

# NEW ZEALAND 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

**M**y 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



**Elder Kevin W.  
Pearson**

this blessing comes the sacred duty to have children and to rear those children in love and 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. ■

#### LOCAL PAGES

## A National Title Always Came Second to the Gospel

By Moana Winitana

Coach Tai Winitana is a big believer in setting goals. He sets his standards high and works hard to achieve them. He knows he can achieve anything with the Lord’s help.

Tai made a name for himself when he won the national Under 13 title for Basketball Auckland in 2011. His efforts contributed to putting Basketball Auckland back on the map after many years of being at the bottom amongst other Auckland Associations.

As with all of his blessings, Tai has always been grateful,

and always gives thanks to the Lord.

Over the past two years Brother Winitana set a goal to do missionary work with his team. He wanted to teach the boys how to pray and to share the gospel to them.

There was some initial reluctance from a few of the players to join in the prayer circle when he first began to offer a prayer before and after each training session and each tournament game. However, after consistently praying week after week, his persistence broke down



**Coach Tai Winitana with the Auckland U13 team.**

barriers between the players, and Tai was eventually able to call on all members of the team to offer a prayer, which created a feeling of happiness and team spirit among the group. The player's parents were happy to respect their coach and his beliefs, and often joined in the prayer circle when they were present at training.

Preparation for a national tournament is intense, and Coach Winitana prepared his team physically, mentally and spiritually. His missionary work

wasn't just with the boys. The day before the finals game in 2011 he explained why Latter-day Saints fast and invited his assistant coach to fast with him. They both fasted and prayed for the team to be successful and utilise all of the things they had been taught at training. They went on to win the national title the following day.

This past season continued the tradition of praying at training and games, and as the Auckland team arrived in Wellington for the finals

tournament at the end of 2012, the whole team began their championship week by attending fast and testimony meeting in Wellington Ward. Bearing his testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel to the team, Tai shared his love for the Saviour, showing profoundly what his bigger goal and priorities were.

The team didn't win the national title of that competition last year, but for Coach Winitana the accomplishments of teaching his team to pray and sharing the gospel was more rewarding. ■

# Develop Your Talents and Enjoy Blessings

By Tessa Dewsbury

*Life isn't about finding oneself . . . it's about creating oneself.*

The talents given to us are designed to help us become more perfected in Christ. Many talents are clearly obvious to everyone, but some are more subtle. I believe a few talents can be developed and enjoyed by everyone.

The peacemaker in the family may go about quietly fixing and repairing hurt feelings, while another person may have a compromising heart. I see these as talents, just as I see the person who is able to soak up the words of the sacred hymns of the Church and be edified by the truths, principles and doctrines that are found in them. This is one of those talents everyone can develop.

Someone once said, “In church, never sing louder than beautiful.” Heavenly Father receives hymns as prayers. We would never shout at Him if we were offering a prayer, neither

would we vocally compete with a person praying next to us. Singing too softly would also be inappropriate—for the purpose of singing hymns is to worship our Father in Heaven, and we need to offer Him our very best efforts.

Below the title of each hymn is a word or words printed in italics which indicate how the hymn should be sung—words such as “Resolutely”, “Confidently”, “Brightly”, “Peacefully”, “Worshipfully”, “Joyfully”, “Thoughtfully”, “With dignity”, “With devotion”, etc.

At the end of each page are scripture references, which if read can enhance our understanding of the principle or doctrine being shared. While the sacrament is being passed we could, for example, reverently read through the words of the sacrament hymn again, and perhaps memorise the words. We could also read the listed scriptures and have our testimonies strengthened as the Holy Ghost testifies of sacred truths.

We learn in Doctrine and Covenants 25:12 that “the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered

with a blessing upon their heads.” Heavenly Father has so many blessings to give us, and here is another opportunity to receive His blessings as we sing the hymns more honourably.

Every day we're working towards becoming our best eternal selves—with that in mind I believe I could develop this talent and be more reverent when singing our Church hymns—how about you? ■

## New Horizons

By President Ross J. Cuff

First Counsellor, Hamilton New Zealand Temple Presidency

Many years ago when I was a teenager, a question arose with my parents as to whether my eyesight was all that it should be, and arrangements were made for me to visit an optician for an eye examination. I remember being told at the examination by the optician that I was short-sighted and would need spectacles to correct this condition. Eventually I was told that my new spectacles were ready for me to collect and I visited the optician again.

As I walked from the optician's rooms to the outside wearing my new glasses, I entered a completely new world. The blurry view of my surroundings that I had been used to, and thought was normal, suddenly became sharp and focused. When

**The Hamilton  
New Zealand  
Temple**

I next went to the movies, I could suddenly see clearly into the actors' eyes and not just a blurred face. In many other facets of my life new horizons were opened to me. It was wonderful.

This experience with my eyesight has some symbolism for me in relation to the blessings we receive from regular attendance at the temple. The fuller understanding that is made available to us of the eternal blessings our Father in Heaven and His Son Jesus Christ have planned for us through the ordinances of the temple brings with it a sharp spiritual focus that reminds me of what

I experienced when in my youth I first saw the world through my new spectacles.

Particularly when we have prayerfully prepared ourselves to enter the Lord's house, from the time of our entry when we receive a warm welcome at the desk where we present our temple recommends, through to the baptistry, other ordinance areas, the beautifully adorned celestial room and then to the very special sealing rooms where families are sealed together for the eternities, a beautiful and peaceful spirit can be felt and our witness of the divinity of the Lord's house can also progressively reach new horizons.

The introduction to chapter 7 of the Apostle John's book of Revelation in the New Testament tells us that this chapter contains a description of "the hosts of the exalted from all nations". The description itself can be found in verses 13–17 and includes the following:

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

". . . These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; . . .

"For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

I will be forever grateful for the new horizons I have witnessed through my regular attendance



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at the temple. I testify that in accordance with our individual circumstances, we who have and will in the future attend the temple as regularly as possible, and then strive to live in accordance

with the covenants made therein, will also be able to one day present before the throne of God, have the tears wiped from our eyes and be fed by the Lamb. ■

## Remembering Those in Need

Members and missionaries from the Pacific Area Office in Takapuna, Auckland, assembled 1,000 hygiene kits for local charities in late November 2012. The hygiene kits were then presented to the Salvation

Army and Women's Refuge organisations.

The kits contained shampoo and conditioner, soap, face washers and combs, toothbrush, toothpaste, and deodorant. The local Auckland

charities were very grateful to receive them in time for Christmas and were happy to distribute them to individuals who are in need of personal care items.

Representatives from the charities explained that often the families they worked with



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*Pacific Area Office employees put together 1,000 hygiene kits for local charities.*



***Pacific Area Office employees clean the streets and parks of Takapuna.***

had to leave their homes in a hurry and arrived at the shelters with no belongings. One family who had arrived recently had one toothbrush between the five family members. They said while the hygiene kits looked like they might just contain basic items, they would be very precious to families in need, and may be the only possessions that some people could call their own until they could get back on their feet again.

Helping Hands participant Mandy Watts said she was impressed when she heard how

welcome the kits would be at the home the Salvation Army runs, which has 80 beds for men who are homeless or have just come out of jail. “My heart was very touched and it left me wanting to do more service like this,” she said.

During the service activity volunteers also donned the distinctive yellow Mormon Helping Hands shirts and took to the streets of Takapuna and the local beach and lake to pick up rubbish on a busy Friday afternoon.

Area Office employee Murphy Maiava says he enjoyed helping to pick up rubbish on the beach. “An elderly woman walking her dog asked what I was doing”, he said. “I replied that we were helping to clean up the beach of rubbish. As we parted, I noticed some guys eating their lunch on a park bench get up and start to pick up rubbish around where they were eating. It’s funny how just a small example of service can influence people.”

Elder F. Michael Watson of the Pacific Area Presidency told guests from three local charities and the Mormon Helping Hands volunteers that “we do what we do because there are needs in our community and this is what Jesus Christ would have us do.”

“This is the Christmas season,” he said, “and a time to provide a little happiness to many who have felt only suffering and despair. The hope of the Christmas season is the Spirit of Christ.”

Elder Watson concluded his remarks with the words of Tiny Tim from Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol*: “God bless us, everyone.” ■