How very fortunate we are to have two temples in the Philippines and another announced for construction. To be so blessed is a mark of the growth of the Church in the Philippines, the Lord’s love for the people and of the faith of many members. The Lord is establishing His Church on these Islands and yet there is still much to do.

Of course, to truly benefit from these temples we must use them. An increase in temple participation will allow us to make sacred covenants that will help us to stay strong in the face of adversity, help to build our personal testimony of Jesus Christ as our Savior, and make available the ordinances of salvation and exaltation to our deceased relatives and others.

Baptism and confirmation into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints brings some of the blessings of membership, but until we have entered the temple and have received all the blessings which await us there, we have not obtained everything the Lord has to offer. The greatest blessings of Church membership are those blessings which we receive in the temples of God.

To be able to attend the temple you will need the precious gift of a current temple recommend. This gift should be sought whether you can attend the temple regularly or not. You will increase in spiritual power by giving an account of your worthiness to your priesthood leaders, obtaining a temple recommend and in carrying it with you.

You will increase in spiritual power by giving an account of your worthiness to your priesthood leaders, obtaining a temple recommend and in carrying it with you.

The Psalmist reminds us:

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?” (Psalms 24:3-4)

“He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart.”

Clean hands and a pure heart are determined by our belief in God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ and in the Holy Ghost and
the reality of the Atonement, our faithfulness to covenants and obedience to commandments and our willingness to serve and attend Church meetings. The standard is one the Lord has set and is not so high that it cannot be achieved. All of us can be current temple recommend holders.

In my teenage years I saw the financial sacrifices many Pacific Islanders made to travel from their Island homes to the temple in Hamilton, New Zealand, and I have seen some of that same sacrifice in the Philippines. It appears that there has almost always been some degree of sacrifice associated with temple attendance. For some it is the struggle of finance and for others the struggle of becoming a full tithe payer or obedience to the Word of Wisdom or of making the time to attend. Whatever the struggle, overcoming it will be worth the rich reward of being worthy to hold a temple recommend and attending the temple as often as you can.

President Thomas S. Monson has reminded us that, “If you have not yet been to the temple or if you have been but currently do not qualify for a recommend, there is no more important goal for you to work toward than being worthy to go to the temple” (“The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World,” Liahona, May 2011, 93).

The Area Presidency joins with President Monson in encouraging those with temple recommends to use them, for those who once held a recommend but no longer do, to qualify themselves once more and for those who have yet to receive their first recommend to prepare themselves for that important demonstration of their discipleship and conversion to Christ.
I was inactive for 22 years. But I have a strong testimony that, just like me, there is hope for those who go astray.

I was 15 when I was baptized on 30 January 1987. My friend, who was a member of another denomination, became interested in the Church and invited the missionaries to his home. He was the one who encouraged me to also investigate the Church. I was baptized in the Gubat Branch, Sorsogon.

I went to Manila in April 1988 to continue my schooling. I then experienced persecutions and discouragement from my relatives about the Church. Soon, I stopped going to church. I started breaking some of the commandments. During this time I finished my school, got married and had three kids.

For 22 years, I was inactive—until one afternoon, two women came to my sari-sari store to buy ice cream. Little did I know that this would change everything.

The women seemed very happy and excited. I became curious and asked for whom were they buying the ice cream. They said that they were giving it to a missionary friend who was celebrating a birthday. They pointed across the street and I recognized two full-time missionaries wearing black nametags.

The two sisters introduced me to the missionaries and since then, these missionaries would come to our home two times a week to teach us about the gospel. At first I was asking myself if it would still be possible to come back to the Church. I have been inactive for many years. However, other members of the Church also started to visit us and through their help, I gained the courage to attend church again in August 2010.

I continued to attend Church until I was given a calling in the elders quorum. That same year, my wife and eldest son were baptized. My sister and nephew also joined the Church. When my daughter
turned eight she was also baptized.

I felt very happy and secure that my entire family partook of the gospel. With the help and support of leaders and Church members, my wife and I were endowed on 17 May 2012 and were sealed as a family in the temple. I will never forget the joy that I felt when I saw my children dressed in white like little angels.

I was called as a bishop in January 2013. As a product of reactivation, I have a really strong testimony of our area emphasis, “Rescue the One.”

What has worked in the Davao Stake was executing the basics that were taught in the past: first is knowing our brothers who have been lost; second is focusing on a few; third is reaching out to them and fourth is responding to their needs. Since the area emphasis is to “rescue,” all of their meetings have been aligned to that direction.

Our stake presidency regularly meets with the bishops to ask them to account for the people we are rescuing. Some of our bishops have achieved success in bringing back priesthood holders by focusing on only five at a time and ensuring that they are visited monthly by the assigned home teachers.

Being able to find out how the needs of those reactivated priesthood holders were met by the bishops and the quorum members play a critical role in bringing back and retaining them.

Philip A. Tan
Counselor, Davao Philippines Stake

Brother Eugene Ferrer has served in the bishopric for a time and has recently been called to preside over Sta. Cruz Ward. He also shared his insight on the approach they made to rescue his brethren.

“The most effective approach to bring back less-active priesthood holders in our ward is to give them a responsibility. Responsibility is an impetus that impels a priesthood holder to be more committed in the gospel of Jesus Christ. He is motivated to work for the kingdom of God because he is inspired at the same time he inspires and motivates other priesthood holders because he works,” shared Brother Ferrer.

“We extended callings to those who are so-called ‘low hanging fruit’ or less-active priesthood holders who are ready to get into activity. Most accepted the call and are now very
diligent in magnifying their calling. We then recommit them to pay full tithes and give generous fast offerings. Obedience to these laws has developed selflessness in our newly activated priesthood holders. And lastly, we prepare them to renew or receive temple covenants. For the last few months, our ward has experienced an increase in temple activities especially from the newly activated priesthood holders such as sealing, renewal of temple recommend, personal endowment, and other temple activities,” shared Brother Ferrer.

Eugene G. Ferrer
Bishop, Sta. Cruz Ward
Manila Philippines Stake

The priesthood leaders in the Butuan stake have a personalized way of bringing a less-active priesthood holder back to activity. Vicente Pag-on, second counselor in the stake presidency, shared that they try to build a strong relationship between a less-active and the assigned home teacher. This is done by their regular visits supported by their presiding priesthood leader. They are also particular with the time they set with their less-active priesthood holder and make sure that they come on time. Building a relationship of trust has been a factor they realized to be effective in all their rescue efforts. They also show love and concern, letting the less active priesthood holder know how they are needed in the Church to help in the work of the Lord.

Vicente Pag-on
Second Counselor
Butuan Philippines Stake

As priesthood brethren, we have special opportunities to serve our fellow priesthood holders and help them come back and stay active in the church. One example is the opportunity to show our love for them. In addition to helping them in time of need and communicating their needs to priesthood leaders so that they can be properly addressed, we can also show our love through the little things. As President Ezra Taft Benson taught, the little things can mean so much to a family. Being aware of their birthdays, the names of their family members and appropriately showing our support during important occasions in their lives can help them feel our love for them and make them want to go back and remain active in Church. When we show them...
we love them, they will feel our Heavenly Father’s love for them through our efforts.

Matthew M. Obial
Elders Quorum President
Quirino Second Ward, Quezon City
South Philippines Stake

In our ward, we have learned that if we want to bring back our less-active priesthood brethren, it takes the efforts of more than just the home teachers. Bringing our priesthood holders back requires the help of the entire ward council. We have found three ways that work well and have remarkable results.

As a ward council, we first identify the priesthood holders that we hope to reactivate according to priorities – those who have already gone to the temple, brethren who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and brethren who are potential Melchizedek Priesthood holders. Second, we assign them strong home teachers who know them personally. Third, as members of the ward council we make a commitment to consistently and religiously reach out to our less-active priesthood holders.

Febian Cacho
Bishop, Quezon City First Ward

Quezon City Philippines Stake

As ward missionaries, we can also do our part to help reactivate our priesthood brethren. Reactivation plays a big part in missionary work, as missionaries can sometimes find people to teach among the families of less-active brethren. Also, it is sad to see recent converts become less active even before they have the opportunity to hold the priesthood and be blessed by it. In our ward, ward missionaries contribute to priesthood reactivation efforts in different ways.

During our coordination meetings, we make sure that our less-active brethren are given fellowshippers who are near their age or share their interests. For example, a less active young single adult (YSA) brother is assigned fellow YSAs to fellowship them in Church and during activities. We make sure that less-active young men are involved in activities that can help them associate with their peers who are active in the Church and have the opportunity to establish friendships with them. For example, we currently hold basketball games in our stake that provide the opportunity for priesthood brethren to associate and strengthen each other. Aside from visiting our less-active brethren, we also invite them to join us in visiting other brethren like them. We have found that as they listen to the testimonies of those who are with them during these visits, they often find an opportunity to bear testimony as well. This strengthens those they are with, those they are visiting and also allows them to find the strength to be active themselves.

Arnold Fernandez
Assistant Ward Mission Leader
Quirino First Ward, Quezon City
South Philippines Stake

Pateros 1st Ward Saints: To the Rescue
By Ma. Teresa Canadalla-Pangilinan

Following the counsel of the Area Presidency, Pateros Ward, Pasig Philippines Stake selected 15 less-active families. Involving each auxiliary, each family was taught and visited weekly. Following this pattern they successfully increased their sacrament attendance in 2012.

PLAN TOGETHER
The bishopric was organized. They worked and planned with the full-time sister missionaries. “We reviewed...
the ward membership records, pondered carefully, and thoughtfully planned the best reactivation program the ward needed," shared Bishop Jay-R Sales.

Full-time missionaries and assigned members traced less-active members’ addresses. Bishop Sales led the visit to the less-active with his wife. His prayers were granted when the Lord sent move-in members to assist.

**FAST AND PRAY TOGETHER**

Bishop Sales also shared that he learned that success comes from much fasting and prayer. He took it as a challenge to fast each week and to pray daily. “I did see the results and shared it with the ward leaders then eventually with the ward members. Surprisingly, members became more mature in the gospel while we are at the peak of ward growth,” Bishop Sales said.

**ALL SHOULDERS TO THE WHEEL**

“Brethren, the world is in need of your help. There are feet to steady, hands to grasp, minds to encourage, hearts to inspire, and souls to save." (Thomas S. Monson, “To the Rescue,” Ensign, May 2001)

During each Sunday when reactivated members come, their visiting and home teachers take time to sit with them and fellowship them. They encourage these members to hold family home evening each week.

“As a bishop, my personal goal is to fellowship each member by visiting them in their houses, particularly the newly baptized, transferees and inactive. There was one Sunday, after sacrament meeting, I approached a family that looked new to me. They said they have been inactive for about 20 years. When I visited them, I felt their excitement. They uttered that that was the very first time a bishop came to visit their family,” said Bishop Sales.

Bishop Sales moved into Pateros 1st in July of 2010. He saw that the ward needed extra help in leadership, reactivation and retention. He prayed and asked the Lord what assistance he could extend. The answer was clear – home teaching. It was also a blessing to have two American couple missionaries (temple workers) in the ward that greatly helped in taking care of the welfare of each ward member. By June 2012, average attendance was 133; by July - 140; August - 174; and September - 185. Based on past records, this was the highest attendance achieved by Pateros 1st ward. Pateros pioneers asked Bishop Sales how this positive change happened to which he simply answered – that’s the power of home and visiting teaching. Members are moved as they see our ward growing and reaping blessings. Truly, numbers represent people – people who are precious in the eyes of God.
“Arise and Shine Forth”

By Eliza Philline Tan

In a world of darkness,
In a crowd of selfishness,
Keep your standards all the way;
Arise and shine forth, light the way.

In a time of confusion and destruction;
The enemy seizing a losing generation;
Don’t give up, don’t ever stop;
Arise and shine forth; be at the top.

In a time when weakness blocks your way;
And trials make hope seem far away;
When all you can do is frown;
Arise and shine forth, don’t let them bring you down.

Arise! You are a child of God.
Endure! Hold on to the rod.
Shine through the starless night;
Arise and shine forth; share your light.

Call for Submissions

The Liahona needs children’s submissions for Our Page. Children ages 3 to 12 can submit drawings, photos, testimonies, and experiences. Drawings may be of their homes, families, the world around them, temples, scripture stories—almost any subject. However, no drawings of the Savior, please. Please include the child’s name, age, and gender and ward and stake or branch and district name. Also, parental permission to publish the submission must be included (email is acceptable). Submissions may be made in any language, and can be made online at liahona.lds.org; by email to liahona@ldschurch.org with “Our Page” in the subject line; or by mail to:

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