

# NEW ZEALAND LOCAL PAGES

## AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

### Bound for Eternal Blessings through Our Covenants with the Lord

By Elder Benjamin Sinjoux

Area Seventy

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).*

I am so grateful to our Heavenly Father for the perfect love He has for all His children.

Many of us go through some heavy challenges in this life. One of the greatest of these is when we lose our loved ones after so many years of cherished moments together. This can feel like an injustice from God, but in reality, it is a sacred life test from a loving Heavenly Father who wants us to grow in faith so that we can become like him.

Our Lord Jesus Christ revealed His will to the Prophet Joseph Smith, who was

feeling despair in his heavy troubles as he sat imprisoned in Liberty jail:

“And if thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

“The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?

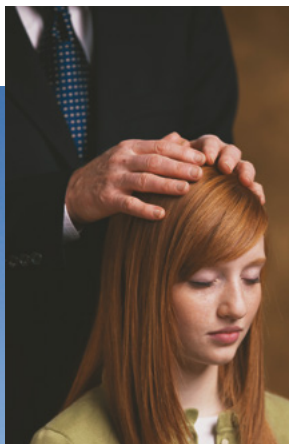


Elder Benjamin Sinjoux

“Therefore, hold on thy way, and the priesthood shall remain with thee; . . . fear not what man can do, for God shall be with you forever and ever” (Doctrine and Covenants 122:7–9).

In a recent ministering visit, we went into a home where the husband had passed away; he had served faithfully as a Church leader. His dear wife had been emotionally tested to an extent that she had gradually lost her faith and the desire to attend Church; the children had followed their mother into inactivity. As we gathered with this family the morning of our visit, daughters and grandchildren included, we expressed the love our Heavenly

*The covenants we make at baptism, when we receive the holy priesthood, and those ordinances accomplished in the temple, are tied to the greatest blessings the Lord has prepared for us. Through our faithful obedience to those covenants as we endure to the end, we will receive all of the Lord’s promised blessings.*



Father and Jesus Christ had for each of them.

We reminded our dear sister of the sacred covenants she and her husband had made some years before in the holy temple of the Lord. Our words of comfort, sustained by the sweet presence of the Holy Ghost and our genuine love for her as her brothers in the gospel, softened her heart and she rejoiced as the sweet memories of her temple sealing filled her mind and heart.

Our temple ordinances and covenants are deeply sacred and are the very expression of our Heavenly Father's love for us. The glorious blessings promised to us through these sacred covenants will only come to pass as we remain faithful until the end.

I shared with the family that I had lost my dear wife recently, and that I missed her greatly every day. This great loss is a cross I will have to bear until I pass into the next life but I shared with them my determination to continue serving my Saviour with all my heart until the end, knowing that one day, I will meet my dear wife again and we will live together with joy and happiness forever.

As we continued ministering with this wonderful family, we testified of the Saviour's outstretched arms of mercy, and his invitation to them to come back to church and enjoy the blessings of the gospel. I turned to each member of the family, starting with the mother, and said:

"Do you accept this invitation from our Saviour? Will you attend sacrament meeting on Sundays?"

Each one of them accepted the invitation. As humble servants of the Lord, our hearts were filled with joy as we witnessed these repentant souls taking steps to come unto their Saviour! I felt the heavens rejoice with us as we bonded with each other, both in trial and in faith.

It is not just the making of sacred covenants, but the continued obedience to them that bind us to our loved ones. The powerful effects of the Atonement of our Saviour and the constant nourishment of our faith through prayer, scripture study and service will give us the strength we need to face all of life's challenges.

Our Saviour Jesus Christ is mindful of all who are suffering. He is constantly extending to us His hand of mercy and love. I invite all who are facing difficult challenges in their life, whatever they may be, to come unto the Saviour and enjoy a feast at the His table as you partake of the sacrament each Sunday and make and keep sacred covenants in His holy temple. As you do this, the following promise is yours:

"Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great. Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing

and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days" (Doctrine and Covenants 64:33–34).

I testify that the covenants we make at baptism, when we receive the holy priesthood, and those ordinances accomplished in the temple, are tied to the greatest blessings the Lord has prepared for us. Through our faithful obedience to those covenants as we endure to the end, we will receive all of the Lords promised blessings. ■

## LOCAL PAGES

# President Nelson Meets with New Zealand Prime Minister

## Newsroom

President Russell M. Nelson of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints met Monday, May 20, with New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern as he reached the midway point of his nine-day Pacific ministry visits to seven countries.

"I think the world will discover a real leader here," said President Nelson concerning his visit with the prime minister. "It's an unlikely scenario—a young mother leading a great





*President Russell M. Nelson and his wife, Wendy, along with other Church leaders and their spouses, outside the New Zealand Parliament buildings in Wellington, New Zealand.*

nation, a peacemaker, a policymaker, consensus giver. We're very impressed with her. She'll have a great future."

The global faith leader expressed his condolences to the prime minister following the terrorist attacks on two mosques in Christchurch in March. President Nelson said, "We will be making contributions to those mosques to help them repair from their damages." Pacific Area President Elder O. Vincent Haleck added, "We're clearly sensitive to what happened there, and our hearts were broken when we heard about the tragedy that took place and the loss of life, and so the Church is reaching out . . .



*President Russell M. Nelson met with New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in Wellington.*

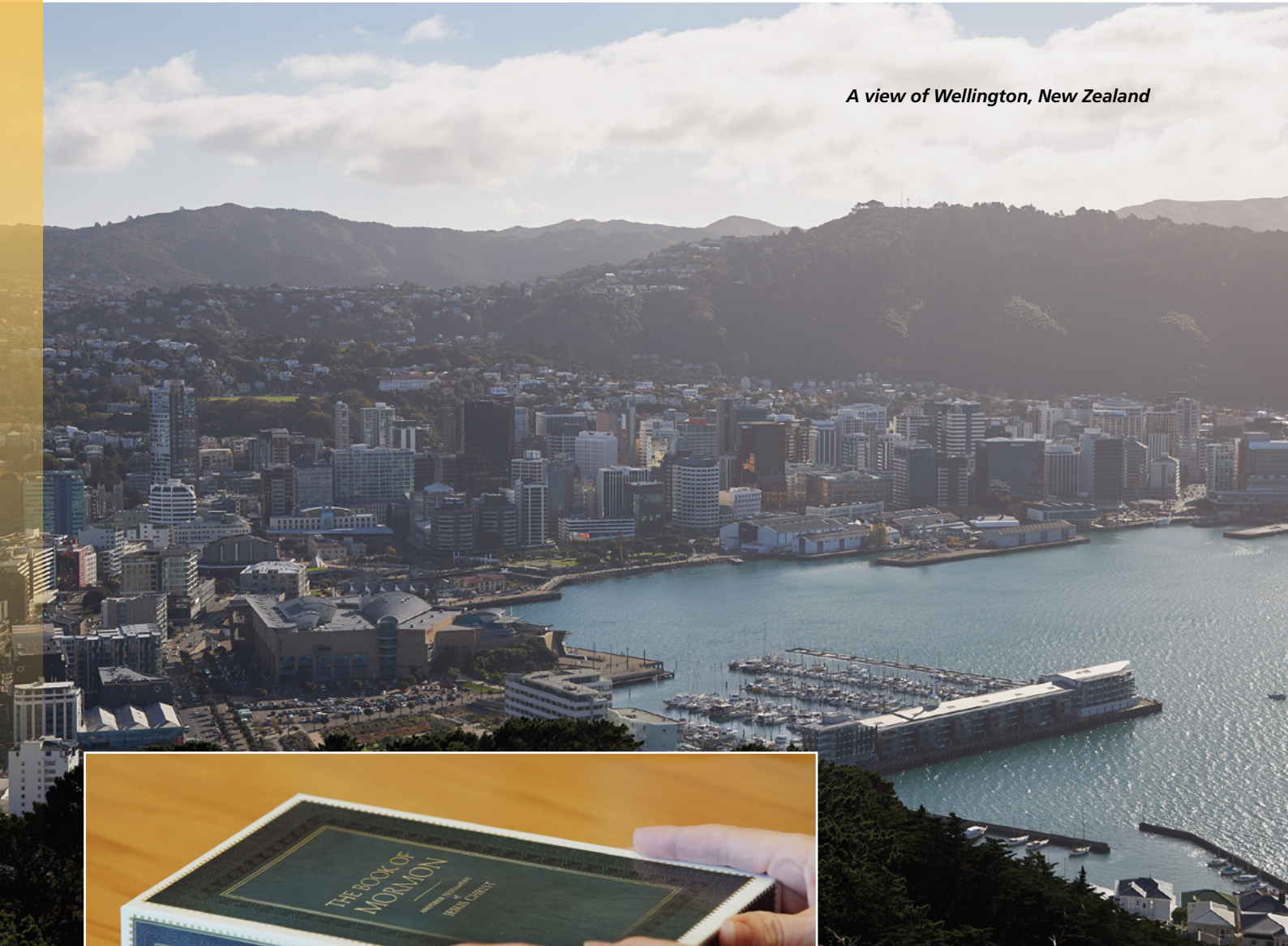
to lend a hand, to be there for our brothers and sisters who are another ethnicity and another religious group."

President Nelson explained that they discussed the diverse population in New Zealand and its differences.

"We have that problem in all countries of the world—how people can have different points of view and yet learn to live in love with one another." The New Zealand prime minister has been in office since October 2017.



*A view of Wellington, New Zealand*



***New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern received a gift of a leatherbound copy of the Book of Mormon.***

President Nelson arrived in Wellington to meet with the prime minister after speaking to a capacity crowd Sunday evening at the International Convention Centre in Sydney. His wife, Wendy, and Elder

Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and his wife, Susan, were traveling with him.

From Wellington, the prophet traveled to Auckland, where a devotional at Spark Arena was held Tuesday

evening and broadcast to all congregations in New Zealand. Prior to the devotional, the senior Church leaders met with missionaries in Auckland in a chapel located next to the missionary training center. The meeting was broadcast to all missions in the Pacific Area.

Hundreds of Latter-day Saints greeted President Nelson in Kona, Hawaii, on the first stop of his visits. From there he traveled to Apia, Samoa, for an outdoor devotional and meetings with government and faith leaders. ■

# New Zealand Latter-day Saint Honoured with Queen's Service Medal

## Newsroom

*Award given for service to Hawke's Bay Māori*

**E**velyn Ratima, a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is happy to receive the Queen's Service Medal for her work with Māori in her community of Hastings, New Zealand.

She will be honoured with the award in Wellington on September 19, 2019.

The Queen's Service Medal is awarded by the New Zealand Government and recognizes volunteer service to the community and for public service.

The honour comes because of her work on the Hastings District Council, being a trustee for the Tangoio Marae, working with the wellness and well-being of Māori inmates for the Department of Corrections, as well as her service on other committees and councils.

Evelyn says she strives to teach "our leaders of tomorrow to be confident, to know, love, and respect who they are, where they come from, and to leave them with fond memories of their childhood and growing up in a safe community where everyone knows everyone."

"Line upon line, precept upon precept," Evelyn continues. "Love, patience and endurance and a lot of

giving is what is required when raising a family and a community."

Evelyn's husband, Des, received the New Zealand Order of Merit last

year for his services to Māori, as well as the wider community.

They have worked together in the Whakatu community for 19 years.

Evelyn says she is "honoured to work and walk beside such a man who is greatly loved by my family, friends, and communities."

Des and Evelyn are the parents of seven children, 14 grandchildren, and three great grandchildren. ■



*Evelyn and  
Des Ratima*



# Auckland Academics Ask: “Why Religion?”

Newsroom



*Panelists speak during the public meeting discussing the importance of religion.*

A group of academics asked the question, “Why religion—given science, tragedy, secularism and materialism?” at University of Auckland on Tuesday, May 28.

The public meeting was organized by New Zealand Christians in Science and took place at Maclaurin Chapel on the university campus. Carolyn Kelly, chaplain of the University of Auckland, hosted the event

Dr. Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye, a senior lecturer in Asian Studies, Cultures, Languages and Linguistics

—and also a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—was one of the panelists.

She told attendees that she “wasn’t just a mildly religious person, but a super religious person.”

She cited her membership in the Church, her mission to Taiwan earlier in her life, and her faith focus with her husband and children, and in her congregation.

The title of her talk was “Thoughtful Marginality: Faith in a Secular Institution.”

She argued that while academic inquiry is based on rational arguments alone, there was a place for people of faith in society and even in the university.

“This is because religious communities, be they Latter-day Saint or Muslim or Catholic or Buddhist, are antidotes to the siloed, segmented, virtual character of so much interaction in the twenty-first century. In our communities we see our neighbours face to face. We know of their joys and sorrows.”

She continued: “Religious communities, with their networks of intertwining relationships, force us to learn to live with each other, and to try to accommodate each other’s differences.

“Some people may find it easy to have faith all by themselves. But, as I discovered when I was dealing with colon cancer two years ago, in the midst of despair it is sometimes easier to have faith in others’ faith than in your own. In this sense my community, the Latter-day Saints, not only saved me as they brought my family meals and watched my noisy children and went with me to chemo appointments, but also as they prayed for me, and blessed me, and had faith.” ■

# A Mighty Change of Heart

Linda Tagiloa

*Just 10 days of following the inspired council of the prophet can have life-long effects.*

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 had already completed the 7-day social media fast with the youth but found that I spent the time anxiously anticipating the end rather than learning anything from it. Being invited to participate again, this time as a Relief Society sister, was the second chance I needed and an answer to prayer.

“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>

I know that this council was inspired for all women in the Church, but as I listened to the prophet’s voice, I felt a specific, personal message from the Holy Ghost touch my heart. “Linda, pray to know what negative influences are preventing you from **ministering** to others.”

“The effect of your 10-day fast may surprise you.”

I was indeed surprised as the spirit opened my eyes to so many things that I had not before considered, including those influences that were

hurting my ability to minister. I realised that I was judging people based on their social media. I believed that knowing their status was knowing them enough, and I accepted my ignorant views on them easily. I realised that I was unconsciously looking for faults in others or things to gossip about. Though they were in my list of ‘friends,’ there were times when I only saw them as a status update or a post.

I felt a desire to change grow in my heart. I wanted to really understand what it truly means to minister. I wanted ministering to come more naturally to me.

Social media was consuming most of my life. People use social media for different reasons and I don’t judge but for me, most days, looking at my social media was the first and last thing I did. I justified this overuse by telling myself that I was only trying to keep in touch with family and friends overseas and didn’t want to miss their messages. I also tried to tell myself that the memes uplifted me and that I learned a lot from the motivational speeches online. I justified the music I listened to though the messages were not always good. Participating in the fast allowed the Spirit to cut through my justifications and show me the truth.

“What do you notice after taking a break from perspectives of the world that have been wounding your spirit?”

I noticed that I have been in bondage to my social media and I don’t have to be. I don’t have to worry about the opinions of others. I don’t have to partake of information that is not aligned with my beliefs. I don’t have to engage in everything that is happening online; I can choose to turn it off. I noticed that the fast was cleansing my mind of the poison of those judgements made on others and I felt my heart changing.

“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?”

Time is a gift that this fast has given me. I have time now to read through the general conference material and study the Book of Mormon. I have time to pray over the needs and concerns of those I have the sacred privilege of teaching as I prepare my lessons. I have time to spend with family having face to face conversations with my siblings and parents. I have time to really ponder on the needs of those I serve and find creative ways to minister to them. So many spiritual blessings and discoveries have come in only 10 days of following the counsel of the prophet. ■

#### NOTE

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Sisters’ Participation in the Gathering of Israel”, October 2018 General Conference, General women’s session; see also *Ensign*, Nov. 2018, 69.

#### AREA WEBSITES

New Zealand Area Site:  
[pacific.lds.org/nz](http://pacific.lds.org/nz)

Australia Area Site:  
[pacific.lds.org/au](http://pacific.lds.org/au)

Samoa Area Site:  
[pacific.lds.org/ws](http://pacific.lds.org/ws)

Tongan Area Site:  
[pacific.lds.org/to](http://pacific.lds.org/to)

Fiji Area Site:  
[pacific.lds.org/fj](http://pacific.lds.org/fj)

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

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

Papua New Guinea Newsroom:  
[www.mormonnewsroompg.org](http://www.mormonnewsroompg.org)

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