

NEW ZEALAND LOCAL PAGES

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Fortifying our Homes in the Latter Days

By Elder Paul Lekias

Area Seventy



Elder Paul Lekias

In President Russell M. Nelson's opening remarks during the October 2018 General Conference he said:

"The long-standing objective of the Church is to assist all members to increase their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and in His Atonement, to assist them in making and keeping their covenants with God, and to strengthen and seal their families. In this complex world today, this is not easy. The adversary is increasing his attacks on faith and upon us and our families at an exponential rate. To survive spiritually, we need counterstrategies and proactive plans. Accordingly, we now want to put in place organizational adjustments that will further fortify our members and their families."¹

As I have pondered this wonderful prophetic statement, among the many thoughts I have had is, "what does it look like to further fortify our members and their families?"

In Alma 50:1–4, Mormon explains how Captain Moroni built fortifications to protect his people from physical bondage. Please pay particular attention to references such as, "digging up heaps of earth, timbers, frame of pickets and towers."

In the spirit of Nephi's counsel to, "liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning,"² I believe Captain Moroni's fortifications and strategies to avoid physical bondage in 72 B.C. are insightful as we look to fortify our own homes and families in these latter days.

Like Captain Moroni, who did not stop making preparations to defend his people from their enemies (Amalickiah), President Nelson in our

day continues to seek revelation from the Lord to defend us from our enemy (Satan). The digging of heaps of earth to protect the city was a physical labour. Can you imagine the many hours of extreme physical exertion the people of Moroni would have gone through to do what they did? All without the aid of modern excavating equipment we have at our disposal today. The heaps of earth we are required to dig in order to fortify our homes today





require spiritual exertion. It will take faith and work, humility, obedience, love, unity, diligence, commitment, prayer and charity to mention only some Christlike attributes.

I love the analogy we can draw from the fortifications Captain Moroni had erected for his people to keep them from falling into physical bondage. One would imagine in building a structure so described that the foundation would need to be sure. We too, must have a sure foundation in order to fortify our homes and families and keep us safe from spiritual bondage. Nephi and Lehi reminded us what our foundation should look like when

they rehearsed the words of their father Helaman to us, “And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation.”³

Once our foundation is sure (built upon Christ, the Son of God) we can with confidence build our fortification. What could the timbers, frame of pickets and the towers in Captain Moroni’s fortification represent in these latter days. Taking further license in likening the scriptures unto ourselves, timbers could represent our wards and stakes. We read, “For Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; her borders must be enlarged; her stakes must be strengthened; yea, verily I say unto you, Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments.”⁴ We are blessed to have a refuge from the storm and a place to assist in the fortification of our homes.

President Nelson said “As Latter-day Saints, we have become accustomed to thinking of ‘church’ as something that happens in our meetinghouses, supported by what happens at home. We need an adjustment to this pattern. It is time for a home-centered Church, supported by what takes place inside our branch, ward, and stake buildings.”⁵

The frame of pickets could represent our homes. In the Doctrine and Covenants we are encouraged to “Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house,

even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God.”⁶ What do our homes look like?

Towers overlooking our stakes and homes could represent the temples of our God. If we are to escape the buffeting of Satan and his followers (avoiding spiritual bondage) the temple needs to be our tower in the fortifications that we are striving to establish. President Nelson said it this way, “Our need to be in the temple on a regular basis has never been greater. I plead with you to take a prayerful look at how you spend your time. Invest time in your future and in that of your family. If you have reasonable access to a temple, I urge you to find a way to make an appointment regularly with the Lord—to be in His holy house—then keep that appointment with exactness and joy. I promise you that the Lord will bring the miracles He knows you need as you make sacrifices to serve and worship in His temples.”⁷

May the Lord bless us as we strive to fortify our homes in these the latter days. ■

REFERENCES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Opening Remarks,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2018, 7.
2. 1 Nephi 19:23.
3. Helaman 5:12.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 82:14.
5. Nelson, “Opening Remarks,” 7.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 88:119.
7. Russell M. Nelson, “Becoming Exemplary Latter-day Saints,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2018, 114.

LOCAL PAGES

He Trusts Us with Hard Things, So Trust in Him and Act

Ana Saulala

I never thought I would start a business. I saw myself as a talented supporter of those with the ideas, rather than the one leading the way. This was not the first time I had believed that I was incapable of something the Lord was prompting me to do. I had to be told three times to go back to university before I finally listened. I had failed a few papers in the past and that made me feel like studying wasn't for me.

I was raised in the Tongan ward of the Auckland New Zealand Waterview Stake. I have been a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints my whole life and was taught from a young age to always trust in, and act on, the guidance of the Lord.

This was a pattern in my life. I did not intend to go on a mission, but when the revelation came, I went. I did not want to go back to university, but with the Lord's gentle persuasion, I finally obeyed. I absolutely did not believe that I would ever start a business of my own, but as the seeds of inspiration were sown and the soil cultivated with line upon line revelation, I found myself once again doing something I never thought I would.

Revelation comes to each of us in unique ways: to some, it is a warm feeling of peace, to others, a thought



Ana Saulala

or an idea that won't go away and to still others, a clear voice that speaks to their minds. For me, revelation comes bit by bit over time. With each bit of inspiration, the aim of my business became clearer: to connect companies to the community through

programmes and initiatives that focus on creating real change.

I have learned throughout my life that trusting the guidance of the Lord is more than simply saying "Yes, I will obey." We must act, and often what we must do is very hard. Nephi had

to first make his own tools before he could follow the Lord's commandment to build a ship. The Lord sent me on a mission and then back to university so I could develop the tools I would need to start this business.

On my mission, I learned to love all of God's children. I observed and pondered on the great needs of His sheep and how those needs could be met on a large scale. At university, I learned about entrepreneurship. I learned to be more observant, creative, passionate and proactive. Under his continued guidance, I did a lot of research and ground work and was led to people that I needed to meet and to learn from. I participated in the "Starting and Growing my Business" course for added support. I prayed hard over every step, but the road has not been easy, and the way has not always been clear.

Last year, I hit a particularly low point in my journey. I was working hard but I felt like I was going nowhere. Before officially starting the business, I prayed to God and shared how I was feeling. As I was praying, a message came to me through the Holy Ghost: *God knows that you will always do what He asks of you. He trusts you.* Whenever I go through hard times, I am reminded of this moment and know that I must keep pushing forward even though it is hard.. Eventually, I was able to look back on that difficult times and see

the perfect wisdom of His process and His timing. He knows what we need and when we are ready for it.

I still have a long way to go, but I know that my trust in the Lord and His trust in me will see me through this journey. I didn't believe that university was for me, but I now have

a degree in arts and commerce.

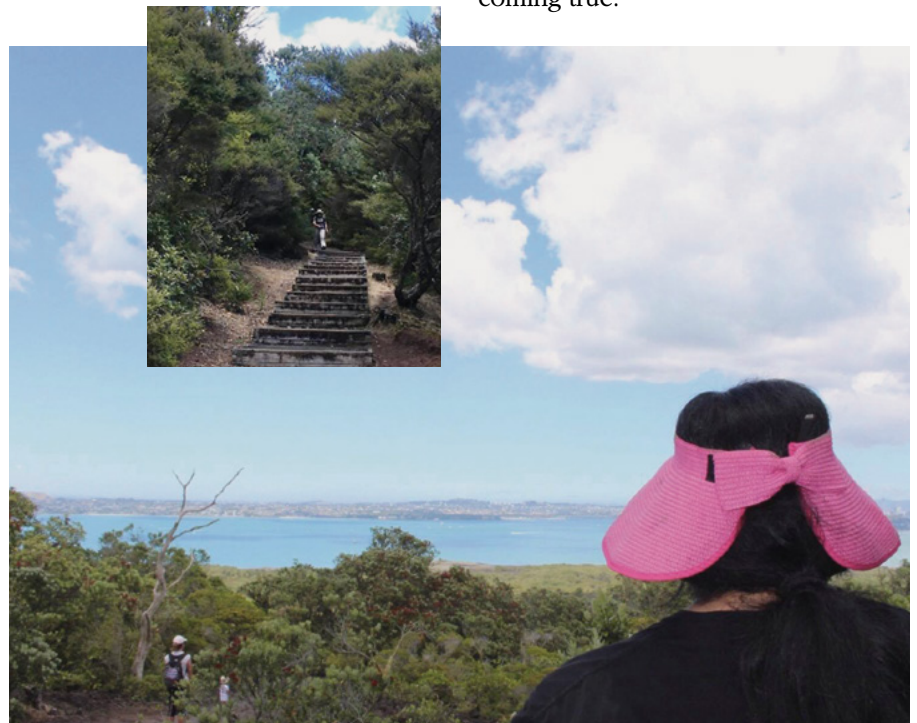
I did not plan to serve a mission, but it became one of the greatest experiences of my life. When the Lord asks you to do something hard, do it! You'll be surprised at what you are capable of under His perfect guidance and mercy. ■

"Come on, Mummy!"

Fusipala Puleiku

I believe that for many of us, our deepest fears are rooted in our deepest desires. This is certainly the case for me, but it wasn't until I left

my young single adult ward that I realised just how deeply I desired to find a husband and have children, and how deeply I feared this dream never coming true.





I loved my time in YSA but I moved on to single adults racked with feelings of failure and despair. While I was in YSA, I let my fear guide my path believing that I was protecting myself from disappointment. Looking back, I see that my fear wasn't protecting me, it was sabotaging my chances at reaching my goal. Now I doubted whether I would ever have a family of my own. My despondency continued to grow until I found myself facing the beginning of yet another year without the family I wanted.

Hiking Rangitoto Island has become a New Year's tradition for me. The hike symbolizes the trials and challenges that would be sure to come with the New Year and is an opportunity to accomplish something difficult and to remind myself that anything that might challenge me that year can be overcome.

This year I wasn't feeling particularly motivated. I dragged my feet most of the way up and stopped many times with the thought of giving up. Another year had passed, and I hadn't made

much progress on my goal. It seemed that everyone was getting married and I was still here. The closer we got to the summit, the more discouraging my thoughts became.

Five minutes from our destination, I stopped for good. I couldn't keep walking. I burst into tears right there on the mountain, having reached the end of my ability to endure. I told myself that I had done enough and decided to quit. Just as that thought entered my mind, something caught my eye. I turned my head and saw a boy standing further up the dirt path. I knew that he was a spirit. His hand was outstretched gesturing me to come to him and he said with a voice I immediately recognized, *"Come on, Mummy!"*

In that moment my emotions completely overwhelmed me. He was my son; I knew he was. I had always planned to name my first boy Nephi and though I only saw him briefly, I instantly knew him as my "baby Nephi." He disappeared suddenly as a family came around the corner, but I knew what I had seen. I knew that God had granted me this special experience so that I would know that He knew my pain and that He hadn't forgotten me. I hurried to the summit with a renewed strength and determination to do whatever it took to reach my goal.

Motherhood does not start with giving birth. My children need me now! They need me to keep going, to remain faithful and to prepare a home

for them to be raised in when their time on earth comes. God is mindful of us. He hears our prayers. He knows the intents of our hearts and if we let Him guide us in His own time and in His own way, we will achieve our righteous desires. ■

Making the Temple a Priority

For the past few years, our Area Presidency have asked us to seek the blessings of the temple as one of the four Pacific Area priorities. With the Hamilton New Zealand Temple currently closed for renovations, Saints across New Zealand have found inspired ways to continue keeping the temple a priority in their lives.

Audrey Day, Hamilton—Indexing

From floppy discs to the internet—700,000 names captured.

A great example of this dedication to temple work is Audrey Day of the Hamilton New Zealand Stake. Many people who have passed beyond the veil will be able to thank her for her sweet service. By January 2019, Sister Day had indexed more than 700,000 names!

Sister Day has been faithfully engaged in this work since the time of the original name extraction



Audrey Day



Erin Matla



Mandy Rawiri

programme, which was introduced around 1990. She kept pace over the years as the programmes, technologies and resources changed and improved. Although she has found technology to be a challenge at times, she has persisted in learning all she needs to know to continue this sacred work—it brings her so much joy.

Sister Day has experienced many occasions when she and her friend Sister Osborne could not read something on a film because it was either too faint or poorly written. They would pray and when they went back to it, the words would be clear and easy to see—as though their eyes had been opened.

Today, with the new and improved indexing programmes moving the work along at record pace, Sister Day feels that more than ever, all Saints, young and old, can get involved in this joyful work.

**Erin Matla, Christchurch—
Family History**

Temple work is not only done inside the temple.

“I can think of no better way to keep the temple close than to do family history work.

“The purpose of the temple is to seal families together so that we can all return to live with our Heavenly Father.

Although these sacred sealings are performed inside the holy temple, finding family names can be done anywhere. Just get started and you will be led.

“Finding ancestors can seem like an overwhelming task but this is God’s work; He wants us to succeed. Our ancestors want us to find them and they will assist us if we have the faith to try. Not long ago, I was working on my family history and was praying for guidance. I was led by the Spirit to a child who had been added incorrectly to the record, and to another child who had been left out.

“You do not have to fear this work because you don’t have to do it alone. I have been called as the temple and family history consultant in the Parklands Ward in Christchurch, New Zealand and I love helping people who are learning what to do. If your ward has a family history consultant, reach out to them. As you do your part in this great work, you will feel your family and the temple close by.”

**Mandy Rawiri, Wellington—
Save up and GO!**

The Lord will help to provide a way.

“Last year, we set a family goal to save up for a holiday and choose somewhere that had a temple. We decided to go to Hawaii as we have family there

and would benefit from their company as well as their babysitting services while we did sessions in the temple.

“As a family, we were inspired by the Spirit as we prayed about ways to save money. We did extra jobs for the family business, made and sold jewellery, went diving for fish and seafood so that we wouldn’t have to buy it and avoided wasting money on takeaways by making simple dinners and eating at home.

“Even though I was heavily pregnant when we finally made it to Hawaii, the holiday was lovely. The highlight of the trip was being able to take my father’s name to the temple. He passed away last year, so this was a sweet experience for us.

“I felt the Spirit so strong in the temple as I often do. I knew the sacrifices we had made throughout the year to make that trip were worth it.”

**Raewyn Viljoen, Auckland—
Write your Personal History**

Before it’s too late.

“I won’t lie, It’s a lot of work. A lot of dictation, photo scanning and formatting, but it’s so worth it in the end. I was able to give each of my four children a copy of the first volume of my personal history, as well as my husband’s, for Christmas last year. It



Raewyn Viljoen

doesn't have to be an award-winning piece of writing; you're simply telling your own stories in your own words; anyone can do it.

"When I started this project, I wasn't sure how much I would remember, but as I got into it, I was surprised how much came back to me. Doing this work will not only give your children and grandchildren the spirit of Elijah, it will also show you just how much the Lord has done for you in your life. Perhaps you might consider making your personal history this year's Christmas gift for your children or other family members. They will love it!"

Leilani Strother, Hamilton— Bringing the Spirit of the Temple into Our Homes

The home may be one of the only places of refuge our children have left in this world.

"Last year we focused on really investing in our little family unit. We wanted to establish better relationships with one another and make our home like a temple for the children.

"We did our best to prioritise the basics: family home evening, daily family prayers, and family and personal scripture study. Most importantly we talked. We talked a lot. We tried to create an environment where our children

would feel safe to be open about everything going on in their lives.

"I feel for children these days. They are surrounded by negative influences and the home may be the only refuge they have.

"Visual reminders like photos of the temple or paintings of Jesus Christ are helpful. Recently, as a family home evening activity, we built a mini-sized temple out of blocks. It sits in our home as a daily reminder of our goal to always be worthy of the temple whether it is open or closed.

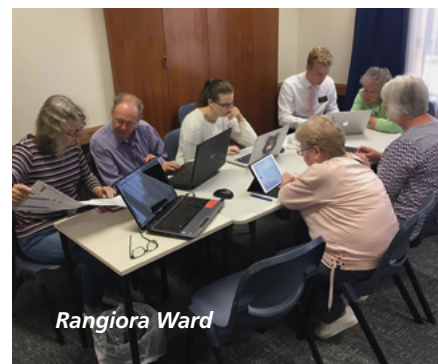
"It takes time and effort but before long, your children will crave the

influence of the Spirit and the peace of a home protected from evil influences. Through prayer, scripture study and a lot of talking, our home is a refuge for our family—preparing them to recognise and love the spirit of the temple when it opens again."

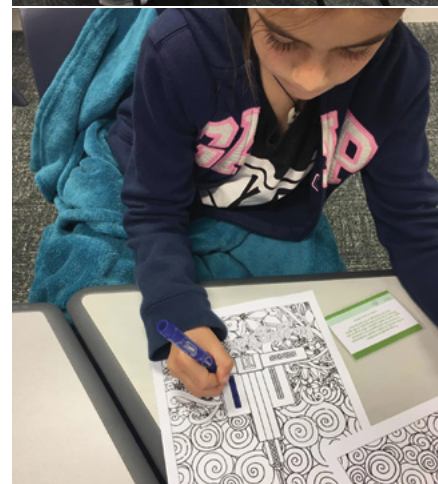
Rangiora Ward, Canterbury— Ward Temple Day

Working together to achieve more.

"Our ward has decided to work together to help each other keep the temple close by holding regular ward temple days. We have set a goal to reach 20,000 names indexed before

Leilani
Strother

Rangiora Ward



the end of the year. As it is, we managed to index more than 350 names during our first ward temple day alone, so we're well on our way.

"The chapel was set up with different rooms focusing on the various areas of temple work, including a

member of the stake presidency so that people could have recommend interviews done while they were there.

"There was a family history room, an indexing room, a login and technology help station and a scanning station for digitizing old photos.

"There was a writing personal histories workshop and a lesson for the primary children on what a temple recommend was. Each child had a 'temple recommend' of their own made up to bring to church each week." ■

New Zealand Latter-day Saints Offer Love and Support to Muslim Friends

Newsroom

Following the tragic mass shootings in Christchurch on Friday 15 March 2019, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints across New Zealand reached out in love and support to Muslim friends and neighbours.

In Auckland, Church members and other supporters welcomed Muslim friends into a local meetinghouse for a devotional that drew a congregation close to one thousand strong.

A day earlier (Saturday, 16 March), the president of the Church's Tauranga New Zealand Stake, Francis Fitzpatrick, and his wife, Megan Fitzpatrick, shared some words of love and support in a YouTube video.

Many Tauranga Latter-day Saints have placed flowers and kind messages at the Tauranga mosque.

A Latter-day Saint Sunday School class joined with members of the local Muslim community, and others, in a small devotional.

Other Church members have posted supportive messages and musical items on social media.

Latter-day Saint women in Dunedin are working alongside Clare Curran MP to set up a Muslim women's support group. Women are signing up to be a friend, to walk with, go shopping with, and offer support in other ways.

"As a Church, we love God, His Son, Jesus Christ, and our neighbours," Elder O. Vincent Haleck, president of the Pacific

Area of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, said.

"We strive to follow Jesus Christ by loving and serving those around us. We extend our love and support to our Muslim friends. We want them to know that we are with them, and as a nation and as communities we can move forward with faith, understanding and unity." ■

