



Elder Dallin H. Oaks and his wife, Kristen, who served a mission to Sendai, examine progress that has been made in Japan since the deadly tsunami and earthquake of March 2011.

Elder Oaks Surveys Japan One Year after Earthquake

Nearly one year after earthquakes and an ensuing tsunami devastated Japan, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Presidency of the Seventy visited the country and offered a message of hope and love.

For 12 days in February, Elder Oaks and Elder Hallstrom, accompanied by their wives, Kristen Oaks and Diane Hallstrom, traveled through the Asia North Area, stopping at Kumamoto, Nagasaki, Sendai, and Tokyo, as well as many coastal cities in the Tohoku area.

In a *Church News* article, Elder Oaks explained one purpose of the trip: “We sought to give comfort following the terrible disaster and tsunami that occurred just about a

year ago and also to give the teaching and testimony we always give when meeting with missionaries and members of the Church.”

Elder Oaks and other Church leaders met with Japanese Latter-day Saints, missionaries, and others and encouraged them to “look for the way that the Lord will consecrate your affliction for your gain.”

To read about the ministry of other Church leaders around the world, including Elder M. Russell Ballard in Brazil, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland in West Africa, Elder David A. Bednar in the Caribbean, Elder Quentin L. Cook in Australia and New Zealand, Elder D. Todd Christofferson in Central Europe, and Elder Neil L. Andersen in Brazil, visit news.lds.org and prophets.lds.org. ■

Church Asks Members to Understand Family History Policies

By Sarah Jane Weaver

Church News assistant editor

Church leaders are asking Latter-day Saints to learn and better understand the Church’s family history policies on submitting names for temple ordinances.

The conditions of use for the New .FamilySearch.org website were set in place “for reasons of common sense, reasons of doctrine, and reasons of respect,” said Dennis C. Brimhall, managing director of the Church Family History Department.

The conditions are simple and straightforward. “Users should not submit the names of nonrelated persons for vicarious temple ordinances, including names of celebrities or famous people, or those gathered from unapproved extraction projects,” state the terms all users must accept every time they log onto the site.

The reemphasis on the guidelines, which are also stated in the Church’s *Handbook 2*, follows recent violations of the Church’s proxy baptism policy.

“One of the things we need to remember is that the searching out of our family and preparing the names for the work to be done in the temple is, yes, a responsibility, but it is also a privilege,” said Brother Brimhall. “That privilege is extended to the members by those who hold the keys to the work. The keys to this work are held by the First Presidency of the Church.”

Church leaders have asked members who are submitting names for proxy baptisms for the deceased to:

- Work only on their own family lines.
- Not submit names of celebrities.
- Not submit names of unauthorized groups, such as Jewish Holocaust victims.

Church leaders issued a statement on February 21, 2012, in response to questions about violations of the Church policy, which was established in 1995 after discussions with leaders of the Jewish faith.

The statement repeated the Church's firm commitment not to accept the names of unauthorized groups for proxy baptism and noted that in order to bypass safeguards already in place, a submitter would have to use "deception and manipulation."

Such actions could lead not only to

suspension of a Church member's access to the New.FamilySearch.org website, but local leaders might also take disciplinary action in some cases.

"It is distressing when an individual willfully violates the Church's policy, and something that should be understood to be an offering based on love and respect becomes a source of contention," the statement said.

"We are going to see a season of education," Brother Brimhall said. "We will remind ourselves again of rights and responsibilities and keys and privileges and whose work this is and how it should be done and who directs the work. If we just remember that, I think we are going to be fine. . . . We can make the system better for everyone." ■

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