

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Making “Rescue” an Individual and Family Priority

By Elder 'Aisake K. Tukuafu

Area Seventy

One of the key priorities in the 2017 Pacific Area Plan is to “hasten the work of salvation by ministering as individuals and families to all.”

The Lord said:

“And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

“And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!”¹

In August 2015, my wife, Sister Tukuafu, and I attended a stake conference for the Neiafu Vava'u Tonga North Stake. Prior to our visit, I had informed the stake president to pray in faith for three families we could visit with a goal to rescue them and bring them back to the fold. One of the three families we visited was the family of Falemaka and Senitelela Fetuani and their three daughters.

Falemaka was a diligent member of his religion. Although his wife, Senitelela, and most of their children were members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, some of his

family members chose to follow the head of their family and attend the same church as Falemaka. Despite Falemaka not being a member, his son was serving a mission in America and his daughter in England.

I asked Falemaka, “What made you accept the Lord’s call for your son and daughter, knowing they will be hungry at times, have to walk in the heat of the sun, experience the cold weather in the countries they will be in and be stranded in a foreign country two years for your son and 18 months for your daughter?”

Falemaka responded to my question with great confidence that his children

have been blessed tremendously through participating in programmes of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I knew from his answer that he was ready to be baptized, but I didn’t know what was stopping him.

Before leaving their home, I shared my testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ and extended an invitation to Falemaka.

“You have just heard the testimony of a special witness of Jesus Christ which He has ordained on this earth, and you will not be at ease until you accept the invitation to be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, which will testify to you of Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and be of comfort to you,” I said.

Falemaka accepted my invitation to attend the Saturday and Sunday sessions of conference. A line from the hymn in Tongan, “Tukuaa hoo’o toloi taimi,” meaning “Stop delaying the time,” sunk deeply in his mind and heart.

We ate lunch together that Sunday, and Sister Tukuafu explained the importance of being baptized and of the happiness she and her family received because they chose to follow the example of Jesus Christ.



Elder 'Aisake K.
Tukuafu



Falemaka then declared, “The eunuch is ready; where is the water, and what doth hinder me to be baptized today?”²

The prayers, music and talks during the conference touched his heart and gave him a confirmation of his need to be baptized. With no delays to his request, he was baptized that evening. The following Sunday, he received the gift of the Holy Ghost and later was ordained to the priesthood. He

was also able to receive his temple endowment and be sealed for time and all eternity to his wife and seven kids, including two who have passed away. I know that our joy, faith and trust in our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ will increase and strengthen as we focus on rescuing individuals and families. ■

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 18:15–16.
2. See Acts 8:36.

President Andrew Shum was released, and President Andrew Manouosso was called to lead and serve the Latter-day Saints in Prairiewood and the surrounding suburbs.

Elder Haleck invited the Prairiewood Latter-day Saints to use their talents to share, to give, to remember and to be grateful.

He then referred to the Saviour’s parable of the talents found in the New Testament of the Bible (see Matthew 25:14–30).

“The verse before the parable begins states, ‘Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh’ (Matthew 25:13).

“This is a declaration for us to prepare,” Elder Haleck said. “The talents, as taught by Jesus in this parable, represent those abilities He has given to us in common and others that are unique to us as individuals.

“We are to develop and use qualities like charity, kindness, patience,

LOCAL PAGES

Leaders Meet with Australian Saints

By Mormon Newsroom

Members of the Pacific Area Presidency made a special visit to the Saints in Australia earlier this year.

The three members of the Pacific Area Presidency—Elder O. Vincent Haleck, Elder S. Gifford Nielsen and

Elder Craig A. Cardon—met with members and guests of the Church in three separate conferences.

Elder Haleck met with members in Prairiewood, Sydney, during the reorganization of the stake leadership.

MORMON NEWSROOM

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Elder O. Vincent Haleck (center) of the Pacific Area Presidency presided at a stake conference in Prairiewood.



Penrith stake president Brad Wood and Elder Cardon of the Pacific Area Presidency

generosity, faithfulness, forgiveness, long-suffering, accepting other traits and examples that turn into talents that persuade others to come unto Christ.”

Elder Nielsen met with Latter-day Saints and others in the Ipswich Australia West Stake.

He encouraged those in attendance to strengthen their faith in Heavenly Father, in Jesus Christ and in the Saviour’s Atonement.

“The Ipswich Australia West Stake is vast in land mass, but the members are very close in connecting their hearts,” Elder Nielsen said.

“President McNamee along with his counsellors have created a foundation of Christlike unity.”

Elder Cardon presided at the Penrith Australia Stake conference in western Sydney.

In his remarks, Elder Cardon emphasised the importance of parents and leaders teaching children in all the ways of God as they seek to establish their independence and personal testimonies of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

Also attending the stake conference in Prairiewood, Sydney, was Elder Paul N. Lekias, an Area Seventy in the Church. In his remarks he encouraged those in attendance to remember and go to work.

“As we remember the Saviour and all He does for us, we are motivated to help and lift others,” he said. ■



More Than 200 Gather to Celebrate and Share Family Stories

By Mormon Newsroom

Do you recall learning about the origins of your family members? Did they come on the first fleet as a convict or free settler? Did they come from one of the vast cultures that make up Australia, or do they consist of the “Dream Time” that has been passed down through generations over thousands of years?

Saints in Gosford, assisted by the Central Coast Family History Society, hosted a Family Discovery Day where families in the local community gathered to learn about the impressive online resources that are available to help individuals uncover their ancestors’ journeys and family history. The event attracted more



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than 200 attendees and included activities such as workshops and training sessions on FamilySearch records, introduction to family trees and tips for collaborating with others when using online family trees.

Latter-day Saint member and event organiser Kate Walter regularly attends family history groups within the Gosford area. Kate expressed, “I felt it was of great importance in helping people understand that there are these amazing online resources that can help people discover their family’s journey—especially for the many young people who are still finding their way in the world, who may not know of the great qualities or achievements that exist within their family’s history.”

Dallin Jarvis, public relations director of the Gosford Australia Stake, commented, “Family history work provides you with the opportunity to reconnect with your family of the past, present and future. We all have a family story—who we are and where we came from. For members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, learning about one’s family history serves a deep and meaningful purpose.”

Family history centres are in various locations across the country. They are free and open to the local community for the purpose of helping them discover their family’s story. ■



Family history centres are free to use and open to all.



Families in the local community gathered to learn about their family history.



Adelaide temple president Robin Hill and temple matron Lorelei Hill

New Temple Presidency for Adelaide Temple

By Caroline McIlwaine and Leo Brown

A new temple presidency has been called to serve in the Adelaide Australia Temple.

Robin Frederick Hill, 72, of the Paralowie Ward in the Adelaide Australia Modbury Stake has been called as president of the Adelaide Australia Temple, succeeding President Jouni Soininen. President Hill's wife, Lorelei Anne Knight Hill, will serve as temple matron, succeeding Sister Christina Soininen.

President Hill, a retired engineer, is currently the second counsellor in the temple presidency. President and Sister Hill have served in many callings in their local congregation.

Both President and Sister Hill were born in England. Almost 50 years ago, Robin Hill travelled halfway across the world from England to Australia to marry his sweetheart, Lorelei, whose

family had immigrated soon after the pair began courtship. They joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints eight years later.

The couple's appreciation for the sacred ordinances and purposes of temples has increased over the years, and they both say they feel blessed and humbled by their new callings to preside over the Adelaide Temple.

"I feel humbled that the Lord has chosen us for this position. I'm excited and a little daunted by the responsibility, but I'm encouraged knowing that whom the Lord calls He qualifies," President Hill said.

There have been many special moments for the couple in their service at the Adelaide temple, including attending the dedication by President Gordon B. Hinckley on 15 June 2000 and singing in the choir at that service.

They will take up their new roles officially in November and are looking forward to this new chapter in their temple-linked lives.

They expressed their appreciation for the temple workers and patrons. "We are looking forward to the experience of being temple president and matron of the beautiful temple in Adelaide, and continuing to work among the devoted ordinance workers and dedicated patrons who serve our Heavenly Father and one another with loving and caring hearts, on behalf of our brothers and sisters who have gone before us," said Sister Hill. ■



New president Daniel Bingham has been called to the Australia Sydney South Mission.

New Mission President Called to Serve in Sydney South Mission

By Mormon Newsroom

A beloved College Dean and CEO will leave Helena College in June to serve as mission president in the Australia Sydney South Mission.

Daniel Bingham and his wife, Donna Jean Anderson, will direct the work of 170 missionaries who come from countries all over the world.

Beyond his leadership at Helena College University of Montana for the past 12 years, Daniel Bingham served as a stake leader. For the past five years, he managed 3,300 members in 10 different units and many missionaries. He also has served in a variety of volunteer capacities, working with young missionaries, youth and adults.

As a young missionary himself, he served a mission for the Church in the Australia Melbourne Mission, so Australia will not be unfamiliar to him.

Donna Bingham currently serves as a counsellor in the Young Women presidency in her ward, and has also previously served in teaching and leading youth and children. ■

President and Sister Bingham will begin their service in July 2017.

Helping Hands Volunteer at Flood-Torn Tree Farm

By Mormon Newsroom

When disaster strikes a community, Australians like to step up and help. Over 300 Mormon Helping Hands volunteers from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints recently worked alongside other local community volunteers in response to a call for help at the Logan River Tree Farm in Queensland.

Tropical Cyclone Debbie had deluged the farm with up to 3 metres of water. Once the water receded, a layer of heavy mud up to 40cm deep remained, and about 70 percent of the farm's tree stock was lost. Owner Ailsa Thompson and her staff were left with an overwhelming task, made only more difficult by the loss of Ailsa's

husband and her son five years ago and a prior flood in 2013.

Eight Mile Plains Australia Stake president Asa Smibert responded quickly when he learned of Ailsa's situation through Logan City Councillor Jennie Breene. Over the next 6 days, Church members from the Eight Mile Plains stake volunteered more than 1,000 hours of service at the farm. Some, like member Jared Brown, took time off work to help; Jared hired and drove a Bobcat for two days.

Working shoulder to shoulder with other community groups and individuals led to new friendships and associations. Other volunteer groups included members of Globalcare,

Mates Helping Mates, Buddhism in Action, and Rotary of Logan.

Louie Naumovski, founder of Logan House Fire Support, posted photos and a message on Facebook to thank all of the volunteers following Saturday's activity: "What a tremendous response. There were over 250 volunteers and 220 of them were from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Mormon Helping Hands. We truly could not thank them enough. The look on the owner Ailsa's face said it all. What a difference one week makes when the community comes together."

Cr Jennie Breene, who helped in the cleanup, also expressed her thanks on her Facebook page, saying, "Thank you, President Asa, Sandra and everyone from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Your army of beautiful people made a huge difference and I will be forever grateful."

"This community is amazing. The support that I've had from people has been amazing," Mrs Thompson told a television news crew. "I don't know them; I've never met them—they just heard there was a cry for help."

This community support has meant that the business might open much sooner than the month that was originally projected. ■



Jennie Breene, tree farm owner Ailsa Thompson, and stake president Asa Smibert

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220 Latter-day Saints worked alongside other local community volunteers in response to a call for help in Queensland.



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MISSIONARY MOMENTS

A Dying Mother's Last Words

By Melissa Te'o

The call to serve could not have come at a more inconvenient time.

In 2008, my dad passed away. Since my dad wasn't with me anymore, I felt numb and a bit lost. I needed a change of scenery, so I moved to Hamilton to study at Waikato University. I had dreams of becoming an occupational therapist because I saw how therapy helped my mum when she was sick.

However, after my first semester, my mum asked me to move back home. She had fallen pretty ill and needed me. *Really? I have three brothers! Why can't they do it?* That made me so mad!

Months after moving back, I sat with Mum and told her I was preparing to serve a full-time mission. I could see myself in the field, working miracles and helping people. I was excited. She supported me and said, "Well, let's get to work."

More months passed and we sat down again. In the same lounge where I announced my desire to serve, she asked me to hold off on my plans because she needed me home. She had just been diagnosed with terminal cancer. I cried—of course for my mum, but partially, and selfishly, I was angry at my circumstances. Why me? Why did I have to stay home? What about my brothers?

My mum got worse every day. Eventually, she couldn't move. I recall one rough day where she had an accident and, with a timid voice, asked me for help. "I'm sorry, Lisa," she said through her tears. In retrospect, I realize that feeling sorry for me wasn't the complete reason for her tears that day.

SUPPLIED BY MELISSA TE'O



Dignity. A woman who had devoted her God-given energy and time to looking after her children and husband was now unable to take care of herself—a chore we usually think of parents doing for their children, not the other way around. "You will be blessed"—Mum made sure I knew this before she left me.

After my mum passed away, I moved in and out of family homes, trying to find my new home. I began attending university again in 2010. I was in my second year of study when I felt the Lord calling me and bringing back into my heart and mind the thoughts and feelings of wanting to serve a mission.

I had many sleepless nights thinking about my mission. The biggest roadblock was finances, and my prayers became more desperate and I wondered where the Lord had gone. Though it didn't miraculously rain money, another miracle occurred when the Fitisemanu family helped pay for my mission expenses. In 2015, I was called to serve in the Samoa Apia Mission, under the direction of President Arthur Hannemann and Sister Margaret Hannemann.

It was in Manu'a, an isolated island with about 500 people, where I met Leva'aia Leva. Leva'aia was deaf and partially blind. Because of diabetes, she had her right leg amputated.

We taught her the gospel of Jesus Christ, and her faith became strong. However, she faced persecution. People would mock her, rip up her study notes and tell her she was foolish to listen to

Despite losing both her parents, Melissa Te'o was determined to serve a mission.

kids. But her desire to follow the Saviour, repent and be baptized into His Church never wavered. Leva'aia was baptized and was excited about the gospel. She would always say, "E moni le tusi! Ou te le iloa se isi tala e fai atu, e moni!"

Her example and radiating the light of the Saviour attracted many others to investigate and also follow Jesus Christ and be baptized, including her husband and three children.

As I look back on my mission, I can see the times when the Lord strengthened me, lifted and carried me. Each trial taught me over and over again, it's not about me. I learned in many different ways that I was nothing, but through Him, I was blessed to witness many miracles.

What a beautiful cause to be a part of this work of the Saviour in helping His children. It's never about us, and I love that when I made it about others, the Lord molded me into someone my parents would have wanted me to become.

Honour. What a privilege and honour it was to serve my mum. I developed the traits Heavenly Father blesses women with—patience, tolerance, long-suffering, love and compassion—in bucketloads. Why me and not my brothers? Perhaps as women, we are taught to be more tender and gentle. But we need not wait for such an extreme event to show compassion.

"You will be blessed." It was a promise my mum gave me before she passed way. She was right. I have been and continue to be blessed tenfold and a millions times over. ■

Melissa Te'o served in the Samoa Apia Mission from July 2015 to February 2017. She is currently in the Ashlynn Avenue Ward in Papatoetoe, New Zealand.

TIP OF THE MONTH

Seeking Learning and Education

LDS Family Services

Learning is a lifelong process! And those who seek learning through both formal and informal education are more likely to experience joy and happiness in this life and the life to come.

Elder Robert D. Hales stated: “Education prepares you for better employment opportunities. It puts you in a better position to serve and to bless those around you. It will set you on a path of lifelong learning. It will strengthen you to fight against ignorance and error. As Joseph Smith taught: ‘Knowledge does away with darkness, suspense and doubt; for these cannot exist where knowledge is. . . . In knowledge there is power’ [Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 265]. ‘To be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God’ [2 Nephi 9:29]. Education will prepare you for what is ahead, including marriage.”¹

Young people are well served when they make specific goals around obtaining a

quality education and training that will prepare them not only for a job but also for the challenges of life that may come their way. Adults are well served to also keep on pathways of personal, professional and spiritual learning. President Russell M. Nelson once said, “So my counsel . . . is to continue your education, wherever you are, whatever your interest and opportunity, however you determine you can best serve your family and society.”²

The dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple, given to the Prophet Joseph Smith through

revelation, provides clear direction that study and learning are essential to our progress: “And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom, seek learning even by study and also by faith” (D&C 109:7). Study, learning, and continuing education are sure to increase the opportunities that will result in blessing individuals, couples, families and even communities. ■

NOTES

1. Robert D. Hales, “Meeting the Challenges of Today’s World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 45.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Where Is Wisdom?” *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 6.

