

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Very Early in the Morning

By Elder Craig A. Cardon

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Elder Craig A. Cardon

The New Testament accounts of the Savior's Resurrection by the Gospel writers all begin with reference to the early morning.

Matthew: "In the end of the sabbath, *as it began to dawn* toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene . . . to see the sepulchre."¹

Mark: "And *very early in the morning* the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre *at the rising of the sun*."²

Luke: "Now upon the first day of the week, *very early in the morning*, they came unto the sepulchre."³

John: "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene *early, when*

it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre."⁴

Whatever the exact moment in time may have been, it is clear from these accounts that the miracle of the Savior's Resurrection was affirmed very early on that first Easter morn to those who loved Him and were closest to Him.

Sister Cardon and I raised our family in Gilbert, Arizona, USA. It so happens that Gilbert is located at about the same geographic latitude as Jerusalem on the earth's surface. That means that the sun rises over Gilbert at approximately the same time of the morning that it rises over Jerusalem, albeit ten time zones later. With this in mind, for several decades while living in Gilbert,

Sister Cardon and I arose very early on Easter morning, "when it was yet dark," and found a place at our home or elsewhere from which we had an unobstructed view of the distant horizon. In silence we reverently watched and listened as the world around us began to come alive with the light of the sun and the sounds of nature. We always read from the scriptures the accounts of the Savior's ten appearances to His disciples in Israel following His Resurrection. In subsequent years while living in different parts of the world, although we recognized that the rising of the sun occurs at different times in the various geographic



May the Spirit of the Lord affirm to you this Easter season that Jesus Christ is our Saviour, the Son of God, and that through Him alone have we the assurance of the Resurrection and the hope of eternal life with our Father.

latitudes, we still attempted to arise early on Easter morning to watch the rising of the sun and to witness the awakening of nature, always with the scriptures at hand.

On each of these occasions as we read the biblical accounts, and also reviewed the Book of Mormon prophecies of this miraculous and glorious event, the Spirit of the Lord bore witness to our souls that Jesus Christ is “the firstfruits of them that slept,”⁵ that He did in fact “bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise,”⁶ affirming our abiding testimony that His Resurrection is a divine confirmation that He is the Son of God.

Because of His Resurrection, in addition to knowing that He overcame physical death for all of God’s children, we also know that He atoned for the sins of all those who exercise faith in His name, repent, receive the ordinances of His gospel, and endure to the end, thereby overcoming spiritual death and receiving the promised blessing of eternal life.

Indeed, at Jerusalem, He invited His disciples to handle Him and see that “a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have”⁷ (overcoming physical death for all), while in Bountiful He invited the people to thrust their hands into His side and to feel the prints of the nails in His hands and feet, “that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the

world”⁸ (redeeming from spiritual death those who repent and are faithful).

Dear Saints and friends of the Pacific Area, may the Spirit of the Lord affirm to you this Easter season that Jesus Christ is our Saviour, the Son of God, and that through Him alone have we the assurance of the Resurrection and

the hope of eternal life with our Father, is my humble prayer. ■

NOTES

1. Matthew 28:1; emphasis added.
2. Mark 16:2; emphasis added.
3. Luke 24:1; emphasis added.
4. John 20:1; emphasis added.
5. 1 Corinthians 15:20.
6. 2 Nephi 2:8.
7. Luke 24:39.
8. 3 Nephi 11:14.

LOCAL PAGES

The Book of Mormon Makes a Big Splash in Melbourne

By Mormon Newsroom

Melbourne has never before seen so many Mormons or so much of their famous book. With the opening of the musical *The Book of Mormon* earlier this year—a production that is not sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—long preceded by ads on trams, and the response from the Church, the book and its easily recognisable missionaries will be front and centre in Melbourne for some time.

This season of Book of Mormon ads has been embraced by members of the Church. As Melbournian Mormon Elder Robert Dudfield recently put it, “We recognise the musical offers us an unparalleled opportunity to place the truth and beauty of our Christian faith before a wider audience.”

The average Melbournian may not know many Mormons or much about their book or church, so with the salty and satirical musical currently playing, here are a few surprising facts.

The Book of Mormon’s first printing in 1830 ran to 5,000 copies.

In 2011 the number of copies printed passed the 150 million mark.

In 2015 the book was published in Kosraean, a language spoken on an island in Micronesia, marking the 110th publication language. The U.S. Library of Congress recently recognised the Book of Mormon as one of the most influential books printed in America.

The book’s influence soon reached beyond American shores, however. While The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is often thought of as



Missionaries at the Southern Cross Station in Melbourne

Called to Serve

By Caroline McIlwaine

Recently the *Financial Review* interviewed Australian Latter-day Saint Elder Peter F. Meurs about his new full-time role as a General Authority Seventy in the Church.

His ease of manner, love of the gospel and enthusiasm for life made the Elder Meurs article a great read. And it will no doubt increase readers' understanding of how almost the entire ecclesiastical work of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is carried out by volunteers—people called to serve in various capacities without pay but with a lot of faith and energy and sacrifice.

That same faith and energy are found among the members recently called to local leadership positions in and around Adelaide.

For Firlle stake Primary president Annette Orth, serving is a “delight”.

“As I’ve visited the wards and branches of the stake, my faith’s been strengthened by the wise, loving leaders and teachers and beautiful Primary and nursery children,” Annette shared.

“I’m especially uplifted by the children’s personal stories and experiences and their knowledge and understanding of gospel principles.”

Hearing the youngsters sing and seeing them serve are choice aspects of the calling too: “I’ve seen children sing in nursing homes, help someone



One of the banners at the Southern Cross Station in Melbourne

an American church, the majority of the world’s almost sixteen million members live outside the U.S. The first Mormon missionary arrived in Australia in 1840, just ten years after the organisation of

the Church. And while the Church in Australia grew slowly during its first hundred years, there are now nearly 150,000 members in Australia and over half a million members in Oceania. ■

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give their talk, or make sure the younger children participate and feel a special part of Primary. They are great examples of the Saviour's love in so many ways—including inviting friends to church and showing kindness to teachers and other kids. I just love them!”

Annette, wife of Andy and busy mother of four children aged 3–11, is full of praise for parents and teachers: “Primary can be a wonderful support for families by reinforcing gospel principles and helping children learn to recognise the Spirit, but we’re just a support really to what happens at home and in the family.



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Prospect Ward Primary children preparing to sing at an aged care facility close to their church meetinghouse



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Shaun Scott of the Firlie stake, pictured with his wife, Emma, has been called to lead the newly created Adelaide City Branch.

“I’m grateful to parents for teaching their children and bringing them to church; and our teachers and leaders deserve a big thank-you for their efforts, faith and prayers on behalf of the Primary children.”

While Annette was able to draw on her previous experience as a counsellor in the Firlie stake Primary presidency, recently called branch president Shaun Scott will lead a new Church unit in the city, created for both members living inside the city and Chinese Church members and converts, bolstered by his faith and his two-year experience as a Mandarin-speaking missionary in Taipei, Taiwan.

“Emma [Shaun’s wife] and I are both excited at the chance we have to serve in the Adelaide City Branch,” said Shaun. “We are especially excited to work with our Chinese brothers and sisters across the three stakes.

“We hope that the branch will become a home away from home for its members and will become a hub of activity for the students who study in the city and the young adults across the stakes.”

Being called President Scott might take a bit of getting used to, but Shaun, who also works full-time as a solicitor, says leading his branch with love will be easy.

“Chinese members are a joy to be around. They have a humility and an enthusiasm for the Church that is contagious, and when they embrace the gospel they instinctively want to share what they have learned with others.

“It is so amazing to think that many of them had not heard about Jesus Christ before meeting the missionaries.”

Marion Ward bishop Nathan Tucci and Playford Ward bishop Daniel

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Bishop Nathan Tucci of the Marion Ward, Adelaide Australia Marion Stake, with his wife, Emily

Santoro were also among those recently called to leadership roles.

For Bishop Tucci, looking after the rising generation is one of his priorities.

“I was serving as the YM’s president before, working with the youth,” he said. “I see this call as a great opportunity to continue to be heavily involved with the youth, helping to build positive changes in their lives and to strengthen their relationship with the Saviour.

“And I have realised very quickly serving as the bishop that tomorrow’s blessings and opportunities depend on the choices we make today.”

He and his family have been part of the Marion Ward for a few years, and the connection goes back even further with Bishop Tucci, assigned there more than 22 years ago as a serving missionary. He says there

is much to be thankful for: “I was born into the Church and grew up in Melbourne with parents who immigrated to Australia—mother from England and father from Italia.

“My parents met the missionaries when they were dating, and they both joined the Church just before getting married.

“My dad was always hardworking, and I guess that was one of the lessons that I learned early in life—not to take things for granted. And I know that’s helped me to recognise and be grateful for blessings we are given.”

Bishop Santoro, a Church convert of more than 12 years, is focused on

ensuring he does what his Heavenly Father and the Saviour Jesus Christ expect of him.

“I’m very humbled to be serving as a bishop in the Modbury stake. I felt like I had been ‘thrown into the deep end,’ as I was only just getting to know the people in the ward when I was called to serve as their bishop,” he explained.

“My family and I came to Adelaide (and had lived here before) from Townsville, where I served in the branch presidency, and I gained a great deal of learning and insight into what is required to be a leader in the Church.



Playford Ward bishop Daniel Santoro with his wife, Sarah, and family

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“Every calling provides an opportunity to serve and to grow. The Lord organized the Church in a way that offers each member an opportunity for service, which, in turn, leads to personal spiritual growth. Whatever your calling, I urge you to see it as an opportunity not only to strengthen and bless others but also to become what Heavenly Father wants you to become.”

— President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counsellor in the First Presidency, “Lift Where You Stand,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 56.

“Looking back, I can see that I was being prepared for the leadership role I have now. However, I don’t think anyone expects to be called as a bishop. And it totally surprised me!”

Each of these new leaders highlighted the strength that comes from testimony and the support of others.

“I have a testimony of the restored gospel and of its priesthood authority,” said Bishop Santoro. “This knowledge allows me to serve with 100 percent confidence in my Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ—and I know they will guide and support me as required, as well as my family and those who I work with and serve.” ■

Missionaries Serve a Community in Need

By Caroline McIlwaine

Missionaries from the Australia Adelaide Mission put their gospel beliefs into action in a much-needed way over the Christmas/New Year break as they cooked barbeque lunches, painted walls and cleaned off graffiti via a service project supporting the city’s Hutt Street Centre.

The centre provides hot meals and assistance each day to hundreds of homeless and disadvantaged people. With some of the regular volunteers

away over the Christmas break, the Australia Adelaide Mission was happy to send out 70 of its missionaries to fill the gap and lend a hand.

“It was a tremendous opportunity to be able to assist the Hutt Street Centre in this service activity,” said mission president Jeffrey Parker.

“Helping others in time of need is a very important part of missionary work. Those we served were an absolute joy to come to know. In addition,



Missionaries prepare to paint the walls of the Hutt Street Centre in Adelaide.

Missionaries from the Australia Adelaide Mission cook a barbeque for the community.

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we were able to work with Ian Cox, the CEO, as well as others who were absolutely fabulous in every way.

“We regularly seek out similar activities for our missionaries. On Christmas Day our missionaries had a day of church worship, a nice meal, and then had an opportunity to Skype their families at home. While many people extend Christmas with Boxing Day leisure time, we wanted our missionaries to be out working, serving,

and making a difference wherever they were needed.

“Everyone worked hard and thoroughly enjoyed it! All benefited in the process of the service—the centre and its surrounds were spruced up, and those in need knew we cared about them and appreciated the opportunity to serve them. Our missionaries had the privilege to lose themselves, as Christ taught, in the service of others.” ■

The other two were assigned to Tahiti.

The Berretts were particularly happy to spend Christmas with the Hilliers, as their son and daughter-in-law were visiting from the States and they could be introduced to the extended family.

Their son, Eric, said, “I was inspired to serve a mission myself because I saw the Hilliers many times as I was growing up, as they often came to the States to visit my parents. I saw the effect on their lives because of their having joined the Church. Once they brought their son Luke with them when he was still at school, and it was a joy to see him again, now a father of three—nearly four—children, and living a righteous life. I am very proud of my dad for serving here again. He and my mother are really enjoying their service in Rockhampton and are working hard.” ■

The Missionary Returns

By Hazel Hillier

In November 1967, Elders Joel Berrett and David Osborn baptised a young couple, Neville and Hazel Hillier. Forty-nine years later, Joel Berrett was Elder Berrett once more as he came to Australia again, to serve with his wife, Karela, as senior missionaries in Rockhampton.

They had kept in contact with Brother and Sister Hillier during the intervening years and were pleased to meet up with them and their family, now numbering five children, along with their spouses, and nearly 18 grandchildren.

The Hilliers’ three boys all served missions, and the fifth grandchild is about to leave for his mission on La Reunion Island and Mauritius. Like his

sister Leah and cousin Joshua Rolls, he had done an immersion French course at school and, like them, will be serving a French-speaking mission.



Elders Joel Berrett and David Osborn with Neville and Hazel Hillier in 1967



Elder Joel and Sister Karela Berrett (center) with Neville and Hazel Hillier

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TIP OF THE MONTH

Communicate: Petition and Listen

By LDS Family Services

The importance of two-way communication with our Heavenly Father is crucial for spiritual and temporal self-reliance. We must ask for help from our Heavenly Father, who hears the prayers of His children across the earth. We all need assistance from heaven and others to succeed in the journey of life.

Developing good communication and social skills more generally is predictive of happiness, academic and career success, physical health, psychological well-being, and fulfilling

relationships. Communication and social skills include making conversation, listening and expressing, conflict resolution, giving emotional support, assertiveness, and cooperation skills. Jesus taught that deep fulfillment will come from losing ourselves in the service of others. But to serve others requires first an ability to relate to others.

President Russell M. Nelson emphasized the importance of listening: “Your soul will be blessed as you learn to listen, then listen to

learn from children, parents, partners, neighbors, and Church leaders, all of which will heighten capacity to hear counsel from on high.”¹

Effective listening is possibly one of the least practiced and developed interpersonal skills. Listening involves more than skill. It requires an attitude of genuine interest and desire to understand, even when we may not like or agree with what we are hearing. We need to be open to viewing the world from the perspective of the person we are listening to.

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught leaders the importance of listening to understand: “Jesus saw sin as wrong but also was able to see sin as springing from deep and unmet needs on the part of the sinner. This permitted him to condemn the sin without condemning the individual.”²

We need to be able to look deeply enough into the lives of others to see the basic causes for their failures and shortcomings. To achieve deeper understanding requires effective listening. ■

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Listen to Learn,” *Ensign*, May 1991, 24.
2. Spencer W. Kimball, “Jesus: The Perfect Leader,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1979, 5.

