

20 November 2020 - Christchurch, New Zealand
News Release

<https://news-nz.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/christchurch-faith-leaders-and-legal-professionals-discuss-value-of-religion-to-individuals-and-society>

Christchurch Faith Leaders and Legal Professionals Discuss Value of Religion to Individuals and Society

“I think people are innately good, but a religious upbringing contributes to their goodness”

[Elder Ian S. Ardern](#), president of the Pacific Area of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, met with faith and legal representatives in Christchurch on Friday 20 November to discuss the intersection of law and religion in the New Zealand context.



Elder Ian S. Ardern and Sister Paula Ardern with guests at a Christchurch, New Zealand law and religion luncheon. 20 November 2020. 2020 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved

“Being here today has been another bridge building moment,” Elder Ardern told guests. Quoting Latter-day Saint apostle, Elder Ulisses Soares, he said, “We need to see a reflection of ourselves in each other.”

Speaking of the impact of faith on an individual and on society, Elder Ardern said, “I think people are innately good, but a religious upbringing contributes to their goodness.”

He invited guests to watch [a message of hope and healing to the world](#) by [Russell M. Nelson](#) — president and prophet of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — which will be

published on [Church websites](#) and [social media](#) on Saturday 21 November at 7am. Elder Ardern was accompanied at the luncheon by his wife, Paula Ardern.

During the luncheon, local lawyer Joshua Shaw, led a discussion with the group focusing on ways that religions and people of faith strengthen communities and nations. Christchurch barrister, Jared Ormsby, spoke on the value to economies and communities of faith-based charitable organisations.

Gordon Tanner, Pacific Area Legal Counsel for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, introduced the worldwide [“Human Dignity for Everyone, Everywhere”](#) initiative, which Brigham Young University and the Church supports.

Guests at the event included The Hon Justice Gerald Nation; Professor Ursula Cheer, Dean of Law, University of Canterbury; Professor Philip Joseph, University of Canterbury; The Very Rev. Lawrence Kimberley, Dean of Christchurch; Peter Eastgate, Trust Lawyer; and Charlene Sell, New Zealand Law Society Canterbury Branch Board Member.

Over lunch, guests watched a highlights video from last month’s [International Law and Religion Symposium](#) at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, United States.

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