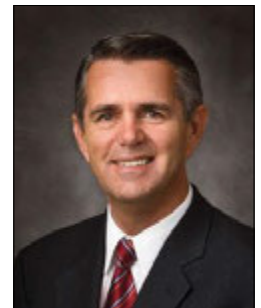




## AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

# Moving Forward



Elder Ian S. Ardern  
Philippines Area Presidency

*I encourage us to be sure that beginning this year we are all engaged in making better use of our time by doing the things that matter most.*

Photo by Noel Maglaque



As the rising sun flickered its way into your life on the first day of January this year you may have asked yourself what happened to last year. As we grow older the words of the familiar hymn seem to ring true: “Time flies on wings of lightning, we cannot call it back” (“Improve the Shining Moments,” *Hymns*, no. 226). Like the white sands of Boracay running through our fingers, unless we are very careful time will escape us and we will be left with so much to do. I encourage us to be sure that beginning this year we are all engaged in making better use of our time by doing the things that matter most. Rich or poor, none of us can buy time at the local sari-sari store for time is never for sale, yet when we wisely use what each of us has

been allocated wonderful things can be accomplished.

So what will change for you this year? The answer depends on you more than anyone else. Like an autumn leaf you can float gently down a stream and be pulled and pushed one way and another by the ever-changing current or you can act for yourself and determine your outcomes for this New Year (see 2 Nephi 2:14). Create a vision of the things you wish to achieve, write them down, make plans on how to achieve them and then go to work. (See Moses 1:4-8.)

With the demands being made on your time by family, friends, school, employment and your Church callings and perhaps even barangay issues, we



Photo by Noel Maglaque



Photo by Noel Maglaque

*We must learn to prioritize our choices to match our goals or risk being in the very same spot next year as we are this year.*

must learn to prioritize our choices to match our goals or risk being in the very same spot next year as we are this year. For some, this could mean spending less time watching telenovela, malling, and texting or being on Facebook and spending more time on the things that matter. Yes, this could be the year you decide there are other priorities in your life that are of great importance which deserve more of your time. We are well taught about priorities by the Master Teacher when He declared in His Sermon on the Mount, “Wherefore, seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God and to establish His righteousness” (JST Matthew 6:38, in Matthew 6:33, footnote a; also quoted in Dallin H. Oaks, “Focus and Priorities,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 69, and *Liahona*, July 2001, 99).

A key priority, as shown in our Area goals, for this year must be nurturing the family. My time in the Philippines has taught me that the demanding and busy lifestyle here robs too many of quality time with their families, yet it is the reality most live with in the Philippines. Long work hours that are often spread over six days of the week, coupled with slow and long jeepney rides on clogged roads to and from work make it difficult for many family members to be together at important times such as family meals, scripture reading and prayers. Such as it may be, the circumstances we live in should not change our priorities but make us more adaptive to our circumstances so we can always be true to our family priority.

Another key priority is the call to go to the rescue. We talk so often of rescuing

another and that continues to be important, yet I cannot brush past the feeling that perhaps the greatest rescue that needs to be made this year is the rescue of oneself. There are some of us who need to be rescued from the trap of falling behind in the payment of tithes and fast offering, poor attendance at sacrament meetings, not fulfilling our callings and even not holding a current temple recommend. As each of us makes such things a priority in our lives we will be richly rewarded with an increase of the Spirit and an increasing sense of peace in our lives.

These are the best of times; our Church membership is growing in numbers and in strength. It is a time of excitement as we respond to the prophet’s call to increase the number of missionaries serving and as we reach out to others. The Church is bursting out of obscurity in the Philippines and is being recognized for good. Thank you for being part of this great coming forth, for being the examples that others can point to and acknowledge as being good. As we each set our priorities and use our time wisely we will find that this time next year our feet have moved and be happy for it. ■

# General Authorities Visit the Philippines

## NAGA CITY

After the meetings in Legazpi City, Elder Tad R. Callister of the Presidency of the Seventy presided in an evening meeting with young single adults in the Naga Stake center last August 25. Elder Callister was accompanied by Elder Ian Ardern, Second Counselor in the Area Presidency, and their wives.

Young single adults who attended the meeting were from the Naga, Goa and Daet stakes, and the Iriga and Pamplona districts. Elder Callister began his remarks by speaking about repentance, how it is not only forsaking something for a matter of time but as being a change of heart. He taught about the need to confess to priesthood leaders for things done that endanger an individual's Church standing. He said that if one can feel the Spirit, it means that one is either forgiven or that the cleansing process is taking place. He told the single adults how the Church needs better prepared missionaries. He taught that testimony is gained one step at a time. He also encouraged them to help bring others back to the Church. "We need you!" Elder Callister told the young single adults.

Elder Callister also presided over the special stake meeting in Naga City. He began by speaking about missionary work and gave counsel to parents. He said that parents have three responsibilities. First, they have the responsibility to prepare their children to serve missions. Second, they are responsible for preparing their children to be clean and pure to enter the temple. Third, parents have the privilege to prepare their children to become celestial companions. He taught that parents should take an offensive stance, instead of a defensive one, if they want to beat Satan. He enumerated ways on how parents could take the offense against Satan in their homes. One is making prayer a spiritual shield in the home. He counseled parents to kneel and pray with their children until they can do it on their own, to pray with eternal consequence, and to teach their children that prayers do come true. Another is the importance of feeding oneself spiritually by studying the scriptures, which



Photo courtesy of Naga, Philippines Stake

gives strength to resist the evil one. "Stick with the scriptures on a day-by-day basis," he counseled. He also emphasized the principle of fasting and that of receiving one's patriarchal blessing. According to him, parents should teach their children about the power of fasting and prepare their children to receive their patriarchal blessing.

## BUTUAN

Saints were gathered early at the stake center awaiting Elder Callister and his wife's arrival. They welcomed them with smiles as Elder and Sister Callister shook each member's hand. He opened his talk by citing examples of great men of faith in the scriptures, like Moses leading the Israelites to the promised land, who had an unwavering faith to lead them despite how difficult their circumstances were back then.

Didi O. Magallanes, Butuan Third Ward, expressed how his testimony was strengthened upon hearing Elder Callister's message on great men of faith: "I know that it is not enough to only exercise an unwavering faith in the Lord. Members need to act and do their part and God will sustain our faith. When we are put in a trying situation whether to follow or not God's will for us, don't make any excuses. Have faith in Him and follow His commandments. Never listen to the reasons of the world. And this is one thought that struck my heart."

Elder Callister encouraged members of the Church to have faith in God and to feast upon the words of Christ, for they will tell

*Elder Callister encouraged members of the Church to have faith in God and to feast upon the words of Christ, for they will tell them all that they should do when they are at the crossroads of their lives.*



*Bishop Dean M. Davies initially greeted the congregation with love coming from the President Thomas S. Monson and his counselors.*

them all that they should do when they are at the crossroads of their lives. He spoke boldly to the young men, saying that there is no reason, no excuse not to serve a full-time mission. He also encouraged parents not to give up teaching their children the way to righteousness, and declared like that of a trump his message on paying full tithes and commitment to scripture study. He compared it to having the desire to always eat regular daily meals.

Greg Gregorio, Butuan Second Ward, expressed his gratitude for Elder Callister's message: "He encouraged me to be more faithful and obedient in keeping the commandments of God, to be committed in paying tithing and to have that feeling of visiting and performing temple ordinances as a necessity. All these things are for our exaltation. I am grateful for his visit."

Sister Callister also called on parents not to neglect their responsibility to their children. She said, "Our family, our children are our jewels. They are the future of the Church. Parents' responsibilities are to teach them to pray, to read and study the scriptures." She also encouraged parents to ponder upon the question: "How can I encourage little children to pray, to live the gospel, to serve a full-time mission, to pay tithing and to marry in the temple?"

"As a father it is my responsibility to provide for my own family temporally and spiritually. If it is important to feed our family three times a day, so it is also in feeding them spiritually. I am blessed this Sabbath day to have heard these inspiring words," said Roger M. Solis, Butuan First Ward.

## BATANGAS

On August 26, 2012, Bishop Dean M. Davies, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric accompanied by his wife Darla James Davies, and Todd Tapp, area director for temporal affairs, and his wife Pauleen, visited Lipa Philippines Stake. About 800 members from 12 wards

and branches gathered at the stake center to attend the special meeting.

He initially greeted the congregation with love coming from President Thomas S. Monson and his counselors. He then discussed his duties as counselor in the Presiding Bishopric. They are considered as General Authorities, who each hold the office of bishop and serve in their positions under the direct supervision of the First Presidency of the Church.

He explained that they are responsible for the temporal affairs of the Church. This includes involvement of finances such as in receiving, distributing, and accounting for member tithes, offerings, and contributions and administering programs to assist the poor and needy. It also includes overseeing the design, construction, and maintenance of temples and meetinghouses; audits; baptisms; and membership records.

Moreover, he invited selected members from Relief Society, priesthood, youth and returned missionaries to share their testimonies.

David Guro, a farmer and a three-year member from Darasa Ward shared his testimony. He said that his humble circumstances did not stop him from going to church. He believes that trials helped increase his faith and he remains loyal in his commitment to the Lord.

Bishop Davies counseled those in attendance to love their spouses. He said that couples should express their appreciation for each other every day and pray together. He reminded the congregation that we act as agents of Jesus Christ.

"We all make mistakes when we get married, but we have to keep in mind that temple marriages are eternal. If you have not gone to the temple and have not yet received your promises and covenants—go and prepare yourselves."

Bishop Davies also encouraged everyone to read the scriptures daily for the gospel light illuminates in our countenance.

To conclude, he blessed those in attendance that if they continue to be obedient and faithful, blessings will come into their lives. He also told them to be kind to their children, since they are the future leaders of the Church. He closed his message with a testimony that God lives. ■

# TOP 10 LDS 2013 NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

By Ma. Teresa C. Pangilinan

Before New Year's Day we make promises that we consider as ways to transform our lives. There is anticipation of change, success and failure that a new year brings.

There are spiritual equivalents to this custom, which members would like to share for the year 2013.

**I have gathered responses from members of all ages on their New Year resolutions to improve their spiritual lives:**

## 1. BE ON TIME FOR SACRAMENT MEETING.

"It's hard to admit that I have poor time management. I arrive home late from work and do not use my Saturdays to prepare for Sunday meetings. That's why I often fail to partake of the sacrament and miss the sweet spirit.

This year I will not be late for sacrament meeting. I will prepare days before that special day so I can contemplate and focus during sacrament meeting."

Anonymous

## 2. MARRY WITHIN THE COVENANT.

"I am now in my 30s and I recognize that I have delayed my potential to have an eternal companion. I have been busy with my career. Starting January 1, 2013, I will put extra effort in finding a Church member partner and be worthy to make higher temple covenants.

Janice M. Liska  
Narra Philippines District

## 3. REGULARLY BEAR TESTIMONY.

"My New Year's resolution is to share my testimony every month. I owe my strength and inspiration to the testimonies of other members. I know if I do the same thing I will also be a source of strength and inspiration to others. President Thomas S. Monson has a quotation which I really love that says, "Regarding one's testimony, remember,

that which one willingly shares he keeps, while that which he selfishly keeps he loses" (quoted in *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* [2004], 198). Let us strengthen each other by sharing our testimony."



Darlene Mae Caporal-Panti  
Las Pinas Philippines Stake

## 4. HOLD ON TO THE ETERNAL PROMISE MADE INSIDE THE TEMPLE.

"My New Year's resolution is to be more faithful to the Lord as well as to my eternal companion. In this world of challenges people may drag you down. People may make you feel unimportant. Disbelief is growing and more marriages are becoming broken. If we will hold faithful and look to the Lord, no power of temptation can overcome us even in the most difficult times. No power of darkness can prevail in our hearts and minds, destroying God's wonderful plan for all of us. God's tender mercy will make weak things great unto us. Let us therefore be more faithful each day of our lives so the power of the Lord can be upon us always to remind us of the things which are eternal and of great worth."

Delia Malou Pajo  
Cagayan De Oro Philippines West Stake

## 5. VISIT THE TEMPLE OFTEN.

"My New Year's resolution for 2013 is to become more committed in my calling as a temple ordinance worker. I will do this by coming to the temple 10 minutes before the start of my duty and completing my six-hour duty. I will ignore any activities that hinder me from fulfilling my temple responsibility. I will sleep early so I can wake up early to be at the temple on time. I will follow all instructions from the temple presidency so my service at the temple is acceptable to the Lord. I know



Photo by Noel Maglaque

*Starting January 1, 2013, I will put extra effort in finding a Church member partner and be worthy to make higher temple covenants.*



Photo by Noel Maglaque

*I will follow all instructions from the temple presidency so my service at the temple is acceptable to the Lord.*



*The true benefit of being organized is to let you focus on accomplishing your most important goals.*

that I have a covenant with the Lord to serve Him and the patrons so that I may receive the full blessings of temple service. I find joy in temple service."

**Jose Manarin**  
*Marikina Philippines Stake*

**6. COME BACK TO CHURCH.**

"Life has been difficult for me and my family. We started gradually to become less active. My husband and I found ourselves not going to church at all and working on the Sabbath. Our children never stopped inviting and reactivating us but the temptation was powerful. Our grandchildren also encouraged us. We did not falter to pray or to study the scriptures but we felt that something was missing.

As a way to finally fill that missing piece, we will attend church again with our family, for we know that life would be even more difficult if we will fail to attend our Sunday meetings."

**Evangelina P. Canadalla**  
*Naic Philippines District*

**7. OBEY THE WORD OF WISDOM.**

"My New Year's resolution is to follow the scriptural admonition in Doctrine and Covenants 88:124, which says: "Retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your minds and bodies might be invigorated." For so many years I have deprived myself of sufficient sleep. I know that this is part of the Word of Wisdom and I feel guilty that I have not been able to follow it for the longest time. I owe it to myself to keep my spirit, mind, and body healthy by ensuring that I get enough rest each night.

With my tight and hectic schedule with work, calling, and family responsibilities, I know that sufficient sleep will enable and allow me to work at my best every day."

**Ana Marie Z.C. Karganilla**  
*Dagupan Philippines Stake*

**8. BE MORE ORGANIZED.**

"I need to get organized and start by cleaning our house of the clutter and items we have not used in the last two years. This will reduce the stress of spending time looking for things and



finding them later when you no longer need them or can no longer use them.

Finally, the true benefit of being organized is to let you focus on accomplishing your most important goals."

**Jess Batoon**  
*Dasmariñas Philippines Stake*

**9. READ AND PONDER SCRIPTURES DAILY.**

"I would like to start the year right by taking 10 minutes in the morning to ponder the scriptures after reading. This is to keep my thoughts focused on the things that matter in eternity while enjoying our journey on earth."



**Jocelyn R. Cabanting**  
*Taytay Philippines Stake*

**10. BE MORE REVERENT.**

"I promise to be more reverent during sacrament meeting. My elder sister and I are always reminded by our mother about this. I would regularly pray about this and listen to what Heavenly Father wants me to do."

**Jared Sarmiento**  
*Quezon City Philippines Stake*

"And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them" (Ether 12:27).

What is your New Year's resolution?

**HOW CAN I BE A BETTER MEMBER OF THE CHURCH IN THE COMING YEAR?**

*By Roxanne Juele-Montojo*

Finally New Year has come! Saints around the country are anticipating that good things might come to pass this year. They are filled with a desire to conquer their weaknesses and continue their good practices. Here are few of the many responses of the Saints on how they can be a better Latter-day Saint in 2013:

As a working mom, every second that I



*Pondering the scriptures after I read will keep my thoughts focused on the things that matter in eternity while enjoying our journey on earth."*

am with my 22-month-old baby boy really counts for me. In the coming year, I will continue to make sure that I spend quality time with him when we are together. I will be more patient in his restlessness and I plan to start introducing the Book of Mormon story book to him. With the limited time I have for myself, I'll dedicate it to my calling in the Young Women organization. Giving all that I can give in the service of the Lord is indeed fulfilling. I'll also be more tolerant of my husband's weaknesses and more supportive in his calling in the branch.



**Eunice Joy Natad**  
*Tagum Philippines District*

I can be a better member of the Church in the coming year by being more joyful as I serve the Lord. When I spend my time helping, lifting and cheering others, I find that I am the principal beneficiary of my actions. It takes very little effort to brighten someone's day like a phone call or a text, or a listening ear which indeed can do wonders. Some of the things I also plan on doing are comforting those who are sad, visiting the lonely and sick, and helping those who are depressed and needy and treating them with gentleness. Performing at least one small act of kindness for someone every day will bring joy into their lives as well as mine.

**Ma. Socorro Licayan**  
*Butuan Philippines Stake*

In the coming year I'll be more committed to: (1) my obedience to Heavenly Father's commandments. I will strive to live the gospel more each day; (2) I will be more responsible in my actions and fulfill my responsibilities as the gospel teaches me to do—to act and not to be acted upon; (3) I will use my agency wisely—I will set my eternal priorities over worldly things; (4) I will continue to balance my secular and spiritual learning to build a strong foundation of faith and grow both temporally and spiritually to become a better Latter-day Saint.



**Elmer Belandres**  
*Butuan Philippines Stake*

I commit to continue serving in the Church by diligently magnifying my calling. I will immerse myself in scripture study and in pondering the words of God, especially the Book of Mormon. This book has power to make man a better person by abiding by its precepts. Worthiness of the companionship of the Holy Ghost as I daily seek the Lord's guidance will also be my topmost priority. I will develop a closer relationship with my Father in Heaven and with my Savior Jesus Christ through soulful prayer. In the midst of hardship and challenges in life I'll continue to seek comfort and peace from the words of the living prophet and other General Authorities.

**Ma. Jerosalyn Hinautan**  
*Butuan Philippines Stake*

To be a good example to my family and the people around me is one goal I must work on in the coming year. This can be done through following the admonition of the leaders and feasting upon the words of Christ. In 2013, I will exert more effort to regularly read the scriptures, and by my example I can encourage other members to feast upon the words of God too. I believe that the best way for Latter-day Saints to improve their lives is through diligent scripture study. I will pray more often and will see to it that we consistently hold family home evening. I know this is the best way to strengthen my family. At work, I will let my colleagues know my standards through words and deeds that they may see my good works and glorify the Father who is in heaven.



**Vicente P. Domantay**  
*Ozamiz Philippines District*

In 2013, I will find opportunities to continue improving and living the gospel of Christ. My attitude will always be directed towards this commitment.

**Edgardo B. Loquias**  
*Ozamiz Philippines District*

My commitment this 2013 is to work out my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to improve my spirit and my testimony of the gospel. I will be a kinder person



*Be a good example to my family and the people around me is one goal I must work on in the coming year.*

Photo by Noel Maglaurue



Photo by Edwin Recifino

*We stand in holy places when we have faith to do those things that are pleasing to our Heavenly Father and when we keep His commandments.*



Photo by Noel Maglaque

*We should have the courage to say no to what we know would not please the Lord.*

and a sweeter mother to my children and grandchildren.

**Celestina Manlupig**  
*Ozamiz Philippines District*

To support the 2012 area goals, the Ozamiz District Relief Society organized a scripture study program where sisters visit other Relief Society members in their homes to have scripture study. This is done every Saturday at dawn. In the coming year I will make sure that this program will continue since this is a way to uplift and help Relief Society members strengthen their testimony. At home, I will strive to be a good example to my family.



**Enriquita Albaterra**  
*Ozamiz Philippines District*

I will first assess what happened with my 2012 personal goals. From there, I will improve on the things I lack and continue with the good things that I have done. I need to have goals as a guide to what I should accomplish."

**Luis V. Tadina**  
*San Fernando La Union Philippines Stake*

To be a better Latter-day Saint this coming year, I am planning to spend more time on the Church websites. I will also encourage at least three potential missionaries to serve full-time missions and prepare myself to marry in the temple.



**Joeneil Palis**  
*Bacolod North Philippines Stake*

### **HOW CAN WE STAND IN HOLY PLACES?**

We can stand in holy places by defending what we know is right, even if we are alone. We stand in holy places when we have faith to do those things that are pleasing to our Heavenly Father and when we keep His commandments.

**Donna B.**  
*Tabaco Philippines District*

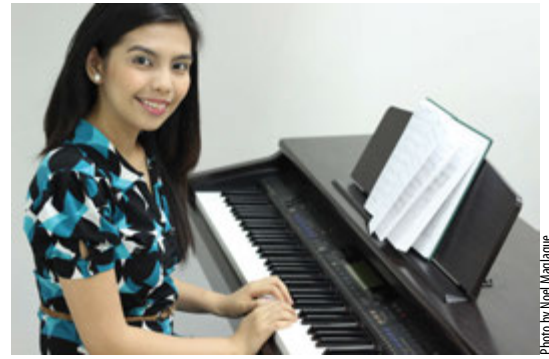


Photo by Noel Maglaque

We can stand in holy places by being true to ourselves, living the gospel principles we have learned and by being a good example. We can stand in holy places when we keep ourselves pure and virtuous, by studying the scriptures, attending Church meetings and serving those who are in need. As young women, we stand in holy places when we follow the standards in *For the Strength of Youth* and work on our Personal Progress.

**Maria Victoria B.**  
*Tabaco Philippines District*

Begin the day with prayer and scripture reading. We will have the companionship of the Holy Ghost and be reminded throughout the day what we stand for and make right decisions."

**Zen Aquino**  
*Fairview Philippines Stake*

We should have the courage to say no to what we know would not please the Lord. Before we do things, we must first think if it will make Him happy. And lastly, we must always begin our day with a prayer (for His guidance) and start our day by reading His words (through the scriptures)."

**Elisabeth Basconillo**  
*Marikina Philippines Stake*