The Temple and the Sacred: Dutch Temple Experiences

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Introduction

In one of the most beautiful songs ever written on the Low Countries, the Belgian *chansonnier* Jacques Brel sang about his flat motherland: "Where men are dwarfs under the heaven, with cathedrals as their only mountains."[1] Indeed, the classical landmarks of the cities on the old continent are the churches and cathedrals, whose spires rise above the houses, dominate the cityscape, and fill the towns with the sound of their bells, adding a Christian "soundscape" to their visual dominance. European Mormons sometimes feel that in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints they have been dealt a short hand in architecture, as in this sense, Mormonism does not have churches. Instead it has two other types of sacred buildings. Using the LDS Church as a central example, the religious scholar Harold Turner[2] distinguished between the *domus dei* and the *domus ecclesiae*. The latter is the building where the congregation meets; the former is the abode of the divine. The Roman Catholic cathedrals—the "mountains" of the Netherlands—combine features of both; in the LDS church the *domus ecclesiae*, the meeting house, is quite different from the *domus dei*, the temple. The one is functional but does not quicken the architectural spirit, being in fact standardized, but the second, the much rarer temple, exudes intricate design and architectural pride.

Dutch Mormons now have a *domus dei* in their midst.[3] Living in their secularized country, far from the center of Mormon gravity, what does a temple—their temple!—mean for the Dutch members? In this article I want to analyze the Dutch temple experience

on three levels. First, the history of the temple project will be shown from the Dutch perspective, with a discussion of some of the observable effects on the Dutch saints, one of them being a large drop in temple attendance. Second, I will explore the connection of hierarchy and the sacred, exemplified in the absolute control over the temple from the church centre, and in the hierarchy as sacred itself. Third, I will consider the routinization of the sacred, as exemplified by having a local temple, and I will try to characterize the difference between a temple in Deseret and one in the international church. Here I find echoes of the First and Second temples in Jerusalem, which tie our understanding of what constitutes the sacred in Mormonism into the wider academic debate on the sacred.

Ever since Rudolph Otto and Mircea Eliade, the notion of the sacred (in Mormonism the term "holy" is used, which I treat as a synonym) is an old fascination of comparative religion,[4] but in the last decennia the field has increasingly acknowledged the importance of the religious *space*. A major debate arose within ritual theory between Jonathan Z. Smith[5] and Ronald Grimes[6] on the primacy of place versus the dominance of ritual. Smith holds that "sacrality is, above all, a category of *emplacement*";[7] Grimes stresses the creative aspect of *ritual* transforming the mundane into the sacred;[8] after all, rituals have to be done somewhere, a spot which then becomes a special place.[9] Present thinking stresses that the attribution of sacredness both to a ritual and a place is so universal that a more productive inquiry into the sacred requires us to balance the properties of the place with the characteristics of the ritual.[10] In this article I will follow this approach, hopefully providing a productive insight into Mormon temple sacrality, with its very own balance between ritual and place, between the "ordinances"[11] and the "House of the Lord." For Mormons, temple "holiness" is tied into the rituals performed inside, but neither can exist in isolation, as ordinances are not possible outside the temple, nor would a temple be holy without the rituals.[12] Thus, speaking about the temple experience for Dutch Mormons requires us to consider their definition of the sacred—both the authority embodied in the temple rituals and the place of this new holy Mormon building in the Dutch denominational landscape.

A short methodological note is apt here, as the data presented

stem from various sources. My own positions in the Church[13] allowed me access to many of the experiences of and conversations on the temple mentioned below, supplemented by specific interviews with civic and temple officials[14] and written documents, including the documented history of the Dutch temple.[15]

A Lowlands Temple

Officially, the name of the Dutch Mormon temple is *The Hague Temple*, but no Dutch Saint ever calls it that, as for them it is the "temple in Zoetermeer." Zoetermeer is a sizeable municipality of its own, and as all cities are close to each other, the Dutch are quite precise in their geographical indications. Likewise they tend to speak about the temple in Friedrichsdorf and in Zollikofen; the other terms (Frankfurt, Bern) are seen as Americanisms. But in the Dutch case there is an additional reason for renaming the temple after "Zoetermeer," as the name literally means "Sweet Lake," so this is the temple of "Sweet Lake City." In fact this translation had been already used by the former mayor of Zoetermeer when he visited Salt Lake City,[16] and it was picked up by newspapers in their reports on the temple as well. The gentle quip stuck. The present mayor of Zoetermeer, Jan Waaijer, commented in an interview that whatever its official name, "For us it is a part of Zoetermeer."[17] The mayor appears to appreciate having a Mormon temple in his city: "As an architectonic object it is quite complete. It exudes a certain discipline: Everything under control, a sense of order which is not foreign to the group as such. The slightly cubist building is constructed with superior materials, which heightens the image of a church that is well organized. For us as Zoetermeer city, this is one of the sights to be seen, an object to be proud of." The mayor then remarked that he would expect the temple presidency, as those responsible for one of the major institutions in Zoetermeer, to be active in Zoetermeer civic life: "At the very least they could come to the New Year's reception at the City Hall." None of the men that manage the temple have ever attended this official reception, a question I will address later.[18]

So, for the Dutch saints this is the temple in Zoetermeer, but for them it is not the location that counts but the fact that it is a *temple*, something they had never expected. At the time of its dedication, the Dutch website of the LDS Church[19] sported a reflec-

tive piece about the temple's presence in the Netherlands, exemplifying Dutch LDS feelings:

> It seemed a dream, when it started: The Dutch speaking church would get its own temple? That was a boon we were not ready for, not by a long shot. But numbers seemed not to be all-important,[20] and gradually we saw the plans take form: Blue print, maquette and then the exciting months of the actual building. The open days were extremely well attended: Never before have so many people had a first-hand contact with the church, and never before did we see so many positive reactions to the Mormon presence in the Netherlands. All Dutch and Belgian Saints vividly remember the dedication services in September 2002 as their spiritual high point, both for the start of their temple and the rare occasion to see the prophet in the Low Countries.

The Dutch had never expected to have their own temple because of their limited number of members and the lack of growth. During a stay at the Frankfurt temple, I heard people "explain" that the country's constitutional monarchy would prohibit a closed building; after all, the story went, the queen has the right to enter any building in her realm. This is an urban legend as many buildings are closed to outsiders and no king or queen of the Netherlands has ever found it problematic. This kind of urban legend, however, is not a reflection on the absolute power of the queen—which she does not have—but on the LDS regard for the absolute holiness of the temple. For example, many of the Lowlands Saints thought that all people connected with the temple would have to be church members in good standing, i.e. with a temple recommend. However, reality is always more mundane than esoteric mythology. The temple in Zoetermeer was constructed by a large building firm in the Netherlands. The builders appeared to appreciate the special task. In an interview, the project manager remarked, "There was to be no swearing, no smoking, and no alcohol on the job, and all our people showed respect and understanding for this. More and more, I felt that what we were building was unique; this was going to be a temple in which members of your church would find inner peace."[21] Apart from this, the building process as such was like any other and after dedication, security, maintenance, and fire personnel would of course have to enter the building when needed, according to normal safety regulations.

Figure 1. The queue to view the temple started in the rain (photo W. E. A. Van Beek).

Another reason for the Saints' astonishment was that there seemed no pressing practical need for the temple. From 1955 onward the Dutch went to the temple in Zollikofen ("Bern"), and beginning in 1987 the Dutch church province fell in the Friedrichsdorf ("Frankfurt") temple district. The four- or five-hour drive from the Netherlands to Friedrichsdorf was not considered a great problem. Nevertheless, some Dutch stake presidencies were convinced that a Dutch temple had to come, and took action. First, they tried to convince the area presidency in their semi-annual briefings of the need for a Dutch temple, and then they started scouting for a suitable location. Ultimately, the Rotterdam/The Hague area in the southwest of the Netherlands (the true "Holland") was chosen by the Salt Lake hierarchy as one major priority for any temple is staffing: the staff at a small temple should be able to commute to the temple and this region accounted for the highest number of members. In addition, the Zoetermeer ward, right in the center of this region, was housed in a former Protestant church building on a suitable site with the ap-

Figure 2. Before the tour the temple was explained to the visitors (photo W. E. A. Van Beek).

propriate zoning provisions, so the choice was in the end not very difficult.

The official announcement of the temple, on August 16th, 1998, created a stir in the Dutch LDS community and generated the setting up of a national temple committee and an enlarged PR committee.[22] Dutch members followed the building process closely, and announcements about the temple were frequently made in the Dutch wards. In the Zoetermeer temple there was no first cornerstone but—in very Dutch style—the first foundation pole was ritualized, the building site being in a polder some four meters below sea level. At present, this is the only temple in Mormondom to be built that low, and some members expressed concern. Dutch society is very interested in issues surrounding climate change and sea level rise, so it was natural to ask what would happen to the temple if the polders flooded. The central leadership never spoke about this risk, as discourse on climate change is absolutely non-existent inside the wider LDS church.[23]

The first spade ceremony (August 26, 2000), the first pole (December 26, 2000), the placement of the angel Moroni (September 21, 2001), the open house (at the end of August 2002), and the final dedication (September 8, 2002) were high points in the Mormon life of the Dutch Saints. Many visited the site regu-

Figure 3. Dutch Saints gather for the second dedication session of their temple (photo W. E. A. Van Beek).

larly to see the building rise and witness the "birth" of "their temple." For public relations this too was a high point in the history of the Dutch church, as the local, regional, and national press maintained an interest in the project, with reports of all types. The building of the temple was used to introduce the church to as many Dutch people as possible, both in Zoetermeer and in the wider region. The open house drew some 33,000 visitors to the temple, as well as a considerable amount of press coverage. For the members, the apogee was the dedication by the prophet Gordon B. Hinckley on September 8, 2002,[24] when he delivered the dedicatory prayer in a series of four dedication sessions, three in Dutch and one in French.[25] Two days earlier, the "cornerstone box," containing the scriptures of the church, books, periodicals, newspaper articles, and other articles, had been placed in a niche in one corner of the temple.[26]

On the express wish of President Gordon B. Hinckley, the temple at Zoetermeer started operations immediately, on the Monday after the dedication. As the temple president and his wife had been called just two weeks earlier, and his counselors and the temple

Figure 4. The choir for the first dedication session of the Zoetermeer temple (photo W.E.A. Van Beek).

workers even later, this was quite a challenge for the fledgling Dutch temple organization, but the appointees had already been temple missionaries at the Friedrichsdorf temple and quickly settled into the job after a first few hectic weeks. Naturally, during these weeks many Dutch Saints were eager to experience their "own" temple. A routinization of the complex procedures necessary for the running of the temple was quickly and efficiently established, although gearing the opening hours of the temples to the needs of all the patrons was more difficult. Small temples are usually open by appointment only, but it was soon clear that this was not going to work in Zoetermeer, and eventually the new temple presidency decided on being open five days a week at specified times. This proved to be a large window for a small temple, and the risk of under-attended sessions became a reality under subsequent presidencies, and now the temple is open for half a week only.

Where Have All the Pilgrims Gone?

What were the effects of the Dutch temple on the Dutch LDS Church? The initial effects surfaced during the construction

phase. The temple was never more present for both the members and the outside world than during that year of building. All wards and branches made their pilgrimages to the site and members kept each other abreast of the progress in construction. Each ward had its representatives either on the committees or among the many volunteers for the open house. In terms of public relations, the construction year, which culminated with the open house, was the most productive time ever for the Dutch Saints. The amount of publicity generated self-confidence for a minority group used to general press neglect and occasional bad reporting.

Has the Dutch LDS Church changed more permanently following the arrival of the temple? Quite a lot was expected, at least by some authorities during the dedication. However, since at least the 1980s the level of membership in the Netherlands—as in most of Western Europe— has been stable: the number of new members matches the numbers who leave the church. In a church used to growth, this calls for an explanation.[27] One is the degree of the secularization of Western Europe;[28] another is the decreased popularity of the U.S. in Europe, where Mormonism is still seen as an essentially American religion.[29] Despite this, voices in the church's administration cry out for a "second harvest" in Europe. Has the temple in the Netherlands stimulated church growth? At the time of writing, after ten years, it would not seem to be the case.[30] The main body of converts in Europe now comes from immigrants, mainly from Africa and the Caribbean, but they form a more transient church population than do the ethnic Dutch.[31]

However, the temple has generated a feeling of "coming of age" of an organization with self-sufficiency and maturity, a feeling helped by the gradual transformation of a church of converts into a body of second- and third-generation members. It has also helped to establish a gradually emerging Dutch Mormon culture.[32] The media attention helped to stimulate this self-awareness, as the gist of newspaper reports has been more positive than the Dutch Saints had been used to. Attendance at the main press conference was massive at a time when religious matters were considered less than interesting for the Dutch general public. The overall impression is that the press coverage has resulted in a normalization of the Mormon presence in the Netherlands and of

the church becoming one of the country's many Christian denominations,[33] at least during the days of intense publicity. The reactions of visitors were also gratifying for members, as positive astonishment colored many of the oral and written reactions.[34] The processes around the Dutch temple resembled to a large extent the Finnish temple experience, a temple that was built at about the same time and also serving a rather small body of members. In the Finnish case, public attention resulted in a lasting reduction of "otherness."[35] In the LDS church in the Netherlands, the effect of publicity seemed to be a more generic improvement in the general awareness of the Dutch public.[36] The number of referrals has not increased, however. Attention does not seem to translate into a receptiveness to missionary endeavors.

One curious effect has been on temple attendance. The church's general policy is to bring the temples to the people, and not the reverse. The end of the twentieth century saw an explosion of temple building and dedications, and in between 1999 and 2001 no fewer than 53 temples were dedicated.[37] When it was dedicated in 2002, the Zoetermeer temple was LDS temple number 114, one of the many new small temples. The goal of building more and smaller temples is to facilitate temple attendance. However, in 1994 David Buerger argued that as far as the available statistics showed, the average attendance per member was slowly dropping throughout the church despite the huge building program.[38] The 1990 changes in the endowment might have affected this trend, but as endowment figures are hard to come by, this still would have to be substantiated. Our experiences from the Zoetermeer temple indicate no incremental effect of the 1990 changes in the ritual. On the whole, Zoetermeer shows no increase in temple attendance compared to the Dutch attendance in Friendrichsdorf; in fact, the contrary has been the case. In its first year, 2003, not only was temple attendance in Zoetermeer by Dutch Saints lower than in the previous years of the Frankfurt temple,[39] but each following year the Zoetermeer temple has also shown a marked decline in attendance.[40] Zoetermeer endowment figures seemed to reach a stable level in 2006 and 2007, but then dropped again, to reach a nadir in 2010. The number started to climb again in 2011 and in the first half of 2012, but in no way is Dutch temple attendance expected to regain its pre-2003 level at the

Friedrichsdorf temple; the present attendance is estimated at about half of the former Friedrichsdorf attendance.

The sacred building for the Dutch Saints is not only a boon but also a burden. The Dutch temple district is small (the main reason for not having an accommodation center on the premises) and the church already demands a large investment in time from its few members. Although temples run mainly on "grey power," i.e. retired people, the temple finds itself in logistical competition with the "everyday church"; the temple is often seen as an extra. This contrasts with those parts of the church with a large membership, where the temple offers a place for retirees to spend their time within the church. And, of course, the genealogical research needed to supply the temples with names is just as time-consuming. In a low LDS-density situation such as the Netherlands, temple callings, with the exception of callings as temple presidency, have to cede priority to this "everyday church."

Some of the Dutch church leaders had in fact foreseen both the problems concerning time allocation and the lower attendance rates. It was clear in the days of the Frankfurt temple that several stakes on the outskirts of the temple district were more active in temple work. And in the London (Newcastle) temple before the building of the Preston temple, according to a temple president of the Newcastle temple, it was the Scots who led the British stakes in temple attendance in London, so the members at the greatest distance might well be the most active temple goers. This was routinely interpreted in terms of faithfulness but in fact a different process is at work here, namely pilgrimage. The LDS Church has no pilgrimage, at least none institutionalized,[41] but this has not stopped members from inventing their own: visits to temples some distance away, such as Bern, London, or Frankfurt, for example, served as quasi-pilgrimages. Because of the distance, most members went for an entire week, and performed endowments all day, interspersed with other ordinances. They would stay in the adjoining hostel and experience an intense "holy week." It was usually a highly social week as well, interacting with members from other wards and stakes. Plus, being in a foreign country, the temple trip provided the chance for some sightseeing and shopping. Distance was not seen as a problem, as members

mostly traveled together, and sometimes buses were hired, increasing the experience of "social traveling." As in any true pilgrimage, the journey counted at least as much as the destination, and arrangements for travel dominated the discourse inside the wards for a long time in advance. After the temple week, all talks and testimonies were about the trip, about the spiritual experiences, and all social ties that were made were couched in terms of spirituality.

This unofficial form of pilgrimage ended with the building of the temple. Temple attendance in Zoetermeer is for one day, often one evening, and then people return home. For many older members today it is more difficult to attend the Zoetermeer temple than it had been formerly to attend the German one, because of the absence of adequate accommodation near the temple and a lack of group travel.[42] Additionally, the Zoetermeer temple is located in one of the most congested traffic areas in the Netherlands, which may present another obstacle to attendance. In the final calculation this amounts to fewer endowments.[43] The temple pilgrimage is sorely missed. Occasionally members organize short trips to Frankfurt or London to regain some of the temple spirit best experienced in intensive cooperation for a whole week. Members are free to go but going beyond one's district is not encouraged by the church hierarchy. A few members make their own pilgrimage route by visiting other temples in Europe, and Zoetermeer too is getting its—admittedly small—share of visitors from abroad. Most are Americans, including U.S. servicemen based in Germany, traveling through Europe and "doing the temples."

In 2009 the Dutch temple presidency sent out a letter with new instructions for patrons in an effort to stimulate attendance at Zoetermeer. The tone of the letter was one of strictness and discipline, which provoked a negative reaction from the members. The temple presidency had to rescind the letter, and wrote a new, friendlier version. In their subsequent conversation with the local leadership[44] they did give instructions but also cultivated a free exchange of ideas: slowly, the notion seems to be arising that the temple is a buyers' market as the members vote with their feet. Thus, what seems to matter most for the Durch Saints is that they *have* a temple, not so much that they *attend* it.

Hierarchies of Sacredness, Sacred Hierarchies

In order to better understand the impact of the temple, the notion of the hierarchy of sacredness is important. The Dutch temple itself is part of such a hierarchy. Though there are differences in small and large temples, this does not count much for the members. A temple is a temple, and the stature of a huge temple, such as the Los Angeles one, and a much smaller temple, such as that in Zoetermeer, is not relevant for patrons.[45] However, the Salt Lake temple is still a case apart. The "Central Temple" carries a different status, as it is the temple the prophet and apostles attend. Its special status was highlighted in the Netherlands by a scholar from the Religious Education department at BYU at a recent well-attended fireside. He talked about ancient and latter-day temples, and the main recent temple in his presentation was the Salt Lake one, for which he claimed an inspired architecture. One other reason for the special place of the Salt Lake temple is that the ceremony is not on film but is dramatized by volunteer temple workers.[46]

This hierarchy of temples underscores the central position of the General Authorities as *the* representatives of the Church and the holders of the "priesthood keys." The central control of the temples is an effective expression of the general control of the Church, and the control of the General Authorities—sometimes referred to by the synonym "Salt Lake"—over temple issues is at the front of everybody's mind. I once suggested moving a chair in one of the rooms of the temple, and received the dry commentary: "Brother, you do not comprehend how things work here." All details come from America and are not allowed to change. In all practical matters, Dutch ownership of "their" temple is very limited indeed.

Central control evidently holds *a fortiori* for any changes in temple ritual. No Dutch Saint, however maverick, would dream of introducing changes in the endowment, as all ritual instructions come from Salt Lake and are implemented in all temples around the world without discussion or explanation. In fact, imagining a temple presidency adapting the ritual to local culture—an option that is standard in many other denominations[47]—can only be a thought experiment. In practice, the notion is unthinkable. Con-

trol by the General Authorities over the ritual is absolute, just as is their control over where temples will be planned and built. At the semi-annual general conferences the announcement of new temples is one of the highlights of the conference. A special case was the announcement of the Rome temple. It created an audible stir in the usually quiet audience, as the LDS Church was, through the announcement, seen to be advancing into the heart of Roman Catholicism. But in all other respects the Rome temple followed normal procedure: the announcement came from the First Presidency, not from the European Area Presidency, let alone from the Italian stake presidents. And new temples are announced, not proposed for a sustaining vote.

The debate on the origin of sacredness mentioned in the introduction—the relative weight of ritual versus place—gets its own solution in Mormonism. Here ritual is the first mover as the new temples are constructed to allow the Saints easier access to the rituals. But the temples are also a *constructed* sacred place, a built environment with little regard to any inherent holiness attached to the building site. Thus the debate is resolved in Mormonism through the hierarchy itself, the notion of authority flowing downward, installing—and changing—the rituals as well as deciding, designing, and building the sacred places to perform them in.

This hierarchy and its control are unchallenged, and this is clearest in the changes in temple ritual. Modifications of ritual are not announced in General Conference—it is a public occasion and the Church does not discuss temple matters in public—nor are the changes announced through the regular ecclesiastical line, through area presidencies, stake presidencies, and bishoprics. In its long history temple ritual has often been modified,[48] and the routine of changing anything in ritual and presentation has become standardized. The implementation of these changes completely skirts ecclesiastical lines of authority, and the following description is based upon the experiences in the Dutch temple with the 2005 changes in the initiatories.[49] The communication stems directly from the Temple Department, which has a direct and continuously manned telephone line with all temples. The procedure is as follows: the Temple Department telephones the temple that a certain representative of the department will arrive at the airport and has to be met. The names of the welcoming

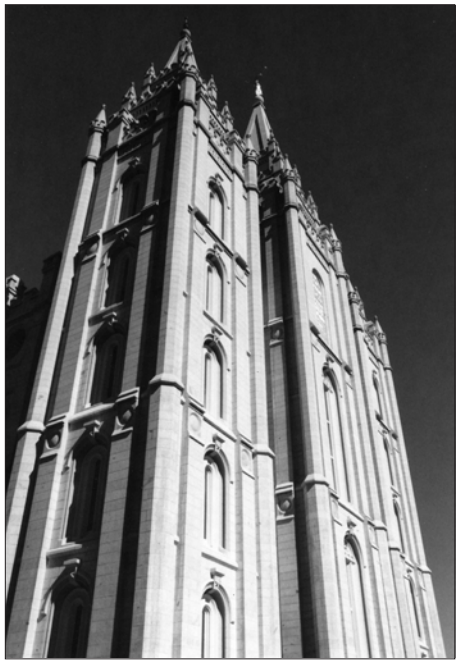

Figure 5. The Salt Lake temple (photo W. E. A. Van Beek)

party are given, and when they meet the representative at the airport all have to present identification. Then a DVD is handed over and signed for and the representative returns with the next flight. In the temple the DVD is put into the central temple computer and the DVD installs through its own programming all relevant changes, as well as some instructional films for the temple staff. Then, witnessed by a few temple staff, the DVD is destroyed in a special machine.[50]

Most Dutch members knew nothing of any possible changes until they attended the temple after the changes had been implemented. If some changes affect rituals they seldom engage in, they will notice the changes much later still. For instance, the 2005 change in the preparatory ordinances is well known by those who perform and undergo them, but a large number of the temple patrons only do endowments. Even now, several years later, some members remain unaware of the change.

Not only is there a hierarchy *in* and *of* sacredness, hierarchy itself has some "ιερος," holiness, as well. The Dutch church leadership operates in the shadow of the prophet's mantle, sharing

some of his authority. Comparing the church with other similar institutions, it is striking how visible LDS leadership is, especially the top tiers, and how well-known. Max Weber's notion of positional charisma is apt here: a General Authority, an apostle, and above all, the prophet, have tremendous charisma based upon the positions they occupy, but charisma is also attributed to them personally. The authority of the Brethren is unchallenged and any appeal they make to the membership should not and does not go unheeded, even in the far reaches of the international church such as the Netherlands. Thus, if representing the church and by implication Jesus Christ, the leadership deems it wise to make a change in temple ceremonies, members will not raise any objections. In fact, most of the changes consist of gently ousting the overt Masonic elements,[51] a change welcomed by a continental European membership, where Masonry was never an important influence and that is, anyway, much less interested in this kind of symbolism than was nineteenth-century America. But given the sacredness of the hierarchy, changes are readily accepted, meaning that the control of the hierarchy, and thus the perceived sacredness of the hierarchy, is in no way diminished.[52] It is considered their right to change the ceremony and, by exercising that right, their span of control is increased.

Control is also exercised when the Church tries to minimize the somatic aspects of the initiatory and of the main endowment, but European Mormons have fewer problems with somatic elements,[53] considering prudish American culture at odds with straightforward body symbolism. As John-Charles Duffy correctly argues, present western European culture is rather sexualized and has generally accepted homoerotic expressions that still are frowned upon by American society and even more so by the LDS leadership.[54]

Dutch saints never challenge the hierarchy of holiness that is implicit in the temple. On the contrary, they use their temple to define their own distinctiveness from other denominations. After all, the European Saints, including the Dutch, live as tiny minorities in a landscape that is increasingly secular but whose secularity is shot through with the deep roots and former power of the mainline denominations. The visual icon of the cathedral in the inner cities in the Netherlands comes to mind here: from my study I can

hear the bells of several churches, but nothing "Mormon"; in Europe, Mormonism is Other. One dominant symbol of that otherness is indeed the Mormon temple, which is a stranger in the world of Christianity. This is what it means to be Dutch and Mormon and this is what the presence of the temple in Holland symbolizes.

The Dutch Temple and the Experience of the Sacred

Having one's own temple can lead to the routinization of the sacred. No longer going on pilgrimage, Dutch Saints are exhorted to fix temple attendance into their weekly schedules and attend frequently. In Dutch understanding, this notion of routinization stands perpendicular to the notion of the sacred itself, pilgrimage events being much more apt for the experience of the holy. The temple ritual may be an act out of time, yet patrons still have fit it into a daily and weekly schedule. So for them it is no longer a "time out of time," i.e. something "sacred," but an item in their agenda. The sacred is not only routinized, it has also become "work," mundane. This is even stressed by the leadership:

> In recent temple dedications President Hinckley has suggested we not focus so much on the personal benefits of attending the temple but rather focus on temple work as "work." While the personal blessings resulting from temple attendance are numerous, we must not lose sight of the fact that it is work and requires commitment and duty.[55]

The end of pilgrimage, as mentioned above, has contributed to this shift. A pilgrimage as such is "time out of time," but driving through traffic to the temple, after phoning home to check whether someone still has to be picked up, and just making it to the temple in time—to be gently chastised by temple staff for coming so late—is not conducive to an experience of sanctity. That is work indeed. Also, members tend to see temple service as work for others, more than for themselves, which sounds like a good piece of altruism but detracts from their own religious experiences.[56]

With the "holy week" of the temple pilgrimage gone, the very nature of the temple experience has changed as well, into the direction of work—and for the Dutch the notion of work is not sacred at all. This dilutes the holy and detracts from the special po-

sition of the temple. This might be one additional factor for the decline in attendance. The temple experience has become more mundane, shifting from a holy week in a foreign country to temple work on Thursday evening in Zoetermeer (a little bit like home teaching). The Church hierarchy operates as if new temples increase the "special work" of holiness that is found within them, but in fact with a proliferation of temples an inevitable dilution sets in. Terryl Givens points at a general paradox in Mormon religious culture, the reduction of the distance between the sacred and the secular, commenting on "Mormonism's tendency to thoroughly infuse sacred space with seemingly pedestrian elements, or to conflate heaven and earth,"[57] or in Armand Mauss's terms, the tension between the "angel and the beehive."[58] When the Saints have to work like "industrious bees" in their most sacred place, the sacred character suffers, since the sacred has a necessary scarcity that cannot be reduced without cost. After all, the experience of the sacred, like any religious experience, almost by definition is distinct from everyday life, with an intermittent character that precludes planning and repetition. So, the paradox holds that planning and inspiration do not travel well together.[59]

This routinization of the sacred seems to hold mainly for the patrons. The experience is different for those who are called to serve as temple presidencies, where their service is a long, liminal time that is experienced deeply. The three couples that make up the temple leadership experience their calling as a real time out of time, three years for the small temples. Looking back on their experience, the first presidential couple in Zoetermeer[60] fondly remember their temple years, love to speak about them, and express their deep, heartfelt gratitude for that special time. An interesting category here is the temple workers, situated as they are between patrons and presidents, serving part-time but for long periods. The ones I interviewed had their own solution for the paradox of the routinization of the sacred. They seem to have shifted the definition of their membership in the direction of the temple. For them the Sunday worship has become more marginal, a ritual to pass through in order to get at the temple, and it is at that very temple that they "live" spiritually. They are "temple dwellers," and equate church service with temple work first, and ecclesiastical service second. Sitting out the Sunday, they can go

"home" during the week. This is reinforced by the fact that they are assigned to one specific temple only, but in the Netherlands there is no alternative at hand anyway. Their attachment is to one particular sacred building. One temple worker formulated it thus: "When you go to the temple, you go to the House of the Lord; when I go, I join my spiritual home."[61]

Final Thoughts: The Internal and External Functions of the Zoetermeer Temple

With routinization accounting for a dilution of the intensity of the ritualized sacred, the Zoetermeer temple has taken on new functions. The temple in Nauvoo and the temples in Utah stood at the heart of a Mormon community, where people met under the direct aegis of spiritual leaders.[62] The temples reinforced their self-definition as a special people, with a definition of specialness that linked past and present in ethnic terms. Jan Shipps has remarked that with the introduction of temple endowments, the covenants of the new dispensation interwove with those of ancient times,[63] while John Brooke highlights the way Joseph Smith through the temple rituals put Mormonism inside a long tradition of mystery religions.[64] But it was an ethnic mystery religion first of all, binding together a close-knit community by enhancing their identity and, above all, by transforming their worldly marginality into a spiritual boon. The temple ceremonies succeeded in redefining that marginality, transforming the rim into the centre, and turning virtual outcasts into a chosen people. Even though the U.S. overtook the Mormon Zion and Utah entered the Union,[65] the function of the temples in sacralizing the home territory remained. The litmus test of being not only a church but also a people was essentially the temple: a temple *of* Zion, a temple *in* Zion.

This ethnic ritual definition became less vital when the church moved out of its desert confinement and grew into an international institution, no longer the colony but itself colonizing,[66] a colonization process that eventually led to the Zoetermeer temple. The temple is a new place of sacredness in the Netherlands and whether they perform the rituals frequently or not does not matter any more: the sacred place has conquered the rit-

ual. The Dutch church province has come of age with its own temple, no longer dependent on temples in foreign countries.

The temple also has the potential to subtly change the relationship of the Saints to Dutch and Belgian society in a way that is somewhat at odds with its ritual otherworldliness. Dutch and Belgian Saints wish for recognition as valid members of their national religious scene. It is not the status as a peculiar people that is being sought but the status of a normal people, respectable Christians, good citizens. To some extent, they still have to learn that they are already there, that they have indeed arrived on the public scene. For Dutch Saints it is so normal to be marginal that they readily define their religion as private and irrelevant for the public space, a dominant trend in the past decade of Dutch religion anyway. This is the reason why the temple presidency, while commanding a building that is very present in the Zoetermeer public space, has never thought of really engaging in Zoetermeer civic life. They never showed up at the New Year reception at the town hall as it simply never occurred to them. If this changes in the future, this twin function of the temple will be confirmed: as a geographic symbol of sacred otherliness (internal) and a sign that Dutch Mormons are now part of the Dutch religious landscape (external).

This observation calls to mind, more than anything else in the LDS temples, the function of the temple in Jerusalem. The relation between Deseret and the temples in the "mission field," such as Zoetermeer, in many respects reproduces the difference between the First and the Second Temple. The temple of Solomon was meant to be the only place of worship, and as such was in constant competition with other gods such as Baal or Astarte.[67] This First Temple was built upon a place which was already sacred, but which also accrued huge sacrality through the temple itself and helped define the Israelite people. Likewise, the first LDS temple united the people, sacralized not only its building space but also the ethnic habitat, its living space, and produced the imperative for ethnic gathering.[68] Kirtland, Nauvoo, Salt Lake, and the mythos attached to the Missouri temple site sanctified that part of America where the gathering could take place, transforming a wilderness into a garden.

The Second Jerusalem Temple, built after the Babylonian exile

and later expanded by Herod, functioned in combination with local congregations and synagogues. No longer was it the centre of a religious polity, but it became the focus of an internationalized Jewish population, all part of a much larger realm. In the Mormon case, its self-imposed exile in the Salt Lake Valley eventually produced a combination of chapel and temple, but the main change occurred during the days of expansion when the church moved out of its Rocky Mountain homeland. It took over a century to build its first temple outside the Mormon culture area,[69] but with that move out of Zion, the temple became a firm link between centre and periphery and a means for local denominational maturity. During the Second Temple period, the Jews in the Roman Empire saw their temple as a mark of identity. In the eyes of the Dutch Saints, the Zoetermeer temple, like other international temples, does not sanctify the city or the province but does mark their identity as Mormon-Dutch citizens of the European Mormon "empire."

Notes

1. "Waar onder de hemel mensen dwergen zijn, waar de kerken de enige bergen zijn," translation from the French by Ernst van Altena.

2. Harold W. Turner, *From Temple to Meeting House: The Phenomenology and Theology of Places of Worship* (The Hague: Mouton, 1979).

3. The temple district also includes Belgium and northern France and, unless otherwise indicated, the term "Dutch" Saints includes members from these stakes as well.

4. For two comprehensive treatments see Matthew T. Evans, "The Sacred: Differentiating, Clarifying and Extending Concepts," *Review of Religious Research* 45, 1 (2003): 32–47; Arie Molendijk, "The Notion of the 'Sacred,'" in *Holy Ground: Re-inventing Ritual Space in Modern Western Culture*, edited by Paul Post and Arie L. Molendijk (Leuven: Peters, 2010), 55–89.

5. Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987).

6. Ronald L. Grimes, *Rite out of Place: Ritual, Media and the Arts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

7. Smith, *To Take Place*, 104. Emphasis added.

8. Grimes, *Rite out of Place*, 15.

9. Paul Post and Arie L. Molendijk, "Introduction," in *Holy Grounds in the Netherlands,* edited by Paul Post and Arie L. Molendijk (Leuven: Peters, 2009), 4.

10. David Brown, *God and the Enchantment of Place: Reclaiming Human Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

11. Like most denominations, Mormonism likes to indicate its own rituals with a term that distinguishes them from the others. Catholics use "liturgy," Mormons "ordinances" or "ceremonies," but both are of course examples of the more generic term "rituals."

12. The cases of the Kirtland and Nauvoo temples are illustrative here.

13. Such as branch president, stake president, high counselor, bishop's counselor, teacher in various organizations including CES Institute, and member of the Dutch Public Affairs Committee.

14. Some of them are mentioned in the notes, but special thanks go to Paul van't Schip, a former counselor in the temple presidency.

15. Bij Michael Butter, incorporated in Antonie A. Vreven, *Predik alle volken; de Geschiedenis van de Kerk van Jezus Christus van de Heiligen der Laatste Dagen in Nederland, 1861–2011* (Groningen: private printing, 2012). For a detailed description see Vreven, *Predik alle volken.*

16. Prof. van Leeuwen was the mayor of Zoetermeer while the temple was being built. At the ceremony of the first pole, which was also a new experience for him, he mentioned his visit to Salt Lake City in 1991 when he presented the Salt Lake City mayor with a Zoetermeer present, a salt and a sugar shaker, out of respect.

17. Interview with Mr. Waaijer, April 4, 2004.

18. The New Year reception is open to the public.

19. http://www.kerkvanjezuschristus.nl, accessed May 5, 2005.

20. The Dutch-Belgian LDS Church province has 11,000 members of record.

21. Vreven, *Predik alle volken*, 171-183.

22. For a detailed description see Vreven, *Predik alle volken*, 175–183.

23. At present, December 1, 2012, another hazard of polder construction appears: the grounds are sinking and the temple is slightly cracking at several spots.

24. Hinckley came from East Germany where, on September 7, he had rededicated the Freiberg temple in former East Germany, a temple which largely eclipsed the Zoetermeer one in internal Church publicity as the only temple ever built behind the Iron Curtain.

25. For the text see Vreven, *Predik alle volken*, 180–3. The Zoetermeer dedication prayer fits in well with the pattern set by Hinckley at other temples. For an analysis, see Samuel Brown, "A Sacred Code: Mormon Dedicatory Prayers 1836–2000," *Journal of Mormon History* 32, no. 2 (2006): 173–196.

26. The list is in Vreven, *Predik alle volken*.

27. Mormons are not only used to growth, but operating under an ideology of growth as well. For some factual critique of this growth ideology, see Henry Gooren, "Analyzing LDS Growth in Guatemala; Report from a 'Barrio,'" *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 2 (2000): 97–116; and David 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 (2005): 53–78.

28. The leadership often blames the free sexual mores and liberal soft-drugs policy of the Netherlands for the lack of growth but this is not a hindrance to proselytizing at all since other Protestant groups, such as the Evangelicals, have no problem recruiting large numbers of youth in the same socio-cultural environment.

29. When the U.S. attacked Iraq in 2003, some chapels in the Netherlands were smeared with tomato ketchup and for several nights members slept in some of the meeting houses to guard them.

30. Bruce Van Orden, *Building Zion: The Latter-day Saints in Europe* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996), 219, 222.

31. Gary Lobb, "Mormon Membership Trends in Europe among People of Color: Present and Future Assessment," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 4 (2000): 55–68.

32. Walter E. A. Van Beek, "Mormon Europeans or European Mormons? An Afro-European Look at Religious Colonization," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 4 (2005): 3–36.

33. Personal communication from Ineke den Hollander-Kirschbaum, then member of the Public Relations Committee, with the press portfolio, June 23, 2003.

34. Visitors could note their impressions on forms after the visit. The general impression was very favorable.

35. Kim B. Östman, "Esotericism Made Exoteric? Insider and Outsider Perspectives on the 2006 Mormon Temple Open House in Espoo, Finland," in *Western Esotericism*, edited by R. Ahlbäck (Abo, Finland: Donner Institute for Research in Religious and Cultural History, 2008), 124–38.

36. Ineke den Hollander-Kirschbaum in an e-mail reaction to me on 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* 40, no. 4 (2007): 85–106.

37. Sociologist Rodney Stark has developed a hypothesis for the growth of the Mormon Church in general. See Rodney Stark, "The Basis of Mormon Success: A Theoretical Application," in *Mormons and Mor-*

monism. An Introduction to an American World Religion, edited by E. A. Eliason (Urbana/Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 207–42.

38. David J. Buerger, *The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994), 174, 175. He notes that in 1987 the Church stopped publishing endowment figures.

39. This figure was hard to estimate, as the data in the Friedrichsdorf temple do not allow for a precise breakdown on patron provenance. Through interviews with former temple missionaries at Friedrichsdorf and with officers of the three stakes in the Netherlands I arrived at a "guesstimate" of 9,000–10,000 Dutch endowments for 2002 in Frankfurt, including Flemish Belgium, as do the Zoetermeer figures. The first year in Zoetermeer, 2003, reported over 7,000 endowments, tapering off toward 4,000 in 2010. In 2012 they are expected to rise just over 5,000.

40. Measured in endowments performed for the dead, the majority of the temple work. The years 2004, 2005, and 2006 showed an annual decline of about eight percent. In 2007 the decline halted, to continue in 2008.

41. There are a few Mormon journeys, however, such as trips to see the pageants and the phenomenon known as "trek" wherein Mormon youth re-enact pioneer crossings. On Mormon historical sites as "Mormon Meccas," see Michael Madsen, *Mormon Meccas: The Spiritual Transformation of Mormon Historical Sites from Points of Interest to Sacred Space* (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 2003) and for Europe, Ronan James Head, "Creating a Mormon Mecca in England: The Gadfield Elm Chapel," *Mormon Historical Studies*, 7, nos. 1–2 (2006), 89–101.

42. The Dutch temple committee tried to have some kind of hostel arrangement near the temple but this was not allowed by the central authorities as it did not fit the standards for a small temple.

43. The temple presidency used to report attendance numbers to the stake presidencies in their temple district but were advised no longer to do so because it would be discouraging for members. Reporting to the temple department was considered sufficient.

44. Rotterdam stake on October 12, 2009.

45. A small temple can only accommodate one group at a time, usually by appointment. Its presidency should live within commuting distance and it has no temple missionaries. Nor does it have hostel or cafeteria facilities. Most of the temples built in the last decade are small temples.

46. In some older temples this is done as well, such as in Manti and Logan, but few people in the Netherlands are aware of that.

47. For instance, denominations operating in Africa show numerous

adaptations to local norms of worship, such as drumming and dancing as part of services. The LDS church in Africa does not adapt in this way, not in the regular services and surely not in temple ritual.

48. Buerger, *The Mysteries of Godliness*.

49. These changes have been analyzed also in terms of ecclesiastical control of the body; see John-Charles Duffy: "Concealing the Body, Concealing the Sacred: The Decline of Ritual Nudity in Mormon Temples," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 21, no. 1 (2007): 1–21.

50. This information stems from interviews with members of the temple presidencies of the Zoetermeer temple.

51. For such a subtle denial, see G.W. Scharffs, *Mormons & Masons; Setting the Record Straight* (Orem, Utah, 2006). For a more balanced reaction, see Armand Mauss, "Culture, Charisma and Change: Reflections on Mormon Temple Worship," in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20, no. 4 (1987): 77–83.

52. Duffy's analysis regarding the power of Church authorities over the members' individual bodies is both productive and interesting, See John-Charles Duffy, "Concealing the Body, Concealing the Sacred."

53. Many ex-Mormon blogs register the shocked reactions of young American LDS on the embodied aspects of the endowment. In Europe this kind of reaction is seldom mentioned.

54. The LDS stance on California's Proposition 8, which exerted heavy public and political pressure against gay marriages, was accepted among most LDS in the U.S. but created problems of conscience for the few European Mormons that were aware of it.

55. www.lds.org (accessed August 17, 2009).

56. Ann Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered: A Building-Block Approach to the Study of Religion and Other Special Things* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 81.

57. Terryl Givens, *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 46.

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

59. Ibid., 121.

60. Anne and Elly Hulleman, interviewed by the author on January 10, 2008.

61. Bauke Elzinga, in a conversation with the author in August 2012.

62. Richard D. Poll, "Utah and the Mormons: A Symbiotic Relationship," in *Mormons and Mormonism. An Introduction to an American World Religion*, edited by E. A. Eliason (Urbana/Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 164–79.

63. Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 63–64.

64. John L. Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

65. The classic treatment is Armand Mauss's *The Angel and the Beehive*.

66. Van Beek, "Mormon Europeans or European Mormons?"

67. The Reformation of Josiah (2 Chron. 34–35), in which the major part of Deuteronomy was produced, forms the best illustration of that struggle for ritual hegemony. See Erik Eynikel, *The Reform of King Josiah and the Composition of the Deuteronomic History* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

68. Armand Mauss, *All Abraham's Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage* (Urbana/Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

69. This was the Bern, Switzerland, temple (which actually is in Zollikofen), built in 1955.