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"...Of Countries and of Kingdoms"

Jeffery R. Holland

When Latter-day Saints speak of the "brotherhood of man," that phrase has special meaning. It means literally that we are all sons and daughters of an eternal father, spiritual kin who once participated in a spiritual family setting. There were no unfamiliar races, no confusing tongues, no cross- or counter-cultures. There was, nevertheless, conflict. But most of the family stayed together.

That kindred relationship continued for the faithful through the mortal parenthood of Adam and Eve by which we renewed our relationship as brothers and sisters, this time in a physical sense. Still there were no unfamiliar races, no confusing tongues, no cross- or counter-cultures. But there did remain the possibility of conflict and loss of more of the family. To nullify that conflict and loss as much as possible, and to weld (as Joseph Smith said) a saving link between these parents and their children, these brothers and sisters, the principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ were immediately introduced. A spiritual family which became a physical family would now with effort and faith become an eternal family. May I quote from George F. Richards, the late president of the Council of the Twelve. Underscoring the truths taught in the fifth chapter of Moses, he said,

The gospel of Jesus Christ was taught to Adam. This is a unique doctrine among the world's followers of Christ. Yet it is one of the basic truths revealed to the prophet Joseph Smith by the eternal father.

This knowledge explains the course of human history. Man from the beginning was taught the gospel. The Lord did not initiate his work on earth by leaving [him] in darkness, but men yielding to the temptations of the evil one departed from the truth. Thus came a succession of apostasies and restorations.

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A luncheon address delivered at Brigham Young University, 17 April 1977, in connection with a symposium on "Deity, Ways of Worship, and Death," sponsored by the BYU Religious Studies Center.
Thus also it happens that the simple doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ appear or have appeared . . . in the religious beliefs of mankind. Fragments of the truth have been handed down through the ages.

This doctrine amply substantiated . . . becomes a powerful evidence for a common source of religious truth, and for the existence of gospel knowledge from the beginning of earth history.¹

The significance of this distinctive Latter-day Saint doctrine cannot be overstated. Yet it would be foolish to propose that all the world’s religious beliefs came from such a common and truthful source. But much of what we study and learn historically comes from that experience, an experience which stems back through the accumulation of races, tongues, and cultures—and conflicts—this human family has witnessed since Adam and Eve stepped out of the Garden of Eden.

Students of comparative world religion, in their own way, seek to perform a Haleyan—“Haley” as in “Alex,” not “comet”—a Haleyan task. As I see it they, too, are searching for roots. LDS students assist by undertaking to define and trace the branches of a family and doctrinal tree, a tree now grown very large, a tree in years past hardly recognizable from limb to limb. Theologically speaking, we know many branches have been inappropriately grafted in and will have to be cut away. Other, truer branches have received too little attention and they will have to be nourished. But with all the searching, and tracing, and watering, and pruning that may need to be done before a final harvest, there is nevertheless before us, restored and continually reaffirmed in our present dispensation, the gospel of Jesus Christ—that age-old tree of Adam’s faith and Adam’s family.

In this day of Church activity which is, by a prophet’s declaration, going to take us to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people we do well to aid that process and facilitate our friendships by sharing here, in just such a symposium, our mutual experience, our knowledge of “countries and of kingdoms” as the Lord has commanded (D&C 88:79). Even in the early and difficult days of this dispensation, with more than enough hardships and temporal travail to go around, the Lord nevertheless urged our forefathers to “study and learn and become acquainted with all good books and with languages, tongues, and people” (D&C 90:15). In the same way

and presumably at the same time we declare ourselves to be seekers after anything that is "virtuous, lovely, of good report or praiseworthy" (Thirteenth Article of Faith). That search is now taking us to countries and kingdoms, cultures and corners of the world our fathers never knew and our grandfathers never dreamed of. The rich opportunity of our time suggests that we move as rapidly and as resolutely into these "new" frontiers as we are able. (They are, of course, very old frontiers.) I am, in short, trying to suggest that what you are doing here today in this comparative religion symposium is not simply a nice intellectual exercise or just another praiseworthy educational experience. For me it is part of a personal dream in terms of what the Center for Religious Studies at BYU may yet do. It is deeply theological, it has eternal implications, and it will play its own part in the process of international brotherhood. Ultimately it will play its own part in preparation for that blessed day—again in a theological framework—when the lamb shall lie down with the lion and we shall beat our swords into plowshares, and our spears into pruninghooks. Then, says the Lord, "they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 2:4; 11:9).

Now just a few specifics about the agenda of this symposium.

Faith seems to be, one way or another, the first principle in any man's devotional life. As far back as anthropologists document, man has worshipped and often believed that he had an immortal soul. (I have spent some time here suggesting why that should not be surprising to Latter-day Saints.) William Howells describes man's impulse to worship in what we would consider to be almost uniquely Latter-day Saint language. He says that man, unlike other animals, is the "creature who comprehends things he cannot see and believes in things he cannot comprehend."2

Obviously it will not take even an alert Latter-day Saint ear to recognize the echo from the opening line of the 11th chapter of Hebrews: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1) or from the 32nd chapter of Alma: "... faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if you have faith you hope for things which are not seen which are true" (Alma 32:21). Or Elliot Landau's classic response to his fellow Jews after his conversion to Mormonism. In answer

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to the persistent "why?" he confessed, "My heart told me things my head did not understand."

That reach for faith—and to Latter-day Saints that is specifically faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—takes us into considerations of deity, of worship, of death, and much more. Reassuringly, the response to that faith is extended to the whole of the human family. In scope, Christ's plan of salvation as taught in the restored doctrines of this dispensation includes not only every living creature on the earth but every ancestor before us and every remnant of our posterity to come. In every age and in every area each living soul will have an opportunity to hear and accept the fulness of the doctrine of Christ. That opportunity is unlimited. Christ's was, according to Amulek (Alma 34:10), an infinite and eternal sacrifice and its blessings will be available to every man, woman, and child from the north to the south, the east to the west, and every island of the sea.

Part of that universal opportunity includes a universal way by which all might respond to it. Every man shares an inheritance of divine light, an influence emanating from the Godhead which is not confined to select nations, races, or peoples. "The Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit" (D&C 84:46).

President Brigham Young once said:

The spirit of the Lord, the light of Christ, and the inspiration of the Almighty are given to every man . . . I do not believe for one moment that there has been a man or woman upon the face of the earth, from the days of Adam to this day, who has not been enlightened, instructed, and taught by the revelations of Jesus Christ. "What? the ignorant heathen?" Yes every human being who has possessed a sane mind. . . . No matter what the traditions of their fathers were, those who were honest before the Lord, and acted uprightly according to the best knowledge they had, will have an opportunity to go to the kingdom of God. . . . No matter whether we are Jew or Gentile . . . No matter whether we believe in the Koran as firmly as we now believe in the Bible; . . . if we are honest before the God we serve.3

The key words are, of course, honesty and opportunity. And the history of gospel activity indicates that many have been honest and will take the opportunity when it is presented to them, in this life or the next.

Let me just quickly give a brief (and incomplete) inventory of some quotations that reinforce the objectives of your symposium. Charles W. Penrose explained,

For the inspiration of God in olden times was not confined to the men who wrote the Jewish scriptures. God has permitted his spirit which is the light of truth and which manifests truth, to be poured out upon all the inhabitants of the earth to some extent; . . . There have been inspired bards and sages and poets who have uttered words of truth, words of inspiration concerning things of which they had been enlightened of God and many things that such men wrote have been recorded and handed down and scraps of them may be found among all nations and peoples. His spirit has enlightened mankind in all ages to a certain extent; for the spirit of the Lord, which gives light to the human understanding is the spirit by which we live; it is the spirit of light; it is the spirit of life . . . [That] spirit is not confined to one race of people, or to one country, or to one age or generation, but it is universal; it is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.\textsuperscript{4}

Orson F. Whitney once said before a general conference of the Church,

God is using not only his covenant people, but other people as well, to consummate a work, stupendous, magnificent, and altogether too arduous for this little handful of saints to accomplish by and of themselves. . . . Outside of the pale \textsuperscript{5} of the Church\textsuperscript{6} are other good and great men, not bearing the priesthood, but possessing profundity of thought, great wisdom, and a desire to uplift their fellows, \textsuperscript{5} who have been sent by the Almighty into many nations to give them not the fullness of the gospel, but that portion of truth that they were able to receive and wisely use. Such men as Confucius, . . . Zoroaster, . . . Buddha, . . . Socrates and Plato, . . . these all had some of the light that is universally diffused, and concerning which we of this day \textsuperscript{6} hear. They were servants of the Lord in a lesser sense, and were sent to those pagan or heathen nations to give them the measure of truth that a wise providence has allotted to them.

\textsuperscript{[They have been]} mighty auxiliaries in the hands of an almighty God, carrying out his purposes, consciously or unconsciously.\textsuperscript{6}

Parley P. Pratt once said that Mohammed, a son of Abraham, was on the side of truth in teaching "the true and living God" and that his was, in its day "a standard raised against the most corrupt and abominable idolatry that ever perverted our earth."\textsuperscript{6} In 1853 John

\textsuperscript{1}\textit{JD}, 23:346.
\textsuperscript{2}Conference Reports of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 5 October 1931, p. 120.
\textsuperscript{3}\textit{JD}, 3:40
Taylor confirmed, "The Catholics have many pieces of truth; so have the Protestants, the Mohammedans and the heathens." Nearly a century later George Albert Smith stated, "I meet members of the Catholic, the Presbyterian, the Baptist, and the Methodist, and all other churches, and I find in these men and women virtues that are most beautiful to me."

After mentioning that all religions have some truth, Joseph Smith said: "We should gather all the good and true principles in the world and treasure them up, or we shall not come out true Mormons."

This is not an attempt to be encyclopedic or exhaustive or even boring but it does recall the prophet Alma: "For behold the Lord does grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word, yea, in wisdom, all that he seeth fit that they should have" (Alma 29:8). And perhaps it helps say in a variety of ways how much we need to do and how broad our sources and opportunities are. I include on that scroll of sources some of the "languages, tongues, and people" to which these prophets have referred. They will all make their appropriate appearance in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times.

Let me use just one specific example which Spencer Palmer and I have discussed, a principle on which he has improved my thinking. Some of what follows will be Professor Palmer's own language. I speak of the doctrine of meditation, so often identified with a tradition like Buddhism. I do not speak of popularized transcendental thought or teenage Zen Buddhism. I speak simply of quiet, uninterrupted, thoughtful consideration of God's will and goodness to us. This is one of the Lord's basic teachings seldom practiced enough in the West. Even Latter-day Saints sometimes seem to have too little time for it. Yet the Savior set the example when, after feeding the 5,000, he went to the mountain for solitude and "when the evening came, he was there alone" (Matthew 14:23). During the hour of his greatest agony, he sought seclusion in the Garden of Gethsemane where he had "oft times resorted" (John 18:2). When assembled believers on the American continent failed to understand his message, he commanded them:

7"*ID*, 1:154, 159.
8"Conference Reports*, 5 October 1931, p. 120.
Therefore, go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand, and prepare your minds for the morrow, and I come unto you again. (3 Nephi 17:3; italics added)

North American members and missionaries often express concern about the Eastern inclination toward the contemplative life, yet as a scriptural principle and in their purest form, such contemplation and prayer are usually prerequisites for revelation from the Lord. David meditated on the law of the Lord day and night (Psalms 1); he first considered God’s heavenly creations, then pondered upon the significance of man (Psalms 8:3-4); Nephi was caught away in the Spirit only after he sat pondering in his heart (1 Nephi 11:1). The voice of the Lord commanded Nephi to “get thee into the mountain for prayer,” and there he cried unto the Lord. He did go oft into the mountains where he prayed often (1 Nephi 18:3). His heart pondereth continually upon spiritual things (2 Nephi 4:16). Out with nature, Enos reported that the truths of eternal life sunk deep into his heart (Enos 3); Helaman frequently pondered privately (Helaman 10:1, 3); Oliver Cowdery was told that he had not understood the nature of revelation and must first “study it out” in his mind before answers could come (D&C 9:7); President Joseph F. Smith received the great vision of the redemption of the dead only after he had spent “many hours pondering over the scriptures and reverting his mind to the writings of the ancients, then were the eyes of his understanding opened, and the Spirit of the Lord began to rest upon him.”¹⁰ Joseph Smith, Jr., prepared his mind through “serious reflection,” and on the crucial passage in James 1:5 he “reflected again and again.” “After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer the desire of my heart to God” (Joseph Smith 2:8, 12, 15).

President David O. McKay in a 1967 general conference address emphasized the importance of meditation as an essential feature of worship in the lives of Latter-day Saints:

I think we pay too little attention to the value of meditation, a principle of devotion.

In our worship there are two elements: one is spiritual communion rising from our own meditation; the other instruction from others, particularly from those who have authority to guide and

instruct us. Of the two, the more profitable introspectively is meditation.

Meditation is the language of the soul. Meditation is a form of prayer. We can say prayers without having any spiritual response. Meditation is one of the most secret, most sacred doors through which we pass into the presence of the Lord.\textsuperscript{11}

The Lord’s revelations teach us that we should repair to our own spiritual gardens, our own sacred groves; that we should seek our solitude, on mountaintops, if necessary. We must feel the presence of God in our lives. In a Church where love of God is taught as the highest quality of the human soul, Latter-day Saints must always remember the value of reflection upon spiritual things. We can receive such gentle reminders even from those not of our faith.\textsuperscript{12}

Paul Hutchinson made a perceptive comment in his informative little essay entitled "How Mankind Worships." He observed:

\ldots there is a tendency, a product of the egotism in all of us, to mock the unfamiliar in other men’s faith and worship. Such words as "heathen," "idolatry," "superstition" are used more often as smear words or in derision than in their legitimate meanings. They are the words we hurl at others. \ldots Yet every man should command respect in the moment when he bows before God. We may believe that his conception of the divine lacks valuable, even essential, elements. His forms of worship may appear to us bizarre, sometimes even repellent. But in that moment of prayer, every man is at his best; if we are as wise as we like to think ourselves, it is then that we will attempt to understand him.\textsuperscript{13}

Of course in our zeal for identifying the revealed light of truth and hearing faint echoes of a common past, we need to be careful not to be confused by what is \emph{not} truthful and what may have wandered greatly from the pristine purity of earlier dispensations. We have our standard works—which are standards—and above all we have living prophets who are the oracles of God, the defenders and the teachers of eternal truth. Scriptures and Prophets are always our safeguards against error. In a lesser way, others may also help in making crucial distinctions, including scholars like Hutchinson who notes that neither Confucius nor Lao Tzu dreamed of founding religions, and that the rites which have been spoken of as religious, both Confucian and Taoist, have only slight connection


\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Hutchinson, "How Mankind Worships," pp. 9, 10.}
with anything the great masters taught. "Both Confucius and Lao Tzu were philosophers. The former was as mundane and pragmatic a thinker as ever lived, and the latter an idealist and mystic whose teachings are so elusive and intangible that it is hard to reduce them to coherence, at least for western minds."  

Hutchinson continues that insofar as Confucianism is regarded ritualistically it may be seen as no more a religion than "Memorial Day appearances of the American President at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier or a meeting of the Society of Mayflower Descendants." As for what has become of Taoism, with "its hoards of nearly illiterate, rapacious priests," one is sobered by the summary of Edmund Davidson Soper. His comment is undoubtedly overstated for effect, but it does suggest the need for caution. He says:

Taoism today . . . is a mass of puerile superstitions. It is the worst side of Chinese religion . . . theoretically, the business of the ignorant priests is to help the people live in accord with Tao, i.e., the Way, but practically it is magic run mad. Soothsaying in every imaginable form . . . is carried on by a priesthood which has become skillful in working on the superstitious fears of the people.

The academic and socioreligious world generally asserts that no great religion has swept into world prominence since Islam some thirteen hundred years ago. Perhaps not a new religion but surely a restored and purified one, is moving to take its rightful place as a "world religion," indeed, as the "world religion." The Prophet Joseph Smith said:

I calculate to be one of the instruments for setting up the kingdom of Daniel by the word of the Lord, and I intend to lay a foundation that will revolutionize the world. It will not be by sword or gun that this kingdom will roll on: the power of truth is such that all nations will be under the necessity of obeying the gospel.

It is in that sense that I speak of the value of knowledge of countries and of kingdoms, of languages, tongues, and people, of symposia on comparative views of deity, worship and death—and much more. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is compellingly on a course wherein we will need to know all people everywhere. We need to love them and listen to them, and, wherever possible, teach them. They are in every instance our brothers and sisters.

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14 Ibid., p. 12.
16 HC, 6:365.
The Founding of the Samoan Mission

R. Lanier Britsch

INTRODUCTION

In April 1974, President Spencer W. Kimball encouraged the Latter-day Saints to "lengthen their stride" and carry the message of the restored gospel to all the nations of the world. The size of the missionary force has grown considerably since that time and efforts are being made to gain entry and teaching privileges in countries which have previously been closed to LDS missionary activities. Nevertheless, a major percentage of the world population remains untouched by LDS mission workers. In addition to the European Communist countries, work remains to be opened in most countries of Southwest Asia and Africa, in all of South Asia, and in several areas of Southeast Asia. Of course, the People's Republic of China also remains closed.

When the problems of poverty, nationalism and anti-foreignism, governmental instability, literacy, and non-Christian religious systems are considered, the challenge to "lengthen our stride" seems difficult to meet. The devoted advocate of Church growth might be tempted to wonder whether the gospel can be taken to the remainder of the world until the Lord intervenes to change many circumstances and, in effect, open the doors.

In answer to such thinking, the historian of LDS mission expansion must point to past experience. It would not be accurate to conclude that the Church makes progress only in those times and places where the evidence would suggest lack of success. There have been many cases which clearly show the Church growing at times and in places where the odds are seemingly against it. National peace and stability do not necessarily create the best seedbed for the growth of the Church. In fact, turmoil, war, dislocation, suffering, and confusion have established a suitable climate for Church growth. Certainly one cannot conclude that wars are good or that unhappiness should be fostered to assure the expansion of the Church. Rather

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one must recognize that the gospel offers answers to those who are displaced, who suffer, or who need answers to life’s questions.\(^1\)

The case under consideration in this study is the Samoan Mission. Its establishment in 1888, which was the official founding date of the mission, came at a most unsatisfactory period in Samoan history. Governmental, social, economic, and to some extent religious problems all militated against the success of the LDS missionary corps. Nevertheless the Church was established and has grown steadily ever since. Today approximately twenty percent of the population of Samoa is LDS, the entire nation (both Western and American Samoa) is covered with stakes, and the First Presidency has just announced plans to build a temple there.

**PERIOD ONE: WALTER MURRAY GIBSON SENDS MISSIONARIES TO SAMOA**

The Latter-day Saint mission to the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) which was founded in late 1850, ran into problems in 1857-58. For a variety of reasons—principally the apostasy of many of the Hawaiian converts and the fact that Brigham Young was deeply concerned about the impending Utah War—the Zion (Utah) elders were called home. After their departure in 1858, the local Saints were left to care for the Church. Three years later, in July 1861, the adventurer Walter Murray Gibson, who had joined the Church in January 1860, arrived in Hawaii as a missionary. His appointed field of labor was Japan and Malaysia, but he had also been asked by President Young to visit the Hawaiian Saints. Gibson went far beyond the authority given him and ultimately defrauded the Hawaiian members and misused his ecclesiastical authority. He was excommunicated in April 1864.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Several of the most recent examples of LDS Church growth in locations of upheaval are Japan after 1945, the planting of the Church in Korea during the conflict there, the establishment of mission work in Thailand, largely as a result of American military people who were there in connection with the Vietnam War, and the brief beginning in Vietnam itself during the war. Certainly other examples could be given from Europe and Latin America.

Whether for good or evil, the influence of Walter Murray Gibson was felt far and wide. Gibson was an ambitious man who thirsted for power. Not long after he established himself as the supreme leader of the Saints in Hawaii, he decided to send missionaries to other islands of the Pacific. As early as September 1861 he reported to Brigham Young that he planned to expand the bounds of the Church in the Pacific to the Society Islands and other points. His hope was to convert a force of Polynesian elders to Mormonism and then train them to move into Malaysia and establish the Church and political kingdom there.

In a 30 August 1862 letter, Gibson told President Young that two elders, "intelligent native brethren," had been dispatched on a mission to the Society Islands and Tonga Islands. He also said he intended to send other Hawaiian elders to the "Marquesas Islands, the Tonga Group, the Samoan Group, and for Malaysia and Japan." Accurate records of Gibson’s activities in this sphere cease with the letter just quoted, but we do know that two priesthood bearers were called as missionaries to Samoa, probably by early December 1862.

There is a sad irony surrounding the call of Kimo Belio and Samuela Manoa as the first missionaries of the Church to the Samoan Islands. Both men were faithful servants of the Lord who had been ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood even before Gibson came to Hawaii. But through his clever manipulations of the Hawaiian Saints, Gibson had convinced many good men that he was authorized to enlarge the priesthood activity in Hawaii. He ordained twelve apostles, some seventies, an archbishop, and bishops to preside over the people. Kimo Belio was ordained one of the Hawaiian apostles, and Samuela Manoa was ordained a seventy under Gibson’s hand. Belio and Manoa were so faithful they accepted Gibson’s charge to open Samoa, but when Gibson was excommunicated in 1864, they were left to their own devices in Samoa.

Belio and Manoa sailed from Honolulu on 23 December 1862 and arrived on the tiny Samoan island of Anuu, a mile off the


Walter Murray Gibson to Brigham Young, 2 September 1861, letters to Brigham Young, Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Gibson to Brigham Young, Church Archives.
southeast coast of Tutuila, now the principal island of American Samoa, on 24 January 1863. After laboring on Aunuu for several months with only one baptism, they moved to Tutuila and began teaching there. Before long they raised up a branch of forty-two baptized members, many of whom lived in Utumea. It is reported that Belio also extended his labors to Apia, on Upolu Island, and baptized several people there.5

When the mission was reopened in 1888, Elder Manoa reported that he and Belio had baptized around fifty people during all of their ministrations. It is doubtful that many more people than this were baptized, even though some sources have reported as many as 200 baptisms.6

Problems arose for the Samoan Mission. First, the mission was not sanctioned by the leaders of the Church in Salt Lake City. Second, local difficulties also arose. In 1868 Elder Manoa, having heard nothing from Hawaii since his arrival in Samoa, decided it would be appropriate for him to marry, and he did. Unfortunately the marriage failed and a year later Elder Belio found it necessary to excommunicate the thirty-three year old Manoa for adultery. Manoa remained outside the Church until 1876, when Church leaders in Hawaii gave permission for his rebaptism. This ordinance was performed by a Samoan elder, Miomio, on 4 June, one day after the now-aged Belio had died.7

Manoa did little missionary work after his reentry into the Church. When the mission was finally reopened, he reported that he had written to Hawaii a number of times asking for assistance. The question may be raised, why was the Church not paying attention to the little cluster of Saints in Samoa during these years? The best answer is probably that the Church was honestly ignorant of the few Saints who had been brought together in that distant place. Manoa’s letters may have ended up in places other than the Church headquarters in Laie. I have been able to find only three references to Samoa in the Church Archives during these years. Harvey H. Cluff mentioned the Samoan group twice. The first reference is cited above: the second leaves us with a question. Cluff wrote: “In the evening Elder John A. West arrived... on his way to fulfill a mission on the Samoan Islands. He will stop here until his two

5Andrew Jenson, Encyclopedic History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1941), p. 765.
6Ibid.; and also referring to a statement by Harvey Harris Cluff, “Autobiography,” 6, 7, and 8 October 1871, p. 128, Church Archives.
7It is difficult to be sure of the facts in this situation. The only source was Manoa himself, and his story is not easily corroborated.
companions arrive.” Apparently West's two companions never did arrive, for he filled his mission in Hawaii.

The other reference is a letter from ten Samoan Saints who asked President Brigham Young to send "some of the servants of God." It arrived shortly after Young's death in 1877. We have no record that the letter was ever answered.

PERIOD TWO: JOSEPH HARRY DEAN REOPENS THE SAMOAN MISSION

The 1880s were difficult years for the Saints in Utah. The most serious problem was the polygamy issue. Many of the Church's strongest men were imprisoned during the later years of the decade. Joseph H. Dean, husband of two wives and father of five children by the first, Sally, spent part of 1886 and until 13 May 1887, in prison on a conviction of unlawful cohabitation. On the day of his release he went into hiding again because he had heard that deputies wanted to arrest him on charges of illegal voting. A close friend, William O. Lee, allowed Dean to stay in his home while plans were being made to take care of him. While Dean was there, he received a message from Apostle Franklin D. Richards. He asked Dean about the possibility of his filling a second mission in Hawaii. Since the subject had been raised by George Reynolds, Church mission secretary, a week or two before, Elder Dean was not surprised by Richards' request. The First Presidency wondered whether such a mission call would be too much for a thirty-one year old man with so many responsibilities, but when they learned that he had taken to the "underground" again, it was agreed that the mission call would relieve more problems than it would cause.

On Monday, 23 May 1887, Joseph H. Dean and his second wife, Florence Ridges, were "set apart to go [as missionaries] to the Sandwich, Society, Navigator (Samoa), or any of the other groups of islands that the spirit might dictate through the authorities." Within a few days Joseph and Florence had said goodbye to Sally and the children and were on their way.

The records do not reveal what else, if anything, the Church leaders said to Dean concerning Samoa. But it is evident from his journals that Elder Dean was interested in the possibility of going to Samoa. By October 1887 he was aware of Samuela Manoa, and during conference he asked whether anyone knew his address.

9Journals of Joseph H. Dean, 23 May 1887, Church Archives.
Brother Kaleohano told Dean that he had received word from sailors of the Hawaiian Man-of-War Imiloa, which had just returned from Samoa, that Manoa was still there, "that there were a good many Saints there, and that they felt that the Church had forgotten them entirely." This news increased Dean's concern.20

As soon as he knew that Manoa was still alive and faithful to the Church, Dean began gathering information about Samoa. From a man who had worked there, Dean learned about steamship connections, the almost total lack of mail service, the cost of sailing to Tutuila, which was close to Aunuu where Manoa lived, the fact that there were 35,000 people living in the islands, and so on.

On 26 October 1887, Elder Dean wrote to Manoa and asked whether he would be able to care for him and his wife. Florence was five months pregnant, and Joseph must have been deeply concerned about housing, food, and other facilities. A few days later he wrote to Presidents Wilford Woodruff and George Q. Cannon and explained the possibilities for mission work in Samoa. In December a letter from them told him to move ahead with the project as he saw fit.

Dean was busy with many matters relating to the Hawaiian Mission, but he continued to work toward going to Samoa. On 9 February 1888, Florence delivered a ten-pound baby boy. On the following day Dean received word from Manoa. He wrote in his journal:

Manoa will open his house for us and make us comfortable. He is very desirous to have us come and says he thinks the prospects are as good for converts as on Hawaii nei. That settles the matter and I will be able to take Florence along with me.21

Dean's course was set. Florence and the baby needed time to gain strength, but they were all going to Samoa.

In early May, Elder Dean decided to sail for Samoa on 7 June. During the remaining time he made reservations for their steamship passage (at a reduced rate because of their ecclesiastical status), arranged with a faithful Hawaiian brother, C. K. Kapule, to come to Samoa as a missionary as soon as he could arrange his affairs (he was delayed because of the untimely death of his wife), and continued to search for information about Samoa. The Hawaiian Saints and the haole (white) missionaries held a number of feasts in their

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20Ibid., 9 October 1887.
21Ibid., 10 February 1888.
honor, and the much anticipated day for sailing finally arrived. Unfortunately the mail ship was three days late because of the late arrival of mail in San Francisco. This complicated the Deans’ departure, because the captain was not sure he would even stop the ship at Tutuila and let them off. When the Alemeda was offshore a couple of miles west of Tutuila, the captain did stop the engines, and had the Deans lowered to a small rowboat that had come out to meet them.

The roughness of the sea, the uncertainty of the accommodations for his wife and infant son, and the knowledge that he was to open the gospel door to a new nation all caused some misgivings and anxiety in Dean’s mind. He was somewhat calmed when the head boatman made it known that he had been sent by Manoa and would take them to his home in Aunuu. Because of the roughness of the sea, the Deans were forced to spend three nights on Tutuila. But finally the longboat was put ashore at Aunuu on 21 June 1888.

Manoa and his wife greeted Joseph, Florence, and the baby at the shore and took them to their frame house. Manoa ushered Elder Dean into a separate room away from the crowd and, taking him by the hand, he said in Hawaiian, “I feel greatly blessed that God has brought us together and that I can meet his good servant here in Samoa.” Here Manoa broke down but soon controlled himself to welcome the new missionaries to his adopted land. It had been over twenty-five years since Manoa had seen an authorized priesthood leader from Zion!

The Deans were not troubled by the primitive physical circumstances they found in Samoa, although Hawaii was far more advanced. Brother Dean had studied the Samoan situation as carefully as possible before leaving Hawaii and had a fairly good idea what to expect. He was happy that Manoa owned a western-style home, and that there was even a bed prepared for their use. This may seem natural until one realizes that the Samoans sleep on mats on the floor of their fales (large mushroom-shaped thatched houses). In addition to the bed there was a good kerosene lamp, earthenware dishes, and a concrete floor. But they had “no stove, no cows, no bread, nor anything to make it of. No running water rainwater being all that they use. It seems that we will have to live on straight native fare.” Probably Dean’s greatest disappointment was with the mail. “The mail facilities seem to be at a fearful state. No inner island mail at all.”12 These inconveniences notwithstanding-

12Ibid., 21 June 1888.
ing, Dean and his wife were excited to be in Samoa and were especially eager to begin teaching the gospel.

The natives of Aunuu were equally eager to hear Dean's message. On Sunday, 24 June, Elder Dean gathered a large number of the villagers and preached his first sermon. Brother Manoa translated from Hawaiian into Samoan after Dean spoke each sentence. The whole process was very cumbersome, so the new missionary was eager to learn the language as fast as possible.

On the following day Dean rebaptized Manoa, confirmed him, and ordained him an elder. This was thought necessary because of Manoa's questionable original authority from Gibson, and because of the questionable authenticity of his first rebaptism by a man (Miomio) whose priesthood authority could be doubted, having come from Manoa himself. The act of baptism must have been a spiritual experience for those who looked on, because a Samoan woman named Malaea applied for baptism almost immediately. Her faith seemed sincere, and so the good elder baptized her. Since she had not been baptized before, Dean counted her as his first Samoan convert.13 By 3 July, Elder Dean had baptized fourteen more and felt much encouraged. He soon expanded his work to include occasional visits to Tutuila, where he baptized the daughter of a Samoan judge on 21 July.

On 29 July Brother Dean delivered his first sermon in the Samoan language. Evidently he had progressed very rapidly in the language, for when the first group of American elders arrived in October, they reported that he was speaking quite fluently. The encouraging thing was that Dean was having success during the first month of his mission. Considering the kinds of problems that existed in Samoa at that time, this success was encouraging.

RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN SAMOA
PRIOR TO THE OPENING OF THE LDS MISSION

Before the arrival of Christian missionaries in Samoa, the people worshipped a pantheon of deities. The names of these gods were not the same as those in Hawaii, but there are clear evidences of common origins. Unlike Hawaii, where traders and whalers flocked in large numbers soon after its discovery, Samoa remained quiet and relatively undisturbed by the modern world until much later. Even

13Manuscript History of the Samoan Mission, 24 June 1888, Church Archives (hereafter cited as MHSM).
as late as 1874 there were fewer than three hundred European and American residents in all of Samoa.

Christianity was introduced into Samoa after it was in Hawaii, Tahiti, and Tonga. Christian converts from Tonga, 500 miles south of the Samoan group, were the first emissaries of Christianity to enter Samoa, in 1828. Two years later one of the greatest missionaries of the London Missionary Society (LMS), John Williams, visited Tonga and then, in company with a Samoan chief who had been converted to Christ while in Tonga, he moved on to Samoa. While there he converted a large number of people at Sapapali‘i, Savai‘i. Williams’ message was so willingly accepted that he promised representatives of various villages he would soon return with teachers to train them in the doctrines of the new religion. When he returned two years later, he was surprised to learn that the news of Christianity had spread over most of the main islands of the group. Once again he left his new converts and went to England to recruit more missionaries to care for the new flock. Although Williams did not return until 1838, and then for but a brief time, his efforts in England bore fruit, for by 1836 a new contingent of LMS missionaries had arrived in Samoa. To their surprise they found a thriving body (13,000) of Methodists who had been converted by Tongan missionaries. This development caused an open feud between the LMS group and the Methodists, but it was resolved in favor of the LMS in 1839. Thereafter the LMS had almost complete control over the religious lives of the Samoan people. Some small minorities of Methodists, Seventh-Day Adventists, and a larger group of Catholics grew over the years. The Roman Catholic mission was founded in Samoa in 1845.14

Just as the Latter-day Saints owe a debt of gratitude to the Protestant missionaries in Hawaii, so do they in Samoa. By the 1840s most Samoans considered themselves Christian. Although some of the changes these early missionaries demanded of their converts had little to do with Christianity (they sometimes equated the cultural preferences of the Western world with Christianity and required their converts to conform to these preferences), most of the work of the early LMS missionaries must be listed on the positive side of the ledger. They founded schools and even started a

seminary in 1844 to train Samoan ministers. By 1842 the Book of John was translated into Samoan, and in successive stages the remainder of the Bible was published in Samoan by 1860. It should be noted that this progress was made under difficult circumstances and at the cost of much sacrifice on the part of the missionaries.

When Elder Dean and his companions began teaching Mormonism in Samoa, they did so as intruders into a stable religious situation. It is not surprising that the LDS and the LMS did not get along well together.

The political situation was much more complex than the religious when the Latter-day Saints arrived. In June 1888 Samoa was on the verge of a civil or tribal war. During the next several years LDS missionaries witnessed several battles and sometimes were caught between the warring factions who were attempting to control the country. The Samoan political situation was complicated by the involvement not only of several tribal factions who were seeking the kingship, but also by the presence of three foreign powers: Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. The degree of their involvement in Samoa varied, but all three nations were tenaciously defending their own interests and interfering in Samoan internal affairs as three men contended for the kingship.15

DEVELOPMENT DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF REOPENING

The difficult political and religious situation notwithstanding, Joseph H. Dean moved ahead with his missionary work. On 30 October 1888, four months after his arrival in Samoa, he wrote to President Wilford Woodruff, explaining in part why he had not expanded the work beyond Aunuu. First, he did not feel that he should leave the forty or so souls who had joined the Church there since he arrived. He wrote: "My policy has always been to labor as hard to keep a member as to get a new one, and not to spread my wings over more eggs than I can keep warm." Second, he mentioned that he had not quite mastered the Samoan language in the four months he had been there. Then, almost incidentally, he mentioned that he had been working with the members on a new meetinghouse.

The modesty of his letter concealed his real accomplishments. In addition to taking care of his wife and new son, he had organized a branch, baptized at least thirty-five people (who had an additional twelve unbaptized children), organized a Sunday School and a Relief

ociety, looked after the arrival and subsequent work of Elder Kapule, who arrived on 13 August, and cared for and oriented Elder William O. Lee, his wife Louisa and their baby Louie, Elder Adelbert Beesley, and Elder Edward James Wood after they arrived in 10 October.

In addition to these activities, Elder Dean and his new flock were faced with a serious challenge. Whether true or not, a rumor was circulated to the effect that the reigning king, Tamasese, following the advice of his German adviser, Mr. Brandeis, had declared it illegal to join the Mamon (Mormon) Church. He allegedly threatened to arrest all who were baptized into the new church—President Dean along with the rest. After this scare, which first came in late August 1888, only one person, a young boy, had applied for baptism. Although the missionaries were not able to confirm the rumor, they later were assured by the American consul that they and their congregations would be protected; nevertheless, a civil war on Upolu Island was having a negative effect upon the work.16

The arrival of new missionaries made it possible to expand the work. Dean had concluded even before the end of October that Aunu was not suitable for a mission headquarters. In fact he was anxious to move to Tutuila as soon as housing could be arranged. But even Tutuila was not central enough and before another year had passed, headquarters were moved to Fagalii, near Apia, the most important city in Samoa.

But the elders took matters one step at a time. When the new group arrived in early October they set about immediately to complete the meetinghouse mentioned above. It was eighteen by thirty-six feet and "very comfortable and commodious." The roof was of sugarcane leaf thatch, the lumber and posts were of breadfruit and coconut, and the floor was covered with clean white coral pebbles. Elder Wood said it was of half American and half Samoan design.17

The elders also devoted as much time as possible to the study of the Samoan language. The method employed was slow. They tried to learn some phrases, but most of the time they listened to the native speakers, jotted down the words they heard, looked them up in a dictionary, and then tried to use them.

The first conference of the Samoan Mission was held on 28 October 1888. In addition to the organizational advancements al-

16Journal History of the Church, 30 October 1888, Church Archives.
17Edward J. Wood, "My Samoan Experience," The Juvenile Instructor 28 (15 May 1895):348. This is a portion of an eleven-part series which gives a great deal of information on a variety of subjects.
ready mentioned, President Dean dedicated the newly completed chapel, gave the new elders their assignments, called one Samoan brother to fill a six-month mission (a practice Dean had learned in Hawaii), and announced plans to make a walking missionary tour of the island of Tutuila as soon as possible.

Four days later President Dean took Elders Beesley and Wood with him to Tutuila. On 2 November, they began a twenty-three day teaching marathon that ultimately led them before 1,851 people in thirty-nine villages and required eighty-eight miles of walking. When they were through, they had baptized only three people, but the elders were sure that once the government problem was resolved, many more people would come into the Church.18

Actually the Tutuila tour was immensely valuable. By living with the Samoan people around the clock, the elders quickly became educated in the native ways. One of the first lessons they learned was the necessity of following local social customs when gospel standards would allow it.

They also learned that the best way to begin a gospel discussion was with the highest ranking chief or chiefs (matai) of a village. The Samoan social system is patriarchal. The village elders make the rules of the community; young people listen and obey. Therefore, it was best to contact the chiefs first.

The missionaries also learned to respect the intelligence of the Samoans, especially their knowledge of the Bible. The LMS had done a good work among the Samoan people, most of whom had learned to read using the Bible as their text. The LMS had also taught the people to pray and to hold a form of family home evening.

Every evening the chiefs came to have prayer with Dean, Beesley, and Wood. After prayer they had supper. Wood described it this way:

On looking around the little village it was a beautiful scene. We could see in every hut the family gathered around the fireplace, singing or reading or praying, seemingly unconscious of all surroundings. This grand custom is followed in almost every household in the islands.19

Seeing the Samoan people pray and study the scriptures helped the elders realize that even though the people lived in huts and used ovens that were but heated rocks in the ground, they were very

18MHS, 1-23 November 1888, Church Archives.
spiritual and much loved of God. Love was extended to the missionaries many times as they tramped around the island. Wood noted that their own "testimonies were many times strengthened by having our food provided for us, having boats placed at our disposal, also having the privilege of holding so many meetings and in nearly every instance of having good places to sleep."20

In early December 1888, the missionaries bought a small (twenty-two foot) sailboat. It was well-made and had two sails, but it was very small for sailing in open water. They christened it the Faaaliga, "Revelation," and began sailing from place to place on Aunuu and Tutuila.

Soon after the end of the Tutuila tour, Elders Wood and Kapule were assigned to teach there on a permanent basis. They worked from the village of Alao, which already had some Mormon families. In early January, President Dean and his family moved there with them, and two weeks later moved on to Vatia, a "nice village" directly over the mountain north from Pago Pago.

The leaders lamented that rents were high, and they were saddened when rumors of war reached their village only a few days after they had moved there. The natives, including some of the members of the Church, then came to them and asked them to live in their homes. The reason for the new generosity soon surfaced: missionaries and their properties were exempt from the ravages of tribal war. On 7 February, Vatia was attacked by thirty followers of Mata'afa, one of the contenders for the kingship. As was customary in such circumstances, the warriors burned fales, destroyed other property, and killed livestock. It did not seem to be their intention to kill people on this occasion. By mistake some of the mission animals were killed and some personal property was destroyed, but the missionaries were not harmed.

After much hard work the elders built a twenty by forty foot mission house. It was constructed of coconut wood and was made with only tow axes and two native adzes. In early March, even before the house was finished, the Lees moved to Vatia from Aunuu.

On 12 and 13 March 1889, Dean, Beesley, and Wood embarked on a trip which was later described as the "most exciting and important boat voyage of our entire mission."21 This voyage, which took the brethren to Apia, Upolu, covered forty miles of open water

20Ibid., p. 491.
21Ibid., p. 539.
between the two islands and approximately twenty-five miles along
the coast of Upolu. Their little twenty-two foot craft was hardly
able to withstand the open seas, but made it close to Upolu, only to
be overturned near shore. Natives righted the craft, and finally, the
elders reached Apia.

They had lost all of their food when the boat overturned but
were fortunate to have several kind men come to their aid. This trip
to Apia was motivated by two desires. First, they hoped to establish
the Church on Upolu. A Samoan convert during the days of Manoa,
named Ifopo, had encouraged the elders to come to his home on
Upolu. Ifopo later proved to be a faithful convert to the Church and
helped establish the Church in his area. The other purpose of the
trip was to visit the American consul in Apia and establish relations
with his office. This was prompted by the Samoan civil war and
its possible implications for the Church.

President Dean and his companions visited the American consul,
Mr. Blacklock, and asked him if he had heard anything concerning
the rumor that Latter-day Saints would be put in prison. He said he
had heard nothing of the kind and assured them that he would
guarantee their safety and the safety of their converts.23

It was while the elders were at Apia that a great hurricane struck,
placing them in dangerous circumstances. A man named Moore
housed them in the loft of an old barn and slaughterhouse near the
harbor. When the storm came, they had to remain in these quarters
until it ended. The barn was so full of holes that they could hardly
keep a candle lit even before the storm, but perhaps the flimsy con-
struction helped the building to remain standing through the entire
storm. Elder Wood later wrote that he stood at the window most
of the day and night watching the ships in the harbor meet de-
struction. There was nothing anyone could do. But when the storm
ended, “the beach was swept clear of its row of buildings, only one
small building still stood, buried in sand to the roof, which alone
had saved it from total destruction.” Inside were Elders Dean,
Beesley, and Wood.24

After completing their business in Apia they sailed toward the
east end of Upolu. At Salea'aumua they located Ifopo, who wel-
comed them warmly, provided a feast, and ultimately applied for
rebaptism. He had been baptized twenty-five years before, but it

23MHSM, 12-19 March 1889, Church Archives.
24Ibid.
24Cardston News (Alberta, Canada), 27 October 1936; Wood, "My Samoan
was considered best to do it again. With the performance of this ordinance the elders felt that the door to this large and beautiful island had been opened. They sailed that day for Tutuila.

The first annual conference of the Samoan Mission was held in Aunuu on 7 April. All the missionaries were present except Sisters Dean and Lee, and a fair number of Samoan Saints were there as well. The pattern for this conference followed the established procedure for such meetings elsewhere in the Church. The leaders of the Church were sustained, talks were given, and business was transacted.

On 16 June 1889, four new missionaries arrived: Elders Hyrum E. Boothe, Brigham Smoot, Jesse J. Bennett, and Brigham Soloman. When they arrived at Vatia, they found that the missionaries and the Samoan people were suffering from a famine caused by the hurricane. Then, two days later, Elder Smoot, who could not swim, stepped off the reef and drowned, but was miraculously restored to life through the administration of his fellow missionaries.²⁵

June 1889 marked the end of the first year of the Samoan Mission. A meeting was held 18 June 1889, in which assignments were made to all the missionaries. Elders Lee and Bennett were appointed to labor on Tutuila and Aunuu, Beesley and Boothe were sent to Manua, and President Dean and Elders Wood, Smoot, and Soloman were given the task of opening proselyting work on Upolu. So ended the first year of the Samoan Mission. The Church was well-founded. Only time and work were needed to see the effort succeed.

It is noteworthy that by this time the missionaries had experienced almost every problem Samoa could offer them. They had endured war, famine, a hurricane, and other tropical storms. They had suffered sickness, apostasy, days in open boats, and storms at sea. Rumors had been circulated against them and Protestant ministers had used newspapers and their pulpits to republish all the old lies about Joseph Smith and the Latter-day Saints. (Although Elder Lee mentioned that the Roman Catholics were to be commended because they did not persecute the Mormons.) Their housing was inferior to their home in Zion, and living conditions resembled a perpetual camping trip. Nevertheless, through all this the elders were in excellent spirits and eager to spread the gospel throughout the islands.

The Mormon Heritage of Vardis Fisher

Leonard J. Arrington and Jon Haupt

Tradition says that Vardis Fisher completely rejected his Mormon background, and that, in turn, he was rejected by the Mormon community. Cassie Hyde Hock, who did the first comprehensive study of fictional works in which Mormons were principal characters, indicates that Fisher was "excommunicated for his frankness in portraying Mormon life as he knew it." With the exception of Joseph Flora, other biographers have dwelt on his early rebellion against a rigid Puritan upbringing and his frequent derisive comments on Joseph Smith and Mormon bishops. Even Flora states that Fisher left the Church at age eighteen and that Mormon authorities "officially repudiated" Children of God.2

Certainly there is enough substance in this view to account for its pervasiveness. Fisher indeed had nothing good to say about Mormon bishops, whom he portrayed as opportunists who used their office to swindle a neighbor or to get an arm around the neighbor's wife. If he were to rewrite Children of God, Fisher is reported to have said, he would "show Joseph Smith as a scheming fraud and nothing else."3 Fisher, as Flora suggests, "loved to outrage"; he

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3Flora, "Vardis Fisher and the Mormons," p. 50.
delighted in making it difficult for his fellow Latter-day Saints to use him as an apologist, and he succeeded, with considerable help from Mormon readers and non-Mormon biographers, in obscuring his relationship to the religion he had voluntarily espoused.

But an undertone to all Fisher’s outrages bespeaks an attachment which few have acknowledged or recognized. It colors his words as vividly as fear colors those scribbled on a University of Utah copy of Bernard DeVoto’s appreciative review of *Children of God*: “Lies—lies—ask one who knows—not a heretic.” That Fisher permitted his oldest child to become a Latter-day Saint and that his second son is active in a ward in Northern California suggests the basic devotion to Mormonism of an indulgent father.

The actuality is that Fisher never rejected his Mormon background entirely enough that it no longer mattered to him. It was a large enough part of his makeup that he never quite outgrew rebelling against it. His younger sister Irene, a loyal Latter-day Saint, wrote, “Vardis always tormented me in one way or another and yet he loved me very much and I him.”4 There is a touch of pleasure and need in Vardis’ characterization of his sister as “pious enough for a whole tribe,”5 as though he were counting on her to arrange that his temple work be done for him after he died (which of course she did).6

In this paper, we should like to establish three points: (1) Fisher was not an apostate; he never renounced his religion nor did Mormonism renounce him. (2) Fisher’s outlook on life and history was religious, definitely Judeo-Christian and, as he saw it, broader than the Mormonism he was acquainted with, but definitely encompassing Latter-day Saint belief and practice. And (3) Fisher was a pioneer in applying modern psychology to the Mormon experience, both past and present, and in that sense he is very much a Mormon literary prophet. He foresaw conflicts his people would have, groped with them two generations before they did, and made some progress toward a resolution of them.7

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6Mead to Arrington, 15 June 1976. Irene stated in a letter to Leonard, 7 October 1976, that Vardis did not wish to be publicly considered an active Latter-day Saint because “he did not wish anything he did or said to reflect with discredit on the church or his parents.”
Fisher's Mormon heritage goes back to 1834, when his great-grandfather, Vardis John Fisher, who had moved from Vermont to New York in the 1820s, was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.\textsuperscript{8} He and his wife had eight children before she died in 1831. Vardis John then married Jane Chapman, by whom he had ten additional children. Not long after his baptism they moved to Ohio, then to southeastern Illinois. Their last child, born in Illinois in 1850, was named Oliver Cowdery Fisher, signifying their continuing loyalty to Mormonism, while the seventh, “our” Vardis’ grandfather, was named Joseph Cylvenus Martin Fisher (perhaps named for Joseph Smith). Vardis John finally took his family across the plains to Utah by oxcart in 1855. The mother died of cholera along the trail near Rock Springs, Wyoming, and Vardis John and family settled in North Ogden (then called Weber Valley); he died in Big Cottonwood, Salt Lake Valley, in 1866, at the age of eighty-four.

Joseph Cylvenus, who was twelve when his family crossed the plains, was baptized shortly after their arrival, and grew up in North Ogden. He was married at the age of twenty-six to Lucinda Amelia Cady, a native of Pennsylvania. Although both her parents had died in Pennsylvania, she had migrated, at the age of seven, with another family in 1859, in the company of Captain James Brown. Joseph and Amelia lived first at North Ogden, then in Eden, Ogden Valley, where they lived adjacent to the William Eccles family. They had moved, in succession, to Promontory, Five Mile (now Weston, Idaho), Willow Creek (southeast of present-day Idaho Falls), and finally, in 1879, to Poole Island or Annis, Idaho, about eighteen miles north of Idaho Falls. Church records indicate that Joseph Cylvenus eventually became a seventy and that he and Amelia were active in Rigby Stake, although they did not attend meetings regularly until an LDS branch was formed at Annis.

The eldest of the twelve children of Joseph Cylvenus and Amelia was named Joseph Oliver. Born in Eden, he had experienced the frequent moves of the family and had grown up as a culturally deprived worker. As the father of “our” Vardis, he figured prominently in the autobiographical sections of Vardis’ novels. This Joseph, usually called “Joe,” married Temperance Thornton, a girl whose parents were also pioneers in southeastern Idaho. Like Joe,

\textsuperscript{8}Richard Jensen has pieced together the story of the family from genealogical records of the Fisher and Thornton families, LDS Genealogical Library, Salt Lake City, and from records of wards in which the families lived, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City. Other sources are given specific citation.
she had Mormon roots going back to the 1830s. Temperance's father, Samuel Thornton, from western New York State, moved his family to Nauvoo, Illinois, and served a mission to Indiana in 1843. He and his wife received their endowments in the Nauvoo Temple in January 1846, but after the Latter-day Saints went west the Thorntons went to Beaver Island, Michigan, to join the Strangites. After Strang was murdered by one of his own disciples, they moved to Council Bluffs, and then to Utah and southern Idaho. Their son William Ezra was the founder of Thornton, Idaho, which is near Annis.

All this suggests that the Thorntons were only peripherally involved with Mormonism. Vardis' sister Irene writes, "Mother [i.e., Temperance] had only a moral training from her parents." She was baptized at the age of ten because her friends in Burton, Idaho (another nearby Mormon village), were being baptized and her father decided, "Let her go; it won't hurt her." Temperance's parents, wrote Irene, "affiliated themselves with no church, but were good people and part of their children grew up to be church members."9

So Vardis' father, an elder from a family with a tradition of being on the fringes, and his mother, a baptized member with little indoctrination or sense of group loyalty to Mormonism, settled a remote farm on the south fork of the Snake River where they raised their children on the fringes of Mormon culture. Joseph read the Doctrine and Covenants to Temperance "a lot," according to Irene, and there was a Bible in the home that Vardis read several times, and that seems to have been the extent of his Mormon training as a boy. When in later years someone asked Vardis' father why he waited so long to have his wife and family sealed to him, he said, "I wanted to see if I could live with her first."10

When Vardis was six (1901), his parents moved into the Big Hole Mountain region on the south fork of the Snake, some thirty miles north and east of Idaho Falls. Across the river from the entrance to Burns Canyon and just west of the entrance to Black Canyon they homesteaded a ranch. They were almost alone in the remote mountain wilderness—the nearest neighbor was across the river some eight miles away. The Fishers always referred to this area as the Antelope District or Antelope Bench, and it became the setting for many of Vardis' novels. It was a world of sagebrush, wind,

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9Mead to Arrington, 15 June 1976.
10Ibid.
coyotes, wolves, mountain lions—and loneliness. The Fishers lived in a log house with a dirt-covered roof and a dirt floor on river bottom land; their food came from birds, wild animals, fish, fruits, dairy products, and what their garden and dry farm would produce; their bedcovers were animal skins. Vardis said that he did not leave the area for five years after they moved there; his mother provided his schooling. Both parents were extremely hard workers; in later years Vardis liked both hard physical and mental labor.

When Vardis was about eleven, his parents sent him to live with his grandmother in Annis, where he attended the Mormon ward school. It was there that he met his future wife. After one year the people in the Antelope region established a ward school at Poplar, some fifteen miles downstream from the Fisher ranch, where Vardis, his brother Vivian, his sister Irene, and about sixty other pupils attended. Here, too, at the age of thirteen, Vardis read “Ode to the Nightingale” by John Keats, and, as he expressed it, became “drunk with the sensuous color and rhythm . . . with the magic of strange lands and seas.” The poem was so beautiful that he was moved to tears. Vardis resolved to become a poet. Encouraged by his mother, he read every book of poetry he could lay his hands upon in the school and homes of the area; he scribbled verse by the yard. He says he particularly enjoyed Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s “The Psalm of Life,” William Cullen Bryant’s “To a Waterfowl,” Oliver Wendell Holmes’ “The Chambered Nautilus,” William Ernest Henley’s “Invictus,” and poems by Thomas Gray and Edgar Allen Poe.

Along with poetry Vardis also read the Bible—“at least two or three times”—before he reached adolescence. “It frightened more than it edified me,” he admitted; “abashed more than it filled. . . . After reading in the book a day or two, I would suffer nightmares.” Still, it provided the foundation for his Testament of Man novels, and influenced him to identify the Mormons with the people in the Old Testament—with Israelites searching for the Promised Land.

At the age of sixteen, Vardis took his younger brother Vivian, then thirteen, to Rigby to attend high school. There the boys lived in a small concrete hut. They were later joined for a year by their sister Irene. Unaccustomed to being with people, Vardis wrote poetry and

a melodramatic novel like those he had read in his lonely home in the hills. His world was a world of books. He was intellectually curious, had many questions, and was haunted by a sense of sin and guilt. Vardis and Vivian (and later Irene) took this opportunity of going to church and usually offered prayer at their meals. During his last year at Rigby High, at age 20, he submitted himself for baptism. Vivian was baptized at the same time (4 April 1915) and his sister Irene a month and a half later. Probably on Vardis' urgings, Joe and Temperance then took their three children to Salt Lake City to the temple where the family was sealed. "The boys were ready and willing to be sealed," writes Irene. That this religious rejuvenation occurred when Vardis was twenty must have left a lasting impact. Soon afterward it was suggested that Vardis go on a proselyting mission. Vardis declined, whether from fears of being alone and inadequate (as suggested in the autobiographical tetralogy), or his family's inability to support him, or his and his family's intense desire that he secure a university education first.

At any rate Vardis entered the University of Utah in 1915, where, says Irene, not having a full knowledge of the gospel, he began to read the one-sided and hostile books available at the time and thus developed intellectual prejudices against Mormonism. As with many in his generation, he was not able, as we are able today, to balance his reading with pro-Church works written with just such intellectually curious readers in mind. Fisher supported himself with part-time jobs, played for the university's football team, and became a "book drunkard," as one of his professors called him. After two years he married his childhood sweetheart from the Antelope area, Leona McMurtrey. He served in World War I, but the war ended before he was sent overseas.

With Leona and their son Grant, Vardis then returned to Salt Lake City to work on his B. A. degree, which he completed in 1920. Vardis was praised for plays he had written, and decided to make a career of writing and teaching. He read and wrote incessantly. He then went to the University of Chicago to do graduate work, did a master's thesis on Daniel Defoe, and shifted his interest from drama to the novel. In 1925 the University of Chicago granted him the doctorate, magna cum laude, for a dissertation on the literary reputation of George Meredith.

Vardis experienced the greatest agony and pain of his life in 1924 when his wife Leona committed suicide; his distress was all

\[\text{Mead to Arrington, 15 June 1976.}\]
the greater because he felt that Leona had done this partly because of his own shortcomings—his failure to make sense of his life. In trying to understand himself in the months and years that followed, he became preoccupied with uncovering men’s excuses and evasions. Vardis’ relentless self-inspection and distrust of easy answers gave him difficulty as a young teacher at the University of Utah, where he taught from 1925 to 1928. He resented what he thought were pressures of the Mormon Church, and he was regarded by many as something of an iconoclast. “In his demand for a pure gospel of truth,” as his biographer says, “he was as rigid a Puritan as his mother could ever have been.” Nevertheless, his son Grant was later baptized and reared to respect the Latter-day Saint way of life.

Vardis resigned from the University of Utah faculty, married Margaret Trusler, a philologist he had known at the University of Chicago, and they went to New York University where he became friendly with Thomas Wolfe. But Vardis did not feel at home in New York, and returned to his wild and beautiful Idaho outpost three years later, in 1931. He built his parents a modern house and farm buildings, and he wrote there from 1931 to 1935.

By the time Vardis returned from New York to Idaho he had written Sonnets to an Imaginary Madonna (1927), a book of poetry; Toilers of the Hills (1928), a novel about life in Antelope Hills; and Dark Bridwell (1931), a brooding examination of the people he had grown up with. Toilers of the Hills initiates a theme which is basic in all his early novels, for each of them represents an attempt to understand his own experiences and the Mormon experience through the study of religion and the human personality. The basic affirmation of this novel, as with those which immediately follow it, is the dignity of the individual—before God and before mankind. The hero of Toilers is Dock Hunter (supposedly Alma Lehi Fisher, brother of Joe Fisher, seventh son of Joseph C. Fisher and therefore “Doc”), who wrings the first bushel of dry-farmed wheat off the parched soil of the Antelope Bench. It is the story of life’s spiritual conflicts intensified by the physical conflicts of survival on the frontier. More than that, it is the story, seen through a wife’s wonderings, of an individual pitted against the ruthlessly indifferent forces of nature.

For most of the book we suspect, with Opal, that Dock is crazy to farm this stupid hill. Dock, with the rest of the characters, is


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drawn as "crude and earthy as the land which they worked,"14 In a later book Fisher has his protagonist, Vridar Hunter, promise: "If I ever write novels about country people I'll tell the truth. I won't simper and bellyache over them like a Dickens or a Hardy."15 And tell the truth Fisher does. Opal has a husband whose hands are gentle only when touching a horse; who's full of empty promises about building her a house with a roof of shingles, not sod; and whom we see throughout the novel as Opal sees him the afternoon of her first look at their new home:

When he came toward her, smiling, brushing his clothes, Opal stared at his teeth. He had two very large teeth on top with a space between, and on either side, not close by, was a small sharp-pointed tooth. Never before had she observed his teeth with such acuteness. She imagined that his ears stuck out farther from his head to-day, that there was more bow in his legs; and when he came near, she saw a drop of water hanging from the point of his nose.16

This is before he kisses her with tobacco-stained lips and tobacco juice on his mustache and chin, and long before she learns that he will not be taking a bath for another decade.

Eventually Opal adjusts to his tobacco-quid kisses, though she never quite adjusts to his dirtiness, and her questioning is more significant.

Sometimes when Dock was out on the hills, she would sit where she could watch him and she would wonder at what she saw. For she would see, with an acuteness unfamiliar to her, a thing small and alone moving out there, a tiny thing on a great gray breast and under a wide solitude that knew no sound but the sound of hawks and mighty winds and the sweep of mighty storms. Above him was the great wakeful loneliness of the sky, limitless and gray, and under him were the rolling dry hills with their mask of death or of gray life that was like death, and around him were mountains that walled him in. . . . And it seemed absurd and pathetic that a man should set his puny might against the boundless power of this earth and this sky.17

In a crude and only partly satisfying manner, Opal's question is answered when Dock, through all his superstitions, stumbles upon dry-farming techniques. Suddenly their world changes. The hills and sky and winds are no longer malevolent; Dock has tamed

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14Book Review Digest, 1928, p. 252.
16Fisher, Toilers of the Hills (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1928), p. 8. We are grateful for the insights of Rebecca Cornwall, Salt Lake City novelist.
17Fisher, Toilers of the Hills, p. 129.
them, and they bring comfort and culture to Opal. "It was not her way to be happy in a world frozen like stone to its heart," but when the world thaws her despair also melts.28

Mormonism is never mentioned in Toilers specifically, but there is much talk of religion. Dock, Opal, and even Lem, a slippery neighbor, seek answers; they need answers more than most people, for life is harder for them. Frontier religion gave them answers—helped them categorize, organize, put this experience into some kind of understandable order. Fisher does not dismiss these people and their religion as unsophisticated products of the frontier. This is life. The very fact that he chose to write about these people is an initial affirmation that they are significant enough that he need not simper and bellyache over them, but can portray them exactly as they were and still be certain of their worth.

Dark Bridwell, the second novel, is a remarkable book. In the two years after Toilers, Fisher learned a great deal about human character, perhaps partly under the tutelage of his psychologist brother, Vivian, who was writing and practicing in New York during the three years Vardis lived in New York writing Bridwell.29 Here he is still playing with evil, but now the causes of good and evil are not so much in nature as in human nature. Happily, psychological causes are suggested, never stated, and the people in Bridwell are real, with real effects and a residue of unexplained mystery.

Bridwell is a tragedy. Charley "Dark" Bridwell takes his dark-haired wife away from the frenetic, neurotic strivings of civilization to a land where they can live on meat and wild fruit. He weaves a net of deception about the outside world so that she will never leave him. And for years it works; they live contentedly and with little effort off the fat of the land—and when the fat thins he steals from his neighbors, openly and honestly, and they let him because he brings some joy and light into their blighted lives.

But gradually things go wrong. He finds he cannot raise his sons and daughters in isolation. For one thing, he cannot maintain total isolation; inevitably intruders deceive and undo them. But most

28Ibid., p. 207.
29Though he lacked the M. D. degree, Vivian was a psychiatrist of some note. Among other works, he published Auto-Correctivism: The Psychology of Nervousness (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1937); An Introduction to Abnormal Psychology (New York: Macmillan, 1929, 1933); and The Meaning and Practice of Psychotherapy (New York: Macmillan, 1950). Irene said Vardis and Vivian "had many hot arguments" about Mormonism, Joseph Smith, and Brigham Young, and Vardis was a defender of Mormonism and its two first prophets. Mead to Arrington, 7 October 1976.
telling, the seeds of destruction are here, in themselves. There is the spontaneous restlessness of the oldest son Jed, which combined with his mother’s hidden ambition and his father’s innocent, animal-like brutality, turns him into a truly evil character. Jed becomes almost like the rattlesnakes he traps, finally coming between his mother and father.20

Again Mormonism is never mentioned, but the question that remains dark after the book is closed is who had the most light—Lela and the civilized society she finally elects to join, or Charley and his worthless, stagnant, unambitious, joyous ways? The irony comes from our own experience—for we know Lela is soon going to learn that Charley had no monopoly on evil, that the respectable world can be as disappointing and brutal as anything she has seen—and perhaps not quite so happy. Lela has made the only possible choice—but she has also lost something—irrevocably.

This is tragedy, of course, but what makes the book remarkable is that it is also religious parable. It is the story of Adam and Eve. Fisher is saying something about the work ethic, but also something about salvation by grace versus salvation by effort. Charley grasped a truth and lived it to the hilt, representing something his neighbors needed to be reassured of, while clinging to their own ambitious ways. Crude and ugly and dirty as he was, Charley Bridwell had his virtues, and while they did not mesh with man’s need for order and progress, they could not be entirely denied. Charley said, “Man is that he might have joy.” Life was not meant to be all tedium and duty and guilt. Fisher’s description of his alter ego’s father, “Joe Hunter,” speaks eloquently of the resolute Mormon farmers of the Upper Snake River Valley: 21

Time built a pioneer and set him down
Upon the grayest waste of Idaho.
He clubbed the desert and he made it grow
In broad and undulating fields of brown.

He laid his might upon it, stripped its frown
Of drought and thistles; till by sweat and glow
He left the aged and barren hills aglow
With color—and its flame was his renown.

Few loved him, many feared, and some would smirk
Derisively, and call his mind untaught;

20This part, of course, is not true of the Fisher family. Vardis’ parents left the wilderness together sometime after their children were raised.
Of foul speech, and unclean from head to feet,
Who poured his great dream into golden wheat;
Until his gnarled and calloused hands had wrought
A deep and quiet holiness of work.

Dark Bridwell was written in New York, where Fisher was under the influence of Thomas Wolfe and Vardis’ brother Vivian, by now a successful New York psychologist. Upon returning to his father’s ranch in 1931, a more confident professional, he wrote and published In Tragic Life, Passions Spin the Plot, We Are Betrayed, and No Villain Need Be, which are collectively referred to as the tetralogy. They are introspective and autobiographical in nature. Their hero, Vridar Hunter, is a thinly disguised Vardis Fisher, and his writing exhibits the rebellious stage through which he was passing. The ideals which he had absorbed in his adolescence seemed now to be impossible in the face of the reality he was recognizing.

One critic, M. C. Dawson of Books, called the first volume of the tetralogy, In Tragic Life, “almost unendurable.” But if it was “abnormal, repellant, [and] unbalanced,” it was also, he admitted, “honest, sensitive, heroic and vast. Those who feel the second list of qualities sufficient to outweigh the first, will certainly find that reading it is an experience not to be missed.”22 And it is hard to judge whether Fisher could have made the tetralogy more endurable; a reader has accomplished much just to get through them, let alone to go back and criticize them page by page, chapter by chapter.

Only an immensely self-centered person could have written these books, and he must have been very sure somewhere within himself that his center was worth examining and that it would strike notes in other souls. The tetralogy emerges as a personal epic, an intense journey toward sanity through complete honesty and suspension of unreflective belief. And the conclusions that Vridar Hunter finally comes to about complete honesty are of interest to Latter-day Saints. One assumes that much of the tetralogy is autobiographical; unquestionably it captures the tone of Fisher’s childhood, and it is a history of two maladjusted family lines coming together. Negativism, pessimism, love always couched in criticism and harshness, tension and denial of emotions and passions—this was the sensitive boy’s early emotional food. Both sex and Mormonism were seasoned for him by this emotion-denying heritage, and the tetralogy is the

22Books, 22 January 1933, p. 2.
story of his attempts to extricate himself from this background. He seems to have succeeded with sex, with solid help from his brother's psychotherapeutic theories, but his religion gave him more difficulty.

The first volume thus is a story of insanity in the making. Vridar's mother, the daughter of a "stern and haughty Puritan" and made in that image herself, rules husband and sons by guilt. In Vridar's impressionable young mind, religion and sexuality become inextricable; his mother teaches him that it is "a wicked and shameful thing to show his flesh," and that he must "be a little gentleman in all ways, cherishing women as the sweetest and holiest of all God's miracles." Material possession and the vision of death are also symbolically linked with religion: Vridar's saddle nag, the "only thing he owned," impales itself on the protruding spike of "what is called in this part of the world a Mormon gate."

This tyranny by suppression of emotional and sexual expression distorts every personality in the family; in the father (who is a party to it) the distortion comes out in an unpredictable and brutal temper, with sullen silence and ruthless hard work between the spurs. The sensitive young son comes to reject himself, primarily because he cannot refrain from normal boyhood "experiments" which he is told are filthy and evil. During this age—nine to thirteen—Vridar has his first catatonic trances or nightmares.

In his late teens, desperate for a way out of the guilt, Vridar begins attending church for the first time in his life. He is baptized but doubts that "all his sin has been washed away," and the religion he gets in a Mormon ward is unsatisfactory. It "exhorted the people to raise more sugar beets; or to have more babies; or to stop eating pepper or drinking tea; or to go as missionaries to heathen lands. Or it was a thundering denunciation of joy in life." "There was nothing here for him." In fact, there is no hope for Vridar anywhere in the religion of his youth; it would be impossible for him to rid it of all the ugliness on which he was reared; agnosticism is perhaps the only way out for him.

But Vridar never escapes Mormonism. At "Wasatch College" in Salt Lake City his efforts to remain virtuous continue to torture him. He is disillusioned by the college's "fawning obeisance to

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24Ibid., p. 66.
26Ibid., p. 446.
27Ibid.
28Ibid., p. 448.
wealth and politics”  
and Mormons and Mormon missionaries take on an increasingly unpleasant color. Something in Vridar yearns still for the ideals of his childhood; he returns to Idaho, marries his sweetheart (Neola, read Leona), and finds at last great meaning in his life. “His desire was to protect her and worship her. She was his god and his hours with her were his testaments and his prayer.”  
His first disillusionment with Neola is his discovery that, while he was torturing himself to remain pure, she had been tarnished—by a Mormon missionary!

In the third volume, *We Are Betrayed* (1935), Vridar is exposed to increasing amounts of truth: “Religion is like small pox,” a friend tells him. “If you get a good dose you wear scars. You had a good dose.”  
He is rapidly shedding the values of his mother in the disillusionment that swept the nation after World War I. Of his mother he says,

> I'm done with your generation and all that it stands for. . . .  
> Your ideals have driven us to ruin. . . .  
> Millions are dead now,  
> buried by these stinking ideals of yours; and yet you sit there in  
> your smug halfwitted Christian piety and tell me not to smoke, not to drink. . . .  
> I hate your way of life. I hate your little pompous religion and your little pompous gods. . . .”

Neola's conservative nature keeps her far behind her rapidly changing husband, although he tries continuously to impose his disillusionment on her: “You've got to read this book, Neola. It will knock all that silly Mormonism out of you.”  
He is still interested in religion, but in intellectual analysis of it.

Half-credulous and half-realistic, he is torn asunder by his obsessions and dominates Neola as surely as his mother dominated him. Finally he attempts to leave her and she commits suicide. The final volume, *No Villain Need Be* (1936), finds him blaming himself, then his childhood, finally no one, for what has happened to him. But now he is determined to face himself with utter honesty. After earning a Ph.D. in the Midwest, he returns to Wasatch College to teach and there becomes notorious for his terrible honesty, which extends to other men’s evasions and self-deceptions—particularly Mormonism. The college president eventually calls him in to ask "Have you been telling your classes that

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31 Fisher, *We Are Betrayed*, p. 34.
32 Ibid., p. 110.
33 Ibid., p. 155.
Mormonism is nothing but babies and sugar beets?'" 36 Vridar's sympathy goes out to the "daughters of Mormons," who must suffer an ideology of babies and beets and zion, of apostles and priesthoods, of prohibitions against coffee and pepper, whiskey and tobacco, tea and coca-cola"—which the daughters found "a little unimaginative and dull." 36

All his questioning and self-searching is well-intended; and he wants to free Mormons from their self-tyranny as he frees himself. But he realizes in the course that he has become, in his anti-tyranny, as stern and haughty a Puritan as his mother, and he begins to find a middle ground.

There's an honest and decent person in everyone under the pretense and sham. Strip the obscene mask away and there he is: a bewildered child in a dark and bewildered world. All of us. 36

He leaves Wasatch to teach in New York, telling his fiancee:

"Well . . . I'm on my way out."
"Haven't you known that? And why in the world, Vridar, did you ever come back to this Mormon college?"
"Oh, I thought I could be a liberalizing force."
"And you've made it more hopeless."
"Yes, it seems that way." 37

Eventually he can say, "I have cleaned out of me my shameful guiltiness about sex: what my terrible early years did to me in that respect I have undone." In the end of the final volume, he is drawn from self-analysis to the spiritual dilemma of the entire country:

Under the calm surface coast to coast, this country of his was a seething neurotic mass and out of its buried and distorted life sprang cults and charlatans and pious frauds . . .
How long . . . must we be governed by these repressed cowards who try to legislate us into heaven? . . . Now we have a negative attitude toward love and joy. Now all our laws are don'ts, all our religion, and practically all our culture. What we need today is some great affirmations. 38

Recently a play by a talented young Mormon writer, Ronald Wilcox, was produced in Greenwich Village; its theme: the effects on a young man of his loss of virginity. Critics found it a compe-

37Ibid., p. 130.
38Ibid., p. 174.
39Ibid., p. 190.
tent play, the writer talented and promising, but the theme, they said, simply had no meaning to this generation. Their judgment needs examining, but if it is true, and the Mormon's experience is now out of the mainstream of American experience, then Fisher's tetralogy has also become a peculiar work, of significance only to Mormons and the relatively small segment of society raised on fundamental religion. We suspect it is not true, that the virtue theme is still widely applicable, and that the young playwright's idea is not outdated, although surely naive to those who are able to avoid self-confrontation and guilt-feeling over this particular human experience.

The tetralogy was a purging saga for Fisher. As he was finishing it, still in the condition of the starving writer, he accepted a position as Idaho's director of the Federal Writers' Project and Historical Records Project of the Works Progress Administration. He served in this position for four years, living in Boise. True to the Mormon work ethic, his output was prodigious. In addition to administrative chores and bureaucratic obstacles, he published the Idaho Guide, Idaho Encyclopedia, Idaho Lore, and other smaller publications. Idaho's was the first guide to be published and is generally acknowledged to have contained more creditable material than was published by any other state except perhaps New York.39

During these years Fisher also wrote two more novels, both far from the violent, heavy mood of the tetralogy and both more mellow in uncovering hypocrisy and sham in small western (presumably Mormon) towns. Critics who had praised the tetralogy found April: A Fable of Love, one of Vardis' favorites, a weak treatment of themes which had already "elsewhere carved a deep channel."40 Critics who had not particularly liked the tetralogy found April a compact, artistic evidence that Fisher had "loosened up."41 No one much liked Forgive Us Our Virtues, a story of a small town populated entirely by neurotics. "About a dozen years ago," complained the Saturday Review, "Mr. Fisher discovered Sex, but he has not yet got over his naive astonishment at his own discovery."42

Having studied over a period of many years secular history, the history of the Mormons, and the psychology of personality, Fisher,

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40 M. C. Dawson, Books, 14 February 1937, p. 10.
41 Mark Van Doren, "A Twelve-Cylinder Idyl," Nation, 144 (20 February 1937) 216.
during this same period, also tackled what many came to regard as his greatest work, an historical and interpretive novel about the Latter-day Saints. Published in 1939 as *Children of God: An American Epic*, this novel won the $10,000 Harper’s Prize for the best novel of the year and quickly became a best-seller. The first two sections, “Morning,” and “Noon,” were adapted for publication in the Book Section of the *Reader’s Digest*, and were read by possibly hundreds of thousands of persons. It attempted to capture “the Mormon story” in a manner that would help non-Mormon readers to understand the intensity of faith and devotion which accounted for Mormonism’s strength. And whether Fisher intended it or not, the book did produce a number of conversions.

Of course, we cannot lodge all the blame for the historical inaccuracies of *Children of God* against Fisher, for unquestionably he wanted to write an historically accurate novel and for that purpose he read everything that had been written about the Mormons and their history both by faithful Mormons and by apostates and unfriendly writers. The trouble is that impartial and scholarly historians had not by that time seriously examined Mormon history. Considering the inadequacies of Mormon historiography before 1939, Fisher did remarkably well in getting inside the minds, souls, habits, strengths, and fears of his people. It is clear that he had immense admiration for Brigham Young and his followers; his art enabled him to reveal the essential nobility of Mormonism without hiding the weaknesses of some of its adherents. The reader of *Children of God* cannot fail to be impressed with the patience and

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43See *Reader’s Digest*, April 1940, pp. 137-93 and May 1940, pp. 141-88.
44We begin with Grace Arrington. The reading of the *Reader’s Digest* condensation drew this North Carolina businesswoman’s attention to the Mormon culture and religion and led her to seek out a Mormon to tell her more. That Mormon happened to be Leonard Arrington, and their meeting eventually led to their marriage and to Grace’s conversion. So one of us has a special reason to be grateful for *Children of God* even though, as a historian, he knows that Fisher’s portrait of Joseph Smith is inaccurate and that many other scenes and interpretations lack historicity. (See David Brion Davis, “Children of God: An Historian’s Evaluation,” *The Western Humanities Review* 8 [Winter 1953-54]:49-56; Ronald W. Taber, “Vardis Fisher: New Directions for the Historical Novel,” *Western American Literature* 1 [Winter 1967]:285-96.) To give a second example, our colleague in the Historical Department of the Church, Richard L. Jensen, served a church mission in Denmark, where he had occasion to work for a week with a native Danish missionary who indicated that in his early youth in the 1950s he had read *Children of God* and, as a result, had gained an interest in Mormonism which led to his conversion. So one cannot always predict the reaction of readers to this kind of book. Shortly after the book appeared, Fisher told reporters of the *New York Times* that at least twelve persons had written to him that they had been converted to Mormonism by reading the book. (*New York Times*, 21 April 1940)
45Fisher told the *Times*, “From a scholarly standpoint the book is historically correct, even though it may destroy the ideologies of some.” Ibid.
magnanimity with which Latter-day Saints bore their savage persecutions.40

Sensing the greatness of Children of God, Darryl Zanuck, managing director of Twentieth Century-Fox Films, considering it the best story ever written on the rise of Mormonism, employed Louis Bromfield to write a screenplay version. They produced "Brigham Young," a film which is still playing after twenty-five years.

One critic wrote:

Let those who have sampled previous novels by Vardis Fisher and have bogged down or shied away from them not be deterred from reading this book. Hitherto Fisher's fame has been limited to a handful of admirers headed by Van Wyck Brooks, who have regarded him as perhaps the greatest of all American novelists, a more profound delver than Proust into the abysses of the subconscious, an introverted writer with a sensitivity so abnormal as to be the exquisite refinement of genius. But to the average person, reading a Fisher novel is something like having the horrors in a fever delirium.

[Here] there is nothing like that. . . . In a novel that gave him every chance to deal with complexes and neuroses, he has told his story so objectively that you would imagine he had never heard of Freud or the theory of the connection between religion and sex. Although definitely pro-Mormon he has told a grand story in a grand manner.47

Even Bernard DeVoto, who had previously concluded that a good novel could never be based on the "tremendous reality" of the Mormon story, changed his mind when he met Children. He found it objective, factual, undecorated, and "thoroughly alive."48

Fisher himself did not like the book, or professed not to. "I have written many [novels] that have more right to the interest of enlightened minds."49 "Novelists have been notoriously poor judges of their own works," warns Flora.50 But in this case perhaps the novelist is right. Whatever its acceptance, whatever was said by the critics, however satisfying it may be as history and adventure, this is not a satisfying novel. Neither the portraits of Joseph Smith nor Brigham Young are drawn with conviction, although compared with previous fictional and historical portraits they shine with ob-

40Millennial Star, 1 February 1940, p. 79.
44Flora, "Vardis Fisher and the Mormons," p. 50.
jectivity. Occasional minor characters come to life, but for the most part this book remains an epic—the events are what carry it, and they carry it nobly, but anemically.

But *Children* is a fine indicator of Fisher’s attitudes toward Mormonism. Most critics found him definitely pro-Mormon, although he said he had many letters from “the righteous” condemning him for being anti-Mormon. Although his treatment is mainly sympathetic to their heritage, his Mormon readers did not like his “natural” explanation for polygamy, nor his suggestion of “certain neurotic impulses” in Joseph Smith to explain it. Fisher, who had visions and dreams and nightmares as a child and young man, identified ferociously with Joseph Smith during those formative years. And it seems to us that Fisher’s expressed lack of respect for Joseph Smith in *Children of God* is precisely a product of this identification, for his portrait of the Prophet is a projection of his own unloved self. The attacks on Joseph must therefore be seen as Fisher castigating himself. The same fury is not directed against Brigham Young.

Catching a theme they themselves liked, Fisher identifies the Mormons with the ancient Hebrews; or, perhaps, it might be more accurate to say that one suspects the Mormons were to some extent a role model for the Hebrews of his later novels.

... the Hebrews were indeed, if not a unique at least a singular and peculiar people. Their spiritual leaders were solemnly and tirelessly preoccupied, not only with the relations of man to man which absorbed the interest of most peoples, but also with the relations of man to the universe. They were preoccupied with the thing called evil, when evil was not even a word in the vocabulary of some peoples. They were preoccupied with what they called righteousness, which, though sometimes suffocated in its elaborate apparatus of ritual, meant essentially good deeds. In defense of what they took to be the right way of life they had a capacity for suffering and self-immolation that has been quite without parallel.  

The Mormons represent other of Fisher’s values—the gospel of work, the Mountain Man strain of intense individuality, the social strain of cooperation in creating a freer, righteous society in which there are none starving and all have a chance to work. In Brigham Young the selfish and social motives are successfully integrated.

In short, *Children* portrays mostly the Mormon virtues; a people of moral earnestness seeking to serve God. Only Mormons are unable to see this, partly because in the naturalistic frame of the

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novel Fisher has Mormonism decline from visionary idealism at morning, to a vigorous pioneering at noon, to a declining freedom and abandonment of principles at evening.

Would the Mormons, like the Jews, become a wandering and outcast people; or would they mix with the gentiles and yield their principles and traditions one by one until their church was only another abomination in the sight of God? He did not know—or perhaps deep in his heart he knew too well.53

For the Mormon attempt, Fisher had profound respect.

We wish to emphasize that there was no actual parting of the ways between Vardis Fisher and the church he joined at the very outset of his career of writing. He was never excommunicated; the Church did not at any time officially or publicly criticize or repudiate Children of God, although it could also not be said that the Church made a cult of Fisher. In June 1939 the Deseret News ran a five-inch story on Fisher’s Harper Prize, apparently basing the story on a press release from Harper’s rather than on a reading of the book.54 There appeared no subsequent review of the book in Church newspapers and periodicals. Later, in January 1940, a long review of the book appeared in a paper of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, The Nauvoo Independent. The reviewer asserts that the book “ought to be dynamited.” “The noble generation of our fathers,” he writes, “is pictured with gutter ideals and grog shop habits.”55 And if any Latter-day Saints were to reread it today we might be inclined to agree. Nevertheless, there remains the testimony of many that suggests Children of God served in some instances as an effective influence in the spread of the gospel.

In the years that followed the appearance of Children of God Fisher was remarried, this time to Opal Laurel Holmes,56 he built a home in Hagerman Valley, Idaho, and published some twenty books, including an even dozen novels in what is called the Testament of Man series (1943-1960). The latter is a truly remarkable narrative of man’s developing moral consciousness, from the prehistoric past to the present. Fisher’s last novel, Mountain Man: A

53Fisher, Children of God, p. 739.
54“L. D. S. Theme of Prize Book,” Deseret News, 26 June 1939. We assume that galleys proofs of the book were sent to a Church official to read from the presence of a copy of these in the LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City.
55Warren L. Van Dine, in The Nauvoo Independent for 11 January 1940, copied into the Journal History of the Church under that date, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City.
56Fisher and Margaret Trusler were divorced in 1939.
Novel of Male and Female in the Early American West, published in 1965, was later filmed under the title Jeremiah Johnson and has been widely distributed. It is still a popular movie in many parts of the world. At the time of Fisher’s death in 1968, at age seventy-three, he was acknowledged as one of the greatest of our national writers.

Fisher's side comments remained, to the end, tart and crusty. In response to our query about his status with the Church, Fisher wrote to us in 1967, "I am, as the simple minds in the hierarchy in Salt Lake could tell you, a member in good standing, but shamefully behind the past fifty years in all assessments." Nonetheless, it is clear that as he grew older he came to a greater harmony with his background. He was able to look at Mormon values and appreciate them. We can be certain of this because the last volume in his Testament of Man series, Orphans in Gethsemane, is a restructuring and rewriting of the Tetralogy—with a mellower look back at his childhood and young manhood, analogous in some respects to the maturation of Plato. The change is not as pronounced as the difference between Plato's Republic of his young years and his Laws of the later years, but it is nonetheless noticeable and significant. Orphans at Gethsemane is an insightful, intelligent, powerful, and moving autobiographical novel of a person of Mormon upbringing, even if its author was only on the fringes of Latter-day Saint culture.57

Flora is quite correct in saying:

... Fisher’s Mormonism ran deep. It was not merely something that Fisher revolted against; it was also something that helped form his life style and code. Church members may sometimes find Fisher unpleasant reading, but the Mormon apostate is clearly on the Mormon side in Children of God. In a fundamental way, he was on their side throughout his life. Fisher’s whole approach to life was religious.58

And there is no doubt that Fisher’s religion was Judeo-Christian; seven of the twelve Testament of Man novels dealt with Hebrews and Christians. He had remembered and absorbed the deep mean-

57Vardis Fisher, Orphans in Gethsemane: A Novel of the Past in the Present (Denver: Alan Swallow, 1960). Fisher's credo, as expressed in the 'word to the reader' at the beginning of Orphans, is worth repeating: "I stand on this that if mankind is ever to build a civilization worthy of that devotion which it seems richly endowed to give, it will first have to accept in the full light of its mind and soul the historical facts of its past, and the mutilations and perversions which its hostility to those facts has made upon its spirit."
ings conveyed to him as he read that monumental heritage of Judeo-Christian civilization, the Bible. He was preoccupied with “the deep and abiding moral earnestness of the Hebrew people, or at least of their religious leaders.” Their moral earnestness, he wrote, was “without parallel and apparently without precedent;” it was one of the riddles of history.” The great gift of the Hebrews to the Western world, he wrote, lay in their intense stress on personality: “It is that intense stress on personality, on the dignity of the individual before God, on free will and moral choice, that has modified the fundamental difference in outlook [from Oriental peoples].”

If one reads Mormon for Hebrew in his essay on “My Bible Heritage,” written in 1963, one finds Fisher finally at peace with his Judeo-Christian-Mormon heritage. Struggling to overcome his earlier ignorances and misunderstandings, having probed the depth of his own psyche and that of his fellow Latter-day Saints, he was prepared to defend the way of life of a great people. Here are his words; surely they are not the words of a dyed-in-the-wool agnostic nor a man who could not celebrate his forebears:

We should, I think we must, accept the Bible humbly as the noblest effort of our ancient forebears to come to terms with the problem of evil and to overthrow it; and in the present, when the same old problem threatens to overturn our world, many of its pages and many of its beautiful parables still speak to us with a clear strong voice if we would only listen. For when we reject those parts no longer applicable we do not discredit those truths which, if not eternal, are still as eternal as any that man has uttered.


Sailing "The Old Ship Zion":
The Life of George D. Watt

Ronald G. Watt

In the history of nineteenth century Mormonism, the contrary spirit of apostasy several times claimed stalwart Latter-day Saints who were respected by their contemporaries and who were influential in Mormon life and thought. Despite many faithful years of service, these once-dedicated servants disappear from the annals of Mormon history, and posterity catalogs them with the obscure and insignificant. Such is the case with George D. Watt.

Once a prominent figure in Utah history, Watt was known widely as a clerk in Brigham Young’s office, as founding editor of the Journal of Discourses, as one of the developers of the Deseret Alphabet, and as a promoter of Utah’s silkworm culture. A long association with President Young provided George Watt with numerous opportunities to serve, and by his quiet efficiency the enthusiastic British convert assisted and even influenced the prophet. In 1874, however, Watt lost his membership in the Church and with it the associations which had brought him a measure of prominence. After his excommunication, old friends ignored him and his obscurity began. To later generations of Mormons George D. Watt is a little-known individual.¹

Rediscovering the character of this man who faithfully reported the discourses of Church leaders for almost twenty years can give us a better understanding of the early Church. He was a man full of paradoxes and complexities, yet one who could be simple in his outlook and in his adherence to a cause.

Watt seemed always to sense a need for love and approval by those closely associated with him. He mentioned this to Willard

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¹Once before a descendant has tried to redeem him. But Ida Watt Stringham and Dora Dutson Flack’s England’s First Mormon Convert: The Biography of George Darling Watt (n.p., [ca 1958]), fails to restore his reputation. Probably this is because the book neither captures Watt’s complicated character nor reveals an understanding of the man and his shortcomings. Andrew Jenson gathered material for a sketch on Watt in his Biographical Encyclopedia, but his notes were never printed.
Richards as early as 1852, and as late as 1878 to John Taylor. He was impulsive, as may be seen by the fact that he ran to the water's edge so as to be the first person baptized in Great Britain. He sought counsel and advice from his superiors, but he wanted them to say he could do as he wished. He was also endowed with a stubborn pride that made it almost impossible for him to admit his own faults, though his need for love and acceptance tempered that pride most of his life. He spent so much of his life with a pen in his hand that it was easier for him to express his feelings in writing than in conversation, although the few sermons or lectures extant show that he could express his ideas well orally. He could be critical of some of his fellow beings to the extent of accusing them of wronging him. He was not a leader of men, but neither was he a blind follower. He was a man well-trained in his own profession, and enjoyed his position, thinking of it as a calling rather than as a daily task.

George D. Watt was born in Manchester, England, in December 1815, to James Watt and Ann Wood. About two years later, his father left for America where he subsequently died in New Orleans. His mother remarried, and young George spent some time in a poorhouse and then went to live with his grandfather in Scotland. When he was fourteen he returned to England where he married and lived in Preston close to his mother.

It was in Preston that Watt joined Reverend James Fielding's congregation at Vauxhall Chapel and first met the Mormon missionaries. James Fielding's brother, Joseph, had joined the Mormons in America, and he wrote to his brother describing this new religion. In 1837 Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, Willard Richards, and this same Joseph Fielding journeyed to Britain as missionaries where they first contacted Reverend Fielding who allowed them to preach in his chapel. However, when his congregation began to leave him for these Americans, Fielding barred the missionaries from Vauxhall.

Watt later attributed his conversion to the lack of the ancient Christians' spiritual gifts in his church which dissatisfied him and led to some disputes between him and his pastor. When the missionaries came he believed in their teachings and was baptized by Heber C. Kimball with that first group of nine Latter-day Saints in Britain on 30 July 1837. His mother was baptized the same day. Watt was the type of person who needed counsel and advice.

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At the time of his baptism, he was working in a factory. He asked some of the presiding brethren whether to continue in the factory or to become a policeman. Joseph Fielding worried about Watt's testimony remaining strong, but Willard Richards blessed him, and he joined the police force. Later that year Watt wrote to Joseph Fielding asking him to ask Kimball about leaving the police force, and Kimball sent him to Scotland as a missionary. It was a thrilling experience and he saw many people baptized. He became homesick, however, and in February 1841 returned to Preston to be with his wife and two small children. Concerned about his family, he wrote to Brigham Young who was then in Liverpool. Thinking that Satan was trying to prevent him from doing the Lord's work, he felt a need to move his family but he did not want them to be a burden on Orson Pratt who already had a destitute family in Edinburgh. It would be nice to be off to the land of Zion, but he desired to continue in the work. The record is not clear as to the advice he received, but in April the Council of the Twelve made him a high priest and sent him to preside over the Edinburgh conference where he remained until he sailed for Nauvoo in 1842.

In the five years he spent in Britain after his baptism, Watt formed lasting associations which would be important for most of his life. Especially was this true of his friendship with Willard Richards and Brigham Young. These men, at different times, became the father he had never known as Watt depended on them for advice and counsel when he most needed it. However, like most children, he did not always accept it.

In 1840 the first Mormons left England for Nauvoo; the spirit of gathering to Zion had begun. Two years later on 17 September 1842, George and his wife boarded the ship Sydney for New Orleans. Sometime between Watt's letter to Brigham Young in 1841 and the departure, the couple's two children had died. The Watts arrived in New Orleans in mid-November and then made their way up the river by steamer.

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9Diary of Joseph Fielding, 29 February 1840, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Diary of Willard Richards, 12 February 1840, Church Archives. Handwritten materials are reproduced as in original with minor alterations in capitalization and periods.

9Watt to Fielding, 4 July 1840, Joseph Fielding papers, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

9Watt to G. A. Smith, 16 January 1841, G. A. Smith papers, Church Archives.

9Watt to Young, 9 February 1841, Brigham Young papers, Church Archives.


9Millennial Star, 3:60.
Nauvoo, the City of the Saints, was a bustling city. The temple was beginning to take shape, and new homes were being built. Watt had something unusual to offer this city of almost 12,000 people. Apparently sometime before May 1843 he had learned shorthand, or as it was then called, phonography. In 1837 Sir Isaac Pittman had invented a phonetic shorthand which enabled the scribe to write every word as fast as a person could speak. In May 1843, Watt delivered lectures on the new writing. Within two years he was teaching classes on the subject, and when the Phonographic Society of Nauvoo was organized, he was its president.\(^9\) In exchange for reporting the conference speeches, he was given a house and a lot.\(^10\)

Watt had many other things to do. When Joseph Smith organized a group to explore the West, Watt impulsively volunteered, but the expedition never left. Shortly before the Prophet’s death Watt was called to serve a proselyting-campaign mission in North Carolina and Virginia.\(^11\)

In late 1845 the Mormons prepared to leave Nauvoo. Work on the temple continued, for the Saints wanted to begin the ordinance work. When the building was sufficiently completed, Watt took Mary to the temple. With Brigham Young officiating, they were first adopted and sealed as the children of Willard and Jeanette Richards, and then sealed to each other as husband and wife.\(^12\)

The following spring, carrying a recommend to Wilford Woodruff, President of the British Mission, they left with their small son for England.\(^13\) When they arrived they were sent to Glasgow where Watt served as president of the conference. During the next five years he labored in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Staffordshire, Preston, and for a few months in northern Scotland. His stenographic ability lay dormant except for two mission conferences for which he was the clerk and a debate between a Mormon and a sectarian minister.\(^14\)

\(^{15}\)Nauvoo Neighbor, 2 May 1845; 16 July 1845.
\(^{17}\)HC, 6:224, 341.
\(^{18}\)Nauvoo Sealing Book, Record A., Genealogical Society, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
\(^{19}\)Brigham Young to Wilford Woodruff, 4 February 1846, Woodruff papers, Church Archives.
Meanwhile, Willard Richards corresponded with Watt, telling about the migration of the Mormons from Nauvoo and of United States relations with Mexico. He asked forgiveness for having so long neglected his friends, "yet, the cause of Zion swallows up all minor or personal considerations, and wife and children and relatives, appear lost as it were, and we are obliged to forsake them all to build up the kingdom of God."16

Watt was more personal in his reply since Richards knew all the mission news from the Millennial Star. He shared with his adopted father some observations drawn from introspection since returning to Britain. "I am more foolish than wise in general," Watt confided. "This conclusion has checked in some degree my headstrong nature, teaching me to think twice before I speak once." He now realized, he said, that his brethren in high positions had passions like himself, and therefore he would overlook their blemishes and expected the same from them. "In conclusion allow me to say that we are every thing to you, which the Law of God, and your own heart shall suggest, give us an interest in your prayers that we may be kept even unto the end Amen. From your children G. D. Watt Mary Watt."17

For some time George had longed to be with the Saints in Zion. He was finally released from his mission late in 1850, and he and his family sailed to America, and crossed the plains, arriving in the Salt Lake Valley late the next summer. After returning, he became involved again in shorthand, for we have record that in December he gave a lecture on phonography.18 His contribution in this endeavor cannot be emphasized enough, because it was not until Watt returned from England that the complete speeches of the leaders of the Church were recorded.

In those economically difficult times Watt soon found himself financially strained, which circumstances eventually brought him into an unpleasant confrontation with Willard Richards, his adopted father and a member of the First Presidency. Richards, as editor of the Deseret News employed Watt as a reporter and it was Watt’s job to record all of the important speeches and prepare them for publication in the News. Given no permanent salary, Watt was in an extremely insecure economic position. He had to borrow ten dollars from Daniel H. Wells to pay a school tax and obtain a few

16Richards to Watt, 16 April 1847, Watt papers, Church Archives.
17Watt to Richards, 5 February 1848, Richards papers, Church Archives.
18Deseret News, 17 December 1851.
19Watt to Wells, 4 January 1852, Wells papers, Church Archives.
necessities. Finally, in September 1852, he wrote a letter of complaint to Willard Richards. The two men exchanged three emotion-filled letters containing exaggerations of the facts, but both men perceived their own position as correct. Even though Watt had valid complaints, Richards saw him as a tormentor for the devil. Watt complained that his wife was ill with diarrhea, and he had nothing to give her but bread and water, for Richards had never paid him. Richards had offered Watt twenty-five pamphlets to sell, but only after he had "drained all the money that would come in this City from Them." (Brigham Young had given Watt the privilege of printing his and Orson Pratt's speeches on celestial marriage. Apparently Watt then gave them to Willard Richards and Richards had published them in the Deseret News, taking all the profits for himself.) Watt said, "Brother Brigham's Doctrines is 'Man make provision for thy own reasonable wants, and then meet the demands the Lord makes upon thy increase.' The Doc's [Richards'] doctrine (as per 'Deseret News') 'God helps them that help themselves.' " Watt finished the letter with:

I love you as I ever did; I shall cleave to you to the last, you cannot bluff me off if you wished to. . . . I am ready to work on, and do my duty, but I cannot tamely submit to have the fruits of my labors taken from me altogether, when it is right by every law that I should enjoy them.  

Richard's reply was like that of a father chastising an ungrateful son:

I regret, that after I have used all my influence and exertions to qualify and place you in a situation in this Church where you might be eminently useful; and have instructed you in the nature of your duties pertaining to your calling as Reporter; . . . that you should pursue such a course after all my brotherly entreaties for daily and hourly intercourse.

Richards was disturbed that Watt had written to him and forwarded the letter through the public post office. A five minute conversation would have been better, he said. He accused Watt of not having fulfilled his duty as reporter. "Brother Watt has done but little for the News, compared with what he might have done, if he had devoted his time and talents, to the cause as diligently as Brother Willard has done." He had offered Watt the pamphlets, and if he had taken them, he would have had more than enough money to provide his family with certain comforts and pay his growing bill

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20Watt to Richards, 24 September 1852, Richards papers, Church Archives
in the tithing store. Richards said earlier in the letter that Watt of late had a foreign spirit about him, "foreign from the Spirit which dwells in the bosom of the Eternal Father." Further revealing his attitude and setting up a defense as well, Richards continued, "My course has been dictated and controlled by my President; and when you find fault with my President you find fault with my God." Concluding, he beseeched Watt to call on him.  

Watt's reply was not long in coming. He had written because he could write more effectively than speak in face to face conversation. He wanted to know how he was to be rewarded. If an account was to be kept against him, a price needed to be put upon his labors. Richards had not employed him and had no more right than a stranger to ask Watt why he had not been reporting speeches. Richards had mentioned that Watt had been absent on important occasions, but Watt could only remember one important occasion, and then he had been in City Creek Canyon registering his complaints with the Lord. He added,

I have written my honest mind Brother Willard: I cannot be intimidated by being told that I have sliped down; I only ask for the enjoyment of my common rights with other men. I am not aware that freedom of speech (whether verbaly or in writing) is always a shure sign of a man possessing a bad spirit; neither do I write thinking that I can change your mind and thoughts concerning me, but this I know, I want to do right to you, to my family, and to mankind at large, and shall try to have them do right to me. . . . You can lead me but you cannot intimidate me; while a kind word from your lips viberates through my soul like the sweetest sounds of harmony.  

That October Conference no detailed reports appeared in the Deseret News. The next April the News published most of the speeches in detail; apparently Watt had sent a copy of the talks to Richards. But there was a definite estrangement between the two men. In August 1852, Watt sent Richards another letter in which he noted that he had several sermons which Richards might want to publish in the Deseret News. "Anything I have is at your command, and has ever been."  

Richards had been wounded deeply by the previous exchange, and he would not seek Watt out. Richards said that he had received Watt's note through the post office, "and as I know not

21Watt to Richards, 25 September 1852, Watt papers, Church Archives.
22Watt to Richards, 29 September 1852, Richards papers, Church Archives.
23Watt to Richards, 6 August 1853, Richards papers, Church Archives.
where to find you, reply through the same channel." He told Watt that if he had a speech he would send it to press that afternoon.

I have not disposition to command you but I will once more repeat the request which I have often made, and that at every reasonable opportunity; that you will furnish me with copies of President Young's sermons, teachings, &c. in the midst of this people, that may be useful for the "News," and which ought to be preserved in the Archives of the Church as a matter of history, and you shall in nowise lose your reward; and when you will do this, I shall know that professions, faith, and works, have shaken hands.24

In the following issue of the *Deseret News* one of the speeches which President Young gave in July 1853 appeared. In later issues more of Watt's reports were published, and Watt and Richards were finally reconciled.

It was not long before Watt's financial situation improved. He was employed as a clerk by Brigham Young, and he also became the reporter for the Utah Legislature.25 In November the *News* reminded its readers that Watt was the reporter not only for the *News*, but for any event for which correct transactions were wanted.26 Earlier he had proposed to publish a journal which would include the speeches of the Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and others.27 This had the complete support of all the members of the First Presidency. The volumes were published as the *Journal of Discourses* and the profits of the venture went to Watt.28 The volumes, printed by Franklin D. Richards in Liverpool, were shipped to Watt who sold them at his home. He continued to be the principal reporter for the *Journal of Discourses* until he left the president's office in 1868; thereafter others continued what he had begun.

Richards died on 11 March 1854. Watt reported the graveside services. At the end of the eulogies Watt said that the mourners departed, "leaving the remains of one of the best and greatest men that ever trod the earth, to sleep in peace, until he shall awake to immortality and eternal life."29

The close association between Watt and Brigham Young developed only slowly. Watt had become acquainted with Young in

24Richards to Watt, 6 August 1853, Watt papers, Church Archives.
25*Deseret News*, 12 December 1853.
26*Deseret News*, 24 November 1853.
27*Deseret News*, 18 June 1853.
29*Deseret News*, 16 March 1854.

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England. He was now the reporter for the Church, and a clerk in Young's office.

In 1852 after attending Watt's lectures on phonography, Brigham Young began the promotion of a new alphabet. George D. Watt, Parley P. Pratt, and Heber C. Kimball were appointed to form a committee to meet with the Board of Regents and to make recommendations on it. In the early discussions of the new alphabet many people took part—Willard Richards, Orson Spencer, W. W. Phelps, Daniel H. Wells, George D. Watt, Brigham Young, and a few others. At first Young was the promoter, but it is unclear what part he played in its development. The committee, primarily under Watt's inspiration, suggested that Pittman's phonetic alphabet, called phonotype, be adopted. Richards rejected it, and he was supported by the other members of the Board of Regents. Phonotype was too similar to the present English language, they complained. In the final revision Watt, using his phonetic training, put the sounds with the new symbols which he had devised. In writing to Young about possible revisions of the new alphabet, he said,

Dear Bro. I herein submitt for your examination the result of much thought and extensive practice on the new alphabet since the Board of Regents last met. . . .

I candidly confess that I never did like the present construction of the alphabet. I was not left as free as I could have wished to be in the construction of it. . . .

In order to make the symbols more pleasing to the pen, he made them more flowing, substituting cursive letters for block letters, but Watt's changes were not accepted. He continued, however, to be one of the principal promoters of the alphabet. He lectured on it, and was on the committee to write up the first reader for the new Deseret Alphabet.

George D. Watt interested himself in other areas, especially farming. He purchased some property in the Twentieth Ward, located in the Salt Lake City avenues and had a rather large, comfortable home there where he spent his spare time raising fruit and some garden crops. He also owned some property in Kaysville where he grazed sheep. He took an active part in the Salt Lake Theater where he even acted on the stage before his friends and family. His first wife died sometime after coming to Utah, and he then married Jane Brown. Later he married Alice Whittaker, the

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30Minutes of meetings, November 1853, Watt papers, Church Archives.
31Watt to Young, 21 August 1854, Young papers, Church Archives.
widow of Moses Whittaker. After the army arrived in 1857, Jane divorced him and married a soldier, apparently because she could not accept the doctrine of polygamy. In 1859 he took his fourth wife, Elizabeth Golightly, a lovely eighteen year old. He later married Sarah Ann Harter and Martha Bench. He had most of his children by the last three wives and was a kind, loving father and husband who was concerned about his children’s welfare.32

As the reporter for the Church, Watt was at all the important meetings, especially when President Young addressed the people. In the 1850s Watt did not travel with President Young when he left Salt Lake City, but beginning in 1861 he was at the side of the president on every trip until 1867. Watt gave prayers, preached, reported the sermons, and often wrote brief summaries which were published in the Deseret News. Watt worked so closely with Brigham Young that it was natural that he would look to Young as a son would to a father.

As he had asked Richards’ advice before, he now often asked Young’s counsel and advice. Once he had problems with a small access roadway next to his property. He had accidentally sold the right of way to a Mr. Tobin and wanted to buy it back. “Bro. Brigham,” he wrote, “It looks cold and formal, to say the least of it, to write you a letter when you are within a few feet of me, but when I try to tell you in words the words wont come. The Tobin affair which I have troubled you so much I wish to lay before you as it is in truth.” He asked Brigham if it would be appropriate to take the case before the high council.33 President Young’s reply, if written, has not been preserved, but the case was taken before a bishop’s court, and Watt was allowed to repurchase the passageway for $579, instead of the $1,000 he had anticipated.34

At another time when he desired to take Sarah Ann Harter as his fifth wife, he wrote his “Dear President and Friend” concerning this “matter of considerable moment.” Explaining that he had courted Sarah and received permission to marry her, Watt noted that her parents had confided that she had been previously married to a soldier. The man had left her, and her parents presumed that he had been killed. Watt closed by saying, “I wish to make her my wife if it would be right for me to do so, and if you can give your

32Watt to his wives and children, 26 January 1867, Brigham Young University. See also Stringham and Flack, England’s First “Mormon” Convert: The Biography of George Darling Watt.
33Watt to Young, n.d., Young papers, Church Archives.
34Bishop’s court papers, 6 February 1865, Watt papers, Church Archives.
free consent to our union; not otherwise."35 Brigham consented, and they were married.

At one time Watt had been instructed to take the speeches down in longhand. In a letter to Young he said, "Dear Brother - Father, It is my greatest earthly happiness when I know that my labors are satisfactory to you and receive your hearty sanction." He agreed reluctantly to record the speeches in that fashion, although it was more arduous than shorthand, and it required little or no exercise of the mind. With his comments about his reporting he gave insight into his own character. He said,

Already my mind has become almost stereotyped in this line of thought, so much so, that much of my time I am unfit for social society and conversation. Earthly wealth is but dust in the balance to me compared with this work which I think I am designed to perform in my lifetime, and the impression that I work for dollars and cents has yet to be made upon my mind; and Sire, I consider that I have nothing in this world that I do not own to your goodness as the dispenser, under God, of his mercies spiritual and temporal to His Saints, what I have of this worlds goods I hold in trust to be accounted for at any time.36

In a letter in 1854 to Young which included a pedigree of some of his ancestry, Watt asked for advice concerning a claim which his brother-in-law said he had to an estate in Ireland.37 Young replied that he could go to Britain and claim the property if he wanted. However, Watt chose "to remain here and fulfill the duties of my calling, learn to accumulate property, and thereby properly know the value of it." In 1866 Watt again desired to claim it. "I shall feel perfectly satisfied with whatever you advise concerning it, and shall gladly and with a free good will regulate my future course accordingly."38

Undoubtedly Brigham told him that he could do as he wished because in February 1867, accompanied by Brigham Young, Jr., he left Salt Lake City en route to Britain. It was a business trip, but he was also expected to preach the gospel. He arrived in Liverpool late in March and after spending a few days there went to his sister's in Preston where he spent the remainder of his time except for preaching at a conference a month after his arrival. Evidence is lacking as to why he did not go to Dublin, but presumably his

35Watt to Young, August 1866, Young papers, Church Archives.
36Watt to Young, 9 September 1865, Young papers, Church Archives.
37Watt to Young, 15 January 1854, Young papers, Church Archives.
38Watt to Young, 10 November 1866, Young papers, Church Archives.
brother-in-law was handling the case for him. From his letter in the *Millennial Star* it appears that he spent most of his time defending Mormonism among his sister’s friends. In his last letter he declared the truthfulness of the restored gospel and bore a fervent testimony of it. On 23 May 1867 Watt left for America. His short stay indicates that he did not obtain the estate. He was back in New York in July where he wrote Brigham Young, telling him about the possibility of obtaining a catalog of “Phonetic Fonts” from the Phonetic Institute of Cincinnati. He closed by saying, “I long to be by your side, and pray, if it can be so ordered in the Providence of God, that I may never leave it in time nor eternity.” Less than one year later George D. Watt left Brigham’s office, never to return.

There were no visible signs of difficulty between Watt and the president that year. In November Watt wrote to Martha, his last wife, who was in Manti, informing her that the president had granted him permission to go after her. He wrote again in April and then on 6 May wrote a letter from the tabernacle while he was reporting. He left the president’s office on 15 May. In the next letter to Martha, dated 17 May, he said,

> I am now no man’s servant. You are anxious to know why? I cannot tell you fully until I see you; I will say this much; the president had said he could not get rid of me, and that I was determined to stay there whether or not and make him pay me $5.00 a day; I immediately put on my hat and left, and I am now free from the toil and labor of pen work.

Several years later, in reflecting on his sudden departure, Watt said that he had had only one thought and that was “to die in the harness for the triumph of truth and God’s kingdom on earth. I was suddenly and unexpectedly crushed, by a public charge of meanness and sly robbery, by one against whose affirmation I had no appeal.” There was only one man who could fit that description. Watt continued:

> I could only see my character as an honest man gone among my friends and brethren, my future to do good defeated, over thirty years of labor and struggle a blank, and branded as a scoundrel to the end of my life. I have since discovered that I might have taken a more reasonable view of the matter. But feeling outraged and abused, I was chagrined and insensed. I did not take time to reason.

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Watt to Young, 9 July 1867, Young papers, Church Archives.

Watt to Martha Watt, 28 November 1867, Watt papers, Brigham Young University.

Watt to Martha Watt, 17 May 1867, Watt papers, Brigham Young University.
But in strict accordance with my impulsive nature kicked over the bucket and spilled the milk. 48

Watt's choice of words leads one to believe that the charge was over a financial matter. The clerks drew on the tithing store for their needs, and this was debited to their accounts in the trustee-in-trust ledgers. Their salary was credited to their accounts in the ledgers sporadically, which meant that the clerks sometimes had more debited to their accounts than credited. Sometimes the clerk would overdraw his allotted amount, and some of the clerks never did completely pay for their tithing store debts. Watt's account was credited in 1857 leaving him with no financial obligation, but because of his growing needs he acquired goods from the tithing store, thus accumulating a debt. He was paid again in December 1865, but his salary did not cover the $16,000 debited to his account. Other clerks had debts for amounts almost as much, but Watt probably had never concerned himself with what the others owed. 44 The profits from the publication of the Journal of Discourses had probably provided him with only a small sum which made him even more dependent on his salary at the office, but with his growing family the salary did not take care of his needs. Conceivably it was to erase his growing debt that Watt considered his claim to the Irish estate and as noted above asked Young's advice, for he said that he had been wrought upon by some spirit of late to do something about the land. The estate was worth £1,500. Earthly possessions meant little to him except to do good and roll on the kingdom of God, he said; but undoubtedly he had to be concerned with his growing indebtedness to the Church. 45 The sale or rent of the estate would make it possible for him to forget his financial problems and continue undisturbed in his calling. But the trip was financially a failure, and his debt was still not paid. It grew until it was over $20,000 in 1868. Presumably Watt was concerned with this debt, but he could do nothing to erase it unless he received more money for his services. He likely approached Brigham Young on the subject, an argument ensued, and Watt left the office; thereafter his pride would not let him return. Officially there was no mention of his departure, except a pencilled notation in the trustee-in-trust ledger stating, "On May 15, 1868, Geo. D. Watt left the office." 46

48 Watt to John Taylor, 5 December 1878, Taylor papers, Church Archives.
44 Trustee-in-Trust ledgers, 1857 to 1868, Church Archives.
45 Watt to Young, 10 November 1866, Young papers, Church Archives
46 Trustee-in-Trust ledgers, 1867-1869, Church Archives.
At first he stayed at home tending his small acreage in the avenues in Salt Lake City. He was especially concerned with his mulberry trees and his silkworms. He then went into the mercantile business with Robert Sleater and William Ajax.

While involved in this partnership, Watt was asked by Brigham Young to travel throughout Utah preaching sericulture. The raising of silkworms was part of President Young's plan for promoting Mormon self-sufficiency and the cooperative movement. Agriculture had always been Watt's avocation, and during the mid-1860s he had spent considerable time raising mulberry trees and silkworms, and spinning silk. Watt, however, was not the right man for this assignment. He was still bitter over the experience that led to his leaving the president's office, and his own business venture was bringing him into conflict with the cooperatives which he was supposed to advocate. In his talk at Wellsville he deprecated the cooperatives and even complained about the riches of Church leaders. He boasted of his own accomplishments in the raising of silkworms, and grumbled about Brigham Young's shortsightedness on the manufacture of silk.47 Repercussions came quickly and at a meeting of the School of the Prophets Watt admitted his imprudence. Several of the brethren at the school complained about Watt's choice of words, but Brigham Young said that so long as a man's intentions were good his indiscretions could be overlooked.48

Watt's mercantile business did not flourish. He sold a variety of goods: ink, brushes, pails, hats, mirrors, and many other things. He specialized in coal oil and bought a considerable number of cooking stoves which the partners got for a reduced price.49 According to family tradition, one day when the partners came to work there was a notice on their door advising people not to patronize the business because of its gentile business connection in Chicago. Although Watt never mentioned this in extant documents, it was a tactic used in other towns at the same time. Because of his outside pressure, the business failed.

It was some time after leaving the president's office that Watt became interested in the Godbeites, a schismatic LDS group. In October 1869, when a committee of the Twelve Apostles was sent to interview the leading Godbeites, they found him among the dis-

47John King to Young, 25 March 1869; J. A. Leishman to Young, 1 April 1869, Young papers, Church Archives.
48Historian's Office Journal, 3 April 1869, Church Archives.
49Memo from S. H. Epperson and David Van Wagenen to Brigham Young, 3 June 1869, Young papers, Church Archives.
sidents. Judging them to be in darkness, the committee disfellowshipped the entire group, Watt included. Less than a week later these Godbeites were summoned to the School of the Prophets where all were restored to fellowship except William Godbe and E. L. T. Harrison.\textsuperscript{50}

In December of that same year in a farewell speech at the Twentieth Ward, Watt reviewed the highlights of his spiritual career. He had been in the Church nearly thirty years, he said, and had received his sacred temple blessings in Nauvoo and again in Salt Lake City. Referring to the Godbeites, he said that some recent experiences had taught him a lasting lesson, and he desired to be faithful to Mormonism.\textsuperscript{51}

Three months later he appeared before the School of the Prophets, and in a soul-searching confession admitted to having been "under the devil's harrow." He hoped that he would be humbled sufficiently to once again be of use to President Young. Watt blamed his waywardness on a stubborn disposition. His mixture of English and Scottish blood could not be driven, he said, but would respond to sympathy and kindness. "He hoped to hang on to the old ship Zion and endure to the end."\textsuperscript{52}

Watt was struggling to stay in the faith. When his mercantile business failed, he decided to leave Salt Lake and move to his farm in Kaysville, but this decision proved detrimental to his spiritual well-being. It meant that he would leave his old friends who understood him and Salt Lake City which had a more tolerant intellectual climate, and journey to the small town of Kaysville where he would have to make new friends in the closeness of a provincial atmosphere. He had been tainted too much with the title Godbeite to be accepted there. It could have been different with an understanding bishop, but Christopher Layton, Watt's brother-in-law, prophesied that George D. Watt would apostatize from the Church.\textsuperscript{53} Watt retreated to the sanctity of his home.

From Kaysville he wrote two letters to Brigham Young. In the first he criticized the cooperatives. In explaining his own deeds he said,

I alone am responsible for my individual acts. I have not troubled you or any other person for counsel or advice touching the road I

\textsuperscript{50}Journal of Wilford Woodruff, 17 October 1869, 18 October 1869, 23 October 1869, Church Archives.
\textsuperscript{51}Twentieth Ward Historical Record, 5 December 1869, Church Archives.
\textsuperscript{52}School of the Prophets minutes, 26 March 1870, Church Archives.
\textsuperscript{53}Watt to Young, 25 August 1871, Young papers, Church Archives.
have chosen to walk since I left your office, but of my own accord and free choice I set my mind upon a purpose, and my stupid head would not suffer me to retrace my steps, but on I went through mire and clay up to the eyes, asking no help from any man, bearing my own burdens, trusting in God alone for deliverance, and confessing all my folly and sins unto Him. It has been a hard road to travel, but I have found him a sure help in time of need, ... I have been under the devils harrow now for two years. It has been my chief business to extricate myself, and have been of little use to the cause of truth, to myself, to you, to anybody else all this weary time. I hope and pray with the sad experience I have past through that I have got a little more balast to steady me, and that the latter part of my days may be spent more to the glory and honor of God than the former.

In the next letter Watt complained about the teachers and especially Bishop Layton. "Espionage, or adversity only stiffens my neck, and sets me in defiance, while generous kindness and smiling friendship melts my soul into tears of gratitude and resolves of eternal affiance." In closing he said, "Brother Brigham I have for you the deepest respect, and sympathy. I have always held you to my heart as a very dear friend."

Recognizing his need for spiritual help he received a patriarchal blessing from Church Patriarch John Smith less than a month later. Patriarch Smith told him that his life had been preserved, and that he needed to be prudent and seek to know the will of the Lord. He still had a work to perform, and his name would be held in honorable remembrance by his descendants. "And I say unto thee let thy faith fail not and thy days and years shall be prolonged until thou art satisfied with life."

But he let his faith fail. He could not adjust to the provincial life, nor the farm life. Farming before had been an avocation, but now as his vocation it was too difficult. It was a dry farm and the soil depended on rain or snow for nourishment, and sometimes not enough came. At times his family had little to eat, and one winter three of his children died of flu. With his struggle against the elements and in just trying to survive he probably tired of the inward struggle, and by 1874, he was definitely a Godbeite. In April of that year the Salt Lake Tribune heralded the talk which was to be given by George D. Watt at the Liberal Institute on "Why I joined

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64 Watt to Young, 27 July 1870, Young papers, Church Archives.  
65 Watt to Young, 23 August 1871, Young papers, Church Archives.  
66 Patriarchal blessing of John Smith to G. D. Watt, 17 September 1871, Church Archives.
the Mormon Church and why I left it.”57 In his speech he told of his early life, membership in the Mormon Church, his passage to the spiritualism which the Godbeites promulgated, and his disapproval of the Mormons' cooperative movement. The newspaper lamented that he had said nothing of his position as a reporter or the association with Church leaders.58 Watt had gone too far, and on 3 May 1874, he was excommunicated.59

He now began a counter-struggle. Four times he made application to rejoin the Church but was denied. His beliefs differed greatly from those of the orthodox Mormon. He said he did not believe in a personal God, nor in a personal devil. He no longer accepted the scriptures as infallible guides. Man had not fallen but had steadily progressed. Of his own struggle he told John Taylor,

My mind gradually lost its fixedness to the one purpose, and merged into a state of mobility. I have wandered over the arid and hopeless wastes of infidelity, and I have wrestled with the ghostly mirage and to me, unprofitable manifestations of modern spiritualism, I have rummaged among the dusty records resurrected from the filthy rags of mummied myths.

He had at last found comfort and spirituality in what he called “exact science.” In concluding this lengthy epistle, he said,

I have doubtless exhausted your patience. I have had to write what I have written to satisfy myself. I have opened to you my heart, and explained to you imperfectly my present faith; that if I am again permitted to enrol myself as a member of your church I may do so as an honest man, and not as a sneak and an embicile. If I cannot do this with the full confidence of yourself and your brethren that I will conduct myself discreetly and honorably, while I am enjoying the privileges and hopes engendered by such a position, I would rather remain as I am than be received with jealous distrust.60

His life extended only three years beyond the date of this letter, to 24 October 1881. The Salt Lake Herald in its obituary said that he was honest, truthful, and sincere, although perhaps misguided. “Being a self-made man of strong character, and exercising vast influence, there is not a little in his career which is remarkable.”61

His last years in Kaysville with only his family at his side are tragic because it was his association with the Mormon Church and

57Salt Lake Tribune, 12 April 1874.
58Salt Lake Tribune, 15 April 1874.
59Deseret News, 5 May 1874.
60Watt to Taylor, 5 December 1878, Taylor papers, Church Archives.
61Salt Lake Herald, 25 October 1881.
its leaders which had given his life so much meaning and made him influential. His family gave him great support, but his need for importance had been best filled by being at Brigham Young’s side. His impulsiveness, pride, and even his need for approval proved detrimental to his spirituality, his psychological makeup, and his reputation among his contemporaries who forgot his great accomplishments.
Mormon Poor Relief:
A Social Welfare Interlude

Betty L. Barton

Scholars have devoted considerable attention to analyses of the law of consecration and the united order experiments and later to the origin and development of the Church welfare plan, but they have said little about the evolution of Mormon poor relief policies from 1850 to 1930. Especially during the Brigham Young period there were poor among the Saints who were not cared for under the united order system, yet the Church made provision for these people. A careful study of this neglected area reveals an interesting chapter in the history of the development of Mormon relief policies and closes the seemingly wide gap between early Mormon practices and the institution of the welfare plan in 1936.

Throughout the Joseph Smith and Brigham Young periods of Mormon history, Church poor relief practices followed a consistent and predictable course, set a precedent for later Church welfare doctrines, and led to the establishment of many of the physical structures of the Church. During much of this time, Mormons were generally a very poor people. Hounded from Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois, they lost virtually all of their possessions; and for many years after their arrival on the arid Rocky Mountain plateau, they barely eeked out an existence, often facing starvation and contending with hostile Indians.

Moreover, the destitution of the vast majority of converts who followed the initial pioneers into the Salt Lake Basin forced upon the Church the problems of charity. In most cases Mormon missionaries made proselyting appeals to the agricultural or poorer urban classes. The Church hierarchy worked hard to find ways of

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caring for these indigent new converts and often brought them to the Great Basin by charity. Having to adapt to new surroundings, the new immigrants required considerable help and encouragement, and consequently, pockets of poverty persisted among the Saints throughout the nineteenth century. One observer expressed his amazement at the privation of some Mormon farmers. "They exist, and that is about all that can be said of them," he noted.

They accomplish their work with ramshackle implements, and ride into town for supplies on saddleless ponies; their feet, in winter, wrapped in burlap to keep them warm. Some of them wear a fierce and hungry aspect; others appear stolid, as though all ambition, if they ever possessed any, had been killed.3

Rejected and ridiculed for their religious beliefs, the Saints developed an "indigenous" or "exclusive" poor relief policy—they took care of their own and asked nothing from government or from private charity.4 As one Church leader remarked,

We have abundantly proved our experience that if we do not sustain ourselves no other people will sustain us, and that we must be united . . . in our temporal as well as in our spiritual affairs; and that if we would build up and strengthen ourselves in the earth, it must be by union of effort, and by concentrating our means in a way that shall produce the best results for the work with which we are identified.5

Moreover, lack of capital among the Saints necessitated a cooperative social arrangement, rather than a capitalistic one with its accompanying system of taxation to provide for the poor.

When the Saints first arrived in the arid Rocky Mountain Basin in 1847, they faced near-starvation when livestock, Indians, and wild animals almost completely destroyed their first crop.

My family went several months without a satisfying meal of vitals [Priddy Meeks recorded in his journal]. I went sometimes a mile up Jordan to a patch of wild roses to get the berries to eat which I would eat as rappid as a hog stems and all. I shot hawks and crows and they ate well. I would go and search the mire holes and find cattle dead and fleece off what meat I could

4This was a particularly common practice among immigrant groups at the time. Jews and Scots, for example, formed their own charity organizations to help new arrivals among their nationality groups find jobs and adjust to the new surroundings. Many others formed close-knit groups and settled in the same neighborhood, refusing to part with many of their Old World ways.
and eat it. We used wolf meat which I thought was good and made some wooden spades to dig segoes with but we could not supply our wants. We had to exert ourselves to get something to eat. I would take a grubing hoe and a sack and start by sunrise in the morning and go, I thought six miles before coming to where the thisel roots grew, and in time to get home I would have a bushel and sometimes more thisel roots. And we would eat them raw. I would dig until I grew weak and faint and sit down and eat a root and then begin again. I continued this until the roots began to fail.6

In order to keep the more distressed from starvation, Brigham Young organized a special committee “empowered to receive donations, buy, sell, and make all exchanges and distributions” in behalf of the destitute.7 Young also imposed a system of rationing and price controls on food items.

During the winter of 1848, hordes of desert crickets destroyed almost the entire crop again. This led to dire circumstances among the majority of Saints. No really poor classes existed, for all were poor and hungry as agricultural surpluses remained inadequate throughout the first decade in the settlement of Utah. Beginning in 1855, a series of natural disasters reduced already meager surpluses to such a dearth that nearly 35,000 Mormon colonists faced starvation. At first grasshoppers and severe drought destroyed almost all the crops. Then an extremely harsh winter killed four out of every five head of cattle in the northern counties. Indians, also facing starvation, stole cattle, adding to the Mormon losses. Famine reigned throughout the land, and the people again turned for food to weeds, roots, dead cattle, cowhides, and blood.8

In an 1856 letter to all Church members, the First Presidency urged the Saints to put forth every possible effort to fill the storehouses. “Let every inch of field and garden be put in the highest state of cultivation; let those who have more acres than they can till in that manner loan or rent to those who have none; let those who have thoughtfully saved more seed than will supply their wants import to those who lack.”9 Young also encouraged bishops

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6He went on to describe how he then turned to making horn combs which he exchanged for buttermilk. Journal of Priddy Meeks, MS, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

7Manuscript History of the Church, Brigham Young Period 1844-77, April 1848, p. 27, MS, Church Archives.


to limit food consumption and organize the poor to glean the fields of any ungathered grain.\textsuperscript{10}

The Saints always operated under the assumption that common effort could banish poverty and want. In wards where it was organized, the women's Relief Society provided innumerable services for the poor, while quorums of Mormon elders helped the men find jobs and other means of supporting themselves. In addition, the Saints developed make-work projects to aid the poor and unemployed. On 26 January 1850, Brigham Young made the public works organization permanent, and appointed Daniel H. Wells as the first superintendent. In 1870, supervision of public works became the duty of the Presiding Bishop. Young usually retained authority to direct the general course of labor, but he delegated to the superintendent as well as to the Church architect responsibility for recruiting labor and purchasing building materials. These work projects served a dual public service: public buildings and services were provided which were beyond the realm of private enterprise, while at the same time, less skilled immigrants received employment and learned many of the techniques which they could later use as a profession in the frontier society.\textsuperscript{11}

Public works projects kept large numbers of men busy manufacturing pottery, cutlery, kitchenware, household furniture, and other items needed by the pioneers. Workers on other Church projects also built the temple, the massive wall around Temple Square, the Spanish-type mud wall around Salt Lake City, canals, a council house and a bathhouse, as well as a storehouse and a granary.\textsuperscript{12}

Other projects were undertaken solely for the purpose of providing much-needed employment. Often those who failed to see the utility of some of the work projects criticized Brigham Young, but he quickly and indignantly rebuked the faultfinders:

I have very little to say to men who are dissatisfied with my course, or with the course of my brethren. Some have wished me to explain why we built an adobe wall around this city. Are there any Saints who stumble at such things? Oh, slow of heart to understand [and] believe. I build walls, dig ditches, make bridges, and do a great amount and variety of labor that is of but little consequence only to provide ways and means for sustaining and preserving the destitute. I annually expend hundreds and thousands of dollars almost solely to furnish employment to those in want of labor. Why? I

\textsuperscript{10}Counsel from the First Presidency: Gleaning and Saving," Deseret News, 9 July 1856.

\textsuperscript{11}Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, pp. 108-12.

\textsuperscript{12}Fox, "The Mormon Policy of Relief."
have potatoes, flour, beef, and other articles of food, which I wish my brethren to have; and it is better for them to labour for those articles, so far as they are able and have opportunity, than to have them given to them. They work, and I deal out provisions, often when the work does not profit me.13

President Young later added that no one had the right to complain if he decided to level Twin Peaks as long as he paid the laborers for their toil.14

Poverty among the Saints, however, did not represent an isolated instance but rather a common phenomenon of the times. As America industrialized, the gap between the classes widened. The rich became richer and the poor, poorer. Increases in the number of immigrants as well as massive migrations to the cities eventually produced a permanent and noticeable class of poor; but at the same time, poverty became less tolerable. Additionally, the depressions of 1873 and 1898 threw hundreds of thousands of people out of work. Big industrialized cities were characterized by disorder, violence, crime, and above all, apathy. To rationalize their unconcern, industrialists adopted the reasoning of Herbert Spencer, who transformed Charles Darwin’s biological hypothesis of the “survival of the fittest” into a social theory agitating for complete abolition of the already emasculated poor laws.15 Public officials, on the other hand, often viewed poor laws only as a stabilizing factor in society to prevent antirent wars, violence, and looting.16

Despite the general malaise which characterized nineteenth-century relief-giving, some truly benevolent groups did emerge as champions of the poor. Churches especially came to their defense and often instituted soup kitchens during periods of particular economic distress. Some newspapers conducted drives to raise money for charity purposes, and a few local governments provided public work for the “honest” unemployed. Yet the belief that outdoor relief (relief given outside the almshouse, usually as a simple dole) had a particularly detrimental effect upon the poor persisted.17

13Feramorz Y. Fox, “Background of the Welfare Program,” reprint of address delivered over radio station KSL, 1 September 1940. Church Archives.
14Fox, “Mormon Policy of Relief.”
During the depressions toward the end of the century, several individuals, concerned with the growing numbers of poor and the bewildering maze of social welfare programs and goals, advanced radical schemes which they thought would solve the problem of poverty. Henry George, annoyed by the persistence of poverty in a land of great industrial wealth and convinced that poverty was actually becoming more widespread as wealth increased, prescribed the abolition of private ownership of land, while Laurence Grønlund found the capitalistic system at fault.18 Mormons also advanced new schemes for the elimination of poverty, but the century, was much more moderate than it was radical.19 The law of consecration, for example, promised each member who was willing to work a means of livelihood. Members unable to work were provided with reserves from the bishop’s storehouse. Failure of the law of consecration led Mormons to simple cooperation and sharing, interspersed with several economic experiments to provide employment, stimulate production, and produce some degree of economic equality.20

Brigham Young’s association of economic industry and self-sufficiency with “building the Kingdom of God” was not so much a new religious doctrine as it was an economic necessity among the Latter-day Saints.21 During their first years in Utah, the Saints found themselves in hostile surroundings with few of the necessities of life. Sheer survival dictated that they cooperate with one another and that they preach the nobility of industry and thrift.

Despite the simplicity of the nineteenth century Mormon economic program, however, Mormon relief policies differed considerably from national poor relief trends of the day. Unlike most charitable institutions, the Church believed that outright charity led only to loss of motivation and more dependence, and that once charitable support was withdrawn, the recipient would grow still poorer and less self-sustaining.22 Where public and private charities failed to implement these ideas, the Saints succeeded because they tied them

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21Gardner, “Communism Among the Mormons,” p. 157; see also Dean D. McBrian, “The Economic Content of Early Mormon Doctrine,” Southwestern Political and Social Science Quarterly 6 (September 1925): 179-91; and JD, 8:89.
22See Franklin S. Harris, “Charity Among the Latter-day Saints,” reprint of address delivered over radio station KSL, 31 January 1932. Church Archives. See also, Brigham Young in JD, 11:297.
in with the doctrinal teachings of their Church. Mormons strove to help one another help themselves, and used charity only as a last resort. At a time, then, when most charitable organizations resorted to the dole, Latter-day Saints clung to ideas of independence and resourcefulness.

Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of Mormon poor relief in relation to other relief institutions was the Church view on the causes of poverty. While most relief-giving agencies in the first half of the century, such as the prominent Association for Improving the Conditions of the Poor, taught that moral weaknesses completely within the control of the victim (such as improvidence, extravagance, idleness, and intemperance) caused most cases of poverty, Mormons postulated the then rare belief that poverty was caused by both controllable individual weaknesses and uncontrollable environmental circumstances. Not until the latter half of the 1800s did Protestant ministers begin refuting individualism and preaching the “social gospel”; and the century was almost over before the Charity Organization Society (COS) and the settlement house movement hesitantly accepted both economic and social conditions as “unavoidable causes” for poverty. Like Mormons, the COS also supported abolition of outdoor relief, yet COS spokesmen continued to represent pauperism as primarily a disease resulting from personal defects and evil acts. And they actually increased the stigma attached to being poor by advocating the doctrine of “less eligibility,” which stated that the poor were always to receive less than the poorest paid independent laborers.53

Additionally the Church recognized perhaps better than any other group at the time that the material needs of man must first be met before he could be expected to exhibit either spiritual or moral virtues. As a result, Smith and Young continued the contemporary dual classification of the poor, and the size and closeness of the

53Although the 1800s saw local and state governments rationalizing the need for welfare and becoming increasingly more sensitive to the problems of the poor, virtually no welfare institution lived up to its expectations. Cities often expended more to have the poor moved to a different location than a simple dole for their support would have cost. Almshouses, or workhouses as they were often called, usually failed miserably also because of seasonal variations in working conditions and working capabilities of the occupants. During the winter, the almshouses were filled to capacity with unskilled farm laborers unable to find work until the spring. But the houses, usually set up as farms themselves, were equally unable to provide work for their occupants during those winter months. During the spring and summer, however, almshouses usually had to hire farm labor from the public work force. Because of the difficulties involved in such attempts at poor relief, most agencies resorted to outright charity as the only workable scheme; philanthropic societies perhaps realized that their efforts offered no real solution to the problems of poverty. See Coll, Perspectives in Public Welfare, pp. 55-61.
Mormon community allowed for successful discrimination between the "worthy" and "unworthy." Brigham himself classified the poor as either "the Lord's poor," "the Devil's poor," or "the poor devils." He taught that the Lord's poor were worthy of both consideration and respect and that they added strength to security programs, but he also taught that the Devil's poor and the poor devils undermined programs of relief and cooperative endeavors. Thus Mormon leaders would not countenance idlers living on the efforts of others and realized that there was such a thing as encouraging idleness and fostering pauperism among men. Yet they regarded the majority of the poor not as outcasts or as morally defective individuals, but as potentially respectable members of society. Church policies consequently exhibited much more leniency than those of either secular or private institutions.

Instead of engaging in "moral preachers" to end poverty, Church leaders set the poor to work. They taught relief recipients to be humble and the wealthy to give willingly of their substance for the support of the poor. Contrary to the national trend, only the truly helpless received sympathy and a bowl of soup.

Knowledgeable Latter-day Saints, then, placed care of the poor high on the list of Church priorities and almost always assured the disabled, infirm, and unemployed a respectable place within their community. From the earliest days the Church stressed the need for unity and brotherhood and proposed to abolish class distinctions based upon wealth and special privilege. "It is the duty of the rich to relieve the suffering poor, to administer to their necessities, and

24 Fox, "Mormon Policy of Relief."
26 "Men and women ought not to be willing to receive charity unless they are compelled to do so to keep from suffering," one Church leader remarked in 1898. "Every man and woman ought to possess the spirit of independence, a self-sustaining spirit, that would prompt him or her to say, when they are in need, 'I am willing to give my labor in exchange for that which you give me.' No man ought to be satisfied to receive, and do nothing for it. After a man is brought down to poverty and is under the necessity of receiving aid, and his friends give it to him, he should feel that it is an obligation under which he is placed, and when the Lord should open his way he would return the gift. This is the feeling we should cultivate in our hearts, to make us a free and independent people. The cultivation of any other feeling or spirit than this is calculated to make paupers, to degrade and bring mankind down to beggary, which is a most wretched condition to be in." Conference Report of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6-8, 10 April 1898, pp. 48-49. See also Joseph F. Smith, "The Message of the Latter-day Saints on Relief for the Poor," pp. 831-33.
faithfully apply their means to the gathering of Israel, the spread of the Gospel, and the building up of the Kingdom,” the First Presidency told the Church membership in 1854.

And to the poor we say, be industrious and faithful; and so soon as you shall be able to return in some available means the advances which have aided you in your deliverance, remember those who, in like circumstances with yourselves, are anxiously looking to the same source for relief.28

Mormon welfare policies developed during a period of hard times for the Church. Latter-day Saint leaders stressed industry, thrift, mutual helpfulness, and charity not only as worthy virtues to be cultivated but also as necessities for community survival.29 By the time of Brigham Young’s death in 1877, the Saints had become a financially viable and relatively independent people. Hundreds of converts flocked to the territory from different parts of the world. And responding to their leader’s urgings, they worked hard to become economically prosperous. Gold fever and the railroad brought outside capital and economic stimulation. The Church itself invested heavily in industrial enterprises, banks, insurance companies, railroads, sugar beet land and refineries, department stores, radio stations, newspapers, and hotels. The Church membership as a whole shared in sponsoring the first cooperative department store, while other joint endeavors of the Church made possible further colonization of the Great Basin. As the decade of the 1880s came to a close more than 140,000 Latter-day Saints were scattered throughout the intermountain region in some 360 settlements. And the Church held thousands of dollars in monetary and physical assets.30

The resulting modifications in Church procedure represented a process of accommodation with secular institutions taking place within Mormonism.31 As the Saints strove to achieve acceptance in a society which defied the dollar and ridiculed people who differed from the norm, they relegated many of their previous ideals of exclusiveness and community to a lower position in their roster of

28Eleventh General Epistle of the Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Millennial Star, 8 July 1854, pp. 422, 427, reprinted from the Deseret News, 13 April 1854.
values.\textsuperscript{32} The years of persecution worked, paradoxically, both to increase the feeling of oneness and also to eliminate much of the force behind the once-powerful Mormon communitarian spirit. The antipolygamy raids and enforcement of the Edmunds-Tucker Act led to the imprisonment of many of the Church leaders, drove many more into hiding, and made centralized Church planning and cooperation practically unworkable.\textsuperscript{33} Moreover, dissolution of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund eliminated the means of facilitating the "gathering" of the Saints, while general overpopulation and lack of irrigable lands led the Church to its 1899 position discouraging new converts from immigrating to Utah.\textsuperscript{34} Saints had already started settling in parts of Wyoming, Oregon, Idaho, Arizona, New Mexico, Canada, and even Mexico. As the Church grew and physical distances between the Saints increased, much of the original feeling of closeness which the pioneers had experienced in living and working together also disappeared.

Yet Utah's susceptibility to the boom and bust of the national economy and a series of critical economic depressions in the last decades of the 1800s combined to keep a vestige of the spirit of cooperation alive, just as the series of natural disasters in the 1850s had worked to increase the number of poverty programs and public works projects among the Saints. The western states were particularly hard hit by a critical agricultural and mining depression lasting from 1873 to 1896. This long depression produced a noticeable increase in poverty and unemployment among the Saints remaining in the valley and led to renewed efforts to deal with economic shortages. Home industries and makework projects and a general, more equitable redistribution of Church wealth received renewed emphasis as a means of keeping the Church afloat and pulling the membership through the financial crisis. The unemployed could usually find jobs in Church-subsidized wool, cotton, silk, clothing, and leather industries, or iron, sugar, salt, soap, and paper manufacturing plants. And resources continued to be shared commonly through the tithing and fast offering funds and through Church-sponsored employment on common public work projects. In the 1870s the Church expended $19,000 annually for relief of the poor and $8,000 annually for the Indian welfare program.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{32}See Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, pp. 380-412.
\textsuperscript{33}Leonard J. Arrington, "Mormon Economic Idealism," address delivered in Salt Lake City, 25 October 1968, p. 9, Church Archives.
\textsuperscript{34}Gustive O. Larson, "The Story of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 18 (September 1931):184-94.
\textsuperscript{35}See Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, p. 355.
A temporary Church program foreshadowing the later “Share Our Wealth” campaign of the Great Depression days developed in 1880 when the Church attempted to redistribute the wealth and income of the membership as part of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Church. John Taylor, Young’s successor to the presidency, advised bishops to canvass their wards and allow the “deserving” poor who were indebted to the Church or delinquent in their tithing to cancel one-half of their debts. Taylor announced that this action was taken to benefit the poor, not to “soften” those individuals able to pay. Additionally, the poor of the Church received a gift of 1,000 head of cattle and were loaned some 34,761 bushels of wheat free of interest. The Church leadership also encouraged Mormon capitalists, bankers, and business houses to cancel the debts of those whom, after study, they considered eligible and worthy for such beneficence.

Church leadership at the turn of the century continued to lead the Church to prosperity. Mormon institutions, more than ever before, came to resemble those of American capitalism, and instead of continuing to invest in cooperative ventures, the Church began investing in other large business enterprises, many of which were non-Mormon concerns. To replace its once exclusivist economic philosophy and its ascetic habits, the Church adopted the American capitalistic business philosophy of competitive profit-making. Thus the once-isolated community became part of the mainstream of American life.

As Church membership rapidly increased and more attention was given to the worldwide mission of the Church, concern for relief outside the individual wards faded. Tithes “in kind” almost completely disappeared, being replaced largely by payments in money. Consequently, the idea of storehouses fell largely into disuse. At a time when national social welfare programs appeared to be coming of age, Mormon welfare efforts reached a nadir. The majority of Mormons no longer regarded poverty as a major problem, and as a result, they relaxed their previous emphasis on wel-

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26Salt Lake Tribune, 7 April 1880.
27Conference Report, 17 April 1880, pp. 61-65. This Year of Jubilee celebration of the Church was an adaptation of the Jewish celebration which occurred every fiftieth year. According to Jewish custom, all enslaved Jews were freed and all property which had been sold was returned to its original owner. It was a time for proclaiming “liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants.” See Leviticus 25.
28Public and private relief agencies at this time, however, were still characterized by considerable overlap and inefficiency. An effort was made during World War I to coordinate these efforts through the Community Chest movement, but continued talk about reform lasted throughout the 1920s.
The Church hospital system and the Relief Society remained the only Church-wide efforts to meet the welfare needs of the Church membership.

The first Church hospital had opened in July 1882 under the auspices of the Deseret Hospital Association. Directed by the general Relief Society presidency, Eliza R. Snow, Zina D. H. Young, and Emmeline B. Wells, Deseret Hospital functioned until the Church founded the Dr. William H. Groves LDS Hospital in Salt Lake City, which remained the largest hospital in Utah until 1952. Later the Church founded additional hospitals. All of these units provided free care to those unable to pay for medical services but charged a fee to more financially stable patients.

In 1922, the Church took a step forward in its welfare program for children with the opening of the Primary Children’s Hospital in Salt Lake City. Initially funded by the First Presidency, but maintained and managed by the Church Primary Association, the hospital offered medical care to all children, including those whose parents lacked financial means to provide for such needs.

The hospital system, however, existed only in the more densely Mormon-populated intermountain regions. With the rapid spread of Mormonism to other areas, many Saints found themselves out of reach of health and other welfare services. The Relief Society women of the Church filled part of the resulting welfare “vacuum.”

During World War I, the Relief Society cooperated extensively with the Red Cross in carrying the burden of relief. By close association with the more highly trained Red Cross social workers (as public relief workers were then called) the Mormon women were introduced to new techniques and trends in poor relief. In 1918, President Joseph F. Smith requested that Relief Society president Amy B. Lyman attend a social work colloquium at the University of Denver. And in January 1919, in the hopes of improving its welfare work and implementing many new ideas, including standardized social case work, the Relief Society organized a welfare department at its

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Andrew Jenson, *Encyclopedic History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1941), p. 184; Ralph T. Richards, “The History of Medicine in Utah,” address to the graduating class, School of Medicine, University of Utah, 3 March 1946, p. 9, as cited in Dean R. Zimmerman, “For the Health of the Saints: The Development of Health Work of the Church Throughout the World,” paper on file with the Health Services Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Isabelle S. Ross, “The L. D. S. Children’s Hospital,” *Deseret News*, 18 February 1933, Church Section.

general headquarters in Salt Lake City as part of its formal organization. Although without funds, building, or facilities at first, the department managed to survive until 1921 when the Church authorities appropriated money for emergency purposes and permitted it to register cases with the Social Service Exchange and acquire membership in the Council of Social Agencies in Salt Lake City. Thus empowered, the department not only acted as a center for cooperation between different units of the Church but also served to coordinate work between Church and secular welfare agencies. It also served as a center for Relief Society women wishing to engage in charity and relief work, and as the official child placement agency for the Church.

During the economic depression of 1921 and 1922, the department established an employment bureau for women and also helped to find jobs for other members of the Church. In 1927, the general board of the Relief Society drew up a policy statement to clarify the work of this social service department, deciding to limit its assistance to families in which the head of the family held membership in the Church.

In 1920, shortly after the department was organized, the Relief Society sponsored an intensive six-week seminar on family welfare work. The women considered such things as the history of social work, they read extensively in related areas, and they attended lectures on such subjects as physical and mental health, juvenile delinquency and child welfare. Periodically thereafter, the Relief Society offered study institutes and fieldwork experience in different localities.

An interesting and unusual feature of Mormon welfare work during the first part of the twentieth century was its continued belief that the causes of poverty were more environmental than innate, and that distress increased as modern life became more complex. As chief spokesman for Church welfare during those years, the Relief Society listed physical and mental illness, unemployment, old age, disaster,

44In 1932, for example, Amy B. Lyman reported that by that time, sixty-five had been held in thirty-six different locations, with a total attendance of approximately 3,000. By 1932, seventy-two stake social service aids had received field work training of about 100 hours each, twenty-four of the regulars in the Welfare Department had received extended training and training working within the department, fifteen entered the professional field, and twelve became members of the American Association of Social Workers. See Lyman, "Social Work."
lack of training, and mismanagement as the prime causes of indigence.

The work of the health organizations and the Relief Society, then, provided the only real system of welfare services in the Church after the decline of the Utah united orders in the 1880s. Throughout its first years of existence, the Church had struggled to gain its economic independence. It had encouraged thrift, started industries, created employment for members without jobs, and stood ready to help needy, faithful Latter-day Saints. With the rising numbers of members and a new-found prosperity, however, the Church placed concern for the poor in a secondary position and concentrated much of its efforts on correcting misunderstandings about the Church at home and abroad, stabilizing its institutions, overcoming slanderous publicity, ending political embroilments, and adjusting the Church program to rapid urbanization and industrialization. A spirit of altruism and brotherhood prevailed, yet the Church had become too large for each member to become intimately concerned about the welfare of every other member. Church leaders placed more emphasis on the duty of family members to care for their own, and bishops were given almost complete responsibility (without coordination or guidance) for directing welfare work in their respective wards.

The tendency toward individualism presented a real problem to the Church beginning in the early 1920s. As the Saints became more prosperous, some wards succeeded in completely abolishing poverty within their boundaries. But as prosperity increased, individualism gained predominance over cooperation. Bishops of the wealthier wards, forgetting their obligation to other members of the Church, failed to press for a collection of the monthly fast offering, and the burden of poor relief fell heavily upon the wards comprised of poorer members. Thus welfare ceased to be an organized Church-wide effort.

Mormons might have realized that they had lost much of their exclusiveness, identity, and economic independence when a severe depression hit the agricultural areas of Utah and the rest of the nation in the early 1920s. During World War I and the years following it, agriculture had become increasingly more specialized. As production rose, farm prices fell. Farmers, struggling to maintain their standard of living increased the size of their farms, purchased more modern machinery, and thus aggravated the economic situation.

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Bowen, Church Welfare Plan, pp. 135-36.
Partly due to the inability of some to compete under these conditions and partly due to the attractiveness of industrial work in the cities, families, and single individuals often moved from rural areas to urban centers. During this migration from the country to the city, many farms were lost through the inability of owners to pay taxes and others were left idle, only to deteriorate and lose value. Latter-day Saints followed these nationwide trends. Great numbers of them congregated in the more densely-settled areas, and cast the occupation of their forefathers aside for industrial employment. It seemed that American farms had ceased to perform the function of absorbing the unemployed and providing a place of self-sufficiency.\textsuperscript{46} Mormonism lost much of its agrarian flavor.

On the other hand, between 1919 and 1929, American businessmen saw the greatest acceleration in economic growth in the history of the nation. Increased business activity meant more jobs, higher incomes, and much speculation and buying on credit. Mormons, relying increasingly upon business and industry as a means of livelihood, naturally participated in the business boom of the day. Throughout the decade, however, Church leaders counseled members against getting in bondage to debt, and condemned waste, extravagance, and spendthrift living. They urged instead that members be frugal and industrious and live within their means.\textsuperscript{47} Church leaders also advised Latter-day Saints not to seek after wealth as an end and purpose in itself. "If used properly it is a great benefit and blessing to mankind. But if sought for simply to satisfy one's appetites and desires in a carnal way it will prove a curse rather than a blessing," Sylvester Q. Cannon taught.\textsuperscript{48}

At the peak of this agricultural stagnation and business acceleration, the dark days of economic depression descended. Following the stockmarket crash in October 1929, previously wealthy men became poor as fortunes were wiped out and factories, businesses, and banks closed their doors. Industrial expansion ceased, and agr-

\textsuperscript{46}J. H. Paul, "Land Poor!" \textit{Improvement Era} 34 (January 1931): 135-36.

\textsuperscript{47}Almost every Church leader at one time or another discussed this subject and laid emphasis on its importance in furthering the progress and happiness of Latter-day Saints. One of President Grant's most pointed statements was made at the April conference of the Church in 1926: "I want to say to you that those who discount their future, who run into debt for the ordinary necessities of life and for the luxuries of life, are laying burdens upon themselves that will come back with compound interest to cause them great trouble and humiliation." \textit{Deseret News}, 17 September 1932, Church Section. These admonitions continued throughout the 1920s. See also W. Seegmiller and Anthony W. Ivins, "The Bondage of Debt," \textit{Deseret News}, 16 January 1932, Church Section.

cultural markets dried up. During 1929 and 1930, national farm income dropped some fifteen to twenty percent and this was followed by another drop of twenty percent during 1932 and 1933. When the depression deepened, employers cut work forces in farm-related supply, processing, and transportation industries.40

As business adjusted to depressed conditions and agriculture reduced its labor force, millions were thrown out of work. The number of unemployed increased from 1,499,000 in 1929 to 4,284,000 in 1931. By 1933, the number of jobless had increased to 12,-634,000, encompassing over one-fourth of the nation’s labor force. During the 1920s, people had lived extravagantly, failing to lay up provisions for hard times. When they lost their jobs during the 1930s, they had no money for either rent or food. Relief rolls became overburdened, breadlines formed, and want, hunger, and despondency threatened. With “Hoovervilles” dotting the outskirts of large cities and hunger marches in the nation’s capital, the time seemed ripe for social change and economic experimentation.50

The Depression served also to stimulate poor relief activity among the Mormons. At the beginning of the financial collapse, Church authorities expressed a genuine desire to provide for the welfare of their people. Remembering anew that temporal as well as spiritual salvation were cardinal doctrines of Mormonism, the Church accordingly offered the membership much practical advice: keep out of debt, patronize home industry, and pay tithes and offerings.53

To the question, “Can the Depression be cured?” Church leaders responded affirmatively, stressing that “despondency and pessimism will never better the situation.”52 They also emphasized that prosperity would return when men discarded selfishness, strife, and bitterness, and reestablished brotherhood in economic relations.53

George F. Richards of the Council of the Twelve, reminding Saints of the Church’s plan of fasting and giving of fast offerings for the care of the poor, remarked that if Church members had

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40 Economist Irving Fisher pointed out that increasing mechanization throughout the 1920s had actually produced a substantial employment lag long before the depression struck in 1929 and that large numbers of the unemployed were layoffs from the building and manufacturing industries. Joseph F. Merrill, “The Problem of Unemployment,” Improvement Era 42 (December 1939): 716; address by Henry D. Taylor, “The Principles of the Welfare Plan,” 16 May 1962, typescript, Church Archives.
44 Ibid., pp. 5-6.
lived fully the law of tithing and fast offering, they would not need government assistance. And in 1930, the Presiding Bishopric of the Church sent out a statement suggesting various methods of treating charity cases. It placed responsibility for care of the worthy poor upon the ward bishopric, and urged Relief Society officers, who operated under the direction of the bishop, not only to use tact, sympathy, and common sense in their labors, but at the same time to secure training in the essentials of social service. "The important thing in relief work is to help people to help themselves," the Bishopric urged.

Since in Mormon principle and under many state laws relatives were held responsible for caring for those in need, the Church decided to limit financial assistance to emergency cases, and even then provide relief in only a supplementary way:

Our efforts should be directed largely toward methods of permanent relief, such as, —securing employment; providing free medical assistance; helping families, where necessary, to secure financial aid from the sources above mentioned; and assisting in the budgeting of the family income. Ward authorities should undertake to see to it that the family secures the relief needed to put them on their feet.

Priesthood quorums were consequently urged to assume responsibility for helping their members find employment. And ward bishops were asked to appoint a ward employment committee, composed of a high priest, a seventy, an elder, and a representative from the Relief Society, to function in conjunction with a proposed stake employment committee. Recognizing that much of the economic achievement of the Mormon people in the past had accrued from their willingness to work together in a spirit of tolerance, Church authorities urged cooperation among the Saints similar to that of the earlier period.

Church efforts at relief, however, provoked only a feeble response. The pioneer virtues of independence, thrift, and diligence had long since been eroded as twentieth century Mormons continued the process of secularization and accommodation to the national pattern which had begun during the 1890s. Weaned from their

55 Ibid.
57 See Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, pp. 380-412.
self-supporting ways and their "do-for-themselves" attitude, and feeling the pinch of depression like everyone else, Mormons consequently clambered aboard the federal relief wagon. In 1932, normally Republican Utah, Idaho, and Arizona went Democratic to support the new administration which proffered economic relief to a suffering populace. The response was not so much political as it was a political necessity. There was a real need among the Mormons.

In addition, Church authorities emphasized that it was the major function of the government to promote the general welfare. "This is the one cause that ranks above all others in bringing about the social justice so much desired in governments," one editorial in the Deseret News reminded the public. With most Mormons being faithful taxpayers, moreover, it seemed only logical that those in need should accept tax benefits.

By early 1931, and with little functioning welfare machinery itself, the Church leaned heavily in favor of joint efforts with the federal government for ending the Depression. The nation as a whole tended to believe that the Depression would be of short duration; moreover, in 1931, the federal government was still attempting to stimulate local philanthropy by reminding people that relief was a local problem. During that year local community chests managed to raise ten percent more than during the previous year, yet the inadequacy of local relief showed up in statistics which revealed that seventy-five percent of relief came from public funds.

Beginning in 1932, then, the federal government saw the need of funding relief through state tax arrangements. The action seemed justified when private donations during the year dropped some twenty-two percent, forcing ninety percent of relief costs upon public sources.

Finally in July 1932, Washington acknowledged the need for national efforts to aid the poor and passed the Emergency Construction Act with an appropriation of $300 million to be administered through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. Governors of the various states received strict warning that the funds represented only supplements to their own resources, yet within the first

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88By 1935, 88,000 of the Church's 658,000 members were on relief rolls. See Cannon, "Facing the Economic Situation."
year, all but $70 million of the original appropriation (which had been intended for a two-year period) had been depleted.62

With the depression worsening and no promise of respite, the federal government instituted its first antipoverty program, involving regulation, stimulation, and unemployment relief to achieve economic recovery. It poured millions of dollars into make-work projects, which could have been modeled after the Brigham Young efforts the century before, and into other ameliorative measures.63 With the establishment of the public employment office in 1933, the Works Progress Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps, and the National Youth Administration emerged, providing work opportunities for thousands of people. And with the passage of the Social Security Act in 1935, President Roosevelt moved to the political left as he allowed the nation to take the unprecedented step of providing direct relief for its constituency. As a result, a national program of old age assistance, general public relief, and unemployment insurance solidified. The failure of private means had necessitated governmental action at the national level.

Throughout the first year of the Roosevelt administration, the Church continued to support increased federal relief activity as well as governmental attempts to stimulate local philanthropy. At the Church conference in 1933, Presiding Bishop Sylvester Q. Cannon quoted President Roosevelt when he urged that

we must redouble our efforts to care for those who still need relief, to prevent disintegration of home life, and to stand by the victims of depression until it is definitely past. The federal government cannot do the whole job. Every community and every state must do their share.64

And a message from the Church Presidency spoke of the "beneficent government" and appealed

to members of the Church who may be in financial circumstances to justify, to give liberally in support of the agencies which have been set up by the Government, the States, the Counties, cities and private charitable organizations, to the end that the necessities of the needy may be provided for during the present winter.65

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62Ibid.

63Harry Hopkins himself acknowledged his indebtedness to Brigham Young for originating the idea of work relief. See "Origin of WPA Plan Laid in Utah," Deseret News, 10 September 1936. Actually, however, some local governments had been using the idea of public work years before Brigham Young adopted the idea.

64"Conference Report, 6 October 1933; see also "The Crisis—Our Opportunity," Deseret News, 20 August 1932, Church Section.

65"A Message and Greetings from the First Presidency," Improvement Era 57 (December 1934):3. This attitude had been similarly expressed by the Church fol-
Yet as time progressed, the Church became increasingly more wary of the growing number of governmental "handouts." Although it recognized that it was often difficult to secure employment, it also continued to teach that idleness was a crime and that everyone who wants work should be able to obtain it. It therefore urged the federal and local governments to make work for the people. "For one to ask for work and not be able to obtain it is, so to say, asking for bread," one outspoken Church member wrote. "We are willing and liberal enough to provide schools of various kinds to educate our children to better prepare them to fight the battles of life. Why should we not be as willing and eager to provide them labor as schools?" And in one editorial the Church argued that money should be spent, not as gifts to those who are hungry or need clothing, but in providing work for those who are unemployed. It suggested that road building or lining ditches and canals with concrete would create good federal employment programs. And for those "honest" unemployed who were then receiving relief, Church leaders suggested that they engage in some home improvement projects such as remodeling the home or working in the garden. The Church stressed work as the most important basis for economic security. No one should be allowed to suffer,

lowing the passage of the Industrial Recovery Act: "In order to be as helpful as possible in the efforts of the President to relieve the conditions of distress throughout the country, the Church gladly joins in the measures the President has inaugurated. . . ." Editorial, Improvement Era 36 (September 1933):672. And Mormons in general probably shared the enthusiasm expressed by Hugo Anderson of the Salt Lake Community Chest in hoping that "the federal government, by assuming the relief burden, will take every possible step to prevent unemployment in the future. This may be one of the lasting benefits of federal aid. The government may develop a preventative medicine, just as England did after the enactment of the poor laws in Queen Elizabeth's time." Salt Lake Tribune, 5 April 1933. See also Conference Report, 7 October 1933, pp. 65-65.


Joshua H. Midgley, "A United Order of Labor, Being an Exposition of the Causes of Poverty and Suggesting an Effective Remedy," 1900, pamphlet in Church Archives. Midgley continued by stating that "Whether worthy or unworthy, the poor are our brothers, and on the ground of common humanity we owe them our help and sympathy. It is easier to sympathize with the worthy than with the unworthy poor. Yet the poor who are so as the result of their own faults are really more in need of both our pity and help. The work of lifting them up to the level of self-respect and self-support is much harder than the mere giving them material aid. Yet nothing less than this is our duty. The mere tossing of pennies to the tramp and beggar is not by any means a satisfaction of their claim upon us. Indeed such indiscriminate giving does more harm than good. It increases rather than relieves pauperism and dependence. So that the first duty of charity is to refuse to give in this indiscriminate way. Either we must give more than food, clothes and money, or else we must give nothing at all. 'Indiscriminate giving merely adds fuel to the flames.'"

Deseret News, 7 August 1931.


Deseret News, 19 September 1931, Church Section.
the Church stressed, but at the same time, great care should be taken that those not needing relief should not sponge off the government. "I believe that every able-bodied person who needs help should give labor or service for the relief that is extended," President Grant stated. "Any other policy is destructive of good citizenship."71

The Church became rightfully alarmed in 1933 when it learned that one out of every four families in Utah was receiving relief, and that Utah had expended more per capita than any other state with the exception of Illinois.72 Moreover, Church authorities received numerous reports about able-bodied Latter-day Saints who accepted government relief yet who had sufficient cattle, hay, and chickens to provide for their needs. J. Reuben Clark, Jr., former U. S. Ambassador to Mexico and first counselor in the First Presidency, remarked in 1933 that "the thought [among Latter-day Saints] that we should get all we can from the government because everybody else is getting it, is unworthy of us as American citizens. It will debauch us."73

Foreseeing the disastrous consequences of continuing the "character-weakening process of doling out relief on such a wholesale scale," and facing the imminent possibility of the discontinuance or drastic curtailment of federal relief programs, the First Presidency began urging Church members to prepare to shoulder the burden of providing for their own welfare.74 The government had simply made it too easy for Mormons to lose their compunctions and accept government gratuities.75

As early as 1933, the First Presidency considered the relief problem serious enough to request all stake presidents to conduct a survey to determine the extent to which the Mormon citizenry were prepared to take care of themselves in an emergency situation. Stake

71Conference Report, 6 October 1933, pp. 4-10.
72Utah was expending $5.00 per capita when the national average was only $1.87. The national average also showed that one out of every seven families was on relief. Salt Lake Tribune, 5 April 1933.
73Deseret News, 8 October 1933.
74"The Mormons Offer the Nation an Example of Cooperative Relief," Washington Post, 31 May 1936; Deseret News, 2 September 1933. In 1935 Roosevelt had announced his intention of discontinuing federal aid and shifting the burden to states and localities.
75"The cries of those in distress must be hushed by our bounty," the First Presidency announced. "The works of the Lord require this from us. A feeling of common humanity bids it from us. . . If we shall full observe the law, the Lord will pour out His richest blessings upon us; we shall be better and happier than ever before in our history; and peace and prosperity will come to us." A Message from the First Presidency Concerning Preparation for Relief Measures, Millennial Star, 12 October 1933, pp. 657-59.
leaders were instructed to indicate resources they had available, areas of need, and employment opportunities in order to plan for a comprehensive Church relief program. An opening remark in the survey stated that

the Lord will not hold us guiltless if we permit any of our people to go hungry, or to be cold, unclad, or unhoused during the approaching winter. Particularly will he consider us gravely blameworthy if those who have heretofore paid their tithes and offerings to the Church when they had employment, shall now be permitted to suffer when the general adversity has robbed them of their means of livelihood.\(^7\)

The First Presidency thus turned to the organizations which Joseph Smith had set up during the early days of the Church, with the objective of coordinating them and making them function as successful relief agencies. The Presidency urged ward and stake leaders to develop private employment, while at the same time stressing that "relief, except to the sick, infirm, or disabled, should not be extended as charity. Our faithful Church members are independent, self-respecting, and self-reliant; they do not desire charity."\(^7\) In addition, each bishop and stake president was directed to provide other less fortunate wards and stakes with food, supplies, and other necessities. An editorial in the Deseret News called the instruction from the First Presidency a noteworthy phase in cooperative efforts against poverty in Church history and said that the Church program would be for those whom public work had not brought relief.\(^7\)

It was hoped that results from the survey would enable the Church Presidency to issue instructions for relief work for the July 1933 to July 1934 period.\(^7\) The survey showed that 88,460 (18 percent of the entire Church membership) received relief; that 80,247 (16.5 percent) received relief from Church funds; that 13,500 were on relief because of unemployment; that approximately 11,500 to 16,500 persons received relief who either did not need it or who had farms that might, if farmed, have kept them off relief; that county relief probably totaled more than five and a half million dollars and Church relief approximately a quarter of a million dol-

\(^{7}\) First Presidency to the presidents of stakes and counselors, 28 August 1933, Church Archives; see also letter from David A. Smith (first counselor in the Presiding Bishopric) to ward bishops, 28 August 1933, Church Archives.

\(^{7}\) "A Message Concerning Preparation for Relief Measures."

\(^{7}\) Deseret News, 2 September 1933.

\(^{7}\) This period was chosen because the winter season occupies a two-year period.
lars during the year 1935; and that county relief cost approximately $5.41 per person and Church relief $2.48 per person per month. The investigation thus confirmed the Church leadership’s premonition that heretofore active and responsible members were becoming dependent on and subservient to the “easy” relief money policies of the government. Church leaders asked what had happened to the once virile and self-contained religious commonwealth. Then they recalled the ideal which Brigham Young had expounded some fifty years before: “My experience has taught me, and it has become a principle with me, that it is never any benefit to give, out and out to any man.” Within a few years, that sentiment would be both the banner of rebellion as the Mormons rejected government welfarism in favor of their own “Security Program” and the abrupt end of a comparatively passive chapter in the history of social welfare activity among the Latter-day Saints.
Mormondom's Lost Generation: The Novelists of the 1940s

Edward A. Geary

Wallace Stegner, in his essay on the writer in the American West, laments that Westerners have been unable "to get beyond the celebration of the heroic and mythic frontier." He says,

We cannot find, apparently, a present and living society that is truly ours and that contains the material of a deep commitment. . . . Instead, we must live in exile and write of anguishes not our own, or content ourselves with the bland troubles, the remembered violences, the already endured hardships, of a regional success story without an aftermath.¹

But perhaps this tendency is characteristic of regional literature in general, not just of Western regional literature. Faulkner has his heroic myth of the South and his war with time and his ceaseless effort to recover the past. Willa Cather's Nebraska novels are nostalgic; My Antonia has as its epigraph "The best days are the first to go." Thomas Hardy's sympathetic characters are all out of tune with their times, seeking a lost community and wholeness, wandering (to borrow Arnold's phrase) "between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born."² Irving Howe has identified this regional quality even in the urban Jewish writers of the mid-twentieth century. Indeed, Howe defines regionalism not primarily as a response to place, as it is often defined, but as a response to a cultural moment. A regional literary movement, he says, is an eruption of creative vitality in response to a cultural breakdown of some kind. The regional writer celebrates a more heroic age and laments its passing.³

¹A paper read at the second annual meeting of the Association for Mormon Letters, 8 October 1977, University of Utah.
²Edward A. Geary is associate professor of English at Brigham Young University.
⁴Matthew Arnold, "Stanzas from the Grand Chartreuse," lines 85-86.
There was such a regional movement in Mormon country in the 1940s. It was a rather sudden eruption. As late as 1938, Bernard DeVoto predicted failure for anyone who tried "to compose fiction out of Joseph Smith and the Mormon people." He declared that "God, the best story-teller, has made a better story out of Joseph and the Mormon wandering than fiction will ever equal" and called his own Mormon novel "the best book I am never going to write." At that time the Mormon story did indeed seem strangely resistant to fictional treatment. After the "home literature" movement in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, there had been very little full-length fiction published on Mormon themes for some thirty years. But things were soon to change. In 1939 Vardis Fisher's Harper Prize novel, Children of God: An American Epic, appeared. It was followed in the next ten years by at least twenty novels on Mormon subjects by at least a dozen different authors, plus such significant nonfiction works as Fawn M. Brodie's No Man Knows My History (1945), which perhaps should be read as a novel, and Wallace Stegner's Mormon Country (1942). Juanita Brooks' The Mountain Meadows Massacre (1950) and Austin and Alta Fife's Saints of Sage and Saddle (1956) were published after the 1940s but are products of the same regionalist impulse that produced the earlier works.

Most of the writers who emerged during the 1940s were born in the first two decades of this century, a transitional time in Mormon country, and most grew up in small towns where the transition was perhaps most strongly felt. (It is interesting to see how few scenes, in all of these novels, are set in Salt Lake

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City.) The pioneer era was over. Virtually all of the arable land had been occupied. The towns had reached maturity; the temples and tabernacles were completed; good substantial houses had taken the place of the simpler dwellings of the first settlers, as one can easily see on a visit to Ephraim or Scipio. Indeed, the rural-agrarian economy had reached the saturation point, with a consolidation of land holdings and rural depopulation already under way. Lorene Pearson, in *The Harvest Waits*, and Virginia Sorensen, in *On This Star*, show this process in operation, as the more successful and ambitious farmers buy up the land of the less successful, leaving them either to remain in town as poor, occasional laborers or to migrate to the cities. Economically, Utah was being pulled into the American mainstream. Culturally, too, for the Manifesto and Statehood had signaled a decisive accommodation with the "outside."

The sense of change was all the stronger because there were still vivid remnants of the past. Every town still had, in the second and third decades of this century, residents who had been at Nauvoo or had crossed the Plains with the handcart companies, hardy pioneers telling their stories at Old Folks' Day parties and Black Hawk Encampments. Every town still had polygamous families or wives abandoned after the Manifesto. Every town still had its immigrant converts whose English or Danish or German traditions enriched the community life. Maurine Whipple, speaking of the period when she was writing *The Giant Joshua*, has said,

"Some of the old people were alive then—Uncle Charlie Seegmiller was 95, Aunt Jane Blake was 90 something—and I just went and talked to them. I got so immersed in that era—reading everything and wandering the hills and sitting upon the red hills and visualizing everything—that it was almost as if I had lived through it myself."

Virginia Sorensen has spoken similarly of her "deep consciousness about the so-immediate and yet so-remote past of town after town, valley after valley," and of the sense of living "where nothing is long ago."

The regional writers of the 1940s found their sense of "cultural breakdown," I think, in this ending of an era of Mormon

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isolation and self-sufficiency, in the stagnation and decline of rural Mormondom. Several of the writers participated in the exodus from Utah in the 1920s and 1930s, as thousands of people left the valleys of their birth for the promise of a richer life in California or the East. For many, leaving the region meant leaving the Church, for they could not clearly separate their Mormon-ness from their Utah-ness or their awareness of the economic stagnation of the region from a sense of the decline of the Church. Some left reluctantly, others eagerly to escape what they saw as the provincial narrowness of their home towns.

But as provincial people have always discovered, it is not easy to escape from one’s native province. Nearly all of the Mormon novels of the 1940s have their roots in the author’s effort to come to terms with his or her Mormon heritage. These are expatriate novels. They resemble the works of the so-called “lost generation” of the 1920s in their ambivalence towards a tradition which seems to have failed yet which still offers the only available spiritual anchor against a tide of meaninglessness.

The Mormon regional novels of the 1940s fall into two groups according to the era they treat. Some have pioneer settings, including Fisher’s *Children of God*, Paul Bailey’s *For This My Glory*, and Virginia Sorensen’s *A Little Lower Than the Angels*, which deal with Missouri, Nauvoo, and crossing the plains to the Great Basin. Maurine Whipple’s *The Giant Joshua* and Lorene Pearson’s *The Harvest Waits* are pioneer novels dealing with the settlement process within Utah, in Whipple’s case Saint George, and in Pearson’s a remote southern Utah village called “Joppa” whose actual prototype, if it has one, I have been unable to discover. The other group of novels is set in what we might call the provincial period of Mormon history, when the communities have grown settled and often rigid. Blanche Cannon’s *Nothing Ever Happens Sunday Morning* takes place on a single day in 1900 in the town of “Lakeview,” which is somewhere south of Ogden. Virginia Sorensen’s *On This Star* and *The Evening and the Morning* are both set in the 1920s in Manti, which is called “Templeton” in the earlier novel. Jean Woodman’s *Glory Spent* and Richard Scowcroft’s *Children of the Covenant* are set in the 1920s or ’30s, Scowcroft’s novel in Ogden, Woodman’s in Provo, which she calls “Melburn.” Bailey’s *Song Everlasting* begins in the ’30s, in “Millard City,” moves to Los Angeles and then back to Millard City at the end of World War II. Samuel Taylor’s *Heaven Knows Why*
is set in a valley west of Tooele in the years after the War, though its folkways seem to belong to the 1920s instead of the 1940s.

In general, the pioneer novels portray a more heroic life and more admirable characters, but similar themes run through almost all of the novels. The central conflict is nearly always between individualism and authority. Virginia Sorensen has said that the writer tends to be "in the middle" and "incapable of severe orthodoxies," trying "to somehow balance the importance of the individual (his respected and ancient concern) with the importance of the great events that wash people into vast groups and crowds, into anonymous armies."9 The founding of the Church and its growth, migrations, and settlement in the West are "great events," the more so because of the Church's authoritarian structure. The settlement of Mormon country was communal rather than individualistic. Villages did not simply grow up around a crossroads store; instead people were "called" on settlement missions and went to the site with their social and ecclesiastical organization already established, in most cases. Communal values took precedence over individual tastes; obedience to authority was more important than individual judgment; and the achieving of communal goals mattered more than personal fulfillment, or rather personal fulfillment was to be attained through the achieving of communal goals. The pioneer novels show their authors' awareness that the distinctive achievements of Mormon country were the product of this highly organized approach. The irrigation systems, especially, are a symbol of community solidarity in The Giant Joshua and The Harvest Waits. Nevertheless, the sympathetic characters in these novels are the ones who experience a tension between the demands of the community and their desires to think and act for themselves. The protagonist is nearly always a character "in the middle": something of an individualist yet involved with church and community, caught between his or her instinct for freedom and the demands of loyalty and obedience. Sometimes, as in the case of Paul Bailey's David Warren, they are able finally to reconcile the opposing pulls of their lives. More often, like Sorensen's Mercy Baker and Whipple's Clory McIntyre, they die with the tension unresolved.

This conflict recurs so regularly in the novels of the 1940s that it is possible to outline a single "story" with certain basic figures that reappear in different forms. This story first appears, so far as I have been able to discover, in 1936 in George Snell's

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9Sorensen, "Is It True?" p. 285.
Root, Hog, and Die. It does not seem, however, that Snell's book had a direct influence on the later novels. The central figure, as I have said, is the character "in between," who can neither escape from the community nor feel comfortable within it. Sometimes, as with Sorensen's Mercy Baker, this character is frankly skeptical about the claims of the Church. Sometimes, like her Kate Alexander, the character is a rebel against the authoritarian constraints of the community. Most often, however, the character is divided, wanting in a way to become a wholehearted member of the community yet also longing to escape, to find some mode of life less filled with hardships, more rewarding culturally and aesthetically. In this category we may place with more or less appropriateness Snell's Mary Brent, Whipple's Clory McIntyre, Sorensen's Chel Bowen, Pearson's Sara Bastian, and Cannon's Matilda Benson. As is apparent, this character is most often a woman. The second figure is usually a man. This character, in our recurrent story, is firm in the faith and committed to the community values to the point of narrow-mindedness. Often he begins as a simple and appealing person, like Snell's Jim Brent, who is barefoot in a pigsty when the missionary finds him and changes his life. Sometimes he retains that simplicity, as Jean Woodman's Hans Sorenson does. More often, however, he slowly grows fanatical and ambitious and finally tyrannical to the central figure, who is usually his wife. In this category are Whipple's Abijah McIntyre, Pearson's Angus Bastian, Cannon's Eben Benson. The third figure is the child (for most of these novels involve a second generation and some a third), sensitive and perceptive, who will eventually fulfill his mother's rebellious impulses by leaving the community for a life both creative and individualistic: Ezekiel Brent, Lucy Bastian, Marian Matthews, and (ironically) Jasper Benson.

A fourth recurring figure is the one we might call the liberating Gentile, an outsider of culture and charm who opens up a vision of freedom and fulfillment beyond the narrow provincial boundaries of the valley. In Nothing Ever Happens Sunday Morning the liberating Gentile is a free-thinking drifter who comes to town with a bagful of books and wins the heart of the bishop's daughter, enticing her to read such subversive things as the poetry of Whitman. In Glory Spent it is an outsider attending BYU who encourages Marian Matthews to develop her talents as an actress so that in the end she goes off to New York in search of a career

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10George Snell, Root, Hog, and Die (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1956).
instead of marrying her returned missionary. In *Children of the Covenant* the liberating Gentile wins his Mormon bride because, as he puts it, he was “the only other person in Ogden who had read a book.”\(^{11}\) In *On This Star* the liberating Gentile is not a Gentile at all but a local boy who has gone out into the great world, gained knowledge, and lost his faith, and who now has come back to Templeton to win the love of his brother’s fiancée. In this case, the seducing device is music, combined, again, with the poetry of Whitman.

Through the variations on this central story of zeal and reservation, crude energy and afflicted sensitivity, dedication and liberation, there emerges a fairly consistent view of Mormon history which may be broadly outlined as follows. The Church in its early stages could appeal powerfully to the imagination because it represented a break with the past and the chance of a new start, because of its social vision of a righteous and egalitarian community, and because of the charisma and humanity of its leaders. It attracted good and idealistic people who were tried in the fire of persecution and made strong for the heroic task of building a civilization. However, the seeds of ultimate failure were present from the beginning, in the self-serving and possibly self-deluding tendencies of the leaders, and in the authoritarian system which valued conformity above creativity and zeal above wisdom. With the end of the pioneer period, the heroes disappeared, to be replaced by men of smaller souls and narrower vision. The social vision was compromised. (Interestingly, by this reading of Mormon history both the institution of polygamy and its abandonment can be seen as signs of corruption.) Finally, the church whose first adherents had expected to fill the earth became merely an odd sect in a remote and backward corner of the West.

Obviously, this is a dead-end interpretation of Mormon history. It is also a humanistic interpretation, as is made clear at the end of *The Giant Joshua* when the author has Erastus Snow justify the Church not because its doctrine is true but because it stands for an “idea”:

“You may lose, Clorinda Agatha. I may lose. Zion may lose, for the time. But the Idea”—he saw all those myriads, the oppressed and downtrodden, marching hand in hand straight into the dawn of a better world—“the Idea can’t lose.”\(^{12}\)


Some of the novels present this view in rather simplistic terms. In *Nothing Ever Happens Sunday Morning*, we get nothing but the dead end of the story. Bishop Benson, scheming and hypocritical, is almost a parody figure, and there is no glimpse of heroism to be seen anywhere. In Richard Scowcroft’s *Children of the Covenant*, the first generation Brother Burton is made of stern pioneer stuff. “Strength was in his square jaw, and condescension in his manner of looking down at anyone to whom he spoke.” He was one of the builders of Ogdæ, and when he died he had the largest monument in the cemetery. His daughter Esther inherits his ambition and drive. She tells her sister, “You want a man who can build a house and then a town and have schools named after him and streets.”

Unable to find such a man, Esther settles for a shoe salesman, hoping to prod him to greatness. When she fails at this she settles her hopes on her son Burton Curtis. But Burton is not made of the same stuff as his grandfather. He comes home from his mission, discovers that his girl friend has taken up smoking, and proceeds to go to pieces. Where Scowcroft sees decline, Jean Woodman sees simply an inevitable process of maturation, outgrowing foolish notions. In her reading of Mormon history, there are three generations from faith to freedom. The grandfather, Hans Sorenson, maintains until the end “an absolute, unquestioning faith” in the Church. His daughter, Grethe, and her husband “had never shared the vision of their fathers, whatever that vision had been,” but had been willing either to conform or to rebel inwardly and quietly.

Marian represented the third step in the cycle. Except that it had shaped her mode of life socially, the Church had never held any fundamental significance for her. In all probability she had never realized that Hans had ever seen a glorious vision or that her mother had ever doubted or that her father had learned acceptance.

In these novels there is little of the nostalgic attachment and ambivalence that I spoke of earlier. However, the best novels in the group are rich with these qualities which are one source of their power. Maurine Whipple resents authoritarianism and polygamy and the demand to sacrifice more than really needs to be sacrificed. She cannot see how the pioneer heritage can be made viable in the present and the future. Yet no single book gives a more powerful sense of that heritage than *The Giant Joshua*. Though the

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12Scowcroft, *Children of the Covenant*, pp. 6, 14.
author's main sympathies are with Clory McIntyre, her character "in the middle," they extend to the authority figures as well. Her Brigham Young is a brilliantly drawn sketch of the man of the Journal of Discourses, combining an overarching vision with a love for detail that finds nothing too trivial to dabble in, even to burning his fingers on a batch of soap. Her Erastus Snow is a character of great humanity and complexity. His inner conflict comes out most clearly in his relation to John D. Lee. He owes his life to Lee and is convinced, moreover, that Lee is being made a scapegoat for others whose responsibility for the Mountain Meadows massacre is at least as great as his. But he is persuaded by Brigham Young that Lee must be sacrificed for the good of the community. He is somewhat like Melville's Captain Vere who, faced with a situation which defies satisfactory solution, chooses, as Yvor Winters puts it, "to act according to established principle, which supports public order, and for the margin of difference between established principle and the facts of the particular situation, to accept it as private tragedy."\(^{15}\)

Lorene Pearson's little-known novel The Harvest Waits is another fine expression of this ambivalence. Her Bishop Bastian is a good picture of the zealot who is willing to lose his family and even destroy the very village he has founded rather than compromise the United Order he was called to establish. There is a great variety of characters in this novel, providing a panoramic view of the growth and decline of a Mormon village and a range of individual destinies. Pearson has something important to say about the nature of responsibility as she shows what happens to Hiram Watt, the one man to refuse to enter the Order, when he becomes bishop after Bastian's death.

If Whipple and Pearson are our best interpreters in fiction of the pioneer period, Virginia Sorensen is the author who writes most perceptively about the provincial period. Her first novel, A Little Lower Than the Angels, set in Nauvoo, is marred by sentimentality and an unsure grasp of materials. She reaches her full power in the novels set in the Manti she knew as a child. On This Star falls into melodrama at the end, but The Evening and the Morning is a well-finished study of three generations of women. Sorensen perhaps realizes regionalist's ambivalence more completely than any other Mormon writer has done. Her sympathetic characters are all skep-

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tics and rebels to some degree, but they also acknowledge the inseparable ties that bind them to the community and a nostalgic loyalty which amounts almost to a kind of faith. Kate Alexander, in *The Evening and the Morning*, has rejected the moral, social, and religious norms of provincial Mormonism and has moved to Los Angeles and become a social worker and a feminist. But in the novel she has come back to Sanpete Valley to try to pull together the loose ends of her life, and she feels the pull of the land and the town, the clustered barns and spreading irrigated fields. On the morning of the twenty-fourth of July she thinks, individualist though she is, "If only a great poet could be born here to make the kind of poetry the story of the water deserves!" And she fully understands that the story of the water is a communal story of faith and sacrifice. Similarly, Erik Erikson, in *On this Star*, has rejected the faith in favor of a kind of humanism. "God wouldn't make a heaven for just a few," he says, "for those who happened to stumble on a certain valley or a certain word." Yet he is the interpreter of the faith of those who live in the valley as he composes a musical work embodying their traditional songs. Erik is very much a man "in the middle." Whenever he comes back to the valley he feels "a rightness within himself, a sort of stay against confused loneliness. Nevertheless he would go away in September and would suffer the old splitting all over again." It is the old splitting that the Mormon regional novel reenacts again and again. It is that voice of expatriation which is the most poignant note of Mormon-dom's lost generation.

THE COMET

Leona Holbrook

We stood there together in an early year of my life, my father and I.
My head came up to his knee as we stood in the dark of the fresh spring night;
We looked at the night sky, bright stars pressed into the dark overhead vault;
He could see the comet and I was satisfied and fulfilled to be with him;
I was rewarded and encouraged by his vision, by his knowledge and interpretations.
He lifted me in his strong arms and together we looked at the sweep of sky;
We maintained the watch under the night skies of passing spring and summer.

His presence and his words and the enduring sky have held together the nights, the days and the years.
In the quest of the comet, the trust of youth, the sustaining assurance of the reality of the known within the vast realms of the unknown,
The years have brought the long view, the life view, and some of the wisdom of the world.
The high arch of the heavens span the days of my life, holding Halley’s comet from the beginning of my years until the end of my years.
Time and life and meaning have been brought together by the long sky watch.
We stood on the cool earth, my father and I, and together we looked for Halley’s comet.

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Being Equal in Earthly and Heavenly Power: The Idea of Stewardship in the United Order

A. Don Sorensen

This essay is about a central feature of what Mormons have come to call the United Order. It is a feature that is seen within Latter-day Saint scripture as being fundamental both to the temporal and eternal purposes of that order. In fact, Mormon scriptures describe this feature as being modeled after the order of heaven for the express purpose of preparing members for eternal life. The feature to which I am referring concerns the peculiar system of power that should characterize the organization of man’s temporal affairs. The relations of power in the United Order are to be uniquely nonhierarchical and nonauthoritarian, so that no man rules over another even in a benevolent way. Modern scripture refers to these relations as a system of “equal power.” This essay presents an analysis of this peculiar system in light of its eternal purposes and the order of heaven after which it is modeled.

Proceeding from the viewpoint of the individual steward whose divine dignity and eternal potential as a person find expression in how power should be organized on earth as it is in heaven, we first consider the idea of stewardship in connection with certain abstract doctrines and principles having to do with man’s temporal and eternal status as an agent. Then we examine how these doctrines and principles achieve concrete expression in the power structure of temporal organization.

STEWARSHIP AND MAN’S REVEALED STATUS AS AN AGENT

In many latter-day revelations the Lord explains why and how the Saints should organize themselves because His purposes cannot be separated from his means. The hows are uniquely designed to complement the whys. It is in this scriptural context of hows and whys that stewardship plays its role. To be a steward in the scrip-

A. Don Sorensen, associate professor of government at BYU, thanks the Curriculum Council and especially John Gardner for their assistance on this article.
tural sense is to occupy a position in the type of temporal organization that prepares a man for his role as an agent in eternal life. First we shall consider that end—the why—and then (in the next two sections) we shall see that the way in which the Saints are commanded to organize themselves is particularly designed to help them realize the end.

*The Stewardship Promise*

Consider the following scripture, which pertains to the organization of the Saints for the “regulation of their temporal affairs.” The Lord says:

... It must needs be that there be an organization of my people... for a permanent and everlasting establishment and order unto my church, to advance the cause, which ye have espoused, to the salvation of man, and to the glory of your Father who is in heaven.... (D&C 78:3-4)

Then he tells the Saints what this new order will prepare them for—provided, of course, that they obey the requirements being laid down.

For if you will that I give unto you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you. (D&C 78:7)

The Lord then commands the Saints to organize themselves “by a bond or everlasting covenant” (D&C 78:11) and provides additional details concerning the reason for this and other commandments of organization:

Behold, this is the preparation wherewith I prepare you... that among other things] you may come up unto the crown prepared for you, and be made rulers over many kingdoms.... (D&C 78:13-15)

Then the Lord promises: “And he that is a faithful and wise steward shall inherit all things” (D&C 78:22). This promise of “all things” includes being a ruler over many kingdoms, as mentioned above, for, as he says elsewhere: “And this shall be my seal and blessing upon you—a faithful and wise steward in the midst of mine house, a ruler in my kingdom” (D&C 101:61).

Let us note several general conclusions: First, the Lord requires his people to organize themselves in a special way for conducting their temporal affairs. He says more than once that “it must needs be done in mine own way” (D&C 104:16). Second, he says that
the commandments of organization (along with other commands) were given to prepare the Saints for a place in the celestial world, a point which his servants have always emphasized. For example, George Q. Cannon said:

The organization of society that exists in the heavens must exist on the earth; the same condition of society, so far as it is applicable to mortal beings, must exist here.\(^1\)

And according to Lorenzo Snow:

The system of union . . . which God has taken so much pains to reveal and make manifest, has been, and is, for the purpose of uniting the Latter-day Saints . . . and preparing them for exalta-
tion in his celestial kingdom, and also . . . preparing them here on this earth to live together as brethren. . . .\(^2\)

Finally, he promises that those who serve as wise and faithful stewards in the revealed order of temporal affairs will "inherit all things" and be made "rulers over many kingdoms." Hereafter this promise will be called the stewardship promise.

The Temporal and Eternal Status of Agency

No doubt what was just written about the how and whys of temporal organizations is familiar to many. But, even at the risk of stressing the obvious, we need to make several further points about the stewardship promise to set the stage for what follows. First, let us note one important part of what that promise comprehends. We read that those who inherit the celestial kingdom will be "equal in the bonds of heavenly things" (D&C 78:5). Now being equal in heavenly things includes being equal in power, for as the scriptures say, those who dwell in the presence of the Father are made "equal in power, and in might, and in dominion" (D&C 76:95). What is more, these positions of equality in the celestial world are positions of godhood in which each heir has "all power." In the words of the scriptures: "Then shall they be gods, because they have all power. . ." (D&C 132:20). Finally, it is in part by sharing equally all power that we become one with the Lord, "clothed upon," as he said, "even as I am, to be with me, that we maye be one" (D&C 29:13).

This, then, is part of what the stewardship promise comprehends.

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\(^1\)Journal of Discourses, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1855-
1886), 13:99 (cited hereafter as JD).

\(^2\)JD, 19:342.
For convenience of reference we propose to call this celestial possibility man’s eternal status as an agent, because it pertains to the power of agency, to the characteristics and attributes of godhood, and to the life of God, whose name is “Eternal.”

The revealed way of organizing temporal affairs has been designed partly to prepare us for that eternal status. But, as we shall see, part of the genius of that mode of organization lies in the way it gives concrete expression to man’s eternal status as an agent in its embryonic form. It enables man to act and not to be acted upon, to be an agent unto himself, after the likeness of his celestial status. We shall refer to this embryonic status as man’s temporal status as an agent, because it pertains to time and mortality as well as to the position of man in the ordering of temporal affairs.

We move now from a consideration of stewardship in relation to abstract doctrines and principles of eternal life to a consideration of stewardship in everyday life. This appears to be the Lord’s way with us—to make the abstract operational, to make everyday life here relevant in terms of eternal life. As we do this we shall proceed on the assumption that the Saints must be “united according to the union required by the law of the celestial kingdom . . .” because, as the Lord says, “Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom; otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself” (D&C 105:4-5). As we shall see, it is in the idea of stewardship that certain of these “principles” of “celestial law” combine to give form to man’s temporal status with the promise of eternal status if he is wise and faithful. This is what distinguishes the idea of stewardship in latter-day scripture.

THE STEWARDSHIP STRUCTURE OF AUTHORITY

We have seen that the commandments pertaining to organizations in which stewardship is a key idea aim at preparing man to take his place in the celestial world and to have all power equal with others. “If we want to get there, we must begin here, and learn the order that is to be there.” It would be surprising, then, if the revealed forms of organization did not reflect in their structures of authority the preparatory role they are meant to play. We would expect those structures to afford man unique opportunities for progressing toward eternal status. And this is what we do find.

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8See Moses 7:35; D&C 20:7, 28, 77, 79; and D&C 79:6.
9Orson Pratt in JD, 2:102.
However, anything approaching an adequate analysis of man's status as an agent in the ordering of everyday affairs would require that we distinguish and compare the positions of man as an agent in various sectors of society—in church, state, and economy. In the cities of Zion as in the present cities of the world, man's status as an agent would be a function of his status in each of these three interconnected areas of life. It would be interesting to examine scripture and the word of prophets on the status of human agency in these areas. We have much to learn about these matters. But the best we can do in this essay is to examine the structure of authority in what may be called a stewardship unit, e.g., a business unit, an agricultural unit, or a university unit.

Let's begin our consideration of the stewardship structure of authority with a quotation from the Prophet Joseph. Addressing the matter of consecration, he rejects the authoritarian and (by implication) democratic structures and emphasizes an essential feature of the stewardship model.

The matter of consecration must be done by the mutual consent of both parties; for to give the Bishop power to say how much every man shall have, and he be obliged to comply with the Bishop's judgment, is giving the Bishop more power than a king has; and upon the other hand, to let every man say how much he needs, and the Bishop be obliged to comply with his judgment, is to throw Zion into confusion, and make a slave of the Bishop. The fact is, there must be a balance or equilibrium of power, between the Bishop and the people, and thus harmony and good will may be preserved among you.  

The Prophet indicates that "harmony and good will may be preserved" when authority is shared. We believe that the Prophet, who understood these matters well, was thinking here of the "harmony" or "oneness" that the Lord commands us to attain. The reward for having achieved the oneness while on earth is, according to the Lord, "to be with me, that we may be one" (D&C 29:13).

Let us look more closely at this structure of power by examining some key scriptures from latter-day revelations. First, let's describe an outline of these powers (Figure 1 may help clarify this description) and then discuss what the scriptures call "equal power" in the light of this outline.

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6See also D&C 35:2; D&C 50:26-29; D&C 43; D&C 44; D&C 76:54-57; D&C 84:35-39; D&C 132:20.
Figure 1

The Structure of Power of a Stewardship Unit

1. Settle important disputes which arise in the various stewardship units
2. Ordain the presiding officer of the stewardship units under the council's direction
3. Help administer unit resources

1. Help give general direction as presiding officer to the stewardship unit
2. Help form individual stewardships
3. Receive an accounting from each steward as to his stewardship performance
4. Help determine the uses of certain resources

1. Counsel and consent of membership in general direction of stewardship unit
2. Voice and consent in uses of unit resources
3. Voice and consent in the calling of a presiding officer

1. Participate in forming his own stewardship
2. Decide how to carry out his own stewardship, which includes the right to employ needed available resources
3. Participate as an equal in unit affairs
The Powers of the Unit Membership as a Body

1. All things are to be done according to the "counsel" and "consent" of the unit (D&C 104:21, 36). It is significant that the powers of counsel and consent are given here. It is elementary to note that the power of consent insures the power of counsel, for unless the latter is taken seriously, the former may not be forthcoming. The two powers are mutually supporting. Together they enable the membership to direct the affairs of the overall unit. And the membership shall be held accountable by the Lord for that direction. Each member shares in this collective stewardship.

2. The membership has the following general powers over the use of resources.
   a. No part of the general treasury can be used except "by the voice and common consent" of the unit (D&C 104:71). This important power over resources is a key power in the operation of any organization. If an individual steward is found to be "unfaithful" or "unwise," the "council of the order" may withhold the resources that he seeks (D&C 104:74-76).
   b. A second treasury, which "shall belong to you all with one accord" and "shall be called the sacred treasury of the Lord," can be used "only by the voice of the order, or by commandment" (D&C 104:60-66). Unlike any powers mentioned so far, this power over the sacred treasury is specifically limited by the provision that this treasury may be subject to "commandment" as well as to "the voice of the order."
   c. "And in case the treasurer is found an unfaithful and an unwise steward, he shall be subject to the council and voice of the order, and shall be removed out of his place, and another shall be appointed in his stead" (D&C 104:77). Just as the power of consent insures the power of counsel, so here the unit's power as a council over the treasurer insures its power over the general treasury as well as its broader power to help determine the general direction of the unit.

3. Any presiding officer is ordained to his office, and any new member is accepted in accord with the consent or vote of the unit membership (D&C 41:9; 20:65; 26:2; 28:13). However,
the unit may be commanded to accept a new member by the Lord (D&C 92).

The Powers of the Presiding Officer

1. The presiding officer helps give general direction of the stewardship unit with respect to temporal things. He shares this power with the unit membership as noted earlier. (See D&C, Sections 107, 41 and 42.)

2. He helps determine the nature of each man's individual stewardship appointment (D&C 51:4).

3. Consistent with his powers as a common judge (D&C 107:72-74), he is empowered to receive accountings from each steward so as to determine whether the steward has been wise and faithful in his stewardship (See D&C 72).

4. He helps manage the affairs of the Lord's storehouse and shares in the power of determining the use of certain of its resources (D&C 42:33-36).

The Powers of the Individual Steward

1. He participates in deciding what his stewardship will be. In many situations the center of initiative and decision resides in the steward while the presiding officer retains the power of counsel and consent. On other occasions the center of decision and initiative may reside in the presiding officer and the steward has the power of counsel and consent. In all cases the agency of each is respected.

2. He decides how to carry out his stewardship. This point and the scriptures related to it will receive further elaboration as we proceed. One scriptural reference will do here. It is indicated above that the uses of the general treasury are subject to the counsel and consent of the unit's membership. But after saying this the Lord goes on to indicate what this power consists of. And what he says shows at once the limitations on this power and the corresponding right of the individual steward to decide how to carry out his stewardship and to make claims on the available treasury which cannot be turned down. Thus: "And this shall be the voice and consent of the order—that any man among you say to the treasurer: I have need of this to help me in my stewardship—If it be five talents [dollars], or if it be
ten talents [dollars], or twenty, or fifty, or a hundred, the treasurer shall give unto him the same which he requires to help him in his stewardship . . . so long as he is in full fellowship, and is faithful and wise in his stewardship, this shall be his token unto the treasurer that the treasurer shall not withhold’ (D&C 104:72-75).

3. Has equal voice with all other members in giving counsel and consent in the running of the unit (D&C 104:21, 36).

The Powers of the Unit Council

1. In what is referred to as the “Constitution of the High Council” we read the following:

   The high council was appointed by revelation for the purpose of settling important difficulties which might arise in the church, which could not be settled by the church or the bishop’s council to the satisfaction of the parties. (D&C 102:2)

   Either party in a dispute may request the high council to settle a difference.

   The high priests, when abroad, have power to call and organize a council after the manner of the foregoing, to settle difficulties, when the parties or either of them shall request it. (D&C 102:24)

   In this connection the Prophet Joseph says that when a bishop and an individual steward cannot reach agreement concerning an important matter of stewardship, “the case must be laid before a council of twelve high priests. . . .”

2. The scriptures read that:

   Every president of the high priesthood (or presiding elder), bishop, high councilor, and high priest, is to be ordained by the direction of a high council or general conference. (D&C 20:67)

3. And again we read:

   Therefore, the residue shall be kept in my storehouse, to administer to the poor and the needy, as shall be appointed by the high council of the church, and the bishop and his council. (D&C 42:34)

\(^{7}HC, 1:365.\)
THE REVEALED STATUS OF AGENCY AND THE STEWARDSHIP STRUCTURE OF AUTHORITY

Being Equal in Earthly Things

With the stewardship structure of authority before us now, we can indicate in specific terms how that structure gives concrete expression to the otherwise abstract doctrines pertaining to man's status as an agent and prepares him to be one in power and purpose in eternity. Consider again the scripture quoted at the beginning of this study. The Lord is saying through the Prophet Joseph that the time has come for establishing "an organization of my people" which will be "a permanent and everlasting establishment and order unto my church." Then he goes on to say why he wants the Saints to organize themselves in a certain way:

. . . to advance the cause, which ye have espoused, to the salvation of man, and to the glory of your Father, who is in heaven;

That ye may be equal in the bonds of heavenly things, yea, and earthly things also, for the obtaining of heavenly things.

For if ye are not equal in earthly things ye cannot be equal in obtaining heavenly things;

For if you will that I give unto you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you.

And now, verily thus saith the Lord, it is expedient that all things be done unto my glory, by you who are joined together in this order. (D&C 78:4-8)

Notice first that the goals of organization are the salvation of man and the glory of God (which includes bringing about the salvation of man). Attaining these goals should be the ultimate end for all that is done through the organization. By requiring that all things be done for these reasons the Lord is requiring members to be one in purpose here as they will be one in purpose in eternity.

It is important to mention at this point that every stewardship order will have temporal as well as eternal goals. This is true of a business, a university, or an agricultural unit. Thus, in another scripture the Lord commands that "an everlasting order" be established, not only "for the salvation of men," but also "to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low" (D&C 104:1, 16).

The Lord also says that if the Saints want to prepare themselves for a place in the celestial kingdom they must be "equal in earthly things" so that they may be "equal in the bonds of heavenly things."
But what does it mean to be equal in earthly things and in heavenly things? To be equal in heavenly things is to be equal in those things which pertain to salvation or the highest place in the celestial kingdom. And in the celestial glory "there is a perfect equality" in which "all the ransomed are equal in authority, in strength, in opportunities, and in possessions." As we saw earlier, to be equal in heavenly things is to be equal with the Lord in power and dominion, to be clothed upon as he is, to be one with him in bringing about the immortality and eternal life of man. To be equal in this way, as we know, is the promise of stewardship. And it is in this sense of equality in heavenly things that we may "prepare" ourselves for "a place in the celestial world." Our schooling in equality here is preparatory for a place of equality hereafter.

The type of equality that characterizes the stewardship mode of organization can be conveniently discussed under what we may call class, status, and power. We shall be concerned mainly with the aspect of power.

Consider first, then, the allocation of material opportunities and rewards as indicators of class. Concerning material opportunities the scriptures read:

And you are to be equal, or in other words, you are to have equal claims on the properties, for the benefit of managing the concerns of your stewardships, every man according to his wants and needs, inasmuch as his wants are just. (D&C 82:17)

This is not to say that each steward is to claim an equal amount, "for the man that takes charge of a great manufacturing establishment would require more funds than he who has a small farm." Claims can and should be treated equally though the amounts of claims need not be equal.

Not only are members to have equal material opportunity for managing their stewardships, they are to have equal material benefits from their cooperative efforts as well. The scriptures read:

Nevertheless, in your temporal things you shall be equal, and this not grudgingly, otherwise the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit shall be withheld. (D&C 70:14)

Again we read: "But it is not given that one man should possess that which is above another, wherefore the world lieth in sin" (D&C 49:20).

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2Orson Pratt in JD, 17:32.
The members are also to be equal in things of social status as well as things of social class. By "social status" we have in mind the esteem, deference or prestige connected with one's position in a social order. Status in this sense should not be confused with man's status as an agent discussed in this paper. On the matter of esteem and deference the Lord says:

And let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practise virtue and holiness before me.
And again I say unto you, let every man esteem his brother as himself.

For what man among you having twelve sons, and is no respecter of them, and they serve him obediently, and he saith unto the one: Be thou clothed in robes and sit thou here; and to the other: Be thou clothed in rags and sit thou there—and looketh upon his sons and saith I am just?

Behold, this I have given unto you as a parable, and it is even as I am. I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine. (D&C 38:24-27)

Accordingly, in the Lord's social order, as we would expect, the "man who makes mortar...is just as honorable as the man who takes charge of a large establishment..."

**Being Joint Heirs Equal in Power**

Last of all consider power itself. We have noted again and again that those who attain eternal life shall be "equal in power" (D&C 76:95). Those who attain this glory are "one" with the Lord not only in purpose but also in power. This is part of what it means to be "equal in the bonds of heavenly things" (D&C 78:5). Does the stewardship mode of organization reflect this aspect of equality too? Does its structure of authority make men equal in temporal power in preparation for equality in eternal power? The answer is that the stewardship structure does equalize power in a certain sense of equality and in a certain sense of power. To see this let's take a closer look at the stewardship structure, beginning with the idea of power.

Many ideas of power exist, but if we are to understand power in a stewardship structure it may be profitable to begin with a definition of priesthood. Priesthood is typically defined as the power of God delegated to man on earth by which man can act in all things for the salvation of the human family. This is a broader

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1Ibid.
notion of power (or authority) than one commonly finds in contemporary definitions of the term which typically denote the idea of one or more persons having the right to determine the actions of one or more other persons in intended ways. The core idea of priesthood power is not the right of someone to direct the actions of someone else; rather, it is the divine right to act in accomplishing the purposes of deity. If we wanted to render the second sense of power in terms of man’s revealed status as an agent, we could define it as individual agency enlarged and authorized by God whereby he accomplishes his purposes in man. Through faithfulness this authorized ability is enlarged until man has all power and equal power according to the oath of the priesthood (D&C 84:38; 78:22).

With this lead, let’s examine the nature and distribution of power with respect to earthly things in preparation for heavenly things. To do this it will be helpful to think of a stewardship unit as a set of interrelated positions aimed at achieving certain goals, some temporal and some eternal but all divine. Having a stewardship involves having position and direction as an agent within such a structure. Each position within a stewardship unit is designed to give concrete expression to man’s temporal status as an agent in preparation for his eternal status as an agent.

Consider again several scriptures pertaining to this matter as far as earthly things are concerned. The Lord says that each is to have “equal claim” on the unit’s resources “for the benefit of managing the concerns of your stewardship, every man according to his wants and his needs” so long as his wants and needs are “just” (D&C 82:17). It is important to notice that the “wants and needs” mentioned here are those connected with managing a stewardship, not simply those wants and needs of the consumer. Notice also that each steward makes a claim on the unit’s resources according to “his” wants and needs, in other words according to his plans and calculations for carrying out his stewardship. It is on the basis of his stewardship needs as he calculates them that each steward says to the treasurer: “I have need of this to help me in my stewardship,” and if he is “faithful and wise in his stewardship, this shall be his token unto the treasurer that the treasurer shall not withhold” (D&C 104:72-75). Again, the locus of decision and action is within each steward himself, and his token unto the treasurer carries with it the authority of his position as a self-directed being within the stewardship unit. There are important limits affecting each steward (as we shall see), but each is to be an agent unto himself within
those limits. Each is to act, not be acted upon, in fulfilling his stewardship. This state of self-direction, as we know, represents man’s temporal status as an agent and is after the likeness of heavenly things. Finally, we should notice that a steward’s claim must be “just.” It is not necessary in this paper to analyze the idea of justice. But in the quotation before us at least the following idea is included in saying that the claim of every steward is just. It presumes that (1) all claims have been adjusted to available resources and (2) no claim is treated as privileged.

We saw above that power in the priesthood sense is man’s right to act for God in all things pertaining to the salvation of the human family. Applying this meaning of power to the stewardship structure, we can say that power is the authorized ability of each steward to help accomplish the divine ends (some temporal and some eternal) of the stewardship unit. It is the right of action connected to each position within the stewardship structure. And it carries with it the promise of joint heirship in the celestial world.

In what sense is this form of power equal within a stewardship unit? It is obvious that power is not equal in the sense that each person has the same kind of stewardship, for some will be tanners and others teachers and still others farmers. It is also true—though slightly less obvious—that the scope of each stewardship would differ from every other: some will have large farms and some will have small farms, some small and some large businesses. For God gives to one, one talent; to another he gives two; and to still another, five. And then he commands them to make use of those talents (Matthew 24:14). Even in heavenly things perhaps we cannot expect joint heirs to be equal in the scope of stewardship: “A person may have the management of only one world, or of two, or of three, or of as many as there are particles of dust that compose our globe. . . .”

In what sense is power equal in a stewardship unit? In at least two senses: each steward is equal to every other steward in his powers of individual stewardship and in the powers of joint stewardship. We shall explain the former sense first.

We have seen that each steward is the center of initiative and decision regarding his stewardship. Having this position as an agent may be variously described as being an agent unto himself, having the power to act and not be acted upon, being a self-directed

\[2^{1}\text{Orson Pratt in } JD, 2:102.\]
agent, and having the power of self-governance. If we will consider what the Prophet Joseph called the balance or equilibrium of powers in the stewardship order, we will see how each steward is equal to every other steward in power as far as individual stewardships are concerned. Within the structure of balanced powers every steward has identical rights (and is subject to identical limitations) in the exercise of self-direction. To verify this let us examine the relation of power between the membership and each steward and between each steward and the presiding officer.

The scriptures say that the unit’s resources shall be subject to “the voice and the common consent” of the membership (D&C 104:71). This should have a salutary effect on the enterprises of each steward in that if he would submit his plans

to the candid decision of [the] Order, many an enterprising man would be saved from foolish ventures and from ruin, and the wise and prudent would receive the necessary encouragement and financial aid, to make their undertakings a success for the benefit of the whole.13

But then the Lord explains that “the voice and common consent” of the order constitute power whereby the membership may balance each steward’s power over the common treasury:

And there shall not any part of it be used, or taken out of the treasury, only by the voice and common consent of the order.

And this shall be the voice and common consent of the order—that any man among you say to the treasurer: I have need of this to help me in my stewardship—

If it be five talents [dollars], or if it be ten talents [dollars], or twenty, or fifty, or a hundred, the treasurer shall give unto him the sum which he requires to help him in his stewardship—

Until he be found a transgressor, and it is manifest before the council of the order plainly that he is an unfaithful and an unwise steward.

But so long as he is in full fellowship, and is faithful and wise in his stewardship, this shall be his token unto the treasurer that the treasurer shall not withhold. (D&C 104:71-75)

However, if any steward is “found to be a transgressor,” if it is “manifest before the council of the order plainly” that he is unwise or unfaithful, then “the treasurer shall be subject unto the council and voice of the order” (D&C 104:76), and the treasurer may very well be instructed by the order to reduce or withhold the resources

13Erastus Snow in JD, 17:78.
requested by such a steward. There are no privileges enjoyed by any steward as far as any of these matters are concerned.

If a steward is wise and faithful, his just claims (D&C 82:17) cannot be turned down. If this were not so, the membership could become the center of initiative and decision with respect to the individual member’s stewardship. On the other hand, if a steward is unwise or unfaithful, then the membership may instruct the treasurer not to honor that steward’s claim as it stands. Unless this were possible, an unwise or unfaithful steward could assume power to direct the unit or could usurp another steward’s power. Thus, every stewardship is protected from the membership as a whole and the membership in turn is protected against unjust stewards.

Let us consider how this equilibrium of power is maintained between the individual steward and the presiding officer. Let us assume that a serious disagreement regarding a stewardship has arisen between a presiding officer and the steward himself. (Such disagreements should occur very rarely in the everyday operations of the unit. If they occur often, it may be that a steward or presiding officer is being unwise or unfaithful and should be judged accordingly.) It is instructive to recall what the Prophet Joseph said about such disputes and to keep in mind the relationship between a presiding officer and a member as indicated in Figure 1.

The Prophet says that “there must be an equilibrium of power between the bishop and the people.” For if each steward were “obliged to comply with his [the bishop’s] judgment,” the bishop would have “more power than a king has,” but if the bishop were obliged to comply with each steward’s judgment, this would “throw Zion into confusion, and make a slave of the Bishop.” Having said this, the Prophet outlines a procedure “in case the two parties cannot come to a mutual agreement.” He writes, “the Bishop is to have nothing to do” with the matter and “the case must be laid before a council of twelve High Priests. . . .”^14 This last remark fits Section 102 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which sets down the primary function of the High Council: to settle “important difficulties which might arise in the church, which could not be settled by the church or the bishop’s council to the satisfaction of the parties” (D&C 102:2). The Council may assume jurisdiction “when the parties or either of them shall request it” (D&C 102:24).

Again we see that the powers of stewardship are equalized by a

^14HC, 1:364-65.
system of mutual and equal limitations. Each steward is protected from being, as it were, ruled over by a king. Yet the presiding officer is likewise safeguarded from being a slave to any steward. And all members are preserved from the consequences of any member having more power than is consistent with their union. If their views in a stewardship discussion become irreconcilable, either may appeal to the high council for a decision. Thus, the stewardship and the presiding officer are ultimately equal.

More generally speaking, a presiding officer is a steward much like any other: he is subject to the same laws of stewardship as are all others, equal with them in esteem and things of class, required to give an account of himself, subject to being removed from his stewardship if he is unwise or unfaithful, and in general limited by a balance of power between him, the membership, and each steward. The presiding officer is in no sense a king or ruler. In fact, it was while giving instructions to a presiding officer over temporal affairs, Bishop Edward Partridge to be specific, that the Lord warned, "Let no man think he is ruler. . ." (D&C 58:20). Smith and Sjodahl comment as follows on this passage: "In the kingdom of God, Jesus Christ is Ruler. Judges and counselors are but his servants. There is no 'hierarchy' in the Church."15

To repeat, the first sense of equal power comes to this: every steward has the same rights and is subject to the same limitations in the exercise of self-direction.

Before passing to the next point, notice the crucial role played by the high council in maintaining the equilibrium of power. By settling serious disagreements or, much more importantly, simply by being prepared to do so, the council helps insure the successful working of a stewardship unit, enabling that unit to operate through the exercise of equalized power without gravitating toward an authoritarian system or declining into anarchy when faced with difficulties that cannot be settled otherwise. And it takes wise men, as we say, to perform this role in such a way that the stewardship structure of authority is preserved and strengthened.

What is the second sense in which power is equal in a stewardship order? The second, which is simpler to present, is that every steward has an equal voice in the membership's power of counsel and a single vote in its power of consent. This means that he is a

joint steward as well as an individual steward. His stewardship is to help determine the overall direction of the unit as well as to perform individual tasks within it. This joint aspect of stewardship is an important aspect indeed: in ways in which individual tasks do not, it prepares each steward for his eternal status. In eternal life being "one" with others and the Lord is a joint as well as an individual stewardship. As the scriptures read, if we are faithful and wise we shall become "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17). In the kingdom of darkness there is no joint stewardship, for Satan seeks to "reign over" (2 Nephi 2:29) man, not to make him a joint heir. Preparation for this sort of kingdom would, of course, be quite different. A different structure of authority would be required—one that is hierarchic and authoritarian wherein some rule over others. In such a structure man's eternal status as agent and the oneness based on it are frustrated.
Whether "right" or "wrong" so far as facts are concerned, the feelings of the contemporary observer are an essential source of history. Whenever we can view events through the eyes of those who were there we come closer to experiencing the feelings that went into the making of history. This is why letters and other personal accounts are so important to our understanding of the broader picture. Feelings and attitudes lead to actions, and therefore become important ingredients in the mixture of materials from which we form our historical perspectives.

In this issue of the Historians Corner we present three personal views of four different aspects of Mormon history. The first is significant for it reveals a modern Jewish scholar's initial introduction to Mormon society, and his reaction to it. The second piece was prepared by a young Mormon scholar engaged in a biographical study of President Heber J. Grant. Impressed with the way his call to the apostleship overwhelmed this young Church leader, Ronald Walker has presented some of the intimate, personal letters that portray the feelings of both the new apostle and his closest friends. Going back another step in history, we also present a document recently discovered by a BYU religion teacher. It reveals Thomas L. Kane's first impression of the Mormon people as he found them camped on the plains of Iowa. This first contact was highly important to both Kane and the Mormons, for it was the beginning of a long and productive friendship between them.
ZION IN THE FAR WEST
[A Modern Israeli View of the Mormons]

Ahoran Ellern

[Editor's note: The following review of Leonard J. Arrington's Great Basin Kingdom appeared in Amudin, No. 366, a Hebrew language monthly publication of the Religious Kibbutz Movement, Tel Aviv, Nissan 5736 (April 1976) 24:286-87. It was translated by the author and sent to Dr. Arrington at the suggestion of Cyrus McKell, the Utah State University professor mentioned in the review. It struck our interest because of the author's cogent comparison between Mormon history and recent Jewish history, as well as his comments on why the people of Israel should take some interest in the Mormons. The review is reprinted here by permission of the publisher and reviewer.]

When I arrived at Salt Lake City airport in the course of a study visit, and turned to the bank with a traveller's cheque, I was struck by the name of the bank: "Zion's First National Bank." Two hours later I saw in the city center the high rising building housing the Administrative Center of the Mormon Church, the Church building [the temple] that a "gentile" such as myself must not enter, and the "Tabernacle" which is the cultural center of the Mormon Capital.

When I reached the university town in the north of the state I was met by my host the Professor. He pointed out the handsome ultramodern church building where he is active amongst the students outside working hours.

When he invited me for supper at his home, I thanked him, but begged off; and in consequence, had to explain to him the meaning of "Kosher." I noticed that he did not seem at all displeased that his children should meet a "gentile" who is as particular as any Mormon about what he may or may not eat. (Mormons, at any rate those with the standing of the Professor and his family, abstain from tea, coffee and liquor; and they do not smoke.)

The history of the white man's settlement of the West is closely intertwined with the history of the Mormon Church, and the book under review is part of the research thereon. Reading it I found that the settlement of this Church anteceded Zionist settlement by thirty years if we count from the BILU (Russian pioneer immigrants) movement and the first Jewish Agricultural Colonies; and very much more if we count from the onset of the organized large-scale settlement. Not only that, but every stage and event in
our settlement history has its parallel in that of the Mormon Church.

At least two traits characterise the two settlement movements, theirs and ours:

(1) The inspiration both received from the Holy Writ to go up and settle in "a goodly land—a land of brooks of water" (and indeed, Utah has a Jordan of its own running down to the "salt sea").

(2) The settlement movement was guided by a religious-social concept far above class struggle, but firmly anchored in economic reality.

In both movements, this concept was translated into action by central bodies; in both the work was supported by congregations and branches in all parts of Europe, where "Shlihim" (emissaries) both collected contributions to the "Permanent Emigration Fund" (tithe), and organised groups of emigrants from supporters in the "diaspora." These emigrated to their Zion in Utah by ships, and continued in wagons and even on foot, with their cattle and all their goods. The railroad did not reach "Zion" till 1869.

In marked contrast with the many Utopian attempts to found a better society that nineteenth century North America witnessed, the Mormon settlement, or rather, in their own parlance, The Latter-day Saints, like our own effort, succeeded beyond all expectations. But in both cases, this success came after great suffering, failures, and trouble.

These included, in the case of the "Saints," actual pogroms, in one of which the Prophet and Founder of the Church, Joseph Smith, was murdered; and their expulsion from the States of Illinois and Missouri, and finally also from their city of "Nauvoo" on the banks of the Mississippi; as well as a war of suppression, which caused the United States to send 5,000 troopers to invade the Utah territory. To this the "Saints" reacted by raising a larger volunteer army of their own, and by implementing a "scorched earth" policy, all the while harassing the U. S. Army. This, in the end, brought about a reconciliation with President Buchanan, and the acceptance of a governor appointed by Washington for the State of Utah.

Space does not permit further details. We have before us a large volume, yet a fascinating narrative in spite of the book's meticulous historical scholarship. Those who do not feel equal to a work of this size may prefer the National Geographic maga-
zine’s account of Utah, illustrated in gorgeous color (April 1975, pp. 440-73).

And finally, a moment of reflection. The relatively unsuccessful public relations and politico-economic struggle of our State of Israel is all too well known. How could it happen that none of us thought of cementing relations with this Church that has congregations in all the Western World?

When I warned the professor, prior to his paying a return visit to our country, that on Passover he would get only Matza, the “bread of affliction,” to eat, he replied, “I, too, am orthodox in my beliefs, and I should be happy to celebrate the important Passover festival amongst you.”

It seems to me that we in Israel, and especially our religious settlements, may have an attraction for people like the Mormons; and that in spite of our differences in the religious sphere, they could be friends of Zionist endeavour.*

Ra’anana

*According to a reader’s letter published this year in the “Jerusalem Post,” hundreds of Mormons danced the “hora” with the Jews of Salt Lake City in its central square when the United Nations declared for a Jewish State on November 29, 1947.

YOUNG HEBER J. GRANT
AND HIS CALL TO THE APOSTLESHIP

Ronald W. Walker

A year following his call to become president of the Tooele Stake, the twenty-four year old Heber J. Grant stopped by the Salt Lake studio of Charles Savage, the pioneer photographer. The conversation took an unexpected turn. He told me, Elder Grant wrote in his journal, “to put it down that within one year I would be a member of the Twelve Apostles.”

One year and a few days later, young Heber received his call. The assignment led the new apostle’s two closest friends, Anthony W. Ivins and Richard W. Young, to write letters of encouragement.

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1Journal of Heber J. Grant, 7 October 1881, Library-Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
Their correspondence reveals that Savage's prediction was by no means unique. "I have long felt that your destiny was sure," Ivins wrote from his mission in Mexico, "but hardly looked to see you go into the Quorum so soon. The sooner in, however, the sooner you become accustomed to the harness and to the life of usefulness which is before you." Likewise Young's letter, parts of which appear below, suggests that only the timing of Grant's apostolic call surprised his friends; in addition it etches a revealing character portrait of the future LDS president.

Despite his youth Heber J. Grant had already displayed his talents in a remarkable fashion. At the age of fifteen, he had been employed as a policy clerk by the insurance firm of H. R. Mann & Co. After business hours, he marketed fire insurance. By nineteen, he had bought out his employers and organized his own successful agency. During his early twenties he broadened out into other business activities. And at twenty-three he was called to preside over the Tooele Stake.

But now this already successful and confident man was forced to take personal stock. Whatever his friends' vaunted opinions, he understood his own weaknesses and strengths. Would his talents be equal to the task at hand? Could his towering business ambitions be properly channeled? In what ways did his new assignment cause him to reflect upon his Mormonism? The young apostle sought to answer these questions as he replied to his friends' letters.

Elder Grant's star eclipsed those of Young and Ivins, but each later achieved prominence. Young was a grandson of Brigham and a graduate of both West Point and the Columbia Law School. Later he would distinguish himself in the American occupation of the Philippine Islands and by his civic and Church service in his native Salt Lake City. Ivins, in turn, was Grant's cousin and proved to be his closest confidant. In 1907 Ivins himself was selected to be an apostle. Fourteen years later, Heber Grant—now as the Mormon Church president—chose Ivins to sit beside him in the First Presidency.

1. Excerpts of the Letter of Heber J. Grant to Anthony W. Ivins, SLC, 22 October 1882.3

Well Tony, your predictions, made last March, as we were going to Saint George, that I would be one of the Apostles, has been fulfilled. You know the true sentiments of my heart on this subject, (as well as many others)


4Heber J. Grant letterpress copybook, 5:7-10, Church Archives.
and that they were not in accord with your prediction, not that I feel to shrink from any duty, but because I did not, nor do I now, feel that my knowledge, ability, or testimony are of such a character as to entitle me to the position of an Apostle, The Lord knows what is for the best and I have always trusted in Him for aid and assistance in the past and shall continue to do so in the future, As advised in my last letter, on the 16th George Teasdale and myself were ordained as Apostles, the 1st Presidency and Twelve officiating. Bros Rich, Carrington and Thatcher were absent, Prest Taylor was mouth in Bro Teasdale’s ordination, Prest Cannon in mine, I shall return to Salt Lake in the morning, when I expect to get a copy of the revelation calling Bro Teasdale & myself as Apostles.4 Bro. S.B. Young as Prest of Seventies, etc, also a copy of my ordination, and I will forward these documents with this letter.

I don’t know how things will shape with me in the future from a financial standpoint. You will notice that Prest Cannon warned me particularly about setting my mind on the things of this world. While I have devoted most all of my time to acquiring this world’s goods in the past, I can truthfully say that never in my life have I seen the time that I was not willing to change my plan of action at the word of command from God’s servants, I did not do so much good in Tooele as I might, had I not been engaged in business.5 I know this and several times expressed my willingness to drop my business if thought best by the authorities. While I have worked hard for Cash, you know as do all of my friends that have a full knowledge of the inmost sentiments of my heart, that Cash has not been my God and that my heart has never been set on it only to do good with what might come into my possession, I most earnestly desire that I may always feel this way. Bro. Erastus Snow comes the nearest to my idea of what an Apostle should be of any member of the Twelve, When I recall his life and labors and stop to think how little time and attention he has for his family or his financial interests, and how much time he has for the people and their interests, and how freely, and without a word of complaint, he neglected his own comfort & worldly welfare for the benefit of others, I am fully convinced that should I follow his noble example, and I shall try to do so, that my financial interests are comparatively speaking at an end. My heart is full of thankfulness to my Heavenly Father for his goodness and mercy to me, I have not language to express the feelings of gratitude in my heart, but I have made up my mind that from this time forth, my life shall be devoted to the work of God upon the Earth, If He gives me time to do my duties in his Kingdom and also make money, all right, if not all right. I feel in my heart to say “Father thy will not mine be done.” Dear Cousin, I feel with God’s aid & the faith and prayers of my friends, especially those that know me as you do, that I shall be able to accomplishing

4For a copy of the revelation calling Elders Grant and Teasdale to the Twelve, see James R. Clark, ed., Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 2:348-49.

5After his call to the Tooele Stake Presidency, Elder Grant had moved his family to the western Utah village but had continued to conduct his Salt Lake business affairs. The result was that he spent as much time in Salt Lake as in Tooele, and local Church affairs sometimes suffered.
some good, without this assistance I shall fail in my calling as an Apostle. I can hardly realize that I am an Apostle, Suppose the fact will become more real as I get down to work. I will now stop talking of myself.

2. Letter of Richard W. Young to Heber J. Grant, 7 November 1882, written from Fort Columbus on Governors Island, New York.

My Dear Heber:

I will pardon you for thinking my long silence strange:—my only excuse to offer is that I have been moving and endeavoring to get settled since receiving your brief note and the news of your appointment.—So you are one of the Twelve.—Well, it is sooner than I looked for it, but certainly not sooner than meets with my approval, It has long been my impression that all that stood between you and that excellent body was time and some more experience.

You have every reason to be thankful congratulated upon your success, so much the more from the fact that it is merited.—As a young man, the youngest of the Quorum and as a man without a very extensive experience in matters of preaching, I can imagine that you feel impressed with your unworthiness for the position, but let me give it you as my frank opinion that the selection was one of the very best that could be made, I have no desire to flatter you, but simply to assist you in feeling more confidence in your newly acquired dignity,—when I say that I regard your judgment as about the finest of any of my acquaintances, and I consider your talent in general business, and your quickness to see a point and to unravel one up to the like qualities of any one, Your conversation to me has always been as free from vapor and as full of common sense, boiled down, as I have always been told your father's was,

I consider that your generosity, moral worth and fidelity are all that could be asked.—Now take a summing up of these qualities and manufacture a young man of 26 and in my estimation, not as your friend, but as a disinterested party, you will have the best candidate for a vacancy in the Twelve to be found in the Church.—And such I am certain is the opinion of everyone, I have not had an opportunity of conversing with many of our people but those I have seen—John Henry (Smith), Wm Groesbeek, Orson Arnold & Jimmy Clinton, While questioning the superiority of Bro Teasdale's worth do not hesitate in approving your selection, I was told by Bro John Henry that the selections were given in so many words by revelation, Heber, you are truly a blessed man, If I am not wrong but few of the appointments in late years have been by direct revelation,

Fancy it—our belief that God, the Good, the Almighty ruler of the Universe, He at whose pleasure the worlds move & the stars give light—He whom so many generations have sought—our belief is that He is the fountain of our Church—this is as firmly my belief as it is my belief that He rules,—and He has been so far pleased with your integrity and worth as to name you personally as one of His representatives on Earth.

6Copied in Heber J. Grant Journal, 17 November 1882, Church Archives. The explanations in parenthesess and the end punctuation are apparently Grant’s. The roughly educated churchman never seemed to master the use of the period.

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I scarcely know how and what to write—there is not language which
will do adequate justice to such an occasion, I can only say, my friend, that
if joy is not yours, that if resolve to sacrifice all to the Gospel is not yours,
it is because you fail in your conception of the infinitely priceless nature of
your selection,

My wish is that you may devote yourself to study, for no adornment of
the mind is unnecessary to this work—that you may be blessed with the
fulness of testimony of God and His Work, and that this may be the case
and that you may be deeply impressed with the nature of your calling and
become eminently useful therein is my earnest prayer.

Nervie (R.W.'s wife) wishes to congratulate you and we both desire
remembrances to your wife and to your mother Do. to Ray & Lucy' remember their so called Uncle Richard—Write soon for I shall look for you to.
Your friend with more good luck to you. — R.W. —

(Richard W. Young.)

3. Excerpts of Heber J. Grant's reply to Richard W. Young, SLC,
16 November 1882.

With reference to my new calling and my abilities to magnify the same, I
must say that I consider my position much in advance of my knowledge—I
regret very much that I have not a better knowledge of grammar, as I murder
the "Queens English" most fearfully—my orthography is perfectly Emense
to say the least— I have not a good memory, or if I have it has been so
badly neglected that I have not found it out that it is good, My information on
subjects relating to the advancement of a community amts to nothing, I know
little or nothing of History—and were it not that I have from 15 to 25 yrs.
in which to study to overtake such men as Lyman, Jos. F. Smith and others,
and knowing that I have the right to call upon our Heavenly Father for
assistance I assure you that I should feel almost like backing out—A knowl-
edge, of grammer and orthography is necessary for a public speaker and one
that has more or less writing to do, — I naturally dislike both of these
studies and have not much faith in becoming proficient in either. — Your
inventory of my abilities is "way up." I should like to have you get someone
to accept of your ideas but think it would be a difficult task, I may have a
little common sense — In fact I know that I have, I also know that my first
ideas, impressions, or quickness to see a point which ever you see fit to call
it, is not bad, but this really amts to but very little when you are looking
for a substantial leading man. Reasoning powers and depth of thought are
the qualities that count — There is one thing that sustains me, however, &
that is the fact that all powers, of mind or body, come from God and that He
is perfectly able & willing to qualify me for His work provided I am faithful
in doing my part — This I hope to be able to do faithfully — I am also
pleased to know that I shall have the faith & confidence of the people —

"Ray" or Rachel and Lucy were the two eldest children of Heber and Lucy
Stringham Grant.

*Grant letterpress copybook, 5:62-63.
This is a great thing as I know from personal experience while laboring in Tooele County — The folks join in regards & best wishes for your continued health & prosperity also that of your wife — Time will not permit my writing more — Again thanking you for your good wishes I remain

Your Friend & Bro
H.J. Grant

THOMAS L. KANE MEETS THE MORMONS

Donald Q. Cannon

Thomas Leiper Kane, a well-born Philadelphia lawyer-diplomat-soldier, first became acquainted with Mormonism at a conference of the Church held in Philadelphia on 13 May 1846. After listening to a discourse by Elder Jesse C. Little, a Scotch-Irish convert from Maine who was presiding over the New England and Middle States Missions, Kane requested an introduction. Within two days of their conversation Colonel Kane told Elder Little that he had decided to accompany the Mormons to California, and asked for a letter of introduction to Brigham Young. He also offered to help President Little solicit aid from the national government, and subsequently joined his Mormon friend in Washington, D.C., where he personally called upon the secretary of state, the secretary of war, and President Polk in behalf of the Mormons. He also furnished Jesse Little a letter of introduction to his friend, George Bancroft, secretary of the Navy and eminent American historian. Little and Bancroft discussed the requisition of a Mormon military force to participate in the war against Mexico.

After completing their negotiations, Kane and Little traveled together to St. Louis, where they parted company, Kane proceeding to Fort Leavenworth and Little to Nauvoo. At Fort Leavenworth Kane delivered messages from Washington to Colonel Kearney concerning the call of a Mormon battalion and then set out alone for the Mormon camp on the Missouri River. The journey from Leavenworth to Council Bluffs included a narrow escape from drowning, a continuing battle with mosquitoes, and a thorough soaking in a Great Plains thunderstorm. As a result of the extreme conditions of this trip, Kane became seriously ill soon after his

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arrival at the Mormon camp. Yet meeting the Mormons made a
greater impression on him than his adventurous journey or his ill-
ness. In fact, the suffering of the Mormons affected him so much
that he gave up a political career to champion their cause. Much
of his life from that time on was spent in aiding the Mormons.

Speaking before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania some
years later, he recalled the impression the Mormons had made
on him:

After a recent unavoidable association with the border inhabi-
tants of Western Missouri and Iowa, and vile scum which our own
society, to apply the words of an admirable gentleman and eminent
divine, "like the great ocean washes upon its frontier shores," I
can scarcely describe the gratification I felt associating again with
persons who were almost all of Eastern American origin—persons
of refined and cleanly habits and decent language—and observing
their peculiar and interesting mode of life—while every day seemed
to bring with it its own especial incident, fruitful in the illustra-
tion of habits and character.1

The following letter was written by Colonel Thomas L. Kane
to George Bancroft, secretary of the navy, on the same day Kane
arrived at Council Bluffs and met the Mormons, 11 July 1846.
In his letter Kane described conditions in the Mormon camp, pre-
SENTED reasons why the Mormons would not be going on to Cali-
FORNIA until the next year, and expressed his desire to remain with
and assist them.

Mormon Camp Near Council Bluffs
July 11, 1846

Dear Sir,

By a steamer of the American Fur Company which is expected
hourly to descend the Missouri to St. Louis from this point, I have
the honour to return to you the despatches intrusted to my charge.

On arriving upon this frontier, I learned from good authority
that the Mormons, although generally supposed to be in the Indian
country somewhere between Grand Island and Fort John, had in
fact delayed their advance so long in order to receive those mem-
bers of their sect who had been left in Illinois and whom a con-
 tinuance of severe persecution drove after them as fugitives deprived
of almost all means of support that they had not yet crossed the

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1Thomas L. Kane, The Mormons: A Discourse Delivered Before The Historical
Society of Pennsylvania, March 26, 1850 (Philadelphia: King and Baird, Printers,
1850), p. 27.
Missouri, and consequently would scarcely be able to reach the Pacific during the present season. Upon this, I made careful inquiry concerning what means existed of proceeding directly on to California, and, particularly, as to the possibility of my being able to overtake any of the emigrant parties already on their way to that country. I received answers of but one tenour, yet I have preserved in writing the opinions of Colonel Kearney, Chief in Command of the Army of the West now on the Santa Fe trace, and of Mr. William Gilpin of Oregon, well known for his experience of Western life, which I shall have pleasure at any future time in submitting to your inspection. Colonel Kearney writes, "You have expressed to me your great desire to overtake the California emigrants and accompany them on their journey. From the best information I am possessed of, I consider it impossible that you could do so—they have too much the start of you"—and Major Gilpin—"You cannot reach them at any nearer point than Bear R. where the trails diverge and those going to California turn to the South. It is impracticable for you to pursue them by the route of the Platte with a party of less than twelve experienced men, and then only at the hourly risk of being rubbed out by the Indians."

A party such as Major Gilpin alludes to whatever its chance of success, though composed of the best materials, could scarcely be organized without a chief to superintendent and encourage its movements in times of responsibility. The office of such, circumstances render it improper that I should undertake. Since my arrival in the Mormon Camp, I find my presence with its inhabitants imperatively called for, nor can I expect with a just regard to the main object of my journey, to feel at liberty to leave them for some time to come. Every day, too, renders it more vain for the people to attempt proceeding to California this season, and I have been acquainted confidentially by those in authority, that such has ceased to be their intention.

Under view of these facts; as it is unadvisable to organize a party for the express purpose of bearing your despatches, without giving it my presence; as it is improper that I should abandon my present company for this purpose; and, finally, as it is impossible by continuing in the same, that I will reach California in any time within which the delivery of my despatches can be of service to the United States, I have the honour to return them to your Department.

With great respect, I am, Sir, Your most obedient servant.

Thomas L. Kane

Hon. George Bancroft

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2Thomas L. Kane to George Bancroft; 11 July 1846, Bancroft Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.
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