

# NEW ZEALAND LOCAL PAGES

## AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

### Enduring Well the Latter-day Storms of Mortality

By Elder James J. Hamula, Area President

On Sunday, August 28, 2005, I was in Houston, Texas, USA, on a Church assignment. In returning to my hotel that night, I found the parking lot filled with cars with Louisiana license plates. In the lobby, many guests of the hotel were talking with some anxiety about a hurricane approaching the Gulf Coast of the United States.

Early the next morning I flew from Houston to Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Prior to departure, I watched television monitors in the gate area broadcasting news reports of the expected landfall of what was characterized as a monstrous storm.

During my flight east, I observed that the entire southern horizon was consumed by a dark, menacing storm front. While I was more than a little troubled by the enormity of the storm, I did not appreciate its ferocity until images of its impact began to appear in the news media.

A week later, President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve visited Hurricane Katrina survivors. I will never forget a report of their observations. They reported that the overriding concern of the people was not the loss of their material things but the loss of connection to family members.

“The thing that kept going through my mind everywhere we were was the children,” President Packer said. “They don’t understand, and can’t understand, what has happened. And then there were the mothers with their little children; in many cases, the men were not there.”

Elder Ballard added: “One of the things that was so heartwrenching were the people trying to get in touch with their own, people trying to

find their families—their parents, children, siblings, cousins, grandparents, aunts and uncles. They were just trying to make some connection.”<sup>1</sup>

These observations, coupled with an assignment I received to assist in locating displaced Church members and their families in the Houston area, gave me a vision of the anguish that awaits those who may lose their families in the eternities as a result of the storms of mortality. In the last days, the storms of mortality seem to be particularly intense and seem to be gathering in scope and fury. Latter-day conditions were foreseen to

come upon man “as a whirlwind” (D&C 112:24), to be vexatious (see D&C 97:23), perilous (see 2 Timothy 3:1), and calamitous (see D&C 1:17; D&C 45:50; 136:35), and to “not be stayed until the Lord come” (D&C 97:23). With no one knowing when the Lord will come (see Matthew 24:36; D&C 39:21; 49:7), and with all people enduring such difficult conditions, it is no wonder that the Lord’s disciples “were troubled” (D&C 45:34) at the hearing of such conditions prior to His Second Coming.

Ancient prophets who foresaw the last days also seemed to have been troubled. Referring to the Lord’s latter-day coming, Joel asked, “Who can abide it?” (Joel 2:11). Similarly, Malachi exclaimed: “Who may abide the day of his coming? and who



**Elder James J.  
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shall stand when he appeareth?” (Malachi 3:2; see also 3 Nephi 24:2; D&C 128:24). And after seeing the signs of the last days, John the Beloved cried out, “The great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Revelation 6:17).<sup>2</sup> These are expressions of concern about the ability of people to endure the calamities and perils of the last days. Fortunately, the Father and the Son have addressed these prophetic concerns.

### Preparing for the Future

“Knowing the calamity” that was coming, the Father and the Son called upon the Prophet Joseph Smith and gave him—and through him, the rest of us—commandments (D&C 1:17). Perhaps the most important commandment was given by the Father when He and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith in the spring of 1820. Referring to His Son, the Father commanded Joseph, “Hear Him!” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17; see also Matthew 17:5; Luke 9:35; Mark 9:7). On that day and thereafter, Jesus Christ gave Joseph doctrines, covenants, and commandments to “prepare [all people] for that which is to come” (D&C 1:12; see also D&C 133:10). Only by receiving such doctrines, covenants, and commandments can the world be properly prepared for the Lord’s coming and everything leading up to it. “If ye are prepared,” the Lord has counseled, “ye shall not fear” (D&C 38:30).

Among the essential instructions given by the Lord to prepare for His coming is that we listen to and obey His voice. “Hearken and hear, O ye inhabitants of the earth . . . hear the voice of the Lord” (D&C 133:16). Significantly, “the voice of the Lord is unto all men” so that “all that will hear may hear” (D&C 1:2, 11). The Lord’s voice is manifest to us in various ways. It is manifest

in the voice of His servants: “Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38; see also D&C 133:8–10, 16, 36–38, 71).<sup>3</sup> It is manifest in the administration of His Spirit: “My voice is Spirit” (D&C 88:66).<sup>4</sup> And it is manifest in the commotions of the earth: “After your testimony cometh the testimony of earthquakes. . . . And . . . the testimony of the voice of thunderings, . . . lightnings, . . . tempests, and . . . waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds” (D&C 88:89–90).

Regardless of the form of the voice, the substance of the Lord’s message is the same. “Sanctify yourselves. . . . Go ye out from Babylon. . . . Hear the voice of the Lord; for he . . . commandeth all men everywhere to repent” (D&C 133:4, 5, 16). The call to repent and be sanctified is a call to prepare “to meet the Bridegroom” (D&C 133:10; see also D&C 133:19; 88:92; Matthew 25:1–13), who is Jesus Christ (D&C 65:3). When the Lord returns, he “shall stand in the midst of his people, and shall reign over all flesh” (D&C 133:25).<sup>5</sup> To dwell with the Lord in that day, we must be clean, for no unclean thing can dwell in His presence (see 1 Nephi 10:21; 3 Nephi 27:19; Moses 6:57; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Ephesians 5:5).

Thus, there is no more essential preparation for the great day of the Lord than heeding His call to repent and be sanctified, which we cannot accomplish without baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost (see 3 Nephi 27:19–20).<sup>6</sup>

### Standing in Holy Places

It is important that we not only leave Babylon but also that we remain worthy of the companionship of the Holy Ghost. “For the Spirit of the Lord will not always strive with man” (2 Nephi 26:11; see also D&C 1:33; Moses 8:17; D&C 20:32). To ensure

continued companionship of the Holy Ghost, the faithful must “stand in holy places” (D&C 101:22). “Wherefore, stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come; for behold, it cometh quickly, saith the Lord” (D&C 87:8). Among the holy places the faithful should stand are the temples of the Lord. It is in such places that the power to overcome the world is delivered to them. The nature and significance of this power should not be underappreciated.

Three years following the First Vision, Joseph Smith received another heavenly messenger, Moroni (see Joseph Smith—History 1:27–48). Moroni’s message included recitation of biblical prophecies concerning the latter-day coming of the Lord and the conditions leading up to it. Quoting Malachi, Moroni declared: “For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven,” leaving the proud and the wicked “neither root nor branch” (Joseph Smith—History 1:37). But “before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord,” Moroni continued, “I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet” (Joseph Smith—History 1:38). And Elijah “shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming” (Joseph Smith—History 1:39).

Moroni’s message was delivered three times in the night and once the next morning “without the least variation” (Joseph Smith—History 1:45). It was the first heavenly communication the Prophet Joseph Smith received since the appearance of the Father and the Son, which initiated the work of the Restoration. Clearly, Moroni’s message was important. The thrust of his message was that “great judgments . . . were coming

upon the earth, with great desolations by famine, sword, and pestilence” (Joseph Smith—History 1:45) and that the power to avoid such judgments was coming in the priesthood keys that Elijah would help restore to the earth.

Thirteen years later, Elijah came as promised, bestowing upon Joseph in the Kirtland Temple the sealing power. By this power, “all covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations” have “efficacy, virtue, and force in and after the resurrection from the dead” (D&C 132:7). Without such power, every human undertaking has an end after death (see D&C 132:13–14). This, then, is the great waste that awaits the world unless Elijah comes and the children of men receive what he came to restore—not the physical destruction that accompanies war, pestilence, earthquake, and famine but rather that men and women are left alone, without root (connection to ancestry) or branch (connection to posterity).

In conclusion, they who will endure the storms of the last days and will stand when the Lord finally appears are they who know and obey His voice. As the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith: “They . . . [who] have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but *shall abide the day*” (D&C 45:57; emphasis added). Such persons will have sanctified themselves through receipt of the saving ordinances and obedience to the covenants associated with such ordinances, understanding that when the veil is rent and all men shall see Him, “he that is not purified *shall not abide the day*” (D&C 38:8; emphasis added). Such persons will be those who have availed themselves of the blessings

of the temple and made such blessings available to their kindred dead (see D&C 128:24; Revelation 7:14–17). May we do as the Lord has instructed so that we may be built on solid foundations and endure successfully the raging storms of mortality (see Matthew 7:24–27; Helaman 5:12). ■

#### NOTES

1. “Church leaders tour devastation of three states,” *Church News*, September 10, 2005, 11.
2. The Lord posed a similar question to the people of our day: “Vengeance cometh speedily upon the ungodly as the whirlwind; and who shall escape it?” (D&C 97:22).
3. The voice of the Lord’s servants includes the “elders of my church” who are sent unto the nations of the earth (D&C 133:8–10, 16, 36–38, 71).
4. As prophesied by Joel and affirmed on the day of Pentecost, the Lord’s Spirit would be poured out upon all nations (see Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17–18).
5. See also Zechariah 14:4 (“his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives”); Revelation 1:7 (“every eye shall see him”); D&C 38:8 (“day soon cometh that ye shall see me”); D&C 76:63 (“he shall come . . . to reign on the earth”); D&C 88:95 (“face of the Lord shall be unveiled”); D&C 104:59 (“prepare my people for . . . when I shall dwell with them”).
6. See also Moroni 10:32–33 (sanctified “by the grace of God”); D&C 88:21 (sanctified through obedience to “the law of Christ”); D&C 84:33 (sanctified through “magnifying their calling” in the priesthood).

#### LOCAL PAGES

## Church Leaders Emphasize Missionary Work at Worldwide Broadcast

### Salt Lake City—

In a recent worldwide broadcast, President Thomas S. Monson reminded members around the globe that there is “no proclamation more relevant, no responsibility more binding, no instruction more direct than the injunction given by the resurrected Lord” to “teach all nations” (Matthew 28:19) the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This comment from President Monson came nearly eight months after he announced lower age requirements for Mormon missionaries (men can serve at 18, women at 19)—an announcement that

has generated a wave of new missionaries.

The Church, which has always followed Christ’s New Testament teaching cited by President Monson, announced more developments in its mission to fulfill this charge. During a two-hour worldwide June broadcast originating from the Marriott Center in Provo, Utah, Church leaders, missionaries and members were also encouraged to follow the Savior as they work together to bring others to Christ.

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, spoke about

the importance of teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ effectively, counseling members to “decide to do it right; decide to be better.” And Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminded Latter-day Saints that, in the words of Joseph Smith, the Church’s “greatest and most important duty is to preach the gospel.”

Fellow Apostle Elder Russell M. Nelson reminded members and missionaries to be concerned about each individual’s needs, saying, “When we follow Jesus Christ, we act as He would act and love as He would love. . . . Until you know a person’s name and face, the Lord cannot help you to know his or her heart.”



*A 3,000-member choir of full-time missionaries and other Latter-day Saints provided the music for the Work of Salvation world-wide leadership broadcast in June 2013.*

Developments announced in missionary work included a milestone for the number of missionaries serving and the news that missionaries will use the Internet and digital devices to reach out to others. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “there will continually be improvements in the way we perform missionary work.”

### **70,000 Missionaries Now Serving**

The number of missionaries continues to rise since President Monson’s October 2012 announcement of lower missionary age requirements. At the time of the announcement,

58,500 missionaries were serving; as of the week of the broadcast, Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, more than 70,000 missionaries were serving—the most ever at one time in Church history.

Female missionaries comprise more than 20 percent of that number, with 14,650 serving. As the Church announced in April 2013, the increasing number of female missionaries has led to the creation of a mission leadership council that will include both men and women as missionary leaders. This council will consist of the mission president and his wife, assistants to the president, zone

leaders and sister training leaders—a newly created role.

As the Church reported in February 2013, 58 new missions were created to accommodate the influx of missionaries, bringing the total number of missions to 405. By year’s end, the Church anticipates having 85,000 missionaries.

### **Using Technology to Invite Others to Follow Jesus Christ**

Elder Perry also announced changes in how missionaries will spend their time finding people to teach. Because many people prefer to connect online, missionaries will use the Internet and digital devices in their ministry, Elder Perry said.

He noted that missionaries will use “Mormon.org, Facebook, blogs, email, . . . text messages” and other platforms to reach out to people. “The Church must adapt to a changing world,” Elder Perry said.

Speaking earlier in the day to new mission presidents, Church leaders said that missionary use of the Internet and digital devices such as iPads will begin in phases, and only in designated missions for the rest of this year. The Church anticipates these tools will be available to missionaries throughout the world sometime next year.

Elder Perry said those who have interest in the Church often complain that they “stop by one of our buildings only to find it locked.” He said missionaries will be at meetinghouses when needed to greet interested individuals and guide them through our houses of worship.

In the worldwide broadcast viewed by hundreds of thousands of Latter-day Saints, Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles encouraged members and missionaries to “work together in faith and unity” with “a love for one another and for those we serve” as they invite others to follow Jesus Christ. ■

## Waikato Interfaith Leaders Look into New Zealand’s Mormon History

### Hamilton, New Zealand—

Members of Waikato’s interfaith community were hosted at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ New Zealand Church History Centre recently.

The guests represented a number of religions including Christian denominations, Muslim, Bahá’í, Hare Krishna and Jewish faiths.

The focus of the evening was how many Latter-day Saint missionaries in New Zealand in the 19th and 20th centuries took photographs and films, created sound recordings, as well as wrote in their journals and in letters regarding their associations with Maori and other New Zealanders.

Their photographic, film, audio and written records combine to create a treasure trove for historians interested in New Zealand history.

Many of the historical items housed in the Church’s collection in Temple View, New Zealand, have been gathered by Rangi Parker and her husband, Vic, over many years.

“It is wonderful to see and feel the love that these early missionaries had for the people of this land,” Sister Parker said. “That is obvious as you read the letters and journal entries.”

The Parkers, Noramerle Davis and Michael Walmsley hosted the interfaith group at Temple View on 18 June. ■

*Members of the Waikato Interfaith Council were hosted recently at the Church’s New Zealand Church History Centre.*



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# BYU Choir Visits New Zealand

## Auckland, New Zealand—

The Brigham Young University–Hawaii Concert Choir packed several performances into its recent visit to Auckland and Wellington.

The choir sang for approximately 700 young adults at Redoubt Road, Manukau stake centre. Two members of the choir also spoke about their experiences in the choir and their feelings about their faith as Latter-day Saints.

Elder F. Michael Watson, who was a member of the Pacific Area Presidency at the time of the visit, presided over the gathering, and along with his wife, Sister Jolene Watson, hosted Brigham Young University–Hawaii president Steven C. Wheelwright and his wife, Margaret Wheelwright, at the meeting.

Both Elder Watson and President Wheelwright spoke to the young people in attendance, encouraging them to obtain all the education they could obtain and to use that education to build strong families and contribute to society in significant ways.

A group of local Latter-day Saint young adults had the opportunity to sing with the BYU–Hawaii Concert Choir. According to Elder Watson, “they were superb, giving our visitors a chance to experience firsthand some of the talents of our own New Zealand Latter-day Saints.”

While in Auckland the choir also performed at Parnell’s Holy Trinity Cathedral. Guests were invited to make a gold coin donation upon entry, with all donations going to De Paul House, a Catholic charity in the Auckland suburb of Northcote that provides housing and other support services to individuals and families in need.

One guest described the choir as “absolutely marvelous” and the event as “a wonderful evening.”

“We loved every minute of it. What fun! What a truly great account they made of themselves with every song and action performed throughout,” she said.

Massey High School’s choir also performed on Saturday night as a curtain-raiser for BYU–Hawaii.

Auckland Mayor Len Brown and other dignitaries were hosted by Latter-day Saint leader Elder Paul Coward and his wife, Sister Julie Coward.

During the choir’s short stay in Auckland they also sang for over 500 Latter-day Saint teenagers at a youth meeting in Robertson Road, Mangere.

The choir also performed on TVNZ’s *Good Morning* program before visiting AUT campus in the city, where the choir performed for university staff and students in a “flash mob” performance.

The BYU–Hawaii students also visited three Auckland high schools, running workshops with the school choirs, and before leaving Auckland gave another public performance at Sylvia Park Westfield shopping centre at the weekend, to the delight of lunchtime shoppers.

As the choir moved on to the Wellington region, a thousand people were enthralled at Porirua’s Te Rauparaha as they watched a high energy performance from the choir, who presented vibrant renditions of music from around the world, to the theme “Music of the Islands.”

The choir also performed at midday to an audience of 250 at the marae at Te Papa as part of its New Zealand/Australia tour.

US Ambassador to New Zealand David Huebner, who attended both shows and hosted the choir at the US Embassy, said he thoroughly enjoyed the concerts.

“The choir’s broad range of traditional songs from the North and South Pacific were a particular pleasure,” he said.

He continued by highlighting the importance of such tours to the US–New Zealand relationship.



**Paul Tovey, in the foreground, is a member of the BYU-Hawaii Concert Choir. The New Zealander by birth moved with his family to Hawaii when he was three.**

“Tours such as the choir’s current visit reinforce and deepen the people-to-people connections that are—and always have been—the foundation of the warm, strong relationship between our two countries,” he said.

Two New Zealanders took part in the performance. Siblings Sarah and Paul Tovey were born in New Zealand, but have spent most of their lives in Hawaii.

Paul, majoring in hospitality and tourism at BYU-H, said, “It feels like coming home. We’ve felt more than just *aroha* from our host families—they’ve made us feel like family, that they love us. In Maori history we’ve always communicated with songs and chanting. I knew New Zealanders would embrace the

music and the spirit of *aloha*. It’s been awesome.”

His sister Sarah, a music major, added, “We’ve met so many people here with connections to BYU-Hawaii and to our family. It’s been beautiful to share the music we love with such an enthusiastic audience.”

Choir member Justin Hinton, an Accounting senior at BYU-H from Arizona, said, “The best part of this tour has been to meet and associate with the great people of New Zealand. The hearty and warm personalities put a smile on my face even in the rain and cooler weather. Although I haven’t been here long and don’t know many people here, I know that I will always be welcome here and will be leaving a piece of my heart here with the great people of this nation.” ■