

A Tale of Two Temples

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Although Church leaders during the twentieth century encouraged Saints to stay in their own lands and build up the Church there, members abroad had to travel to western America as late as 1950 to receive temple blessings. Before temples were built in England, “We couldn’t hold [members] there,” one Church leader lamented. The branches were simply “gathering points” from which converts would emigrate to receive the highly prized temple blessings.¹

Even as Charles Dickens used the backdrops of London and Paris in his *A Tale of Two Cities*, this chapter will use events surrounding the construction of the London and Preston temples to illustrate the progress of the Church in Great Britain between the 1950s and the 1990s. It will also show how these two temples reflected broader developments in the Church worldwide.

The First Temples Overseas

In April 1952 the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles made the historic decision to build temples in Europe. Two months later, President David O. McKay flew to Europe to personally oversee the selection of temple sites. The first site chosen was in Switzerland. Upon arriving home, President McKay stated that the Swiss Temple “would be the first of several such temples to be erected for the Saints in Europe,” explaining that “the Church could bring temples to these people by building smaller edifices for this purpose and more of them.”² The Saints in Britain couldn’t help but realize that “it would be only a matter of time before they too would have a temple.”³

In fact, President McKay had visited and approved the purchase of property at New Chapel in Surrey, which is twenty-six miles south of London on the highway to Brighton on England’s south coast. Purchase of the beautiful thirty-two-acre baronial estate was

announced publicly on August 1, 1953, at which time President McKay was once again en route to Europe.⁴ He wrote in his journal, "This is the beginning of another great blessing for the faithful Latter-day Saints in this land, for the Saints can enjoy all the blessings that are available anywhere in the world."⁵

President McKay arrived in London two days later. He and Church architect Edward O. Anderson spent that same day walking over the grounds until they knew specifically where the new temple should be situated. President McKay was particularly anxious to preserve the estate's beautiful formal garden. On August 10, following groundbreaking services for the Swiss Temple, the President returned to dedicate the London site. Only a small group was invited, and most sat on the lawn under the stately oak trees during the two-hour service. President McKay spoke enthusiastically of the site's beauty, suggesting that being there "is like entering into a little paradise"⁶ and that the stream along the southern border of the property, Eden Brook, was appropriately named. He indicated that the 350-year-old Elizabethan manor house with its thirty-six spacious rooms and other buildings on the property would be retained and used for various purposes. A twenty-by-forty-foot tiled chicken house, for example, would be remodeled into quarters for the Genealogical Society.

The temple announcement began a period of intensified genealogical activity among the British Saints. Many spent Saturdays poring over old parish records, copying cemetery inscriptions, or traveling to London to consult government records. "Sixty-nine out of seventy-five British branches had a genealogical organization," and microfilers continued gathering vital data from throughout the country.⁷

Twenty-four acres of the property were farmland, including a slight rise where the architects favored placing the temple. The local agricultural agent, however, would not approve sacrificing any farmland. Instead, he insisted that the temple be built on the former tennis courts.⁸ This created a problem. As reported in the *Millennial Star*, a lily pond had earlier covered this site, so now construction engineers were concerned about this swampy ground. Nevertheless, President McKay insisted that the temple be located on the

spot he had approved. After much discussion, holes were drilled to determine if the soil could hold the temple's weight. Surprisingly, rock was found at the proper depth to support the foundation. One of the engineers quipped, "You could build the city of London on that site."⁹

About one thousand people gathered for the groundbreaking service on Saturday, August 27, 1955. The Salt Lake Mormon Tabernacle Choir, then in Europe on a concert tour in connection with the Swiss Temple dedication, took part in the service. President McKay declared, "In years to come, many of us may not be able to return and traverse the highway which you're facing; but your children may; and as they pass the completed structure, dedicated to the Lord, they will say: 'See, my parents or my grandparents, were there on that occasion that the ground was broken on the southeast corner of that edifice.'"¹⁰ Derek A. Cuthbert, a new member of the Church and future General Authority, said of that day, "Our hearts were full as we returned to our home after a weekend of rejoicing, first at the temple groundbreaking, then at the Tabernacle Choir concert in the Royal Albert Hall."¹¹

Actual construction of the temple began the following spring and reflected the highest standards of craftsmanship. Below ground level, the structure was carefully "damp-proofed" with a layer of hard asphalt an inch thick.¹² Latter-day Saints throughout Great Britain "eagerly followed the construction of the temple, as reports and photographs were given in the monthly issues of the *Millennial Star*."¹³ The London Temple exterior was of "pure white" stone "quarried on the Island of Portland, just off the British coast."¹⁴ As construction progressed, Elder Richard L. Evans of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles placed the cornerstone on May 11, 1957, under showery skies.

There was no organized fund-raising, but several members launched fund-raising projects of their own. Some contributed one hundred dollars, and others suggested that each mission district pay to furnish one room in the temple. Mission President A. Hamer Riser noted that the Saints' total contribution wasn't that large compared to the overall cost but that their contributions "were pretty substantial for them" and reflected "their spirit." For years, tithes had been

retained in Britain because they could not be sent out of the country. Therefore, no new money was needed from America.¹⁵

The thirty-four-thousand-square-foot temple was completed in 1958 at a cost of 1.25 million dollars. During the two-week pre-dedication open house, some 76,324 people visited the temple, with three days added to the open house because of high public interest. At times as many as one thousand people were in line to tour the edifice. One newspaper reported, “The Mormon Temple is the only Church in Britain with a quarter-mile queue waiting to get in.”¹⁶ In earlier years, missionaries had experienced virtually no success in this region, but following the open house, branches in nearby Epsom and East Grinstead blossomed.¹⁷

President Gordon B. Hinckley, then a newly called Assistant to the Twelve, arrived in Britain ahead of other General Authorities so he could “coordinate final arrangements” for the dedication. A last-minute problem occurred when a severe thunderstorm dumped torrents of rain on the area. The night before the dedication, the local fire department was called to pump water out of the basement. At the same time, Salt Lake Temple President ElRay L. Christiansen, London Temple President Selvoy J. Boyer, and President Hinckley, “all dressed in their pajamas, stood in waist-deep water bailing out a stairway area that led into the temple basement.”¹⁸

The London Temple was dedicated by President David O. McKay. On his first visit to the completed temple, President McKay stood at the door with “tears rolling down his cheeks.” He said, “Imagine me living long enough to build a temple in England, in Surrey where the Magna Carta was signed. Where people can come and take out their endowments without traveling to America. Just imagine how I feel.”¹⁹ In his dedicatory prayer, President McKay acknowledged Britain’s great legacy of liberty, specifically referring to the guarantees in the Magna Carta.²⁰

Twelve thousand Saints were able to attend the six dedicatory services held Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, September 7–9. The Church chartered twenty-five large double-decker buses to transport people to the temple. The Saints were picked up from several locations around London, beginning at about five in the morning each day.²¹ Because the new temple would serve Saints not only

from Britain but from other areas as well, dedicatory sessions were planned especially for those coming from Scandinavia, the Netherlands, and other parts of Europe.²²

Clifton Kerr, who had just arrived to preside over the British Mission, recalled how the choir sang the “Hosanna Anthem.” Then the congregation was asked to rise and sing “The Spirit of God.” President Kerr said, “It just had a melting effect, nearly everyone broke down before it was completed. There was just a tremendous feeling of love and good-will.”²³ A local newspaper reported that “there was not a dry eye among the Mormons as they came from the temple dedication ceremony.”²⁴

The temple had a positive impact on the British Saints even before it opened for service. “Ever since the temple project began,” Derek Cuthbert observed, “there had been a new spirit of commitment and service among the members. . . . Meetings were better attended, tithing [was] at a higher level, and the love and fellowship of the Saints [were] increasingly manifest.”²⁵ President Kerr reflected, “I couldn’t help but believe that those brothers and sisters going back to their branches would be a lot kinder and more considerate of each other, especially of new members.”²⁶

President Boyer called six couples as ordinance workers. The first ordinances commenced the morning after the dedicatory services concluded. The first family sealed in the new temple was that of Derek and Muriel Cuthbert, who had been baptized just a few years before.²⁷ Nearly three decades later, Brother Cuthbert became the first British resident called as a General Authority. Each Sunday President Boyer accompanied the British Mission president to district conferences to encourage temple attendance. “When you build a temple in a new country and they’ve never had the habit of going to the temple,” President Boyer noted, “it takes a little while to get them thinking temple.” His efforts succeeded and temple attendance increased. Because most of the Saints were working people, they couldn’t come to the temple during the week. Therefore, sessions were scheduled on Saturdays. Even in nearby London, members couldn’t attend on weekday evenings because it took two and a half hours to reach the temple by bus, and local buses quit running before sessions concluded. President Boyer convinced the members

of one district to spend a week at the temple “instead of going to the ocean on vacation.” When patrons came from America, President Boyer called on six couples and an impromptu session was scheduled. If there were only one or two visitors, a sealing session would be organized instead. During the frequent slack times, President Boyer kept busy clearing the brush that grew up around the property.²⁸

The cost of traveling to the temple was another problem. Many Saints came for their own ordinances but never came back. To help solve this problem, in 1978 the temple launched the “Golden Age Programme,” paying an allowance to senior citizens who would spend time at the temple performing endowments and other ordinances.²⁹

As early as 1959, the question arose of whether the temple should be taxed. The Church was willing to pay taxes on the manor house and related facilities but insisted that the temple, as a place of worship, should be exempt. A local magistrate held that the temple did not need to be taxed. His ruling prompted ministers from the Church of England to protest the taxation of their residences, which were typically attached to an adjoining church. In response, the Parliament immediately passed a new law stating that such religious properties be taxed at only half the rate. In 1962 a British court ruled that the temple was not a place of *public* religious worship; furthermore, the whole property should be regarded as a single unit and therefore all be taxed. The Church appealed this ruling to the House of Lords, the highest court in the land, which received the case on May 30, 1963. Henry D. Moyle, First Counselor in the First Presidency and an experienced attorney, flew to London to give personal direction to the Church’s effort. Following a two-day hearing, the House of Lords upheld the temple’s taxation. Some speculated that because of this unexpected financial burden the temple might even close. Nevertheless, the Saints met the emergency, increased their tithes and offerings, and the temple remained open. Interestingly, because the temple and related facilities were considered to be a single religious unit and therefore taxed at half the usual rate, the Church actually paid less tax for the whole unit than it had earlier been willing to pay on the property for the related facilities alone.³⁰

Grateful the temple was still open, Saints came from all parts of the British Isles to enjoy its blessings. Members in the North British Mission, for example, rented twelve-passenger minibuses for the two-hundred-mile trip. At first, overnight accommodations were provided in the Manor House with its thirteen bedrooms and eight bathrooms. Subsequently, other facilities were provided nearby for temple patrons. In 1985 the Manor House became a missionary training center for the European area.

The temple's impact, however, was not limited to Latter-day Saints. Many visitors were attracted to the temple grounds. The temple's "beautiful rhododendron walk, lakeside planting of azaleas, herbaceous borders and massed bulbs" were featured in a national guidebook *The Gardens of England and Wales*.³¹ In 1969 the Church opened a visitors' center at the temple with a fifty-seat theater. This visitors' center also affected members of other faiths. It was dedicated on June 14 by Elder John Longdon, Assistant to the Twelve and a native of England.³²

When President McKay dedicated the temple, he prayed, "Cause, O Lord, that even people who pass the grounds, or view the temple from afar, may lift their eyes from the groveling things of sordid life and look up to thee and acknowledge thy providence."³³ Soon after the temple dedication, John Cox, a young man in the area, took pictures of the temple as part of a photography contest. This led to his joining the Church. Years later, after he had served as president of the London Stake, he reflected, "Throughout my life, I've had a special feeling about the temple, and it all started with a photograph."³⁴

Robert W. Scott, a medic with the armed forces stationed near the temple, enjoyed jogging past it in 1967. He didn't know what the building was but recognized it "as being very peaceful and special." After he was transferred to turbulent Northern Ireland, however, he forgot all about it. There he married a recent Latter-day Saint convert and joined the Church. Even after he heard about being sealed in a temple, he didn't connect the concept with the building that had earlier impressed him. By 1977 he and his wife were living in Scotland, where Robert would later become a member of a stake presidency. From there, they journeyed overnight to the temple, where

they planned to be sealed. Only when they reached the grounds did Scott realize that the London Temple was the building that had impressed him years before. “It was quite uncanny,” he reminisced. “The feeling I’d never quite left. It was like a door being unlocked; things clicked into a full picture.”³⁵

The temple had a similar impact on members from three branches in Ireland who spent a week completing ordinances for five hundred ancestors of one group member. After completing baptisms and endowments, the “apex came on Friday when sealing ordinances were performed for the departed families.” The journey home seemed to drag because, as one member reflected, “It was like leaving heaven, and returning to earth.”³⁶

The London Temple even served Church members in areas far beyond Great Britain. These faithful Saints often made significant sacrifices in traveling to the temple. For instance, a couple from Ghana traveled to England by freighter, arriving on a Friday night. With some difficulty, they traveled to the temple by train, taxi, and foot. When they arrived Saturday afternoon, their joy at seeing the temple “turned to despair when they learned it was closed” and would not be open again until Tuesday—after they would be back on their ship headed for home. They broke down and cried. When temple president Arthur Henry King learned about their situation, he quickly gathered some temple workers and Saints together and organized a special session. The couple from Ghana received their endowment and sealing blessings. “There they were, a couple of human beings, who were going to become kings and queens,” the temple president reflected, “looking as is if they were fully capable already of being a king and a queen, looking magnificent in their white attire.” The Ghanaian couple left the temple “filled with joy.”³⁷

The London Temple Remodeled

The decades following the London Temple’s dedication were filled with unprecedented growth. Between 1960 and 1990, Church membership in Britain multiplied more than ninefold from about 16,600 to approximately 153,000. The first British stake was orga-

nized two years after the temple was dedicated. By 1990 Britain had forty stakes. Not only was there explosive numerical growth, but there was a significant development in maturity as well.³⁸ Elder M. Russell Ballard gratefully acknowledged that by this time there were “second-, third-, fourth-, and even fifth-generation members of the Church.”³⁹ The fact that an increasing number of Latter-day Saints held local community leadership positions and that there was even a Latter-day Saint member of Parliament gave the Church a heightened respectability.

In the spring of 1990, the Swiss and London temples closed for remodeling to enlarge their capacities. Construction in the Swiss and London temples’ interior included adding a fourth floor. The single, large ordinance room that seated about two hundred fifty people was replaced by four smaller endowment rooms each seating about seventy people. This not only expanded the temple’s capacity but also made scheduling much more convenient; rather than having one endowment session beginning only every two hours, one could now start every half-hour. Additional sealing rooms were also added. Elder Ballard remarked, “We practically have brand new temples where the old ones were.”⁴⁰

The remodeling of both temples was completed in the fall of 1992, and open houses were scheduled for each. A flyer was distributed to every home in the London Temple area. It featured a color picture of the temple and a map showing its location. Above the picture were the words, “The last time you could tour this building was in 1958,” and below the picture was, “The next time is for six days during October 1992.” The open house for the rebuilt London Temple took place October 8–14 with more than 55,200 visitors.⁴¹

Elder M. Russell Ballard believed that the open house benefited both Latter-day Saints and people of other faiths: “There is something about walking through a temple, even before it is dedicated or rededicated, that causes people to stop and think about what is really important and of value in their lives.”⁴²

In the United Kingdom the Church’s higher profile was reflected in the increased media attention given to the temple open house when compared to thirty-four years before. This was “the best single event in terms of its effect on the general public that

we've ever had in Britain," claimed Bryan J. Grant, the Church's area Public Affairs Director. Media coverage included "over 1,000 column inches of reports in newspapers," coverage on regional and national television, and even "a feature on the BBC World Service." Grant reported that after their experience in the temple, "two non-LDS ladies" simply remarked, "This is the house of the Lord," and others asked, "How can I join your church?"⁴³

The London Temple was rededicated on October 18–20 in ten sessions by President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, with 13,200 faithful Church members attending. President Hinckley referred to the temple's original dedication thirty-four years earlier and affirmed that President McKay's prayer of dedication "has been answered and fulfilled." President Hinckley continued, "Now recently thy house has been extensively remodeled and rebuilt. Much of the interior is entirely new, and today we are met to rededicate it to thee and to thy divine Son for the consummation of thine eternal purposes." Then he echoed President McKay's reference to England's heritage of freedom and gratefully acknowledged that these liberties made possible the Restoration of the gospel. In conclusion, he prayed: "We are grateful that this thy holy house has been restored and made even more beautiful, that thy faithful saints may enter and receive the ordinances to be administered herein. We thank thee that those who have passed beyond the veil of death may have cause to rejoice because the facilities for vicarious work in their behalf have been enlarged and made more efficient."⁴⁴

The Preston Temple

During the second day of the London Temple rededication, when members from the Preston area of Northern England were assigned to attend, President Hinckley made the surprising announcement that a second temple would be built in England, near Preston, a site important in early Latter-day Saint history. "As the announcement was made, an audible response of delight rustled throughout the various rooms of the temple. Many wept."⁴⁵ This meant that England would be only the third country outside the United

States having more than one temple (the others being Canada and Germany, which had gained that distinction only two years earlier, in 1990).⁴⁶ Unlike the London Temple, which was built to serve Latter-day Saints outside of the British Isles, the new temple was intended to serve Saints only from Scotland, Ireland, and Northern England.

The decision to build a second temple in Britain had been made at least two years earlier. When Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Seventy was appointed as Area President in the summer of 1990, President Hinckley specifically assigned him to seek a possible temple site in northern England. By summer of the following year, attention focused on a fifteen-acre site at the north edge of Chorley in Lancashire, a few miles from the city of Preston. Elder Holland had not limited his search to the immediate Preston area, but he felt this site was in “a class of its own. As a piece of property, I fell in love with it. . . . It just seemed to ring all the bells.”⁴⁷ Later President Hinckley reported: “Someone asked me if my serving a mission here had anything to do with our acquiring this location or looking for this location. No, I think I can honestly say that. But I think I can say that Heber C. Kimball serving a mission here 157 years ago had something to do with looking for a temple location in this area.”⁴⁸

The site overlooked “rolling hills to the east and a greenbelt area to the north” and had easy access to the regional highway system.⁴⁹ Still, two significant obstacles had to be overcome. The site had been zoned as a business park, which would bring a needed boost to the Chorley economy, and immediate neighbors opposed any development whatsoever. When these obstacles were discussed with President Hinckley, he emphatically replied, “I want you to buy the site.”⁵⁰

Another task was to select an architect to work with the Temple Department. The area administration office recommended Building Design Partnership (BDP), a firm with a “sound national reputation and a local office in Preston.” Several years earlier, however, at the time of the British Mission 1987 sesquicentennial, President Hinckley had become acquainted with architect Peter J. Trebilcock, bishop of the Preston Ward. He wanted to consider giving the assignment to

Bishop Trebilcock's firm. Surprisingly, "discreet inquiries" revealed that the bishop was an associate at BDP.⁵¹

Delicate and persistent efforts were required to secure official approval of the temple project. Local Church members contacted city officials they knew. A recent convert was an associate of the mayor of Chorley. When contacted about the temple project, the mayor indicated that two Latter-day Saint missionaries had recently been in his home for Christmas dinner and that he "had been impressed by the young men." He pledged his support and promised to urge others to do the same. At a special meeting with the property's neighbors, they unanimously agreed to approve the temple project and asked, "What more can we do to help you?" Peter Trebilcock noted, "My non-member colleagues from BDP were speechless." Additional months of planning and negotiations climaxed with a "vigorous debate." On March 8, 1994, the Chorley Borough Council gave unanimous approval. Following the meeting, Joseph Leece, president of the Preston stake, remarked: "Seeing people who had been so much against us in the beginning actually chide the other delegates for any slight hesitancy or concerns was literal proof that a miracle had taken place."⁵²

In the presence of over ten thousand Church members, who had come from all over Great Britain, ground was formally broken on June 12, 1994. President Hinckley, who had commenced his missionary service in that area sixty-one years before, officiated. "This is an emotional day," he reflected. "Never in those years would I have dreamed that here in Lancashire there would someday stand a house of the Lord and that I would have a part in breaking ground for its construction."⁵³ Following his remarks, he offered a dedicatory prayer. He then invited the mayor "as Chorley's 'first citizen'" to join him in breaking ground. President Hinckley next invited the children present to come forward and have a part in the ground-breaking. "They needed no second bidding, and in a very short time, the five General Authorities were busy helping and supervising their young charges, who enthusiastically threw themselves into the task."⁵⁴

Even though ground had been broken, a contractor still needed to be chosen to build the temple. When the field was reduced to

two or three firms, representatives were invited to visit Utah and personally inspect temples under construction to get a clear understanding of the quality expected. When one representative returned to England, he reported that “not only was he very impressed by the temples, but also by the people he saw in Salt Lake City; *that’s the kind of place I’d like to raise my family.*” He and his family were soon baptized. At the conclusion of the bidding, Laing North-West was awarded the contract in September 1995.⁵⁵

In the fall of 1994, the First Presidency had released the architects’ rendering of the temple. The temple would have a “modern classical design,” an exterior of “light-colored European granite,” and a roof “of zinc.” Unlike the London Temple, the 154-foot tower would be surmounted by a statue of the angel Moroni.⁵⁶ Exterior panels would feature stars near the temple’s entrance, the moon in its various phases, and the sun near the celestial room, suggesting the three degrees of glory. Most of the temple’s windows would be stained glass; one at the base of the tower would depict a lantern as a reminder of the Lord’s words “Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14).⁵⁷

The temple was to be part of a larger complex, which would include a stake center and a missionary training center with accommodations for 120 young missionaries and 20 senior couples. There would also be apartments for temple workers and “wash and brush-up facilities,” plus lodging for patrons traveling long distances to attend the temple. A reception center would house a Beehive Clothing outlet and a family history center. This complex would constitute one of the largest construction projects ever undertaken by the Church.⁵⁸

The temple’s almost 70,000-square-foot interior would be approximately double the size of the London Temple, with its three floors including four endowment rooms and four sealing rooms.⁵⁹ The temple’s larger size reflected not only Latter-day Saint growth in Great Britain but the trend in temple building worldwide. London had been one of the three original overseas temples, all about the same size. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Church built nine temples, ranging from 51,000 square feet at São Paulo, Brazil, to 160,000 at Washington DC. The early 1980s brought the construction of

over a dozen much smaller temples, most ranging from 13,000 to 18,000 square feet. Larger temples began to be constructed again during the latter half of that decade and the 1990s. The Preston Temple was the largest of those built outside of North America during these years. In 1997, however, while the Preston Temple was still under construction, President Hinckley announced plans to build a large number of much smaller temples.

Standards expected of those working on the Preston Temple were not typical of other construction sites. The rules against smoking and swearing “were readily adhered to and faithfully, if not gleefully, enforced by them on all visitors to the site.”⁶⁰

After nearly four years of construction the beautiful new temple was finally ready. A two-week open house in May 1998 attracted 123,000 visitors—far more than had attended the two London Temple open houses. Twenty-five hundred members from twenty-four stakes were pleased to volunteer their time and facilities to host their countrymen in the special new building. A successful “media day” attracted seventy representatives of national and local radio, television, and newspapers, resulting in “excellent media coverage.”⁶¹ The *Times* of London reported that the temple offered, “A slice of well-scrubbed Americana, with a breathtaking religious opulence.” The temple’s “thickly carpeted rooms” climaxed with the celestial room, which the *Times* said was a “physical representation of a state of grace. . . . It looks like an old-fashioned sitting room except that the settees are ivory and fixtures are marble.”⁶² On the first Sunday of the open house, “the entire two-hour religious program on BBC Radio Lancashire was devoted to coverage of the temple opening.” It included an interview with Elder Cecil O. Samuelson of the Seventy, then President of the Europe North Area.⁶³

Most local officials and even members of Parliament from the area came to the open house. Response from visitors was typically quite positive. “I’ve been very moved,” a magistrate reflected. “You people will be an influence for good in this area. We are delighted.” A special VIP tour was organized specifically for the temple’s neighbors. Some opposition had arisen during construction, but the opposition “melted away” as the temple took shape and as Church members helped to resolve concerns. One lady who had organized

“the group against the temple,” now conceded, “I think it’s a lovely building.”⁶⁴ One elderly woman was particularly impressed and asked one of the ushers, “‘Where does one go to be baptized?’ Needless to say, we were able to help her,” Bryan Grant quipped.⁶⁵ A minister of a nearby Protestant church invited open house attendees to stop by for coffee so he could set them straight on Mormonism. Latter-day Saints reported he had less than a dozen takers during the two-week open house.⁶⁶

The new temple was dedicated in fifteen sessions June 7–10, 1998. Some 18,202 Latter-day Saints participated in this long-anticipated event. President Hinckley presided over all but the last two dedicatory sessions. In the dedicatory prayer, he acknowledged: “Through the centuries Thou hast smiled with favor upon England. . . . She has bequeathed to the world the great principles of English law to enhance the dignity of man, and the priceless gift of the English Bible which since the year 1611 has stood as a testament of the Redeemer of the world.” Then he continued: “This magnificent temple has been reared in this beautiful area where Thy chosen servants, in the days of their deep poverty and great sacrifice, first preached the restored gospel.” He then petitioned blessings for the faithful Saints in the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic: “As they pay their tithes and offerings, wilt Thou open the windows of heaven and shower down blessings upon them. Bless their homes and families. Bless their children that they may grow up with a love for the truth. Bless them in body and mind and spirit.”⁶⁷

The opening of the Preston Temple meant that Church members in the north of England and in Scotland could reach a temple in only a few hours, rather than spending most of a day traveling to the London Temple. While the number of ordinances performed in the London Temple dropped somewhat, the total ordinances completed in both temples was far greater than had been the case in London alone.⁶⁸ Thus, these two temples—the Preston Temple in the north and the London Temple in the south—became cherished sources of spiritual strength and guidance for the Latter-day Saints in Great Britain. Reflecting on these developments, historian James R. Moss concluded that the Church truly had come of age in Great Britain: “After a hundred years of serving primarily as a source of

immigrants for the Church in North America, the Church in Britain at last attained all the spiritual, intellectual, social and temporal advantages of the full Church programme, and could look to a future of building the kingdom in a way that was distinctly British.”⁶⁹

Notes

1. Selvoy J. Boyer interview by Gordon Irving, December 12, 1978, James H. Moyle Oral History Project, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, 25.

2. “Pres. McKay Approves Berne Temple Plans,” *Church News*, April 11, 1953, 7; see also “Temple Site Secured in Switzerland,” *Church News*, July 23, 1952, 2; Henry A. Smith, “Pres. McKay Completes Europe Tour,” *Church News*, July 30, 1952, 1.

3. V. Ben Bloxham, James R. Moss, and Larry C. Porter, eds., *Truth Will Prevail: The Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the British Isles, 1837–1987* (Solihull, England: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 396.

4. “Pres. McKay Leaves for Europe to Dedicate Two Temple Sites,” *Church News*, August 1, 1953, 2; Henry A. Smith, “London and Berne Temple Sites Dedicated,” *Church News*, August 8, 1953, 1–2.

5. Quoted in Bloxham, Moss, and Porter, *Truth Will Prevail*, 400.

6. “Day-by-Day Report on Pres. McKay’s Travels in Europe,” *Church News*, August 22, 1953, 4.

7. Quoted in Derek A. Cuthbert, *The Second Century: Latter-day Saints in Great Britain* (England: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 23.

8. A. Hamer Riser interview by William G. Hartley, July 16, 1974, James H. Moyle Oral History Project, Church Archives, 231.

9. Edward O. Anderson, “The Making of a Temple,” *Millennial Star*, September 1958, 282; Leland R. Grover interview, February 13, 1987.

10. Cuthbert, *The Second Century*, 25.

11. Cuthbert, *The Second Century*, 26.

12. Anderson, “The Making of a Temple,” 282.

13. Cuthbert, *The Second Century*, 29.

14. Clifton G. M. Kerr interview by Gordon Irving, October 23, 1980, 26.

15. Riser interview, 235.

16. Quoted in Cuthbert, *The Second Century*, 30.

17. Boyer interview, 36.

18. Sheri L. Dew, *Go Forward with Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996), 201–2.

19. Quoted in Boyer interview.

20. “London Temple Dedicatory Prayer,” *Improvement Era*, October 1958, 719, 775–76.

21. Kerr interview, 29.
22. Bloxham, *Truth Will Prevail*, 404.
23. Kerr interview, 33.
24. Kerr interview, 31.
25. Cuthbert, *The Second Century*, 33.
26. Kerr interview, 33.
27. Cuthbert, *The Second Century*, 34.
28. Boyer interview, 34–35.
29. “Temple: Golden Age Programme,” *Millennial Star*, January 1968, 42.
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38. James R. Moss, “The Great Awakening, in Bloxham,” *Truth Will Prevail*, 395.
39. Gerry Avant, “Site Acquired for Second Temple in England,” *Church News*, October 24, 1992, 3.
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47. Quoted in David M. W. Pickup, *The Pick and Flower of England: The Illustrated Story of the Mormons in Victorian England and the Story of the Preston Temple*, 3rd ed. (Lancashire, England: Living Legends, 1997), 131–32.
48. Pickup, *Pick and Flower*, 156.
49. “Preston Temple Modern Classical Design,” *Church News*, October 29, 1994, 3.
50. Pickup, *Pick and Flower*, 133.
51. Pickup, *Pick and Flower*, 134–35.
52. Pickup, *Pick and Flower*, 138–39, 141–42.
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59. “Preston Temple Modern Classical Design,” 3; “Preston Temple Design Released,” *Ensign*, January 1995, 76.
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64. “Open House Begins for Preston Temple,” *Church News*, May 23, 1998, 4.
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