

## AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

### Raising the Rising Generation

By Elder Ian S. Ardern

Second Counselor, Pacific Area Presidency



Elder Ian S. Ardern

Recently I participated in a camp for the young single adults in Tonga. There before me, on that bright Friday morning, sat over five hundred of the Lord's best. They had danced, sung, enjoyed wholesome activities together and listened to uplifting instruction from each other and their leaders. It was a joy to be with them, to feel of their goodness and to know that before me sat some of the Church, community and business leaders of tomorrow.

We have much to celebrate with the good being accomplished by the rising generation of young men and women in the Pacific. Many of them are serving missions, marrying in the temple and serving in the wards and branches throughout the countries of the Pacific. As good as these achievements are, there is still a significant gap between those who are remaining strong and true to their covenants and those who are not, and that is a key concern for all of us.

The Pacific Area Presidency calls upon the rising generation to care for the eternal welfare of their own souls. No member of this generation can abdicate that responsibility to someone else. Each must ensure their eternal salvation by nourishing

themselves spiritually, which necessitates the making and keeping of covenants and participating in wholesome activities. A disciplined disciple of Christ will have the Saviour as the center of their lives and make the things that matter most a priority. Daily sincere prayer, scripture reading, attendance at seminary and institute, Church attendance, holding a current temple recommend, the renewing of covenants and service to others are just a few of the things that matter most. Yes, each member of the rising generation must take responsibility for their spiritual well-being by doing the things that matter most.

With Christ as the center of our lives, there are four other areas that will help us to remain strong and true to the restored gospel. They include an appreciation for your membership in the Church. The moment we become casual about that is the very moment casualness about our covenants begins. Second, we must remember that there is a plan for God's children on earth and ultimately we are to return to live with Him once more. The better we understand the great plan of happiness, the more likely we are to successfully complete the plan. Third, we must remember that missionary service deepens our conversion to Christ



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and increases our faith in Him. We all need to be fully converted to withstand the darts of the adversary. The fourth essential is to be committed to marriage. Marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and should not be unnecessarily postponed.

Nobody is meant to be alone in mortality, and so God has ensured that when opposition comes, help is available. The rising generation will find that help in good parents, priesthood and auxiliary leaders, and helpful friends who share their values. Like all members, they will find that the best help is found on bended knee as they plead for assistance to overcome the troubles and temptations that confront them. They will feel, as I have, the impressions of the Holy Ghost guiding and reassuring them through troubled times.

In the interest of further helping the rising generation, Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles made a special plea that “adult men—fathers, single adults, leaders, home teachers—be worthy models and help the rising generation of boys become men. Teach them social and other skills: how to participate in a conversation, how to get acquainted and interact with others, how to relate to women and girls, how to serve, how to be active and enjoy recreation, how to pursue hobbies without becoming addicted, how to correct mistakes and make better choices.”<sup>1</sup> Adult men of

the Pacific, we ask you to arise to this call by a prophet of God.

He further noted that “a woman’s moral influence is nowhere more powerfully felt or more beneficially employed than in the home. There is no better setting for rearing the rising generation than the traditional family, where a father and a mother work in harmony to provide for, teach, and nurture their children.”<sup>2</sup> Clearly, a strong LDS home is an important component

in raising the rising generation.

We invite all parents and leaders to ensure that in the face of opposition and temptation, none of the rising generation is lost and that you join with them in their quest to remain true to their covenants and to rescue their peers who have wandered. ■

#### NOTES

1. D. Todd Christofferson, “Brethren, We Have Work to Do,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 48.
2. D. Todd Christofferson, “The Moral Force of Women,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 29–30.

#### LOCAL PAGES

## Saints Light the World

By Mormon Newsroom

In December, members across Australia participated in service opportunities during the Christmas season to celebrate the life of Jesus Christ.

The “Light the World” Christmas initiative focused on celebrating and sharing the light of Jesus Christ, “the light of the world” (John 8:12).

### Victoria

*As the “Light the World” campaign gets into full swing, day 2 focuses on the scripture “I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink” (Matthew 25:35).*

People can thirst both physically and spiritually. Needs can be quenched when others respond in kindness.

That’s exactly what the youth from the Melbourne Australia Wyndham Stake did as they prepared “baby boxes” for mothers and their newborns.

The “Baby Box Project” is run by local member of the state parliament Dr. Rachel Carling-Jenkins, who saw a way to provide for the physical needs of the child and to lift the spirits of the mother.

Each “baby box” includes a small gift for the mother and newborn items—a baby blanket, wipes, jumpsuit, beanies, socks and disposable nappies. The youth, who had gathered for a mini youth conference, enjoyed turning their attention from their games and

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**Youth from the Melbourne Australia Wyndham Stake prepared “baby boxes” for mothers and their newborns.**

Church of Christ residential facility, including Sister Elizabeth Fell, the widowed mother of Cleveland stake president Paul Fell.

The Cleveland YSAs are fulfilling the counsel of President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) to members worldwide “to find someone who is having a hard time or is ill or lonely, and do something for him or her today” (“Help Someone Today,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2017, 80).

Harriet Nicholson, one of the YSA representatives involved, said, “Sharing our musical talents on the Sabbath day is a great way to become closer to the Saviour and demonstrate our love for those who are restricted by age or illness.”

**Western Australia**

*For day 4, the scripture was “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:39).*

Whether our “neighbours” live next door or in another country, we can show Christlike love for them through service.

The last weekend of November, 30 young men from Baldivis, 12–18 years, divided themselves into 10 teams with a goal to cut the lawns of 100 people in a single day.

Working as a team, the boys travelled through their local areas and sought out homes in need of a quick refresh. The boys were trained on how to approach the various home

activities to participate in this project.

Whether it’s physical or spiritual, we can help others receive the life-sustaining water that their bodies need and the living water that their spirits need by following Christ’s example of loving-kindness.

**Queensland**

*Day 3 focused on Sabbath day observance. Matthew 12:12 says, “Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.”*

Young single adults of the Brisbane Australia Cleveland Stake

shared their musical talents with residents of aged-care facilities in their area. Recognizing that music is an excellent way to communicate spiritually with others, especially as a lead-in to the Christmas season, these young people are great ambassadors for their faith.

Under the direction of their stake leaders, the YSAs decided that the Sabbath day was an excellent time to visit and perform for live-in residents at Buckingham Gardens in Alexandra Hills. The choir was warmly welcomed by the 50 residents in the

**Young single adults of the Brisbane Australia Cleveland Stake shared their musical talents with the elderly.**

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**30 young men from Baldvis cut the lawns of 100 people in a single day.**

owners and ask if they could help out by mowing their lawns.

This “Movember” project, named after the cancer awareness project that shares the same name, was the brainchild of Jared Greening, the boys’ youth leader.

Greening said, “Many of the young fellas are not old enough to grow moustaches of their own, so we thought we would mow lawns instead.”

James Bennett, bishop of the Baldvis Ward, stated, “Many people have wondered why we continue to run this activity, which is now in its 4th year. Our answer is twofold.

“Firstly, we seek to assist the community which we feel is a great joy and also our duty as Christians to help those in need.

“Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, we seek to build good Christian men to serve in our church and our community. This is a great way to teach our boys that setting a goal, preparing and planning, working hard to meet that goal, and achieving the desired outcome is one of our greatest joys and teaching opportunities.”

Bishop Bennett also reported that they did indeed reach their goal of 100 lawns in a single day.

## Tasmania

*Day 9 was based on the scripture in Matthew 25:36: “I was sick, and ye visited me.”*

The holiday season can be a lonely time for the sick and infirm but not for the elderly residents of Queen Victoria Home in Lindisfarne, Hobart.

They were recently visited by young children from the Rosny Ward in Tasmania.

With hearts full of love and voices sure, the children sang familiar Christmas carols to the joy of those listening. The children’s visits have been so welcomed by the residents for the last four years because they bring their special blend of Christmas cheer to the home and their residents.

Women in the Relief Society of the Rosny Ward made bookmarks and cards for the children to take to the event. After singing, the children were invited to distribute the gifts and spend time talking to residents.

The children’s Christmas visit is enjoyed by everyone—even the children themselves. Nine-year-old Josh said, “I thought it was good that we had all the people smiling. I liked it that one of the ladies mentioned she was glad that we were singing songs about Jesus.”

Daniel, 11 years old, said, “I felt that the Saviour would be really proud because the residents were happy and loved to get our presents.”

**Elderly residents of Queen Victoria Home in Lindisfarne, Hobart, were happy to have a visit from the young children from the Rosny Ward in Tasmania.**



For those who are older and infirm, the giving of one's time and attention is especially appreciated. Claire Dale, Primary president, praised the children by saying, "We made a difference. We were the Lord's hands today and that's why we felt so good. You were awesome."

Sickness and hard times affect us all eventually. We can help lift those who are suffering, even if all we do is devote a little time to visiting them.

### New South Wales

*On day 16 of "Light the World," youth from the Richmond Ward assembled personal and practical items into backpacks to donate to individuals in the local area who are in need.*

Jesus taught, "I was . . . naked, and ye clothed me" (Mathew 25:35-36). The youth brainstormed and came up with the idea to put together rough sleep (homeless) packs for the people within their boundaries. Under the direction of the leaders, the youth set out to raise the funds themselves through a series of paid projects and the spring fair.

This allowed them to raise sufficient funds to purchase all the items for the packs.

Bishop Chris Foster of the Richmond Ward said, "When the youth collectively put the packs together, there was a strong spirit and excitement in the air to help their fellowmen. It was a sobering



***The youth came up with the idea to put together rough sleep (homeless) packs for the people within their boundaries.***

but also an uplifting experience for the youth and leaders alike as we presented the care backpacks to the less fortunate. At the same time the experience was unique and rewarding."

The participants met a young man who was only 20 years old and lived permanently alone in his car. He was truly touched by the gesture from the youth. He acknowledged he is a Christian and reads the Bible regularly but hasn't attended church for a long time. The youth took the opportunity and extended him an invitation to meet with them.

Another man carried his earthly possessions in the front basket of his push bike. He shared that he normally arrives later in the day but felt prompted to arrive earlier the day they were there. He asked if they were the reason why he received this prompting.

The care packs were received with much gratitude. The thoughtfulness, effort and love the youth showed filled all with the lasting memories of joy that come from knowing we are looking after all sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father. ■



## Ballet Dancer Wins Award

By Mormon Newsroom

With dedication, great talent and the support of admiring fans, Jake Mangakahia has been awarded the 2017 Telstra Ballet People's Choice Award at a special presentation in Sydney, Australia.

Six other dancers were also competing for the coveted award. According to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Jake responded to the award by saying, "The other nominees were so amazing and hard-working, and I feel like anyone who would have received the award was deserving of it."

Jake spent two years serving a mission beginning in 2014 and was able to return to the Australian Ballet in 2016.

In 2007 Jake received an Award of Excellence and a Travelling

Scholarship for the Overseas Exchange Program. He was also the ballet school's first school captain. Jake was given a position in the corps de ballet of the Australian Ballet in 2011.

Setting and reaching goals has helped Jake to receive many honours, such as being the winner of the People's Choice Award in 2012. One of his goals since his youth was to dance the lead role in the contemporary piece *Waramuk* by the Australian Ballet at the London Centre in New York. He accomplished this goal in 2012.

Jake wants to use the prize monies to assist dancers in the Australian Ballet to create art as a vehicle to bring people and culture together. ■

## MISSIONARY MOMENTS

## A Miracle Encounter at a Restaurant

By Shilo Kino

I never thought about Sarah joining the Church. It didn't really cross my mind when I first met her. She was my waitress at a restaurant and I just wanted to be her friend.

I was walking through an alley of shops with my friend Tahir, trying to decide what to eat. We saw two Chinese restaurants. The one on the left was vibrant and packed with people. The one on the right was deserted with no customers. We chose to eat at the one on the right. At the time, I didn't really know why I chose to eat at that particular restaurant. Now I can understand why.

We were greeted by Sarah, our waitress, who I found out later wasn't even supposed to be working that night. When I spoke to her in Mandarin, her eyes widened with shock and she exclaimed, "hen bang!" which means "awesome!" Her eyes glistened and her smile was huge. I loved her immediately.

Sarah and I became friends, and she started asking questions. Just like so many people in China, Sarah had never heard of Jesus Christ. She didn't even know there was a God. The more I got to know Sarah, the



Left to right: Grandparents Patrick and Jane Mather; Jake Mangakahia; brother Kuba; parents Anita and Bernard Mangakahi

more I wanted to share my happiness with her.

I served my mission in Hong Kong. It wasn't an easy mission.

There's nothing worse than starting a conversation with someone and wearing a dumb expression when they respond because you don't know what they are saying. I learnt quickly to just smile and nod, or to flick through the Book of Mormon for a scripture when an investigator started crying about something because you don't know what in the world they are crying about. There were some nights I cried myself, often uncontrollably, because I felt useless not being able to communicate with Chinese people. There were also moments I questioned my call and why I wasn't just sent to an English-speaking country instead. And always, at the back of my mind, I was envious of my companion, who became a fluent Mandarin speaker in only four months. At four months I was still trying to get the tones for "ni hao" right.

But something happened to me in Hong Kong. Something I can't quite explain. As human beings, I don't think we could ever comprehend the sense of what it really means to love and to be loved. We feel love for our family (well, most of us do) and for our spouse and friends and maybe for a few more people in our lives.

Human love is so limited. But the love I felt for people I met in Hong

Kong had no limits. It transcended any love I've ever felt in my entire life.

When I finished my mission, my mum whisked me off to the hairdresser almost immediately because my hair hadn't been cut in 18 months and, to quote my mum, "it was a mess". I remember walking through the shopping mall, a little petrified, because I was still an awkward missionary, but I was also amazed. I could hear

Mandarin within earshot of almost every store I went to.

In fact, everywhere I went I was confronted with the language that I spent months crying over. My hairdresser, shopkeeper, neighbour, friend of friends and people I walked past on the street were speaking Mandarin, and the amazing thing was, I understood. I couldn't believe what was happening. There were a lot of gasps,



*Shilo met Sarah (left) for the first time at a restaurant in Auckland.*

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and offers of free food from my new friends, but it also meant opportunities to share something so precious to me with the people and culture that changed my life. In that moment, I realised my mission never really ended. It was only just beginning.

And that's when the miracles started happening. The greatest miracle being Sarah. A light turned on when she met the missionaries. I watched her go from someone who couldn't grasp the concept of believing in something you can't see to a disciple of Christ who saw God in the blessings that began pouring into her life every day. And even though Sarah

was shivering from the cold water after her baptism, her face was beaming. I'll never forget the look on her face when she came out of the water and exclaimed, "hen bang!"

After Sarah's baptism, we drove home. It was dark outside, but the ambience in the car was filled with light. Sarah, who's usually quite animated and giggly, was suddenly very serious.

"Shilo," she said quietly. "I don't know where I would be if I hadn't met you and this gospel."

I too don't know where I would be if I hadn't met Sarah, or the Chinese people in Hong Kong, or this gospel.

But I understand now why I served in Hong Kong. Not to change the lives of people. But to allow my life to be changed.

I came to understand that the gift and talents God gave me had nothing to do with the language. Heavenly Father didn't give me the gift of tongues on my mission in the way I wanted or at least expected. He gave me something much, much greater. He blessed me with the ability to love His children.

And that love I felt in Hong Kong never went away. It is what ultimately connected me to Sarah.

It is a gift that transformed my missionary experience from ordinary to extraordinary. A gift that allowed me to see into the souls of people I had barely met and to love them unconditionally. I saw past their rudeness, tiredness, anger, impatience and every other human emotion and weakness. And isn't that how Heavenly Father sees us? Despite the mistakes we make, or our many weaknesses, He loves us. He sees us as something much greater than we can comprehend. His love is free. It's simple. It has no bounds. And it's always there. He simply loves us.

I now understand the perfect love of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ a little better. That love saved my mission. It saved my life. And I watched that love save my friend Sarah. For that I am grateful. ■



*Sarah was eventually baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.*