

In Taiwan But Not of Taiwan: Challenges of the LDS Church in the Wake of the Indigenous Movement

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The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has experienced stable growth in Taiwan since the first four missionaries arrived in 1956. Even in recent years, when the growth of the Church has slowed considerably in many countries including those in East Asia, LDS growth in Taiwan remains robust. Thus, something distinctive characterizes Mormonism in Taiwan compared to Mormonism in neighboring countries. Some scholars have used diminishing growth rates in the past decade or two to argue that Mormonism remains marginal in many countries.¹

I argue, somewhat differently, that despite its stable growth, the LDS experience in Taiwan shows signs of cultural marginalization that are not much different from its marginalization elsewhere. Like Mormonism in many places outside the American continent, Taiwan's Mormons also face a double marginalization, a marginalization manifest both inside the Church and in their own country. Taiwan is at the periphery of internal LDS dialogues. The land and the people there remain unknown to most of the LDS population. Stories about Church development on the island, foreign missionaries' encounters with the local population, members' cultural conflicts and adjustments, and their gospel outlook and identity struggles await a telling. Externally, comprising a small proportion of society in Taiwan, Mormonism continues to be seen as a cult-like religion. Its foreignness, and particularly its Americanness, is positively exotic and

productive of continued growth in the unique context of Taiwan, but this quality simultaneously keeps Mormonism at the margins of society.

Local members celebrated the fifty-year jubilee of Mormonism on the island in the summer of 2006. The jubilee provides a useful lens through which to reflect on the history of the Church in Taiwan and evaluate its current fortunes. This paper examines the position of Mormonism in contemporary Taiwan, where two seemingly contradictory forces—the indigenous movement and the desire for strong engagement with globalization—work together in shaping the culture of Taiwan. Through analyzing both the outsider narrative (discourse constructed by media) and the insider narrative (discourse constructed within the Church in Taiwan), this paper evaluates how the American image of the Church has both benefited and challenged the Church in Taiwan.² The paper first provides a brief history of Taiwan and then outlines the development of Christianity and Mormonism on the island. Next it analyzes the media image of Mormonism and ways in which local members internalize Americanness within the Church. The concluding section discusses the benefits and challenges that accompany perceptions of an American church and reflects on the conceptualization of an American church in a global setting.

The Land and the Past

Taiwan is located ninety miles off the coast of Southeast China. In a literal sense, the island has lived “at the edge” for the past four centuries.³ It has been a backwater frontier for both Eastern and Western empires; and its political ownership has exhibited remarkable discontinuities.⁴ Aborigines—Austronesian-speaking, Malay-Polynesian peoples who have inhabited the island for about eight thousand years—have not fully been agents of their own political and economic fate for the past four centuries.

Western knowledge of Taiwan began in 1544 when a Portuguese ship first passed the island and a Dutch navigator on the ship, Jan Huygen van Linschoten, named it *I’lha Formosa* (meaning “Beautiful Island”). Taiwan soon became a frontier for Japanese, English, Chinese, Spanish, and Dutch traders for commercial gain. The Dutch eventually controlled the island between 1624 and 1662. This short-lived Western occupation ended when the late Ming general, Zheng Chenggong (Koxinga), retreated to Taiwan after his defeat by Manchu armies in China. The Zheng

family expelled the Dutch, ruled part of the island for about twenty years, and eventually surrendered to the Qing regime in 1683.

Streams of Chinese migration to Taiwan started during the Dutch period when Chinese men (mainly from Fujian Province) crossed the “Big Black Ditch”—the Taiwan Strait—to work for the Dutch East India Company. Large-scale Han migration to the island, however, did not occur until the late Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), when the Qing pressed southward on the mainland. Although Qing authorities imposed migration restrictions to Taiwan, Chinese migration, mostly from Fujian and Guangdong provinces, continued. The Chinese population thus steadily increased during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, soon outnumbered the aboriginal population, and became the majority in Taiwan.

The Qing regime (1644–1911) loosely ruled Taiwan for two centuries until it ceded the island to Japan in 1895 after the first Sino-Japanese War. Fifty years later, Japan “returned” Taiwan to Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist government in 1945, after Japan was defeated at the end of World War II. Chiang then lost China’s civil war to Mao Zedong’s Communists in 1949 and fled with more than one million Chinese to Taiwan. For five decades thereafter, the Nationalists controlled and shaped the island’s politics, culture, and society in significant ways. In recent years, however, the Taiwan-centered (though mostly Han Chinese) indigenous movement fostered the growth of opposition forces and created a situation in which power can and does change hands.⁵

Christianity in Taiwan

Christian missionaries came with Western explorers, traders, and armies in the 1620s. In conjunction with Western armies occupying the land, missionaries converted aboriginal village after village. Historian John E. Wills identifies two factors for early Christian success. First, aboriginal social and cultural organizations were isolated and vulnerable in the confrontation with outside forces. Second, the “red-haired barbarians” (as Han Chinese later called the Dutch) simply owned superior weapons. Many aborigines were forced to convert in the encounter. Christian missionaries set up school systems, expelled female shamans (leading practitioners of aboriginal religious rituals), kept men home from the head-hunting business, and recast the family structure of the aborigines from a matriarchal toward a patriarchal emphasis.⁶ Nevertheless, Zheng’s

Chinese Taiwan, by resisting Manchurian rule as well as maintaining Han cultural traditions, limited the development of Christianity on the island.

A similar sentiment toward Westerners carried through the Qing Dynasty. In this period Christian missionaries gained converts among aboriginal villages but had very little success among Chinese.⁷ During Japanese rule (1895–1945), the colonial government first held a neutral position toward Christianity as it tried to build a positive relationship with the Western world. With the outbreak of World War II, however, the Japanese suspected missionaries of spying for their home countries and strictly limited missionary activity on Taiwan.

Missionaries resumed their work on the island after 1945 as the Nationalist KMT government guaranteed freedom of religion. In fact, the new regime favored Christianity over traditional religions because many political elites, including the “first family,” were Christian. Christianity reached a “golden age” during the 1940s and 1950s. The membership of Catholicism, for example, reached 190,000, an increase of 1,700 percent between 1945 and 1966.⁸ Two factors contributed to this phenomenon. First, as Communists prevailed on mainland China, a large number of missionaries and members flooded Taiwan. Second, Taiwan’s economy collapsed after the war, with inflation and unemployment rates running at all-time highs. American aid provided great relief in that desperate time. Since a great deal of food and social services came through church institutions, people waited in lines in front of churches for flour, soap, eggs, and other daily goods. Christian churches therefore won the nickname of “the flour religion.” These churches also built hospitals, schools, nursing homes, and orphanages, weaving themselves into Taiwan’s social fabric.

Mormon missionaries arrived near the end of the golden age of Christianity, on June 4, 1956. Early missionary efforts focused on American military personnel in Taiwan and educated local elites, who often spoke English as missionaries struggled with the language and had no Chinese LDS scriptures available.⁹ As historian R. Lanier Britsch points out, the Church did not take as strong a hold in Taiwan as in Hong Kong in the first few years, due to the threat of war from China and the distance and lack of communication between the mission president in Hong Kong and missionaries in Taiwan.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the Church has grown slowly but steadily during the past five decades. (See Figure 1.) An average of about a thousand people have converted to Mormonism yearly from 1979

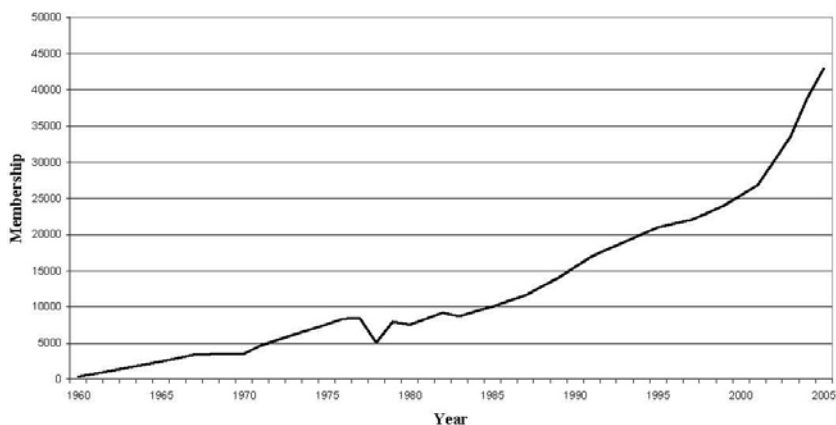


Figure 1. LDS Membership in Taiwan, 1960–2005

onward;¹¹ since the mid-1990s, more than two thousand have joined per year. The Taipei Taiwan Temple was dedicated in November 1984. In 2007 there were three missions and nine stakes. At the end of 2005, LDS membership was 42,881, or about 0.19 percent of Taiwan’s almost 23 million people.¹²

The “Outside” Narrative

The steady growth of Church membership in Taiwan, however, does not indicate a full acceptance of Mormonism. On the contrary, Mormonism is seen, at worst, as a cultish, unknown, polygamous religion or, at best, either as a friendly, polite American guest or as something exotic that accentuates the diversity and the global outlook of a cosmopolitan Taiwan and of Taipei in particular.

This conclusion is based on analysis of popular media in Taiwan. I utilized periodical and newspaper databases from the National Central Library, the most important research library in Taiwan. The periodical database is relatively new, encompassing articles published in Chinese in both popular magazines and academic journals in Taiwan since 1998. A keyword search for “Mormon Church” and the “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” yielded only ten articles. This result suggests, unsurprisingly and as in many other countries, that Mormonism is virtually unknown or unimportant on the island. These ten articles are an LDS pub-

lic relations piece on the development of the Church in Taiwan; a jubilee-related article on missionaries and Mormonism; a story on the Mormon connection to multi-level marketing; a review of Jon Krakauer's *Under the Banner of Heaven*; two articles on Church architecture (one featuring the Conference Center in Salt Lake City and the other a new Church office building in Taipei); three pieces on the un-Christian nature of Mormonism published in a university-oriented Christian periodical (one details a Utah-based pastor's mission to save Mormons from false doctrine); and one article comparing Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity. Only the last-mentioned is an academic article, written by a Presbyterian pastor who is also an adjunct religion studies professor at the Catholic Furen University in Taiwan. This article, for the most part, correctly describes the origin and history of the Church. The focus on these three specific religions, however, imputes a cult-like nature to these sects, as indicated in the title: "Pseudo-Christian Religions in Taiwan."¹³ Most of these articles signal Mormon otherness in one way or another.

Using a different database, I located seventy-seven articles about Mormonism in major Taiwanese newspapers between 2000 and 2006. I separated stories on American Mormonism from those on the local LDS Church. Polygamy, not surprisingly, dominated news reports about American Mormonism. Stories about Warren Jeffs, Tom Green, and the kidnapping of Elizabeth Smart comprised twelve of the total twenty-five. Headlines such as "American Top Ten Most Wanted: 80 Wives 250 Children, Polygamous Head Arrested," "Self-Proclaimed President and Prophet, Jeffs Inherits His Father's 65 Wives and Controls His Followers' Marriage Decisions," and "Mormon Headquarters State of Utah Still Has 30,000 people Living in Harem," signify a strong sense of Mormon otherness and peculiarity, if not bizarre deviance. One report, which featured the accusation by Hugh Nibley's daughter that her father had sexually abused her, worsens the image.

These news articles are all translations of articles from U.S. wire services. Until the past decade or two, with the rising of grassroots identity and the revitalization of traditional religions (discussed below), religion was seen as a private activity and, except for scandals, rarely became a topic for public discussion. In journalism practice, as a result, religion is not considered a separate beat, there are no "religion reporters" in Taiwan, and religion studies is not mandated as a part of the journalism (or regular

university) curriculum and training. With limited knowledge about religion, journalists in Taiwan are generally not equipped to report on religion-related events and often arbitrarily add unrelated information and stereotypes.¹⁴ In the case of Mormonism, most reporters/translators do not have enough understanding of Mormonism to differentiate the LDS Church from other groups with Mormon roots. Many of the articles, especially in headlines, use sensationalism to entice readership. Some articles did indicate Jeffs's and Green's "fundamentalist" affiliation. But if this disclaimer does not register with most American readers, there's no reason to expect it will with Taiwanese readers.

Tourism is the second most prominent theme in Taiwanese news articles on Mormons. With rhetorical conventions common to tourism, many of these articles produce Mormon otherness by creating or emphasizing the distance (both real and imagined) between the place they write about and their readers' world. Mormon Utah is portrayed as mysterious and exotic—with mentions of the beauty of the desert and the secrets of this religious Zion—in the far-distant American West. Each article contains stereotypes about Mormons and misinformation about Utah/Mormon history. One article, for example, asserts that Mormon temples are only for high-level elders and for special occasions such as marriages. It describes ordinary Mormons as wearing black dresses and suits in everyday life and claims that Taiwanese tourists joked that, if they want to be saved, they must at least use Mormon restrooms on Temple Square.¹⁵ Brigham Young is arguably the best-known LDS Church president and prophet in Taiwan, in part because of the reputation of Brigham Young University. Without careful research, these travel writers credited every historical event they know of to him. One article, for example, claimed that Young issued the Manifesto in 1898 (instead of Woodruff in 1890).¹⁶ Another article about the Church-run Polynesian Culture Center on Oahu, Hawaii, is even more fantastical, claiming that Brigham Young established the center forty-one years ago; the article was written in 2004.¹⁷ A few tourist-style reports on the 2002 Winter Olympics in Utah mention Mormonism. One specifically focused on alcohol regulation in Utah and made the indirect connection with polygamy by citing a billboard advertisement for beer that "One Is Not Enough."¹⁸ This article is light-hearted; but by recalling polygamy and rigid Mormon prohibitions against drinking, it positioned Mormonism as out of the mainstream.

Stories on the local LDS community presented a very different, al-

though equally exotic, aspect of Mormonism. Among the forty-three articles on the local LDS Church, excluding jubilee-related stories, about half (twenty-one articles) focus on American missionaries.¹⁹ In fact, foreign missionaries are the dominant image or face of the LDS Church in Taiwan. They become news simply because of their foreignness. In most of these stories (always accompanied by sizeable photographs), missionaries are seen as providing community service, such as teaching English, cleaning up streets, and visiting nursing homes or orphanages. But, interestingly, they are not often depicted as missionaries proselytizing—the thing they come to Taiwan for. To be fair, local members' good deeds are occasionally reported as well. However, these reports tend to be small and located on the bottom portion of news pages either with only small photographs or without illustrations.

The Church received a public relations boost during its jubilee celebration, which generated impressive news coverage.²⁰ Three activities particularly attracted the press's attention: the first Mormon missionaries in Taiwan, the island-wide bicycle relays, and the pioneer handcart reenactment during a youth conference. All three strongly reinforced the American image of the Church. Stories about Elder Weldon J. Kitchen and Elder Melvin Fish, two of the four first missionaries to Taiwan in 1956, who returned for the Jubilee were spotlighted. Their experiences during post-World War II Taiwan and their touching reunions with early members typified news reports of the early jubilee celebration. Local members became part of the news stories only in relation to the two American missionaries.

Photographs of the bicycle relays featured members and missionaries, but the dominant image stressed missionaries. All the local members featured in photographs wore white shirts; some even had ties. The pioneer handcart reenactment during the youth conference provided another exotic, and probably the most problematic, spectacle for media coverage. Most newspaper photographs showed Taiwanese youth wearing clothes from the Victorian era, imitating early Mormon pioneers pushing handcarts or crossing small streams. This image (mis)places Taiwanese youth in time and space and in a way that fits nowhere in local LDS history. However, it presumably satisfied the curiosity of journalists as well as the general public toward "the Spirit of the American West" and "American Migration History," as newspaper headlines suggested.

In short, the coverage of Mormonism in the Taiwanese media is am-

biguous, and geography seems to condition such portrayals. The image of Mormonism in the United States is mainly shaped through the reports on polygamy, and the religion is often described as a cult or a religious oddity in a far distant land. This negative image coexists with the positive portrayal of American missionaries and, to a much lesser extent, local members. Either way, however, Mormonism comes across as foreign—as something that does not quite fit in Taiwanese society. This ambiguity might have prompted another subset of newspaper articles giving tips on how to refuse Mormon missionaries in humorous and inoffensive ways.²¹

The “Inside” Narrative

Journalists do not necessarily invent these images; rather, they are often supplied with them. What people see in the local press partly reflects Church public relations strategy, which, in turn, is directly shaped by the public perception of Mormonism in Taiwan. It is a reinforcing cycle: A church with strong American characteristics is seen as American and is expected to be American; the Church in turn meets this expectation with appropriate images, thus reinforcing perceived American characteristics. One local Church leader, “Brother Lin,” with long membership and much administrative experience, noted that local leaders had tried unsuccessfully to break the cycle by promoting local members’ stories. The Taiwanese media, he concluded, simply do not deem stories about local members newsworthy.²² In a separate interview, one Public Affairs missionary said that what Taiwanese media, as well as the government and general public, want from the LDS community is something “spectacular” and “exotic.”²³ He cited an incident with the Taipei City Government, which invited the Church, among other social groups, to celebrate Confucius’s birthday, but instructed the Church to send only foreign/American members (missionaries and the mission president). Organizers wanted to use the Americans to show the globalization of the Taipei metropolis. Although amazed at this request, the Americans dutifully showed up so as not to let slip the public relations opportunity.

Some members say they are sometimes afraid to let others know of their religious affiliation; many Taiwanese think local members are trying to become like Americans by going to an American church.²⁴ This identity is reinforced both inside and outside the Church. These examples, in one way or another, indicate that the Church is in Taiwan but not of Taiwan. Fifty years of Mormonism in Taiwan have changed the size but not

the position of the Church on the island. Missionaries and the Americanness of the Church are merely used to display Taiwan's desire to be seen as cosmopolitan. The Church remains at the margin of Taiwanese society and is perceived by members and nonmembers alike as quintessentially American.

While the embrace of Americanness is doubtless instrumental in some instances in promoting missionary work, it is also my sense that many members internalize the Americanness of the Church and uncritically take it as natural. A survey of jubilee promotional materials shows such an internalization process. Many of the event posters, produced to advertise among members, were strongly American oriented. The island-wide bicycle relay poster was such an example. Two photographs of missionaries were featured—four elders and two sisters—all of them American. Similarly, of the four photographs on a poster promoting a “member-missionary” reunion, none shows a local member. The image on the youth conference poster reflects pop culture in Taiwan, with two Americanized Japanese-type comic-book characters (both are Western-looking; one with blond hair and blue eyes) holding a flag with Chinese characters—“heritage”—on it. Though not unusual in Taiwan (and indeed in East Asia), it is no small irony for Western-looking comic-book characters to represent Taiwanese youth. The word “heritage” is also ambiguous. Does it refer to Chinese/Taiwanese cultural heritage, local Church heritage, or American pioneer heritage? The attendance of former “Especially for Youth” workers from the United States to help direct the conference might also illustrate an unwitting effort to import American/Utah youth culture as a gospel norm.

The use of English in Church-owned workplaces also shows such Americanness. English becomes another, if not *the*, official language in Church buildings. English proficiency is almost a requirement for employment in the Church, since most workers need to either communicate with Church headquarters in Salt Lake City or with American Church leaders in both Taiwan and Hong Kong (e.g., mission presidents, area authorities, temple presidents, senior missionaries, etc.). Most Church employees and local Church leaders adopt English names for convenience; most Americans cannot pronounce their Chinese names. Even many regular members have English names, often given by American missionaries, and use those names in church. One sometimes hears American missionaries, especially senior missionaries, commenting on Taiwanese people's

lack of English skills, particularly with terminology, which, in their view, becomes an obstacle in communication. The demand for and acceptance of English in regular Church functions in Taiwan (and other parts of the non-English-speaking world) reinforce “the hegemony of English,” to borrow BYU Hawaii professor Mark James’s phrase.²⁵ English, he suggests, has been uncritically accepted as the world’s dominant language and, as a result, endangered many native languages. Again, the point here is not to argue that this phenomenon is unique to Taiwan or limited to the local LDS community but simply to point out that this institutional practice reinforces the hegemony of English.

Mormonism in Taiwan’s Cultural Paradox

Arjun Appadurai points out that globalization is not a unitary process but is rather characterized by the coexistence of different cultural flows, each possessing its own logic.²⁶ Contemporary cultural identity in Taiwan is similarly characterized by the confluence of distinctive cultural trends. Two seemingly paradoxical cultural flows have developed on the island since the 1990s: passionate nationalism/local identity and a strong desire for globalization. These two forces often interact with each other without clashing. Mormonism in Taiwan is affected by both flows, which work both for and against the development of the LDS Church. This section of the paper examines contemporary pros and cons of the Church’s Americanness given Taiwan’s various trends relating to cultural identity.

The Positive Side of Americanness

The Americanness of Mormonism has worked in favor of LDS growth. In the late 1950s and the 1960s, missionaries attracted highly educated social elites with English proficiency to the Church. These converts became the backbone of the local church and laid a firm foundation for the Church in Taiwan, including the translation of scriptures and the construction of the Taipei chapel.

Consider two current phenomena: First, since the end of the Christian golden age in the late 1950s, most Christian denominations have suffered either very slow or no increase in membership; some have even experienced diminished membership numbers. Second, since the 1990s Mormonism has faced a similar slowdown in parts of Asia, such as Japan, South Korea, and Hong Kong. But LDS growth in Taiwan has not slowed.²⁷ An examination of Taiwan’s colonial past and its current politi-

cal dilemma provide a helpful perspective in interpreting this difference. As mentioned earlier, Taiwan's past is a history of multi-layered colonialism. Colonial history results in a colonized mentality. Many people in Taiwan tend to have the so-called *Congyang Meiwai* (Western-worshipping, foreign-envy) psyche that leads people to become extra friendly toward Westerners. Many develop a blind belief in Western cultures and technologies. The United States had a strong presence on Taiwan after World War II, providing military and financial aid, technological assistance, cultural imports, etc. Taiwanese people still tend to lionize Americans more than other foreigners. A popular tongue-in-cheek saying—"The American moon is always rounder [than the Taiwanese moon]"—illustrates this colonized mentality.

The LDS Church, to some degree, has benefited from this Western envy and attracted many who would like to be associated with Americans. A long-time local member bluntly states, "In general, people in Taiwan worship Americans. Two-thirds of the people joined the Church because of American missionaries."²⁸ It is no secret that many come to church simply for socialization—to practice English and befriend American missionaries. "Brother Lin" felt a need to suggest that the situation may be changing, claiming that an increasing proportion of more recent converts come to church because they are searching for a religion. Nevertheless, Mormonism's American characteristics continue to attract people to the Church.²⁹ This social-psychological inclination may not be wholly unique to Taiwan, but it is particularly developed in Taiwan and has undergone little alteration in Taiwanese life even in the new millennium due largely to Taiwan's unique political history.

The island's political difficulties have made the role of the United State relevant in ways that surpass the U.S. role in even South Korea and Japan. Unresolved remains "the Taiwan issue"—which refers to the debate over Taiwan's political future. That future is often framed as having only two options: becoming an independent country or uniting with China. Facing constant military threats from China, Taiwan relies on the United States for arms sales and protection, part of its role as a kind of "legal guardian" of Taiwan for the past six decades. Taiwan has always been careful to read the signals from Washington before deciding its political moves. Unlike Japan and South Korea, which have moved toward more independence in foreign policy in the last decade or two, Taiwan has remained dependent. An example is the Anti-Secession Law, which the Chinese government

passed in March 2005, forbidding Taiwan from claiming independence, as Beijing insists that Taiwan is one of its provinces. While encouraging citizens to protest against Beijing's law, Taiwan President Chen Shuiben waited for Washington's reaction before vocally denouncing Beijing's law and formally mobilizing the largest-ever demonstration in Taiwan. In any case, Taiwan cannot afford to offend the United States. Although the U.S. invasion of Iraq has generated anti-American sentiment in many parts of the world, Taiwan's government and media rarely disagree publicly with the Bush administration. Most news reports of the war are filtered through the lens of American foreign policy. As a result, there is no significant anti-American sentiment in Taiwan. This pro-American attitude, I think, protects missionaries from outcries challenging the legitimacy of the war in Iraq and U.S. international relations, allowing American missionaries to stay focused on proselytizing.

Taiwan's international options have been greatly restrained since the United Nations recognized China and expelled Taiwan in 1971, and since the United States and China rebuilt their diplomatic ties after President Richard M. Nixon's visit to Beijing in 1972. China has either bullied or enticed nation after nation into cutting ties with Taiwan. Taiwan currently has formal diplomatic ties with only around twenty-five countries, mostly small nations in Africa and the Pacific Islands, to whom Taiwan gives large amounts of financial aid in exchange for recognition. The more energetically Beijing tries to curtail Taiwan's international relations, the more eagerly Taiwan strives for international recognition, and the more obsessed it is with globalization. Acceptance of an American church fits into this psychological and practical geopolitics. Mormonism, as a particularly visible manifestation of Americanness, becomes a welcome guest that helps to showcase Taiwan as a legitimate part of the global community.

Challenges of Americanness

Existing simultaneously but disjunctively with Taiwan's embrace of (especially American) globalization is Taiwan's search for identity. Economic growth and political liberation have generated post-colonial consciousness and strong nationalism in Taiwan. Thus, while Americanness has aided the numerical growth of the LDS Church, Taiwan's indigenous movement has also hindered broad LDS participation in, and influence on, Taiwanese society. There are reasons to believe that Mormonism may be having only a surface-level impact, rather than deeply integrating with

Taiwan's society. The LDS Church faces four particular challenges in Taiwan.

1. New Kid on the Block. In comparison to other Christian denominations, Mormonism is a new kid on the block. Four hundred years of Christian missionary efforts have secured some denominational presence on Taiwan, even if the Christian proportion is relatively small—5% of the total population. Catholicism, for example, became the major religion among the aboriginal population. The Presbyterian Church, with its long-time involvement in the democratization process, also won a place in Taiwan. With its late arrival (thirty-six years after David O. McKay, then an apostle, dedicated China in 1921 and seven years after missionaries went to Hong Kong), Mormonism probably missed a chance at integrating itself into Taiwan society in the early Nationalist KMT era (1940s–1950s).

Japanese colonialism and the political instability that followed World War II might have delayed the Church's decision to send missionaries to Taiwan. The "return" of Taiwan to China after the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–45) did not stabilize the political situation on the island. Taiwanese people were again terrorized by the new regime. The civil war between Nationalists and Communists in China was extended to Taiwan after the Nationalists lost China and escaped to the island in 1949. Communist leader Mao Zedong wanted to "wash Taiwan in blood" and therefore bombed the intervening islands controlled by the KMT Nationalists. During the so-called First Taiwan Strait Crisis (1954–55), the Nationalists lost the Yijiangshan Islands and the Tachen Islands and barely maintained control over Jinmen (Quemoy) and Matzu islands. Many countries, including the United States, did not expect Taiwan to survive.

After years of on-and-off offensives, Mao finally decided to make the timeline for Taiwan's "liberation" indefinite. Mormon missionaries came toward the end of this political instability. Unfortunately this time period also marked the end of the golden age for Christianity in Taiwan, as local consciousness started to rise. Consequently, Mormonism's ability to become deeply involved in Taiwan's society has been limited.

2. The Indigenous Movement. The ongoing indigenous movement posits a fundamental challenge for the development of the LDS Church in Taiwan. The lifting of martial law in 1987 dramatically transformed Taiwan-

ese society. Political liberation and economic confidence led to a search for identity. Local consciousness and grassroots culture have become the main ideologies affecting almost every aspect of Taiwanese identity. Consider language. If language is a crucial site for contesting identity, as many theorists argue, the revival of mother tongues has challenged the legitimacy of Mandarin, the official language installed by the Nationalists. Some intellectuals have even gone so far as to label Mandarin the “colonizers’ language.” In the wake of the indigenous movement, the government has instigated a new school curriculum to teach children and youth their native tongues. The media also reflect this new trend and incorporate various dialects into regular programs and news broadcasts.

As Weller observes, religious practices have always been connected closely to changing identity in Taiwan.³⁰ Whether a religion can identify with local culture in post-martial-law Taiwan might determine its acceptance by the Taiwanese people. Catholicism and many Christian denominations were on the frontline of indigenization even before Taiwan’s political reforms. Catholicism identifies itself with aboriginal cultures and uses tribal languages in its worship services and Bible readings. The Presbyterian Church also gradually became a key player in religious indigenization in Taiwan after it came to the island in 1865. It called for a native ministry, established an indigenous clergy, ran an independent Taiwanese church, and invented a Romanization for the Taiwanese (Hoklo) language in order to translate the Bible. Since the 1970s, the Presbyterian Church has been sympathetic toward the Taiwan Independence Movement, allying itself with the Taiwanese and their Hoklo language.³¹ In other words, the Presbyterian Church helped Hoklos “define their sense of cultural/linguistic self-identity.”³² These churches identify themselves as *Taiwanese* Catholicism or *Chinese* Christianity in an attempt to distance themselves from being *huan a gao* (literally meaning, in Hoklo, “barbaric religion,” referring to Western/foreign churches).³³ Some Christian denominations, such as the New Testament Church and the True Jesus Church, are locally grown, with indigenized Pentecostalism in their history, organizational structure, doctrine, and rituals.³⁴

The LDS Church seems to have little desire to adjust to the indigenous movement. Mandarin remains the common language used in formal Church functions in Taiwan. Foreign missionaries sometimes feel frustrated because they are not able to communicate with many of the older generation who use Taiwanese. “Brother Lin” half-jokingly stated that

missionaries might have better success if they could also speak Hoklo, particularly in the southern part of Taiwan where grassroots identity is strong. I taught at a university in Kaohsiung in 2000–2001 in southern Taiwan, and constantly found myself needing to speak Hoklo to connect with students there. But at church, during both my mission and living experiences, Mandarin was the only language spoken. When Hoklo speakers come to church, they need a translator. This awkwardness undoubtedly turns many people away. Britsch asserts that, in the Church's early days in Taiwan, missionaries found more success among those with Christian backgrounds than those without.³⁵ Those Christians he refers to were probably not the aborigines or Presbyterians mentioned above but more likely urban, middle-class, relatively educated, younger, Mandarin-speaking Christians who had come to Taiwan with the Nationalist government. In continuing to give linguistic priority to Mandarin, the Church may have failed to reach a population as wide as it could hope for.

Of course, the Church's prioritization of Mandarin makes some sense. It has been the country's *lingua franca* since the Nationalists arrived. In practical terms, it is still the language that reaches the most people, both in Taiwan now and potentially in China in the future. However, cultural sensitivity in post-martial-law Taiwan is crucial. It doesn't really take much effort to make the cultural connection. In fact, many missionaries learn a few phrases of Hoklo to impress people. But the problem is that they often use those phrases in a somewhat demeaning way, either to make fun of Hoklo speakers or to show that the dialect does not sound as "graceful" or "polished" as Mandarin. There is still little sense that Mormonism is using language to authentically integrate itself within Taiwan's society.

3. *Revitalization of Traditional Religions.* "Secularization theory" expects religion to decline in situations of increased modernization and economic development. However, the orthodoxy of the secularization thesis has been seriously challenged in recent decades. Reviewing sociological research on religion, Rodney Stark and Roger Finke question the correlation between modernization and religiosity and propose a rethinking of the paradigm.³⁶ Taiwan's experience also contradicts secularization theory. Modernization has not pushed Taiwan away from religion; on the contrary, it has pulled Taiwan toward it—especially toward its traditional expressions. The transformation of Taiwan society, in fact, has produced

TABLE 1
STATISTICS ON RELIGIONS IN TAIWAN

Religion	Members	% of Total population	Temples/ Churches	Universities/ Colleges	Hospitals
Buddhism	8,086,000	35.1	4,006	1	3
Daoism	7,600,000	33.0	*18,274	8	3
Yi Guan Dao	810,000	3.5	3,260	—	—
Protestantism	605,000	2.6	3,609	7	14
Catholicism	298,000	1.3	1,151	4	12
Lord of Universe Church	298,000	1.3	50	—	—
Maitreya Great Dao	250,000	1.1	2,200	—	—
Tian De Jiao	200,000	0.9	14	—	—
Li-ism	186,000	0.8	138	—	—
Syuan Yuan Jiao	152,700	0.7	22	—	—
Islam	58,000	0.3	6	—	—
Tenrikyo	35,000	0.2	153	—	—
Universe Maitreya Emperor Jiao	35,000	0.2	12	—	—
Hai Zih Dao	30,000	0.1	55	—	—
Confucianism	26,700	0.1	139	—	—
Church of Scientology	20,000	0.1	7	—	—
Baha'i	16,000	0.1	13	—	—
The Chinese Heritage and Mission Religion	5,000	<0.1	5	—	—
Zhonghua Sheng Jiao	3,200	<0.1	7	—	—
Mahikarikyo	1,000	<0.1	9	—	—
Precosmic Salvationism	1,000	<0.1	6	—	—
Huang Zhong	1,000	<0.1	1	—	—
Da Yi Jiao	1,000	<0.1	1	—	—
Total Religious Population	18,718,600	81.3	33,138	20	32
Total Population	23,036,087	100	—	—	—

Source: *Taiwan Yearbook 2006*.

*Includes 8,753 home shrines.

its own paradigm shift in the island's religious terrain. The "Taiwan Miracle" starting from the 1960s gradually reduced the island's economic reliance on the United States and diminished the social welfare functions of Christian churches in general, contributing, as a result, to a decline of Western religion in Taiwan. The end of the golden age of Christianity coincided with the beginning of the revitalization of traditional religions. In fact, traditional religions benefited from economic growth. Many Bud-

dhist and Daoist organizations emerged during this time and eventually became the backbones of contemporary Taiwanese society.

Four Buddhist forces, in particular, have become symbols of grassroots identity and agents within civil society, in both Taiwan and abroad: *Ciji* (or *Tzu Chi*), *Foguangshan*, *Fagushan*, and *Zhongtaishan*. Each of these organizations has a charismatic leader who attracts millions of followers and generates substantial donations. Each also operates sophisticated media outlets and mobilizes seemingly endless numbers of volunteers. They build schools and hospitals and are involved in other humanitarian relief efforts; they have, in the past two decades, gradually replaced the social functions filled by Christian churches. Their influence is expanding transnationally with strong proselyting efforts and influence among the Taiwanese diaspora.³⁷

According to Taiwanese government records and as partially indicated in Table 1, religious groups currently operate 32 hospitals, 43 clinics, 25 retirement homes, 33 centers for the mentally challenged, 14 institutions for the physically disabled, 3 rehabilitation centers, 12 orphanages, and 39 nurseries. They have also established 352 kindergartens, 12 elementary schools, 41 high schools, 6 colleges, 14 universities, and 107 monasteries and seminaries, and set up 147 libraries and 59 publishing houses, with 774 publications.³⁸ In comparison to traditional religions and established Christian denominations, Mormonism is virtually invisible and has very little impact on Taiwan's society. The LDS Church is not even listed as an independent religion in this government source but rather is included in the Protestant category. In a recent *BYU Studies* article, Richard B. Stamps, former missionary and mission president, argues that Mormon missionaries have contributed to Taiwanese society on an extensive scale both monetarily and culturally.³⁹ I respectfully disagree. Although the Church and missionaries have brought in American dollars, the amount remains insignificant in comparison to the Taiwanese economy as a whole. I find no compelling evidence, either, that Mormonism has had much impact culturally.⁴⁰

Seeing the strong social impact of Buddhist and Daoist organizations, many local members wonder why Church headquarters does not invest more money in Taiwan.⁴¹ However, "Brother Lin" argued in his interview that the Church has actually put more money in Taiwan than its share. He cited the Taipei Temple, new chapels across the island, and the recently completed Church office building as evidence of the Church's in-

vestment on the island.⁴² Nevertheless, he recognized the gap between the LDS community and the general Taiwanese population and acknowledged that the Church is often one or two steps slower than other religions and charity organizations in providing humanitarian relief in Taiwan because of the constraints accompanying central control of the budget and lack of emergency funds available locally. Every request needs to go through bureaucratic procedures back and forth from Taiwan through Hong Kong and then Salt Lake City. In addition, given its small number of members, the Church is in no position to compete with traditional religions or even other Christian churches in numbers of volunteers and frequency of social services. Of course, the leaders at Church headquarters may view its mission differently than that of providing social services; however, such an approach risks failing to fully encounter religion as it is understood in Taiwan.

4. *Universalism versus Localization.* In comparing Christian missionizing in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with contemporary mission fields, a renowned German missiologist Walter Freytag commented, “Formerly missions had problems, but now they have become a problem to themselves.”⁴³ The post-colonial world has challenged the traditional West-centered focus of Christianity. Thus, Mary Schaller Blaufuss, a theology professor, argues, “The field of missiology suffers from a ‘Colonial Captivity,’” which prevents missions from going forward.⁴⁴ Many scholars suspect that effectiveness in spreading the gospel in today’s world requires a shift in Christian missiology, in both conceptualization and practice. These reformers acknowledge problems with the traditional model of Western-dominated knowledge and authority and call for a de-centered, contextual approach to Christianity. In other words, they argue for an indigenous Christianity—integrating local culture and tradition into an understanding of Christianity and missionary work.⁴⁵

Mormonism, I suggest, stands at a similar crossroads. Missions and American-centeredness generally are no longer simply a means to expansion, but a cultural issue in their own right. Accompanying the Church’s international growth are questions such as whether Mormonism is an American religion with many non-American members or a true world religion, and whether Mormonism can be applied universally or should allow room for local cultural negotiation and adaptation. Such questions have become central for scholars of Mormonism.⁴⁶ They point out that inter-

national success has, in fact, led to tighter central control from Church headquarters. The claim of being a universal church often deemphasizes the need to integrate the Church into local societies. This universalistic view tends to overemphasize the similar, compatible parts of local culture (e.g., family values in Confucianism) but shuns the incompatible parts of local tradition (e.g., ancestor worship, explained below).

As mentioned earlier, missionaries are able to convert more than a thousand souls per year; but the activity rate in Taiwan remains very low, about 25 percent.⁴⁷ Every time I visit my home ward in Taiwan, I notice a core, stable group of members who have been active in the Church for years or even decades, but more recent converts are constantly in flux, seldom present when I visit again. Why is the Church able to convert but unable to retain new members? I assume that the answer differs to some degree from place to place, but I hypothesize that a consistent element regardless of locale is the same core issue: local cultural traditions. At least in the case of Taiwan, I think the gap between Mormonism (or Christianity in general) and traditional culture/belief systems correlates with low retention rate. Britsch correctly identifies some difficulties of Church growth in a Chinese society in his important history of Mormonism in the Far East.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, he rhetorically quickly turns to a preaching tone and dismisses the issue with a faith-promoting quotation. Approaches like Britsch's and Stamp's, while faith-confirming, tend to fall short in providing insights that come from grappling seriously with uncomfortable data.

Epistemologically, Chinese people generally have a very different view about religion and deity from Westerners. The Chinese, in general, see religion as a natural human tendency, not something to force upon someone, or to express with undue insistence. As a result, most are tolerant toward different belief systems. Although there have been historical exceptions, the Chinese do not often fight over religion because of their broadly tolerant attitude toward how religion should be practiced. Religion is seen by many Chinese people as a way of life but often not in the formalized and ritualized way Westerners/Christians are used to. For example, clearly defined religious membership, boundaries, loyalty, and weekly services are not required. In their view, different religions do not necessarily contradict one another. They do not claim the only truth; instead, they believe that truth encompasses everything. It might puzzle a Christian to see a Taiwanese person going to a Buddhist temple right after

visiting a Daoist shrine, but it is a very common religious practice in Taiwan. Many Taiwanese people do not see a need to insist on monotheism, just as most Christians have a hard time understanding/accepting polytheism. It takes time and determination for new converts to make this sea change in worldview.

Another crucial difference between Western ideas and traditional Chinese culture concerns ancestors. Many Chinese/Taiwanese regard becoming a Christian as betraying one's tradition and ancestors. After I joined the Church, my mother often sighed and repeated a local saying: "Christianity: nobody weeps when people die." What she is concerned about is that I will not care for her when she (or anyone in the family) dies. Many Chinese believe in an afterlife in which the dead will live well in the spirit world through regular offerings (of food, incense, religious paper money, etc.) from their family and descendants. Thus, they will not become dislocated, hungry spirits floating aimlessly in the spirit world. My mother also worries that I will not have anyone to provide me with necessities when I leave this earth. The saying thus expresses a common resentment over Christianity's hostility toward ancestor worship.

Through localization, Catholicism generally accepts Chinese ways of paying respects to ancestors and to heaven/gods and adapts its religious rituals accordingly. Protestantism, on the other hand, interprets the first commandment ("thou shalt have no other gods before me") to exclude any traditional practice that recognizes other entities. The LDS Church is able to effectively use genealogy and temple work to connect with the local population on this issue. However, defining one's devotion toward ancestors as idol worship, as is done by most Christian denominations, including Mormonism, creates a fundamental conflict for converts and their families. Male converts face an even more difficult dilemma than their female counterparts. In a patriarchal culture that emphasizes male obligations toward family (and, by extension, ancestors), many male converts feel particular pressure to follow cultural traditions and often feel forced to make tough decisions between their family and the Church.

Like many converts around the globe, members in Taiwan also risk being cut off from their original social networks once they join the Church. Such alienation does not necessarily come from persecution or anti-Mormon sentiment, but as a natural result of a different lifestyle from the rest of the Taiwanese population. With limited membership, the Church has not been able to fully provide a meaningful support system

for local members who face this alienation. In an economy-driven society like Taiwan, materialism defines the standard of living and the quality of life. People constantly overwork themselves in an extremely competitive environment. Missionaries complain that people are not receptive to the gospel because of constraints on their time. Members carry extra burdens because they also assume multiple, heavily tasked Church callings. Some eventually burn out and leave the Church.

Conclusion

The political situation and identity struggles in Taiwan pose an interesting challenge for Mormonism. The Americanness of the Church, in this context, yields both positive and negative results for the development of Mormonism on this island nation. As the Church becomes more globalized, non-American congregations become contested ground for universalistic views of the gospel versus localization/indigenization. Simply asking non-American members to repent and change cultural practices that are seemingly incompatible with American Mormonism might not prove fruitful or even desirable in a post-colonial world where strong nationalism has aroused the desire for local identity and collective consciousness.

The long-term, stable success of a religion in a new environment largely depends on how it can transform itself to fit in the society in which it resides, without necessarily compromising its doctrine. Christianity in the Western world and Buddhism in Eastern Asia are examples. Negotiation between American Mormonism and local cultures is essential for Mormonism to become a world religion. In the case of Taiwan, the success of Catholicism and the Presbyterian Church, or even Buddhism, has much to do with their willingness to connect with and integrate into Taiwanese society.

It is certainly not yet fair to expect Mormonism to look “Taiwanese,” since the Church has only been in Taiwan for half a century. However, viewing the length of time Mormonism has been in other cultures, time might not be the most crucial element. It is more a mind set and how the Church defines Mormonism that will eventually determine the shape it takes. As the Church is working toward global Mormonism, I believe that an approach that takes the local cultural, political, and socio-economical context into account will offer great potential.⁴⁹

Notes

1. Marjorie Newton, “Towards 2000: Mormonism in Australia,” *Dia-*

logue: *A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 193–206; Jiro Numano, “Perseverance Amid Paradox: The Struggle of the LDS Church in Japan Today,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 39, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 138–55.

2. The primary sources for this paper include information that spans 2002–07 from interviews with Taiwanese members, local Church leaders, and American missionaries; Taiwanese popular periodicals; major newspapers’ coverage of the LDS Church from 2000 to 2006; and Church promotional materials for the jubilee celebration. All interviewees are anonymous or pseudonymous.

3. Robert P. Weller, “Living at the Edge: Religion, Capitalism, and the End of the Nation-State in Taiwan,” in *Millennial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism*, edited by Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000), 215.

4. John E. Wills Jr., “The Seventeenth-Century Transformation: Taiwan under the Dutch and the Cheng Regime,” in *Taiwan: A New History*, edited by Murray A. Rubinstein (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1999), 85.

5. In English, the generic term “indigenous movement” usually describes the revitalization of aboriginal culture and political rights in the post-colonial world. Taiwan’s cultural politics, however, presents a difficulty. The Taiwanese term “indigenous movement” is widely used by scholars to describe the late twentieth-century social/political/cultural reexamination of Taiwan’s relationship with China and the world, and the attempt to create a Taiwan-centered identity, most frequently by Taiwanese of Chinese ethnicity. This movement is different from the concurrent “aboriginal movement,” led by Taiwan’s aboriginal peoples to revive cultural identity and political rights. To avoid potential confusion to readers, I thought about instead using terms such as “Taiwanese nationalism,” “localism,” “nativism,” “regional identity,” or “de-Sinification.” While the indigenous movement encompasses elements of these concepts, none of these other terms quite captures the same meaning as “indigenous movement.” Therefore, I use it. Readers should understand that, in the context of Taiwan, “aboriginal” refers to Taiwan’s first peoples, while “indigenous” refers to a Taiwan-focused identity that suggests a decentering of mainland historical experiences and cultural inclinations.

6. Wills, “The Seventeenth-Century Transformation,” 92.

7. *Ibid.*; see also Ke Xinya, “The Development of the Catholic Church in Taiwan” and Yan Jiajun, “The Truth on the Cross: The Development of Christianity on Taiwan” in *An Overview of Taiwan Religions*, edited by Li Shiwei (Taipei: Boyang, 2002), 62–83, 84–105.

8. Ke, "The Development of the Catholic Church in Taiwan," 66.

9. The Chinese Book of Mormon was first published in 1965, the Doctrine and Covenants in 1973, and the Pearl of Great Price in 1976.

10. See R. Lanier Britsch, *From the East: The History of the Latter-day Saints in Asia, 1851–1996* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1998), 254–55.

11. *Ibid.*, 280.

12. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Historical Department, *Deseret News/Deseret Morning News Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1960–2007); see also David L. Stewart Jr., "Taiwan," *Cumoram Project International LDS Database*, www.cumoram.com/cgi-bin/db.cgi?view_records=View%2BRecords&Country=Taiwan (accessed April 23, 2007). The anomalies in growth between 1978 and 1983 might be mistakes in the official record. Nevertheless, without other sources for comparison, I followed the official account.

13. Dong Fangyuan, "Pseudo-Christian Religions in Taiwan: Mormon Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, and The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity," *Taiwan Wen Hsien* 53, no. 3 (2000): 237–61.

14. Jiang Caiteng, "The Coverage of Religion in Mass Media in Contemporary Taiwan and Its Possible Social Impacts," *Association of Taiwan Religious Studies* 4 (2000): 115–25.

15. Huang Weiwen, "Visiting Mormon Headquarters," *China Times*, September 11, 2005, E8.

16. Huang Caijuan, "Salt Lake City: Beauty of Desert," *Mingshen Bao*, May 10, 2004, D1.

17. Xu Wenli, "Oahu: Seven-Tribe Cultural Shows," *United Daily*, October 20, 2004, F1.

18. Ruan Ziliang, "Mormon Territory, Olympics Visitors Follow the Rules," *China Times*, January 30, 2002, 31.

19. Most people in Taiwan do not distinguish Americans from other Westerners. Many call all Caucasians "Americans" regardless of their nationalities. Many non-American missionaries complain about this misidentification but cannot do much about it. Such a generalization, in a way, shows the hegemonic influence of the United States on Taiwan. To many Taiwanese, the United States represents all Western countries.

20. I located fourteen news articles related to the jubilee celebration. All major Taiwanese newspapers are islandwide and most have regional/local editions; thus, some local news might not be collected in the database.

21. Fu Tianyu, "Who Is Afraid of Mormon Missionaries?" *United Daily*, October 19, 2002, 39.

22. "Brother Lin" (pseud.), interviewed, December 2006, audiocassette in my possession.

23. Public affairs missionaries, interviewed December 2006, audiocassette in my possession. Public Affairs missionaries are sent to twenty-eight international and thirteen U.S. "key cities." They are under the direct supervision of the Church Public Affairs Department and are not considered part of local mission structure.

24. Local members expressed this sentiment in three group interviews: two conducted in the winter of 2003 in Kaohsiung (seven people) and Taipei (four people), and one in the summer of 2005 in Taipei (five people). Participants in the 2003 groups were active members who held leadership positions in local wards and stakes; three of them had been in the Church for more than a decade, three of them more than twenty years, and one for forty years. The 2005 group consisted of both new members and long-time members, ranging from two months to twenty-four years. Of course, not all members agree with one another. "Brother Wang," who was in a stake presidency at the time of the interview (summer 2005), claimed that he seldom felt Americanness in the functions of the Church.

25. Mark James, "The Hegemony of English: A Way Forward," David O. McKay Lecture, Brigham Young University Hawaii, February 16, 2006 (Laie, Hawaii: Brigham Young University Hawaii, 2006).

26. Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," *Theory, Culture, & Society* 7, nos. 2–3 (1995): 295–310.

27. Stewart, "Taiwan," Cumorah Project International. Ryan Cragun recently found that LDS Church growth rates correlate significantly (and negatively in the index's upper reaches) with the United Nations' Human Development Index. Ryan Cragun, "The Secularization Transition: Worldwide Growth of Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, November 3, 2007, Tampa, Florida. Though Taiwan's Human Development Index is comparable to those of Japan and South Korea (in the range where expected growth is quite low), LDS growth is anomalously high.

28. This individual is a Church Educational System employee, an active member for more than twenty years. Interviewed winter 2003. Audiocassette in my possession.

29. "Brother Wang" and a couple of participants in the summer 2005 group interview echo this view, pointing out that, in the past, missionaries

tended to attract young converts; in recent years, however, new members actually come from a variety of age groups. They see this as an evidence of changing motives among those who join the Church.

30. Robert P. Weller, "Religion and New Taiwanese Identities: Some First Thoughts," *Harvard Studies on Religion: Papers of Taiwan Studies Workshop* 3 (2000): 225–32.

31. Generally speaking, there are four ethnic groups in Taiwan: (1) "Hoklos" are the descendants of Han Chinese from Fujian Province who immigrated to Taiwan during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. They speak Hoklo, or *Minnan hua* (Southern Fujian dialect). As the largest ethnic group (70 percent of Taiwan's population), they identify Hoklo as the Taiwanese language and themselves as Taiwanese; (2) "Hakkas," descendants of a different ethnicity of Chinese immigrants from eastern Guangdong and the mountains of Fujian, who came about the same time as Hoklo immigrants. Hakka speakers make up 15 percent of the population; (3) "Mainlanders" are those who came to Taiwan after 1949 with the Nationalist government and their offspring. This group is extremely diverse, coming from all over China and speaking the various dialects of their hometowns. However, all are lumped together and generally thought of as Mandarin speakers. This group comprises around 13 percent of Taiwan's population; (4) Aborigines are the smallest minority, consisting of only 2 percent of Taiwan's population. There are various tribes speaking different Austronesian languages. John Cooper, *Taiwan: Nation State or Province?* 4th ed. (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 2003). A long history of intermarriage, however, makes these categories more a form of political classification than ethnic reality.

Identity politics is a hot debate in Taiwan, mainly over the issue of who is Taiwanese. The hegemonic Hoklo claim has been seriously challenged. "Taiwanese" now more broadly refers to whoever identifies himself or herself with Taiwan's culture and political fate, which allows even some first-generation Mainlanders to regard themselves as Taiwanese. The term "New Taiwanese" is particularly popular among Mainlander politicians in order to position themselves in Taiwan's society and to appeal to non-Mainlander voters.

32. Murray A. Rubinstein, "Mission of Faith, Burden of Witness: The Presbyterian Church in the Evolution of Modern Taiwan, 1865–1989," *American Asian Review* 9, no. 2 (1991): 71.

33. Ke, "The Development of the Catholic Church in Taiwan," 81; Yan, "The Truth on the Cross," 101. Chinese, especially Han Chinese, are as ethnocentric as other civilizations. They often objectify non-Han people as the Other and assign them low status, calling all non-Han people barbarians.

34. Murray A. Rubinstein, "The New Testament Church and the Protestant Community," in *The Other Taiwan: 1945 to the Present*, edited by Murray A. Rubinstein (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), 445–73.

35. Britsch, *From the East*, 278.

36. Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

37. Jiang Caiteng, *Contemporary Taiwan Buddhism* (Taipei: Nantian Press, 1997); see also Andre Laliberté, *The Politics of Buddhist Organizations in Taiwan: 1989–2003* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004).

38. "Religion," *Taiwan Yearbook 2006*, <http://www.gio.gov.tw/taiwan-website/5-gp/yearbook/22Religion.htm> (accessed November 5, 2007). The Catholic Church runs 186 schools while Protestant churches operate 158 schools ranging from kindergartens to colleges. See Paul R. Katz, "Religion and the State in Post-War Taiwan," *China Quarterly* 174 (2003): 395–412.

39. Richard B. Stamps, "The Cultural Impact of Mormon Missionaries on Taiwan," *BYU Studies* 41, no. 4 (2002): 103–14.

40. Stamps also asserts that missionaries are "making a sacrifice to serve the people of Taiwan" and "reinforc[e] Chinese values" "through their teaching and activities" at the time when "traditional Chinese social values . . . are increasingly under pressure in fast-paced Taiwan." *Ibid.*, 107, 110. While I acknowledge missionaries' good work in Taiwan, his comments can also be interpreted as posing an anthropologist's gaze on Taiwanese people with his strong missionary mentality by assuming superiority over people he was serving and writing about. Traditional Chinese values, he assumes, need to be maintained and retaught to Chinese by American missionaries. The inclusion of a photograph in his article of an American missionary pointing to local food displayed by a street peddler reinforces a sense of American superiority. To native eyes, this photograph comes across as a typical example of cultural ethnocentrism, with an American missionary making fun of local food (in this case, chicken feet and organs) as unclean and repulsive. This photograph partakes of a version of Orientalism: the West (American missionary) as progressive, modern, and civilized; the East (Taiwanese cuisine/peddler) as regressive, backward, and barbaric.

41. Group interview in Taipei, summer 2005.

42. He hinted, however, at the sentiment shared among many local members that the Church's investment in Taiwan seems to aim toward the Church's preparation for China. Over the years, members in Taiwan have been constantly reminded about the possibility of opening China's door for the Church, and they have been encouraged to prepare themselves for this

mission. The question of whether Taiwan should unite with China or become an independent state has painfully divided the Taiwanese population. Interestingly enough, members in Taiwan, regardless of their individual political inclination, seem not to talk much about their stances on Taiwan's political future, at least in public. The Church's noninvolvement in politics and concerns about unity among members may discourage conversation on the topic.

43. Quoted in Lalsangkima Pachuau, "Missiology in a Pluralistic World: The Place of Mission Study in Theological Education," http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1177#_edn13 (accessed November 5, 2007). For a slightly different version of the quotation, see Mary Schaller Blaufuss, "De-centered and De-centering Missiology: A Search for New Relationships and New Terminology," *Asia Journal of Theology* 16, no. 2 (2002): 435.

44. Blaufuss, "De-centered and De-centering Missiology," 428.

45. Ibid. 428; Kirsteen Kim, "Missiology as Global Conversation of (Contextual) Theologies," *Mission Studies* 21, no. 1 (2004): 39–53; Herb Swanson, "Said's Orientalism and the Study of Christian Missions," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 28, no. 3 (2004): 107–12; Notto R. Thelle, "Changed by the East: Notes on Missionary Communication and Transformation," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 30, no. 3 (2006): 115–21; Yeow Choo Lak and Megumi Yoshida, "Doing Theology in Asia: The Narrative Way," *Asia Journal of Theology* 16, no. 2 (2002): 449–66.

46. See, for example, Walter E. A. van Beek, "Mormon Europeans or European Mormons? An 'Afro-European' View on Religious Colonization," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 3–36; Marjorie Newton, "'Almost Like Us': The American Socialization of Australia Converts," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 24, no. 3 (Fall 1991): 9–20; Jennifer Huss Basquiat, "Embodied Mormonism: Performance, Vodou and the LDS Faith in Haiti," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 37, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 1–34; J. Douglas Davies, "World Religion: Dynamics and Constraints"; Gerald R. McDermott, "Testing Stark's Thesis: Is Mormonism the First New World Religion Since Islam?"; Jan Shipp, "Joseph Smith and the Making of Global Religion"; and Roger R. Keller, "Authority and Worldwide Growth," in *The Worlds of Joseph Smith*, edited by John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies Press, 2006), 251–316.

47. Stewart, "Taiwan," Cumorah Project International LDS Database.

48. Britsch, *From the East*, 284–88; see also Janice Clark, "Taiwan: Steep Peaks and Towering Faith," *Ensign*, August 1975, 55; Christopher K. Bigelow,

"Taiwan: Four Decades of Faith," *Ensign*, September 1998, 39; Raye Kao, "A Higher Calling," *Taipei Review*, October 2001, 14–21.

49. Blaufuss, "De-centered and De-centering Missiology," 429–30.