

First Stake in India Organized

By Elder E. Jack and Sister Pamela Kellerstrass

India Bangalore Mission

There was a palpable sense of excitement and gratitude as more than 1,500 members and friends gathered at the Novotel Convention Center in Hyderabad, India, for the creation of the Hyderabad India Stake, the first stake in

the country, on May 27, 2012. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles presided and was accompanied by Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Presidency of the Seventy and Elder Anthony D. Perkins of the Seventy, who serves as the Asia Area President. Each leader was joined by his wife at the conference.

John Gutty was sustained as stake president with Suresh Natarajan as first counselor and Rajaratnam Bushi as second counselor. India's first patriarch

is the former district president, Prasad Rao Gudey.

Addressing the largest-ever gathering of Saints in India, Randy D. Funk, president of the India Bangalore Mission,

The stake presidency of the newly established Hyderabad India Stake (left to right): Suresh Natarajan, first counselor; John Gutty, president; Rajaratnam Bushi, second counselor.



Nearly 600 young single adults from India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka gathered for a conference prior to the creation of India's first stake.



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said, “This is a glorious sight on this historic day, a day we will always remember. We will always remember an Apostle of the Lord was here.”

Elder Perkins expressed love from the Asia Area Presidency to members in India and said, “We are seeing the beginnings of a wonderful work in this land. Church growth and stake formation is being done in accordance with eternal gospel principles and established priesthood patterns.”

Noting he was a second witness to the calling of the new stake presidency, Elder Hallstrom explained the revelatory process of selecting new stake leadership. As a member of the Seventy, he is assigned and arrives without bias or prejudice, he said. He came in the Lord’s way, dependent on His Spirit to receive revelation. “The will of the Lord is for President Gutty to be the stake president,” Elder Hallstrom said.

Kristen Oaks, who accompanied her husband, spoke of teaching children so that they believe “because their mothers knew it” (see Alma 56:48).

As the final speaker at the meeting, Elder Oaks expressed gratitude to the nation of India, a country with religious freedom that permits members of the

Church “to meet and speak the principles of our faith.”

Elder Oaks testified of having had a witness of the Spirit that the Lord had prepared and chosen the leaders who were called. Elder Oaks also spoke of the new responsibilities of a stake.

In the Old Testament the prophet Isaiah likened Israel to

“A patriarchal blessing declares your lineage in the tribes of Israel through which great blessings are received,” said Elder Oaks. “A patriarchal blessing also declares blessings and promises we can claim if we are faithful.”

“As the Church in India grows, the time will come that the prophet will be inspired

While visiting Hyderabad, India, Elder Oaks and other Church leaders met with hundreds of members from India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.



a tent that sheltered the children of Israel, he said. “The Church today is the tent. We all know that a tent must be supported with stakes. Now that Hyderabad is a stake of Zion, you will be expected to step forward and provide greater support in the way of tithing and missionaries.”

As a result of a stake being formed, members in Hyderabad will be able to receive patriarchal blessings. Elder Oaks explained what is contained in a patriarchal blessing, referring to blessings as “private scriptures.”

to build a temple in India,” he continued. “Every stake created improves the probability that there will be a temple. As people show worthiness and commitment, a temple follows.”

In closing Elder Oaks invoked a blessing: “In this first stake in the great country of India, I bless you to remember the teachings of this hour. I bless you to remember the covenants that you’ve made as you have been baptized. I bless you with a memory and determination to keep the commandments of God that you may enjoy His blessings.” ■