



AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Send Forth the Elders – A Commandment to You

In 1831 the Prophet Joseph Smith asked the Lord how the gospel should be taken to the inhabitants of the earth. In response he received Section 133 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The Lord's answer to Joseph's question was specific and direct, as we read in verse eight: "Send forth the elders of my church unto the nations which are afar off; unto the islands of the sea; send forth unto foreign lands; call upon all nations." You might think at first glance that this is a commandment for young men to serve missions. You would only be partially right. If you look more

closely you will find that the Lord is actually speaking to all members of the Church. Interestingly, verse one makes it clear that this revelation is to each one of us. We all have a responsibility to send forth the elders. The revelation begins with these words, "Hearken, O ye people of my church, saith the Lord your God, and hear the word of the Lord concerning you." The commandment to send forth the elders is to you. The Lord is expecting you to play an important role as we work together to send forth the elders. During Elder Russell M. Nelson's recent visit to the Philippines, he commented, "The best missionaries for the Philippines are Filipinos." Currently, we are only able to supply about 70 percent of the missionaries needed to serve in the Philippines. We are relying upon other nations to supply our missionaries here. Our vision as an Area Presidency is to be able to fill our own needs here in the Philippines and, as the commandment in Doctrine and Covenants 133 states, "Send forth the elders unto the nations which are afar off." We see the day when our Filipino missionaries will be going to other countries in Southeast Asia.

Therefore we must understand that the Lord's direction to send forth the elders is still in force today. We are to send forth the elders here in the Philippines to preach the gospel to all nations. President Thomas S. Monson has renewed the call for all worthy, able



Elder Brent H. Nielson
Philippines Area Presidency

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Remember, the commandment to send forth the elders is to all of us. We all must help the young men prepare for and serve full-time missions.

young men to prepare for and serve an honorable full-time mission. (see "As We Meet Together Again," *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 5-6).

The revelation is clear. The prophetic call has sounded. How will we as members respond? One of our Area goals in the Philippines is to save the rising generation by increasing the number of young men serving missions. In order to accomplish the Lord's work; in order to respond to President Monson's call; in order to achieve our Area goal, we need the help of everyone. How can you help send forth the elders?

If you are a father or a mother you can begin now to prepare your sons to serve full-time missions. They will need to be taught the gospel by you. They will need to attend sacrament and priesthood meetings with you. They will need you to assist them to save their money. This parental work begins when a young man is Primary age. Start the process with your children when they are young and help them know that the Lord has called them to be ready to serve when they reach the age of 19.

If you are a Church leader, we need your very best effort to help these young men become missionaries. They cannot do it alone. You will need to start early to teach them and to train them and to help them prepare to become missionaries. Most important of all, you will need to walk them through the application process. Invite every young man, including the less active, to serve a mission. Sit down with him in your office during a personal interview and review the requirements. Help him fill out his application. Work with him until he has everything in order to submit his papers. Continue to work with him until he enters the Missionary Training Center. The commandment to send forth the elders is specific to you as leaders of the Church.

If you are a member who is not a parent and not a Church leader, what can you do? You can encourage the young men of the Church to serve full-time missions. Give them your support. Remind them of their duty. Contribute each month to the ward or branch missionary fund, even if it is a small amount, so that money will be

available for those young men who cannot afford to go. Members all over the world contribute each month to the missionary fund of the Church. As we send forth the elders, we ask you to join them. Those donations allow missionaries in the Philippines to serve today. Remember, the commandment to send forth the elders is to all of us. We all must help the young men prepare for and serve full-time missions.

If you are a young man, you should mark the date of your 19th birthday as the day your mission begins. It will be the day that you will dedicate yourself to serve the Lord. It will be the day that you begin to share the gospel full time and bring the joy of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ to people all over the world. It is a noble and a righteous call. It is a spiritual assignment. It will require the best of you. Missionary work is not easy, but it will be the most gratifying experience of your life up until now. There is no greater call; there is no more important work than following the Savior's commandment to "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matthew 28:19) Decide today to serve. It will change your life forever. Study the scriptures, attend your Church meetings, magnify your Aaronic Priesthood assignments and save your money.

If you are a young woman, President Monson has also invited you to serve. President Monson reminds us that missionary work is a priesthood duty, but sister missionaries are outstanding, and they are always welcome. Young women can also encourage young men to serve missions and make it clear to them that they intend to marry a returned missionary.

May each of us understand that it is our personal sacred duty, as members of the Church in the Philippines, to send forth the elders. ■

Elder Nelson Visits the Philippines

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles visited the Philippines on May 17-27, 2012. Elder Nelson dedicated the new Missionary Training Center (MTC) in Manila and presided over the Mission Presidents' Seminar. He visited different parts of the Philippines to conduct devotionals and special meetings with missionaries. He also had a special meeting with the Vice President of the Philippines, Jejomar Binay.

NEW MISSIONARY TRAINING CENTER IN MANILA DEDICATED

Members gathered at the Joseph Smith Hall of the new Missionary Training Center last May 20, 2012, to witness the dedication of the new MTC facility. Elder Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles offered the dedicatory prayer.

Others in attendance were members of the Area Presidency, Elder Michael John U. Teh, Area President; Elder Brent H. Nielson, First Counselor; and Elder Ian S. Ardern, Second Counselor, who each gave brief remarks prior to the dedicatory prayer. Also present were President George Terry Taylor, MTC President, his wife, Sister Taylor, all the mission presidents in the Philippines and local Area Seventies.

In his remarks, President Taylor shared the special experience they had in the new MTC on April 30 when the flags of the different nations represented by the missionaries in the MTC were raised and the national anthem of each of the countries were played. It was a fitting symbol of the missionaries being an ensign to all the nations. (see 2 Nephi 15:26) The new MTC will prepare these missionaries



to invite all to come unto Christ and receive the gospel.

Before his dedicatory prayer, Elder Nelson expressed his admiration for the design of the new building. He said the best way to understand the gospel is through "teaching by the Spirit."

At the start of the dedicatory prayer he expressed gratitude for the Atonement of Jesus Christ, and for the faithful missionaries and members of the Church throughout the world who love and serve the Lord.

He blessed the Republic of the Philippines to "maintain open doors of welcome" to all of the Lord's servants, and that the people of this nation will be blessed with "freedom and accountability to grow in righteousness both temporally and spiritually."

Elder Nelson is greeted by local members at the Manila Philippines Temple.



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The new Missionary Training Center can house 144 missionaries from all over Asia. (Philippines, Cambodia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and Thailand). Training is provided to each missionary in his own language through the help of translators.

The new MTC is made up of three buildings. The first building houses state-of-the-art training facilities such as the Joseph Smith Hall, practice teaching rooms with built-in cameras, translation booths, a computer lab, a laundry area with heavy-duty washing machines, and sleeping quarters for the missionaries. Across from it is the administrative building which houses the offices of the MTC Presidency, the Director of the MTC, and additional practice teaching rooms. The third building is a recreation facility to provide physical exercise activities for the missionaries.

The first class in the new MTC began on December 27, 2011.

METRO MANILA

Elder Nelson met on Tuesday with full-time missionaries and young single adults at the Makati stake center in Buendia, Makati.

His message to the two groups of young people was the love of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and the blessings that can be obtained through obedience and faithfulness.

Seeking to lighten the mood at the beginning of his talk at the young single adult (YSA) devotional, Elder Nelson said: "Why do you come on a



weeknight to hear older people talk to you? I think you came because maybe we can tell you something that can be helpful."

He talked about 10 things that he would like the YSA to know: 1. God lives; 2. Jesus Christ is our Savior and His Atonement has made immortality possible for all; 3. God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith; 4. Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon; 5. Priesthood power has been restored on the earth; 6. Prophets receive revelation; 7. Satan is allowed to function because God honors agency; 8. The youth of Zion are the hope of Israel; 9. Joy comes from keeping the commandments of God; and 10. The choice of eternal life or destruction is ours.

Speaking about Joseph Smith and his work in translating the Book of Mormon, Elder Nelson said that "there is no way anyone could have done"



what the prophet did “without the help of God Almighty”. He cited that since he works a lot with translators in the Church, he knew that the best translator translates scriptures to other languages at the rate of one page a day, and this with the help of modern technology and other tools such as lexicon and previously translated works.

When Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon, he did 8 to 10 pages a day. “When you read the Book of Mormon, remember that Joseph Smith translated faster than you can read it.”

Elder Nelson stressed the need for the young people to keep the faith, telling them that they are “on the good side”. He said unlike previous dispensations that all ended in apostasy, this last dispensation in which we live will not end in apostasy and “will carry on to that great millennial reign of the Lord.” Calling Satan an “incorrigible insomniac,” he said that God allows His children to be tempted because God “does not want to force anyone to come to Him.”

He recalled his courtship with his wife, the late Dantzel White Nelson, to emphasize to the YSA that “one of the most important things that God wants us to do in life is to form families; not just ordinary families but eternal families.”

Earlier in his talk with full-time missionaries from the Philippines Manila Mission, he addressed the sisters telling them to “look for a man who loves the Lord more than you. Don’t settle for anything else. Because

when a man loves the Lord, his capacity to love you will be increased; it will be holy and pure.”

He taught full-time missionaries how to make their teaching more effective by knowing more about the doctrine of the Church and learning to communicate better, such as finding common ground with those that they teach.

Elder Nelson was accompanied by Elder and Sister Ian S. Ardern, Second Counselor in the Philippines Area Presidency.

CEBU CITY

“The temple is a great blessing! Take advantage of the blessings of that holy place.” This was the main message of Elder Nelson during the member devotional he presided over in Cebu. He was accompanied by Elder Michael John U. Teh and Sister Grace Teh.

In line with the Elder Nelson’s message, President Gerald Mortimer, temple president of Cebu City Philippines Temple, also gave a message during the devotional where he shared two words that are close together: *sacred* and *sacrifice*. He mentioned that “it takes sacrifice to bring sacred experiences in our lives. When we make sacred ordinances in the temple we make ourselves sacred and we learn in the temple that we are eternal.”



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At the end of the devotional, the congregation was blessed with an opportunity to shake Elder Nelson's hand. Members eagerly and excitedly waited for their turn to meet one of the Lord's living Apostles.

Elder Nelson also presided over a missionary zone conference where he emphasized the importance of loving their companions and placing themselves under the direction of their leaders—their mission president and his wife. He also stressed Elder Teh's message that "nothing is impossible with the Lord, and that God will never do for us what we should be doing for ourselves." Before the zone conference, missionaries of the Philippines Cebu Mission were given an opportunity to shake hands with the Apostle.

VISIT WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

Elder Nelson, together with Elder Teh met with Jejomar Binay, Vice President of the Republic of the Philippines, during a special meeting at the Coconut Palace.

After the introductions, the conversation revolved on various topics from the name "Mormons" to the Church's humanitarian efforts. Elder Nelson took the time to explain to him the origin of the Church's nickname and the purpose of the Book of Mormon.

Vice President Binay also asked the difference between a temple and a chapel, which Elder Teh explained. He spoke about his familiarity with the Church's full-time missionaries walking the streets in pairs.

In the discussion on humanitarian efforts, Vice President Binay was particularly interested in our present partnership with the Catholic Relief Services to build low-cost homes for typhoon victims in Cagayan de Oro City on the island of Mindanao. Elder

Nelson expressed to the Vice President the Church's willingness to partner with his office for any worthwhile projects that will benefit the people.

Elder Nelson thanked him for taking the time to meet. He also acknowledged the many worthwhile projects of the



government that were undertaken under the Vice President's direction.

Elder Nelson explained the role of the Philippines Area Presidency as it relates to the Quorum of the Twelve and the Church's worldwide presence.

ANGELES, PAMPANGA

The full-time missionaries of the Philippines Angeles Mission were among those who were blessed to be visited by Elder Nelson. Elder Nelson was accompanied by Elder Brent H. Nielson, First Counselor in the Philippines Area Presidency, and his wife, Marcia.

All the missionaries, led by their mission president, David C. Martino and his wife, greeted Elder Nelson by singing their mission hymn, "Where the Finest Serve."

Sister Nielson first addressed the missionaries by sharing her love for the missionaries. "There is so much power in this room and you are such a scene to behold," she told them. She then bore her testimony that their Heavenly Father is looking after them and their families.

The missionaries were then favored with a powerful and loving message from Elder Nielson, who shared with them the importance of revelation in their lives and the lives of their



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investigators. He also expressed his love for them. "All of you are numbered and we love you all," he added.

Elder Nelson related to them a story about when he was privileged to visit China and meet a colleague of his there. He told of his wonderful friendship with the man and how the man became interested in the restored gospel. He told the missionaries that when he first saw his Chinese friend, he couldn't help but imagine him wearing white baptismal clothes and temple clothing.

His friend expressed interest in the way Latter-day Saints govern their lives. "The only thing that makes sense to me is how you and your people live," his friend told him.

Elder Nelson was informed that his Chinese friend would be visiting his daughter in Toronto. Knowing the opportunity for his friend to be closer to the truth of the gospel revealed in



this dispensation, Elder Nelson quickly phoned the mission president assigned in that part of Canada and said, "Send the best missionaries to him."

During this time, Elder Nelson was already serving in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and when he found out that his friend and colleague would soon be baptized, he asked President Howard W. Hunter, who was then presiding over the quorum, if he could attend the baptism. President Hunter agreed to the request. After fulfilling his apostolic duties, he traveled a few miles and arrived just in time to baptize his dear friend.

"See the future potential of the people

that you are teaching," he said.

Sister Frejas, a full-time missionary from the Bicol region in the Philippines assigned in Angeles, was deeply moved by the story. "I really liked what Elder Nelson said that we should see beyond what you see when dealing with investigators. That vision will be truly helpful when dealing with those who are not members of the Church," she added.

Before concluding the meeting, Elder Nelson left a wonderful blessing on the missionaries. "I bless you that you will be missionaries all throughout your lives," he said.

A full-time missionary who will soon complete her mission was touched by the blessing. Sister Breckenridge of Springville, Utah, who has a few months left in her service said that the blessing inspired her to become an angel to other people. "I want to be a part of their eternal lives," she said. Elder Nelson taught the missionaries the true nature of their call, which is to help others receive eternal life.

TACLOBAN CITY

Elder Nelson, together with Elder Benson E. Misalucha, Area Seventy, presided over the Tacloban Philippines Stake Conference held on May 26–27, 2012.

During the priesthood session, Elder Nelson instructed the brethren to make sure that each home has a picture of a temple, copies of "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" and "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles," and a set of scriptures. He counseled the brethren about the evils of pornography, which he calls the great plague invading families of the world today. Responding to a question about building temples, he explained that it is easier to build a temple than to build a people ready for the temple. He also counseled a departing missionary to make sure he knows the Book of Mormon.

In the Saturday adult session of the conference, Elder Nelson emphasized the importance of family relationships. Speaking about marriage, he stated that it is a match between two imperfect people, and that nobody wins an argument in marriage. Among other things, he counseled the husbands to make sure they surprise their wives with little things. He admonished



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Elder Benson E. Misalucha of the Quorum of the Seventy, and Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles with Tacloban Stake Presidency

couples to pray and read scriptures together every day. Speaking on prayer, he told the fathers to thank Heavenly Father for specific deeds their wives did for them during the day.

More than 1,500 members attended the Sunday session. Elder Nelson focused on the responsibilities of parents to their young children. With 57 grandchildren and 60 great-grandchildren himself, he instructed parents to teach their children what it means to be a child of God, the importance of partaking of the sacrament, the blessings that come from tithing, prayer and scripture study. He instructed parents to let their young children memorize the sound of their voice reading the scriptures to them. He also asked parents to allow their children to learn other languages such as English, Chinese or Spanish, and to let them get all the education they could acquire. He gently warned parents that there is no need for physical abuse in rearing children.

PHILIPPINE YOUTH PERFORM FOR ELDER NELSON

Reminiscent of the Jubilee Cultural Celebration held last April 30, 2011, young men and young women from various stakes in Metro Manila performed some of the dances during the special cultural celebration for Elder Nelson. They were also joined by the members of the Philippine Area Presidency, Elders Michael John U. Teh, Brent H. Nielson and Ian S. Ardern with their wives.

Dances from Luzon, Visayas, and

Mindanao were performed, and two song numbers, one by a single adult choir who sang a medley of Filipino songs and the other by a group of male singers who gave a rendition of the Jubilee theme song, "United."

"It's the most amazing display of talent I have ever seen," Elder Nelson said after the performances. His message elicited cheers from the audience. He also said that he will never forget what they have done.

Elder Nelson asked the youth if they realize what they are becoming. He said that they are becoming future leaders of the Church.

"We love you, we thank you and we bless you," concluded Elder Nelson. ■

