

AMONG THE MORMONS

A Survey of Current Literature

Edited by Ralph W. Hansen

*If we could first know where we are, and
whither we are tending, we could better
judge what to do, and how to do it.*

Abraham Lincoln

With the words of Abraham Lincoln ringing in our ears we once again take up our pen to examine the dissertations of Mormon interest accepted by American universities. Certainly with Lincoln's admonition in mind we can more fully appreciate why most of the twenty dissertations listed at the end of this essay inform us as to where we are and where we are tending. But specific proposals about what to do and how to do it generally seem to lie beyond the scope of Mormon studies.

Again this year, doctorates in the field of education dominate the list, contributing more than half the titles. Furthermore, fully eight of these deal with some aspect of education in the L.D.S. Church (Bradshaw, Bowen, Hartshorn, Higbee, Jarman, Jorgenson, Meservy, and Sellers), and, of these, four are closely related investigations of the Church's Institutes of Religion (Bradshaw, Higbee, Jarman, and Jorgenson). Earl V. Pullias, Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Southern California, was supervisor of the first three Institute studies, which must qualify him as an expert of sorts. At least three other studies of the Institutes and Seminaries were conducted at the University of Southern California prior to this recent spate of dissertations. They are Paul H. Dunn, "An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Latter-day Saint Institutes of Religion" (1959); Ray L. Jones, "A Study of the Principalship in the Seminaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (1956); and Rodney Turner, "A Study of Teacher Selection in the Seminary System of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (1960).

A synthesis of the studies of education in the Church is Hartshorn's "Mormon Education in the Bold Years" — the bold years begin with 1951 when David O. McKay became President of the Church. The rationale for this study according to its author is to provide information: "Educational leaders in the Mormon Church have no sources of their own. They must depend upon independent studies to supply them with information." To fortify his thesis

Hartshorn demonstrates that "there is a dearth of material in the history of education in the Mormon Church." (Undoubtedly the author was unaware of the related studies under way at the same time.)

If we accept Hartshorn's premise then his dissertation has filled a void. However, portions of this work would be of slight value to knowledgeable Church members (i.e., background histories of Brigham Young University, Ricks, and Seminaries and Institutes). The history of education in the Church and the more recent unification of the Church school system might have only slightly broader appeal, but none can fail to take interest, if not pride, in the report of the present far-flung educational activities of the Church:

Since 1960 the establishment of over thirty Church-run schools in Mexico has placed the Church in an important position, educationally, in that country. Due to the legal restrictions imposed upon church-state relations in Mexico, Mormon schools are an arm of the Mutual Improvement Association rather than the L.D.S. Church *per se*. The schools are staffed by Church members who are citizens of Mexico and non-members are accepted up to 30% of the student body. By law no religious training is tolerated in any Mexican school; thus, before one L.D.S. school was permitted to open, a cinder block wall was required to separate it from the chapel. Nonetheless, there have been a number of conversions among the non-members.

In addition to Mexico, there are two schools in Chile and we can expect an expansion of educational plants in Latin America. A similar story can be told of the Pacific schools, an area in which the Church has long sponsored education, providing probably the best education available in places like Samoa. There are no Church schools in Europe, but Seminaries and Institutes Administrator William E. Berrett, as quoted by Hartshorn, believes that by the early 1970's the Church education program will be there.

While the Church is expanding its role in education outside of the United States (keep in mind this is primarily elementary and secondary education), there seems to be some hesitancy regarding its support of higher education in this country. To be sure, Brigham Young University and Ricks College are taking great forward strides, but the proposed junior colleges in Phoenix, Arizona, Southern California, and Portland, Oregon, seem to be permanently shelved. This decision was apparently dictated by financial considerations. On the other hand, expansion of the Seminaries and Institutes of Religion adjacent to high schools and collegiate institutions seems to be favored by those directing Church education. One is forced to be indecisive (it seems) when discussing such matters, for, as Hartshorn so ably points out, the "hows" and "whys" of decisions regarding policy are not available outside of the Church's governing body because of the theocratic nature of the Church. All one can do is present "what" occurred and spend fruitless hours speculating as to why.

A recurrent motif of Hartshorn's dissertation might be summarized in the question, Why Church education? "To preserve cherished values, which are necessary to the continuation of the Church" is one of Dr. Hartshorn's responses. Furthermore, the Institutes, he says, "are primarily designed to help Latter-day Saints college students understand the teachings of the Church and to help them become more competent and more loyal members of the Church."

From the non-Mormon view, presented by Thomas O'Dea, a respected student of the Church, Mormons are in an unprecedented era of success. "Can

the Church survive its own success?" asks O'Dea (as quoted in Hartshorn). O'Dea answers, "The Mormons believe the Gospel which they possess will fill the whole earth and that education is the vehicle which will make such a destiny possible." Undoubtedly we can be assured of continued interest in the inner workings of the L.D.S. Church educational system and philosophy.

In general, the other titles herein reported rather succinctly suggest the contents of the dissertations. There are some rather ordinary conclusions: Sellers in "The Relation Between Certain Latter-day Saints Seminaries and the Publics Which They Serve" finds (among eight conclusions) that "The seminary program was worth the money being expended to maintain it," and Meservy in "A Historical Study of Changes in Policy of Higher Education. . ." concludes that "the basic policies of the Church in regard to higher education and education in general have never changed." In the field of history JoAnn Shipps, "The Mormons in Politics. . .," discovered that "when the Mormons joined with those whom they accounted Gentiles to build effective political party organizations in Utah during the first two decades of the twentieth century, separation of church and state, at long last, came to the Kingdom of the Saints." A rather positive assumption for such an uncertain world.

PH.D. DISSERTATIONS

- Boren, Robert Reed. *An Analysis of the Speaking in the Utah Constitutional Convention of 1895*. Ph.D. Purdue University, 1965. #66-5242.
- Bowen, Walter D. *An Evaluation of the In-Service Program of the Department of Education of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. Ed.D. Brigham Young University, 1965. #64-5822.
- Bradshaw, Frank Mills. *The Administrative Organization of the Latter-day Saints Institutes of Religion*. Ed.Rel. University of Southern California, 1966. #66-7066.
- Buechley, Robert William. *Lung Cancer Epidemiology in the Rocky Mountain States, 1953-62*. Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley, 1966. #66-3554.
- Gentry, Leland Homer. *A History of the Latter-day Saints in Northern Missouri from 1836 to 1839*. Ph.D. Brigham Young University, 1965. #65-9857.
- Hartshorn, Leon Roundy. *Mormon Education in the Bold Years*. Ed.D. Stanford University, 1965. #65-12,733.
- Higbee, Joseph Marvin. *Objectives and Functions of the Latter-day Saints Institutes of Religion*. Ed.D. University of Southern California, 1966. #66-3817.
- Howard, Bruce. *Public School Insurance Programs in the State of Utah*. Ed.D. Arizona State University, 1965.
- Jarman, Dean. *Requirement of Effective Administrative Behavior in the Latter-day Saints Institutes of Religion*. Ed.D. University of Southern California, 1966. #66-3819.
- Johnson, Paul Timothy. *An Analysis of the Spread of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from Salt Lake City, Utah, Utilizing a Diffusion Model*. Ph.D. University of Iowa, 1966. #66-7211.

- Jorgenson, LeRoy J. A Study of Student Reaction to the Curriculum in the Institutes of Religion of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Ed.D. Brigham Young University, 1965. #65-14,557.
- Meservy, Royal Ruel. A Historical Study of Changes in Policy of Higher Education in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Ed.D. University of California, Los Angeles, 1966. #66-9328.
- Nyman, Monti Stephen. Source Book of Suggestions for Teaching the *Book of Mormon*. Ed.D. Brigham Young University, 1965. #65-14,559.
- Reeder, Ray M. The Mormon Trail: A History of the Salt Lake to Los Angeles Route to 1869. Ph.D. Brigham Young University, 1966. #66-10,518.
- Reid, Ethna Robinson. The Need For and the Design of a Reading Clinic in Granite School District. Ph.D. University of Utah, 1965. #65-12,543.
- Seal, Glenn T. An Analysis of the Procedures and Practices in the Business Education Curriculum of the Secondary Schools of Utah. Ed.D. Utah State University, 1963. #64-1095.
- Sellers, Keith L. The Relations Between Certain Latter-day Saints Seminaries and the Publics Which They Serve. Ed.D. Brigham Young University, 1965. #65-14,560.
- Selman, Orrin McEwan. A Study of Curricula for Existing and Proposed Junior Colleges in Utah. Ed.D. Brigham Young University, 1966. #66-7559.
- Ships, JoAnn Barnett. The Mormons in Politics: The First Hundred Years. Ph.D. University of Colorado, 1965. #66-3281.
- Strebel, George Lofstrom. Irrigation as a Factor in Western History, 1847-1890. Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley, 1965. #66-3706.

The essence of poetry is in its idealism. God has built his universe upon symbols, the lesser suggesting and leading up to the greater; and the poetic faculty, possessed by the prophet in fulness, recognizes and interprets it. All creations testify of their creator. They point to something above and beyond. That is why poetry of the highest order is always prophetic, or infinitely suggestive; and that is why the poet is a prophet.

Orson F. Whitney
THE STRENGTH OF
THE MORMON POSITION