



DIVINE PROVIDENCE

THE WRECK AND RESCUE OF
— THE *JULIA ANN* —

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CHAPTER ONE

The Call to Gather

“Ye are called to bring to pass the gathering of my elect. . . . The decree hath gone forth from the Father that they shall be gathered in unto one place upon the face of this land.”

—Doctrine and Covenants 29:7–8

THE CALL TO GATHER TO ZION IS A DOCTRINE THAT has echoed for millennia from the portals of both heaven and earth. For Jews, Zion was the ancient land of Israel, with its core in the holy city of Jerusalem. For members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the nineteenth century, it was to an American Zion they would go. Latter-day Saints consider themselves descendants of the ancient house of Israel and part of “the literal gathering of Israel.”^[7] But why the need to physically gather somewhere? Wasn’t it enough to travel the crossroads of conversion? Why the call to leave the comforts of one’s family and homeland? Why did the ancient Israelites have to leave the fertile soil of Egypt’s Goshen and pass through the waters of the Red Sea and the deserts

of Sinai? Why did Abraham need to leave Ur and cross over the Mesopotamian midlands to Canaan? Why the ongoing commandment to leave Babylon and come to Zion? We must find the trailhead beyond the plains of man's limited reasoning to determine why this doctrine has been continually emphasized by the Lord's chosen servants throughout the ages and kept in sacred records since the earliest times.

Following the establishment of the LDS Church in 1830, its principles included adherence to the doctrine of the gathering, which resulted in dramatic life changes; many converts made an arduous journey to a new homeland. The many migrant miles traversed by tens of thousands of Mormon converts in the nineteenth century begs the question, Where does the Mormon Trail really begin? One observer queried, "How many branches does it have, and how shall we compute its duration?"[8]



Kirtland Temple, ca. 1880–1920
*George Edward Anderson collection,
courtesy of BYU, L. Tom Perry Special
Collections*

For North American converts in the East, it meant only a trip west to the Mormon gathering places of Kirtland, Ohio; Jackson County, Missouri; or Nauvoo, Illinois, all nestled within the boundaries of Zion's American borders—such journeys did not require an ocean crossing. For many others abroad, there was the “sail before the trail,” and the winds did not always blow toward the promised land. It was a voyage of faith, and it meant not only crossing the borders of belief but crossing over into

another culture, which required tremendous fortitude and patience in a sea of change.

And yet, despite the diverse waves, Saints who traveled via sail and trail knew the purpose of the voyage: to gather as a people and build a temple to the Lord in order to receive special blessings. The Prophet Joseph Smith once asked rhetorically, “What was the object of gathering the Jews, or the people of God in any age of the world?” His answer: “The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation.”^[9]

In the preface to a book of LDS scripture known as the Doctrine and Covenants, reference is made to people who were choosing to follow the ways of the world rather than gathering in righteousness: “They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol, which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon, even Babylon the great, which shall fall” (D&C 1:16).^[10] The appendix to this same book contains an invitation to flee Babylon and return to Zion: “Go ye out of Babylon; gather ye out from among the nations, from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Send forth the elders of my church unto the nations which are afar off. . . . And behold, and lo, this shall be their cry. . . . Go ye forth unto the land of Zion” (D&C 133:7–9). And again, “Go ye out from among the nations, even from Babylon, from the midst of wickedness, which is spiritual Babylon” (D&C 133:14). This theme of leaving Babylon and

gathering to Zion became a prominent subject in LDS scripture during the nineteenth century and is still addressed in modern times, though now with reference to a spiritual condition rather than a physical journey.[11]



Plymouth Dock, 1863

Courtesy of Church History Library (CHL)

A universal call to gather was received by the Prophet Joseph Smith Jr. during the second Church conference of the Latter-day Saints, less than six months after its organization in 1830:

And ye are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect; for mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts; wherefore the decree hath

gone forth from the Father that they shall be gathered in unto one place upon the face of this land, to prepare their hearts and be prepared in all things against the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the wicked.[12]

Yet missionary work and gathering were limited to the boundaries of North America during the first decade of the Church's existence; new converts did not need to cross international borders to suffer stiff opposition from those who tried to thwart the work of the Latter-day Saints. The Saints first assembled in the region of upstate New York, where the Church was established in Fayette on April 6, 1830. As the year 1831 dawned, they were instructed to gather to the Kirtland, Ohio, region and were given specific reasons for so doing: "And that ye might escape the power of the enemy, and be gathered unto me a righteous people, without spot and blameless—Wherefore, for this cause I gave unto you the commandment that ye should go to the Ohio; and there I will give my law; and there you shall be endowed with power from on high" (D&C 38:31–32).

From Kirtland, missionary work expanded during the 1830s to various places in the United States and Canada. Converts from pockets of North America were encouraged to gather to Kirtland, where the temple was being constructed during 1833–1836. Once the temple was complete, Church members were inspired by ordinances performed in this sacred edifice. However, social prejudice soon followed, which forced the Saints to leave the Kirtland region. It was not intended that Kirtland be a permanent Mormon gathering place; in the fall of 1831, the Latter-day Saints were

told, “I, the Lord, will to retain a stronghold in the land of Kirtland, for the space of five years” (D&C 64:21).

During the decade of the 1830s, some Church members also gathered to western Missouri; in 1831, Joseph Smith told Church members that Jackson County, Missouri, was the heart of Zion. LDS scripture noted that “the place which is now called Independence is the center place; and a spot for the temple is lying westward” (D&C 57:3).[13] Yet the Missouri temple was not built at this time, partly because the Saints were driven out by Jackson County mobs at the close of 1833.[14] Five years later, the Missouri Saints who had generally migrated north to Caldwell and Davies Counties, as well as hundreds of Kirtland Saints who had fled to this region, were exiled from the state of Missouri as a result of the extermination order issued by Governor Lilburn W. Boggs on October 27, 1838.[15]

Therefore, a new gathering place for these displaced Ohio and Missouri Saints was chosen the following year: Nauvoo, Illinois. Here, Saints from Canada and the eastern United States, and soon thousands of British converts from abroad, combined their faith and works to build a beautiful city and temple on a mosquito-infested swampland on the eastern bank of the Mississippi River.[16]



Nauvoo Temple

Courtesy of CHL

The assembling of these foreign Saints from abroad did not commence until the necessary priesthood authority for the gathering of Israel was restored to the earth. The designated time and place for such a restoration occurred April 3, 1836, just one week after the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. In this sacred edifice, LDS scripture records that the ancient prophet Moses appeared and restored to Joseph Smith Jr. and Oliver Cowdery “the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth” (D&C 110:11).[\[17\]](#)

The following year, Joseph Smith charged his trusted associate Apostle Heber C. Kimball with the assignment to open up missionary work in

Great Britain. Elder Kimball was joined by fellow Apostle Orson Hyde and five other missionaries.[18] These elders were instructed to teach the message of the restoration of the primitive Church of Jesus Christ and were also warned by Joseph Smith before their departure to “remain silent concerning the gathering . . . until such time as the work [is] fully established, and it should be clearly made manifest by the Spirit to do otherwise.”[19]

After a concerted effort by the missionaries in England, the doctrine of Mormonism penetrated the hearts of many English people, and soon several desired baptism. However, this did not come without much opposition. Shortly after plans were made to baptize the first converts in the River Ribble, Elder Heber C. Kimball noted, “By this time the adversary of souls began to rage, and he felt determined to destroy us before we had fully established the kingdom of God in that land, and the next morning I witnessed a scene of satanic power and influence which I shall never forget.” Among other things, Elder Kimball also recounted the following:

I was struck with great force by some invisible power, and fell senseless on the floor. The first thing I recollected was being supported by Elders Hyde and Richards, who were praying for me; Elder Richards having followed Russell up to my room. Elders Hyde and Richards then assisted me to get on the bed, but my agony was so great I could not endure it, and I arose, bowed my knees and prayed. I then arose and sat up on the bed, when a vision was opened to our minds, and we could distinctly see the evil spirits, who foamed and gnashed their teeth at us. We gazed upon them about an hour and a half (by Willard’s watch). We were not looking towards the window, but towards the wall. Space appeared before us, and we saw the devils coming in legions, with their leaders, who came within a few feet of us. They came towards us like armies

rushing to battle. They appeared to be men of full stature, possessing every form and feature of men in the flesh, who were angry and desperate; and I shall never forget the vindictive malignity depicted on their countenances as they looked me in the eye; and any attempt to paint the scene which then presented itself, or portray their malice and enmity, would be vain.[20]

Despite the fierce opposition from both the seen and unseen world, during the space of just nine months (July 1837–April 1838), these missionaries obtained over fifteen hundred converts,[21] most of whom eventually immigrated to America. Mission success was augmented less than two years later when other members of the Twelve launched another mission in Great Britain at the dawn of 1840. They came not only to expand the work but also to revive a lethargic spirit that had crept in among some of the British converts.[22] The Mormon Apostles reaped great success in the British Isles, and by the spring of 1840, the Church was firmly established in the land. It was in this season that the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles decided it was time to commence the gathering of the British converts to America. About five thousand heeded the call and journeyed to Nauvoo, Illinois, to build and enjoy the blessings of another temple.[23]

CHAPTER TWO

Early Mormon History in Australia (1840–1855)

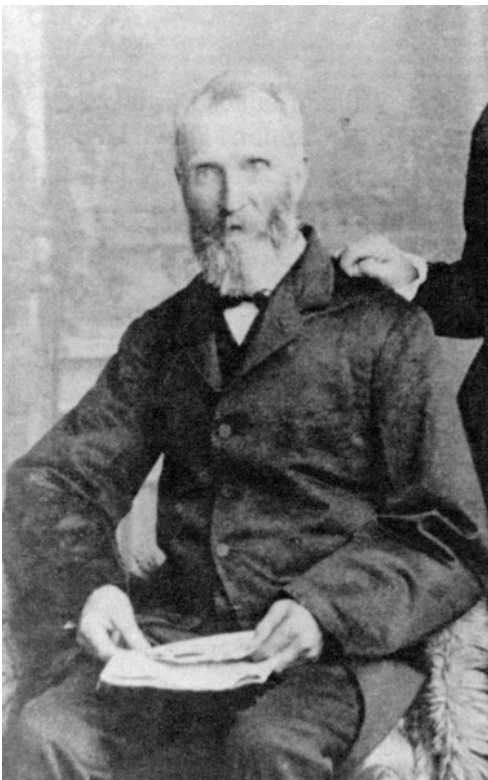
*While on these distant Isles I roam
To Preach the gospel far from home
It's there I look with wishful eye
To see my wife and family*

.....
*And when I call upon his name
My wife and children to see again
His spirit answer to me is
We shall be satisfied with bliss*

—John Murdock [24]

FROM THE TIME THE LDS CHURCH WAS ORGANIZED (1830) until the end of the nineteenth century (1899), LDS leaders sent more than twelve thousand full-time missionaries into the field. Historians have specifically noted that these Church leaders “assigned 6,444

(53 percent) of church members to evangelize throughout the United States and Canada and designated 4,798 (40 percent) of the laity to missionize in Europe, especially in Great Britain and Scandinavia.” Historians also noted that “Mormon authorities sent the remaining 803 (7 percent) elders and sisters to the peoples of the Pacific. In short, they allocated not even a tithe of their missionaries to the Pacific world during the nineteenth century.”^[25] Of this 7 percent, there were only two known part-time LDS missionaries sent to Australia in the 1840s, and only a dozen other American elders were called to serve in Australia between 1851 and March 1854, when the *Julia Ann* embarked on its first voyage carrying Australian Saints.^[26]



William James Barrett, ca. 1880
Courtesy of John Devitry-Smith

During the same year that British converts began to immigrate to America (1840), Elder William James Barratt became the first Mormon missionary sent to Australia.^[27] On July 11, 1840, LDS Church Apostle George A. Smith recorded that he had ordained Barratt “to the office of Elder, furnished him with what books I could, and gave him instructions preparatory to his mission to Australia; he was 17 ½ years old.”^[28] Leaving London in the summer of 1840, the teenage Barratt traveled 16,000 miles and finally disembarked in Adelaide in the

late fall of the year. The *History of the Church* officially noted that after a “rough passage” Barratt arrived safely in Adelaide but by spring “had not baptized any persons.”^[29] On April 9, 1841, he wrote to Alfred Cordon, noting, “I never saw so much Prostitution, Drunkenness and Extortion in England [as] is practised here.”^[30]

Although it appears Barratt baptized few converts and apparently became uninvolved after a couple of years, evidence reveals that his brief harvest indirectly yielded an increase. One that he reaped who produced good fruit (the only known person he baptized) was Robert Beauchamp, who brought many into the fold and later presided over the Australasian Mission for several years.^[31]

Other converts reached Australia a year after Barratt, like the Andersons from Scotland. A Scottish bricklayer, Andrew Anderson and his wife, Elizabeth, were baptized by Elder Orson Pratt in Edinburgh. Pratt ordained Andrew to the office of elder and gave him a license to preach before the Andersons left their homeland for Sydney, where they arrived in the fall of 1841 with their three children. By 1844, Andrew had apparently baptized nearly a dozen people and had organized the very first branch in Australia in the Wellington district.^[32] Concerning his missionary labors, Anderson wrote;

I have gone many miles to preach the gospel, and by so doing pulled down censure upon my own head, for I was told that one of the magistrates of the district of Wellington was to banish me out of this, however, they

have never tried as yet. The last two winters I put out hand bills the same as put up in Edinburgh at the first announcing by O. [Orson] Pratt in that city. I preached on the subjects therein contained every Sunday evening; the last winter I preached in the town of Montpelier, where the first night the room was full and some standing out, and most of them Catholics.[33]

However, it would not be until the decade of the 1850s that official missionaries from Utah would embark from California to be sent Down Under to reap where Barratt and Anderson had sown. The first during this period were John Murdock and Charles Wesley Wandell. Wandell told of the contact made between him and Anderson in the spring of 1852 through a convert named Henry Gale, who had been baptized by Elder Anderson eight years earlier. Anderson, at the time living in the country, wrote the following letter to Wandell (May 17, 1852), who had sent Anderson an invitation to attend an upcoming conference.



John Murdock
Courtesy of CHL

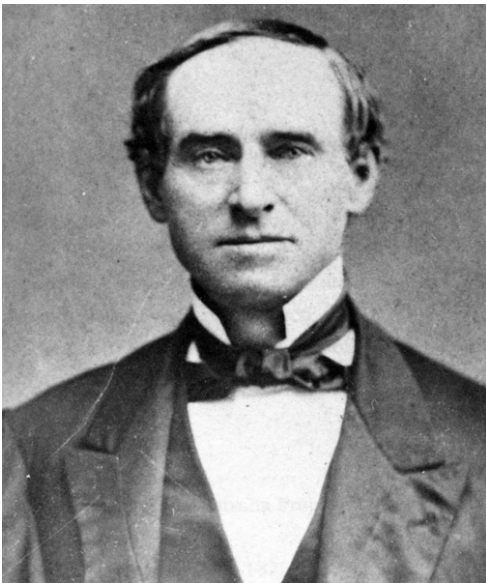
My Dear Brother:—It gives much joy to see from your hand, that you and another of my dear, brethren has come to this wide extended field.

I received your much-welcomed letter on the evening of the 16th; I cannot easily

express my feelings when I opened your letter and saw that it was from one I had not seen yet loved on account of the new and everlasting covenant.

I then formed an idea of starting the next day for Sydney and could have wished myself there in the midst of my dear brethren and sisters, but I found this morning that the idea I had forever last wisht, was not in wisdom; because I could not easily get away at present, and besides it might deprive me of attending the conference that is to be held on the 6th day of July, which I would not on any account absent myself. God willing, I will be in Sydney a few days before the 6th of July.

My beloved brethren, I rejoice to see that the Lord has blessed your labors so much: pray for me your weak and unworthy brother, that I may be strengthened and that a way may be prepared that I may soon enter into the field with you; from your loving brother in the gospel. Elder Andrew Anderson.[\[34\]](#)



Charles W. Wandell

"Hero or traitor: a biographical study of Charles Wesley Wandell" by Marjorie Newton

Yet at this time most Australians were not as welcoming as Anderson and seemed quite distant from the peculiar message of American Mormonism, although there were distinct similarities between the two countries. For example, the *San Francisco Whig* in 1852 described a resemblance in the landscape between the American West and Australia: "Vast plains, entirely naked, or presenting an orchard-like prospect of scattered trees—river channels that at one season are washed and worn by impetuous

torrents, and at another dry, or basins or stagnant ponds—ranges of grass-covered knolls and lofty hills—a floral profusion—a bright sky and a balmy and health-conservative atmosphere, are characteristic of both.”[\[35\]](#)

Beyond the landscape, there was also the more obvious connection between the gold rushes that were going on with great luster in both regions. California was booming with activity in the mid-nineteenth century, and, during the decade of the 1850s alone, more than one-third of the global gold output came from the Australian colony of Victoria. This rush would transform the Australian colonies as gold seekers rushed in. In just two years (1851–1853) the number of newly arrived immigrants was greater than the number of convicts who had been placed on Australian soil during the preceding seventy-year period.[\[36\]](#)



San Francisco Harbor, 1851

Murdock and Wandell left this port for Australia the year this image was taken.

SanFranciscoharbor1851c_sharp.wikipedia

Despite the overwhelming number of new arrivals, rippling effects from the convict era were certainly manifest, and evidence reveals that spiritual conditions “down under,” particularly during the decade of the 1850s—the Australian gold-rush period—were a bit challenging; in general, gold became God for many.[37] In a letter to the Mormon leadership recorded in his journal, John Murdock, the first mission president in Australia, noted, “The people in this country are very shy of strangers; for they are jealous of each other, from the circumstances of so many convicts being the first settlers of this country.”[38]

Murdock and his companion, Charles Wandell, were the first full-time LDS missionaries to go Australia, as well as the first American missionaries to go to Australia.[39] Just getting to Australia proved a bit challenging for this companionship. Before disembarking at Sydney in late October 1851, they had already endured a lengthy seven-week, eight-thousand-mile voyage across the Pacific, accompanied by passengers who were initially unreceptive to their teachings. In fact, according to Wandell, a group of disgruntled ruffians being sent back to Sydney from San Francisco threatened to hang these two Americans on the yardarm during the early stages of the voyage.[40] Yet Murdock optimistically recalled, “Altho there was much prejudice by the 70 passengers on board against our religion, yet we preached each Sunday on the passage and got friends and assendency over their prejudice.”[41]

On Sunday morning, November 2, soon after arriving in Sydney, Murdock went to Hyde Park, popularly known as the “race course,”[42] in an attempt to give a sermon, but the opportunity did not present itself. He returned in the afternoon and requested to preach after a Methodist minister concluded his remarks. Murdock, then nearly sixty years old, notes;

I then requested the attention of the people a few minutes, they gave it. I informed them who I was, where I came from, and what I had cum fore; that it was to preach the gospel. One man wanted to know, who sent me? I told him the God of Heaven sent me. They agreed the[y] would hear me. I spoke on the first principals of the Gospel a short time. . . . They were attentive, but manifested a great deal of curiosity that so old a man should

come so far to preach to them; it was to some of them as novel as if I had come from some other planet.[43]

Recounting the early entrance of Mormonism into Sydney, Wandell further explained;

On the first Sunday, brother Murdock preached a discourse on the public grounds called the Race-Course. On the next Sunday he preached again at the same place, and I bore testimony. I preached in the evening in a school room. We found it impossible to get at the people, except on Sundays on the Race-course. The people are very shy and suspicious of Strangers, and of one another: . . . a great majority of the male inhabitants have gone to the gold diggings; and those that are left are too much excited by it to think of the true riches of Christ: and it is worthy of remark that those who professed to love Christ the most and lucre the least, were the first to be off to the diggings for a little gold, which, in the end, will be worth nothing to them.[44]

Yet in some instances the elders' tenacity paid off, and after nine weeks of hard work, Murdock reported in his journal on January 22, 1852, that after he had returned from laboring in two villages nearby Sydney, he had witnessed three baptisms; Brother Wandell, during Murdock's absence, "had baptized ten; and organized a branch of the Church [in Sydney], himself President." [45] About two weeks later, Murdock wrote to the Church leadership about the missionary labors in Australia and requested qualified elders to assist with the vast harvest: "There is labor for many after the way is opened, and it requires experienced hands to do that. Bro. W.

and I, would be glad to leave as soon as you can supply the mission. . . . And brethren I wish you would attend to this matter, for bro. Pratt has but little idea of the multitude of inhabitation on these Isles. And they [are] continually increasing from Europe.”[46]

Regarding other denominations and religion among the Aussies during this mid-nineteenth-century era, one historian noted, “It was already established that there was no established religion in Australia, and that all were entitled to worship as they chose. This was in part a recognition of ethnic diversity: the overwhelming majority of Catholics were Irish, most Presbyterians Scottish, and they demanded equality of status with the Church of England.”[47] Two historians reasoned that such diversity resulted generally in a measure of forbearance:

In religious matters, distant Australia delivered a relatively large degree of tolerance, if more by muddled uncertainty than deliberate intention. While ardent advocates tried their best to spark disputes between and within denominations, there was little appetite for the importing [of] Britain’s battles over establishment and disestablishment. If the baggage of faith was carried to Australia, not all of it was unpacked. Adherents of the Church of England might have hoped for an established church, and British authorities tended to act and speak as if it was, but growing demands for rights of political representation were accompanied by calls for religious toleration.[48]

Notwithstanding, Mormons appear in large part to be one exception to such a tolerant view. For example, John Murdock observed in traveling to

proclaim the gospel that he “had no chance to preach, because of the incredulity of the people.”[49] Murdock also noted with apparent frustration, “It was with the greatest difficulty I could stay over night . . . and could get no public meeting: for it is verry rair [rare] to attend meeting here only on Sunday, except in the Chapels to read preys, and we cannot get there to preach. It is a common thing when I travel in City, Village or country, tho I should talk an hour at the door in the heat of the Sun they would not ask me in.”[50]

When they did have a chance to preach, they also faced obstacles as described by Murdock when Wandell tried to speak in a meeting: “But a number of young men, stood round the door, to opose and accuse bro Wandell of lieing [and] a multitude of boys were in the street pleying, hollowing, yelling, squalling, and one at the door whistling, and they disturbed the meeting all they could.”[51]

Concerning the continual antagonism, Wandell explained that there was “a constant influx of Australio-Californians, who are sure to be more or less prejudiced against us by California newspaper stories; and those who are professors of religion are the ones that take the utmost pains to influence the people against us.”[52] Less than two years later, it was noted by the Australian Saints that the local clergy was particularly responsible for stirring up the most opposition against them: “In Sydney the bitterness of their feeling is peculiarly manifested in their counsel to their flock, whose fleece they are in fear of losing. Tracts are circulated mis-representing the principles of truth; visitors go abroad impunging the moral standing of the Saints. Priests rise up and lecture against the

revelations of God.”[53] It was later observed by another LDS missionary in Australia, “Mostly in entering new places, there is great opposition manifested.”[54]

In spite of such resistance, the Mormon missionaries found ways to get the word out, and sometimes the word got out regardless. Therefore, Wandell wrote articles in defense of Mormonism that were later published by the Australian press.[55] In reporting missionary work from Down Under to the First Presidency, Wandell noted, “The work continues to increase in interest, and our congregations are large and attentive. The press and the pulpit are actively engaged against us . . . but they only assist in spreading the work, by bringing it into notice. We complacently smile at their holy anger, and their mad efforts recoil upon themselves.”[56]

Though costly, printed LDS literature proved to be an effective tool with a positive impact on spreading Mormonism through such a vast country, equal to the size of the continental United States.[57] Geoffrey Blainey, in his catalytic work *The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia’s History*, observed that “distance is as characteristic of Australia as mountains are of Switzerland.”[58] The effort required to harvest was great, and the laborers were few. Augustus Farnham, who followed Wandell as mission president of the Australasian Mission, wrote, “We want Elders . . . of good physical strength; for it is hard to travel in this land. To preach and travel here, soon wears a man out. The cause of so much travelling being necessary is, that the settlements are scattered. . . . It costs on an average about £3 per day to visit the different Conferences.”[59]

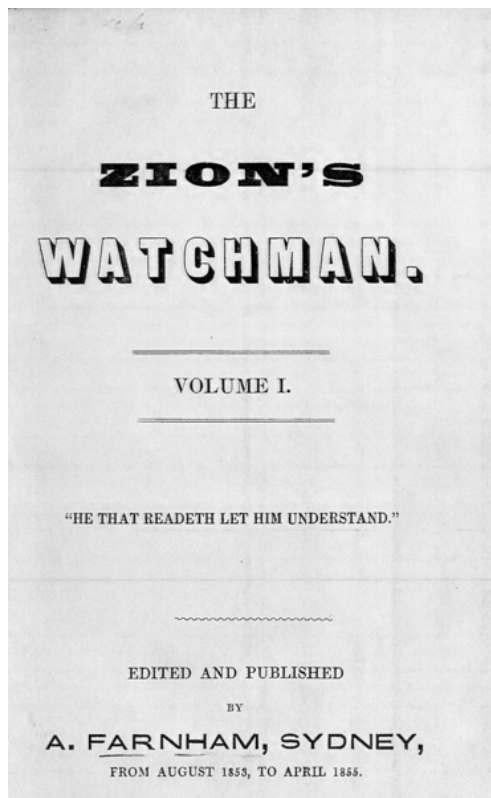
The following comment by Josiah W. Fleming about the scarcity of men in Australia also echoed a reverberation that would last the duration of the nineteenth century: “If we had a few more good, faithful Elders in this land, they would make many a poor honest heart rejoice, for we cannot supply half the calls.”[\[60\]](#)



Parley P. Pratt, President of the Pacific Mission, and his wife, Belinda ca. 1851

Courtesy of CHL

Though the first American missionaries may not have fully recognized this fact when first arriving in Sydney, Elder Murdock felt it wise to print a proclamation penned by Elder Parley P. Pratt of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who supervised the entire Pacific region.[61] Soon thereafter, Murdock evidences that he was also using Elder Pratt's well-known tract "Voice of Warning," adding, "We had 2000 copies of P. P. Pratt's Proclamation printed for £9. 2000 [copies of] O. [Orson] Pratt's remarkable visions £9. [And] 500 pamphlet form of Hymns £6. And now printing 2000, *History of the persecution of the Saints in America* £32. In all £56." [62]



Front Cover of the *Zion's Watchman*

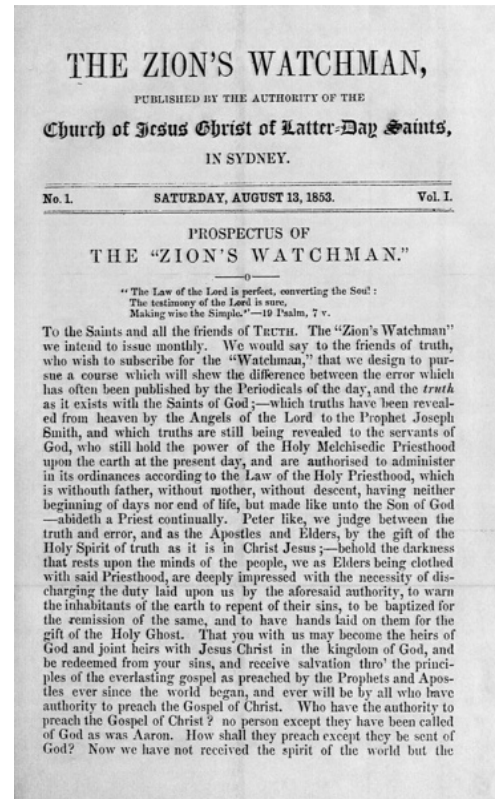
These tracts proved useful in spreading the word about the Mormons to various regions of Australia. An Australian LDS periodical titled *Zion's Watchman* was used to strengthen local Church members, attract investigators, and defend the Mormon faith. Launched in the late summer of 1853, its presence caught the attention of the British Saints. The English periodical of the Church, published in Liverpool, the *Millennial Star*, noted, "We hail the first tidings from our fellow-watchman of the Antipodes with gladness, and we trust his warnings

may be attended to by those who may be located near his tower of observation. We have no doubt that the Saints in Australia rejoice that they

have a watchman now in their midst, to tell them of the night.”[63]

Zion's Watchman was a monthly periodical published in Sydney by Augustus Farnham and was similar in general content to the *Millennial Star*, though the *Watchman* generally had only eight pages per issue, and the *Star* sixteen. The first edition went to press on August 13, 1853, shortly after Farnham arrived in Australia, and ran somewhat regularly until the second group of American missionaries began to travel home about two years later. Augustus A. Farnham served as the paper's editor while also serving as the president of the mission.[64]

The prospectus of *Zion's Watchman* released the following announcement in its first issue: “To all the Saints and all the friends of truth. . . . We would say to the friends of truth, who wish to subscribe for the ‘Watchman,’ that we design to pursue a course which will shew the difference between the error which has often been published by the Periodicals of the day, and the *truth* as it exists with the Saints of God.”[65] The preface also emphasized the need to defend the LDS faith and calm the apparent troubles with local Australian newspaper firms:



Prospectus to *Zion's Watchman*
Courtesy of BYU Harold B. Lee
Library, L. Tom Perry Special
Collections

We would assure the reader, that we did not take upon us the duties and responsibilities of conducting the *Watchman*, because that we were secularly educated, or practically qualified for the duties of an editor, neither was it to gratify our own personal ambition, but we were actually forced into our present position by the press in these colonies, who were continually inserting articles against the character and doctrines of the saints, and uniformly refused to insert a reply except as an advertisement, for which they charged an exorbitant fee.[66]

This LDS Australian periodical was especially timely: plural marriage had been announced the previous year, and the doctrine of polygamy was bombarded with continuous slander and stood in need of constant defense. After plural marriage became public, the *Sydney Morning Herald* and other Australian papers spread the word, usually in an unfavorable light.[67]

In the earliest issues that followed, the *Watchman* printed a defense of plural marriage: “A Sermon of Plurality of Wives, Delivered in the Tabernacle at Great Salt Lake, August 29th, 1852, at 10:00 a.m., by Orson Pratt, one of the twelve Apostels of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”[68] In additional issues, a lead article appeared that refuted false claims by a local Sydney Christian newspaper titled “A Reply to the ‘Christian Herald’ on the Plurality of Wives,” immediately followed by an article titled “Celestial Marriage in Deseret,” extracted from *The Seer*, authored and published by Elder Orson Pratt.[69] By the end of the following year, evidence suggests that polygamy was still an issue, and the *Watchman* continued to provide ammunition to defend the doctrine.[70]



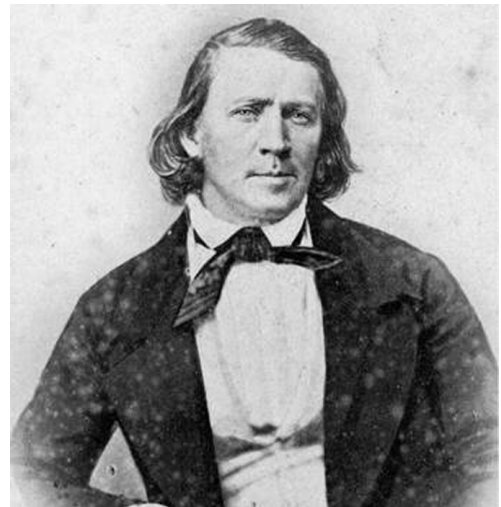
Salt Lake City Tabernacle, 1855

Courtesy of the Utah State Historical Society

Right before the issue of polygamy became public, Elder John Murdock returned to Utah due to poor health (mid-1852), and Charles Wandell, the only full-time LDS missionary left, carried on the work for another ten months with forty-seven members to shepherd. However, he was assisted by a number of local brethren who served as part-time missionaries.[71] In the early spring of 1853, an additional ten missionaries came to Australia aboard the *Pacific*, and this very ship carried the newspapers that publicly announced the practice of polygamy by the Mormons as reported by the *Sydney Morning Herald*. [72] Coincidentally, Wandell was just leaving Sydney aboard the *Envelope* [73] at the time the new missionaries arrived in port with the news. [74]

Not only did the missionaries have to deal with polygamy in a metropolis such as Sydney, but this doctrine also became a challenge to the elders laboring in rural regions as the word spread to the Australian countryside. For example, Elder Burr Frost, one of the ten missionaries who came from America aboard the *Pacific*, recorded in his journal on November 19, 1853, that he had met a man who “saw something about the celestial marriage and taking a second wife which he felt to reject and us with it.”[75] However, fervent testimonies by the missionaries and printed literature in the *Zion’s Watchman* and other LDS publications helped to address the issue throughout this period.

Another topic that received frequent attention in the *Watchman* was the doctrine of the gathering. Conversion and the importance of gathering to Zion went hand in hand. New converts were continually encouraged to emigrate to Utah as soon as occasion would permit. In an article penned by a Utah elder who accompanied Frost, the urgency of the gathering to Utah in order to receive sacred ordinances was laid out: “We have many ordinances to attend to which pertain to our own salvation, and also to the salvation of our dead, which we cannot attend to in our scattered condition.”[76] Letters from Brigham Young to Australasian Mission president Augustus Farnham were also published to encourage the Saints



Brigham Young, ca. 1851–1852

Courtesy of CHL

on the topic of the gathering, telling the Saints to take every opportunity to gather as quickly as possible.[77] In one epistle of Young to Farnham on the gathering, Brigham wrote, “You will . . . organise and regulate matters in the most judicious manner for the continuance of the work; but gather out the Saints and bring them with you as far as you shall be able to do so.”[78]

The gathering from Down Under was a different story than the European harvest. Instead of reaping tens of thousands of converts in the mid-nineteenth century, as in Scandinavia and Great Britain, the Australian soil would yield only hundreds of converts. The difference can be somewhat understood when the number of missionaries per square mile is considered, as well as the demographics; most of the work in Australia was done by about a dozen missionaries covering a vast continent, compared to the thousands with sickles in their hands in far larger cities in the British Isles. [79] Less than 1 percent of the total gleanings from the foreign mission field came from Australia.



Further, Australian Saints were required to travel twice the distance at three times the cost.[80] While there was the doctrine of the gathering, there was also the immediate need to take care of local Church members. They struggled to obtain needed funds to care for their families and prepare for the expensive journey to Zion. The needs of members in the Sydney Branch, near Church

Burr Frost

Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah,

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headquarters for the Australasian Mission,

varied from the needs of members in the gold fields hundreds of miles away.

Nevertheless, members from various

regions were dedicated to the gospel. For example, soon after Burr Frost arrived in the mission field, he headed for the gold fields to proselytize; less than six months later, Frost organized a small branch in the Bendigo gold fields named the Gold Diggers Branch. He also collected a large sum of gold from the miners who wanted to pay their tithing.[81]

The everyday operations of the Church, as well as a glimpse of the lives of Australian Church members in the Sydney region, are illuminated in the 1854–187 journal of John Perkins, a “college bred man.” After reading the Book of Mormon day by day, as well as other LDS literature, John Perkins was baptized in February 1854.[82] Concerning this life-changing event, Perkins wrote, “I felt quite light and revived after coming up out of the water.”[83] The following day, when he was confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and received the gift of the Holy Ghost through the administration of the laying on of hands, he wrote, “While being confirmed today I felt (at the time that the Ministers of God had their Hands on my head[]) . . . as tho there was a stream of fire running through my body. I may thank God[’s] Son [for] bringing me into the only true Church on this earth founded as it is on direct revelation from Heaven.”[84]



Endowment House, Salt Lake City, used to perform sacred ordinances before completion of the Salt Lake Temple

Courtesy of Utah State Historical Society

Journal entries reveal that the Australian Saints in the Sydney region, although a small group, held Church meetings several times during the regular work week as well as on Sunday. The first week of Perkins’s church membership was very active. Three days after his baptism, Perkins describes gathering in President Farnham’s room with a small congregation of Saints for a testimony meeting held on a Wednesday.[85] It was here that he made his first attempt at speaking publicly. The following day (Thursday) Perkins attended what he describes as a “Singing Meeting at the President’s Room.”[86] On Friday, another singing meeting was held at the President’s Room.[87] On Sunday, he noted, “Attended divine service at the rooms in King Street three times today. Very much edified by the several

discourses.”[88] Such a regular series of meetings continues throughout his journal. Perkins’s written record also provides evidence of individual needs being met via visits to local Sydney Branch members in his priesthood capacity of a teacher.[89]

Yet during the nineteenth century, the ministry of the local Saints in Australia was meant to be temporary until they could flee Babylon (the world) and travel permanently to Zion. This counsel to immigrate to America (Zion) as soon as possible was repeated frequently to Church members worldwide by local Australian Church leaders and LDS General Authorities throughout the century. The directive was particularly clear in letters written by President Brigham Young to the Australasian Mission president, Augustus Farnham. In 1853, President Young wrote, “On the subject of the gathering, you are aware that the spirit and word to scattered Israel is, ‘come home to the vallies of the mountains, as fast as circumstances will permit.’”[90] Less than two years later, this same counsel came from Young to Farnham again.[91] In the same month the directive was repeated, a sermon appeared in the *Zion’s Watchman* stating that the foundation stones had been laid for the Salt Lake Temple, echoing the invitation to “let Zion complete this Temple.” [92] This communication no doubt influenced the Australian Saints in their decision to travel to America.

During this same time, the Australasian Mission Presidency issued a second general epistle to the Australian Saints that strongly advocated the critical need to gather to the Salt Lake Valley to receive temple blessings through apostolic authority:

We would again entreat the saints to use every possible effort in their power to flee the confines of Babylon, ere the way becomes more closed than it is at present; cease to spend your money on that, that neither benefits body or mind, remember that all will be required for securing your temporal, yea, and your eternal salvation, for if you gather not with the saints, and are not administered to in the holy ordinances of the house of God, by those who hold the keys of the Holy Apostleship, and who have power to bind on earth, that which will be bound in heaven, you cannot attain unto the blessing, honour, glory, and exaltation that await such as are thus privileged.

Beloved saints, the very end of this dispensation, which is “the dispensation of the fulness of times,” is to “gather [together] in one” dispensation, all the dispensations ever sent to the earth; to gather in one authority all the keys and powers of the previous dispensation, so that the power and authority of the saints on the earth may be one with power and authority of those behind the veil, for the purpose of accomplishing the design and purpose of God in relation to man and this earth, this design and purpose is, “the restoration of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began.” It is in this dispensation that the Lord hath said, that, He will bring His saints together unto him; those that have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice, these will be gathered in one on the earth. This dispensation is *preeminently a gathering dispensation*. The peculiar influence of the spirit given in this dispensation is a spirit to gather, therefore none, whatever their profession may be, can enjoy the spirit of the Lord, and possess the blessings of the gospel, who neglect or disregard the important commandment to gather. Then let the saints arouse themselves with deeper interest than ever on this important matter. . . . Prepare to gather with us to a place of safety . . . gather to where the prophet of God is, where his temple is being built, where his angels will minister, where his power will protect and deliver. Gather before the desolating scourges overtake these lands, for the Lord has decreed a consumption of the whole earth.[93]

During the nineteenth century, about half of the Australian converts followed this counsel to gather to Zion; the peak decade for immigration to America was the 1850s, when 62 percent of foreign converts immigrated. Between 1853 and 1859, a total of 440 Australian Latter-day Saints immigrated to California on eight voyages. Of this number, 96 percent had been born in the British Isles and had therefore immigrated to Australia prior to their departure for America.[94]

Immigration to America could have been motivated by secular reasons as well as spiritual ones. Augustus Farnham, writing in the fall of 1854, stated, “The desire to leave the confines of Babylon pervades the mass of the Saints here, and they are striving with all their power to gather.”[95] A few months later, as the new year dawned, Farnham again wrote, “The Saints here are generally very anxious to gather out—the extremely high rate of living here, united with the prospect everywhere felt of an approaching commercial crisis, increases that desire.”[96]

Farnham’s comment about the cost of living suggests that a secondary factor for immigration to America was economic, but his additional mention of leaving Babylon, coupled with an abundance of other LDS first-person immigrant accounts, reveals that the primary motive for both Australian and British converts was spiritual.[97]

In a letter sent from Salt Lake City on October 28, 1853, to LDS convert Captain Thomas C. Stayner[98] written by his children who were recent passengers on the *Envelope*, the first voyage of Australian Mormons

to America, we find strong evidence of a spiritual call to a father from his offspring:

When do you think of leaving Babylon and come to Zion, let the time not be far distant, I feel that if you do not take the first opportunity that offers, you will either not come, or it will be in much sorrow and mourning. I am glad, Tom and Arthur are glad, that we are in Zion, in the city where the Prophet of God dwells, here is manifested the power of God. I feel thankful that we have the privilege of hearing Brigham tell us the mind and will of God, we now cannot feel sorrow that we did not live in the days when the Prophets of old revealed the will of God, no, for we are favoured as much as they were.[99]



Jane C Robinson Hindley and child
Courtesy of CHL

This spiritual call to gather is also evident in a riveting journal entry by British convert Jane C. Robinson Hindley, who immigrated to Zion the same year the ill-fated *Julia Ann* left the Sydney docks in 1855. It no doubt reflects the views of Australian Latter-day Saints, like the Stayners, who were bound for Utah during this same time period: “I believed in the principle of the gathering and felt it my duty to go although it was a severe trial to me and my feelings to leave my native land and the pleasing associations that I had formed there. But my heart was fixed, I knew in whom I had trusted and with the fire of Israel’s God burning in my bosom I forsook my home but not to gather wealth or the perishable things of this world.”[100]

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