

Australia Local Pages

Teaching Our Children True Doctrine

By Elder Kevin W. Pearson

The words to a popular Primary song read: “Teach me to walk in the light of His love; Teach me to pray to my Father above; Teach me to know of the things that are right; Teach me, teach me to walk in the light” (“Teach Me to Walk in the Light,” *Children’s Songbook*, 177). Prophetic counsel to parents throughout the ages has been to love and care for their children (see, for example, “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129) because “children are an heritage of the Lord” (Psalm 127:3).

We often think of our children as being *our* children, when, in fact, they are the very children of God our Eternal Father. They were in the beginning His children. It is easy to forget they still belong to Him. He knows and understands them infinitely better than do we. His love for them is perfect, and each one has infinite worth to Him. It is, therefore, not surprising He has commanded that “parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness,” to teach them to love and serve one another,

and to observe the commandments of God, warning that they will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World”).

In the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord makes more specific what we are to teach our children so that they understand doctrine: “And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that **teach** them not to **understand** the **doctrine** of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents” (D&C 68:25); “And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord” (D&C 68:28). What does it mean to **teach** our children to **understand doctrine**?

To *teach* is to impart knowledge of, or skill in. Teaching is not the same as telling. It requires a transfer of knowledge and skill. To *understand* is to comprehend; be thoroughly



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familiar with or grasp the significance of; to learn or to accept as true; to believe. Understanding is more than knowing the “what”; it is also knowing “why”. *Doctrine* refers to principles or teachings—in this context, of Jesus Christ and His gospel. Our task is to help our children acquire a personal knowledge of the Savior, His teachings and gospel principles, and the desire and ability to use those principles to follow Him and to become His disciples.

Let me provide a simple example. Young children can be taught to give a simple prayer and be told they are supposed to pray. But to keep the commandment to pray always unto the Father in His name,

children need to personally come to know Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ. This includes understanding their divine nature and relationship to God and understanding who the Holy Ghost is and how it feels to have the influence of the Holy Ghost as we teach them to pray.

Prayer is an appointed means for us all to receive personal revelation from God, which requires us to align our will with His. Praying in the name of Christ means that we have the mind and words of Christ in our hearts.

The children will need to understand the importance of being virtuous; in feeling comfortable in the presence of our Heavenly Father. They will need to learn the importance of studying and pondering the scriptures; to have the influence of the Holy Ghost in their thoughts and prayers. They will need to learn to recognize the Holy Ghost and how answers to prayers come. They will need daily examples to show them how and daily personal experience to know and understand the power of personal prayer, to develop their personal ability to pray in faith.

As parents we can provide our children with experiences to grow and learn, to develop talents and abilities physically, socially and academically; all of which are important. However,

unless we help them develop personal faith in Jesus Christ and a commitment to follow Him, it will not matter what else we have given them. That is a very sobering reality.

Teaching our children to understand the doctrines is one of our single most important responsibilities in life. It can also be one of our most challenging. Without the scriptures and the Holy Ghost this would simply not be possible. President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has often taught: “true doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behaviors” (“Little Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 17). So, what doctrine or principles, if better understood, would help us to be the powerful teachers of doctrine we need to be? I suggest five principles that might help.

In our premortal existence each of us knew and worshipped God as our Eternal Father and accepted His plan. There each of us learned the essential principles and ordinances of the gospel. Our spirits still have perfect knowledge of these things. Because mortality by divine design introduces us into a state of forgetfulness, we need the Holy Ghost to remind us of things we have always known to be true.

The Holy Ghost is the perfect teacher. He knows us and

understands how we learn, and what we need to know and feel. The influence of the Holy Ghost will remind us of all things and, “by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:5); “the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:5).

The scriptures contain a fullness of the gospel and key doctrines that we need to understand. They provide a witness through the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ and that His teachings are true.

Our Heavenly Father always answers the righteous prayers of His children, especially prayers of humble parents pleading for direction in teaching and rearing His children in righteousness.

Heavenly Father loves each of His children and has promised to bless us as we keep His commandments and exercise faith in His Son.

These principles help us understand that we have divine resources available to help us rear our children in truth and righteousness, and a compelling truth becomes evident. Spiritual truths must be taught and learned according to a divine pattern—through the influence of the Holy Ghost. Our responsibility to teach our children to understand doctrine goes well beyond merely telling them, or

exposing them to the truth. We are under sacred obligation to help them *feel* the truthfulness of these doctrines and principles by the power of the Holy Ghost.

As we prayerfully seek divine help and learn to listen for direction, the Holy Ghost will help us to know which doctrines and principles our children need most and how to reach their hearts with the same conviction we feel in our hearts.

Shared spiritual feelings and experiences create strong lasting bonds in marriages and families.

As we share our personal testimonies about sacred spiritual truths with our children and spouses, we will draw closer to one another, and they will feel our conviction. Faith is kindled by hearing the testimony of those who have faith.

May we more deeply and fully understand our divine

responsibility to teach our children to understand and embrace true doctrine. As we do, we have the promise that the Holy Ghost will become the true teacher and will, with power, teach them the truth of all things. I bear witness of the power of true doctrine to change and bless our lives. We are not alone in raising our children. It is never too late to begin. We always have the promise of heaven's help. ■

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Interfaith Members Share a Visit

One of the many benefits of an interfaith community is sharing with and learning from one another. Over the years of interacting through the Casey Multifaith Network, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association have developed a friendship that goes beyond the confinements of meetings and activities. Visits to each other's places of worship, sharing meals together, and visiting one another's homes are all part of this extension of friendship.

Sisters from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in

Pakenham, Victoria, have hosted the women of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association on two recent

Muslim and Latter-day Saint youth shared their beliefs at a recent activity.



IMAGE COURTESY OF SHARON KIDESTER

occasions. On 26 February 2011, six youth members from the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association along with the president of the ladies auxiliary of the association, Mrs. Kaukab Nasir, visited with two youth members and their mentor from the Church. The objective of this visit was not only to enhance their friendship, but also to take understanding about each other's faiths to the next level. Members from both faiths had the opportunity to participate in a discussion about their basic beliefs and reached the conclusion that they have a lot more in common than they realized. The girls also shared some refreshments which were prepared by all the participants.

Similarly, on 1 June 2011, nine women of the

Ahmadiyya Muslim Association were invited by Latter-day Saint sisters to visit. This occasion once again provided the unique opportunity of sharing their beliefs with one another and realizing that the similarities far exceed the differences. Women of both faiths exchanged answers to preformatted questions, read from the scriptures, and prayed together. A tour of the church was organized by the hosts. A light lunch was also served. All the participants had a memorable afternoon of loving, sharing and laughing together. Both these occasions bore testimony to the fact that interfaith harmony leads to a peaceful culture, and the world needs more of such exchanges. ■

If There Is Anything Virtuous, Lovely or of Good Report

Growing up, siblings Aaron (18) and Celeste (17) Brown from the Sydney Australia Baulkham Hills Stake were always encouraged by their parents to have a current temple recommend. It sounded strange to them at first because they thought it was something only older people are encouraged to do. However, over the past five years they have become used to seeing extended family and friends in the temple on family temple days.

"It's a very special feeling seeing everyone in white, and it helps us to remember the importance of families and the peace it brings when we are together, and away from them" they said. "Once the youth are finished with the baptisms, we get to spend time catching up with the rest of our cousins while our parents progress with the work for a few more hours in the temple."

Aaron and Celeste are of Australian/German, Cook Islands/Tahitian origin. And as members of the National swimming team for the Cook Islands, Aaron and Celeste are used to being

in the water. Their swimming commitment has enabled them to compete in the Cook Islands, New Caledonia, Samoa, and in the Singapore Youth Olympics. Born in Australia, both lived in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, in 2009 as part of the eligibility requirements to represent the Cook Islands on an international basis.

Aaron, who graduated from high school and seminary in 2010, has placed swimming on hold as his Carpentry apprenticeship allows him to work and earn money for his mission. He currently serves as the Normanhurst Ward young single adult representative.

Celeste, the only female swimmer on the team, remains in the sport and competed at the 2010 FINA World champs in Dubai, and Shanghai in 2011, the Youth Commonwealth Games—Isle of Man UK in 2011, and is preparing to compete at the London Olympic Games in 2012. In her final year of high school and seminary, Celeste teaches flute once a week and also undertakes tertiary studies in Event Management. Celeste currently serves as



*Aaron and
Celeste Brown*

Laurel class president in the Normanhurst Ward.

“From making friends with many youth around the world to sharing the gospel, it’s a wonderful blessing to have the companionship of the Holy Ghost for comfort when in a different country,” said Celeste. Reflecting on memorable experiences, she said that some highlights were meeting an aunt for the first time in Samoa, being given last-minute permission to

leave the athletes’ village in Singapore to attend church, and being welcomed to church in New Caledonia.

Aaron and Celeste are thankful for their upbringing. They emphasised that they are grateful to make the temple a priority in their lives, because it reminds them that if there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report, we seek after these things. ■

Dinner with Kevin Conolly MP

By Matthew Parsons

Members of the Sydney Australia Hebersham Stake invited the local member of New South Wales Legislative Council, Kevin Conolly, and his wife, Kathy, to enjoy a meal together and get to know them.

Kevin Conolly won the seat of Riverstone at the March elections, following the retirement of long-time friend of the Church, John Aquilina, who had held the seat since 1991.

The evening with Mr Conolly and his wife began with a tour of the Quakers Hill meeting-house led by returned missionary Dallin Leota and Quakers Hill seminary teacher Cie Komene. This was followed by a meal and brief presentation about the Church and our beliefs. Also attending the event were Hebersham stake president Mark Peteru and his wife, Ruta; second counsellor in the stake presidency Kimball Hobby and his wife, Paige; Hebersham stake director of public affairs Matthew Parsons and his wife, Jenni; along with Erin Harper, member of

the Hebersham stake public affairs committee.

Ashlea Parsons sang “Jesus, Lord, at Thy Birth”, following which her father, Matthew Parsons, introduced the core beliefs regarding the foundations of eternal families. Cie Komene spoke about her role as seminary teacher to the youth. President Hobby then spoke about the recent event at NSW Parliament House hosted by the Church to celebrate the 400th anniversary

of the King James Bible. It was at this event that President Hobby first met Mr Conolly.

Kevin Conolly then shared his views, including his passion for protecting the family unit and righteous Christian values. The evening concluded with President Peteru presenting Mr Conolly with a copy of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World”, a *For the Strength of Youth* booklet and the Articles of Faith. He also outlined our desire to support him in protecting those values which we hold so dear. ■



Left to right: Ruta Peteru, Kathy Conolly, Kevin Conolly MP, President Mark Peteru, and Cie Komene.

IMAGE COURTESY OF MATTHEW PARSONS

Aboriginal Leaders Meet at National Conference in Canberra

In April 2010 the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (the premier organisation for Aboriginal Australia) invited Aboriginal leaders from across Australia to a workshop to look at issues affecting Aboriginal communities. Invitees included Darryl Andy (Lakes Entrance Branch), Michelle Abel and Professor Kerrie Peita (Woden Ward). After two days of intensive planning, the convenors asked for suggestions as to how to increase community inclusion. Brother Andy then recommended the organisation support a family home programme, based on the Church's family home evening model. He bore powerful and humble testimony to the healing and protective power of this programme—so much so that his recommendation was unanimously accepted by the other leaders in attendance, who agreed to take his recommendation back to their organisations and committees. ■



Kerrie Pieta, Darryl Andy, and Michelle Abel attended a workshop on issues affecting Aboriginal communities.

IMAGE COURTESY OF LEN COLLARD

Leadership Changes

TEMPLE PRESIDENTS		
Barry Lee	Adelaide Australia Temple	Temple President
Peter R. Barr	Sydney Australia Temple	Temple President
STAKE PRESIDENTS		
B. Rainer Korte	Adelaide Australia Firlle Stake	Stake President
Dale C. Maurer	Brisbane Australia Stake	Stake President
BISHOPS AND BRANCH PRESIDENTS		
Brisbane Australia Centenery Stake		
Edward R. Pene	Springfield Ward	Bishop
Eight Mile Plains Australia Stake		
Francis Iva	Loganholme Ward	Bishop
Michael J. Stone	Windaroo Ward	Bishop
Ipswich Australia Stake		
David G. Law	Raceview Ward	Bishop
Melbourne Australia Deer Park Stake		
Anthony R. Lawless	Glenroy Ward	Bishop
Melbourne Australia Pakenham Stake		
Hartmut G. Skibbe	Churchill Park Ward	Bishop
Sione F. Lavaka	Dandenong Ward	Bishop
Graham F. Smith	Pakenham Ward	Bishop
Melbourne Australia Wyndham Stake		
Hyrum P. Mohring	Footscray 1st Ward	Bishop
Perth Australia Warwick Stake		
Neil C. Brodie	Mindarie Ward	Bishop
Sunshine Coast Australia Stake		
Paul W. McAllister	Nambour Ward	Bishop
Wangaratta Australia District		
Joshua D. Wolff	Albury Branch	Branch President