

# Hard Questions in Church History

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## Apostolic Mission to Great Britain—D&C 118

### Questions to Consider

- Why did married missionaries leave their families for two years?
- Why did not all the Twelve Apostles go to Great Britain?
- Why make the converts move to America?
- Why call Joseph's brother and cousin as apostles—isn't that nepotism?
- Why have the leadership leave right when they were desperately needed?

### Timeline

<b>1837-1838</b>		First mission to England under direction of Apostles Heber Kimball and Orson Hyde
<b>1838</b>	June 2	Alexander Hale Smith born to Joseph and Emma, eighth child, fourth living
	July 8	Apostles called to serve a mission to Britain “over the great waters” (D&C 118:4)
	Oct 27	Missouri Governor Lilburn W. Boggs issues the Extermination Order
	Oct 30	Massacre at Haun's Mill
	Oct 31	Joseph surrenders to Missouri militia outside of Far West. Approx. sixty men are illegally charged with treason and murder, imprisoned in Richmond, Ray County
	Dec 1	Joseph and five other leaders (Hyrum, Lyman Wight, Caleb Baldwin, Sidney Rigdon, Alexander McRae) moved to Liberty Jail. All but Sidney stay for four months
<b>1839</b>		
	Mar 20, 22	Joseph writes to Emma and the Church a long letter that contains the texts of D&C 121, 122, and 123.
	Apr 6	Under guard, prisoners leave Liberty Jail for court hearing in Gallatin
	Apr 10	Judge Burch rightly changes prisoners' venue to Boone County Sheriff arranges for Joseph to use his horse and facilitates his escape
	Apr 22	Joseph and Hyrum Smith join Latter-day Saints in Quincy, IL
	Apr 26	Six Apostles gather to ordain two new apostles (Wilford Woodruff & George A. Smith) at the Far West Temple site. In fulfillment of Joseph's prophecy, this officially started their missions to England (with a long stopover in IL)
	May 10	Joseph Smith and his family move to Commerce, IL; the saints follow
	Jun 27-Jul 7	Joseph speaks at the missionaries' farewell and gives sermons in Nauvoo
	July	Malaria plagues Nauvoo
	July 4	Parley Pratt escapes from was incarcerated in Richmond and starts off for Illinois
	Jul 21-22	Joseph administers to the sick; three days of miraculous healing
	Aug	Apostles plagued by malaria which delayed and staggered their departures
	Fall	Apostles Wilford Woodruff and John Taylor sail for England. Joseph Smith leaves Nauvoo for Washington, D.C. to seek redress
<b>1840</b>		
	Jan 31	Brigham Young and Heber Kimball reach the New York Harbor—earn money for passage
	Feb	Joseph leaves Washington DC to return to Nauvoo
	Mar 4	Joseph arrives home again in Nauvoo
	April	Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball arrive in England
	May	Missionaries in England publish first issue of the <i>Millennial Star</i>
	Jun	First British converts immigrate to America

1841

April	Apostles complete missions to England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. Apostles write Joseph to request more missionaries for Britain.
Summer	Apostles and hundreds of British saints arrive in Nauvoo
Oct 24	Orson Hyde dedicates the Holy Land on Mount of Olives

### Apostles Called to Serve Mission to the British Isles (July 8, 1838)

On Monday, July 8, 1838, a few months after relocating to Missouri with his family, the Prophet Joseph held a conference for the Twelve Apostles in Far West, Caldwell County, MO. Four members of the twelve had left the church and one died—leaving half the quorum vacant. The Lord revealed to Joseph who should fill four of those vacancies in D&C 118:4-6.

Next spring let them depart to go over the great waters, and there promulgate my gospel, the fulness thereof, and bear record of my name. Let them take leave of my saints in the city of Far West, on the twenty-sixth day of April next, on the building-spot of my house, saith the Lord. Let my servant John Taylor, and also my servant John E. Page, and also my servant Wilford Woodruff, and also my servant Willard Richards, be appointed to fill the places of those who have fallen, and be officially notified of their appointment.

The Lord called the apostles to leave for their British mission on April 26, 1839 from the Far West, MO Temple site. Fulfilling this prophecy became problematic because six months before the April departure date, Governor Boggs' extermination order forced the Saints to leave the state of Missouri. By coming back into Missouri, they were risking their lives.

On March 18, 1839 Brigham Young called a meeting to discuss the matter. The patriarch, Joseph Smith Sr., and many others, did not feel it wise to return into Missouri. The Apostles could just leave for England from Illinois. They believed that “the Lord would not require the Twelve to fulfill his words to the letter” because it was so dangerous. However, Brigham and the other apostles at the meeting felt differently. They “expressed their desires to fulfill the revelation.” Brigham Young declared, “I told them the Lord God had spoken, and it was our duty to obey and leave the event in his hands and he would protect us” (Robert Freeman, Richard Holzapfel, ed., *Regional Studies in Latter-Day Saint Church History: The British Isles*, vol. 7, [Provo, UT: BYU RSC, 2007], Arnold K. Garr, “George A. Smith’s Mission with the Twelve in England, 1839-41”).

### Apostles Fulfill Joseph’s Prophecy in Missouri (April-May 1839)

Nine months after receiving D&C 118, as the Prophet Joseph was escaping out of Missouri, the five apostles secretly snuck back into Missouri. Under Brigham Young’s direction the apostles Orson Pratt, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and George A. Smith wanted to fulfill the Prophet Joseph’s divine injunction exactly. The prophesied time approached for the Apostles to fulfil their mission call to depart for the British Isles from the Far West Temple Site. The group cautiously made their way nearly two-hundred miles across Missouri to the Far West Temple Site.

Divinely choreographed, across the vast lightly populated state, the apostles happened upon Elder John F. Page and family. As a recently called apostle, Elder Page joined the other five apostles. Late on April 25, 1839, they arrived at the temple site in Far West. There to greet them was apostle Heber C. Kimball—making the total seven apostles gathered at the Far West Temple site as prophesied by

Joseph. A few other saints who were still in Missouri joined them for the sacred event. They talked all night.

At sunrise on April 26<sup>th</sup> a small troop of Saints gathered for the historic event. Seven Apostles were able to be there to fulfill the Lord's prophecy: Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, John Taylor, John E. Page, Wilford Woodruff, George A. Smith, and Orson Pratt. Another apostle was already preaching in England (Willard Richards), Parley was still in prison, and two chose not to come (William Smith and Orson Hyde). Brigham ordained Wilford Woodruff and Heber C. Kimball ordained George A. Smith.

**Table 1: List of Apostles in 1835, 1839, and 1845**

1835	1839	1845
Thomas Marsh	Brigham Young	Brigham Young
David Patten	Heber C. Kimball	Heber C. Kimball
Brigham Young	Orson Hyde	Orson Hyde
Heber C. Kimball	Parley P. Pratt	Parley P. Pratt
Orson Hyde	Orson Pratt	Orson Pratt
William E. McLellan	William Smith	Willard Richards
Parley P. Pratt	Willard Richards (1840)	Wilford Woodruff
Luke Johnson	Wilford Woodruff	John Taylor
Orson Pratt	John Taylor	George A. Smith
Lyman Johnson	John E. Page	Amasa Lyman
William Smith	George A. Smith	Ezra Benson
Luke Boyton		

They held a short worship service. Each apostle prayed aloud, and joined together singing a favorite song, “Adam-ondi-Ahman.” They laid a foundation stone in the southeast corner for the future temple. Brigham felt strongly about fulfilling this prophecy: “Thus was this revelation fulfilled, concerning which our enemies said, if all other revelations of Joseph Smith were fulfilled that one should not, as it had day and date to it” (Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 39). After the dedicatory service, the group divided into three small units and traveled over two hundred miles back through enemy territory together (*Saints*, 394-395).

One may ask why did the apostles have to come back to Missouri for this experience. Perhaps the Lord orchestrated the extra journey so that the apostles would be in the right place at the right time to assist the poor saints who were still struggling to flee Missouri. Whatever the reason, the Lord miraculously placed another band of poor religious refugees fleeing Missouri in the apostles' path. The Lord protected the group as they traveled together across the Missouri border and arrived safely into Illinois. Prior to leaving for England the apostles hoped to build homes for their families, or at least provide some means for them before leaving on their missions. Their good intentions to provide for their families were interrupted by another challenge.

## May 10, 1839—Relocating to Commerce / Nauvoo Illinois

After the Prophet escaped from Missouri and arrived in Quincy, IL on April 22, 1839, he immediately moved ahead with his plan to relocate the Saints. Before the month of April was out, he followed through with a large land opportunity fifty miles north of Quincy. By May 10, only eighteen days after his arrival in Illinois, Joseph had completed the arrangements and moved to the nearly empty area on the Illinois boarder of the Mississippi River. The area had not grown despite its inviting two previous names: Virgin and Commerce. Most who had tried to settled there had died off. It was even known to the local Native Americans as a place of death. But Joseph felt inspired to buy the available land and began the exodus north to Commerce, Illinois. Brother David Rogers recorded in 1839 that the Lord told the Prophet: “build up a city and call my Saints to this place” (*josephsmithpapers.org*, J2:354; Joseph Smith Journal April 13, 1843).

### *Illinois Land Arrangements*

In 1839 marshlands bordering the Mississippi River were touted as a bargain by entrepreneurs to unsuspecting investors in the East. Land speculation in frontier “paper towns” of Illinois was considered an investment windfall for fortunate buyers. Speculators like Isaac Galland saw the potential for a quick dollar in an infested swamp known as Commerce before the nationwide financial panic of 1837. After the national banking failure, Galland believed there was little hope for his investment and offered to sell Commerce in 1839 for almost no money down, exchanging it for valuable Missouri landholdings abandoned by the Saints. The church members could afford little more and were enticed by his offer.

The Prophet Joseph described the land:

The place was literally a wilderness, . . . mostly covered with trees and bushes, and much of it so wet that it was with the utmost difficulty a footman could get through, and totally impossible for teams. . . . Commerce was unhealthy, very few could live there; but believing that it might become a healthy place by the blessing of heaven to the saints, and no more eligible place presenting itself, I considered it wisdom to make an attempt to build up a city” (B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* 6 vols. [Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1965], 2:9).

The Prophet Joseph and his counselors in the First Presidency—Hyrum Smith and Sidney Rigdon—co-signed notes to purchase the first plots of land in Commerce—the Isaac Galland and James White farms—for \$14,000. Other land deals followed in the greater Commerce area and across the Mississippi River in Iowa.

The Prophet Joseph advised “the brethren, who could do so, to go to Commerce and locate in Dr. Galland’s neighborhood,” which consisted of “one stone house, three frame houses, and two block houses, which constituted the whole city of Commerce” (Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 2:9). The Prophet Joseph resided in one of the block houses, known as the Homestead. Hyrum settled his family in the stone house. Unfortunately, not every Saint found proper lodging, and many were in tents or wagons.

### *Saints Move in Time to Plant a Crop*

Despite much illness which had constantly plagued the refugees since being chased off their Missouri properties, the Saints followed their prophet once more from Quincy to Commerce. Joseph's mother Lucy Mack Smith remembered the details this way:

A man by the name of Miller from McDonough county who showed a very friendly disposition and requested us to informed us that he had a quantity of land where he lived and also a number of log houses that were somewhat out of repair but if the brethren were disposed to settle on his premises they might have the use of the houses by repairing them We were much pleased with the disposition which he manifested and before he left Samuel my sons Samuel and <Don Carlos [Smith] and> Jenkins Saulsbury [Wilkins Jenkins Salisbury] my son in Law agreed with him for a piece of Land sufficient for both of them to work that season Samuel returned with him and after making preparations for their families they removed them to that place (Anderson, *Lucy's Book* 700; Also *josephsmithpapers.org*).

Joseph felt the opportunity to settle on these large tracts of land at a reasonable exchange for Missouri lost lands was an answer to his prayers—despite the hardships that accompanied it. The timing was part of the miracle. If the saints hurried, they could get a good crop that year. Everyone planted—whether you were a store keeper, mason, black smith, baker, or undertaker.

### ***Smith Family Accommodations***

Joseph and Emma moved into one of the existing log cabins very close to the Mississippi River. When his parents arrived, Lucy and Joseph Sr. moved into a small log room next door. Joseph Sr. had been sick with “consumption,” and the Nauvoo climate brought mosquitoes multiplying the problems of “agues bilous fever.” Lucy remembered:

Hyrum's family were mostly sick My youngest daughter Lucy was also very sick and there was in fact but few of the inhabitants of the place who were well Joseph and Emma had the Sick brought to their house and took care of them there and they continued br [sic] have them brought as fast as they were taken down untill [sic] their house which consisted of four rooms was so crowded that they were under the necessity of spreading a tent in yard for the reception of that part of the family who were still on their feet. Joseph and Emma devoted their whole time and attention to the care of the sick during this time of distress (Anderson, *Lucy's Book* 703; *josephsmithpapers.org*).

More and more of the saint-refugees gathered in tents and in old army barracks on either side of the Mississippi River. Thousands became prey to the malaria mosquitoes.

### ***Swamps Breed Malaria Mosquitoes***

Weakened by their ordeals in Missouri and living in makeshift tents and wagons, thousands of Saints fell prey to illnesses inherent in the Mississippi River bottoms. Lucy Mack Smith wrote, “For five nights Emma never left me, but stood at my bedside all the night long, at the end of which time she was overcome with fatigue and taken sick herself. Joseph then took her place and watched with me the five succeeding nights, as faithfully as Emma had done” (*Lucy Mack Smith, History*, p. 306. *JosephSmithPapers.org*). Not everyone survived the illnesses inherent in the swamp-infested area. Yet those who had received and kept their covenants made in conjunction with their Kirtland Temple initiatories knew their lives would not be taken before their missions on earth were complete.

### Apostles Prepare to Leave for England (July 2, 1839)

The Apostles hoped to leave on their mission as soon as they could provide housing and possibly a potential crop for their families. But the warmer summer months brought malaria onto their weakened immune systems. Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal:

Inasmuch as the devil had been in a measure thwarted by the Twelve going to Far West, and returning without harm, it seemed as though the destroyer was determined to make some other attempt upon us to hinder us from performing our mission; for it seemed that as soon as any one of the Apostles began to prepare for starting, he was smitten with chills and fever or sickness of some kind. Nearly all of the quorum of the Twelve or their families began to be sick, so it still required the exercise of a good deal of faith and perseverance to start off on a mission” (Wilford Woodruff, *Leaves from My Journal, Third Book of the Faith-Promoting Series* [SLC: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1881], 68).

In the meantime the prophet provided training for the missionaries. On July 2, 1839, The prophet Joseph held a mission preparation seminar of sorts.

The First Presidency gave special blessings to the two newest Apostles: Wilford Woodruff and George A. Smith. Then Hyrum Smith spoke to the Apostles, counseling them to teach nothing but the first principles of the gospel because that was all “this generation could endure.” Then the Prophet spoke to them about the importance of forgiving their brother “on the first intimations of repentance & asking forgiveness.” Soon thereafter, Joseph Smith gave the Twelve an important “key.” He warned, “In all your trials, troubles, & temptations, afflictions bonds imprisonment & death see to it that you do not betray heaven, that you do not betray Jesus Christ, that you do not betray your Brethren, & that you do not betray the revelations of God whether in the bible, Book of Mormon, or Doctrine & Covenants or any of the word of God . . . lest innocent blood be found in your skirts & you go down to hell” (Freeman, Holzappel, *The British Isles*, vol. 7, Garr).

### Revelation on Mother in Heaven: July 8, 1839

One of the many deaths at this time opened the way for a prophetic revelation. When Zina Huntington, lost her mother, she asked the Prophet Joseph, “Will I ever see my mother again?” Joseph taught her, “More than that,” he said, “you will meet and become acquainted with your eternal Mother, the wife of your Father in Heaven.” Zina asked, “Have I then a Mother in Heaven?” The Prophet answered, “You assuredly have, How could a Father claim His title unless there were also a Mother to share that parenthood?” (Susa Young Gates, *History of the Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, from Nov 1869 to June 1910*, 16).

### Days of Healing: July 21-23, 1839

The Smiths and the majority of the saints were already destitute and immune-compromised. They became deathly ill that summer from mosquitos carrying malaria. On July 21-23, 1839 Joseph recorded healing miracles. The Prophet Joseph, “after being confined to his house several days, and while meditating upon his situation, . . . had a great desire to attend to the duties of his office” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:18). He rose from his sick-bed and received the power to heal hundreds and went out among the Saints. Joseph’s journal account reads:

*Sunday the 21rst [sic]* no meeting on account of much rain, and much sickness, however, many of the sick were <on> this day, raised up by the power of God, through the instrumentality of the Elders of Israel ministering to them in the name of Jesus Christ

*22–23 July 1839*

Monday & Tuesday <also> the sick were ministered unto, with great success but many still remain sick & new cases occurring daily.

Wilford Woodruff recounted those same days of miraculous healings:

[Joseph] commenced to administer to the sick in his own house and door-yard, and he commanded them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to arise and be made whole; and the sick were healed upon every side of him. Many lay sick along the bank of the river; Smith walked along up to the lower stone house, occupied by Sidney Rigdon, and he healed all the sick that lay in his path. . . . After healing all that lay sick upon the bank of the river as far as the stone house, he called upon Elder Kimball and some others to accompany him across the river to visit the sick at Montrose

In Iowa more miraculous healings occurred, beginning with Brigham Young and other leaders. They then joined the Prophet in calling upon God to heal many there. Wilford Woodruff's account adds his own involvement in the miracle:

After healing the sick in Montrose, all the company followed Joseph to the bank of the river, where he was going to take the boat to return home. While waiting for the boat, a man from the West, who had seen that the sick and dying were healed, asked Joseph if he would not go to his house and heal two of his children who were very sick. They were twins and were three months old. Joseph told the man he could not go, but he would send some one to heal them. He told Elder Woodruff to go with the man and heal his children. At the same time he took from his pocket a silk bandanna handkerchief, and gave to Brother Woodruff, telling him to wipe the faces of the children with it, and they should be healed . . . Elder Woodruff did as he was commanded, and the children were healed (Wilford Woodruff Journal, July 21-22, 1839).

These three miraculous days of healing reached all within Joseph's path. Unfortunately, humans can contract malaria over and over. It became their plague until the saints were able to drain the swamps it was a dangerous place to live in the summer time. Illness and pain were especially part of pre-immunization life—but the summer of 1839 was one of the worst for the Saints.

### The Apostles Continue East on their British Mission

By the late summer, one or two at a time, the apostles began their trip for England. Each departure story is filled with the pains of illness and difficult goodbyes. In addition to the nine apostles, two elders traveled with them, Theodore Turley and Reuben Hedlock (Freeman, Holzapfel, ed., *Regional Studies: The British Isles*, vol. 7). A newly called apostle was still in England from the first British Mission, Willard Richards.

**Table 2: Apostles Departure from Commerce, Illinois for British Mission**

Aug 8, 1839	John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff
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Aug 29, 1839	Parley P. and Orson Pratt
Sept 18, 1839	Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball
Sept 21, 1839	George A. Smith, Theodore Turley, and Reuben Hedlock
Apr 15, 1840	Orson Hyde—Only stopped in England enroute to Palestine

### ***Wilford Woodruff and John Taylor***

Sacrifice was required on all fronts and slowly the elders left their families for the long trip. Wilford Woodruff and John Taylor were the first to leave on August 8, 1840. Wilford recorded the hard details surrounding their departure:

I arose from my bed of sickness, laid my hands upon the head of my sick wife, Phoebe, and blessed her. I then departed from the embrace of my companion, and left her almost without food or the necessities of life. She suffered from my departure with the fortitude that becomes a saint (Woodruff, *Leaves from My Journal*, chp. 21).

With nothing but a profound faith that God would provide for them, they departed. This faith kept them obediently moving forward, both for Pheobe at home and Wilford abroad. And God did provide for both groups. As often happens in the service of the Lord, their sacrifices became refining fires that drew them to their knees, closer to the Spirit, and at last, God blessed them immensely.

### ***Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball***

Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball prepared to leave even though both men and their families were very sick. Brigham recorded, “There was not a healthy man among us, and some more fitted for a hospital than a journey” (*Manuscript History of Brigham Young*). Their departure from Nauvoo to Great Britain is well known. With their sick families in bed, Heber felt as though his “very inmost parts would melt” at the thought of leaving his family. Asking the teamster to pull up on the reins he said to Brigham, “This is pretty tough, isn’t it; let’s rise up and give them a cheer.” They did so, swinging their hats three times over their heads and shouting, “Hurrah, hurrah for Israel!” Vilate Kimball, hearing their shout, called out, “Good bye, God bless you” (Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* [SLC: Kimball Family, 1888], p. 276).

A week later Vilate Kimball sent a letter to her husband Heber:

As to my feelings I don’t know but I am perfectly reconciled to your going, but I must say I have got a trial of my faith as I never had before. The day you left home was as sick a one as I ever experienced. The pain in my back and head was almost intolerable. No doubt the pain in my head was worse on the account of my much weeping (Letter of Vilate Kimball to Heber C. Kimball, September 21, 1839, in Richard E. Turley Jr. and Britainy A. Chapman, *Women of Faith in the Latter Days, Volume One, 1775-1820* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011], p. 139).

She concluded her letter, “All that I can ask of you is to pray that I may have patience to endure to the end whether it be long or short” (Turley and Chapman, *Women of Faith in the Latter Days*, p. 140).

### ***George A Smith***



George A Smith was sick as well. His Uncle, Joseph Sr., gave George a blessing that promised him healing so that he might, “accomplish a great deal of good, and return safely home again.” George recorded in his journal that the Prophet Joseph also gave his cousin a letter of introduction as he had known him a long time “and always found him faithful in all things” (George A. Smith, “My Journal,” *The Instructor*, March 1947, 168).

**Table 3: Apostles who Served in England**

Apostles	First British Missions	
	1837-1838	1839-1841
Brigham Young		x
Heber C. Kimball	x	x
Orson Hyde	x	*
Parley P. Pratt	X	
Orson Pratt	X	
William Smith		
Willard Richards (1840)	x	x
Wilford Woodruff	x	
John Taylor	x	
John E. Page		
George A. Smith	x	

### ***Orson Hyde and John Page***

Apostle Orson Hyde served in the first British mission, but did not leave with the other apostles for the 1839 mission. One night in March 1840, while pondering where the Lord would have him serve, a vision opened:

The vision of the Lord, like clouds of light, burst into my view. . . . The cities of London, Amsterdam, Constantinople and Jerusalem, all appeared in succession before me, and the Spirit said unto me, “Here are many of the children of Abraham whom I will gather to the land that I gave to their fathers; and here also is the field of your labors” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:375-376).

A few weeks later, at General Conference in April 1840, Elder Hyde referred to an earlier blessing by Joseph and his recent vision. He said: “it had been prophesied, some years ago, that he had a great work to perform among the Jews; and that he had recently been moved upon by the Spirit of the Lord to visit that people” (ibid., 4:106). The Prophet then stood and also felt inspired to call Orson Hyde to journey beyond England, to Palestine in order to dedicate the land for the return of the descendants of Abraham. The congregation voted in favor.

The newly called apostle, Elder John E. Page spoke following Elder Hyde, “with much force on the subject of Elder Hyde’s mission, the gathering of the Jews, and the restoration of the house of Israel” (ibid.). During the last session of the conference, the Prophet Joseph “stated that since Elder Hyde had been appointed to visit the Jews, he had felt an impression that it would be well for Elder John E. Page to accompany him on his mission” (ibid., 4:109).

The two elders started off a few weeks later on April 15, 1840. Miraculous financial gifts were given as they preached across the nation. Sadly, Elder Page never completed his call, fell away and in a few years followed different breakoff groups led by James J. Strang, James C. Brewster, and the Church

of Christ—Hedrickites (Susan Eastman Black, *Who's Who in the Doctrine and Covenants*). On February 13, 1841, Elder Hyde left New York harbor alone. On October 24, 1841 he made it to the old city of Jerusalem in Palestine and offered his dedicatory prayer. It is an inspiration to read (<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/times-and-seasons-1-april-1842/5>). His total mission lasted 33 months.

### Elders Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball's Voyage to England

Brigham Young was then the President of the Quorum. But that did not give him any more financial help than anyone else. When he and Heber left Nauvoo, they only had \$5.00. Someone gave them more money so they had \$13.50 to help pay for a stage coach while they were still so sick. Brigham stored the money in his trunk. Miraculously the trunk continued to supply their travel clear to Kirtland. Brigham estimated that he paid \$87.00 from his trunk.

The Lord's miracles accompanied the apostles' voyage. Once they reached Lake Erie, they boarded a steamboat. On November 26, 1839 a great storm arose. Brigham recorded,

I went upon deck and I felt impres [*sic*] in spirit to pray to the Father in the name of Jesus for a forgiveness of all my sins. And then I set to command the winds to sees [*cease*] and let us [*us*] goe [*sic*] safe on our Jorney [*sic*]. The winds abated and Glory & ouner [*honor*] & prase be to that God that rules all things (Brigham Young 1837–45 Journal, 26 November 1839).

By January 31, 1840, after more than three months of travel, Brigham and Heber reached the New York Harbor. By this point, some of the apostles had already arrived in England. Others were at the harbor working to pay for their passage. Once enough monies were earned, the apostles set sail.

The sailing was excruciating for Brigham. For all twenty-eight days on the sea, Brigham Young was most often too sick to leave his berth. Several missionaries could not eat due to nausea. They were so emaciated when the landed, that their friends did not recognize them.

### The Twelve Apostles Proselytize in England

By the late fall of 1839 the first two apostles arrived in Liverpool, Elders Wilford Woodruff and John Taylor. The area around Liverpool was the capital of the European industrial revolution from 1760 to 1840. The two apostles met up with Pres. Willard Richards who had not left England since his first mission there. He served in England from 1838 to 1842. He bridged both British missions and served as the mission president in between the two apostolic missions. He began his mission as a bachelor, married a British convert, Jennetta Richards (same last name, though not closely related), and they had two sons born in Manchester, England in 1839 and 1840.

On April 6, 1840, Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball arrived after a very difficult voyage, in Liverpool, England. Brigham was so thankful to be off the tossing seas and set foot on solid ground that he “gave a loud shout of hosannah” (Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 69).

On April 14, 1840, shortly after President Brigham Young landed, in fulfillment to the revelation known as D&C 118:6, he ordained Willard Richards as an apostle.

The Twelve divided up to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in various locales. All moved around except for Willard Richards who stayed with his family in Manchester. All correspondence to the

missionaries from the states was sent to his home address, and then Elder Richards forwarded the mail to each traveling missionaries. The Elders labored across the British Isles including in part:

- Heber C. Kimball in Preston where he had previously taught
- Orson Pratt in Scotland
- John Taylor and Joseph Fielding in Liverpool
- Parley P. Pratt and William Clayton in Manchester
- Theodore Turley in Birmingham (imprisoned for eight weeks)
- Brigham Young, Willard Richards, and Wilford Woodruff in Herefordshire
- George A. Smith in Staffordshire, then in London

We have detailed reports of some of the apostles' service in journals and letters. Wilford Woodruff and John Taylor labored five to six months before their fellow apostles arrived in the spring and summer of 1840. In a journal entry from first early six months, Wilford Woodruff recorded miraculous divine guidance to gather Israel. On March 4, 1840, the Lord led him to the John Benbow farm in Manchester:

I found Mr. Benbow to be a wealthy farmer . . . He and his wife received me with glad hearts and thanksgiving . . . I also rejoiced greatly . . . there was a company of men and women—over six hundred in number—who had broken off from the Wesleyan Methodists, and had taken the name United Brethren. . . . [They] were searching for light and truth, but had gone as far as they could, and were calling upon the Lord continually to pave the way before them and send them light and knowledge, that they might know the true way to be saved (Brian and Petrea Kelly, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [American Fork, UT: Covenant, 2000], 233).

During that period, Willard baptized all but one of the 600 United Brethren—male and female.

### United Brethren Preacher: Hannah Gittings

One of the United Brethren preachers who felt the Spirit's confirmation of the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ was not a man. The preacher was a single woman named Hannah Gittings. Later in life, an eye-witness, Job Smith (1828-1913) reminisced of a prayer meeting held at his Uncle's home when Preacher Hannah visited:

About this time (1836), I being about eight years old, one of these preachers . . . with United Brethren. . . . [offered] impassioned appeals for praying by the congregation individually, which seemed to take such hold upon her listeners that several at the same time occasionally might be heard. In due time the meeting closed, and, of course, the lady, needing lodging, was made welcome to stay all night.

Previous to retiring she introduced family prayers. Concentrating now her efforts in behalf of the family, requiring each individual to pray vocally, it soon became my turn. I had been used to repeating the Lord's prayer every night before retiring, but that would not do for this occasion. I was compelled, by her entreaties, to make an effort to use my own words, which I did, in praying zealously for the change of heart which she had been advocating; and, sure enough, it had the effect to make me a very anxious candidate for baptism when Apostle

Woodruff afterwards arrived (<http://ldsbritain.blogspot.com/2015/06/gloucestershire-power-of-prayer.html>).

Starting in 1840, Elder Woodruff taught and baptized “all of the six-hundred United Brethren except one person.” One of those baptized was Hannah Gittings. She was one of the 57 ministers that Elder Woodruff baptized on his British mission. Hannah emigrated to Nauvoo and died there in the faith. Young Job Smith, his father, and extended family were also baptized and migrated to Nauvoo first and later Utah.

### The Vision of Ann Booth

A story from an English convert highlights how the Lord prepared the British Saints to accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Soon after Wilford Woodruff arrived in Manchester, Ann Booth had a vision of the Spirit World and of an apostle in March, 1840. Ann saw her deceased family and famed Methodist founder John Wesley being baptized. She later learned that the apostle in her vision was David W. Patten.

On May 26, 1840 Brigham Young wrote in a letter to his wife about the vision of Ann Booth. He asked his wife to share it with the widow of Elder Patten, Ann Bentley Patten. The vision became known in Nauvoo when the Prophet Joseph Smith spoke of it in a sermon on October 5, 1840. He corrected the information by explaining that the dead may be taught the gospel, but that they will be baptized vicariously on earth, not in the Spirit World (Christopher James Blythe, “Ann Booth’s Vision and Early Conceptions of Redeeming the Dead among Latter-day Saints,” *BYU Studies*, 56, no. 2 [2017]).

### British Conferences—April, July, & October 1840, and April 1841

In April 1840, just days after Brigham Young, Heber Kimball, George A Smith, Parley and Orson Pratt arrived in Liverpool, the Saints gathered for a conference in Preston, England (about 30 miles north of Liverpool). An estimated two thousand saints gathered to hear the newly arrived apostles. Similar to the church conferences under Joseph’s direction, the Apostles called these conferences every few months. The Lord had prepared and called many people in that area to receive the restored church of Jesus Christ.

On July 6, 1840, seven of the eight apostles gathered in Manchester and invited all the Saints in the British Isles to a general conference (Orson Pratt remained in Scotland). Forty-one branches from across England gathered together in a large hall. The minutes from the conference report that there were 2,513 members from England and Scotland, with 256 of them ordained to the priesthood. Since their previous conference in Preston three months earlier, the church had grown by 842 members. Three months after their July conference, 3,500 British converts gathered for an October Conference. To put these numbers in perspective, this was five-hundred more saints that were living in Nauvoo in 1840. Six months later at the April 1841 British Conference, they had 4,000 more British saints gather than the year before.

### Under-Employed British Converts

Many of the new British converts were not well employed. As a sampling, in late November of 1841, Elder George A. Smith estimated that in his area:

“[One-] third of the 450 Saints . . . were fully employed, others worked only two or three days per week, and some worked not at all . . . Some of the Saints are suffering for want of food; others are turned out of employment for being Latter-day Saints. . . . I pray daily for the Lord to gather them up and send them to Zion” (George A. Smith, “My Journal,” *The Instructor*, March 1947, 106).

Brigham felt a need to call these good people to join with the Saints in Nauvoo. By June 1840 the first group of English Saints had voyaged to America to be with the Saints. Other groups left over the next few years.

### A Problem with Publications

The publishing arm of the British Mission blessed the saints enormously. To meet the needs of the missionaries and new converts, Brigham oversaw the publication of missionary tracts, a new edition of the Book of Mormon, hymnal, and a periodical called *The Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star*. The latter claims the title for the longest continuously published periodical in the church—from 1840 to 1970. However, Brigham’s choice to publish a hymnal for the British Saints was problematic. Emma had been given responsibility over the church’s collection of hymns and when she found out he independently published a collection of hymns without consulting her, hard feelings developed.

### Growth of Church

The growth of the British church in those first years was remarkable, and nothing short a miraculous witness to God’s timing. The people living in the industrial northern area (especially around the Staffordshire Potteries), were spiritually open to the message of the restored gospel. However, the capital city, London did not share the same level of missionary success, even though much time and effort was expended. On July 8, 1840, the apostles Heber C. Kimball, Wilford Woodruff, and George A. Smith left to serve in London for the first time. Without a base of converts there, the work did not share the same success. The first British mission (1839-1849), led by Heber C. Kimball, laid the foundation for the apostle’s success in other areas.

The missionaries’ year of service in bore much fruit. The two apostolic missions brought the gospel of Jesus Christ in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. By 1841, there were more British members than American members. The quorum president, Brigham Young, recorded a summary of their work during the Apostles’ one-year sojourn in the British Isles: “We . . . baptized between seven and eight thousand, printed 5,000 Books of Mormon, 3,000 Hymn Books, 2,500 volumes of *Millennial Star*, and 50,000 tracts” (Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 97).

Wilford Woodruff’s journal provides a clear tallied of his missionary work (<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/manual/church-history-in-the-fulness-of-times/chapter-eighteen?lang=eng&0>):

A synopsis of Wilford Woodruff’s travels and labors in 1840.

Traveled	4,469 miles
Held	230 meetings

Established preaching	53 places
Planted	47 churches
which included	1,500 Saints
28 elders	
110 priests	
24 teachers	
10 deacons	
Attended conferences	14
Baptized	336 persons
which included	57 preachers
2 clerks of the Church of England	
Assisted in the baptism	86 others
Confirmed	420
Assisted in confirmation	50 others
Ordained	18 elders
97 priests	
34 teachers	
1 deacon	
Blessed	120 children
Administered unto	120 sick persons
Assisted in procuring	1,000 pounds sterling for printing the <i>Millennial Star</i> , three thousand copies of Latter-day Saint hymns, and five thousand copies of the Book of Mormon
Assisted in emigrating	200 Saints to America

Wrote	200 letters
Received	112 letters
Mobs came against me	4

### Letters Between Missionary Spouses, 1839-1841

The British postal system worked on boats and took weeks if not months to go back and forth. We have a wealth of correspondence between the Apostolic missionaries and their families. They open up the details of how hard every day life was in their companion's absence. Prior to this mission overseas, missions were only a few months, and this two-year separation was trying on both the missionaries and their wives. Each couple writes with a different style—some were verbally affectionate; others were reticent to write their deep feelings.

At a FairMormon conference in 2019, Elizabeth A. Kuehn, a historian with the Joseph Smith Papers project, presented a lecture on the correspondence between the couples. Each couple's relationship and correspondence patterns were unique—both in frequency and style. Surprisingly, she found that the apostles' letters showed their vulnerability as they directly wrote of their trials, while their wives rarely went into detail about their challenges ([https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/conference/august-2019/the-lives-and-letters#\\_ftnref21](https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/conference/august-2019/the-lives-and-letters#_ftnref21)). Both husbands and wives expressed their deep love and faith. I will close with a few example from two couples:

#### ***Heber C. Kimball***

Oct 25, 1839

“. . . the Love that I have for you has eclipsed all mens on earth and I believe it ever will while I live and through Eternity and then will never end. [. . .] I am perfectly miserable out of your site. I esteem you most pressious of all things below this sun.”

Nov 16, 1839

The of separation is “one trial above the rest. So we have gained one more victory over the Devel [*sic*].”

Oct 7, 1840

“I can truly feel for you and the rest of our Sister's who are called to Sacrifise the Company of So near and dear relation and left as it were alone though I must not say alone for I believe that the Lord is and will be with you in their absence. Dear Sister we will lift up our hearts and rejoice looking forward to that day when we shall meet never to part, which may our heavenly father grant.”

#### ***Vilate Kimball***

June 6, 1840

“Br Joseph Young promised to get me a cow, and he has got me a good one for which I feel very thankful. Br Hubbard gave me a pig last spring which I think if well fattened will make our meat for winter. I have plenty of potatoes, turnups . . . so I shall not have much to buy but bread.”

July 18-19, 1840

“I have but one dollar of all that you left with me, I get not much from the Bishop but bread and meat, and some times cant [*sic*] get that. but I have the best of neighbors so I do not suffer.”

***Wilford Woodruff***

Oct 30, 1840

“ . . . many lonely hours, & some gloomy meditations, as you were left alone so long & had no Relations to keep you company, I know this is trying, & none would have bourn it better than you have done.”

Nov 24, 1840

“Phebe I know you have made sacrifices, & great ones to, you have made them for Jesus Christ & his cause, & you have made them for me: Some of them have been of such a nature that it hath required all the powers of the soul to pass through them, & these sacrifices still continue, now our separation is required for a season in order to do the will of God, but I think you are sensible that no worldly honor or Earthly gain would cause this our separation. No nothing but the commandment of God.”

***Phebe Woodruff***

July 2, 1840

“I often felt that I was alone, a stranger in a strange land sick and ill . . . but I would often look back and ask myselfe [*sic*] the question did I leave my fathers [*sic*] house for the sake of honour, ease, or popularity, I . . . try to be reconciled to my situation but I found it to be verry hard work in the situation that I then was in —once I had a kind Wilford to cheer me in my lonely hour, but then I had none.”

July 18, 1840—Writing after the death of her two-year-old, Sarah Emma,

“The Lord has given, and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.