

NEW ZEALAND LOCAL PAGES

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

The Power of Learning

By Elder Paul R. Coward

Area Seventy



Elder Paul R. Coward

To hear by listening at church usually requires attendance and a good sound system, but to hear and understand requires preparation, desire, and action on our part. President Thomas S. Monson has taught: “Listening is not a passive activity. To actively listen to another person requires willpower, concentration, and great mental effort. Its rewards are many, because only then do we really learn to understand.”¹

A mother of an 18-year-old son exclaimed, “My boy is no longer active in the Church. He heard the gospel taught in a number of settings for many years, but I’ve since learnt he never really understood.” When Ammon visited the people of Limhi, the record states, “he . . . rehearsed unto them the last words which king Benjamin had taught them, and explained them to the people . . . so that they might understand” (Mosiah 8:3).

Clearly, the learning outcome from attending or ‘turning up’ may be different from that of preparing our hearts beforehand and attending with purpose.

A young single adult reported that after a Saturday night activity with a group of YSAs had concluded around 2am on the Sunday morning, she retired to bed, only to arise shortly after to attend church on the Sabbath.

This YSA revealed that she will never do that again because she got nothing out of sacrament meeting. Fortunately, she did make the effort to attend, but if seeking to come unto Christ was her desire, perhaps her activities the night before may have reflected that outcome and could have been a little different.

Merely attending and waiting for someone else to teach or train us, as compliant as that may be, may produce a “completed” outcome rather than any deep spiritual learning and a desire to act in faith, to go with power and to do. For example, think about attending sacrament meeting each week. If our unplanned motive is to “attend” or “turn up” or to “get there”, certainly this is a necessary starting point, but is it possible we may arrive at church a little late, sit at the back of the chapel out of sight or in the foyer, linger in the hallways, check our phone

messages or our social media pages frequently, partake of the sacrament as an afterthought, look idly into space during the singing of hymns, all without making any connection with Deity? We might say within ourselves, “But, hey, didn’t I attend church today!” Tick! “I am all good!” Tick!

Conversely, if our planned motive is to “go to the house of prayer *and offer up* [our] sacraments . . . and to *pay* [our] devotions unto the Most High” (D&C 59:9–10; emphasis added), the learning outcomes can be significantly more rewarding and life changing. To go to church is essential. To go to church with purpose and pay, or give, to the Lord our devotion requires a little more effort beyond just attending church. What

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meeting? What do we want to feel? What help do we need? Have we prepared for that sacred experience? The response, “That was boring,” may indeed be illustrating our own lack of preparation and love for the Lord.

We are counselled to seek learning, undoubtedly because learning brings knowledge, it informs, it stretches the mind, it can touch the heart, it inspires confidence, it can be uplifting, it brings fulfilment, and it will increase our opportunities and our appreciation and refine our spirit and talent.

Seeking both spiritual and secular learning is essential, and we commend all who have and continue to study. When I was a pupil at high school in a small country town, of those completing their high school years, about two students went on to undertake university study. Sadly, those few students were called derogatory names by the majority, who, in their self-proclaimed “coolness,” felt that university study

was for a strange group of nerdy people. Lulled into foolishness and ignorance, I was part of that majority for a brief moment. Fortunately today we live in times where ongoing education is available and strongly encouraged and supported.

In recent training meetings, members of the Seventy in the Pacific Area made presentations in all stakes emphasizing the doctrine, importance and value of seeking learning through education. This learning obviously impacts the rising generation and also includes post-high school education for adults by undertaking courses, obtaining trade certificates, diplomas, degrees and meaningful qualifications, and an ongoing “continuing education” plan, including on-the-job training, which will ultimately result in acquiring new knowledge and skill to strengthen our individual and family potential and self-reliance. One simple example: a recently returned

missionary started work at a factory, and his outlook, he says, was bleak. After hearing the teachings on education, he really felt inspired to further his education to learn new skills and obtain qualifications. He adjusted his priorities, went back to school, and gained a greater vision of his potential.

In the 2016 area goals, one objective is to increase spiritual and temporal self-reliance. No matter the age or ethnicity, we encourage all to evaluate their circumstances, change priorities and sacrifice a little more to create the personal environment to strengthen religious and temporal learning. Thirst for this learning, and the Lord will help you open doors. He will bestow spiritual gifts to enable you to achieve remarkable things. We are so blessed to have a profound power beyond our own—the enabling power of the Atonement of Christ in our lives.

Sister Lagi Sipili Sialeipata, whose first language is not English, is now 73 years of age and joined the Church in 1964. Sister Sialeipata has served in the Church as an early-morning seminary teacher for over 25 years. With this many years of teaching experience in the Church, Sister Sialeipata applied for teachers college to undertake a three-year teaching qualification. She was accepted! From there Sister Sialeipata went on to university and is currently studying for a master of educational leadership degree. Her

next educational goal, following her master's, is to study for a PhD degree.

Sister Sialeipata has explained, “Deep within myself I want to be an inspiration to the youth and YSAs, that there is nothing impossible to the Lord if they humble themselves, pray, and do what is right. I also believe that education is an ongoing process which you can take back to our Heavenly Father when He calls us back.”

“Is any thing too hard for the Lord?” (Genesis 18:14). Sister Sialeipata is a remarkable example to all ages.

The Church has many resources, inspired of the Lord—for example, *My Foundation: Principles, Skills, Habits*²—to assist anyone willing to improve their lives. President Gordon B. Hinckley firmly stated: “There can be no doubt, none whatever, that education pays. Do not

short-circuit your lives. If you do so, you will pay for it over and over and over again.”³

May the Lord help us to be serious about seeking spiritual and temporal learning. President Russell M. Nelson has stated:

“Leaders of this church have repeatedly emphasized the importance of education. It is a vital component of wisdom. . . .

“Because of our sacred regard for each human intellect, we consider the obtaining of an education to be a religious responsibility.”⁴

“Seek, and ye shall find,” the Saviour taught (Matthew 7:7). As we seek guidance on how to live this counsel and obtain a more complete education for ourselves and our family, remember the words of the Lord: “Seek not for riches but for wisdom,

and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich” (D&C 6:7).

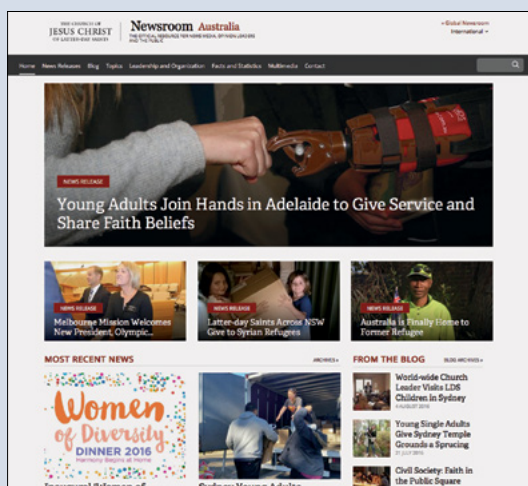
President Henry B. Eyring taught, “The Lord and His Church have always encouraged education to increase our ability to serve Him and our Heavenly Father’s children.”⁵

Let us encourage and support each other, particularly our rising generation and all who listen to counsel and yearn to follow it. I bear testimony of these teachings in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

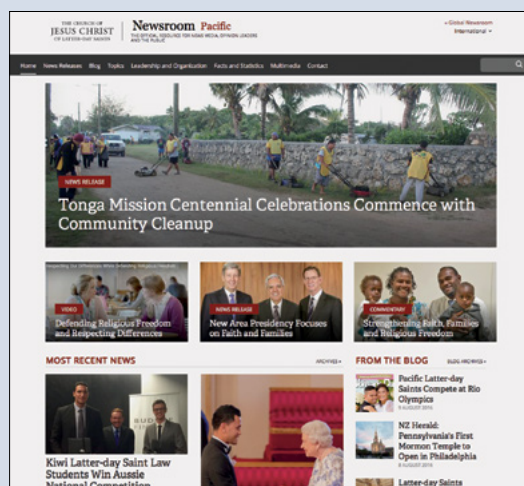
NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Building Bridges,” *New Era*, Nov. 1985, 66.
2. See *My Foundation: Principles, Skills, Habits* (self-reliance booklet, 2015).
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, “A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 7.
4. Russell M. Nelson, “Where Is Wisdom?” *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 6.
5. Henry B. Eyring, “Education for Real Life,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2002, 17.

LOCAL WEBSITES



www.mormonnewsroom.org.au



www.mormonnewsroom.org.nz



Left to right: Janet Anderson, Caitlin Lavelua, Kaveinga Lisati, Kayne Pilling, and Ati Nemaia

LOCAL PAGES

New Zealand Women Bloggers Share Goodness

By Mormon Newsroom

A group of New Zealand women who blog gathered at a luncheon recently in Takapuna to exchange ideas on lifting their blogs to the next level and sharing goodness as they go.

“The world needs more wonderful individuals like these women,” said their luncheon host, Linda Champlin, a public affairs missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

“It’s getting darker and darker in the world, and more and more people are needed to share goodness and light.”

Janet Anderson, a law school graduate now dedicating herself to being a full-time mom, helped organize the event and travelled from her home in Tauranga to participate.

Next to her family, blogging is her passion. “Everyone has a purpose in their life and it takes a while to find it,”

says Anderson, whose blog can be found at motivatememommy.com.

“It took me some time to find the final focus of my blogging, but now I know it is to be invited into the homes of young mothers to help and encourage them. And to share what we have in common—both the good and the difficult.”

During their get-together the women learned more ways to share positive messages and how to access ideas from the many Internet sites and social media platforms provided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

“The Church’s websites are a great source for helping communicate your messages effectively. They are loaded with positive, uplifting messages to help in everyday life,” said Champlin.

“They can also help anyone share the gospel of Jesus Christ through their

everyday blogging, and His gospel is the ultimate in goodness.”

Others who participated in the noontime exchange of ideas included littlemrslavelua.com blogger Caitlin Lavelua and pillingsworth.com blogger Kayne Pilling, who blogs on a variety of topics. A recent post was on a friend’s “Demons of Depression.”

Ati Nemaia, whose most recent post on her blog at atinemaia.blogspot.com was on “Postnatal Blues,” also participated, along with pacificldswomen@wordpress.com blogger Kaveinga Lisati.

Looking toward the future, the “Sharing Goodness” bloggers are planning a seminar in a few months for all interested bloggers who want to learn about all aspects of blogging to include increasing followers, monetizing a blog, developing story ideas, finding the right look for a blog, staying motivated, starting a blog, and being a light to others. ■

20,000 Facebook Fans Follow Pacific Mormon Newsroom

By Mormon Newsroom

The Pacific Mormon Newsroom editorial team celebrated reaching 20,000 Facebook friends on 28 July.

“We’re very grateful for everyone who follows Pacific Mormon Newsroom and shares our content with others,” said Richard Hunter, Pacific Area director of public affairs for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

“In the last 18 months we’ve grown from 3,000 Facebook friends to 20,000. Our next goal is to reach 30,000 followers by Christmas,” he said.

Brother Hunter said Pacific Mormon Newsroom is one of around 70 similar Mormon Newsroom sites around the world, including sites for Australia, Papua New Guinea and a French-language site for the Pacific.

The aim of Mormon Newsroom is to provide news and other resources related to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its members for the information and use of news media, opinion leaders and the public.

“We couldn’t do what we do without our wonderful volunteers here in Auckland: Jeff and Linda Champlin, Barry and Susan Preator and Cheri Loveless. They do a huge amount of finding, writing, photographing, editing and posting. They are always on the lookout for a good story to share with others. They epitomise the spirit of the Latter-day Saint hashtag #ShareGoodness.”

He added, “They and thousands of other retired couples are making a massive difference around the world as senior Latter-day Saint missionaries.

Some are involved in maintaining Mormon Newsroom websites; others are dentists, doctors, teachers, family history consultants, humanitarian coordinators and lawyers, among many other assignments.”

Brother Hunter also thanked the many Pacific Mormon Newsroom contributors from across New Zealand, Australia, Papua New Guinea and the islands of the South Pacific.

“Latter-day Saints—often alongside our friends from other faiths and other groups—are doing some truly extraordinary things in terms of lifting lives, fortifying families and creating caring communities,” Brother Hunter said.

“We love hearing about these unsung heroes and sharing their stories with others, to inform and inspire.” ■



Sister Cheri Loveless, Sister Susan Preator, Elder Barry Preator, Elder Jeff Champlin, Sister Linda Champlin, and Richard Hunter celebrate the milestone of having 20,000 followers on the Pacific Mormon Newsroom page.



#ShareGoodness



IMAGE COURTESY OF PUBLISHING SERVICES LIBRARY

The new Pacific Area Presidency (left to right): Elder S. Gifford Nielsen, Elder O. Vincent Haleck, and Elder Craig A. Cardon

New Area Presidency Focuses on Strengthening Faith and Families across Pacific Region

By Mormon Newsroom

Members of the new Pacific Area Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints started their service together in August.

The Pacific Area Presidency comprises: Elder O. Vincent Haleck, President; Elder S. Gifford Nielsen, First Counsellor; and Elder Craig A. Cardon, Second Counsellor.

Elder Haleck is from American Samoa, Elder Nielsen from Texas, and Elder Cardon from Arizona. All three leaders are based in New Zealand, with their wives, Peggy

Haleck, Wendy Nielsen, and Deborah Cardon.

“We are delighted to welcome Elder and Sister Cardon to the Pacific Area,” Elder Haleck said. “They bring with them enthusiasm, wisdom, experience, and deep faith.”

Elder Haleck said the three members of the Area Presidency are looking forward to meeting with leaders, members, missionaries, and friends of the Church across New Zealand, Australia, and the South Pacific over the next year.

“Our focus continues to be to help strengthen individuals and families throughout the Pacific by increasing faith and trust in Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ and His Atonement,” Elder Haleck said.

“As individuals and families give their best efforts to honour the Sabbath day both at home and church; to increase spiritual and temporal self-reliance; to hasten the work of salvation; and to seek the blessings of the temple—miracles are occurring in the lives of our members.” ■

Pacific Area Administration Office Staff Participate in Week of Community Service

By Mormon Newsroom

Employees and senior missionary couples from the Pacific Area administration office of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Takapuna, Auckland, lent a hand during a week-long community service project recently.

And in the process they met some “wonderfully kind people who are helping individuals and families in need, every day,” according to Paul Bennalack, one of the organisers of the week of service.

Around 100 office staff supported four local charitable organisations: Feed the Need, De Paul House, Auckland City Mission, and the Salvation Army.

Brother Bennalack was one of many volunteers who spent time at Auckland City Mission, an organisation that supports thousands of people each year who are going through tough times.

“It was a wonderful experience being able to provide service to not only the Auckland City Mission but to those they assist in the community who are in need of clothing,” Brother Bennalack said.

“It was gratifying to think that each piece of clothing would be provided to someone in the community in need.”

He also noted the service of those who give of their time and energy on a daily basis at Auckland City Mission.

“What a privilege it was to work side by side with two of their workers, Jackie, who has worked there for 20 years, and Trish, 17 years. They were excited to know that we were willing to give up some of our time to help support them and the people they provide clothing for.”

Richard Hunter, who lent a hand with another group at the Glenfield Salvation Army food bank, said, “I really enjoyed meeting the wonderful folks at the food bank. Their service is desperately needed by many individuals and families in our community who are doing it tough this winter.

“Our friends at the Salvation Army have a reputation for working together to bless those who need help the most, right now. I saw the love of God and love of neighbour up close today.”

One of the coordinators of the week of service activities, Luisa Vaifale, said, “It was a humbling experience walking into the doors of Auckland City Mission for the first time.

“There were numberless stacks of food in boxes, clothing, and furniture to be sorted, all for the benefit of



IMAGE COURTESY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS LIBRARY

Left to right: Nana Lafolua, Vanessa Poleo, Luisa Vaifale, Anna Ma'u, Marilyn Lesa, and Eloree Wilson sorting some of the donated items at the Auckland City Mission

those who do not have what many of us take for granted at times.”

She added, “I’m so grateful for these agencies and their employees, many of whom have worked there for many years, providing for those who are in need.”

Sister Vaifale also expressed gratitude for the Latter-day Saint volunteers for being “willing and kindhearted.”

The regular day-to-day work of the Pacific Area administration office staff and volunteers is to support the humanitarian, welfare, self-reliance, education, construction and other efforts of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New Zealand, Australia, Papua New Guinea, and the islands of the South Pacific. ■

TIP OF THE MONTH

The Power of Obedience

By LDS Family Services

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught of the power of obedience to invite specific blessings into our lives:

“There is a law . . . upon which all blessings are predicated—

“And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.”¹

We may tend to think of obedience as a principle that only applies to spiritual matters, such as covenants, sin, repentance and worthiness. However, obedience is equally relevant to temporal matters, whether that be physical health, mental health, relationships, employment, study,

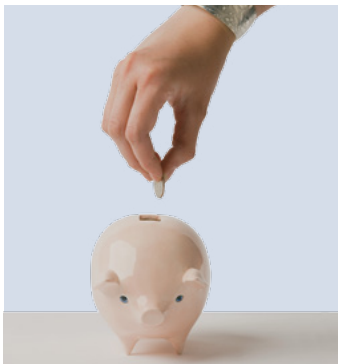
training, or budgeting, among other temporal goals.

The blessings we seek for our temporal lives are equally predicated upon obedience to laws and principles. President Spencer W. Kimball taught, “We deal with many things which are thought to be not so spiritual; but all things are spiritual with the Lord, and he expects us to listen, and to obey, and to follow the commandments.”² Gaining a knowledge and understanding of the laws that govern temporal blessings will help us to identify that which we need to obey in order to claim those blessings.

We cannot claim the blessings of health whilst not obediently observing the laws that govern a healthy body, as outlined in the Word of Wisdom.³ Similarly, we cannot disobey the principles that govern communication with a loved one and expect that the relationship will be strong. We cannot disobey the requirements of financial discipline and restraint and expect to have no debts. To achieve temporal blessings we must seek to know and then learn to obey the laws and principles that govern those blessings. ■

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–21.
2. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Lord Expects His Saints to Follow the Commandments,” *Ensign*, May 1977, 7.
3. See Doctrine and Covenants 89.



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