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Introduction

The year 2000 marked the 150th anniversary of the preaching of the gospel in Scandinavia and continental Europe by missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In commemoration of that event, the Department of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University held a conference on the history of the Church in Europe. The conference was held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Mormon History Association (MHA), which was held in Copenhagen and Aalborg, Denmark. Several BYU Church history professors presented papers at the MHA conference. Following the meetings in Denmark, the conference continued with visits to historic sites related to Church history in Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and France, where papers and presentations were given on-site.

The essays in this volume have been selected from the papers that were delivered as part of the conference celebrating the sesquicentennial anniversary of the gospel being taken to Europe. Not all of the papers presented at the various conference sessions are included in this volume. Some will be published in other venues, including the *Journal of Mormon History*, *Mormon Historical Studies*, and the *Ensign*. We have selected papers that provide us with an interesting look at key events and people associated with the organization and expansion of the Church in Europe. Although the conference commemorated the groundbreaking work of the nineteenth century, many of the papers also highlighted important events and issues of the twentieth-century Church in Europe. We have organized the papers in a chronological order, beginning with the early events in the nineteenth century and ending with a paper that takes us almost to the present.

We are pleased to introduce you to these excellent papers that comprise this volume of *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: Europe*. Interestingly, the lead essay focuses on a country far away from continental Europe, namely Iceland. **Fred E. Woods** tells us about a native Icelander, Guðmundur Guðmundsson, who introduced the gospel to Iceland in 1851. Guðmundsson joined the Church in Copenhagen, where he was working as a goldsmith. He then returned to Iceland and preached the gospel to his friends and other interested parties. Eventually he and other members immigrated to Utah.

In the second essay, **Richard D. McClellan**, a graduate student, portrays the experiences of a fascinating French Church member, Louis Bertrand. This essay describes Bertrand's service as mission president in France. Because of his earlier political connections, Brother Bertrand felt comfortable with both French political leaders and members of the French intelligentsia. His connections and enthusiasm were not enough, however, to prevent the closure of the French mission in 1864.

Hitler is continually a subject of interest for people around the world. In her essay, **Jessie L. Embry** of the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies tells us about Mormon missionaries' views of Hitler in the 1930s. She points out that the views of the missionaries were not uniform. Some liked Hitler and his programs; other elders held negative feelings toward Hitler and his Nazi Party. On the negative side she quotes extensively from her father's journal. She concludes that the passage of time has reaffirmed the negative view of Hitler.

David F. Boone has written an interesting essay on the evacuation of missionaries from Scandinavia at the outbreak of World War II. Professor Boone has done extensive research on

the worldwide evacuation of Latter-day Saint missionaries, consequently enabling him to set this particular evacuation story into its proper context.

World War II has been treated in a whole range of recent publications. **Robert C. Freeman** tells us about the experiences of German Saints during that conflict. This essay presents new information and helps the reader understand the war from “the other side.” By 1945 more than five hundred German Saints had died in battle. The costs were enormous.

In a second essay on World War II, **Dennis A. Wright** describes the experiences of Church servicemen and women during the D-Day invasion at Normandy. In graphic detail Wright presents the events of that invasion as seen by Latter-day Saint men serving with Army, Navy, and Air Force units. It may surprise many readers to learn what important roles many Church members played in that invasion.

Richard O. Cowan writes about the first overseas temple. The Swiss Temple was not only the first temple in Europe but the first to use audiovisual media in the presentation of the endowment. Consequently, Cowan calls the Swiss Temple “pivotal.”

A team of authors, **David F. Boone** and **Richard O. Cowan**, prepared an essay on the Freiberg Germany Temple. The events surrounding the approval and subsequent construction of this temple are truly miraculous. Surprisingly, the authoritarian government of East Germany, which had denied German Saints the right to travel to the Swiss Temple, proposed that the Church build a temple in East Germany. Approvals for various phases of construction were granted with astonishing efficiency. Nearly ninety thousand visitors attended the open house at the Freiberg temple, and sometimes the tours did not conclude until 2 A.M.

Turning to another country in eastern Europe, **Arnold K. Garr** tells the story of Mormon pioneers in Estonia. The work in Estonia actually began in Finland in 1989, when Latter-day Saint missionaries baptized a native of Estonia living in Finland. In November 1989 the Berlin Wall fell, and soon missionaries entered Estonia. Before Estonia declared its independence from the Soviet Union, one hundred Estonian “pioneers” had joined the Church, laying the foundation for solid growth.

The Tabernacle Choir has been used as a forerunner to enhance missionary work in many times and places. Such was the case in the 1990s, according to **Cynthia Doxey’s** essay. The choir had been to Europe previously in 1950, 1973, and 1982. The 1991 tour included Frankfurt, Dresden, and Berlin, Germany; Strasbourg, France; Zurich, Switzerland; Budapest, Hungary; Vienna, Austria; Prague, Czechoslovakia; Warsaw, Poland; and St. Petersburg, Russia. The 1998 tour included London, England; Brussels, Belgium; Geneva, Switzerland; Turin and Rome, Italy; Marseille, France; Barcelona, Madrid, and El Escorial, Spain; and Lisbon, Portugal. These tours facilitated missionary work, increased publicity, and strengthened relations between the Church, community, and national leaders.

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