

# AUSTRALIA LOCAL PAGES

## AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

### Seek Learning

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

The Church needs great leaders. With the rate of growth in the Church across the Pacific and across the world, the Church needs great leaders; men and women, young and old, who are willing and able to respond to the call to serve. Leadership can be taught and developed, but all great leaders are also great learners. Therefore, in order to develop great leaders in the Church, present and future, we must first develop great learners, men and women with a thirst for knowledge, understanding and wisdom.

In the early days of the Church, the Lord helped Joseph Smith understand this important principle as he established the School of the Prophets in late December of 1832 in Kirtland, Ohio. At the time, the Church was young and very thin on leadership talent and strength. The Quorum of the Twelve would not be called until 1835, nor would the Presidency of the Seventy. And so, the faithful few who had been gathered thus far, assembled each evening after a long hard day's work on the second floor of the Whitney school to learn. There they were taught by Joseph and by one another. "Seek learning, even by study and also by faith."<sup>1</sup> The Church would never develop leaders until it first developed learners.

Joseph Smith and Brigham Young had very little formal education. Emma Smith recorded that Joseph was hardly capable of constructing a sentence when he began translating the Book of Mormon. He struggled to even pronounce

the name *Sariah*, the name of Lehi's wife. Yet, the Lord would send angelic tutors beginning with Himself and His Beloved Son Jesus Christ to teach Joseph and to help him prepare and develop into the great prophet-leader of the last dispensation of times. Joseph is a prime example of what President Thomas S. Monson often teaches: "Whom the Lord calls, the Lord qualifies." In time, Joseph Smith would become one of the most knowledgeable and learned men of his time, as the Lord poured out revelation upon revelation through the prophet. With the Holy Ghost as his near-constant companion, Joseph's ability to learn was quickened and expanded well beyond his innate ability. He became a great learner and a great leader.

In the Church of Jesus Christ, all leaders are teachers. Effective teaching inspires people to strengthen their relationship with God and live according to gospel principles. Great teachers are great learners. Effective leaders "prepare themselves spiritually as they keep the commandments, study the scriptures and the teachings of latter-day prophets, pray, fast, and humble themselves before the Lord."<sup>2</sup> Great learners appoint the Holy Ghost to be their teacher, and prayerfully "seek learning even by study and also by faith." "Leaders' most powerful teaching comes from sharing their personal example. Leaders also teach by sharing their testimonies and conducting doctrinally based discussions in leadership meetings, classes, and activities."<sup>3</sup>



**Elder Kevin W.  
Pearson**

As the Lord continues to “hasten [His] work in its time”<sup>4</sup> a strong case can be made for greater urgency in strengthening and expanding priesthood and auxiliary leadership within the Church. That means greater urgency in personal spiritual preparation and learning among all members of the Church. Consider the following recent prophetic announcements:

1. The recent change in the age of eligibility for full-time missionary service. Missionaries must now be prepared earlier. The home is the new mission training center. The responsibility to teach our children the doctrine and to prepare them to teach others is the parents’. Learning must take place in the home.
2. The new youth curriculum. Parents, teachers, advisers and leaders of youth are called by the Lord to help the youth learn the gospel by their own study and faith, to discover the truthfulness of the gospel for themselves, and to strengthen their families and others by sharing their experiences, insights, and testimony. This will require parents, teachers and leaders to first become more effective learners, establishing a daily pattern of personal prayer, scripture study and obedience to have the Holy Ghost be their appointed teacher.
3. The Church’s *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* and the recent worldwide leadership training video, *Strengthening the Family and the Church through the Priesthood*, are materials which emphasize what the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles are teaching priesthood and auxiliary leaders about the pre-eminent role of the family and the priesthood.

Since “true doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behaviours”<sup>5</sup>, perhaps the following

doctrinal principles will help each of us become better learners and by so doing become better leaders and teachers.

1. Learning is the very purpose of the plan of salvation. We are here to learn obedience, to live by faith and to become like the Saviour.<sup>6</sup> The purpose of learning is not just to know, but to become.
2. Agency is the cornerstone to the plan of salvation and to learning. Learning requires that we exercise our agency and act. To “seek learning even by study, and by faith”, is an act of agency.<sup>7</sup> We get what we focus on consistently. What level of learning are you choosing?
3. Learning will continue long after mortality.<sup>8</sup> So will the personal habits and desires we have for learning. A thirst for knowledge is a key characteristic of discipleship.
4. Spiritual learning requires prayerful and diligent study, but also faith and experience based on obedience.<sup>9</sup> Learning is not a spectator sport. It requires our active participation. No generation has had greater access to the scriptures and the inspired words of living prophets. How diligent are we in our gospel study? With online study aids available through LDS.org, *Preach My Gospel*, and the scriptures themselves, we have little excuse for not being students of the gospel. Experience is a great teacher and a fundamental part of our mortal experience. Learning requires experience, and it is often the application of knowledge that leads to wisdom. It is acting in faith and applying principles of obedience that allow us to experience blessings.
5. The Holy Ghost is the ultimate teacher of all spiritual truths.<sup>10</sup> As we faithfully keep our covenants and humbly call upon the Father in the name of the Son, we are promised the Father

will send the Holy Ghost to us. An essential part of “seeking learning, even by study, and by faith”, is recognizing our constant need to have the Holy Ghost be our teacher.

6. Learning our true relationship to God is the most important thing we can learn.<sup>11</sup> Understanding our true relationship with God is the beginning point for all spiritual learning and the foundation of a personal testimony.
7. The Atonement of Jesus Christ is the enabling power for all learning. Obedience to God is the basis for obtaining and developing faith in the Saviour. The Atonement provides the power and “means unto men” to change, to repent, and to qualify for the Holy Ghost and the spiritual gift and power to learn.<sup>12</sup> Without the Atonement, we could not learn from experience without being condemned by the very experiences we need to grow.

If we are to save the rising generation, prepare a generation of powerful missionary teachers, strengthen future fathers, mothers, priesthood and auxiliary leaders and establish the Church, indeed if we are to save our own souls and prepare to meet the Saviour, then we need to hasten the work of learning. We need a generation of learners who “seek learning, even by study and by faith.” We need leaders who are diligent learners and powerful teachers. ■

#### NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 88:118.
2. *Handbook 2*, 3.2.1.
3. *Handbook 2*, 3.2.4.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 88:73.
5. Boyd K. Packer, “Do Not Fear,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 79.
6. See Abraham 3:25.
7. See 2 Nephi 2:16, 26.
8. See Doctrine and Covenants 130:18–19.
9. See Doctrine and Covenants 88:118; 122:7.
10. See Doctrine and Covenants 8:2–3; John 14:26; Moroni 10:5.
11. See John 17:3; Bible Dictionary, “Prayer,” p. 753.
12. Alma 34:15.

IMAGE COURTESY OF SKYE FORSPÖTNER



**Minister Chris Hartcher speaks with Lyn Carnovale and President Paul Carnovale with (left) David Craig from the stake high council and Bishop Bill Walter (right) of Tuggerah Ward.**

## Family History Expo Is Huge Success

By Karen Coulson

“When our hearts turn to our ancestors, something changes inside us. We feel part of something greater than ourselves” (Russell M. Nelson, “Generations Linked in Love,” *Ensign*, May 2010).

Little did the Relief Society presidency of Tuggerah Ward know that a goal they set in November 2012 for the sisters would lead to an event that would have over 200 people come through their chapel doors in one day a few months

later. Most of the visitors were from the wider community.

The ward Relief Society goal to focus on family history research and the temple coincided with Elder Vinson’s challenge for Latter-day Saints to find the name of an ancestor and perform at least one ordinance in the temple on their behalf.

What began as a workshop gained impetus when the Wyong Family History Group came on board, as well as State Archives

and FamilySearch. Before she knew it, Kate Walter, second counselor in the Relief Society presidency, had an Expo with interest from both members and nonmembers.

The day was a huge success with presentations covering all facets of family history. Paul Parton from the LDS Family History Department shared the latest in FamilySearch—a timely presentation as the latest FamilySearch updates had just come online that week.

John Cann from NSW State Archives shared the huge range of resources available to anyone with NSW ancestry, while Joy Murrin, a transcription specialist from Mortdale stake, shared insights into transcribing certificates as an alternative to purchasing more expensive birth, death and marriage certificates.

Workshops on indexing, charting, filing and scrapbooking were booked solid, while individual consultations with Church family history consultants and members from the Wyong Family History Group were constant throughout the day.

Chris Hartcher, Member for Terrigal, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister for Resources and Energy attended, along with his colleagues and fellow MPs—

Darren Webber, Member for Wyong; Chris Spence, Member for The Entrance; and Chris Holstein, Member for Gosford.

President Paul Carnovale, first counselor in the Newcastle stake presidency, was able to share with the MPs the history of the building of the chapel and the various amenities available to members. As well as learning of the genealogical research done by the Church, they also learnt of other key aspects of the seminary and youth programs.

Chris Hartcher was invited to speak and showed his depth of understanding of genealogy and the work the Church does in this area. He also reaffirmed his commitment to families and acknowledged that by recognizing our past, we can strengthen our future.

As well as the visitors gaining a greater understanding of family history research, wonderful new connections were made between local members of the Church and the local family history groups.

It truly was a day when all those who attended could more fully follow the admonition of Malachi to turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers (see Malachi 4:6). ■



*Left to right: Jodie Hall (mother), Elder Joshua Hall, Stephen Hall (father), Ammon Hall, Ephraim Hannant (brother-in-law), and Jessica Hannant (sister).*

## Called to Serve

By Sandra McLennan

Joshua Hall was the first missionary to be called to serve from the Gold Coast following the announcement of the lowering of the missionary ages for men and women last year.

President of the Church Thomas S. Monson announced in October last year that the missionary service age had been lowered, with men able to begin serving missions at age 18 and women at age 19.

Joshua was watching the broadcast at home while his parents were having a sleep in. Within moments of the announcement, Joshua went running into his parent's room and jumped on the bed between them. All they heard was Joshua yelling about President Monson's announcement that the missionary service age for men had been lowered to age 18 effective immediately.

Joshua left for his mission on Anzac Day, and is serving in the Perth Australia Mission.

Elder Hall's younger brother, teachers quorum president Ammon Hall, will be following in his brother's footsteps in a few years' time. "My older brother has always been such an inspiration to me, and I can hardly wait until I will be the one packing up and getting ready to leave on my mission," he said.

President Monson, in the opening address at the recent April 2013 general conference said, "The

response of our young people has been remarkable and inspiring.” He went on to say that the Church currently has almost 66,000 full-time missionaries serving, with over 20,000 more who have received their calls but who have not yet entered a missionary training centre, and 6,000 prospective missionaries in the interview process with their bishops and stake presidents. It has been necessary to create 58 new missions to accommodate the increased numbers of missionaries (“Welcome to Conference,” *Ensign*, May 2013). ■

## Relief Society Sisters Help 1,000 Mothers-to-Be

By Linda Hawkins

Nearly 100 members of the Perth Australia Southern River Stake Relief Society recently gathered in Thornlie for a special assembly day, where they packed 1,000 birthing kits as part of a service project to celebrate the 171st anniversary of their organization.

The Relief Society members were supporting



IMAGE COURTESY OF LINDA HAWKINS AND USED WITH PERMISSION.

the work of the Birthing Kit Foundation Australia (BKFA), an organization dedicated to improving conditions for women in developing countries who give birth at home, often on dirt floors.

The BKFA provides clean birthing kits and training in how to use them. Each birthing kit contains six basic items—a plastic sheet, soap, two gloves, a sterile scalpel blade, three cords and five gauze squares—which are assembled into a small bag at an assembly day.

The kit’s simple contents give birth attendants and mothers the resources to reduce infection and fatalities.

With an estimated 385,000 women dying annually in childbirth worldwide, many from infections acquired during childbirth, there is a great need for clean birthing kits.

Many of the sisters who helped to assemble the birthing kits were mothers themselves, and they wanted to participate because they recognised the dramatic difference a kit can make to the health of a mother and her newborn child. ■

**Perth Australia Southern River Stake Relief Society sisters assemble clean birthing kits.**

**Perth Australia Southern River Stake Relief Society sisters with the completed kits.**



IMAGE COURTESY OF LINDA HAWKINS AND USED WITH PERMISSION.



# Mortdale Youth “Arise and Shine Forth”

By Mataele Jude Taufa

YOUTH from Sydney Mortdale Stake shared how they continue to “Arise and Shine Forth” in the months following their participation in the Special Multistake Youth Conference (SMYC) earlier this year.

Mataele Taufa from Mortdale Ward said, “This programme that the Church has organized for the youth is an outstanding programme! It was also the best week of my life so far. SMYC has helped me to prepare for a mission, because the testimony I came back with is far greater than what it was when the conference started.”

He continued, “I have never seen so many youth around my

age in the Church, and it opened my eyes to see that we are not just a small group who are trying to stand tall and hold on to our values. To see the commitment the leaders put in for us was amazing. It has increased my understanding of the Church and has made giving talks, teaching lessons, and missionary work easier. I have been teaching and doing service with the missionaries in the months since returning from SMYC, and we helped a boy around my age become converted to the gospel, along with his sister.

“SMYC has changed my life for the better. It has been a battle through school, but the gospel

principles I learnt there have helped me resist bad influences. I am not ashamed of the gospel. I am sharing it with my friends every time they ask. I gained a testimony that prayer, fasting and scripture study help me with my studies.”

Leonie Eti, from Bankstown I Ward, added, “SMYC continues to bless my life because it reminded me of my purpose, and that I should never be afraid of who I am, and to stand as a true witness of God at all times.” ■

## Lest We Forget

By Sandra McLennan

Representatives from the Gold Coast Australia Stake Choir were recently presented with a Certificate of Appreciation from Mudgeeraba RSL following their tenth anniversary performance at the Mudgeeraba RSL Anzac Day Sunset Celebration in April 2013.

When presenting the Certificate of Appreciation to Gayle Hampson (choir director) and Gold Coast Australia Stake president Dean Reid, Mr Shakey Lake, Warrant Officer (Retd) and RSL Club Secretary, said, “The Gold Coast Stake Choir has helped to make our Anzac Day Celebration what it is today”.

*Ezra Malolo, Mataele Jude Taufa, and Alex Masima at SMYC earlier this year.*



IMAGE COURTESY OF EMILY KWOK AND USED WITH PERMISSION.

In accepting the Certificate, Sister Hampson said, "Upon reflecting upon our involvement in the celebration, I have to say it has been one of the greatest spiritual and temporal experiences of my life to conduct the choir for the Anzac Day Sunset Service for the Mudgeeraba RSL for the last 10 years."

Gold Coast Stake president Dean Reid added, "We feel it a great privilege to have been invited to participate in this sacred service. We believe that part of being true Christians is to honour our country and those who fought for its freedom. Contributing in a service such as this is a great way to join with others in the Mudgeeraba community in showing our appreciation and respect."

Sister Hampson continued, "I met Mr. Vic Knowles (who is not a member of our faith) who lives near us, while on a walk with my husband, and we began chatting about our interests and our Church choir, only to discover the then-public affairs director for our stake and Jules Smibert had set the wheels in motion to have the choir be part of the Anzac Day service, in which the Hinterland Community Band played, and in which Vic Knowles was the band leader."

IMAGES COURTESY OF SANDRA MCLENNAN AND USED WITH PERMISSION.



**The Gold Coast Australia Stake Choir received a Certificate of Appreciation for their performance at the Mudgeeraba RSL Anzac Day Sunset Celebration in April.**

"I have seen the growth of the relationship between the Church and the Mudgeeraba RSL grow over the years as we have continued to serve the community together" said Jules Smibert.

In conclusion, Sister Hampson commented, "I have learned that when the Spirit prompts, obey and open your mouth. Great things can come by giving our time to serve." ■

IMAGES COURTESY OF SANDRA MCLENNAN AND USED WITH PERMISSION.



**From left to right: Ben Gilgen, Gold Coast Australia Stake high councillor; Jeff Batty, soloist; Ali Lavelle, florist; WO (Retd) Shakey Lake, Secretary Mudgeeraba RSL; Gayle Hampson, choir director; Lucy Matheson, soloist; Jules Smibert; Gold Coast Australia Stake president Dean Reid, and Malcolm Hampson.**

# Mortdale Stake Youth Exemplify Love to Their Neighbours

By Angelina Dycueco

Sixty young men and young women along with 20 youth leaders from the Mortdale stake took part in a service project at Sylvanvale Foundation, at Sutherland. Sylvanvale is an organisation which provides support to people with intellectual disabilities.

The youth actively participated and assisted the dedicated staff in running various activities. They lovingly helped with arts and crafts, grabbed tennis rackets and played with enthusiastic clients, shot hoops, and involved themselves with sensory activities which were especially enjoyable to those who have dementia. They shared their musical talents and fun natures as they participated with the singalong and dancing, which was very popular with both clients and staff. They also sang some Church hymns.

The young men and women all agreed that it was a great experience. A young man from Bankstown Ward, Tala Malolo, said that it was a really nice way

**The Mortdale stake youth**



**The Mortdale stake youth participate in a service project at the Sylvanvale Foundation.**

of fulfilling his Duty to God Award, referring to the Young Men programme's goal for lifelong service.

Krissy, a staff member, commented about the young people, "They are a great bunch of kids. Everyone was willing to communicate and they all had a smile on their faces." The manager, Marti Travers, said, "It is a remarkable group of young people."

The youth certainly touched hearts and allowed their hearts to be touched, which complements the mission of Sylvanvale, "to touch lives, awaken potential. . . ."

After a sausage sizzle provided by the stake, the staff requested the youth to sing again the hymn, "Love One Another." It was a fitting farewell and a tender way of leaving a message: By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. ■



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