

NEW ZEALAND LOCAL PAGES

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

The Lord's Day

By **Kevin W. Pearson**

President, Pacific Area Presidency

As Christmastime approaches, there are signs everywhere reminding us that it's that time of the year again. These signs remind us of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all mankind. The Saviour's life and teachings and Atonement are a sign of Heavenly Father's love for each of us. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

The scriptures teach us that after completing the Creation of the heavens and the earth, "on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested . . . from all his work which he had made . . . God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it" (Genesis 2:2–3). This was a sign that the earth was prepared for man. From the very beginning, we have been taught that the Sabbath day is the Lord's day and commanded to keep it holy. This commandment has been renewed in every dispensation of the gospel.

To Moses the Lord said, "Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you" (Exodus 31:13). He said, "It is holy

unto you" (Exodus 31:14) and called it "a perpetual covenant" throughout the generations (see Exodus 31:16).

The Lord identified Himself as the Lord of the Sabbath. He has repeatedly commanded us to honour Him on His day. The first and great commandment is to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37). How can we honour the Lord and His holy day?

Today, the Sabbath day is anything but holy for most people. It has become a play day for man rather than a day of worship. The Sabbath day is a holiday, not a holy day.

Keeping the Sabbath day holy is more than just attending church for three hours; it is about who we are and what we do all day long. It is about keeping the entire day holy.

We can begin preparing for the Sabbath day (completing tasks, responsibilities and shopping) on Saturday, so that we are prepared to focus on making the Sabbath day a day of worship—a day focused on being our very best for one another and offering our deepest devotion to the Father and the Son. We can deepen our understanding of what we are doing when we partake of the sacrament. The sacrament



Elder Kevin W. Pearson



The Sacrament is not merely a renewal of an old covenant made at baptism, it is a new covenant made each and every week.

is a remembrance of His infinite Atonement. When we take the sacrament, we are doing three things:

1. We are offering a broken heart and a contrite spirit to Heavenly Father and asking Him to forgive and sanctify us as we remember the Saviour's atoning sacrifice and partake of the bread and water. In so doing we are asking Heavenly Father to forgive and sanctify us.
2. We are witnessing unto Heavenly Father that we will take upon us the name of Christ and always remember Him and stand as living witnesses of



We can be forgiven and clean each and every Sunday during the Sacrament. We can leave with the promise of forgiveness and the companionship of the Holy Ghost each week.

Him in all places, at all times and in all things (see Mosiah 18:9).

3. We are making a new covenant to keep all of His commandments. The sacrament is not merely a renewal of an old covenant made at baptism; it is a new covenant made each and every week.

In making this covenant, we are exercising our agency, showing personal obedience, exercising faith, repenting of any mistakes, forgiving others so we can receive forgiveness, and committing anew to be like the Son.

As we do, Heavenly Father promises to forgive us and promises that we might always have His Spirit, the Holy Ghost, to be with us.

We can be forgiven and clean each and every Sunday during the sacrament. We can leave with the promise of forgiveness and the companionship of the Holy Ghost each week. The sacrament is the most sacred thing we do each and every week. It is a powerful reminder of who we are and of the power and reality of the Saviour's infinite Atonement. The sacrament is a sacred symbol of Heavenly Father's love for us and a sign of His willingness to always bless and help us.

But keeping the Sabbath day holy is more than just attending church. As with all commandments, the Lord promises us significant blessings for keeping His entire day holy. These promises are found in the Doctrine

and Covenants, section 59. In this revelation the Lord mentions four specific and powerful blessings for keeping the Sabbath day holy.

1. We can be clean (verses 8–9).
“That thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world.” When we are unspotted from the world, we have more confidence in approaching Heavenly Father in prayer. We feel better about ourselves. Our self-esteem increases.
2. We can have greater joy (verse 13).
“That thy joy may be full.” When we keep the Sabbath day holy, He promises us a greater fulness of joy—joy in our lives, our marriages, and our families.
3. We can receive greater temporal blessings (verse 16).
“The fulness of the earth is yours.” He promises a greater fulness of the earth, of the things we need. These are temporal blessings. Our efforts to provide for ourselves and families will be magnified and multiplied. Heavenly Father wants His children to “prosper in the land”. He wants us to have a greater fulness of the earth.
4. We can have peace (verse 23).
“Peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come.” We all want greater peace in our lives and in our families. What greater blessing can He promise than eternal life!

LOCAL PAGES

These are the Lord's blessings to those who keep His day holy.

Spencer W. Kimball said that the most important word in the Book of Mormon is the word remember. The Lord gave us the Sabbath day to keep as a remembrance of the infinite Atonement. The Sabbath day since the days of Adam and Eve has been a covenant between God and His children to remind us of who we are and what we have covenanted to do and to be.

The prophet Ezekiel taught that the Sabbath day is a sign (Ezekiel 20:20), a sign of Heavenly Father's love for us. It is also a sign of our love and devotion to Him and to the Saviour. What sign are we giving Him each Sunday? What kind of sign does your Sabbath day observance represent?

I pray that as we come to understand the Sabbath day better, it will be a delight: a day we always look forward to, a day we give back to the Lord, a day of remembering, a day of witnessing, and a day of covenanting, a weekly sign between us and the Lord demonstrating our love and devotion, a perpetual covenant throughout the generations that we will honour the Father and His Only Begotten Son.

As we end the year and look to a new year, may we resolve anew to more fully follow the living Son of the living God. May our lives be a powerful sign of our discipleship. ■

10,000 People Follow Pacific Mormon Newsroom

By Mormon Newsroom Staff

Thumbs-up for the Pacific Mormon Newsroom Facebook page for reaching 10,000 fans.

"At the beginning of the year we had around 3,000 Facebook fans. Today we have over 10,000," said Elder Maurice Melligan, a public affairs social media specialist with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"Our goal is to share goodness and offer our fans a unique, uplifting newsfeed experience."

Paula Fugal, a missionary currently serving as a public affairs specialist in the Church's Pacific Area office in

Auckland, says, "There is so much good that happens in the world that often goes unnoticed.

"I love the fact that we can provide a positive space for people to go for uplifting stories and information. I hope when people read our stories they feel inspired to do good things in their communities, churches and families."

The Facebook page includes fans throughout the world, including Fiji, New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga, Marshall Islands, Vanuatu, Australia, Papua New Guinea and the United States.



Newsroom staff at the Pacific Area Office celebrate having 10,000 fans.



Women make up 62 percent of the fans and men 38 percent, with the largest representation coming from the 18–24 year age bracket.

Pacific Mormon Newsroom is one of around 70 national and regional Mormon Newsroom websites. There is also a global edition, published in Salt Lake City, United States.

The aim of the Mormon Newsroom sites is to provide accurate information about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its members to interested media professionals, opinion leaders and the public.

Among its features, Mormon Newsroom includes news releases, topics and background information, notes on leadership and organisation, facts and statistics, and a blog. ■

American Idol Finalist to Mormon Missionaries: “Small and Simple Things Matter”

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—

“For me, music is a way I can share my belief in Jesus Christ,” said David Archuleta—an *American Idol* finalist, recording artist and former missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—speaking recently to missionaries in Auckland.

During a special devotional meeting in August at the Redoubt Road Latter-day Saint meetinghouse in South Auckland, Mr Archuleta used his gift of music and the spoken word to share his faith in Jesus Christ and his belief that “through the small and simple things we do each day, great things can happen.”

Mr Archuleta gave examples from his own Latter-day Saint mission in Chile, South America, where doing the small and simple things—like approaching people he didn’t know and inviting them to Church services—felt awkward and was hard to do.

His advice to the missionaries was, “Even when it gets hard, even when you’re feeling down, even when it’s hard to make those decisions to keep going, please just pray, get on your knees and pray and just do it anyway. Those small and simple things bring about the work of the Lord.”



IMAGE COURTESY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS LIBRARY.

David Archuleta—an American Idol finalist, recording artist and former missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—speaking in August 2015 to missionaries in Auckland.



Elder O. Vincent Haleck and Elder S. Gifford Nielsen, members of the Pacific Area Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, present David Archuleta and Dr Brad Wilcox with a copy of the Maori hymnal Nga Himene Hunga Tapu at a missionary devotional in August 2015.

“You’ve been asked to be obedient,” he said. “You have been called to serve. You’ve been asked to be loving, to have charity, to be humble—and sometimes it’s hard to do that.”

Mr Archuleta was accompanied by Dr Brad Wilcox, an author and professor of education at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, USA. Dr Wilcox brought to life, through audience participation and his gift of using humour while teaching, a well-known story from the Bible.

During a two-week tour Dr Wilcox and Mr Archuleta, along with other

Latter-day Saint actors, singers and authors, spoke and performed for members and guests of the Church in several cities in Australia and New Zealand. Their fellow presenters included Mrs Sandra Turley, Mrs Heidi Swinton and Mrs Elaine Dalton.

Closing remarks at last week’s devotional were given by Elder S. Gifford Nielsen, a member of the Pacific Area Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Elder Nielsen counselled the

missionaries to acknowledge their own talents.

“Don’t ever think you don’t have talent,” he said. “You do, and the Lord has asked you not to bury it. His invitation is to build on what He gives you. Today you have seen talent in action.”

Elder Nielsen was accompanied by his wife, Sister Wendy Nielsen. Also attending the devotional were Elder O. Vincent Haleck, also of the Pacific Area Presidency, and his wife, Sister Peggy Haleck. ■

Celebrating a Rich Heritage

By Lovey Geiger

A group of 32 Relief Society sisters and one brother from the Nelson Branch gathered together for a combined birthday celebration to recognise the four eldest, much loved and respected sisters of the branch.

The celebration, which was held at the chapel on Nayland Road, gave the Relief Society sisters an opportunity to take some time out to learn about and appreciate those who were instrumental in building up the Nelson Branch in the past.

The young adults decorated the room and tables and organised the gifts for the occasion.

Hazel Ruruku, who turned 90 in February, is the wife of the late Pene Ruruku, who was the longest-serving branch president of the Nelson Branch. They are the proud parents of 2 children.

In 1964, Hazel and her husband took their children and served for two and a half years as labour missionaries



From left to right: Hazel Ruruku, Dorothy Groome, Frances Vercoe, and Shirley MacDonald are honoured by fellow members of the Nelson Branch for the rich heritage they have brought to the Church in that area.

in the Maori Village at BYU–Hawaii.

Later they spent two years as dorm parents in the Wealtha and Wisser dorms at Church College of New Zealand.

Hazel has a strong testimony of prayer and knows Heavenly Father will answer us when we need His help.

Recently she looked out of the window and decided one of her rose bushes needed to be removed.

Determined to do it herself, she went outside to take care of its removal. Unfortunately she lost her balance when the spade slipped, and she fell, striking her shoulder on a pipe. Unable to get up by herself, she said a prayer asking for help. Around that same time her son was asked to pass a message on to her. He arrived quickly at her home and was able to



Members of the Nelson Branch celebrate the birthdays of the four oldest sisters in the branch.

help her and take her to the hospital, where she was told she had two fractures in her shoulder. Her prayer was answered, just as she knew it would be.

Dorothy Groome turned 90 in May. After losing her husband at an early age, Dorothy was left to bring up their six children by herself. She joined the Church after his passing and has remained strong in the Church ever since. She was a faithful and dependable member of the branch as she served in her various callings. Although she didn't have a car, she would walk—rain, hail, or shine—to fulfil her assignments. Her sewing skills were greatly appreciated by the local kapahaka group, and she became very well known in the branch for her apple shortcake and banana chocolate-chip muffins.

Frances Vercoe turned 90 in October. Francie and her husband were members of the Salvation Army when they first heard about the gospel in the early 1960s. They had six children, and Francie can remember many times pushing the pram from town over the hills to Stoke to get to the chapel. Although not well off herself, Francie is remembered as being very generous to those in need. She remains active today, helping to look after some of her grandchildren who live with her. She continues to try and attend the temple every year and remains a faithful visiting teacher.

Shirley MacDonald turned 88 in September. Shirley has fond memories as a child of the missionaries stopping off to visit her family whenever they biked between Nelson and Blenheim. Although her father and husband were members of the Church, Shirley didn't get baptised until 1987, and it was some years before her husband became active again.

She was overjoyed when they were sealed together in the temple. This has been a great comfort to her since he passed away some years ago. Shirley and her husband Joe are the parents of seven children.

The faith, testimonies, and experience these sisters have shared over the years has created a strong foundation for the Nelson Branch to build upon. ■

Henderson Stake Youth Presented with Duty to God Awards

Duty to God is a program for young men 12–18 years old which helps them to:

- Strengthen their testimony and relationship with God.
- Learn and fulfil their priesthood duties.
- Apply standards from *For the Strength of Youth*.

Henderson Stake has a rich line of Duty to God graduates dating back

to 2005. Following in that tradition are Isaiah Tekare (Massey Ward), Unaloto Suli (Massey Ward), Victor Patterson (Henderson Valley Ward), Joshua Matthews (West Harbour Ward), Felix Patterson (Henderson Valley Ward), Paul Falifatu (Henderson Valley Ward), and Lagi I'u (Swanson Ward), who received their Duty to God awards recently. ■



Henderson Stake president Mark Brunton, Isaiah Tekare, Unaloto Suli, Victor Patterson, Joshua Matthews, Felix Patterson, Paul Falifatu, and Lagi I'u, and first counsellor Mila Masiasomua.

Obedience and Spiritual Self-Reliance Are Essential Elements for Happiness

Joseph Smith taught, “Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God.”¹

“When we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.”²

Thus, to be happy we need to learn and obey laws or commandments to receive the associated blessings.

“But we cannot keep all the commandments without first knowing them, and we cannot expect to know all, or more than we now know unless we comply with or keep those we have already received.”³ Not all laws will be taught

from the pulpit, but obedience to the basic laws of the gospel allows us to learn additional laws which help us achieve happiness.

Joseph Smith added, “That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be, and often is, right under another.”⁴ It is right to attend sacrament meeting. But if we have a contagious illness, the law of common decency and respect for others would require that we

miss sacrament meeting until we are well. Church leaders simply cannot make all these decisions for us. We must learn to “act” for ourselves and not be “acted upon” by the consequences of disobeying important laws or principles.⁵

Elder Holland taught: “General Authorities . . . are called to teach [God’s] general rules. You and we then lead specific lives and must seek the Lord’s guidance regarding specific circumstances.”⁶ This principle is supported by much secular research associating the capacity to adapt to life circumstances with better health.⁷

We each have the responsibility to learn how to adapt to the many different life circumstances with which we are confronted. Learning to do this with the help of the Holy Spirit is the essence of spiritual self-reliance. ■

NOTES

1. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 5:134–35.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 130:21.
3. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 5:135.
4. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 5:135.
5. See 2 Nephi 2:13.
6. Jeffrey R. Holland, “General Patterns and Specific Lives,” *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Feb. 9, 2008, 3.
7. See Todd B. Kashdan and Jonathan Rottenberg, “Psychological Flexibility as a Fundamental Aspect of Health,” *Clinical Psychology Review*, vol. 30, no. 7 (Nov. 2010), 865–78.

