

Seeking a “Second Harvest”: Controlling the Costs of LDS Membership in Europe

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The Church in Europe must live again. The work of the Church has run on the backs of its European Saints since the beginning. Don't think that you are just minding the shop waiting for the Savior to come. Don't think that the great days of gathering in Europe are over. This is our time. –Elder Jeffrey R. Holland¹

Most of the world today is certainly not secular. It's very religious. So is the U.S. The one exception to this is Western Europe. One of the most interesting questions in the sociology of religion today is not, How do you explain fundamentalism in Iran? but, Why is Western Europe different? –Peter Berger²

European exceptionalism [must be seen] in the proper perspective. As long as their religious markets are highly regulated, the apparent secularization of many European nations will be sustained. But should significant and authentic competition arise, it seems likely that other Europeans will embrace religion. –Massimo Introvigne and Rodney Stark³

It is not often that we see a convergence in predictions between apostles and sociologists, though, to be sure, this is not the first prediction from Rodney Stark that has proved pleasing to the LDS leadership.⁴ Yet, for today's LDS members in Europe, the predicted “great days of gathering,” or, in President Hinckley's terms, “second harvest,” must seem as far off as the Millennium itself. Certainly Stark's earlier projections of enduring Church growth have proved rather optimistic for Europe, where the rate

of new converts has barely kept pace with the defections. The seemingly static membership in western Europe is no secret, nor is the Church's ongoing struggle with retention. Well-researched articles on such topics have been appearing for more than a decade, and a series of 2005 articles in the *Salt Lake Tribune* brought the problem forcibly to public attention.⁵ More recently, a devout and energetic young LDS scholar, David G. Stewart Jr., a pediatric orthopedist, has established a website rich in data about members' profiles, distribution, and retention and has published a telling critique of the LDS missionary program, along with many suggestions for improving both the conversion and the retention rates.⁶ On balance, the prospects so far seem quite mixed for the future of the LDS Church as a worldwide religion in a meaningful sense, especially in Europe.

In this paper, I first review what seem to be the most important deterrents to the Church's growth in Europe, and then identify both a theoretical basis and some operational developments that nevertheless might justify "second harvest" optimism. This approach means a kind of "bad news versus good news" bifurcation, with the "bad news" coming first.

My personal knowledge about the Church membership in Europe is quite limited, based mainly on (1) a fairly extensive study of published membership data, (2) first-hand accounts from informed European members, and (3) some interviews and other communications with knowledgeable Church leaders and members in Europe.⁷ While traveling during the past decade or so, I have also attended perhaps a dozen LDS ward meetings in England, Belgium, and Sweden. I'm well aware that this record does not make me a great expert, but it has left me with some experiences and impressions, both cognitive and emotional. As a further limitation, my observations and generalizations, drawn as they are from western Europe, are far less applicable to eastern Europe, where the religious and political histories are quite different and where a significant LDS presence is more recent. From my reading and observations, I have concluded that it is not easy to be an active Latter-day Saint anywhere in Europe, for there are many costs of membership, both obvious and hidden but not primarily financial. Most American members can scarcely appreciate or even imagine these costs. Some can be mitigated by creative changes in the Church program itself, but many are built into the cultural and political contexts of European societies.

Secular Culture and the Regulation of Religion

Social scientists have been predicting the decline and fall of religion at least since Auguste Comte almost two centuries ago. So far, however, historical developments during those centuries, and especially the periodic religious resurgences, have proved to be obstinate counterindications of secularization. Nevertheless, many scholars and commentators have observed that contemporary Europe, especially as contrasted with the United States, is permeated with a secular culture of disbelief in traditional religion and with moral permissiveness toward a variety of personal behaviors once regarded as major vices.⁸ The contrasting persistence of religious belief in the United States has tended to be regarded, somewhat dismissively, as “American exceptionalism.”⁹

Post-War Trends in the European Religious Scene

European observers seem astounded that surveys find belief in God and an afterlife among Americans so much higher than among Europeans, at least in western Europe. Furthermore, such religious belief as there is does not seem to be accompanied by church-going in Europe nearly as much as in the United States. Depending on the survey and the region, a majority of Americans are in church on Sunday, compared to around 20 percent or less in Europe. This situation has led British sociologist Grace Davie to identify the predicament of “believing without belonging” in her study of religion in contemporary Britain.¹⁰

Large-scale cultural trends, however, are rarely self-generated. They usually follow important political developments that seem to call for new norms and values and that render the old ways impractical, irrelevant, or at least “politically incorrect.” In Europe, these political developments have included fundamental changes in the relationships between the traditional religions and national governments since World War II. Though a certain amount of disillusionment with religion in general probably followed that war (given God’s seeming inability to prevent such disasters), the main impact on church-state relationships was the attenuation, or even elimination, of government sponsorship for religion, including the traditional state churches.¹¹ In Soviet-controlled territory, officially atheist states emerged. In the West, however, under the influence of the U.N.’s 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an increase in religious freedom was gradually institutionalized. The derivative European

Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) was signed in Strasbourg in 1950.¹²

Further institutional backing for these documents came in 1962 through a multilateral treaty establishing the similarly named European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), also in Strasbourg. This court has issued many efficacious judgments against member nations for violations and state persecutions of minority religions, often resulting in the rewriting of national laws. Not all European nations are signatories to the European Convention on Human Rights; but as one after another has signed on, Europe has come increasingly to share an ideology of “human rights” where religion is concerned. In this ideology, each individual is guaranteed freedom of conscience, meaning freedom to choose any religious belief or tradition—or none at all.¹³ Starting in the 1990s, after the fall of the Soviet Union, religious freedom also came to be a principal concern of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), with fifty-six member states, as it has struggled to bring peace and security to the newly emerging states of eastern Europe.¹⁴

However liberating these developments might seem at the level of individual conscience, the European Convention on Human Rights also guarantees each member state the ultimate right to grant or deny the status of “legal entity” to any religious body.¹⁵ Thus, legal entity status must be sought and granted in accordance with the laws of each country. The European Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg, with some success, has attempted to require that legal status be granted in a fair and neutral process, without arbitrary delays or restrictions, without considering the preferences of the traditional state religions, and without any judgment about the religious doctrines of the applicant bodies. Yet the court also permits a state to deny or restrict legal entity status wherever, in its judgment, an application raises questions about public safety, order, health, or morals.¹⁶

In western Europe, generally speaking, the United Kingdom has been among the most liberal in granting legal entity status, and France is among the least liberal, with most other countries in between.¹⁷ Although the ideal of equal treatment is everywhere espoused rhetorically, actual implementation is complicated by competing traditional values in the various states and, more recently, by the increasing assertiveness of Islam in many European countries.¹⁸ Most of the former Soviet states in the East, meanwhile, have proved quite restrictive, especially after their traditional religious bodies began to reestablish the old ties with their governments

and to push back against the initial successes enjoyed by Mormons and others after the Soviet collapse. Yet even in those countries, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg has had some impact with a succession of rulings upholding access to legal entity status.¹⁹

In sum, there are at least three implications of the current jurisprudence governing religious association in most of Europe: (1) Although the principles of freedom of religion (or freedom of association) are important, establishing the legal entity status for any religion, so essential for even the most basic legal and social privileges, ultimately depends on each nation's laws and their interpretations; (2) There is considerable variation from one nation to the next in both the process and the obstacles involved in gaining legal entity status; and (3) Each nation may retain a state church or otherwise privilege traditional religious bodies over newer ones and may also continue to extract a religious tax from its citizens.

Religion in Europe as Seen by Sociologists and Psychologists

In most of Europe, these conditions have led to a “two-tiered” (or even multi-tiered) system of religious registration and recognition, according to which the conventional religions in each nation are privileged not only by tradition but also by cooperative—even organic—relationships with the government.²⁰ These integrated relations between governments and the traditional religions have existed for centuries, comprising what some sociologists have called “pillars,” by which social and civic life in Europe was carried on. Thus, Catholic citizens had their births, schooling, employment, marriages, and funerals through institutions provided by the Catholic “pillar”; Protestants did the same through a Lutheran, Reformed, or other traditional “pillar.”²¹ Where conventional religious “pillars” proved insufficiently inclusive, eventually such secular parallels as a socialist, a liberal, or a union “pillar” developed. In this system, religious institutions had vital secular, civic functions, supported by public taxes, whether or not citizens were church-goers.

To be sure, my description of this process is very superficial and, indeed, somewhat obsolete, for the religious “pillars” have eroded considerably in more recent years, partly because increasing numbers of citizens, especially immigrants, have been difficult to assimilate into one of the traditional religious pillars, and partly, perhaps, under the influence of changes encouraged by the spreading European Convention on Human Rights regimen in Europe. The necessary social services and amenities are

increasingly available outside the religious “pillars,” making religion less salient as an organizational basis for society. At the same time, the citizenry does not seem to have sought the more ancient spiritual functions in any greater numbers. Consequently, church attendance remains very low. Having been secularized through years of integration with governments, traditional churches seem to have lost their *raison d’être* and their power to provide meaning in life.²² Recognizing that “believing without belonging” leaves the actual functions of traditional churches somewhat ambiguous, Grace Davie has more recently suggested using “vicarious religion” to refer to religious institutions in which few citizens seek either social or worship services, but still hold to certain supernatural beliefs and still feel loyal to their religious traditions.

In this conceptualization, the traditional churches continue to represent even the large number of nonparticipants, for the latter still expect the church to be available for occasions of celebration, bereavement, or crisis, and to be supported by public funds. Still, on Sundays they prefer to have their interests represented “vicariously” by the more devout few.²³

Yet the basic two-tiered structure among religious communities still remains, such that the newer religions are marginalized and stigmatized (*de facto* if not *de jure*). In many places, they are subject to special surveillance and restrictions. Mormons are usually positioned on this lower tier of religious respectability with Jehovah’s Witnesses, Pentecostals, and even some of the “scarier” new sects (or “cults” as they are usually called in the United States), such as Scientology, the Unification Church (or “Moonies”), The Family (formerly “Children of God”), and followers of various Eastern gurus.²⁴ All such “cults” (including Mormons) remain at varying degrees of disadvantage whenever they are involved in any transactions requiring government approval, ranging from access to desirable parcels of land for meeting houses and temples all the way to child custody disputes. Indeed, many countries manifest an official wariness about all “sects,” a pejorative term commonly used in Europe to refer to all religious communities not part of the immediate post-Reformation world.²⁵ The rising Muslim tide in Europe might be seen as even more ominous than the “sects,” but the latter have apparently gained no comparative legitimacy in the process.

In general, sociologists in the United States, the United Kingdom, and most of Europe have found no scientific basis for privileging the beliefs of conventional Christians over those of “sects” or “cults.” Accord-

ingly, most social scientists have long adopted the more neutral term “new religious movements” (NRMs).²⁶ Certain psychologists, however, with their more therapeutic proclivities, have retained the professional suspicion that some religious beliefs must be considered *ipso facto* symptoms of dubious mental health. Governments in France, Belgium, and francophone Switzerland, for example, have all sought the assistance of psychologists to help them identify “potentially harmful sects,” more than a hundred of which appear on official lists, often including Mormonism.²⁷ In France, the Interministerial Monitoring Mission Against Sectarian Abuses (French acronym MIVILUDES), established in 2002 and largely financed by the French government, has been somewhat influential as a “watchdog” organization regularly advocating various kinds of regulations against “sect” activities, not only in France but elsewhere.²⁸ However, a team of Belgian psychologists recently reviewed the applicable literature of psychology on “contested religious movements” and basically found no reliable evidence that such movements cause any harm.²⁹ Nevertheless, through a complicated rationale, they still concluded that it would be well for the Belgian government to consider “precautionary” policies to protect its citizens from potential “moral harassment” by CRMs.³⁰

The high cost of being Mormon, then, for LDS families and individuals, comes fundamentally from being relegated both constitutionally and culturally to this lower tier or margin of religious respectability.³¹ Until this situation can be changed, which I believe is possible in future generations, membership in the LDS Church will continue to carry a cost, heavier in some countries than in others, but a cost nevertheless, with respect to marriage opportunities, family life, friendships, careers, and many other aspects of life. The number and impacts of these costs can scarcely be appreciated by Latter-day Saints in the United States, where membership and activity in a given religious community rarely have any implications for other aspects of a person’s life. For that reason, American Saints (unless they have served missions elsewhere) tend to subscribe to the naive idea that retaining one’s “testimony” is simply a matter of keeping the commandments and maintaining Church activity. Brought up on pioneer stories about their European forebears, who sacrificed all for the sake of gathering to Zion, American Saints do not adequately appreciate the huge difference in the cost-benefit ratios faced by today’s European Saints compared to those of the nineteenth century.

Precisely because nineteenth-century Mormon European converts

emerged from humble origins and from countries with limited religious freedom, they could expect a net gain in life circumstances if they could emigrate to America—as thousands did, often with Church help.³² This is not to diminish the faithfulness or sacrifices of those early European Saints as they adopted a new and unpopular religion, separated from loving friends and families, and confronted a cruel and hazardous journey on sea and land followed by challenges in settling in a harsh and limited environment. Yet this change offered prospects that were usually vindicated within a generation or two in the new land. LDS converts gathered, furthermore, to a new religious community in which their faith was regularly reinforced by a supportive network of friends and Church leaders. I am not unaware of cases in which immigrants to early Utah returned in disillusionment and bitterness to their homelands, but most of the transplanted Saints soon experienced a net improvement, materially and spiritually, over what they had left behind.

For today's European converts, in contrast, though their situations vary by country, the cost of Church membership is likely to exceed the benefits, material and otherwise. There is little to be gained by emigration in most cases, even when it is possible; yet in the home country, their worldly prospects are more likely diminished than enhanced by membership in a stigmatized religion. Even in the spiritual part of the equation, while a convert might take strength for a while from a powerful personal conversion experience, he or she usually does not find much spiritual support from family, friends, or large and thriving LDS congregations. Everything depends on one's own resources, insofar as these can be acquired through spiritual experiences and reinforced in the normally small LDS communities. European Saints today who remain faithful and active are indeed a tough breed.

The LDS Retention Problem

There is recent evidence of some improvement in the retention of new converts in Europe, to which I will refer in the next section. First, however, it seems only realistic to acknowledge that European wards and branches are still struggling under the heavy burden of inactive members brought into the Church in recent decades—usually amounting to a majority of those on the membership rolls.³³ I shall never forget the startling experience I had at a priesthood meeting in the Nottingham area in 1995, at which the entire meeting was devoted to discussing which of the many

inactive elders and high priests should be invited to apply for a cancellation of their Church membership. The dead weight of unconverted and disaffected members on Church rolls is another heavy cost borne by those who are still active—more in Europe than in America, for in Europe the member who drops out is usually gone permanently, while inactive members in the United States more often circulate in and out of Church activity and can more often be reclaimed later in life.³⁴ No matter how attrition is measured, both in Europe and elsewhere it is a discouraging problem. National census data in some countries show that the citizens claiming to be LDS are only 25–50 percent of those on official LDS records. “Active” status, usually defined as attending at least one Church meeting a month, remains at around 25 percent for members of record in most countries outside North America.³⁵

This situation can be understood as the cumulative consequence of thousands of unfavorable “cost-benefit analyses” by disaffected individuals whose Church experiences have proved more stressful than gratifying. Indeed, all new converts in all societies are likely to encounter stress as they transition into an LDS way of life; but some of conversion’s consequences in the normal daily experiences seem to exact a higher cost for European Saints than they do in North America.³⁶ Here are just a few examples:

1. Much larger investments of time and energy are required to attend Sunday meetings because of travel over much longer distances. This burden is greatly magnified by the additional meetings required during the week for the youth and their teachers, as well as for ward and stake leaders.³⁷

2. Partly because of the time-consuming nature of LDS Church life, and partly because of a conservative LDS understanding of proper Sabbath observance, an active member in Europe must regularly choose between Church activities and participation in recreational activities with his or her family, given that Sundays are the preferred and usual days for family gatherings.³⁸ Extended families typically cannot understand the convert’s preoccupation with religion, and family relationships are often ruptured beyond repair, especially when the convert is young—for youth are under parental and family guidance longer in Europe than in the United States. This strain in family relationships contributes to a common perception in Europe that Mormonism is just another “cult” stealing away the youth.

3. Like others in the lower tier of European religious legitimacy, Latter-day Saints sometimes face legal discrimination (*de facto* if not *de jure*) in cases of divorce (sometimes the convert's participation in a "religious cult" is cited as grounds for divorce), in child custody cases, adoption applications, and sometimes even in access to employment. So far, the Church itself has not usually intervened in such cases on behalf of the aggrieved member, adding irony to this special cost of membership.

4. Tithes and offerings turn out to be a much larger proportion of disposable income for most European members than for Americans. Given the welfare state features of many European nations, the tax rates are already comparatively high, and contributions to the LDS Church are often not tax-deductible as they are in the United States

5. Expectations for LDS members to participate in missionary work in various ways, though routine (if somewhat desultory) among U.S. members, are experienced as much more intrusive and objectionable invasions of privacy in most European societies. The pressure applied by succeeding waves of well-meaning American missionaries for local Saints to arrange visits and meetings with their friends simply increases the stress associated with membership.

As members who are unable to endure unfavorable cost-benefit ratios drop out of activity, they heighten the cost of membership for those who stay and who must therefore pick up the slack at the increased jeopardy of their own respective cost-benefit assessments. A vicious circle is thus set in motion. In places where men cannot be retained long enough to be ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood, the Church cannot form new wards and stakes and may even be forced to collapse and combine them.³⁹

Great as these costs to individual members might be, today's poor retention rates are attributable less to the struggles of converted members than to decades of a proselyting methodology that emphasized numerical increases in baptisms over enduring conversions of new members who could add to the human and religious capital of the branches, wards, and stakes of the Church.⁴⁰ Baptisms in the recent past have occurred disproportionately among those with the least to lose, who are therefore the most readily "available" in a social sense—the young, the single, the modestly educated, non-European immigrants, and the lonely.⁴¹ The high costs of these earlier decades of inadequate convert preparation and premature baptisms are evident, not only from the low retention rates, but

also from the well-informed accounts by devout and active LDS scholars in England, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, among other countries.⁴² Their work describes some of the serious—and often tragic—setbacks to Church growth and retention that have followed from large-scale baptisms of essentially unconverted new members in previous years. Even the latest program outlined in the new missionary manual envisions setting a date for the baptism of an investigator as early as a month or less after the first missionary contact.⁴³ To be sure, the manual emphasizes the need for investigators to understand at least the four basic lessons before they are baptized, but there is no requirement that they demonstrate an enduring change, prior to baptism, either in behavior or in commitment to church activity.⁴⁴ Large wards, with plenty of leaders, home teachers, and visiting teachers, can encircle, sustain, and fellowship new converts; but in the struggling smaller wards and branches of Europe, the unconverted disproportionately tax the time and resources of the local members and leaders. For this reason, bishops and other local leaders will sometimes, understandably, resist early missionary baptisms.⁴⁵

In the future, it seems likely that poor retention of new converts will be less significant as the major cause of future attrition than other factors over which the Church has but little control: (1) a reduced birthrate among LDS parents (as among other Europeans); (2) continued emigration to the western hemisphere; and (3) a reduction in the U.S. military presence, especially in Germany, which has recently thinned out the numbers of both American and local Saints employed on military bases.

Brighter Prospects on the European Horizon

There is some recent and heartening evidence of improved retention of converts. In the Europe Central Area during 2006, the proportion of new converts who had attended Church meetings at least once in the previous month was 69 percent—higher than in many American wards.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the proportion of twenty-year-old men holding the Melchizedek Priesthood rose from 31 percent in 2001 to 38 percent in 2006. Even more encouraging is the evidence of retention among the European youth in particular. From 2001 to 2006, the proportion of twenty-year-old men who had served (or were then serving) missions increased from 13 percent to 20 percent.⁴⁷ This increased success among

youth and young single adults bodes well for producing a multi-generational membership in Europe.

Yet growth remains slow among the European LDS membership. The marginal status and image of the Church, and the pervasive secularized culture, still contribute to the high and varied costs of being an active LDS member in Europe today. Readers can perhaps recognize how such conditions can be costly in certain ways for the Church as an institution without appreciating how those costs are also translated to the level of the individual member. Institutional attrition, slow growth, and marginal status in a secularized society all bespeak a greater or lesser degree of stigmatization of the Church in European society, at least as symptoms, if not as causes. By extension, individual members share in this stigmatization, just as children do in stigmatized families.⁴⁸ Of course, many costs specific to the individual member also occur, as indicated above. Ultimately, individual costs cannot easily be distinguished from institutional costs, since the latter so often amplify the former.

What is occurring in Europe that might enhance the appeal and/or help to reduce the costs of LDS membership so that more members can be attracted and retained? Where can we see indications of the future “great days of gathering” envisioned by Elder Holland and others? I offer three considerations that might justify such optimistic predictions. The first draws on contemporary sociological theory to identify some cultural and political changes in Europe that have the potential to increase the appeal of the LDS religion among some segments of the population. Second, international efforts by LDS professionals and public affairs missionaries to improve the legal climate in each country for the operation of the Church and the enhancement of its public image have been promising. And finally, in a separate section, I will consider some prospects and processes that might make the LDS Church and religion seem a little less “American” and a little more universal.⁴⁹

New Theoretical Outlooks on Secularization and Its Implications

A lively discussion has been underway for two decades among scholars, both LDS and others, about the secularization process in Europe and its implications for the future. The process is sufficiently complicated and so variable from one European group to another that many different implications can be pointed out with some evidence for each, even though some of them are mutually contradictory. Indeed, the very defini-

tion of secularization and the identification of its key indicators remain matters of scholarly debate.⁵⁰

At least one component generally considered part of the secularization process, however, is “detraditionalization”—the decline in the power of traditional norms and institutions to inform personal identity, choices, and behavior.⁵¹ As individuals are thus thrown back on their own intellectual and emotional resources, they will not all respond in the same way. Accordingly, despite what conventional “secularization” theories have been predicting, not all “detraditionalized” individuals will necessarily turn to strictly rational, pragmatic, and materialistic epistemologies in their search for meaning. Some will remain open to spiritual understandings and interpretations of their existence and destinies.

To be sure, terms like “spiritual” can also have many different meanings. Dutch sociologists Houtman and Aupers propose that, in the “detraditionalized” context of modern Europe, we are seeing the rise of a “post-Christian spirituality” which manifests itself as a quest to “reestablish . . . contact with the divine self . . . to reconnect to a sacred realm that holistically connects ‘everything’ and thus to overcome one’s state of alienation.”⁵²

This is, they acknowledge, a kind of “romanticist conception of the self,” which “lays central stress on unseen, even sacred forces that dwell within the person, forces that give life and relationships their significance.”⁵³ Unlike traditional Christianity, which sees the divine as primarily transcendent, post-Christian spirituality sees the divine as essentially immanent. It also rejects the premise of secular rationalism that, if “truth” exists, it can be discovered only by rational human faculties. Thus post-Christian spirituality is epistemologically a “third way” of gnosis—“rejecting both [traditional] religious faith and scientific reason as vehicles of truth.”⁵⁴ Importance is placed on trust in one’s “inner voice” or intuition. Or, in the words of Hanegraaff, “Truth can only be found by personal, inner revelation, insight, or ‘enlightenment’ . . . in contrast with . . . *reason* or *faith*. . . . This ‘inner knowing’ cannot be transmitted by discursive language [as is rational knowledge] . . . [n]or can it be the subject of *faith* . . . [for] there is, in the last resort, no other authority than personal, inner experience.”⁵⁵

This description of the post-Christian mindset raises at least two derivative questions. First, in the modern world, is there really a sizable pop-

ulation embracing such a gnostic epistemology? Second, is the LDS gospel likely to appeal to such people?

In response to the first question, Houtman and Aupers draw upon the World Values Survey for fourteen Western countries (1981–2000) with a careful sample of more than 60,000 cases. By a complicated statistical process of cross-classifying survey respondents according to their answers on five questions, the authors identified a sub-sample that could be considered neither traditionally Christian nor rationally secularist in orientation. Between 15 percent and 40 percent of this sub-sample believes in life after death and in a life force or spirit; it rejects atheism but has little confidence in traditional churches and denominations to meet people's spiritual needs.⁵⁶ It is this population, neither traditionally religious nor secular, that the authors consider "detraditionalized" and "post-Christian." These people have not rejected religion per se but have relocated the sacred from religious institutions to an immanent spiritual force within themselves. The authors find, furthermore, that this spiritual orientation has actually been spreading in recent decades, particularly among the younger and better educated, and most notably in France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Sweden.⁵⁷

At first glance, this post-Christian segment of the population in Europe might not seem a very promising market niche in which Mormonism would have any appeal. The LDS Church, after all, makes claims about objective, transcendent truths which are outside the individual and available for individuals to discover for themselves through the promptings of the Holy Spirit. That does not seem quite like relying on the immanent divinity within oneself for discovering one's own path to truth and meaning. On the other hand, Mormonism has always encouraged a certain dependence on personal revelation in seeking the divine will, and this ideal has coexisted in some tension with a methodology of linear, deductive apologetics in quest of universal truths.⁵⁸

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, LDS preaching, proselyting, and pulpit discourse relied heavily on rationalistic biblical arguments. Missionaries not only used such an approach in open public meetings and in the private homes of potential converts, but they distributed thousands of pamphlets or "tracts" based on such propositional arguments. In more recent decades, however, LDS preaching and proselyting have increasingly emphasized feelings over reason as the means of validating the truth-claims of the Church.⁵⁹ Moroni 10:4–5 in the Book of

Mormon is understood primarily as a call for members and investigators to rely on the spiritual promptings they feel when they pray, seeking confirmation of the authenticity of LDS teachings in general and of the Book of Mormon in particular.

Mormons, of course, understand the promptings of the Holy Spirit to come from outside the individual, but there is no obvious distinction between internal and external origins of feelings in such matters. Both missionaries and their investigators are taught that “in answer to our prayers, the Holy Ghost will teach us truth through our feelings and thoughts. [These feelings] are powerful, but they are also usually gentle and quiet.”⁶⁰ Yet Mormonism does not hold that all spiritual experiences come externally from the Holy Spirit. Some originate from a person’s own inner promptings called the “light of Christ.” This is an impersonal force that “giveth light to every man that cometh into the world” (D&C 84:46), “which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space.” (D&C 88:12). As President Boyd K. Packer explains, “A teacher of gospel truths is not planting something foreign or even new. . . . Rather, the missionary or teacher is making contact with the Spirit of Christ already there. The gospel will have a familiar ‘ring’ to [an open-minded investigator].”⁶¹

So we have the discovery of a “detraditionalized” population in modern secular Europe, dubbed “post-Christian” by Houtman and Aupers, because of its belief in an immanent divine power deep within each individual; and then we have a description in LDS scriptures of a divine light given at birth to every individual. Are these essentially the same powers or attributes? Such is, of course, a theological question, not an empirical one. What is important for purposes of the present discussion, however, is not whether either or both of these immanent qualities can be empirically demonstrated, but rather whether there is a segment of the modern post-Christian population that believes in such attributes and might be attracted precisely by the nontraditional nature of Mormonism. If so, such people will seek to authenticate LDS claims by resorting to their own internal promptings, whatever these are called, and will find increasing validation for their efforts as they associate with members of the LDS religious community, who are taught to recognize the “light of Christ” and the Holy Spirit in personal revelation. Such personal, subjective conversions, however, will not prove durable without some eventual support from the more rationalistic tradition in LDS discourse and teaching.

Houtman and Aupers reject the claim by such scholars as Steve Bruce that the radical individualism, fragmentation, and diffuseness of New Age spiritual believers militate against their socialization into any kind of community. At the very least, such participants in new spiritual milieus will socialize each other in the quest for personal authenticity.⁶² In other words, post-Christian spiritual experiences can be “socially constructed because people are socialized into a spiritual discourse about the self”—which, in Mormon parlance, might be rephrased as discourse about “gaining a personal testimony.”⁶³ Ultimately, only time will tell whether there is a segment of post-Christian believers that will constitute a promising niche for Mormon proselyting in the emerging religious market of modern Europe. It need not be a very large niche to be important. After all, the nineteenth-century niche where Mormonism took root in England, Scandinavia, and Germany was not large in absolute terms, but it produced half of the entire LDS membership by 1880.

Changing Prospects for the LDS Position in Europe

Even if the secularization of Europe has produced a “detraditionalized,” post-Christian niche holding some promise for the “marketing” of the LDS faith, there remains the serious question of whether the Church as a corporate institution is in a position to appeal to that niche. It is apparent from the political and cultural conditions I have described that the LDS Church’s public image places it at a serious disadvantage in the European religious marketplace. There is, of course, more than one way to portray the position of the LDS Church in the world. However, the context I find most useful and insightful is one I have borrowed from contemporary American sociologists and economists who study religion.⁶⁴ As it has evolved over the past two decades, it has come to be called the “religious economy model.”⁶⁵ This model postulates that the potential for a “religious market” is universal, since every society, implicitly or explicitly, holds out to its members the promise of happiness or fulfillment or success (however defined), contingent upon conformity to that society’s basic values and norms. Yet it is inherent in the nature of human experience that no society “delivers” adequately on its promises to all or even most of its members.

It is from this gap between the ideal and the real that the market arises for the otherworldly products of religion (and a number of other markets, as well). The main products of the religion market are supernatu-

ral; its “goods” are covenants or promises—certificates, as it were—available in this world but redeemable only in the next world. Because this redemption of “certificates” takes place only in the future, the “buyer” must accept on faith claims that are “unfalsifiable”—cannot be either proven or disproven—in the here and now. As a result, each individual must make periodic cost-benefit assessments, the outcome of which will determine whether she or he continues to prefer products from the same religious firm. Because this process for each individual is rationalistic, this theory is akin to so-called “rational choice” theories in contemporary economics, sociology, and political science.

In this religious economy model, the LDS Church can be compared to an industrial and commercial corporation, with corporate headquarters in Salt Lake City. Like other corporations, the Church not only designs and produces certain products but also directs a worldwide marketing program intended to recruit a clientele of long-term customers who will continue to prefer its products over those of its competitors. Such a conceptualization encourages us to analyze the nature and appeal of the Church’s products in various niches of the world market, to see how the “packaging” of its products might need to be different for these different niches.

A critical question is: What is its competition? In the United States, we are used to seeing competition from other religious “firms” or organizations that are also in the business of marketing otherworldly products. Europe is different, however, according to the conventional wisdom, for the religious market is limited to that marginal fringe or lower tier of so-called “sects.” Otherwise, there is no real competition in a highly secularized culture of moribund religious traditions sustained by the state.

This situation in Europe presents a challenge, not only to the LDS Church but also to the religious economy paradigm that has emerged recently in the American sociology of religion.⁶⁶ According to this new paradigm, secularization is inherently a self-limiting process, for no matter how much comfort and security societies can deliver in this world, fulfillment and contentment must ultimately come from an otherworldly system of meaning that is not vulnerable to the periodic setbacks, disappointments, and disasters that have always punctuated human experience. Theoretically, the more secular a society becomes, and the longer it has been undergoing secularization, the greater the proportion of its population that should be in the market for otherworldly meaning systems. Of

course, these otherworldly products need not, and often do not, come only from organized religion, which is in competition also with astrology, magic, and many other claimants to an otherworldly reality. Simultaneously, intense competition continues from hedonistic meaning systems, with which western Europe is well supplied.

The proponents of this new paradigm have long recognized that, for the religious market to operate in this idealized way, it must be mostly free of constitutional constraints. Regulation of the religious market by state agencies or public interest groups can be expected to have the same effect that regulation has in other markets. Constraining market access for certain religious communities, or relegating them to a marginal niche, will not only place artificial barriers on their growth and development but will also undermine the integrity even of the favored religious traditions, leaving them lazy, flabby, and unable to compete if and when the artificial protections of market regulations erode in favor of real competition. Furthermore, when market constraints are finally removed, brand-new religious firms can be expected to spring up, especially those of an unconventional or “fringe” kind. The general effect will be to increase the total volume of “customers” in the religious market as a whole, just as in any other market, according to supply-side economists. Latin America, whose traditional Catholic monopoly has long since broken down, provides an excellent example of the general flourishing of new religions.

The short-term and long-term consequences of market regulation, then, can be summed up in the following five propositions:⁶⁷

1. If government regulation of religious markets suppresses competition, the authorized religious groups will make little effort to attract rank-and-file support or to meet religious “demand.”

2. Moreover, the authorized churches will tend to be controlled and staffed by careerists, who are often quite lacking in religious motivation.

3. The net result will be widespread public religious alienation and apathy.

4. In addition, lacking effective religious socialization and congregational support, religious beliefs will become tentative, vague, and somewhat eclectic.

5. However, deregulation will (at least eventually) produce a religious revival. As religious organizations begin to compete for public support, participation in organized faiths will rise, and religious beliefs will become more clearly defined and widely held.

One implication of that fifth proposition is that, if and when conventional religious organizations revive and become more aggressive in the market, the newer, unconventional religions will be harder to sustain.⁶⁸ Because the religious market in the United States has always had plenty of active conventional religions, the unconventional ones, such as the Mormons, have found it difficult to compete without becoming more “conventional,” the path it has followed during the twentieth century. In Europe, in contrast, since the conventional religions remain weak, the unconventional ones are actually more prevalent and noticeable than in the United States—or at least they seem so, given the amount of official animosity and “anti-cult” activity in Europe. In this difficult market, Mormonism will have to compete with many other unconventional or marginal religions, but its prospects for an increased market share against other religions will be directly tied to the success of lawyers, public affairs experts, and scholars in combating the defamation and fear-mongering generated by the political establishments in much of Europe.

To be sure, this new paradigm has had its adherents and its critics, both in the United States and in Europe.⁶⁹ Its European critics, in particular, have pointed out that it has been derived mainly from the American historical experience and ideologies, with reference particularly to the market metaphor and to the notion of secularization as inherently self-limiting. Furthermore, although unconventional or “fringy” new religions in Europe might be numerous, their combined membership remains very small. Yet the argument of Stark, Introvigne, and their colleagues is not that secularization and a religious market cannot coexist. Indeed, the secularization process helps create the demand for religious (and/or otherworldly) “products.” Much of the argument between American proponents and European opponents of this theory has to do with what counts as data or evidence and with how “secular” Europeans really are as individuals. Given the general social, political, and ideological climate prevailing in most of Europe today, it might be difficult to see a large potential market for the products offered by the LDS “firm,” or by any other religion that demands costly investments of time, energy, wealth, and self-discipline in exchange for covenants and promises to be redeemed in the next world. Of course, only time can tell about the long-term efficacy of any investments and commitments—whether made for rewards in this world or for rewards in the next. The various supposed “guarantees” of ultimate security and happiness in this world are scarcely more

reliable than the promises of ultimate salvation in the next. Both kinds of rewards are “products” that must be “sold” to more or less willing consumers, who accept them on faith in the future.

So what evidence have we that government regulation of religion is holding back a demand for otherworldly products that might be building up in Europe, either despite or because of the prevailing secular environment? A Stockholm-based journalist, publishing in the *Wall Street Journal* in 2007, reported on various unexpected outbreaks of religious sentiment and “upstart churches” in Sweden and other supposedly “secular” countries, precisely for the reasons postulated in the new paradigm outlined above.⁷⁰ Introvigne and Stark also offer numerous examples from various European countries supporting their claim of an inverse relation between religious participation and government regulation in any given society. Their showcase example, though, is Italy.⁷¹ After 1947, all religions in Italy were supposedly equal before the law, but a series of Christian Democrat governments had always shown favoritism to the dominant Catholic religion. After Vatican Council II, however, and especially after the erosion of Christian Democrat political dominance in the 1980s and 1990s, the government entered into a series of new concordats with various religious communities, starting with the Vatican itself in 1984. Since then, Catholic priests have no longer drawn their salaries from the state.

However, the public still pays 0.8 percent of their total tax for purposes designated by law as “humanitarian or religious.” Taxpayers may direct their respective portions to the religious communities of their choice, which need not be their own religious communities; or they may opt to leave the allocation to the discretion of the government for a “general humanitarian” purpose. The Jehovah’s Witnesses, the most apolitical of all new religions, have chosen to accept the *otto mille*. Baptists have declined to accept their designated portion of the allocation. What is most interesting about this process is that it sets up an annual competition among the several religious communities, complete with professional ad campaigns, to attract these designated taxes from any and all of the taxpayers without regard to what their actual church memberships might be. Given that 89 percent of the Italian population claims to be “religious” (though only 40 percent are active participants), the designated church tax has been going disproportionately to *non-Catholic* denominations.⁷²

This semi-deregulation process in Italy has opened up much more space for new evangelical and Pentecostal groups, as well as for a growing

number of so-called “para-churches” (e.g., Campus Crusade) and for totally new religious movements (NRMs), which in Italy do not face the same official “anti-cult” suspicions as in France or Belgium. So far, these non-Catholic bodies remain small, though by 2001 there were 120 independent evangelical or Pentecostal groups and some 350 unconventional new religious movements. A major reason that the Protestants and NRMs are not growing faster is because of increased competition from a resurgent Catholicism, which itself is undergoing a certain amount of internal competition from segments such as Opus Dei and the Catholic Charismatic movement. Those claiming to be “active” Catholics rose from 33 percent in 1981 to 38 percent in 1999. In other words, deregulation has not only encouraged the rise and development of various competing religions, but Italy has actually become even more Catholic as a result, supporting the claim of Stark and others that deregulation brings an increase in the total amount of religious activity, not just in the number of new religions.⁷³

Finally, survey data show a general increase among Italians, across roughly two decades (1981–99), in religious belief and participation. Those believing in life after death increased from 44 percent of the population to 59 percent; those believing in hell rose from 33 percent to 49 percent; those claiming to pray with some regularity went from 71 percent to 79 percent; and weekly church attendance rose from 32 percent to 40 percent. Interestingly enough, these data for the general population were replicated, for the most part, among those between ages eighteen and twenty-nine, though with somewhat smaller figures. The authors cite several other recent studies by scholars in Italy which have also shown a generally upward thrust in religiosity among Italians.⁷⁴

Nor is Italy unique in such trends. The Bertelsmann Foundation, a nonprofit research firm doing periodic surveys in Europe, recently found that most Germans and Swiss, for example, claim to be “religious” and that more than a fifth of respondents in each of those countries went further by claiming “deep religious convictions.” These generalizations are qualified importantly by noting that such claims come disproportionately from women, youth, and Roman Catholics, and that “religious convictions” do not necessarily mean regular church attendance or traditional convictions. Yet neither do such findings bespeak a shrinking religious market in Europe.⁷⁵

Let me be clear about the contentions of this essay so far: I am not

claiming to have demonstrated (1) that secularization (however defined) has reached its limits in Europe and is now in decline; (2) that deregulation of the religious market in Europe has been progressed far enough to permit a major religious resurgence there; or (3) that a new and extensive post-Christian religious consciousness has arisen in Europe that will provide a fertile niche for rapid LDS growth. These three propositions would all require far more empirical evidence than I can adduce here. They are also developments that could occur independently of each other without any necessary causal relationships among them. Furthermore, even to the extent that they are occurring, they might be necessary conditions, but would not be sufficient conditions, for a new “second harvest” of the Church in Europe. Nevertheless, if they are considered in light of the general theoretical framework proposed here, they do seem to offer at least the prospects for a brighter Mormon future in Europe. But much remains yet to be done.

LDS Efforts to Reduce Market Regulations in Europe

It is not well known among the American Saints, though it might be better known elsewhere, that the LDS Church itself has been actively involved in political, legal, and diplomatic efforts to reduce restraints on the religious market all over Europe. This is not a new development, for the Church has had an effective international diplomatic program for decades. One need only recall the work of David M. Kennedy, who was appointed by President Kimball in 1974 as a special envoy from the First Presidency to various governments, a post that he occupied until 1990.⁷⁶ Among his many accomplishments was gaining access for the Church and its members in Soviet-occupied eastern Europe to certain new opportunities, including the construction of a temple in Freiberg, then in East Germany, in 1985.⁷⁷

More recently, the International Center for Law and Religion Studies (ICLRS) has been established at the J. Reuben Clark School of Law at Brigham Young University, directed by W. Cole Durham Jr. This center describes its mission as working “with scholars, government leaders, nongovernmental groups, and religious organizations from a variety of countries and faith traditions, to promote religious liberty and study the relations between governments and religious organizations.”⁷⁸ Its work is supplemented by a few skilled senior couples serving special missions and based in such strategic locations as Brussels and Geneva. Led by the

globe-trotting Cole Durham, this entire effort is devoted to reducing formal restrictions on religious activity and associations of all kinds, not just on the Latter-day Saints, and improving the image of the Church and its members among the general public in every country. To use the language of the religious economy model again, all such efforts are aimed at reducing the costs of membership by improving the public image and legal status of the Church in various countries.

Although based at BYU, the work of this international center is multifaceted and world wide. It includes active participation in numerous conferences on religious regulation and freedom; cooperative projects with other centers having similar missions, such as CESNUR (Center for the Study of New Religions) based in Turin, and the Center for Human Rights at the University of Oslo; communications and negotiations with various governments, including occasional filings of amicus briefs, over issues such as legal status and privileges for various religious communities; and teaching courses in various universities and law schools on all such matters. For example, in 2007 Durham and a colleague at the University of Oslo prepared academic materials for a graduate course in religious freedom and comparative constitutional law to be taught in Indonesia. Durham also spent a month teaching a course on similar topics at the Central European University in Budapest. The center also sponsors an ongoing program of summer fellowships at BYU to provide students with expertise in these legal and constitutional issues, after which they are stationed as “interns” at various locations to gain practical experience along with their academic training.

The annual ICLRS symposia at BYU for the past fifteen years have been especially impressive, for they have cumulatively involved 527 scholars and government ministers, judges, and other officials from 108 countries. China, Russia, and eastern Europe have been especially strongly represented, no doubt a deliberate strategy in the center’s selection process. Among the participants in these symposia have been the Austrian justice of the European Court of Human Rights; the head of Belgium’s Advisory Centre on Harmful Sectarian Organizations; the chief justice of the Norwegian Supreme Court; various law professors; and several sociologists, including some well known to me, such as James Richardson at the University of Nevada and Eileen Barker at the London School of Economics. In looking over the entire list of past participants in these BYU symposia, available through the “past participants” link on the center’s website, I am

struck by the obvious effort to establish relationships with government ministers and advisors who are likely to arrive with considerable prejudice. One hopes and assumes that they return home from these symposia somewhat less prejudiced against the cause of religious freedom generally and the LDS religion in particular.

Yet, effective as the ICLRS clearly is, its efforts must be limited to the “softening up” process—to building friendships, to persuasion, remonstrance, advice, teaching, and setting good examples. It has no formal power, and it is not a political pressure group. For more direct and strenuous efforts, the Church must find its support from local Saints and friends with expertise in law, in public relations, and in lobbying. Some such experts are found in Area offices and in the various European stakes. Most of them are local Europeans, though some are special missionaries. Along with the constitutional changes promoted by the European Convention on Human Rights and its court in recent decades, these efforts by hard-working European Latter-day Saints have helped greatly to create enough political space that the Church in most of western Europe enjoys a level of legal recognition that is adequate for most purposes, though still not ideal. Its legal status still needs to be consolidated so that it will truly enjoy the rights and privileges accorded to the “recognized” religious organizations. Even though the Church can operate as a legal entity and carry on its program openly in most countries, to the general public and to much of the officialdom it is still treated as an obscure sect or cult.⁷⁹

In eastern Europe, the situation is even more daunting. Certain restrictions remain in force against the LDS Church and other newer religions, despite the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which most countries of eastern Europe have ostensibly either joined or aspired to join.⁸⁰ Some of these restrictions derive simply from the traditional Catholic and Orthodox outlooks on religion common to central and eastern Europe, which have been embodied in the “Austrian model” for implementing the ECHR. That model permits state discrimination in favor of traditional religions, as well as restrictions upon unconventional and “foreign” religions.⁸¹ Serbia and Romania, for example, have recently adopted it. Of course, whatever the laws of the various countries might provide, many restrictions also take the form of deliberate administrative delays, evasions, and extralegal intimidations.⁸²

Still, some progress has been made at removing or reducing these

barriers through the work of Cole Durham, of friendly local scholars and officials he has cultivated, of skilled legal counsel based in the Area office, and of local LDS public affairs people. For example, after years of ground-work, in October 2006 the Church finally achieved legal recognition in Slovakia. It wasn't easy. Slovakian law required supportive petitions containing at least 20,000 valid signatures to be collected and submitted to the government within a ten-day period. This feat was accomplished with the help of the seventy LDS missionaries from the neighboring Czech Republic.

In another emerging eastern nation, Moldova, gaining legal status also required some political pressure from LDS legal counsel in Europe. For a while, after the dedication of the mission in May 2001, LDS missionaries had been permitted there unofficially, but a change of government shortly thereafter brought a crack-down, harassment, and the expulsion of the missionaries. The Church filed for legal recognition more than once according to the prescribed procedure, but the government remained unresponsive. Then the Church filed suit in and won favorable verdicts at successive levels of the Moldovan court system, but the government still failed to comply. Finally, in 2006 five LDS members of the U.S. Senate sent a letter to the Moldovan president reminding him of the commitments his country had made under the new European legal framework for religious freedom; and in the spring of 2007, he finally complied.⁸³ Such victories are heartening, but the Church will be required to sustain its efforts to increase its public presence and respectability in Europe and to reduce the costs of membership among its faithful adherents.

Ironically, both the Moldovan example and the Italian situation present a public relations dilemma for the Church. In Moldova, the good news is that the Church was able to get five U.S. Senators to intervene to achieve the desired effect. But that is also the bad news, for it strengthens the perception that the Church in that country (and perhaps neighboring countries as well) is essentially an American organization, backed by the U.S. government. Such a perception is not likely to facilitate its acceptance as an authentic part of the Moldovan religious landscape. Meanwhile, in Italy, the LDS Church has applied for legal recognition under the new Italian system, but the Parliament had not approved the application as of July 2007.⁸⁴ Opinion among Latter-day Saints in Italy is mixed about how long the approval process might take; but whenever it comes,

the Church must then face the question of whether to accept its fair share of the *otto mille* tax. On the one hand, if the Church accepts the tax money, it will be violating its usual policy of remaining entirely independent of government funding. On the other hand, if it rejects the tax money, it is likely to be seen as deliberately opting out of “legitimate” Italian religious life, as though it is just another big, rich American outfit whose members don’t need their share of community funds, given their connection to this “foreign” institution. Such are the dilemmas encountered even when the Church gains some success in trying to reduce the costs of membership for its European Saints.⁸⁵

Adapting the Church to the European Setting

Some of the costs of membership borne by the Saints outside the United States, including those in Europe, are unintentionally imposed by the Church itself as an essentially American organization. In countless ways, some subtle and some overt, the Church gives expression to American cultural preferences and even to American interpretations of certain traditional teachings. Unlike the European legal arena that I have just discussed, the Church arena is one over which the Saints and leaders themselves have the ultimate power, through the process of revelation, to decide how the Church program should be adapted to the culture and traditions of each society. In making these adaptations, the Church, both at headquarters and through its leaders in each country, will be able to reduce the cost and enhance the appeal of membership only to the extent that local members and investigators can visualize how the Church program can be implemented or adapted in their lives—and without unduly increasing the cultural tension between themselves and their local families, friends, employers, and familiar traditions. Or, to resort again to the language of economists, members and investigators need to be able to see how they can “buy into” the Church program with a minimal loss or expenditure of the “cultural capital” (including “religious capital”) that they have already accumulated in their respective societies.⁸⁶

Calling attention to this approach does not mean advocating a cost-free religion, either in Europe or anywhere else. Contemporary social science theory would agree with President Hinckley that a religion commanding the loyalty and commitment of its adherents must “stand for something.”⁸⁷ Put another way, the Church must “protect its brand”; it must always strive to make sure that the world knows what it stands for

and how it is distinctive. Ever since Kanter's 1972 study of religious and other utopian societies, social scientists have understood that organizational demands for conformity and sacrifice function as "commitment mechanisms."⁸⁸ More recently, Lawrence Iannaccone and others associated with the "new paradigm" have argued similarly that truly strong and enduring religions are "strict"—that is, they make demands on their members.⁸⁹

Yet the nature and degree of strictness of those demands must be commensurate with the perceived benefits enjoyed by the adherents in a particular market niche. If the demands are too strict, they will be counterproductive and will strain the bonds of customer loyalty. If they are not strict enough, they will invite free riders, who, if they become too numerous, will demoralize the more committed and undermine the long-term viability of a "firm" or organization.⁹⁰ Some demands arising from the standard policies and practices of the Church require much more sacrifice in Europe and elsewhere than in the United States and might require selective adaptations to make them feasible. Still other organizational demands (e.g., the Word of Wisdom for Latter-day Saints) mark important behavioral boundaries that can create some tension between the organization and its surrounding culture—and which are actually functional as long as the tension is moderate or optimal for the niche in question. If the tension is too great, the religious organization will be stigmatized and persecuted. With minimal or no tension, however, the organization will lack distinctiveness, or a clear "brand" that can attract and hold adherents looking for something special.⁹¹

From this theoretical viewpoint, then, the strategy of the LDS Church would be to advocate and enforce doctrines and practices that would represent, not maximal but optimal, strictness within, as well as optimal cultural tension with the outside. However, determining what is "optimal" in one market niche or cultural setting will not necessarily provide an optimal solution in another. This predicament is difficult to manage in an organization guided by correlation, standardization, and centralized control. Elder Dallin Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve has attempted to define a "gospel culture" that is separate and independent of any of the cultures of the world, because it derives from the plan of salvation and informs the "values and expectations and practices common to all members of the Church."⁹² Elder Richard P. Lindsay of the Seventy, while serving as president of the Africa Area, was quoted in 1993 with a

somewhat more expansive definition of the gospel culture as “transcend[ing] all boundaries and barriers.” Yet “building a gospel culture doesn’t mean the denial of everything in our separate heritages, although we must keep the doctrine pure and be willing to change certain traditions that aren’t compatible with the gospel.”⁹³ A still more expansive view can be seen in an earlier article by Elder Charles Didier, who described the gospel culture as “a vast amalgam of all the positive aspects of our cultures, histories, customs, and languages. The building of the kingdom of God is such an amalgam, and is the only place where these different values may and can coexist.” An “amalgam” is more inclusive and hospitable to good values from many sources than, presumably, a system that is “separate and independent” from all the world’s cultures.⁹⁴ This definition seems to leave more room for adaptations across cultures, but a precise and common definition of “gospel culture” has not yet been embraced by all Church leaders.

Selective Adaptation of Doctrines

Obviously a major component in the gospel culture would be the official doctrines, a category that is not itself without some ambiguity. A recent “LDS Newsroom” press release on the official Church website attempts a rather parsimonious definition of what constitutes official doctrine: the standard works, official declarations and proclamations, and the Articles of Faith.⁹⁵ The same document contains the following caveats: (1) Even from those official sources, isolated statements should not be taken out of context; (2) Not every statement made by a Church leader, past or present, constitutes doctrine; it might be just a personal opinion; (3) Some doctrines (such as the atonement of Christ) are core doctrines and are thus far more important than other doctrines (such as the precise location of the Garden of Eden); and (4) Continuing revelation is intended to be relevant to the circumstances of a given age or period, so that teachings and practices of the Church are subject to modification across time. In 1994 in a somewhat less public setting, the First Presidency, then consisting of Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson, defined the following as “fundamental”: faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the atonement and resurrection; the apostasy and restoration; the divine mission of Joseph Smith; continuous revelation; the plan of salvation; and the priesthood with its ordinances and covenants. Even this relatively short list leaves room for a certain amount of in-

terpretation, but it probably corresponds to what the Newsroom release means by “core doctrines.”⁹⁶

From these various official statements and the observations by Elder Oaks and others, we can infer that his concept of a “gospel culture” is limited to a certain set of “commandments, covenants, ordinances, and blessings.” Yet anyone in any culture who strives to act on even this limited definition of “gospel culture” must deploy time, resources, energy, and moral courage, for non-Christians—or even many Christians—will not see these expectations as culturally neutral. The gospel culture, then, will inevitably exact some cost for those who undertake to live the LDS way of life, and the cost will be higher the more exotic that way of life seems in a given traditional culture.

Can anything be done with the doctrines and policies of the Church that might mitigate this cost and thus improve member (customer) retention rate? Probably not much can be done with the fundamental or “core” doctrines outlined above if the LDS “brand” is to be protected; and it is doubtful that many Saints would welcome an erosion or abandonment of any of those core doctrines. Douglas Davies, a non-Mormon scholar of LDS doctrine and culture, has argued that a major appeal of the LDS Church is its program for “transcendence over death” or, in LDS parlance, its “plan of salvation.”⁹⁷ Seekers open to such supernatural explanations for the purpose of life, whether in traditionally Christian or other cultures, will continue to investigate the core LDS claims, so it would be a mistake to abandon or “water down” these major products of the LDS brand. Nor would such a dilution be likely to appeal to committed secularists, who tend to avoid the theological marketplace altogether. Since the LDS Newsroom statement about Mormon doctrine reminds members that not all doctrines are of equal importance, one strategy for reducing the costs of membership, it seems to me, would be to deemphasize certain doctrines selectively, and emphasize others, when “marketing” the religion to peoples of different cultures.⁹⁸

I can well understand, for example, why many European Saints these days might prefer that visiting authorities and Church publications would leave in the background such traditional doctrines as the location of the garden of Eden, the divine status of the U.S. Constitution, and the oft-repeated folk prophecy that some day the elders of the Church will have to save the Constitution. Such seeming “Americanisms” have nothing to do with “coming unto Christ” or with the covenants made as part

of the proffered plan of happiness for all of God's people. Even the designation of America as "a land choice above all other lands" in the Book of Mormon does not refer to the particular nation known as the United States of America. There can be no doubt that historically (or even ontologically) the LDS Church is an American organization; but still, to the extent that any of these "Americanisms" are highlighted in LDS discourse, they imply invidious comparisons with European and other nations. Such an approach is bound to exacerbate, not reduce, tension for European members, especially in an age when the foreign policy of the United States seems so troubling to Europeans and others.⁹⁹

Still more dubious are doctrines long taught by Utah leaders and repeated as recently as 1998 by Hoyt Brewster, president of the Netherlands Amsterdam Mission about the LDS people as uniquely "chosen," not only for a special mission to the world in modern times, but also for a special lineage assigned them in the preexistence, so that they could be born as literal Israelites, and particularly Ephraimites, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁰⁰ Though lacking a canonical basis, these doctrines enjoyed widespread acceptance for a very long time, since they tended to favor the British and other northwestern Europeans, from among whom most early Mormon converts had come. Such doctrines were also part of the same ideological framework that gave rise to restrictions on people of African ancestry and to the generally racist categorizations of humankind that have been common in both Europe and America for centuries. However valid it might have seemed to take such doctrines literally in the nineteenth century, contemporary LDS usage has been far more figurative or metaphorical, as were Paul's original teachings to the Galatians. Yet to the extent that contemporary American Saints and leaders insist on literal understandings of invidious distinctions among peoples of different lineages, they will impose an unnecessary burden on the public image of the Church, thereby increasing the general costs of membership in Europe and elsewhere in the world.¹⁰¹

The recent modification of a certain phrase in an official Church document illustrates how easily a potentially troubling traditional doctrine might be set aside by minor textual changes. The document in question is the introduction to the Book of Mormon bound with that book ever since 1981. Originally written by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, that introduction describes the Lamanites in the Book of Mormon as "the *principal* ancestors of the American Indians"; but a slight revision that appeared

for the first time in the fall of 2007 now describes the Lamanites as “among the ancestors of the American Indians” (emphasis mine).¹⁰² Most Latter-day Saints, whether in Europe or anywhere else, probably paid little attention to this change in wording, but for the minority of members who have been paying attention to the scholarly literature on the Book of Mormon, the change is important.¹⁰³ Why? Because it relieves faithful scholars, apologists, and ordinary members of the need to defend the traditional belief that all the aboriginal peoples of the western hemisphere had descended from the small bands of Near Eastern Semites described in the Book of Mormon. A broader implication of the same change is that the Church now has no official doctrine describing exactly where the Book of Mormon story did take place, though some Western Hemisphere location is still the official understanding.

Many other examples of traditional teachings in the Church could also be cited in this connection, but perhaps these are enough to illustrate my main point that there are doctrinal issues outside the “core,” which the Church could review (and perhaps modify) to reduce some of the unnecessary costs of membership, especially in Europe.

Localizing the LDS Presence

Aside from doctrinal issues, which, to be sure, can be quite sensitive, are many less sensitive issues that have implications for increasing or decreasing the costs of membership in the LDS Church. If the LDS religion is ever to become “normalized” in Europe—that is, to seem as though it really belongs and is not just a foreign cult—it will have to be dressed as much as possible in the local garb of each nation. Although the important manifestations of such normalization are cultural, to some extent, this statement could even be taken literally, for the typical buttoned-down, dark suit, white shirt, and clean-shaven look, apparently *de rigueur* for priesthood leaders in every country, sends a mixed message about whether they are representatives of a local people or of an American corporate organization. A particular concern is the apparently official insistence on clean-shaven grooming for stake presidents and other local priesthood leaders, especially in countries where beards are fairly common.¹⁰⁴ Choices and policies about dress and grooming tend to be guided by symbolic meanings that are culture-specific, and an exporting firm (in this case, an American church) might not always be aware of the meanings conveyed to the local populace by headquarters grooming stan-

dards. On the other hand, such standards might carry a deliberately didactic function from headquarters. The main thing is for all parties to understand the intended meanings of dress and grooming.

To be sure, though, there are far more important issues than dress and grooming in an LDS presence; and in many respects, Church leaders are already implementing changes that might help to “normalize” the LDS presence in European communities. Consider the following examples:

1. LDS leaders, male and female, are now typically local people, not only at the branch, ward, and stake levels, but also at the area level. Area presidents still tend to be sent mostly from Church headquarters, on a rotating basis, but counselors in Area Presidencies are more often local Seventies. Recent callings to the First Quorum of Seventy have included increasing numbers of non-Americans, so the time seems close that we will see area presidents themselves called from among the natives and permanent residents of European and other countries to serve indefinitely in such callings. As this regionalization occurs, such leaders will become the “faces” of the LDS Church in those countries, increasingly familiar to both members and non-members, somewhat like the resident prelates in the traditional churches. The 2008 call of Elder Dieter Uchtdorf (a second-generation Mormon) to the First Presidency of the Church removed him as one of the leadership “faces” in his own homeland, but he had already served there as a stake president and a mission president, so his career still represents the “localization” process I am talking about. So do the many other non-Americans called to the First and Second Quorums of the Seventy, almost always after years of local leadership service, often as part of other quorums of the Seventy. Paid employees of the Church in CES, Welfare, Translation, Facilities Management, and other roles have typically been locals for a long time. The same is true of those involved in Public Affairs for the Church at various levels. And nothing bespeaks a permanent LDS presence as much as a temple, of which there are now ten in Europe, more than in the entire United States in 1950.

2. Church leaders are striving to increase the “sense of ownership” that the Saints in various countries have toward Church publications. Of course, the translation of the Book of Mormon and other scriptures into various languages has been going on for a long time, and the same with hymnals to some extent. Yet the process of translation sometimes reflects competing interests between a headquarters desire for staying as close as

possible to literal renderings of the English originals and a local desire for more colloquial and comfortable renderings—though even, at the local level, opinions will always be diverse.¹⁰⁵ The main Church magazine, *Ensign*, published in many languages as *Liahona*, contains a section of news about Church members in the various local countries. These inserted sections are produced, written, and edited by local members under the supervision of the Area Presidency. On the ByCommonConsent blogsite for June 9, 2007, both the U.K. edition and the Finnish edition of the Church magazine (all non-English versions are uniformly titled *Liahona*) received high marks from young LDS bloggers for such local coverage in their respective countries, hoping that they were seeing the beginning of a “decentralization” of Church supervision of such material “in favor of regional and local flavor” to help create “a church identity less dependent on SLC.”¹⁰⁶ General and Area authorities native to various local countries are periodically contributing to the official literature in those countries—for example, Elder Patrick R. Kearon, second counselor in the Europe West Area Presidency (from Clevedon, England) wrote a news item about the U.K. Saints in that country’s June 2007 issue of the *Ensign*. Entitled, “Midsummer’s Day: Out of Darkness and into His Marvelous Light,” this article received the appreciative comment from blogger Norbert that even though the title carried a common “Mormonish” metaphor, it was at least “a metaphor about midsummer, not [about] baseball or beet farming.” Such a comment reflects the continuing desire in the United Kingdom for articles that highlight the lives of faithful members and of key events in the LDS history of each country. Certainly the recently established LDS websites for the various languages and countries will also improve a feeling of connection to the Church for its far-flung members, though these sites are still in the early stages of development.

Beyond such official initiatives, translations of articles, or collections of articles, from unofficial publications such as *BYU Studies*, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, and the *Journal of Mormon History* also seem now in prospect. Bilingual LDS Church members with scholarly training and credentials could assist greatly both in selecting material for translation into various European languages and in the translation process itself. Access to such publications in all the European languages would increase the sense of connection to the scholarly literature on Mormon culture, in addition to the official literature, among European Saints of an intellectual bent.

Of course, literature from or about the Church for internal consumption, important as that is, will not help much to improve the LDS public image on the outside. There is a desperate need to make reliable contemporary literature on the Church available to European journalists, scholars, and educators, preferably through their own local libraries. This need was brought starkly to my attention during 1999 when my wife and I visited a few local libraries in modest-sized cities and towns in the north of England. We were appalled at what the library patrons and local school children would have encountered in trying to study up on “the Mormons” in those towns. On returning to the United States, I reported on this situation to a friend in the leadership of the Seventy, who later notified me that “library kits” containing the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* and a number of standard “classics” by Talmage and others had recently been distributed to numerous libraries in all the English-speaking countries as, indeed, they had been for years in the United States. I am reliably informed that a private group of members and returned missionaries, both in Utah and in Germany, are translating the *Encyclopedia* into German for posting on a private website. There are also a few, but very few, outlets from which the Saints in various countries can purchase Mormon-related books locally. One of these, serving German-speaking Saints, is *HLT Bücher* (LDS Books) located in Salzburg. These are promising developments, but bare beginnings.¹⁰⁷

Policies and Practices

Every large, bureaucratic organization devises policies and practices which seem reasonable and efficient as applied to the organization in general but which produce unintended consequences and unexpected tensions up and down the various levels of the structure. I suspect that a constant source of frustration for the American General Authorities and officers of the LDS Church is trying to find adaptations of general policies and practices that will work in Europe, Asia, and everywhere else. If appropriate adaptations cannot be made, the demands of Church programs and policies often become too costly for the members to bear. I earlier mentioned Sabbath observance and seminary attendance as examples of individual cost-benefit dilemmas. Any of the normal tensions over policies and practices in large organizations are simply exacerbated by cultural differences between the American headquarters and the local stakes. Numerous scholars who are active members and leaders of the Church in Eu-

rope and in other countries have cited examples of expectations originating in Utah that clash with European cultural preferences.¹⁰⁸ These clashes might arise from different political and economic traditions, or from differential cultural preferences in adapting the Church programs, while still others arise from the increasingly secularized and permissive local norms governing relationships between the sexes. For example, even though family law is very much in flux, both in Europe and in the United States, the LDS Church's current position is strongly opposed to accepting homosexual relationships or even heterosexual cohabitation as normative. However, in some European countries, the Church's legal status might well be jeopardized if it takes disciplinary action against members seeking homosexual marriages. Yet I can envision a policy that might recognize preexisting (i.e., preconversion), long-term monogamous heterosexual relationships (i.e., common-law marriages) for members who are otherwise living gospel standards and preparing for eventual temple marriages. The policy of requiring the lapse of a year between a civil and a temple marriage—a continuing irritant for non-Mormon relatives of American members—is not an issue in Europe, where all marriages must be performed by civil authority and where LDS temple marriages are not recognized.

One of the cultural differences that sometimes complicates relationships between American and European Latter-day Saints is the greater personal reserve and privacy expected in social interactions among Europeans. Thus, traditional LDS practices such as home teaching and visiting teaching often come across as invasions of privacy or unwanted intrusions into the lives of members, especially those who are not very active in the Church.¹⁰⁹ During the past few years, both the First Presidency and the European Area Presidencies have formally changed the home teaching policies in recognition both of this cultural sensitivity and of the practical difficulties in comprehensive home teaching where most of the membership is inactive in the Church, and where most men fail to achieve the Melchizedek Priesthood. Accordingly, the latest policy calls for (1) limiting home teaching assignments to about five families or individuals for each pair of brethren willing to serve as home teachers; and then (2) assigning those home teachers in such a way as to give priority to (a) new members and (b) the most responsive among the less active, with (3) the use of missionaries to supplement the work of home teachers in both of those categories. Such is the gist of the information provided me by the

Europe Central Area office. These are not all new ideas, of course, but apparently they have been more widely implemented lately as formal policy. This same basic cultural difference is greatly intensified when it is a non-member home being visited by uninvited Mormon missionaries doing their daily “tracting.” This method of seeking investigators and potential converts has always rankled Europeans (and those in many other cultural settings as well), who are likely to resent being accosted by strangers wishing to discuss something as private as religious beliefs, especially when they are disturbed in their own homes. Actually, tracting has for some years been given the lowest priority among proselyting methods, considered a last resort when missionaries can’t find other ways to make promising contacts. While missionaries might always do some tracting from time to time, the Church has been seeking a variety of alternative methods for finding and teaching investigators in ways that do not require the “frontal assault” of knocking on their doors. Indeed, in some of the more affluent neighborhoods people live behind locked gates, making tracting impossible. In some European missions, the missionaries now depend mainly on a system of “unplanned finding,” which consists of watching for unobtrusive opportunities to greet people and engage them in conversations in public locations such as bus stops and buses, trains and train stations, stores, markets, street displays, sports events, and other random times and places. The missionaries are urged to seek at least ten such opportunities every day and thus to remain in a “mode of constant finding.” During each such conversation, the missionaries will hand out “pass-along cards” with engaging pictures, the phone number of the missionaries, the address of the nearest LDS chapel, and the Church website in the local language. Opportunities for these kinds of contacts and receptivity to a subsequent visit from missionaries are also greatly enhanced by instances in which the Church receives positive publicity as, for example, whenever a new temple is dedicated. My granddaughter, who returned in 2007 from a mission in Finland, continues to rejoice in the proselytizing opportunities that resulted from from publicity associated with the open house and dedication of the Helsinki Temple in the fall of 2006.¹¹⁰

It has long been well known that the likelihood of an eventual baptism is greatly enhanced the more that local Church members themselves are involved in the teaching process, so the preferred missionary method has come to be teaching investigators in the presence of, and with the participation of, members of the Church whenever possible.¹¹¹ Various pro-

cedures for involving the members are laid out in the current missionary publication, *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* implemented Churchwide in 2004.

In some newly opened countries, where the members are too few and too new to help much in this way, the missionaries fall back on the time-honored method of offering English classes to bring in potential investigators. At the beginning of each class, the missionaries explain their ultimate purpose in offering these classes, so that there are no false pretenses. They indeed do a conscientious job of teaching English, but then invite those who might be interested in their religious message to remain after the class for further discussion.

Among the most recent and effective method for involving members in the missionary program is a pilot project that was field-tested in 2003 with the encouragement of two apostles, and finally implemented during the next two years in all of the stakes of the Europe Central Area, and perhaps in other areas as well. This method uses the CES classes with their Young Single Adults (YSA) as Institute Outreach Centers. Under the direction of the local stake and mission presidents, these YSAs join with full-time missionaries to invite and bring young people of the same general age range (18–30) to local LDS church buildings for family home evenings, Institute of Religion classes, cultural and intellectual events, socials, and sports activities. Through these events, missionaries get many opportunities to teach young investigators in the chapels with YSA members present. So far the results of this program have been promising, not only in conversions but in retentions, for 80 percent of those converted through the Institute Outreach Centers are still active a year after baptism. Social scientists have long known that people in this transitional age range comprise the category most likely to be open to new ideas and experiences, including religious ones, so this approach appears to be a very effective “marketing strategy” for reaching the most likely “customers.”

The same approach has had some derivative and secondary applications: It is now being used in an effort to reactivate some less-active YSAs themselves, and it was introduced among teenagers as well through “Especially for Youth” (EFY) programs in Sweden and Germany during 2006. There are signs that the youth of all ages who get involved in this kind of outreach to their peers not only give the missionary effort a big boost but also are themselves more likely to go on missions and remain active in the Church. Meanwhile, the YSAs who participate also provide role models

that encourage the younger set in their stakes to aspire to serve missions, obtain higher education, and marry in the temple.¹¹²

Every device attempted by the Church to reach nonmembers is likely to produce an ambiguous cost-benefit (or risk-benefit) assessment. Probably the most serious problem for the public image of the LDS Church is simply that so few people, especially outside the United States, have ever even heard of the LDS Church, to say nothing of having been exposed to a reasonably competent and accurate explanation of what it stands for. Mere publicity, however massive in scale, is not a solution in the absence of quality control—as is apparent from the mixture of the sublime and the ridiculous stirred up about Mormonism by the Romney presidential campaign in the United States. Yet the one-to-one approach through tracting, “unplanned finding,” or bringing young single adults to Institute gatherings is a “slow and steady” method, which is unlikely to produce rapid growth. The involvement of faithful members in the proselyting process, whether in their homes or in YSA events, has the advantage of increasing their personal investment in that process, and in the Church program more generally, but it also carries the risk of excessive costs for the members when leaders apply too much pressure to participate. For the LDS religion to come to seem somewhat more normal and natural as part of the European setting (and thus less stigmatizing for its members and investigators) will likely require another couple of generations of these kinds of slow and steady efforts.

Summary and Conclusions

In this paper, I have been concerned mainly with the differential cost of LDS membership in Europe compared to North America, with special reference to what the Church can do to reduce the costs of membership among the European Saints. I reviewed three conditions that seem especially important as sources of these membership costs: (1) the secularized and regulated cultural and political environment throughout Europe, in which the LDS Church must operate; (2) the special costs to European members, collectively and individually, from various cultural, legal, and even logistical burdens that American members rarely face; and (3) the energy and resources that European leaders and members have had to devote to the retention and recovery of inactive members—with poor prospects in the latter case. I turned then to developments that hold out the prospect for significantly reducing membership costs in the years

ahead, especially: (1) the creation of a market niche of well-educated young Europeans with a nontraditional spiritual orientation, as a side effect of the secularization of the traditional European religions; (2) the extensive campaign being waged by the Church itself to reduce the regulation and stigmatization of the LDS and other newer religions in Europe; and (3) the potential for local adaptations of general Church doctrines, policies, and practices that will make Church activity less costly and more appealing for European members.

There are good reasons to be optimistic about the future of the Church in Europe. Old traditions and restrictions on new religions are breaking down. The religious market is stirring, and the LDS brand, with its innovative combination of the familiar and the novel, will find new “customers” in the younger generations. The Church now has experienced local leaders in place and enough organizational stability to maintain successful “franchises” in many wards and stakes. Many of these leaders are of a second generation of European Mormons, who have already learned to cope with the costs and adapt to the tensions with a Utah leadership. As the Area President put it to me, “Recent developments in Europe can give our . . . members an increased level of confidence about their own membership in the Church here. One of our/their challenges is that they deserve to have more confidence than some of them feel. I see the Brethren working very hard to ‘build Zion’ as much as possible in the far-flung areas of the Church, and they are very conscious of not wanting to ‘Americanize’ that effort.”¹¹³ For my own part, I see a new cohort of General Authorities in their fifties and sixties (and younger) who have more experience than ever before in countries outside North America, are more often native to those countries, and are more sensitive than ever to the inappropriate intrusions of American culture into LDS Church life in other countries. I see them as also more open than earlier generations to the counsel and advice of local Saints and leaders living in Europe and elsewhere, despite the strictures of “correlation.”

I see that openness extending also to the work of scholars in the field of Mormon studies, especially during the past decade or so while President Hinckley was at the head of the Church. As recently as November 2007, the Church’s Public Affairs Newsroom issued a statement on its website supporting academic Mormon studies at secular universities and referencing President Hinckley himself for its authority. Citing recent academic conferences on Mormonism, this statement declares that “the

Church encourages a deeper and broader examination of its theology, history, and culture on an intellectual level . . . [and] open dialogue and conversation between the Latter-day Saints and various scholarly and religious communities . . . [in the belief that] Mormonism has a depth and breadth of substance that can hold up under academic scrutiny.”¹¹⁴

Mormon studies programs and courses are gaining traction at various locations in the United States and the organization of the European Mormon Studies Association in 2007 bodes well for similar academic developments in Europe. The intellectual ferment which Islam and various new religions have brought to Europe in recent years has generated a variety of regular scholarly conferences on religion there, most of them under such respectable auspices as those of CESNUR and INFORM.¹¹⁵ If LDS scholars will present papers and join in the conversations at such conferences, “they can bring especially fresh perspectives rooted in their [own] LDS experience in Europe . . . [and the day] may come . . . when there will be courses in Mormon studies at universities across Europe.”¹¹⁶ That might seem a far-fetched prospect today, but no more so than a similar projection about Mormon studies in American academia would have been in the middle of the twentieth century.

Notes

1. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, 1995 seminar for stake and mission presidents in Paris, quoted in Hoyt W. Brewster Jr., *The Promise: The Prophesied Growth of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Netherlands and Belgium and All of Western Europe* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam Netherlands Mission, 1998). Brewster, then mission president, also quotes a comparably optimistic prediction by Elder Henry B. Eyring made two years later at a similar meeting in Rome and a third by President Gordon B. Hinckley in 2000 about a “second harvest” soon to come in Sweden. Erik Nilsson, “Göteborg, Sweden: Second Harvest,” *Ensign*, July 2000, 77.

2. Peter Berger, “Epistemological Modesty: An Interview with Peter Berger,” *Christian Century*, October 29, 1997, 974. In the 1960s, Berger had been among the most confident social theorists predicting the final decline and fall of religion in Europe and elsewhere before the inevitable onslaught of modernism and secularism. See, e.g., his *The Sacred Canopy* (New York: Doubleday, 1969), 107–8.

3. Massimo Introvigne and Rodney Stark, “Religious Competition and Revival in Italy: Exploring European Exceptionalism,” *Interdisciplinary Journal*

of *Research on Religion* 1, no. 1 (2005, Article 5): 14, <http://www.religjournal.com> (accessed in April 2008).

4. I have in mind here primarily Stark's predictions during the past two decades of gigantic Church growth, compiled and updated most recently in his *The Rise of Mormonism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), edited by Reid L. Neilson, as well as certain other observations in that same book.

5. The series ran for several issues in the *Salt Lake Tribune*. See, e.g., Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Keeping Members a Challenge for the LDS Church," *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 26, 2005.

6. The website {www.cumorah.com} includes many kinds of data on contemporary Mormons. See also his *Law of the Harvest: Practical Principles of Effective Missionary Work* (Henderson, Nev.: Cumorah Foundation, 2007).

7. I acknowledge with deep appreciation how much I have benefited by the consultation, information, and advice offered by many colleagues, especially from those who provided more formal critiques of earlier versions: Wilfried Decoo, Henri Gooren, Bruce C. Hafen, George K. Jarvis, O. James Stevens, Walter E. A. van Beek, and Ethan Yorgason. I alone am responsible for whether and how I have made use of their suggestions.

8. See, e.g., Walter van Beek, "Ethnization and Accommodation: Dutch Mormons in Twenty-First Century Europe," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 119–27; and his "Mormon Europeans or European Mormons," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 27–32; also Gary C. Lobb, "Mormon Membership Trends in Europe among People of Color: Present and Future Assessment," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 62. I am not insisting that religious disbelief and moral permissiveness are always causally connected, though historically a culture's moral strictures have usually been "enforced" by some sort of supernatural beliefs. A recent Pew survey found that many people in the United States and most people in the rest of the industrialized world do not believe that morality is necessarily connected to religion. Of course, public opinion is not the same as empirical reality, and in any case such opinion in secularized societies could be expected to deny a connection between religion and morality. Also, much depends on how "morality" is defined—in particular, on whether the issue is civic morality or personal (especially sexual) morality. Nathan Black, "Survey: Wealthier Nations Less Religious," *Christian Post* 5 (November 2007), http://www.christianpost.com/article/20071105/29971_Survey:_Wealthier_Nations_Less_Religious.htm (accessed April 2008). I am grateful to Wilfried Decoo for calling this article to my attention. On the other hand, Rodney Stark and William S. Bain-

bridge, *Religion, Deviance, and Social Control* (New York: Routledge, 1997) have found empirically that in a society with high religious participation, rates of crime, delinquency, and other deviance are lower even among those who are not religious or do not attend church.

9. See, e.g., the discussion in Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 220–23; and the analysis by Edward A. Tiryakian, “American Religious Exceptionalism: A Reconsideration,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 527 (1993): 40–54.

10. Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (Oxford, Eng.: Oxford University Press, 1994).

11. I gratefully acknowledge the informative documents for this section which were shared with me by W. Cole Durham, director of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies at Brigham Young University, and O. James Stevens, fellow of the center, who is currently serving a Church service mission in Brussels with his wife, Joan.

12. For comprehensive religion-state relationships, see James T. Richardson, ed., *Regulating Religion: Case Studies from Around the Globe* (New York: Springer-US, 2003), and Phillip Charles Lucas and Thomas Robbins, eds., *New Religious Movements in the Twenty-First Century: Legal, Political, and Social Changes in Global Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2006). Religious freedom for the individual has varied among European nations for more than a century. The ECHR had the effect of bringing all member nations under one juridical umbrella, legitimating personal freedom where it was already established, and pressing for change in nations where it was minimal. For the current social and legal status of religions in European countries, see EUREL newsletters {<http://www.eurel.info>}.

13. Lasia Bloss, “European Law of Religion: Organizational and Institutional Analysis of National Systems and Their Implications for the Future European Integration Process,” *Jean Monnet Working Paper 13/03* (New York: NYU School of Law, 2003). My thanks to O. J. Stevens for calling my attention to this paper.

14. See <http://www.osce.org> and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/osce#history>.

15. Silvio Ferrari, “New Religious Movements in Western Europe,” http://religion.info/pdf/2006_10_ferrari_nrm.pdf, (accessed June 5, 2007), 22 pp., published as *Research and Analysis Paper No. 9*, edited by Jean-François Mayer (Milan, Italy: Religioscope, October 23, 2006).

16. W. Cole Durham, “Re-Evaluating Foreign Evaluations of the 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Organizations: The Per-

spective after Ten Years,” unpublished paper written for BYU International Center for Law and Religion Studies, and presented at a conference of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society, February 16, 2007, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

17. Ferrari, “New Religious Movements in Western Europe.”

18. Marco Ventura, “Equality in the Regulation of Religion,” in *Religious Pluralism and Human Rights in Europe: Where to Draw the Line?*, edited by M. L. P. Loenen and J. E. Goldschmidt (Antwerp, Netherlands: Intersentia, 2007). The intertwining of religious and ethnic prejudice is another complicating factor. See, e.g., *Fact Sheet No. 34: Religious Discrimination and Legal Protection in the European Union*, issued jointly in October 2007 by the European Network against Racism (ENAR) {www.enar-eu.org} and the Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe (CEJI) {www.ceji.org}, both based in Brussels. ENAR is a network of some 600 European NGOs working to combat racial and religious discrimination throughout the European Union. The *Fact Sheet* concludes (p. 22) that much remains to be done in establishing equality even in individual freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, to say nothing of legal entity status for religious organizations. Once again, I am grateful to O. James Stevens for calling my attention to these and many other documents referenced in this paper.

19. Durham, “Re-Evaluating Foreign Evaluations of the 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience.”

20. W. Cole Durham Jr., “Facilitating Freedom of Religion or Belief through Religious Association Laws,” in *Facilitating Freedom of Religion or Belief*, edited by Tore Lindholm, W. Cole Durham Jr., and Bahia Tahzib-Lie (Leyden, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2004), 321–405.

21. Karel Dobbelaere and Lillian Voyé, “From Pillar to Postmodernity: The Changing Situation in Belgium,” *Sociology of Religion* (formerly *Sociological Analysis*) 51 (Supplement 1990): S1–13; Walter van Beek, “Ethnization and Accommodation,” 121–24, and “Mormon Europeans or European Mormons?,” 27.

22. Van Beek, “Mormon Europeans or European Mormons?” 27–31.

23. Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe: A Memory Mutates* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2000).

24. Van Beek, “Ethnization and Accommodation,” 124–28.

25. Elder Bruce C. Hafen, president of the Europe Central Area, email to Armand Mauss, July 15, 2007, finds my characterization of the LDS plight here to be somewhat exaggerated or outdated, at least in the northwest part of Europe.

26. Eileen Barker, *New Religious Movements: A Perspective for Understand-*

ing Society (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1982), and her *Sects, Cults, and New Religions* (Oxford, England: Routledge, 2007).

27. Willy Fautré, Alain Garay, and Yves Nidegger, "The Sect Issue in the European Francophone Sphere," in *Facilitating Freedom of Religion or Belief*, edited by Tore Lindholm, W. Cole Durham, Jr., and Bahia Tahzib-Lie, chap. 26.

28. This organization is successor to an earlier one (MILS = Interministerial Mission on Sects) established with a similar purpose. See information about both in *Wikipedia*, <http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/miviludes> (accessed April 2008).

29. "Contested religious movements" (CRMs) is a more neutral term than the usual government designation "sects" (or "cults"), but less neutral than "new religious movements" (NRMs) preferred by most sociologists, at least in the United States and the United Kingdom.

30. Vassilis Saroglou, Louis-Leon Christians, Coralie Buxant, and Stefania Casalfiore, *Mouvements Religieux Contestés: Psychologie, Droit et Politiques de Précaution* (Gent, Belgium: Academia Press, 2005); see also the authors' summary: "Contested Religious Movements: Psychology, Law, and Policies of Precaution" (University of Louvain, Center for the Psychology of Religion and Faculty of Law, 2006). For an example of the consequences of such marginalization for Belgian Mormons, see Wilfried Decoo, "Feeding the Fleeing Flock: Reflections on the Struggle to Retain Church Members in Europe," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 101–4.

31. Jörg Dittberner, "One Hundred Eighteen Years of Attitude: The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Free and Hanseatic City of Bremen," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 51–69, considers this factor one of the three most important reasons for the continuing difficulty in keeping a "typical" German ward going. The other two are emigration and internal dissension.

32. Historians who have studied the social origins of nineteenth-century European Mormon converts agree that they were predominantly working class. The precise forms and degrees of religious freedom varied considerably in nineteenth-century Europe. Mormon missionaries had no trouble with public preaching and meetings when they arrived in the British Isles in 1837, but these activities were not permitted in Scandinavia until after 1850. For a useful summary of the relations between church and state in fifteen European countries across time, see *La Laïcité dans la Construction Européenne* (Caen, France: La Ligue de l'Enseignement du Calvados at the University of Caen, 2000). See also its website: www.fol14.asso.fr. Some expansion

("élargissement") in religious rights apparently occurred in May 2004, after this report was issued.

33. Interestingly enough, some knowledgeable reviewers have found this section's assessment unduly pessimistic and somewhat outdated, while others have found it quite appropriate.

34. Most of my European informants concur with this generalization, although I allow the possibility that it may be an overstatement. For the more fluid U.S. situation, see Tim B. Heaton, "Vital Statistics," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1992), 4:1525–27.

35. See reports from census data in Austria, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Chile, and Mexico, in Rick Phillips, "Rethinking the International Expansion of Mormonism," *Nova Religio* 10, no. 1 (2006): 52–68, and David C. Knowlton, "How Many Members Are There Really? Two Censuses and the Meaning of LDS Membership in Chile and Mexico," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 53–78.

36. Many examples have been recounted in the work of other scholars who have written on Latter-day Saints in Europe. Examples are the articles by Decoo, Dittberner, and van Beek cited earlier. These generalizations are offered in the absence of systematic comparative data for European versus North American members, which (if available) might show that I have exaggerated some of the differences, despite the reports cited here from European scholars.

37. A similar situation prevails, of course, in remoter regions of the United States and Canada, but not for the great majority of Church members in these countries.

38. Since Sunday is also the preferred day in Europe for most activities of clubs, sports teams, and even volunteer civic organizations, an active LDS member is likely to be isolated from both the local community and from the family itself. For an engaging and comprehensive historical review of cultural varieties in Sunday sabbatarian observances, see Craig Harline, *Sunday: A History of the First Day from Babylonia to the Super Bowl* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), its review by Wilfried Decoo, and commentary by others on the Times and Seasons blogsite (www.timesandseasons.org/?p=3854). The continuing influence of Puritanism on LDS conceptions of Sabbath uses is readily apparent in the Harline study.

39. Gordon Shepherd and Gary Shepherd, "Membership Growth, Church Activity, and Missionary Recruitment," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 33–57, esp. 45–52.

40. Faithful LDS Europeans still have a continuing urge to emigrate to areas where the Church is stronger. Though European emigration in total is

not large, it can severely weaken an already struggling European ward or branch. See Dittberner, "One Hundred Eighteen Years," 63–65, and Van Beek, "Mormon Europeans or European Mormons," 19.

41. See Lobb, "Mormon Membership Trends in Europe." In the Europe Central Area, at least, according to Hafen, email, July 15, 2007, two-thirds of those joining the Church during 2006 had been baptized in the country of their birth, so a third had not been. There is no separate record of converts from the second generation of immigrant families, who might constitute many of those in the native two-thirds. Immigrant converts have tended to come from southern Europe and from Africa, and have proved both highly mobile and difficult to assimilate. They are also stigmatized by the local Europeans, so their conversions do not help to make LDS congregations seem any more "normal" by local standards.

42. See, e.g., the following articles in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996): Decoo, "Feeding the Fleeing Flock"; Van Beek, "Ethnization and Accommodation"; Marjorie Newton, "Towards 2000: Mormonism in Australia," 193–206; Ian G. Barber and David Gilgen, "Between Covenant and Treaty: The LDS Future in New Zealand," 207–22; and Jiro Numano, "Mormonism in Modern Japan," 223–35. See also Van Beek, "European Mormons or Mormon Europeans"; 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; Lobb, "Mormon Membership Trends in Europe"; D. Michael Quinn, "I-Thou vs. I-It Conversions: The Mormon 'Baseball Baptisms' Era," *Sunstone* 16, no. 7 (December 1993): 30–44.

43. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (Salt Lake City: Intellectual Reserve, 2004).

44. Stewart, *Law of the Harvest*. See also his website {www.cumorah.com}, an enormous collection of worldwide data on LDS Church growth, retention, and many other matters. For a rich, data-driven overview of his findings, see his "Growth, Retention, and Internationalization," in *Revisiting Thomas F. O'Dea's The Mormons: Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Cardell K. Jacobson, John P. Hoffmann, and Tim B. Heaton (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2008), 328–61.

45. Wilfried Decoo, email, December 2, 2007, believes that readiness for baptism is not merely a straight-line function of length of time since the first contact with missionaries but that it varies by individual investigator. Decoo believes that the individual investigator should be self-motivated enough to ask for baptism, rather than responding mainly to prodding from the missionaries.

46. George K. Jarvis, mission president in Romania 1999–2002, reported similar activity figures for converts in that country. Email to Armand Mauss, January 14, 2008.

47. My appreciation to President Hafen for providing these data (email, July 1, 2007). Figures for females were not offered, probably because the number of priesthood-holding men is such a crucial determinant of the potential for forming wards and stakes.

48. Any doubt that this institutional stigmatization is extended to the individual is confirmed by Mitt Romney's 2007–08 campaign for U.S. president, which was constantly on the defensive from the flurry of misperceptions and canards about the LDS Church stirred up by Romney's detractors in this campaign. This near-obsessive focus on Mormonism's more peculiar details had the effect of giving LDS Americans a taste of what European members regularly encounter. See Suzanne Sataline, "Mormons Dismayed by Harsh Spotlight," *Wall Street Journal*, February 8, 2008, A1.

49. In working on the second and third of these topics, I benefited greatly from consultations with Elder Bruce C. Hafen, president of the Europe Central Area, and with Elder Marlin K. Jensen, its former president and currently Church Historian. Both generously entertained a number of probing questions from me during the summer of 2007 and responded expansively. However, I alone am responsible for the accuracy of my understanding and interpretation of the information they provided.

50. See, for example, Olivier Tschannen, "The Secularization Paradigm: A Systematization," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 30, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 395–415.

51. P. Heelas, L. Woodhead, B. Seel, B. Szerszynski, and K. Tusting, eds., *Detraditionalization: Critical Reflections on Authority and Identity* (Oxford, England: Blackwell, 1995). I see "detraditionalization" as the equivalent, on the individual level, of "desacralization" on the institutional level, as defined by Stark and Finke, *Acts of Faith*, 200–201.

52. Dick Houtman and Stef Aupers, "The Spiritual Turn and the Decline of Tradition: The Spread of Post-Christian Spirituality in 14 Western Countries, 1981–2000," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 46, no. 3 (September 2007): 307.

53. K. J. Gergen, *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 19, as quoted in Houtman and Aupers, "The Spiritual Turn and the Decline of Tradition," 307.

54. Much of this paragraph is either directly quoted or slightly rephrased from Houtman and Aupers, "The Spiritual Turn and the Decline of

Tradition,” 307. For the full explication of post-Christian spirituality, see pp. 306–9.

55. W. J. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1995), 519, as quoted in *ibid.*; emphasis Hanegraaff’s.

56. Houtman and Aupers, “The Spiritual Turn and the Decline of Tradition,” 310–13.

57. *Ibid.*, 313–16. Though this “post-Christian” orientation is sometimes subsumed under New Age spirituality, Houtman and Aupers also point out that the former has a more coherent, socialized, and less atomized quality than the fragmented variety of New Age thinking in general (306–7, 316–17).

58. See Terryl L. Givens, *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), esp. chap. 2.

59. Elsewhere I have argued that recent Latter-day Saints have emphasized subjective, affective evidence (feelings) and deemphasized rationalistic discourse. See my *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 146; and my “Feelings, Faith, and Folkways: A Personal Essay on Mormon Popular Culture,” in *“Proving Contraries”: A Collection of Writings in Honor of Eugene England*, edited by Robert A. Rees (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005), 23–38.

60. LDS Church, *Preach My Gospel*, 39.

61. *Ibid.*, 90.

62. Houtman and Aupers, “The Spiritual Turn and the Decline of Tradition,” 316–17.

63. I recognize the conjectural nature of the parallel that I am drawing here between LDS and “post-Christian” spiritual orientations. Ultimately there is no way to determine the validity of such a parallel. I can only leave it to the reader to judge whether I have reached too far. Walter van Beek, personal communication, email, January 24, 2008, emphasizes Bruce’s point that “New Age” thinking does not lend itself readily to the formation of church-like communities. Van Beek finds Mormon proselyting in the Netherlands too “church-oriented” and not sufficiently focused on redemptive doctrines for Dutch tastes.

64. See the earlier application in my “Mormonism in the Twenty-First Century: Marketing for Miracles,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 236–49.

65. For this model’s fullest presentation, see Stark and Finke, *Acts of Faith*, chaps. 2, 4, and 5.

66. R. Stephen Warner, “Work in Progress toward a New Paradigm for

the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States," *American Journal of Sociology* 98 (1993): 1044–93.

67. Introvigne and Stark, "Religious Competition and Revival in Italy," 2.

68. *Ibid.*, 8.

69. Critics include Steve Bruce from the United Kingdom, Karel Dobelaere from Belgium, and Frank Lechner, writing on the Netherlands. Stark offered a rather stern rebuttal to these critics in his "Secularization, R. I. P.," *Sociology of Religion* 60 (1999): 249–73, updated as Stark and Finke, *Acts of Faith*, chap. 3.

70. Andrew Higgins, "In Europe, God Is (Not) Dead," *Wall Street Journal*, July 14, 2007, A1, quotes Stark and others. I am grateful to Bruce C. Hafen for bringing it to my attention.

71. Introvigne and Stark, "Religious Competition and Revival in Italy." See also Stark and Finke, *Acts of Faith*, chap. 9, for Stark's examples supporting his argument that the total religious activity in a given society is inversely related to the extent and severity of government regulation.

72. Introvigne and Stark, "Religious Competition," 5–10. The figures on religious commitment come from the 1999 European Values Survey.

73. *Ibid.*, 10–13.

74. *Ibid.*, 13.

75. See www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de, especially the Religion and Society link. Some results from this foundation's 2007 *Religion Monitor* survey of some 21,000 European respondents are reported in *WorldWide Religions News (WWRN)*, December 17, 2007, <http://wwrn.org/article.php?id=27206>. I am grateful to O. James Stevens for calling these sources to my attention.

76. Martin B. Hickman, *David Matthew Kennedy: Banker, Statesman, Churchman* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), esp. chap. 19. Kennedy had been U.S. Secretary of the Treasury and Ambassador at Large in the administration of Richard M. Nixon. An international research center at BYU now bears his name.

77. Both President Henry J. Burkhardt of the Dresden Mission and President Thomas S. Monson also played key roles in this event. Raymond M. Kuehne, "The Freiberg Temple: An Unexpected Legacy of a Communist State and a Faithful People," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 37, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 95–131, and his "How Missionaries Entered East Germany: The 1988 Monson-Honecker Meeting," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 39, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 107–37.

78. Mission statement, International Center for Law and Religion

Studies website, www.iclrs.org (accessed May 31, 2007). The following overview of the center's activities comes from its website and newsletters.

79. Kim B. Östman, "The Other' in the Limelight: One Perspective on the Publicity Surrounding the New LDS Temple in Finland," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 49, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 71–106, is a fascinating review of the struggle with different segments of the print media in Finland to define the Church's image before the dedication of the Helsinki Temple in 2006.

80. Durham, "Re-Evaluating Foreign Evaluations of the 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience," deals mainly with the situation in Russia and eastern Europe.

81. Forum 18 [www.forum18.org], based in Oslo, reports on and promotes religious freedom throughout the world. This information comes from its archived reports for the first half of 2006.

82. George K. Jarvis, email, January 17, 2008. Jarvis was president of the Romania and Moldova Mission (1999–2002). Since 2002, he has lived with his wife in Geneva under the auspices of the BYU Kennedy Center, the BYU CLRS, and the LDS General Counsel.

83. Hafen, email to Armand Mauss, July 2, 2007.

84. Peggy Fletcher Stack, "LDS Church Wants to be Official in Italy," *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 9, 2000; accessed indirectly from CESNUR archives, www.cesnur.org/testi/mormons.htm (accessed August 25, 2007).

85. Michael W. Homer, email to Armand Mauss, July 12, 2007. Homer has long been a well-informed observer of LDS affairs in Italy and is a close colleague of Massimo Introvigne of CESNUR. He has advised LDS leaders in Italy to accept the *otto mille* if and when it is offered.

86. Stark and Finke, *Acts of Faith*, 120–25.

87. Gordon B. Hinckley, *Standing for Something: Ten Neglected Virtues That Will Heal Our Hearts and Homes* (New York: Random House/Three Rivers Press, 2000). His ten virtues are not uniquely LDS, although his discussion in Part 2 about marriage and family reflects traditional LDS values.

88. Rosabeth M. Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972). In somewhat different terminology, cognitive consistency theory makes the same claim. The theoretical basis, which has been extensively critiqued and sustained for half a century, is in Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1957).

89. Laurence R. Iannaccone, "Why Strict Churches Are Strong," *American Journal of Sociology* 99 (1994): 1,180–1,211. See also R. D. Perrin and A. L.

Mauss, "Strictly Speaking . . . Kelley's Quandary and the Vineyard Christian Fellowship," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 32, no. 2 (1993): 125–35.

90. Laurence R. Iannaccone, "Sacrifice and Stigma: Reducing Free-Riding in Cults, Communes, and Other Collectives," *Journal of Political Economy* 100, no. 2 (1992): 271–92.

91. For a creative theoretical analysis of "strictness" in the American LDS Church, with special reference to "free riders," see Michael McBride, "Club Mormon: Free-Riders, Monitoring, and Exclusion in the LDS Church," *Rationality and Society* 19, no. 4 (2007): 395–424.

92. See, e.g., his conference addresses: "Give Thanks in All Things," *Ensign*, May 2003, 95–98, and "Priesthood Authority in the Family and the Church," *Ensign*, November 2005, 24–27. In the first, he describes the gospel culture as "commandments, covenants, ordinances, and blessings," expressed, for example, by the principles in "The Family: A Proclamation to the World."

93. R. Val Johnson, "South Africa: Land of Good Hope," *Ensign*, February 1993, 33–34.

94. Charles Didier, "I Have a Question," *Ensign*, June 1976, 62.

95. See www.lds.org/ldsnewsroom, link to "Approaching Mormon Doctrine," May 4, 2007 (accessed June 5, 2007). This statement concedes that the Mormon vocabulary and terminology are different in some ways from those of other religions, sometimes creating misunderstandings.

96. First Presidency, "Fundamental Principles," statement presented at a meeting of the All-Church Coordinating Council, April 26, 1994; photocopy in Armand L. Mauss Collection, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.

97. Douglas J. Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2000), esp. chap. 3.

98. Elsewhere I have argued for categorizing LDS doctrines as canonical, official, authoritative, or folklore. See my "The Fading of the Pharaohs' Curse," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 14, no. 3 (Autumn 1981): 32–34.

99. I am not in a position to estimate the frequency with which such Americanisms appear in the LDS literature or sermons circulating in Europe. Several European Church members have mentioned this issue to me in conversations; but President Hafen (email, July 15, 2007), current Europe Central Area president, told me that he had never encountered such Americanisms in European meetings. George K. Jarvis, cited above, told me the same thing. Maybe such notions appear only in the occasional comments of American missionaries serving in Europe.

100. Brewster, *The Promise*, copy in Mauss Collection, Utah State His-

torical Society. According to Wilfried Decoo, email, December 2, 2007, efforts by local leaders in the Netherlands to fulfill “second harvest” prophecies among these modern European Israelites pressured the Saints to use certain proselyting tactics and promised success as a result. When the promises were not fulfilled, a backlash of guilt and frustration occurred with which a later mission president had to deal. Like many other well-intentioned but ill-advised proselyting tactics in twentieth-century Church history, this one simply added an artificial and avoidable cost for faithful and compliant members.

101. See my *All Abraham’s Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

102. See accounts and comments on this development in the *Deseret News*, November 8, 2007, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/1,5143,695226008,00.html>, and November 9, 2007, <http://deseretnews.com/dn/view/0,5143,695226317,00.html> (accessed April 2008).

103. I particularly refer to controversies generated since 1980 by the work of scholars associated with the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS), proposing the “limited geography” hypothesis. This hypothesis argues that the entire Book of Mormon story took place in a few hundred square miles in southern Mexico. Consequently, the overwhelming majority of aboriginal peoples in this hemisphere never were “Lamanites.” For an assessment of these implications, see my *All Abraham’s Children*, chap. 5.

104. Van Beek, email, January 24, 2008, sees strong competition to Mormonism for Netherlands youth from new forms of evangelical and pentecostal Christianity. Mormon missionaries might be more effective in this competition, he suggests, if they were dressed more informally, rather than looking like “junior management trainees.”

105. Van Beek, “Mormon Europeans or European Mormons,” 20–22, describes his work on translation committees in the Netherlands. See also John-Charles Duffy and Hugo Olaiz, “Correlated Praise: The Development of the Spanish Hymnal,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 89–113. Van Beek, email, January 24, 2008, reported that, while he was a stake president in the Netherlands, General Authorities with “puritanical” musical tastes frequently criticized his stake choirs, presumably for their choice of more contemporary music. Roger R. Keller, “India: A Synopsis of Cultural Challenges,” in *Mormon Identities in Transition*, edited by Douglas J. Davies (London, England: Cassell, 1996), 87–90, questioned why LDS hymns in non-Western countries should have to employ American LDS melodies, harmonies, and instruments.

106. Norbert, “Local Church News,” www.bycommonconsent.com,

posted June 9, 2007, followed by twelve comments, some of which recognized the danger of “edgy theology” if there were too much “decentralization” but also pointing out that local “wackiness wardens” would not necessarily have to be in either Church or Area headquarters.

107. According to Walter van Beek, email, January 24, 2008, an LDS book company in the Netherlands, *Mosterdzaad* (Mustard Seed), translates LDS literature and also produces original works. In January 2008, FAIR (Foundation for Apologetics Information and Research) began publishing its monthly e-journal in German, <http://deutsch.fairlds.org/newsletter.php> and/or www.fairlds.org.

108. See, for example, work by Barber, Decoo, Newton, Numano, and van Beek cited earlier.

109. Decoo, “Feeding the Fleeing Flock,” 115–16, comments on this problem and offers useful suggestions for adapting the Church program to Europe.

110. See Östman, “‘The Other’ in the Limelight.”

111. See Rodney Stark, “Extracting Social Scientific Models from Mormon History,” *Journal of Mormon History* 25, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 178–83, and Rodney Stark and William S. Bainbridge, “Networks of Faith: Interpersonal Bonds and Recruitment to Cults and Sects,” *American Journal of Sociology* 85 (1980): 1376–95.

112. Hafen, email, July 5, 2007.

113. Hafen, email, July 2, 2007.

114. See “‘Mormon Studies’ and the Value of Education,” November 2, 2007, and the even more upbeat “Academic Interest in Mormonism Rises,” February 22, 2008, www.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/articles (accessed March 1, 2008).

115. INFORM (Information Network Focus on Religious Movements, based at the London School of Economics) and CESNUR are considered “respectable” by the international academic community because they are run by scholars who reflect the modern consensus in the sociology of religion—namely, that new religious movements (NRMs) cannot be distinguished from traditional religions on scientific grounds, but only on political grounds. That is, NRMs are not considered legitimate by the political and religious establishments in a given society. Countering CESNUR, INFORM, and cognate organizations are thriving “anti-cult” movements in Europe and the United States. These organizations usually include Mormons on their list of dangerous “cults.” For example, see the Apologetics Index (www.apologeticsindex.org), based in Amsterdam and operated by Anton and Janet

Hein-Hudson and Ruud Hein. I am grateful to Wilfried Decoo for bringing this website to my attention.

116. O. James Stevens, Brussels-based spokesman for LDS Public Affairs.