



“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.”

— The Reverend Dr. Andrew Teal, Chaplain, Fellow, and Lecturer in Theology, Pembroke College

The Latter-day Saint Image in the British Mind

By Malcolm Adcock and Fred E. Woods

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Description:

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 from their “green and pleasant land” in search of Zion in the New World. Now, the Church is active in the British interfaith community and many of its members are prominent across public life, including in Parliament.

Former BBC journalist Malcolm Adcock and Brigham Young University scholar Fred E. Woods collaborate to explore how the perceptions of Latter-day Saints in the United Kingdom have improved over time. They present historical accounts, through literature, film, and media reviews. Adcock and Woods utilize over a hundred face-to-face interviews and surveys to analyze how citizens of the United Kingdom perceive the Church in the twenty-first century.

Subjects: Religion in the United Kingdom, LDS History, British Mission, Media Studies



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The Latter-day Saint Image in the British Mind

The Latter-day Saint Image in the British Mind examines how British perceptions of Latter-day Saints developed as church members participated in British society. Over nearly two centuries, opposition ranging from blasphemous satire to the kidnapping of a missionary has kept interest in the Church high throughout Great Britain.

Background:

Fred and Malcolm started collaborating after realizing they each brought a unique perspective to the story of how British society has responded to Latter-day Saints throughout several decades. Malcolm's background in journalism, combined with Fred's religious and historical scholarship, paints a full picture of how Latter-day Saints have been depicted in British media and how the Church has responded. New eyewitness accounts from the 1950s to the 2020s contribute to especially strong depictions of that period. The book shows how present-day British Latter-day Saints interact and contribute to the modern world. Interviewees include British members of the Church, but also influential figures outside it: from MPs and members of the House of Lords to leading members of the Church of England and prominent thinkers within the interfaith community. With its rich new source material, this book will stimulate discussions about the place of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in British life.

Key topics:

1. Religion in the United Kingdom
2. Latter-day Saint History
3. British Mission
4. Media Studies

Relevance to readers

The Latter-day Saint Image in the British Mind applies an international perspective to church history by showcasing the deep resilience of British Latter-day Saints, a religious minority who have been frequently mischaracterized in British media. Readers will gain a better understanding of how these stereotypes were perpetuated and how Latter-day Saints challenged them through effective social action. The book appeals to scholars in religious and media studies as a case study of how one religious group interacted with its depictions in popular culture and to church members as a story of how faith and communication can bridge divides created by misinformation.

Recommended Chapters

Chapter 7, "Osmondmania" – The popularity of the Osmonds influenced the Church's growth throughout the world during the 1970s—including in the UK.

Chapter 8, "Public Communications Comes to Britain" – The 1977 kidnapping of a missionary by his stalker was a tabloid sensation that shone a spotlight on British Saints.

Chapter 10, "The Church of Jesus Christ in Modern Britain" – How the "Mormon Moment" led to new challenges and opportunities in British politics, media, and culture.

About the Authors

Malcolm Adcock is a public affairs professional and writer, who has helped shape communications strategy for global organizations. Working for the Communication Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he regularly interacts with senior government representatives and national media. Malcolm graduated from Kent Law School and has a background as a BBC journalist and producer. He is a Member of the Royal Institute of International Affairs and the Chartered Institute of Public Relations.

Fred E. Woods obtained a PhD from the University of Utah in 1991. Currently a BYU professor of Church History and Doctrine, he has been a visiting teaching and research professor at several universities. Fred held the BYU Richard L. Evans Professorship of Religious Understanding from 2005 to 2010. He is a prolific author with over 150 articles and many books to his credit and often produces documentary films to augment his historical work.