

AUSTRALIA LOCAL PAGES

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Hearken to the Voice of the Lord

By Elder James J. Hamula, Area President

The first word of the Lord's preface to His latter-day revelations to man is "hearken."¹ *Hearken* means to listen carefully, to give due attention, to give strict heed. Indeed, the Lord makes this clear by enjoining all men—the "people of [His] church," "people from afar," and people "upon the islands of the sea"—to "listen together."²

To what should we hearken? As the Apostle Paul observed, "There are . . . so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification."³ This reality of life weighed upon Joseph Smith. Referring to the many often conflicting voices of his day on the question of religion, Joseph observed: "In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself: What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?"⁴ Whether or not the question is one of religion, Joseph's questions apply to us all. To what, or to whom, should we give our ear and follow?

This question was answered when God our Father appeared to Joseph Smith. Pointing to His Son, Our Father told Joseph—and through him all of us—"*This is my Beloved Son. Hear Him!*"⁵ Out of all of the many voices in this world, the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ is the one to which we must hearken. After the injunction to pray, there is probably no more frequent injunction in scripture than the injunction to hearken,⁶ listen,⁷ hear,⁸ or heed⁹ the voice of the Lord. Our first parents, Adam and Eve, set the pattern for all of us. After they found themselves in the lone and dreary world, they not only offered prayer unto the Lord, but they "heard the voice of the Lord" and obeyed His instructions.¹⁰

Hearkening to the voice of the Lord brings rich blessings. If we hearken to the voice of the Lord, He will be quick to answer our prayers.¹¹ We will be protected and magnified temporarily.¹² We will have the mercy and compassion of the Lord.¹³ And we will be delivered from death and have our place in mortality and immortality made



Elder James J. Hamula

secure.¹⁴ Not hearkening to the voice of the Lord can only bring the opposite of such blessings.¹⁵

Where may we find the voice of the Lord so that we may follow His voice and be blessed? The Lord's voice can be found in the voice of His servants. The Lord told Joseph Smith: "This generation shall have my word through you."¹⁶ Whether it is His voice, or the voice of His servants, "it is the same."¹⁷ The Lord's voice may also be found in the scriptures. Referring to His revelations, the Lord has said: "These words are not of men nor of man, but of me . . . For it is my voice which speaketh them unto you; for they are given by my Spirit unto you, and by my power you can read them one to another . . .

Wherefore, you can testify that you have heard my voice, and know my words.”¹⁸ The Lord’s voice can also be found in the spiritual impressions that come to our hearts and minds. Said He: “I speak unto you with my voice, even the voice of my Spirit.”¹⁹

As one who has sought and found the voice of the Lord amidst the din of the many other voices of this world, I know that there is no other voice as peaceful, and loving, and reassuring as His. I testify that the Lord’s voice can be heard again and, when followed, will bring no greater blessing in this life or in the life to come. ■

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 1:1.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 1:1.
3. 1 Corinthians 14:10.
4. Joseph Smith-History 1:10.
5. Joseph Smith-History 1:17.
6. Examples include Deuteronomy 28:1–2, 15; Doctrine and Covenants 1:1; 39:1, 10; 45:2; 133:16.
7. Examples include Doctrine and Covenants 27:1; 29:1; 35:1; 39:1; 45:6; 72:1.
8. Examples include Deuteronomy 4:33, 36; Isaiah 28:23; Matthew 17:5; Mosiah 26:21, 28; Doctrine and Covenants 1:11; 38:6, 22; 43:23.
9. Examples include Alma 12:9; 37:44; 3 Nephi 23:4; Doctrine and Covenants 6:2; 11:2; 12:2, 9; 14:2; 32:5; 84:43.
10. Moses 5:4–6.
11. See Doctrine and Covenants 101:7; Moses 6:52.
12. See Exodus 15:26; Deuteronomy 30:9–10.
13. See Deuteronomy 13:18.
14. See Doctrine and Covenants 45:2; 124:45.
15. See Doctrine and Covenants 124:45–48; Deuteronomy 28:15–68.
16. Doctrine and Covenants 5:10.
17. Doctrine and Covenants 1:38; see also 68:3–4.
18. Doctrine and Covenants 18:34–36.
19. Doctrine and Covenants 97:1; 88:66.

New Pacific Special Multistake Youth Conference Advisors Called

Chantal and Kendall Pitman from Brisbane have been called by the Pacific Area Presidency to be the Pacific Special Multistake Youth Conference (SMYC) advisors. Chantal and Kendall have been serving as the session directors for the Brisbane SMYC. They conducted a Brisbane SMYC in 2012 with 1,300 youth and are preparing for the next Brisbane SMYC from 6–11 January 2014, with 1,500 youth and 250 young single adult counsellors, at the University of Queensland.

Kendall and Chantal Pitman



bishop and branch president.

Chantal is from France and travelled to Australia to meet Kendall, and marry in the New Zealand Temple. Chantal was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease in 2011 but continues to enjoy life with her family, and loves serving with the youth in the Church. They have two children who each married in the Brisbane Temple, and they now have five grandchildren.

Brother and Sister Pitman are enthusiastic about their new assignment. Kendall said, “We are delighted and excited, as we love how SMYC blesses the lives of our youth and counsellors and answers the prayers of parents who want their children to feel the Spirit and make friends with gospel standards.”

They are currently teaching a Strengthening Marriage class in Logan Stake and love meeting with couples who want to know how the Lord will bless them as they apply and live gospel principles in their own marriage. They love attending the temple, and recently worked in the temple laundry together as a Valentine’s Day date. ■

IMAGE COURTESY OF KENDALL PITMAN AND USED WITH PERMISSION.

Adelaide Sisters Join Growing Missionary Ranks

By Caroline McIlwaine

Jacquie Rochow's "possibly-one-day" plan to serve a mission changed the instant she heard President Thomas S. Monson lower the minimum age requirement for sister missionaries from 21 to 19 in October 2012.

"I was visiting Utah and attending the general conference session at which the prophet made the announcement, and I just looked at my father and said, 'I have to go!'" said Sister Rochow, who turned 19 in February.

She is one of six young sisters who left for full-time missionary service from Adelaide's Firlie Stake between February and May this year.

"It felt like that revelation was just for me. The tears flowed as soon as the announcement was

made. Before that moment, serving a mission was always an 'if'—if I wasn't married; if I wasn't too far into my law studies; if I didn't have a career. The announcement came at the right time for me," Sister Rochow explained. She began applying right away and received her mission call and assignment three months later.

"I was so excited when I read that I was 'assigned to labour in the New Zealand Auckland Mission'," she said. "I didn't have any particular place I wanted to go; I just wanted to go where the Lord needed me. I know there are people in New Zealand prepared just for me, so I'm excited to find, meet and teach those people."

Lucy Kuhn, also 19, was determined to serve. "I woke the day after the announcement to missed phone calls, voice mails and text messages from people telling me about the news of the age change, because they knew how excited I would be to serve my mission sooner," Sister Kuhn recalled.

From left: Sisters Jacquie Rochow, Marnie Pink, Ivy Ting, Hae Ji (Catherine) Kim and Lucy Kuhn say goodbye to one another at the 2013 Adelaide Firlie Stake conference before leaving for their missionary service.



IMAGE COURTESY OF RAINER KORTE AND USED WITH PERMISSION.



Sister Jill Foster

“The gospel has blessed my life so much; I would feel selfish not serving a mission. I have this wonderful truth in my life about why I’m here and where I’m going, and I feel like I need to share it with everyone. I’ve seen the blessings and joy the gospel gives people and I know it’s true—I feel it: whenever I’m at church or studying *Preach My Gospel* or the Book of Mormon or when I’m serving people, I know it’s true.”

As missionaries everywhere would attest, Jesus Christ is the role model.

“Christ loved everyone, no matter what. That’s what I try to do—to see people’s potential even if they can’t. It will help me a lot on my mission I think,” added Sister Kuhn, who put graphic design studies on hold to serve in the England Leeds Mission.

For Korean-born Hae Ji (Catherine) Kim, 21—who interrupted nursing studies to serve in the Australia Perth Mission—her family’s convert roots and her own personal conversion led to her decision to be a missionary.

“My grandparents joined the Church in Korea

after housing LDS missionaries from the USA who taught them, and I am always thankful that both my parents stayed strong and taught me to live the gospel and love the Lord and follow Him,” Sister Kim said.

“We moved to Australia when I was 13, and we went through some tough years living in a foreign country, but we knew that blessings come from being faithful in the gospel. And we had the comfort of support from Church members in Adelaide as well. It was during my seminary years that I felt the Spirit strongly and knew the scriptures and the Church were true. For me, going on a mission means helping people—inviting them to be part of this beautiful gospel.”

It is a sentiment echoed by Marnie Pink, 20, who is serving in the England London South Mission.

“I knew the gospel was true from reading and applying teachings about faith in Alma chapter 32 of the Book of Mormon, and I’d had other experiences too, especially through prayer,” Sister Pink explained.

“I want to serve to help people, and share with them what I have: the happiness found in this amazing gospel! One of the things that motivates me is knowing that we can be forever families and live with God again. The message I am most excited about sharing with people is that there is a point to this life and we’re here on earth for a reason.”

Sister Pink graduated from a TAFE Diploma of Fitness course in April and left for her mission in May. She was excited to serve in south England where her grandmother, Violet Mason—the first convert in her family, who joined the Church in Scotland in 1963—was born.

While each of these missionaries is a second- or third-generation Latter-day Saint, and each

is building on her parents' and siblings' former missionary service, Ivy Ting, 26, is creating that tradition for her non-LDS family.

“My family has been quite supportive because they’ve seen how the Church has helped me become a better daughter and person,” shared Sister Ting. “Also, they knew once I’d decided, it would take a great effort to change my mind when it came to something as important as being a missionary!”

Sister Ting, who is serving in the Taiwan Taichung Mission, joined the Church at age 13 with her sister in Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia.

“I had been thinking about serving since I was about 18. I went out to teach with the missionaries a lot and those experiences helped me understand the gospel even more, and to see the impact of missionary work in people’s lives,” she said. “Since I (at that time) had to wait until 21 to be able to serve, mum sent me to Australia to further my nursing studies and said I wasn’t allowed to talk about a mission until I graduated.

“Later, my bishop raised the subject and invited me to pray about it. I received a personal revelation that it’s the right decision, and no better time than now. Once I decided to serve and started applying, every day I felt more grateful and more blessed, and because I felt the Saviour’s love I knew I could extend that same love to others as a missionary.”

Serving with the same loving purpose in the Australia Melbourne Mission is Sister Jill Foster, 22, who deferred university study and worked two jobs to fund her mission.

“My experiences with relying on the Saviour in daily life, and especially through trials, made me want to serve a mission,” shared Sister Foster. “We had a loss in our family, and turning to the Saviour was what helped me get through that

time. That’s the foundation of my testimony—that I know He is always there for each of us. As a missionary, it’s a blessing to share that with others, so they too can have that foundation of Jesus Christ in their lives.”

She said missions were full of small miracles, with the Lord preparing people to hear gospel truths.

“Recently my companion and I taught a family, and one member was not keen to hear our message. But the Spirit softens hearts, and he went on to read scriptures and even offered a kneeling prayer. Then he said, ‘I feel really good!’ and told us he might offer another personal prayer to Heavenly Father later that night.”

Sister Foster, who has been in the mission field since February, reflected that her extra-large Missionary Training Centre intake group of 80 seemed to show that the age requirement drop was inspiring many to serve the Lord.

The fact that six sister missionaries from Adelaide’s Firlie Stake embarked on service in the first few months of 2013 compared to the previous six over the past 10 years, reflects the global increase in female missionary service applications, which surged from about 15 percent of all applications to close to 50 percent following the age requirement change.

Firlie Stake president Rainer Korte expressed gratitude for their faith and willingness to serve. “These young sister missionaries are an inspiration,” he said. “Their faith, testimony and commitment to sharing the joy of the gospel of Jesus Christ with others are a wonderful example to all of us. The missionary experiences these sisters have will also strengthen their relationship with the Saviour and develop their potential for future service and achievement in the home, Church and community.” ■

Thornlie Ward Youth Add Spiritual Gifts to Care Packages

By Lin Hawk and Hannah Mortley

In December 2012 the combined youth of the Thornlie Ward, Southern River Stake in Perth WA, picked and packed 50 boxes for Australian service men and women serving in the Middle East.

Items such as socks, toothbrushes, toothpaste, disposable razors, shaving cream, shampoo, deodorants, powder, confectionery, biscuits, instant noodles, and cans of tuna were donated by members of the Church, as well as the youth and their families. These items were collected and then securely packed into parcels

weighing up to 2 kg each, so they could be shipped free of charge by Australia Post, to special mailing addresses established by the Australian Defence Force.

The most precious of the items included in the boxes was the Church-produced DVD *Joy to the World* or a Book of Mormon. The youth expressed their desire to include them in the boxes as their testimony of the blessing of the gospel in their lives and as a missionary opportunity, that it may spark a desire to learn more about the gospel.

Prior to the actual assembly day, the volunteers posed for a photo with an Australian flag and the words THANK YOU. A copy of the photo was included in each box along with a personal letter of thanks, which expressed appreciation to the recipients for their service and sacrifice. An email address was also placed on the back of the photo to enable any service men or women to reply if they wished.

At the request of the youth this will continue to be an ongoing service project in the Thornlie Ward. Many of the youth benefited from this project as it allowed them to be selfless and think about those people to whom the boxes were delivered.

Thornlie Ward youth with the 50 care packages they assembled for ADF personnel.



IMAGE COURTESY OF HANNAH MORTLEY AND USED WITH PERMISSION.



Casey Yip, the deacons quorum president, said, “It was great to give back a small bit of service to those that have sacrificed so much for us.”

Tatiana Rochester, a member of the Mia Maid class presidency, commented, “During the service project it felt really good to do something that would really brighten someone else’s day. It gave me more appreciation for the soldiers and what they do

for our country and how grateful we should be for them giving up so much for us”.

When Jacinta Hales, a member of the Beehive class, was asked about her experience, she summed up the ultimate aim of this service project as she shared her thoughts: “During the project I noticed that the worldly items would be of benefit to the soldiers’ physical well being, but those

who received either a Book of Mormon or the *Joy to the World* DVD were being cared for spiritually”.

The night ended with a prayer of thanks and gratitude, especially for those who served to keep our country free, and a request that the Spirit would guide the boxes to those soldiers who needed to hear the messages from the youth and the message of the gospel. ■

Youth from Thornlie Ward express gratitude to the Australian Defence Force.

LDS Chaplain Serves at Scout Jamboree

By Gregory Kearney

The 23rd Australian Scout Jamboree was held in Maryborough, Queensland, in January this year. It was attended by 12,000 Scouts, their leaders and support staff.

Three Scout chaplains were attached to the Jamboree—Gregory Kearney as the LDS chaplain from Western Australia; Father Ian Furby, an Anglican priest from Bundaberg, Queensland; and Rabbi Peter Moore from Melbourne. They were affectionately called “the three wise men”.

One of the chief duties of the chaplains was to provide short church services for those attending. They held Islamic prayers on Friday. This was led by one of the Scout leaders from Indonesia and attended by the Muslim boys. It is the tradition in Islam for women and girls to pray in private. Brother Kearney had the pleasure of meeting this group, finding the direction to Mecca and ensuring they had the water and other items needed for Friday prayers. Attendance was about 40 boys and men.

The Jewish Friday evening service was led by Rabbi Moore, with about 80 Scouts and leaders in attendance.

On Sunday morning Father Furby conducted a short Anglican service, which was well attended, with over 100 people.

The Sunday morning LDS sacrament service was attended by more than 60 people, with about half of those attending being nonmembers. Many Baptist Scouts came to the LDS service. Chaplain Kearney spoke on the topic of a Scout being courageous, using the story of Christ cleansing the temple from the scriptures, as well as stories from the life of Scouting founder Robert Baden-Powell.

IMAGE COURTESY OF GREG KEARNEY AND USED WITH PERMISSION.



Bishop James Brown from Harvey Bay Ward also attended and spoke on the subject of honesty.

The service was well received, and several Baptist Scouts and their leaders made special note of it. One young woman in particular commented that she now knew “you Mormons are Christians just like me.” All of the chaplains attended the services of the others to show their support.

Brother Kearney said, “I have never had as many opportunities to speak with others about our faith as I had at the Jamboree. I worked very hard to show that we are part of the wider Christian tradition. We received a request from the Jamboree newspaper to write prayers from each major world religion. Christian, Jewish, Muslim and so on. Rather than write a separate ‘Mormon’ prayer, Father Furby and I wrote a single ‘Christian’ prayer. It took a while of give and take to get one that we could both agree to, but it was the kind of exercise that was typical of what we did every day.” ■

Jamboree chaplains from left to right: Rabbi Peter Moore (Victoria); Father Ian Furby (Queensland); and Greg Kearney (Western Australia).

Correction

In the April 2013 *Ensign* insert pages, the article entitled “Lifting Hearts through Service” contained a photograph that was incorrectly credited. The correct photographer was Kelly Fleming. We apologise for the error. ■

Submissions

We welcome the submission of uplifting, faith-promoting, and testimony-strengthening articles and stories for the *Ensign* Insert Pages. They should be sent to:
ensign-australia@ldschurch.org ■