

In 1991 the Church of Christ, Temple Lot (Independence, Mo.) published a Spanish Book of Mormon that was a copy of the 1960 RLDS edition (using the same chapter & versification).

In 2004 a private group, The Restoration—Spanish Translations published an improved edition of the 1960 RLDS edition, by replacing some of the Hebraisms.

Also, in 2004, The Church of Jesus Christ (TCOJC), of Monongahela, Pa. published a Spanish edition of the Book of Mormon. It uses the same chapter & verses that are used in the LDS editions.

In spite of the fact that the English text of the Book of Mormon from which all of these translations were made is almost exactly the same, there are still many inconsistencies in all of them that need improvements. These include the restoration of Hebraisms where they have been changed or removed, the use of *cognate words whenever possible, as well as a simplified vocabulary. (*See article entitled "Rights vs Rites" on our website.)

Over the years since 1960, a number of the Spanish speaking Seventy of the RLDS church have recognized the need for an updated and corrected version of the Spanish Book of Mormon. The plan to do this began in the mid 1990s and is now coming to fruition.

It is intended that this new Spanish translation will be formatted with the page numbering and verses that will match the English RCE. This will aid in scripture teaching with mixed groups of English and Spanish speakers, allowing quick reference to verses by page number.

Since existing copies of the current Spanish Book of Mormon are nearly exhausted, this updated edition will help fill that void. The plan is to publish the Book in three parts, 1 Nephi to Words of Mormon, Mosiah to Helaman, and 3 Nephi to Moroni. Each part will consist of two sections: The front half will be the easy-to-read Hebrew Strophe layout, and the back half will be a two column English - Spanish layout. This will serve two purposes:

1. Allow the Spanish reader to investigate and compare it with the English, thus allowing a better comprehension of the text of the Book itself.
2. Provide for future adjustments in this and any other Spanish translation by Spanish readers around the world—something that has never before been done.

This new translation will be an advantage for any missionary minded person who is intent on sharing the Book of Mormon with Spanish speakers, among many of whom are the very descendants of the peoples of the Book of Mormon for whom this Book was written. The RLDS officially opened the work in Latin America at the General Conference of 1948 by Israel A. Smith. Today, millions of these people are spilling across our southern border and are among us. Perhaps the Lord is allowing this because we did not seriously take their book back to them first.

If you would like to learn more about this translation work, please visit our website at www.mmsg.org where you will find numerous articles about the translation of the Book of Mormon into Spanish and the need for other languages also. Even though the Book of Mormon has been translated into several other languages, none of them have been properly vetted and verified.

We Need Your Help to Do This

The plan is to publish a small number (several hundred) copies of the first one-third of the Book which will be distributed to people around the world who will have an interest in reading a new version of the translation, and who will be willing to give meaningful feedback. This same process will be used for each of the other two parts of the Book.

After all three parts, along with agreed-upon corrections, have been evaluated by people around the world who speak Spanish, and by people who thoroughly understand the Book of Mormon and the English of the 1820s and 1830s, then the entire book will be assembled and published in the Strophe format of the RCE Book of Mormon. If there is a demand for a separate volume of the English-Spanish edition, we will consider how many need to be printed at that time.

This major undertaking will require some significant funding, and we realize that we will not be able to do it by ourselves. Even though we have received several significant donations, we are still far short of what the needs of this major publication will be. The MMSG board members urge each of you to prayerfully consider how you may be able to assist in this project in reaching the Spanish speakers who are in our own country as well as in many other parts of the Lord's vineyard.

MMSG Newsletter

The "Moroni Stone"



Photo by Ken Simmons



Mexico Ministry Support Group (MMSG) utilizes this as one of the symbols to represent our organization because it reminds us of an event in the Book of Mormon. The inscription shows a man wearing a headdress, loin cloth and some sort of foot gear. He is carrying a pole with a flag or banner apparently bearing a message represented by the three glyphs below the flag. Behind the man there is a footprint. This stone stele was found in La Venta, in southern Mexico. It is identified as Stele 13 and informally as the "Ambassador stone."

Archeologists have interpreted the stone as representing a man carrying a message through the lands. The footprint indicates traveling, and the glyphs identify the message. The bird glyph is a representation of Deity.

In the Book of Mormon in Alma 21 Verses 40–49 we have the following record of Moroni, and the title of liberty:

Alma 21:40–42

"And now it came to pass that when Moroni, which was the chief commander of the armies of the Nephites, had heard of these dissensions, he was angry with Amalickiah.

"And it came to pass that he rent his coat, And he took a piece thereof and wrote upon it—'In memory of our **God**, our **religion** and **freedom** and our **peace**, our **wives** and our **children**'— And he fastened it upon the end of a pole thereof;

"And he fastened on his head-plate and his breastplate and his shields and girded on his armor about his loins, And he took the pole which had on the end thereof his rent coat and he called it 'The Title of Liberty'."

Alma 21:47-49

"And he saith: 'Surely God shall not suffer that we who are despised because we take upon us the name of Christ shall be trodden down and destroyed, until we bring it upon us by our own transgressions.'

"And when Moroni had said these words, he went forth among the people, waving the rent of his garment in the air that all might see the writing which he had written upon the rent, And crying with a loud voice, saying:

"'Behold, whosoever will maintain this title upon the land, Let them come forth in the strength of the Lord and enter into a covenant that they will maintain their rights and their religion, that the Lord God may bless them.'

MMSG has selected this iconic image from Stele 13 to represent our organization since it appears to be a clear record of Chief Captain Moroni carrying the title of liberty throughout the lands. For us, it is one of the many physical evidences of the truth of the Book of Mormon.

It also reminds us of our responsibility as believers to take the record of the Book of Mormon back to the descendants of Lehi so that they may be reminded that the promises of the Lord to their forefathers are extended to them even in these last days.



The Resplendent Quetzal Bird

The other symbol that we have chosen to represent MMSG is the Quetzal Bird, for two reasons. Firstly, because of its relationship with the important Mesoamerican deity Quetzalcoatl. This person is known by many names, but when translated into modern languages, they are all associated with the quetzal bird. Three such names are: **Quetzalcoatl**, **Kukulcan** and **Gukumatz**. The bolded parts in each of these names refers to the **quetzal** bird.

The Second reason that we have chosen this bird is because of its beauty. Even the Internet and online dictionaries will bring up the name of this bird by simply typing in the word "resplendent." It has become part of this beautiful bird's official name. It is no wonder that this bird was used to describe the heavenly nature of the Deity who descended from heaven long ago and who taught so many cultures how to live in harmony. His name meaningfully lives on—no matter what language the people speak or what tribe or nation that they descended from.

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A New Spanish Translation of the Book of Mormon

Mexico Ministry Support Group (**MMSG**) is supporting the development of a new translation of the Book of Mormon into the Spanish language. This translation is modeled after the Hebrew Poetic Layout (Strophe) of the Restored Covenant Edition of the Book of Mormon (**RCE**) that was first discovered by Ed Faunce. Among other things, this new translation seeks to preserve, whenever possible, the many Hebraisms that are found in the English Book of Mormon. This translation work was initially undertaken by Frank Frye, and the late Neil Simmons.

The 1830 Palmyra, New York edition of the Book of Mormon was divided into 114 chapters, but with no verses. The LDS church was the first group to add verses to the text of the Book of Mormon. In their **1852** edition they experimented with versification by adding verses to the existing chapters.

However, in 1879 Orson Pratt changed the original 114 chapters by shortening them and making 239 chapters. Then he created a new versification with a total of 6530 verses.

Meanwhile in Lamoni Iowa, the RLDS church printed its first edition of the Book of Mormon and maintained the original chapters of the 1930 edition and continued the paragraph numbering system which remained in use until the scarce 1907 edition. Their 1908 edition kept the original chapters and created its own versification with more manageable, shorter verses with a total of 8662 verses. The 1908 edition has remained their "Authorized Edition" since then.

One of the main objectives to this undertaking is to provide consistency in translation with the English as given to Joseph Smith, Jr. There have been several previous Spanish translations of the Book of Mormon. The first complete translation was done by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (**LDS**, Salt Lake, Ut.) in 1886. It has undergone numerous updated editions since then.

The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (**RLDS**, Independence, Mo.) published its first Spanish Book of Mormon around 1960. Later in 1979 an RLDS "Spanish reader's edition" was requested and done by Ben Peterson. This was done before much was known about Hebraisms. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the request, most Hebraisms were lost from that edition.