

New Mission Presidents Blessed for Exercise of Faith

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The Church's 128 new mission presidents and their wives were invited to the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah, USA, to receive instruction before leaving for their assignments.

President Thomas S. Monson opened the four-day seminar, held in June 2011, saying, "You have been chosen from among the most faithful in the Church, and now you have the opportunity to go forth in the Lord's harvest field. . . . I know of no field which produces more fragrant nor bounteous roses than the mission field to which you have been called."

The couples come from all over the world—22 different countries—and will serve worldwide in 18 languages. Their backgrounds are diverse, but already they have something in common.

As these newly called mission presidents and their wives have made sacrifices to prepare temporally and spiritually, they are learning that blessings of exercising faith can sometimes be immediate.

Making Sacrifices

Serving as a mission president is both a challenging and a spiritually exhilarating three-year assignment. In dedicating themselves to this call, many couples essentially put their old lives on hold, including their jobs and families.

The interruption to professional employment can in some cases mean financial loss. While the Church provides mission presidents with a minimal living allowance, the couples usually have the financial means to supplement that allowance with their own funds.

When Marcus Martins and his wife, Mirian, received their calling to the Brazil São Paulo North Mission, the Laie, Hawaii, USA, residents were counseled by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles that there would have to be sacrifice, but he told them not to sacrifice too much.

The Martins went home and prayed to know how they could afford to accept this opportunity. They sold everything. "The blessing—we sold everything in one day," Sister Martins said. "It was a miracle for us."

Not all may sacrifice financially, but every mission president and his wife will face faith-testing sacrifice of some kind.

For Gary and Pamela Rasmussen of Tucson, Arizona, USA, accepting the call to the Japan Sendai Mission meant leaving their six children and 23 grandchildren.

"I know that Heavenly Father can take care of the children better than I can," Sister Rasmussen said. "So we're happy to do this and feel like this will be a great blessing to them."

Many who accept the call to serve as mission presidents and mission presidents' companions express that attitude of willing sacrifice.

"I sometimes wonder what exactly is considered a sacrifice, because something that can be very difficult for one person may not be as difficult for another one," President Martins said. "Many times in our lives . . . we've said that we'll put the Lord first and that for the Lord we'll do anything, we'll go anywhere. So we don't really think in terms of sacrifice. . . . It's a privilege; it's an honor to lay down everything."



Being Prepared

In the time before mission presidents and their wives begin their mission assignments a lot of spiritual and temporal preparation takes place. Mission presidents are generally called more than six months in advance, but occasionally that preparation time is compressed. Brent and Anne Scott of Eden, Utah, USA, were called to supervise the Canada Toronto Mission just a week before the mission presidents' seminar and two months before they were to begin their service.

Between telling friends and family and trying to make arrangements for their home, they studied manuals, listened to CDs, and made other spiritual preparations. But they said their greatest preparation was the seminar at the MTC.

"It's just a spiritual immersion of knowledge," President Scott said. "To be with a group of people who have [sacrificed to serve the Lord] and to be taught by prophets, seers, and revelators . . . has absolutely been one of the greatest experiences of our lives."

Learning Wisdom

Over the four-day seminar in June, mission presidents and their wives were spiritually fed with messages from the First Presidency and several members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

"As we listened to them, as they taught us, [we felt] that the Lord was there, that He cares, that this is His work, that these are His servants, and that we have the privilege of going out and representing our Savior," Sister Scott said.

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles expressed some of his hopes for the outgoing mission presidents and their companions.

"May you have good physical, emotional, and spiritual health [and] success in learning, teaching, and applying the doctrine of Jesus Christ," he said. "My hopes include your ability to harness the power of the members; to focus on the ordinances; [and] to be one with the Lord, the members of the Church, and those precious missionaries entrusted to your care." ■

Newly called mission presidents attend a four-day training session at the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah, USA, shortly before they enter the mission field.