

# NEW ZEALAND LOCAL PAGES

## AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

### Easter Awakening

By Elder S. Gifford Nielsen

Second Counselor, Pacific Area Presidency

**E**aster is a time of awakening. That first Easter morning, Jesus Christ became “the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Corinthians 15:20). His infinite Atonement changed everything!

My dear friends, has it changed you and me? Are we awake and alive in Christ? Have we received His image in our countenances? Have we experienced a mighty change in our hearts? Do we truly exercise faith in the Saviour’s atoning sacrifice and look forward with confidence to our own judgment day? How can we know that we are wide awake to such important considerations? May I offer two possibilities? If we were fully awake to Jesus Christ and His Atonement, we would

love to learn all we could about Him and His mission. We also would seek to serve Him and all of God’s children every day.

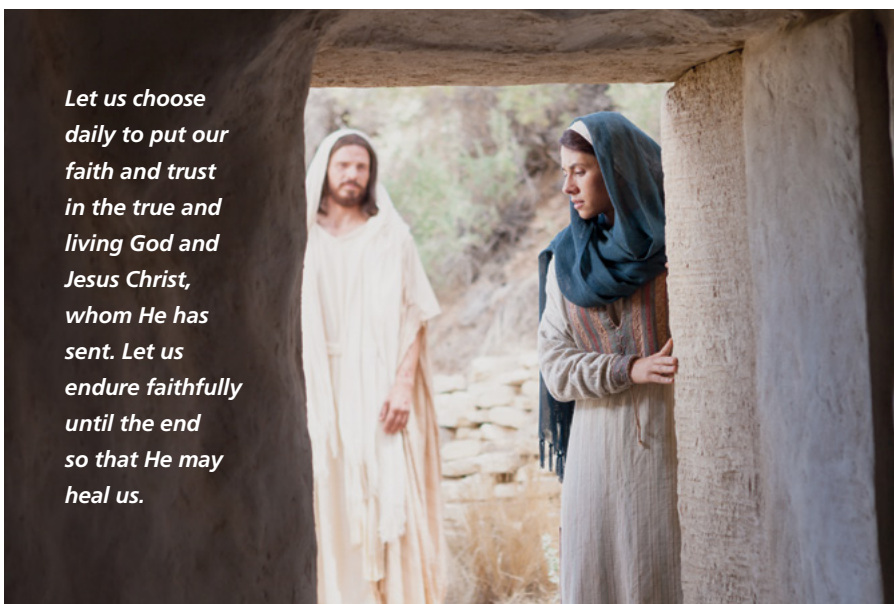
The Atonement of Jesus Christ offers both redemptive and enabling power. It includes Christ’s perfect life of service and obedience; His suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane to take upon Himself every single sin, shortcoming, and stress of each of our lives; His Crucifixion, including mockery, abandonment, and excruciating pain; and His glorious Resurrection, that consisted of emptying a tomb and filling a world with hope. As we open our eyes to all that our Saviour’s Atonement

provides, our desire to learn of Him will increase. Do we hunger and thirst after this knowledge, feasting upon the scriptures and all the words of modern prophets? Are our prayers meaningful as we humbly connect with our beloved Father in Heaven through His perfect Son? Do we thoughtfully prepare ourselves to partake of the sacrament each Sunday, pondering His transcendent gifts to us and renewing all of our covenants to love and serve Him?

As we come to know the Lord even more deeply through constant and joyful study of His life, His works and His mission, we will desire to serve Him and His children with all our heart, might, mind and strength. We will receive inspiration and ability to help those who need our love, our faith and our testimony of truth. We will seek out our kindred dead through family history work and regular temple attendance. The Sabbath will become even more delightful as we magnify our callings in the Church to lift, teach, and edify one another. As agents who act and are not acted upon, we are free to choose what we do, how we speak and even how we feel. Let us choose daily to put our faith and trust in the true and living God and Jesus Christ, whom He has



Elder S. Gifford  
Nielsen



*Let us choose daily to put our faith and trust in the true and living God and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. Let us endure faithfully until the end so that He may heal us.*

sent. Let us endure faithfully until the end so that He may heal us. I pray that we become fully awake to the things of crucial importance and that we never let influences of the world lull us into spiritual slumber.

May the words of this hymn inspire each of us to arouse our faculties and remember our Saviour more each day:

*The shade and gloom of life are fled  
This Resurrection-day;*

*Henceforth in Christ are no more  
dead,*

*The grave hath no more prey;*

*In Christ we live, in Christ we sleep,*

*In Christ we wake and rise;*

*And the sad tears death makes  
us weep,*

*He wipes from all our eyes. . . .*

*Then wake, glad heart! awake!  
awake!*

*And seek thy risen Lord,*

*Joy in His resurrection take,*

*And comfort in His word;*

*And let thy life, through all its ways,*

*One long thanksgiving be,*

*Its theme of joy, its song of praise,*

*“Christ died, and rose for me.”<sup>1</sup>*

May this beautiful Easter season awaken and enliven each of us as we celebrate the supernal gift given so lovingly by our Saviour, Jesus Christ. ■

## NOTE

1. John S. B. Monsell, “Awake, Glad Soul! Awake! Awake!” in *Christ in Song: Hymns of Immanuel*, sel. Philip Schaff (1870), 231.

## Blessings of YSA Temple Sessions

By Catherine Vaughan

Following the recent scheduling of a monthly young single adult temple session with YSA assigned temple workers, the Hamilton New Zealand Temple president, Sidney M. Going, is enthusiastically supporting this initiative and the positive blessings it provides.

“We have a wonderful group of returned missionaries and YSA who come and help us with the work in the temple. They bring a special spirit and vibrancy to the temple,” he said.

The young single adults were first assigned to organise a YSA session in the temple in September 2015.

President Going added, “One needed to be here to feel the strength of their testimonies as they came together for the first time as a group of YSA, to work as ordinance workers for the afternoon session. At the conclusion of the session it was like they just wanted to linger and enjoy the spirit of the temple and each other,” he continued. “We look forward to having them come the first Saturday of each month.”

Beginning in 2016, the YSA have been assigned the 8:30 am session on the first Saturday of every month.

Kasia Cook, from the Auckland YSA 2nd Ward, Harbour Stake, shared her feelings after participating in the YSA temple session:

“When I go to the temple and participate in the sacred ordinances there, I sense my eternal purpose and identity. I know that I am valued and loved by my Father in Heaven and that I am equal with all others, regardless of my marital status and where I’m at in life.

“Being with other young single adults in the temple is an incredible experience. I remember that at the beginning of the first YSA temple session in September, when the YSA workers came in, one of the temple missionaries turned to me and asked, ‘Can you feel that?’ It felt like the spiritual temperature of the temple got turned up a few notches—there seemed to be an increased energy, faith, and spirit in the work during that session which just made it even more exciting to participate in. It is also really amazing to be able to be in the temple with friends that I get to see at church and activities. It binds us together in a more meaningful way.”

Kasia added, “As a young single adult living far from family, the temple is my second home. I go there to be with my family—the other temple workers, my Heavenly Father, and those on the other side of the veil.”

Fusi Puleiku, also from the Auckland YSA 2nd Ward, Harbour Stake, shared

IMAGE COURTESY OF R. KALEI DECAIRES



*Members of the Auckland YSA  
2nd Ward outside the temple  
in Hamilton*

her thoughts and feelings: “What a sacred privilege to attend the house of the Lord, but how much more remarkable that experience is when all your friends are there with you! Almost all of my closest friends, and now my only sibling, are temple Saints. I am grateful for the YSA sessions—now we have a dedicated session for us all to participate in! As a young single adult temple ordinance worker, seeing them and working together with them inside the temple has been such a sublime and heartwarming experience. I am reminded of what

Lucy Mack Smith said, that ‘we must cherish one another, watch over one another, comfort one another and gain instruction that we may all sit down in heaven together.’ My friends and I need not wait for heaven; we can frequent the link to heaven readily available to us now—the holy temple of our God! What a blessing!”

Another YSA member from the Auckland YSA 2nd Ward, Vanessa Kiwa, said, “Since being set apart as an ordinance worker in November 2014 I have made more of an effort to attend the temple, heading down

on Tuesdays for training days and other days of the week as often as I could. As a result, I have received so much more peace and direction for my life. As a typical YSA, I have been confronted with decisions regarding education, a career path, work, dating relationships and other personal decisions, which have felt like far too much for me to answer on my own. The temple has been the place where I’ve found guidance and peace of mind in making these decisions. With the announcement of the new YSA session, a couple of my friends and





*Front, left to right: Simone Lee (Auckland YSA 1st Ward) and Evalon Viliami (Auckland YSA 2nd Ward). Back, left to right: Fusi Puleiku and Vanessa Kiwa, both from the Auckland YSA 2nd Ward.*

I were really excited to travel down from Auckland to attend. The week leading up to the session, we messaged one another of our excitement to attend, and we soon started to call it our ‘princess day out’. Knowing that one day we can make further covenants with God through marriage and becoming queens, we call the temple ‘Father’s house’ but also our ‘castle’. My joy has felt more full knowing I have so many other wonderful YSA who share a great love for the temple just as I do. But there is still room for more YSA. The first session was historic! And it was lovely to see so many

familiar faces. But again, there is still room for more. So come, YSA, come. I love the temple and have begun to really notice an emptiness within me if I haven’t attended in a while.”

Reflecting on the impact the YSA temple sessions have had on his stake, President Sione Pulu, the Otara Stake president, said, “As soon as I received the suggestion from our Area Seventy, Elder Coward, to recommend returned missionaries as temple ordinance workers, I knew this was a revelation to save our YSA. I immediately contacted the returned missionaries who had already come home, and gave one month notice to those others who were due to finish their missions, and submitted their recommendations as temple ordinance workers. When the YSA were set apart to serve in the temple, you could see the radiant smiles on their faces and their willing hearts and minds to serve their fellow brothers and sisters in the temple. When stake temple week assignment came, my testimony and faith grew to a higher level when I saw them take a week off from work to fulfil their assignments. When YSA sessions were introduced, it wasn’t hard to encourage our YSAs to attend; it was imprinted in their mind and heart to serve in the temple. Our YSA developed unity and strengthened their testimonies and faith. They continue to be active in the Church and in the gospel.” ■

## From Mormon Missions to Medical School

By Mormon Newsroom Staff

### AUCKLAND, New Zealand

Three young men, each a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, graduated from Auckland University’s medical school at the end of last year.

Ash Horsford, Zanazir Alexander, and Maihi Brown—all in their late twenties—intend to be positive role models to young people, just as they have been similarly influenced for good by many others.

The men are all from New Zealand’s Northland region.

“Not many Far North Maori aim to go to medical school,” Alexander says.

He adds that many Maori role models have helped him realise that medicine is possible. And now he wants to help other young people set and achieve their own educational and career goals.

Horsford also encourages young people to make good choices by having good friends.

“Make good friends, because they have a massive influence on decision making, for either good or bad,” he said.

Each of these future doctors served missions. Horsford served in Perth, and Brown served in the Philippines.

**Zanazir Alexander****Maihi Brown (front), with Ash Horsford (right) and Joshua Perrett (centre)**

According to Brown, “serving a mission is such a blessing! I have always had a very positive and hopeful outlook on life, but there were so many experiences I had while serving a mission that have given me added confidence and helped me to develop skills that I believe have helped me get to where I am today.”

Alexander served his mission, speaking Mandarin, in Taiwan. “I had a mission president who was a very successful businessman who stressed the importance of tertiary education on completion of my mission. Also, many of my companions aspired to higher education, which supported my desire for further education.”

When Brown was working as a personal banker, a doctor sparked his interest in medicine. The doctor said to Brown, “There is a need for more Maori doctors and health professionals. There are pathways and supports that are in place for Maori who are looking to head down the medical road.”

With this seed planted, Brown says, “the more I thought about it, and looked into it, the better it felt!”

The three men agree that parents have a big impact on how children and youth approach education and life generally.

“I would have to say my parents had the biggest influence on me,” Alexander says. “From a young age they encouraged me to do my best in everything I did, whether it was at school, in sports, or church.”

Other positive influences in these young men’s lives came from friends, schoolteachers, Church leaders, and a family doctor. All were supportive of their choices to pursue careers in medicine.

The three young men from Northland have a friend from Auckland, Joshua Perrett, who will graduate from medical school with them. Perrett is also a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and a former missionary.

There are several other New Zealand Latter-day Saints studying medicine. ■

# Young New Zealand Mormons Work and Save before Missionary Service

By Paula Fugal

Jesse Ngatai is one of many young people who work for several months to save money before beginning their missionary service. Some work in supermarkets, in offices, on farms, and in other jobs. Others, like Jesse, work on construction sites such as those currently in operation in Temple View, just outside Hamilton. He and others have been helping as the community undergoes significant changes.

Ken Williams, the young workers' supervisor and Temple View facility

manager, explains that the youth save money for their missions and learn new skills in the process.

"They learn to plan and save for something with a purpose in mind," he says.

He also believes that when the young people work for the money themselves, they become better missionaries.

Prior to leaving for his mission, Jesse Ngatai said, "If you didn't know how to work and you came here and you gave it your all, it would teach you

how to work. I don't know how it is for other people, but for us, the ability to do something builds character and shows you how to appreciate things."

Service has been an overriding lesson learned by the young people working at the Church sites. Because of the many things Rawiri Kahui learned to do while working on the Temple View project, he said, "Whenever there is a chance to do service and give charity, I can do it."

Returned missionary Adam MacTavish attended the dedication service for Temple View's Camp Tuhikaramea earlier this year. During the service he shared his thoughts about working at the recreational facility before his mission.

"I worked here with many others to fund our missions," he said. "It was always a great opportunity to work alongside Roger Hamon [his supervisor] as many others have done."

He further explained, "It was a spiritual experience to be able to work here. Prior to this dedication, my father and I walked around this campground, and as we were walking around the grounds I mentioned to him that there was a different feeling here now, as to the feeling that was here when I was working.

"I came to realize as we continued to walk around that this different feeling was a result of the many hours of service that have been given by people [here]." ■



IMAGE COURTESY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

*Latter-day Saint youth work to save money for their missions.*





## Strengthening Others through Sharing Your Stories

By Catherine Vaughan

We are continually inspired and uplifted by the stories of service our members perform in their communities and the challenges so many overcome in their everyday lives. It's great to be able to share those wonderful stories because someone has taken the time to write them and send them through to us.

We are collecting stories of inspiration and growth, learning and understanding, of moments that have changed your lives. These personal stories may be included in the *Ensign* or *Liahona* insert pages and may also be added to the country websites and social media pages, if suitable. There is no deadline for these stories, as they are not time sensitive and can be added to the magazines at any time, as space permits.

These stories can be recent or from past experiences. They can be short, everyday moments where you have gained an insight into the gospel or longer, life-changing experiences.

We are mindful that some experiences may not be appropriate or are too personal to share, but know that there are many testimony-strengthening experiences that

would be suitable and would uplift others to read of them.

Some ideas and suggestions may be:

- An unexpected answer to a prayer
- A scripture that helped you understand a gospel principle more clearly
- Challenges you may be facing
- Periods of growth in your calling or personal life
- Developing good habits with scripture study
- A successful family home evening
- Gaining a testimony of tithing or any other gospel principle
- Catching the family history vision
- Watching your children or family or friends overcome challenges and grow from the experience
- Overcoming bad habits
- Service you have received
- Visiting teaching or home teaching moments that have touched your heart
- Missionary work with colleagues or friends
- Stories about faith, sacrifice, or service

Stories do not need to be long, approx. **300–400 words**. They

must be written in **English**, and we will help with editing as required.

This will be an ongoing project, so if you feel inspired to share a story from your life or the lives of those around you, we would love to be able to share it with the other members in the Pacific Area. There may be others who are experiencing similar things and whose hearts will be touched and strengthened by the words you share.

We also welcome news of local events and activities that are happening in your area, as well as any testimony-strengthening stories you would like to add to the database. We look forward to reading them all.

You can contact us at the following email addresses:

**ensign-nz@ldschurch.org**

for New Zealand contributors

**ensign-australia@ldschurch.org**

for Australian and PNG contributors

**liahona-pacific@ldschurch.org** for

contributors from all Pacific Islands

If you know of any other people who might be interested in writing the occasional article for the magazine inserts or websites, please pass on this contact information to them. ■

## Mental Illness

During this era known as the dispensation of the fulness of times, the world has been blessed with additional light and knowledge that have propelled advances in almost every facet of life, including treatment for many illnesses and diseases. At the same time, the demands, pressures and consequences of modern life can generate their own impacts and risks to the mental health and well-being of individuals. Numerous studies consistently show that 45–50 percent of people will suffer a diagnosable mental illness at some point in their lifetime, and members of the Church are no less susceptible.<sup>1</sup>

As members who have been blessed with the light and knowledge of the gospel, it is important that we do not hold or perpetuate ignorant and damaging attitudes towards those experiencing mental illness. Such attitudes can restrict our ability to seek effective help for ourselves or limit our ability to give the love and support necessary to appropriately assist those who deal with these challenges, often through no fault of their own. In the October 2013 general conference, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland made the point that “these afflictions are some of the realities of mortal life, and there should be no more shame in acknowledging them than in acknowledging a battle with high blood

pressure or the sudden appearance of a malignant tumor.”<sup>2</sup>

While many and varying factors contribute to the development of mental illness, it is important to understand that as with any other vital organ in the body, the brain is also subject to vulnerabilities and risks of malfunction. A respected scientist trained in pharmacology and nutrition, Elder Alexander B. Morrison, an emeritus member of the Seventy, taught: “We still do not know exactly how the brain works nor exactly how and why parts of it may malfunction. One thing is certain, however: no individual, family, or group is immune from the effects of mental illness. Furthermore, we are learning that many mental illnesses result from chemical disorders in the brain, just as diabetes results from a chemical disorder in the pancreas.”<sup>3</sup>

For those with a mental illness or who support a loved one with a mental illness, Elder Morrison urged that time and energy “be used to increase understanding of what actually is happening—to get a complete assessment and proper diagnosis of the illness involved, to understand the causes, to get proper medication and learn behavioral and cognitive techniques that are part of the healing process”<sup>4</sup>. Similarly, Elder Holland offered advice, saying: “If things continue to be debilitating, seek the advice of reputable people

with certified training, professional skills, and good values. Be honest with them about your history and your struggles. Prayerfully and responsibly consider the counsel they give and the solutions they prescribe. If you had appendicitis, God would expect you to seek a priesthood blessing *and* get the best medical care available. So too with emotional disorders. Our Father in Heaven expects us to use *all* of the marvelous gifts He has provided in this glorious dispensation.”<sup>5</sup>

Ultimately, the greatest of all gifts is the Atonement of Jesus Christ. It is in and through the Atonement that one day “loved ones whom we knew to have disabilities in mortality will stand before us glorified and grand, breathtakingly perfect in body and mind. . . . Until that hour when Christ’s consummate gift is evident to us all, may we live by faith, hold fast to hope, and show ‘compassion one of another’ [1 Peter 3:8].”<sup>6</sup> ■

### NOTES

1. See various reports from the World Health Organisation and the US National Institute of Mental Health, as well as the 2009 Australian Government Department of Health study “The Mental Health of Australians 2: Prevalence of Mental Disorders in the Australian Population”.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Like a Broken Vessel,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 40.
3. Alexander B. Morrison, “Myths about Mental Illness,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2005, 32.
4. Alexander B. Morrison, “Myths about Mental Illness,” 33.
5. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Like a Broken Vessel,” 41.
6. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Like a Broken Vessel,” 42.