

The World Church

MIDDLE BUDDHA

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

Psalm 137:4

Robert J. Morris

DIALOGUE inaugurates a new section, THE WORLD CHURCH, which will expand our dialogue with the non-American world and give our readers an enlarged perspective on the Church overseas.

The following essay by Robert J. Morris of Brigham Young University's Asian Studies Department pinpoints some of the problems involved in presenting Mormonism to other cultures. The author served as a missionary in the Far East.

If anybody asks me where I've been, I say Utah and China. When I realized that "Southern Far East Mission" didn't mean Florida, I had to buy a map to locate Taiwan, my own mission field. I was dutifully packed off to the plane with remarks about proselytizing the Chinks, and don't drink the water. Thus my part in this story begins.

Since it is the story of two missionaries, one of whom is myself, it will not be objective. These little scenarios from actual experience are exercises in contrasts and thoughts as West approaches East, as the Church approaches China. It is variations on a theme, for indeed the timbre of my own soul had not been prepared for the "all-pervading music in an alien mode."¹ My dialogue with my companion described below accomplished one thing for each of us: it raised questions about the meaning of Mormonism and Sinimism — the sore spots and the problems, the joys and the visions. It did not provide the answers. There are none in this story.

The occidental concept "typical Chinese" eludes us. Do not generalize Jen Mou Hsing into all Chinese today. He is not a symbol but a man.

¹Vincent Cronin, *The Wise Men from the West* (New York: Dutton, 1955), p. 45. An account of Matteo Ricci and the Jesuits in fabled Cathay.

He was the only Chinese I lived with and knew well enough to write about. For twenty-four hours a day I was with a man young enough to have grown up between Traditional China and Modern Taiwan, spiritual enough to have mature Gospel insights in that frame of reference, and lucid enough to bring the two together in meaningful dialogue. He was released in December, 1967, after two honorable years as a Beautiful Island missionary, but his story really begins nearly a half century ago.

In 1921, in an icy Peking cyprus grove, David O. McKay knelt to "dedicate and censecrate and set apart the Chinese realm for the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as restored in this dispensation through the Prophet Joseph Smith, saying:

Heavenly Father . . . break the bonds of superstition and may the young men and young women come out of the darkness of the past into the glorious light now shining among the children of men. Grant, our Father, that these young men and young women may through upright, virtuous lives and prayerful study be prepared and inclined to declare this message of salvation in their own tongue to their fellow men. May their hearts and the hearts of this people be turned to their fathers that they may accept the opportunity offered them to bring salvation to the millions who have gone before.²

My call from that same David O. McKay came in August 1964 and I arrived a month later in Taipei. I was a green bean. An array of senior companions and I early battled Chinese theological mind-benders: why polygamy? why the Negro question? why Vietnam? why are we yellow (the Indians being red)? can we burn incense? Chinese schools teach by rote learning, and most educated members wanted rote answers. We had none.

I lost patience with one or two cheating merchants and doors punctiliously shut after the resident's bow. I discovered that in liking the food, using

²As early as August, 1852, the Church was thinking about China, but the official dedication waited until President McKay's visit. This mission was opened July 14, 1949, in Hong Kong; Taiwan on March 9, 1956. For details of the old days, see the following:

"An Historical Overview of the Missionary Activities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Continental Asia," by Robert C. Patch, at Brigham Young University.

The Southern Far East Mission and You, a pamphlet published by the Church in Hong Kong, June 1961.

Quarterly Historical Report for the Southern Far East Mission, March 31, 1956; June 30, 1956; June 30, 1961.

R. Lanier Britsch, *Early Latter-day Saint Missions to South and East Asia* (PhD. dissertation: Claremont Graduate School, 1967).

Joseph Fielding Smith, "Why Take the Gospel to Asia?" *Answers to Gospel Questions*, Vol. IV (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co.), pp. 201-207.

Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Church in the Orient," *Improvement Era*, pp. 166 ff, and pp. 440 ff, 1967.

Don Hicken, "The Church in Asia," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. III, No. 1 (Spring 1968), pp. 134-42.

President McKay's prayer, given on the Sabbath, January 9, 1921, is a fascinating study in prophecy. The entire thing, recorded by his companion Hugh J. Cannon, contains these major points:

- 1) He characterized it a "solemn and momentous occasion";
- 2) he prayed that Peking "may be held sacred in thy sight";

chopsticks, tossing off some slang — all the less important issues — I was doing fine but in dealing with outsiders, farmers, pedicab drivers, and bellboys, I was looking with impatience down my long American nose, and that was lethal. I did not overcome this flaw until I began to know Jen. He became, slowly, a purge and a catalyst. I first knew him when I was there a year — long enough for the language to be less a Great Wall and more just a Bamboo Curtain.

His call to the work heralded a prestige leap for the missionary class in China. He was the only indigenous male missionary in captivity then (though there were six lady missionaries) and that was special.

During the first weeks he began memorizing the Uniform System for Teaching Investigators — the famous Six Discussions. He lived for a week in our apartment with six American Elders and compiled an IP notebook. He learned the rules; he honed his tools. Gifts came from friends: a gilt-edged Bible, a trunk, clothes, money, love.

At our new and expensive chapel³ in Taipei, the members and his friends met together and filled the red guest register with carefully brushed characters. His parents were there, perhaps the only non-graduated non-member Taiwanese in attendance. The Church uses exclusively Mandarin because it

3) he characterized the land and the people as "bound by the fetters of superstition and false doctrine, and *who have never been given the opportunity even of hearing the true message of their redeemer*";

4) he said that "the time has come when the Light of the Glorious Gospel should begin to shine through the dense darkness that has enshrouded this nation for ages"; it is a "religiously misguided nation";

5) he prayed God to stabilize the Chinese government, "if not by the present government, then through the intervention of the allied powers of the civilized world";

6) he prayed God to avert famine and "stay the progress of pestilence";

7) he asked that those who would ever deal with China in the Church be given special insight to develop "the best methods to adopt and the best plans to follow in establishing thy work among this ancient, tradition-steeped people"; "may the Elders and Sisters whom thou shalt call to this land as missionaries have keen insight into the mental and spiritual state of the Chinese mind. Give them special power and ability to approach this people in such a manner as will make the proper appeal to them";

8) his dedication concerned "one end of this realm to the other," not just a part.

Cyprus is the symbol of sadness to the Chinese. Perhaps it is metaphorical in the sense that the first L.D.S. missionary efforts a century before had failed, because they had been undertaken during the T'ai P'ing Rebellion. For journalistic accounts of these early events, see the following:

Millennial Star, XVII (June 26, 1855), 607.

The Eleventh General Epistle of the First Presidency, dated April 10, 1854.

³Land prices in Taiwan are high, especially in Taipei. The current Taipei chapel is said to be worth three times now what it was before completion early in 1965. Because of the high water table and soil problems, special materials and methods are required. Another chapel has subsequently been completed at Kao Hsiung in the south. All contracting and construction have been done under supervision of American couples on building missions, assisted by their families, the missionaries, and the local members. The trend now, by coordination through Japan, is toward numerous smaller chapels for the smaller branches. When I left there were sixteen branches and 3500 members of record.

is the national language by which Government and School operate. Thus Jen's parents were slow of speech and hearing, yet they were *there*.

Two sentences remain with me from the meeting. The first from the District President: "If you are faithful as a missionary, you will have the opportunity of seeing your parents into the Church." The second from his father, who said only, "Thank you, everyone, for sending off my son tonight. Thank you."

Jen was becoming a missionary for two reasons. The Vietnam war drain was making the need for local missionaries great. And he was fulfilling a self-promise.

His brother had been a building missionary for this chapel, and these two sons, both former Marines, were proud of their family. It was a preach-in of the first water. Nobody loves a story and a song like the Chinese, so he told of his conversion, with a tear; and a young lady, who was also of the M.I.A., sang *The Holy City*. That night he stood as tall as a pagoda, and as straight.

He left Taipei and us, and no one told him about preaching to the Chinks and he didn't need a map. I saw him six months later when we became companions.

Our prayers together those first nights must have sounded strange to Heaven's ears, since I always prayed in Mandarin, and he always in English; and when the one praying didn't know the expression in his adopted tongue, the supplication was half and half. We were in Hua Lien on Taiwan's east coast, and it was May. Everything was summer-damp in the humidity. He always asked to be humble, and he always slept wrapped up like a rice cake in his comforter, and never perspired though the humidity was ninety.

At two the third morning I lay awake from the heat. I looked down and his bunk was empty beneath me and I knew he would be on the roof in the moonlight, meditating. He did so most nights because he could think better then, he said. Our rented building was a three-story cube and our good earth a cabbage field by a river, a five-minute pedicab ride from the ocean. We lived above the chapel, which was above the recreation hall.

It was at such times, on the roof, he would compose the day's events into a meaning for his journal, or focus on a branch problem that needed an honorable solution, or compose Sunday's theology lesson from his respectable knowledge of memorized scripture, or perfect his discussions.⁴

I went up. A wester full of cassia assailed my damp pajamas and rustled palm fronds. When he saw me he grinned and reminded me of the hour.

⁴The topics of each one-hour discussion are these: a) The Church of Jesus Christ; b) The Book of Mormon; c) "Ye Shall Know the Truth"; d) The Gift of God is Eternal Life; e) The Plan of Salvation and Law of Eternal Progression; f) "Be Ye Therefore Perfect." Most missionaries have enough Chinese after six months to use these discussions effectively. Contrary to popular opinion, spoken Mandarin is easy to learn — devoid of grammar and syntax mostly and with an English word order.

Most of the experienced missionaries felt that the discussions needed modification, sometimes extensively, in each situation, and that especially the first discussion — "The Only True and Living Church" — is more an onslaught than a learning experience for most Chinese contacts.

We talked for a couple of hours about missionary work and the Gospel and his China. I questioned him about tracting that day: We had come to a gate where a child told us her mother wasn't home. I had seen the mother inside, being, well, inconspicuous, and I felt piqued at their lying to us. We were losing face! On the roof that morning Jen explained that this is the way of saying no thanks, and that the woman probably felt she was saving *our* face, by not telling us she didn't want to listen, and *her* face by not having to tell us to *our* face! This was a cultural jade puzzle box with a new key. I had oughta learn it, being from Utah and all.

The night made us very awake and our talk was clear. Jen knows the flavor of the Gospel and is master of himself. I was about to decry the little girl's lying when he told me, with a hand on my shoulder and a voice soft, part of the "Jen Theorem of Personal Relations": "Don't try to change people's customs and traditions by polemic. Let them preserve to themselves that which makes them themselves, and be restful. With the Gospel they will change what needs to be changed in themselves."

He despised "littleness of soul"⁵ in people, although he was patient with those afflicted. "*Man man lai*" — slow and sure does it — was the basic principle in the "Jen Theorem." Prime targets of his analyses were two-week tourist-experts on China ("Action is easy; knowing is difficult."), and parents who failed to teach their children moral principles.⁶

Whenever *he* got angry at a merchant's cheating, he would ignore it. So Jen taught me patience and understanding most of all. He was impatient at being a junior companion, yet he followed well.

That morning on the roof we decided that the Church in Taiwan is in a position to make several able and unique contributions:

1. The Gospel experience in such a culture contrapuntal to Western culture is forcing Gospel scholars on both sides of the ocean to examine *ultimate* issues and values in religion; a lot of fat has been cut away from Gospel rhetoric and dialogue as we have got down to grass roots and laws irrevocably decreed: What really is the Gospel; what *really* are Church laws versus opinion; what *will* we do to be saved?

⁵Doctrine and Covenants 117:11.

⁶Taiwan is becoming irrepressibly westernized, and has become a sort of peephole on Red China and the West, a hybrid floating between them trying to be independent of the West, and needing the West to do it. Competition for all levels of education, which is not compulsory beyond the ninth year (fifteen years old), is heart-stopping. The lure of universities in our own Great White PX in the Sky is great, and everybody wants to Go West, Young Man, at any cost to body and soul. Materialism has formed its clot, and too many eyes and hearts are overworked and undernourished on too many tests and texts with too great a lack of loveliness in their lives. Immorality in the right places, as everywhere in our mod, mod world, is as a bamboo castle in the typhoon.

Nor is nationalism dead. Chinese are Chinese, and are proud of the Red Chinese bomb. Youth seldom blame other youth, and they can identify easily with the Red Guards.

There is a leadership problem in the Church posed by two Chinas — branches led often by an American branch president, his one counselor a Taiwanese and his other a Mainlander — and the fact that here spirituality and nationalism both find difficulty in being separate concepts.

2. Because we have discovered that we need special creative approaches to proselyting here in order to teach well, we have gained experience in effectively presenting Gospel materials in the Chinese context, not modifying the Gospel but the approach, as President McKay's prayer indicated; we still need improvement here; hence, necessary materials and programs have yet to be molded uniquely for the total effort as they have for the Lamanite effort; things are progressing, wisely, with restraint, and better ways are coming.⁷

3. By escalating the number of branches, services used, and goods consumed, the Church aids the provincial economy, as well as by land and business dealings.

4. The missionaries are doing an ambassadorial work in behalf of the several cultures foreign to China which the majority of them represent. For example, the coordinator of the USIS Visual Aids Office in Taipei told me that he felt we were doing a more effective job than his organization in publicizing America because of our closer awareness and understanding of the people on a "gut level."

Mou Hsing's favorite lessons were The Plan of Salvation and the Spirit of the Priesthood (for its resemblance to the thinking of karate: shame a would-be opponent by the radiating integrity of your soul). He believes that the Gospel is not the opposition of Chinese tradition, but the cohering and fulfilling of truths given by Confucious, Mencius, and others, as it was to Moses' Law. "All truth can be circumscribed into one great whole."

For him, the Priesthood is the power to take Confucius' Golden Rule, say, and seal it as a commandment in Heaven and Earth and Man. The Chinese are not heathens becoming Christians becoming Mormons, but rather they are making from the mosaic of oriental ethics and metaphysics a "creative synthesis" with the Gospel. Then they can become Saints by the Priesthood.⁸

The deity known in China at least as early as the Chou Dynasty as "*Shang Ti*" — God on High — becomes to a Mormon the "*Yung Heng Ti Fu Shang Ti*" — O God, the Eternal Father on High — of the sacrament prayers. This king of grafting and updating gave the Book of Mormon's allegory in Jacob 5 a real appeal to Jen. Thus, the Restoration of All Things, for him, can mean the restoring of all that has been great and good in China's dynasties. *That* is eclecticism.

And in the Jen Theorem he often used local stories, traditions, and sayings to make his brand of Gospel more than just the best available footnote of a translation from the American Church.

⁷Under the Regional Advisers, all Church translation, printing, and visual aids will be coordinated under regional offices, the East Asian Church being under Japan. Currently B.Y.U. is preparing filmstrips and tapes for use in the new Project Temple, whereby Taiwan Saints are preparing to fly to Hawaii and attend the temple at Laie two summers hence. Our stake missionaries here are hoping to meet them at the temple. See the "Church News," January 20, 1968, p. 4.

See also Alma 29:8; 2 Nephi 31:3; D&C 5:10; D&C 105:24; D&C 1:24; I Corinthians 14:9, 24-33; Isaiah 49:12.

⁸See *Hymns*, p. 211, verse 6; also, *Mormonism — A Message For All Nations*, a Brigham Young University Extension Publication, by Spencer J. Palmer, Ph.D., Associate Professor of History and Religion at B.Y.U., and recently Korean Mission President.

It is not "expedient" (D&C 45:72) in China to be a Christian. Mormons are as forks in a rice bowl. Yet I was often to sit with him in the ensuing weeks on the curbs with passersby, or the steps at a Buddhist temple, underneath glass gargoyles and bug-eyed wooden gods, comparing notes and obtaining opinions of the bonzes or noodle-makers who gathered there daily to play mahjong or their role. And they would listen and comment, and they gave this Chinese youth respect. Rescue the weak, lift up the fallen. "Most precious," said Mencius, "are the people. . . ."⁹

Our talk that morning was a turning point in time. Thereafter I proselyted with a new vision of the job at hand, and I continued to marvel at this personality who was my companion. He would ask often about America. Yes, I have a girl waiting. She writes every week. Yes, his girl in Taipei is attending the Cultural Arts College. (She was the one who sang at his Farewell. Ah so.)

Most events were teaching opportunities to practice the Jen Theorem. When he checked into Hua Lien at the police station, the chief looked amazed. "You're a missionary? Ha!" Unfazed, "though the enemy deride," Jen asked the man some golden questions, had a discussion, and made a contact. We left with Jen grinning again — and myself having been taught about Christ-likeness by a Buddha. Jen was no paper tiger, but compliance with things was as simple as his command of English slang was considerable: "Roll with it, baby!" It gained him friends and baptisms. He kept his cool like a pagoda at nap time. Never strength against strength, but love with love.

Yet on other things his Chinese wouldn't budge. He had been a missionary a month when the Chinese Book of Mormon was published, in January, 1966, and he hugged his copy like an heirloom.¹⁰ (It is as a "familiar

⁹Here was the setting of another brain-bender. Ever since the Jesuits first tried to preach, teach, expound, and exhort things Catholic to Chinese, and even down to the present, everyone has been asking, "Can a Christian Chinese genuflect, burn incense and paper money, and ceremonize in temples and shrines for his dead and Confucious?" Where does ancestral veneration end and idolatry begin? This is the infamous Rites Controversy which has perplexed Popes and proselyters since the Ming Dynasty. Does the popping of firecrackers at the M.I.A. New Year's party signify the repudiation of devils or just a lot of loud fun? For ourselves and our house, we decided to teach the scriptures and let each one who faced the question govern himself. Thus we and everybody's ancestors saved lots of face.

See Jesse G. Lutz, *Christian Missions in China: Evangelists of What?* (Boston: Heath, 1966), p. 108.

To defend the Chinese Rites, Matteo Ricci quoted the *Doctrine of the Mean*, in which King Wu and the Duke of Chou were said to have "served the dead as they would have served them had they been living, which is the summit of filiality."

¹⁰At the present time the Book of Mormon is undergoing a fifth edition, including for the first time the footnotes and complete index. Translator Hu Wei I informs me that many translation corrections will be included as well. He still expects to get feedback from readers to make an even "clearer" sixth edition. (The first Chinese Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price will be published within the year. Translator Ch'e Tsai T'ien began working on it in summer, 1966.)

President Hu, who is also a counselor to the mission president, has said this about the Chinese Bible: "Its style is neither Mandarin nor classical nor modern, but a nebulous mixture." That is the general feeling of many people who know their Chinese and their base languages — to say nothing of the doctrinal errors of the Chinese Bible. The reason is not

spirit" to him too.) When I tried to persuade him five months later to buy a new third edition, he said, "Your first book of Mormon and Bible are special. Like a mission call or a set of Classics on rice paper hand-brushed."

He used the scriptures to teach, and emphasized points by gesturing a "mama-mia" with his hand. He would switch to Taiwanese or Mandarin at the drop of a silk cap, and we disagreed heartily on that point, because the language of the Church, and those who have been schooled, is Mandarin.

"Look," I said, "suppose you do baptize someone who understands only Taiwanese. What can they do in the Church besides just *come and sit*, which defeats your purpose anyway?"

"Just because they don't speak a given dialect, can't they have the Gospel?"

"Yes, but the time isn't yet. When we teach, how can I bear testimony to a lesson I haven't understood?"

"How could you when you were a green bean and the only thing you knew in Chinese was one rote testimony?"

I wasn't convinced, but things went on as they had before. His scripture knowledge, like his appearance always, was extremely sharp. His ebony hair was carpet-thick and he wore it with a slight bang, his companion's semi-baldness being a standing joke. At the barber shop (we went oftener than I needed it, but not often enough for him) he attributed my problem to all the salt lying around Sanitary Utah, and made jokes with the barbers in Taiwanese. I speak Mandarin, as you recall.

Leaving the barber shop one drizzling day (the rain in Taiwan fell mainly on me), we saw three young recruits walking together toward a wine house. The one in the middle, a teenager, and a head shorter than the others, walked about twice as fast just to keep up. Jen said, "How about a cottage meeting?" "Of course." He was never above walking up to, or along with, these new friends, talking Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon and "Church at ten on Sunday if you're in town"; and these kitty-cornered street meetings attracted many and became our first trademark. He handed them a tract and pointed them to a movie down the street, and ping pong at our place after.

Then we hopped on our bikes to scout some more cottage meetings. The people of Hua Lien knew when we were coming by our second trademark: his warped bike wheel scraped the frame rhythmically, and his two-piece rain suit swished in time, making him an à-go-go monk with hood and trousers.

We had monickers for each other — he called me *Ta Fo* (Big Buddha) and I called him *Chung Fo* (Middle Buddha), and whenever his proverbially long showers reached the hour mark, I would yell down, "Hey, Chung Fo, don't waste water! There are people going unwashed in America."

so much the carelessness of the translators as just plain pain at having to translate a Western alphabetic concept into an Eastern ideographic one. The problems are enormous. "Exaltation" for example becomes "ch'ao sheng," an old Buddhist term. Is that ok? Who is to say? See my article on this subject in the July 1966, Vol. 8, No. 3, *Voice of the Saints*, pp. 35-38, in Chinese and English.

See also H. Grant Heaton, "Comments on Translation Work in Chinese," January 31, 1963, pp. 11-13 et al., unpublished manuscript. Mr. Heaton is a former mission president for the Southern Far East Mission of the Church.

On Diversion Day an anxious father came to ask us to administer to his little daughter; she was running a fever. At the house, Jen tried to perform the ordinance — the first for him and the baby — but she kept turning her face up to watch, and they both were covered with oil. The sealing took the three of us, and she did get well.

We learned that this family was related to Jen (It seemed that sooner or later half the population of Hua Lien turned out being in his clan). So we always visited two or three a week and talked "Gospel story." But most of them did not join the Church. Many were farmers or small business operators; the Church's membership is predominantly educators and educated, non-soldiers and non-officials, the young and youthful.

By this time, other Chinese missionaries were teaching Jen's parents in Taipei, and his father wrote regularly asking questions of his son. Middle Buddha is a Chün Tzu — a Confucian Superior Man — who would be ashamed to die without accounting for himself in the eyes of his ancestors and posterity. He always did his best by that ideal, and his people. ("Heaven sees as my people see; Heaven hears as my people hear.")

When I returned to Sanitary, Utah, exchanging one island for another, Taiwan became my *cause*, my defense, the *raison d'être* for any knowledge I had of the world.

And the day before this essay goes to the editor, I receive a letter from Jen and in it a farewell program. The cover is embossed red with phoenixes and dragons, and inside a picture of his brother — the Marine, called to serve his second mission in Taiwan for the Church. His call, signed by President McKay just forty-eight years out of Peking's cyprus grove himself, seems to give to the first prayer its most efficacious amen. If there is joy in the Gospel, then for me it is this: regardless of different coefficients for different Saints, the Gospel-equation is everywhere the same. The Lord's song can be sung, but never by "foreign devils," for the hybrid counterpoint and meter are elusive, and the pitch must be true. In every land it must be indigenous, this Gospel.

I saw Jen last as we returned to Taipei and *our* chapel for an All-Island Conference. From the plane we went straight to his parents' electric repair shop where they welcomed us like Mandarins, with cold pears (it was June and you could have fried a bird nest on the sidewalk) and candied pineapple. It was a reunion-farewell for my second family and me. Jen and I had been long separated since Hua Lien a year ago, but had flown together as a last journey.

Next, we joined the other eighty-six missionaries for kettleball at the National University lawns where eight Chinese elders and lady missionaries beat us foreign devils by a score too high to mention here. On the ball field he was called the Yellow Peril by his Chinese team, all very fast and agile, and I the White Man's Burden of mine.

Finally, after two days of ball, testimony, and workshops, it was time to split up again. I had to catch a plane for home, and he a train for points south. But we had a baptismal service beforehand that for me has come to

define the meaning of our work in Taiwan. The speaker was T'ang Tung Yüan, the second Chinese elder of our day. He was a green bean, having been called a month before, but he didn't need a map. He spoke of the future and the work, articulately and movingly. Then the Jen brothers and I baptized the Jen parents, and we all became ancestors to them in the Gospel, for by us they were born of water and spirit. There was a time for pictures and gifts. They gave me a hand puppet that said *Ta Fo* on the front. I was afraid of going home, but I had thrown away my map of China long ago.

Revelation is unfolding truth whether in the test tube, the human mind, or a message from the Creator. It is the infinite becoming known. Death is not extinguishing the light but putting out the lamp because the dawn has come. Night never has the last word. The dawn is irresistible.

Both religion and science teach us that nothing is ever annihilated; forms change and patterns are altered, and we do not even attempt to anticipate the details, but it is unreasonable to conclude that a law which operates everywhere else in life ceases to operate only in life's highest, noblest form — human personality. The human spirit shrinks from extinction. It refuses to believe that the departed have vanished like the flame of a burned-out candle. There has never been an age in which the hope of life, immortal and eternal, has not flamed brightly.

In this world of indestructibility each of us is a timeless, spaceless unit of energy. Is it not absurd to assume that the infinitesimal electron is of more import in the economy of the universe than the creative consciousness that is I?

*President Hugh B. Brown
General Conference, April, 1967*