History of the Norwegian Mission From 1851 to 1960

Curtis B. Hunsaker

Brigham Young University - Provo

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd

Part of the European History Commons, Missions and World Christianity Commons, and the Mormon Studies Commons

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/4813

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.
HISTORY OF THE NORWEGIAN MISSION FROM 1851 TO 1960

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of Graduate Studies in Religious Instruction
Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Curtis B. Hunsaker
July 1965
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource materials</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of this study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of terms used</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline of the study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. CHRISTIANITY GOES TO NORWAY</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pagan religion and early Norwegian gods</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion of the Vikings</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway received Christianity by force</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheranism replaces Catholicism in Norway</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway prior to 1850</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE OPENING OF THE SCANDINAVIAN MISSION</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder Erastus Snow called to Scandinavia</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First missionaries arrive in Denmark</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early opposition to the Church in Scandinavia</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gospel goes to Norway</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The first persecution of the Church and Saints in Norway</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The first branches of the Church established in Norway</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE TRANSLATION OF LITERATURE INTO DANISH THEN INTO NORWEGIAN</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The first tracts in Danish</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation and publication of the Book of</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mormon into Danish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Book of Mormon translated and published</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in Norwegian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation and publication of the Doctrine</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Covenants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Doctrine and Covenants in Norwegian</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation and publication of the Pearl of</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Price</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pearl of Great Price in Norwegian</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation and publication of a hymnbook</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hymnbook translated into Norwegian</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission publications, Skandinaviens</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stjerne, Morgenstjernen, Lys over Norge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation and publication of lesson</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Norwegians to speak English</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Mormon literature increased</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. MISSION GROWTH THROUGH THE YEARS

| Expanse of areas of labor                  | 43   |
| Early progress in Norway                  | 43   |
| Organization of the Church auxiliaries    | 45   |
| Relief Society organized in Norway        | 47   |
| The Sunday School organized in Norway     | 49   |
| The Primary organized in Norway           | 49   |
| The Young Men's and Young Women's         | 50   |
| Improvement Associations organized in     | 50   |
| Norway                                     |      |
| Summary                                    | 53   |
CHAPTER VI. MIGRATION OF THE SAINTS TO ZION ............................................. 54
The spirit of gathering felt in Norway ................................................. 54
Organized migration to Zion began ..................................................... 58
Methods used in migrating to Zion ....................................................... 60
Influence of Saints migrating to Zion on Norway ................................. 65
Influence of Saints migrating to Zion on Zion ....................................... 66
Efforts made to discourage migration of Saints to Zion ......................... 68
Summary ................................................................................................. 69

CHAPTER VII. NORWAY AS A MISSION FIELD ............................................. 70
Missionaries in Norway and their activities ......................................... 70
Methods employed by missionaries in proselyting ................................ 76
Members in Norway ............................................................................... 79
Summary ................................................................................................. 82

CHAPTER VIII. THE WAR YEARS AND THEIR EFFECT ON THE NORWEGIAN MISSION ... 84
The Utah War of 1858 .............................................................................. 84
World War I ......................................................................................... 85
World War II and its effect on the Norwegian Mission ............................ 86
Missionaries from Zion released or re-assigned ..................................... 86
War Conditions in the Norwegian Mission ............................................ 88
World War II Ended and Help sent from Utah ....................................... 90
Summary ................................................................................................. 91

CHAPTER IX. THE NORWEGIAN MISSION SINCE WORLD WAR II ................. 93
Reopening of the Norwegian Mission .................................................... 93
Elder Ezra Taft Benson made president of the European Mission ........... 94
CHAPTER PAGE

Elders from Zion in Norway again .................. 95
Opposition to Mormonism renewed .................. 98
Norwegian Buildings and growth .................... 99
The spirit of migration revived ..................... 101
Microfilming church, county, state records in Norway ... 102
General Authorities of the Church visit Norway ...... 104
Missionaries and saints of Norway attend Swiss Temple Dedication .................................... 105
Mission presidents of the Norwegian Mission ........ 106
Summary ............................................. 106
X. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS ..................... 109
  Summary ......................................... 109
  Conclusions ...................................... 115
BIBLIOGRAPHY ..................................... 117
APPENDIXES ....................................... 122
ABSTRACT ......................................... 134
### LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ILLUSTRATION</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Map of Norway</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convert baptisms in Scandinavia</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptisms in Scandinavia compared with Norway</td>
<td>44a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics of Norwegian Mission</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwegian Emigration Chart 1836-1928</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scandinavian Emigration</td>
<td>56a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writer is indebted to the following for the assistance they have given in the preparation of this story:

To his Graduate Committee, Dr. Milton Backman, Dr. Howard Barron and Gustive Larson, all of whom read the manuscript and gave helpful suggestions. Special thanks is given to Dr. Backman, Chairman of the Advisory Committee, who has given of his time in consultation.

To Carma Hunsaker, wife of the writer, for her encouragement and assistance in typing.

To Keith Sellers for his timely encouragement and many helpful suggestions.

To President Axel J. Andresen, formerly President of the Norwegian Mission, for his help and encouragement.

Appreciation is extended to the various libraries and institutions who have made research materials available for this study, especially to A. William Lund and his staff at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Historian's Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. Purpose of the Study

The writer felt that a more complete history of the Norwegian Mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints needed to be written in order for the Church to gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the growth and development of the Restored Church in Norway. An extensive history of the mission in Norway has never been written. Andrew Jensen's History of the Scandinavian Mission\(^1\) is a brief biographical treatment covering the years between 1850 and 1926. In addition, many private journals, diaries and mission records are available, but these had not been compiled into one history.

II. Resource Materials

Every effort has been made to obtain and review as many original and secondary sources as possible that pertain to this study. Historical writings, newspapers, private interviews, journals, mission records, and other materials have been employed. Works placed in the collections from the Church Historian's Library of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, located in Salt Lake City, and the Special Collections Library at the Brigham Young University, in Provo, Utah, have also contributed much to this study.

---

\(^1\)Andrew Jensen, History of the Scandinavian Mission (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News Press, 1927)
III. Organization of this Study

It was the purpose of this study to (1) provide a history of the growth and development of the Norwegian Mission from its creation as a part of the Scandinavian Mission in 1850; (2) its subsequent separation from the Scandinavian Mission in 1920; and (3) its problems and progress until 1960. The topical approach, rather than a chronological, was used in an attempt to better portray the growth and development of the various aspects of the Norwegian Mission. An effort was made to focus on important, historical events as they affected the members of the Church in Norway.

IV. Definitions of Terms

**Latter-day Saints** an abbreviation for the title of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Church was organized on April 6, 1830, through the instrumentality of Joseph Smith.

**Saints**-- Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the term "saints" was used in the days of Jesus Christ to refer to members of the Church He organized while He was here on earth.

**Mormons**-- A nickname given to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints because of their belief in The Book of Mormon.

**LDS Ward**-- A local, geographical area of Saints, directed by a bishopric consisting of three members; usually containing between four and eight hundred members.

**LDS Branch**-- A small geographical area containing insufficient members to carry out the full program of the Church.

**LDS Stake**-- A geographical area made up of several wards and/or branches. A stake is presided over by a presidency of three members and a group of twelve men called a high council.
Zion-- A term used by Latter-day Saints to describe either an area where the righteous Saints dwell or a condition among the Saints of possessing pure hearts. In the Mormon view the American Continent is thought to be Zion with Jackson County, Missouri as being the "Center stake of Zion." Although America is considered to be Zion, Zion is also any place where members are organized into a stake.

Perpetual Emigration Fund-- A revolving fund collected through voluntary contributions from among the early Saints in Utah and overseas. The purpose of this fund was to assist emigrants who needed financial assistance in coming to Zion. The help of the fund actually was on a loan basis that was to be repaid as soon as the emigrant was in Zion and was financially able to pay back the money he had received.

LDS Church Welfare Program-- An organized plan initiated in the Church in 1936 to help rehabilitate those in need. The financial support of this program comes through voluntary means.

V. Outline of the Study

Chapter I includes a statement of the purpose of the study, resource materials, organization of the study, and definitions of terms.

Chapter II comprises a history of the religions of the Norwegians before the introduction of Christianity. It includes the conversion of the Norwegians from paganism to the belief in one supreme God. The chapter also contains the history of Christianity in Norway prior to 1850.

Chapter III includes the introduction of Mormonism into Scandinavia.

Chapter IV contains the history of the translation of Mormon literature from English to Danish and eventually into Norwegian.

Chapter V includes a history of the growth and development of the Norwegian Mission from 1851 until 1960. The chapter includes accounts of the introduction of the Church auxiliaries in the mission.
Chapter VI contains the emigration of the Norwegian Saints to Zion.

Chapter VII contains a history of the missionary activities from 1851 until 1960. It includes problems and successes encountered by these emissaries of the Church.

Chapter VIII contains a history of the Norwegian Mission during war years. The chapter includes the effect of the wars, beginning with the Utah War and includes the wars through the years, ending with World War II, on the Saints in Norway.

Chapter IX comprises the history of the Norwegian Mission since World War II. It includes the re-opening of the mission, and the growth made by the missionary activity.

Chapter X contains the summary and conclusions of the history of the Norwegian Mission.
CHAPTER II

CHRISTIANITY GOES TO NORWAY

Pagan Religion and Early Norwegian Gods

The Norwegian people have long been known as a religious people. They originally based their religious philosophies around everyday situations. Among their early religious concepts were paganistic ideas, which helped motivate the Vikings to their bold adventures. Their religions contained a belief in many gods. Among their gods was "Thor, the Thunderer and Hammar Wielder."1 Thor was the dearest to them as he "was their friend, protector, patron to the farmers, peacemaker and mighty comforter."2

Odin was another popular god, recognized especially for his valor and wisdom. Odin ruled as the supreme god of their dead warriors. T.D. Kendrick maintains that in addition to Thor and Odin, the Norwegians also worshipped Frey, who was the god of the fishermen and merchants. Besides these were other minor and local gods. Temples and shrines were built to these gods; and human, as well as animal sacrifices, were part of their worship rites.3

Driven by these concepts of religion, the early Norsemen placed little value on human life. This condition explained, in part, their


2Idem.

3Idem.
bold adventures. The small value placed on human life is revealed by Sigrid Undset, who said that their population was regulated by the decision of the fathers as to whether babies were killed at birth or were allowed to live.4

Conversion of the Vikings

As the Vikings sailed from land to land in conquest of treasure and adventure, they came into many countries which had embraced medieval Christianity. The Vikings were lured into some of these Christian countries by the easy wealth they gained from the monasteries. Sigrid Undset recorded that "...they knew only that in the monasteries were large supplies of food, cattle and costly treasures, and that the strange people lived there went unarmed in the midst of all this wealth."5

As Norsemen associated with Christians, some were converted to Christianity. Others were influenced by "Christian women they took to wife."6 By the 950's, many prominent Viking aristocrats had become Christian.

The conversion of a few of the northern people had little effect upon the masses for it was not until the twelfth century, when the Viking period and the Middle Ages began, that there were "momentous signs of Christian piety governing the warlike inclinations of a Viking chief."7

---

5Ibid., 36.
6Kendrick, op. cit., 136.
7Ibid., 138.
The conversion of the northerns fell into two periods, the first consisting of merely an acknowledgement of Christ. This conversion led to lip service only. The second conversion was a real spiritual reconciliation to Christian doctrine.

Norway Receives Christianity by Force

Some of the Vikings who were converted to Christianity returned home with a strong determination to have all Norwegians believe as they believed. They took no thought of the fact that their own people were perfectly satisfied with their old forms of religion, even though they were most primitive. One of the first attempts to Christianize Norway was made by King Haaken during the tenth century. He called his peasant followers around him and told them that they should forsake their old heathen gods, be baptized and believe in the one living God. He further instructed the people that they should abstain from work every seventh day and fast every Friday. As he spoke to them, a great murmur arose among the people because they wanted to know if the king wanted to deprive them of their work and their old faith. If he did, they were going to choose a new king. After the king recognized their unwillingness to turn from their traditional ways, he relented to their wishes to retain their old forms of religion and joined in with them in their sacrificial rites.

---

8 Ibid., 135.

After the death of King Haaken, Olaf Trygveson became the new leader. Olaf was not as easily discouraged as his predecessor. Olaf, upon his return from England, was made king over the whole of Norway. He had decided, even before his arrival home, that all of Norway would become Christian. Olaf launched a campaign that was to take him throughout Norway in the cause of Christianity. One historian, Sigvart Sorensen, reported the extent of his endeavors in these words:

...King Olaf travelled through the country, and carefully investigated the manner in which Christianity was observed. Where he found the people lacking in Christian knowledge, he taught them and furnished them with Christian teachers. If he met with obstinate opposition, he acted with severity and cruelty. If any there were, says the saga, who would not renounce heathen ways, he took the matter so zealously that he drove some out of the country, mutilated others on hands or feet, or stung out their eyes; hanged some, slew some with the sword; but let none go unpunished who would not serve God.\(^8\)

As King Olaf continued his Christianization program of Norway, "the peasants saw that resistance was useless so they submitted to the king's demands. He spared their lives on condition that they would be baptized, take an oath to support the true faith and renounce all sacrifices to their heathen gods."\(^11\)

Not all agreed with Olaf's method of procedure or even that he brought true Christian thought into the hearts and minds of the Norwegian people. One of those doubting Olaf's approach was Kendrick who said

...in reality, Olaf's robust methods of conversion and his complete failure to organize a proper teaching of the Christian doctrines left Norway as much heathen at heart after these wholesale compulsory baptisms as before them... .\(^12\)

\(^8\)Ibid., 85.

\(^9\)Ibid., 55.

\(^10\)Kendrick, op. cit., 123.
It is generally agreed, says Karen Larsen, that by 1030 A.D., Christianity had won the battle against the old religion; and although the country had by no means become thoroughly Christian, any return to the old faith was inconceivable. Norway had joined the ranks of Christian countries.\(^{13}\)

**Lutheranism Replaces Catholicism in Norway**

Norway, Sweden, and Denmark were united in 1397 in the so-called Kelmar Union, so that what one country did usually effected the other two as well. Sweden and Denmark were on the verge of war when Gustavus Vasa, a Swede, was taken prisoner by the Danes. He escaped and fled to Germany and while there became converted to protestantism. He supported the reformation movement. Upon his eventual return, he became influential in government and persuaded the Danish King, Christian the Second, to become a Lutheran.

It was decided at the diet held in Copenhagen in 1536 that the Catholic faith would be abolished. The property of the bishops and cloisters was confiscated, and the Lutheran faith was introduced into Scandinavia. The Norwegian Council of State was also abolished, the Catholic bishops were removed, and the Danish noblemen were installed at the fortresses to rule the country in the king's name. "After the flight of the archbishops, the new faith (Lutheranism) was little known; and the Danish magnates sic took possession of the silver, treasures and goods of the old idolatry."\(^{14}\)

---


\(^{14}\)Sorensen, *op. cit.*, 250.
As it was difficult at first to find enough converted Roman persons to serve all the congregations in the country and carry through the new program, Lutheranism gradually replaced the old religion of Norway. It took time for the older Norwegians to look upon Lutheranism as a civil church, many refused to grant permission to the new religious leaders to perform baptisms and other religious rites. But slowly the old order fell apart, with the disorganization came a certain amount of demoralization and decline. In the opinion of Jørgen Finkdahl, a historian of Scandinavian history, the amount of whoring, murdering, manslaughter, fraud, loose living and fighting and similar vices greatly increased after the inauguration of Lutheranism; and he concluded that the nation at the culture of Norway weakened during the Protestant Reformation.

Those who were charged by the Danes to destroy the Catholic Church in Norway went about their assignment in a very zealous manner. They began in Bergen with Eiske Bills, the church robber, sparing neither churches nor graves; in Trondheim with To Stigson burning the library and archives; in Stavanger with Thord Boed committing havoc in the same manner. Along with the destruction of the buildings, the Catholics were driven out and replaced with Lutheran superintendents or bishops. The government could not immediately remove all the Catholic priests, however, because there were not enough Lutherans to replace them. In addition when Lutheran ministers were appointed, they were generally treated with ill-will and sometimes driven out or killed.16


Eventually the Lutheran Religion came to be accepted, and the religious life of the Norwegians settled down again. Religious conditions in Norway were still not bright, however, as it required the passing of a sabbath law in 1735 requiring church attendance or a heavy fine was imposed. If those fined could not pay the debt, they were placed in stocks that were located outside every church. Along with this condition came the discontinuation of public amusements such as dancing, games, and festivities. Then in 1737, there came the establishment of a general Church Inspection College, whose duty it was to watch over the proper performance of church services. Sorensen further reported that,

The result of this unwise zeal for religion was a general state of hypocrisy and intolerance. The ordinance of Confirmation was added on January 13, 1736. This ordinance led to an improved Christian education of the people, and indirectly compelled all classes of people to read. Great zeal was also shown in printing of Bibles and other religious books.\(^{17}\)

Despite efforts to increase religious activities among the Norwegians, political and religious leaders were not very successful. During the reign of Fredrick IV, the government sold the Norwegian churches to private people in order to raise money to help meet governmental expenditures.\(^{18}\)

Later a small group of religious leaders, called the Synstjernen, met to discuss ways and means for improving the people's moral and religious life. They distributed hymnbooks and collections of sermons among their parishioners and urged the government to sell Bibles and catechisms so cheap that the people could afford to buy them. This appeal led to the reduction of the price of Bibles from ten to one.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 281.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 280.
riks dollar. Knut Gjerset, in his book, *History of the Norwegian People*, emphasized the ignorance and moral depravity of the people. He stated that it was considered necessary by many that schoolmasters should be employed to teach the masses and that there should be at least one teacher in each parish. Gjerset strengthened his argument concerning the condition of the people by quoting these thoughts from a Thomas V. Westen,

> The common people are for the most part so little versed in Christian knowledge that they do not even know who Christ is. Many do not believe in the immortality of the soul or the resurrection of the body, while others who are educated, are usually given to pride, drunkenness, covetousness, hardness of heart, disregard for God's work, cursing, and breaking the sabbath.

> ... All this is the kingdom of the devil. ¹⁹

**Norway Prior to 1850**

Shortly before the introduction of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter in this study referred to as Mormons, Mormonism, LDS, The Restored Church) in Norway, this land had secured its independence from Sweden in 1805 and formulated new laws for itself. The following articles, included in the constitution of Norway reveal that Lutheranism was maintained as the state religion and that genuine toleration was not a principle supported by the state:

> Article 2. The Evangelical Lutheran religion shall continue the established religion of the State. Such inhabitants as profess the same shall educate their children therein. Jesuits shall be excluded.

> Article 4. The King shall constantly profess, maintain and defend the Evangelical Lutheran religion.

> Article 16. The King shall prescribe rules for all public religious affairs and he shall take care that the public instructors of religion adhere to the standards prescribed them. ²⁰


²⁰Sorensen, *op. cit.*, 328, 331, 332.
Summary

Far back in Norway's history, paganism, filled with concepts of polytheism and sacrificial rites, helped to motivate the bold Vikings to sail for wealth and adventure. As the Vikings came into contact with Christian nations some of the Vikings became converted to Christianity. Through the energetic efforts of one of these converted norsemen, Olaf Trygvason, by 1030 A.D., Norway became Christian.

Little is known about the religious lives of the Norwegians from the time they became Christians until the beginning of the 16th century. In that century, a Swede, Gustavus Vasa, brought Lutheranism back from Germany, where he had been in exile. Since the countries of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark were at that time united, being ruled primarily by Danish rulers, that which influenced one nation was felt throughout the other two. When the Danish rulers were converted to Lutheranism, they soon forced the new religion on the people of Norway and Sweden.

The conversion from Catholicism to Lutheranism was a slow, painful one. The Catholic churches were robbed and destroyed; the bishops and priests driven out. Eventually, Lutheranism became the established state religion.

Norwegians were forced by Olaf Trygvason to accept Christianity, then they were forced by King Christian II to change from Catholicism to Lutheranism. After this second religious transformation had occurred, many people were forced to attend church or be fined or sentenced to sit in stocks. These movements helped to create a situation of both religious intolerance as well as religious indifference. It was into this unusual situation that Mormonism was introduced in 1851.
CHAPTER III

THE OPENING OF THE SCANDINAVIAN MISSION

According to Mormon philosophy, during the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the earth, the Lord decreed that those who received testimonies should share their witnesses whenever possible.\(^1\) Samuel H. Smith was the first missionary to be officially called following the establishment of the Restored Church. Soon after his calling, many others were ordained to declare the restoration of the Gospel. In 1837, a mission was opened in Great Britain. This mission met with great success, which gave encouragement for the opening of other missions in Europe. As fast as missionaries became available, the proselyting activities of the Church expanded. Even during times of severe hardship in the Church, missionaries were sent to teach the Gospel.

There had been some activity in the Mormon Church by Scandinavian people before the Latter-day Saint mission to Norway was opened. A branch of the Church was organized in LaSalle County, Illinois, in 1842, by Joseph Smith.\(^2\) Although Mormon missionaries had not yet been sent into the Scandinavian countries, some of the original members of the pioneer settlement in LaSalle were from Scandinavia.

---

\(^1\) *Doctrine and Covenants* 88:81-82.

In 1849, two years after the pioneers arrived in the Great Salt Lake Basin, missionaries were called to expand the missions in Europe to include the countries of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. The missionaries selected to go to Scandinavia, like most others chosen during that period, were willing to heed the call even though they were in the process of battling the desert to make a fit place to establish their new homes.

Erastus Snow, who had recently been ordained an apostle or special witness for Christ, was chosen to open the mission to Scandinavia. He recorded that during the October General Conference of the Church (a general gathering of Church leaders and Church membership), of 1849, many missionaries were called to open missions in various parts of the world. Since the missionaries called to Scandinavia had to pass over the mountain passes and plains before winter set in, they were asked to prepare for immediate departure. In his private journal, Erastus Snow, also recorded that,

"On the evening the 7th (October) we were called together and the Twelve were blessed by the Presidency and set apart to there respective missions and they in turn blessed and set apart the other elders who had received appointments in like manner and prophesied upon their heads according to the spirit of revelation that was in them."\(^3\)

Moreover, Elder Snow stated that President Young predicted upon his head "that the way should begin to open before him from that hour and the angels of the Lord should go before his face to prepare the way whethersoever he went."\(^4\) In addition to this marvelous blessing, he was promised

\(^3\)Erastus Snow Journal, December, 1847-September 12, 1850 (This journal is in the possession of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, located in the Church Historians Library, Salt Lake City, Utah)

\(^4\)Idem.
that his family should lack nothing and that he would be returned to them in safety.

According to Albert Zobell, Jr., the company consisting of thirty-five men, twelve wagons, one carriage, and forty-two horses and mules, met at the mouth of the Emigration Canyon on October 17, 1849, for their departure. After bidding their families farewell, the missionaries set out on their long trek. One of their great concerns, as already mentioned, was that of snow coming before they could cross the mountains. Elder John Taylor recorded in his journal that the snows had fallen on their right and left, before and behind, but with the exception of a slight fall on the Sweetwater, and another on the day of their arrival at Fort Kearney, they had escaped unharmed.

During their journey, they reported that they encountered bands of Indians who were on the war path; but the missionaries proceeded without being molested. On another occasion, the narrative continued, when Erastus Snow and other members of the company reached the Missouri River, they found it impassable due to huge blocks of floating ice. Within a few days, however, the river became frozen making an ice bridge. Elder Snow reported that later in his journey, he stopped to visit some friends. After having stayed the night with his friends, Elder Snow, upon arising from his bed, discovered he had come down with Small-Pox. According to Elder Snow, he was healed by the power of the Priesthood, and his friends were promised they would not contract the disease.

---

5 Albert Zobell, Jr., Under the Midnight Sun (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1950), 3.

6 Ibid., 4.
Erastus Snow and his companions eventually arrived in the East. Since they had no money with which to pay for their passage to Europe, it was necessary for the missionaries to separate and travel among the branches of the area, seeking contributions from the Saints.

After arriving in England, Elder Snow raised additional funds from the Saints and then continued to his assigned field of labor in Denmark. Elder Peter O. Hansen, who had traveled some of the way with Elder Snow, had continued to Denmark, thus making him the first Elder in Scandinavia. As Elder Hansen lost no time waiting for Elder Snow, his superior, he wrote and published a tract entitled "En Advarsel Til Folket" (A Warning to the People).7

According to Elder Snow's journal, he completed his stay in England on June 8, 1850, and left England, accompanied by Elder George P. Dykes. The Elders sailed on the "Victoria," arriving in Copenhagen, Denmark, on June 14, 1850. Elder Dykes was somewhat familiar with the Norwegian language because of his association with the Norwegian Saints in the LaSalle Branch, but Elder Snow could not speak the language. Upon arriving in Copenhagen, Elders Snow and Dykes were met by Elder Peter Hansen, who acted as their interpreter. The group located lodging in a hotel, where they "Offered up thanks giving to God and dedicated themselves to his service."8

8Ibid., 5.
Elder Snow recorded that he was very anxious about the success of the mission. With this thought burdening his soul, he had found sleep an impossibility. Sleep had also been made difficult because of the disturbance which came from the entertainment going on in the hotel. After having walked the floor for several hours, he threw himself upon his bed and prayed for the Lord to help him and his companions locate suitable living quarters. He further asked the Lord to guide their footsteps. The following day, reported Elder Snow, the Lord blessed them with a fine place to live and also the acquaintanceship of a Mr. Monster, a Baptist preacher. Elder Snow was allowed to speak to Monsters' following, this association resulted in helping to bring in the first converts in Scandinavia. Many of Monsters' followers, upon hearing Elder Snow's testimony, became interested and began investigating the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Elder Snow, on August 12, 1850, baptized fifteen persons; some had originally been followers of Mr. Monster. These individuals were the first to receive the Gospel in Scandinavia.9

Elder Snow, in a report to the First Presidency, indicated that baptisms occurred frequently in Copenhagen; and he was very much encouraged about the prospects of the Scandinavian Mission. The first meetings were held in the private homes of the members until September 1, 1850, when a room was rented in "Vingaardsstradet." This was an important meeting. On that day, the first branch of the Church was organized in Scandinavia.10

9Ibid., 7.
10Ibid., 10.
Elder John Forsgren had gone to Sweden to begin missionary work there, but he had met with strong opposition and had been forced to leave Sweden. He escaped to Denmark. Upon his return, the brethren met in prayer and counsel and decided that Elder Hansen should revise and prepare The Book of Mormon for publication in Danish. (It is important to note that the Danish translation of The Book of Mormon was used in the Norwegian Mission until 1950). After the book was prepared for publication, Elder Snow left for England to raise funds for the said publication. Before leaving, Elder Snow wrote a tract entitled "En Sandheds Rost" (A Voice of Truth). The tract was translated by Peter C. Hansen. Elder Snow was in England for Twenty-six days, after which he returned with sufficient money to have The Book of Mormon published in Danish.11

After Lutheran priests noticed the interest some of their followers displayed in attending the Mormon meetings, they began holding evening meetings in an effort to curb the loss of their following. When this failed, they spoke out against the Mormons and aroused the resentment of some people against the Mormon Church. The evening meetings of the Saints were interrupted by mobs who gathered outside their services, shouting insults and knocking on the doors and windows. The brethren appealed to the authorities for help but received none. Elder Snow then advised that the evening meetings be discontinued. When the next appointed time for the Saints to meet arrived, unknown to the mobs, the Saints conducted their meetings, without incident, in the confines of their own homes.12

11Ibid., 18
12Ibid., 19.
Elder Snow reported that labors of the first year in the Scandinavian mission had spread forth successfully in spite of stiff opposition. His statement continued by indicating that when The Book of Mormon came forth from the press, it aided in proselyting new converts.

The Gospel goes to Norway

On September 3, 1851, Elder Snow entered these important notes in his journal concerning meeting a Norwegian sailor who played an important role in the Norwegian Mission:

The following week while I was at Brother H.P. Jenses, in Norre Limby, a Mr. Svend Larsen from Norway master of a vesel came in search of me saying that he had heard of me and my religion and had to enquire and learn for himself.

For several Hours I taught him the things of the kingdom and the dispensation of the gospel which we had received, and he received my testimony with joy and as his vesel was appointed to sail for Norway next day, I called and set apart Elder W.J. Petersen to accompany him home and preach the gospel in Norway. They sifled together next day well supplied with Books of Mormon and tracts and Bro. O.C. Nielsen quickly baptized him (Mr. Larsen) as the first fruits of Norway.

Elder Petersen recorded that he and Svend Larsen arrived in Osterrigor, Norway, September 11, 1851.

13 Erastus Snow Journal, located in CHL.

14 Jenson, History of the Scandinavian Mission, 33.
He continued his record by stating that he lived with Brother Larsen in Osterrisor where the first missionary labors were performed in Norway. Svend Larsen, usually referred to as "Skipper," asked the priest for permission to hold meetings in the school building. The Priest was astonished at the boldness and asked, "with considerable emotion if the Mormons really had now come to Norway!" 15

On September 12, 1851, Elder Petersen began visiting the people in Osterrisor where he distributed several tracts. When it was learned that Elder Petersen had come to Norway without first obtaining a passport, he was forced to return to Denmark to get one. According to Elder Petersen, the second time he arrived in Norway, he was accompanied by Elder Johan August Ahmanson. These two Elders preached the Gospel in the near-by villages, winning some friends; but they were received, for the most part, with much doubting. Before long, the Elders met Peter Adamsen and John Olsen, who, on November 26, 1851, became the first proselyted converts in Norway. 16.

Elder Petersen related that persecution began the day of the first baptism. A mob, under the influence of liquor, came after Elder Petersen. He was able to escape from them by hiding in Svend Larsen's home. Elder Petersen sent word to the civil authorities asking for protection. Instead of receiving assistance, he was called into the mayor's office and told not to perform any further ordinances of religion. He was threatened with a prison sentence if he failed to comply with the law, specifying that no one, except an approved religious leader or priest, could perform religious ordinances.

15 Ibid., 34

16 Norwegian Mission Record - Christiania Conference, 1851-1939 located in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.
A short time later, Elder Petersen was again chased by the mob; and again he sought refuge in the home of Svend Larsen. The mob, by candle light, searched in vain for him. He had hid himself in an abandoned chimney; when he came out, he was black with soot.

Elder Petersen left Osterrisor and sailed with Svend Larsen towards Bergen. At each stop, he preached to whomever he could find to listen to him. Elder Petersen reported that during his sermons, he was often interrupted by priests who challenged his doctrine, but when told to prove him wrong were unable to do so. Elder Petersen arrived in Bergen, January 18, 1852, where he stayed the rest of the winter.

Gradually the increasing numbers of missionaries began making small in-roads into the Norwegian way of thinking. New converts were being added from time to time. Elder Petersen recorded that the first branch of the Church in Norway was organized in Osterrisor on July 16, 1852. The second branch was organized at Fredricstad, July 25, 1852.17 Elder Canute Petersen, who was the first native of Norway to return from Zion as a missionary, was sent up to Christiania, Norway's largest city, to preach. He related that when he arrived there, his food and means were exhausted; and he had no place to turn for help. He sought the Lord and prayed for help. Arising from his knees, he proceeded, not knowing where he was going. When he found himself in the middle of the city with thousands of strangers hurrying past, a man approached him and said he was a recent convert from Denmark sent to assist Elder Petersen. Shortly thereafter, these men organized the Christiania branch.18

17Ibid., 1851-1939, CHL.

18Idem.
While presiding over the Scandinavian Mission, Elder Snow maintained headquarters in Copenhagen. In October, 1851, he informed President Franklin D. Richards, who was in Liverpool, England, that the Scandinavian mission was making good progress, but that opposition was severe. He declared,

Those who have seen persecution in America and are acquainted with all the early history of the Saints, can in some measure appreciate them but they must be experienced to be fully realized.

In many places here, to embrace the gospel is almost equal to the sacrifice of one's life; and to travel and preach it, a man carries his life in his hands. 19

Other Latter-day Saints aptly described the nature of Mormon opposition in Norway. Elder Canute Petersen testified that Elders in Osterrisor were imprisoned for preaching and baptizing for the remission of sins. When Elder Petersen arrived at Christiania, he found six of the brethren in prison and learned that three had just been liberated on condition that they would cease their labors until a decision was returned from the state court. 20

19 Journal History, 1851-1851 Supplement, CHL.

20 The dissenter law was a law in Norway which granted religious liberty to all religious parties except Jews and Jesuits, on condition that they should be acknowledged by the civil authorities. The elders petitioned the civil authorities when they first arrived in Norway, but their petition was referred to the clergy, who were divided in their views, thus the great delay of decision and eventual decision that Mormons were not recognized as Christians.
Shortly thereafter, the six were liberated on the same terms. Because the courts delayed announcing a decision, the elders decided to resume their missionary activities. Subsequently, they were re-arrested and placed in prison. The lower court decided against the brethren and fined them. The superior tribunal confirmed the decision, but acknowledged the Mormons as Christians. The amtmand or superior officer (having jurisdiction) appealed this sentence to the supreme court, which decided that the Mormons were not to be acknowledged as Christians and imposed a fine of ten dollars each.21

Elder Johan F.F. Dorius recorded that he and other missionaries were often imprisoned, sometimes for as long as seven months. They were frequently, while in prison, required to subsist on bread and water.22 While in prison, Elder Dorius continued, they often preached the Gospel to fellow prisoners, jailors, or individuals who approached the jail.

Elder John Van Cott also described the nature of Mormon oppression in Norway,

The Saints were forbidden to preach or even mention "Mormonism," and should those to whom they teach or read the Bible, betray them, they were subjected to fine or imprisonment (sic). No mercy was shown to any who would acknowledge the name of Latter-day Saints.23

Elder Willard Snow, who served as president of the Scandinavian Mission until his sickness and death, reported that one of the methods used by the priests in Norway to create ill-feelings among the people against the Saints was to circulate falsehoods about the Mormons. He wrote,

21 Journal History, 1853: September-1854, CHL.

22 Ibid., 1852: November-1853: August, CHL.

23 Ibid., 1853: September-1854: August, CHL.
It would appear that a priest here, finding that many were disposed to listen to the Elder's preaching and a considerable number had been baptized, called a public meeting and harangued the people, stirring them up and angering them against the Saints, as usual by false and slanderous reports, which appeared in prints, such as the following: That a man in England, under the pretense of baptizing, had drowned a person; that a 'Mormon,' who had been baptized somewhere in Denmark had killed his wife; the old Spaulding story, spiritual wifeism; and the same kind of yarn that a hireling priest always spins out; making the horizon sic rather stormy around the heads of the Saints for a little season.  

Most of the opposition was instigated by intolerant religious leaders. The missionary efforts were, however, crowned with success even though some who joined the Church were "beaten with clubs, kicked and dragged in the streets by the hair of the head."  

An entry in the Journal History of the Church specified that the persecution stimulated some people to investigate the Gospel. Because of the conflict created by the priests on many occasions, the elders received attention, enabling them to preach to many people, who otherwise, would never have listened. At other times, the priests were challenged by the people to prove the missionaries wrong by the use of the Bible and not by the telling of falsehoods.

Summary

The elders constantly found themselves in a precarious position. They were fined or imprisoned for baptizing, administering the sacrament, preaching the Gospel, and reading the Bible with people. Through all this, the missionaries went forward and seemed to have maintained a positive attitude. Elder John Van Cott wrote from Copenhagen, Denmark,

24Ibid., 1852: January - October, CHL.

25Ibid., 1853: September -1854: August, CHL.

26Ibid., 1852: January - October, CHL.
In Norway the Elders continue to have their usual amount of opposition, often they have to pay a visit to the prison walls. When liberated they cheerfully go to work again. Truth is breaking forth on the right and left. 27

Although religious intolerance was still a very serious problem, the missionaries had built a lasting foundation upon which future missionaries could build. From these humble beginnings were to come enough converts from Scandinavia to comprise in 1930 between one-third to one-fourth of the entire Church population. 28

27Ibid., 1854: September - 1855: April, CHL.

28John A. Widtsoe, "How Many Latter-day Saints are of Scandinavian Descent?" The Improvement Era, (June 1950), 471.
CHAPTER IV

THE TRANSLATION OF MORMON LITERATURE TO DANISH THEN TO NORWEGIAN

The expansion of the L.D.S. Church in Norway and the other Scandinavian countries was conditioned upon the ability of the elders to spread the teachings of the Gospel as widely as possible. Since the laborers were few, in order to extend the Gospel to as many as possible, the distribution of printed matter was necessary. In addition, the converts were unskilled and unread, in a large measure, in Church doctrine and standards. This situation made it necessary, in order that these converts could discuss the Gospel with their neighbors, to have the Gospel in print.

Andrew Jenson, a noted Mormon Church historian, believed that, with the exception of certain parts of the United States and a few places in England, no section on earth had been so thoroughly canvassed for the Gospel's sake as had Norway, Sweden, and Denmark.¹ This then, in light of the limited missionary force in those countries, is an indication of the wide distribution of literature.

As the literature used in the Scandinavian Mission was surveyed, it became obvious that almost all printed matter was in Danish. It should not be assumed that the Norwegian, Danish and Swedish languages are the same. These languages are, for the most part, understood by all Scandinavians.

¹Andrew Jenson, "Scandinavian Latter-day Saint Literature," The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine, XIII (October 1922) 191.
Elder Snow explained to Brigham Young why most of the literature appeared in Danish when he wrote:

... literature of the great university of Copenhagen has long taken the lead in this north country. ... works read in Danish may be read and understood by a large portion of the Swedes. ... and as for Norway, although they have their rustic dialects, yet the Danish is the public language of the State.²

Literature translated into Norwegian is of recent occurrence. Norway, as in most nations, has a keen sense of national pride, and for the Norwegians to have to read religious materials in the Danish language, the country from whom they and Sweden had gained their independence created ill-satisfaction.

The First Tracts in Danish

The early years of the Scandinavian Mission saw a profusion of books and pamphlets, most of which dealt with theological matter. Most of them were translations from the writings of Orson and Parley Pratt.³ Translating and printing constituted a striking aspect of early Mormon activity in Scandinavia. Books and pamphlets were available for sale in all meetings. In addition, they were carried and sold by the elders whenever opportunity was afforded. The members of the Church were encouraged to purchase large amounts of printed matter which they were to either sell or give to their associates.⁴ It was not until 1929 that the First Presidency made provisions whereby missionaries were furnished tracts free of cost.⁵

²William Mulder, Homeward to Zion (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1957), 76.
³Ibid., 77.
⁴Norwegian Mission History - 1920-1939, 1929, CHL.
⁵Mulder, Homeward to Zion, 77.
Elder Peter O. Hansen, who arrived in Copenhagen a few days ahead of Elder Snow, was credited with having edited and published the first tract in Scandinavia. His four-page tract was entitled "En Adversel til Folket" (A Warning to the People). This tract was soon followed by "En Sandheds Rost" (The Voice of Truth) written by Erastus Snow. This religious treatise of Snow's, however, was recognized as the first official tract in Scandinavia. The first edition of "En Sandheds Rost" consisted of two thousand copies. Printed in September, 1850, it reached 140,000 copies by 1882. It was the most popular tract then and it is still actively read in Scandinavia today. It would be impossible to go into a detailed analysis of each tract, but "En Sandheds Rost" will serve as an example of the type of material contained in these early tracts:

"En Sandheds Rost" was skillfully written without using the words "Mormons" or "Mormonism" or "Latter-day Saints" or "Church" in the first thirteen of its sixteen pages. The tract clarified basic doctrines: the fall and redemption, faith, repentance, baptism, infant sprinkling, priesthood authority, the Second coming. It concluded with sixteen articles of faith and declamation avowing Mormon belief in monogamy and admonishing obedience to the marriage laws of the land.6

By 1873, more than eighteen books and pamphlets were in print. They covered a wide range of religious topics which helped correct misunderstandings so common to slanderous accounts given by the enemies of Mormonism. The majority of the tracts, written by Church authorities, were translated from English. These tracts helped bind the Saints in Scandinavia to the

6Ibid., 27. Although Elder Snow's tract taught monogamy, polygamy was being practiced in Utah by a very small, select few. Because polygamy was not practiced by the majority it was therefore, taught that monogamy was practiced by the Church—meaning the masses.
leadership of the Church in Zion. The editions, measured by the standards of modern mass media, were not large; but their appeal was personal and effective.\(^7\)

Elder Snow reported that he had difficulty in finding a printer who would handle the "Mormon heresies," but F.D. Bording, a young journeyman, took the risk. He continued thereafter to do all the printing for the Church until his death in 1884, when his son continued this assignment. By 1881, Bording and son had printed a total of 1,854,750 pieces of literature—tracts, periodicals, and books—in Danish and 275,600 pieces in Swedish, giving him an income of 100,000 kroners ($25,000).\(^8\) Although numerous Mormon works passed through the hands of these printers, neither Bording nor his son became members of the Church.

**Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon into Danish**

The *Book of Mormon* has long been recognized for its converting impact. The Church recognized the need for the translating of *The Book of Mormon* into the Scandinavian language several years before the elders were sent to open that mission. Elder Peter O. Hansen had been commissioned by Brigham Young in 1844 to make the translation for the Norwegian Saints in the LaSalle Branch.

Elder Snow reported that immediately after his arrival in Copenhagen, he directed Elder Hansen to revise his original translation. Hansen soon found that he had become "very dull in his native tongue"\(^9\) and that

\(^7\)Ibid., 77.

\(^8\)Andrew Jenson, *History of the Scandinavian Mission*, 104.

he needed help to perfect the translation. Elder Snow also recognized the need for help but wished not to confide the book "to learned professors who were not imbued with the spirit of the work." Elder Snow engaged a language teacher, Mme. Mathiesen, to assist; but she proved unsatisfactory. She wanted to convert the style "to modern taste," which would have ruined the ancient, peculiar style which Hansen had been charged to preserve.

Elder Snow wrote to Brigham Young informing him that English financial backers were promised and that the book would appear soon in Danish. Directly, thereafter, Elder Snow took a twenty-seven day trip to England. When he returned, he had the money. From England he obtained two hundred pounds of sterling; in addition, one hundred regsdaler were obtained from a recent convert.

Brother Snow kept a close watch over the translation as it proceeded from January to May of 1851. When completed, the Danish Book Of Mormon contained 568 pages. The first edition consisted of 3,000 copies. The members of the Church were instructed to buy copies of The Book of Mormon even if they had to buy them a few sheets at a time or join with other families to purchase a copy. Elder Snow reported that "as the Saints began to peruse its (The Book of Mormon) sacred pages the Holy Ghost descended upon them and bore record of it in a marvelous manner, which caused their hearts to magnify the Lord." By 1882, Scandinavia had absorbed 8,000 copies of The Book of Mormon in Danish and 3,000 copies in

10 Idem.

11 Mulder, Homeward to Zion, 75.

12 Snow, One Year in Scandinavia, 12.
Swedish. Elder Snow could have looked with pride over his first year as president of the Scandinavian Mission. During that period, the first tracts had been written and published; the first edition of The Book of Mormon had been published and circulated; a small song book was in use; and parts of The Doctrine and Covenants had been translated.

The Book of Mormon Translated and Published in Norwegian

As previously stated, the Norwegian Mission was obliged to use the Danish translation of The Book of Mormon for many years. It was not until July 1, 1950, that The Book of Mormon was translated in the Norwegian language. The Norwegian monthly publication, Lys over Norge, announced, The Book of Mormon is off the press for the first time translated into Norwegian. Ever since The Book of Mormon was translated and published in Copenhagen in 1851, the Norwegian mission has used the Danish edition. It was translated by Sister Lex Novik Frende. It was a real jubilee gift to the Norwegian Saints.\[\text{\textsuperscript{13}}\]

Translation and Publication of The Doctrine and Covenants

Before the translation of The Book of Mormon was completed, President Snow had begun the work of translating The Doctrine and Covenants into Danish. The Laerdommens of Paktens Bog (Doctrine and Covenants) first appeared in February, 1852. The first edition consisted of 1,000 copies. This edition, like The Book of Mormon had been, was subsidized by English benefactors, along with an outright gift of two hundred pounds from a Mr. Lennant. The first edition contained 318 pages. Its main purpose was to help indoctrinate the members of the Church; whereas the primary purpose of The Book of Mormon was to be used as a proselyting medium.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{13}}\text{Norwegian Mission History, 1946-1961, CHL.}\]
The *Doctrine and Covenants* set forth the order of the Church, introducing the members to the responsibilities of a lay leadership. By 1882, 6,800 copies of *The Doctrine and Covenants* were in circulation.

**The Doctrine and Covenants in Norwegian**

In 1931, President Hyrum D. Jensen, president of the Norwegian Mission, received permission from Elder John A. Widtsoe, member of the Council of Twelve Apostles, to revise *The Doctrine and Covenants* in Norwegian and Danish. The printing and binding were to have been done by the Danish Mission and the expenses divided equally among the three missions in Scandinavia. Since the history covering the next few years of the Norwegian Mission is incomplete, no record was found by this writer to indicate that this edition ever came into fruition.

After Axel J. Andrasen became president of the Norwegian Mission, he sought to have the Standard Works (*Bible, The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price*) of the Church translated into Norwegian. On April 17, 1953, accompanied by Elder Harold D. Peterson, he went to Jonkoping, Sweden, to discuss with Brother Kindberg, a Church printer, the forthcoming work on *The Doctrine and Covenants*. On April 18, 1953, President Andrasen turned over to Brother Kindberg $2,275, which paid for the paper stock to be used in publishing *The Doctrine and Covenants*. In November of that year, President Andrasen returned to Sweden to transfer the printing operations to Oslo, Norway. The attempted transfer apparently failed, because on July 26, 1954, *Lys over Norge* recorded that President Andrasen was again in Sweden where he saw the manuscripts of *The Doctrine*

---

14 *Snow, One Year in Scandinavia*, 8.

15 *Quarterly Historical Report for the Norwegian Mission, September 30, 1931*, in possession of the Church Historian's Library.
and Covenants and The Pearl of Great Price in the Norwegian language. On July 26, 1954, the printers promised that they would begin setting the type immediately. Such encouragement brought forth this exclamation of joy from President Andrasen, "we rejoice in the fact that we have finally reached the point where we can begin to see the realization of having these important books of the Church in printed form." 

Translation and Publication of The Pearl of Great Price

The Pearl of Great Price was the last of the standard works to be translated and printed either in Danish or Norwegian. The Pearl of Great Price was first published in one of the volumes of Morgenstjernen (a mission periodical). It was not published in book form until 1909.

The Pearl of Great Price in Norwegian

The Norwegian Mission used the Danish edition until the time of President Andrasen's administration. He worked on the translation of The Doctrine and Covenants and The Pearl of Great Price during the same period of time. Those who faithfully assisted President Andrasen with The Pearl of Great Price and Doctrine and Covenants were: Sigrid Andrasen, wife of President Andrasen; Gosta Berling; Beatrice Denkers, who typed the manuscript; and Lela Jameson, who did the proof-reading. The Norwegian edition of the Pearl of Great Price was published by the Church printer, Mr. Kindberg, in Jonkoping, Sweden. President Andrasen, assisted by Elder Adolph Swensen, did the managerial work, for the publication, which

16 Idem.
17 Norwegian Mission History, 1949-1961, CHL.
18 Quoted from an interview with President Andrasen to writer, 1963.
When expressed the two of us (himself and Elder John Matsen, Secretary of the mission) expressed when we saw and handled this book."  

He later added:

It was with joy and thanksgiving in our hearts that we handled the books (Pearl of Great Price and Doctrine and Covenants) and gave our thanks to the printers for a very splendid work performed. We know that this book will bring blessings unmeasured to the faithful Saints now in the Norwegian Mission and to the many, many who later come into the Church, as well as the missionaries who now labor in the mission and who in the future will be assigned to labor in the Norwegian Mission.  

Translation and Publication of a Hymn Book

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has long been recognized for its interest and appreciation for hymnal music as a part of its worship exercises. In July, 1830, the prophet Joseph Smith assigned his wife, Emma Smith, the responsibility of compiling hymns for the Church.  

Andrew Jenson observed the great need for a hymn book for the use of the new converts in Scandinavia, for while the collection of hymns used by the State Church and also by the Baptists contained many gems of Christian poetry, yet they failed, in many respects, to represent the real spirit of the Gospel. Elder Snow directed Elder Peter O. Hansen to translate some of the best Gospel hymns from the English Latter-day Saints' hymn book. These were published in Copenhagen in March, 1851. The collection included twenty-eight hymns "adapted to the tunes used in Zion"

---

19Quarterly Historical Report for the Norwegian Mission, June 21, 1955, CHL.
20Ibid., December 5, 1955, CHL.
21Idem.
22Doctrine and Covenants 25:11-12
23Andrew Jenson, Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine, 1922, XIII, 181.
and devoted to the theme of the gathering of Isreal, the restoration of the Gospel, and the kingdom of God. These hymns appeared in one of the Skandinavien Stjerne publications.  

The published editions of hymns went through several revisions. The hymns used by the saints were almost considered of equal value as that of the scriptures. According to the Scandinavian Mission History, the converts themselves wrote many of the hymns, setting their new emotions to old tunes. Hymns were written by people representing many occupations that were considered unusual such as clerks, tailors, school teachers and shoemakers. The record continued by stating that by 1900 "Salms til Brug" (Psalms to Use) had gone through fourteen editions composed of 40,000 copies. The fourteenth edition contained 275 hymns, forty of them translated from English Latter-day Saint Hymns. A few were selected from other denominations, and all the rest were written by Scandinavian converts. Historians have observed the fulfillment of one of Erastus Snow's great wishes when he extended the call to collect the first hymns in 1851. He stated that "these few hymns will be kindly accepted until the Lord shall raise up gifted poets and give a great abundance of the songs of Zion."

**Hymn Book Translated into Norwegian**

The Norwegians used the Danish translation of hymns until 1955 when President Andrasen received permission from Elder Spencer W. Kimball to investigate the possibility of having the hymns translated into Norwegian.

---

24 Mulder, *Homeward to Zion*, 73.

25 *Idem*.

26 *Scandinavian Mission History, 1850 to 1939*, CHL.

27 *Ibid.*, March 31, 1951, CHL.
In that year, while President Andrasen was returning from the Swiss Temple dedication, he visited President Alvin Eyre of the West German Mission and German printers concerning methods employed in obtaining hymns published in the German language. After gathering pertinent information, President Andrasen was able to complete this assignment.  

Mission Publications, Skandinavien Stjerne, Morgenstjernen, Lys over Norge

Because of the large number of publications produced during the history of the Scandinavian and Norwegian Missions, it would be difficult to consider each in detail; but the three main ones will be discussed.

The Skandinavien Star was founded in October, 1851, and was published in Copenhagen, Denmark. The Star, as it was commonly referred to, was first a monthly and within the first year of its publication became biweekly. After reaching its highest circulation of 2,700 in 1861, it leveled off to an annual average of about 1,500 copies each month. The Star had a non-member circulation in 1861 of 500, suggesting the extent to which it was used as a proselyting tool.

The Star contained quoted scripture, mission historical records, news, guide for emigrants, and a serialized American book. In addition, it carried sermons from Zion, epistles, letters from emigrants, excerpts from American newspapers, and reprints from the Millennial Star and the Deseret News. It was a storehouse of information about the new world of Zion.

Until January 1, 1922, The Skandinavien Stjerne had served as the Church organ for Denmark and Norway. After the establishment of the Norwegian Mission in 1920 as a separate mission, the Saints in Norway desired their

---

28Norwegian Mission Report, September 30, 1955, CHL.
29Mulder, Homeward to Zion, 79.
30Ibid., 80.
own publication. The Morning Star was a sixteen-page semi-monthly. It, like the Skandinavien Stjerne (The Scandinavian Star) was published and edited by the presidency of the mission. President August Schow, president of the Norwegian Mission, was the first president to write in The Morning Star. This publication survived only four years then died for lack of subscribers. With the discontinuation of The Morning Star, The Skandinavien Stjerne once again became the official organ for both Denmark and Norway. It remained the official publication until the beginning of the Lys over Norge (Light Over Norway).31

The first issue of this new Norwegian Mission periodical, Lys over Norge, was on January 1, 1937. During the years The Skandinavien Stjerne was the organ of the Church in Scandinavia, the Norwegian Saints felt the loss of local information. They concluded that they wanted another publication of their own. The initial issue carried this plea:

Brothers and Sisters everywhere in Norway: We now again have the much sought after and greatly missed periodical. We promise each other that we always shall keep it among us as a distributor of culture and a tie between fellow believers from the utmost North to the utmost South of Norway.32

True to this plea, with the exception of the war years, this periodical has continued. In 1940 the Lys over Norge became a monthly, whereas prior to that time it had been a semi-monthly. During World War II, it was discontinued for lack of supplies and contact with the branches of the Church.33 However, it is now being published again.

Translation and Publication of Lesson Materials

As the Church has gained world-wide status, the need for greater

31Idem.
32Quarterly Historical Report for the Norwegian Mission, 1920-1939, CHL.
33Idem.
correlation has been felt. Until about 1957, little was available by way of lesson materials for the auxiliaries of the Church in Norway. President Ray E. Engelbretnsen, president of the Norwegian Mission, expressed the need to furnish the auxiliaries and their classes with teaching materials. He considered these translated lesson materials as an essential part of the mission teaching program, for he wrote,

A great effort has been made along the line of translating the lesson material provided by the Church which is used in the wards and stakes, and this is now beginning to show results in the Norwegian Mission. . . . Teacher training classes have been started all over the mission.

Teaching Norwegians to Speak English

Because the task of translating all church records, periodicals, sermons, and instructions from the General Authorities into Norwegian was too burdensome, some effort has been carried on through the years to teach the Norwegians to speak and read English. This was especially true in the early days of the mission during the time of heavy emigration to Utah. As a few Norwegians mastered the English language, they assisted others.

Anti-Mormon Literature Increased

At the same time that Mormon propaganda favoring Zion was spreading, an increased anti-Mormon movement was being initiated. "The anti-literature mingled fact and fiction, which took its rise from clerical attacks, folk rumor, traveler's accounts, and the testimony of disillusioned immigrants." During the 1850's when Mormon literature was most prolific, so also were the anti-writings. Most of the anti-Mormon pamphlets originated in newspapers

---

34 Quarterly Report for the Norwegian Mission, December 31, 1957, CHL.

35 Mulder, Homeward to Zion, 90.
and periodicals which devoted an enormous amount of space to the Mormons.\textsuperscript{36}

The extensive attack, not uncommon to Mormon history, concerned tracts written about experiences of Mormons in a particular locality. Some, in their attacks, classified Mormonism and other religions together, but the arguments were tediously the same: accusations over and over that Mormonism was not Christian, that its followers were ignorant of the facts, that its leaders were schemers, that the movement was a fool hypocrisy, with polygamy its crowning abomination.\textsuperscript{37}

**Summary**

Literature in the Scandinavian and Norwegian Missions was one of the keys to the successful proselyting activities. With the field of labor so broad and the laborers so few, other means than personal contact had to be utilized. As almost everything concerning the Restored Church was printed in English, the process of translation became a vital factor. Much credit should be given to those who spent long hours accomplishing this arduous task. The inspired words of the prophets in print enabled the Saints to study the Gospel. They could also better defend and teach Mormonism to their neighbors and relatives.

\textsuperscript{36}Idem.\textsuperscript{37}
\textsuperscript{37}Ibid., 92.
LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN

MAP OF NORWAY
CHAPTER V
MISSION GROWTH THROUGH THE YEARS

Expanses of Areas of Labor

The first missionary labors in Norway were in Osterrisor, located on the southern coast. From there, during the first year, the work spread west to Bergen and east as far as Brevig. (See map on page 42). Because of the opposition encountered by the intolerant laws and the limited number of missionaries, the work naturally moved slowly in terms of areas covered; but the number of converts per missionary was extremely high. (See chart on page 44). The records show that the highest number of converts per missionary was made during the first twenty years of proselyting work in Norway. There were 12,915 people baptized in the Scandinavian Mission during the first decade; 1,758 were from Norway. Denmark had the greatest number of baptisms. According to Albert Zobell, Jr., there were only forty-six missionaries from Zion laboring in the Scandinavian countries during the same period of time. There were, of course, some local saints called to preach the Gospel. The peak of convert baptisms per missionary was reached in 1862, with 1,977 people coming into the Church.¹

As the converts became numerous enough to merit the organization of branches, these were established. In the beginning, the Norwegian Mission was known as the Brevig Conference of the Scandinavian Mission.

¹Albert Zobell, Jr., Under the Midnight Sun, 186.
CIVIL WAR BAPTIZING IN SCANDINAVIA 1650-1728 Compared to Mission Periods in Scandinavia 1650-1728

The History of the Scandinavian Mission, p.533, by Andrew Jenson.
The entire country of Norway had but one conference or district, with all the branches under this one district. In 1905, due to the growth of the members in that area, the headquarters of the Norwegian part of the Scandinavian Mission were transferred to Christiania (Christiania was changed to Oslo in 1925). The Christiania (Oslo) conference continued undivided from 1852 until 1899, when two other conferences were organized. The two new conferences were organized at Bergen and Trondheim. The Bergen conference included the western part of Norway and the Trondheim, the northern sector. On April 1, 1920, the Norwegian Mission was created. On October 31, 1948, the Tonsberg conference (the word conference was later changed to districts; the terms are used interchangeably in this study) was organized, making the fourth conference. This district or conference divided the Oslo district into two parts. (See map on page 42)

**Early Progress in Norway**

According to Mormon teachings, the Lord informed the early church leaders that the time was right for the accomplishment of missionary labors as he said the field was "white already to harvest." It would appear that Norway was one of the fields he had in mind as the records indicate the converts came in rapidly, especially during the first two decades of proselyting activities. There were 24,606 converts during the period from 1851 to 1871, as compared to the next twenty years which produced

---


3Norwegian Mission Record, September, 1948, CHL.

4*Doctrine and Covenants* 4:4
16,797 converts. The third twenty years had 9,215 converts, and the fourth twenty years or down to 1940 had only 4,050 converts.  

The mission probably could have continued to grow even more rapidly if the new members had stayed in Scandinavia to share their testimonies; but as the next chapter of this study will indicate, there was a very heavy emigration to Utah. The new converts, filled with the spirit of the Gospel, helped much in teaching others. Andrew Jenson reported that the first class of people to join the Church in the Oslo Branch, for example, were blacksmiths and masons who preached the Gospel to their customers. The people were invited to the homes of these recent converts where they would hear the Gospel preached.  

It was said of the new converts of early Norway "that they heard the Gospel one day, were baptized the second, and on the third day they were out preaching the restored truth to kinfolk, neighbors, and friends."  

In order that the reader might more fully appreciate the type of faithfulness some of these early members possess, the following entry is made:  

...the elders recently visited Bynild Isaksen, a veteran elder residing in Brevik, whose life is a remarkable story which inspired one in his presence to faithfulness and good works. He was born at Nellefos, Norway, May 11, 1825, and later removed to Brevik where, in 1852, the first conference of the Church was organized. During all these years (time of this writing was 1912), he has been a true and faithful defender of the cause. Some years ago his wife, who also was a faithful Church member, died......he has been a tithepayer ever since he joined the Church, and though he had never seen the peaceful vales of the Rocky Mountains, he has now in his possession the genealogy of 43 dead relatives for whom work has been performed in the Temples of God...he remained a monument marking the introduction of the Gospel to Norway.  

---

5Zobell, _op. cit._, 186-188.  
6Norwegian Mission - Christiania Branch, 1853-1939.  
7Albert Zobell, Jr., "Scandinavia...Fruitful Gospel Field," _The Improvement Era_, L No. 6, (June 1950), 474.  
8Joseph F. Smith, (ed.), "Messages from the Missions," _The Improvement Era_, XVI, No. 4, (February, 1913), 382.
In 1924, The Morgenstjernen reported that there were 102 baptisms in the Norwegian Mission, with a total membership of the mission standing at 1,621 (including children). The mission consisted of three conference or districts and thirteen organized branches.9 (For a sample of the growth of the Norwegian Mission from 1851 to 1926, see page 48).

By 1903, the labors of the Norwegian Mission had expanded to include most of the country. The Narvik Branch, "the most northern branch of the Church, not only in that country, but in the world" was organized in 1903.10 The work performed by the early missionaries had laid a solid foundation upon which later progress was made. Elder Henry O. Poulsen, clerk of the Christiania Conference, reported that the work of the Lord was progressing nicely. He reported many strangers were visiting the meetings and receiving literature about the Gospel. He further observed that the better classes were looking upon the Saints as an enlightened people. Also he stated that the Church choir in Christiania was the best choir in that city.11 Some of Elder Poulsen's thoughts on the progress in that district were:

People who were once so bitter towards us are now beginning to consider Latter-day Saints as Christians. . . . As a result of the change in conditions, our progress has been very marked. During the past eight months there have been 74 baptisms in this conference, and under the present conditions we expect to see the number increased considerably. . . . The elders have all enjoyed the spirit of their calling, and feel encouraged over the prospects for the future.12

Organization of the Church Auxiliaries

Latter-day Saints who have lived their entire lives where the Church auxiliaries were well established probably fail to realize the opportunities

9 Andrew Jenson, The History of the Scandinavian Mission, 509.
12 Idem.
Theodore C. Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America*, p. 112.
for enjoyments and development these programs provide. Most of the branches of the Church in the Norwegian Mission consisted of older people, usually sisters. The lack of male members greatly limited the development of the auxiliaries (an organized program within the Church), except for the Relief Society and Sunday School.

The Relief Society Organized in Norway

The Relief Society is the oldest of the auxiliaries, as it was organized by the Prophet Joseph Smith on March 17, 1842. The purpose of this program was to provide the women of the Church with the opportunity of assisting the poor. Since a large portion of the Norwegian Saints were women, this program was organized in most of the branches. The first branch known to have the Relief Society was the Oslo Branch. This program for the women of the Church was organized in January, 1880.

Under the direction of the Relief Society of the Oslo Branch, a genealogy class was begun on August 12, 1928. It was the first organized genealogical study done in the Norwegian Mission. The Norwegian Mission History, quoting the Millennial Star, about the success some of the sisters had in doing genealogical research reported:

The two archives in Oslo, and the care that Norwegian people have given, for several centuries, to the keeping of full and accurate vital data, made such research more readily possible than in other places.

The Sunday School Organized in Norway

The Sunday School was organized by Richard Ballantyne among the Saints

13 Joseph Fielding Smith, Essentials In Church History (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1940), 648.

14 Norwegian Mission History, 1920-1939, April 15, 1936, CHL.

15 Ibid., August 12, 1928, CHL.
in Utah in the fall of 1849. Its goal or mission was to teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the entire membership of the Church. Lessons were later developed for this purpose. On November 1, 1870, the first Sunday School was organized in the Oslo Branch.

The Primary Organized in Norway

The Primary organization was founded in Utah on August 25, 1878. The purpose of this association was to teach the youth in their formative years. There seems to be no record available to indicate when this auxiliary began in Norway but the Skandinavien Stjerne reported the largest primary organization in the Norwegian Mission was in Kirkenes, Trondheim District. The account stated that in 1938 the elders had organized this youth program with ninety-three children enrolled, with an average attendance of eighty-one. The children, it continued, were almost all of non-Mormon parentage; there was only one Latter-day Saint child. Also, there were several nationalities in attendance including Lapps, Finns, Swedes, Russians, and Norwegians. The missionaries closed their report with this interesting note:

When going down the street it is amusing to hear the children, while playing, sing: "I'll Serve the Lord While I am Young," "Ere You Left Your Room This Morning," "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," etc., The seed is sown—what will the harvest be?

The Young Men's and Young Women's Improvement Associations Organized in Norway

The Young Men's Mutual was organized on June 10, 1875, in Salt Lake City,

---

16 Smith, op. cit., 647
17 Norwegian Mission—Christiania Branch, 1853-1939, CHL.
18 Smith, op. cit., 653
19 Norwegian Mission—Christiania Branch, 1853-1939, CHL.
Utah. During the organization of this program Brigham Young announced the purpose of this organization to be,

The establishment in the youth of individual testimony of the truth and magnitude of the great latter-day work: The development of the gifts within them that have been bestowed upon them by the laying on of hands by the servants of God; cultivating a knowledge and an application of the eternal principles of the great science of life.\(^\text{20}\)

The "Unge Mends Gjensidige Uddandelse-forening" as the Young Men's program is called in Norwegian was not organized until January 29, 1879.\(^\text{21}\)

The Young Women's Improvement Association, as it came to be called, was organized under the direction of Brigham Young on November 28, 1869 in Salt Lake City, Utah.\(^\text{22}\) President Young expressed the purpose of this program when he said, "to retrench in dress, in speech, in everything that is bad and worthless, and to improve in everything that is good and beautiful."\(^\text{23}\)

This program for girls was initiated in Norway on January 10, 1881.\(^\text{24}\)

The Mutual (as it was commonly referred to) presidency of the Christiania Branch reported that the Mutual Improvement cause had prospered during the twenty-five years of its existence in that branch. They reported a membership of fifty members. In addition to the regular activities, they published a monthly paper entitled "Knudskap og Lys". During the past season (date 1903), this publication had treated one hundred twenty-eight subjects of a religious

\(^{20}\text{Smith, op. cit., 650}\)

\(^{21}\text{Norwegian Mission-Christiania Branch, 1853-1939, CHL.}\)

\(^{22}\text{Smith, op. cit., 652}\)

\(^{23}\text{Idem.}\)

\(^{24}\text{Norwegian Mission-Christiania Branch, 1853-1939, CHL.}\)
and miscellaneous nature. In addition, it contained music and songs, answers to questions. The Improvement Associations held thirty-five meetings, eleven with the young ladies. They had a library of eighty-two volumes, which had been on loan during the year. The associations supported a full-time missionary from money they raised. They also kept a chronology and history of the Church in that locality, as well as a scrapbook of all articles that appeared in the daily newspapers, magazines, etc., both for and against the Latter-day Saints.25

The Oslo Branch acknowledged the challenge to assist the proselyting movement of the Church. In 1903, the YMIA and YMIA (Young Men's and Young Women's Mutual Improvement Associations) organized themselves to do tract work. In that same year they visited a total of 8,951 homes, distributed 8,728 tracts, sold four-hundred books, and carried on 630 Gospel conversations.26

The Fredericstad Branch reported that they, too, carried on proselyting program through the MIA's as they wrote:

In Fredericstad the M-Men and Gleaners (classes for boys and girls within the MIA organization) have formed a Sports Club which meets semi-monthly, when they play basketball, take gymnastic exercises, and learn fancy dancing. Many of the town's youth have joined the organization, but all must be members of the M-Men and Gleaners Girl's classes, keep the Word of Wisdom and pay their fees before they can become members of the Sports Club.27

Based on the scattered reports it would appear that the MIA program was successful in Norway wherever sufficient young people could be found to

---

25 "Flourishing Norwegian M.I.A.," The Improvement Era, VII, No. 9, (July, 1904), 728.

26 Norwegian Mission-Christiania Branch, 1853-1939, CHL.

27 Norwegian Mission, 1920-1939, CHL.
effect a program. Elders John Perfrass and Kalmer Nilsen reported that a YMMIA was organized north of the Arctic Circle and was doing fine. This group consisted of sixteen members; about one-half were non-members. 28

Summary

The history of the Norwegian Mission indicated rapid growth to begin with, even though there were few missionaries. The phenomenal growth was due, at least in part, to two things: (1) there were many people ready to receive the Gospel when it was presented to them, and (2) those who received the Gospel were energetic in sharing it with their friends, neighbors, and relatives. The early missionary work was begun on the southern seacoast, but by 1900 it encompassed most of the entire country. Branches of the Church were organized as the membership became large enough to warrant such an organization. These branches were directed by the missionaries, being assisted by the local priesthood bearers.

As the auxiliaries gained strength and momentum in Zion, they were instituted in Norway. The MIA seemed to have been quite effective in strengthening young converts as well as having served as a useful tool in doing proselyting work. The other auxiliaries became popular and beneficial to the Saints wherever there were sufficient numbers to merit the organizations.

28 Joseph F. Smith, (ed.), "The Mutual Farthest North", The Improvement Era XI, No. 4, (February, 1908), 312
CHAPTER VI

MIGRATION OF THE SAINTS TO ZION

The Spirit of Gathering Felt in Norway

The roll-books of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have shown through the years a great number of names of Scandinavian descent. What brought this influx of Scandinavian people? Why did a people from the beautiful land of the "Midnight Sun" want to come to a part of America that was barren, hot and dry?

The Mormon concept of religion has, from the beginning, been one of selecting a site upon which to build an Utopian society—commonly referred to as Zion; the place where the pure in heart dwell.\(^1\) America has been recognized, by the Mormons, as the land of Zion; thought to be a "land choice above all other lands."\(^2\) Latter-day Saints believe the prophecy of Isaiah 2:1-3 meant two gathering places: One in America and the other in Jerusalem. They believed that the word of the Lord would proceed from these two centers and the "blood of Israel" would be gathered to them. Jesus spoke of "a hen gathering her chicks as he (Christ) would gather his children from the four corners of the earth." (Matt. 23:37). Mormons have placed a literal interpretation upon the gathering of those "of the house of Israel," or in other words the members of the Church. Closely coupled

---

\(^1\)\textit{Doctrine and Covenants} 97:21

with the fulfillment of this concept of "catching" came the visitation of Moses to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on April 3, 1836, in the Kirtland Temple. Moses committed... the keys of the "catching" of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north. These events were to precede the second coming of the Savior.

According to the Utvandrings-statistikk chart (emigration chart), found on page 56, before 1836, emigration from Norway was insignificant, and that from 1836 forward emigration became an important issue. Historians, such as Theodore Blegen, have analyzed the emigration from Norway as due to the "mineral discoveries in the Rockies, the depression of the 1870's in Europe, wars between kings, and the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad."

According to Mr. Zobell, the subject of emigration had scarcely been mentioned by the Elders until 1852, when Elder Franklin O. Richards wrote President Snow inviting some Scandinavian Saints to join with a party of British Saints bound for America. When the Elders began teaching the "catching concept," the Scandinavian Saints were found to be as eager to cast their lots with the Saints in America as were the Saints in England and other parts of the world. Blegen explained their eagerness to migrate in these words,

It must be recalled in this connection that the great majority of Scandinavian converts were wretchedly poor... they enjoyed poverty and persecution no more than people generally, and that

---

3 Doctrine and Covenants 110:11.

4 Kenneth O. Bjork, West of the Great Divide (Northfield, Minnesota: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1958), 635.

5 Albert Zobell Jr., Under the Midnight Sun, 33.

6 Bjork, op. cit., 96.
Theodore C. Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America*, p. 112.

*The Course of Norwegian Emigration, 1836-1928*

[Graph from *Utgangsbevegelsen*, 1836-1928; courtesy of Dina Nordahl, Oslo]
they desired to live in peace as fully accepted members of a community of fellow believers. The ion of the west was painted for them in bright colors by the missionaries from America, who thus appealed to an already strong urge to migrate...

If it can be agreed that God works in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform, is it not possible that the preaching of the Gospel in Norway came at a time when the people, at least some of them, were prepared to receive it?

If the natural incentives had not been enough to cause the Saints to emigrate, the counsel from the headquarters of the Church would have further encouraged them. The Seventh General Epistle of the Church read:

Let all who can procure a bit of bread, and one garment on their back, be assured there is water plenty and pure by the way, and doubt no longer, but come next year to the place of gathering, even in flocks, as doves fly to their windows before the storm.

New emphasis was given at the October, 1849, Conference to the carrying the Gospel to the continent of Europe. It was part of the Latter-day gathering, which by 1849 already had a history, a philosophy, and a program.

The doctrine of the gathering was the mainspring back of all missionary labors. Many non-Mormons looked upon the proselyting efforts in Europe as a part of the polygamy movement, but it was the "gathering" that was the most influential doctrine.

A Church spokesman observed:

Among the first principles that were revealed to the children of men in the last days was the gathering; the first revelations that were given to the Church were to command them to gather, and send Elders to seek out a place for the gathering of the Saints.

---

7Ibid.

8Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, "Seventh General Epistle," The Improvement Era, XIV, No. 21 (July, 1852), 325.

9Mulder, Homeward to Zion, 17.

10Ibid., 18.

11Journal History, March, 18, 1855, located in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Historian's Library in Salt Lake City, Utah hereafter expressed as CHL.
Some of the Saints in Scandinavia felt the spirit of gathering so keenly that they sold their properties far below their worth and assembled themselves in Copenhagen, hoping for an earlier opportunity to migrate to Zion. These Saints had to be warned not "to prepare in haste, but in wisdom and order."  

Those, in Europe, who thought the missionaries were out looking for wives for the polygamy movement could not have been more wrong. The records show that in "the general emigration from Norway to America that males predominated at a rate of fifty-seven per cent. The male predominancy was even greater in the other Scandinavian countries."  

Organized Migration to Zion Began

The first organized emigration movement from Norway began in 1853 with twenty-three emigrating that year. The organized movement is usually considered to have lasted until 1926, with a total of 3,437 Norwegian converts having emigrated. This same account stated that it was understood from the beginning of the exodus, that only those who were willing to meet certain standards were to emigrate to Zion. Excommunication was the price for failing to meet the standards expected. It was suggested by some that people joined the Church in order to receive assistance in immigrating to America; however, those who did not keep the Laws of the Gospel were not offered assistance.

---

12 Erastus Snow, "Til De Hellige," Skandinavien Stjerne, I No. 9, (June, 1852), 141.

13 Mulder, Homeward to Zion, 109.

14 Ibid., 126.
Norway, of the three Scandinavian countries, seemed to be the least receptive to the Gospel and the emigration movement. It was reported in the Skandinavien Stjerne, for example, that in Bergen in 1887, having a population of 81,000, only four families were converted. In the years Mormonism had been preached, there had only been five or six families emigrate.\(^{15}\)

It was reported in the Millennial Star from 1850 to 1905, that Norway contributed fourteen per cent of all converts and eleven per cent of the emigrants. The Norwegian emigrants were, however, considered to be a highly articulate minority, largely from Christiania (later Oslo), providing an intelligentsia easily distinguished among the Scandinavian converts.\(^{16}\) These Norwegian converts, were in the main, the "respectable farmers and mechanics, with their families, who had embraced this work."\(^{17}\) Among the high quality converts were people like the mother of the late Elder John A. Widtsoe.

Mulder commented that while conversions, after reaching a peak in the 1860's, steadily declined, as did the excommunications, while the rate of emigration among converts rose. The peak of emigration came in the 1880's, reaching a high of sixty-seven per cent, in relationship to the number of converts. Only twenty-six per cent of the converts had emigrated in the 1850's; forty-eight per cent in the 1860's, but those who emigrated during the earlier years were a vanguard which, once established in Zion, sent help

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 106.

\(^{16}\) Daniel Spencer, "A visit to Scandinavia," Millennial Star, XVII, No. 45, (October, 1855), 705.

\(^{17}\) Idem.
to the Old Country. This made it possible for the greater emigration, in
the 1870's and 1880's.\footnote{Mulder, Homeward to Zion, 107.}

Scandinavia yielded 66,497 converts between 1850 and 1905. Of those,
fifty per cent were Danish, slightly less than twenty-six per cent were
Swedish, and almost fourteen per cent were Norwegian.\footnote{Idem.}

Although the actual number of people, who emigrated for the sake of
Mormonism, was not really great, yet it was sufficient to arouse this
comment from Mr. Blegen:

The fact is that many... were powerfully drawn by things
foreign. Distance... invested institutions and practices with
special enchantment for them... was coupled with that of a free
land, the promise of ideal conditions, and passage money to cover
the costs of translation to the New World Zion. These were powerful
inducements, indeed. Economics buttressed religion; and it was not
an unrelated circumstance that the Mormon appeal evoked its greatest
response from the very poor.\footnote{Theodore C. Blegen, Norwegian Migration To America, Northfield:
(Norwegian-American Historical Association 1931), 112.}

In spite of the zealous effort by the Church to weed out those who joined
the Church as a means of emigrating to America, the indictment advanced by
Blegen was not completely groundless. According to Blegen there were some
who lost the faith, or perhaps never had very much to begin with, who, after
reaching New York refused to go any further.\footnote{Idem.}

Kenneth Bjork suggested there were four main methods by which emigrants
could come to Zion: (1) to pay his own way entirely; (2) to come as a ten-
pound emigrant,\footnote{Idem.} thus being partially aided by the fund; (3) to be aided by
funds from Utah, in whole or part (the fund here referred to was the Perpetual

\begin{flushleft}
\footnote{\textit{A} Saint who paid the first ten English pounds of his passage to Zion.}
\end{flushleft}
Emigration Fund\textsuperscript{23} to be chosen by officers of the foreign mission and be aided wholly by the fund in Europe.\textsuperscript{24} Probably the most common way was to receive some type of financial assistance from the Perpetual Emigration Fund. When this fund program was first explained to the Saints in Scandinavia they applauded it and two hundred twenty-five dollars were raised from among those present. "It was further explained that every brother, sister or family might, with diligence and economy, strive to prepare themselves by living an upright life... To make themselves worthy to receive assistance. Those aided by the fund should return to it, the money they had received as soon as they were able to do so."\textsuperscript{25}

It was quite normal for the Saints in Utah to use the machinery of the emigrating fund to send for relatives and friends in Europe. The Saints in Zion would contribute in Salt Lake City for the purpose of assisting their own friends and relatives. An agent abroad would then make the necessary contacts with the relatives in Europe informing them of the money made available for their emigration.\textsuperscript{26}

The fund succeeded in aiding the Saints to emigrate, although from its inception it had a deficit. Gustive Larson, in his book, \textit{Prelude to the Kingdom}, remarked that the Perpetual Emigration Fund was so widely used it, "could not begin to meet the demands placed upon it."\textsuperscript{27} It became, therefore

\textsuperscript{23} A revolving fund established by contribution to assist emigrants.

\textsuperscript{24} Bjork, \textit{op. cit.}, 99.

\textsuperscript{25} Bjork, \textit{op. cit.}, 98.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 99.

\textsuperscript{27} Gustive O. Larson, \textit{Prelude to the Kingdom} (Francetown, New Hampshire: Cooperative Experiment, 1947), 156.
necessary to devise a new plan that would better meet the needs. The leaders called upon the adult emigrant to pay thirteen pounds each and five pounds for those under one year of age. The general idea behind it was that "through judicious purchasing at the outfitting points in the United States," transportation could be provided. There were some 957 who utilized this new plan, but it too failed to be sufficient as the "cost of transportation had been greatly underestimated and a loan was necessary to help this group complete the journey."  

The successful efforts in bringing Scandinavian emigrants to America, encouraged the Mormon Church officials to experiment with various methods and routes of travel in an effort to reduce the great expense involved. In 1856, the Saints were informed that handcarts would be used in crossing the plains to Utah; for the handcarts provided a cheap mode of transportation. This message was gladly received. Emigration continued through 1857, but few emigrated in 1858 due to near open hostilities between the government and the Saints in Utah. 

During 1859 the Saints were strongly urged to put aside funds for the trip to Zion the following year. They responded to this directive favorably as is recognized by the number who subsequently emigrated. In 1860, the route remained the same, but in 1861 the new comers were met at Florence, Nebraska, by teams and wagons sent out from Utah to aid immigrants who lacked funds to cross the plains. Between 4,000 and 5,000 Mormons crossed

---

28 *Idem.*

29 *Idem.*

30 *Bjork, op. cit.,* 114.

the plains in 1861. Similar routes were used until 1866 when the Saints sailed directly from Hamburg, but from New York they traveled by rail via Montreal, where they were loaded into dirty freight and cattle cars for the trip from Canada to Chicago. It was reported that if the details of the journey were written it would probably present one of the most pitiable and heart-rending chapters in the history of the Church. In 1869, the rail road became available for transporting the Saints across the plains and from that time on only those who could pay their complete fare were to emigrate. In 1868, there were eight hundred and twenty emigrants of which sixty were from Norway. In 1869 there were 567, of which forty-four were Norwegians.

In preparing to emigrate each "adult was allowed 135 pounds of freight..., children half as much...," They were reminded to take all the bed clothing they had; a long, low food basket that could be slid under the train seat, hand towels, comb and soap for each person. They also were reminded to be prepared to pay lodgings, and other expenses incurred in Copenhagen, which was the central gathering point.

Those who were emigrating were warned of the risks involved before they signed up. They were told frankly that the risks of sickness and death were great. The risks of death were especially high among children. Very few families ever went through without losing at least one member. The average loss was ten per cent of the number before the journey's end.

32Mulder, Homeward to Zion, 117
33Bjork, op. cit., 20.
34Mulder, Homeward to Zion, 166.
35Idem.
Most tragic were the parties which left in January, 1854. Two hundred out of 678 lost their lives, most of them from cholera.\textsuperscript{36}

The ships the Saints traveled on were dedicated before departure. The captains were impressed by this. The Skipper of the S.S. Idaho, with 703 Saints on board in 1874 reported, "I have conveyed Mormons safely across the Atlantic for eighteen years and have never heard that any ship went under with them on board."\textsuperscript{37}

The crowds of curious on-lookers always appeared at the departures. They were scornful of their countrymen, who were foolish and disloyal enough to leave home as victims of the double delusion of America and Mormonism. They sometimes created scenes like "in 1857 an indignant crowd tried to snatch the children away from one convert couple; 'Let the elders be damned,' they said, but it was too bad the young should face a shameful upbringing in the Mormon kingdom."\textsuperscript{38} Once the Saints were on board the ship they found themselves members of a well-ordered community.\textsuperscript{39}

Hundreds of Saints were able to migrate to Zion through funds made available through the Perpetual Emigration Fund, who, otherwise, would never have made it. One would assume that they would all have been grateful for the aid they had received to the extent that they would have made repayment as rapidly as possible. According to the \textit{Morgenstjernen}, the Saints had to be reminded of their responsibility to repay their Perpetual Emigration loans.

\textsuperscript{36}Ibid., 167.

\textsuperscript{37}Ibid., 168.

\textsuperscript{38}Idem.

\textsuperscript{39}Ibid., 170.
Those who had not repaid were asked this question, "Have you forgotten how eagerly you seized every means which could make your emigration possible?" They were further told that by not repaying their debt they were denying faithful members of the Church, in Scandinavia, the opportunity of emigrating. They were also cautioned that if they forsook this duty of repayment they were on the sure road to apostasy.

There were those in Europe who had been very generous in helping their fellow emigrants. Such was the case with Bent Nielsen, although warned by the missionaries that some might apostize by accepting his money to come to Zion, he sold his farm and used the money to help the Saints. Another, Jens Andersen, who was like Moses of old, inasmuch as he aided more than sixty of his fellow converts to emigrate, never had the opportunity to set foot on the promised land.

Influence of Saints Migrating to Zion on Norway

It was stated earlier in this treatise that Norwegian people heard the Gospel one day, were baptized the second day and the third day they were out teaching their friends, relatives and neighbors. It, then, was a natural consequence that with so many of the converts emigrating that the missionary work did not prosper as rapidly as it would have had the new spirited converts remained in their native land. Kenneth Bjork observed that after 1862 there was a decline in Mormon successes in Norway as well as throughout Scandinavia. He attributed this slow-down to the reduction of converts to

---


41 Idem.

42 Zobell, op. cit., 35-36.
assist in the proselyting activities. A greater reason was due to the letters written by some disappointed emigrants of 1862.\(^3\) Then, too, great opposition continued from the pastors, editors and others.\(^4\)

**Influence of Saints Migrating to Zion on Zion**

During the 1850's and early 1860's the emigrants from Norway and Scandinavia, were a welcomed addition, for they greatly aided in carrying out Zion's dreams. The Scandinavians settled in groups, as they had been for the most part, converted in family units.\(^5\) The Norwegian and Scandinavian immigrants were the "seed corn for Zion," as they supplied it with skills that were sorely needed. They were better fitted for an agrarian type of life, as opposed to urban-minded British emigrants. Such trades as carpenters, cabinetmakers, coopers, wheelwrights, jointers, turners, carriagemakers, weavers, tailors, seamstresses, tinsmiths, machinists, shoemakers, tanners, saddle and harness makers, stonecutters, masons, bricklayers, butchers, brewers, millers, fishermen and seamen were found among these immigrants. The basic skills were all there, or would soon be developed. One visitor to Utah wrote in 1872, "I would never have believed that so much talent could be found among us as a people who are nearly all gathered from among the poor and most downtrodden classes of mankind."\(^6\)


\(^4\) Bjork, *op. cit.*, 107

\(^5\) Mulder, *op. cit.*, 237

It was reported that by 1900, the Scandinavians formed thirty-four per cent of Utah's foreign-born; and Scandinavian descendants that year made up sixteen per cent of the total population. The report continued by stating that Anthon H. Lund, noted Church Historian, of Scandinavian descent, told a big reunion of Scandinavians in Brigham City, in 1902, "We are now 45,000 and are a great power in our State." 47

Although these immigrants aided in the initial setting-up of Zion, they were not so favorably looked upon by the governments of America or Norway; as both took a dim view of convert-emigrants. The Norwegian and other Scandinavian converts were considered by some to be "an embarrassment to Scandinavia, and a trouble to the United States." 48 Government officials like Secretary of State, William Evarts, for example, said he felt uneasy about Utah's "accessions from Europe...drawn mainly from the ignorant classes, who are easily influenced by the double appeal to their passions and their poverty." 49 Journalists and anti-Mormon religious leaders took up the cry against the European converts. The Rev. J. Wesley Hill said the converts were "gathered from the slums of Europe; ... brought from the fetid fields of the Old World... refugees who endeavored, in the name of religions, to undermine our (America's) liberties and destroy our government." 50 Governor Caleb West's anger, in 1889, drove him to exclaim: "It is just as


48 Unknown, "Emigranter," Nordstjarnan, (February 1, 1892), Stockholm: (Nordiskabogtryckeriet, 1923), 47.


50 John W. Hill, Mormonism vs Americanism, (Salt Lake City, 1889), 22.
if a lot of Chinamen or other foreign people should come here and take possession of that territory (Utah), with ideas entirely distinct and diametrically opposed to ours."\textsuperscript{51} though the popular opinion was against the convert-emigrants, one novelist, Ole Rolvaag, called them "giants in the earth."\textsuperscript{52}

**Efforts Made to Discourage Migration to Zion**

In the 1859's and for the next forty years, the Saints were encouraged very strongly to emigrate. In 1891, the *Millennial Star* carried this article of instructions, "respecting the gathering, the Elders should explain the principle (of gathering) when occasion requires; but acting upon it should be left entirely to the individual."\textsuperscript{53} In 1904, the Swedish periodical, *Nordsjarnan*, stated that in most cases the Saints of Europe were emphatically advised against emigrating. The Saints were asked to consider the facts of employment, resources and their ability to succeed in the new land. In 1929, the First Presidency issued this decree, quoted in part:

> In the early days of the settlement of this western country, when there was land and water for irrigation purposes in abundance for all our members who gathered to Zion, it was urged in the missions that all who could come should come and help build up the Church in this land.

> Conditions have changed since then. The land has been practically all taken up wherever there is any water to be had, and the consequence is that people from the different missions come here and must either be able to purchase homes or secure employment until they work and pay for a new home... Naturally our missionaries

\textsuperscript{51}Unknown, *Hearings before the Committee on Territories in Regard to Admission of Utah as a State, 1889* (Washington, D.C. 1889), 128.

\textsuperscript{52}Ibid., 247

\textsuperscript{53}Mulder, *Homeward to Zion*, 89.
tell of the wonderful land of liberty, that we are permitted to occupy... But we advise you to counsel missionaries that the people who have fairly good positions, in their homeland, remain where they are and help to build up the Church in the localities where they live.54

From that time the counsel has been for the converts to remain in their native lands and to live as examples, and to build up congregations in the missions. Their services, tithing, and influence has been of great worth to the proselyting efforts of their friends and loved ones.

Summary

The years of heavy emigration were fruitful ones for Zion, but they took a heavy toll on the success of the missions. The converts felt the "spirit of Moses" moving them to emigrate and live among the Saints in Zion. Most of the Saints were in need of financial assistance, which was given them through the Perpetual Emigration Fund. Most of the Scandinavian converts and emigrants came from Denmark and Sweden, as Norway was not as receptive to the Gospel and the movement to Zion. The Church did what it could to encourage all Saints to gather to Zion during the first forty years of proselyting work in Europe; but after 1890 the Saints were encouraged to remain in their home-lands to build up congregations.

54 Norwegian Mission History, 1920-1939, December 31, 1929, CHL.
CHAPTER VII

NORWAY AS A MISSION FIELD

Some historians and writers have pointed out that Norway from the beginning had been a very difficult field of labor for missionaries. The difficulties were many, but two of the most limiting were: (1) religious intolerance by the Norwegians and (2) the long distances between cities. Norway is 1,000 miles in length and contains an area approximately the same size as the state of California. Both of these situations created great obstacles to early missionary activities, and, no doubt, had some limiting influence upon the number of converts made.¹

Missionaries in Norway and Their Activities

The records indicate that the first missionaries called to labor in Norway were from Denmark; Hans F. Petersen and John A. Ahmanson being the first. According to the records left by Andrew Jenson, these two Elders did a great deal toward opening Norway up to missionary work but they were somewhat handicapped by being Danes. This created a language and social barrier between them and the Norwegians. In 1853, Elders Canute Peterson and Eric G.M. Hogan arrived in Norway. They were the first missionaries from Utah to labor in Norway. They were natives of Norway, having emigrated years before and had now returned as missionaries. Their arrival gave a

¹Zobell, op. cit., 165.
new impetus to the proselyting efforts in Norway. From that time the
Norwegian Mission became more successful inasmuch as the Elders renewed
their diligence; new fields of labor were opened; many meetings were held
and quite a few converts were baptized. 2

The converts began coming into the Church, but as they became members
many of them immigrated to America. The immigrants helped create a
situation that was mostly beneficial, but sometimes worked against the
missionary cause. As the immigrants reached Utah they naturally wrote
back to Norway, informing the people there of conditions in Utah. Brigham
Young, in writing to Franklin D. Richards, who was presiding over the mission
in England, recognized the migration of the Saints as a helpful tool to the
missionary cause. He wrote, "I am happy to learn of your forwarding so
many Saints to America... I believe it helps the cause... in obtaining
hearers and believers." 3

Some of the letters written by the immigrants were filled with
descriptions of how beautiful and wonderful it was in Zion. Such expre-
sions as "children are no burden in Zion"; "We have the deeds to our
property"; "There is freedom here"; "The land cries out to be used"; "The
best place for the Saints I have ever seen... but the greatest joy for

2 Albert Zobell, Jr., op. cit., 55.

3 William Mulder, Image of Zion: Mormonism as an American Influence
in Scandinavia (hereafter referred to as Image of Zion), (Reprinted from
the Mississippi Valley Historical Review), June 1959, XLIII, No. 1, 19.
me is that I can see and hear the prophets and apostles Sunday after Sunday who teach us Christ's pure Gospel," were often included, and when received spread through the villages like fire.  

Closely coupled with this favorable propaganda was, however, an abundance of anti-Mormon propaganda originating primarily from the pens of religious intolerants. Often the anti-Mormon materials came in forms of concocted histories, explications, exposes; even handbooks were written in such a way as to make the immigrants appear as foolish and sad for having left their native land and religion. The missionaries found themselves in the midst of a people who knew not in which source to place their confidence.

President Widerborg, President of the Norwegian Mission, in writing to Brigham Young Jr., reported that the Elders from the Valley (Utah) laboring in Norway had created considerable interest among their friends and acquaintances concerning things and matters in Utah. While President Widenborg admitted that some of the strangers only wished to satisfy their curiosity, still many who were honest were led to investigate and accept the truth of the Gospel. Mulder concluded that "next to the return of the emigrants as missionaries, of which there were 1,300 by 1900, the emigrant letters proved to be Mormonism's most persuasive witness."
These early emigrant-missionaries became widely known by their passports from Washington and their talk about America. These elders were often accused of being white slavers, polygamists fleeing federal marshals, or speculators and railroad agents, seeking emigrants for profit. President Widerbarg's observation to Brigham Young, concerning the emigrant-missionaries, was that the Scandinavian brethren were respected among the people and were wielding a good influence. This situation caused their former friends and acquaintances to listen to their testimonies.

The early Elders were helped financially on their missions from portions of the tithing allotted to them. In 1860, Brigham Young informed the missionaries that they were to sustain themselves. This information was sent to the various Mission Presidents and in addition was published in the December issue of the Skandinavens Stjerne. Branches and conferences also had to sustain themselves from money raised by free-will offerings of the Saints. Albert Zobell suggested that this was a testing process on the missionaries and Saints. It was reported the way was opened, however, so that the Elders seldom suffered for want of the necessities of life, as the spirit of the Holy Ghost prevailed upon the Saints that they responded in helping to support the missionaries.

The Elders continued to find their labors in Norway difficult for many years. Those who were converted often found clever ways to assist the missionaries. Mr. Zobell reported the conversion of Anna Widtsoe as

8 Norwegian Mission History, July 2, 1949, CHL.

9 Andrew Jenson, History of the Scandinavian Mission, 189.

10 Zobell, op. cit., 80.
having come about when she took a pair of shoes, belonging to one of her children, to the shoemaker. When the shoes were returned she found a tract inside one of them. When she went back to investigate, the shoemaker told her he had something to give her that was worth more than the soles for her child's shoes. This incident led to her eventual conversion.¹¹

Often the Elders were denied the privilege of entering into certain areas to preach. Franklin D. Richards told of one way that they overcame this problem:

Our only safe and certain mode...had been for some Elder, a mechanic, to obtain employment in the place where it was designed to introduce the Gospel, and thus while employed at his work, disseminate the revealed truth among the hands until, without let or hindrance from the enemy, a branch was organized.¹²

The proselyting work continued throughout Norway so that by 1885 there was scarcely a house in which a Mormon tract had not been distributed.¹³

The number of baptisms during the first fifty years reveal the success of these early missionaries. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Elders from Zion were still coming in increasing numbers, but the conditions under which they labored had changed substantially. Although most of the young Elders who labored in Norway at the beginning of the twentieth century were born of Scandinavian parents in America, most of them were unable to speak the Norwegian language. This created a great problem and a slow-down in actual proselyting activities since the first year or so their missionary activities were spent primarily in studying the language. Mr. Jenson

¹¹Ibid., 107-108.

¹²Jenson, History of the Scandinavian Mission, 197.

¹³Mulder, Image of Zion, 19.
reported that after finally becoming somewhat prepared in the language, the young missionaries were not ready to commence missionary work in earnest. He further commented:

...they were still unacquainted with the customs and habits of the people, and were in many instances unable to approach them (the Norwegians) in the effectual way that their sires had done; in several cases they even failed to understand or appreciate the characteristics of the people among whom they were laboring.\textsuperscript{11}

Mr. Jenson continued by stating that the natives, on the other hand, were at a loss on many occasions to understand the young men with their American training and methods of procedure. Jenson concluded that the consequences of all this was that "the progress of the work was not what it had been in earlier days; nor were the number of people baptized up to the record made, for instance, during the sixties."\textsuperscript{15} It would appear that by 1900 most of the people of Norway had been contacted by the missionaries thus having had an opportunity to at least hear of Mormonism. In addition to this, the desire to emigrate to Utah had slowed down considerably because the resources in Utah were being used to near capacity.

Slow progress was often made because of the shortage of missionaries. During World War I and World War II the missionary force dwindled greatly. The Improvement Era carried this article indicating the problem the Church faced at the close of World War I in getting missionaries back into Norway:

The big problem now confronting us is getting missionaries into the country (of Norway). It has been and now is almost an impossibility

\textsuperscript{11} Jenson, History of the Scandinavian Mission, 384.

\textsuperscript{15} Idem.
for a missionary of the "Mormon" Church to get into Norway. Consequently, our list is not large.  

When the number of missionaries had been greater the Elders had presided over the conferences and branches, but during times when the missionaries were few, it became necessary to close some of the branches because of the lack of priesthood holders. In addition to missionaries presiding over the conferences and branches, some were called to act as second counselors to the mission presidents. This was done in compliance with the instructions received from the First Presidency of the Church in 1948. Often the Elders from Zion were aided by local missionaries who were called to labor in their spare time.

The Norwegian Saints looked to the Elders for strength and example. The missionaries, therefore, were expected to live the commandments or they were sent home. Here, in part, is the directive as it was given to the Elders: "...any missionary who does not keep the Word of Wisdom would be sent home, and likewise that no one could hold office in the Church who were users of liquor, tea and coffee." Several accounts of healings by the administration of the Elders, along with other spiritual experiences, were reported, indicting the faith and obedience of those missionaries.

Methods Employed by Missionaries in Proselyting

Due to the limitation of not being recognized as Christians, the first missionary efforts were involved in contacting people in their homes. With


18. Norwegian Mission—Christiania, (Oslo), 1853—1939, CHL.
the publication of tracts and other literature the missionaries traveled from house to house talking to the people, giving them literature and inviting them to attend whenever meetings could be arranged.

Most of the meetings were held in the homes of the Saints. The Stavanger Branch, one of the first branches organized, reported:

Meetings were held at the homes of the Saints, whenever conditions permitted. Here, as elsewhere in the world, the members had...suffered hardships and persecutions that were the Saints portion to endure. When a meeting was held...the songs were read instead of sung, for fear that the windows would be knocked in if it was noised abroad that the "Mormons" were holding a meeting.¹⁹

President Martin Christopherson, President of the Norwegian Mission, after a visit to the various conferences of the mission, reported that the meetings were well attended, both by Saints and friends.²⁰ Elder John Halversen, clerk of the Christiania (Oslo) Conference, wrote that all the Sunday School superintendents reported their schools were flourishing. Many non-members sent their children to Sunday School, "and in instances the percentage of Saints and strangers (attending Sunday School) were nearly equal."²¹

Much of the country of Norway is mountainous and miles of farm land lies inland away from the cities. During the months of July, August, and September, until the rainy and disagreeable weather sets in, the Elders did much country tracting. One report said, "they did much tracting, holding meetings where permission could be obtained and distributed literature."²²

¹⁹Norwegian Mission History, 1920-1939, October 7, 1934, CHL.
²⁰"Prospects Good in Norway," The Improvement Era, XXIX, No. 9, (July, 1926), 879.
²²Norwegian Mission History, 1920-1939, June 4, 1934, CHL.
The missionaries were few and the number of people in the cities so great that a plan was designed whereby open-air meetings (street meetings) could be held. This gave the Elders an opportunity to address greater numbers of people at one time. The first of such meetings was held in Trondheim. Here is a part of the account, as reported by Elder Golden D. Carlston,

"We received permission from the police of the city of Trondheim to hold meetings on the market place, and the first open-air meeting was thus held this day by Elders Carlston and Arthur J. Larsen, who spoke to about 200 people who had gathered." 

Elder Carlston continued his report by stating that there were no defaceable remarks made and that the people listened attentively to their testimonies. He concluded his report with this interesting statement:

...no announcement had been made of the meeting, and the people walking about did not notice us before we began to put the chair parts together; one of us had carried the seat and the other the legs under our coats. When the "stand" was finished, we began to sing, and a few people stopped to see what we were doing. The spirit of the Lord was truly with us, and as we continued to sing, about 200 intelligent and interesting people gathered around.

As time passed street meetings were held in many more cities. Even in this effort the Elders were interrupted often by Lutheran priests. At other times they were denied the opportunity of holding such meetings "because of interference and complaints made to the police by the Lutheran priests." 

Another proselyting opportunity afforded itself when investigators were invited to attend baptismal services. The Elders laboring in the

---


24 Ibid.

25 Norwegian Mission History, 1920-1939, April 31, 1933, CHL.
Bergen Branch reported that they had decided to hold a baptismal service, and they sent invitations to those whom they knew might want to be baptized. The baptismal was to be held in the open sea. The following day "a large congregation gathered at the evening services, among which (sic) were several strangers." 26

In 1952, two Elders were sent to England to learn how the Gospel was being presented in the British Mission. No detail is given, but a new plan with organized lessons was introduced. This new plan introduced to Norway new methods of tracting, holding cottage meetings and group teaching. 27

**Members in Norway**

Andrew Jenson, as he looked back over the history of the Norwegian Mission, observed,

In those days (when the gospel was first introduced in Norway) "Mormonism" was considered to be a disgraceful confession. Often the family providers lost their jobs as it was noised abroad that they had embraced the Gospel; it generally harpened because of the clergy abusing their influence among the employers, and when this happened in the winter time, the poor were often brought to great privations and sufferings. Nevertheless, new members were all the time added to the congregation,... 28

The Norwegian people seemed to be a people of strong will. Once convinced of truth they were valiant in its support. This strong will is manifested in this event of a sister being baptized in the icy March waters:

A public meeting was held at 4:30 in Alesund. That evening a baptism was performed by Elder Imanuel S. Eksund. The baptismal

---


candidate was Sister Nikoline H. Steffersen. The baptism was performed at 9p.m. and took place in an inlet of the fjord. The mountains surrounding the fjord were covered with deep snow and a thin layer of ice covered several of the small ponds. The spirit of the Lord was truly enjoyed and the waters seemed warm to the candidate as well as to the Elder performing the ordinance.\textsuperscript{29}

Another example of the steadfastness of the Norwegian people is evidenced by a group who called themselves "Champions of the Word of Wisdom."

According to the report this group was organized with twenty-five members in 1925, consisting mainly of children. At the time of the writing of this report there were over forty-two members. These champions met once a month. The report continued by stating that only those who observed this health regulation were admitted to the organization. They were admonished not to use tea, coffee, tobacco or liquor. The report concluded with these interesting words:

"The little union is like a leaven that works among all who come in contact with it. When the children say to father or mother that it is wrong to break the Word of Wisdom, and when the teachings concerning this revelation are given in public meetings, it has a wonderful influence upon many who learn of its value.\textsuperscript{30}"

President Ray Engelbretsen, another president of the Norwegian Mission, reported that drinking in Norway is a very serious problem. Speaking about the alcoholic problem, he said: "Drinking alcoholic beverages is a tremendous problem and seems to be general throughout the entire country among workmen on the job. They have their bottles along side their tools and materials.\textsuperscript{31}"

Elder Christian D. Fjeldstad, once a member of the First Council of Seventy of the General Authorities, in writing of the conditions through

\textsuperscript{29}Norwegian Mission History, 1949-1961, March 28, 1954, CHL.

\textsuperscript{30}Heber J. Grant, (ed.), "Champions of the Word of Wisdom", The Improvement Era, XXIX, No. 2 (December, 1925), 179-180.

\textsuperscript{31}Quarterly Report for the Norwegian Mission, December 31, 1957, CHL.
which the young ladies in Norway have to pass in order to join the Church, made this observation:

In many cases they are sent from their homes, and are not recognized as members of the family. Their friends turn their backs on them and often they lose their positions, and find it hard to secure employment. But they are willing to pass through all these trials, rather than deny the testimony of the gospel.32

Another problem readily observable in Norway, among the young people, is that of having no other Latter-day Saint boys or girls to date and eventually marry. For this reason many young people who receive testimonies of the Gospel are willing to give up everything and come to Utah in order that they might have the opportunity of associating with other Latter-day Saints. They want to be able to raise their families where religious freedom exists and the eternal covenant of marriage, practiced by Mormons, can be their opportunity.

President Engelbretsen, who had served both as a missionary and president of the mission, further reported on other difficulties faced by the missionaries in proselyting and by the Norwegians in accepting the Gospel when he said:

Success in proselyting has been equal to that of last year which was one of the highest years on record in the Norwegian Mission. This is due to the efforts of the missionaries in utilizing all their time continually to present the Gospel to as many people as possible every day. It must be remembered, however, that every convert has to be worked for under most adverse conditions before they finally can see the truth and accept it. Priestcraft, tradition and other factors still have tremendous effect on the people. Socialism, which has given a so-called security to all inhabitants of this country has taken the incentive from people to think or do for themselves. The Priest, in many cases, when they receive requests from prospective converts to us to be written out of the State Church try to intimidate the people by saying that they should be careful in leaving the State Church, since the State Church is a part of

the State from which they get all their wonderful supports
and their leaving the State Church might some day have an influence
on the support they get. This, of course, is not legally true, but
nevertheless, many innocent people are reluctant in taking that big
step into membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day
Saints.33

Summary

The Norwegian Mission has long been recognized as being a difficult
mission in which to do proselyting work. Religious intolerance and the
long distances between cities help to complicate missionary activities
there. The records indicate that upon the arrival of Canute Peterson
and Eric Hogan, the Norwegian Mission became a decided success. This was
due, in part, to the fact that these two Elders were originally natives of
Norway.

Two big factors played important roles in the early success in the
Norwegian Mission: First, the immigrants returning as missionaries and
second, strong testimonies were sent back to Norway by faithful Norwegian
Saints who had emigrated to Zion. Around the turn of the century the
second generation missionaries, sons of the original emigrants, began
coming to Norway. Most of these young Elders were unable to speak the
Norwegian language. In addition, they were not acquainted with the Nor-
wegian ways and customs. Because of these factors they were less effective
as missionaries than their fathers.

The methods used by the Elders in doing missionary work were limited
because of the religious intolerance in Norway. The basic approach had
to be a door to door appeal, distributing literature and an invitation to
attend a meeting whenever one could be arranged. The auxiliaries played

33Quarterly Report for the Norwegian Mission, Dec. 31, 1957, CHL.
an important role in fellowshipping candidates before they were baptized. Every opportunity to have investigators attend meetings, baptismals, and cottage meetings was taken advantage of, and clever approaches had to be resorted to in taking the Gospel to places where the missionaries were denied the opportunity of preaching.

The Norwegian people had demonstrated great perseverance in overcoming the many obstacles that had confronted them in receiving and living the Gospel. One who has never lived under circumstances where even one's own family and friends reject him because he joined the Church, can never appreciate the travail of those who have to endure this. It was the experience of this writer as a missionary in Norway to call on people and introduce them to the Gospel and later see those same people ostracized by the neighbors for allowing the Mormon Elders to enter their homes.
CHAPTER VIII

THE WAR YEARS AND THEIR EFFECT ON THE NORWEGIAN MISSION

The Utah War of 1858

The missionaries had been in Scandinavia only eight years when trouble broke out in Utah. An attack by Johnston's army was imminent. One of the grievances which occasioned the threatening war in Utah was the Mormon practice of polygamy. Some historians have reported that President Buchanan acted too hastily in sending troops to Utah, basing his plans on faulty reports. They refer to this unwise move of President Buchanan as "Buchanan's Blunder."

Foolish or not the Utah situation had immediate effect upon the activities of the Church and especially upon the proselyting labors of the Church. All the Saints in the outlying communities and the Elders in the mission fields were called home. The call home was to make preparations "to come to the defense of their loved ones in the Rocky Mountains." With the elders home little progress was made in the mission fields. Emigration also came pretty much to a stand-still. As history is considered today, it was a sad thing that communications were so slow then because the calling home of the Saints and Elders could have been averted had the leaders of the Church been able to keep those outside of Utah alerted to actual happenings in Utah.

1Zobell, Under the Midnight Sun, 154.
2Ibid., 71
World War I

The Elders from Zion did not return to Norway until 1860.³

The missionary work began anew and soon had regained some of its strength. The next fifty years witnessed Norway's greatest number of baptisms per missionary. In 1914, however, the work was again hampered by the threat of World War I and hostility among the nations. The Elders were again either called home or sent to safer fields of labor. The effect in Norway, in terms of missionaries, may best be realized by noting that during the decade, from 1904 to 1914, preceding the outbreak of World War I, there had been a reported total of 570 Elders from Zion laboring in Norway.

During the war-years (1915-1924) the missionary force dwindled to sixty-one.⁴

During the same period of time the number of baptisms dropped from 1,454 to 551.⁵

President A. Richard Petersen, President of the Norwegian Mission, after having visited the city of Narvik, reported the serious effect the lack of missionaries had on the Saints. He said,

I found a pretty little town with six thousand inhabitants hidden among the mountains... To my great joy I found there ten baptized and faithful members of the Church. They had almost lost patience because they had been so long without missionaries.

The difficulty which the missionaries faced in regaining entrance into Norway, after having been withdrawn because of the war, became a very serious

³Jenson, History of the Scandinavian Mission, 536.

⁴Idem.

⁵Idem.

⁶A. Richard Petersen, "Missionærer Udsendte Fra Zion Til Scandinavien," Morgenstjernen, II, (September, 1883), 310.
problem for the Church. The Quarterly Historical Report for Norway explained the following: "The war made it very hard for our missionaries to enter Norway and the local police were very much opposed to having Elders in the cities." Gradually, however, conditions once again improved until the missionaries were freely allowed entrance. The number of baptisms increased and emigration was resumed.

World War II and Its Effect on The Norwegian Mission

The Improvement Era reported that the First Presidency of the Church was well ahead of the outbreak of actual conflict in the countries of Europe. The high Church leaders had ordered an immediate evacuation of the missionaries from Germany, France, and England. The article continued by stating that the mission presidents in the areas of disturbance were issued instructions for them to perfect plans for the removal of all missionaries at a moment's notice. It was also reported that the Church maintained a close connection with the situations well in advance of hostilities by daily telephone conversations between President J. Reuben Clark Jr., and the Department of State in Washington D.C. President Joseph Fielding Smith made a tour of the European Mission during which time he released those missionaries who had served twenty or more months of their missions and transferred the rest to safer fields of labor in the United States. These transfers affected some 700 missionaries according to the report in Lys over Norge.

7Quarterly Historical Report for the Norwegian Mission, June 1925, CHL.

8Heber J. Grant, (ed.), "Church Completes Reassignment of European Missionaries," The Improvement Era, XLII, (December, 1939), 735.

9Thomas E. McKay (Translated and edited by Olaf Sonsteby and Einar A. Strang), "Vare Misjonaener in Europe," Lys over Norge, June 1941, 100.
President Peterson had been released, and President John A. Israelsen had taken over the Mission on October 4, 1939. The evacuation of the missionaries was nearing completion when President Israelsen began his administration. President Israelsen reported that upon his entering the mission he was informed that most of the missionaries had already left for America, or other assignments. He and his wife had not been there three months, when they were called back to America. Before the presidents of the different missions left for America they placed local men and women in the leadership responsibilities of the missions "that the work might continue on as good as possible." On June 30, 1940, the Church announced that the missions of the Church were placed under the leadership of President Joseph Fielding Smith. President A. Richard Peterson, previous President of the Norwegian Mission before President Israelsen, who then lived in America, was recalled to Norway to continue on as the President of the Norwegian Mission, under the direction of President Joseph Fielding Smith. In February, 1941, President Thomas E. McKay was appointed to take charge of the European Mission, and "all questions and problems for consultation and recommendation" were to be referred to him. A little later a third statement was issued by the Church which placed the local brethren in Norway, in the executive positions, under the direct supervision of President Thomas E. McKay.

---

10 Norwegian Mission History, 1920-1939, December 1, 1941, CHL.

11 McKay, op. cit., 100.

12 Quarterly Historical Report for the Norwegian Mission, June 30, 1941, CHL.

13 Idem.
War Conditions in the Norwegian Mission

Olaf Sonsteby, acting local President of the Norwegian Mission, reported that on April 9, 1940, Norway was attacked by the German war-machine. The invasion went into several of the larger cities in the southern half of Norway. His report continued by stating that the Norwegians had made all possible resistance; several civilians were killed; and that the German war troops were continuing to take Norway. He concluded by stating:

Fortunately, none of our Church members were killed by war operations or by bombing and none of our meeting houses were destroyed by same. But several difficulties came along as to contact with branches. Many of the Saints have been evacuated from their homes and their addresses were unknown.\(^\text{14}\)

Later in the year of 1940, the city of Narvik reported that "the Saints have lost most of their belongings owing to war operations there, and they were scattered,"\(^\text{15}\) On June 30, 1941, the Alesund Branch reported that "the German troops coming into our city have occupied the hall we used for meetings. But we have held Relief Society meetings and Sacrament meetings in private homes."\(^\text{16}\) The Stavanger Branch, as well as a few others, reported similar losses of their buildings of worship, due to German occupation.\(^\text{17}\) However, in most cases the Saints continued to hold their meetings in the homes of the Saints.

In order that the reader might better appreciate some of the conditions in the Norwegian Mission during World War II this one instance is cited:

\(^{14}\)\text{Idem.}

\(^{15}\)\text{Ibid., December 31, 1940, CHL.}

\(^{16}\)\text{Ibid., June 30, 1941, CHL.}

\(^{17}\)\text{Ibid., March 31, 1942, CHL.}
Another terrible happening visited Bergen at Conference week. Allied planes came to bomb submarine nests and during this action many civilians were killed. A school house were (sic) also hit and about eighty children killed and several others, that total going far up to two hundred. The Saints, and the rest of the people were very strained. Only a few weeks after, in the same month, did the city feel attack in the middle of the night. It lasted (sic) for one hour, bombs falling by not many meters from our Church building; killing about forty (sic) people. Our building were (sic) very damaged, but not the hall. Next morning were (sic) Sunday and the Saints came to Church, stricken and scared, blind bombs laying around the house. A meeting was held and the Saints felt better. One-fourth of Bergen is now in ruins.18

President Sonsteby, after having toured the branches, report that it was his impression "that the Saints were trying to do as well as possible to keep together. . ."19 The Oslo Branch, for example, held their annual Christmas Tree party. They reported that,

There were glimmering lights and happy children's faces which marked the whole arrangement. In spite of strict rationings, both the children and adults were treated to chocolate and cake.20

President Sonsteby in 1942 reported that traveling conditions were becoming more difficult. This reduced his opportunity to hold the branches together. He also indicated that since the Elders from Zion had left, no new members had been added but that the Saints were happy to be able to worship together each Sunday.21 There were some missionary activities performed by the Saints during the war. Elder Hakon Jensen of the Bergen Branch reported that he and his wife, while doing proselyting work, had narrowly escaped death when the ship they were sailing on was bombed out from under them. They testified that there lives were miraculously spared.22

---

18Ibid., December 31, 1944, CHL.
19Norwegian Mission, 1920-1939, June 17, 1940, CHL.
20Norwegian Mission, 1920-1939, CHL
21Ibid., May 1, 1942, CHL.
22Quarterly Historical Report for the Norwegian Mission, September 30, 1943, CHL.
Very little correspondence between the local leaders in Norway and those in Salt Lake City was possible during the war. This placed the Norwegian brethren on their own. The Norwegian leaders considered their callings as opportunities which the Lord had been preparing them for. The first letter received by the Church leaders in Salt Lake City summed up the conditions in Norway in these words:

The condition here in our mission is good, taking the circumstances in consideration. We are living under the yoke of war, and that does interfere with our work to some extent. Thus it has been difficult to travel and visit the Saints. ... Up to this day (September 4, 1944) we have been saved from destruction. ... and the Church property is still in our hands except for a few buildings. ... The activity in the priesthood has been very good lately, especially in the larger branches, and many good brothers are willing to do their best in performing their duties. All our organizations are active and holding their meetings regularly. ... The offerings are coming in better than ever, thus the economical condition of the Norwegian Mission is very good. ... When I look back on the four years which are gone since we were left alone, I feel to say that in spite of the difficulties which often have been hard, there has always been a way out of it, and I must thank my Father in Heaven for his help and guidance. ... I don't think the Norwegian Mission ever has been in such a condition before as we have had for the last three years, without connection with Zion. This has been difficult in many ways. ... but we have many good and loyal brothers and sisters who each in their own place are doing their best, and I don't think the Saints have agreed as well before as they have done these last years.23

World War II Ended and Help Sent From Utah

On March 18, 1946, acting president, Olaf Sonsteby, was released. On September 1, 1946, President A. Richard Petersen received another call to return to Norway. He and his wife were sent on a special mission to investigate the needs of the Saints and to find out how much food and clothing was necessary. Due to complications in being admitted into Norway, they did not reach Oslo until February 6, 1947. They immediately discovered

that food and clothing was sorely needed. This they quickly reported to
the First Presidency of the Church. These and other supplies were forwarded
without delay from Salt Lake to Norway. Enough food and clothing for 15,000
people was sent. This was more than enough to meet the needs of the Saints,
so the remaining goods were given to non-members. It was reported that the
Church received very little credit from the Norwegian Government for this
Christian-like deed.

President and Sister Petersen were told when they entered Norway that
they would be admitted for one year only. During the time they had been
in Norway making their investigation, they had heard nothing further about
being allowed to remain. After three months they received word that their
"sojourn was denied."\textsuperscript{24} By this time they had completed their investigation.
They were, however, allowed to remain longer than the three months.

Summary

War, whenever it has come, has been a retarding factor on missionary
activities. When the Elders were called home, due to the pending Utah War,
the number of baptisms and immigrants was greatly reduced. During the
period from 1914 to 1924 the number of missionaries was again seriously
reduced. During the periods when there were few missionaries the branches
suffered, since the Elders from Zion had officiated in them prior to their
departure.

The First Presidency of the Church always maintained a close vigilance
upon the war situations and had been able to place the missionaries of the
Church in areas where they could be safe in the performance of their callings.

\textsuperscript{24}Norwegian Mission, 1920-1939, September 1, 1946, CHL.
When the country of Norway was invaded all the Elders were evacuated successfully and local personnel called to take over the leadership of the mission. It was under this condition that Olaf Sonsteby was appointed acting President of the Norwegian Mission. He carried this assignment for six years. President Sonsteby acted under the leadership of Elder Thomas E. McKay whenever channels of communications could be opened.

When the Germans came into Norway the Norwegians fought with every means at their command. Even though the Norwegian effort for independence was most determined, they were so far out-numbered and the Germans so much better equipped for war that the Norwegian cause was hopeless. The Norwegians suffered greatly under German occupation. It was reported to this writer by some Norwegians that food became so scarce that city-dwellers traded their fine linen, china, silver-ware or any valuable property they had for food. Flour became so scarce that small amounts of finely ground saw-dust was added to stretch the flour supplies. In some instances the Norwegians were beaten and killed for being caught on the streets after dark without a pass. Others were placed in concentration camps for attempting to smuggle food and clothing to the families that had small children in them. Several of our Church buildings were taken over and used by the Germans. After the war these places of worship had to be renovated and re-dedicated.

The war years for the Norwegians were terrible, yet they were filled with faith-promoting experiences. The Saints in Norway learned that they could take over and lead the mission if required to do so. They also learned to work harmoniously together in living the Gospel of Jesus Christ even during the most trying circumstances. They will remember the celebrations that came with the ending of the war; but their suffering for the necessities of life were not over until supplies were sent to them from the Saints in Utah. The horror and unhappiness of the war years will never be erased entirely from the memories of the people in Norway.
CHAPTER IX

THE NORWEGIAN MISSION SINCE WORLD WAR II

Re-opening of the Norwegian Mission

According to the mission history, the conditions that had existed in Norway during and following World War II subjected the Saints, along with the other Norwegians through many unpleasant experiences. They had been looking forward to the day when the Elders from Zion would be among them again. The closing of 1946 found many changes in the Norwegian Mission as compared with 1945. Among the changes was that the mission had once again been placed in the charge of a leader from Zion. Missionaries, also, were beginning to return. By the close of 1946 there were twenty-four missionaries laboring in Norway. Their first labors consisted mainly of re-establishing and relieving the temporal needs of the Saints. The mission report stated that the missionaries that had arrived were enthusiastic and had a strong desire to make the Norwegian Mission the best mission in Europe. It was also reported that the Saints felt the hand of the Lord and His generosity toward them in a temporal way since living conditions had been much improved over the past year.¹

The re-opening of the mission was not an easy accomplishment. The Church, as it did following each war, had difficulty in getting missionaries back into Norway. The Drammen daily news Fremtiden as reported by Lys over

¹ Quarterly Historical Report for the Norwegian Mission, (In Church Historian's Library, hereafter referred to as CHL), December 31, 1946.
Norwegian stated that,

American Mormons have sought permission to enter Norway. The bishops of the Norwegian State Church have dissuaded to give the permission and the department has joined the bishops. The case is under consideration in the central pass bureau. 2

The entire Church and especially the Saints in Norway waited anxiously for the next three months for a decision to be made as to whether or not Mormon missionaries would be re-admitted into Norway and if those twenty-four missionaries already there would be allowed to remain. When President Petersen and Elder Vogeler went to the Central Pass Office, they were frankly told the "government does not want Mormons in Norway and we're making an attempt to keep both the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses out." 3 President Petersen was further informed that "all other religions were admitted, but that Mormons were not considered as being a Christian denomination and that the government did not want a heathen sect preaching to a Christian nation." 4 When the final decision was made, however, it was in favor of the Church. The situation of not wanting Mormons in Norway was cleared up and the doors were thrown open for missionaries to remain and new ones to enter. 5

Elder Ezra Taft Benson made President of the European Mission

Following the re-establishment of the missions in Europe, Elder Benson, of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, was appointed President of the European Mission. On March 31, 1946, Elder Benson visited Norway. His assignment was to go over the temporal needs of the Saints. It was reported in 1946

---

2 Norwegian Mission, 1920-1939, September, 1946, CHL.

3 Ibid., September 30, 1946, CHL.

4 Idem.

5 Idem.
the Saints in Norway "had received 3,384 eleven-pound packages" sent under the auspices of the Church Welfare Program in Utah. All had been distributed and had proven to be of tremendous worth in aiding the saints and others, who were in dire need of food and clothing. In addition, it was reported that two carloads of food and clothing were being shipped to the mission and would arrive the first part of April, 1946.

After the welfare supplies were sent to the Saints in Norway, the Norwegian Saints desired to express to the leaders of the Church their sincere appreciation for what they had received. They sent a silver plaque to the First Presidency of the Church "as an expression of gratitude from the Saints for all the welfare supplies they received after the war." Some time later the First Presidency responded in recognition of receipt of the plaque with these comments:

The beautiful, enameled silver plaque, sent us as a gift from you, was received a few days ago. For this evidence of your affection we thank you heartily and sincerely. The plaque is a work of art, reflecting the Scandinavian love of beauty, ... It is of double value to us because we are told that small contributions of silver ornaments and cherished keepsakes from the Saints everywhere in Norway were used to make the plaque. Your gift is but another expression of the devoted faith of the men and women of Norway who have kept for nearly a century and now keep the Gospel torch lighted in the land of the midnight sun."

Fiders from Zion in Norway Again

After the temporal needs of the Saints were taken care of, the missionaries revived proselyting activities. Elder Benson, during his visit to Norway, had emphasized that the responsibility of the Latter-day Saints to teach the Gospel "would play a grand role in the history of the future." 

---

6 Quarterly Historical Report for the Norwegian Mission, March 31, 1964 CHL.

7 Ibid., February 7, 1947, CHL.

8 Norwegian Mission, 1920-1939, CHL.
As the missionaries rededicated their efforts "to bring the Gospel to as many people as possible," their labors began bearing fruit.

The usual procedure of the Norwegian Mission was to assign the new elders from Zion with companions that had been in Norway long enough to have command of the language. The experienced companions were to teach the language and customs to the new missionaries. In 1952, a new orientation program was initiated for the purpose of giving the new elders some elementary instructions before sending them to their assignments. After 1952 the usual procedure for a new missionary to follow upon arrival in the Norwegian Mission was first, to fill out all the required papers for the local police and American Embassy. He was then enrolled in the mission language class which included instructions in the "proper pronunciation of the alphabet, the putting together letters of the alphabet into simple words...simple grammar lessons, learning to count money and some of the Norwegian customs."10

A day in the life of the Norwegian missionary began at 6:00 a.m., followed by two to three hours each morning in the study of the language and lesson plans. The daytime hours were spent in making door-to-door contacts trying to give cottage-lessons or making arrangements to return when the family could all be together. The evenings were spent giving cottage lessons and making call-backs to promising homes. The missionary labored six or sometimes six and one-half days a week, attending Church meetings only when accompanied by investigators.

Since Norway is a land of streams, fjords and mountains one might expect that the missionaries would either fish, swim or ski during his day

9Ibid., December 31 1946, CHL.

10Ibid., September 30, 1954, CHL.
of diversion. This is not the case, however, as the Church officials have strongly counseled against swimming, fishing or skiing. These activities are not allowed because of the danger involved.

According to the reports of the mission, the average missionary has many trying and discouraging experiences, but he also has many positive experiences. Missionaries both give and receive the blessings of the Gospel. Here is an example of the type of faith-producing experiences the missionaries may have as reported by the Quarterly Historical Report:

During the fall conference in Trondheim it was a wonderful surprise to hear Elder Mervin Coy Hatch bear his testimony. He had previously been afflicted with an impediment of speech. Elder Adam S. Bennion, while visiting the Norwegian Mission, gave Elder Hatch a special blessing and the progress made by Elder Hatch since is wonderful. The blessings of the Lord poured out upon Elder Hatch in abundance and his impediment is hardly noticeable.\(^{12}\)

With the Church still not being recognized as a Christian denomination, everything that helped to build the prestige of the Church in the eyes of the Norwegian masses was appreciated by the missionaries. On September 1, 1955, Elder Grant Johannsen, a world famous pianist and member of the Church from Salt Lake City, gave a wonderful concert in Oslo. Lys over Norge reported the music critics as having proclaimed the concert a huge success.\(^{13}\)

In 1956, the Brigham Young University Track team participated in an international track meet held in Oslo. It was reported by President Ray Engelbretsen, President of the Norwegian Mission, that "those in the Norwegian Mission were extremely happy to have had with them the B.Y.U. track team."\(^{14}\)

\(^{11}\text{Ibid., September 30, 1953, CHL.}\)

\(^{12}\text{Quarterly Historical Report for the Norwegian Mission, October 22, 1956, CHL.}\)

\(^{13}\text{Norwegian Mission 1949-1961, September 1, 1955, CHL.}\)

\(^{14}\text{Quarterly Historical Report for the Norwegian Mission, July 30, 1956, CHL.}\)
Engelbretsen continued, "this had created a great deal of good will among many people which will help in proselyting work, particularly among those sports-minded." Also in 1956, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir was in Europe, which gave some of the Norwegians an insight into another phase of the cultural side of Mormonism.

When the Norwegian Mission was re-opened in 1946 the newspapers carried several articles about the Church but most of the reports were unfavorable. It was hoped by those laboring in the mission at that time that the Church could grow in prestige. It would appear that according to an article reported in Lys over Norge the general concept relative to Mormonism was improving in the minds of many of the people of Norway in recent years. A Mr. Anders Burass, a Norwegian writer who had just returned from Utah, commented that Salt Lake City and surroundings were beautiful. He also described Elder Harold B. Lee of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, as "a man of great intelligence." He concluded his article with this challenging statement: "The Mormon's faith is either the greatest fraud in the world or the greatest truth." 

Opposition to Mormonism Renewed

Almost as a natural consequence of growth in the Church came the renewed opposition. Again as in former times the chief opposers to the Church were the intolerant religious leaders. They were the ones who felt most poignantly the loss of their own members as the LDS Church grew in size. In

---

15 Idem.

16 Ibid., December 31, 1946, CHL.

17 Norwegian Mission History 1949-1961, April 1, 1955, CHL.
one newspaper article, dated December 31, 1955, a Lutheran priest called the Church leaders and missionaries "non-Christian Pirates." This article touched off a series of articles, most of which were answered by President Axel J. Andresen of the Norwegian Mission. This new series of anti-Mormon attacks were in the form of a variety of subjects such as: missionaries being called spies; on the doctrines of blood atonement, temple work; and an un-Christian like attack upon the Church leaders as individuals. The Quarterly Mission Report stated in conclusion that "the results of these articles was a renewed interest kindled in the Norwegians to find out what Mormonism is—thus opening many doors to us."19

Opposition was not just thrown at the Church in general, but individuals also became the victims of cruel words and actions. The Quarterly Historical Report gave this account of a faithful sister who was persecuted from within her own family:

After Sister Anna Karine Austanvik was baptized into the Church her son, who is a prominent attorney, immediately began to cause difficulty and told the Mission President that we would immediately have to write his mother out of the Church. Sister Austanvik objected. The son took his own mother under protest to the State Church Priest's office where she was forced to sign a written statement to the effect that she wanted to be "written out" of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Within a few hours after this document was sent to the Mission Office, Sister Austanvik appeared and gave the Mission President, in detail, the story of how she had been forced by two priests and her own son to sign such a document. It is a faith promoting incident...This so-called religious freedom which Norway particularly boasts about is felt in name only because prejudice, tradition and priestcraft all still seem to have tremendous effect on the people.20

Norwegian Mission Buildings and Growth

Due to the fact that the Church had not been recognized as Christian,

18Ibid., December 31, 1955, CHL.

19Quarterly Historical Report for the Norwegian Mission, August 3, 1955, CHL.

20Ibid., September 30, 1953, CHL.
real difficulties were involved in obtaining buildings for worship.

Realizing this problem very keenly, President Andresen wrote to the First Presidency of the Church requesting permission to make new attempts in gaining Christian recognition. He received this answer:

You point out that it is unlikely that the State Church will ever permit full recognition but that it may be possible to bring the Church within what you designate as the "Christian Dissenter Law." You recommend that an attempt be made to bring this about. We give our permission for you to make this effort and to secure the legal help which you may regard as necessary in the undertaking. 21

Legal help was thereafter obtained and some success was made as the importance of securing the right to purchase property was vital to the Norwegian Mission. The Headquarters of the mission had been located in a section of town which, through the years, had become part of the slum area of Oslo. President Andresen, with the assistance of Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and a lawyer, finally gained possession and title to a very choice piece of property located at Drømmensveien 96g.

The headquarters of the mission were subsequently moved to that new location on November 6, 1957. 22 In addition to the purchase of Drømmensveien 96g, other valuable properties were procured in the cities of Drammen, Bergen and Trondheim. The Norwegian Saints learned that beautiful chapels could be a great asset in bringing converts into the Church.

The growth of the Church in terms of baptisms was increasing. During the year of 1951, ninety-six people were baptized; 9,388 cottage meetings were held by the eighty-one missionaries laboring in Norway. 23 By 1956 the

21 Quarterly Historical Report for the Norwegian Mission, September 30, 1953, CHL.

22 Ibid., November 6, 1957, CHL.

number of baptisms had increased to 102.\(^{24}\)

Another evidence indicating the growth in the mission was the organization of the First Quorum of Elders in the Mission. Elder Spencer W. Kimball organized this quorum with Brother Kare Lorang Parsboll as the President of the new quorum.\(^{25}\) During 1956, the following year, the mission record indicated that "in keeping with the Church's accelerated program for adult members of the Aaronic Priesthood a program was begun in September in the Oslo Branch in an attempt to reach the delinquent members of the Aaronic Priesthood.\(^{26}\)

By 1958 the Oslo Branch became large enough that it was divided into two branches in order to give more members the opportunity to hold positions.\(^{27}\)

At the time of this study, 1965, there were no wards or stakes within the limits of the Norwegian Mission.

The Spirit of Migration Revived

The spirit of gathering, as experienced in the early days of the Church in Norway, began to be felt again in 1958. President Engelbretnsen reported the reasons for the desire to emigrate when he said:

Probably one of the main reasons for this feeling to emigrate is caused by insecurity as far as the future is concerned. Many Saints are concerned for the upbringing of their children. The laxity of the youth outside of the Church in living up to principles of righteousness is very predominant. Another factor is that many Norwegians realize the socialistic form of government they are living under. . . . There is a tremendous consumption of liquor and uses of tobacco among the youth. On Sundays there are thousands, in fact, one could say the majority of the population, who go out in the interest of sports,

\(^{24}\) Quarterly Historical Report for the Norwegian Mission, 1956, CHL.


\(^{26}\) Quarterly Historical Report for the Norwegian Mission, December 31, 1956, CHL.

\(^{27}\) Ibid., January 5, 1958, CHL.
activities, and in the summer time we have difficulty having our own Saints keep the Sabbath Day holy and sacred.28

Certainly the Church officials were aware of the desires of the Saints in Norway to immigrate to America, but they, of course, were equally aware of the problems to be encountered here in Zion. In 1955 when President McKay toured Europe, he announced that the Saints were to remain in Europe and the Church programs would be brought to them instead of them having to come to where the Church was. The Norwegian Saints, along with the Saints of other foreign nations were encouraged to remain in their home lands and do all they could towards strengthening the Church where they were.29

Microfilming Church, County, State Records in Norway

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints since 1836 (the restoration of the keys of genealogy work to Joseph Smith)30 has been interested in gathering genealogical information. Since so many members of the Church came originally from Norway and other European countries (Scandinavian people and their descendents making up about one-fourth of the total Church population), the need to have access to records from these countries had become very acute. With so many investigators in genealogy needing information from the Norwegian records and considering the impracticability of their being able to go to Norway, the Church launched an extensive project of microfilming as many records as possible. These records were brought to the archives in Salt Lake City, Utah. Mr. Zobell reported that negotiations for microfilming in Norway began in 1946 and continued through

28Ibid., December 31, 1958, CHL.

29Clare Middlemiss, "With the President in Europe," The Improvement Era, (Salt Lake City, November, 1955), No. 11, 799-800.

30Doctrine and Covenants 110:
the year of 1947. Difficulties were encountered in obtaining permission to do the microfilming work because the decision rested in the hands of the Norwegian Parliament. Since the State Church had representation in Parliament, it was natural for them to oppose the project. This they did very strenuously. It was this writer's experience while laboring in Honefoss, Norway, to be ejected from a State Church office by a very angry priest for having asked permission to see some of his church records.

In 1947 Elder Archibald F. Bennett, general secretary of the Genealogical Society, together with President A. Richard Petersen, toured some of the larger cities where the microfilming was to be done. Brother Hilmar Freidel of Norway contracted the microfilming project for the entire country. The Church sent him a model E portable Recordak camera. Later a model D Recordak camera was also sent. The work of microfilming actually got started on June 12, 1948. From June to October Mr. Freidel labored in Oslo in the Norwegian National Archives. On October 20, 1948, Sister Paula Freidel, wife of Hilmar Freidel, began using the portable model E Recordak, working with her husband to expedite the work. From Oslo they moved to the Lands Archive in Bergen where all church books, mortgage registers and probate records were microfilmed. This area was completed in September, 1949. The cameras were next moved to Trondheim, and from there to Hamar. By January 16, 1950, there had been over 2,300 rolls of one hundred feet filmed in Norway. These rolls contained a total of 2,760,000 pages of records. Permission for the Mormons

31 Zobell, op. cit., 173

32 Norwegian Mission 1920-1939, August 8, 1947, CHL.

33 Zobel, op. cit., 174.
to microfilm all these records was obtained upon the agreement that the Mormon Church would give the local archives a microfilm copy also.

**General Authorities of the Church Visit Norway**

There seemed to have been a practice through the years of having one of the General Authorities of the Church preside over the missions of Europe. The visits of these officials to Norway were greatly appreciated events in the lives of the Norwegian Saints. Elder Benson, who presided over the European Mission following World War II, won a lasting place in the hearts of the Saints in Norway. Until more recently, with the development of better communications, the Saints in far off Norway have felt apart from the Church leaders. Perhaps it is the distance that helped endear the visits of the Church officials.

In 1950 Elder Stephen L. Richards of the First Presidency visited Norway. His assignment was to look after the missionaries and their welfare. In 1952 the Saints in Norway had the choice experience of having the Mormon leader, David O. McKay, visit them. The Norwegian Mission History reported that the Saints looked with the greatest anticipation to having their highest leader in their land. The report mentioned that among other things President McKay directed his text,

...to encourage people to emulate our Redeemer while we were here by being kind; first to ourselves by building character; second by creating happiness in our homes and by spreading happiness to our neighbors; and finally by devoting our time by proclaiming the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He concluded by stating that "it is the desire of all men to have peace, but there is only one way that peace can come and that is by obedience to the

---


Gospel of Jesus Christ." The Saints and missionaries were encouraged and thrilled by the visit from the President of the Church. The newspapers were generous and complimentary in their reports of President McKay's tour through Norway.

In 1954, Elder Adam S. Bennion of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles visited the Norwegian Mission. He, too, thrilled and encouraged the Saints and missionaries with his sincere way and jovial sense of humor. In 1955, Elder Spencer W. Kimball toured the mission. His assignment was to check on the missionaries and their activities to see if better methods could be employed to hasten the work. He stated that the Norwegian Mission was the second lowest in number of baptisms in the Church. He interviewed each missionary individually, asking them about their worthiness and how they felt the proselyting work could be speeded up. During his stay in Norway he held twenty-eight meetings "and all were inspired with his deep knowledge of the Gospel, his sincerity and humility." It was also reported that, "wherever and whenever he spoke he raised the voice of warning and told of the glorious restoration of the Gospel of Christ. All who came to hear him were deeply impressed with his message and the truths he expounded." 38

**Missionaries and Saints of Norway Attended Swiss Temple Dedication**

On April 15, 1955, the letter from the First Presidency of the Church arrived extending an invitation "to all missionaries who were serving as full time missionaries...to attend one session of the dedicational services" of

36 Idem.

37 Ibid., April 17, 1955, CHL.

38 Idem.
the Swiss Temple. It was with grateful hearts that about one hundred missionaries and several Norwegian Saints left Oslo, September 11, 1955, bound for Bern, Switzerland. For the Saints in the company this was an experience they had waited nearly a life time for; the chance to receive the blessings of the Temple in being sealed to their companions and families for eternity. The Norwegian, Danish and Swedish Missions attended the September 11, 1955 session of the dedication. Following the dedication the missionaries and Saints were permitted to tour some of Switzerland, seeing the Alps and travelling as far as Geneva before returning to Norway. The Norwegian missionaries returned to their labors on September 21, 1955, after a most thrilling and faith-promoting experience.

Mission Presidents of the Norwegian Mission

In general, it may be stated that most of the Presidents of the mission, both during the time it was but a small portion of the Scandinavian Mission as well as when it was an independent mission, have either been born in Scandinavia or are descendents of Scandinavian stock. For a complete listing of the Presidents, see page 131 of the appendix.

Summary

The Saints in Norway had suffered greatly during World War II, especially for want of the basic necessities of life. Following the war the Church had a most difficult time obtaining permission to allow missionaries to re-enter Norway. The main reason given for the difficulty was that the Norwegian

39 Quarterly Historical Report for the Norwegian Mission, April 15, 1955, CHL.

40 Idem.

41 Idem.
government still refused to recognize the Church as being a Christian denomination. When the missionaries did get back into Norway the first thing they had to do, under the direction of Elder Ezra Taft Benson, was to help eliminate the temporal wants of the Saints. When this was accomplished during 1946, the missionaries returned their attention and energies toward preaching the Gospel. The strong hope of the elders laboring in Norway was to make the Norwegian Mission the best mission in Europe.

The life of a Missionary is not an easy one either from a physical or mental standpoint. The new missionary must first check in with the Norwegian Police Department, clear with the American Embassy, then he is enrolled in a training program for a few days orientation in the rules of the mission, the language, and the customs of the people he will be laboring among.

The statement is often repeated among the Mormons in Norway that the Norwegian people consider themselves religiously tolerant but in reality they are very religiously intolerant and traditional minded. Even in our age of enlightenment there still remains much intolerance in Norway. The missionaries and Saints find they must stand together in facing the opposition that comes because of their minority position. The primary source of opposition is reported to come from the Lutheran priests. The newspapers take an active part in airing the controversies between the Mormons and Lutherans. The Church appreciates the opportunity afforded to put its teachings before the public because this has helped in the proselyting activities of the mission.

The Norwegian Mission has suffered from the lack of having adequate buildings in which investigators can be invited to worship. Because of the
non-Christian classification the Church has had a very difficult time procuring places of worship. President Andresen gained permission in 1955, to submit a new petition requesting the repeal of the non-Christian title. Though this effort failed to bring the new title desired, he was, nevertheless, successful in gaining enough prestige for the Church that the purchasing of property and buildings became somewhat easier. Perhaps the greatest advantage gained was the successful purchases of Drammenveien 96g, which became the new mission headquarters and the place of worship for the Oslo Saints. This move was a step forward in the mission since the old location of Osterhausgaten 27 had become part of the slum area of Oslo.

When travel became possible again, following the war years, the desire to migrate to America was revived. The Church leaders counseled against this as they preferred that the Saints remain in their homeland to help strengthen the Church there.

In recent years greater emphasis seems to have been placed on doing genealogy work. With the renewed spirit of genealogy, it became necessary for the descendants of the earlier Norwegian people to have access to the records kept in Norway. Consequently, the Church in 1946 began the tremendous task of microfilming all possible records in Norway that would assist the researcher. Most of the filming, some 2,760,000 pages, was done by Mr. Hilmar Freidel and his wife.

With the Norwegian Mission located so far from the Church headquarters, the Saints sincerely appreciated the opportunity to have the officials of the Church visit them in their native land. They especially appreciated the visit of President David O. McKay.
CHAPTER X

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Summary

Norwegians, sometimes earlier in history called Vikings, were a very bold people. Their courage was stimulated by their belief in heathen gods, as these gods represented bravery and valor. Norwegian worship of Thor, Odin and Frey, in part, was the sacrificing of human and animal victims.

Some of the Vikings were converted to Christianity. Several of these converts to Christ tried to turn their countrymen away from their paganistic ideas. However, it was not until 1000 A.D., after the conversion of Olaf Trygvason, that the Norwegians, through force, became Christians. Their earliest form of Christianity was Catholicism.

Catholicism prospered from its inception in Norway until the beginning of the sixteenth century. At that time a Swede, Gustavus Vasa, brought Lutheranism from Germany to Scandinavia. Through the efforts of the Danish King Christian II, who controlled Norway, Sweden and Denmark, all of Scandinavia was forced to become Lutherans. The transition from Catholicism to Protestantism was a gradual one as it took many years for the Catholic ideas to be eliminated from the thinking of the Norwegians.

One historian indicated that there was a decline in the moral character of Norway following the transformation to Lutheranism. Although the Lutheran faith was enforced among the masses, the religious problems of Norway did
not disappear. It became necessary to formulate laws which forced the people to worship or be fined. If the people were unable to pay their fines they were placed in stocks. It was into this type of religious environment that Mormonism was introduced in 1851.

The Scandinavian Mission was opened by Elder Erastus Snow in 1850. The headquarters of the mission were maintained in Copenhagen, Denmark. Converts to the Gospel came into the Church quite rapidly in the early days of the mission. As the numbers of converts became sufficiently large, branches and conferences were organized.

Missionaries to Scandinavia, in the beginning of the mission, were extremely few. Because of the lack of missionaries to contact the people it was necessary to disseminate as much information in the form of literature as possible. As almost all the literature used in the Church was in English it became necessary to translate the tracts and books into Danish. (Danish at that time was the accepted language for Scandinavia even though each country had its own language). The Book of Mormon was the first of the standard works, other than the Bible that was already in Norwegian, to be translated and it was soon followed by The Doctrine and Covenants, hymnbooks, and finally The Pearl of Great Price. Very little material was translated into Norwegian until the 1950's.

The Mormon movement in Norway faced strong opposition because of the lack of religious toleration. Lutheranism was the state supported religion so it was natural for the Lutheran ministers to become angered by the losses they encountered to Mormonism. Opposition came in many forms. The Church was denied the right of preaching or performing any religious ordinances. Violation to these restrictions subjected the missionaries to fines or imprisonment or both. The Church was not recognized as Christian denomination, consequently, the Church was looked upon as being paganistic. This condition
brought on persecution in the forms of name-calling, rock throwing, interruption of meetings, ostracization from society, loss of employment and sometimes physical beatings.

The mission to Norway began in 1851 through the instrumentality of a Dane, H.J. Petersen. He served as the first officially called missionary to Norway. Svend Larsen, a sea-captain, was the first Norwegian convert. He assisted the missionary movement in Norway a great deal. Elder Petersen, along with those later called to assist him, began their work along the southern coast of Norway. Gradually, as the missionaries became more numerous the work spread until it covered the entire country of Norway. It was stated by one historian, Andrew Jenson, that it was his opinion that with the exception of England, Scandinavia was more thoroughly proselyted than any other area in the world.

The new Norwegian converts, filled with the spirit of the Gospel, were very influential in bringing their friends, neighbors and relatives into the Church. It was stated that Norwegians were converted one day, baptized the second and began preaching the Gospel on the third day. Closely coupled with the ambitious spirit of these new converts was the movement which made Mormon literature available. Books and tracts were purchased by the Saints and they sold or gave the literature to their associates. It was suggested that by 1890, almost every Norwegian home contained some type of Mormon literature.

The records indicated that the first forty years of proselyting were the most fruitful ones in Norway in terms of numbers of converts per missionary. When the number of converts became sufficient, branches and conferences were organized with missionaries presiding over them. The lack of male members in the branches was a serious handicap in organizing the full programs of the Church. Most of the branches were small, containing
mostly women. Consequently, the Relief Society and Sunday School organizations were more common than the MIA or the Primary. The Primary and MIA, however, did succeed very well wherever the number of members the right age merited these programs.

From 1851 to 1920 the country of Norway was just a small part of the Scandinavian Mission. It was called the Brevig Conference of the Scandinavian Mission. Prior to 1899, the Brevig Conference was transferred to Christiania. (Christania was Norway's capital city; the name was changed to Oslo in 1925). In 1905, the Swedish Mission was created; thus leaving Denmark and Norway combined as one mission until 1920. At that time the Danish and Norwegian Missions were created as individual missions.

As previously stated, the first forty years of proselyting were the most fruitful, but the total membership of the Norwegian Mission did not increase much because of the large percentage of converts that emigrated to America upon their becoming members. The peak of emigration was reached in the late 1860's and early 1870's. During one year sixty-nine per cent of those that joined the Church that same year emigrated to Utah. The Perpetual Emigration Fund was established to assist those who needed financial help to emigrate to Zion.

From 1851 to about 1890, the Church encouraged all worthy converts to emigrate, but after 1890 there was a reversal as the water resources in Utah for irrigation were limited. The spirit of gathering continued to be felt so strongly that the Church officials had to issue a statement to the effect that they wished the people of the missions to remain in their respective lands and help to strengthen the Church in their native countries.

Two of the most powerful tools in winning converts in the early days of the mission were the native elders returning from Zion as missionaries, and the letters written by the emigrants describing Utah. Canute Peterson
was the first of these emigrants to return as a missionary. He was followed by many others of his countrymen, who had emigrated some years before. Those native missionaries were especially successful because they knew the language and customs of their former friends and neighbors. After 1900, the second generation missionaries (sons of the American born Norwegians) encountered difficult language and social problems which rendered them much less effective as missionaries than their fathers had been.

Because the Mormons were not recognized as Christians, they were very limited in the methods they could use in proselyting the Gospel. The main procedure had to be a door-to-door approach, handing out literature and extending an invitation to attend a meeting whenever one could be arranged. Because of opposition, the meetings, for the most part, were held in private homes, where the songs were read, rather than sang, for fear of arousing the mobs to action.

Despite the problems to be overcome before one could join the Church, many strong-willed Norwegians still joined the Church. Those who became members had to be virtually willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of the Gospel. By 1930, between one-fourth and one-fifth of the total membership of the Church were originally from Scandinavia or were of Scandinavian descent.

With the impending war crisis came the withdrawal of the missionaries from Norway. In 1858, when Johnston’s Army was advancing towards Utah, the missionaries were called home. In 1914 and again in 1939, the missionaries were called out of Norway. With the departure of the elders followed the discontinuation of much progress in proselyting activities in the mission. During World War II a Norwegian, Olaf Sonsteby, acted as the president of the Norwegian Mission for six years. He received very little instruction from Church Headquarters in Salt Lake City because of the lack of communication facilities.
At the end of each war came the problem of getting the Mormon missionaries back into Norway. Each time the Norwegian Government had said something to the effect that they did not want Mormons, who to them were heathens, coming into their Christian country preaching paganism. In 1946, at the close of World War II, the Church received permission to have missionaries re-enter Norway.

Elder Ezra Taft Benson was called to be president of the European Mission and under his direction the Welfare Program of the Church sent more than enough food and supplies to take care of the needs felt by the Mormons. The surplus supplies were distributed among some non-Mormons.

When the missionaries were finally re-admitted into Norway, the physical wants of the Saints had been met, the proselyting efforts were renewed with much success. New methods of teaching the Gospel were implemented and a renewed desire on the part of the elders to make the Norwegians Mission the best mission in Europe was felt. The new missionaries were given some elementary orientation in the language and customs of the people before they were assigned to their fields of labor. This orientation program proved to be most helpful.

In 1955, during the administration of President Axel J. Andresen, The Doctrine and Covenants and The Pearl of Great Price, along with a hymn-book, were translated, for the first time, into the Norwegian language. The Book of Mormon had previously been translated and published in 1950.

With new converts coming into the Church the desire to emigrate was again revived. Some Saints did emigrate; but in 1955, President McKay, while visiting Norway, told the people not to go to Utah to find the Church, but that the Church would be sent to them. He told them to remain in Norway to help strengthen the Church there through their activity and faithful observance in keeping the commandments. The desire to emigrate was prompted by the lack
of security the members felt, especially those who had families. They realized that the lack of other young LDS people for their youth to associate with and eventually marry was a very serious handicap.

In 1956, the Swiss Temple was dedicated. The full-time missionaries and the Saints worthy of a Temple recommend, were invited to attend a dedicatory service. This was the first opportunity most of the Saints had ever had to receive the benefits of a temple.

The Norwegian Saints rejoiced exceedingly whenever a General Authority of the Church came to visit them in their native land. When President McKay was there in 1955, it was reported that this experience of seeing the Mormon Leader was the highlighting experience in their lives.

In 1946, the first efforts were made in Norway to microfilm records for genealogical purposes. The desire was to microfilm as many church, county, and state records as possible throughout all of Norway. This movement met with stiff opposition from the state church officials. The success of genealogical research in Utah, in a large measure, was determined upon the Church's ability to bring the necessary records to the researchers in Utah as so many people in the Church today are the descendants of Norwegian and other Scandinavian ancestry.

II. Conclusions

Based on the writer's research, the following conclusions concerning the history of the Norwegian Mission are made: (1) the first years were the most successful in terms of converts; (2) those who first served as missionaries were courageous souls, who placed more importance on doing the work of the Lord than on their own personal safety; (3) those early Saints who joined the Church, in spite of opposition they faced, had the spirit of the Lord with them to make them equal to the challenges; (4) the Church's ability to
have Mormon literature translated into Norwegian was a vital tool in the success of the missionary activities in Norway; (5) the progress of the mission was hindered by not being recognized as Christian, but the opposition it brought on was an advantage in that those who joined the Church had to be strong and work cooperatively together in the Gospels sake; (6) the Norwegian Mission could have been much stronger had not so many converts emigrated to America; and (7) the Lord was the power behind any success realized in the land of the "midnight sun."
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS


Hearings before the Committee on Territories in Regard to Admission of Utah as a State. Washington, D.C., 1889, 128.

Hill, John W. Mormonism vs. Americanism. Salt Lake City, 1889.


The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *The Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. *The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. Salt Lake City: 1956.


B. PERIODICALS


"Emigrater," *Nordstjarnan*, XVI (February, 1892), 47.


"Flourishing Norwegian M.I.A.,” *The Improvement Era*, VII (July, 1904), 728.


________. (ed.). "Church Completes Reassignment of European Missionaries," *The Improvement Era*, XXXII (December, 1939), 735.

________. (ed.). "News Received from Norway," *The Improvement Era*, XXVIII (December, 1924), 142.


McKay, Thomas E. (Material translated and edited by Olaf Sonsteby and Einar Strand). "Vare Misjonaer i Europa," *Lys over Norge*, (June, 1911), 100.
"Message from the Missions," *The Improvement Era*, XI (July, 1908), 809.


_______. (ed.). "Messages from the Missions," *The Improvement Era*, XVI (February, 1913), 382.


Snow, Erastus. (ed.). "Til De Hellige," *Skandinavien Stjerne*, I (June, 1852), 141.


C. UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS

"Quarterly Historical Report for the Norwegian Mission." This is an unpublished accumulation of the reports submitted quarterly by the Presidents of the Norwegian Mission. These records are in the possession of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Historian's Library located in Salt Lake City, Utah.

"Norwegian Mission History--1920-1939." This record contains the major occurrences in the Norwegian Mission for the specified time. This record has been kept and submitted by the Secretaries of the Norwegian Mission. This record is in the possession of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Historian's Library.
"Norwegian Mission History--1946-1961." A continuation of the major events in the Norwegian Mission. This unpublished account is also located in the Church Historian's Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.

"Norwegian Mission--Christiansa Branch and/or Conference." This unpublished record is the minute book entries for the Christiansa Branch and conference. Located in the Church Historian's Library.

"Scandinavian Mission History." This unpublished record contains the history of major events as they pertain to the founding and development of the Scandinavian Mission which at one time included all the Scandinavian countries. This record is located in the Church Historian's Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Erastus Snow Journal. A private journal written in long hand by Elder Snow covering the period of time from December, 1847 to September 1850. This unpublished journal is in the possession of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Historian's Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.
APPENDIXES
APPENDIX A

EARLY CHURCH WORK IN NORWAY

Extract from Deseret News for November, 1903.

The first "Mormon" missionary who introduced the Gospel (as restored to the earth through the instrumentality of Joseph Smith) in old Norway was the late Hans Frederik Petersen, of Ephraim, Sanpete Country, Utah. He arrived in Osterrisor, September 11, 1851, and baptized his first converts in December following the next year the late Elder Hans Peter Jensen, of Brigham City, Utah, and Johan A. Ahmanson were sent to Norway to continue missionary work there, and so successful were these two Elders that they soon organized three branches of the Church, one in Osterrisor, one in Frederikstad and one in Brevig. The prospects for the further spread of the Gospel being bright, six other missionaries were called at the mission headquarters in Denmark and sent to Norway. They were Christian J. Larsen, Peter Beckstorm, Christian Knudsen, Ole Hansen, Niels Hansen and John F. F. Doriaus, who arrived on the Fjord near Brevig, Norway, October, 12, 1852. Another missionary, Jeppe G. Folkman, had arrived some time before. The arrival of so many "Mormons" in Norway alarmed the Norwegian clergy who at once began to look around for means of defense against those "intruders" who dared to question the correctness of the old Lutheran religion that had served the people of that land so long as a vehicle by which to get to heaven. First arguments were tried, but the newcomers astonished and defeated all their opponents by proving the correctness of all their doctrines from the Bible. Persecution, incited at least in part by Lutheran clergymen, followed next, but that only added
"fuel to the flames," and it was soon discovered that "Mormonism" made better progress under persecution than under more passive conditions; for while some people came to hear, and the arguments of the Elders were often so convincing and powerful that those who came with the avowed purpose of taking a hand in beasting the missionaries returned home to make preparation for their own baptism. In the midst of their discomfiture the clergymen, as a last resort, turned their attention to the law. Religious liberty in Norway was only conditional and if some pretexts could be found for denying the "Mormons" that protection which had already been granted a few Christian denominations, who dissented from the opinions of the Lutheran or state church, the "Mormons" who believed in modern revelation and who preached without salaries, could be silenced or banished. On the pretext that "Mormons" were not Christians, all the "Mormon" missionaries in Norway were arrested and imprisoned.

In October, 1853, Brothers Christian J. Larsen, Svend Larsen, John F. Dorius and Peter Beckstrom were confined in the debtors' room in Frederikstad courthouse, part of which was utilized as a jail; Ole Olsen was imprisoned at Elverhoj, and Jeppe C. Folkman, Christian Knudsen and Niels Hansen in a country prison connected with the official residence of Lehnsmand Printz, some distance from Frederikstad. These three last named brethren were subsequently removed to Elverhoj and about the same time John A. Ahmanson was arrested at Osterrisor and confined in Frederikstad, together with the brethren already imprisoned there. The imprisonment of so many young and intelligent men—professed ministers of the Gospel, naturally created general interest among the people and the jailor, who had been used to handling real criminals, soon found himself guarding men of a higher order. This feature was also noticed very soon by the jailors marriageable daughters, who became deeply interested in the young prisoners, all of them being good-looking men
and attractive, both in manner and appearance. Three of these daughters, subsequently joined the Church and one of them became the wife of Elder John A. Ahmanson, one of the prisoners.

The brethren had not been confined very long before they were granted special privileges, the jailor permitting friends to come and visit them; and at length also permitted the prisoners themselves to go out sometimes under guard and sometimes unguarded, to mingle with their friends on the outside. Thus the missionaries perhaps made as many converts while being housed and fed on the expense of the government as they would have done had they spent their time tramping through Norwegian snow and ice in visiting from house to house, as free men.

In the meantime the Elders were petitioning for their rights and liberty and appealed their case to the higher court. That court at last rendered its decision, which was unfavorable to them; but they were all discharged from prison in the following order: Peter Beckstrom, Dec. 5, 1852; Svend Larsen, March 15, 1853; Christian J. Larson, March 31, 1853; and John A. Ahmanson, John F. F. Dorius, Jeppe G. Folkman, Ole Olsen, Christian Knudsen and Niels Hansen, May 5, 1853.

Bishop Christian J. Larsen, of Logan, one of the brethren who spent the winter of 1852-53 in the Frederikstad prison, returned a few weeks ago from a visit to Scandinavia, after having spent nearly 50 years in America.

ANDREW JENSON
APPENDIX B

ELDER KJAR IMPRISONED IN NORWAY FOR BAPTIZING

Deseret News, April 16, 1910.

Korgsade 11. Copenhagen, Denmark, March 25, 1910—At our fall conference held in Bergen, Norway, about six months ago, the successful labors of our elders, as reported on that occasion, attracted the attention of the Norwegian state church clergy, one of their number being present to take notes. A number of baptisms which had recently taken place in Haugesund (where 16 new members had been added to the Church) became the special subject of alarm, and the civil authorities at once became active in gathering details. Being furnished with a complete list of those baptized and those who performed the ordinance, it was discovered that some of the new converts had not formally withdrawn from the Lutheran church before they were baptized into the true Church of Christ. Such neglect is technically against the law of Norway, which, however, is seldom very strictly enforced in such cases. But in this instance our enemies thought they had an opportunity to prosecute the Mormon elders. Consequently, they made diligent inquiries about the names of the elders who had done the baptizing but found that they had all left the country except Elder Carl Kjar, a young man who resides in the Fifteenth Ward, Salt Lake City, Utah, and who still labors as a missionary in Haugesund, presiding over the branch. Appearing in court, in obedience to a summons, Elder Kjar was told that he had been fined 20 kroners for having baptized two little girls, one 15 and the other 8 years old, whose names had not previously been withdrawn from the Lutheran church records. In lieu of the 20 kroner fine,
he could atone by serving 12 days as an ordinary prisoner or four days on a water and bread diet. To the great surprise of the officials, Elder Kjar chose the latter alternative, and was consequently imprisoned in a solitary cell on Tuesday, March 8, in the evening, and served till the following Saturday, March 12. Before entering his cell, Brother Kjar had the opportunity of explaining the principles of the gospel to the judge and other officials of the court. And during his four days of imprisonment he had a most interesting time in conversing and explaining Mormonism to the jailor and his fellow prisoners. He also sent for the priest at whose instigation, no doubt, the whole affair was inaugurated, and bore his testimony to that official in a way that is liable to remain on his memory forever. We will now let Elder Kjar tell his own story. He writes:

"I could not keep my seat when the priest said the Mormons were not Christians and didn't believe in Christ. I told him about my dear mother who is now dead, taking me on her lap many times when I was only four or five years old, teaching me that Jesus was the Son of God, and about his atonement and that it was only through him that we all could be saved. Addressing the pastor, I said: "These lessons I'll never forget, as long as I live, and let me tell you, pastor, that my mother was a Mormon, and I was born in Utah. Now, don't you ever tell anybody that the Latter-day Saints don't teach Christ and him crucified, for that is a falsehood. He bowed his head as if he was ashamed. 'Why,' said I, 'I have never heard anything but that as long back as I can remember; if there is anybody who believes in Jesus, it is the Latter-day Saints.' I continued my talk to him and explained authority, and revelation, and priesthood, telling him about the restoration of the same, etc. He then looked at his watch and said it was time to go, but before he went, I made him a present of 'The Fundamental Principles of the Gospel,' (by Apostle Orson Pratt), which he accepted and promised to read the same; he took me by the hand and thanked
me. We parted after about 40 minutes interview. When the elders previously have visited this man, he has in almost every case refused to take our tracts, but now he accepted a good book.

"After the priest had left, the jailor had one of the police come down and wanted to know what the priest had said. I preached to them for about 15 minutes, and then my friend, one of the judges, also came down, and wanted to know what the priest had said to me, and I had another conversation with him. After they left, a woman prisoner next to my cell, who had overheard my lecture to these officials of the prison, soon started to ask me questions concerning Mormonism. But I did not explain very far before it was my bedtime, according to the prison rules. After I was in bed, our conversation continued. She had a New Testament in her hands, and the light was on in her cell, as she should be transported to Bergen on the 1 a.m. boat. So I laid in bed and told her where to read. She read out loud and I dictated to her, thus following through one principle (sic) to another, until the jailor came again. Our conversation lasted about two hours. She knows more about Mormonism now, and she said it was her intention to investigate further as soon as she could, and try and live a good life hereafter.

"The next morning while sitting looking at the walls, I noticed a small crack in the partition (the walls being double) but now I could not resist the temptation in keeping a former resolve. I folded up some tracts and a book and forced them through this crack to a certain prisoner, who had put me up to sending after the priest. I signaled to him first and he gladly received the tracts through on his side. I also gave the jailor two books, which he promised to read.

"Before making up my bed this last day, I put two small books under the pillow; hoping that they might do good to some one. Saturday afternoon I also had a good conversation with the lady cook for the prison through the wall, and she invited me to come and visit her after I got out again."
"Friday and Saturday were hungry days for me, as I had lost my appetite and had only eaten two slices of bread but had drank a lot of water. Saturday evening at 8 p.m. sharp I was released, went home to one of the saints and ate a good hearty meal. Sunday night our little hall was so overcrowded that I think we will have to hire a larger one, if it keeps on thus.

"My name had been in the newspapers and the whole affair explained in the Haugesund Avis on Saturday. The editor of that paper is a very good friend of the Mormon missionaries.

"Monday I made a revisit, or rather a 'first self invitation' with an armful of books, to the prison. I asked permission to have an interview with the chief, and was shown into his office. He took me by the hand I made a neat little speech to him, using the best language I could, and thanked him for his kindness and friendliness. He look down at the floor and replied 'ingen aarsag' (no cause). I then praised the force of men laboring under him and especially did I praise the jailor for his zeal in performing his duty. He thanked me for the kind words I spoke about his men. I then took a Book of Mormon out of my pocket and made him a present of it. He took it, hurriedly looked over it and then accepted it with a 'thank you' and gave me his hand.

"I next made my friend, Judge No. 2, a present of the same book; he only asked to loan it, but became very glad when I told him it was meant as a gift. He took me by the hand and thanked me. The other judge received 'A Voice of Warning,' and the jailor 'The Fundamental Principles of the Gospel,' and every policeman and even the marshal who arrested me received some kind of book. I gave out all the 'A Voice of Warning,' Orson Pratt's works and Books of Mormon I had, and it brought my bill nearly as high as the fine would have amounted to. Not one refused to accept my books and all were polite as could be. I imagine that this is the first time the judges and prison officials have had any prisoner return, after serving
sentence, to thank them for their kindness.

"Monday afternoon when Elder Terkelson visited the editor of the Haugesund Avis, he told him of my interview with the priest while I was locked up; the editor asked him if he could not get the same book that the priest got, as he would like to read it. He got it at once. All whom I've talked with are on our side and we have gained many good friends through this occurrence. I feel very happy and never felt the Spirit of God in such a degree as when I was addressing that priest in the prison; it burned in my breast like fire and I shall never forget this peaceful good feeling. The Lord was with me while in jail and I know that his guardian angels comforted me for I could feel their presence.

'I've learned many lessons through this experience; I love my Savior, the gospel and the opportunity I have in being an ambassador of the same, better than ever before. I love my home in Zion, my dear loved ones there, my fellow-men, freedom and liberty. I feel I've done my duty and would be willing to go through the same ordeal if I could bring one honest soul into the fold of Christ. Yes, I'll be willing to die before I'll give up my work or deny my testimony that God has given me. I know it's the truth and I'm not here to do the will of man, but my Father in Heaven who sent me. I feel fine, dear president, and shall try and do as you say, 'fulfill an honorable mission.' I can't return unless I do, no never; God help me, and you and all his servants, that we may prove faithful in discharging our duties."

....It has subsequently come to light that our elders in Haugesund had not been guilty of breaking a law since the technicality of the law referred to in this instance the ground on which Elder Kjar served his sentence. One of the two young persons whom Elder Kjar baptized had complied with the requirements of the law by asking the Lutheran priest to mark them out of the state record, but that officer had failed to make the proper entries; the other candidate was a member of a Mormon family.

ANDREW JENSON.
APPENDIX C

A FEW STATISTICS --- PRESIDENTS OF THE SCANDINAVIAN AND NORWEIAN MISSIONS
AS GIVEN BY ALBERT TOBBELL IN HIS BOOK UNDER THE MIDNIGHT SUN, 177-179.

Presidents of the Scandinavian Mission

Erastus Snow, 1850-1852
John E. Forsgren, 1852.
Willard Snow, 1852-1853.
John Van Cott, 1853-1856.
Nelson C. Haight, 1856-1858.
Carl Widerburg, 1858-1860.
John Van Cott (2nd Term) 1860-1862.
Jesse N. Smith, 1862-1864.
Samuel L. Sprague, pro tem., 1864.
Carl Widerburg (2nd term) 1864-1868.
Jesse N. Smith (2nd term) 1868-1870.
William J. Cluff, 1870-1871.
Camute Petersen, 1871-1873.
Christian G. Larsen, 1873-1875.
Nils C. Flygare, 1875-1876.
Ola N. Lilienquist, 1876-1877.
August N. Carlson, pro tem., 1877-1878.
Nils C. Flygare (2nd term) 1878-1879.
Neils Wilhelmsen, 1879-1881.
Andrew Jensen, pro tem., 1881.

Christian J. Fjeldsted, 1881-1884.
Anthon H. Lund, 1884-1885.
Nils C. Flygare (3rd term) 1885-1888.
Christian D. Fjeldsted (2nd term) 1888-1901.
Edward H. Anderson, 1890-1892.
Joseph Christiansen, 1892-1893.
Carl I. Carlquist, 1893-1894.
Peter Sundwall, 1894-1896.
George Christensen, 1898.
Andreas Peterson, 1898-1901.
Anthon L. Skanchy, 1901-1904.
Christian Fjeldsted (3rd term) 1904-1905.
Jens M. Christensen, 1905-1907.
Soren Rasmussen, 1907-1909.
Andrew Jensen, 1909-1912.
Martin Christoffersen, 1912-1914.
Carl E. Peterson, 1919-1920.
Presidents of the Norwegian Mission

August S. Schow, April 1920-April 1923.
A. Richard Peterson, April 1923-January 1926.
Martin Christoffersen, January 1926-July 1927.
Lorenzo W. Anderson, July 1927-May 1929.
Hyrum Jensen, May 1929-fall of 1933.
A. Richard Peterson (2nd Term) 1936-1939.
John A. Israelsen, 1939-1939.
Olaf Sonsteby, 1939-1946.
A. Sherman Gowans, 1949-1953.
HISTORY OF THE NORWEGIAN MISSION

An Abstract

Of A Thesis

Presented to the

The Department of Graduate Studies in Religious Instruction

Brigham Young University

Provo, Utah

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirement for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Curtis B. Hunsaker

July 1965
This abstract, by Curtis B. Hunsaker, is accepted in its present form by The Department of Graduate Studies in Religious Instruction, as satisfying the thesis requirement of Master of Arts.

May 10, 1966

Chairman, Advisory Committee

Minor Committee Member

Committee Member
This study contains the history of the Norwegian Mission from 1850 to 1920, during which time it was a part of the Scandinavian Mission. It also includes a history of the mission from 1920 to 1960, while it was an independent mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The writer attempted to focus on the development of the major areas of the mission.

The research for this study was done, as far as possible, from primary sources, supplemented by some secondary references. The major sources of information were obtained from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Historian's Library in Salt Lake City, and the Brigham Young University Library in Provo, Utah.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was introduced in Norway into a situation of religious intolerance and indifference. This unusual condition was created as a result of the people of Norway having been originally forced by Olaf Trygveson to replace their paganistic ways of life with those of Christian Catholicism. After five hundred years of Catholicism another movement, enforced by ruling Danish King Christian II, changed the Norwegians from Catholicism to Lutheranism. This latest religious transition was probably motivated more for financial and political gains than from any religious conviction. Because the Norwegians had become satisfied with Catholicism during this five century period, the transition to Protestantism was a gradual one. It became necessary to enact laws requiring church attendance and worship to accomplish the change.
The missionary work of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to Norway was advanced by the translation of some of the literature commonly used in the Church. The Book of Mormon was first translated into Danish, and the Norwegian Mission used this edition for one-hundred years. In fact, almost all books and tracts used in the Norwegian Mission for the first hundred years were in Danish.

Elder Erastus Snow was called to open the mission to Scandinavia. During his first year he completed the translation and publication of The Book of Mormon, several tracts, a hymnbook and parts of The Doctrine and Covenants. The missionaries were few and the early converts were unread in the Gospel. In order for the mission to succeed, it was necessary for the Saints to have Church literature to read. As the Saints gained confidence through study and activity in the Church, they became conscientious missionaries for the Mormon movement.

From 1851 to 1890 all new converts were encouraged to emigrate to Utah where they could help build Zion. However, after nearly all the water resources for irrigation had been utilized, the officials of the Church discouraged emigration to Utah.

War was a menace to missionary work in Norway. The elders were called from Norway on three different occasions. The first time was in 1858, when Johnston's Army came into Utah; the second time was in 1914, previous to World War I; and a third time in 1939, prior to World War II. After the missionaries were taken from the mission, the proselyting activities were greatly restricted. In addition to the lag during their absence, the Mormon missionaries have had a very difficult time re-gaining admission into Norway.
Although the Church is still not recognized as a Christian denomination in Norway, the Church has made progress since World War II. The Saints are beginning to be recognized for their high standards and accomplishments. The Church has been able to acquire more and better buildings for worship. The standard works of the Church have all been translated and published in the Norwegian language. There is high regard among many Norwegians for the Mormon Church leaders, musicians, athletes and other outstanding men and women of great accomplishments. The prospects for an accelerated growth of Mormonism in Norway are promising.