

David O. McKay's European Mission: Seedbed for His Administration

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Before becoming a General Authority at age thirty-two, David O. McKay had limited ecclesiastical experience. When called as an Apostle at the April 1906 general conference, he was serving as the second counselor in the Weber Stake Sunday School presidency. As a new Apostle, he had never served as a bishop, stake president, priesthood quorum president, or even head of a Church auxiliary. Thus, he gained many of the key leadership skills necessary to guide the Church while serving as president of the European Mission, learning how to handle local leadership situations and administer to distant Church units. In fact, his experience as mission president and his role in developing the Church in Great Britain from 1922 to 1924 foreshadowed his administration as President of the Church from 1951 to 1970. Many of President McKay's innovative ideas had their inception during his service as a mission president.

An Unexpected Call

President McKay's call to the European Mission presidency was unexpected. He had arrived home from a world tour of all Latter-day Saint missions and schools on Christmas Eve, 1921, having been away from his family and Church headquarters for over a year. On a late summer day in 1922, David O. McKay's wife, Emma Ray Riggs McKay, was putting up fruit when her husband walked into the kitchen and told her the First Presidency had called them to preside over the European Mission.¹ Serving in this capacity not only included being president of the British Mission but also required him to supervise eight other large missions: the Swiss-German, French, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Dutch, Armenian, and South African missions. In addition, he had the responsibility to train and motivate

leaders, missionaries, and members.² President McKay was set apart on November 3, 1922, and he was promised he would have “great influence with the elders and gain their love and their confidence and their respect.”³ After being called and set apart, the McKays were able to receive the necessary inspiration to develop programs that would advance the European Mission and eventually bless a worldwide Church.

The Seeds of Policies and Programs

When David O. McKay became President of the Church in 1951, most of his predecessors had served as mission presidents in what could be referred to as the training ground of the prophets: the European Mission. During the twenty-three months he served in this capacity, he developed much of his administrative style that would later characterize his Church presidency. To counter the extensive negative media that saturated Great Britain before 1922, President McKay initiated a program that helped to change the Church’s image in the press and public view by creating a more positive image for the Church in Great Britain.

As part of this public relations effort, President McKay coined a slogan that would become important in his future presidency. In a letter to Rudger Clawson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve, he wrote of his goals “to have every member of the Church a missionary.” It is “their duty,” President McKay writes, “to invite their friends to the regular meetings and conferences and to arrange [cottage] meetings to which one or more investigators will be present.”⁴ President McKay reiterated this theme in a letter written June 6, 1923, to fellow Apostle Stephen L Richards. After explaining that “the rise of the members to greater activity” would have the desired effect of “strengthening and bettering the organizations and missionary work,” President McKay wrote, “this purpose we have expressed to the wards: every member a missionary.”⁵

President McKay understood the need for the Church to become an enduring entity in Europe for these initiatives to succeed. As European Mission president, he became convinced that the con-

struction of chapels would bring sustained growth to the Church and would establish the Church as a permanent presence in Europe.⁶

Finally, during his almost two years of service as a mission president, David O. McKay gained a knowledge of Church organization at the local level and developed a strategy for using that organization to reach individual members, missionaries, and investigators alike. These areas of expertise were the prominent guiding factors of his mission president experience, and the programs and philosophies he developed in Europe would later strengthen, solidify, and bless the entire Church.

Effects of Prejudice and Bigotry on Missionary Work

While being set apart, President McKay was promised he would influence those of other churches who were honorable and willing and through their friendship they would assist him in “allaying the prejudice of the press and the opposition to the spread of the Gospel.”⁷ These statements foreshadowed one of his most daunting tasks as mission president.

On Saturday, November 25, 1923, the McKays arrived at the mission home at 295 Edge Lane in Liverpool. While examining his new desk, he found a newspaper clipping with the headline “Mormon Missionaries Assaulted by Students in Edinburgh Scotland.” One clipping read, “Latter-day Saint’s Wild Hyde Park Scene,” and others called Mormons “destroying angels” and “assassins who carry out orders of Utah Saints, women in chains of slavery, etc.”⁸ Other articles told unbelievable stories about elders “bewitching young girls into conversion and then sending them to Utah to lead debased lives.” Another tale told of a man who “swore that he rowed a boat from San Francisco to Salt Lake City but could not get inside the wall around Salt Lake City.” Missionaries had been writing articles refuting such claims but could not get them published.⁹

Prejudice against Latter-day Saints had long existed among the British population. For the first two decades of the 1900s, Mormons had been subjected to poor treatment in the British Isles, and various newspapers profited from sensational stories about Mormon escapades.¹⁰ Books by anti-Mormon novelists such as Winifred Graham

(Mrs. Theodore Cory) successfully “magnified the rumors of Mormon wickedness that circulated throughout the world.” Graham’s novel *Ezra the Mormon*, first published in 1907, was “reprinted three times during its first two years, attesting to the international popularity of the Mormon subject matter in fiction.”¹¹ Graham’s writings were the basis of the popular 1922 film *Trapped by the Mormons*, which gave anti-Mormon stereotypes even wider circulation.¹²

The McKays were continually taken back by the British prejudice toward Mormonism. Even basic freedoms such as the freedom of assembly were curtailed by bigotry. President McKay’s sister Jeannette McKay Morrell recalled that “in one town in Wales where members had been meeting in a public building the Town Council decided to prohibit any further Mormon assemblies.”¹³ President McKay knew that such prejudice was impeding the work. In a *Millennial Star* editorial he wrote: “Prejudice [is the] unwholesome fruit produced from the seeds of Misrepresentation and Calumny, and sown in the fertile but untilled soil of human ignorance and credulity. So rank has this noxious weed grown in the minds of British people that the seeds of Truth can scarcely find a spot in which even to germinate, let alone flourish and bear fruit. Until these tares shall have been first cut down, and a proper seed bed prepared, the spreading of the Gospel message will be impeded.”¹⁴

Press, Prejudice, and Public Relations

As mission president, David O. McKay sought to change the relationship between the English press and the Latter-day Saints. He refused to deal directly with reporters, instructing elders in his mission to do likewise. “Without giving any information to reporters, President McKay wrote directly to the editors of the papers involved in the attacks.”¹⁵ President McKay’s approach was simple: “Whenever he read what to him was a vile newspaper or magazine article, he sat down and personally wrote the editor a letter asking why the printing of such a story had been allowed.” He tried to employ a patient tone “that would both clarify the Mormon stand and show the falsity of the reporting. He pleaded with editors to be fair

and honest. His letters were written . . . using a style designed to win their readers over.”¹⁶

The first such letter was to *John Bull*, “one of the oldest and best weekly newspapers in Great Britain.”¹⁷ Among other things he refuted in the January 5 *John Bull* issue were the following:

Your pretension to reveal plans of the Mormons for an invasion of our shores. . . . The attitude of enlightenment which you arrogate to yourself when you so broadly announce that you propose to tell your readers who the Mormon Elders are would be truly amazing if such statements did not reveal a state of mind almost appalling. There is no secret Mormon invasion, there never has been, and there never will be. . . . Your snaring vitriolic reference to Mormonism as a religion of blasphemy . . . discloses a dearth of knowledge and of Bigotry. . . . Do you think it fair play to refrain from publishing denials of the slanders you . . . print against the so called Mormons? Why didn't you print at least the text of my denial and let fair minded [people decide]? In the interest of justice dare you publish the enclosed and imputable testimonies regarding the much blinded people? Come now *John Bull* be a good Englishman.¹⁸

To everyone's amazement, including President McKay's, “the next issue of the newspaper contained a large headline which read ‘A DANIEL COME TO JUDGMENT,’” under which appeared the complete text of his letter. Before his arrival in Great Britain, newspapers had refused to print rebuttals written by missionaries or other Latter-day Saints.¹⁹ In June, President McKay reported to Rudger Clawson that *John Bull* hadn't printed anything against Latter-day Saints since.²⁰

In the same vein, “he called on Lord Beaverbrook, owner of a chain of newspapers, and appealed to his British sense of fair play. It was a cordial visit, there was a decided change in the atmosphere, and the dialogue continued on a more even footing, with the worst excesses stopped.”²¹ The effect of David O. McKay's persona on others was dramatic, and the new approach of going directly to editors and owners rather than reporters had found success. Within three months of his arrival, President McKay was pleased to see results from his strategy. Writing to Rudger Clawson, on February 5, 1923, Elder McKay reported, “Regarding the work here, it is mov-

ing along slowly and encouragingly. Even the *Sunday Illustrated* . . . is leaving us alone.”²²

By December 11, 1923, President McKay expressed the thought that the circulating slander was a thing of the past except for one source. Writing to the editor and staff of the *Standard Examiner* in Ogden, Utah, he shared, “Winifred Graham is the only one of whom we know of present who is chewing the cud of slander against Utah. Undoubtedly, as long as it fattens her purse, she will continue to call the calumnious stuff sweet.”²³ He may have decided to turn her villainous slander over to a higher authority, for at one point he wrote to the First Presidency that “‘the Lord would take her in hand’ because he [McKay] hated to fight a woman.”²⁴ Taking a higher road, he improved the Church’s image by including abundant public appearances in his travel itineraries from 1923 to 1924.

Later, as a prophet, David O. McKay repeated the practice of making public appearances during his travels a priority. These consisted of “meetings with church members . . . interspersed with press conferences, public addresses, and meetings with business and government leaders.”²⁵ One traveling companion reported: “[The purpose] was to let as many people see the President of the Church as was possible. . . . The reports in the papers and the write-ups and the pictures that they took! He broke down so much prejudice. He looked the part of a prophet.”²⁶

Just as the dedication of the London Temple had caused positive interest in British newspapers, President McKay must have felt his earlier experiences as a mission president with the media had brought dramatic results. The *Daily Express* reported in one of its issues, “Other churches in Great Britain would do well to take note of the response by the public created during the public viewing of the new London temple.”²⁷ With the Lord’s direction and President McKay’s skills, the Church became more accepted internationally through the press just as it had become more accepted in Great Britain decades before.

“Every Member a Missionary”

Because of World War I and the resulting “decrease in the number of missionaries coming to England, . . . the missionary corps

dropped from more than 150 to just over a hundred” in the European Mission. In Great Britain alone the number of missionaries was reduced to 68 in 1922, down from 107 the previous year. Therefore, President McKay knew it would be necessary to gain help from local members as never before.²⁸ He decided to involve local Church members in proselytizing, and he became increasingly convinced that the impact of each Church member on the missionary effort could be greater than it had been. Just a few weeks after coming to England, he told Latter-day Saints on December 7, 1922, “May we think, speak, and act in such a manner as shall compel even our enemies to acknowledge the uplifting and ennobling power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”²⁹ On December 17 at a London conference, he announced his aim for the British Mission for 1923. He asked that “each member of the Church do his best to bring at least one soul to a knowledge of the Gospel.” Hoping this aim would be uppermost in the minds of British Saints, Elder McKay wished they would “sense the responsibility that rests upon them of carrying the Gospel message to their friends and neighbors.”³⁰ He appealed to the Saints of Europe to pledge themselves to bring one new member into the Church every year, suggesting they look to relatives, friends, coworkers, and even casual acquaintances or strangers for possible converts.³¹ He restated this goal constantly for the next few months. That January, at a meeting of the traveling elders and local priesthood at a Newcastle conference on January 8, 1923, he urged, “Let each member be a missionary. . . . We have nothing to feel ashamed of, nothing to apologise for.”³²

President McKay also addressed a problem he felt was a roadblock to his goal: local membership was under the impression that the great harvest of souls in Great Britain had already taken place. The *Millennial Star* reported that he refuted such an idea: “[He] said the statement is often made that this is the gleaning time. He did not consider the statement well-founded.”³³ Writing to President John Blooth of the North Weber Stake in Ogden on October 24, 1923, he shared, “I believe that there are just as many sincere people in Great Britain today as there ever have been.”³⁴ A week later, on February 3, he reiterated at a conference that it was “harvest time, not the time of gleanings. The motto of the European Mission for

1923 is, he said, ‘Every member a missionary.’” He then proceeded to show the Saints how they could “assist the missionaries in getting the Gospel message before the people.”³⁵ Writing a letter that same week, he shared his ideas: “We are making an effort . . . to use the local priesthood and the church membership as a means of influencing non-members to investigate the truth. Our aim is to have every member a missionary, not in the sense of leaving their homes or work, but in the sense of opening the way for elders to get in the presence of men and women who honestly desire to know the truth.”³⁶ Throughout the mission this goal was “heartily adopted,” and the burden of gospel conversion was placed squarely on the shoulders of all active members in Europe.³⁷

David O. McKay also knew it was important to have literature for investigators to read that would have an impact on them after the missionaries or local members went home. At a meeting of the traveling elders in the Manchester conference, President McKay recommended printing new missionary tracts. By October, the mission had “printed 200,000 tracts containing the testimony of . . . prominent business men in Utah, and ministers of other churches and of US senators.”³⁸ During the fall of that year, the “tracting society” was formed. The tracting society was basically the “every member a missionary” program, where individual members of the Church would distribute Church literature in neighborhoods and among family members and coworkers.³⁹ President McKay suggested a “new environment and new means of approaching people.”⁴⁰ Instead of going door-to-door to distribute these tracts, missionaries would distribute them at home and at street meetings. Street meetings were largely attended, and they prevailed at each conference. The distribution of these tracts worked to refute the falsehoods that had been circulated about the Latter-day Saints.

Under President McKay’s leadership, proselytizing practices were also changed. Although he called the “every member a missionary” program a tracting society, President McKay felt that on his own mission (1897–99) door-to-door contact had been futile. He had greatly disliked this mode of proselytizing that was common in the European Mission at the time. As a young missionary, the first time he distributed tracts door-to-door he felt so “discouraged and

downhearted” that he had to spend a lot of time on his knees to remove the feeling through humble prayer.⁴¹ He never enjoyed this approach and often repeated to himself a poem he made up that expressed his feelings on the subject:

Offering some people a gospel tract,
Is like getting cold water poured down the back
Such a look does one get
As the door goes smack.⁴²

Because of these early missionary experiences, President McKay developed a new approach as a mission president. Elders and couple missionaries were to secure “more homes in which to meet friends in a social way,” and there was to be an organization to put tracting societies into operation.⁴³ Church members responded by opening their homes more frequently to cottage meetings.⁴⁴

On November 1, 1923, President Heber J. Grant mentioned the success of the program: “I note with interest the splendid work you are doing in the distribution of tracts, refuting the slanders which have been circulated against us. I am gratified to learn that this work is bearing fruit.”⁴⁵ And by September 1924, President McKay reported that his new system was successful: “Conditions in Great Britain are becoming more favorable for missionary work. . . . Our open air meetings and cottage meetings are showing results. Open air meetings are now being held successfully. . . . Five hundred people were in an open air meeting in Newcastle the other evening, and the Elders were not enlisted. A few years ago the Elders labored in that city were put on a train and ordered out.”⁴⁶ David O. McKay’s plan of “every member a missionary” bore incredible fruit in the British Mission, and in 1923 achievements of the mission doubled.⁴⁷

“Every Member a Missionary” Goes Churchwide

The policy of turning the missionary work over to local members impacted the Church worldwide thirty years later when David O. McKay became President of the Church. From 1951 to 1970, he taught Church members what he had taught British Saints. Appealing to the entire membership to become involved in missionary work, in 1953 President McKay spoke on the

meaning of the phrase “every member a missionary”: “All mission presidents . . . will have missionaries under [them] who are paying their own expenses and will give their time and ability and wealth to spread the Gospel. We often think it is their responsibility. But the responsibility to preach the Gospel and carry happiness to the world should rest upon every member of the Church.”⁴⁸ In 1960 one convert baptism was made for every 1,038 homes visited tracting, while through referrals missionaries had one baptism from every 7.9 homes on which they called.⁴⁹ It was during President McKay’s tenure as prophet that “every member a missionary” began to have a real impact on converts as the referral system came into use.

The formation of new stakes under President McKay’s administration may be seen as an indicator of the success of his “every member a missionary” philosophy. As Prince and Wright report: “Missionary efforts from 1959 through 1962 were highly successful. Ninety-one new stakes were formed during this four-year period, including the first ever in Europe (Manchester, England) and fifteen additional stakes outside of North America.”⁵⁰ This success must in part be attributed to the increasing member missionary work. Indeed, membership tripled during his tenure as prophet, and before his death more than two-thirds of the Church had known no other prophet.

If We Build It, They Will Come

As previously mentioned, open-air meetings became a significant part of the European Mission strategy. As important as these meetings were, President McKay emphasized the importance of finding places to meet on a more permanent basis. Francis Gibbons wrote, “Saints in Europe were, for the most part, housed in deplorable buildings, usually rented and often wholly unsuitable as places of worship. It was not uncommon for the members to have to sweep away the debris left by thoughtless smokers before they could hold their meetings, amid the stench of stale tobacco smoke.”⁵¹ Jeanette McKay Morrell reported that her brother felt there was a real need in Great Britain for better meeting places. He suggested that “if the sum that we are now spending for rent were applied wisely in build-

ing societies, many branches might, in a few years, own their own Church buildings.”⁵² David O. McKay felt that using rented halls for Church meetings hindered proselytizing efforts. He later said, “People would ask, ‘Where is your meeting place?’ . . . We say, ‘It is in Hall So-and-so,’ giving the impression to an investigator that the Church was not permanently established.”⁵³

Even in cities where prejudice against the Latter-day Saints was nonexistent, few buildings were available where the Saints could meet. One such building was needed for the Bradford Branch, which at the time was “one of the leading branches in the British mission.” On June 29, 1923, Elder McKay wrote the First Presidency: “The Bradford branch of the [Leeds] conference has no home which to have services. . . . [There is] very little prejudice in the town against the Church. For several months the elders laboring there have tired in vain to secure a hall suitable in price and rent.”⁵⁴ For other branches in the mission, prejudice made it even more difficult to find a hall to rent. On many occasions, President McKay wrote Church headquarters asking for buildings to be erected. For instance, on November 7, 1923, he wrote to President Grant appealing for a small chapel for the Nuneaton Saints. He pleaded that they were worthy of having a permanent home.⁵⁵

Finding buildings available for Latter-day Saints to meet in throughout the rest of the European Mission was even more precarious. In a letter written to a friend in Ogden, President McKay stated, “I think you’ve already heard that at our conference in Berlin 1800 people filled the hall and 200 others turned away because of lack of room.”⁵⁶ He felt strongly that if the Church were to succeed and grow, it must have a permanent presence, and for him that meant Church-owned structures. Before being released as mission president, he wrote to his successor, James E. Talmage: “The need of suitable places of worship confronts the missionaries daily. Several small churches should either be built or purchased. It will save you great deal of worry if you ascertain the presidencies of your area in regard to this matter.”⁵⁷ This desire of President McKay to provide chapels for the Latter-day Saints in Europe would largely remain unfulfilled until after 1951.

President McKay's Building Program

Soon after becoming President of the Church, President McKay told reporters that “the focus of the Mormon Church today is upon building.”⁵⁸ Biographer Greg Prince explained that “the major reason” for President McKay’s emphasis on new buildings was “to establish the church as a permanent international fixture.”⁵⁹ At the October 1952 general conference, President McKay announced that eighty-four new chapels had been completed and dedicated in the first nine months of that year with another fifty-three scheduled for completion in the final quarter. Furthermore, 389 chapels were under construction.⁶⁰ The idea of constructing buildings even where there weren’t enough Church members to support them was a McKay innovation first talked about during his mission presidency. Elder Robert L. Simpson, who served in the Presiding Bishopric during President McKay’s presidency, said, “This building missionary program was instrumental in getting hundreds of chapels built, not only in the South Pacific, but over in Europe, chapels that might have waited another generation or two under the old thinking. Everything was accelerated.”⁶¹

In 1960 the *Church News* announced that the largest building program in Church history was under way and that by the end of that year, “800 chapels will be waiting dedication, under construction or have plans approved.”⁶² True to President McKay’s instincts, permanent buildings increased conversions. William Bates, a counselor in the first stake presidency in Manchester, England, recalled that new chapels “absolutely multiplied the number of baptisms, and it raised the status of the Church tremendously.”⁶³ During his presidency, the belief was that a building would draw new members to the Church and activate existing ones.⁶⁴ The underlying thought had been germinated in President McKay’s mind as the European Mission president.

“A Veritable Genius in Leadership”

“President McKay is a veritable genius in leadership,” declared the *Millennial Star* after he reorganized the elders into groups with several acting as traveling elders to spread better teaching meth-

ods.”⁶⁵ During this time, his ability to train missionaries blossomed. G. Martin Hopfenbeck remembered a nine-hour elders’ meeting that convened in Berlin in February 1923. Of the 207 missionaries that attended, few could speak English. Despite language barriers, President McKay took time to hear each one of the difficulties the elders were facing, offering suggestions for improvement. Hopfenbeck recalled, “Elders came away from that meeting with a clear understanding of what it means to be a missionary of the Church of Christ in the world.”⁶⁶ Throughout his tenure, President McKay instructed missionaries on a wide variety of topics. His notes from one conference reveal the breadth of his instruction: “How to conduct meetings, relations of the officers to each other—when properly understood troubles will be minimized. The obligation of each missionary is (1) to be responsive, (2) to be dependable, (3) to be industrious, (4) to be masters of self, (5) to know principles and ordinances of the Gospel, and (6) to be sincere.”⁶⁷

He taught the missionaries to be strict in their obedience, even in small things. For instance, at one conference he asked the missionaries to speak for only three minutes each. When several elders took longer than the designated time, President McKay didn’t say anything and just let them continue into his time. When his turn came, he announced the closing song and sat down, not giving a talk as expected. “After the meeting he said to the missionaries, ‘When I say to talk three minutes I mean to talk three minutes.’”⁶⁸

Though he led hundreds, he led with a personal touch. During his two-year stay, he knew over five hundred missionaries in Europe by name.⁶⁹ Calling each missionary by first name, he showed an interest in each individual, bringing great dividends as he held conferences extensively throughout the mission.

His son, David Lawrence McKay, recalled: “Father scheduled conferences virtually every weekend. In January, he was in Holland. In February, he and Mother went through Paris, Zurich, Basel, Dresden, and Berlin, holding meetings as they went. In March, they held meetings in Wales and Grimsby, near Hull. Just before Christmas 1923, he records concluding a five-session conference in London—‘the last of fourteen successful conferences in as many weeks.’”⁷⁰ Francis Gibbons noted that “he toured all of the missions under

his jurisdiction, except the South African Mission, in the course of which he held numerous conference gatherings that combined instructions to missionaries and preaching services.”⁷¹

He taught local leaders in these conferences. For example, he was concerned that local leaders did not understand Church organization. At a conference held in London, he “spoke on the organization of the Church, beginning with the First Presidency, then the quorums of the Priesthood, with their presiding officers, and after these the auxiliary associations, all working in perfect harmony, having for their aim the glory of God and the welfare of his children.”⁷² At another conference, on June 10, 1923, in South Tottenham, he “emphasized the purpose of the Church organization and the responsibilities devolving upon those who have accepted positions in it. [He said] the most common weakness in organizations is lack of unity. One cause of disunity is distrust, and one cause of distrust is a lack of personal interest. We are all equal, but in the Church there is a system, and when honor is given it is not the man that is honored, but the position.”⁷³ He repeated these same topics in his talks as Church President.

Prophet-Leader

Many aspects of the administrative style David O. McKay developed in the mission field were repeated as he served as the prophet. Just as he had trained missionaries decades earlier, he now trained General Authorities. As a mission president, he had listened to each missionary’s concerns at various conferences, and as the prophet he continued to be a good listener.⁷⁴ His leadership style continued to help those in difficult circumstances.⁷⁵ For instance, if one of the General Authorities was making a presentation that was not going well or was headed in the wrong direction, President McKay would try to save the presenter from embarrassment in front of the group. He would suggest, “‘Can we postpone this until our next meeting?’ Before the next meeting he would either get with that person, or get someone to get with him and help him to do what needed to be done to make it acceptable and presentable.”⁷⁶

The subject of Church organization he had often addressed in the mission field was repeated in general conference addresses. In 1967 he explained his objective for Church members: "Unity of purpose, with all working in harmony within the structure of Church organization as revealed by the Lord, is to be our objective."⁷⁷ The prominence he placed on the subject of Church organization can be seen especially in the priesthood correlation program developed and introduced during his tenure. While he served as prophet, Latter-day Saints experienced a new "pipeline" of presiding authority in Church organization, emphasizing that all Church activities were to be funneled through the priesthood.⁷⁸

As mission president, President McKay recommended to the President of the Church that missions be visited more frequently by members of the Quorum of the Twelve, adding that generally stakes were far better prepared to go without such official visits than were the missions.⁷⁹ Taking his own recommendation when he became President of the Church, David O. McKay became a world traveler, spending much time visiting the far-flung missions of the Church. As a mission president he had not conducted business from the mission home. Instead, he made sure he was out among the people. He duplicated this practice on a worldwide scale as prophet, seer, and revelator, traveling more extensively than any previous Church leader.

Preparing the Church to Be a World Force

President McKay completed his European Mission service in December 1924. The result of his leadership "was a great increase in membership in the mission during 1923, exceeding that of previous years by a large margin."⁸⁰ The year 1924 was equally successful and busy. During one twelve-day period, he traveled two thousand miles, held fifteen meetings ranging from two to ten hours each, met 228 elders, addressed almost seven thousand people, and spent sixty-eight hours on trains.⁸¹

More importantly, he had instituted a mission-wide program that created a more positive image for the Church in Great Britain, turning the tide of public views in favor of the Church. He had

instituted the “every member a missionary” program and had established more permanent meeting places. In addition, he had become knowledgeable of Church organization at the local level and had developed a strategy to reach individual members. Upon concluding his mission, he wrote, “This mission has been one of the most pleasant and worthwhile experiences of our lives.”⁸² At the next April conference he testified, “I know that [the Lord’s] Church is established among men. God help us all to be true to it and help the world to see it as it is.”⁸³

Part of the preparation of this great future prophet was to see the Church established more fully in Europe. His views of the Church were broadened in ways they had not been before. He discussed with a friend these new views of the Church becoming a world influence. In a letter to George F. Middleton, dated June 5, 1924, he shared:

As I view it, the Church has every element needed to become a world force. . . . The reason the Church is not yielding a greater influence over this increasingly skeptical world is not, I take it, that the Gospel is in any way inapplicable to the needs of man, but that we members are inadequate to the task of declaring its applicability and greatness. I believe one sublime phase of this church has hitherto received altogether too little attention. I refer to the organization as a social and economic factor in the world. There is nothing equal to it in the world today; and as far as I can learn, there has never been anything like it in all the history of man. . . . It seems to me that the time has come when we must realize more fully than we do that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation of here in this old world.⁸⁴

As a prophet prepared by his past leadership experiences in the European Mission, President McKay led Church members to accept the Savior’s charge to carry the gospel to all nations, helping transform the Church into a greater force for good in the world today.

Notes

1. See David Lawrence McKay, *My Father, David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 216.

2. See Francis M. Gibbons, *David O. McKay: Apostle to the World, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 124.

3. Blessing given to David O. McKay prior to his mission for England, November 3, 1922, McKay Scrapbook, no. 130, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

4. David O. McKay to Rudger Clawson, March 15, 1923, McKay Scrapbook, Church Archives.

5. David O. McKay to Steven L Richards, June 6, 1923, McKay Scrapbook, Church Archives.

6. See Jeanette McKay Morrell, *Highlights in the Life of President David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966), 76.

7. Blessing given to David O. McKay prior to his mission for England, November 3, 1922, McKay Scrapbook, no. 130, Church Archives.

8. David O. McKay to Rudger Clawson, December 15, 1922, McKay Scrapbook, Church Archives.

9. McKay, *My Father*, 163–64.

10. See Orson F. Whitney, *Through Memory's Halls: The Life Story of Orson F. Whitney* (Independence, MO: Press of Zion's Printing and Publishing Company, 1930), 323–24.

11. Kenneth B. Hunsaker, "Mormon Novels," in *A Literary History of the American West*, ed. J. Golden Taylor (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1987), 851.

12. William O. Nelson, "Anti-Mormon Publications," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:49.

13. Morrell, *Highlights in the Life*, 75.

14. David O. McKay, "All Roads Lead to Rome," *Millennial Star*, March 15, 1923, 168.

15. Morrell, *Highlights in the Life*, 74–75.

16. Keith Terry, *David O. McKay, Prophet of Love* (Santa Barbara: Butterfly, 1980), 91.

17. Morrell, *Highlights in the Life*, 75.

18. David O. McKay to Rudger Clawson, June 18, 1923, McKay Scrapbooks, Church Archives.

19. Morrell, *Highlights in the Life*, 75.

20. See David O. McKay to Rudger Clawson, June 18, 1923, McKay Scrapbooks, Church Archives.

21. McKay, *My Father*, 164.

22. Gibbons, *David O. McKay: Apostle to the World, Prophet of God*, 125.

23. David O. McKay to the Editor and Staff of the *Ogden Standard Examiner*, December 11, 1923, McKay Scrapbooks, Church Archives.

24. Gibbons, *David O. McKay: Apostle to the World, Prophet of God*, 124.

25. Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005), 368.

26. Franklin J. Murdock interview by Gordon Irving, March 28 and 30, 1973, MS 200 89, Church Archives, as cited in Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*, 368.

27. Morrell, *Highlights in the Life*, 206.

28. "Well Done Good and Faithful Servants," *Millennial Star*, November 20, 1924, 744–45; and Richard L. Evans, *A Century of Mormonism in Great Britain* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1984), 243.

29. David O. McKay, "A Word of Greeting," *Millennial Star*, December 7, 1922, 777.

30. Horace W. Shurtleff, "Minutes of the London Conference," *Millennial Star*, December 28, 1922, 826–27.

31. See Morrell, *Highlights in the Life*, 75.

32. "From the Mission Field," *Millennial Star*, February 1, 1923, 80.

33. "From the Mission Field," *Millennial Star*, February 15, 1923, 112.

34. David O. McKay to President John Blooth, October 24, 1923, McKay Scrapbooks, Church Archives.

35. "From the Mission Field," *Millennial Star*, February 22, 1923, 126.

36. David O. McKay to Ruderger Clawson, February 5, 1923, McKay Scrapbook, Church Archives.

37. Alvin W. Jones, "Minutes of the Welsh Conference," *Millennial Star*, March 22, 1923, 187.

38. David O. McKay to President John Blooth, October 24, 1923, McKay Scrapbooks, Church Archives.

39. David O. McKay Scrapbook, December 1922 to December 1924, McKay Papers, MS 668, box 12, folder 4, November 4, 1923; December 2, 1923; Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

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41. Stan Larson and Patricia Larson, *What E're Thou Art Act Well Thy Part: The Missionary Diaries of David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Blue Ribbon Books, 1999), 13n29.

42. Terry, *Prophet of Love*, 39.

43. "From the Mission Field," *Millennial Star*, January 10, 1924, 32.

44. David O. McKay Scrapbook, December 1922 to December 1924, McKay Papers, box 12, folder 4, October 14, 1923, Special Collections, Marriott Library.

45. President Grant to David O. McKay, November 1, 1923, McKay Scrapbooks, Church Archives.

46. David O. McKay to President Ruderger Clawson and Members of the Council of the Twelve, September 16, 1924, McKay Scrapbooks, Church Archives.

47. David O. McKay, December 1922 to December 1924, McKay Papers, box 12, folder 4, November 4, 1923, Special Collections, Marriott Library.

48. David O. McKay Diaries, September 6, 1953, David Oman McKay Papers, MS 668, Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, as cited by Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*, 230.

49. See T. Bowring Woodbury Diary, June 25, 1960, MS 8000, Church Archives, as cited by Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*, 237.
50. Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*, 254.
51. Gibbons, *David O. McKay: Apostle to the World, Prophet of God*, 128.
52. Morrell, *Highlights in the Life*, 76.
53. Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*, 199.
54. David O. McKay to President Grant and Counselors, June 29, 1923, McKay Scrapbooks, Church Archives.
55. David O. McKay to President Grant, November 7, 1923, McKay Scrapbooks, Church Archives.
56. David O. McKay to President John Blooth, October 24, 1923, McKay Scrapbooks, Church Archives.
57. David O. McKay to James E. Talmage, September 10, 1924, McKay Scrapbooks, Church Archives.
58. "Mormons' Leader Visits Los Angeles," *Los Angeles Times*, April 29, 1951, as cited in Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*, 202.
59. Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*, 204.
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62. "800 Chapels To Be Built By Church In '60," *Church News*, July 23, 1960, 3.
63. William Bates, interview by Gregory Prince, October 3, 2000, as cited in Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Mormonism*, 209.
64. Alan Blodgett, to Gregory Prince, November 2, 1999, as cited by Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Mormonism*, 222.
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68. Gunn McKay, interview by Mary Jane Woodger, July 28, 1995, Huntsville, Utah, transcript in possession of author.
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70. McKay, *My Father*, 162.
71. Gibbons, *David O. McKay: Apostle to the World, Prophet of God*, 125.
72. Horace W. Shurtleff, "Minutes of the London Conference," *Millennial Star*, December 28, 1922, 826.
73. Horace W. Shurtleff, "Minutes of the London Conference," *Millennial Star*, June 21, 1923, 394–95.

74. See Robert L. Simpson, interview by Mary Jane Woodger, December 30, 1996, Salt Lake City, Utah, taped transcription in author's possession; and Paul H. Dunn, interview by Mary Jane Woodger, October 11, 1995, Salt Lake City, taped transcription in author's possession.

75. See Hartman Rector Jr., interview by Mary Jane Woodger, October 10, 1997, Salt Lake City, taped transcription in author's possession.

76. Simpson interview, December 30, 1996.

77. David O. McKay in *Conference Report*, October 1967, 6.

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79. See McKay, *My Father*, 171.

80. Morrell, *Highlights in the Life*, 75; see also Terry, *Prophet of Love*, 93.

81. David Lawrence McKay, *My Father*, 169.

82. Morrell, *Highlights in the Life*, 76.

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84. David O. McKay to Dr. George F. Middleton, June 5, 1924, McKay Scrapbooks, Church Archives.