

AUSTRALIA LOCAL PAGES

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Increasing Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood Ordinations

By Elder Robert J. Dudfield
Area Seventy



Elder Robert J. Dudfield

Listed in the Area Plan under “Hastening the Work of Salvation” is the goal “Increase Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood ordinations.” The questions arise: Why is there such an emphasis to increase Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood ordinations? And how does this align with hastening the work?

In the Doctrine and Covenants we read:

“Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the *power* of godliness is manifest.

“And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the *power* of godliness in not manifest unto men in the flesh” (D&C 84:20–21; emphasis added).

In my personal scriptures I have written under the word *power* the word *love*. Heavenly Father’s love is evidenced through the ordinances of the gospel, such as the priesthood.

The power of the priesthood is available to all. Elder Neil L. Andersen reminds us:

“The priesthood is the power and authority of God given for the salvation and blessing of all—men, women, and children.

“A man may open the drapes so the warm sunlight comes into the room, but the man does not own the sun or the light or the warmth it brings.”¹

On the Church website, LDS.org, we read:

“In the Church, an ordinance is a sacred, formal act performed by the authority of the priesthood. . . .

“Ordinances and covenants help us remember who we are. They remind us of our duty to God. The Lord has provided them to help us come unto Him and receive eternal life. When we honor them, He strengthens us spiritually.”²

Throughout the Pacific Area, leaders have aligned their vision to the Area Plan and with concerted effort have seen the fruits of their labours as they witness individuals and families blessed through ordinances and covenants, including an increase of young men being ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood at the correct age and more brethren receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood.



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Left to right, standing: Medema (daughter) carrying Yamila (great-granddaughter); seated: Melisa (granddaughter) with Rina (great-granddaughter); Abol Gulal with his wife, Tuba; pictured with Elder Dudfield during a visit to Abol’s home in Wali.



In order to provide more opportunities for our brothers and sisters to be recipients of His love, we need to expand both access to and distribution of priesthood authority with the associated ordinances.

I recently presided at the Madang Papua New Guinea District Conference. During the weekend I had the privilege of meeting Abol Gulal, a recent convert at the age of 84. Abol and his family live in Wali, which is a remote village in the mountain ranges of Madang Province.

After being introduced to the Church by a friend, Abol started attending Church meetings every week. To get to church he would have to walk at least two hours in the hot Papua New Guinea sun. He attended faithfully, even though he was not yet a member. Abol was touched by the gospel message of families being together forever, so he shared the gospel with all of his children and their spouses and invited them to attend church with him. As his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren started getting baptised, he knew it would only be a matter of time before he would join the Church with his wife, Tuba. Soon enough, he and his entire extended family in the village of Wali were baptised.

Due to health constraints, Tuba was unable to walk long distances

too often. Abol would therefore bring Tuba the sacrament when she was unable to attend church so she did not miss out on this sacred ordinance. It also provided him, his sons, and his young Aaronic Priesthood grandsons the opportunity to exercise the priesthood together.

During the Sunday session of the Madang district conference, I had the privilege of witnessing many brethren sustained to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. Their stories and ages were wide and varied, from faithful Aaronic Priesthood holders who had turned 18 to new converts and others who had been reactivated. Among this group were nine brethren from Wali, including Abol and his sons. That meant that one-quarter of this small group in Wali now held the Melchizedek Priesthood! The Lord was hastening His work in this small village in the mountains of Papua New Guinea.

As a result of this growth, a new branch has been created in Wali, and Abol and his family are now preparing to go to the temple in Fiji to be sealed for time and all eternity. This is just

one example of the Lord hastening His work through the ordinances of the gospel.

Elder David A. Bednar declared, “Each successive ordinance elevates and enlarges our spiritual purpose, desire, and performance.”³

So back to the question, why is there such an emphasis to increase Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood ordinations in the Pacific Area? The answer is simple. Heavenly Father loves all of His children, and the Lord is hastening His work. Therefore, in order to provide more opportunities for our brothers and sisters to be recipients of His love, we need to expand both access to and distribution of priesthood authority with the associated ordinances.

My witness is that the priesthood is the authority of God on the earth today. We are led by prophets, seers, and revelators, who hold all priesthood keys. I know that our faith and trust is strengthened in Heavenly Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and His Atonement as we focus on the area goals and objectives, including helping more of our brothers and sisters receive the blessings of ordinances, such as the priesthood. ■

NOTES

1. Neil L. Andersen, “Power in the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 92.
2. “Ordinances,” Gospel Topics, topics.lds.org.
3. David A. Bednar, “Always Retain a Remission of Your Sins,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 62.

LOCAL PAGES



*Merridy
Granger and
Alicia Buring*

Mormon Helping Hands Assist with Adelaide Flood Cleanup

By LDS Adelaide News

Mormon Helping Hands volunteers were part of a ‘mud army’ helping people across Adelaide clean up their flood-affected properties.

Requests for volunteers from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints came via the State Recovery Office (SRO) immediately following

the 14 September flash flooding which caused considerable damage to properties at Old Noarlunga and the Waterfall Gully Road area of Burnside.

Armed with gumboots, gloves, shovels and power hoses, the helpers removed debris and layers of mud from floors, fencing and gardens. One yard was so deep in silt left behind as floodwaters receded that it yielded 70 wheelbarrow-loads of mud. This was hard going, as the barrow tyres kept deflating and the surface became more slippery as the day’s endeavour progressed.

But whether the service was shifting furniture and lifting waterlogged carpet or shovelling mud for hours, the volunteers said it was important—and rewarding—to lend a hand.

“It felt great to serve in this way,” said Alicia Buring, who was an LDS missionary in Fiji at the time of Cyclone Winston. “When I left Fiji the recovery was still ongoing, and it was hard to leave a people and place I loved. I’m really glad that I was able to help people here in Adelaide, who have been affected by another disaster emergency.”

The first flood emergency was followed by a second wave of mega-storms two weeks later which caused extensive flooding again, including around the township of Virginia. ■

Home Teaching with a Difference

By Caroline McIlwaine

Life can get really busy in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There are lessons to be taught and learned, meetings to attend, Church assignments to fulfil

and—importantly—people who need care and contact from their home and visiting teachers.

Victor Harbor Branch member Tobi Thornton lives with his wife, Tracy,

and family on Hindmarsh Island, and last summer he found a great way to connect with one of his home teaching families and shave 20 minutes off the travel time to the mainland—they went by Jet Ski!

“I have a family I visit in Clayton Bay—the Holt family—and one weekend I decided to go and visit with them by Jet Ski. It’s 25–30 minutes by road but 10 minutes across the water,” Tobi shared.

“Most of the visit was spent on the water with the family, fellowshiping and having fun. I can’t say it was your typical ‘dress in church clothes and visit’ meeting, but it was a great experience.

“I definitely plan similar visits when the weather gets warm again, and I will record an outing from start to finish.”

Ethne Holt said the family look forward to these visits because after the home teaching is complete, each family member gets the opportunity to have turns riding with Tobi on his Jet Ski around Clayton Bay.

“Tobi and his sons Lucas and Enoch are true and faithful home teachers who diligently watch over our family and bless our lives with fun, laughter and adventure,” she said.

What creative ways have you found to look after and connect with the individuals and families you home or visit teach? ■



Tobi Thornton and the Holt children have a fun day after the home teaching formalities.



Tobi and Tracy Thornton find a unique way to visit their home teaching family in a remote location.



The Holt family: John and Ethne with their children, Genesis, Zalia, and J.D.

IMAGES COURTESY OF ETHNE HOLT AND USED WITH PERMISSION



Left to right: Najlaa, Sister Dora Abbas, Shaymaa, Sada, Jan Addis, Caroline Mclwaine, Shaista Kalaniya, Sabrina and Kate at the Eid al-Adha morning tea

Interfaith Gathering: Celebrating Eid al-Adha

By Caroline Mclwaine

It has been my experience that when a faith community invites others to join them in marking a religious holiday or involves others in a service project to help disadvantaged

people, good things happen. It's not unusual to hear, "Your beliefs are so similar to ours", or "We need to do this again", or "It is so good to see you again".

Interfaith activity definitely bears the fruit of increased understanding and respect for differing beliefs and recognition of similarities. In the "City of Churches" or almost anywhere, it promotes unity and strengthens communities.

And then there are the food, fellowship and social elements that provide fertile ground for friendships to grow.

Earlier this year The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in South Australia organised and hosted a "Faith Matters" afternoon for young adults that was well supported by young people of our own and other religions. And recently the young women from the Muslim Women's Association of SA's (MWASA) youth group—who



Caroline McIlwaine of the LDS Adelaide PA Council discussed the Catholic community's support of the recent "Faith Matters" service project with the Most Reverend Philip Wilson, Catholic Archbishop of Adelaide, at the Eid event. An article about the project appeared in the archdiocese publication *Southern Cross*.

had taken part—organised an event to which I was invited in return.

It was a delight and an inspiration for fellow PA council member Jan Addis and me to be with them again at the Eid al-Adha event, held at the University of South Australia. They are intelligent, happy and faith-filled women, studying at university while also wanting to serve within their faith community and the wider society. They are mentored by similarly inspiring mature women, one of whom I count

as a friend—and I can do so because interfaith invitations allowed us to get to know each other.

Learning about other cultures and values is enriching without in any way detracting from one's own beliefs.

The difference between the terms "multifaith" and "interfaith" is *reaching out and connecting*. "Multifaith" means many faiths, while "interfaith" suggests working together for a common good—which was highlighted by the event speakers.

"Eid teaches us to care for each other—and that doesn't just mean Muslim neighbours," explained Imam Abdulsalam Alim, of the Masjid (mosque) Abu-Bakr as-Siddique. "It means all of our brothers and sisters, all humanity."

Sister Dora Abbas, of MWASA, reinforced the message in her closing remarks: "It is important to promote harmony—we are all one family."

I was reminded of what President Thomas S. Monson has taught Latter-day Saints about diversity and differing beliefs: "I would encourage members of the Church wherever they may be to show kindness and respect for all people everywhere. The world in which we live is filled with diversity. We can and should demonstrate respect toward those whose beliefs differ from ours."

There were about 70 invited guests at the Eid al-Adha morning tea, including Archbishop Philip Wilson of the Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide, Lord Mayor Martin Haese, Minister for Volunteering Zoe Bettison, Multicultural SA's chairperson Grace Portolesi and others. The programme included a presentation on the significance of Eid al-Adha, along with scripture and poetry readings, nasheed performances, and an exhibition of "Silat"—Malaysian martial arts. ■

Church Updates Official “Mormon and Gay” Website

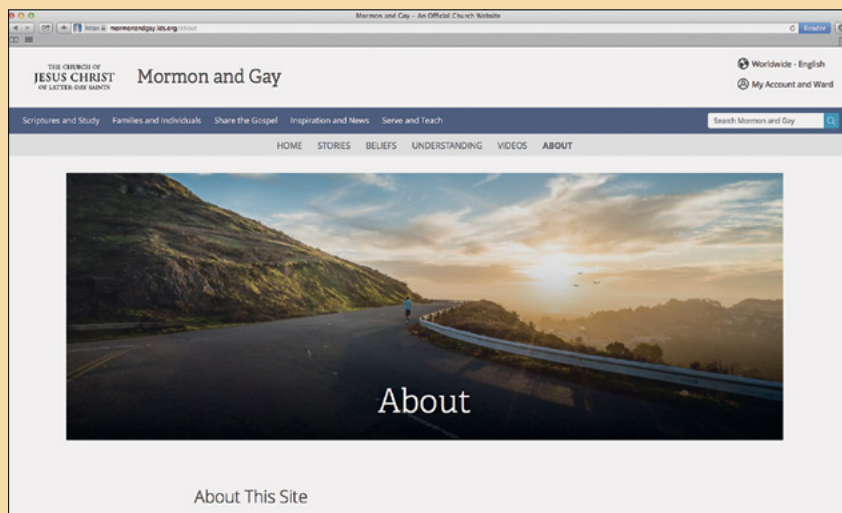
“Even though I still don’t understand everything, I know that I don’t have to. All I am asked to do is love as God would love.”

This comment, and many others like it, is included in an updated version of “Mormon and Gay,” an official website from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The site reinforces the reality that, in the words of one Mormon scripture, God “loveth his children” (1 Nephi 11:17) and seeks to help everyone better understand same-sex attraction from a gospel perspective.

The first version of this website launched in December 2012 under the title “Mormons and Gays.” The new appellation, “Mormon and Gay,” reflects the reality that a person doesn’t need to choose between these two identities—one can, in fact, be gay and live faithful to the teachings of Christ.

Personal Accounts and Comments from Church Leaders

Mormonandgay.lds.org features five personal accounts from multiple perspectives—including those who experience same-sex attraction, as well as their families, friends and ecclesiastical leaders. Each story is unique and vulnerable and ultimately hopeful, reflecting the complex and uncertain reality that it is to experience same-sex attraction or know someone who does.



The website is “a place where the people whose lives are impacted by attraction to the same sex can find inspiration to work through difficult challenges while remaining faithful to Church teachings,” says Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The site “does not offer a comprehensive explanation of everything related to same-sex attraction,” he adds, “but it does reflect the feelings of Church leaders as to how we should treat each other as part of the human family.”

In addition to firsthand narratives, the new site includes encouraging comments from Elder L. Whitney Clayton of the Presidency of the Seventy. Speaking directly to Latter-day Saints who experience same-sex attraction or identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual, Elder Clayton says, “We want you to know we love you. You are welcome. We want you to be part of our congregations. You have great talents and abilities to offer God’s kingdom on earth, and we recognize the many valuable contributions you make.”

What the Church Believes about Same-Sex Attraction

Visitors to the website can find outlines of official Mormon beliefs about same-sex attraction and key concepts, themes and vocabulary to

help Latter-day Saints engage in healthy conversations about this topic.

Key beliefs include the following:

- We should love everyone.
- Feelings of same-sex attraction are not a sin, and we can choose how to respond.
- People who live God’s law can fully participate in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The belief section also includes information about God’s plan, Christ’s infinite capacity to change hearts, and our eternal and core identity as God’s children.

Engaging in Healthy Conversations about Same-Sex Attraction

Other portions of the website include frequently asked questions, explanations of sexual orientation, tips for parents, guidance for responding to depression and suicide, and information about self-mastery and sexual expression.

One question addresses the use of “same-sex attraction” instead of “gay.” The site says, “Same-sex attraction is a technical term describing the experience without imposing a label. This website uses this term to be inclusive of people who are not comfortable using a label, not to deny the existence of gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity.” ■

TIP OF THE MONTH

Work—Take Responsibility

By LDS Family Services

A sign that appeared in a dental office serves as a reminder about the importance of work and responsibility. It said: “You don’t have to brush all of your teeth, only the ones you want to keep.”

Work and responsibility are eternal principles that teach us that success requires our best effort and being responsible for our actions.

From Genesis we learn about the importance of taking responsibility for our work. When God created the earth, He made sure everything was completed and done in order. The account says, “God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.”¹ Adam and Eve were commanded to work hard and take responsibility. “By the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,” Adam was told, and the couple was sent forth “to till the ground.”²

In this mortal journey, the challenges we face require that same effort and determination which leads to success.³

For example, overcoming compulsive pornography use will require both these qualities and will include the following actions:

- Recognize triggers and cravings as they occur.
- Establish specific actions to help withdraw from the temptation.



- Redirect thoughts and energy toward the Lord.
- Outline daily specific actions to fortify a personal commitment to live righteously.⁴

Points to Ponder

1. Work and responsibility are intertwined; write down how you will implement them as part of planning your daily work.
2. The Lord’s way consists of people helping themselves, but it must be done in His way (see D&C 104:15–16).

3. Be prayerful and record impressions about how you will take positive action.
4. We are more likely to succeed when we take personal responsibility for our own change and do not blame others or our situations.
5. Choose to learn from past mistakes. ■

NOTES

1. Genesis 1:31.
2. Moses 4:25, 29.
3. See *My Foundation: Principles, Skills, Habits* (self-reliance booklet, 2015), 2.
4. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Recovering from the Trap of Pornography,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2015, 36.