

CHURCH TIME LINE FOR CHILE, 1952-1961

1952 June 19 En route to Chile to work for Eastman Kodak, former Argentine missionary Billie F. Fotheringham meets with Stephen L Richards, first counselor in the First Presidency, to determine whether there is any Church presence in Chile.

Once in Santiago, Bill Fotheringham develops contacts with government officials and investigates the possibility of bringing LDS missionaries to Chile. Fotheringham urges President Richards and other Church leaders in Salt Lake City to send missionaries.

1954 Feb. 8-9 President David O. McKay, his wife, and their son Robert (a former Argentine missionary) stop in Santiago returning home from touring the missions on the east coast of South America and meet with the Fotheringhams, giving President McKay a chance to form an impression of Chile.

Mar. 19 Bill Fotheringham writes to President McKay urging that missionaries be sent and offering suggestions on how to secure visas for them.

1955 Jan. 10 Returning from a tour of the Argentine Mission, Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Twelve and his wife stop briefly in Santiago to meet with the Fotheringhams.

May 26 The First Presidency advises President Lee B. Valentine of the Argentine Mission that Santiago, Chile, has been added to his jurisdiction and that they will advise him when to send the first missionaries.

June 21-25 The Valentines visit Santiago to renew their Argentine visas. While there, they meet with the Fotheringhams and become acquainted with the city.

1956 Jan. 7 President Valentine writes to the First Presidency to say he is ready to send missionaries as soon as he receives permission to do so.

- May 30 Elder Henry D. Moyle of the Quorum of the Twelve (who had already been authorized to organize a branch in Santiago while touring South America, if he felt the time was right) writes to the First Presidency from Buenos Aires requesting permission to send two elders to Chile.
- June 23 Missionaries Verle M. Allred and Joseph C. Bentley, who had been notified on June 14 that they had been chosen to go to Chile, fly to Santiago from Mendoza and are met by Bill Fotheringham.
- July 5 Elder Moyle visits Santiago with President Valentine and their respective wives and at a meeting held in the Fotheringham home organizes the first branch of the Church in Chile, with Bill Fotheringham as branch president. Initially called the Santiago Branch but soon renamed the Ñuñoa Branch, at its inception the branch consists of the Fotheringhams and their two children and U.S. embassy employee Reed Robinson and his wife and their four children. At the time no Chileans are known to be members of the Church. Elder Moyle states, “These people will accept the Gospel rapidly and . . . soon there will be a mission here with at least ten branches.”
- While in Chile, Elder Moyle visits the government department that issues visas to explain why LDS missionaries would be coming to Chile.
- Aug. 1 A home at Campo de Deportes 93 in the *comuna* of Ñuñoa is rented as both a residence for the missionaries and a meeting place for the Santiago Branch. Sunday School had been held for several weeks in the Fotheringham home prior to this time. At the first meeting in the new facility, sixty-five to seventy Chileans contacted by the missionaries are present.
- Sept. 13-15 Recently-arrived mission president Lorin N. Pace makes the first of many visits to Chile.
- Nov. 25 The first Chilean converts are baptized in the swimming pool of the Prince of Wales Country Club in Santiago — Ricardo S. García, Isidro and Graciela Saldaña, Silvia Ortiz, Mario S. and Patricio A. Oróstegui, and Sally Silva Lanzarotti. Also baptized are Craig F. Fotheringham and Jo Ann Robinson.

1957 Jan. 17-21 President Pace visits some twenty of southern Chile’s larger cities and towns to investigate the possibilities for missionary work, but due to lack of missionaries does not send elders to any but the largest Chilean cities. He frees up additional missionaries for Chile by calling Argentines to serve in their own country.

Branches are established in Concepción (February) and Viña del Mar (May). President Pace had hoped to open a branch in Valparaíso, but, unable to find a

place to rent there, opted instead for neighboring Viña del Mar, where a home is available at 2 Poniente 333.

June 9 The first Relief Society and Primary organizations in Chile are established in the Ñuñoa Branch.

July The Church purchases its first property in Chile, a large home at El Bosque Sur 547, as the headquarters of the Providencia Branch and a future mission home. The site serves as the unofficial Church headquarters in Chile for several years. Bill Fotheringham is president of the new branch until Kodak transfers him to Puerto Rico in January 1958, when Clarence W. Langdorf of the military mission assigned to the U.S. embassy in Santiago replaces him.

Aug. 16 Signed by the president of Chile, Carlos Ibáñez del Campo, a decree is published in the *Diario Oficial* formalizing the incorporation of the Church, making it possible for the Church to enter into contracts, buy properties, etc.

1958 May 16 Opal M. Atwood and Hope C. Kohler arrive from Argentina as the first sisters assigned to Chile. By this time fourteen elders are serving as missionaries in Chile.

Oct. 31 The San Miguel Branch is organized in Santiago.

1959 Jan. 16. Ruth Peters and María Cristina Donoso, both from the Ñuñoa Branch, become the first Chilean full-time missionaries. On July 13 Guillermo E. Núñez of the Viña del Mar Branch becomes the first male Chilean called to serve a full-time mission.

Feb. 4-9 Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Quorum of the Twelve visits Chile with his wife and stresses the need for developing local leadership.

Apr. 13 Ricardo S. García is the first Chilean to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood.

During the year additional branches are organized in Santiago (Parque Cousiño) and Valparaíso.

Oct. 26-31 Elder Harold B. Lee of the Twelve visits Chile with his wife and organizes the Andes Mission, headquartered in Lima, with J. Vernon Sharp as president, to supervise missionary work in Peru and Chile. At the time, twenty-five LDS missionaries are serving in Chile. Joseph R. Quayle, a U.S. citizen working in Santiago for the United Nations, is appointed first counselor in the mission presidency.

At the end of 1959, seven branches are functioning in Chile, all of them presided over by U.S. missionaries. There are 615 Latter-day Saints in Chile.

1960 May Following a major earthquake in southern Chile, relief supplies are sent by the Church and LDS missionaries serve as translators for U.S. Army medical personnel there to render humanitarian assistance. On May 31, a delegation from the Chilean Congress visits Salt Lake City to thank President McKay for the Church's contributions.

May 22 **«Featured Chilean leader» Carlos A. Cifuentes, a counselor in the Providencia Branch presidency, is the first Chilean called as a branch president. Both his counselors and the clerk are also Chileans.**

Oct. 28 Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Twelve visits Chile as Secretary of Agriculture in the Eisenhower administration and speaks at an LDS gathering attended by 430 persons, including representatives of the U.S. and Chilean governments.

Nov. Additional branches are opened in San Bernardo and Talcahuano.

Dec. 10-15 President Joseph Fielding Smith of the Quorum of the Twelve and his wife and Elder A. Theodore Tuttle of the First Council of the Seventy visit Chile. President Smith inspects a property about to be purchased in Viña del Mar and advises President Sharp to buy the adjoining lot as well, envisioning that one day the property would become the site of an LDS temple.

During President Smith's visit, Sharp suggests the time has come to organize a mission headquartered in Chile, with the nation's northernmost city, Arica, remaining in the Andes Mission until such time as a mission based in Santiago expands into that part of the country.

1961 Feb. 1-2 The five mission presidents in South America are advised of the new labor missionary program. Subsequently representatives of the Church Building Committee visit Chile to see potential meetinghouse sites owned by the Church.

May 26 The Chilean District is divided to form the Concepción District. When the Valparaíso District is formed soon thereafter, the original district is renamed the Santiago District.

Aug. 25 The South American Mission is organized to supervise Church activities in South America, headquartered in Montevideo, Uruguay, with Elder A. Theodore Tuttle as its president.

By early October a branch has been established in Quillota, a second branch is functioning in Viña del Mar, and another branch (Quinta Normal) is operating in Santiago. In addition, a branch has been established in Arica.

Oct. 8

At the Teatro El Golf in Santiago, Elder Tuttle organizes the Chilean Mission as the Church's sixty-seventh mission, with A. Delbert Palmer as president. There are sixty-five missionaries, three districts, twelve branches (five with Chilean branch presidents), and 1,136 members (including 122 local priesthood bearers) within the new mission's boundaries.

By the time the Chilean Mission is created, President McKay and six members of the Quorum of the Twelve (among them four future Presidents of the Church) have already visited Chile to become acquainted with the country and its people.

Cecilia Coleman, AUGUST 2006

