

# NEW ZEALAND LOCAL PAGES

## AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

### Ministering to the One

By Elder Adolf J. Johansson

Area Seventy

*Whenever you feel like you are just another number, always remember you are number ONE.*

A few years ago, we moved into a new ward. My ward priesthood leader assigned me a home teaching companion, and one of the families I was assigned to visit was a man who had been away from church for many years. He was less active and didn't want to come back to church even after our visits and invitations.

While I was away on an assignment to another country, I texted this dear brother with an encouraging message and another invitation to come to church. I assured him that if he needed a ride, my wife could pick up

him and his wife. While on my knees offering my prayers, I heard a buzz on my phone with his text message reply. The text read, "My wife and I have been talking and we feel like we are just another number in the Church."

While still on my knees, I prayed to Heavenly Father, saying, "Father, please, see this text. What should I say?" Just then an inspiring thought came to my mind. I replied with the message: "Dear brother, whenever you feel like you are just another number, always remember you are number ONE."



Elder Adolf J.  
Johansson

I didn't hear back from him that day, but when I returned home the following Sunday, I went to church and there was the dear brother and his wife. As I greeted him, he shook my hand and said, "I just had to come. I couldn't stay away."

As I think of this experience, I was so grateful to hear President Russell M. Nelson announce a significant change to home and visiting teaching during the Sunday afternoon session of April general conference.

President Nelson said: "We have made the decision to retire home teaching and visiting teaching as we have known them. Instead, we will implement a newer, holier approach to caring for and ministering to others. We will refer to these efforts simply as 'ministering.'"<sup>1</sup>

To the Apostle Peter and to each of us the Lord says, "Feed my sheep" (John 21:17). We do this as ministering brothers and sisters in a unified way under the direction of priesthood and auxiliary leaders.

We must include our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, in our ministering. Said the Lord, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). As we prayerfully minister, seeking revelation and following inspiration, we will be



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the voice of the Lord for His sheep to follow.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland also explained in the Sunday afternoon session of the April general conference some of the many ways we can minister to one another:

“As the First Presidency counseled years ago, do the best you can. In addition to whatever schedule you establish for actual visits, that calendar can be supplemented with telephone calls, written notes, texts, emails, video chats, conversations at Church meetings, shared service projects, social activities, and a host of possibilities in the world of social media. . . .

“ . . . *We* at Church headquarters don’t need to know *how* or *where* or *when* you make contact with your people; we just need to know and care that you *do* make it and that you bless them in every way you can.”<sup>2</sup>

In His simple but compelling parable of the lost sheep, the Saviour said, “What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?” (Luke 15:4).

This is a reminder that whenever you feel like you are just another number, always remember that to the Lord you are number ONE. ■

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Ministering,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 100.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Be With and Strengthen Them,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 102.

## Māori Lawyer Sworn into the Bar with Book of Mormon

By Shilo Kino

As a child, Nephi Pukepuke wanted to be an All Black or a surfer. He never imagined he would become a lawyer.

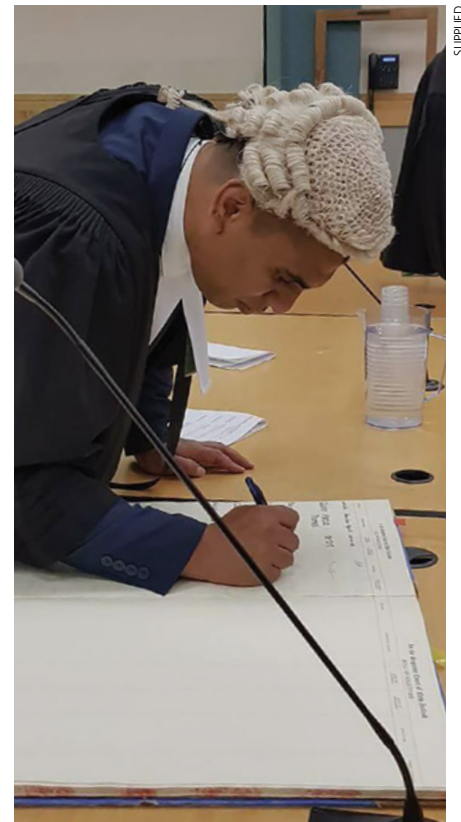
The 28-year-old was admitted to the bar recently at a special ceremony at Whangarei High Court, using both the Holy Bible and the Book of Mormon.

“The Church and the Book of Mormon is a huge aspect of my life and part of my identity. I wanted that to represent me when I swore my oath and became a member of the bar,” he said.

“I was getting a few weird looks from other people, but the judge and the registrar knew it was important to me and they were very accepting. I wanted to bring a God that I know, not a God that the world knows, into the ceremony. It felt really good.”

Nephi is from Takahiwai, Northland, and studied a Bachelor of Laws at the University of Waikato, specializing in equity law, environmental law, Maori land law and the Treaty of Waitangi law.

“There are so many people who aren’t engaged in the justice system because it’s a foreign system to them. So, explaining it to them as a lawyer is a small blessing in itself,” he said.



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***Nephi credits scripture study and prayer as a tool for helping him succeed in education.***

“I remember one day being with friends and realizing why I needed to study law. I thought of some of the struggles my people were going through and I want to go back home and help them out. That’s the moment I really decided to be a lawyer.”

Nephi began studying in 2008 and then left to serve his mission in Ogden, Utah, from 2009 to 2011.

When he came home, Nephi began working at factories in Australia and New Zealand.

“I would work enough to get money and then I would go on road trips or go surfing and do something fun, but I knew it wasn’t sustainable, especially if one day I was going to have a family. I needed to think about my future. The nature of my work also felt soulless. Basically, I was working to support a fun lifestyle.”

Nephi made the decision to get back to university and finish his law degree. He graduated in May 2017.

“People underestimate themselves, but anything we want to achieve is possible,” he said.

“God wants us to live up to our worth. We have a greater calling in life, a self-worth that enables us to achieve more than what is around us.

“Seeking education is important. It was obviously a lot of hard work studying law, but you don’t have to be a brilliant person. You just need to be passionate and purposeful.

“I made sure I kept up my scripture study and prayers. That helped a lot, especially when I noticed a lot of anxiety and depression can creep in for students. But keeping up the regular habits and being around good friends helped me to have a balanced lifestyle.”

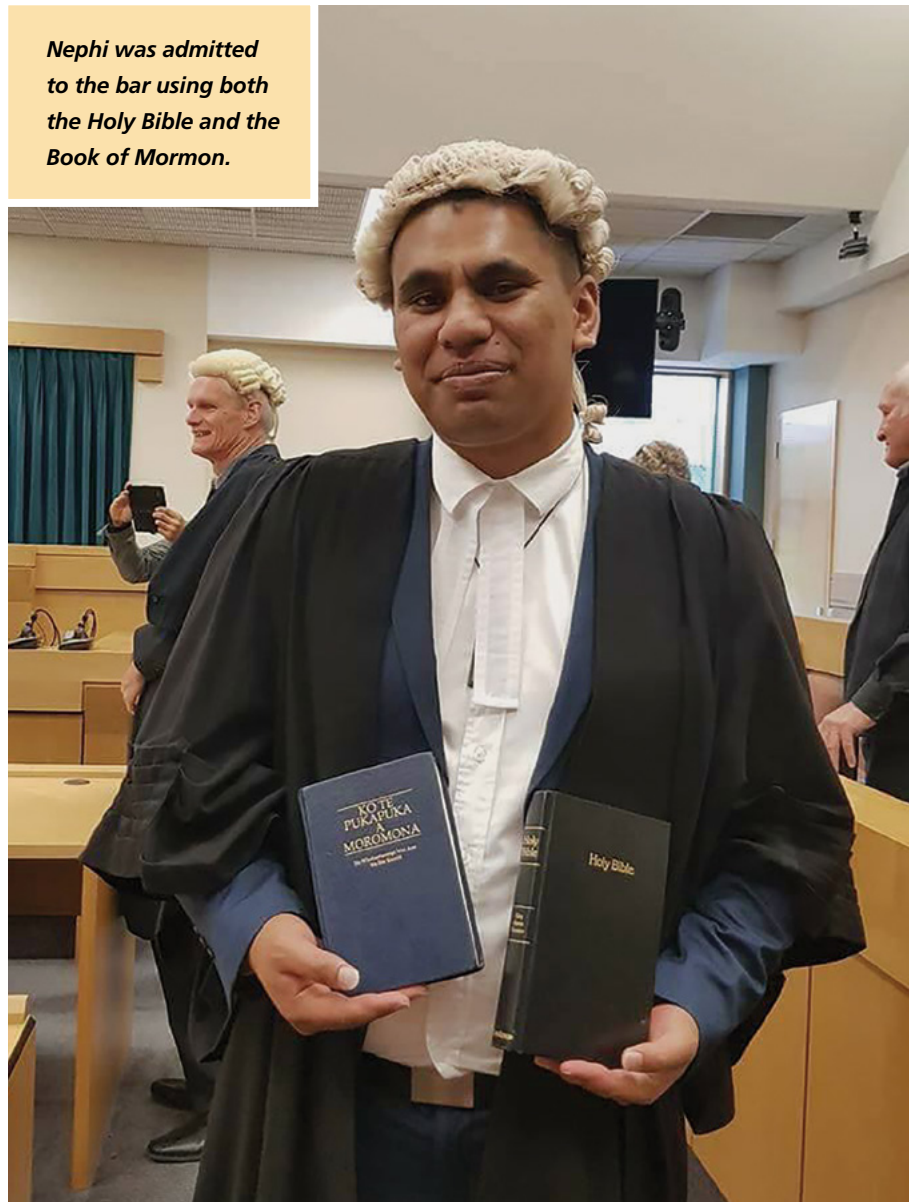
Nephi also credits his mum, Wini, who obtained a degree while raising both Nephi and his younger brother, Jarom, as a solo parent.

“My mum has been fundamental to my journey, not just becoming a lawyer but helping me be the best person

I can be. She really steered me to go to university straight after school,” he said. “My brother and I were both under 10 when she graduated, and that was a great example to me.”

Nephi said his dad was also supportive of his decision to study law. ■

***Nephi was admitted to the bar using both the Holy Bible and the Book of Mormon.***



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# Hamilton New Zealand Temple Marks 60 Years of Service

By James and Shirley McGuire

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*The Hamilton New Zealand Temple in 2018*



*David O. McKay at the Hamilton Temple dedication cultural celebration*

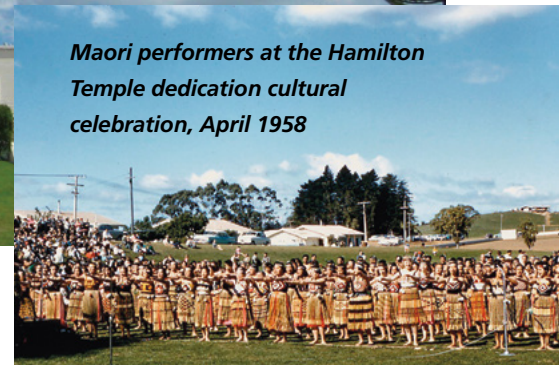


*President David O. McKay and his wife, Emma Ray McKay, leaving the Hamilton New Zealand Temple following the dedication*

*Visitors waiting to attend the Hamilton Temple open house in April 1958*



*Maori performers at the Hamilton Temple dedication cultural celebration, April 1958*



Sixty years ago, beloved prophet David O. McKay was in New Zealand to dedicate the newly constructed Hamilton New Zealand Temple. The temple was first announced on 17 February 1955, and ground was broken on 21 December 1955.

Originally dedicated on 20 April 1958, the Hamilton New Zealand Temple has now been operating for 60 years. It was the Church's first temple in the Southern Hemisphere and the eleventh operating temple in the world. Many Saints from the

Pacific, including Samoa, would travel to New Zealand to attend the temple.

Speaking of the dedication, Waitohi Elkington, one of the labour

missionaries who attended the second session on 20 April, recently recalled: “It was a memorial occasion for all of us to see the completion of our temple here in New Zealand and to hear the prophet offer a prayer of thanksgiving and expressing his love for the people of New Zealand.”

Over 5,000 people attended the dedication, which extended over several sessions. Accommodating language differences, separate sessions were held for Samoans, Tongans and Maori.

Surrounded by the newly constructed David O. McKay Stake and Cultural Events Centre and the refurbished Wendell B. Mendenhall Library, George R. Biesinger Hall and Kai Hall, the temple stands majestically on a hill in Temple View, New Zealand (a suburb of Hamilton), overlooking the Waikato River valley. It primarily serves members of the Church in New Zealand and the Cook Islands.

On 22 July 2018, the temple will close for renovation, including seismic upgrading. It is expected to reopen in 2021 and will be rededicated at that time.

Constructed by more than 1,500 volunteers known as labour missionaries, the 42,304 square-foot temple serves as a place where Church members learn about God’s plan for mankind and make commitments to live Christlike lives. ■

## New Leaders Announced for Dunedin Saints

By Mormon Newsroom

Early this year in April, members of the Dunedin New Zealand Stake attended a meeting where new stake leadership was announced.

Members of the outgoing presidency were acknowledged for their efforts on behalf of Dunedin Latter-day Saints.

Elder Ian S. Ardern, Second Counsellor in the Pacific Area

Presidency, presided at the conference. Elder Alistair B. Odgers, Area Seventy, also participated in the meeting.

The newly called leader of the Dunedin stake is President Maurice Turketo.

Called as counsellors in the new presidency are Justin Kaufana, first counsellor, and Jason Mather, second counsellor.

President Jason Mather in his remarks acknowledged and thanked the outgoing presidency for their hard work and efforts on behalf of the Dunedin stake.

Sharing an insight from President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973), Elder



*The new president of the Dunedin New Zealand Stake is Maurice Turketo, and the counsellors in the new presidency are Justin Kaufana, first counsellor, and Jason Mather, second counsellor.*

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Ardern told those gathered that the most important commandment for you is the one with which you have the most difficulty.<sup>1</sup>

He went on to say, “We need to establish the basics of the gospel in our children to eliminate the rust that can

corrode the generational links that help bind families together in the gospel by daily prayer and scripture study.”

Speaking to the members and guests, Elder Odgers called upon those attending to “obey commandments at a higher level.”

President Turketo told those attending, “The Lord knows each of us—He knows our thoughts and the intents of our hearts.” ■

**NOTE**

1. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* (2000), 30.

**MISSIONARY MOMENTS**

## Faithful Wife Keeps Serving

By Shilo Kino

It was an unexpected love story for John and Julie Sennett.

Julie joined the Church in 1990 and she met John in 2004, soon after he was baptized.

It wasn't until five years later that they met again at a singles fireside. John asked for Julie's phone number and they began dating.

“He started taking me to Australian bush dances and colonial dances. He introduced me to all of these things and we had a really good time,” Julie said.

“John always said to me that he was looking for someone who loves God first. He loved the gospel and he honoured his priesthood.”

John and Julie are both from Adelaide, Australia, and were married in 2009. They were later sealed in the Adelaide Australia Temple.

“Even if we had bad moments, we made sure to always pray and read scriptures together. We also made sure to attend the temple as often as we could. I just love that man so much.”

In 2015 they submitted their mission papers and were called to serve as preservation specialists for FamilySearch in Adelaide, at the State Records of South Australia Centre.

“We mostly worked with non-members and we became a family. Everyone loved John. He formed friendships with everyone.”



**John and Julie Sennett served as preservation specialists for FamilySearch in Adelaide.**

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John also had a bicycle business, and he serviced bikes for the missionaries Tuesday and Thursday nights and during the day on some Saturdays.

However, halfway through their 23-month mission, tragedy struck.

“John loved hiking,” Julie said. “So on preparation day, we went on a hike, due to the records place being closed for a public holiday. We went to a small cliff front and began using a GPS to find out where we were. Then we realized we were in the wrong spot.

“John decided to go in another direction, and I began losing my footing because there was loose gravel. I had a prompting that it wasn’t safe, and John said to me, ‘You go over there and make a picnic. I will meet you back there.’

“My husband was a hiker and he was quite confident. But I watched him for a while because I was concerned. When I felt it was OK, I headed towards the picnic area.

“I heard a shuffling sound and I heard him say something . . . he had lost his footing. As I turned I watched his body tumble to the bottom of a 50-metre cliff. When he hit his head he was killed outright, as reported by an inquest later.”

“For a couple of months, it was hard to get through life,” Julie said.

After constant prayer and reading the Book of Mormon, Julie gained the

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**Julie gained the courage to return to the mission field two months after John’s death.**



courage to return to the mission field two months after John’s death. She finished the rest of their mission in February this year.

“I just kept reading three pages of the Book of Mormon every day as part of a mission challenge we undertook and I found strength in that,” she said. “I felt like Heavenly Father was talking to me and Jesus was standing by me and they were getting me through this. I began to see a light. I thought about the people at the State Records of South Australia who knew us. I remembered the work we had started. I thought to myself, ‘I need to go back.’

“The mission is something we planned to do together. I also became

aware of the people we got close to; I was concerned with how they were. I wanted to go back to see them.”

Julie has already served two service missions, one for CES (the Church Educational System) and one serving in the Adelaide mission office. This was her first full-time mission with her husband.

A mission is a road to the unknown, she said.

“The Lord is waiting to bless you. When you turn your life over to Him and serve Him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, He will surely bless you.

“Heavenly Father loves all of His children and wants to see them grow and become closer together as a

family and to work together to help one another. When you serve a mission, you become a different person.”

Julie loves going to the temple and undertook a self-reliance course soon after her mission. She now hopes to become a children’s writer.

“I have learnt more about my self through scripture study and prayer. Heavenly Father has blessed me with a new journey,”

she said. “I don’t know what I’m going to be doing after my books and writing, but I’m hoping I can serve other missions when the time is right.”

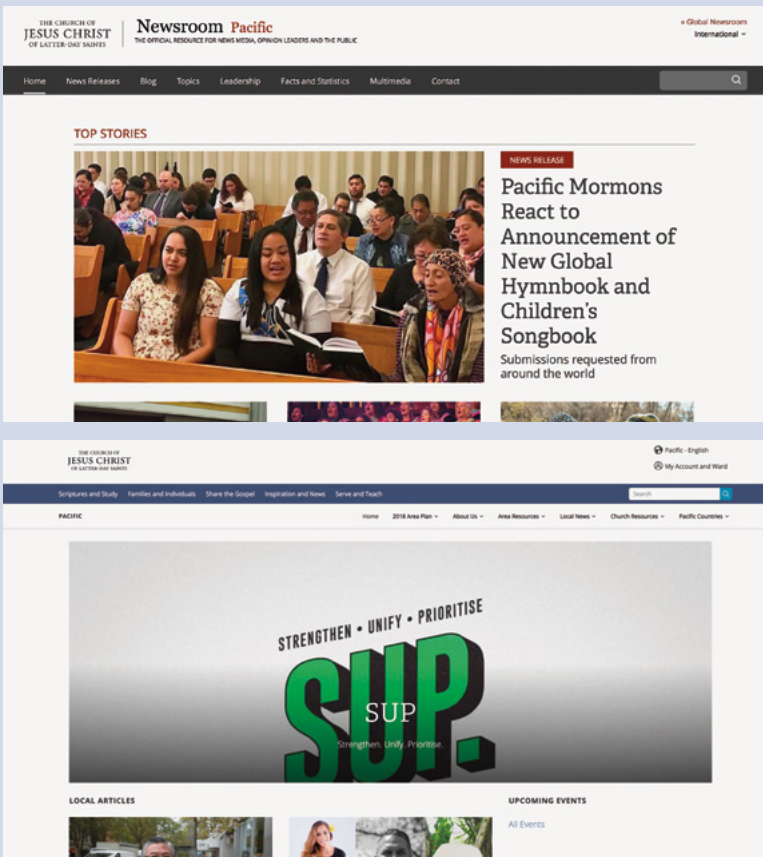
Julie is very grateful for the love and support she has received since John’s accident. “I’m deeply touched by all the support and especially those who continue to minister to me,” she said. ■

## CALL FOR ARTICLES

Our local pages section is produced by members in our own area under the guidance of our Area Presidency so that it can address the needs and experiences of members where we live. The inclusion of the local pages in each issue depends on the availability of local content. We are invited to contribute our faith-promoting thoughts and experiences by contacting our editor:

**liaihona-pacific@ldschurch.org ■**

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