

## AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

### Yes, We Can Trust Him

By Elder Daniel G. Hamilton

Area Seventy

Like many faithful members, I have sometimes wondered why tough and trying times seem to touch even the faithful.

We want to believe and trust, but our doubt makes us feel so unworthy.

Disappointment comes when family members wander off from the gospel and appear lost.

Debilitating illness discourages some, and all of us experience death.

Some struggle with financial setbacks and career challenges, while others wrestle with a marriage that seems less than perfect. Many worry about not being married at all.

Tough times for some come due to nagging weaknesses that gnaw away at our souls, like Paul's "thorn in the flesh."<sup>1</sup>

Whatever it is, there will be something that one day, or maybe even every day, will find us questioning, as did the Prophet Joseph, "O God, where art thou?"<sup>2</sup>

We may even at times feel to cry out in agony, as did the Son of God, the great Jehovah, exclaiming, "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?"<sup>3</sup>

In desperation, despair and discouragement, some will give up eternal hope.

Yet in our hour of need, all we simply want to know and feel is that He cares for us and hears our cries, that He will reach down from the heavens and lift us up.

I testify we can feel so and that He will rescue us.

I don't have all the answers, but that's okay because neither did Nephi, who told an angel, "I do not know the meaning of all things."<sup>4</sup>

So, what should we do when all seems lost?

When overburdened with challenges, we can heed King Limhi's counsel:



Elder Daniel G. Hamilton



Yes, we can trust Him.

## Rebekah Petty a Rising Ballet Star in Australia

By Mormon Newsroom

Young Latter-day Saint Rebekah Petty is a rising star in the ballerina world.

Rebekah, who is from Victoria, danced the principal role in *Le Corsaire* in its premier performance by the Victorian State Ballet earlier this year in May. The performance was at the Plenty Ranges Art Centre in South Morang.

Rebekah started ballet lessons when she was four in Gosford and



Rebekah Petty dancing  
in *Le Corsaire*.

COURTESY OF MICHAEL LEAN

“O ye, my people, lift up your heads and be comforted; for behold, the time is at hand, or is not far distant, when we shall no longer be in subjection to our enemies, notwithstanding our many strugglings, which have been in vain; yet I trust there remaineth an effectual struggle to be made.

“Therefore, lift up your heads, and rejoice, and put your trust in God.”<sup>5</sup>

We trust those we have a relationship with, but remember, trust takes time.

A key to trusting Heavenly Father is found in our submissiveness to His will.

In a general conference message about the need for opposition, Elder Dallin H. Oaks quoted President Thomas S. Monson as saying, “Our Heavenly Father . . . knows that we learn and grow and become refined through hard challenges, heartbreaking sorrows, and difficult choices.”<sup>6</sup>

As I have contemplated Elder Oaks’s powerful message, three thoughts have distilled upon my mind.

1. The defining discipline of true Christian discipleship and submissiveness will develop when we accept Heavenly Father’s will for us.
2. Submissiveness is a sign of our trust in Heavenly Father’s love for us.
3. We demonstrate our trust in Heavenly Father when we live as one, full of hope, even when things go wrong.

H-O-P-E, by the way, is “Having Optimistic Perspective Eternally.”

When things seem like they can’t get any worse, remember that the scriptures say, “It came to pass,” not “It came to stay.”

In one of his darkest hours, the Prophet Joseph Smith was told, “Thine afflictions shall be but a small moment.”<sup>7</sup>

Suffering for many months, about to perish from hunger, having poured out their souls in prayer to God, pleading that He would deliver them, the Nephite army took courage, as mighty Helaman records:

“Yea, and it came to pass that the Lord our God did visit us with assurances that he would deliver us; yea, insomuch that he did speak peace to our souls, and did grant unto us great faith, and did cause us that we should hope for our deliverance in him.

“And we did take courage . . . and were fixed with a determination to conquer.”<sup>8</sup>

I don’t know the meaning of all things, but this I do know from observing faithful Saints who have trusted in God: in time the fog lifts, and looking back they can see that their trust in Him was well worth the wait.

Yes, we can trust Him. ■

### NOTES

1. 2 Corinthians 12:7.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 121:1.
3. Mathew 27:46.
4. 1 Nephi 11:17.
5. Mosiah 7:18–19.
6. Thomas S. Monson, quoted in Dallin H. Oaks, “Opposition in All Things,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 116.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 121:7.
8. Alma 58:11–12.

continued there for the next 16 years. When she was 20 she moved to Perth to study at the Western Australia Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), where she earned an advanced diploma. She then attained a bachelor of arts after another year of study, completing all her studies in 2012.

Rebekah then moved to Victoria and took a position with the Melbourne Ballet. A year later she was accepted into the Victorian State Ballet. Rising quickly, she spent a year in the corps (beginning level) and in 2015 was made a senior artist. In September of 2016 she was promoted to principal. The May performance was her debut dancing the lead role.

Rebekah and her husband, Dylan, attend the Church's Fairfield congregation in suburban Melbourne, where she serves as a counsellor in the congregation's Relief Society.

While balancing a dancing career with family and Church responsibilities may seem difficult, Rebekah thinks otherwise.

"The road to becoming a professional ballerina has been a wonderful but challenging one. I'm grateful for a family who raised me with strong gospel principles and a knowledge of eternal perspective. Putting the Lord first has helped me find real joy and a great many successes in my life, both personal and professional," she said. ■

## Different Faiths Unite in Brisbane

By Mormon Newsroom

Where in the world could you see fifteen faith groups publicly join together in mutual respect to advance interfaith understanding and build a stronger community? The answer: Brisbane, Australia, at Griffith University's Centre for Interfaith and Cultural Dialogue (ICD).

Earlier this year in May, the Queensland Faith Communities Council (QFCC) was officially formed, representing an exciting milestone in the cause of supporting and protecting freedom of religion and conscience in that diverse state.

The newly formed council membership includes fifteen faith groups, such as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as well as Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Sikh and other groups.

The QFCC took root from a seed planted 18 months ago in November 2015 by a small group of interfaith friends who wanted to consider the possibility of forming an umbrella multi-faith organisation in Queensland. Nurtured by their commitment to work in unity, this seed has grown into a timely reaffirmation of the value in respecting the



▲ **The Queensland Faith Communities Council (QFCC) was officially formed to support and protect freedom of religion and conscience in that diverse state.**

**The newly formed council membership includes fifteen faith groups, such as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as well as Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Sikh and other groups.**



PUBLIC AFFAIRS

rich diversity of faiths practiced in Queensland.

Official statistics for the state reveal an increasingly multicultural society speaking more than 220 languages, practicing more than 100 religious traditions and coming from over 200 countries. Against this backdrop of religious and cultural diversity and their associated challenges, the interfaith group met to work out how to establish a statewide voice of faith on matters such as freedom of religion and conscience, interfaith understanding, social justice and inclusivity. Their efforts led to the development of a formal constitution and operational guidelines for the QFCC.

In his keynote address at the official launch of the QFCC, the Commissioner of the Queensland Police Service, Ian Stewart, APM, stated: "The extent to which we are willing to accept into our society those who come from other cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds is a measure of our Australian values. . . . This includes 'giving everyone a fair go' and respecting the rights of those who want to live in a safe, peaceful society, enjoying all of our foundational freedoms and the rule of law."

The interim chair of the QFCC management committee, Ms. Margaret Naylor (Executive Officer of the Council for Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Relations in the Catholic Archdiocese), outlined the vision and

mission of the new organisation: "We are a Queensland network of faith communities committed to advancing interfaith understanding and collaboration and to making a positive contribution within the broader community."

Julie McDougall (Director of Multicultural Affairs Qld) noted that the formation of the QFCC indicates its members have a shared commitment to mutual respect and building of a united and harmonious society. She also observed that the QFCC enables individual members and groups "to join together with a united voice to speak out against violence and discrimination in the community."

Elder Keith Walker from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints attended the opening ceremony with his wife, Marilyn. He remarked on how pleased he was that the LDS Church is an active partner in founding and "supporting the operational functions of the council. As a church, we are committed to strengthening religious freedom and building . . . collaboration through trust and good works, as well as overcoming religious prejudice and misrepresentation of faith, beliefs and practices."

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who sit on the interim management committee of the QFCC include Evelyn Ray, Lyn Wroe, and Mathew Glen. ■

## Melbourne Women Share Insights about Missionary Service

By Mormon Newsroom

Upitaua Sauvao and Kelsea Randell, both from Melbourne, Australia, are serving 18-month missions for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

They have temporarily put on hold their education, dating and other personal interests to serve the people of Fiji.

As is the case with all Mormon missionaries, they serve two by two, teaching interested persons about their beliefs and providing community service wherever they are assigned to go.

Sister Sauvao and Sister Randell have been assigned to serve the people in the Fijian city of Labasa.

Recently they shared some of their experiences and insights about their missionary service, in particular what they are learning as they serve.

"I have learnt to be more independent, appreciate the Book of Mormon and the gospel of Jesus Christ," Sister Sauvao said.

Sister Randell says she has learnt to put more trust in the Lord, "because it's impossible to do His work on your own."



**Sister Randell and Sister Sauvao have been assigned to serve the people in the Fijian city of Labasa.**

Looking ahead, Sister Randell says she wants to give her best for the rest of her mission.

When she finishes her service and heads home to Australia, Sister Sauvao says she wants to “maintain the same spirituality [she] gained on her mission.” ■

## Church Honours Five Women Councillors in the City of Mandurah

By Mormon Newsroom

Members of the Relief Society in the Perth Australia Rockingham Stake, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, recently honoured women serving in their local council, highlighting the role of women in government. Church representatives presented the five female City of Mandurah councillors with an award for industry and exemplary community service as part of the 175th anniversary of the women’s Relief Society.

Tamera Morris (Relief Society president for the Mandurah Ward) and Mackenzie Hita (Relief Society president for the Rockingham stake) met with Mandurah

City Mayor Marina Vergone and four other female city councillors on the 16th May 2017. The councillors were each presented with an Industry and Exemplary Community Service Award for their outstanding contribution to the local Mandurah community. Being unable to attend the original Relief Society anniversary evening because of heavy council commitments, the councillors invited the Relief Society to come to them so that they could be presented with their awards at the council offices. All the award recipients were thrilled at receiving the award, as they do not often receive recognition for the work they do. ■



**Mandurah City councillors with their awards: Caroline Knight, Jane Field, Mayor Marina Vergone, Lynn Rodgers and Shannon Lawson, flanked by Church representatives Tamera Morris and Mackenzie Hita**

STANISLAW ROGALSKI PHOTOGRAPHY

# The Unexpected Miracle under the Mango Tree

By Samuel Fairbank

PHOTOS SUPPLIED BY SAMUEL FAIRBANK



*Samuel Fairbank served his mission in the Philippines Urdaneta Mission.*



*Samuel Fairbank and the Macaraeg family*

I had three months left before I finished my mission. A transfer with my new companion in a new area called Santa Barbara left me nervous, excited

and above all else prayerful. My companion Elder Shettell and I prayed for miracles every day. We didn't know where to go. We didn't know what to

do. We didn't know what miracle God was preparing.

There was a lot of walking in the hot sun. And a lot of talking. And teaching. There was a day Elder Shettell and I had temporary companions. Elder Shettell and his companion went left; my companion and I went right. We planned to meet after two hours at the place we started.

Elder Shettell and his companion returned a few minutes early. Dripping in sweat, like most other days in the Philippines, they sat in the shade by the road for what seemed like a well-deserved rest. But as they sat, Elder Shettell got the feeling that they couldn't sit. What if there was someone that was waiting for them at that very moment? So they stood up, walked across the street, and went down the slope to a little bright orange home. A call of "Tao po" and a knock later, a woman welcomed them in. With only a few minutes to teach, they taught a lesson about God and family and the Restoration. The woman, named Mary Ann, was just visiting that home that day, but she gave her address and agreed we could visit her family on Wednesday.

Wednesday came. We set out to find her house. We asked. And asked. And got some directions. And some different directions. Then we found



*Samuel Fairbank said the biggest miracle on his mission was what he found under the Mango tree.*

out a car couldn't make it out there. So we took a tricycle. But then Mary Ann rang and said she had no electricity. It was already dark. So we reluctantly gave up for the day. She sounded disappointed.

The next day we tried again. We found a track where the car could go. And we drove through fields and by rice plantations and across bridges and between trees and cows and kids and houses. And then we went off on another track, up the hill. There weren't many houses or people in sight by then. But we kept on going. At the top of the hill, we saw

a compound of small homes to the right. And then off in the distance we saw a tiny bamboo hut sitting under an old mango tree. Elder Shettell and I both looked at each other and said, "Surely it's not that one."

We went to the concrete homes nearby and asked. The children told us, "It's over there!" We couldn't believe it. They were pointing at the mango tree.

Mary Ann's home really did have no electricity. Or water. Or anything else. They had a dog and some cows. And that big old mango tree.

We sat with a torch on because it was so dark. The kids came out

of their hiding places one by one. Apparently foreigners didn't get out that far very often. In fact, we were the first ones. Especially the first ones in white shirts and ties. Mary Ann said she had prayed that she would find the truth. And then that very day she met us. Coincidence? I think not.

From that day in November, everything changed. Mary Ann believed in miracles. She wanted to find the truth for her family.

The whole time we taught her, I wondered how on earth they would ever get to church. They had almost

no money, no car or motorbike, and lived in the middle of nowhere.

Three weeks later, we were sitting in the chapel pews, and as sacrament began we turned to see Mary Ann and her children, in their Sunday best, nervously smiling.

The long, four-kilometre walk to the highway and then riding a jeep 25 minutes to church was no obstacle for them. They loved church. They felt something they had never felt before. And they could not wait to come back.

An almost daily visit to their home. A lesson underneath the mango tree each afternoon. Or a torch-lit lesson at night. Those moments became a ritual for us and for them. The children would wait up, excited to see us. And to hear the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Mary Ann became patient and sweet and slow to anger, something she didn't think she could do. Her children became kind and God-loving. They were ready. And on a beautiful day in January, Mary Ann and her four children were baptised. It was a day I will never forget.

We must have talked to hundreds of people on the day we met Mary Ann. The Spirit told us that day to go where we didn't usually go. And the Spirit must have told Mary Ann the same thing. "Go somewhere you don't usually go."

That was just the beginning. I learnt that miracles happen—but not how we

think. They usually happen so gradually that we don't often see them.

Mary Ann was a miracle. The big miracle I was looking for was just made up of a thousand little miracles. And I couldn't see it unless I stepped

back, looked up to Him, and really saw as He does. ■

*Samuel Fairbank is from Adelaide, Australia, and is currently in the Buderim Ward in Sunshine Coast, Queensland. He served in the Philippines Urdaneta Mission from January 2015 to January 2017.*

#### TIP OF THE MONTH

### Showing Integrity

#### LDS Family Services

“Blessed is my servant Hyrum Smith; for I, the Lord, love him because of the integrity of his heart” (D&C 124:15). This high praise that the Lord bestowed on Hyrum Smith is a powerful admonition to each of us to act with integrity in our lives.

We live in a world where many seek to satisfy their wants by false, deceptive, opportunistic and exploitative means to achieve instant gratification. However, as Latter-day Saints and disciples of Jesus Christ, we need to show integrity in all of our choices and behaviours, both public and private. This includes not associating ourselves too closely with others who demonstrate a disregard for integrity.

“Success will come and go, but integrity is forever. Integrity means doing the right thing at all times and in all circumstances, whether or not anyone is watching. It takes having the courage to do the right thing, no matter what the consequences will be. Building a reputation of integrity takes years, but it takes only a second to lose, so never allow yourself to ever

do anything that would damage your integrity.”<sup>1</sup>

When we build our lives on a foundation of integrity, we can be confident of the Lord's approval and blessings, and we will find that we will not only protect ourselves spiritually but also strengthen our relationships with others. Men and women who act with integrity are generally respected and trusted by others. The strength of character that integrity develops will not only help a person to be more resilient but will also enlarge their circle of influence over others. Furthermore, as Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin taught, “the consummate reward of integrity is the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost, . . . [who will] guide us in all we do.”<sup>2</sup>

No matter the trials, challenges and temptations of life, may we strive to have an eternal perspective and live as Job of old did, proclaiming, “Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me” (Job 27:5). ■

#### NOTES

1. Amy Rees Anderson, “Success Will Come and Go, but Integrity Is Forever,” [www.forbes.com/sites/amyanderson/2012/11/28/success-will-come-and-go-but-integrity-is-forever/#56c1401c470f](http://www.forbes.com/sites/amyanderson/2012/11/28/success-will-come-and-go-but-integrity-is-forever/#56c1401c470f).
2. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Personal Integrity,” *Ensign*, May 1990, 33.