



Editors' Introduction

The year 1997, the sesquicentennial of the arrival of the first Latter-day Saint settlers in the Salt Lake Valley, has been marked with commemorations by members of the Church throughout the world, celebrating not only the sacrifices and struggles of the 1847 pioneers, but also the ongoing story of people coming to Zion. This continuing trek includes stories of missionary work and conversions throughout the world, as well as the saga of Latter-day Saint immigration by way of sailing vessels, covered wagons, and handcarts that brought over eighty-five thousand pioneers to Utah before the transcontinental railroad arrived in 1869. Their devotion and heavy sacrifices make modern Saints more cognizant of their own responsibilities as inheritors of this legacy and of the fact that in the Latter-day Saint world of 1997 there are new pioneers in every land—new members of the Church who are anxiously engaged in the process of building Zion in areas and among peoples and cultures where the restored gospel has never effectively been introduced before. As President Gordon B. Hinckley said in a video presentation at the April 1997 general conference of the Church:

This great pioneering movement of more than a century ago goes forward with latter-day pioneers. Today pioneer blood flows in our veins just as it did with those who walked west. It's the essence of our courage to face modern-day mountains and our commitment to carry on. The faith of those early pioneers burns still, and nations are being blessed by latter-day pioneers who possess a clear vision of this work of the Lord. (*Ensign* 27 [May 1997]: 64)

As one contribution to an understanding of our pioneer heritage, we bring together in this volume some of the best scholarly

articles that have appeared over the years in *BYU Studies*, together with a previously unpublished address, “Pioneer Footsteps of Faith,” by **Elder M. Russell Ballard**. We had a rich assortment of articles to draw from, offering a wide diversity of insights into that epic story of “coming to Zion.”

The Latter-day Saint move to the West began long before the first group of exiles crossed the Mississippi River and camped on the frigid Iowa prairie in February 1846. As **Lewis Clark Christian** tells us, Joseph Smith made frequent reference to the fact that one day the Saints would establish themselves in the West, and after Joseph’s death Church leaders made increasingly intensive studies of the area. Even before they left Nauvoo, they had a good idea of where they were going and what they would find. As the great migration got underway in 1846, the first pioneers built communities in Iowa that would become way stations for those who followed. These are discussed in **Leland H. Gentry’s** detailed study. Numerous complications arose in preparing to move thousands of people across Iowa and settling some of them temporarily in Iowa and Nebraska, not the least of which was negotiating with the Native Americans who had rights to much of the territory where the Saints would stop. **Lawrence G. Coates** informs us of this in “Refugees, Friends, and Foes: Mormons and Indians in Iowa and Nebraska,” an amalgam of his prior studies on Mormon-Indian relations against the background of American Indian policy.

When the year 1846 ended, the main body of the Saints was camped at Winter Quarters, Nebraska, and numerous other settlements along the Missouri River. **Richard E. Bennett** describes the activities of Church leaders in making final plans for the push across the heart of the continent, and **Stanley B. Kimball** documents the various trails across Nebraska followed by the Saints and other pioneers over the next two decades.

A poem by **Dian Saderup Monson** and the next four articles discuss other aspects of the emigration process. Saderup’s touching verse captures the heart-rending tragedy that resulted when the Martin handcart company was caught in a terrible snowstorm in 1856. **Stanley B. Kimball** provides little-known details about the water and railroad routes used by immigrants to reach

their outfitting posts before hitting the overland trail. **Rulon A. Walker** and **John Devitry-Smith** tell us of the voyages of two ships carrying Latter-day Saint converts across the ocean, the *Ellen Maria* from Great Britain and the ill-fated *Julia Ann* from Australia, and **William G. Hartley** reminds us of the importance of Florence, Nebraska, as an outfitting post for Mormons headed westward. In particular, he tells the story of the “fitout” of 1861 in connection with Brigham Young’s “down-and-back” plan, by which wagon trains went eastward from Utah to bring the poorer Saints west at a much reduced cost.

Other articles tell of the rise of the Church in the British Isles, from whence more converts came to Zion than from any other place. **Ronald W. Walker** discusses the rise of the Church in England, **Leonard J. Arrington** tells of Latter-day Saint women in nineteenth-century Britain, and **Frederick S. Buchanan** covers the story of the Church in Scotland during that century.

The final piece, presented at a BYU forum, provides a glimpse into early Mormon society: **Maureen Ursenbach Beecher** provides an important interpretation of the role of women in pioneer Utah, giving “faces” to specific women by making the reader personally acquainted with them.

We hope you enjoy this commemorative publication and that it contributes to your appreciation for the Latter-day Saint pioneer heritage. We also wish to recognize the indispensable work of several people, without whose efforts this book could not have appeared: Jennifer Hurlbut and Elizabeth Watkins for editing; Richard Neitzel Holzapfel for photographs; Jeffrey Bird for cartography; and Karl F. Batdorff and Marny Parkin for production.

We appreciate the assistance of the photo archivists at the Archives Division, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; the Museum of Church History and Art; the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Mass.; the Smithsonian Museum; the Utah State Historical Society; and the Daughters of Utah Pioneers.

James B. Allen
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"This Is the Place" Monument, Emigration Canyon, Utah. Looking out over the Salt Lake Valley, the monument commemorates the arrival of the first pioneer company on July 24, 1847. The 12½-foot-high figures atop the central pedestal are, from left, Heber C. Kimball, Brigham Young, and Wilford Woodruff. Bronze statues by Mahonri M. Young, on a base of Utah granite. Dedicated 1947. Courtesy LDS Archives.



Pioneer Footsteps of Faith

Elder M. Russell Ballard

It takes a lot of planning, as you can appreciate, to get ready to have a grand international celebration for basically the six months from April through October 1997, so the pioneer sesquicentennial committee was appointed by the First Presidency over four years ago. In its earliest deliberations, our committee devoted a good deal of thought and prayer to finding a theme that would have a true meaning in every nation of the world. When “Faith in Every Footstep” was proposed, it felt so right for the whole world. This year we will celebrate the lives of pioneers in every unit of the Church, because there are pioneers wherever and whenever the Church has been established in the world.

The first pioneers in this world were Adam and Eve. They had faith in every one of their footsteps when they were cast out of the Garden of Eden. The history of the Church from the Old Testament prophets through to our present prophet, Gordon B. Hinckley, is filled with faith. All those marvelous pioneers from Adam to today walked in faithful footsteps as they established the kingdom of God upon the earth. It took exceeding faith for them to protect and defend the Church; many gave their lives for the cause. As we think of the Apostles of old and consider the missions they were sent on, we realize that they, too, were pioneers in every sense of the word.

In my judgment, with the exception of the Lord Jesus Christ, no greater pioneer ever lived on the face of the earth than the Prophet Joseph Smith. Anyone who studies the Smith family and learns how the Lord moved them from Vermont to New York and finally to Palmyra can appreciate the challenges that this family had; they were surely great pioneers. Great footsteps of faith were taken by young Joseph when he walked to the place now known

as the Sacred Grove and there had the marvelous vision of the Father and the Son which is the foundation of our faith. How grateful I think all of us must be that Joseph had the kind of courage and faith that led him to ask of God to know the truth.

The journey from the Sacred Grove to Cumorah also required faith in every footstep. We cannot really understand what must have been going through Joseph's mind in those tender years of his life as he prepared to receive the Book of Mormon plates from Moroni and to translate them. Faith was the companion of Joseph and Oliver in this great work of translation. The Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods were restored because of great footsteps of faith that Oliver Cowdery and Joseph took to the banks of the Susquehanna River. I believe that the Prophet Joseph's sincere desire to accomplish our Father in Heaven's purposes led his every footstep.

The revelations that came to Joseph in Kirtland have blessed our understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Kirtland is a special place, and I have had the wonderful opportunity in the last three years to better understand the history of the Church as it unfolded there. Kirtland is filled with footsteps of faith. One cannot visit any of the Church-owned properties there and read the original jour-



The Kirtland Temple, before 1887. Building the House of the Lord was the focus of the Saints' efforts for three years, beginning with Hyrum Smith's eager work at the site. Courtesy RLDS Church Archives.

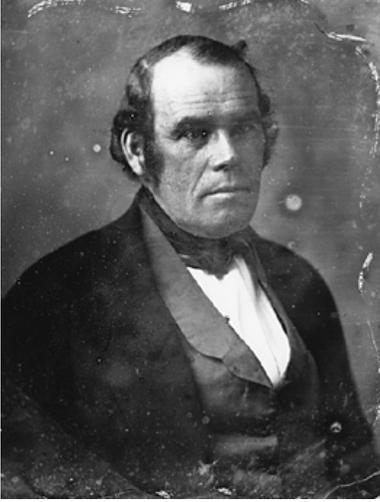
nals and study the revelations without feeling the power of faith that moved and motivated the Prophet Joseph Smith and the brethren in Kirtland. When the Lord condemned the Church because its members had not proceeded to build the temple, my great-great-grandfather Hyrum Smith picked up his scythe and, in footsteps of faith, hastened immediately to the temple site and started to clear the land for the temple. I marvel at Hyrum's faithful life.

Two or three years ago, I had the special experience of holding a sacrament meeting in the Kirtland Temple with our Church leaders from the eastern states, meeting there for the first time since 1840. There was a wonderful outpouring of the Spirit as we read the revelations that occurred in that temple. As the General Authorities blessed and passed the bread and water to the stake presidents, mission presidents, temple presidents, and their wives, we felt the Spirit of the Lord. When we sang "The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning" and reflected on the faith in every footstep that made the Kirtland Temple possible, many had to wipe away their tears.

Faith was the power that gave the Prophet Joseph Smith the courage to send out missionaries when he needed to have close to him all the strength of the priesthood possible. But when the Lord said it was time for the gospel to be taken to England and other places, missionaries with great faith heeded the call of the prophet and went abroad.

Perhaps you have heard the story of the faith shown by Parley P. Pratt when Elder Heber C. Kimball went to the Pratt home to call Parley on a mission to Upper Canada. At that time, Parley had absolutely no resources, and his wife was desperately ill. But Heber prophesied, "'Brother Parley, thy wife shall be healed from this hour, and shall bear a son, and his name shall be Parley. . . . Take no thoughts for your debts, nor the necessaries of life, for the Lord will supply you with abundant means for all things. . . . You shall yet have riches, silver and gold.'"¹ It took a great deal of faith for Parley P. Pratt to put his earthly belongings in a knapsack and give his wife a kiss good-bye and start walking to Upper Canada.

He arrived in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, basically destitute, hungry, dirty, and tired. He learned that a ferry could take him from Hamilton across Lake Ontario to Toronto, which was his



Parley P. Pratt, about 1853. Daguerreotype by Marsena Cannon. Courtesy LDS Archives.

destination, but it cost money. He went into a forest and knelt down and prayed. He later recorded that, when he came out of the forest, a stranger came to him and said, “I perceive that you need some help. How can I help you?” Parley P. Pratt said, “I need to get over to Toronto. I have no money, and I am hungry. Any help you can give me I would appreciate.” The stranger reached into his pocket and gave him ten Canadian dollars and a letter of introduction, saying, “When you get to Toronto, you look up this man and he will help you.” That same evening Parley knocked on the door of John Taylor.²

On that mission, Parley also found Joseph Fielding, ultimately converting him and his two sisters.³ One of these, my great-great-grandmother Mary, was thirty-seven years old when she arrived in Kirtland. You know the story of Hyrum losing his first wife, Jerusha, and being counseled by his younger brother Joseph to take Mary Fielding as his wife. Together they had two children, a son and a daughter. The faith in every footstep of Parley P. Pratt resulted in the conversion of the third President of the Church and the mother of the sixth President of the Church; from these two families descended the tenth President and several Apostles in various generations.

I have always enjoyed reading Wilford Woodruff’s account of the meeting held in the little Kirtland schoolhouse before the march of Zion’s Camp. He recorded in his journal that that was the first time he had ever met Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Parley P. Pratt, and others. The Prophet Joseph invited each one of the brethren to express themselves, and when they concluded, the Prophet said:

“Brethren, I have been very much edified and instructed in your testimonies here tonight, but I want to say to you before the Lord,

that you know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and Kingdom than a babe upon its mother's lap. You don't comprehend it. . . . It is only a little handful of Priesthood you see here tonight, but this Church will fill North and South America—it will fill the world."⁴

Faith in every footstep has seen that prophecy literally fulfilled. Many of you have had your feet planted on foreign soil, and you have walked among peoples who were totally strange to you. Today every mission call is a fulfillment of Joseph Smith's prophecy.

Reading of the Saints in Missouri—the stories of the destruction of the printing building, Haun's Mill, and other such experiences—fills our hearts with an appreciation for our great pioneers. Liberty Jail! I do not know how the Prophet and Hyrum and their associates ever lived through that experience, but they did. And out of that suffering came, in my judgment, two of the most important revelations that the Church has. I believe that section 121 of the Doctrine and Covenants is the greatest declaration there is on how people are to treat each other, with particular emphasis on how men should treat their wives and children.

Following in the footsteps of faith, we move on to Nauvoo and the tender moments of that last day or two before Hyrum and Joseph would leave Nauvoo for Carthage. The comments of the Prophet Joseph as he looked at the Nauvoo Temple for the last time touch the heart. To our family, the scene when Hyrum reached down from his horse and gathered into his arms little Joseph F. and held him and kissed him before he and Joseph rode off to Carthage is a most precious one. No greater footsteps of faith were ever taken than those of Joseph and Hyrum toward Carthage.

So faith in every footstep leads to Brigham Young, whose mighty leadership from Nauvoo to Winter Quarters and on to the Salt Lake Valley is primarily what we are celebrating during this sesquicentennial year. But I hope that we will never hesitate to celebrate the marvelous pioneering efforts of Adam through Joseph and Hyrum, to Brigham, and now to the faithful Latter-day Saint pioneers of the past 150 years.

It took 131 days for the pioneers leaving Nauvoo to travel through Iowa. I think this saga is one that everybody should read during 1997. One cannot study the struggle through Iowa and

remain the same. That trek was only 300 miles, but those were footsteps of faith rarely paralleled in history. My wife and I had the opportunity to be at Winter Quarters recently, and we read some of the journal entries that explained the trauma and tragedy of the people. To me, being there and reading the journals helped me to realize what faith really is, and my heart will never be the same again. When the first company of Saints left Winter Quarters, they took 111 days to travel the 1,050 miles to the Salt Lake Valley. With faithful footsteps, many others followed, enduring the heat of the summer sun and the cold of early winter snows.

Who can study the saga of the Mormon Battalion and not have his or her heart touched by the accounts of the thousands of footsteps of faith from Winter Quarters to San Diego? This is the longest military march on record. The journals of Mormon Battalion members build faith and great affection for these men of unusual strength and courage.

It is a wonderful thing to know that Joseph Smith prophesied that the Saints would be driven to the Rocky Mountains. He had seen this valley in vision. He knew where the Saints would go, and he told them that the exodus would be difficult, that some would apostatize, and that some would lose their lives. He must have seen in vision the pioneer trail.

Brigham Young, on more than one occasion, saw in vision the Prophet Joseph Smith standing on Ensign Peak. Prior to entering the Salt Lake Valley, Brigham Young, who was ill and riding in Wilford Woodruff's carriage, asked Wilford to turn the carriage so that Brigham could see the valley. I believe he was looking over the valley in search of Ensign Peak. You ought to go to Pioneer Memorial State Park and stand just below "This Is the Place" Monument and look at the valley. You will see the prominence of Ensign Peak from this place.

As you know, Brigham Young followed the main body of the first pioneer company into the valley on the twenty-fourth of July, and on the twenty-sixth, the leaders climbed the peak. I don't know how they ever got the prophet up to the top because he was still quite sick, but they did. I believe that as they stood upon the peak the layout of our city took form in Brigham Young's mind. There are several different stories as to what happened on top of the peak that day. The one I like describes Wilford Woodruff's

scarf being waved by Heber C. Kimball as an ensign to the nations. We have only to wait to talk to Wilford Woodruff and Heber C. Kimball to find out if that is a true story.

Since that day on Ensign Peak, missionary work has expanded into 160 countries, and the gospel is being taught in 148 languages. The gospel is now being carried to the nations of the world by fifty-five thousand full-time missionaries. It is no small thing, brothers and sisters, for a missionary to open a missionary call letter. It is no small thing to accept a call to learn Japanese, Korean, Cambodian, or Mongolian. Their footsteps of faith take our missionaries into foreign lands, where they are tested and tried and where their faith is increased.

Now I would like to say something—and I surely do not want to be misunderstood. You and I have a duty: it is to build faith. We must not allow anything that we do, say, or publish to destroy anyone's faith and particularly the faith of our youth. I had the privilege this last summer of taking three of my grandsons on the trail in Wyoming. We went from Independence Rock to Devil's Gate, Martin's Cove, Rocky Ridge, Rock Creek, South Pass, Big Mountain, and home. We pushed and pulled handcarts. No one can do that and remain the same. On the trail, I had the impression that those early pioneers survived because they had a simple faith. What I am saying is that the faith that built this Church was the faith of the simple people, many of whom were uneducated. Some of them could not read or spell. But they knew deep in their hearts that Joseph Smith was a prophet to whom God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ had appeared, and they knew that this was the work of God established here upon the earth in this last dispensation of time.

When I read the journals of Henry Ballard and Margaret McNeil, the parents of my grandfather Melvin J. Ballard, I read of unwavering faith. Henry's spelling is something to behold; sometimes I have to struggle to determine what he is really saying. But in everything he wrote, it is clear that he knew the Church is true. With his simple faith, he had the courage to herd some sheep across the plains for the Snow family. When he first came to this valley, he hid himself all day because his clothes had been ripped and did not cover his body. When it was night, Henry went to a cabin where light was showing through the window and knocked

on the door. In his journal, he expressed how grateful he was that a man came to the door. He begged for some clothes and was given some. He recorded that the next morning he walked into the valley, this being the greatest day of his life.

I could keep you here all day telling you family stories, but instead let me encourage you to learn and share some of your own with those you are called to strengthen. Let us build faith in our youth by sharing the faith and testimonies of our pioneer forefathers. Let us do whatever we can to touch the lives of our young people. Our youth are walking on a trail today that in many ways is far more treacherous than the pioneer trail from Nauvoo to Salt Lake City—a trail with pornographic filth all along it, now found even on the Internet. Our youth are on a trail littered with drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and sexual promiscuity. They are on a trail where violence, confusion, and lack of real responsibility confront them. You and I—their parents, grandparents, and teachers—need to help them walk their trail in faith, that they may safely reach their destination. Apostles are teachers, and I think that is what each one of you is also. May God bless you in your teaching and writing to build faith in the lives of the Latter-day Saints.

In a meeting I attended, President Hinckley said the following:

I grieve over the loss of so many, many people. . . . I wonder why it happens. I believe it is because people learn but do not experience. They don't experience the power of the Holy Ghost. They have a mental conversion but not a spiritual conversion. The gospel appeals to many people, but the most important part must be felt, not in the mind, but in the heart. . . . [They must] be touched by the power of the Holy Ghost and create a spiritual experience. There has been mental assent but not spiritual conviction.

I was at Martin's Cove, and I dedicated a monument there and walked into where they [the handcart pioneers] tried to find shelter and where they huddled and starved and died. [As you can imagine, President Hinckley could not talk about this without emotion. Tears started down his cheeks.] I looked at a green spot and felt that this must have been their burial place. I sat on a log and saw in my mind the terrible situation that occurred in 1856, the wolves howling, the burying of their dead, and their feeling of helplessness. I experienced something there on that occasion that went into my heart and soul.

The power and deep conversion of the Spirit is needed by our members to get into their hearts to confirm what they agree to in their minds, and that will carry them through every storm of adversity.

To me, my beloved brothers and sisters, this was pure prophecy—revelation flowing from our prophet, who loves the pioneers. I pray that the Lord will bless all of us that during this sesquicentennial year we will have those choice spiritual experiences that will reinforce in our minds and hearts the majesty and the power of the faith of our pioneers. They paid such a great price to establish this Church in this land. May our hearts be filled with the same kind of faith and commitment shown by those who were on the trail so many long years ago.

May the Lord be with each one of you. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and through the holy apostleship, I bless you that you may have an opportunity to build faith as you teach others. May you set aside anything that might destroy faith, and always look for ways to build faith. I pray that the Lord will bless you with wisdom and with the sense of our sacred stewardships.

I pray that none of us will ever be party to anything that would destroy anyone's faith in Christ or in the Church. Surely the Lord will hold us accountable for what we do, what we say, what we write, and what we teach. May the Lord bless you and your families, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

NOTES

This address was presented initially in Salt Lake City to the BYU Studies Academy on February 1, 1997, in advance of the 1997 pioneer sesquicentennial celebrations.

¹Parley P. Pratt Jr., ed., *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 130–31.

²Based on Pratt, *Autobiography*, 134–35.

³Pratt, *Autobiography*, 152.

⁴*Conference Report*, April 1898, 57.



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