

UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND LOCAL PAGES

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Continual Growth of Personal Testimony

By **Elder Patrick Kearon, UK**

First Counsellor in the Europe Area Presidency

Elder David S. Baxter recently said, “Even if at times our faith seems no bigger than a mustard seed, as we move forward, Providence will move with us. If we seek heaven’s help, we will receive it—perhaps even in unexpected ways.”¹

Elder Baxter was speaking of adversity when he penned those words, and I believe they are true in good times as well. The key is to keep moving forward. It has been said that if we are not moving forward, we fall back. We need to stretch and grow to keep our faith strong and vibrant, constantly exercising our spiritual muscles. President Henry B. Eyring, First Counsellor in the First Presidency, has said, “Great faith has a short shelf life.”² This causes me to think of those times when our faith and testimony are most vibrant and sure, and then something happens to shake our faith, or we fail to nourish it with consistent connection with God.

On a recent stay in a large city, I was awakened twice during the night by sirens outside my hotel window. When dawn came, I looked out of the window to see that the city’s central fire and rescue station was located directly across the street. The firefighters were out working with one of their big ladder trucks. I became captivated by the training exercise in which they were engaged. They extended the ladder up a little way, and then brought it back down. Then they extended it again, but this time a little further, and then retracted it once more. They did this time and time again until they had reached the full extent of the ladder’s reach and the top floor of the building on which they were practicing. I suspect that they conduct this exercise regularly. Through this consistent practice, they will know exactly what to do when the critical call comes. The fire-fighting team will respond immediately to the call for help, and in an instant each member of the



crew will know where to be and what to do to effect a rescue from a building’s uppermost floors.

**Elder Patrick
Kearon**

It is the same for us. Our faith and testimony need constant exercise, constant stretching to extend our spiritual reach. We know the things we must continually repeat to keep ourselves spiritually strong, and yet we can be slow to do them, even when we have discovered that they do in fact strengthen and bless us. Our devoted daily prayers, our dedicated study

of scripture, regular fasting with sincere purpose, regular temple attendance, time spent in the service of our Father in Heaven and of others all help us extend our spiritual reach and fortify our testimony. We must likewise remember that there are few things that strengthen testimony like sharing it with others. Expressing out loud what we believe bolsters our faith and reinforces our convictions. The consistent repetition of these simple but powerful practices, in a very real sense, enables us to “put on [our] beautiful garments” and become our best spiritual selves.

The Lord commands us in Doctrine and Covenants 82:14: “For Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; her borders must be enlarged; her stakes must be strengthened; yea, verily I say unto you, Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments.”

Each time we determine to stretch a little farther and a little higher, we are surprised at the rich spiritual reward that flows from our remarkably small offering. At this time of year when we remember the Savior’s miraculous atoning gift, we can easily recommit to act in a way that will let those blessings flow into our lives. ■

NOTES

1. David S. Baxter, “Leaving Adversity Behind,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2012, 26.
2. Henry B. Eyring, “Spiritual Preparedness: Start Early and Be Steady,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 39.

Valerie Ahern Receives Award from the Queen

By Debbie Twigger



Valerie Ahern, from the Witham Ward, Ipswich Stake, was awarded a British Empire Medal, (BEM) in The Queen’s New Year Honours List for services in her local community as chairwoman and then vice-chairwoman for the Templars Estate Residents’ Association. Valerie lives on the Templars Estate in Witham, Essex, and was given the award for her work for the tenants.

The BEM award was reintroduced for the Queen’s Jubilee year and is given out to those who are trying to improve conditions in the community. Medals are used to recognise bravery, long and/or valuable service and/or good conduct. Valerie has spent 15 years working to upgrade security on the estate with CCTV and lighting and improve the quality of life for local residents.

Valerie Ahern at the Templars Residents’ Association. After devoting 15 years of service to the community, Valerie has been awarded a British Empire Medal in The Queen’s New Year Honours List.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JANE GOUGH

Valerie has been a member of the Witham Ward since 1996, after learning about the Church for 18 months. She states, "I'm shocked at receiving the award, but it's not just me, it's team work. You can't do much on your own." She helps out regularly at church and is currently serving in the Relief Society. Friend and ward member Jane Gough states, "She is the person most in tune with the Spirit that I know, and is always helpful to anyone and everyone. We are all so excited and pleased for her to receive this award."

Valerie continues, "I've enjoyed serving in the community and have tried to make a difference. You need a lot of tact and love in your heart, especially with antisocial behaviour and drug problems. You have to be mindful of people's situations, and not be judgmental, because 'there but for the grace of God go I'. This work has made me aware of some of my own shortcomings. I'm doing my best, and one day I might get there, but my friends accept me as I am."

Valerie has been invited to attend Ingatestone Hall, a Grade 1 listed, 16th-century manor house in Essex, in March to meet Lord Petre, who will present her with the medal. ■

Wrapping Up a Generous Donation

By Joel Matthews

Members and friends of the Oxford 2nd Ward, Reading Stake, volunteered a phenomenal 350 hours to help raise £3640 for the Children's Critical Care Unit at the John Radcliffe Hospital.

During the week leading up to Christmas the fundraising project spearheaded by Margaret McLuckie saw many members carefully gift-wrap hundreds of presents for shoppers in the Westgate Shopping Centre. The money donated for the gift wrapping will help provide specialist care for those children who bravely fight against serious conditions and illnesses.

The project was boosted by the generosity of a local Sainsbury's store. The supermarket

From left: Margaret McLuckie, Sharon Buchanan (Deputy Matron, Paediatric Critical Care at the John Radcliffe Hospital) and Adele Patrick representing Sainsbury's Oxford Locals with a cheque for the funds raised from gift wrapping by the Oxford 2nd Ward.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOEL MATTHEWS

giant donated many of the materials required, including large amounts of quality wrapping paper, ribbons, bows and tags. The Westgate Centre management team provided a platform within the shopping mall to wrap the presents and provided storage space to hold the materials all week.

Samantha Chaundy of the Westgate Centre management team, who kindly opened their doors to the fundraisers, said, “We were delighted to welcome Margaret and her team of gift wrappers to Westgate Shopping Centre in December and were thrilled to help support such an important service as the Children’s Critical Care Unit. It’s a real testament to Margaret and our shoppers that such a fantastic amount of money was raised for this very important local cause. We look forward to working with them again next year.” Sister McLuckie has already confirmed that the gift wrapping service will be available again in the same place during the week leading up to Christmas 2013, starting on 16 December.

Expressing her sincere gratitude to the generosity of Sainsbury’s and the Westgate Centre Management, Sister McLuckie also praised others, saying, “It was incredible to see so many people have the desire to get involved. Without the gratefully received donations from the local shops and the shoppers of Oxford we wouldn’t have achieved the amazing sum we did. I am grateful for every donation—big and small, material and monetary.” Store manager Oscar Matalobos remarked, “The team at Oxford St. Clements Local branch of Sainsbury’s are delighted to contribute a further £300 towards this amazing cause. Margaret is a truly inspirational and charitable individual. A huge well done and thank you from the team and the other Oxford Locals.” ■

From Strength to Strength— Kylie Leuluai

By Annette Stewart and Shawna Denny

Not many Young Men leaders could bench press three or four of their young men at a time. And not many ward missionaries occasionally have to miss a meeting to play in the Rugby World Club Challenge. But then, not many members are professional rugby players of international renown.

Currently a member of the Leeds 1st Ward, Leeds Stake, 35-year-old Kylie Leuluai is a prop forward for professional rugby league team the Leeds Rhinos. He has announced he is postponing retirement for a year after initially intending to hang up his boots at the end of 2012. This is good news for fans of the club as Brother Leuluai has helped the Rhinos to five Super League titles and two World Club Challenges since his arrival in 2007.

It’s also good news for the local Leeds ward as he has served faithfully in the youth and missionary programmes since he came to the UK from his native New Zealand.

Before moving to England, Brother Leuluai had already made quite an impression on the National Rugby League in New Zealand. His ability to

bench press a whopping 225 kilograms (496 pounds or roughly 35 stones) remains the heaviest weight lifted by an NRL player.

But Brother Leuluai says the mark he’d really like to leave behind is that you can be true to yourself and still accomplish everything you want in life. “I want the young men to know that you can be different and still be you,” he said. “Young men can stand up for who they are and for their beliefs and others will learn to accept them for those beliefs. I want the youth to realize that you can reach your goals through the gospel.”

“My proudest moment was my first professional game because of all the challenges I had to overcome to get there,” said Brother Leuluai. “When I was younger, I wasn’t too comfortable with who I was. Now I believe in myself. You should never underestimate who you are and what you can become.”

Heeding the advice of friend and legendary former New Zealand rugby union footballer Sid Going (a prominent rugby player and Church member who was the subject of a talk given at the April 2011 general



conference by Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; see “Preparing for the Second Coming,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 50), Brother Leuluai started his career with a devotion to his faith in the gospel and has held strong to it ever since. “[Sid] saw me out one night and told me that if I ever wanted to do well in my sport or make it in rugby I should live the gospel. I have always remembered that,” he said.

Brother Leuluai, whose first name is actually Hawaiian in origin, recalls gathering at his grandmother’s house with his family as

a boy and watching rugby, some games featuring his father and uncles playing. It was only a matter of time before he would join them on the professional field.

The light of the gospel and the strength this has brought to his life is also recognized by his club coach, Brian McDermott, who told BBC Radio Leeds: “Kylie [is] one of those unsung heroes where his numbers are always good. But, more than that, the presence he has on the field is big for us. He’s also very good for us off the field as well—some of that leadership that every team needs, somebody to lead from

the front and show people the right way to go.”

Brother Leuluai is quick to explain that his devotion to religion has been the cause of his success on the rugby field. “If it wasn’t for religion, I believe I wouldn’t have anything,” he told the *Daily Mail*. “It’s the main purpose and reason behind what I’ve achieved.”

Brother Leuluai is married. He and his wife are parents of three children. After years of playing professional rugby, he will finally retire at the end of the 2013 season and return to the southern hemisphere. ■

Kylie Leuluai, professional rugby player with Leeds Rhinos and member of the Leeds 1st Ward, with his sons.

Preston Stake Primary Leads the Way

By Janice Peers

During 2012 the Primary children in the Preston England Stake have been seeking opportunities to share the gospel with others and to be aware of and to seek out “Missionary Moments”. The children were encouraged at the start of the year by the stake, ward and branch Primary leaders to follow a message in the November 2011 *Friend* magazine and be missionaries by sharing the gospel with friends, family and teachers. A stake-wide Missionary Moment initiative was organized whereby the children’s experiences were recorded and sometimes illustrated, and specially prepared Missionary Moment badges were awarded to the children by the Primary presidents during sharing time.

The stake Primary presidency collected these records and compiled them into a booklet. The booklet was presented to the England Manchester Mission president, Robert Preston, and his wife, Pat, in a special sharing time by the children of the South Ribble Ward Primary on behalf of all of the children in the Preston Stake. President and Sister Preston were delighted by the children’s efforts and success. They interacted with the children, and President Preston told them that in order to be a missionary all they need to do is to be a friend to somebody. Speaking about friendships, President Preston suggested to the children that they could continue to invite their friends to church, to Primary and to Faith in God activities.

The Missionary Moments included telling friends and teachers about the Church. In particular, one Primary child from Blackpool spoke up in school when his teacher said that “Mormons aren’t Christians”. He explained to her that they are and



PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL PEERS

South Ribble Ward Primary children, on behalf of all of the children in the Preston Stake, present the “Missionary Moment” booklet to Robert Preston, England Manchester Mission president, and his wife, Pat.

took her a Book of Mormon and some pass-along cards, which she promised to read.

A child from the South Ribble Ward said, “I invited my friends and teachers to my baptism so that they could feel the Spirit.” Many children invited their friends to Church activities, especially Faith in God activities and to Sunday Primary. Many of these nonmembers still attend activities on a regular basis. One five-and-a-half-year-old child in Barrow invited her cousin to church, and he has now been baptised. The children have not been afraid to talk about the Church, what they believe, and where they go on Sundays. And as one seven-year-old Carlisle child said, “I bore my testimony”.

What a wonderful example these children have been to their wards and branches. Although the booklet of Missionary Moments has now been passed on to the mission president the children will continue to have their Missionary Moments and be wonderful ambassadors for the Church. ■

Clare Tate—a Faithful Friend of Missionaries

Clare May Tate has been a friend to the full-time missionaries in her branch and ward for a long time—caring for them, feeding them and opening her house to them since 1984. She has kept a book listing all the missionaries since that time, which is very precious to her, with the names of the young people who became her friends. The first entry was by Elder James G. Dahl from Calgary, Alberta, Canada, who stated, “It is a great privilege to write in this book and to be the first. . . . It is great to be able to visit your lovely home, keep the good work up.”

Over the years many missionary sisters stayed with her for a period of time, including Sister Sharleen Bodily, who wrote on November 14, 1984, “Thanks for all you’ve always done for me—in caring when we were down and cheering up the room with your presence. For having missionaries even though you didn’t have to”.

Life wasn’t easy for Clare. She was born in Jamaica in 1928, the eldest of seven children. When their dad walked out of the family, her mother was left to look after all seven children on her own. Clare travelled to England in 1950, aged 22 years, following a school friend whose family emigrated to England at about the same time. When she arrived in Stockwell, London, however, it was wet, cold and miserable, quite a change after the sunshine of Jamaica, and the house where she stayed had a toilet in the back garden. She decided to train to be a nurse and met her husband in London where they lived in Stockwell. They later moved to North London in Highgate where Clare started working in Orpington General Hospital in Kent.

With her siblings scattered around the world, Clare travelled to Germany and then back to

Jamaica several times to visit her dear mother. It was when she returned to England after a three-year stay that she met the missionaries and joined the Church in June 1981. She was baptized by Elder Nelson and Elder Donald Williams (both from the USA) into the Wellingborough Branch in the Northampton Stake (now the Kettering Ward). The members met in a rented building near the Embankment in Wellingborough and in various schools before that. When Clare arrived back in England after staying in Jamaica for three years she had nothing. “I sold my property, the Lord blessed me and opened His window and showered me with blessings,” she said. “I give to others now because the Lord has told me to give. I go to the temple regularly. I feel that the more I give, the more I get back.”

Sister Tate feels she has been very blessed due to the help she has given others and comments, “After many letdowns in life I feel the Lord has picked me up”.

Clare Tate with photographs of some of the missionaries who have stayed with her since 1984.



PHOTOGRAPH BY DEBBIE TWIGGER

Clare had a strong relationship with her mother and travelled back frequently to Jamaica to visit her. “I remember what the Lord has done for me. I feel I am a really blessed person. I am a survivor because of the way I treat others. I looked after my mother because she did everything for us as children, raising us on her own. She worked hard and washed people’s clothes. My mum came to England and stayed with me because she wanted to fly in a plane. She went to Buckingham Palace and I showed her the sights of London. My mother, a Baptist, said that “everything I touch turns to gold.”

On March 6, 1985, Sister Angelee Anderson wrote about Clare, “How can I tell you how grateful I am for your hospitality you have given me? You are a wonderful person, full of love and charity—thank you for being an example to me.”

After a five-month stay with Sister Tate, another full-time sister missionary commented on the difficult times she had been through whilst serving: “Thank you so much for all your love and concern, especially when I learned of the deaths in my family.”

Now living alone in Wellingborough, Clare states, “I enjoyed having the missionaries in my house because I felt the Spirit of the Lord all the time. When I feel sad I go to the temple and I know I am in the house of the Lord. He has provided for me. I know I get so many blessings from going to the temple. I am a happy person; I read my patriarchal blessing because I feel the Spirit which tells me that the Lord loves me and not to worry about anything.”

Sister Tate still gives a carrier bag of food to the full-time serving missionaries in the Kettering Ward every Sunday “because they are doing the Lord’s work”. She is a great example of continually thinking of others, counting her blessings and walking by faith. ■

Sister Tate was in conversation with the assistant editor.

Editor’s note

Welcome to the new editors of the UK Church websites and Local Pages of the *Ensign* magazine—Jason Watling (webmaster) and Debbie Twigger, assistant editor.

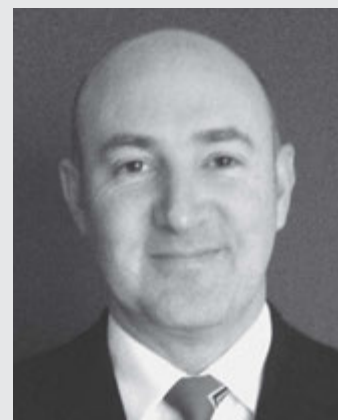
Elder Clifford Herbertson, Area Seventy, would like to thank Paul and Beryl Oliver for their dedicated work over the past two years, and for all those who have assisted them with writing and editing articles.

Please submit all stories and photographs to the editors, Jason and Debbie, at ukiensign@ldschurch.org. Stories should be in Microsoft Word format. Photographs should be in jpg format. It would assist the editors in processing photos if the pictures did not require a large amount of memory. More stories can be found online at <http://www.lds.org.uk> by clicking on *United Kingdom & Ireland Church News and Events* and at <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org.uk> for media and the public. There is also a UK Church Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/LDSUK>. We need the signed permission of all participants in the photograph, as well as the photographer, for the Church to use the article and photograph. A form will be sent out upon receipt of the article or it can be obtained from us in advance or from your stake media specialist/stake director of public affairs.

We look forward to receiving news from your ward or stake under the following headings:

- News
- Latter-day Saint Voices
- ‘How I Know’
- Favourite scripture (youth)
- Trying to Be Like Jesus (Primary)

Send all stories and photographs for the websites and Local Pages to ukiensign@ldschurch.org ■



PHOTOGRAPH BY RUTH WATLING

Jason Watling, webmaster and editor for the UK Church websites and Local Pages of the Ensign.



PHOTOGRAPH BY TONY TWIGGER

Debbie Twigger, assistant editor for the UK Church websites and Local Pages of the Ensign.