

NEW ZEALAND LOCAL PAGES

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Raising the Rising Generation

Elder Ian S. Ardern

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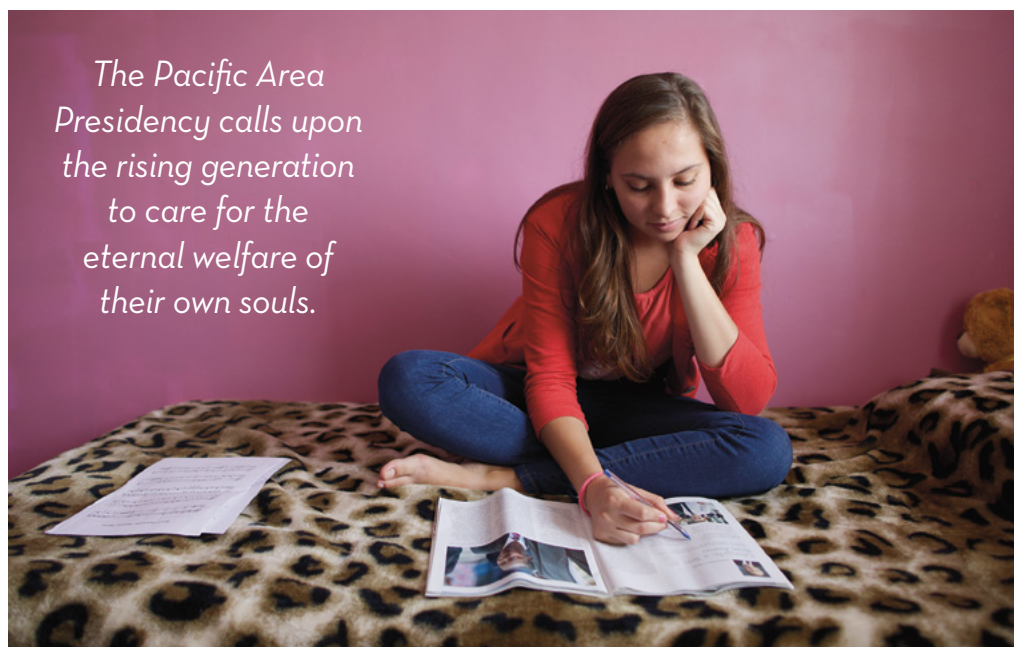
Recently I participated in a camp for the young single adults in Tonga. There before me, on that bright Friday morning, sat over five hundred of the Lord's best. They had danced, sung, enjoyed wholesome activities together and listened to uplifting instruction from each other and their leaders. It was 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 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.”¹ 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.”² 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

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 more I wanted to share my happiness with her.

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



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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

become 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, 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. ■

High School Rugby Player to Play in South Africa

By Sarla Donovan

Seventy years ago, Brigham Riwai-Couch's great-grandfather could have worn this blazer (see photo) on the All Blacks' tour of South Africa.

But Ben Couch never got the chance—he wasn't selected for the 1949 tour, because the New Zealand Rugby Union left Maori players out of the 30-man squad to meet apartheid conditions set by South Africa.

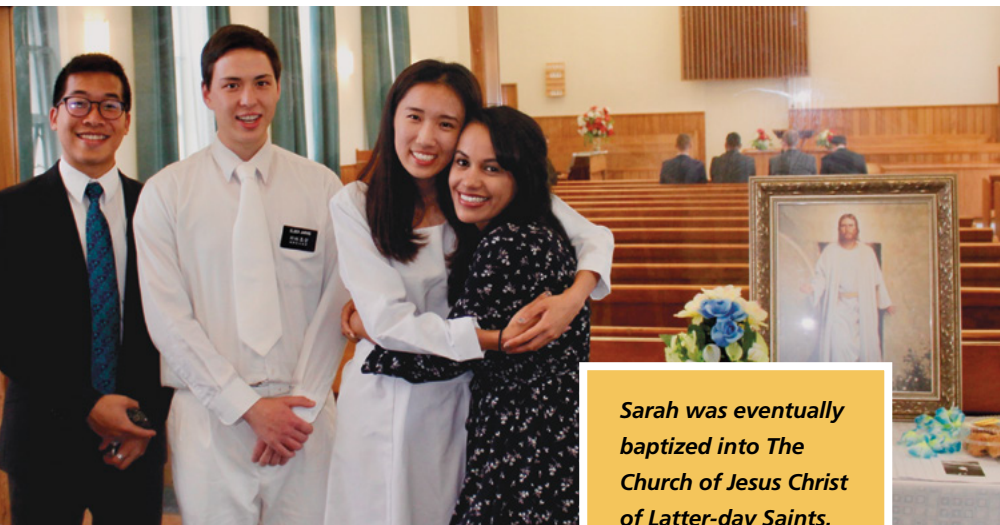
Mr Couch was one of three players who weren't considered for the tour because they were Maori. He later went on to become a politician and Minister of Maori Affairs.

His great-grandson Brigham now has the opportunity to right that wrong. Brigham and his family are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The 17-year-old Christchurch Boys' High School mid-fielder is off to Capetown in April with the school's first XV, to the inaugural world schools tournament.

Brigham said he was excited to have the opportunity to travel to South Africa.

"It's a very humbling experience to be picked for the team. And in relation



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



◆ *Brigham Riwai-Couch tries on his great-grandfather Ben Couch's All Blacks blazer with the help of proud mum Melanie Riwai-Couch and dad Jared Riwai-Couch.*

◆ *The 1947–49 All Blacks; Ben Couch is in the front row, middle.*



to my great-grandpa, I feel like I'm righting a wrong that was done to my family, not just to him. It's a great honour—to be able to do what my great-grandpa was denied."

Doing the haka on South African soil tops his most-looked-forward-to list.

"I'm really excited to perform the haka there. Being a proud Maori—proud

of my culture—I feel I will also be representing my great-grandfather and my tipuna and my school."

His parents, Melanie and Jared, have told him stories about his great-grandfather all his life, though they never met. Mr Couch died in 1996, but he passed on one of his traits to Brigham, who also kicks off both feet.

It was an ability Ben Couch honed while living with his aunt and uncle in Kohunui, a rural pa near Pirinoa in south Wairarapa.

"One of the stories Dad told me is how his [Mr Couch's] uncle used to take him out into the paddock with a bull-whip, and whichever side he cracked it, left or right, my great-grandpa would kick the ball and try and catch it; that's how he became really quick."

The blazer Brigham is wearing in the accompanying photo has been passed through the family and now has pride of place in their Somerfield home.

Ben Couch was born at Lyttelton in 1925, the first of eight children of a farmer, George Manning Moke Couch, who had an English father and Ngai Tahu mother, and his wife, Hinerua Riwai of Rapaki, who had a Ngai Tahu father and Ngati Mutunga mother.

He played seven matches for the All Blacks from 1947 to 1949 and later went on to be MP for Wairarapa in 1975—one of the first two Maori ever to win a general seat. He was Minister of Police in 1981 during the Springbok tour of New Zealand.

Jared Riwai-Couch remembers his grandfather as a man of integrity, "an honest man" who spoke the truth and was well known and loved in his Wairarapa community.

Brigham was showing leadership skills like his great-grandfather, he said.

"We're extremely proud of his achievements. We keep his feet firmly

grounded, but he's done himself and his great-grandfather proud."

The school's rugby festival event is being organised by former Springboks coach Heyneke Meyer. South Africa's top-10 school teams are confirmed, and Mr Meyer has sent

invites to 25 leading New Zealand rugby schools and around the globe to Fiji, Tonga, Japan, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Georgia, England, Ireland and France. One of South Africa's oldest schools, Paarl Boys' High School, plays host. ■

is the first female service centre manager in the Pacific Area.

For the past seven years, Malae had been serving as the service centre finance manager, but with a recent realignment of responsibilities throughout the Church's Pacific Area, she was asked to continue as finance manager but also appointed to assume the additional responsibility as service centre manager. She replaces Denny Afualo, the last of five consecutive expatriates who served as service centre managers in Samoa.

Hailing from the villages of Vaisala and Falelima Savaii, Malae was educated at Samoa College, received a bachelor of commerce degree from the National University of Samoa and later obtained a master's degree in business administration from the University of the South Pacific. She is also a certified public accountant. As part of her services for the local community, she is also a member of the board of directors for the Development Bank of Samoa.

Sauimalae and her husband, Pulotu Lyndon Chu Ling, stake president of the Upolu Malie Stake and the CEO of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour in Samoa, have six sons. She expressed appreciation for the help of her three oldest sons, who have helped with her three younger sons, allowing both her and Lyndon to pursue their demanding careers and Church callings.

Samoa LDS Service Centre Names First Female Manager

By Mormon Newsroom

Aiolupotea Sauimalae Malolo-Chu Ling was recently named as manager of the Church's service centre for

Samoa and American Samoa. Sister Chu Ling is not just the first female service centre manager in Samoa; she



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Aiolupotea Sauimalae Malolo-Chu Ling (pictured with family) was recently named as manager of the service centre for Samoa and American Samoa.

She enjoys working for the Church and says that it is a very pleasant and optimistic work environment.

The Samoa Service Centre is one of seven centres in the South Pacific. There are 90 employees working in the Samoa Service Centre, providing support services to the Church's priesthood leadership in Samoa and American Samoa. ■

MISSIONARY MOMENTS

There Is Something Special about You

By Shenade Mataupu

Growing up in the Church, I, like most Primary children, was always asked if I would consider serving a mission. I would always (with little hesitation) hastily reply with a resounding yes or raise my hand in class to indicate my willingness to serve. Although I did not quite understand the true significance of serving a mission, I felt from a young age that the call to serve was a sacred call from our Heavenly Father. The gospel teachings of loving parents, examples of older siblings, and the encouragement of dear friends allowed my personal desire to serve a mission to swell within me.

As the years went by and I transitioned from childhood to adolescence,

my once strong vision of serving a full-time mission gradually weakened. The focus that was once fixed on becoming a full-time missionary was now consumed by the insignificant distractions of the world. Perhaps the counsel from Alma the Younger to his son Helaman is something I would personally recommend to those who struggle with such confusion or doubt: "Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good" (Alma 37:37).

After much prayer, fasting and deep consideration for what the Lord would have me do, I decided to refocus my energy and recommit myself to serving a mission. I am the youngest of five children to two wonderful parents. My father, Siaso Mataupu, served in the Samoa Apia Mission from 1977 to 1979, whilst my mother Ruth Mataupu also served in Samoa from 1985 to 1987. My two older brothers, George and Roger, served in the New Zealand Wellington Mission from 2008 to 2011, my sister, Gladys, served in the Australia Brisbane Mission, and Julius, the youngest of the boys, served in the Philippines Cebu East Mission. Considering these examples of returned missionaries I have in my family and also friends who have served, I was able to begin the process of application for a full-time mission. Upon the completion of my application, a month later I received the call from our beloved prophet Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) to serve for a period of 18 months in the England Leeds Mission.

I recall entering into the mission field slowly coming to terms with the fact that England, a foreign land where I knew no one, was going to be home for 18 months. Despite the lack of familiarity in climate, lifestyle, and location, I knew that I was ready to save lives. On our first day of work I woke up with an eagerness to serve and talk to everyone. Unfortunately, as the day went on, and a fair amount of rejections later, I quickly became discouraged. The feelings of determination I had felt prior quickly transformed into doubt and fear. I remember questioning not only my motives but also if I was qualified for such work. I felt absolutely alone.

Nearing the end of our day, my companion and I were accompanied by another set of sisters, heading back to our flat. Along the way, we met a lovely lady named Maxine who claimed to recognize us from a previous encounter with missionaries in the past. Talking with her, we understood that she had experienced a great deal of conflict in her life, most of which she blamed God for. Although Maxine did not consider herself religious at all, she did commend us on the work we missionaries engage in.

Timid, shy and lacking any confidence at all, I hung back, silently observing the more senior sisters converse with Maxine. After about half an hour of listening to these companions of mine speaking with

Shenade Mataupu is originally from Samoa and served her mission in Leeds, England.



Maxine, I noticed her shifting her gaze, mid-conversation, towards me. As discouraged as I had grown throughout the day, Maxine made her way toward me, leaving the conversation with my companions and stood in front of me. I remember saying to her,

“God loves you and cares about you”. She paused for a moment and said something I needed to hear, which I will never forget. She said, “There’s something special about you, there’s something special that’s drawing me to you”. After a day full of self-doubt,

discouragement and fear, I knew that Heavenly Father was comforting me through Maxine. I realised the irony of what I had said to her that night when I said, “God loves you and cares about you”. Perhaps He needed me to understand the exact same thing, that He loves me and cares about me. Perhaps we ought to be reminded that there is something special about each of us and that we too must live our lives so as to merit our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

“Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14–16).

I have grown to understand through this experience and many more that we each have not just the capability to shine but the duty to shine also. Ours is the responsibility to shine so that we too may touch the hearts of those around us, that through our examples we may testify that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ, and that we may be a beacon of hope in such seemingly hopeless and perilous times. ■

Shenade Mataupu served in the England Leeds Mission from March 2016 to October 2017. She currently lives in Mangere and is in the Thomas Road Ward in Manukau, New Zealand.