

# NEW ZEALAND LOCAL PAGES

## AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

### Make the Sacrament a Spiritual Experience

By Elder Andrew O’Riordan  
Area Seventy



Elder Andrew O’Riordan

Over the last 12 months our Apostles have urged the leaders in the Church and the worldwide Church membership to increase our observance of the Sabbath day both at church and in our homes.

Exodus 20:8–10 records:

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

“Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

“But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God.”

The purpose of the Apostles’ direction is not only to assist us to obey the commandment to keep the Sabbath day holy but also to aid us to qualify to have His Spirit to be with us.

This is a specific promise extended to all who rest from their labours, attend church, and partake of the sacrament with a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

There is a great need for each one of us to fortify ourselves spiritually and draw near to our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. The



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Sabbath day is the perfect day for us to do that as we have the opportunity to partake of the sacrament and review our thoughts, intents, and actions of the previous week and renew our commitment to follow the Saviour of the world.

Once we have been baptised by one holding proper authority, we are spiritually washed clean through the cleansing blood of the Saviour Jesus Christ's Atonement. We are then, by the laying on of hands, confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and extended the gift of the Holy Ghost. The reception of the Holy Ghost has a sanctifying effect as if being cleansed by fire. This is a spiritual purifying-like fire that has the effect of changing our nature from that of a carnal, fallen state that can't comprehend spiritual things to a new state of righteousness, or spiritual rebirth, that enables us to discern the will of God and desire to follow it. This new spiritual understanding will ultimately enable us to have eternal life and dwell with God, all made possible through the love and sacrifice of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

This experience, however, was never designed to be a once-in-a-lifetime event. Partaking of the sacrament each Sunday gives us the opportunity to repeat the cleansing experience of baptism over and over again. As we approach the ordinance of the sacrament with a broken heart

and a contrite spirit, recognising and repenting of our sins and weaknesses, we can feel the cleansing power of the Atonement being applied in our lives as the Holy Ghost purifies our minds and hearts, resulting in hopeful, spiritual renewal. This process enables us to retain the remission of our sins.

President Henry B. Eyring stated the following: "If you have felt the influence of the Holy Ghost during this day, . . . you may take it as evidence that the Atonement is working in your life. For that reason and many others, you would do well to put yourself in places and in tasks that invite the promptings of the Holy Ghost. . . . The reception of the Holy Ghost cleanses us through the Atonement of Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup>

The sacrament meeting is the most important meeting of all the meetings we attend in the Church, and weekly preparation and attendance at this spiritual feast can literally transform our lives and preserve our faith and testimony of Jesus Christ and the restored gospel week in and week out.

In Moroni 6:4–6 we read:

"And after they had been received unto baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken, that they might be remembered and

nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way, to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who was the author and the finisher of their faith.

"And the church did meet together oft, to fast and to pray, and to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls.

"And they did meet together oft to partake of bread and wine, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus."

Every year in the Pacific Area thousands are baptised into the Church, and it has been my pleasure to meet and encourage many of these new members. Often, making the changes in their lives that have enabled them to observe the Sabbath day and attend stake conferences and especially sacrament meetings has brought powerful, spiritual conversion experiences that have convinced them of the truthfulness of the restored gospel. I see this as a promised spiritual blessing that has been bestowed for faithful Sabbath day observance.

I testify of the spiritual blessings that await those who observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy by attending sacrament meeting and partaking of the sacrament in remembrance of Him. ■

#### NOTE

1. Henry B. Eyring, "Gifts of the Spirit for Hard Times" (Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Sept. 10, 2006), 4, [broadcasts.lds.org](http://broadcasts.lds.org).

## LOCAL PAGES

# Latter-day Saints Express Love for Departing Church Leader

By Mormon Newsroom

Elder Kevin W. Pearson, the former President of the Pacific Area of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has been assigned a new responsibility at Church headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, and left the Pacific Area in July this year.

Elder O. Vincent Haleck, the new Pacific Area President, stated: “Elder and Sister Pearson have served and loved the people of the Pacific Area, whom they have served faithfully in the past five years. They have always provided wise and loving counsel wherever they have spoken and taught. For those of us who live in the ‘isles of the sea,’ we will remember how Elder Pearson reminded us through the scriptures of the great blessings declared by the Lord through keeping the commandments.

“We will miss them as dear friends and servants whose contributions are measured by the many individual lives they have touched for good throughout the Pacific. They move on with new assignments in the Church and will continue to bless people wherever they serve and minister.”

First Counsellor in the Pacific Area Presidency Elder S. Gifford Nielsen commented: “We have learned so much from Elder and Sister Pearson . . . and are so happy the Lord is



*Elder and Sister Pearson speak to members in Hamilton, New Zealand.*

IMAGE COURTESY OF PUBLISHING SERVICES LIBRARY

blessing them with their new assignment where they will be close to their family. They have given their hearts and souls to building the kingdom in the Pacific Area.”

“Elder and Sister Pearson leave a legacy behind after five wonderful years in the Pacific Area,” said Elder Robert J. Dudfield of Melbourne, Australia. “Elder Pearson will be fondly remembered for his passion and love of the Pacific. . . . We will miss them dearly.”

Known for welcoming all peoples, the Pearsons recently hosted luncheons in Christchurch and Wellington

to spotlight the needs of people new to New Zealand, including refugees, migrants, and others seeking asylum. They have also visited people in need across the Pacific. They were in Fiji when Cyclone Winston struck the island nation this year, and helped to assess needs and mobilize the Church’s disaster relief efforts.

Garrick Parr, service centre manager in Tonga, described recently hearing Elder Pearson speak: “My wife and I were deeply moved by the Spirit as we witnessed this remarkable servant of the Lord. He helped us glimpse a

vision of Jesus Christ that we have not been able to see before.”

Area Seventy Elder David J. Thomson, Hamilton, NZ, concurs: “Elder Pearson has been an emphatic witness of the Saviour everywhere he has been in the Pacific—to missionaries, to members, to those who have strayed, and to those who are not of our faith. Everyone knows that he knows our Master. We are grateful for his remarkable service.”

“I have admired the Pearsons’ devotion and love in serving the Church and the wonderful example of how they live the gospel,” says Cyndee Hamilton of Sydney, Australia. “Their sacrifice in ministering here in the Pacific inspires me to want to live my life as they do. They are the ultimate example of true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Elder Thomson adds: “Elder Pearson’s connection to New Zealand goes back to his grandfather who served here as a full-time missionary in 1907. Because of the Pearsons’ intensely personal approach, you always know that they care about you as a person, whether it is remembering your name, or asking about the children, or inviting you to follow the Saviour more closely. And who can forget the vital messages contained in Elder Pearson’s powerful teaching: How often should we study the Book of Mormon? Every day! Every day! Every day! Where is the best place to be in the last days? ‘Stay by the tree!’”

(“Stay by the Tree”, *Ensign*, May 2015, 114).

Elder Pearson’s ministry took him, and often Sister Pearson, over expansive distances of the Pacific Area to large cities, country towns, and remote island villages.

He taught the gospel of Jesus Christ in the homes of Church

members, from the pulpits of the Church’s modern meetinghouses and its isolated bush chapels, and in private meetings with government leaders and representatives of other faiths.

The Pearsons’ five years in the Pacific have left an indelible spiritual mark on all who know them. ■

## Church Leaders Meet with Christchurch Latter-day Saints

By Mormon Newsroom

Elder Kevin W. Pearson, recently released Pacific Area President of the Church, accompanied by his wife, Sister June Pearson, travelled to Christchurch with Sister Linda S. Reeves of the Relief Society general presidency and Sister Carol F. McConkie of the Young Women general presidency. They came to listen to and learn from—and then train—volunteers serving in leadership positions in Christchurch congregations.

Sister Pearson, borrowing a line from a familiar Church hymn, counselled those in attendance—predominantly women leaders—to “be safe thru inspiration’s pow’r” (“Choose the Right,” *Hymns*, no. 239).

“Qualify for and seek and act on personal revelation,” she said. “We never have to walk alone. We can turn our hearts to our Father in

Heaven—He will hear and answer our prayers.”

“Heavenly Father loves you and you are precious to Him,” added Elder Pearson. He taught that “through personal revelation, gentle impressions will come to your mind and heart about things you should do to help yourself, your family and others.”

He suggested, “Write down these divine impressions. Then pray for help to further understand what you should do next.”

Sister Reeves, who, along with Sister McConkie, had travelled from their homes in Utah, assured those in attendance that the Lord had sent them: “We felt it would be best to come to areas in the Pacific that haven’t been visited by Church leaders from headquarters in a long time.





*Sister Carol F. McConkie of the Young Women general presidency, and Sister June Pearson meet with Relief Society sisters in Christchurch.*

Heavenly Father sent us here because of the love He has for you.”

As part of a discussion where local leaders of the Relief Society and Sister Reeves exchanged ideas, she emphasized that “with half of the women in the Church being single, many need support both emotionally and temporally.”

But in addition, she encouraged leaders—some of whom are single themselves—to personally focus on and help other single women focus

on personal discipleship: “We want everyone to be on the covenant path, to go to the temple and make sacred covenants.”

Sister Reeves concluded her training by praising local leaders for all they are doing. “You’re incredible women. You are powerful members of the Church. Heavenly Father is so aware of you. And He has placed you here to help others who need His help.”

Sister McConkie addressed separately the women leaders of the

Church who teach and strengthen youth who are members of the Young Women organization.

She stressed to the leaders that the work they do will have a positive effect on the young women they serve.

One area that needs attention, according to Sister McConkie, is the impact of technology on young women. “We need to encourage our young women to find positive ways to use technology,” she said. “There are good websites to go to.”

She also counselled to encourage young women to share good, wholesome things on their phones and computers. “They could use #sharegoodness, which connects them to others who desire to share good things.”

She suggested the leaders help girls to know the Church has many

good places on the Internet to visit.

“Our young women need to realize they are different, not ordinary or common. They have a divine nature. They have a divine identity that will help them rise above the bad things in the world.”

She expressed the great blessing it is for young women to learn how to

become disciples of Jesus Christ. She encouraged local leaders in their efforts to love and serve those they teach.

“It’s a powerful work we are in,” she concluded. “It doesn’t happen overnight, but step by step, day by day. ‘By small and simple things are great things brought to pass’ [Alma 37:6].” ■

## Auckland Women Make Baby Blankets for Mothers in Refugee Camps

By Mormon Newsroom

A group of women from the Albany Ward in the Auckland New Zealand Harbour Stake gathered

recently to sew blankets for New Zealand Red Cross to distribute to expectant mothers in refugee camps.

“We had a discussion one Sunday at church about the plight of refugees in some parts of the world,” project organiser Rachel Smith said. “I was especially moved to hear that newborns were being wrapped in newspaper.

“I went home and wanted to make some blankets to send,” she said. “I’m not a great seamstress but managed to make two blankets, and then invited others to come lend a hand to make some more to donate. A couple of women also donated material and provided sewing machines. And all of the women that came along gave of their time and talents.

“The beauty of being part of Relief Society is that we can learn skills from each other and by joining together with our varying talents and desire to serve are able to accomplish far more and able to bless the lives of those around us,” she said. ■



IMAGE COURTESY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS LIBRARY

*Relief Society sisters from the Albany Ward, Auckland New Zealand Harbour Stake, make baby blankets for newly arrived refugees.*



IMAGE COURTESY OF ROSEANNE JONES AND USED WITH PERMISSION



*Trust members and support members with donated items from the four pallets of goods. From left: Tauranga DPA Roseanne Jones, Shewaynesh Beyene (Ethiopia), Robyn Parkinson (liaison between LDS Church and UMMA Trust), Mona Darwish (Somalia), Fetiya Mohammed (Ethiopia), Anne Lee (trust manager), and Faiza Hanslo (South Africa).*

## Auckland Refugee Families Receive Warm Bedding

By Roseanne Jones

Warm blankets, bedding and linens were collected for needy refugees by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Tauranga area as part of a Mormon Helping Hands project. The donations were then shipped to Auckland.

“Church members from Katikati to Te Kaha collected and sorted four pallet-loads of donated goods, which were delivered just as the cold winter began to set in,” said Roseanne Jones of Opotiki.

The donated items were shipped to Auckland courtesy of the transport and logistics company Mainfreight.

UMMA Trust was chosen to distribute the bedding to refugee families. The trust provides services to clients from refugee and migrant backgrounds. It works with 24 different ethnicities and helps to reunite families separated by war or terror that fall outside the criteria for assistance from government agencies, according to Robyn Parkinson, who acted

as liaison between the Church and UMMA Trust.

Upon receipt of the donations, a UMMA Trust spokesman issued a statement of thanks: “On behalf of all the refugee families who will receive warm bedding this winter, we extend a heartfelt thank you to all those in the Tauranga Stake. Collecting four pallets of bedding was beyond our expectations—a stupendous effort. It arrived exactly at the start of the cold weather!” ■

TIP OF THE MONTH

## Use Time Wisely—It Is One of God’s Greatest Gifts

By LDS Family Services

Have you recently experienced these thoughts or feelings?

- Get off Facebook.
- Don’t go online.
- I just wasted the entire morning.
- I intended to do my scripture study, but once again I didn’t.

Living in a privileged technological world where infinite information and communication is available at our fingertips can be a blessing or a curse. We can be easily distracted as we chase that newsfeed, create social media hype, or live vicariously through an undesirable Hollywood star

or anime character. Would you be brave enough today to take a full inventory of how you spent your last 24 hours?

Brigham Young taught that “time is all the capital stock there is on the earth. . . . If properly used, it brings that which will add to your comfort, convenience, and satisfaction. Let us consider this, and no longer sit with hands folded, wasting time”<sup>1</sup>—or, we might say, sit with hands mindlessly tapping and swiping electronic devices.

The self-reliance booklet *My Foundation: Principles, Skills, Habits* provides an excellent resource to understand and use time wisely, because time is a gift from God. One family studied the booklet’s chapter on using time wisely (self-reliance principle 2) and often refer to Sister Benkosi, who teaches five important steps in the booklet and in an accompanying video:

### List Tasks

Each morning, make a list of tasks to do. Add names of people to serve.

### Pray

Pray for guidance. Listen. Commit to do your best.

### Set Priorities

Number your top priorities. Put a “1” by the most important task, put a “2” by the next one, and so on.

### Set Goals, Act

Listen to the Spirit. Set goals. Work hard. Start with the most important task and work down the list.

### Report

Each night, report to Heavenly Father in prayer. Ask questions. Listen. Feel His love. Repent.<sup>2</sup>

Why is this self-reliance principle 2? Discipline is required to manage time—it is clearly a priority. Counsel with the Lord, with your family, with your spouse, even with a trusted friend. The Lord wants to provide for us, and He wants us to succeed. Let us challenge ourselves in our choices and heed President Thomas S. Monson’s counsel to “choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong,”<sup>3</sup> and use time wisely. ■

### NOTES

1. Brigham Young, in *My Foundation: Principles, Skills, Habits* (self-reliance booklet, 2015), 7.
2. *My Foundation*, 6.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “Choices,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 86.

