

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Complete the: *My Path to Self-Reliance* Initiative

By Elder Meliula Fata



Elder Meliula Fata

Towards the end of 2016 during our monthly management meeting at the Samoa Service Centre, our service centre manager, Denny Afualo, challenged us to complete the *My Path to Self-Reliance*. I had a very strong feeling that I should be one of the first to do this.

The very next day I picked up the *My Path to Self-Reliance* booklet from the self-reliance manager and started looking through it. I found the message from the First Presidency on the first page.

I read and pondered on the blessings and the promise from the Lord that He will provide and open the door of self-reliance, which is the ability, commitment, and effort for us to provide the spiritual and temporal necessities of life for ourselves and our family members.¹

The First Presidency has invited us to carefully study this booklet, apply the principles therein, and teach them to our family members. As we do so, our lives will be blessed. We will learn how to act on our path towards greater self-reliance. We will be blessed with greater hope, peace, and progress.

I urge everyone to complete the *My Path to Self-Reliance* booklet by yourself or as a group. Apply the principles that are taught there and you will experience the blessings that were promised by the First Presidency of the Church to us and our families. By doing the exercises in the booklet, you will learn why we should be self-reliant and how the Savior can help us become self-reliant. Ask yourself, how self-reliant are you and your family today?

By completing the *My Path to Self-Reliance* booklet, you will also learn how to determine your financial requirements for you to be self-reliant, what kind of work could give you the

income you need, and how to determine the training or education for your preferred options to meet your financial goals. The principles in the booklet will help you learn how to control your spending, how to budget your income, and how to live within your means. At the end of this booklet exercise, you will want to do your self-reliance assessment again and see how much you and your family have improved towards becoming more self-reliant.

President Thomas S. Monson has counselled, “[Self-reliance] is an essential element in our spiritual as well as our temporal well-being”.² The Lord has declared, “It is my purpose to provide for my saints.”³ This revelation is a promise that the Lord will provide temporal blessings and open the door of self-reliance. He has also declared that “it must needs be done in [his ways].”⁴ To receive the blessings of self-reliance, we must accept and live the principles of self-reliance.

It is not enough to have only a desire to become self-reliant. We must make a conscious, active effort to provide for our own needs and those of our families. Bishop H. David Burton, former Presiding Bishop of the Church, reminds us that when we have “done all we can to be

IMAGE COURTESY OF ELDER MELIULA FATA



Elder Fata is on a journey to be more self-reliant. He and his wife grow their own fruit and vegetables.



Sister Fata holding the papaya from her and Elder Fata's garden.

LOCAL PAGES

Apostle visits Perth

By Mormon Newsroom

Saints in the Mandurah area of Western Australia were treated to a first-ever visit by a Latter-day Saint Apostle.

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles made a special visit to Perth, Western Australia, earlier this year.

Elder Renlund said the main reason for his visit was to say thank you.

He made a special trip to two stake conferences, met with missionaries in Western Australia, and spoke at a special youth meeting.

“Thank you for exercising faith in the Lord, for being faithful in the Church and in your homes, and for sustaining your leaders,” he said.

Elder Renlund, who was called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in October 2015, also spoke to members and guests in a meeting held at the Community Arts Centre in Mandurah.

Accompanying Elder Renlund were his wife Ruth Renlund; Elder S. Gifford Nielsen of the Church’s Pacific Area Presidency; and Elder Nielsen’s wife, Wendy Nielsen. All spoke, giving counsel and encouragement.

Elder Renlund testified of the living Christ’s reality and the mercy, love and compassion He has for all God’s children throughout the world.

self-reliant...we can turn to the Lord in confidence to ask for what we might yet lack.”⁵ Being self-reliant allows us to help and bless others.

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “Only when we are self-reliant can we truly emulate the Savior in serving and blessing others.”⁶

Alma teaches the members, especially the ordained priests, to labor with their own hands and support themselves and not to depend upon others. He “commanded them that the priests whom he had ordained should labor with their own hands for their support.” He also “commanded that the people of the church should impart of their substance, every one according to that which he had; if he have more abundantly he should impart more abundantly; and of him that had but little, but little should be required; and

to him that had not should be given.”⁷

My wife and I have a little garden on a two-and-a-half acre plot of land where we grow banana, taro, ta’amu, yam, tapioca, sugarcane, avocado, breadfruit, tomatoes, pawpaw, cabbages, sweet potatoes, green peppers, eggplants, ginger plants, and so forth. Because we have more than enough to provide for ourselves, we either sell some of the produce or we give most away to others. We feel blessed because we listen to the counsel of the leaders in trying to be self-reliant. ■

NOTES

1. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church*, (2010) 6.1.1.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Guiding Principles of Personal and Family Welfare”, *Ensign*, Sept. 1986, 3.
3. Doctrine & Covenants 104:15.
4. Doctrine & Covenants 104:16.
5. H. David Burton, “The Blessing of Work,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2009, 43.
6. Robert D. Hales, in *The Eternal Family Teacher Manual*, 2015, 96.
7. Mosiah 18:24, 27.

He promised those in attendance that God would answer their prayers, they would have a sense of peace, and they would know if anything in their lives is not right and be able to make the changes they needed to make

Those in attendance were deeply moved by the messages that were given. “If more people listened to these messages and followed them, the world would be a better place,” said Kevin Spicer from Halls Head.

Maureen Brown from Rockingham remarked, “It was fantastic and beautiful and special! These were the things I needed to hear. It was so reassuring. I am honoured and grateful to see and hear an Apostle of the Lord.” ■

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*Elder Dale G. Renlund
speaking in Western Australia*

New plan for returned missionaries

By John Millar and Shilo Kino

Now, what? It's the question young missionaries often ask when they return home from serving a mission. For 18 months or two years, their lives are dedicated and focused on serving the Lord. But what happens after the mission?

In the Australia Perth Mission, the self-reliance senior missionaries, Elder John Millar and Sister Colleen Millar, have created a new post-mission education plan.

The plan will ensure that missionaries serving in Perth will be enrolled

in a course at a college, trade organization or university when they arrive home.

Perth mission president Walter Fife has worked with returned missionaries for over 30 years. He says some missionaries who don't have a plan when they get home “fall apart”.

“We are taking the work they are involved in and showing them how they can apply the skills they learnt. A mission experience is preparation for the rest of their life.”

Elder and Sister Millar work directly with the missionaries by exploring their interests, strengths, and options to identify a course they can enrol in.

Elder and Sister Millar do extensive research for missionaries on the courses or professions they are considering, so missionaries can focus on the work of building the kingdom of God. As a result, more than one-third of all missionaries in the Australia Perth Mission are going home enrolled in a course of their choice.

“Many missionaries return home unhappy because they are leaving the mission,” Elder Millar said. “This plan changes the way they think. They go

home happy and excited about the prospects of their future rather than going home wondering what they are going to do. It gives them a change of mentality.”

Timuia Matautia returned home in January this year after serving a two-year mission in Perth. Timuia, who is from Brisbane, said the mission plan helped him tremendously.

“I felt a lot more prepared coming home,” he said. “I didn’t study before the mission but I’m passionate about music. Brother and Sister Millar helped me to see the different options, and the self-reliance courses helped me understand how I can use the skills I learnt as a missionary in a different setting.”

The Pacific Area Plan invites every adult member to seek learning and education and to complete the *My Path to Self-Reliance* initiative. The Pacific Area Plan also focuses on increasing spiritual and temporal self-reliance by seeking learning and education.

“Through education, these returned missionaries can return with direction and a plan to provide guidance and support to overcome this growing tendency to inactivity,” Elder Millar said.

Missionaries are also instructed in the following self-reliance materials during the final three days of their mission: *My Job Search, Education for Better Work and My Foundation: Principles, Skills, Habits.* ■

Saints in Perth find their pathway to success

By John Millar and Shilo Kino

Later-day Saints in Perth are on the right path when it comes to being self-reliant.

Thirty-two-year-old Elam Semu serves as a bishop in the Mandurah Ward. He has one daughter, Willow, with his wife, Serene. Although he already works as a manager and Serene is the owner of a family day care, Semu has a desire to upskill. He hopes to one day hold an executive position and gain a degree in business management.

Semu is one of many Saints around the world who have joined what is now called BYU-Pathway Worldwide. Pathway began in 2009 in the United States. It was designed to give students like Semu a low-cost and flexible way to prepare for university.

Pathway operates on most of the Pacific Islands, and in New Zealand, as well as in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. This is the first time the programme has been offered in Perth.

“I like that through BYU Pathway, education is affordable and easily accessible for New Zealand citizens unable to access higher-education loans in Australia,” Semu said.

“I’ve experienced it improve my daily schedule. All learning materials



Missionaries serving in Perth are on their way to being self-reliant.



The Pathway group in Perth meets each Thursday night at the Como chapel.



COURTESY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS.



COURTESY OF ELAM SEMU

Elam Semu, bishop of the Mandurah Ward, is one of the many Saints around the world who have joined the Pathway programme.

are supported by gospel doctrine and principles, which enhances my learning experience. There is an eternal perspective in the learning model that provides increase in my vocation, calling duties and as a father, husband and so on. The skills are relevant and

can be implemented immediately.”

Successful completion of Pathway (with a B-grade average or better) allows students entry to BYU–Idaho online courses. The programme takes one year (or three semesters) to complete and can lead to professional certificates and degrees offered online from BYU–Idaho.

Louisa Kaberry also attends the Pathway classes in Perth. She said Pathway has been enlightening.

“This is definitely an inspired program,” she said. “I have enjoyed myself immensely, and every lesson seems to be well timed to my personal and spiritual progress. It has helped me to become a better person and has strengthened my relationships with my family. I am much better because of it.”

Individual Pathway locations are facilitated by service missionaries in Australia, New Zealand and across the Pacific. The Pathway programme is supported by the 2017 Pacific Area goals, which encourage Latter-day Saints across the world to seek learning and education by faith.

Pathway has expanded to nearly 500 sites in 50 countries, serving over 57,000 students.

The Pathway group in Perth meets each Thursday night at the Como chapel at 7pm. Contact Elder Millar at colinjohnmillar@gmail.com for more information. ■

Go to www.pathway.lds.org to find out more information about the Pathway programme.

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Australian singer Stephanie Dass is reaping the blessings from keeping the Sabbath day holy.

Gold Coast Singer Sees Benefits of Observing Sabbath

By Mormon Newsroom

Australian singer Stephanie Dass says that honouring the Sabbath day is helping her in unexpected ways.

Husband and manager Amit says, “I am grateful for Steph’s example. As a strict rule she does not gig on Sundays.”

Last year a new night market and live music venue called NightQuarter opened on the Gold Coast. They have a number of small stages across the markets and a main stage area called “The Paddock.”

Amit continues, “The main stage usually hosts national and international big name artists and the small stages usually host local musicians. Because NightQuarter is the most happening live venue here on the Gold Coast, no one says no when they are asked to perform there, because if you say no you will most likely never be invited to perform there again.”

Stephanie, who is also a youth leader in her ward, says, “I was asked to perform on a Sunday afternoon on one of NightQuarter’s small stages, and I respectfully declined and told them I don’t perform on Sundays because of religious reasons. I didn’t expect to hear back from them ever again, but to my surprise they called me two weeks later and asked if I was available to perform on their main stage, on a Saturday night, and to be the opening act for Bjorn Again, the world-famous ABBA tribute show!”

Stephanie considers this to be a huge blessing because she chose to keep the Sabbath day holy. ■



A group of young members lend a hand to a refugee community garden.

Creating a Community Garden for Refugee Families

By Mormon Newsroom

Young Saints in Brisbane are doing their part to help out refugees.

The Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT), which assists refugees, needed some help to prepare a large community garden plot as an ongoing therapeutic initiative for its clients.

Young single adults from several Brisbane congregations responded to the need, lending a hand on a sunny Saturday morning.

Two young Latter-day Saint women, also members of QPASTT, helped bring other volunteers together to do the work. They obtained a small funding grant from Brisbane City Council to initiate the

refugee community garden project.

The first step of the project required over 40 energetic workers to reclaim an existing garden space of around 100 square metres that had become overgrown with weeds. With tools supplied by local Latter-day Saints, volunteers from the River Terrace YSA ward and the Brisbane Australia Cleveland Stake donated their time and enthusiasm to the cleanup project.

Prior to the event and due to an extended period without rain, the organizers were concerned that the ground would be too hard to work. A small miracle occurred and heavy rain fell on the area for two days prior to the planned service, making the ground

softer and the task much easier for the workers. In addition, the rain stopped on the morning of the project, enabling them to complete the preparation for the garden.

After the service project concluded, the QPASTT services manager, Mrs Vicki Pastellas, thanked the young volunteers.

"This garden initiative will help many of our refugee families who come to Australia from very difficult and challenging environments," Mrs Pastellas said. "Planting and tending this garden will provide them with a meaningful therapeutic outlet."

All those involved left with a greater appreciation for the good that arises from doing small deeds for others. ■



The newly created Adelaide City Branch is the first of its kind in South Australia.

Newly Created Adelaide City Branch Holds First Meetings

It was an historic day when the new Adelaide City Branch held its first Sunday meetings with 120 people in attendance.

The new branch is the first of its kind in South Australia and was created within the Adelaide Australia Firlie Stake to support young Chinese Latter-day Saints as well as provide a meetinghouse for any members living in the CBD area.

Elder Andrew O’Riordan, Area Seventy, who presided at the meetings, spoke of the impact the faith of the recent Chinese converts would have on others, especially their future families. “How powerful it is when you join the Church. You become a pioneer in your family.”

That pioneering spirit and positive impact on others are already taking place with some of the young people who joined the Church between one and three years ago, being called to serve in leadership positions. Mark Ruan is second counsellor in the branch presidency, Shawn Ye is the elders quorum president, and Summer Liu will serve as the Relief Society president.

Branch president Shaun Scott—who served a mission to Taiwan and is fluent in Mandarin—spoke of the enthusiasm Chinese young single adults have for the Church and gospel. “It was great to see so many of our Chinese

brothers and sisters in attendance. The spirit was strong in all meetings, and the members truly caught the vision of what can be achieved in the Adelaide City Branch moving forward. 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.”

Other branch leaders include John Addis, first counsellor in the branch presidency; Jan Addis, first counsellor in the Relief Society; Lincoln Mutton, branch mission leader; and Karl Ho, branch clerk.

In their remarks to the congregation during the first service, President Scott emphasised that as brothers and sisters in the gospel, they were a church family, while President Korte taught the importance of extending a welcome

and acceptance to all. A spirit of invitation was evident on the day, with 24 visitors joining the congregation for sacrament meeting and the Mandarin Sunday School and other classes that followed.

Elder O’Riordan said the day was historic and Spirit-filled. “It was wonderful to see the many new members and investigators being shepherded by the full-time missionaries and branch members. There was a sweet spirit of unity and fellowship amongst the branch members, strongly supported by President and Sister Scott and the other mature members who were there. This is a fine example of hastening the work in Adelaide.”

The Adelaide City Branch is located at Level 7, 195 North Terrace, and its Sunday worship meetings commence at 10am. ■



New Adelaide City Branch leadership, L-R: Firlie Stake President Rainer Korte with Adelaide City Branch counsellor John Addis, Branch President Shaun Scott, counsellor Mark Ruan and Elder Andrew O’Riordan of the Seventy.

Persevere: Never give up

LDS Family Services

The priority of LDS Family Services is to foster and teach skills of emotional self-reliance that will prepare a people for the Saviour. LDS Family Services encourages individuals and families to teach emotional self-reliance from *My Foundation: Principles, Skills, Habits*. President Thomas S. Monson reminds us that “our forward progress in this great work is dependent upon a deeper understanding and a more thorough application of divinely revealed welfare principles.”¹

Self-reliance principle 9, “Persevere,” in *My Foundation*,² involves how we learn to keep going even when it is difficult. How does trust in the Lord affect our ability to persevere? Emotional challenges are part of life; some are more critical than others—such as losing a loved one, living with a spouse or child who has behaviours that are offensive to God’s commandments, or growing up in an environment of trauma and abuse. These are a few examples of trials in mortality. Elder James E. Faust reminds us that “perseverance is demonstrated by those who...don’t

give up even when others say, ‘It can’t be done.’” *My Foundation* gives the following pattern for persevering:

1. Keep a Positive Attitude—List your blessings.
2. Remember to Work Together—Ask friends, peers, group members, and others for help.
3. Replace Fear with Faith—Avoid doubt. Remember the Lord has all power. Call upon Him and accept His will.
4. Move Forward with Patience and Courage—Never, never, never give up; endure with faith.

Using the four steps in the pattern above, find a friend or group to work with. Commit to each other that you will persevere—that you

“Our responsibility is to rise from mediocrity to competence, from failure to achievement. One of God’s greatest gifts to us is the joy of trying again, for no failure ever need be final”.

will keep going until the duty or task is well done. As declared in Doctrine and Covenants 58:4, “After much tribulation come the blessings.”

President Monson wisely shared, “Our responsibility is to rise from mediocrity to competence, from failure to achievement. Our task is to become our best selves. One of God’s greatest gifts to us is the joy of trying again, for no failure ever need be final.”

The First Presidency explained that *My Foundation* “has been prepared to help members of the Church learn and put into practice principles of faith, education, hard work, and trust in the Lord.” The Brethren assure us that when we “diligently study and apply these principles and teach them to [our] family members, our lives “will be blessed with greater hope, peace, and progress.”³

This can be our experience as we apply these principles, resting assured that we are indeed children of God who loves us and will never forsake us. ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, in *My Foundation: Principles, Skills, Habits* (self-reliance booklet, 2015), 1; available at “Self-Reliance,” Gospel Topics, topics.lds.org.
2. See *My Foundation*, 20–21.
3. First Presidency, in *My Foundation*, 2.