

The LDS Sound World and Global Mormonism

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THE EXPANSION OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS may be described from a broadly phenomenological perspective in terms of sound and silence. My observations here deal with the outer, open dimension of the LDS sound world, including theories about de-Protestantisation and feminisation. Also examined herein will be the institutional process of "reduce and simplify" and the historical exposition of a new musical genre. Other theories concern the private, inner or closed dimension of the Mormon sound world, such as the function of silence in LDS ritual and the principles of non-distraction and dysfunctionality with reference to Mormon ritual and the temple. I believe that the developments described in this paper have provided and continue to furnish gateways to a global Mormonism.

Outwardly, Latter-day Saints utilize music in their culture much like other modern Christian sects, including the singing of hymns and the use of the organ. There are practically no public meetings of Latter-day Saints where music is not present in some form or other. However, in 1980, the amount of institutional time Latter-day Saints spent in worship together was seriously curtailed. The reduction from the traditionally Protestant style of two blocks of meetings each Sunday to one three-hour block represented a watershed in the process of de-Protestantisation, or the moving away from previously adopted Protestant forms of worship. The twentieth century evinced a general momentum, which began in the late nineteenth century, towards a less Protestant and more distinctively LDS identity.

I. LDS HYMNS AND THE PROTESTANT TRADITION

A. Early Protestant Influence

It is important to understand that while The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has always taken a cautious and conservative approach to its broad, cultural development, such as in art, dance, and architecture, it is largely in the specific realms of music and worship where the process of Protestantisation can be clearly distinguished.

Four practical examples illustrate the Protestantization of Mormonism:¹

1. The religious landscape of early nineteenth-century New York was predominantly Protestant. Within this narrow yet varied tradition, religious differences were rife. Religious borrowing was common among the new sects. Indeed, much of the early LDS hymnody was borrowed from existing Protestant collections, mainly Presbyterian and Methodist, although, as Karen Lynn Davidson points out, "even though many hymns and hymn traditions were available to them, the early Saints did not choose to adopt in its entirety any other church's hymn tradition."² Just thirty-five of the ninety hymn texts in Emma Smith's little volume of hymns published in 1835 were written by Latter-day Saints, the remainder were Protestant hymns.³

2. Two basic styles of hymn singing were prevalent in the New York area in the early 1800s. The first type was the anti-authoritarian church style of gospel singing that was sung in a free manner, characteristic of the southern frontier church. It was highly emotional and punctuated by frequent spontaneous outbursts which were often led by the ecstatic song of the itinerant preacher. The other type of hymn singing, more common in northern New York state in the early nineteenth century, (where Mormonism had its roots, geographically speaking), was more in the spirit of New England. The music and verse were utilitarian. Here, hymn singing released a milder emotion and served the practical aim of religious persuasion. The relative restraint characteristic of the Latter-day Saint religious exercises and group singing followed the northern pattern and has continued to be a constant in LDS worship today. One can only speculate as to how different the style of LDS singing might now be had Mormonism evolved in the southern part of the state instead of Palmyra.

¹For a detailed exposition, consult Warren Kear, "Music in Latter-day Saint Culture," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nottingham, U.K., 1997, 228f.

²Karen Lynn Davidson, *Our Latter-Day Hymns: The Stories and the Messages*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1988), 7.

³Michael Hicks, *Mormonism and Music: A History* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 18f.

3. Another musical feature of many, but not all, Protestant congregations was the use of an instrumental accompaniment to worship. The practice was not routinely desirable or even possible in Christian worship forms at that time and in that locale, the organ being the most popular instrument. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continued this tradition and emulated the European custom of building large organs. For example, the magnificent Tabernacle Organ in Salt Lake City was built in 1867 by the British-born Joseph Ridges. Many Mormon pioneers from Britain brought their musical instruments with them to Nauvoo in the 1840s, and then across to the Salt Lake Valley. As the LDS church became more prosperous, the organ established itself as the principal instrument for accompanying worship.

4. Early Mormonism utilized its own, unique and revealed liturgy and fitted it to pre-existing patterns of worship from the Protestant tradition. Thus morning and evening services, a family-based Sunday School, and a simple eucharistic celebration now called Sacrament Meeting and held only in the evening, were quickly established as the norms of LDS worship.

B. The De-Protestantization Process (including Internationalization)

The initial evidences of a general Protestantization described above, coincide broadly with Mauss's periods of "Refuge" and "Assimilation,"⁴ covering the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, the seeds of a musical de-Protestantisation were planted as early as 1870, under Brigham Young's leadership. The considerable influence and tutelage of British immigrant music professors such as John Tullidge, George Careless, and later, Evan Stephens prevailed among the Saints. The practice of borrowing hymn tunes and words from other denominations all but ceased. Latter-day Saint composers were encouraged to write original tunes for their hymnals, as reflected in the 1927 *Latter-day Saint Hymns*, which incorporated the earlier unofficial publication *Songs of Zion*. This bias against borrowed music and words was only temporarily arrested for about two decades following the deaths of Evan Stephens (1930) and George Careless (1932)—the "old guard" of LDS music—as shown by the insertion of some popular Protestant hymns in the church's 1948 publication, *Hymns*.⁵

In the twentieth century, the church leadership took certain deliberate actions aimed at their musical culture which further distanced themselves from Protestant trappings. In May 1946, the First Presidency⁶ prohibited the

⁴Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

⁵*Hymns* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1948).

⁶See Michael Hicks, *Mormonism and Music: A History* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 139.

playing of music during the eucharistic ritual of the passing of the bread and water in church, known in Latter-day Saint terminology as "taking the sacrament." This gesture might possibly have been the first outward evidence of an institutional attempt to control the use of silence in LDS ritual.

Furthermore, quoting from the *Encyclopedia Of Mormonism* (hereafter EOM): "Wishing to avoid the loss of Mormonism's basically populist spirit and lay-oriented worship, it [church leadership] repeatedly spoke and wrote against such Oxford-style innovations as wearing choir robes, giving choral benedictions, and meditating during musical postludes."⁷ This comment points to the interesting, but not unexpected, observation that such pseudo-Protestant practices were more common in LDS Britain than they were among the Saints in Utah. Even the practice of standing to sing hymns, for which there was considerable tradition in the church, was discontinued. In fact, J. Reuben Clark argued that "if the Tabernacle Choir could sing to millions over the radio while sitting, congregations should be able to sing well enough without standing up."⁸

Further de-Protestantisation in LDS musical worship occurred in the second half of the twentieth century. The *General Church Handbook* in 1960 declared that "the practice, common in some churches of the world, of sitting quietly after the final prayer, presumably to meditate upon what has been said, while a few bars of music are played on the piano or organ is not approved. When the final prayer is over the meeting should end and those attending may arise and prepare to leave."⁹

Two decades later in 1980, the change to a single three-hour Sunday meeting block, mentioned above, signaled a watershed in the process of de-Protestantisation. The new program consolidated virtually all weekday and Sabbath meetings into a three-hour block on Sunday. The consolidated meeting schedule was intended to give more time for families to be together on that day and throughout the week; time which they were encouraged to use, among other things, in the pursuit of spirituality through music, as pointed out in the "Preface" to the current LDS hymn book.¹⁰

Indeed, the new *Hymns of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, published in 1985, was historically pivotal in encapsulating the trends toward de-Protestantisation and also in signaling the beginnings of a movement towards musical internationalization. The First Presidency of the day said the new hymnal should "meet the varied needs of

⁷Hicks, *Mormonism and Music*, 139.

⁸*Ibid.*, 140.

⁹*General Church Handbook* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1960), 28.

¹⁰*Hymns of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), ix.

today's worldwide Church membership."¹¹ In practice, this meant fewer Protestant-type hymns, like the old Wesleyan tunes "Arise My Soul, Arise" and "Author of Faith, Eternal Word," as well as a significant number of new LDS hymn compositions and the internationalization of selected hymn texts. Furthermore, the inclusion of national folk tunes not in any previous hymnals, such as the Swedish Folk melody set to the text "How Great Thou Art" (no. 86), the English hymn "For All the Saints" (no. 82) by Ralph Vaughan Williams, and Sibelius's Finnish tune to "Be Still My Soul" (no. 124), are small but not insignificant steps toward an internationalized LDS hymnody.

Ironically the movement away from Protestant traditions and practices in the twentieth century was further highlighted by the Protestantization of its sister organization, the Reorganized Church of the Latter-day Saints, or RLDS. In short, while the LDS church in the twentieth century retrenched traditional sectarian beliefs and sought to highlight its distinctive "Mormon-ness," the RLDS church became more and more Protestant in its image, theology and practice. Much has been written on this subject by Roger D. Launius, who described the position of the RLDS Church in this manner:

By standing in opposition to plural marriage but still claiming the legacy of early Mormonism, the RLDS made a legitimate place for itself in the nether world between Mormonism and Protestantism.¹²

Furthermore, the RLDS church has gone so far as to shed the name Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints in favour of the "Community of Christ," which Launius suggests, "signals this continuing move toward Protestantism."¹³ Richard P. Howard further speculates: "The RLDS Church seems intent on shedding many of the vestiges of its sectarian background of early Mormonism. To what extent it can discard these while retaining its identity as a recognisable part of latter-day Saintism remains to be seen."¹⁴ Put simply, the Protestantization of the Reorganized church has brought further into relief the de-Protestantization of the LDS church.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Roger D. Launius *Neither Mormon Nor Protestant? The Reorganised Church and the Challenge of Identity*, in Douglas J. Davies, ed., *Mormon Identities in Transition*, (London: Cassell, 1996), 53.

¹³Ibid., 58.

¹⁴Richard P. Howard, "Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS Church)," in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 1211-16.

II. FEMINIZATION IN MODERN LDS CULTURE

Continuing my assessment of aspects of the *open* dimension of the LDS sound world, I now turn to the phenomenon I have called feminization, a very important and broad-ranging development which roughly coincides with Mauss's third period of "Retrenchment." Historically speaking, feminization is a relatively recent phenomenon dating from the 1960s. Perhaps it may best be viewed as the timely reaction to a social and musical earthquake, namely the Rock/Pop explosion and emergence of a youth music culture in the 1960s. I believe its emergence to be immensely important to the development of the LDS sound world.

A. *Feminization and Musical Gender*

Feminization is not a word usually associated with religious processes. Let me explain my usage of the term. While it is very difficult to express the essence of music in terms of femaleness or maleness, I feel such a course is necessary to accurately identify this phenomenon. Although a degree of subjectivity is involved in judging the gender of musical characteristics, my observations are nonetheless based on definite, physical attributes of musical style which will be described later.

We should also distinguish between the essence of music and its social application, in relation to feminine or masculine characterization. These aspects are two sides of the same coin. On the one hand, we may, at times, speak of the feel of a song or hymn as being either feminine, masculine, or even ambiguous; this refers to the essence or impression of the music. On the other hand we shall also refer to a piece of music as being favoured by or written for a particular gender.

I have interpreted the masculine characteristics of music to be generally energetic, with jaunty rhythms, fast tempi, strong pulse, wide ranging melodic lines, and powerful, up-beat lyrics. For example, the early LDS song by Newell Dayley, "Let Me Soar" (1976), and the LDS hymns, "Called To Serve" (no. 249) and "Let us All Press On" (no. 243) display these masculine musical characteristics. They have, at least to the writer, a masculine feel and would presumably be attractive to the male Latter-day Saint.

Feminine musical characteristics would include a gentler rhythm and pulse, slower tempi, less angular, more flowing melodic lines, with more introvertly personal or devotional lyrics. Examples of this type would include the song by Prudy F. Gneiting called "Morning of Your Life" (1980), or the hymns "Let the Holy Spirit Guide" (no. 143) and "We Have Partaken of Thy Love" (no. 155). There are, as you might expect, many examples of LDS songs and hymns whose musical gender is ambiguous.

A general, church-wide feminization, or a softening down, such as in the demands made on member's money and time, as with the "reduce and simplify" program described below, became evident institutionally during the 1980s, but the phenomenon most especially affected the church's youth and young adult programs. As a reactionary expression of style in LDS youth and music culture, feminization emerged in the 1960s and was well established within two decades.

Feminization will be examined from two perspectives: a) through developments in LDS hymnody, and b) in the generation of a distinctively new genre of LDS popular, religious ballads.

B. A New Musical Genre: The LDS Ballad

In the case of the latter genre, this style of musical composition grew out of and alongside another musical phenomenon which burst on to the stage in Britain and the U.S.: the instantly popular religious musicals of the late 60s and early 70s such as *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Godspell*, and *Joseph and His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. LDS composers were quick to copy their success with shows such as *Open Any Door* and *Saturday's Warrior*. The new LDS ballads of the 1960s and 70s were essentially a less heavily syncopated, or perhaps we can now say feminized, version of the ballads from the new musicals. They were mostly, but not exclusively, written by female LDS composers, the most prolific of whom was Janice Kapp Perry. Known as sacred ballads, their compositional style fits our feminine criteria. Not surprisingly, the young women of the church were first to adopt these new songs as their own. The new religious ballads were basically sacred words set in a popular, contemporary musical style—if you will, the sacred set to the profane. The LDS leadership, though cautious at first, eventually endorsed and encouraged the growth of the new genre. The relatively gentle syncopation of these new songs was at least a palliative to the very aggressive, masculine sound of the contemporary rock music culture that was sweeping across the world and engulfing all young people in the West, LDS and non-LDS alike. One has only to play and sing through a few of the examples of LDS sacred ballads and songs to recognize the deeply feminine nature of the vast majority. The LDS sacred ballad became especially popular with the young women both in church and at home, while LDS boys in general were left with only the hymnbook as their sacred musical "standard" to which they could rally.

An examination of any LDS music publisher's catalogue will reveal a disproportionately large amount of vocal music written for young women. Music written especially for LDS young men in the late twentieth century is very scarce indeed. Since 1970 the young women of the church have been supplied with many additional, some specially written, song collections for their organization. One such collection, *A*

Song Of The Heart, published by the church in 1978, did much to establish and consolidate the style of the LDS popular and sacred song in the 1980s. That these songs became established as a valid and popular addition to the LDS sacrament meeting attests to the depth of their accreditation in LDS culture. To the author's knowledge, no similar collection of popular LDS songs was ever written for or used by the church's Young Men's program, though some combined Young Men and Young Women choruses have, on occasion, sung songs from *A Song of the Heart*.

Before feminization, LDS church music publications included selections for men and boys as well as a smaller number of songs for girls. They included scouting and campfire songbooks, *M.I.A. Let's Sing* for the "M-Men" (the church's single adult program for 18-26 year old men), and *Recreational Songs* for general purpose use. The musical style of most of these songs follow the masculine characteristics I have described previously, being geared for the outdoor, robust pursuits and aspirations of boys and men. These publications were all discontinued in the early 1970s. They were never replaced, leaving an immense vacuum in the male song genre in LDS culture. There are now no songs published by the LDS church for young men. Although a similar fate befell the church music of the Young Women, their particular vacuum was eagerly filled by the new genre of the LDS sacred ballad.

The trend toward a feminization of LDS musical style runs parallel with an internationally recognized decline in music and music-making generally for young men. The past three decades have seen a marked fall in the amount of singing done by boys in educational and religious organizations. Even England, with one of the world's oldest traditions for boy trebles and church choirs, has seen a large drop in male music-making in schools and churches. Since most proselytizing missionaries of the LDS church are male, the feminization of LDS popular music may well pose challenges in the future. If the young men of the church are singing the songs of Zion only on a Sunday, and that reluctantly in many cases, and humming the songs of the world the rest of the week, so to speak, it does not auger well for the perpetuity of the church's rich musical culture

C. Feminization in LDS Hymnody

To demonstrate the trend toward feminization in LDS hymnody, I will make a comparative examination of the two generally used hymn publications of 1948 and 1985.

Both hymnals contain over 300 hymns. The earlier, post-war publication was intended mainly for adult use with some sub-sections for youth and choir use. The later hymnal of 1985 is not obviously sectionalized. It is intended for general use and even includes hymns adapted from the old *Primary Song Book* for children.

When we compare the degree of feminization (using the gender criteria mentioned above) in the two hymnals, the numerical results are summarized as follows:

Hymns Dropped from the 1948 Hymnal (total = 70)		
<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Ambiguous</i>
26 (41%)	18 (29%)	19 (30%)
Hymns New to the 1985 Hymnal (total = 92)		
<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Ambiguous</i>
13 (14%)	59 (64%)	20 (22%)

Even allowing for the subjectivity of my evaluative processes, I believe we can observe a significant swing in favour of hymns with feminine characteristics. With the exception of new hymns like "Called to Serve" and "Press Forward Saints," generally speaking, the rousing, sometimes awkward and demanding tunes of Evan Stephens, the expansive and majestic sweep of George Careless's melodies, and the strikingly arresting imagery of the nineteenth-century poets like Parley P. Pratt, which once gave the church such a distinctive musical identity, are largely absent in the new LDS hymnody.

The combination of the very feminine style of the LDS sacred ballad and the trend toward feminization in LDS hymnody leads me to conclude that the feminization of the LDS sound world since 1970 is real. Other churches, notably from the Anglican and Pentecostal traditions, have made some accommodation with the jazz syncopations of modern "pop," producing alternative hymns in the modern style. I am of the opinion that the LDS church's unique response can best be defined in terms of a feminization.

D. Reduce and Simplify

Furthermore, feminization must also be seen in the light of a contemporary and wide-ranging church program called "reduce and simplify" which was also begun in the early 1970s. Some have viewed it as a necessary response to and preparation for the explosion in church membership throughout the Third World. In 1961, under the direction of the First Presidency and the Twelve, Elder Harold B. Lee announced the formation of the All-Church Coordinating Council, which eventually pulled every organization, auxiliary, and professional service under the priesthood umbrella. The eventual goal was to reduce and simplify church curricula, publications, meetings, and other aspects of the Lord's work. This was the beginning of the church's inspired correlation effort. Other changes during the 1960s included altered and refined auxiliary goals

and purposes, a uniform church curriculum year, meetinghouse libraries which served all organizations, as well as other changes to reduce, simplify, and consolidate church organization.¹⁵

The reduce and simplify program not only led to sweeping alterations in the system of tithing revenue and the church's building program, but also significantly reduced the amount of institutional music making both in LDS worship and in the church at large. Through it the baggage of the Wasatch Front church programs was to be greatly reduced to fit a much slimmer and poorer world. As a result, official church music publications were reduced to just two: *Hymns* and the *Children's Songbook*¹⁶ used by the church's Primary (children's) organization. These very public reductions and simplifications mentioned above can now be placed alongside changes to the private dimension of LDS culture. Thus we move in our considerations, from the public to the private dimension, from outer to inner, from open to closed, if you will.

III. THE FUNCTIONS OF MUSIC AND SILENCE IN COLLECTIVE AND RITUAL LDS LIFE

As mentioned previously, there lies at the heart of Mormonism an intriguing paradox focused in the relationship between music and LDS ritual practices. I must first explain that, to Latter-day Saints, the term "ritual" has a somewhat specialized connotation. It is used to describe only those activities where set patterns are acted out with symbolic meaning, including acts such as baptism, eucharistic feasts (or the taking of the sacrament), and temple rites. There is a clear distinction within the LDS culture between what are publicly accessible, religious services, and the ceremonies or rites that are private, exclusive, and redolent in symbolic meaning. LDS public activities use music overtly, but the musical imperative diminishes as we move inward toward the private and symbolic realm where silence and the spoken word are often the only media. Thus, as we move from the outer edges of LDS culture toward the more powerfully ritualistic core of the church, we can detect trends away from public openness and accessibility, and a lessening dependency upon music as such.

¹⁵Bruce A. Van Orden, "Preparing for a Worldwide Ministry," *Ensign* 29 (October 1999): 35-36.

¹⁶*Children's Songbook* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989).

A. Outer Music to Inner Silence

The movement from outer music to inner silence may be illustrated in the following examples. The weekly sacrament meeting is the basic meeting of the Mormon church. All members are expected to attend; worthy members, children, and non-members who are well advanced in their investigation of LDS beliefs, are permitted to partake of the sacramental emblems. In these meetings, music plays a crucially important role. Three or four hymns are sung, and other musical items may be part of the program. One of the hymns is sung to prepare the congregation for the eucharist, but the following ceremony of passing and sharing the eucharistic emblems, while the participants contemplate the meaning of the symbols in the ritual, is performed in silence.

Eucharistic rites do not take place at the semi-annual general conferences of the church. These general conferences are held in the tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, and are now simultaneously transmitted by satellite to most LDS centers in the world. Their main purpose is to proclaim the spoken word. Choral items punctuate the service and help establish and maintain the mood of reverence. Audience participation is limited to the singing of just one hymn in the middle of the program.

Solemn assemblies, too, provide an important example of the silence that attends symbolic ritual in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When a new prophet or president of the church is presented in a general conference to the membership, for their sustaining vote, that portion of the conference is called a "solemn assembly." The various quorums and groups of the church stand one-by-one to sustain their new leader. Members raise their right arms in a solemn, demonstration of support. This supremely important activity in the life of the church is conducted in impressive silence. A further use of solemn assemblies is for special instruction from the leading brethren of the church, usually given to invited priesthood leaders only, and held in temples or other large gathering places. In such meetings music is of little importance. Silence and the spoken word are paramount.

The LDS temple is a profoundly quiet place. Only the softly spoken word punctuates the reverent dignity of temple rites. In recent years, some music has been added merely as background to the first part of the temple endowment. Also, some temples play quiet, background, prelude music in the ante-chapel. In these instances, the music serves a purely incidental and decorative function, and is in no way integral to the temple rites. As Douglas Davies said recently, in describing the new Preston Temple: "[A]t the heart of Mormonism, we find silence."¹⁷

¹⁷*R&C Church Times*, May 1998.

B. Differential Values for Music

Thus, comparative trends may be observed as between what I call “organizational sanctity” and the use of music. By “organizational sanctity” I refer to the degree of sacredness afforded a particular function by the religious body. For instance, a church’s sporting league will not be perceived as having the same degree of sacredness as, say, the Bible Study group meetings. We may here be speaking, in the language of Hans Mol, of a gradation of sacralisation.¹⁸ The sanctity of an organization or meeting is measurable by the sacred value placed upon it by those involved. In this sense, it may be assumed that Latter-day Saints place less sacred value upon auxiliary and cultural activities than upon attendance at their sacrament meeting, and similarly, attendance at their stake conferences is less sacred, say, than temple attendance. So as organizational sanctity decreases, the use of music takes on greater significance, and more importantly germane to the arguments in this paper, as organizational or functional sanctity increases, the importance of music decreases.

The following diagram expresses the trend in organizational sanctity and the differential values over the use of music in terms of four key elements, *function, accessibility, use of music and sanctity*:

Differential Values for the Use of Music			
Function	Accessibility	Use of Music	Sanctity
Auxiliary Organization	Very open to visitors	Vitally important	Low
Sacrament Meeting	Open to investigators	Important	Reverential
Conference	Generally for the members	Desirable	Impressive
Solemn Assembly	Usually by invitation	Not important	Deeply solemn
Temple Ceremonies	Restricted access	Unnecessary	Supremely worshipful

¹⁸Hans Mol, *Identity and the Sacred* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976), 202f.

As LDS meetings/activities (see "Function" above) become more restrictive or private in terms of accessibility, the sanctity afforded the practice increases, but the importance of music decreases until, saturated in symbolic meaning, it becomes a sacred silence. This is the first time that academic attention has been drawn to this fact.

So it is that Latter-day Saints appear to place differential values on the use and non-use of music, depending upon the function, sanctity, and accessibility of the meeting. In summary, we may say that music's application or non-application in LDS worship and culture, taken as a whole, is determined by its usefulness.

C. Understanding the Dysfunctionality of Music in LDS Life

This phenomenological observation of the dysfunctionality of music has been described using the foregoing analysis of differential values. However, purely phenomenological approaches do not explain the paradox. Why does music appear to play such an increasingly lesser role as we move toward the heart of the LDS religion? I suggest the following as possible reasons, but these explanations are in no way intended to be definitive.

1. *No need for musical assistance.* It may simply be that members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the temple do not need the assistance of music to connect with the saving power at the ritual heart of their religion. This power lies in the performance of the rituals and ceremonies themselves, thereby rendering music superfluous to achieving a connection with that power. Music may be useful in preparation for the ritual act, but not in the actual performance of it. Similarly, it might be assumed that the temple itself is already sufficiently sanctified through its ceremony of dedication and the sacred character of the activities performed within its walls to be spiritually self-sustaining and thereby without the need of music or any other uplifting medium.

2. *The temple and ritual purity.* The next explanation may better be grasped through the anthropological form of analysis of cultural classification and the notion of ritual purity. According to the work of Judith Okely,¹⁹ whose study demonstrates the symbolic nature of the gypsy's cultural classification of inner and outer worlds, this distinctive ethnic group maintains a strict tradition of protective separation of the clean from the unclean in their society, and thereby assert their gypsy identity against the wider, non-gypsy world. Okely gives many examples of things gypsies are not allowed to bring into or do inside the sacred space of their wagons. Such things would tend to be polluting of their tradition. Other nutritional taboos are protective of their bodily health and hygiene as they see it.

¹⁹Judith Okely, *Traveller Gypsies* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 78-80.

Rather like the gypsy wagon and the gypsy's inner body, the LDS temple represents to Latter-day Saints all that is pure and undefiled in their religion. The temple enshrines their core belief and ritual tradition. It must be protected at all costs and from all potential pollutants, including music.

3. *The ambiguity of musical meaning.* The third reason for the absence of music and singing in the enactment of LDS ritual may lie in the ambiguity of musical meaning itself. A musical statement can be interpreted in a variety of ways by the listener/performer. Worshipers may indeed sing the same hymn together with the same tune and utter the same words yet understand its message slightly differently. The message implied in the words can also be modified and overshadowed by the attractiveness or otherwise of the tune to which it is set. Where clarity, comprehensibility of intent, and directness are of paramount importance, as is generally the case with religious ritual, the spoken word alone coupled with silent action is a more direct medium than music, or music combined with the spoken word. Silence and the spoken word are comparatively unambiguous modes of ritual expression. This is reflective of the wider Christian tradition of favouring the spoken word for moments of the highest ritual sacredness: for instance, in the Catholic Mass, where, with the temporary cessation of music, the ringing of a bell signals the commencement of the ritual of transubstantiation of the emblems of Christ's body and blood. The priest speaks the eucharistic text, "This is my body which is given for you." The rite is then punctuated by the second sounding of the bell, signalling the resumption of music. Thus at the apex of the Mass, the unambiguous spoken word, within an aura of sacred silence, is the supreme medium.

4. *Music as a distraction.* In connection with the above discussion of the idea of music as a source of impurity, we should be reminded of a statement of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in connection with music's use in their sacrament service: "[A]nything which detracts the partaker's thought from the covenants he or she is making is not in accordance with the ideal condition that should exist whenever this sacred, commemorative ordinance is administered to the members of the Church."²⁰ This is analogous to the principle of non-distraction propounded by Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in October 1998 in connection with the passing of the sacramental emblems among the congregation, which is done by the young Deacons in the LDS church:

²⁰James R. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-1970) 6: 252-53.

[T]hey should not do anything that would distract any member from his or her worship and renewal of covenants. . . . Deacons should pass the sacrament in a reverent and orderly manner, with no needless motions or expressions that call attention to themselves. . . . The principle of non-distraction applies to things unseen as well as seen. . . . [Y]ou should qualify yourself to participate in your priesthood duties worthily and appropriately.²¹

Thus any distractions, musical or visual, to the mental focusing necessary for gaining the full benefit from LDS rites are shunned. The need to concentrate and mentally focus in silence is obviously crucially important in the performance of LDS ritual, and this principle may equally apply, indeed perhaps even more so, in the performance of temple rites.

5. *The universality of the sacred silence as a means of apprehending the divine.* In Eastern religions like Hinduism and Jainism, silence is intrinsic to the achievement of salvation, a very positive part of Bhakti or devotion. Here again, as in Mormonism, music is frequently used to prepare the worshipper for those moments of supreme inner silence. The silence is clearly both meaningful and potent. For many religious people, silent meditation is an intrinsic part of devotion. Van der Leeuw calls it the "worshipful Silence."²² He describes one possible manifestation as "the silence of profound emotional disturbance," or "the wordless decision of the eternal Word."

For a final insight let us consider the ideas of Rudolph Otto, who saw a connection between silence and the numinous.²³ Otto suggested that the arts held two direct means of expressing the numinous, namely darkness and silence. For Otto this was a real, aural silence, that is, in addition to the mere absence of music, "a spontaneous reaction to the feeling of the actual *numen praesens*." This perhaps comes closest to representing the Latter-day Saint notion of silence in connection with temple ritual: a real sense of awe and divine presence that is best apprehended in the silence within.

²¹Dallin H. Oaks, *Ensign* (November 1998), 39.

²²Gerardus Van Der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, 2d ed. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964), 433.

²³Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923), 69f.

IV. CONCLUSION

With the exception recently of Professor Jon D. Green's 1996 paper on silence in Mormonism,²⁴ Latter-day Saint academics have been silent on the meaning of silence. It may be that the full answer to the paradox of music and silence in the LDS sound world lies in a combination of all the explanations proffered. Perhaps it might be summarised in this manner: The sacred silence in Mormonism is fundamentally an unambiguous and un-pollutable aid to the acquisition of religious meaning in symbolic ritual. Not surprisingly, the most silent of all arts, namely pictorial art, continues to grow and flourish at all levels in Mormonism, and especially in temples.

Music in LDS culture may soon become a closed boundary to foreign cultures, especially as the church seeks to move into Far East Asia. Western tonality, on which the LDS church's musical language is based, is exactly that—Western. Most Eastern Asian tonalities are not based upon the tonic scale. The Chinese have a very specialized form of pentatonic music, and Indian culture enjoys ornamental quarter-tones and un-Western rhythms that are very complex, not to mention the strangely religious, percussive music of the Javanese Gamelang. Certain Indian sub-cultures sing their scriptures, considering it blasphemous and vulgar to speak them. How will these peoples sing "Come, Come Ye Saints," for instance, or adjust to hearing scripture spoken in conference? The scale and scope of such cultural assimilation can hardly be imagined. Commenting on the challenges to the church of musical assimilation in the Indian sub-continent, Roger Keller has stated: "If the door of music can be opened within the parameters of priesthood authority, a thoroughly vibrant and orthodox community of believers will emerge in India."²⁵ However, given its possible status as a new world religion, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints may no longer have the critical need for music as the flagship of its institutional identity. The more recent processes in what Mauss has broadly labelled a period of "retrenchment" have tended to focus the attention of LDS leaders away from the outward forms of their religious culture, where music features strongly, and toward the inner reinforcement of socially relevant foundational and sectarian beliefs. Latter-day Saint identity may no longer be locked into its former stereotypes of plural marriage and dietary abstention. Issues such as family values, sexual purity, and gender roles are surfacing

²⁴Jon D. Green, "The Paradox of Silence in the Arts and Religion," *BYU Studies* 35, no.3 (1995-96): 95-131.

²⁵Roger Keller, *India: A Synopsis of Cultural Challenges*, in Douglas Davies, ed., *Mormon Identities in Transition* (London: Cassell, 1996), 89.

within Mormonism and taking on increasingly greater prominence. If secularisation and moral liberalisation in the world increase in this century, the LDS church's stand on these moral issues and other similar issues may indeed come to replace the older, outdated symbols such as polygamy, health codes, and the Tabernacle Choir as important boundary markers for LDS culture.

Not unlike the sweeping, late-nineteenth century changes which prepared the LDS church for survival and expansion into the twentieth century, the church's program of institutional down-sizing ("reduce and simplify") together with the processes of cultural accommodation (principally, de-Protestantization and feminization), have both protected and prepared it for whatever the Latter-day prophets see as lying ahead in the next century. The inner church too has been safeguarded: Latter-day Saint ritual clothed in its sacred silence maintains the purity of symbolic and theocratic tradition, while the temple continues to stand as the supreme shrine and protector of what is most sacred in Mormonism.