

AUSTRALIA LOCAL PAGES

LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Creating a Home of Conversion

By **Rosemary M. Wixom**

Primary General President

Brothers and sisters, I love the Pacific Area and I love you! About 15 months ago I visited the Pacific Area with Sister Linda K. Burton from the Relief Society. It was a marvellous experience. Upon our arrival in New Zealand, the Area President and his wife drove us through the city of Auckland. I still remember the details of that drive. I noticed the Norfolk pines and the sheep grazing in the city parks. We drove up to overlooks that allowed us to see the view below. It was breathtaking. New Zealand is beautiful, and the graciousness of the people matches the beauty of the land.

While in Auckland, we went to visit the Starship Children's Hospital, where I met 11-year-old Tristan, who was awaiting heart surgery. As I walked into his room I noticed his big, bright brown eyes. I wanted to give him a hug, but because of his sterile environment, I could not touch him; I could only talk to him from a distance. His father sat in a chair near his bed, and on the bed I noticed a

Book of Mormon. Tristan was a brave young man. I asked him, "Where do you get your courage for the surgery you have ahead?" He paused, and then with tears in his eyes, he said, "The fear leaves when my dad and I read from the scriptures together."

The example of Tristan that day taught me the importance of parents and children sharing their pure faith in the Saviour Jesus Christ and the great value of reading the scriptures together.

Children have a natural ability to believe and to know Jesus Christ. Jesus tells us we would do well to be as converted and as humble as they are. One has only to listen to a child praying to confirm that truth. It is beautiful to witness a child's naturally sensitive spiritual nature. As we watch children grow, we want to preserve that faith in Jesus Christ. We want them to remain just as converted and humble as they are while they are young, so we focus on their spiritual core. Alma tells us, "Learn wisdom in thy youth . . . to keep the commandments of God."¹



**Sister
Rosemary M.
Wixom**

We put our trust in the words of Proverbs 22:6, which reads, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Elder Neil L. Andersen said, "Fan the flame of their spiritual core already aglow with the fire of their premortal faith."² Elder Andersen is encouraging us to help children remain converted through their teenage years and into adulthood by helping them remember what they once knew before they came to this earth. It takes all of us—parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, neighbours, and Primary leaders—to influence the children around us. Don't underestimate the impact you may have on the lives of the children and youth

you know, and don't underestimate the impact they may have on yours. Listening is just as important as telling—and sometimes even more so. Their personal conversion to the Saviour strengthens ours.

Let me share three ways we can all help our children preserve their faith in Jesus Christ.

First, speak often of Jesus Christ. Elder Neil L. Andersen spoke to all of us when he said, “To fathers and mothers, to grandfathers and grandmothers, and to those without children of their own . . . , my counsel is to speak more frequently about Jesus Christ. In His holy name is great spiritual power.” He said, “To mothers who are raising their children without a father in the home, I promise you that as you speak of Jesus Christ, you will feel the power of heaven blessing you.”³

How do we do it? We can refer to Jesus Christ often as we speak to our children. We can share with our children how we want to better know our Saviour as our personal friend and how we can turn to Him when we are discouraged or afraid.

Children, have you ever been afraid of something? Are you afraid of the dark in your room at night? I know of a young boy

who had that fear. He would lie awake at night, too afraid to even move in his bed. One day at Primary he received a small picture of Jesus. He had an idea. He decided to attach the picture of Jesus to a night-light plugged into the wall of his room. When he would awaken at night, fearful of the dark, he would quickly look down at the night-light and see the picture of Jesus reflected in the light. Looking at that picture of Jesus brought him the peace he needed to be able to go back to sleep.

I also know of a parent who taught his little two-year-old son the words to a hymn to help him deal with his fear at night. This father taught his son to softly sing the words, “O Savior, stay this night with me; behold, 'tis eventide.”⁴

Through our family prayers and our personal prayers, we can come to know our Saviour, Jesus Christ. We can turn to Him with every need. As we kneel with our family to pray we can share the concerns of each individual family member, trusting that He is listening and He will guide us through our trials.

We can tell our children the stories of Jesus and the parables He taught. When they are faced

with a choice to make, we may ask, “What do you think Jesus would do?”

In 2 Nephi we read, “We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins.”⁵ Our speaking of Christ often, with comfort and reverence, may instill in our children a greater conversion to our Saviour—one that will remain throughout the years. It's never too late to begin speaking of Jesus Christ in our homes.

Second, we read the scriptures with our families. Tristan's family had created a pattern of reading the scriptures that blessed Tristan in his time of special need.

One mother of four young children said, “We started reading the scriptures when our children were babies. We would read out loud from the Book of Mormon two verses each night before we would kneel down for family prayer. When each child was old enough to talk, we would have him repeat back the words or phrases of two verses each night. When each child was old enough to read, we would have that child read

two verses each night.” She said, “Our children became familiar with scriptural language, and they began to recognize the Spirit as we would read from the scriptures.”

Children and youth, have you ever sought the answers to your questions in the scriptures? Think about this: when you are faced with a difficult task ahead of you, try reading in the Book of Mormon about Nephi returning to Jerusalem for the plates. What can you learn from Nephi? If you feel you need courage to stand up for your beliefs, read about Captain Moroni and let him teach you about finding the courage to stand for truth and righteousness. Nephi said, “Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.”⁶ It’s never too late to begin reading the scriptures daily in our homes.

Third, bear personal testimony to your children.

Children and youth, do you know the story of how your parents received their testimonies? Do you know how they feel about Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ? Do you know their feelings for the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith, or their feelings for our prophet

today, Thomas S. Monson? Just ask them. Ask your parents to tell you about the first time they recognized the Spirit of the Holy Ghost. Elder David A. Bednar said, “Parents should be vigilant and spiritually attentive to spontaneously occurring opportunities to bear testimony to their children.” He continued, “Such occasions need not be programmed.”⁷

You may express your testimony to each other as you work together in your home. You may express your testimony as you share how you see the Lord’s hand in the events of your day. As we express simple gratitude to our Heavenly Father for a beautiful sunset or take opportunity to refer to the Saviour’s influence in our lives while we sit around the dinner table, we are bearing testimony. It’s never too late to begin to bear testimony of Jesus Christ in our homes.

When we speak often of Jesus Christ, when we make the scriptures a part of our day, and when we bear witness of our Saviour, we not only strengthen the faith and conversion of our children in our homes but we also strengthen our own faith and testimony.

I was taught valuable lessons that day in the New Zealand

Starship Children’s Hospital. The Spirit of the Holy Ghost was prevalent as I watched a parent and a child rest their faith on the firm foundation of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Helaman said to his children, “And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation.”⁸

Our prophet, Thomas S. Monson, has said, “The lessons learned in the home are those that last the longest.”⁹ We know that when those lessons are focused on our Saviour Jesus Christ through prayer, scripture study, and testimony, we are creating a climate of a gospel-centred home. Like you, I share my testimony that He lives and that His Spirit is abundant in our homes when we build our foundation on Him, our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God. ■

NOTES

1. Alma 37:35.
2. Neil L. Andersen, “Tell Me the Stories of Jesus,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 108.
3. Neil L. Andersen, “Tell Me the Stories of Jesus,” 109, 110.
4. “Abide with Me; ’Tis Eventide,” *Hymns*, no. 165.
5. 2 Nephi 25:26.
6. 2 Nephi 32:3.
7. David A. Bednar, “Watching with All Perseverance,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 42.
8. Helaman 5:12.
9. Thomas S. Monson, “Constant Truths for Changing Times,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 19.

Relief Society Sisters Attend International Day of the Girl in American Samoa

By Shirley M. De La Rosa

IMAGE COURTESY OF SHIRLEY DE LA ROSA, AND USED WITH PERMISSION



Some of the Relief Society sisters who attended the International Day of the Girl in Samoa

Latter-day Saint sisters were invited to participate in the International Day of the Girl held at Veteran's Memorial Stadium at Tafuna, American Samoa, last October. Sauimoana M. Purcell, one of the organizers of the event, extended the invitation to all women of all faiths and walks of life. The invitation to the Latter-day Saint sisters came with a request to sing at the event's opening ceremony.

The weeklong celebration included a beautification project,

and registered participants were involved with planting and engaged in other manual labour, such as painting and cleaning in and around the Veteran's Memorial Stadium as a service. When they learned that the planting was not quite completed, several sisters from the Mapusaga Pago Pago and West Pago Pago Stakes volunteered to complete the planting project and went the extra mile to water all the plants that had been planted previously. They had to fill bottles of water

to do so, and they also extended their service to the cleaning of the grandstands, which were very dusty and needed to be washed down and swept.

There were over 2,000 women of all faiths who pre-registered for the event, but initially the Latter-day Saint sisters were not numbered among them. Just two weeks before the event, the invitation was finally issued, along with a request for the Latter-day Saint sisters to sing. The stake Relief Society presidents contacted the ward Relief Society presidents, who passed the word to their sisters with a message that a women's choir was to be formed, and the rest was history. They organized themselves and came together for a practise, and each participating stake had T-shirts printed.

Stake president E. Starlight Lotulelei of the Central Pago Pago Stake, who owns a silk-screening business, donated the screen and his time for the last-minute request, and he fittingly designed a print that was inspired from the recent Church movie *Meet the Mormons*. The print read: "International Day of the Girl, I'm a Mormon." Interestingly, Sister Tagi Schwenke from public affairs, who also assisted in the planning with the National

Olympic Committee (NOC), reported that the president of the NOC, a nonmember, requested to have several of the T-shirts in various colours. He wanted to share them with his friends at BYU–Hawaii and in the community of Laie.

Nearly 200 voices strong, the LDS choir sang simple arrangements of two beloved hymns, “Love at Home” and “Teach Me to Walk in the Light”. Verses of each hymn were sung in parts, acapella, in native Samoan, and English. The sisters sang with enthusiasm, spirit, and conviction.

Although 2,000 women had pre-registered for the event, many of them did not show. The Latter-day Saint sisters made up for those who were not there, and of the many

groups of women who did attend, the LDS group, ranging from 12 to 92 years old, was the largest group from a single organisation. They represented the Church well, showing their love for the gospel and supporting a worthy cause, while having the determination to proclaim, “I am a Mormon,” in a very positive way.

The women participated in the service projects and other planned physical activities, such as stretching, yoga, Tae-Bo, Zumba, and other sports. They also took part in the “Walk to Remember,” where names of women who had died of cancer or are cancer survivors were announced as groups walked the stadium track to remember them. ■

In the Service of Their God

By Carl and Karen Maurer

Approximately 500 young single adults from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints gave up a weekend and shared their time and talents to serve others locally, and around the world, recently in Brisbane.

The YSA from Brisbane and surrounding areas gathered to participate in three projects. The event began with a devotional in the chapel, after which three speakers outlined the projects to be done and the people who would be helped by their service. Collin Sivalingum, a representative from Red Cross, outlined how 300 hygiene kits being prepared would help people from all over the Pacific respond to emergencies and disasters. These kits will be a great source of comfort and assistance when people are removed from their homes and living in disaster shelters.

Nicole Armada from Hoa’s Angels spoke to the YSA about the condition of children, often as young as four years, found on the streets of Vietnam in need of protection, food, and medical care. The 220 “Kids Kits” that the YSA packed for them would be perhaps the first time a child received anything of his or her own, let alone a pencil and paper to draw and write with.

The third project was assembling birthing kits for mothers in Third World countries. YSA heard how a woman dies in childbirth every two minutes around the world, despite 90% of these circumstances being preventable by having simple, sterile basics on hand. The YSA packed 400 sterile birthing kits for Birthing Kits Australia, which will hopefully save the lives of precious mothers and their babies.



IMAGE COURTESY OF SHIRLEY DE LA ROSA AND USED WITH PERMISSION

Some of the members of the LDS women’s choir that sang at the International Day of the Girl conference.

Daniel Gray from the Brisbane North Stake said, “I couldn’t help but wonder how many lives we saved by preparing birthing and hygiene kits for those less fortunate than us.” And Blair Nelson from Cleveland Stake added, “I really felt the Spirit when I heard how our small little effort will be a wonderful thing to someone in need.”

In all, there were over 500 YSA from across the Brisbane region stretching from the Sunshine Coast Stake in the north to the Gold Coast Stake in the south. Matthew Stubbs from Coomera Stake said, “It is just so amazing to see so many YSA come together and do something for someone else.” That sentiment was shared by Gardenia Naunau from Ipswich Stake, who said, “Focusing on the people and not the task made it so easy to serve.”

The first evening concluded with a variety show in which the YSA displayed their many talents in

singing, dancing, comedy, and a Polynesian cultural participation item, enjoyed by all.

On Saturday, YSA split into four groups to participate in locally based service projects, beginning with an early-morning breakfast. A small army of participants helped out the Ipswich City Council by planting 650 trees in a council-led rehabilitation project. This was a great opportunity to help the community of Ipswich and build the trust necessary to ensure the Church is offered further chances to serve in the future.

Redland City Council also appreciated the help of a large group of YSA—handing out disaster preparation leaflets to areas deemed most in danger during the storm season. Some YSA travelled out to remote populated islands, while others focussed on high-risk areas of the mainland. Council representatives there were impressed not only with the

Some of the YSA who participated in the service convention



IMAGE COURTESY OF CARL AND KAREN MAURER AND USED WITH PERMISSION

willingness of so many young adults to serve on a Saturday morning but also with the Church's own stance on disaster preparedness and 72-hour packs.

Another task force of YSA devoted themselves wholly to the service of the Lord in completing a much-needed "deep clean" of Queensland's largest meetinghouse and of the Brisbane temple grounds. In addition to these two LDS locations, the Tingalpa cemetery, which has a long-standing history in the area, was cleaned and cared for. As a result of this service, there are now discussions for this cemetery's records to be digitised and made more readily available to the public.

Other YSA were able to serve those beyond the veil with a FamilySearch indexing station being run by the Logan Stake. This stake also collected can donations for Poverty Week, an initiative run by the Brisbane Youth Centre.



IMAGE COURTESY OF CARL AND KAREN MAUREK AND USED WITH PERMISSION

On Sunday the YSA met together at the Forestdale Chapel for a fast and testimony meeting. Dinner was followed by a fireside focussed on family history, organized and brilliantly executed by the YSA in Centenary Stake.

Later, Jolea Rogers from Coomera Stake commented, "I had so many university assignments due, but I decided to go and do something for someone else, and it just all worked out in the end." Ben Munro from Eight Mile Plains Stake agreed: "I loved service convention! It was amazing. I know that there was a lot of hard work in planning it, but it was worth it, a thousand times and more." ■

YSA beautify the Tingalpa cemetery.

Some of the 650 trees that were planted



IMAGE COURTESY OF CARL AND KAREN MAUREK AND USED WITH PERMISSION

TIP OF THE MONTH

A Word of Wisdom

Work Burnout

Continually feeling exhausted and losing interest in your work are signs that you could be experiencing “burnout”. Symptoms of employee burnout may include:

- Prolonged exposure to stress at work, creating a negative emotional reaction to your job.
- Seeing little reward at work, only punishment, because he/she lacks value reinforcement, control over outcomes, or personal competence.
- Feeling fatigued or frustrated because devotion to a cause or way of life has failed to meet expectation.

This in part may explain why members, devoted to the cause, may not feel stress or the accompanying fatigue when “anxiously engaged” in building the kingdom.

Measuring Burnout

Experts have devised a measure for burnout which includes three dimensions, namely:

1. Emotional exhaustion—lack of energy, negative affect, and a perception that your emotional resources are depleted.
2. Depersonalisation—a callous or uncaring response towards work colleagues (a coping mechanism to deal with work stress by distancing oneself from others).

3. Reduced personal accomplishment—a perceived reduction in your professional competency.

Signs and Symptoms

Experts say that experiencing any of these dimensions can be manifested in multiple ways, including:

- Physical symptoms—loss of physical health, fatigue, sleep difficulties, headaches, colds, and flu.
- Emotional symptoms—irritability, anxiety, guilt, depression, and feeling of helplessness.
- Behavioural symptoms—rigid reliance on rules, absenteeism, substance abuse, poor work performance, misuse of work breaks, and workplace theft.
- Interpersonal symptoms—treating others inhumanely, increase of physical and verbal abuse towards others, increase in employee complaints.
- Attitudinal symptoms—cynicism, callousness, defensiveness, intolerance of others, and resistance to going to work.

Tools to Help Assess and Manage Stress

See website below regarding stress and stress management:

www.mindtools.com

On the home page of this website, click on “Stress Management” link to access “Stress Management Techniques.” See also “Burnout Self-Test” by typing “burnout self-test” in the search box. ■

AN EASTER GIFT FOR YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS

This Easter season, the Church will be releasing a video and website on March 29 that focus on the Resurrection of the Saviour and the importance His Atonement has in our lives. We invite all to *discover His sacrifice, embrace His teachings, and share His joy* by visiting HeLives.mormon.org. ■