

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Paying a Full Tithe and a Generous Fast Offering

By Elder Benjamin Sinjoux

Area Seventy

I remember that in my childhood, my grandparents were a living example of being honest with the Lord. Their first worry was to set aside their tithes after they sold flower leis for the day. I do not recall the amount of their earnings, but what really counts is that they gave to the Lord the one-tenth He had commanded. All faithful members follow the sacred invitation of the Lord,

when He said to the Nephites, “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house; and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”¹

President Heber G. Grant said: “I appeal to the Latter-day Saints to be

honest with the Lord and I promise them that peace, prosperity, and financial success will attend those who are honest with our Heavenly Father. . . . When we set our hearts upon the things of this world and fail to be strictly honest with the Lord, we do not grow in the light and power and strength of the gospel as we otherwise would do.”²

My wife and I made the decision forty years ago, at the beginning of our marriage, we would obey the law of tithing, no matter how hard the circumstances of life would be. We promised we would always pay an honest full tithe. The Lord has been so generous to us. He has indeed opened the windows of heaven and poured out countless blessings to us. The Lord is not looking at the amount of our tithes, but surely He wants to see if we will be faithful unto Him. Paying an honest full tithe is a major constant test of our life.

The Lord reaffirmed to the Prophet Joseph Smith on July 8th, 1838, in Doctrine and Covenants 119,

“And after that, those who have thus been tithed shall pay one-tenth of all their interest annually; and this shall be a standing law unto them forever, for my holy priesthood, saith the Lord. . . .



Elder Benjamin Sinjoux



“Bring ye all the tithes in the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”

“And I say unto you, if my people observe not this law, to keep it holy, and by this law sanctify the land of Zion unto me, that my statutes and my judgments may be kept thereon, that it may be most holy, behold, verily I say unto you, it shall not be a land of Zion unto you.”³

What a magnificent promise from our Lord Jesus Christ. I testify of its divinity.

Another major test of life is the way we take care of those who are needy of food and the necessities of life. The law of the fast and donating

generously for the poor and the needy is the Lord’s way to provide for them. I am reminded of when the Saviour felt compassion for those who followed Him for days to listen to His teachings, going without food all day. He multiplied fish and bread to feed them until full to express His love and compassion for them.⁴

Our Saviour Jesus Christ has commanded us to go to the house of prayer on the Lord’s day and to fast and pray, that we may “fully keep [ourselves] unspotted from the world”.

He further said:

“And on this day thou shalt do none other thing, only let thy food be prepared with singleness of heart that thy fasting may be perfect, or, in other words, that thy joy may be full. . . .

“Verily I say, that inasmuch as ye do this, the fulness of the earth is yours.”⁵

The prophet Joseph F. Smith declared: “The leading and principal object of the institution of the fast among the Latter-day Saints was that the poor might be provided with food and other necessities. It is, therefore, incumbent upon every Latter-day Saint to give to his bishop, on fast day, the food that he or his family would consume for the day, that it may be given to the poor for their benefit and blessing; or, in lieu of the food, that its equivalent amount, or, if the person is wealthy, a liberal donation, in money, be so reserved and dedicated to the poor.”⁶

This is the second and greatest commandment, to love our neighbour as ourselves.

I testify that paying an honest full tithe and a generous fast offering will draw the blessings of heaven upon us and our loved ones, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

- 3 Nephi 24:10.
- Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Heber J. Grant* (2002), 126.
- Doctrine and Covenants 119:4, 6.
- See Matthew 15:32–39.
- Doctrine and Covenants 59:9, 13, 16.
- Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. (1939), 243.



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LOCAL PAGES

Mormon Youth Serve Together at Canberra Annual Convention

A youth convention recently held in Canberra attracted over two hundred members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Attendees came from locations from around Australia and New Zealand to attend the five-day event held at the Australian Institute of Sports.

Area Church leader Elder Johnny Leota said of the event, “The theme was ‘Seek, Obtain, and Share’. The participants came with open minds and seeking hearts. The events and activities were well planned and exceeded our expectations.”

The participants were taught by local Church leaders and energized by their peers. They also performed random acts of kindness for unsuspecting individuals and families. These included washing cars, donating to the homeless, helping a stranger with his yard work, and recording grave information for the Australia Billion Graves Index Project.

“The simple and small things you do put a smile on a stranger’s face,” said Melissa Tombu.

The culminating event, a remembrance activity at the Australian War Memorial, gave participants the



200 members attended the convention in Canberra.



Young single adults helping Tom (a stranger) with his yard work



Julius Afele, Dallas Abel, and Monique Tuddenham laying a wreath at the Australian War Memorial

opportunity to pay respects to those who fought and died in defence of freedom. A soldier was honoured and remembered as the familiar sound of the bugle played the last post, signifying the end of the day.

Julius Afele expressed his appreciation in these words: “As I attended the last post, I felt a sense of unity with all of Heavenly Father’s family.”

Elder Leota summed up the conference by saying, “In honour of all who

had fallen in war, we were privileged to lay wreaths at the last post ceremony for those who had suffered and sacrificed their lives for us. Tears were shed; our hearts were profoundly touched for those whom we did not know. It was a sobering, solemn and poignant experience for all. The fruits of the convention have been a joy to witness.”

Many are still sharing their feelings and random acts of kindness on social media. ■

Gerehu Teenagers Learn Sewing and Cooking Skills

Teenagers from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints hold regular youth activities at their local church meetinghouse. One such activity was a combined event focusing on work and self-reliance, a standard from the *For the Strength of Youth* booklet provided to each young person. It contains nineteen standards for living.

A message from the First Presidency of the Church to the youth states: “Our dear young men and young women, we have great confidence in you. You are beloved sons and daughters of God and He is mindful of you. You have come to earth at a time of great opportunities and also of great challenges. The standards in this booklet will help you with the important choices you are making now and will yet make in the future” (*For the Strength of Youth* [2011], ii).

During the evening the young people were taught to sew simple skirts from patterns they downloaded from the Internet.

Then the young men and young women learned how to cook and made three different types of chicken recipes: curry chicken, chicken sandwich, and chicken adobo. They first watched carefully as the master chef



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Young women learning how to sew

The youth participate in the cooking competition at the activity.



prepared his ingredients and prepared his dishes.

Next youth were divided into two cooking groups to use their newly taught skills. They worked as a team to prepare their ingredients, cook the recipes, and present the dish to the judges. They were judged on the presentation, flavour, and general art of cooking as a team.

The activity was full of fun as the youth excitedly worked together in their teams to ensure ingredients were prepared well and that the cooking was done in the given time frame. The groups were also judged on cleanliness of their table and general cooking area.

All involved thoroughly enjoyed the evening as they learned life skills and enjoyed each other’s company. ■

Australian Woman Enters One Million Names into Global Genealogical Database

By Mormon Newsroom

Irene Deans, 92, is a one in a million. In fact, recently the devoted family history enthusiast completed the indexing of one million genealogical names for FamilySearch.org, enabling people around the world to more easily find information about their ancestors.

Irene is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She and millions of Latter-day Saints around the world enjoy tracing their family trees and helping others do the same.

FamilySearch indexing is an online system in which volunteers view a digital image of a record, then type in the names, dates and places listed on that record.

For years Irene has been rising at 5:30 am every morning to sit at her computer, translating old vital records for many hours each day. Irene is the top indexer in the Sunshine Coast region of Queensland, single-handedly recording 36,000 of the 43,000 names indexed in October 2015.

Church leader Brian Atkinson said, “Irene is the epitome of someone

who truly goes above and beyond in all she does. She is an example and inspiration to us all.”

The nonagenarian cannot remember how long she has been indexing but claims it is truly what gets her up in the morning and keeps her going. Irene attributes her fluidity of mind to her indexing and living the Church’s health code, which requires

abstaining from alcohol and addictive substances.

Irene’s hard work does not stop there. For over 40 years since becoming a Latter-day Saint, she has provided piano and organ accompaniment in worship services.

Fellow Latter-day Saint Kaylee Spicer says, “Irene is so positive and reliable.” ■

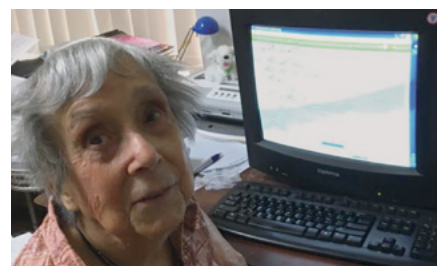


IMAGE COURTESY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS LIBRARY

Irene Deans has indexed over one million names.

Missionary Leads the Way in Australia

A missionary from Papua New Guinea is gaining valuable leadership experience while serving a mission in Australia for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Sister Fidelish Metta from Port Moresby and her companion, Sister Jaz Mikaele-Pali from Hawaii, serve as sister training leaders in the Australia Sydney North Mission.

Sister training leaders provide weekly training and leadership to several missionaries, providing guidance in areas such as teaching, time management, health,

finance and other life skills. They also participate in a mission leadership council every month with their male counterparts and mission president Max Checketts and his wife, Donna.

President Checketts enthusiastically described Sister Metta and Sister Pali as “absolutely powerful, and very effective.”

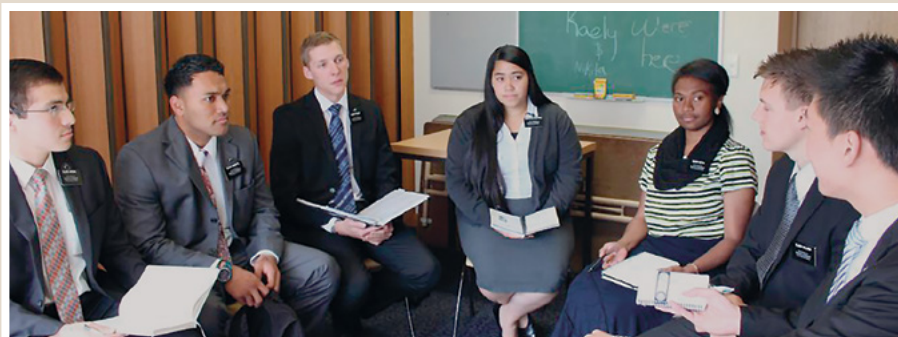
President Checketts also explained, “In the past, training [of sister missionaries] was the responsibility of the wife of the mission president, but these newly called

sisters have stepped up to the leadership role and are a great asset to the mission.”

Both sisters plan to attend universities after their missions—Sister Metta at Pacific Adventist University in Port Moresby, and Sister Pali at BYU-Hawaii, a Church-owned university on Oahu.

Sister Metta and Sister Pali are part of a worldwide force of about 75,000 Latter-day Saint missionaries who learn valuable leadership skills while serving for 18 months to two years. Approximately 40 percent of missionaries now are women, who can begin their missionary service at age 19. ■

The sisters participate in leadership meetings with other missionaries.



IMAGES COURTESY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS LIBRARY

Sister Pali and Sister Metta



Church Launches Papua New Guinea Mormon Newsroom Website

“News media, opinion leaders and members of the public now have a place to go online for information and stories about Papua New Guinean Mormons,” Dr. Fa McCarthy, spokesman for The Church of Jesus Christ

of Latter-day Saints, announced recently.

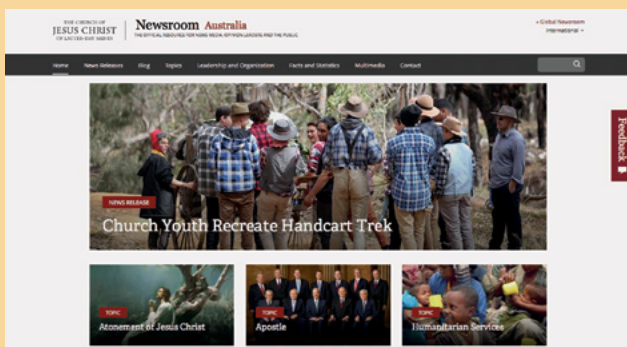
This site provides news releases, background material, commentary, Church statements, multimedia and other elements for use by the news media, bloggers and others.

There are currently 25,000 members of the Church worshipping in 73 congregations throughout Papua New Guinea. Membership has increased by nearly 30 percent over the last five years. ■

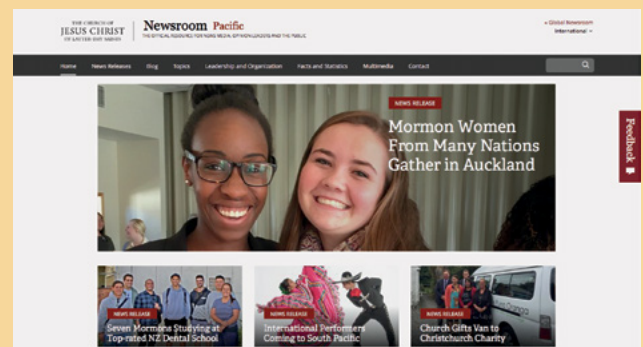
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Members of the Church in Papua New Guinea



www.mormonnewsroom.org.au



www.mormonnewsroom.org.nz

Hobart Latter-day Saints Launch “Toys for Timor” Drive

By Mormon Newsroom

Twelve pallets of toys, sporting goods, bicycles, musical instruments, clothing and other necessities were recently gathered by members of the Hobart ward and stake of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Tasmania and sent to orphanages in East Timor.

Working with Dr. Nitin Verma, an ophthalmologist in Hobart who has contributed his time and expertise to provide training for doctors and eye care for the people of East Timor, Liz Watson, who works as a nurse in Dr. Verma’s office, and her friend Hannah Challis contacted fellow members of the Church and invited them to participate in the toy drive.

Hobart stake members caught the vision and gathered toys, clothing, sporting equipment and musical instruments, which were sent to several orphanages run by the Catholic Church in East Timor. Money was also raised to purchase bicycles for the older children, who ride out to fields where they gather food for the orphanages.

As the grassroots project took on a life of its own, community members and other Catholic and Christian schools gave invaluable support to the charity.

When it came time to package the donations, members of the

IMAGE COURTESY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS LIBRARY



Members of the Hobart ward in Tasmania help pack the toys going to East Timor.

committee, the community and the Hobart stake worked together at the stake centre to prepare them for

shipment to Darwin. Local transport operators transported the pallets at their own expense. ■

New General Authorities Called



*Elder
Peter F.
Meurs*

Elder Peter F. Meurs was called as a General Authority Seventy at the April 2016 general conference.

Elder Meurs received a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Monash University in 1980. He worked as an engineer for Esso Australia, and participated in the development of oil and gas production fields. He was a founding partner of WorleyParsons Limited, an international engineering services and project management company. He recently led an iron ore expansion project for Fortescue Metals and served as an executive director on the board.

Elder Meurs has served in numerous callings, including branch president, counselor in a bishopric, bishop, high councilor, counselor in a district presidency, counselor in a stake presidency, stake president, counselor in a mission presidency, and Area Seventy.

Peter Fletcher Meurs was born in Warrnambool, Victoria, Australia,



*Elder
S. Mark
Palmer*

on December 21, 1956. He married Maxine Evelyn Thatcher in January 1979. They are the parents of four children.

Elder S. Mark Palmer was serving as a member of the Sixth Quorum of the Seventy in the North America Southwest Area when he was called to be a General Authority Seventy at the April 2016 general conference.

Elder Palmer received a bachelor of commerce degree in 1979 from the University of Auckland and a master of business administration in 1982 from Brigham Young University. He was the founder of SMP Ventures, a real estate development company, and has served as president since 1993.

Elder Palmer has served in a number of Church callings, including full-time missionary in the New Zealand Wellington Mission, elders quorum president, high councilor, high priests group leader, counselor in a bishopric, bishop, counselor in a stake presidency, stake president, mission president, and Area Seventy.

Stanley Mark Palmer was born in Te Puke, New Zealand, on February 11, 1956. He married Jacqueline Ann Wood in 1981. They are the parents of six children. ■

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-australia@ldschurch.org ■

