

## Elder Oaks Bolsters Members in Asia

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles visited Church members in India, Pakistan, and Thailand from August 17 through 26, 2007. Elder Oaks and his wife, Kristen, were accompanied by Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Seventy, First Counselor in the Asia Area Presidency, and his wife, Diane.

Throughout the trip, Elder Oaks and Elder Hallstrom emphasized gospel fundamentals such as a testimony of the Savior, strengthening families, priesthood keys and temple ordinances, and the need to focus on training the youth as future leaders.

### India

Nearly 7,000 members live in India, where the predominant religions are Hinduism and Islam. Most members live in two districts in the south, including Bangalore, where the India Bangalore Mission is headquartered.

"When I last visited India there were only a few hundred members in the entire country," Elder Oaks said at a district conference in New Delhi, the capital of India. "Now it thrills me to see how our membership has increased in numbers and maturity."

Though it can be challenging, members of the Church in India, like many other Christians, are permitted to practice their religion. "They treasure their temple sealings," Elder Oaks said, noting that 93 percent of the endowed members in India hold current temple recommends.

### Pakistan

In Pakistan, Elder and Sister Oaks and Elder and Sister Hallstrom visited the homes of various members and conducted a weekday fireside.

Only native Pakistani missionaries serve in this Islamic republic of about 170 million people, a number that includes about 3 million Christians. "It is not easy to be a Christian in Pakistan," said Elder Oaks. Many Christians live together in colonies.

### Thailand

Elder and Sister Oaks and Elder and Sister Hallstrom then flew to Thailand for a conference in the Chiang Mai district in northern Thailand, where there are about 875 members. Most of the more than 15,000 members in Thailand reside in the south.

Thailand is an economically thriving country. Approximately 95 percent of its citizens are Buddhists, though religious freedoms are granted to others.

