

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

“As Busy as I Am, I Live for Sunday”¹

By Elder Matthieu Bennasar, France
Area Seventy



Elder Matthieu
Bennasar

After high school, I started two very competitive years to prepare for entrance to French *Grandes Ecoles*. At the end of these two intense years, students take competitive entrance exams in the hope of being accepted at the most prestigious schools. As every student in my class, I was working very hard. Students literally work all day and late every night. I rapidly realized that not working on Sundays would amount to a serious numeric disadvantage two years later: I would then miss the equivalent of fourteen full weeks of study compared to my fellow students.

As my father saw me fighting the internal struggle between reason and faith, he spoke to me in a Jethro-like manner: “Matthieu, what you are contemplating is wrong. You should not work on Sundays.” My heart initially rebelled against this counsel. My father did not know what it was like, after all. But once the storm calmed, I chose to heed his advice. I have never regretted it. “Not doing [mine] own ways”² on the Sabbath proved invaluable. Not only did I come refreshed on Monday mornings when all my classmates seemed exhausted from a weekend of continual study, but these years became pivotal in my spiritual progression. All I experienced by

diving headlong in the scriptures on Sundays tremendously deepened my spiritual roots for the years to come.

At the conclusion of these two intense years, I took the exams I had planned, and although far from being among the brightest students, I scored enough to get accepted in one of the schools I dreamed about but never thought I could get in, one of the very best. This added to my testimony that all “all things work together for good to them that love God.”³ I learned through that experience the Sabbath was a much-needed source of soul refreshment that my classmates did not have access to. Like the Israelites feeding on manna in the wilderness and not gathering manna on the Sabbath, I learned that trusting God by not working on Sundays gave me an edge, not a disadvantage, for with the commandment, He prepares a way.

Isaiah knew well that, far from burdensome, the Sabbath could be a delight:

“If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

“Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”⁴

The Sabbath provides an unparalleled respite from the cares of our tumultuous world and a rest from our media-bombarded lives. It is a time to slow down and enter a world of contemplation. The Sabbath is a sacred *time* just as much as the temple is a sacred *place*. It is a day to center on family, rejoice, bond and worship together. It is a day for spiritual development, a day to testify, a day to strengthen the feeble knees. Until we continuously live in a celestial realm, the Sabbath may be our best weekly preparation for living like celestial beings. Ultimately, the Sabbath revolves around the wondrous partaking of the sacrament, whereby our spirits commune with the Lord, our covenants are renewed and healing for our souls is granted. In the Sabbath, we find the Lord.

I thank the Lord for the Sabbath. Truly, it is a delight. ■

NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, in “Roundtable Discussion,” *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Feb. 9, 2008, 27.
2. Isaiah 58:13.
3. Romans 8:28.
4. Isaiah 58:13–14.

Members Enjoy Service with the Mayor and Mayoress of Guildford

By Louise Elder

The outgoing Mayor and Mayoress of Guildford spent their final joint engagement together at a church service with members of the Guildford Ward, who were delighted to welcome Councillor Gordon Jackson and his wife, Sue Jackson, to their Sunday service on 30 April.

Valerie Phillips, a family history specialist for the Church in Guildford, was also present to give some guidance to Councillor Jackson in completing more of his own family history, an interest which has seen him research back to the 12th century on one line and the 15th on another. "The Church has extensive

researching resources available, and our family history specialists are only too happy to help all those who are interested. With ever-increasing access to online records, it gets easier all the time," said Valerie.

Russell Ball, stake president, who addressed the ward on the subject of 'hope', said, "We have very much enjoyed our association with Councillor Gordon Jackson and his wife, Sue Jackson, over this past year and were delighted to see them again before they left office. We wish them well for the future and look forward to our associations with the new Mayor of Guildford." ■

Working Together to Dispel Food Poverty

By Dorothy Martin

When considering which charity to support throughout 2017 and beyond, members of the Paignton Ward in Devon decided that they wanted to help an organisation called Torquay Community Larder, which is based at Torquay Salvation Army. The Community Larder is a multi-faith operation that provides emergency food for those in need, under a referral system. Torquay Community Larder has plans to develop other welfare support, such as money management courses and employability skills training. It is hoped that these more sustainable welfare support solutions will begin to have some impact on the root causes of food poverty rather than inadvertently creating a culture of 'dependency' solely around food.

Members of the Church in the Paignton Ward have been enthusiastically donating tinned foods, potatoes, meats, fruit, beans, vegetables, soups, jams, sauces, long-life milk, pasta, rice and hygiene products. Bishop Schofield met with Mrs Marion Hill of the Salvation Army to hand over the collection of food and hygiene products that had been donated.



ADAM RAMPTON

Left to right: Russell Ball, stake president; Darren Phillips, bishop; Mrs Sue Jackson; and Councillor Gordon Jackson at the Sunday service in Guildford

Paignton members feel this is a really important project to be involved in, as more and more people are finding themselves struggling financially. They have a strong desire to help as much as they can and feel privileged to be able to work with other churches under the direction of the Salvation Army in order to help meet this local need. ■



DOROTHY MARTIN

Left to right: Bishop Schofield and Salvation Army representative Mrs Marion Hill with the donated food from Paignton members

MEP Visits Northampton Family History Centre

By Peter Slattery

Emma McClarkin, MEP, recently attended the family history centre at the Northampton meetinghouse of

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and received her four-generation plan. Ms McClarkin, the elected Member

of the European Parliament for the East Midlands, met local leaders of the Church in Northampton and the directors of the family history centre and listened to a moving rendition of a song from local young single adults. She was shown around the meetinghouse and was keen to hear about the Church's self-reliance programme.

The MEP was interested in a board showing the young people from the Northampton area currently on full-time missions at various locations around the world who give up their time from 18 months to 2 years to talk to others about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

One member in attendance stated, "We gave her a Book of Mormon and some pamphlets. It was great to be able to share with her the inspiration for all this was based on the First Vision and how closely we follow the true teachings of our Saviour Jesus Christ." ■

ARTHUR NEWBURY



Left to right: Arthur Newbury, Northampton public affairs; Emma McClarkin, MEP; Peter Dodkins, family history director; President Peter Slattery of the stake presidency (released in May 2017); and Bishop Simon Robinson

First Minister of Scotland Invites Dundee Member to Parliament

By Evelyn Liston

Chelsea Cameron, a member from the Dundee congregation, was invited to a chat with the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, on Thursday 30th March following Chelsea's appearances in the media and TV recently. The First Minister has been following Chelsea's story with great interest and admiration. A letter written by Chelsea to her drug-addicted parents in a blog was picked up by local and national media, TV and in print.

Chelsea, aged 18 years, has previously said, "It's my hope and desire

to continue to speak up for young people, to speak up for changes being made in our society which decrease stigma against children with parents who suffer from addiction, to speak up for the gift of choice but most of all to speak up and show people a positive side to life in this ever-growing world of chaos."

During the chat, the First Minister was also given an invitation to attend the British pageant, which is taking place in August this year near Preston, Lancashire. ■



BY EVELYN LISTON

Left to right: Dundee teenager Chelsea Cameron with First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon

COURTESY OF HELEN CAMPBELL



Perth members sorting the donated clothing for the refugees



Perth—the Caring City

By Helen Campbell

March marked the 2nd anniversary of launching a collecting initiative to benefit Syrian refugees. Organised by Rosemary Johnstone, a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the good citizens of Perth have collected over 50 tonnes of supplies. Rosemary, her husband, Thomas, and daughter, Tracey, are the power team behind this project.

Two years ago at a Sunday meeting, the plight of Syrian refugees was

highlighted. Leaflets were left in the chapel for anyone who was interested. Rosemary was more than interested. With the help of her family, she set up a Facebook page. She advertised the plight in the local paper. She arranged for deliveries of contributions to be made at the church building in Perth on a Tuesday. She organised the sorting and packing of the donations, and

finally, she was behind the transportation of the items to Swan House in Dundee and ultimately to the people of war-torn areas. Further links with the community were strengthened with Tracey Johnstone's visit to Methven Primary School. As a result of her visit, pupils enthusiastically began collecting too.

Two years and 50 tonnes later, Rosemary and her team continue to

be amazed by the generosity of the people of Perth, saying:

“It has been wonderful not only to collect for the refugees but to be working with the people of Perth. They have been wonderful.”

There is no doubt that as a result of this appeal, links between the Church and the community have been strengthened. ■

Aberdeen 50th Anniversary—Long-Serving Church Members Honoured

By Sandra Wood

Longtime members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were honoured at a special service to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the North Anderson Drive, Aberdeen, church building, which was dedicated on 1st May

1967. Alistair Smith, a former district president and commandant at the Scottish Police College, led the talks during an enjoyable programme of music, memories and laughter. Marcella McRae and Isabel Coull gave insights into church life back

in 1967, and a choir sang ‘To Those Who Came before Me,’ accompanied by a slide show depicting those who helped to build the church meetinghouse, providing much-needed labour at the time. Gemma Christie, women’s leader, gave the special tribute to all who had contributed their faith, time and talents over the years, and President Alistair Grubb, Aberdeen stake president, gave the closing remarks. ■



Members of the Aberdeen Scotland Stake at the 50th anniversary

DOUGLAS SIM JR.

Women of Faith and Conscience Meet to Share Values

By Des Waddington and Eileen Webb



*Left to right:
Paula Sherriff
MP, Dr As Sami
and Eileen
Webb*

Eileen Webb, from Huddersfield, recently attended the Baitul Tauhid Mosque in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, for the annual Peace Conference of the Lajna Ima'illah, the Women's Auxiliary of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. This year's theme was 'The Role of Women in Integration, Peace and Security'. Among the guests were Paula Sherriff, MP for Dewsbury and Mirfield, and Angela Williams, Assistant Chief Constable for West Yorkshire.

The event included a presentation about the role that Muslim women play in their local community and on the wider global stage to help alleviate suffering wherever it is found. To illustrate their efforts, a film was shown of an Ahmadiyya project that digs wells in remote areas of Pakistan, bringing clean water to the people of that region.

Paula Sherriff MP spoke of her inspirational grandmothers and of her work in hospitals and the victim support service before entering Parliament.

She told of her experiences there, in what was once a male domain.

Angela Williams spoke of her twenty-six years in the police force as a woman whilst also being a wife and a mother. She promoted her desire to see more women take up leadership roles within the police force.

The importance of good role models was emphasized, with Malala Yousufz and Rosa Parks being held up as good examples. The expression "What extremists fear most is a girl with a book" was particularly striking.

Eileen gave a brief history of goals and accomplishments of the Relief Society, the women's organisation within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, since it was established in 1842. Eileen said, "The Relief Society's aims of developing faith in Christ and the Atonement, strengthening home and families and caring for the poor and needy were well received and seen as being in harmony with the theme of the day. Stickers were given out of the Relief Society emblem bearing the motto 'Charity Never Faileth'. The majority of the women present accepted these, stuck them on their clothing and wore them for the rest of the meeting."

The afternoon ended with an opportunity for silent prayer, after which a delicious Asian meal was served. Each guest was presented with a gift of literature explaining more about the Muslim faith and customs. ■

New Patriarch Called for Norwich England Stake

By Heather Kilgour

Due to declining health, Brother Glen Rumbold, patriarch of the Norwich England Stake, was released from his calling and Stephen Jon Butcher of the Norwich Ward was called to fill this position. Brother Butcher said that he was completely amazed and overwhelmed when this call was extended to him; he had absolutely no idea it was coming. He remarked that on occasions in the past when given callings, he would sometimes have a feeling that he would be called to a specific calling, like the time when he was called to be a bishop, but this calling of stake patriarch took him by complete and utter surprise.

COURTESY OF STEPHEN BUTCHER



Stephen J. Butcher, newly called patriarch of the Norwich England Stake

Brother Butcher has had many callings in the Church. He served as a missionary in the France Toulouse Mission, and on his return he served in the elders quorum presidency, then as the elders quorum president. He has served in the bishopric, the stake high council and the stake presidency. Stephen Butcher was called as bishop of the Norwich Ward in November 1999 and served until December 2004. More recently he served as the director of public affairs.

In this new calling as patriarch he has received training and after much studying, fasting and prayer was able to give his first patriarchal blessing. He remarked that the main thing that really worried him was declaring someone's lineage. However, his testimony came during that first patriarchal blessing when he experienced a strong spiritual witness as he declared the person's lineage and knew it was a true prompting from the Holy Ghost.

Brother Butcher says he has learnt an awful lot since his calling. "It changes you as a person, changes for the better . . . not that I was a bad person before," he quickly added, "but now I think more and try to conduct myself in a more spiritual way." His wife, Joy, agrees. ■

Watched Over by Him

By Jonathan McColgan

Two days before they were planning on flying home, disaster struck my family during their recent holiday to Singapore. My mum, dad, and two of my sisters were travelling on Singapore's public transport on their way to church. They were unfamiliar with the city and were struggling to find which buses they should be taking. This wasn't so bad, until my mum discovered that in the confusion of jumping between two different buses, she had somehow lost her bag containing the family's passports, her purse and her iPad.

Panicking, my family tried to retrace their steps, but they lost sight of the previous bus they had travelled on. Unfortunately, this was Chinese New Year—calling the bus company, they discovered that due to the holiday all services would be closed over the next couple of days. Even if someone handed in the bag with the passports, they were told they would not hear about it until Wednesday at the earliest. My family were flying back home on the Tuesday, and as their tickets were not refundable or transferable, this was a disaster. They'd lose a lot of money for new tickets, both of my parents would miss over a week of work, and my sisters would be missing classes without the school's consent.

My parents tried all possible solutions to get around the problem. However, after a day of trying, my dad had no luck at rescheduling the tickets, and the British embassy was also closed for Chinese New Year, so no new temporary visas could be obtained. Understandably, my family was now very stressed.

However, independently of each other, both my mum and my dad had a feeling that everything was going to be all right. My dad told my sister that somehow he felt the passports were on their way back to them.

Unable to do anything else, and trusting in the Lord, my family decided to tick off one of the last things on their list for their Singapore trip: visit the former house of an old friend who had once lived in the city. The friend was curious to see how their home was doing and hoped my parents could take a picture of it. My parents consented. It took a while to get out there, but two buses and a 30-minute walk later my family arrived outside the building.

As this was now someone else's house, it seemed rude to just take a photo, so my father knocked on the door to see if the new owners would mind.

Here's where the miracle comes in. A complete stranger, who nonetheless greeted my father by name, answered the door—and then astounded them further by saying:

“Ah, I have your passports.”

My family's jaws collectively dropped.

That morning, my family's passports and mum's credit card had turned up on this homeowner's doorstep in a little white bag. My mum realised that, as part of her plan to visit this house, she had written down its address on a little piece of paper which she'd left in her bag. Whoever had found the bag had kept the iPad but had felt sufficiently sorry for my family that they had travelled almost an hour out of their way to drop these passports off at this address.

Imagine if my family hadn't decided to go to visit this house, or even had planned to visit it earlier in the week (which they very nearly had done, several times).

The homeowners were amazed when they realised my family hadn't been sent by the police to pick up their passports. They had tried to get the passports back to my family but after making some phone calls had encountered the same problem my family had faced—all the public services were closed for Chinese New Year, so they had no one to hand them in to. To them, the idea that my family had just happened to stop by and found them was incredible. “Someone must be watching over you,” they told my family.

The Lord watches out for us. As we trust in Him, He can direct our paths to where we need to go. I know that

He can do the same for each and every one of us. We should always remember that even in the darkest times, He is watching over us and wants to help and bless us in ways we cannot even imagine. ■

Editors' Note

The editors, **Jason Watling** and **Debbie Twigger**, invite all news stories, articles and photographs to be sent to ukiensign@ldschurch.org. Stories should be submitted in Microsoft Word, 300–500 words, with photographs in jpg format, around 3–4mb in size. Please submit stories for the News section as close to the event as possible.

The signed written permission of all participants in the photograph, as well as the photographer and author, is required for the Church to use the article.

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