

# NEW ZEALAND LOCAL PAGES

## 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.<sup>1</sup>

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”.<sup>2</sup> The Lord has declared, “It is my purpose to provide for my saints.”<sup>3</sup> 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].”<sup>4</sup> 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

IMAGES 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 New Zealand

By Mormon Newsroom

It was a memorable time for the New Zealand youth who had their questions answered by Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles when he visited New Zealand earlier this year.

Elder Renlund; his wife, Sister Ruth Renlund; and other Church leaders travelled from Salt Lake City to meet with Church leaders, members and missionaries in New Zealand, Australia and Tonga.

Youth had the opportunity to ask Elder Renlund questions at a special devotional held in Hamilton.

Elder Renlund was accompanied by his wife and by Elder Craig A. Cardon of the Pacific Area Presidency and his wife, Sister Deborah Cardon. The meeting was conducted by Elder David J. Thomson, Area Seventy.

Before the meeting, youth were invited to submit questions for the Church leaders. The result was a list of 129 unique questions.

During the course of the meeting, the Church leaders offered insight and counsel to the gathered youth on a range of topics from how to respond to a call from the Lord to how sin affects spirituality.

In response to a question asking if one should still pray even when one

self-reliant . . . we can turn to the Lord in confidence to ask for what we might yet lack.”<sup>5</sup> 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.”<sup>6</sup>

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.”<sup>7</sup>

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 and Covenants 104:15.
4. Doctrine and 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.



▲ **Elder Dale G. Renlund greets youth at the special question-and-answer devotional held in Hamilton.**

◀ **Elder Renlund with Church leaders at Temple View, Hamilton**

doesn't feel worthy, Elder Renlund told the youth that "Jesus Christ loves us and invites us to change. We don't earn forgiveness; we qualify for it."

Quoting Nelson Mandela, he said, "A saint is a sinner who keeps on trying."

Responding to the question "How do I find the desire to turn away from sin?" Elder Renlund counselled that we can't turn away from sin by thinking about sin. We need to think about the Saviour to turn away from sin. He also suggested that if you don't know the Saviour well enough, you won't have a desire to turn away from sin.

Elder Renlund told the youth, "God does not care who you were;

He cares who you are and who you are becoming."

In answer to a question asking how to comfortably share the gospel with others, Sister Renlund advised the youth that when they are asked what they did last weekend, they should "accurately report [their] activities."

When asked what they did over the weekend, instead of responding, "Oh, nothing," they might say, "I went to church and had a wonderful experience."

She also encouraged the youth not to compare themselves to others because that will lead to feelings of inadequacy. "Focus on your strengths.

Look inside, not in the mirror, for feelings of self-worth," Sister Renlund said.

Elder Renlund also travelled to Hamilton so he could tour the Church's extensive redevelopment project in Temple View.

Elder Renlund was accompanied by Sister Renlund; Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Presidency of the Seventy and his wife, Sister Diane Hallstrom; and Bishop Gérald Caussé, Presiding Bishop of the Church, and his wife, Sister Valérie Caussé.

Elder O. Vincent Haleck and Sister Peggy Haleck; Elder S. Gifford Nielsen and Sister Wendy Nielsen; Elder Craig A. Cardon and Sister Debbie



*The youth listen intently to Elder Renlund.*

Cardon; and Brent Buckner, director for temporal affairs in the Pacific Area, accompanied the visiting leaders.

Elder Renlund and the other leaders were briefed on the history of Temple View and the Church College of New Zealand. They received an update on the repurposing of the school campus (which closed in 2009) and development of surrounding land.

The presentation to Church leaders, given by Paul Coward, leader of the Temple View Project, included a report on how desired outcomes, outlined when the development was first conceived, are coming to fruition.

Those outcomes included, among others, enhancing and protecting the Hamilton New Zealand Temple environs, preserving and celebrating

heritage, stimulating economic development, and implementing ecological improvements.

They also toured the soon-to-be completed museum—part of the Mendenhall Building repurposing—that will document the journeys of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout its history in the Pacific and celebrate their cultures. The museum will be state-of-the-art, with many impressive interactive experiences built in for visitors to enjoy. ■

## “Famous Mormon” Rises above Challenges

By Shilo Kino

His family and friends call him the “Famous Mormon.”

Peter Cowan served a two-year mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He became “famous” to many after his inspiring story was featured in a talk by his former mission president, Elder Kazuhiko Yamashita, to a worldwide audience in the Church’s October 2016 general conference.

Elder Yamashita shared Peter’s experience of overcoming the challenge of serving a mission in Japan with a prosthetic leg.

But the 21-year-old is brushing off all the attention. “I feel kind of goofy about it,” he said.

“I try and shy away from any recognition—never thought it was a big deal. I was just doing my part. Some people were sweet. They said they were so touched. It means a lot to me.”

Elder Yamashita said, “I am proud not only of Elder Cowan but also of all the missionaries throughout the world who serve willingly without murmuring or complaining.”

But Peter almost didn’t serve a mission after his bike accident resulted in him losing a leg.

While training for the IronMaori triathlon six years ago, Peter’s bike collided with an oncoming car.

“I thought I might actually die,” he said.

“Afterwards, I was told I wouldn’t be able to play sports or walk, so I thought my mission dream was over. I hadn’t heard about any other amputee on a mission.

“I was trying to be ‘Mister Optimistic,’ but it cut me pretty deep. I couldn’t participate or do anything.”

Peter said the accident only boosted his desire to serve.

“I found myself praying more, to accept it and try and find peace. Never before did I have to rely more on the Lord.”

He certainly wasn’t expecting to serve in Japan, a mission where riding a bike was a requirement.

“My mission president asked me if I was okay to ride a bike, and I just said, ‘Should be okay.’”

But after six months and several broken prosthetic legs, he was re-assigned to the Australia Sydney South Mission, where a car was available to use.

“After hanging up the phone with my mission president and hearing the news, I just wanted to crawl up in a little ball and cry.

“My heart just dropped. I wanted to stay. But as I made my way to the mission office, I felt peace and contentment. I was reassured it was going to be okay.”

Proud mum Geraldine says she was surprised when she heard Peter’s name mentioned in general conference. “We didn’t know about it beforehand,” she said.

“I was [watching conference] with Peter’s younger brother and sister at my sister’s home in Australia. There

was not one dry eye in the room.”

Geraldine knows all about Church missions. While Peter was in the Sydney South Mission, his twin brother, Chesser, was serving a mission in the Philippines and younger brother Benjamin was serving in the Sydney North Mission.

“It left a bit of loneliness as each one left,” Geraldine said.

“Every day I would wake up and know that I had three sons on a mission. And you couldn’t ask for anything greater than that.”

Peter returned from his mission to his hometown of Hastings last August.

In January he finished the Waka Ama national sprints and placed second.

The aspiring teacher tutors the kapa haka group at his former high

school, Hastings Boys High School, and plans to go to university this year.

But the sports enthusiast still has one more goal on his bucket list.

“I want to give Paralympics a go,” he said.

“I got a chance to try on a running blade last November and it was cool.

“I want to give people a little bit of hope. People think hope is lost for this kind of life but it’s not. I want to inspire people along the way.”

Peter says his motivation is simple. He puts his trial in perspective, saying: “I look back on the Saviour’s suffering and what He went through for us. That was my motivation for getting through it all. Once I thought about it, I realized, ‘This is nothing; the Saviour had it worse.’” ■

IMAGES COURTESY OF PETER COWAN



*Peter with his former mission president, Elder Yamashita, and Sister Tazuko Yamashita*



*Peter is looking forward to trying out for the next Paralympics.*

IMAGES COURTESY OF KAIARAHÍ NGAKURU



*Kaiarahi Ngakuru, now age 14, with her family*

## Young Woman Chooses the Temple

By Shilo Kino

Most young women want a big party for their birthday.

Not Kaiarahi Ngakuru. She wanted to go to the temple.

The day she turned twelve, Kaiarahi travelled four hours from Paihia to the Hamilton New Zealand Temple, together with her mum, dad, big sister, uncle, and two cousins.

There were no balloons, party food or music, but Kaiarahi says going for the first time on her birthday was special.

“Every time I saw the temple, it was beautiful and pure white. The gardens, flowers—it was all beautiful,” she said.

“Before I went through the temple door, I felt a little bit nervous. But I could feel the Spirit strongly, and I started to cry. It was a pretty cool feeling.”

It has been over two years since that special day, and the temple has now become a priority for Kaiarahi and her family.

Kaiarahi’s interest in the temple began after her ward’s Young Women president, Sister Pam White, invited her to do family history work.

“To be honest, at first I didn’t have any interest because it seemed very boring, but I said to myself I would try it out and see how it goes.”

Kaiarahi was surprised to discover family history was fun.

“I ended up loving it. I tagged along, watched, researched and got family names ready for baptisms. I can just feel the spirit of the people I have done the work for in the room, and it feels very special. I have been doing family history work ever since.”

Her love for photography, netball and school keeps Kaiarahi busy in her small town of Paihia. However, Kaiarahi always manages to find time to do family history work. So far she has discovered an impressive 110 names of ancestors.

Mum, Lynelle, said Kaiarahi’s example was a turning point for her and her husband.

“She was so excited about going to the temple that she couldn’t eat or sleep. So to hear my daughter so excited, I knew I had to make a change,” she said.

“Previously, only I went to the temple often. My testimony has grown through her example. Spiritually, our family has become stronger in the last two years, and now every time we get an opportunity, we will go to the temple.”

Young Kaiarahi wants to encourage everyone to give temple and family history a go.

“Even though it might seem boring, just give it a go because it is actually enjoyable and you won’t regret it. It has definitely helped me to have a better relationship with Heavenly Father.” ■



*Kaiarahi Ngakuru in front of the Hamilton New Zealand Temple*



*Auckland institute celebrates its 40th anniversary this year.*

## Auckland Institute Turns 40

By Mormon Newsroom

The Auckland Institute of Religion has every reason to celebrate.

The institute originally opened in 1976. It was dedicated by Elder David B. Haight on 26 February 1977 and has continuously operated ever since, celebrating its 40th anniversary this year.

Elder Meliula M. Fata, an Area Seventy of the Church who presided at a celebratory devotional in March commemorating the anniversary, said,

“This building is dear to all of us. I have some beautiful memories of this place. My heart goes back to all who have sacrificed their time to help make this institute a success.”

Two former University of Auckland students say they are grateful for the blessings that have come to them as a result of making institute an important part of their busy lives.

Most students have hectic schedules and part-time employment. Bryton and Kayne Pilling were no different. However, they felt it was a privilege to attend classes in the Latter-day Saints’ Auckland city institute building.

According to Bryton, “The institute building in town wasn’t just a place for structured lessons but a place where we met and formed friendships that have lasted much

longer than the years we spent at university. There were many hours spent laughing, in deep conversation, or enjoying pancakes and pizza.”

Bryton feels that the institute was an uplifting place where he and Kayne could study and have fun amongst great people. They still find time to get together with friends met there, though they have all moved to different areas of New Zealand.

“The blessings of good friendships last a lifetime, and we made many good friends at the institute,” he said.

Aaron Wi Repa, area director of Seminaries and Institutes, noted that “this institute has become ‘a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God’ (D&C 109:8).”

President Thomas S. Monson has said, “If you are a single college student, I ask you to make participation in institute a priority. . . . Divine favor will attend those who humbly seek it.”<sup>1</sup> ■

*The Auckland institute is located at 9 Governor Fitzroy Place near AUT.*

#### NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, in “Institute Quotes,” [lds.org/si/institute/about/institute-quotes](https://lds.org/si/institute/about/institute-quotes).



*Bryton Pilling and his wife, Kayne, feel they have been blessed tremendously by institute.*

## 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.”<sup>1</sup>

Self-reliance principle 9, “Persevere,” in *My Foundation*,<sup>2</sup> 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. President 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 will keep

*“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”.*

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.”<sup>3</sup>

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.