

NEW ZEALAND LOCAL PAGES

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Very Early in the Morning

By Elder Craig A. Cardon

Second Counsellor, Pacific Area Presidency



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



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.

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 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

Latter-day Saint Youth Gather at Faith-Building Conference in Auckland

By Blake and Leilana Wong-Ling

At the beginning of the year, over 1,000 youth from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints across the Auckland/Northland region and the Cook Islands assembled at Auckland’s King’s College for a For the Strength of Youth (FSY) conference.

Local Church leaders organized the week-long conference, and over 180 young adults (ages 18–30) of the Church served as counsellors and mentors to the youth (ages 14–17) in attendance. The event aimed to help young people make friends, have fun and develop their faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

Caitlyn Sloan, a 17-year-old participant from north of Auckland, said of the experience, “I really loved my time here—enjoyed the spirit of the week, making new friends, and strengthening my faith.”

Throughout the week, youth received encouragement from a range of speakers, such as Elder Paul R. Coward, Area Seventy in the Auckland area. “The time has come for your generation to do as the theme of this



Some of the participants and counsellors who attended the For the Strength of Youth (FSY) conference earlier this year



▲ *Dame Valerie Adams-Price participated in the conference and encouraged the youth to learn how to handle disappointment and work hard for their success.*

◀ *FSY 2017 directors Natasha and Abinadi Lameko with Elder Paul R. Coward, Area Seventy, and Sister Julie Newman Coward*



conference reminds us, press forward with faith and a steadfastness in Jesus Christ," he counselled.

Olympic gold medallist and member of the Church Dame Valerie Adams-Price shared her story of Olympic success and how to handle disappointment. "To become a champion, it isn't

about winning, but it is about getting up again and working hard through thick and thin and through triumph and disappointment."

In addition to hearing from inspiring speakers and attending spiritually motivating workshops, attendees participated in a range of sporting,

cultural, and faith-based activities.

Abinadi and Natasha Lameko, who were the conference directors, shared their insights on the impact of the conference on attendees.

"We have received so many amazing stories from youth, their parents, and young adults who have

Latter-day Saint youth at the FSY conference in Auckland



IMAGES COURTESY OF DYLAN LUKI, MARIA NOVOVAO, WYNTON PAPALI, TE RINA OWEN, KEVIN DANIELSON, JAROM FITSEMANU



rediscovered their purpose in life and have a stronger understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ,” said Natasha Lameko.

“I came with the hope that I could strengthen myself spiritually,” said Zion Strickland of Epsom. “I had a bad year filled with trials and tribulations and wanted to start off the year with a kick start.”

Zion’s commitment to spending the week at the conference waned soon after his arrival. “But as the week progressed, I began to feel a change within my heart. I loved learning about the gospel and the doctrine of Christ.”

Zion said he learned that being obedient allows the Lord to start to change him and that if he wants to change he has to make sacrifices.

Daniel Papali’i of Henderson, who was Zion’s counsellor at the conference, said, “There were many boys like Zion who came from different backgrounds and faced different trials in their lives when they came to For the Strength of Youth. But I have found that as these young people have taken a leap of faith, our Father in Heaven has blessed them with courage and strength to realise their true potential.”

“The For the Strength of Youth experience has been priceless,” said Abinadi Lameko, summing up the week from his perspective as a director.

Many of the youth who attended left with increased faith in their Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and a greater desire to lead lives dedicated to serving others, according to Lameko.

For many attendees, their next step will be to serve as full-time, self-supported, voluntary missionaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in various parts of the world, beginning at age 18. ■

Member of Parliament Joins Latter-day Saints at Panmure Stake Conference

By Mormon Newsroom

The Auckland New Zealand Panmure Stake of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints held its first conference of 2017 in January. Presiding at the conference was stake president Dean Westerlund.

Special guests at the conference included Jenny Salesa, Labour MP for Manukau East; her husband, Damon Salesa, Associate Professor for Pacific Studies at Auckland University; and their daughter. They were joined by Priyanca Radhakrishnan, who will be standing for Labour in our Maungakiekie/Tamaki electorate later this year.

The conference was attended by a capacity gathering, who enjoyed counsel and encouragement from Church members and leaders, including the Hamilton New Zealand Temple president and matron, Michael and Christine Roberts. New Zealand Auckland Mission president Fredrick Balli and his wife, Robyn Balli, were also present and spoke to the audience.

Inspiring musical items during the meeting included congregational singing and numbers performed by a choir from the Glen Innes Ward, one of the local units of the Panmure stake. ■

Stake president Dean Westerlund with Jenny Salesa, Labour MP for Manukau East; her husband, Damon Salesa, Associate Professor for Pacific Studies at Auckland University; their daughter; and Priyanca Radhakrishnan



Six Kiwis to Lead Latter-day Saint Missionaries in Asia-Pacific

John R. Higgins, Michael J. Fermanis and Newman N. Soloai, all New Zealanders, have been called to serve as new mission presidents. They, along with their wives, will lead the Church's missionary efforts in their respective areas over the course of the next three years, beginning in July 2017.

"We congratulate these wonderful couples for being prepared to serve in these important assignments," said Elder O. Vincent Haleck, President of the Pacific Area of the Church. "They are men and women of faith who love their Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

"They desire to share their sacred feelings with others and are willing to leave behind those they love and their regular lives to serve. The missionaries they lead will be blessed immensely," he concluded.

President John R. Higgins and Naomi Grace Heperi Higgins, from Hamilton, will serve in the Fiji Suva Mission.

President Michael J. Fermanis and Raelinda Maxine Hemi Fermanis, from Porirua, will serve in the Philippines Manila Mission.

President Newman N. Soloai and Luisa Kava Kavea 'Etuata, from Auckland, will serve in the New Zealand Wellington Mission.

The Church has more than 70,000 missionaries in over 400 missions worldwide. Presidents Higgins, Fermanis and Soloai are only three of 123 new mission presidents called to begin their service this year. ■

Auckland Father and Daughter Invited to "Sing with Angels"

By Mormon Newsroom

Each week the 360 singers in the world-renowned Mormon Tabernacle Choir meet to rehearse for *Music and the Spoken Word*, a weekly radio programme now beginning its 88th year without interruption.

The choir's Thursday evening rehearsals are open to the public.

Occasionally a few guests are invited to join in the rehearsal. Albert Niuelua and his daughter Peyton Niuelua, from Auckland, New Zealand, were delighted recently to accept an invitation arranged by a friend who is a member of the choir.

The father and daughter, who were in Salt Lake City, Utah, as part of a business vacation, were seated amidst the choir members and handed a book of sheet music.

"I felt like we were singing with angels," recalls Albert. "I was nervous, so I started by mouthing the words until I got the confidence to sing.

"And having the orchestra playing was just surreal," he added. The choir is often accompanied by the Orchestra at Temple Square.

"Singing with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir was beyond belief. That is one experience we will never, ever forget," exclaimed Peyton, speaking for herself and her father.

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▲ **Albert Niuelua and his daughter Peyton at the Conference Center in Salt Lake City, where the Mormon Tabernacle Choir sing at general conference**

▼ **Albert Niuelua sings with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir at their weekly practise.**





Peyton contemplates the music as she sings with the choir. ↑

Albert and Peyton at the Tabernacle to attend the weekly choir practise ↓



Peyton recalls that the experience was both thrilling and spiritually moving.

“They represent our Church,” she said. “They share their faith and belief in Jesus Christ through song.

“It was so beautiful that I could be a part of that, even though it was just a practice,” she concluded.

The Mormon Tabernacle Choir is one way The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints shares messages of inspiration, faith and hope with millions around the world.

Music and the Spoken Word can also be viewed on television in many parts of the world. ■

Senior Missionaries Gather in Hamilton, New Zealand

By Mormon Newsroom

A group of senior missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and some of their friends visited the Hamilton New Zealand Temple and the nearby visitors’ centre recently.

The group was led by Frederick K. Balli Jr., president of the New Zealand Auckland Mission, and his wife, Robyn Balli.

While in Hamilton, the group also met with president of the Hamilton New Zealand Temple, Michael A. Roberts.

“The Hamilton New Zealand Temple is the only one in New Zealand and one of 150 operating temples worldwide,” President Roberts said.

“To members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, temples are the most sacred place on earth—a place where earth and heaven meet and where we feel close to our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.”

Senior missionaries for the Church take on a number of different roles during their 18-month service, including supporting disaster relief as well as humanitarian, self-reliance, education, legal, medical, dental and public affairs projects.

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, said in 2004: “I express gratitude for our senior missionaries. They are young in spirit, wise, and willing to work.

... These dear members are willing to serve and strengthen the lives of others [see Luke 22:32]. Even if these seniors don’t know the local language, their accomplishments are great and their spirit of sacrifice is precious.”¹ ■

NOTE

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Senior Missionaries and the Gospel,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 79.



Senior missionaries serving in New Zealand meet at the visitors’ centre in Hamilton.

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New Zealand's Ariel Pearse Crowned Miss Tourism International 2017 on New Year's Eve

Ariel Pearse of New Zealand rang in 2017 by winning the Miss Tourism International world final in Putrajaya, Malaysia, at the New Year's Eve event. She was selected from 60 contestants representing countries around the world.

She is the first New Zealander to win the world final since its inception in 1994. The pageant serves as a platform to educate and promote tourism and cultural exchange.

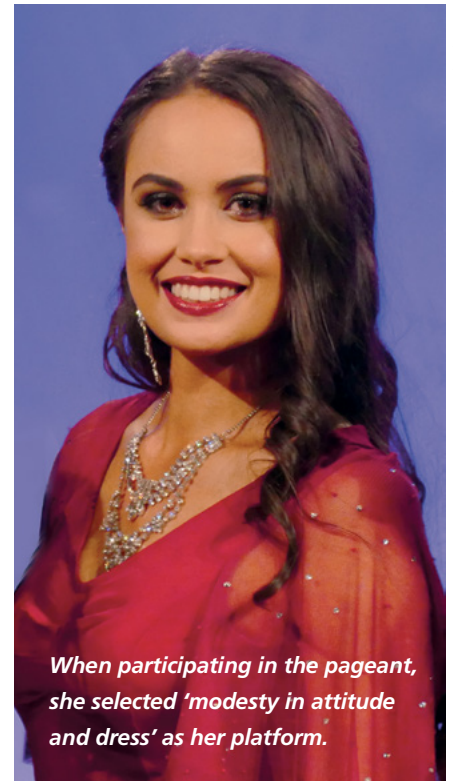
Ariel was selected as Miss New Zealand Tourism International in June 2016, one of five crowns given at the Miss World New Zealand pageant in Auckland. When participating in the pageant, she proved to be a unique beauty pageant contestant when she selected 'modesty in

attitude and dress' as her platform.

Her parents, Edward and Michelle Pearse, in a Facebook post thanked all who had helped their daughter prepare for the Malaysian pageant and ended their post: "But most of all we thank our Heavenly Father for . . . Everything!"

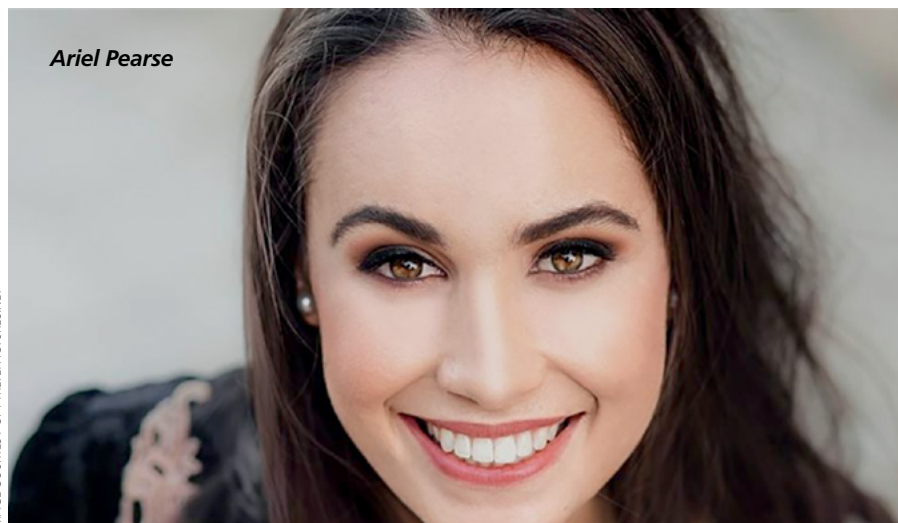
Ariel, who is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, was featured in videos produced in May 2016 by the Church highlighting the power of personal faith in Jesus Christ, the value of an education, personal happiness, modesty in attitude and dress, and her joy from serving others.

Her Church service included serving as a missionary for 18 months in Brisbane, Australia. ■



When participating in the pageant, she selected 'modesty in attitude and dress' as her platform.

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Ariel Pearse

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Ariel Pearse stands between her parents and with family and friends after being crowned Miss New Zealand Tourism International.

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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.

