

Small & Simple Things

“By small and simple things are great things brought to pass” (Alma 37:6).

CHURCH HISTORY AROUND THE WORLD



Mexico

The first Latter-day Saint missionaries arrived in Mexico in 1875. They divided into two groups. One sent selections of the Book of Mormon in Spanish to influential leaders throughout the country and taught many people, but they had no converts. The other group baptized Mexico’s first five

members of the Church, in Hermosillo, Sonora. Four years later, one of the leaders who had received the Church literature in 1875, Plotino C. Rhodakanaty of Mexico City, requested baptism for himself and others. By 1885 a Spanish translation of the Book of Mormon was completed.

For many years the country faced political tension, but the early members remained faithful. The first Spanish-speaking stake in the Church, the Mexico

Stake, was organized on December 3, 1961. The Church opened several schools, including Benemérito de las Américas, founded in Mexico City in 1963, which is still in operation.

The first temple built in Mexico, located in Mexico City, was dedicated in 1983. In 2000, eight temples were dedicated in Mexico.

In 2004, Mexico became the first country outside the United States to have one million members.



Church leaders participate in the ground-breaking for Benemérito de las Américas on November 4, 1963.



THE CHURCH IN MEXICO	
Membership	1,234,545
Missions	23
Stakes	221
Wards and Branches	2,009
Temples	12 in operation; 1 announced

Christmas for the Early Pioneers

Harsh winter months made for difficult times for most pioneers, and resources for Christmas presents and celebrations were often scarce. Yet that didn't deter the early pioneers from creating special memories during the holiday season. Here are a few records of how Christmas was celebrated in pioneer times:

My Happiest Christmas

"My first Christmas in the [Salt Lake] Valley came on Saturday. We celebrated the day on the Sabbath. All of us gathered around the flag pole in the center of the fort. There we held a meeting. What a meeting it was. We sang praises to God. We joined in the opening prayer, and the speaker that day has always been remembered by me. There were words of thanksgiving and cheer, not a pessimistic word was uttered. People were hopeful and buoyant, because of their faith in the future. After the meeting there was handshaking all around. Some wept with joy. Children played in the enclosure and around the sagebrush fire that night. We gathered and sang, 'Come, come, ye Saints, no toil nor labor fear; but with joy wend your way.' We had boiled rabbit and a little bread for dinner. We all had enough to eat and there was a sense of perfect peace and good will. I never had a happier Christmas in my life."

Unknown author, quoted by Bryant S. Hinckley, in Kate B. Carter, comp., *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 20 vols. (1958–77), 14:198.

My, How Time Flies

"One night when I was sixteen years old, Father gave a Christmas party for his own children and their families and the nearest neighbors. We danced. My brothers were the musicians. We knew it was Father's aim to end the party at ten o'clock, which he did right in the middle

of a square-dance by ordering the musicians to stop. But Father didn't know that my brothers had lifted me up to the clock many times that night. Each time I turned it back thirty minutes. It must have been past midnight when the party broke up."

From Christian Olsen family records, in Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 15:199.

A Jolly Time

"When the children awoke on Christmas morning in 1849, not a doll was to be found in all the land, no, not even a stick of candy, or an apple was found in the cabins. But the children and their parents were happy for all that. They were glad that they still had a little to eat, and prospects before them in their new homes

were beginning to grow brighter every day. But, if there were no dolls or toys for the children, the fathers and mothers could not forget Christmas, and before the day was over they all had a jolly time.

"In the evening they met at the cabin of John Rowberry. This was the house where the first meetings were held. There they had an old fashioned dance to wind up the day, and it was the merriest crowd that ever met in a Christmas gathering. . . . But the great drawback was music. Not an instrument of any kind was to be found. Cyrus Call was a very good whistler and he whistled tunes while the merry pioneers danced."

Sarah Tolman, in Kate B. Carter, comp., *Treasures of Pioneer Heritage*, 6 vols. (1952–57), 4:197–98.



GREAT LIVES REMEMBERED

President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901)



Though he later became the fifth President of the Church, Lorenzo Snow had little interest in being baptized until his sister, Eliza, invited him to attend Hebrew classes at the School of the Prophets in Kirtland, Ohio. Also attending the school were Joseph Smith and other Church leaders. Lorenzo soon became interested in the gospel and joined the Church on June 19, 1836. Elder Snow then served missions to Italy, the Sandwich Islands (now Hawaii), and Great Britain, where he presented a copy of the Book of Mormon to Queen Victoria.



Elder Snow possessed remarkable gifts that he used to serve the Lord. In his patriarchal blessing he was promised that although he would live to an old age, he would not feel the effects of aging. His vitality allowed him to remain active in his later years as an apostle and a prophet. He also used the priesthood to raise several people from the dead.

During President Snow's time as prophet, Latter-day Saints in southern Utah were suffering from a drought. While speaking at a conference in the southern Utah town of St. George, President Snow was inspired to promise the Saints that it would rain and they would enjoy a bountiful harvest if they would pay tithing. Though the members paid their tithing, several months passed without rain. President Snow implored Heavenly Father to send rain. Later he received a telegram announcing, "Rain in St. George."

For more information, see Francis M. Gibbons, Lorenzo Snow: Spiritual Giant, Prophet of God (1982).



Top: Portrait of Lorenzo Snow in about 1865. Middle: President Snow (middle) with his counselors in the First Presidency, George Q. Cannon (left) and Joseph F. Smith (right) in 1900. Bottom: Latter-day Saints were blessed with rain for their crops after heeding President Snow's counsel to pay tithing.