

# David O. McKay and the “Twin Sisters”: Free Agency and Tolerance<sup>1</sup>

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ON A SPRING DAY IN 1955, a group of distinguished gentlemen gathered at a White House dinner at the request of President Dwight Eisenhower. The guests included founding partners of three law firms, the President of the Teamsters' Union, three Army Generals, a Cabinet Secretary, the publisher of the *Boston Globe*, the Vice President of ABC, the Chairman of CBS, the President of MIT, four CEO's and one clergyman—David O. McKay, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Following a tour of the White House led by President Eisenhower, the group moved towards the dining room. President McKay described the scene:

As we came through the hallway, a secretary approached with the plan of the table and the place where each would sit. As I came, he said: "President McKay, your place is just opposite the President's." (This seat, directly across from the President of the United States is the honor seat). Just before we took our seats, President Eisenhower came up to me and said: "President McKay, your seat is just opposite mine, and just before we take our seats, I should like to have you say grace."<sup>2</sup>

President McKay consented. After the prayer the gentleman seated next to him started a conversation:

He said "You mentioned in your grace the freedom of the individual. Is that fundamental?" I said, "Next to life itself." He was a Presbyterian by training.

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1. Originally presented at the Salt Lake City Sunstone Symposium in August, 2000.

2. David O. McKay Office Journal (hereafter DOMOJ), 7-12 May, 1955.

He said, "They crowded me so much I have finally left churches," but he said, "I believe in that freedom of the individual and developing oneself." I said, "That is fundamental in the Mormon Church."<sup>3</sup>

To understand David O. McKay's reverence for the principle of free agency is to understand the basis of his extraordinary tenure as president of the church, as well as the highest esteem in which countless thousands to this day, both within and without the church, continue to hold him.

Although President McKay's feelings about free agency were lifelong, they were heightened in the mid-1930s by the growing menace to world order of Soviet Communism under the leadership of Joseph Stalin. On Independence Day, 1936, the First Presidency (of which President McKay was a member) published its first statement warning of the dangers of Communism, stating in part:

"The Church does not interfere, and has no intention of trying to interfere, with the fullest and freest exercise of the political franchise of its members, under and within our Constitution. . . . But Communism is not a political party nor a political plan under the Constitution; it is a system of government that is the opposite of our Constitutional government, and it would be necessary to destroy our government before Communism could be set up in the United States. . . . Communism undertakes to control, if not indeed to proscribe the religious life of the people living within its jurisdiction. . . . Such interference would be contrary to the fundamental precepts of the Gospel and to the teachings and order of the Church."<sup>4</sup>

World War II pushed American concerns over Soviet Communism to the background, but the onset of the Cold War renewed President McKay's concerns, central to which was Communism's suppression of the principle of individual free agency. In dedicating a chapel in Wisconsin in 1954, he addressed the issue publicly. A wire service article reported:

President David O. McKay. . . said Sunday that Communist rulers will fall if they continue to rob people of their free choice between good and evil.

President McKay said he believes persons under Communist domination will revolt because their leaders have tried to take away their most valuable possession—free will.

Speaking at the dedication of a new Madison branch chapel, President McKay said, "No power on earth can take this freedom away." He said the Communists are trying to, but will not succeed.

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3. Ibid.

4. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 4 Jul., 1936.

"When a group claims that you and I are not free as individuals, you may rest assured that their philosophy is on a sandy foundation," he said.<sup>5</sup>

Three years later, in a meeting with Senator and future President John F. Kennedy, he reiterated this theme. Speaking of Khrushchev and Soviet Communism, President McKay said, "They are fundamentally wrong. Free agency is inherent in every individual. Rule by force has been fought against by men throughout history." Kennedy replied, "They have the power to continue. Their prospects for the immediate future are bright," to which President McKay rejoined, "I have hoped for 20 years that they would break up, and I do not see how they can last. It is just wicked to dominate men that way."<sup>6</sup>

But it was not just the threat of Communism that he abhorred; it was any threat to an individual's free agency, whether from a government, an organization—including a church—or an individual. Speaking to his driver, Darcy Wright, one day, President McKay quoted from memory the verses from the *Doctrine and Covenants* that warn of such a threat:

We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion.

Hence, many are called, but few are chosen.

No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned.<sup>7</sup>

Then he added, "That section alone is proof that the Prophet Joseph Smith was one of the great—there is no question about it!"<sup>8</sup>

He developed this thought in a public sermon reported by the *Deseret News*:

Declaring the divine right of man to freedom of choice, President David O. McKay . . . said there was never a time in the history of mankind when the evil one seems so determined as now to strike at this fundamental virtue of free agency.

The Church leader told a congregation of nearly 1000 persons. . . that he stressed this fundamental principle of the Gospel because he thought it was one of the most vital problems facing the world today, and particularly vital to the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. . . .

"God has given us our free agency," President McKay said, "and any

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5. DOMOJ, 25 Apr., 1954.

6. DOMOJ, 12 Nov., 1957.

7. D&C 121:39-41.

8. DOMOJ, 4 Feb., 1963.

nation or any group in any nation, our nation included, that will take from an individual that right, freedom of thought, freedom of action, is acting contrary to the will of God. There is that in the spirit of man which will rebel against it, against tyranny.”<sup>9</sup>

To speak of free agency is noble, but to practice it in one’s own backyard is the measure of one’s character, particularly when doing so exacts a price. Yet time and again David O. McKay showed his true character as he placed free agency first, even when those around him felt otherwise. I will present eight case studies, four of which involved the liberal side of the ideological spectrum and four of which involved the conservative side. In each case the central issue was free agency.

#### STUDY #1: JUANITA BROOKS

One of the great figures in Mormon historiography, and considered by some to have been the brightest intellect ever produced within the state of Utah, Juanita Brooks published in 1950 a landmark history of the Mountain Meadows Massacre that remains one of the classics of Mormon history and, after a half-century, is still in print. In sharp contrast to the accolades given the book by the historical community, stood the icy reception of some general authorities of the church, including an unsuccessful attempt to have its publication stopped. Once published, however, the quality of its scholarship led the Lee family to petition President McKay for the reinstatement to membership of their ancestor John D. Lee, whose role in the massacre had led to his excommunication. President McKay set up a committee, chaired by Apostle Delbert Stapley, to investigate the matter. Based upon the committee’s recommendation, President McKay authorized Lee’s reinstatement although he strongly counseled the Lee family that knowledge of this action be held in confidence. Brooks complied with this wish in the small first printing of her John D. Lee biography, but shortly thereafter included notice of it in the second printing. Incensed by what he felt to be a breach of trust, Stapley recommended that Brooks be excommunicated. President McKay’s response was brief and unequivocal: “Leave her alone.”

Several years after the fact, a Stake President related to Brooks, for the first time, this story as it had been related to him by Apostle Stapley. In the words of that Stake President:

In this life I was not permitted to see the plates of the Nephites, but I did see the tears in Juanita Brooks’s eyes when I told her of President McKay’s instruction to “leave her alone.” Again, it was never mine to handle

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9. *Deseret News*, 3 Dec., 1951; DOMOJ, 2 Dec., 1951.

the plates, but Sister Brooks thrust out both of her hands and I took them firmly in mine. No words were exchanged, none were necessary."<sup>10</sup>

#### STUDY #2: STERLING McMURRIN

In 1952, Sterling McMurrin, a philosophy professor at the University of Utah, met with two senior apostles, at their request, to discuss his religious beliefs. Entirely candid in his responses to their inquiries, he readily professed himself to have heretical beliefs, while simultaneously remaining an active church member. Alarmed at his beliefs, they initiated a series of events that resulted, two years later, in McMurrin's Bishop making a decision to call a church court to put him on trial for his membership. Although McMurrin resigned himself to letting events unfold as they might, his close friend, Apostle Adam S. Bennion, reacted swiftly to news of the impending judicial proceedings. Bennion informed President McKay of the matter, and he, in turn, placed a phone call to McMurrin to request that the two of them meet privately.

In a 90-minute meeting at the University of Utah, McMurrin responded to the questions asked of him, but made no attempt to ask for President McKay's intervention. McMurrin later recounted the concluding portion of that meeting:

[President McKay said,] "They cannot put you on trial!" And I said, "Well, President McKay, you know better than I what they can do, but it appears to me that they are going to put me on trial." He said, "They cannot do it!" And then, there was a rather long pause, and he said, "Well, all I can say is, that if they put you on trial for excommunication, I will be there as the first witness in your behalf." . . .

He said, "I have only one piece of advice to give you, just one piece of advice. It is the advice that my uncle gave me." President McKay indicated that this uncle was kind of a non-conforming member of the family, and a non-conforming member of the Church. "Now, when I was just leaving to go on my mission, we were down at the station, people were down there telling the missionaries goodbye, and my uncle shook hands with me and said, 'Now David, I just have one piece of advice to give you, just one piece of advice. Don't you ever let anybody tell you what to think, or what to believe. You just think and believe as you please.'" And President McKay said, "Now, that's my advice to you. Don't ever let anybody tell you what to think or what to believe."<sup>11</sup>

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10. William H. Delves, "'Leave Her Alone': The Dynamic Triangle—David O. McKay, Delbert L. Stapley and Juanita Brooks," unpublished manuscript communicated from Delves to Gregory A. Prince [hereafter GAP], 3 Aug., 1995.

11. Sterling M. McMurrin oral history, ca. 1980. Original tape recording transcribed by GAP.

In a follow-up letter, McMurrin wrote, "You have always been a symbol to me, as to countless others, of the religion that reaches out to include rather than exclude, that unites rather than divides, that is concerned with large moral and spiritual issues."<sup>12</sup>

Several weeks later, without mentioning any names, President McKay used the forum of General Conference to send to the entire church the message that he'd sent to McMurrin:

"Ours is the responsibility. . .to proclaim the truth that each individual is a child of God and important in his sight; that he is entitled to freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly; that he has the right to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. In this positive declaration, we imply that organizations or churches which deprive the individual of these inherent rights are not in harmony with God's will nor with his revealed word."<sup>13</sup>

The intent of his message was not lost on his audience. Four days later, M. Lynn Bennion, Superintendent of Salt Lake City Schools, wrote the following letter to President McKay:

Our recent conference impressed upon me more than ever that Religion is a constant struggle between the formalistic and the traditional on the one hand and the unending stimulation of the spirit. Your conference messages are based on laws and commandments, but the great stress is upon love, freedom, and compassion. I want to congratulate you again on your prophetic leadership. . . .

There is a fundamental issue at stake in the case being formulated against [Sterling McMurrin]. You expressed it directly when you spoke of man's right of freedom to think and to worship within the Church. God bless you for taking this stand. It is our most precious possession and worth every sacrifice to maintain. I noted with joy that a number of the brethren caught your spirit and spoke in the same vein. . . .<sup>14</sup>

Although many are familiar with parts of this story, it is more complex—and more subtle—than most people appreciate. It is true that President McKay's offer to be a witness in McMurrin's behalf immunized him from church judicial action, not only then but also for the remainder of his life. In making the offer, however, President McKay was defending a principle—the free agency of the individual to think as he wished without adverse ecclesiastical reaction—without condoning McMurrin's

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12. Sterling M. McMurrin to David O. McKay, 24 Mar., 1954; in DOMOJ, 14 Mar., 1954.

13. David O. McKay, *One Hundred Twenty-fourth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, (4 Apr., 1954), p. 26.

14. M. Lynn Bennion to David O. McKay, 8 Apr., 1954; in DOMOJ, 14 Mar., 1954.

beliefs and actions. Indeed, in a conversation a short time later with Ernest Wilkinson, President of Brigham Young University, President McKay expressed his disapproval of McMurrin's vocalization of his heretical beliefs, and his irritation at McMurrin's having made known to others the content of what had been a private conversation. Furthermore, he clearly differentiated McMurrin's status as a professor at a state university from that of professors at BYU, whom he held to a much higher standard of conduct. Wilkinson recorded in his diary the essence of that meeting:

[I said I had heard] that President McKay had had a conference with Sterling McMurrin, and had told McMurrin that there was plenty of room in this Church for diverse religious beliefs, and further said that if any excommunication proceedings were ever held, President McKay would appear as a witness in his favor. I further told him that in the eyes of the dissident McMurrin group, he, President McKay, was now being held up as their idol. I told him that I felt I ought to report to him what was being represented as to his views. President McKay replied that there was all the difference in the world between whether a man should be excommunicated because he may not accept all the views of the Church, and whether he should still be employed on the faculty of BYU. He told me that I would have his complete support in refusing to renew the contracts of any teachers who did not teach the doctrines as they were interpreted by the leaders of the Church. He expressed disappointment that McMurrin had been around telling of his private conversation. He told me that McMurrin had himself proposed that he believed in the Church. He told me further that he had told McMurrin that McMurrin should not have stated the things he did to President Smith and Brother Lee, and McMurrin agreed that he should not have done so.<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps because of McMurrin's breach of etiquette, the two men never met privately again. However, although President McKay later commented to his counselors that he was disturbed over McMurrin's subsequent statements and attitude towards the church policy on blacks and priesthood, he never made it known publicly, and never failed to defend McMurrin's right to hold such views.<sup>16</sup>

### STUDY #3: O. C. TANNER

At one time a teacher and author in the Church Education System, O. C. Tanner had long since parted company philosophically with the conservative faculty who came to dominate the system when to his surprise a request came, in 1955, from the General Sunday School

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15. Ernest L. Wilkinson diary, 15 Jun., 1954.

16. DOMOJ, 26 Jun., 1968.

Superintendency that he author a Sunday school manual. Initially, he turned down the request, not knowing that it had originated at a higher level. He later recounted:

After my negative reply, I had my hand on the door knob and I was about to leave, aware that when I opened the door, I would have turned down an opportunity, which I might later wish I had accepted. At that moment, Superintendent Hill asked his associates: "Should we tell him?" They replied affirmatively. He said, "We have been to President McKay and asked him to give us the name of someone who could write the best text for our college-age Sunday school classes on the subject of Christ's teachings. Without hesitation he mentioned you as the one who could do this."

I must say this surprised me. I loved President McKay. I had seen him in many circumstances and I thought he always came through with intelligence, perception, and compassion. He had spoken at my Steven's funeral in 1949. I was not about to turn him down on anything he might ask me to do. I went back to where I had been sitting in front of them, and replied that if President McKay asked me to do this, then I certainly would comply with his request.<sup>17</sup>

As he set about the task, however, doubts came to his mind. His wife described the episode:

President McKay requested that Obert write *Christ's Ideals for Living*. But he didn't think he could, for he said, "President McKay, I don't think I could pass the reading committee, because I'm quite a liberal Mormon." And what do you think President McKay said? "Then we'll change the reading committee!" And they did!<sup>18</sup>

The Sunday school manual that Tanner authored, *Christ's Ideals for Living*, became the most widely-distributed and, arguably, finest manual ever written for the Sunday school.

#### STUDY #4: DIALOGUE

*Dialogue, A Journal of Mormon Thought* began publication in 1965 and soon came to the attention of the First Presidency. After discussing the subject with his counselors, President McKay recorded that "it was the sentiment at that time that we do not think it wise to oppose it nor to support it." That settled the subject in his mind, but not for some of his associates. In a later meeting of the Church Board of Education, a senior

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17. Obert C. Tanner: *One Man's Journey in Search of Freedom* (Salt Lake City, The Humanities Center at the University of Utah, 1994), 116.

18. Grace A. Tanner, interviewed by GAP and Wm. Robert Wright, 10 Oct., 1994.



apostle spoke on the subject, as reported later by a board member and general authority present at that meeting:

"Well, that book, *Dialogue*, has no value in the world. In fact, if I had my way, I would burn the book," just like that. . . . Well, President McKay sits up and says, "Brethren, in this Church we do not burn books. But if we did, we ought to burn some that have been written around this table!"<sup>19</sup>

#### STUDY #5: JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

President McKay's feelings about free agency and tolerance were not reserved for the liberal wing of the church. In 1954 Joseph Fielding Smith, the senior member of the Quorum of the Twelve, published a book entitled *Man, His Origin and Destiny*. Outspokenly critical of science in general and of biological evolution in particular, the book raised serious concerns among Latter-day Saint scientists and among Institute of Religion teachers who were being told they had to teach it in their classes.

Several Institute teachers took their case directly to President McKay, who was disturbed to find out that the book was being promoted without having been passed by the reading committee of the general authorities. Seeing that damage was being done by the way in which the book was being used, he commented privately to the teachers (and later to individual scientists who inquired) "that that book should be treated merely as the views of one man. It is true that one man is President of the Twelve, and makes it more or less authoritative, but it is no more to be taken as the word of the Church than any other unauthorized book."<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, he said "that so far as evolution is concerned, the Church has not made any ruling regarding it, and that no man has been authorized to speak for the Church on it."<sup>21</sup>

It would be easy to interpret this episode as a criticism by President McKay of President Smith, but it was not. Indeed, the two men had the highest respect and love for each other, having served together as General Authorities for over forty years at that time. It was not the publication of the book that caused President McKay's reaction; rather, it was a combination of its unauthorized use as an Institute textbook, not having been approved for such by the reading committee, and the fact that its views concerning evolution, on which the church had not taken an official position, were being advanced as the church position. There is no

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19. Paul H. Dunn, interviewed by GAP, 18 Feb., 1995.

20. DOMOJ, 13 Sep., 1954.

21. DOMOJ, 29 Dec., 1954.

record of a reprimand to President Smith, nor was there ever any public statement by President McKay concerning the book. Rather, he handled the matter quietly and privately, not ducking the issue when confronted with it by church members, but not dealing with it in such a way as to inhibit, in any way, President Smith's ability to carry out his sacred calling as President of the Quorum of the Twelve.

#### STUDY #6: BRUCE R. MCCONKIE

Four years later, Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the First Council of Seventy, took it upon himself to write an encyclopedic work that, because of his own church office and the book's title, *Mormon Doctrine*, quickly came to be regarded by many as the official position of the church. It soon became apparent to President McKay that the book, which consistently employed authoritative language, was causing damage among many church members, who mistook it as representing official church policy, and among many non-members, particularly Roman Catholics who took great offense at the way their church was portrayed. Indeed, Duane Hunt, the Catholic Bishop of Salt Lake City, approached a newly-elected Latter-day Saint Congressman, with book-in-hand and tears on his cheeks, saying, "Why did you do this to us? We are your friends."<sup>22</sup>

Not willing to act precipitously, President McKay asked two senior members of the Quorum of the Twelve to read and report on the book. Several months later they met with the First Presidency and submitted their reports, which stated that the manuscript had not been submitted to the reading committee prior to publication, was written without the knowledge of Elder McConkie's father-in-law, Joseph Fielding Smith, and contained over one thousand errors that "affected most of the 776 pages of the book."<sup>23</sup>

There were several ways in which the matter could have been handled, all of which would have caused Elder McConkie public embarrassment and interfered with his ability to carry out his calling. Instead, President McKay chose a course of action that addressed the damaging aspects of the book while still respecting the free agency of its author and not undermining his position as a General Authority:

It was agreed that the necessary corrections are so numerous that to republish a corrected edition of the book would be such an extensive repudiation of the original as to destroy the credit of the author; that the republication of the book should be forbidden and that the book should be repudiated

22. David S. King, interviewed by GAP, 1 Feb., 1995.

23. DOMOJ, 7 Jan., 1960.

in such a way as to save the career of the author as one of the General Authorities of the Church.<sup>24</sup>

Not wishing to place Elder McConkie in an awkward position in front of his fellow General Authorities, President McKay and his counselors met privately with him to inform him of their decision, thus succeeding in avoiding a "rebuke that would be embarrassing to him and lessen his influence with the members of the Church."<sup>25</sup> Eight years after its initial publication, *Mormon Doctrine* was published in a second edition containing hundreds of changes that addressed some, but not all of the major areas of concern with the first edition.

#### STUDY #7: HUGH NIBLEY

A different dilemma was presented to President McKay with the writing of a Melchizedek Priesthood manual by Hugh Nibley. I'll let Nibley relate the incident in his own words:

I wrote the priesthood manual for 1957, you know, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*. Well, there was a reading committee on it. Adam S. Bennion was the head of the committee. . . . The reading committee wiped out every lesson in that book. Now this is one thing in which I'm greatly obliged to President McKay. They kicked out every lesson in the book. They said it was over people's heads. And every time, President McKay overruled them. The book is exactly as I wrote it. They wanted to make hundreds of changes and get rid of the whole thing entirely, and President McKay said, "No. If it's beyond their reach, let them reach for it." Adam S. Bennion said, "It's over their heads." And President McKay said, "Let them reach for it." Now there's a great man. I liked that.<sup>26</sup>

#### STUDY #8: EZRA TAFT BENSON

In commemoration of the 1947 centennial of the pioneers' entry into the Salt Lake Valley, the church commissioned a play entitled "Promised Valley." In 1961 the church staged a revival of the play in Kingsbury Hall, on the University of Utah campus. President McKay reported on the attempt of one senior church official to censor the revived production:

Clare [President McKay's secretary] called me at the apartment and said that Elder Ezra Taft Benson had called and left a message that he was greatly concerned over what had been reported to him about the MIA play, "Promised Valley." He said that he has heard that in one scene there is "too much kiss-

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24. Ibid.

25. DOMOJ, 27 Jan., 1960.

26. Hugh Nibley, interviewed by GAP, 5 Jun., 1995.

ing," and in the "sparkin' on a Sunday afternoon" scene is not what it should be. I told her that we would judge that after we have seen it this afternoon.

5 p.m.

Sister McKay and I attended the MIA's production of the play "Promised Valley" held in the Kingsbury Hall, U of U Campus.

The original of this production was composed by Dr. Crawford Gates at the request of the Centennial Commission of which I was Chairman in 1947. I was, therefore, very interested in seeing this musical again after all these years. It received wide acclaim at the time. Sister McKay and I thought this production by amateurs was wonderful, and much credit should be given to the MIA drama directors for the excellence of the entire play. There was nothing in it that could be criticized.<sup>27</sup>

By not rushing to judgment on the basis of hearsay and by viewing the production from his own vantage point, he prevented an unjustified and probably damaging censorship that would have sent the wrong message to the community.

The fact that these eight studies are equally divided among the conservative and liberal sides of the spectrum is potent evidence that President McKay's concern was not to favor one ideology over another, but to ensure that all points on the spectrum were given access to free agency as well as receiving protection from those who would have constricted that free agency. His was an inclusive church, not an exclusive one—perhaps the most inclusive it had ever been. He was not threatened by diversity; indeed, he appreciated, as few others have, the strength that comes from diversity. Having spent his formative years on a farm, he understood from his own observations the dangers of inbreeding, and even his choice of general authorities reflected that understanding, as he surrounded himself with ardent conservatives, true liberals, and everything in between.

However, his tolerance of diversity did not necessarily translate to approval, a distinction not appreciated by all recipients of his largesse. For example, he did not approve of Sterling McMurrin's self-described heretical viewpoints and would not have tolerated their having been taught at BYU. Neither, however, did he share Joseph Fielding Smith's anti-evolution beliefs, and would not allow them to be advanced as the official church position. But in all eight case studies, whether or not he agreed with the beliefs, thoughts, or actions of the individual, he defended the exercise of free agency and intervened only when such exercise was threatened or when a church officer's words and actions caused sufficient institutional repercussions to require damage control. Even in

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27. DOMOJ, 9 Jun., 1961.

those extreme cases, the damage control was buffered so as to minimize its negative impact on one's ability to continue in a church calling.

His was truly a universal church, and we remain indebted to him, thirty years after his death, for establishing so lofty a standard. One of the most eloquent and profound of the many tributes that followed President McKay's death, written by Sterling McMurrin, highlighted the importance of his universality. It reads in part:

Universality as a religious ideal is possible only where there is an authentic conception of the reality of the individual, a genuine concern for his dignity and worth, and a full measure of human sympathy. It was not an accident that Jeremiah, who may have been the first of the prophets to declare unequivocally that there is only one God and that he is the God of all men and all nations, was also the first to clearly champion the moral freedom and responsibility of the individual. Nor was it an accident that in teaching that Christ came to save all men, Paul declared that each is precious in the sight of God. I believe that the universalism of President McKay, his identification with humanity, was grounded in his respect and concern for the individual, his reverence for the freedom and autonomy of the moral will, his sympathy and compassion for every person.<sup>28</sup>

McMurrin would have been pleased, but not surprised, to hear President McKay make his point when he said to his secretary one day, "Men must learn that in presiding over the Church 'we are dealing with human hearts, that individual rights are sacred, and the human soul is tender. We cannot run the Church as we would a business.'"<sup>29</sup> I continue with McMurrin's tribute:

My point, then, is a very simple one: that President David O. McKay, whom we knew and loved as a charismatic leader and friend, combined the virtues of kindness, compassion, love, and profound commitment to the moral and intellectual freedom of every person with a strong consciousness of the unity of mankind and the ideal possibilities of human brotherhood. We may hope that future historians will find that his ideal was in fact the beginning of a new era for the Church.<sup>30</sup>

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28. Sterling M. McMurrin, "President David O. McKay—1873-1970," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 4, no.4 (Winter 1969): 55.

29. DMOJ, 17 May, 1962.

30. Sterling M. McMurrin, "President David O. McKay—1873-1970," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon thought* 4, no.4 (Winter 1969): 55.