

PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND



**The First Presidency, bottom right, listens as the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra on Temple Square perform during the 2006 First Presidency Christmas Devotional.**

## First Presidency Focuses on the Savior at Devotional

Of all the seasons of the year, there is none so beautiful as Christmas,” said President Gordon B. Hinckley during the annual First Presidency Christmas Devotional held in the Conference Center in Salt Lake City and broadcast around the world.

“Our hearts reach out to those in need. Love overcomes hate. . . . Love grows a little stronger, hearts are a little more generous. We are more inclined to strengthen feeble knees and lift up the hands that hang down. Children’s hearts are made glad. There comes an added magic in the air. There is a deep underlying current of happiness.”

After recounting the loss of his mother shortly before Christmas in 1930 and the difficult loss of his wife in 2004, President Hinckley said: “Shining through all of the darkness is the sublime figure of the Son of God, who gave His life that we might live. This is the true meaning of Christmas, the reality of the Atonement wrought by the Redeemer of the world.”

President Hinckley testified that Christ offers the hope of salvation to all men, even in these times of war, conflict, and difficult problems.

President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, said Christmas is “a time for families, it is a

time for remembering, it is a time for gratitude.

“The spirit of Christmas is the spirit of love and of generosity and of goodness. . . . The spirit of Christmas is something I hope all of us would have within our hearts and within our lives, not only at this particular season but throughout the year.”

President Monson said that when we keep the spirit of Christmas, we keep the Spirit of Christ.

“The salutation ‘no room’ was not only heard by Joseph and Mary before the birth of Jesus, but was also endured by Him on frequent occasions in His ministry,” President Monson said.

“In our homes today we have rooms for eating, rooms for sleeping, rooms for recreation. Do we have room for Christ? We have time for . . . activities that are part of our daily lives. Do we have time for Christ?”

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught that “at this time of year when we commemorate His birth, we should also take time to contemplate with deep reverence His death and transcending sanctification of the Resurrection.”

In his remarks, President Faust focused on one of the Savior’s “great and profound teachings . . . to do for others

that which they cannot do for themselves.”

Anonymous giving reflects the Savior’s love, said President Faust. “I wish to express appreciation and thanks to all who open their hearts and give to others.

“Those of us who

contribute anonymously have sweet inner feelings of the Spirit that swell inside when we do something for others that cannot be traced back to ourselves. Anonymous giving gives the gift a higher form of sanctification.” ■

## Tabernacle Choir Honored with Mother Teresa Award

The late Mother Teresa once said, “The world is hungry not only for food but also for beauty.” In November 2006, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir was presented with an award named in her honor, recognizing “the achievements of those who beautify the world, especially in the fields of religion, social justice, and the arts.”

“This is the only choir that has touched the entire world with its beauty,” said Dan Paulos, director of the

St. Bernadette Institute of Sacred Art, which bestows the Mother Teresa Award. “There are a lot of choirs out there, but none so remarkable. It’s a gift of God, and it should be shared with the world.”

Choir members were honored in a simple ceremony following the weekly broadcast of *Music and the Spoken Word* on Sunday, November 19, 2006. The Very Reverend Joseph Mayor, Rector of the Cathedral of the Madeline, presented the award to Mac

Christensen, choir president, and Craig Jessop, music director, who accepted it on behalf of the choir.

“We are honored to accept this award on behalf of all the volunteers who make up our choir. We are also honored to be remembered by an award named after this saintly woman, Mother Teresa,” noted Scott L. Barrick, choir general manager.

The St. Bernadette Institute developed the award program to “rightfully acknowledge spiritual accomplishments in this secular world.” Previous recipients of the honor include Pope John Paul II, Maya Angelou, Nelson Mandela, Jimmy Carter, Braille without Borders, and many others.

### Choir Announces 2007 Tour

The Mormon Tabernacle Choir will tour Canada and the midwest United States from June 21 through July 3, 2007.

It will perform concerts in Toronto, Canada; Chautauqua, New York; Cleveland, Ohio; Chicago, Illinois; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Nashville and Memphis, Tennessee. Sixty-five members of the Orchestra at Temple Square will accompany the 360-voice choir on tour.

Craig Jessop, music director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, said: “We look forward to bringing the choir and orchestra to these great music festivals and venues. Our repertoire will include works from the masters of classical composition to famed Broadway tunes, and there should be something to please everyone who attends.” The concert program will also feature selections from the choir’s spring 2007 CD release entitled *Showtime! Music from Broadway and Hollywood*.

The choir and orchestra will perform at the Roy Thomson Hall in Toronto on June 22, followed by the Chautauqua Amphitheater on June 23. The choir will perform at three prestigious outdoor summer venues beginning with the Blossom Festival in Cleveland on June 25, followed by the Ravinia Music Festival in Chicago on June 27 and an appearance at the Riverbend Music Center in Cincinnati with the Cincinnati Pops on June 29. The tour will conclude with shows at two large Tennessee venues: the Gaylord Entertainment Center in Nashville on June 30 and the FedEx Forum in Memphis on July 2.

The tour will mark a return to Chicago—the site of



PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFERY D. ALKRED/COURTESY DESERET MORNING NEWS

**The Very Reverend Joseph Mayo, right, presents the Mother Teresa Award to Craig Jessop, left, and Mac Christensen after the Choir’s Music and the Spoken Word performance.**



the choir's first tour outside of Utah, to the Chicago Exposition in 1893—as well as first-ever visits to Cincinnati and Memphis. Since that first Chicago appearance, the choir has toured extensively across the United States and abroad. It has performed throughout Europe and in music capitals from Israel and Russia to Japan and Australia. Its travels have also included performances at the inaugurations of six U.S. presidents. The Choir's weekly 30-minute broadcast, *Music and the*

*Spoken Word*, which celebrated its 4,000th weekly broadcast in April 2006, is the world's longest continuously running network broadcast. It currently airs on over 2,000 radio, TV, cable, and satellite stations worldwide.

Tickets for the 2007 concerts, except for the performances in Chautauqua, went on sale on December 15, 2006, at all concert venues, through various online ticket agencies, over the phone, and also online at [www.mormontabernaclechoir.org](http://www.mormontabernaclechoir.org). ■

*I am a child of God.  
Rich blessings are in store;  
If I but learn to do his will,  
I'll live with him once more.*

Naomi W. Randall, who served as a member of the Primary general board and as a counselor in the Primary general presidency, wrote the words at the request of the Primary general board. Mildred T. Pettit, who also had served as a Primary general board member, composed the music.

Sister Randall described the process of writing the words to the song:

"I got down on my knees and prayed aloud, pleading that our Heavenly Father would let me know the right words.

"Around 2:00 a.m., I awakened and began to think again about the song. Words came to my mind. . . . I immediately got up and began to write the words down as they had come to me. Three verses and a chorus were soon formed.

"I gratefully surveyed the

work, drank of the message of the words, and returned to my bedroom where I knelt before my Father in Heaven to say 'Thank you!' " (in Karen Lynn Davidson, *Our Latter-day Hymns* [1988], 303–4).

Sister Randall sent the words to Sister Pettit, who spent many hours working on the music.

The words in one line of the chorus originally read, "Teach me all that I must know." After the song was written, President Spencer W. Kimball attended a conference where a Primary children's chorus sang the song. He later asked if Sister Randall would agree to change "Teach me all that I must know" to "Teach me all that I must do," and so the line reads today.

"To know isn't enough," President Kimball said. "The devils know and tremble; the devils know everything. We have to do something" ("New Verse Is Written for Popular Song," *Church News*, Apr. 1, 1978, 16).

## Beloved Song Turns 50

By Abbey Olsen, Church Magazines

The hymn "I Am a Child of God" (*Hymns*, no. 301) has rung across the earth, its music played and its words sung by adults and Primary children around the world since 1957.

As it reaches its 50th anniversary in 2007, the song, published in more than 90 languages, continues to touch the hearts of many.

The message of the three-verse hymn teaches the gospel truths that each person is a son or daughter of God and has been sent to this earth with eternal potential. Parents and teachers are asked to help each child make righteous choices in a mortal experience that can lead to eternal life and happiness.

The hymn reads:

*I am a child of God,  
And he has sent me here,  
Has given me an earthly  
home  
With parents kind and dear.*

[Chorus]  
*Lead me, guide me, walk  
beside me,  
Help me find the way.  
Teach me all that I must do  
To live with him someday.*

*I am a child of God,  
And so my needs are great;  
Help me to understand his  
words  
Before it grows too late.*



Now 50 years old, the beloved hymn, "I Am a Child of God," is sung around the world in more than 90 languages.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT CASEY

A fourth verse of the song was written for a Primary chorus to sing at general conference in April 1957. When the current hymnbook was prepared, the General Music Committee and the Correlation Department decided the extra verse was not officially part of the song and did not include it.

Later, when the *Children's Songbook* was created, the Primary general board decided to include it. The four-verse version has been translated into the 20 languages of the international *Children's Songbook*. The verse reads:

*I am a child of God.  
His promises are sure;  
Celestial glory shall be mine  
If I can but endure.*

The hymn was first included in *Sing with Me*, a children's songbook published in 1969, and then in the *Children's Songbook* in 1989 with the music arranged by Darwin Welford.

"I Am a Child of God" is one of the 45 hymns and children's songs found in the *Gospel Fundamentals* and *Gospel Principles* manuals. This means that when Church material is first introduced in a new language, "I

Am a Child of God" is one of the first hymns received.

Scriptures; manuals; instrumental, choir, or other adaptations; CDs; General Authority talks; "I Am a Child of God" stickers; and other materials all herald the message contained in the words and music of the beloved hymn, which has reached out across cultures, backgrounds, and traditions to instill in people the gospel truth that each person is a child of God.

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, then a member of the Seventy, elaborated on the theme of the song in

1978: "Our Father in heaven loves us more deeply than we can understand. He has said that He 'numbereth his people' (Alma 26:37) and that each one of us is important to Him. He wants us to return to live with Him and Jesus again. He wants us to communicate with Him in prayer, to tell Him of our love, and to show our love by obeying His commandments. Through obedience we can become more like Him, developing those qualities of character that He wants His children to have" ("I Am a Child of God," *Tambuli*, Nov. 1978, 21; *Friend*, Mar. 1978, 8). ■

## Four New Translations Completed for Book of Mormon, Triple Combination

The Church continues to make editions of the scriptures available to members in many languages. In 2006 speakers of Armenian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Malagasy received word that the triple combination of the scriptures, along with new editions of the Book of Mormon, was available in their language.

The release of the new triple combinations continues a push by Church leaders to give every member the opportunity to own his or her own copies of the scriptures, hopefully resulting in an increase in testimony and faith.

"We encourage members to obtain their own copies of the scriptures and to use them in regular, personal, and family study, and in Church meetings and assignments," the First Presidency

stated in letters announcing the release of the new editions. "As they prayerfully learn and teach from the scriptures, their testimonies will grow, their knowledge will increase, their love of family and others will expand, their ability to serve others will enlarge, and they will receive greater strength to resist temptation and defend truth and righteousness."

### Member Response

Whenever the scriptures are provided in a new language, Church members respond enthusiastically. Such was the case with the new triple combinations released last year.

"To see how people receive the books when they come out—it's just fantastic," said Jim Berlin, a scripture

translation supervisor.

In Armenia Brother Berlin gathered with a group of about 20 people, and each person shared a scripture from the new publication and told why it had touched his or her heart.

"It is so powerful as 15 to 20 people hold in their hands their own copy of the Book of Mormon—marked up, loved, cherished," he said. "They shared their love for scripture passages and for the Lord."

Although some preparatory work was done beforehand, the translation of the scriptures in Armenian, Latvian, and Lithuanian began in 1998.

### Translation Process

After a new scripture translation is requested by an Area Presidency and

approved by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the Church's Translation Division begins the translation process, communicating with local priesthood leaders to find and recommend candidates from the area as scripture translators.

"The Lord prepares souls in all these lands, and one thing that we as supervisors see very clearly is that this is the Lord's work and He has His hand on it," said Brother Berlin, who supervised the translation process for Armenian and initiated and later finished the process for Latvian and Lithuanian.

Brother Berlin told the story of a brother who had joined the Church in St. Petersburg, Russia, many years ago and felt prompted to return home to Armenia to build up the kingdom. He did so, and a year later Brother Berlin arrived to begin the scripture translation work.

The man had helped in the translation of the Book of Mormon, published in 2000, and after his English skills increased, he became the translator of the Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price in the full triple combination.

Brother Berlin said scripture translators in Latvia and Lithuania have similar experiences of how the Lord had prepared them.

“The Lord has prepared people in all these countries and is currently preparing people to accomplish His work,” he said.

#### The Languages

The first full edition of the Book of Mormon in Malagasy was published in 2000; selections from the book were published in 1986. Malagasy is a language spoken by the people in Madagascar, an island off the east coast of Africa. Just months after



**New translations of the Book of Mormon in Armenian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Malagasy have been released, along with new triple combinations in those languages.**

the first full edition of the Book of Mormon was published, the first stake was organized in Madagascar—the Antananarivo Madagascar Stake. Madagascar is home to more than 3,300 members

of the Church. Church membership there grew 86.3 percent from 2000 to 2005.

The first edition of the Book of Mormon in Armenian was published

in 1937. Because the majority of Armenians speak a different dialect today, a new Armenian edition of the Book of Mormon was published in 2001.

Located in southwestern Asia, Armenia is home to more than 2,000 members of the Church. Membership has almost tripled in Armenia since 2000.

Latvia and Lithuania, Baltic States in Eastern Europe, are home to more than 800 and 750 members of the Church respectively. From 2000 to 2005, Church membership grew by 62 percent in Latvia and by 42.8 percent in Lithuania.

Copies of the triple combination editions of the scriptures are available through local Church distribution centers and may be ordered through local Church leaders. ■

## ASL Version of *Church History* DVD Now Available through Distribution

Recently released is the American Sign Language (ASL) version of the DVD titled *Church History*, which was made available by the Church earlier this year. This DVD set, a compilation of Church history videos, including footage many members have never seen before, is part of the Home and Family Collection intended to enrich instruction and learning in the home.

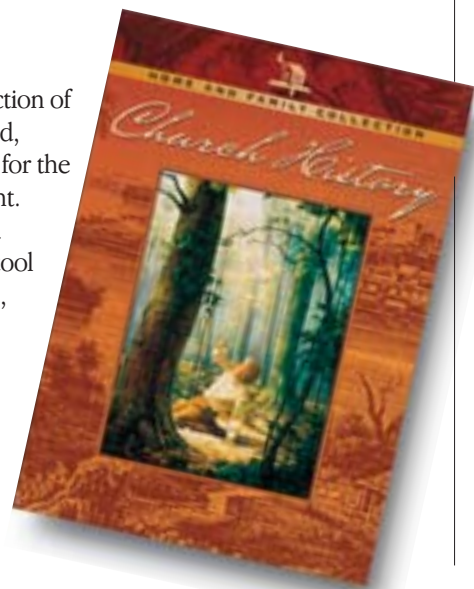
The set includes three

DVDs containing footage from 29 videos and takes viewers on a visual journey through a century and a half of Church history. Many of the segments are quite rare. One segment, *LDS Leaders of the Past*, includes black-and-white footage from the first half of the twentieth century.

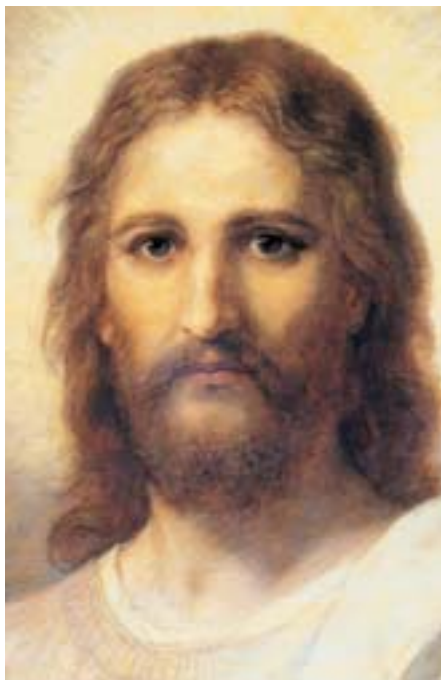
The set contains almost eight hours of footage and is packaged with a booklet that includes ideas and questions for discussion.

“It’s not just a collection of videos,” said Doug Hind, development designer for the Curriculum Department. “We designed it to be a teaching and learning tool for individuals, families, and teachers.”

Sold individually for U.S. \$6 (item no. 54116010), the *Church History* DVD ASL version is available at distribution centers. ■







Hundreds of thousands of young women ages 12 to 18 and their parents and leaders gather in meetinghouses around the world to participate in the broadcast each year.

This year the Young Women general presidency has invited the young women to prepare themselves to be taught by the Spirit by doing the following:

- Memorize Doctrine and Covenants 121:45.

- Memorize

“Dearest Children, God Is Near You” (*Hymns*, no. 96).

- Review the 13th article of faith.

In addition, the presidency has challenged the young women to read *For the Strength of Youth* and do one of the following:

- Circle each reference to the Spirit.

- Highlight the promises found in the pamphlet.

- Choose one standard, study it, and make goals for living it.

The theme for this year’s meeting is the 2007 Mutual theme taken from Doctrine and Covenants 121:45, “Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God.”

For broadcast information, including satellite or Internet schedules, contact local leaders or visit [www.lds.org/broadcast](http://www.lds.org/broadcast). ■

## Presidency Invites YW to Prepare for Meeting

The Young Women general presidency has invited the young women of the Church, their parents, and their leaders to prepare themselves for the upcoming annual general Young Women meeting to be held on March 24, 2007.

“The general Young Women meeting is the First Presidency’s meeting for you, the young women of the Church,” the Young Women leaders stated in announcing the meeting. “It is a great opportunity for you to receive encouragement and hear testimony from a member of the First Presidency and the Young Women general presidency.”

## New for Families: Two Conference Issues

Church leaders have encouraged members to obtain their own copies of the scriptures for personal study and for use at church. Now members can receive two copies of the conference issues, allowing husband and wife to have a personal copy to study and take to Relief Society and priesthood meeting for fourth-Sunday lessons.

A new 14-issue *Ensign* subscription is now available in the U.S. and Canada through Distribution Services. For an additional \$2 per year (\$12 total), subscribers can receive two copies of each conference issue.

Subscribers who wish to convert their current subscriptions, purchase new subscriptions, or give gift subscriptions can call the Salt Lake

Distribution Center at 1-800-537-5971, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. mountain time, or Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Subscriptions can also be purchased or renewed online at [www.ldscatalog.com](http://www.ldscatalog.com).

When current subscriptions are converted, an adjustment is made in the expiration date. For each conference issue remaining on a current subscription, one regular issue is converted to provide an additional conference copy, and the length of the subscription is shortened accordingly. For example, if a subscription were due to end with the July issue, that July issue would be converted to provide an additional May conference issue and the subscription would end with the June issue. ■



**Members in the United States and Canada may now order two copies of each conference issue with their annual subscription to the Ensign.**

## Upcoming Broadcasts

### Worldwide Leadership Training Broadcast Set

A worldwide leadership training meeting will be broadcast over the Church's satellite system on Saturday, February 10, 2007. Those attending will receive training focused on gospel teaching and learning.

Those invited to attend include General Authorities; Area Seventies; stake, mission, temple, and district presidencies; high councilors; stake, district, and ward or branch auxiliary presidencies; bishoprics; branch presidencies; high priests group leaders and assistants; elders quorum presidencies; all Church Educational System administrators, seminary teachers, and institute instructors. Teachers in local quorums and auxiliaries may attend where distances and circumstances permit.

DVDs will be sent to local units following the broadcast.

### CES Broadcast to Feature Elder David A. Bednar

Young adults worldwide will gather to listen to the counsel of an Apostle this month at a CES fireside to be broadcast on the Church's satellite system on February 4. Elder David A. Bednar will address both single and married young adults ages 18 through 30 from the Marriott Center on the Brigham Young University campus in Provo, Utah.

The address will be

broadcast or rebroadcast in up to 32 languages. For information on broadcast times and locations, contact local priesthood leaders or visit [www.lds.org/broadcast](http://www.lds.org/broadcast).

The address will be archived on the Church's Internet site at [www.lds.org/broadcast](http://www.lds.org/broadcast) by February 10. Audio versions will be available in 32 languages. ■

## Church Country Web Sites Spread around the World

With the launch of the new Ukraine country Web site, the Church now hosts 61 sites unique to countries around the world. These sites are places where members can go to find information, news, and resources in their own language.

Work first began on country-specific Web sites in 2001 as an effort to provide more localized content that could be easily found by search engines around the world. The Church launched

its first country Web site, for Chile, in August 2003, followed closely by Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland of the Europe Central Area, where work on country sites first began.

The sites, which are managed locally under the direction of Area Presidencies, provide local news, history, events, and other information about the Church in the host country as well as links to content on the Church's Web sites, such as [LDS.org](http://LDS.org)

and [Mormon.org](http://Mormon.org).

The sites receive just under one million page views each month, providing a positive Church presence in the language of many countries.

Links to the country Web sites can be found at [www.lds.org/countries](http://www.lds.org/countries). ■

## Comment

### I Have Joy

I received the October issue, and what a huge difference it has made. I'm still reading parts over again. The magazine has helped reaffirm what my heart felt but my tongue could not articulate. Heavenly Father blesses me daily, and even though I'm in prison for a while longer, I have joy. I appreciate all you do for so many. Thank you for your efforts, and I look forward to future issues.

Name Withheld



The new Ukraine country Web site is the Church's 61st in a six-year-old project aimed at providing information and resources around the world.