Come, Come Ye Saints, and Pass the ERA

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Come, come, ye Saints, and pass the ERA; and with joy come our way.
Tho hard to you this journey may appear, great shall be equality.
‘Tis better far for us to strive discrimination for us to drive;
Do this, and joy your heart will swell--ERA! ERA!
Mormons for ERA (MERA)

- Group of women from Virginia
- Formed in the winter of 1978
- Women were middle to upper class
- White
- Highly educated
Equal Rights Amendment

Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.
Sources/Methods

Sources:

- Mormons for ERA collection at USU Special Collections and Archives
- Photos, protest ephemera including protest buttons, bumper stickers, songs, and newsletter articles

Methods:

- Analyzed how protest material was used, its effect, and how it related to the LDS church
Methods of Protest

**Argument:** Mormons for the ERA modified popular hymns, rituals, and language as a way for protesters to claim elements of their faith as their own and connect the religious and political elements of their protest.

*Angry Anthems*

*Fasting for Justice*

*Latter Day Suffragists*
“Angry Anthems”

“Battle Hymn of Women”

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the flame of women’s rage
Smoldering for centuries, now burning in this age
We no longer will be prisoners in the same old gilded cage,
That’s why we’re marching on.

It’s we who’ve done your cooking.
Done your cleaning, kept your rules.
We have birth to all your children,
And we taught them in your schools.
We’ve kept your system running
But we’re laying down our tools.
And we are marching on.

Chorus: Move on over or we’ll move on over you
Move on over or we’ll move on over you
Move on over or we’ll move on over you
For women’s time has come.
“Fasting for Justice”

- Focusing Faith
- Drew upon history of hunger strikes

“We hope the spiritual energy and enlightenment we generate will ultimately free both the oppressed and the oppressors from the cycle of injustice in which we have both been bound.”
"ERA Missionaries"

- Spring 1981
- “Convert” people to their cause
- Traveled in twos
- Wore professional dress
“Latter-day Suffragists”
Conclusion

- MERA modified hymns, rituals, and language
- Reclaimed and repurposed elements of their religion to serve their own needs
- Entered the male sphere
- Drew attention to gender discrimination in the church

Importance of this research:
- Broadens scope of Mormon women’s history
- Uses less typical sources to draw conclusions
- Helps future protesters better understand ways to protest within the LDS church
More information

Library exhibit April 16th Library Atrium

USU Digital Exhibit May 2018