



THE LATTER-DAY SAINT IMAGE IN THE BRITISH MIND

MALCOLM ADCOCK
AND FRED E. WOODS



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To our beloved parents:
Denis and Joyce Adcock, pioneers in the faith,
& Fred and Shirley Woods
who supported their children in all their undertakings.

They inspired their families
and their influence
will touch the lives
of generations to come.

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Foreword

The *Latter-day Saint Image in the British Mind* is a welcome, careful, and accessible account of the transformation and growth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the changing attitudes of British culture towards this community.

In this volume, Malcolm Adcock and Fred E. Woods track these changing attitudes that began with suspicion and hostility, directed at the perceived weird beliefs and threat of bogeymen from Utah coming to abduct local women to America. Adcock and Woods show how the curiosity of Latter-day Saint presence in a nation—where “everything stops for tea” and where local pubs serving ale had a central social function—provoked a sense of Latter-day Saints as somewhat puritanical alien Americana through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

But Adcock and Woods show that this is far from the whole picture. Citing Charles Dickens, Latter-day Saint service in wartime Britain, missions through popular music and sport, the building of temples, and networking in public and political life, they illustrate how Latter-day Saints patiently faced ridicule and won respect through consistent integrity.

Dickens came to judge not by the hearing of the ear, but by what he saw as the fruits of “Mormon” endeavour. Examples of uprightness and sustained service led judgments—such as those of the Architect of the London Temple, Sir Thomas Bennett—to be transformed. He came to value Latter-day Saints as “the finest people for whom I work.”

This volume also shows how a more nuanced series of theological engagements and interfaith dialogue is fruitful and equips further understanding and appreciation.

The profile of Latter-day Saints in the United Kingdom continues to change and deepen. Missionaries may be ridiculed in the West End’s production of *The Book of Mormon*, but the refusal to react aggressively has positively surprised many.

In addition to these diverse images, Latter-day Saints are also increasingly celebrated for profound humanitarian work in the United Kingdom and beyond, with missionaries showing that Latter-day Saints are indeed “friends of all nations” through their self-forgetfulness and

outward focus. This service was noted in their charitable assistance during the floods of 2019 in Wales and Yorkshire, and through the coronavirus pandemic of 2020. In this, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Britain shows consistency with the classic Anglican desire to serve the whole nation, yet it does so with an intensity and dynamism that seems to have dissipated in more traditional, established faith traditions.

From the earliest Latter-day Saint missions in England, the community has endured persecution but has persevered, proving resilient, innovative, and committed to sharing faith and life with non-Latter-day Saint neighbours. The transformation of culture, for example, by the Osmonds in popular mission is appreciated. In contemporary estimation, the accessibility of Latter-day Saint family history work is also an increasingly valued contribution in showing the connectedness of the whole human family.

This well-written, carefully evidenced book provides a broad and hopeful foundation for the future mission of Latter-day Saints in Britain; it invites us to continue to commit to witness and service together, and to grow in authentic love and appreciation of one another. I commend it wholeheartedly.

Reverend Dr. Andrew Teal
Chaplain, Fellow, & Lecturer in Theology
Pembroke College, Oxford, 2020

Preface

Since the coming forth of the Book of Mormon in 1830, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has added millions of people to its global membership. Crucial to its initial growth were converts from Great Britain who emigrated to join with other Latter-day Saints in the United States. Many, however, stayed in the United Kingdom in order to establish a presence of the Church there. The faith's reputation among the British is the focus of this work. Although both authors have British roots running back several centuries, Malcolm was brought up in the Latter-day Saint faith and lives in the United Kingdom, while Fred has no Latter-day Saint ancestry and lives in America.

Malcolm Adcock's parents became Latter-day Saints in 1959, during an era of significant expansion. Malcolm vividly recalls many childhood experiences reflecting the Latter-day Saint cultural realities of the time, including working at meetinghouse building sites with his family ("Put down that sledgehammer!" he was once told by a worried adult) and clearing away cigarette butts and beer bottles (discarded by Saturday night revelers) in rented halls to prepare the area for Sabbath day meetings.

Malcolm graduated from the University of Kent Law School and served a Latter-day Saint mission in Ontario, Canada. Soon after returning home, he was able to follow his passion for journalism and writing (specifically investigative coverage) by working with the BBC as a consumer issues journalist and producer. During his time as Mayor of Daventry, Northamptonshire, he had two chaplains: an Anglican and a Latter-day Saint. Now heading the UK-based Communication office (previously Public Affairs¹) for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he is in regular contact with opinion leaders who share a mutual desire to focus on common touchpoints, including the vital need for freedom of religion and belief in the United Kingdom and globally. Malcolm has participated in many of the high-profile events described within the book.

1. "Public Affairs" is used in this book to refer to public outreach activity by staff or volunteer Church representatives. Over the years, various designations have been used, including Public Communications, Public Affairs, and now Communication (incorporating public affairs).

Fred E. Woods was raised near Los Angeles, California. His immediate family members, each of a different Christian denomination, reflected the multi-faith cultural influence of his local neighborhood and city. Although he grew up in a metropolitan region, Fred was naïve when it came to understanding the Latter-day Saint tradition. He had been told that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was a cult and was unaware that it is a Christian faith. Fred envisioned the Latter-day Saints as a bizarre sect whose people were garbed in black. Aside from these misconceptions, he had learned of early Latter-day Saint pioneer leader Brigham Young via a student report in his sixth grade class and later heard the buzzword “polygamy.” This was the extent of his exposure to the faith.

Just shy of his twentieth birthday, Fred became a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He later obtained a PhD in Hebrew Bible and encountered the Talmudic idea “We do not see the world as it is. We see the world as we are.”² Certainly this idea was indicative of Fred’s revised perspectives through the lens of his newfound faith. He discovered that the Jews and the Latter-day Saints have a similar number of adherents³ but wondered why so many people knew more about Judaism than about the doctrines and practices of those belonging to the Church.

The purpose of this book, *The Latter-day Saint Image in the British Mind*, is to explore the multifaceted perspectives of British people outside the Latter-day Saint faith tradition and how these perceptions of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its members generally have improved over time. In the context of the book, the term *image* refers to an “impression of something” or a “mental conception held in common by members of a group that’s symbolic of a basic attitude and orientation.”⁴ Our intent is that this study will provide a better understanding and serve as a reminder that how people view things has everything to do with correct information blended with their personal biases and experiences. Along those lines, although the Church and its leaders, beginning with Joseph Smith, have largely embraced the nicknames

2. William Berry, “The Truth Will Not Set You Free.”

3. As of this printing, there are over fifteen million Jews and over sixteen million Latter-day Saints among the world’s population. See “Vital Statistics: Jewish Population of the World (1882–Present),” AICE; and “Facts and Statistics,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

4. *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. “image.”

“Mormon” and “Mormonism,”⁵ in October 2018 the President of the Church, Russell M. Nelson, requested that Church members and the media no longer use those terms: to instead use the full name of the Church whenever possible and to refer to its members as “Latter-day Saints.”⁶ We have thus strived to follow this request, except in quotations in which members or others use those terms as they would have naturally adopted them at the time.

In this book, we present historical accounts via literature, film, and media reviews of Latter-day Saints and their faith. In addition, we have conducted over a hundred face-to-face interviews and surveyed a thousand Brits to determine how UK citizens perceive The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the twenty-first century and why they hold those views.

We have also produced a documentary as a companion to our book. This 2021 award-winning film, directed by Martin Andersen, captures the expressions and voices of many of those we interviewed. It can be accessed via this link:

https://truth-and-reason.com/LDS_Image_BritishMind.htm

We hope that our exploration and analysis of these evolving public views—with reference to how Church members see themselves—coupled with the combined lens of our blended perspectives will enable us to identify and demystify naïve conceptions about Latter-day Saints and make what may once have seemed strange appear quite sound. We also hope readers will be left with a keen sense of the contribution Latter-day Saints have made to British society and of their concerted efforts to join hands with neighbors in their local communities in rendering multidimensional service for the benefit of all.

5. For example, in a March 20, 1839, letter to Latter-day Saints that was later published in the Church’s *Times and Seasons*, Joseph Smith wrote: “No, they [critics] may rage, with all the powers of hell and pour forth their wrath, indignation and cruelty like the burning lava of mount Vesuvius, yet, shall Mormonism stand. Truth is Mormonism, and God is its author.” See Joseph Smith, et al, “Copy of a Letter, Written by J. Smith Jr. and Others, while in Prison,” 103.

6. Russell M. Nelson, “The Correct Name of the Church.” In that address Nelson stated: “If we allow nicknames to be used or adopt or even sponsor those nicknames ourselves, [God] is offended.”

Acknowledgments

We are so grateful to the very many individuals and organizations who have made it possible for us to produce this work, whether named or unnamed below. We especially acknowledge the time and insight provided by those whom we have interviewed. We deeply value our association with everyone who has advised on the book in a wide range of capacities.

Fred's time as Summer Oxford research fellow to Harris Manchester College, Oxford, for the Trinity trimesters for 2017 and 2018 was an inspirational and foundational experience for the book. Malcolm and Fred are especially appreciative of the invaluable contribution to the project by Revd. Dr. Andrew Teal, Chaplain, Fellow & Lecturer in Theology, Pembroke College Oxford, whose public dialogue on Latter-day Saint theology continues to be deeply enlightening. Professor Eileen Barker OBE, Professor Emeritus of Sociology with Special Reference to the Study of Religion at the London School of Economics, provided very important perspectives on how religious groups have been perceived over the years. Dr. Terryl L. Givens, Neal L. Maxwell Senior Fellow at Brigham Young University, conveyed the context within which the Latter-day Saint faith has often been significantly mischaracterized in popular culture. Dr. James Holt, Associate Professor of Religious Education, University of Chester, suggested that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would be categorized as a "restorationist" Christian faith, thus going beyond the three main traditional groupings of churches as Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant.

We thank Michael Otterson, former managing director of the Public Affairs Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for his time in carefully reading the pre-publication manuscript. Likewise, we are appreciative of the support of Richard E. Turley, previously Assistant Church Historian and latterly managing director of the Church's Communication Department. Previous employees of the Church's Public Affairs Department providing valuable insight include Lynn Driscoll, RoseMarie Loft, Marion McLaverty, Kym Reichart, and Lesley Smith. Malcolm has warm memories of association with the late Bryan Grant and David Fewster, previous UK-based Area Public Affairs Directors, who

provided professional mentorship over the decades (and who are referenced in the book).

We appreciate Greg Kofford Books' publication of this volume and thank Loyd Isao Ericson for his support in the production process. The tireless work of those who provided the interview transcripts and other administrative support must not go unnoticed, especially Beverly Yellowhorse.

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It has been a pleasure to work with filmmaker Martin Andersen, who accompanied us on many interviews across the length and breadth of Great Britain and Ireland. His humor and professionalism helped buoy our spirits during very long days. We thank Chris Wills, former UK-based video producer at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who also assisted—with his wife Jeannie Wills—in locating archive sources and in other ways. Utah-based radio host and book reviewer Terry Hutchinson provided insightful editorial steers. In the United Kingdom, we also thank Dr. David Cook and Professor Simon J. Gibson, CBE DL, Frank Blease, and many others for background material on the mid-twentieth-century Church building program. We are most grateful to Rosalie West for her detailed research on British newspaper archives.

It was fun to spend time with members of the Osmond family, who did—and do—so much to help bring the Church out of obscurity in the United Kingdom. Thank you to Donny and Marie Osmond, and brothers Alan, Jay, and Merrill, and the rest of the family.

We are very conscious of the tireless work of so many Public Affairs volunteers and leaders from the Church, as well as interfaith representatives in many churches and faith groups who do so much to connect with community and promote goodwill across the faith spectrum. Every individual with whom we interacted on this “book journey” has had an impact on our own lives, and if we have failed to acknowledge anyone by name, then we offer our sincere apologies. The following people deserve special mention for their time providing further understanding of their individual experiences and for their support in other ways: Chris Abbas, Bill Baldock, William Bodine, Eric Bowyer, Eileen Connolly, Martin

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The writers take full responsibility for the book's content. Views expressed do not necessarily reflect the position of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or of Brigham Young University.

INTRODUCTION

The Latter-day Saint Image

It was nevertheless a fact that I had beheld a vision . . . but still there were but few who believed.

— Joseph Smith History 1:24

On central London's congested public transportation system (with capital-wide annual passenger numbers of 1.35 billion), next to crowded escalators and on the sides of iconic red buses, "I love Mormon" posters shout for attention.¹ The London promoters of *The Book of Mormon* musical reportedly spent one million dollars for the launch marketing of one of the world's top entertainment hits, and the sizeable British ad spending for *The Book of Mormon* musical continues.²

The portrayal of Latter-day Saints in melodramatic fashion—with hackneyed recycling of stereotypes—has pulled crowds to the box office over the decades and has captured readers' attention even before the turn of the twentieth century. What *The Book of Mormon* musical (with its raw, excessive adult humor) is to the twenty-first century, *A Study in Scarlet* (with its sensationalized reports of Latter-day Saints) was to the Victorian era. Early depictions of "Mormons" in this novel helped launch Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's literary career. *A Study in Scarlet*, Doyle's first novel, was published in Britain during 1887 when Latter-day Saint persecution for polygamy—seen then as the religion's chief feature—was at a peak. (Following a visit to Utah, Conan Doyle softened his view of the Latter-day Saints.³)

On both sides of the Atlantic, television shows such as *Big Love* and *Sister Wives* continue to promote the myth of polygamous "Mormons." Thankfully, many reality-based programs are now increasingly making it clear that the multiple-wived men featured in these shows are not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but some confusion continues.

1. TfL Community Team, "Tube Trivia and Facts."

2. Paul Scott, "The Book of Mormon Review: The Most Over-Hyped Show on God's Earth."

3. Sebastian Lecourt, "The Mormons, the Victorians, and the Idea of Greater Britain," 85.

Latter-day Saints well known to Brits include the Osmonds, Brandon Flowers, Gladys Knight, and Mitt Romney. Romney's political run as Republican 2012 US presidential candidate raised the Church's profile to a huge extent in the United Kingdom—during a time dubbed “the Mormon Moment.” A spiritual legacy of inspiring musical tours from the Mormon Tabernacle Choir—now named The Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square—has also enthralled British audiences.

So, what do people really think about Latter-day Saints? We found that in modern Britain, the perception of Church members is perhaps more like the view through a kaleidoscope than through a telescope; there are multiple views, informed by personal experiences and interactions with Latter-day Saints individually and with the Church as an organization. There is no overriding “groupthink” norm, no overall prejudgment; yet, generally speaking, the British perception of the Latter-day Saint image has improved in the modern era. After all, there are over 189,000 Latter-day Saints living in the United Kingdom, including members of the judiciary, members of parliament (MPs), and West End talent (London's Broadway), as well as people in more traditional jobs.⁴ Latter-day Saints then are members of a sizeable minority faith. (By comparison, there are just over 263,000 Jews in England and Wales.⁵)

In our survey of one thousand UK residents, we discovered that nearly a quarter expressed the individual view that “I would not mind learning more about Latter-day Saints if I could learn it from a friend without feeling any pressure to join.”⁶ This is perhaps a surprising response at a time when church attendance in Britain is at an all-time low. Other questionnaire answers were revealing too.

Members of the Church are active in community building, as is the Church institutionally. For example, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints supports religious and secular rights of conscience through the All Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief. In its early days, the Church was not strong enough in the United Kingdom to lend support to religious freedom since its own rights for religious freedom were unassured. Over a century ago, it was Winston Churchill as Home Secretary who, during House of Commons exchange-

4. See “Facts and Statistics,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

5. See “Jews in Numbers,” Board of Deputies of British Jews.

6. This professional survey conducted with one thousand British citizens is in possession of authors.

es, advocated religious tolerance towards Latter-day Saint missionaries.⁷ Now, members of the Church are reaping the benefits of that tolerance supported by Churchill.

Latter-day Saints in the United Kingdom are not a homogeneous social group and instead display significant racial and political diversity. For example, the first Latter-day Saint elected to Parliament was Terry Rooney MP, who represented the Labour party in Bradford North.⁸ All the major political parties have had parliamentary candidates, campaigners, and elected MPs who are Latter-day Saints. Latter-day Saint singer and entertainer Alex Boyé was born in the United Kingdom and is of Nigerian heritage.

The Britain of today is a far cry from late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain when the Church's worship services in varied locations were disrupted by angry locals,⁹ or from the 1950s when many people saw families converting to what was seen as a strange new American sect. The public perception of the Church began to change more quickly in the 1960s, however; it was a time of major growth for the Church in Britain, as Latter-day Saints constructed large chapels and rapidly baptized tens of thousands across the land.

The spiritual yearnings of Latter-day Saint British converts were satiated as they embraced a new faith route for their Christianity that they felt was borne of a sure spiritual witness; the concept of "Zion in Britain" was in their hearts. They would have strongly related to the words of William Blake's "Jerusalem," which builds off the folk story of a young Jesus visiting the British Isles:

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

7. See "Mormon Missionaries: Volume 25: Debated on Monday 8 May 1911."

8. See "Church Member Elected to British Parliament."

9. See, for examples, "A Mormon Riot," *Mormon Chronicle* [London], 7; "Mormon Riot at Sheffield," *Shields Daily Gazette and Shipping Telegraph*, 4; "The Anti-Mormon Riots at Brightside," *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 2; "Anti-Mormon Riot in London," *Western Daily Press*, 7; "A Welsh Anti-Mormon Meeting," *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, 4; "Anti-Mormon Riot," *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 7; "Anti-Mormon Riot," *Manchester Courier*, 10.

And did the Countenance Divine
 Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
 And was Jerusalem builded here
 Among these dark Satanic mills?

 Bring me my bow of burning gold:
 Bring me my arrows of desire:
 Bring me my spear: O clouds unfold!
 Bring me my chariot of fire.

 I will not cease from mental fight,
 Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
 Till we have built Jerusalem
 In England's green and pleasant land.¹⁰

The spiritual and emotional resonance new members felt was linked to the social backgrounds of many earlier converts to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. New followers in the nineteenth century may have literally worked in Blake's "dark Satanic mills"—the industrial factories—of northern England. Those joining in the middle of the nineteenth century were often from the working class, and they formed large groups and gathered to Zion in America, ready to build up a "New Jerusalem." Their more modern counterparts were urged to build up a Zion in the British Isles—this was a place of gathering too.

Building the Kingdom of God

It was the physical building of the kingdom that British Latter-day Saints took literally in the late 1950s. That time was designated by David O. McKay, then President of the Church, as a "new era" in Great Britain, and Church meetinghouses sprang up all over the land.¹¹ Currently, 320 congregations are established in the United Kingdom.¹²

Permanence and stability for the Church has been demonstrated via the chapel building programs and the construction of the Latter-day Saints' two British temples—impressive structures in Chorley, Lancashire, and in the Surrey countryside. As it was with the ancient Jews, the temple is regarded by Latter-day Saints as the most sacred place on earth—a place where heaven and earth meet. One of the most fascinating episodes in the history of construction of Latter-day Saint chapels in the United Kingdom

10. William Blake, "Jerusalem."

11. Derek A. Cuthbert, "Breakthrough in Britain."

12. "Facts and Statistics," The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

is the relationship between renowned architect Sir Thomas Bennett and the British Latter-day Saints. Bennett was the architect for the Latter-day Saint London Temple in Surrey (dedicated 1958) and the London Hyde Park Chapel (dedicated 1961), and he could justifiably be seen as Blake's knight who helped "build Zion in England's green and pleasant land." This greater physical prominence was accompanied in the 1970s by the musical superstardom of the Osmonds, who indelibly made their mark on the United Kingdom. Tens of thousands of people began to see the Latter-day Saint faith in a new light as this popular musical family exemplified good, wholesome living.

Fifty years ago, most of the Church's full-time missionaries in Britain were from the United States. As designated Church representatives to the community, they were clean-cut and clad in white shirts and ties; it was thus easy to get the impression that this was indeed an American religion. While it was true then that most Church members worldwide were US-based (less than half are now), the heritage of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is just as much British as it is American. The Church's oldest extant meetinghouse in the world is located near the village of Pendock, Worcestershire—the Gadfield Elm Chapel.¹³ And the Church's longest continuous congregation globally, founded in 1837, is in Preston, Lancashire.¹⁴

During the Victorian era, nearly 90,000 European converts, prior to sailing on over four hundred chartered voyages, made their way (often by rail) to Liverpool, then the most important point of embarkation from Europe.¹⁵ Most of these fledgling converts were from the British Isles, many of whom immigrated to the United States even before the pioneer prophet Brigham Young led the epic trek to the western US settlement of Salt Lake City. This all came about because Joseph Smith, the founder and first President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commissioned the Church's Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to travel to Britain. This was a mission to rescue the Church from major challenges. It led to significant results and probably saved the Church numerically, energizing the American-based religion. During the second half of the nineteenth

13. "Gadfield Elm Chapel," The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

14. "History of the Church in the British Isles," The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

15. Fred E. Woods, "The Tide of Mormon Migration Flowing Through the Port of Liverpool, England," 60–86.



Statue of Latter-day Saint emigrants at Liverpool Docks. Courtesy Craig Ostler.

century, Latter-day Saints from Britain formed the backbone of the new church.

In more recent times, the Church has been no stranger to challenges—some of these resulting in extensive publicity and increased name recognition for Latter-day Saints among fellow Brits, despite regrettable contexts. One of the most remarkable challenges is the series of bizarre episodes surrounding Joyce McKinney and her accomplice Keith May who kidnapped Church missionary Elder Kirk Anderson in 1977. After Anderson escaped, McKinney and May were arrested, but they eventually jumped bail, using unusual disguises, and fled to the

United States. Media coverage at the time was extensive—covering front pages for days. Understandably, many members of the Latter-day Saint faith were concerned. The very unfortunate incident, however, gave the Church an opportunity to tell its own story.

This book dives deep into the British people's perceptions of Latter-day Saints through interviews with Church members and those of other faiths. In the process of researching this volume, we spoke to Latter-day Saints who were involved in or lived through many different moments of the Church's history in Britain, such as those who worked to build the first modern Latter-day Saint meetinghouses in the 1960s, converts who discovered the Church during the earlier era of "baseball baptisms," and Michael Otterson, who was the UK public communications director in the late 1970s and later headed the Church's global Public Affairs department.

Not limiting our examination to the past, we bring readers up to date with the Latter-day Saint image in the British mind. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is no longer an obscure sect meeting in cold, damp rented halls with just a few congregants—though many long-term British members fondly recall that heritage. It has grown and faced new challenges while striving to appeal to those seeking a practical, Christ-centered lifestyle and worship system. Far outnumbering the handful of

apostles sent on missions to the British Isles by Joseph Smith, today there are typically around one thousand Latter-day Saint missionaries serving in the United Kingdom—many of whom are either women or not from the United States.¹⁶

In addition, we look at the lives of modern British Latter-day Saints and examine how they reconcile their apparently strict moral code—including no alcohol or extramarital sex—with modern existence in the United Kingdom and a desire to be part of and serve their local communities and the larger society. Although Latter-day Saints are distinct, they are also inclusive; anyone who wants to maintain positive values within local communities, educational institutions, and society as a whole through public service will typically find common ground with Church members.

Following the first publication of his work *The Uncommercial Traveller*, Charles Dickens endorsed the view that “The Mormon ship is a Family.”¹⁷ While no family is perfect, the avowed aim of Latter-day Saints is to share their message of hope aimed at strengthening people as they sail on their grand voyages of life.

16. During the COVID-19 national lockdown of early 2021, UK in-field missionary numbers were fewer, at around 600.

17. See Charles Dickens, *The Uncommercial Traveller and Reprinted Pieces etc.*, 220–32, annotation included in reprinted edition; referencing conversation with Lord Houghton, and (article by) Lord Houghton, *The Edinburgh Review*, January 1862, citing the Select Committee of the House of Commons on emigrant ships in 1854. Dickens had referred to his June 4, 1863, experience observing Latter-day Saints aboard the ship *Amazon*.

The First Half of the Twentieth Century: Opinions Regarding The Saints

Their missionary work is chiefly directed to making converts of young and comely girls with a view to induce them ultimately to go out to Utah . . . and there become the plural wives of Elders.

– London Times

Perceptions about Latter-day Saints in the twentieth century were greatly influenced by an event that occurred a decade preceding it. In 1890, Church President Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto announcing an end to the practice of polygamy in response to both persecution and prosecution by the US Government against the Saints. Woodruff said he was shown in a vision what would occur if Church members did not desist from the observance of plural marriage: temples would be closed, and the Latter-day Saints' proxy ordinance work (sacred ceremonies for deceased persons) would cease.¹ This document was very influential in the decision to have Utah admitted into the Union in 1896. Despite the Manifesto, repercussions stemming from polygamy continued at home and abroad and influenced how the Church would be viewed in the twentieth century.

Although the official statement by Woodruff prompted some welcomed softening towards the Church generally, one prominent Church leader was carefully scrutinized and harassed because of the stigma associated with plural marriage. Senator Reed Smoot served on the US Senate and as a Church apostle concurrently for three decades from 1903 to 1933. Rumors and accusations that polygamous practices continued into the twentieth century led to the "Smoot hearings," which ran a lengthy four years beginning in 1903 and prompted a second manifesto completely prohibiting polygamy among the Latter-day Saints, this time issued by

1. Woodruff stated, "The Lord showed me by vision and revelation exactly what would take place if we did not stop this practice. If we had not stopped it, you would have had no use for . . . this temple in Logan; for all ordinances would be stopped throughout the land of Zion." See "Excerpts from Three Addresses by President Wilford Woodruff Regarding the Manifesto," *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*.

President Joseph F. Smith in 1904. In the end, Smoot kept his Senate seat; however, the Church continued to have a difficult time eliminating its reputation of polygamy from the public consciousness.

Continued Persecution via Slanderous Media

Coverage of the Smoot hearings rekindled a wave of anti-Mormon sentiment in film and literature throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, with polygamy continuing to be fodder for this slander. The United States was passing through the Progressive Era, and a reform-minded society remained committed to publishing articles condemning what the public perceived to be the Latter-day Saints' persistent practice of polygamy.

Across the Atlantic, things were no better. According to one Church historian,

In England, the anti-Mormon crusade reached its height in 1911, when people like the Rev. Daniel H. C. Bartlett, an Anglican vicar, led an anti-Mormon rally in Liverpool; and Hans Peter Freece, . . . a former member of the Church, described how well-dressed Mormon elders flattered thousands of English girls into joining the harems in Utah.²

In this same year, the London *Times* baselessly stoked these fears:

The great charge brought against them is that their missionary work is chiefly directed to making converts of young and comely girls with a view to induce them ultimately to go out to Utah . . . and there become the plural wives of Elders, for, it is said, though . . . declared illegal, [polygamy] is still secretly practised in Utah.³

These messages had the intended effect on the British population. For example, Abraham Wright recalled first hearing of the “Mormons” as a seven-year-old in Sunderland during 1911:

When I was a kiddie, . . . my auntie . . . said, “Now come on home or I’ll let the Mormons catch you.” . . . That was the first time I ever heard the word Mormon referring to anybody. . . . In those days there used to be stories . . . that Mormons used to trap girls into going to America. . . . The newspapers . . . used to think anything scandalous was fine.⁴

This stirring up of fear led to some governmental leaders investigating the matter themselves. One Church periodical reported that due

2. Richard Cowan, “Church Growth in England, 1841–1914,” 226–27.

3. “Mormonism In England,” 8.

4. Abraham Wright, interviewed by Ron Walker, 5–7.

to the negative reports against the Saints, the “British Home Secretary, Winston Churchill, directed that a nationwide survey of the activities of the ‘Mormon’ missionaries be made. However, when pressed as to what action the British government intended to take . . . he replied: I have not so far discovered any grounds for legislation in the matter.”⁵

Not all periodicals were swept up in the anti-Mormon fervor. For example, the *Daily Express* kept a cool head during this tumultuous period, noting,

The whole so-called crusade is an outbreak of sectarian savagery worked up by journalists, who in their zest for sensation appear to be quite indifferent to the fact that the only permanent result of their exploit will be to advertise and to spread the ‘Mormon faith’ among the masses, who love fair play, and who hate religious persecution.⁶

Anti-Mormon sentiments, however, continued in the media. In 1922, *Cosmopolitan* magazine used the phrase “viper on the hearth” to heighten awareness of the Latter-day Saints’ polygamous threat to society via the destruction of “the domestic sphere.”⁷ The following year, Zane Grey’s 1912 *Riders of the Purple Sage* became another best-selling popular novel that focused on the Saints’ perceived practice of luring women into plural marriage.⁸

These years preceding World War I in Great Britain were viewed as the most hostile assault against the Church since the Latter-day Saint missionaries first arrived at Liverpool in 1837. This prejudice and the anti-Mormon films and literature that flung such epithets as the “Mormon Peril” or the “Mormon Menace” were widely distributed through the British press and often resulted in violence.⁹

Among these, perhaps the most damning influence during this era stemmed from British novelist Winifred Graham, who penned several sensational novels with a similar theme: Latter-day Saint missionaries deceiving gullible young women into plural marriage. During these peak years of anti-Mormon assaults in Great Britain, she published *The Love Story of a Mormon* (1911), *The Sin of Utah* (1912), and *A Popular History* (1913). As one historian noted, Graham was “a popular Edwardian novelist . . . [who] portrayed the Mormons as the personification of evil,” though

5. Richard L. Evans, *A Century of “Mormonism” in Great Britain*, 211.

6. Evans, *Century of “Mormonism,”* 211.

7. Terryl Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth*, 4.

8. Givens, *Viper on the Hearth*, 145, 151.

9. See, for example, “Anti-Mormons Riot,” 7; “Anti-Mormon Riot,” 10.



Cecil B. DeMille (left) and David O. McKay (right), ca. 1956. Photo courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections, BYU.

her writings suggest she knew few facts regarding The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.¹⁰

Several years later, *A Mormon Maid* (1917), an anti-Mormon silent film that also carried this damaging theme, was shown in movie theaters throughout the United States and later in Britain. The film producer was none other than the famous Cecil B. DeMille, who would later produce and direct the epic *The Ten Commandments* starring Charlton Heston. Although DeMille was not directly responsible for the content of the film, he was responsible for the decision to release it. The film has been described as “arguably the most potent

and important anti-Mormon film in the history of cinema” and “the most-advertised picture in the history of American cinema up to that time.”¹¹

Decades later, DeMille was introduced to Church President David O. McKay and over time they became dear friends. DeMille not only changed his view of the Latter-day Saints; he actually became an advocate for McKay and the Church. As the ultimate goodwill gesture, DeMille chose to preview *The Ten Commandments* in Salt Lake City, and there he publicly praised what he saw as the fine character and goodness of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.¹²

This happy ending was not the case with other films produced to mar the image of the Church during this period. Although World War I brought a bit of a reprieve, a harmful motion picture that was released in 1922, titled *Trapped by the Mormons*, again sent the message that English girls must be warned of the mesmerizing Latter-day Saint missionaries sent to lure them back to Salt Lake City to join a harem. Based on Graham’s

10. Malcolm R. Thorp, “‘The Mormon Peril’: The Crusade against the Saints in Britain, 1910–1914,” 69, 75–76; see also Thorp, “Winifred Graham and the Mormon Image in England,” 107–21.

11. “A Mormon Maid,” *Mormon Literature and Creative Arts*.

12. Fred E. Woods, “Cecil B. DeMille and David O. McKay—an Unexpected Friendship,” 78–104.



Three Latter-day Saint missionaries posing with a London advertisement for *Trapped by the Mormons*, 1922. Courtesy Church History Library.

venomous novel *The Love Story of a Mormon* (1911), this film was also heavily influenced by Bram Stoker's 1897 novel, *Dracula*.

Trapped by the Mormons proved to be another stumbling block for the missionary work in the British Isles. In fact, the film was so detrimental that McKay, at that time a member of the Church's Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and serving as the president of the European Mission, wrote to then Church President Heber J. Grant stating, "The activity of the Saints in Britain in tracting [proselytizing] is arousing the devil, who is manifesting his evil designs through his co-partner Winifred and her ilk."¹³

Desiring Protection from Physical Abuse

During this tumultuous period of the early 1920s, missionaries such as future Church President Ezra Taft Benson and his companions had to rely on the police for protection.¹⁴ Abraham Wright, a teenaged Saint from Sunderland, recalled that Benson and another elder "were stoned outside our railway station by a mob. His companion [William Harris]

13. James V. D'Arc, "The Mormons as Vampire: A Comparative Study of Winifred Graham's *The Love Story of a Mormon*, the Film *Trapped by the Mormons*, and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," 168–69.

14. Sheri L. Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson, A Biography*, 62.

got his face or his cheek cut and had to go to the local infirmary and have some stitches put in.”

When Wright went tracting with Benson himself, Wright noted that Elder Benson told him, “When we go tracting like this there’s one thing we must always remember. If we come to a close [dead end street], don’t start at one side and go around the close delivering tracts. Go to the middle and work outwards so that if by any chance you met with any antagonism, at least your way wouldn’t be blocked to get out of the street.” Wright also explained, “The general feeling of the people at that time was antagonistic. . . . Some areas were very, very, very bad. When you got into some of these villages or some of these smaller places, the antagonism was greater.”¹⁵

Another Saint from Sunderland, Frederick W. Oates, captured the intense persecution during this era:

I can remember coming out of the chapel with my father, and just seeing what looked to me at that time as hordes of people. They were throwing flour bags and grass sods at the Saints as they were coming out of church to make their way home. They then would break up into groups and follow the Saints to their homes, break into their homes, and look under the beds and in the wardrobes and see if they had any missionaries there. So it was very bitter. . . . The police weren’t too helpful. The Saints would ask them for protection, but I guess they were afraid and we very seldom got any real help.¹⁶

Wisely Dealing with Attacks

The 1922 releases of *Trapped by the Mormons* and its sequel *Married to a Mormon* were quickly met with a plucky, preemptive response as reported to the *Deseret News* by G. Osmond Hyde, president of the Hull Conference:

We secured permission from the police and the manager of the hall to tract the people as they left the show. . . . We distributed a large number of pamphlets and tracts. Of course some of the people would not accept them, others tore them up in our faces, but others were anxious to get them and would not leave until they had secured one. That was the best stroke of advertising that we have put forth since coming over here. In three evenings we let more people know that we are here than we could have done in three months at ordinary tracting from door to door. It was a rare experience but one in which, I am sure, we did a great amount of good.¹⁷

15. Abraham Wright, interviewed by Ron Walker, 5–7.

16. Frederick W. and Gladys Q. Oates, interviewed by Richard L. Jensen, 11–12.

17. G. Osmond Hyde, “Movie Campaign against ‘Mormons’ Leads Many to Investigate Message,” 40.

Two years later Graham launched yet another work, *Eve and the Elders*. This, however, did not flourish like the previous films largely due to the public image of the Church at this time quickly transforming into just another of the many sects coming out of America.¹⁸ It was also a time of some needed respite for the Church because of the rippling impact of the end of World War I and the changes brought by the Roaring Twenties, which flooded America and also managed to pour over onto Britain's shores. Notwithstanding, Elder James E. Talmage, a Church apostle seasoned in dealing with anti-Mormon attacks in the press, was sent to preside over the British Mission from 1924 to 1927 and to fortify the Church and be ready for any additional onslaughts.¹⁹

Upon his arrival to replace David O. McKay as mission president, Talmage explained the current media problem: "Mission authorities had been unable to reach the men at the decision-making level of the offending journals. . . . Always the man at the top . . . was unavailable—for a variety of reasons, or, rather, of conventional fictions."²⁰

During his presidency, Talmage confronted these media leaders head-on, and the tide ebbed. For example, one Church periodical noted the change evident in Cardiff, South Wales:

Credit for bringing this about must be given to President Talmage. With an influence born of his scholarly achievements, and his recognition by, and his membership in, various Royal Societies, together with his sincerity of purpose . . . President Talmage exerted a powerful influence upon the editors.²¹

Summarizing the extent of his influence on the media during his leadership in Great Britain, Talmage's son wrote, "The change in the attitude of the press was not reflected only in the disappearance of scurrilous anti-Mormon attacks but also in positive ways, including objective reporting of Latter-day Saints activities and even occasional articles directly praising the Mormons and their work."²²

Talmage was replaced by Apostle John A. Widtsoe, who followed the counsel of his friend and mentor. Widtsoe served three consecutive two-

18. Thorp, "Mormon Image in England," 113.

19. Alan K. Parrish, "Turning the Media Image of the Church in Great Britain, 1922–1923," 179.

20. John R. Talmage, *The Talmage Story: Life of James E. Talmage—Educator, Scientist, Apostle*, 206.

21. Lewis F. Hansen, "The Work in Wales," 469–70.

22. Talmage, *Talmage Story*, 211.

year terms as mission president from 1927 to 1933 due largely to his success with the media. One technique he employed that proved effective was to invite the press to mingle with Church members so that they could feel of their goodness.²³ After only one year in office, Widtsoe reported to the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*: “The old bogey of young men coming to this country from Salt Lake City to take young women back to America is dead and buried, and what is more, it had a respectable funeral.”²⁴

Using Sport to Create a More Favorable Image

The decade of the 1930s provided a more favorable image of the Church as British citizens became more accepting, understanding, and—to some degree—even admiring of the Saints. Transitioning the Church’s British Mission headquarters in 1932 and the European Mission headquarters in 1933 from Liverpool, where they had been located for nearly a century, to London significantly and positively affected the Church’s public image.

One particular impact on the Church’s image in the 1930s was the successful participation of Latter-day Saint missionaries in both baseball and basketball associations. In 1935, the first year of organized league baseball in Britain, two teams of Latter-day Saint missionaries gained national reputations. One of the teams, the Rochdale Greys, made it to the British championships that year; as did the other team, the Catford Saints, the following year. The Rochdale Greys soon won the national championship in 1938.²⁵

In 1936 and 1937, the Rochdale Greys won first place in the baseball northern division.²⁶ In 1936, the Catford Saints were placed second in the southern baseball division, being defeated in the final championship by the White City team. Shortly thereafter, the secretary of the White City

23. Parrish, “Media Image of the Church,” 182–83.

24. “The Mormon Mission: One of the Twelve Apostles,” 7.

25. Louis B. Cardon, “The First World War and the Great Depression, 1914–1939,” 357–58. See also Josh Chetwynd et al, “National Champions of British Baseball.”

26. The Rochdale Greys caught the attention of the media, who knew they were Latter-day Saint missionaries. For example, in announcing the north division championship baseball game in 1937, one journalist wrote, “They are in England as missionaries of the Church of Latter-day Saints.” See “Rochdale Greys to Visit Craven Park,” 9.

team sent a tribute to Elder Wendell J. Ashton, manager of and player for the Catford Saints. This tribute was later published in the *Millennial Star*:

We always hoped and needed to play our best game against our L.D.S. friends. Most important of all, however, was the sporting spirit in which every game was played, and I regard those games in which I was privileged to participate against you last year as ample reward for the work which has devolved upon me in connection with baseball. Although you came to this country as missionaries of your Church, your success as ambassadors of goodwill has earned a special debt of gratitude from the general public both here and in the States.²⁷

The elders continued to participate successfully in athletic contests, with the team names of the Catford Saints and the Rochdale Greys also being used for missionary basketball teams.²⁸ Because of their success, the Catford Saints were allowed to compete in the international basketball competition—and won. After returning to Britain, their manager, E. W. Browning, made this report to the national committee of the praiseworthy Latter-day Saint missionary team:

It was a pleasure to accompany such an exemplary group of young men on this trip as manager. Their conduct at all times was above reproach. On the basketball floor their clean play and sportsmanship made them very popular with the large crowds who saw them play. . . . [T]hey were a distinct credit to the highest traditions of British sportsmanship.²⁹

Building Bridges with Music

During the same decade, music was also used by missionaries to build bridges in the British Isles. Under the direction of Joseph J. Cannon, who served as British Mission president from 1934 to 1937, the Millennial Chorus was formed, and they sang for thousands of people throughout Britain. Made up of a total of sixteen missionaries out of ninety possi-

27. Parry D. Sorensen, “A New Kind of Pioneering,” 668; also cited in Cardon, “First World War,” 358.

28. Cardon, “First World War,” 357–59. Again, the media was aware that the Rochdale Greys were Latter-day Saints. For example, one reporter wrote, “Take a look at the Rochdale Greys, a team of sturdy, non-smoking, teetotal American missionaries.” See “Basketball Makes New Speed Thrill,” 11.

29. Parry D. Sorensen, “Mormon Missionaries Under the Union Jack,” 476, 502–3; “Catford Saints Win European Tournament,” 292; also cited in Cardon, “First World War,” 359.

ble candidates, these missionaries continued to tract, but they also held musical street meetings and sang at district conferences. In addition, the Millennial Chorus performed for various church and school functions and entertained at cinemas and on the radio.³⁰ By 1938, these talented missionaries had become an outstanding choir, wielding a tremendous positive impact on how the Church was viewed.³¹ This is evident in supportive articles from the British media. For example, a reporter from the *Gloucestershire Echo* observed,

The Millennial Chorus . . . are missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and are on a goodwill tour of England. . . . Their work is entirely voluntary, and extends over a period of two years. . . . There are 180 such missionaries in Great Britain, and 3,000 in the world. . . . This particular chorus is well known in this country for its singing.³²

The fame and influence of the Millennial Chorus soon spread as far as Northern Ireland, where the media similarly offered up praise. For example, the *Northern Whig and Belfast Post* announced,

Fifteen young missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are at present staying in Northern Ireland. They are known as the Millennial Chorus, and . . . they are to broadcast some songs in the B.B.C. Northern Ireland programme. The Chorus . . . possesses some very fine voices.³³

Among the Saints, the *Millennial Star* reported on the choir's impact:

With two or three performances each day . . . before audiences of up to two and three thousand each session it is not over estimating to say that in one week more than 25,000 people are coming in contact with these singing ambassadors . . . [who] cannot help but admire the views and conduct of this outstanding group of young men. . . . There is not a more effective means of making friends for the Church in Britain than through the efforts of the members of the Millennial Chorus.³⁴

30. For an overview of how the Church was using the radio for missionary work in the decade of the 30s, see Jessie L. Embry, "New Ways of Proselyting": Radio and Missionary Work in the 1930s," 117–50.

31. Cardon, "First World War," 359.

32. "Goodwill Tour of Britain," 4. See also, "Mormon Singers in Hull," 9; "Male Voice Choir," 6.

33. "American Chorus in Belfast," *Northern Whig*, 10, cited in Evans, *Century of "Mormonism,"* 213.

34. Robert S. Stevens, "Broadcasting with the Millennial Chorus," 92–95; Marvin J. Ashton, "Singing Ambassadors," 520–21.

A Season of Positive Press

Perhaps an even better barometer of the change in public perceptions of the Church can be seen in reports by those not of the Latter-day Saint faith in local newspapers during the 1930s. For example, in 1932, London's *East Ham Echo* noted,

Probably no section of the human race is more unfairly criticized, more libelled and slandered or more misunderstood by the ignorant, than members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. . . . Sensational fiction and crude films have created among the uninformed in England, many queer impressions.³⁵

The following year, a journalist from the *Birmingham Weekly Post* likewise reported on the disparity between rumor and reality: "Everywhere in Salt Lake City . . . you begin to appreciate the sterling qualities of this once despised sect."³⁶

Similar reports that decade also came from the *Liverpool Evening Express*:

Let us hope that readers will no longer look upon the Mormons as decadent ministers luring women to a shameful life in Salt Lake City. They are a clean-living band of young men, anxious to convert Gentiles. . . . And they do it without reward of any sort.³⁷

The London-based *Daily Express*:

The faith of the Mormons, which began in ridicule, now stands in dignity and respect. They have created a worthy and useful institution whose members do good by teaching and by the example of their upright lives.

And the British magazine *Cavalcade*:

Since [the Latter-day Saints] arrived in this country one hundred years ago they have had to fight against blind prejudice brought about by untrue stories. . . . In the years that have passed they have succeeded in living down this calumny.³⁸

Some old stereotypes persisted but, at times, supposed "Mormon" polygamy was referenced in lighthearted ways. This included the 1933 newspaper advertisement for a British breakfast cereal, with the strapline

35. Charles Eade, "Salt Lake City and Utah," 342.

36. Evans, *Century of "Mormonism,"* 212.

37. Eargle M. Charmsen, "Making Friends with Fleet Street," 443.

38. Both these articles were cited in Cardon, "First World War," 360.

“All the wives a Mormon ever had couldn’t prepare a better breakfast than you get in Scott’s Porage Oats.”³⁹

Centennial Commemoration of the Church in Great Britain

In the year leading up to the celebration of the centennial commemoration of the Church in Britain, the Saints would reflect on what it took to get them to this point. Apostle Richard L. Evans was commissioned to write the centennial history, which would culminate in a variety of celebratory activities. Although the statistics for the year 1937 placed Church membership in Britain at only a bit more than six thousand, by the end of the first century of the Church in Britain, over 125,000 had been baptized and nearly six thousand missionaries had labored there.⁴⁰ In addition, it is thought that at least 52,000 British converts immigrated to America between 1837 and 1937.⁴¹

Attending the commemorative activities were Church President Heber J. Grant and his counselor J. Reuben Clark. The *Millennial Star* noted, “Never in the history of the [British] Mission have two members of the First Presidency been here at the same time.”⁴² A week later, Elder Parry D. Sorenson, a missionary serving in England, observed, “Never in the eventful history of the British Mission have so many Church leaders been in Britain at one time as there are at present to attend the Centennial Conference.”⁴³ Ironically, however, as noted by Derek A. Cuthbert fifty years later, due to the mass nineteenth-century British emigration from the British Isles to Zion, “[s]adly, few were left in Britain to join in these [centennial] celebrations.”⁴⁴

Throughout this period, President Grant also dedicated seven chapels, which no doubt thrilled the local Saints who generally met in rented facilities for Church meetings. In addition, the media took notice of the

39. February 2, 1933, *Hull Daily Mail* advertisement, referenced in Rosalie West, “HULL Newspapers 1830–1950.”

40. Alexander L. Baugh, “The Church in Twentieth-Century Great Britain: A Historical Overview,” 242–43.

41. Cardon, “First World War,” 355.

42. “Greetings to President and Sister Clark,” 452.

43. Parry D. Sorenson, “Our Centennial Visitors,” 485.

44. Derek A. Cuthbert, *The Second Century: Latter-day Saints in Great Britain*, 1:1.

centennial event, and on several occasions during the festivities, the BBC invited missionaries to participate in their programs.⁴⁵

The War Years

The threat of Nazi Germany sweeping over Europe dulled the happy echoes of Latter-day Saint commemorations, missionary athletic cheering, and even the inspirational singing of the Millennium Chorus. On August 24, 1939, the First Presidency of the Church ordered an evacuation of the missionaries throughout Europe, including in the British Mission. Soon, these missionaries would return to their homes in the United States. This was the first time in over a century of British Latter-day Saint history that Great Britain would be left without American missionaries.⁴⁶

Anticipating the impending withdrawal, Mission President Hugh B. Brown (a Canadian who had fought in World War I and knew something of the impact of global warfare) reserved one hundred tickets to ship home his missionaries in advance of the First Presidency's evacuation order. After sending the missionaries safely home, Brown stayed in England several more months to make sure that leadership of the mission was taken care of. He then transferred authority for the mission into the hands of Andre K. Anastasiou, a native Russian who had come to England as a nineteen-year-old during World War I. Though it was challenging, Anastasiou and his counselors continued to publish the *Millennial Star* to keep the scattered European Saints informed of what was going on in the Church during the war years.⁴⁷

In order to maintain some stability for the Church and its members, Anastasiou successfully petitioned the British government to allow presidents of local branches and districts to have exemption from wartime service. Still, in some areas, there was only one priesthood leader to carry out the work of conducting church meetings and performing ordinances and rituals. Due to these trying circumstances, Anastasiou called upon

45. Cuthbert, 1–2.

46. Bruce Van Orden, *Building Zion: The Latter-day Saints in Europe*, 138.

47. Van Orden, 141; Cardon, "War and Recovery," 365, explains that Anastasiou's first counselor directed the publication of the *Millennial Star*. Further, after only a few months of service in the presidency, Hill was replaced as counselor by George H. Bailey, but Hill continued to direct the editing of the *Millennial Star* throughout the war years. The second counselor in the mission presidency was James R. Cunningham.

local men who had disability deferments or health challenges, as well as some women, to serve full-time missions. In addition, hundreds more were called as part-time home missionaries in their local regions. One Latter-day Saint historian commented on the successful home missionary program launched by Anastasiou during World War II:

Church members who were called to this program agreed to contribute four to eighteen hours of Church service each week, visiting members, . . . proselytizing door to door, and doing the duties the full-time elders had performed. Over five hundred British Saints labored as home missionaries during the war years.⁴⁸

In the spring of 1944, a year before the war in Europe would end, Brown returned to inspect the British Mission and congratulated Anastasiou and his associates for what they had achieved since the outbreak of war. During his four-and-a-half-year tenure as mission president, the branches in England had actually increased in number, and Anastasiou had collected over eighty thousand dollars in tithes and offerings.⁴⁹ Having passed through a season of limited availability of priesthood leaders wherein the scars of war-torn Europe took their toll, the British Saints arose from the ashes and stood stronger in their spiritual independence—not in spite of but because of the agonizing, adverse conditions of the war years.

By spring of 1945, the shout of victory heralded across Europe as the war came to its bitter end and Brown was able to fully reestablish the British Mission, with Selvoy J. Boyer presiding over the mission from 1946 to 1950. Adding to the strength of the region, Apostle Ezra Taft Benson was called in 1946 to preside over the neighboring European Mission and help restore stability in the area. Soon, there was a rapid increase of missionaries, and by 1950, Boyer was replaced as British mission president by Stayner Richards. As the mid-twentieth century concluded, missionaries were back in the throes of building bridges through sports programs. They also started a poster campaign to promote Church awareness.⁵⁰

48. Baugh, “Historical Overview,” 244.

49. Van Orden, *Building Zion*, 141–42.

50. Cuthbert, *Second Century*, 4.

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