

Elder C. Scott Grow

Growth in Mexico fulfills prophecy

Thirty-six years ago I served a mission in southeast Mexico. At that time there were no stakes, with the largest cities in the mission having only two branches. There were limited opportunities for education and much poverty. With two or three exceptions, all the missionaries were from the United States.

I remember the people of the Nealtican Branch. All buildings in the town were made of adobe, except the Catholic cathedral and the LDS chapel. I remember standing in the small adobe house of the branch president. It had a dirt floor, windows with no glass, and a rug hanging over the entryway. There was no furniture in the house. His family had no shoes.

But they were a happy people. He told me that they had sold everything they had to buy bus tickets to the Mesa temple, where they were sealed for time and all eternity. Many of the branch members had done the same thing.

A month ago I returned to Mexico to serve in the Mexico North Area Presidency. The Mexico of today is much different from that of 36 years ago. Nealtican is the center of a thriving stake of Zion. Mexico has 200 stakes and a million members of the Church. Many stake and ward leaders are highly educated and financially secure. Thousands of young men and women from Mexico are serving full-time missions.

Truly the vision seen by Lehi and interpreted by Nephi is coming to pass. “And at that day shall the remnant of *our seed* know that they are of the *house of Israel*, and that *they* are the *covenant* people of the Lord; and then shall they *know* and come to the knowledge of their *forefathers*, and also to the knowledge of the *gospel* of their Redeemer, which was ministered unto their *fathers* by *him*; where-

fore, they shall come to the knowledge of their *Redeemer*.”¹

The Book of Mormon blesses all nations

Truly the people of Mexico and other Latin American countries are among the descendants of prophets. The Book of Mormon is their inheritance. Jesus Christ did minister unto their fathers.

After His resurrection, Jesus Christ descended out of heaven, clothed in a white robe, and stood in the midst of their ancestors here in the Americas. He stretched forth His hand and said:

“Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.

“. . . I am the light and the life of the world.”²

“Therefore, hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up.”³

To the Church in our day, the Savior repeated that counsel when He said, “Verily I say unto you all: Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations.”⁴ Jesus Christ is the light that we hold up as a standard to all nations. We offer the additional light of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ.

President Hinckley has challenged us to read or reread the Book of Mormon before year-end in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of the Prophet Joseph Smith. By so doing, we honor Joseph Smith, who translated the Book of Mormon “by the gift and power of God.”⁵

When the ancient prophet Moroni appeared to Joseph, he told him “that God had a work for [him] to do; and that [his] name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people.”⁶

That prophecy has come to pass. The name of Joseph Smith is known and revered throughout the world, even in the remote village of Nealtican, Mexico.

A young man in Mexico finds the Church

Recently a member in Monterrey, Mexico, told me how the Book of Mormon changed his life. As a teenager, Jesús Santos was impressed by the LDS missionaries he saw walking down the dusty streets. He wanted to talk to them about their church but was told by a friend that you have to wait for them to contact you.

Many times he would go to the church building and look through the iron fence at the missionaries and the Mutual youth playing games. They seemed so wholesome, and he wanted to be part of them. He would lean his chin on the fence, hoping that they would notice him and invite him to participate with them. It never happened.

As Jesús recounted his story to me, he said, “It is sad. I was a young man and could have served a full-time mission.”

He moved to Monterrey, Mexico. *Nine* years later he was visiting a friend across town when the missionaries knocked at the door. His friend wanted to send them away. Jesús begged him to let the missionaries talk to them for just two minutes. His friend consented.

The missionaries talked about the Book of Mormon, how Lehi’s family traveled from Jerusalem to the Americas, and how the resurrected Jesus Christ visited Lehi’s descendants in America.

Jesús wanted to know more. He was especially intrigued by the picture depicting Christ’s appearance in America. He gave the missionaries his address. He waited for months, but they never made contact with him.

Three more years passed. Some friends invited his family to a family home evening. They gave him a copy of the Book of Mormon.

As soon as he began to read it, he knew the Book of Mormon was true. Finally, 12 years after he first became aware of the Church, he and his wife were baptized. So many years had been lost. If missionaries had just talked to him, if the Mutual youth had just noticed a lonely teenager looking over the fence, if the missionaries in Monterrey had found him at home, his life would have been different during those 12 years. Gratefully, member neighbors invited him for a family home evening and shared with him that book which has such great converting power, the Book of Mormon.

Today Jesús Santos serves as the president of the Monterrey Mexico Temple.

Invite others to read the Book of Mormon

Jesus Christ gave us the Book of Mormon as the instrument to gather scattered Israel. At the time of His appearance in America, He told the people, “And when these things come to pass that thy *seed* shall begin to *know* these things—it shall be a *sign* unto them, that they may *know* that the work of the Father hath already commenced unto the fulfilling of the *covenant* which he hath made unto the people who are of the *house of Israel*.”⁷

The Book of Mormon is *its own witness* to the people of Latin America and of all nations. Its very coming forth in these latter days bears witness that God has once again begun to *gather scattered Israel*.

In my mind’s eye I can still see Jesús Santos as a ragged 18-year-old boy looking over the fence at the chapel. Can you see him? Can you invite him and others like him to be one with us? Whom do you know that would respond to your invitation to read the Book of Mormon? Will you invite them? Don’t wait.

The instrument to gather scattered Israel

I testify that Joseph Smith is the prophet of the Restoration. The Book of

Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ is the means whereby people from all nations shall be gathered into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This Church is founded upon apostles and prophets, just as it was in ancient days. President Gordon B. Hinckley is the Lord's anointed prophet on the earth today. Jesus Christ is our Savior and our Redeemer. This is His Church and His

kingdom. He is our King Immanuel. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. 1 Nephi 15:14; italics added.
2. 3 Nephi 11:10–11.
3. 3 Nephi 18:24.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 115:5.
5. Book of Mormon introduction.
6. Joseph Smith—History 1:33.
7. 3 Nephi 21:7; italics added.

Elder Paul K. Sybrowsky

Seeking after the one who is lost

Many years ago, when our oldest children were six, four, and two, my wife and I sprang a pop quiz on them. We had been reading daily as a family from the Book of Mormon.

“Who was the man,” my wife inquired, “who went into the forests to hunt, but, instead, prayed all day and into the night?”

After a few moments of silence, she ventured to help: “His name starts with an E . . . e . . . e . . . e.”

From the corner of the room, our two-year-old called out, “Nos!”

This child was the one who was playing in the corner—the one we had thought was too little to understand. Enos! It was Enos who had gone into the forests to hunt but hungered for his own soul. Though his record does not say that he was lost in that forest, the story of Enos teaches us that he came out found—and then feeling a desire for the welfare of his brothers.

In the New Testament our Savior, Jesus Christ, teaches us the importance of seeking after the one who is lost:

“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?”

“And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing” (Luke 15:4–5).

Being found by friends and leaders

Since the Fall of Adam, all mankind are in a lost and fallen state. Like many of you, my being “found” started with two faithful missionaries. In the year 1913, in Copenhagen, Denmark, Elders C. Earl Anhder and Robert H. Sorenson taught my grandparents the gospel of Jesus Christ and baptized them. My parents taught me the importance of hard work, honesty, and integrity. However, in one short generation we became lost to activity in the Church and a knowledge of the gospel. Looking back, I recall at a very young age my playmates inviting me to Primary. My first Church experience was built around Primary friendships.

As a boy several months shy of my 12th birthday, one Saturday afternoon I answered a knock at my front door. Several of my friends—deacons dressed in white shirts and ties—sought me out to come to my very first priesthood meeting. Our leader walked beside me as we made our way down the hill to the Tabernacle on Temple Square. That was the April general conference priesthood session.