



Elder Saldanha (left) from Brazil put a promising soccer career on hold to serve a mission.

One Million Missionaries, Thirteen Million Members

They are as much a symbol of the Church as the Salt Lake Temple and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir—clean-cut, well-dressed young men and women on bikes or on foot going door-to-door with a gospel message. Mormon missionaries have fanned across the globe since the earliest days of the Church and in the process have reached a major milestone.

“We have made great progress in our missionary work in recent years,” said President Gordon B. Hinckley at the Missionary Training Center in Provo during the most recent New Mission Presidents’ Training Seminar. “We have more missionaries—and more effective missionaries. It is reliably estimated that a million missionaries have served since the

organization of the Church.”

“It is not possible to pinpoint exactly who the millionth missionary is,” said Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles during a news conference while at the orientation sessions with 118 new mission presidents. “We do know that young men and women, senior sisters, and couples have volunteered to serve at their own or family expense in spreading this message to 145 nations and territories.”

Emphasizing the importance of understanding the mosaic of missionaries this milestone represents, Elder Ballard spoke of the unique traits that make each of these million missionaries special.

“A young Peruvian sister grilled hamburgers at a street cart to finance her mission in her home country,” he said. “A

young elder from India served in Toronto, Canada, and a retired couple left children and grandchildren to help dig clean water wells in West Africa. Missionaries serve where they are assigned, not knowing beforehand where in the world that may be.”

In fact, the work these volunteer missionaries perform is as diverse as the missionaries themselves. On any given day missionaries are working on everything from assisting with humanitarian projects and helping others trace their family history to helping with public affairs efforts and teaching the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

“From personal experience I can tell you that they study, they pray, they worry intensely about each child of God and especially the souls of those they are able to teach,” said Elder Ballard. “They face rejection and sometimes verbal abuse. But they soldier on. They serve,

they help others, and they go the extra mile to lift and bless people in all walks of life and in all human conditions.”

At the press conference, Elder Ballard stood among missionaries he said exemplified the missionary spirit. They included a native African couple from Kenya called to preside over a mission in Nigeria; a pair of young sister missionaries, one from South Korea and one from Mexico, serving on Temple Square in downtown Salt Lake City; a senior couple from Utah serving a humanitarian mission that takes them all over the world helping to provide clean water to many communities; and a pair of young men, one from Brazil and one from Idaho, who just entered the Missionary Training Center in preparation to serve in Japan.

The young men, Samuel Pelaquim and Brandon Soelberg, are both postponing college to spend the next two years of their lives without television, dating, and other teenage activities to preach the gospel. “Some people think I’m giving up a lot to serve a mission,” said Elder Soelberg. “But the reality is I feel I have a lot to give. I have always known I wanted to serve a mission, so it doesn’t really feel like a sacrifice to me. I need to do this; I want to do this.”

Elder Pelaquim agreed. “It is a wonderful opportunity to serve,” he said. “Since I was very young I have noticed a difference between my other friends and me. They had problems that I did not have to worry about, and I

have always known that it was the gospel that made that difference.”

It's that difference that brought Unbyul Cho's parents into the Church, according to the 22-year-old from Seoul, South Korea. "I've always wondered what would have happened to my family and me if the missionaries hadn't served in Korea," she said. "I wanted to serve a mission to help others have the same blessings my family enjoys."

Likewise, Gazelem Munoz saw several family members join the Church in her native Mexico. "It changed my family. It changed my life, and hopefully it will help to change for good other people's lives as I [teach] them as a missionary."

The news conference was held next to a life-size bronze statue of Samuel Smith, the Church's first missionary. In 1830, the year the Lord restored the Church through the Prophet Joseph Smith, there were only 16 missionaries called. Now, 177 years later, some 53,000 missionaries— young men, young women, senior sisters, and senior couples—currently serve in nearly 350 missions throughout the world.

And their work is striking a chord with many. President Hinckley also announced that Church membership has now reached 13 million, spread all across the world. There continue to be more members outside of the United States than inside, reflecting the global depth and diversity of Church membership. ■

God Loveth His Children Booklet Released

The First Presidency has released a new booklet, titled *God Loveth His Children*, aimed at helping both those who struggle with same-gender attraction and members of their families.

"We encourage all leaders to reach out with love and understanding to those affected by same-gender attraction," the First Presidency said. "As you do so, please remember to teach true doctrine, as explained in the . . . booklet, and to counsel in a spirit of warmth and love."

The booklet discusses the nature of individual identity

and potential, the plan of happiness, self-mastery, filling a life with goodness, and going forward in life.

The booklet will be available in 27 languages and will be distributed through stake, branch, and mission leaders. The languages include: ASL, Cebuano, Chinese, Danish, Dutch, English, English Braille, Fijian, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Portuguese, Russian, Samoan, Spanish, Swedish, Tagalog, Tahitian, Thai, Tongan, and Ukrainian.

Additional copies of the

booklet are available through distribution centers. The booklet will also be available on the Church's Web site in these languages. ■



God Loveth His Children is a booklet aimed at helping those who struggle with same-gender attraction.

Historic Church Property Spared During Fire

On July 7, 2007, the Milford Flat fire, the largest blaze ever seen in the state of Utah, burned dangerously close to but miraculously spared the

Church's historic Cove Fort, which originally served as a home and shelter for early pioneers.

The fort was evacuated as high winds

drove the flames toward the property at between 40 and 60 miles per hour (65 to 95 km per hour). But despite the absence of firefighters or physical barriers, the fort, an outlying barn, and the eight



Flames from the Milford Flat Fire in Utah soar into the sky just off I-15 near Cove Fort.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SCOTT WINTERTON/DESBET MORNING NEWS

trailers that house most of the couple missionaries serving at the fort were spared.

“There was no damage whatsoever to the fort,” said Elder Kent Jones, director of the historic site. “There’s no question in our minds that the trailer park and fort were protected.”

When he returned to the site following the evacuation, Elder Jones says it appeared that the fire had burned to within 150 feet (46 m) of a barn located about 200 feet (61 m) from the fort, but had stopped in knee-high field grass and turned in a different direction. The fire had also burned right up to the trailer park property line but didn’t jump the road that circles the trailers.

The fort, located some 200 miles (322 km) south of Salt Lake City, was built of volcanic rock and limestone. President Brigham Young called Ira Hinckley, grandfather of President Gordon B. Hinckley, to direct the building of the fort in 1867. The purpose of the fort at that time was to offer protection and refreshment to people traveling between Idaho and California.

Now, 140 years later, the fort has been restored and is a historical site where 32 couple missionaries give tours to visitors, explaining what life was like for the early pioneers.

The fire, which was started by lightning on July 6, 2007, burned more than 363,000 acres (172,000 ha)—some 567 square miles (1,470 square km)—over a period of 10 days. ■

Church Reacts Quickly to Major Peru Earthquake

The Church worked closely with government leaders and other emergency response organizations to identify and meet urgent needs in Peru after a devastating 8.0 magnitude earthquake struck just off the coast on the evening of Wednesday, August 15, 2007, killing hundreds and leaving more than 1,500 people injured.

Early reports confirmed seven Church members were dead and more were injured. More than 70 member homes were among the thousands of homes destroyed by the earthquake. No Church buildings were destroyed, but many received damage.

Under the direction of the

South America West Area Presidency, Church members immediately responded to those in need. Limited food was provided to four meetinghouses that temporarily housed more than 600 Church members, relatives, and neighbors. The Area Presidency members visited the affected areas to provide support.

Small truckloads of food were sent to each meetinghouse early the following morning. Within 36 hours the Church was loading a 747 cargo plane at the Salt Lake International Airport with urgently needed items, including medical supplies, surgical instruments, family food boxes, hygiene kits, and tarps.

The hardest hit areas were the cities of Ica and Pisco. Authorities in Pisco estimated that more than 70 percent of the city had been destroyed.

Rescue teams trying to get to Ica, Pisco, and other rural towns southwest of Lima, the capital, found roads broken up and power knocked out. Hospitals reported the number of injured was overwhelming.

The earthquake was centered 25 miles west-northwest of Chincha Alta, 90 miles south-southeast of Lima, and about 25 miles below the earth’s surface. The major quake prompted a tsunami warning, but this was later canceled.

The earthquake was felt nearly 100 miles from its epicenter. Dozens of severe aftershocks continued into Thursday. Most of these measured well above 5.0, and the strongest registered 6.3. ■



Residents of Pisco, Peru, wait outside their homes, which were ruined by a magnitude 8.0 earthquake on August 16.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROLLY REYNA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Members Respond to England Flooding

After massive flooding throughout parts of central and western England left more than 15,000 homes in Gloucestershire without power and up to 350,000 people without running water in July, Elder Kenneth Johnson of the Seventy, Europe West Area President, made a £25,000 donation to the Red Cross's relief efforts in Gloucestershire on behalf of the Church.

Church leaders near Sheffield also worked with civil authorities to distribute cleaning and other emergency

relief supplies to those affected. Members helped each other and their neighbors clean up in the aftermath of the worst flooding in recorded UK history.

The areas of greatest concern were along the Severn, Avon, and Thames Rivers. Royal Navy helicopters and personnel rescued residents in areas covered by six feet (1.8 m) of water and more.

It took at least a week for officials to reconnect 80 percent of the homes cut off from running water, although the water remained unsafe to drink for some time, even

after boiling, because of the failure of a water treatment plant.

A number of member families were affected by the flooding, but all members and missionaries were accounted for. The Hull England Stake center suffered a significant amount of water damage.

Environment Agency spokesman Anthony Perry told the BBC that flooding of this magnitude has never been seen before in this region. In March of 1947 rivers in the south of England, Midlands, East Anglia, and North Yorkshire burst their banks, causing extensive damage, but this flooding exceeded that, Mr. Perry said. ■

Center," Sister Condie said.

In the 1994 October general conference, President Hunter admonished members to be a temple-attending and temple-loving people and to always hold a current temple recommend, even if attending the temple was difficult (see "A Temple-Motivated People," *Liabona*, Mar. 2004, 40; *Ensign*, Mar. 2004, 38).

President Hunter's display includes a temple recommend book and a copy of the *Church News* describing his dedication of the Orlando Florida Temple in October 1994. President Hunter also dedicated the Bountiful Utah Temple, in January 1995.

A large model of the Brigham Young University Center for Near Eastern Studies in Jerusalem, which President Hunter dedicated in 1989, shows what an enormous undertaking the project was. Items from his office, including a bowl given to him for his work with the Polynesian Cultural Center in Hawaii, surround his portrait and pictures.

President Gordon B. Hinckley is the 15th President of the Church. His display is evidence of the development of a worldwide Church and the use of technological advances that have facilitated that growth.

In 1953, under the direction of President David O. McKay (1873–1970), Gordon B. Hinckley, who at that time was not yet a General Authority, was asked to create the Church's first film presentation for use in the temples. An exact model of the

Hall of Church Presidents Brought Up to Date

For years the Hall of Church Presidents, located on the top floor of the Museum of Church History and Art, has featured unique displays from the lives of the Church Presidents from the Prophet Joseph Smith to President Spencer W. Kimball, who died in 1985.

Visitors sometimes ask where the displays are for the three most recent Presidents of the Church, exhibit curator Marjorie Conder said. It was something that was just put off for various reasons—until now.

Guests can now enjoy a complete exhibit featuring all Church Presidents from the Prophet Joseph Smith to the current prophet, President

Gordon B. Hinckley.

Each President's display features a portrait, a quote, an example of his signature, and artifacts that represent his life. The displays help convey the role each President played in building the Church.

"We try to focus on the stories and events that are most familiar to members," Sister Conder said.

President Ezra Taft Benson's display has a large bookshelf with 87 copies of the Book of Mormon—one of each of the languages the book was published in while he was President of the Church, from 1985 to 1994. A glass case is lined with pamphlets featuring speeches he

gave to various groups in the Church.

President Benson was well known for his service as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture during the Eisenhower administration. The chair from his cabinet office—which he commonly referred to as "the hot seat"—is part of his display. A display case holds political cartoons depicting President Benson's good character while he served in the cabinet and a medal of distinguished service awarded to him by the state of New Jersey.

Following President Benson, Howard W. Hunter served as President of the Church for nine months, from 1994 to 1995.

"Because he was President for so short a time, we focused on the talk he gave at a general conference and his work with the Jerusalem

camera and the actual microphone used by President Hinckley for this project are on display.

In the center of the display, a small sampling of the many gifts given to President Hinckley by members all over the world surrounds a large globe. Pictures, President Hinckley's concept sketch of

a small temple, and books he has written are also on display.

A model of the Conference Center shows the magnitude of the building, and an exact replica of the Conference Center's walnut pulpit, which was built from a tree grown in the yard of President Hinckley's Salt

Lake home, is placed so visitors can stand at the pulpit as a speaker would.

Overhead, a model of a satellite hangs from the ceiling, representing how technology has been used to broadcast general conference, firesides, meetings, and even the dedications of the Palmyra New York, Winter Quarters

Nebraska, and Nauvoo Illinois Temples.

The Museum of Church History and Art is located at 45 North West Temple, just west of Temple Square in Salt Lake City. It is open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays and from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekends and holidays. Admission is free. ■

Comment

It Hasn't All Been Done

I want to thank Loretta Evans for her "It's All Been Done" article (July 2007 *Ensign*; see also



"FamilySearch Indexing," August 2007 *Ensign*). Thank you for informing me of the opportunity to help in the process of digitizing for the Family and Church History Department. I've always wanted to do genealogy work and have felt frustrated with the lack of progress in doing my own family's work. But now I have another way I can feel helpful. I'm a whiz at the computer and typing, and I've always wondered how I could make use of this talent for good. Now I can go on the Internet and do batches of work for others. This is such an easy and accessible way to serve! I hope the Church continues to advertise this volunteer opportunity. Kealoha Kagawa, Oregon

FamilySearch Indexing

I too have found indexing a profound experience. I get tears in my eyes when I find mothers who have had several children and most of them have died. I feel the pain and realize these are not just names; these are real people. I soon discovered I had indexed 18,000 names—and the effort was well worth the time.

Shirley M. Mackley,

Washington

Contemplating the Atonement

Thank you for publishing Thomas B. Griffith's article, "The Root of Christian Doctrine" (August 2007 *Ensign*), which advocates studying in detail the events that make up the Atonement



of Jesus Christ. Brother Griffith's quote from President Hinckley that "no member of this Church must ever forget the terrible price

paid by our Redeemer" emphasizes an obligation we sometimes shirk: contemplating the full and arduous scope of the atoning sacrifice.

I frankly find it painful to learn about and contemplate all the Savior suffered for my redemption, but such studying brings me strength, comfort, grace, and the courage to face my challenges. Truly, as Brother Griffith points out, our sacrament hymns remind us of all Jesus Christ underwent from Gethsemane to Calvary, and "we should not avoid thinking about the price He paid to win our souls."

Betsy VanDenBerghe, Utah

The Success of Temple Square Missionaries

I read with great interest the article about the sister

missionaries on Temple Square, (July 2007 *Ensign*) and the fact that they never know whether the information they have given to the tourists ever ends up with someone becoming a member of the Church.

In August 1948, I was a tourist in Salt Lake City. I had purchased a bus tour package

to visit the parks out West. During the time I was in Salt Lake City, I visited Welfare Square, Memory Grove, the Great Salt Lake, and Temple Square.

I picked up one each of all the leaflets at Temple Square. When I went to the drugstore I found a booklet entitled *These Amazing Mormons*. I purchased this booklet too. I returned home to Chicago and systematically read the literature and the booklet. The booklet mentioned the nearby mission home. One Sunday I got up enough courage to locate the mission home to find out more about this religion. I feel I was led from above. After investigating the Church for about a year, I was baptized in 1950.

Yes, there are people who take the Temple Square tour who are touched by the messages!

Dorothy J. Kirton, Utah

Crediting the Sculptors

The *Ensign's* June 2007 inside back cover features a photograph of the statues of Joseph and Hyrum Smith on horseback. These statues were sculpted by Stanley J. Watts and Kimberly Corpany. ■