

# NEW ZEALAND LOCAL PAGES

## AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

### Increase Baptisms and Retain Converts —Share the Gospel with Others

By Elder Jeffrey D. Cummings

Area Seventy

On the front cover of *Preach My Gospel*, the Lord gives the following injunction: “Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>1</sup>

We then read a message from the First Presidency: “We challenge you to rise to a new sense of commitment

to assist our Father in Heaven in His glorious work. Every missionary [member] has an important role in helping ‘to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man’ (Moses 1:39).”<sup>2</sup>

One of the objectives of the 2016 Pacific Area Plan is to “Hasten the Work of Salvation”, of which baptising new converts is an integral part.

The word *hasten* is interesting. When we reference the scripture carefully that refers to this hastening, we see that the Lord says, “Behold, I [the Lord] will hasten my work in its time.”<sup>3</sup>

We see much evidence of the Lord hastening His work of bringing the message of the gospel to the world, including:



Elder Jeffrey D.  
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**We can make our homes available for the missionaries to teach investigators.**

- An increase in the number of full-time missionaries.
- The opening of many new missions, including some in countries previously closed to missionary work.
- The rapid development of technology.

The opportunity is there for each of us, member and missionary alike, to partner together with the Lord in this work and to “be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of [our] own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness.”<sup>4</sup>

We can participate in missionary work in the following ways:

- Being living examples of the gospel by keeping the commandments.
- Share with people the blessings that come from being a member of the Church. Invite them to learn how they can receive the same blessings.
- “Open thy mouth at all times, declaring my gospel with the sound of rejoicing.”<sup>5</sup>
- Make our homes available for the missionaries to teach investigators.
- Fulfill our home teaching and visiting teaching responsibilities, particularly to part-member and less-active families. Invite any non-member spouses and children to hear the missionary discussions.
- Welcome any new members and those investigating the Church



***“It is my conviction that the world needs, as it needs no other thing, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the people of the world want what the gospel will give, but they do not realize it.” —Ezra Taft Benson***

and help them to adjust to Church membership.

A prophet of the Church, and himself a great missionary, President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) made the following statements:

“It is my conviction that the world needs, as it needs no other thing, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the people of the world want what the gospel will give, but they do not realize it. They want the anchor which the gospel provides, which gives them the answers to the problems that face them; that brings them a feeling of security and a feeling of inner peace. The gospel

is the only answer to the problems of the world. . . .

“Only the gospel will save the world from the calamity of its own self-destruction. Only the gospel will unite men of all races and nationalities in peace. Only the gospel will bring joy, happiness, and salvation to the human family.

“The world is hungry for true religion, and we have it.

“This is the glorious message we desire to share with the world, that through God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, the kingdom of God has been restored. It is the greatest message since the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”<sup>6</sup>

I bear witness that the doctrine of missionary work is an essential part of the Lord’s eternal plan and that as members we have a sacred responsibility to take any and every opportunity to share the gospel with others—to invite them to receive the blessings of the gospel through true conversion, repentance, baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost.

As we do this we will draw ever closer to our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, blessing the lives of those with whom we share the gospel. ■

#### NOTES

1. 3 Nephi 27:20.
2. *Preach My Gospel* (2004), v.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 88:73.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 58:27.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 28:16.
6. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 278.

## LOCAL PAGES

## Filling the Gaps

By Asena Lameko

Just as the scripture found in Doctrine and Covenants states, we can “plant in the hearts of [our] children the promises made to [our] fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers” (D&C 2:2).

We have received counsel from our Church leaders about the need not only to seek after the living but also to seek and find the names of our kindred dead. We need to prepare and take their names to perform sacred saving ordinances in the house of the Lord.

I have taken up the challenge which was given in 2015 to find “15 in ’15,” including myself, my parents, my grandparents, and then my great-grandparents.

When I started doing my family history, I noticed a lot of gaps. I needed to find the missing names on my tree to make the tree branches full. After a long time of searching through old family journals, pedigree charts, family trees, and paperwork, I was able to fill those gaps.

Heavenly Father has blessed me with a knowledge of and a passion and love for family history work. As I was preparing these names, I was excited and anxious to get the work done. Some of these names had been waiting for over 100 years. Our Penrose stake temple week in November 2015 gave me the opportunity to do the temple work.

Eternal blessings come not only to the person you are doing the work for but to yourself as well, as you perform these sacred ordinances. As I was confirmed for my grandmother, I could feel her with me. I had a warm, burning feeling. She was pleased that I had done the work for her, and she was rejoicing on the other side.

By proxy my husband and I were able to complete temple ordinances for 150 of our kindred ancestors. In doing so, we linked our families together not only for this life but also for life eternal. Performing this sacred

ordinance brought me a sense of peace and joy, knowing that when we pass from this life into the next, our family members will be there waiting to greet us.

We can feel closer to our Heavenly Father when we do work for our families in His holy house. I look forward to doing more work for my ancestors, linking and joining these family members together in love and harmony.

“Life is better (and much happier) as hearts turn toward family and as families live in the light of the gospel of Christ,” said Elder M. Russell Ballard.<sup>1</sup> ■

### NOTE

1. M. Russell Ballard, “That the Lost May Be Found,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 99.

## Church Creates Dunedin New Zealand Stake

By Mormon Newsroom

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints organised the Dunedin New Zealand Stake on Sunday, 17 April 2016. It is the 132nd stake of the Church in the Pacific Area.

Elder Kevin W. Pearson, Pacific Area President, announced the Dunedin stake presidency: Stephen Smith; Rangi Solomon; and Justin Kaufana.



IMAGE COURTESY OF ASENA LAMEKO AND USED WITH PERMISSION

**Asena and Andrew Lameko at the temple in Hamilton, New Zealand**





*The 132nd stake in the Pacific Area was created in Dunedin in April.*

Approximately 700 members and guests of the Church attended the Sunday morning session of the two-day conference.

Elder Pearson said the stake organisation was “an historic event in the Church for Dunedin.”

He reminded stake members that the Dunedin District was organised in 1892, and encouraged local Latter-day Saints to work towards the creation of a second stake in the area in the next five to ten years.

Elder Pearson urged the members of the stake to keep the Sabbath day holy and to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ and of modern-day prophets and apostles.

He invited all in attendance “to take upon ourselves the name of Christ through covenants with God. In order to seek and receive the Lord’s richest blessings for ourselves, our families and others, we must fully align ourselves and our lives with the Lord.”

Elder David J. Thomson, Pacific Area Seventy, accompanied Elder Pearson at the stake conference.

In his remarks, he said the Church has been a part of the landscape in Dunedin and in the surrounding region for a long time.

“A stake is a refuge from the storms that will come,” he said. “It is a gathering place for the growth of the Church.”

President Stephen Smith, originally from Canada, works full-time as a



*Rangi Solomon (first counsellor), Stephen Smith (president), and Justin Kaufana (second counsellor) have been called as the first Dunedin New Zealand Stake presidency.*

professor of law at the University of Otago.

President Smith served as a missionary in New Zealand as a younger man, including a period of time in Dunedin. He, his wife Kimberly, and their six children returned to New Zealand ten years ago, settling in Dunedin.

As he began his remarks on Sunday, he said it was “an overwhelming sight to stand at this pulpit to see the congregation.”

Answering the rhetorical question “What do we do, now we are a stake?” President Smith said, “We carry on.” Elder Thomson echoed the sentiment when he urged all in attendance to “press forward.”

Jared Ormsby, president of the Church’s Christchurch New Zealand Stake, said his heart was “full of joy” as the new stake was created.

Roger Hudson, president of the Church’s New Zealand Wellington Mission—which covers the lower part of the North Island and the entire South Island of New Zealand—encouraged those in attendance to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with others.

Geoffrey Mitchell, who served previously as the Dunedin district president, thanked his wife Shona and many others who have worked with him in serving the Lord and the people for many years.

“We are a village and we work together,” he said. ■

## Seven Members Studying at Top-Rated NZ Dental School

By Mormon Newsroom

University of Otago’s School of Dentistry, ranked 12th in the world, currently has seven undergraduates who have something else in common: their faith. They are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and they someday hope to use dentistry skills to help others.

“My wife and I packed up, sold our house, and left our jobs to move from Kalgoorlie (Western Australia) here to Dunedin, in the hope that I would gain entry into dentistry,” recalls Terrence Reid. “It was a ‘make or break’ year for us, so I gave it my all.” He passed his first year health exams and has just begun second year as a dental student.

According to Jivarne Joseph, also starting his second year, “Health Sciences [First] Year . . . [is] where you have to achieve the grades needed to be accepted into dentistry. The workload was intense, and the amount of spots for dentistry were very limited.” Jivarne adds: “I hope to be an example for future Maori students who wish to study in the health sector. I also would love to help out the Maori community with affordable dental care.” Six of the students are of Maori descent.

Joonhee Han did not give up when he was not accepted on his first try. “The most challenging thing I’ve had thus far was staying focused,” he says, recalling how he started Health Sciences First Year in 2013 but was not successful with one of the required tests. “As the test was held once a year, I had to go back to my full-time job in Auckland and prepare for that specific test. I took the test again the next year, but the result was still not good enough to get me into the programme. At that time, I started to doubt myself and was fading away from my goal.”

Working full-time and fulfilling family responsibilities and Church callings seemed overwhelming for Joon at that time. “But thanks to my family’s encouragements and the Lord’s help, I was able to pass the test last year. There were many times I wanted to give up . . . but my family was always there for me to motivate me and remind me of my goal. Their support and sacrifices are my greatest motivations. Also my goal, which is to serve people and community, helps me to stay focused and gets me going.”

Summer Kendall, the only female among the seven, describes her personal motivation to take on dentistry as





*From left to right: Kamryn Brown, Terrence Reid, Hyrum Martin, Jivarne Joseph, Jonathan Martin, Joon Han, and Summer Kendall*

“knowing that when I finish my degree I’ll be able to help other people.”

She’s not alone. Kamryn Brown describes his reason for studying dentistry as having “always been interested in health and helping others” and “loving to interact with different people.”

Jonathan Martin always wanted to be a doctor. “I find dentistry to be an interesting specialisation of that,” he remarks. “I’m interested in helping my family and giving service to those of less fortunate circumstances.”

“I love the fact that I could help somebody with my own skill,” says Joon. “When I was young, I was touched by stories of doctors and dentists who sacrificed their time and talent to help those who were less fortunate.”

Jivarne considers dentistry “a very family-friendly job that will allow me to spend time with my wife and child but also give me the financial means to look after them. It also is a career that will allow me to serve other people.”

Hyrum Martin, a fourth-year student who is cousin to both Jonathan and Terrence, agrees. “It’s a great career for a good balance of life, work, and family. I think what dentists are able to do to help quality of life is nothing short of amazing.”

Five of the seven students are fathers with young children. Six of the seven students have served missions for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Hyrum, Joon, and Terrence served in the area of Australia and New Zealand, while Jivarne, Jonathan, and Kamryn,

respectively, knocked on doors in California, Uruguay, and Japan.

Some feel that a mission prepared them for the hard work at dental school. Hyrum points out that it was on his mission he learned “how to be self-motivated, to work unsupervised, without being told every step of your day and how it should be done. No one was physically there to see if you went through with it all. So it really came down to your own conviction and how true you were to the Lord and to yourself.”

Sums up Terrence: “I see myself enjoying dentistry . . . because I love people, and to deal with patients every day will give me the chance to improve the quality of their lives and help to instil habits to promote a healthy lifestyle.” ■

## Changes to Latter-day Saint Leadership in the South Pacific Announced

The First Presidency announced in early May that the new Pacific Area Presidency of the Church will be Elder O. Vincent Haleck, President; Elder S. Gifford Nielsen, First Counsellor; and Elder Craig A. Cardon, Second Counsellor.

Elder Haleck succeeds Elder Kevin W. Pearson, who has served alongside his wife June for the last five years in the Pacific Area.

The changes will take effect on 1 August.

**Elder O. Vincent Haleck** was sustained as a General Authority Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on April 2, 2011. At the time of his call, he was serving as president of the Samoa Apia Mission. He is currently serving as a member of the Pacific Area Presidency.

Elder Haleck received a bachelor's degree in advertising and marketing from Brigham Young University in 1973. He owns a number of businesses in American Samoa, including Tuna Ventures, Inc., and Tropical Beverage Distributors, Inc.

Since joining the Church in 1966, Elder Haleck has served in numerous Church callings, including full-time missionary in the Samoa Apia Mission, stake high councilor, bishop, patriarch, and stake president.

Otto Vincent Haleck was born in Utulei, American Samoa, on January 19, 1949. He married Peggy Ann Cameron in June 1972. They are the parents of three children.

**Elder S. Gifford Nielsen** was sustained as a General Authority Seventy of

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on April 6, 2013. At the time of his call he had been serving as a member of the Sixth Quorum of the Seventy in the North America Southwest Area. He is currently serving as a member of the Pacific Area Presidency.

Elder Nielsen received a bachelor's degree in 1977 from Brigham Young University. In 1978, the Houston Oilers selected him in the third round of the NFL draft. Following a six-year career as quarterback for the Oilers, he worked as the sports director for KHOU-TV in Houston for twenty-five years. In 1994, Elder Nielsen was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame. In 2008 he was one of the organizers of Memorial City Bank, becoming a board member and chairman of the executive committee.



**Elder  
O. Vincent  
Haleck**



**Elder  
S. Gifford  
Nielsen**



**Elder  
Craig A.  
Cardon**

Elder Nielsen has served in numerous Church callings, including seminary teacher, elders quorum president, Young Men president, Sunday School president, counsellor in a mission presidency, bishop, stake president, and Area Seventy.

Stanley Gifford Nielsen was born in Provo, Utah, on October 25, 1954. He married Wendy Olson in April 1975. They are the parents of six children.

**Elder Craig A. Cardon** was sustained as a General Authority Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on April 1, 2006. He has served as President of the Africa West Area and as editor of Church magazines. He is currently serving as an Assistant Executive Director in the Priesthood and Family Department.

Elder Cardon studied accounting and earned a bachelor of arts from Arizona State University. He received a master of public administration from the Harvard Kennedy School with a methodological area of concentration in leadership and was named a Littauer Fellow. Prior to his call in 2006 he was an entrepreneur with multiple business interests.

Elder Cardon has served in a number of Church callings, including full-time missionary in the Italian Mission, president of the Italy Rome Mission (1983–1986), stake president, bishop, high councilor, counsellor in a stake presidency, counsellor in a bishopric, elders quorum president, institute instructor, and Gospel Doctrine teacher.

Craig Allen Cardon was born on December 30, 1948. He married Deborah Louise Dana in November 1970. They are the parents of eight children. ■

TIP OF THE MONTH

## Calling on God's Grace

By LDS Family Services

President Thomas S. Monson said of self-reliance that “it is an essential element in our spiritual as well as our temporal well-being,” and he quoted President Marion G. Romney as saying, “Salvation can be obtained on no other principle.”<sup>1</sup>

Although Nephi did not use the modern term *self-reliance*, the implication is the same when he wrote, “For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.”<sup>2</sup> Self-reliance is more than just relying on individual abilities, or “after all we can do”, but salvation comes when we also yoke ourselves to God's grace.

Threatened by King Nebuchadnezzar with death, Daniel and his friends sought God's grace. Under the same condemnation if they failed, the king's wise men were justifiably aggrieved at the difficulty of the king's request to guess what he had dreamed and interpret it. To interpret a dream, albeit very possible, was one thing, but to also guess what he dreamed was quite another.<sup>3</sup> Like the wise



Daniel before King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2:25–28), by Simon Vedder

men, Daniel and his friends similarly could do no more, except call upon God's grace. They had shown their spiritual mettle early on when they refused to eat Babylonian food, forbidden by God's law, even though they were captives in a foreign land. This obedience did not go unrewarded.<sup>4</sup> However, in spite of their righteousness, the king's request was simply beyond their ability. But because of their obedience to God's law, and after all they could do (reliance on their abilities), they were

entitled to make claim upon God's saving grace, as can we all.<sup>5</sup>

Self-reliance involves developing and using all God-given talents. Then, even after all we can do, there is still a deficit to our journey ahead. God's grace will be the difference in saving the day and the person. ■

### NOTES

1. See Thomas S. Monson, “Guiding Principles of Personal and Family Welfare,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1986, 3.
2. 2 Nephi 25:23.
3. See Daniel 2:3–12.
4. See Daniel 1:8–20.
5. See Daniel 2:16–19, 27–28, 47–48.