

# Early-Morning Seminary Celebrates 60 Years

**E**arly-morning seminary can be challenging, but over the past 60 years more than a million teenage members of the Church have learned that rising before the sun and trying to focus not just their eyes but their minds on the scriptures is worth the effort.

“Spending a few minutes in the scriptures each day, bearing testimony, and feeling the Spirit has not only a strengthening effect as students go to school, but it has a healing effect as the Atonement of Jesus Christ acts in their lives,” said Kelly Haws, assistant administrator for seminaries and institutes of religion. “It’s a great opportunity for youth.”

*More than a million young Latter-day Saints have benefited from early-morning seminary since its beginnings 60 years ago.*



## The Birth of Early-Morning Seminary

The first seminary classes were held during regular school hours in 1912 in a seminary adjacent to Granite High School in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. However, as years passed, more and more Church youth were enrolled in the growing public school system but did not have access to seminary classes as the students at Granite High did.

As Church membership grew rapidly in

Southern California in the late 1940s, the need to educate young people in the gospel inspired a group of stake presidents to request the establishment of the Church’s seminary program in the Southern California area.

During the 1948–49 school year, Marion D. Hanks, who later served in the Presidency of the Seventy, had success teaching an early-morning seminary class at West High School in Salt Lake City. Holding similar classes seemed a logical solution for the Saints in California, and the 11 stakes were approved to form 13 early-morning classes.

## Meeting Diverse Needs

From the program’s official start during the 1950–51 school year, early-morning seminary

spread across the United States and throughout the world, helping youth everywhere to learn the scriptures and apply gospel principles. Its official name was recently changed to “daily seminary,” because not all such classes are held in the early morning.

Part of what makes daily seminary so successful is its flexibility. Programs are organized at the stake and district level, and classes can be organized in a single ward or branch or with multiple wards or branches meeting together accord-

ing to the needs and circumstances of youth, parents, and priesthood leaders.

While approximately 115,000 students still benefit each year from released-time seminary held during school hours in areas with a large concentration of Church members, nearly 217,000 seminary students throughout the world participate in daily seminary.

Because some youth in the Church live too

far from other Church members to attend either released-time or daily seminary classes, the home-study seminary program was established. Home-study students spend four days each week studying assigned material independently, then gather with other home-study students once a week to discuss what they've learned.

### **A Stone Cut without Hands**

Today, seminary classes are held in every state in the United States and in 140 countries around the world. In 1948 Canada became the first country outside the United States to hold seminary. With the spread of early-morning seminary, Mexico followed in 1958, Finland and Germany in 1962, Japan in 1963, Panama in 1964, and more countries over the years. Most recently, seminary classes were established in 2008 in the countries of Benin, Georgia, and Morocco.

As seminary spreads around the world, a worldwide community of seminary students is developing. No matter where seminary students live, they memorize the same scripture-mastery verses, study the same passages of scripture, feel the same Spirit as their testimonies grow, and work to build the same kingdom.

### **Blessings from Sacrifice**

Seminary students, whether they attend released-time, daily, or home-study seminary, make sacrifices that bring them closer to Heavenly Father.

“When a 15-year-old decides, ‘I’m going to get up at 5:00 a.m. for seminary,’ not only is that a sacrifice, but that use of agency is a statement to Heavenly Father that is returned with a blessing,” Brother Haws said.

Those blessings are as real today as they were 60 years ago, and seminary in all its forms continues to bless the lives of youth all over the world. ■

## Saints Serve across Africa

Church members across the African continent spent Saturday, August 21, 2010, improving their communities as part of the 2010 All-Africa Helping Hands Day.

This year, the Aba Nigeria Stake invited several community-based youth groups to partner with them, bringing together



more than 1,000 people. In the Umuahia Nigeria District, more than 100 members from six branches cut grass, trimmed flowers, and cleaned the gutters and grounds of the Broadcasting Corporation of Abia State.

In Accra, Ghana, branches were assigned to clean up various areas, including hospitals, children’s schools, and police stations. Some members were assigned to fill potholes or to clear storm drains that had become clogged.

Wherever the members went in their Helping Hands vests, grateful communities welcomed their help. The rector of Abia State Polytechnic told the

volunteers, “In an era where everybody is asking what the government will do for them, it is a welcome development to have an organization that continuously provides service to humanity.” ■

## Triple Combination Now Available in Indonesian

An Indonesian version of the triple combination is now available, making it possible for Indonesian speakers to have the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price bound together in their own language. A new edition of the Book of Mormon in Indonesian is also available.

The Indonesian triple is also available online. The online version includes footnotes, maps, and photographs and allows readers to mark the scriptures and perform key word searches. It can be accessed at [scriptures.lds.org/ind](http://scriptures.lds.org/ind).

There are more than 6,000 Indonesian-speaking members of the Church worldwide, most of them in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the United States. Indonesia is the fourth-most populous nation in the world.

The First Presidency has encouraged members to acquire their own scriptures and to use them in regular