

# News of the Church

## International MTCs Play Important Role

By Breanna Olaveson

Church Magazines

**B**eginning in 1925, newly called missionaries spent time in a small “mission home” in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, before beginning their service.

In the 85 years since, the Church has established missionary training centers (MTCs) around the world. A missionary in training might be one of thousands in Provo, Utah, USA, or one of only a few dozen in Johannesburg, South Africa. But no matter which MTC they attend, missionaries come away ready to preach the gospel.

“At the MTCs, we do everything we can to prepare missionaries to accomplish their purpose, to ‘invite others to come unto Christ,’” said Kelly Mills, director of international MTCs in the Church’s Missionary Department.

In the early 1970s, the first MTC was established in Provo, Utah. In 1977, MTCs were established in São Paulo, Brazil; and Hamilton, New Zealand, to train local missionaries. The smaller, local MTCs proved efficient and helpful, and over the next 25 years the total of MTCs operating worldwide rose to 15, and are now found in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, England, Ghana, Guatemala, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Spain, and the United States.

### More Alike than Different

Regardless of variations in location, size, and language, MTCs across the world have more similarities than differences. The Provo Utah MTC can accommodate more than 3,000 missionaries at a time while the second largest MTC, located in Brazil, holds a maximum of just under 700.

However, MTCs outside of the United States provide a training experience that is very



***The São Paulo, Brazil, MTC was one of the first international MTCs built and is the largest outside of the United States.***

similar to what missionaries receive at the Provo MTC. When a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gives an address in the Provo MTC, for example, it is recorded, translated if necessary, and shown to missionaries at all the other MTCs.

That consistency among MTCs is important, because some missions receive missionaries from more than one training center. One-third of all missionaries receive their MTC training outside of the United States.

### Local Missionaries

All MTCs outside of the United States exist primarily to train local missionaries. That is the sole function of the MTCs located in Mexico, Colombia, Chile, Philippines, and New Zealand. Missionaries trained at these MTCs have been assigned to serve in their native language and do not receive language training. If a missionary’s assignment requires language training, he or she

is usually trained at the Provo MTC.

“The local MTCs provide the best environment for the local missionaries to learn the gospel from those of the same culture and language,” said Boyd Cardon, president of the Mexico MTC. “The local instructors in the local MTCs have a lot in common with the missionaries, and they become their mentors.”

Each MTC is located near a temple, and that proves beneficial for many missionaries. “Many missionaries in Africa would not be able to be endowed were it not for coming to this MTC,” said T. Dean Christensen, president of the South Africa MTC.

### **Full Training**

In addition to their primary function of training local missionaries, MTCs in Argentina, Brazil, England, Ghana, and South Africa have been approved to provide “full training”—that is, all missionaries assigned to serve in these areas, including those from North America, receive their full MTC training experience at the MTC in the area.

The Argentina and Brazil MTCs provide language training for missionaries who need to learn Spanish and Portuguese, while the England, Ghana, and South Africa MTCs teach mostly in English. Missionaries assigned to the British Isles or Africa who require training in other languages attend the MTC in Provo.

During their stay, missionaries in some of the international MTCs are allowed to leave for short periods of time to practice the things they are learning and preach the gospel, which also helps them learn about the local culture. “They go to the post office, a small eatery, or other businesses,” said Donald L. Clark, president of the Brazil MTC. “This is a wonderful experience for them because they learn to talk to salesmen, deal with the local currency, and get a feel for what it’s like on the streets.”

### **Phased Training**

The Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Peru, and Spain MTCs offer a variation on full training. Because of limited space in the MTC facility or the length of time required to acquire a visa, North American missionaries assigned to serve in these areas who do not already speak Spanish spend three weeks at the Provo MTC and the final six weeks of their MTC training at one of these international MTCs.

“The North Americans have been grateful for their three weeks of training at the Provo MTC,” said Douglas Steimle, president of the Guatemala MTC. “It gives them perspective that enhances their experience here. All arrive so excited to be in the country and feel like they have really begun to serve.”

North American missionaries who receive this phased training usually arrive at the international MTC having already made many adjustments to missionary work.

“By the time they get here their anxieties about being a missionary are usually behind them and they are eager to improve their Spanish-speaking skills and immerse themselves in the new culture as quickly as they can,” said Clifford L. Whetten, president of the Peru MTC.

### **Room to Grow**

As the Church’s missionary efforts continue to evolve, MTCs change as needed. The New Zealand MTC recently moved from its previous location in Hamilton into a new, larger building in Auckland. Missionaries began receiving training in the new building on September 2, 2010.

The Philippines MTC will also be expanded to accommodate more missionaries. When the new facility opens in 2011, it will hold 140 missionaries at a time—60 more than it held before the addition, with room to expand further.

MTCs around the world vary in size and location, but they share a common goal: to

prepare missionaries for the great work ahead of them. “The MTC is a beautiful place to be,” said President Richard George of the Argentina

MTC. “But in the end, the missionaries are all eager to leave. That means the MTC has served its purpose.” ■

## Future of FamilySearch.org Explained at Seminar

By David Packard

Church Magazines

The future of the FamilySearch Family Tree application—often referred to as new .familysearch.org—will allow users to add sources, fix records, and communicate with fellow researchers, according to Ron Tanner, a product manager for FamilySearch.

Brother Tanner delivered the keynote address, “The Future of FamilySearch,” to about 300 participants attending a family history seminar at the Riverton FamilySearch Library in October 2010.

In his address, Brother Tanner focused on changes currently being made to the current Family Tree application and its transition from a “My Tree” system to a more open system in order to improve accuracy and reduce research duplication, which will make it easier to receive “help from millions to save billions.”

With regards to the future of the current

*Beta.familysearch.org shown below, is being prepared as a replacement for FamilySearch.org.*

FamilySearch.org, all of the site's existing features and data, such as the International Genealogical Index and other historical records; Record Search pilot; research wiki, forums, and indexing; a blog; and the Family Tree application are being consolidated into one site to replace all the others.

The beta version of the replacement Web site is available at beta.familysearch.org. Brother Tanner encouraged Internet users to visit the site and leave feedback so that changes can be made before the beta version replaces the current FamilySearch.org Web site, which is to happen before the end of the year.

The main goal of the Family Tree application is to reduce duplication in both research and temple ordinances. With these changes, Brother Tanner said the Family Tree feature hopes to create a collaborative, conclusion-based, online family tree system that allows anyone to make changes, explain why, and provide evidence for their conclusion.

The system will be closely monitored. Whenever any changes are made, an e-mail notification will be sent to those interested in that ancestor. A history of all changes will also be found on the particular ancestor's file as well as the ability to undo changes.

Through a discussions feature that was added in May 2010, family history researchers could discuss the differences found in research and come to a consensus. Similar updates to the site will take place quarterly. A notifications feature is being added by the end of 2010. Additional updates are planned throughout 2011.

Brother Tanner believes the changes will help fulfill the vision explained by Archibald Bennett, the former secretary of the Genealogical Society of Utah, set forth almost 63 years ago.

“A universal system of intelligent cooperation

