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FULL  
GOSPEL  
*in*  
ZION



*A History of Pentecostalism in Utah*

ALAN J. CLARK



THE FULL GOSPEL IN ZION



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# INTRODUCTION



In the mid-1990s, shortly after the opening of the Latter-day Saint Temple in Bountiful, Utah, the city put up a sign near the corner of 450 East and 400 North. In all capital letters, the sign read “LDS TEMPLE,” accompanied by an arrow pointing north along the street. The city intended to help visitors to the newly constructed temple find their way through the Bountiful neighborhood, which led up to the religious structure. A few days after the sign was posted, someone in the community decided to add a few more signs to the post. Above and below the sign for the LDS Temple, they placed signs to help people find their way to the local Community, Baptist, Lutheran, and Catholic churches.

After a few days, the local newspaper noticed and put a small article in the paper commenting on the new signs. With the headline “Diversity in Bountiful?,” the brief paragraph reported, “Someone erected signs near 400 North and 400 East in Bountiful last week in response to an arrow sign erected by the city that points in the direction of the Bountiful LDS Temple. The unauthorized signs point to the city’s Lutheran, Baptist, and Catholic churches.” The night following the newspaper article, someone smashed off all of the unauthorized, non-Latter-day Saint signs. And the day following that, the sign for the LDS Temple also disappeared. The city chose not to replace the “LDS TEMPLE” sign, and the pole returned to an unadorned state.<sup>1</sup>

The nearest Pentecostal church to this location is the Abundant Life Assembly of God church in North Salt Lake, which has been there since the mid-1980s. Only in the last few decades have Pentecostal churches in Utah become a recognizable part of the community. From the Christian Life Center’s large campus and school in Layton, to the Salt Lake Christian Center, which maintains facilities for

congregations worshipping in twelve different languages, Pentecostal churches now rival in size all but the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Catholic Church in the state of Utah.

In some ways, the minor public controversy over religious street signs represents the story of Pentecostal Christians in the state of Utah. Long dominated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, religious diversity often feels like a myth to non-Latter-day Saints living along the Wasatch Front and rural corners of the state. Pentecostals first arrived in Utah as early as 1914, but the small congregations that gradually planted themselves in the state went unnoticed for much of the twentieth century. Even today, Latter-day Saints (who are also sometimes known as Mormons) are usually more familiar with the churches like those posted above and below the sign for the temple.<sup>2</sup> Yet whenever politics, culture, and religion intermingled in Utah, the results did more to bury the concept of religious diversity in Utah than to highlight it. Take away the signs and the LDS Temple is still conspicuously located on the hill above. The location of the other churches, however, becomes more obscure without any arrows to point visitors in the right direction.

This book argues that most Pentecostals first came to Utah for the express purpose of converting the Latter-day Saints. American Pentecostal Christians considered the residents of both Utah and many non-Christian nations to be heathens living in heathen lands. The Great Basin region of the American West, predominantly settled by Latter-day Saints, became regarded by many Christian missionaries during the early twentieth century as “the most difficult mission field on the entire globe.”<sup>3</sup> For much of the twentieth century, Pentecostal missionaries viewed the residents of Utah as little different spiritually from the non-Christian masses of Asia and Africa. Yet the lives and experiences of the Pentecostal missionaries and converts who evangelized and remained in Utah were quite different from the experiences of foreign missionaries because of the unique religious environment in the state.

Ultimately the goal of complete conversion was too lofty. Pentecostals did not manage to convert the Latter-day Saints en masse. Over the course of the twentieth century, very few Latter-day Saints joined any of the Pentecostal congregations in Utah. Certainly, some did convert, but Pentecostals attracted little interest in their preaching because it was too theoretically similar to the message already being preached by the Latter-day Saints. Both of their communities became defined as religious outsiders within American culture. Latter-day Saints in the nineteenth century viewed themselves not as Catholics or Protestants but as something

new and old at the same time. Within the revelations received by Joseph Smith, the Lord declared he would “raise up unto [himself] a pure people” that would embrace the moniker of “a peculiar people” as well.<sup>4</sup> Claiming revelation that restored ancient truths, they recast Christianity in their own image. Pentecostals left behind what they viewed as the spiritually hollow Protestant denominations in pursuit of the genuine experience of Christian Spirit. Proclaiming their message as the whole or the full gospel, they pointed out just how different they were from other Protestants. Their engagement with the Spirit made them “true Christians,” distinct from the Protestants they left behind.<sup>5</sup> Both Latter-day Saints and Pentecostals viewed their movements as different.

Both movements also embraced the designation of religious outsider. R. Laurence Moore argued that the labeling of “mainline” and “outsider” religions in American history has developed a misleading understanding of the narrative of American religion. It suggested that within American religiosity there are “mainline” or “normal” types of religions, as well as “outsider” or “aberrational” types of religions. Many religious historians and members of the mainline denominations argued that the narrative of American religion focused on the histories of the mainline denominations because the outsider denominations represented ephemeral curiosities that would fade away over the course of time. Moore, however, argued that the “American religious experience began as dissent, and invented oppositions remained the major source of liveliness in American religion both in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.”<sup>6</sup> American religion maintained its vibrancy and creative energy through the pluralistic controversies that developed between groups that identified themselves as “mainline” and the groups that identified themselves as “outsiders.”<sup>7</sup>

Within the factionalism of American religion in the West, both Pentecostals and Latter-day Saints willingly appropriated the role of religious outsiders. “Mormons were different because they said they were different,” argued Moore, “and because their claims, frequently advanced in the most obnoxious way possible, prompted others to agree and to treat them as such.”<sup>8</sup> Pentecostals in the twentieth century behaved identically. “Holy Spirit-filled believers had come to know, either through inerrant Scripture or through direct revelation, exactly what God wanted them to think and to do,” argued Grant Wacker.<sup>9</sup> Their “noble conviction that the Holy Spirit lived within” created an identity apart from other Protestant Christians in America.<sup>10</sup>

Because both groups shared this theoretical perspective, Pentecostals offered no novelties to, and Latter-day Saints desired no substitutes for, the Latter-day

Saint spiritual worldview. Pentecostals were the outsiders of the Protestant community because they believed they were experiencing the resurgence of true, or full, Christian spirituality. They claimed to be embracing spiritual practices ancient in relation to early Christianity, rejected by institutions more concerned with themselves than with God. This was the very same messaging developed by Latter-day Saints eighty years earlier. They embraced it so fully that they literally became American outsiders, living on the outer edge of American civilization. To Latter-day Saints, the Pentecostal message sounded like a generic version of Latter-day Saint identity—or as one observer put it, “an unconscious illapse [sic] into ‘Mormonism.’”<sup>11</sup> And that is how most Latter-day Saints received it—a pale imitation of the true, full gospel already received by Latter-day Saint leaders almost a century before. When later in the twentieth century the charismatic renewal movement spread across Christianity, it did not affect the membership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as it affected Protestants and Catholics because Latter-day Saints were theological charismatics already. Latter-day Saints could point to the stories of Joseph Smith and their grandparents as examples of “true” charismatic experiences. They rarely spoke in unknown tongues any longer themselves, but the theology of charismatic expression was fully institutionalized within Latter-day Saint scripture and canon. Outside expressions could be viewed only as suspect and deceitful.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the difficulties in converting the Latter-day Saints, the historical narrative of Pentecostal growth in Utah illuminated the ignored fact that Utah is in fact religiously diverse. Most studies focus on the majority population of Latter-day Saints and misrepresent the lived religious reality. Religious diversity increased significantly from the late nineteenth to the early twenty-first centuries, from the state of Utah being approximately 70 percent Latter-day Saint in 1880 to roughly 55 percent in 2020.<sup>13</sup> Pentecostal churches helped fuel the growth of religious diversity in Utah during the twentieth century as they converted other Christians and religiously unaffiliated Utahns.<sup>14</sup> Early Pentecostal growth was different in Utah because it grew almost entirely through missionary transplants. Whereas in other parts of the country where many pastors read about the Pentecostal revival or visited the Apostolic Faith Mission at Azusa Street (or other early Pentecostal congregations), converted to the message, and carried their congregations into the movement, in Utah, no Utah pastors converted and no churches converted to Pentecostalism. Every Pentecostal church had to be built from the ground up. This delayed significant growth until later in the twentieth century. So even though Pentecostals failed to convert the Latter-day Saints en masse, they succeeded by



other means in developing a vibrant Pentecostal community alongside the Latter-day Saint majority in Utah.

Pentecostal Christianity in the state of Utah provides three insights on religion in the American West. First, it reveals the historical narrative of the Pentecostal experience in Utah, from its origins in the early twentieth century to its struggles and growth in the twenty-first century. This narrative brings to light a variety of religious congregations previously ignored in the state's religious history, including the Assemblies of God, the Spanish Assemblies of God, the Church of God in Christ, United Pentecostal Church, Pentecostal Church of God, Asamblea Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel (ICFG), and various independent Pentecostal congregations. These religious groups share similar experiences, and their victories and struggles highlight a dimension of religious activity unfamiliar even to many lifelong residents of Utah.

Second, Pentecostal Christianity in Utah functions as a case study in the religious history of the American West. Discussing religion in the American West, Ferenc Szasz argued, "A completely secular interpretation of regional history is a lie about the West."<sup>15</sup> Very few historians of the American West consider religion a significant part of the analysis. Because of this oversight, Utah is commonly evaluated apart from the West due to its historical connection with the development of the Latter-day Saint people. This means, however, that Utah's history is conflated with Latter-day Saint history in an overwhelming way. There is a veritable mountain of historical works on the influence of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on Utah, which might lead an individual to believe that Latter-day Saints are the only religious group in the state. Yet, as the story about signposts illustrates, many other religious groups struggle under the shadow of the Latter-day Saint community in Utah. It is a complicated network of religious interactions, often unseen by Utahns themselves and ignored by historians at large.

The religious interactions in Utah are demonstrative of the story of religion in the American West because they reveal how poorly western communities integrated outsiders. Instead of newly arrived citizens melding into the community, they felt cut off from the community because of their differences. Usually enough available land existed to allow these new westerners to create their own communities nearby, but as time passed and communities grew, conflicts arose. The history of the West is guided by these interactions, and the dynamics of western local communities are fleshed out by ways in which individuals sought to convert each other to their beliefs about culture and religion. It is a tale of conquest, as Patricia Limerick suggests, but not one of victory.<sup>16</sup> No one religious group came even close to

conquering the West. Like the giants of Norse mythology, each institution sought to claim its own mountain, create its own space in the West, from whence it could stare suspiciously across the valleys at the other giants and plot its conquest. And the resulting factionalism prevented politically like-minded groups from working together for most of the twentieth century. Pentecostals and other evangelicals worried about voting for Mitt Romney in the 2012 presidential election entirely because of religious differences. As Neil J. Young points out in *We Gather Together*, religious concerns prevented political conservatives from working together for most of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.<sup>17</sup> Religion in Utah reinforces this claim, as does religious history in the American West generally.

Third, Pentecostal Christianity in Utah helps us explore the emerging American religious mainstream of the twenty-first century. As the religious identity of the United States undergoes important transformations in the twenty-first century, Pentecostal Christians and Latter-day Saints both maintain pivotal positions in the renegotiation of American Christianity. They are two of the fastest-growing religious groups of the twentieth century, and they emerged as significant counterparts to the fastest-growing religious group of the twenty-first century, the religiously unaffiliated. The growth of the religiously unaffiliated has directly affected the willingness of Pentecostals and Latter-day Saints to work with each other on national issues pertaining to religious liberty. Analyzing the ways in which Pentecostals and Latter-day Saints perceive each other may also shed light on the ways in which these institutions interact on national concerns.

## RELIGION IN UTAH

It is difficult to situate Pentecostal history into the literature of Utah religion because there is yet to be written a decent volume on the subject. Most books focus only on Latter-day Saint history. Otherwise, three common types of books have been written about non-Latter-day Saint faiths in Utah: reminiscences/autobiographies, regional studies, and denominational studies. Reminiscences and autobiographies are helpful but do not always meet the standards of modern research. For example, Stanford Layton's edited volume *Being Different* and Eileen Hallet Stone's edited volume *A Homeland in the West* do offer historical experiences of religious pluralism in Utah as minorities or minority faiths.<sup>18</sup> However, they lack source citations and historical analysis. Other autobiographical accounts, such as Edmund W. Hunke's *Southern Baptists in the Mountain West* and

Carl Ballestero's Pentecostal autobiography *How High My Mountain* are similar in structure and style to the previous examples, but they also manage to offer insight into the experience of non-Latter-day Saint religious leaders living in Utah.<sup>19</sup> Then there are a few articles, like Martin Mitchell's "Gentile Impressions of Salt Lake City, Utah, 1849–1870," which help identify attitudes and tensions that existed historically between Latter-day Saints and outsiders.<sup>20</sup> These studies, even though they are less academically rigorous for the most part, still help to provide important details and therefore fill gaps in the missing literature about Utah religious pluralism.

Regional studies, while crucially important, do not always include much specific detail on religion. Around the time of the Utah statehood centennial (1996), the Utah State Historical Society commissioned a series titled the *Utah Centennial County History Series*. It includes twenty-nine books that catalog the culture, history, and, in some of the volumes, religion of each county.<sup>21</sup> The Works Progress Administration's *Directory of Churches*, Robert J. Dwyer's *The Gentile Comes to Utah*, Thomas G. Alexander and James B. Allen's *History of Salt Lake City*, and Jan Shippo and Mark Silk's *Religion and Public Life in the Mountain West* all focus on geographical regions and are representative of the regional approach to non-Latter-day Saint studies in Utah.<sup>22</sup> Religion is not usually the focus of a regional study, but it sometimes factors into it as part of the cultural, political, and historical elements of the region. And the few regional studies that do focus on religion are desperately outdated and need to be revised.<sup>23</sup> The comprehensive study *Utah's History*, helmed by Richard D. Poll as General Editor, remains the foundational work in regional studies for Utah. This large edited volume contains many references and statistics on Utah's religious pluralism, yet it fails to address Pentecostalism at all despite its detailed analysis of the twentieth century up to its publication date in the late 1980s.<sup>24</sup> Jesse Bushman, first working on behalf of James B. Allen and then on his own project, updated the general data on Utah religion in James B. Allen's *Still the Right Place*. Including an appendix on Utah religion, it updated available information on various non-Latter-day Saint traditions through the 1990s.<sup>25</sup> A few regional histories exist by ethnicity or race, such as Ronald Coleman's "A History of Blacks in Utah," Jorje Iber's *Hispanics in the Mormon Zion*, and Juanita Brooks's *The History of the Jews in Utah and Idaho*.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, these works focus more conceptually on the culture of the region, with a nod to that race or ethnicity's religious behavior. Although regional studies offer less information concerning Utah's religious pluralism, their insights on the relationships between culture, history, geography, and religion are invaluable and not to be ignored.

Denominational studies offer the greatest resource in understanding the history of religious pluralism in Utah. There are history monographs, dissertations, or articles for most major Christian denominations. These histories provide valuable information concerning the struggles, successes, and failures of religious outsiders as they attempted to cohabit the state. Edgar T. Lyon, Stanley Kimball, and Peggy Pascoe offer research concerning evangelical missionary movements in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>27</sup> The Presbyterian Church has the longest history in Utah (aside from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Native Americans), and the recent works of Frederick G. Burton, R. Douglas Brackenridge, and Jana Kathryn Riess elucidate the long interaction between Latter-day Saints and Presbyterians.<sup>28</sup> Henry Merkel's *History of Methodism in Utah* was updated by the Utah Methodism Centennial Committee in 1970.<sup>29</sup> Bernice Maher Mooney's *Salt of the Earth* explicates Catholic history, Dee Richard Darling discusses Congregational history, France Davis and Maud Ditmars elaborate on Baptist history, and Frederick Quinn's *Building the "Goodly Fellowship of Faith"* stands alone for Episcopal history.<sup>30</sup> I am not aware of books or dissertations on other major non-Latter-day Saint denominations in Utah, though there are a few journal articles.<sup>31</sup>

Although it shares aspects of both a denominational study and a regional study, this work employs Pentecostal history in Utah as an avenue toward a more complete review of Utah religious pluralism. Pentecostal churches are a significant portion of the Utah Christian community that have not been represented in academic literature. It will complement and encourage a new compilation of updated religious history for the entire state. Furthermore, its implications about the changing nature of the American religious mainstream bring nuance to future studies involving Pentecostals, Latter-day Saints, and religion in the American West.

Several questions serve as broad guideposts in uncovering this history. First, in what way did Pentecostalism infiltrate the tight-knit Latter-day Saint community in Utah? Pentecostals, of course, were not the first Christian missionaries to test their mettle among Latter-day Saints.<sup>32</sup> How did their approach vary from the approach of other missionaries? Were their methods successful? Pentecostal missionary work in Utah spans most of the twentieth century, as individual missionaries sought to plant churches first in the major cities of Salt Lake City, Ogden, and Provo, followed by outreach into the more rural parts of the state. The creation of permanent congregations took decades of planting and failing during the first

half of the twentieth century. And even early into the twenty-first century, some Utah communities remained flatly disinterested in outside religion.

Second, how was the Pentecostal message received? As storefront churches opened up, what kind of members of the community visited? Were some Pentecostal denominations more successful than others, and if so, why? The greatest difficulty noted by Pentecostal and other Christian missionaries dealt with the interconnectedness of Latter-day Saint religion and culture. Much like Judaism, Latter-day Saint theology forged religious directives, which affected great swathes of a Latter-day Saint's day-to-day activities, including dress, dietary restrictions, marital patterns, and economic relationships. This question addresses how Pentecostal denominations managed to gain a foothold in such a monolithic religious environment.

It also draws attention to the disdain that Pentecostalism received from all types of Christians in the early twentieth century. Latter-day Saints, despite what is inferred by most academic literature, were not the only religious people in Utah during the twentieth century. T. Edgar Lyon estimates that the percentage of Utah's total population that identifies as a Latter-day Saint has fluctuated around 60 to 70 percent since the 1890s, and Pew's "Religious Landscape" survey of 2014 estimated a low of 55 percent.<sup>33</sup> Among the non-Mormon Christians in Utah, Pentecostalism arrived as the newest form of Protestant Christianity. It was a Christianity neither mainline Protestants nor Catholics found any value in. So Pentecostal missionaries entered Utah with absolutely no safety nets. If the Latter-day Saint community rejected them, there would be no friendly Methodist or Catholic congregation with which to commiserate. Many Pentecostals would suffer and soldier on through this rejection and solitude for most of the first half of the twentieth century.

Third, how does one define the relationship between Pentecostals and Latter-day Saints? The themes of conquest and conversion frame the relationship. In terms of conversion, Pentecostals first sought to convert the "Mormons." So "Mormons" became the objects of Pentecostal evangelizing. When that proved far more difficult than expected, Pentecostals transitioned from the conversion of a people to the conquest of the land. They sought instead to create more room for themselves, and Utah itself became the object of Pentecostal evangelizing. They continued hoping for Latter-day Saints to convert but also laid claim to sacred space of their own amidst the deep roots of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Utah by planting small churches all across the state. Pentecostals



engaged far-flung Latter-day Saint communities, some of which had never previously received any other religious options.

Pentecostals altered both the landscape of Utah and their relationship to Latter-day Saints through this conquest. They became the objects of Latter-day Saint exclusivism as they successfully developed small congregations around the state. Significant social isolation defined life in Utah for many Pentecostals—members of the community and not, involved in politics and not, living with Latter-day Saints and not. The exclusive nature of the Latter-day Saint community in Utah limited more than just religious conversation. It affected politics, economics, culture, and even the relationship between neighbors.

Finally, I ask how Pentecostalism in Utah differs from Pentecostalism in the rest of the United States. Utah is the only state in the United States where the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints constitutes a large majority of the religious adherents. How is a Latter-day Saint majority different from a Protestant or Catholic majority? Did Pentecostalism in Utah change at all to survive in this unique religious context?

These questions examine Pentecostal history in Utah, but they also examine Latter-day Saint culture and history. Many Latter-day Saints perceive their history to be a story of intolerance and persecution at the hands of others, yet their cultural and religious dominance in the state of Utah reveals a surprising story of Latter-day Saint intolerance against Pentecostals. Framed as a narrative history of Pentecostals in Utah during the twentieth century, the answers to these questions enhance the study of Pentecostal history, Latter-day Saint history, and the history of the American West.

## SPIRITUAL RIVALS AND REVIVALS

The Pentecostal revival of the twentieth century ignited a wave of missionary work and evangelizing across the globe. Millions of Christians claim connections to the movement. Approximately sixty-three million Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians reside in the United States alone, the vast majority of those being the latter.<sup>34</sup> Denominations and independent churches that adhere to aspects of Pentecostal theology or worship exist in almost every country. Many scholars consider it the future of world Christianity. Discussing the early origins of American Pentecostalism in the United States, Harvey Cox envisioned the movement as “a spiritual tsunami that would eventually engulf the entire globe.”<sup>35</sup> As Pentecostalism enters

into its second century of growth, it continues to be an immense religious force within modern Christianity.

The initial spread of Pentecostalism across North America leaped from Kansas to California and then back East across the continent. Classical Pentecostal denominations tracing back to Charles F. Parham, William J. Seymour, William H. Durham, and others formulated the theological relationship between spiritual gifts and Spirit Baptism. Within a few years of 1906, William Seymour's Apostolic Faith Mission, located in Los Angeles, California, flooded the Christian world with newsletters and missionaries. The Pentecostal belief in spiritual gifts, most notably the gift of tongues, emboldened missionaries to abandon the comfort of their homeland for distant shores, with the expectation that God had granted them the capacity to speak foreign languages to spread the Christian gospel to the heathen nations. Impressed by belief in a divine mandate and empowered for witnessing by the receipt of spiritual gifts, missionaries embarked on a quest to bring the experience of Christian rebirth to the entire world.<sup>36</sup>

But few Pentecostal missionaries ever stopped to preach their message among the Latter-day Saints as they crisscrossed back and forth over the Rocky Mountains in the United States. The so-called "Mormon corridor" ran from southern Canada to Mexico, and it included strong concentrations of Latter-day Saints in Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, and Nevada. Many Pentecostal missionaries reported to newsletters about their travels through Salt Lake City and the majesty of the snow-capped mountains of Utah, but far fewer expended any efforts on spreading the fire of Pentecost among Latter-day Saints generally and in Utah specifically.

The history of Pentecostalism in Utah can be divided into three distinct periods over the last one hundred years. The first third of the century, beginning with the Azusa Street Revival in 1906, initiated several decades of tent revivals and failed church plants. The second third of the century, beginning in the 1940s, witnessed the first permanent Pentecostal congregations in Utah. From the 1940s to the late 1960s, members of Pentecostal churches dealt with rejection and persecution as they entrenched themselves in Utah and laid the groundwork for permanent congregations in the major urban centers of Salt Lake City, Provo, and Ogden, as well as a few rural locations. Finally, the last third of the twentieth century and early twenty-first century displayed the tensions and similarities that existed between Pentecostals and Latter-day Saints concerning their views on community, theology, interfaith dialogue, and politics.<sup>37</sup>

What must it have been like for a Pentecostal missionary to begin evangelizing among the rivers, mountains, and cities of the Salt Lake Valley? When Pentecostal

missionaries first poured out from Los Angeles in 1906, Utah was a very different place from the present. The population in 1900 was 276,749 compared to 3,205,958 in 2019.<sup>38</sup> In 1914, there were 269,980 members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints living in Utah compared to 2,109,578 in 2018.<sup>39</sup> In 1900, the federal government controlled very little inside the state compared to the many military holdings, recreation areas, national forests, and national parks now owned and operated by federal agencies. Despite federal interference in and prohibition of the Latter-day Saint practice of polygamy, the government more or less left the state alone once the church renounced its unusual marriage customs. The US Army maintained a small garrison east of Salt Lake City, but the first national park was not created in Utah until 1919.<sup>40</sup> The religion, culture, and politics of Utah convulsed as Utahns incorporated into the United States during the mid-twentieth century and found their footing in the national community. Labeled the “awkward” years of Utah’s history by Charles S. Peterson and Brian Q. Cannon, early twentieth century Utah underwent a variety of changes as it transitioned from a religious colony to a permanent part of the United States.<sup>41</sup> So as the first Pentecostal missionaries entered Utah, they entered a community in flux, its religious and political institutions experimenting with the changes brought on by national attention, institutional introspection, and cultural progressivism.

The cultural makeup diversified dramatically during the early twentieth century. As mining and smelting companies invaded Utah, the need for cheap labor drove immigrants into the state as well. Italians, Greeks, Yugoslavians, Mexicans, and others all found jobs in the new mines across Utah.<sup>42</sup> They brought with them the faith and heritage of their homelands. Two World Wars brought military bases and defense industries, which in turn drew more outsiders to the state. Many of these new Utahns would become foundational to the formation of Pentecostal congregations.

Politics at the national and local level remained religiously charged during the first few decades of the new century. As Pentecostal missionaries first set foot in Utah, the Reed Smoot hearings continued in Washington. The federal government had already prevented the known polygamist B. H. Roberts from being seated in the House, and now Congress was conducting an investigation of the elected Utah senator Reed Smoot to determine whether he would also be removed from office.<sup>43</sup> T. Edgar Lyon and Glen M. Leonard note, “Utah has the distinction of being the only state in the Union that was founded primarily as a religious colony and in which the total population was all of one faith . . . in its first decade.”<sup>44</sup> At the

local level, as Latter-day Saint voters filtered into the Republican and Democratic national political parties, a third party called the American Party formed in Utah. Strongly supported by the Salt Lake Ministerial Association, the American Party supported Republican politics nationally and promoted the interests and concerns of non-Latter-day Saints locally. Although the American Party all but withered away by the start of the First World War, religion remained a controversial element of Utah politics throughout the twentieth century.

Into these chaotic circumstances, Pentecostal missionaries introduced the message and vibrancy of the full gospel to a religious group that already believed in rival spiritual gifts. Latter-day Saints shared a belief with Pentecostals in charismatic worship and spiritual gifts, albeit other Christians did not consider them within the Pentecostal umbrella because of their belief in the Book of Mormon and their rejection of the Trinity. Thus, the exciting charisma of the Pentecostal experience fell flat among the Latter-day Saints, who long believed in “the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healings, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.”<sup>45</sup> Despite the practice of spiritual gifts dwindling among Latter-day Saints in the twentieth century, formal teachings placed spiritual gifts firmly within the purview of priesthood authority and practice. James E. Talmage, a leading apostle of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, explained in 1931:

Miracles, as the manifestations of such gifts are sometimes called, will not be done away as long as men are receptive to the operations of the Spirit of the Lord. . . . When the Christ came in person . . . , when he cast out unclean spirits that were afflicting men, there arose many who undertook to exorcise the demons, and to imitate the work of Christ. . . . And when the Gospel was again brought to earth, and the Priesthood restored in this, the last dispensation, there was a great revival and increase in the manifestations called spiritualistic phenomena, in the effort to put something forth that looked like the original and the genuine, and so lead people astray.<sup>46</sup>

Latter-day Saint leaders enshrined spiritual gifts within the purview of the “true church” of Jesus Christ. Spiritual manifestations outside of the church could be only imitations meant to “lead people astray.” When Pentecostals suggested they too had access to such gifts, the historical narrative of charismatic gifts and worship among Latter-day Saints cast suspicion on the Pentecostal message, significantly increasing the difficulty for Pentecostal missionaries in Utah.

## CONTINUALLY AT WAR WITH ITSELF

Because of its difficulties, the narrative of Pentecostal history in Utah illustrates the way in which religion influenced the creation of the American West. Many religious groups hoped to recast the frontier of the United States into sacred space uniquely all their own. None ultimately succeeded despite their best efforts. Some, like the Latter-day Saints, succeeded for a time and within a limited geographical region, but no single religious group conquered the American West. By the twenty-first century, many western states instead ranked among the most religiously diverse in the country.<sup>47</sup> Made up of religious forays, failed conquests, and factional realignments, religious pluralism played a creative role in the evolving narrative of all of the American West. As religious outsiders clashed with each other, the resulting American West of the twenty-first century became intensely factionalized into different religious and cultural groups. Instead of merely depicting Limerick's legacy of conquest, it seems to better represent an amalgamation of her theory with R. Laurence Moore's depiction of the model of religious growth sustained through the tension between religious insiders and outsiders. Many religious groups dreamed of being conquerors; instead, they simply fed the fire of religious pluralism.

Nineteenth-century academic debates about the American West focused on Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis. Turner argued, "American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier," meaning that the history of America is best understood through a succession of frontier stories ending with the settlement of "the Great West."<sup>48</sup> Since his presentation of this thesis in 1893, studies of the American West invariably acknowledged the frontier as a historical process and conceptual tool for unpacking the particulars of American culture and life.

In the 1980s, several historians initiated a different approach to the American West in which they threw out the concept of frontier and replaced it with the West as a geographical region. Limerick, one of the core historians of the New Western History, complained how "Turner's frontier was a process, not a place. When 'civilization' had conquered 'savagery' at any one location, the process—and the historian's attention—moved on."<sup>49</sup> Studying the American West as a particular region allowed historians to extend the chronology in both directions. Limerick, along with Richard White, William Cronon, and Donald Worster, re-envisioned the West as a region filled with tragedy. The "legacy of conquest" left by the federal government as it explored and exploited the territory west of New England



countered the traditional image of “independence, self-reliance, and individualism,” which previous authors thought ferried white Americans to a more noble future among the western climes.<sup>50</sup> Instead, white Americans privileged by an increasingly powerful federal government raped the land and its inhabitants in the name of American capitalism and manifest destiny.

The New Western History received significant attention, but not all agreed. Other historians appreciated the introduction of race, gender, and ethnicity into regional studies of the West while pointing out that the New Western History reduced its ultimate interpretive capacity to a single geographical area. Turner’s frontier thesis, or variations on that thesis, maintained stronger appeal among historians due to its greater capacity to make sense of trends broader than just the West. Robert Hine and John Mack Faragher authored *The American West* as an attempt to combine New Western history with Turner’s thesis. They suggested, “The West is not only a modern region somewhere beyond the Mississippi but also the process of getting there.”<sup>51</sup> They resurrected the frontier as “a unifying American theme, for every part of the country was once a frontier, every region was once a West.”<sup>52</sup> Very much in the same vein as Turner, Hine and Faragher expanded the frontier to signify “what happens when cultures meet,” and what comes from that interaction for better or worse. History, then, is a reconstruction of cultural interactions.

On the fringes of this historiography, a few attempted to synthesize religious history and history of the American West. Carl Guarneri and David Alvarez headed a conference in 1984 where they and colleagues identified religion in the American West as a mixture of “unusual flux and diffusion, innovation and plurality.”<sup>53</sup> In 1994, Ferenc and Margaret Szasz surveyed the West as well, arguing that “Western religion was molded by both the historical moment of settlement and the vast spaces of the western landscape.”<sup>54</sup> Ferenc expanded this introductory chapter into a monograph in 2000. He claimed, “The American West may well have set the stage for national religious life in the twenty-first century” because of its pluralism and lack of any religious mainstream. He also viewed twentieth-century Los Angeles culture as emblematic of twenty-first-century American religious culture, and also shifted his gaze toward California as the heart of the West.<sup>55</sup>

Perhaps most notably, Laurie Maffly-Kipp reoriented the academic perspective on religion in the American West. Writing in 1997, Maffly-Kipp noted, “All that most of us know and learn about American religion keeps us firmly moored in an east-to-west framework, and the farther west we go, the less important the religious events seem to become, in part because the vast majority of us know

much less about them.”<sup>56</sup> As outsiders made their way to the American West and established communities, they became widely forgotten or overlooked by their eastern counterparts and the catalog of American history. To understand the West, Maffly-Kipp argued that “ignoring other movements—northward from Mexico, southward from Canada, and especially eastward from Asia—as well as the history of the prior presence of those who never wanted to move at all, furnishes us not simply with an incomplete historical narrative, but with unsatisfying accounts of religious experience.”<sup>57</sup> With a new perspective to view the migrations occurring in the American West, migrations coming from all directions, the religious history of the American West became even more pluralistic and diverse than before. Maffly-Kipp’s reorientation of Western origins helped highlight many cultures and peoples in the West that history had previously ignored.

Questions of race, religion, and region guided more recent works. Fay Botham and Sara Patterson complicated the story by suggesting that “scholars need to investigate how the blending of racial and religious communities alters our understanding of western-American history.”<sup>58</sup> Intertwining, race, religion, and region, they edited a volume of case studies intent on telling the religious stories not only of those “facing westward,” but also “the perspectives of those who looked northward and eastward from places like Mexico and California.”<sup>59</sup> Jan Shippo, through her extensive studies of Mormonism and the Intermountain West region, contended that historians “write Western history as if it were a doughnut, leaving historians of the Latter-day Saints to fill in the hole.”<sup>60</sup> Yet Shippo identified the problem without fully identifying its scope; the doughnut is the American West, and religion in general is the hole. Nevertheless, Shippo’s analysis of Mormonism, furthered recently by Paul Reeve’s analysis of Mormon whiteness, also added dimensions of religion and ethnicity to the American West.

Todd Kerstetter’s *Inspiration and Innovation*, the first survey of religion in the American West since Ferenc Szasz in 2000, drew on New Western history, Turner’s thesis, and narratives within American religion. For Kerstetter, religion inspired the process of Americanizing the West, and the western region itself forced and shaped religious innovation unlike elsewhere in the United States. Whether religion “aided and abetted conquest” or offered “solace and strength to face the disruption and turmoil of conquest,” religion brought light and life to the spirit of the American West.<sup>61</sup>

The narrative of Pentecostal history in Utah offers a case study of failed religious conquest and vibrant religious factionalism in the American West. As the New Western History suggests, Pentecostals invaded Utah with a vision of spiritual

conquest. Yet after half a century of failure, they settled for the development of their own faction within the makeup of Utah culture. This religious competition highlights the significance religion played in the maturation of the culture of the American West. Sometimes the religious conquest of the West failed because of federal intervention, and sometimes it failed because of religious rivalries between outsiders, as in the case of Utah Pentecostals. Yet with every attempt at conquest, new factions formed, increasing both diversity and anxiety in various ways.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

The chapters in this book include both narrative history and topical analysis. The history of the various Pentecostal denominations in Utah is explored and analyzed in the first few chapters, followed by more in-depth discussions of particular points of interest in Utah and Pentecostal history. They are followed by an epilogue.

The first chapter delves into the history and activities of the predominantly white, English-speaking Assemblies of God churches in Utah. The Assemblies of God is the largest Pentecostal Christian denomination in Utah, and most of the early history of Pentecostal evangelism is under their aegis. The Assemblies of God in Utah is mostly white and middle class, much like the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Assemblies of God missionaries and ministers came to Utah hoping to convert the Latter-day Saints. Initially hostile toward each other because of the differences in theology and the style and acceptance of spiritual expression and worship, the Assemblies of God managed to convert very few Latter-day Saints. Dividing the twentieth and early twentieth centuries into thirds, the chapter discusses three periods of development and growth within the largest Pentecostal denomination in Utah. Much of their success came from the endurance of lifelong missionaries and pastors that relocated to Utah and remained there for the rest of their lives.

The second chapter continues the narrative of Pentecostal history in Utah by exploring the other Pentecostal denominations and independent churches found around the state of Utah. Volatile and unstable, Pentecostal congregations within many of these smaller denominations underwent schisms, mergers, and transformations over the twentieth century. The creative energy and unpredictability of loose organizational structure resulted in a diverse expansion of the Pentecostal community in Utah over the twentieth century, and it modeled aspects of Pentecostal growth that exist on the fringes of the Pentecostal community at large.