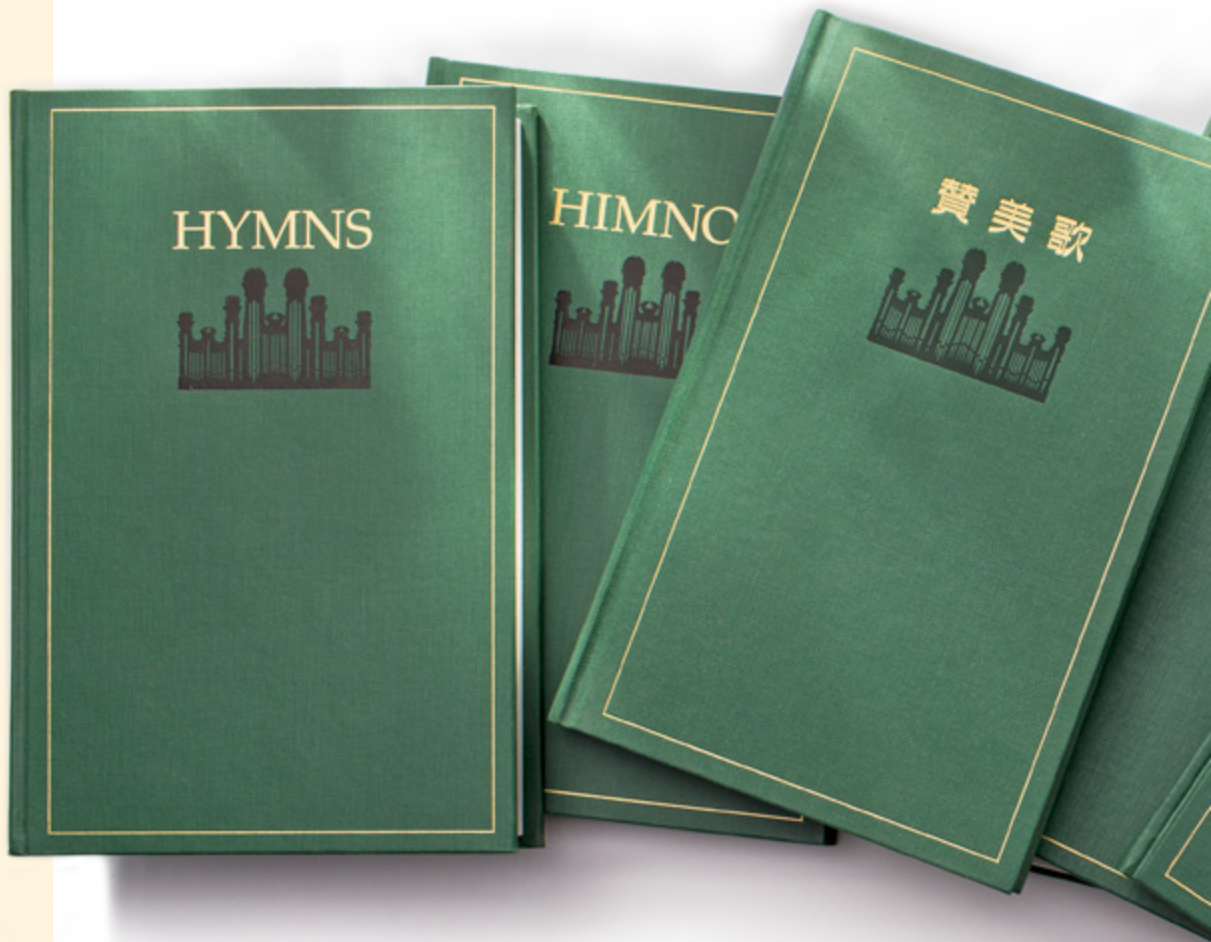


THE HYMNBOOK TURNS

30

TRANSLATION GOES ON

The Church's 1985 hymnbook in English is 30 years old this month, but the work of producing hymnbooks for Saints who speak—and sing—in other languages goes on. Each language version of the hymnbook is carefully crafted, containing core hymns familiar to members worldwide as well as other hymns that are meaningful to those who speak that particular language. The selection and translation process can be long, but the aim is to ensure that every hymnbook in every language is the most beautiful, doctrinally sound, and unifying collection possible.



To access the hymns and other music resources online, go to music.lds.org.

By **Garrett H. Garff**

Church Magazines

When the current Church hymnbook was first released back in 1985, the chairman of the General Music Committee, Michael F. Moody, said that those charged with producing the book had “tried to select music that people would want to hum as they walk down the street and go about their daily work.”¹ You need only think of such hummable hymns as “Called to Serve,” “Our Savior’s Love,” “Press Forward, Saints,” and “I Am a Child of God” to know that those well-worn green books in our meetinghouses and homes are indeed a rich source of memorable and inspiring music.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the 1985 hymnbook, which is part of a legacy of Church hymnals dating back to 1835, when Emma Smith, with the help of William W. Phelps, published the first Latter-day Saint collection of hymns. In celebration of this anniversary year, a

special event will be held on September 11 in the Temple Square Assembly Hall in Salt Lake City and will include guest singers, musicians, and speakers.

Looking back at the efforts of those who worked on the 1985 hymnbook, Brother Moody has recently said, “As a committee, we tried to project the future, knowing that each hymn would become part of a canon of hymns that would serve the Saints in all cultures and climes of the world.”² In keeping with this worldwide reach, the hymnbook is now available in 31 language versions, with several more in process.

Because translation work is ongoing, and given the quality and continued usefulness of the current hymnbook, there are no plans at this time for a new edition. The 300-plus selections in the 1985 hymnbook—some of which to this day remain “undiscovered”—will continue to bless lives as members accept the First Presidency’s invitation: “Let us use the hymns to invite the Spirit of the Lord into our congregations, our homes, and our personal lives. Let us memorize and ponder them, recite and sing them, and partake of their spiritual nourishment.”³ ■

NOTES

1. Michael F. Moody, in Kathleen Lubeck, “The New Hymnbook: The Saints Are Singing!” *Ensign*, Sept. 1985, 9.
2. Michael F. Moody, fireside remarks, Pleasant Grove, Utah, Mar. 8, 2015.
3. “First Presidency Preface,” *Hymns*, x.

SCRIPTURE CONNECTIONS

A seemingly small but significant feature of the hymnbooks produced by the Church since 1985 is the inclusion of scripture references at the end of each hymn. These not only establish the underlying doctrines of the hymn texts but can also yield additional gospel insights.

