

PERIPHERAL MORMONDOM: THE FRENETIC FRONTIER

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A CONCEPT CALLED THE "CENTER PERIPHERY DICHOTOMY" is sometimes used by social scientists to illustrate and analyze regional disparities.¹ *Center* or *core* usually refers to those areas so richly endowed in population and resources that they dominate a less favored periphery. Centers are usually urban, while *periphery* refers to marginal rural zones with declining population. An analogous dichotomy occurs when a population and its institutions expand from a central core into its peripheral regions.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints displays an obvious core-periphery dichotomy characterized by a center rich in resources and population dominating a marginal periphery which is seeking to become central. A rough geographic representation would have Salt Lake City, Utah and the western United States as core focus, with the periphery consisting of the rest of the world. The exception would be well-organized and smoothly functioning church units in certain urban areas elsewhere in North America and possibly in Europe.

TYPICAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND ATTITUDES OF CORE AND PERIPHERY DWELLERS

The interplay of the factors affecting the growth and migration of active church membership produces four easily recognizable types: Converts living

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on the periphery, converts living at the center, those born in the church and living on the periphery and life-long members living in the center.

Life-long Latter-day Saints in the center rejoice at the relative ease with which they exercise and express their faith. Frequently, however, the effortlessness of religious practice leads to a "taking for granted" of church programs, procedures, policies and principles. When he becomes aware of this, the member sometimes feels so ashamed that he expresses a yearning for struggle, as in the mission field, in order to strengthen his testimony. Despite this, the life-long LDS in the center is quite satisfied with his lot and reluctant to trade places with his peripheral brother or sister.

Another characteristic of the life-long Mormon in the center is the greater importance placed upon form and ritual. Such customs as deacons in white shirts and ties, members partaking of the sacrament with the right hand and the bishopric seated in the "correct" order on the stand are very important, sometimes even appearing as foundation stones of faith and testimony.

Converts in the center may have joined the Church there, or may have migrated to it after conversion and after the facts of peripheral life became evident. This is particularly true of young unmarried converts who discover the dearth of marriageable partners in the periphery and of young families who seek life for their children in a more nearly ideal environment, i.e., a Mormon milieu. In either case, their general behavior is similar. Converts quickly discover the ward as a substitute family which welcomes them, eases their integration and tends to compensate for some former relationships broken as a result of conversion.

Converts come to perceive the functioning of church administration, particularly that of the ward, as smooth and effective, an organization of which they can feel proud. Their pride of membership may be further enhanced by the higher societal value placed on the Mormon "way of life," particularly in the center, but also in a somewhat larger sphere where the Church enjoys a generally favorable media image. In this milieu converts are able to ease comfortably into Mormon life through tasks and assignments consistent with their capacity and experience.

Converts on the periphery present a decidedly different image. After a fairly orderly presentation of gospel principles before baptism, they discover, as they are brought into the fold, a chaotic ecclesiastical organization frequently unable to cope with the problems stemming from the transition from former ways to Latter-day Saint ways. Non-Mormon members of their immediate families may exert pressure upon the new converts.

Despite efforts by the central Church, and to the chagrin of many center dwellers, there are still areas of North America, to say nothing of more distant world regions, where the masses have heard little about the Mormons. As a result, the converts in the periphery have little positive reinforcement for their new identities and may even see themselves as objects of scorn. These converts generally reside in small branches which may draw their limited membership from many miles around. Because the needs of the branch may be so severe, the convert is often pressed into service without proper training or

experience. Sometimes there is no one in the branch, even among its officers, to provide this training. The new brother or sister is thrust into a sink or swim position. Many drown and are lost to the Church forever, having "lost their testimony." Others survive and do remarkably well, but some suffer from another disease endemic to the periphery—an exaggerated sense of worth growing out of their meteoric rise within the local church hierarchy.

The life-long LDS on the periphery is usually migrant and transitory, harboring deep-seated desires to return to the center, but willing to "do good" in the mission field in the meantime. A major challenge for these members is to treat the local brothers and sisters as equals. Core members usually possess much church experience, and they usually enjoy higher social status and incomes. This class distinction is frequently compounded by the church practice of calling these interlopers to positions of authority because of their greater experience. Administrative expediency thus imposes its will on the local pecking order.

The seeming incompetence of less experienced local coreligionists and the blatant lack of accustomed form and ritual in religious practice in the typical small branch can be overlooked by the life-long Mormon if life on the periphery is viewed as a temporary posting. But as time wears on, and no transfers are forthcoming, with local progress remaining imperceptible, unfulfilled expectations breed frustration.

As children grow up on the periphery, still another type of life-long Mormon is born—one who does not know "how the Church is supposed to be." This individual, usually teenaged or younger, is obliged to look for models almost exclusively in his parents or other adults who have migrated from the center. The child is probably the only one of his kind in school. Integration and attachment are not easy because the child must retain a considerable degree of loyalty to the center, where he or she will probably have to go eventually to obtain the greatest blessings of church membership. Conflicts are obvious and severe.

In spite of these adverse conditions, however, the majority of new members who remain active participants in the life of a small branch derive deep satisfaction from their affiliation with the Church. We find, however, that the combination of certain circumstances, probably unavoidable in the periphery, and some church practices place a heavy physical and emotional burden on the members, a burden which exacts a heavy toll.

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS ON THE PERIPHERY

Experienced missionaries often speak of a threshold of proselyting efficiency reached when a local unit of the Church achieves sufficient size that tracting can be largely replaced by the teaching of friends, relatives and other associates of the members. Since the persons referred by the members tend to share a common social, economic, educational and even religious background with them, this threshold represents a turning point in the making of a cohesive church unit. Before this point is achieved, however, there is a marked

tendency toward social stratification from the amalgamation of what, from a nonreligious point of view, amounts to a randomly selected sample of persons.

The missionaries seek out and instruct all those who respond to the gospel message without much regard for the investigator's background or current nonreligious activity. The resulting mix of personalities brought into a branch can be stimulating, but it can also be uncomfortable, even explosive. More often it is just boring. After a series of futile attempts, often perceived as a duty, to develop a comprehensive relationship with the newcomers, one simply perceives that any conversation or activity beyond the narrow limits of more or less formal religious intercourse quickly exhausts mutual interest. Smaller sub-units with a broader shared background develop spontaneously, and unfortunately these groups tend to reflect a strong correlation between general interests and socio-economic origin. Although the formation of cliques undoubtedly occurs throughout the Church, the negative effects are magnified by the smallness, isolation, inexperience and lack of self-confidence which characterize the peripheral branch.

A second prominent feature of the small branch is its high degree of organizational instability. It is probably inevitable that rapid growth in an institution which draws its leadership directly from the membership and emphasizes rapid individual advancement will lead to a rapid turnover of officers and teachers. But when this circumstance is viewed in relation to certain other church doctrines and practices, the net effect is a significant psychological burden for the individual member. For example, the member finds himself immersed in a rapidly changing and unpredictable environment where he is called upon to accept and adapt to new organizational structures, new assignments and new ways of doing things almost weekly. He is often expected to fill teaching or leadership positions with little or no training or supervision. He either moves from one position to another too quickly to learn how to perform well in any one of them, or he is given multiple assignments. Temples, church buildings, general authorities and other symbols of permanence and stability are far removed from his experience. The missionaries, who touch his life so profoundly, depart after a few brief weeks or months. The ultimate church authority in his immediate experience, the mission president, remains on the scene for only three years. The arrival of each new mission president brings a reevaluation of priorities and a new set of goals. The member is constantly reminded of the urgency of the food storage program, the continual threat of personal, community, or national disaster and the imminence of the millennial advent. In his personal life he must often overcome behavioral patterns of long standing, such as drinking or smoking, in a matter of days or weeks. In this tumultuous environment he cannot help but experience sustained emotional shock.

One natural response to this state of affairs is a readjustment of the time scale on which the member sees his life unfolding. Encouragement to make a commitment to baptism after only a few hours of instruction, rapid completion of the missionary lessons, a quick sequence of church assignments and

advancements in the Priesthood, continuous exposure to organizational change and constant turnover of fellow worshippers—all combine to produce not only resignation to a rapidly changing church environment but also an expectation of instant relationships. Thus a new member is nonplussed if the faithful payment of tithes for a few weeks does not immediately improve his financial situation, or if living the Word of Wisdom for a comparable period does not tangibly improve his health. He tends to judge his fellow-members, placing them either on a precarious pedestal or condemning them out of hand. He bases these judgments on isolated, happenstance observations of behavior. "Enduring to the end" and the importance of constancy in moral behavior are almost incomprehensible because the single most obvious constant in his world is the certainty of change.

It is not unusual to hear a member of a few months, one who bears his testimony on each successive Fast Sunday, repeat an account of how the preceding month's experience has brought him through deep discouragement and disenchantment with the Church back to a new and more profound testimony of its divinity. Others pass through cyclic changes in their church activity, moving within just a few months or weeks from complete indifference towards the Church to periods of feverish activity. These oscillations are not unique to the peripheral branch—the phenomenon seems to occur everywhere—but its foreshortened time scale and the resulting emotional burden on the member can be overwhelming. The fatigue it brings frequently leads to hostility, arguments, open defiance of authority, ill-conceived repressive measures by local authorities and a host of other evils.

Besides these social and emotional problems, the member of a peripheral branch is saddled with perplexing financial and physical burdens. He must travel great distances to attend meetings or to fulfill assignments such as home teaching. If he is one of the typically small fraction of branch members who owns an automobile, he is frequently called upon to provide transportation. Often he is expected to participate heavily in meeting house remodeling projects and maintenance and janitorial services.

Some of his direct financial responsibilities may also seem inconsistent with those in the core. Consider the payment of tithes. The long-standing discussions of how the farmer, the small businessman, the wage earner, the professional and others should calculate an honest tithe in keeping with their diverse forms of remuneration become complicated when the economic framework of the country in which the member resides is considered. For example, the disposable income of workers performing similar functions in two countries may vary widely depending upon the type of economic system. In instances where the extent of socialization is the same for two countries, the full wage for the services of a worker in one may appear on his paycheck stub only to be reduced to a much lower level by taxes withheld at the source; whereas, the second country does not attribute that wage to the worker at all, and his paycheck, if he has one, indicates only the net amount paid him. In such cases the gross amount on the respective pay vouchers might vary by a large amount even though the disposable income of the two individuals is

identical. It is surely legitimate in such circumstances to ask, ten percent of what? But there appear to be no guidelines based on an assessment of local circumstances, and the most often heard counsel is the "ten percent of the gross" derived from the core experience.

An important aspect of the financial relationship between a peripheral branch and the central Church is illustrated in Figure 1. The tall bars in the histogram represent, in arbitrary units, the tithes sent to the Church by a particular branch during the first seven years of its existence. The crosshatched section of these bars represent, on the same vertical scale, the monies received directly by this branch from the central Church. No attempt has been made to adjust the monies received by the branch to account for its fair share of the administration of general church programs, the maintenance of general church buildings, the expenses and salaries of general authorities, and we do not have enough data to know if the net flow of money towards the core shown here is typical. What does appear typical, because it is consistent with church growth and the policies governing the payment of funds to the branches, is the fact that the in-flow and out-flow of money follow two dramatically different growth curves. The remitted tithes follow a relatively smooth exponential curve, similar to the membership growth curve for this branch which will be discussed shortly. The funds provided to the branch, on the other hand, are represented by a step-like graph, remaining relatively constant for the first three years and then moving abruptly to a new constant level for the remaining four years. The cause of the step-increase is, in the case of this branch, completely obvious; the branch moved into a larger meeting-house during the fourth year. It is the fact that the funds received directly from the central Church are based exclusively on the rent, custodial fees, electricity bills and similar expenses of the branch that leads us to conclude that this type of growth curve is typical.

For a young branch, moving into a larger facility is a difficult undertaking that depends critically on the initiative taken by the local leaders. It often requires considerable imagination because the local leaders have had little or no experience with the facilities taken for granted in the core, perhaps never having seen an LDS chapel. The church program of reimbursing the branches for a share of their actual expenses seems well calculated to motivate local initiative, although the branch is often woefully unaware of the possibilities. On the other hand, Figure 1 dramatically illustrates the inverse relationship between local financial need and the response of the central Church. In the earliest years, when small, poor and inexperienced, the branch receives little money. Then as its membership and financial resources grow it may arrive at a threshold level where its purchasing power is suddenly and dramatically increased by moving into a larger facility. By doing its own custodial work and pocketing the money paid by the Church for this purpose, a branch may increase its monthly revenues many times over. Being in a new locale and presumably having a few more melodious voices, they can for the first time afford a piano. Now that the teachers have more experience, they can, for the first time, afford blackboards and perhaps some audio-visual equipment. In

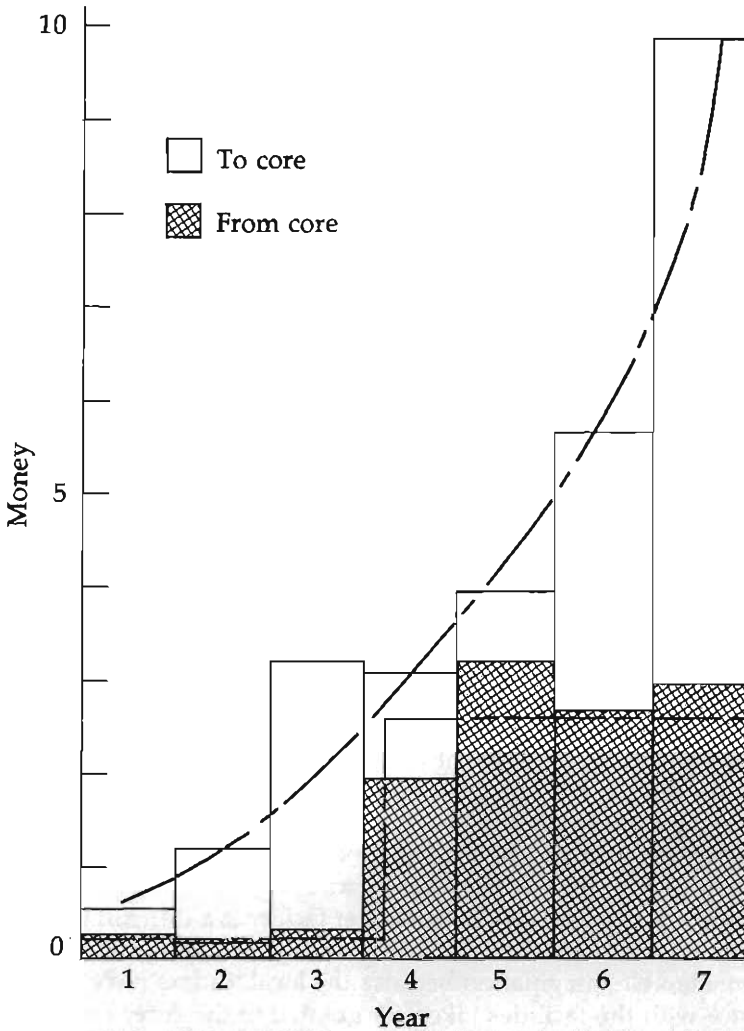


Figure 1. *Flow of Money Between the Core and a Peripheral Branch.*

short, the need-response relationship is inverted: When money from the center was needed most, it was not available.

In the ecclesiastical organization, the main problem occurs at the level of the mission president. He has a triple responsibility: (1) the personal health, safety and spiritual well-being of the missionaries; (2) the planning and direction of the proselyting activity; and (3) the leadership of the members in the mission. He is instructed to regard these responsibilities in that order of priority, and since each of them is very demanding of his time and energy, the members may not receive all the attention they need. Only when they have achieved sufficient size and maturity will they be given a stake president, who, unlike a district president, has all the authority required to look after their ecclesiastical needs and for whom they represent the chief responsibility. Here too an inverted need-response relationship is evident.

Finally, services such as translation, personal counseling, health care and accessibility to instructional and other materials tend to be concentrated where there are large numbers of members to be served. This is natural, but those church units least equipped to improvise are most often required to do so. Other examples could be cited, but it is clear that the prevailing concept is that central church assistance should be based on the initiative of the local units and their ability to participate and that this concept necessarily spawns an inverted need-response relationship.

One other institutional preoccupation complicating life on the periphery should be cited. It is the strong tendency toward central direction and the maintenance of universal programs and materials, even a universal calendar. Even though benefits from complete uniformity are obvious, a disproportionate share of the costs must inevitably be borne by the periphery. In questions of finance, language, cultural heritage and socio-political activity, church policy will undoubtedly be shaped by the needs of the majority of the members, or the needs of the core. Strict adherence to these policies renders impossible anything but a general and often totally unrealistic response to highly specific local situations. We have already cited the problem of calculating an honest tithing. A second classic example is the requirements that revered hymns with beautiful native-language poetry and magnificent music must be replaced with poor translations inspired by a foreign heritage.

ARE THESE PROBLEMS TRANSITORY?

In recent times exponential growth rates have commanded the attention of all thinking people. Exponential curves can be forboding when they forecast energy shortages or the exhaustion of other resources vital to our well-being or delightful when they foresee rapid growth of church membership. It is important to recognize that essentially the same extrapolation techniques underlie all of these predictions, and that other equally valid (or equally invalid) conclusions are implied by the same mathematical procedures. In this context, it is an interesting and informative exercise to determine the effect of sustained exponential growth of the church membership on the average level of church experience of the members. Doing so requires a little mathematics, but it is worth the effort.

To illustrate the implications of such a calculation it is useful to consider three different growth trends. For each, we consider a hypothetical branch formed on a given date with an initial membership represented by the symbol N_0 . In the first case this membership remains constant over the ensuing months and years. If the passage of time is indicated along a horizontal axis, as in Figure 2, a graph of the membership at any given instant of time is a simple horizontal line like graph a. In the second case, the membership increases at a constant rate, i.e., a constant number of members is added during each successive time interval of equal duration. This is called linear growth and is represented by graph b in Figure 2. A more rapid type of growth is represented by graph c. It is called exponential growth and is characterized by the fact that the membership doubles with the passage of each succeeding

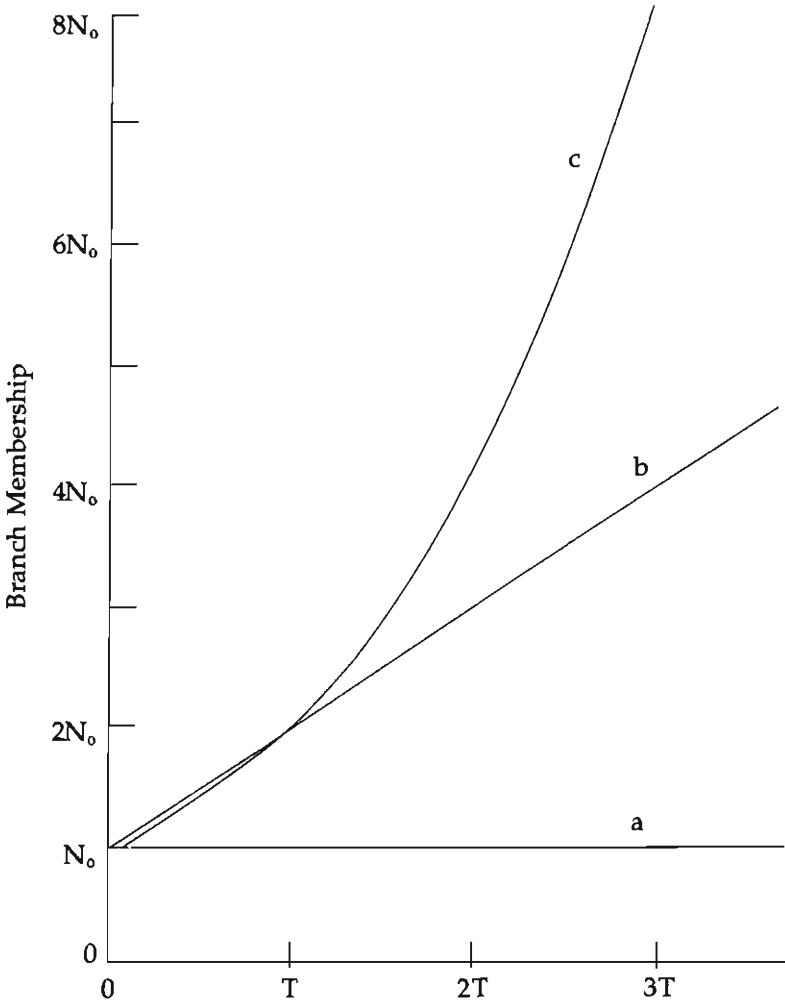


Figure 2. Hypothetical Branch Membership Growth Trends.

time interval of a well defined length appropriately called the *doubling time*. Thus for curve c the initial membership N_0 grows to $2N_0$ with the passage of one doubling time denoted by T . It then doubles once again over the same period, but this doubling, in terms of numbers of members is considerably larger than in the initial time interval. It will continue to increase ever more rapidly as time passes. The Church's desire to achieve such a growth condition is expressed by such slogans as "every member a missionary" and "each family should convert a family each year". Some areas of the Church are currently experiencing this growth, including our sample branch.

It is easy to calculate the increase in mean church experience with the passage of time for each of the three growth trends. Mean church experience is here defined as the total number of member-years of church membership

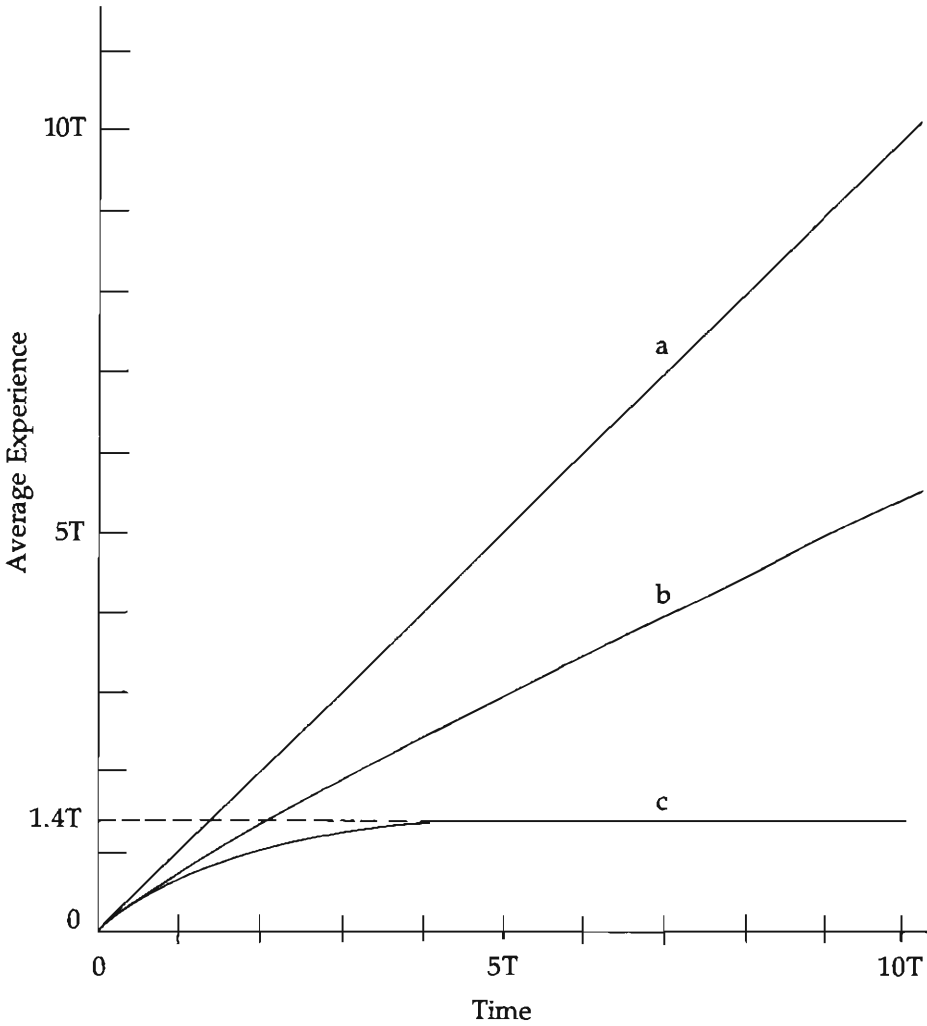


Figure 3. *Accumulation of Experience by the Average Branch Member.*

accumulated by all of the members of the branch up to a given time, divided by the total branch membership at that time. For simplicity, it is assumed that the mean church experience at the beginning was zero, or that all of the initial branch members were baptized on the day the branch was organized. After several doubling periods, the effect of this assumption becomes insignificant. See the three curves of Figure 3.

In graph a (the first trend) the branch membership remains constant. The result of each member's gaining a year of experience with the passage of each calendar year is that the mean church experience grows at this same rate. For case 2 (graph b), which postulated a linearly increasing membership, apart from a small initial perturbation due to the initial branch membership, the mean church experience also grows linearly but at one-half the rate associated

with the first scenario. Case 3, however, produces a qualitatively different result. Here the mean experience, as illustrated by graph c in Figure 3, does not increase indefinitely but approaches a horizontal line which it never quite reaches.² Note from Figure 3 that after about four doubling times the mean experience has very nearly reached its limiting value and thereafter remains constant.

In terms of the concrete example afforded by the sample branch, which was founded in 1970 with 45 members, the growth to date can be represented by an exponential curve with a doubling time of 3.6 years. The mean experience of its members grew from zero at the time of founding to about 3.5 years in 1976. If it continues to follow the same exponential growth curve, the mean experience will raise to 5.2 years by 1988 and thereafter remain constant. Note that the faster the growth rate, the shorter the doubling time, the lower will be the final level of mean experience achieved. The sample branch has often been criticized for its sluggish growth rate. We have been told that there are branches in the Church with a doubling time of only a few months, with the result that the mean church experience of the members will always remain less than one year, provided of course that the exponential growth continues.

It is also instructive to consider the distribution of experience among the branch members after the passage of a given period of time. The following interesting results are also mathematically inevitable. Given the trend where the membership is forever constant, each member obviously has the same length of church membership as every other member. In the exponential case, on the other hand, the experience tends to be concentrated in the hands of a small and continuously diminishing fraction of the membership. After all, the members of the branch on any given date can always expect to welcome and train a number of newcomers equal to their own number during the very next doubling time.

These simple calculations have neglected many important factors, including the level of activity and hence the real experience accumulated by the branch members. Drop-outs, of course, tend to reduce the rate at which useful experience is accumulated by the branch membership. If enough data were available, it would be interesting to develop a more refined model including these factors, but the qualitative conclusions which we wish to emphasize would probably not be altered. The chief conclusions are inescapable: (1) As long as exponential growth proceeds with a constant doubling time, the mean experience of the growing population cannot exceed one and one-half doubling times; (2) The faster the growth, the shorter the mean experience; (3) With the passage of time the number of members with long experience becomes a dwindling fraction, and the statistical impact of small-scale immigration of experienced members, regardless of their arrival time, also dwindles. It follows that all of those problems associated with the meager church experience of the average member will persist as long as the growth persists undiminished. Contrary to the hope and expectation often expressed by local leaders at all levels, many problems of the periphery are thus inevitably long term problems.

SUGGESTED COURSES OF ACTION

To stimulate discussion we are willing to venture a few suggestions which we hope will illustrate our conviction that unusual and daring initiatives are required to cope with the problems we have described. First, we find useless the traditional administrative tendency to respond to a problem by changing the "organigram".³ Stakehood is often touted as both the goal and reward for the sacrifices to which members living in the mission field are enjoined. When it arrives and branches are instantaneously converted into wards, the new bishops, as well as the new stake presidency and other members of the hierarchy, undoubtedly receive wisdom and inspiration in keeping with their new callings. They are, however, still the same men who were struggling with the problems of yesterday's branches, and those problems have not diminished. In instances where, for one reason or another, the prerequisites for the organization of a stake cited by Harold B. Lee have not been satisfied before the stake is formed, these problems may still be formidable.⁴ In some instances the need to maintain a full church program, one of the inflexible requirements for stakehood, may then prove to be overwhelming, and the simple reshuffling and retitling of the personnel will have been to no avail. It will certainly not have rendered central what was and what remains a part of the periphery.

In a more positive vein, we call attention to the well known fact that the establishment of Zion, the creation of a church at the center, was accomplished in great part through the doctrine of the gathering. Could not similar results be brought about by terminating once and for all the practice of gathering and establishing in 1980 the "doctrine of dispersal"? Faithful Latter-day Saints at the center could be encouraged to migrate to the periphery and be given instruction on proper behavior and local church conditions. Given the typical church member's avowed respect for the prophet's authority, it is possible that "calls" similar to those once issued by Brigham Young might bear fruit. Those called would be permanent "settlers," not young missionaries on a two-year sojourn or even shorter term retired missionary couples. Migration, not conversion alone, we believe, is the key to rational progress on the periphery.

Another effective way of contributing to a policy of dispersal would be for the Church to recruit the most linguistically gifted of the returned missionaries before their commitment to church service has had time to ebb. Those recruited could be guaranteed fellowships to the best language schools available where they could hone the rudimentary skills obtained as missionaries. In exchange for the fellowship, the individual would guarantee, much as do West Point graduates for the U.S. Army, a few years of his life to the Church as a translator, resource-person and ordinary member somewhere in the world. Such an engagement would perhaps even lead to a life of salaried church service, probably in that part of the world where the particular language is spoken. The contributions of such a program to the peripheral church would be immeasurable.

A further proposal relates to the multicultural and multilinguistic character of many church units on the periphery. Usually the language of the dominant group is used in church service and activities until such time as a sufficiently large number of members of other groups has developed. This threshold leads to a division. The original language is maintained for the dominant group, and a new unit is formed for the second language group. The result is that rather than breeding love and comprehension as Christian attributes among culturally diverse members of the Church, linguistic and ethnic groups are driven apart—once again, for purposes of administrative expediency. It would seem wise for the Church in multi-language areas to train and develop people able to carry out simultaneous translation in all meetings, not just on such showcase occasions as quarterly conferences. Small-scale spontaneous projects of this kind have shown some success. People who are thus permitted to participate in their own language while meeting with others not of their group soon learn to do so spontaneously and faithfully, and they find great joy in their enhanced activity and the fellowship that it engenders. If appropriate resources could be committed to such projects on a church-wide basis, the rewards for the Church and the example it would thereby set for feuding groups of all persuasions in world society would be startling indeed!

Our final comments are directed to the topic of administrative decentralization in the Church. A realistic evaluation of the costs and benefits of any steps in this direction would rest heavily on a detailed understanding of the variety of local church environments and their geographic and demographic distributions. To our knowledge, attempts at creating a typology of church regions have been limited. This should be a priority! In his 1978 presidential address to the Mormon History Association, Douglas D. Alder suggested a five category typology of Mormon wards, ranging from the neighborhood ward so typical of urban Utah, with its full church program and strong leadership, to the widely dispersed emerging ward characteristic of the periphery.⁵ While admittedly inadequate in its present formulation, the typology nevertheless allows Mormonism to be viewed from a broader spectrum than just the Utah cultural scene. More important, the implications of such a typology for planning programs are enormous! Certainly the great diversity of ecclesiastical units, whether branches or wards, helps to explain why implementation of core-oriented programs on the periphery is so often inefficient.

One of the most important benefits of a broader eventual participation of local members in policymaking would be to bring the prophet and other general authorities, who are presently perceived only from a great distance, closer to the daily lives of the members on the periphery. The zeal, imagination and profound knowledge of local circumstances possessed uniquely by the local members could be brought to bear on many decisions which have direct and important bearing on their lives and which are presently imposed from afar.

We hope that our rash dissemination of these suggestions will encourage

others to innovative thinking which might someday lead to circumstances in which all can share equally in the joys of belonging to a world church.

NOTES

The authors acknowledge with thanks the comments of Lowell C. Bennion.

¹Sources are too numerous to list. Suffice it to mention just two. The first, J. Friedmann, *Regional Development Policy: The Case of Venezuela*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966, although in an entirely different sphere, i.e., regional economic development seems to reflect the thinking of church leaders on church development. According to Friedmann, the center, urban areas, must be strengthened through investment. Spin-off effects will gradually diffuse to the periphery. The second, S. Amin, *Le développement inégal*, Paris: Les éditions de minuit, is highly critical of the polarization theories. Amin places the developed center and the exploited periphery in opposition to each other.

²The mean experience represented by this horizontal line is called the limiting value and can easily be shown to equal $1.44 T$, i.e., a little less than one and one-half doubling times.

³An organigram is a chart illustrating various suborganizations within a given organization and the relations which should exist between them.

⁴In an August 26, 1961 speech at a Mission Presidents' seminar in Salt Lake City, Elder Lee said, "Stakehood is the ideal, the goal for which every mission district is being prepared. Stakes cannot be organized until there is sufficient membership and trained leaders, the problems of distance and communication have been overcome; and the church program is operating fully within a district."

⁵Douglas D. Alder, "The Mormon Ward: Congregation or Community," *Journal of Mormon History* 5 (1978):61-78.