

ARCHIVES**First edition
to be printed
by trade
publisher**

Church permits
Doubleday to publish
Book of Mormon

By Church News Archives
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The first commercial edition of the Book of Mormon by a major trade publisher will be available in bookstores on November 16 this year after its publication by Doubleday in New York, it was announced July 7.

It will be the first time since its publication in 1830 that a trade publisher has handled distribution of the Book of Mormon outside the Church.

A contract between the Church and Doubleday is expected to be finalized shortly, according to a news release issued by the Church's Public Affairs Department.

Doubleday and Church officials have been working for more than a year on the project, ensuring that the text remains faithful to the authorized edition already used by Church members and missionaries, the news release stated.

The new hardcover edition will reflect design changes introduced by Doubleday to make the volume more easily read and understood by a non-Mormon audience, but will remain faithful to the text itself. For example, the new edition will not include the exhaustive cross-references and index included in the volume used by Church members. Footnotes have been eliminated, and the approximate dates at the bottom of many pages will appear in the brief chapter headings. A special seven-page Reference Guide will be included to help orient the reader who is less familiar with the Church and its teachings.

Millions of copies of the Book of Mormon are in print, in dozens of languages. They have typically been distributed by missionaries and Church members in inexpensive editions or obtained from Church distribution outlets. A "readers' edition" of the 1928 Book of Mormon is available from the University of Illinois Press.

Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve who serves on the Church's scripture committee, said that the Church was not asking members to buy new scriptures for themselves.

"The new edition uses the authorized text, so buying new scriptures is not necessary," he said. "However, many members may feel that this new edition would be an ideal gift for friends who are not members of the Church."

Elder Eyring said that the First Presidency had authorized the new publication, feeling that this would allow the sacred volume to be more readily obtainable by the general public at such places as airport bookstores and through major popular retail outlets, including their web sites.

The book will sell for \$24.95.

Doubleday Religion Division Vice President Michelle Rapkin said: "The Mormon faith has become one of the largest in America. We're proud to be the first publisher to bring this vitally important work to bookstores across the country and to add it to our outstanding library of authorized religious texts."

The project became a reality after Doubleday approached Church-owned Deseret Book, the Church's commercial publisher. The matter was referred to the First Presidency for consideration.

Beginning with Danish in 1851, the full text of the Book of Mormon has been published in 72 languages, and selections of it in another 32. Printed copies have totaled more than 120 million. From the beginning, Church members have accepted it as scripture.

"The Book of Mormon makes the Latter-day Saints what we are," said S. Kent Brown, director of ancient studies at Brigham Young University.

In his article, "The Book of Mormon: A Minimal Statement," ancient-scripture scholar Hugh W. Nibley writes, "Just as the New Testament clarified the long-misunderstood message of the Old, so the Book of Mormon is held to reiterate the messages of both Testaments in a way that restores their full meaning."