

Episode: 373 | Cuppa Joe | The Most Spectacular Harvest of Souls Since Wesley's Time: Latter Day Saint British Isles Mission 1837 to 1863
Project Zion Podcast

Josh Mangelson 00:17

Welcome to the Project Zion Podcast. This podcast explores the unique spiritual and theological gifts Community of Christ offers for today's world.

Karin Peter 00:33

Welcome to Project Zion Podcast. This is Cuppa Joe, where we explore Restoration history. And I'm your host, Karin Peter. Today's episode is a collaboration with Community of Christ Historic Sites as we interview the presenters from the 2020 Historic Sites Fall Lecture Series. The lectures can be found on the Historic Sites website, historicsitesfoundation.org. We have two guests with us today. Andrew Bolton and Pete Gaffney, both of whom were born and grew up in Lancashire, England, the most responsive English county to early Latter Day Saint missionaries. They are here to talk about early Latter Day Saintism in the British Isles. The title of this podcast is the title of the Historic Sites Foundation Fall series, The Most Spectacular Harvest of Souls Since Wesley's Time Latter Day Saint British Isles Mission 1837 to 1863. So with that introduction, welcome, Andrew and Pete. Andrew Bolton, you are returning to the Project Zion Podcast, I think it's your fifth one. And you have papers published in the Journal of Mormon History, Dialogue, as well as restoration studies, and John Whitmer Historical Association Journals. You are British, and you worked for Community of Christ for 18 years in the USA, leading peace and justice ministries worldwide, and then serving as Apostle for Asia from 2007 to 2016. You're now back researching early church history in Britain. So please give us a little more of the story behind this title. And I have to read it again because it's a marvelous title. The Most Spectacular Harvest of Souls Since Wesley's Time: Latter Day Saint British Isles Mission 1837 to 1863. So, Andrew?

Andrew Bolton 02:43

Thank you, Karin. So let me say a little bit about the math of this. John Wesley with his brother Charles, started the Methodist movement in the 18th century on both sides of the Atlantic. He reached out to the unchurched poor and the expanding towns as the Industrial Revolution began. John Wesley was a very good preacher, and also a brilliant missionary strategist. His brother, Charles Wesley was the poet who wrote over 6,500 hymns. John preached the gospel, organized the missionary efforts strategically, Charles got the converts to sing the gospel. Together, they were a brilliant missionary team with many others, who through the Methodist revival movement brought 1000s into congregations, and in many ways transformed British society for good. So here's the story. About 50 years after the Wesley's, early Latter Day Saintism also became a very successful missionary movement in the British Isles. According to WHG Armitage, a British Social historian at this time, at the University of Sheffield says they were successful as the Wesley's and Methodism, the quote in our title, "The most spectacular harvest of souls since Wesley's time." is by Professor Armitage. Pete Gaffney. And I want to tell this fantastic and very important story of early Latter Day Saintism.

Karin Peter 04:19

So Pete Gaffney, your native of Liverpool, the port city, in which the early missionaries landed from their journey across the Atlantic, and from which 1000s of saints migrated first to Nauvoo, and then to Utah and elsewhere. Pete, you are in historian with first class honors from York University, and with a master's degree on slavery from the University of Liverpool. Please tell us about, more about the city of Liverpool, and its role in the British economy in Victorian Britain?

Pete Gaffney 04:54

Yeah, thank you. So Liverpool, which I'm not representing the accent of very well. Fortunately, I'm trying to sound coherence and reactance a bit heavier might not be very well understood in America. So I'm trying to be on my best behavior. But Liverpool is something of an oddity in the, although it's now one of the biggest cities in England at the time in the early 19th century, it was a very new city, so it begins life and spends most of its life as a as a fishing village really a fishing village on the Irish Sea, it only starts to grow to become big enough to warrant its own customs authority in 1699, to separate it from the surrounding County. In the 17th century, its economy is based primarily on importing raw materials, particularly sugar for refining in England that can become consumer and industrial goods. But the slave trade from the Caribbean and later the mainland United States or future United States, is what helps us economy to really, really boom. So the slave trade starts much further south in Bristol is its main port. But Liverpool has a unique advantage in that it is surrounded by rural poverty, and a well populated rural regions that have a big surplus workforce. And so it's a perfect place to invest if you are a 19th century industrialist looking to open a factory, because you have the pope that can import raw materials produced dirt cheap from the New World by slave labor, and you have an abundance of people you can exploit very easily and conveniently from the raw population nearby. And you also have down the road another famous city called Manchester, which is where I live, fun fact, which has a financial center which provides cheap, affordable credit to those people who want to invest in industry. So Liverpool's economy booms on the back of the slave trade, and the projects of slavery in the new world. That industrialization process means that under slave trade is abolished by both the US and Britain the 1907. It only really has a short term impact on people's economic fortunes, because industry locally has grown so huge and slavery is still continuing in both the Caribbean and the United States and even trade that's been abolished. Liverpool's port quickly becomes in the 19th century, one of the most advanced possibly the most advanced in the world, certainly the biggest in the world in terms of how much cargo we can consolidate. And that facilitates the explosion, not just in traditional sugar industries, but in the textile mills of Lancashire, which use cotton imported from the southern United States to make various consumer goods, but also in things like iron working glassmaking factories are going up all over the place. And this brings about great poverty. So people who were already impoverished in the countryside and now moving into the city, which is creating a population boom, there's not enough housing to keep up so slums are developing around the factories. Wages can be kept below because there are more people who need work than there are then there is work to do. Policy is so bad than in the 1840s Liverpool's workhouse, which was a very primitive form of extremely coercive welfare, designed to keep people off the streets and from being a public nuisance, but the problem has to be rebuilt from scratch in the 1840s to accommodate all the people who may need to (air quotes) "help". There's a cholera epidemic in 1832. There isn't even public water supply in the city for ordinary people until 1857. They have to rely on digging their own wells, and infants and child

mortality is very, very high. So it's a city of two vast extremes, extreme poverty, for the working people with extreme wealth, who've moved in and made it this industrial hotbed.

Karin Peter 08:26

Thank you for setting that context for us, Pete. Andrew, the story of the first British Isles mission then begins in Kirtland, Ohio at the Temple. Is that right?

Andrew Bolton 08:40

Yeah, let's go to Kirtland, Ohio now for a few moments. If the story really begins in a communion service, the fourth of June 1837. Joseph Smith leaned over to apostle Heber C Kimball in the service and said, "Brother Hebert, the Spirit of the Lord has whispered to me that my seven Hebert go to England and proclaim my gospel and open the doors of salvation to that nation." Now, things were not going well in Kirtland at this time, were struggles with the bank, so it's risky to send Heber C. Kimball, a loyal apostle, aware in a mission trip. Awesome. Apostle Orson Hyde also joined Heber C Kimball. And also in the missionary team where Willard Richards, Canadian Joseph Fielding, originally from Preston, Lancashire, and three other Canadians with roots in England. They raised money by preaching on the way to New York. They raised their fair, took a new ship called the Garrick to Liverpool, England, which by the way, set in Atlantic crossing record of about three weeks.

Karin Peter 09:51

So Andrew, you were born in Preston, and grew up and went to schools in the upper Ribble Valley and I think it's in the Clitheroe area? Did I say that? Oh good, got a thumbs up there. So set the stage there for us.

Andrew Bolton 10:07

So Preston was a booming cotton town in July 1837, when the first missionaries arrived. Richard Arkwright, an inventor an entrepreneur was born in Preston. In 1732. He invented a way of carding raw cotton and then spinning it using water power in a factory system. And then later on there were steam engines to do the power. He's a pioneer of the Industrial Revolution. Lancashire is damp, humid climate, which is awful. It chills you to the bone, particularly this time of the year. It was great for spinning and weaving cotton. The dampness meant that the threads did not snap. In July 1837, Preston had 38 cotton factories with 16,000 cotton mill workers. So the Industrial Revolution have begun. Preston was about 38 miles north of Liverpool. So the missionaries after spending a couple of days in Liverpool waiting for their bags to be unloaded past customs went up to Preston by coach. On Saturday, the 22nd of July, Joseph Fielding had a brother the Reverend James Fielding, who had a Baptist congregation impressed them. They arrived in Preston to find the general election in full swing. Queen Victoria just 18 was the new queen, a month or so before an election banner proclaimed, "Truth Will Prevail!". Recent missionaries took as a good sign. Sunday morning they went to Reverend James Fielding's Baptist congregation and sat in the worship. Introduced by Joseph Fielding, Reverend James Fielding invited them to preach that afternoon, thinking they were revival ministers who would uplift and strengthen his congregation to the great consternation of Reverend Fielding. A week later, the first nine baptisms happened in the Rebel River, taking people away from his congregation. I can take you to the exact spot where the baptisms happened. It's half a half a mile from where I was born. I can also take you to the house the missionaries lodged in. It's a decrepit old house, but it's still there. 100 yards from

where we would park our car on these site visits. So Karin, if you can, it's 100 yards away from where we park our car.

Karin Peter 12:39

I might have to take you up on that sometime, Andrew, now that I'm fascinated with this story. So what happens next?

Andrew Bolton 12:46

So the missionaries now with some confidence that missionary work in Britain was going to be successful. They divided that up, and I won't say where they all went. But there's three groups. Apostles Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde with Joseph Fielding worked in and around Preston, and up the Ribble Valley, to the Clitheroe area, which you said perfectly, where incidentally, I went to school from the age of 11 to 18. The first conference of the church in the British Isles was on Christmas Day 1837. In a building called The Cockpit in Preston and 300 people gathered. There were ordinations and 100 children were blessed. The poor only had two holidays in the year Christmas Day and then Good Friday. The next conference was April the eighth 1838, again in Preston, were six to 700 people gathered. By this time 1400 people have been baptized in about eight months. The most spectacular harvester souls since Wesley's time had begun. Matthew Rasmussen, an LDS scholar, in his history of the British Isles missions, calls the Ribble Valley as important sacred geography as Palmyra, Kirtland or Independence, Missouri. So I think that's really important and significant for us to understand.

Karin Peter 14:15

Absolutely. So I understand that Apostles, Kimball and Hyde, then left, which meant Willard Richards and Joseph Fielding were in charge of the new mission. Smith and Rigdon leave Kirtland in a hurry early, 1838 and go to Northern Missouri. That's a really nice way to say that. And we have the northern Missouri war in October 1838. And Missouri Governor Bogs his extermination order, which people familiar with early Latter Day Saint history are aware of. The Saints must be driven out of Missouri or be exterminated. Joseph Smith Jr. and others were incarcerated in Liberty Jail for five months and then escaped in April 1839. A new gathering of the saints starts in a small settlement on the Mississippi called Commerce. It grows and becomes Nauvoo. So all of this early Saint, Latter Day Saints history into one paragraph. But this is all the turmoil in the church and it hindered follow up missionary work in the British Isles, did it not?

Andrew Bolton 15:29

Yes, absolutely. The violent exodus from Missouri, being homeless refugees delayed getting back to the British Isles. However, by April 1840, they were back this time with eight apostles. And then Orson Hyde comes later for a brief time on his way to the Holy Land. So the nine apostles at one time in the British Isles. Orson Pratt was assigned Edinburgh Scotland, which suited him great as an intellectual. Scotland Edinburgh is an intellectual city. Wilford Woodruff went to the Midlands, and then to Herefordshire, was very successful with the United Brethren. He worked the area near Dunfield House our reunion grounds, conference center. John Taylor went to Liverpool where his sister lived and did missionary work in the Isle of Man and Northern Ireland. parley P. Pratt was assigned Manchester and had responsibility for compiling and publishing the first hymanl, tracks, and the Book of Mormon. And two presentation copies were especially made for Queen Victoria and her husband, Prince Albert, and

the one given to Queen Victoria is currently held in the Queen's library at Windsor Castle, which you can see from London airport. Again, missionary efforts were very successful. Most of the apostles left in 1841. But Parley P Pratt continued. The first migrations to Nauvoo happen beginning in 1848, and 41. By 1840 for over 4000 converts have left from Liverpool for Nauvoo. There were a third of the population of Nauvoo, which was then 12,000 people just behind Chicago. So one in three people on the streets of Nauvoo spoke like Pete and me. Nauvoo was also our city, an international city.

Karin Peter 17:30

So did the I'm sorry, I was kind of giggling because I have walked Nauvoo, the streets many times. And so now I'm hearing accents instead of prairie, American prairie sounds. Did the assassination of Joseph then and Hyrum Smith in 1844. And the difficulties in Nauvoo, following that did that cause problems in terms of the missionary effort in the British Isles? What happened then?

Andrew Bolton 17:58

So yeah, I think so. And what's really interesting is these spectacular crises happen, but the missionary effort is still supported. So, Apostle Wilford Woodruff, very successful in 1840-41, is back in the British Isles in 1845. And then there's a surge in membership growth up to 1851. So in the last years, 1849, 1850, 1851, baptisms every year, were over 8000 a year. The Millennial Star newspaper published in Liverpool in 1851 has a report in the June issue reports with details that in total is 32,000 members, and 642 branches. 60% of all Latter Day Saints were living in Britain at this time. 80% of all Latter Day Saints were British born and baptized. So by 1851, there were more members of the British house and the rest of the world put together. It's an amazing story and justifies fully Armitage's verdict, "The most spectacular harvest of souls since Wesley's time."

Karin Peter 19:13

So why did early Latter Day Saints grow so rapidly? What brought on this 8000 baptisms every year?

Andrew Bolton 19:24

So it's a really important question, Karin. And we're going to answer it in two parts. I will outline what I think is going on. And then Pete is going to share some entirely new recent heart research. So why we're early Latter Day Saints successful in the British Isles? Firstly, the missionary was successful in the poorer Northwest Britain. This is grass growing, not wheat grain, where nonconformance Christians also thrive. It's a bit further from London, so less control. So here the Methodist Quakers Baptist congregationalist independent groups, and we will also nonconformists with an attractive new synthesis of the gospel. The second reason, poverty, poverty and poverty. Poverty caused by the agricultural revolution with landowners fencing in the common land and pushing off the poor. Poverty caused by the Industrial Revolution, which as Pete said, created enormous new wealth. For the poor working in coal mines, factories, etc, did not benefit, they became poorer. Life expectancy, for instance, in the rural areas was around 38. But in the slums, around the booming factory towns on mining villages dropped to 19. Thirdly, poverty was also caused by the worst recession in 19th century Britain from 1837 when the missionaries arrived, first to 1843. And this recession, by the way, affected banks in the United States. The two economies already linked, and was one of the reasons why the Kirtland Safety Bank failed in 1837. Thirdly, our message and I'm going to call this the Kirtland gospel. This resonated with

the poor. In Kirtland, we were communal socialists, living out the law of consecration in Section 42 of the Doctrine and Covenants. We had a strong New Testament gospel, the Sermon on the Mount is repeated in the New Testament of the Book of Mormon. Acts 2, Pentecost, all things in common. Building a temple is the model for Kirtland. The first principles of the gospel from Hebrews, have faith, repentance, laying on hands and so on, is a standard basic sermon. We have eight sacraments. And baptism meant something it's by full immersion, believers baptism. Remember the 100 children being blessed on Christmas Day in 1837. sacraments are good for illiterate or semi-literate people, because it's the gospel dramatic sized, acted out spiritual and we preached and practice the worth of all souls as great in the sight of God. Working class people semi-literate could be called to priesthood. Our congregation for democratic, participatory people had a voice in their affairs. We were also Pentecostal charismatic; the Holy Spirit was a real experience for people. You hear that time and time again. And finally, millennialism. Jesus was coming soon, the current injustice is going to end so be ready. Fourthly, the missionaries were very capable. They are experienced, intelligent and good ministers and they were young people. The average age of the Council of 12 and 1814 in Britain was 32. The youngest was 21. Heber C Kimball was the old man at 38. John Taylor, Joseph Fielding and some others were British, originally, to be American at this time was positive for working class British people. Although the upper classes could be snooty. The missionaries were working class from the states of Britain originally, also poor but they had confidence. They had authority. They had the dream of sign and that heart. And finally they were very well organized team. So that's why I think they were successful. They had a message that appeal to the poor, who were strongly New Testament, we were participatory, like the Quakers and Methodists. Like the Methodists, they rejected the limited atonement preached by Calvinists. And limited atonement means only is there's only enough grace for some people. That John Wesley said no is unlimited atonement. It was a bigger invitation to salvation, all could be saved. Now, the Book of Mormon we talk a lot about unlimited atonement. We talk about infinite atonement. We baptize like the Baptists, and the Latter Day Saint elder had as much sacramental authority as one of the posh Church of England bishops. And besides, we had apostles and they didn't. And finally, Jesus was coming soon to ensure Zion would fully come. So I'm going to invite Pete now to tell us about his hot research. What does this tell us about the message of early Latter Day Saints Pete?

Pete Gaffney 24:57

Thank you, Andrew. So one of the of great challenges in trying to recover the experience of Latter Day Saints is that they don't actually leave that many records, which I know sounds so Latter Day Sainty. But these are mostly semi literate or illiterate people, if they do have a chance and the ability to write, it's probably not going to be recorded and stored anywhere in a meaningful way. So by and large for working people in 19th century Britain, it is very, very difficult to leave your mark in the historical record. And so it's very difficult for historians to recover your voice. What we can do in these cases, though, is look at what critics of Latter Day Saintism, we're happy to say, which sounds counterintuitive. And certainly you do encounter some quite entertaining claims about what Latter Day Saints believe, which are very amusing to read, some of which are still popular today. But by and large, what you can do is if you set aside each individual person you can look at, what references are they making to what Latter Day Saints themselves are saying, and what are the general trends in how they describe Latter Day Saints. And because when we see that, when we're reading what the elite are having to say, reading what local British people who can read and write, I have to say misery culture, we can start to unpack

what the impact of Latter-day Seekers and was on the Society of Britain at the time. So I've looked so far, at about 600 critical writings about the these missionaries were preaching and who they were converting mostly from local newspapers. So local sources were where the Latter Day Saint missionaries were going and where they were making converts. What are the people in bad areas saying in response to the spread of this? What are they scared of? What did they laugh at? What did they tell us about the people who were preaching? What things do they pick up on that maybe the missionaries ourselves would never have thought to record because it was so obvious to them, you wouldn't need to talk about it in a letter back to the United States. One of the most fascinating trends is that again, and again and again, critics compare Latter Day Saint preaching and the themes they observe, and the ideas we get articulated to the first socialists. So socialism begins before Karl Marx, a lot of people assume it comes out of communism. It starts before Karl Marx, and it starts in Britain as an ideology. And it doesn't quite mean what we might mean by socialism today. But it's very, very simply, it does mean holding property in common. It does mean having public welfare where wealth is redistributed, the main differences, they wouldn't necessarily have thought that the government should do that, because we didn't really have an understanding of public welfare the same way where communities doing it locally together. But that comparison is made again in the game. The other comparison that gets made is to a movement called Chartism. Chartism was very active in Britain in the 1830s, and 1840s. And Chartism was very literally a movement to give all working class men the vote, and to end corruption in government. So it's extremely telling that the things that critics of Latter-day Seekers are identifying is basically sharp similarities to socialists economically, and to Chartism politically, they see it as a similarly disruptive movement. One of the most interesting stories comes from James Fielding, who Andrew mentioned. So Joseph Fielding's brother, the brother of his missionary who has a congregation and he invites his brother to come and preach. And unexpectedly, his brother steals the entire congregation from him. And they all become Latter Day Saints. They all join the church, which leaves his brother in a somewhat difficult position in terms of his livelihood. And he starts writing a series of letters in the local press, condemning the preachers and their converts and saying that they go around and they purposely appeal to socialist ideas. And they purposely appeal to chartist ideas, and they seek out working class people to try and manipulate quotes, as he would have seen it, limits of joining their faith. And what's especially telling about that is, this is this Joseph Fielding's brother is the head of the missions brother, which is significant in itself. But he also has a copy of the Book of Mormon, and a copy of what becomes Doctrine and Covenants, unlike lots of critics. So he knows exactly what he's talking about. He can and does back this up by talking about what's in Doctrine and Covenants. So that's extremely interesting that he makes that criticism. We find that the missionaries themselves once they get settled in, a place they have the most success is wherever the working people are. So they go to pubs and inns to preach in spare rooms in the mall down on the floor. They go to the factories and talk to people on their lunch (...) as it was on their break, what little break they go. They go to working men's libraries and technical Institute's where railway workers will be able to spend their spare time. One contemporary critic of the factory system wrote a series of reports where he goes on a tour, and he's a he's a very devout Anglican and he reassures people that the factory system isn't degrading people's religious morals and Lancashire, as he sees them with one exception. And that is he's alarmed by how many people know the Book of Mormon and how many people call themselves Latter Day Saints, which is extremely interesting. And his his work actually prompts several letters of concern in the newspapers about the state of education in the factories of the state of religious influence in the factories. Some of the individual stories that come out,

are extremely interesting. So we know at least one of the British converts was first I'm trying to find out more about him. And I hope I can dig deeper into his life. But he was a working-class Chartist after this, and the papers in his area, right, kind of with his aspiration, that they sort of go, "of course, he's become a Mormon! Why wouldn't he become a Mormon?" because it's such an obvious connection for them. There's another where there's a court case, where one of the American missionaries is summoned on charges, essentially, of preaching illegally, because you needed a license to preach, you had to fall within certain realm of accessibility and do it in a certain way you weren't supposed to preach in the streets or in private houses. He gets he gets found guilty in the church has to have a kind of a whip round, as we would call it in Britain to pay his fine. But in that case, one of his congregation stands up to defend him and say, "No, I can testify to this man's good character, I can testify, he's a good Christian, he's he's not a heretic." And someone else stands up and says, "Excuse me, I know that in a meeting last Sunday, you stood up, and you said that you think it's time for a revolution against the elite, and that it should happen now. And you don't mind if a few noses get broken on the way." Now, we wouldn't necessarily sanction in Community of Christ today, the idea of breaking noses for Christ, but it's very, very telling this is this is a long time, this is over a decade before Karl Marx or not, well about a decade before Karl Marx comes along. You know, socialist revolution is not an idea yet. And that word does get used a couple of times by critics as well, one person says that "Mormonism as I will have called it has all the air of a revolutionary ideology", which is extremely interesting as well. There's another case, I find extremely interesting that they have a laborer who uses his house to host a Latter Day Saint church, which is illegal. And all of the kind of middle-class farmers in his locality because he lives on the outskirts of the city, complained that all of these ordinary people are trudging across their land and opening gates to go to this rowdy and raucous meeting. And if you unpack the language at the time, it's basically saying, What are all these poor people doing having fun and being spiritual on my land go away. And he's just a regular, ordinary, ordinary, ordinary guy. There are middle class converts as well, absolutely. But overwhelmingly it is working class people who come and engage with missionaries and the middle-class people who do tend to be those who get behind the economic and social justice message for the kind of people who would have also been supporting charters and then would have been using their privilege to help those kind of causes. And there's another point I just want to touch on which I need to do more digging into perhaps in a separate project, but one of the things that does recare a bit is stories of Latter Day Saints faith healing going wrong, because these are critical accounts, obviously, both have children and adults. But a lot of them are quite detailed and go into the specifics of who the person was, who the family were when they became a Latter Day Saints. And there's an interesting feeling in the critics picking up on this fake feeling thing to try and knock Latter-day Seekers them over the head. This but in 1832, the cholera epidemic that I mentioned earlier, was accompanied by a medical scandal, particularly in the northwest, because in Liverpool, doctors at the hospital that treated those cholera patients, it emerged that they were taking organs from deceased cholera patients who were working class to study because they saw them as worthless essentially, as people of course, they could use them as cadavers without permission for research purposes. And that was deeply, deeply scandalizing. And of course, led to some conspiracy theorizing, which is not they weren't killing people for their organs. But that's the kind of rumor that spread. And so people were very skeptical the medical establishment, which was not that accessible anyway. So here comes Latter Day Saintism, with two advantages, one saying we have faith healing. And two, if the faith healing doesn't work, we also have as Andrew touched on this idea of salvation that is much more inclusive, and especially inclusive to children. And I think it is very telling and it's only a correlation not causation at

this point, but I think it is very telling but Preston where Latter-day Seekers had the most success also has the highest infant mortality rate in England at this time. And in general, you can link the chances of Latter Day Saints succeeding in the in the missionary efforts to infant and child mortality rates was a very, very strong link between those two things. So it's very clear to me from what I found that Zion is already a vision and an idea, not just a place. Zion on being a place as important as well, as Andrew said, America isn't, you know, kind of demonized and when maybe it can be sometimes today in popular culture outside of the United States, it being a place in a utopia that you build practically had an appeal. But underneath that there is still this idea of building Zion and changing your community and life. Anyway, it is about for rightful and just all human affairs and not just a physical location and that's manifest in the kind of people who are attracted to Latter Day Saints and the reasons why they probably would have been.

Karin Peter 35:46

What we would call Zion principles, I guess, at this time.

Pete Gaffney 35:49

Yes, exactly.

Karin Peter 35:50

Zion principles. So in 1851, things are going well for Latter Day Saints in the British Isles just as far as expanding. So why isn't half the population Latter Day Saint today in the United Kingdom? What happened?

Andrew Bolton 36:08

So what happened next was the great crash. So as I mentioned, 1851 is the third year with over 8000 baptisms. 1859. Eight years later, it was down to 1000 baptisms a year. In 1851, we had 32,000 members 1860 to drop less than half that to 13,018. By 1890 there were 2770 Latter Day Saints in Britain. In 1893 the Preston branch nearly closed, the first branch. Chatlin millworkers in the upper Ribble Valley, village of a small town that I went to on the school bus twice a day, I went past the mill. This place had welcomed Heber C. Kimball in 1837. He was very successful there. But there's a story I read that when later LDS missionaries came, chat the millworkers Stone them. So what's happened?

Karin Peter 37:18

What did happen what caused this great crash?

Andrew Bolton 37:21

So LDS scholar Craig Foster, in his book, Penny Tracks and Polemics in Great Britain, who's looking at the critics, like Pete's been looking at he argues the causes were perhaps four. First of all, polygamy was announced officially in the church newspaper, in the Millennial Star in January 1853. So there's no denying it was in the church publication. And then in the same year, November 1853, Brigham Young's article was published on the front page, Adam, our Father and God. So you have a sex scandal in Victorian Britain, of enormous proportions. And Victorian Britain is uptight about sex. And you have the dismissal of nearly 2000 years of Trinitarianism by some weird, speculative theology, I bring me up. Thirdly, Brigham Young's reformation, which was kind of bringing people into line, and included

rebaptism happen in 1856. And this was quite alienating for people. And excommunication unfortunately became more common in the 1850s. There was migration. But up to this, up to 1851-1852, baptisms easily exceeded migration. So we went from a great and marvelous work to a hiss and a byword. We went from the Kirtland Gospel to the Nauvoo beliefs and practices of polygamy, authoritarian leadership, and weird theology about God. It was a disaster, and we've never recovered. The great crash was caused by the great betrayal.

Karin Peter 39:26

So Andrew, wind does then the Reorganization what we now are the Community of Christ begin in the British Isles?

Andrew Bolton 39:36

So there's the wonderful pioneering story of Charles Darya was a British church member church leader, who, in the 1850s went to Utah is still loyal even though polygamy is now public. Sadly, tragically, his wife dies on the last part of the track. He's driving an ox wagon across. He's trained as a blacksmith and he has two little girls in Utah, he became very disillusioned and managed to leave. So he left Utah and at the same time, he left Latter Day Saintism. He was done with religion, but it's on his way to Nebraska on his way back, and he had family members coming as well. So he wanted to say "Don't go." He met members in Nebraska, the Reorganization, met Joseph Smith, the third was very impressed by Joseph Smith the third. His gentleness, his loving Spirit, and he found faith again, even though he resisted initially, in 1863, he went back to Britain as a solitary missionary. To start the Reorganization. He lands in Liverpool as they all all the missionaries do. And I think he walks hundreds of miles. He only rides 15 miles and a coach the whole year. Later in 1863, around May, he's so desperately lonely, lonely. He sees in the post office for Herald magazines from the church. He has no money. So he goes and pawns his coat to get the magazines. he settles down to read them and then pass them the winder is possible Jason Briggs and apostle of Jeremiah Jeremiah, they've come to strengthen the work. They've found him. The first conference of the RLDS church was held on Christmas Day, in 1863, with about 100 in attendance, and it was held in Metha Tidville, another major strength about a Latter Day Saintism in Wales. So there we are. That's how it begins.

Karin Peter 42:02

Thank you for that, Andrew. So before we bring our episode, to an end, anything you'd like to share any closing thoughts for us.

Andrew Bolton 42:13

So I love my country, I love my land. Although I was I became very at home in the United States as well and in Asia. So I want to say Victorian capitalism in Britain was vicious to the poor. And it's only labor unions, the expanding vote, the beginning of the Labour Party, that improved things for the poor. Especially in 1945, at the end of World War II, when the Labour Party won power with a good majority, introduce the welfare state, including our wonderful National Health Service, which is paid for, by general taxation. Everybody's in. And today, I went with Jewel to the hospital, nobody asked if we could pay. Nobody asked us for insurance. Morgan Phillips, General Secretary of the Labour Party in the 1930s said this and it's profound. "Socialism and Britain owes more to Methodism, than to Marx." Socialism in Britain is Christian in its origins. And Methodists trained lay preachers, working class

people to preach the gospel on Sunday. This gave working class people confidence to speak up, then informed by the Methodist social gospel that there should be social justice. There should be decent wages for people, there should be welfare for people. We should protect the dignity of the poor. The same lay preachers in their workplaces spoke up for workers rights Monday to Saturday. They were among the union leaders and the early socialists. I think the Kirtland gospel of Latter Day Saintism, could have had an even bigger impact for good in Great Britain than Methodism. But with the Nauvoo corruptions of polygamy, speculative theology about God and authoritarian leadership, we disastrously lost that 19th century opportunity to contribute to making a British Zion. However, knowing about the radical nature of early Latter Day Saintism in the British Isles, strengthens Community of Christ today in its mission, to invite people to Christ, develop disciples to serve and to abolish poverty and war. Abolish poverty has never gone away from our movement.

Pete Gaffney 44:43

And I think there's a joyful challenge to look at the experience of Latter Day Saints in 18, in the 1830s 1940s, and consider how we can learn from the way they organize themselves and carry themselves in a way but in a world that's not as distant as we'd like to think it is. You know, that The neoliberal kind of globalized economy of today began in the 17th and 18th centuries, and it's not changed as much as you think it does, even if in kind of Western democratic countries policy is less absolute. And the nature of work is changing. Really, we're just seeing in some senses a remaking and re entrenching of older classes since you know, the, the new cotton spinner in terms of their economic opportunity and standard living is now that the driver for delivery company and so on over the warehouse worker for a global Empire shall not be named. And I think the success that they've Latter Day Saints had in Britain in the 19th century shows for the faith with a radical and applied message for economic and social justice can be transformative, not just to society, but in the lives of the oppressed, and the marginalized. Now we have to think about what an incredible thing it was, in 1838, 39, 1844, a working-class man, to be told that you can be a holder of priesthood, you can be someone who has to the authority to teach, live the gospel, and be valued and cherished of God and lead your community. Regardless of what this well educated Anglican clergyman from 200 miles has to say about it. You know, that's an that's a powerful thing. And there are similar things, I think that were today and in terms of the experience of 19th century class as well, those elements are still here in our world, they're just scattered. So that class structure still persists in Britain about poverty also persists in what we would now call the industrializing quotes developing world, in that extreme depth poverty is still in our world. And there's, there's a lot we can learn about how we can connect to people from how are the very beginning that those people in our church did. And I think Finally, the most important thing is, it's easy, I think, sometimes it Community of Christ to feel like the Peace and Justice Mission is new, and something that's novel and is being constantly figured out. But it's been there from the very beginning. Right? It's there at the very beginning in Britain. It's a very good Book of Mormon, it's very parts of Doctrine and Covenants, it's there in what the missionaries are saying, it's always been there, and what's happening isn't new, really given other things have changed. That's always been at the core of who Community of Christ is and should be. And what's happening is a recentering of that a reclaiming of it, not the creation of something new. And I think that's really, really inspiring.

Karin Peter 47:27

So Andrew and Pete, before we close, I want to ask you each one question and just give you a moment to share a sentence or two. And, Andrew, I'm going to start with you because I just met Pete today. And so I'm going to give him the longer time period to think of his answer. So here's my question. How has the study of this particular narrative? Latter Day Saintism in the British Isles, how has this been formative in your own personal discipleship?

Andrew Bolton 48:03

So my dad was a soldier for seven years in World War II. Supposed to have finished in 1945. But in our family, that didn't really get help that found real healing until 1965, 20 years later, I met the church in Germany, the Community of Christ in Germany, and they were, even those the early 1970s, they were really interested in peace and justice. They knew about the American Civil Rights Movement. I got the the church seal, the lion and the lamb, and the word "freedom" underneath "peace" And then our family lost the farm when I was eight. It was really so hard. And so I've known economic struggles, I grew up in poverty. So the church's message about stewardship and economic justice reading the early Doctrine and Covenants, reading the Book of Mormon was so, so wonderful for me. That God's on the side of the poor, that changes everything, guards against war, that means ultimately, peace will prevail, that I find so significant, and Community of Christ is honing, right in that these days. I've never been so hopeful about the church's mission as I am today, and I was baptized 47 years ago.

Karin Peter 49:37

And for our listeners, I'm looking at Andrew as he shares and you can see that hope on his face. So thank you, Andrew. Pete, you've had a moment to think about this. How has the study of this narrative? Latter Day Saintism in the British Isles affected your personal discipleship?

Pete Gaffney 49:58

Well, about how to answer this in less than 45 minutes, so my best for me it's interesting because for me, it's it has come from coming into Community of Christ. So, like Andrew, I also grew up in poverty. My neighborhood I grew up in is one of the absolute poorest and medical out of about 30,000, I think we were sort of 500 not on the good end of where you want to be ranked in those kind of numbers. So very similar kind of experience. And I, I was Quaker, I found Quakerism at University. And I have learnt a lot from the Quakers and I love the Quakers very, very dearly, including that peace and justice message, but Quakerism in Britain, and also some American listeners will recognize this, some won't, depending on which branch of American Quakers and the familiar with but in Britain Quakerism has become more of a practice than a denomination. So anyone can be a Quaker, which is a wonderful thing. But there's no emphasis on the Bible in quite the same way in Quaker worship, as there would have been, say 50 years ago, and I was just looking for something more authentically Christian. So I then find Community of Christ and I see that they're talking about all of this peace and justice stuff, which is wonderful. Then I read the part about scripture. And as I like to tell people, I go, Oh, no, they're Mormons. No. And then I read the Book of Mormon in a 19th century way. And I fall head over heels in love with it. And I go down this whole rabbit hole with with Andrew of exploring and falling in love. And I started exploring, from what Andrew had told me what, I just went digging, being a trained historian into the into the archives of "I wonder what was said about the Latter Day Saints?" And suddenly, I'm finding what I found in no other denomination, which is an origin story, unless you want to go all the way back

to the beginnings of Christianity itself that we all share with Peter and Andrew fittingly, working class people exactly like me, who are the bedrock of of this of this movement, which is fantastic and inspiring and gives me this incredible sense of homecoming and connection to Community of Christ. It's that I couldn't find anywhere else, all of which the principles which are made possible or celebrated in Community of Christ reading of the Book of Mormon of the Bible, of what it means to be living out Christianity.

Karin Peter 52:15

Thank you for being willing to share Peter, appreciate that. And I appreciate both of you Andrew Bolton, and Pete Gaffney being our guests today here on Cuppa Joe for Project Zion Podcast listeners, you can find Andrews original lecture and the other lectures at the historic sites foundation.org website and on Andrews lecture. There are some great maps that help especially United States folks understand the southeast and northwest division of the British Isles, which helped me a lot understand what was going on. And there's some great photos in there as well that you don't want to miss. If you have questions or comments about Andrews books or writings or papers or this podcast you can reach Andrew at abolton and the numeral two, ableton2@live.com Pete Is there a way to contact you?

Pete Gaffney 53:15

Yes, there is sorry, I realized I forgot to send that and it is gaffnp@gmail.com

Karin Peter 53:31

gaffnp@gmail.com. All right, with that information for our listeners, and hopefully everybody goes to the historicitesfoundation.org website after this. This is Cuppa Joe, the restoration history series for Project Zion Podcast. I'm your host, Karin Peter. Thanks so much for listening.

Josh Mangelson 54:02

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