

1990

# The history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Mexico

Byron James McNeil  
*San Jose State University*

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THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST  
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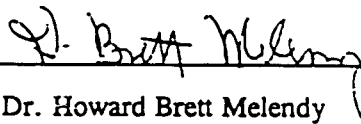
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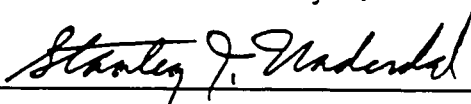
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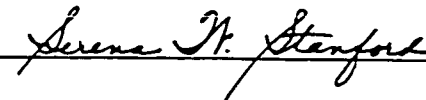
  
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## ABSTRACT

### THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN MEXICO

by Byron James McNeil

This thesis addresses the topic of how The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been able to attract and assimilate hundreds of thousands of Mexican members into its church. It covers the period of time from 1875 to 1990. In addition it deals with some of the cultural conflicts that developed between the church's American leadership in Mexico and its Mexican members.

Research on this subject demonstrates that it took until the early 1960's before the church was able to develop sufficient Mexican leadership to lead the growing number of congregations in Mexico. Most of the information used in this thesis was obtained from sources affiliated with the church. These sources included church periodicals and interviews with individuals living in Utah. In addition a substantial amount of information was obtained from the church Historian's Library and Archives in Salt Lake City, Utah and the Berkeley Theological Library.



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Appendix 1.

LIST OF SUPPORTING STATISTICAL DATA

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## CHAPTER ONE

### GOALS OF THE STUDY

This thesis will explain how The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ("Mormons") has been able to attract and assimilate hundreds of thousands of Mexican converts by providing a historical and doctrinal survey of the church in Mexico. The primary objective of this paper is to gain an understanding of the importance of the Mormon Church's success in Mexico on both the church as a whole and the nation of Mexico. A secondary purpose of this paper is to gain an understanding of the church's potential in Mexico during the 1990's.

#### Basic Doctrines of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

In order to understand how a small, conservative American church like The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has able to expand rapidly in Mexico recently, one must first examine its basic doctrines. The church's origins go back to the life of Joseph Smith who lived in the early nineteenth century in upstate New York. Joseph Smith's teachings formed the basis of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

In 1820 Joseph Smith was a fourteen-year old farm boy who, like many of his neighbors in upstate New York, had been subject to years of constant and intense religious revivals. These revivals were emotional and the preachers often stressed that unless those who heard their fiery speeches repented and were baptized into their churches, they would be damned. Joseph Smith wrote of this period:

That while I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads: If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraidedth not; and it shall be given him.<sup>1</sup>

After reading this passage of scripture, Joseph resolved to ask God in prayer which one of the churches that he had investigated was correct and that he should join. Joseph Smith then stated that while he was praying:

I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said pointing to the other `This is My Beloved Son Hear Him': I asked which of all the sects was right. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.<sup>2</sup>

Joseph Smith's account of how his prayer was answered became a cornerstone of the LDS's (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) theology. The concept that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, actually appeared to Joseph Smith is a radical departure from accepted Christian dogma. However, to assert that all existing churches are false and that none of the Christian preachers was authorized to speak for Jesus Christ was revolutionary. Joseph Smith then stated that in time the true Church of Jesus Christ would be restored with him as its prophet.

Between 1820 and 1830 Joseph Smith taught that he had received a number of additional revelations from God. Through one of these revelations, he obtained a collection of gold plates from an Angel Moroni.<sup>3</sup> By 1830 Joseph had translated the plates and published a book known as The Book of Mormon. The publication of The Book of Mormon represented a major addition to Mormon theology, since it then possessed a new book of scripture. Smith's concept of new or modern scripture

was a major departure from the accepted Christianity of the nineteenth century.

What made The Book of Mormon even more remarkable was that the church maintained that it was a scriptural account of a lost band of the House of Israel that lived in the Americas before and just after the time Jesus Christ lived in Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup>

An important premise of The Book of Mormon is that the American Indians are descendants of the Lamanites, one of the peoples discussed in the book.<sup>5</sup> In the second half of the twentieth century many Mexicans, because of their Indian heritage, became attracted to the Book of Mormon and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Several leaders of the church have for years maintained that the Mexican people, through their Indian ancestry, were Lamanites and direct descendants of the people described in the Book of Mormon.<sup>6</sup>

Another key tenet of the church is that its leaders possess the Priesthood of God and are thereby authorized to act in His name. Through the priesthood, Joseph Smith on April 6, 1830, organized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the state of New York. Within six years of the church's founding, it relocated to the state of Ohio and established its present organization. This organization began with Joseph Smith serving as the Church's first Prophet and President. Other key leaders included The Quorum of Twelve Apostles and The First Quorum of the The Seventy.<sup>7</sup> These senior leaders of the church are known to its members as General Authorities.

Once the top ecclesiastical positions were established, the church, in the 1830's, began to organize local units, known as wards and stakes. The wards were administered by Bishops and the stakes were led by Stake Presidents and a High Council. Smaller groups of members were organized as branches with Branch

Presidents as their leaders.<sup>8</sup> Today the organization of the church mirrors the structure that was outlined in Section 20 of The Doctrine and Covenants.

The concept of a well-defined church organization is a key church doctrine. According to church doctrine, Jesus Christ is the literal head of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The President of the church is a Prophet of God who leads under the direction of Jesus Christ. The President is assisted by at least two counselors and they together form the First Presidency of the church.

The President of the church, in conjunction with the other General Authorities, sets policy and supervises the affairs of church. The local leaders of the church minister to the needs of their people in accordance with guidelines established by the General Authorities. The underlining premise that governs the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is that the President of the Church is also a Prophet of God. Church doctrine also states that its Prophet will never lead the church in a way contrary to the will of Jesus Christ. This key concept was reinforced in 1890 by President Wilford Woodruff when, after much confusion and contention, he abolished the institution of plural marriage. In a major address he stated:

The Lord will never permit me or any other man who stands as President of this church to lead you astray. It is not in the programme. It is not in the mind of God. If I were to attempt that, the Lord would remove me out of my place, and so He will any other man who attempts to lead the children of men astray from the oracles of God and from their duty.<sup>9</sup>

Other key church doctrines include the "Word of Wisdom" that prohibits faithful members from using tobacco, alcohol, or hot drinks such as coffee and tea.<sup>10</sup> A strict moral code was based on the seventh of the Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt not commit adultery."<sup>11</sup> The definition of adultery in the LDS church does not differentiate between the acts of single or married persons.<sup>12</sup> The Church

of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints also maintains that The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price are scriptures in equal standing with the Holy Bible.

The concept of the temple is central to the LDS view of families and their relationship with God. So sacred is the temple that only worthy members of the church are allowed inside the buildings. The purpose of the temple is to enable members to make covenants with God so that "which is sealed on earth shall be sealed in heaven." Members of the church who attend the temple generally go through an endowment session or service. In the endowment, a person will promise to obey all of God's commandments. In exchange for their obedience, a person is promised in the temple that they will be able to live with their Heavenly Father (God) and their Savior Jesus Christ, with their worthy family members, after their lives on earth are over. These sealing ordinances include marriage "for time and all eternity," which means to the Latter-day Saint that such marriages will last forever. These marriages, according to church doctrine, are only valid if the individuals are faithful to the covenants that they make in the temple. The temple is also where members of the church perform vicarious baptisms and marriages for their ancestors. The final aspect of the temple in Mormon doctrine is that it is where the members are taught how to become Godlike.<sup>13</sup> Faithful members of the church are willing to make tremendous sacrifices in order to attend a Latter-day Saint temple. Examples of this point will be described later in the paper.

The doctrines of the church are applied equally to all members of the church worldwide. The church makes no distinction between a Mexican, an American or a convert in Zaire. They are all taught the same gospel and are expected to live by the same principles. The principle of tithing is practiced by all members equally. All

worthy members are expected to donate 10% of their income to the church.<sup>14</sup> In fact, only members of the church who pay an honest tithe and live the word of wisdom and other doctrines of their religion are allowed to attend the temple.<sup>15</sup>

The final doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that needs to be addressed is that of missionary work. As early as 1829, a year before the church was formally organized, Joseph Smith and members of his family were actively proselytizing among their neighbors. A number of revelations are recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants that stress the importance of missionary work. It was clear in 1829 that Joseph Smith was to lead a world-wide missionary effort. The Doctrine And Covenants states that all members of the church are expected to perform missionary service for the church.<sup>16</sup> The members are reminded in the LDS scripture that "The worth of souls is great in the sight of God." The scripture continues:

And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father! And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!<sup>17</sup>

The result of the church's strong emphasis upon missionary work has been a vigorous proselytizing program throughout the world. (See Table 1 in Appendix.)

Two qualities that the LDS church stresses are hard work and gaining a good education. These qualities became critical to the success of the church in Mexico by the early 1960's when it established its own elementary school system in Mexico to assist its members in obtaining an education.<sup>18</sup>



CHAPTER TWO  
HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF  
LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN MEXICO FROM 1874 to 1936

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints did not attempt to send missionaries into Mexico until 1875. There is no explanation why the church did not begin proselytizing in Mexico earlier. The first foreign mission began in 1836, when Elder Parley P. Pratt and a Brother Nickerson traveled from Ohio to Toronto, Canada.<sup>1</sup> In 1838 LDS missionaries left for England and other parts of Europe shortly afterwards.<sup>2</sup>

A brief attempt was made to establish a missionary program in Chile in November 1851, by Elder Parley P. Pratt. However, because he did not speak Spanish, he was forced to abandon his efforts March, 1852 and return to America.<sup>3</sup> The only other contact that members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had with the people of Latin America before 1875 was in 1846 and 1847 when the Mormon Battalion traveled through what was then Mexican territory enroute to California. Despite participating in the Mexican-American war, the Mormon Battalion never engaged in any conflicts with the Mexican Army, nor did it have any significant contacts with the Mexican people who lived in what are now the states of New Mexico, Arizona, and California.<sup>4</sup> In 1874, at Brigham Young's direction, preparations were begun to send the Church's first missionaries to explore Northern Mexico for places for the church to colonize and to proselytize in that country.<sup>5</sup> The first LDS missionaries called to serve

in Mexico were Daniel Jones and Henry Brizze. These men were instructed first to improve their knowledge of Spanish so that they could translate parts of The Book of Mormon into that language before they began their missions.<sup>6</sup>

Initial efforts to translate The Book of Mormon into Spanish by Jones and Brizze proved unsuccessful due to their poor understanding of the language. However, in 1875 Meliton Gonzalez Trejo, a recent Mormon convert and a former Spanish soldier who had served in the Philippines, arrived in Salt Lake City. Shortly after his arrival, Brigham Young requested that Trejo help with the translation of The Book of Mormon into Spanish.<sup>7</sup> With his help the Trozos Selectos del Libro de Mormon was soon ready for publication in Utah.<sup>8</sup>

Due to limited church funds, Brigham Young informed Daniel Jones that his group would need to pay all of its own mission expenses in Mexico. The Mormon Prophet did suggest that Jones and the six other missionaries who were to accompany him to Mexico were free to solicit funds to publish the Trozos Selectos del Libro de Mormon which he had helped translate and to finance their missions.<sup>9</sup> The missionaries soon raised \$500 and had 2,000 copies of the condensed Book of Mormon published. It is important to mention that it has always been customary for those sent on LDS missions to pay their own costs. In the early days of the church, the missionaries paid the cost of tracts that they used as well.<sup>10</sup>

After securing the necessary funds, Elder Jones and his six fellow missionaries left Salt Lake City in September 1875 for Mexico. Of the seven men in the Jones company, only two spoke Spanish. Meliton Trejo did not accompany them to Mexico. The Jones mission resembled a survey expedition more than a proselytizing mission because of all the supplies that they took with them and the remote areas through which they were to travel. Included in their supplies were the

copies of the Trozos Selectos del Libro de Mormon that they had translated and published.<sup>11</sup>

The Jones mission lasted ten months and covered more than three thousand miles. They traveled through the territories of Utah, Arizona and New Mexico and into the State of Texas, resting briefly in El Paso (then known as Franklin). From El Paso, the missionaries crossed the border and entered the Mexican city of Juarez (then called EL Paso del Norte).<sup>12</sup>

Following Brigham Young's counsel, they traveled extensively in the Mexican states of Chihuahua and Sonora. Despite giving a number of speeches about the church, the missionaries, again following Brigham Young's advice, made no attempt to baptize anyone into the church. The missionaries even turned down the request by Francisco Vasquez to be baptized. He had earlier had a dream that Elder Jones and his fellow missionaries would come to his village and teach him the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Elders refused to baptize him because they did not know when the church would be able to send additional missionaries to that area to establish a congregation.<sup>13</sup>

While Daniel Jones was in Mexico, he gave away a number of copies of Trozos Selectos del Libro de Mormon. Of particular importance to the development of the future missionary work in Mexico City were the thousand-plus copies that Jones mailed to prominent businessmen, educators and intellectuals throughout Mexico.<sup>14</sup> One of these copies brought the church to the attention of Dr. Plotino C. Rhodakanaty who, after reading the book that Elder Jones had mailed him, requested that the church send missionaries to visit him in Mexico City.<sup>15</sup>

Almost every Mormon missionary who has served a proselytizing mission has to some degree measured the success of his mission by the number by convert

baptisms that he had. Based on this criterion, many would feel that Elder Jones's mission was not particularly successful. However, when Elder Jones reported back to Brigham Young and gave him an accounting of his missionary efforts, the Mormon Prophet was delighted and praised the missionaries' efforts saying that the information gained would be used "as an opening for a greater work."<sup>16</sup>

Elder Jones's mission accomplished three important things for the church. First, and perhaps most important to Brigham Young in 1876, was the knowledge that there were places in Northern Mexico to settle polygamist Mormon families. LDS men who had more than one wife were subject to arrest and imprisonment by the Federal government for violating the country's anti-polygamy laws.<sup>17</sup>

Second, missionaries would again be sent to Northern Mexico beginning in September 1876. These missionaries numbered six men, two of whom had been part of Elder Jones company, and included Meliton Trejo.<sup>18</sup> This time the missionaries baptized the first Mexican into the church. Despite the baptisms, the missionaries were greatly limited by the widespread Indian wars that made it unsafe to travel in many parts of Northern Mexico. As a result of these wars, missionary work in Northern Mexico was not resumed for several years.<sup>19</sup>

Third, sufficient interest had been aroused in the summaries of The Book of Mormon that Elder Jones had mailed out to prompt the new President of the Mormon church, John Taylor, to send missionaries to Mexico City.<sup>20</sup> In 1879, at the request of President Taylor, James A. Stuart, Meliton Trejo and Apostle Moses Thatcher went to Mexico City to contact Dr. Plotino Rhodakanaty and begin proselytizing in that city.<sup>21</sup>

Within days of the missionaries meeting Rhodakanaty, they met a number of his friends who were found to have a sound knowledge of the principles of the

church. Rhodakanaty and his friends were quickly baptized and confirmed as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-days Saints.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, Rhodakanaty's motivation for becoming a Mormon was to persuade the church to support his plans to establish a communal society in Mexico. He expected the church to finance the society, making him its leader. When his plans were rejected by Elder Thatcher, Rhodakanaty left the church and took with him almost the entire membership in Mexico City. After the collapse of the church in Mexico City, little additional missionary work was done in the major cities of Mexico for several years.<sup>23</sup>

In both Mexico City and Northern Mexico, the Catholic church was a major hindrance to the LDS missionaries' proselytizing efforts. The Latter-day Saint missionaries at this time found that the Mexican people were still closely allied to their traditional church.<sup>24</sup> This loyalty to Catholicism prevented the missionaries from having any significant success among the Mexican people until after 1960. (See Table 2.)

Once it became clear to Elders Thatcher, Stuart and a new Elder, Feramorz L. Young (who replaced Meliton Trejo when he returned to his home in Arizona), that there was little chance of attracting new converts in Mexico City, they began to proselytize in the small villages outside the capital.<sup>25</sup> By 1880, the missionaries were proselytizing among the small number of Protestants who lived in these mostly Indian villages near Ozuma. These missionaries baptized sufficient number of people in this area during the 1880's to be able to organize a small branch.<sup>26</sup>

According to Elder Agricol Lozano Herrera, a Regional Representative (he supervised a number of stakes and several thousand members of the church in Mexico), this branch of the church in Ozumba became the foundation for the future

growth of the church in Mexico. Between 1880 and 1889, the church's membership increased slowly to 241 members.<sup>27</sup>

Due to the intense persecution of the church in Utah over the polygamy issue, the mission was discontinued and all Mormon missionaries were withdrawn from Mexico from 1889 to 1901.<sup>28</sup> After the church resolved the conflict with the American government over polygamy, it reopened the Mexican Mission near Mexico City under the leadership of Elder Ammon M. Tenney. Serving alone for a year, Elder Tenney worked hard to reestablish the church among the small number of members who lived near Mexico City. Within a year, Tenney organized a small number of branches. During this time several men were ordained to the Priesthood so they could function as local missionaries and serve in the newly organized branches. All the branches that Elder Tenney organized had their own local leaders. Between 1901 and 1902, he developed a group of native leaders who would play key roles in the expansion of the church in Central Mexico.<sup>29</sup>

Between 1901 and 1913, the church grew steadily in the rural countryside surrounding Mexico City. By 1913, there were more than twelve hundred Latter-day Saints in this area.<sup>30</sup> However, because of the massive turmoil caused by the Mexican Civil War, which lasted from 1910 to 1917, the church was again forced to withdraw its American missionaries from the country in 1913.<sup>31</sup> Due to the loyal leadership of the locally run branches, the church continued to function during the Civil War. In 1915, the Mormon Church gained two martyrs when Rafael Monroy and Vincente Morales were publicly executed by the Zapatist forces because they refused to renounce their belief in The Book of Mormon and in the divinity of their church.<sup>32</sup>

The church in Salt Lake was unable to send missionaries to Mexico again until 1921.<sup>33</sup> In 1926, due to the religious conflict that erupted between the Catholic church and the Mexican government, all foreign clergy were ordered from the country. The expulsion order by President Calles, although clearly aimed at the Roman Catholic Church, was enforced equally against all religions operating in Mexico. The LDS church, lacking an experienced leader who had been born in Mexico, was unable to re-establish a mission in Mexico until 1936.<sup>34</sup> When the new mission president, Howard W. Pratt, arrived in Mexico City, there were about sixteen hundred members in central Mexico.<sup>35</sup> From 1913 to 1936, with the exception of a five-year period, the Saints in the Mexico City area had functioned with no direct supervision from church leaders in the United States. Despite their isolation from the main body of the church for several years, they continued to attend to their meetings and even managed to grow modestly in numbers.<sup>36</sup>

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE MORMON COLONIES IN MEXICO, 1887 TO 1989

In 1875, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints began to look to Mexico as a possible refuge against the increasingly rigid anti-polygamy laws of the American government.<sup>1</sup> The church's original mission to Mexico, led by Daniel Jones, reported to President Young that there were a number of suitable sites in the Mexican state of Chihuahua that the members of the church in the United States could colonize.<sup>2</sup> Despite favorable reports, no serious efforts were taken to establish settlements until 1885.<sup>3</sup>

In 1886 Elder Helaman Pratt purchased 49,000 acres in the name of The Trustee in Trust of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for \$12,000. This is the present site of Colonia Juarez. Approximately 300,000 additional acres were purchased by the church and its members by 1892. Between 1885 and 1912 these Mormon colonies grew from 350 to approximately 4,000 people.<sup>4</sup> The vast majority of the church members who settled in Mexico belonged to polygamous families who sought to avoid prosecution by the United States government.

The Latter-day Saints eventually established nine settlements in the states of Chihuahua and Sonora. Since the Mormon colonists viewed themselves as religious refugees from the United States, they were reluctant to become Mexican citizens or to associate with the Mexican communities near them.<sup>5</sup> Due to differences in education, culture, religion and economic values, the Mormons largely kept to themselves. The colonies provided their settlers



a lifestyle comparable to other small Mormon communities in the United States and Canada. Both the Mexican government and the church in Salt Lake City considered the colonies as prosperous. The Deseret News described Colonial Juarez, the largest of the settlements:

This beautiful little village ... has many tasteful brick dwellings, some of which would be a credit to Salt Lake City.... There will be a considerable quantity of apples, pears, plums, prunes, cherries, grapes, and peaches. The Mexicans say if you want to buy good horses and cows, go to the Mormon settlements. They have them.<sup>6</sup>

The prosperity that the colonists enjoyed during the first decade of the twentieth century ended abruptly in 1912. During the Mexican Civil War, the colonists began to fall prey to both the rebel and the government armies. Finally, by July 1912, after being warned by the leaders of both armies to leave the country, the vast majority of the Mormon colonists fled Mexico and sought refuge in El Paso, Texas.<sup>7</sup>

While the Civil War lasted from 1910 to 1917, not all of the colonists left their homes in Mexico. In fact, 630 colonists were still living in Mexico at the war's end. In the years following the end of the revolution some colonists began to return to their former homes. By 1921, the population of the colonies had increased to 816. All but 65 of the colonists were said to be American citizens.<sup>8</sup>

The Mormon population of the colonies continued to grow slowly from 1921 to 1938 when its population was just under 1,000, mostly Americans. The colonists maintained strong ties with church members in the United States. When the children in the colonies finished high school, they almost always attended college in Utah, married, and established their homes in America. Despite the colonists' strong ties to their ancestral homes, by 1938 they had again established a prosperous, well

respected farming communities in Mexico. During that year, 26 of their young men served as missionaries in central Mexico.<sup>9</sup>

After 1938, Mormon colonists made up a progressively smaller percentage of the LDS population in Mexico. However, from the 1930's until the 1960's, the majority of the church's leadership in Mexico was made up of Anglos from the colonies, but gradually Mexican members replaced the leaders from the colonies. Today, the Mexican members occupy almost every key local and regional church position within their country. In recent years the population of the colonies has declined steadily until today there are barely 600 people left.<sup>10</sup>

## CHAPTER FOUR

### MORMON FUNDAMENTALIST POLYGAMOUS SECT IN MEXICO

Few topics in LDS history have generated as much controversy or curiosity as the practice of polygamy. As mentioned earlier, the practice of plural marriage or polygamy was officially discontinued by the church in October 1890.<sup>1</sup> The decision to end plural marriage was difficult, controversial and in some cases unpopular. In a revelation that President Wilford Woodruff said that the Lord gave him, he was told to ask:

The Latter-day Saints a question, and He also told me that if they would listen to what I said to them and answer the question put to them, by the Spirit and power of God, they would all answer alike, and they would all believe alike with regard to this matter. The question is this: Which is the wisest course for the Latter-day Saints to pursue—to attempt to continue to practice plural marriage, with the laws of the nation against it and the opposition of sixty millions of people, and the cost of the confiscation and loss of all the temples, and the stopping of all the ordinances therein, both for the living and the dead, and the imprisonment of the First Presidency and the Twelve and the heads of families of the church, and the confiscation of personal property of the people (all of which themselves would be forced to stop the practice); or, after doing and suffering what we have through our adherence to this principle to cease the practice and submit to the law; and through doing so leave the Prophets, Apostles and fathers at home, so that they can instruct the people and attend to the duties of the church and also leave the temples in the hands of the Saints, so they can attend to the ordinances of the Gospel, both for the living and the dead? The Lord showed me by vision and revelation exactly what would take place if we did not stop this practice. If we had not stopped it, you would have had no use for ... any of the men in this temple in Logan; for all ordinances would be stopped throughout the land of Zion. Confusion would reign throughout Israel, and many men would be made prisoners. This trouble would have come upon the whole church, and we should be compelled to stop the practice.<sup>2</sup>

This quote from President Woodruff demonstrates that his decision to end plural marriage was made only after all other options had been exhausted to resolve this conflict with the United States Government. It is equally important that President Woodruff's decision to end polygamy was not made either because he was desperate or was personally weak. President Woodruff further stated that:

I saw (in vision) exactly what would come to pass if there was not something done (to end the practice of plural marriage). I have had this spirit upon me for a long time. But I want to say this: I should have let all the temples go out of our hands: I should have gone to prison myself, and let every other man go there, had not the God of Heaven, commanded me to do what I did do and when the hour came that I was commanded to do that, it was all clear to me. I went before the Lord, and wrote what the Lord told me to write.<sup>5</sup>

The details of the polygamy conflict between the American government and the church are beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is essential to understand that the church's very existence in 1890 was determined by its resolution of this complex and emotional crisis. There were two primary reasons why the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints refused to stop the practice of plural marriage earlier. First, the practice of plural marriage was established by revelation. Many members of the church could not accept the concept that the Lord, through a revelation to his prophet, would ever rescind a commandment as important as plural marriage. A second and equally important consideration was how would the church end the practice. Would it declare all plural marriages void and create a class of disenfranchised wives and illegitimate children? Would it continue the practice outside the United States and bypass Federal anti-polygamy laws? Or would it simply stop allowing its members to enter into new plural marriages, while allowing existing ones to continue. The later option was chosen. In essence President Wilfred Woodruff and later President Joseph F. Smith simply allowed plural marriage to end as those who practiced it slowly died out. The advantage of the last

option was that it preserved the integrity of the family units and the dignity of those who belonged to plural families.

Each person makes a covenant when baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that he or she will obey all of God's commandments. Implicit with the covenant of obedience to the Lord's commandments is a covenant that the new member will sustain the president of the church as a Prophet of God. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in most cases willingly follow the council of their Prophet. In the case of President Woodruff's decision to end plural marriage, a small number of people refused to accept the new policy as inspired of God. These individuals have from 1890 until today continued to advocate and practice plural marriage. It is traditional that any policy change in the church be presented to the membership under the signature of the First Presidency with the unanimous support of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. This procedure applies even to minor policy changes in the church. Only in extraordinary circumstances will the President of the church issue a manifesto under his signature alone. This is exactly what President Woodruff did in 1890.

The church was without a President from the death of President John Taylor on July 25, 1887, until April 7, 1889, when Wilford Woodruff was sustained as the new church leader.<sup>4</sup> Until this time, whenever a President of the church died, a period of time elapsed before his successor was named. This succession period after Taylor's death was different. The primary reason that the Presidency of the church was not reorganized in 1887 following President Taylor's death was due to serious rifts that affected some of the members of the Council of the Twelve. Some of these conflicts were purely personal. The most serious conflicts were tied to the federal government's enforcement of anti-polygamy laws.<sup>5</sup>

A proposal to discontinue plural marriage was made by Wilford Woodruff a number of times between the death of President Taylor and Wilford Woodruff's becoming the new church leader. Until 1890 all of the proposals to comply with the Federal law concerning polygamy failed due to an inability of all members of the Quorum of the Twelve to agree to the motion.<sup>6</sup>

In early 1889, George Q. Cannon, an apostle and former first counselor to President Taylor, was convicted and imprisoned for violating the Federal anti-polygamy laws. When Elder Cannon became one of the nearly six hundred men to be sent to prison over this issue, it became clear to the General Authorities that "the church was unmistakably disintegrating."<sup>7</sup> Shortly after Cannon's imprisonment, Wilford Woodruff, acting as the senior apostle, with the support of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, became the President of the church with two new counselors. In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the senior apostle becomes its new leader following the death of the President of the church. During the first eighteen months of President Woodruff's administration he and his counselors worked tirelessly to find a workable solution to the polygamy issue. Finally, on September 25, 1890, President Woodruff issued the Manifesto ending plural marriage.<sup>8</sup> The Manifesto was officially submitted to the church in General Conference on October 6, 1890, and it was unanimously accepted by those present.<sup>9</sup>

In the nearly one hundred years since the Manifesto, the vast majority of the members of the church have complied with it. The Manifesto, it should be noted, only prohibited the creation of new plural marriages. The church did not abolish any of the polygamist units that existed at that time. These unions continued to function and children were born into these families until at least 1929.<sup>10</sup>

In the years after the Manifesto was issued there was some confusion over the church's policy concerning plural marriage. Between 1890 and 1904, contrary to the First Presidency's instruction, two members of the Quorum of the Twelve continued to take additional plural wives and to advocate plural marriage. These two men were apostles John W. Taylor, the son of President Taylor, and Mathias Cowley. In 1905 John W. Taylor was excommunicated from the church. Elder Cowley was dropped from the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and disfellowshipped. By being disfellowshipped, Elder Cowley's membership status was placed on probation for refusing to comply with the church's prohibition against new plural marriages.<sup>11</sup>

In 1904, President Joseph F. Smith issued what is now known as the Second Manifesto. He made it clear that there were to be no additional plural marriages performed by members of the church inside or outside of the United States. This statement was in part necessitated because some of the members felt that they could continue to enter into plural marriage as long as they did so outside the United States. President Smith's Manifesto further stated that those who continued to advocate or engage in new plural marriages were to be excommunicated from the church.<sup>12</sup>

By 1905, the church leadership was united and the Second Manifesto had the full support of both the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve (with the exception of the two members who were dropped). President Smith's action permanently resolved the confusion concerning plural marriage within the church. It had also firmly established that all persons who engaged in or actively advocated plural marriage were to be excommunicated from the church.<sup>13</sup>

In 1906, President Joseph F. Smith made a special trip to meet with the members of the church who lived in the colonies in Mexico to explain the Second Manifesto to them. From these meetings, it was clear that the members of the church in the colonies fully supported their prophet's commitment to end plural marriage. At that time, there were just a few families who continued to advocate plural marriage out of the 4,000 members who lived there.<sup>14</sup> Following President Smith's visit in 1906, only two or three families in the colonies continued to advocate plural marriage.

The most notable exception to the colonists compliance with President Smith's Manifesto of 1904 was Alma Dayer LeBaron and his children. Alma and his wife were excommunicated from the church in 1923 for practicing and advocating polygamy.<sup>15</sup> Generally, the small number of people in the community who continued to take plural wives did so quietly and kept a low profile. Alma, and later, his sons, were the only ones who aggressively advocated polygamy.<sup>16</sup>

In the early 1940's, Ross LeBaron became the first of Alma LeBaron's sons to continue to advocate polygamy. In 1944 the five oldest sons of Alma LeBaron were excommunicated from the LDS Church. Two of the brothers were at the time serving as LDS missionaries in the city of Ozumba, in the State of Mexico, when they were dishonorably released from their missions and excommunicated.<sup>17</sup> This was the first and, to the author's knowledge, the only public apostasy from the church over the practice of plural marriage, or for any other reason among the colonists in Mexico.

The only other significant group of Mormon fundamentalists in Mexico, besides those who followed the LeBarons, was a small group of followers of Margarito Bautista. He was largely responsible for a major rift between the church



and a number of Saints in the Mexico City area in 1936.<sup>18</sup> Joel, Ervil and Alma LeBaron had some contacts with Bautista in Ozumba in 1944, prior to their being excommunicated from the church. It is not known how much influence these visits had on the LeBaron brothers. It is, however, unlikely that Bautista was responsible for the LeBaron brothers' decision to break with the church. Alma Dayer LeBaron had already strongly encouraged his sons to practice plural marriage as they grew into adulthood.<sup>19</sup>

Between 1944 and the early 1960's when Bautista died, there were occasional contacts between his followers and the LeBarons.<sup>20</sup> Despite a brief agreement to unite into a common church, they never agreed on theological matters. Both the LeBaron and Bautista groups maintained contacts with Mormon fundamentalist and polygamous groups in Utah.<sup>21</sup>

Bautista and his followers established their own colony in 1937 in Oaxaca, which they called New Jerusalem. Although this community exists today, it has never attracted more than a small number of followers.<sup>22</sup> The significance of Bautista and his group of polygamists lies in their ties to similar groups mainly in the state of Utah. They are almost totally isolated from the members of the church in Mexico and the vast majority of whom have never heard of Bautista.<sup>23</sup>

The LeBarons, like the followers of Bautista, were not well known among the members of the church in Mexico.<sup>24</sup> However, between 1955 and the early 1970's, the LeBarons' missionary efforts were focused at trying to convert Latter-day Saints in the United States to their church.

The Mormons who practiced polygamy called themselves fundamentalists and justified their actions in similar ways. The most common justification for taking a plural wife is the claim that Wilford Woodruff was not authorized by God to

discontinue the practice.<sup>25</sup> This logic is further amplified by the claims of a Lorin C. Woolley. In 1929 Woolley claimed that he was a guard at a series of meetings that took place on September 26 and 27, 1886 where President John Taylor and a number of church leaders discussed ending plural marriage. During the course of these meetings, he said that he became aware that Jesus Christ and the Prophet Joseph Smith had appeared to the men inside the room that he was guarding. President Taylor, according to Woolley, was instructed by the Lord that they were never to abandon plural marriage. It was impossible to verify Woolley's claims when they became public in 1929 since all those supposedly in attendance at the meeting with President Taylor had died. Nor was any evidence given by the men who, according to Woolley, were at the meeting that supported his claims.<sup>26</sup>

Woolley also claimed that President Taylor prophesied that the seventh president of the church (Heber J. Grant) would lead it "into bondage both temporally and spiritually." He also claimed that in the administration of the seventh president that one Mighty and Strong would come forth and save the church. The Mighty and Strong person Woolley spoke of was referred to in the 85th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. This leader was to "rise up" and save the church from corrupt leaders. Several of the LeBaron brothers in time would claim to be the "Mighty and Strong" leader that Woolley described.<sup>27</sup>

Other complaints about the church that many Mormon fundamentalists make are: 1. Many priesthood ordinances performed in the church are not performed properly. 2. Missionaries no longer serve without "purse or script" (relying on those they come in with contact to support them). This was a practice of the early missionaries of the church. It ended when modern banking methods made it possible for families and friends to send money directly to their missionaries serving

in different parts of the world. 3. The temple ordinances were changed improperly. 4. The church no longer advocated the social-economic system taught by Joseph Smith, known as the United Order.<sup>28</sup>

The LeBarons also claimed that through their great-grandfather, Ben Johnson, they inherited the right to lead the church. According to the LeBarons, Ben Johnson was adopted as a son by Joseph Smith and the Prophet granted him the right of succession in the church.<sup>29</sup> Ben Johnson was in fact a close friend of Joseph Smith and was a well-known and respected member of the church when he died in 1905. However, at no time did Johnson ever indicate that he was given any special keys or authority from Joseph Smith nor did he ever claim to have been adopted by him.<sup>30</sup>

The LeBaron brothers officially organized The Church of The Firstborn of The Fulness Of Times in Sandy, Utah, a suburb of Salt Lake City, on September 21, 1955.<sup>31</sup> For a number of years the LeBarons maintained a mailing address in the Salt Lake City area. Apparently the church no longer exists in the Salt Lake City area as the author was unable to find any listing for The Church Of The First Born in the 1990 Salt Lake City Metropolitan Phone Directory.

Despite organizing his church in Utah, Joel LeBaron, his brothers, and a few converts continued to live in Colonial LeBaron near Galeana, Chihuahua, Mexico. This colony remained the main gathering place for those who joined the new church for the next decade.

In 1958, the first significant number of converts began to join the newly organized church and settle in Colonial LeBaron. These converts were made up mostly of a small number of former LDS missionaries who earlier in 1958 had been excommunicated for advocating plural marriage while serving missions in France.

The leader of these ex-missionaries was William Tucker who had begun a fundamentalist study group among some of his co-missionaries in France.<sup>32</sup>

Eventually Ervil LeBaron, along with William Tucker and a number of his missionary followers, established small proselytizing missions in California, Utah, and other western states. The missionaries were aggressive and would frequently hand out literature and challenge Mormons as they would leave local Stake Conferences and at the church's General Conference held in Salt Lake City.<sup>33</sup>

Some additional converts were made through the efforts of the church's missionary force. A number of the converts and most of the ex-French missionaries settled in Colonial LeBaron. Although the number of members of the Church of The First Born was never large, they did begin to develop a chicken-packing and egg cooperative in Colonial LeBaron that for a time enjoyed some success.<sup>34</sup>

Beginning in 1966, the Church Of The First Born began to experience serious conflicts in Colonial LeBaron. At first the problems were centered around the LeBaron brothers fighting to see which one would replace Joel as the leader of their church. By the end of the year, two murders would cost the lives of a member of the colony and a visiting fundamentalists from Utah. Mauro Gutierrez, a Mexican covert was murdered while attempting to break up a fight outside a bar in a nearby town of Babicora. Although this murder was never solved it was believed to have been committed by at least three men who opposed Gutierrez attempts to acquire additional wives from their community. The second murder occurred within the colony itself; this victim was John Butchereit who was there to assist the LeBarons in establishing their poultry business. This murder was also never solved.<sup>35</sup>

After the Gutierrez and Butchereit murders, it became clear to William Tucker and his ex-French missionaries that they were no longer safe in Colonial LeBaron. Tucker's decision to leave the church in 1967 deprived it of a sizable number of members and almost all of its missionaries.<sup>36</sup>

Shortly after the Tucker group's departure from the colony, Ervil LeBaron also left the church. In time, Ervil formed a small, but loyal group of fanatical followers who between 1971 and 1977 were believed to have killed as many as fourteen people in Mexico, California, Utah, Texas, and possibly Oklahoma. Among those people whom Ervil was believed to have ordered killed were his brother Joel and one of his daughters who was pregnant. Two members of his cult were convicted of the murders that he was believed to have ordered his followers to commit. One of Ervil's wives, Vonda White, was convicted in California of murdering Dean Vest. In 1975 Vonda killed Vest in her San Diego home at Ervil's orders to prevent Vest from leaving his church. Vonda White was sentenced in 1979 to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. Ervil was convicted in 1979 of ordering the death of Dr. Rulon C. Allred, a prominent polygamist leader. The murder was committed in Dr. Allred's office near Salt Lake City, Utah, by two women wearing costumes. Ervil ordered the murder in an apparent plot to take over the polygamous church that Allred led. Ervil was sentenced to life imprisonment in the Utah State Prison where he died of a heart attack on August 16, 1981.<sup>37</sup>

Today, as far as the author can determine, The Church of The First Born of The Fulness of Times no longer exists. All of the seven LeBaron brothers except Virlin has died.<sup>38</sup> The significance of the LeBarons lies only in the notoriety that their church and Ervil's crimes attracted in the United States. Few people in the church in Mexico today have ever heard of the LeBarons or of their church.

CHAPTER FIVE  
YEARS OF CONFLICT IN CENTRAL MEXICO 1936 TO 1946

Beginning in 1931, a number of the Saints in Central Mexico became frustrated with the years of isolation from the main body of the church. They were also anxious to see the church grow more rapidly in Mexico. As a result of these concerns, they began to petition the church in Salt Lake to have a native Mexican called to be the next President of the Mexico Mission.<sup>1</sup> Considering the circumstances that the Mexican Saints were living under in 1931, their concerns were understandable. The church in Utah agreed that it was time to re-establish the Mexican Mission in Mexico City and appointed Howard W. Pratt as the new Mission President in 1936.<sup>2</sup>

President Pratt was chosen in part because he was born in the Mormon Colonies in the State of Chihuahua. According to the Mexican Constitution, Pratt could function as the President of the Mexican Mission, since under Mexican law only native-born citizens could hold ecclesiastical positions.<sup>3</sup> However, to the Mexican Saints, Pratt had two serious shortcomings. First, he lacked "the tact and empathy" needed to meet their needs. Second and equally important, he was an Anglo who had been born in the colonies.<sup>4</sup>

The conflict between the Saints in the Mexico City area and President Pratt was greatly aggravated by the arrival of Margarito Bautista in 1934. Bautista, a long-time member of the church, had lived in Salt Lake City for many years. He

had held some minor positions in the church while he lived in Utah. As a result of his activity in the church, he was ordained to the priesthood office of a High Priest. Once in Mexico City he began to push the idea of having a local member called to become the next Mexican Mission President. He published a book entitled La Evolution de Mexico: Sus Verdaderos Progenitors Y Su El Destino de America y Europa.<sup>5</sup> The book advocated a strong Mexican-Lamanite nationalism. Bautista classified the Lamanites as members of the House of Israel and insisted that the American members were Gentiles and were not of Israelite lineage as the church claimed. He lent credence to the Mexican Saints' demand that one of their own people become the Mission President by claiming that the Americans, being Gentiles, had no right to rule over the Mexican Saints who were Israelites.<sup>6</sup>

After a second and unsuccessful attempt by the dissatisfied members in the Mexico City area to voice their concerns, the stress between President Pratt and the members reached the breaking point. The church began to take a more traditional approach to dissension within its ranks. One of the church leaders from Salt Lake, Elder Antoine R. Ivins, condemned the actions of those who petitioned for a Mexican Mission President.<sup>7</sup> The church's policy in resolving internal conflicts, he said, has always been to "follow the Brethren," or the leaders of the church.<sup>8</sup>

On April 26, 1936, a third attempt by the dissidents was made to resolve the issue of local leadership to their satisfaction. This meeting is now known as the Third Convention.<sup>9</sup> When the demands made by these people were not met by the brethren in Salt Lake City, Bautista and his followers rejected President Pratt's right to be their local church leader. At this time, about 600 people, or a third of the church's membership in Central Mexico, joined the Third Convention and selected from among themselves their own Mission President.<sup>10</sup>

The irony of the Third Convention's leaving the church was that it resulted as much from cultural misunderstandings as from any other factor. The Mexican Saints were proud of their ability to function independently. They were encouraged to be more independent in a letter to the members in Mexico City area by J. Reuben Clark, a member of the First Presidency of the church in Salt Lake City and the former United States Ambassador to Mexico. In the letter, President Clark also made it clear that the advocates of The Third Convention were out of order and needed to return to the church.<sup>11</sup>

However well intended the members of the church in Mexico were, they failed to understand the primary function of the Mission President. The most important function of the Mission President was not, as they had supposed, to be a regional church leader, but to be the head of a group of proselytizing missionaries.<sup>12</sup> Until a stake is organized within the boundaries of a mission, the Mission President is the ecclesiastical leader of church in that area. In time, the church devised excellent programs within its Mexican missions to develop the leadership when the membership grew large enough to form a stake in areas such as Mexico City.

Once the issue of the correct role of the Mission President was accepted by the members of the church in central Mexico, the years of mistrust of the Anglo Mission Presidents began to subside. It took ten years of constant effort by the church in Salt Lake City before the causes of the conflict were understood and could be corrected. It was through the patient efforts of Arwell L. Pierce, President of the Mexican Mission from 1942 to 1948, that made the resolution of the problems between the Third Convention and the church in Salt Lake City possible. It was ironic that President Pierce was able to work with the members of the Third



Convention since he was an American citizen, not a Mexican citizen. He was only allowed to enter the country after he received special permission by the Mexican government to serve as the President of the Mexican Mission. The Mexican government apparently decided to consider President Pierce a Mexican citizen even though he had been born in El Paso, Texas, since he had been raised in the Mormon Colonies. The final obstacles that divided the two "Mormon" Churches in Mexico were resolved by President Pierce. After he won the trust of the members of The Third Convention, he convinced them that the spiritual independence that they sought would best be achieved through the creation of a stake in the Mexico City area.<sup>13</sup>

By 1946 President Pierce had persuaded the Brethren in Salt Lake City that The "Third Convention" problem had been poorly handled by the church. He indicated to the brethren that some of the Convention's complaints were justified.<sup>14</sup>

The resolution of the conflict between the members of the Third Convention and the church in Salt Lake City was aided by the conduct of the dissidents themselves during their ten-year absence from the church. F. Lamond Tullis in Mormons In Mexico wrote:

The Conventionists had generally maintained doctrinal purity, had done vigorous proselyting, and had promoted much interest in The Book of Mormon.<sup>15</sup>

The division within the church in Central Mexico ended in 1946. In a conference that George Albert Smith, the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, attended in Mexico City, the members of the Third Convention were accepted back into the LDS Church in full fellowship.<sup>16</sup> Prior to the conference, the status of all but one of the excommunicated members' had been changed to that of being disfellowshipped.<sup>17</sup> In the LDS Church, members who

are disfellowshipped are on probation; once their problems with the church have been rectified, they are returned to full fellowship. The only member of the Third Convention not accepted back into the church was Margarito Bautista who had been excommunicated for practicing plural marriage.<sup>18</sup>

The members of The Third Convention who had belonged to the church prior to the division were accepted back into the church without being baptized again. However, those who had joined the Third Convention after it had broken with the Mormon Church were formally baptized into the Mormon Church since their prior baptism was performed without its approval. A total of 1,000 members of the Third Convention rejoined the church in 1946.<sup>19</sup>

## Chapter Six

### Reconciliation And Growth, 1946 To 1960

Once the church in Central Mexico was unified under the guidance of President Pierce, it was in a position to address the needs of its members and to start a serious proselytizing program. In 1946, after the Third Convention, the church had 4,962 members in Mexico. (See Table 2.) The church's Mexican population was not only small, but it made up less than .005% of the total world-wide church population of 996,505.<sup>1</sup> Most of the members of the church in Mexico were scattered throughout Central Mexico. As a result of the low concentration of Saints outside the colonies, there were not enough members of the church in the Mexico City area to justify the creation of a stake.<sup>2</sup>

At the end of The Second World War, the only foreign country other than Mexico to have a stake was Canada, which had two. Both Canadian stakes were made up of Mormon colonists who had settled in Southern Alberta just as their American cousins had settled in Northern Mexico.<sup>3</sup>

The promise of establishing a stake in the Mexico City area was the key to resolving the conflict with the Third Convention. Therefore, it was necessary for the Mexican Mission President to develop both effective proselytizing and member leadership development program before a stake could be organized. The critical mass needed to organize a stake is generally 2,000 to 4,000 members who are concentrated in a reasonably close geographic area.<sup>4</sup> The actual size of a stake

depends on the number of members with sufficient experience and commitment to fill the hundreds of different ward, branch and stake-level positions needed to operate properly. The Colonial Juarez Stake is a case in point. Despite having only about one thousand members in 1946, it had a fully functioning stake. The stake was made up almost exclusively of descendents of the original colonists who settled in Northern Mexico in the late Nineteenth Century.<sup>5</sup>

Little is written about the church in Mexico between 1946 and 1960. However, it is known that missionary work had developed sufficiently that by 1956 the Northern Mexican Mission was formed from the Mexican Mission.<sup>6</sup> The church experienced rapid growth during this period. By 1960 there were 17,724 members in Mexico.<sup>7</sup> Based on the 4,962 members who belonged to the church in 1946, the church grew by almost 340% during this fifteen-year period.

From 1946 to 1960, all of the mission presidents in Mexico were from the colonies in Northern Mexico. During this time a growing number of native Mexican men were given responsible administrative positions.<sup>8</sup> Although these were not senior ecclesiastical positions, they did have meaningful responsibility for handling the church's legal matters in Mexico as well as for purchasing land, constructing new church buildings, and other related functions. These administrative positions enabled a number of Mexican Saints to gain management skills that were invaluable in the administration of the wards and stakes that were formed beginning in 1961.

The church began to develop formalized missionary programs at the end of the Second World War. These programs used standardized teaching lessons and improved missionary training.<sup>9</sup> When these programs were coupled with a large

increase in the number of young men and women serving missions, the church was able to grow rapidly in many parts of the world, including Mexico. (See Table 1.)

As the missionary program began to generate large numbers of converts, the church realized that many of these converts were illiterate or poorly educated. As a result of the critical need of its newly converted members to obtain an education, the church began a major effort to educate its school-age children beginning in the 1950's. The church-run schools were deemed necessary because the Mexican government at that time was unable to educate more than 40% of its school-age children.<sup>10</sup> By the late 1970's, the church had built an extensive school system that educated thousands of children a year. This program apparently was never intended to be permanent. Most of these schools were eventually closed by 1982 when the church felt that the national government was able to educate all of the members' children.<sup>12</sup>

Most importantly, the postwar years in Mexico were a time of healing old wounds that had existed among the long-time Mexican Saints in Central Mexico. The church developed programs to insure future membership growth and to meet the needs of its members. By 1960, the foundation was laid for the establishment of the first stake in Mexico City. Not all of the problems of The Third Convention period were resolved by 1960. In fact, a number of cultural differences lingered between the Mexican and Anglo members well into the 1960's.<sup>13</sup>

CHAPTER SEVEN  
THE RAPID GROWTH OF EVANGELICAL RELIGIONS IN MEXICO  
AND THEIR EFFECT ON THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

The growth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Mexico has closely mirrored the growth of other evangelical churches in that country. The purpose of this chapter is to show how the various evangelical churches have grown in Mexico and how they have impacted the traditional religion of Mexico, The Roman Catholic Church. Unfortunately, few churches keep detailed records or publish membership information in Mexico. So it is impossible to know with any real accuracy how many people belong to the various religions that exist in Mexico. What is known is that in 1900 only a handful of people in Mexico belonged to a Christian religion other than the Catholic Church. By 1980 the population of Mexico was estimated to be 92.6% Catholic and 3.3% Protestant while another 1% belonged to other religions, including Jewish.<sup>1</sup>

Some evangelical churches active in Mexico do not consider themselves to be Protestant religion. These churches are The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, The Jehovah's Witnesses and the Seventh-Day Adventists. The LDS Church will only be briefly included in this discussion since it was extensively covered earlier.

Due to the lack of available published material on non-LDS churches in Mexico it was not possible for the author to gain as complete knowledge of those churches as he did with the LDS Church. A few key assumptions are used

in this chapter. These assumptions include: 1. That the evangelical churches in Mexico grow at similar rates to elsewhere in Latin America. 2. That the reasons these churches are attractive to large numbers of people in Mexico are the same as elsewhere in Latin America. These assumptions are valid in the opinion of the author because the literature that is available treated all of the people in Latin America alike.

There are some important conditions that make Mexico different from the rest of Latin America. These conditions include: 1. Mexico has maintained a stable democratic government for over fifty years, while many nations in the region have been dominated by the military. 2. The Mexican Constitution is very restrictive when it comes to religion. The Constitution specifically bans public criticism of the government or of government officials by the clergy, requires government ownership of all places of worship, and bans foreign clergy within the country. These restrictions on religion were aimed at reducing the power, wealth and influence of the Catholic Church. However, the provisions of the Mexican Constitution that deal with organized religion have been more or less applied equally to all other churches. These provisions include a prohibition on wearing religious robes, collars, or other items of apparel unique to a priest or to a minister. Another provision requires that all church property used for ecclesiastical purposes must be deeded over to the Mexican Government. However, once they have deeded their property over to the Government, the churches are still able to use it as they see fit. Churches according to Mexican law are not to criticize the Mexican Constitution or any governmental official. Finally, all ordained clergy who minister to Mexican citizens must be Mexican Citizens by birth. Despite the strong anti-Catholic bias of

the 1917 Constitution, as late as 1980 easily 90% of the population of the country remained Catholic.

According to the Catholic Church, the various Protestant religions (which includes all non-Catholic religions in Mexico) have attracted at least 7.4% of the population of the country. The Catholic Church reported that in metropolitan Tijuana, 10% of the population belonged to evangelical or Protestant churches. In Quintana Roo the non-Catholic Christian populations is estimated to be 60% of the population.<sup>2</sup> The membership of the various Protestant and evangelical Christian churches today probably exceeds 10% of the country's population. This represents roughly a 100% increase in membership since 1980 which is appropriately the same growth rate that the Protestant and evangelical Christians experience in the rest of Latin America. (See Table 6.) Due to the poor quality of the information available, it is possible that the Christian, non-Catholic population of Mexico could be 10% or greater since the above data was based on 1980 numbers. The Latter-day Saints have grown in Mexico by 267% between 1980 and 1989. (See Table 2.) Other evangelical churches have shown significant increases in their memberships during this period. (See Table 6.)

Based on the Catholic Church's own estimates, there were in 1988 more than 2,000,000 members of the Assemblies of God Churches, 500,000 Adventists and 200,000 Jehovah's Witnesses.<sup>3</sup> They did not include any estimates of the number of Latter-day Saints. However, based on the information found in Table 2, there were probably 500,000 members of that church in Mexico in 1988.

To understand the rapid growth of the various Protestant and evangelical churches, it is important to understand how the Catholic Church reacts to their success. One of the most striking things that a reader sees in examining the



literature written by the Catholic Church is its negativism towards the more successful evangelical churches. These churches are gaining large numbers of converts from the Catholic Church. One article typical of many that the Catholic Church has published states:

Groups such as the Jehovah's Witnesses tend to infuriate nationalist sentiment by refusing to the flag, sing the national anthem and vote in elections. The Mormons... disturb nationalists who claim the church pushes "the American way of life"<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, there are numerous references to the fact that almost all of the evangelical churches are from the United States. This fact leads the Catholic leadership "to advance the conspiracy theory," a theory which includes the notion that the CIA or powerful Americans bankroll the various Protestant and evangelical sects' missionary efforts.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, many of the above articles state that the Catholic Bishops are concerned over the high number of Protestant conversions because:

The sects are infecting national culture and identity .... The Protestant missionaries are (acting as) Beachheads of U.S. imperialism. It is their way of dominating us without arms .... The future of the nation is at stake.<sup>6</sup>

The conversion of large numbers of Catholics to Protestantism in 1983 even concerned Pope John Paul who feared that this movement could "polarize" the people and lead to serious social conflicts.<sup>7</sup>

Clearly the Roman Catholic Church has been very defensive over the loss of perhaps 5,000,000 Hispanics in the United States, 3,000,000 in Mexico and another 12,000,000 members in the rest of Latin America.<sup>8</sup> It is obvious that the Catholic Church is aware that it is losing members rapidly. Unfortunately, most of its church's literature does not address the real reason for the growing popularity of the evangelical churches. These churches attribute their rapid membership growth in

Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America to their being better able to meet the spiritual needs of their members than does the Roman Catholic Church.

In Mexico there seems to be a tremendous pent-up demand by a large number of people to open up the Scriptures and discuss the teachings of Jesus Christ with a religious teacher. This point was made clear in a series of articles in The San Jose Mercury News in February and March 1990. According to these articles, most Hispanic Catholics have had little opportunity to study the Scriptures in their own church. In one article the author indicates that a Mrs. Parra, like many Hispanics, greatly enjoys visiting with the LDS missionaries. Although she insisted that she would never join the Mormon Church, she was disappointed when a religious discussion with the missionaries ended. Her response at the end of the meeting was that the "girl missionaries always bring good messages."<sup>9</sup>

During a conference of Latin American Bishops which Pope John Paul II attended in Haiti in 1983, a proposal was made to make greater use of the Bible in teaching their members in Latin America.<sup>10</sup> None of the literature that the author reviewed indicated that this recommendation has been widely implemented. It seems that as the population of Mexico and other Latin American nations becomes more literate, the people have developed a strong desire to read the scriptures and discuss them with others. Extensive use of the scriptures has enabled the evangelical churches to attract more than five million converts a year in Latin America. (See Table 6.)

An important secondary issue that greatly aids the evangelical churches is that they directly involve their members in the process of becoming spiritually "saved." In the Catholic Church the members are not generally able to become actively involved in how their church functions or in the interpretation of its

theology. The opposite is true of the evangelical religions. In those churches being converted or "saved" becomes a highly personal and emotionally charged event in a person's life. It requires the active living of one's religion in accordance with the moral values found by studying the Scriptures.<sup>11</sup>

Many people feel that the Catholic religion is a passive religion that does not encourage its members to become involved. They also feel that the church has a basically negative theology. Many Catholics feel that the church encourages them to accept passively what life offers and not attempt to change their lot in life. Each person is to accept his or hers life's conditions without complaint. Traditionally this attitude was taught to the poor peasants to encourage them to forget their poverty in this life by concentrating on the good life that they will receive in Heaven if they obey God's commandments. This concept in turn encourages the faithful member of the Catholic Church not to complain about the social and economic problems that they must deal with on a daily basis. Today these concepts are being rejected by many members of the church. All of these concepts work to the advantage of the evangelical missionaries who can show by teaching directly from the Scriptures how one can improve his life.<sup>12</sup>

John Hawkins, an Associate Professor at Brigham Young University, during an interview with the author, stated that the Mexican people like to feel that they are making progress in their lives. He also stated that a progressively larger number of people in that country will reject a religion that does not encourage them to make progress and show them how to improve the quality of their lives. His research in Mexico and Guatemala has shown that the success of the evangelical churches is directly tied to their teaching prospective converts how they can live better richer lives by actively living the teaching of Jesus Christ. Most of the people who join an

evangelical church were born and raised as Catholics. These same people feel that the Catholic Church is distant and does not get as actively involved in their lives as the evangelical churches do with their smaller and more personable congregations.

To illustrate how strongly these people feel about their new-found faith many of them insist that they are not living their religions properly despite the tremendous efforts they make. According to Professor Hawkins the people who join the evangelical churches take their new-found religious beliefs seriously. They are also insecure in that they do not feel that they are ever able to live their religions as they should. The Professor added that a key factor in the conversion of the people in Mexico to an evangelical church is the social bonding of the new members into their new churches. Unless the new convert develops strong social ties with the new congregation, they tend to stop attending church. This is true even though they may still adhere to the tenets of their new faith.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the rapid growth of many evangelical churches in Mexico, a large number of their converts are having a difficult time living the standards of their new religion. Many people in Mexico, like their American neighbors, drink to an excess or have difficulty living the moral standards required by the evangelical Christian churches. Besides breaking their old habits, many of these converts must deal with the social pressures to return to their previous lifestyle and rejoin the Catholic Church. A sizable number who refuse to give up their new religion and values are socially excluded by their friends and are often treated like outcasts by their own families.<sup>14</sup>

Despite social and family pressures not to break with traditional values and religious beliefs, progressively larger numbers of Mexicans and Latin Americans are joining evangelical Christian churches. The Assemblies Of God Churches are easily

the largest of the evangelical religions in Mexico and in Latin America. It is estimated that two-thirds to three-quarters of the non-Catholic Christians living in Latin America belong to the Assembly Of God Church or one of the other related Pentecostal Churches functioning there.<sup>15</sup>

Based on the degree of success that the evangelical churches throughout Latin America have experienced, it is highly likely that they will continue to double their membership every ten years, just as they have for the past four decades. The evangelical churches are expected to grow in the future for the same reasons that they have during the past forty to fifty years. It has been estimated by some Catholic and evangelical observers that by the early part of the Twenty-First Century the evangelical Christians will outnumber the Catholics in Latin America.<sup>16</sup>

The mainline Protestant churches based in the United States are not enjoying the same rapid growth as the evangelical Christian churches in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America.<sup>17</sup> These churches include the Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, and the Episcopalian churches which generally do not maintain extensive missionary programs in Mexico or in other parts of Latin America. They also tend to avoid "sheep stealing," the practice of attempting to convert members of another Christian faith whether Catholic or Protestant to their church.

In Latin America the traditional Protestant and Catholic churches, are active in the social, economic, political, and environmental issues. The evangelical churches in this region however, essentially ignore those issues.<sup>18</sup> The number of articles in Latinamerica Press and LADOC, both of which are pro-Catholic publications, that advocate social change vastly outnumber those that address religious and moral issues. Titles of the articles include "Mexican Bishops Criticize Constitution," "Native Peoples Organize, Resist Western Encroachment," and

"Mexican Bishops Decry U.S. Immigration Law."<sup>19</sup> Similar subjects of articles were found in the more traditional American Protestant church publications.

The Pentecostals in particular have been successful in Latin America because they emphasize just one thing: how a person can be "saved" from his or her sins and come unto Christ.<sup>20</sup> The missionary approach that the Pentecostals use has been very simple. They organized "New Testament Churches" so that their message could be easily delivered to prospective converts.<sup>21</sup>

By focusing narrowly on the teachings found in the New Testament the Pentecostal missionaries could readily claim that they were teaching the words of the Savior. Such a message would be simple and direct. By concentrating on individual salvation, the evangelical churches offer potential converts the feeling that they can control how they conduct their lives. Since the conversion process in the Pentecostal religion, like other evangelical churches, tends to be a powerful personal experience, the new converts feel that they are able to make positive behavior changes in their lives. These changes in turn reinforce their commitment to their new religion since once again they feel that it has enabled them to become a better person and a Christian.<sup>22</sup>

As the converts change their lives for the better, they encourage their families, friends and acquaintances to investigate their new-found religion. This process attracts even more new members to their churches. By avoiding the social, political and environmental issues that the Catholic and the traditional Protestant churches often focus upon, the evangelical churches avoid dealing with the parts of the lives of their people that the people have little or no control over. This also enables these churches to avoid getting caught up in the controversies that arise whenever one tries to solve complex social, political or environmental matters.

It is the author's opinion that the evangelical churches are successful because they do a few important things very well. First, they stick to what they do best: teach from the scriptures what the Savior taught. Second, they emphasize that overcoming one's sins is the best way to become happy and feel successful. Third, they teach that their religion has real power in the lives of their members because it is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. Finally, they avoid getting caught up in the problems of society that they cannot control or that are extremely complex and controversial.

Each church that operates in Mexico must advocate values consistent with their religious beliefs. The evangelical churches concentrate on helping their members live their particular religion. I could not find a single example of one of these churches making public statements about such issues as abortion, governmental policies or the environment. It should be noted that in Mexico it is illegal for any church official to advocate changes in the laws of that country or to criticize any governmental official. Should any of the evangelical churches in Mexico attempt to become politically active, they would almost certainly risk being banned or severely restricted by the Mexican Government. The Mexican Constitution does not guarantee its citizens the freedom of religion that exists in the United States of America.

The evangelical churches in Mexico are almost exclusively headquartered in the United States. Since they tend to be identified as American religions, it is particularly important for them to comply with all Mexican laws. In reviewing the literature on the various evangelical churches I did not find that their conduct or the doctrines they taught in Mexico differed from elsewhere in Latin America.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only evangelical church that the author was able to find that has a specific policy that it will obey the laws of the countries that it operates in. The church's policy is found in one of their scriptures known as the Doctrine and Covenants which states:

Let no man break the laws of the land, for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land. Wherefore, be subject to the powers that be, until he reigns whose right it is to reign, and subdues all enemies under his feet.<sup>23</sup>

The Catholic Church in Mexico was frequently critical of the Mexican Government in articles in LatinAmerica Press and LADOC. These articles were based on the talks or writings by Catholic ecclesiastical leaders and could be considered to violate the Mexican Constitution. The author was unable to find any actions that the Mexican Government took against the Catholic Church as a result of these articles.

I also feel that the Catholic Church and the mainline Protestant churches are not able to attract new members or maintain their congregations because they have forgotten that the primary duty of a Christian church is to teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to its members. These churches get caught up in trying to solve the key social issues of the day, deemphasis the Scriptures and often strive to persuade others to implement solutions to problems which may not be popular. The result is that these churches, in the author's opinion, become identified with social or political issues instead of the actual theology that they espouse. When this happens, some members will leave their church and become attracted to another church that they feel better meets their spiritual needs. I believe this is one reason why the evangelical churches have been so successful in Latin America.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### YEARS OF RAPID GROWTH 1960 TO 1989

According to Agricol Lozano, a prominent Mexican church leader and author, 1960 was the beginning of the explosive growth of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Mexico. To Elder Lozano and other members in Mexico, 1960 was the "Year of The Miracle." That year, however, was also one of the most challenging since the Convention years. Beginning in 1959 the Mexican government, in accordance with the nation's constitution that prohibited non-native-born clergy from serving in the country, ordered all foreign missionaries and clergy to leave the country.<sup>1</sup>

This crisis, according to Elder Lozano, was resolved by calling sufficient native missionaries to staff the two missions operating within Mexico at the time.<sup>2</sup> According to Lozano, it was a miracle that the church in Mexico was able to supply enough local members within a year to replace the hundreds of mostly American born missionaries expelled that were from the country. In 1961, a small number of missionaries from the United States were again allowed in Mexico. However, Elder Lozano, in an article in the May 5, 1985 issue of the Church News, indicates that the vast majority of the missionaries serving in Mexico were Mexican and did not come from the colonies. Elder Lozano maintained that the church's ability to maintain a missionary program in Mexico under these conditions was a major accomplishment.<sup>3</sup>

The emphasis on developing a strong local missionary force within a country is much more important to the Mormon Church than the number of converts that they might make. The mission field is the church's main leadership training ground. It is there that many members learn the importance of giving lifelong service to the church.<sup>4</sup> It is important to the church that missionaries remain active and faithful after their missions are over. In fact, the leaders of the church consider a missionary's mission a failure if he or she should become inactive or leave the church regardless of how many people they may have baptized.<sup>5</sup>

In 1961 when foreign missionaries were once again allowed to proselytize in Mexico, the church's missionary program expanded rapidly. By 1968 the church had expanded the number of missions in Mexico from two to five. (See Table 3.)

While the number of the church's missions in Mexico grew rapidly, the church's membership grew even faster between 1960 and 1970. By 1970, there were 67,850 Mormons in Mexico, an increase of 383% over 1960. (See Table 2.) The addition of 50,000 members in the decade resulted in the creation of two additional stakes, including the first stake in Mexico City which was organized in 1961. (See Table 4.) The Mexico City Stake had the distinction of being the first stake organized in Latin America outside of the colonies.<sup>6</sup> The second Latin American stake was formed on May 1, 1966, in Sao Paulo, Brazil.<sup>7</sup>

The first President of the Mexico City Stake was Harold Brown, a colonist.<sup>8</sup> President Brown's First Counselor was Julio Garcia Velazquez, a former "Conventionist" leader. Brown's Second Counselor and his clerk were both Mexicans.<sup>9</sup> Almost all of the subsequent Stake Presidencies outside the colonies were made up of Mexicans.<sup>10</sup>

The second stake in Central Mexico was formed in 1967 when the Mexico City Stake was divided and the Mexico City North Stake was created. The first President of the Mexico City North Stake was Agricol Lozano, who later became the Regional Representative.<sup>11</sup> The Mexico City North Stake was only the fourth stake organized among the members of the church in Latin America.<sup>12</sup>

During the 1960's, the church in Mexico developed a number of significant programs. Perhaps the most important of these was the leadership development program. New leadership was badly needed so new stakes could be formed to keep up with the church's rapid growth. This issue was addressed by Elder A. Theodore Tuttle of The First Council Of The Seventy during the April, 1962, General Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. He said that the Mission President's primary duty was:

the organization of stakes out of mission areas and the acceptance of church responsibilities by members in stake, ward, branch and mission organizations is making for uniform operations around the world.<sup>13</sup>

In the 1960's, almost all of the members of the church in Mexico were part of the various missions in the country. In 1962, the Mission Presidents in Mexico were responsible for all the members of the church in that country except those who lived in the two stakes. By 1963, almost a thousand converts a month were being baptized into the church in Mexico and Guatemala. As a result of this rapid growth, the Mission Presidents were spending more and more of their time on ecclesiastical problems. These problems included the organization, staffing and training of the leaders of the branches and districts that were located within his mission. The Mission President would also have to deal with the most serious moral problems of the members in his mission.<sup>14</sup>

The church in Salt Lake City was anxious to have new stakes organized in the missions that existed in various parts of the world. The new stake presidents would relieve the mission presidents of most of their ecclesiastical duties. This would enable the mission presidents to focus their missionaries' efforts on seeking new people to teach and baptize. The church in Salt Lake City would clearly prefer that all of the ecclesiastical responsibilities for its members worldwide be handled by the stakes, not by the missions.<sup>15</sup>

In 1964, a Mission President's Conference was held in conjunction with the Mexico City Stake Conference. The purpose of this combined conference was to provide training to the local leaders of the church. During the conference, members were instructed by the four Mission Presidents serving in Mexico, General Authorities, and leaders of the church's administration departments from Salt Lake City, Utah. The speakers taught the local members how to fill their ward, branch, and stake assignments.

The church has conducted numerous training seminars for mission and local member leaders throughout Mexico from the 1960's until the present time. According to Elder Tuttle, the object of these seminars was to establish new stakes and to insure that they all function in the same way. This standardization of church operations was being implemented world-wide during the 1960's.<sup>17</sup>

According to Harold Brown, the first President of the Mexico City Stake and a Regional Representative for the church in 1972, the development of local leadership in Mexico:

Has been sluggish. But the situations improving in spite of the increasing influx of converts, because of school and seminary (religion classes that the church offers it high school age members) programs and internal training under Priesthood supervision.<sup>18</sup>

Based on Elder Brown's comments, the rising level of education, both religious and secular, of the members has been a key ingredient in the development of local church leadership. The development of the church education system in the 1960's has improved the education level of the members in Mexico. Those schools provided both a quality secular education and, through off-campus-classes, a religious education as well.

During the early 1960's, J. Thomas Fyans, who was serving as the President of the Uruguayan Mission, developed the "Six Steps to Stakehood" program. This program was so successful that it was widely adopted throughout Latin America. Each step was designed to increase the level of responsibility delegated to each local church leader. President Fyans made sure that each branch was organized as much like a ward as possible. Each mission district had the same organization a stake would have. The church policies and procedures that govern each organization within a stake were implemented. Once the leadership of the branches and districts in the Uruguayan Mission were trained to fulfill their responsibilities, they in turn began to train the members of their congregations on how to fulfill their individual callings in the church. The development of the concept of "every member a missionary" was a key part of the "Six Steps to Stakehood" program.<sup>19</sup>

In the late 1950's David O. McKay, who was at that time the president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, issued the challenge to the entire church "every member a missionary." Members were encouraged to share their religious beliefs with their friends and acquaintances. They were also encouraged to help the full-time missionaries by providing them with the names of people that the missionaries could teach. The members were also trained to help fellowship their friends into the Church. In time, each district was expected to function with little or

no direct supervision from their Mission President. As the size of the local units grew and the number of trained leaders increased, these units became locally supervised stakes.<sup>20</sup>

The Latter-day Saints throughout Latin America began to feel that they were an integral part of the church when the top leaders of the church during the 1960's explicitly stated that they were not to be treated as "second-class citizens in the kingdom of God."<sup>21</sup> Since this attitude was projected from the President of the church downward, it undoubtedly emphasized to the North Americans that they were dealing with intelligent and capable people in Mexico and other parts of Latin America. The General Authorities' attitude was quickly detected by the people of Latin America. This reinforced their feelings of self-worth and eased their feelings of being treated like second-class members of the church.<sup>22</sup>

The church gained a number of benefits from the development of local leadership in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America. Local leadership was and still is essential to the creation of stakes and other permanent ecclesiastical units in Mexico. It was equally important to the church in Salt Lake City and in Mexico to relieve the young Mormon elders from the responsibility of being branch presidents and of holding other local church positions. This program first began to be seriously pursued in the early 1960's.<sup>23</sup>

President Harold E. Turley, while serving as the president of the Western Mexican Mission from 1960 to 1964, called local members to fill almost every leadership position in local branches. According to President Turley, between 1960 and 1964 almost all the full-time missionaries who were serving as branch president in their mission, were replaced by local members. The Western Mexican Mission from 1960 to 1964 also grew from 775 members to 4,000. The number of branches

organized in the mission increased from ten to nineteen. By 1964, there were sixteen local branch presidents in the Western Mexican Mission. In 1960, there had been just two. President Turley said that the members who lived within his mission were "progressing steadily in accepting responsibilities and were developing as members of the church."<sup>24</sup>

What President Turley did not say in his review of the four years he served as mission president was that his missionaries became more effective in their missionary efforts once they were relieved of their ecclesiastical duties. The full-time missionaries were free to spend their all their efforts finding and teaching potently converts. By replacing the full-time missionaries with local members, the image of the church in Mexico greatly improved. Once the LDS Church in Mexico was being led at the local level by native Mexicans, the impression that the people in Latin America had of the church being a "gringo" religion began to diminish.<sup>25</sup>

During the decade of the 1960's, the church rapidly expanded the number of schools that it operated in Mexico. The first Mexican school that the church built in was the Juarez Academy in Colonial Juarez in 1885.<sup>26</sup> In 1960, the church owned just three schools in Mexico.<sup>27</sup> The enrollment in the schools in 1960, probably numbered only three or four hundred students. Five new schools were opened in 1960.<sup>28</sup> By 1963, the church was operating fourteen more schools and had a total enrollment of 2,250 students.<sup>29</sup> In February, 1963, the church opened the El Arbalillo School near Mexico City. This school, unlike any of the others established in Mexico, provided an education for students from the first grade to teacher's college.<sup>30</sup>

In 1964, the church schools increased to a total of twenty-seven which enrolled 3,500 students.<sup>31</sup> All 150 of the teachers in the school system were

Mexican nationals. By January 1971, the church was operating thirty-three schools with 4101 students.<sup>32</sup> The church was careful to make sure that it complied with all the requirements so that each of its schools was certified by the national government. Despite these efforts, the church was not at first able to obtain the needed certificates since some local governmental officials refused to issue them. The needed certificates were quickly issued once the church appealed directly to the Office of the Federal Secretary of Education.<sup>33</sup>

At no time was the church able to provide educational opportunities for more than a small percentage of its members who wanted their children to attend its schools in Mexico. The government also required that the schools admit a small number of non-LDS children. Through the establishment of the church schools in Mexico, thousands of its members between 1960 and 1989 received their only chance to obtain an education. This is the reason that many of the Mexican Saints considered the church schools a "modern miracle."<sup>34</sup> The members' pride in their schools was reinforced when they constantly placed academically among the best schools in their respective states.<sup>35</sup> As mentioned earlier, the church did not intend to offer a secular education to members who could attend public schools. The church began to close its elementary and secondary schools in the late 1970's and by 1982 only two or three schools remained open.

The final program that really took form in the church in Mexico during the 1960's was temple work. Due to the limited number of members in Mexico, the church was not able to build and dedicate a temple in Mexico until 1983, when the Mexico City temple was dedicated. Until then, they had to travel either to Mesa, Arizona, or to Los Angeles, California to attend the temple. Due to the poverty of many of the members of the church in Mexico, many had to save for a year or



longer just to pay the bus fare to attend the temple. Beginning in 1945, the church arranged temple excursions to the Mesa Temple. The participants on these excursions received discount group rates for their bus fare. Food was provided by the members of the church at prearranged LDS chapels in Mexico and in the United States. The Saints who went to the temple were also able to stay overnight in LDS chapels along the way at no cost. This program enabled more than a thousand people a year to attend the temple by the early 1960's.<sup>36</sup>

In November 1962, 1,200 members of the church from Mexico traveled by bus to attend the Mesa Temple. They traveled in two different excursions from all parts of Mexico to spend five days attending the temple. In order to make the trip more affordable, the LDS Churches in the Mesa area provided housing and meals for those attending the temple.<sup>37</sup>

Elder Spencer W. Kimball of The Council Of The Twelve told those who attended the 1962 excursion in Spanish "That there can be no true church without temples. The true church has always been a temple-building people." Elder Kimball later said that "the temple work is not limited to the rich or the educated. Even the poorest man can go to the temple and receive the same blessings as the most wealthy." Elder Mark E. Peterson, also of the Council Of The Twelve, spoke to the second group of Saints from Mexico who attended the Mesa Temple in November 1962.<sup>38</sup>

Mexicans who traveled to the United States to do temple work did not take the trip lightly. In November 1964, one group of 688 members performed 4,128 endowments, or six per person.<sup>39</sup> As mentioned earlier, the endowment is where a faithful member of the church makes a covenant in a temple to obey all of God's commandments. Each endowment takes an average of two to three hours to

perform. Only one endowment can be performed at a time, so it would be difficult for a person to perform more than three endowments in a day.<sup>40</sup> Since there was no mention of baptism for the dead or proxy sealings of families, it must be assumed that the majority of the Mexican members spent at least two to three full days working in the temple. All the work that these people did in the temple was done in Spanish.<sup>41</sup>

By 1970, the Mormon church in Mexico was firmly established in many parts of the country. There were 67,850 members living in three stakes and five missions. All the stake and mission programs of the church that the church's members in the United States enjoyed had been put in place in Mexico. Most importantly, the Mexican people could see that they were assuming more and more of the church leadership positions within their country.

Between the end of the Second World War and 1970, the church had grown into an important international religion of nearly three million people. (See Table 1.) How did an American-based religion become accepted in Mexico? To answer this question, one must first examine how the Latter-Day Saints explain their church's remarkable success to each other. Then it is important to explain the church's success to a non-Latter-day Saint.

Latter-day Saints would explain their success in Mexico to each other by saying that since it is the true Church of Jesus Christ, it will be attractive to the "honest in heart" or to those who honestly seek to do what is right in the sight of God. Second, many people in Mexico are attracted to the church because they are Lamanites (of Indian ancestry). Third, the church offers the people of Mexico many teachings and principles that, if accepted and lived, would help them become a more Christ-like people. These principles were discussed in some detail in Chapter One.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is successful in Mexico because, like other evangelical Christian churches active in Mexico, it teaches directly from the scriptures. Many Mexicans are anxious to be taught from the scriptures about Jesus Christ. In recent years, the LDS Church has also involved large numbers of its Mexican members in the direct operation of its congregations.<sup>42</sup>

The current success of the Latter-day Saints in Mexico, as with other evangelical Christian churches, is possible because of the rapidly weakening influence of the Catholic Church over its members.<sup>43</sup> The relationship between the Catholic Church and the Mexican government has also been a factor weakening traditional ties between the church in Rome and the people of Mexico. Beginning in 1917 the Mexican constitution greatly restricted the ownership of property by a church, outlawed the use of foreign clergy within the country, and placed a number of severe restrictions on the clergy serving in that country.<sup>44</sup> Although these restrictions were applied to all religions in Mexico, they had the greatest impact upon the Catholic Church since it was heavily dependent upon foreign clergy for the operation of the church. In addition, the use of its large land holdings and wealth was greatly restricted.<sup>45</sup>

Another important factor in the success of the Mormon Church is its extensive use of The Book of Mormon in teaching both investigators and members about Jesus Christ. The church has tied the people of Mexico to those who were described in the book. By proclaiming that the Mexican people are of the House of Israel and therefore a chosen people, the church appeals to a form of ethnic nationalism.<sup>46</sup>

Other important attractions of the LDS Church are its strong emphasis on the family unit, education, self improvement and the importance of living a Christ-like life. In 1980, The church's emphasis upon education resulted in the enrollment of more than 34,000 Mexican students in religious instruction at the high school and university level. At least 30,000 of these students are enrolled in public schools and universities and attend religion classes either before or after school. The high school religion classes are usually held daily before school begins at a local chapel or in a member's home. The college-level classes are held weekly in one of the church's Institutes of Religion located near the country's colleges and universities. Currently, fewer than 4,000 students attend the church's elementary, secondary or normal schools.<sup>47</sup> In 1980 there were just over 231,000 members of the church in Mexico. Almost one in seven attended a church school (See Table 2.)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints emphasizes building and maintaining strong family units. The sole purpose of the Mexico City Temple and all the other nearly fifty temples which the church operates or which are under construction is to strengthen the family unit. Every active Latter-day Saint child from the time that he or she learns to talk is taught the importance of living worthily so that he or she can be married "for all time and eternity" in one of the church's temples. Every Latter-day Saint is taught all through his or her life the concept that "families are forever." They are also taught that those who live the Gospel of Jesus Christ will inherit a place in the Celestial Kingdom (where God lives) with their family. In the Celestial Kingdom, the traditional family unit that we recognize on earth will exist with parents, children, grandparents, etc.. Further, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that only worthy children who have been

endowed and worthy parents who have also been endowed and married for all time and eternity in the temple will live together in the Celestial Kingdom.

The concept of the eternal family is so important to Latter-day Saints living in Mexico and elsewhere that diligently search out their ancestors and have temple ordinances performed for them vicariously. Since Latter-day Saints can only take out their endowment once, each additional time that they go to the temple they perform a temple ordinance for someone who has died. It is the goal of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints eventually to have the temple work performed for everyone who has ever lived. The Church teaches that everyone who has lived on the earth, if he or she has lived a righteous life, would be part of a family unit in the Celestial Kingdom. This concept applies to all people who have ever lived on the earth whether or not they have ever heard of Jesus Christ or belonged to His church during their mortal lives.

The key concept is not whether they were endowed or married in the temple, but rather will they prove worthy of the blessing of being part of an eternal family unit when this life is over. Thus the concept of "enduring to the end" of one's life, or living the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout one's life, is the key to being worthy to be part of an eternal family unit.<sup>48</sup>

The church offers its members in Mexico and elsewhere significant opportunities to fill positions of responsibility within the church. Each stake requires that hundreds of positions be filled at the branch, ward and stake levels by qualified and dependable members.<sup>49</sup>

The church's success in Mexico results from a combination of the above explanations. It is significant that the church's organization and doctrines are the same throughout the world.<sup>50</sup> This sameness is based on the concept that people

worldwide are basically the same.<sup>51</sup> The concept of having uniform church programs and policies was formally adopted in 1960.<sup>52</sup> This program is called The Correlation Program of the Church. Under this program all church functions are reviewed by the General Authorities to insure uniformity.<sup>53</sup> For example, this program requires that the same Sunday School lesson manuals are used at each class level worldwide. The Correlation Program of the Church also requires use of the same Church Handbook is used worldwide. This handbook is given to the stake, mission, ward and branch leaders. The manual contains the official church policies concerning how each position within the stakes and missions are to be organized and function.<sup>54</sup>

Between 1970 and 1979, the church in Mexico came into its own. The growth rate slowed slightly from 383% in the 1960's to 344% in the 1970's, but the growth rate was still impressive. The church's membership went from 67,850 in 1970 to 233,108 members in 1980. (See Table 1.)

In 1971, one of the first Mexican nationals to serve as a Mission President was Samuel V. Miera. President Miera was called to preside over the Mexico West Mission. As time passed, the church called more Mexicans to serve as Mission Presidents. In 1971 Arturo Rivera Martinez, one of the first native Mexicans to become a Mission President, became the first Mexican from outside of the colonies to become a Regional Representative.<sup>55</sup> A Regional Representative is generally responsible for three to six stakes. Each stake may vary in size from two to seven thousand members, thereby giving Elder Martinez six to forty-five thousand members to supervise.<sup>56</sup>

The first Mexican Regional Conference was held in Mexico City in 1972. During this conference, a number of General Authorities from Salt Lake City, Utah,

spoke. Talks were given by the President of the church, Harold B. Lee, and his two counselors. This conference was similar to the church's semi-annual conferences held in Utah.

The topics presented in the conference included a history of the church in Mexico and the types of economic and personal sacrifices that the members there had made to be active in the church. Elder Harold Brown, a Regional Representative, said that "most people do not have any idea how many sacrifices these people make when they join the church." Some people were rejected by their families and friends when they joined the church.<sup>57</sup>

During this conference, there were a number of significant talks given by members of the First Presidency of the church. These talks included one by President Harold B. Lee, who spoke on the importance of a testimony of the truthfulness of the Gospel, that the church is for all nations, and about the law of chastity. President Marion G. Romney, President Lee's Second Counselor, told the audience that they were fulfilling Book of Mormon prophecy by joining the church and living God's commandments.<sup>58</sup>

In 1979, the President of the church, Spencer W. Kimball, announced that a temple would be built in Mexico City. The temple was scheduled to be opened by 1983.<sup>59</sup> This announcement was a signal that the leadership of the church considered the people of Mexico to be mature in the Gospel. It also meant that most of the members of the church in Mexico would travel a much shorter distance to attend a temple and that many more Mexican church members would be able to attend a temple on a regular basis.<sup>60</sup>

The number of stakes operating in Mexico grew from three in 1970 to fifty-five in 1980. (See Table 4.) During this same period, the number of missions in

the country rose from five to eight. (See Table 3.) At the same time, the number of local or native missionaries in Mexico reached 721.<sup>61</sup> Worldwide the number of local missionaries rose to 5,628, or almost 20% of the church's nearly thirty thousand missionaries worldwide.<sup>62</sup> Finally, the enrollment in various secular and religious church schools increased from 7,600 students in September of 1971 to 34,000 in 1980.<sup>63</sup>

The church's growth rate in Mexico during the 1980's slowed slightly. Still the church's population in the 1980's grew by an impressive 266% to an estimated 620,000 by the end of December 1989, an increase of nearly 390,000 people from the 231,260 members in 1980. (See Table 2.) The creation of new stakes continued at a rapid rate and by September 1989 there were 101. (See Table 4.) The number of missions in Mexico grew from eight in 1980 to fifteen in 1989. (See Table 3.) The number of full-time missionaries serving in Mexico in March 1989 was 2,377.<sup>64</sup> Of these missionaries, about 2,300 were Mexicans.<sup>65</sup> The Mexico Mazatlan Mission is typical. Here only 17 of the 192 missionaries serving in this mission in 1988 were from the United States. A number of Mexicans have also been called to serve missions in Italy, Spain, Central America and in the United States.<sup>66</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the church closed almost all of its schools in Mexico by 1982. The decision was not popular among the members of the church in Mexico. The decision was made partly for financial reasons since the church could not afford to build the extensive school system required to educate all of its school-age members in Mexico. A second and perhaps more important reason was that the Mexican government was finally able to meet the educational needs of its people, including the Latter-day Saints. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



will almost always avoid building and operating schools where the local government is to able educate its school-age children. This policy enables the church to focus its resources on the spiritual rather than the temporal needs of its members. The Latter-day Saint Church had earlier closed all of the schools in other parts of Latin America. The church delayed closing a number of schools in Mexico to allow its members to enroll their children in local schools.<sup>67</sup>

In November 1983, the Mexico City Temple was completed and opened to the public for twelve days. During the few days that the temple was open to the public, a total of 120,000 people toured the building.<sup>68</sup> The temple was formally dedicated on December 4, 1983. More than 40,000 members of the church attended the nine dedicatory sessions. In the dedicatory prayer President Hinckley, Second Counselor to President Kimball, stated that the dedication of the Mexico City Temple "was the most important day in this great nation." He also said that the people of Mexico were direct descendents of the House of Israel through "Lehi the father of the Lamanites." The original boundaries of the Mexico City Temple included all of the country of Mexico plus all of Central America. In 1984, with the completion of the Guatemala City Temple, the members of the church in Central America were transferred to the newly completed temple.<sup>69</sup>

The Mexico City Temple has become the most-used temple outside the United States. In fact, the temple was operating at capacity during the summer months in 1989.<sup>70</sup> To help relieve crowding and for the convenience of the members of the church in Northern Mexico, temple excursions are again traveling to the Mesa and Los Angeles Temples.<sup>71</sup>

The author probed the subject of the church building a second temple in Mexico but was unable to gain any information.<sup>72</sup> It is the author's opinion, however, that

a second and possibly a third temple will be needed in the next few years.

California, which has about the same number of members of the church (almost 700,000) as there are in Mexico, has two temples and a third under construction.<sup>73</sup>

Additional temples will have to be built in Mexico, if only to accommodate the needs of the current membership.

## CHAPTER NINE

### HOW THE LDS CHURCH RESPONDED TO THE PROBLEMS OF GROWTH

The most critical problem that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints faces in Mexico is how to handle properly the rapid growth there. So far, the church has been barely able to deal with the explosive that it has experienced in that country. There are obvious signs that the church is struggling to cope with the problems caused by the growth.

Perhaps the most obvious sign of the church's need for additional leadership in Mexico is the size of the stakes there. Currently there are just 101 stakes with about 620,000 members, or one stake for every 6,138 people. (See Tables 2 and 3.) In California, there are 681,000 members and 153 stakes or 4,451 members per stake.<sup>1</sup> Utah, on the other hand, has 1,277,000 members and 382 stakes or 3,343 members per stake.<sup>2</sup> These ratios help demonstrate that there is not enough sufficiently trained leadership in Mexico to create the needed number of stakes. The Stake Presidents in Mexico have much more responsibility than their counterparts in California and Utah. The smaller stakes generally have fewer branch, ward, and stake leaders for the Stake Presidents to supervise than in a larger stake. This would result in the Stake President being better able to focus his energies on meeting more of the individual needs of the people in his stake. The smaller stakes usually also means that the membership is more concentrated geographically making it easier for the stake leadership to train and motivate their people to participate in the church and to live up to the church's standards.

Up to 50% of the converts in the Mexican missions, like converts in other countries, become inactive.<sup>3</sup> Although a percentage of converts in all missions go inactive, most missions baptize far fewer people so the impact of their inactivity on their congregations tends to be less. The California San Jose Mission, for example, will baptize about eight hundred people in an area that extends from Monterey to San Francisco.<sup>4</sup> There are twelve stakes and 45,000 Latter-day Saints in this area.<sup>5</sup> In Mexico, however, the new members make up a substantial part of the church's membership. The Mexico Mazatlan Mission is the most striking example, since there could be as many as 7,200 baptisms in 1989 in that mission.<sup>6</sup> To make this issue even more serious, to date there is not enough experienced leadership in Mazatlan to form even one stake.<sup>7</sup>

The most critical problem the church faces in areas like Mazatlan is who is going to train and fellowship the new converts into activity. Today the answer is the missionaries and their dedicated converts will fellowship the new members into the church. In time, a stake will be organized and the activation programs of the church will be implemented. In the meantime, the active members of the church in Mazatlan will have to work hard just to keep a minimum church organization going. New chapels will have to be built. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people will have to accept the church callings that must be filled before a new stake can function. Once the people have been called to fill an assignment in a ward or stake they will have to be trained in how to fulfill their church callings. The process of creating new stakes in areas where the members have little experience in filling assignments in the church often takes many years before the new stakes are able to function effectively.

The problems caused by the church's explosive growth in Mexico has taught the church leadership in Salt Lake City that it must first develop local leadership before attempting to attract large numbers of converts in other parts of the world. To help prevent this kind of problem from developing outside of Mexico, the church is being careful to limit the number of new converts that are baptized in areas such as Africa and Eastern Europe until a solid foundation of local leadership has been established. This major change in church policy has been demonstrated in the opening of four missions in eastern Europe. In those countries the church first sent retired couples as proselytizing missionaries to establish a nucleus of a church organization in the Eastern Bloc countries.

Once sufficient local leadership has been trained and local missionaries have been called, the church will then send larger numbers of missionaries from the United States and other countries to assist the local members' efforts.<sup>7</sup> Missionary couples are increasingly being used in Mexico as well to train and assist members of the church to develop strong testimonies of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>8</sup>

Other problems that the church in Mexico will continue to face include the issue of nationalism and the development of sufficient local leadership. The Mexican people are proud of their heritage and do not want to feel subordinate or inferior to others, especially to the North Americans.<sup>9</sup> Cultural differences are significant between the North Americans and the Mexican people. Lack of respect by the American members living in Mexico for the cultural and nationalistic feelings of the Mexican Saints led to the rise of the Third Convention.<sup>10</sup>

Education, employment opportunities and poverty are serious issues in Mexico. Although members of the church in Mexico are much more likely to complete high school and college than non-Mormons, there are not always jobs

available for the graduates. When young members in Mexico are unable to find jobs that take advantage of their college education they frequently become discouraged and feel that they are failures. This feeling of failure causes some college graduates to stop attending their church meetings.<sup>11</sup> Peer pressure to use alcohol, tobacco, drugs and to practice sexual immorality are also serious problems among the members of the church in Mexico just as they are in the United States. These issues are addressed everywhere in the church by having local leaders and teachers teach the standards of the church clearly to their people. Bishops, Branch Presidents, and Stake Presidents have the responsibility to work personally with those members who have special spiritual or temporal needs and help them to resolve them.

In Mexico, as in the United States, many members may stop attending church or attend only occasionally; these members are classified as inactive. The vast majority of them have positive feelings about the church. They welcome the monthly visits from their Home Teachers (two lay priesthood holders who visit three to five families once a month). Generally, most inactive members continue to live most of the standards of the church. In Mexico, few individuals leave the church completely.<sup>12</sup>

The church is aware of the difficulties that its members have in Mexico and is constantly working to find solutions to their individual problems. Some examples of the ways that the church is attempting to assist its members include involving the missionaries with "community service, in member activation, and in convert retention after baptism."<sup>13</sup>

Elder Gene R. Cook of the First Quorum Of The Seventy and the former president of the Mexico and Central America Area in an interview with the author provided valuable insights into how the church operates in Mexico. Elder Cook

admits that the church generally is "not typically as (well) organized as we are in the States." However, Elder Cook said that the churches leadership in Mexico is "more inclined to minister than it is to administer (the programs of the church)."<sup>14</sup>

By North American standards, the programs of the church in Mexico are not handled as well as they would like. However, the church in Mexico is self-sufficient. The Mexican Saints are able to provide all the missionaries needed in their country in addition to sending numerous others to serve missions in the United States, Latin America and Europe. The Mexican leaders of the church, according to Elder Cook, are diligent in teaching the correct doctrines of the church and are striving to help their people to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Elder Cook added that the people in Mexico "do not feel the need to have complex organizations. They rely on the Lord. They encourage (the people) to read the Scriptures. Record keeping is not as accurate as it could be, although record keeping is getting much better." It should be noted that in Mexico many streets do not have names or street numbers, making accurate record keeping impossible at times.<sup>14</sup>

Additionally many of the leaders:  
 "are not trained administrators and their managerial skills are somewhat limited due to a lack of education and experience in the church. However, they do an excellent job in ministering to the needs of their people. They are full of faith in Jesus Christ and do an excellent job in that area, which is the most important aspect of leadership (in the church)."<sup>15</sup>

One final comment by Elder Cook was "that there will probably be an effort to move the church in the United States to more of a ministerial effort like they do in Mexico." An example of such an effort was that the church on January 1, 1990, assumed responsibility for funding all local church expenses and activities in its congregations in the United States and Canada through the tithing monies that the

members in those countries donate. These expenses include such items as utilities, lesson manuals, and youth activities.<sup>16</sup> Up to now, active families in the United States, in addition to paying a full ten percent of their incomes to the church as a tithe, were often assessed \$100 a month or more to help cover local church-related expenses and activities funded at the stake and ward level. In addition, parents were often expected to contribute hundreds of dollars for church-related youth trips. Most of these programs have been eliminated in an effort to reduce the church's financial burden on its members.<sup>17</sup>

In the United States and Canada, unlike in Mexico, social activities, particularly those that involved the youth, required a great deal of time and expense. The church, according to Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, decided change to return to the parents the responsibility of raising their own children. A secondary purpose of this change was to reduce substantially the amount of time required to administer church activities and to free the faithful members from the burden of funding activities that may prove to be a financial hardship for them. A final reason for this change, according to Elder Packer, was that elaborate and expensive activities did not bring people to Christ and "no one was saved by attending those activities." In fact, some members who were financially unable to afford these costly activities stopped attending church rather than ask for financial assistance so that their children could attend. Elder Packer stated that this change was simply "a course correction" that would bring great blessing to the members and strengthen the church.<sup>18</sup>

It is ironic that in Mexico, given the members' limited financial resources, they never had the extensive and expensive youth activities on the local level that were common in the United States and Canada. The church has recognized that,



although many of its members in Mexico may be financially poor, their lack of expensive and elaborate youth activities never harmed their spiritual development.

## CHAPTER TEN

### CONCLUSION

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has enjoyed remarkable success in Mexico since 1945. The church membership has nearly tripled almost every ten years since 1950. (See Table 2.) It is impossible to predict future trends as accurately as we can measure the past, but it seems safe to forecast that the church will continue to grow at or near its present rate. If such a trend were to continue until the year 2000, there would be up as many as 1,860,000 Latter-day Saints in Mexico. (See Table 2.)

The leadership of the church in Mexico is strong even though it is in short supply. In April 1989, Elder Horacio A. Tenorio became the first Mexican national to become a General Authority of the church.<sup>1</sup> Previously a number of colonists had become General Authorities. Due to the church's rapid growth in Mexico there will undoubtedly continue to be a shortage of trained leaders who can head the numerous stake, ward and branch organizations that must be formed in Mexico in the coming years.

Mexico is an economically underdeveloped nation with many serious economic and social problems that will continue for the foreseeable future. However, as more Mexicans join the church and obtain an education, the LDS people in that country should fare better than most of their fellow countrymen. It is also likely that a small but significant percentage of the college-educated population in Mexico will be LDS.

These individuals will assume positions of responsibility professionally and socially and in their churches as well.

How the Mormon Church will assimilate hundreds of thousands of Mexican converts into its church probably has not been fully answered in this thesis. It is possible that the question is too subjective to be answered satisfactorily. It is my conviction that the principles that govern the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will enable its members to live lives that are richer and fuller than they would otherwise experience. Few religions require their members to give so much of their time, talents and money as does The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Yet, probably because of this, many of the members of the church in Mexico and elsewhere do just that on a regular basis.

In conclusion, it is the position of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that it has been successful in Mexico and elsewhere because it teaches the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. According to A. Bryan Weston, the Zone Administrator for the Church Education System, "the Lord directs this work (the LDS Church)." The church, by teaching the Savior's doctrines as they are found in the scriptures, is able to "change people from the inside out." Mr. Weston, quoting from Galatians 5:22 to illustrate the powerful effect that the teachings of the Savior have on those who accept and live his teachings, said, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith."<sup>2</sup>

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is successful in Mexico for many of the same reasons as are the other evangelical churches in Mexico. However, unlike the other churches, its growth rate is limited by its ability to train and assimilate the new converts as active and functioning members. Unfortunately, many of the leadership callings in the church require not only that the person be

educated, but have years of church experience so that they can understand how to fulfill their duties. Since members possessing both of these qualities are limited in Mexico, it has been challenging for the church to keep the local units fully organized and staffed. This situation is unlikely to change as long as The church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continues to triple in size almost every ten years. Despite these problems, the LDS Church should in the future continue to be self-sufficient and make significant contributions to the lives of its members in Mexico.

NOTES  
CHAPTER ONE

- <sup>1</sup>The Pearl Of Great Price, Joseph Smith, 1:11.
- <sup>2</sup>Ibid., 1:17-18.
- <sup>3</sup>Ibid., 1:59.
- <sup>4</sup>The Book of Mormon p. IX-X.
- <sup>5</sup>The Doctrine and Covenants Section 3: 17- 20.
- <sup>6</sup>Church News, 4 December 1983, 3.
- <sup>7</sup>Ibid., 20: 1, 38-67; 61: 25-26.
- <sup>8</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup>Doctrine and Covenants Official Declaration-1: Excerpts from Three Addresses By President Wilford Woodruff Regarding the Manifesto (abolishing the practice of polygamy by the church).
- <sup>10</sup>Ibid., 89: 1-20.
- <sup>11</sup>Exodus 20: 14.
- <sup>12</sup>The Holy Bible... Authorized King James Version: With Explanatory Notes and Cross References To The Standard Works Of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979 edition, Bible Dictionary, 604.
- <sup>13</sup>Doctrine And Covenants 132: 18-21, 28-31, 46.
- <sup>14</sup>Ibid., 119: 1-7.
- <sup>15</sup>Based on person interviews that the author has had with various Bishops and members of Stake Presidencies since 1967. The interviews involve having the person being interviewed answering a brief set of questions that must be answered properly before a "temple recommend" is to be issued. The object of the interview is encourage the

members of the church to faithfully live the tenets of their religion. In no part of the interview does the Bishop or member of the Stake Presidency consider the individuals status in the community or how much time or money he or she may contribute to the church. The only question that is asked about the individuals finances is "do you pay an honest tithing (this amounts to paying 10% of ones income to the church). The object of the interview is to give recommends to those individuals who are living a minimum standard and are trying to fully live the tenets of their religion. Therefore, there are some individuals who receive "temple recommends" who barely qualify to attend the temple.

<sup>16</sup>Doctrine And Covenants 5: 5-6.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 4: 1-7; 18:15-16.

<sup>18</sup>"LDS School System Takes Literacy To Latin America. "The Church News, 28 December, 10 1963.

## CHAPTER TWO

Parley P. Pratt, ed., Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt, 8th. printing (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1970), 131.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Smith, History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Period I History of Joseph Smith By Himself, Vol. IV, 2 ed. revised (Salt Lake City: The Deseret Book Company 1972), 46, 170.

<sup>3</sup>Autobiography, 390-402.

<sup>4</sup>B. H. Roberts, A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Century 1, Vol. III (Provo, Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 63-122.

<sup>5</sup>F. Lamond Tullis, Mormons In Mexico: The Dynamics of Faith And Culture (Logan, Utah State University Press, 1987), 4, 18-19.

<sup>6</sup>"Mexican Centennial," The Church News, 26 June, 1976, 16.

<sup>7</sup>The Language Training Mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Culture For Missionaries: Mexico And Central America (Provo, Brigham Young University Printing Services for the Language Training Mission, 1977), 29-30.

<sup>8</sup>Tullis, 18.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

- 10 Pratt, 168, 294.
- 11 Tullis, 18.
- 12 Ibid, 20.
- 13 Ibid., 19-30.
- 14 "Historical Vignettes: Mexico Centennial IV," Church News, 17 July, 1976, 16.
- 15 Ibid., "Historical Vignettes: Mexico Centennial III," 10 July, 1976, 16.
- 16 Culture For Missionaries, 29-30. 43; "Historical Vignettes: Mexico Centennial IV," Church News, 16.
- 17 Tullis, 19-33.
- 18 Ibid., 33-34.
- 19 Agricol Lozano Herrera, "Year Of The Miracle Beginning of Church Growth," The Church News, 5 May, 1985, 7 and 8. This article was an extract from the author's book Historia Del Mormonism en Mexico.
- 20 Tullis, 35-36.
- 21 Church News, 5 May 1985, 7.
- 22 Tullis, 38.
- 23 Gordon Irving, "Mormonism And Latin America A Preliminary Historical Survey," November 1976, [photocopy], 9, Task Papers In LDS History: Submitted to History Division Historical Department The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
- 24 Herrera, Church News, 5 May, 1985, 7.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Tullis, 70.
- 28 Ibid., 80.
- 29 Elder Richard Scott, Member of the First Quorum of Seventy, "Mexico's 100th Stake Created, Lamanite Heritage Flourishing," Church News, 1 July 1989, 14.
- 30 Herrera, Church News, 5 May, 1985, 7.

<sup>31</sup>Irving, 13.

<sup>32</sup>Tullis, 103.

<sup>33</sup>Herrera, Church News, 5 May 1985, 7.

<sup>34</sup>Michael C. Meyer and William L. Sherman, The Course of Mexican History (New York: Oxford University Press), 1987, 587.

<sup>35</sup>Irving, 14-15.

<sup>36</sup>Tullis, 109-137.

### CHAPTER THREE

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Cottam Romney, The Mormon Colonies In Mexico (Salt Lake City: The Desert Book Company, 1938), 38-39.

<sup>2</sup>Tullis, 28-29.

<sup>3</sup>Romney, 56.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 62-68.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 56, 182.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 75-127.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 176-194.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 247-250.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 250.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 300.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 301.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 309.



<sup>16</sup>Eran Abegg Call, interviewed by the author at Brigham University, Provo, 16 January 1990.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

<sup>1</sup>Doctrines And Covenants Official Declaration 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Deseret New Church Almanac 1989-1990, 39.

<sup>5</sup>Merlo J. Pursey, Builders of The Kingdom (Provo, Brigham Young University Press, 1981), 152-156.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 155.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 158-160.

<sup>9</sup>Brian H. Stuy, Collected Discourses (Burbank, BHS Publishing, 1988), 128. It is important to note that a large number of people present at this conference did not raise their hands to support this notion, nor did any raise their hands to oppose it either. Many members clearly would have preferred continuing the practice of plural marriage regardless of the consequences to themselves or to the church.

<sup>10</sup>Eran Abegg Call, "Oral History," interviewed by Gordon Irving, 1973-1974, typescript, Oral History Program, Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. Eran Call believes that he was the last person to be born into a LDS plural marriage that took place before President Woodruff's Manifesto in 1890.

<sup>11</sup>B. H. Roberts, A Comprehensive History of The Century One, Vol. VI (Provo, Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 394-401.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ami Lorenzo Anderson, "Oral History," Interviewed by Gordon Irving, 1,2 February 1977. Typescript, Oral History Program, Archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, 12.

- <sup>15</sup>Ben Bradlee Jr. and Dale Van Atta, Prophet Of Blood New (York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1981), 36.
- <sup>16</sup>Call, 15.
- <sup>17</sup>Lyle O. Wright, "Origins And Development Of The Church Of The First Born Of The Fullness Of Times," M.A. Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1963, 90, 91.
- <sup>18</sup>Tullis, 139.
- <sup>19</sup>Harold Brown, "Oral history," interviews by Gordon Irving, 1973-74, 45-46. 103.
- <sup>20</sup>Harold Brown, interviewed by the author Provo, 17 January 1990.
- <sup>21</sup>Harold Brown, "Oral History," 45-46.
- <sup>22</sup>Bradlee, 50; Wright, 61; Tullis, 147.
- <sup>23</sup>Tullis, 147; Brown, 45-46.
- <sup>24</sup>Based on interviews by the author with Harold Brown, Eran Call, Elder Gene Cook, and Gordon Irving, 17-23 January 1990.
- <sup>25</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup>Wright, 52.
- <sup>27</sup>Ibid., 52-57.
- <sup>28</sup>Wright, 93, 101.
- <sup>29</sup>Ibid., 77, 135.
- <sup>30</sup>Ross Wesley LeBaron, "The Patriarchal Priesthood," The Church Of The First Born Of The Fullness Of Times, [195?], Salt Lake City, Utah, 4.
- <sup>31</sup>Wright, 155-174.
- <sup>32</sup>Ibid., 224. This is a photocopy of the First Articles of Incorporation of The Church of The First Born of The Fullness of Times.
- <sup>33</sup>Bradlee, 72.
- <sup>34</sup>Ibid, 77; personal experience of the author who, while leaving a Stake Conference held in the San Jose Stake Center, 1336 Cherry Avenue San Jose, California in 1963, was greeted by missionaries from the Church of The First Born who were handing out pamphlets concerning their church.

- <sup>35</sup>Bradlee, 78-79.  
<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 80.  
<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 195-196, 327-350.  
<sup>38</sup>Bradlee, 350.

## CHAPTER FIVE

<sup>1</sup>Robert Gottlieb and Peter Wiley, America's Saints: The Rise Of Mormon Power (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1984), 137.

<sup>2</sup>Irving, 15.

<sup>3</sup>Tullis, 119-120.

<sup>4</sup>Irving, 16.

<sup>5</sup>Tullis, 122-123, 134.

<sup>6</sup>Wiley, 137-138.

<sup>7</sup>Tullis, 138.

<sup>8</sup>The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Seek To Obtain My Word: Melchizedek Priesthood Personal Study Guide 1989 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1988), 68.

<sup>9</sup>Tullis, 139.

<sup>10</sup>Wiley, 139.

<sup>11</sup>Tullis, 142.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 154-155, 168.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 152.

<sup>15</sup>Irving, 17.

<sup>16</sup>Tullis, 156.

<sup>17</sup>Irving, 17.

<sup>18</sup>Tullis, 156-157.

## CHAPTER SIX

<sup>1</sup>The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Church Statistics Deseret News 1989-1990 Church Almanac, Salt lake City: Deseret News, 1988, 205.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 212.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 212, 214.

<sup>4</sup>Church News, 28 November 1970, 10. In this article the Mexico City East Stake was formed with 4,520 members. The stake was formed from a division of the Mexico City North Stake.

<sup>5</sup>Church News, 18 August, 1985, 8.

<sup>6</sup>1989-1990 Church Almanac, 265.

<sup>7</sup>Church News, 5 May 1989, 7.

<sup>8</sup>Gottlieb and Wiley, 140-141.

<sup>9</sup>Irving, 21-22.

<sup>10</sup>Clark V. Johnson, "The Story of the LDS Elementary Schools in Mexico," 1, 7. Library of the Church Historian: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>11</sup>Tullis, 191-192.

<sup>12</sup>Gottlieb and Wiley, 138-142. It is important to point that the authors of this book are not LDS. Although many of their points have considerable merit, they fail to point out whether the Anglo members of the church that worked with the Mexicans were from the colonies or from the United States. The authors also failed to discuss the serious cultural, educational, etc. differences that existed between the American and Mexican members of the church. These differences have been largely overcome because of their strong commitment to their church. None of the Mission Presidents or other church leaders, whether Mexican or American, were paid for their service to the church. The Mission Presidents almost always took leave of their jobs and business and paid their own living expenses during their three year mission. Having served a mission in Canada from 1967 to 1969. I, like many other members of the church, have been amazed by the unselfish commitment these men and their families have made to the members and missionaries that they are were responsible for. I believe that it is this commitment and true concern for their people that enabled them to largely resolve the cultural differences that existed between the American and Mexican members.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

<sup>7</sup>1990 Britannica Book of The Year (Chicago, Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc.), 1990, 673. Note the membership of the various Christian churches fluctuate greatly based on what source was used. The 1981 World Almanac, 659, reported that Mexico was 92% Catholic and 2% Protestant. The 1983 Funk and Wagnalls New Encyclopedia, V, 17, 250, reported that 95% of the countries' population was Catholic while less than 1% was Protestant. The 1989 World Almanac, 698, reported that in 1980 Mexico was 97% Catholic, however, it gave no numbers for the Protestant membership.

<sup>2</sup>Latinamerica Press, Lima, 27 October 1988, 1, 8.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>San Jose Mercury News, 28 February 1990, 1A, 20A: Latinamerica Press, 30 April 1987, 5, 6; 27 October 1988, 8.

<sup>5</sup>Latinamerica Press, 29 June 1989, 3, 8: LADOC, May 1986, 1, 6.

<sup>6</sup>Latinamerica Press, 29 June 1989, 3,8 : 16 May 1985, 7: 3 April 1986, 7.

<sup>7</sup>Missiology, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, July 1983, 259.

<sup>8</sup>San Jose Mercury News, 28 February 1990, 20. The 3,000,000 Protestant converts is equal to the difference between the 3.3% plus of the Mexican population that belonged to these religions in 1980 and the 7.3% today. See 1990 Britannica Year Book, 673 and Latinamerica, 27 October 1988, 8. The 12,000,000 figure for Latin America represents the difference between the 1980 membership and the estimated 1989 membership. (see Table 6.)

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 3 March 1990, 12c.

<sup>10</sup>Missiology, June 1983, 259.

<sup>11</sup>International Review Of Missions, LXXVII # 309, 80-84.

<sup>12</sup>San Jose Mercury News, 26 August 1989, 12F, 13F.

<sup>13</sup>John Hawkins, interviewed by author at his office at Brigham Young University, Provo, 18 January 1990.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Latinamerica Press, 29 June 1989, 8.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>This conclusion was drawn by the author after reviewing every issue of the following newsletters, magazines and journals from 1985 to March 1990, Latinamerica Press, LADOC, Missiology and several others.

<sup>19</sup>Latinamerica Press, 9 May 1985, 5: 31 October 1985, 1: 13 November 1986, 1.

<sup>20</sup>International Review Of Missions, Vol LXXVIII #309, 82.

<sup>21</sup>Missiology, 4 October 1988, 427-436.

<sup>22</sup>San Jose Mercury News, August 26, 1989, 12C, 13C.

<sup>23</sup>Doctrines And Covenants, Section 58: 21-22.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

<sup>1</sup>Church News, 5 May 1985, 7.

<sup>2</sup>Tullis, 205

<sup>3</sup>Church News, 5 May 1985. 7.

<sup>4</sup>Ezra Taft Benson, The Teachings Of Ezra Taft Benson (Salt lake City: Bookcraft), 182.

<sup>5</sup>This is almost a word for word quote that President Bryan A. Espenschied of the Western Canadian Mission made to the author in the fall of 1969, prior to his release from his two year mission in Canada.

<sup>6</sup>Deseret News 1989-1990 Church Almanac, 224-227.

<sup>7</sup>Church News, 3 September 1966, 11.

<sup>8</sup>Deseret News 1989-1990 Church Almanac, 224.

<sup>9</sup>Church News, January, 1962 to January, 1990. In reviewing almost every issue of the Church News, during this period, I have not found a colonist or North American who has served as a Stake President with the exception of Harold Brown who became the President of the first Mexican stake in 1961. There were a small number of issues missing from the collection that I reviewed. It is possible, therefore, that a small number of Anglos have served as Stake President outside of the Colonies.

- <sup>10</sup>Ibid., 20.
- <sup>11</sup>Church News, 18, November, 1967, 4.
- <sup>12</sup>Deseret News, 1989-1990 Church News Almanac, 224-228.
- <sup>13</sup>Church News, 14 April 1962, 9.
- <sup>14</sup>Ibid., 14 December, 1963. 14. This article refers to a Seminar that was conducted by Elder Marion G. Romney of The Council Of The Twelve Apostles with the Mission Presidents of Mexico, Guatemala and Spanish speaking parts of Southern United States. Topics of the seminar were the church education, and building programs in addition to their missionary duties.
- <sup>15</sup>Ibid., 14 April 1962, 9.
- <sup>16</sup>Ibid., 8 August 1964, 5; 14 September 1964, 13.
- <sup>17</sup>Ibid., 14 April 1962, 9.
- <sup>18</sup>Ibid., 12 August 1972, 10.
- <sup>19</sup>Church News, 13 July 1963, 2, 13.
- <sup>20</sup>Irving, 23-24.
- <sup>21</sup>Ibid., 24.
- <sup>22</sup>Church News, 5 May 1985, 5-9.
- <sup>23</sup>Ibid., 28 August 1964, 5.
- <sup>24</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup>Irving, 24.
- <sup>26</sup>Church News, 13 July 1963, 15.
- <sup>27</sup>Johnson, "The Story Of The LDS Elementary Schools In Mexico," 1-5.
- <sup>28</sup>Church News, 16 October 1963, 16.
- <sup>29</sup>Johnson, "The Story Of The LDS Elementary Schools In Mexico." 5.
- <sup>30</sup>Church News, 16 October 1963, 16.
- <sup>31</sup>Ibid., 1 August 1964, 8-9.
- <sup>32</sup>Johnson, "The Story Of The LDS Elementary Schools In Mexico," 10.

- 33 Ibid., 12
- 34 Church News, 1 August 1964, 8-9.
17. 35 Johnson, "The Story Of The LDS Elementary Schools In Mexico," 16,
- 36 Church News, 10 November 1945, 1, 6, 8; 7 November 1962, 15.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Ibid., 10 November 1962, 6.
- 39 Ibid., 7 November 1964, 15
- 40 This is based on the author's personal experience. Each endowment is performed for just one person. A person will for an example take out his own endowments, and then each time that he does an endowment, it is for someone who as died. This vicarious work includes baptisms for the dead, the endowment, or the process of covenanting with the Lord to always keep his commandments. Once a person has had his or her endowment, they can then be married or sealed in the temple for eternity. All children of the couple are then sealed to them "for time and all eternity." If the children are living they must be present with the parents when the sealing is performed.
- 41 Church News, 10 November 1962, 6.
- 42 San Jose Mercury News, 3 March 1990, C1, C2.
- 43 Church News, 8 November 1967.
- 44 James B. Allen and Richard O. Cowan, Mormons In The Twentieth Century (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1967), 15.
- 45 James W. Wilkie, Revolution In Mexico (Tucson, Arizona: The University Of Arizona Press, 1984), 159-160.
- 46 Church News, 5 May 1985, 6.
- 47 Doctrine and Covenants, 121:29; 138:32-60.
- 48 Church News, 29 September 1979, 8.
- 49 Ibid., 15 December 1979.
- 50 Ibid., 5 May 1985, 7-9.
- 51 Ibid., 2 September, 1972, 5.



<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 6 April 1963, 8, 9.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 20 October 1962, 20.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 44 6 April 1963, 8, 9.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 22 May 1971, 6.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.. In reviewing the articles in the Church News from 1962 to 1972, I was unable to determine when Elder Martinez was called as a mission president although it was probably in 1969 since mission presidents generally serve three year terms.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid. The author was unable to locate any evidence that there existed any concrete policy in the church that set the number of members that are to be in a given organization or how many stakes are to be assigned to a Regional Representative. In 1973, there were six Regional Representatives assigned to the five stakes and approximately thirty districts (areas with insufficient members or leadership to form a stake) and about 100,000 members. (See Table 2) and Church News 28 July 1973, 3-5.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 12 August 1972, 3-17.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 10, 192.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 3-10. The prophecy that President Romney said had been fulfilled was one of several found in the Book of Mormon that predicted the Lamanites would join the true church of Jesus Christ in the last days. The Lamanites descendants today, according to the church are the native American Indians who live in North and South America. See The Book of Mormon: Enos 1: 11-16.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 1 September 1979, 1, 3.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>1989-1990 Church Almanac, 208.

<sup>64</sup>Church News, 14 June 1980, 11.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 16 October 1971, 3; 15 December 1979, 11.

<sup>66</sup>\*Missionary Department Statistical Department, "missionaries serving in March 1989, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 11, (photocopied), 200.

<sup>67</sup>Church News, 12 August 1989 9; 14 May 1988, 4.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 16 February 1986, 11.

<sup>69</sup>Tullis, 191-192.

<sup>70</sup>Church News, 4 December 1983, 3.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 23 December 1984, 3; 12 August 1989, 8-9.

<sup>72</sup>Derek Metcalfe, Managing Director Temple Department, interview by the author, 8 November, 1989.

<sup>73</sup>Deseret News 1989-1990 Church Almanac, 121, 133.

## CHAPTER NINE

<sup>1</sup>Deseret News 1989-1990 Church Almanac, 121.

<sup>2</sup>Irving, 24-25.

<sup>3</sup>Tullis, 206-207, 216; "Missionary Department Statistical Report," March 1989, 12.

<sup>4</sup>Personal experience of the author who had a full-time mission in Canada 1967-1969 and stake missions in Utah 1969-1970 and California 1986-1987.

<sup>5</sup>"Missionary Department Statistical Report," 7 March 1989, 10.

<sup>6</sup>Deseret News 1989-1990 Church Almanac, 105-106 and a review of all issues of the Church News between October 1988 and April 1990.

<sup>7</sup>Church News, 3 March, 1990, 3, 8-9.

<sup>8</sup>Derek F. Metcalfe, Managing Director Of Temple for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, response to a questionnaire submitted by the author, 7 December 1989 a copy of the responses are in the possession of the author.

<sup>9</sup>Tullis, 206-210.

<sup>10</sup>Irving, 23-24.

<sup>11</sup>Tullis, 117-159.

<sup>12</sup>"Missionary Milestone: More Than 40,000; The Ensign Of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints April 1990, 74.

<sup>13</sup>Hawkins.

<sup>14</sup>Elder Gene R. Cook, member of the First Quorum of The Seventy, interviewed by the author, 23 January 1990.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Church News, 24 February, 1990, 3, 7.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER TEN

<sup>1</sup>Tullis, 186-195, 224; "Elder Horacio A. Tenorio of The Second Quorum Of The Seventy", The Ensign of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, May 1989, 99.

<sup>2</sup>A. Bryan Weston, Zone Administrator for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, interviewed by author, 18 January 1990, The Church Office Building 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah.

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**APPENDIX**  
**TABLES OF SUPPORTING STATISTICAL DATA**

TABLE 1

LDS Proselyting Missionaries 1830 To 1989

| Year | New Missionaries Called During The Year <sup>a</sup> | Total Number of Missionaries Serving <sup>b</sup> |
|------|--|---|
| 1830 | 16   |   |
| 1835 | 84   |   |
| 1840 | 80   |   |
| 1845 | 84   |   |
| 1850 | 50   |   |
| 1855 | 65   |   |
| 1860 | 96   |   |
| 1865 | 71   |   |
| 1870 | 46   |   |
| 1875 | 197  |   |
| 1880 | 219  |   |
| 1885 | 235  |   |
| 1890 | 283  |   |
| 1895 | 746  |   |
| 1900 | 796  |   |
| 1905 | 716  |   |
| 1910 | 933  |   |
| 1915 | 621  |   |
| 1920 | 889  |   |
| 1925 | 1,313  |   |
| 1930 | 896  |   |
| 1935 | 899  |   |
| 1940 | 1,194  |   |
| 1945 | 400  |   |
| 1950 | 3,015  |   |
| 1955 | 2,414  |   |
| 1960 | 4,706  | 9,097   |
| 1965 | 7,139  | 12,585  |
| 1970 | 7,590  | 14,387  |
| 1975 | 14,446   | 22,492  |
| 1980 | 16,600   | 29,953  |
| 1985 | 19,890   | 29,265  |
| 1987 | 21,001   | 34,750  |
| 1989 | na.  | 36,132  |
| 1990 | na.  | 40,130  |

<sup>a</sup>Missionaries generally serve missions of eighteen to thirty-six months, with two years being the norm.

<sup>b</sup>Years 1830-1087, Deseret News 1989-1990 Church Almanac, 207-208; Church News, 8 April, 2; 30 December 1989, 2.



TABLE 2  
LDS Membership IN MEXICO 1878 To 1989

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Number of Member</u> | <u>Year</u> | <u>Number of Members</u> |
|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 1871        | 50 <sup>a</sup>         | 1971        | 82,000 <sup>p</sup>      |
| 1889        | 241 <sup>b</sup>        | 1972        | 92,118 <sup>q</sup>      |
| 1906        | 5,000 <sup>c</sup>      | 1974        | 117,118 <sup>r</sup>     |
| 1911        | 5,200 <sup>d</sup>      | 1975        | 141,768 <sup>s</sup>     |
| 1913        | 1,204 <sup>e</sup>      | 1976        | 175,806 <sup>t</sup>     |
| 1926        | 3,472 <sup>f</sup>      | 1977        | 199,586 <sup>u</sup>     |
| 1935        | 4,523 <sup>g</sup>      | 1978        | 211,805 <sup>v</sup>     |
| 1945        | 4,962 <sup>h</sup>      | 1979        | 231,260 <sup>w</sup>     |
| 1955        | 10,926 <sup>i</sup>     | 1980        | 241,521 <sup>x</sup>     |
| 1958        | 17,720 <sup>j</sup>     | 1981        | 236,990 <sup>y</sup>     |
| 1960        | 17,720 <sup>k</sup>     | 1982        | 236,889 <sup>z</sup>     |
| 1962        | 26,353 <sup>l</sup>     | 1984        | 367,000 <sup>aa</sup>    |
| 1965        | 43,367 <sup>m</sup>     | 1985        | 367,000 <sup>bb</sup>    |
| 1966        | 50,000 <sup>n</sup>     | 1987        | 360,000 <sup>cc</sup>    |
| 1970        | 67,850 <sup>o</sup>     | 1989        | 620,000 <sup>dd</sup>    |
|             |                         | 2000        | 1,860,000 <sup>ee</sup>  |

<sup>a</sup>Estimate based on early Missionary activity in Northern and central Mexico Tullis, 34-35.

<sup>b</sup>Ibid., 70.

<sup>c</sup>Estimate based on Tullis p. 82 for Central Mexico and Romney 182.

<sup>d</sup>Ibid.

<sup>e</sup>Church News, 12 August 1989, 8-9.

<sup>f</sup>Ibid., 1,822 members in Central Mexico and 1,450 in the Colonies, Romney, 263.

<sup>g</sup>Irving, 36.

<sup>h</sup>Ibid.

<sup>i</sup>Irving Appendix 1

<sup>j</sup>Church News, 5 November 1966, 4.

<sup>k</sup>Ibid., 5 May 1985, 8-9.

<sup>l</sup>Ibid., 2 September 1972, 3.

<sup>m</sup>Ibid., 5 May, 1985, 8-9.

<sup>n</sup>Ibid., 5 May, 1966, 11.

<sup>o</sup>Ibid., 5 May, 1985, 8-9.

<sup>p</sup>Ibid., 28 July 1973, 6.

<sup>q</sup>Ibid., 6 May 1976, 6.

<sup>r</sup>Church Almanac 1976, E. 8.

<sup>s</sup>Church Almanac 1977, 212.

<sup>t</sup>Church Almanac 1978, 212.

<sup>u</sup>Church Almanac 1979, 227.

<sup>v</sup>Church Almanac 1980, 249.

<sup>w</sup>Church Almanac 1981, 230.

<sup>x</sup>Church Almanac 1982, 222.

<sup>y</sup>Church Almanac 1983, 220.

<sup>z</sup>Church Almanac 1985, 254.

<sup>aa</sup>Church News, 5 May 1985, 8-9.

<sup>bb</sup>Church Almanac 1987, 256.

<sup>cc</sup>Church Almanac 1989-1990, 105.

<sup>dd</sup>Estimate based on 571,000 members on 1 July 1989, Church News, 12 August 1989, 8-9, and there being over 600,000 members as of October 1, 1989 see Church News 25 November, 1989, 3. I expect that the membership of the church in Mexico could reach 620,000 by 31 December 1989.

<sup>ee</sup>The projected population of the church for the year 2000 is based on the assumption that the church will continue to triple about every ten years. The 1989 population is estimated to be 620,000 and three times that number equals 1,860,000 or the projected membership in Mexico in the year 2000.

**TABLE 3**  
**LDS MISSIONS IN MEXICO**  
**BY THE YEAR THEY WERE ORGANIZED**

| <u>Year A Mission Was Organized<sup>a</sup></u> | <u>Number Of Missions Organized</u> | <u>Total Number Of Missions</u> |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1889  | 1                                   | 1                               |
| 1956  | 1                                   | 2                               |
| 1960  | 1                                   | 3                               |
| 1963  | 1                                   | 4                               |
| 1968  | 1                                   | 5                               |
| 1975  | 2                                   | 7                               |
| 1978  | 1                                   | 8                               |
| 1987  | 2                                   | 10                              |
| 1988  | 4                                   | 14                              |
| 1989  | 1                                   | 15                              |
| 1990 <sup>b</sup>                               | 2                                   | 17                              |

<sup>a</sup>Deseret News 1989-1990 Church Almanac, (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Company, 1988), 262-276. This covers years 1889 to 1988. 1989 information came from Church News 25 February 1989, 10.

<sup>b</sup>Church News, 3 February 1990, 6-7.

TABLE 4  
 ORGANIZED STAKES IN MEXICO  
 BY YEAR THEY WERE ORGANIZED

| <u>Year The Stakes Were Organized</u> | <u>Number Of Stakes Organized</u> | <u>Total Number Of Stakes Organized</u> |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1895                                  | 1                                 | 1                                       |
| 1961                                  | 1                                 | 2                                       |
| 1967                                  | 1                                 | 3                                       |
| 1970                                  | 2                                 | 5                                       |
| 1972                                  | 2                                 | 7                                       |
| 1973                                  | 2                                 | 9                                       |
| 1974                                  | 2                                 | 11                                      |
| 1975                                  | 17                                | 28                                      |
| 1976                                  | 10                                | 38                                      |
| 1977                                  | 8                                 | 46                                      |
| 1978                                  | 7                                 | 53                                      |
| 1979                                  | 2                                 | 55                                      |
| 1980                                  | 10                                | 65                                      |
| 1981                                  | 6                                 | 71                                      |
| 1982                                  | 2                                 | 73                                      |
| 1983                                  | 2                                 | 75                                      |
| 1984                                  | 3                                 | 78                                      |
| 1985                                  | 2                                 | 81                                      |
| 1986                                  | 4                                 | 85                                      |
| 1987                                  | 5                                 | 90                                      |
| 1988 <sup>b</sup>                     | 3                                 | 93                                      |
| 1989 <sup>c</sup>                     | 8                                 | 101                                     |

<sup>a</sup>Data for years 1895 to 16 October 1988 was obtained from the Deseret News 1989-1990 Church Almanac, (Deseret News Publishing Company: Salt Lake City, 1988), 212-254.

<sup>b</sup>Church News, 14 January 1989, 13.

<sup>c</sup>Church News, 1 July, 1989, 2, 3; 30 September 1989, 13.

**Table 5**  
**Percentage Of The Church Membership In Mexico**  
**To The Total Population Of The Church**

| <b>Year</b>       | <b>Church Membership<sup>a</sup><br/>In Mexico</b> | <b>Total Church<sup>b</sup><br/>Membership</b> | <b>Percentage of Membership<br/>In Mexico To Total<br/>Church Population</b> |
|-------------------|--|--|--|
| 1880              | 50   | 133,628  | .04  |
| 1889              | 1,241  | 183,628  | .13  |
| 1906              | 5,000  | 345,014  | 1.45   |
| 1911              | 5,200  | 407,291  | 1.20   |
| 1913              | 1,200  | 431,607  | .28  |
| 1926              | 3,472  | 623,909  | .56  |
| 1935              | 4,523  | 760,690  | .59  |
| 1945              | 4,962  | 979,454  | .51  |
| 1958              | 11,500   | 1,555,799                                      | .74  |
| 1960              | 17,724   | 1,693,180                                      | 1.05   |
| 1962              | 26,353   | 1,965,780                                      | 1.34   |
| 1965              | 43,367   | 2,395,932                                      | 1.81   |
| 1966              | 50,000   | 2,480,989                                      | 2.02   |
| 1970              | 67,000   | 2,983,810                                      | 2.27   |
| 1971              | 82,000   | 3,090,953                                      | 2.65   |
| 1972              | 92,114   | 3,218,908                                      | 2.86   |
| 1974              | 117,118  | 3,306,658                                      | 3.54   |
| 1975              | 141,768  | 3,409,987                                      | 4.16   |
| 1976              | 175,806  | 3,742,749                                      | 4.70   |
| 1977              | 199,556  | 3,969,220                                      | 5.03   |
| 1978              | 211,605  | 4,166,854                                      | 5.08   |
| 1979              | 231,260  | 4,404,123                                      | 5.25   |
| 1980              | 241,521  | 4,644,768                                      | 5.20   |
| 1981              | 236,990  | 4,920,449                                      | 4.82   |
| 1982              | 236,889  | 5,162,619                                      | 4.59   |
| 1984              | 367,000  | 5,641,054                                      | 6.51   |
| 1985              | 293,000  | 5,910,000                                      | 4.96   |
| 1987              | 360,000  | 6,400,000                                      | 5.63   |
| 1989 <sup>c</sup> | 620,000  | 7,000,000                                      | 8.86   |
| 2000 <sup>d</sup> | 1,860,000  | 11,200,000                                     | 16.61  |

<sup>a</sup>See Table One for membership of the church in Mexico.

<sup>b</sup>For years 1880-1987 Deseret News 1989-1990 Church Almanac, (Salt Lake City, Deseret News Publishing Company, 1988), 204, 205.

<sup>c</sup>Church News, 9 December 1989, 3,7.

<sup>d</sup>The projected church membership is based on a 60% growth rate by the year 2000. The church grew by 59% during the 1980's. The author expects that the church will continue to grow in the near future at the same or higher rate as it did during the past ten years.