Jeffrey R. Holland Dedicates Laos

On February 23, 2006, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles dedicated the Lao People's Democratic Republic for the work of the gospel.

A small group of local Latter-day Saints, humanitarian missionaries, and visiting Church leaders were in attendance as Elder Holland invoked God's blessings upon the people of Laos. He prayed that the government, its leaders, the Laotian people, and the entire land would be blessed with peace.

Elder Holland was accompanied on his visit to Laos and other Asian nations by Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Seventy, First Counselor in the Asia Area Presidency; and President Scott F. Hansen of the Thailand Bangkok Mission.

The Vientiane Laos Branch of the Thailand Bangkok Mission was formed in June 2003. President Khampee Keosouphom and his two counselors in the branch presidency represent an emerging group of local leaders in Laos.

Two Church members present at the dedication have received mission calls to the Thailand Bangkok Mission. Elder Tiengsack Inthavong and Sister Lackhana Keosouphom, the Vientiane branch president's daughter, will be the first two missionaries to leave from Laos to serve missions.

"This dedication will be a blessing to our country and to the Church here," said President Keosouphom. "It is the first time an Apostle of the Lord has been on Laotian soil."

Elder Lawrence Martin, a humanitarian missionary, said, "It was touching to hear Elder Holland bless the fields and crops, the very earth here, as well as blessing the government and the people."

Sister Gaile Clark, a humanitarian missionary, agreed. "It was marvelous and moving, so filled with hope, optimism, and promise for the future," she said.

Laos is located in Southeast Asia, northeast of Thailand and west of Vietnam. It is slightly larger than Utah, with just more than six million residents. The landlocked country is mostly mountainous and thickly forested. The Mekong River forms a large part of its western border with Thailand.