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The Apocalypse of Peter: Introduction and Translation	S. Kent Brown and C. Wilfred Griggs	131
Mesmerism and Mormonism	Gary L. Bunker and Davis Bitton	146
The Closing of the Early Japan Mission	R. Lanier Britsch	171
Members Without a Church: Japanese Mormons in Japan From 1924 to 1948	J. Christopher Conkling	191
The Gadianton Robbers and Protracted War	Ray C. Hillam	215
Eleanor McLean and the Murder of Parley P. Pratt	Steven Pratt	225
Editor	Charles D. Tate, Jr.	
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# The Apocalypse of Peter: Introduction and Translation\*

S. Kent Brown and C. Wilfred Griggs\*\*

The Apocalypse of Peter is one of the fifty-three religious treatises which comprise the recently-found Coptic Gnostic Library of Nag Hammadi.<sup>1</sup> This collection of texts, written in the late Egyptian script known as Coptic, was discovered by Egyptian peasants about 1946 near the modern village of Chenoboskion, Egypt, just across the Nile from the town of Nag Hammadi. The story of events from the discovery of these texts to their final location in the Old Coptic Museum in Cairo resembles a modern spy novel.<sup>2</sup>

The Nag Hammadi Library consists of some thirteen books or codices in which the fifty-three treatises were bound. Even though the origins of the various tractates are very difficult or often impossible to trace, they generally fall into two major divisions.<sup>3</sup> In the one we have revelations, visions, discourses,

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\*A German translation of this text has been published by Martin Krause and Viktor Girgis in the work edited by Franz Altheim and Ruth Stiehl, *Christentum am Roten Meer* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1973), pp. 152-79. Before the completion of the final draft of our translation, we were able to consult an unpublished translation of this document owned by the Institute of Antiquity and Christianity in Claremont, California. We would like to thank Professor James A. Brashler, Assistant Director of the Institute, for allowing us access to his translation. In addition, we wish to express appreciation to Professor Richard A. Parker, professor emeritus of Egyptology at Brown University, for his many helpful suggestions.

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<sup>1</sup>The complete listing of the individual documents in the Library appears in *Novum Testamentum* 12 (1970):82-85.

<sup>2</sup>For a reconstruction of events, see Willem C. van Unnik, *Newly Discovered Gnostic Writings* (Naperville, Illinois: Alec R. Allenson, 1960), pp. 7-15, and James M. Robinson, "Introduction to the Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices," included as an insert with *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices, Codex VI* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), pp. 1-4.

<sup>3</sup>The two categories drawn up here by no means exhaust the variety of texts found in the Library. In the terms we have chosen, there are texts which are not associated with any particular historical or literary figure. The Hypostasis of the Archons (CG II, 4), for example, has no clear literary ties with a



and the like which are associated with the great patriarchal figures of the Old Testament such as Adam, Seth, Melchizedek, and Shem. The other group comprises writings which claim to derive from Jesus and his disciples, including such apostles as John, James, Paul, and Peter. It is within the latter that the Apocalypse of Peter fits.

This Apocalypse is the third of five treatises which make up Codex VII of the Library<sup>4</sup> and is designated by the symbol CG VII, 3.<sup>5</sup> It is preceded in Codex VII by the Paraphrase of Shem (CG VII, 1) and the Second Treatise of the Great Seth (CG VII, 2), and is followed by The Teaching of Silvanus (CG VII, 4) and the Three Steles of Seth (CG VII, 5). The Coptic text of the Apocalypse of Peter runs from about the middle of page 70 (70, 13) to about the middle of page 84 (84, 14).<sup>6</sup>

We should note that our text is not to be confused with another Apocalypse of Peter which was lost in antiquity. Although the latter was known from quotations in the writings of the early Christian Fathers, it has only been known to the modern world for a little more than fifty years from Greek fragments and an Ethiopian translation of a Greek text.<sup>7</sup> Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea (c263-339), classified it as a spurious writing.<sup>8</sup> No mention of our text, however, has been noted in any of the extant writings of the Church Fathers. The first

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patriarchal or apostolic personality. It is simply a reinterpretation of the Genesis stories of the creation and of the events in the Garden of Eden. No attempt is made to link it back to a record written, for instance, by Adam.

<sup>4</sup>In the early years following the discovery, the Nag Hammadi codices were variously numbered by different scholars. The current standard numbering is that which appears in *Novum Testamentum*, 12:82-85, and which was established earlier by Martin Krause's work; see J. M. Robinson, "The Coptic Gnostic Library Today," *New Testament Studies* 14 (1968):356-401, esp. pp. 359f.

<sup>5</sup>The "CG" of CG VII, 3 refers to the fact that the text is part of the Coptic Gnostic Library from Nag Hammadi now located in Cairo (*Cairensis Gnosticus*). The Roman numeral "VII" means that we are speaking of Codex VII of the 13 codices. Finally, the "3" refers to the fact that this is the third treatise found in Codex VII. Hence, CG VII, 3:80, 3 means that we are dealing with the Coptic Gnostic Library, Codex VII, the third treatise, page 80, line 3.

<sup>6</sup>This is the way it appears in the photographic reprint of the papyrus leaves in *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices, Codex VII*. To date, the photographs of Codices II, VI, VII, XI, XII, and XIII have appeared in Brill's edition.

<sup>7</sup>On this other Apocalypse of Peter, see Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher, eds., *New Testament Apocrypha* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), 2:663-83. See also Montague R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 505-24.

<sup>8</sup>Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III.3.5; 25.4; VI.14.1.



knowledge of it came to light only after the discovery of the Nag Hammadi corpus.<sup>9</sup>

#### DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS

The entire account is narrated as if written by Peter. The setting finds the Savior sitting in the temple on the day before the crucifixion. The uncommon description of the temple (70, 14-20) tempts us to suggest that the following conversation between the Savior and Peter takes place in an other-worldly setting. But no evidence exists in the text which would plainly indicate that this is a heavenly temple. It is certain that their meeting occurs the night before Jesus' death, for Peter is allowed to see the crucifixion in vision before it happens (80, 26-83, 8). In addition, we find a passage which recalls Matthew 26:34 where Jesus, just having spoken of his impending death, says to Peter: "Truly, I say to you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." The passage in the Apocalypse of Peter parallels this when the Savior tells Peter: "He [You?] will accuse you [him?] three times during this night" (72, 2-4). The nearness of the approaching crucifixion is clear in our text.

In the first part of the Savior's opening discourse, he considers those belonging to the Father whose origin is "above the heavens" and who, consequently, are able to distinguish falsehood from truth (70, 20-71, 6). In the second section (71, 6-71, 15) he deals with the Son of Man whom the rulers have sought. He has appeared among those from above and will soon be exalted. The last segment of Jesus' discourse has to do with Peter's call to lead the true remnant (71, 15-72, 4). Peter is told that he must be strong "until the imitation of righteousness" comes and that, as a result of his call, he will come to know the Son of Man "in the way which is proper to perform."

When Peter begins to fear for their lives because of an approaching hostile crowd, the Savior starts a conversation on spiritual blindness (72, 4-73, 14), telling Peter that he can understand their blindness if he places his hands over the "eyes" of his robe. The first time Peter does this he sees nothing, so he is commanded to repeat the action (72:20ff), and sees a light that falls upon the Savior, indicating that Peter

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<sup>9</sup>Jean Doresse, *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1960), p. 236.

does not suffer from spiritual blindness. In what follows (72, 28-73, 14), Peter apparently learns that false teachings and hypocrisy on the part of his Jewish contemporaries also constitute spiritual blindness.

Adjuring Peter not to repeat what he will hear next (73, 14-18), Jesus launches into his second discourse which focuses on the apostasy, the nature of immortal souls, and deceptive leaders (73, 18-79, 31). The apostasy, Jesus explains, will occur when those who have partaken of "the power of our word" are deceived into clinging to "the name of a dead man." Not only will they "blaspheme the truth" but they will also be given "destruction instead of immortality" (73, 18-75, 11). Then the Savior discusses the nature of immortal souls. These, he affirms, differ from the souls which do not come from "truth and immortality," the latter loving "the material creation which came forth with them." The immortal soul, by contrast, has its existence "within immortality" and renounces the things of the material creation which will eventually "be dissolved into what does not exist." Some will be converted from materiality, becoming "a people," while others will simply envy the immortal souls and never become free from their pride (75, 12-77, 3).

The Savior then makes observations regarding the deceiving rulers who seek existence with the immortal souls, thus trying to become "like the indestructible ones." He notes that some leaders will oppose his "pure thought" with their "law." From these the immortal souls will flee until the second coming of the Savior. Possessing free will, these "angels of deception" will create an imitation message and will be "cast into outer darkness" since they deliberately hinder those coming to the truth. Others, Jesus goes on, will fashion a brotherhood and matching sisterhood in a vain attempt to foster "the companionship of the Spirit." But their measures will actually be oppressive to the true followers, the "little ones." Others among them, called Bishops and Deacons, will turn away and become "waterless canals" (77, 4-79, 31).

At this Peter expresses his concern that the "little ones" will be led astray and destroyed while believing incorrectly that they trust in the real Savior (79, 31-80, 7). Jesus then replies that the period of deception for the "little ones" has a predetermined end. After that, Jesus says, "the agelessness of immortal



thought will be renewed" and the deception will be pulled out "by its root" and be exposed for what it is (80, 8-23).

The next section of the text deals with Peter's vision of the Savior's nature (80, 23-83, 15). Beginning this section, the Savior alludes to his imminent crucifixion and then promises Peter the protection of the "Invisible One" (80, 23-81, 3). At this point the vision opens again and Peter is puzzled since he sees two likenesses of the Savior: one being nailed to the cross and the other standing above the cross and laughing. After Jesus explains what Peter is seeing, Peter suggests that they both "flee from this place." But the Savior assures him that the crucifiers are blind and have only put the physical Jesus to shame, that is, the "son of their glory." Then Peter is allowed to see the glorification of the spiritual Jesus, "the one who bestows glory." Following this, the Savior explains in more detail the peculiar relationship between the fleshly Jesus, the spiritual counterpart, and himself (81, 3-83, 15).

The concluding segment of the text consists of Jesus' final instructions to Peter (83, 15-84, 13). Peter is to pass on what he has learned to "those of another race," the elect ones. No one else, the Savior affirms, can be joined with the Deity, "Him-who-is," since they do not possess an immortal nature (83, 15-84, 6). Then Jesus speaks directly to Peter: "Take courage and do not fear anyone. For I shall be with you so that none of your enemies will have power over you. May peace strengthen you." The vision now ends and Peter comes to himself (84, 6-13).

#### CHARACTER OF THE TEXT

The revealer in the vision is referred to by a number of names and titles, the most common of which is Savior (70:14; 72:26; 73:11; 80:8; 81:15; "Living Savior" in 82:28). Other names or titles which seem to refer to the Savior are: the Strong One (70:27), Fulness of Truth (71:2-3), Son of Man (71:12), the Enlightener (71:32), Guileless One of the Noble Ones (74:3), Christ (74:8), Intelligent Spirit (possibly 77:18, certainly 83:8), the Living Jesus (81:17), Lord (81:8; 81:26), the One who bestows glory (82:16), and the Intelligent Fulness (83:12). The terms "Living Jesus" and "Living Savior" correspond to the usual manner among Gnostic Christians of denoting the resurrected or glorified Christ. In this

text these terms can only refer to a glorified spiritual Savior, since the Jesus in the Apocalypse is docetic. Docetism (from the Greek *δοκεῖν* "to seem") held a particular view of Jesus which can be traced to the end of the first century A.D.<sup>10</sup> The major thesis of Docetic Christians was that the real Jesus was only a spirit who appeared—seemed—to have a body of flesh.<sup>11</sup> Although various forms of this heresy existed, one facet which is attributed to the Gnostics by Irenaeus claims that the divine Christ descended from heaven and united himself to the physical personage of Jesus. This unification of the Savior and his physical counterpart was said to have occurred at the time of Jesus' baptism.<sup>12</sup> Because the Docetics believed both in the inherent impurity of matter and the inability of Jesus (as God) to suffer, they also proclaimed that the "spiritual" Jesus departed from his "physical" counterpart prior to the passion. On occasion this separation is not stated explicitly, but rather is implied, as in the apocryphal Gospel of Peter: "But He (the crucified Christ) kept silent, as if he felt no pain."<sup>13</sup> The present text presents as clear a picture of the docetic doctrine of Jesus as can be found. The first evidence of docetism in the Apocalypse of Peter is found in 71:25ff, where Peter is said to know the Savior "with regard to the distance which divides him," probably referring to the dual nature of Jesus. In 74:3ff, it is possible to understand the passage docetically as the Guileless One being pushed both toward death (referring to the body) and toward the kingdom where glory is given to Christ in a restoration (speaking of the unification of the Spirit with heaven). This docetic tendency becomes clear in the last few plates of the text where Peter sees in vision the separation of the spiritual and physical Jesus (81:5ff). Jesus explains that "his fleshly counterpart" is being nailed to the cross while the "Living" (glorified) Jesus is above the cross laughing at the ignorant folly of the crucifiers. Peter is told that blind men have put one of their own kind to shame, but were unable to harm (or even see) the immortal Savior (82:1-16). It is in fact the knowledge of the docetic Jesus which comprises the primary *mystery* of this text, and in typical Gnostic fashion

<sup>10</sup>I John 4:2ff. True knowledge of the physical Jesus is also emphasized in I John 1:1 ("... whom we have seen and our hands have handled. . ."), and fellowship is based on this true knowledge (I John 1:3).

<sup>11</sup>Justin Martyr, *De Resurrect*, 2.

<sup>12</sup>Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, 1.7.2.

<sup>13</sup>Gospel of Peter 4:10.



Peter has been told not to reveal the mystery to the "children of this age" (73:16ff).

It was inevitable that among the various Christian movements of the second century, each claiming the correctness of its special doctrines concerning the Savior and the Church, charges and countercharges of apostasy would be made. The Apocalypse of Peter is replete with such charges, and they seem to be directed primarily toward one group, the early Catholic ("orthodox") Church. Following the introduction of the vision, Peter is informed that he is to be a ruler over the remnant of true believers (71:18ff) and is challenged to be strong until the imitation of righteousness appears (71:23). The identification of this *imitation* with *orthodox* Christianity is based on the following passages: its adherents claim association with Peter although they really blaspheme his name (73:19ff); they worship the name of a dead man (the crucified physical Jesus), thinking they can be purified by it (74:13ff; 78:17); they erroneously believe that they can be saved through a brotherhood and a sisterhood that they have organized (79:1ff); and these false worshippers who, in some instances, have received authority from God and are called Bishops and Deacons will become apostates and "waterless canals" (73:23ff; 79:22ff). Other charges leveled against this deceptive imitation include the merchandizing of the word of Christ (77:33), leading astray true believers (80:1ff), and being associated with a man and a naked woman (74:30ff). This last charge may refer to Adam and Eve, although this is not at all certain.

In true apocalyptic fashion, the document proclaims an eschatological (last days) restoration of the truth after the age of apostasy. This restoration will coincide with the coming of Christ (78:4ff), and is called the "agelessness of immortal thought" (80:13ff). At that time the deceivers will be exposed (73:30), judged (80:26), and cast into outer darkness (78:24). Other apocalyptic elements in this text include the following: Jesus appears as an *angelus interpres*; the promise of eternal salvation is extended to a community of believers presently being persecuted; and Peter is apparently ecstatic (a technical term referring to separation of body and spirit during a vision), for he "came to himself" at the close of the vision. The title "Apocalypse of Peter" which is found both before and following the text conforms to a practice first noticed in

the second century of placing superscribed titles on apocalyptic works. Prior to that time the title was taken from the *incipit* (beginning) of the work, which is not the case with the Apocalypse of Peter.

It is well known that Gnostic movements claimed to have secret rituals, and the Apocalypse of Peter appears to contain some ritual passages. Peter is told to become perfect through his name (71:15), which clearly must be based on familiarity with Matthew 16:17-19. Peter is told that he will know Christ in a way which is proper to *perform* (71:25-27), referring in this text to his knowing the "distance which divides" the spiritual and physical Jesus. This idea may also have its antecedent in the New Testament where the Apostles "knew" the resurrected Jesus through touching his hands and feet (Luke 24:39; John 20:27). Just how this ritual "knowledge" would be understood by a docetic Christian is unclear, since for him Jesus did not really die and, therefore, was not resurrected. As mentioned earlier, when Peter desired to know the blindness of the people who were going to kill Jesus, he had to cover the eyes of his robe two times (72:15-16), after which he perceived a *New Light* descending upon the Savior. Although what is meant by the "eyes" of the robe is not explained, it is clear that they are important in opening the vision to Peter's view. The significance of the robe is further suggested in this text when it is stated that true believers will become the captives of false worshippers by becoming disrobed (74:1-3). Peter's use of his hands to "see" and "hear" is repeated when the Savior tells him to raise his hands upward so he can "hear what the priests and the people are saying" (72:29ff). A few lines later the Savior commands Peter to lift his ears (with his hands?) to hear what is going on (73:6ff). Such ritual passages are more easily observed than explained.



## The Apocalypse of Peter

14, 15 The Savior (σωτήρ) was sitting in / the temple near the  
 three-hundredth adornment and the joint of the tenth pillar  
 (στῦλος). And he was resting against the number of the un-  
 20 defiled living Greatness. / He said to me: "Peter, blessed are  
 those belonging to the Father who are above the heavens. It is  
 he who has revealed Life through me to these who come from  
 25 Life. / I have been considering these who are established in  
 the Strong One, that they will hear my word and will distin-  
 30 guish words / of wickedness (ἀδικία) and lawlessness  
 (παράνομος) from law (νόμος) and righteousness  
 71, 1 (δικαιοσύνη). Since (ὥς) // they exist by means of the  
 loftiness of every word of this Fulness (πλήρωμα) of  
 5 Truth, they have received Light by the will of / Him whom  
 the rulers (ἀρχή) seek. And they neither found him nor  
 (οὐδέ) did they mention him in front of any seed  
 (σπέρμα) of the prophets (προφήτης). He has appeared  
 10 / even now among these through him who is manifest; he is  
 the Son of Man who is exalted above the heavens during a  
 15 time of men of compatible / nature (οὐσία).<sup>1</sup>

"And (δέ) as for you, Peter, become perfect (τέλειος)  
 through your name with me who has chosen you, for out of  
 20 you I made a ruler (ἀρχή) / over the remnant whom I have  
 called to understanding. Therefore (ὥστε), be strong until the  
 imitation (ἀντίμιμον) of the righteousness (δικαιοσύνη)  
 25 of him who was first to call / you comes. He has called you  
 so that you will know him, in the way which is proper to per-  
 form, with regard to the distance (ἀποχή) which divides  
 30 him, even the joints of his hands and his feet, / and the  
 crowning by those of the center (μεσότης), and the body  
 (σῶμα) of his Enlightener. They bring him, hopeful  
 72, 1 (ἐλπίζ) of // service (διακονία) for the sake of a  
 glorious reward, when (ὥς) he [you?] will accuse you  
 [him?] three times during this night."

5 And (δέ) when he said these things, / I beheld the  
 priests and the people (λαός) running toward us with stones  
 so that (ὥς) they might kill us. And (δέ) I was anxious  
 10 lest we should die. And he said / to me: "Peter, I have told  
 you many times that some are blind since they have no leader.  
 15 If you desire to know their blindness, / place your hands over

<sup>1</sup>Krause and V. Girgis read: "in a Fear of men of the same nature."

the eyes of your robe ( ποδήρης )<sup>2</sup> and tell what you see.”

72, 20 But ( δέ ) when I did it and saw nothing, I said: “There is nothing / to see.” Again ( πάλιν ) he said to me: “Do it once more.” Both fear and joy came upon me .For ( γάρ ) I  
25 saw a new Light, which was greater than the light / of the day, which afterwards came upon the Savior ( σωτήρ ). And I told him the things that I saw.

30 And he said to me again: “Raise / your hands upward and hear what the priests and the people ( λαός ) are saying.”  
73, 1 // And I heard the priests while they were sitting with the teachers. The multitudes were crying out with their voice. He  
5 / heard these things from me. He said to me: “Lift the ears of your head and hear the things they are saying.” And  
10 again I heard (and said): “While you are sitting, / they are giving glory to you.”

And after I said these things, the Savior ( σωτήρ ) said:  
15 “I have told you that these are blind and deaf. Now hear / what things are spoken to you in a mystery ( μυστήριον ) and guard them. Do not tell them to the children of this age  
20 ( αἰών ); for ( γάρ ) you yourself will be blasphemed / against during these ages ( αἰών ), since they will not know you. But ( δέ ) they give glory to you in knowledge ( γνῶσις ). For ( γάρ ) a multitude will receive from the power ( ἀρχή )  
25 of / our word. And they will be turned once more according to the will of the father of their deception ( πλάνη ), since they did what pleases him. And he will expose the wor-  
30 shippers of the word by means of / his Judgment.

74, 1 “But ( δέ ) those ( worshippers ), who were // mixed with these, will become captives ( αἰχμάλωτος ) at their hand (the multitude who received power) since they will be disrobed ( ἀνέσθητος ). But ( δέ ) the unmixed ( ἀκέραιος ) guileless One of the Noble ( ἀγαθόν ) Ones  
5 / is being pushed towards the one who does the work of death and toward the kingdom of these who are giving glory to  
10 Christ in a restoration ( ἀποκατάστασις ). / And they are giving glory to the men of the constitution of deceit. These are they who will come into being after you. And they  
15 will cleave to the name of a dead man, thinking / that they will become purified. Rather, they will be very greatly defiled. And they will fall down at a name of deception ( πλάνη ) and before the evil artificer ( -τέχνη ) and a doctrine

<sup>2</sup>In Christian literature, this word often appears in a ritual setting. See Revelation 1:13 and Epistle of Barnabas 7:9.



4, 20 (δόγμα) / of a multitude of forms (μορφῇ) (all of)  
 which reign (ἄρχειν) over them in heresy (αἵρεσις).  
 For (γάρ) certain ones among them will blaspheme the  
 25 truth while also / speaking an evil word. They will even  
 speak evil things to each other. Others, moreover (μέν),  
 30 will be given a name: 'They stand within a power of / the  
 rulers (ἄρχων) of a man and a naked woman who will  
 bring a multitude of forms (μορφῇ) and a multitude of  
 75, 1 sorrows.' And those who recite this will come // to ask con-  
 cerning dreams. And if (κἄν) they say that a dream has  
 5 come from a daemon (δαίμων) who is / worthy of their  
 deception (πλάνη), then (τότε) they will be given de-  
 struction in place of immortality (ἀφθαρσία). For (γάρ)  
 the evil one (κακόν) is unable to produce good (ἀγαθός)  
 10 fruit (καρπός). For (γάρ) every / place, whatever is  
 there, produces that which resembles itself. For (γάρ) not  
 (οὔτε) every soul (ψυχῇ) comes from truth or (οὔτε)  
 15 immortality. / For (γάρ) every soul (ψυχῇ) of these ages  
 (αἰών) is reckoned as a death in our presence because  
 (καθότι) it is always a worshipper (or: idolater). It is  
 20 created with its passions (ἐπιθυμία) / and their eternal  
 destruction, which is what they are in and what they come  
 from, and they love (ἀγαπᾶν) the material (ὕλη)  
 25 creation / which came forth with them.

"The immortal souls (ψυχῇ), however (δέ), do not  
 resemble these, O Peter. But (ἀλλὰ) as long as (ἐφόσον  
 30 μέν) the critical time is not far away, / it (the immortal  
 soul) will indeed (μέν) resemble the one (soul) which is  
 mortal. But (ἀλλὰ) it will not disclose its nature (φύσις),  
 76, 1 since it alone exists within (ἐντος) immortality. // When  
 it considers immortality, it believes (πιστεύειν) and de-  
 sires (ἐπιθυμεῖν) to renounce these things (the passions).  
 5 For (γάρ) they do not (οὔτε) gather a fig / out of thorns  
 or (ἢ) out of thorn trees, if they are wise, nor (οὔδέ)  
 grapes out of large thorns. For (γάρ) indeed (μέν),  
 10 this one always comes into being / from what exists within it.  
 Since it comes from that which is not good, it is as a de-  
 struction and death to it (the immortal soul). It (the im-  
 15 mortal soul), however (δέ), comes into being / in eternity  
 in the Living One and the immortality of Life which re-  
 semble him.

"This one, therefore (οὖν), the All, which (really)

76, 20 does not exist, will be dissolved into what / does not exist.  
 For (γάρ) there are deaf and blind ones who are joined to  
 those who belong to them alone. And (δέ) some will be  
 25 converted / from sayings of the evil one (πονηρόν) and  
 mysteries (μυστήριον), and they will become a people  
 (λαός). Others will not know the mysteries (μυστήριον),  
 30 saying things that they / do not know. But (ἀλλά) they  
 will pride themselves that the mystery (μυστήριον) of  
 77, 1 truth is in their hands alone. And / in arrogance // they will  
 lay hold of high position, envying (φθονεῖν) the immortal  
 soul (ψυχῇ) which has made a pledge. For (γάρ) every  
 5 authority (ἐξουσία), ruler (ἀρχή), / and power of the  
 ages (αἰών) desires to come into being with them (the im-  
 mortal souls) through the creation of the world (κόσμος) so  
 that (ἵνα) they (the rulers) who do not (really) exist  
 10 through / those who do exist are forgotten, and so that they  
 (the rulers) are given glory although they were not saved nor  
 (οὔτε) were they brought to the Way by them. They are  
 15 always desiring / that (ἵνα) they will become like the in-  
 destructible ones. For (γάρ) if the immortal soul (ψυχῇ)  
 receives power through an intelligent (νοερόν) spirit  
 20 (πνεῦμα), then (δέ) immediately / they (the rulers)  
 are joined (ὁρμάζειν) to one of those who have been  
 led astray.

“Moreover (δέ), there are many others who oppose the  
 25 Truth who are angels (ἄγγελος) / of deception (πλάνη).  
 They will prepare their deception (πλάνη) with their law  
 (νόμος) against my pure thoughts. Since (ὥς) they per-  
 30 ceive (only) / oneness, they think that good (ἀγαθόν) and  
 evil (πονηρόν) come from one. They, then, make mer-  
 78, 1 chandise of // my Word. And they will set forth (or: put  
 aside) a difficult fate (εἰμαρμένη). The race (γένος) of  
 5 immortal souls (ψυχῇ) will run away from it in vain / until  
 my coming (παρουσία). For (γάρ) they will come into  
 being through them (the immortal souls) and (through) my  
 forgiveness of their transgressions (παράπτωμα) into which  
 10 they have / fallen because of opponents (ἀντικείμενος)  
 and whose ransom I have received for (πρός) the bondage  
 15 which they have been in. I grant them freedom / so that they  
 may create a remnant imitating (ἀντίμιμον) the name of  
 a dead man, which is the foundation (ἔρμα) of the first



78, 20 born of iniquity ( *ἀδικία* ), / so that ( *ἵνα* ) they will not believe in the existing light through the little ones. And ( *δέ* ) these of this sort are the fashioners ( *ἐργάτης* ).  
 25 They will be cast into outer darkness, / outside the Sons of Light. For ( *γάρ* ) They will not ( *οὔτε* ) be entering in. But ( *ἀλλά* ) neither ( *οὔτε* ) will they let those go who  
 30 are coming up to their pleasure, / until ( *πρός* ) their destruction.

“And ( *δέ* ), moreover, some others among them experience suffering, thinking that they will perfect // the wisdom of the brotherhood which really ( *ὄντως* ) exists and is the companionship of the Spirit ( *πνεῦμα* ). They are also companions of root in a fellowship ( *κοινωνία* ) / through which the marriage of incorruption ( *ἀφθαρσία* ) will appear. The  
 5 likeness of the race ( *γένος* ) of the sisterhood will appear / according to ( *κατά* ) an imitation ( *ἀντίμιμον* ). These are those who oppress their brothers by saying to them:  
 10 ‘Through this (imitation or likeness) our God has mercy, / since salvation will come to us from it.’ They do not know the chastisement ( *κόλασις* ) for those who are gladdened through the ones who have done the work of the little ones  
 20 whom / they have seen and have captured ( *αἰχμαλωτεύειν* ).

“Further ( *δέ* ), some others of those who are outside of  
 25 our number will be called / ‘Bishop’ ( *ἐπίσκοπος* ). And ( *δέ* ) furthermore ( *ἔτι* ), some Deacons ( *διάκων* ), when ( *ὥς* ) they have received their authorities ( *ἐξουσία* ) from God, are turned against the judgment of the first thrones.  
 30 / They are (all) waterless canals.”

And ( *δέ* ) I said: “I am afraid because of what you have  
 80, 1 said to me: ‘Indeed ( *μέν* ), some // little ones in our presence are those beyond ( *παρά* ) the mark. There are multitudes who will certainly ( *μέν* ) lead astray other multitudes  
 5 of these who are living. / These are destroyed among them and, when they speak your name, these will believe them.’ ”

The Savior ( *σωτήρ* ) said: “There is a time ( *χρόνος* )  
 10 which is appointed for them according to the / number of their deception ( *πλάνη* ) when they will rule over the little ones. And after the fulfillment of the deception ( *πλάνη* ), the agelessness of immortal thought ( *διάνοια* ) will be renewed. / And they will rule those over whom we rule. And  
 15 he will pull out their deception ( *πλάνη* ) by its root. And

80, 20 he will put it (the deception) to shame. And it will be revealed / in every liberty which it has taken for itself. And these of this sort will remain unchanged, O Peter. Come, 25 therefore (οὕν), let us go to the fulfillment / of the purpose of the Undeified Father. For (γάρ) behold, these who will draw the judgment to themselves are coming. And they 30 will be put to shame. And (δέ) as for me, / they will be unable to seize me. And (δέ) you, O Peter, will stand in 81, 1 their midst. Do not be afraid because of your weakness of // heart. Their understanding (διάνοια) will cease. For (γάρ) the Invisible (ἀόρατος) One has stood against them."

5 After he said these things, I saw how he will / be if they themselves arrest him. And I said: "Who is it that I am seeing, O Lord, since you alone are taken and it is (also) you 10 restraining / me? Or (ἤ) who is this glad one above the tree who is laughing while another is being struck on his feet and on his hands?"

15 The Savior (σωτήρ) said to me: / "The one whom you see above the tree, who is glad and is laughing, is the Living Jesus. But (δέ) his fleshly (σαρκικός) counterpart, 20 into whose hands and feet they are driving the nails, / is the substitute whom they put to shame. He it is who was in (κατά) his (Jesus') likeness. Now (δέ) look at him and me!"

25 And (δέ) / after I looked, I said: "Lord, no one sees you. Let us flee from this place."

30 And (δέ) he said to me: "I told you that some / are blind. Leave them. And as for you, see how (πώς) they 82, 1 do not know what they are saying. // For (γάρ) they have have put the son of their glory to shame in place of my servant (διάκων)."

5 And (δέ) I saw one who will command (or: approach) / us, who resembles him as well as the one who was laughing above the tree. And (δέ) it was written through a Holy Spirit (πνεῦμα): "And he is the Savior (σωτήρ)." And 10 (δέ) there was a great / ineffable Light which surrounded them and the multitude of ineffable and invisible angels 15 (ἄγγελος) who were praising them. / And (δέ) I am he who saw him being revealed as the one who bestows glory.

And (δέ) he said to me: "Be strong, for (γάρ) to you



82, 20 has been given to know these mysteries (μυστήριον) /  
 through revelation, that he who was nailed is the first-born  
 and the house of the demons (δαίμων). And they inhabit  
 25 the stone footstool / of Elohim of the Cross (σταυρός),  
 which exists by reason of the Law (νόμος). And (δέ)   
 the one who stood near him is the Living Savior (σωτήρ),  
 30 the first one in him who was arrested. / And he was set free  
 and he stood joyfully watching those who had taken him by  
 force after they (the spiritual and fleshly Jesus) parted one  
 83, 1 from // another. Because of this he laughs at their lack of per-  
 ception, knowing that they are blind offspring. The one who  
 suffers as to the body (σῶμα), therefore (οὖν ἄρα), will be  
 5 / the one who is the substitute. And (δέ) the one who has  
 been set free is my bodiless (-σῶμα) body (σῶμα). And  
 (δέ) I am the intelligent (νοερόν) spirit (πνεῦμα)  
 10 who is filled with Light / which came forth. The one whom  
 you have seen coming to me is our intelligent (νοερόν)  
 Fulness (πλήρωμα). This joins the perfect (τέλειος)  
 15 Light with / my Holy Spirit (πνεῦμα)).

“These things, then (οὖν), that you have seen, you shall  
 entrust to those of another race (ἀλλογενής), some of  
 whom are not from this age (αἰών). For (γάρ) there will  
 20 be no (οὐ) glory / in any man who is not immortal, ex-  
 cept (εἰμήτι) those who were chosen through the na-  
 ture (οὐσία) of the immortal ones. That (nature) which  
 25 was revealed / will be able to receive to itself the one who be-  
 stows his own greatness. Because of this I said: ‘Everyone who  
 has, to him will be given and someone will have more than he.  
 30 But (δέ) he / who has not, he is the man of the place  
 (τόπος) which is entirely dead.’ It (the place) is changed  
 84, 1 through the planting of the creation of begetting // which,  
 if something of the nature (οὐσία) of the immortal ones is  
 revealed, they think that they are seizing him. He will be  
 5 taken / by his hand (or: from him) and he will be added to  
 Him-who-is. You, therefore (οὖν), take courage and do  
 not fear anyone. For (γάρ) I shall be with you so that  
 10 none / of your enemies will have power over you. May peace  
 (εἰρήνη) strengthen you.” Having said these things, he  
 (Peter) came to himself.

Apocalypse (ἀποκάλυψις) of Peter

# Mesmerism and Mormonism

Gary L. Bunker and Davis Bitton\*

On 2 May 1842 the *Times and Seasons* reprinted an article from the New York *Weekly Herald* which suggested that Joseph Smith was, unknowingly, practicing animal magnetism:

Joe believes himself divinely inspired and [a] worker of miracles. He cures the sick of diseases—so it is said:—and although Joe is not aware of the fact, we have been informed by a medical man that his influence over nervous disorders, arises from a powerful magnetic influence—that Joe is a magnet in a large way, which he calls a power or spirit from heaven.<sup>1</sup>

This was the first effort to explain Mormonism in terms of animal magnetism, mesmerism, or their more respectable counterpart, hypnotism. Since Church leaders made repeated efforts to discourage any participation in such experiments, the persistence of claims that Mormonism relied on the powers of mesmerism is ironic to say the least. It was not the first time, nor the last, that Mormons were accused of practices they had clearly opposed. It is another instance of the wide chasm separating the Mormon religion and its history from the images purveyed in popular writings that established the stereotype of Mormonism.<sup>2</sup>

## EVOLUTION OF MESMERISM

The belief that the human body possessed magnetic properties is generally traced back to the physician and astronomer

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<sup>1</sup>*Times and Seasons* 3 (May 1842):773.

<sup>2</sup>Two significant studies of the image of Mormonism are David Brion Davis, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47 (September 1960): 205-24; and Leonard J. Arrington and Jon Haupt, "Intolerable Zion: The Image of Mormonism in Nineteenth Century American Literature," *Western Humanities Review* 22 (Summer 1968):243-60.



Paracelsus (1490-1541). It was J. B. van Helmont, however, who taught that this magnetism could be transferred from one person to another. The term "animal magnetism" was introduced to differentiate the magnetic effects of human bodies from magnetism applied to physical objects. Franz Anton Mesmer was most responsible for popularizing the practice of animal magnetism in the eighteenth century. He was so successful that "mesmerism" became a more common label of this interpersonal influence phenomenon than animal magnetism. Initially, Mesmer used magnets to effect cures in patients. Later he believed that magnets only served as conductors of an ether-like fluid emanating from his body. Eventually he dropped the use of magnets altogether and adopted the view that the magnetic power resided within him and was transferred by a subtle fluid to the body of his patient.<sup>3</sup>

It was a disciple of Mesmer, the Marquis de Puysegur, who extended the concept to include mesmeric or magnetic sleep, what we now call hypnosis. While subjects were in this state, Puysegur noted, not only could they sometimes be cured of diseases, but their movements could be controlled, and when they returned to normal consciousness they usually remembered nothing of the trance. A royal commission appointed to investigate these various claims, including eminent men like A. L. Lavoisier and Benjamin Franklin, reported in 1784 that it found no evidence for the existence of a magnetic fluid, but it did not express an opinion as to the reality of cures or the nature of the magnetic sleep. Nevertheless, the general skeptical tone of the report did much to reduce interest in the phenomenon for a generation.

In the early nineteenth century interest was revived by Alexandre Bertrand, a Parisian physician, and by a favorable report in 1831 by the Academy of Medicine of Paris recommending magnetism as a therapeutic agency. It came to be extensively practiced in Europe and America, but because many of the practitioners still held to the unsupported theory of magnetic fluid and because it was frequently combined with belief in astrology, spiritualism, and other fads and bizarre practices, most sober scientists regarded it as quackery or superstition. Everyone had heard of people who had experienced amazing cures, how-

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<sup>3</sup>Theodore R. Sarbin, "Attempts to Understand Hypnotic Phenomena," in *Psychology in the Making*, ed. Leo Postman (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), p. 750.

ever, and the behavior of people in a magnetic sleep was used for entertainment of the curious and was a frequent subject of discussion.<sup>4</sup> When the medical consultant to the *New York Weekly Herald* said that Joseph Smith was practicing animal magnetism, therefore, he was making reference to a little understood but widely discussed phenomenon.

#### MORMON MESMERISM: ARTLESS OR EVIL?

Despite differences in interpretation concerning the source of Joseph's power, many writers perceived him to be a man of unusual influence. Amos S. Hayden, the chronicler of the early history of the Campbellite faith, wrote:

Whatever we may say of the moral character of the author of Mormonism, it cannot be denied that Joseph Smith was a man of remarkable power—over others . . . he exercised an almost magnetic power—an irresistible fascination—over those with whom he came in contact.<sup>5</sup>

To some the magnetic power of Joseph Smith and his disciples was the exercise of an unconscious, misunderstood power. Others took the opposite position that the Mormons deliberately learned the principles of mesmerism to delude, and even seduce, unwitting victims.

An example of the first interpretation, the naive application of misunderstood power, appeared in an essay written in 1847 entitled "Fascination or the Philosophy of Charming."<sup>6</sup> John B. Newman, the author, argued that "the majority of that deluded sect" were converted by the observation of healing miracles. He told of an incident in which Mormons had confused "apostolic power" with the principles of "fascination" (mesmerism):

Some three years since, I attended a Mormon lady, who had disease of the heart, with marked success. One day, while operating, an elder of the faith who stood by, remarked that I possessed the gift of laying on of hands. I paid very little attention to his remark at the time; but some weeks afterward, while visiting a friend one evening, I heard a lady explaining the tenets of Mormonism, and triumphantly quoting her own case as an illustration of the fact of their possessing

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<sup>4</sup>*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., s. v. "Hypnotism."

<sup>5</sup>Amos Sutton Hayden, *Early History of the Disciples in the Western Reserve Ohio* (Cincinnati: Chase & Hall, 1876), p. 250.

<sup>6</sup>John B. Newman, *Fascination, or the Philosophy of Charming* (New York: Fowler and Wells, 1850).



apostolic power, more especially the gift of healing by laying on of hands; she had frequent attacks of tic doloireux, and nothing except the rite of the Mormon church had ever sufficed, for one moment, to alleviate the pain.

She was speaking with considerable animation, and had produced a powerful impression on the minds of those present, but was suddenly arrested in the midst of her interesting and enthusiastic discourse, by an attack of that horrid disease. Finding that she was suffering the most exquisite agony, I rose rather hesitatingly—for I dislike scenes—and offered to relieve her, giving her the assurance that one of the Mormon elders had pronounced me in possession of the gift. The drowning will catch at a straw; and my proposition was assented to, but evidently without any hope of success on the part of the sufferer. In less than a minute—for her system had been prepared by repeated fascinations—she was powerfully under my influence, and the relief was immeasurably greater than it had ever been before. After awaking the lady, I explained the whole matter to those present; and it is very probable that but few of my hearers ever undertook a pilgrimage to the holy city of Nauvoo.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, Newman also believed that the practice of “fascination” by Mormons and other religious groups would eventually prove their undoing.

Fascination . . . will most assuredly crush them, and so well is this fact known, that, perceiving its onward progress, many of them are even now endeavoring to wrest its phenomena to support their own views.<sup>8</sup>

The foremost exponent of the proposition that Mormons deliberately used mesmerism to persuade, delude and deceive was the author of *Female Life Among the Mormons*, Maria Ward.<sup>9</sup> Maria was mesmerized into accepting a marriage proposal from a Mormon elder. “I was like a fluttering bird before the gaze of the serpent-charmer.”<sup>10</sup> Her husband learned the art from none other than Joseph Smith. The Prophet had fortuitously (for him though not his followers) “learned all the strokes, and passes and manipulations, from a German peddler, who notwithstanding his reduced circumstances, was a man of distinguished intellect and extensive erudition. Smith

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 88-89.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>9</sup>Maria Ward, *Female Life Among the Mormons* (New York: J. C. Derby, 1856).

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

paid him handsomely, and the German promised to keep the secret."<sup>11</sup> A footnote observed:

Joseph Smith was one of the earliest practitioners in Animal Magnetism; and it was the use of this power at that time, that convinced his disciples of his supposed miraculous gifts.<sup>12</sup>

Early in the novel we learn that the Prophet mesmerized a young lady from the dead. After the plot thickens it is revealed that he had earlier mesmerized her to simulate death. The victim of Joseph's machinations recalled:

I was fascinated by his gaze, so deep, earnest and steady. A strange sensation of drowsiness overpowered my senses. I wished, but could not struggle against it. The consciousness that I was dying came over me; and yet how different from all that I had imagined of death. No pain, no torture, no agonizing convulsions, but all calm, sedate and tranquil. A gradual suspension of feeling and perception, a blending of indistinct images, like objects in a dream, that mingle and then melt to nothingness. Yet I knew that a warm hand closed my eyes, that the same hand moved gently down my extremities; and that was the last.<sup>13</sup>

Not content to heal, the Prophet also gave a display of his power over his enemies. He took a Brother Babcock, seated him in a chair, and proceeded with his gazing and passes. Brother Babcock became palsied, and "every sense and perception seemed closed to external objects."

"You see now," said Smith, pointing towards Babcock, "you see the power which God has delegated to me, you cannot doubt how immediately with a motion of my hands and a glance of my eyes, I could transform my enemies to lifeless, senseless, lumps of clay; how I could deprive them of their senses, or compel them to my bidding, even to take their own lives."<sup>14</sup>

Fortunately, members of the Church were not subjected to the powers of mesmerism. Its application was reserved for the unbeliever. Those most expert in this practice were selected as missionaries, and the scope of this program was said to have reached at least ten thousand in its diabolical use.

It is probable that the Maria Ward novel influenced others

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 417.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 25.



to read mesmerism into Mormonism. In 1856 "two independent French translations of this novel were sold all over France. . . ."<sup>15</sup> Two French authors, Paul Duplessis<sup>16</sup> (1859) and Hortense DuFay<sup>17</sup> (1863) used the language of magnetism to explain the behavior of Mormons. DuFay's use of magnetic gifts to describe Joseph Smith was much more benign than the version in *Female Life Among the Mormons*. Nevertheless, DuFay, like Ward, wrote that Joseph Smith was taught animal magnetism by a German practitioner. The Prophet's power was said by DuFay to reside in his "fascinating eyes." Duplessis was not as restrained. He created the magnetic-like, spiritualistic personality of Hiram Harris, characterized as the moving force behind the token, figurehead leadership of Brigham Young. The extent to which the two French writers borrowed the themes of mesmerism from Ward is, of course, conjectural. They may have drawn as well from nineteenth century mesmeric theories fashionable in France.

Other novels and plays incorporated mesmerism as an explanation of Mormonism's attractions. Usually this was done indirectly, emphasizing such terms as attraction, fascination, or magnetism, and somehow calling attention to the eyes. Percy Bolinbroke St. John, in *Jessie, the Mormon's Daughter*, writes the following warning: "Beware of their arts; enter not the circle of their fascinations; their charms are like those of the serpent. . . ." At a Mormon meeting the young Mormon at the front was said to have terrible eyes."<sup>18</sup>

The case of Pascal B. Smith illustrates how easily Mormonism became linked to mesmerism in the public mind. In 1848 Harriet Smith secured lawyers to represent her claim that her husband, Pascal B. Smith, was insane, and, hence, incompetent to manage their financial affairs. She requested that the court appoint someone as a guardian of their finances. In the course of the trial it was noted that Mr. Smith had joined a spiritualist group called Universal Brotherhood. The intent of this group was to "establish a Christian church . . . with a view to

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<sup>15</sup>Wilfried Decoo, "The Image of Mormonism in French Literature: Part I," *BYU Studies* 14 (Winter 1974):169.

<sup>16</sup>Paul Duplessis, *Les Mormons*, 5 vols. (Paris: A. Cadat, 1859).

<sup>17</sup>Hortense G. Dufay, *Le Prophète du XIX ème siècle, ou Vie des Saints des Derniers Jours (Mormons), Précède d'un aperçu sur d'autres socialistes unitaires et sur le génie de la poésie Anglaise* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1863).

<sup>18</sup>Percy Bolingbroke St. John, *Jessie the Mormon's Daughter*, 3 vols. (London: E. Harrison, 1861), unpagged preface, p. 13.

remedy the great evils of society.”<sup>19</sup> It was alleged that the medium for the Universal Brotherhood, James F. Mahan, was unscrupulously siphoning money for personal gain from Pascal B. Smith under the guise of religion. The legal transcript included a relatively obscure reference that Mahan “had been a Mormon preacher or been with the Mormons.”<sup>20</sup> Nothing else is said about Mahan’s alleged association with the Mormons, except that in the summary statement of one of the prosecuting attorneys, Mahan is repeatedly referred to as “the prophet.” Mahan’s alleged previous association with the mainline Methodists or even his involvement with the Universal Brotherhood was ignored. Instead the published pamphlet of the court proceedings received the title: “Law Case of Pascal B. Smith Exhibiting the Most Extraordinary Developments, Arising from Mesmeric Clairvoyance, As Related by a Mormon Prophet.”

More serious efforts to account for the rise of Mormonism occasionally brought in mesmerism in one way or another. As early as 1838 David M. Reese in *Humbugs of New York* lamented: “Multitudes who believe in ‘Animal Magnetism,’ subscribe to ‘Phrenology,’ are the willing victims of every form of ‘Quackery,’ . . . multitudes of such, have gathered around this *Mormon Oracle*, and drank in wisdom from his ‘golden bible!’ ”<sup>21</sup> J. B. Turner, *Mormonism in All Ages* (1842) sees Mormonism as one of a series of delusions; in the same series was “animal magnetism.” Charles McKay, who wrote one of the earliest reliable histories of Mormonism, also produced *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions* (1850), with a substantial section on “the Magnetisers.” This was guilt by association, Mormonism and mesmerism finding themselves together on the same rubbish heap.

In 1867, Pomeroy Tucker published *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism*. After recounting Brigham Young’s succession to the leadership of the Church following Joseph Smith’s death, Tucker notes that Young’s “peculiarities of character were similar to Joseph’s. He was shrewd, bold, and resolute, possessing an almost intuitive knowledge of men. He soon attracted attention, and became influential with his brethren.

<sup>19</sup>*Law Case of Pascal B. Smith Exhibiting the Most Extraordinary Developments Arising from Mesmeric Clairvoyance, as Related by a Mormon Prophet* (Cincinnati, 1848), p. 13.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>21</sup>David M. Reese, *Humbugs of New York* (New York: J. S. Taylor; Boston: Weeks, Jordan & Co., 1838), pp. 264-65.



They were involuntarily swayed by his strong, electric will. . . ."<sup>22</sup>

#### THE HYPNOTIC PROPHET

About this same time mesmerism was invoked as an explanation for one of the famous miracles of early Mormonism. The event took place in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1831. Ezra Booth, Symonds Ryder, a Mr. and Mrs. Johnson and others went to visit Joseph Smith to examine the claims of Mormonism. In the course of the conversation it was disclosed that Mrs. Johnson had a paralyzed right arm as a result of a stroke. An 1876 account of the event described the subsequent developments:

A few moments later, when the conversation had turned in another direction, Smith arose, and walking across the room, taking Mrs. Johnson by the hand, said in the most solemn and impressive manner: "Woman, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I command thee to be whole," and immediately left the room. The company were awe-stricken at the infinite presumption of the man, and the calm assurance with which he spoke. The sudden mental and moral shock—I know not how better to explain the well-attested fact—electrified the rheumatic arm—Mrs. Johnson at once lifted it up with ease, and on her return home the next day she was able to do her washing without difficulty or pain.<sup>23</sup>

By 1888 an important addition occurred in the description of the scene.

Moving backward a few steps he looked intently into the eyes of the lady, as if to get her under his mental control.<sup>24</sup>

The latter author summarized the alternative explanations.

The case is well authenticated; and those who seek to explain it away will be compelled to base themselves upon mesmeric influence or the unconscious nervous co-operation of the lady affected, rather than in cunning upon the part of Smith. It seems to have been simply a case where his audacity was rewarded with an accident of fortune it by no means deserved.<sup>25</sup>

In 1894 I. Woodbridge Riley traveled to Salt Lake City to gather material for a master of arts thesis and a subsequent

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<sup>22</sup>Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1867), p. 132.

<sup>23</sup>Hayden, *Early History*, p. 250.

<sup>24</sup>J. H. Kennedy, *Early Days of Mormonism* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1888), p. 122.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 121.

doctoral dissertation on Joseph Smith. He was not content with earlier explications of the psychology of the Prophet. "Sectarians and phrenologists, spiritualists and mesmerists have variously interpreted his more or less abnormal performances,—it now remains for the psychologist to have a try at them."<sup>26</sup> He was not really a trained psychologist—as an academic discipline psychology was in its infancy, and Riley's training had been minimal—but in his primitive effort to explain Joseph Smith on psychological grounds he was a pioneer psychohistorian. He relied heavily on genetic explanations, based on reports and rumors about the Prophet's family, and on the substantial role of hypnosis as a source of deception, both self-deception and the deception of others. By Riley's time hypnosis had acquired greater credibility in the explanation of phenomena previously explained by the discredited mesmerism. Hypnosis did not rely on explanation which emphasized the activation of magnetic fluids or the mystical power of the mesmerist. The psychological state of the subject, not the hypnotist, was the key to successful hypnosis. It was James Braid who was responsible for the greater respectability of hypnosis over mesmerism. Braid "did not believe that hypnosis was a cure-all, but like any other medical treatment, had its indications and contraindications."<sup>27</sup> According to Riley there were two difficulties with Maria Ward's mesmeric theory of Joseph Smith's power: exaggeration and anachronism. "The theory is interesting," he said, "but it overexplains. Joseph had immense influence long before this country was permeated by a distorted mesmerism."<sup>28</sup>

Although Riley did not see mesmerism as an adequate explanation for the Prophet's behavior, he was quite willing to suggest a linkage that disparaged Mormonism without endorsing mesmerism. Citing an anonymous pamphlet, he suggested that Joseph Smith knew the value of Anna Little, who had "mastered the science of animal magnetism," and kept her "in the sanctuary of the Communicant Sisters." Furthermore, Riley saw in anti-Mormon descriptions of the Mormon temple ceremony similarities to "the real doings around Mesmer's 'baquets Magnetiques.'" While discounting the trustworthiness

<sup>26</sup>I. Woodbridge Riley, *The Founder of Mormonism* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1902), pp. ix-x.

<sup>27</sup>Sarbin, "Hypnotic Phenomena," p. 759.

<sup>28</sup>Riley, *Founder*, p. 235.



of these accounts, Riley ignored the credibility issue when Mormonism could be identified with the occult and abnormal. Riley alluded to the use of mesmerism by the "Mormon Prophet" in the law case of Pascal B. Smith, which as we have seen offered no evidence of any such use. He noted that the account of the law case was published in a city "where city ordinances early prohibited public mesmeric exhibitions, and where there was some complaint of the difficulty of keeping female servants out of the clutches of the Mormons."

Riley found in the heir apparent to mesmerism, hypnotism, the key to Joseph Smith's power. Without documentation Riley alluded to Smith's "apparent hypnotic influence over people." In many respects Riley's interpretations were more compatible with mesmerism than hypnosis. The examples offered, in the most general of terms, of the Prophet's "suggestive successes" include the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, the early faith healings, and his ability to retain a large congregation for hours—obviously, for Riley, as a result of "a real collective hypnosis." In an appendix entitled "Polygamy and Hypnotism" he proposed "to show that some of his [Joseph Smith's] illicit purposes were effected through hypnotic influence." But beyond the feeble examples already mentioned, all he offers is Lucy Kimball's account of her original reluctance to become the Prophet's plural wife, his insistence that she would receive a manifestation that would reassure her, and the eventual spiritual experience that did just that. For Riley this was a perfect example of "post-hypnotic suggestion, with deferred hallucination."<sup>29</sup>

In the 1910s a wave of anti-Mormon propaganda and occasional violence swept across Great Britain. Based on the charge that polygamy was continuing, the participants in this anti-Mormon crusade were especially concerned about the conversion of English girls. In newspaper articles, in sermons, in rallies, in all kinds of public anti-Mormon meetings the warning was sounded. Among headlines in the London *Daily Express* were "The Mormon Trap," "The Deadly Menace to English Girls," and "Polygamy Still the Real Faith."<sup>30</sup> If there were not explicit charges of hypnotic powers in many of these warnings, they often implied that the Mormons exerted a

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 414.

<sup>30</sup>Nicholai Sorenson, "The Winds of Adversity: Anti-Mormonism in Great Britain, 1910-1925," unpublished paper, History 497, 17 April 1974, pp. 24-25.

mysterious, unholy influence. One of the most popular movies of the time was *Trapped by the Mormons*, in which the Mormon missionary exerts an obvious hypnotic force upon a beautiful, helpless maiden; camera close-ups repeatedly showed the missionary's eyes in a powerful, transfixing stare.<sup>31</sup>

About 1919 a London publisher brought out *In the Grip of the Mormons* by "an escaped wife of a Mormon elder." In it one of Joseph Smith's first converts was his wife Emma, who listened to him "with fear and an undefined, reverential awe that paralyzed her reason." Due to his "powers of fascination," she was helpless: "The combination of terror and superstition had been so overpowering that she remembered nothing but a conflicting of different passions in her heart, a dizziness and pressure of the atmosphere, when all was dark and blank, and she was half inclined to believe more than human agency had been present and deprived her of consciousness." As the Prophet continued his preaching, adding to his followers, he felt his own powers: "As his bold, fiery eyes rested on them, he knew their hearts quailed before him."<sup>32</sup>

#### MESMERISM: MORMONS AND EX-MORMONS

From the 1840s to the 1910s, those who saw mesmerism in Mormonism, used it to explain the appeal of Joseph Smith in particular and Mormon missionaries in general. They also, as we have seen, saw it as an explanation of the faith healings claimed by Mormons. That either the conversions or the healings might have been authentic was seldom considered. Ironically, the mesmeric interpretation was given unwitting encouragement by some Mormons, and it found its strongest advocate in one ex-Mormon.

Not that the Mormons ever said that Joseph Smith had mesmeric powers. But he was described as being a strong "personality and influence" (Mary Alice Cannon Lambert), as having an "engaging" personality (Jane Snyder Richards), as being "highly charged with the Holy Ghost" (Joseph Lee Robinson), as having "personal magnetism" (William Taylor), as having an electrifying handshake (Emmeline B.

<sup>31</sup>*Trapped by the Mormons* was recently acquired by the Church Historical Department.

<sup>32</sup>*In the Grip of the Mormons* by "an escaped wife of a Mormon Elder" (London: n.p., c1919). This is the same book as [Orvilla S. Belisle], *The Prophets; or, Mormonism Unveiled* (Philadelphia and London: Wm. White Smith, 1855).



Wells), as having eyes that could look right through a person (Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner). Parley P. Pratt said, "There was something connected with the serene and steady penetrating glance of his eye, as if he would penetrate the deepest abyss of the human heart, gaze into eternity, penetrate the heavens, and comprehend all worlds."<sup>33</sup> A nonbeliever at all disposed to explain Smith's influence on the grounds of mesmerism, exercised consciously or unconsciously, would find reinforcement in these statements from the Prophet's devoted followers.

More influential and more direct were the words of apostates who, looking back, saw their own conversion to Mormonism as coming from some strange, mysterious power. The most widely read such account was *Tell It All* by Fanny Stenhouse.<sup>34</sup> By the 1870s she, along with her husband, T. B. H. Stenhouse, had abandoned the Mormon faith. Her book is thus an apology, not only giving her reasons for apostasy, but also explaining her conversion in the first place. In essence she says that the Mormonism she heard in England in the 1840s was not the Mormonism of today. But it is obvious that hypnotic or mesmeric attraction entered into her early conversion and loyalty to Mormonism. Even before she encountered Mormonism firsthand, her parents were "led astray by the fascinations" of the new religion. Then the wife of a Baptist minister warned her about the Mormon missionaries: "There is a strange power with them that fascinates the people and draws them into their meshes in spite of themselves."<sup>35</sup> She describes a meeting in which a new member was confirmed. A short testimony meeting followed, and one Mormon was seized with "a nervous trembling" and began to prophesy. Stenhouse explains:

When we consider the excited state of her [the new member's] mind, and—if the statements of psychologists be true—the magnetic currents which were being transmitted from the sensitive nature of the man into the excited brain of the new convert, together with the pressure of half a dozen hu-

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<sup>33</sup>Examples drawn from a convenient summary, Hyrum L. and Helen Mae Andrus, *They Knew the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1974).

<sup>34</sup>Fanny Stenhouse wrote two books: *Exposé of Polygamy* (New York: American News Co., 1872), later reworked and transformed into *Tell It All* (Hartford, Conn.: A. D. Worthington, 1874), which itself went through many editions. Ronald W. Walker has shown the extent to which the book was plagiarized or fictionalized in "The Stenhouses and the Making of a Mormon Image," *Journal of Mormon History* 1 (1974):51-72.

<sup>35</sup>Stenhouse, *Tell It All*, p. 41.

man hands upon her head, it is not at all astonishing that when the hands were lifted off she should firmly believe that she had been blessed indeed.<sup>36</sup>

At another meeting Mrs. Stenhouse heard a Brother Edwards bear his testimony:

His voice thrilled with an earnestness which seemed to us something more than the mere excitement of the soul. A burning fire seemed to flash from his large, expressive eyes; his features were lighted up with that animation which gives a saint-like halo to the earnest face when fired with indignation or pleading soul-felt truths; while his whole frame seemed to glow with the glory of a land beyond this earth. . . . The effect of this exhortation was magical. We forgot all our outward surroundings, in the realization that the great work of the Lord was so gloriously begun and that it would surely go on, conquering and to conquer.<sup>37</sup>

She even describes the ordinance of anointing the sick in similar terms:

There was something peculiar about this laying on of hands. It was not a mere gentle touching, but a thorough manipulation. The two hands were placed firmly on the top of the head and then drawn energetically down the body while vigorous "passes"—as magnetizers call the action—were made repeatedly over the affected parts.<sup>38</sup>

What Mrs. Stenhouse wanted was a naturalistic explanation of the phenomena that had impressed her as an investigator and convert to the faith. It was all a "mystery" to her then, she explains:

I knew then nothing of the miraculous power of faith—not religious faith, but often just the reverse, which has so often relieved and cured diseases and infirmities which have baffled the power of the most skilled physicians. Moreover I knew nothing then of that peculiar magnetic power which scientific men now have proved belongs to certain constitutions and can be used for curative purposes.<sup>39</sup>

She does not for a minute believe that they were really miracles, for she is confident that "scientific inquiry would readily show that the effects were only natural results of natural causes."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 86.



Mesmerism for Mrs. Stenhouse is a *deus ex machina*, a naturalistic explanation for the success of Mormon proselyters, for the healings and sincere testimonies she has witnessed, and above all for her own conversion and early belief. It places the responsibility beyond herself; she was not duped, but was the victim of a mysterious power. Although she did not originate the supposed connection between Mormonism and mesmerism, her work, which went through several editions, probably did more than any other to give it currency from the mid-1870s on. The mysterious powers of attraction, the intense, expressive eyes, the irresistible fascination of the missionaries, the miraculous (actually hypnotic) healings—these, as we have seen, become the commonplaces of anti-Mormon literature for a whole generation.

#### MESMERISM AND ANTI-MORMON LITERATURE

One of the most prolific of anti-Mormon writers during this period was Winifred Graham, whose books, all novels except one, sold by the hundreds of thousands. For many readers the image of the Mormon was that portrayed by this author. In her *Eve and the Elders* the opening scene has the heroine Eve coming upon a Mormon elder in the park who was being heckled and on the verge of being driven out. She was "drawn by curiosity. . . , fascinated by the sight of his strained, white face." When she met the missionary, an Elder Penrose, she found that "his face contained a charm that was indefinable." His eyes sought hers, and she "felt the magnetism of his glance—strong and appealing." Actually, there is some complexity to this plot, for Elder Penrose turns out to be secretly chafing under the tyranny of Mormonism. But the description of other elders goes along the same line. A very successful proselyter Elder Solomon Flittler, "would go to any lengths to win converts. He never considered the truth, and promised the girls anything under the sun if he thought he could persuade them to emigrate." His conquests were numerous, for he sought impressionable girls. . . . He was "a kind of conjurer who could produce the most wonderful gifts from unseen sources." Eve finds herself "drawn by a strange destiny into a web from which she could not break free."<sup>41</sup> The plot continues through murders (blood atonement), escapes, threats, and eventual

<sup>41</sup>Winifred Graham [Cory], *Eve and the Elders* (London, n.d.), chapters 1-6.

marriage of the heroine and the elder, who renounces Mormonism. Winifred Graham's *Ezra the Mormon* contains the same stereotypes. Ezra, the Mormon elder, was "the very nature to attract Thora—[he was] a man in whose eyes the power of dominion shone." In a later scene when Thora's father attempted to separate the two young people, he brought down his cane on the Mormon elder's shoulder, who "made no signs of feeling pain; he just stood and fixed his assailant with an eye of steel." The elder slipped his arm through Thora's. "The girl looked dazed and helpless. She tried to speak, but her trembling lips failed to frame a word. 'She's mesmerized,' half shrieked her father."<sup>42</sup> Again, the plot moves from England to Utah, with the girl and the elder drawn through a series of adventures, including the unspeakably hideous endowment ceremonies and threats of blood atonement. But enticement, attraction, fascination, and magnetism are prominent throughout, set against the countercurrent of attempted escape.

That a concept so useful, seeming to explain so much, continued to crop up in more recent treatments of Mormon history should not be surprising. Vardis Fisher's *Children of God* portrays a Joseph Smith by no means lacking in admirable traits of character, but including as well some stereotypes from the mesmerism tradition. At one confrontation between the young Smith and a Palmyra mob one man "tried to laugh but only snickered; and another, slowly withdrawing, with his gaze on Joseph's face, spoke out of sudden awe. 'Look at his eyes! Men, look at his eyes' " Soon the men left, and "Joseph was left alone, a man courageous and fearless, whose eyes, whose strange intense directness, had abashed his enemies." Later, he took the three prospective witnesses of the Book of Mormon into the woods. "There, with bared head, he stood motionless, gazing at the sky, his eyes so bright and hypnotic that Dave looked anxiously at Oliver. . . ." In other incidents the same pattern is repeated, as when Sidney Rigdon and Joseph entered the woods to pray. "Rigdon watched him with a skeptical stare. When he saw the pallor in Joseph's face and the far-seeing hypnotic brightness of his eyes, he was convinced, and he listened attentively when the prophet spoke."<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup>Winifred Graham [Cory], *Ezra the Mormon* (London: Everett & Co., 1908), p. 19.

<sup>43</sup>Vardis Fisher, *Children of God* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1939), pp. 30, 47, 80.



The standard biography of Joseph Smith, Fawn Brodie's *No Man Knows My History* refers to Smith's "magnetic influence over his friends" and his "talent for making men see visions." Referring to the testimony of the three witnesses and the fact of their later departure from the Mormon Church, Mrs. Brodie notes that Joseph Smith had no reason to fear that they would deny their testimony "for he had conjured up a vision they would never forget." She recognizes his "magnetic" sway while attempting to see him as growing into a role quite unconsciously.<sup>44</sup> Ultimately, the Brodie interpretation sees the Prophet as self-hypnotized. The combination of personal sincerity and deception earlier claimed for converts is now claimed for the Prophet himself.

#### MORMON ATTITUDES TOWARD MESMERISM

While many non-Mormon, or ex-Mormon, writers were attributing the powers of Mormonism to mesmerism, many Mormon writers were relegating the powers of mesmerism to the devil. At the very best Mormons were cautious and skeptical about mesmerism. The *Times and Seasons* issue of 15 March 1843, reflected this concern:

With several hundred different religions, all clashing and in commotion, the speculative theories of Miller, with his wild enthusiasm; the deceptive pretensions of mesmerism; the poison of infidelity; the plans of Fourier, and the ten thousand other notions that are deluging the earth, and cracking the human brain, render it indeed necessary that God should again speak and point out the way of salvation and happiness with certainty to the human family, and bid the dire commotion cease.<sup>45</sup>

Less than two months later Joseph Smith objected to "a lecturer on Mesmerism and Phrenology . . . performing in the city."<sup>46</sup> However, the record is not clear as to whether Joseph objected to his phrenology, his mesmerism, both, or some other characteristic of the man. In 1843 the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, under the

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<sup>44</sup>Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), pp. 73, 74, 78, 86.

<sup>45</sup>*Times and Seasons* 4 (15 March 1843):137. The same statement appeared in the *Millennial Star* 4 (January 1844):140.

<sup>46</sup>Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1932-51), 5:383. The handwritten version included the following stronger words, which were omitted from the published version: "thought we had been imposed upon enough by such kind of things." Joseph Smith History, ms., Church Archives.

rather hostile caption "Mesmeretic Idiots," gave "important cautions to those who wish to examine this subject practically":

Never allow yourself to be mesmerized by a person not in perfect health.

Never allow yourself to be acted on by a person inferior in his mental powers.

Never allow a rough, uncouth person to act on you—he will frequently induce nervous diseases the most difficult to cure.

Never allow a stranger, especially one of the opposite sex, to mesmerize you.

Never allow yourself to be acted on by more than one mesmerizer.

Never remain in the mesmeric condition more than thirty minutes.

By all means never allow your brain to be tampered with by ignorant mesmerizers; in an evil hour they may render you idiotic for life.<sup>47</sup>

Cautious participation in mesmerism seemed permissible under certain circumstances.

Notwithstanding, it is clear that during the Nauvoo period there was little sympathy for mesmerism. In 1844 a New York newspaper, the *Attican Democrat*, reported the case of a Harvey Hawkins who, with the help of mesmerism, was able to reveal the location of \$1,000 buried in the woods near Alexandria. The *Nauvoo Neighbor* took a rather dim view of the sensational mesmeric revelation. "We should suspect that Harvey knew something about the money before he went into a mesmeric sleep."<sup>48</sup>

One of the earlier attributions by Mormons of the power of the devil to the practice of mesmerism occurred in 1845. The *Nauvoo Neighbor* printed an account from *Blackwoods Magazine* of an amateur mesmerist who was surprised by his newly found powers. The origin of his power was no mystery to the editor of the *Neighbor*:

We can inform Mr. Blackwood that there is a power in mesmerism, and that power is the same that John saw come out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. Devils working miracles; that's all.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>"Mesmeretic Idiots," *The Nauvoo Neighbor* 1 (19 July 1843):3.

<sup>48</sup>"Mesmerism," *The Nauvoo Neighbor* 2 (21 August 1844):3.

<sup>49</sup>"A Man a Mesmerizer in Spite of Himself," *The Nauvoo Neighbor* 3 (11 June 1845):1.



Before Elder John Taylor left Wales in 1846 to join the Saints in the wilderness, he sketched an outline of an essay on mesmerism and requested T. D. Brown, the editor of the *Millennial Star*, to complete the project. The intent of the article was "to guard the Saints against the frauds and impositions of men, and the power and influence of Satan."<sup>50</sup> Taylor conceded that there was power in mesmerism, questioned the secular explanations of magnetism as the source of the power, and implicated the devil in its operations. Evidently, Taylor's concern was stimulated by his observation that some of the members were meddling in mesmerism:

I have met with some who were Saints that had been magnetized by unbelievers, and they partook of their spirit and have fallen from the simplicity of the gospel. Again I have met with Saints who have magnetized others, not knowing that they were doing wrong, and the persons have received no material injury, because the magnetizer himself had not a bad spirit; but let him continue to do it and he would loose [sic] the spirit of God, and so would those who were operated upon.<sup>51</sup>

John Taylor made his position very clear:

We shall not ourselves go to magnetizers, nor suffer ours to go to them, to be benumbed for amputation, excision, or healing; . . . if God does not heal us, the Devil cannot.<sup>52</sup>

Other articles appeared in Church publications with a similar message.<sup>53</sup>

The identification of the devil with mesmerism intensified with the growth of spiritualism beginning in the late 1840s.<sup>54</sup> Spiritualism incorporated many of the techniques of mesmerism. Clairvoyance, table-rapping, seances, table-tipping and spirit mediums became virtually synonymous with mesmerism. Much of the criticism by Mormons of mesmerism after the onset of

<sup>50</sup>John Taylor, "Mesmerism," *The Millennial Star* 9 (15 February 1847):49.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>John Davis, "The Cholera and Mesmerism in Wales," *The Millennial Star* 11 (10 July 1849):264-66; *The Millennial Star* 11 (1 November 1849):335; "The Cheltenham 'Ecce Homo,'" *The Millennial Star* 15 (17 September 1853): 618-20; J. L. Barfoot, "Dialogue on Mind," *Juvenile Instructor* 14 (1879):106.

<sup>54</sup>See Davis Bitton, "Mormonism Encounters Spiritualism," *Journal of Mormon History* 1 (1974):39-50. The association with spiritualism also resulted in a loss to mesmerism of support in scientific circles. E. G. Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology*, 2nd ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1950), pp. 122-23.

spiritualism was directed at the claims of spiritualism. When the spiritualistic and the occult were divested from phenomena circumscribed by the concept of mesmerism, there was occasional evidence of openness to more naturalistic explanations. An 1850 article in the *Deseret News* under the heading "A New Form of Mesmerism" illustrates this contention:

It is said that certain clock makers at Bristol, Connecticut, in making some chronometers lately, found it impossible for the workmen to keep awake when they were setting instruments agoing. It is necessary, in regulating them, to count the beats in a minute by a regulator, and change the hair-spring until both go nearly in time; then the screws in the balance are turned until the greatest maximum is obtained, when they are rated and the rate registered. The workmen find no difficulty with the parts, but when the whole movement is going, any person who sits down and counts the beats, or watches the motion of balance, invariably becomes drowsy. Attempts have been made with other clocks, but they do not produce the same sensation. The clocks are of polished work, and gilded by a peculiar galvanic process, which, if the facts be as here stated, may have something to do with the effect. What is curious is, that the person who is put to sleep continues to count the beatings of time with his hand or foot. The writer in the Boston Post, who gives an account of the matter adds:—"It affords me some amusement to visitors to see a company of men at work and half of them asleep, yet laboring to keep themselves awake. On Saturday last a collier came to the factories with a load of coals, and was admitted into the finishing room, to see the clocks. One of the workmen desired to make the experiment; accordingly the old man was put to count; striking on the bench with his hand in time with the clock, he went to sleep in three minutes, and was kept under the influence for nearly an hour. His dog, that had followed him into the room, upon discovering his situation exhibited alarm and ran about howling in a most dismal manner; all this did not disturb the sleeper, but the moment the clock was stopped he awoke, and was surprised to find that so much time had passed."—There is some great principle established in these phenomena that is truly mysterious.<sup>55</sup>

Orson Pratt thought that some had been rendered more susceptible to the acceptance of mesmerism by the adoption of "scientific phraseology" which seemed to confer the "authority" of science on the practice.

The devil has invented various names for his manifestations in order to get the people to swallow them down; the same as

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<sup>55</sup>"A New Form of Mesmerism," *Deseret News*, 19 October 1850.



the doctors. When they wish to administer some nauseous kind of medicine, they sweeten it up a little. So the devil has sweetened up these things in such a way that he has got almost all these manifestations under the name of science. If you want to see a species of devilism made manifest, it comes out under a scientific phraseology, under the specious name of electro-biology, animal magnetism, or some such popular name—names that have been given to real sciences, which have their laws, founded in nature, are now given to these supernatural manifestations. Why does Satan use these artifices? Because the people at the present day have become naturally scientific or a great many of them have; and the devil thinks if he can only invent a real, nice, beautiful name, with some resemblance to a scientific name, a great many of these persons will swallow it down, and think it all right.<sup>56</sup>

But it was not simply the legitimization of mesmerism by its association with accepted jargon that influenced some. Brigham Young cited examples, hypothetical and real, of the power of seduction by mesmeric demonstration. "I know of many whom Mesmerism has led out of this church; they would see the sick healed, and attribute it to the power of God; would fall under its influence, embrace and practice it, and thus give the devil power over them to lead them out of the kingdom of God:"<sup>57</sup>

Mormons were by no means perceived to be powerless in the face of mesmerism. Quite the contrary, President Young taught that the faithful Latter-day Saint could not be magnetized and he defied spiritualists to exercise mesmeric powers in his presence. It was when members of the Church did not possess the light of revelation that they were unable to discern between the powers of Satan and the powers of God.

For President Young there was another key besides the light of revelation to judge the value of mesmeric demonstration. His practical bent moved him to apply a pragmatic test.

As I have said to my friends here, in speaking about Spiritualism, I have seen the effects of animal magnetism, or some anomalous sleep, or whatever it may be called, many a time in my youth. I have seen persons lie on the benches, on the floor of the meeting house, or on the ground at their camp meetings, for ten, twenty, and thirty minutes, and I do not know but an hour, and not a particle of pulse about them. That was the effect of what I call animal magnetism; they

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<sup>56</sup>Orson Pratt in *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1855-86), 13:70. Hereafter cited as *JD*.

<sup>57</sup>*JD*, 3:156.

called it the power of God, but no matter what it was. I used to think that I should like to ask such persons what they had seen in their trance or vision; and when I got old enough and dared ask them, I did so. I have said to such persons: "Brother, what have you experienced?" "Nothing." "What do you know more than before you had this; what do you call it—trance, sleep, or dream? Do you know any more than before you fell to the earth?" "Nothing more." "Have you seen any person?" "No." "Then what is the use or utility of your falling down here in the dirt?" I could not see it, and consequently I was infidel to this.<sup>58</sup>

Obviously, while calling attention to the lack of useful, practical results in the revivalistic experiences, Young was willing to explain the behavior itself by involving the term "animal magnetism"; he was giving a naturalistic explanation to something the revivalists themselves thought divine. At the same time he did not carry this notion to its logical conclusion: never did he suggest that Mormon healings were merely mesmeric illusions, and once he explicitly rejected the claim of some that the New Testament miracles were accomplished by "psychology, electro-biology, mesmerism, etc."<sup>59</sup>

Actually, Brigham Young was willing to concede some truth to mesmerism. In 1846 he heard a lengthy explanation of the experiments of animal magnetism by a Dr. Jewett, who said it had "nearly cured him of infidelity, and he thought the mormons would understand the principle." Young's answer falls far short of condemnation: "Pres. Young told him that he understood it [the principle of animal magnetism] perfectly, that the Saints believed in the Lord's magnetizing, that God magnetized Belshazzar so that he saw the hand writing on the wall, etc."<sup>60</sup> Ten years later Young said in a sermon:

The principle of animal magnetism is true, but wicked men use it to an evil purpose. I have never told you much about my belief in this magnetic principle. Speaking is a true gift, but I can speak to the glory of God, or to the injury of his cause and to my condemnation, as I please; and still the gift is of God. The gift of animal magnetism is a gift of God, but wicked men use it to promote the cause of the devil, and that is precisely the difference.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>*JD*, 14:113. See also 14:90.

<sup>59</sup>*JD*, 13:140-41.

<sup>60</sup>Journal History, 3 March 1846. Brigham Young also used the language of mesmerism on one occasion to support the importance of the laying on of hands in healing the sick. *JD*, 3:157-58.

<sup>61</sup>*JD*, 3:370.



Mesmerism, said Young, was an "inverted truth" which originated in holy, good and righteous principles, which have been inverted by the power of the devil."<sup>62</sup>

But the recognition that animal magnetism was a true principle if properly used, and that it explained the trances of revivalists and at least one scriptural miracle, fell short of an endorsement. As practiced in his day the principle was associated with spiritualists and "evil men." He did not encourage the Saints to participate in these experiments.

The closest that any Latter-day Saint came to the non-Mormon allegations regarding Joseph Smith's magnetic powers was contained in an article published in the *Juvenile Instructor* at the turn of the century. N. Y. Schofield, a Mormon phrenologist, had been exposed to the claims of mesmerism during his schooling at the American Institute of Phrenology. He wrote:

One of the many distinguishing characteristics of the prophet was the wonderful magnetic influence he unconsciously exerted over others.

In looking for the physiological source of this mystic power in Joseph Smith it is important to bear in mind that God always works upon natural principles. . . . If therefore a positive effect be traced to its probable cause we should expect to find in the Prophet's mentality an unusual development of that particular organ which determines the strength and measure of that subtle force we call magnetism . . . locating the seat of magnetic power in the "little" brain or cerebellum, we find the organ remarkably strong in the present instance.

. . . The cerebellum is conspicuously large giving rise to the fair and logical inference that in raising up Joseph Smith to be a leader, expounder, defender and martyr, the Lord designedly endowed His servant with a special measure of these mental and physical attributes, the natural function of which is to attract, repel, and influence according to will or expediency, the thoughts, emotions and actions of other men.<sup>63</sup>

This is an interesting attempt to have it both ways, a kind of naturalistic supernaturalism. God, fully understanding that the Prophet would require magnetic powers, created a large cerebellum in Joseph Smith that the last dispensation might be ushered in. The essential point does not rest upon the assump-

<sup>62</sup>*JD*, 3:156.

<sup>63</sup>*The Juvenile Instructor* 37 (15 May 1902):308-9.

tions of mesmerism; in the same vein Schofield might have said that recognition of what the Prophet would need led God to create in him a high intelligence and an articulate tongue. Still, it is clear enough that Schofield, influenced primarily by phrenology, ascribed some truth to mesmerism.

Such minor eddies should not take us away from the main stream. Throughout its history Mormonism generally opposed mesmerism. There were many reasons for this opposition. Mesmerism was frequently associated with spiritualism, was often practiced by charlatans, seemed to offer a competitive, naturalistic explanation for miracles, and was perceived as a threat to free agency. It should be added that throughout its history mesmerism was also faced with substantial scientific skepticism and opposition. The Mormons liked to see themselves as scientific, especially when the conclusions of science coincided, as in this instance, with their religious position. John Taylor's early skepticism of the theory of animal magnetism underlying mesmerism was in spirit close to the scientific skepticism of his contemporaries.

#### HYPNOTISM

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the language of mesmerism, except as metaphor, gradually disappeared from the scene, and theories of hypnosis assumed the role of explanation. Yet Mormons showed little variation in attitude, continuing to regard hypnotism in the same terms as the earlier mesmerism. To the popular mind they were simply two words for the same phenomenon, and hypnotism continued to be handicapped by many of the questionable associations and sensational, exhibitionist uses that had handicapped its predecessor. Besides, as we have seen, popular writers interested in the attractions of Mormonism used the terminology of hypnotism in the same general way that they had used that of mesmerism. In 1901, a hypnotist had been visiting the settlements in Emery County. This led someone to ask whether Latter-day Saints should participate in the experiments. The *Deseret News* answered:

We say, most emphatically, that it is not right to engage in that practice, nor to come under its influence. There is no harm in fairly investigating the claims of hypnotism to be a science, or in learning what it is and does. But revelation is very clear as to the means to be employed in the Church, for



the healing of the sick and the suppression of disease. When there is not sufficient faith to obtain relief, we are to nourish the sick with all tenderness, with herbs and mild foods but not from the hands of an enemy, and the Elders are to administer the ordinance provided for the purpose. . . .  
. . . it is not proper for Elders or members of this Church to experiment on people, in the fashion of the pretended "professors" who travel through the land as conjurors and stage performers, to astonish and draw money from the credulous. Let them alone.<sup>64</sup>

In addition to the inappropriateness of hypnotism as a means of treating illness and its use "to astonish and draw money from the credulous," there was another basic reason why Latter-day Saints were warned against it. As Apostle Francis M. Lyman explained in 1903:

Hypnotism is a reality, and though some who claim to have this mysterious power are only tricksters, yet others do really hypnotise those who submit to them. From what I understand and have seen, I should advise you not to practise hypnotism. For my own part I could never consent to being hypnotised or allowing one of my children to be. The free agency that the Lord has given us is the choicest gift we have. As soon, however, as we permit another mind to control us, as that mind controls its own body and functions, we have completely surrendered our free agency to another; and so long as we are in the hypnotic spell—and that is as long as the hypnotist desires us to be—we give no consent in any sense whatever to anything we do. . . . Hypnotism is very much like the plan that Satan desired the Father to accept before this earth was peopled. He would make them do good and save them in spite of themselves. The Savior, on the other hand, proposed to give free agency to all, and save those who would accept salvation.<sup>65</sup>

Thus, abuses by the unethical and/or incompetent, the use of hypnotism as show business, the honest concern with the issue of free agency and skepticism of hypnosis as a healing power also led church leadership to oppose hypnosis. Moreover, the historical tie between mesmerism and hypnotism did not enhance the image of the latter. More recently the involvement of the ethically competent professional has doubtless played some role in the formation of a more neutral church position vis-à-vis hypnosis and the professional. In a letter addressed to Dr. Leslie Cooper on 7 October 1974, Church Com-

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<sup>64</sup>*Deseret News*, 29 January 1901.

<sup>65</sup>*Improvement Era*, April 1903.

missioner of Health, Dr. James O. Mason, noted that the First Presidency had cleared the following statement on hypnosis: "The Church regards the use of hypnosis under competent, professional supervision for the treatment of disease as wholly a medical question. The Church advises members against participation in hypnosis demonstrations."

Given the general rejection of mesmerism and hypnotism by Mormons (at least until the very recent cautious changes noted above), what stimulated writers to connect these with Mormonism? Mainly, we feel, they offered a naturalistic explanation of Joseph Smith's success as a leader, of the proselyting success of Mormonism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and of the miraculous healings and gifts that Mormons testified to. To portray the Mormons as foul and disgusting was not consistent with their success or the experience of those who heard the missionaries. To portray them as outwardly attractive or at least inoffensive while calling attention to their strange and mysterious powers of attraction seemed to combine a description with a warning. The "seduction" of converts was explained. A factor like "brainwashing" or mesmerism seemed at once to recognize the sincerity of many Mormons and to hold forth the promise that educational and social crusades might be the solution to the Mormon problem.<sup>66</sup> At least one ex-Mormon, Fanny Stenhouse, found the approach highly useful in describing her own experience: she could reproduce her early enthusiasm for the Mormon religion and even recognize the sincerity of other converts while offering a naturalistic explanation that in effect absolved her of responsibility for her early decisions. Finally, both Mormonism and mesmerism made good copy; to connect them capitalized on a widespread popular interest in the strange and exotic. If the two "delusions" could be simultaneously smeared by being brought into contact with one another, this was for many of the writers all to the good.

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<sup>66</sup>Gail Farr Casterline, " 'In The Toils' or 'Onward for Zion': Images of the Mormon Woman, 1852-1890," Master's thesis, Utah State University, 1974, p. 25.



# The Closing of the Early Japan Mission

R. Lanier Britsch\*

The first Japan Mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was closed 7 August 1924, after twenty-three years of effort and sacrifice on the part of missionaries and Church members. Because the Church is growing rapidly in Japan today, students of Asian mission history often wonder why the Church is successful now, since the early mission failed. The object of this article is to explain that failure and the consequent closing of the early mission.

## THE CLOSING

On 13 June 1924, President Hilton A. Robertson of the Japan Mission, received a telegram from Church headquarters in Salt Lake City; it contained 12,000 yen but no message of explanation.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, Robertson and his missionaries had a good idea why the money had been sent. For several years rumors had circulated among them concerning the possible closing of the mission. Even during a missionary conference the month before President Robertson had "touched upon the possibilities of the Japan Mission closing and said that under present conditions, with the current thought as it is, it is impossible for the missionaries to spend their best efforts in the work." He also told the missionaries "that he hoped to learn in the very near future the fate of the mission. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

He was free to make such a statement because he had been corresponding with the First Presidency regarding this matter. On 31 January, he sent them a very carefully written appraisal

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<sup>1</sup>Japan Mission Journals, 1901-1924, 13 June 1924, Church Archives, Hereafter cited as JMJ.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 14 May 1924.

of the condition of the mission, after he had consulted with all of his missionaries to find how they evaluated conditions in their areas. His five page report was considered carefully by President Grant and his counselors.

In answering this letter the First Presidency gave several indications that they were seriously considering closing the mission. The words "if the work continues" were used in one instance, and elsewhere they said they had "doubted as to the wisdom of continuing the mission." The most direct reference to closing the mission was written as follows:

When we stop to think that over twenty years of hard labor have been performed in Japan, it certainly looks as though the Lord would justify us if we saw fit to close that mission, when we read the words: "I feel perfectly safe in saying that we haven't over five or six real Saints in the mission who are willing and ready to help carry on the work."<sup>3</sup> The Lord has said in Section 18 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

"And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!"

We do not wish to lose one soul in Japan, but if the same amount of labor in some other country was performed the chances are we would have many many times as many converts.<sup>4</sup>

Robertson's letter had indicated that all of the missionaries felt "the same amount of labor with some other people would bring better results."

All this was considered by the First Presidency when they wrote to President Robertson on 20 February. The only thing that appears to have kept them from a final decision to close the mission at that time was "whether we have done our duty in warning the Japanese nation."<sup>5</sup>

Following the May 1924 conference, the missionaries in Osaka, Sapporo and Sendai, as well as those in Tokyo, found attendance at scheduled meetings dropping weekly. Furthermore, some of the elders were insulted by irate Japanese who were aroused by the recent passage of the Japanese exclusion

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<sup>3</sup>In the same letter the First Presidency mentioned that Lloyd O. Ivie, the previous mission president, estimated that there were "only five or six real converts to the Gospel in that mission."

<sup>4</sup>Heber J. Grant, Letterbook, 22 February 1924, p. 154, Church Archives.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 156.



laws in the United States. Notes telling them to go home had been left on their doors. To their surprise, on Sunday, 15 June, a Tokyo newspaper "contained a short telegram message stating that the Mormon missionaries would be immediately withdrawn from Japan."<sup>6</sup>

Why an earlier telegram from President Heber J. Grant had been delayed is not known,<sup>7</sup> but on Thursday, 26 June 1924, the following arrived at the mission office. It was dated 9 June:

Have decided to withdraw all missionaries from Japan temporarily. Cabling you twelve thousand yen for that purpose. If more needed cable us.  
Arrange return immediately.  
Grant.<sup>8</sup>

The man who had opened the mission in 1901 had made the decision to "temporarily" close it.

Few missions of the Church have been closed, especially after being in operation for so many years. There are some slight similarities between the closing of Japan and the earlier closure of the Society Islands, Tonga, and other missions, but Japan is a separate problem. Most of the circumstances that caused temporary defeat there were peculiar to that mission.

#### PROBLEMS THAT CAUSED THE CLOSING

The official announcement of the First Presidency stated that the mission was being closed because of "existing conditions in Japan and because of the almost negligible results of missionary effort in that country. . . ."<sup>9</sup> The issues that must be explained are what the "conditions" in Japan were and why the results were "almost negligible." The problems and con-

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<sup>6</sup>JMJ, 15 June 1924. The LDS missionaries in Japan were not aware that a formal public announcement concerning the closing of the mission had been made in the *Deseret Evening News* (hereafter cited as *DN*) on 12 June 1924. It is not surprising that international news wire services had picked up this information by 15 June.

<sup>7</sup>The First Presidency was a little upset that this telegram did not arrive sooner than the notice about the money. They conjectured that the Church's cable address, "Quickmere," was not registered in Tokyo, which would have accounted for the failure of the mission to receive the telegram immediately. Grant, Letterbook, letter to Hilton A. Robertson, 12 July 1924, p. 969.

<sup>8</sup>Manuscript History and Historical Reports of the Japan Mission, 1901-1924, Church Archives; see also Heber J. Grant, Letterbook, 19 June 1924, p. 752.

<sup>9</sup>*DN*, 12 June 1924. The official text of the announcement also stated that the closing was temporary.

tributing difficulties the Church faced in Japan fit broadly into three categories: First, a number of problems were constant during the entire length of the mission. Difficulties with language, missionary approach, culture, scarcity of missionary numbers, long tenure, and failure to attract many converts all fit into this category.

Secondly, there were a number of hindrances that arose during the last several years of the mission. Among these were: international problems, such as the Japanese exclusion laws which were passed in the United States, the near-closing of the Tonga Mission at approximately the same time, the failure to acquire any real property, and the great Tokyo earthquake of 1923.

Thirdly, to these definable historic facts can be added the dimension of inspiration which guided the First Presidency, and the general aspect of psychological distress or defeatism which plagued missionaries in Japan, and Church leaders in Salt Lake City.

The Japanese language was recognized by every Mormon missionary as the main difficulty in the quest for baptisms. President Heber J. Grant complained that he constantly fell asleep while studying the language. He also reportedly quipped "that he learned the Japanese language but the people couldn't understand their own language when he spoke it."<sup>10</sup> Years after the mission was closed, Hilton A. Robertson said he felt that many Mormons had condemned the Japanese for not accepting the gospel more readily, but he felt this was wrong. He placed the blame on the poor language abilities of the missionaries. They simply did not communicate well.<sup>11</sup>

It is not correct to conclude that none of the missionaries mastered the language. A number of elders accomplished remarkable tasks, such as translating the Book of Mormon, Anderson's *Brief History of the Church*, Talmage's *Articles of Faith*, and other materials. But the fact remains that mastery of the language took years, not months, and this ability frequently came concurrently with waning enthusiasm for the work and a missionary's personal desire to return home.

Spoken language mastery was important but it was recognized from the beginning that potential converts needed printed

<sup>10</sup>Hilton A. Robertson in *Conference Report of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, April 1947, p. 53. Hereafter cited as CR.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.



information to study. The earliest missionaries expected that translated materials would bring in converts more rapidly. Unfortunately, after years of diligent effort and a number of good publications, there was no evidence that tracts and books helped the conversion rate at all.

An important aspect of the language and translation problem was transculturization, or the adaptation of terms from one culture to another. Special terminology has developed since the founding of the Church that sets Latter-day Saints apart from other religious organizations. Words as basic as "God" and "Savior" carry different meanings for Mormons than for other groups. The early missionaries to Japan soon learned that finding the proper vocabulary to convey their special message was difficult. The case of Elder John W. Stoker's translation of the *Brief History of the Church* illustrates this problem well. In writing the First Presidency of the Church after the book had been published, Alma O. Taylor said:

Being a book in which nearly all of our Mormon terms are used, it seemed that we would never get through all the problems that came up, for no words in common use ever approached an equivalent for the English meaning as we interpret it; hence, study, inquiry, and experiment had to follow . . . but these words are not necessarily beyond the grasp of the reading circle . . . for new words are only a combination of old words.<sup>12</sup>

Selecting good material for translation and publication was another problem. Several poor choices were made, along with some wise ones. Possibly the worst choice of a tract to translate was "Why I Left the Church of England. . . ."

It must be added, however, that in general, efforts were made to fit tracts to the needs of the people. An intelligent early effort to accommodate preaching to local needs was a pamphlet titled "The True and Living God." In its entirety this tract contained a very simple, step-by-step analysis of the Mormon concept of God.<sup>13</sup>

The problem was compounded by the fact that the Japanese did not share the same Christian patterns of logic, belief in

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<sup>12</sup>Letter from Alma O. Taylor to the First Presidency, 3 September 1907, Japanese Mission Letterbook, Copybook C, p. 153, Church Archives. Hereafter cited as Copybook, plus appropriate letter.

<sup>13</sup>Alma O. Taylor, Journal B, 15 June 1903. Taylor kept a careful diary of his daily activities for a number of years. His diaries are held by Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

scriptures, or ideas about God. This is to be expected in a non-Christian part of the world. Missionaries with keen insight, such as Alma O. Taylor, Elbert D. Thomas, H. Grant Ivins, and Joseph H. Stimpson, recognized this problem and worked to overcome it. Taylor wrote concerning this difficulty after his arrival home:

I remember being asked to address an audience in Salt Lake City, before I went to Japan, on the subject, "Why I am a Latter-day Saint." After stating that my birth and bringing up in the Church were the first and foundation reasons for being a Latter-day Saint, I proceeded to quote scriptures to show that "Mormonism" was true. I am not ashamed of that speech, but I often smile when I think of the effect, or rather the lack of effect, such a speech would have on an audience in Japan, where we have to give reason for our faith independent of The Bible and the scriptures.<sup>14</sup>

Taylor continued this line of reasoning further by suggesting that many Church members placed too much reliance upon the testimonies of the ancient apostles and disciples of Christ. He said,

In Japan, the elders have to preach God and Jesus Christ, not in the name of Paul, John, Peter, Nephi, Samuel, Joseph Smith, or any other prophet, but in their own names and through the testimony of their own works. . . .<sup>15</sup>

Taylor felt that missionaries succeeded best "by earnestly and prayerfully seeking the evidences which God has amply provided in His own creations and dealings, and by using these evidences under the direction of the Holy Spirit."<sup>16</sup>

English language classes were used to attract prospective investigators during almost the entire mission. Some members were acquired through this means, but the missionaries frequently felt that this approach was a waste of time. Their students were often interested only in the English language and not in religion.

President Grant became disgusted with the attitude of many Japanese who attended LDS meetings. Speaking for President Grant, one of his counselors wrote to President Robertson saying,

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<sup>14</sup>Alma O. Taylor, "Japan, the Ideal Mission Field," *Improvement Era* (June 1910), p. 780.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 781.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 780.



President Grant's experience in Japan teaches him that the average Japanese who comes to our meetings comes to see what he can get out of it. There is one little illustration of a man who learned French, German and English by belonging to three different churches and he was only too anxious to become a member of our church, providing we would employ him as interpreter and translator.<sup>17</sup>

Another example of a similar nature was also mentioned in the same letter to President Robertson. The First Presidency wrote:

President Grant remembers a group of young men, ten, he thinks it was in number, who came and believed everything we taught until the elders quit talking to them in English and made all their remarks in the Japanese language, and one by one these converts that believed everything disappeared when there was no chance to secure information regarding English. It was really amusing to Brother Grant to have these young men spend the evening talking in English as best they could and the elders answering in Japanese as best they could, and neither one of them speaking in their native tongue.<sup>18</sup>

The following portion of a letter from Loring A. Whittaker to President Stimpson dated 1 September 1919, verifies that the same problem existed late in the mission. From Osaka, Whittaker wrote:

I don't like this idea of staying inside of the church to wait for people to come to you, for from my experience you get people that just waste time that is spent on them because they come to study English and *not to hear the gospel*. I've felt sometimes that being dropped from a three-story building would not hurt me any more than when I've been trying to preach the gospel and some one has stopped to ask if that word on the third line down the page was an adverb—*ad infinitum*. . . .<sup>19</sup>

Even though the language classes had drawbacks, they were continued to the end of the mission. In fact the language classes were the main approach during the period from 1921 to 1924, particularly for the married couples who were serving in the mission at that time.<sup>20</sup> Some of the missionaries even took

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<sup>17</sup>Grant, Letterbook, 22 February 1924, p. 155.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Letter from Loring A. Whittaker to Joseph H. Stimpson, 1 September 1919, Stimpson Papers.

<sup>20</sup>Interview, Hilton A. Robertson by R. Lanier Britsch, 1 August 1967, Provo, Utah.

salaried positions as English teachers. In 1923 and 1924, for instance, Elder Elwood L. Christensen was employed at a commercial school near Osaka. He, of course, spent most of his time actively proselyting the gospel.<sup>21</sup>

Street meetings were also a regular means of preaching the gospel. Large crowds were usually easy to attract. People were courteous and willingly accepted tracts, announcements about meetings, and other literature, but getting the ideas of Mormonism across to a constantly fluctuating audience was a difficult task. Tracts were distributed by thousands but they did not attract many serious inquiries.

Special lessons were devised for the Japanese. Newsletters and periodicals were circulated among the members. Hymn books were published in Japanese. The Mutual Improvement Association was used to attract and hold young people. It accomplished some good, but the barriers of language and culture seemed to be insurmountable to each of the approaches used.

Another important question to consider is that of the difference in religious intensity. The main body of the Japanese have historically been low-keyed religiously. Although exceptions exist, generally Japanese religions are classified as "perfunctory, weak, and indifferent."<sup>22</sup> In contrast it is evident that most Mormon groups should be classified as "lively, intense, and strong." This difference in religious intensity is a probable explanation for some of the lack of LDS success with the Japanese people.

Another Japanese trait is that of familism, or family centeredness. This cultural trait was very strong during the early mission period. The family group has traditionally been the individual's means of establishing his identity. Efforts, whether economic, social, or religious, have usually been made in behalf of the whole family organization. Fathers have ruled the Japanese home with an iron hand. Sons have respected the desires of their fathers, as have the wives and daughters. Marriages have been intended to be as compatible as possible, but they have been arranged for the benefit of the family, as well as the parties involved. Occupations have frequently been

<sup>21</sup>Japan Mission President's Report, 31 December 1923, in "Mission Annual Reports," p. 461, Church Archives.

<sup>22</sup>Joachim Wach, *The Comparative Study of Religions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 125.



family occupations. These traditions, and others like them, tended to discourage affiliation by individual Japanese with an alien institution such as the LDS Church. It was very difficult for the missionaries to take the place of the family, or become the primary socio-religious group in the place of the family. It was through constant association with the missionaries that converts, at least those who remained active in the Church, became acculturated to and comfortable with the new social group to which they belonged.

The problem the missionaries faced was how to influence people sufficiently that they would be willing to leave the secure environment of their natal family (which could be enlarged to include the entire Japanese national family) and take a chance with the Mormon family. Several of the most faithful converts were women who worked as cooks in the mission headquarters and thus became part of the Mormon family, so to speak, and were able to establish a new identity.

When the conservative nature of the Japanese family and society during the mission years is considered, it is perhaps more remarkable that 174 converts were baptized than that the number was so small.

Another problem was that of a small missionary force. At no time were there more than twenty missionaries and on several occasions there were as few as eight. It is implicit that the leaders of the Church felt ambivalent toward Japan. It was almost as though they had a policy of succeeding first and sending missionaries later. Requests for more missionaries were frequent from the various mission presidents, but they were seldom granted.

The lack of missionaries was recognized as a very real detriment to the work. Joseph H. Stimpson and his wife, Mary, who were in charge of the mission from 1915 until early 1921, struggled with this handicap and sought the help of Elder David O. McKay, then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, to overcome it. In March 1920, President Stimpson wrote a letter of invitation to Elder McKay, inviting him to an international Sunday School convention to be held in Tokyo that fall, and including some statistics concerning the progress of the mission. To that date sixty baptisms had been performed during his tenure as president, sixteen children had been blessed, thirty-seven men had been ordained to the Aaronic

Priesthood, and the total membership was one hundred twenty-four. At that time there were only eight missionaries in the field. He pleaded with Elder McKay to use whatever influence he could to have six more missionaries sent to Japan. Three new elders did arrive in May 1920, the first to come in two and a half years, but they merely replaced several others who were released. There were only two elders working in each conference, and Sendai had been closed for lack of missionaries. Stimpson wrote: "We have so few missionaries here in the mission at the present time that the devil has to look elsewhere for a workshop."<sup>23</sup>

Similar feelings had been indicated long before by Alma O. Taylor and were echoed after by Hilton A. Robertson. Taylor once reported, almost hopefully, that finally "the devil is waking up a little over here. The elders . . . report falsehoods and anti-Mormon literature afloat."<sup>24</sup>

Many years later Robertson suggested that the devil had the Japanese people so securely that he did not have to worry about the Mormon elders.<sup>25</sup> He was probably quoting President Grant, who, in 1924, said "the devil is not at all worried over our success in Japan."<sup>26</sup> It is apparent that the missionary force was so small that they made virtually no impression upon the Japanese nation. The sad concomitant was that the missionaries felt that they were not a part of a going concern, and this was reflected in their attitude toward the work.

Another problem that was related to that of a small missionary force was the problem of long tenure by missionaries. From the days of Heber J. Grant to the end of the mission, years spent in the Japan mission field were longer than for other missions of the Church.

A survey of the "Manuscript History" reveals the following statistics concerning the length of time missionaries spent in Japan. The average mission length was three years and three months. President Alma O. Taylor stayed longest of all—eight years and five months. See Table I.

Parents, sweethearts, and ward members sometimes wrote to

<sup>23</sup>Letter from Joseph H. Stimpson to David O. McKay, 18 March 1920, Copybook H, p. 359; also McKay to Stimpson, 10 June 1920, Stimpson Papers.

<sup>24</sup>Letter from Alma O. Taylor to the First Presidency, 20 March 1907, Copybook C.

<sup>25</sup>Interview, Hilton A. Robertson by J. Christopher Conkling, 13 November 1973, Provo, Utah.

<sup>26</sup>Grant, Letterbook, 22 February 1924, p. 155.



Table I

<i>Length of Mission</i>	<i>Number of Missionaries</i>
1. More than 8 yrs.	1
2. 7 to 8 yrs.	1
3. 6 to 7 yrs.	1
4. 5 to 6 yrs.	5
5. 4 to 5 yrs.	19
6. 3 to 4 yrs.	24
7. 2 to 3 yrs.	19
8. 1 to 2 yrs.	13
9. less than 1 yr.	5

Note: Under categories six, seven, and eight, four, seven and six missionaries, respectively, left without completing missions because of the closing. Two missionaries served two missions. Their total years tenures were 11 yrs. 6 months and 7 yrs. 1 month, respectively.

the Presiding Brethren asking why some elder had been left in the mission for so long. The missionaries themselves were usually less concerned because they knew it was necessary to remain long enough to conquer the language and do some good. But the pressure from home did have an effect on the work in Japan. Alma O. Taylor once wrote an article in the *Improvement Era* in which he tried to explain why such lengthy stays were necessary.<sup>27</sup> Still the parents and friends at home had a hard time understanding the problem.

As a result of the difficulties mentioned above, the rate of conversions to the Church was very slow. The missionaries never had a chance to become elated with their success. It was always slow. This fact reflected upon both missionaries and converts alike. The missionaries did not learn to expect rapid success, and members and prospective members did not feel that they were a part of a successful operation. The old saying that nothing succeeds like success was without question true in the case of the Japan mission. The psychology was not one of winning.

From 1920 on, the Japan mission was on trial. There is no question that from this time on the leaders of the Church in Salt Lake City were harboring grave doubts concerning the value of continuing the mission. During Stimpson's era, reports

<sup>27</sup>Alma O. Taylor, "About Japan and the Japanese Mission," *Improvement Era* (November 1906), p. 6.

were received regularly by his missionaries to the effect that Church authorities were thinking about closing the mission. Confirmation of this fact was never received by Stimpson from the Brethren, but when David O. McKay went to Japan as part of a world mission tour, his role while there was definitely to assess the situation and decide whether or not the mission should be continued.

Elder McKay arrived in Japan on 20 December 1920. While he was there he visited all of the conferences of the mission (except Sapporo, Hokkaido, where a blizzard prevented such a visit) and remained in Japan for a month. He spent considerable time asking questions and seeking to learn more about the Japanese people. At the end of his visit he concluded that the mission was worth continuing and that if this were so, enough missionaries must be assigned to do it right. "It is like trying to run a sixty horsepower machine with a one horsepower motor and that out of repair," said McKay.<sup>28</sup> He decided that the mission would do much better if there were several married couples appointed and distributed to each of the conferences.<sup>29</sup> These couples were to have six or eight missionaries working under them, and they were to act as guardians and counselors for their missionaries. This idea began to be put into effect during the coming months, but never became fully operational. In June 1921, Hilton A. Robertson and his wife, Hazel, arrived in Tokyo, and in November 1922, three more couples arrived in the mission. At the end of the year there were twenty missionaries in the field, three more than in any other year.

In addition to the plan for more missionaries, Elder McKay also made some suggestions concerning improving the work immediately. He stressed the need to turn every conversation into a gospel discussion. Missionaries were to always carry tracts and other literature. They were to spend more time in public places, such as markets, teaching the gospel. Street meetings were to be continued. Elder McKay wrote the following to the elders:

As far as the Truth is concerned, the Japanese people are in darkness, though we believe that hundreds of thousands of them are groping blindly for the light. The light is now in

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<sup>28</sup>"Missionary Annual Reports," 31 December 1921, p. 191.

<sup>29</sup>Letter from Joseph H. Stimpson to Alma O. Taylor, 19 January 1921, Copybook I, p. 10.



their midst, but "the darkness comprehendeth it not." And we wonder whether we are not, perhaps unintentionally and unconsciously, hiding our light under a bushel, or at least to hold it aloft, so that all who see us must have their attention directed toward it.<sup>30</sup>

Apparently the visitor did not feel that the missionaries had been working hard enough. They were told to work at least as hard as if they were working for a salary.

Elder McKay's last official act was to release the Stimpsons to return home. They left Japan on 11 February 1921. In March 1921, Lloyd O. Ivie, a former Japan missionary, and his new bride, Nora, arrived in Japan to assume the reins of leadership. Ivie continued in the spirit of the reforms or innovations started by Elder McKay. He tried to expand the work. Missionaries were sent to four new areas and new methods of language study were introduced. For a brief moment total numbers of missionaries, Book of Mormon sales, and baptisms increased, but by the end of 1922, matters had returned to the old pattern. In January 1922, Kofu, after having been worked for fourteen consecutive years, was closed. This left only three conferences in the mission. Unfortunately, after the arrival of couples, the leaders in Salt Lake City did not continue to send the numbers of missionaries that had been suggested by Elder McKay. The result was less enthusiasm among the missionaries.

During the last couple of years missionary activity varied little throughout the mission and weekday schedules were quite similar in all areas. The missionaries spent most mornings studying, teaching English at local schools and taking care of various tasks, such as letter writing, picture taking, shopping, visiting the doctor, and other similar activities. Active proselyting did not usually begin until afternoon. Evenings were filled with English classes, Mutual Improvement Association, teaching lessons, and visiting friends and investigators. Three meetings were usually held on Sunday. Sunday School was the largest, being attended by large numbers of children. The missionaries hoped these children would be a successful avenue of approach to their parents. Sacrament meetings were usually attended by only a few members and investigators. An evening preaching meeting frequently drew fairly good numbers.

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<sup>30</sup>Letter from David O. McKay and Hugh J. Cannon to the Elders of the Japan Mission, Tokyo, Japan, 23 January 1921, Stimpson Papers.

Attendance patterns in the individual branches of the mission were not encouraging. Just before Kofu was closed there were only two or three Saints and a couple of investigators attending sacrament meeting—the elders claimed these figures were encouraging.<sup>31</sup> This was in spite of the fact that there were thirty baptized members still living in Kofu<sup>32</sup> and ten years earlier between five and eight members attended regularly.<sup>33</sup> The situation in Osaka was slightly more encouraging. On seven Sundays picked at random during 1923 and 1924, the following numbers attended: an average of about twelve at sacrament meeting (including missionaries); about thirty-seven at Sunday School; and around twenty-five usually attended the evening preaching meeting.<sup>34</sup>

In 1924 the elders in Sapporo reported a regular attendance of between twenty-five and fifty people at Sunday School, and of about eight to ten people at sacrament meeting.<sup>35</sup> Sendai was a much newer area and little success had been realized there. Even though Tokyo had twenty more potential members than any other area the attendance figures were more erratic than in other branches. Average attendance there was only eight at sacrament meeting. Tithe paying was reportedly very poor throughout the mission.

In summary, the statistics for the mission were far from impressive. This is evident in Table II giving statistics for the years 1918 through 1924.<sup>36</sup>

One further issue should be raised here. Were the Mormons unusual in their lack of success or was their record somewhat like that of other missionary groups? It is my belief that the Latter-day Saints were no less successful than other missionaries, though it is difficult to accumulate the statistics to prove this statement. However, it appears that the ratio of effectiveness was about proportional to the number of man-years put in by any missionary group. Such thinking is justified

<sup>31</sup>Japan Mission District Records, Kofu Conference, April 1921 through January 1922, Church Archives.

<sup>32</sup>Record of Members, Form E., Microfilm, Japan Mission, Reel 1, Church Archives.

<sup>33</sup>Lloyd O. Ivie, *Missionary Journal*, 5 November 1911, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library.

<sup>34</sup>Japan Mission District Records, Osaka Conference, 1923, 1924, Church Archives.

<sup>35</sup>JMJ, 14 August 1924.

<sup>36</sup>"Missionary Annual Reports," 1920-1924; and *Manuscript History*, 1918-1921, 31 December statement. Figures compiled by J. Christopher Conkling.



Table II

	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924
Number of Members	105	127	127	135	154	158	164
Number of Missionaries	11	10	9	13	17	19	14
Baptisms	10	13	10	10	18	6	8
Ordinations	11	4	6	11	7	1	2
Excommunications		1		1	1		

by the fact that the other Christian missionaries stayed in Japan much longer and still had few converts, especially during the early years.<sup>37</sup>

Political conditions were much different then, but during the first thirteen years of the Protestant missions, only ten converts were baptized. By 1882, there were 145 Protestant missionaries and 4,987 members. Many of the missionaries had been there for ten years or more. By figuring in terms of man-years put in, the LDS missionaries actually gained converts a little faster than did the Protestants.

As was mentioned above, Lloyd O. Ivie became president of the mission in March 1921. He worked hard and tried to follow the counsel of Elder McKay. Two factors, however, worked against his success as president. The first was his own personality. He was a very bright and capable man, but he has also been described as being rather undiplomatic. This did not help relationships with either his missionaries or the members. Another problem was the health of his wife and new child. Sister Ivie gave birth during the early months of 1923, and neither the mother nor the child felt very well after. This was the apparent cause of his release as mission president in October 1923. However, because the child was not well the Ivies did not sail from Japan until 22 January 1924.

Elder Hilton A. Robertson was appointed president of the mission when the Ivies returned home. The period of his leadership was short-lived for two principle reasons. The most serious factor was the problem that arose in Japan as a result of the Oriental or Japanese exclusion laws. A second contributing factor was the great Tokyo earthquake of 1 September 1923.

We will turn to the international political situation next,

<sup>37</sup>See Kenneth Scott Latourette, *The Expansion of Christianity* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), 6:385ff.

but first some comments about the earthquake. The destruction that came in the wake of this terrible disaster was very great. About 91,000 people died in fires, under falling debris, and as a result of riots and disorders. Several missionaries, including the Robertsons, were in Tokyo at the time of the disaster and were very fortunate to escape bodily harm or death. Through the entire disaster, Robertson reported, not one member of the Church was injured, nor were any of the missionaries. The mission home lost some tile from the roof and plaster from the walls, but aside from that the place fared very well.<sup>38</sup>

The results of the earthquake caused missionary work in Tokyo to stop for a long time. However, the missionaries filled their days by helping some of the members repair their homes and others to relocate. Because the missionaries outside Tokyo were not able to get in touch with headquarters, they lost time by coming to Tokyo to assess the situation.

At home, gloomy reports were circulated, and in one instance an incorrect report of the death of President Robertson was published in one of the Utah papers.<sup>39</sup> Not until 11 September did the friends and relatives of the missionaries know that they were safe.<sup>40</sup>

The earthquake had a lasting effect on the mission in one way. It started the leaders at home thinking more seriously about the work in Japan, and reassessing the position of the Church there. The parents of the missionaries also felt the distance from their sons and daughters to be greater than ever before. Family members of missionaries were concerned by scriptural passages telling of earthquakes as warnings to wicked peoples. Upon his return home Robertson concurred in this reasoning. He said: "We are told in the Doctrine and Covenants that after the testimony of the servants of God, earthquakes, pestilence, and disease, etc., will follow and I bear testimony to you folks, . . . that those things have taken place in that land. . . ."<sup>41</sup> The "handwriting was on the wall," so to speak. The question was simply what to do. It was not answered immediately.

With the exception of the problem of unavailability of missionaries during World War I, international matters had no

<sup>38</sup>Robertson in *CR*, October 1924, pp. 123-24.

<sup>39</sup>Article found in scrapbook of Hilton A. Robertson.

<sup>40</sup>*DN*, 11 September 1923.

<sup>41</sup>Robertson in *CR*, October 1924, pp. 123-24.



major effect upon the mission until 1924. The Japanese exclusion law in America caused the most serious problems. In October 1920 Alma O. Taylor wrote the following to President Stimpson:

You are perhaps anxious about the present agitation and ill feelings over the pending legislation in California against the Japanese. I can see no way out of the situation as the people of California have more support from the rest of the U. S. than ever before. Something should be done now to prevent the constant recurrence of the question. Before the settlement the feeling in Japan among the populous [sic] will perhaps run high against the Americans.<sup>42</sup>

Taylor was prophetic in his assessment of the coming situation.

The problem did not come to a head until 1924, when laws preventing Japanese from immigrating to the United States were passed. The question of racial discrimination against Chinese and Japanese living on the West Coast of the United States was a contributing cause of the closing of the Japan Mission. A long series of state and national issues concerning the immigration of "orientals" into the United States and subsequent issues relating to their possession of land began in 1882, and was culminated by the enactment by Congress of a new immigration law, the second Johnson Act, containing a section forbidding admittance to the United States of "aliens ineligible for citizenship."<sup>43</sup> Because the Asians of China and Japan were the only aliens not eligible for citizenship, the law was a direct insult to the Japanese nation and was accepted by the Japanese as such.

The law went into effect on 1 July 1924. That day was observed throughout Japan as a "day of humiliation," and Tokyo was blazing with posters which read "Hate Everything American." The largest of sixteen meetings of protest lasted continuously from one in the afternoon until ten in the evening, with an audience ranging from 5,000 to 12,000.<sup>44</sup>

The situation became very tense for the missionaries after this law was passed. Americans were temporarily not welcome

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<sup>42</sup>Letter from Alma O. Taylor to Joseph H. Stimpson, 17 October 1920, Stimpson Papers.

<sup>43</sup>See Edwin O. Reischauer, *The United States and Japan* (New York: Viking, 1963), pp. 16-17, for a clear evaluation of these events.

<sup>44</sup>Sidney L. Gulick, "American-Japanese Relations: The Logic of the Exclusionists," *The Annals of the American Academy of Social and Political Sciences*, November 1924, p. 181.

in Japan. On one occasion, shortly after the 1924 exclusion law went into effect, President Robertson found two posters tacked to his door saying, "Bei-jin Haiseki" or "American go home."

Even before 1 July, other missionary groups were feeling the negative effects of the law. A *Salt Lake Telegram* article printed 18 June 1924 noted that the Reverend Dr. Paul B. Waterhouse had asserted that "the passage of the exclusion act has made Christian missionary work in Japan almost impossible." However, further attention must be paid to the dates involved in these actions and reactions. By the time the unfriendly law went into effect the fateful telegram from the First Presidency had already been delivered. It was sent 9 June 1924 and arrived 26 June 1924. The final decision, however, probably had not been made much before then.

The earthquake and the deterioration of Japanese-American relations hastened the closure of the mission, but Robertson and others believed that the real reason for the closing was the indifference of the Japanese and the failure of the missionary work.

Robertson's conclusion was correct. In a letter dated 10 June 1924 the First Presidency stated that they were not "particularly alarmed over the situation in Japan." They believed that the current problems would soon subside. The reason for closing the mission was because "from the standpoint of converts" success had been "so limited that, at least for the present, under existing circumstances, it will be better to withdraw. . . ." <sup>45</sup>

Several other items may have contributed to the willingness of the First Presidency to close the Japan-based operation. One was that the Church had not acquired any real property. This made it possible to leave easily. Another development that may have had some bearing, was the consideration being given to closing the Tonga Mission at the same time. (The mission president in Tonga made a valiant plea for the continuance of his mission. There were over a thousand Saints in Tonga. Nevertheless the mission came very close to being shut down during the summer of 1924.) Such thinking seems to reflect a willingness to assess missions and determine their worth. Japan was found wanting.

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<sup>45</sup>Grant, Letterbook, 10 June 1924.



Closely related to the above reasoning was the problem of psychological failure. This was a cumulative matter. Since the mission was first opened President Grant had questioned its validity. Upon his return from his mission to Japan he had requested to go somewhere where he could perform a real mission; he was sent to England two months later. A feeling of questioning the possible success of the mission had been in the mind of President Lorenzo Snow when he sent Grant to Japan. On 26 June 1901 President Snow told Elder Grant:

Noah preached 120 years, he was a grand man, he did his duty but failed . . . and as to these brethren who will shortly leave for Japan the Lord has not revealed to me that they will succeed, but He has shown me that it is their duty to go.<sup>46</sup>

This attitude may have helped President Grant make this particular decision.

There is still one further ingredient that many Latter-day Saints would suggest as an essential reason for President Grant's decision. This is inspiration or direction from the Lord. When the missionaries arrived in Salt Lake City on 22 August 1924, President Grant greeted them with, "Thank God you are home because I know what is in store for the people of that land and we are glad you are safely home."<sup>47</sup> President Robertson made a statement many years later that was similar in spirit to that of President Grant's greeting. He said:

I think that the mission was closed for a purpose in 1924 when we returned home. I feel that the Lord knew what was going to transpire and he called the missionaries home and ordered the mission closed temporarily. Later on we find that the other denominations throughout the world who were proselyting in Japan were forced to close their missions and return to America at great loss and sacrifice.<sup>48</sup>

When the telegram arrived on 26 June, instructing them to return, the missionaries promptly set about making the necessary arrangements for closing the mission. Arrangements were immediately made for Elder and Mrs. W. Lamont Glover to sail home, as Sister Glover's health was not good at the time. They sailed on 8 July aboard the *S. S. Shinyo Maru*. On 16 July

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<sup>46</sup>Gordon A. Madsen, comp., *A Japanese Journal* (n.p., 1970), p. 12. Quotations from the journals of Heber J. Grant.

<sup>47</sup>Manuscript History, 22 August 1924.

<sup>48</sup>Robertson in *CR*, April 1947, p. 53.

1924, Elder Elwood Christensen baptized Yosaku Morita in Tokyo, the last baptism in Japan for over fourteen years. During the first three weeks of July elders and sisters arrived at Tokyo from their various locations. Most of the last month or so was spent visiting members, selling and giving way mission-owned goods, shipping books, and other similar activities.

Then on 24 July, Elders William E. Davies and Milton B. Taylor, along with Elder and Mrs. F. Wallace Browning (who had visited China since the notice of closing came), boarded the *S. S. President Cleveland* and sailed for the United States.

All meetings were cancelled after 29 June, except sacrament meeting, which was held until the last Sunday before departure. Only two to four Japanese Saints attended during that time. Three thousand seven hundred tracts were passed out during these final days. Finally on 2 August, President and Sister Robertson went to Osaka to encourage the Saints there to "live up to their duties." They boarded the *S. S. President Pierce* in Kobe, and all the remaining missionaries, Elder and Mrs. Elwood L. Christensen, and Elders Rulon Esplin, Vinal G. Mauss, Lewis H. Moore, and Ernest B. Woodward, boarded the same ship in Yokohama. They sailed from Japan on 7 August 1924. Thus the early mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to Japan was closed.<sup>49</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Considering the number of problems the mission had faced through the years, the disruptions of the final two years, and the psychological distress suffered by the missionaries, it is easy to understand the decision of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve to close the mission. It was true that the results had been "almost negligible." Nevertheless, the mission did produce some lasting contributions—translation work in particular—and a few converts were brought into the Church who remained faithful through the years until the work was recommenced following World War II.

<sup>49</sup>Manuscript History, 7 August 1924. One of the final entries in this history states simply that in the first twenty-three years, eighty-eight missionaries had served in Japan. One died in the mission field and seven were sent home sick. Nine elders had been sent home in varying degrees of dishonor. One hundred seventy-four Japanese had been baptized—one hundred twelve men and sixty-two women. Ten members had been excommunicated, nine died, and eight had moved. Seven elders, twenty-two priests, fifteen teachers, and thirty deacons had been ordained.



# Members Without a Church: Japanese Mormons in Japan From 1924 to 1948

J. Christopher Conkling\*

What happens to two dozen faithful church members who are almost totally isolated from their church for over twenty years? One of the best case studies of this phenomenon in recent years is the withdrawal of the missionaries, and essentially the Church, from Japan in 1924. From 1901 to 1924 the early missionaries experienced struggles, challenges, and some tremendous accomplishments. However, the decision to withdraw all missionaries from Japan left the members in Japan almost entirely on their own from 1924 until 1945.<sup>1</sup> Although the “early” and “modern” missions have been subjects of numerous articles, the more than twenty-year interim has never been treated more than in a footnote. It deserves more attention.

When the missionaries left Japan in August 1924, one hundred seventy-four Japanese people had been baptized, though only a few were still active. The last mission president, Hilton A. Robertson, reported, “we have at least a dozen Saints who could be called such,”<sup>2</sup> but at least twice that number called themselves Saints. They were located in four cities throughout Japan—Kofu (where the missionaries had been withdrawn in 1922), Tokyo, Osaka, and Sapporo.

Both despair and hope were caused by the manner in which the missionaries left. President Robertson tried to visit many of

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<sup>1</sup>Although the mission was not officially reestablished until 1948, LDS servicemen began meeting with the Saints in late 1945. The isolation from the Church ended at this time. For a consideration of the original Japan mission, see R. Lanier Britsch, “The Closing of the Early Japan Mission,” in this issue of *BYU Studies*.

<sup>2</sup>Hilton A. Robertson in *Conference Report of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, October 1924, p. 123.

the active members and assure them that the closing would be only temporary. Sister Kumagai of Sapporo said she felt that the order to close was a revelation from God as a test of faith to the Japanese Saints, and, after the test, the work would be restored by another revelation from God.<sup>3</sup>

The missionaries did little to prepare the members, other than to give them general encouragement. In fact, the native priesthood holders were explicitly prohibited from functioning in that priesthood. They were specifically *not* allowed to hold meetings of any type except MIA.<sup>4</sup> After the closing of the mission, Brother Katsura of Osaka felt, "sad and lonely, as though he had lost a brother or a sister."<sup>5</sup> Sister Kumagai said she felt, "zen to kuraku natta yōna kimochi" ("I felt like all had become darkness").<sup>6</sup> Thus, with the hope of a not too distant restoration, and yet, with the frustration of not being allowed to function in the church they loved, the members were left to themselves.

#### THE NARA ERA: 1924 to 1933

Into this vacuum came Brother Fujiya Nara<sup>7</sup> of Tokyo to give some organization to the Saints. He had become friends with the "foreigners" as a young teenager in Sapporo, had been baptized when he was seventeen, and had been ordained an elder by President Ivie at age twenty-four, in January of 1923. He had been mission secretary under presidents Stimpson and Ivie.<sup>8</sup>

A month after the closing, Elder Nara and a couple of other Saints gathered in Tokyo and officially established the Japan Mutual Improvement Association of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They also discussed starting some sort of publication to help hold the Saints together. In Novem-

<sup>3</sup>Taped interview between Tamano Kumagai and Professor Seiji Katanuma, Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan, November 1973.

<sup>4</sup>Interview with Hilton A. Robertson, Provo, Utah, 13 November 1973.

<sup>5</sup>T. Katsura to Murray L. Nichols, 8 September 1956, quoted in Murray L. Nichols, "History of the Japan Mission of the LDS Church 1901-1924," Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1957, p. 97.

<sup>6</sup>Kumagai interview.

<sup>7</sup>Japanese names in this paper will follow the American rather than the Japanese style, that is, with family names last.

<sup>8</sup>Interview with Fujiya Nara, Provo, Utah, 8 October 1973; Fujiya Nara, "Brief Record of My Conversion," a handwritten record of Church events in his life, which he carries with him; Form E Membership records, microfilm, Japan Mission Reel 1, Church Historical Department.



ber 1924, the small Tokyo group published and circulated the names and addresses of all members of the Japan MIA.<sup>9</sup>

As a result of these early meetings in late 1924 Brother Nara and others began to publish a magazine to keep in contact with and encourage the Saints. It was called *Shuro* (*The Palm*) after the palm leaves strewn on the way as Christ entered Jerusalem. Their plan was to publish sixty-five copies of each issue, ten issues per year. Each issue would have about twenty pages and a contribution of ten *sen* (about three cents) per issue would be asked. Copies would be sent to all known Japanese Saints and friends in Hawaii and America. It was a good plan, but it didn't quite work. The number of issues gradually decreased and Brother Nara ended up paying most of the cost himself. Through several of the extant issues, we can get an insight into what the members thought and did during those early struggling years.<sup>10</sup>

The first issue appeared on 1 January 1925. It listed Fujiya Nara as editor and Brothers Yamaide and Kitagawa and Sister Reiko Mochizuki as his assistants. In the first article, "About the Beginning," Nara says that his heart hurts so much since the missionaries left that he doesn't have words to express it. However, the MIA is the path to light in the present darkness. He hopes both *Shuro* and the MIA will be of concrete spiritual benefit to the members. He hopes that the Saints can be unified, love each other, and live righteously. In a similar vein, Sister Mochizuki says, in "Impressions," that at Christmas time when she saw the Salvation Army she was reminded of the Church and was saddened. She has been further saddened by seeing many fall away, and thinks that even though the active Saints may not be perfect themselves, they must still warn the others when they are doing wrong before it is too late. *Shuro* has reenthused her faith.

Further issues included editorials, correspondence, scripture study, news of members (about travel, marriage, new jobs, armed forces, college entrance), expressions of feelings, short stories, poems, and serialized articles (as Brother Kentaro

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<sup>9</sup>*Hattatsu* [*The Progress*], published by Takeo Fujiwara (1935), p. 16.

<sup>10</sup>Thirteen different issues of *Shuro* published by the Japan Mutual Improvement Association exist in Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, dating from 1 January 1925 to Winter 1928. I have looked at these briefly with the gracious help of Hiromi Ashizawa, Masa Watanabe, and Tetsuro Fujita.

Mochizuki's about Tolstoy's short stories and Brother Nara's about tomatoes).

Members expressed their feelings quite frankly in the subsequent issues. In one article entitled "Deep Feelings," Brother Takeo Fujiwara of Sapporo mentions that he looked for almost any way to strengthen his faith. He found the way in *Shuro*, and has been moved to tears, at times, reading it.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, in a later issue another member writes a note of thanks to *Shuro* and mentions how happy his family has been in another Christian church since the Mormon Church left Japan.<sup>12</sup>

Sister Mochizuki and Brother Yamaide were the poets among the Saints. A rough translation of one poem of Brother Yamaide's, "If One's Alone," is included below because it gives insights to the longings of some Saints. It appeared in the November 1925 issue, more than a year after the closing.

#### IF ONE'S ALONE

If one's sad and lonely  
And looks at the sunset,  
He hears the nearby temple bells ringing.

If one hears the distant temple bells  
And it touches his heart,  
He will pray with a sad heart.

His card is a hateful spade,  
But, sorrowfully,  
It's just a game he is playing with his  
fortune telling cards.

When I see the hearts of all the noisy people  
I see sadness.  
I'm opposed to flowers, and yet . . .  
spring will come anyway.

If one's alone,  
His heart is sad.

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<sup>11</sup>*Shuro*, April 1925.

<sup>12</sup>This suggests the interesting question of whether it is worse to go to no meeting at all or to another Christian church when one cannot attend an LDS meeting.



In spite of all the fogginess  
I can still see you,  
Disappearing.

If one's alone,  
The night is sad.  
Oh miserable heart!  
What a pity,  
The light is disappearing.

If one's alone,  
I'll try to pray, but . . .  
My heart is hollow.  
I can still see your  
Dear fleeting form.<sup>13</sup>

This poem is certainly open to individual interpretation and is not distinguishable from other sentimental Japanese poetry. Nevertheless, the word translated "you" is *kimi*, and not only suggests an intimate form of "you" but is also the word translated as "prince" in both the national anthem and Isaiah 9:6 ("The Prince of Peace"). Whatever the interpretation, it was not too long before Brother Yamaide ended his association with the Church, and this poem could represent some real yearnings on his part.

The plight of *Shuro* might be representative of Church activity as a whole during these years. Nara and others published it ten times in 1925, but only four times in 1926, and that December they decided that it should only be a seasonal publication. After 1926 only the Winter 1928 issue is available, but there is mention of *Shuro's* being published through the Fall issue of 1929.<sup>14</sup> Presumably, about that time publishing ceased altogether.<sup>15</sup> *Shuro* did, however, begin a tradition, and whenever the Church has been active in Japan since then, similar publications—whether originating in Salt Lake City or not—have flourished.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup>*Shuro*, 1 November 1925.

<sup>14</sup>*Hattatsu*, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup>Fujiya Nara, "The Joy of This Publication," *LDS Messenger* (December 1949), p. 2.

<sup>16</sup>For example, *Hattatsu*, *LDS Messenger*, parts of the early *Seito No Michi*, and even in the former Japan East Mission (recently divided) was published, in addition to the Church Unified Magazine, *Sazanami*, written by and for Japanese Saints, and not dissimilar to *Shuro*.

In 1925, in addition to the publishing activities, periodic meetings of Church members were taking place. In Sapporo, for instance, Sister Kumagai held weekly meetings, but attendance became so sporadic that she gave them up. Members would move, die, or just stop coming. Then Sister Kumagai would invite her friends (all the members among them) at Christmas time and other special occasions. These gatherings would start with song and prayer, and would somewhat resemble Church meetings.

Through *Shuro* and personal letters during this time, the Japanese Saints kept in contact with friends back in Utah. As a result of this correspondence, the First Presidency asked Alma O. Taylor (one of the original missionaries to Japan) to write and find out what had been happening, who was still faithful, and what concrete things the Church could do to help the Japanese Saints.<sup>17</sup> Taylor sent letters to Brother Nara of Tokyo, Brother Katsura of Osaka, and Sister Kumagai of Sapporo in February 1926.<sup>18</sup> Brother Nara got a consensus from these and other Saints and answered Taylor on 1 July 1926. Beginning with this correspondence the Saints, through Nara, made the same two basic requests they would repeat to the brethren throughout the closed period—reopen the mission and help supply a suitable permanent meeting place (other than just someone's tiny house).<sup>19</sup>

The next fall, President Franklin S. Harris of Brigham Young University, on an excursion around the world, visited Japan as a representative to the Pan Pacific Congress of Arts and Sciences. As a result of Nara's letter to Taylor, President Heber J. Grant gave Harris a commission to meet with the Japanese Saints and more officially organize the MIA. When Harris left Japan in November 1926, he had visited and organized the Saints in Tokyo, Osaka, and Sapporo. In each city he had appointed an MIA president with two counselors and a secretary—with the Tokyo MIA president (Brother Nara) to preside over the others.<sup>20</sup> Brother Harris described a meeting with the Sapporo Saints:

I was busy with official things till 9 p.m. so my meetings

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<sup>17</sup>*Shuro*, 10 May 1926.

<sup>18</sup>*Hattatsu*, pp. 16-18.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup>Manuscript History and Historical Reports of the Japanese Mission: 1901-1924, 1946-1955, foreward to 1949, Church Archives; *Hattatsu*, p. 16.



with them began at that hour and continued till 12:00. They clung onto me as if I were the only old friend they had.<sup>21</sup>

And a few days later he wrote:

As we passed through Sapporo last night at nine there were four members of the church there to meet me. One of them had come 200 miles to see me. . . . As we only remained at the station a few minutes the saints asked to ride a few stations with me, so we went into the dining car and they stayed with me till one a.m. when they got off. They were so tremendously hungry for someone from Utah and there were so many things they wanted to ask about—a fine lot they are.<sup>22</sup>

While in Sapporo Harris invited two young men to come to America to attend BYU and offered to personally help them. Although Saburo Sada never made it, Takeo Fujiwara, a court reporter, did, and arrived in Utah late in 1927. In all, Harris' visit certainly rejuvenated the members and made them realize they had not been totally forgotten.<sup>23</sup>

Throughout 1927 monthly meetings were held in Tokyo, Osaka, and Sapporo. Meetings varied in contents, ranging from Book of Mormon study, to singing and talking, to mountain climbing. Average attendance at the Tokyo meetings that year was between six and nine Saints per meeting, which is interesting because only two to four attended regularly in the last weeks before the mission was closed.<sup>24</sup>

In July 1927 a Sister Tsune Nachie arrived in Tokyo for a brief visit with her old friends. She was then over seventy and had moved to Hawaii five years earlier to do missionary and temple work. Nine people attended both her welcome home party and her farewell party four months later. At both these meetings she inspired the members by giving detailed teachings about baptismal work for the dead, the resurrection, and enduring in the faith.<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile, Takeo Fujiwara, in the States, had been trying to help the Japanese Saints. As he later explained:

. . . I expressed and described in details through the interpretation of Dr. Elbert D. Thomas (now a senator of the

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<sup>21</sup>Franklin S. Harris to his wife, 22 October 1926, Franklin S. Harris personal papers, Box 19, Folder 6, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid, 24 October 1926.

<sup>23</sup>Kumagai interview; newspaper clippings located in alumni file, Alumni House, Brigham Young University.

<sup>24</sup>*Hattatsu*, pp. 16-18.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

U.S. from Utah) who was once president of the Japan Mission, our desire for the Church in Japan . . . to the First Presidency. With the result of the best effort and kindest assistance of Mr. Alma O. Taylor . . . in December 1927, the First Presidency appointed Elder Nara as Presiding Elder in Japan and restored all activities of Priesthood. . . . Therefore, Elder Nara felt great responsibility.<sup>26</sup>

With Nara's appointment as Presiding Elder in 1927, the First Presidency removed all restrictions that had been put upon priesthood activities at the time of closing in 1924 (except that Nara was not authorized to do active missionary work or to ordain people to offices in the priesthood without approval from Salt Lake).<sup>27</sup> Taylor sent him a good deal of instruction in the following weeks both in Japanese and English.<sup>28</sup> After some correspondence between the two, Taylor reported to President Grant that Nara had accepted his call with a humble spirit, but, because he had a family to support, it would take him some time to fully translate and understand all the instructions.<sup>29</sup> However, Elder Nara was apparently overwhelmed by the new, somewhat "foreign" instructions from Salt Lake, for the Church never did return to the full priesthood programs under Nara as it should have by virtue of his new calling.

Nevertheless, MIA meetings seemed surprisingly healthy by the end of 1927. Tokyo and Sapporo Christmas parties were each attended by twenty people or more, and Osaka wrote to say that they had officially sustained Nara and had even sent some donations to Salt Lake.<sup>30</sup>

The Winter 1928 *Shuro* came out with some exciting news. Not only did it contain the recently acquired letters from Heber J. Grant, Franklin S. Harris, and Takeo Fujiwara, but it also contained—for the first time since the closing—news from Kofu. In response to a request from Kofu, Nara had sent a nonmember friend, Mr. Kubota, to organize an MIA. They held their first meeting in several years on 19 October 1927, at which officers were appointed. They met again shortly afterward for a farewell party for one brother going into the army

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 29A.

<sup>27</sup>First Presidency to Fujiya Nara, printed in *Shuro*, Winter 1928.

<sup>28</sup>See *Hattatsu*, pp. 17-18; Fujiya Nara interview; Nara, "Brief Record of My Conversion," p. 1.

<sup>29</sup>Alma O. Taylor to First Presidency, 31 March 1928, in Japan Mission General Files, 1901-1966, Church Archives.

<sup>30</sup>*Hattatsu*, pp. 16-18.



and had a Christmas party at Brother Renji Yoneyama's house. A "fresh and pure" spirit was felt there.<sup>31</sup>

In spite of this brief period of rejuvenation, the support of all but the most faithful gradually declined. In 1928 all we know is that a few members met briefly with some visiting students from Utah; in November Brother Nara visited Brothers Katsura and Watanabe in Osaka and discussed the Church organization; and in December a small Christmas party was held in Tokyo.<sup>32</sup>

After this there is no clear record of what happened. We know that two issues of *Shuro* came out, but do not know their contents. Near the end of 1933 Elder Nara was transferred to Manchuria with his railroad job. Later records tell us that little if anything was going on in the Church by 1933. What happened to the Church and Elder Nara from 1929 to 1933 is one of the mysteries of the history of the Church in Japan. The presumption is that as Nara received gradually less and less support and enthusiasm he may have just let things go. Alma O. Taylor later wrote to the First Presidency about Nara and his new calling, "Nothing came of this assignment. Elder Nara dried up and blew away to Manchuria before any preaching activities got going."<sup>33</sup> This may have been a little harsh. Nara, before his official appointment, had been responsible for the publication of *Shuro*, and had been the motivator behind most MIA activities. Nevertheless, it is true that within twenty months of Nara's call to be Presiding Elder, knowledge of all activities in Japan, and most of the activities themselves completely ceased. The records are blank until the end of 1933, and after that time Nara was in Manchuria and out of the picture until the end of the war.

#### THE FUJIWARA ERA: 1934 to 1936

Nara was soon replaced by Japan's second Presiding Elder, Takeo Fujiwara, the student who had gone to BYU in 1927. If the last years of Nara were the most vague, the first years of Fujiwara were the most clear—we have almost a daily account of his activities. If Nara had run the Church on his own and received his appointment almost as a surprise or afterthought,

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<sup>31</sup>*Shuro*, Winter 1927.

<sup>32</sup>*Hattatsu*, p. 18.

<sup>33</sup>Taylor to President Heber J. Grant, 14 March 1936, Japan Mission General Files.

sustained and set apart by mail (if that's possible), with a load of somewhat foreign instructions thrust upon him, Fujiwara received the actual "laying on of hands" by the First Presidency, had lived and been trained in the heart of the Church, and had received explicit instructions which he fully understood. Perhaps this different background accounts for the different manner of and results achieved by the two men. As for those results, if the "light" under Nara gradually dimmed and faded through the years, the "new bulb" of Fujiwara lit so brightly that it burnt itself out in a flash.

Takeo Fujiwara was born in Hokkaido in 1905 and was baptized on 10 May 1924, just before the mission closed. He lived in America from 1927 until he received his master's degree from BYU in 1934. (He supported himself by explaining Japan through song, dance, dress, and martial arts to paying audiences.)<sup>34</sup> As he spoke fluent English and was an unwavering Church member,<sup>35</sup> he must have seemed to the brethren to be a logical replacement for Nara. On 7 July 1934, President Grant released Nara and set Fujiwara apart as Presiding Elder and a special missionary (an added responsibility Nara had not had). The Church would send him \$35.00 a month so that he could afford to travel and communicate with the other Saints. On 27 September 1934, he reached Yokohama after spending a few weeks in Hawaii and having written to Alma O. Taylor about the total lack of missionary work among the Japanese in Hawaii.<sup>36</sup>

For the next nine months Fujiwara did everything humanly possible to restore the faith and activity of the members. He experienced both failure and success—ex-members hiding from him and his vigorous restoration activity campaign as well as a new mission magazine and the first priesthood ordinances in the ten years since the closing. During this time Elder Yoshihiro Watanabe (formerly of the Osaka MIA Presidency, but now moved to Tokyo) and his daughter Tazuko were Elder Fujiwara's constant companions and greatest supporters.

<sup>34</sup>Biographical sketch in the *Improvement Era* (September 1933), p. 655; newspaper clippings, Alumni House, Brigham Young University.

<sup>35</sup>There were two other Japanese Saints who had come to Utah to study—Tomigoro Takagi and Chojiro Kuriyama. Takagi proved to be enthusiastic once back in Japan and supported Fujiwara in attempts to get the mission reopened. Kuriyama went completely inactive, but after the war became a member of Japan's Diet, and, as a government official, aided the Church in his silent way, although never taking an active part in it himself.

<sup>36</sup>Fujiwara to Taylor, 14 August 1934 and Japan Mission General Files, n.d.



Within just two months Fujiwara had visited all four cities with members in them. On his first visit to his home, Sapporo, a welcome home party had to be cancelled because no one attended. On the other hand, seven members attended the first Osaka meeting at Elder Katsura's house, and Fujiwara learned some valuable information—Nara had never reinstated priesthood functions, and MIA meetings were still being held every month or two. At this and other meetings Fujiwara asked for the raising of the right hand to release Nara and sustain himself (he always did and recorded everything very precisely).<sup>37</sup>

Seven also attended the Kofu meeting in November 1934 (which means there was just the Yoneyama family of five in addition to Fujiwara and Sister Tazuko Watanabe—by now set apart as mission secretary). The Kofu Saints reported that they had been left out of all communication since the closing of the mission. If we are to understand how the closing affected the lives of the average Saints, then the Yoneyamas of Kofu are our best documented example—not that they are necessarily average, but, as they both stayed true to the Church and yet had several problems about which Fujiwara wrote in detail, we can look into their feelings deeper than into any others.

Renji Yoneyama and his wife, baptized in 1908, were the first married couple to join the Church in Japan. Kofu had once been a thriving branch, but as members gradually lost interest and few new converts were made, the elders were withdrawn about two years before the official closing of the mission. From that time until 1934 the only real contact Kofu had had with the Church was the visit by Nara's nonmember friend, Mr. Kubota, in 1927.<sup>38</sup>

In Fujiwara's first semi-official handwritten approximation of a quarterly report to Alma O. Taylor, he mentioned that at the November meeting he had asked Brother Renji Yoneyama to be branch president, that Yoneyama had at first refused but then later accepted. He further wrote:

We understood that Brother R. Yoneyama (father) blamed the conduct of the church for the closing of the

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<sup>37</sup>*Hattatsu*, p. 19; Fujiwara, "Official Record of Church in Japan Until December 31, 1934," in Manuscript History, pp. 1-5.

<sup>38</sup>Mr. Kubota turned out to be unscrupulous. According to Mrs. Nara, Elder Nara had appointed him mission treasurer, and he had stolen some Church funds.

mission and seemed to have stood against the church and changed to his old Buddhist religion.

Fujiwara also noted that a month after the first meeting in Kofu, Morizo Yoneyama, a son, had written to Fujiwara telling him that they had cancelled a Christmas party they had planned for their home because "there will be no earnest and faithful saints who do come to a church meeting." Fujiwara, therefore, decided to postpone Yoneyama's appointment.<sup>39</sup>

By the time Fujiwara and Taylor exchanged letters again, however, Fujiwara was seeing a different picture. On 18 January 1935 Morizo had written to Fujiwara stating that Morizo's own wife and his younger brother were both sick. Fujiwara and both the Watanabes (father and daughter) went to Kofu two days later to comfort and pray for the sick. Morizo's sick wife, a Christian but not a Mormon, prayed with them. On 3 March, however, Kenji, the younger brother died.<sup>40</sup>

About this time Taylor wrote with some understanding to Fujiwara:

If Ren Yoneyama has definitely joined the Buddhist Church, he should probably be dropped from the rolls of our church, however, we do not recommend any hasty action in these matters. We must remember that the saints were, as you say, left without organization, leadership, church building, church literature, etc. and it is a wonder that any of them kept the faith. We too are proud of their loyalty.<sup>41</sup>

Because Morizo had refused to allow the Christmas party in his home, Taylor also recommended that Fujiwara not ordain him a priest as Fujiwara had requested.

On 28 April 1935, nine attended a meeting where Fujiwara presided over the first sacrament in over twelve years in Kofu. Renji Yoneyama was again appointed branch president. As Fujiwara later explained, Yoneyama had not lost faith in the Church, but had become somewhat embittered. He believed he and his whole family had given their utmost devotion to the Church in Kofu, and yet, just as they were getting going, the Church was pulled out of Kofu suddenly, and without any explanation.

His whole-hearted devotion was nothing. Brother Yoneyama blames the church for this insincerity, negligence, and im-

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<sup>39</sup>Fujiwara, "Official Record," pp. 5-9.

<sup>40</sup>Fujiwara, "The Official Report January 1-April 30, 1935," Japan Mission General Files.

<sup>41</sup>Taylor to Takeo Fujiwara, 14 April 1935, Japan Mission General Files.



patience in doing the mission activities among the Japanese people.

Although he had been hurt, he had not rebelled against the Church or broken the commandments. He refused his calling at first only because he felt he was not capable and too old and feeble.<sup>42</sup>

Due to the lonesomeness of his mind he often goes to the font of the Buddha shelf where ancestors were worshipped and gives prayer. It is the natural habit of the Japanese old people.<sup>43</sup>

Fujiwara stressed that he did this out of habit, not belief, and stated:

We must pity, indeed, on the lonesomeness of his heart without the church, its leaders, its meetings—in fact, there was nothing of the church affairs except the members were drifted in the wandering path. He was, I understand, one of the most faithful saints who the Japan Mission had ever had . . . [his is the only family] all of whom (but last girl) joined the church.

He is rather frank, honest, and faithful. That is perhaps a reason why he blamed the sudden action of the church in the withdrawal of the missionary activities from Japan, especially from Kofu before the closing of the mission. Since then the saints in Kofu were left alone without any instruction and some of them did not know why it was withdrawn. . . . So we cannot after all blame Brother Ren Yoneyama who is, I am sure, far better than the average saint in Japan. If we will excommunicate him, we must excommunicate most of the members in Japan.<sup>44</sup>

Fujiwara also explained that they had refused to use their house for the Christmas party only because of disease (which later took the lives of Kenji and Morizo's own baby). He also explained that Morizo was the first member to write him upon his return to Japan and at that time he had written:

I joined the church when I was eight years old . . . so I could not understand much of the gospel. . . . I always thought I would do something for the church. Therefore we are very glad to have you here in Japan . . . we shall cooperate and assist you as much as we can. . . .

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<sup>42</sup>Yoneyama was 58, according to Form E membership records, having been born on 10 August 1876.

<sup>43</sup>Fujiwara, "Official Report, January 1-April 30, 1945," 28 April 1935, Japan General Mission Files, pp. 21-22.

<sup>44</sup>Fujiwara, "Official Report, August 3, 1935," Japan Mission General Files, pp. 1-6.

Fujiwara also mentioned that, "Sister Hana Yoneyama (wife of Brother Ren) is still much faithful. She worries much about her husband's changing mind and attitudes." And the oldest daughter, now married as Tsuneko Kitai, often sent Fujiwara cards and greetings.<sup>45</sup>

Although we don't know what happened to the Yoneyamas or their attitude toward the Church, or the Church's attitude toward them during the next fourteen years, Edward L. Clissold, the first mission president after the reopening, felt that the Lord still had a work to perform through them. In trying to reestablish Kofu as a branch in 1949, he had spent the day with a Brother Yajima searching for old members, especially a photographer named Yoneyama. Having failed, President Clissold offered a silent prayer just before they were to return to Tokyo, in a last desperate hope. He was impressed to return to the military translation office he had just come from. When he asked if anyone knew a Mormon named Yoneyama, one man asked if they are the people who use the Book of Mormon. He then said he had seen a Book of Mormon many years ago in the house of a school teacher named Yoneyama. Within minutes they were in contact with Renji and Morizo. The Yoneyama's greatly helped in the reestablishment of the work thereafter.<sup>46</sup>

Fujiwara worked diligently to locate and reactivate the Saints. Using the addresses printed in *Shuro* he sent out greetings and invitations for meetings and parties. Of thirty-three invited to a 1934 Tokyo Christmas party, only seven attended; but the party was so enjoyable that all "sighed with pleasure."<sup>47</sup> By this time Elder Watanabe had been sustained as Tokyo branch president with Sister Reiko Mochizuki as clerk. Twenty-two people attended a Christmas party at Sister Kumagai's in Sapporo, but she was most likely the only member there.

By March 1935, Fujiwara had located six Sapporo members who agreed to help in varying degrees, and he organized a branch there. Nine attended the previously mentioned April sacrament meeting in Kofu. Also in April Osaka held its first testimony and sacrament meeting in over ten years. On 19 May 1935, two children of Sister Reiko Mochizuki (eleven and

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Don W. Marsh, *The Light of the Sun* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 47-48; Interview with Edward Clissold, 8 November 1973, Salt Lake City, Utah; Nara interview.

<sup>47</sup>Fujiwara, "Official Record Until December 31, 1934," pp. 6-9.



seventeen years old) were baptized by Elder Fujiwara and confirmed by Elder Watanabe—the first such ordinances since the closing. As Fujiwara later expressed it, “I am very happy to have two new members within a year of my mission in Japan. May the Lord continue his favor and blessings upon me.”<sup>48</sup>

Also in May, the first and last issue of *Hattatsu* (*The Progress*)—a magazine fashioned after *Shuro*—was published. It was printed in both Japanese and English, so that friends in Hawaii and America could be made aware of the happenings in Japan. It contained mission history and news as well as letters between the Japanese Saints and friends overseas. One letter from Brother Takagi Tomigoro (who had studied in America) to Senator Thomas and Alma O. Taylor pleaded, “with my ardent desire for PEACE of the whole human kind on the earth I do earnestly point out that NOW is the best and finest chance for restoration of the Japan Mission of the Church.”<sup>49</sup> Fujiwara and Takagi and others had a strong nationalistic feeling for Japan,<sup>50</sup> and felt that the reestablishment of the mission was the best way to solve the growing differences between Japan and America. This is especially true since Chojiro Kuriyama, a member, was working for the Japanese government in New York, and former mission president, Senator Elbert Thomas, was in Washington.<sup>51</sup>

The variety of comments and people that Fujiwara ran into testifies of the varieties of religious experience and needs. Some members really wanted and needed the Church to keep them strong. As a Brother Nakagawa commented to Fujiwara, “We are generally less faithful, and could not continue our faithful with some reasons, but we are still Mormons.”<sup>52</sup> Others felt close to the gospel, without any apparent need for the Church. The name of Fude Tai (sister to Tsune Nachie of Hawaii) is not on any of the lists of those who attended meetings yet, when Fujiwara located her in February 1935, she

<sup>48</sup>Fujiwara, “Official Report, January to April 1935,” pp. 7-14.

<sup>49</sup>*Hattatsu*, p. 27.

<sup>50</sup>See the introduction to Fujiwara’s master’s thesis, “The Political and Military Policies of the Tokugawa Shogunate,” Brigham Young University, 1934, pp. vii, viii.

<sup>51</sup>On one occasion, Senator Thomas wrote to Chojiro Kuriyama in New York and advised him “as a friend and former teacher” to influence the Japanese government to renew its notice to withdraw from the League of Nations rather than actually withdraw. Thomas said that in view of the tense situation, such an act would do “immeasurable good.” (Thomas to Kuriyama, 25 March 1935, in Japan Mission General Files)

<sup>52</sup>Fujiwara, “Official Record until December 31, 1934,” pp. 6-9.

was reading the Book of Mormon with her son and his family. Others, like Sister Kumagai, were always holding church-type meetings whether there was anyone from the Church there or not.

Some, feeling neglected by the Church, returned to old life styles, and were bothered by Fujiwara's persistence in trying to reactivate them. Such was the case with the Nakazawas and the family of a Brother Kitagawa (Nara's former MIA counselor and coeditor of *Shuro*), who kept trying to give Fujiwara "the slip." "The family of this brother are very ignorant or funny, as they told us wrong places of this brother's business and they told us just wrong things." And of course others, like the Yoneyamas, felt inwardly hurt, as if God had turned his back on them.<sup>53</sup> Fujiwara summarized the feeling of many former Saints to Taylor:

If we investigate the Saints in Japan, we will find no saints who can be said to be really faithful and real members of the church of Christ. Many of them will say that they are not interested in religion any longer, for religion does not give them anything spiritually and, of course, nothing materially. So they say they are in changing their mind, "Shinkyo no henka" . . . I always send them cards . . . but only five or six Saints have ever answered my greetings.<sup>54</sup>

Alma O. Taylor served in a position something like what is today called a regional or mission representative—a go-between for Fujiwara and the general authorities, translating and advising concerning letters that went both ways. The letters between him and Fujiwara are fascinating. Over and over he tried to get Fujiwara to classify donations from the members, but he just kept saying, "the money is for the Church. That's all." (Fujiwara recorded over sixteen people donating to the Church, although over half the total amount came from Fujiwara himself.) They corresponded about many things: about Fujiwara's getting a regular job, his stewardship, advancements in the priesthood, spreading rumors that Taylor was going to begin missionary work among the Japanese in Hawaii, and about money for a permanent building (and how the Church doesn't need "rice Christians," who only join the Church for its fancy buildings, although Taylor did admit the

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<sup>53</sup>Fujiwara, "Official Report, January 1-April 30, 1935," pp. 4-10.

<sup>54</sup>Fujiwara, "Official Report, August 3, 1935," pp. 4-10.



need for a building).<sup>55</sup> However, what happened next superseded all these matters in importance.

In March Fujiwara was confined to his bed for two weeks, seriously ill, until he was nursed back to health by Sister Watanabe's constant care. In the summer he became ill again and finally returned to his home in Hokkaido for a complete rest and recovery in August. For this reason the September *Hattatsu* was never published. From his home in September, and then from a hospital in November, he dictated letters to Taylor apologizing for not doing more work. Finally, in February 1936, Taylor received a letter from Fujiwara's father stating:

With words of regret upon his lips that he had done so little for the church, uttering words of deep gratitude to all who had helped him . . . he went to what he calls heaven. Not knowing much about his religion, it is all very strange to me.

Fujiwara had died of pleurisy (and possibly tuberculosis) on 27 January 1936.<sup>56</sup>

Taylor reported all this in a long letter to the First Presidency in March 1936, and then asked, "Now what is to be done about a successor to Elder Fujiwara?" Yoshihiro Watanabe seemed to be the only one who could be trusted, although he was an unlearned ivory carver, and rather elderly. Watanabe had just written Taylor asking the same question, saying that he had tried to substitute for Fujiwara but was not able and was not very capable and had not been set apart so was limited in his authority. He concluded,

. . . we wish that you do not abandon the work in Japan, but that you continue it, in that connection I suggest you send someone from America or designate some desirable Japanese to carry on. Please let us know.<sup>57</sup>

#### THE DARK AGES: 1936 to 1945

There is no record of an answer to Watanabe, and we know very little about what happened in Japan for the next ten years. Elder Nara later called this period, "the absolute dark

<sup>55</sup>See letters in Japan Mission General Files. Also included were several letters from Fujiwara to the First Presidency containing condolences at the deaths of Church leaders, congratulations at the times of general conferences, and reminders that there were still Saints in Japan who desired the reopening of the mission.

<sup>56</sup>*Deseret News*, 29 February 1936, Journal History, Church Archives.

<sup>57</sup>Taylor to Grant, 14 March 1936.

ages" ("Mattaku sono ju nen wa ankoku no jidai de atta").<sup>58</sup> But a few Saints in each city had been meeting somewhat regularly before Fujiwara's death, and there is no reason to suppose that these meetings stopped, at least for two or three years. Sister Kumagai still held her meetings, and at least one member, Brother Ono, came for a while.<sup>59</sup>

It would be interesting to know the details of this period when there was no presiding elder, for the Brother Katuras and Watanabes may prove to be the real heroes of this period. They were never the great initiators, but they endured through it all humbly and faithfully, giving constant support to whomever the leaders might have been. As Taylor once described Watanabe, "he has always confessed his membership in the Church and one who had, in this feeble way, supported every movement attempted for the Saints since the closing."<sup>60</sup>

In April and May of 1939, Hilton A. Robertson made an official visit to Japan on behalf of the Church. With only inaccurate addresses, he began searching for Nami Suzuki, an old sister who had once lived in and cooked for the mission home. Of all the millions in the Tokyo-Yokohama area, a young girl emerged from a public bath, saw the foreigner and asked what he wanted. When Robertson told her, she said, "That's my mother." She took him right to Sister Suzuki's, and Robertson got other addresses from her. He visited the Tokyo, Sapporo, and Osaka Saints, and assured them that they had not been forgotten and that missionaries would return some day. While in Japan he baptized several new members—the two surviving children<sup>61</sup> of Sister Suzuki (with Elder Watanabe confirming) and Elder Katsura's daughter (with Katsura confirming), among others.<sup>62</sup>

Whatever the Church activities there were during these years, they probably ended with the war. Cards and letters were exchanged, but formal meetings were not allowed. Police precautions were very strict.<sup>63</sup> It would be interesting to know

<sup>58</sup>Nara, "Brief Record," p. 2; see also Nara, "Joy of Publication," p. 2.

<sup>59</sup>Kumagai interview.

<sup>60</sup>Taylor to Grant, 14 March 1936.

<sup>61</sup>Sister Suzuki had two other children who had died—one in the China War, and another of disease in 1935. This means that of the thirty or forty Saints during this period whose lives we know anything at all about, four died of disease in 1935-36: Suzuki's daughter, Fujiwara, and the two Yoneyamas.

<sup>62</sup>Form E Membership Records; Marsh, *Light of the Sun*, p. 24.

<sup>63</sup>During the war playing or singing of foreign hymns and even using Japanese forms of English words (such as the common "erebeitaa" for "ele-



the thoughts of the Saints during the war—how they resolved the conflict that may have arisen in their minds when they found the country they loved fighting against a country closely aligned with the Church they loved. Sister Kumagai, at least, claims there really was no conflict. She thought that both the Japanese and Americans fought because they loved their countries, and therefore had no hatred for either side. Her only prayer during that time was for peace and the reestablishment of the mission. She also said that all who worked with her at a local newspaper knew of her Christian affiliation, but never gave her any persecution or abuse because of it.<sup>64</sup> Thus the members sat out the war years without any outward activity or signs of Church membership. In spite of the lack of activity in Japan during these years, a mighty work was being accomplished among the Japanese elsewhere.

#### THE HAWAIIAN ERA: 1936 to 1950

Although the First Presidency neither appointed a replacement for Fujiwara after his death in 1936, nor sent a "high apostle" to reopen the mission (as Tomigoro Takagi had suggested), they had not ignored the work among the Japanese. Rather, they gave heed to another suggestion Fujiwara had sent before his death:

I am sorry to tell you that the older members are mostly unenthusiastic at my work. . . . Better make new members than struggle to help the old ones. It would take less energy, effort and courage.<sup>65</sup>

Within eight months after receiving Taylor's report about Fujiwara's death, they called ex-mission president Hilton A. Robertson to reestablish the Japanese Mission, but with headquarters in Honolulu, "from which base of operations the president and missionaries will work among the Japanese people of Hawaii and also the established branches of Japanese members in Japan."<sup>66</sup>

A great deal of the credit for the initiation of the work among the Japanese in Hawaii goes to one person, Sister Tsune Nachie, who had been working among her people since 1923.

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vator," and "outo" for "out" in baseball) were all strictly forbidden. See Seiji Katanuma, "The Church in Japan," *BYU Studies* 14 (Autumn 1973):21, 22.

<sup>64</sup>Kumagai interview.

<sup>65</sup>Quoted in Taylor to Grant, 14 March 1936.

<sup>66</sup>*Deseret News*, 27 November 1936, Journal History.

She went out each morning with her Church books and a few pamphlets in Japanese language, tied in a large handkerchief, and visited diligently among her people and preached the Gospel to them.<sup>67</sup>

Because of her efforts, in the spring of 1934, a Japanese Sunday School class was started as a separate unit of Kalihi Branch. When Elder Fujiwara passed through in August on his return to Japan, about thirty Japanese were attending. The brethren that came to organize the Oahu Stake in 1935 were so impressed with the class that they organized it as a special unit in the stake under the new first counselor, Edward Clissold.<sup>68</sup>

They began to talk of a special mission for the Orientals in Hawaii, and Robertson was called in November 1936, arriving in Hawaii on 24 February 1937. In October three missionaries arrived, and by the end of the year there were eighteen baptized members, all active.

The environment, results, characters and condition of the mission in Hawaii were so different from those in Japan that it should be a subject for a long paper in itself. Briefly, we can simply say that with fewer language and social barriers, the Japanese in Hawaii had a different attitude towards Mormonism than did the Japanese in Japan. The mission was immediately successful, more missionaries were sent, and baptisms increased, until the war came and missionaries had to be withdrawn. Year end totals more easily show the mission progress:<sup>69</sup>

#### MISSIONARIES

1937	'38	'39	'40	'41	'42	'43	'44	'45	'46	'47	'48
5	19	32	54	55	18	13	7	4	34	66	89

#### BAPTISMS

1937	'38	'39	'40	'41	'42	'43	'44	'45	'46	'47	'48
4	13	26	37	48	156	72	48	34	30	15	52

#### TOTAL MEMBERSHIP

1937	'38	'39	'40	'41	'42	'43	'44	'45	'46	'47	'48
17	30	60	101	150	302	375	437	484	522	532	604

Not only were they numerically successful, but if tithe paying

<sup>67</sup>Castle H. Murphy, "A Brief Resumé of the Organization of the Missionary Work among the Chinese and Japanese in Hawaii," 30 March 1973. Typed manuscript in possession of the author.

<sup>68</sup>Clissold interview.

<sup>69</sup>Taken from the year-end totals in the Missionary Annual Reports, 1937-1948, Church Archives.



is any indication, the converts were the most faithful in the world. In 1945, for example, over 97% were tithe payers, which compares with only 61% paid in the non-Japanese Hawaiian Mission, and less elsewhere.<sup>70</sup>

The mission definitely progressed. When aged Sister Nachie died in December 1938, President Robertson stated that the Lord had left her until he had twenty-five missionaries to replace her.<sup>71</sup> In 1939 Robertson made his trip to Japan. In 1940 he was replaced by J. C. Jensen, who became ill at the end of 1942 and was replaced by Edward L. Clissold. When Castle Murphy took over in 1944, there were just seven missionaries because of the war; and also, because of the bad connotations of the word "Japanese" during the war, the name of the mission was changed to the Central Pacific Mission.<sup>72</sup> Melvyn Weenig became mission president in 1946 and, with the end of the war, dozens of missionaries were sent to the mission, several of whom were later transferred to Japan itself in 1948.

The greatest contribution of the work in Hawaii is just being seen today in Japan. Almost every major mission leader in Japan from the mid-1960s until now was converted or served as a missionary in Hawaii under the Japanese Mission.

#### THE REOPENING: 1945 to 1948

In 1945 when the war ended, the few members in Japan had been waiting for twenty-one years for the reestablishment of the mission. Meanwhile, in Hawaii, Japanese people had been joining the Church in exciting numbers. It was now time to join these two elements and let the fusion bring forth a new era of missionary work among the Japanese people.

LDS servicemen, who began entering Japan in late August 1945 along with occupation forces, immediately began sharing the gosepl with the native Japanese they met. Edward L. Clissold also entered Japan as a member of MacArthur's staff in 1945, and ran an ad in the *Mainichi* newspaper asking all Tokyo Saints to come and meet him at the Dai Ichi Hotel. Brother and Sister Nara (recently returned from Manchuria)

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 1945.

<sup>71</sup>Murphy, "Brief Resumé," Addendum, p. 5.

<sup>72</sup>From the annual summaries under the "Japanese" and "Central Pacific Missions," *Missionary Annual Reports*, 1937-1950. In 1950, after much debate, it was decided to merge the Central Pacific Mission with the Hawaiian Mission in order to avoid dual Church organization over the same area.

and Sister Watanabe met with him at once and requested the restoration of the mission.<sup>73</sup>

By the time Clissold left Japan in 1945, local servicemen, especially *nisei* like Brothers Komatsu and Horiuchi, who had been converted in Hawaii, had begun aiding the Saints and conducting small Sunday Schools in their homes. As the group grew they moved from meeting in a small room in Nara's niece's house, to a school in Roppongi to a large home in Gotanda. By 1948 about fifty were meeting in Ogikubo. The Saints in Hawaii were sending a lot of goods to help destitute Saints in Japan, and servicemen brought young war orphans to Sunday School classes.<sup>74</sup>

On 6 March 1948, Clissold returned as mission president, and the mission was officially reestablished. Due to his particular assignment on MacArthur's staff (an assignment he had not desired at the time), he had the exact connections he needed to get the Church going again.<sup>75</sup> The first thing to do was to get a permanent building. In April 1948 a partially burnt house in Azabu was obtained. Renovation began in May, and on Thanksgiving Day 1948 the building was dedicated. The mission in Japan would be permanent this time.<sup>76</sup>

Among the very first baptisms of the new mission, was that of Nara's wife Motoko, on 6 April 1948, performed by President Clissold.<sup>77</sup> Another group was baptized in November. The first five missionaries finally got permission and entered the country on 26 June 1948. By the end of that year there were seventeen missionaries (six *nisei*), twenty-two baptisms, and several different Sunday Schools being held with over 900 attending the various areas.<sup>78</sup>

Missionary numbers increased and they were sent out into all the old areas and many new ones. Elder Matthew Cowley saw a bright future for Japan when he dedicated the mission home and said, "there will some day be many church buildings and even temples built in this land."<sup>79</sup> Members and missionaries became numerous, and communication with the Church

<sup>73</sup>Clissold interview; Foreward to 1949, Manuscript History.

<sup>74</sup>Interview with Aiko Horiuchi, Provo, Utah, 11 October 1973.

<sup>75</sup>Clissold interview.

<sup>76</sup>For Clissold's own detailed account, see Nichols, "History of the Japan Mission," pp. 141-48.

<sup>77</sup>Form E Membership Records.

<sup>78</sup>Missionary Annual Reports, 1948.

<sup>79</sup>Quoted in a letter from Harrison T. Price to Paul C. Andrus, 26 August 1958, Church Archives.



became a daily affair. It was a different place indeed. As of 1974 there are six different missions in Japan and three stakes.<sup>80</sup> As an indication of this success, during his first general conference as President of the Church, Spencer W. Kimball challenged Japan to, “. . . furnish its own 1,000 missionaries and then eventually 10,000 more for Mongolia and China.”<sup>81</sup> But that is another story.

#### SOME OBSERVATIONS

The history of the Church in Japan in the period between missions is not a history involving great movements or controlling forces, but is rather a documentation of how individual people reacted to a particularly hard situation.

Perhaps this type of subtle adversity brings out a person's true character—in all its diversities. Some members may have actually been made stronger during the Church's absence. Others fell away all the more quickly. Some hung on, barely, and others did not have the strength to make it alone. Some were insulted, some hurt, and others basically unaffected. Nara reappeared after World War II as enthusiastic as the day the first *Shuro* came out, and as recently as 9 September 1973 was set apart as a stake patriarch by Elder Thomas S. Monson. Brothers Katsura and Watanabe seemed to have pursued a steady course throughout the years regardless of the external conditions of the Church. Some members never supported the Church during the interim, but came back enthusiastically once the Church proved its devotion to Japan. Others, perhaps longing for a more intimate and simple organization, served less valiantly after the reopening of the mission and the subsequent successes. Perhaps the greatest tragedy of the closing and interim period was that some who truly loved the Church felt deserted and disappointed by the closing, and ended up “in the Church” but less than they might have been otherwise.

How do we judge the effect this period has had on the future of the Japan missions? Why is all the research, interviewing, translating, and corresponding that still needs to be

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<sup>80</sup>For an objective opinion of actual success in Japan in recent years (which looks beyond the mere increase in numbers), see Katanuma, “The Church in Japan,” pp. 16-28.

<sup>81</sup>Spencer W. Kimball, “When the World Will Be Converted,” *The Ensign* (October 1974), p. 12, from a speech delivered on 4 April 1974.

done if we are to truly understand the many mysteries of this period really necessary? The Hawaiian period is obviously important in that it produced so many of today's leaders. But what difference do Fujiwara's life and death, Yamaide's poetry, Kuriyama's inactivity, Kumagai's enthusiasm, Watanabe's steadiness, Nara's initiative and Yoneyama's hurt make on the future of the Church in Japan? Perhaps their lives can teach us a few things: like an essential quality of both Japanese culture and Mormonism—true endurance. In their lives we can see the complex effect a simple act like closing down an area can have on faithful Latter-day Saints. But more important, in this day when we are striving to be a worldwide church, their lives serve as prime examples of the fact that one can be a good Mormon without being an American or Utahn. The Japanese who joined the Church in large numbers—in Hawaii and in post-war Japan—were those partially made, or ready to be partially made into Americans. But the fact that a few endured faithful to the Church at a time in Japan's history when being truly Japanese was everything, proves that one can still keep his culture and be a good Latter-day Saint. For two decades they had nothing to sustain them—nothing but the true essence of the gospel without any external organizational or cultural reinforcements, and yet some still made it. The numbers of those who didn't make it untouched shows that this may be extremely difficult—perhaps harder than it should be. But it is possible.



# The Gadianton Robbers and Protracted War

Ray C. Hillam\*

There are many kinds of war described in the Book of Mormon. Some are enormous in their destruction, followed by intermittent periods of "cold war." Most are placed within the context of a highly polarized relationship in which the Nephites and Lamanites are cast as deadly rivals. While some Book of Mormon wars are limited in their objectives and means, others are unlimited, such as the war that led to the destruction of the Nephites by the Lamanites.

The Gadianton wars were different from most other wars in the Book of Mormon in that they were internal, often covert, and protracted. In part they grew out of internal dissent stemming from alienation and were fueled by a satanic lust for power. The characteristics of these protracted wars, which endured, off and on, for approximately seventy years, are like some of the insurgencies and counterinsurgencies of modern times. Since World War II we have witnessed many forms of such wars in the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, and Africa. As one who has studied the concepts and principles of contemporary insurgency and counterinsurgency, I find them strikingly similar to those in the Gadianton era.

## THE GADIANTON WARS

It was during the troubled fortieth year of the reign of the judges (52 B.C.) that serious difficulty arose among the people of the Nephites. Since their judge, Pahoran had died, disagreement arose among three factions, each led by one of the

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several sons of Pahoran: Pahoran II, Paanchi, and Pacumeni. When Pahoran II was "appointed by the voice of the people," Pacumeni supported him, but Paanchi decided he could not; he organized a rebellion and was caught, convicted, and condemned to death. His angry followers sent Kishkumen to assassinate Pahoran II. (Helaman 1:9)

After the assassination, Kishkumen escaped to the sanctuary of the rebels, who in turn could "mingle themselves among the people, in a manner that they could not be found" (Helaman 1:12). The rebels were able to remain within the Nephite body politic and could benefit from the impending war between the Nephites and Lamanites.

Pacumeni, who had succeeded Pahoran II, was killed during the Nephite war with the Lamanites, and Helaman II was appointed to fill the judgment seat, an appointment that was equally unacceptable to Kishkumen and his band of rebels.

Within this environment of dissent, a man named Gadianton emerged as the leader of the rebels. Gadianton was an "exceeding expert in many words, and also in his craft, to carry on the secret work" of the rebels. He was a professional propagandist of the first magnitude, for he "did flatter them [his followers], and also Kishkumen," and promised that "they should be placed in power and authority" (Helaman 2:4).

Gadianton dispatched Kishkumen to carry out his second assassination of a judge. But one of Helaman's servants who had been able to penetrate the secret combination or infrastructure of the enemy and learn of the plan, entrapped Kishkumen, and killed him as he led him to the judgment seat of Helaman. That event brought the conspiracy into the open, and Gadianton and most of his followers were forced to find sanctuary in the wilderness. (Helaman 2:1-11)

After another war between the Nephites and Lamanites, a long period of peace and freedom, unprecedented prosperity, and a trend toward wickedness, the rebels, who called themselves Gadianton, reemerged. During the sixty-sixth year of the reign of the judges (27 B.C.), or approximately a generation after Gadianton and his rebels were forced to flee to the wilderness, they were able to infiltrate both societies, particularly the Lamanites. Once again, they were able to carry out their politics of terror, which led to the assassination of two judges—Cezoram and his son. (Helaman 6:15-19)



Initially they had found sanctuary among the Lamanites, but the Lamanite leaders, being politically embarrassed by their presence, "did use every means in their power to destroy them . . ." (Helaman 6:20). Their success in removing them from their midst came through (1) the building of the people's faith in their leaders and obedience to law, (2) the vigorous and forceful suppression and pursuit of the robbers, and (3) a conversion program for those Gadianton rebels who would listen. (Helaman 6:34, 37) Because of this comprehensive strategy by the Lamanites, the band of robbers was utterly destroyed among them.

The Nephites had at the same time become particularly vulnerable to infiltration and subversion by the Gadianton rebels. Being soft and permissive, they were soon politically seduced, even "the righteous until they had come . . . to believe in their [the rebels'] works and partake of their spoils, and to join with them." And "they [the Gadianton leaders] did obtain the sole management of the government" of the Nephites (Helaman 6:38-39) and "usurped the power and authority of the land" (Helaman 7:4).

During the reign of the Gadianton judges, Nephi, the son of Helaman, returned to the people of the Nephites. Seeing what had occurred, he began to preach repentance among the people and to lead an insurgency against the Gadianton government. Nephi, who had earlier stepped down as chief judge in order to devote himself to the ministry, had charismatic qualities that enabled him to consolidate Nephite resistance to the Gadianton government. His sermons and prophecies produced a following of the faithful who formed an opposition to the corrupt and iniquitous rule of the Gadianton judges. By the seventy-second year, or four years after the Gadianton judges came to power, there were "wars throughout all the land among the people of Nephi." After two years of civil war, which were followed by a great famine, the people began "to remember the Lord," and they repented. Soon, the Gadianton leaders and their followers "were swept away by the people and they became extinct" (Helaman 11:1, 5-7, 10).

Thus, Nephi became a revolutionary leader in opposition to a politically illegitimate government established by the Gadiantons. He led a revolt against them and after several years of struggle established a government that was politically and morally legitimate. His strategy was similar to the one em-

ployed by the Lamanites some years earlier, although of greater magnitude. In both instances, once there was little popular support for the Gadianton leaders and their followers, they were easily defeated.

After almost a decade of peace and prosperity, both the Nephite and Lamanite societies again became soft and vulnerable to insurgency. (3 Nephi 2:23-29) And with the growth of dissension, the number of rebels reemerged and multiplied, as did their sanctuaries and bases. The rebels, who had adopted Gadianton's operational code or secret plans, began to launch more and more terrorist and guerilla-type attacks against the governments and people of both the Nephites and the Lamanites. The Nephites and Lamanites in turn sent search-and-destroy missions into the mountains and wilderness to pursue them but were obliged to return, unable to rout them from their base areas and sanctuaries.

Over the years many Lamanites and Nephites joined with the rebels, and the mountains and wilderness became filled with them. Large base camps were built by the rebels for protection and, more important, for launching attacks. Thus, within a few years, a small group of rebels became a large conventional army and a major military threat to both the Nephite and Lamanite societies. Their leader, Giddianhi, called himself governor of the secret society of Gadianton.

After years of protracted war and military preparation, the rebel chieftain issued an edict to Lachoneus, governor of the land, which said:

Lachoneus, most noble and chief governor of the land, behold, I write this epistle unto you, and do give unto you exceeding great praise because of your firmness, and also the firmness of your people, in maintaining that which ye suppose to be your right and liberty; yea, ye do stand well, as if ye were supported by the hand of god, in the defence of your liberty, and your property, and your country, or that which ye do call so.

And it seemeth a pity unto me, most noble Lachoneus, that ye should be so foolish and vain as to suppose that ye can stand against so many brave men who are at my command, who do now at this time stand in their arms, and do await with great anxiety for the word—Go down upon the Nephites and destroy them.

And I, knowing of their unconquerable spirit, having proved them in the field of battle, and knowing of their



everlasting hatred towards you because of the many wrongs which ye have done unto them, therefore if they should come down against you they would visit you with utter destruction.

Therefore I have written this epistle, sealing it with mine own hand, feeling for your welfare, because of your firmness in that which ye believe to be right, and your noble spirit in the field of battle.

Therefore I write unto you, desiring that ye would yield up unto this my people, your cities, your lands, and your possessions, rather than that they should visit you with the sword and that destruction should come upon you.

Or in other words, yield yourselves up unto us, and unite with us and become acquainted with our secret works, and become our brethren that ye may be like unto us—not our slaves, but our brethren and partners of all our substance.

And behold, I swear unto you, if ye will do this, with an oath, ye shall not be destroyed; but if ye will not do this, I swear unto you with an oath, that on the morrow month I will command that my armies shall come down against you, and they shall not stay their hand and shall spare not, but shall slay you, and shall let fall the sword upon you even until ye shall become extinct.

And behold, I am Giddianhi; and I am the governor of this the secret society of Gadianton; which society and the works thereof I know to be good; and they are of ancient date and they have been handed down to us.

And I write this epistle unto you, Lachoneus, and I hope that ye will deliver up your lands and your possessions, without the shedding of blood, that this my people may recover their rights and government, who have dissented away from you because of your wickedness in retaining from them their rights of government, and except ye do this, I will avenge their wrongs. I am Giddianhi. (3 Nephi 3:2-10)

Lachoneus, alarmed by the boldness and arrogance of Giddianhi's demands, encouraged his people to strengthen their faith, and issued a proclamation that "they should gather together their women, and their children, their flocks and their herds, and all their substance . . . unto one place" (3 Nephi 3:13). He built fortifications and instructed the Nephite and Lamanite armies to defend them. He appointed Gidgiddoni as commander of the Nephite forces and appointed chief captains as Gidgiddoni's subordinates. As was the custom, only chief captains who in their own personal lives were righteous enough to have the spirit of revelation and also prophecy were chosen. And Gidgiddoni was "a great prophet among them," as was Lachoneus. (3 Nephi 3:19) Thus the resulting strat-

egy against the enemy was based, in part, on revelation and prophecy.

Assembling the people and their sustenance into a protective area was only part of the strategy. They also implemented a food-denial program, leaving their cities and fields desolate. Moreover, Gidgiddoni sent search-and-destroy missions to harass the rebels and prevent them from tilling the soil of the Nephites, which had been left desolate. Soon, in desperation, the rebels attacked the fortified settlement and "there never was known so great a slaughter among all the people of Lehi since he left Jerusalem" (3 Nephi 4:11). The mighty army of the rebel leader was beaten back and forced to retreat. Gidgiddoni's forces pursued Giddianhi and his rebels to "the borders of the wilderness" and overtook and killed Giddianhi.

The Gadianton forces regrouped and appointed another leader, Zemnarihah, under whom they decided to encircle the protective settlement of the Nephites and Lamanites and to starve them into submission. But because of the disruption of their plans by continuous harassing missions and guerilla attacks by Gidgiddoni's irregulars, the Gadianton forces themselves nearly perished from hunger. Finally, Zemnarihah broke off the engagement and retreated to the north. Gidgiddoni became aware of the rebels' plans, cut them off, and encircled them. Many surrendered, but others were killed, including Zemnarihah. This brought an end to what was called the Gadianton wars.

#### RELEVANCY FOR MODERN TIMES

There were several patterns of Gadianton insurgency during the approximately seventy years of active, and sometimes latent, Gadianton wars. The first was characterized by rebels disrupting the rule of the judges, promoting unrest, recruiting followers, developing an infrastructure and strategy for seizing political power. The countermeasure of Helaman II, however, proved successful when Gadianton and most of his followers were forced to retreat from their clandestine sanctuaries within the body politic and to seek safety in the wilderness. As long as the Nephite and Lamanite societies remained spiritually healthy, the presence of the rebels in the wilderness was of little consequence.

The second Gadianton insurgency began with the infiltration of both the Lamanite and Nephite societies by the rebels



and their eventual control of the Nephite government. The Lamanites were successful in removing the rebels from their midst, but the Nephites succumbed to propaganda and the skillful tactics and strategies of the rebels. Only by a new insurgency led by Nephi, and years of war and famine, was the Gadianton government swept away.

The third Gadianton war had some of the characteristics of a regular war. There was less subversion and more confrontation on the battlefield. However, it was a more destructive, and larger war. The Gadianton forces moved from being a small disaffected group of rebels seeking sanctuaries in the wilderness to a large conventional force able to confront the military might of both the Nephites and the Lamanites.

Those wars were necessarily protracted because it took time to develop the capability to compete with the constituted authorities. They lasted for approximately seventy years from the time of Kishkumen's murder of Pahoran II to the defeat of Zemnarihah by Gidgiddoni.

To the rebels the role of the sanctuary was important, as were flexible base areas from which to launch attacks or to retreat. They developed a network of base areas in the wilderness and tried to maintain a secret presence within the Lamanite and Nephite communities. Their movements were, in part, based on ideology—tied to issues and lists of grievances. For instance, Giddianhi claimed he sought to recover the rights of his followers, the rights of government and property.

The counterinsurgency and insurgency programs of the Nephites and Lamanites were very much tied to the God-fearing ideology of the day and to a particular political system and process of government. The Nephites placed much emphasis upon the voice of the people and sought men of righteousness to rule them. In Nephi's insurgency he relied heavily upon regenerating their faith to mobilize opposition to the Gadianton government. During the last war, Commander Gidgiddoni and the chief captains also relied upon the gospel and the spirit of revelation to unite and lead their society and armies against the enemy. It was not simply a contest of arms but of ideas. It was not a conflict that could be resolved on the battlefield alone.

The Gadiantons presumably had leaders who could whip their followers into the frenzy of battle, while Gidgiddoni had

men of faith to motivate and lead. Even the chief captains, as well as the commander of the Nephite forces, were men who had the spirit of revelation. They were not only military leaders but spiritual leaders as well, all within the context of revealed truth.

Psychological warfare and propaganda were important then as they are today. The bold epistle of Giddianhi was a brilliant effort to persuade Lachoneus to capitulate. His praise of Lachoneus and his people, his speaking of the "unconquerable spirit" of his men who only desire to "recover their rights and government," his willingness to accept the Nephites and Lamanites as brethren and to share with them "secret works" that are good, and his alleged feelings for Lachoneus' welfare are impressive propaganda themes.

Perhaps more significant is the role propaganda played in the incipient phases of the Gadianton movements. The tactics in the first two patterns of insurgency presumably consisted not only of assassinations but also of persuasive techniques that would bring converts and a significant measure of public apathy.

Secrecy, ritual, and tradition were important variables in the Gadianton movements as they are in many contemporary insurgencies. The movements were clandestine, with the aura of secrecy appealing to the frustrated and alienated Nephite and Lamanite. Giddianhi boasted of the Gadianton society of "ancient date," which implies legitimacy and the importance of tradition.

The secret organization or infrastructure, with Mafia-like captains and soldiers, was evident. For instance, the secret sub rosa sanctuary of the rebels, before they were forced to retreat to the wilderness, suggested the existence of an infrastructure of interrelated cells led by elites such as Kishkumen and Gadianton. Such an infrastructure was maintained within the Nephite and Lamanite societies while the armed units were of necessity forced to seek and maintain sanctuaries and base areas in the wilderness. This infrastructure was particularly apparent in the second pattern of insurgency, which relied almost entirely upon internal subversion and assassination.

The food-denial program—the scorched-earth policy—was important to the strategy of the Lachoneus government. The food-denial program reduced or eliminated the parasitical relationship of the insurgents with the agricultural economy of



the Nephite and Lamanite societies. The insurgents were forced to raise their own crops, which then could be easily destroyed by their enemy. Guerrillas and soldiers with empty stomachs are easily demoralized. In fact, Giddianhi's forces eventually became desperate and were forced to attack a defense citadel because of this program.

Search and destroy, seize and hold, protective sanctuaries for storage, and strategic settlements were important aspects of Lachoneus' counterinsurgency effort. The gathering of the people into a protective area that could be easily defended was strategically important in Lachoneus' struggle to defeat Giddianhi. This defensive measure, combined with the search-and-destroy missions forced the insurgents to fight on terms that were disadvantageous to them.

When the Lamanites found Gadianton robbers in their midst, their response was broader than the mere suppression and pursuit of the robbers. They sought the support of the people through promoting their faith and obedience. They also made an effort to convert their enemies. Later, after the fall of the Nephite government to the Gadianton robbers, Nephi pursued a broad program that produced a following of the faithful. A popular base seemed essential to Nephi's mission of removing the corrupt and wicked rule of the Gadianton judges.

The roles of terror, hit and run, and assassination were integral parts of the Gadianton strategy. The symbolic impact of terror and assassination presumably paralyzed the government, so much so that panic, disorder, and fear struck the constituted authorities and the people. Terror, if skillfully coordinated with the political and military effort, is an important and often effective instrument of the weak.

While there are a number of similarities between the insurgent movements of the Gadianton robbers and modern insurgencies, there are also some striking differences. First, Mormon, the compiler-abridger, tended to interpret Nephite history in a cyclical fashion. For example, Mormon sees the Nephites at peace and living in righteousness, then come pride and arrogance, evil and pestilence, war and suffering, repentance and peace, and the whole cycle begins again. Furthermore, these cycles occur over brief periods of time, usually within a few years.

Modern insurgencies cannot be so comfortably fitted into a cyclical model. Not only has the world changed into a nation-state system that makes an analysis of insurgency more complex, but our historians are not as gifted as Mormon in being able to impart a moral judgment to the process of history.

Mormon says that the Gadianton insurgency is immoral, for it deceptively leads the people away from truth and freedom. On the other hand, he praises Nephi's insurgency, which brought down the Gadianton judges, because Nephi was a righteous man who was guided by gospel principles. He viewed that insurgency to be morally legitimate, even though Nephi's act of opposing the judges was politically seditious, since these wicked judges enjoyed authority extended to them by a politically seduced sector of the Nephite society.

Unfortunately, present-day insurgencies and counterinsurgencies are more difficult to define as good or bad. Both insurgents and counterinsurgents are known to employ abhorrent tactics, such as terror, assassination, or the indiscriminate killing of the innocent. Often those in power and those not in power are equally bad—or perhaps equally good.

For those who tend to view all insurgent groups as bad, it should be remembered that the insurgency of Nephi was deemed to be good by a prophet, as it was directed against an evil government. During the Gadianton era, only one such insurgency is recorded. The other insurgencies were initiated by the forces of evil against legitimate political authority.

Insurgencies, ancient or modern, are spawned essentially in the environment in which they occur. In the case of the Gadianton robbers, the laxness and self-indulgence of the Nephites, coupled with the great wealth and material comfort, produced social decay and created the conditions for insurgency. In the case of Nephi's insurgency, the corruptness of the Gadianton judges and their overconcentration of power also produced the kind of social unrest that could be turned to Nephi's advantage.

Today's political leaders, insurgent or counterinsurgent, do not have the perceptions of a prophet. This is the most salient distinction that can be made. Nevertheless, as one reads the accounts of insurgency and counterinsurgency in the Book of Mormon, one is impressed with its relevancy for modern times.



# Eleanor McLean and the Murder of Parley P. Pratt

Steven Pratt\*

Twelve miles northwest of a small Arkansas town called Van Buren, Parley P. Pratt was murdered on 13 May 1857. The events that precipitated the murder have often been speculated about and discussed among students of Mormon history. Most scholars know that Parley's death was connected with his involvement with Eleanor Jane McLean and that her estranged husband Hector committed the murder. Though the narrative of Parley's tragic end is available, the full details are not, and these need telling so that whatever mystery still surrounds it may be resolved.

## ELEANOR JANE MCCOMB MCLEAN: 1817-1854

Eleanor Jane McComb was born 9 December 1817, in Wheeling, Virginia, to James and Ann McComb.<sup>1</sup> Little is known of her early life, except that her parents were strict Presbyterian and that they moved to Greenville, Louisiana, near New Orleans when she was a small child. It was there that she met and married Hector McLean in 1841.<sup>2</sup> They seemed to be happy at first. But Hector started drinking heavily, causing a separation in 1844. Eleanor, after seeking counsel from her father, two brothers, E. C. and J. J. McComb, and

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<sup>1</sup>Parley P. Pratt Family Record, a genealogical record kept by Parley Pratt. The original, in Parley's handwriting, is in the possession of Cathryn B. Pratt, Salt Lake City, Utah. Hereafter cited as Pratt Family Record.

<sup>2</sup>New Orleans Probate Court. "In the matter of Eleanor Jane McComb wife of Hector H. McLean," June 1857, Case #12018. A petition to the court for the arrest of Eleanor on the charge of insanity, filed by David McComb acting for Hector McLean.

a John McDougal as to whether she should return to or leave Hector sent him an ultimatum:

Dear Hector:

Having used every persuasion in my power to no effect, I see but three alternatives all ending in misery if not in crime. First, to live a victim of the vice to which you have become a prey 2nd to to seek a home among strangers, or shall the smoothe current of the Mississippi be the last page that any may read of my "*Ill Fate?*"

Your Wife.  
E.J. McLean

Hector responded with the following note:

Millikins Bend  
December 31, 1844

Nea, Ellen neither of these shall ever be your lot. I will cease to grieve your gentle spirit, and we will live together so long as it is the will and good pleasure of a Heavenly Parent we should. We will seek an asylum among the people of God (I care not what that may be) and by their good example and precept I am persuaded your own dear husband, *may cure*. I must be saved and reformed—it is impossible to be either here. I have tried in vain, to live soberly and righteously before God and men but cannot accomplish it.

Yours sincerely.  
Hector<sup>3</sup>

Eleanor then returned to live with him. Sometime later they decided to leave New Orleans and go to San Francisco to help accomplish Hector's reform. They were accompanied by their three children, Fitzroy, Albert, and Annie, and one of Eleanor's brothers.<sup>4</sup>

It was in San Francisco that they came in contact with the Mormon church. After attending a Mormon meeting with Hector, and her brother, J. J. McComb, Eleanor wanted to join the Church but was forbidden to do so by her husband, who purchased a sword cane and threatened to kill her and the minister who baptized her if she became a Mormon.<sup>5</sup> In spite

<sup>3</sup>Eleanor Pratt, sixty-two-page handwritten account of the murder of Parley P. Pratt, p. 60. Eleanor Pratt Papers, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Hereafter cited as Eleanor Pratt, "Account."

<sup>4</sup>*Millennial Star* 19:418. Her youngest child was born in New Orleans in 1847.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 419. Reva Stanley, in the *California Historical Quarterly* (March 1935), p. 175, suggests that Parley met Eleanor sometime during his visit to San Francisco from 11 July to 4 September 1851, prior to sailing for Valparaiso, Chile, on 5 September 1851. Parley was also in the San Francisco area from



of this threat, Eleanor attended Church meetings as often as she could. One Sunday night, while Eleanor was singing from a Mormon hymn book she had purchased, Hector tore the book from her hands, threw it into the fire, beat her, cast her out into the street, and locked the door. She sought the help of a Dr. Bush, the family doctor, who took her to a hotel, boarded her there for the night, and charged the bill to Hector. The next day she filed a charge of assault and battery against Hector, planning to go to San Bernardino to live with the Saints and never return. She dropped the charges, however, and returned to Hector, following the advice of Dr. Bush and the members of the San Francisco branch.<sup>6</sup> She describes the incident as follows:

That Mr. McLean put me by violence into the street at night, and locked the door against me, Captain Grey and Dr. Bush are witnesses; and I presume McLean himself would not deny that I then declared that I *would no more be his wife* however many years I might be compelled to appear as such *for the sake of my children*.<sup>7</sup>

Even though she embraced Mormonism in November of 1851, she was not baptized until 24 May 1854, by William McBride.<sup>8</sup> Although he had given his written permission for her

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21 May to 30 July 1852 (see *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, 6th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966], pp. 383-87, 404), and it is possible that Parley met her during that period. Both of these suggestions are countered by the following: "In July '54 br. Pratt arrived here [San Francisco] from G. S. L. City, on a mission to the country. Up to this time Mrs. McLean had never seen br. Pratt; and he did not know that such a woman existed, although she had been a member nine months, and had been trying for two years to obtain her husband's consent to it" (*Western Standard*, 10 July 1857). This quotation is from an article signed by a member of the Church who was in the San Francisco Branch when Parley and Eleanor met, and also prior to their meeting when Eleanor had problems with Hector in her attempt to obtain consent to join the Church. Eleanor substantiates the above with the following: "In the first place, the article alluded to says that 'Mrs. McLean was induced to embrace the Mormon faith by Mr. Pratt' [*Arkansas Intelligencer*, 15 May 1857]. *This is false*, for Mr. McLean knows that the first 'Mormon' sermon I heard in California, himself and my brother J. J. McComb, were present, and they know that it was at least two years before Mr. Pratt made his appearance in San Francisco; and they know that from the time I heard the first sermon I never spoke except in defence of the 'Mormons' and their faith; and they know that I sought diligently for my husbands consent to be baptized into the Church of the Saints, and finally obtained it in writing, and was baptized before P. P. Pratt made his appearance" (*Millennial Star* 19:428).

<sup>6</sup>*Western Standard*, 10 July 1857, and *Millennial Star* 19:419, 432.

<sup>7</sup>*Millennial Star* 19:432.

<sup>8</sup>Nathan Tanner Journal, 24-26 May 1854, Church Archives. Although Eleanor said that she had "embraced" the Mormon faith in November 1851, Tanner records that the baptism occurred on 24 May 1854: "Sister McClain was baptized & Sisters Evans & King, Sister Evans a little big also & I preached at Sister Evan's house. May 25-26, 1854. . . . Sister Eleanor Jane McClain gave



to be baptized and she continued to live with Hector, he forbade her to sing Mormon hymns or to read Mormon literature in his home. Eleanor did not comply fully with his rules, however, for she made it a practice to hold morning devotionals with her children while Hector was away, and sought all available means to stay in contact with the Church.

#### PARLEY MEETS ELEANOR

Parley Pratt, having been called by the First Presidency to preside over the Pacific Mission and to set up a gathering place for the Saints in San Jose, arrived in San Francisco on 2 July 1854.<sup>9</sup> Upon his arrival, he immediately went to San Jose, picked up his wife Elizabeth, who had come to California earlier, and returned to San Francisco, where they first rented a small house for \$25 a month. When it proved to be inadequate, they moved to a larger home on Broadway Street which cost them \$35 a month.<sup>10</sup> They had few funds and little to eat but were cared for by members of the branch, including Eleanor McLean. She brought the Pratts food, bedding, and clothing and became a frequent visitor at their home, often arriving at dawn with gifts of meat, bread, fruit and other articles which sustained the Pratts until the next day.<sup>11</sup> This was a great help to Parley, because Elizabeth was sick most of the time and could do very little for herself or her husband. During her visits, Eleanor told Parley and Elizabeth of her home situation and asked Parley to help her solve her problems. Parley did visit the McLean home a few times to try to reconcile Hector and Eleanor's differences, but succeeded only in making Hector more bitter.<sup>12</sup> Eleanor appears to have decided that there was no chance that her husband would join the Church, but she decided that her children should belong. So on 27 August 1854, she took her two oldest children, Fitzroy and Albert, to Union City, where Parley was holding a meeting, and had him baptize them into the Church.<sup>13</sup> Shortly after the two boys were baptized, Hector decided that the only

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me one shirt and 3 hankchiefs. Her husband dos not belong to the Church & has forbid deen for the last two years [her] beying baptized untill now he gave his concent in writeing." The Endowment House Record, 1855-56, also lists her baptism as May 1854.

<sup>9</sup>Parley P. Pratt Journal, 2 July 1854, Church Archives. Hereafter cited as Pratt Journal.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., August 1854.

<sup>11</sup>*Millennial Star* 19:430-31.

<sup>12</sup>*Western Standard*, 10 July 1857.

<sup>13</sup>Pratt Journal, 26-27 August 1854.



way to save his family from the Mormons was to have his wife committed to an asylum; consequently he filed a charge of insanity against Eleanor. When Parley was informed of Hector's plan, he assigned a young missionary to try to stop Hector.

#### HECTOR AND THE MORMON COOK

John R. Young was one of a group of missionaries working in and around San Francisco to obtain funds for their fares to the Sandwich Islands. While they were there, Parley, who was the mission president, had them tracting, distributing pamphlets, and doing other missionary work. John had been assigned to tract the city of San Francisco, but Parley released him from that assignment and assigned him the delicate task of helping Eleanor McLean keep her membership in the Church and keep out of an asylum. When he asked how he was to accomplish his assignment, he was instructed to "listen for the whisperings of the Spirit and do as it directs and you shall be successful." Then President Pratt and William McBride gave him a blessing. Among other things, Parley told John that McLean would not harm a hair of his head.<sup>14</sup> John went immediately to the McLean home and walked past it singing, "O My Father." When no one responded, he went back to his room and spent the remainder of the day reading of Christ's trial and persecutions in Jerusalem. The next morning he returned to the McLean home and finding a card in the window advertising for a cook, applied; Hector agreed to hire him on a trial basis for a month. For nearly a month John stayed in the McLean home cooking, making beds, and performing other household chores. His job was not without some danger, however. Daily he would take the pistol that Hector threatened to use on the first Mormon that set foot in his house from under the pillow, lay it on the window sill until he had made the bed, then replace it under the pillow. That Young fulfilled his assignment is recorded in his journal:

A week later the directors of the insane asylum, a physician, and Mrs. McLain's brother, who was a banker, called as an examining committee. They had a long talk with Mr.

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<sup>14</sup>John R. Young, "The Last Days of Parley P. Pratt," Church Archives. A letter to William C. Black from John R. Young, March 1930. Also in the "Autobiography of John R. Young," Church Archives, and William E. Berrett and Alma P. Burton, *Readings in L. D. S. Church History* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1953), pp. 400-1.

and Mrs. McLain, then called in the children, who had been kept home for that purpose. After a long talk with them, Mrs. McLain suggested that the cook be called. Oh, how I prayed that I might be directed to say the right thing and not say too much. In answer to the questions, I said: Mrs. McLain comes in every day to the kitchen to tell me what she wants and instructs me how to do it. She is always calm and sensible in her talk. I see no evidence of insanity in her conduct. As to McLain, I can say but little. He stays in his room until breakfast is ready and immediately afterwards, goes to his office. When he returns at night, his step does not seem as firm and steady as it does in the morning. He appears nervous and walks about and talks a good deal to himself." Mrs. McLain's brother seemed pleased with my statement. The committee decided that Mr. McLain had no grounds for his complaint, and the shadow of the insane asylum was dispelled. I felt very happy about this, but a few days later something else happened. A man called at the bank where Mr. McLain was a cashier. After a few minutes of business conversation, he said: "I want to ask you a question. You seemed so pronounced against the Mormons. Why do you employ a missionary as cook in your home?" McLain seemed surprized and the man continued: "Do you not know that he is the same young man who was tracting the city and selling Mormon Literature? McLain hurried home and coming to me, demanded: "Are you a Mormon?" "Yes sir," I answered. Shaking his fist in my face, he exclaimed, "If you were not a child, I would kill you. "What have I done that you should want to kill me?" "You are teaching the false doctrines of Joseph Smith."

I asked what was false in the doctrines. He replied that we claimed to confer the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, while the scriptures declare that it has been done away and is not needed in this day. I asked him for a reference. He took his bible and tried to find it, but his hands shook so that he could not find the passage he sought. I took the Bible from his hands, turned to 2nd Chapter of Acts, 38 and 39 verses and read to him "Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, For the promise is unto you and to your children and all that are far off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." He sprang up, went into the other room and returned with two twenty dollar gold coins in his hands. Giving me the money he said: "Here are your month's wages. You are dismissed."<sup>15</sup>

John Young left and used the forty dollars to pay his fare to Honolulu.

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.



## HECTOR'S RETALIATION

Shortly after Young left, Hector took the children, put them on the ship *Sierra Nevada*, and sent them to their grandparents in New Orleans. When he returned home that evening, he told Eleanor what he had done, saying, "Now they are where you and the cursed Mormons can never see them again!" Then he locked Eleanor in her room. About two in the morning Hector released her since she had cried so much that it disturbed him. The next morning she attempted unsuccessfully to find the children. Her brother, E. C. McComb, suggested that she take the next steamer and follow the children, but McLean would not let her.<sup>16</sup> She then obtained \$20 and some goods from a local merchant which she gave to Amasa Lyman for safekeeping, planning to use them to finance her trip to New Orleans. When Hector heard of her plans, he boasted that she was in his power and that if she attempted to go he would have her in the insane asylum in twenty-four hours. This, however, proved an empty threat, as two weeks after the departure of the children, in February 1855, he even helped pay her fare on the steamer *Daniel Webster* bound for New Orleans.<sup>17</sup> She was also assisted in paying her fare by Parley,<sup>18</sup> whom she wrote on 5 February 1855:

Brother Pratt,

I have some goods and 20\$, in gold in Amasa Lyman's hands. Will you be so kind as to see what can be done, in order that whatever they are worth may be available to me, at as early a date as may be convenient. I am called suddenly to depart for a distant shore, and would feel obliged to you to attend to this matter, for I expect to need all the funds I can raise to defend myself in the midst of my enemies.

Feb 5th 1855

Your Sister in hope  
Eleanor J. McLean<sup>19</sup>

Parley wrote to Amasa Lyman on 2 March informing him that Eleanor had been "called suddenly away to New Orleans—& never expects to see this country again, But to make her way to

<sup>16</sup>*Millennial Star* 19:429.

<sup>17</sup>New Orleans Passenger List, Genealogical Society Library, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>18</sup>*Millennial Star* 19:429.

<sup>19</sup>Letter from Eleanor McLean to Parley P. Pratt, 5 February 1855, Parley P. Pratt Papers, Church Archives. Hereafter cited as Pratt Papers.

Zion with her children, if she can get the means,"<sup>20</sup> and asking him to send her things to her by the first trustworthy messenger. This Amasa did, and they enabled her eventually to make her way to Utah.

The children had been sent to New Orleans accompanied by neither friends nor relatives. They traveled by ship to San Juan, Nicaragua, and then by steamer to New Orleans, arriving 13 February.<sup>21</sup> They were taken to their maternal grandparents.

Eleanor arrived in New Orleans on 2 March and went immediately to find her children.<sup>22</sup> She remained in her father's house three months, being closely guarded at all times lest she should try to take the children. She did attempt to remove them, however, and kept them hidden four days, but was unsuccessful in getting out of the city. Her father then pledged to change his treatment of her and let her have a room and free access to the children if she pledged she would not take them out of the city. She agreed and returned to her father's house. Under these circumstances her health declined, and finally she asked her father to help her arrange passage to Salt Lake. She was given the means to take the *May Flower* to St. Louis and then the *Alma* to Atchison, Kansas, where she found a Mormon emigration party that hired her as a cook to pay her way to Salt Lake. She arrived in Salt Lake on 11 September 1855.<sup>23</sup>

#### PARLEY AND ELEANOR: 1854-1855

We do not know what the relationship between Eleanor and Parley was during the 1854-55 San Francisco period other than that he tried to help her solve her domestic difficulties and she assisted the Pratts with gifts of food and clothes. After she had left for New Orleans in 1855, Parley wrote his wife Belinda that he had met a worthy soul who then was in deep tribulation, who, he hoped, could make her way to Zion.<sup>24</sup> After Parley's death in 1857, Eleanor wrote that she had "often sought his society" at the home "he kept with his

<sup>20</sup>Letter from Parley P. Pratt to Amasa Lyman, 2 March 1855, Pratt Papers.

<sup>21</sup>New Orleans Passenger List, 13 February 1855, Genealogical Library, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid, 2 March 1855.

<sup>23</sup>*Millennial Star* 19:429.

<sup>24</sup>Letter from Parley P. Pratt to his wife Belinda, 16 May 1855, Pratt Papers.



wife, Elizabeth, in San Francisco. . . ."<sup>25</sup> Whatever their feelings, Eleanor remained with her husband until she went to New Orleans to get her children back, however estranged they had become. When she left San Francisco she left Hector, and later she was to state in a court of law that she had left him as a wife the night he drove her from their home. Whatever the legal situation, she thought of herself as an unmarried woman..<sup>26</sup>

#### FOR TIME AND ETERNITY

After Parley arrived home in Salt Lake from California on 18 August 1855,<sup>27</sup> he worked in the Endowment House and went on a couple of local missions, speaking, and attending to local Church business. Eleanor arrived in September and went to the Pratt home to apply for a position as a school-teacher.<sup>28</sup> She was accepted, and one month after her arrival

<sup>25</sup>*Millennial Star* 19:430. Eleanor seems to have been deeply fond of Parley for she says: "When he kept house with his wife, Elizabeth, in San Francisco, I often sought his society, and if any censure me, let them censure me for the strongest impulses of my nature, which have ever prompted me to seek light and truth, despite the difficulties that might intervene between me and the object of my search."

<sup>26</sup>*Millennial Star* 19:432. There is no doubt that Eleanor was not divorced from Hector at the time she was sealed to Parley on 14 November 1855. On 1 June 1857 when Hector filed a charge of insanity against his wife in New Orleans, he stated that he wanted her "placed under charge of your petitioner [Hector] as her curator." All through the petition Eleanor was named as his wife. To further substantiate the above, when Eleanor was asked by a reporter of the *New York World* in 1869 whether she had divorced Hector prior to marrying Parley, she answered: "No, the sectarian priests have no power from God to marry; and as a so-called marriage ceremony performed by them is no marriage at all, no divorce was needed. The priesthood with its powers and privileges, can be found no where upon the face of the earth but in Utah. . . . I regard the laws of Celestial Marriage, or, as the "Gentiles" term it, polygamy, as the keystone of our religion. That is wherein we differ from the sects of the world. They hope for salvation in a heaven where husbands and wives shall be utter strangers to each other; we expect to reach a heaven where we shall rear families, the same as we do here. We could not do this unless we had a revelation authorizing Celestial Marriage; and we could not be saved in the Celestial Kingdom without obeying this revelation. It is the great distinctive feature of our religion, and by it our religion stands or falls" (*New York World*, 23 November 1869, p. 2).

Eleanor's explanation of why she joined in a polygamous marriage without going through the formalities of a sectarian divorce from Hector helps the modern reader better understand both the teaching about the authority of the priesthood, and the tenor of the time. For further discussions on the subject, see the following: Wilford Woodruff Journal, 15 August 1847, Church Archives; Orson Pratt, Speech on Marriage, *Journal of Discourses*, 16:175; Parley P. Pratt, *Marriage and Morals in Utah* (Liverpool: Orson Pratt, 1856); and Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology* (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855), chapter 17.

<sup>27</sup>Pratt Journal, 18 August 1855.

<sup>28</sup>*Millennial Star* 19:429.

in Salt Lake, Eleanor and Parley were married. The ceremony took place in the Endowment House on 14 November 1855, and was performed by Brigham Young. Parley's journal records the marriage ceremony in these words: "Ministered in the Endowments and had Sister Eleanor Jane McComb of N. Orleans sealed to me at the alter by President Brigham Young."<sup>29</sup> The Pratt Family Record also notes the marriage, adding that they were married for time and eternity.<sup>30</sup> Eleanor was looked upon as one of Parley's plural wives from that time on, and was referred to by family and friends as Eleanor Pratt.<sup>31</sup>

Eleanor remained in Salt Lake for one year, serving as schoolteacher for Parley's children for seven months and then boarding in Brigham Young's house for four months and teaching the governor's family school.<sup>32</sup> But with Parley's call to a mission in the Eastern States on 24 August 1856, Eleanor, thinking to regain her children, bring them to Utah, and raise them there, asked Parley to let her accompany him on his mission.

#### ELEANOR RETURNS TO NEW ORLEANS

Traveling by way of Fort Kearney, through Iowa and Illinois, they arrived in St. Louis on 18 November,<sup>33</sup> where Eleanor borrowed \$100 of Church funds and proceeded to New Orleans. She went to her father's home and, by telling him that she had reconsidered her stand on Mormonism and did not believe it anymore, gained liberty with the children. She stayed at her father's house for a week, then she and her two youngest children (Albert and Annie) took a steam car from her father's home to New Orleans, a distance of several miles, from where she wrote a letter to her father telling him that she was now Mrs. Pratt and that she and the children were

<sup>29</sup>Pratt Journal, 14 November 1855.

<sup>30</sup>Pratt Family Record. The Endowment House Record's date of 10 November 1855 must be in error.

<sup>31</sup>Pratt Journal, 24 January 1856: "Jan. 24 The day in slayriding and visiting Bro. Keslar with five of my wives viz: Belinda, Elizabeth, Mary, Hannahette and Eleanor." Reva Stanley, in *Archer of Paradise* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Press, 1937), pp. 293-94, 296, didn't rule out the possibility that Parley and Eleanor lived as a married couple, but favored the idea that the marriage was a Platonic gesture to provide Eleanor a husband in eternity. The evidence is not conclusive either way, except it was Parley's habit to live with his wives.

<sup>32</sup>*Millennial Star* 19:429.

<sup>33</sup>Pratt, *Autobiography*, pp. 434-35.



going to Utah.<sup>34</sup> She had hoped to leave on a steamer for Galveston, Texas, but when no steamer was to leave for almost a week, she took a room in the United States Hotel kept by a Mrs. Smith. The next morning, deeming it unsafe to stay in a public house, she took an omnibus, leaving the children at the hotel, and rode far down in the third municipality. There she found a furnished room across the street from a Dutch grocery store and, together with the children, stayed for four days. Thursday morning, 18 December 1856, they boarded the *Atlantic* bound for Texas; and at Galveston they took the steamer *Captain Pierce* to Harrisburg, where they stayed all night at a hotel kept by a Captain Andrews. The next morning they went to Houston. Two miles from Houston they found a place to stay at the residence of William Gambell, where they were treated very well. While there, Eleanor worked as a seamstress in a Mrs. Stansbury's dressmaking shop. On 4 March, Eleanor and the children left Houston with Captain Andrews, Mr. Stanfield, and James Gambell to journey to Ellis County, where a Mormon emigration group was fitting out for a trip across the plains. Learning in Houston by letter that Hector was in pursuit of her, Eleanor decided to take a passage with a man by the name of Clark, who was not a Mormon. He had a wife, three children, a poor wagon and three yoke of good oxen. It was while they were traveling with these people that McLean met them a little west of Arkansas.<sup>35</sup>

#### PARLEY'S TOUR OF THE EAST

Parley visited various eastern states from December 1856 to March 1857.<sup>36</sup>

Throughout his eastern mission, Parley kept in touch with his wives by mail. In January (1857) he wrote:

I have heard from E, once since she sailed from St. Louis. She had arrived in safety in her father's house, & found her two children alive and in tolerable health. She is living there in quiet with them. She may make it back soon.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>John A. Peel, "Dying Remarks of Parley P. Pratt," Church Archives. Peel was in Van Buren at the time of the murder, but his statement was not taken down by Frank Poneroy until 1895. See also *Daily Missouri Democrat*, 25 May 1857.

<sup>35</sup>Eleanor Pratt, "Account," p. 1.

<sup>36</sup>Pratt *Autobiography*, pp. 435-42.

<sup>37</sup>Letter from Parley P. Pratt to his family, 3 January 1857, Pratt Papers.

And in February he added:

I arrived in the states all well, in Novr. E soon went south, found her c. . . ren well, staid at her father's one week, and escaped with the c . . . ren to Texas. She may return to St. Louis, and may not. She may go by land a thousand miles northward through Texas, Indian Territory, and Kansas to get to the Platte River. A Texas company of saints talk of coming that way.<sup>38</sup>

During his visits to Cincinnati, it is claimed that Mormon apostates informed McLean of Pratt's eastern itinerary, setting him on Parley's trail.<sup>39</sup> However he found out where Pratt was to be, McLean followed him throughout the eastern states and almost caught him in St. Louis in March of 1857. Erastus Snow relates:

Early in March Mrs. Rushton who some years ago belonged to the Saints and still professed friendship for us came to George A. Smith and told him that she had learned through a police officer that H. McLean was in St. Louis and seeking Elder Pratt's Life: That the city police had orders for his arrest and a general search would be made for him the following night. She further said that many apostates in the city were leagued with McLean for the accomplishment of his purpose. From a variety of circumstances we became satisfied that this information was in substance correct and Elder Pratt had for some days previously felt the approaching danger and kept himself retired.

We now thought it advisable for him to leave the City privately and after concealing him one day we found means to disguise him and send him to Bro. Browns in Belfountain Cemetery, where on the following morning by day break I sent him Bro. Sprowl with a satchel of clothes and some \$100 expense money and he accompanied by Elder Sprowl left that place immediately and traveled a circuitous route westward avoiding the roads, until he deemed himself safe. When he dismissed Bro. Andrew Sprowl some 12 miles from the City and steered his course westward he sent word by Elder S. not to be uneasy if we did not hear of him again in a year.

In the meantime McLean assisted by the police and apostates continued searching the houses of the Saints and all places frequented by us in the City, and adjacent county but without finding the object of their search.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Letter from Parley P. Pratt to his wife Agatha, 25 February 1857, Steven Pratt Collection, typescript.

<sup>39</sup>Samuel E. Allen, notarized statement sworn before Joseph W. Musser, 25 May 1857, Steven Pratt Collection, typescript.

<sup>40</sup>Erastus Snow Journal, March 1857, Church Archives.



## GEORGE HIGGINSON AND THE CHEROKEE MISSION

George Higginson and Riley Perryman were working as missionaries among the Creek and Cherokee Nations in the Indian Territory. In the spring of 1857, they expanded their labors and traveled a great deal to meet and contact as many as they could before their April conference. In the early part of March, George and some Indian members started up the "Verdigree" one Saturday morning to attend the funeral of Prince Perryman. About noon, after coming to Little Spring Creek and stopping for lunch, they noticed a man riding on horseback full speed toward them. Thinking it was the U. S. Marshal come to remove them from the Indian Nations for preaching the gospel, he and his companions rode off as fast as possible. The rider soon caught up with them, steered straight for George, and asked if his name was Higginson. Receiving an affirmative reply, the rider asked George to ride with him a short distance ahead of the company as he had some business with him. George refused to go unless the rider identified himself, at which the rider drew closer and whispered "Parley P. Pratt." Parley being in disguise, George doubted his word until Parley produced a letter Higginson had written to J. H. Hart in St. Louis. As they rode on together, Parley said that he was "flying from death" and sought protection in the Indian Nations.

After the Perryman funeral, George took Parley up the River "Verdigree" to Joseph Burgess, who secluded Parley in his home, which was on the edge of a large prairie. Parley was introduced as Elder Parker from New York, and stayed in the Burgess home until 6 April when he went to conference at Mr. Jack Randall's house. During the conference Parley asked George to go to the frontiers of Texas to look for Eleanor and convey some letters to her that informed her of Parley's whereabouts. George went as requested, but after traveling for 200 miles found that the Mormon train was yet 300 miles south of him. He then hastened back to the Arkansas River to report to Parley and receive instructions. Arriving at Fort Gibson on 6 May, George found a letter informing him of Parley's whereabouts.<sup>41</sup> He returned to the Texas road, and having ridden about five miles spotted a man about a mile ahead of him, overtook him, and found it to be Parley. Parley

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<sup>41</sup>George Higginson, "History of the Cherokee Mission," pp. 8-10, Church Archives.

told him that he was determined to travel until he met Eleanor. George asked Parley if he felt safe traveling the public road. Parley replied that he thought so for no one had inquired about him. Shortly thereafter George saw a military escort armed with muskets coming toward them. He said, "Brother Parley here comes an escort of soldiers armed." Parley paused and replied, "Yes They are certainly in persuit of me. I must have been watched it is all over now." The captain, whose name was Little, rode up to Parley and said, "Parley P. Pratt. I arrest you in the name of the United States of America."<sup>42</sup>

#### HECTOR'S PURSUIT

As soon as Eleanor had left New Orleans with her children, her father sent word to Hector in San Francisco. Hector came immediately to New Orleans, then searched for Parley throughout the East, almost capturing him in St. Louis in March 1857. Failing that, he decided to look for Eleanor, because he heard that she might be in Texas. He found in Houston that she had left earlier to join a Mormon train to Utah, so he went back to New Orleans. From there he went to Fort Gibson with the hope of catching Eleanor there. On arriving at Fort Gibson, he inquired if anyone had seen Eleanor or anyone fitting her description. None had, but after he related some of his troubles to the postal official and had given descriptions of Parley and Eleanor, the official produced some letters written to a Mrs. Lucy Parker from Mr. P. Pratt Parker.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup>George Higginson, "Account of the Assassination of Parley P. Pratt," handwritten manuscript, Church Archives. All conversations between Pratt and Higginson are taken from this source.

<sup>43</sup>*Daily Missouri Democrat*, 25 May 1857. Following is a copy of one of the letters Hector found that led to his locating Parley and Eleanor. The letter was addressed "Mrs. Lucy R. Parker, by P. Pratt Parker, from near Fort Gibson, Cherokee nation,—dated 11 April 1857, as printed in the 25 May 1857 *Daily Missouri Democrat*:

Dear Eleanor,

McLean is in St. Louis; he has offered a reward for your discovery, or your children or me. The Apostates have betrayed me and you. I had to get away on foot, and leave all to save myself. If you come to Fort Gibson, you can hire a messenger and send him to Riley Perryman's mill on the Arkansas River, twenty-five miles from Fort Gibson, and let him inquire for Washington N. Cook, mormon missionary, and when he has found him he will soon tell where elder-Pratt-Parker is. Do not let your children or any friend know that I am in this region, or anywhere else on the earth; except it is an elder from Texas who is in your confidence, and even him under strictest charge of *keep you it*.

"If you send a messenger to Perryman's mill for Elder Cook in order to find me, send a note addressed to Washington N. Cook. Everybody knows the place. He may live a few miles distant, but the folks at Riley Perryman's mill know where he is. And if they can be made sensible that it requires immediate



Hector knew immediately whose letters they were. He filed a formal charge with the commissioner in Fort Gibson and went in pursuit of Eleanor, while the soldiers and his friend Shaw looked for Parley.<sup>44</sup> While riding a little west of what is now Arkansas, he came upon a rider by the name of John Peel, who told him where Eleanor could be found.<sup>45</sup> He met Eleanor's wagon on 6 May, and with another man rode up to the wagon, took the children, and rode off. About three hours later, Eleanor was arrested by a man styled the "State Marshal" on a charge of larceny of clothing belonging to Albert and Annie McLean to the amount of ten dollars. Three other names appeared in this same charge: Parley P. Pratt, James Gammell, and Elias J. Gammell.<sup>46</sup>

#### ON THE ROAD TO FORT GIBSON

The "marshal" took Eleanor to a hotel in the Indian town of North Fork. She saw twelve armed men in the gallery in a state of "great excitement." These twelve men were some of Hector's Mason friends gathered from "all parts of the territory" to aid him, should the "government take no notice" of his grievances.<sup>47</sup>

The next morning a party consisting of the "marshal" (Shivers), Eleanor, and twelve armed men, set out on horseback. When they had ridden about fifteen miles, Shivers asked Eleanor if she would like to see Mr. Pratt. She replied: "Not in tribulation such as I am in. He is a good man, and I know his family and would be sorry to see him as a prisoner. Is he in this part of the country?" "Well he's not forty miles

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action, some of them can go and find him. Your messenger can leave the note at Riley Perryman's, or with Elder George Burgess there and return, but you must state in the note where you can be found, and Elder Cook will probably call on you before he can have time to see me, as I may be some days journey away, for I don't much expect you at Fort Gibson, *as I don't believe you received my last letter mailed at St. Louis, March 4th*, and addressed as usual to the usual place. Elder Cook knows all, and you can trust him with all necessary information. When I know that you and the children are safe and your circumstances, I will know what to do.

"Be sure not to let the Texas company know anything, for all the frontiers are watched, and some of them may betray you there. I must hide you or pass you some other way.

"Pray much. Be still and wise. I have made use of some of the late alterations in the alphabet. I am well.

And your own \_\_\_\_\_."

<sup>44</sup>*Daily Alta California*, 9 July 1857.

<sup>45</sup>Peel, "Dying Remarks."

<sup>46</sup>Eleanor Pratt, "Account," p. 2.

<sup>47</sup>*Daily Alta California*, 9 July 1857.

from here," was the answer. This was the first Eleanor had heard that Parley was in the Indian Territory; the last she had heard, he was in St. Louis. They rode until noon and then stopped at an Indian's house for dinner. Eleanor noticed that the mob, which was composed of some of Hector's friends, had increased. When they remounted the horses, she noticed Hector, who had the children in a carriage some distance from the house, give the lines to another, buckle on a sword in addition to his pistol, and ride off. The marshal informed Eleanor that "they had got Pratt; and McLean is determined to kill him, but we are bound to prevent him while he is our prisoner."<sup>48</sup> When they had ridden a half mile from the house, they came upon the military unit that had arrested Parley. As they drew near, Eleanor could see Parley lying near a stream, with his hands under his head. He was wearing a blue checked shirt and dark pants. When they dismounted, Eleanor asked if she could speak to Parley. Given permission, she advanced towards him. Parley rose and extended his hand. Eleanor said, "How do you do, Brother Pratt." "Very well Madam, how is your health," Parley replied. "I am well in health, but that demon who has been in my pathway these thirteen years has again crossed my way. He has torn my children again from me and he says I shall never see them again." Parley then said, "Well, my sister, never mind, these things are all in one short lifetime and life is but a speck of eternity and will soon be over." Eleanor turned to him and said, "Brother Parley, I rejoice in one thing. Mormonism has taught me how to live and taken from me all fear of death and the grave." Then she raised her hand and voice and turned to the crowd and said, "Now you civil and military officers and soldiers you can only kill the body and after that you have no power over the soul, do what you please I am ready and willing to die as to live but that is my Father's business not mine."<sup>49</sup>

The marshal then read the charges to Parley. Someone in the crowd pointed to George Higginson, who was with Parley, and asked what was going to be done with him. Though both Captain Little and Marshal Shivers said they had no power to arrest him, he was placed under guard until such time as they deemed it safe to release him. They rode on to Fort Gibson, Parley riding with a rope tied around his right ankle, the other

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<sup>48</sup>*Millennial Star* 19:545.

<sup>49</sup>Eleanor Pratt, "Account," p. 5.



end held by an Indian riding alongside him as a guard. Reaching the fort at midnight, after a twenty-five mile forced ride, Parley and George Higginson were placed in jail with a heavy guard, and Eleanor was taken to a boarding house. She was so bruised and mutilated from the ride and violence of the day before that she had to be lifted from her horse and carried into the house.<sup>50</sup>

#### AN IMPORTANT LETTER FROM FORT GIBSON

After Hector had left Eleanor at the hotel, on the way to Fort Gibson, he went out to meet his friend Captain Little at the spring where Parley and Eleanor were to meet later. Making sure that Parley was securely arrested, he traveled to the Creek Agency, where he stayed with his friend, Mr. Whitfield. They started for Fort Gibson, escorted by Perkins and the rest of the "Masonic Brethren," and arrived on 7 May.<sup>51</sup>

While in Fort Gibson, Hector wrote a letter to some friends in St. Louis:

Fort Gibson  
Cherokee Nation  
May 7th, 1857

Dear Friends:—I have just arrived from a sore tramp, in which I *succeeded* in coming up with Eleanor and the children, and have taken the children from her by force. I have placed Eleanor in charge of the U. S. Marshal, and have succeeded also in arresting Pratt, who is now in the guard-house of the Fort. The U. S. Marshal will start with his prisoners for Van Buren tomorrow, and I will by a different route, in company of Capt. Cahil and lady, leave with the children for the same place. I arrested Pratt and R. (E) J. on charge of larceny, in stealing the clothing on the children when kidnapped—in the value \$8 to \$10. It is the only way I could arrest them in these Territories. When I fail before the U. S. Commissioner at Van Buren, I mean to have Pratt arrested for having fled from justice from St. Louis, Mo., and get a requisition from the Governor of Missouri for him. You are fully posted. See Strong, and inform him forthwith of the best manner of proceeding.

Thank God for his goodness,  
Yours truly,  
H. H. McLean<sup>52</sup>

There are several things that can be learned from this letter: (1) Hector realized that the charge of larceny would not hold

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>51</sup>*Daily Alta California*, 9 July 1857.

<sup>52</sup>*Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, 16 May 1857.

up before the U. S. Commissioner in Van Buren; (2) he was planning to have Parley charged in St. Louis with higher crimes and was asking his lawyer to take care of the necessary arrangements; and (3) larceny was the only charge he could come up with in Indian Territory to have Eleanor and Parley arrested. Hector was using the arrest in Indian Territory as a pretext to give him time to get a requisition from the governor of Missouri and thus enable him to put Parley in prison. His plan failed, however.

#### ELEANOR'S DEFENSE

After spending Friday at the fort, Eleanor, Parley, George and company started for Van Buren on Saturday, 9 May. They traveled the two days following, Eleanor in a carriage driven by two soldiers and Parley and George chained to each other on horseback. The group arrived in Van Buren, Arkansas, the place of the trial, about noon on 11 May. Hector, traveling by a different route, had gone to Fort Smith and left the children there. He, Captain Cahil, and Major Rector also arrived in Van Buren on 11 May.<sup>53</sup> Parley was sent to jail, Higginson released, and Eleanor taken before the judge and lawyers. At first Judge Ogden was severe in tone, but after Eleanor had answered a few questions his attitude changed. She described her experience as follows:

He first said, "I suppose you understand madam that you have been arrested upon a charge of larceny?" "Yes, Sir, I know the charge but it is false." "Well madam, I suppose you will not deny that you were happy with Mr. McLean until this man Pratt and Mormonism crossed your pathways." "Yes Sir, I must declare that many years before I heard Mormonism McLean drove happiness from our home by inbibing that spirit that comes in bottles! And because I was a mother I would fain have escaped the impending fate foreshadowed in the breath of a man who had learned to love wine more than he loves the happiness of the wife of his bosom. And down through thirteen long years I suffered this blight, and at length he put me by violence into the street in a dark winter's night in a wicked city, and I was compelled to seek shelter and protection in a public house. And do you suppose Sir, a woman conscious of having done her duty as a virtuous wife and faithful mother could be induced to come again to the arms of that man? No Sir, it was not Mormonism that desolated McLean's home—but that spirit that comes

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<sup>53</sup>*Daily Alta California*, 9 July 1857.



in bottles, prepared his heart and him for deeds of desperation and at last he found a pretext in my religion, that was unpopular, and upon this ground he might treat his family with personal violence,—thrust his wife into the street and lock the doors—send his children, while yet infants upon the high seas to go many thousands of miles without one friend they had ever seen. And now it is no marvel that he is prepared to tell a lie and swear to it—imprison innocent persons, and drag them before an excited populace in a land where mob law bid defiance to the Constitutional government and the Civil Courts. I have no hope of justice in this land Sir. If I had a chance I could bring truthful testimony from the days of my childhood until the present moment, that I have lived a life of strict virtue, industry and faithfulness in the duties belonging to my station. But I see no motive. For after all the adopted course of this government, would sanction my imprisonment and perhaps the shedding of my blood. Because I will *not deny* what I *know to be the Truth of Heaven!*

"Well Madam, do you acknowledge your father to be a truthful man?" Yes Sir. Here then is a letter from him, which confirms Mr. McLean's statements. I read, "She was honored and beloved by her family and highly esteemed in the society in which she moved. Mr. McLean went to Cal. and by industry procured a home, sent for his family, and they were happy in San Fran. until/Mormonism, and its wiley Elder, began to throw their seductive influence about my unfortunate daughter!"

Well Sir. I will still say my father is a truthful man but honest men are often deceived. And I claim this mother to be the best judge. In all the years to which he alludes, I was in McLean's kitchen, parlor and *bed room*, while my father was at peace in the midst of his own household thousands of miles distant. And if my husband came enraged and intoxicated to either neglect or abuse his family how could my father know it? Who but a wife knows bedroom scenes? It is true if I had gone for my neighbours and brought them to see him lying with his head hanging nearly off the bed, one coat sleeve off, and the other on, one boot off and the other on, and the vomit over his boots and all richly perfumed with old bourbon, (or some other well known beverage that adorns the shelves of the fashionable saloon). Then I might have hundreds of witnesses to what I now state. But the opposite of this was my course. I studiously concealed year after year the viper that clung to the secret fibers of my soul. He was not a man that drank and mingled much with his fellowmen, nor did he often drink enough before leaving his place of business to betray to anyone, that he drank at all. But a copious draft just as he left, and then another out of his secret bottle, before a 5 o'clock dinner, and then after

dinner *another*; laid the strong man low. Yet who but a wife could know of this state of things. If he could not eat dinner he was sick. If he vomited It is because he was *sick*, and the children pitied "pa" because he was sick! And if a neighbour called he was excused on the same ground. The wife might shed a million tears of untold bitterness between the setting and rising of the sun; and who could know it? Could the husband who lay on the dead sleep of the inebriated all these lonesome hours realize that she had known no rest? And when she stood beside him at break of day with toast and tea to stay his stomach and clear his brain, so that no betrayal of his vice, might reach his business place or even the nearest neighbours? Was there any witness? When he enjoyed a refreshing mornings' nap, a good breakfast and sallied forth at 9 o'clock in a clean suit, would any neighbors or friends suspect him? And if he delivered a strong temperance speech the following night as a grand worthy Patriarch of the Order Sons of Temperance, was there any to betray him? Nea gentlemen, but I tell you God and the holy angels witness these things and before *them* I am clear as the morning's dew.

The Judge then said, "I think madam it is the mind of the District Attorney to release you as a prisoner and call you as a witness in this case." "Well sir, I am in your power and you can do as you please. But I hope to be protected from insult or personal injury."

"Oh yes Madam, you will be taken to the best hotel and all your wants attended to, and no one shall molest you."

"Thank you Sir."<sup>54</sup>

The lawyers then asked her several questions about Utah and the condition of the women there. After they had finished their questions, the "marshal" (Shivers) took her to a hotel.

The next morning (12 May) when court convened, a crowd rushed into the courtroom, anxious to see the proceedings. Eleanor was there, having come twenty minutes before court was to begin. They then brought in Parley as soon as Judge Ogden had taken his place. Parley looked weary and weak, having spent the whole night in jail with no food and little sleep. He seated himself near Eleanor with his counsel, Henry Wilcox. The first thing Judge Ogden did was to dismiss the charges against Eleanor. He said, "Mrs. McLean, the court finds nothing against you. You can retire." Eleanor hesitated, then said to Judge Ogden, "Judge, I have been assured by the officers both Civil and Military that here I would once again see my children, and if this is the only place I may ever see

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<sup>54</sup>Eleanor Pratt, "Account," pp. 11-15.



them I wish to stay." The Judge said, "Well madam you are at liberty; but not compelled to leave, you are no longer a prisoner." Eleanor then went back to the hotel following the advice of a lawyer, John T. Humphreys.<sup>55</sup>

#### THE TRIAL OF PARLEY PRATT

After Eleanor had left, the charges were read to Parley by McLean, who was allowed to state the history of his grievances, and read evidences to the court that "implicated" Parley. He succeeded in stirring up feelings against Parley among the five hundred spectators.<sup>56</sup> When Parley arose to respond to the charges, Hector drew his pistol and pointed it at him but was prevented from firing by the officers of the court.<sup>57</sup> Because of the excitement of the crowd and McLean's display, Judge Ogden postponed the trial until four o'clock that evening. The crowd reluctantly allowed the officers to lock Parley in jail, and crowded the courtroom and courtyard long before it was time for the trial to start. Judge Ogden postponed the trial further until the next morning at eight o'clock.<sup>58</sup> This was a trick, however, to deceive McLean, for later that evening the real marshal, Mr. Hays, called on Eleanor with George Higginson and told them that Parley had been acquitted by the court and was only kept in jail for his own personal safety and would be released as soon as it was deemed prudent to do so.<sup>59</sup>

Early on Wednesday, 13 May 1857, Judge Ogden brought Parley's horse to him at the jail. He released Parley, put him on his horse and offered him his knife and pistol, but Parley refused by saying, "Gentlemen, I do not rely on weapons of that kind, my trust is in my God. Good-bye Gentlemen." He rode off in a southerly direction.<sup>60</sup>

#### THE MURDER

Hector, who had stayed up all night, came into Van Buren the morning of the thirteenth and was talking to a group of men outside the hotel, when a boy ran up and told him that

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>56</sup>*Daily Alta California*, 9 July 1857.

<sup>57</sup>Eleanor Pratt, "Account," p. 22.

<sup>58</sup>*Daily Alta California*, 9 July 1857.

<sup>59</sup>Eleanor Pratt, "Account," pp. 23-24.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

Parley had escaped.<sup>61</sup> Hector and several others mounted their horses and started in pursuit. Parley had taken a circuitous route to avoid detection, but a light rain that morning made his tracks easily traceable. Some of the pursuers turned back, but Hector and two others (James Cornell and Amasa Howell) followed Parley's tracks. They caught up with him in front of the Winn farm about twelve miles north of Van Buren. McLean fired six shots from his pistol, but they all missed, some going through Parley's coat and some into his saddle. McLean then rode up close to Parley and stabbed him twice in the chest. Parley fell off his horse to the ground and lay there motionless; McLean and his friends rode away. But in about ten minutes Hector came back, got down from his horse, placed a gun next to Parley's neck, fired, and then rode off. Mr. Winn, who witnessed the murder, thought that Parley was dead, so he rode to his neighbors' homes for help, which took about an hour. When he and a few neighbors returned, Parley turned over and said, "Sir, will you please give me a drink of water? I am thirsty and raise my head if you please." Mr. Winn asked him his name, who had attacked him, and if he had any family. Parley responded:

Yes, I have a family at Salt Lake City, Utah Territory and that is my home. My gold is in this pocket (pointing to his pants) and my gold watch is in this, and I want them with all my effects sent to my family in Salt Lake, write to a Mr. Couch Flint Post Office Cherokee Nation and let him have all my things to send to my family.<sup>62</sup>

Parley asked the men to communicate with a Mormon train and have some of them take his body back to Utah.<sup>63</sup> He then desired to leave his dying testimony with these men saying,

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<sup>61</sup>Peel, "Dying Remarks."

<sup>62</sup>Eleanor Pratt, "Account," pp. 29-30.

<sup>63</sup>Eleanor sent the following letter to Erastus Snow. The original is in the Erastus Snow Papers, Church Archives. This copy comes from the one Eleanor Pratt retained in her files, also in the Church Archives.

Dear Brother Snow,

I do not feel to have power to write you fully the painful news, you will find on the enclosed sheet. I therefore leave it open for your perusal.

Can you send for the body of Brother Parley. What shall I do? In case Mr. McLean either flees to evade arrest, or is taken into custody, my children will be without a protector!

I cannot wait to hear from you before I take some step, and I think I will go to N. O. and there I hope to hear from you. Address to E. J. McComb care of J. S. McComb N. O.

Yours respectfully,  
Eleanor



P. S.

If Brother Higinson is permitted to live and journey to you he can tell you all things.

E. J.

The claim that the Church had deserted Parley Pratt by not taking his body to Utah for final burial needs to be placed in its proper perspective. There were a number of circumstances that arose to block any attempt to return Parley's body as he had requested. First, the difficulty of transporting a body over the miles of wagon trail led the Saints to bury their dead where they died and move on, which is what they invariably did. Second, the news that Johnston's Army had been sent to Utah precluded taking anything on the trains that did not absolutely have to be taken. Third, during the events of the Utah War there was no real opportunity to recover the body. Fourth, after the Mountain Meadow's Massacre, the people of Van Buren, Arkansas refused to allow Mormons into their region until this century. All these did not deter later attempts as the following shows:

In 1902 Samuel Russell, Parley's grandson, corresponded with John Neal, former mayor of Van Buren, and was informed that a Walter Fine knew the location of Parley's grave. Russell wrote to the First Presidency asking what he should do. They recommended that he contact President J. G. Duffin of the Southwestern States Mission and request him to send some Elders to locate the grave "with the view of bringing his remains to this city [Salt Lake] for interment" (Letter from J. F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund to Samuel Russell, 19 May 1902, Church Archives). J. G. Duffin visited Van Buren on 3 September 1902 and contacted John Neal, former mayor, John Orme, Justice of the Peace at the time of Parley's murder, and John Steward, the man who drove the wagon that transported Parley's body to the gravesite. Brother Duffin did not visit the grave, but got a promise from John Steward and John Neal that they would assist in the removal of the body if the exact location of the burial place could be determined. They informed Duffin that the Fine brothers could point out the exact location. He was not able to visit them. (James G. Duffin to Anthon H. Lund, 19 December 1902, and Journal History of the Church, 13 May 1857)

Further investigation was done in 1912 by Samuel Russell. He visited Van Buren and talked with Thomas Fine, who pointed out what he thought was the location of the grave. After Elder Russell had returned to Salt Lake, he sent a letter to his friend, Calvin Little, of Alma, Arkansas, on 17 November 1912, and asked him to investigate further. Little sent Russell a memorandum giving the location of the graveyard and the approximate location of the grave, which was in the northeast part of the graveyard near a large oak stump—he could not determine the exact location. (Samuel Russell Papers, Church Archives. The Little Memorandum is a letter from A. B. Howell to Calvin Little, dated 11 August 1912. Little must have gotten the memorandum after Russell left, and sent it to him later in the November letter.)

In 1937 John Whipple, President of the Stillwater, Oklahoma Branch, conducted an investigation of the grave's location. He had to conceal his religious affiliation in order to talk to a Mr. Fine, son of one of the Fine brothers previously mentioned. Mr. Fine at first would not show Whipple the gravesite, but on persuasion, he finally did. Whipple sent a letter to the First Presidency and Harold Pratt discussing the possibility of exhuming the body. He felt that because of the feeling the people of Van Buren had towards the Church, it would be unwise to erect a monument; but felt he could not proceed without either permission from the Church or the family. Harold Pratt visited John Whipple in May 1937, and was shown the gravesite, but did not disclose his identity to Mr. Fine or the people of Van Buren. Harold then sent a letter to the family expressing his feelings that they should erect a monument rather than transfer the body, because of the uncertainty as to the exact location of the grave. (Letter from Elias S. Woodruff to Harold Pratt, 26 February 1937; letter from John Whipple to Harold Pratt, 1 April 1937; and letter from Elias S. Woodruff to the First Presidency, 26 February 1937, tell of Whipple and associates' activities. Letter from Harold Pratt to the Pratt family, 26 May 1937, tells of Harold's recommendation concerning the monument.)



I die a firm believer in the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith, and I wish you to carry this my dying testimony. I know that the Gospel is true and that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the living God, I am dying a martyr to the faith.<sup>64</sup>

Parley's voice weakened and finally ceased.

At about half past noon a lady came to the hotel in Van Buren where Eleanor was staying and told her that Parley had been shot. A later report said he was wounded but not dead. Then McLean appeared on the scene. He and a few friends were drinking at the bar of the hotel when Mr. Smith, the landlord, approached them and asked McLean what he had done. Hector replied, "Well, I have done a good work." Then the crowd began talking of lynching Eleanor, one saying, "Come now let us lynch her, twile not do to let her escape." Mr. Smith broke in:

How dare you speak in that manner in my house. If any man attempts to molest that lady while she is in my house he must do it over my dead body, for I will protect her while she is under my roof. The man that would so disgrace his kind as to suggest such a thing had better not be seen again on my premises.

A few minutes later McLean crossed the Arkansas River and boarded a boat. Just before he stepped on deck he spoke to a man on the street and said, "Sir if you will go out eight or ten miles on a certain road, you might do a deed of humanity," and then he sailed off.<sup>65</sup>

#### ELEANOR AND GEORGE VISIT THE MURDER SCENE

After Eleanor received definite word that Parley was dead, she asked Marshal Hays if she and George Higginson might go prepare the body for burial. The marshal said he would furnish a wagon and take them out to the site the next morning. Upon entering the Winn farm house they saw Parley's body lying on a board. Mr. Winn told them about the murder and took them to the scene. They saw where Parley had fallen near a stump and had crawled to and used it to try to stop the

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On 29 August 1949, John D. Giles purchased the gravesite and in 1951 the Pratt family and the Church erected a \$2500 monument. The arrangements were made by Jones Brothers of Barre, Vermont, the builders of the monument at the Hill Cumorah. (John D. Giles Collection, Parley P. Pratt Monument, Church Archives)

<sup>64</sup>Peel, "Dying Remarks."

<sup>65</sup>Eleanor Pratt, "Account," p. 25, for this and preceding quotation.



bleeding. They also found several papers that he tried to use as a compress. Although Parley had lived about two hours after being attacked, he had bled to death. Examination of his body and clothing showed six bullet holes around the skirt of his coat and two knife marks in the front. One was in a V form over the left breast, but this did not penetrate to the body. The second, the fatal wound, was to the left of the first and about two inches long; this went directly to the heart. They also found evidence that a bullet had struck his collarbone and bounced off. Mr. Winn informed them that when asked if they should send for a doctor, Parley had said, "I want no doctors for I will be dead in a few minutes."<sup>66</sup>

When Eleanor and George arrived, the body had been washed, the face shaved, and all necessary materials made available for their use. George and the marshal put clean clothing on the body and Eleanor wrapped it from head to foot in white linen, which she had obtained from Mr. Smith at the hotel. She returned to the hotel in Van Buren, being advised to do so by the marshal because of the animosity that prevailed in the area. Parley's body was placed in a white pine box made by William Steward at the request of James Orme, Justice of the Peace, and driven by John Steward to Sterman's Graveyard (now known as Fine Springs) about twelve miles northeast of Van Buren.<sup>67</sup> There Parley was buried by George Higginson about ten o'clock the night of 14 May 1857.<sup>68</sup>

#### ELEANOR RETURNS TO SALT LAKE

Eleanor, without means to leave Van Buren, was compelled to stay until a way could be provided. The lawyers continued to call daily to question her on when she planned to leave, but she replied that she "knew nothing on the subject" and could not leave then because she lacked money and clothing.

This situation continued for several days, until the district attorney persuaded her that if she would go to see her parents in New Orleans just once more, "the means would flow freely." Eleanor promised to go if the way were provided for her escape if she would run into trouble in New Orleans. The lawyers still insisted that she go because her father had at-

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., pp. 26-31.

<sup>67</sup>Journal History of the Church, 13 May 1857.

<sup>68</sup>George Higginson, "History of the Cherokee Mission," pp. 9-10.

<sup>69</sup>Cancelled.

tempted to see her while she was on trial but couldn't because of sickness and was forced to return home. Eleanor promised to go. On Monday morning, 18 May, Marshal Hays, Judge Ogden, and an unnamed lawyer gave Eleanor \$54.50 to pay her expenses to New Orleans. The judge had collected this money from various people in Van Buren,<sup>70</sup> and he told her that he sympathized with Parley and had never seen a man quite like him, so "uncomplaining and free from every feeling of revenge." He told Eleanor that he had instructed Hector to leave Parley alone because he had failed to prove one thing against him:

I pleaded with him until two o'clock in the morning, I kept him in my office and talked with him, and told him I did not wish violence done to the prisoner, and I hope he would not incite men to take his life. And he [McLean] said he did not wish any man to touch him, that *that* was a privilege he wished to reserve to himself.

Judge Ogden continued, "I am doubly grieved when I reflect that he [Pratt] was a grand Master Mason." Eleanor replied:

And not only so, he was a mighty man of God and this day tens of thousands of men, women, and children (not to mention his numerous family) would fain bring their tribute of unsophisticated affection & gratitude. And I know not of a nation where the news of his cruel death will not produce a sensation of grief and irreparable loss.

The judge also spoke of the men who had assisted McLean and said that they could not escape punishment. The lawyer then spoke up and asked if the Mormons would not avenge Parley's death. Eleanor told them that they need have no fear on that score, for Hector and his friends would be judged by God and get their just reward. Eleanor then told them that she had composed a song on the death of Parley and wished to sing it to them, which she did.<sup>71</sup> After the song, she read them an article she had written for the *Arkansas Intelligencer* and asked them to see that it was printed. The judge said that he would see that every word of it was published.<sup>72</sup> He then handed her a five-dollar gold piece and went on board

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<sup>70</sup>List of the contributions by the people of Van Buren to Judge Ogden to pay Eleanor's expenses to New Orleans, Eleanor Pratt Papers, Church Archives.

<sup>71</sup>Eleanor Pratt, "Account," pp. 40-42, for this and two preceding quotations.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., pp. 42-43. For a copy of the article, see *Arkansas Intelligencer*, 22 May 1857 and *Millennial Star* 19:428-32.



the boat to arrange passage for her down the Arkansas River to the Mississippi. Mr. Smith, the landlord of the hotel, took Eleanor to the boat (the *H.L. Tucker*), introduced her to its captain and made sure that she would be cared for.

They were five days reaching the Mississippi, landing at Napoleon to let off some passengers. Eleanor was afraid to leave the boat because most of the men on board that had gone ashore were gamblers. Feeling unsafe on the boat also, she asked the protection of the captain, who said he would protect her but made it clear that he did not approve of her. She stayed on board until the first boat going to New Orleans was available; she boarded the *Queen of the West*, and traveled directly to the Baton Rouge area. While on board, she became acquainted with a couple named Walker, who were spiritualists. She told them of her peculiar situation and requested that Mr. Walker take a letter to her father, and then write back to her at Bayou Sara when it was safe for her to proceed to New Orleans. Mr. Walker promised he would deliver the letter. She waited at Bayou Sara, a hundred miles from the city, for three days, hoping to hear from either Mr. Walker or her father. Finally she decided she had better go to New Orleans. She took a packet, stayed at a friend's house until the next morning, and then, taking a steam car to her father's neighborhood, stopped at a hotel. From there she sent her father a note informing him that she had been advised by the district attorney and Judge Ogden of the state of Arkansas to see him, and that he could reach her until 11:00 A.M. at the Carlton Hotel, and at 11 Gracier Street from 4:00 to 5:00 P.M. Her father replied by note that he would meet her that afternoon. When she inquired at 11 Gracier Street for J. S. McComb, she was told that he had been there, but had left word that he did not wish to see her. As she was leaving, she met her brother-in-law, Dr. Cambell, who was living with his family in her father's house. He assured her that he was her friend and had decided to see her when her father had refused. They talked freely, and when Dr. Cambell left, Eleanor felt assured that she had at least one friend in New Orleans. Dr. Cambell visited her a number of times, passing notes between her and her parents. The substance of these notes was that they wished her to give up her religion and come back to them. She responded by testifying of the truths of Mormonism. She remained in New Orleans four days, affording her parents

ample opportunity to see her; but they did not come, and she didn't go to them for fear of meeting McLean.<sup>73</sup> The day before she left, she learned that her oldest brother, David, had come from Memphis, empowered by McLean to act as his agent and have her arrested upon a charge of insanity, that he had sworn an oath before the court that she was a maniac, and that the papers were in the hands of the sheriff for her arrest.<sup>74</sup> She went to the private residence of Randall Hunt, a lawyer, and related her case to him, asking his counsel. He listened to her story and told her that McLean had no case against her, but that she had better leave, for McLean might put her in an asylum for a time to see if he could make her insane. She left New Orleans and went back to Bayou Sara, where she found several notes from her parents in one envelope. These stated that they never wanted to see her again, that when she had taken upon herself the name of Mrs. Pratt, she had cut off all their sympathy for her. With that disappointment, she left the New Orleans area, never to return.

She took the *James E. Woodruff* to St. Louis, arriving on 11 June. As she stepped off the boat, she noticed H. J. Bartlete, another brother-in-law, talking to a couple on board the ship. Eleanor walked by, paying no attention to them. She had anticipated that she would be followed, so she asked the clerk of the boat to take her to the corner. When the clerk left her at the street corner, she noticed that a man was following her. He followed her until she went into a boarding house, and then left. The next morning there were several policemen in front of the building, but none of them entered. When she left, however, they followed her from house to house until they lost sight of her. The police continued their search for several days, but could not find her. Eleanor said that she knew of their movements at all times, had looked in their faces several times, and had overheard several conversations about her and their plans to arrest her. But she was never detected. On 16 June she left St. Louis on the first steamboat to Florence, Nebraska, and then joined a wagon train going to Salt Lake.<sup>75</sup>

Arriving in Salt Lake, she stayed with the Pratt family and taught school. Brigham Young had called her to build a

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid., pp. 44-49.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 49. See also Hector's petition to the probate court on 1 June 1857. See footnote 2.

<sup>75</sup>Eleanor Pratt, letter in "Account," pp. 49-59.



schoolhouse in which to teach the Pratt family. During the construction of the school, she wrote several letters to Brigham Young, and these are the principal source of the knowledge we have of her activities until her death in 1874.<sup>76</sup> The building was begun in the latter part of 1857 and completed in 1858. The other Pratt wives were slow enough in helping her financially that she had to borrow twenty dollars from Brigham Young to complete the structure.<sup>77</sup> Most of the letters to Brigham Young reflect her dismay at the lack of support she was receiving from the Pratt family both before and after the school was completed. She wrote on 23 October 1858:

Bro Young,

Must I teach the Pratt children without any compensation? Or should I share like any other members of the P. P. Pratt family?

Certainly they have not contributed a mite to the building of the house neither have they rendered a mite of gratitude for my services, during the past years in instructing their children.

I have waded through toil and perplexity unknown to any second person to obtain a living and building the house agreeable to your instructions—and now I much desire your counsel as to the terms upon which I am to occupy the house. The women are not agreed and Parley [Jr.] declines deciding the matter. I believe your word would make an end of all strife in the case.

Your Sister in the Everlasting Covenant,  
Eleanor Pratt<sup>78</sup>

Brigham wrote back on 26 October:

Dear Sister:

Your note in regard to teaching Brother Pratt's children is received. As regards the school house I suppose that it was principally built, by a freewill gift of the people, out of respect for Brother Parley and with a view of benefitting his Family.

<sup>76</sup>Letters from 1858-1866 from Eleanor Pratt to Brigham Young, Brigham Young Correspondence, Church Archives. Stanley Hirshson in *Lion of the Lord: A Biography of Brigham Young* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 217, quotes a Captain Ginn, who visited Utah, that Eleanor was a concubine of Brigham Young. I could find nothing to substantiate this claim, and in fact, her letters to Brigham suggest that she was not married to him. The Endowment House Record from 1858-1874 shows no sealing taking place between Brigham and Eleanor. Eleanor was a frequent visitor to the Young house, because she taught Brigham's children.

<sup>77</sup>Letters from Eleanor Pratt to Brigham Young, 18 August 1858 and 5 November 1858.

<sup>78</sup>Letter from Eleanor Pratt to Brigham Young, 23 October 1858.

So far as you identify your interest and means with the family and for their support, you should share equally with them according to your necessities.

Trusting that unity may pervade your councils and that the Lord will give you wisdom to see and do right

I Remain as Ever  
Your Brother in the  
Gospel of Christ,  
Brigham Young<sup>79</sup>

She did begin to share her means equally as Brigham directed, and the family allowed her to stay in the school, which became her home. Not only did she teach the Pratt children but also Brigham Young's children and several other children of members of the Church.<sup>80</sup> She was able to support herself on the tuition paid by her pupils, even though she received very little in tuition payments from the Pratt family, which created a hardship for her because even though she had enough to live on, that was about all she had, and repairs on the schoolhouse drew heavily on her funds. It appears that the Pratt family blamed her for Parley's death and withheld their complete support from her.

On 30 April 1860 she met with George A. Smith and turned her handwritten account of the murder of Parley P. Pratt over to the Church.<sup>81</sup> On 16 November 1860, Wilford Woodruff and Robert Campbell addressed the concluding session of a series of teachers' meetings held in Eleanor's schoolhouse. The major topic of the week-long meetings was education in Utah, and how to best teach the various subjects in the schools. The teachers presented papers on several topics and discussions were held on all aspects of teaching. Eleanor was a dedicated teacher and participated fully in the meetings in an attempt to improve her teaching ability.<sup>82</sup> One example of her dedication may be cited. One of Parley's sons, Teancum, had lost part of his foot to frostbite and required special care to insure his education. Eleanor wrote to Brigham Young:

. . . I am now anxious to help in the education of Teancum. If my school is not decided the best place for him at present, I am ready to contribute the tuition of one pupil and also

<sup>79</sup>Letter from Brigham Young to Eleanor Pratt, 26 October 1858, Brigham Young Letter Book, Church Archives.

<sup>80</sup>Letters from Eleanor Pratt to Brigham Young, 5 November 1858 and 13 October 1866.

<sup>81</sup>Journal History of the Church, 13 April 1860.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 16 November 1860.



assist to clothe him, when I shall be free from debt contracted to improve the house last fall.<sup>83</sup>

In 1862 Eleanor added two rooms to the schoolhouse to rent and proposed to clear a way for a playground for the school. That way she could accommodate some "brother or sister with a small place of business, in a convenient location, at a reasonable rent," and at the same time create a small income for her to live on.<sup>84</sup> The next thing that we learn about her comes from a 13 October 1866 letter to Brigham Young. Writing very graphically, she relates what had happened to her since coming to Salt Lake after Parley's death:

When I came from your Office in 1857 and told the family what you had given me to do one said, "I'm glad its not me." Another "I wouldn't like to do it." And a third said "Eleanor are you going to do it?" Yes. "When do you intend to commence?" Tomorrow.

She then recounted to him how the construction of the school was accomplished by freewill offering and her expenditure and then said that the family had held a meeting and by unanimous vote refused her either the portion of a wife or 3/5 tuition pay for their children, when the schoolhouse was \$200 in debt. She then continued:

Nevertheless the Lord blessed me and I have toiled through the years and the sons and daughters of Parley have been faithfully taught in the house built for that purpose and now a number of them are qualified to maintain themselves by teaching.

She then told Brigham that an old rumor was abounding in the vicinity that she had refused to teach the Pratt children until they paid tuition and this had been used to prejudice the minds of several against her. She affirmed that she had not refused them but had sought all manner of means to improve the building for their best good. She asked President Young to put aside this controversy by a word from him to the guilty parties. She informed him that she planned to leave town that winter with Abinadi, one of Parley and Belinda's sons, to teach in the country. She said that plan met with Belinda's approval

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<sup>83</sup>Letter from Eleanor Pratt to Brigham Young, 2 June 1866. Young Pratt had lost part of his left foot to frostbite in 1865. "History of Teancum Pratt. Autobiography," p. 44. Handwritten original in the possession of Mrs. J. A. Barker, Sandy, Utah.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 18 August 1862.

and wished to know if Brigham would approve.<sup>85</sup> We can only suppose that she did go through with her plan for we can find nothing further on what she did do in the winter of 1866.

In 1870 she was still teaching school at the Pratt school-house and had Keziah, one of Parley's wives, living with her.<sup>86</sup> It seems from the 1870 Census Record of Utah that her youngest son, Albert, came to live with her, for he taught school for a time with her in the house.<sup>87</sup> What happened to her other children is still a mystery. Annie died on 9 September 1872.<sup>88</sup> We know nothing of Fitzroy, and we know little about Eleanor's activities until her death at 8:00 P.M. on 24 October 1874.<sup>89</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

These, then, are the details available concerning Eleanor Jane McComb McLean Pratt and Parley P. Pratt. Hector McLean apparently was a violent man, especially when he was under the influence of alcohol, which problem plagued him most of his life. When he had driven his wife from him and, in his mind at least, lost her to Mormonism, and was on the verge of losing his two youngest children he struck out at the man who stood for the Church and seemed to be the cause of his personal problems, convinced that by doing so he would rid the world of a social menace and a despicable man. He was totally unable to feel anything for his estranged wife's or Parley's religious beliefs.

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<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 13 October 1866, for this and two preceding quotations.

<sup>86</sup>U. S. Census Record of Utah, 1870.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Pratt Family Record.

<sup>89</sup>Wilford Woodruff Journal, 24-25 October 1874, Church Archives.



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