

has adhered more closely to the doctrines of the early church, that it has strayed less from basic principles of belief.

In procedures, however, he makes it clear that he feels each has too often allowed traditions to develop which have led to a degree of apostasy. For instance, in his chapter discussing prophetic succession, he charges the Mormons with abandoning revelatory experience and turning to "rights of seniority." The Reorganized Church, on the other hand, has "circumscribed God to the choice of a descendant of Joseph Smith."

It appears that the author, because of his personal experiences, feels the Reorganization has gone too far in the use of "democratic processes." It is his opinion that the theocratic rights of leadership have been abandoned in too many instances, allowing too much diversity in belief and practice to grow within the organization. He also suggests that the Reorganization has accepted too many of the practices of Protestantism. He decries the use of full-time "paid" ministers, feeling that this practice leads to dependence on them in local situations. He prefers the "divine call" found in the Reorganization to the almost automatic ordination at a certain age found in the Mormon Church, but he favors the Mormon selection process for the major quorums — one based on choosing according to experience and success in past performance, especially in the secular administrative field.

It is in the fundamentals of belief that the author disagrees with the Mormon Church. He speaks against the plural marriage doctrine, baptism for the dead, secret temple rites (which he feels were greatly influenced by Masonic involvement in Nauvoo), the eternal progression theory, Negro discrimination in priesthood and salvation, and dependence on the "living oracles." He approves of the Mormon interpretation on tithing and likes their welfare programs and their general administrative approach to priesthood, as well as their women's and youth organizations for service and fellowship.

In concluding his book, he calls for positive steps to foster better understanding between the organizations. He notes that past animosities between leaders have greatly subsided, and suggests that members of both groups get to know each other in order that the "work of the Lord" can be more fully accomplished.

It appears that this is the first attempt in recent years to suggest a reconciliation between the two churches. It comes, however, from one who is not in an official position to do much about it. Perhaps this is the only way such a movement can get its start. Reactions to the book among members of both churches may further encourage the reconciliation process.

## A SURVIVING DYNAMIC

*T. Edgar Lyon*

This is a unique composition in the true sense of the word — there is not another with which it can be compared. Francis W. Holm, Sr., was reared in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City (hereafter

referred to as Mormon or LDS Church) until he was twenty years of age. Still residing in his native city he joined the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (hereafter cited as Reorganized or RLDS Church). He was baptized and received the priesthood in each church. He served as a professional RLDS missionary in the Utah-Idaho district, then moved to Missouri, where he was an active layman and worked in the auditing department of his church until his recent retirement. Strangely, he retained his membership in both churches for more than half a century.

Moving from the Mormon-dominated Rocky Mountains where he was born to the center of the Reorganized population, he nevertheless has retained close contact with the Mormon group through his many relatives in the West and through Mormon publications. It is from this position that he has made an honest effort to compare the two churches, bringing to bear the understanding of one who has been a participant in each at different periods of his life. The scope of his writing is summarized in his statement: "The major purpose of this book will be to compare the two organizations with that of the original church in the days of Joseph Smith, the martyr; especially in reference to organization and teachings."

In addition, he states his thesis in this summary: "It is the contention of the author that all the differences between the two churches are based on doctrines and ideas that were introduced into the church after the Prophet's death. . . ."

In short chapters, Francis Holm presents his views of twenty-eight practices and doctrines in which the two churches have grown apart. In the twenty-ninth chapter he summarizes his investigation, indicating where he thinks each of the two churches has departed farthest from the norm of the restoration movement of Joseph Smith, and where each has most successfully adhered to the Prophet-Restorer's teachings. It is a provocative and challenging analysis of the differences which have divided the two largest organizations which claim to be the true successors of the restoration inaugurated by Joseph Smith.

Holm attempts to depict the fundamental teachings of Joseph Smith and describe the "early church" of the restoration which he uses as the norm for his comparative study. He depicts the overall result of more than a century of Mormonism as having introduced many teachings and practices that were unknown in the early period of the church. These were innovations unheard of or unimagined in the lifetime of Joseph Smith. Among these is the creation of a false image of Joseph Smith. He says that the Utah Church has created an artificial "reverence for the prophet, almost to the point of idolizing him." This created an aura about Joseph Smith so that his funeral sermons, letters, conversations, and even hearsay regarding him have been elevated to the status of scripture.

He sees the idea of an almost infallible church president transferred to Joseph Smith's successors in the LDS Church, so that in time their words assume the authority of scripture. This idea later produced two other departures from attitudes in the early church; namely, an automatic succession

in the LDS presidency (without God being involved in the selection through revelation) and in a demand for almost unquestioned obedience to LDS General Authorities.

By way of contrast, Holm depicts the Reorganized Church as going in an opposite direction during the last century. Joseph Smith, although viewed as a prophet and restorer, has often been minimized as an on-going force within their church. At times some of their prominent leaders, rejecting teachings of Joseph Smith, went so far as to declare he was a fallen prophet. Leadership in the Reorganized Church has never been strongly centralized, as depicted by the power struggle which took place between the Presidency, the Apostles, and the Presiding Bishop in the 1920's and 1930's (see Chap. IV).

Although Holm does not use the terms, actually he describes the Mormon Church as the left wing of the original restoration movement (progressive, innovative, and fearlessly adjusting to changing conditions of society). In this respect it has retained the spirit of the early church. The RLDS Church is viewed as the right wing of the restoration (conservative, looking backward even beyond Joseph Smith, cautious of anything that was not scriptural, and not readily adjusting to an on-going world). This attitude has directed the Reorganized Church toward Protestantism, as manifested in its professional priesthood, the low percentage of its members involved in the activities of the church, and in its theology which has been gradually rejecting the dynamic challenge of the materialistic Godhead of Joseph Smith and reverting toward a medieval Catholic concept of a trinity. Holm points out that due to the LDS Church's voluntary missionary system, its educational programs for its youth, its welfare plan, and other vigorous achievements, the comparison of the statistical growth of the two churches is challenging. The Mormon "annual growth rate" in recent years was 7.6 percent as contrasted to the 1.3 percent for the Reorganized Church.

Because of his experience in both of them, Holm has probably written as unbiased a comparison of the two churches as anyone within either church could do. The weakness of many of his interpretations, however, reveals the limitations of such an undertaking without a thorough examination of the historical sources of the period. At no place does he accurately describe the "early church" of Joseph Smith, with its growing body of doctrinal beliefs and its expanding organization, which serves as his norm for the comparison. He manifests little acquaintance with what happened to the church and its doctrines during the Far West and Nauvoo periods. For instance, he states that re-baptism was "required of everyone that entered Salt Lake Valley," which is not true. He also assumed that a "re-sealing" implied a "re-ordination." This was cited to indicate that Brigham Young had organized a different church from the one to which his followers had previously belonged. Historical evidence indicates it was Joseph Smith who instituted re-baptism, possibly in Missouri, but certainly at Nauvoo, where he personally re-baptized many of those who settled there. This was viewed as a renewing of the original covenant and a symbolic re-sealing of former vows and obligations, nothing more.

When discussing the public worship services of the “early church,” Holm states we have little to guide us concerning what transpired at the meetings. On the contrary there are many accounts available, such as accounts of meetings in the Kirtland Temple, and accounts of conference meetings both in America and England, minutes of meetings at Far West, and rather detailed minutes of meetings year after year at Nauvoo. Expert clerks made their records during the meetings. Some of these are published in the *Times and Seasons* and *The Millennial Star*. Private journals of church members often provide supporting material to supplement the official accounts.

While conceding that baptisms for the dead were practiced at Nauvoo, Holm gives a cut-off date for them in the early 1840's. Records indicate these were continued almost to the exodus of 1846. Holm also ignores Joseph Smith's institution of the endowment ceremony in 1842 and its continued practice, on a limited scale, until the Temple had been made operative for those ordinances in November, 1845. He accounts for the temple ceremonies as an outgrowth of the Masonic ritual and implies that they had their origin in the post-Joseph Smith period. Evidence exists which indicates that members of the church who came west, as well as some who did not come west, had received their endowments at Nauvoo prior to the death of Joseph Smith.

Another area in which historical study is needed, to properly evaluate the differences between the churches, is that of the historical and geographical backgrounds of those who established the Reorganized Church. Many of its leaders were not thoroughly conversant with what Joseph Smith had been teaching during the last four years of his life at Nauvoo. Some lived at a great distance from Nauvoo and had never visited the place nor known Joseph Smith intimately. Some had attended conference meetings, but were not permanent residents of the community. Many of these knew little of church development between 1839 and 1844. When they rejected the leadership of the Twelve, they resorted to what they knew, which was basically Mormonism as it had existed at the close of the Kirtland and Far West periods of the church. Those who had not heard the Prophet at Nauvoo, assumed that new doctrines were teachings of Brigham Young. It is at this focal point that an in-depth study of church history is needed to make a valid comparison between the churches.

It has been this reviewer's contention that any attempt to bridge the differences between the LDS Church and the RLDS Church will not be successful as long as it is approached from the areas in which convictions and devotion are closely associated with religious emotions. The differences must be bridged by way of a careful examination of what was taught and believed and practiced in the closing years of Joseph Smith's life.

Holm's work represents years of careful observation, patient tolerance of people in both churches who have disagreed with him, and study of the restoration scriptures. A tabulation of the points he has discussed would indicate that the LDS Church is closer to the “early church” in its spirit and accomplishments than his own Reorganized group. In Mormonism's

wide distribution of the priesthood among its members; the wide participation of its membership in church activities; the place of women in the church; its missionary, tithing, marriage, and welfare systems; its interpretation of the Word of Wisdom; its auxiliaries; the stress on family religious teachings; and the devotion of its members to support the church, Holm sees more of a survival of the organizational dynamic of Joseph Smith's restoration than he finds in his own church.

## THE LION OF THE LORD

Donald R. Moorman

*The Lion of the Lord, a Biography of Brigham Young.* By Stanley P. Hirshson. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1969. xx, 396 pp. \$8.95.

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In the history of the West, Brigham Young is a star of the first magnitude, for no man shaped the history of the Great Basin more dramatically nor influenced the ultimate destiny of the Mormons more profoundly than did this extraordinary figure of nineteenth century America. Yet the personality of this remarkable colonizer has excited feelings of ambivalence unresolved to this day. Professor Hirshson's latest work continues the tradition: though widely revered and commemorated, Young's life remains an enigma to serious scholars striving to capture both the deeds and the spirit of the man in biography. The sources exploited by Professor Hirshson and his interpretation of them testify that *The Lion of the Lord*\* has failed to reach the flesh-and-blood Brigham Young, leaving us rather with a caricature of the man drawn from news accounts of the period; the founder of a new western empire is transformed into a paper lion.

Professor Hirshson dismisses his failure to utilize available materials with the simple explanation that he received no help or encouragement from the Church Historian's Office and that discussions with Mormon scholars convinced him that few records of historic importance were to be found in these archives. The key to understanding Brigham Young, he explains, was "not in the Rocky Mountains but in the Midwest and along the Atlantic Coast. . . ." This is pure folly. A brief perusal of the index of original holdings in the Latter-day Saints' Archives should serve to convince any historian that more than one lifetime would be necessary for a serious student to work through the personal papers of significant Mormon leaders. Letters, reports, and memoranda of George A. Smith, Wilford Woodruff, Heber C. Kimball, and John Taylor alone are voluminous. The private and public correspondence of Brigham Young is no less impressive: "History of Brigham Young" (manuscript history), forty-seven volumes; letter-books, fifteen volumes or fifteen thousand entries; public, private, and family papers, nineteen thousand items;

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\*This book is reviewed concerning its use of sources by Chad Flake elsewhere in this issue (pp. 105-107).