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The Saints Abroad: Missionaries Who Answered Brigham Young's 1852 Call to the Nations of the World

Bruce A. Van Orden

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Dime Novel Mormons, edited and introduced by Michael Austin and Ardis E. Parshall, *The Mormon Image in Literature* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2017)

In *Dime Novel Mormons*, editors Michael Austin and Ardis E. Parshall invite the readers to experience late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century portrayals of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its members. Beginning in the 1860s, dime novels gained popularity in the United States. These novels, full of thrilling storylines and heroic characters, often included negative stereotypes of various groups of people. Among them, “Mormons” were often depicted as murderous villains who kidnapped women for polygamist marriages and operated an underground society of Danites—dangerous vigilantes out to kill “gentiles” (x–xi).

After a short but informative introduction, the book presents the full text of four dime novels that include examples of how members of the Church were portrayed in these sensational stories. *Dime Novel Mormons* includes the following novels: *Eagle Plume, the White Avenger. A Tale of the Mormon Trail* (1870), by Albert W. Aiken (1); *The Doomed Dozen; or, Dolores, the Danite’s Daughter* (1881), by Prentiss Ingraham under the pseudonym Dr. Frank Powell (59); *Frank Merriwell among the Mormons; or, the Lost Tribe of Israel* (1897), most likely by Gilbert Patten under the pseudonym Burt L. Standish (149); and *The Bradys among the Mormons; or, Secret Work in Salt Lake City* (1903), by “A New York Detective” (185).

The editors bring combined expertise in both literature and history. Michael Austin, who has a PhD in English literature from the University of California at Santa Barbara, is an author or editor of

seven books and many smaller works. His book *Useful Fiction* was named a CHOICE outstanding academic title in 2011. Ardis E. Parshall is an author, historian, and freelance researcher specializing in Latter-day Saint history. With Paul Reeve, she coedited *Mormonism: A Historical Encyclopedia* and is presently writing a history of the Church told through the lives of Mormon women.

Dime Novel Mormons will appeal to readers interested in American and literary history, nineteenth-century pop fiction, and specifically the history of the calumny of the Latter-day Saints.

—Veronica Anderson

The Saints Abroad: Missionaries Who Answered Brigham Young’s 1852 Call to the Nations of the World, edited by Reid L. Neilson and R. Mark Melville (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2019)

In a specially called conference in August 1852, the First Presidency issued a summons to over one hundred elders, most of whom were husbands and fathers, to serve missions to “the four quarters of the globe” (286). The global reach and large number of these calls were startling at the time and reflected an impressive devotion on the part of the elders, their families, and their leaders.

From the beginnings of the Restoration, taking the gospel message to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people had been contemplated, and in the late 1830s and 1840s, under the leadership of Joseph Smith, the global missionary project was modestly started. This 1852 initiative, however, signaled a turning point for the internationalization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

Saints, and in the twenty-first century, it is now taken for granted that the Church has a wide international scope.

The editors provide a powerful nine-page introduction as to the whys, wherefores, and background to this unprecedented action. This calling of missionaries was “the largest cohort of full-time elders in the Church’s three-decade history” (xxi). Emphasized was “an ongoing tension between the prophetic priorities to settle the valley in Utah and simultaneously proclaim the gospel abroad during this pioneer era” (xxiii). But, as explained in this volume, the Church leaders could not deny their divinely appointed charge to redeem the entire human family. The editors give short shrift to one factor as to why 1852 was chosen for such a sacrifice for the Saints: by the end of that season, nearly all of the straggling Saints who had lived for years in Iowa camps had eventually made their way to Utah and were available for missionary work.

On Saturday morning, August 28, 1852, President Heber C. Kimball of the First Presidency opened this conference “a month earlier than usual” to call scores of elders to virtually every continent to proselytize (286). This August date would allow the elders to be on their way out of the mountain canyons before storms would halt them. One after another, numerous Apostles took the stand to testify of the importance of opening the nations to the everlasting gospel. Orson Pratt, for instance, prophesied, “The way will open before you, and the Lord will visit the hearts of the people before you arrive among them, and make manifest to them by visions and dreams that you are the servants of God before they shall see your faces; and you will receive heavenly visions to comfort you. . . . And you will find that his power will be more conspicuously made manifest through your administrations on these missions than

has ever taken place since the rise of this church” (309).

At midday during this conference, names of elders were read (without any advance notice for most of them), who were called to serve in specific nations and states: England (37 elders), Ireland (2), Wales (3), France (1), Germany (4), the capital of Prussia [Berlin] (3), Norway (2), Denmark (1), Gibraltar (2), Hindoostan [India] (9), Siam (2), China (3), Cape of Good Hope [South Africa] (3), Nova Scotia and British Provinces (4), West Indies (4), British Guiana (2), Texas (3), New Orleans (1), St. Louis (1), Washington, D.C. (1), Iowa (1), and Australia (9). In subsequent weeks, additional elders were called.

President Brigham Young concluded the conference by counseling the newly called elders to give their whole minds and hearts to their new duties. First and foremost, these men must possess “*clean hands and pure hearts*, before God, angels and men” (311, italics in original). Young also urged the missionaries to not fret about their families while away and left assurance that the Church would see to their welfare. To the wives, Young cautioned, “Women should be loyal to the cause of God, and help to build up his kingdom by their husbands, in assisting them to fulfil their missions, and if they do not do it they are not a helpmate to their husbands” (316).

Neilson and Melville clarify a significant irony in this entire episode. During that same conference weekend in August 1852, the Church, through the voice of Orson Pratt, confirmed publicly for the first time the open secret that many Church members practiced plural marriage. As it turns out, three-fourths of the elders called were or would eventually become polygamists, thus showing that entrusted callings in the Church generally went to men who had shown their obedient attitudes by

entering into this order of matrimony. Ultimately, the doctrine of polygamy negatively affected the labors of the elders to the various nations more than any other single factor.

The bulk of this volume consists of eight chapters that chronicle the work and writings of eight elders who served lengthy missions and who wrote intimate details of their labors, mostly in the form of letters to Church publications such as the *Deseret News*, the *Millennial Star*, and the *Juvenile Instructor*. These eight men were Dan Jones in the Wales Mission, Orson Spencer in the Prussia Mission, Edward Stevenson in the Gibraltar Mission, Jesse Haven in the Cape of Good Hope Mission, Benjamin Johnson in the Sandwich Islands Mission, James Lewis in the China Mission, Chauncey West in the Siam and Hindoostan Missions, and Augustus Farnham in the Australia Mission. The editors provide extensive biographical and contextual information about each of these elders and their missions.

The book also contains two appendices: Appendix 1 provides the entirety of the minutes of the August 1852 special conference. Appendix 2 contains biographical sketches for 115 missionaries who were called to serve in 1852, granting present-day family historians valuable data.

Adding immensely to the value of this volume are highly informative footnotes on nearly every page that provide historical, geographical, genealogical, and theological context to events and descriptions of the elders.

This compilation clearly shows that some missionary fields were “white already to harvest” (John 4:35), while others were not ready for unseasoned and unprepared elders, owing to vastly different cultures, races, and languages. In the case of Prussia, for example, unrelenting police intimidation arising

out of a lack of religious freedom precluded any success there. Neilson and Melville also explain, “Compared to the British Isles . . . , the growth of the church in Australia was sluggish. But compared to the missionary efforts in Asia and other parts of Europe, church growth in Australia was substantial” (258).

This compilation is a beneficial contribution to the study of the internationalization of the restored Church. It is definitely worth reading.

—Bruce A. Van Orden

Utah's 19th Century Stone Quarries, by William T. Parry (Salt Lake City: E. L. Marker, 2020)

Temples and other structures built in Utah in the nineteenth century required massive amounts of large blocks of limestone, granite, and other stone. *Utah's 19th Century Stone Quarries* documents where that stone came from and the lives of many of the stone masons and quarrymen who worked it. The author is a geologist and professor at the University of Utah and is the great-grandson of one of the major figures in the book, Edward L. Parry.

The book has chapters on the stone deposits near Willard, Beaver, Ephraim, and St. George, and in Salt Lake Valley, Cache Valley, and Price Canyon. The different types of stone quarried from each site are given historical context, and where the stone was used is discussed. Also noted are the methods for quarrying and shaping stone. A number of maps and photographs help illustrate the text.

Though a small book of just over 150 pages, *Utah's 19th Century Stone Quarries* covers an aspect of Utah history not usually mentioned in histories of temples and temple builders.

—Marny K. Parkin