

# NEW ZEALAND LOCAL PAGES

## AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

### Make the Sabbath a Delight All Day

By Elder Johnny L. Leota

Area Seventy



Elder Johnny L. Leota

On the 1<sup>st</sup> February 1980, when the consolidated Sunday meeting schedule was announced, the First Presidency issued a message that included the following:

“A greater responsibility will be placed upon the individual members and families for properly observing the Sabbath day. More time will be available for personal study of the scriptures and family-centered gospel study.

“Other appropriate Sabbath activities, such as strengthening family ties, visiting the sick and homebound, giving service to others, writing personal and family histories, genealogical work, and missionary work, should be carefully planned and carried out.

“It is expected that this new schedule of meetings and activities will result in greater spiritual growth for members of the Church” (in Hal Knight, “Meeting Schedule Approved,” *Church News*, Feb. 2, 1980, 3).

In the October 1991 general conference, Elder James E. Faust said the following regarding the First Presidency’s 1980 announcement: “It is hoped that priesthood leaders and members of the Church will honor the spirit of more family togetherness on Sunday” (“The Lord’s Day,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 34).

In the April 2015 general conference, Elder Russell M. Nelson suggested some Sabbath day activities to strengthen family relationships:

“The Sabbath provides a wonderful opportunity to strengthen family ties. . . .

“We make the Sabbath a delight when we teach the gospel to our children. . . .

“As you teach the gospel, you will learn more . . .

“Such study of the gospel makes the Sabbath a delight. . . .

“In addition to time with family, you can experience true delight on the Sabbath from family history work. Searching for and finding family members who have preceded you on earth—those who did not have an

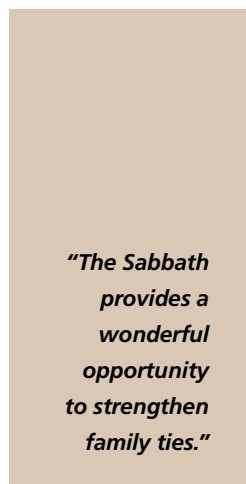
opportunity to accept the gospel while here—can bring immense joy. . . .

“. . . Routine and recreational activities can be done some other time” (“The Sabbath Is a Delight,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 130, 131, 132).

One of the Pacific Area goals for 2016 is to “make the Sabbath a delight all day”. In the First Presidency’s announcement on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 1980, they charged the Saints that Sabbath day activities “should be carefully planned and carried out.”

I invite you to “carefully plan” and counsel together with your family about appropriate Sabbath day activities for you and your family.

A few simple things our family decided to do on the Sabbath was to not watch television programmes,





***“God gave us this special day, not for amusement or daily labour but for rest from duty, with physical and spiritual relief.”***

including sports, or listen to worldly music. We simply replaced these with Church video programmes and Church music. One very helpful resource we found was the LDS Media Library on LDS.org. The effect of our decision has made an amazing difference in our family.

Now in our home the *feeling* of the Sabbath is so different from other days of the week. I feel more persuaded to worship our Heavenly Father more fully. I feel a stronger desire to attend sacrament meeting to partake of the sacred emblems, to renew all of my covenants. I feel a profound peace in my life and a deepening love and reverence for our Heavenly Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost. I feel nearer to Them. I honour Them more. I want to serve Them more diligently; I want to be like Them. My relationship with my wife, children, and family members is strengthened when I keep the Sabbath day holy.

Some Sunday mornings my family wakes up to the sound of music coming from the piano. Our daughter sometimes feels inspired to play a few hymns and other music from seminary and institute before we go to church. Our home is filled with a spirit of love, reverence, forgiveness, joy and peace.

The inspiring and soothing music sets the tone for the home and family and allows the Spirit of the Lord to abide.

After our Church services, our family enjoys Sunday dinner together and then gathers together in the living room to unwind, relax, and enjoy one another's company. This time together has become a wonderful tradition in our family. We reflect upon the lessons taught in our Sunday classes. We share our thoughts and insights about gospel topics taught and testified of in sacrament meeting. Sometimes we talk about challenges and successes of the week, and often find ourselves drawn to the scriptures and other writings of the prophets, which have enlightened and deepened our understanding of the gospel. At the same time one may be quietly watching a Church video, another reading scriptures, or writing in a journal, or drawing a picture on the floor. Our family tradition has strengthened our faith and trust in our Heavenly Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost. My relationship with my wife, children, and family members has deepened and has drawn us closer together as a family.

On Sundays when I was a young Aaronic Priesthood holder, my father and I visited a homebound elderly

brother who lived down a steep hill. He lived with his faithful and loyal wife, who lovingly cared for him. The routine was always the same. My father would set up the sacrament on a small table next to the brother's bed, fill a few sacrament cups with water, lay the bread on a clean plate from the kitchen, and then gently cover the emblems with a white sheet. My father then humbly knelt next to the table and quietly and reverently blessed the emblems, then passed the plate with the broken bread to me to serve to the elderly couple, then the sacrament cups filled with the blessed and sanctified water. Words cannot express the spiritual and tender feelings I felt each time my dad and I visited to perform our duty. The couple were always so appreciative and grateful for our visit. I am forever grateful for the example of my dad, the holy priesthood, and especially the love of our Heavenly Father for all His children.

Elder Russell M. Nelson said: “What did the Savior mean when He said that ‘the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath’? I believe He wanted us to understand that the Sabbath was His gift to us, granting real respite from the rigors of daily life and an opportunity for spiritual and physical renewal. God gave us this special day, not for amusement or daily labor but for a rest from duty, with physical and spiritual relief” (“The Sabbath Is a Delight,” 129). ■

## LOCAL PAGES

## New Zealand Youth Attend FSY Conference

### AUCKLAND, New Zealand—

Over 1,100 New Zealand teenagers from across the country attended the For the Strength of Youth (FSY) conference in January in Auckland.

Elder S. Gifford Nielsen of the Pacific Area Presidency and his wife, Sister Wendy Nielsen, were guest speakers at

a devotional meeting—one of the final activities of the weeklong event.

Elder Nielsen spoke about Latter-day Saint teachings regarding God and His plan for each of His children. He emphasised that the plan of salvation is a plan of love and hope, personalised for each individual.

Azekah Ngakuru, 14, from Welcome Bay Ward, Tauranga Stake, who attended the conference for the first time, said, “When I went to FSY I heard that we would make lifelong friends, but at the time I didn’t really think much of it. As we got put into our companies, I started meeting new

*Elder S. Gifford Nielsen talking to the youth during the conference*



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*Elder S. Gifford Nielsen with some of the youth from the 2016 FSJ conference, in Auckland*

people and it was quite awkward to begin with, but as we started talking, planning, studying the scriptures, and hanging out together our friendships got stronger and stronger. One night during testimony meeting the Spirit was so strong. We could all feel it, and I know it is moments like those that help build my testimony of the gospel to be so much stronger. As the

camp came to an end we were sad to leave each other, but also happy to see our families again. At FSJ I learnt that through our love for the gospel we can make strong eternal friendships in a really short time.

Braxton Goldsmith, 14, also from Welcome Bay Ward, Tauranga Stake added, “The reason I went to FSJ was because all my friends and

family told me about it and how awesome it is. I got to FSJ thinking it was just going to be like church every day, but by the end of FSJ I realised how fun and spiritual and emotional it really is. The one thing that I will never forget happened at around 9pm on the fourth night. My whole company walked into our classroom and sat down, and we

were all offered lollies. Some people took them, and some people didn't. One of my counsellors then asked us who ate the lollies. Most of us put our hands up. She then said that for every lolly eaten, my friend Shaquille had to do five push-ups. It all added up to 310 push-ups. By the end of it all, everyone was crying because he was really struggling. This lesson taught us about how Jesus Christ suffered for our sins and how painful it was. I believe that Jesus really did suffer for our sins and that through His Atonement we don't have to suffer as He did."

Taylor Moore, 14, from Paraparaumu, enjoyed spending the free time with her friends and felt her FSY company was like a family you could turn to, if necessary.

Ngakeisha Rangi, 15, also from Paraparaumu, said, "It was the most beautiful and positive feeling I have ever felt. 'Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection' (D&C 130:18). What I learnt in FSY is to be more humble and patient, not only with myself but with others around me."

Youth conferences such as this one include cultural and sporting activities, as well as opportunities to develop talents in a wide range of areas. They also give youth the chance to make new friends and strengthen their faith in God and His Son, Jesus Christ. ■



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**Youth from New Zealand participated in the Face to Face session that was broadcast worldwide.**

## Face to Face with Elder Rasband

By Catherine Vaughan

Youth from three Auckland stakes were involved in a recent broadcast from Salt Lake City, Utah, when they participated in the "Face to Face" broadcast with Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; Sister Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women general president; and Brother Stephen W. Owen, Young Men general president.

All youth worldwide were invited to watch the broadcast. But 15 young men and young women from both New Zealand and Argentina were invited to participate in the discussion by video conference. The broadcast introduced the Mutual theme for 2016, "press forward with a steadfastness in Christ" (2 Nephi 31:20), and enabled the youth to see they are part of a large global group which can give them strength.

The New Zealand youth from Aeroview Ward in Harbour Stake, Swanson Ward in Henderson Stake, and Mountford Ward in Manurewa Stake were given the opportunity to ask questions and receive counsel in the live, interactive session.

"I am a longtime fan of the 'Face to Face' events," Elder Rasband said. "I love how they let youth around the world connect with each other and with

Church leaders. . . . I love the youth of the Church, and any opportunity to interact with them is precious to me."

During the broadcast Elder Rasband, Sister Oscarson, and Brother Owen answered questions that had been sent in from youth around the world, as well as questions from their studio audience and from the youth participating from New Zealand and Argentina. Elder Rasband commented that the questions were courageous and bold, and the leaders were excited to answer them. Following the broadcast, they continued to answer questions online, attempting to respond to as many as possible.

Carl Murray, 14, from Sunset Ward, Harbour Stake, reflected on the broadcast, saying, "Issues for our generation were discussed, like preparing to be a full-time missionary and how social media can be used to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. We also learned ways we can fit in—be part of the world—yet still keep our religious and moral standards. It was a great experience being face-to-face with and instructed by an Apostle, the Young Men general president, and Young Women general president". ■



# Latter-day Saint Apostle Visits South Pacific

## **AUCKLAND, New Zealand—**

Elder D. Todd Christofferson, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and his wife, Sister Katherine Christofferson, visited the South Pacific in January.

They visited American Samoa, Samoa, and the Solomon Islands, and were also scheduled to visit Vanuatu but were unable to fly in, due to safety concerns about the runway at Port Vila's international airport.

Elder Kevin W. Pearson, Elder O. Vincent Haleck and Elder S. Gifford Nielsen of the Pacific Area Presidency

hosted Elder and Sister Christofferson and travelled with them.

While in the South Pacific, the visiting leaders met with government leaders, members, missionaries and guests of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as well as media representatives.

In Samoa, Elder Christofferson—who fielded questions alongside local Latter-day Saint leader Elder Meliula Fata—spoke about why The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is in Samoa.

“The primary effort is to strengthen the character of individuals as they become faithful followers of Jesus Christ, to have faith in Him,” he said.

“Their lives are full of integrity and industriousness, and they become wonderfully strong citizens and contributors to society—not only within the Church but the entire community.”

He continued: “We have a constant emphasis on strong families, on fathers being loyal in their homes, being diligent in teaching their children; mothers nurturing their children and teaching them as well. We feel that family is the most important unit of society, that any nation depends upon the strength of the family, and we even see family as the order of heaven as we pass to the other side.”

Elder Christofferson said the Church has “many humanitarian projects that are conducted here and across the world.

“We also want to unite with other churches, people of other faiths, to benefit the community together—things we can collaborate [on] and do with one another. We want to not only do what we can within our church to help but to unite with others and do the same.”

The following week, during a meeting in New Zealand, Elder Christofferson urged members of the Church in Hamilton to live the gospel of Jesus Christ and serve their families, neighbours, and communities as Christ would do.

*Elder Christofferson speaking in Hamilton, New Zealand*



*Elder Meliula Fata and Elder D. Todd Christofferson in Samoa*



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***Elder D. Todd Christofferson meeting with the Solomon Islands Prime Minister, The Hon. Manasseh Sogavare.***

***Meeting with 500 missionaries from the New Zealand Auckland Mission, and New Zealand Hamilton Mission, at the Redoubt Rd chapel***



## SHARE YOUR STORIES

Your local pages section is produced by members in your own area under the guidance of the Area Presidency so that it can address the needs and experiences of members where you live. The inclusion of the local pages in each issue depends on the availability of local content. We invite you to contribute your faith-promoting thoughts and experiences by contacting your local editor at: [ensign-nz@ldschurch.org](mailto:ensign-nz@ldschurch.org) ■



Quoting from the Doctrine and Covenants, Elder Christofferson said, “Verily I say unto you all: Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations” (D&C 115:5).

Elder Christofferson also quoted words spoken by Jesus Christ in the Book of Mormon: “Therefore, hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do” (3 Nephi 18:24).

“The reason we have the Church,” Elder Christofferson said, “is to strengthen one another’s faith and to lift and sustain one another.”

Elder Christofferson told those in attendance that none of us can fully overcome the challenges of life “without the blessings associated with our covenants, the Holy Spirit, and the grace of Jesus Christ.”

Other leaders who attended meetings in New Zealand included Elder Kevin W. Pearson and his wife, June Pearson; Elder Paul R. Coward and his wife, Julie Coward; the president of the Hamilton New Zealand Temple, Sid Going, and his wife, Colleen Going; and the president of the New Zealand Hamilton Mission, Charles A. Rudd, and his wife, Annette Rudd.

Earlier the Apostle had met with 500 missionaries from the New Zealand Auckland Mission and the New Zealand Hamilton Mission. He shook hands with and greeted all in attendance.

In his remarks, Elder Christofferson spoke words of deep gratitude to those who have “voluntarily sacrificed their time to serve the Lord at this time in their lives.” He also responded to questions from missionaries. ■

## TIP OF THE MONTH

# Don't Worry, Be Happy

A common experience that most human beings have is the tendency to worry. We seem to worry about nearly everything. Indeed the Savior seems to have had this in mind when he described Martha as being “careful and troubled about many things”<sup>1</sup>. Oxford online dictionaries define *worry* as to “feel or cause to feel anxious or troubled about actual or potential problems” and “to keep thinking about unpleasant things that might happen or about problems that you have.”<sup>2</sup>

Continual worrying can actually develop into a habit of looking at things negatively. While it's an almost natural thing for us to worry, it doesn't serve any useful purpose. Prolonged worry has been associated with poor sleep, poor health, anxiety and even panic.

Here are a few ideas that may help us overcome the propensity to worry.

Firstly, we can be aware of our thought patterns and remember that worrying is optional.

Secondly, because worry rarely leads to effective action, looking at what we can do will usually lead to a positive outcome.

Thirdly, we can develop a habit of looking at life's challenges positively.

Finally, we can apply the excellent counsel President Gordon B. Hinckley

*Put your trust in God, and move forward with faith and confidence in the future.*



(1910–2008) provided when we find ourselves caught up in worry: “It isn't as bad as you sometimes think it is. It all works out. Don't worry. I say that to myself every morning. It will all work out. If you do your best, it will all work out. Put your trust in God, and move forward with faith and confidence in the future.”<sup>3</sup>

Our lives will be a lot happier as we learn to overcome the natural human tendency to worry excessively. ■

### NOTES

1. Luke 10:41.
2. Oxford Dictionaries, “worry,” [oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/worry](https://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/worry); [oxforddictionaries.com/definition/learner/worry](https://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/learner/worry).
3. “Excerpts from Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2000, 73.

*We can develop a habit of looking at life's challenges positively.*