

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

We without Them Cannot Be Made Perfect

By Elder Adolf J. Johansson

Area Seventy



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Johansson

As my family accepted the invitation from our Area Presidency to complete “My Family 15 in 15” and take a name to the temple, I personally witnessed and felt the love my ancestors have for one another in the spirit world.

Since moving to Fiji from New Zealand, I have made connections to living relatives in Sweden, who gave me five generations of family names on my father’s side. As we prepared our ancestors for temple ordinances, I could feel the joy of husbands and wives looking forward to their eternal union. I could feel the anticipation of kindred spirits

preparing for their sealing in the Suva Fiji Temple.

I did not realise the reality of being separated as husband and wife after death until I knelt with my wife in the Suva Fiji Temple on behalf of those who have gone beyond the veil.

As my wife and I participated in the sacred sealing ordinance, I saw in my mind the couple embracing each other for the first time after their departure from this mortal life, as husband and wife. I could feel that their longing for one other was now over. Tears filled my eyes as I realised how much this couple had missed each

other while waiting to be married for eternity. In the spirit world, only those who are married by the laws and ordinances of the holy temple can continue the marriage relationship. “Therefore, when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage.”¹

We sometimes don’t appreciate the urgency of temple and family history work until we catch a glimpse into the lives of those in the spirit world. There are husbands and wives, parents and children waiting and longing for the promised day of eternal union through temple ordinances.

Our ancestors are praying for us to take their names to the temple and fulfil our promised obligations in the work of salvation on their behalf.



The scriptures testify of our duty and obligation to one another in the great latter-day work of temples: “For we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect.”²

There are also those of our ancestors who are repenting and exercising exceeding great faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ but cannot progress until the ordinances of the temple are complete. The promise of redemption is assured to all who will obey the ordinances of the temple. “The dead who repent will be redeemed, through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God.”³

Our ancestors are praying for us to take their names to the temple and fulfil our promised obligations in the work of salvation on their behalf.

Our ancestors are waiting, longing, hoping, and praying for you and me to relieve them from their suffering through the sanctifying ordinances of the holy temple.

President Thomas S. Monson shared his gratitude for the blessings of the temple in the April 2015 general conference:

“The blessings of the temple are priceless. One for which I am grateful every day of my life is that which my beloved wife, Frances, and I received as we knelt at a sacred altar and made covenants binding us together for all eternity. There is no blessing more precious to me than the peace and

comfort I receive from the knowledge I have that she and I will be together again.”⁴

I testify of the sealing powers that bind husband and wife, parents and children for time and eternity. These sealing powers and priesthood keys are held by the living prophets and apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I witness that marriage and family relationships will continue as we obey the ordinances

of the house of God. May we find our ancestors, take their names to the temple, and teach others to do likewise. This is the great latter-day work of temples, and the Lord is hastening His work on both sides of the veil, I humbly testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 132:16.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 128:18.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 138:58.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “Blessings of the Temple,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 93.

LOCAL PAGES

Storms No Deterrent to Modbury Stake “Pioneers”

By Caroline McIlwaine

Last September’s “storm of the half century” in South Australia could have wiped out the Modbury stake’s planned pioneer reenactment trek, but just like the early pioneers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, nothing deterred them.

Just four days before the start of the trek, organisers learned that the storms had washed away tracks, causing closures and damage to the trail chosen and mapped out in the Mount Remarkable National Park.

“We had to find an alternate route to ensure trek went ahead for the youth,” explained trail boss Chris Castle. “We

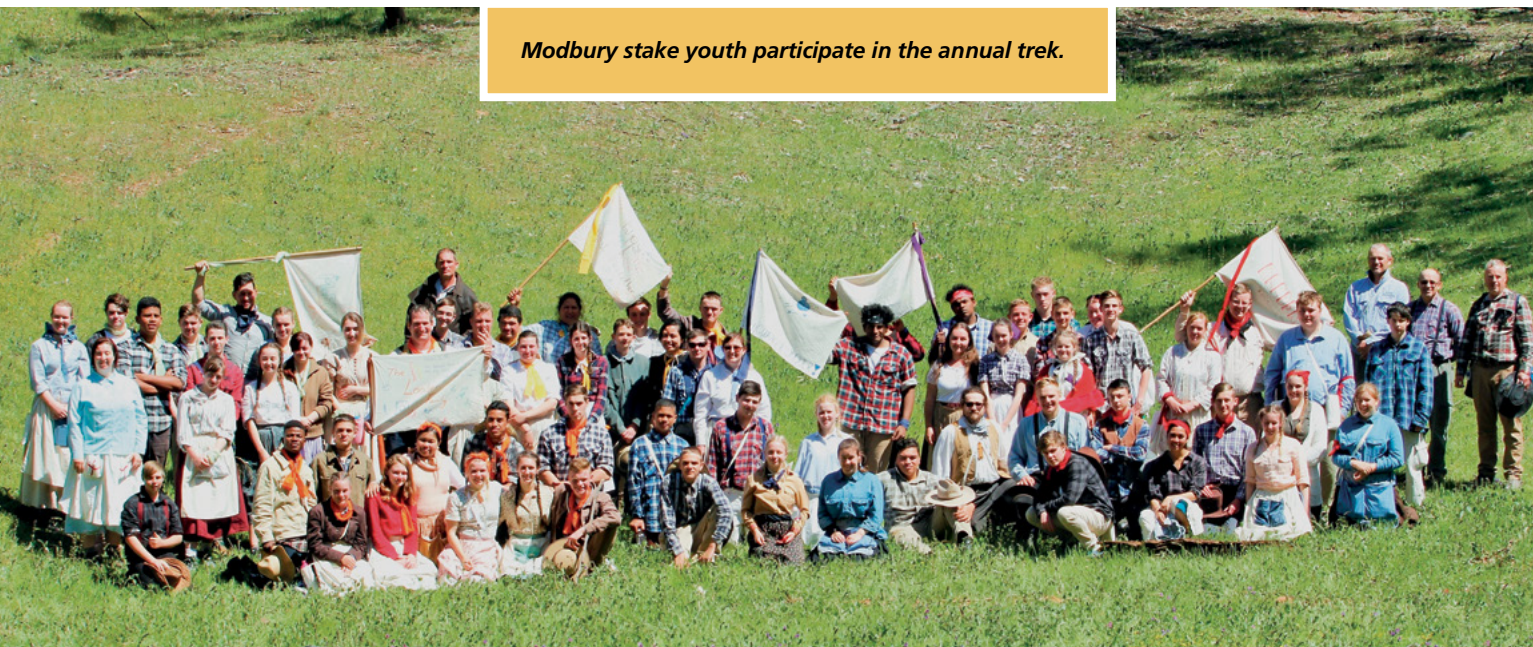
held emergency meetings as a trek committee and fasted and prayed for guidance and a miracle.”

What followed was exactly that—a miracle!

“Suddenly we had land owners who’d previously not allowed us access through their properties open their lands up to us at a day’s notice, and when we inspected the trails we found that they were unaffected by the wild weather, even though they were not far from the original site,” Chris said.

With that faith rewarded, and in high spirits, the youth and their leaders headed north to the Flinders

Modbury stake youth participate in the annual trek.



Ranges on the 4th October. Leaving home comforts and technology behind, they resolved in their hearts to experience—even in small measure—what the Church’s 19th-century converts underwent as they trekked from America’s midwest to the Salt Lake Valley, fleeing persecution and suffering privation and loss, in their faith-filled quest for religious freedom.

Small miracles are not unusual on the trek. It is designed to build faith and testimony through the sacrifice, courage, and sheer hard work that have brought people throughout time closer to God. Dressed in 19th-century clothing and enduring the meagre fare that was the norm for the pioneer trail, the 56 youth pushed and pulled their handcarts—often uphill—along the 21-kilometre route.

The youth were divided into six families, with a ‘ma’ and ‘pa’, and were given the name of an actual pioneer family whose journey was recorded. Sixteen-year-old Sebastian Trudgen of Playford Ward said that sharing the challenge with his trek family (the

Hoyts) was a highlight and blessing.

“That’s my favourite memory from trek—the way my family supported each other through our weaknesses and trials,” said Sebastian. “We sang the most, prayed the most, and kept our spirits up.”

But it was still hard.

“Most of us were on the verge of collapse after each hill, but there were easier parts, and people who weren’t pushing or pulling handcarts always

kept a watch to see if anyone needed a break. We helped each other out.”

Rest for sore feet and blistered palms came at nighttime, as tarpaulins were thrown over the handcarts to make rudimentary tents. Sebastian said it was hard to sleep on the first damp night, but then—another blessing—the weather fined up and the sun shone.

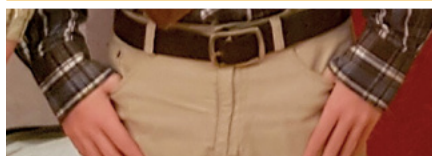
Julia Quince, 17, of Golden Grove Ward considers the women’s handcart pull the hardest aspect of the trek—and the most rewarding.

“It was so mind blowing: (tackling) the steepest hills on the trail, and we did it three times,” enthused Julia about the reenactment of the pioneer stories of women who had to push and pull their carts west, alone.

“It got harder each time, but it was a really good feeling—pushing through and encouraging each other. I absolutely related to the pioneer women, but I know when the men went off to war, they had this hardship each day, and we only had it for a short time. How challenging it must have been for them.”



Sebastian Trudgen was one of 56 youth who undertook Modbury stake’s trek.



During the annual stake trek, Modbury stake youth and leaders experience the conditions early Church pioneers endured.



This was more than an eye-opener for Julia, though. “I know my faith definitely increased when I put my trust in the Lord as I was pushing up each hill. So many times I didn’t think I had the strength, but I kept going and the Lord helped me a lot. It increased my faith

or confidence in myself too—because I now know I can keep going, I can overcome challenges.”

Both youth agreed that being away from the distractions of everyday life for the three days of the trek helped them spiritually, as did participating

in the testimony meeting at the close of the trek.

“I really felt the Spirit,” Sebastian said. “Everyone did—it was inspiring.”

Echoing the words of President Brigham Young in the summer of 1847, when he and the first Mormon pioneers reached the Salt Lake Valley—they were in the right place!

Reflecting on the overall experience, Chris Castle is thankful for the youth, their parents, the accompanying leaders, and everyone who worked towards its success.

“We were blessed because many of the parents and committee exercised faith that a way for trek to go ahead would be provided if we trusted in the Lord. The Lord truly loves his youth and those who serve them.” ■

The Unexpected Things I Learnt from Reading the Book of Mormon

By Catherine Vaughan

In August 2005, President Gordon B. Hinckley challenged the members of the Church to read the Book of Mormon right through, before the end of the year.

For some reason, I missed the initial challenge, so by the time it came to my attention as I sat in a devotional at the end of September, there were only three months left to accomplish

the task. I spent the rest of that meeting trying to figure out how many pages I would need to read each day to achieve the goal. I have often struggled with consistent scripture study, so I decided this was my opportunity to get back into it, and if I stuck to almost six pages a day, I would have the whole book completed by the end of the year.

The next day I began to read from 1 Nephi, and each day continued with the assigned reading I had set myself. There was the occasional day that I missed, but I managed to keep up with my schedule. By the beginning of November I was just over a third of the way through and enjoying the peace that I received as I read the sacred words of the prophets.

I looked forward to that brief interlude that I had set aside daily. Then as the month went on, I began to feel an urgency to read more and more, which often resulted in my

completing two or three times the scheduled amount for each day. I became consumed with the words of counsel contained in the Book of Mormon, as I felt the need to study and ponder what I was reading. Soon I was reading my scriptures several times throughout the day, and I realised that I was going to finish much earlier than originally anticipated.

On Thursday 24th November I triumphantly finished reading Moroni, feeling pleased with myself that I could cross “Read the Book of Mormon by the end of the year” off my to-do list.

Very early the next morning, as I was preparing for work, I received the type of phone call that no one ever wants to get. My 82-year-old father had been killed in a hit-and-run accident the previous night while crossing the road outside his house.

The next few weeks were hectic with travelling out of town to organise his funeral, meeting with police to be updated on the manhunt for the person who had killed him, and the eventual court case once the offender was caught.

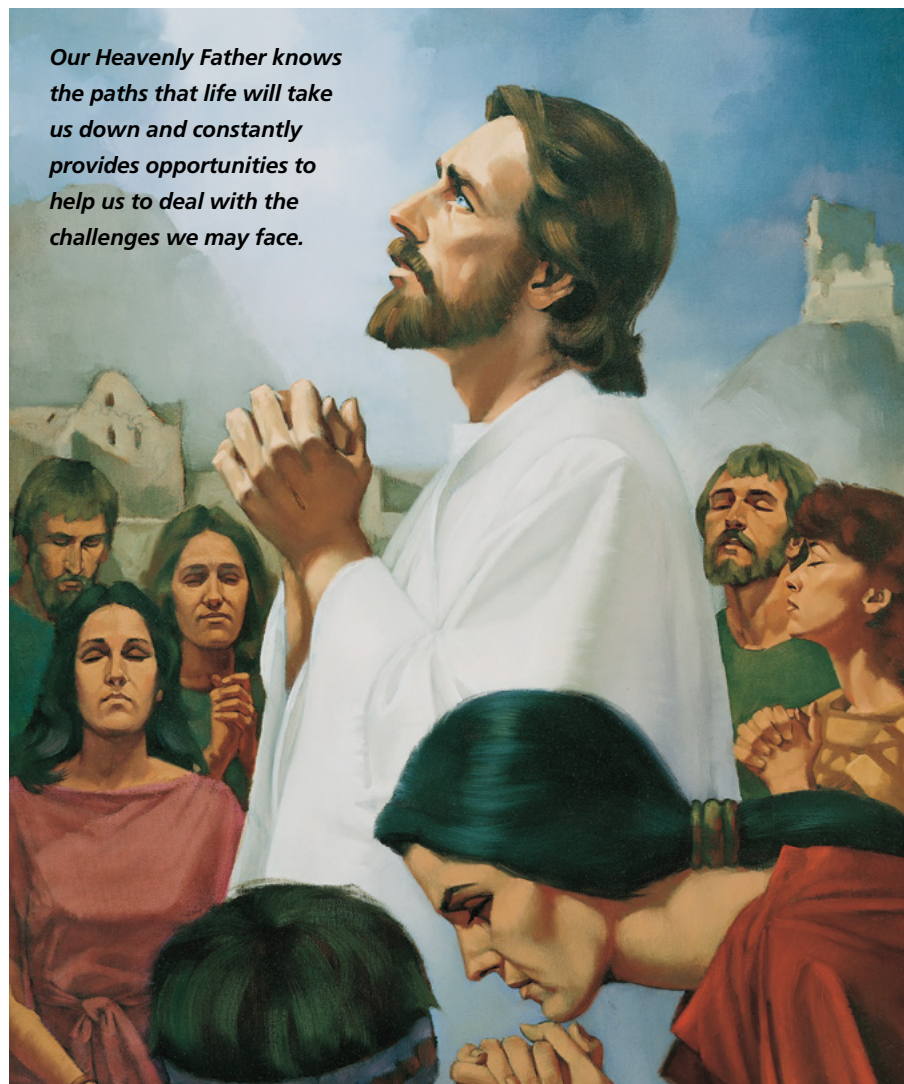
During that time, the scriptures that were so fresh in my memory gave me peace and comfort. And I realised that there are no coincidences in Heavenly Father’s plan. Following the promptings regarding the feeling of urgency I had felt in studying the last part of the Book of Mormon meant that I was able to finish the assigned reading

despite the world falling apart around me—and then draw on the strength of those scriptures to help me through the dark days.

It also emphasised to me that we are not alone. Our Heavenly Father knows the paths that life will take us down and constantly provides opportunities to help us to deal with the challenges we may face.

I thought I was being obedient to the challenge of our prophet and dutifully set about reading the number of pages of scripture required

to help me reach that goal. It was a task that I accepted. But there was a deeper purpose at hand. Heavenly Father had provided a way for me to feel closer to the Spirit, a way to be reminded of the eternal nature of His counsel. He had provided a way for me to cope with the chaos around me and gain an understanding of life and death and being together as a family forever. He was reminding me that there is a purpose in all things—and that He is always aware of us individually. ■



Our Heavenly Father knows the paths that life will take us down and constantly provides opportunities to help us to deal with the challenges we may face.

Cleanup Crew Enjoyed Volunteering at Cleland Wildlife Park

By Caroline McIlwaine

A cheerful band of volunteers from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints joined other locals in a cleanup blitz at Adelaide's popular Cleland Wildlife Park late last year.

They joined Latter-day Saints across the South Pacific who similarly lent a hand in their neighbourhoods on the Church's designated "Weekend of Community Outreach".

"Joining in with the other volunteers for the Cleland Wildlife Park blitz was a great activity for the single adults. It provided us with the opportunity to work together to do something good for the community," said participant Jodey Hatchard.

"We were able to help with weed control, as well as laying fresh sand and mulch, within some of the animal enclosures. One of our groups was able to get up close with Fred the wombat while working within his enclosure. It was physical work; however, we found it to be really rewarding and a great bonding experience."

The project began at 8.30am with instruction by the park rangers, with the cleanup starting at 9am and winding up at midday with a sausage sizzle. Twenty-four of the volunteers were Latter-day Saints, including several children. ■



Daniela Duffield raking mulch at Cleland Wildlife Park



Everyone, including Fred the wombat, became shy when the camera came out.

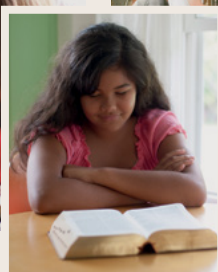


Volunteers taking a well-earned rest

IMAGES COURTESY OF BARBARA NEAVE AND USED WITH PERMISSION

Strengthening Others through Sharing Your Stories

By Catherine Vaughan



Lately we have been struggling to find local stories and articles about members and Church activities in Australia and about local events in your wards and branches. We hope to make the *Ensign* insert pages personal to the members of Australia and look forward to receiving more local stories.

We have been able to publish some wonderful local stories from Adelaide and look forward to receiving more South Australian stories, but we would also like to share stories from around the whole country.

We are collecting stories of inspiration and growth, learning and understanding, of moments that have changed your lives. These personal stories may be included in the *Ensign* or *Liahona* insert pages and may also be added to the country websites and social media pages, if suitable. There is no deadline for these stories, as they are not time sensitive and can be added to the magazines at any time, as space permits.

These stories can be recent or from past experiences. They can be short, everyday moments where you have gained an insight into the gospel or longer, life-changing experiences.

We are mindful that some experiences may not be appropriate or are too personal to share, but know that there are many testimony-strengthening experiences that would be suitable and would uplift others to read of them.

Some ideas and suggestions may be:

- An unexpected answer to a prayer
- A scripture that helped you understand a gospel principle more clearly
- Challenges you may be facing
- Periods of growth in your calling or personal life
- Developing good habits with scripture study
- A successful family home evening
- Gaining a testimony of tithing or any other gospel principle

- Catching the family history vision
- Watching your children or family or friends overcome challenges and grow from the experience
- Overcoming bad habits
- Service you have received
- Visiting teaching or home teaching moments that have touched your heart
- Missionary work with colleagues or friends
- Stories about faith, sacrifice, or service

Stories do not need to be long, approximately **300–500 words**. They must be written in **English**, and we will help with editing as required.

So, if you feel inspired to share a story from your life or the lives of those around you, we would love to be able to share it with the other members in the Pacific Area. There may be others who are experiencing similar things and whose hearts will be touched and strengthened by the words you share.

We also welcome news of local events and activities that are happening in your area, as well as any testimony-strengthening stories you would like to add to the database. We look forward to reading them all.

You can contact us at the following email address:

ensign-australia@ldschurch.org
for Australian and Papua New Guinea contributors

If you know of any other people who might be interested in writing the occasional article for the magazine inserts or websites, please pass on this contact information to them. ■

TIP OF THE MONTH

Problem Solving

By LDS Family Services

"In 1936 the First Presidency outlined a welfare plan for the Church. They said: 'Our primary purpose was to set up . . . a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership.'"¹

Since the aim of the Church is to help people help themselves, then one essential skill needed to obtain self-reliance is problem solving. This same principle of self-reliance has application in emotional and spiritual things.

The Lord said to Oliver Cowdery, and it has meaning for all of us:

"Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me.

"But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause

that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right."²

To study it out in our minds is to problem solve; to problem solve is to initiate; to initiate is to do something intentionally. To do something intentionally bears credence to the admonition of the Lord to act and not be acted upon.³ To act is to take control, to use the faculties the Lord has blessed us with to govern our lives. President Boyd K. Packer said: "When you have a problem, work it out in your own mind first. Ponder

on it and analyze it and meditate on it. Pray about it."⁴

See tools on how to problem solve at:

- www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/docs/ACF3B8C.pdf
- www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/ProblemSolvingWorksheet.pdf
- www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/docs/ACFE1D3.pdf ■

NOTES

1. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 6.1.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 9:7–8.
3. See 2 Nephi 2:26.
4. Boyd K. Packer, "Self Reliance" (Brigham Young University fireside, Mar. 2, 1975), 8, speeches.byu.edu.

