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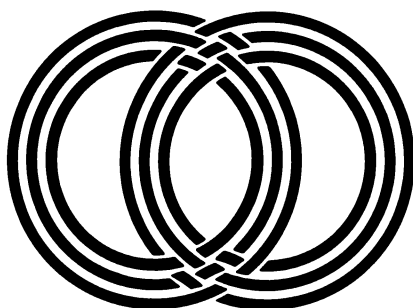
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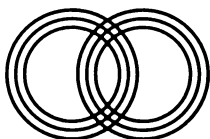
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DIALOGUE
A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT

Guest Editor's Introduction

Armand L. Mauss

WHO WOULD HAVE DARED TO PREDICT in 1830 that a tiny, radical circle of religious seekers around the Joseph and Lucy Smith family would be a church of 10 million only a few generations later at the dawn of the twenty-first century? The answer: Maybe the irrepressible and visionary prophet Joseph Smith, Jr., but scarcely anyone else. For that matter, who would dare to predict now that by the middle of the twenty-first century this same church could increase at least ten-fold to 100 million or more? The answer: More than one expert! The most engaging of these is non-Mormon sociologist Rodney Stark, whose predictions about Mormon growth were first published in 1984 and have since been updated.[1] His optimistic projections have so warmed the hearts of the faithful that they are often quoted over the pulpit, even in general conference now and then.

Church growth during the past decade, at least, has matched or exceeded Stark's projections, thereby lending credence to his longer-term expectations. Yet Stark was not the first to track Mormon growth trends into the future. As early as 1969 Mormon economist Jack W. Carlson published in *Dialogue* his projections to the turn of the century, covering not only church membership but also average household income of Mormon families![2] A generation later these ambitious projections seem surprisingly accurate, though slightly short of the actualities. Carlson has Amer-

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1. Rodney Stark, "The Rise of a New World Faith," *Review of Religious Research* 26 (Sept. 1984): 18-27. Stark's updates, publicly reported in recent oral presentations but not yet published, indicate that his 1984 projections might have been somewhat conservative. Stark has also studied demographic, economic, and cultural *correlates* of Mormon growth in various locations. See his "Modernization, Secularization, and Mormon Success," in Thomas Robbins and Dick Anthony, eds., *In Gods We Trust: New Patterns of Religious Pluralism in America*, 2d (Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1990), 201-18; and "Modernization and Mormon Growth: The Secularization Thesis Revisited," in Marie Cornwall, Tim B. Heaton, and Lawrence A. Young, eds., *Contemporary Mormonism: Social Science Perspectives* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 13-23.

2. Jack W. Carlson, "Income and Membership Projections for the Church through the Year 2000," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 4 (Spring 1969): 131-36.

ican church membership reaching 6 million by the year 2000 (it is already at 5 million), most of it in suburban residential areas, and an additional 2.5 million outside North America (already more than 4 million), for a total of 8.5 million out of a world population of 5 billion. These figures can now be seen as underestimates, but not by very much.[3] Up to the year 2000, at least, Carlson's estimates converge reasonably well with Stark's to that same point, though made from a greater temporal distance.

The projections of Ben Bennion and Larry Young, in the first article presented here, go only as far as 2020, when they estimate a worldwide church membership of about 35 million, more than triple the current figure. Since membership has tripled during the *past* twenty-five years, it is not extravagant to estimate that it will triple again in the *next* twenty-five, though Bennion and Young are too cautious to take their projections farther into the next century, as Stark has done. Yet another tripling in the twenty-five years beyond 2020 would take us to the 100 million or so that Stark has envisioned by the middle of the next century. Of course, demographic projections get more tricky with temporal distance; and in the case of a new religion (which is what Mormonism is everywhere but in the U.S.), they are especially contingent on variables that are almost impossible to estimate with any precision. That is why, as Bennion and Young show, the *regional* projections embody greater fluctuation and, when combined, yield a somewhat higher total than we get by making more composite projections for the world as a whole. It seems, in other words, that the whole is smaller than the sum of its parts in this case.

The fluctuating variables in question include differential rates around the world not only of conversion but of marriages, births, deaths, and (perhaps most of all) retention. It is obviously not enough to reap only where the "field is white and ready to harvest." If the field is small to begin with, or if some of the seed does not germinate, or if some of the ripe grain is lost to disease or weather, the harvest will not be large in that particular field. Similarly, even with a good initial harvest, large quantities of grain can be lost in storage if great care is not taken to guard against rot and rodents. Then, of course, there are those fields that never seem to "ripen" for the harvester's sickle. Thus, one wonders, how much of the Latin American success story for Mormons (and, indeed, for Jehovah's Witnesses and Assemblies of God) can be attributed to the sheer sizes of the birth rates in most of those countries, which insure a steady supply of young people and young families, the "ripest" of all potential converts. Conversely, how much of the seeming "stagnation" in Mormon growth in Japan or in northwestern Europe can be attributed to the rela-

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3. Carlson also estimated median family income for the year 2000 among U.S. Mormons (surely a more difficult task!) at $23,000 in 1968 dollars, which might be an overestimate if we triple that figure to reflect 1995 dollars, but again not enormously off base.

tively small birth rates in those countries? Or is it that most of the "grain" in those highly secularized societies never seems to "ripen," given the unfavorable "spiritual climates" there, as some of our later essays seem to suggest? In short, how important, respectively and relatively, are demographic factors versus socio-cultural factors in the conversion and retention of LDS members?

Let us be clear at the outset that we cannot adequately explain the growth or success of the church anywhere in the world on the basis of social science knowledge alone, whether we are talking about demographic, political, social, or cultural factors. Surely much of the explanation will always lie with other influences (including the spiritual) that are scarcely understood by social scientists. Although much of the readiness or susceptibility of a given people for the gospel message can be understood in human or social terms, how do we account for the fact that similar social conditions yield very different rates of conversion from one country to another, or even within the same country? The "ripening" of a people for a missionary harvest has much to do with *how they respond* to their social conditions (*whatever* these are); and that seems to be a spiritual matter less amenable to social science prediction or explanation. Individual missionaries in the right place at the right time, whether through divine intervention or not, can also have a powerful spiritual impact on the conversion process. One thinks, for example, of the special power of Paul's preaching in New Testament times or of Wilford Woodruff's in England during the 1830s and 1840s.

Yet, even with a spiritual interpretation, one can easily understand that the divine hand might well use social and political conditions to prepare a people for the missionaries. Other human factors also reveal themselves in the differential skills (and results) that we see throughout the church in the strategies and tactics of missionaries and of local leaders as they strive, no matter how prayerfully, to do the work to which they have been called; for, obviously, equally spiritual and conscientious servants of the Lord do not produce equal results. Clearly, therefore, the spiritual and the social science explanations for missionary success are more complementary than contradictory. The essays in this special issue have thus been prepared on the assumption that social science explanations can contribute to our understanding of church growth and success, present and future, without excluding spiritual explanations but adding to them.

When *Dialogue* editors Martha Bradley and Allen Roberts encouraged me, some two years ago, to put together this issue, I was very apprehensive about the eventual outcome. I had sworn years ago that I would never again put myself in a position of trying to enforce deadlines on other authors. As things turned out, however, the process went more smoothly than I had expected. We began by casting as wide a net as pos-

sible in an effort to recruit knowledgeable authors. In addition to calls for papers that appeared both in *Dialogue* and in the *Newsletter* of the Mormon History Association, we sent personal letters of invitation to some 80 scholars. Eventually a dozen or so responded with commitments to contribute papers. Nearly all of those came through with the contributions that you see in this collection. We hope you will be pleased with the work that all of us have done.

Without the gift of prophecy, which none of us would claim, how does one make credible prognostications about the future, even a future as close as the twenty-first century? The best we can do in most cases is to study the present and the immediate past in order to tease out trends likely to persist into the future. As a matter of editorial policy in this issue, we have deliberately slighted history, especially the more distant past, in order to give the collection a future-looking orientation. In some cases, the trends have seemed fairly clear; in others, considerable imagination has been required to estimate the future. In all cases, the authors have tried to be appropriately humble and cautious about their predictions. We have thus been more willing to identify likely future *issues and problems* than to propose solutions or to predict outcomes. Some of the papers point to options or possibilities that might be helpful in resolving certain problems, but it is not the scholar's role to instruct church leaders in solutions. Yet we hope that some of what we have to say will prove useful to anyone interested in the future.

We have tried to employ a perspective that is serious and realistic without being somber or negative. All of the contributors are members of the LDS church, many actively involved. All of us wish the church well, not only in the twenty-first century but all the way to the Millennium! Speaking at least for myself, and I believe for the rest of the contributors as well, we gladly associate ourselves with the remarks made by President Gordon B. Hinckley at the concluding session of the October 1995 general conference. He deplored the tendency for some observers to cry doom and gloom about the future of the church and called on all of us to go forward with optimism and enthusiasm in church service. We presume, however, that no one would have us advocate a naive triumphalism in considering the future prospects of the church; neither the Lord, the church, nor its members are well served by such head-in-the-sand assessments.

For the fact is that the church will have to deal with many serious problems, present *and* future, if it is to continue to enjoy its recent rates of growth in the world, and particularly if it is to retain the active commitment of its members and their children. We have little doubt that most of these problems are well known to church leaders, general and local, so what we are offering here are perspectives, and perhaps a few sugges-

tions, rather than new "revelations." No matter how knowledgeable
church leaders themselves might be about the matters to be discussed in
these pages, most members of the church are not so knowledgeable. Thus
we hope that our readers will benefit from our efforts here, perhaps gain-
ing insights that will help them as partners in building the Kingdom.

Some of the essays in this issue would have benefitted by access to
data gathered and maintained under official church auspices. Several of
the authors, indeed, explicitly sought access to such information but
could not obtain it, given the strict proprietary controls imposed on most
church-generated data. Fortunately, however, much valuable information
was still available from more public sources. In a few cases, furthermore,
local church leaders were willing to share what they knew (if only anony-
mously) out of personal trust in an author's judgment, balance, and fair-
ness. We have tried to vindicate that trust. Furthermore, many of the
papers rely as much on personal experience for their "data" as on exter-
nal or archival sources. This is particularly true of those authors with ex-
perience from outside North America. While personal experience is not
systematic, and therefore cannot be easily generalized, it nevertheless is
still empirical, for it represents the observations of "expert witnesses"
and "native key informants," as they might be called in anthropological
field work. Our key informants in this case, furthermore, have been im-
mersed in Mormonism for decades as active members and leaders. Their
passionate and sincere concern for the future of the church sometimes
breaks through in their writing, but their observations can hardly be dis-
missed as merely emotional or impressionistic, given the depth and
breadth of their LDS backgrounds and church experience.

This unique collection of papers reflects implicitly the assumption
that the future of Mormonism in the next century depends largely on
what happens outside North America. Accordingly, while a few of the es-
says deal with general topics like scriptural interpretation or science,
most focus on countries or regions outside the U.S.: Latin America, Eu-
rope (north and south), Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. We would
like to have included a paper on England or the British Isles, where half
of all Mormons in Europe reside. However, no such paper was offered,
despite some solicitations.[4] Perhaps some inferences can be cautiously
generalized to the British scene from what we learn in observations about
Australia and continental Europe.

The issue begins with the Bennion-Young geographic and demo-
graphic overview of Mormon growth in the world, followed by the Shep-
herds' study of missionary activity as the engine of that growth. Together

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4. Actually, a few knowledgeable potential authors, especially some who are BYU-con-
nected, declined to participate for reasons that were not always clear.

these papers provide a strong empirical context for understanding much of what follows. One thing clear from these two essays is the strong circular or reciprocal relationship between member retention and missionary mobilization; as either one of these drops off, so does the other, and each serves to intensify the impact of the other on future church growth. The next two papers deal with issues that will be relevant anywhere in the world in which the church achieves or maintains a significant future presence. Karl Sandberg examines contrasting perspectives that have developed among Mormons on how best to understand and interpret scripture, doctrine, and the teachings of modern prophets, and he wonders which will be the dominant hermeneutical mode of the future. David Bailey reviews the related issue of how doctrine is to be articulated and reconciled with the rapidly emerging discoveries and understandings in the sciences.

The remaining papers all deal with settings outside North America, and despite the obvious cultural differences among these settings, these essays all illustrate certain common problems faced by Saints striving to make an essentially American religion work in other places. The first two of these, Walter van Beek's from Holland and Wilfried Decoo's from Belgium, make clear (among other things) that the American connection no longer contributes either to conversion or to retention in those countries; in some ways, indeed, it is an obstacle. One suspects that the same is true in most of western Europe. The commitment and endurance of the Saints who remain faithful in those small and slow-growing LDS congregations should evoke the admiration of those who live in the thriving but complacent wards of western America. In southern Europe, to judge by Michael Homer's example of Italy, the recent end to the Roman Catholic legal monopoly was followed by an initial spurt of LDS growth, which is now proving difficult to sustain in that part of Europe. Interestingly (and perhaps ironically), a perceived similarity between LDS and Catholic values and authority structures contributes somewhat to LDS conversions there, although the church still has a long way to go in overcoming its image as a weird American cult.

Difficult as LDS proselyting might be in Europe, it has been enormously successful in Latin America, though probably not as successful as that of Protestant pentecostals and other groups. Yet, as David Knowlton points out, it is hazardous to generalize about Latin America, which, after all, comprises many different countries. There is, in fact, a great deal of variation in LDS success among the various Latin American societies for reasons that are not all obvious; and again the U.S. connection is a serious drawback in certain ways. One fascinating attempt in Latin America to deal with the Anglo-American bias found in traditional Mormonism can be seen in Thomas Murphy's account of local efforts in Guatemala to "re-

invent" or adapt the message from up north in ways that will enhance lo-
cal pride in their own ethnic heritage. One wonders if there is enough
flexibility in Mormonism to permit such local adaptations outside the
core of basic doctrine; if so, we can look forward to a variety of Mormon-
isms by the end of the next century.

The remaining papers take us to the Pacific island nations of Austra-
lia, New Zealand, and Japan, each of which presents its own cultural
complications to the LDS enterprise. At the same time all are "First
World" countries (like western Europe) dominated by secular climates in
which traditional religions retain only limited popular appeal. According
to some contemporary theories, such a setting is fertile ground for the
rise and spread of new religions. However, opportunities for the LDS
church to expand there are constrained by various historical encum-
brances. In Australia, as Marjorie Newton explains, the church is still
struggling with the consequences of "hard-sell" missionary tactics tried a
generation ago, which (as in England's era of "baseball baptisms") se-
verely damaged the LDS public image and left the church with a large
proportion of only nominal—or even hostile—members. A similar devel-
opment has occurred in Japan, and church growth there is further con-
strained by a powerful, assimilative culture which has never allowed
much room for any form of Christianity, and which is now as much per-
meated with secular, agnostic, and material values as any Western nation.
In New Zealand, where the church has historically enjoyed great success
among aboriginal Maori people, it has in recent years found itself drawn
into the national political struggle for Maori cultural preservation and
autonomy. While the New Zealand situation is unique in some ways, it
also provides an example of the kind of quandary that the church can ex-
pect increasingly to face in multi-ethnic nations, not only elsewhere in
Polynesia, where the LDS presence is already strong, but in other emerg-
ing nations.

In the final essay I have tried to highlight certain present and future
issues affecting church prospects in the world and to provide a general
theoretical perspective that views those issues in the framework of "reli-
gious economies" or "religious markets." This perspective has become
the dominant "paradigm" in the sociology of religion during the past de-
cade or so, and it offers a new and challenging way of assessing prospects
for Mormonism around the world during the coming century.

Enjoy your reading!

The Uncertain Dynamics of LDS Expansion, 1950-2020

Lowell C. "Ben" Bennion and Lawrence A. Young

MORE THAN EVER BEFORE THE LDS CHURCH seems to measure its milestones in terms of numbers. Almost every issue of the *Church News* and the *Ensign* includes an article or a graphic that highlights the latest indicator of "Church Growth."[1] Sometime this year or next, while celebrating the Utah State Centennial and the Pioneer Sesquicentennial, Mormons will doubtless point to two more milestones: (1) 10 million members and (2) the rise of *non*-North Americans to a position of numerical majority in the "Worldwide Church." Who would have predicted twenty-five years ago such rapid change in the size and regional make-up of church membership? We have been asked to project the geography and demography of Mormondom twenty-five years from now; fortunately for us, *Dialogue* readers will have to wait that long to decide how prescient we have been.

In 1972, when President Harold B. Lee dedicated the new Church Office Building just east of Temple Square, he presided over a mere 3 million members, 85 percent of whom were Americans or Canadians. Yet he sensed a trend well under way, declaring that Mormonism already had become more than a Utah or an American church, with members in some seventy nations. Moreover, he claimed rapid growth posed the greatest problem facing the church.[2]

That problem persists, "but what a remarkable and wonderful challenge that is," in the eyes of President Gordon B. Hinckley, who in 1995 was called to preside over "a great global society" of 9 million Latter-day Saints in 150 countries.[3] More than any previous generation of general

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1. A recent illustration appears in the *Deseret News 1995-96 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1994), 410, which measures "Progress During Administrations of the Presidents" by numbers of stakes and members at the beginning and end of each president's tenure.

2. Harold B. Lee, "Growth of Church," *Conference Reports*, 6 Apr. 1973 (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1973), 7.

3. *Ensign* 25 (Apr 1995): 6, and (May 1995): 52.

authorities, he and his associates must view the expansion of the church during their ministry as fulfillment of a prophecy voiced by Joseph Smith in 1842: "No unhallowed hand can stop the work [of the Latter-day Saints] from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done."[4]

Proclaiming the gospel probably commands more of the church's attention than either of its two other major missions: perfecting the Saints and redeeming the dead. Leaders must find it easier to measure the results of missionary work, and they naturally take pride in touting the constant increases in converts, wards, stakes, and missions that demand so much of their time.

What do such numbers—whether graphed or mapped—reveal about the changing composition and distribution of Mormons? How much confidence can we give them as a basis for forecasting Mormonism's future into the twenty-first century? For this special issue of *Dialogue*, we have combined our geographic and demographic perspectives to provide an overview of the dynamics operating to shape the configuration of Mormondom—the world's Latter-day Saint population—for the period 1950-2020. First, we regionalize the highly uneven distribution of the current membership, using both absolute and relative numbers. Then we assess various projections of both general and regional growth rates of the church for the next twenty-five years. Third, we examine the most important variables which make forecasts that far into the future highly problematic, even, we suspect, for prophets. Finally, we consider two of the most important challenges facing Mormonism because of its expansion.

GEOGRAPHIC PATTERNS OF MEMBERSHIP DISTRIBUTION

Any mapping of the LDS membership requires a few observations at the outset, since numbers and graphics can mislead if not read properly. Although Mormons reject infant baptism, they count as members any "children of record" blessed and named soon after birth. Thus unbaptized children of members (until age eight) make up an important share of the LDS population (about 15 percent among Americans). Moreover, in spite of its diligent clerks and computerized records, the church still loses track of an unspecified number who drift away from the faith and leave

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4. Taken from the Wentworth Letter published in Joseph Smith et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2d ed., rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978), 4:540.

their local branches or wards without forwarding addresses. The "Missing Members" file presumably accounts for the discrepancies sometimes found between lower regional and higher churchwide totals. Those actually excommunicated, and thus no longer counted, likely amount to only a fraction of 1 percent.[5]

Between the two extremes—blessed but unbaptized, baptized but unbelieving members—falls the majority of Latter-day Saints. They too represent a spectrum of commitment to the faith, and their activity levels not only vary among regions but also change over the life course.[6] In reality, despite outsiders' stereotypes, Mormonism, like any religion, embraces a diverse group.

LDS membership counts appear even more inflated when compared to surveys of self-identified religious affiliation based on probability samples. At least in the United States this overreporting of Mormons stands in contrast to the underreporting of members in most other churches. Such inflation likely looms higher in areas of the world where the church has lower retention rates. The figures cited in this essay, unless otherwise footnoted, come from the biennial *Deseret News Church Almanac*, first published in 1973.

Despite due allowance for the wide gap between the nominal members and true believers counted by the church, we must acknowledge that Mormonism has experienced an impressive annual increase in numbers ever since 1950. Equally striking changes have occurred in the spatial dispersion of Mormons, with the rapid rise in converts in certain countries of Africa, East Asia, and, most of all, Latin America.

To make visual the geographic distribution of the current membership, we have drafted three cartograms (Figs. 1-3), maps that make the actual area of a state or country proportional to, in this case, the size of its Mormon population.[7] To the individual political units we have added the LDS percentage of the total population if it equaled or exceeded the U.S. average of 1.7 percent at the start of 1992. In addition, we have located the sixty temples and fifteen Missionary Training Centers that the church has built (or plans to build) as of 1 July 1995, and around which the largest numbers of Latter-day Saints appear to cluster.

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5. Tim B. Heaton, "Vital Statistics," in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 4:1527. The frequency with which some Mormons move may also result in the church's inadvertently counting them twice. LDS leaders in Tonga told an anthropologist that their figures included some Saints who had emigrated overseas and presumably become members of record in, say, a California or Utah ward. See Tamar G. Gordon, "Inventing Mormon Identity in Tonga," Ph.D. diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1988, 74.

6. Heaton.

7. Special thanks to Nancy S. Rohde and Jim Wanket, former students at Humboldt State University, for drafting the maps and graphs.

In effect, the cartograms collapse the twenty-two *Areas* of the world now used by the church for administrative purposes into three global realms: a *North America* area that still contains a bare majority of the membership; a *Latin America* that includes nearly one-third; and an *Eastern Hemisphere* with four vast and disparate regions—Europe, Africa, Asia, and Oceania—that together account for the remaining one-sixth.[8]

Despite at least a minimal presence in most countries of the world, Mormonism remains strongly based in western North America and is deeply rooted only in the U.S. Intermountain West and in a few islands of Oceania. As the data in Figure 1 indicate, more than three-fourths of Mormons in the U.S., and two-thirds of those in Canada, are westerners; and two-thirds of the western U.S. Saints live in the so-called Mormon Culture Region centered in Utah.[9]

Only the thirteen Western States and Alberta have an LDS percentage higher than the U.S. national average, ranging from Alberta's 2.25 percent to Utah's 77 percent as of 1992. Moreover, while LDS wards and stakes have spread across most of the eastern half of North America since 1950, the general distribution pattern has changed little since 1970, despite the sharp drop in the U.S. and Canadian shares of the worldwide membership.[10]

The most impressive change on the world map of Mormondom has taken place in the *other two* Americas: Middle America (Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean) and South America. With roughly one-third of the total and nearly two-thirds of the membership outside North America, Latin America deserves its own cartogram (see Fig. 2). Mexico, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, and Chile stand out on this map, especially when compared with a cartogram for Latin America's entire population, although their dominance is not as great as that of the Intermountain West. As David Knowlton observes in his essay herein, the size and extent of the LDS Latin American population still make Mormonism a predominantly *American* faith. Having proclaimed the "whole of America" as *Zion* in 1844, Joseph Smith now would undoubtedly include *all three* Americas in the 1990s.[11]

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8. For a more detailed description of "The Geographic Dynamics of Mormondom, 1965-1995," see the article by Lowell C. "Ben" Bennion in *Sunstone,* Dec. 1995.

9. For the definitive mapping of this area, see D. W. Meinig, "The Mormon Culture Region: Strategies and Patterns in the Geography of the American West, 1847-1964," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 55 (June 1964): 191-220; an assessment of his essay and an update of his MCR map appear in Lowell C. Bennion, "Meinig's 'Mormon Culture Region' Revisited," *Historical Geography* 24 (1995): 22-33.

10. The best demonstration of this spread appears in Jan Shipps's series of three maps showing new buildings erected by the church throughout the U.S., 1950-65, in S. Kent Brown et al., eds., *Historical Atlas of Mormonism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), Map 78.

11. See *History of the Church,* 6:318-19.

2.3

Alberta

Canada

U.S.

Seattle
3.9

11.3

4.3

Portland
4.0

26.7
Boise
Idaho Falls

Denver
2.7

Logan

Ogden

Bountiful

Jordan River   Salt Lake

Mt. Timp.

Provo*

Vernal

8.7

Las Vegas

2.4

Oakland

77.0

Manti

St. George

Los Angeles

Hawaii

San Diego

3.1

4.5

6.5

3.9

Arizona

Deseret News 1993-1994 Church Almanac
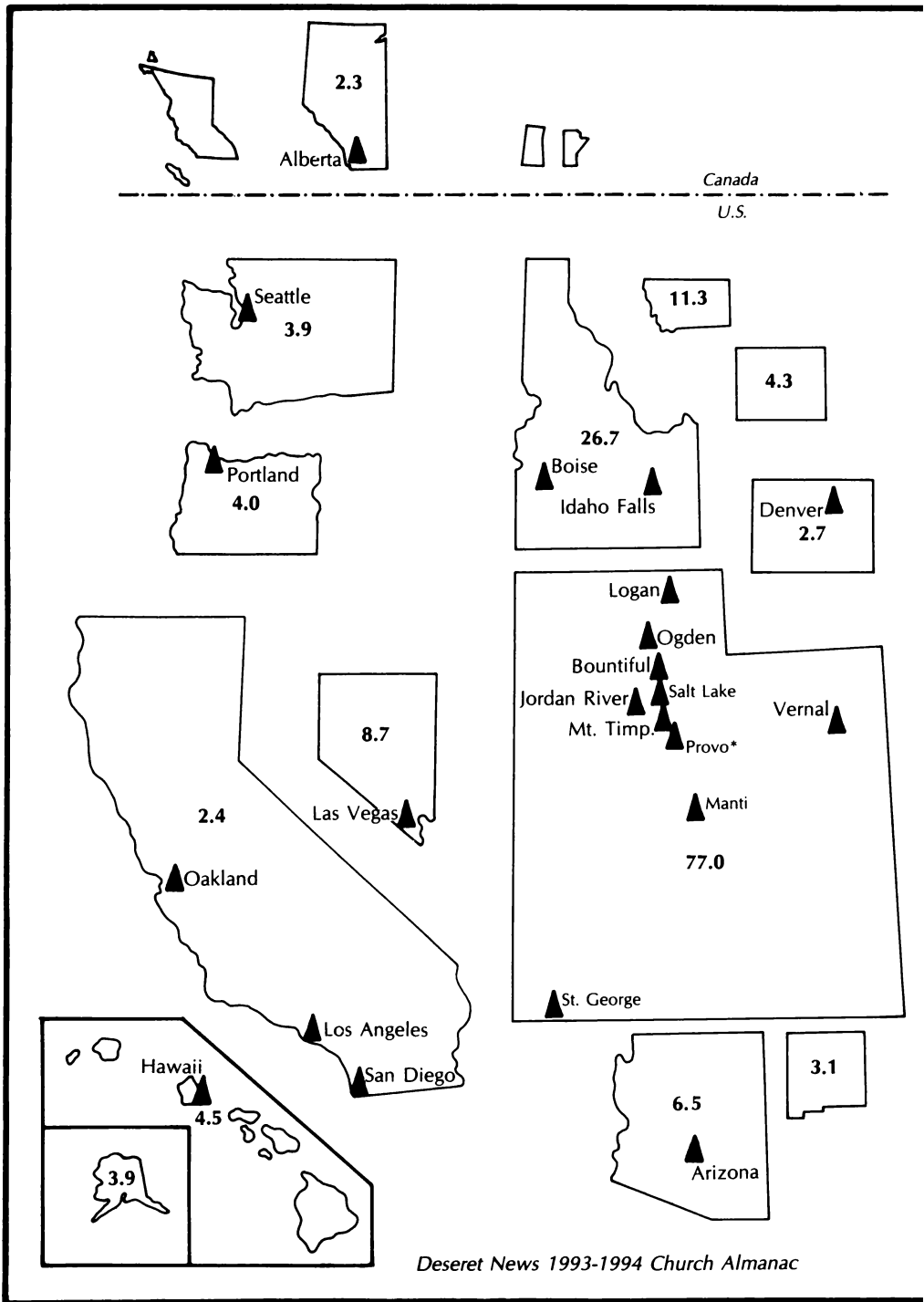
Figure 1

AMERICAN—CANADIAN
WORLDS OF MORMONDOM
WEST vs. EAST
1992

Area Size Proportional to LDS Population

◻ 600 Members   Provo* MTC

▲ LDS Temple   **2.3** LDS Percents above
                         U.S. Average of 1.7

Toronto

Hartford

Chicago

St. Louis

Washington

Nashville

Dallas

Atlanta

Orlando

North America Reference Map

4,466,000 LDS

LATIN WORLDS
OF MORMONDOM
1992

Area Size Proportional to LDS Population

- ☐   1000 LDS
- ▲   LDS Temple
- *Bogota   MTC
- **1.9**   LDS Percents for Countries
  above U.S. Average of 1.7

*Mexico City▲

Santo Domingo

☐ Lesser Antilles

*Guatemala City ▲

*Bogota▲

■ The Guianas

▲Guayaquil

Recife▲

*Sao Paulo ▲

*Lima▲

▲Cochabamba

1.9

*Santiago▲

▲Buenos Aires *

2.4

Latin America Reference Map

2,621,000 LDS

Deseret News 1993-1994 Church Almanac

Figure 2

"EASTERN" WORLDS
OF MORMONDOM
1992

Area Size Proportional to LDS Population

JAPAN

▲Tokyo *

Preston

Stockholm

*London EUROPE

ASIA

Frankfurt ▲Freiberg

Hong
Kong ▲Seoul *

Swiss

Madrid

Taipei

Manila PHILIPPINES

AFRICA Johannesburg

□ 600 Members

▲ LDS Temple

* London MTC

2.3 LDS Percents for Countries
above U.S. Average of 1.7

INDONESIA

*Samoa ▲

OCEANIA Tahiti ▲
6.6
▲Tonga *

New Zealand *

▲Sydney 2.3

AUSTRALIA

NEW ZEALAND

Eastern Hemisphere Reference Map

1,218,000 LDS
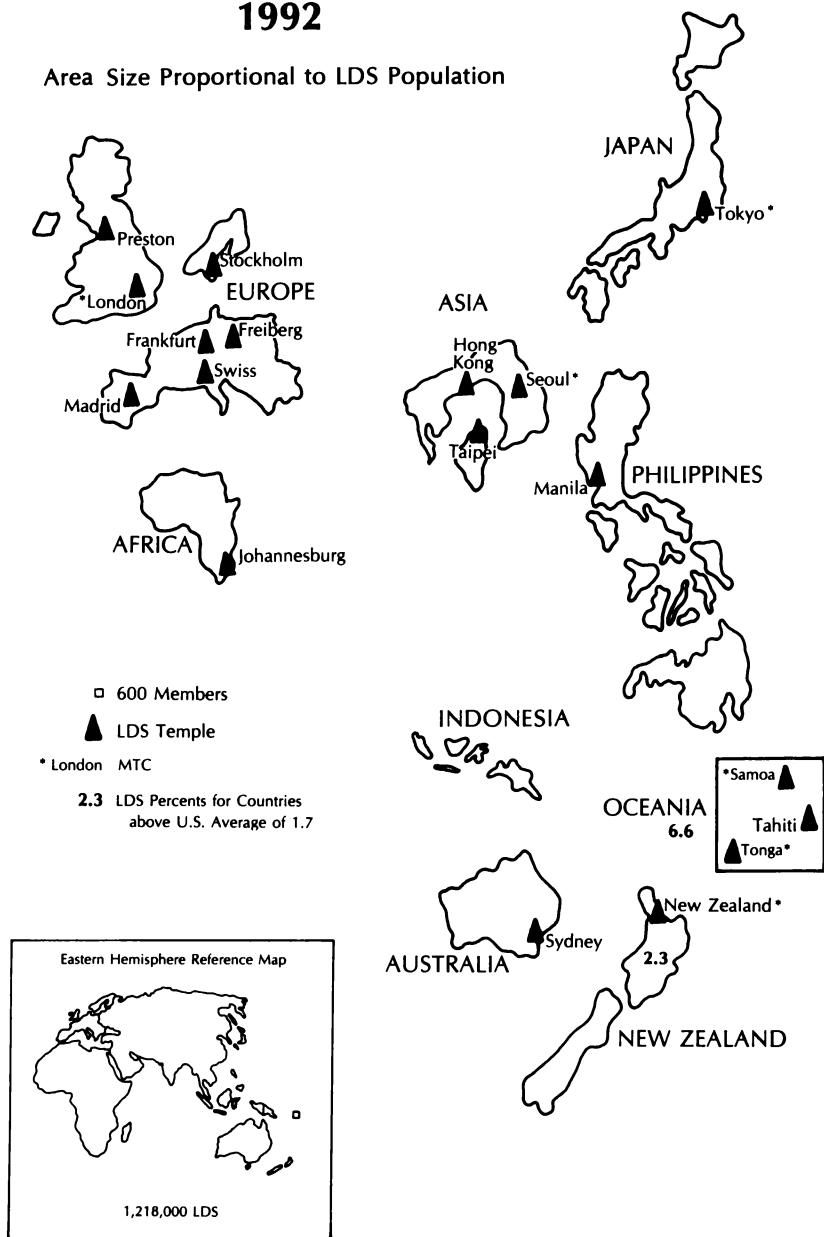
Deseret News 1993-1994 Church Almanac

Figure 3

Even when combined, the other four regions, shown in Figure 3, claim less than 15 percent of the world's Mormons. Europe and Oceania each have small but relatively stable shares, but Oceania's Saints make up a sizable portion of all the Pacific islands' people, particularly in the two Samoas and in Tonga (with 25-33 percent each). Although Mormonism depended heavily upon European converts for its nineteenth-century growth, modern Europe, even Great Britain (which claims almost half of all European Saints), has only a minuscule number of Mormons compared to its total population. Nowhere in East Asia or in Africa, where Mormons are either more numerous or increasing more rapidly than in Europe and Oceania, do the Saints add up to more than .5 percent in any country.

Thus only on the Christianized or Westernized edges of the eastern hemisphere has the church established significant beachheads. Perhaps because of their physically and politically fragmented natures, these four regions have nevertheless received more than their share of temples (25 percent of the world's temples versus 15 percent of its members). All but absent from this cartogram (Fig. 3) are the non-Christian Asian and African realms that embrace three-fifths of the world's people. Finding ways for Mormonism to penetrate these populous and culturally diverse worlds of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism will doubtless challenge LDS leaders throughout the twenty-first century. Should Mormonism succeed where other Christian faiths have failed, it would represent a religious change of miraculous magnitude in the world.

PROJECTING CHURCH GROWTH RATES

What of the church's future in areas where it already has at least solid footholds? How will the location, size, and composition of its membership change in the foreseeable future? Among the few efforts to tackle the task of plotting possible trajectories, the work of sociologist Rodney Stark has attracted the most attention. In his oft-cited 1984 essay he pointed to LDS growth rates exceeding 50 percent for each decade since 1950. Then he made simple projections by region of Mormon membership for the next century.[12]

A decade later Stark returned to his forecasts to see how they compared with actual growth. Given the church's 67.3 percent increase in members during the 1980s, he found strong support for his vision of Mormonism as an emerging world religion. His latest projections to the year 2080 include a "conservative" estimate of 63,415,000 (30 percent per

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12. Rodney Stark, "The Rise of a New World Faith," *Review of Religious Research* 26 (1984): 18-27.

decade) and an "optimistic" estimate of 265,259,000 (50 percent per decade).[13] However, if his optimistic growth rate proves correct for only the first sixty years, and if growth then remains flat for the final twenty years, the number of Mormons in 2080 would fall 120 million short of the "optimistic" total.

Matthew Shumway, a BYU geographer, recently mapped the changing regional composition of church membership from 1920 to 2020. Unfortunately, he used percents rather than actual numbers, did not indicate how he derived the annual growth rates for his regional projections, and did not enumerate rates for all ten of the regions mapped. "If current regional growth trends continue," he concluded, "the demographic makeup of Church members will be dramatically different in the future." In the year 2020, he calculated, Latin Americans would account for about 71 percent of all LDS while North America and Europe combined would account for only 11 percent.[14]

We propose a different set of projections driven by data presented in Table 1: regional growth rates by decade from 1950 to 2000 (with figures for the 1990s extrapolated from increases in 1990-94). Although rates remain high, they have dropped by at least half in every region except Africa since 1990.

Table 1
Regional Percentage Growth Rates per Decade, 1950s-90s

Decade	Africa	Asia	Canada	Europe	Lat. Am.	Oceania	U.S.
1950-60	123%	1731%	69%	41%	569%	59%	54%
1960-70	102	472	75	185	850	135	42
1970-80	87	370	47	39	441	38	40
1980-90	351	216	57	68	235	99	50
1990-2000	311	97	30	35	105	42	22

Source: Deseret News Church Almanacs. 1990 data equal average of 1989/1991.

This latest trend makes any prediction risky. Should we ignore the early 1990s as a brief aberration or consider them the beginning of a new and downward trend? Both Asia and Latin America show reductions in growth rates since 1970, and Africa may do the same after its upward surge following the end of the church's priesthood ban for blacks in 1978. Table 1 also reveals that since 1950 Europe and the United States have usually shown the lowest growth rates while Oceania's and Africa's levels have fluctuated the most.

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13. Lawrence A. Young possesses a copy of Stark's unpublished 1995 paper, "So Far, So Good: A Brief Assessment of Mormon Membership Projections."

14. See J. Matthew Shumway's map-essay in the *Historical Atlas of Mormonism*, 122-23.

Table 2
Regional Composition of Church Membership, 1950-2020 (in thousands)

Year	Africa		Asia		Canada		Europe		Latin America		Oceania		United States	
1950	1.4		0.3		18.8		34.3		1.9		26.3		926.7	
1960	3.1		5.2		31.6		48.2		13.0		42.0		1,422.7	
1970	6.2		19.7		55.5		137.0		123.0		98.5		2,016.8	
1980	11.5		139.5		81.2		665.2		665.2		136.0		2,832.2	
1990	52.0		441.0		127.5		321.0		2,227.5		270.0		4,254.3	
	Ser. 1	Ser. 2	Ser. 1	Ser. 2	Ser. 1	Ser. 2	Ser. 1	Ser. 2	Ser. 1	Ser. 2	Ser. 1	Ser. 2	Ser. 1	Ser. 2
2000	234.5	213.9	1,393.9	870.2	200.1	166.1	539.1	433.7	7,458.8	4,575.0	536.2	384.1	6,390.5	5,204.6
2010	1,057.3	879.8	4,405.8	1,717.3	314.0	216.4	905.6	586.2	24,976.1	9,396.4	1,064.9	564.4	9,599.2	6,367.1
2020	4,767.6	3,619.0	13,926.7	3,388.9	492.8	281.9	1,521.2	792.1	83,632.9	19,298.9	2,114.9	777.3	14,419.2	7,789.4

Source: Deseret News Church Almanacs. 1990 figures represent the averages of 1989 and 1991 data. Series 1 projections are based on regional growth rates of 1980-90, while Series 2 projections come from estimated regional growth rates of 1990-2000.

The instability in these rates suggests caution in assessing the data in Table 2 (and later in Table 4). Table 2 presents two series of projections. The first, based on the regional growth of the 1980s, probably represents an unduly optimistic forecast. The second, based on 1990s rates, should prove more realistic if declines persist into the next century in the fast-growing realms of Latin America and Asia.

The slower growth rates in Latin America and Asia might result from either or both of two conditions. First, these regions began with very small memberships in 1950. The conversion of a few thousand individuals thus generated high rates of growth. With much larger base memberships by, say, 1980, per decade growth had already fallen noticeably, even with baptisms numbering in the hundreds of thousands.

Second, the cumulative effects of years of low retention rates in fast-growing areas inhibit somewhat the long-term growth and strength of Mormonism. Table 3, based on data not available since 1980, implies the difficulty the church has had, especially in Asia and Latin America, in retaining adult male members long enough to make them Melchizedek priesthood holders.[15] The absence of an adequate priesthood base for staffing wards and stakes eventually limits growth.

Table 3
Percent Adult Males, 1980, Ever Ordained to Melchizedek Priesthood

Area	% Ordained	Area	% Ordained
Utah	70	Great Britain	29
U.S.	59	South America	25
Canada	52	West Indies	25
Africa	39	Central America	23
Scandinavia	38	Asia (incl. Japan)	21
South Pacific	35	Mexico	19
Continental Europe	34	Japan	17

Source: *Deseret News 1983 Church Almanac* (217-22).

Table 4 provides a picture of the changing regional composition of church membership in terms of percentages based on the two series of projections in Table 2. Series 1 figures suggest a redistribution of members that mirrors the one projected in Shumway's map (see footnote 14). For instance, he predicts that 71 percent of all LDS will live in Latin America by 2020 compared to the Series 1 forecast there of 69 percent.

However, even the more moderate estimates of Series 2 point to the continued erosion of North American dominance. By about the year 2005 Latin America will replace the United States and Canada as the region with the largest LDS population. By 2020 a majority of all church mem-

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15. Lawrence A. Young discusses this problem in his chapter "Confronting Turbulent Environments: Issues in the Organizational Growth and Globalization of Mormonism," in Cornwall, *Contemporary Mormonism*, 55-59.

bers will reside in Latin America with less than one-fourth in North America, a near reversal of the 1995 pattern in just twenty-five years. In neither of the projections, however, will the church lose its high membership concentration of 75-80 percent in the western hemisphere. Figure 4 summarizes the shifting distribution of the world's church members between 1960 and 2020.

Table 4
Regional Composition of Church Membership by Percent, 1950-2020

Year	Africa	Asia	Canada	Europe	Lat. Amer.	Oceania	U.S.
			Series 1 Projections				
1950	0.1%	0.0%	1.9%	3.4%	0.2%	2.6%	91.8%
1960	0.2	0.3	2.0	3.1	0.8	2.7	90.9
1970	0.3	1.2	2.2	5.6	5.0	4.0	81.8
1980	0.3	3.4	2.0	4.7	16.4	3.4	69.8
1990	0.7	5.7	1.7	4.2	29.0	3.5	55.3
2000	1.4	8.3	1.2	3.2	44.5	3.2	38.1
2010	2.5	10.4	0.7	2.1	59.0	2.5	22.7
2020	3.9	11.5	0.4	1.3	69.2	1.7	11.9
			Series 2 Projections				
2000	1.8%	7.3%	1.4%	3.7%	38.6%	3.2%	43.9%
2010	4.5	8.7	1.1	3.0	47.7	2.8	32.3
2020	10.1	9.4	0.8	2.2	53.7	2.2	21.7

Source: Based on data from Deseret News Church Almanacs, via Cornwall et al. 1990 figures equal the average of data from 1989 and 1991. Series 1 projections reflect the per decade regional growth rates of 1980-90; Series 2 projections are based on estimated per decade regional growth rates of 1990-2000, which in turn depend on data from 1990-94 extrapolated through 2000.

As already implied, projections tied to regional trends differ from those for the church as a whole. Regional dynamics generate forecasts which cumulatively project much higher growth rates than those based on the combined population. Thus the cumulative membership size for the Series 1 projections in 2020 comes to 121 million; but if we apply the 1980s churchwide growth rate of 67 percent to the total church population, the number drops to 36.4 million.[16] Here is one case where the whole

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16. The church itself anticipates a membership of 35 million by 2020, assuming "growth rates for the past decade remain constant." See "Church Notes 1992 Growth," Ensign 23 (Aug. 1993): 75. Regional projections stem from much smaller base populations than churchwide projections. Small base populations pose problems with respect to forecasting future growth because they exhibit less stable trends. Relatively small institutions committed to high growth can easily sustain it over the short run, but projecting such trends over the long run becomes risky because of the high costs of supporting rapid increases. The same holds true for sub-populations or regions within the organization. As the base populations in the new regions increase, the rate of growth declines. Regional growth rates exceeding 100 percent simply are not sustainable for more than a few decades. Thus projections based on regional trends are unduly influenced by short-term high-growth rates, whereas churchwide forecasts smooth out such effects and result in estimates more conservative but more reliable.

REGIONAL COMPOSITION
of LDS by PERCENT

Asia

Africa   Europe

Oceania   Latin America

North America

1960

Africa

Oceania   Asia

Europe

North   Latin
America   America

1990

Oceania

Africa

North   Asia
America   Europe

Latin America

2020
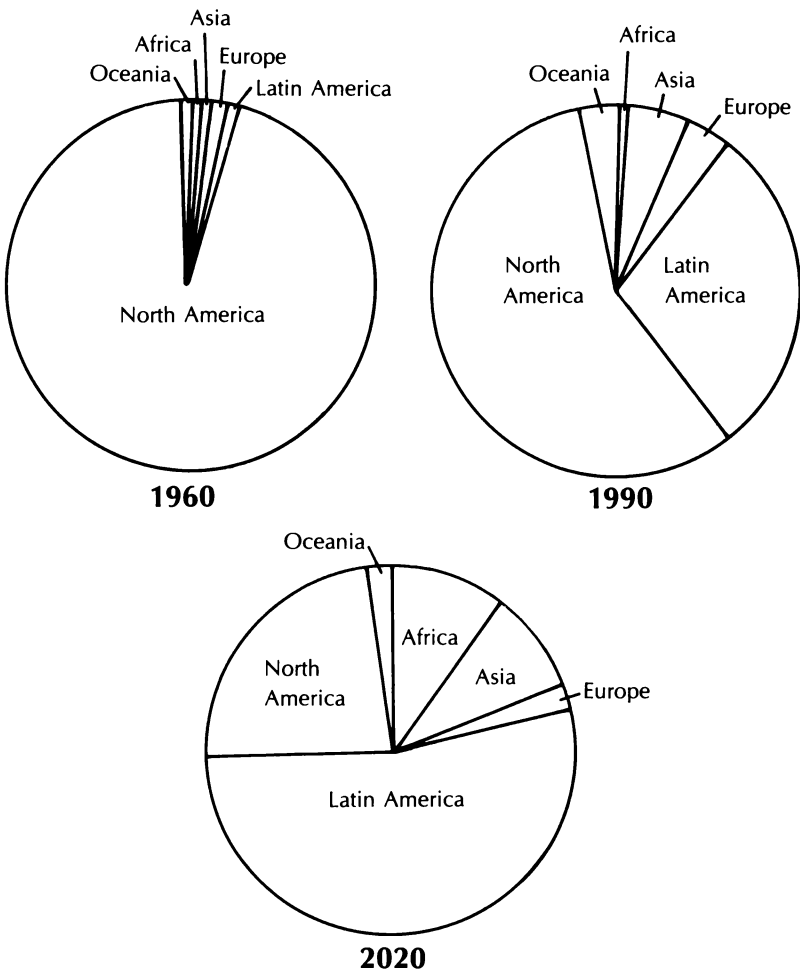
Figure 4

comprises *less* than the sum of its parts, producing churchwide estimates that are probably more reliable than those based on variable regional trends.

The data analyzed above clearly indicate a future of sustained growth for the increasingly international church, but we cannot predict its precise nature with confidence because of our dependence on past patterns of expansion. Better forecasts would require knowledge about the future size of the missionary force and such basic characteristics of members as fertility/mortality rates, sex-age ratios, migration patterns, and activity/retention levels.

Ultimately these variables, combined with the conditions of the chaotic "new world order," will influence both the number and distribution of Latter-day Saints during the next quarter century. Presumably these factors will also affect the church's deployment of missionaries and allocation of resources. We can only hint at just how all of this might alter the geography and demography of Mormondom as we continue our global overview to provide a basis for the more specialized essays that follow.

<div align="center">VARIABLES COMPLICATING GROWTH PROJECTIONS</div>

Missionary Force

If the Shepherds are correct that the single best predictor of the annual Mormon conversion rate is the size of the LDS missionary force (see essay herein), then we should consider that factor first. Since 1960 convert baptisms have increasingly outstripped child baptisms as a source of growth; converts now outnumber born-in-church members each year by a margin of four to one. The number of missionaries increased during the 1980s by about 50 percent, but since 1990 the rate has slowed down (see Shepherds' Table 1), which might help explain the *relative* decline in membership growth so far in the 1990s.

The failure of missionary numbers (47,331) to reach the magic mark of 50,000 by the start of 1995 reflects in part a recent tightening in the screening of prospective young missionaries to ensure their worthiness. As President Howard W. Hunter emphasized, "Let us prepare every missionary to go to the temple worthily and to make that experience an even greater highlight than receiving the mission call."[17]

With the proliferation of new missions everywhere except in insular Oceania, one might expect the church to recruit more older couples for service. Certainly leaders have long encouraged such calls, offering a wide choice of "customized" missions that do not require tracting. Sur-

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17. *Ensign* 24 (Nov. 1994): 8.

prisingly few have responded relative to the number of eligible elderly in the slow-growth areas of the church, notably North America. Even though the number of couples more than doubled from 1979 to 1994 (785 to 1,706), the current figure represents on average less than one couple for each stake in the church (or 1.4 per North American stake).[18] Health or financial problems, ties to grandchildren, or a lack of missionary zeal keep many couples from serving.

Since the church still seems reluctant to urge young women (prospective wives and mothers) to fulfill missions, any major increase in the proselyting force must come from couples or from young men. (The current ratio of women to men among single missionaries is about 1:4.) In recent years native residents have comprised more and more of those called to areas outside of Canada and the United States, so that some nations now have high proportions of non-American elders and sisters. However, North America still provides roughly three-fourths of the church's worldwide cadre—substantially more than its proportion of members (just over one-half).[19] To our knowledge, no one has yet determined if native missionaries propagate the faith more effectively than do non-natives. In any case, the overall annual ratio of converts per missionary has changed little since 1980, fluctuating from 6:1 to 7.5:1.

Public Relations

If LDS leaders cannot find enough willing and worthy missionaries to meet what quotas they set, they can still employ the other means they have developed to spread the gospel message. For example, each year since 1990 the church has produced a satellite broadcast aimed at non-members and less-active ones, and it has endeavored more than before to engage faithful members in missionary-related endeavors, including community service projects.[20]

All types of activities, from annual pageants to Temple Square Assembly Hall concerts, function in some way as missionary tools.[21] If anyone wonders why downtown Salt Lake City "probably has the greatest

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18. According to the director of the Missionary Department, "The growth of the Church has multiplied the need for couples," but the number of couples serving missions has not kept pace. See *Church News*, 5 Aug. 1995, 3.

19. *Church News*, 13 Nov. 1993, 3. A breakdown of missionaries assigned and called by macro-areas would greatly enhance our ability to assess past and future growth patterns, but the church's Missionary Department declines to release such figures due to the sensitive issue of securing visas for missionaries. Ironically, church publications sometimes include such information for *individual* areas and countries.

20. *Church News*, 11 Feb. 1995, 8-10.

21. *Ensign* 23 (Sept. 1993): 77.

concentration of free tours in the known world,"[22] the answer seems to lie in Mormon determination to promote the message. Such a desire even influenced at least two key members of Salt Lake City's successful 1995 Olympic bid delegation: (1) a Mormon convert "got involved because I want other people to see the kind of people who live in Salt Lake"; and (2) a lifelong member admitted, "I thought it would be a great thing for the [LDS] church."[23]

In addition to all of the publicity emanating from Mormondom's burgeoning Wasatch Front, almost all of the church's twenty-two areas now have directors of public affairs who try, under the direction of the Area Presidency, to improve the Mormon image with the media, government officials, and local communities. "Public affairs workers are encouraged to recognize opportunities to publicize positive activities and events associated with the Church."[24]

Surely the church has enhanced its image and influence since it first organized a Radio, Publicity, and Mission Literature Committee in the mid-1930s. Appropriately enough, President Hinckley began his career as a defender and diplomat of the faith by serving as executive secretary of that committee. Certainly he would acknowledge that the church's present Public Affairs Department represents a more sophisticated operation than his original publicity committee, and its programs make it much easier for missionaries and other members to reach and teach possible converts.

Social and Political Conditions

For all its increasing efforts to promulgate Mormonism, the LDS hierarchy still encounters opposition, often strong enough to prevent official entry. "Ten years ago we [leaders] never would have dreamed that we'd have missionaries and congregations in Russia and Latvia and Albania and Mongolia, places of that kind."[25] Many church members anticipated major breakthroughs in spreading the gospel after the collapse of the Soviet Empire in 1989. The church in 1994 had some 8,000 members in that area, where five years earlier it had had almost none. However, Eastern Europe's and Russia's current civil wars, economic chaos, and conservative religious backlash have hindered missionary work enough to dampen initial expectations.[26]

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22. John Goepel, a travel writer, makes this astute observation in *Motorland/CSAA*, July/Aug. 1995, 34.

23. *Deseret News*, 17 June 1995, A2.

24. *Ensign* 25 (May 1995): 110.

25. *Church News*, 1 July 1995, 4.

26. But not enough to prompt a pullback. Indeed the church has organized that vast realm and its sparse membership into a new Europe East Area, according to the *Church News*, 1 July 1995, 8-9.

The near anarchy not only in Rwanda but in much of Subsaharan Africa could prevent the church from forming many stakes in more than a few new nation-states for decades to come. In 1993, 960 missionaries (almost half of them from Africa) baptized more than 9,000 converts (enough for forty new wards or branches) on a continent that contains about 525 million inhabitants. The church now has authorization for missionary work in about half of the forty-five countries south of the Sahara. However, its limited resources, manifested in the small number of missions (twelve in seven countries) and missionaries (eighty per mission), along with Africa's political turmoil and cultural pluralism, have seriously restricted the church's ability to proclaim the gospel there.[27]

As a result, Area leaders have apparently decided to concentrate church growth around the major cities of the countries where the colonial languages of English and French have national recognition. Moreover, missionaries focus on families that have: (1) literacy in one of those two languages, (2) some kind of employment, (3) transportation as well as proximity to an LDS chapel in the growth center; and (4) prospective Melchizedek Priesthood holders.[28] Such a plan should create a widely scattered but highly localized pattern of membership. Since South Africa, with 23,000 of Africa's 79,000 members (in 1994), rates a temple, we would expect the church to try to erect one somewhere in West Africa—in or near Nigeria or Ghana which together number 34,000.

Compared to East Europe and Africa, Latin America might seem stable, but the church has already had enough experience there with terrorism to realize that leaders must proceed cautiously in many countries. For instance, the South America North Area Presidency has responded to such dangers by withdrawing all North American missionaries from Bolivia and Peru and replacing them with Latin Americans. At the same time, however, political and economic instability will apparently not deter LDS leaders from "working for an explosion [of their own]: more baptisms and more retention [of those baptized]."[29] Such Area leaders, strongly imbued with the evangelizing spirit of their calling as Seventies, still tend to measure success in terms of numbers baptized and retained.

Ironically, in stable places like Singapore the church might have less success than in more volatile countries like Peru and Bolivia. In that prosperous Southeast Asian city-state the Saints have only seven branches and fewer than 2,000 members after more than twenty-five years of activ-

27. This assessment comes from an informative "Conversation with the Africa Area Presidency" in the *Ensign* 24 (Oct. 1994): 79-80.

28. A couple returning from the South Africa Cape Town Mission spelled out these criteria in a report presented to the Meadow Ward in the Fillmore, Utah, Stake on July 9, 1995.

29. "Conversation with the South America North Area Presidency," *Ensign* 24 (Mar. 1994): 79-80.

ity, largely because of restrictions on proselytizing imposed by the government. Hong Kong, with twice Singapore's population, has ten times as many LDS (and a temple under construction), probably because more missionaries have operated longer and much more freely there than in Singapore. Relative to its even larger population, Taiwan should have three times as many Saints as Hong Kong instead of only 3,000 more. Local cultural and political variations would probably explain such differences if we understood them.

The church may eye the People's Republic of China in much the same way that American and European merchants and missionaries long have done: as an enormous marketplace for the goods and the good news of the West (just one percent of the 1.2 billion Chinese would add 12 million members to the LDS fold!). For now, LDS leaders are seeking to establish a foothold on the mainland through cooperative efforts with a Communist regime never noted for friendliness toward religion.[30]

Since at least 1973, when Spencer W. Kimball assumed the prophet's mantle, the church has aggressively pursued its own "Open Door" policy. It has sought for any opening that would allow it to establish a new mission field. When President Kimball asked David M. Kennedy, the church's one-time roving international ambassador, "which countries I thought we could open up, I said I would put Portugal first on the list because the people there were undergoing massive change."[31] After the country's dictatorship and empire collapsed in 1974-75, LDS elders, many of them from Brazil, entered Portugal. *Retornados* uprooted from the former colonies of Angola and Mozambique responded to the missionaries' preaching more readily than did the native Portuguese. By the late 1980s Portugal not only had four times the membership of the much more populous Spain, but the church's highest growth rate. Since 1990, however, as Portugal has prospered and integrated its *retornados*, LDS conversion rates there have leveled off.

By way of contrast, the church struggled for forty years (1950-90) to establish a modest membership base in Paraguay, South America's poorest and most *mestizo* state. In just the past five years, however, the number of LDS branches, wards, and stakes has doubled due to a wider dispersion of more missionaries, stronger local leaders, and efforts by both groups to coordinate their conversion campaigns.[32] The cases of Paraguay and Portugal illustrate the difficulty of predicting where and when the church will fare well or poorly, and they also show how quickly trends can change.

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30. For examples of such efforts, see "Conversation with the Asia Area Presidency," *Ensign* 25 (June 1995): 76-77.

31. Quoted by Mark L. Grover, "Migration, Social Change, and Mormonism in Portugal," *Journal of Mormon History,* 21 (Spring 1995): 73.

32. *Church News*, 27 May 1995, 8-11.

Demographic Variations

The present strength of Mormon missionary and public relations programs makes it easy to overlook less visible but more measurable factors that also affect the size of the church from region to region. Among the most important are the so-called demographic variables that constantly shape (and reshape) all populations: fertility, mortality, migration, and—in the case of religions—disaffiliation. Wherever Mormons have more children and live longer than their fellow nationals, the church naturally stands to increase its relative size. However, only in areas with relatively high numbers of lifelong and active members (notably in North America and the South Pacific) are fertility or mortality rates likely to make a significant difference in total numbers. Since 1980 Mormon fertility has declined sharply even in Utah and the rest of the United States, although it remains higher than both national and state averages.[33]

Migration, of course, shapes both the distribution and composition of the LDS population. Nowhere is that more apparent than in the slow-growth areas of North America, Europe, and Oceania. The fact that Utah's percent of U.S. Mormons has dropped by just 6 points since 1970 (from 37.5 to 31.5) reflects more than any other fact the state's continuing role as the Mecca of Mormondom. Nowhere else have Saints and place bonded so strongly to create a sense of identity. The Pacific Coast states (including Alaska and Hawaii) have increased their share of the national total by only one percentage point during the same period. Between 1990 and 1994 the number of Saints in Utah increased by 120,000 while the number in California dropped by 3,000.

LDS families living outside the Mormon Culture Region sometimes move to Utah ("Zion") in search of an environment "more supportive of their values."[34] Those content to live outside the Intermountain West often send their college-age children to BYU or Ricks College (in Rexburg, Idaho), and especially if those children then marry and/or stay in Utah or Idaho, the parents will often retire to the Intermountain West to live closer to their (grand)children. Within the United States, and to a lesser extent Canada, we therefore expect the Far West to retain its preponderance of North "Amer/Can" Saints well into the next century.

Since 1970 LDS missionaries have found newcomers to North America, Europe, and even Oceania particularly receptive to their message. The United States and Canada now contain more than 300 ethnic wards

33. See Heaton.

34. The phrase comes from Enid Waldholtz, elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Utah in November 1994 and interviewed by the *Church News*, 18 Jan. 1995, 11. Her family moved from San Francisco to Salt Lake City when she was twelve.

and branches, at least 40 percent of them in California.[35] Salt Lake City has a Tongan stake, and a stake in Sydney, Australia, has more Polynesian and Latin American members than active Aussies. In Europe 60 percent of the LDS converts since 1985 consist of immigrants from former colonial empires.[36] Thus migrating members and immigrant converts keep changing the location and ethnic make-up of Latter-day Saints in subtle but significant ways, perhaps especially in areas of slow growth. As immigrants become an increasing component of many well-established LDS communities, how readily will longtime members accept them? Might their presence lead to lower conversion rates among native residents?

The demographic variables combine with the conversion process to create Mormon congregations that also vary greatly in gender and age distribution, ranging from, say, a youthful Cambodian branch in Southern California to a ward of retirees in Salt Lake City.[37] The sex-age structure obviously has some bearing on future growth rates. Two related trends, most evident in regions of rapid growth, naturally concern the leaders of a family-oriented church. First, East Asia (except for South Korea), Latin America, and even Europe have only 80-90 males per 100 females (as of 1990).[38] Second, the same areas often draw a majority of their converts from the same age group (15-24) as that represented by most missionaries. A preponderance of young (and often female) single members in, say, Hong Kong or Taiwan, naturally hinders the development of stable family wards.[39] A severe shortage of males anywhere means that many LDS women will marry outside the church, thus increasing the likelihood of their becoming less active.

Paradoxically, rapid growth sooner or later is followed by a slowdown if it outstrips the ability of wards with few and/or inexperienced leaders to retain their converts. The decline in the global rate of stake formation over the past decade, as indicated by both Knowlton and the Shepherds (to follow), corresponds with the downward trend in the overall rate of church growth observed for the early 1990s. Leaders of international Areas, when interviewed by *Ensign* editors, almost invariably

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35. See Jessie L. Embry's fascinating survey of ethnic branches and wards in the U.S. and Canada in the *Historical Atlas of Mormonism*, 146-47.

36. Bruce Van Orden, untitled text for his BYU "Religion 344" class on "The International Church," chap. 9.

37. For a description of Santa Ana's Cambodian branch, see Suzanne Lois Kimball, "Cambodian Saints in Southern California," *Ensign* 25 (June 1995): 78.

38. Heaton. R. Lanier Britsch, "The Church in Asia," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1:78, points out the anomaly of a male majority among South Korean converts.

39. "Conversation with the Asia Area Presidency," *Ensign* (1995). Of course, to the extent that these young converts pair off and marry, they will eventually contribute families to the church.

mention the challenge of staffing newly created church units. Even in Mexico, where "Many members have been well prepared for leadership" over a relatively long period, "new growth has outstripped the leadership base we have among our longtime members."[40]

The church has responded to this problem in two ways. First, since 1980 it has established fourteen Missionary Training Centers (MTCs) outside the United States (which has only one, adjoining BYU); half of these are in Latin America. Located near temples, they not only prepare an Area's native missionaries for proselytizing among their own people, but also provide them with leadership skills they can bring back to their home branches and wards upon their release. Second, and more recently, the First Presidency has instructed mission presidents "to concentrate on teaching fathers and families. There must be a priesthood infrastructure for the Church to have proper ... leadership,"[41] since ultimately "the Church can grow only as fast as leadership strength allows."[42]

CHALLENGES OF EXPANSION

Given the above considerations, what kind of church do we envision in the year 2020? Since we no longer have 20/20 eyesight (weakened by years of teaching and writing), we have difficulty peering that far into the future. We can, however dimly, make out a few features. First, we see an institution still headed by an all-male hierarchy of fifteen (the First Presidency and Quorum of Twelve Apostles), the only general authorities exempted from emeritus status. The average age of the top fifteen (now just under seventy) might be considerably higher by then, since many of the current incumbents have a fair chance of living that long. We expect to see from three to six new apostles, with at least one from either Latin America (maybe Mexico), Europe (United Kingdom or Germany), or Asia (Japan or Korea).

The First Presidency in 2020 will preside over no more than about 35 million members. Furthermore, we foresee fewer dramatic shifts in the distribution of Latter-day Saints in the next twenty-five years compared to the past quarter century. The main change, of course, will be a near-

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40. "The Church in Mexico," *Ensign* 23 (Aug. 1993): 78. Two *Dialogue* authors foresaw this problem from their own experience in Quebec as early as 1980: Jerald R. Izatt and Dean R. Louder, "Peripheral Mormondom: The Frenetic Frontier," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 13 (Summer 1980): 76-89.

41. President James E. Faust went so far as to suggest that "We violate eternal principles when we divide families." *Church News*, 1 July 1995, 5.

42. "A Conversation with the Brazil Area Presidency," *Ensign*, 25 (July 1995): 79. A third response to the problem of providing stronger leadership for "Peripheral Mormondom" appeared in an announcement of new Area authorities. One of their primary duties is to provide leadership training. See *Church News*, 5 Aug. 1995, 3, 7-10.

reversal of the present positions of North America and Latin America on
the world map of Mormondom (see Fig. 4, which Table 4 makes graphic).
Latin America will loom ever larger than now, with populous Brazil mak-
ing up for its late (post-1978) start and adding the most members.[43] Yet
North America, and mainly the Great Basin Kingdom, will retain its cen-
tral place as the prime source of decision-making, despite its reduced nu-
merical status. No other area of the world, not even Asia, will match any
of the Americas in importance. The church will undoubtedly capitalize
on its newly gained acceptance in India and in the countries of the former
French Indo-China, but we would be surprised if growth there proceeds
much faster than it has among, say, the Thais, who waited nearly twenty-
five years for their first stake.[44]

   We hesitate to predict when and where new temples (or even MTCs)
will appear on the map of Mormondom, since "The Lord directs where
and when his holy houses are to be built." In making such decisions the
First Presidency takes into account the geography of the membership rel-
ative to existing temples but also considers "statements by past and
present . . . leaders regarding future temple locations" and inspects possi-
ble sites.[45] Any country with a sizable body of Saints, at least 25-50 thou-
sand, would seem a potential candidate for a temple, but the church
might also decide to locate one in a "forward" position in the huge Area
of East Europe and Russia before the membership reaches the usual mini-
mum of 50-100 thousand. Regardless of where the Brethren decide to site
the next generation of temples (at least thirty-five in 2020 to equal the
thirty-five completed since 1970), more and more Latter-day Saints will
find themselves living within (or moving to) relatively easy access to one
of the Lord's holy houses.

   If our projections seem cautious, they reflect the complex dynamics
of Mormon expansion that we have identified and illustrated. While the
church will continue "to enlarge Zion across the world" and to describe
"its achievements . . . in terms of numbers," what matters most is the im-
pact of enlargement on the lives of individual members, local/regional
units, and even the institution itself. As President Hinckley has advised
the membership, "All of our efforts must be dedicated to the develop-
ment of the individual."[46] Rapid conversion rates may not serve the best
interests of Latter-day Saints at any level if they overtax the church's re-

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   43. As of 1995 Brazil claimed nearly 530,000 members (versus 400,000 in 1992). See *ibid.*,
79-80.
   44. Joan Porter Ford and LaRene Porter Grant, "The Gospel Dawning in Thailand," *En-
sign* 25 (Sept. 1995): 48-55; and Michael R. Morris, "India: A Season of Sowing," *Ensign* 25
(Aug. 1995): 40-48.
   45. "How are the locations of our temples determined?" *Ensign* 25 (July 1995): 66-67.
   46. *Ensign* 25 (May 1995): 52-53.

sources. Current leaders clearly recognize and seek to meet the challenge of deciding how fast Mormonism can expand and still maintain viable programs for its diverse membership.

Certainly the places and faces of Mormonism will take on an increasingly metropolitan and cosmopolitan cast in the next century, and LDS leaders will preach more sermons on the need for tolerance in an international church. They might also continue to insist that "Our real strength is not so much in our [cultural] diversity but in our spiritual and doctrinal unity . . . As we move into more and more countries of the world, we find a rich cultural diversity in the Church. Yet everywhere there can be a 'unity of the faith' . . . Temple worship is a perfect example of our unity as Church members."[47]

Therein lies a second great challenge facing a growing church: striking the right balance between cultural diversity and doctrinal unity. As long as "ethnic Mormons" rooted in the Mormon Culture Region rule the worldwide church, it will retain a built-in American and Utah bias no matter how large and international the membership becomes or how hard leaders strive to discard their own "cultural baggage." For instance, some French-speaking members still resent the church's refusal to locate the headquarters of a Quebec mission in the more French capital of Quebec City rather than in Montreal. Even in English-speaking Australia, "The Church is still largely seen as an American church . . . by public, press, and members."[48]

Within the United States, Saints outside the Intermountain West often refer to "Utah Mormons" as a group apart, viewing them as somewhat smug, provincial, or simply not sensitive enough to the needs of members living on the periphery—anywhere far from the Wasatch Front. In spite of all the Great Basin members who have learned a second language in distant lands as missionaries, the church has seldom, if ever, promoted bilingualism. Ironically, the only bilingual congregations in Utah belong to other denominations.

Jessie Embry has expressed the church's "multicultural" dilemma in scriptural language. In the essay that accompanies her map of more than 300 ethnic branches/wards in North America, she points out that LDS general authorities have long vacillated over whether to let "Every man [and woman] . . . hear the fulness of the gospel . . . in his [or her] own language" or to encourage all converts to become "fellow citizens with the

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47. This emphasis appears in President James E. Faust's first address as second counselor in the First Presidency. *Ensign* 25 (May 1995): 61-63.

48. For elaboration of these two examples, see Dean R. Louder, "Canadian Mormon Identity and the French Fact," in *The Mormon Presence in Canada* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1990), 302-26, and Marjorie Newton, "'Almost Like Us': The American Socialization of Australian Converts," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 24 (Fall 1991): 9-20.

[English-speaking] Saints."[49] Given the existence of numerous ethnic units throughout North America and Oceania, present church policy seems to support the formation of ethnic congregations wherever logistical considerations seem to require them.[50] Even with a Spanish-and Portuguese-speaking majority among the world's 35 million Mormons by the year 2020, English, we predict, will still prevail as the only official language of the universal Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

This prediction, like most of those made in this essay, may well prove wrong. The only opinion we can express with confidence is that the next quarter century will bring the church as many changes and surprises as the past one has. However, as a new millennium approaches, perhaps leaders and members alike should discuss more than they heretofore have the causes and consequences of these changes for their lives.

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49. *Historical Atlas of Mormonism*, 146.
50. For a discussion of the pros and cons of separating inner-city branches from suburban wards within the U.S., see *Sunstone* 17 (Dec. 1994): 76-77.

Membership Growth, Church Activity, and Missionary Recruitment

Gordon Shepherd and Gary Shepherd

> *No other American religion is so ambitious, and no rival even remotely approaches the spiritual audacity that drives endlessly toward accomplishing a titanic design. The Mormons fully intend to convert the nation and the world; to go from some ten million souls to six billion. This is sublimely insane. . . . Yet the Mormons will not falter; they will take the entire twenty-first century as their span, if need be, and surely it will be.*
> —Harold Bloom[1]

TO COMPREHEND THE POTENTIAL EMERGENCE of Mormonism as a major religious force in the twenty-first century, it is essential to comprehend the missionary ideology and practices of the LDS church. For rank-and-file Latter-day Saints, this proposition seems simply axiomatic of their foundational faith in the restoration of Christ's gospel and their divine mandate to convert the world in anticipation of his second advent.[2] For outside observers (and many LDS church planners as well), projecting and explaining the patterns of Mormon growth produced by evangeliz-

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1. Harold Bloom, *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 113.

2. For a recent historical analysis of LDS millenarian beliefs and their relationship to the development of the Mormon missionary ethos, see Grant Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

ing efforts in the world religious economy is complex and problematic.

By religious economy we mean the marketplace of competing faiths in a society where individuals exercise personal preferences in deciding about religious affiliation.[3] Where religious choice is possible and competition among different denominations for adherents is allowed by political authorities, we may speak of a religious market. As in other market economies, action in a religious economy is shaped by both supply and demand. Competing denominations must mobilize their resources in a simultaneous attempt to shape and cater to individuals' religious preferences.[4] The structure of the world religious economy defines the historical context in which the LDS church is expanding through missionary recruitment. In this essay we examine LDS growth rates in different world regions as a function of the size and distribution of the LDS missionary force in comparison to other Christian missionary competitors. We focus in particular on the growth of new stake organizations as a measure of recruitment success and active lay retention. On the basis of these and other institutional indicators, we consider some of the prospects and potential problems for continued LDS missionary recruitment internationally in the century to come.

Religions grow over time through natural increase (i.e., birth rates that exceed both death rates and member defections), as well as through recruitment of new members. Natural increase has been an important source of Mormon growth historically.[5] Yet far more important to rapid expansion of the modern LDS church in many parts of the world has been a renewed emphasis on international proselyting since World War II and a willingness to concentrate church resources on the systematic enhancement of missionary programs. Missionary recruitment as the primary mechanism of LDS member growth in recent decades can be seen in Table 1. By 1960 the proportion of LDS membership growth worldwide due to annual conversions exceeded natural increase for the first time in

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3. For applications of the concept of religious economies, see Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992); Laurence R. Iannaccone, "Religious Markets and the Economics of Religion," *Social Compass* 39 (1992): 123-31; Darren E. Sherkat and John Wilson, "Preferences, Constraints, and Choices in Religious Markets: An Examination of Religious Switching and Apostasy," *Social Forces* 73 (Mar. 1995): 993-1026; Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

4. See Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Doubleday, 1967), 138-53; and Darren E. Sherkat, "Embedding Religious Choices: Integrating Preferences and Social Constraints into Rational Choice Theories of Religious Behavior," in Lawrence Young, ed., *Assessing Rational Choice Theories of Religion* (New York: Routledge Press, 1995).

5. Tim B. Heaton, "Vital Statistics," in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 4:1522, 1524.

this century and has continued to do so ever since. Currently, in fact, annual convert baptisms exceed those of Mormon children by approximately four to one. Clearly recruitment much more than natural increase is fueling current Mormon expansion.

Table 1
LDS Missionary Force and Convert Baptism Numbers
for Selected Years, 1940-94

Year	Missionaries in the field	Converts Baptized	Child Baptisms	Convert/Child Baptism Ratio	Convert/Miss- ionary Ratio
1940	2,216	7,877	14,412	0.55	3.55
1945	592	4,957	16,106	0.31	8.37
1950	5,313	14,700	22,808	0.64	2.77
1955	4,687	21,669	32,807	0.66	4.62
1960	9,097	48,586	42,189	1.15	5.34
1965	12,585	82,455	49,413	1.67	6.55
1970	14,387	79,126	55,210	1.43	5.50
1975	22,492	95,412	50,263	1.90	4.24
1980	29,953	211,000	65,000	3.25	7.04
1985	29,265	197,640	70,000	2.82	6.75
1990	43,651	330,877	78,000	4.24	7.58
1991	43,395	297,770	75,000	3.97	6.86
1992	46,025	274,477	77,380	3.55	5.96
1993	48,708	304,808	76,312	3.99	6.26
1994	47,311	300,730	72,535	4.15	6.36

Sources: Deseret Church News Almanac, 1994-95; LDS *Conference Reports,* 1940-59; *Ensign* 25 (May 1995).

Religious recruitment and conversion rates, however, vary dramatically from one world region to another. Relatively open, active religious markets are unequally distributed in the world religious economy. Old markets decline and new ones emerge. For example, as religious historians have long recognized, the population center of modern Christianity has shifted dramatically in this century from Europe and its colonies in North America to regions of the southern hemisphere. According to missiologist Andrew Walls, "The only safe prediction appears to be that [Christianity's] southern populations in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific, which provide its present centers of significance, hold the key to its future."[6]

As a rule, LDS proselyting success has followed general Christian trends; the overwhelming majority of Mormon converts are already Christians, who are recruited in markets already cultivated by other Christian denominations. Correspondingly, in recent decades LDS missions have proliferated in Christianized countries of the southern conti-

6. Andrew Walls, "Christianity," in John R. Hinnells, ed., *Handbook of Living Religions* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Viking, 1984), 70, 73.

nents, especially in the predominantly Catholic countries of Latin America.[7]

<center>MISSIONARY TRAINING</center>

Dominant trends in Mormon proselyting programs since World War II, both in missionary preparation and in the field, include increasing reliance on: (1) uniformity of the proselyting message and how it is to be delivered by missionaries, (2) goal setting and outcome measurement by objective criteria, (3) standardized and programmatic training of missionary novices, (4) systematic supervision of missionary performance, and (5) cost-benefit accountability. These are all characteristics of the modern, bureaucratic ethos of corporate rationality and illustrate what Andrew Walls describes as the American business approach to Christian missions.[8]

According to LDS historian Gordon Irving, even though church leaders always urged lay members actively to support the missionary effort, "proselyting continued to be a relatively slow process during the 1950s. Missionaries would spend several months instructing converts prior to baptism, making sure that they fully understood every aspect of church doctrine and procedure before inviting them to become members. Mission presidents could see that help was needed for their elders, who, left to their own devices, hoped for spiritual guidance but often faltered in presenting the gospel convincingly to non-Mormons."[9] A trend thus developed toward standard and systematic lesson outlines and aids in missions throughout the world.

In 1953 *The Systematic Program for Teaching the Gospel* became the first set of missionary lessons published by the church to be used in all missions. Prior to this time a number of *ad hoc* plans had been developed and used as aids in proselyting in different missions of the church with varying degrees of success. As noted by Jay E. Jensen, a former Missionary Department administrator and current member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy: "Having a systematic plan to present the message of the church gave rise to a systematic plan for training."[10] In 1961 a conference

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7. See Heaton, 1521.

8. Andrew Walls, "World Christianity: The Missionary Movement and the Ugly American," in Wade Clark Roof, ed., *World Order and Religion* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1991), 156-58.

9. Gordon Irving, "Mormonism and Latin America: A Preliminary Historical Survey," *Task Papers in LDS History,* No. 10 (Salt Lake City: Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1976), 22-23.

10. All the information in this paragraph comes from Jay E. Jensen, "The Effect of Initial Mission Field Training on Missionary Proselyting Skills," Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1988, 29, 31, 32-33.

for the world's LDS mission presidents was convened by the First Presidency in Salt Lake City. As a result, missionary work "would never be the same, especially in mission field training." At this conference a churchwide program was unveiled for systematically involving the laity to implement the slogan "Every Member a Missionary," and a new missionary plan was presented called *A Uniform System for Teaching Investigators*. Reflecting a rational, salesmanship approach, the *Uniform System* consisted of six missionary lessons which were to be memorized and used verbatim by all missionaries worldwide in teaching potential converts about the basic tenets of Mormonism. The key to increased proselyting success was presumed to be a standard message presented in a simple but systematic way. In addition, the daily activities of all missionaries were to be regulated henceforth by a standard schedule: "When to arise, when to study both as individuals and as companions, what to study, when and how to proselyte, and when to retire."

Over the years the Missionary Department's efforts to refine proselyting strategies and training procedures have centered on the goal of preparing individual missionaries to have "great converting power," beyond their own native talents, in attracting new converts.[11] Later research sponsored by the Missionary Department on the teaching characteristics of missionaries who were most successful indicated that the *way* in which proselyting materials was presented to investigators, not just the standardized content of the missionary message itself, was correlated with increases in convert baptisms. Church researchers inferred that certain communication skills, transcending rote presentation of the investigator lessons, were important factors in the conversion process. They called these communication skills the "commitment pattern," which they simplified for pedagogical purposes in the formula: prepare, invite, follow up, and resolve concerns.[12] In turn, each of these basic skill areas was analyzed in terms of a number of communication sub-skills. Thus emphasis in training eventually shifted from sheer memorization of lesson plans to training missionaries in the effective implementation of the commitment pattern.

Whether programmatic attempts to refine individual missionaries' communications skills lead, on average, to significant increases in conversions has not yet been demonstrated (see, for example, the relatively stable, annual convert/missionary ratios shown in Table 1). Nonetheless, as a result of Missionary Department research findings, a second world mission presidents' conference was convened in Salt Lake City in June 1985. At this conference yet a new set of missionary discussions was pre-

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11. Ibid., 4.
12. *Missionary Guide: Training for Missionaries* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1988), 44-71.

sented for implementation in all missions which, in its final form, was entitled *Uniform System for Teaching the Gospel.* This is the system currently taught to and used throughout the world by LDS missionaries. It is an approach that departs from the aggressive salesmanship of earlier plans in favor of a more "human relations" form of persuasion. Standard investigator lessons still are learned but need not be memorized word for word by missionaries, who are permitted to use their own phrasing in explaining religious precepts and are encouraged to "teach by the Spirit" in their testimonies and responses to investigator questions. This means that missionaries are given greater flexibility in presenting the content of their message while, at the same time, they are supposed to incorporate systematically the commitment pattern in all their discussions with investigators. Also introduced for universal use at the 1985 conference was a new training manual, *The Missionary Guide,* which adopted the commitment pattern as its basic training requirement. According to Jensen, "Missionary Department leaders have taken the position that all training materials must be built around the commitment pattern . . . The discussions and *The Missionary Guide* have been implemented in all MTCs [Missionary Training Centers] as the two principal tools to help missionaries learn and use the commitment pattern."[13]

Later in this essay we will comment further on the socializing consequences of missionary preparation and field supervision, especially for missionaries called from outside the United States.

CHURCH GROWTH AND THE MISSIONARY FORCE

Independent of periodic attempts to refine missionary training and increase the persuasiveness of proselyting appeals in different religious markets, the overall number of converts to Mormonism appears most importantly to be a function of the sheer *number* of missionaries laboring in the field.[14] The single best predictor of the annual Mormon conversion

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13. Jensen, 43. After several "test versions," the final version of *The Missionary Guide* was finally adopted in 1988.

14. While many programs have been developed to increase missionary productivity, "since 1970, the only factor that seems to have accounted for an increase in convert baptisms was an increase in the number of full-time missionaries . . . Even though the number of converts has increased only as the number of missionaries has grown, Missionary Department executives have operated on the assumption that missionary training can make a difference to increase converts" (ibid., 1). For other summaries of the development of LDS missionary training and proselyting approaches since World War II, see Richard O. Cowan, *Every Man Shall Hear the Gospel in His Own Language* (Provo, UT: Missionary Training Center, 1984); and George T. Taylor, "Effects of Coaching on the Development of Proselyting Skills Used by the Missionary Training Center, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Provo, Utah," Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1986.

rate is the size of the LDS missionary force. As indicated in Table 1, the average number of LDS convert baptisms per missionary usually ranges between five and seven annually worldwide. At the individual level, this would seem to be a tiny return on a tremendous investment of personal time and resources. At the aggregate level, however, an equally massive LDS missionary force producing at this rate accounts for a massive number of annual conversions (over 300,000 converts, for example, in both 1993 and 1994).

Following World War II, the size of the LDS missionary force rapidly surpassed pre-war levels, and so did the corresponding annual conversion rate. After a hiatus in missionary expansion caused by the Korean War, the number of full-time LDS missionaries tripled during the decade between 1954 and 1964, then continued to increase by over 50 percent per decade for the next thirty years. At the present time there are nearly 50,000 Mormon missionaries stationed in approximately 300 missions in Latin and North America, the South Pacific, Europe, parts of Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. As non-Mormon journalists Robert Gottlieb and Peter Wiley put it: "Almost over night, this small Utah church became an international church, with an international missionary program beyond the dreams of any other church in the world."[15] Today, in fact, there is no other single religious denomination in the world—Catholic, Protestant, or non-Christian—whose full-time *proselyting* force is remotely close in size to that currently recruited, trained, and supported every year by the LDS church.

Advancing hand in hand with the expansion of its missionary force and accelerated conversion rates after World War II has been the world-wide proliferation of separate LDS mission field organizational units. In fact, one of the most visible structural trends in Mormon missions over the past fifty years has been the constant division and subdivision of mission field administrative units, resulting in an ever shorter geographical span of control and closer, more systematic supervision of missionaries.[16] The actual number of missionaries assigned to labor in particular missions varies from time to time and place to place, but the current norm is approximately 160 missionaries per mission unit. Yearly increases in the number of missionary volunteers requires the creation of new mission units within the boundaries of previously established missions and simultaneously stimulates expansion of mission field organizations into new religious markets for LDS proselyting. The number of Mormon missions increased from a total of twenty-nine worldwide in 1944 to 303 in

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15. Robert Gottlieb and Peter Wiley, *America's Saints: The Rise of Mormon Power* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1984), 14.
16. See Gordon Irving, *Survey of LDS Missionary Work, 1830-1973* (Salt Lake City: Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1974), 16-23.

Figure 1. Total Membership, Stakes, and Missions, 1944-1994
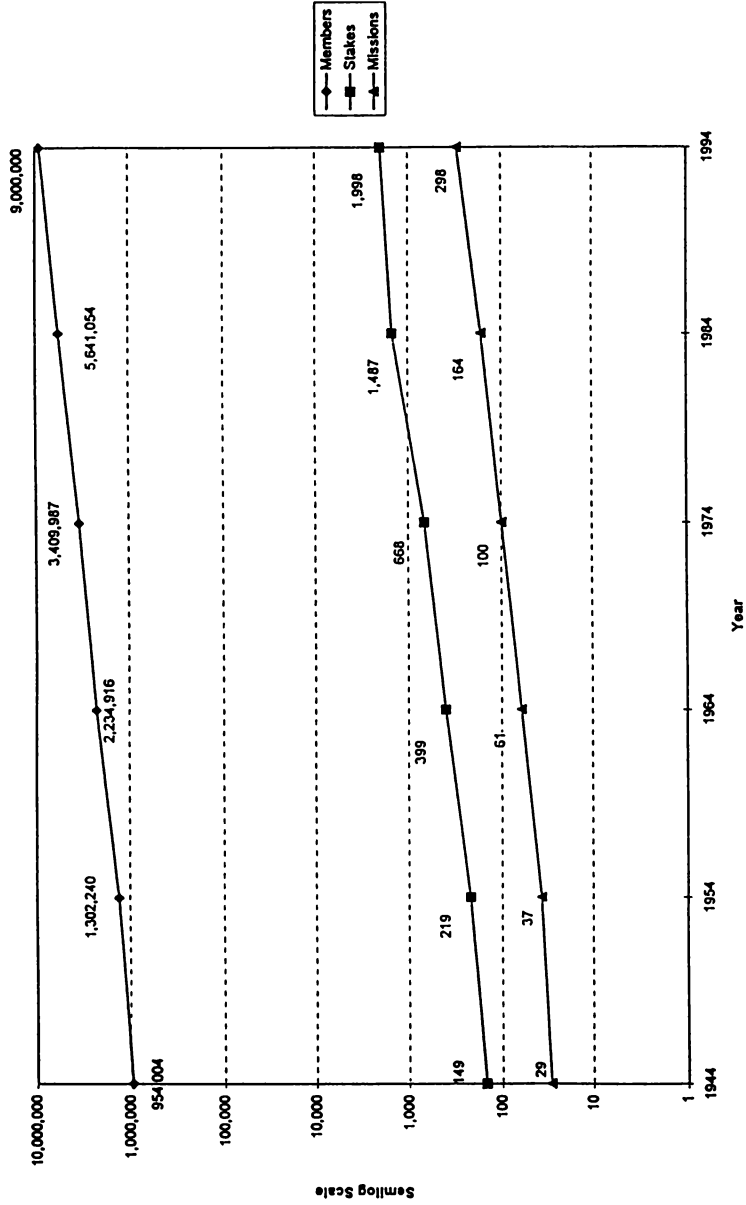
Sources: Deseret News Church Almanac, 1994-95; Ensign 5: 1995.

Figure 2. Number of LDS Missions by World Regions, 1944-1994
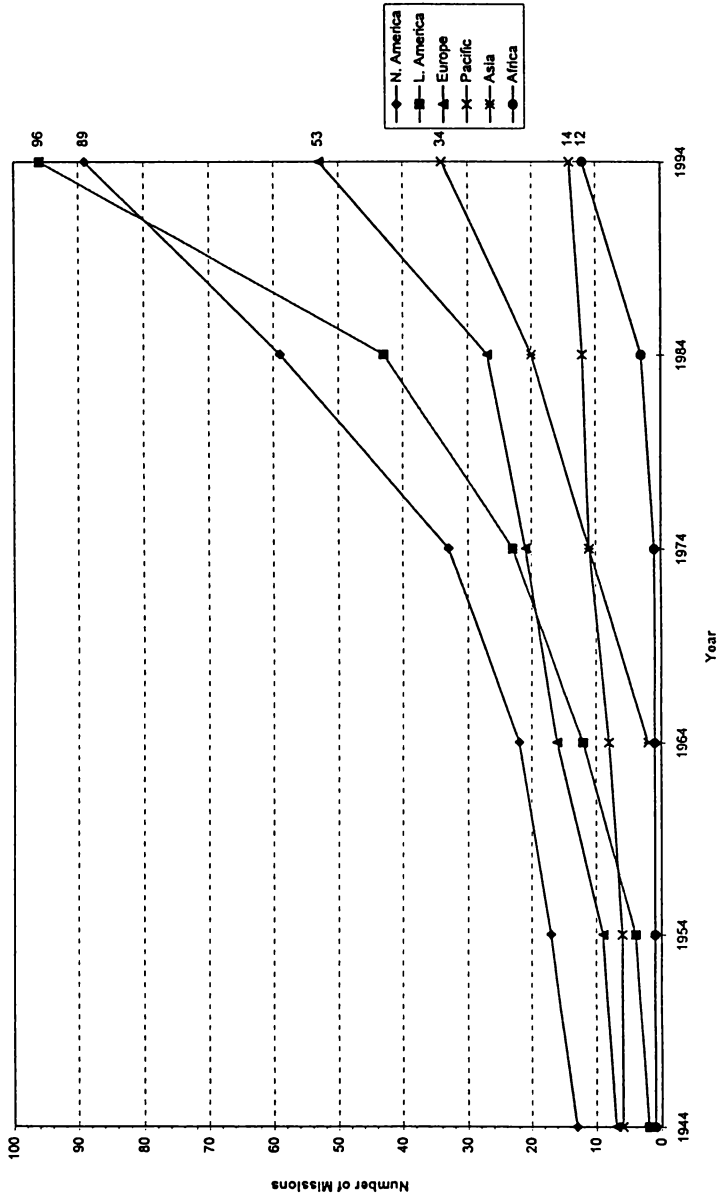
Source: Deseret News Church Almanac, 1994-95.
These figures include number of missions as of October 1, 1994.

1994, for an average rate of increase per decade of 60 percent. During this time the proportion of international missions (i.e., those outside of North America) has gone from a little over half to 70 percent of all LDS missions (with Latin America currently accounting for one-third of the total). It was the past decade in particular which represented the greatest surge to date in new LDS mission field organizations, with a total increase of 82 percent since 1984.

LDS expansion in the world religious economy can be compared to the evangelical efforts of other North American religious denominations. According to figures published in the Missions Advanced Research and Communications Center (MARK) *Mission Handbook*, there was an estimated combined total of 85,000 full-time Protestant missionaries worldwide in 1992, many of whom were on furlough at any given time (an estimated 20 percent) or who functioned as staff in "enabling" (humanitarian) agencies rather than engaging in active proselyting. The single largest Protestant agency was the Southern Baptist Convention Foreign Mission Board, which supported 3,660 overseas career missionaries in 1992, and an additional 329 "short-termers," who were serving two-month to four-year assignments. We do not have data on the total number of proselyting Catholic missionaries worldwide but, according to MARK, U.S. Catholic missionaries (mostly religious order priests and nuns) serving abroad numbered 5,441 in 1992.[17]

A more detailed analysis of recent trends among North American Protestant mission agencies indicates an overall decline in the number of Protestant career missionaries serving in world markets. According to Robert Coote, assistant editor of the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, "The numerical growth rate of career missionaries over the last twenty-five years has failed to keep pace with the population growth rate in North America, let alone with growth rates in regions of the globe least exposed to the gospel."[18] While it is principally mainline Protestant mission agencies in decline,[19] "nonecumenical" agencies (evangelical, pentecostal, and fundamentalists, which have come to represent over 90 percent of the North American Protestant missionary force) also experienced a 1988-92 leveling of their rates of growth.[20] While still ideologically committed to recruiting career missionaries, many Protestant

17. John A. Siewert and John A. Kenyon, *Mission Handbook: A Guide to USA/Canada Christian Ministries Overseas, 1993-1994* (Monrovia, CA: MARK, 1993).

18. Robert T. Coote, "Good News, Bad News: North American Protestant Overseas Personnel Statistics in Twenty-Five-Year Perspective," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 19 (Jan. 1995): 6.

19. Michael Burdick and Phillip Hammond, "World Order and Mainline Religions: The Case of Protestant Foreign Missions," in Roof, 202.

20. Coote, 11.

agencies increasingly have turned to "short-termers" to fill growing gaps in missionary ranks. However, the increase of short-termers thus far has not compensated for early resignations and the declining rate of career enlistments. On an ending note of concern, if not alarm, for the future of Protestant evangelizing in the world religious economy, Coote concludes that "we cannot rule out the possibility . . . that North American Protestant missions are facing a substantial decline, perhaps across all sectors."[21]

By mainstream Protestant standards, all full-time LDS missionaries, including mission presidents, are short-termers. Compared to Christian career missionaries, the vast majority of Mormonism's youthful missionary corps lack theological knowledge and ecclesiastical experience. Their relative immaturity, however, is balanced by idealistic enthusiasm and by a willingness to live spartan lives in a regimented proselyting program under experienced adult supervision. Most importantly, the full-time LDS missionary force continues to grow, with good reason to believe that its growth will extend well into the twenty-first century, while many Protestant mission agencies will struggle to maintain previous rates of recruitment in their missionary forces. Continued institutional emphasis on the lay missionary obligations of every member, and especially the intensive religious socialization of young males to accept full-time mission calls before assuming other adult responsibilities,[22] gives the LDS church a decisive missionary recruiting advantage over most evangelical competitors (who typically depend on idiosyncratic personal calls to the ministry in order to staff their missionary ranks).

Even if only a third of eligible young men accepts LDS missionary assignments, full-time missionary ranks should continue to expand along with the growing membership base.[23] If, for example, the size of the LDS

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21. Ibid., 11.

22. Lack of official encouragement notwithstanding, single women have served full-time LDS missions since the turn of the twentieth century. See Vella Neil Evans, "Woman's Image in Authoritative Mormon Discourse: A Rhetorical Analysis," Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1985, and Calvin S. Kunz, "A History of Female Missionary Activity in the Church, 1830-1898," M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1976. Until the last two decades, sister missionaries represented only a small fraction of full-time Mormon missionaries in the field; but, according to a personal communication from the Missionary Department, in recent years the proportion of young women has increased significantly to about 20 percent of the total LDS missionary force. Today there are more LDS young women pursuing college educations and vocational training, while also volunteering in larger numbers for missionary assignments, than ever before. In part this is a reflection of larger national trends among women. It indicates a growing number of women in the church who are willing to postpone marital and family aspirations until later in their lives than customarily has been the Mormon norm.

23. About one-third of those eligible has been the norm in recent years. See Darwin L. Thomas, Joseph A. Olsen, and Stan E. Weed, "Missionary Service of LDS Young Men: A Longitudinal Analysis," unpublished paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, 1989, 17.

missionary force were to continue to increase at a rate of 50 percent per decade for twenty more years, there would be 110,000 missionaries laboring in about 700 missions by the year 2015. Within fifty years at this same rate the church would be managing a force of over 370,000 missionaries in approximately 2,300 missions. As fantastic as these figures seem, they represent the current potential of Mormon proselyting efforts in the first half of the twenty-first century.[24] In turn, the single most important condition either facilitating or impeding the future growth rate of the LDS missionary force will be the rate of world increase in church members who are willing and able (1) to socialize their youth to accept missionary assignments and (2) to contribute financially to their mission field support. In any estimate of the Mormon future we must see the circular and reciprocal connection of member conversions, lay activity, and missionary recruitment.

There are, of course, complicating factors, many of which (like political strife and wars) are completely beyond the church's control. Furthermore, we cannot confidently claim to know what the limits are of Mormonism's current appeal in existing religious markets—whether it is already very close to or far from having exhausted its appeal in such markets, especially in Christian countries. Even more ambiguous is what Mormonism's potential appeal might be if new religious markets are opened in vast world regions, such as China, where Christianity has never had a strong footing. If it is to become a major world religion, we assume that Mormonism will continue having to make institutional accommodations and doctrinal adjustments to tailor its appeal in different world markets. Exactly what these adjustments might entail, or how effective they might ultimately prove to be, is difficult to say in advance. Furthermore, much of Mormonism's current proselyting success is occurring in regions where member resources are often precarious and inactivity rates have become a major source of concern for LDS officials. Since an active membership is essential to the institutional functioning of the church, and especially for the support of its lay missionary program, we need better indicators of Mormonism's future than sheer membership growth projections.

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24. A declining birth rate among the core North American membership could begin to have a substantial impact on LDS missionary force enlistments. To the extent that this occurs, a relative decline in the number of young men eligible for missionary assignments in U.S. and Canadian congregations would have to be off-set by a corresponding increase in the percentage of non-North Americans and young women in order for the size of the missionary force to continue expanding at its current rate. If church authorities ever changed the required age for single sister missionaries from twenty-one to a lesser age, and/or encouraged young women to prepare for full-time missionary assignments with the same emphasis given to the socialization of young men, missionary enlistments would increase dramatically.

MEMBER RETENTION, NEW STAKES, AND CHURCH GROWTH

For some purposes, a superior way to measure Mormonism's global development is to count the creation of LDS stakes rather than the total number of nominal members or convert baptisms. The organization of a stake presupposes a sufficient number of active members (particularly a sufficient number of active Melchizedek priesthood holders), in a relatively concentrated geographical area, who are both able and willing to staff the lay ecclesiastical organization required for the church's full complement of priesthood and auxiliary programs at the local level. In addition, the organization of a stake also implies that an infrastructure of chapels, recreation centers, libraries, and associated equipment and supplies can be established and maintained with church resources in a locally designated area. It is thus the creation and functioning of stakes, not just the initial professions of faith made by newly baptized members (who may or may not remain active) that corresponds most closely to LDS ambitions of building the kingdom of God on earth.

Based on information extracted from the *1995-96 Deseret News Church Almanac*, we have tabulated the worldwide organization of LDS stakes by decade over the past half century. To facilitate generalizations we have aggregated the specific countries into six somewhat arbitrary world areas: North America (Canada and the U.S., excluding Hawaii); Latin America (Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean); the South Pacific (including Hawaii, Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti, Fiji, New Zealand, and Australia); Europe (including northern, central, and southern Europe, Russia, and other republics and satellite countries of the former Soviet Union in Eastern Europe); Asia (Korea, Japan, and the Philippines); and sub-Saharan Africa.

At the end of World War II there were 149 LDS stakes worldwide, 147 (99 percent) of which were in North America, with a concentration of 111 (75 percent) in the Mormon heartland states of Utah and Idaho. As of 1 October 1994 there were 1,998 LDS stakes worldwide, 801 (40 percent) of which were located in regions outside of North America. Though still representing a disproportionate concentration of stakes (502), after fifty years of Mormon expansion Utah and Idaho stakes have been cut to 25 percent of the world total. In the larger context of newly opening religious markets internationally and continued world growth for the church, the proportional reduction of North American stakes in general, and of Utah and Idaho stakes in particular, represent trends bound to continue well into the twenty-first century.

Shifting attention from half-century comparisons to decade comparisons, we get a better sense of variations in the rates of stake development in various parts of the world over time. Thus in North America from 1944 to 1984 we see an average increase of over 60 percent per decade in the

Figure 3. Number of LDS Stakes by World Region, 1944-1994
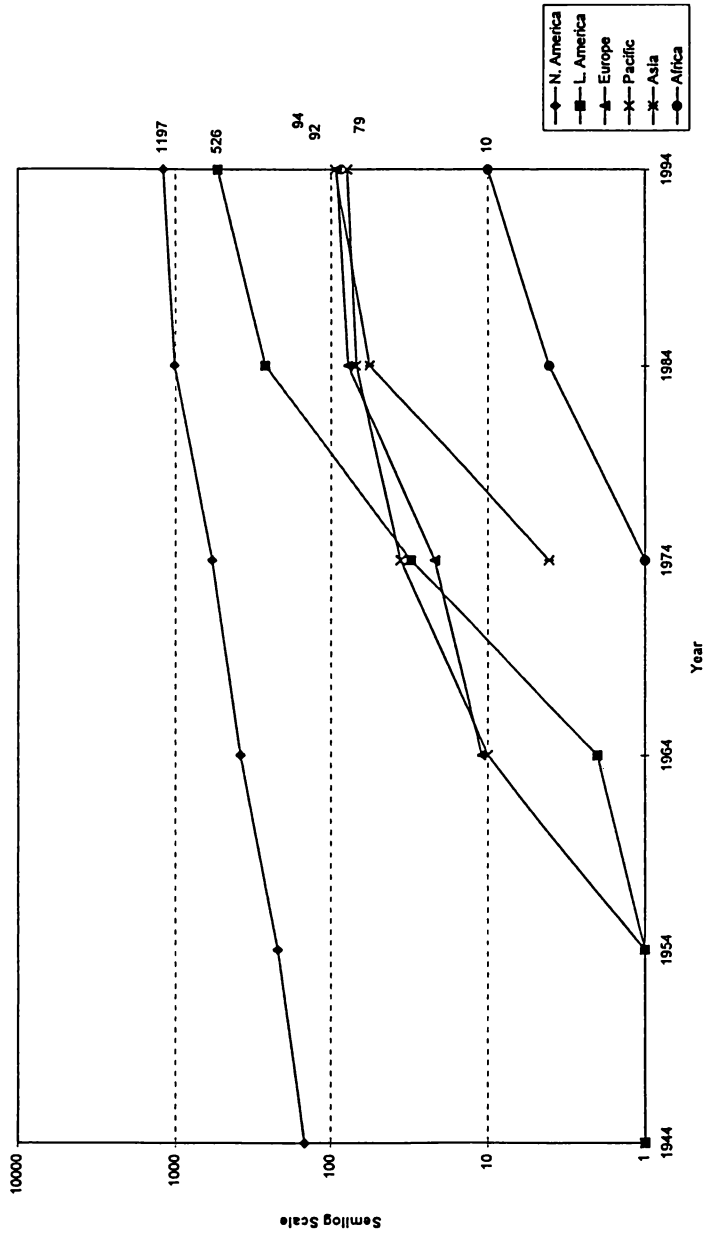
Source: Deseret News Church Almanac, 1994-95.
These figures include number of stake organizations as of October 1, 1994.

Figure 4. Number of LDS Stakes, 1944-1994
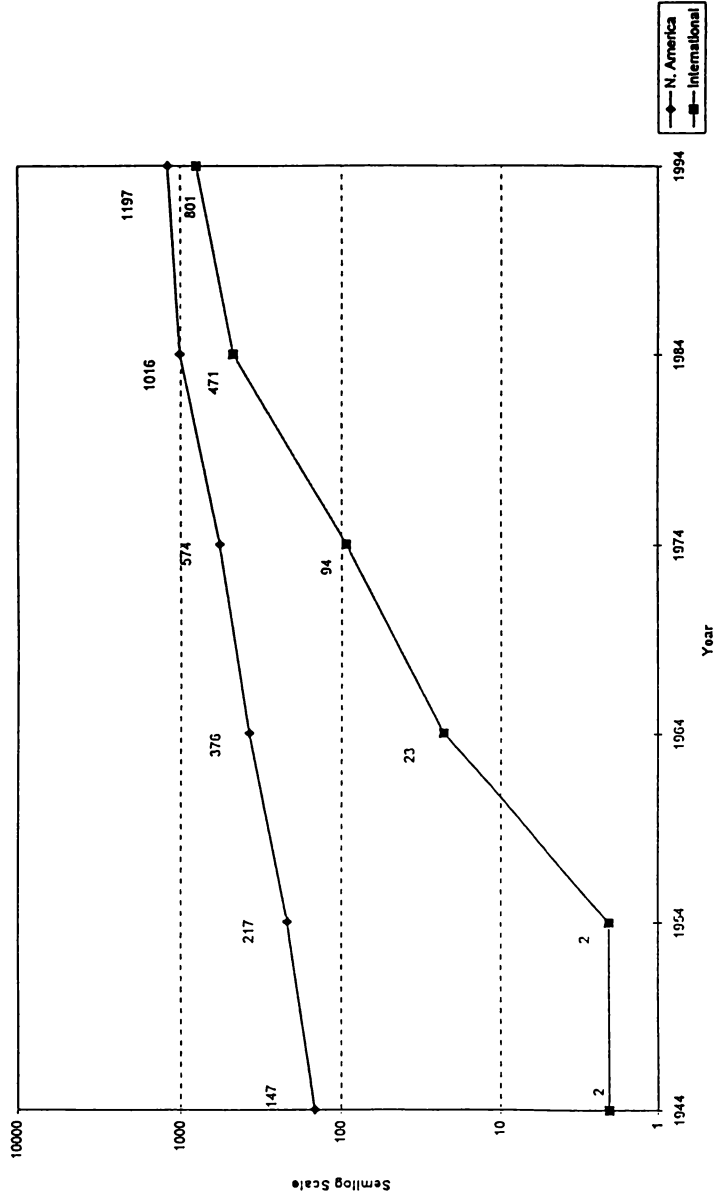
Source: Deseret News Church Almanac, 1994-95.
These figures include number of stake organizations as of October 1, 1994.

formation of new stakes, a very strong record of sustained organizational growth and infrastructural development. Meanwhile, the rapid acceleration of stakes in Europe, Asia, the Pacific, and especially Latin America during the twenty-year period 1964-84 was even more dramatic. Beginning with a small organizational base of twenty-five stakes in 1964, growth in these four world areas increased by 444 stake units, or over 1,900 percent, in two decades. The surge of new stakes during this period was particularly strong between 1974 and 1984, a decade which coincided with the urgently growth-oriented administration of Spencer W. Kimball and produced 324 new stake organizations in those same world regions.

In the past decade the actual number of LDS stakes organized in all world regions (including Africa as a relatively new market for active LDS proselyting) has continued to increase. However, the *rate* of stake formation from 1984-94 declined noticeably worldwide. For the first time since the mid-1950s, the growth rate per decade of new stakes dropped below 20 percent in Europe, the South Pacific, and North America. Though numerically still expanding, an overall decline in the rate of new stakes growth in Latin America and Asia also occurred during that decade.[25]

So even while LDS missions are proliferating around the globe, the missionary force becomes larger, and total LDS membership continues to grow steadily, the rate at which new stake units are organized has tapered off, at least for the time being. Since this slowdown has occurred only in the past decade, we cannot draw confident conclusions about the long-term implications for continued Mormon expansion. It might represent merely a brief, historical interlude for consolidating recent gains, to be followed by a new spurt of organizational growth in the next several decades. It might also signal the beginning of a much longer trend of declining stake growth in already established religious markets. In any event, the discrepancy in the past decade between growth rates in nominal church membership and the organization of new LDS stakes worldwide indicates the need for a more complex analysis of the dynamics of international Mormonism in the twenty-first century.

RESOURCES, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND CHURCH GROWTH

Based on extensive interviews with ecclesiastical officials and church employees over a decade ago, Gottlieb and Wiley identified a looming

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25. Our tabulations from the *1995-1996 Church Almanac* showed that it was principally the Philippines that boosted the rate of stake development in Asia during the last decade, with the organization of forty new stakes (84 percent of the Asian total from 1985-94). The rate of new stake development in other Asian countries, particularly Japan and Korea, dropped significantly in this same period.

"capital crunch" for the church brought about precisely by the dynamics of its own proselyting success outside of the United States. According to Gottlieb's and Wiley's sources, by the early 1980s financial managers within the church bureaucracy and some general authorities (especially Nathan E. Tanner) "began to question the continuing viability of the rapid expansion of the church, particularly in the Third World." Newly-formed congregations in rapidly expanding international areas typically could not meet their share of new chapel construction or maintenance costs or financially support other church programs, including missionary work. In order to expand internationally, the church had to squeeze its domestic base, resulting in a massive drain of funds from Salt Lake City. Alarmed by the depletion of financial reserves, church authorities began instituting cost-cutting policies: "Not only were the number of chapels and other church buildings cut back, but those built no longer were constructed in a way that reinforced the notion that Mormons were wealthy and powerful."[26]

At the time Gottlieb and Wiley wrote their book on "the rise of Mormon power," they anticipated a downturn in the annual growth of the LDS missionary force as an institutional response to the depletion of central church resources caused by high conversion rates in impoverished international areas. This has not happened. Instead, missionary enlistments and the development of new mission fields are continuing and, we think, will continue to do so well into the twenty-first century, if somewhat more slowly. *However*, as our data also indicate, there indeed has been a decline recently in the rate of new stake organizations worldwide and concomitantly a decline in the rate of chapel construction and associated infrastructure investment. While we are not privy to the decisions and strategies formulated by church officials, we surmise that the current slowdown in new stake organization reflects a more prudent growth management policy, as described by Gottlieb and Wiley, calculated to keep church expenditures on infrastructure development in line with actual church income. Systematic implementation of a more conservative fiscal and managerial approach to the creation of new local congregations helps to explain the current discrepancy between the rates of nominal LDS membership growth and the formation of new stakes.

We seriously doubt, however, that Mormon officials are likely to de-emphasize member missionary obligations any time soon as a mechanism for managing the rate of membership growth. The missionary ethos is too central to Mormon ecclesiology and to the dynamics of Mormon lay culture—too central, indeed, to Mormonism's own history and future aspirations as a world religion in the next century—to be curtailed. This

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26. Gottlieb and Wiley, 124, 155-56.

is true in precisely those international areas of greatest LDS growth, where the cultivation of a native missionary force plays a key role in the preparation of native ecclesiastical leaders. Ironically, it is the relative lack of male priesthood holders who are willing and/or able to assume lay leadership roles which often presents the most serious obstacle to the growth and development of LDS congregations internationally. We would interpret the slowdown in the rate of new stake organization in part as an acknowledgment of this problem at central headquarters, re-sulting in a greater institutional emphasis on cultivating an adequate leadership base before approving the investment of church monies into the creation of new stakes.

Here again we are forced to recognize the close interdependence of several core institutional factors in LDS growth and development. The cultivation of a viable native missionary force in international areas of Mormon expansion is contingent first on the formation of local stake and ward organizations under the direction of native leaders and subse-quently on the institutionalization of Mormon youth programs, espe-cially seminary and institute courses, which channel young people toward accepting missionary assignments when they come of age. Mex-ico provides one prominent example of this linkage. Native missionary enlistment rates in Mexico first began to climb in the 1960s and 1970s in conjunction with the rapid formation of native Mexican stakes and asso-ciated auxiliary programs beginning in the same period.[27] As of 1994, Mexico had 128 stakes[28] and was virtually self-sufficient in native mis-sionaries, supplying at least 90 percent of the missionaries serving in eighteen different missions throughout the Mexican Republic.[29]

According to a former mission president and director of LDS schools in Mexico, the impact of church-sponsored education in Mexico has been critical there to Mormon growth. He credits the church education system with producing the current generation of native leaders who typically have followed a pattern of (1) enrollment in church schools and/or semi-nary classes from which they (2) have gone on to accept and perform missionary assignments and (3) subsequently have returned home to as-sume ward and stake leadership callings.[30] Because of their youth and relative lack of ecclesiastical experience, returned Mexican missionaries

27. See Irving, "Mormonism and Latin America"; Agricol Lozano Herrera, *Historia del Mormonismo en Mexico* (Mexico, D.F.: Editorial Zarahemla, S.A., 1983); and F. Lamond Tullis, *Mormons in Mexico: The Dynamics of Faith and Culture* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1987).

28. *1995-96 Deseret News Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1994), 258.

29. Elayne Wells, "Centers Prepare Missionaries to be Effective Instruments," *Church News*, 13 Jan. 1990, 6.

30. Earin Call, personal communication, Jan. 1994.

often have faltered in leadership callings, but a large proportion also have succeeded. It is quite doubtful whether the extensive complex of LDS stakes and wards in Mexico today would be able to function were it not for the presence of thousands of local members who have passed through the missionary experience.[31]

Two other important infrastructural indicators of LDS development internationally are the creation of MTCs and construction of new temples, both in the United States and abroad. Like LDS stakes, MTCs and temples tend to follow active membership growth and support in given geographical areas, and both are linked to the promotion of native missionary activity. In addition to its twenty-six-acre flagship MTC in Provo, Utah, the LDS church in the last fifteen years has established MTCs in its major recruiting markets throughout the world, including Buenos Aires, Argentina; Sao Paulo, Brazil; Santiago, Chile; Bogota, Columbia; London, England; Guatemala City, Guatemala; Tokyo, Japan; Seoul, South Korea; Mexico City, Mexico; Temple View, New Zealand; Lima, Peru; Manila, Philippines; Apia, Samoa; and Nuku'ulofa, Tonga.[32] *The Missionary Guide* is the basic training manual used in all MTCs worldwide, and all missionaries, regardless of language or country of origin, learn and follow the standardized "commitment pattern" in their proselyting efforts.

MTCs have been established only in cities where temples are also located. Typically, in fact, the MTC is situated adjacent to a temple, where missionaries in training can be exposed to temple worship as an important part of their brief but concentrated preparation.[33] The Missionary Department's long-term goal is to establish MTCs in every country where membership numbers and levels of church activity warrant the construction of a temple.[34] According to Charles Didier, current member of the presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy, "The best preparation is always in your own country. Not only does the church avoid the cost of transporting missionaries somewhere else for training, but also the local aspect is much more effective. We'd like to have one [an MTC] in every

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31. For a discussion of the interrelated topics of church education, missionary recruitment, and native ecclesiastical leadership in Mexico and Latin America, see F. Lamond Tullis, "Church Development Issues Among Latin Americans"; Harold Brown, "Gospel Culture and Leadership Development in Latin America"; and Efrain Villalobos Vasquez, "Church Schools in Mexico"; all in F. Lamond Tullis et al., eds., *Mormonism: A Faith for All Cultures* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1978).

32. Gerry Avant, "Missionary Training Center Expands," *Church News*, 19 Mar. 1994, 11.

33. Richard O. Cowan, "Missionary Training Centers," in Ludlow, 914.

34. At the present time there are sixty temples in use, planned, or under construction worldwide, with twenty-nine in North America, eleven in Latin America, seven in Europe, six in the Pacific, five in Asia, and one in Africa. See the *1995-96 Deseret News Church Almanac*, 329-30.

country."[35] With a renewed emphasis on the importance of temple worship in LDS communities, we can look forward to a continued investment of church resources in the international construction of temples and a corresponding stimulus to native missionary activity and the creation of local MTCs.

Assuming that these particular international trends have become an integral part of the dynamics of modern Mormonism, we should not be surprised to see in the next century a steady increase in the number of non-North American missionaries to the point where they eventually surpass their North American counterparts as a proportion of the total missionary force. As always, however, this projection ultimately is contingent on the willingness and ability of church members to bear the cost of a global missionary enterprise, which can be productive in the Mormon scheme of things only when it is matched by adequate infrastructural development. On top of tithes and fast offerings, members (especially in North America) also are encouraged to make regular contributions to the General Missionary Fund, which is used primarily to support the growing number of missionaries originating in Third World countries who otherwise could never hope to pay for their own missions.[36]

CULTURAL CONSTRAINTS, MARKET NICHE, AND CHURCH GROWTH

Mormon scholars have expressed some concerns in recent years about institutional problems which might complicate the church's efforts to become a world religion. For example, in his analysis of the dialectical tensions between LDS accommodation and retrenchment within American society, Armand Mauss concludes that, both doctrinally and socially, modern Mormonism is listing in the direction of Protestant fundamentalism and is in peril of losing its peculiar Latter-day Saint identity in the religious economy.[37] Mauss worries that current Mormon retrenchment trends in scriptural literalism, corporate church governance, traditional gender role definitions, youth indoctrination, and political conservatism

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35. Wells, 6.

36. Currently, about one-quarter of the full-time LDS missionary force is made up of missionaries called from outside the U.S. and Canada. World areas where the greatest numbers of local missionaries are serving are Latin America, the Philippines, and the South Pacific—precisely those areas where proselyting success and development of new stakes have been greatest internationally. At the same time, a majority of these missionaries are financed through the church's General Missionary Fund. See John L. Hart, "Local Missionaries Supported in Service by International Fund," *Church News*, 13 Nov. 1993, 3.

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

threaten to limit Mormonism's potentially universal appeal primarily to individuals already inclined toward a fundamentalist, authoritarian outlook. Consequently he suspects that such individuals are being disproportionately recruited by the missionary enterprise and actively retained in the modern church. In part this analysis reflects the growing alienation of liberal Mormon intellectuals themselves (always a small fraction of the Mormon lay community) from the institutional church. Yet to the extent that it is also true, it might predict a selective market niche in the religious economy and a definite ceiling to the prospects of continued Mormon expansion. It is the potential size of that niche, however, that is a key question to be answered. In the United States, at least, LDS retrenchment has been in harmony with resurgent conservatism in national life since the late 1960s, and this, no doubt, has contributed significantly to Mormonism's enhanced market appeal in the U.S. religious economy. There is no compelling indication at the moment that the popular ideological appeals of religious conservatism—or even authoritarianism—are about to wane on the American religious scene.

In spite of its rapid international growth, outside the United States the LDS church is still, as Larry Young reminds us, a very small minority religion in almost every part of the world and continues to experience considerable strain and conflict in many of the host societies where it is attempting to take root.[38] In Young's view, the major problem internationally for the modern church is not so much its literalistic theology but its top-down administrative structure, which tends to suffocate local initiatives attempting to respond to local problems. Young sees current Mormon retrenchment trends described by Mauss primarily as an assertion of the church's fundamentally theocratic form of organizational hierarchy (which, of course, always has been an ambiguous source of both unity and division in Mormon history). He argues that Mormon bureaucracy has become well accommodated to the corporate structure of North American society but is out of joint with social realities in other parts of the world and often is inflexible in adjusting to local circumstances in foreign cultures, where many converts are lacking in formal education. Young points to major retention problems for the church in many international areas where new converts are often unwilling or unable to function as active participants in centrally coordinated lay programs. Like Mauss, he speculates that the church's modern appeal is limited mostly to selected segments of the international religious market; that it is most likely to retain the active participation of middle-class professionals, who can be assimilated more easily into an Americanized organizational culture

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38. Lawrence A. Young, "Confronting Turbulent Environments: Issues in the Organizational Growth and Globalization of Mormonism," in Cornwall et al., 43-63.

that stresses record keeping, reporting and supervisory systems, hierarchically-imposed objectives, and standardized programs. This is particularly true for the recruitment of native leaders into the administrative ranks of general authorities, mission presidents, stake presidencies, bishoprics, church education and welfare services personnel, etc. Rank-and-file converts must, of course, also learn to comply with the requirements and structures of local priesthood and auxiliary programs. Finally, it is the distinctly American character of Mormon organization and ecclesiastical practice that, according to Young, has created image problems and conflicts for Mormonism in nationalistic Third World countries, where negative associations are often made linking the church with Yankee imperialism.[39]

Both Mauss and Young appear to believe that if Mormonism is to realize its potential as a major world religion in the next century, it will have to decentralize its decision-making procedures, become less bureaucratic in local governance, less parochial in its lifestyle prescriptions, and more tolerant of cultural heterodoxy. Whether these are desirable adjustments is not the question here. The question is whether they are necessary for Mormonism to continue global expansion and for how long at its current rate. While we find much with which to sympathize in both Mauss's and Young's analyses, we think that at least for the foreseeable future insistence on doctrinal orthodoxy and the centralized, corporate managerial approach (which has worked well thus far in mobilizing church resources and member support for missionary expansion) will continue to be the Mormon norm worldwide. We have no reason to believe that current Mormon authorities or their immediate successors will soon abandon an apparently successful formula for unprecedented institutional growth, in spite of the accompanying economic strains and cultural conflicts. The institution of area presidencies a decade ago, which placed general authorities in closer touch with local conditions and expedited decision-making and the allocation of local resources, was not designed to produce a more pluralistic church with federated power centers, nor has it done so. The periodic rotation of members of the Quorums of the Seventy in area presidencies, and their closely monitored performances at central headquarters, works against the gradual emergence of autonomous regional churches. If anything, the institution of area presidencies has brought church operations in faraway places, including mission fields, under closer scrutiny and administrative control than ever

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39. Problems of cultural dissonance for the LDS church are shared with other evangelizing North American denominations, particularly in Catholic Latin America. See Graham Howes, "God Damn Yanquis: American Hegemony and Contemporary Latin America," in Roof, 91.

before.[40]

We find many of the insights offered by Gottlieb and Wiley concerning modern Mormonism's internal strains to be as valid now as they were a decade ago:

> Today, the church faces a contradiction between its bottom-line considerations and its fundamental purpose—to expand the church. For the future, these contradictions might well intensify as the church's desire to become more like a corporation clashes with its desire, as a correlated and missionary-oriented church, to spread its message and bring in new members throughout the world as rapidly as it has over the last thirty years. . . . The financial situation has, to a certain extent, forced the issue of what kind of Mormon church will emerge throughout the next two decades of this century. One route, which Mormon liberals hope will be followed, involves the development of any kind of diversity and cultural pluralism. The likely route, however, involves a further strengthening of the hybrid Mormon-American culture based on a narrow and centrally defined reading of doctrine, with all decisions still flowing from Salt Lake.[41]

What Gottlieb and Wiley call the "hybrid Mormon-American culture" corresponds to Young's depiction of a middle-class managerial church. It is a church whose missionary message can be somewhat tailored to different segments of the religious economy in order to maximize the appeal of its doctrines and values. Yet the church's emphasis on active lay participation seems less susceptible to market modification. Lay participation in the modern church, especially in leadership positions, presupposes a certain literacy level, as well as a willingness to function in a bureaucratically regulated organization. Many LDS converts, attracted by different aspects of Mormonism's religious promise, are not disposed to assume organizational roles. Those converts who do become active organizational members represent a narrower band of the religious market than those who initially join the church through baptism. This, of course, is true in varying degrees for virtually every established religious denomi-

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40. According to instructions and operating procedures given in the 1990 *Mission President's Handbook* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), mission field organizations are monitored and supervised conjointly by Area Presidencies and the Missionary Department in Salt Lake City. Thus "mission presidents report to and receive direction and training from Area Presidencies. Unless noted otherwise, dealings with headquarters are handled through the Area Presidency" (2). At the same time, "the Missionary Department . . . assigns a representative to help them [the mission president and his wife] prepare and to work with them throughout their mission. In matters affecting the status of individual missionaries (surgical operations, health, conduct problems, etc.), the mission president should contact the Missionary Department. The Area Presidency should also be apprised of more serious cases" (ibid.).

41. Gottlieb and Wiley, 128, 156.

nation. The basic institutional problem for all evangelical movements is to retain a sufficiently large core of active participants to allow for continued expansion.[42]

In Mormonism the dual functions of expansion through recruitment and retention of members through church programs are both served by the missionary system. The church, especially in the high growth regions of Third World countries, has come to depend on local missions as socializing agencies for native missionaries. In many respects the mission field organization is both an idealization and a microcosm of the institutional church. In the field young Mormon missionaries are immersed in a managerial ethos of daily planning, reporting, and supervision. They are grounded in institutional procedures. They are being groomed to assume local leadership positions on completion of their full-time proselyting service. It is in the mission field where the hybrid Mormon-American culture is most clearly modeled and transmitted. Retaining the participation of a sufficient fraction of returned native missionaries, socialized and equipped to discharge organizational roles, is of key importance to the continued international development of Mormonism in the twenty-first century.[43]

This is the formula which, all things considered, has worked very well since the end of World War II and, in our analytical peep-stone, will continue to be followed in the century to come. This is in spite of the po-

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42. Robert E. Wells, current member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and a former Mexican mission president, reported several years ago that in Mexico "we normally get one-third of our people out to stake conference. We get about one-third of our people attending sacrament meeting. We have a challenge. One-third of our people are fully active always. One-third are lukewarm and one-third we don't see back in church a few weeks after they're baptized." Undaunted by member retention problems connected with rapid LDS growth in Mexico, Wells went on to say,

> We'll just call the best men and let the Lord bless them and magnify them . . . It doesn't bother me to see imperfect leaders . . . We're plowing ahead without perfect leaders . . . I would rather see a mission baptize 1,000 a month and lose 333, but have 777 there, than baptize 10—like some European missions, who also lose 3 to total inactivity . . . The Savior said the kingdom is like fishermen who cast the net and bring in all kinds of species, and that's what we're doing—we're bringing in everybody that will promise to live the commandments, knowing full well that probably a third of them won't. But that doesn't bother me at all (from an untitled talk given to a BYU alumni group at the Benemerito School, Mexico City, Jan. 1988, copy in our possession).

43. Some older studies estimated the inactivity (or dropout) rate of returned Mormon missionaries in the U.S. to be about 10 percent (see John M. Madsen, "Church Activity of LDS Returned Missionaries," Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1977). More recent figures have not been published, and to our knowledge the subsequent inactivity rates of returned Mormon missionaries from outside the U.S. have not been studied. Our hunch is that non-U.S. missionaries are more likely, on average, to withdraw from active lay participation once they complete their missionary service and return home than are their North American counterparts, but we have no empirical evidence to support this.

tential of market saturation in the religious economy, convert member defections and inactivity rates, alienation of intellectuals, and even nationalistic schisms. The transfer of church resources to developing areas of the international church undoubtedly will continue, but more selectively and under even greater institutional scrutiny than in the past. The rate of Mormon expansion eventually will slow down in the next half century, especially the infrastructural organization of new stakes, but not before the LDS church has become a major presence in the world religious economy.

Thinking about the Word of God in the Twenty-first Century

Karl C. Sandberg

FOR THOSE IMBUED WITH MORMONISM, the most appropriate figure for talking about the word of God in the twenty-first century is Janus, the Roman god of beginnings and endings, presider over doors and gateways, and with one face looking forward, the other back.

Ahead is a new period as Mormonism becomes a worldwide church, entailing increased contact with world religions and with the secular culture of the modern world. Over the next two decades millions of converts will come into Mormonism from religions that have widely divergent understandings of the character of the word of God or the divine mind. The missionaries who bring them in will encounter questions concerning fundamental issues of faith which will come to fruition sooner or later. The challenge of this exercise in relative perspectives will be equaled or exceeded only by the encounter with the secular culture; as the church population expands and the Church Educational System remains in steady state, the thinking of more and more young Mormons will be formed in systems of secondary and higher education in which the concept of the "word of God" is not hard currency but is usually more like the Italian lira, or the Confederate dollar. As the church in its processes becomes more dependent on technology, and members become enmeshed in a technological world, they will face the temptations of technology, whose values and modes of thought work like acids on what Mormonism has hitherto been. What is taking place among Mormons in a secular culture is a collision of world views.

In addition, for the first time serious efforts of wide-scale textual criticism of Mormon scriptures have begun among Mormon scholars and have already engaged large parts of the Mormon intellectual community in the discussion, either as proponents of the new views or as defenders

of the traditional ways.[1] Many Mormons will therefore be obliged to confront more directly during the twenty-first century issues which the church has generally side-stepped during the twentieth century.

Looking back to the beginning of Mormonism, one can view the development of a dynamics of revelation unusual, if not unique, among the world's religions: the claims of a living prophet speaking continuously for God; the promise to all believers that through the Holy Ghost God will speak to them directly; and a concept of revelation that requires rational ratification. Historically, these three elements have sometimes moved harmoniously together and have sometimes wobbled out of round, as one or the other has received excessive prominence. It would seem natural, therefore, to expect a certain tension to grow as the central hierarchy endeavors to retain tight control over a worldwide church which is every day taking into itself more elements of diversity. Beyond the tuggings and contests of institutional authority is an indeterminately large number of people, in and out of Mormonism, who hunger for something to feed their souls, those of whom Milton said, "The hungry sheep look up and are not fed." They will seek out the word of God in whatever forms they can find, the voice of the Ultimate in the cosmos, speaking in judgment on the world, commanding duties, and offering redemption.

In this light no question appears more basic for Mormonism than: What shall we understand by the word "revelation," or by phrase "the word of God"? This question is the repository of all questions of faith and authority, the cog that makes the other wheels turn.

TALKING ABOUT THE WORD OF GOD

In the world's long march, however, many forms and concepts have been associated with "the word of God." We can gain in clarity if as a first step we look analytically at any proposed concept of the word of God according to the following categories:

(1) Do we think of revelation as *propositional*, that is, as information communicated in the form of sentences which God speaks to humans ("Hear, O Heavens and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken" [Isa. 1:2])? Or is it *experiential*, consisting of words which humans speak about their experiences with God (the numinous aspect of their existence) and the interpretations they make of them ("In the year that king Uzziah

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1. A recent example is *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, ed. Brent Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993). A spirited rebuttal is in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6 (1994), published in Provo, Utah, by the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies. Also indicative of serious efforts in textual criticism is *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture*, ed. Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990).

died, I saw also the Lord . . . and then said I, 'Woe is me! because I am a man of unclean lips'" [6:1, 5])?

(2) Should we consider the word of God as *absolute and unimprovable* ("We have the mind of Christ" [1 Cor. 2:16]), or is it *partial and relative* to the understanding of the hearer ("when I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child" [13:11])? In either case, what authority does the word carry?

(3) Shall we think of the word of God as *mediated* or *unmediated?* Does it come to us through the intermediary of another person (or book or tradition which goes back to another person), or does it come to each individual directly? If it is mediated, how do we satisfy ourselves about the reliability of the mediator? If it is unmediated, how do we know that the experience or message that comes to us is from God and is not simply the voice of our own fears, hopes, or prejudices?

(4) If we accept as the word of God that which comes to us by tradition, how are we to discern the word of God from that which is merely the status quo?

FAITH, AUTHORITY, AND REVELATION

A framework for discussing these questions is provided by the series of seminars offered by the German theologian Hans Küng and colleagues at the University of Tübingen in 1982 for the purpose of widening the dialogue between Christianity and Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism.[2] Abandoning the proselytizing mode, the seminars attempted first to understand each religion in terms that its own believers would accept, then to identify areas of basic agreement, and finally to delineate clearly what the real differences were so that further talk could go on.

A specialist in each religion would present a statement of that particular tradition sympathetically and in its strongest light, to which Küng would make a response from his Christian point of view, which in turn necessitated a recognition and a review of the several different positions held in the Christian tradition. Out of this kind of exchange would emerge understanding of other religions and cultures, but no less important would be the new understanding of one's own religion—"If one knows only England," said Küng, "one does not know England."[3] It would be the occasion for Christians to rethink the Christian enterprise. The goal for the Christian theologian was "less to answer all specific

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2. The proceedings of the seminars were subsequently translated into English and published as Hans Küng, Josef van Ess, Heinrich von Stietencron, and Hans Bechert, *Christianity and the World Religions: Paths to Dialogue with Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co. 1986).

3. Ibid., 440.

questions and formulate every rebuttal than to create something like *a presentation of Christianity in the light of world religions.*"[4]

If Mormonism could detach itself momentarily from the warm embrace of the proselytizing mode, this kind of exercise with regard both to theistic and secular religions would provide an opportunity for it to respond reflectively to questions common to all. It would be an occasion for Mormons to look at Mormonism in the context of larger relationships—if one knows only Mormonism, one does not know Mormonism.

Mormonism, like Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, presents itself as a *revealed* religion, in contrast with Hindu and Buddhist religions, which emphasize personal enlightenment or mystical experience.[5] Jews, Christians, and Muslims all think of themselves as peoples of the book, in each case a book which contains the revealed word of God. What does that mean for each of them?

Islam occupies the anchor position for propositional revelation: The Koran consists of the very words which God spoke audibly, or caused his messengers to speak, in the most excellent Arabic to his prophet Mohammed. The Koran is therefore perfect, definitive, universal, immutable, and its authority is absolute. It is thus the linguistic standard for all other forms of Arabic and is moreover not really translatable, all "translations" of it being considered only aids to understanding the original, which is perfect.[6] In thinking of the Koran as total and complete, I recall a conversation with an enthusiastic supporter of the Iranian revolution in 1979. What role would a legislature play in the new Islamic republic? None, he answered, since all of the necessary laws had already been given in the Koran. It follows that the Islamic state is theocratic and its authority derives ultimately from the Koran. The state authority is exercised *de facto* by the clergy, who stand in the stead of God by mediating the Koran to the people.[7]

If we believe that the word of God is in a text, we must raise the question of textual criticism. To what extent is revelation dependent for its

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4. Ibid., xix.

5. Ibid., 166-78, 291-305.

6. The position of Islam was described in careful detail in ibid., 5-18, 37-49, 70-82, 97-108.

7. As this is being written, reports tell of the strains and tensions of sixteen years of theocratic rule in Iran. After the revolution a parliament was in fact established which passed laws, but these were subject to approval of the grand ayatollah who interprets Islamic law and applies it to daily life, in this case, the Ayatollah Khomeini. Since Khomeini's death six years ago, no one has attained his personal authority and stature, and the contest is now between those who want an Islamization of the state and those who want a modernization of Islam. See "Iranians Open Debate on Khomeini's Legacy," *Christian Science Monitor,* 5 Apr. 1995, 1, 7.

meaning and significance on the historical context, culture, and personality of the recipient? As we study the text, do we first ask which manuscripts are the oldest, which have lapses or emendations, which ones follow which rhetorical or structural tradition? That is, do we get at the understanding of the text by using the methods and techniques of textual analysis, which submit the text to the judgment of the analyzer? For Islam, the answer has been and remains "No." God's word consists of God's words. These words do not reflect Mohammed's times or even less his personality. The authority of the Koran is the linchpin of the entire religion, and Islam will not allow that authority to be called into question by fiddling with the text. To repeat, this position seems to anchor one end of the spectrum: the word of God as found in the Koran is propositional, complete, infallible, and its authority is absolute in all areas of personal or social life.

The faith that grows out of this concept of the word of God as propositional revelation carries the conviction of infallibility and is powerful enough to move nations and inspire men to suicide missions in a holy war. The word *Islam*, in fact, means "submission." It is also a faith which appears at bottom to be fearful, since it cannot tolerate the threat of looking analytically at its foundations. The more a group believes that it has an absolute and unimprovable knowledge of the word of God, or, as in the late Soviet Union, of the workings and destiny of history, the more it becomes intolerant and totalitarian when such a belief is challenged. The group becomes threatened and, in extreme cases, violent, assuming the power of life or death over the challenger. We have the example of the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran pronouncing a death sentence on a citizen of another country, Salmon Rushdie, for having blasphemed the word of God. The episode has been repeated in present day Bangladesh with crowds calling for the death of the author Naslima Nasreen, she having, in their view, blasphemed the Koran, the word of God. We also have the example of the young man beheaded in Saudi Arabia in 1992 for "having insulted God, the holy Koran and Mohammed the prophet."[8]

In contemporary Christianity some fundamentalist Christians hold a similar view of the Bible, believing their scriptures to be inspired and perfect from every standpoint—linguistic, stylistic, logical, historical, scientific—and they would echo the claim of the nineteenth-century millenarian Alexander Carson: "If the Bible is a book partly human and partly divine, it cannot, as a whole, be the word of God, nor be justly ascribed to Him as its sole author . . . to be God's book, it must be His in

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8. Joyce Appleby et al., *Telling the Truth about History* (New York: Norton, 1994), 34, citing *The Washington Post*, 1 Oct. 1992, A18-19.

matter and in words, in substance and in form."[9] It is apparently this kind of conviction that fuels the present crusade of the Christian Coalition to "reclaim America for Christ."

Nonetheless, the majority of Christian scholars, both Protestant and Catholic, have not scrupled to look analytically at the founding documents of Christianity and have embraced textual criticism. The time is long past when the majority of Christian scholars can look upon the array of evidence and hold to the view of an inerrant Bible. As a matter of fact, they note that the Bible itself does not claim to be written by God, but by many people in many different places on earth.[10] The books of the Bible reflect the times and the personalities of their authors. They were written in and for a historical context, and they can therefore be understood only in that context. They are inspired and inspiring, but they are not infallible, and their meaning derives ultimately from their interpretation by the individual. Moreover, since their interpretation depends on our changing knowledge of the circumstances of their creation, no interpretation is definitive, although the official Catholic position holds that final interpretation of scripture in matters of faith and morals is the prerogative of the Pope speaking *ex cathedra.* In any case, the authority of the Bible as the last word which routs all competitors has therefore suffered sore erosion. For most Christians, the authority of the Bible depends on its ability to move and enlighten individual believers.

With this mode of thinking about the word of God comes another mode of faith. In Arizona, at the height of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, Tucson was ringed with missile silos that would have brought in an estimated 350 megatons in the event of a pre-emptive Soviet strike, causing some concern locally about real estate values. There was a big business in bomb shelters. At that time I heard a young Quaker talk about his way of confronting violence and the possible end of the world. He was laboring to establish and equip a playground in a blighted area of Sacramento. He was not acting on divine instruction communicated verbally about urban renewal, but imbued with the words about God in the New Testament; and being inspired by them, he believed this was the sort of thing God wanted people to do. The word of God is the seed which takes root in individuals and grows toward God.

In this context, would an earnest Mormon engaged in this discussion with an earnest Muslim and an earnest Christian tilt more toward Islam and the view of an infallible, mediated, propositional view of the word of

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9. Philip L. Barlow, *The Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 72, quoting Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 111.

10. Küng, 32.

God, or more toward modern Christianity and a partial, experiential, pro-
gressive view of the word of God? What response would be most faithful
to the genius of Mormonism?

When the question is posed in this way, the starting point of the dis-
cussion has to be that Mormonism at the end of the twentieth century is
and always has been multiple. From its beginnings it has had strong and
authentic elements of both views, expressed clearly in its founding docu-
ments. It has been the scene, on the one hand, of yearning for certainty
and infallibility in the form of a propositional and absolute transmission
of God's words mediated by a prophet,[11] and, on the other hand, the rec-
ognition of insuperable limitations of the human condition which make
the word of God partial, relative to time and circumstances, and immedi-
ate to the individual.

LOOKING BACK: THE WAY OF THE INFALLIBLE PROPHET

The view of propositional revelation emerged early with the image of
Joseph Smith as a choice seer, a modern Moses. Joseph was to be called "a
seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the
church through the will of God the Father, and the grace of your Lord
Jesus Christ." The Lord therefore enjoined the church to receive Joseph's
word "as if from my own mouth" (D&C 21:1, 2, 4-6). Joseph, then, was
seen as the very mouthpiece of God. When Oliver Cowdery, as second el-
der in the church, "commanded" Joseph to delete part of present-day
Doctrine and Covenants 20:37, Joseph immediately wrote to him, asking,
"By what authority he took upon him to command me to alter or erase, to
add or diminish to or from a revelation or commandment from Almighty
God." Moreover, when Hiram Page, in the manner of Joseph, started re-
ceiving revelations through a seer stone, God (speaking through Joseph)
said to the church that "no one shall be appointed to receive command-
ments and revelations in this church, excepting my servant Joseph Smith,
Jr., for he receiveth them even as Moses" (28:2-3) or, we might add, as
Mohammed, for the word of God delivered to the church consisted of the
very words of God.[12]

This hankering for infallibility can be seen in the tendency of many
Mormons to view the Bible as a text which in its original state was unde-
filed and verbally inspired, a curious view considering the fact that from
the beginning prominent Mormons, Joseph Smith among the first, ac-

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11. See the primacy given to this point in Marvin Hill, *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon
Flight from Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 166 and passim.

12. This point is developed in detail by Richard Howard in "Latter Day Saint Scriptures
and the Doctrine of Propositional Revelation," 3-7, in Vogel, *The Word of God: Essays in Mor-
mon Scriptures.*

knowledged the deficiencies of the biblical text. It is doubtful, for exam-
ple, if the most critical of eighteenth-century *philosophes* or nineteenth-
century positivists identified the inadequacies of the biblical text more
vigorously than Orson Pratt.[13] Pratt's intent, however, was not to encour-
age the appropriate use of textual criticism, but to establish the need for a
new revelation and a living oracle to transmit God's current will and in-
structions to humanity. Moreover, a substantial current of Mormonism
has shown great persistence in avoiding any modification of the King
James translation of the Bible, as Philip Barlow has meticulously docu-
mented, with some Mormon scholars adopting attitudes even more con-
servative than those of evangelical Christians.[14]

This absolutist current of Mormonism received what is possibly its
most extreme expression in a 1980 BYU devotional speech by then apos-
tle Ezra Taft Benson. Among the "fourteen fundamentals in following the
prophets" in Elder Benson's speech[15] were that the prophet (the presi-
dent of the church) speaks for the Lord in every aspect of life, spiritual
and temporal, including civic matters, politics, and economics, and is the
only one who does so. The living prophet takes precedence over all previ-
ous prophets, as well as over the standard works. The prophet will never
lead the church astray and is not limited by human reasoning.

It is difficult to imagine a more comprehensive or categorical position
of absolute, mediated, propositional revelation. It moves far beyond the
infallibility claimed by Roman Catholics for the Pope (who limit the pa-
pal privilege to *ex cathedra* statements on faith and morals) to the univer-
sality and perfection claimed by Islam for the Koran. It centers the word
of God in one man, who is by this definition beyond the reach or limita-
tions of historical precedent, rational evaluation, or any kind of objection,
and this in the midst of changing conditions of economics and politics. It
is nonetheless true that revelation mediated by a central authority has
been part of the Mormon dynamics and has been a necessary leg of the
tripod that has sustained the Mormon community of faith.

It is not, however, the only leg. A no less integral part of Mormon dy-
namics as we look into the twenty-first century is that any revelation
from the hierarchy must be ratified by (1) the personal spiritual experi-
ence of each individual and by (2) the exercise of individual reason.

Even at the beginning the mode of inerrancy (God speaking defini-
tively in sentences in the first person) could not consistently be main-

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13. Orson Pratt, "Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon," 168-98, in *Orson Pratt's
Works* (Salt Lake City, 1965; first published in Liverpool 1850).

14. Barlow, 174-78.

15. Ezra Taft Benson, "Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophets," in *Following
the Brethren: Speeches by Mormon Apostles Ezra Taft Benson and Bruce R. McConkie* (Salt Lake
City: Modern Microfilm, 1980), pt. 1.

tained for long. Even as the early church developed and encountered new situations, the "very words of God" given previously did not suffice, with the result that when Joseph prepared the Doctrine and Covenants for publication in 1835, he introduced numerous changes into revelations previously prepared for the Book of Commandments in 1833. What is now Doctrine and Covenants 20, for example, contained 102 changes, and current Doctrine and Covenants 42 contained 138. The majority of changes were grammatical and stylistic, but some were doctrinal and institutional.[16] To be absolute, the word of God had to be immutable, and these words turned out to be mutable.

The same may be said of the Book of Mormon, whose origins make it look like a miracle book very much in the same mode as the Koran. The book itself claims to have been brought forth "by the gift and power of God," the translation of ancient records written in an unknown language and rendered into English, not by a translator who knows both languages, but by a seer who by the "gift and power of God" sees "into hidden things" and goes back to the original source, that is, to God, for a new revelation. This sounds like a dictated book[17]; but in spite of its unusual origins, the Book of Mormon itself does not claim to be inerrant. It allows on its title page that there may be mistakes in it: "if there be faults, they are the mistakes of men." In fact, the text of the book has undergone many changes in style, grammar, and content, starting with Joseph's own revision in 1837.[18]

Finally, the absolutist notion of the word of God, the pursuit of absolute certainty and total control, appears to reach for a handful bigger than the hand. For example, previous to 1978 Elder Bruce R. McConkie had denied in the most absolute terms that blacks could ever receive the priesthood in this life because the restriction upon them was built into the cosmos.[19] Yet after the 1978 pronouncement he said, "Forget everything that I have said, or what President Brigham Young or President George Q. Cannon or whomsoever has said in days past that is contrary to the present revelation. We spoke with a limited understanding and

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16. Howard, 14-16.

17. A number of those closely associated with the circumstances of its production believed it was a dictated book. David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses, declared that when Joseph Smith looked into the stone or stones he was using to translate the Book of Mormon, he would see a character from the plates and underneath it the meaning in English. The scribe would then write down what was dictated and read it back. If the scribe's sentence was correct, the word or sentence in the stone would disappear and a new one would take its place. David Whitmer, *An Address to all Believers in Christ* (Richmond, MO, 1887), 8.

18. Changes in Mormon revelations are discussed and documented by Lamar Petersen, *Problems in Mormon Text* (Salt Lake City, 1957). See esp. 12-16.

19. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 1st ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958), 476-77.

without the light and knowledge that now has come into the world."[20] What these words say to me is that what was previously set forth as un-improvably true was in reality based on limited understanding. It is wise to change one's views in the light of new knowledge, but unwise to set down any present understanding as final and unimprovable, lest the ab-solutistic stance turn out to be self-destructive and everything else set forth by the same way of authority become vulnerable. Grasping after certainty and finality ends up by undermining the possibility of certainty and finality.

How could it be otherwise? The preface to the Doctrine and Cove-nants states that these words, which God has spoken, are given "to my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language" (1:24). Since human language reflects and is limited by both personality and cul-ture, it precludes looking on any statement as immutable or absolute. Ac-cording to this scripture, if God himself were to address a general conference, he would have to do it in a language rooted in and bounded by a culture, and what he said (if it were to be at all understandable to the congregation) would still require rational interpretation. The truth of God's word can rise no higher than the minds that perceive it.

LOOKING BACK: THE WAY OF THE INDIVIDUAL

If the word of God is mediated to the church through its hierarchy, it is also in an even more basic sense unmediated, coming directly to each individual who must satisfy him- or herself about the authenticity of the intermediary.[21] When we ask if the authority of the president of the church is self-evident to everyone, the answer has to be "No." Therefore, missionaries urge people to ask God directly while promising them that the Holy Ghost will make the answer known to them. Then a further question arises: Does the answer come to them in the form of a voice

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20. Bruce R. McConkie, "All Are Alike unto God," in *Following the Brethren.*

21. This question is not new in Christianity. When it was exhaustively debated in the Protestant-Catholic controversies of the seventeenth century, the question turned around the Catholic claim to infallibility for the church. Protestants were schismatic heretics, said Cath-olic apologists, because Christ promised infallibility to the church, and thus the interpreta-tions of the revelation of the scriptures set forth by the church were binding on all Christians. Protestants retorted that the passages cited by Catholics to prove infallibility were ambigu-ous and susceptible of differing but equally plausible interpretations. The authority of the church to interpret scripture could not be invoked until that authority were clearly estab-lished. Now if individuals reading the scriptures could resolve these questions, which were among the most difficult, they could as easily resolve all the others, and the Protestant prin-ciple of individual examination was established. *The Great Contest of Faith and Reason: Selec-tions from the Writings of Pierre Bayle,* ed. and trans. Karl Sandberg (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1963), 23-27, 35-36.

speaking in sentences? If so, how do they know that it is the true voice of God? Or if the answer comes in a strong feeling of persuasion, they need to decide on what basis they give greater credence to their own experiences than to other people who have also prayed and have also been fully persuaded by spiritual experiences of contrary conclusions. In any case, it is always the individual who decides the question of the meaning and authenticity of the answer. In the words of Montaigne, "Be he seated atop the highest throne in the world, still must each one sit on his own behind."

One of the most profound ideas of Mormonism, one most central to its genius, comes from Doctrine and Covenants 88:1-15, which declares that the light by which God created the universe, the sun, the moon and the earth, is the same light which is found in every person. It is through this light that we are connected to God. Because of this light there is a part of every person that is God.

In 1831, when the excesses of revivalistic religion threatened to fragment the newly formed Church of Christ into just another frontier sect[22] beyond rational check or balance,[23] another revelation came to Joseph giving the key for discerning which revelations came from God and which did not. It begins with an appeal to reason: "And now come, saith the Lord, by the Spirit, unto the elders of his church, and let us reason together, so that ye may understand" (D&C 50:10). Revelation from God is both rational and self-verifying: "he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together. And that which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness. That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day" (vv. 22-24).

The same test is proposed by the Book of Mormon. The word is a seed. The test of its goodness is whether it sprouts and grows, i.e., whether it enlightens the understanding, expands the mind, enlarges the soul, and brings forth increase in the living of one's life (Alma 32:28-41). This concept of the word of God will not serve as the basis for authority to be exercised over others; but for the individual who experiences it, its authority is bedrock.

The test of revelation is thus understanding and intelligibility, the coherence of "hidden things made known" with a growing body of understanding, coupled with a pragmatic confirmation of their goodness in

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22. Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt*, 4th ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1950), 61.

23. See Whitney Cross, *The Burned-over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 1950), 202, 203, for this assessment of frontier religion.

one's life. Revelation depends on the understanding and experience and thus the reason of the recipient for its completion. According to this view, it is therefore incorrect to say that "when the Brethren speak, the thinking has all been done." Rather, the word of God is not alive in the world until it has entered into the mind of an individual and the thinking has started.

The same approach that was set forth as a check on the revels of the Spirit also became the check on the excesses of authority and hierarchy. In 1839, after the disaster of the Missouri attempt, Joseph in Liberty Jail set forth a revelation (not a propositional revelation, by the way, with God speaking in the first person, but an experiential revelation showing him the meaning of recent events): "We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise un-righteous dominion," that is, they will try to put their authority to the service of covering their sins, or gratifying their pride and ambition, or exercising control and compulsion over others. They do not realize that their authority, their priesthood, does not, cannot, work that way. It can be exercised only by persuasion, which by its nature appeals to the mind and understanding. The only lasting "dominion" is established without recourse to compulsion (D&C 121:34-46). The authority of the priesthood thus looks like Alma's description of the progress of the seed. It grows slowly, and the soil must be nourished and cultivated. The effect of the word of God in Mormonism, in its ideal form, is a reconciliation of the need for hierarchy and organization with the need for individual liberty and initiative.

This view is supported by the declaration in the Book of Mormon that "the Lord doth grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word, yea, all that in his wisdom he seeth fit that they should have" (Alma 29:8). Here we learn that the word of God is to be found universally, but it is spoken of as relative to people and place. Does this refer to the Koran, the Bagavad-Gita, the teachings of the Buddha? Did God grant to any during the seventy years of the late Soviet Union that they should perceive his word in any way and speak it? Could we imagine Mormons studying the sacred books of other religions to see what words God has caused to be taught among them? Yes, if we still have in us the leaven of the 13th Article of Faith, if we actively seek after whatever is good and true from whatever source, accepting the idea that the word of God consists of the words which lead to God, and that God strives among all nations.

This notion suits well the ideas of human freedom prevalent in Mormonism and encourages individual initiative: "It is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant . . . men should be anxiously engaged in a

good cause, and do many things of their own free will . . . for the power is in them wherein they are agents unto themselves" (DC 58:26-28). When people are anxious to know what God wants them to do, it may be that God is just as interested in seeing what *they* want to do. I think of Lowell Bennion's ranch for adolescents in difficulty and his efforts on behalf of elderly people in their needs. I think of Eugene England organizing a Food for Poland campaign at that time of extreme need in the early 1980s. These and similar efforts show a faith that did not wait until instructions came down through channels, the kind of faith which like a seed grows toward God.

In summary, I believe that a statement faithful to the whole range of Mormonism on the threshold of the twenty-first century would say that revelation in the view of many Mormons is propositional and absolute— God speaking in sentences tells the president of the church what to do. On the other hand, the course of history and many founding statements show revelation instead to be experiential and partial, consisting of the description which individuals give of their experiences with God and the conclusions they draw from them. The word of God, either to individuals or the church, is never absolute or definitive, since the doctrine of continued revelation guarantees that even apostles and presidents of the church, speaking in their most categorical terms, might, in Elder McConkie's phrase, be "speaking from limited understanding," which will cause their statements to be modified in the future. Thus despite the belief in mediated revelation, coming through the president of the church or other general authorities, the burden of ratification is ultimately cast on individuals, who make the decisions themselves, whether by seeking after the unmediated revelation coming directly through the Holy Ghost, or through the exercise of rational and critical faculties, or sometimes simply a leap to an authority-based faith. The Mormon venture advances to the degree that a climate of persuasion enables institutional authority and individual growth to move in harmony. Since such harmony is the highest achievement of any human society, we should not expect it to come easily or quickly.

LOOKING AHEAD

If the foregoing analysis approximately describes the situation of Mormonism at the end of the twentieth century, we can expect a number of issues concerning the word of God to persist into the next century. The first may be the problem of distinguishing the word of God from the status quo.[24]

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24. This formulation is borrowed from Ed Firmage.

The Word of God vs. the Status Quo

Given the popular belief in apostolic infallibility, many people reason that the Brethren are instructed constantly by the Lord and therefore easily conclude that everything in current belief and practice in the church is upheld by, and is in conformity with, the will of God. If God wants anything changed, he will say so, and the message will come from the top down. Yet many people are uncomfortable in maintaining beliefs that seem to hang in the air waiting for God to speak further. Therefore, in order to defend the current position, they invent reasons for it, and these reasons metastasize into doctrines, which become part of the status quo and which in turn come to be accepted in all docility as the word of God. An example is in the question of the blacks and the priesthood. There was no founding revelation for such a practice: the only person in all of the scriptures to be "cursed as to the Priesthood," i.e. the Pharaoh pictured in facsimile three of the Pearl of Great Price, was white, and Joseph Smith himself ordained Elijah Abel, a black man, to the priesthood and sent him on missions. Nonetheless, a prevalent cultural belief at that time, the status quo, was that blacks were inferior, still laboring under the curse of Cain or Caanan, and Brigham Young accepted it in the nineteenth century.[25] Joseph Fielding Smith and his son-in-law Bruce R. McConkie both echoed it in the twentieth century.[26] B. H. Roberts also endorsed it and even elaborated on another reason given for withholding the priesthood from blacks: they were less valiant in the pre-existence.[27] In 1978 all of these statements which had been proclaimed and accepted as the word of God were unhinged. Brigham Young was wrong. Joseph Fielding Smith was wrong. Bruce R. McConkie was wrong. B. H. Roberts was wrong. Either that or Spencer W. Kimball was wrong in now extending priesthood to all worthy black men. What had been accepted as the word of God turned out to be the status quo. Venerating the status quo as the word of God is not easily distinguishable from idolatry, always a vexatious problem, but one we will continue to encounter in the future.

Textual Criticism

The mode of infallible and absolute revelation will continue to con-

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25. *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855; reprint ed., 1964), 2:172, 184. Examples of the currency of the idea of the supposed inferiority of Negroes can be found among the most progressive, even in Abraham Lincoln himself. See David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995), 202.

26. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (1958), 102.

27. B. H. Roberts, *The Truth, The Way, The Life: An Elementary Treatise on Theology: The Masterwork of B.H. Roberts*, ed. Stan Larson (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994), 420-21.

flict with the increasing activity of some Mormon scholars in textual criticism. By its nature, textual criticism leads to the idea of partial and relative revelation, if not to the denial of the authority of a given text. Problems arising from textual criticism have recently been manifested in two areas: (1) attitudes of some Mormon leaders toward the Bible, and (2) attitudes of some scholars toward the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham.

In 1925 the battle of fundamentalist Christianity against the rising forces of modernity[28] was joined in a courtroom in Tennessee, where high school teacher John Scopes was brought to trial for teaching ideas of Darwinian evolution. William Jennings Bryan, assisting the prosecution, staked the entire case for Christianity against its arch foe on the existence of an inerrant Bible which needed no interpretation: "Bryan was determined to defend as literally true every word of the Bible. In the deepest sense, he had to defend it; he needed reassurance and certainty, and since childhood, he had learned to rely on the Bible as the source of reassurance and certainty."[29] While the prosecution technically won and Scopes was fined $100 for teaching evolution, the cause of fundamentalist Christianity ultimately lost in the minds of the general public.[30]

In 1994 the dynamics of the Scopes case were replayed in Mormonism, when a Mormon stake president in Nashua, New Hampshire, excommunicated David P. Wright, an assistant professor of biblical studies at Brandeis University, for "apostasy." The "apostasy" did not consist of any moral lapse, but rather of Wright's insistence on the right to publish the findings of his research in his field of study. One of the incriminating points urged against Wright by the stake president was that Wright did not believe in a literal flood of Noah; we have to believe in a literal flood, said the stake president, or else we make God a liar.[31] To the extent that leaders continue to refight in the twenty-first century the battles that were fought and lost elsewhere in the twentieth century,[32] textual criti-

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28. An extensive description of this contest is found in William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 141-78.

29. Ray Ginger, *Six Days or Forever? Tennessee vs. John Thomas Scopes* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), 41.

30. Ibid., 191.

31. "The Wright Excommunication Documents," *Sunstone* 17 (Sept. 1994): 71. This was despite the explicit repudiation by Elder John A. Widtsoe of a literal interpretation of the flood story, quoted in Daniel Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1994), 1:432.

32. I say "lost" in the sense of "lost in the public discussion of ideas" where evidence is the yardstick. The battles were not lost in the minds of those who made a leap of faith to a pre-determined view of the Bible, nor of course were the battles "won" by those who merely made a similar leap to an opposite view.

cism of the Bible will continue to be a source of tension.

Textual criticism of uniquely Mormon scriptures, specifically the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham, becomes an even thornier matter: Are these two texts translations of ancient documents, or are they nineteenth-century documents? Textual criticism will continue to nudge inquiring people closer to one of the following decisions: (1) these texts are ancient, authentic, and inspired, or (2) they are nineteenth-century, spurious, and not inspired, or (3) they are nineteenth-century and inspired.

What does it imply for faith to believe that the Book of Mormon is a nineteenth-century document? For those who have relied on the Book of Mormon as an icon, a warrant for the rest of the Mormon venture, the shift is immense, as it is for those who have held that Joseph Smith was either a prophet (i.e., an authentic messenger) or a fraud. Of course, it is possible that Joseph was neither infallible nor fraudulent, and that the origins of the Book of Mormon still differ from traditional understandings. In any case the documents that came forth through Joseph depend on their religious content for their value, and their precepts are verified by their effects in personal experience, which indeed the Book of Mormon proposes as *the* test of its truth (discussed above in connection with Alma 32).

To illustrate, Cervantes was a historical personage, and Don Quixote and Sancho Panza are literary personages who may have been modeled on one or several historical personages, or on none at all. The value of the work of Cervantes does not depend on the literal historical accuracy of his accounts but on their power to inform the human condition. In the critical assessment of Mormon texts there are those who conclude that Nephi is a personage like Don Quixote, while on the other hand there are those who hold that Nephi was a personage like Cervantes. I do not expect the question to be resolved to everyone's satisfaction anytime soon.

SECULARIZATION AND THE ACIDS OF MODERNITY

How might the Mormon mode of the word of God fare in a secularized society? "Secular" refers to "life lived out within the confines of this world." The challenge of secularization derives specifically from the encounter with science and technology, which operate from the supposition of a mechanistic universe, a cause-and-effect universe which moves according to law and not according to an intervening God in control of everything. Science moreover is corrosive of ethical standards, since it is concerned with describing what *is* and cannot bridge the gap between *is* and *ought*.

Returning to our comparison with Islam, we are reminded that Islam from its inception has existed in the world as a totality, encompassing

politics, economics, and morals, the whole based on the total and final authority of the Koran. It would be unthinkable for a Muslim to admit a split between politics and religion. Has not the degeneracy of the West, especially in its sexual laxness and promiscuity, demonstrated what happens when morals are not dictated by the divine law? Have not science and technology, which carry with them their own inherent authority, priorities, and imperatives, ended up by relativizing and undermining all traditional moral codes?

How can Islam face this crisis? Is it possible to accept science and maintain revealed values? Can Islam just say "no" to science and technology? Such was the stance of some of the revolutionaries in Iran just after the revolution in 1979. One example shows how. A physics professor, about to begin a lecture on quantum physics, held up a pair of dice to demonstrate the concept of randomness and statistical probability. A revolutionary in the classroom took charge of the class and forbade the professor to go further; since everything that happens in the world happens by the direct will of God, he declared, any attempt to show randomness goes directly counter to the revealed word in the Koran.[33] Yet science, technology, and industrialization are forces that will not be turned back. Islamic cultures are tied to political and economic forces throughout the world, and they sometimes depend on technology for their very existence, as in the recent war between Iran and Iraq.

How has Christianity, specifically Catholic Christianity, responded to secularization? Hans Küng gives an intriguing response. Christianity, like Islam, was also once a system that embraced and controlled all public and private life. The law, the church, and the state were a unit. At the challenge of the Reformation and the greater challenge of the Enlightenment, Catholic Christianity thought that it could resist the currents of modernity and restore the medieval paradigm. In 1870 the First Vatican Council devoted itself to condemning all modern errors and to establishing the infallibility of the Pope. Less than a hundred years later, in 1963-65, Vatican II was obliged to accept what Vatican I had condemned: the vernacular in the liturgy, active participation of the laity, modern science (including the Copernican and Darwinian views), modern history and biblical scholarship, popular sovereignty, freedom of conscience and religion, and the abolition of the church censor and the Index.[34]

How has Mormonism responded to modernity and secularization? One of the significant features of early Mormonism was its confidence in its ability to include the whole world in its embrace. As the elders of the church were enjoined to teach each other the doctrine of the kingdom,

33. Heinz Pagels, *The Cosmic Code: Quantum Physics as the Language of Nature* (New York: Bantam, 1982), 80.

34. Küng, 52.

their curriculum potentially included "all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand . . . things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, and things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and perplexities of nations, and the judgments which are upon the land; and a knowledge also of countries and kingdoms" (D&C 88:77-80). There was no distinction between "spiritual" and "temporal" (29:34, 35).

In the nineteenth century the metaphor for Mormonism was Daniel's stone cut out of the mountain without hands to roll forth and break all other kingdoms into pieces and itself fill the whole earth. This figure lost much of its potency at the end of the century when Mormonism lost not only its economic, political, judicial, and marriage systems, but large parts of its theology. The effort to subsume the whole earth was replaced by the encounter with the world, that is, with all of the forces of secular culture.

This encounter coincided with a similar transition in Protestant Christianity, which separated into two streams: liberal, social gospel Christianity and fundamentalist Christianity doing battle with the forces of modernity (e.g., Darwinian evolution, textual criticism of the Bible, etc.).[35] Within Mormonism there were likewise two streams: one represented by B. H. Roberts, James Talmage, and John A. Widtsoe, who found it necessary to respond to the challenge of science and work out new answers to new questions, the other represented by Joseph Fielding Smith and Bruce R. McConkie, who simply withdrew within the confines of dogma. The second stream ultimately prevailed, with the result that Mormonism's twentieth-century response to secularization has been like that of both Islam and Vatican I. It has embraced the technology of the modern world but has officially turned away from the science that undergirds that technology, as was visible in the Roberts-Talmage-Smith contest of the early 1930s.[36]

In the last half of the twentieth century the response to secularization has been the Correlation movement, an essentially defensive response to the perceived threat of secular incursion. Correlation sought to strengthen the family by strengthening the priesthood, and it sought to strengthen the priesthood by weakening women.[37] This was the time in

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35. McLoughlin, 139-78.

36. Richard Sherlock and Jeffrey E. Keller, "The B.H. Roberts/Joseph Fielding Smith/James E. Talmage Affair," in Gene Sessions and Craig Oberg, eds., *The Search for Harmony: Essays on Science and Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 93-116.

37. The dynamics of pushing men to exercise leadership by subordinating women is illustrated by a 1973 BYU devotional address of Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, where this aspect of Correlation is explained, "A New Emphasis on Priesthood," *Speeches of the Year: BYU Devotional and Ten-Stake Fireside Addresses, 1973* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press), 41-51.

the 1960s when Relief Societies were deprived of independent control of funds and women were not allowed to give opening prayers in sacrament meetings.

Another perceived threat during the same period was to the missionary system. The temporary defection of about a third of French missionaries in 1957-58, and the definitive defection of nine of them, was traumatic for some general authorities, and it was from that time forward that the entire missionary system was taken under tighter control. One perceived cause of the French apostasy was too much reading. Henceforth, lists of approved reading materials were drawn up and then shortened. Whereas previous generations of missionaries had been encouraged to reason from the scriptures and to learn how to talk with as many different kinds of people as possible, now they were told to testify, and, if people did not believe them, to move on. This approach produced a different kind of mission experience.

Correlation took a similar approach to materials for all the classes in the church. In order to forestall divisions and doubts, the questions to be raised were specified, whether or not they were questions faced by people living in a secularized society. In many cases, Correlation has thus turned out a long list of answers to a set of non-questions.

A Mormon in dialogue with a Muslim- or a Hans Küng-type of Christian, however, would have to rethink a paradox in Mormonism in responding to secularization. On the one hand, Mormonism has always had the element of "coming out of Babylon," or as Marvin Hill has put it, a "quest for refuge." On the other hand, it has been decidedly *this-worldly* and not *other-worldly*. The temporal and the spiritual are not separated. Beginning with the view of the human being, a person needs a body to have a soul, since "the body and the spirit are the soul of man" (D&C 88:15). Those who went on an iron mission to Iron County or on a cotton mission to Dixie were deemed just as essential to the building of the kingdom as were those who went on proselytizing missions.

Instead of trying to turn back history, both Christianity and Islam, said Küng, would be better advised to observe that contrary to the prophecies of the secular prophets, such as Feuerbach, Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche, secularization has not meant the end of religion. Worldliness has not been identical to godlessness. Why? Because "man's eternal questions about the meaning of life, suffering, and death, about the highest values and ultimate norms for the individual and society, are not simply still with us—they have grown more urgent in the face of political catastrophes and disenchantment with blind faith in progress."[38] In other words, religion is not a garment that can be put on or cast off but is part

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38. Küng, 55.

of the human condition itself. To what extent will Mormonism in the twenty-first century realize that the only way to oppose secularism is to attend to what people who live in a secular world are seeking for their spiritual lives? This thought brings us to look at another dimension of the twentieth century.

For hundreds of millions in the twentieth century the faceless, impersonal state or mass movement has been the new name of God. Why? No one has expressed the psychology of this phenomenon more accurately than Dostoyevsky in his nineteenth-century portrait of the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov.* In this parable Christ returns to earth at the height of the Inquisition in Spain. The people recognize him and hail him, but at a sign from the Grand Inquisitor, they shrink back, and the Inquisitor has Christ arrested and put into a dungeon, where he comes at night to visit Christ and upbraid him. Christ came bearing the gift of freedom, says the Inquisitor, but it was a terrible gift for most of humanity. "If for the sake of the bread of Heaven thousands and tens of thousands shall follow Thee, what is to become of the millions and tens of thousands of millions of creatures who have not the strength to forego the earthly bread for the sake of the heavenly?" So long as man remains free, he seeks for nothing so much as an authority at whose feet he can lay his freedom. Humankind are born rebels, but they are impotent rebels, unable to keep up their own rebellion. Therefore, says the Inquisitor, "we have corrected Thy work and have founded it upon miracle, mystery, and authority. And men rejoiced that they were again led like sheep, and that the terrible gift that had brought them such suffering, was, at last, lifted from their hearts."[39]

This parable is one of the most prophetic passages of the nineteenth century in that it so closely describes what came to be the actual situation of hundreds of millions in the twentieth century.[40] It raises serious questions about the nature of faith, its sources and effects, and points to the most subtle and terrible temptation of our modern world: to absolve ourselves of choice by giving our consciences, our moral power of attorney, to the keeping of another, who in turn pledges us comfort and safety in the flock, or, as in the parable, in "a great, teeming anthill."

The temptation comes in the form of an authority-based faith, much like that in Islam, founded on the inerrancy of the written text, or in Catholicism on the ultimate inerrancy of the Pope, or in the secular religions on the infallibility of the Party's reading of history. In one mode of Mor-

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39. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Grand Inquisitor,* ed. Anne Freemantle (New York: Fredrick Ungar, 1956), 8, 9, 12, 13.

40. Two works describing the details of this "fulfilled prophecy" are Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Avon, 1941), and Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951).

monism it derives from the commission of the living oracle to speak in the name of God, where this belief assumes a gift of infallibility vouch-safed to the hierarchy, as the phrase comes easily to the lips, "God will not allow the Prophet to lead the Church astray." The principal concern of the believer is to maintain his or her testimony of that authority. The authority, not care of the soul, has become the object of the faith.

In contrast to this is faith that is authenticated to the individual, not by an authority *out there*, but by the effect *in here*. When we go to the scriptures to find the word as *seed*, we are never uncertain, never in doubt; the ground always knows when the seed is good. We also know immediately when the light grows brighter. When we go to an external *authority*, we are never entirely sure. However fervent our declarations, our testimony *of* something always needs to be shored up by a faith-promoting report. It is the difference between two modes of faith, the first saying, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the *authority* of God to salvation"; the second saying, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the *power* of God to salvation." The first is a covenant and manifests itself in striving after perfection. The second is a faith of religious intuition, ratified by the mind and marked more by growth and unfolding of the possibilities within than by perfection and conformity to an objective standard.

I nonetheless expect that an authority-based faith will persist and thrive in the twenty-first century, for it is the source of stability when all else trembles, and it has much appeal when the burden of personal freedom and choice becomes onerous or overwhelming. It is one of the places where many people will choose to seek and find one form of the word of God. It is a matter of choice, but it is not the only choice that emerges from the Mormon tradition. At the headwaters of Mormonism, and in distinction to the collectivist mentality so prevalent in the twentieth century, was the Puritan dynamics, standing on the bedrock of human existence: the soul alone on its journey and aware of its peril, in this case before an all-powerful and inscrutable God, who had chosen some for salvation and left the rest to torment. "Here is a matter of terror," we might hear in a Puritan sermon, "in that few shall be saved."[41] In the 1832 account of his first vision and his early experiences, Joseph Smith indicates that the beginnings of the marvelous things that happened to him were "the all important concerns for the welfare of my immortal soul" which led him to reflect on "the state of religion and of the world." Between the ages of twelve and fifteen, he states, "my mind became exceedingly distressed for I became convicted of my sins." The message of the

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41. David Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1989), 140-41.

first vision was: "Joseph /my son/ thy sins are forgiven thee. Go Thy way, walk in my statutes and keep my commandments."[42]

In this original context of Mormonism we see exemplified the primal context of the word of God, the soul alone and in peril on its journey. It is not a faith that can be pursued in comfort and safety, but it is a choice that must be confronted. What is happening at the end of the twentieth century is a re-awakening to the spiritual context of human life. Carl Jung is one eminent example of this way of thinking: the journey inward as the way of individuation and human fulfillment is the last great adventure open to humankind.[43] Another perspective on this thought comes from a post-Vatican II Catholic, Garry Wills, who says:

> The best things in the church, as in a nation, or in individuals, are hidden and partially disowned, the vital impulse buried under all of our cowardly mis-uses of it—as the life of a nation lies under and is oppressed by its crude gov-erning machinery; as the self lies far below the various roles imposed on or adopted by it; as covenant and gospel run, subterranean, beneath temple and cathedral. Life's streams lie far down, for us, below the surface of our lives— where we must look for them. It is time to join the underground.[44]

The original aspect of Mormonism, the soul on its journey, persists today in those for whom the nurture of the soul is the first consideration.

The word of God endureth forever, but the languages, cultures, and world views which express it do not. Moreover, they render any meaning or content that people attribute to it partial and incomplete. What we call the word of God can be no more than our best idea of God and his inten-tions at any given time, and it is therefore astringently helpful at times to think upon the late Episcopal bishop James Pike and his rendering of the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me, not even the best idea you have of me." Seeking for the word of God has been a constant in human affairs, and since all meaning is constructed, the words which we attribute to God and then finalize become gods in our own minds. Perpetually seeking for the word of God is and will be seek-ing after the God beyond our gods.

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42. Scott H. Faulring, ed., *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1989), 4, 5.

43. M. L. von Franz, "The Process of Individuation," in Carl Jung, *Man and His Symbols* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1964), 228.

44. Garry Wills, *Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy, and Radical Religion* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1971), 272.

Science and Mormonism: Past, Present, Future

David H. Bailey

IN 1832, WHILE JOSEPH SMITH was organizing the Mormon church, Ralph Waldo Emerson wryly observed, "The Religion that is afraid of science dishonours God and commits suicide."[1] One hundred sixty-four years later, as the church faces a new century and a new millennium, issues in the arena of science and religion are still before us.

Will the church be able to retain the essence of its theology in the face of challenges from science? Will the church's discourse on scientific topics be marked by fundamentalism, isolationism, or progressivism? Will the church be able to retain its large contingent of professional scientists? Will it be able to produce new scientists in fields germane to this discussion? Will Mormon youth be able to sort out conflicts between faith and science? What will be the likely outcome of the faith *versus* science issues currently being discussed in LDS literature? What entirely new issues will emerge? What is the likelihood that the church will be able to deal with these new issues?

A GLANCE AT THE PAST

Before answering these questions we first need to review briefly the history of scientific thought in the LDS movement. Additional information can be obtained in the helpful works by Duane Jeffery[2] and Erich Robert Paul.[3]

At a time when other Christian faiths were still smarting from the

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1. From Ralph Waldo Emerson's journal, cited in J. L. Davis et al., eds., *A Treasury of American Literature* (New York: Grolier, 1948), 1:703.
2. Duane Jeffery, "Seers, Savants and Evolution: The Uncomfortable Interface," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 8 (Autumn 1974): 41-75.
3. Erich R. Paul, *Science, Religion, and Mormon Cosmology* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992). Sadly, Paul died of cancer in October 1994.

Copernican revolution, Joseph Smith's revelations included frequent references to God's vast creations—"worlds without number" (D&C 76:24, 88:37-39, 93:10; Moses 1:29-35; Abr. 3:9). In another departure from Christian orthodoxy, Joseph taught that God works in accordance with natural laws: "True science is a discovery of the secret, immutable and eternal laws, by which the universe is governed."[4] Joseph specifically denied creation *ex nihilo,* teaching instead that matter is eternal (D&C 93:33).

Other early church leaders expressed similar views. Orson Pratt, who authored a number of scientific and mathematical works, advocated the Platonic view that scientific truths are known to God and that humans merely rediscover them as their knowledge progresses.[5] Orson's older brother Parley P. Pratt emphasized that LDS theology encompasses all of human knowledge, including "philosophy, astronomy, history, mathematics, geography, languages, the science of letters."[6] Brigham Young was also receptive to the pursuit of scientific knowledge, emphasizing its beauty, practical value, and divine origin. He was particularly open-minded about such issues as the age of the earth and the questionable reliability of the Bible as a scientific text.[7]

In his monumental opus *The Truth, The Way, The Life,*[8] B. H. Roberts attempted to harmonize modern secular and scientific knowledge with LDS theology. He included many details of the current understanding of astronomy and astrophysics, even Hubble's expanding universe and Einstein's relativity. He acknowledged the antiquity of the earth and the existence of pre-Adamic life, including beings resembling modern-day humans.[9] He repeatedly emphasized that both science and revelation are indispensable in the search for ultimate truth. For example, with regard to the Creation he taught,

> On the other hand, to limit and insist upon the whole of life and death to this side of Adam's advent to the earth, some six or eight thousand years ago, as proposed by some, is to fly in the face of the facts so indisputably brought to light by the researcher of science in modern times; . . . [t]o pay attention to and give reasonable credence to their research and findings is to link the church of God with the highest increase of human thought and effort.[10]

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4. *Times and Seasons* 4 (15 Dec. 1842): 46.

5. *Journal of Discourses,* 26 vols. (Liverpool, Eng.: Latter-day Saints' Bookseller's Depot, 1855-88), 7 (12 Feb. 1860): 157.

6. Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology* (London, 1855), 2.

7. *Journal of Discourses* 7 (6 Oct. 1850): 271; 8 (3 June 1860): 278; 9 (31 Aug. 1862): 369; 13 (25 Sept. 1870): 247-48; 14 (14 May 1871): 116; 15 (11 Aug. 1872): 127.

8. Brigham H. Roberts, *The Truth, The Way, The Life: An Elementary Treatise on Theology* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994).

9. Ibid., 260-74, 339-64.

10. Ibid., 363-64.

However, by about 1930 this positive approach to science began to change. One indication was the dispute among Roberts, Joseph Fielding Smith, and James E. Talmage over the church's stance toward the theory of biological evolution.[11] This dispute arose when Roberts attempted to gain permission to publish *The Truth, The Way, The Life* as an official lesson manual, which Smith opposed because of its mention of "pre-Adamites." The matter ended inconclusively in 1931 when the First Presidency declined to publish Roberts's book and issued a memorandum declaring, "Leave geology, biology, archaeology and anthropology, no one of which has to do with the salvation of the souls of mankind, to scientific research, while we magnify our calling in the realm of the Church."[12]

Some LDS figures, mainly those of scientific or intellectual backgrounds, continued to advocate a positive and open-minded approach to scientific questions. An example was John A. Widtsoe, one of Mormonism's first academically trained scientists and an apostle for several decades. In *Evidences and Reconciliations* he discussed, among other things, the increasing weight of evidence for an old earth and even presented a detailed tutorial on the technique of uranium isotope dating.[13] In an article published in the *Improvement Era*, he mentioned the existence of "human-like" beings before Adam and explained that "the mystery of the creation of Adam and Eve has not yet been revealed."[14]

Voices such as Widtsoe's came to reflect a minority view. In 1954, after Talmage, Roberts, and Widtsoe had passed away, Joseph Fielding Smith, with the encouragement of several other general authorities, published his manuscript *Man: His Origin and Destiny*.[15] Even though the book had not received official approval, it quickly gained widespread acceptance. Elder Smith's anti-science philosophies were further developed in subsequent works such as his *Doctrines of Salvation*.[16]

In these works Smith promoted a highly literal interpretation of the scriptures. On the age of the earth, he asserted that the earth's temporal existence "is to endure for just one week, or seven days of 1,000 years each."[17] He insisted that Noah's flood literally and completely immersed

11. Richard Sherlock, "We Can See No Advantage to a Continuation of the Discussion: The Roberts/Smith/Talmage Affair," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 13 (Fall 1980): 63-78.

12. Ibid., 71.

13. John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1951), 149.

14. John A. Widtsoe, "Were There Pre-Adamites?" *Improvement Era* 51 (May 1948): 205.

15. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Man: His Origin and Destiny* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954).

16. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1956).

17. Ibid., 1:80.

the earth.[18] He condemned the theory of evolution as "falsehood absolutely."[19] His views gained even greater circulation when they were cited in Bruce R. McConkie's popular reference *Mormon Doctrine.*[20]

During the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, some LDS authorities, notably David O. McKay and Hugh B. Brown, continued to emphasize a positive outlook on science. President McKay, who apparently believed in evolution, quietly assured those who inquired of his office that the church had not taken an official position on the issue.[21] Brown once declared, "We should be in the forefront of learning in all fields, for revelation does not come only through the prophet of God nor only directly from heaven in visions or dreams. Revelation may come in the laboratory, out of the test tube, out of the thinking mind and the inquiring soul, out of search and research and prayer and inspiration."[22]

Yet other leaders during this time emphasized the dangers of science. Mark E. Petersen raised concern about the "tenuous and fragile theory that the universe and all life came about in some mysterious spontaneous, accidental manner."[23] Harold B. Lee listed "science so-called" with communism as among the sources of "untruth" challenging the world.[24] Bruce R. McConkie termed Darwin's theory of evolution as one of the "seven deadly heresies."[25] Ezra Taft Benson urged members to use the Book of Mormon to combat falsehoods such as "socialism, organic evolution, rationalism, humanism."[26]

THE PRESENT SITUATION

So where do we stand today? One recent example of scientific commentary by an LDS general authority is a talk given by Elder Boyd K. Packer at a BYU Book of Mormon symposium in 1988, where he declared,

18. Smith, *Man*, 414-36.

19. Smith, *Doctrines*, 1:140.

20. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 256.

21. William L. Stokes, "An Official Position," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 12 (Winter 1979): 90-92; David O. McKay, *A Message for LDS College Youth* (Provo, UT: BYU Extension Publications, 1952), 6-7; *Conference Reports*, Apr. 1968, 92; *Gospel Ideals* (Salt Lake City: Improvement Era Publications, 1953), 49; Sterling M. McMurrin and L. Jackson Newell, "McMurrin's Heresies, History, and Humor," *Sunstone* 18 (Apr. 1995): 55-62.

22. Edwin B. Firmage, ed., *An Abundant Life: The Memoirs of Hugh B. Brown* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988), 139.

23. Mark E. Petersen, "Creator and Savior," *Ensign* 13 (May 1983): 63-65.

24. Harold B. Lee, *Conference Report*, Apr. 1964, 21-25; also Oct. 1968, 59-62.

25. Bruce R. McConkie, "The Seven Deadly Heresies," BYU Fireside, 1 June 1980, transcript in my possession.

26. Ezra Taft Benson, *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), 60. Benson did acknowledge the scientific evidence for evolution; see Steve Benson, "Ezra Taft Benson: A Grandson's Remembrance," *Sunstone* 17 (Dec. 1994): 29-37.

It is my conviction that to the degree the theory of evolution asserts that man is the product of an evolutionary process, the offspring of animals—it is false! ... And, I am sorry to say, the so-called theistic evolution, the theory that God used an evolutionary process to prepare a physical body for the spirit of man, is equally false. ... How old is the earth? I do not know! But I do know that matter is eternal. How long a time has man been upon the earth? I do not know! But I do know that man did not evolve from animals. ... When confronted by evidence in the rocks below, rely on the witness of the heavens above.[27]

In spite of the fundamentalist tone in these excerpts, note that Elder Packer does not rule out plants and animals as possible products of an evolutionary process, nor does he rule out an old earth. In this regard he is more flexible than some of the other LDS authorities who have commented on these issues during the past few decades.

There are other indications that the literalism which has dominated LDS literature during the last forty years may have peaked. In 1987, in response to numerous inquiries from readers on the subjects of fossils, the age of the earth, and related issues, the editors of the *Ensign* asked Morris Petersen, a professor of geology at BYU, to respond. He replied with a straightforward scientific explanation of the geological record, including evidence for the earth's great antiquity and the progression of fossils from primitive to highly advanced forms.[28] The fact that such an article could be published in the church's official organ, which requires official review, indicates that many LDS leaders are now comfortable with the conventional scientific picture of an old earth.

Other examples are in the student lesson manuals used in the Church Education System (CES). The Old Testament manual currently used in institute classes, which was revised in 1981, takes a highly literalist approach. On the question of the age of the earth, the manual mentions the work of Velikovsky and Melvin Cook in defense of the position that the earth is only a few thousand years old. On the question of evolution, the manual includes several quotes by certain general authorities, which appear to rule out any possibility of a reconciliation with LDS doctrine, while leaving other viewpoints unmentioned. These quotes are followed by a lengthy excerpt (twenty-two paragraphs) from the writings of a Christian creationist.[29] Similar commentary appears in several other places.

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27. Boyd K. Packer, "The Law and the Light," in Monte Nyman and Charles D. Tate, eds., *To Learn With Joy* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1990). This published version of Packer's 1988 speech was prefaced with a strong disclaimer by the editors.

28. Morris Petersen, "Fossils and Scripture," *Ensign* 17 (Sept. 1987): 28.

29. *Old Testament: Genesis—2 Samuel Student Manual* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), 28-29, 33-36.

By contrast, the Old Testament manual currently used for seminary classes, which was revised in 1990, does not include any such material. Its only allusion to evolution is in a brief question, to be considered by the student, regarding the scripture "whose seed could only bring forth the same in itself, after his kind" (Abr. 4:12). The manual concludes its discussion of the creation with the admonition, "There are still many unanswered questions about how the earth was created, but these will be answered in the Lord's own due time."[30]

A third indication of a softening in the prevailing views on scientific issues is given in the new *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*,[31] which has at least semi-official status due to its sponsorship and rigorous review by the church. The article "Science and Religion," by Erich R. Paul, author of *Science, Religion and Mormon Cosmology*, briefly summarizes LDS commentary on the subject and then concludes that Latter-day Saints "look forward to a time when more complete knowledge in both areas will transcend all present perceptions of conflict." The article "Origin of Man," by John L. Sorenson of BYU, emphasizes that there are differing views on this issue and that the official position of the church is "not definitive."[32]

The article "Evolution," by William Evenson of BYU, is also telling. It is just a few paragraphs long, mainly a quote of the First Presidency's neutral statement in conclusion to the 1931 Roberts-Smith-Talmage dispute. For this particular article, at least three earlier and much longer drafts were reviewed and rejected by the First Presidency and other church leaders. The First Presidency then supplied the 1931 statement from their files, and the ensuing *Encyclopedia* article contains little more than this short statement. Incidentally, a slightly abbreviated version of this article is now distributed by church headquarters to people inquiring about evolution. Articles on other science-related topics, such as "Abortion," "Birth Control," "Homosexuality," "Medical Practices" and "Prolonging Life," are similarly moderate and open-minded, compared with discourse on these topics from decades past.[33]

EMERGING ISSUES

In reviewing the history of discourse on scientific topics in LDS literature, one is struck by the large amount of space that has been devoted to

30. *Seminary Old Testament Student Manual* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1990), 18-19.

31. Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992).

32. "Science and Religion," *Encyclopedia*, 3:1270-72; "Origin of Man," 3:1053-54.

33. "Evolution," *Encyclopedia*, 2:478; "Abortion," 1:7; "Birth Control," 1:116-17; "Homosexuality," 2:655-56; "Medical Practices," 2:875; "Prolonging Life," 3:1159-60.

a single topic: the apparent difficulty in reconciling modern biology, geology, and paleontology with the LDS creation scriptures. This issue was particularly at the forefront during the period from about 1950 to 1990. Those favoring a synthesis of faith and science can draw comfort from the articles in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*. Also encouraging to many scientifically-minded LDS are the successful efforts of BYU faculty and administrators in resisting periodic efforts to impose creationist biology there.[34] Along this line, in 1992 the Board of Trustees approved a packet of information on evolution to be made available for perusal by interested students at the library. It includes only a few statements by various First Presidencies while omitting a large number of less conciliatory (and less authoritative) statements by other church authorities. These developments are shallow victories, however, given that most members still hold fundamentalist beliefs on many scientific questions. For example, over 80 percent of BYU students in a 1973 survey did not believe that the Creation involved evolution.[35]

In any event, it might one day be lamented in LDS circles that such an inordinate amount of intellectual energy was expended during the twentieth century debating evolution and the age of the earth, while other, potentially more significant, questions were ignored. For it now seems clear that the twenty-first century will bring a host of such issues to the forefront. Among them are likely to be the following.

1. The recent discovery of an "ozone hole" over Antarctica, and the increasing weight of evidence that this phenomenon is due to fluorine compounds emitted by the industrialized nations, has convinced many observers that the environmental crisis must be taken seriously.[36] Other crises include steadily growing levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide, due principally to the burning of fossil fuels, the destruction of tropical rain forests, and the ongoing extinction of numerous species of plant and animal life. Are there scriptural suggestions of these calamities? How should world governments respond? Is it prudent for the church to become involved in these matters? If so, should LDS members be instructed, especially in light of early church teachings and scriptures charging us with

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34. Gary J. Bergera and Ronald Priddis, *Brigham Young University: A House of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1985), 131-71.

35. Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 179. According to BYU zoologist Duane Jeffery (private communication), BYU students today are at least as literalist in their beliefs on evolution as they were in 1973.

36. Owen B. Toon and Richard P. Turco, "Polar Stratospheric Clouds and Ozone Depletion," *Scientific American* 264 (June 1991): 68-75; Sasha Nemecek, "Holes in Ozone Science," *Scientific American* 272 (Jan. 1995): 26-27.

responsibility for *stewardship* over nature?[37]

2. Hand in hand with the environmental crisis is the burgeoning world population. LDS authorities have historically discouraged the practice of birth control, although the church's current official position on this issue is moderate.[38] In any event, the question of worldwide population control is coming explosively to the fore as it appears that the green revolution of the past few decades may have run its course and that the food supply cannot be increased much further without incalculable environmental damage.[39] In China, for example, even though a draconian birth control program has reduced the country's annual population growth rate to only 1.4 percent, the nation grows by 17 million people per year. Analysts project that by the year 2030 China alone could consume all the surplus grain produced in the world today, just to meet the most basic nutritional needs of its population.[40]

If pressure continues to build for limiting population around the world, what counsel should be given to prospective LDS parents on family size? Should families in all regions of the world be given the same counsel?

3. Advances in biological science are certain to bring significant questions of medical ethics to the fore. An example is the detection of genetic defects by DNA analysis.[41] If a person is diagnosed with a hereditary genetic defect, should he or she still be encouraged to have children? Which defects are serious enough to justify formal or informal restrictions? One key question here is whether or when abortion should be considered for fetuses diagnosed with serious defects. At the present time the church's official condemnation of abortion excepts cases where "a severely defective fetus cannot survive birth."[42]

A related issue is the possible "cloning" of living organisms, including humans.[43] If this becomes possible, under what circumstances should it be done? Still another issue along this line is the commercialization of human gene therapies, as well as the creation and patenting of new spe-

37. Larry L. St. Clair and Clayton C. Newberry, "Consecration, Stewardship, and Accountability: Remedy for a Dying Planet," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 28 (Summer 1995): 93-99.

38. Lester E. Bush, Jr., *Health and Medicine Among the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 152-59; Smith, *Doctrines,* 2:87; Ezra Taft Benson, *Conference Report,* Apr. 1969, 10-15; Mark E. Petersen, *The Way to Peace* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969), 266; *Encyclopedia,* 1:116-17.

39. John Bongaarts, "Can the Growing Human Population Feed Itself?" *Scientific American* 270 (Mar. 1994): 36-43.

40. Eugene Linden, "Showdown in Cairo," *Time* 144 (4 Sept. 1994): 52-53.

41. Philip Elmer-Dewitt, "The Genetic Revolution," *Time* 143 (17 Jan. 1994): 46-57.

42. Bush, *Health and Medicine,* 159-67; *Encyclopedia,* 1:7.

43. Philip Elmer-Dewitt, "Cloning: Where Do We Draw the Line," *Time* 142 (8 Nov. 1993): 64-67.

cies by genetic engineering.[44] What are the implications of such new technologies for traditional LDS teachings about *a priori* spirit creations in the pre-existence?

4. Even though there have been advances in medical technology during the twentieth century, the pace of progress is likely to accelerate during the twenty-first. While these developments will be a boon to the majority of humankind, they are certain to pose more and more dilemmas in prolonging the lives of terminally ill patients.[45]

What portion of our resources should be devoted to extending the lives of those who at best have only a few months left, as opposed to measures that will improve the quality of life for others? When does meaningful life end? When should "the plug be pulled"? Is euthanasia ever warranted? Is a "brain-dead" person still alive in the LDS sense of being inhabited by a spirit? At the present time the church condemns any form of euthanasia, although it permits artificial life support systems to be disconnected after prayerful consideration.[46]

5. Recently scientists have found evidence that homosexuality is very probably partly determined by heredity and other biological factors. Other scientists vigorously contest this evidence.[47] Historically the church has regarded homosexuality as a sinful choice, although its current official position no longer condemns homosexual *orientation per se*.[48] If the evidence for a biological connection grows stronger, how should the church respond? How might such developments affect the church's policy towards same-sex marriages?

6. There are striking similarities between humans and certain animals, particularly primates, not only in anatomy, but also in behavior. Some animals have even been taught to use rudimentary language.[49] To what extent can animals think? What distinguishes us from the animal kingdom? How much of human behavior derives from an evolutionary past? How much of our "darker" nature can be overcome by individual

44. Richard Stone, "Religious Leaders Oppose Patenting Genes and Animals," *Science* 268 (26 May 1995): 1126; Kenneth L. Woodward, "Thou Shalt Not Patent!" *Newsweek*, 29 May 1995, 68-69.

45. C. Everett Koop and Timothy Johnson, *Let's Talk—An Honest Conversation on Critical Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Press, 1992), 39-60.

46. Bush, *Health and Medicine*, 36-39; *Encyclopedia*, 3:1159-60.

47. Simon LeVay and Dean H. Hamer, "Evidence for a Biological Influence in Male Homosexuality," *Scientific American* 270 (June 1994): 44-49; William Byne, "The Biological Evidence Challenged," *Scientific American* 270 (June 1994): 50-55; Larry Thompson, "Search for a Gay Gene," *Time* 145 (12 June 1995): 60-61.

48. Bush, *Health and Medicine*, 173-78; Benson, *Teachings*, 280; Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969), 78-89; *Encyclopedia*, 2:655-56.

49. Carl Sagan and Ann Druyan, *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (New York: Random House, 1992); Eugene Winden, "Can Animals Think?" *Time* 141 (22 Mar. 1993): 54-63.

agency? Can scientific research offer perspectives on the eternal struggle between good and evil? Would such findings be acknowledged or accepted by the church?

7. The "big bang" cosmological theory is the currently accepted model for the origin and evolution of the universe, although some questions remain regarding its evolution since then.[50] How can the notion of a finite age universe be accommodated in LDS doctrine, which has historically taught that matter is eternal, and which has favored a steady-state cosmology? Was God the architect of the universe at the big bang? Does God exist in time and space, as a physical member of this universe, or does he exist elsewhere, beyond time and space?[51] If he exists beyond time and space, how can he influence our present world?

8. Current formulations of the big bang cosmology seem to indicate that the fundamental laws of physics are exquisitely tuned to permit the existence of matter, stars, and sentient beings.[52] Are these facts evidence of the existence of a creator, or are there other, more prosaic explanations? Why does the universe exist at all? Why is there something and not nothing?[53]

9. Quantum theory, a cornerstone of modern physics, draws into question our basic notions of reality and causality. One of its assertions, that there is a fundamental uncertainty in all physical measurements, has been solidly confirmed in a number of experiments.[54] Furthermore, the emerging field of chaos theory tells us that many physical processes exhibit the "butterfly" property: an arbitrarily small change to present conditions can dramatically affect the future state of the system.[55] Thus there appear to be fundamental limits to our ability to predict future events.

How can God's foreknowledge and the principle of prophecy be interpreted in light of them? Do these theories shed any light on the princi-

50. Corey S. Powell, "The Golden Age of Cosmology," *Scientific American* 267 (July 1992): 17-22; R. Cowen, "Hubble Telescope Eyes a Younger Universe," *Science News* 146 (29 Oct. 1994): 278; Michael D. Lemonick and J. Madeleine Nash, "Unraveling Universe," *Time* 145 (6 Mar. 1995): 77-84.

51. Robert Wright, "Science, God and Man," *Time* 140 (28 Dec. 1992): 38-44; Paul Davies, *God and the New Physics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983).

52. Paul Davies, *The Accidental Universe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); John D. Barrow and Frank J. Tipler, *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Steven Weinberg, "Life in the Universe," *Scientific American* 271 (Oct. 1994): 44-49.

53. Andrei Linde, "The Self-Reproducing Inflationary Universe," *Scientific American* 271 (Nov. 1994): 48-55; Paul Davies, *The Mind of God* (New York: Touchstone, 1992), 39-72, 161-93; Steven Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (New York: Doubleday, 1988).

54. Abner Shimony, "The Reality of the Quantum World," *Scientific American* 258 (Jan. 1988): 46-53.

55. James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1987).

ple of free agency?[56]

10. As noted above, LDS literature, especially in the nineteenth century, is replete with references to beings on other worlds. Indeed, many scientists have assumed that life must exist elsewhere, and they have investigated numerous scenarios for the detection of extra-terrestrial civilizations. Since at present the most reasonable approach appears to be the detection of microwave signals emitted by other societies, extensive astronomical searches of the microwave region of the electromagnetic spectrum are being conducted. Unfortunately, these and other scientific searches have so far turned up nothing.[57]

Are we alone? If not, where are these other beings? Is their biology based on carbon chemistry and DNA, like ours, or on a completely different biochemical system? How do they think, communicate, and govern themselves? What are their religious beliefs? If these searches continue to come up empty-handed, how might this affect LDS theological discourse? On the other hand, if intelligent life is detected elsewhere, how might this momentous discovery be accommodated, especially if that life turns out to have forms drastically unlike our image of God?

11. Many people imagine that the work of a mathematician largely consists of repetitive and mechanical manipulations of mathematical expressions. In fact, the process of mathematical discovery is usually a highly intuitive process, with deep abstract contemplation followed by sudden bursts of brilliant insight. Often it takes months after this flash of insight to work out all the technical details.[58]

How is it possible to sense intuitively the outcome of a long train of abstract and difficult mathematical reasoning? If, as many philosophers believe, mathematical truths exist independent of the universe, human beings, and our particular physiology, how can our minds discover them? Is religious revelation another manifestation of this process? If so, what can be learned about revelation? Why does the universe appear to be governed by profound and elegant mathematical laws?[59]

12. A far-reaching discovery by twentieth-century mathematician Kurt Godel rules out the possibility of proving the logical consistency or completeness of formal mathematics. In other words, we can never be ab-

56. See David B. Timmins, "Free Agency, Determinism, and Chaos Theory," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 28 (Fall 1995): 163-70.

57. Barrow and Tipler, 576-612; Paul, 193-227; Carl Sagan, "The Search for Extraterrestrial Life," *Scientific American* 271 (Oct. 1994): 92-99; Carl Sagan, *Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space* (New York: Random House, 1994), 351-65.

58. John D. Barrow, *Pi in the Sky: Counting, Thinking and Being* (New York: Little Brown and Co., 1992); Robert Kanigel, *The Man Who Knew Infinity* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1992); Barry Cipra, "Princeton Mathematician Looks Back on Fermat Proof," *Science* 268 (26 May 1995): 1133-34.

59. Davies, *Mind*, 140-60.

solutely certain that the basic axioms used in mathematics are logically consistent; and even if we assume that they are, there will always be questions which cannot be answered either affirmatively or negatively.[60] In the field of fundamental particle physics, we already are pressing the limits of our ability to construct (and society's willingness to pay for) experiments that can decide among competing theories. Although some scientists remain optimistic that we will soon discover a "final theory," it may be that we will be forever frustrated in this quest. In any event, we can never be absolutely certain that we completely understand the fundamental laws of the universe or that our formulation of them is the most elegant possible.[61]

In other words, even in the two most "certain" and "precise" of the sciences, absolute certainty appears forever out of reach, and there may be questions which can never be conclusively answered. Do these principles have analogies in theology? Is God's knowledge limited in this manner?

13. In recent years some scientists have speculated on the possibility of immortality, proposing various scientific scenarios for how this might be achieved. Some suggest that advances in technology predicted for the next few decades will result, among other things, in medicines that slow or even reverse the aging process. Others look forward to a time when humanity will free itself from its historic reliance on flesh, blood, and brainpower.[62] To what extent can doctrines such as immortality be submitted to scientific examination? Do LDS scriptures and literature offer insight into these questions?

14. The phenomenon of human consciousness is being investigated by biologists, psychologists, physicists, philosophers, and even computer scientists. Some argue that it is fundamentally impossible to model or understand consciousness, while others dismiss such arguments and say that it is only a matter of time before computers can realistically model human thought.[63] What exactly is human consciousness? What is the relationship between consciousness and the "soul" or "spirit" in LDS theology?

15. If the breathtaking pace of scientific and technological advancement of the past half-century is any clue, we will see new and intriguing developments in the twenty-first century that can now be only dimly

60. Barrow, *Pi*; Douglas R. Hofstadter, *Godel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid* (New York: Random House, 1979).

61. Steven Weinberg, *Dreams of a Final Theory* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994); John Horgan, "Particle Metaphysics," *Scientific American* 270 (Feb. 1994): 96-106; David Lindley, *The End of Physics* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); Davies, *Mind.*

62. K. Eric Drexler, *Engines of Creation: The Coming Era of Nanotechnology* (New York: Doubleday, 1990); Marvin Minsky, "Will Robots Inherit the Earth?" *Scientific American* 271 (Oct. 1994): 108-13; Frank J. Tipler, *The Physics of Immortality* (New York: Doubleday, 1994).

63. Barrow, *Pi*; Hofstadter, *Godel*; Minsky, "Robots"; Tipler, *Immortality*; John Horgan, "Can Science Explain Consciousness?" *Scientific American* 271 (July 1994): 88-94.

imagined. How well will the LDS church cope with these advances?

THE CHALLENGE OF SCIENCE

Conflicts between science and religion are as old as recorded history. In the sixth century B.C.E. a mathematician in the Pythagorean philosophical school was able to prove that the diagonal of a square is incommensurate with its sides. In our modern mathematical terminology we would say he proved that the square root of two is an irrational number: it cannot be expressed exactly as the ratio of two whole numbers. This discovery precipitated a major crisis for the Pythagorean school and its numerology-based religion, since one of its fundamental beliefs was the assumption that all reality could be described by using whole numbers. The school reportedly drowned one of its number who publicly discussed this unsettling discovery.[64]

In the Middle Ages growing exposure to ancient Greek and Middle Eastern writings caused considerable consternation among medieval Christian theologians. As a single incredible example, theologians were once disturbed at the discrepancy between the biblical value of the ratio between the circumference and diameter of a circle, namely 3.0 (based on the dimensions of the circular pool in King Solomon's temple [1 Kgs. 7:23; 2 Chron. 4:2]), and the more accurate values (approximately 3.14159) obtained by mathematicians in ancient Greece and medieval Europe. As late as the eighteenth century Bible commentators were still attempting to explain away this discrepancy, using such imaginative dodges as speculating that the circular pool in Solomon's temple was really hexagonal in shape.[65]

The most serious challenge of the expanding corpus of scientific knowledge was to the geocentric, flat-earth cosmology that had been assumed in the Judeo-Christian world for centuries. Many Christian scholars, who noted the numerous instances in the Bible of the "four corners," the "foundations," the "pillars," and the "ends" of the earth (see 1 Sam. 2:8; 2 Sam. 22:16; Job 28:24, 38:4; Ps. 75:3, 102:25; Isa. 11:12; Heb. 1:10; Rev. 7:1), could not see how these scriptures could be reconciled with the scientific notion of a spherical earth. The last straw for these theologians was Copernicus's heliocentric cosmology, in which the earth was but one of several planets orbiting the sun. Many felt that this cosmology was so clearly incompatible with numerous biblical scriptures (see Josh.

64. Bertrand Russell, *Wisdom of the West* (London: Crescent Books, 1959), 22; D. W. Hamlyn, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1987), 18-19.

65. Petr Beckmann, *A History of Pi* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971), 75-76. Beckmann references a seven-volume history of mathematics, in German, by Jerome Tropfke, published in 1923. Tropfke in turn quotes original eighteenth-century sources.

10:12-13; Job 9:6-7; Ps. 93:1, 104:5; Eccl. 1:5; Amos 8:9) that both the Bible and the church would lose their authority if it prevailed. The Jesuits considered the theory more dangerous than the heresies of Luther and Calvin. The Inquisition forced Galileo to recant his arguments in support of it.[66] Martin Luther, who taught that the Bible was the infallible word of God, rejected the Copernican theory because Joshua commanded the sun, not the earth, to stand still (Josh. 10:12-13).[67] In the nineteenth century similar warnings were voiced in Catholic and Protestant circles about Darwin's theory of evolution. The same is true to a lesser extent in the twentieth century about theories such as the "big bang."

If there is a lesson to be learned from these examples, it is that scientific challenges which may seem to present insuperable difficulties for religious faith in one era are almost always found to be compatible with faith in another. The Bible today still contains the many passages that reflect the geocentric, flat-earth cosmology of antiquity; yet only the most ardent literalists lose sleep over them. It is now widely appreciated that the writers of the Bible wrote from their own world view, often in a poetic style, and no one expects that they could have anticipated every principle of modern science. Similarly, while many are still uncomfortable with the theory of evolution, others now view it as an elegant and effective mechanism used by God in the process of creation. Some further argue that any attempt to read the scriptures as scientific documents, against the intent of the original writers, only obscures the deeper spiritual messages contained in them.[68]

How can the LDS church best cope with the challenges of science during the next century? Some Mormons may dismiss such issues, believing that the second coming of Jesus Christ will occur soon after the turn of the century, thus rendering these issues moot. But others note scriptures such as Matthew 24:36 and conclude that we must face these issues.

On one hand, it seems clear that if the church adopts, even implicitly, a strict, fundamentalist approach, with a rigid creed that precludes a harmony between science and religion, then it risks losing many educated members, especially in developed countries like the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Japan. Particularly at risk are young Latter-day Saints at colleges and universities, who usually lack the sophistication to see beyond superficial conflicts to the deeper issues. The tensions that many of these

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66. Will and Ariel Durant, *The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961), 7:600-12.

67. Ibid., 6:858.

68. Keith E. Norman, "Adam's Navel," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 21 (Summer 1988): 81-97; Karen Armstrong, *A History of God* (New York: Knopf, 1993), 395; John S. Spong, *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism* (New York: Harper, 1991), 25-36.

students now experience will only increase if they are required to choose between the increasingly dominant world of scientific knowledge and a narrowly defined religious orthodoxy.

For example, recently there has been an explosion of scientific discoveries in molecular biology and evolution. These include DNA computing,[69] the recovery and analysis of ancient dinosaur DNA fragments,[70] the resuscitation of 25-million-year-old microbial spores,[71] and the tracing of modern humans to a common ancestor of 270,000 years ago.[72] Among other things, such developments herald a new era in biological research, one that Darwin in his wildest dreams might not have imagined possible: the direct study of the course of evolution (including human evolution) at the DNA level through eons of time. Imagine the dilemma faced by a young college student, particularly one with aspirations for a scientific career, who is bombarded by news of these exciting discoveries in the academic environment but hears only creationist doctrines and somber warnings of the dangers of science in his/her church environment. Fortunately, as mentioned, there are indications that the scriptural literalism which has dominated LDS science discourse in recent decades may be giving way to a more open-ended approach. It remains to be seen, however, if this approach will be truly acceptable to church leaders or rank-and-file members, many of whom have adopted a highly literal understanding of scripture.

On the other hand, an isolationist approach appears equally doomed to failure in a world increasingly pervaded by science and technology. Some separation of science and religion is certainly appropriate: surely there is no point in the church's delving into matters which are largely irrelevant to its theology or which are still highly tentative from a scientific point of view. Even in most other cases it may well be best for the church simply to remain silent. It is certainly unwise for anyone in the church to make seemingly "final" statements about anything in the ever-expanding world of scientific knowledge.

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69. Leonard M. Adleman, "Molecular Computation of Solutions to Combinatorial Problems," *Science* 266 (11 Nov. 1994): 1021-23; Robert Pool, "A Boom in Plans for DNA Computing," *Science* 268 (28 Apr. 1995): 498-99.

70. Richard Monastersky, "Dinosaur DNA: Is the Race Finally Over?" *Science News* 146 (19 Nov. 1994): 324; Ann Gibbons, "Possible Dino DNA Find Is Greeted with Skepticism," *Science* 266 (18 Nov. 1994): 1159. The researcher here is Scott Woodward of BYU.

71. Raul J. Cano and Monica K. Borucki, "Revival and Identification of Bacterial Spores in 25- to 40-Million-Year-Old Dominican Amber," *Science* 268 (19 May 1995): 1060-64; J. Madeline Nash, "Return of the Living Dead?" *Time* 145 (29 May 1995): 55-56.

72. Svante Paabo, "The Y Chromosome and the Origin of All of Us (Men)," *Science* 268 (26 May 1995): 1141-42; Robert L. Dorit, Hiroshi Akashi, and Walter Gilbert, "Absence of Polymorphism at the ZFY Locus on the Human Y Chromosome," *Science* 268 (26 May 1995): 1183-85.

Yet if Mormonism is isolated from science, or if meaningful discussion of scientific topics is ruled off-limits in the church, then it risks being viewed as sterile and irrelevant. Widtsoe warned about such an isolationist approach: "Scientific truth cannot be theological lie. To the sane mind, theology and philosophy must harmonize. They have the common ground of truth on which to meet."[73] In a similar vein physicist-theologian Frank J. Tipler recently warned, "If religion is permanently separated from science, then it is permanently separated from humanity and all of humanity's concerns. Thus separated, it will disappear."[74] Thus one hopes that the church and its members will steer a middle course, applying their collective gifts of intelligence and inspiration to careful consideration of these matters and their significance for the LDS faith. Certainly LDS scientists must participate in this dialogue. We thus look forward to an improvement, as we enter the next century, in the intellectual atmosphere that heretofore has often seemed so tense.

Fortunately, the church has one important advantage over many other religious denominations in dealing with the challenges of science: its fundamental belief in continuing revelation, as declared in the ninth Article of Faith. One implication of this principle is that current church teachings at any given point in time should never be considered final, absolute, complete, or infallible. Instead, they should be considered as representing the best present understanding and certainly subject to change as knowledge and understanding grow.

CONCLUSION

An ancient Chinese curse holds: "May you live in interesting times." Clearly we find ourselves living in "interesting times" today. For every scientific development that seems to pose a difficult challenge to religion in general and to the LDS religion in particular, another suggests that genuine faith can be successfully enlarged to accommodate modern scientific discoveries, with both science and religion being enriched in the process. As religious historian Karen Armstrong observed: "In our scientific age, we cannot think about God in the same way as our forebears, but the challenge of science could help us to appreciate some old truths."[75] In fact, there is sublime, spiritually-rewarding pleasure in discovering truths previously known only to God. Perhaps it is a good thing that he always holds some of the most fascinating and fundamental truths just beyond our research so that we always have something to seek for and wonder about. Perhaps within our lifetimes we will be able to an-

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73. John A. Widtsoe, *Joseph Smith as Scientist* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964), 156.
74. Tipler, *Immortality*, 332.
75. Armstrong, 395.

swer some of the above questions of science and religion. If so, then we will come one step closer to "knowing the mind of God."[76]

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76. See Hawking, 175; and Davies, *Mind of God*.

Feeding the Fleeing Flock: Reflections on the Struggle to Retain Church Members in Europe

Wilfried Decoo

As a twenty-two-year-old convert of just a few years, I was called in June 1969 to preside over a small branch of the church in Belgium. In the tiny office of the old house serving as our chapel, I discovered a black binder containing the branch membership records. I was shocked to find there the names of some 200 members (baptized since the opening of the mission in 1948), for our sacrament meeting attendance had been averaging only twenty. With a retention rate of 1:10, our flock had obviously suffered far beyond the proverbial 99:1 in the parable of Jesus. My responsibility as branch president was indeed daunting, for there was virtually no help available from other active priesthood holders. Fortunately, however, I was single, had just graduated from college, and had only a part-time job, so I was able to devote all my spare time to locating and visiting these 180 inactive members.

In the process I discovered a world of disillusionment, sorrow, and misery unknown in my youthful experience: The majority of these inactive members came from lower socio-economic classes and from inner-city areas that I had never before entered. Many were single, widowed, or divorced. Many others were in part-member families which had been torn apart by religious contention. Of course, some were unwilling to obey commandments and had dropped out of church activity through transgression. Especially common, however, were agonizing stories of struggle against hostility in families and in the surrounding environment, of persecution from outside the church and of disillusionment within, as many explained to me why they wanted nothing more to do with the

church. Yet to me these were all lost sheep, and I continued visiting and working with those who were willing, helping them solve their financial, social, emotional, or marital problems. In retrospect, however, it is clear that I had neither the personal nor the professional resources required for this endeavor. At the same time, with the help of the missionaries, we did everything we could to build the branch with new converts. When I was released as branch president after only fourteen months (to accept a professional position in central Africa), average sacrament meeting attendance had increased to fifty.

Yet now, after twenty-six years, only four of those fifty are still active, even though that small branch has now become two wards in a local stake. The constant turnover from active to inactive members remains with us. For every active member we seem to have lost another dozen over the years into inactivity. The situation is not so different elsewhere: From personal observations during my travels throughout the world, I know that between 50 percent and 70 percent of the members of record are inactive. If we consider also the many losses through administrative "clean-ups" of the records and formal excommunications, our losses throughout the church since mid-century probably number into the millions. Of the 300,000 new members whom our missionaries might bring into the church in any given year, we can anticipate that 150,000 or 200,000 will eventually drop out, many of them in a very short time. Yet none of us should be surprised that our current reactivation efforts are hardly working, for they depend on a small corps of local leaders, home teachers, and visiting teachers, some of whom are on the verge of defection themselves.

This is far more than a problem of organizational failure. If we take our religion seriously, we are talking about the prospect of a kind of spiritual death for those millions whom we have lost; indeed, perhaps "spiritual holocaust" is not too strong a term.[1] For many the suffering begins already in this life. I know, from years of experience in working with inactive members, of the agony—some of it lifelong—involved in the process of leaving the church. Here are people who once joyfully discovered the gospel, gained testimonies, and then turned their lives upside down and even severed relationships with families and friends to follow gospel principles, only to sink back eventually into the bitter pool of disillusion-

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1. I had intended to use the term "Mormon holocaust" in the title of this essay but was restrained by some of the reviewers of the manuscript, who regarded the term as hyperbolic and potentially offensive to Jews. I mean only to call attention to those doctrines emphasized in Heb. 6:4-6; 2 Pet. 2:20-21; 3 Ne. 27:19; D&C 20:29, 76:79; and in the discussions of concepts like covenants, disobedience, endurance, and spiritual death in Bruce R. McConkie's *Mormon Doctrine* or in Joseph Fielding Smith's *Doctrines of Salvation*.

ment.[2]

I do not offer here a sophisticated scientific study but a personal and subjective analysis of my own thirty years' experience in church service in Belgium and the Netherlands. This experience includes leadership both at the local level and in mission presidencies. I care deeply about the future of the church. I also feel that we must be able to face our problems openly and realistically, without resorting to blind triumphalism and without fear of outside criticism. We must respect and sustain the authority of those given the heavy burden of leadership in this endeavor, but we do not ease that burden by withholding informed and conscientious observations about organizational problems, whether at the local, mission, or international level.[3]

I recognize the fundamental responsibility of each individual to cultivate his or her own testimony, despite hardship, sacrifice, and temptation. That is the meaning of agency. We are enjoined to endure to the end. It might well be true, furthermore, that transgression and failure to repent constitute the most common reason for losing the spirit and leaving the church. Nevertheless, the main point of this essay is to call attention to other factors that undermine testimonies, sap endurance, and weaken resistance to temptation. These factors combine in different ways for different individuals; some of them lead directly to inactivity, others more indirectly. If the church is to thrive in the twenty-first century, we must

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2. It is probably difficult for most American Mormons to appreciate how fundamental is the disruption to a convert's social life, both on entering *and* on exiting the LDS church in Europe. Most Americans seem more used to religious diversity and mobility, which tend to touch relationships outside of religion in only minor ways. However, in countries where a "pillar" of families, institutions, and social networks has been dominated by a single ideological tradition, converts to a new religion set themselves outside of normal social life in many ways (see n5). In so doing they come to depend increasingly on the social support and tightening social bonds with other converts, which must then be painfully severed as one later drops out through disillusionment or transgression. This predicament is less true of converts from among immigrants and refugees (e.g., from Africa), who often move as "religious tourists" from one new religion to another after they get to Europe, seeming to retain mostly pleasant memories of their sojourn in Mormonism as they move on to the next stop.

3. To avoid misunderstanding, let me define three terms I will be using: By *Church unit* I mean any and all kinds of local branches and wards, whether in Utah or elsewhere in the world; of course, some problems are common to church units everywhere, but others are unique to units of specific sizes or in specific locations. *Mission field* in the generic sense refers to any place where missionary work goes on; but in this essay I wish to stress the particular predicament where one or more ancestral religions have dominated social and cultural life for centuries, even in many secular respects, making for a *confrontational* relationship in which the minuscule LDS membership is seen as an eccentric, even dangerous, American sect or cult. By *international church* I will be referring not merely to the world outside North America but primarily to the *non-English-speaking* parts of the world, which suffer both spiritually and intellectually from their dependence on the narrow scope of church materials available in translation, despite the church's best efforts.

find ways to deal with these factors more effectively.

EXTERNAL PRESSURES ON CHURCH MEMBERS IN EUROPE

Problems with Incoming Members

Converts to new religions tend to be marginal, in one sense or another, to the societies in which they live. That is, they tend to be people with somewhat less to lose than most others in a given society, because their "investments" are not as great in conventional pursuits and institutions. Thus single people are generally easier to convert than people with families; immigrants and newcomers are easier to convert than well-established residents; people of modest means and occupations are easier to convert than members of elites; those who already have some attraction to (or familiarity with) the languages and cultures of other societies (especially a society in which the new religion might have originated) are among the first attracted to new missionaries; and so on. Such forms of marginality are not at all stigmatizing and have been prominently represented among LDS converts for the past 165 years.[4]

Yet there are other forms of marginality that are more problematic but perhaps just as likely to be apparent in the lives of many investigators and converts who reach out to the missionaries in the pain of their alienation or in their need for some other kind of fulfillment. These are the "walking wounded," socially and psychologically speaking. Despite their eccentricities, they must be accepted, integrated, and nurtured in the community of the Saints once they join the church.

Probably every unit of the church has some of these sad souls, and they are not all converts, of course. In the larger wards or branches they can be assimilated and their potential for disruption can be contained. In the mission field, however, both their presence and their influence can be disproportionately large, partly because a small branch might not be large enough to integrate them readily, and partly because branch presidents and bishops are not allowed to evaluate the readiness for baptism of even seriously troubled and eccentric converts if missionaries and mission leaders are determined to baptize them.

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4. For discussions of the part played in the conversion process by "marginality," "structural availability," and similar concepts, see D. A. Snow, L. A. Zurcher, and S. Ekland-Olson, "Social Networks and Social Movements: A Microstructural Approach to Differential Recruitment," *American Sociological Review* 45 (Oct. 1980): 787-801; D. G. Bromley and A. D. Shupe, "'Just a Few Years Seem Like a Lifetime': A Role Theory Approach to Participation in Religious Movements," *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts, and Change* 2 (1979): 159-85; and A. L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 213.

So it is that in many units in the mission field, and even in some of the well established wards, local leaders must contend with everything from overt disturbances in meetings and classes to spiritual fanaticism, playing at pastoral roles, meddling in each other's families, *ad hoc* prophecy, promotion of divergent doctrines, and the like. This is in addition to transgressions in the form of sexual lapses, addiction, and even fraud. Many converts have marital, legal, financial, and emotional problems for which they seek assistance after they join the church. They frequently make their problems and peculiarities public in foyer visits before and after meetings, in testimony meetings, in assigned talks, or even in class discussions. In certain cities legal and illegal aliens from Africa and eastern Europe are prominent among these troubled converts. Despite sincere efforts on the parts of the general unit membership to deal with such people charitably, in time a number of members become discouraged by the turmoil and stop coming to church. Among the heroes in such situations are those who remain for decades, in spite of everything; for some units are torn apart in the process, and local leaders, themselves often weak and inexperienced, are burned out.

Isolation from the Surrounding Society

During recent generations LDS converts in Europe have been urged by church leaders not to emigrate to America but to stay and build Zion in their respective stakes. As a result church life in Europe usually means a significant withdrawal from the society and institutions of one's birth without a comparably dense social life in the church. Of course, European converts expect to give up much from their previous lives when they join the church. However, most Americans do not realize just how much isolation Europeans may experience upon entering the church. In a religiously pluralistic society like the United States, few converts are disconnected from other important social networks.

In many European countries, by contrast, conversion to an unconventional "sect" means not only cultural isolation (from many shared customs and traditions) but also *structural* isolation because of the "pillarized" nature of society. That is, even in the present secular age many social services (schools, hospitals, health insurance, employment security, etc.) are provided either by Catholic, Lutheran, or other religious institutions, or alternatively by socialist or liberal counterparts with explicitly non-religious ideologies. Mormon converts are obviously not easily accommodated in any of these compartments or "pillars." Even the selection of a school for the children, or union affiliation for employment, is often determined by "pillars," leaving Mormons sometimes "out of the

loop" by definition.[5] In addition to these formal structural handicaps, Mormon converts typically experience social isolation also in less formal relationships with families, peers, and communities.

Family and Friends. In the European setting, whether or not a family is "religious," it is almost always regarded as a tragedy for a family member to join the LDS church. My own case is typical. As a teenager living in a Catholic home in a Catholic country, I was (in the eyes of my parents) spiritually kidnapped into a weird sect by two foreigners who had dropped by uninvited and unwanted. In a matter of days their son had simply abandoned the faith and traditions of his ancestors. They felt bewildered, betrayed, and destitute of hope. In the intervening years they have come to accept the inevitability of my remaining a Latter-day Saint, but they have never understood how a sound-minded European could join such a blasphemous American sect. Something broke in our relationship and has never been fully restored.

This breach between converts and their families is not limited to the moment of conversion but continues to plague family relationships. In the event of a temple marriage the non-Mormon parents and relatives cannot attend; when a child is born, there will be no christening for them to attend, and none of them will be selected as godparents; there is no sharing of religious commemorations at Christmas or Easter; if the LDS member attends a Catholic funeral for another member of the family, he or she will be conspicuous by declining to take communion; and so on. Where the convert's spouse is not LDS, or is an LDS defector, there is even more anguish. Even if the marriage survives, the partners often grow apart, and they frequently quarrel over the religious upbringing of the children, even pitting children against one or the other of the parents. In my thirty years' church experience the most vitriolic clashes have occurred where the convert's family is Catholic. These cases have involved not only verbal and physical abuse, but expulsions from home, disinheritance, legal suits over child custody, and similar forms of conflict.[6]

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5. For more on the "pillarized" nature of traditional Belgian society, see J. Billiet and K. Dobbelaere, "Vers une Désinstitutionalisation du Pilier Chrétien?" in L. Voyé et al., eds., *La Belgique et Ses Dieux* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Cabay, 1985), 119-52; and K. Dobbelaere and L. Voyé, "From Pillar to Postmodernity: The Changing Situation of Religion in Belgium," *Sociological Analysis* 51 (Supplement, 1990): S1-S13. On the isolating consequences for Mormons in particular, see my "Mormonism in a European Catholic Region: A Contribution to the Social Psychology of LDS Converts," *Brigham Young University Studies* 24 (1984): 61-77.

6. The level of hostility in such conflicts is attributable in large part to the ways in which unconventional sects and cults are portrayed in publications and in the mass media. As LDS church leaders, we do what we can to minimize the hostility and to correct media images. Lately I have taken to urging members to write detailed personal records about their experiences, which someday will comprise a valuable historical record of the price paid by many European Saints for their conversions.

Community Life. It is perhaps difficult for the people of one society to understand the nature and intensity of community life in another society, but Belgium is fairly typical of Europe: A glance through local newspapers and other public bulletins reveals a variety of meetings or celebrations for numerous clubs and social organizations, sports and cultural events, and special days (Museum Day, Forest Day, Open Monument Day, and many others). There are humanitarian projects and services for the elderly, the disabled, refugees, hospitals, conservation, and also local chapters of Oxfam, Amnesty International, Doctors without Frontiers, Foster Parents, and many other causes. Schools, businesses, and factories sponsor annual events of their own. Not all such events are scheduled on Sundays, of course, but often they are; and to the extent that local Latter-day Saints feel constrained to stay away, they are effectively isolated from community life.

This is particularly hard for many LDS adolescents and young adults, especially if they are not first-generation members who have had the conversion experience; for they are denied a sense of belonging in their peer groups at a time of life when such belonging is important to their development. The same isolation is even harder for new converts if they were heavily involved in community life before joining the church. This is one of the reasons that so few involved and substantial people from the community can be induced to join the church, for it means effectively withdrawing from community life. The conflict of loyalty between the church and the outside is more acute here than in the U.S., and leaders too often simply warn in ominous terms about the ways of the wicked world, rather than help us integrate the good in both worlds.

The problem is two-fold: On the one hand, the church seems to ignore the socio-cultural realities of the surrounding society; on the other, church units, even in the mission field, are expected to organize their own social and cultural activities, including outings, musical events, Boy Scout events, and so on, often without the resources to make these activities truly successful. One example will illustrate the problem: Every Sunday the national Scout movement of Belgium sponsors well-organized and well-financed indoor and outdoor activities all over the country involving 85,000 boys and girls with their well-trained leaders. By contrast, a certain Belgian LDS branch, disdaining such Sunday activities, instead gathered together all seven of its scouts on a couple of Saturdays for a parallel program under an inadequately trained leader and with inadequate facilities. This courageous little group was enthusiastically hailed as heroes in a local church magazine story but without acknowledgement that their program failed within a few months. Were those children really well served by keeping them away from "outside" scout troops and activities?

The church demands made on members, both on Sunday and during the week, leave little room for involvement in the life of the larger community; nor does the church propose ways in which members can combine living the essentials of the gospel with participation in the activities of the host society, certainly not if those activities take place on Sunday. It is not that the European Saints miss the leisure activities or entertainment offered only on Sundays; these are willingly sacrificed by those who are truly converted. Rather it is the general sense of disengagement and isolation from the rest of the community that sometimes seem required of church members.

<div align="center">INTERNAL PRESSURES ON CHURCH MEMBERS IN EUROPE</div>

Isolation from the World Church

Many European Saints feel isolated even from the worldwide LDS community. To some extent this feeling results from the lack of varied church literature available in the local languages. To be sure, the church does a great deal of translating into various languages, but the translated materials tend to address only the essential moral, spiritual, and organizational needs.[7] Accordingly, the European Saints are hungry for news about the international church. They are anxious to feel a part of this vibrant international movement and to learn as much as possible about its accomplishments, challenges, and even problems on both the regional and the international levels. Of course, the international version of the church magazine is available in several languages, and its section on local news, however primitive, is appreciated; but it contains only a tiny fraction, if anything, of what is happening in the church at large, and no mention is ever made of anything problematic. Members living in small problem-ridden units thus wonder painfully why their units are so atypical.[8]

Beyond this basic hunger for realistic news about the world church, many Saints are cut off also from the many important developments and

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7. I well remember a leadership meeting at which a local leader asked a visiting general authority if it would be possible for the church distribution center in Frankfurt to make available books from the Deseret and Bookcraft companies, even in English for local English-speaking members, with permission perhaps to translate some of the more popular books into other languages. The visiting authority responded categorically that the scriptures should be enough for any of the Saints. Yet in the foyer I observed his wife reading a book by Hugh Nibley and his daughter a novel by Jack Weyland.

8. Ironically, visiting authorities often unintentionally reinforce this anguish and feeling of isolation with their glowing success stories of high rates of baptism, home teaching, and seminary attendance elsewhere.

discoveries in the world of LDS scholarship. American Saints can scarcely appreciate this predicament, given their ready access to the many LDS books, journals, media productions, videos, and educational events, even for their children. The very availability of these materials, even for those Saints who do not use them, provides them nevertheless with constant reinforcement for the feeling that they belong to a thriving enterprise. The need in Europe for such "extra" materials is apparent from my experience during the early 1980s as editor and publisher of *Horizon*, an independent bimonthly magazine published for Dutch-speaking Saints. This magazine featured international and local church news, sketches of local and foreign Saints, prophets' biographies, the history of the church in various countries, easy-reading LDS stories, and special articles selected and translated for their combination of intellectual and faith-promoting impact. *Horizon* drew upon sources like F.A.R.M.S. and authors like Leonard Arrington, Truman Madsen, Steven Sondrup, John Sorenson, and John Welch. I was eventually constrained to cease publishing this magazine because of its very success: it was starting to displace the official church magazine, indicating that I had achieved my goal of demonstrating the existence of the very need I have been discussing here.[9]

Most people who join the church in Europe do not require much serious "repentance" in the process, since few have much serious sin to repent for. Rather, the most durable converts join the church for the combined spiritual and intellectual content of its claims and unique teachings: the first vision, the Book of Mormon, the visits of heavenly messengers, the plan of salvation, the restoration of the ancient order of things, and the many other exciting doctrines. Having obtained such knowledge as investigators, they are eager to continue adding "knowledge upon knowledge" (D&C 42:61). However, most church lesson material tends to emphasize general, well-understood Christian teachings and morality at the expense of unique LDS doctrines. With no alternative sources available in their languages for spiritual and intellectual enrichment, many European Saints feel a tremendous void. What's worse is that this situation is in stark contrast to the knowledge-driven societies in which European Saints reside, where they are constantly exposed to debates, discussions, and documentaries at school and in the mass media, and where the LDS youth, in particular, are presented with scientific and other questions never addressed in church lesson materials.

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9. A survey of readers indicated a widespread hunger *especially* for articles that combined the intellectual and the faith-promoting elements. The results of this survey were published in *Horizon* 2 (Nov. 1983): 6. At the time publication ceased, the magazine had 2,000 subscribers, and another 2,000 copies were distributed gratis to libraries and waiting rooms.

Fundamentalism and Fanaticism[10]

The church in the mission field is often and understandably the "Church Militant." It is nourished by the spirit of missionaries sent to preach repentance. The strict rules and instructions given to missionaries for their conduct are often internalized by converts as well: total obedience, total dedication to the Lord's work, and total avoidance of the evil world. To a considerable extent, one must admire such a crusading spirit in the valiant Saints, as they struggle to build the kingdom. Yet this spirit can easily deteriorate into fundamentalism, with "preachers," male and female, constantly harping in church meetings on their versions of obedience and obligation. Some cross over into fanaticism, adopting even the rigorous missionary rules not really intended for the Saints in general (no worldly music, radio, television, or reading of anything but the scriptures, etc.), calling for youth to avoid academic studies as destructive to faith, for "natural healing" methods in place of medical care, and so on. In these strictures we can see the common tendencies of apostate groups to assert their right to impose new rules on the membership.

Such a fundamentalist spirit has more in common with the discredited doctrines of human depravity, total dependence on divine grace, and the impossibility of perfection than with the doctrines of joy, optimism, and eternal progression to godhood as taught by Joseph Smith. As zealots continue week after week to focus on extreme positions, rarely corrected by the leaders, new members become confused about what the gospel message really is. In the momentum of their own enthusiastic conversions, they might follow the zealots for awhile, striving to obey even the rules and principles invented by the latter. In the process of trying thus to prove themselves, they lose all the joy the gospel promises, as church membership becomes an intolerable burden and they finally reach a breaking point and begin to slip away. At that stage they are in danger of being judged weaklings and apostates, or (even worse) they begin to see themselves in that way.

The Marriage Challenge

At a local conference some time ago a visiting authority addressed the audience on the blessings of living the gospel at home, going to the temple, and entering the eternal covenant of marriage, all topics that rep-

10. By "fundamentalism" I am referring to a tendency toward overzealous interpretation of certain commandments, with an obsessive focus on certain ones in particular, and an insistence that others must accept the same understandings. By "fanaticism" I am referring to a degree of fundamentalism going even beyond what the church will officially tolerate. The line between the two is obviously easy to cross.

resent the highest ideals of the restored gospel. As the leader was speaking, he included references about his own blessed family: his exemplary, supportive wife, sitting with him on the stand, well-dressed, radiant; and his several children, all of whom had served wonderful missions. I was sitting on the stand too, and as I looked out over the audience of some 400, I could count at most twenty couples married in the temple. I reflected also on the dozen or so couples of my age group in the district who had had temple marriages fifteen or twenty years ago, and I realized that my wife and I were the only one of those couples still married. All of the other marriages had foundered within three years. From what I know about LDS life elsewhere in Europe, our local situation is not unusual. What accounts for this large discrepancy between the ideal and the actual?

First, there is the disproportionate presence of single people as a general reality in the mission field. Many converts are not only single but somewhat beyond normal marriage age and from troubled social backgrounds, often including divorce, sometimes with children; for these are the kinds of converts especially attracted to the missionaries. Despite their patient waiting and hoping, most who desire to marry never find partners. To be sure, other single converts, and children of converts, are young and eligible. Yet even they face a limited LDS marriage market. Many of the young women, in particular, after long and patient waiting finally marry non-members and leave the church in the process; others remain faithful but single.

A visiting general authority once reported on a church study indicating that contacts with 300 potential marriage partners is adequate for most individuals to be able to find mates. Few districts or stakes in Europe are able to offer their young people more than a small fraction of that circle. Of course, the church program for young adults brings them together in conferences and camps, often from long distances, which improves their prospects. Even then, however, the social, intellectual, and ethnic heterogeneity in such gatherings restrains the prospects or, where a marriage is eventually realized, increases the risk of discord and divorce. They hardly have time to get acquainted, given the distances between their homes and the small number of personal encounters possible. Young adults are thus often pushed by parents and church leaders into opportunistic marriages without adequate preparation or courtship, just because LDS partners are so hard to find.

The second condition affecting LDS marriage and family life in Europe is the large proportion of part-member families. Obviously this condition is found all over the church, but it is especially common in the mission fields. The conversion of one spouse in a couple is more common than the conversion of both. A similar and equally common predicament

is presented when one of the spouses in an LDS couple drops into inactivity. In either of these situations a great deal of stress is placed on the marriage by disagreements over keeping the commandments, such as tithing or the Word of Wisdom, over the amounts and kinds of church activity tolerated, and over the expectations for the children. Naturally the faithful and believing partner, in particular, will feel a lot of anxiety and uncertainty about his or her eternal future. In the mission field the church is almost totally lacking in professional resources to help couples deal with this pervasive predicament, which has to be handled instead by well-meaning but inexperienced priesthood leaders. The result is that the church is far more likely to lose part-member and part-active families (and their children) than to keep or reactivate them.

The teaching and preaching in the church on the importance of eternal marriage and family is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, the church cannot shrink from its responsibility to teach the fullness of the gospel and to urge all members to strive for the highest ideals. On the other, such teaching, especially if it is not done with sensitivity, sometimes has the unintended effect of producing pain and distress by reminding members of the large gap between the eternal ideals and their own mortal realities, leading to discouragement and eventual inactivity. The prospect of eventual marriage and family in the next life is an important proviso for those with the patience to wait, but for others it does not assuage the pain of the present.[11]

Normal Disenchantment and Beyond

As in other places, and indeed in other religions, LDS converts in Europe are subject to what we might call "normal" disenchantment. This is the process of spiritual and social transformation from the early charisma, zeal, and enthusiasm of conversion to the more subdued and routinized life of the ordinary member. The process goes more rapidly for some than for others. This is not only normal, it is essentially constructive if it takes place within a context of careful and loving fellowshipping; for it enables the new convert to learn the standard "church ways" and to be integrated into the roles and callings that go with active church membership.

Beyond this normal process, however, lies the stormy sea of *disillusionment*, by which I mean a spiritual, intellectual, and social demoralization, accompanied by an eventual loss of faith and commitment.

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11. In cases where LDS families are broken by divorce, the ex-partners will often feel guilty and out of place, even if no transgression was involved, and will drift into inactivity. No doubt this predicament occurs elsewhere in the church as well, but in the relatively small units in Europe a failed marriage is all the more conspicuous and stigmatizing.

Converts can drift toward this sea or be pushed by the experiences they have in the church during their earliest years or even months. For some the disillusionment comes quickly, as they are first swept off their feet by the enthusiasm of the missionaries, baptized after attendance at only one or two meetings, and then obliged to accommodate to routine and reality when they are turned over to the jurisdiction of the overworked unit leaders. A number of new converts have the testimony and stamina to weather this stormy time and eventually take hold of their church membership. For others, however, the whole experience adds up to a brief, emotional side-venture with the Mormons.

For still others the disillusionment occurs after a period of normal church activity, sometimes a rather lengthy period, and is therefore all the more painful. Church attendance comes to lose its attraction after three hours each Sunday of dull speakers and bland lessons, punctuated occasionally only by the rantings of local fanatics. Even the best teaching and preaching sometimes seem limited to platitudes or idealistic moralizing with little relevance to the real struggles of LDS life in the mission field. If a person is burdened with heavy church callings and duties in a troubled unit, the discouragement is all the worse. We lose many members each year through this process of disillusionment, and we have not yet found a way to stanch the flow.

TOWARD THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: ISSUES AND POSSIBILITIES

So far I have explored in some detail a number of difficulties currently standing in the way of the success and growth of the church during the coming century. Such a theme is unavoidably accompanied by a negative tone and runs the risk of some distortion in the reality of the European situation. Let me therefore emphasize two important points at this stage: (1) I do not mean to suggest that all church units in Europe are ridden with the problems I have been discussing. The problems are more severe in some units than in others, and many European Saints enjoy strong testimonies, fulfilling family lives, and the other joys of gospel living. Clearly the church is working well for them. (2) I do not mean to suggest that the problems discussed so far are unknown to church leaders, general or local. They remind us regularly to seek out the lost sheep, and the whole system of fellowshipping, home teaching, and visiting teaching is intended to accomplish just that. Yet it is also clear that the gravity and extensiveness of the problems discussed here are not adequately handled by our present arrangements, so the disappearance of our lost sheep continues.

In this final section of the essay I would like to suggest some possibilities for future developments that might alleviate some of these prob-

lems. I do so as an active member with a deep concern of my own about the future, and particularly about the tens of thousands of "lost sheep" currently on church rolls.[12] How can any of us who understand the plan of salvation look with equanimity on the loss of so many who might, from an eternal perspective, have gained so much? As leaders and members, we must find ways to make conversions more durable and to retrieve and reactivate members who have drifted away. I will proceed first with some thoughts on improving the prospects for durable future conversions; then I will consider the equally important matter of building LDS communities that are viable in a surrounding secular world.

Toward More Durable Conversions

Some church members and leaders seem to believe that cities and countries in which our missionaries have labored for many decades have somehow been "covered," that large proportions of the populace have been exposed to the gospel message. In fact, probably *no more than 1 percent* of the people in any European country, or even fewer, have ever truly had a chance to listen to that message. The reason is that our missionaries have gone year after year to the same kinds of people—those usually at home during the tracting day—and even to the *very same* people again and again. One unintended consequence has been the tendency to attract converts selectively from among those most available and needful rather than from those equipped to bring strength to our wards and branches. We need to devise alternative ways of reaching the 99 percent or more who have yet to hear our story for the first time.

We must, of course, continue to offer the gospel to all kinds of people, since it is a healing gospel as well as an exalting one. Yet at present we are systematically excluding other kinds of converts, especially professional men and women not at home during the day. We do this partly through our reliance on contacts made through tracting or through chance meetings in public places. We do it also through our reliance on simplistic and formulaic missionary lessons, delivered by youthful teachers ill equipped to answer the serious but unanticipated questions of thoughtful investi-

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12. Not the least of my concerns is that some of the problems created in the older mission fields might be avoided in newer mission fields, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. Some Saints are fond of telling stories of "miraculous conversions" in ex-communist countries and citing remarkable figures. These accounts, however, contrast with what I have learned from personal visits with well-informed sources in those countries: Some branches that once had a hundred or two hundred members have already collapsed to only a dozen still active. This should surprise no one. People in great material need, temporarily infatuated with Western ideas, have always been open to proselyting by American missionaries; but some of the problems discussed in this essay are already contributing to the massive defection of members in former communist countries as well.

gators. Even if the sincere testimonies of the missionaries are confirmed by the Holy Spirit, investigators deserve better and fuller responses to their questions; and surely gospel scholarship has those answers. How might we reach out to other segments of the population with more thorough and appealing teaching materials?

First, we might offer professionally polished television documentaries, "infomercials," and/or radio programs, not the public relations productions with generic Christian themes already in use, but direct and candid pieces setting forth the unique claims of the church. These would of course require considerable financing for market research and evaluation, for production, and for the broadcast time itself. Yet they would reach a far larger proportion and variety of the populations in the various countries, especially those kinds of people not home during the day or otherwise unwilling to open their doors to strangers going from house to house. Such people might be willing to ask for such visitors after they have been intrigued by inspiring media presentations, and they might also come from social and educational backgrounds which equip them with assets and talents to bring into the church.

The same kinds of people might respond also to free interactive software programs or CD-Rom presentations with both image and sound, which could reach millions of middle-class and professional people with their own home computers. With interactive programs people can easily move through their menus for segments on church doctrine, history, organization, or other aspects in whatever order appeals to them. A related approach is the rapidly growing world of Internet. Already there are many different independent LDS web sites, discussion groups, e-mail exchanges, and the like.[13] What we are still missing is an official LDS missionary site on the web, from which interested people can download a full LDS presentation on their own computers (perhaps with a Tabernacle Choir performance as a bonus).[14]

A second kind of innovation in our proselyting, besides the employment of both new and traditional media, might be the recruitment of missionaries with somewhat more education and maturity. Here I am not referring to elderly couples, who already make important contributions in increasing numbers, but to the usual young men and women who accept mission calls. At present they tend to consist of youths on either side of age twenty with little or no college education. Of course, even in the early days of the church (whether in the first century or the nineteenth) some missionaries were rather young—but not, as a rule, quite *so* young.

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13. See Bryan Waterman, "A Guide to the Mormon Universe," *Sunstone* 17 (Dec. 1994): 64-65; and the growing number of "web-wards" on the web itself.

14. The *Salt Lake Tribune* (2 Sept. 1995) quoted LDS spokesman Don LeFevre as saying that the church has "under review" the creation of an official church web site.

Perhaps at least a significant portion of our youthful missionary corps could be called slightly later in life, after completion of their formal education, when they have acquired somewhat more seasoning and wisdom. If such a postponement would mean a reluctance to accept mission calls in some cases, it might in other cases make for missionaries who could be more effective with mainstream investigators.[15]

A third modification might be a longer period of preparation before an investigator is baptized. On the one hand, I understand and appreciate the sense of urgency that accompanies our proselyting system at present: We have long been taught that these are the last days, that the harvest time is short. If people have truly repented and accepted the gospel, they should not have to jump through a lot of hoops to get to the baptismal font. Also, the missionaries themselves understandably look to the number of baptisms as measures of their own success. Yet, on the other hand, in our preoccupation with sheer numbers we have often baptized people prematurely in the expectation that some spiritual form of "natural selection" would eventually separate the weak from the strong.

For many new members, and for the church units which they have joined, our experience in Europe and elsewhere has shown us the drawbacks of this proselyting philosophy. It has produced the opposite of the desired result. Instead of saving souls, it has placed in spiritual jeopardy at least half of those baptized by persuading them to make sacred covenants which they were not ready or able to fulfill. Why could we not ask prospective converts to attend church meetings and keep the commandments for perhaps a year before baptism? We might lose some who are not stable or fully converted, or whose early enthusiasm cools somewhat in the process; but those who endure for that year will be far more likely to endure for a lifetime. Furthermore, local leaders could become more involved than they are now both in the decision to accept new members for baptism and in the process of their integration into the church unit, which would enhance their sense of responsibility for new members. All of this might mean that missionaries who first introduce a given investigator to the gospel will not be in town for the baptism, but that consideration should not take precedence over adequate convert preparation.

A longer preparation might also help avoid or lessen tragic clashes with family, friends, and the larger community. Candidates will have more time to work out tensions, to brace themselves for a new and overwhelming change in life, and even to invite family members and friends to join in the investigation process, which will be less threatening given

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15. For prospective missionaries from Europe, a call *after* completion of post-secondary schooling would also, in most cases, fit better with the prevailing system of higher education. The present timing of mission calls might fit the American system well enough, but in Europe it can be disruptive or even fatal to an eventually successful completion of higher education.

the longer time frame. Some people will probably attempt to dissuade the potential convert from baptism, but others might be intrigued enough to become investigators themselves. In any case, if the potential convert cannot stand up to the social consequences of joining the church, it is better to learn that before baptism than afterward. However, my confidence in the outcome of this process, I must confess, derives in part from my own personal experience. Since I was a minor when I first expressed a desire for baptism, and my parents would not approve, I was required to wait three years. During that waiting period my knowledge, commitment, and testimony of the gospel only increased, while the sanctity and importance of the baptismal ordinance loomed ever larger in my mind.

Either during a pre-baptism period of preparation, or after baptism, or both, converts need strengthening with a more gradual integration into the responsibilities of church membership. Presumably the church has been doing some research on the process of new member integration in recent years, but it is difficult to see how the results of that research have made a difference. What can we do to help new members reduce family conflicts that occur as they seem to offend the rest of the family by walking away from the ancestral faith and by striving to observe the Sabbath, the Word of Wisdom, and tithing?

Is it wise to bestow priesthood offices and heavy auxiliary callings immediately on new members? Might that not compromise the sanctity of such callings and introduce unnecessary stress too early in the convert's new relationship with the church? On the one hand, it is desirable to begin the total integration of new members immediately at some level, and to be sure they feel a necessary part of the Lord's work. On the other hand, we need to be careful to adapt this principle to individual circumstances. Some new members will be more likely to stay away from church meetings than to participate if they feel overburdened, especially if their church responsibilities come too often between them and their families. Relatedly, does it help or hinder new members' relationship with the church for them and their family to be visited so often by home teachers, visiting teachers, and various other leaders? In many homes such visits are regarded as invasions of privacy, especially by the non-members present. Finally, can't we provide new converts with more guidance in how European Latter-day Saints can remain true to their Mormon identity while still participating constructively in the social and cultural life of the local community?

The Mormon Community

Probably the most complex challenge we face in the internationalization of the church in the twenty-first century is this: Can we make

changes in the ways we organize and experience the LDS community that will reduce and contain the massive defections of recent decades? The answer is all the more complex because of the disparate needs of the various Saints; a solution to problems for one church member or unit will not be a solution for others. All I can do here is point to a number of key issues and themes.

The Boundary Issue. How should we define and communicate LDS distinctiveness? On the one hand, the church has mounted a strong public relations campaign in recent decades to emphasize our common Christian heritage with other denominations. On the other hand, our LDS heritage from the beginning has emphasized the state of *apostasy* in which the rest of Christianity now wallows. Joseph Smith was told that other creeds are "an abomination" in the Lord's eyes. How far can we go in both directions simultaneously? Ultimately there is a big difference between being *a* Christian church and *the* one true Christian church; and only the latter posture is consistent with our extensive proselyting effort. Sometimes we seem to water down our *doctrinal* distinctiveness for the sake of good public relations, preferring instead to emphasize *social and moral conservatism* (obedience, life-style conformity, sexual chastity, anti-abortion, and the like), all of which are important in their own right as *products* of conversion to the doctrine; but they do not make us distinctive by comparison with either Roman Catholicism or conservative Protestantism. Most LDS converts prefer to *deny* any connection with traditional Christianity, having rejected it as an apostate remnant. They come to us to be fed on strong doctrine, and we run the risk of losing them if our conference sermons, lesson manuals, and press releases become too generically Christian.

Cultural Adaptation or Correlation? The issue of "adapting" Mormonism to local cultures has already drawn much attention.[16] I appreciate the concern of some of my American LDS friends about the danger of imposing American values on church members in other cultures. Some even favor the reduction of Mormonism to a minimal spiritual core, leaving each local culture to make adaptations in accordance with its own needs and traditions. I tend toward a different opinion. First, given the disproportionate presence of troubled and spiritually immature converts with their own eccentricities and preferences, even a minimal measure of freedom to adapt can easily lead to serious deviations and even schisms. It is "correlation," properly understood as carefully monitored standardization,

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16. See, for example, F. Lamond Tullis, ed., *Mormonism: A Faith for All Cultures* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1978); Edwin B. Firmage, "Restoring the Church: Zion in the Nineteenth and Twenty-First Centuries," *Sunstone* 13 (Jan. 1989): 33-40; James B. Allen, "On Becoming a Universal Church," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 25 (Spring 1992): 13-36; and Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive*, 204-14.

that guarantees our unity and strength in the essentials.

Second, among industrial societies, at least, no matter on which side of the Atlantic, there has been considerable cultural convergence in recent decades, and many residual "cultural differences" are actually superficial. To be sure, they can still cause irritation, but they should not be exaggerated. There is no reason that a certain amount of standardization or "correlation" from church headquarters should prove more onerous or less necessary in Europe than in America, given a reasonable amount of flexibility and controlled diversification. Here I am talking about different organizational patterns, different meeting schedules, and different unit scales (some of this is already underway). Other needs include more varied and pedagogically sound lesson materials and a better international church magazine to address varied local concerns.

Third, in the name of more local independence the European church must not be deprived of the important spiritual and intellectual resources (in translation) that only the church can provide (a point made earlier to which I will return again).

Relation to the Host Society. Another important issue is how church members can participate in the social and cultural life of the surrounding community while still maintaining a strong LDS identity. The strain between these two imperatives is one of the reasons for LDS defection. We need more analysis to discover ways in which a committed Mormon can combine living the essentials of the gospel along with continued participation in acceptable and constructive aspects of non-Mormon community life. Such would imply some structural changes in the church to permit a member more opportunity for involvement in the surrounding society without feeling guilty for neglecting church obligations. This leads directly to the next point.

Adapting Church Programs to Local and Individual Circumstances. Perhaps one of the most basic and constructive adaptations we could make would be to individualize the definition of "active member." Some members need and want a lot of church activity, while others are being crushed by too much. Instead of the one-size-fits-all definition, we might measure "activity" with due consideration for the kinds and weights of a member's responsibilities outside the church (family, profession, community, and others). We might consider also a member's heart and spirit, the evidence in one's life that he or she has internalized the teachings of the gospel. We need, in other words, a little pragmatism and common sense in the ways in which we deal with all the members of the local LDS community. This is especially important in the cases of part-member families, of those with demanding occupations, of the less healthy, and even of those who are by nature more modest and retiring.

Examples of such needed adaptations include the home teaching and

visiting teaching programs. In Europe at present no program elicits more vehement injunctions from local leaders, or imposes more strain on the small corps of obedient souls, than these visiting programs. Given the insoluble problems of so many troubled members, the masses of inactives, and the long distances that must often be travelled, the burden is often unreasonable. Even worse, home and visiting teaching sometimes deteriorates into meddling in each other's affairs, gossiping, and criticizing leaders. Adaptations could be made to relieve some of these strains: Visit the most apathetic or hostile inactives only once a year; visit active families infrequently also, recognizing that they are less needful than other members, and that "required" church visits may go against the European tradition of home privacy, anyway; use telephone calls in place of more frequent visits; provide gift subscriptions to a new and lively LDS magazine (see below); and make better use of professional services in the surrounding community for dealing with serious social problems among church families.

Maintaining Membership Interest. Perhaps more than anything we need a different international magazine. The present magazine (which goes by different names in different languages) is much in need of expansion, enrichment, and features that reveal LDS life and problems in realistic, analytical terms. As demonstrated by my experience with *Horizon*, such a creative magazine can also reach many people outside the small circle of active Latter-day Saints, including inactive members, investigators, their families, journalists, and even leaders in the larger community. Let me illustrate with an example out of my own profession: Until a few years ago the Flemish Ministry of Education published a dull monthly magazine for 100,000 teachers. The contents were always predictable. Ministry policies were always justified; problems were concealed; the many success stories were unrealistic; and so on. Then a new Minister of Education came along and turned the publication over to a team of devoted and creative professionals. With research on readers' needs, with creative writers, with modern media techniques, and with engaging graphics, including humorous cartoons, the magazine has been transformed. Real problems are now addressed: the burned-out teacher, school violence, teenagers' academic and sexual problems, and so on, but in constructive and upbeat ways. There are still the success stories and ministry regulations, but these are now presented in an engaging and witty style, with due allowance for variations in circumstances. The magazine now provides a successful forum for what is really happening in education. It gives readers a feeling of belonging to a community and helps channel their frustrations into a desire to promote needed change.

Teaching in the church is also in great need of improvement if it is to motivate members to remain active. A little research on the teaching pro-

cess might be beneficial. How might we create teaching materials that will be largely independent of the teacher? Few of our classes or teachers at present provide the kinds of intellectually rich, thought-provoking lessons that stress the originality and power of our religion. Lesson materials could be easily upgraded by the many faithful scholars at BYU and elsewhere. How can we produce or train good teachers? In professional pedagogical research useful data for the improvement of both techniques and materials can often be provided by analyzing video recordings of class sessions. Perhaps the church could benefit by sponsoring some of this kind of research as a basis for improving our teaching across all the auxiliaries and quorums.

CONCLUSION

As I look into the twenty-first century and try to summarize the concerns and possibilities I have expressed here, I find myself favoring simultaneously two different trends which might seem, at first glance, to be contradictory. Yet they are not, for they focus on two different levels. On the spiritual and intellectual level I recommend *strengthening* our message of doctrinal distinctiveness, backed by an open and lively program of public information and dissemination, which will give us a sense of pride in being Mormons. However, at the operational level of church governance and regulation I would like to see a *loosening* of policy, insofar as gospel standards permit, especially in regard to those regulations and requirements that isolate Latter-day Saints from their surrounding social environments, so that they might more fully participate in those environments while still enjoying the blessings of the gospel.

In recent decades church policy has often seemed to move in directions opposite to the two I would favor, perhaps in response to conditions in Utah or in North America more generally. However, it might well be that the success of the international church during the next century will be achieved instead through a successful combination of the two trends I have proposed.

I would like to conclude by reiterating my earlier caveat that the mission field in Europe has many branches and wards that are doing well. Many Saints live happy and well-balanced lives, both in the church and in the world; have strong testimonies of the gospel; and have, since their baptisms, felt overwhelmed with gratitude for the privilege of membership in the church. I count myself among their number.

Yet in this essay I have focused on the reality that for many decades the church has suffered from massive defections, hundreds of thousands if not millions. To be sure, many of those defections can be attributed to individual transgression, weakness, and failure, and I have not discussed

those. Instead I have addressed other factors and emphasized the awe-some responsibility that we face for bringing back our lost sheep and for reducing further losses. My ultimate purpose, and my keenest desire, have therefore been constructive; I have desired only to acquaint readers with problems and issues as I have seen them in my three decades of church membership and leadership, and to suggest some possibilities for improving the holding power of the church, at least in my part of the kingdom, as we enter a new century.

Ethnization and Accommodation: Dutch Mormons in Twenty-first-century Europe

Walter E. A. van Beek

ALONGSIDE UTRECHT'S LARGEST CANAL, the nineteenth-century Neo-Gothic Martinuschurch dominates the centuries-old waterfront houses. Far beneath its glistening spire, the little entrance square, with a statue of the warrior saint Martinus at the center, bristles with people. Still, this is not Sunday; no service is held. This particular morning bears no difference from any other: just people going to their jobs. The splendid church has become a condominium; thirty-eight apartments fill the space created by this former house of worship. Residents at the top can boast large gothic windows, and middle floors have stained glass windows from floor to ceiling. The church's exterior has been restored with great care during the transformation. Only at night is the change evident. Dutch custom calls for unshuttered windows, so light from the many apartments shines through the bay windows.

There is nothing unusual here, not in Holland. As in Germany, Switzerland, and other Western European countries, the houses of worship in Holland are being deserted. Non-ecclesiastical use is essential for the upkeep of more than half of the buildings.[1] The faithful no longer flock to the Sunday sermons of Dutch Reformed, Roman Catholic, or Neo-Calvinist *(Gereformeerd)* services. One indicator is the number of non-church-affiliated Dutch: 20 percent in 1958, 57 percent in 1991. Of church-affiliated Dutch, in 1966 51 percent went to church regularly (once

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1. A. Stinissen, *Functieverandering van Kerkgebouwen* (Change of Function in Church Buildings) (RUG: Groningen, 1989), 56.

a month), but in 1979 only 34 percent went. This percentage has decreased by about 1 percent per year down to an estimated 23 percent in 1991. In recent years the retreat has tapered off to about 2 percent every three years.[2] Differences by denomination are marked. Among Roman Catholics the retreat is most dramatic: from 85 percent in 1966 to 28 percent in 1994. Neo-Calvinists show more stability: attendance dropped from 81 percent to 64 percent during the same years.[3]

In the 1970s and early 1980s the clergy tended to interpret this process as loss of the ecclesiastical fringe: People who had belonged only marginally to a denomination dropped out, leaving the hard core behind. This would provide the churches with a challenge to concentrate on their true calling to develop a community of faith. However, the process has not halted; the core is giving way as well, and the prognosis is that by about 2020 only the most devout—a small minority—will attend church.[4]

The average Dutch person has chosen not to belong to a denomination or to attend services. Compared to other countries in Europe, the Dutch situation is not unique. Though Holland is becoming one of the most secularized societies in Europe, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland are all comparable. The 16 percent of the total Dutch population that regularly attends church[5] is about the same as in West Germany and Great Britain. Norway has the lowest figure, with 5 percent attending church.[6]

Non-attendance is part of a larger phenomenon, secularization, which implies in its first phase a separation of secular and sacred institutions, and in its second phase the breakdown of religious institutions. Thus secularization is the dominant theme in assessing the future of religion.[7] For many observers, processes such as industrialization, urbanization, massive schooling, and the development of science have led to an erosion of the credibility of and need for religion. However, this view is too simple, picturing waves of enlightenment beating on the sands of unproven religion, washing superstition away with the advance of objective knowledge. Secularization is an observable but more complicated process, which we will see for the Dutch case in order to place Mor-

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2. J. W. Becker and R. Vink, *Secularisatie in Nederland, 1966-1991* (Secularization in the Netherlands, 1966-1991) (Rijswijk: Sociaal-Cultureel Planburea, 1994), 116.

3. Ibid., 51.

4. Ibid., 190.

5. The self-report basis of these studies might even make for some exaggerations. Such church attendance records as do exist (also unreliable) give much lower figures.

6. The same holds for the 8 percent of the Dutch who cling to a literal interpretation of the Bible; this figure matches those of most Western European countries and of the Eastern European as well (Becker and Vink, 168).

7. R. Stark and W. S. Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 429.

monism in the secularizing religious landscape there.

SECULARIZATION IN WESTERN EUROPE: THE CRUMBLING OF PILLARS

Not long ago a Catholic comedian in Holland, for the amusement of his audience, recounted, "Last Sunday I watched our parish football team play against a team from a Protestant community. Objective sports admirer that I am, I applauded an action of the adversary. Immediately the man in front of me turned and chided: 'Have you no faith?'" Such is but one expression of secularization in today's Europe. Following David Martin's incisive study[8] on the relation between church and politics, several types of secularization may be discerned: the type with a Roman Catholic monopoly (Belgium, France, Italy, Spain); the mixed type (Germany, Holland, Switzerland); and the type with a non-Catholic state church (England, Scandinavia). Since my focus is on continental Western Europe, I will concentrate on the second type, of which the Dutch form a typical case.

The American situation is different from any of the European types. Martin characterizes the American situation as follows: a pluralist culture, federalist in politics and religion, with churches playing a large role in the interstices of society. Its low-status clergy has a constant turnover, according to the constant adaptation of religious styles to changing circumstances and to a floating population. The legitimation of the overall social order comes from a pervasive civil religion, with a definite social gospel: the welcome offered by the Statute of Liberty in fact is a symbol of general salvation, social inclusion, and universal civil rights. In America churches are denominations, competing in a market with other denominations, and judged by genuineness and performance.[9]

The most relevant type for Western Europe is Martin's so-called mixed type, i.e., a large Catholic minority and a Protestant majority, a situation that has prevailed in several countries (Germany, Switzerland, and especially Holland), leading to a close intertwinement of religion with politics, education, health, and other institutions.[10] The process is one of subcultural segregation: around each denomination a political party, a school system, a broadcasting corporation, trade unions, medical and paramedical care, sports facilities and organizations, and cultural organizations have developed. A more or less complete subculture has been created for each denomination. This is a "pillar."

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8. D. Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization* (Oxford, Eng.: Blackwell, 1978).

9. Ibid., 25-32.

10. G. Schmidtchen, *Ethik und Protest. Moralbilder und Wertkonflikte junger Menschen* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1993); M. A. Thung, *Exploring the New Religious Consciousness* (Amsterdam: Free University Press, 1985).

Someone born in, say, a Neo-Calvinist Dutch family would be delivered in a *Diakonessenhuis* (a denominational hospital), with nurses from the same background. Nursery, basic schooling, secondary school, and university of the same affiliation are provided. During his school years a boy would not only attend his church but find his recreation in a Neo-Calvinist football club, blow his trumpet in a denominational brass band, and enter a denominational student body organization at the denominational university. His wedding would take place in the church, career activities would be supervised by a Christian trade union, and ultimately his funeral would be taken care of by a "confessional" (the operative term in Holland) undertaker. A similar story could be told for a Roman Catholic citizen, and curiously enough even for a leftist non-believer, who has his or her own niche in a social-democratic pillar.

Not all denominations have been equally successful in creating their own pillars or subcultures. Neo-Calvinists and Catholics were among the first and most effective. Evangelicals came relatively late in Western Europe, but they too succeeded in creating their own socio-political and cultural pillars: political parties, a broadcasting corporation, and even an attempt at a university. However, they entered a shaky system, for the basic elements of, and public support for, such secularized pillars were already eroding.

Mormonism in Holland is too small to have its own pillar. Still, some Mormons have tried to create a pillar with a primary school, an old age home, shared time in public broadcasting, and their own periodical; but without success: the efforts were too few and too late. The tide for pillar-building has passed. Also most Dutch LDS leaders have not been too happy with member initiatives, foreseeing practical problems and in principle opposed to segregation through pillars.

Politics in such a system was, and still is, a discourse of compromises; of give and take; of arguing and listening; of respect and tolerance, on the one hand; but steeled conviction, on the other. Politics and religion in these countries always have been characterized by moderation, absence of extremes, and middle-of-the-road theological pragmatism. Pillarization has been the dominant theme for about a century in Western European religion. However, for the last decade of this century and the first part of the next, de-pillarization will be crucial.

Dutch Catholicism offers the clearest example of the erosion of a pillar. Up until the 1960s the Dutch Catholic province, roughly the south of the country, was among the most orthodox, uniform, and obedient in the Roman Catholic church. The "pillar" it constructed between 1860 and 1960 has been its means towards "emancipation"; the Catholic minority at the turn of the century was less educated, had less power and influence, and was less vocal than its Protestant compatriots.

Within the span of two decades, however, Dutch Catholicism has, from the viewpoint of Rome, changed from a faithful servant to an obnoxiously progressive and extremely vocal church province. Vatican Council II initiated fierce controversies, great enthusiasm, and a general slackening of Catholic identity and practice. Discussions between parties in the debates, intellectuals versus administrative elites, could not be curtailed by the clergy: "the bishops were forced to referee a civil war within the middle class, paralleling the civil wars elsewhere, e.g., England and the USA."[11] The close, coherent, and efficient organization created for Catholic emancipation was now used for debates, discussion, and dissent. "Previously, the system had echoed loudly to the tune of one message; now it resonated doubly with several conflicting messages, especially so given the progressive sympathies of media operators. Knowledge of being watched by the world acted as a further accelerator."[12]

The reaction on the ideological level was clear. Mainline churches, like Dutch Catholicism, in the 1970s and 1980s became arenas of ferment over contemporary issues, political, cultural, humanitarian, and social. Third World projects abounded and still are crucial. Congregations were expected to adopt projects, either as part of ongoing programs or as partners with a project or Third World town. This might seem similar to the old link-with-the-missionary-in-the-field of Catholic congregations, but any resemblance is superficial. The missionary tie was a logical *extension* of the church; nowadays the project has become an *alternative* to the church: not a this-worldly translation of the message, but the message itself.

In the larger society churches have become focal points for discussions about moral issues. During the 1960s and 1970s there were mainly the issues of apartheid (South African apartheid was a particularly Dutch trauma), nuclear armament, abortion, homosexuality, divorce, unmarried cohabitation, chemical preservatives, etc. Here the same thing happened: the issue itself became central, replacing the transcendent message with a pragmatic and political one, even if the discourse was moral in nature.

For Mormons in Holland the absence of such discourse at their church was and is sometimes felt as a void; lessons and manuals hardly ever treat reality, focusing only on our desired perfection as members and families, avoiding the relevant issues of the times. The absence of Third World projects and the non-debate on moral discourse have meant political non-involvement, separating LDS members from their fellow Dutch.

Political debates have remained intensely moral in Holland, but with

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11. Martin, 192.
12. Ibid., 193.

less and less religion behind them. Any moral controversy calls at the same time for religious, social, and political discourse. This loss of transcendency in the mainline churches has been applauded by several theologians as a return to the proper calling of the church. However, the issues themselves, like any moral dilemmas, have been tough, timely, but also time-bound. In 1996 the issues from the 1960s seem dated and are no longer topics of discourse. Most have disappeared because they have been generally accepted or resolved; nuclear armament and apartheid became obsolete through political change. The discussion on abortion is still with us, but given the degree of its acceptance by the general public and by most church-affiliated people, what remains are questions of detail: under what conditions, for what motives, etc. Euthanasia is the topic of the 1990s, having become an unofficially tolerated practice in clinically terminal situations and enjoying almost nationwide support.

The difference from the American scene is evident. In the U.S. denominations have entered a religious market situation competing in a religious arena defined by primordially transcendent claims. There are links with politics but not with any particular part of the political spectrum. The absence of a center in the American political dichotomy is important here. In Western Europe no direct competition exists among churches in the American way. Churches confront each other on non-transcendent issues through pillarized institutions. They have eschewed the supernatural market place.

For European mainline churches, what remains is a pragmatic Christianity, a shared Christian cultural heritage. The issues are clearly this-worldly: human rights, environment, helping the hungry. Christianity in Western Europe finds its clearest expression in secularized institutions like the Red Cross, Amnesty International, Greenpeace, and other eco-movements. Generalized Christian notions of charity, partnership, stewardship, and mutual dependency form the guideposts of these organizations; they are the inheritors of general Christianity in Western Europe.

The Denominational Margin

The recent history of mainline Christianity in Western Europe might read as the demise of religion, but it is not. In fact it is a history of secularization, not only of society but of churches themselves. This redefinition of religious content simply brought the churches in line with their social and political environments. This kind of secularization, according to Stark and Bainbridge, "eventually leads to the collapse of religious organizations as their extreme worldliness—their weak and vague conceptions of the supernatural—leaves them without the means to satisfy even

the universal dimensions of religious commitment."[13] According to their theory, this kind of secularization is the standard way of reducing tension between the denomination and its social environment. As a consequence churches may flounder, but the supernatural does not disappear: "Only the gods can formulate a coherent plan for life."[14] What is lost in the center grows anew in the margins. Indeed, in Western Europe religion is not on the way out; it is just changing faces.

Secularization has not occurred in the small orthodox sects, many of which split off in the last century from Neo-Calvinism. Neo-Calvinists themselves are less prone to secularization. Evangelicals and Neo-Calvinist splinter churches are doing well (in Holland it is even hard to count them, fission-prone as they are). Often they are tied to specific communities (like fishing villages or small agricultural towns), but also in large cities they have their place. Even their efforts at creating a new pillar in an age of depillarization are somewhat successful. Yet they represent not so much a new growth of religion as a resistant old core.

The truly new forms of religion are, of course, the most marginal: cults, sects, and movements coming from abroad, though a few are homegrown. The "non-respectable" fringe of the religious scene is doing well. Jehovah's Witnesses, Adventists, Scientology, Hare Krishna, etc., are growing, though some have felt the general loss of interest in organized religion in recent years, and their growth in the past decade seems to be slowing.[15] Pentecostal movements are doing well, as are Evangelicals such as the Moravian Brethren.

Far more spectacular in Western Europe has been the success of Eastern cults, movements, and currents, a large fringe with diverse forms of organization. The general context for the kind of speculative thinking involved in these movements is exemplified in the increased acceptance of astrology. From 1966 to 1979 the number of people who "thought the stars might influence our lives" doubled in the Netherlands.[16] Led by the media, the "old sciences" of astrology, palm-reading, and the like regained credibility and respectability. The New Age, with its amalgam of Eastern and Western occultisms, flourishes. This kind of margin has become the fashion. Bookshops feature large and profitable sections of occult literature.

The more organized cults of Indian and Eastern origin are popular as well. The Rajneeshi Baghwan found, after Oregon, his firmest support in

13. Stark and Bainbridge, 429.

14. Ibid., 431.

15. Jehovah's Witnesses, for instance, experienced a decrease in adherents in 1994, for the first time in decades (R. Singelenberg, personal communication).

16. From 21 percent to 40 percent (W. Goddijn, H. Smets, and G. van Tillo, *Opnieuw: God in Nederland* [God in the Netherlands, Again] [Amsterdam: De Tijd, 1979], 123).

Holland, before the grand exposé took place. The Unification Church, Hare Krishna, and others remain entrenched, though their heyday seems to be over. Some movements are homegrown, too. A number of European movements have sprung up with a mixture of Eastern and European contents. Some remain small, but some have intense media appeal. Recently a healer cult, through one Yomanda, a former ballet performer, has attracted large numbers of people in Holland: train schedules have to be adapted to her performances. Though most people maintain a detached skepticism, interest in something new is common.

The rise of the occult goes hand in hand with a loss of confidence in Western science. Increasingly the limitations of technology for existential problems, as well as the inflated presumptions of science, are exposed: *"Hinten der Kosten Explosion im Gesundheitswesen steht Verzweiflung über Endlichkeit"* ("Behind the cost explosion in health issues stands despair over finality [when it will all end]").[17] The demise of the supernatural has brought a heightened consciousness of the fragility of individual well-being. The enormous growth of psychotherapies in the 1970s and 1980s is a case in point. Though the crest of this wave has passed, psychotherapy remains a continuous presence, in many cases fulfilling more than a few functions of religion.

MORMONISM AS PERPETUALLY MARGINAL

Any religion is part of its environment. Though Mormonism in Western Europe is an imported religion, Mormons still have to live in and with European culture. They are, in fact, products of that culture, so they will have to deal with the consequences of secularization. Clearly, general Western European culture is moving farther away from the basic elements of Mormonism. It is not separation between church and state that is a problem, for Mormonism has long accepted that idea and even made it into a social doctrine. However, the process of secularization of churches in Holland, and in other European countries, implies the dissolution of religious institutions. The trend is towards non-organized religion or networking religion. Secularization in Europe involves de-institutionalization. The idea that salvation is found in a specific organization, led by a well organized hierarchy with an authoritative voice, will become more alien to European culture. Notions of hierarchy, authority, and power are increasingly suspect. In Europe the time of the theocracies is over. Thinking in absolutes, in fixed norms and standardized value systems, becomes increasingly marginal culturally. Transcendental theology with a closed theology and half-open scripture is out of step, both with

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17. Cited in ibid., 151, 231n6.

the secularizing majority and with the immanence-oriented theological margin.

So tension between European Mormons and the cultural environment will increase. In a few areas Dutch and other European members have to accommodate the general society. For instance, in Holland tolerance of alternative forms of marriage relations (such as common-law marriages which have been accepted legally and socially); of alternatives to the traditional nuclear family; and especially of alternative forms of sexuality, are all points of difference. Condemnation of homosexuality is seen as intolerance (a damaging epithet); recent findings of genetic origins for homosexuality have received a wide and receptive hearing in Western Europe. Mormonism's condemnation of homosexuality means reduced respectability in Europe.

As they grow more distant from the cultural center, European Mormons will increasingly find themselves at the ecclesiastical margin. Ironically enough, this is the very position society has allotted Mormons in the past, and against which European Mormons have battled since World War II, striving for respectability and legal acknowledgement (the latter finally acquired). However, in the course of Western European secularization this margin itself is of rising importance and respectability and does hold some opportunities for future development and growth. The question then becomes, if the center moves away, how well will Mormonism fit into the margin?

Mormonism shares a number of features with Evangelicals: the orthodoxy, the link between creed and behavior, obedience to authority, some emphasis on the experiential side of religiousness, and inner-directedness. Some social characteristics are also comparable: small, homogeneous congregations, mutual self-help, intense internal networking, a sharp distinction between in- and outgroup. Ironically, from a political point of view, Evangelicals are ill at ease with Mormons, branding them members of a heretical sect mainly because of the extra scriptures. Yet a number of Mormons feel at home in the Evangelical "pillar"; for example, in their broadcasting corporation. Orthodox Neo-Calvinists are also part of this margin; they, however, being chips off the old Calvinist block, enjoy greater respectability in Dutch society. Even when their practices clash with the common good, authorities and the general public are tolerant. For instance, several Calvinist groups prohibit inoculation; thus, every odd decade a small polio epidemic scourges their communities, also endangering other people. Yet the government has never made polio vaccination mandatory, though the press and the general public have been critical. Mormonism does not enjoy that type of public tolerance.

This part of the margin, however, is not the most productive one. The occult religious milieu is far more dynamic in terms of its following,

though it is often difficult to speak of membership. However, Mormonism is almost diametrically the opposite of these movements, with their diffuse doctrines, absent authorities, non-organization, and individual salvation. The fuzzy organization and identity of these movements stand in contrast with the clear-cut organization and unambiguous boundaries of Mormonism. Finally, the low level of commitment in these cults, the amount of shopping around, and ecclesiastical eclecticism are not encouraged in Mormonism. So even in the margin Mormonism occupies a position among small stable denominations lacking spectacular growth, but it is never accepted as one of them.

Most European LDS members have become used to this position.[18] In most countries social ostracism is not severe. Holland, for example, does not always live up to its reputation of tolerance, and in indirect ways LDS members have been put at some disadvantage in the job market and especially in public positions. Yet the trend in society is toward less personal judgments, toward more latitude for alternative lifestyles, even for Mormons. Anti-Mormon drives are not likely in Western Europe; any clergy willing to instigate them would lose respect.

DYNAMICS IN WESTERN EUROPEAN MORMONISM: ETHNIZATION WITH ACCOMMODATION

The Impact of Immigration

Many changes are affecting Europe. One is immigration in recent decades, requiring the accommodation of an increasing range of cultures. The depillarization process, as well as the specific forms of secularization, affect only the main population; and the traditional mono-ethnic situation is breaking down in many countries. Not only does this engender the rebirth of ethnicity, currently the scourge of eastern and southeastern Europe, but also the arrival of other religions, such as Islam. A considerable ethnic fringe is developing in Western Europe, with immigrants often depending on state welfare. This ethnic lower class offers a suitable terrain for missionizing, especially the recently arrived Africans and the more entrenched Surinamese and Antillians in the Netherlands. They occupy a position in society similar to that which the LDS church occupies in the ecclesiastical environment. Their receptivity to the missionaries' message is greater than that of the mainstream population. So the growing ethnic margin of European societies might fill the religious void created by a secularized middle class.

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18. The difference with Belgium, where ostracisim is very present, is striking, though. See Wilfred Decco's essay in this issue.

In the Dutch Mission (including Dutch-speaking Belgium, most of the time) during the past fifteen years (1980-94) a total of 1,960 baptisms have taken place, averaging 131 per year, with about one-third coming from member referrals and two-thirds from missionary contacts. In the early 1980s mission presidents were hesitant to baptize ethnic minorities, fearing an "easy come, easy go" attitude in these converts. In the late 1980s pressure to proselyte among these groups increased, and so did baptisms. Of the 110 baptisms in 1994, sixty-six were from missionary contacts and included the baptisms of twenty-eight ethnic converts; forty-four were from member referrals and included four ethnic converts.[19]

No longer will middle- or lower-class Dutch nationals, who used to form the bulk of converts, continue to fill the ranks of the church. The distance between their culture and the Mormon subculture is growing larger, making the transition harder and missionaries less successful. For people at ease with Dutch culture, and with the trends in that culture, the step into Mormonism demands an increasing reorganization of values and a rethinking of norms. Though occupational and societal consequences of their LDS membership will be less serious, the cognitive transformations will be greater. However, the immigrant population presents a different situation. At least the non-Muslim among them have a definite need for attachment, for reassurance, for inclusion in a closed community. Their view of hierarchical authority, as well as their value systems, is much closer to LDS ways. In their countries of origin secularization is only just starting, and religion remains a meaningful institution.

Increasing proportions of immigrants and refugees are thus joining the church. The opening of eastern Europe will enhance this tendency. The present experience is that immigrant converts come in quickly and fade away gradually. They tend to be "consumers" of new religions, without taking part in leadership positions or activities. Several reasons account for this: They lack standing in Dutch society, have language problems, and come from cultural backgrounds where religion has always been more consumed than produced. Baptism often has some opportunism to it: they shop around. In many of their background cultures (especially the African ones), plurality of religions is an accepted way of life, a strategy for survival and optimization of life-chances; the pattern is repeated in Holland. However, Mormonism does not make this strategy easy, so they fade away once the heyday of attention is over.

The Shrinking Core of Long-term Members

Branch and ward leadership positions still have to be filled by non-

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19. Monthly baptismal reports of Netherlands Mission; notes in my possession.

immigrant members. As the balance of convert baptisms continues to shift towards immigrants, the majority of Dutch will be second-, third-, and fourth-generation members. They will run the wards, serving an increasing fringe of ethnic Europeans, who, in turn, will be only marginally involved in activities and leadership. A small core, with slowly changing personnel, will work hard on behalf of an increasingly floating population, which shops around for religious alternatives. The rotation of callings in such a system implies a recycling of relatively few leaders through the positions, often to return to the same position two or three times. Someone who becomes branch president or bishop for a third time will not be exceptional. This trend will endure as the number of potential leaders remains limited, even among second-generation Mormons.

Given an organizational struggle to retain long-term members, and the growing shortage of non-immigrant Dutch converts, the future will bring a trend already evident: the "ethnization of Mormons." Ethnization is the process by which a group exaggerates its differences with the main population in a situation where they increasingly interact, and in which its culture in reality grows less distinctive. I expect this to happen to Mormons for several reasons. Being a Mormon in twenty-first-century Europe constitutes an effort, not a comfortable identity. The self-definition of Mormons will not coincide with the place they occupy on the fringe. Lacking public respectability as Mormons, they will not simply accept their *Schicksalsgeworfenen* (the fate to which they have been thrown). Most long-term members will develop a dualistic attitude. On the one hand, they will define themselves as Mormons, active, obedient, and worthy; in the branches and wards they will share in an internal discourse of feeling privileged to be Mormon.

On the other hand, they will tend to downplay their membership in public life, among gentile peers, colleagues, or neighbors. Though tolerance in Holland is great enough to warrant a group's right of existence, individual relations are too brittle to expose to contrasting definitions. Members will be comfortable in the church among fellow members, but also reasonably comfortable in the secularized tolerance of the general society, as long as they do not mix the two spheres. Living a dual cognitive life inevitably draws the minority towards the general culture of the majority: Mormons will become more similar to their cultural environment, while continuing to stress their differences. The fact of being a second- or later-generation Mormon enhances this process; members without a first-hand experience of living in another denomination will tend to overdefine the gap between them and others. Stereotyping the other is an integral part of ethnization. This ethnization process enables members to manipulate their various identities, either defining their Mormonism as different or being part and parcel of European culture and society. Euro-

pean members thus will follow to a considerable degree the develop-
ments and tendencies of their own cultures, while defining themselves as
different at the same time. A relatively high degree of societal tolerance
for their peculiarities will permit them to define their own identity in a
secular society.

Relationships with Non-member Friends and Relatives

The bifurcated attitude resulting from ethnization appears especially
in missionary work. No topic is treated as often in conferences, priest-
hood meetings, or sacrament talks; yet no topic is as tedious to the aver-
age audience. Members in Europe must live in two worlds: a secularized
one with high tolerance but increasingly alien to fundamentalist preach-
ing, and the church environment which resists secularization. Some de-
gree of disjuncture in the action and thinking of LDS members is essential
for successful living; yet the call to proselyte is precisely the intrusion of
one of these domains into the other. In Western European culture this
kind of intrusion is resented. In Europe people tend not to mix socially
with shop or office colleagues but have separate friends, neighbors, and
acquaintances for hobbies and sports. So missionary work is something
of an oddity in secularized Western Europe, both because it is active
preaching and because of the fundamentalist content of the message.

One other issue, relevant for most European members, is their rela-
tionships with non-member relatives. In recent decades becoming a
member has not necessarily entailed the rupture of relations with one's
family, at least in the Netherlands. Yet all members still have to define
their church ties within the circle of their own personal families. Manuals
written in Utah offer no help here, especially in the case of wayward chil-
dren, a common phenomenon. The need for continuing relationships
with non-member children and non-member spouses runs counter to the
definition of self versus other in Mormonism. Again church manuals of-
fer no guidance. European members feel a need for realistic treatment of
everyday problems. In these family matters separation between church
and public spheres no longer is possible, a predicament exacerbated by
divorce. Since primary relations tend to be modelled more after European
ways than Mormon ways, the growing divorce rate in European societies
will reflect itself in a growing divorce rate among Mormons, as well.
Frowning on this development from the pulpit will have no effect. Di-
vorcés represent the fastest growing part of the church population, but
officially they do not exist in the church. No attention at all is given to
their problems; no programs to retain them in the fold; no discussions
about how ex-partners should interact; for in small European branches
and wards ex-partners constantly have to interact at church. Stake confer-

ences increasingly are becoming occasions for ex-partners to meet (or avoid) each other. For Dutch members it is incomprehensible that the church does not address these practical problems. In the matter of ruptured primary relations the continuing pain and problems are issues which should be addressed.

Doctrinal Homogeneity and Ethnization

The ethnization process has accompanied a general church change in the doctrine of gathering. "Gathering to Zion," up to the last decade still common among European Mormons, is losing its appeal and will fade away. Millennial movements, too, inside or outside of Mormondom, will continue to be marginal in Europe. In the church it is possible that some muted hope of gathering to the U.S.A. might surface again briefly with the approach of the new millennium, but it will quickly subside. Some appeal of America will always remain, not as a millennial attraction, but as an attraction to a church stronghold, or even to BYU. Loss of the "Zion-America Mystique," however, is inevitable. Even the appeal of the missionary has changed. Not only do European girls no longer marry American missionaries in any numbers; missionaries are no longer seen as "representative of the church" or even "representative of America." Increasingly they are seen as youngsters in "uniform" in need of guidance.

Important in this respect is the changed attitude towards America itself, and of course Mormonism still has strong American overtones. The position of the United States in European culture has been ambivalent. After the pro- and anti-American decades of the past, the general political and cultural image of America seems to have stabilized. The times of the "baseball baptisms" are over, never to be repeated, not only because of more recent church policy, but also because the image of America is not as alluring as it used to be. In European youth culture, and in the subculture of the business world, the influence of the U.S.A. is large and pervasive, but in other subcultures this is less the case. The standard political term *Amerikaanse toestanden* (American conditions) in the Netherlands has negative overtones. The image conjured is one of a sharp division between haves and have-nots, low social security, high rates of violence and crime, and an internal arms race due to a terrible gun craziness (European Mormons wonder why the church does not speak out against private arsenals).

The absence of internal variety in European Mormonism facilitates the drawing of sharp boundaries between "them and us," an essential feature of ethnization. In doctrine and practice "middle-of-the-road" Mormons tend to dominate. The absence of polygamy fundamentalists, Christian Identity adherents, or other Mormon splinter groups leaves

quite a monolithic Mormonism. The smaller sizes of wards and branches promote doctrinal and behavioral conformity as well. Dutch-speaking LDS on record in 1994 numbered 7,734, with an average attendance at sacrament in the first quarter of 2,885, or 37 percent. These members are distributed among forty units, more often branches than wards.[20] One specific ward, about average, has 162 members of record, with a sacrament meeting attendance of sixty-five: fourteen in the Melchizedek priesthood, six in the Aaronic priesthood, twenty-one in Relief Society, six Young Women, and eighteen in Primary. The truly active members comprise eleven families with young children; two young married couples without children; five couples with adult children; seven women with children (six of them divorced, one remarried to a non-member after divorce); one divorced man with children; eight single women (two of whom have been divorced though one now has a non-LDS husband); and six single men (two of whom are divorced). Of the twelve divorcés, in one case both ex-partners have stayed on in the same ward. Of the eleven full-member families with children, nine are second-generation LDS, in three cases with their parents living in the ward (counted as older couples).[21]

Almost all older couples have one or more, sometimes all, of their children inactive or disaffiliated. In Europe people are either members and more-or-less active, or they are totally inactive. Europe has few "Jack-Mormons" on either side of the boundary; most wards and branches have no marginal members in a practical sense. Dissenters do not stay in the church, for moving out is easier than staying. Once having lost contact with wards and branches, people seldom return. Whereas in the U.S.A. a high disengagement rate is accompanied by a substantial return rate,[22] the Dutch LDS scene has almost no returnees. One reason is that in Holland raising a family does not typically call for church affiliation. Thus youth who drop out seldom return. Such might be even more true for the elderly. Their activity, where mobility is required, becomes problematic at a time when they are gradually losing self-sufficiency. They tend to gravitate for care to institutions in one of the "pillars" (identified with mainline Christian churches), where they gradually fade from view.

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20. Correlated reports from the three Dutch stakes (Apeldoorn, Utrecht, and Amsterdam) and from Flanders; notes in my possession.

21. These data come from a very knowledgeable source.

22. S. L. Albrecht, M. Cornwall, and P. H. Cunningham, "Religious Leave-taking: Disengagement and Disaffiliation among Mormons," in D. G. Bromley, ed., *Falling from the Faith: Causes and Consequences of Religious Apostasy* (Beverley Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1988), 62-80; H. M. Bahr and S. L. Albrecht, "Strangers Once More: Patterns of Disaffiliation from Mormonism," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 28 (1989): 180-200.

Ethnization is the drawing of boundaries in situations of relative similarity. West European Mormons will do so on a doctrinal basis, while still conforming to the general culture. Another distinction appears in education. American Mormons can boast a somewhat higher education level than the American average; not so in Europe where members seem to have lower general levels of education than non-members. The over-representation of Mormon converts in lower clerical jobs (as in other proselyting churches) has led to an internal Mormon culture where education has a slightly lower value than in the rest of society. A latent anti-intellectualism pervades much of internal Mormon discourse. Spirituality counts more than intellect or learning. At the same time, somewhat ironically, European culture holds academics in high esteem, higher than in the U.S.A. Almost all public opinion ratings have the university professor at the top as the most respected status in society (though not the highest paid!). Here the Mormon culture in Europe has been at variance with the general cultural environment. However, this difference seems to decline quickly in the next generation, where higher education becomes more important. In this respect perhaps the situation is not so different from that in the U.S.

One example of such a second generation can be found in the participants of a typical Young Adults camp. Of the seventy-two Dutch participants in last year's camp, a third had an education on the LBO level (lower professional education) and a fourth on MBO level (medium professional level), leaving slightly under one-half with higher education (10 percent with university education and 30 percent with higher professional schooling). Of those seventy-two participants, fourteen are converts and fifty-eight are second-generation Mormon youth. Of the latter, fourteen had completed missions. After four years thirty-one had married in the church and four others with non-members. The educational distribution of this "sample" is comparable with that of general Dutch youth population. There is, however, a tendency among Mormon youth to opt for "practical" or applied sciences and skills—like nursing or technical training—rather than purely intellectual ones. A Mormon youth opting for, say, psychology is viewed with some alarm. Medical professions are in high favor.[23]

So the second generation catches up, despite the lingering anti-intellectualism, and despite the pressure of leadership positions in the church, confirming Niebuhr's thesis that in any new religious movement after a few generations the level of schooling rises.[24] Whether traditional LDS emphasis on education will result in an improved Mormon profile in

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23. Records of young adult camps in the Netherlands and additional oral information of several participants; notes in my possession.
24. Stark and Bainbridge, 99, 100.

higher education remains to be seen. One problem is that the university system in Europe differs importantly from its American counterpart. Most of the medium professional or vocational training in Europe is done in separate schools, not in universities. European universities generally do not have a level comparable to the bachelor's degree, which allows great numbers of American youth a respectable way out of the university system, after a thorough but short brush with higher education. Most vocations and professions in Europe have their specific schools, and universities tend to concentrate on more academic subjects, up to the M.A. or M.S. as the first graduation level.

For Mormon youth in Europe this implies that, given their practical orientation, they tend to seek schooling in specialized higher vocational schools. This fact, and the structure of universities, makes a mission more of a problem than it is in the U.S.A., since a two-year leave of absence can be very disruptive. The only feasible point at which to interrupt one's education is after secondary schooling; but for those not in college this comes too early. So the missionary call is out of sync with the educational system, which creates difficulties for Mormon youth. On the whole the church has little influence on schooling plans, so the Mormon community will come increasingly to reflect surrounding European trends.

The situation might be different for women, as Mormon women in Europe (like other women there) tend to favor home-making and child-rearing roles. Holland especially has the lowest proportion of married women working for wages (31 percent). In other countries of Europe the figure is higher, with Scandinavian countries at the top (where two-thirds of married women work outside the home). The traditional housewife is very much present, and of course her role is reinforced by church values. In lower levels of secondary education Mormon girls are overrepresented. The few of them who do opt for advanced education still expect to give priority as soon as possible to child-rearing and home-making over career or profession.

Ethnization is further enhanced by the strong endogamy in the Mormon peer group. For example, in the above-mentioned Young Adults group the majority married within the group. For Mormons this is nothing new, but in Western Europe peer groups are limited and partner selection is restricted. The LDS penchant for endogamy can be seen more clearly in the case of that Dutch-speaking ward mentioned several paragraphs earlier. In this ward were two LDS mothers (A and B), both of whom had married non-LDS men (though one subsequently divorced). The children of Mother A married those of Mother B. Their children (the grandchildren), in turn, intermarried with those of a third (divorced) LDS woman, Mother C. The principals and offspring of those unions comprised a third of all active ward members. In the literature of anthropol-

ogy one would have to look far to find a similarly dense endogamous network.

Most LDS youth find marriage partners in different wards, however. European cross-national marriages, though on the rise, are still a minority. In the future this type of internationalization might increase, though the centripetal tendencies of the various language communities preclude a large increase. In those cases where the partner comes from beyond the Mormon-gentile boundary, recent years have shown a hopeful sign. In earlier years mixed marriages tended to imply either restricted activity for the member-spouse or a gradual drifting away; with the second generation increasingly the non-member partner is drawn into the church, though the numbers are still too small to predict reliable trends.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In general, European Mormons will have to struggle against growing alienation from the values of their own LDS culture while growing to resemble more the social profile of the average Dutch, German, or Belgian. The tensions thus created can be both a challenge and a problem, resulting probably in a stronger definition of "otherness" even in situations of great similarity. Cognitive retrenchment, the redrawing of the borders of orthodoxy, is not likely to happen. Tolerance in European culture, and the relative comfort Mormons enjoy there, will preclude a siege mentality. So in order to live in reasonable comfort (an important European value) in his or her society, the European Mormon will have to invest considerable mental effort to bridge the gap (on the one hand) between Mormon culture and mainstream culture, between his or her view of society and society's view of itself and of him- or herself, and (on the other hand) between the expectations of the Utah church and the reality of Mormonism in Europe. At least in Holland, and in most Western European countries, the larger society is tolerant enough to make room for such cognitive maneuvers. Persecution, harassment, and problems with authorities will diminish, mainly because of a lack of concern.

We can expect internal changes in the European church in the next century mainly from changing attitudes among second- and third-generation local leadership. They will be better educated and will probably allow more leeway for diversity. Their room for maneuver, however, will depend on the room allotted them from higher up. The growth of the European church will be mainly internal, with strengthening leadership patterns and a local Mormon scene with its own ideas. One important factor will be the autonomy the Area Presidency gives to local leaders and receives from church headquarters. A more European and more permanent

Area Presidency, with more authority of its own, might reduce some of the control and provide some flexibility for local leaders. However, the present trend seems to be the other way, towards uniformity and control from the center, which will only aggravate the problems.

Flexibility is important for several issues in particular. One is the mission. Mission terms (age, duration) have to be flexible to fit the European educational structure. In Holland, for example, boys leave secondary school at about age eighteen, and a mission is best served before entering the university. More flexibility in mission duration, say, eighteen months, would also alleviate some strain. A second and related issue is the need to encourage high aspirations among youth and to promote education. Latent millennialism, mission calls at inopportune times, and the huge load of leadership in small units all form obstacles to educational and professional development.

Marriage and divorce form a third issue. As elsewhere divorce rates are mounting, and Dutch Mormons, at least, increasingly resemble their fellow countrymen (roughly 40 percent of first marriages end in divorce, with half that for second marriages) in this regard. In the coming decades divorce will be the main internal threat to Mormondom. The present church stance implies a definition of divorce as failure, and divorcés seem a nonexistent category in the church. An already traumatic situation is thus exacerbated by the church. What is needed is some rethinking about our teachings on the family institution to accommodate non-ideal family arrangements. More broadly, the standardized "script" of an individual's life in terms of mileposts (mission, temple marriage, children) could be reconsidered.

Whatever the internal dynamics, the main interaction of Mormons will always be with their larger cultures. Living implies facing moral dilemmas. For European Mormons the church needs to encourage more discussion of existential dilemmas, of how to live productively with inactive children, with non-member partners, with ex-partners. Decentralizing the production of church manuals would make this easier. Yet for European Mormons the issues do not stop with their own family circles. Political and general moral issues are of great concern, including poverty, economic development, political dilemmas, and the like. For Europeans the Utah church seems overly-focused on sex-related problems, ignoring problems of violence, pollution, and poverty. Though possibly far-fetched, one European LDS style might be the development of a "green Mormonism." Ecological issues weigh heavily in Europe, and European members sometimes wonder why church leaders say so little about ecological problems. Mormon doctrine easily can accommodate an involved partnership with the environment, offering another venue for coping

with the chasm between doctrinal definitions and societal realities.[25] This raises again the issue of the general inward-orientation of the church. For European members more activities and projects aimed at alleviating poverty and at development more generally in the world would greatly enhance their sense of LDS pride and alleviate some of the strain in trying to be both Mormon and European.

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    25. See, for example, Larry L. St. Clair and Clayton C. Newberry, "Consecration, Stewardship, and Accountability: Remedy for a Dying Planet," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 28 (Summer 1995): 93-99.

LDS Prospects in Italy for the Twenty-first Century

Michael W. Homer

WHEN APOSTLE LORENZO SNOW WAS CALLED in 1849 to "establish a mission in Italy and wherever the spirit should direct,"[1] he was initially optimistic that the Waldensians, a Protestant group in the Kingdom of Sardinia (Piedmont), would be receptive. Like others, he believed they had "been the means of preserving the doctrines of the gospel in their primitive simplicity."[2] He hoped that Waldensian converts would spread the gospel message to the larger Catholic population in Piedmont and the other *statarelli* on the Italian peninsula.[3] Snow was disappointed, for the Italian

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1. Eliza R. Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Co., 1884). A comprehensive history of the Italian mission has not been written. For a short sketch, see my "The Italian Mission, 1850-1867," *Sunstone* 7 (May-June 1982): 16-21.

2. *Sketches of the Waldenses* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1846), 14-15, quoting Alexis Mustin, *Histoire des Vaudois* (Paris: F. G. Levrault, 1834), v. Although Snow did not identify this Religious Tract Society publication, the content of his letters written during his mission (see Snow, *The Italian Mission* [London: W. Aubrey, 1851]) demonstrates that it influenced his initial enthusiasm about the Waldensians. The theme of the tract—commonly accepted by many Protestants in the nineteenth century—is that the Waldensians were preserved from the corruption of the Catholic church and were a remnant of the primitive church because of their remote mountain location. Two poems contained in the tract were republished by Snow in *The Italian Mission*. One, "Hymn of the Vaudois Mountaineers in Times of Persecution," written by Felicia Hemans and first appearing in her *Scenes and Hymns of Life* in 1834, was adapted and published in the 1863 edition of the Mormon hymnal as "For the Strength of the Hills We Bless Thee."

3. Snow, *The Italian Mission*, 11. William Gilly and other Protestant conformists—whose views were reflected by the Religious Tract Society—did not advocate "converting" Waldensians but did envision using them to convert Catholics. See William Gilly, *Narrative of an Excursion to the Mountains of Piemont* (London: C. and J. Rivington, 1824). Snow's plan to "convert" the Waldensians was later followed by other non-traditional religious groups, including Seventh-Day Adventists (1864) and Jehovah's Witnesses (1908), who also began their proselyting activities in Italy among the Waldensians. See *1982 Yearbook of Jehovah Witnesses* (Brooklyn: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1982), 117-34, 238-42; and D. A. Delafield, *Ellen G. White in Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1975).

mission attracted fewer that 200 converts, all of whom emigrated or were excommunicated, before the mission was closed in 1867.[4]

Almost a century later the Italian mission reopened in 1966. During the next three decades approximately 16,000 joined the church. Although these are encouraging results, they are modest compared to those of some non-Catholic churches in Italy (Jehovah's Witnesses, Assemblies of God, and other Pentecostals) or even to those of most LDS missions in the United States and Latin America. The prospects for Mormonism in Italy during the twenty-first century will depend on a variety of factors, of course, but one of the most important is political. In order to project church growth into the next century, it is necessary to understand the relationship between church and state in Italy during the past 150 years, which has been influenced more by the increasing secularization of society than by the increasing presence of minority religions.

<center>CHURCH AND STATE</center>

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries church-state relations in Italy have undergone many permutations. Throughout most of this period the Catholic church enjoyed a legal monopoly, except for an interlude of secularization during the Napoleonic period (1796-1814), after which the Treaty of Vienna (1815) restored the Catholic protections and privileges in the various Italian *statarelli*.[5] There was no separation of church and state, and the church had juridical parity with the state.[6] The revolutionary agitations of 1848 forced King Carlo Alberto of Sardinia (with capital in Turin) and other rulers of the *statarelli* to loosen some Catholic control over their citizens. Although the Catholic church remained the official state religion, certain civil privileges were granted for the first time to non-Catholic minorities (mostly Jews and Waldensians); but it was the movement to unify Italy (the "Risorgimento") by the Kingdom of Sardinia that sharpened the conflict between the church and state;

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4. Snow overestimated the extent of religious liberty in Piedmont. Royal edicts prohibited publication of tracts hostile to the Catholic church. See Vittorio Emmanuele I, *Regio Editto* (Torino: Stamperia Reale, 10 June 1814), para. 13, which prohibited publication of books and scriptures without a license and introduction and sale without permission of books originating in foreign countries or critical of "Religion." Article 28 of the *Statuto*, "ordained" by Carlo Alberto in 1848, also prohibited publication of Bibles, catechisms, and liturgical and prayer books without permission of the Catholic bishop. Although Snow understood these limitations, he attempted nominal compliance by including woodcuts in an 1851 tract which contained the following Catholic symbols: Catholic Nun, anchor, Monstrance (which he confused with a lamp), cross, Noah's ark, dove, and olive. See Snow, *The Italian Mission*, 22-25.

5. Lucy Riall, *The Italian Risorgimento: State, Society, and National Unification* (London: Routledge, 1994).

6. See William Halperin, *The Separation of Church and State in Italian Thought from Cavour to Mussolini* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937).

and disagreements arose concerning the prerogatives of the church in civil matters. Since Pope Pius IX was not only Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic church but also leader of a sovereign nation, he opposed unification of the Italian *statarelli* (since it would result in the annexation of the Papal States) and the separation of church and state in any of the *statarelli* (since it would reduce the prerogatives of the church in civil affairs). Thus "the Catholic church did not play a spontaneous role like religion in the early United States, where the ethical fabric of democracy was formed by Christian experience . . . [and] [i]n Britain [where] the Labour Party and the Tories spring from Christian roots."[7] The prime minister of Sardinia, Camillo Cavour, attempted to overcome this resistance by proclaiming in 1860 that there would be "a free church in a free state."[8] As the expanded Kingdom of Sardinia became the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, King Victor Emmanuel II, backed by the Italian senate, implemented the Cavour formula more fully.[9] By 1871, even though the Catholic church was still the official state church and the Kingdom had renounced any powers over it, civil matrimony was recognized and measures adopted which undermined the civil powers and privileges of the clergy. The Catholic church eventually reconciled itself to the political realities of Italy by allowing the formation of a political party to advance church interests and by permitting its members once again to stand for office and vote in elections.[10]

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7. Pietro Scoppola, *La Repubblica dei Partiti* (Bologna: Mulino, 1991), 95, in Charles Richards, *The New Italians* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 178-79.

8. A Catholic Cardinal writing in the Jesuit publication *La Civilta' Cattolica* in 1860 pointed out that even the Mormons in Utah were unwilling to separate church and state, and argued that the American church had borrowed this and other fundamental tenets (including infallibility) from the Catholic church. See "Il Mormonismo nelle sue attinenze col moderno Protestantesimo," *La Civilta' Cattolica* 6 (3 May 1860): 411-12. Joseph F. Smith, during a mission to England, kept himself informed on Italian church-state debates by purchasing a pamphlet in early 1875 written by William Gladstone, *The Vatican Decrees in Their Bearing on Civil Allegiance: A Political Expostulation* (London, 1874). Papal and Mormon "infallibility," which were compared in the 1860 article in *La Civilta' Cattolica*, were also compared in the wake of Vatican I in "Brigham Young and the Pope," *Mormon Tribune* 1 (18 June 1870): 196; and in "Papal and Mormon Infallibility," *Salt Lake Tribune* 2 (20 Aug. 1870): 4.

9. Sixteen years after Cavour's death, Wilford Woodruff included him in a list of "eminent men" for whom baptisms were performed in the St. George temple on 21 August 1877. Other historically prominent Italians have also received baptisms, including Dante, St. Francis of Assisi, Pope John XXIII, Mazzini, and Mussolini, along with many early Waldensians. See Michele L. Straniero, "Il Duce e un papa fatti mormoni," *La Stampa*, 3 Dec. 1991, 14; and Massimo Introvigne, "Da Dracula a Mussolini, acqua santa su tutti i vip," *Avvenire*, 6 June 1995, 21.

10. In 1870, following the invasion of Rome, Pope Pius IX issued his famous *Non expedit* which prohibited Catholics from standing for office or voting in elections. Although *Non expedit* was formally revoked in 1919 when the first Catholic church party was formed, the church has not modified its position that it is improper to separate the church from the state. The church continues to argue against such separation. See *La Civilta' Cattolica*, 6 July 1911; Halperin, 77.

Under Benito Mussolini (1922-45) the Lateran accords were negotiated between the Kingdom and the Vatican. Under these accords the Vatican was recognized as a sovereign state by the king; compensation was paid to the papacy for the annexation of Rome; it was agreed that stipends would be paid to the clergy from government funds; and the Kingdom made concessions in matters of education and marriage. The treaty also reconfirmed that the Catholic church was the official church of Italy. After the fall of Mussolini and fascism at the end of World War II, the constitution of the new Republic of Italy recognized the Lateran accords, including the official status of the Catholic church, but for the first time extended religious liberty to non-Catholic religions. The new republic also entered into separate agreements with some minority religions extending certain tax advantages and recognizing the validity of their marriage ceremonies. Since the end of World War II Italians have become increasingly secular in their outlook. In 1970 the Italian Parliament legalized divorce (which was confirmed by referendum in 1974), and in 1981 a referendum legalized abortion. These developments undermined the unique relationship between the church and state in the Lateran accords and emphasized the conflict between church teachings and civil legislation in a country where Catholicism was still the official religion. Because of this tension the Lateran accords were modified in 1984. The government and the Vatican negotiated a new treaty under which the Catholic church is no longer the official state religion. Furthermore, since 1990 the Catholic church has not received government funds except from taxpayer allocations (see footnote 17) for which it competes with other religious groups and state charities.[11]

MORMONISM IN ITALY

Between the close of the Italian Mission in 1867 and the end of World War II, only scattered attempts were made by the LDS church to proselyte in Italy.[12] For the first half of the twentieth century Italy was virtually ignored. The familiar story of Vincenzo Di Francesca, who in 1910 discovered a copy of the Book of Mormon in a New York City trash can, illustrates the obscurity of Mormonism to Italians during this period. Di Francesca's copy of the Book of Mormon lacked the title page, so he did

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11. Richards, 170-73.

12. These attempts were made by Italian converts returning to Italy, including Joseph Toronto, a Sicilian who had accompanied Lorenzo Snow to Italy in 1849-50, returned to his hometown of Palermo in 1876-77, and succeeded in emigrating to Utah with fourteen friends and family members. Waldensian "returnees" Jacob Rivoire, his wife Catherine Jouve, James Bertoch, and Paul Cardon all spent a number of months in the Waldensian valleys between 1879-1900. None enjoyed much success.

not know of its connection to the LDS church, even though he believed its teachings. He returned to Europe for wartime service in 1914 and eventually to Sicily after the war. In 1930 he finally discovered the connection between the book and the church and began corresponding with LDS leaders. It was not until 1951, however, forty-one years after he had first read the Book of Mormon, that church representatives finally visited Sicily and, after a three-hour interview, baptized him.[13]

Although Di Francesca's baptism had no implications for renewed church growth in Italy, several LDS servicemen's branches were organized at American military bases after World War II. In addition, Archibald Bennett of the Genealogical Society visited Europe in 1948 and obtained permission to microfilm Waldensian parish records in Piedmont. Permission was subsequently granted to microfilm records in selected Catholic parishes as well.[14] Only in 1963 and 1964, however, were the first regular church units organized (which were also near U.S. military installations) making possible the organization of the Italian District of the Swiss Mission. In 1965 the church obtained permission to send missionaries to Italy, and in 1966 Elder Ezra Taft Benson presided over the rededication of the Italian mission near the same location in the Waldensian valleys where Lorenzo Snow had launched the first mission in 1850. The new mission was headquartered in Florence, and missionary zones were organized in major cities among the Catholic population. By the end of 1966 there were two Italian branches and seven servicemen's branches. Pursuant to bilateral treaties between the United States and Italy, which guaranteed certain tax advantages to U.S.-based religious organizations, the LDS church was allowed to open bank accounts and to purchase property for future construction.

As Italian government policy on church and state has evolved, the legal status of the LDS church has improved. Although the church was given permission in 1965 to reopen the Italian mission, it was not until February 1993 that its marriage ceremonies were legally recognized and it was given certain important tax benefits, including the right to inherit property through wills, trusts, estates, and other donor tax advantages.[15] This latest recognition places the LDS church in company with

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13. See "Pres. Bringhurst Baptizes First Convert in Sicily," *Deseret News*, Church Section, 28 Feb. 1951, 12-3; Don Vincent di Francesca, "Burn the Book," *The Improvement Era* 71 (May 1968): 4-7; Vincenzo di Francesca, "I Will Not Burn the Book," *Ensign* 18 (Jan. 1988): 18-21; and Vincenzo Di Francesca, "Non Brucero' Questo Libro," *La Stella*, June 1988, 14-17.

14. See Giuseppe Platone, "I Valdesi in Nord America," *La Beidana* 10 (July 1989): 71-78.

15. Three legal experts helped me understand the complicated legal relationship among the Republic of Italy, the Catholic church, and "culti acattolici": Massimo Introvigne, a lawyer, scholar, and friend of Torino, Italy; Judge Alfredo Mantovano of Lecce, Italy; and Judge Gino Fletzer of Venice, Italy, recently deceased and formerly a judge on the Corte di Cassazione (one of Italy's two highest courts).

Catholics, Waldensians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists, Assemblies of God, Baptists, Methodists, Jews, Muslims, and Buddhists, which in itself might help enhance the LDS image in Italy during the coming century.[16] Other forms of recognition and benefits enjoyed by other minority religions have still not been extended to the LDS church, including eligibility for designation by taxpayers to receive a percentage of their taxes as charitable contributions.[17] In addition the LDS church, unlike the Catholic church, Seventh-Day Adventists, and Jews, has not entered into agreements with the government under which a church is recognized as an independent entity negotiating directly with the government.

THE MORMON IMAGE

The image of Mormonism in Italy continues to be influenced by travel accounts, religious writers, and fiction as a church dominated by patriarchs who dress in black and practice polygamy.[18] Whereas many Americans recognize that Mormonism has changed dramatically during the past 100 years, many Italians continue to imagine Mormonism in its nineteenth-century environment. They associate Mormons with Utah and polygamy or confuse it with other religions. In 1985 the notorious occultist Aleister Crowley—who lived in Sicily from 1920 until his expulsion in 1923—was identified as a Mormon because he advocated

16. Such recognition was achieved through a long, complicated process. After initial registration as a "religious corporation" in 1989, the church filed an application for official recognition. The Minister of the Interior conducted an extensive investigation in Utah and in Italy concerning the church's financial condition, its involvement in politics, and its doctrinal teachings. The church's application and the results of this investigation were approved by the Council of Ministers and signed by the president of the republic. See "Ai 10.000 mormoni riconoscimento del nostro governo," *Corriere della Sera*, 6 Feb. 1993. This approval was registered with the Court of Accounts and published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale*. Only after the approval was published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale* did the church make its own official announcement. See "Milestone reached in Italy: Church gains legal status," *Church News*, 12 June 1993, 4.

17. The Catholic church, Seventh-Day Adventists, Assemblies of God Pentecostals, Waldensians, Methodists, and the State Charity Fund are eligible to receive .8 percent of the taxes paid by any Italian who designates them. (If a taxpayer does not make a designation, .8 percent of his or her taxes are still allocated on a pro rata basis based on the national average.) The Catholic church is the beneficiary of more than 80 percent of this designated tax revenue. Both the Seventh-Day Adventists and Assemblies of God also enjoy a favorable share of the revenue, perhaps because many nominal or disaffected Catholics prefer to designate one of these non-Catholic churches or even the State Charity Fund.

18. For a bibliography concerning the image of Mormonism in Italy, particularly during the nineteenth century, see my "The Church's Image in Italy from the 1840s to 1946: A Bibliographic Essay," *Brigham Young University Studies* 31 (Spring 1991): 83-114.

polygamy.[19] More recently at least two Italian magazines have confused the Amish characters in the film *Witness* with the Latter-day Saints,[20] and Mormonism is frequently identified with "fundamentalist" groups which still practice polygamy.[21] In Italy a "fundamentalist" is a "conservative" practitioner of a religious group, and a sociological survey conducted in 1990 revealed that a significant number of Italians believe that Mormons practice polygamy, wear old-fashioned clothing, dress in black, and that Mormon men have long beards while their women cover their heads with bonnets.[22] Only occasionally do newspaper articles distinguish between today's fundamentalist (excommunicated) "Mormons" and their nineteenth-century forebears.[23]

Even before the Italian mission was reestablished in 1966, the LDS church distributed proselyting pamphlets and a new translation of the Book of Mormon.[24] Responses were published by Protestant churches apprehensive that Mormonism was a serious new competitor in the already difficult terrain.[25] These churches were as anti-Catholic as they were anti-

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19. See Pietro Saja, "Aleister Crowley e il suo soggiorno a Cefalú," *Il Corrierre della Madonie,* Oct. 1985, 6. For a description of Crowley's residence in Cefalú, see John Symonds, *The Great Beast: The Life of Aleister Crowley* (London: Rider and Co., 1951), 149-215. For information concerning Crowley's attitude toward Mormonism, see Massimo Introvigne, "The Beast and the Prophet: Aleister Crowley's Fascination for Joseph Smith," delivered at the Mormon History Association, Claremont, California, 31 May 1991.

20. See "L'Animismo e le sette minori," *Oggi* 15 (1988): 188-89; and Robert Walsh, "Mormoni variazioni sullo stesso tema," *La Presenza Cristiana* 36 (10 Nov. 1988): 27-8.

21. On 26 July 1991 one of Italy's largest newspapers published an article about Alex Joseph which claimed that "the Mormons in Utah—but not all—are among the fortunate religions" which allow men to have more than one wife. See "L'Harem di Papa Joseph," *Il Venerdi di Repubblica* 181 (26 July 1991): 39-42.

22. See Luigi Berzano and Massimo Introvigne, *La sfida infinita, La nuova religiositá nella Sicilia centrale* (Caltanissetta-Roma: Salvatore Sciascia Editore, 1994), 198.

23. See Giuseppe Josca, "Il sindaco da l'esempio: 5 moglie e 60 figli," *Corriere della Sera,* 25 Sept. 1986, 3.

24. Extracts from the "History of Joseph Smith" were translated and published after World War II. See *Il Profeta Giuseppe Smith Racconta La Sua Propria Storia* (n.p., n.d.). A new translation of the Book of Mormon was distributed by the European mission in 1964. See *Il Libro di Mormon* (Basilea, Svizzera: Missione Europea, 1964).

25. See Ermanno Rostan, *Chi sono i Mormoni* (Torino: Editrice Claudiana, 1974). (On 4 February 1965 Rostan, in his capacity as Moderator of the Waldensian Church in Italy, had visited Salt Lake City and participated in a program with Elder Marion D. Hanks, of the LDS First Council of Seventy, "to make some friends for the Waldensian Church.") A more recent Waldensian response is Giorgio Bouchard, *Chiese e movimenti evangelici del nostro tempo* (Torino: Editrice Claudiana, 1992). The earliest evangelical responses were translations of polemics published in the United States. See Walter Martin, *I Mormoni* (Napoli: Centro Biblico, 1966); and Truman Scott, *Il Mormonismo ed il Vangelo* (Genova: Editrice Lanterna, 1972). Italians and other Europeans also joined the fray: Silvio Caddeo, *Gli equivoci storici e archeologici del libro di Mormon* (Genova: Editrice Lanterna, 1967) (Evangelical); and Tommaso Heinze, *Risposte ai miei amici Mormoni* (Napoli: Centro Biblico, 1984) (Evangelical).

Mormon. However, beginning in the 1980s, after Mormon membership had grown to approximately 10,000, two Catholic priests, Nicola Tornese and Pier Angelo Gramaglia, wrote polemical anti-Mormon works which are still in print.[26] They were joined in 1987 by a conservative Catholic counter-cult organization, Gruppo di Ricerca e di Informazione sulle Sette (G.R.I.S.), which has organized conferences and published materials attacking various new religious movements in Italy, including Mormonism.[27] Much of this material parrots articles published in English.

Historically many Italian journalists reporting about the LDS church have relied on negative material which places all Mormons in a nineteenth-century context when supposedly "all" Mormons practiced polygamy. The journalist who reported in February 1993 that the Council of Ministers had approved the LDS application for government recognition emphasized that "Mormons do not like to talk about the old practice of polygamy which was abolished in 1890," and that "there are those who say they [the Mormons] are racists and are prejudiced against women."[28] Other journalists have been even more misinformed. In 1991, in the wake of the "cold fusion" controversy at the University of Utah, one Italian newspaper headlined a story, "Pons, a swindler like all Mormons,"[29] without noting (or perhaps realizing) that Pons is not LDS. The headline was simply a "soundbite" from a statement made by an Italian Olympic official who was competing with Salt Lake City for the 1998 Olympics.

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26. See Nicola Tornese, *Le origini: Joseph Smith e le sue visioni* (Napoli, Capella Cangiani-Marigliano: Istituto Anselmi, 1980); Nicola Tornese, *L'uomo e il suo destino* (Napoli, Capella Cangiani-Marigliano: Istituto Anselmi, 1981); Nicola Tornese, *Il concetto di Dio secondo i Mormoni* (Napoli, Capella Cangiani-Marigliano: Istituto Anselmi, 1983); Pier Angelo Gramaglia, *Confronto con i Mormoni* (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 1985).

27. On G.R.I.S. and the difference between "counter-cult" and "anti-cult" movements in Italy, see Massimo Introvigne, "Anti-Cult and Counter-Cult Movements in Italy," in Anson Shupe and David Bromley, eds., *Anti-Cult Movements in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (New York: Garland, 1994), 171-97. For a sampling of G.R.I.S. publications concerning Mormonism, see Robert Walsh, "I Mormoni," *I nuovi movimenti religiosi non cattolici in Italia* (Leumann [Torino]: Editrice Elle Di Ci, 1987), 49-66; Mirella Lorenzini, "Il millenarismo dei Mormoni," *Sette e Religioni* 1 (Jan.-Mar. 1991): 69-82; Robert Walsh, "Il Libro di Mormon: opera di Dio o dell'uomo?" *Sette e Religioni* 11 (July-Sept. 1993): 34-48; Mirella Lorenzini, "Il mondo degli spiriti nella dottrina dei Mormoni," *Sette e Religioni* 11 (July-Sept. 1993): 49-78; Alain Bouchard, "L'evoluzione eterna. Panorama delle dottrine dei Mormoni," *Sette e Religioni* 11 (July-Sept. 1993): 79-88; Paolo Blandini, *Mormoni in Cammino* (Caltanissetta: presso l'autore, 1992) (the author notes on the title page that he is a member of G.R.I.S.); Jerry and Dianna Benson, *Testimonianza per i Mormoni* (Caltanissetta: G.R.I.S., 1992). Although the Bensons are Evangelical anti-Mormons, their pamphlet was published by a branch of G.R.I.S., whose membership is largely Catholic. Mormonism has been particularly controversial in Caltanissetta because of Blandini and G.R.I.S. See, e.g., letters to the editor, *Cammino*, 26 Jan. and 2, 6, and 9 Feb. 1992.

28. *Corriere della Sera*, 6 Feb. 1993, 15.

29. *Il Giorno*, 11 Nov. 1991, 5. A more balanced article was published in *Il Nostro Tempo*, 22 Mar. 1992, 9.

Four years later, when Salt Lake City was awarded the 2002 Olympics, the Italian press failed to note that Utah's delegation was led by two non-Mormons. Other articles, including those reporting the Mark Hofmann affair, adopted a similarly melodramatic tone.[30]

While one-dimensional, stereotypical, anti-Mormon articles continue to be written, a "budding" of responsible comment concerning Mormonism has also commenced in Italy.[31] Massimo Introvigne and his Center for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR) have been at the forefront of this development. One Catholic scholar recently observed that Introvigne is one of several Catholics who will likely "influence future official Catholic documents on the NRMs [new religious movements]" and that he "does not indulge in the kind of negative and belligerent reactions that have so often characterized Christian responses to the new religions."[32] Introvigne has presented and published numerous papers about the LDS church and is the author of the only book on Mormonism published by the Vatican Press.[33] The French edition[34] was favorably reviewed in both the *Journal of Mormon History*[35] and *Brigham Young University Studies*.[36] In 1994 he responded to an article in *La Civiltá Cattolica* which criticized Mormon doctrines that the same journal had praised in 1860.[37] Introvigne's response was published in *Cristanitá*, a monthly magazine of Alleanza Cattolica, a conservative Catholic lay organization. Introvigne identified *La Civiltá Cattolica's* most obvious inaccuracies and documented   diatribe of Pier Angelo Gramaglia,[38] even though more responsible descriptions of Mormonism were available in Italian.

The Mormon image in Italy has improved and will continue to im-

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30. See Alberto Pasolini Zanelli, "Il Caso della Salamandra assassina," *Il Giorno,* 14 Sept. 1986, 3.

31. See also my "The Budding of Mormon History of Italy," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 25 (Spring 1992): 174-76.

32. See John Saliba, "Official Catholic Responses to the New Religions," in Shupe and Bromley, 204-205.

33. Massimo Introvigne, *I Mormoni* (Schio [Vicenza]: Interlogos/ Cittá del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993). Introvigne's articles in French and Italian are set forth in bibliographies contained in *Les Mormons* and *I Mormoni.* He has also published in *Dialogue, Sunstone,* and the *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal.*

34. Massimo Introvigne, *Les Mormons* (Turnhout, Belgium: Editions Brepols, 1991).

35. Davis Bitton, "Review of *Les Mormons," Journal of Mormon History* 19 (Fall 1993): 141-44.

36. Michael D. Bush, "Brief Notices," *Brigham Young University Studies* 33 (1993): 366-67.

37. See "I Mormoni. Chi sono? In che cosa credono?" *La Civiltá Cattolica,* 16 July 1994, 107-20.

38. See Massimo Introvigne, "'La Civiltá Cattolica e i Mormoni," *Cristanitá* 234 (Oct. 1994): 17-27. For a short description of this episode, see my "La Civiltá Cattolica Revisits Mormonism," *Sunstone* 17 (Dec. 1994): 84.

prove in the twenty-first century because of CESNUR, Introvigne, and press stories which rely on them. The Italian press is beginning to consult scholarly material rather than rely solely on anti-Mormon, or at least badly-informed, authors. In addition more journalists have visited Utah or, more importantly, have encountered and interviewed Mormons in Italy. Balanced descriptions of LDS temple work for the dead, genealogical program, and Family History Library have recently appeared in the Italian press.[39]

<div align="center">MORMON IDENTITY</div>

Many Italians might continue to identify Mormons as old-fashioned cowboys who live in Utah and spend their evenings with multiple wives. However, the Italian membership, although not uninformed about Mormon history, regards with disdain press stories which emphasize this distorted image. Most LDS converts in Italy are former Catholics. Some were anti-Catholic and were particularly attracted by teachings concerning an apostasy. A few Italians have become more anti-Catholic after joining the LDS church because of organizations such as G.R.I.S. and Catholic priests such as Tornese and Gramaglia. To some extent most converts to non-Catholic churches in Italy are "anti-Catholic." Because of this, some LDS converts find it difficult to understand recent statements by general authorities which compliment the Pope and the Catholic church.[40]

In contrast, a 1976 study by a Catholic priest and professor at Palermo Theological University concluded that Mormons in Sicily were less anti-Catholic than Jehovah's Witnesses or Assembly of God Pentecostals.[41] Although no surveys concerning the social composition of Italian Mormons (on a national basis) have been published, the conclusions of the 1976 survey have been reconfirmed by sociologists Massimo Introvigne and Luigi Berzano in a recently published book which compares Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Assemblies of God in Sicily.[42] Although the survey conducted for Introvigne's and Berzano's book may not justify sweeping generalizations about Mormons in Italy (there are few Mormons living in central Sicily where the survey was conducted), the authors concluded that Mormon converts in Italy are of an average

39. See Roberto Beretta, "Nella caverna degli Antenati," *Avvenire*, 6 July 1995, 21; Michele Straniero, "Il Duce e un papa fatti mormoni," *La Stampa*, 23 Dec. 1991, 14; and Gianni Riotta, "Ho visitato l'anagrafe del mondo," *Corriere della Sera*, 14 July 1991, 7.

40. See Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Great and Abominable? LDS Now See Catholic Church in a New Light," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 20 Nov. 1993, C1-C2. See also *Ensign* 23 (Nov. 1993): 18-20.

41. Cataldo Naro, "Tre fasi e tre forme di dissenso religioso nella storia contemporanea del nisseno," *Argomenti* 2 (Apr.-June 1976): 5-15.

42. Introvigne and Berzano, 198-203. Introvigne's *I Mormoni* also contains some sociological comments, 192-97.

higher social status than either Jehovah's Witnesses or Assemblies of God Pentecostal, and that there is continuity between traditional Sicilian values (family, traditional morality, and patriarchy) and certain Mormon practices and teachings. In general, Sicilian converts have simply become dissatisfied with Catholicism and have found in Mormonism a new religious experience without the same type of radical cultural discontinuity required by other new religious movements. Thus, even if they are dissatisfied with the Catholic church, LDS converts are more reluctant to engage in the type of radical anti-Catholic rhetoric (written and verbal) more typical of Jehovah's Witnesses.

The LDS church recognizes "cultural continuity" and does not require members to totally "discard their religious heritage and adopt a new one."[43] This has reduced, to some extent, the "tension" normally created when a new religious movement challenges a predominant religion. Catholicism is much more than a church. It is headquartered in its own sovereign state and for many Italians represents a kind of continuity with the ancient Roman Empire. Most Italians, believers and non-believers, take pride in the worldwide presence and influence of a church so closely identified with Italy. Until recently Italian politics were dominated by the church party (the Christian Democrats) which continued the trend of combining politics and religion. Thus when people leave the Catholic church, they leave behind part of their cultural heritage. This is one of the reasons that non-Catholic missionaries have had, and continue to have, difficulty finding converts in Italy even among the majority of Catholics who are only "cultural" members. Although 97 percent of all Italians are baptized Catholics, only about 31 percent regularly attend Mass or consider themselves practicing Catholics.[44] While the latter percentage might seem low, it is the highest in Europe except for Ireland. Proportionally, there are three times more practicing Catholics in Italy than there are in France.[45] Some converts are initially attracted to Mormonism because it is an American church, an echo from the nineteenth-century mission when some converts saw the church as a ticket to the "promised land." Yet as a general rule, even though Italians are not generally anti-American, they are bound to Italian customs and history and are more likely to join an international church which has some continuity with their customs and culture (some Italian converts have jokingly noted that eight of the fifteen books in the Book of Mormon end in vowels!). Furthermore, a church in

43. Rodney Stark, "How New Religions Succeed: A Theoretical Model," in David G. Bromley and Phillip E. Hammond, *The Future of New Religious Movements* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 13.

44. Franco Garelli, *Relgione e Chiesa in Italia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1991).

45. See Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, *La Religione degli Europei* (Torino: Edizione della Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1992).

which Italian members participate significantly will be more attractive than an American church totally dependent on a hierarchy in the United States or whose growth depends on the proselyting efforts of American missionaries.

Many characteristics of the LDS church have Catholic counterparts. Italian Catholics are family-oriented, patriarchal, and conservative. Official teachings about family values, divorce, and abortion are similar in the two churches. The church community plays a central part in the lives of both Catholics and LDS members. Most LDS converts continue to share these values, even if they have become alienated from the Catholic church itself. Perhaps they have become lost in the majority church and prefer to participate in an organization that is smaller and in many ways less complicated.[46] Although there are many Catholic lay organizations, especially after Vatican II, Mormonism provides a more direct mechanism through which lay members can participate in local church government and at the same time rely on a hierarchy similar to that in Catholicism for governing members.[47]

If such "cultural continuity" exists, one may ask why Catholics, particularly those who have not become rabidly anti-Catholic, do not remain in Catholicism, since similar values are emphasized in both religions. The Introvigne and Berzano survey of central Sicily (and other sociological studies of Italian Catholicism) might offer one possible explanation (beyond the spiritual process of conversion itself): After Vatican II many conservative Italians living in liberal parishes no longer believe that the Catholic church is a safe harbor for traditional values. In Sicily many prominent members of the clergy are active in politics and openly advance a liberal social agenda. This agenda has been interpreted by many Sicilians as a breach of traditional values. Belgian sociologist Johann Leman concluded in the 1970s that Catholics were upset with priests who were too modern or were not staunch supporters of traditional family values; and for that reason lower-class Sicilian immigrants in Belgium, as well as peasants in Sicily, began converting in large numbers to the Jehovah's Witnesses.[48] Similar attitudes might account for the curiosity some middle-class Italians have about Mormonism, with its emphasis on traditional family values. In a somewhat different way similarities might also explain why there are fewer converts to Mormonism than to Jehovah's Witnesses or Pentecostals. Mormonism lacks the strident, anti-Catholic

46. See Eileen Barker, *New Religious Movements: A Practical Introduction* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1989), 11-13.

47. Stark, 16-17.

48. Johann Leman, *From Challenging Culture to Challenged Culture: The Sicilian Cultural Code and the Socio-Cultural Praxis of Sicilian Immigrants in Belgium* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1987).

tone of its competitors and does not require a complete, total denuncia-
tion of one's former faith, which somewhat neutralizes its appeal to truly
alienated Catholics. Although Pope John Paul II has attempted to reem-
phasize traditional values, the local clergy, which was educated in the af-
termath of Vatican II and is still politically active, continues to have a
negative influence on Catholics who are alienated, or are becoming alien-
ated, from the church. All of the Pope's efforts will not prevent a portion
of these alienated segments from converting to new religions, such as
Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Assemblies of God Pentecostals,
which emphasize conservative social and sexual ethics.

Because of their small numbers and closer links to church leader-
ship, LDS converts willingly commit themselves to sacrifices that are
not required by many other competing religions. Part of Mormonism's
appeal in Italy, particularly for the middle class, is its elitism. Mormon-
ism's small community heightens the sense that members enjoy a partic-
ular enlightenment about "ancient mysteries," a feeling reenforced
through temple rituals. Although the law of tithing and the Word of
Wisdom may be stumbling blocks for some investigators, they are ac-
ceptable sacrifices for those who are attracted by this special knowl-
edge. Nevertheless, in Italy, where *espresso* and *vino* are like the "Big
Gulp" in the United States, and where middle-class workers are taxed
at higher rates than their American counterparts, these sacrifices are not
insignificant. As health consciousness increases and the Italian econ-
omy improves, these types of impediments might become less formida-
ble handicaps in Mormon proselyting efforts, particularly as the image
of Mormonism in Italy improves.

THE COMPETITION

Even though Mormonism was among the first non-Catholic churches
to dispatch missionaries to Italy in the nineteenth century, it recalled
them too early to reap any significant benefit from the anti-clericalism
which permeated the Kingdom of Italy from the Risorgimento (when the
anti-Catholic element of Mormonism was given more emphasis)[49] until
the Lateran Treaty in 1929 (when the growth of non-Catholic churches in
Italy stalled until after World War II). During this period anti-clericalism
provided an important catalyst for the growth of Baptist churches and

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49. See Orson Pratt's references to the Catholic church published in *The Seer* 1 (Dec.
1853): 177-78, and 2 (Jan. 1854): 204-205. These and other statements were used to poke fun at
Protestant churches because they were the "offspring" of the Catholic church which they
called "the Mother of Harlots." See my "Some Thoughts about Mormon Attitudes and Teach-
ings about the Roman Catholic Church, 1830-1990," delivered at the Mormon History Asso-
ciation, 15 May 1992.

congregations of Brethren,[50] and eventually contributed to the explosion of conversions to Jehovah's Witnesses, Assemblies of God, and other Pentecostals. With the exception of Jehovah's Witnesses and the Assemblies of God (which began proselyting in Italy only in 1908), all of these Protestant religions established missions in Italy during the nineteenth century but, unlike Mormonism, remained for the next 100 years.

Mormon missionaries returned too late to participate in the conversion boom which occurred as Italians returned to their homeland after World War II. Assemblies of God and other Pentecostal groups benefited from Italian Americans who converted in the United States before returning to Italy to retire. Jehovah's Witnesses profited from converts returning from Belgium, where many Italians had emigrated at the beginning of the century to work in mines.[51] The most successful non-Catholic religions in Italy began through the conversion of friends and relatives of returning converts, who had achieved enhanced status and became eloquent spokespeople for previously "foreign" new religions. Italian sociologists have compared the limited success of Protestant missionaries in the nineteenth century, who had little in common with the working classes, with the greater success achieved by the "churches of the returnees," which had blue-collar roots.

Joseph Toronto's return to his hometown of Palermo for one and a half years between 1876-77, and his subsequent return to Utah with fourteen friends and relatives, is a unique example of this network phenomenon in the nineteenth-century Mormon mission. It failed to bear any fruit in Italy because of the Mormon practice of "gathering." Mormon converts moved to America and seldom returned. Although Di Francesca's return to Italy after his "conversion" is a twentieth-century example, it also failed to bear fruit because there was no church organization in Italy; no one in Italy could baptize him, and he apparently did not convert any relatives or friends. James B. Allen has perceptively observed that the American military presence in Italy "helped pave the way for the introduction of Mormonism."[52] Although Allen also acknowledged that a few Italian workers, converted in Switzerland and Germany, returned to their homeland in the 1960s where they "helped lay the foundation for the growth of the Church in Italy itself,"[53] these Mormon returnees were ex-

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50. The most highly acclaimed book concerning the impact of the Risorgimento on Protestant churches in Italy is by Waldensian scholar Giorgio Spini, *Risorgimento e protestanti* (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 1989). Mormonism is briefly mentioned on p. 425n3. Protestants in Italy—even after the Risorgimento—are also described by Catholic writer Camillo Crivelli in *I Protestanti in Italia* (Isola del Livi: Macioce e Pisani, 1936).

51. See Leman.

52. James B. Allen, "On Becoming a Universal Church: Some Historical Perspectives," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 25 (Spring 1992): 21.

53. Ibid., 22.

ceptions rather than the rule. Just as Catholicism was "shaped and nur-
tured in the bosom of the Roman Empire," the doctrines of Mormonism
have been introduced in Italy with a "strongly American cast—especially
Western American."[54] Mormons who joined (or were drafted into) the
American military were initially responsible for the reorganization of
Mormon branches in Italy; other young, short-haired American represen-
tatives expanded the foundations of the church by proselyting (on a full-
time basis) disenfranchised Catholics in the urban centers of Italy.

In contrast, returnees who converted to other denominations were
Italian natives who came in larger numbers and were keenly aware of the
existence and success of non-Catholic churches outside of Italy. Many
Italians converted to Jehovah's Witnesses, Assemblies of God, and other
Pentecostals, and then returned to Italy, before the Mormon church orga-
nized its first branch. These returnees remained in Italy and proselyted
on behalf of their new faith in the cities of their birth. Perhaps the sacri-
fices required of Jehovah Witnesses (twelve hours of proselyting each
week) have been more conducive to growth than have the sacrifices re-
quired of Mormons. By 1995 there were over 400,000 Jehovah's Witnesses
in Italy; over 200,000 members of the Assemblies of God; and at least an-
other 200,000 other Pentecostals. At the same time there are still only
25,000 Waldensians (approximately the same number as in 1850) and an-
other 20,000 members of the Evangelical Federation in which Walden-
sians, Methodists, and Baptists participate; approximately 16,000
Mormons; 13,000 Brethren; and 8,000 Seventh-Day Adventists. Although
these are the most successful Christian churches in Italy, there are approx-
imately 14,000 members of Soka Gakkai, whose most famous member is
Italian soccer star Roberto Baggio, and another 9,000 other Buddhists. At
the same time the number of Muslims in Italy is exploding because of il-
legal immigration from northern Africa. It is estimated that there may be
a million Muslims, and the first Mosque (Islamic Cultural Center) was re-
cently completed in Rome. This influx of Muslims has forced Italian soci-
ety, and its courts, to confront their attitudes toward polygamy and to
reconsider the constitutionality of anti-bigamy laws in effect since the
Napoleonic occupation.[55]

Despite the LDS church's withdrawal from Italy for more than 100

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54. Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation*
(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 204.

55. Anti-bigamy laws were applicable in Italy during the Napoleonic occupation and
others were enacted after the restoration. See *Codice Penale per gli stati di S. M. il Re di Sardegna*
(Torino: Stamperia Reale, 1839), §§ 522-29. Under current Italian law bigamy is a crime, pun-
ishable by from one to five years, which may be augmented if the guilty party—usually the
husband—has deceived the second spouse. See *Codice Penale*, § 556 (Piacenza: Casa Editrice
La Tribuna, 1980).

years, the number of Mormons in Italy is comparable with those in other European countries where Mormon missionaries have proselyted for longer periods of time. Italian membership is about half that of Germany (36,000) and two-thirds that of France (25,000). It can also be compared with membership in Spain (25,000), where missionaries began proselyting about the same time. Italy has double or triple the membership of countries which, in some cases, were more successful mission fields in the nineteenth century, including Switzerland (6,700); Denmark (4,400); Norway (4,000); Sweden (8,300); and Austria (3,400). Only the United Kingdom, which shares many traditions and a common language with the United States (and where a contingent of American missionaries has been since 1837) has a significantly larger membership (167,000). These numbers are all relatively small, however, and suggest a common thread which might explain Mormonism's relatively slow growth throughout Europe. As we enter the twenty-first century, we should perhaps reconsider whether the church's small membership, and the fact that 85 percent of all Mormons live in the Americas, is related to its unchanged nineteenth-century image and to its American connection (both historical and theological), which can both attract and repel potential investigators.

THE FUTURE

Although the image of the LDS church in Italy has improved, it is unlikely that there will be significant increase in convert baptisms unless the church undertakes a more aggressive public exposure campaign, as it has done in the United States. The church's image in Europe and elsewhere would benefit by mass media campaigns emphasizing Mormonism's twentieth-century culture, its Christian roots, and its humanitarian activities (particularly those done in conjunction with Catholic and Protestant relief organizations in former Italian colonies such as Somalia). The commitment of significant financial resources for public relations would not only enhance the church's emerging image but also provide missionaries with more informed investigators. It could have a greater impact than doubling the number of foreign missionaries. The church, however, will be identified with Italy (rather than with America) only if such a campaign is reinforced by local Mormons. One factor in whether the church eventually becomes international in image and influence will be if Italians ever recognize that there are influential Mormons in Italy.

As the LDS church in Italy becomes more indigenous, with Italian members, missionaries, and leaders who do not necessarily depend on American thinking on subjects beyond the fundamentals of Mormonism, the local members will become more visible. Travel accounts from Utah, even if more evenhanded lately, do not necessarily reinforce the image of

an international church, which includes socially-conservative, middle-class Italians. The image of Mormonism will facilitate church growth as it becomes the image of the man (and his family) in the street, not the man (and his wives) living across the ocean.

Even in the twentieth century some of the best and brightest Italian converts have emigrated to Utah, in part because of their attraction to the American lifestyle and customs. Few of those who leave ever return to Italy. Although a strong core has remained in Italy to build Zion, one Mormon sociologist has correctly observed that the church has not yet reared "a full second generation" of Mormon adults outside the United States.[56] The level of church growth in the twenty-first century will depend on these second-generation Mormon "returnees." The Mormon church no longer depends on servicemen's branches for its life blood in Italy. If the church successfully acquires a critical mass of membership, including a second generation which can support a complete church structure, the church is likely to enjoy more significant growth in the twenty-first century. But such growth could be undermined by church programs designed to simplify, economize, and adapt to the rapidly increasing church membership in North and South America. Italian participation in making decisions not affecting basic truth claims—that is, in matters like church architecture, translation, and public relations[57]—could increase the sense of community among members and identify the church as "Italian" to those encountering it for the first time.

Since Mormonism is less anti-Catholic than are Jehovah's Witnesses, Assemblies of God, and other Pentecostals, it has been less successful in attracting those segments of society most alienated from the Catholic church. Yet the Mormon missionary program can find success with the more moderate segments of society. At the same time the Catholic church will continue to resist all efforts to proselyte any of its members. Although no longer the official religion of Italy, and no longer comprising a

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56. Mauss, 204-205.

57. On church architecture, see Martha Sonntag Bradley, "The Cloning of Mormon Architecture," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 14 (Spring 1981): 20-31; and "The Mormon Steeple: A Symbol of What?" *Sunstone* 16 (Sept. 1992): 39-48. Although church architecture has not retarded church growth in the Americas, where "uniformity of design and concept helped to unify different styles and peoples" ("Cloning," 30; "Mormon Steeple," 46), resistance to such standardization, particularly with American concepts and designs, may only reinforce the image of Mormonism as an American church, and may unintentionally undercut efforts to establish the church's bona fides among Italians—and other Europeans—who are attracted by many of Mormonism's doctrines, principles, and practices but are not enamored by its American architecture or political orientation. These American features are sometimes reenforced by American missionaries, standardized discussions, tracts, and church magazines and manuals, which—particularly when they are poorly translated from speeches delivered in Salt Lake City—remind listeners that the message originates in the United States.

monolithic voting bloc, the Catholic church still has an important impact
on many Italians and on how they react to Mormonism and other new re-
ligious movements. The Pope, even a non-Italian one, will continue to in-
fluence the political and religious climate in Italy.[58] Within the past ten
years the Italian press has reported that the Pope criticized Jehovah's Wit-
nesses, Seventh-day Adventists, and Mormons because they are "reli-
gious sects which are not open to dialogue and are harmful to
ecumenism."[59] Catholic scholars have also suggested that Mormon pros-
elytism is a major stumbling block to establishing good relations between
Catholics and Mormons on an international scale.[60] Any dialogue, official
or unofficial, would increase Italian understanding of Mormonism and
its Italian members.

Despite these criticisms, and similar statements by Mormon offi-
cials,[61] improved relations between Mormons and Catholics have already
begun. A spirit of cooperation, if not regular dialogue, between Salt Lake
City and the Vatican has been reflected in similar religious orientations,
and in their social and political agendas. Italian journalist Michele L.
Straniero reported in 1992 that Mormons were "officially" invited to par-
ticipate, with other religious groups, in an ecumenical alliance organized
by the Vatican against pornography. He noted that this invitation and

58. Richards, 126.

59. *Corriere della Sera*, 7 Feb. 1985, 4. The Pope was also quoted in 1990 that there are
false prophets in new religions which take advantage of the disorientation of immigrants (es-
pecially in Latin America). Other church officials have similarly complained that some NRMs
disseminate confusion among the faithful but that their ultimate success depends more on
the indifference of Catholics than on the message of the new religion. See John Paul II, "Una
sapiente azione pastorale per salvaguadare i migranti del proselitismo religioso," *L'Osserva-
tore Romano*, 30 Aug. 1990, 6; and "La Chiesa é chiamata ad illuminare secondo il vangelo tutti
i campi della vita dell'uomo e della società," *L'Osservatore Romano*, 17 May 1990, 22-23.

60. See John Saliba, "Mormonism in the Twenty-first Century," *Studia Missionalia* 41
(1992): 49-67; and *Salt Lake Tribune*, 20 Nov. 1993, C2.

61. The "Great Apostasy" is a central theme in Joseph Smith's narrative and will con-
tinue to be taught. The *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* emphasizes doctrinal differences rather
than similarities in social and political outlooks in "Catholicism and Mormonism." More re-
cent discourses by general authorities on the "Great Apostasy," "postbiblical creeds," "lesser
light," "philosophical abstraction," and "traditional Christianity" are directed as a "condem-
nation of the creeds, not of the faithful seekers who believed in them" and are admittedly
"undiplomatic" but are consistent with long-accepted LDS teachings. A recent discourse by
a Mormon apostle on the apostasy was criticized by Catholic clergy and ministers of other
faiths. See Dallin H. Oaks, "Apostasy and Restoration," *Ensign* 25 (May 1995): 84-86; Oaks,
"Apostasia e restaurazione," *La Stella*, July 1995, 98-101; and Kristen Moulton, "Oaks' Talk on
Trinity is Criticized, Ministers of other Faiths take offense at portrayal, Apostle's Trinity talk
offends others," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 Apr. 1995, E3. For an example of a Catholic response to
the current teachings by fundamentalist Christians concerning the Catholic church, including
arguments concerning early church history, see Karl Keating, *Catholicism and Fundamentalism:
The Attack on "Romanism" by "Bible Christians"* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988).

subsequent participation were unique, because of Mormonism's traditional exegesis concerning Catholic history.[62] It has also been reported that President Gordon B. Hinckley was "warmly received at the Vatican archives [in 1992] when he presented a set of the five-volume *Encyclopedia of Mormonism.*"[63]

Even if Mormonism in Italy continues to grow slowly, many of the changes of the last thirty years have created an environment favorable to a new stage of assimilation. The increasingly friendly official relations between Mormons and Catholics, their shared values, the official recognition and improved image of the LDS church, the secularization of the Italian government, and increasing religious pluralism have all created an environment in which Mormonism is no longer considered by the well informed as a weird "sect" or "cult." In the twenty-first century Mormonism has a unique opportunity to enter a second phase in which it is no longer considered a threat to Italian society. Societal and family pressures associated with joining "new religious movements" often dissipate as knowledge replaces fear.[64] Even Catholic renewal might facilitate understanding between Mormons and Catholics, because such renewal emphasizes many of the characteristics and practices which form the basis for some "cultural continuity" between Mormonism and Catholicism.[65] Such a transition could broaden the base of those whose curiosity might result in conversion. Presumably the membership profile would broaden from those who are favorably disposed toward Americans, marginal to their own environment, and alienated from their own religion, to a profile comprising those who are integrated into upper-middle-class society, not afraid to challenge traditional American social and political thinking, and in background cultural Catholics nonetheless attracted by the community life and lifestyles of their Mormon friends.[66]

In his best-selling book, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope,* Pope John Paul II wrote that "the number of people who participate in religious ceremonies" is not a definitive measure of faith or a determinant of the future of a religious movement. As the world approaches the twenty-first century, he believes: "Truly, there are no grounds for losing hope. If the world is not Catholic from a denominational point of view, it is nonetheless profoundly permeated by the Gospel."[67] In Italy one might also conclude

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62. Michele L. Straniero, "Nella crociata, anche coi mormoni," *La Stampa,* 6 Feb. 1992.

63. See statement of LDS church spokesman Don LeFevre in *Salt Lake Tribune,* 20 Nov. 1993, C1.

64. Barker, 93-98.

65. See, e.g., Rodney Stark, "How New Religions Succeed: A Theoretical Model," in Bromley and Hammond, 11-29.

66. See Mauss, 213n1, on the "social availability" of potential converts.

67. John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 102, 112.

that while Mormonism remains a small minority religion, the current po-
litical and religious climates favor increased understanding; and that
since Mormonism is also "permeated by the Gospel," it will continue to
grow.

Mormonism in Latin America: Towards the Twenty-first Century

David Clark Knowlton

FROM THE RIO GRANDE TO THE STRAITS OF MAGELLAN the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is now taking part in a revolution that is radically transforming Latin America. As a result, the church will also change. This essay explores the current situation of Mormonism in Latin America in the context of this religious upheaval as a means of thinking through issues the church will face there as it moves into the next century.

REVOLUTION IN LATIN AMERICA

During the past thirty years millions of Latin Americans, perhaps 20 percent of the entire continent, have joined new religions.[1] While changing religious affiliation may be common in Anglo-America, it has been rare in Latin America. This is a stunning change in much more than the religious life of Latin America. Catholicism was once central in organizing society there.[2] It connected larger national levels with lowest local levels. It had roots that went deeper than most Anglo-Americans expect in religion.[3] The configuration of Latin American society itself is being transformed. Religious pluralism is now the norm, although many still resist the idea.

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1. David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford, Eng.: Blackwell, 1990); and David Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

2. As an entry to the voluminous literature on Catholicism in Latin America, see Daniel H. Levine, *Popular Voices in Latin American Catholicism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), and Penny Lernoux, *The People of God: The Struggle for World Catholicism* (New York: Viking Press, 1989).

3. "Anglo America" refers to English-speaking countries, while "Latin America" refers to Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking countries in the Western Hemisphere.

This once Catholic stronghold might even become predominantly Protestant. Already, "on any given Sunday more Christians attend Protestant worship than . . . Roman Catholic churches."[4] The number of practicing Protestants is greater than the combined total of members of all other kinds of voluntary organizations in politics, culture, and sports.[5] In this panorama of change the most important groups are those originating in Anglo-America. They have flooded the continent with missions over the last century. Of these, the single most significant in numbers of members and rapidity of growth is Pentecostalism, just as is true in other parts of the globe, followed by various Evangelical groups.[6] Seventh Day Adventism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and of course Mormonism also play an important role.

The Mormon church, despite the enormity of its missionary force—probably greater than that of all Protestant missionaries on the continent combined—does not gain the largest number of converts. It is also relatively unstudied.[7] Nevertheless it is growing in a number of significant social niches and promises to continue doing so in the future.[8] It is building what will become a significant institution in Latin America in that it too connects local events with national, even global, processes.

MORMONISM IN LATIN AMERICA

Although Mormon proselyting was initiated in the nineteenth century here, most countries received full-time missionaries only after World War II, and some significantly later.[9] After an initially slow start, church growth jumped sharply in the 1970s and boomed in the 1980s. At times the number of baptisms seemed almost mythological; some returning elders told of baptizing hundreds. By the end of 1993 the church claimed almost 2.75 million members in Latin America, 32 percent of the church total.[10] If growth rates continue, by the end of 1995 there will be some 3.3

4. Guillermo Cook, *The Changing Face of the Church in Latin America* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 1994), ix-x.

5. Phillip Barryman, "The Coming Age of Evangelical Protestantism," in *NACLA Report on the Americas* 6 (May/June 1994): 6-10.

6. Martin.

7. See bibliography on Mormonism in Latin America compiled by Mark Grover, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

8. Martin, 207-10.

9. Rodolfo Acevedo, *Los Mormones en Chile* (Santiago: Impresos Cumorah, 1990), Nadia Fernanda Amorim de Maia, *Os Mormons en Alagoas: religiao e relaçoes raciais* (Sao Paulo: FFLH/USP-CER, 1986), F. LaMond Tullis, *Mormons in Mexico* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1987), and Frederick G. Williams and Frederick S. Williams, *From Acorn to Oak Tree* (Fullerton, CA: Etcetera Etcetera Graphics, 1987).

10. This figure is based on *Deseret News 1995-1996 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1994).

million Mormons in this region, and by the end of the century almost 4 million.

Table 1
LDS Membership in Latin America,
End of 1993

Argentina	205,000
Bolivia	78,000
Brazil	474,000
Chile	345,000
Colombia	96,000
Costa Rica	22,000
Dominican Republic	47,000
Ecuador	115,000
El Salvador	50,000
Guatemala	140,000
Honduras	53,000
Mexico	688,000
Nicaragua	13,000
Panama	23,000
Paraguay	16,000
Peru	234,000
Puerto Rico	19,000
Uruguay	61,000
Venezuela	66,000
Total	2,745,000

This development is consistent with the general growth of non-Catholic religions throughout Latin America.[11] It stems from a host of social processes, including problems in the internal structure of Catholicism, military dictatorships, massive urbanization, mass education, rapid population growth, and economic crises. It also depends on the structure of the new religious groups and their national and international connections. Nevertheless, we will need more research than is now available to understand the particulars of what led certain sectors of the population to join the LDS church, while others became Pentecostal, members of Catholic Base Communities, or of Opus Dei, while still others turned to political reform or private voluntary organizations.

Currently most Mormon growth is in Latin America. Despite a popular focus on growth elsewhere, the numbers of new converts outside Latin America remain relatively small. "Between 1987 and 1989 nearly a million new members were added ... [Latin America] contain[s] more than 60% of these new members."[12] Latin America's share of church

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11. Martin; Stoll. See also William Mitchell, *Peasants on the Edge* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991).

12. Tim B. Heaton, "Vital Statistics," in Daniel Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1994), 4:1521.

FIGURE I
Mormon Growth in Latin America
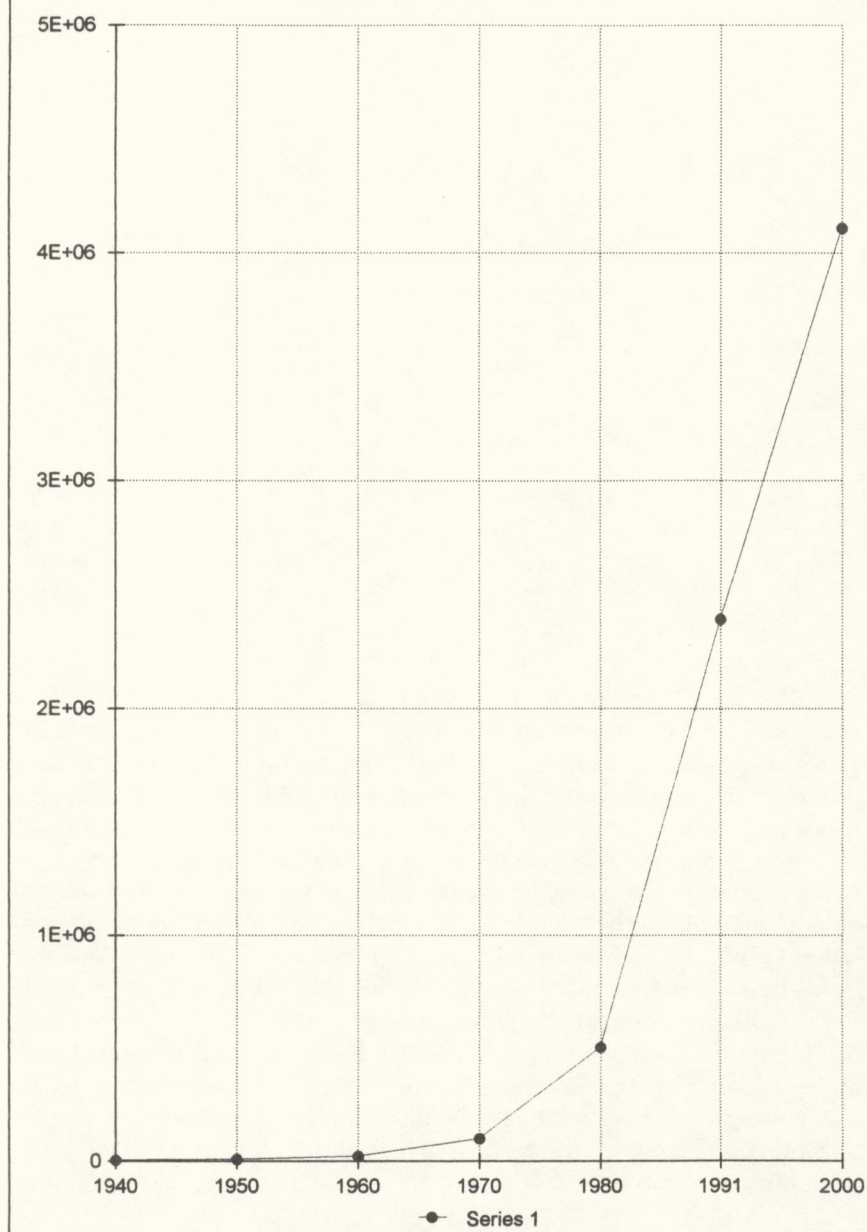
membership continues to grow relative to the rest of the church, particularly to the U.S. and Canada. Thus, although people frequently say Mormonism is a "world religion," in fact it is an American religion; more than 80 percent of its membership is found in the Americas. Only a small number of countries outside this region have significant membership,[13] or much growth in the number of stakes. Between 1988 and 1994, 310 stakes were organized churchwide. Of these only fifty-three, or 17 percent, were in the U.S.[14] The majority of the rest were in Latin America, where the 2,000th stake was created in Mexico in 1994.[15] At the end of 1993 this region held some 26 percent of LDS stakes, compared with 59 percent for the U.S.

This growth pressures the church, straining its capacity to expand while still controlling institutional integrity; yet in many ways Latin America is taking on characteristics of a mature church region. There is an ever-increasing need for new leaders, but there is also a seasoned cadre of Latin American authorities. For example, there are at present eight general authorities from Latin America—not including the Mexican Mormon colonies—and two emeritii. The church developed a corps of regional representatives from the area (now reassigned), and virtually all stake presidents and bishops are Latino, as are an increasing number of mission presidents and missionaries. Twenty years ago virtually none of this pool of leadership existed.

Six temples are currently operating in Latin America (13 percent of the total) and several more have been announced. The church has missionary training facilities in Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, and Guatemala, as well as Area offices in Quito, Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires, Guatemala City, and Mexico City. Presiding Bishopric offices function in every country, and the church has a substantial Church Education System, with seminaries and institutes, as well. In addition, in Mexico an LDS history museum was recently established privately, but with official sanction.

An additional measure of maturity indicates what will be a theme of much of the rest of this essay: *diversity.* One measure of maturity is the total number of members per stake, which is relatively small in the core areas of the church. There must be a minimum of active, tithe-paying members for a stake to be established. In mature areas most of the membership will be found in stakes, while in less mature ones substantial numbers will exist in mission districts. Thus in the Utah-Idaho core area of Mormonism, we find between 3,000 and 3,500 members per stake, while in the less mature areas of California, Illinois, and Texas there are between 4,000 and 4,500. In Latin America we find a range, from a low of

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13. Australia and New Zealand, Great Britain, Japan, and the Philippines.
14. *Church News,* 17 Dec. 1994, 7.
15. Ibid., 3.

FIGURE II
Members per stake in South America

FIGURE III
Members per Stake in Central America
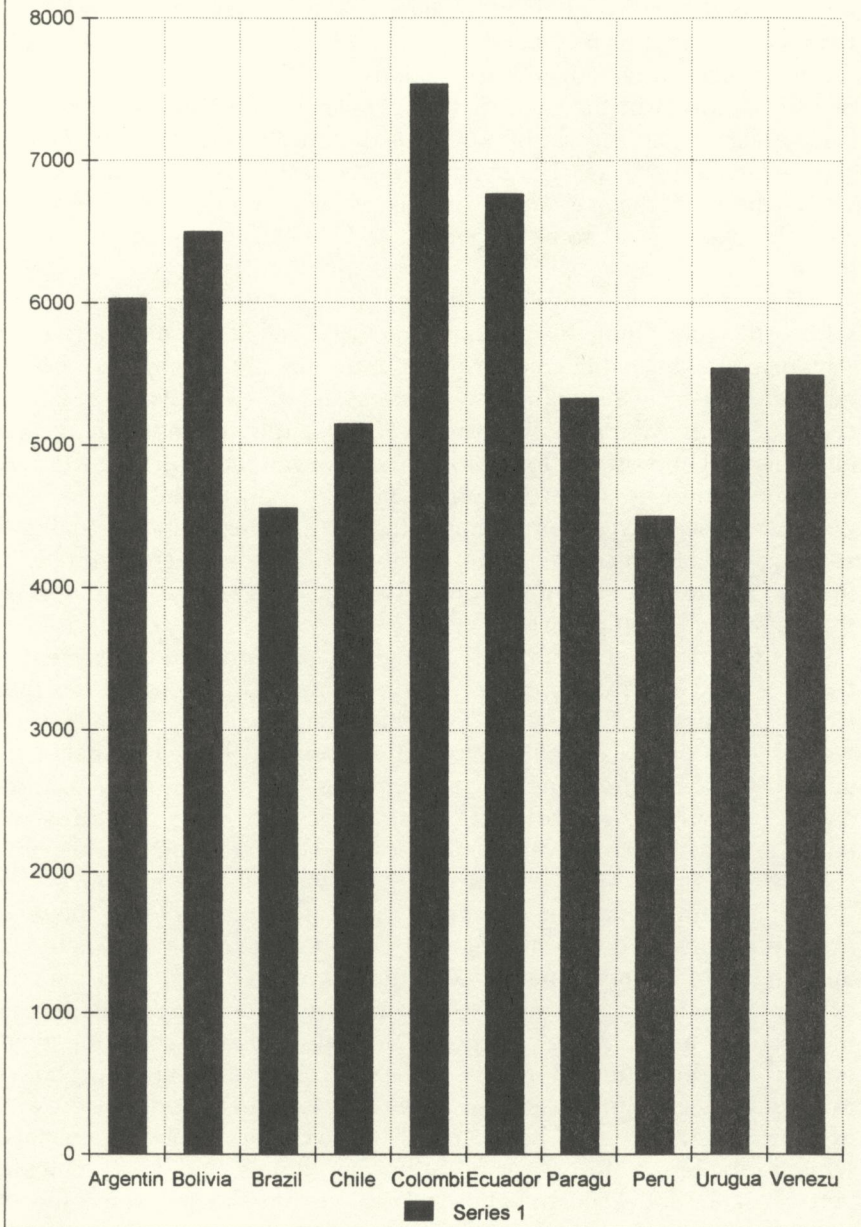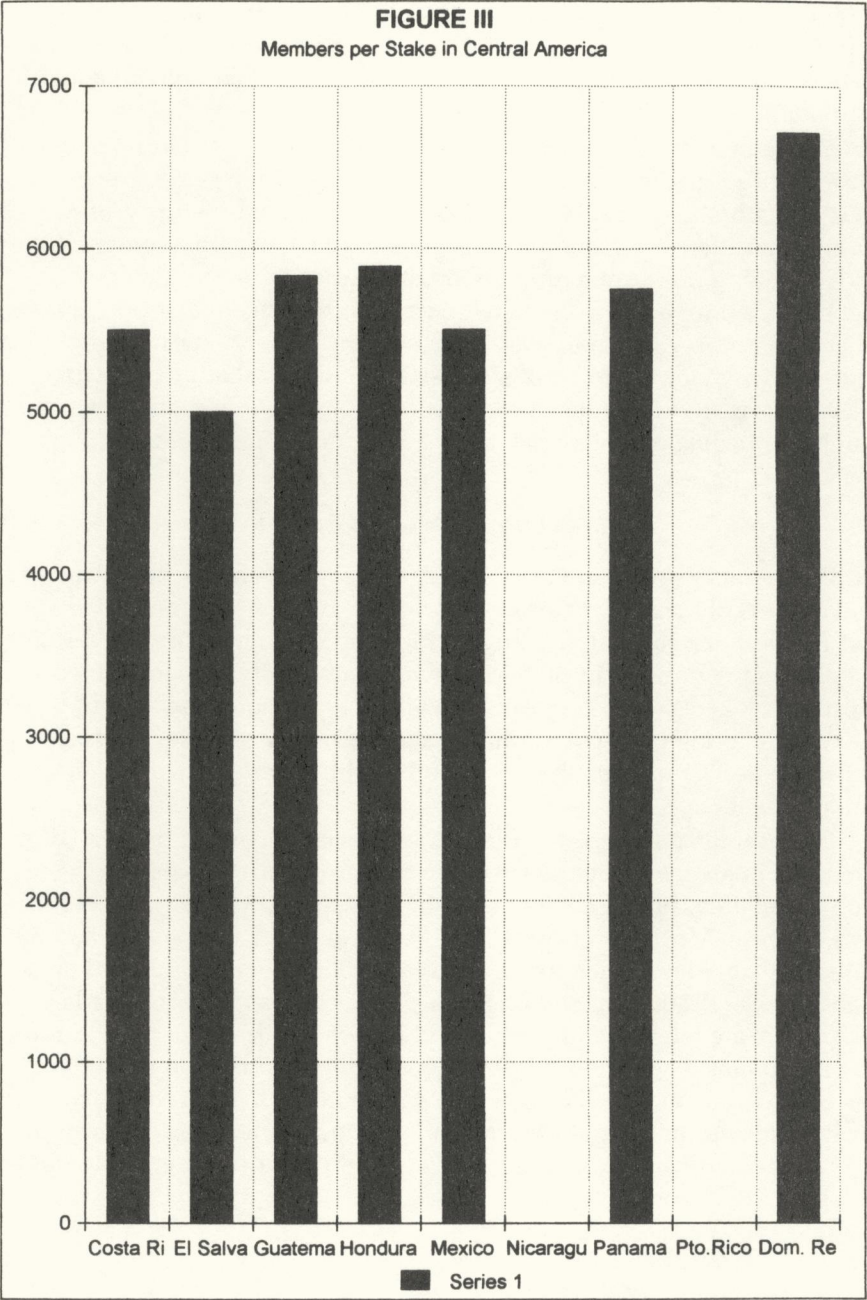
4,500 to a high of 7,500 for Peru and Colombia, respectively. The lower figures approximate those for California, Illinois, and Texas, while the higher figures indicate rapid growth (as in Ecuador and Bolivia) and/or high rates of inactivity.[16]

At the moment these data suggest that some areas of Latin America show institutional maturity, while others do not. They suggest that further research should explore the relative institutional maturity of Mormonism in different regions and countries if we are to gain a comparative understanding of Mormon growth in Latin America. Although one hears that activity rates are low there, these figures challenge that report somewhat. In Peru, for example, we find a country undergoing high growth and yet displaying a profile of stake sizes similar to that of California.[17] Relatively small stakes must have reasonable activity rates, with a certain number of people willing to pay tithing and donate their time.

### UNEVEN DISTRIBUTION OF GROWTH

Despite its growth in Latin America, Mormonism has not attracted converts evenly across regions or countries. Just as certain individuals and families are particularly attracted to this religion, so too are certain regions and countries. In fact, Mormon membership is concentrated in specific key areas. This bespeaks a relationship among the structure of the church, its allocation of resources, and the nature of each local society. Furthermore, it provides the LDS church with its peculiar dynamics in the continent.

In absolute numbers more than 80 percent of Mormons in Latin America congregate in just seven of the twenty countries that form the region: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru.[18] Two of these, Mexico and Brazil, are giant countries with more than 80 million inhabitants each. Mexico, with 688,000 members, has a third more than Brazil's 474,000, even though its population is about half as large. Two others are relatively tiny, Chile and Ecuador, with fewer than 15 million inhabitants each. Yet Chile, with only some 13.5 million inhabitants, has 345,000 Mormons. This is where Mormonism has arguably had its greatest success in Latin America. Chile's population forms 3 percent of the Latin American total, and it holds only 4 percent of the continental

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16. I divided the total membership by the number of stakes as reported in the *Deseret News 1995-1996 Church Almanac* to obtain these figures.

17. A caveat: If for some reason stakes in areas of Latin America are substantially truncated in organizational requirements, this may not follow. In that case Peru and California, for example, would not be comparable.

18. Unless cited otherwise, all figures are based on *Deseret News 1995-1996 Church Almanac*.

FIGURE IV
Relative % of National Population

■ Series 1
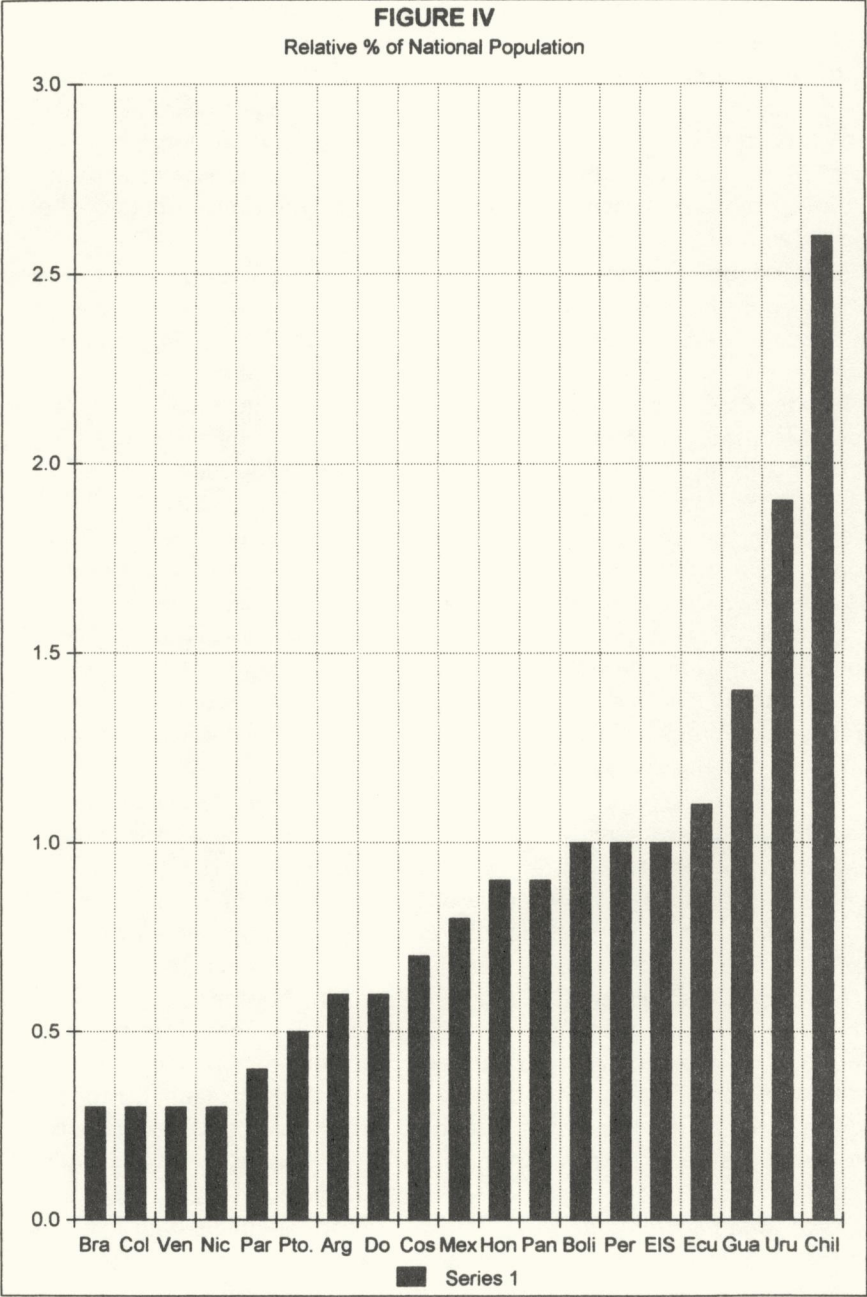
land mass, but it claims 13 percent of the total Mormon membership for Latin America. Yet Mormon proselyting began in Mexico in 1876, eighty years before it began in Chile. The relatively large country of Colombia, with a population of more than 34 million, has only some 96,000 members. Proselyting did begin relatively late there, in 1966, some ten years after Chile. Also the country is known for having the strongest formal Catholic presence in the region and some of the lowest numbers of Protestants, as well.[19]

The relative percentages that Latter-day Saints form in the various national populations also vary widely. At its high end, with an amazing 2.6 percent, is Chile. Outside of Oceania, this is the highest relative Mormon percentage for any country. It places Chile in the company of such U.S. states as Colorado and California, which are just outside the traditional Mormon geographic core. Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, and Nicaragua bring up the rear. This variation suggests, once again, the importance of local social structure and history and the critical need to do research on the growth and development of the various national Mormonisms. For example, Nicaragua once had a thriving LDS population, but after the Sandinista revolution of 1979 it disappeared almost entirely, because of the U.S. political relationship the Sandinistas attributed to Mormons. In Chile, on the other hand, evidence suggests that Mormonism found favor with the Pinochet dictatorship and might even have received quasi-official sanction, as part of a so-called "Protestant card" played to stop the growth of leftist Catholicism.[20]

Venezuela is one of the most secular Latin American societies—i.e., one with the least formal influence of Catholicism. This factor explains the situation of other religions there and might also explain the low percentage of Mormons. Yet another country known for its extreme secularity, Uruguay, has one of the highest relative percentages of Mormons at almost 2 percent. However, in Uruguay this growth occurred during an earlier period, for it currently has a very low Mormon growth rate, while Venezuela is experiencing substantial growth. Thus not only must we take national structures into account, we must also locate them in time to see how historical configurations have militated for or against Mormon growth. Each of these factors gives the resulting national Mormonism a somewhat different character and provides limits on its continued expansion.

One final example: the three Andean countries which stem from the old Inca Empire—Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru—share similar social structures but have substantial historical differences. Nevertheless, they have

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19. Stoll; Levine.
20. Ethnographic evidence gathered in interviews I conducted in Chile, 1991 and 1992.

at the moment almost identical percentages of LDS membership, around 1 percent. Growth has recently declined in Bolivia but remains high in the others. In Bolivia two U.S. missionaries were assassinated, and a guerrilla group dedicated substantial effort to eradicating Mormonism, without success. In Peru, despite the assassination of three missionaries, the Mormon church has remained relatively uninvolved in Peru's guerrilla war, unlike the Pentecostals and Adventists.[21] The growth of Mormonism there undoubtedly is attributable somewhat to the social and economic chaos the country has experienced. Furthermore, in all three countries Mormonism takes diverse paths in its relationship to the large indigenous populations and to the local politics of Indian identity in each country.

Another country, Guatemala, also has a relatively high LDS percentage, higher than that of the equally indigenous Andean region, at 1.4 percent. This country has also experienced a brutal civil war and social chaos. For reasons of the particular way in which religion fits into the struggles and into local political economies, it has probably the highest percentage of non-Catholics in Latin America. Estimates range as high as 50 percent. Mormonism undoubtedly bears some relationship to this general pattern.

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION

Mormonism is strongly concentrated in Latin America's cities. It is not a rural religion, with a few exceptions.[22] Its efforts to move into rural areas and work with rural populations, particularly the indigenous ones of Mexico, Central America, and the Andes, have been relatively unsuccessful. In part this is because the social structure of the church, with its emphasis on residence-based congregations, is designed more for towns and cities than for rural social life.

Not only is Mormonism biased in favor of cities and urban skills, it arrived in Latin America at a time of unprecedented urban growth. Since World War II Latin America has shifted from predominantly rural to predominantly urban in the distribution of its population. The urban growth has been phenomenal and has meant that the problems of urban plan-

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21. Juan Ossio, *Violencia estructural en el Perú; antropología* (Lima: Asociación Peruana de Estudios e Investigacion para la Paz, 1990).

22. For example, Huacuyo, Bolivia, reported in David Knowlton, "Protestantism and Social Change in a Rural Aymara Community," M.A. thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1982. See also Martin, 96, whose contrasting viewpoint is based on a literature which overemphasizes rural Mormonism, and see David L. Clawson, "Religious Allegiance and Economic Development in Rural Latin America," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 26 (1984): 499-524.

ning and human need have overwhelmed the cities of the region. Mormonism and many other new religions have found fertile soil here for growth.

Many Latin American countries have further suffered from what many call hypercephaly, the growth of a large city that dominates the nation, such as Mexico City in Mexico, Buenos Aires in Argentina, and Lima in Peru. The relationship of Mormon growth to hypercephaly is unclear. Santiago, for example, contains slightly more stakes than its LDS share of the national population would indicate. In Mexico it is different. There is a concentration of Mormons in the city, but it is smaller than the size of the city would seem to warrant. In part this is explained by the growth of Mormonism in regional cities near the valley of Mexico, which gives it a peculiar character there, and very strong growth in the cities of the north, where the church is overrepresented. There it contains almost 45 percent of the total stakes for Mexico. The north also has almost 50 percent of total membership for the country, while Mormon presence in the indigenous regions of southern Mexico is weak. Undoubtedly the strength in the north has something to do with the region's shifting social and economic relationship with the United States, but what, precisely, requires detailed and cautious research?

Every country shows LDS distributions that do not correspond to those of the general population, but which indicate that other dynamics are at work to produce the various concentrations of Mormons. Another example: in Peru we find a large concentration of stakes, 44 percent of the total, in metropolitan Lima. This is greater than its share of the national population. We also find 73 percent of stakes along the coast, while the highlands, the traditional population center of Peru, claims a scant 18 percent. This reflects the recent massive population movement from the highlands to the coast because of economic problems and violent civil conflicts in the highlands. I imagine that among this immigrant population the church has made great gains, but there remains the critical question of which specific segments of that population have been drawn to Mormonism and why.

There is another anomaly in Peru that requires explanation. Why are 20 percent of stakes found on the north coast, while the south, including the inland city of Arequipa (the second city of Peru), claims a mere 16 percent? Members from the north coast have further claimed, somehow, a niche of BYU alumni; its student population, when I worked there, was almost entirely composed of people from the city of Trujillo. It would be interesting to know what social factors led to this situation.

Mormonism is also concentrated in particular neighborhoods. For example, in Santiago, Chile, the greatest number of stakes is found in those neighborhoods which are expanding and which comprise some of the

poorest in the city. This creates a very uneven distribution, with stakes congregating along a north/south corridor and being relatively sparse in the east and west.[23] Similarly, in La Paz, Bolivia, there is a concentration of stakes in the upper parts of the city, those areas which are more indigenous and also poorer,[24] but the relationship to indigenous issues is ambiguous at best.[25]

While Mormonism may find many converts in the informal neighborhoods and shantytowns that ring Latin America's cities, its institutional growth carries a distinctive middle-class character.[26] It is likely that Pentecostalism better typifies the dynamics of the shantytowns and working-class neighborhoods of the continent, as David Martin argues.[27] On the one hand, he claims that Pentecostalism relates to the social structures and values more typical of the bourgeois or middle-class societies of the developed world. On the other hand, he writes that it is primarily the poor, those who are not able yet to take on bourgeois culture, who are becoming Pentecostal. The same might be true for Mormons, although it seems to me that Mormonism is much more successful in its relationship with bourgeois society, despite the correlation between Mormon presence and poor neighborhoods.

SOCIAL POSITION OF LEADERS

A substantiation of the essentially middle-class character of Mormonism can be seen in the employment of its leaders. As we shall see, not only do most leaders in stake presidencies and higher fill middle-class occupations, but the majority comes from sectors with management skills, sectors relatively young and growing rapidly, as the Latin American economy changes.[28]

Part of the challenge Mormonism has faced has been the need to obtain leaders who fit the requirements of our bureaucratized church. We have had to convert people and train them quickly in the requirements of Mormon leadership. Besides whatever spiritual qualities might be re-

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23. David Knowlton, "Violence and Mormonism in the Crucible of Social Change: The Cases of Bolivia and Chile," read at International Conference on New Religions, Recife, Brazil, May 1994.

24. Ibid.

25. Julio Cordova Villazon, "Los evangélicos, entre la protesta y la compensación minorías religiosas y sectores urbano–populares: el caso de El Alto," thesis of Licenciatura, University Mayor de San Andres, La Paz, Bolivia, 1990.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. The data for this assertion come from a classification of occupations listed for members of stake presidencies, mission presidencies, regional representatives, and general authorities as published in the *Church News* for 1993 and 1994.

quired, Mormonism requires a commitment of a significant portion of one's time to church service and a sufficient education in the culture of management to be able to perform according to church practices. Thus we should not be surprised that church leadership tends to be drawn from relatively narrow social circles. Mormon leadership shows an affinity with certain segments of the society and is colored by them. Virtually none of the leaders comes from the laboring classes that make up the majority of Latin America's workforce. Even in those stakes in heavily working-class areas, there appears to be a preference for leaders from the management sectors. One finds a few stake presidents and counselors who are skilled or unskilled laborers, but they are exceptions that highlight the general trend.
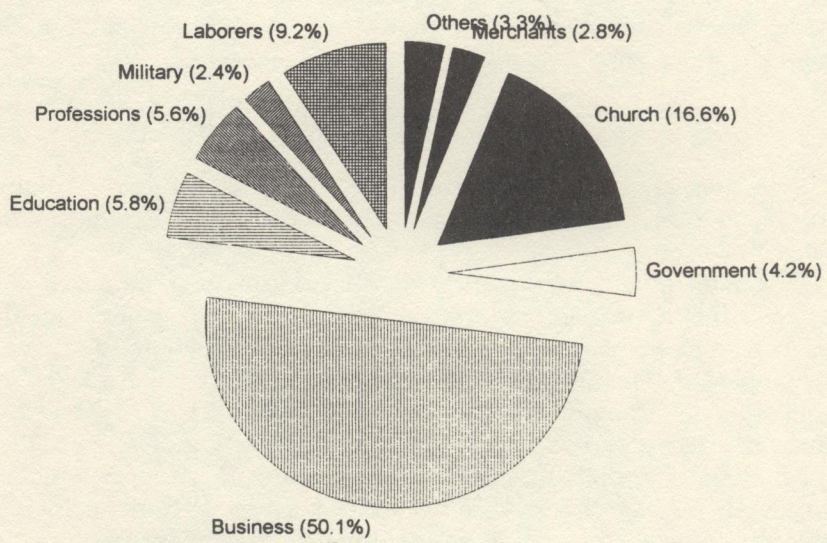
Another critical group from which the church recruits leaders is the salaried employees either of the Church Educational System or of the Presiding Bishopric's Office. This is truer the higher the leadership level, and is especially true of regional representatives, mission presidents, and Latin American general authorities. This means that church employment is important for future high leadership. We have professional full-time church leaders augmented by another cadre from the private business world. A problem with salaried church employees in a lay leadership is that they sometimes elicit *envidia*, or jealous envy, since some leaders will seem to be rewarded arbitrarily with church jobs while others will not. Church employees are already suspected in some areas of being a kind of church "nobility," leading to some tension, anger, or even hatred.[29]

Nevertheless the church will need to expand its bureaucracy greatly in Latin America to cope with the growth there; and for the foreseeable future church employees are just about the only large group of Latin America members who can afford to leave their work for three years to serve as mission presidents. Yet this undermines the tradition of a lay church, suggesting for Latin Americans the image of a paid clergy, separate from ordinary church leaders, who occupy a privileged position. In addition, salaried leaders occupy a career track leading to the highest ranks of church leadership, including the general authorities. This situation carries a potential for serious conflict in the Latin American church.

Whether or not by design, certain socioeconomic sectors symbolically represent the church as its leadership. Though the majority of members might come from less affluent sectors, the character of the institution is symbolically represented by those from the management sector, including salaried church employment. This sector was virtually nonexistent in Latin America fifty years ago but has expanded massively during the

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29. This issue came up periodically during my ethnographic interviews in various countries. See n35.

FIGURE V
LDS Latin Leaders by Occupation

Laborers (9.2%)

Others (3.3%)

Merchants (2.8%)

Military (2.4%)

Professions (5.6%)

Church (16.6%)

Education (5.8%)

Government (4.2%)

Business (50.1%)

same period the church has grown there. Since it promises to continue expanding as Latin America develops economically, the church is in a favorable niche for further growth, despite the simultaneous potential for class conflict.

On the other hand, there is also a potential for integrating lower-class members into a corporate structure stretching from the top of society to the bottom. Such corporate structures have been a familiar mainstay of Latin American social organization. In this respect the LDS church will likely present a contrast with many of the more numerous Pentecostal churches, since they tend to integrate horizontally rather than vertically. In its vertical emphasis and authority structure, Mormonism is not unlike the right-wing Catholic movement Opus Dei which is also spreading in Latin America among particular social sectors.[30] A study comparing Mormon growth and membership characteristics with those of Opus Dei would be interesting.

TOWARDS THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

From this limited discussion of the LDS church structure in Latin America, we can intuit a number of themes that will emerge in the twenty-first century.

First, sometime between 2010 and 2015, if growth continues at current rates, Latin American Mormons will constitute a majority of the church, leading perhaps to a "latinization" of the entire church as increasing numbers of general authorities come from that region. We could even see a Latin American president by the end of the century. This would be a change as momentous as the relatively recent election of a non-Italian Pope in Rome. Cultural and social concerns from Latin America will then increasingly become the background from which church manuals, general authority talks, and policies are formulated. This might lead to some tension between Anglo- and Latino-Mormons over issues of cultural hegemony expressed in gospel concerns.[31] Given the diversity in Latin America, we can expect substantial discussion about how the varieties of Latin American culture and social organization will be manifested in church programs. Will church leaders attempt in this process to distinguish Wasatch Front culture from gospel culture? Or will Anglo-American culture be sacralized as part of the gospel, somewhat as Arabic culture as been in Islam?

Second, the church will increasingly be caught up in the social and political dynamics of this region. These include issues of mass poverty,

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30. Michael Walsh, *Opus Dei* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992).
31. This, in fact, was important in the "Third Convention" conflict in Mexico early in this century (see Tullis).

nationalism versus internationalism, conflicts over capitalism, education, employment, gender and sexual issues, and how morality and religiosity are applied to those issues. Already Pentecostals and Evangelicals are being drawn into politics, despite their strong resistance. One hears of desires by Latin LDS leaders to form Mormon-based political parties or groups to influence various national discussions.[32] This political pressure is but one of many points where Mormonism will be drawn into Latin American social concerns, even if it is manifested only in resistance.

Third, we can expect the increasing growth of various national Mormonisms. Inevitably, the national churches will respond to national issues, although there might be, of course, tension with central church authority. In subtle ways Mormonism blends with its new milieux creating Mormonisms that are not all identical. Even if they continue to use the same ritual and symbolic forms, the contextual meanings given them are different. Already this is reported in the increasing literature on the church in that region.[33] Furthermore, we might find the development of a "popular" (folk) Mormonism different from that of the formal church. In this usage "popular" stems from the social science literature in French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish in reference to the religion of the "people" rather than that of elites and institutions. A rich literature discusses this phenomenon in Latin American Catholicism, and it appears also as an issue for Protestantism.[34] More importantly, it is the numerically dominant form of religion with deep psychological roots in Latin America. As a result, Mormonism will feel increasing pressure to accommodate or actively resist it.

Finally, the church's growth is constrained by the social niches from which it recruits and the elective affinities between them and the institutional church. These niches both limit and enhance the church's potential for growth; but at some point they might bring the church into conflict with the broader Latin American society. One example, above mentioned, comes from the church's penchant for taking leaders from among church employees and the managerial class. Given the recent expansion of the latter class in Latin America, it has provided a fertile basis, symbolically and materially, for church growth. However, it can just as easily serve as

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32. Ethnographic interviews with Latin church officials.

33. See, for example, Mark L Grover, "Relief Society and Church Welfare: The Brazilian Experience," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 27 (Winter 1994): 29-40; as well as Thomas Murphy's essay on Guatemala in this issue.

34. See, for example, José Luís Gonzalez and Teresa María van Ronzelen, *Religiosidad Popular en el Perú* (Lima, Peru: Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones, 1983), Lynn Stephen and James Dow, *Class, Politics and Popular Religion in Mexico and Central America* (Washington, D.C.: Society for Latin American Anthropology, 1990), or Thomas A. Kselman, "Ambivalence and Assumption in the Concept of Popular Religion," in Daniel H. Levine, ed., *Religion and Political Conflict in Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986).

a symbol of exploitation. Much here depends on how the social constituency of the church and its leaders is invoked in local political struggles, as happened in Bolivia and Chile with the terrorist strikes against the church.

Internally too the church must deal with the perception that it is producing an almost professional caste of leaders. This inevitably will enter into tension with the Mormon norm of voluntary service and lay leadership. The problem exists in a tenuous space between pragmatism and the Latin American understanding of social position as a kind of prebend for the benefit of oneself. Already, given popular complaints, this is a problem and will increase in intensity.[35] It desperately needs study.

THE DRAMA OF MORMONISM

This essay has explored Mormon reality in Latin America as part of a complex of changes revolutionizing the continent. We hope to extend a filament of understanding to look to the future. Yet we still do not know much. Little research has been performed into the nature of the rapidly growing Mormon church there. Only fools, prophets, and futurologists make firm claims about the future. Here I say merely that we have front row seats to watch a first-class drama unfold, one which will transform both Latin America and Mormonism. Yet we know only its title and a vague abstract of its possible plot. The curtain is drawn, the revolution has begun.

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35. During my stints of ethnographic fieldwork on religious questions, 1979, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1991, 1992, and 1994 in Bolivia, 1990 in Argentina, and 1991 and 1992 in Chile, as well as from occasional ethnographic interactions in Peru, this issue continually came up in interviews of varying natures.

Reinventing Mormonism: Guatemala as Harbinger of the Future?

Thomas W. Murphy

WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF HER FAMILY, Marta Angelica Solizo forms and paints incredibly detailed ceramic Nativity scenes. A standard set consists of fourteen pieces: three sheep, a bull, four donkeys laden with corn, squash, flowers, firewood, three wise men with a flute, a ceramic pot, and a colorful bag; and, of course, José, María, and the baby Jesus lying in a manger. The appeal of this assortment derives from its local character exemplified in the brightly colored, hand-woven textiles adorning the Mayan figurines.[1]

The Solizos have taken an internationally recognized religious icon, the Nativity, and given it local immediacy. This translation of meaning from the international to the local level expresses both affinity and difference with international Christianity. Affinity is present in the recognizable characters of the three wise men, José, María, Jesus, and the animals. Difference is apparent in the Mayan features, textiles, flute, firewood, flowers, squash, and corn.

A similar movement or a cultural translation from the international to the local level in Mormonism is the focus of this essay.[2] I contend that

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2. Peter Lineham has argued that there is a cultural translation involved in the adoption of Mormonism in other cultures. See "The Mormon Message in the Context of Maori Culture," *Journal of Mormon History* 17 (1991): 62-93. For a discussion of translation in Catholic conversion, see Vincent L. Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society Under Early Spanish Rule* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993).

Mormonism in Guatemala is being locally reinvented. Cultural transla-
tion can be observed through a variety of avenues. One particular exam-
ple is a public assertion by a Guatemalan Mormon of an ethnic difference
with Euro-American Mormons. This claim is examined with insights
from anthropological literature on ethnicity. Comparable avowals of eth-
nic distinction by Native American Mormons are highlighted. A second
avenue of cultural translation can be seen in Guatemalan interpretations
of the Book of Mormon and the *Popol Vuh* in the context of Guatemalan
nationalism.

Moving from the particular to the general, I will consider finally the
implications of local reinventions of Mormonism in a rapidly growing in-
ternational church. Recent assertions of a Mormon ethnicity by scholars
in the United States are analyzed in relation to ethnic distinctions af-
firmed in Guatemala to suggest that rapid growth is reshaping Mormon-
ism at its center as well as at the periphery. The emerging international
gospel is increasingly lived locally by individuals trying to make sense
out of a globally interconnected world. In the next century claims of an
ethnic Mormon identity will continue to be made by those uncomfortable
with the changing character of Mormonism; but they will be countered
by an uneasy attachment to an international gospel adapted to a variety
of local cultures.

COVENANT OF ABRAHAM

Dramatic episodes often reproduce historical understandings, ethnic
identities, and perceptions of existing power relationships.[3] An event I
observed in Guatemala included a public assertion of likeness and differ-
ence that evoked both past and future in terms of the present.

While seated in the chapel of a colonial style LDS meeting house in
Antigua, Guatemala, I was participating in a weekly meeting of the all-
male lay priesthood.[4] Luis (a pseudonym) was teaching a lesson on the
Abrahamic covenant. In the midst of the discussion Luis turned to me
and explained that what distinguished Latin American Mormons from
Anglo-American Mormons was the fact that the former were direct de-
scendants of Abraham through the peoples of the Book of Mormon,
while *"los americanos"* or *"los anglos"* were adopted into the Abrahamic

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3. Michael Roberts, "Ethnicity in Riposte as a Cricket Match: The Past for the Present,"
Comparative Studies in Society and History 27 (1985): 420. See also Clifford Geertz, *The Interpre-
tation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

4. This meeting combined the elders and high priest quorums, which would ordinarily
meet separately in the United States.

covenant.[5] This view was echoed by others in the group, and subsequent discussions indicated that a similar view was held by many Latin Americans.[6]

According to the LDS Bible Dictionary, the covenant God made with Abraham promised that his descendants would be offered the blessings of salvation through baptism, the priesthood, exaltation through celestial marriage (thereby eternal increase), certain lands as an eternal inheritance, and that Christ would come through their lineage. Those of non-Israelite heritage, gentiles, could also become heirs to the covenant but only through the ordinances of the gospel.

ETHNIC IDENTITIES

Valuable insights can be obtained by exploring the singularity of ethnic identity professed by the participants in Luis's priesthood quorum discussion. The use of theories of ethnicity, however, must be qualified. First, the identity asserted by Luis was constructed in a Mormon community. Second, it blurs distinctions among Mayas, Ladinos, and Euro-Americans that make up the membership of the Antigua ward.[7] Third, this event involved individual (as opposed to group) expressions of an ethnic identity. Finally, although the claim made in this priesthood class might be widely shared, there are likely Guatemalans who would dispute it as strongly as a North American might.

Notions of self are often manifested through relationships with others.[8] Luis's pronouncement of an exclusive primordial connection to the Abrahamic covenant was made as a direct challenge to my presence, an apparent Euro-American Mormon, in a Guatemalan priesthood quorum.[9]

An ethnic identity "involves symbolic construals of sensations of

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5. Luis had spent some time in the southwestern United States and had apparently picked up the use of the term "*anglo*" to refer to Euro-Americans. He also employed the more common Guatemalan term "*americanos*."

6. This particular assertion was not explored in my formal interviews and consequently more research is needed to establish with any accuracy just how pervasive it is.

7. Within the category of the Maya (or *Indios*) there are also locally significant divisions such as *Quiché, Mam*, etc. A discussion of the impact of these differences in the church would require more fieldwork. The term *ladino* is a local term for people of mixed ancestry and for Mayas who have adopted the Spanish language and no longer identify with an indigenous community. See Richard N. Adams, "Guatemalan Ladinization and History," *The Americas*, Apr. 1994, 527-43. The term Euro-American is my term for people of European ancestry from the United States and is intended to correspond with Luis's use of "*los anglos*" and "*los americanos*."

8. Harold Isaacs, *The Idols of the Tribe* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).

9. Luis was unaware of my partial Iroquois ancestry.

likeness and difference."[10] Luis was asserting an identity that distin-
guished himself, as a Guatemalan with Native ancestry, from me, a Euro-
American, while simultaneously professing a likeness with me through
our shared Mormon religion. Ultimately, he recognized, all Mormons
share in the blessings of the covenant of Abraham. Yet for Guatemalans
and others with Native ancestry, these blessings have a primordial qual-
ity; they are given at birth.

Luis, a Ladino, was claiming an identity that blurred the distinctions
among Maya, European, and African descent. His claim is similar to that
of Guatemalan nationalists, primarily Ladinos, who assert a connection
to the Mayan past as part of their national identity. The Mormon context
in which it is formed, and thereby its lack of salience outside of the
church, makes Luis's claim peculiar in Guatemala. Yet in the church it
provides Mayas and Ladinos with a shared identity which also encom-
passes, through adoption, Euro-Americans.

Ethnic identities gain salience both symbolically and socially.[11] Gua-
temalan discourse about the Book of Mormon and the Old Testament
might be understood as a form of social validation of these texts, akin to
engaging them as myths of origin. This dialogue is not unlike discussions
of the Doctrine and Covenants and the oral narratives, known as pioneer
stories, for Mormons in the United States with pioneer ancestry. Integral
to ethnic identity is the perception of shared descent which Guatemalan
Mormons maintain through stories of the Old Testament and the Book of
Mormon.[12] For example, Guatemalans can and do refer to Abraham,
Lehi, Sarah, Nephi, or other Old Testament and Book of Mormon figures
as grandparents, thus claiming a parent/child relationship (over many
generations).[13] Guatemalans look to the distant past, as they interpret it
through the Book of Mormon, to establish an identity with salience in the
present.[14]

Not only does this postulated connection with Abraham link Guate-

10. G. Carter Bentley, "Ethnicity and Practice," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*
29 (1987): 27.

11. Anna Maria Alonso, "The Effects of Truth: Re-Presentations of the Past and the
Imagining of Community," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1 (1988): 33-57.

12. Charles F. Keyes argued that "what is common to all ethnic groups is not any par-
ticular set of cultural attributes but the idea of shared descent." See "Towards a New Formu-
lation of the Concept of Ethnic Group," *Ethnicity* 3 (1976): 206.

13. For the significance of parent/child relationships, see Charles F. Keyes, "The Dialec-
tics of Ethnic Change," in Charles F. Keyes, ed., *Ethnic Change* (Seattle: University of Wash-
ington Press, 1981), 5.

14. For a discussion of the significance of the past and future in ethnic identity, see
George De Vos and Lola Romanucci-Ross, "Ethnicity: Vessel of Meaning and Emblem of Con-
trast," in George De Vos and Lola Romanucci-Ross, eds., *Ethnic Identity: Cultural Continuities
and Change* (Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield, 1975), 364.

malan Mormons with a past, it also links them to a future. The Book of Mormon offers some key assurances to the house of Israel. The book foretells that in the latter days the restored gospel will go first to the gentiles (who can be interpreted as Euro-Americans in the United States) and then: "when the Gentiles shall sin against my gospel . . . I will bring the fullness of my gospel from among them. And then will I remember the covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them" (3 Ne. 16:10-11).

When combined with primordial attachments to the Abrahamic covenant, this scripture can be interpreted in a manner that might lead to serious social consequences. Similar claims proved divisive in the mid-1930s in Mexico. Approximately one-third of Mexican Mormons, known as the Third Convention, petitioned the Utah hierarchy for local leadership, missionary programs for Mexican children, educational opportunities, translation of all doctrinal literature, and the opportunity to do temple work.[15] Their requests were based in part on the special position, derived from the Book of Mormon, which they believed those with Native American ancestry held in the church. In a letter written in November 1936 J. Reuben Clark, a member of the First Presidency, denied Mexican requests and warned members of the Third Convention that they did not have an exclusive share in the blood of Israel.[16]

In 1989 similar assertions of ethnic difference were a point of contention in a letter from George P. Lee to the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve. Lee, a Navaho, was the first Native American to have served as a general authority. Shortly after writing this letter, Lee was excommunicated for "apostasy" and "other conduct unbecoming a member of the church." He had written:

> My beloved Brethren, I am afraid that you as Gentiles or "adopted Israel" have forgotten your blessings and the divine role you were to play. I am afraid that the same thing that has happened to the Nephites is happening to you. . . . I feel that you are sinning against God. . . . [Because] You have set yourself [sic] up as a literal seed of Israel when the Lord Jesus designated you as Gentiles or "adopted Israel."[17]

In the current social context Guatemalan Mormons such as Luis are

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15. Most members of the Third Convention eventually reconciled with the centralized authorities in Utah and returned to the LDS church. A few followers of Margarito Bautista, however, remained autonomous.

16. F. LaMond Tullis, *Mormons in Mexico* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1987), 137-68.

17. Copies of the letters that George P. Lee sent to the press after his excommunication have been widely circulated. I have a copy in my possession. See also Mike Carter, "Mormon Officials Excommunicate General Authority," *Salt Lake Tribune,* 2 Sept. 1989, B1-2.

asserting an identity that transcends their marginal position in relation to the hierarchical center of Mormonism. Through the evidences of rapid growth in Latin America, scriptural promises, and a primordial ethnic attachment to Israel and ancient America, Guatemalan Mormons, in a manner reminiscent of distinctions claimed by the Third Convention and by George P. Lee, translate their marginal position in the church to one of primary significance by invoking the past and the future. Although the volatile actions of the Third Convention and of Lee were socially peripheral even among Native American Mormons, the public assertions of ethnic difference I observed in Guatemala suggest that the basis for such divisive claims may have been symbolically central.

THE BOOK OF MORMON AND THE POPOL VUH

An ethnic affinity with Abraham and the communities in the Book of Mormon involves more than the consideration of primordiality or adoption. Guatemalan Mormons with Native ancestry repeatedly profess the belief that the Book of Mormon is a record of their progenitors who dwelled in the land that they still occupy.

This canonical account of ancient American civilizations is employed as a new source for meanings socially attached to the numerous temples, pyramids, stela, and palaces that dot the Guatemalan landscape. Through retelling Book of Mormon stories, Guatemalans can imagine their ancestors living amidst the grandeur of these spectacular edifices. For example, some members told me that the ruins of Kaminaljuyú, near Guatemala City, were the vestiges of the city of Zarahemla (from the Book of Mormon). For those few who could afford to do so, a visit to the ancient Mayan cities of Tikal, Quirigua, Kaminaljuyú, or Copán is comparable to the pilgrimages to the Mormon historical sites of Nauvoo, Independence, Kirtland, or Palmyra made by Mormons in the United States.

The Guatemalan Mormons I interviewed unanimously claimed that there were many similarities between the Book of Mormon and the *Popol Vuh*, a Quiché Mayan epic recorded in the sixteenth century by a Quiché noble.[18] The *Popol Vuh*, which has been incorporated into the rhetoric of Guatemalan nationalism and is required reading in public schools, has obtained local significance for Mayas and Ladinos alike.[19] Guatemalan members told me that although the names of the people and places were different, both books spoke of the visit of Jesus to the Americas, gods,

18. See Dennis Tedlock, trans., *Popol Vuh* (New York: Touchstone, 1985).
19. The majority of people I interviewed did not finish school. The average attendance was between six and twelve years. About a third of them had actually read *Popol Vuh*. A couple of members had devoted extensive time to studying the *Popol Vuh*, but the assertions by the majority of the members were assumed rather than developed.

wars, the tower of Babel, Creation, Trinity, and Satan. While the *Popol Vuh* is closely tied to sites that are still identifiable, the lack of continuity between Book of Mormon place names and modern Guatemalan place names permits converts to Mormonism to exercise more fluidity in their postulated attachments to sacred places.[20]

Jesus was explicitly identified by Guatemalan Mormons with the Sovereign Plumed Serpent in the *Popol Vuh*. Although today scarcely a trace of the Sovereign Plumed Serpent can be found in Quiché oral narratives, he played a major role as one of the gods covered by the terms Maker, Modeler, Bearer, and Begetter in the creation stories and historical narrative of the *Popol Vuh*. Guatemalan converts to Mormonism have conflated the Sovereign Plumed Serpent, a local god revived by Guatemalan nationalists, with the internationally recognized Jesus Christ, whose ancient visit to the Americas is proposed in the Book of Mormon.

Anthropologists and sociologists usually refer to this type of symbiotic reinvention as syncretism. William Madsen has defined the process of syncretism as "a type of acceptance characterized by the conscious adaptation of an alien form in terms of some indigenous counterpart."[21] In Guatemala such an adaptation is clearly taking place. Yet the indigenous counterpart from which this syncretism has emerged has more in common with the rise of Guatemalan nationalism than with an ancient Mayan tradition. The *Popul Vuh* has been adopted as a nationalist text by the Mayan past in the present. Both the Book of Mormon and the *Popul Vuh* are written sources which are assigned a greater importance than oral narratives which evolved as a discourse of resistance against colonial subjugation over nearly 500 years since the recording of the *Popul Vuh* in a latin script. Socially and symbolically, Guatemalans can claim something most other Mormons lack: a sacred local manuscript they believe complements the imported religious text of the Book of Mormon.

BLANCA Y DELEITABLE

In contrast to the argument proposed here, David Martin has sug-

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20. From a historical perspective, however, the validity of correlations between the Book of Mormon and the *Popol Vuh* is undermined by the stark differences between the physical environments described in each account. While the animals and plants depicted in the *Popol Vuh* include numerous local species such as monkeys, pumas, jaguars, coatis, tapir, possum, macaws, whippoorwills, parrots, quetzals, yellowbites, corn, beans, squash, matasanos, jocotes, and chilis; the Book of Mormon, usually in general terms, refers to beasts, dogs, fish, fowl, serpents, insects, grain, grass, corn, and herbs while substituting some non-native varieties not found in the Americas until after 1492, such as ass, cattle, horse, elephants, sheep, oxen, swine, barley, oats, rye, and wheat.

21. William Madsen, "Religious Syncretism," in Manning Nash, ed., "Social Anthropology," in Robert Wanchope, ed., *Handbook of Middle American Indians* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 6:333-56.

gested that conversion to Mormonism in Latin America involves an ex-
tensive re-socialization that cuts converts off from almost all outside
connections and substitutes an orientation to the United States that might
be described as a religious vehicle for making Latins into North Ameri-
cans.[22]

Martin is correct that conversion to Mormonism in Latin America in-
volves intense pressures for resocialization in which aspects of American-
ism are prevalent. He is wrong, however, in suggesting that Mormons
succeed in transforming Latins into North Americans. A closer investiga-
tion reveals that Mormon affinity with the lands of the Americas is pri-
marily interpreted by Guatemalan Mormons in the context of rising
Guatemalan nationalism. Nonetheless, tensions between adaptation and
conformity lie just beneath the surface.

Mayan communities have been assaulted for five centuries by au-
thorities attempting to instill Catholicism. Yet the failure of the use of
force to produce complete conformity is apparent. Catholic edifices are
built on top of Mayan temples. Prayers during La Fiesta de Santiago reveal
that Mayas pray to their own gods alongside Catholic saints.[23] In Santi-
ago Chimaltenango Mayas imbue their patron saints with images of their
own "Mayanness."[24]

Obviously, the methods of conversion employed by Mormon mis-
sionaries and by Spanish conquistadors and missionaries cannot be credi-
bly equated. For Guatemalans today, the most of effective means to resist
Mormon missionaries is to turn the missionaries away or simply to ig-
nore them. A significant percentage of Guatemalans does just that. A few,
however, listen to the message and join the church.

Many Guatemalans who embrace this new gospel believe that their
ancestors wrote the Book of Mormon, that the Popol Vuh supplements this
canonical text, that the significance of the Maya in the past and future of
the church exceeds their temporary marginality; and they imbue Lehi, Sa-
rah, Nephi, and other Book of Mormon characters with their own "May-
anness." In fact, the Book of Mormon serves not only as another
testament of Jesus Christ but also as a new witness of the Sovereign
Plumed Serpent. This slippage in translation should not be dismissed
with the assertion that Mormons are making Latins into North Ameri-
cans. Such a claim presents Latin Americans as passive actors in the on-
slaught of American imperialism and ignores the complex ways that
Latin Americans engage and resist Mormon penetration. In his discus-

22. David Martin, Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America (Cam-
bridge, MA: Basil Blackwood, 1990), 209.

23. David Carrasco, Religions of MesoAmerica (San Francisco: Harper, 1990).

24. John M. Watanabe, "From Saints to Shibboleths: Image, Structure, and Identity in
Maya Religious Syncretism," American Ethnologist 17 (1990): 131-50.

sion of Mormonism, Martin has failed to recognize that "ideological he-
gemony is not monolithic and static, fully achieved and finished, but
constantly renegotiated."[25]

Despite the above qualifications, neither should Martin's assertions
be entirely dismissed. With rejection as a more effective means of resis-
tance, the local reinvention of Mormonism is not yet as apparent as that
of Catholicism. Adaptation lies beneath an overt expectation that Latin
converts become like North Americans, racially and culturally, a transfor-
mation anticipated in Mormon scripture. A comparison of the English
and Spanish translations of key Book of Mormon verses elucidates such
tension.

In the Spanish translation, the prophet Nephi proclaimed that when
"los gentiles" bring the Book of Mormon to the posterity of his family that
*"las escamas de tinieblas empezarán a caer de sus ojos; y antes que pasen muchas
generaciones entre ellos, se convertirán en una gente blanca y deleitable."*[26] In
contrast to this Spanish translation, the most recent English version no
longer promises that the descendants of the Book of Mormon people will
become "a white and delightsome people." Since 1981 that phrase has
been changed to "a pure and delightsome people." Similar references in
other verses, however, have been maintained in both the English and the
Spanish accounts.[27] Both versions anticipate a transformation—one racial
and cultural, the other only cultural.

Despite the force of such statements in both the English and Spanish
versions of the Book of Mormon, it would be incorrect to assume that the
same meaning is attached by both Guatemalans and Mormons in the
United States. To speculate that the meanings of *"blanca"* and "white" are
completely equivalent is to ignore the discursive space into which the
term is thrust in Spanish. Martin errs when he imagines that a North
American expectation of cultural or racial transformation is accom-
plished without acknowledging multiple possible interpretations. A
more complete picture of the contextual meanings of this phrase in Gua-
temala and elsewhere in Latin America is required. The complexity of the
Guatemalan responses to the Abrahamic covenant and the Book of Mor-
mon, brought to light here, casts doubt on the assumption that Latins are

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25. Alonso, 48.

26. 2 Nefi 30:6, El Libro de Mormon (Salt Lake City: La Iglesia de Jesucristo de los San-
tos de los Ultimos Dias, 1980). The post-1981 English version reads: "their scales of darkness
shall begin to fall from their eyes; and many generations shall not pass away among them,
save they shall be a pure and delightsome people."

27. This change seems to have been made because the 1840 edition of the Book of Mor-
mon was changed to read "pure," a change not maintained in subsequent editions. Neither
the 1840 nor 1981 editions changed similar references. See 1 Ne. 2:23; 2 Ne. 5:21-24; Jacob 3:8;
Alma 17:15; and 3 Ne. 2:15.

being turned into North Americans.[28]

Nonetheless, Martin does bring to light a troubling paradox in the exportation of Mormonism from the United States. Latin American Mormons are caught between the anticipations of many Mormons in the United States that they are "Lamanites" (the "dark-skinned," "savage," and "wicked" scourge of the white people in the Book of Mormon) and simultaneously are culturally white. This haunting expectation is tragically demonstrated through the experience of an Argentine woman now living in the United States. She has complained to me that, although she has no Native ancestry, she is consistently identified as a "Lamanite" because she speaks with a Spanish accent. Contrary to the assumptions of her Mormon peers, she is just as Euro-American as any Mormon in the United States. Her experience draws attention to the inaccuracy of Mormon stereotypes of Latin Americans as well as illuminates the paradox projected on Latin American Mormons: that one ought to be but cannot quite be white.

If a white woman from Argentina cannot be considered "white" by her Mormon peers in the United States, then the challenge for a Maya or Ladino in Guatemala must be insurmountable. This attempt by Guatemalans to highlight affirmations of difference with Euro-Americans should not be interpreted as an extension of the stereotype that Guatemalan converts cannot quite be "white." Rather, it is the fallacy of this expectation of racial and cultural conformity that I wish to convey. This essay is not so much about Guatemalan or Latin American Mormons as it is an attempt to explicate and publicize the criticisms that Guatemalans have made of "the forces that are affecting their society—forces which emanate from ours."[29]

When Martin emphasized a Latin American Mormon orientation to the United States, he could have been referring to this paradoxical expectation to become "white." In fact, six of the people I interviewed, including Luis, have lived in the United States for extended periods of time and probably operate competently in either the United States or Guatemala. Such people, who could be described as living between two cultures, do hold disproportionate authority in the local congregation. North American cultural expectations, on the other hand, should not be assumed to have the same meaning in Guatemala as they do in the United States. In fact, these transcultural Mormons were the ones who most strongly affirmed to me their own contrast with Mormons in the United States.

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28. See also Thomas W. Murphy, "Are Mormons Turning Latins into North Americans? The Hot/Cold Dichotomy and Word of Wisdom in Guatemala," unpublished manuscript, 1995.

29. Michael Taussig, *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 6.

The local reinvention of Mormonism in Guatemala is not a wholesale repudiation of its roots in the United States. Guatemalans reach back to a distant past, interpreted through the rhetoric of Guatemalan nationalism, to create a sense of continuity with an imported religion in the present. Primordial attachments to the Abrahamic covenant, a fascination with the *Popul Vuh,* and Book of Mormon prophecies of a glorious future for the Native peoples of America serve as symbolic means for Guatemalans to transcend a temporary position of marginality in the church. Luis and other Guatemalans have taken aspects of a globally interconnected world and given them local meaning in a manner reminiscent of Marta Solizo's Nativity scenes. Although the Nativity is unmistakably Christian, the Mayan clothing and gifts display local elegance and would have been just as appropriate for the Sovereign Plumed Serpent as for Jesus Christ in ancient America.

ETHNIC MORMONS

To emphasize the significance of the present in the social construction of Mormon identities, and to bring this discussion from particular events in Guatemala to general transitions in the church as a whole, I draw from recent assertions of ethnic Mormonism in the United States. Changes at the center of Mormonism, I contend, are accompanying recent peripheral growth.

The supposition that Mormons "represent the clearest example to be found in our national history of the evolution of a native and indigenously developed ethnic minority" was originally proposed by Thomas O'Dea in 1957.[30] Mormon ethnicity, according to Dean May, was based on a series of experiences which Mormons shared. The belief that Mormons were a "chosen people" in a promised land, several migrations in the Midwest and then to Utah, persecution, hardships, struggling for survival in the Great Basin, distinctive doctrines and folk narratives all served to mold an ethnic identity for Mormons. May acknowledged in 1980 that the ethnic model for Mormon identity was already suspect because of rapid growth in the twentieth century. In defending his position, he pointed to the dominant role of the central leadership based in Utah and the frequent external ostracizing of converts as factors that contribute to a constant revitalization of Mormon distinctiveness.

Since 1980 the church has more than doubled in size. Diversity is rapidly reshaping Mormonism.[31] Despite the growing variation in the

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30. See Thomas O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957). This particular passage was quoted in Dean May, "Mormons," in Stephan Thernstrom, ed., *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1980), 720-31.

31. Daniel Golden, "Diversity Reshapes Mormon Faith," *Boston Globe,* 16 Oct. 1994, 26.

church, private skepticism and even open speculation about doctrines, history, and authority are met with increasing hostility as part of a process that Armand Mauss has called sectarian retrenchment.[32] This development threatens the internal and external viability of an *ethnic* Mormon identity, as contrasted with a fundamentalist *sectarian* one. Recent exhortations by church leaders to preach the gospel and strengthen the members expose inherent tensions which proselytization and diversity produce with an ethnic Mormon identity given at birth.

In response to such developments, claims of a Mormon ethnic identity are receiving renewed emphasis. Despite his September 1993 excommunication, historian D. Michael Quinn claimed: "I'm a DNA Mormon."[33] In a subsequent address at Snow College in Ephraim, Utah, he said, "I'm still a Mormon for the same reasons that secular Jews are still Jewish."[34] In the Tanner lecture at the 1994 Mormon History Association's annual conference, Patricia Nelson Limerick, a non-Mormon with Mormon ancestry, proposed using the Mormons to rethink ethnicity in American life by arguing that Mormons could still be regarded as an ethnic group.[35] The same subject occupied a subsequent panel discussion on "Ethnicity in Mormon History."[36] During that discussion the question "Do you consider yourself an ethnic Mormon?" was posed to the audience. A majority said yes.

These self-identifications can be analyzed in much the same manner as I have just done above with the identity asserted by Luis in Antigua. The Anglo Americans at MHA claimed a shared descent and assert a connection to a past and a future in terms of the present. The past that lays the groundwork for such declarations of singularity can be found in narrative form in pioneer stories and family histories and in written form in the New Mormon History.[37] These stories evoke a sense of a shared past for Mormons of pioneer ancestry.

It should not be surprising that claims of Mormon ethnicity gained new immediacy after recent disciplinary actions were taken against prominent scholars and/or feminists. The position of the skeptical scholar and/or feminist in the current climate of the LDS church is pre-

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

33. "Six Intellectuals Disciplined for Apostasy," *Sunstone* 16 (Nov. 1993): 68.

34. D. Michael Quinn, "Dilemmas of Feminists and Intellectuals in the Contemporary LDS Church," *Sunstone* 17 (June 1994): 68.

35. Patricia Nelson Limerick, "Peace Initiative: Using the Mormons to Rethink Ethnicity in American Life," *Journal of Mormon History* 21 (Fall 1995): 1-29.

36. David C. Knowlton, Mark L. Grover, Mario DePillis, and Patricia Nelson Limerick, "Ethnicity in Mormon History," panel discussion at the Mormon History Association conference, Park City, Utah, May 1994.

37. See the essays in D. Michael Quinn, ed., *The New Mormon History: Revisionist Essays on the Past* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992).

carious. These assertions from within the scholarly community challenge the right and ability of church leaders to strip people of their Mormon identity. They affirm an association with a past and a future that cannot really be taken away but seems precarious. Such assertions must be understood in their temporal context. The past and future evoked are given meaning in the perilous present.

Two of the major thrusts of the current retrenchment produce a polarizing tension with assertions of Mormon ethnicity. While promoting "an expansion and standardization of the missionary enterprise," church leaders also place a "renewed emphasis on temples, temple work, and genealogical research."[38] A vital complement to temple work is the writing of family histories. Genealogy and family histories serve to reinforce a sense of group distinctiveness among multi-generation Mormons, while the rapid growth that is a product of the expanding missionary effort threatens that distinctiveness.

In addition to the direct effects of retrenchment, Mauss argues, an indirect consequence "has been a further undermining of Mormon identity." Mormon identity has unintentionally been eroded by Correlation, characterized by "centralized, standardized, and top-down managerial control." For example, the consolidation of meeting schedules into three-hour blocks on Sundays has led to a dramatic decrease in the week-long, community building activities of previous Mormon generations.[39]

In the first half of the twentieth century, Mauss noted, "the social boundary between insiders and outsiders was more often drawn by the non-Mormons than by the Mormons."[40] With the decreased salience of geography, politics, or social distance in the second half of the century, "many Mormons have found it necessary to draw their own boundaries from the inside."[41]

While pioneer stories lack a clear immediacy in Guatemala, nationalist rhetoric and archaeological evidences of a glorious Mayan past provide an alternative immediacy for the Book of Mormon and the *Popol Vuh*. Mormon identity in Latin America, as in the United States, is formed locally by individuals drawing upon internationally significant ideas. The most striking aspect of these two divergent ethnic assertions by Luis in Guatemala, and by certain scholars in the United States, is that they are each drawn primarily from the inside. While the *Popol Vuh* and alternative interpretations of the Abrahamic covenant are generally unknown among Mormons in the United States, the identity asserted by Mormons in the United States has no immediacy for the first-generation converts

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38. Mauss, 85.
39. Ibid., 167.
40. Ibid., xii.
41. Ibid., 167.

who are coming primarily from foreign countries.

Despite the lack of salience that a Mormon ethnicity presumably holds for most new members of the church, some applicability for converts has also been suggested. After claiming to be a "DNA Mormon," Quinn added, "This is true for converts as well as those who are born into the church."[42] While the adoption of converts into ethnic Mormonism appears possible from Quinn's perspective, the Guatemalan converts have inverted this assertion of a peculiar ethnic Mormonism by denying Euro-Americans a primordial claim to the covenant of Abraham while yet allowing for their adoption into the covenant. Each identity claim draws its immediacy from the local environment. Each expresses both difference and similarity with an emerging international Mormonism. The Mormon ethnicity discussed by O'Dea and May was primarily based on the external creation of boundaries between Mormons and non-Mormons in the United States. These recent assertions of ethnicity, however, also depend on boundaries drawn from the inside.

TURN OF THE CENTURY

In this essay I have focused on the local adaptation of Mormonism. I have stressed the enduring reinvention of Mormonism through the consistent re-evaluation of the past and future in terms of the present. In building this argument I have pointed particularly to Guatemalan expectations for a glorious future. Latin American membership in the LDS church has already increased from 22,503 in 1960 (1.3 percent of the entire church) to 2,397,000 in 1992 (29.5 percent of the entire church).[43] If these numbers indicate a continuing trend over the next few decades, then the expectation of a leading role for the Latin Americans has the potential of fulfillment, although it will be somewhat constrained by the dominance of centralized authority.

No Guatemalans with whom I spoke used ethnic difference as a socially divisive tool. It is unlikely that they were aware of any similar assertions of an exclusive primordial claim to the Abrahamic covenant or any unhappy consequences thereof. Most of the demands of the Third Convention have now become standard practice in the church, and it is consequently unlikely that a similar schism is brewing in Guatemala. Yet a fertile symbolic distinction lies just beneath this quiet surface. The Third Convention, George P. Lee, and a priesthood leader in Guatemala have all symbolically invented the rhetoric of Mormon ethnicity in a manner that emphasizes the primacy of Native Americans in a "white"

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42. "Six Intellectuals," 68.
43. Deseret News, *1993-1994 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1992).

church.

Numerous unofficial statements by U.S. church leaders have in-cluded claims that Euro-Americans can be and often are literal descen-dants of Israel.[44] The Book of Mormon, however, repeatedly states that the gospel will be restored first to the gentiles and only subsequently to the house of Israel (1 Ne. 13-15, 22; 2 Ne. 10, 29-30; 3 Ne. 16, 28:27, 29:1; Mormon 3:17; Ether 12:23, 36). Some of the statements of church leaders, largely unavailable in Guatemala, appear as if they might contradict vari-ous passages in the Book of Mormon. A productive climate for varying local interpretations is thereby created. Increased access to translated works in the next century could lead to a revision of some local interpre-tations or to some contention over orthodoxy; but most likely the co-existence of multiple points of view will increase along with the size of the church.

The expanded avenues of communication and transportation that made possible the rapid post-World War II growth of the church continue to evolve. New technologies have made for further advances in mass communication. However, when emerging technology has been com-bined with rapid growth in the past, interpersonal communication with the upper levels of church leadership has dramatically diminished. The handshakes that signified bonding during the numerous community-building activities at the beginning of this century are being replaced by video images and written statements read from the pulpit. This emerging form of communication frequently moves only from the top to the bot-tom. Attempts to use new technology in a manner that allows for more personal forms of communication might, in the future, help to forestall individual or local resort to symbolic differences as fodder for socially disruptive actions.

CONCLUSION

Mayan and Ladino converts in Guatemala, as well as Mormons in the United States, take aspects of the globally interconnected world and give them local meaning. The international gospel of the late twentieth cen-tury finds a local immediacy in Guatemala through Book of Mormon sto-ries imbued with "Mayanness" and correlated with the *Popol Vuh*; and in the western United States through folk narratives and family histories. Assertions of Mormon ethnicity resound with difference as well as with community. As the next century approaches, the words of Akhil Gupta

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44. See Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d Ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965); Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols., comp. Bruce R. McConkie (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1956), 3:246; Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), 149-50.

and James Ferguson gain new resonance in Mormonism: "We need to give up naive ideas of communities as literal entities; but remain sensitive to the profound 'bifocality' that characterizes locally lived lives in a globally interconnected world, and the powerful role of place in the 'near view' of lived experience."[45]

When communication proceeds primarily from the top down, slippage in translation is more likely. Slippage is not necessarily problematic, as long as it is recognized as legitimate. The ceramic baby Jesus which forms the focal point of Marta Solizo's Nativity scene is honored, not threatened, by the Mayas surrounding the manger. Their gifts, though equally appropriate for the Sovereign Plumed Serpent, are not rejected by the family of Jesus. Mormonism in the next century is apt to be increasingly characterized by diverse understandings of what it means to be Mormon. Diversity can be fostered or it can be suppressed, but it will never disappear.

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45. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, "Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference," *Cultural Anthropology* 7 (1992): 11.

Towards 2000: Mormonism in Australia

Marjorie Newton

IN APRIL 1994 SOME SIXTY LDS PROFESSIONALS and business people from around Australia were invited to meet with the Pacific Area presidency in a Sydney conference unique to the Mormon church in this country. Quite startling in its departure from normal LDS practice, the conference was designed to recruit influential members to work towards bringing the church "out of obscurity" (D&C 1:30) as Australia moves into the twenty-first century. In a sincere and moving address, area president Rulon G. Craven urged those present to help achieve this by working outside, as well as inside, the institutional framework. "It is imperative that we become pillars of influence in the community," he said. "Latter-day Saints need to be actively involved in community and government affairs. If we don't participate, we deserve what we get in the way of a deteriorating society."[1]

The conference was inspiring, as refreshing as a cool "southerly buster" after a Sydney heat wave. We were encouraged to be frank and candid in our comments and suggestions, and discussion was vigorous. Few concrete plans were made, for such was not the intention; but most of those who attended have responded to the challenge with enthusiasm and energy.

I found the conference fascinating, as much for the *implications* of what was said as for the explicit message we were given. Here were members of the hierarchy tacitly acknowledging that the LDS church is still perceived as an obscure sect in Australia; that the priesthood and missionary programs of the church are inadequate to redress this perception; but that if we add to the institutional efforts the influence and example of good, intelligent members in extra-curricular service (duly publicized by the Public Affairs Department), the moral climate of the

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1. *Ensign* 24 (July 1994), Australia/New Zealand Insert, 83.

Australian community will improve and, it is hoped, Australians will come to see the LDS church for what it is and be more willing to investigate and accept its message.

<div style="text-align: center;">GROWTH IN AUSTRALIA: PROJECTIONS AND REALITY</div>

While at present Mormonism is largely irrelevant to Australian society, some members predict an enormous increase in numbers, prestige, and power in the early decades of the twenty-first century. It could happen; but other Latter-day Saints are beginning to apprehend a different picture of the future. The area presidency's suggested initiatives are timely and needed; but unless radical changes are made in other policies and procedures, the outlook for the LDS church in Australia in the twenty-first century may be less than rosy. There are deep, underlying problems to be addressed if the hoped-for rise in numbers and reputation is to occur.

Our membership base is very small. After 150 years of proselytizing in Australia, the church has only 90,000 members out of a population of 18 million.[2] To those who have seen the church in Australia grow from a single mission with 3,000 members in January 1955 to twenty-two stakes and six missions forty years later, the growth seems enormous, even if not as spectacular as that in South America.[3]

However, leaders are aware that some of this has been paper growth. While the official membership figure was 78,000 in 1991, the Australian census that year showed only 38,372 Latter-day Saints. A letter from the area presidency urging members to respond to the voluntary census question on religious affiliation was read in every ward sacrament meeting before the census, making it unlikely that many active Latter-day Saints would have refused to answer. When we consider that the census figure also includes those of the 4,000 RLDS members who responded (the Australian Bureau of Statistics does not distinguish between the two churches), the conclusion seems inescapable that well over half the nominal Mormons in Australia no longer regard themselves as Latter-day Saints. The combined LDS and RLDS census figure represents less than .25 percent of the population.

Until recently I subscribed to the optimistic view. I witnessed the phenomenal growth during the post-World War II decades as membership figures increased by 2,000 percent in forty years; the Australian national population merely doubled in the same period. On the basis of

2. As of 31 December 1994. Membership figures supplied by Membership and Statistical Records Division of the Presiding Bishopric's Office, Pacific Area.

3. In Brazil, for example, membership rose from 5,000 to 500,000 over the same period. See *Ensign* 24 (June 1994): 79.

1990 figures, I calculated that by the year 2020 there would be 1.5 million Latter-day Saints in Australia, reducing the ratio from 1:235 to 1:30. This projection, of course, assumed continuation of the same growth rate. Instead, however, that rate was only 18 percent between 1990 and 1995. Elsewhere I have suggested reasons for the slow growth of Mormonism during its first century in Australia and the sudden spurt after World War II.[4] Here I am contemplating reasons why the growth has so markedly slowed again.

FACTORS INHIBITING LDS GROWTH

Australia-U.S. Tensions

Five years ago, I regarded culture-conflict—American cultural imperialism, "Coca-colonization," call it what you will—as the biggest problem facing the church in Australia.[5] I still believe that cultural differences are important and should be accommodated, but I now believe that the relatively superficial culture-conflict will become less and less relevant in the twenty-first century. In common with youth around the globe, young Australia is leaping to embrace all things American. "Our children play baseball instead of cricket," wrote journalist Richard Guilliatt recently. "Their heroes are basketball superstars; their clothes, music and slang are straight off the streets of LA; this is a generation consumed by US culture." There may be a reaction to this as today's youth become twenty-first century adults, but many older Australians doubt it. "I think it's game, set, and match," commented national TV and radio personality Phillip Adams to Guilliatt. "I love American culture, I'm mad about it—in America. I'm just not quite so mad about seeing every kid in Australia osmosing before my eyes."[6]

In the meantime along with the spread of the "McDonald's culture," anti-American sentiment in Australia is a fact of missionary life. The post-World War II honeymoon between Australia and the United States ended abruptly with the Vietnam war. Perversely, Australian fascination with American pop culture has grown in inverse proportion to Australian disenchantment with American global imperialism, both economic and military. In recent years American dumping of agricultural products

4. Marjorie Newton, *Southern Cross Saints: The Mormons in Australia* (Laie, HI: Institute for Polynesian Studies, 1991).

5. Marjorie Newton, "'Almost Like Us': The American Socialization of Australian Converts," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 24 (Fall 1991): 9-20.

6. Richard Guilliatt, "U.S. eh? Why Young Australia is so smitten with American Culture," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 June 1994.

has had detrimental effects on the Australian economy, as our traditional wheat markets have been poached, and our farmers, still the backbone of our economy, disadvantaged. "As of now, the US is Australia's No. 1 trade enemy," declared Bruce Lloyd, deputy leader of the National Party, at a conference in Canberra in September 1992.[7]

While the Australian government supported operation "Desert Storm," many individual Australians soon became cynical about American involvement in the Gulf War. They remembered when East Timor, just off the Australian coast, was invaded by Indonesia in 1975. Despite a U.N. Security Council resolution calling on all states to respect the territorial integrity of East Timor and the inalienable right of its people to self-determination, the United States didn't feel any idealistic obligation to help the East Timorese; but then, Australians are quick to point out to each other, there are no commercial oil-fields in East Timor.[8] None of this has made American Mormon missionaries more popular in Australia.

Lack of Religiosity

Australia has been a secular society from the beginning of European occupation. Added to secularism are a deep and abiding anti-authoritarianism and a tradition of anti-institutionalism. All three attributes are generally assumed to have been brought to Australia by its convict pioneers who were sent from the slums of industrial England two hundred years ago. Whatever the source, this combination of attitudes is a formidable barrier to the growth of any authoritarian institution. Some willingness to change basic policies and practices in the church may be needed to obtain the desired growth.

It could be argued that the nature of the environment itself has also contributed to the lack of religiosity in Australia. In most of Australia there is no tradition of Sabbath observance. The temperate-to-sub-tropic climate fosters an outdoor lifestyle. All year round Sunday is the day for the beach and the barbecue, the sports field, and the plentiful national parks. Conversion has to be real to change this way of life.

Surveys have shown that the population of Australian adults attending church at least once a month declined from 41 percent in 1960 to 24 percent in 1983-84. The International Social Science Surveys, 1991-92,

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7. *Sun-Herald*, 6 Sept. 1992, 1; see also "US wheat sale stuns Australian growers" and "Dairy war looms over US subsidies," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 Sept. 1992, 23 Jan. 1995. The United States has also drastically cut imports of Australian beef and sugar.

8. Senator Peter Baume, Professor Manning Clark, et al., *The Australian*, 15 Jan. 1991. See also *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 May 1992. Ironically, the Australian government is the only one which has officially recognized the Indonesian occupation of East Timor. Even more ironically, this recognition is linked to recent oil discoveries in the Timor Sea.

found that only 17 percent of Australians attended church weekly, compared with 34 percent in the United States.[9] While most Americans appear to us to be interested in discussing religion and politics, both topics are considered taboo in Australian society. Those few Australians who discuss religion or who change churches are often classed with the "lunatic fringe." Anyone willing to talk about his or her spiritual experiences is regarded as abnormal and embarrassing in Australian society, even, to some extent, in Australian Mormon society.

Legacy of Missionary Excesses

During the late 1970s and for some years to follow, the LDS church was one of the fastest-growing in Australia.[10] Though there were numeric gains, those years left a decided distaste for Mormonism on the Australian palate; for what was obviously intended by mission leaders to be a highly spiritual conversion process was, as time went by, transformed into a "hard sell" proselytizing program. This officially-approved pilot program condensed all discussions into a single presentation (at first named "The Day of Pentecost Discussion") which was given by missionaries to groups of contacts in LDS meetinghouses.[11] The font was filled beforehand, and those attending were urged to be baptized then and there. Those still not touched by the "Pentecostal" spirit at the end of the discussion were ushered into classrooms and encouraged to kneel and ask for a witness. Stories of locked doors and long prayer sessions began to circulate. On 5 November 1977, at the request of missionaries, I drove a woman whom they had met that day to our ward meetinghouse, where we listened to the "one discussion" and she agreed to be baptized. Not anticipating baptism, she had not brought a change of clothing. A white frock and towel were provided from the Relief Society supply, and she was baptized without underwear because the missionaries would not agree to postponing her baptism. Friends in my own and other wards assured me that this procedure was not unusual.

During regular "Wilford Woodruff Weeks" missionaries tracted ninety hours per week, sometimes for an entire "special" month.[12] Such a schedule required them to knock on doors at extremely early and late hours. Newspapers published many complaints; questions were asked in the Federal Parliament; and one city council even appealed to the New

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9. Peter Kaldor, *Who Goes Where? Who Doesn't Care?* (Homebush West, Sydney: Lancer Books, 1987), 23; Nick Richardson, "Soul-searching times," *The Bulletin,* 18 Apr. 1995, 30.

10. Hans Mol, *The Faith of Australians* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), 219.

11. See *Australia Sydney Mission News,* various issues including 24 Oct., 19 Dec. 1977; 20 Mar., 18 June 1988.

12. See, for example, ibid., 14 Aug., 4 Sept. 1976; 28 June, 13 Sept., 4 Oct. 1977.

South Wales Attorney-General, who, however, was powerless to intervene.[13]

The long hours also meant that missionaries quickly "tracted out" their assigned areas, and to maintain the required "stats," they had to retract the same streets several times over within a matter of weeks. Resentment among the public rose. My husband was a bishop during this period, and by some quirk of fate his name one year appeared first in the Sydney telephone directory under the general heading for the LDS church. My entire family to this day exhibits a pathological reluctance to answer the telephone. We handled so many abusive phone calls from all over Sydney that, in a conditioned response not unlike that of Pavlov's dogs, I eventually had to bolt for the bathroom whenever the telephone rang. On one occasion an extremely angry caller threatened to shoot the next missionaries who knocked on his door but refused to give me his address so that I could tell them not to call there. Sobbing with worry and frustration, I called the mission office to beg them to change the program. I could not get past the mission secretary who predictably assured me the program was inspired. A shiftworker rang from his job at 2:00 a.m. He also refused to identify himself but told my husband that we were going to find out what it was like to have our sleep disturbed. Thereafter the phone rang every hour all night, every night, for several weeks. Few of the irate callers, once having reached us, would accept the number of the mission office to make direct complaints.

I used to think it would take about ten years for the public to forget, but now I think a generation will have to pass away before the disrepute of this era fades. Church members were also affected, and most of us who lived through this time are still wary of introducing our friends to the missionaries. Missionary behavior for some years since then has been exemplary, and this has helped; but there are ominous signs that a new push for increased numbers of baptisms, as against converts, is beginning in at least one Australian mission. A member of a stake presidency told me of two recent incidents in his stake: a male investigator was baptized at midnight, despite official church prohibition of baptisms at unusual hours; and a woman was baptized in a green dress. In both instances the missionaries refused to wait for a more convenient hour or for more appropriate clothing to be provided in case the "converts" might change their minds. What kind of conversion has taken place in such cases? I worry that a repetition of earlier excesses may undo the good that has been done by more moderate and acceptable proselytizing methods in recent years.

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13. See, for example, *Liverpool Champion*, 26 Apr. 1978; *Sydney Sun*, 16 May 1979; *Bellinger Courier*, 14 June 1979; *Newcastle Herald*, 17 Oct. 1979; *Maitland Mercury*, 11 Oct. 1979; *The Sun*, Newcastle, 11 Oct. 1979; *Cessnock Advertiser*, 9 Jan. 1980; *Canberra Times*, 21 Feb. 1980.

Certainly church membership figures grew quickly in Australia during those "pentecost" years, but retention rates were low. For example, a study by one concerned branch president has shown that there were thirty-three convert baptisms in the Belconnen Branch of the Canberra District during the calendar years 1979 and 1980, when this program was at its height. Of these thirty-three, eighteen (55 percent) either never attended a Sunday meeting at all or attended no more than twice after baptism; twenty-four (73 percent) had ceased attending even occasionally within three months. Of the remaining nine, only one (representing 3 percent of the sample) made the transition into long-term church activity.[14] I suspect these figures are probably no worse than those in other areas of the church; but they continue to affect the well-being of the church in Australia even today.

Of course, in the view of some missionaries, the low retention rates had nothing to do with their own failure to work towards sincere conversion, genuine repentance, and full understanding of the nature of the baptismal covenant by their contacts. If the "converts" were not retained, it was because the bishops and ward members failed to fellowship them. To some extent this was true. When there were several baptismal services each week, sometimes held during daytime at an hour's notice, it was impossible for bishopric members to attend every service. Bishops asked in vain for weekly, scheduled baptismal services so they could always attend. "We feel, as a bishopric, that if a convert cannot arrange his or her life to attend a regularly scheduled baptism that there is little chance of them being willing to rearrange their lives to fit in all the meetings and duties devolving on church members," protested one Australian bishopric.[15]

The first Australian stakes were created with minimum numbers (around 1,400) and barely adequate Melchizedek priesthood leadership. Divisions of wards and stakes had left the resources of all units overstretched even before this sudden influx. The Birks study has shown that in some areas, despite the numerous baptisms, total numbers attending meetings actually declined as busy leaders and home teachers had even less time to spend with already marginal members, and some active members stayed away in reaction to a missionary program they rejected.[16]

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14. Edwin M. Birks, "The Mormon Missionary Program in Australia: Recruitment vs Retention," unpublished paper, 1995, 8.

15. "Report on Status of Newly Baptized Members," prepared by a Sydney ward bishopric, May 1977; copy in my possession.

16. Birks, 8.

Modern Societal Influences

Adherence to organized religion in Australia is frequently manifested only by attendance at Easter and Christmas services and by participation in the traditional rites of passage—christenings, marriages, and funerals. Even this tenuous connection with religion is disappearing for much of the population. The number of funerals and marriages conducted in churches in Australia has decreased enormously in recent years. In 1972 86 percent of the weddings in Australia were performed by a clergyman. Twenty years later the figure had dropped to 58 percent.[17] Not only has the number of church marriages decreased in favour of garden ceremonies performed by civil marriage celebrants, but marriage rates in general are also declining.

The 1991 census revealed that the number of couples in *de facto* marriages increased by almost 50 percent between 1986 and 1991, and that 56 percent of couples now live together before marrying. Births outside marriage almost doubled from 13.7 percent in 1982 to 24 percent in 1992—meaning that one in four Australian children is now born to an unmarried woman.[18] The degree of permissiveness represented by these figures makes missionary work difficult. While some Australians are responding to this situation by turning to religion, even those churches which are growing fastest—the charismatic Pentecostal churches—are too small to influence the quality of Australian society; and they, like the LDS church, are numerically insignificant.

Internal Policies

Historian Richard Bushman has identified three stages of LDS church development in areas outside Utah—pioneering, settlement, and entrenchment.[19] Sociologist Armand L. Mauss suggests that assimilation into the larger society is most likely during the "entrenchment" stage. Despite the temple and numerous meetinghouses in Australia, it would be difficult to class many Australian church units as "entrenched." Those that should be, for instance, the capital city wards first organized as branches between 1890 and 1930, are now often inner-city units with shrinking and transient memberships. The majority of the 260-plus units in Australia fall into Bushman's "settlement" phase, with a few still in the pioneering mode. The church is perceived as a sect or cult and remains

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17. *Sydney Morning Herald,* 27 May 1994; figures from report on social trends in Australia released by Australian Bureau of Statistics.

18. *Sydney Morning Herald,* 30 Aug. 1993, 27 May and 11 Aug. 1994.

19. Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 11.

far from assimilation, but, as illustrated by the recent meeting of LDS professionals, described at the beginning of this essay, there can be no doubt that church leaders here are actively seeking both entrenchment and assimilation.

Despite leadership preference for middle-class converts,[20] most Australian converts, like those in other missions, are still coming from lower socio-economic groups. Most are single or, if married, are baptized without their spouses. Few nuclear families are baptized in the English-speaking units; no one I questioned in my ward could remember the last time a whole family was baptized. In another Australian unit the last time a nuclear family joined the church was in January 1980.[21]

Most growth is occurring in ethnic units.[22] Each of the five mainland capital cities has a large immigrant population, and immigrants are usually poor. Additional Samoan, Tongan, and Asian units are being organized in each region. Oddly, given the conversion rates in South America, the Latin American units are not growing at the same rate. In early 1995 a Latin American ward in Sydney was declared no longer viable and was disbanded, although Spanish-speaking units are still being created in other cities.[23]

While there are many benefits of the consolidated meeting schedule, it does not foster community spirit under the best of circumstances.[24] The logistical problems with multi-ward buildings make it virtually impossible to promote sociality and unity, especially in city wards whose members have disparate racial and cultural backgrounds. Australian meetinghouses are commonly built of cement blocks, are small, and are not sound-proof. As in many other areas of the church, services are noisy, and it is impossible to create a reverent, worshipful atmosphere. I am not alone in my reluctance to invite friends to services in such chaotic conditions. Reducing the meeting block to two hours would avoid the necessity for overlapping wards. In practice, many members have already adopted this change and either come late, leave early, or skip the middle session. The corridors and courtyards are crowded with defaulters adding to the noise and confusion while classes and sacrament meetings pro-

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20. Just last year a mission president urged an Australian ward to find prosperous middle-class referrals: "We have enough of the other kind" (reported by ward members, names and name of unit withheld).

21. Birks, 7.

22. This confirms trends in other areas of the world. Mauss gives a sociological explanation of this phenomenon in *The Angel and the Beehive,* chap. 213n1.

23. There are other factors at work here: Latin American converts do not come from homogeneous backgrounds as do Western Samoans and Tongans. They come from different nations (with long histories of mutual hostility in some cases) and are artificially brought together in Spanish-speaking units.

24. Mauss, 166-67.

ceed around them.

Many Australian Latter-day Saints are dismayed by the growth of the church bureaucracy in the Australian Area office. They look gloomily at the prospect that the new century will bring yet more technology needing yet more staff to operate the programs. This may not happen, of course; more and more missionary couples are being called to work in areas such as Public Affairs, the Family History Service Centre, and the Membership and Statistical Records Division. The bureaucratic arms of some church programs are being located in chapels in Sydney, where land prices have Manhattanized in recent decades. Some Church Education staff are located in a specially built addition to the Parramatta chapel; however, the Sydney Australia South Mission has recently taken over the existing stake office wing at the Mortdale Stake Centre. As a consequence, a large, busy Family History Centre was squeezed out of its already inadequate accommodation into a smaller room, which will serve only two-thirds of the previous number of patrons, to allow the stake presidency and high council to move into the classroom wing. The overall plan is, of course, a sensible use of expensive real estate that otherwise lies idle much of the week. Yet the decision to promote "preaching the gospel" at the expense of "redeeming the dead" is disquieting, especially as the Family History Centres are among the most positive images of the church held by the Australian public.

AUSTRALIAN PERCEPTIONS OF THE CHURCH TODAY

While leaders continue to grapple with these issues, other problems remain unsolved. Perhaps the missionary program itself needs to be revised. In 1990 public relations experts were hired to survey the image of the church in Australia. They reported that missionary tracting was both the best known and most disliked feature of Mormonism in Australia. "There is no doubt that doorstep religion is very unpopular in Australia," reported the Public Affairs Department to the area presidency.[25] Scarcely a week passes but Mormon missionaries are lampooned on television (the recent "Early Mormon Warning" noted in *Sunstone* is suggestive).[26] A friend told me that his non-LDS father-in-law summed up the situation with typical Aussie irreverence as they discussed recent efforts to improve the image of the church in Australia. "They might as well pee on a bushfire [forest fire]," his father-in-law observed, "if they don't stop tracting."

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    25. Pacific Area Public Affairs Department, "Images of the Church: A proposal to the Pacific Area Presidency," *Newsbrief: Pacific Area*, Mar. 1991, 3; copy in my possession.
    26. "Scattered Tracts and a 30% Chance of a Dinner Appointment," *Sunstone* 16 (Feb. 1994): 88.

Interestingly enough, a second public perception of Mormons is their "stand-offishness" and lack of involvement in the community.[27] Until recently this feature, not tracting, was the issue that was being addressed. Members were urged to get involved in the community and missionaries required to donate four hours each week to community service. Perhaps both objectives might be obtained simultaneously if tracting were abandoned and missionaries taught only by appointment, devoting the rest of their time—not just a token four hours—to community service.

In 1994 a member of the Quorum of the Twelve urged Australian priesthood leaders to use full-time missionaries in home teaching and reactivation. However, in many localities this is still not enough to fill the missionaries' working hours, and tracting continues. Although tracting is now the proselytizing "method of last resort" in official church policy, a check with missionaries labouring in four of the six Australian missions showed that they are still required to tract between twenty and twenty-five hours per week. Street meetings were abandoned as inappropriate for the times some fifty years ago; perhaps it is time tracting was similarly abandoned.

In contrast to the Mormon church, the Salvation Army is held in the greatest of affection and goodwill by the Australian public, since they stopped holding street meetings and concentrated on good works in the community. It must be conceded that few Australians actually want to *join* the Salvation Army, but at least it is held in such esteem as to be no longer the butt of ridicule and jokes. Also the public gives generously— millions of dollars—to the "Salvos" each year.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

The approach of the twenty-first century seems filled with both promise and problems for the church in Australia. Most of the problems could be solved with vision and imagination. The present area presidency has shown unprecedented willingness to listen, but the steps needed to be taken may be too radical. Another problem is that we will soon lose this particular area presidency. I have previously argued that historically growth and stability have followed the change from missions to stakes, as stable local leaders have taken over from frequently-rotating American mission presidents. Now we have the earlier mission instability writ large: frequently-rotating American general authorities serving in the Pacific Area presidency. Most have done a superb job. Yet if American mission presidents can only just begin to understand one country and

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27. "March of the Mormons," *Australasian Post,* 20 Mar. 1980, 4; *Public Affairs Newsbrief,* Mar. 1991.

culture when their three-year terms end, how much more difficult is it for American general authorities to understand some twelve or fifteen Pacific Area cultures in a similar period? Indeed, in actual practice only six of fifteen general authorities assigned to serve in the Pacific Area presidency, from its inception in 1985 to the present, actually remained here for a full three-year assignment.[28]

Mauss suggests that assimilation brings "the predicament of respectability"—that is, "the movement has taken on so many traits of the surrounding culture that it is not readily distinguishable from the establishment. Accordingly, its very identity as a separate people is in jeopardy."[29] For some years interested observers of the LDS church have noted a growing conservatism in church policy and in doctrinal interpretation. Mauss suggests that, having achieved entrenchment and then assimilation into American society, church leaders since the 1960s have been consciously fostering a period of *retrenchment*—the process of re-establishing the church's nature as a "peculiar people." If Mauss is right, and the retrenchment in the U.S. is extended to Australia, problems here may escalate. That is, if directives from Salt Lake City undermine the efforts in Australia toward assimilation and entrenchment, we might be trying to achieve both entrenchment and retrenchment simultaneously. This raises pertinent questions. Is it feasible for less-developed areas of the church to skip the "entrenchment" stage? Is it possible to retrench without first becoming somewhat assimilated? Can stable growth be achieved without some entrenchment?

The concomitants of retrenchment are, of course, that it will "cost" the individual member more—materially, emotionally, and socially—to belong to the church. This may—and Mauss has shown that it does[30]— build stronger, more committed members. Yet belonging to the LDS church outside Utah already demands a significant degree of sacrifice, in addition to the stigma of belonging to a perceived cult or sect. My sister's ward in Sandy, Utah, covers ten blocks, and no one has to go farther than three blocks on a visiting- or home-teaching round. My ward in Sydney covers eighteen suburbs. The time and financial burdens of home- and visiting-teaching and meeting attendance are very different. Perhaps in the American west the church, with its already strong power base, can afford retrenchment.[31] In Australia, it seems to me, it cannot.

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28. This has been somewhat counterbalanced by the assignment to the Pacific Area Presidency of New Zealander Douglas J. Martin and Australian Robert E. Sackley, plus four American area presidents who formerly served as mission presidents in New Zealand.

29. Mauss, 5.

30. Ibid., 9-11.

31. Ibid., 120.

TOWARDS A REVITALIZED MORMONISM

Most of the vitality of Mormonism in Australia today is to be found in the ethnic wards. They have enthusiastic new converts and no backlog of "less-active" members accumulated over decades. How can we revitalize stagnant city wards and recapture the impetus and enthusiasm we once had? Less frequent ward divisions, shortening the consolidated meeting time, and abandoning tracting in favour of good works would all help. There are other steps which might be taken, as well.

In many wards the number of inactive families hangs like a sword over the heads of the bishopric. I suspect that my ward is typical of many "old" Australian wards. Currently we have 173 "less active" families, thirty-five active "families," but only fifteen more-or-less active Melchizedek priesthood holders and three active Aaronic priesthood holders. This averages twenty-three families per home teaching pair—an impossible equation, given the area our ward covers. The simple arithmetic defeats the home teachers before they begin. Even missionary help does no more than melt the tip of the iceberg. What could we do? Target a few of these families at a time and work only with them? Assign families visiting *or* home teachers, but not both? Try to visit each "less active" family just once or twice each year with a warm invitation to come back or to contact us if in need? Official approval of any one of these suggestions would lift an intolerable burden of frustration and guilt from the Australian Saints and make us feel that our goals are attainable.

While the church does not officially release the number of members whose records are in the "lost" or "address unknown" file, about one quarter of the total Australian membership records appear to be in this category.[32] A great many scarce resources are devoted to trying to track down, contact, and reactivate these people, who, by and large, do not want to be contacted. On a call-in radio program I heard a woman complain that she and her family, inactive Mormons, had migrated from England and hoped with the change of country they had "escaped" the reach of the Mormon network. To her horror, she said, within months they had been "located," their membership records assigned to the nearest ward, and they were again being regularly visited and importuned to resume association with the church. "Why would they do that?" marvelled the show host. Perhaps we should allow such people their agency to choose disaffiliation, as others were allowed to make such a choice in

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32. Until the late 1980s the relevant figure for each year could be obtained by simply subtracting the membership total for Australia in the *Deseret News Almanac* (a figure presumably compiled by adding enrollment totals shown on activity reports for each stake and mission) from the total quoted by the Public Affairs Department for the same date (a figure which included all membership records, including those not attached to units).

our pre-mortal life.[33]

THE COMING CENTURY

I am sure that the Brethren have just as much love and concern for Australians as they have for Saints anywhere else in the world. Yet unless there is dramatic growth here, we may become increasingly marginalized. Our numbers and conversion rates are too small to call for much attention from an overworked church hierarchy, nor does the church in Australia face dramatic problems like terrorism. So as church membership mushrooms elsewhere around the globe, and limited leadership and financial resources have to stretch even further, perhaps Australia may receive even less attention from Salt Lake City.

Herein may lie the solution. A period of benign neglect from Utah might allow the church in Australia to assimilate and Australianize. The middle of the next century may yet see Mormonism burst into a long-delayed full flowering as an Australian religion. I hope it will be so.

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33. Of course, any church members wishing formal disaffiliation can simply write a letter to the local priesthood leader (usually bishop) asking that his or her name be removed from church records; but many inactive members seem unwilling or reluctant to do even that.

Between Covenant and Treaty: The LDS Future in New Zealand

Ian G. Barber and David Gilgen

FOR THE EARLIEST NINETEENTH-CENTURY LDS missionaries in the Pacific, a strong appeal of the British Crown colony of New Zealand was the high concentration of English-speaking settlers among whom they could proselyte. Elder Addison Pratt, one of the first missionaries sent to Polynesia from Nauvoo, Illinois, in 1844, remarked that the New Zealand islands held the attraction of "large settlements of English on all of them." This situation presented "a great and delightful field for our Elders to occupy: some hundred thousands of English emigrants to preach to."[1] Yet any hope of the mass conversion of these settler populations was short-lived once New Zealand missionary work began in 1854. Until 1880, the resident LDS population never exceeded about one hundred people, almost entirely European. However, this situation would change dramatically after 1881, when the American elders turned to the *tangata whenua* (literally, people of the land), the indigenous Maori of New Zealand, with new intent and remarkable effect. By 1890, about 3,000 *tangata whenua* had been baptized, roughly 8 percent of the total Maori population. One hundred years later the New Zealand church would claim approximately 45,000 *tangata whenua*, or about 15 percent of the Maori population.[2]

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    1. Addison Pratt's report in *Times and Seasons*, 15 Nov. 1844, as cited in Norman Douglas, "The Sons of Lehi and the Seed of Cain: Racial Myths in Mormon Scripture and Their Relevance to the Pacific Islands," *Journal of Religious History* 8 (June 1974): 96.

    2. Ian Rewi Barker, "The Connexion: The Mormon Church and the Maori People," M.A. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1967, 24-36, and "The Maori and Mormonism," *Te Kaunihera Maori*, Summer 1969, 13-21; R. Lanier Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea: A History of the Latter-day Saints in the Pacific* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1986), 272-78; John L. Hart, "Early Maori stalwarts prepared way for growth," *Church News*, 18 Apr. 1992, 8; Peter Lineham, "The Mormon Message in the Context of Maori Culture," *The Journal of Mormon History* 17 (1991): 62-93.

In the twentieth-century LDS church Maori-European interaction has vacillated between the poles of biculturalism and assimilation.[3] Movement towards the latter has been facilitated by a new ethnic mix in the postwar church, as proportionately larger numbers of Pakeha (European settler descendants) have joined the Saints. Furthermore, in larger population centers high levels of postwar migration from West Polynesia have added to the Tongan and Samoan LDS membership, especially in Auckland. In New Zealand Mormonism this emerging pattern of ethnic diversity has challenged both the church's bicultural history and the most recent and potent legislative assertion of Maori rights. In this essay we argue that these cultural matters are crucial to any appreciation of the twenty-first-century course of the church in New Zealand. Consequently, to inform a future vision of the LDS tradition in our country, we explore the emerging cultural pluralism in the New Zealand church in historical, sociopolitical, and theological contexts.

MAORI CONVERSIONS AND A BICULTURAL HISTORY

To appreciate the cultural complexities of twentieth-century New Zealand Mormonism, one must consider the early bicultural history of the country. In 1840 most of the autonomous Maori *iwi* (tribes) of New Zealand ceded *kawanatanga* (government in New Zealand) to the Crown in the Treaty of Waitangi. In return, the Crown promised to recognize *tino rangatiratanga* (traditional authority) over Maori *taonga* (literally, treasures), as administered on a *hapu* (sub-tribal) basis. Such *taonga* were understood to include Maori land, forests, fisheries, and settlements. They were to be held inviolate in, and protected by, British law, with the Crown asserting only a first right of land purchase by consent.[4] However, as recent historical and legal research has confirmed, the settler government thereafter alienated land and resources from Maori without recourse to treaty provisions using such political stratagems as the promotion of land wars and the subsequent confiscation of large areas of land.[5] In a landmark legal case in 1877 (*Wi Parata v. the Bishop of Wellington*), the provisions of the treaty were declared a "nullity" regarding promissory

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3. Ian G. Barber, "Between Biculturalism and Assimilation: The Changing Place of Maori Culture in the Twentieth Century New Zealand Mormon Church," *New Zealand Journal of History* 29 (Oct. 1995): 142-69.

4. The two most important scholarly treatments of the Treaty of Waitangi are Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington: Allen & Unwin, with Port Nicholson Press, 1987), and Paul McHugh, *The Maori Magna Carta: New Zealand Law and the Treaty of Waitangi* (Auckland: Auckland University Press and Oxford University Press, 1991).

5. See texts in n4 as well as Alan Ward, *A Show of Justice: Racial "Amalgamation" in Nineteenth Century New Zealand* (Auckland: Auckland University Press and Oxford University Press, 1973), and Belich, *The New Zealand Wars*.

obligations of land use, a decision that would prove influential in converting the affected Maori to Mormonism thereafter.[6] Early British jurisprudence thus rendered *tino rangatiratanga* ineffectual where Crown interests or conflict was concerned.

For Maori, treaty grievances were not simply matters of resource control or land ownership. The Protestant missionaries who had helped draft the treaty in 1840 encouraged a perception of the document as a sacred bond, with "all the spiritual connotations of the biblical covenants." If not generally accepted among all of the original Maori signatories, this perspective was at least appreciated by some northern Maori from the region where the treaty was signed, and where, significantly, Mormon missionaries were to enjoy success in the 1880s.[7] Furthermore, as the struggle against colonialism deepened, the treaty came to be seen by the Maori as a *tapu* (sacred) covenant, with spiritual connotations and authority. As stated recently by E. T. J. Durie (chief judge of the Maori Land Court and Waitangi tribunal chair): "The Treaty became in the course of the struggle a sacred covenant, equating the promises of God, and a *taonga*, a treasure passed down from revered forebears."[8]

The Treaty of Waitangi thus became a sacred authorizing text in the Maori world, where Pakeha refusal to acknowledge its provisions was perceived as political hypocrisy and spiritual malaise. Maori began in greater numbers to be alienated from the Protestant missionaries and churches who were originally associated with the drafting of the treaty and yet who now appeared to assent to, or collaborate in, the abuse of its provisions. In this context many *tangata whenua* sought new political and spiritual solutions, including a Maori monarchy (the *kingitanga* movement, based in the Waikato) and Maori millenarian movements based on charismatic prophet figures and themes of resistance.[9] In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Maori from southern, eastern, and northern regions of the North Island (all areas where the Mormons had made the greatest impact) also supported a separate Maori parliament movement (*Kotahitanga*), calling for a measure of legislative autonomy and the re-

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6. On the legal and historical details of *Wi Parata*, see McHugh, *The Maori Magna Carta*, 113-17. On the subsequent LDS conversion of Maori involved, see Barker, "The Maori and Mormonism," 17, and Lineham, "The Mormon Message," 78.

7. Orange, *Treaty of Waitangi*, 56-57; see also 49, 65, 90-91.

8. E. T. J. Durie, "The Treaty in Maori History," in W. Renwick, ed., *Sovereignty & Indigenous Rights: The Treaty of Waitangi in International Contexts* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1991), 159; see also Orange, *Treaty of Waitangi*, 150, 156, 197, 200, 201; David V. Williams, "Te Tiriti O Waitangi—Unique Relationship between Crown and *Tangata Whenua*?" in I. H. Kawharu, ed., *Waitangi: Maori and Pakeha Perspectives of the Treaty of Waitangi* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1989), 79.

9. Two useful overviews of Maori prophet movements are Bronwyn Elsmore, *Like Them That Dream: The Maori and the Old Testament* (Tauranga: Moana Press, 1985), and Elsmore, *Mana from Heaven: A Century of Maori Prophets in New Zealand* (Tauranga: Moana Press, 1989).

dress of treaty grievances.[10]

This situation of sociopolitical disenchantment and religious fluidity finally delivered success to the LDS Maori ministry in the late nineteenth century. Like the first successful Protestant missionaries (who had now scaled down their operations among, or even deserted, many Maori communities in the wake of the land wars), the Mormons also lived among the people and learned their language.[11] In the 1880s the preaching of this non-British religion, with its prophetic claims and promise of imminent millennial redemption, tapped deep roots of Maori dissent and alienation. Some Maori converts to Mormonism were also influenced by predictions of nineteenth-century prophet-leaders anticipating the advent of new religious solutions—prophets that included even Tawhiao, the Maori king.[12] The application of such prophecies to the Mormon advent offers an important perspective on the hopes and perceptions of early Maori converts. As reported in a missionary letter in 1884, East Coast North Island Maori investigators told the elders: "When the white man came here first he brought the gun to shoot the Maori. Next he brought the gospel to shoot the Maori and his land. But the gospel which you bring shoots the kings, governors, ministers, churches and all."[13]

From the missionary perspective, the dramatic impact of the church among the *tangata whenua* after 1881 was influenced by the doctrine that Maori were descendants of Book of Mormon Israelites. Indeed, some missionaries suggested more ancient scriptural connections, such as Elder John Sorenson who recorded a dream in 1881 "that the Maories [sic] down near the Coromandel out toward Manaia had preserved the Language best since the Confusion of Tongues at Babylon."[14] Such perceptions encouraged a desire among missionaries and Maori converts to identify elements of Maori culture rooted in ancient scriptural precedent.

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10. On the *kotahitanga* movement and its importance and legacy in Maori political life, see Lindsay Cox, *Kotahitanga: The Search for Maori Political Unity* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1993), 66-70; Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*, 222-25; Ranginui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou, Struggle without End* (Auckland: University of Auckland Press, 1990), 165-72; John A. Williams, *Politics of the New Zealand Maori: Protest and Cooperation 1891-1909* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969).

11. C. Lesley Andrews, "Aspects of Development, 1870-1890," in I. H. Kawharu, ed., *Conflict and Compromise: Essays on the Maori since Colonisation* (Wellington: Reed, 1975), 90; Lineham, "The Mormon Message," 68-72.

12. Barker, "The Connexion," 4-6; "The Maori and Mormonism," 13; Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea*, 272-76; Elsmore, *Mana from Heaven*, 278-88; Brian W. Hunt, *Zion in New Zealand: A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1854-1977* (Temple View, New Zealand: Church College of New Zealand, 1977), 9-11; Lineham, "The Mormon Message," 87-88.

13. Letter of Alma Greenwood, 11 Apr. 1884, published in *Deseret News* and cited in Lineham, "The Mormon Message," 76.

14. John P. Sorenson, Journal, 17 July 1881, holograph, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, and microfiche copy Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

For both parties, these elements reinforced the power and truth of the LDS Maori ministry.[15] Although conversion and interaction also encouraged some level of cultural conflict, especially where traditional healing by *tohunga* (ritual specialists) was concerned, a varying but important level of respect for Maori custom was sustained by the Mormon Maori ministry throughout the early twentieth century.[16]

Yet as Peter Lineham has argued, the earliest LDS missionaries appear to have appreciated neither the depth of feeling about land and treaty grievances among Maori converts nor the perception that the restored gospel would be instrumental in the amelioration of such.[17] However, a far more sympathetic mission perspective developed after, and perhaps because of, the temporary defection of about 2,000 Maori Saints to the church of Maori prophet-leader (and proponent of treaty justice) Wiremu Ratana in the 1920s. The New Zealand mission leadership of President Matthew Cowley during World War II marked the zenith of twentieth-century support for Maori aspirations. Cowley supported a revival of Maori culture (especially in the area of traditional carving) and language, to which end he cooperated with government and Maori leaders.[18]

A POSTWAR POLICY OF ASSIMILATION

The bicultural sympathies and policies of the early twentieth-century church were substantially challenged by the postwar mission administration. At a fundamental level this may be related to universalizing and standardizing processes in the international church.[19] Thus in New Zealand LDS mission authorities indicated that traditional funerary customs and the informal (and potentially flexible) practice of "Maori marriage" impeded stake organization and temple patronage.[20] Before the

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15. "Are the Maoris of Israelitish Origin[?]" *Te Karere* 1 (31 Oct. 1907): 146; Cole and Jensen, *Israel in the Pacific.*

16. Barber, "Between Biculturalism and Assimilation."

17. Lineham, "The Mormon Message," 77-78.

18. Barber, "Between Biculturalism and Assimilation."

19. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), 561-622; Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Knopf, 1979), 284-307; Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea*, 358-59.

20. On (post-European) "Maori marriage," and the opposition of mission authorities to this and traditional funerary practices between the 1950s and 1960s, see Barber, "Between Biculturalism and Assimilation," Barker, "The Connexion," 101-102, and Schwimmer, "The Cognitive Aspect of Culture Change." The most important historical influence in this regard was Gordon C. Young (mission president, 1948-51), who recalled that the need "to press and have stakes and a temple there [in New Zealand] meant that these practices had to stop." See Gordon C. Young, Oral History Interview by Lauritz G. Petersen, Murray, Utah, 1972 (MS 200/24, archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS archives]), 21.

1970s at least this assimilationist emphasis was not at odds with official government policy in New Zealand, nor with the emergence of an Urban Maori identity (relocated and newly industrialized) which emphasized "progressive" values and the attainment of English language proficiency and integration, often at the expense of tradition.[21] As Barker observed of this era, "Maori [LDS] members were told never to refer to the Church as a 'Maori Church', nor to greet their brethren in the Church in Maori when Pakeha [whites] were present."[22] At the same time there are also indications that the new emphasis on acculturation was resisted by many Maori Saints, for traditional world views and even ritual (including *tangihanga*, or traditional funerals) were maintained by some of them in spite of official discouragement.[23]

Within the postwar New Zealand LDS church a policy shift in the direction of explicit assimilation was also reinforced by a changing ethnic mix. A renewed proselyting emphasis on Pakeha communities characterized the administration of mission president M. Charles Wood after 1936.[24] However, it was the determined efforts of President Gordon C. Young after 1948 that were to bear fruit in this regard. Young taught that the European mission was of "equal importance" to the Maori ministry[25] and remarked that "the mission . . . needed the stimulation of new converts."[26] With this emphasis, he positioned the church in the 1950s to accept an unprecedented number of Pakeha converts. As Barker observed, "The proportion of Pakeha church members increased from 18.6 percent in 1951 to 32.3 percent in 1961."[27] The ethnic mix of the postwar New

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21. Joan Metge, *A New Maori Migration: Rural and Urban Relations in Northern New Zealand* (London: University of London, Athlone Press, and Melbourne University Press, 1964); Ian Pool, *Te Iwi Maori: A New Zealand Population Past, Present & Projected* (Auckland: University of Auckland Press, 1991), chaps. 6 and 7; Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou*, 196, 197-98.

22. Ian R. Barker, "The Maori and Mormonism: Part 2—Retreat from *Maoritanga*," *Te Kunihera Maori*, Autumn 1969, 57, and larger discussion, 57-65. Schwimmer ("Mormonism in a Maori Village," 114) and Barker ("The Connexion," 110n1) also document the promotion of the assimilationist perspective in the 1960s by a prominent Maori Saint and community leader.

23. Pieter H. de Bres, *Religion in Atene: Religious Associations and the Urban Maori*, Polynesian Society Memoir 37 (Wellington: Polynesian Society, 1971), 47; Ian G. Barber, "Social Change and Cultural Identity in the Maori-Mormon Tradition," paper read to the Canadian Mormon Studies Association Conference, University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, 21 June 1990.

24. Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea*, 310-11. See also Barker, "The Connexion," 85, and "The Maori and Mormonism: Part 2," 59.

25. Young to David O. McKay, 12 May 1950, holograph, Gordon C. Young Papers (GCYP), LDS archives; see also Young, Oral History, 17-18, and Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea*, 320.

26. Young, Oral History, 17-18.

27. Barker, "The Maori and Mormonism: Part 2," 59.

Zealand church was also affected by an unprecedented migrant stream from Western Polynesia, especially Tonga and Samoa, including significant numbers of Polynesian Saints.[28]

These demographic trends were welcomed by Young, whose assimilationist perspective was set out in a 1951 letter to the LDS First Presidency. Here, Young promoted the vision of a New Zealand Mormon community who were "not Maoris and Samoans and Tongans and Europeans, just LATTER DAY SAINTS."[29] From a theological perspective, such a move undermined the primacy and uniqueness of the *tangata whenua* (indigenous people) as a covenant people in a promised land to whom the gospel had been especially directed. New Zealand was now a land where other Polynesian Book of Mormon descendants had gathered, along with northern European settlers with their own claims to Israelite ancestry, all of whom were to hear the gospel without preference or prejudice. This shift was further facilitated by the 1958 dedication of the New Zealand temple, offering participation in a covenant-centered ceremony that transcended the claims or necessity of kin-association with God's ancient chosen people. At a conceptual level the temple had been important to twentieth-century Maori as a fulfillment of the prophecies of visionary, nineteenth-century Maori leaders and, for some *tangata whenua*, as the ultimate expression of the traditional and sacred school of learning, or *whare wananga*.[30] Such expectations had helped to bridge the gap between the traditional and temple community concepts in New Zealand. Consequently, and with some irony, *Maoritanga* became increasingly marginalized in a church retaining a predominantly Maori membership and whose visibility in later twentieth-century New Zealand was the direct consequence of an earlier LDS biculturalism.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL TENSIONS

If an assimilationist perspective largely determined the policy direction of the postwar New Zealand church, the process did not proceed without tension or tempering. As indicated above, many traditional

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28. K. D. Gibson, "Political Economy and International Labour Migration: The Case of Polynesians in New Zealand," *New Zealand Geographer* 39 (1983): 29-42; David Pitt and Cluny Macpherson, *Emerging Pluralism: The Samoan Community in New Zealand* (Auckland: Longman Paul, 1974). On the LDS context of Pacific Islander migration in the twentieth century, see Max E. Stanton, "A Gathering of Saints: The Role of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints in Pacific Islander Migration," in G. McCall and J. Connell, eds., *A World Perspective on Pacific Islander Migration* (Pacific Studies Monograph 6, Centre for South Pacific Studies, The University of New South Wales, 1993), 23-37.

29. Young to First Presidency, 23 Jan. 1951, GCYP.

30. Rangi Davis, "The Mormon Temple, or Whare Wananga," *Te Karere* 47 (Aug. 1953): 275-77; Hunt, 9-11.

Maori Saints passively resisted the official challenge to their important customs, and in some regions of New Zealand Mormon *tangihanga* continued in an (effectively) unaltered form. This persistent assimilationism has received its greatest challenge in the post-1960s Maori cultural renaissance, potentially, the most significant national movement of its kind in New Zealand since 1840. Contemporaneous with the struggle for civil rights and equality for African Americans in the 1960s, this Maori movement constituted a call both for redress of land grievances and for legal recognition and enforcement of the Treaty of Waitangi. The 1970s witnessed mass protests among a broad section of the Maori community, including conservative and radical elements and a number of both older but especially younger LDS Maori. While tension characterized the uniting of diverse tribes and political interests, such protest contributed to a broad consensus that the treaty could no longer be considered a nullity nor Maori grievances sidelined.[31] In response, the Crown (represented by the New Zealand parliamentary government) appointed the Waitangi Tribunal under the provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi Act (1975) to consider Maori grievances. By 1985 the tribunal had been given a retrospective mandate to consider claims back to 1840.[32]

The involvement of Maori Saints in protest marches for land rights from the 1970s into the 1980s drew a generally negative response from LDS leaders in New Zealand, including some visiting general authorities. As the struggle for redress and recognition intensified throughout the 1980s, the issue of Maori language (*te reo*) came to the fore. This issue has had a more immediate and polarizing impact on the church than land rights militancy. In both Mormon church policy and the national politics of early twentieth-century assimilationist New Zealand, the Maori language had been effectively viewed as a cultural fossil inappropriate in the modern world (or the international church). As indicated above, its use was discouraged if not forbidden in most official contexts (other than in superficial "tourist" or ceremonial forms); but for traditional and recently politicized Maori, the maintenance of *te reo* as a living language against such opposition was a fundamental expression of cultural resistance. However, in the postwar LDS community the strength of official government discouragement meant that Pakeha Saints did not have to confront Maori language or cultural forms in any substantive way, notwithstanding their membership in a Maori-dominated church. By contrast, Maori Saints concerned about the preservation and perpetuation of *te reo* as a sacred *taonga* (treasure) have had to accommodate the withdrawal and even reversal of the church's once-proud historical support,

31. Ranginui Walker, *Nga Tau Tohetohe: Years of Anger* (Auckland: Penguin, 1987).
32. McHugh, *The Maori Magna Carta*; Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*.

along with a lack of understanding or sympathy from many newly con-
verted Pakeha.

While the growing Maori membership has continued to be repre-
sented in the leadership, these have generally been young, recently afflu-
ent urban men without an active commitment to *te reo* or to the
maintenance of traditional customs. By contrast, church members com-
mitted to more traditional lifeways, and/or demonstrating any militancy
over the use of the Maori language in worshipful contexts, have been
passed over and even sanctioned. Indeed, Maori members in one North
Island stake were disciplined for speaking *te reo* in a priesthood meeting
as recently as 1992. Of similar cultural significance, the planned official
opening of the Otara (South Auckland) Stake Centre by Tainui Maori as
regional *tangata whenua* following traditional protocol was stopped in
1991 by a local Pakeha church authority.

Here it is relevant to consider the parallel, but by no means conver-
gent, development of policy towards the rest of the growing LDS Polyne-
sian population in New Zealand. From around 1980 the movement by
stakes in Wellington and Auckland (with the encouragement of the Pa-
cific Area presidency) to integrate Polynesian language church units into
large English-speaking congregations produced unprecedented levels of
concern and resistance in the Samoan and Tongan communities. As the
most dramatic consequence of this policy, hundreds of Samoan Saints
abandoned the official church system and formed their own Samoan-
speaking branches in Newtown, Wellington, and Westmere, Auckland,
under the direction of prominent *Matai* (Chiefs). Leaders among these Sa-
moan Saints petitioned church leaders in Salt Lake City for support, but
in 1981 some were excommunicated.[33]

In 1982 stake leaders in New Zealand signalled a policy change in re-
sponse to this situation. Thus in a letter addressed "To all leaders of eth-
nic groups" from the presidency of the Auckland Mount Roskill Stake,
approval was extended for such groups to meet on the evening of the
first Sunday of each month "to worship in their own language." Such
meetings were to be conducted "in conjunction with Sacrament meeting
procedure" and in consultation with a high council adviser. Leaders were
also to "organise an activation programme to help members of your
group who are inactive."[34] As Max Stanton has noted, by the beginning
of the 1990s the New Zealand church had eight Samoan units (including
seven wards), six Tongan units (including five wards), and a Niuean

33. This discussion is based on our personal experiences at the time in Auckland (Bar-
ber) and Wellington (Gilgen), respectively. See also Ruby Welch, "Ethnicity among Auckland
Mormons," M.A. thesis, University of Auckland, 1989.

34. Auckland New Zealand Mount Roskill Stake Presidency [s/P. Syddall, first counsel-
lor] to All Leaders of Ethnic Groups, 28 Feb. 1982. Copy in our possession.

ward.[35] These groups have been largely successful in encouraging the return to the formal church structure of those Polynesian families who had earlier formed separate congregations. By the early 1990s ethnic meetings had also been organized for new Asian immigrants in at least one Auckland stake.

However, in spite of this new authorization for *other* Polynesians to have separate church units in New Zealand (in contrast to the church's contemporary *Maori* policy), there is no evidence that the assimilationist fundamentals of the postwar church had changed. One of the primary intentions of the ethnic meetings organized by the Mount Roskill Stake in 1982 was to make possible speaking assignments for those "not receiving an opportunity to speak in Ward Sacrament meetings because of language problems." The names of assigned speakers in ethnic groups were still to be submitted to the assignee's bishop for approval to ensure that those participating "are worthy to carry out the assignments."[36] The monthly ethnic group meetings thus justified and linked church involvement in the framework of an assimilationist and English-language stake organization. Here it is especially revealing that "the LDS Church does not maintain separate units for Maoris in New Zealand or for Hawai'ians in Hawai'i."[37] This would seem to support Pieter de Bres's statement that LDS policy toward the Maori "has always been one of 'full integration,' which, in fact, means complete 'assimilation,' placing a strong emphasis on the unity and uniformity of all believers irrespective of ethnic origin." For de Bres, this is demonstrated by the fact that in spite of some promotion of "Maori cultural activities," "actual services in the Maori language, a prominent feature of the Maori sections of the major denominations, do not receive official [LDS] approval."[38]

A NEW CLIMATE OF CHANGE

As indicated earlier, post-1985 New Zealand governments have finally begun to deal with Maori issues at both *iwi* and national levels. Given recent and current church policy (and the discussion above), it is especially relevant to note that Section 3 of the *Maori Language Act 1987* provides that Maori is an official language of New Zealand. The Maori Language Commission created from the act has functions and powers to promote *te reo*, and in particular its use as a living language.

In this climate of change and empowerment Maori members of the

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35. Stanton, "A Gathering of Saints," 33.
36. See n34.
37. Stanton, "A Gathering of Saints," 33.
38. Pieter H. de Bres, "Maori Religious Affiliation in a City Suburb," in Kawharu, *Conflict and Compromise*, 146.

church have turned both to the historical precedent of biculturalism and to new possibilities for the future recognition of their *mana* (spiritual authority, esteem) in the land. A return to Maori community had even been anticipated by Ben Couch, a conservative and influential Maori Saint and member of parliament responsible for the portfolios of Police and Maori Affairs in the National government of the late 1970s and early 1980s. With respect to the problem of disaffected youth, Couch remarked: "There is still a strong allegiance to tribal roots. Now there is a strong bias by some sectors of the community against tribalism. Some people don't believe in it. But it is really another form of provincial loyalty. People are proud to belong to one particular place. Look at the Scots. We have to take this tribal sense of identification, and we must develop it."[39]

More significantly and recently, (the late) Cleo Smith, temple sealer, stake patriarch, and *kaumatua* (respected Maori leader), has spoken of the church in early New Zealand as "about the only institution that encouraged the development and growth of our culture . . . others took a long time to realise that we, as Maoris, had something to give."[40] If the actual historical situation is more complex than this perception suggests,[41] it is at least significant that once again a respected Maori Saint and leader has commended the church for its historical support of *Maoritanga* in the church press. The new sociopolitical situation has also rekindled an interest among Maori Saints both in the status of the *tangata whenua* as a covenant people in a chosen land and in traditional cultural forms as necessary expressions of spiritual authority and community. A recent publication by Maori Saint Cleve Barlow, lecturer in Maori Studies at the University of Auckland, explores and validates *tikanga* (traditional custom) in its traditional setting and as a living, vibrant, spiritual form.[42]

There are even indications that the New Zealand church has begun to respond at an official level to an inexorable tide of culture change. In 1989 the church republished the 1918 Maori language edition of the Book of Mormon (*Ko Te Pukapuka a Mormona*). In 1990 the sesquicentennial anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitanga was recognized nationally, promoting vigorous discussion on partnership and the recognition of the *mana* of the *tangata whenua*. During this year a *hui* (ceremonial Maori gathering) was convened in a Mangere, South Auckland, LDS meeting house as a *Hui Pariha* (the name for the once regular quarterly conferences of the New Zealand church). Former American missionaries

39. "Ben Couch: Hardliner with a Soft Touch," *Te Maori*, Oct./Nov. 1980), 8.

40. Hart, "Early Maori Stalwarts," 8.

41. Barber, "Between Biculturalism and Assimilation"; Lineham, "The Mormon Message."

42. Cleve Barlow, *Tikanga Whakaaro: Key Concepts in Maori Culture* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1991).

attended along with Maori Saints, and a testimony meeting, much of which was expressed in Maori, continued for eight and a half hours. At this meeting a regional representative (soon thereafter released) promised in Maori that he would do all he could to see the restoration of annual church *hui* (formally called *Hui Tau* but abandoned by the church in the 1950s).

If formal church *hui* are yet to be convened, it is at least appropriate to note that *Te Rau Aroha*, the first LDS *marae* (traditional Maori community center) of recent decades, was dedicated on 4 March 1994 in Temple View, the LDS community built around the temple and Church College of New Zealand (actually a Mormon high school). *Te Rau Aroha* is constituted around the traditionally carved George R. Biesinger Hall (named after the temple and Church College construction supervisor), which has been maintained by the Maori labour missionaries association in Temple View for over thirty years.[43] At present the *Kaumatua* Council (composed of respected older Maori leaders of high mana), formed in association with the *marae,* represents the interests of these former labour missionaries. Since the Biesinger Hall and associated Kai Hall (which also now operates as part of the *marae* concept) are owned by the Church College, the official renovation of the latter and the incorporation of the former into *Te Rau Aroha* effectively involves the church in this initiative. This is especially notable when one considers that the Temple View community and the Church College continue to represent the "flagship" and "focal point" of the church in New Zealand.[44] Church support is also evident in the dedication of *Te Rau Aroha* by President Rulon G. Craven of the Pacific Area presidency in 1994. At this time President Craven proclaimed his belief that Maori "should cling onto" *Maoritanga.* "I recently attended a Tangi here, a marvellous occasion, great spirit," he added and concluded that "the occasions and things that will be held here will be a great tribute to this land and the area on which it stands."[45]

In perhaps the most significant recent policy adjustment, an important memorandum was issued by the Pacific Area presidency in 1992 regarding "language and cultural values in New Zealand." Intended to help priesthood leaders and others "understand and respect language

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43. See aims of the Church Builders Association (of labour missionaries) in *He Mahi Aroha,* 1964-65, 103, as cited in Hunt, *Zion in New Zealand,* 92, and discussion of the New Zealand labour missionaries in Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea,* 322-26, 336-37, and Hunt, 91-92.

44. R. Lanier Britsch, "Latter-day Saint Education in the Pacific Islands," in D. Bitton and M. U. Beecher, eds., *New Views of Mormon History: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 209.

45. Transcript of address given by area president Rulon Craven at the opening of "Te Rau Aroha" (Temple View, Hamilton), 4 Mar. 1994. Typescript in our possession.

and cultural values in meetings of the Church,"[46] this communique was in direct response to the disciplining of members for speaking Maori in a priesthood meeting, reported above. Although the subtext of the memorandum does not stray from a primarily assimilationist view where the formal church organization is concerned, there are several significant qualifiers on earlier practices. The primary assumption of the document remains that "English is generally understood by native born New Zealanders," but the memorandum allows that "for a few" now elderly people Maori was their first language and is the tongue they speak more comfortably. After stipulating that public prayers should be given in a language understood by the majority, the document allows that Maori prayers "may be appropriate" in funeral services and in specially designated Maori meetings. Even in other public meetings allowance is made for "a brief introduction or Mihi in Maori when prompted by the Spirit." For testimony meetings, and with respect to elderly members who wish to express testimonies in Maori (or any other language), "no one should forbid such expression." Furthermore, in the context of home and visiting teaching or meetings on *marae*, the document affirms that "there are many occasions when the Maori language is most appropriate."

If such counsel extends qualified support to some Maori expression in Mormon congregational life, and (with less constraint) to the use of Maori in other "appropriate" situations, the memorandum offers even clearer direction on the important matter of funerary customs. Here it is important to note that the earlier postwar mission opposition to *tangihanga* was especially crucial and telling as an expression of intent, since this interactive community ritual, and its associated *hui* (gatherings), are understood as being central to the cultural identity and *mana* of *tangata whenua*. Thus in a study of the largely LDS Maori population of Whangaruru in northern New Zealand in the early 1960s, anthropologist Eric Schwimmer documented the divisive effect of mission opposition to customary expressions of mortuary grief and especially the LDS insistence that the funeral cask be covered, restricting customary physical interaction with the deceased.[47] Bitterness over the rigid imposition of such policies in those days is still expressed by non-LDS (and even some LDS) Maori from northern New Zealand. It is therefore significant that the 1992 memorandum signals a crucial change in direction. While it affirms that the bishop presides over the content of funeral services in consulta-

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46. Memorandum from the Pacific Area presidency (Douglas J. Martin, Robert E. Sackley, and Rulon G. Craven) to regional representatives, stake, mission, and district presidents, bishops and branch presidents in New Zealand (on) "Language and Cultural Values in New Zealand," 25 May 1992. Copy in our possession.

47. Schwimmer, "The Cognitive Aspect of Culture Change," 156-63.

tion with the family, it adds that "when a funeral service is to be held on a Marae, Priesthood leaders should always respect Maori customs and protocol." Where priesthood leaders do not understand such protocol, "a Maori spokesman should be called to assist." Most significantly the memorandum affirms that "the casket may remain open or closed during the viewing." Nevertheless, we believe that the church's unwillingness to move further in the accommodation of *te reo* in worshipful contexts retains the greatest potential for continued cultural tension in the LDS community, especially in light of government support for the Maori language and LDS authorization of other Polynesian-speaking units in New Zealand.

A Partnership Future?

At the approach of the twenty-first century, New Zealand is a country in transformation due to an unprecedented assertion of postcolonial Maori identity and activism, and a new treaty-based judicial-political environment. Perhaps most significantly for the church, the credibility of an "assimilationist" postwar urban Maori identity has been damaged beyond repair, as even conservative leaders among the *tangata whenua* now recognize the need to nurture and promote *tikanga Maori*. As a community of faith with an estimated 60 percent of its 76,000 members claiming Maori ancestry, the New Zealand Mormon church will continue to be under pressure from the debate and struggle over Maori treaty rights, especially the growing desire to express and recognize *te reo* and other cultural forms as sacred *taonga*. We see this as a crucial defining issue for the New Zealand church in the next century. In this regard the church confronts not only the problem of reconciling its Maori and its growing Pakeha membership, but also the aspirations of large Samoan and Tongan LDS communities, especially in Wellington and Auckland.

We believe that the church's persisting postwar assimilationism in New Zealand will continue to be modified at the community (if not policy) level and perhaps finally be abandoned. Certainly, given the legal recognition of Maori as an official language of New Zealand, and the protection of indigenous languages under international treaty, it is hard to imagine that well-informed church leaders will initiate new measures to discourage the expression of *te reo* in church settings. However, the more interesting question is whether the church will seek to adopt a proactive role in the forging of a new partnership environment. For all the historical difficulties, the *Church News*'s 1992 juxtaposition of the statement that the church "played a major role in preserving Maori culture in the earlier part of this century" with the fact that "now, public schools teach Maori

culture and language"[48] is at least sympathetic to the concept of church support for *Maoritanga*. We see the official 1994 establishment of a *marae* at Temple View as an even more positive statement of this support. With suggestions for further development of the Temple View *marae*, including the building of a formal *wharenui* (large ceremonial house), the direction taken by the *Kaumatua* Council of *Te Rau Aroha* might signal the emergence of a twenty-first-century Mormon *Maoritanga*. Since (as discussed above) Temple View retains a central place in the religion and affections of New Zealand Mormons, such a movement will influence the attitudes of the larger LDS community and leadership. Indeed, with its prominent minority representation of Pakeha and various Polynesian populations, the New Zealand church may be uniquely placed to offer new models for social justice and cultural understanding in the Pacific. If so, it can be expected that the popular image of the New Zealand church as an important multicultural institution will be enhanced into the next century in spite of the cultural tensions of recent decades.

Appendix: Glossary
(Note: The Maori noun does not show a plural form.)

hapu	Maori sub-tribe
hui	ceremonial gathering or formal meeting
iwi	Maori tribe
kaumatua	older respected Maori leader of recognized *mana*
kawanatanga	Pakeha government under British Crown authority in New Zealand (lit. hybrid English-Maori term, rendering governor as *kawana*)
kotahitanga	unity (trad.); Maori Parliament movement (post-European)
marae	place of ceremonial greeting and gathering; community centre (esp. recently)
Maori	common/ordinary person; descendant of pre-European Polynesian settlers of New Zealand, or *tangata whenua* (generic and recent)
Maoritanga	Maori culture (generic and recent)
mana	spiritual authority/power
Pakeha	European (esp. British) settler of New Zealand
tangata whenua	People of the land (lit.); original or first inhabitants
tangi; tangihanga	funeral ceremony
taonga	treasure (lit.); prized resource, including subsistence and settlement

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48. Hart, "Early Maori Stalwarts," 8.

te reo	the language (lit.); *Maori* language
tikanga	traditional custom or lifeway
tino rangatiratanga	traditional authority; *Maori* government
tohunga	ritual specialist; healer (esp. late nineteenth/twentieth centuries)
Waitangi	location (North Island Bay of Islands) where 1840 treaty of partnership was signed between Maori and British Crown
wharenui	large ceremonial house

Mormonism in Modern Japan

Jiro Numano

"SINCE JAPAN AS A NATION has made such remarkable economic and technological progress, why is the church in Japan not also making comparable progress, but in fact is stagnant?" For some years now such a question has arisen among LDS members in the U.S., and particularly among church leaders.[1] Interestingly enough, a similar question periodically arises among Japanese Christians more generally: even 135 years after the opening of the first Protestant mission in Japan (and the Roman Catholic presence goes back much farther), the total number of mainstream Christians amounts to less than 1 percent of the population.[2] This essay analyzes the current state of the LDS church in Japan, and its prospects for the twenty-first century, from the viewpoint of an active Japanese member.

A NUMERICAL OVERVIEW

Mormonism appeared in Japan almost a century ago, when Apostle Heber J. Grant arrived with three other brethren to open the mission in 1901. Since this was barely a decade after the official abandonment of polygamy, both the Japanese population and the mass media were understandably wary.[3] The mission stumbled along with negligible results until it was finally closed in 1924, at which time there were 166 mem-

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1. For example, this question was raised at a training meeting for Japanese regional representatives in Salt Lake City in April 1990.

2. The *Christian Yearbook 1994*, published in Japan by the *Kirisuto Shimbunsha* (Christian News Press), reports that there are 1,050,938 Catholic and Protestant Christians in Japan, representing 0.8 percent of the total population. However, if the LDS, Jehovah's Witnesses, and certain fundamentalist sects are added in, the figure nearly doubles.

3. The cautionary tone of newspaper editorials and letters to the editor about the polygamy issue in Mormonism is understandable at this early time, when Japan had just emerged as a modern nation and was anxious to appear fully "civilized" to the West. (See my "Transition in the Reception of the Mormon Church in Japan," a paper presented at the annual meetings of the Mormon History Association in Park City, Utah, on 20 May 1994.)

bers.[4] The main causes for this early failure seem to have been rising anti-American feeling in the wake of U.S. foreign and immigration policies; meager language training; and a shortage of scriptures and church literature in Japanese. A different picture emerged when the mission was reopened in 1948, and by 1994 there were more than 100,000 members of record in Japan.[5]

This church membership, as of 1994, was contained in twenty-five stakes, 132 wards, 148 branches, ten missions, and nineteen districts. Some unit of the church can be found in almost any urban area of Japan. In the larger urban and suburban wards attendance at sacrament meeting sometimes reaches 100 or 150.[6] Worship services are well conducted at both the ward and stake levels. Congregations are orderly and comply readily with instructions from presiding authorities. American visitors would be impressed and pleased, feeling that they are attending the same church in Japan as in the U.S. The infrastructure of the church in Japan is also impressive: a six-story administrative center built in Tokyo in 1977; a temple there in 1980; chapels in almost all large cities; a distribution center; and five LDS institutes (with four others meeting in rented rooms).

However, several problems are not apparent from these favorable numbers. First, the *active* membership of the church is only a fraction of the official membership. As recently as 1992, after forty-five years of postwar missionary effort, only 20,000 members could be counted as active out of a total membership of more than 87,000, or about 23 percent.[7] Depending on how strict a definition one uses of "active member," the figure could range from 15 percent active,[8] with a strict definition, to as much as 30 percent. I estimate 25 percent active as a realistic figure for the country in general. This means that three-fourths of church members in Japan are inactive, having nothing to do with the church.[9]

A second problem is the decreasing rates in recent years *both* of baptisms themselves *and* of activity on the parts of new converts. As an illus-

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4. See the account in R. Lanier Britsch, "The Closing of the Early Japan Mission," *Brigham Young University Studies* 15 (Winter 1975): 171-90.

5. The following figures illustrate the rapid growth of the church in Japan after World War II. Some are found in the Japanese international version of the *Ensign* (*Seito no Michi*, or the Way of the Saints) 25 (Oct. 1981): 17-27; the later figures come from the Tokyo administrative offices of the church: 1948: 166; 1957: 2,000; 1968: 10,000; 1980: 54,259; 1990: 83,148; and 1994: 107,905.

6. A member of my ward reported finding 150 in attendance at sacrament meeting during a visit to the Kawagoe Ward, Tokyo North Stake, during one Sunday in October 1994.

7. These figures come from knowledgeable, unofficial sources. The 87,000 figure quoted here, incidentally, does not include members with unknown addresses.

8. Koichi Aoyagi, "Conversion and Lesson Plan," in Ryuichi Inoue, ed., *To Increase Retention in the Church* (Tokyo: Privately Published, 1991), 66.

9. This level of inactivity was asserted and discussed by a high councilor during a priesthood leadership meeting of the Hiroshima Stake on 7 January 1995.

tration, although 50,000 people were baptized from 1978 through 1990 (including some children of members), the increase in *active* membership was only 10,000, with virtually *no* growth in Melchizedek priesthood holders. Since 1981, furthermore, attendance at sacrament meetings, priesthood meetings, and Relief Society meetings has all remained fairly level, despite thousands of new convert baptisms. In general, the growth in nominal membership has outstripped the growth in activity by either men or women.[10]

This discrepancy between ostensible members and active members is probably attributable largely to the period from September 1978 through the first half of 1982 when the number of baptisms was five times that of any comparable period before or since.[11] In a sincere, well-intentioned effort to accelerate and streamline the proselyting program, most Japan missions relaxed somewhat the conditions required for baptism and set unusually high baptismal goals. Many fine members of the church were brought in during this period, but a more general result was an extremely low retention rate. Indeed, 35,000 of the 50,000 baptisms mentioned in the above paragraph occurred during these years. In two church units for which I have first-hand knowledge, it was common during this period for a new convert to stop attending church within the first month, and many did not even show up on the first Sunday after baptism![12] The result of these premature baptisms was, of course, a terrific increase in the burdens carried by home teachers, visiting teachers, and priesthood leaders to locate and maintain contact with such a large, indifferent, even antagonistic segment of the membership. Even fifteen years after this period, as indicated above, attendance at various meetings has remained level, despite increasing baptisms; many Japanese Saints are still trying to put behind them the unpleasant memories from that time.

Of course numbers do not tell the whole story, and not all wards or branches of the church suffer from low retention rates. There is actually a range of diversity among them. Some are like sturdy trees with deep roots in fertile soil. Others are struggling for viability on stony ground. Some are led by strong and capable young men and women with energy enough both to minister to the needs of Saints and to render humanitarian service to their communities. Others are managed by middle-aged or

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10. Again, this information comes from knowledgeable, unofficial sources.

11. Among many Japanese Saints, this is sometimes called the period of *baputesuma kyosoki*, a term which can be translated as "rash baptism" or "reckless baptism." See my article, "The Reckless Baptism Period in the Early 1980s," *Mormon Forum* 8 (Spring 1992): 12.

12. That the situation was similar throughout Japan is indicated by the *Christian Yearbook*, 1981 through 1984 editions, which show that LDS attendance at church (sacrament meeting) rose from 10,707 in 1980 to 16,853 in 1981 but then declined to 13,678 in 1982 and to 10,384 in 1983.

older leaders who conduct church affairs in a manner that is quiet and composed but also formulaic, repetitious, and unimaginative, as might be true in any country. Obviously a voluntary organization like the church, dependent as it is on lay leadership, cannot thrive on the models and methods of the commercial world. The state of the church in Japan as elsewhere, both at present and in the future, will depend heavily on the faith, talents, leadership abilities, and attitudes of Saints and their leaders. Ideally, the diversity of talents and abilities will enrich the daily and weekly activities of wards and branches and produce a variety of the fruits of faith.

Aside from such internal assets, however, the future of the church also depends on external factors over which members and leaders have no control. One of these might be called the "cavity phenomenon," which refers to the social and demographic "holes" left by the outmigrations of church members from certain settings. On the one hand, in large cities like Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe, and Hiroshima, young couples striving for home ownership are forced by the price of land to relocate in the suburbs. On the other hand, in the more remote northern or western regions of the main island of Honshu, like the one on which I live, young converts and the children of members must leave the area after graduation from school or college to find work. In such areas, church attendance stays between thirty and fifty perpetually. While the suburban areas are the ultimate beneficiaries of these demographic shifts, with their constant infusion of young and spirited members, the spirit does not flourish in the urban and other areas that are emptied out.

Another external factor is in the customary corporate demands made on the time and energy of Japanese men, LDS or not. In the corporate world men are expected to work longer hours, with more overtime and fewer holidays, than workers in most other countries. Resident foreigners from Korea and from the Philippines have often remarked to me about how busy Japanese men seem compared to those in their own countries. This condition saps much of the energy and the time that Japanese priesthood holders might otherwise devote to church service. A related business practice is the "single transfer" arrangement by which men are periodically sent on company business, without their families, to distant cities for extended stays. This is as much a disruption of church life as of family life for these men.

Having reviewed and explained the numerical profile of the church in Japan, I would like to consider now some general cultural factors affecting LDS prospects in this country. First, I will discuss some fundamental characteristics of Japanese culture that influence religious commitment; then I will consider the impact of modernization on Japan and on the church there.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JAPANESE

There is much in Christianity generally that is difficult for the Japanese to understand. To begin with, the Eastern religious traditions tend to see different religions as complementary, rather than competitive. The idea of exclusive legitimacy, expressed in the LDS claim to being "the only true church," is more understandable in the great Western religions of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, but it is a puzzle to the Japanese and to much of the rest of Asia. Values in Japan are not understood as absolute but rather relative to the social situation. To many Japanese Latter-day Saints, as to many other Christians in Japan, there is nothing incongruous about membership and activity in the LDS church interspersed with periodic Buddhist and Shinto observances on special occasions like marriages and funerals, or even with the maintenance of a traditional household shrine as the focus of family connectedness to the Japanese heritage.

The existence and nature of God can be grasped without much trouble, given adequate and effective teaching, but the need for a savior is again a difficult concept. The ordinary law-abiding Japanese finds it hard to understand *sin* as a personal transgression against God requiring human redemption through the intervention of a savior. Japanese Saints thus tend to regard faith in Christ as perhaps less important than it would be to converts joining the church in Christian countries, a matter of some concern to the general authorities assigned to Japan in recent years.[13] Many converts are introduced to such concepts for the first time only when they obtain copies of the scriptures and study with the missionaries, and they might then submit to baptism more from a sense of friendship and obligation to the missionaries than from any real understanding of these fundamentals.

This predicament points to a common distinction in the Japanese mind between *tatemae* and *hon-ne.* The first of these refers to normative conformity at the *behavioral* level, whereas the second refers to one's true *inner* feelings and intentions. Such a distinction might be found in almost any culture, of course, but in Japan it is a pervasive dichotomy used in assessing all kinds of social interaction. The typical convert in Japan enters into church activity through *tatemae,* and many (perhaps most) new members never experience a true conversion at the *hon-ne* level. Those who do not will soon grow weary of the demands placed on church members and their faith will grow cold.

Japanese tend to be an other-directed people. This quality, when combined with a relativistic understanding of values, gives them a deep sen-

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13. In this connection, see Miwako Nakamura, "To Endure to the End after Baptism," in Inoue, 48-49.

sitivity to the behavioral expectations of their peers and neighbors. This is perhaps derivative of their history as an insular farming people. They are reluctant to offend or inconvenience their neighbors by standing out as individuals against an apparent consensus. For example, on a Sunday, when required to choose between attending sacrament meeting and going to a school athletic event involving their children, they are likely to be much more influenced by what the other members are going to do than by their own judgment about sabbath observance. Individualism has not developed in Japan as it has in the U.S., so it takes not only *hon-ne* but a great deal of courage to forego the Sunday athletic event, or even just to be one of the "peculiar people."

Those who cannot endure the perpetual cross-pressures typically do not merely drift to the margins but soon disappear into the great bustling crowd of Japanese life. The borderline between the inside and the outside is sharp and impermeable. It circumscribes a small but enduring nucleus of active members, with hardly anyone at the periphery. Even the less active members in generally active families soon drop out completely. Outside of church meetings themselves, the LDS network is simply too sparse to hold those who cannot hold on by themselves.

Another common Japanese trait, docility and respect for order and authority, has presented the church with a dilemma. When the question was raised about why the church in Japan is not growing as it should (see n1, above), five of the regional representatives present consulted among themselves and offered the answer, "We have accepted instructions and endeavored to follow them, but it seems that we are always awaiting instructions from our leaders."[14] The dilemma is that, on the one hand, the church hierarchy, recognizing the limits to what it can do from Salt Lake City, would like Japanese leadership to become more independent, to solve local problems on its own. On the other hand, the hierarchy is perceived by many as reluctant to transfer the authority necessary for meaningful independence.

Two examples illustrate the problem. First, bishoprics and branch presidencies are not given the authority to make final decisions about which potential converts are ready for baptism, even though they have the major responsibility in fellowshipping and retaining new members after their baptisms. If local leaders had more to say about who joins the church in their units, I believe the retention rate would improve, as local leaders would feel that they had more of an investment in the fellowshipping responsibility. Second, if Japanese members were given the editorial responsibility for the international church magazine in Japan, *Seito no Michi,* members might read the entire magazine with the enthusiasm now

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14. Ryuichi Inoue, "Conversion of the Japanese," in Inoue, 38.

reserved for the few pages devoted to local news. Periodically the re-
gional representatives in Japan have proposed (so far without success)
that they be permitted to meet as a council to deal with various local
problems. It seems unlikely that the church in Japan (or probably any-
where else) can thrive without more of this kind of decentralization of
authority.[15]

MODERNIZATION

In addition to the special cultural traits reviewed above, moderniza-
tion has introduced certain problems for the church in Japan, as well as
for the country as a whole. At first its impact on the church was positive,
but lately it has become more negative. Beginning with the Meiji Era in
1868, Japan began to follow its own unique course toward moderniza-
tion. Guided by the pragmatic motto, "Useful things are preferable," Jap-
anese society began to phase out traditional ways and opened itself to
new ideas. The younger generation was thus more free to experiment
with Western ways, which might have included, for some, conversion to
Mormonism and to other Christian religions. After 1945 the close political
and economic partnership between Japan and the U.S. was accompanied
by a new popularity for American ways in general. The LDS church in Ja-
pan benefitted by this popularity, as is apparent from the steady growth
of the church during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Just as Japan had
achieved prosperity by freeing itself from the past, converts to the church
came from among those who had also freed themselves from many tradi-
tional ways.

As elsewhere, however, modernization has proved a mixed blessing
for Japan and for the church there, for it has been accompanied by the de-
mographic disruptions of urbanization and by the social and cultural dis-
ruptions of secularization. In particular, atheism, though long known in
Japan, is now widespread. National self-confidence born of economic
prosperity has reduced the earlier interest in Western religious and other
cultural values. The nation has grown smug with self-sufficiency and
gourmet diets. Intellectual and moral degeneration are everywhere. The
historian Daikichi Irokawa has commented on this decline in moral and

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15. One is reminded of the successful movement for *san-zi* (triple-self) and *ai-guo* (patri-
otism) in Chinese Protestantism, making possible the survival of Christian churches during
the Communist rule in China (which, of course, has tended to look on Christianity as synon-
ymous with imperialism and colonialism). *San-zi* is reflected in *zi-zhi* (self-government), *zi-
yang* (self-support), and *zi-chuan* (self-proselyting), all without support from any foreign mis-
sions. See Ting Guang Xun, "Reflections and Prospects for the Chinese Christian Church,"
Hiroshi Shishido, trans. and ed., in *What Chinese Christians Believe* (Tokyo: Shinkyo Shuppan-
sha, 1984), 106-32.

intellectual discipline[16]; and Seiichi Morimura has warned the younger generation that they are losing themselves, and their interest in life, because of their excessive freedom.[17] Sexual permissiveness too, once imported from the West, has affected youth as well as adults.[18] Japan is now a major producer and consumer of pornography. Thus modernization has brought with it secularization, atheism, and moral degeneration, in both sexual and other regards. In this environment we should not be surprised to see LDS membership and growth level off or missionary success decline.

<div align="center">TOWARD A TRULY JAPANESE VINEYARD</div>

It is not yet clear whether the transplanted stalk of Mormonism has taken root in the exotic soil of Japanese society. It might in time come to look Japanese enough to belong on the landscape, despite some occasional American foliage. The goal, of course, should not be to make the church in Japan a duplicate of the church in America. Yet many Americanisms remain. For example, in the United States it is common for people to travel during the Christmas holiday season to visit relatives and friends. Accordingly, in many (perhaps most) American wards church activities are reduced during the holidays, and only sacrament services are held on Sundays. There are no such Christmas migrations in Japan, however, so there is no reason for Japanese meeting schedules to be truncated. On the contrary, Christmas, with its special programs, would be an ideal time to invite non-members and inactive members to sacrament services and special programs. Rather than following the American pattern, as many Japanese wards and branches do, we should instead have an especially full program during those holidays. Another example is the ward Halloween party, which is a mystifying curiosity to Japanese Saints.

Even Pioneer Day, as celebrated by American Mormons, is not meaningful in Japan. It could be meaningful if Japanese Saints were to honor *their own* LDS "pioneers," rather than those who settled Utah. Such a celebration could commemorate the arrival of the first church leaders in Japan, which occurred in 1901 on 12 August (not 24 July). Besides the American leaders so crucial in the history of the Japanese mission, like Heber J. Grant and Hilton A. Robertson, Saints in Japan could honor

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16. Daikichi Irokawa, "How I See Japan," a lecture delivered on the NHK educational television channel, 6 Jan. 1995.

17. Seiichi Morimura, in ibid.

18. Recent surveys by both governmental and non-governmental agencies have shown that three out of every four male high school students have seen pornographic videos, and that one out of every seven high school students has had sexual intercourse (*Asahi Shimbun,* 1 and 11 Aug. 1994).

early brethren like Fujiya Nara and Takeo Fujiwara or sisters like Tamano Kumagai, converts from the early mission, who accepted the responsibility to keep the waning flame of Mormonism alive during the difficult years between the closing of the early mission and its reopening after the war; and Tatsui Sato, converted in 1946, chief translator of the LDS scriptures and other literature crucial to the post-war success of the church in Japan.[19]

Beyond the superficial issue of adapting American LDS commemorations to the Japanese scene, there is the reverse (and more delicate) issue of embracing certain traditional Japanese observances.[20] For example, when a person dies in Japan, it is customary to hold not only a funeral but also a wake, followed by periodic commemorations at one month and again at one year after the death. Japanese bishops do occasionally hold funerals but seldom, if ever, do anything about wakes or the periodic commemorations. Accordingly, the LDS church in Japan is sometimes criticized for its indifference toward the memory of the deceased and for its disregard of sentiments and customs important to Japanese culture. A related and more serious problem is that ancestral tombs are usually located on Buddhist temple grounds, and the remains of a deceased family member cannot repose in the ancestral tomb unless a Buddhist priest officiates at the funeral. The church has its own cemetery in Saitama Prefecture, which might relieve the immediate problem for local LDS families there, but it does nothing to accommodate the feelings of non-LDS family members. This issue is likely to become more serious with the advancing age of the present membership, and it is only one of many such flashpoints of potential conflict in the future.

Of course, there is much in Japanese tradition that not only converges with LDS teachings but also reinforces them, and certainly the convert can bring these ideas and customs with him or her into the church at baptism. Included here would be the well-known Japanese earnestness, modesty, and consideration for the feelings of others (parallel to the Golden Rule of the New Testament), as well as respect for the elderly and for ancestors. Other LDS ideas and practices with strong appeal are genealogy and vicarious work for the dead, the high priority placed on the family as an institution, and patriarchal governance in the family. (This last idea appeals especially to the men, of course, but Japanese women

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19. See the account of these early leaders in J. Christopher Conkling, "Members without a Church: Japanese Mormons in Japan from 1924 to 1948," *Brigham Young University Studies* 15 (Winter 1975): 191-214.

20. Elder Ryuichi Inoue, formerly a regional representative in Tokyo, together with other members sharing his concerns, made several studies of this issue and others; these analyses are privately published in *To Increase Retention in the Church.* See citations in nn 8, 13, and 14, above, and his "For the Guidance of LDS Youth."

are becoming more assertive and men are coming to appreciate more the help that women provide, both in the home and in the church.)

While Japanese seem to "delight in exotic things outside" Japan, they tend to "reject things foreign (that attempt) to come deep into their own country."[21] The restored gospel must be adapted to the Japanese environment in ways that will give it a distinctive Japanese quality without undermining any of its universal core elements. The Book of Mormon (2 Ne. 29:12; Alma 29:8) recognizes the legitimacy of religious truths and records handed down in various cultures, and even today's church leaders have expressed appreciation for the great truths found in all the world's religious traditions.[22] Some accommodation will need to be made in the church for certain elements in the Japanese heritage, lest the church continue to be regarded as strictly an American religion. Furthermore, for Mormonism to lose its conspicuously American image, it would be desirable for half or more of its missionaries and mission presidents to come from Japan, and for the proportion of Japanese brethren in the area presidency also to be increased.

PROSPECTS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

On the basis of recent trends, I would now like to hazard a few prognostications about the LDS future in Japan. First of all, the highly secularized environment in which the church must operate will continue. In this respect Japan and Japanese Saints are sometimes compared unfavorably to Korea, the Philippines, or other Asian countries, but even for these countries the eventual prospect is that increased modernization will bring secularization in its wake. To be sure, national history and cultural traits differ from country to country, but common developments like urbanization, constitutional government, democratization, a market economy, and increased affluence for a growing middle class will eventually lead down essentially the same path followed by Japan. It may well be that as "traditional religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Chris-

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21. David Spector, an American residing in Japan as a television commentator, made this observation in an interview, "Japan, a Nation with a Membership System," *Asahi Shimbun*, 1 Jan. 1995.

22. For example, the First Presidency under President Spencer W. Kimball issued the following statement on 15 February 1978: "The great religious leaders of the world, such as Mohammed, Confucius, and the Reformers, as well as philosophers including Socrates, Plato, and others, received a portion of God's light. Moral truths were given to them by God to enlighten whole nations and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals" (in Spencer J. Palmer, *The Expanding Church* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978], v). Elder Carlos E. Asay made a statement in the same vein in his "God's Love for Mankind," included by Palmer, ed., in *Mormons and Muslims* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1983), 208; see also Gerald E. Jones, "Respect for Other People's Beliefs," *Ensign* 7 (Oct. 1977): 69-71.

tianity are losing their influence in Asia,"[23] new religions like Mormonism will thrive for a time but then eventually themselves suffer stagnation as they succumb to ripening secularization. Of course, if the nation should be humbled by a serious economic setback, or by some other misfortune like a series of destructive earthquakes,[24] the people might turn to more spiritual concerns, as in the typical cycle of the Book of Mormon; but the prospects for this do not seem great.

Without a drastic improvement in the retention of new members and their children, it seems likely that the stagnation of recent years will continue, at least with regard to the main numerical and demographic indicators. Retention will continue to be problematic, especially among the youth.[25] Convert baptisms will barely replace the dropouts. Church attendance and activity will continue to suffer from corporate demands made on the men (long hours and temporary transfers) and from the "cavity" phenomenon in the big cities. Most ward and branch meetinghouses are already located on the outskirts of metropolises, so perhaps the outmigrations will not require the closing of any units. External pressures on families will probably increase the divorce rate, which will also undermine efforts to retain the second generation. Converts so far have usually been young, but as church growth slows, the membership will become older.

Yet, although the church in Japan seems now to be in a numerical slump, there are plenty of faithful, dynamic, sincere, and conscientious Saints who have fully assimilated the gospel in the Japanese *hon-ne* manner. Some families have succeeded in producing a second, or even a third, generation faithful to the LDS tradition. Such members, though now relatively few in number, are the hope of the future and must exert themselves to improve both missionary work and retention rates. There are some hopeful signs: Local (Japanese) missionaries now comprise perhaps a third of the total serving in Japan. Many of these are second-generation members, who return to strengthen their wards and branches after their missions. The Boy Scout movement has been part of the church program

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23. Tamotsu Aoki, a cultural anthropologist at Osaka University, suggested this process in his televised comments, "Toward a New Civilization: Is a New Civilization Going to be Created in the Quickening and Fast-Growing Asia?" NHK Educational Television Channel, 24 Dec. 1994.

24. In the wake of the Great Hanshin Earthquake which hit Kobe on 17 January 1995, a column in the "Vox Populi, Vox Dei" section of the *Asahi Shimbun*, 26 Jan. 1995, quoted a college student and other sufferers with the following introspective sentiments: "Everyday life, casually led, should not be taken for granted. It is in fact very fragile, so we should be grateful for it."

25. Ryuichi Inoue reports that 69 percent of the young men of record, and 48 percent of the young women, never attended church meetings during 1988 ("For the Guidance of the LDS Youth," privately published, 1989, 2).

in Japan for about twenty-five years. There are now 646 scouts enrolled in
nineteen troops or units under church auspices.[26] The number of Latter-
day Saints on the faculties of Japanese colleges and universities has
reached a score. Indeed, a new revision of the LDS scriptures (just pub-
lished) was accomplished with the important participation of three pro-
fessors who are specialists in Japanese language and linguistics.

One sign of the strength and vigor of the Japanese LDS community is
often overlooked—the growth and activity of the private or "unspon-
sored" sector. From at least the 1960s on many Japanese Saints have pub-
lished books dealing partly or wholly with LDS topics, such as
autobiographies, collections of testimonies, histories of local units, travel-
ogues, novels, and poetry, numbering more than twenty so far.[27] The Bee-
hive Shuppan, begun in 1992, in collaboration with Bookcraft in Salt Lake
City, translates and publishes LDS books. So far it has published six, in-
cluding two on Ezra Taft Benson and others written by David O. McKay,
Neal A. Maxwell, and Dallin H. Oaks.[28] About ten years ago musical
compositions on gospel themes began to be marketed on tapes and disks
through such private LDS channels. Other private enterprises periodi-
cally organize tours to Salt Lake City and to Jerusalem.

In 1988 the independent semi-annual journal Mormon Forum was first
published and is now edited by me. An LDS electronic network on Nifty-
serve (Japan) was started in 1990 and carries a lively and intense exchange
of information and opinions.[29] This electronic forum proved especially
useful during the Kobe earthquake in January 1995. Limited as such en-
terprises are, even among the Saints themselves, they all contribute to the
social network and the bonds that hold together the LDS community in
Japan. They help also to build a separate Japanese Mormon identity—
separate both from the rest of the Japanese and from other Mormons. Ul-
timately, both the growth and the retention rate in the church will benefit.

I conclude with an observation about an analogy between the global
U.S.-Japan relationship and that between Americans and Japanese in the
church. Throughout the Cold War, Japan, living under the shadow of the
United States, was content to leave in American hands the most difficult

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26. Asia Scouting Council of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, The Way of
Scouting, Dec. 1994.

27. For periodic lists of all such privately published works by LDS writers, see Mormon
Forum, Spring 1990; Fall 1990; Spring 1993; Fall 1994; and Spring 1995; or contact me.

28. The six translated books (all from Bookcraft in Salt Lake City) are: Frederick W. Bab-
bel, On Wings of Faith, 1972; Elaine Cannon, Boy of the Land, Man of the Lord, 1989; Neal A. Max-
well, A Wonderful Flood of Light, 1990; David O. McKay, Secrets of a Happy Life, 1967; Preston
Nibley, LDS Stories of Faith and Courage, 1957; and Dallin H. Oaks, Pure in Heart, 1988.

29. Mormon Forum and the e-network on Niftyserve (Japan) are both described briefly in
Bryan Waterman, "A Guide to the Mormon Universe: Mormon Organizations and Periodi-
cals," Sunstone 17 (Dec. 1994): 44-65.

issues of foreign relations. With the end of the Cold War, Japan is suddenly required to make more of those decisions in its own right. Similarly, as church leaders in recent years have pressed Japanese Saints to handle their own problems locally, Japanese leaders have often seemed reluctant to think through the problems, make the decisions, and draw up the necessary plans. The time has come for Japanese members and their leaders to be less passive and more assertive; to claim their own identity as Japanese Latter-day Saints; and to realize the roles, responsibilities, and important contributions which must accompany that identity.

Mormonism in the Twenty-first Century: Marketing for Miracles

Armand L. Mauss

IN RECENT YEARS SOCIAL SCIENTISTS have found it theoretically useful to understand church growth or decline in the context of a "religious economy."[1] In this conceptualization each society has a "religion industry" in the same way that it has a food industry or a clothing industry. Each denomination or church is a "firm" with a certain line of "products" competing with those of other religious "firms" to meet the needs or tastes of as large a segment of the "market" as possible. Some products are mundane in nature, such as social and/or economic support, community feeling, entertainment, intellectual stimulation, or even useful business contacts. However, a church which depends for its survival and growth mainly on such mundane products will find itself competing with many firms in the *non*-religious industrial sectors which are in stronger competitive positions, so it will probably not prosper. Religions are more likely to prosper to the extent that they deal mostly in the *unique* "products" of the religion industry, namely *other*-worldly "products," like heavenly promises, rewards, meaning systems, relationships with deity and with

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1. Some of the most recent scholarly literature making use of the idea of a "religious economy" includes Rodney Stark and William S. Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, "Religious Economies and the Sacred Canopy: Religious Mobilization in American Cities, 1906," *American Sociological Review* 53 (Feb. 1988): 41-49; and (same authors) *The Churching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992). What follows here is derived mainly from that literature.

departed loved ones, and so on.[2]

As in the commercial world, religious monopolies or other "restraints of trade" tend to depress entrepreneurship in the market. Thus in societies that have only state churches, those responsible for delivering goods and services (i.e., the clergy) tend to become complacent, formal, distant, and bureaucratic in dealing with the laity who are their "customers." The latter, in turn, come increasingly to participate in church activities in only a perfunctory manner, if not a cynical one. To the extent that religious institutions provide important rites of passage (like weddings and funerals), or useful social services (like schools or hospitals), people will periodically (but unenthusiastically) seek their services in the same way that they seek food, clothing, or shelter from other state monopolies. Otherwise, they will have little to do with churches, especially on Sundays, when there are other, more inspiring diversions from the work week.

To the extent that state controls on religion are lifted (as in western Europe a generation ago and in the former Soviet bloc more recently), new religious enterprises arise to meet the "pent-up need" for trade in the new "products." To be sure, not everyone will suddenly seek these products, for the cynicism of centuries dies hard; yet the market for new religious products (to the extent that it remains unfettered by state intervention) will gradually expand, and even the old state religions might experience some resurgence. Such, at least, has been the experience historically in the United States and more recently in Europe. From the viewpoint of the religious establishment, it might seem paradoxical that religion seems to thrive to the extent that it is free of state sponsorship; but there is no paradox for modern economists, who have always known that the more competition there is among individual enterprises, the more the options for the variety of potential customers, and therefore the greater the market for the entire industry.

When viewed from the individual perspective, this well-known market process means simply that people seeking other-worldly products will have many choices, not just the tedious traditional ones offered by monopoly religions. To be sure, not everyone in a given society is in the market for other-worldly products, but that market is much larger than one might think from the rampant secular cynicism that we associate with advanced industrial countries; it might even comprise a majority of the population in many countries. Whatever this market potential, the

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2. Readers offended by this comparison of religion to a worldly market economy might prefer to think of it as metaphorical or analogical rather than literal. However, in most respects the comparison seems apt even in literal terms. Few students of Adam Smith seem to be aware that even he applied the market concept to an analysis of the religious scene two centuries ago (see Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* [New York: Modern Library, 1937 (1776)], 740 et passim.).

new religions offer an enormous range of products, from the inspiring music and liturgy of high mass to the highly emotional, participatory frenzy of pentecostal encounters with the Spirit, and everything in between. In this array of programs for making connections with deity, or with other supernatural forces, different varieties will appeal to different kinds of people (that is, to different "market segments") for different reasons.[3]

Each variety too will carry a different cost for its potential customers, and each customer can be expected to make a cost-benefit assessment, at least implicitly, before adopting a new product. The "cost" side of this assessment consists of what one has to sacrifice (including respectability) to embrace a new religion (product). The "benefit" side typically is of two kinds: (a) the social, emotional, intellectual, or other kinds of gratification received from participation with others in the services and programs of the religious movement or institution; and (b), at least as important, the promises of salvation, beatification, exaltation, or other such blessings in the next life. To be sure, the other-worldly blessings in (b) are all "unfalsifiable," in the jargon of science: they cannot be proven empirically to exist and thus must be accepted on faith.

Of course, the same is true of other "future promises" in life, such as the prospect that the next hand at cards, roll of the dice, or turn of the wheel in Monte Carlo will be the "lucky" one; or that the next business deal (despite high risks) will finally be the big one; or even that the next wife (or husband) will be a big improvement over the one divorced last year. There is thus nothing inherently more irrational about acting on faith in the next *life* than in acting on faith in the next *wife!* The prospect of big gains often requires taking big risks on faith or hope, and costly sacrifices "up front" (here and now) represent but one kind of risk.

Whether the prospective benefits (gains) are mainly of the worldly or the other-worldly kind, the "consumer" (convert, member) of the religion must believe that the potential gains justify the cost and risk. One consideration, of course, is the nature of the other-worldly promises themselves: A promise of eternal family bonds and eventual godhood, for example, might be more appealing to consumers than certain other conceptions of the next life. Another important consideration is the cost itself: It might be either too high or too low, depending on the "social capital" that con-

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3. One of the intriguing issues about LDS "marketing" is that converts in some societies seem to come from different social strata from those of converts in other societies. Why do converts in North America seem to come from about the middle of the social structure, while those in other societies come from either somewhat lower or somewhat higher strata? Is there a deliberate "marketing strategy" behind any of this? Or (more likely) are there local contingencies making the LDS message more attractive in some strata than in others? (See also n10 in this regard.) This issue could use careful empirical research.

sumers must sacrifice *versus* that which they stand to gain through the conversion process. That is why most converts to new religions tend to be young with relatively few "stakes" yet invested in the conventional social and economic institutions of their societies; or they might be "marginal" in other senses, such as having already experimented with unconventional religions or lifestyles. Youthful and marginal members of every society have much "less to lose" by "buying into" a new religion than do other members who have invested more of their lives and identities in conventional institutions. In that sense certain kinds of people in every society are socially more "available" than others for recruitment as "consumers" to a new religion with the right kind of appeal. It is such socially available potential consumers that constitute the field that is "white and ready to harvest."[4]

Yet consumers' cost-benefit assessments involve more than the appeal of the "product" and the estimate of what they stand to gain or lose by "buying into" the new religion. The cost of buying into a new religion can obviously be too high, but it can also be *too low*. If a religious community makes but few and weak demands on its members for access to its products, many members will assume that the products themselves are not valuable. The cost must seem commensurate with the greatness of present and future gains. That is why, as recent research has shown, religious movements and communities that enjoy the greatest growth tend to be those which make the *most strenuous* demands on their members (not vice-versa). Another function of "high cost" religious products is that they tend to discourage "free riders"—those members (consumers) or future members who might otherwise enjoy access to these highly desirable products without paying the cost. Thus, if many demanding or "high cost" religions tend to be relatively small in membership, at least the *average levels of commitment and sacrifice* for the religious community are relatively high and mutually reinforcing for individual members.[5]

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4. The importance of "marginality" in providing susceptibility to proselyting can be seen in several of the essays in this collection. See, for example, the observation by Bennion and Young that 60 percent of converts in Europe during the past decade have been colonials or other foreigners immigrating from elsewhere (like the African *retornados* in Portugal), and comparable comments in passing by both van Beek and Decoo about their countries. The same phenomenon is reported about France, over a much longer period, by John C. Jarvis, "Mormonism in France: A Study of Cultural Exchange and Institutional Adaptation," Ph.D. diss., Washington State University, 1991. While missionaries are as glad to baptize "marginals" as anyone else, church growth, to the extent that it is limited to the margins of any given society, will never be very great.

5. See Laurence R. Iannaccone, "Religious Practice: A Human Capital Approach," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 29 (Fall 1990): 297-314; "Why Strict Churches are Strong," *American Journal of Sociology* 5 (Mar. 1994): 1180-1211; and "Sacrifice and Stigma: Reducing Free Riding in Cults, Communes, and Other Collectives," *Journal of Political Economy* 100 (1992): 271-92.

One of the factors determining the "cost" of conversion and membership in a new religion is the *degree of tension* between the culture of the religion and that of the surrounding society. If the religion and its "products" consist of beliefs, rituals, and behavior strongly at odds with the surrounding culture, the religion will be stigmatized and persecuted (formally and informally) by the rest of society. The degree of cultural tension between the two will thus greatly limit the "market share" or "market niche" of the religion (perhaps even criminalize it) and will correspondingly increase the "cost" to the individual adherents or consumers. Therefore, as important (and complicated) for LDS church growth as are the demographic factors discussed earlier (by Bennion, Young, and the Shepherds), many of the factors that will determine the future of the church are *cultural, economic, and political*, rather than only demographic.

The potential for any religious movement or organization to grow depends largely upon its ability to maintain "optimum tension" with the surrounding cultural environment in which it operates. Too much tension brings various forms of persecution and repression, which dissipates the resources of the religion and makes the social (or even economic) cost of membership too high for many individuals to bear. Any religion (or other subcultural movement) that will not make assimilative compromises (as the Mormons finally did after 1890) can expect either a rapid demise, as in the cases of Jonestown and the Rajneeshees, or a slow, lingering demise like that of the Shakers. On the other hand, if too much assimilation occurs, the tension with the surrounding culture becomes minimal, so that the distinctive mission and benefits of the religion are unclear and lack wide appeal. Unitarians are among those exemplifying the eventual fate of low-tension religions. Thus it is neither maximum nor minimum but *optimum* tension that provides the best prospect for the future of any religious movement or organization.[6]

Mormonism in the World Market

Obviously the church has gotten the "tension factor" about right in its twentieth-century relationships with the host societies in the United States and in many parts of Latin America—at least so far. As we can see from the essays in this collection, however, all is not well in other Zions. As much as we might be entitled to rejoice in the spread of the gospel to so many parts of the earth, the fundamental reality is that we are nowhere near having a "world church." We can more accurately be consid-

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6. On the meaning and measurement of "tension," and the desirability of "medium tension," see Stark and Bainbridge, *Future of Religion*, especially chaps. 3 and 6; or, as I would call it for Mormons, "optimum tension." See Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), chap. 1.

ered a "hemisphere church," for 85 percent of all Mormons live in the Western Hemisphere. The church has certainly prospered *at certain times* in other parts of the world, depending on local circumstances. It appears, however, that success has often depended largely on influences more worldly than spiritual, such as the appeal (usually temporary) of *American* cultural imports, including religions. I well recall, during my own four-and-one-half-years' sojourn in Japan in the early 1950s, how our missionary success there rode upon a wave of popular interest in all things American, including the English language, a wave that has long since receded to a ripple, if we are to judge by Numano's essay herein. The recent rapid growth of the church in the Philippines might well be related to similar (and equally ephemeral) local conditions. Even the appeal of the Mormon message to those thousands of *nineteenth-century* British, Scandinavian, and German converts could not easily be separated from the appealing prospects of emigration to America during that era. These were all times and places in which the benefits of Mormon conversion, for many at least, seemed to outweigh the costs of experimenting with things American, including a new religion.[7]

Does this mean that LDS conversion and church growth in the world depend upon the nature and appeal of American cultural and political influence? One is tempted to draw parallels between Roman Christianity and American Mormonism: Just as early Christianity did best wherever Roman influence went, so Mormonism seems to do best wherever American influence is felt (especially to the extent that such influence is welcomed). Yet it is obviously not that simple. As Knowlton makes clear (both in his essay here and in earlier ones), American influence is a mixed blessing in Latin America. On the one hand, some of the appeal of the Mormon message seems to lie in its emphasis on traditional American values (family, education, self-discipline, upward mobility); on the other hand, anything American is definitely a liability in those countries with

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7. The unenduring nature of the fascination with American novelty, including religion, is underscored by the recent experience of the church in the formerly Soviet countries. During the late 1980s and early 1990s LDS representatives were welcomed first as American technical experts, educators, and business consultants, often then successfully paving the way for proselyting missionaries. After a very few years of rapid church growth, memberships in some of the Eastern European countries reached into the thousands. Since then, however, massive defections have occurred, due partly to new member disenchantment and partly to government interference with *all* new religions under pressure from the resurgent influence of the old Orthodox faith. See comments in n12 of the Decoo paper herein; see also Kahile Mehr, "English Teachers/Gospel Preachers," and "Serving Body and Soul," both 1995 unpublished papers on recent LDS history in Bulgaria, and his "The Eastern Edge: LDS Missionary Work in Hungarian Lands," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 24 (Summer 1992): 27-45; and Harvard Heath, "Romania and the Mormons: Past Perspectives and Present Problems and Predictions," paper presented at the annual meetings of the Mormon History Association, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, 22 June 1995.

strong leftist and/or anti-colonialist sensitivities. Thus the American connection will probably help the LDS cause in some times and cultures but hurt it in others. Increasing the *non*-American proportion of the world's LDS missionary corps would be a wise strategy in this regard, especially if these could serve in Latin American and other countries especially sensitive to the American (and/or C.I.A.) presence.[8]

To return to the main point, though, the crucial factor, however it is affected by American influence, will be the success of the church in achieving and maintaining "optimum tension" with the local culture in each part of the world where we aspire to have a significant presence. Since the variety of cultural settings is almost infinite, the strategies, tactics, and doctrinal emphases of the church will also have to vary in order to achieve the right kind and degree of tension. This requires a great deal of inspiration and sophistication on the parts of church leaders at the general and local levels. If its operations or teachings seem to generate too much tension in a given locale, the church will not only have public relations and proselyting problems; it will eventually be closed down or expelled, as it was for a time in Ghana and in Indonesia. Even before the church seeks permission to operate legally in a given country, it might be perceived by the government as somehow alien and dangerous and thus be refused entry, as is still the case in China (officially) and in most Islamic countries (for all practical purposes).

The church has already shown strategic skill in dealing with nations that have been reluctant to permit LDS proselyting or organizing operations. The construction of a temple in East Germany, long before the fall of communism there, bespeaks that skill. As often as not, the LDS strategy in China and elsewhere has consisted of cultivating good will through the use of BYU programs, Tabernacle Choir visits, LDS technical and business experts travelling under non-church auspices, and so on. Furthermore, though it is not well known, the church, through various kinds of expert "humanitarian missionaries," has been funding an enormous program in various countries of medical, agricultural, technical, educational, and social service programs of all kinds. These efforts are indispensable to the eventual establishment of the church in such countries; for most of them have made clear to *all* foreign churches that they will not be welcome until they have shown a willingness to help with *modern development* (sometimes called "nation-building"), which is the top priority in most of those countries today. Although such contributions are undoubtedly rendered by the LDS and other denominations in all sincerity, they might also be considered part of "the cost of doing business" in the

8. See Marcus H. T. A. Martins, "The LDS Church in Brazil: Past, Present and Future," paper presented at the joint annual meetings of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Mormon Social Science Association, St. Louis, Missouri, 27 Oct. 1995.

missionary enterprise.[9]

Aside from such general strategies, tactics too can be adapted to fit local cultural norms. Missionary street-meetings, once a major tactic in England and America for reaching large numbers of people quickly, do not work so well any more; cultural images of such activities in those countries now make them seem bizarre (partly because other groups now using street gatherings often *are* disruptive to the cultural mainstream). Besides, in this age of mass communication there are more efficient ways to reach large numbers of people. One wonders if another time-honored missionary tactic, namely "tracting," might not also have become a cultural liability in many countries. Newton's essay on the Australian experience suggests that tracting there might actually undermine church prospects; and in many other places (including the U.S.) it is obvious that tracting is now regarded as the last resort for the use of missionary time. Member-missionary collaboration is clearly preferred as a proselyting tactic in many places, although in continental Europe, and perhaps in other cultures, even that might breach a customary wall of privacy which the local people prefer to maintain in matters of religion. Perhaps, as Decoo suggests, "cybertracting" (it might be called) will provide an efficient way of reaching people not now accessible through traditional tracting.[10]

Like tracting, home teaching of the American kind is also considered an invasion of privacy in some cultures. Clearly new tactics, both in proselyting and in general church operations, are being called for as the church gains a presence in the myriad cultural settings around the world. The church has obviously made its mistakes and had its setbacks in both strategies and tactics throughout its history in different parts of the world. We are still paying a price for some of those tactics that seem in retrospect to have been ill-advised, such as the experiments in high-pressure, premature baptisms, called "baseball baptisms" in England and elsewhere, or by other names in Australia and Japan (see Newton's

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9. According to President James Faust, the church has contributed such humanitarian services in as many as 114 countries during the past decade or so (*Ensign* 25 [May 1995]: 61). From friends who have recently served as LDS "humanitarian" missionaries, I know that these services, along with many material, infrastructural installations, are offered especially in Third World Asian countries from Mongolia to Indonesia to Vietnam to India, irrespective of the prospects for LDS proselyting access in the near future. Nor is it only Third World countries where this occurs. The church has started its relationships with several of the formerly Soviet countries through humanitarian or educational endeavors. See, for example, unpublished 1995 papers in n7 by Mehr and Heath.

10. Aside from questions of local cultural sensitivity, Decoo also makes the important practical point that dependence on tracting in *any* country runs the risk of systematically bypassing millions of people not usually at home during the day; many of these are professional people of talent and substance who might be receptive to the gospel message if permitted to study it on their own initiative and at their own pace through use of the Internet. Interestingly enough, Marcus Martins makes exactly the same point about Brazil (see n8).

and Numano's essays). However, time and again the church has also shown flexibility and creativity in tactics and strategies. One example that has created a lot of good will has been the allocation of a few hours of missionary time each week to community service, an arrangement that obviously could be expanded or contracted in response to varied local conditions.

Toward a Parsimonious "Gospel Culture"

Culturally sensitive innovations in strategies and tactics, however, will always prove less difficult than *ideological or doctrinal* flexibility, which is clearly a crucial element in maintaining optimum cultural tension. The potential for flexibility is curtailed by at least four simplistic ideas about doctrine found among Latter-day Saints: (1) doctrines in the scriptures (and elsewhere) are clearly spelled out and can be understood best through literal interpretation; (2) whatever a church leader says, especially if and while he is a president of the church, is doctrine and can readily be harmonized with whatever other church leaders have said; (3) all doctrine has equal weight or importance with all other doctrine, so that doctrine is doctrine; and (4) there have been no doctrinal changes in the history of the church, for true doctrine has always been the same. To the extent that the Saints or their leaders maintain such an understanding of doctrine, whether in Utah or in other parts of the world, Mormonism will prove difficult to transplant in a variety of cultures, and quite unnecessarily so.

This is not the place for a point-by-point consideration of these four folk maxims, but to some extent the first and third ones are addressed in both Sandberg's and Bailey's essays in this collection. The second one was more than adequately refuted by J. Reuben Clark in 1954.[11] The third and fourth ones are refuted by Thomas G. Alexander's historical study of various doctrines; by the obvious modification and truncation throughout this century of the doctrines about plural marriage and millennialism; and by the recent changes, familiar to all of us, in traditional doctrines about black people.[12] On the other hand, it would be equally simplistic (and disastrous) to hold the view that church doctrines are

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11. J. Reuben Clark, "When are the Writings or Sermons of Church Leaders Entitled to the Claim of Scripture?" *Church News*, 31 July 1954, as reprinted in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 12 (Summer 1979): 68-81.

12. See Alexander, "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology," *Sunstone* 5 (July-Aug. 1980): 24-33; Jan B. Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985); and Bruce R. McConkie, "All Are Alike Unto God," address to Church Education System faculty, 18 Aug. 1978, copy in my files.

more or less infinitely adaptable to fit the cultural biases or traditions of any people on earth. The tough questions really are: (1) Which doctrines constitute the absolute, minimal, unchangeable core of the restored gospel, and how can we tell? (2) How much flexibility or latitude can be permitted in the interpretation of *other* doctrines to give them salience and authenticity in various other cultures? (3) Which traditional LDS ideas are either not official doctrines or are simply American (or Utah) customs rather than doctrines and can be considered entirely optional from one culture to another?

In this church we must look to our prophets for a definition of the hard, minimal core of absolutely essential doctrine that will unite all Latter-day Saints in the world across all cultures. Clearly the presiding brethren understand this need, for in recent years they have spoken about the need to identify a "gospel culture" which will unite Latter-day Saints across *all* cultures while remaining free of biases from any *one* of the world's cultures.[13] So far, however, there have been few efforts at authoritative articulations of the precise content of this "minimal Mormonism," at least for the church membership at large. In 1971 the Church Board of Education outlined the "basic doctrines of the Gospel . . . essential to developing a religious education curriculum," a four-page summary of doctrines on the Godhead, humankind, the purpose of earth life, Satan, human agency, the Fall and Atonement, the gospel of Christ, the kingdom of God, judgment, salvation, and exaltation. Given the specified purpose for this document, and the twenty-five-year interim, it is not clear how authoritative this doctrinal summary is for the worldwide church today. It is certainly not a parsimonious document, and some of its doctrinal declarations seem gratuitous and problematic if the church is to maximize its cultural adaptability.[14]

A more succinct document, and presumably a more authoritative one, was presented by the First Presidency at a meeting of the All-Church Coordinating Council on 26 April 1994, entitled simply, "Fundamental

13. See President James E. Faust, "Heirs to the Kingdom of God," *Ensign* 25 (May 1995): 61-63, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, "This Work Is Concerned with People," *Ensign* 25 (May 1995): 51-53.

14. See "The Basic Doctrines of the Gospel of Jesus Christ Essential to Developing a Religious Education Curriculum as Revealed to Ancient and Modern Prophets," identified as a "supplement" approved by the Church Board of Education on 5 March 1971 (copy in my files). Among the doctrinal propositions that some members might find questionable, or at least superfluous in the world church, are (depending on how they are interpreted): "B.3. Every individual born on this earth comes into a lineage according to a pre-earth-life determination"; "C.4. All things on earth have a purpose in (the) creation"; "H.8. Through the preaching of the gospel to the nations of the earth, Israel will be gathered"; and "H.9. Preceding the second coming of Jesus Christ, Zion must be established as a place and a people."

Principles."[15] The first of these fundamental principles was given as "faith in and a testimony of" the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The only other fundamentals listed were the Atonement and Resurrection, the apostasy and Restoration, the divinely ordained role of Joseph Smith, the Plan of Salvation, the priesthood, ordinances and covenants, and continuous revelation. The document then goes on to list the *responsibilities* of individuals, families, the church organization, and the community of Saints in general for teaching and practicing these fundamentals. Both kinds of lists in this document (that is, both the principles and the responsibilities) were provided at a rather abstract level, with little or no elaboration, leaving room for a certain amount of interpretation and adaptation to local cultural understandings. I am not aware of any authoritative counterpart of this document prepared for the church membership as a whole, but perhaps one will be forthcoming as members and leaders in various locales undertake to distinguish the minimal core of the religion from American (and other) cultural encrustations.

The fundamental problem, of course, is to protect *whatever* that minimal core comprises from the dilution, corruption, or syncretism of the various cultures of the earth, while still welcoming the efforts of Saints in *each* culture to make the core gospel their own by embroidering it with *their* folk doctrines, customs, commemorations, and celebrations, somewhat as Guatemalan members have done (see the Murphy paper), and, indeed, just as we do in the United States. For example, American Christians (including Latter-day Saints) sometimes point with scorn to the "pagan" remnants in African or Latin American adaptations of Christianity, demanding that the true religion be kept pure. At the same time, however, we seem comfortable enough in our own communities, whether in Utah or elsewhere, in having Christmas trees in our churches, Santa Claus at church children's parties, and Halloween festivities as part of church youth programs, to mention only a few of the clearly pagan elements in our own syncretism of religion and superstition. Can't we allow the Saints in various exotic locales to bring in some of *their* favorite "superstitions" as part of their Mormon experience?

Such a policy might seem more simple and feasible in the abstract than it does in concrete cases. The First Presidency document described above does not mention, for example, "the patriarchal order." Are we to infer that this traditional LDS concept is therefore not one of the "fundamentals," or that it is already implicit in the plan of salvation and need

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15. Copy in my files. The document ends with the instructions that "adherence to these principles will help accomplish the mission of the Church and the purpose of God 'to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man'"; and "please teach these principles as would the Savior, with love, understanding, patience, testimony, and charity," all qualities that will be especially crucial in dealing with the Saints in various cultures.

not be mentioned separately? If the latter, then *what else* must be taken as implicit in one or more of the "fundamentals" listed in that document? Insofar as the patriarchal order refers to a pattern of family governance, is it to be understood and applied everywhere in the Victorian terms so characteristic of twentieth-century Utah? If so, perhaps we will hear rejoicing from our sisters in certain Latin American societies, where Victorian patriarchalism would seem to be an improvement over the *machismo* tradition under which they have been living; or from sisters in certain parts of Africa, where Mormon patriarchy would presumably be preferable to local customs permitting the sale of daughters into marriage and the beating of wives for disobedience. On the other hand, the patriarchal order (understood in the Victorian Utah way) will certainly complicate efforts to adapt the LDS religion in societies (including some of the Native American Indian tribes) where family life has been organized for centuries in matrilineal, matrilocal, and even matriarchal patterns.

Similarly, sabbath observance is not mentioned in the First Presidency's list of "fundamentals." Is that because, again, the sabbath principle is to be inferred from one of the other fundamentals on the list; or are the different LDS communities around the world now being left with the responsibility to adapt that principle as best they can to their own local cultural situations? Even in North America, economic, legal, and technological changes have long since destroyed the ability of the Saints to observe the sabbath in the rather simple and literal ways possible in an earlier agrarian age. Indeed, much of the work of the church itself would suffer if we all conscientiously observed the sabbath according to the literal prescriptions and proscriptions found in Exodus 20 and in Doctrine and Covenants 59. Interestingly enough, sabbath closing laws and customs are now more widespread in some European countries than they are in the United States, not out of any sabbatarian *religious* sensitivities but only to be sure that one day a week is set aside for everyone to participate in important *community* observances, such as athletic activities at schools and elsewhere, various festivals and commemorations, and other totally secular but socially integrative activities.

For LDS members in Europe, Japan, and elsewhere to boycott these important community activities on religious grounds seriously disrupts their relationships not only with some of their closest friends and occupational peers, but especially with their own families, most of whom are not LDS (see the Decoo, van Beek, and Numano essays). Any such disruption obviously increases the "cost" of being an LDS member and might, indeed, prove as costly to the church's retention efforts (and to its public image) in some countries as it would be (say) to require U.S. Mormons in the hotel or transportation enterprises to close their businesses on Sunday. Can adaptations of the sabbath principle in various cultures be made

in ways that will preserve a modicum of integrity in that principle without requiring the Saints in those locales to withdraw, in effect, from normal and constructive participation in their respective communities?

How about the nature and structure of LDS worship services or sacrament services in various parts of the world? Must they all conform to the American pattern? Can our African members worship and partake of the sacrament in an environment featuring drums rather than organs, spontaneous enthusiasm rather than sedate speeches? Must we permit only infants the privilege of injecting bodily motion and noise into our services, as in Utah, or can we tolerate more adult counterparts of the same where local tradition defines it as worship? Can the Saints in India publish their own hymnbooks based on their own musical forms, tonality, and instruments? Or does the Holy Spirit, where it is authentically present, impose only one mood and format of worship?[16]

Obviously, similar questions will have to be raised and resolved about many traditional LDS principles, standards, and customs, even after we settle on an essential core of the universal doctrines themselves, if the church is ever to have an appreciable presence in *all* parts of the world. In such cases local Saints (and potential converts) will be called upon, in effect, to make "cost-benefit analyses," pitting the blessings of church membership in good standing against the losses of standing and participation incurred in their relationships with families and communities. For some, the cost will prove too high, which will mean that, across time, conversion and retention will be *selective*. What kinds of people, with what kinds of social and psychological traits and backgrounds, will find the "costs" of church membership acceptable?[17]

The *institutional* counterparts of these individual cost-benefit analyses pose hard questions too: How much adaptation of gospel teachings and standards can be permitted without running the risk of syncretisms that will cost the religion its integrity? How much do we actually *want* to reduce the cost of church membership? In our effort to achieve the "minimal" gospel message that will make it maximally adaptable, what will we have to strip away? Can we afford to dispense with customs, practices, and doctrines (including folk doctrines) accumulated through two centuries of American and Utah experience? Which ones? What becomes

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16. On the problematic aspects of worship styles among LDS congregations in West Africa, especially in regard to influence of the Holy Ghost therein, see E. Dale LeBaron, "A New Religion in Black Africa: Mormonism and Its African Challenges," paper presented at the joint annual meetings of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Mormon Social Science Association, St. Louis, Missouri, 27-29 Oct. 1995. On the prospects and desirability for LDS members in India to create their own hymns, see Roger R. Keller, "Cultural Challenges to the LDS Missionary Effort: Focus on India," paper presented at the Mormon Studies Conference, University of Nottingham, England, 6 Apr. 1995.

17. In this connection, please refer again to nn3 and 10, above.

of the "Correlation Program" in all of this? Can it be adapted to provide the right mix of world standardization and local autonomy in church governance, programs, and literature? Or should it be repealed altogether? Can local autonomy be extended far enough to give local leaders some participation in the decisions about readiness of candidates for baptism? Or must there remain the traditional "conflict of interest" between missionaries and bishops/branch presidents?

Leaders and members of the church will have to grapple with such questions not only at the general policy level but in applying policy intelligently to each specific cultural setting. The twenty-first century of Mormonism will be a fascinating period in church history. I regret that I can expect to live long enough to see only its first decade or so!

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ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATION

The illustration on the front and back covers is from a steel engraving made from a drawing by William Henry Bartlett (1809-54). The engraving first appeared in William Beattie's *The Waldenses, or Protestant Valleys of Piedmont, Dauphiny, and the Ban de la Roche* (London: G. Virtue, 1838), and in subsequent translations published in French (1838) and German (1840). Bartlett was a prominent nineteenth-century artist who collaborated with Beattie (1793-1875) on other projects including: *Switzerland* (1834); *Scotland* (1838); *Caledonia* (1838); *The Castles and Abbeys of England* (1842); *The Ports, Harbours, Watering-Places, and Coast Scenery of Great Britain* (1842); and *The Danube* (1844). Bartlett was also the author of books which contained his drawings including: *Niagara Falls* (1837-38); *Engravings* (1839); *Walks around the City and Environs of Jerusalem* (1844); *Forty Days in the Desert* (1848); *Nile Boat* (1849); *Scripture Sites and Scenes* (1850); *A Pilgrimage through the Holy Land* (1851); *Footsteps of Lord and His Apostles* (1852); *The Pilgrim Fathers* (1853); *The History of the United States of America* (1853); and *Pictures from Sicily* (1853). Following Bartlett's death Beattie published his *Brief Memoir of the late William Henry Bartlett* (London: M.S. Rickerby, 1855).

The town pictured in Bartlett's drawing is Torre Pellice or La Tour in French—the language preferred by its inhabitants. Torre Pellice was the headquarters of the Waldensian church and the location in Piedmont which Lorenzo Snow selected in 1850 as the starting point for his Italian mission. The drawing includes the river Angrogna where initial Mormon converts were baptized in 1851. It also shows two mountains (Casteluzzo and Vandalino) which Snow climbed and renamed "The Rock of Prophecy" and "Mount Brigham" when he organized the Italian Mission. Franklin D. Richards also ascended "The Rock of Prophecy" when he visited Torre Pellice in 1855, and Ezra Taft Benson rededicated the Italian Mission in 1966 from this same location.