

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Sealed Safely in the Covenants of the Everlasting Priesthood

By Elder David J. Thomson

Area Seventy



Elder David J.
Thomson

The Pacific Area goals for 2016 invite us to increase our faith and trust in our Heavenly Father and in Jesus Christ and His Atonement. The blessings of the temple are a core part of how we can strengthen ourselves and our families in this way. The temple reminds us of God's great desire to have each of His children


return safely home to Him. President Boyd K. Packer spoke of this when he referred to families being "protected by the principles and laws of the gospel, sealed safely in the covenants of the everlasting priesthood."¹

The Area Presidency's invitation to all youth and adults to have a current temple recommend is consistent

with the teachings of President Howard W. Hunter, which we are studying in Relief Society and priesthood classes this year. He has said: "I . . . invite the members of the Church to establish the temple of the Lord as the great symbol of their membership and the supernal setting for their most sacred covenants. It would

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May each of us take the steps necessary to ensure that we gain and retain a current temple recommend and to attend the temple as often as our circumstances allow. May we also reach out with love to those who need love and support and help to do likewise.

be the deepest desire of my heart to have every member of the Church be temple worthy. I would hope that every adult member would be worthy of—and carry—a current temple recommend, even if proximity to a temple does not allow immediate or frequent use of it.”²

When our children were quite small, we would often drive from our home out towards the temple. Every time, as we rounded the corner into Temple View and the temple came into sight, they would burst into song:

*I love to see the temple.
I'm going there someday
To feel the Holy Spirit,
To listen and to pray.*³

Our children grew up with a love of the holy temple.

One of the great blessings of my life occurred just over one year ago. On a quiet day in February 2015, my wife and I attended a sealing session in the Hamilton New Zealand Temple to complete ordinances for our ancestors. That day for the first time we were joined by all of our children. Why was this particular day so special to me? That day I felt as if eternity were all around me. Surely this is what heaven is—being surrounded by people we love who have kept their covenants and with whom we can share eternity. Being in the temple as a family opened my eyes more fully to the eternal blessings available to us all because of Heavenly Father’s great plan of happiness and the Atonement of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Near the close of the Book of Mormon, Moroni includes in that sacred record a letter which he received from his father, Mormon. Although the letter speaks of the demise of the Nephite people, it also contains some priceless words from a father to his son. Mormon knows that the conduct of the Nephite armies is displeasing to the Lord; however, he is certain of his son’s righteousness:

“Behold, my son, I cannot recommend them unto God lest he should smite me.

“But behold, my son, *I recommend thee unto God*, and I trust in Christ that thou wilt be saved; and I pray unto God that he will spare thy life” (Moroni 9:21–22; emphasis added).

Each time I read these words I can imagine Mormon considering the

conduct of his son and the joy that reflection must have brought him.

I imagine also that our personal temple recommends have a similar purpose. Those who sign the recommend are recommending us to God—worthy to enter His holy house.

Each temple recommend interview is a private, reverent time for us to consider our conduct as members of the Church. Do I meet the standard the Lord has set to enter into His house? Recently I met with a member of the bishopric and then a counsellor to our stake president to renew my temple recommend. As I pondered the questions asked, I felt a deep reverence for the privilege of living to these standards the Lord has set. My spiritual integrity depends on my keeping the commandments, covenants and standards the Lord has established.

A few years ago, a temple matron spoke in a stake conference we were attending. She likened our temple recommend to an invitation from the Lord for us to visit His home. Sister Thomson and I have been blessed to serve in the temple and to greet wonderful youth, recent converts, and Saints returning to full activity as they have come to do work for their ancestors in the house of the Lord. Each carries with them a recommend signifying their worthiness and their desire to be in the Lord's house as invited and most welcome guests. It is a joy to serve there with these choice people.

May each of us take the steps necessary to ensure that we gain and retain a current temple recommend and to attend the temple as often as our circumstances allow. May we also reach out with love to those who need love and support and help to do likewise. I promise you in the name of the Lord that as you worthily carry a temple

recommend, you will always feel welcome in His house and your ancestors will share their joy with you as you help them receive sacred ordinances of salvation. ■

NOTES

1. Boyd K. Packer, "And a Little Child Shall Lead Them," *Ensign*, May 2012, 8.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Howard W. Hunter* (2015), 1.
3. "I Love to See the Temple," *Children's Songbook*, 95.

LOCAL PAGES

Changes to Latter-day Saint Leadership in the South Pacific Announced

The First Presidency announced in early May that the new Pacific Area Presidency of the Church will be Elder O. Vincent Haleck, President; Elder S. Gifford Nielsen, First Counsellor; and Elder Craig A. Cardon, Second Counsellor.

Elder Haleck succeeds Elder Kevin W. Pearson, who has served alongside his wife, June, for the last five years in the Pacific Area.

The changes will take effect on 1 August.

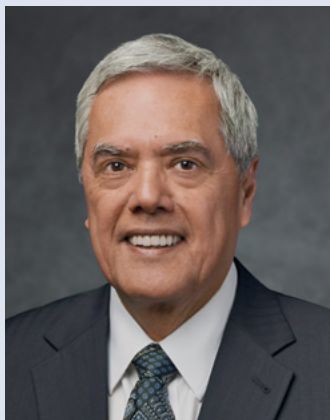
Elder O. Vincent Haleck was sustained as a General Authority Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on April 2, 2011. At the time of his call, he was serving as president of the Samoa Apia Mission. He served

as a counsellor in the Pacific Area Presidency from 2013 until his call as President.

Elder Haleck received a bachelor's degree in advertising and marketing from Brigham Young University in 1973. He owns a number of businesses in American Samoa, including Tuna Ventures, Inc., and Tropical Beverage Distributors, Inc.

Since joining the Church in 1966, Elder Haleck has served in numerous Church callings, including full-time missionary in the Samoa Apia Mission, stake high councilor, bishop, patriarch, and stake president.

Otto Vincent Haleck was born in Utulei, American Samoa, on January 19, 1949. He married Peggy



Elder O. Vincent Haleck



Elder S. Gifford Nielsen



Elder Craig A. Cardon

Ann Cameron in June 1972. They are the parents of three children.

Elder S. Gifford Nielsen was sustained as a General Authority Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on April 6, 2013. At the time of his call, he had been serving as a member of the Sixth Quorum of the Seventy in the North America Southwest Area. He served as Second Counsellor in the Pacific Area Presidency from 2014 until his call as First Counsellor.

Elder Nielsen received a bachelor's degree in 1977 from Brigham Young University. In 1978, the Houston Oilers selected him in the third round of the NFL draft. Following a six-year career as quarterback for the Oilers, he worked as the sports director for KHOU-TV in Houston for twenty-five years. In 1994, Elder Nielsen was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame. In 2008 he was one of the organizers of Memorial City Bank, becoming a board member and chairman of the executive committee.

Elder Nielsen has served in numerous Church callings, including seminary teacher, elders quorum president, Young Men president, Sunday School president, counselor in a mission presidency, bishop, stake president, and Area Seventy.

Stanley Gifford Nielsen was born in Provo, Utah, on October 25, 1954. He married Wendy Olson in April

1975. They are the parents of six children.

Elder Craig A. Cardon was sustained as a General Authority Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on April 1, 2006. He has served as President of the Africa West Area and as editor of Church magazines. At the time he received the assignment to serve in the Pacific Area Presidency, he was serving as an Assistant Executive Director in the Priesthood and Family Department.

Elder Cardon studied accounting and earned a bachelor of arts degree from Arizona State University. He received a master of public administration degree from the Harvard Kennedy School, with a methodological area of concentration in leadership, and was named a Littauer Fellow. Prior to his call in 2006, he was an entrepreneur with multiple business interests.

Elder Cardon has served in a number of Church callings, including full-time missionary in the Italian Mission, president of the Italy Rome Mission (1983–1986), stake president, bishop, high councilor, counsellor in a stake presidency, counsellor in a bishopric, elders quorum president, institute instructor, and Gospel Doctrine teacher.

Craig Allen Cardon was born on December 30, 1948. He married Deborah Louise Dana in November 1970. They are the parents of eight children. ■

Apostle Urges, “Learn about the Saviour by Serving Him”

By Australia Mormon Newsroom

Elder Neil L. Andersen Speaks to Queensland Missionaries

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints spoke to approximately 200 missionaries in Brisbane during his recent visit.

He was accompanied by Elder Lynn G. Robbins of the Church’s Presidency of the Seventy.

Elder Andersen encouraged the missionaries in attendance to “learn about the Saviour by serving Him.”

Elder Andersen spoke about “the merits, mercy and grace of Jesus Christ.”

At one point in the meeting, Elder Andersen asked for questions and comments from the missionaries.

Elder Andersen asked, “How do you understand the Atonement of Jesus Christ?”

One young missionary replied, “By applying it.”

“How?” Elder Andersen gently pressed.

Missionary: “It provides the hope and the avenue to change. It is an indescribable feeling of peace and hope.”

Elder Andersen quoted John 11:25: “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”



Elder Neil L. Andersen speaks to missionaries in Brisbane, Australia, during his recent visit.

“That is our witness,” Elder Andersen said. “We should be anxious to say it.

“Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ you can become someone, more than you thought possible. That is mercy.”

Elder Andersen promised the missionaries that if they would bear witness of Jesus Christ on their mission, that will never leave them throughout their life. “You will never forget,” he said.

He challenged those in attendance to speak the name of Jesus Christ “with more power.”

In Elder Lynn G. Robbins’s remarks, he said, “The Saviour’s best sermon was not on a mount but it was His life.”

He challenged the missionaries to work on Christlike virtues each week. “Choose one and focus on it,” he said.

Elder Andersen travelled with his wife, Sister Kathy Andersen.

Sister Andersen told the missionaries what a great blessing it was for her and her husband to be there. “Today you will hear the words the Saviour would have you hear,” she said.

One young missionary who attended the meeting, Pavina Vichittavong, is from Laos. She had been in the mission field just a few days. Sister Vichittavong said she enjoyed hearing Elder Andersen and the other speakers. She was especially

touched, she said, by what she heard and felt about the Atonement of Jesus Christ. “We can repent, we can be good, and we can become like Jesus Christ,” she said.

Elder Lose Siliili, from Melbourne, said the experience increased his desire to “serve our Father in Heaven and to be close to Him.”

Elder Tyler Johnson, from Arizona, USA, said the meeting provided “a wonderful experience to be in the presence of an Apostle and to learn more about the Atonement of Jesus Christ and how through the merits, mercy and grace of our Saviour we can one day return to live with Him and be clean and perfect just as He is.” ■

IMAGE COURTESY OF SHIRLEE AND KELLY WILLIS

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Sister Vichittavong from Laos is serving in the Australia Brisbane Mission.



Elder Neil L. Andersen greets a young missionary in Brisbane, Australia.

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Missionaries from the Papua New Guinea Port Moresby Mission sing at the Anzac Day commemoration.

Missionaries Sing at Papua New Guinea Anzac Day Service

By Mormon Newsroom

On April 25, 2016, missionaries from the Papua New Guinea Port Moresby Mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints joined government dignitaries and military officials in the annual Anzac Day commemoration at Port Moresby Bomana War Cemetery.

The missionaries were invited to provide a choir to sing the hymn “Abide with Me,” as well as the national anthem of Papua New

Guinea, the national anthem of Australia, and the national anthem of New Zealand.

The pre-dawn service paid tribute to Australian and New Zealand forces who bravely fought in defense of the freedom of Papuans and New Guineans. Various government, military and religious leaders were invited to participate in readings, prayers and other solemn tributes, including the laying of wreaths.

Local Port Moresby Stake president Moasope McCarthy and Papua New Guinea Port Moresby Mission president Voi Taoalii participated in the laying of a wreath on behalf of the Church.

Local PNG missionary Elder Derick Atakie of Wewak expressed his appreciation for the privilege of attending the service, noting he had never been to Bomana War Cemetery or participated in Anzac Day, and commented on how special it was to be there. ■

TIP OF THE MONTH

Exercise Faith in Jesus Christ to Strengthen Temporal Self-Reliance

By LDS Family Services

Exercising faith in Jesus Christ is central to spiritual and temporal self-reliance.¹ We learn from the *Lectures on Faith* that “faith is . . . the principle of action in all intelligent beings.”² If we do not believe an action will lead to a desired outcome, we will not be motivated to act. Taking action and experiencing

confirming consequences reinforces the action and leads to strengthened belief.³ Jesus taught, “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine.”⁴

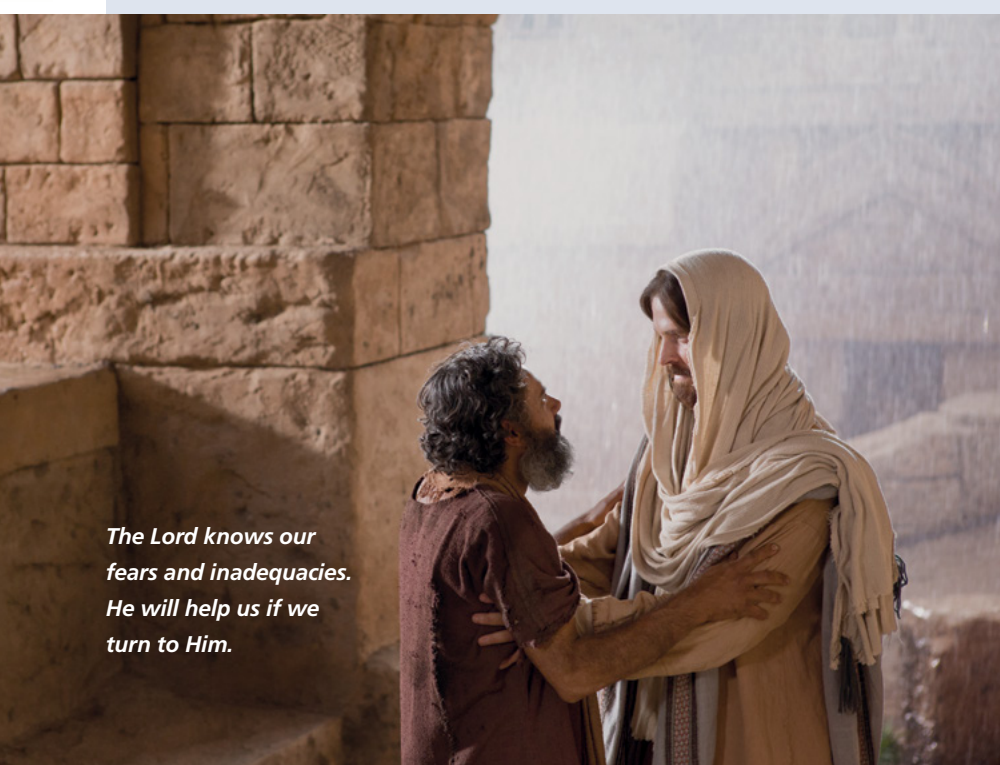
Points to Ponder

1. The Lord promises He will provide for us.⁵

2. Education and training are the keys to providing better for ourselves and our families.⁶
3. The Lord wants to help us increase our income to improve our quality of life and availability for service.⁷
4. Modern Church leaders provide us with resources to obtain better training and employment.⁸
5. The Lord knows our fears and inadequacies. He will help us if we turn to Him. “Men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that He can make a lot more out of their lives than they can.”⁹
6. If increasing income or furthering education are not the temporal needs we currently have, the Lord can help us with whatever we require in our specific circumstances.¹⁰ ■

NOTES

1. See *My Foundation: Principles, Skills, Habits* (self-reliance booklet, 2015).
2. *Lectures on Faith* (1985), 1.
3. See Alma 32.
4. John 7:17.
5. See Doctrine and Covenants 104:15.
6. See *Leadership Guide* (Pacific Area Presidency publication, 2015); Russell M. Nelson, “What Will You Choose?” *Ensign*, Jan. 2015, 30–35.
7. See Alma 34:25; Jacob 2:18–19.
8. See [lds.org/topics/pef-self-reliance?lang=eng&_r=1](https://www.lds.org/topics/pef-self-reliance?lang=eng&_r=1).
9. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 42.
10. See Jeffrey R. Holland, “General Patterns and Specific Lives,” *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Feb 9, 2008, 3.



The Lord knows our fears and inadequacies. He will help us if we turn to Him.