

NEW ZEALAND LOCAL PAGES

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Good, Better, Best

By Elder Meliula Fata

Area Seventy



Elder Meliula Fata

Wilbur and Orville Wright are generally credited with inventing the world's first practical fixed-wing aircraft when their plane made a controlled, powered and sustained flight in the air of 12 seconds on 17 December 1903. The airplane covered 120 feet (37 m), about half the length of a 747 jumbo jet. By today's standard, that was a very short flight, but at the time it was an accomplishment few believed would ever be possible.

Wilbur and Orville's parents taught the importance of good education, religion, hard work and family values. Both brothers had their share of serious illnesses. They went through times of trouble, and even despair, and wondered if they would ever succeed in inventing the first airplane. They tried different vocations as printers, bicycle repairmen, bicycle manufacturers and eventually aircraft inventors.

Whenever they picked a project to work on, they were committed and worked as a team; they also did their homework. They were humble and smart enough to appreciate and learn about the work done by inventors who had gone before them. And they tackled problems line upon line, precept upon precept.

The brothers realized there were three main requirements for a practical flying machine:

1. The pilot had to be able to control the aircraft.
2. The wings had to produce lift.
3. It had to be powered by an engine to stay in the air.

Wilbur and Orville took these principles as their guidelines to control and discipline themselves in everything they did to accomplish their goals.

Similar principles and requirements apply to our own journey through life and toward the destination of eternal life. Divine principles need to be learnt, practiced and lived as you prepare to rise and produce a "lift" in your own

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life. It isn't until you come to a spiritual understanding of who you are that you can begin to take control of yourself. As you learn to control yourself, you will be able to better control your own life. If you want to move the world, you first need to move yourself.

The Wright brothers had confidence there could be a better plane than the one they invented, and they believed it would stay in the air longer than 12 seconds!

The changes from the Wrights' first airplane to the super jets of today is inspiring. The Airbus A380 superjumbo jet was first flown in April 2005—it has room for as many as 800 passengers and has the ability to fly nonstop for almost 18 hours.

Many times, when we feel comfortable and content, we remain in the same situation without trying to do better by improving and perfecting (developing) ourselves. Jesus warned Peter when He said, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32).

As we work to perfect ourselves, we may need to change our habits. If we cannot change our habits, they become part of our nature and part of our lives. The Lord already saw the

Our Lord Jesus Christ started His earthly life from humble beginnings. He atoned for our sins and opened the door for us to be exalted if we will keep His commandments.



potential in Peter—but unless Peter changed himself, he could not help others become converted.

What have we learnt so far this year from our own life’s journey? What changes do we wish to make to show we are progressing both temporally and spiritually—from good to better to best? What are some old beliefs and traditions we do not avoid or will not change?

One day I was driving in Samoa, and along the way I stopped and picked up a man who was carrying

a huge load on his shoulders. He hopped into the back of the pickup truck with his load and I drove off. A while later I looked in the rearview mirror, and to my surprise I saw the man standing in the back of the truck, still carrying the huge load on his shoulders. I had assumed he would put his load down in the truck, then sit down and rest his shoulders until I dropped him off at his village.

Sometimes the “putting away” of customs and traditions that conflict with the principles of the gospel is a

great challenge for people who join the Church.

There are some customs and traditions which can stop us from improving and progressing from good to better, or from better to best. The gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us the *best* principles to help us change our lives.

Getting into the back of my truck, the man never thought that putting his load on the floor and sitting down would be the best thing to do.

Think about some gospel principles that can help to produce a

spiritual lift in our lives: faith, humility, service, repentance, love, prayer, forgiveness—to name just a few. They can help us to make firm changes from good to better to best.

These are the principles of salvation; they are celestial laws. If we are not able to abide these laws, we cannot abide a celestial glory (see Doctrine and Covenants 88:22).

The Wright brothers' flight journey started in a very humble way. While they experienced many challenges in their lives, they believed it wasn't where they started that counted but where they were headed.

Attention to the small and simple things in life will take you on to greater things. Many great men and women came from small and humble beginnings. They didn't stop at being just good people; they tried their utmost to become the best.

Our Lord Jesus Christ started His earthly life from humble beginnings. He atoned for our sins and opened the door for us to be exalted if we will keep His commandments.

The Atonement of Jesus Christ will never be a substitute for our responsibility to keep the commandments, so we can be exalted. Our Saviour has shown us the *best* way for us to return to live with Him and our Father in Heaven. May each of us do our homework and commit to becoming the best son or daughter of God we can become. ■

Ratana and Kingitanga Leaders Visit Temple View

By James McGuire

Leaders from Ratana Church and Kingitanga were welcomed onto the Temple View property with a traditional powhiri at the George R. Biesinger Building on 8 June 2018.

Following the powhiri, the group toured other parts of the Temple View project, including the stake centre, visitors' centre and Matthew Cowley Pacific Church History Centre.

Elder Ian S. Ardern, Second Counsellor in the Pacific Area Presidency, said of the visit: "We were honoured to host representatives from the Ratana Church and Kingitanga today at Temple View. We have a common belief in Christ as the Saviour of the world and a deep interest in the welfare of our members."

He added, "Sitting in the G.R.B. Hall, with the majesty of the New Zealand temple in the background, we could not help but feel we were in a blessed place. Having the chance to welcome our guests, to share our feelings and rekindle a friendship was important and a blessing for us all."

Just earlier in May, senior leaders from the Ratana met in Auckland with Elder O. Vincent Haleck, President of the Pacific Area, and Elder Ian S. Ardern.

During the May meeting, the leaders discussed their common belief in



Elder Ardern said it was an honour to host representatives from the Ratana Church and Kingitanga at Temple View during their June visit.

Jesus Christ, Ratana's visit to Salt Lake City almost a century ago, and the upcoming 28 July 2018 Morehu Day in Auckland to celebrate the Ratana Church's 100th anniversary.

Speaking of this historic meeting in Auckland, Elder Haleck expressed his delight to meet with "our Ratana friends" and to discuss "our common love of the Saviour, Jesus Christ, the people of New Zealand, and the importance of families."

He added, "We are grateful for their interest in working together to be a positive influence in this wonderful land."



Leaders from Ratana Church and Kingitanga with members and missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints outside the temple this past June.

Apotoro Takiwa Kereama Pene said of the Auckland meeting: “This has been an historic gathering for us as leaders of the Ratana Church. The last time the LDS and Ratana faiths gathered together was in 1925 when our founder, Tahupotiki Wiremu Ratana, visited the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah. He declared that we, the Maori people, are direct descendants of the house of Israel. We stand with the LDS in confirming our faith in Jesus Christ and those values He represented.” ■



At the May meeting in Auckland, left to right: Vernon Ruwhiu; Elder Ian S. Ardern; Elder O. Vincent Haleck; Joyal Pene, Spiritual Apostle of The Ratana Established Church of New Zealand; Kereama Pene, Regional Apostle; and Puhī Pene, Local Apostle.

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Missionary Hero Died Saving Five Children

By Gayle Ryan

Missionary Elder Aaron Ahkau Matapa Patiole is still remembered as a hero in the island of Samoa.

Aaron Ahkau Matapa Patiole, from Sydney, Australia, had been on his mission in Apia, Samoa, for eleven months before he was struck by a car and killed.

The 21-year-old was walking along a street with his companion, helping five children return home on a Sunday afternoon last November.

Elder Patiole pushed the children to safety over a fence to his companion, to avoid a swerving car. On this day, Elder Patiole returned to his Father in Heaven.

A week later, the five children and their family were baptised by Elder Patiole's companion, Elder Timoteo from California.

Aaron's love of life and the Lord, his generosity of time and spirit were impressed upon us as we shared a Sabbath afternoon in his family home.

Born in New Zealand to Samoan parents, Aaron was the fourth of six siblings. The family moved to Australia when he was three months old. His happy demeanour and good humour affected all those around him. His only sister, Tagi, said he liked to joke and loved family time, especially spending time with his nieces and nephews.

Aaron had a missionary attitude well before he went on his mission, his family said.

In his youth, Aaron enjoyed rugby and basketball, supported the Wallabies (even when they played New Zealand) and was a big fan of Liverpool Football Club. Aaron displayed talent in his creative ability, producing outstanding artwork while at St. Gregory's High School. He completed his studies in 2015, and there's no doubt he was a much revered student. Aaron worked for a year

at several jobs to save for his mission.

Prior to his mission, Aaron attended seminary and institute and participated in pioneer treks. He loved the gospel and lived his life accordingly.

Sister Patiole, Aaron's mother, had arrived in Samoa the Tuesday before Aaron's accident, to visit her relatives. The following week she brought her son back to lay to rest in Cawdor cemetery.

The service for Elder Patiole was conducted by the Pacific Area President Elder O. Vincent Haleck. Over a



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Sister Patiole with some of Aaron's artwork

thousand people attended the funeral, spilling into the corridors to pay their respects. The Patiole family have been overwhelmed by the love and support they received and continue to feel. They received letters from the First Presidency and the mission presidency, and the mother of Aaron's companion rings Sister Patiole each week.

Each day, Sister Patiole travels to Cawdor before sunset to visit the resting place of her son. This sweet woman waits for the sunset to fall

over where he is laid—a poignant and beautiful reminder that, as Sister Patiole commented, “he is in a better place. And we’ll see him again, as we understand the plan of salvation.”

Aaron's family were delighted to find that the missionary had saved his testimony on his computer.

In his own words, Aaron stated, “I know that everyone is different . . . the Lord has provided a way for us to be united and feel His love and find that peace and unity we all long for.” ■

Brother Ratima has spent his entire life as a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

“My membership,” he says, “is vital in ensuring that my behaviour, decisions and engagement are always of the highest calibre.”

“It is important to me that everyone knows that I am a member of the Church, and I welcome them to judge my performance by their knowledge of the gospel.”

Brother Ratima has served in the development of the Whakatu community for over 14 years and has been heavily involved in bettering the Maori community.

He feels that his faith has been strengthened as he has served in the community.

“Seeing outcomes which enhance the lives of people through my service is extremely empowering and motivating. I believe that the Lord expects us to be of service by giving service. There is a real need for people with natural empathy and who want to genuinely help. We should look for those opportunities and then make ourselves available.”

He added, “Service does not require us to be brilliant, wealthy, employed, or retired. It requires a desire to help others, compassion and lifting those around us.”

Fred Morley, bishop of Brother Ratima's ward, said, “Brother Ratima brings a completely global and

Hastings Saint Honoured for His Service

By Myra Barber



Des K. Ratima was recognised on this year's Queen's Birthday Honours List

Des K. Ratima, the second counselor in the Hastings Second Ward bishopric, has been recognised on this year's Queen's Birthday Honours List.

He was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to Maori.

all-inclusive view of service to the community to our ward.

“He brings a very broad range of attributes to the table, including compassion, love, and sincerity. It is an honour to serve beside this wonderful leader who loves God and his family.” ■

Rugby Stars Put Career on Hold for Mission

By Emily Kwok and Thomas Swain

Like any passionate young men, rugby stars Young Tonumaiepa and Richard Kennar dreamed of working in a career they love. But when it comes to your career or your faith, which one would you choose?

Young and Richard made national headlines when they announced they would leave their respective rugby clubs to serve a mission. Young will leave his club, the Melbourne Storm, and Richard will leave South Sydney Rabbitohs.

Richard Kennar, age 23, said, “Playing in front of 50,000 to 60,000 people is the best feeling ever, but it only lasts a couple of hours. The gospel lasts forever, and the joy goes deep down in your soul.”

Richard shared that the decision for him to serve a mission came when



Richard Kennar knew he needed to serve a mission after hearing a young woman express her desire for her dad to hold the priesthood.

Young Tonumaiepa said it is a priesthood holder's duty to serve a mission.



PHOTOS SUPPLIED



he attended a Latter-day Saint young single adult convention in early 2018 and heard a young woman express

her feelings that she wished her father held the priesthood. Richard reflected on the times his own father gave him

priesthood blessings when he needed surgeries for rugby, and he desired for more families to have fathers who hold the priesthood.

Richard said, “The priesthood is a gift you cannot buy no matter how much money you have. I want to honour the priesthood that I hold by serving a mission and I want families to be blessed by it.”

Richard admitted he felt anxious to tell his coach when he received his mission call in May. He recounted that he prayed, fasted and visited the temple for a few weeks before he shared the news with his club. To his surprise, his coach responded, “I know how much your faith means to you and . . . I’m glad you’re standing up for what you believe in.” Richard added that the club, its CEO and his teammates were all supportive of his decision.

Richard said that rugby has exposed him to a “high-class life” that can be tempting for a young person, and the physical and emotional intensity of the sport are unseen by the public. He said that he has learned to rely on his faith in Jesus Christ to manage the challenges that come with the sport.

Richard will continue to represent his team until he leaves for a Scotland/Ireland mission this month.

Young, age 25, from the Melbourne Australia Craigieburn Stake, transitioned to professional rugby league straight from high school, where he

played virtually every sport on offer.

“I played anything at school—volleyball, table tennis, soccer, AFL and rugby. I’ve always been blessed at sports.”

Even though some of Young’s fans have been skeptical of his decision, the club has been remarkably understanding. “It’s actually amazed me how unbelievably supportive the club has been; I feel very blessed.”

In 2011, fellow rugby mate Lagi Setu left the Broncos to serve a mission in Birmingham, England.

“Lagi is a great example to me. Even though I was living my dream playing rugby, I . . . could see all the blessings in Lagi’s life that came from his mission.”

“Even though I didn’t fully commit until last year, a mission has always been in the back of my mind, even before rugby.”

For what appears to be a tremendous sacrifice in the peak of his career, Young said serving a mission is the right thing to do.

“I was so nervous telling the club, I fasted and prayed before going to see Coach. Being in the prime of my career, I knew this wouldn’t be easy, but the day I decided to go and talk with him he happened to be walking towards me down the corridor. I knew that was no coincidence.”

“I feel I don’t deserve all the congratulations I’m getting for choosing to go on a mission; as priesthood

holders it’s a duty we have to fulfill as young men.”

“My advice to any of the youth or YSA is to stay true to what you know. The hardest times in my career have been when I’ve been away from the teachings of Heavenly Father. When I was doing the right thing, I was doing well at sport.”

Melbourne Storm CEO Dave Donaghy is sure that if Young wants to come back after his two-year mission, “he has plenty of footy left in him.”

Young said, “If there was ever a regret in my life, it would have been to serve a mission earlier [in my life].”

Young is not sure what the future holds when he returns from Germany in two years, “but I have faith that things will work out.” ■

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:

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