

# NEW ZEALAND LOCAL PAGES

## AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

### Making a Difference

By Elder David J. Thomson

Area Seventy



Elder David J. Thomson

In the book of Jude in the New Testament we find these simple words: “And of some have compassion, making a difference” (Jude 1:22). There are many ways that we can make a difference in our own family, in our ward or branch and in the community. Our compassion is a product of faith and hope and is closely linked to charity, which we know is an attribute of the Saviour.

One of the objectives of the work that you and I do in building the kingdom of God is to increase faith in our Heavenly Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and His Atonement. My hope today is that as you consider what you will read, your faith will grow into a desire to act for the salvation of others and that you will feel prompted to make a difference by preparing to serve as a senior missionary.

Several years ago, Elder David B. Haight (1906–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counselled: “The goal of every physically able couple in the Church, just as it is for every . . . young man in the Church, should be to serve a mission. No finer example can be given, no finer testimony can be borne by parents to children or grandchildren, than through missionary service in their mature years”

(“My Neighbor—My Brother!” *Ensign*, May 1987, 61).

Years later in general conference, President Thomas S. Monson turned his attention to more mature members with this very specific call for senior couples:

“And now to you mature brothers and sisters: *we need many, many more senior couples*. To the faithful couples now serving or who have served in the past, we thank you for your faith and devotion to the gospel of Jesus Christ. You serve willingly and well and accomplish great good.

“To those of you who are not yet to the season of life when you might serve a couples mission, I urge you to *prepare now* for the day when you

and your spouse might do so. As your circumstances allow, as you are eligible for retirement, and as your health permits, make yourselves available to leave home and give full-time missionary service. There are few times in your lives when you will enjoy the sweet spirit and satisfaction that come from giving full-time service together in the work of the Master” (“As We Meet Together Again,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 6; emphasis added).

You will note that as well as expressing gratitude for those who do serve, President Monson urged the rest of us to prepare now. That invitation was issued seven years ago. I wonder if we have exercised faith sufficient to respond to that call from our



prophet to prepare to serve. Those of us who heard his words seven years ago are now seven years closer to the time he spoke of when we might be able to serve.

In my Church service I have seen the Lord's work grow and progress through senior couples serving in a variety of ways. Here are a few examples from my area.

**Elder and Sister Damron** are currently serving in the New Zealand Hamilton Mission as member-leader support. Their mission plans were delayed a bit while they cared for an elderly relative, but now they are here loving and supporting the local members and helping build the branches where they have been assigned.

**Elder Joe Hay and Sister Sue Hay** are full-time Church-service missionaries working as directors at Camp Tuhikaramea in Temple View, New Zealand. After retiring, there was nothing they wanted to do more than serve at the camp to help our young people who come there to enjoy their experience learning and growing in the gospel.

**Elder Alan Templeton and Sister Jan Templeton** have served several missions in far-off places like Russia and the USA and recently completed a service mission, serving full-time in the New Zealand Hamilton Mission office while still living at home. They have received their call for their next mission to Ghana.

Some of us spent many years helping and supporting young people as they prepared for missionary service—now it's our turn!

Preparing for a senior mission takes time and effort, so best to start that preparation sooner rather than later. There are lots of things you can do right now to prepare, even if you're not in circumstances which would enable you to start serving soon:

- Assess your financial position—do you have savings, access to pension funds, or other resources that could help you serve? Are there financial commitments you need to resolve before serving?
- Consider your health, skills, experience and personal situation. This will help you determine where and how you may want to serve and for how long—senior missions are generally between 6 and 23 months' duration.
- Discuss your mission plans with your family and seek their support and commitment to help.
- Continue to study and live the gospel, pray and serve in your ward or branch while you prepare.

One of my favourite scriptures is the words of Peter, the Apostle, speaking to the household of Cornelius about his beloved Saviour. He described Jesus as one "who went about doing good . . . ; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38). In your own nation and

across the Pacific and the world, the Lord is calling faithful couples to serve in a variety of different ways, adapted to the capacity of any of us. He is offering us the opportunity to do some good. There will be something you can do to make a difference. I testify that this service will change your life and your family in time and in eternity. I pray we will each have the faith to answer the call of our prophet to serve our Master, Jesus the Christ. ■

## LOCAL PAGES

# Mum Finds Way to Give Back

By Shilo Kino

A holiday at a beach house was the last thing on Ronda's mind when she found out she had only a year to live.

But it ended up being exactly what she needed.

In October 2013, Ronda Amende was diagnosed with small intestine cancer.

"It was a huge shock," she said. "I don't think anything ever prepares you for that. Any terminal diagnosis is a shock."

She describes the next three months as a particularly stressful period. Her children all had exams, and eldest child Hunter had just got his mission



**Ronda Amende (centre) is the founder of TimeOut, a nonprofit organization that allows people to donate holiday homes for terminally ill persons and their families to stay in.**

So the donated time out took the pressure off us financially and it was flexible to fit around when I was well enough to travel.”

The special thing about TimeOut is that you can serve in multiple ways, she said.

TimeOut was started by Ronda in 2016 and continues to grow.

“There are little miracles happening all of the time, helping us to establish and run TimeOut,” she said. “People in the community who own the holiday homes have been so generous and so willing to help. It’s nice to see that generosity in the community. We often get down and gloomy with how bad the world is, but when you see people’s generosity like this, it is amazing and heartwarming.”

She said her faith and understanding of the gospel has helped her immensely. “Being positive is great, but it’s not about that. It is about faith to know that no matter whether I live or die, this is what my journey is. I believe strongly that Heavenly Father has a plan for everything. It is my job to have faith in Him and His plan.

“We all have choices we must make every day. We all try and find out what Heavenly Father wants us to do and do our best to do His will. TimeOut is just one of those things that Heavenly Father has asked me to do.” ■

*For more information or if you would like to be a volunteer, go to [www.timeoutnz.org](http://www.timeoutnz.org) or email [info@timeoutnz.org](mailto:info@timeoutnz.org).*

call to Leeds, England. When Hunter left on his mission, Ronda wasn’t sure if she would see him again.

It was at this difficult time that a friend offered a holiday home in the Coromandel for the family to have some time out.

“We had a lovely time being together, and it was just what we needed,” Ronda said. “We left all our worries behind and were able to have quality time together, leaving all other stresses behind. It allowed us to focus on being together. It was so simple—playing games together, chatting, going for walks on the beach. It was about being together.”

When Christmas came around and Ronda was undergoing chemotherapy,

a work colleague offered his parents’ holiday home in Taupo to Ronda. It ended up being another answer to prayers. Ronda and her family were able to spend Christmas with extended family because of this act of generosity.

The kindness of these two friends is what inspired TimeOut, a nonprofit organization that allows people to donate time in holiday homes for terminally ill persons and their families to stay in.

“Someone donating their home for me to use made a big difference,” Ronda said. “When you are going through something like this you never know if you are going to be healthy enough to travel on a fixed date and your family finances are under strain.

# The Blessings of Learning Chinese

By Shilo Kino

When Chinese people hear David Purdue speak Mandarin for the first time, they can't quite believe it.

"They get a shock and then I repeat myself again and then they finally figure out I'm speaking Chinese," he said. "They have a laugh with each other. I guess they're a bit taken aback."

Thirty-two-year-old David, who was raised in Tauranga, New Zealand, served in the Taiwan Taichung Mission from 2004 to 2006.

"For a Māori boy coming out of the bush and getting sent to a city with 24 million people speaking Mandarin Chinese, it was an eye-opener," he said.

Learning the language, he said, unlocked many hearts, including his own.

"It took me 12 months before I was confident enough to share the gospel in Mandarin," he said. "And because of that, my relationships with family members in Taiwan became closer. They fell in love with us and we fell in love with them. I can confidently say I still have family back in Taiwan."

David never thought he would pursue an education, let alone study Mandarin Chinese in university. But after a meeting with his mission president, David knew he had to use the talents he was given and pursue an education.

David majored in Mandarin at Auckland University of Technology and has traveled and worked all over China. He now works for a scaffolding company, using the language to help communicate between businesses.

For Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye, learning Mandarin has also changed her life.

Melissa, husband Joseph and their four children moved to New Zealand almost four years ago from California.

Although Melissa's father is Japanese and her mum is Chinese, Melissa didn't grow up speaking Chinese.



*Melissa is a professor in Asian studies at Auckland University.*



*David majored in Mandarin at Auckland University of Technology.*

The busy mum is a professor in Asian studies at Auckland University and a firm believer in education, completing her Ph.D. at Harvard College on the history of the True Jesus Church, a Chinese Pentecostal church, and the history of charismatic Christian modes in China in the twentieth century.

She has also taught Chinese history and Asian history at California State University, Los Angeles, and at Loyola Marymount University, and she has taught American religious history at the University of Hong Kong.

When she was at high school, Melissa wanted to be a scientist but said she was excited at the opportunity to study language.

She studied Chinese at Harvard University, then went on a mission in Taichung, Taiwan, where she became even more fluent in the language.

"Learning Mandarin has completely changed my life," she said. "It has opened up an entire new world into a new career path, a new place for my family to live, and a new language that we can speak with my kids." ■

*To watch the full story on David and Melissa, visit our official Pacific Facebook page at [facebook.com/LDSPacificArea](https://facebook.com/LDSPacificArea).*





LeRoy  
Transfield

## Maori Mormon Artist Wins Design War

By Mormon Newsroom

A design made by a Kiwi-born Saint was selected by the United States Mint to adorn the 2018 World War I American Veterans Centennial silver dollar. A maximum of 400,000 of the limited-edition coins will be minted.

Inspired by his great-uncle who fought in the Maori Battalion in World War I and other veterans whom he has come to know while working on several war memorials in the United States, LeRoy Transfield said, "I [had] done very few low-relief sculptures and no coins," but "all this excitement and energy flowed through me when I first got the news that I was a finalist. I so wanted to create a great design!"

The front of a coin is called the obverse side and the back is called the reverse side. LeRoy said that following a lengthy, laborious and often frustrating process of learning more about coin design and sculpting, the obverse side design concept came to him fairly quickly.

"I finally came up with the soldier profile, collar up and a rifle slung over his shoulder. This was not the final design but a good starting point."

However, he felt the design still needed something more. "That night I had barbed wire going through my head. Soldiers charging barbed wire, wire in the dirt and finally, somehow, wire on my relief sculpture."

But that was not all. Later he determined the relief needed hands. So the rifle would not be slung over the soldier's shoulder; he would hold it. The design of the obverse side of the

coin, titled "Soldier's Charge," was done.

Originally LeRoy thought the reverse side of the coin should feature an eagle, the national bird of the United States. "I just knew it would look good. But when I fleshed it out, it looked terrible!"

Still believing a bird should be on the reverse side, LeRoy remembered that pigeons were used extensively in World War I to carry communications. "I sculpted the bird as best I could, but the final reverse looked not near as good as the obverse."

Running out of time and frustrated that he had not yet finalized the design, he nevertheless took a break from his work to go biking and jump into the river with his daughter before she started school again. It was then that his head cleared and the inspiration finally came.

As LeRoy stood on a bridge waiting to jump into the river, "a thought came to me of using . . . barbed wire again in

contrast to . . . poppies," he said. "The tradition of poppies on ANZAC [Australian and New Zealand Army Corps] Day played a huge role in finally deciding on the reverse design."

The reverse side is titled "Poppies in the Wire."

Proof and uncirculated versions of the coin are expected to be available in January.

Among many others, LeRoy's previous works include memorials for several cities in Utah, where he now resides; a bust of Matthew Cowley displayed in the Matthew Cowley Pacific Church History Centre in Temple View; and a relief sculpture of Jesus Christ and the Apostles above the entry to the Church's Newport Beach California Temple. ■

*LeRoy received his bachelor of fine arts degree from Brigham Young University-Hawaii in 1993. He currently lives with his family in Orem, Utah.*



**A design made by LeRoy Transfield was selected by the United States Mint to adorn the 2018 World War I American Veterans Centennial silver dollar.**



**LeRoy says that the tradition of poppies on ANZAC Day was a major influence on his design for the reverse side of the coin.**

# A Journey to Motherhood

By Celeste Kaka

*Celeste was diagnosed with cancer shortly after she married her husband, George. Here she talks about their journey to becoming parents and the challenges involved.*

As I got older and soon after being married, the idea of having a family was all I wanted. I kept telling my husband, George, how life is short and if we started trying for kids now and had any setbacks, I'd have the time to seek the medical attention I would need. Little did I know the medical attention I needed would be a lot sooner than we thought.

Once we found out I needed to have chemotherapy to cure the cancerous lump in my leg, my doctors suggested doing IVF (in vitro fertilization) where they would essentially retrieve eggs from my body and freeze them until we were ready to start trying to have a family. I remember when they told me, and I was like, "Why the heck do I need to do IVF?" I'd learnt about it in high school, so I knew what it was, but it still didn't make sense to me that I needed to do it.

Then the doctors told me, "Chemo can affect your chances of being fertile and conceiving children, so if you did IVF, you'd increase the likelihood of having a family post chemo."



SUPPLIED

***Celeste was diagnosed with cancer shortly after she married her husband, George.***

So that is where my IVF experience began.

You know how if you're in a waiting room and someone walks in, everyone stops what they're doing just to look at the person? Well, yeah, when my husband and I walked into the waiting room on the first day of my IVF cycle, that's what happened. Not in a rude way; I think more in a

***Celeste said the journey to motherhood is comprised of unique twists and turns.***



SUPPLIED

curious way, like, "They look a little young to be doing IVF" (I mean, most people thought I was way too young to get married, so I'm sure many more thought trying to start a family young was a little crazy). We took our seats and I took a look around. I saw couples, women who had come by themselves or with their older children and women who were accompanied by friends. Essentially it was a great mix of people coming for different reasons yet hoping for the same result.

It was a really humbling experience for me to get a glimpse of the unspoken pains behind conceiving a child. I wondered how many times these women had done IVF, if they'd been successful or not, or how much of a financial strain it was. One lady came in, got her injection and blood tests and left straight to work! These women were going about their daily duties and responsibilities, all the while carrying this emotional plea of hoping that they would finally be able to have the privilege of being a mother. I'd see women leave with smiles on their faces but also many who left in tears. Talk about heartbreaking!

Emotionally, IVF is extremely hard. It was for me at least, and I only did one round—some women do multiple! My emotions are all over the place in my "normal life," so when I had to take daily injections of hormones and manipulate my body, it didn't make it any easier.

It's no secret that the IVF process is invasive, but the pain that can come with it is a new experience for sure. I'm no medical professional, so I'm sure there's a better way to describe this, but for me it felt like I was nine months pregnant! My body had blown up so much that I couldn't fit into any of my clothes. When I could walk I literally waddled from the hospital bed to the shower, and no position brought me comfort. Sitting hurt, lying down hurt, everything hurt. It was just crazy to see my body transform like that in such a short time.

Although my experience with IVF had a few unexpected setbacks, I was blessed to have retrieved six eggs after my cycle, three fully mature and three half mature but mature enough to freeze.

Every mother's journey to motherhood is comprised of unique twists, turns and miracles, most of which remain within the knowledge of their immediate family. Because George and I have experienced seeing the realities of what many other couples face, we have seen firsthand how difficult conceiving children can be. So before you decide to ask a couple why they "don't have any kids yet," it would be wise to think twice. Starting a family isn't as easy as "the birds and the bees" story suggests.

Whether you're a woman that goes through IVF unsuccessfully, endures the heartbreak of miscarriage, is denied

an application for adoption or is facing another setback whilst trying to conceive, just remember you are not alone and you are most definitely not a failure as a woman! These setbacks and trials are more common than you think, and although they are hard to relive and share with others, your silent battles need not be without

the comfort of women and couples around the world.

I'm only halfway through my chemo treatments, so I don't know yet what my verdict will be as to becoming a mother and what avenues I may need to take. What I do know is that with God, all things are possible and eternal. ■

## MISSIONARY MOMENTS

### The Church Is True

By Claudia Mitchell

I remember clearly when the prophet announced the age change for sister missionaries. I was 16 years old and visiting another ward with my family. When we heard about the announcement, my mother and I stepped out of sacrament meeting so we could search online for the official announcement. It shocked me because previously I felt that 21 was so far away and I would be well into university and dating seriously, so a mission was the last thing on my mind. But when I heard 19 was now the new age for sisters, I knew that I would serve a mission. This announcement changed everything for me. Suddenly a whole new path opened up.

The next three years I prepared to serve a mission—finishing seminary, working full-time to save money,

studying at university to develop good habits and working to keep myself unspotted from the world. My father and three older brothers had all served missions, so I felt some pressure and I wanted to be certain that I was going to serve the Lord and not to impress my family.

One night as I was reading the Book of Mormon and pondering over my decision to serve, I had an epiphany—2 Nephi 16:8: "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said: Here am I; send me." This scripture spoke directly to me as if the Lord was asking me, "Who will go for us?" And I could, now, wholeheartedly reply, "Here I am. Send me." And send me He did to the Fiji Suva Mission for 18 months to labour with the beautiful people there and make lifelong friends with the sisters who would help me through this time.



I grew up in the Church and earned the right to a testimony. I know the Church is true, and these are the words I wrote, in various ways, every day in my journal. Each day the statement “the Church is true” would vary according to how my day had gone and the experiences I had had for the day, reinforcing a fundamental truth I have held dear all of my life. It’s a simple phrase, “the Church is true,” but it held so much strength and motivation for me during this challenging but wonderful 18 months of my life.

I remember watching my first convert, Sala, enter the waters of baptism. It was as if I got a small glimpse into the love Heavenly Father has for His children. I wrote in my journal that night:

**Saturday, 2nd April 2016:** “I am very emotionally, spiritually, and physically drained today. One of Heavenly Father’s special daughters took one step closer to Him, and yet again *the Church is still true.*”

This phrase helped me to remember what my purpose was:

**Friday, 19th August 2016:** “I know that serving others is something I want to continue doing for the rest of my life. *The Church is very true today.*”

I wrote the phrase again when I felt love and concern for the welfare of others:

**Monday, 12th September 2016:** “I love my family so much. When a family does not want to take the lessons anymore it really hurts me



**Claudia Mitchell served in the Fiji Suva Mission.**

because I want them to have an eternal family like mine. Everything will be okay because the *teachings of the Church will still be true tomorrow.*”

Again, the phrase fit so perfectly in my journal entry about growth and self-improvement:

**Thursday, 15th December 2016:** “It’s such a blessing getting to learn and grow each day. Even when it gets hard, I know I can look back and see my life change and hopefully the lives of others too. I can’t believe I only have 6 more months to go. I have so many things that I still want to accomplish, but I know there is *no better place to learn and grow than in the true Church.*”

In times of doubt and inadequacy, this phrase always brought me the most comfort:

**Wednesday, 19th April 2017:** “I wonder if I am being too hard on myself. I wonder if my service is the best it can be. I can’t seem to connect with others lately. I just want to do well and make Him proud. Even when I don’t feel that I am good enough—*the Church will always be true.*”

Even in my last weeks of serving as a full-time missionary, this phrase I had come to love gave me the peace and comfort I needed:

**Thursday, June 1st 2017:** “I can’t believe my mission is coming to an end. I am excited about the new life I will be starting when I return home. I have learned so much from this experience. I love the Lord, and whether I’m here serving a mission or I am at home—*the Church will always remain true.*”

This statement is one of the fundamental parts of my testimony which I loved to declare each day and be reminded that the Church is true, Jesus is the Christ and this is His restored gospel. President Monson is the living prophet and the Book of Mormon is true.

The Church is true: that was my declaration and my comfort and it kept me going. It continues to be my declaration and my comfort and will keep me going through the days ahead. ■

*Claudia Mitchell is from Auckland, New Zealand, and served in the Fiji Suva Mission from December 2015 to June 2017. She is currently in the YSA ward in Takapuna.*