When Christians hear Mormons refer to the Garden of Eden they may incorrectly assume that the LDS believe it was by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Joseph Smith, however, claimed by revelation that the Garden of Eden was in western Missouri. This would throw off the entire first part of Genesis. Noah would have left in the ark from Missouri and sailed to some location in the Middle East. LDS Apostle John A. Widtsoe explained:

Latter-day Saints know, through modern revelation, that the Garden of Eden was on the North American continent and that Adam and Eve began their conquest of the earth in the upper part of what is now the state of Missouri. It seems very probable that the children of our first earthly parents moved down along the fertile, pleasant lands of the Mississippi valley. (John A. Widtsoe, Evidences and Reconciliations, three volumes in one, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft 1960, p. 127)

Joseph Smith declared this new understanding of Genesis and the location of Eden during a trip through Missouri in 1838. Historian Fawn Brodie commented:

Shortly after his arrival Joseph rowed up the Grand River to Lyman Wight’s ferry to explore land on the north bank in Daviess County [Missouri]. On a high bluff overlooking the river someone in the party discovered the ruins of what seemed to be an altar and excitedly led the prophet to it. After examining it Joseph stood silent, his eyes sweeping over the prairie that rolled away beneath him. . . . The glory of the scene made Joseph heady as with new wine. “This is the valley of God in which Adam blessed his children,” he said, “and upon this very altar Adam himself offered up sacrifices to Jehovah. . . . we will lay out a city which shall be called Adam-ondi-Ahman. Here Adam, the Ancient of Days, shall come to visit his people. . . .” (Fawn M. Brodie, No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, Random House, 1971, p. 211)

In 1835 the Latter Day Saints Messenger and Advocate printed a poem titled “Adam-ondi-Ahman”:

This poem was considered of such importance that it was incorporated in the first LDS hymnal in 1835 and continues to be included in current LDS hymnals (see the 1985 LDS hymnal, p. 49). While the poem does not designate the location as being in Missouri, it is the earliest printing of the name Adam-ondi-Ahman.

Even after the Mormons moved west they continued to talk about the importance of Adam-ondi-Ahman in Missouri. LDS Apostle Wilford Woodruff, writing in his journal on March 30, 1873, commented:

Again Presdet Young said Joseph the Prophet told me that the garden of Eden was in Jackson Co Missouri, & when Adam was driven out of the garden of Eden He went about 40 miles to the Place which we Named Adam Ondi Ahman, & there built an Altar of Stone & offered Sacrifice. That Altar remains to this day. I saw it as Adam left it as did many others, & through all the revolutions of the world that Altar had not been disturbed. Joseph also said that when the City of Enoch fled & was translated it was were the gulf of Mexico now is. It left that gulf a body of water. (Susan Staker, ed., Waiting for World's End: The Diaries of Wilford Woodruff, Signature Books, 1993, p. 305)
Oliver B. Huntington, a faithful Mormon, wrote an article on Adam-ondi-Ahman for the LDS magazine *Juvenile Instructor*:

Adam's Altar, which was mentioned, I have visited many times. I sat upon the wall of stone and reflected upon the scenes that had taken place thousands of years ago right where I was. There were the rocks that Father Adam used. . . . My father’s house stood about two hundred and fifty yards from that altar, on the bottom land of Grand River, in the valley of Adam-on-Diahman. (*Juvenile Instructor*, Nov. 15, 1895, p. 700-701)

LDS Apostle Bruce R. McConkie gives this information about the location of the Garden of Eden:

**ADAM-ONDI-AHMAN**

Adam was the first man of all men; Ahman is one of the names by which God was known to Adam. Adam-ondi-Ahman, a name carried over from the pure Adamic language into English, is one for which we have not been given a revealed, literal translation. As near as we can judge—and this view comes down from the early brethren who associated with the Prophet Joseph Smith, who was the first one to use the name in this dispensation—Adam-ondi-Ahman means the place or land of God where Adam dwelt.

Apparently the area included was a large one; at least, the revelations speak of the land, the valley, and the mountains of Adam-on-Diahman. They tell us that Christ himself “established the foundations of Adam-ondi-Ahman” (D. & C. 78:15-16), and that it included the place now known as Spring Hill, Daviess County, Missouri. (D. & C. 116.)

Far West, Missouri, also appears to be included in the land of Adam-ondi-Ahman. On April 17, 1838, the Lord commanded his saints to assemble at Far West, which place, he said, was holy ground; and there they were to build a city. (D. & C. 115.) By July 8 of that year, William Marks and Newel K. Whitney had not left their temporal concerns in Kirtland, Ohio, and were not assembling with the saints coming to Zion. In rebuking them the Lord said this: “Is there not room enough on the mountains of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and on the plains of Oolah Shinehah, or the land where Adam dwelt, that you should covet that which is but the drop, and neglect the more weighty
matters? Therefore, come up hither unto the land of my people, even Zion.”

William Marks was told that he was to “preside in the midst of my people in the city of Far West,” and Newel K. Whitney was told to “come up to the land of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and be a bishop unto my people.” (D. & C. 117.)

The early brethren of this dispensation taught that the Garden of Eden was located in what is known to us as the land of Zion, an area for which Jackson County, Missouri, is the center place. In our popular Latter-day Saint hymn which begins, “Glorious things are sung of Zion, Enoch’s city seen of old,” we find William W. Phelps preserving the doctrine that “In Adam-ondi-Ahman, Zion rose where Eden was.” . . .

One of the greatest spiritual gatherings of all the ages took place in the Valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman some 5,000 years ago, and another gathering—of even greater importance relative to this earth’s destiny—is soon to take place in that same location. Our revelations recite:

Three years previous to the death of Adam, he called Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, and Methuselah who were all high priests, with the residue of his posterity who were righteous, into the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman and there bestowed upon them his last blessing.

And the Lord appeared unto them, and they rose up and blessed Adam, and called him Michael, the prince, the archangel. And the Lord administered comfort unto Adam, and said unto him: I have set thee to be at the head; a multitude of nations shall come of thee, and thou art a prince over them forever. And Adam stood up in the midst of the congregation; and, notwithstanding he was bowed down with age, being fill of the Holy Ghost, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation. (D. & C. 107:53-56.) (Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, pp. 19-20)

Apostle McConkie went on to explain that Joseph Smith had even identified an altar in Missouri as one built by Adam:

At that great gathering Adam offered sacrifices on an altar built for the purpose. A remnant of that very altar remained on the spot down through the ages. On May 19, 1838, Joseph Smith and a number of his associates stood on the remainder of the pile of stones at a place called Spring Hill, Daviess County, Missouri. There the Prophet taught them that Adam again would visit in the Valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, holding a great council as a prelude to the great and dreadful day of the Lord. (Mediation and Atonement pp. 69-70.) At this council, all who have held keys of authority will give an accounting of their stewardship to Adam. Christ will then come, receive back the keys, and thus take one of the final steps preparatory to reigning personally upon the earth. (Dan. 7:9-14; Teachings, p. 157.) (Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 21)

LDS Apostle John A. Widtsoe gave these comments about the Garden of Eden:

Later, the Prophet designated “Spring Hill,” a hill of eminence about fifty or sixty miles north and somewhat to the east of Independence, as Adam-ondi-Ahman, . . . the place where Adam shall come to visit his people, or the Ancient of Days shall sit, as spoken of by Daniel the prophet.” (D. & C. 116) . . .

Since Adam called together seven generations of his descendants at Adam-ondi-Ahman, it can well be believed that there was his old homestead. If so, the Garden of Eden was probably not far distant, for it was the entrance at the east of the Garden which was closed against them at the time of the “fall.” (Genesis 3:24) In fact, it has been commonly understood among the Latter-day Saints, from the teachings of the Prophet, that the temple was to be built in or near the location of the Garden of Eden. That the Prophet actually taught that the Garden of Eden was in or near Independence, Missouri, is amply testified to by many who knew and heard him. Heber C. Kimball, close associate and friend of the Prophet, said on one occasion:

The spot chosen for the Garden of Eden was Jackson County, in the state of Missouri, where Independence now stands; it was occupied in the morn of creation by Adam and his associates, who came with him for the express purpose of populating this earth. (Journal of Discourses, 10:235)

Brigham Young, also a close associate of the Prophet, testified similarly:

In the beginning, after this earth was prepared for man, the Lord commenced his work upon what is now called the American continent, where the Garden of Eden was made. In the days of Noah, in the days of the Boating of the ark, he took the people to another part of the earth. (Discourses, p. 102)

In conversation with Orson Hyde, on March 15, 1857, President Young said:

You have been both to Jerusalem and Zion, and seen both. I have not seen either, for I have never been in Jackson County. Now it is a pleasant thing to think of and to know where the Garden of Eden was. Did you ever think of it? I do not think many do, for in Jackson County was the Garden of Eden. Joseph has declared this, and I am as much bound to believe that as to believe that Joseph was a prophet of God. (Journal History, March 15, 1857)

That is the position of the Latter-day Saints today, with respect to the much-discussed location of the Garden of Eden. Adam, after his expulsion from the Garden of Eden, lived in the vicinity of the great Missouri and Mississippi rivers. As his descendants multiplied, they
would naturally settle along the fertile and climatically acceptable river valleys. When the flood came in the days of Noah, the Mississippi drainage must have increased to a tremendous volume, quite in harmony with the Biblical account. **Noah’s ark would be floated on the mighty, rushing waters, towards the Gulf of Mexico.** With favorable winds, it would **cross the Atlantic** to the Eastern continents. There the human race, in its second start on earth, began to multiply and fill the earth.

The **location of the Garden of Eden in America, and at Independence, Missouri, clears up many a problem which the Bible account of Eden and its garden has left in the minds of students.** (John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, pp. 395-397)

However, there is nothing in the book of Genesis to indicate that the first eight chapters of the story happened in North America.

Additionally, Smith’s 1838 designation of Missouri as the home of Adam and Eve contradicts his earlier 1830 revelation in the Book of Moses. That account of the creation clearly presented the Garden of Eden as being in the Middle East. In it we read:

> And, I, the Lord God caused a river to go out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. . . . And the name of the second river was called Gihon; the same that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river was Hiddekel; that which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river was the Euphrates. (*Pearl of Great Price*, Moses 3:10, 13-14)

(For more information on Adam-oni-Ahman see http://www.lds-mormon.com/adam_ond.shtml)