

## AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

### “Lovest Thou Me?”

By Elder Glenn Burgess

Area Seventy



Elder Glenn Burgess



*To serve our Saviour is to love Him, and to love Him is to know Him.*

to how we care and minister to others. He said, “The Lord has made important adjustments in the way we care for each other.”<sup>5</sup> Then in the October general conference, President Nelson announced the implementation of “a *home-centered* and *Church-supported* plan to learn doctrine, strengthen faith, and foster greater personal worship.”<sup>6</sup>

As Peter continued to develop in his own faith, the Saviour said to him, “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”<sup>7</sup> President Nelson’s announcements of a home centred on learning the doctrine and of the newer, holier approach to caring for and ministering to others allow us to do the very two things Christ asked of Peter.

First, we are to develop our own personal conversion to the Saviour, Jesus Christ. Whether the Sunday meeting schedule is three hours or two, it is within the walls of our own homes that we will receive much of our personal conversion and conviction.

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said, “If we really want our homes to be places of holiness, we will try harder to do those things that are conducive to the Spirit of the Lord.”<sup>8</sup> The Church-supported resource

As the disciples travelled with the Saviour into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked them, “Whom say ye that I am?” Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”<sup>1</sup> Then, at the sea of Tiberias, the now resurrected Christ asked Peter, “Lovest thou me more than these?” Peter resolutely responded, “Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.”<sup>2</sup>

Peter knew through the Holy Ghost that Jesus was the Christ. He had received his own personal revelation,

and this became his personal witness and testimony. The Saviour acknowledged this by saying, “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”<sup>3</sup> After Peter had professed his love for the Saviour, Jesus responded with the command, “Feed my sheep.”<sup>4</sup> To serve our Saviour is to love Him, and to love Him is to know Him.

Last year in the April general conference, President Russell M. Nelson announced a new and holier approach

*Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families* is designed to help us better learn the gospel, whether on our own or with our family.

When introducing any new adjustments to a personal or family schedule, it may come with its own challenges. Understanding this, President Nelson provided us with this reassurance: “I promise that as you diligently work to remodel your home into a center of gospel learning, over time *your* Sabbath days will truly be a delight. *Your* children will be excited to learn and to live the Savior’s teachings, and the influence of the adversary in *your* life and in *your* home will decrease. Changes in your family will be dramatic and sustaining.”<sup>9</sup>

The second aspect of Peter’s directive was to strengthen his brethren. We now commonly refer to this as “ministering”. Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said ministering is “simply discipleship. We’re following the Savior. We’re trying to do what the Good Shepherd did and follow the example that He set, and our doctrine is to follow Christ and be His disciples in every way.”<sup>10</sup> As we develop Christlike qualities within ourselves, the responsibility of our ministering assignments will not seem burdensome, but rather, it will feel desirable and be both rewarding and fulfilling.

What was Christ referring to when He used the word *these*, when He asked Peter, “Lovest thou me more than *these*?”<sup>11</sup> It refers to the busyness and the many other influences in our lives that compete for our time and attention.

Elder Christofferson said, “To persevere firm and steadfast in the faith of Christ requires that the gospel of Jesus Christ penetrate one’s heart and soul, meaning that the gospel becomes not just one of many influences in a person’s life but the defining focus of his or her life and character.”<sup>12</sup> As we develop our testimony in Christ, our conversion becomes our conviction. We can then answer as Peter did and resolutely say, “‘Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee’—for ‘thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.’”<sup>13</sup> ■

#### NOTES

1. Matthew 16:15–16.
2. John 21:15.
3. Matthew 16:17.
4. John 21:16.
5. Russell M. Nelson, “Let Us All Press On,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 118.
6. Russell M. Nelson, “Opening Remarks,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2018, 8.
7. Luke 22:32.
8. James E. Faust, “Standing in Holy Places,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 68.
9. Russell M. Nelson, “Becoming Exemplary Latter-day Saints,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2018, 113.
10. D. Todd Christofferson, in *Effective Ministering* (video), ministering.lds.org.
11. John 21:15; emphasis added.
12. D. Todd Christofferson, “Firm and Steadfast in the Faith of Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2018, 30.
13. See John 21:15 and Matthew 16:16.

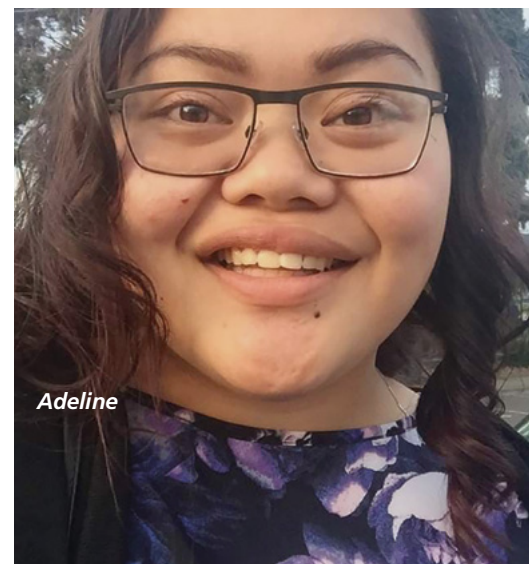
#### LOCAL PAGES

## Following the Counsel of the Prophet

*Australian women complete their 10-day social media fast.*

During the October 2018 general conference, President Russell M. Nelson invited the women of the Church to participate in a 10-day social media fast:

“I invite you to participate in a 10-day fast from social media and from any other media that bring negative and impure thoughts to your mind. Pray to know which influences to remove during your fast. The effect of your 10-day fast may surprise you. What do you notice after taking a break from perspectives of the world that have been wounding your spirit? Is there a change in where you *now* want to spend your time and energy? Have



any of your priorities shifted—even just a little? I urge you to record and follow through with each impression.”<sup>1</sup>

Following the prophet’s inspired invitation has resulted in many wonderful blessings in the lives of the sisters in Australia. A few of them shared their experiences:

#### **Adeline Akaiti: Happier**

During this time, I was happier. Breaking the habit of checking my phone so often became easier, and I was able to feel the Spirit more. I had more time to attend to my callings and went about my day feeling more at peace.

I’ve been thinking about doing another 10 days, maybe 10 weeks, maybe longer . . .

#### **Dale Rogers: A Sense of Freedom**

This is the second time I’ve completed such a fast. I joined the youth fast earlier in the year; I was hoping

to inspire my daughter to do the same. I think it’s a great thing to fast from social media. Social media can be a bit addictive—constantly checking to see if anything exciting is happening on Facebook. I’ve enjoyed the freedom of not thinking about what’s on my phone, and I’ve been using my time more wisely.

I finally managed to finish reading a wonderful book that I purchased recently from Deseret Book. I’ve had more time to spend with my daughters and granddaughter. I have had more time to get outdoors and exercise. I even ended up applying for university and have been accepted for next year. You can’t predict where you’ll be led when you give the Lord the time and space to guide you.

I am not back on Facebook yet, as I have enjoyed this fast so much. The prophet is truly inspired, and if we listen when he speaks, I know that we cannot go astray.

#### **Lara Gilbert: A Sense of Accomplishment**

By the end of the 10-day fast, I was able to see very clearly how much time I had been wasting.

Instead of checking my phone, I read the scriptures or did tasks around the house or squeezed in a quick nap. So many important things had been neglected because of my impulse to go on social media. I felt more peace and a sense of accomplishment, and our family was happier.

#### **Belinda Chan Oates: Productive**

I found that during the 10-day fast, I was more productive. I used my time to get chores done and get organized for Christmas. I make a family calendar every year, and because I made it early this year, I only paid half price for materials. Blessings!

I did not miss the negativity that detracts from the Spirit; there is a lot of meanness out there. I have four



Dale



Lara



Belinda



adult children living at home, and I am having more conversations with them. I am studying instead of just reading the Book of Mormon, which brings me so much peace.

There were some things that I missed. I missed the sharing of ideas. I missed the sharing of special moments like babies being born, birthdays, anniversaries and the convenience of having information from Church sites on my newsfeed.

However, doing this fast showed me how much time I waste on social media. I now use an app to keep track of that and have set timers to limit my use. I've also shifted in the way I use social media. While it is nice to share fun photos, I want to use my social media time more to share my testimony and beliefs.

### **Amy Congerton: In the Moment**

At first, I found the 10-day fast a little difficult. I'm so used to scrolling

through my social media feeds mindlessly, just out of habit.

After a couple of days of fasting, I forgot about time. I soon become used to *not* going on social media, and now I can't remember what day I started.

I quickly noticed I had more time and was more productive with that time. I felt that I enjoyed things more because I was more in the moment. The huge effect this social media fast has had on me inspired me to keep it going. I don't know what day I'm on currently, but it's well over 20 days!

I feel so much gratitude for the prophet's inspired invitation as I enjoy this new sense of freedom in my daily life.

### **Nora Costigan: No Longer Comparing**

When the prophet challenged us to a 10-day social media fast, I knew it was counsel from the Lord for

me. My husband and I deleted our social media apps from our phones that night and committed to living President Nelson's challenge.

During the fast, the biggest difference I noticed was that there was significantly less competition in my life. Removing the comparison that naturally comes from social media brought happiness and gratitude for all the little successes we had.

I didn't feel like I was lacking or *lagging behind* in any way and was free to be myself. My son was free to grow and develop at his own pace, as there was no pressure to perform according to what other babies his age were or were not doing.

My husband felt the same. We could focus on our own relationship in our own unique way instead of copying or besting what other couples and parents were doing.

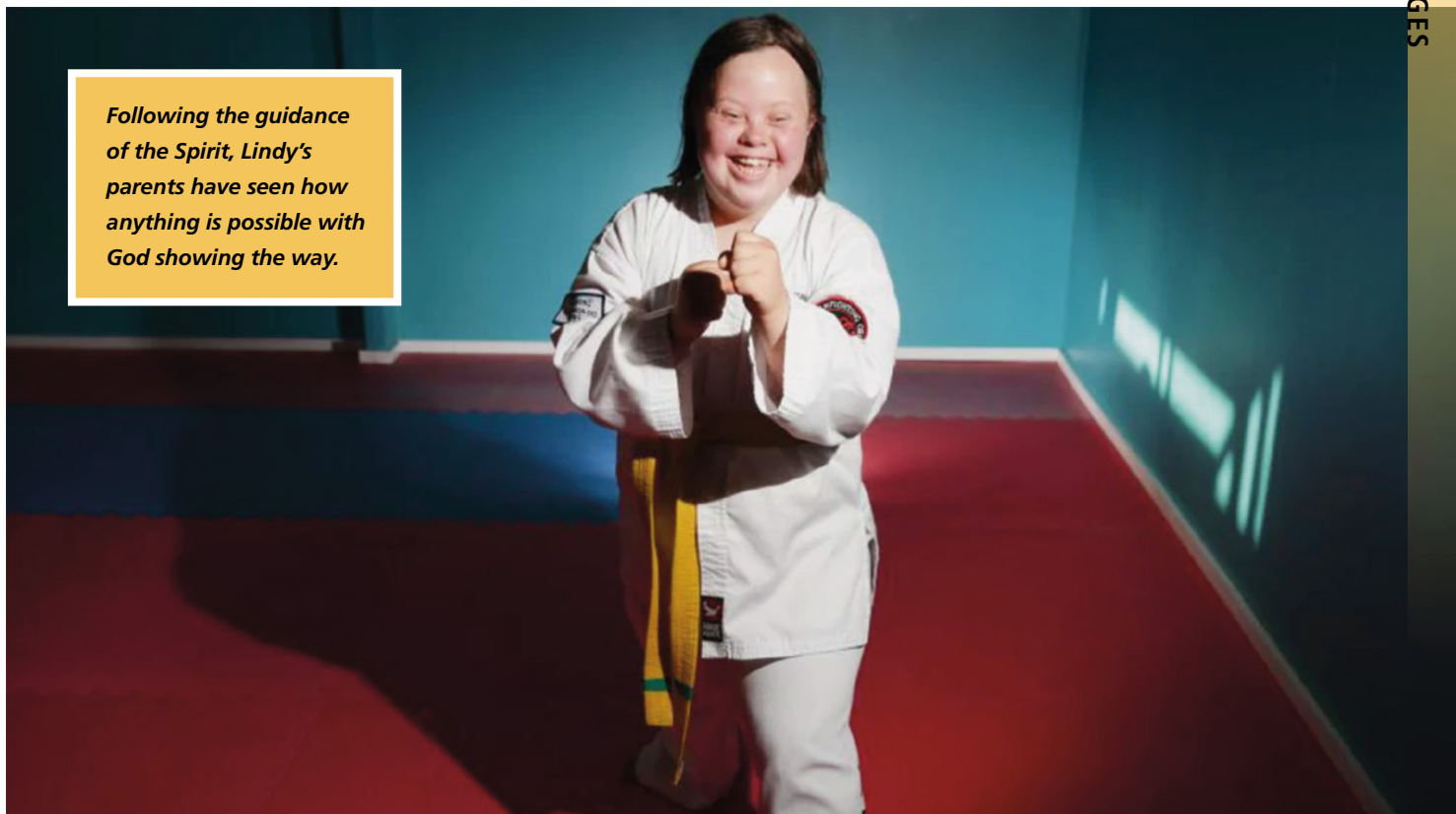
Moving forward, I have determined to stay off social media every weekend so that I can concentrate on my family. To borrow the words of Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf's wife, Harriet, life "is not a race; it's a journey. Enjoy the moment."<sup>2</sup> That is how I want to live. ■

#### **NOTES**

1. Russell M. Nelson, "Sisters' Participation in the Gathering of Israel," *Ensign*, Nov. 2018, 69.
2. Harriet R. Uchtdorf, quoted in Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Of Regrets and Resolutions," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 23.



*Following the guidance of the Spirit, Lindy's parents have seen how anything is possible with God showing the way.*



## He Shall Prepare a Way

By Crystal Viljoen

Lindy Crouch has lived by a simple motto her whole life: 'I can do it.'

One of her favourite scriptures is found in 1 Nephi 3:7: 'I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know . . . he shall prepare a way.'

Lindy has Down syndrome, but it isn't going to hold her back. Lindy is not interested in living a *reasonable*

life; she wants to be exceptional.

In August 2018, Lindy defied the odds and was selected to represent Australia at the World Taekwondo Championships in Argentina. The 25-year-old from Geelong won two gold medals in patterns and mixed abilities.

The road to such an achievement has certainly had its challenges.

However, Lindy's mother, Jayne, has seen many miracles as the Lord has 'prepared the way'.

"When she was young, her physiotherapist said that she was so floppy she would probably never walk, let alone win a gold medal," Jayne said.

From her earliest years, Lindy has had to work harder than most to reach even basic milestones like walking, talking and reading. Following the guidance of the Spirit, Lindy's parents have seen how anything is possible with God showing the way.

“When Lindy was struggling to read, we were prompted to have her read a few scriptures during our family scripture study each day, and her reading really improved after that,” Jayne said. “Now she has graduated seminary and institute.”

The trials and challenges of Down syndrome have not held Lindy back. Instead, they have fostered in her a work ethic and determination that has been the key to her success.

Defying expectations has become second nature to Lindy as she and her family have followed ‘the way’ provided by the Lord, including the decision to start Lindy in Taekwondo in the first place.

“We were led to Taekwondo,” Jayne said. “We were lucky enough to find a coach who saw her potential and was willing to seriously train her. She tried it a few times and loved it. She’s worked very hard to achieve what she has.”

Lindy’s mother does not see the Down syndrome. She sees an exceptional daughter of God who has a sacred mission to fulfil.

“Lindy’s patriarchal blessing says that it is her mission to share love with the world,” Jayne said.

Being chosen to represent Australia was a chance for Lindy to fulfil her mission and share her example of love and hope on a world stage. While in

Argentina, Lindy met with many important figures in the global Taekwondo community. All were impressed by her example of strength and positivity.

“Her name is Lindy Joy,” Jayne said. “She likes to use both names because she wants there to be joy everywhere. When she bears her testimony, she tells everyone to be happy. When she prays, she prays for everyone to be happy. Regardless of what’s

happening in her life, she chooses to be positive.”

Regardless of any perceived limitations, Lindy is an example to everyone of the truth of Nephi’s testimony. We can have the confidence to go and do the will of the Lord because He truly will prepare the way. For this gold medallist and her family, Nephi’s promise is a proven recipe for success. ■

## How an Indigenous Family Found the Gospel

For over a decade, Elyssa Djurududuku Cameron smoked cigarettes at least twice a day. That changed when he met the missionaries in 2018.

Elyssa and his wife, Irene, and their four children live in a small indigenous community in the Arnhem Land region in Australia. The family love their heritage and place strong emphasis on good cultural values.

While the family didn’t formerly belong to any religion, they did believe in Jesus Christ.

“They were very quiet and didn’t say much,” missionary Elder Richards said. “During the whole lesson, Elyssa

probably said three to four words; there were communication challenges because English was their second language.”

The family agreed to come to church, although reliable transportation and enough petrol to meet his family responsibilities was a problem for Elyssa.

He knew, however, that this was where he could partake of the sacrament and feel the love that his Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ have for him and his family.

Through his faith and actions, the kindnesses of others and tender miracles, he was helped to find a way to church each Sunday.



*Through his faith and actions, the kindnesses of others and tender miracles, Elyssa was helped to find a way to church each Sunday.*



Over time, and because of his mechanical skills, Elyssa was able to rebuild a car that they now use to transport the family to church each week.

“Coming to church has brought much happiness to our family. We love following Jesus Christ,” Elyssa said.

Elyssa and Irene weren’t legally married when they met

the missionaries, so they were married in their garden the night before their baptisms.

Elyssa’s children Narelle and Duron, together with his niece Jaylin,

were baptised on 11 May 2018. Elyssa and Irene were baptised on 12 May along with another son Jaseph.

The baptisms were a landmark experience in the journey of the Cameron family.

“Their baptism had a massive effect on everyone and brought so many members closer to the Aboriginal culture,” missionary Elder Syme said. “The love was immense and unified as [these children] of our Heavenly Father were able to enter His fold.”

Elyssa has since received the priesthood, and he recently baptised his daughter Karly.

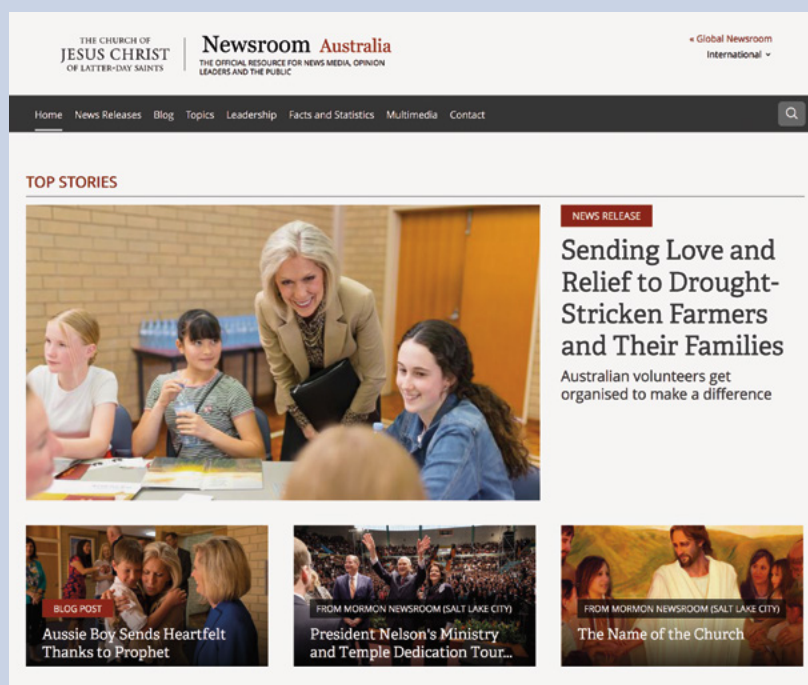
“It was a joy to baptise her, and [I’m] happy for the blessings that have come to my family. By exercising my priesthood in baptising Karly, I know my family will be blessed. It brings me joy and happiness to be able to use the priesthood to bless others.”

Being active member missionaries, the Camerons also love to share the gospel with their community and have referred their entire family to the missionaries.

Elyssa helps to teach with the missionaries and speaks in his language to provide clarification. Currently three members of his family are being taught the gospel.

“The Church has been a great blessing to our family,” testifies Elyssa. ■

## AREA WEBSITES



[www.mormonnewsroom.org.au](http://www.mormonnewsroom.org.au)

[www.mormonnewsroom.org.nz](http://www.mormonnewsroom.org.nz)

## 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:

[liahona-pacific@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona-pacific@ldschurch.org) ■

