

Topic

Growth of the Church

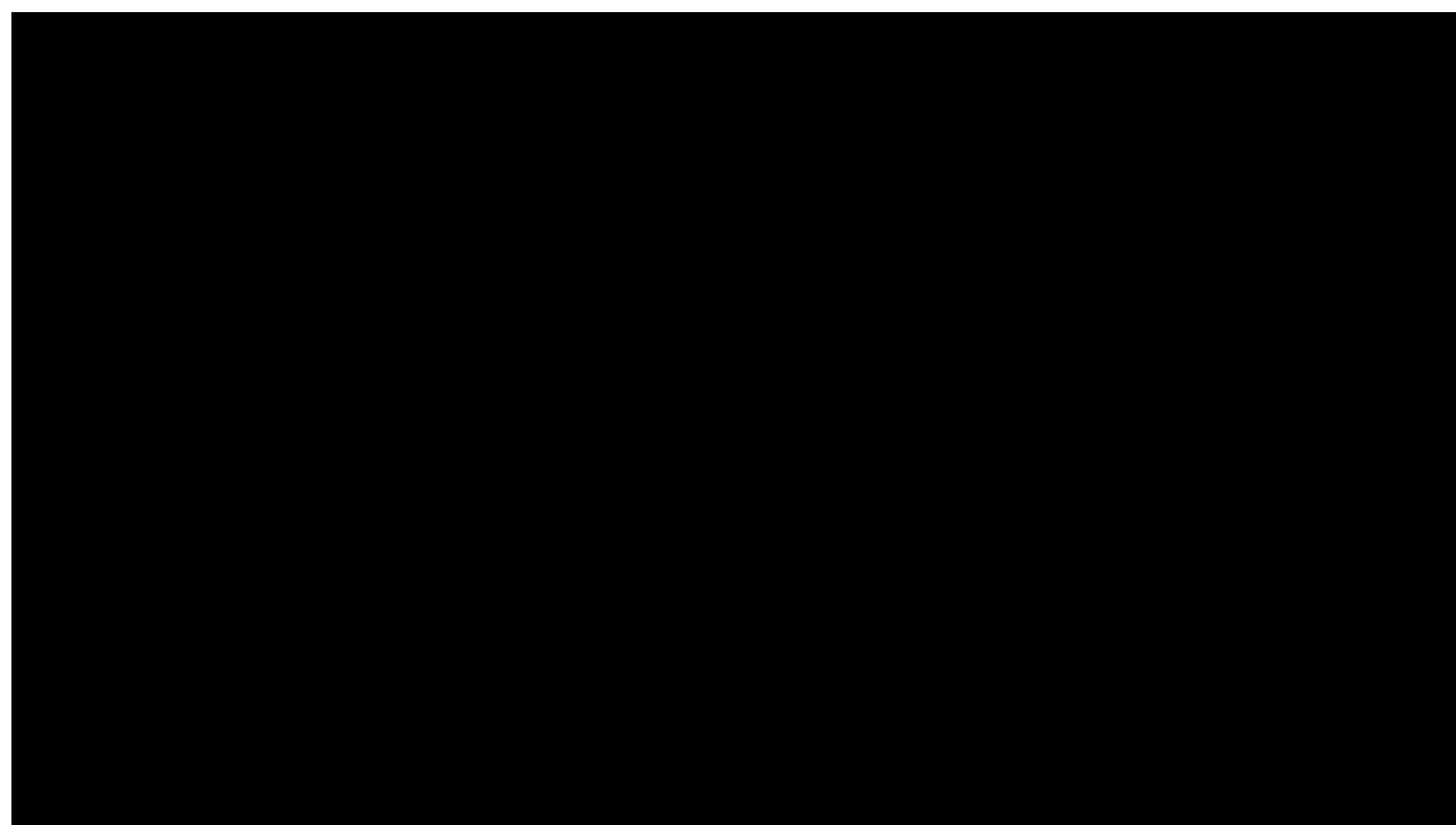


The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was formally organized in a small log cabin in upstate New York in 1830.

It took 117 years — until 1947 — for the Church to grow from the initial six members to one million. Missionaries were a feature of the Church from its earliest days, fanning out to Native American lands, to Canada and, in 1837, beyond the North American continent to England. Not long after, missionaries were working on the European continent and as far away as India and the Pacific Islands.

The two-million-member mark was reached just 16 years later, in 1963, and the three-million mark in eight years more. This accelerating growth pattern has continued with about a million new members added every several years. Growth consists both of convert baptisms and natural growth through the birth of children.

Church membership today is over 16 million.



Temple Square is always beautiful in the springtime. Gardeners work to prepare the ground for General Conference.
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The consequences of this rapid and sustained growth are seen in many places in the world where the Church operates. Congregations that are grouped into geographical areas known as wards are periodically divided as they become too large to administer, or to worship in a chapel or meetinghouse all at once. New buildings are being completed virtually every day of the year in order to house growing membership.

According to the National Council of Churches, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the second-fastest-growing church in the United States. However, despite its increasing numbers, the Church cautions against overemphasis on growth statistics. The Church makes no statistical comparisons with other churches and makes no claim to be the fastest-growing Christian denomination despite frequent news media comments to that effect. Such comparisons rarely take account of a multiplicity of complex factors, including activity rates and death rates, the methodology used in registering or counting members and what factors constitute membership. Growth rates also vary significantly across the world. Additionally, many other factors contribute to the strength of the Church, most especially the devotion and commitment of its members.



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STYLE GUIDE NOTE: When reporting about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, please use the complete name of the Church in the first reference. For more information on the use of the name of the Church, go to our online [Style Guide](#).

