

THE 1985 LDS HYMNBOOK

Emma Smith, wife of the Prophet Joseph Smith, was told by the Lord to make a selection of sacred hymns for the Church (D&C 25:11-12). The first hymnbook was published in 1835 with 90 hymns (words only), 42 of which had appeared earlier in Church periodicals. Members of the Church authored 34 hymns - 26 by William W. Phelps, 3 by Parley P. Pratt, one by Thomas B. Marsh and Parley P. Pratt, and one each by Eliza R. Snow, Edward Partridge, Philo Dibble, and William C. Gregg.

The Church has published nine hymnbooks between 1835 and 1985. Hymnbook #3, published in 1889 (54 years after the first hymnbook), was the first to include musical settings with the texts. Hymnbook #9, published in 1985 (150 years later), still contains 26 of the original 90 hymns.

Characteristics of the 1985 Hymnbook

1. Much greater balance in the number of hymns that teach basic gospel doctrines.
2. Lower keys in many hymns to allow a worldwide lay membership to sing the melodies.
3. Published in all major Church languages worldwide.
4. Standard and recommended hymns are coordinated in all international hymnbooks.
5. Some children's songs are included for the first time.

Directives Introduced by the 1985 Hymnbook

1. Use the words "music director" - not the obsolete word "chorister" (*Hymns*, 1985, p 384).
2. Singing the hymns of Zion more frequently (Preface, *Hymns*, 1985).
3. Using the words of hymns in support of teaching gospel principles (Preface, *Hymns*, 1985).
4. Feeling the power of hymns motivating righteous conduct and behavior (Preface).

Current Concerns by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

1. Appropriate worshipful music in sacrament meetings and conferences.
2. Participation in congregational singing.

Some General Guidelines for Music in Sacrament Meetings

1. Music should focus on gospel topics that members most need to build faith and testimony.
2. Music should be in harmony with the sacred nature of the sacrament.
3. Music and musical texts are to be sacred, dignified, and suitable for sacrament meeting.

"In the Church, we need better music and more of it, and better speaking and less of it."
(Elder Adam S. Bennion, Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, some time in the 1950s).

"We ought to have great music in the Church and more of it; great speaking in the Church and less of it." (Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, Priesthood Department, 2006 Christmas Devotional).

"If you love the Lord, if you love His doctrine, you'll love the hymns; and when you love them, then you sing them. . . . We must learn once again in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to really sing. We simply must do something with our congregational singing to bring out the spirit of music in the heart and soul of every boy, every girl, every man, every woman."
(President Thomas S. Monson, Hymnbook Celebration, Assembly Hall, 3 September 1985).

MAJOR PUBLICATIONS OF LDS HYMNBOOKS

1835 – Emma Smith's Hymn Collection

Entitled *A Collection of Sacred Hymns for the Church of the Latter-day Saints*, the first hymnbook in this dispensation contained ninety hymn texts (no musical settings).

1840 – The Manchester Hymnal

This second and one of the most important hymnals contained 271 hymn texts.

1889 – The Psalmody

The first large collection of hymns to include musical settings with the texts.

1908 – Songs of Zion

This edition included about 100 gospel hymns.

1909 – Deseret Sunday School Songs

Patterned after *Songs of Zion*, it quickly became the most popular hymnbook in the Church.

1927 – Hymns

This new hymnal combined the best of the Manchester hymnal, *Psalmody*, and *Songs of Zion*.

1948 – Hymns

This hymnal contained 387 hymns. It was congregation-centered (with some choir selections).

1950 – Hymns

This revised edition replaced some "1948" hymns with hymns from earlier LDS hymnbooks.

1985 – Hymns

New hymns and some children's songs have been added to a balanced selection of old and borrowed hymns. It also contains a much greater balance of basic gospel topics.

HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S SONGBOOKS

1880 – Hymns and Songs

Compiled by Eliza R. Snow, this little songbook contained 121 pages of songs with words only.

1880 – Tune Book

Also prepared by Eliza R. Snow, this companion publication contained 40 pages of songs with words and music. A cross-reference list indicated which melodies could also be sung with verses in *Hymns and Songs*.

1905 – The Primary Song Book

This publication contained 93 songs with words and music.

1940 – Little Stories in Song

Published by the Deseret Sunday School Union, the volume included songs for younger children.

1951 – The Children Sing

This publication included 199 songs and 13 instrumental selections for devotional music.

1969 – Sing with Me

This book contained newly composed songs. Songs written specifically on essential gospel subjects resulted in the printing of three supplemental songbooks: *Activity Songs and Verses* (1977), *More Songs for Children* (1978), and *Supplement to More Songs for Children* (1982).

1989 – Children's Songbook

Containing 255 songs, taken from previous publications and some written specifically for this publication, the new songbook represents the best balance to date of basic gospel topics. It also contains songs for parents or leaders to sing related to their responsibility to teach children.