

NEW ZEALAND 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

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



Elder James J. Hamula

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 Beginnings

By Lavinia Sekona-Vimahi

In Manukau Stake, the Peninsula Park Ward young women participated in their very first New Beginnings event since the ward was newly formed late last year. The evening recognized the achievements of four young women and set a standard for all to follow.

Jessica Folau was recognized for completing the requirements for Personal Progress with a Young Womanhood Recognition medallion, and her twin sisters Mele and Seini, along with their friend Tui Palei Mulitalo were recipients of the

Honor Bee Award, which is historically given to young women who do more than is required.

Each young woman expressed gratitude for the support of their leaders and their parents. Tui, Seini and Mele shared their personal experiences about pairing up with Beehives and scheduling meetings to set goals to accomplish the set criteria for Personal Progress and the Honor Bee award. Each bore heartfelt testimony and encouraged the young women and parents in attendance to work together in completing the Personal Progress. Jessica shared how

Jessica, Seini, and Mele Folau, and Tui Palei Mulitalo, with Bishop Robert Laban.



she was excited to do Personal Progress as a Beehive, but found it hard as she became a Mia Maid, though with support from family and leaders she was able to dedicate time as a Laurel to complete the requirements.

Church President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said the following:

“Give me a Young Woman leader who loves home and family, who reads and ponders the scriptures daily, who prays, who has a burning testimony of the Book of Mormon. Give me a Young Woman leader who faithfully attends her church meetings, who studies the gospel

and prophetic word, who has earned her Young Womanhood Recognition Award and wears it with pride! Give me a Young Woman leader who is virtuous and who has maintained her personal purity, who will not settle for less than honoring her baptismal and temple covenants, and I will give you a Young Woman leader who will perform miracles for the Lord now and throughout eternity.”

Jessica recently moved into the Relief Society programme; Seini and Mele are preparing for the temple and missionary service. Tui was sealed to her husband, Zion, in the

New Zealand Temple in early December last year. Each of these young sisters are pioneers in their own right and have shown perseverance and dedication to gaining a better understanding of their divine role as daughters of God.

Bishop Robert Laban expressed that he can't wait for his daughter to begin Personal Progress. Everyone in attendance that evening walked away with a better understanding of the Personal Progress programme and how it helps the young women in our care come to a better understanding of their divine potential. ■

Church Leader to New Missionaries: “Children around the World Are Praying for You”

Rosemary M. Wixom, general president of the Primary organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, told 81 young men and women at the New Zealand Missionary Training Centre (MTC) recently that they are “prayed for by children all over the world.”

Sister Wixom, along with the Church's general president of the Relief Society, Linda K. Burton, and Elder F. Michael Watson of the Pacific Area Presidency, visited the MTC in Auckland, New Zealand, in February.

Sister Wixom was accompanied by her husband,

B. Jackson Wixom; Sister Burton was accompanied by her husband, Craig P. Burton; and Elder Watson was traveling with his wife, Jolene Watson.

The Church leaders were on a Pacific tour, visiting Latter-day Saints and guests of the Church in New Zealand, Tonga, Samoa and American Samoa.

Both Sister Burton and Sister Wixom have experience *with* missionaries, and *as* missionaries, as they served alongside their husbands as they presided over Latter-day Saint missions in South Korea (the Burtons) and Washington D.C. (the Wixoms).

The 81 missionaries—60 young men and 21



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Front row, left to right: Elder F. Michael Watson, Jolene Watson, Craig P. Burton, Linda K. Burton, Rosemary M. Wixom, B. Jackson Wixom, MTC president Taylor Tarawhiti, Sister Cairo Tarawhiti, and missionaries at the New Zealand Missionary Training Centre.



IMAGE COURTESY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS LIBRARY AND USED WITH PERMISSION.

Sister missionaries at the New Zealand Missionary Training Centre with Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president, and Rosemary M. Wixom, Primary general president.

young women—at the New Zealand Missionary Training Centre came from different parts of the Pacific region, sometimes further afield, to attend the New Zealand MTC before they left for their respective missionary assignments.

In a devotional meeting with the missionaries, Elder Watson shared brief histories of the Relief Society and Primary organizations.

Sister Burton told the missionaries that as a missionary with her husband she found that reading the scriptures brought the comfort and direction that she needed.

Sister Wixom counseled the missionaries to have confidence in the Lord. “Follow with faith and confidence,” she said. “With His help you can do all that is required of you.” ■

Auckland Latter-day Saint Woman Looks Back on 100 Years

When New Zealand member Ailsa Margaret Coutts celebrated her 100th birthday on 20 January 2013 with family and friends at her local chapel in Beach Haven, Auckland, it was a time to reflect on her life.

One such reflection was regarding the passing of her husband Andrew, whose plane was shot down over Amsterdam during World War II. Sister Coutts was just 29 years old and was left to raise her two young daughters alone.

A young boy eight years of age witnessed the plane crash and wrote down the identification number of the German aircraft. Later, the fighter pilot was told of Andrew Coutts' death. In the 1980s he contacted Sister Coutts and apologized for the death of her husband. Memories of the unexpected phone call from 30 years ago are still very clear for her. She was very touched that he wanted to apologise personally, she says, and holds no ill feelings towards the man.

When Linda K. Burton, general president of the Relief Society, was recently in New Zealand, she met with Sister Coutts, and was touched by the compassion Sister Coutts showed toward the airman.

Sister Coutts was born to Ella White and Arthur Edmond Wilson on 20 January 1913 in Auckland, New Zealand. She is the oldest of seven children and says she has had many wonderful experiences in her 100 years.

As a child she was involved in musical concerts and performances. Her mother, Ella, was an excellent pianist and song writer, Sister Coutts remembers.

Her mum would take her seven children with her to perform in various churches and schools. Sister Coutts learned to love music and still loves to sing for visitors. Her mum was very particular about how the children looked and how they were dressed when they performed.

She told them: "You don't sing about Jesus with a dirty face."

Sister Coutts was married to Andrew Edward Coutts in 1934 in Tauranga. They were blessed with two daughters, Rae and Andrea. She now has five generations in her family and expresses how proud she is of her daughters and extended family.

According to Sister Coutts's genealogy, her mother is a direct descendant of Toroa, brother of Wairaka, both arriving at Whakatane in the Mata'atua Canoe, one of the 13 original canoes that came to New Zealand.

Her grandfather John James Wilson arrived in Auckland on 18 April 1862 in the ship *Cashmere*. He was one of the first settlers to bring English birds to New Zealand. He left England on 8 December

**Ailsa Coutts
outside her
Auckland home.**



IMAGE COURTESY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND USED WITH PERMISSION.

1861, bringing with him blackbirds, thrushes, starling, larks and sparrows.

In addition to celebrating her birthday, Sister Coutts also marked the anniversary of her baptism in 1950 and 63 subsequent years as a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Fellow Latter-day Saint and friend, Elaine Lawrence, says, “We always feel welcome and treated with kindness when we visit with Ailsa in her home.”

Sister Coutts has an infectious laugh and lively spirit. She said at 100 she “feels no different than when I was 9”. She lives with her daughter Andrea, who struggles to keep up with her mum, who had a hip replacement at 93. “I have to yell out, ‘Wait for me’ as she walks along the road,” Andrea says.

Sister Coutts has been honoured by receiving cards from Queen Elizabeth II, Prime Minister John Key, Governor General Jerry Mateparae, and Minister of Internal Affairs Honourable Chris Tremain.

She has also received letters from Auckland’s mayor, Len Brown, and the Member of Parliament for Northcote, Honourable Dr. Johathan Coleman. ■

Ailsa Coutts and Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president, enjoy a conversation together in Auckland on 19 February, 2013.



IMAGE COURTESY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND USED WITH PERMISSION.

New Zealand Probate Index Goes Live

More than a million images of probate records from Wellington, Auckland and Christchurch have been digitised and indexed at Archives New Zealand in a joint venture between FamilySearch and the archives.

“This collaborative project between Archives New Zealand and FamilySearch brings to life the past,” says Chief Archivist Greg Goulding. “These indexes are a gold mine of information for researchers and historians.

“The probates add to the wealth of information already available via the shipping lists previously digitised in partnership with FamilySearch,” he said. “Our next goal is all the ‘Intentions to Marry’ records.”

The probate records, essential for genealogical research, contain over 30 types of documents, including wills, affidavits, property records, and death certificates. The documents can now be searched by name via an index which went live on 5 March.

Mike Higgins, Manager of FamilySearch Pacific Area said hundreds of hours of work, donated by FamilySearch volunteers, at Archives New Zealand offices in Wellington, Christchurch and Auckland have made the project possible.

“We are pleased to continue our ongoing relationship with Archives New Zealand as this digitisation is a win-win for both organisations,” he said.

Tom McVey, a FamilySearch volunteer who has been in the country digitising records with his wife, Ann, since August 2011, was delighted to see the index go live before he leaves for the United States.

“In Wellington four full-time volunteers and

two working part-time have digitised more than a million images,” Brother McVey said. “Volunteers are on task to digitise more probate records in Wellington, Auckland and Christchurch. It’s been a pleasure to donate our time to help others research their roots.”

Another volunteer couple, Steve and Cathy Stucki, recently arrived from the United States, and will be replacing the McVeys.

FamilySearch International is the largest genealogy organization in the world. Millions of people use FamilySearch records, resources, and services to learn more about their family history. The NZ probate records are now available on <http://www.FamilySearch.org> ■

IMAGE COURTESY PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND USED WITH PERMISSION.



Volunteers Elder and Sister Overton, and Tom and Ann McVey celebrate the one millionth image captured for the index on 24 October 2012.

Young Man Saves Brother from Dog Attack

By Roseanne Jones

Chris and Maude Maxwell, from Opotiki, had taken their three sons, Karaitiana, Leeroy and Jose, on an outing to dive for paua, kina and crayfish at a coastal spot about 60 km east of their small hometown. Access to the beach was through private land owned by relatives, who were not home at the time.

Karaitiana, who was 15 at the time, believes that the Spirit prompted him to be in the right place at the right time, so that he was in a position to save his youngest brother from a brutal dog attack later that day.

The family parked their vehicle by the house, which was sited at the top of a 15-metre bluff, and made the descent to the beach down a steep track by using a rope. The beach was covered in uneven rocks of varying size. It was about 120 metres to the edge of the ocean.

Two dogs, which were loose and running around the property by the house, were unable to get down to the beach.

The two older boys were enjoying being in the water with their father, catching shellfish. Karaitiana, who usually stays in

the water for a long time, was suddenly feeling cold and got out of the water earlier than he normally would have. He sat on the rocks watching his dad and brother coming in from the water with their catch, when he heard the sound of his youngest brother screaming and dogs barking.

Ten-year-old Jose had gone up the bluff to the vehicle, and it was then that the attack by the loose pit bull terrier took place.

Maude also heard the sound, but Chris and Leeroy, who were still in the water, were too far away and were oblivious to



Karaitiana with his youngest brother, Jose.

the sound. However, they saw Karaitiana “spring up off the rocks and run full bolt up the bluff”, and realised that something was wrong.

Maude ran as fast as she could towards the screaming, but Karaitiana covered the distance across the rocks and up the bluff in a matter of seconds. As he raced towards his brother he did not even notice he was barefoot.

Chris and Leeroy quickly got out of the water and headed up the bluff, being comforted as they went that they could still hear Jose screaming out. “That is how we knew he was still alive,” Chris said.

As Karaitiana approached his brother he had a moment of fear that the dog would attack him too. Jose was trying to fight the dog off and Karaitiana yelled at him to get up on the truck, but Jose could not get away from the dog.

Karaitiana saw his brother bleeding and saw the dog jump

into the air ready to come down on him again. He said his mind went blank as he flew at the animal to try to save his brother.

He kicked the animal and fought it off with a pole that was on the ground until the dog left them.

By the time the rest of the family arrived at the scene Karaitiana had already found towels and wrapped them firmly around Jose’s wounds, stopping the blood flow.

The nearest hospital was a 90-minute drive away, at Whakatane. Once they were able to pick up cell phone reception, the family called the police, who met them east of Ohope. Jose was transferred to the police vehicle, and with sirens on, the traffic parted and they arrived quickly at the emergency department where staff were waiting for him.

During three hours of surgery, doctors repaired the damage, cleaned puncture wounds in his arms and hands, and closed a wound on his temple. Jose recovered well at home.

Looking back at the incident Karaitiana said he felt that Heavenly Father had been there to help him rescue his brother.

“I normally stay in the water,” he said, “but I believe that Heavenly Father made me feel cold and get out of the water early. I know that He protected Jose’s life while he was fighting off the dog before we got to him.”

His parents said they had never seen him move so quickly and are very proud of their oldest son. “Our boys were amazing,” they said.

“Our family has gained a stronger bond now, and we realise how precious life is. This incident proved that my boys really care for each other, whether or not they want to admit it,” she smiled. ■

Submissions

We welcome submission of uplifting, faith-promoting, and testimony-strengthening articles and stories for the *Ensign* Insert Pages.

They should be sent to:

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