chapter 38, "The Wentworth Letter," 437.
3. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 437.
4. James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 6.



IMAGE COURTESY OF BRIDEY LAWLESS AND USED WITH PERMISSION.

Sam, Mack, and the missionaries who taught Mack prior to his baptism.

A Missionary Now

By Bridey Lawless

Seventeen-year-old Sam Lawless had the opportunity and blessing to baptize his best friend, Mack.

Mack often stayed overnight at Sam's place on Saturday night. The next morning when Sam's family headed off to church, Mack would stay in bed. Regularly they would return after church to find Mack still asleep.

Sam said, "I thought to myself,

if he is only going to sleep away the morning, I should ask him to come to church." He finally plucked up the courage to ask Mack to attend church with them, and was pleasantly surprised when Mack said yes.

Over the next four months Mack had all the discussions taught to him by two amazing missionaries, who were perfectly placed to be in the ward

at the right time. The two boys clicked with the two elders like they were brothers. The missionaries were definitely guided and led by the Spirit. Just a week after the last discussion, Mack was baptized. Both Sam and Mack had smiles from ear to ear all day, and the Spirit was felt very strongly.

While bearing his testimony Sam shared his love of and appreciation for the truthfulness of the gospel and of having such a great friend, and expressed his gratitude towards the missionaries he admired and looked up to, who had given up two years of their lives to share the gospel with his friend. He was grateful that he had invited Mack to church.

Mack also shared his testimony. He shared his feelings for the gospel and Book of Mormon, and testified that he knew they were true. He expressed his love for the bishop (Sam's dad), who gave Mack a Book of Mormon on his first Sunday at church and challenged him to read and study it. And finally, he shared his gratitude for a friend who he loved, and was happy he had invited him to church that Sunday morning. ■

Helping Hands in Newcastle Stake

By Karen Coulson

A number of Helping Hands activities were underway across Newcastle stake for the annual Helping Hands Day last October.

Members of the Maitland congregation focussed their efforts in cleaning up the local skate park and the reserve surrounding the Metford railway station. Bishop Pita Tupou led families, friends and missionaries in their clean-up efforts. Within a few hours they had filled a box trailer with recyclable and general waste materials, which were then taken to the local waste transfer station.

"Being active participants and contributors to our local



IMAGE COURTESY OF KAREN COULSON AND USED WITH PERMISSION.

communities is something we can do to show those in our community that we care for them, and for our area. By offering a helping hand even in small ways we can make a big difference," said Bishop Tupou. ■

Members and missionaries from Maitland Ward participate in a Helping Hands project.

Helping Hands in Melbourne Deer Park Stake

By Anthony LeVannais

On Saturday the 10th of November, Primary children, youth and adult members of the Sunbury Ward participated in the preparation and

planting of 75 native trees in 5 Mile Creek, at Woodend.

Woodend is located in the outer western region of Melbourne, and within the

boundaries of the Sunbury Ward. The weather was just perfect for the Helping Hands activity, which was spearheaded by the Woodend Landcare Group. Latter-day Saints

from the Sunbury area partnered with Landcare, who have been working hard to reduce the amount of willow trees which are dominating the flora in this

region. Together the two groups enjoyed a morning of clearing and planting, followed by home-baked treats to celebrate the work they achieved. ■

Sunbury Ward members serve at the Helping Hands activity.



IMAGE COURTESY OF DAVID HOARE AND USED WITH PERMISSION