



Elder Holland Visits the Philippines

Elders Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Tad R. Callister of the Presidency of the Seventy visited the Philippines on 14-23 October 2011. The General Authorities visited different parts of the Philippines to conduct priesthood leadership meetings, devotionals and special meetings with missionaries and temple ordinance workers.

San Fernando, La Union

By Sariah G. Ordinario

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles presided over a priesthood leadership conference in San Fernando, La Union, Philippines last October 17, 2011. He met with stake, district, and mission presidencies, branch presidents, and bishops under the Baguio and Laoag Missions. With him during the meeting were Elder Tad R. Callister of the Presidency of the Seventy, Elder Michael John U. Teh, Philippines Area President, Elder Abenir Pajaro and Elder Miguel Valdez, Area Seventies. President Moises Mabunga, Manila Temple president, was also in attendance.

Elder Holland began the training by stating, “The Church now faces the best problem in the



world—that is uncompromised, committed, devoted, and undeniable growth. It will and must continue to grow until the work is finished and the Savior comes. The question is, with all this growth, how do we go around and meet all of you? There are currently nearly 2,900 stakes and 29,000 wards and branches. That is a lot, and if you waited for the members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, we could only visit each stake once every 29 years! This is the reason why we have decided to cluster meetings such as this to reduce the gap between our visits from 29 years to just 4 ½ years. We can't be with all the members, but we can at least meet the key leaders." Quoting President James E. Faust (1920-2007, Second Counselor in the First Presidency) Elder Holland said: "It's important that people with keys stay in contact with people with keys' to keep the line of communication between the First Presidency and the Church leaders." ■



Dagupan, Pangasinan

By Ryte Cruz Peralta

“Last September 3 and 4, Elder Abenir Pajaro, Area Seventy, spoke and presided over us in our stake conference. A month after, October 9 and 10, we heard the messages from the prophet and other leaders of the Church as we watched the satellite broadcast of the general conference. And now, we are blessed to have Elder Tad R. Callister with us today. Surely the Lord loves us so much that He gives us these opportunities to spiritually feast,” Dagupan Stake President Greg A. Karganilla said.

On October 16, Elder Callister spoke in a special Sunday meeting attended by more than 700 members of Dagupan Philippines Stake. He was accompanied by his wife, Kathy and Elder Miguel Valdez, Area Seventy. Before the meeting started, Elder Callister went around and shook the hands of every member in attendance.

The youth and young single adult choir rendered a number that made the meeting more spiritual.

In his message, he compared the Church to a perfectly formed building. He explained that a building must have a plan, a “blue print” before they start the construction. And just like the Church of Jesus Christ, it also has a blueprint that can be found in the New Testament. He quoted Apostle Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians 4:11-12, “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the



edifying of the body of Christ.” He explained that this organization is essential to the Church. He also added that they must have the authority from God. Another part of the blueprint is the teachings and revelations these men receive from God. He explained that the doctrine in the Church of Jesus Christ today is the same as the doctrine in the Church of Jesus Christ in former times.

Elder Callister also encouraged the youth, especially the young men, to serve missions. He counseled the members to always live the gospel and the Lord will bless them. The members were truly grateful to have Elder Callister with them to hear the Lord’s message through him by the power of the Holy Ghost. ■

Cebu City, Cebu

By Cynthia Uy-Fantone

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland presided over two fireside meetings held at the Cebu Temple Complex on October 20, 2011. He was assisted by Elders Tad Callister and Michael John U. Teh with their wives.

FIRESIDE WITH PHILIPPINES CEBU FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES

“Thank you for serving!” These are the opening words that Elder Holland used to extend the Brethren’s heartfelt gratitude to more than 90 full-time missionaries who are now serving in the Cebu Mission. In a tone of love and fatherly care, Elder Holland reminded the full-time missionaries to always stand by their colors. “When you go on a mission we do everything

to help you grow overnight and one of which is to send you to the temple. Every help, grace, blessing of Heavenly Father is now open for you to help you on your mission.” Elder Holland continued by saying, “We do not apologize for your age and what we expect you to do. You are the Joseph Smith, the David, the Samuel Smith and the Captain Moroni of your day.”

Elder Holland shared how *Preach My Gospel* was created. He said, “*Preach My Gospel* is designed to help the

“You are the emissary of Christ. Teach with power, teach with authority. You have to be believing and obedient because this is the Lord’s Church.”

missionaries learn the doctrines of the gospel according to the dictates of the Spirit. There will be no more memorizing, no more canned answers but more of teaching from the Spirit.” According to Elder Holland, the responsibility to share the gos-

pel message to investigators requires finer missionaries than ever before. “Know who you are teaching, find out what they need and prepare accordingly.” He then concluded with these words, “You are the emissary of Christ. Teach with power, teach with authority. You have to be





“Each one of you is important, and it is a tragedy if you don’t know it. We are so preoccupied with all the pitiful things in our lives when we should be counting what we ought to be. You ought to see the divinity inside you. We are all gods and goddesses in embryo.”

believing and obedient because this is the Lord’s Church. This is His work and you have to do it in His ways. If any of you have a problem with your testimony, hang on to mine. Then as you strengthen your own testimony have that power of conviction in your eye, your voice and your heart. This will bring investigators to where they should be—to become covenant-making and covenant-keeping people.”

FIRESIDE WITH YOUNG SINGLE ADULTS

“You are young. You are single. But more importantly you are adults!” began Elder Holland as he addressed the young single adults from different stakes. With emphasis on a consistent upward growth, he counseled that everyone who has the gospel in their lives should be climbing up to the challenge of the Lord and not going down after the enticements of the world.

The event began with a question-and-answer portion where Elder Holland answered with much boldness. A male single adult asked when a returned missionary must get married, to which Elder Holland responded, “Whatever it is that would help you continue your growth in the gospel that’s what you have to do. Temple marriage is a big part of that growth. Marriage doesn’t have anything to do with money but everything to do with faith.” He continued by counseling the audience to sign on and step up and to act as adults. “Be the kind of person you ought to be. You are important. Don’t act like children but be responsible.”

Another question asked about was on agency and its relationship to our freedom to choose our mortal parents. The question was asked by a new member whose parents have not yet accepted the gospel and

as Elder Holland asked her to stand up, he gave the following prophetic words, “Regarding choosing our parents, how do you know we did not choose our parents in this world? How did you know that you did not volunteer to be the one to bring the gospel to your non-member parents? If we remember anything we did before we came to earth, we might be a little bit more proud than how we see ourselves now.”

As Elder Holland concluded his message he left a powerful challenge to the audience. He said, “Each one of you is important, and it is a tragedy if you don’t know it. We are so preoccupied with all the pitiful things in our lives when we should be counting what we ought to be. You ought to see the divinity inside you. We are all gods and goddesses in embryo.” ■



Feedback from the audience

CEBU FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES' FIRESIDE

"I am grateful to be reminded by an Apostle of the Lord that indeed as a full-time missionary it is my solemn obligation to help bring the children of God to the waters of baptism and fulfill the work of the Lord to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of our brothers and sisters." - Elder Galvez, Mandaue 2nd Ward

"The fireside was a great reminder for me to continue to invite the Spirit as we teach investigators the gospel. Elder Holland's message inspired me to seek and develop a stronger and more profound testimony of the Lord's work." - Elder Doncillo, Tanjay District

"After the fireside I felt a greater love for the Lord and a greater desire to be obedient, to work hard and give my best to missionary work." - Elder Straley, Bacong Branch

"The message of Elder Holland helps ignite the burning desire in me to spread the gospel to as many investigators who will listen. I am grateful for the reminder to always renew my full-time missionary commitment and to continue to strengthen my testimony." - Sister Gonzaga, Lapu Lapu 2nd Ward

"I am thankful for the message of an Apostle of the Lord which intensified my desire to teach everyone regardless of their circumstances in life. I understand now that as ministers of Christ we have the full responsibility to elevate our investigators from where they are right now to where they ought to be." - Sister Patombon, Mabolo Ward

YSA FIRESIDE

"It was wonderful to be reminded that I have the responsibility to stand firm in faith like Abinadi. As a young single adult I need to grow spiritually in a consistent manner." - Schilla Montero, Mandaue Stake

"I think it's time to step up. Elder Holland's message came with power and conviction." - Reydonoel Medio, Liloan Stake

"I was again reminded that I was one of the valiant spirits in the pre-existence and that should help me remain strong. Elder Holland shared the message that I needed to hear." - Russel Patalinghug, Cebu City Stake

"I now realize that I need to mature faster and continue to follow the counsel of leaders. I need to become a better example to other young single adults." - Michael Jay Awe, Danao 2nd Branch

"Elder Holland's message helped me understand how important I am in the sight of God. That I matter. I should strive to see the divinity within me." - Kickson J. Mallapre, Danao 1st Ward

"From Elder Holland's message I learned never to give up whatever happens. The Lord can count me in to volunteer to move His work on Earth! - Jessie Adlaon Jr., Baclayon Tagbilaran Stake

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Bataan

By Ma. Teresa C. Pangilinan

About 800 Saints attended the special stake meeting in Bataan on October 23, 2011. The stake center was filled with members and investigators. Some even stood outside for hours to witness this once-in-a-lifetime moment with an Apostle of the Lord.

Elder Holland's message centered on the youth and young adults. He called attention to those who are 12 to 22 years old, to spare a decade of their lives—a tithing of their lives.

AGES 12 TO 17 (THE FIRST YEARS)

He counseled them to pledge a decade of their lives. He stressed first that dating should not happen until you are 16 years old. Friendship is a serious issue which leads you to do what others do. Peers, if not selected well, will influence you to be immoral.

School and Church activities have an immense influence as well. Parents and leaders have a great role to play. They are the shapers and the developers—first liners.

He told the youth to not lose their patience with regards to issues that involve them. They were counseled to stay away from immorality.

AGES 18 TO 19 YEARS OLD (MISSIONARY AGE)

He said that young men must go on a full-time mission. "I expect you to go. I am a prophet of the Lord. I am telling you to go, if you don't go, it's an indifference to the work of the Lord." Young women were encouraged as

well. "Only you (young women) are excused if you found a handsome worthy young man," said Elder Holland.

He recounted how he had no one to ask about a full-time mission since he was the only missionary in his family then. They were very poor and he was about to give up school but God allowed him to go on a mission. "My mission gave me everything—unlimited and infinite gospel." He counseled the young men to not walk away from their mission and to let the Spirit guide them as they develop virtue, belief and faith.

He explained that members are here to take advantage of all the gifts given by the Lord, especially the youth. "For what doth it profit a man if a gift is bestowed upon him, and he receive not the gift? Behold, he rejoices not in that which is given unto him, neither rejoices in him who is the giver of the gift" (D & C 88:33).

"God never slumbers nor sleeps, in His entire existence He finds ways to bless us. Let us not break His heart."

AGE 22 (THE FINAL YEAR OF PROMISE)

He reminded the youth that after their mission they will obtain an even greater gift which is received in the temple with their chosen eternal partner. "The Church has done everything for you, and for the rest of your life we'll keep you on track," but after those first 10 years, you are on your own now. But those who make changes very late in their lives,

repentance will always be available. "If you done that 10 years faithfully, we will not worry about you", Elder Holland added.



To conclude his talk he gave an apostolic blessing to all those in attendance. He gave comfort to those who were experiencing trials. He admonished the men to honor their priesthood. To follow the example of the Savior, be more like him, walk where he walked, talk like he talked and to be strong where He became strong so that they can become a better father to their children. Women should be treated equally and that the brethren should stand with their wives. He counseled the youth not to play on the wrong side and to stay morally clean. He also blessed the babies, the lonely, the sick, those who are mourning, those who want to be married, and those who are out of their marriage. He said that God is their father. He is the same that saved you. Elder Holland testified that the Book of Mormon is the most correct book on earth, that President Thomas S. Monson is a prophet of God. He said that this is the destiny we are on. "Young people stay on it. Don't dare leave it," Elder Holland concluded. ■

Devotional with Manila Temple Ordinance Workers

By Arvin James Despuig

On the evening of October 16, 2011, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles held a special devotional for the temple ordinance workers in the Manila Philippines Temple. With him were Elder Tad R. Callister, Sister Kathy Callister, Philippines Area President Elder Michael John U. Teh and the Manila Temple Presidency.

Elder Teh reminisced on the time when he was still serving as the Manila Temple recorder and counseled the Saints that they should not take the temple for granted and that the members of the Church should work on making their hearts pure in their labor in the house of the Lord.

Elder Callister then addressed the congregation and told them that the image of godliness radiates from the Filipino Saints. He also thought of the time when he was also serving as a temple ordinance worker. "Those times are the sweetest moments of my life," he said.

"Every temple is beautiful," Sister Callister added.

Elder Holland delivered a wonderful and powerful discourse on the importance of the temple in the lives of the ordinance workers and to members of the Church. He gave three points that we need to remember to make our temple service more meaningful.

Point one is that the very fact that you serve in the temple is sacred. Elder Holland taught that there is a necessity to teach correct principles, but we must remember not to be sensational and maintain reverence. We



must stay humble as we minister to the people and we should be in the best of attitudes when we are in the temple.

Point two is that "when life is difficult, we all go to the temple." The temple ordinance workers were counseled that they need to welcome people to the temple and that they are helping them be closer to God through their efforts.

Point three is that everything in the temple is symbolic and that in order for us to understand and make it work in our

lives, we must keep ourselves worthy. "Let us choose to be endowed by the power of the blessings of the temple," Elder Holland counseled.

"If you could just keep remembering, that it [the temple] is officially, by dedication and [by the] priesthood and commissioned from on high, indeed the house of the Lord," he added.

Elder Holland concluded by giving an apostolic promise: "Even if all else fails, the Atonement will never fail." ■

Devotional at the Missionary Training Center

By Gelene Tobias

“We are all enlisted till the conflict is o’er; Happy are we! Happy are we! Soldiers in the army, there’s a bright crown in store; We shall win and wear it by and by!” (“We Are All Enlisted, *Hymns*,” p.250)

The voices of the missionaries from different countries in Asia echoed in the large room of the Philippines Missionary Training Center as they sang during the devotional of Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on 19 October 2011.

Elder Holland started his talk by expressing how his two-year experience in the mission as a young man greatly changed his life. “I’ve run all over the world, but no young man anywhere in the world has been affected by his mission more than me. For 24 months, everything in my life was molded and shaped and directed. It seems to me that I have thought of my mission every day for 49 years, one month and two weeks,” he expressed.

Elder Holland emphasized to the missionaries that they can change the world once in a lifetime and they will never have this chance again. This is why they should devote every single waking hour to the Lord.

“What you’re doing is the most important thing in all eternity—the salvation of the human soul. By definition, there is nothing more important. Grow up really quick! Grow up overnight! We ask you to take your place. Stand up at 19 or

21—stand up there and take your place!” he said boldly.

Before a missionary can take part in the conversion process of another individual, Elder Holland also stressed, a missionary’s first investigator is his or her own self. “I can promise I can insist that one convert in your mission better be yourself! Don’t worry a lot about others being converted. Worry first about your own conversion—because everything else you’re going to do depends on that,” he said.

In addition to this, he also emphasized the importance of obedience to the Missionary Handbook. This is the handbook of freedom and handbook to happiness. “Why the missionary handbook? If you wanted it to be your Church, then you make up your own handbook. Your own rules! [But this] is God’s work [so] do it God’s way. Do it that way or don’t do it at all. That ought to be decided right now—once and forever! There is 180 years of learning on how to do missionary work; two centuries of experience in those pages,” he added.

Moreover, Elder Holland reminded the missionaries of their sacred calling and the power and authority that they have. “The mayor, president, parliament sheriff, battalion, do not have a fraction of that authority. Act like you’re somebody because

you are! You’re not [going to be] intimidated,” he said.

Elder Holland sealed his talk with a powerful testimony saying, “I will not come halfway around the world and devote all my life telling a fairytale [or a] cunningly-devised fable! We don’t do this for a joke. We don’t do this because we’re stupid. We do this for one simple reason—

because this is God’s truth.”

After missionaries finish their two years or 18 months of service, Elder Holland encouraged them to stay active. “If I ever see a returned missionary who’s inactive, [I will tell him this—] How dare you! How dare you

do what you did and come home and walk away,” he stressed. He encouraged them to come home and send [their] children’s children to do this work.

“Everything that I have is because of the gospel. Go give it away and it will come back to you—come back to you, for the rest of your lives. We put the most important institution of this world in your hands,” he concluded.

After the wonderful devotional, the missionaries were all filled with the Spirit and armed with the powerful words from an Apostle. Elder Ian S. Ardern, Second Counselor of the Philippines Area Presidency and his wife were also present in the meeting. ■

