

The Private versus the Public David O. McKay: Profile of a Complex Personality

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THE PUBLIC IMAGE OF DAVID O. MCKAY, ninth president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is overwhelmingly positive. Impressive in physical appearance, with a large frame, McKay stood six feet one inch, making him the tallest church president since Joseph Smith. McKay appeared "vigorous and well-preserved" even as an elderly man approaching his eightieth birthday, noted a non-Mormon Oregon newspaper account published in the early 1960s. "His massive, well-groomed mane of white hair tops a handsome face that shines with strong character."¹

Giving further credence to this positive image are McKay's many accomplishments, first as a member of the Council of the Twelve—a position to which he was ordained in April 1906 and held for some forty-five years—and then as Mormon church president—his tenure lasting from April 1951 until his death in January 1970.² McKay's call to the apostleship, at the young age of thirty-two, came in the wake of an already-impressive record of church service—first as a missionary to England from 1897 to 1899, where he served as president of the Scottish Conference; then as a member of the Weber Stake Sunday school superintendency be-

1. As quoted in Terry W. Call, "David O. McKay," in *Church News, Deseret News*, 25 Sept. 1993.

2. For a good descriptive overview of McKay's varied accomplishments throughout the period of his apostleship and presidency, see Jeanette McKay Morrell, *Highlights in the Life of President David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966).

ginning in 1901. In the latter capacity he inaugurated a number of innovative reforms in teaching and curriculum. He also had been principal of the Weber Stake Academy (later Weber State University) from 1902 to 1908, where he presided over that institution's rapidly growing enrollment and successfully promoted expansion of its physical plant.

Early in his apostleship, McKay implemented his highly successful program of Sunday school curriculum reform on a churchwide basis, thanks to his role as a member of the general superintendency of the Deseret Sunday School Union commencing in 1906 and through his service as Mormon church Commissioner of Education beginning in 1919. The following year McKay was assigned to undertake a one-year tour of various Latter-day Saint missions and schools throughout the world. In 1922 he assumed even more responsibilities when he was appointed president of the European Mission. This meant taking up residence with his family in Liverpool, England. He remained abroad until 1924. These latter two assignments were critically important in that they made McKay sensitive to Mormonism's international potential. They foreshadowed his later efforts to vigorously promote the church as an international movement.

In 1934 McKay was appointed second counselor in the First Presidency by then-church president Heber J. Grant. Following Grant's death in 1945, McKay was reappointed to this same position by new president George Albert Smith. Within the First Presidency, McKay was actively involved in the day-to-day running of church administration. This was even more the case during the latter years of both Grant's and Smith's administrations, as each aging president, in turn, suffered declining health. In 1959 McKay, as senior member of the Quorum of the Twelve, assumed additional responsibilities as president or presiding officer of that body while concurrently serving as second counselor in the First Presidency.

McKay's own nineteen-year tenure as church president, commencing in 1951, resulted in a number of significant milestones. Total church membership increased almost threefold from 1,111,000 to 2,931,000. During this same period, the number of stakes increased from 184 to 500. In the spirit of McKay's basic creed that "every [church] member is a missionary," the number of missionaries increased from 2,000 to 13,000. Under his leadership, the church completed more than 3,700 buildings, including five temples: two in California (Los Angeles and Oakland), and the other three abroad in Switzerland, New Zealand, and London, England.³ Completion of the latter three edifices underscored McKay's fundamental commitment to church growth outside the United States. It

3. Richard S. Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, "David O. McKay," in *A Book of Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1982), 87-91.

also represented a bold departure from Mormonism's longstanding doctrine of "the gathering," whereby all church members were admonished to gather to Zion in anticipation of the Millennium, believed to be imminent.⁴ McKay described his greatest accomplishment as "Making the Church a worldwide organization."⁵

McKay's positive image is further underscored by his behavior and statements relative to family and home. Throughout his tenure as president during the 1950s and 1960s, McKay effectively presented himself as a loving husband to his wife, Emma Ray Riggs, and devoted father to his seven children. McKay's family symbolized the ideal "role model" for all Latter-day Saints. Reenforcing this image, David O. McKay frequently and publicly praised the virtues wife Emma Ray, his companion of sixty-nine years. She was, David O. would say, "the sweetest, most helpful wife that ever inspired a man to noble endeavor. She has been an inspiration, my life-long sweetheart, an angel of God come upon the earth."⁶ Through poetry written by David O. himself, and published in various church periodicals, the Mormon leader publicly praised Emma Ray, thus inspiring Latter-day Saint readers.⁷ The importance that McKay placed on the ideal home and family is reflected in his oft-quoted statement that "No other success can compensate for failure in the home."⁸ On another occasion the Mormon leader characterized "the home [as] the fundamental institution of society."⁹ "The dearest possession a man has is his family," he added.¹⁰

Along with concern for family, McKay vigorously promoted the concept of service to others—a responsibility of primary importance, one that takes priority over self-interest. "We live our lives most completely," McKay stated, "when we strive to make the world better and happier; it is to deny self for the good of others."¹¹ He often quoted the New Testament verse: "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 19:39). McKay interpreted this scripture in the broadest sense, stating that "Our lives are wrapped up with the lives of others, and we are happiest as we

4. A good discussion of early Mormon millennialism is Grant Underwood, *The Millennial World of Early Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

5. As quoted in Call, "David O. McKay."

6. *Ibid.*

7. For various examples of McKay poetry written in tribute to Emma Ray, see Llewelyn R. McKay, *Home Memories of President David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book), 171-93.

8. David O. McKay, "Address Given at 134th Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," 4 Apr. 1964, as contained in *Report of Discourses*.

9. McKay, *Home Memories*, 212.

10. Clare Middlemiss, comp., *Cherished Experiences from the Writings of President David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1955), 19.

11. McKay, *Home Memories*, 235.

contribute to their happiness."¹² With effusive praise, son Llewelyn McKay observed that David O. lost "himself entirely" in giving all of his energy "in service to mankind," adding that his father was in fact "never less than he has been; but is ever greater than he was before."¹³

David O. McKay promoted both family and service to others as essential virtues to be embraced by all devout Latter-day Saints. But beyond the ideals of family and service, and in certain ways related, McKay manifested certain attitudes and patterns of behavior—less public and less idealistic.

David O. McKay's concept of family was based on strongly held principles of self-control and self-discipline. "Lack of self-control is the greatest source of unhappiness in the home," McKay asserted, noting that "Children should be taught self-control, self-respect, and respect for others."¹⁴ All problems within McKay's own family were handled "quietly and settled ... in strict kindness," recalled Jeanette McKay Morrell, David O.'s younger sister. There were "no company manners in the McKay home," she added. All family members exhibited the "same courtesy and respect for each other" in private as "when the most respected guests were [present] in their home."¹⁵ As David O. himself explained, "The best lesson that a child can learn is self-control and consideration for the rights and feelings of others."¹⁶

Discipline within the McKay home was based on "expectations," recalled oldest son David Lawrence McKay. "It was very clear what Mother and Father expected us to do." Both parents set a proper example by their own "self-disciplined" behavior so that there was never any confusion. "Father never used physical punishment on any of us, but he had a firm rule: 'Never repeat a clear command.'" Also "scolding was not a part of [his] repertoire ... Father never talked much. He just looked. And we knew." "The look," as it was termed, generally had the desired effect. Such "gentle loving discipline," moreover, was coupled with high expectations. As David Lawrence recalled, "Father expected the best. No one ever wanted to disappoint him."¹⁷

Self-control and self-discipline were also essential hallmarks in David O. and Emma Ray's relationship. They never argued openly or in front of their children, preferring to settle all matters of disagreement or contro-

12. Middlemiss, *Cherished Experiences*, 176.

13. McKay, *Home Memories*, 272.

14. *Ibid.*, 214.

15. Morrell, *Highlights*, 47.

16. McKay, *Home Memories*, 231.

17. David Lawrence McKay, *My Father David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 99-191, 219.

versy in private and away from their children and other outsiders. "I never heard my parents disagree let alone quarrel," recalled David Lawrence.¹⁸ Such restraint was in keeping with David O.'s strong conviction "that a married couple ought not never to speak in loud tones to each other unless the house is on fire."¹⁹ David O. had a fundamental advantage in all aspects of their relationship. Physically, he towered over his almost petite five-foot three-inch wife. More important, as the male, his status as head of the family was undisputed, in conformity with prevailing principles of Mormon patriarchy.²⁰ In turn, Emma Ray seemingly accepted her subordinate status without question.

Emma Ray, moreover, adjusted to the frequent absence of her ever-busy husband, with the family seeing "little" of David O., particularly after he became an apostle. His extensive church responsibilities often took him away from home for extended periods of time.²¹ At the same time Emma Ray assumed significant latitude in running day-to-day affairs within the household. "Father was gone a great deal too much" for Emma Ray to wait for him to resolve problems, recalled David Lawrence. Thus she made decisions in his absence, but with the essential caveat that: "Your father would want ..." ²²

Emma Ray summed up her subordinate relationship with David O. in the following revealing manner: "Peace in the home is really a woman's responsibility, and if she wants happiness, she must work for it—yes, and pay for it, too—by being at all times kind, loving, self-sacrificing, ready to help, ready to serve, in fact, loving to do anything the head of the house desires because his desires are also hers."²³ Emma Ray took this concept of subordinate submissiveness one step farther, advocating that the "ideal wife" repress all feelings of anger and/or frustration in the name of "patience," which she characterized as "the most important ... qualification ... to be a good wife and mother." One must have "patience with children's and husband's tempers, patience with their misunderstandings, with their desires, with their actions." She then added the following remarkable statement: "a sure way to bring gloom is to show that your feelings are hurt."²⁴ Such repressed submissiveness was evident early on, and is reflected in an incident that occurred two weeks after the birth of the McKays' first child:

18. *Ibid.*, 11.

19. McKay, *Home Memories*, 223.

20. McKay, *My Father*, 12.

21. McKay, *Home Memories*, 39.

22. McKay, *My Father*, 103.

23. *Ibid.*, 12.

24. *Ibid.*, 13.

The nurse had been discharged, David O. kissed his wife goodbye, and left for a [Sunday school] board meeting. Emma Ray was distressed, and at first she could not believe that her husband would leave her alone with the baby and the dishes. As she started to cry, she remembered her mother's advice: "Don't cry before you're hurt" and "Don't cry over spilt milk." Well, she had asked her mother, "If I can't cry before I'm hurt and I can't cry after I'm hurt when can I cry?" the obvious answer: "Don't cry at all." Emma Ray told herself not to be foolish, and she quickly vowed that she would never feel bad when David O. had to leave on a church assignment.²⁵

Such strongly held McKay family traits of self-control and self-discipline were the products of a complex set of factors; some of which transcend and predate the January 1901 marriage of David O. and Emma Ray. A primary factor was the strong, lingering influence on David O. of his parents, David and Jennette Evans McKay. The elder McKay, a native of Scotland, had immigrated to Utah in 1859 as a fifteen-year-old with his parents, William and Ellen McKay, and family, all recent converts to Mormonism. The McKays ultimately settled in Huntsville, Utah—a high mountain community located some ten miles east of the city of Ogden. As David McKay reached adulthood, he met and married David O.'s mother, Jennette Evans. The daughter of Thomas and Margaret Powell Evans, Jennette along with her parents were natives of Wales who after converting to Mormonism migrated to Utah at about the same time as the McKay family. Jennette had grown up in Ogden in fairly comfortable circumstances thanks to her father's success as a large landowner and landlord.

Following their marriage, David and Jennette settled in Huntsville where they prospered economically, thanks, in large measure, to timely investments in agricultural land and livestock. Economic success, in turn, made David McKay a community leader both politically and ecclesiastically—the latter reflected in his appointment as bishop of the Huntsville Ward. It also enabled David and Jennette to build the spacious fourteen-room home in which David O. was born and which still stands in the center of Huntsville.²⁶

The success of David and Jennette McKay did not come by chance, but was the product of two strong-willed, highly motivated individuals seeking to provide adequately for their large family of ten children, eight of whom reached maturity—the oldest being David O. born 8 September 1873. The elder McKay has been described as "somewhat of a martinet," reflecting "the very rigidly, disciplined Victorian" environment in which

25. As described by James B. Allen in "David O. McKay," 285, in Leonard J. Arrington, ed., *The Presidents of the Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986).

26. For a good overview of the experiences and background of David McKay and Jennette Evans McKay, see Morrell, *Highlights*, 1-39.

he was raised. His own family was "very structured ... very disciplined, and very motivated," according to one close family member.²⁷ What David McKay "did, he always did right—second best was never good enough," noted grandson Llewelyn R. McKay, adding that "it was he who imparted this ideal of perfection" to his son David O.²⁸ The elder McKay clearly embodied the spirit of the McKay family motto as emblazoned on the family crest: "manu forti," meaning "with a strong hand."²⁹ Such influences were profound on David O. and particularly evident in the response of the younger McKay to the question: "Who is the greatest man you ever met?" He replied "without hesitation, 'My father.'"³⁰

David O. was also profoundly influenced by his equally strong-willed mother. Described by contemporaries as a woman of exceptional beauty, Jennette had a striking personality to match.³¹ "Though high-spirited she was even-tempered and self-possessed. Her dark brown eyes immediately expressed any rising emotion, which, however, she always held under perfect control," recalled grandson Llewelyn R. McKay.³² Jennette demonstrated her strong will and initiative in taking over complete management of the family farm in the wake of her husband's departure to serve a church mission in Scotland, lasting for two years from 1881 to 1883. At the time Jennette had three young children, including David O. then age seven, plus she was pregnant with a fourth.³³

A further demonstration of Jennette's strong will was the fact that her husband, David, never practiced polygamy, despite being bishop of the Huntsville Ward, and even though some fourteen families in Huntsville were polygamous along with an additional five or six in nearby Eden. When asked why he never practiced polygamy, David McKay reportedly replied, "You don't know my Jennette!"³⁴ Thus this "handsome, soft-spoken but strong-willed woman" "bore the distinction of being the only Mormon bishop's wife who did not have to share her husband with another woman," noted granddaughter Fawn McKay Brodie, adding that Jennette's "extraordinary capacity to maintain the Victorian amenities [of monogamy] in so alien an atmosphere was a testament of her ability to get her way."³⁵

27. Hugh Garner, Oral History Interview conducted by Newell G. Bringhurst, 29 Sept. 1988.

28. McKay, *Home Memories*, 23.

29. Morrell, *Highlights*, 2-3.

30. As quoted in Call, "David O. McKay."

31. Morrell, *Highlights*, 10.

32. McKay, *Home Memories*, 3.

33. Morrell, *Highlights*, 23-25.

34. LaVerna Burnett Newey, *Remember My Valley: A History of Ogden Canyon, Huntsville, Liberty, and Eden, Utah from 1825 to 1976* (Salt Lake City, 1977), 111-13.

35. Fawn M. Brodie, "The Protracted Life of Mrs. Grundy," 2, unpublished manuscript [n.d.], copy of typescript in my possession.

David was extremely solicitous of Jennette's welfare in other ways. "He refused to let her work in the fields, and insisted on obtaining help for her in the house—particularly because he so admired her beautiful hands and lovely, clear complexion."³⁶ Jennette was also "a very socially proper woman," recalled one McKay relative.³⁷ She along with her husband were "conscious of the immigrant status and the educational deprivations they had suffered as a result." Jennette was determined that her children "enjoy the advantages" that she and her husband had missed out on. Thus upon receiving an unexpected gift of \$2,500 from her mother, Jennette set aside the money for her children's education, seeing to it that all eight, including David O., attended college—a remarkable feat for the time.³⁸

Jennette was also extremely socially conscious about whom her children associated with, according to another McKay family member.³⁹ She even restricted her children in their interactions with the children of other Huntsville McKay relatives, in particular the Gunn McKay family, distant relatives who lived in the house immediately north of the David McKay residence. Jeanette's aloofness was the result of her strongly held convictions that the Gunn McKay family was beneath her own, both socially and economically. Jeanette's behavior was reenforced by the parallel perceptions of local residents. One of Gunn McKay's descendants colorfully recalled that the two McKay families were designated as: "the god-blessed McKays and the goddamned McKays," carefully adding that it was "obvious which ones we were."⁴⁰

Jeanette's social concerns notwithstanding, David O. chose to reflect on his mother's virtues years later, characterizing her as a "saint." "Her influence, and beauty," he noted, "entwined themselves into the lives of her sons and daughters as effectively as a divine presence!" David O. also recalled his mother's relationship with his father: "She was loved—almost revered—by [my father] the best and noblest of husbands and fathers."⁴¹

In addition to the pervasive influence of both parents, David O. was

36. McKay, *Home Memories*, 26.

37. Quinn McKay, Oral History Interview conducted by Newell G. Bringhurst, 23 Sept. 1988.

38. Francis M. Gibbons, *David O. McKay: Apostle to the World, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 26-27.

39. Gunn McKay, Oral History Interview conducted by Newell G. Bringhurst, 26 Sept. 1987.

40. Monroe McKay, Oral History Interview conducted by Newell G. Bringhurst, 21 July 1986.

41. David O. McKay to Lou Jean McKay, 5 May 1921, as quoted in McKay, *My Father*, 131.

strongly affected by his religious environment. Early on, however, he manifested apparent ambivalence concerning his Mormon faith. David O. confessed to being a "roguish boy."⁴² He possessed "the normal vitality of youth"—and more, "as evidenced by his aunt's statement while taking care of him as a youngster." She told David O.'s mother: "Jennette, if you will just take care of this boy, I'll gladly cook for the threshers!"⁴³ Years later David O. referred to his "extremely active, somewhat reckless days of youth."⁴⁴ He confessed that his mother's influence had given him "the power more than once during fiery youth to keep my name untarnished and my soul from clay."⁴⁵ And on another occasion he expressed gratitude "for the wise and careful guardianship and training of noble parents" which "kept me from turning to paths that would have ended in an entirely different kind of life!"⁴⁶

More to the point, David O. confessed to being "a doubting youth."⁴⁷ This despite the fact that David O. had been ordained to the priesthood office of deacon shortly after his twelfth birthday, and then to the higher office of teacher, all in conformity with a recently implemented church-wide practice of ordaining teenage boys into the Aaronic priesthood.⁴⁸ Also David O., as early as age thirteen, was bearing his testimony in quorum meetings.⁴⁹ He possessed "an intense desire ... to receive a manifestation of the truth of the Restored Gospel." Young David O. prayed "fervently and sincerely ... that God would declare to me the truth of his revelation to Joseph Smith." But he was disappointed at the response or rather lack thereof, lamenting: "No spiritual manifestation has come to me. If I am true to myself, I must say I am just the same 'old boy' that I was before I prayed."⁵⁰

McKay's doubts persisted even as he reached adulthood and completed his education, attending first Weber Stake Academy and then the

42. David O. McKay to Thomas E. McKay, 12 Dec. 1938, as quoted in Morrell, *Highlights*, 29.

43. As quoted in McKay, *Home Memories*, 6.

44. *Ibid.*, 209.

45. As quoted in Leonard J. Arrington and Susan Arrington Madsen, *Mothers of the Prophets* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 146. Along this same line, McKay further recalled carrying on the following conversation with his mother while a college student: "'Mother, I have found that I am the only one of your children whom you have switched [whipped, as with a willow shoot].' She said, 'Yes David O., I made such a failure of you I didn't want to use the same method on the other children.'" *Ibid.*, 148.

46. As quoted in McKay, *Home Memories*, 209.

47. As quoted in Morrell, *Highlights*, 38.

48. William G. Hartley, "From Men to Boys: LDS Aaronic Priesthood Offices, 1826-1996," *Journal of Mormon History* 22 (Spring 1996): 89-136.

49. Allen, "David O. McKay," 285.

50. "Prayer Answered in God's Own Due Time," as dictated by President [David O.] McKay in 1938, as contained in Middlemiss, *Cherished Experiences*, 16.

University of Utah where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1897. McKay's ambivalence was evident in the response to his mission call to Scotland immediately following graduation. David O. "was upset with this interruption of his plans" in the wake of having been offered a teaching position in Salt Lake County after his graduation.⁵¹ Upon receiving written notification of his mission call, David O. reportedly "read [the letter from church headquarters]; flung it across the table with disgust exclaiming: 'Ain't that Hell!'"⁵²

Further complicating David O.'s mission call was his lack of preparation. Early in his mission when a woman attacked David O. on his theology, he "found out [he] knew nothing about the Bible" and thus could not respond adequately. He immediately sought to remedy this deficiency through an intense course of self-study of the Bible.⁵³ But his doubts persisted for, upon arriving in Scotland, he confessed to finding it "a gloomy looking place & I ... a gloomy-feeling boy."⁵⁴ His insecurities and ambivalence intensified as a result of his appointment as president of the Scottish Conference in June 1899. "I just seemed to be seized with a feeling of gloom and fear lest in accepting this I would prove incompetent."⁵⁵

But then McKay experienced a sudden change in attitude because of two critical events. The first involved the influence on the young missionary of a written inscription he happened upon which was emblazoned on a building in the Scottish countryside. The inscription read: "Whate'er thou art, act well thy part." "This message struck [David O.] forcefully, and he decided to devote himself completely and wholeheartedly to his 'part' which was the role of missionary."⁵⁶ The second event was a particularly moving missionary meeting which he attended with a number of fellow missionaries, a gathering presided over by James L. McMurrin, a councilor in the European mission presidency. As McKay later recalled, McMurrin delivered a discourse in which he directed a number of remarks directly at McKay, stating: "Let me say to your Brother David, Satan hath desired you that he may sift you as wheat, but God is mindful of

51. McKay, *My Father*, 2.

52. According to the recollections of Thomas E. McKay who was living with his older brother at the time, as described by Fawn M. Brodie to Dale L. Morgan, 13 June 1963, original in Dale L. Morgan Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California. Gibbons, in *David O. McKay*, 35, while conceding that "a mission was not the top item on his agenda for the future," attributes McKay's reluctance "to a combination of factors," including a family sense of "obligation to start working soon to replenish the McKay family's meager education fund so that his younger brother and sisters could receive university schooling."

53. McKay, *My Father*, 17.

54. As quoted in *ibid.*, 18.

55. *Ibid.*, 24.

56. *Ibid.*

you." He then added: "If you will keep the faith, you will yet sit in the leading counsels [sic] of the Church." In recalling this meeting, McKay noted "that an excellent spirit of love and unity was amongst us. A peaceful Heavenly influence pervaded the room ... It was the best meeting I have ever attended."⁵⁷ The total experience, he asserted, "was the manifestation for which as a doubting youth" he had prayed for years before.⁵⁸ McKay's long and difficult religious odyssey undoubtedly had the cumulative effect of further reenforcing his already strong tendencies toward self-control and self-discipline.

David O. McKay was also significantly affected by his relationship with Emma Ray Riggs, specifically the nature of their courtship and her family's unusual, ambivalent relationship with Mormonism. Both of Emma Ray's parents had initially embraced the Mormon faith. Emma Ray's father, Obadiah Higbee Riggs, a native of Library, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, had joined the Mormon church in 1866 at age twenty-two.⁵⁹ Emma Ray's mother was Emma Louisa Robbins, a native of San Francisco, whose parents were members of the church, having arrived on the west coast in 1846 as part of Samuel Brannan's *Brooklyn* Mormon contingent.⁶⁰ Emma Louisa herself was baptized a member of the church in 1860 at age nineteen. In May 1867 Emma Louisa and Obadiah were married and sealed in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City.⁶¹ Obadiah and Emma Louisa were apparently both well-educated, as reflected in the fact that both taught at the University of Utah.⁶² Obadiah went on to serve as Utah's territorial superintendent of schools from 1873 to 1877, in which capacity he promoted a number of reforms designed to improve the quality of public education throughout the territory.⁶³ His proposals, however, generated controversy, with Obadiah leaving his position after just one term.⁶⁴

Obadiah and Emma Louisa were the parents of six children with

57. *Ibid.*, 32.

58. As quoted in "Predictions and Spiritual Manifestations," 27 Oct. 1934, in Middlemiss, *Cherished Experiences*, 13.

59. From information on Obadiah Higbee Riggs family pedigree chart, original in LDS Family History Library, Salt Lake City.

60. As noted in Lorin K. Hansen, "Voyage of the *Brooklyn*," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 21 (Summer 1988): 71.

61. From information on Obadiah Higbee Riggs family pedigree chart.

62. McKay, *Home Memories*, 171.

63. John Clifton Moffitt, *A Century of Service: A History of the Utah Education Association, 1869-1969* (Salt Lake City: Utah Education Association, 1961), 29-30, 40-42, 282-83, 418-19, 511-13.

64. A more detailed discussion of such activities is contained in Newell G. Bringhurst and Frederick S. Buchanan, "The Forgotten Odyssey of Obadiah H. Riggs: Early Pioneer for Education Reform," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 66 (Winter 1998): 48-64.

Emma Ray, the fifth child and only daughter, born 23 June 1877.⁶⁵ But difficulties developed within the Riggs family when Obadiah entered polygamy, taking two plural wives, Annie Wilson in 1882 and her younger half-sister, Almira Wilson, in 1884. Eventually, both Emma Louisa and his first plural wife, Annie Wilson, left him. To make matters worse, Riggs himself was excommunicated from the Mormon church. Then Riggs left Utah, abandoning his second plural wife, Almira Wilson, and their small child, Lisle.⁶⁶

Obadiah moved to the east coast, where he changed professions, choosing medicine. He attended and graduated from Long Island College Hospital at Brooklyn, Kings County, New York, and then located his practice in Cincinnati, Ohio. Here he met and married Hattie Fruhauf in 1895. Also while living in Cincinnati, Obadiah joined the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.⁶⁷ In 1900 Obadiah along with his family moved to Independence, Missouri, and relocated his medical practice to nearby Kansas City. He was extremely active in the Reorganized Church, becoming personally acquainted with its leader, Joseph Smith III.⁶⁸

Meanwhile Obadiah's daughter Emma Ray continued to live with her mother in Salt Lake. She attended the University of Utah, graduating in 1898. She met David O. who along with his younger brother and two sisters were also attending the same institution. The four McKays all lived together in a cottage which they rented from Emma Ray's mother, Emma Robbins Riggs.⁶⁹ David O. and Emma Ray did not immediately become romantically involved. David O. was "dating a beautiful classmate, and Emma Ray was engaged to a fine young man in the business world," according to the recollections of sister Jeanette McKay Morrell.⁷⁰

Eventually David O. became interested in Emma Ray near the time of his graduation in 1897, and just before his departure for missionary service in Scotland. The young couple corresponded steadily for the first several months that David O. was gone, from August 1897 to March 1898. But then there was a gap of twelve months from March 1898 to March

65. From information on Obadiah Higbee Riggs family pedigree chart.

66. This is according to information given by David O. McKay family members to Lavina Fielding Anderson as related to Newell G. Bringhurst. Telephone conversation between Lavina Fielding Anderson and Newell G. Bringhurst, 7 Mar. 1996. Also see Bringhurst and Buchanan, "Forgotten Odyssey," 59-69.

67. Susan Easton Black, comp., *Early Members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Vol. 5 (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1993), 100-19.

68. The extent of Riggs's interaction with Joseph is evident in the fact that the leader of the Reorganization preached at Riggs's funeral following the latter's death in October 1997. See *Saints' Herald* 57 (2 Oct. 1997): 899. Also see *Saints' Herald* 83 (3 Oct. 1936).

69. McKay, *My Father*, 1-2.

70. As quoted in Morrell, *Highlights*, 32.

1899 when no correspondence was exchanged.⁷¹ The reasons for this are not completely clear. It appears that David O. and Emma Ray had completely broken off their relationship. This was the possible result of changes in Emma Ray's life. Emma Ray's mother had died suddenly, apparently in August 1897 at age forty-seven. Then Emma Ray left Utah, moving to Cincinnati immediately following her graduation from the university in 1898. Here she joined her father and studied piano at the Cincinnati College of Music.⁷²

In March 1899 David O. and Emma Ray suddenly renewed their correspondence. David O. was still on his mission. Shortly thereafter Emma Ray returned to Utah and became a teacher at Madison Elementary School in Ogden. Meanwhile, in August 1899, David O. returned home from Scotland and began to court Emma Ray in earnest. Emma Ray, however, manifested apparent ambivalence over their relationship. A year and a half passed. Finally in early December 1890 David O. proposed. Emma Ray's response reflects apparent initial ambivalence: "Are you sure I'm the right one?" David O. quickly answered in the affirmative. Just one month later on 2 January 1891 David O. and Emma Ray were married in the Salt Lake temple.⁷³ The historical record is unclear concerning the precise qualities that ultimately drew the young couple together in marriage. Years later McKay asserted that one should choose a mate "by judgement and inspiration, as well as by physical attraction," adding that "Intellect and breeding are vital and important in the human family."⁷⁴

David O. McKay became the dominant figure not just within his own immediate family, but also in directing affairs affecting the extended McKay family, particularly his three younger brothers and, to a lesser extent, his four sisters, along with their families, as they married and had children of their own. His dominance relative to the larger McKay clan was particularly evident following the deaths of his parents. First, his mother died suddenly and tragically at the relatively young age of fifty-four in January 1895, then his father passed away at age seventy-three in November 1917.

McKay "was very much the family patriarch," recalled niece Fawn Brodie, adding that he "dominated all of the McKay family, to an extraordinary degree, just like an old Chinese patriarch."⁷⁵ McKay reportedly in-

71. McKay, *My Father*, 3-4.

72. McKay, *Home Memories*, 171-72.

73. McKay, *My Father*, 4-10.

74. As quoted in McKay, *Home Memories*, 213-14.

75. Fawn M. Brodie, "Biography of Fawn M. Brodie," Oral interview conducted by Shirley E. Stephenson, 30 Oct. 1975, original in Oral History Collection, Fullerton State University, Fullerton, California, 3.

fluenced his children's choice of spouses, particularly his three oldest. This assertion was made by another niece, Flora McKay Crawford, who also claimed that McKay attempted to influence the choice of spouses by extended family members, albeit with less success.⁷⁶ All of McKay's brothers and sisters went to him "for advice," according to Fawn Brodie who also asserted that "none of his brothers [would] accept a job" without first consulting their older brother.⁷⁷

But the positive aspect of this arrangement was the help and influence David O. rendered in securing employment for various family members. One particular situation in 1937 involved younger brother Thomas E. McKay. The younger McKay had lost his position, a political appointment, with the Utah State Public Utilities Commission due to a change in the state's political climate. In response, David O. apparently used his influence to facilitate his brother's appointment as president of the church's Swiss-German mission, a paid position in which Thomas served from 1938 to 1940, allowing him to support his family. Then in 1941 David O. apparently intervened on his younger brother's behalf a second time to gain for Thomas appointment as one of the newly created assistants to the Council of the Twelve, which, like his mission presidency, was a paid position. Thomas E. McKay held this position until his death in 1958.⁷⁸

But David O.'s success in helping his younger brother was offset by failure in speculating in land and commodities during the late 1910s and early 1920s. This failure had adverse economic consequences for all concerned. In making such investments, the two McKay brothers along with their two younger brothers, William and Morgan, chose to borrow the needed funds by refinancing, and increasing, the mortgage on the family's Huntsville farm—a property which all four had inherited jointly following the deaths of their parents. The money so borrowed was apparently invested in various schemes, including "Arizona Cotton," citrus fruit orchards near Tempe, and also "Canadian Wheat." The McKays also speculated in at least one venture closer to home, cattle and land at Birch Creek, an area just south and east of Ogden. But in every case the investments failed.⁷⁹ The lasting effect of all these failures was an increase in the total mortgage debt to \$35,000—a sum considered astro-

76. Flora Crawford, Oral History Interview conducted by Newell G. Bringhurst, 29 Sept. 1988.

77. Fawn M. Brodie to Maurine Whipple, 12 Nov. 1941, copy of original in hands of Verda Hale, St. George Utah.

78. Flora Crawford, Oral History Interview conducted by Newell G. Bringhurst, 29 Sept. 1988.

79. Flora Crawford, Oral History Interview conducted by Shirley E. Stephenson, 5 June 1986.

nomical at the time. This debt fell most heavily on Thomas E. McKay because he directly held the mortgage. This was Thomas's lot by virtue of his position as the primary resident living with his own family in the old McKay family homestead and holding the bulk of surrounding farmland. This financial burden remained "immutable, fixed as the polestar, the absolute around which the [Thomas McKay] family revolved," according to the recollections of Thomas's daughter, Fawn. Thomas, manifesting the McKay family creed of self-control and self-discipline, held in check whatever resentment he might have harbored against his older brother. Instead, Thomas bore his burden over the next thirty years "like Atlas, without hope and without lament" and *most* important without complaint.⁸⁰

David O. McKay's role in speculative ventures was one aspect of the Mormon leader's strong, almost compulsive attachment to his childhood home and community. He would spend as much time as possible in Huntsville, when his extensive church responsibilities would permit, including weekends and during the summer. In his haste to get to Huntsville, McKay's reputation as a fast and aggressive driver was amply displayed. McKay would leave his home or office in Salt Lake City, heading north "driving with his foot right to the fire-wall all the way," recalls one close family member, adding "that must have been quite an experience for all of the [Utah state] highway patrolmen."⁸¹ On one memorable occasion, in his later years, McKay received a speeding ticket. But he was undeterred, telling the officer: "I'm glad to get this ticket. Some have said I am slowing down [but] this is proof that I'm not."⁸² McKay was ever anxious to reach his destination, asserting: "The air is better in Huntsville. That's what keeps me young."⁸³ He looked upon the high mountain community as "a cherished haven, where he could ... relax from the cares and burdens of his official duties."⁸⁴

David O. McKay went through the annual ritual of actually living in Huntsville for three months every summer beginning in the 1910s and continuing into the 1950s. McKay with his immediate family took up residence in the old McKay family homestead. This was the case even though David O. maintained his primary residence some distance from

80. Fawn M. Brodie, "Inflation Idyll: A Family Farm in Huntsville," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 49 (1972): 113-15.

81. Hugh Garner, Oral History Interview conducted by Newell G. Bringham.

82. Gunn McKay, Oral History Interview conducted by Mary Jane Woodger, 28 July 1995, copy in my possession.

83. As quoted in "David O. McKay," in Van Wagoner and Walker, *A Book of Mormons*, 189.

84. Preston Nibley, *The Presidents of the Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1959), 432.

Huntsville—first in Ogden in the years immediately following his marriage, then, after 1920, in Salt Lake City.

While living in Huntsville, the David O. McKays moved in with younger brother Thomas E. and his family. Moving in with another family for such an extended period every summer would appear to violate the essential privacy of the family affected. But Thomas never complained, at least not openly. The younger brother, in fact, had no choice but to go along with this arrangement because actual ownership of the old McKay homestead was held jointly by the eight surviving children of David and Jennette Evans McKay through a legal entity known as “the McKay family corporation.” In this arrangement the four brothers and four sisters each had an equal voice in making decisions involving the McKay homestead. In actuality, the McKay family corporation was dominated by David O. and, to a lesser extent, the four McKay sisters, Jeanette McKay Morrell, Elizabeth McKay Hill, Ann McKay Farr, and Katherine McKay Ricks, who were strong, assertive, dominant personalities in their own right—all clearly taking after their mother. They were “a formidable quartet of big, handsome women who marched through the family’s problems in an unbreakable phalanx,” recalled niece Fawn Brodie.⁸⁵

By contrast, the two youngest McKay brothers, William and Morgan, exerted limited influence mainly because both lived with their families far away from Huntsville. At the same time David O.’s third brother, Thomas E., despite being the most affected by decisions made by the McKay family corporation, also had minimal influence. This was because of his relatively docile personality and almost obsessive desire to avoid conflict. This made Thomas E. ill-suited to oppose David O. and his sisters, even on decisions affecting him and his family in a potentially adverse way, which was often the case.⁸⁶ “We were the low family of the McKay clan,” lamented Thomas E.’s oldest daughter, Flora McKay Crawford.⁸⁷

In fact, two of the four sisters, Jeanette McKay Morrell and Elizabeth McKay Hill, along with their families, followed the example of their oldest brother, taking up residence in the McKay family homestead every summer, primarily to take advantage of the cooler mountain climate thereby escaping the oppressive summer heat of Ogden and Salt Lake City where each maintained their primary family residence. While this significant influx of McKay relatives invaded the privacy and disrupted the domestic independence of the Thomas E. McKay family, the fourteen-room house was large enough to accommodate them all, even though the residence, for many years, lacked the basic amenities of running water

85. Brodie, “The Protracted Life of Mrs. Grundy,” 4.

86. This somewhat complicated family arrangement is discussed in vivid detail in *ibid.*

87. Flora Crawford, Oral History Interview conducted by Newell G. Bringhurst, 29 Sept. 1988.

and indoor plumbing.⁸⁸

David O. McKay looked forward to his extended stay in Huntsville as more than simply an escape from the oppressive summer heat of the Wasatch Front. Time in Huntsville represented one of the few forms of recreation enjoyed by the ever-busy Mormon leader.⁸⁹ Huntsville also offered McKay an idyllic, temporary escape from the pressures of his responsibilities as a general authority. While in Huntsville McKay assumed the role of "gentleman farmer," spending a significant amount of time working some 400 acres of cultivated land and 2,000 acres of rangeland which he shared with brother Thomas. David O. enjoyed getting out in the fields, asserting a physical robustness going back to his youth. David O., in fact, continued to work his farm acreage alongside his sons and others under his supervision until well into his eighties.⁹⁰

In particular, McKay enjoyed being, and working, with his horses. His "love for horses [was] proverbial," asserts sister Jeanette McKay Morrell, with his horses being "more than farm animals—they were friends and were treated as such."⁹¹ But McKay was not reluctant to "wrestle the horses and ... gave them the whip ... if they didn't mind," suggests another family member.⁹² In fact, McKay on occasion would deliberately "rile up" a team of horses that he was driving, according to the recollections of one old-time Huntsville resident who spent significant time working for the Mormon leader. McKay would "tighten up the reins to get [the horses] started up [and] work them up by tightening back on their bits." As a result, "the horses would get ... stampeding a little bit and then [McKay] would start saying, 'Th' go' d' s' bit'!' You could hear him in the back saying, 'Those goddamn sons of bitches.' It would never get fully out, he would only get the first letters of the words." McKay's heavy-handed behavior towards his horses was designed "to demonstrate how masterful he was" and to prove to those around whom he worked that he "really knew horses."⁹³

McKay demonstrated another important skill to residents of Huntsville—his ability as an effective public speaker—an attribute particularly evident during services in the old Huntsville LDS meetinghouse. McKay was dubbed "the silver tongue" and compared to early-twentieth-century orator and three-time Democratic presidential candidate William

88. Brodie, "The Protracted Life of Mrs. Grundy."

89. McKay, *My Father*, 203.

90. Barrie McKay, Oral History Interview conducted by Newell G. Bringhurst, 16 Sept. 1988.

91. Morrell, *Highlights*, 293-94.

92. Barrie McKay, Oral History Interview conducted by Newell G. Bringhurst, 16 Sept. 1988.

93. Jarvis Thurston, Oral History Interview conducted by Newell G. Bringhurst, 16 May 1988.

Jennings Bryan by one old-time Huntsville resident. Like the more famous Bryan, McKay was able to deliver a sermon on virtually any topic with "grand eloquence."⁹⁴ His sermons, moreover, were "heartening [and] optimistic," recalled niece Fawn Brodie, noting that her uncle avoided discussing "the complexities of Mormon theology ... 'I bring you a note of encouragement and cheer' [was] a frequent theme ... To thunder over the pulpit and denounce the world for its evil [was] never his technique."⁹⁵ McKay "loved to appear before an audience [and] spread himself around," making such oratorical performances a memorable experience for all.⁹⁶

David O. McKay's visits to Huntsville and extended stays in the old homestead also afforded him the opportunity to visit and interact with his brothers and sisters as well as with other members of the extended and extensive McKay family. This, in turn, gave further validation to the Mormon leader's well-cultivated public image as a caring, empathic family man.⁹⁷ Certain McKay family members, however, recall a somewhat different image of David O. "He was not a very loving man," according to niece Flora McKay Crawford, who noted that he had minimal interaction with his various nieces and nephews.⁹⁸ "He never was very loving even to his own children, let alone his nieces and nephews," continued Crawford, adding that he was loving only "to strangers and people that he [thought] he could influence."⁹⁹

Such a contrasting and negative view on the part of Flora Crawford was undoubtedly due, in large measure, to the fact that she was both the daughter of Thomas E. McKay and the sister of Fawn M. Brodie. The particularly difficult relationship between David O. McKay and Fawn Brodie had stemmed from the latter's writing her controversial biography of Joseph Smith, *No Man Knows My History*, and the firestorm following its 1945 publication. This episode brought to the surface various long-standing, simmering family tensions, particularly between certain members of the Thomas E. and David O. McKay families. Brodie believed, with some justification, that her uncle had played a leading role in her public excommunication from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in

94. *Ibid.*

95. Fawn M. Brodie to Maurine Whipple, 12 Nov. 1941.

96. Jarvis Thurston, Oral History Interview conducted by Newell G. Bringhurst, 16 May 1988.

97. As clearly noted and strongly developed in Morrell, *Highlights*; McKay, *Home Memories*; and McKay, *My Father*.

98. Flora Crawford, Oral History Interview conducted by Newell G. Bringhurst, 29 Sept. 1988.

99. Flora Crawford, Oral History Interview conducted by Shirley E. Stephenson, 5 June 1986.

May 1946.¹⁰⁰ David O. McKay was reportedly angry about the whole episode, particularly over the extensive publicity it generated. But at the same time he was scrupulously careful not to show it publicly. He avoided discussion of his wayward niece even within the privacy of his own immediate family.¹⁰¹ Such behavior was in keeping with a long-standing McKay family tradition of avoiding all topics of a controversial nature.¹⁰² It was also in keeping with David O.'s own well-honed and long-practiced behavior of self-control and self-discipline.

In summary, David O. McKay was an individual of great complexity, evident in the Mormon leader's private versus his public behavior. McKay could project himself as extremely gracious, open, warm, loving, and empathic. In the words of noted Mormon historian D. Michael Quinn, "McKay loved intimate association with crowds and individuals, [and] treasured close fellowship" with his fellow Latter-day Saints.¹⁰³ However, Francis M. Gibbons, past secretary to the First Presidency, characterized McKay as "a private person who kept his own counsel and who did not easily admit someone into his inner circle of confidentiality."¹⁰⁴

To others McKay came across as a "very arrogant, vain man," noted one relative. Even McKay's own son conceded that "if father had any weaknesses they would be two: He drives too fast; and the other is vanity."¹⁰⁵ "He was a little bit of a showman," recalls another relative.¹⁰⁶ His dress included, on occasion, flowered shirts, but more notably his trademark white, double-breasted suits. He thus broke ranks with his conservatively dressed colleagues in the church hierarchy. Also McKay "intentionally left his snow-white hair slightly longer than the prevailing style to increase its striking effects," notes Gregory Prince.¹⁰⁷

100. For an extensive discussion of David O. McKay's reaction to Fawn Brodie's biography as well as the reaction of various other McKay family members, see Newell G. Bringhurst, "Applause, Attack, and Ambivalence—Varied Responses to Fawn M. Brodie's *No Man Knows My History*," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 57 (Winter 1989): 46-63.

101. This according to David O. McKay's son Edward R. McKay, Oral History Interview conducted by Newell G. Bringhurst, 23 July 1987.

102. This particular McKay family trait is vividly discussed in Brodie, "The Protracted Life of Mrs. Grundy."

103. D. Michael Quinn, *J. Reuben Clark: The Church Years* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1983), 116.

104. Gibbons, *David O. McKay*, 32.

105. Gunn McKay, recalling what David O.'s son had told him, as noted in his Oral History Interview conducted by Newell G. Bringhurst, 23 Sept. 1988.

106. Gunn McKay, Oral History Interview conducted by Mary Jane Woodger, 28 July 1995.

107. Gregory A. Prince, "David O. McKay and the Rise of the International Church," unpublished paper given at the Mormon History Association Meeting, 16-19 May 1996, privately circulated.

The obvious question is: What is the significance of exploring the “private” David O. McKay and noting the contrasts with the better-known “public” image? Certain little-known aspects in McKay’s background and behavior influenced and affected certain crucial actions McKay undertook as Mormon church leader. For example, McKay’s own early doubts concerning Mormonism, combined with the unconventional background of wife Emma Ray Riggs’s family, quite likely influenced McKay’s tolerance of diversity in its varied forms. “Sound independent thinking should be encouraged rather than discouraged,” McKay asserted on one occasion, adding that “careful logical analysis, coupled with a sincere desire to find the truth is praiseworthy.” McKay was tolerant of “groups of people interested in doctrine and in Church policies [meeting] together independently of Church functions to discuss questions of importance, wherein there appears to be differences of opinion in interpretation.”¹⁰⁸ As son Llewelyn R. McKay noted: “Father’s religion is concerned with large, all-embracing spiritual issues which reach out to include rather than to exclude; it unites rather than divides.”¹⁰⁹

Such essential openness and tolerance was also evident in McKay’s view of different peoples and cultures—attitudes reenforced by McKay’s own early exposure to different nationalities and races. “When you are in a country other than your own ... view life from that country’s point of view,” he admonished his son on one occasion. McKay further asserted: “The need to learn foreign languages should be accentuated and the acquisition and use of such languages stimulated.”¹¹⁰ Such attitudes were in conformity with McKay’s desire to extend Mormonism throughout the world, making it a truly international religion. He saw as a major impediment to this goal the church’s policy of excluding men of African descent from ordination to the Mormon priesthood. He sought, unsuccessfully, to change this policy in 1954-56, early in his tenure as church president.¹¹¹

McKay’s ultimate failure to eliminate the church ban on black priesthood ordination was, to a significant extent, the product of his own upbringing and background—specifically his tendency to avoid unpleasant topics and situations. This attribute had been impressed upon McKay from his formative years on, and enforced within his own family. Thus he failed to vigorously promote repeal of black priesthood denial, particularly in the latter years of his administration, not wanting to alienate certain conservative men in the church hierarchy, notably Harold B. Lee, increasingly influential by the late 1960s and adamantly opposed to

108. McKay, *Home Memories*, 154-55.

109. *Ibid.*, 272.

110. *Ibid.*, 142-43.

111. Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 117.

abandoning the practice. Consequently, McKay, with deep personal reluctance, continued to uphold black priesthood denial—a practice with which he was, at the very least, uncomfortable.¹¹²

McKay's basic "dislike of confrontations of any kind" also affected his complex relationship with J. Reuben Clark, his longtime associate and counselor in the church's governing First Presidency. In varied ways McKay and Clark stood in sharp contrast to one another. In personality, McKay was open, optimistic, feeling that "man's nature was basically good." Whereas Clark, in the words of his biographer D. Michael Quinn, "was an unreconstructed pessimist." In administering church affairs, McKay "favored expansive growth and a more liberal expenditure of funds," whereas Clark "favored slow growth and cautious, even parsimonious, expenditure of funds." In leadership style the two clashed, with McKay willing "to make immediate decisions based on his personal impressions," while Clark demanded "thorough research prior to a decision."¹¹³ Despite such differences, McKay, upon becoming church president in 1951, retained J. Reuben in the First Presidency. This reflected, at least in part, McKay's reluctance to confront the unpleasant task of completely replacing the conservative, doctrinaire church leader. But Clark's retention involved a demotion in rank from first counselor—which position he had held for some seventeen years under previous church presidents Heber J. Grant and George Albert Smith—to that of second counselor.¹¹⁴ Clark's position of first counselor was given to Stephen L. Richards, McKay's longtime close friend and associate. McKay, moreover, carefully but discreetly excluded Clark "as much as possible from decision-making," such exclusion becoming "nearly total during the last two years of Clark's life," according to Quinn.¹¹⁵

David O. McKay's strict avoidance of controversy also conformed to the Mormon leader's well-cultivated image as the idyllic husband and family man. Throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s, David O.'s family was promoted as the absolute "ideal" for all Latter-day Saints to emulate, by virtue of the apparent peace and harmony that seemed to prevail within. But such an "ideal" was exaggerated, even within McKay's own family. In reality, this ideal was largely based on "myth"—a fact that became more and more apparent during the unsettling decade of the 1960s and beyond. Indeed, it could be further argued that the idyllic, widely

112. D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 13-14. Also see Newell G. Bringhurst, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks: The Changing Place of Black People within Mormonism* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), 171-96.

113. Quinn, *J. Reuben Clark*, 116-17.

114. *Ibid.*, 129.

115. Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, 26.

publicized images of the McKays—specifically David O. as a caring but dominant husband acting in seemingly perfect harmony with his devoted but deferential wife, Emma Ray—promoted unrealistic expectations among both Latter-day Saint men and women. The reality was much less idyllic, with Latter-day Saint couples confronting the same types of tensions and marital difficulties experienced by their non-Mormon counterparts—problems leading to approximately the same levels of separation and divorce.¹¹⁶

Finally the fact of David O. McKay's weaknesses of character, specifically his avoidance of controversy, overbearing behavior within his own family, and vanity, does not diminish from his status as perhaps the most important Mormon church leader of the twentieth century. Such traits make David O. McKay more believable as both a human being and an effective, charismatic leader.

116. In this regard, see Tim B. Heaton, Kristen L. Goodman, and Thomas B. Holman, "In Search of a Peculiar People: Are Mormon Families Really Different?" 87-117, in *Contemporary Mormonism: Social Science Perspectives*, ed. Marie Cornwall, Tim B. Heaton, and Lawrence A. Young (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).