

Latter-Day Saints celebrate 200 years

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Though The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is one of the world's fastest-growing religions - though 120 million copies of the Book of Mormon are in print - believers still endure suggestions by mainstream churches that they are not authentically Christian.

Yes, the Mormons once called themselves "a peculiar people." But as the church celebrates the 200th anniversary of founder Joseph Smith Jr.'s birth, its president says his flock is well within the Christian fold.

"Of course we're Christian. The very name of the church declares that," said Gordon B. Hinckley, in a recent interview with The Associated Press. "No one believes more strongly in the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. No one believes more strongly in the power of his redeeming sacrifice. The Book of Mormon is another witness for the divinity and reality of Jesus Christ," he said. "The more people see us and come to know us, the more I believe they will come to realize that we are trying to exemplify in our lives and in our living the great ideals which he taught."

Smith founded the Mormon church in April 1830, 10 years after he claimed to experience a vision of God and Jesus in a grove of trees near his family home in Palmyra, N.Y.

He said an angel, Moroni, later led him to a buried set of gold plates inscribed with the story of a lost tribe of Israel that had settled North America.

Smith's translation of the plates became known as The Book of Mormon, the first of the unique scriptures the church follows alongside the Bible.

The church teaches that Smith was a prophet and considers the men who succeeded him as church president to this day as the "prophet, seer and revelator" on earth for Mormons.

Even more than the 78-year-old Pope Benedict XVI, the 95-year-old Hinckley bears weighty responsibilities for his church.

Hinckley holds authority to convey divine guidance to church members and direct appointment of the leaders of every regional body and local congregation worldwide and all the tens of thousands of Mormon missionaries. This year alone, he visited Africa, Russia, Iceland, Korea, Taiwan, India and western Europe - the most traveled president in church history. About half of all Mormons live outside the United States.

It also falls to Hinckley, a third-generation Mormon who was appointed president in 1995, to respond to those who question church practices and teachings. The denomination has been criticized in recent years for the practice of posthumously baptizing thousands of deceased Jews (among them Holocaust victims) and those of other

faiths.

Mormons believe individuals' ability to choose a religion continues beyond the grave. Asked about the practice, Hinckley said performing the baptisms only provides the option for non-Mormons to convert, "so there's no injury done to anybody."

The church also has tried to distance itself from its history of polygamy, but some fundamentalist Mormons still support the practice. Hinckley said the doctrine of polygamy "came of revelation and was discontinued by revelation."

"We believe in honoring, obeying and sustaining the law. And so, we have very little sympathy with those who disobey the law in this manner," he said.

Hinckley defended the church's practice of disfellowshipping, or excommunicating, ex-Mormons for what they have written about the denomination. He said this step has been taken against "very few" people and only if they try to damage the church.

"It's only when they begin to teach what they believe to try to influence others that action is taken against them," he said.

Relations with other denominations has also been an issue. Some churches do not recognize Mormon baptism, in effect denying that Mormonism is fully Christian. The Latter-day Saints, through their teachings, raise similar questions about other churches.

In the scriptural Doctrine and Covenants, Smith taught that the Mormon church is "the only true and living church upon the whole Earth."

Hinckley said Mormons "believe in the virtue in the lives of other people in other churches," and that all churches "do great good."



Contributed photo

Children perform a Christmas program Dec. 18 at College Drive Assembly of God Church.

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SACRED HEART CATHOLIC, 462-2179, Father Dana Clark, Pastor, Saturday Eve. Mass 5:30 p.m., Sunday Masses 8:00 & 10:00 a.m., Confessions will be heard Saturday 4:30-5:05 p.m. and from 7:30-7:45 a.m. and 9:25-9:40 a.m. on Sunday.

Schedule of church services

ASCENSION-ON-THE-PRAIRIE EPISCOPAL, Rev. Don Martin, College Drive & Wheatridge Rd., 462-3041, Holy Eucharist, 9:00 a.m. every Sunday, Evening Prayer, 5:15 p.m. Wednesday, September through May. Christian Education for Youth, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, September through May

COLLEGE DRIVE ASSEMBLY OF GOD, Pastor, Jeremy Gundling, 245 W. College Dr. - 462-8234, Early Service - 8:00 a.m.; Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Morning Worship - 10:45 a.m.

BEREAN CHURCH, 1000 S. Franklin, 460-2763, www.colbyborean.com; Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m. Awana Clubs, Wednesday, 7 p.m., Middle & High School, Wednesday, 7 p.m. @ the Colby Armory

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, Pastor Bradley L. Herndon, Grant & Webster Street, 462-2867, Morning Worship 10:30 a.m., Sunday School 9:15 a.m., Evening Worship 6:30 p.m., Wednesday Bible 7:30 p.m.

COLLEGE VIEW BAPTIST CHURCH, (SBC), Pastor Tom Huffman, 1185 Wheatridge Rd. at College Drive, 460-7144, Sunday Bible Study 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship services, 10:45 a.m.

MINGO BIBLE CHURCH, 420 Main Mingo, 785-462-2992: An independent community church served by Village Missions Pastor Chris Shubert. Sunday School: 9:30AM - all ages. Sunday Services: 10:45AM. Sunday Nights: 1st Sunday of the month: potluck following morning service - no evening service; 2nd Sunday: services at 6:30 PM; 3rd Sunday: informal fellowship - bring a snack to share!; 4th and 5th Sunday: services at 6:30 p.m.

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC, 462-2179, Father Dana Clark, Pastor, Saturday Eve. Mass 5:30 p.m., Sunday Masses 8:00 & 10:00 a.m., Confessions will be heard Saturday 4:30-5:05 p.m. and from 7:30-7:45 a.m. and 9:25-9:40 a.m. on Sunday.

This feature is sponsored by these business firms and individuals as a contribution to the religious life of the community.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Rev. Carol Rahn, 515 W. 4th, 462-6342, Sunday School 9:15 a.m., Worship, 11:00 a.m. September through May; Worship 9:30 a.m. June through Labor Day.

WESLEYAN CHURCH, 320 W. Pine - 462-8391, Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:40 a.m., Sunday Evening Cell groups at 6:00 p.m., Wednesday Youth Ministries, Kids Clubhouse 7 p.m.

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, 1145 S. Franklin - 460-6605, President Dave Geldmacher, 846-7740; Calvin Haverfield, 1st counselor, 672-4165; Matt Christensen, 2nd counselor, 460-0146. Sacrament meeting 10 a.m., Sunday School and Primary 11:20 a.m., Priesthood, Relief Society, YM/YW, 12:10 p.m.; Family History Center open to public, 7-9 p.m. Thursdays or by appointment. Call 462-3571.

COLBY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, Rev. James Mardock, pastor, 950 S. Franklin, 462-6521, Sunday Worship Services at 8:30 and 11:00 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Fellowship coffee 9:30 a.m., Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., KXXX broadcasts 11:00 worship. http://www.gbmg-umc.org/colby-umc/

REDEEMING LOVE CHURCH, 345 N. Franklin, Apostle W.G. and Rev. Orvella Romine, Equipping Service, Sunday, 10 a.m., Sunday worship, 11 a.m., Thursday, RLM Training Center (Bible School), 6 p.m.

CHURCH OF CHRIST, 510 E. 4th, Jay Kelley, minister, Sunday Bible Study 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m., Sunday Eve. Worship 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

COLBY EVANGELISM CENTER, Rev. Robert Cooper, 815 West 3rd - 462-2062, Sunday School 9:45; Sunday service 10:00 and 6:30 p.m.; Wednesday Bible Study 6:30 p.m.; Friday Youth Power Hour at 7:00 p.m.

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, (Disciples of Christ), Pastor Bradley L. Herndon, 385 W. 3rd - 460-2718, Sunday Morning Worship at 9:00 a.m.; Sunday School at 10:30 a.m. E-mail: fcccolby@st-tel.net

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, Rev. John L. Schmidt, East 5th & Country Club, 462-3497, Services, Sat., 5:30 p.m., Sunday; Sunday School and Adult Bible Class 9:15 a.m.; Services, 10:30 a.m.; Lutheran Hour on KXXX at 10 a.m.; KGCR at 2 p.m.

OUR SAVIORS LUTHERAN CHURCH, Brewster, Sunday worship 9:00 a.m.; 2nd Sunday of the month at 8:00 a.m.

PLEASANT HOME CHURCH, Pastor, Charlie Busch, 694-2242, 3190 Road 70, Edson, Worship, 9:00 a.m., Sunday School 10:00 a.m., Evening worship, 6:00 p.m.

LEVANT COMMUNITY CHURCH, 205 1st St., Pastor Jerry Vincent, 586-2376, Sunday School (classes for 3 years & up and 3 adult classes) 9:30 a.m., Morning worship 10:30 a.m., Sunday Evening Worship 7:00 p.m.

WINONA METHODIST CHURCH, Rev. Michael Eurit, Sunday School, 10:30 a.m., Morning Worship 9:30 a.m. (CDT)

BREWSTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, PO Box 250, Brewster. Pastor Dorine Chambers, 785-462-6044, Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., Morning Worship, 10:45 a.m.

THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF, REXFORD, Mr. Bob Leach, Director, 687-2565

REXFORD COMMUNITY CHURCH, Rexford, Pastor Lane Purcell, 687-3305, Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

BREWSTER COMMUNITY CHURCH, Mike Pinkelman, Pastor, Brewster - 694-2720, Sunday School (all ages) 9:30 a.m., Worship Service 10:30 a.m., Bible Study 7:00 p.m., Wed. mornings 6:30 a.m. - Men's Bible Study, Wed. 7:00 p.m. - Children's Ministries (Royal Rangers/Missionettes), Wed. 7:15 p.m. - Intercessory & Prayer, Thurs. 4:00 p.m. - Women's Bible Study

You are cordially invited to a reception for
Roberta (Hornung) Heaton
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