

NEW ZEALAND LOCAL PAGES

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.



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.”

Moroni's Quest

By Dahlia Lemafa

Earlier this year the youth of the Auckland New Zealand Tamaki Stake embarked on a special stake youth conference held at Camp Tuhikaramea in Hamilton.

The theme for the conference was "Moroni's Quest." The programme's main focus was centred around the experiences and teachings of the Book of Mormon. As part of the conference, youth were grouped into tribes, which were led by tribal leaders, a married couple, who acted as their Lehi and Sariah.

The youth then participated in a series of reenactments, followed by spiritual discussions or reflections on what was being taught during each reenactment. Some of the reenactments they participated in included the story of Lehi and his family leaving Jerusalem.

To begin their quest, each tribe was given a large pallet on which they were to place as much of their luggage as possible and then carry it as they hiked into the campsite. Elder and Sister Witts, who oversee Camp Tuhikaramea said that Tamaki stake youth were the first ever to actually hike into their campsite. This experience signified Lehi and his family leaving Jerusalem and their journey through the wilderness. There was much murmuring!

Other reenactments included Lehi's vision of the tree of life, King

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. . . .

"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

1. 3 Nephi 24:10.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Heber J. Grant* (2002), 126.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 119:4, 6.
4. See Matthew 15:32-39.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 59:9, 13, 16.
6. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. (1939), 243.

Benjamin speaking from his tower, Alma and the sons of Mosiah, and Ammon and King Lamoni, to name a few. The most remarkable and memorable experience was the appearance of the Saviour Jesus Christ to the people of ancient America. We felt truly blessed to have our stake president, President Faateete Lavea, play the role of the Saviour. He described it as being the most sacred and spiritual experience he's ever encountered.

After the camp, a few of the youth shared some thoughts on their experience.

Helen Wilson from the Tamaki 3rd Ward shared, "Attending Moroni's Quest made me realise that there was a need for change in my life. As a teenager, life is hard and sometimes it takes something really special to get you back on track. For me, that something was Moroni's Quest. I have a burning desire to make changes in my life, to be better. I'm reading my scriptures more, I'm strengthening my bond with my Saviour Jesus Christ. I want to prove my love to my Heavenly Father. It makes it all worthwhile."

Royden Takataka, 16 years old, said, "When I first heard about the stake youth conference, I knew I would have to go, but I didn't really want to, so I wasn't at all excited about it. But as we started the conference, and as we began to get more involved in things, I became very grateful that I was there. My whole attitude changed.



▲ *Brother Warren Roberts, Royden Takataka, and Phillip Mu'a help carry their tribe's belongings into camp.*

Tamaki 3rd Ward: Eferona Gaga as King Lamoni (YM leader), Teeyah Gaga as Queen (YW president), TJ Lemafa as Ammon, Taviuni Lemafa as Captain, new convert George Pritchard as a guard, and Jr Matuauto as another guard reenacting a scene from the Book of Mormon



Youth and leaders from the Auckland New Zealand Tamaki Stake participating in Moroni's Quest during their youth conference earlier this year

IMAGES COURTESY OF CHARMINE KENNACH AND WENDY VAIVAI



↑ Youth from Tamaki stake in a reenactment scene from *Moroni's Quest*

↓ Kepa Tukuafu as King Noah



Bishop Talanoa Pome'e as King Benjamin on the tower

I'm so grateful for this experience. Moroni's Quest has strengthened my testimony of the Book of Mormon, and it helped me to learn things that I never took notice of before."

Rachana Ang, who is in her last year of Young Women, also shared, "This is by far the best youth camp I have been to. From this conference I have gained a greater appreciation for my

Saviour and His Atonement. I am not perfect. But knowing that He loves me and that I can always return back to Him gives me hope for the future and the life to come."

This year's stake youth conference could easily be described as being a spiritual journey. For us, it was more than that. It was our quest, our search for something greater than ourselves.

Moroni's Quest was about helping our young people to understand that we are not alone in our life experiences. There were people who lived before us who experienced some of the very same challenges that we face today, and we can learn from their experiences. Moroni's Quest was about helping our young people to understand who they are and who God intends for them to be. Having that knowledge can strengthen and help them to understand and overcome the challenges they face.

Moroni's Quest is a programme that was beautifully created in the early 1990's by Brother Richard MacMillian, of the Calgary East Stake in Canada. Since then, the programme has been shared and has made its way around the United States, with each stake adding its own unique touch. No one could anticipate that it would be an experience that would penetrate the hearts of all those who would participate. ■



Tamaki stake president Faateete Lavea represents Jesus Christ during a reenactment as part of Moroni's Quest.

Renamed Tauranga Park Honours Mormon Missionary Who Loved Maori People and Language

By Mormon Newsroom

In 1914, 17-year-old Mormon missionary Matthew Cowley would often go to a Tauranga park at 6am to pray, fast, read the scriptures, and study the Maori language.

Cowley became fluent in te reo Maori, and later in his nearly five-year mission he helped revise and translate Maori scriptures for the Church.

His genuine love for New Zealand and its people ensured he was happy and willing when called to return for a second mission from 1938 to 1945.

His assignment was to supervise the missionary program here, but in 1940 all foreign missionaries were returned home by the Church because

of WWII. Only Cowley stayed on with his family throughout the long war years, sustaining the New Zealand Church and winning the love and respect of its members.

On his return home to the USA in 1945, Cowley was called to serve in the Church's Quorum of the Twelve Apostles until his death in 1953.

In February this year, Tauranga City officials, including the mayor, Stuart Crosby, along with Latter-day Saint and other community leaders, gathered to celebrate the renaming of Churchill Park to Matiu Kauri (Matthew Cowley) Grove.

Mayor Crosby told the group that the City Council met last October to

ratify the renaming of the grove in memory of Cowley "so his presence will be felt and will be enduring as time goes on. I think that it's very important that we recognize people who had a huge influence in the city."

Representing The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, local leader Francis Fitzpatrick responded to Mayor Crosby's remarks.

"We appreciate you acknowledging this for us and approving it as a council; and we are, indeed, very thankful for this. I'm sure that Matthew Cowley would appreciate the acknowledgment of other men and women, of whatever faith or whatever background, that have made contributions

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Church and city leaders at the ceremony to change the name of Tauranga's Churchill Park to Matiu Kauri Grove.



A group, including descendants of individuals baptised by Matthew Cowley, sing at the ceremony.

to society and to our nation. And I'm sure that he would like to honour them also, as we honour him this morning"

Reweti Peri Kohu, whose grandparents were baptized by Cowley, said he was known as "the war missionary" because he served in New Zealand during the First World War and then came back as mission president throughout the years of the Second World War.

"More importantly," Mr Kohu said, "we had 18 men that were with the Maori Battalion and they had a blessing that Matthew Cowley gave those soldiers . . . that all 18 would return home. And that's what happened. So this is a special memory for us of that occasion.

"We want to recognize his tremendous efforts and his contributions to the Tauranga people, and particularly the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, much of whom are Maori people that live in this area."

Many members of families influenced personally by Matthew Cowley were present at the ceremony and were recognized as descendants of some of Cowley's first converts to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They sang a musical number dedicated to Cowley and hosted a breakfast following the service as a thank-you to Tauranga City and those attending.

Local Latter-day Saint Tamati Tata was a leading exponent of the effort to honour Matthew Cowley in this way. He and others met with city officials

over many months to make the necessary plans. A commemorative plaque is being designed and will be placed in the park later this year.

Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand says this of Cowley: "His knowledge of the language and

enjoyment of their hospitality inspired a warm regard among Maori, who called him Matiu Kauri. . . . He used exhortations and songs and the printed slogan 'Kia ngawari' (be patient) to instil the faith" (teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4c41/cowley-matthew). ■

Archives New Zealand and FamilySearch Volunteers Capture 1.7 Million Genealogical Images

By Mormon Newsroom

In 2011 Archives New Zealand and FamilySearch agreed to work together to digitally preserve 161,988 probate files held at Archives New Zealand's Christchurch regional office.

According to FamilySearch manager for New Zealand and the South Pacific Mike Higgins, "A tremendous cooperative working relationship was established between the two organizations, and the mammoth undertaking of digitally capturing every page of every file began.

"It is estimated that over 1.7m images were captured over the term of the project that was successfully completed on the last week of January 2016."

Mr Higgins added: "We are grateful for the trust that Archives New Zealand placed

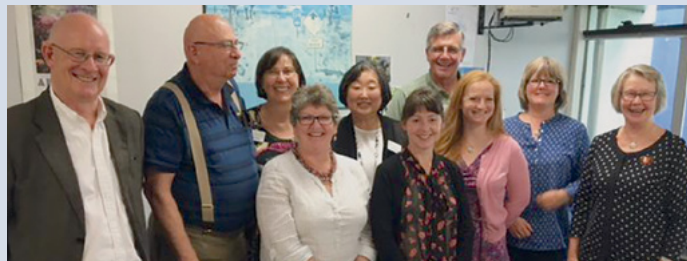
in us to help preserve these precious records.

"It was a huge undertaking, but thanks to ten Latter-day Saint volunteers and the dedicated team of professionals lead by Chris Adam [regional archivist and manager of Archives New Zealand] and his Christchurch team, along with community volunteers, these valuable records will be preserved indefinitely.

"It also means that people from all around the world can enjoy free access to the records via the FamilySearch.org website."

FamilySearch continues to work with Archives New Zealand in Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin to digitally capture other probate records. ■

IMAGE COURTESY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS LIBRARY



Latter-day Saint volunteers perform valuable work in preserving probate files.



IMAGE COURTESY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS LIBRARY

Stephen and Heidi Dil are members of the Albany Ward in the Auckland New Zealand Harbour Stake.

Latter-day Saint Elected to Lead Funeral Directors Association of New Zealand

Stephen Dil (41) from Albany, Auckland, is the newly elected national president of the Funeral Directors Association of New Zealand (FDANZ).

The third generation to own and lead Dil's Funeral Services on Auckland's North Shore, Stephen is also a third-generation Latter-day Saint. The Church's encouragement for its members to give community service influenced his decision to stand as president of FDANZ.

"A major goal of FDANZ is to improve and maintain high standards of public service in the funeral industry throughout New Zealand, and this is consistent with the Church's emphasis on helping others both in the Church and the wider community."

Stephen started in funeral service straight from high school when he needed to earn funds to support himself as a missionary, serving in Montréal, Canada, from 1993 to 1995.

On his return, he married Heidi Dunlop in the Hamilton New Zealand Temple, and they have three daughters. With a family to care for, Stephen took nine years to gain his bachelor of business degree part-time through Massey University while continuing to work in the family business.

He did his formal funeral training through Weltec in Wellington and finished top of his class.

When his parents left to serve a three-year mission for the Church in West Africa

in 2005, Stephen bought the business from them.

He gained a full scholarship to Pennsylvania State University in the USA, and took his family there from 2011 to 2013 while gaining his MBA.

Prior to being elected national president at the FDANZ national conference at Wanaka, Stephen had served on the executive board for two years and is also a trustee of the Funeral Service Training Trust and the FDANZ Funeral Trust.

In the Church he has simultaneously given ongoing voluntary service working with the youth and young single adults and is currently teaching a Gospel Doctrine class in his ward. ■

Massive Helping Hands Effort Brightens and Beautifies Hamilton City

By Mormon Newsroom

It was clear that organisers who had planned and worked for months to beautify and improve Hamilton City, in February, were rewarded for their efforts.

Hundreds of volunteers turned out early in the day and spent hours improving parks, neighbourhoods, and homes—rendering them better places to live because of their unselfish efforts at lending a hand.

In an extensive joint effort, Hamilton City Council, the Catholic Church, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints banded together to beautify and improve the surroundings of Hamilton City.

The overall effort was spearheaded by Latter-day Saint Vicki Lee Wihongi, along with Parks and Open Spaces manager Sally Sheedy and unit manager Deanne McManus-Emery.

Projects were located at A. J. Seeley Park, New Memorial Park, Taitua Arboretum, Porritt Stadium, Chartwell Park, Enderley Community Centre, Te Rapa Sportsdrome, Celebrating Age Centre, Waikato Migrant Centre, Tuhikaremea Latter-day Saint chapel, Camp Tuhikaremea, and St. Vincent de Paul retirement village.

Working together, volunteers tackled these 12 significant community projects throughout the morning hours.

Bright yellow Helping Hands vests and tee shirts and bright orange vests could be seen everywhere, being worn by workers who laboured



Helping Hands volunteers clean gardens, trim shrubs, and provide lunch at St Vincent de Paul retirement village.



Sixty-eight volunteers donate blood at the Tuhikaremea chapel in Hamilton.

gardens, washed cars, and generally cleaned up each project area.

Even a blood drive found great success through the humanitarian kindness of many willing donors. Senior citizens were also blessed, as their homes were beautified, their cars were washed, and they were entertained and fed.

At Chartwell Park the volunteers cleared out brush and debris from the gully and spread mulch beside the pathway.

Vince Murphy of City Parks said, “It’s very important to beautify the city, keep the wildlife and birds happy. Without the massive group of volunteers we have today, the city wouldn’t be able to complete these projects for some time.”

A first-time blood donor at the Tuhikaremea chapel said, “It feels good knowing that I’m helping to save someone’s life.”

The blood of the sixty-eight donors will benefit three times as many recipients, the project coordinator, Suzanne Miller, reported.

Sister Anne Marie, a resident at the St. Vincent de Paul retirement village, said, “We think it’s wonderful. They’re a godsend. They know what they’re doing, weeding and pruning and getting rid of rubbish. They are such responsible people, and they are all smiling and happy!”

Latter-day Saint Jean MacBeachen said, “If you’re feeling depressed, lift yourself and go do something for somebody else.” ■

side-by-side on each project. Men and women, teenagers and youngsters—even small children—were helping to get the job done.

Perhaps most impressive were the smiles seen on so many faces and the goodwill extended so clearly as participants banded together to cause good things to happen.

Latter-day Saints have been participating in Mormon Helping Hands projects on an annual basis for several years. Many volunteers expressed their pleasure at the opportunity to give community service and said they look forward to it every year.

Bishop Nusi Kailea, who worked alongside several members of his congregation at the Te Rapa Sportsdrome,

said, “Everyone is excited, wanting to be part of it. It’s a good family and kids’ day.”

Sixteen-year-old Tylan Robinson said, “We do this every year and it’s actually pretty fun.”

A city co-chair, Sandy MacDonald, said, “Service is doing something for others. It benefits them and it gives you a nice buzz, seeing the benefits of what you do, enhancing others.”

The range of projects was broad as groups pulled weeds, mulched limbs, collected litter, cleaned windows, planted vegetation, vacuumed and cleaned carpets, washed walls, removed graffiti, tidied up playgrounds, laid pavers, raked up leaves and debris, discarded rubbish, tended