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President Heber J. Grant standing in front of the mission home in Basel, Switzerland, probably July 4, 1937. After delays caused by the Depression and pressing duties at home, President Grant was finally able to tour missions in several European countries. While there, he encouraged the Saints as they faced an uncertain future. The images in this article are selected from a collection of thirty-one photographs that chronicle President Grant’s 1937 visit to Germany and Switzerland. Several of these photographs are previously unpublished.
A Long-Awaited Visit
President Heber J. Grant in Switzerland and Germany, 1937

Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Marc Alain Bohn

In 1937, just two years before Hitler invaded Poland, President Heber J. Grant made a memorable journey from Salt Lake City to Europe (fig. 1). President Grant had served as president of the European and British Missions from 1903 to 1906 and was now returning to Europe as prophet of the Church. He was the second Church President to visit Europe while serving in that capacity. His predecessor, Joseph F. Smith, visited Europe in 1906 and again in 1910.1

Although the close succession of President Smith’s two visits probably raised hopes among the European Saints that such frequent visits would continue, circumstances prevented any Church President from traveling to Europe again until 1937. The worldwide depression, for example, had forced President Grant to concentrate his efforts on saving the Church and its members from economic catastrophe while maintaining the Church’s missionary effort, temple work, and daily affairs.

Finally, the centennial of the 1837 founding of the British Mission2 provided President Grant a reason to visit Europe that temporarily superseded his duties at home. Despite his nearly eighty-one years, the prophet was eager to make the arduous journey to fulfill the Saints’ righteous desire to hear the voice of the Lord’s anointed.

Before joining the Saints in the British Isles for their celebrations—scheduled for late July and early August 1937—President Grant went directly to the continent and spoke to the American Club of Paris on June 24, 1937.3 His talk was published in the prestigious Paris edition of the New York Herald Tribune newspaper.4 He then met with the Saints and others in the French, Swiss-German, Czechoslovakian, and German-Austrian missions as well as with the media and government officials.
Following the festivities in the British Isles, President Grant’s party returned to the continent to visit several more missions, passing through the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. While in the Netherlands, they stopped at the International Boy Scout Jamboree. They returned to the United States on September 4.  

While the history of each of these European missions makes special note of his visit, President Grant’s travels in Switzerland and Germany were particularly well documented by a series of photographs offering a rare glimpse of President Grant among the German-speaking Saints. A selection of those photographs is published here, several for the first time.

**Historical Context of the Photographs**

President Grant left Salt Lake City on June 13, 1937, accompanied by his personal secretary, Joseph Anderson; Sunday School general superintendent George D. Pyper; and recently appointed British Mission president Hugh B. Brown. A few days later, they boarded the Canadian Pacific
steam liner *Empress of Australia* for the journey across the Atlantic, landing at Cherbourg Harbor on the northernmost tip of France the evening of June 22, 1937. The party disembarked the following day and was greeted by Elder Richard R. Lyman, a member of the Twelve Apostles and the current president of the European Mission, by French Mission president Octave F. Ursenbach, and by several others.

Following a visit to Paris, France, and Liege, Belgium (headquarters of the French Mission), President Grant’s party made its way to Switzerland, finally arriving in Basel (headquarters of the Swiss-German Mission) on June 28, 1937. Swiss-German Mission president Philemon M. Kelly, along with his wife and a few others, greeted President Grant at the train station. Upon arriving, President Grant reflected that it had been about thirty-three years since he last visited “this lovely land.” President and Sister Kelly hosted the visitors in the mission home, where the group enjoyed a brief break from traveling.

The next day, President Grant left Basel (fig. 2) for the French-speaking regions of Switzerland. President Kelly remained behind to continue his labors in Basel. President Grant spent the next three days visiting local congregations of Saints before leaving Geneva on July 1 for Neuchâtel, Switzerland. President Kelly joined the party to begin a tour of the Swiss-German Mission on July 2, and President Ursenbach returned to Liege.

The party then left Neuchâtel for Berne, Switzerland

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**Figure 2.** President Grant (right) and Richard R. Lyman, European Mission president, at the Basel train station, July 1937.
President Grant recorded these impressions of Berne in his journal following his arrival:

We went to one place where we could obtain a fine view of the city—it was a beautiful park. . . . Everybody seemed content and happy. One is profoundly impressed with the industry and the contentment of the people. . . . Nearly every building in Berne has flowers in the windows, particularly geraniums—homes and business places.¹⁵

While in Berne, President Grant spoke to several hundred Saints and guests and participated in interviews with “all the newspaper men from the largest [local] newspapers.” Swiss-German Mission records noted that “in Bern [sic] a very favorable impression was made.”¹⁶ In fact, President

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**Fig. 3.** Eliza and Wilford Ruf, children of District President Walter Ruf, greet Presidents Grant, Lyman, and Philemon M. Kelly (Swiss-German Mission president) and Sunday School general superintendent George D. Pyper in Berne, Switzerland, July 2, 1937. Everywhere President Grant and his party went, the European Saints greeted him warmly, some of them traveling great distances to see and hear him. While in Berne, President Grant spoke to several hundred Saints and guests and participated in several interviews with local newspapers. The German and Swiss press wrote glowingly of President Grant in 1937—a marked contrast to the “vile” reports about the Church that appeared in the European press earlier in the century.
Grant’s positive experience with reporters in Switzerland and elsewhere during his European tour was one of the most important and successful aspects of his 1937 travels in Europe. As he recounted in a general conference talk that October, what impressed him most “profoundly” on this tour was “the marvelous change” in the attitude of the European press toward the Church since his mission in 1903–1906. During those three years, he recalled, “some of the vilest, most wicked, obscene, terrible things were published regarding us.” This time, however, there were only “favorable newspaper notices in Germany, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, in Holland and in Belgium. No criticism of any kind or description.” He concluded, “I rejoice in these things. It is such a marvelous change from the spirit of animosity and almost hatred that I found among newspaper men that I came in contact with over thirty years ago.”

The meetings in Switzerland provided many of the Saints their first opportunity to see and hear a Church President in person, so they were eager to take advantage of the visit. Hans Rindlisbocher, a local Latter-day Saint serving in the Swiss military at the time, told his superiors that he had an important employment interview, an excuse he hoped would allow him to hear President Grant. Hans was granted leave. Brother Rindlisbocher recalled, “It was very important for the members to see the President of the Church, and for me it was very important too, even if I had to lie [to be able to attend]. I was able to go and meet him and shake hands with him. That was the most important thing.” He also said that President Grant’s visit helped the Saints to endure because “he gave us something to improve ourselves. He gave an inspirational talk. I’m sure he strengthened the membership of the Church.”

In his history of the Church in Switzerland, Christian Gräub summarizes the message to the Saints that President Grant repeated in Basel, Zürich, and Frankfurt:

Central to his talks, stood on the one hand his testimony of the Book of Mormon and on the other hand a treatment of the Articles of Faith. Concerning the Book of Mormon he related how he read this book for the first time as a boy: “From that time to this day I have always had a strong testimony that the Book of Mormon truly is that which it purports to be: the Word of God to the ancient inhabitants of America.”

President Grant also testified of the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“I am very happy to leave with you my testimony that I know without a shadow of a doubt that Joseph Smith restored the true gospel under God’s direction and that we can again today participate in all of the blessings of the original Church of Jesus Christ. I know that the tree lives and
bears good fruit, and why do I know this? Because I have stretched out my hand and picked and eaten the fruit.”

President Grant’s party returned to Basel “using a bus which took them through Thun, Interlaken, Brünig and Luzern, the most beautiful area in Switzerland; the train then took them from Luzern to Basel shortly after 8 o’clock in the evening.” This trip through the Berner Oberland, a region of lakes, quaint villages, agriculturally rich valleys, and awe-inspiring alpine peaks, was led by Brother Hans Balmer of Interlaken.

During this scenic journey, President Grant lamented, “There has been no day since I left home when I regretted more that my wife [Augusta Winters Grant] and my daughter Lucy [Grant Cannon] were not with me.” He was so impressed with the scenery near Interlaken, in fact, that during general conference the following October he described the Alps as he had seen them from the train:

The clouds disappeared just before we reached the highest point on the railroad, and we could see five or six of those great towering mountains, covered with snow . . . . We were very grateful for that wonderful, magnificent sight, second only of course to the Grand Canyon of the Colorado.

On Sunday, July 4, the morning after their return to Basel, President Grant and his fellow travelers were greeted by a surprise from the local members. According to Der Stern, the Church’s German-language periodical, some twenty young women from the Basel Ward “gathered early at the mission home to serenade the guests: They sang traditional Swiss songs as well as Church hymns and gave the visitors little gifts as a sign of gratitude and happiness for this long-desired visit. The guests were visibly touched by this unexpected honor” (fig. 4).

A photograph in the album shows these young Swiss women surrounding Presidents Grant, Kelly, Lyman, Brown, and secretary Anderson (fig. 4). Receptions like this one certainly must have added to the feelings that President Grant expressed to a group of Saints later in the day:

“I am really very happy that I, by the goodness of God, am allowed to meet with you, beloved brothers and sisters. Three times have I already reserved a place on a steamer to travel to Europe, but every time something came up so that I finally said to my assistants: ‘Until I find myself actually swimming in the Atlantic Ocean, I don’t think I’ll get to Europe.’ I can hardly hope to return here again to Europe, but yet I hope it.”

On this Sabbath day, President Grant addressed two different groups. Attendance at both meetings totaled over seven hundred, many of them from southern Germany. Describing these meetings, President Grant
wrote in his journal that Anderson, Brown, Kelly, and Lyman spoke briefly, but “I spoke about 50 minutes enjoying liberty. . . . At the morning meeting there were a great many flowers, and two little children presented bouquets to all of the visiting brethren.”28 A number of photographs were taken at these meetings (figs. 5, 6).

These sermons in Basel were not only well attended by members of the Church but also were covered by the local press. Basel’s daily newspaper, the National Zeitung, reported the proceedings of the July 4 meetings and wrote glowingly of President Grant: “[He] has remained, despite his 81 years, a colossal figure who could present himself as well in the saddle as he does at the pulpit; his graying hair and white beard encircle his mild visage from which, despite his energy, true Christian goodness is expressed.” The newspaper also reported President Grant’s “fascination with the immaculate cleanliness” and with the “rich greenness and glorious flowers” of Switzerland.29
Fig. 5. President Grant addressing the Saints in Basel, Switzerland, with Max Zimmer translating, July 4, 1937. The Swiss flag hangs behind President Grant.

Fig. 6. President Grant with the priesthood holders at Basel, Switzerland, July 4, 1937. Identifiable individuals (front row, left to right): President Brown (third from the left, holding flowers), Brother Feh, Walter Ruf, Alfred Niederhauser Sr., Alfred Niederhauser Jr., President Grant, President Lyman, President Kelly, and Marel Chappuis. President Grant’s journal records that the two children in front gave flowers to all the Church leaders.
On July 5, local members dressed in native costumes sang Swiss songs in a program held for President Grant on the Basel Mission home grounds. According to President Grant’s journal, he apparently favored these Swiss Saints with a performance of his own: “I told some of my experiences in learning to sing, and sang two or three numbers.”

On July 6, President Grant traveled to Zürich, where he was scheduled to speak again. Upon arriving, however, he and his companions first took time away from their hectic traveling schedule to relax with a nap and a boat ride on Lake Zürich (fig. 7).

From Zürich, President Grant and his party traveled back through Basel and on to Frankfurt, Germany, to address a large gathering of Saints on the evening of July 8. Members congregated from six districts—Frankfurt, Ruhr, Karlsruhe, Stuttgart, München, and Nürnberg—to hear President Grant speak. Many Saints traveled several hours for the opportunity to hear the prophet.

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**Fig. 7.** President Grant taking a boat ride on one of Switzerland’s glacial lakes, possibly Lake Zürich, July 6, 1937. Although the album notes that this photograph was taken on Lake Geneva, that information does not seem correct. In his personal journal, President Grant records two boat rides, one on Lake Geneva while traveling to meet President Kelly (July 1) and the other for leisure on Lake Zürich (July 6). The Church archivist who transcribed these sections of President Grant’s journal believed that this particular photograph was taken on the leisure trip.
The general meeting for members of the Church and friends was held later that evening (fig. 8). A missionary who attended those meetings noted in his journal that “there were about 870 people present at the meeting, one of the largest group [sic] of saints that have Ever came [sic] together in Europe.” Presidents Brown, Lyman, and Kelly all spoke before President Grant, who addressed the members at around nine o’clock. President Grant spoke for almost an hour about the Book of Mormon, the Articles of Faith, and “the first principles of the Gospel.” Afterward, he visited and shook hands “for nearly an hour” with the people attending the meeting.

Many freedoms had been dramatically curtailed in Nazi Germany, including religious freedoms. In this context, President Grant reported in October general conference how “very remarkable” it was that they had
had “perfect liberty in the holding of our meetings in Germany, notwithstanding the fact that more than thirty different denominations have been prohibited from preaching there.”

President Grant and his companions spent the night in a local hotel before leaving for Prague, Czechoslovakia, the following day. En route, they changed trains in Nürnberg, Germany (fig. 9), where a group of about thirty Latter-day Saints and missionaries greeted them. The party spent the next several days in the Czechoslovakian Mission before returning to Germany for a tour of the German-Austrian Mission. On July 12, they visited Hamburg and then made their way to Dresden, Breslau, and Berlin.

The physical presence of the prophet had a profound effect upon the Saints in Europe. Mirjam Schirm recalls that when President Grant visited the Interlaken Ward in 1937 “the respectful character of the prophet impressed painter Arthur Hodel so much that he painted a portrait of him.” When Hodel finished the painting the following year, he presented it to the Interlaken Ward, where it hung “until shortly after the death of President Heber J. Grant in 1945. Later, when the ward changed location to the

**Fig. 9.** President Grant and President Lyman visiting with the Saints as they prepare to leave the train station, Nürnberg, Germany, July 9, 1937. A group of about thirty-five Saints and missionaries greeted them at the station.
Rugenaustrasse, the picture went along and continued . . . to please the members and to remind them of the visit of a prophet.” Sister Schirm continues, “The deep and sincere glance of Heber J. Grant seems, to me, to continue warning: Take the speakers’ words seriously—remember the message of the prophet—your Savior lives!”

**Conclusion**

President Grant’s trip to the British Isles and continental Europe in 1937 was a milestone in Church history for the region. It gave the Church increased visibility in countries where growth had slowed considerably, and it allowed President Grant to determine personally what changes would best befit the European missions at the time. An immediate administrative change resulting from this tour of Switzerland and Germany was the creation of a third mission for German-speaking countries. More importantly, however, the visit had a profound effect on the lives of President Grant, those traveling with him from Utah, and the European Saints, missionaries, and others who heard the words of a prophet.

The Swiss-German Mission manuscript history concludes that this European trip “was both inspiring and instructive. During his stay in the Swiss-German Mission, Pres. Grant made many friends, both members of the Church and non-members.” He bore his testimony “in every branch, and consequently fulfilled the dreams of the German Saints. They had seen the man who stood at the head of the Church.”

President Grant also long remembered the reception he was given at their hands. Upon his return to the United States, President Grant said:

“It melted my heart to find how anxious the people who are in those countries are to see the Authorities of the Church. . . . I feel really and truly ashamed of myself that I have neglected so long returning to that part of the flock. They are just as much a part of this Church as we are. . . . If the Lord spares my life, I am not going to wait very long before going back again.”

With the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, President Grant was unable to return to Europe as he had hoped. He died quietly in Salt Lake City in May 1945 just as hostilities in Europe concluded. The memory of his visit, however, helped to spiritually sustain the European Saints during the dark years of conflict, death, and destruction. Edith Schade, a German Latter-day Saint, explained the impact she felt President Grant’s visit had on younger European members like her: “Two years later the Second World War broke out and we, by our having met President Grant, received
stronger testimonies of the truth and tried harder to better understand and keep the commandments."

President Grant recognized the need to expand Church programs and opportunities to the European Saints, something his successors followed up on. After the war, the Church sent large shipments of aid to the Saints in Europe. President George Albert Smith called Elder Ezra Taft Benson, a newly ordained Apostle, on a year-long European mission to lead the effort to save Church members and friends from starvation and to begin to rebuild the Church in Europe.

In 1952, President David O. McKay became the third Church President to visit the European Saints in their own lands. During subsequent years, he visited several times, and in 1955 he dedicated Europe’s first temple—a temple near Berne, Switzerland.

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5. Heber J. Grant, in *108th Semi-Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1937), 2–3, 6–8; Sorensen, “President Grant on Tour of Europe,” 1.

6. The collection is contained in a well-preserved, cloth-bound album currently housed in the Latter-day Saint Church Archives in Salt Lake City. It is not clear exactly how or when the Archives acquired the album, although William W. Slaughter, Church photo-archivist, says that the album may have been donated by the Swiss-German Mission. The 9.5” x 6.63” album has thirty-four black pages.
(the last seventeen of which are blank) containing thirty-one black-and-white photographs from President Grant’s travels in Switzerland and Germany. Some of the images have ragged edges (fig. 2), and others have a clean-cut border, suggesting different photographers.

Throughout the album, notes provide details about photographs (dates and locations), the handwriting of which corresponds to similar notes inscribed on the backs of the photographs themselves. These notes suggest that someone removed from the situation prepared the album because some of the inscriptions incorrectly date the photographs as August (President Grant was in Switzerland and Germany in July) and because there is at least one site-identification problem (see fig. 7). The collection of images includes pictures from Berne, Basel, and Zürich (Switzerland); from Nürnberg and Frankfurt am Main (Germany); and from one other site in the German Third Reich, probably Hamburg.

8. Sorensen, “President Grant on Tour of Europe,” 1.
13. Switzerland Zurich [Swiss and German] Mission Manuscript History and Historical Reports, July 2, 1937, vol. 9, Switzerland Zurich Mission collection, Church Archives. After President Grant returned home in 1937, the Switzerland Zurich Mission was created. The Swiss-German Mission records are now a part of the Switzerland Zurich Mission history at Church Archives.
17. Grant, in 108th Semi-Annual Conference of the Church, 8.

Others who recall hearing President Grant during his visit have also specifically mentioned his testimony regarding the Articles of Faith:

We, like many other members, . . . were very delighted that he spoke about the thirteen Articles of Faith of the Church. We could now truly better understand them and recognize their importance.
... We all, including our children, began memorizing the Articles of Faith as a result of this visit. ... 

... After 1937 the church also put out a thin, but significant, pamphlet that was called “The Articles of Faith” compiled by Heber J. Grant. (Edith [Schade] Krause to Marc Alain Bohn, August 22, 2003)

22. Rindlisbocher, interview.
33. Elder Bertis Lloyd Embry, a missionary serving near Essen, Germany, at the time, describes in his journal his extraordinary efforts to organize the many Saints from his area for the trip to Frankfurt to hear the prophet. Elder Embry and the members from the Essen area traveled almost seven hours to get to the meeting on July 8. Bertis Lloyd Embry, Journal, July 5 and 8, 1937, typescript, Missionary Journals November 1935–July 1938, Church Archives.
38. Grant, in 108th Semi-Annual Conference of the Church, 4.
39. Gräub, Chronik, 240, translated by Peacock. Another member also recalled that the Nazis asked the members to remove a picture of President Grant in a German meetinghouse because he “was supposedly a Jew.” Krause to Bohn, August 22, 2003.
42. Heber J. Grant, quoted in Hinckley, Heber J. Grant: Highlights, 146. President J. Reuben Clark Jr., representing a League of Nations committee on International Loan Contracts in Berlin, took time from a busy diplomatic schedule to visit members of the Church as a member of the First Presidency in August 1937. See Scharffs, Mormonism in Germany, 89; and “Präsident J. Ruben Clark in un dern Missionen,” Der Stern 69 (September 1–15, 1937): 258.
43. Krause to Bohn, August 22, 2003. See similar sentiments in Der Stern’s “Ein lang erwarteter Besuch,” 215; and “Präsident J. Ruben Clark,” 258.


45. Van Orden, Building Zion, 162–63.
In researching and writing the story of Helmuth Hübener, the Latter-day Saint youth who was executed for distributing anti-Nazi literature in Germany during World War II,¹ I learned of several other Hübener-like people in Nazi Germany.² One such person, whom I shall call Bruno to preserve anonymity, was a young Latter-day Saint man who joined Hitler’s infamous elite force, the SS, and then had a change of heart. I had the privilege, a number of years ago now, to interview this gentleman at his home in Germany.

The Early Years

Bruno’s story begins with his father, Johann Kusmin S., a native of Riga, Latvia, who supported the czar on the side of the White army in the Russian civil war against the Bolsheviks. He died in a battle in Lithuania in 1923. His pregnant widow, Olga Viktoria Romanovska, fled to Königsberg, now Kaliningrad in Russia, where Bruno was born on November 7, 1923.

² For a discussion of some of these, see my unpublished paper “Six Authors in Search of a Character: Helmuth Hübener in Post-War German Literature,” which can be read online at germслав.byu.edu/faculty/afkeele/authors.htm.
Olga had had six other sons, all of whom had died young, either from an illness such as typhus or by accident; one was sliding in the snow while hanging onto an automobile, and he got hooked onto the car somehow and was dragged to death. After the death of her husband, Olga found herself staatenlos (without citizenship in any state) and could not legally work. She eked out a living as a cleaning lady. One can only imagine her emotional state.

There was a Latter-day Saint sister in the town who was also a part-time fortune teller (Kartenlegerin), to whom Olga went to have her fortune told. In what must be one of the strangest conversion stories on record, she learned from this woman about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In 1936, Olga and her thirteen-year-old son, Bruno, were baptized in the Memel River.

They became members of the Tillsit Branch in the Königsberg District, a branch of between one and two hundred members presided over at

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3. In 1899, Arnold H. Schulthess, president of the German Mission, recorded that “a fine opening has been made in Königsberg, East Prussia.” The area grew
the time by President Otto Schulzke, reportedly a professional prison warden but not a Nazi. Bruno was made a deacon. He remembers hearing President Heber J. Grant speak at a conference in Königsberg. All the district members reportedly traveled to the city and stayed with other members there, often five to a bed. Some children slept at the church on the bellows of the organ.

Bruno remembers the article by the president of the East German Mission in the official Nazi newspaper stating that Mormons and Nazis had some common experiences and values. But Bruno also recalls that most of

quickly, and Königsberg became its own district in 1901. Gilbert W. Scharffs, Mormonism in Germany: A History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Germany between 1840 and 1970 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), 47. Though the district continued to grow, World War II took a severe toll on Church membership. For example, in 1937 there were 845 members in the Königsberg area. In 1947, the branch closed. Scharffs, Mormonism in Germany, 129.

4. President Heber J. Grant traveled to Germany in 1937. (For more information on President Grant’s European tour, see “A Long-Awaited Visit: President Heber J. Grant in Switzerland and Germany, 1937” by Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Mark Alain Bohn, also in this issue.) Meetings were held in Frankfurt. Previously, in a First Presidency Message of 1929, President Grant counseled the European Saints to remain in their homelands despite the turbulent political and economic atmosphere rather than emigrate to the United States. Emigration among German members of the Church declined sharply in the years leading up to World War II. Scharffs, Mormonism in Germany, 78, 81.

5. Alfred C. Rees was president of the East German Mission from December 31, 1937, to August 16, 1939. Scharffs, Mormonism in Germany, 88–90, 92. As tensions mounted in Nazi Germany, President Rees wrote an article called “Im Lande der Mormonen” (“In the Land of the Mormons”) comparing German and Mormon history and praising selected efforts of the current government. His article was published in the Völkischer Beobachter, the official Nazi newspaper, on April 14, 1939. The following excerpts are from a translation of his article:

The Mormon people know what persecution and suppression mean. And the German people who have gone through the shadow of the valley since the World War; and who have been forced to rely upon their own strength and determination, and upon their undying belief in their own ability to restore their self-respect and their merited place among the mighty sisterhood of nations, reveal that same progressive character, which does not shun obstacles. For that reason, to a student of Mormonism, recent developments in Germany present a most impressive comparison. . . . The Mormon people, perhaps more than any other people in all the world, pay high tribute to the German government for its bold declaration of war against the use of alcohol and tobacco by the youth of Germany. (Joseph M. Dixon, “Mormons in the Third Reich: 1933–1945,” Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 7 [Spring 1972]: 72.)
the Latter-day Saints in the area were not pro-Nazi; on the contrary, when he later joined the SS, most of them looked at him suspiciously. He and his mother were both philosemites, he said, with many Jewish friends. When he performed his Landjahr (an obligatory year working in the countryside) near Elbing, East Prussia, he attended the branch there, an indication that he must have also been somewhat committed to the Church at that time.

Bruno had a strict upbringing and had to work hard to help his mother make ends meet. When he was growing up, he reported, she often had two jobs and had to lock him in the apartment for the day. When he was a bit older, he helped by gathering mushrooms and berries in the forest.

His mother did not speak German well and relied on him as her translator. Possibly for this reason, among imaginable others, she did not want her only remaining family member out of her sight and was overprotective to the extent that she discouraged him from participating in Church youth programs.

**The Jungvolk**

In order to break free of his clinging mother, Bruno reported, he began to get involved with the Jungvolk, the Nazi program for young boys. A friend of his mother, a man whose house she cleaned, sponsored Bruno and purchased his uniforms for him. When Bruno was old enough, he became a member of the Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth). Looking back on

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Four months later, missionaries fled Germany, and on September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland, beginning the Second World War.

6. Jungvolk was a branch of Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth), for boys ten to fourteen. Formally organized in 1931, Jungvolk saw immediate and exponential growth with the birth of the Third Reich. Gerhard Rempel, Hitler’s Children: The Hitler Youth and the SS (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1989), 9.

7. In 1933, Hitler voiced his conviction about the significance of the youth in the Nazi movement:

I am beginning with the young. We older ones are used up. . . . We are rotten to the marrow. We have no unrestrained instincts left. We are cowardly and sentimental. We are bearing the burden of a humiliating past, and have in our blood the dull recollection of serfdom and servility. But my magnificent youngsters! Are there finer ones anywhere in the world? Look at these young men and boys! What material! With them I can make a new world. (Rempel, Hitler’s Children, 1–2)
it, he recalls that he should have seen the inherent violence and injustice in the party, for as a Hitlerjugend member he had to do pushups with a leader holding a knife upright below his stomach. He also recalls the H.J. clearing out cafés at curfew time and then breaking curfew themselves by lounging in the cafés until late at night.

Although he began an apprenticeship as a Drogist, which is not quite the same thing as a druggist, Bruno became interested in the Feuerschutzpolizei, a voluntary fire department of sorts that was a kind of pre-military training program rather than a full-time occupation.

In 1942, when Bruno was twenty or so, a committee of the Waffen SS (armed protective services) came to the Feuerschutzpolizei looking for likely recruits, and they mustered Bruno into the SchutzStaffel (protective echelon). He was sent to Debica in Poland, where he served as a guard at a Truppenübungsplatz (a troop-training facility). Of his memories there, he said only that the local governor in Poland (the Provinzleiter), was a notorious high-living “swine.”

Now comes the ugly part: While Bruno was in Poland, the SS were assigned to details to eliminate Jews. The SS were given Schnapps and drugs to make them fearless, Bruno reports, and then they were driven into the countryside to round up Jewish villagers in the shtetls. Bruno was uncomfortable talking to me about this episode in his life. I did not feel like pressing him for details about his participation; nevertheless, I got the

The Hitlerjugend was Hitler’s youth organization created with this vision in mind in 1926, before the Nazis had even come to power. Peter D. Stachura, Nazi Youth in the Weimar Republic (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Clio Books, 1975), 23. As Hitler’s youth organizations expanded, the Hitlerjugend came to refer specifically to the organization for boys ages fourteen to eighteen. Rempel, Hitler’s Children, 9. The Hitlerjugend had close ties to the Nazi adult organizations such as the SA (the Storm Troopers), the SS, and the German army. Rempel observes, “The social, political, and military resiliency of the Third Reich is inconceivable without the H. J. It was the incubator that maintained the political system by replenishing the ranks of the dominant party and preventing the growth of mass opposition.” Hitler’s Children, 2.

8. The Waffen-SS, literally, “the SS-in-arms,” was the combat wing of the SS, a paramilitary group used by Hitler as a secondary, politically motivated army. D. S. V. Fosten and R. J. Marrion, Waffen-SS: Its Uniforms, Insignia, and Equipment, 1938–1945 (London: Almark, 1972), 5, 8. Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS and anxious for more power to move forward with his sinister racial agenda, expanded the ranks of the SS greatly as the war progressed. Rempel, Hitler’s Children, 23. Because the SS could not draft soldiers, it recruited heavily from Hitler youth organizations. Rempel, Hitler’s Children, 200–201. By the end of 1942, the Waffen-SS had nearly 190 thousand men. Fosten and Marion, Waffen-SS, 12.

9. The correct Yiddish plural is shtetlach (small Jewish villages).
impression that he did not do the horrible things others did. He particularly recalled how shocked he was when an SS man threw a baby into the air and shot it with his carbine. Women were stripped and their body cavities searched, ostensibly for hidden jewels. Bruno said, “Lest anyone argue that there was no persecution of the Jews, let me tell him that I saw it firsthand.”

One night after this horrible experience, Bruno and a Hungarian comrade buried their uniforms, dressed in their civilian clothes, and began walking southwest toward the British lines, as they imagined them. In five days they made it as far as the Carpathians, where they were captured by Germans at a small border crossing. Bruno and his companion suspected that a Pole who had befriended them earlier had alerted the Gestapo about them.

**Dachau**

Bruno was taken back to his unit and tried by the *SS-und Polizeigericht VI* (SS and Police Court VI) in Krakau, Poland. The judge reportedly said to him, “Der Alte Fritz hätte Sie erschossen!” (“Old Emperor Friedrich would have shot you!”) When he was sentenced to seven years, Bruno laughed. Apparently this was a nervous tick of his (he had laughed when a bomb had landed near him during the war).

He was first sent to the concentration camp at Dachau, Germany, then was moved to a labor camp in nearby Allach that was making BMW aircraft engines. In 1944 he grasped at an opportunity to volunteer for a kind of suicide mission involving one-man submarines, but when he got to Berlin and party officials looked more closely at his record, he was sent right back to Dachau. From there he was sent to Budweis, Czechoslovakia, on a *Bewährungsaufsatz* (probationary assignment), but he left the train in Vienna to go to the amusement park at the Prater, as he recalls it, and overstayed his leave. When he finally arrived in Prague, he was tried again and given an additional three years of imprisonment in Dachau. In December 1944, he was sent to a labor facility in Neckar-Els bei Moosbach, near

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Heidelberg. Here he worked assembling Daimler-Benz aircraft engines in filthy underground tunnels that dripped cold water on him as he worked.

**Illness and the End of the War**

Having survived several bombing raids on the factory, he contracted tuberculosis from the terrible conditions underground. The Red Cross once visited his factory and sent him to a clinic in Rockenau bei Eberbach on the Neckar River, where the end of the war overtook him. Because the United States Army had no proof that Bruno had been a prisoner of the Nazis, they treated him as an SS man, for that is what someone told them he was, even though he did not have the SS blood-type tattoo under his arm.¹¹

At first he was a prisoner of war in the former *Grossdeutschland Kaserne* (Greater Germany Barracks), then in a tent camp in Heilbronn, Germany, and later in Niederroden, Germany. Then, due to his failing health, the Americans put him in one of their own hospitals before freeing him, presumably to die. After he was released on April 22, 1946, he entered a German hospital at Heidelberg-Rohrbach, where his entire right lung was removed. (When I interviewed him in 1985, his chest was still very noticeably sunken in on the right side.) The left lung was infected, but he was given antibiotics to treat it.

**Church, Family, and Career**

While recovering in the clinic, Bruno saw a newspaper advertising an upcoming conference of the Church in Karlsruhe, Germany. He wrote to the address given in the paper and received visitors from the Church. About eight weeks after his operation, he boarded a train with his newfound Latter-day Saint friends, notably the Eugen Hechter family, for the conference. They propped him up with pillows to ease his pain. He reported to me that from that moment forth he has been a one-hundred-percent-devoted Latter-day Saint. He has served as a patriarch and a

¹¹. The blood type was tattooed on the inside of the left upper arm of SS soldiers. This mark—or any scar that might have suggested an attempt to remove the tattoo—was considered prima facie evidence of membership in the SS and often resulted in summary executions. See Karl Schnibbe’s account in Holmes and Keele, eds., *When Truth Was Treason*, 380, n. 40.
bishop, as a high councilor several times, and in many other callings; he projected to my eyes a saintly, even beatific spirit. Educationally, he finished his apprenticeship and became a Drogist. At twenty-seven he married a woman who was a war widow with two children. They had two sons together. (His two sons were inactive in the Church when I spoke to him; he thought he had been too severe with them when they were young.) When his wife passed away in 1978, he lived for a while with a stepdaughter and her family. He met his second wife at a Latter-day Saints singles gathering in Tirolia, Austria. Together they have served a mission in Pirmasens, Germany.

Regrettably, he was unable to locate his mother: though he had heard from her once while he was in Berlin briefly, he does not know what became of her in the confusion of the war, nor could the other Latter-day Saints from the Königsberg area tell him anything more about her fate. When he was asked to teach a class in Church after the war, he realized he knew the gospel better than he thought he did, thanks to reading to his mother aloud from the Book of Mormon and the Bible. Like many who had been in camps, he had a problem with the Word of Wisdom, which he soon overcame. After the war, he received some reparations money, but he had to pay some of it back when it was learned that he had been in the SS. He lived for two and one-half years in the United States, where he worked as a janitor in a Latter-day Saint stake center, but he returned to Germany after fasting and praying about it.

**Conclusion**

Bruno’s story leaves room for much conjecture: Why did he join the SS? His mother was anti-Bolshevik, but he says she was also philosemitic and anti-Nazi. I got the impression he had been, as a very young and impressionable man, simply motivated to get away from a possessive mother and have some excitement, a young man who did not have the perspective to see what Nazism really promised. Yet when he saw Nazism in its true light, he had the courage to flee from it. And when he returned to the narrow path of the gospel, he held onto the rod with the strength of a man who had literally been to hell and back.

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During the thirty-three years that Brigham Young led The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1844–77, he set the Church on a course of following the Word of Wisdom to the letter. While most Church members failed to obey the revelation’s proscriptions during Brigham’s lifetime, he set the goal that members would eventually comply with the Word of Wisdom. During his tenure, he changed the standard from moderate use of tobacco, alcohol, tea, and coffee to full abstinence.

This important chapter in the history of the Word of Wisdom has several subtexts. It reveals President Young’s personality and leadership style. It also suggests a social trend and incremental progress. Like Americans and western Europeans generally, the men and women of President Young’s era were refining themselves and their society—slowly and fitfully, perhaps, and certainly not as quickly as President Young hoped.

Despite the lag between the rhetoric and the reality, the change in practice was eventually complete enough that many of today’s Church members might look back on pioneer-day Word of Wisdom observance with surprise and disbelief. This article presents an examination of Brigham’s role in the elevation of Word of Wisdom compliance in hopes that this information will help readers understand the difficulties he faced in changing the personal habits of the growing Church membership.¹

Initial Word of Wisdom Interpretations

The Brigham Young era began with an easy tolerance about Word of Wisdom compliance that reflected both the flexible wording of Joseph Smith’s revelation and the social norms of the nineteenth century. Given to
the Church in February 1833, the health code revelation came not by way of “commandment or constraint” but as a voluntary “greeting.” In short, it was an invitation (literally a “word of [divine] wisdom”) that promised Church members “temporal” blessings (physical and perhaps monetary advantages) as well as spiritual insight (“wisdom” and “knowledge”). To gain these gifts, the Saints were asked to forego “wine or strong drink,” tobacco when taken internally instead of as a healing herb, and “hot drinks.” These prohibitions were matched by a series of prescriptions—suggestions of foods that might be ideally eaten. For instance, the revelation urged a diet of vegetables (“herbs”), fruits, grains, and a little meat, although more meat was allowed in “famine” and cold weather.²

At first glance, the revelation appeared to be a mild advisory that left the use of the prohibited and prescribed items to the judgment of Church members. However, elements of the Word of Wisdom revelation also suggested a stricter view. While the revelation was offered as advice, could a conscientious Saint set aside any word of God? After all, the health code was a divine instruction. Moreover, the revelation contained words that seemed inclusive. It was intended for the “weak and the weakest of all saints, who are or can be called saints”—categories that came close to suggesting a universal application.³

In truth, Church members did not immediately receive consistent, unequivocal direction from prophetic figures relative to how certain specific verses were to be interpreted and/or implemented. Could the proscribed items be used “moderately”—with restraint—or did members have to abstain from them? How much attention should they give to the prescribed foods? Were these to become the bulk of their diet? And there were hard questions about duty and conscience. If the Word of Wisdom was more than a health code—if it also had a moral or religious duty attached to it—the revelation might require a greater obedience. Finally, how insistent would the Church be about obedience? Would following the Word of Wisdom become a matter of Church discipline, perhaps requiring the names of the wayward to be taken from Church rolls? Or would compliance be left to each man and woman? The Latter-day Saint concept of agency had to be considered. Since none of these questions and issues were fully answered by the 1833 Word of Wisdom revelation, Church leaders and members would need time and experience to sort them out.

The vagueness of the wording of the Word of Wisdom actually may have been an advantage to the fledgling Church. Because the revelation sought to reform embedded drinking and dietary habits (and the social traditions on which these habits were based), the revelation might have foundered had its full application been sudden or strict, and the early
Church itself could have lost its cohesion and focus. The abolition of alcohol, especially, posed a difficult challenge, for eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century Americans were drinkers on a scale that can scarcely be imagined today.

**Early American Drinking, Tobacco Use, and Diet**

In the colonial era, most men drank, as did a fair number of women and children. Alcohol supplemented bland diets, helped as a relaxant for anxiety, and served as medication for colds, snake bites, and broken limbs. Drink provided uplift at parties, military drills, and community projects such as house-raisings.⁴ “Freer was its use than water by the human species,” said one temperance author.⁵ Americans would drink from dawn to dusk, at breakfast and dinner, with friends or alone.⁶

The four decades between 1790 and 1830 saw the heaviest per capita alcohol consumption in the nation’s history, as the dark brews, fermented wines, and distilled rum of the colonial era gave way to the hard cider and especially to the hard whiskey of the new republic. Annual per capita consumption of alcohol for Americans over the age of fourteen rose from an estimated 5.8 gallons in 1790 to 7.1 gallons in the first third of the nineteenth century—more than three times the drinking level of Americans near the end of the twentieth century.⁷

Excessive drinking—perhaps the United States’s most serious preventable public health problem of the time—was not the only issue addressed by the Word of Wisdom. Disease resulting from the use of tobacco also was a growing public health problem. In addition to smoking cigars and pipes, Americans sniffed or chewed snuff (finely pulverized tobacco).⁸ Chewing tobacco, an American innovation that mixed tobacco and molasses, was a social staple. Stains of dark-colored spittle covered the floors in most public places; well-mannered people could do little but complain and hope for better times.⁹ While the early-nineteenth-century incidence of tobacco use is difficult to estimate, clearly tobacco was used by many men as well as by some women. The Saints were no exception; when Joseph Smith first presented his Word of Wisdom revelation to a group of twenty-two men at Kirtland, Ohio (fig. 1), twenty were using tobacco.¹⁰

Finally, there was a growing feeling that Americans might improve their diet. The popular and possibly most influential food reformer in the 1830s, Sylvester Graham (famous for the “Graham cracker”), voiced concern not only about alcohol and tobacco but also about such things as coffee, tea, pepper, mustard, and “every other kind of artificial stimulants and narcotics.”¹¹
Obviously, the Word of Wisdom came in a time of widespread health and social reform. Alcohol reformers had first raised their voices before the end of the eighteenth century, and their cries grew as the quantity of spirits used by the American public rose. The year 1826 saw the organization of the American Temperance Society, which urged abstinence rather than moderation as the most feasible way to end the national binge. This national organization in turn led to the establishment of hundreds of local societies, which were especially numerous in the Western Reserve of Ohio, where Joseph Smith received his Word of Wisdom revelation. Interestingly, the day before Joseph Smith received the revelation, temperance societies throughout the United States engaged in a special campaign. “A whole nation,” wrote a journalist in the New York Temperance Recorder, “called up its energies, and the cry . . . was heard reverberating from hill to hill and from vale to vale.”

Many Americans, particularly religious evangelicals, worried about the social conditions of the new republic. While the colonial population may have drunk a great deal, public behavior had been controlled by restraining ideals and institutions that placed a premium on social order and virtue. As a result, drinking, particularly in the New England colonies, had been “orderly” and private. However, by the end of the eighteenth century and
beginning of the nineteenth, these old controls began to loosen, and many “traditional” Americans grew alarmed at the public display of drinking and the resulting social disorder.  

The Early Church and the Word of Wisdom

Brigham Young was influenced by the Mormons’ experience with the health code before he became the President of the Church. At best, early Word of Wisdom observance had a checkered history. It is true that some voices in Ohio urged complete abstinence. “Have not the authorities of the church in council assembled in this place, decided deliberately and positively,” wrote a Church editor at Kirtland in 1837, “that if any official members of this church shall violate or in any wise disregard the words of wisdom which the Lord has given for the benefit of his saints, he shall lose his office?”

Such strict views led to turmoil and schism in Missouri, and by the time the Church established its headquarters at Nauvoo, Joseph Smith declined to enforce a policy of abstinence. After one Church elder preached a long sermon that enjoined the Saints to “sanctity, solemnity, and temperance in the extreme, in the rigid sectarian style,” Joseph reproved him for being “pharisaical and hypocritical and [for] not edifying the people.” Later that evening, a Church council concluded “that a forced abstinence was not making us free but we should be under bondage with a yoak [sic] upon our necks.” The decision apparently reflected the Latter-day Saint ideals of personal conscience and forbearance as well as the reality that an enforced compliance might tear the social fabric of the Church.

However, at Kirtland and at Nauvoo, the first-generation Mormons insisted that their towns be orderly and filled with virtue. A visiting Methodist preacher named Prior expressed astonishment at not seeing “loungers about the streets nor any drunkards about [their] taverns,” while the Hancock Eagle called the city of Nauvoo “a Benighted Region,” lamenting that “from the centre to the circumference of the city, ... a glass of ardent spirits cannot be purchased at any price” (italics in original). While the newspaper perhaps exaggerated, it suggested a policy that Brigham Young reaffirmed upon becoming the Church leader in 1844. Said an official letter of the Quorum of the Twelve, sent out several months after Joseph Smith’s death, “To be plain . . . we wish to suppress all grogshops, gambling houses, and all other disorderly houses or proceedings in our city, and to tolerate no intemperance or vice in our midst.”

Observance on the Trail. When, in January 1847, Brigham Young issued his only canonized revelation—section 136 of the Doctrine and
Covenants—the theme of intemperance was once more touched upon. The revelation, meant to list the procedures and standards of the Latter-day Saint migration to the Great Basin, included an admonition to the Saints to cease their “drunkenness” (D&C 136:23–24). Church leaders tried to control drinking at Winter Quarters by giving the bishops exclusive right to sell alcohol; illegal vendors nevertheless sold enough drink to cause “very prevalent” drunkenness and disorderly noise. A police sweep netted five barrels of contraband in a single day, resulting in rage and defiance from some of the moonshiners. But Brigham hoped for an even greater reformation. In March 1847, as the pioneer camp was about to go west, he spoke about making the Word of Wisdom a test of fellowship. While sickness might bring the use of a “cup of tea or a little sp[irits],” Brigham urged that the Saints generally put aside their whiskey and tobacco. They would see, he said, “who is King, tobacco or the man.” There was a measure of self-inspection in his statement. “If I was not afflicted with chewing [tobacco],” he told the Saints, “I should be just right” with the Word of Wisdom.

To show abnegation, Brigham urged the Saints to substitute for their ten-pound trail ration of coffee, which was a luxury, additional basic flour (fig. 2). Few Saints did so. At the very least, they regarded tea and especially coffee as staples for their trip to the Great Basin, and many also used tobacco. In fact, according to one report, the Church members, fearing a short supply of these commodities, stocked up on them before leaving the Midwest. This relaxed stance toward Word of Wisdom observance characterized Mormon gathering efforts for much of the century. Abraham O. Smoot, later a Salt Lake City bishop and stake president in Utah County, recalled that around their campfires Latter-day Saint pioneers often drank tea and coffee and used tobacco.

Regulation in Early Utah. Once in the West, President Young saw just how heavily the realities of pioneering in Utah weighed upon the Saints: there were more pressing demands upon his Saints than meeting head-on their ingrained drinking and preconversion dietary habits. However, he refused to yield on the single item that he believed to be the most serious Word of Wisdom violation: immoderate drinking leading to public inebriation. Upon learning that William Tubbs was bringing whiskey into the newly founded Great Salt Lake City community, Brigham ordered the seizure of the liquor. In 1849, Tubbs was tried and excommunicated from the Church for speaking evil against the Presidency.

But such action hardly stopped the manufacture of “home brew.” It was common enough that in 1849 Church leaders ruled that those using much-needed corn to make whiskey were subject to having their grain
taken from them and given to the poor. In the next several years, Brigham established a virtual Church monopoly on liquor distribution. Further, in February 1851, newly appointed Utah Territorial Governor Brigham Young approved an ordinance of the local general assembly stipulating that only the governor could issue licenses to manufacture ardent spirits. Such a policy was not uniquely Mormon. Civil licenses to make and sell alcoholic beverages, present since colonial times, were being used increasingly by United States temperance workers to control consumption.

Redefining the Word of Wisdom

Brigham’s sermons indicate that the hope of a more faithful Word of Wisdom observance never seemed far from his mind. One of his April 1850 general conference sermons began to define the issue of proper observance. To obey the health code, he said, the Saints must “quit drinking whiskey and leave off using so much tobacco, tea, and coffee,” although several months later he good-naturedly offered to delay for a year any sanction on chewing tobacco if the Saints would support the Church’s emigration program. By the end of the year, however, he seemed willing to
mount a serious Word of Wisdom campaign. On December 15, 1850, he
told a private meeting of Church leaders that he “thought [it] best to renew
the word of wisdom.” and two weeks later the Church’s Deseret News
published an editorial that declared the time had come for members to
decide if the health code was “sent forth in the wisdom of heaven, or in the
folly of man.” That same month, Brigham complained that the Saints did
not know what was good for them and spoke of their unfortunate desire
for tobacco, alcohol, tea, and coffee. These commodities were luxuries
that agitated the nervous system and caused an early death, he believed.

Brigham’s preaching may have had to do with the Christmas–New
Year social season, which in Deseret—like elsewhere—began a round of
parties that often included drinking. Further temperance preaching was
put on hold for the next few months, as Brigham was appointed territorial
governor and devoted his attention to setting up the new government.

**The September 1851 Conference.** Events of the September 1851 general
conference are often regarded as a watershed in the history of the Word of
Wisdom. On the third day of the conference, Patriarch John Smith urged
the men to “leave off using tobacco &c.” After Smith’s fervent plea, W. W.
Phelps presented a motion (perhaps uttered from his seat in the podium
area) that the Saints lay aside their use of tea, coffee, tobacco, and snuff.

Apparently, Brigham Young then “rose to put the motion [to the people]
and called on all the sisters who will leave the use of tea, coffee, &c., to man-
ifest it by raising the right hand.” One vote in opposition was recorded.
Brigham, in a second vote, then called “on all the boys who were under
ninety years of age who would covenant to leave off the use of tobacco,
whisky, and all things mentioned in the Word of Wisdom, to manifest it in
the same manner” (italics in original). Again, there was one dissenting
vote. Patriarch Smith then uttered a brief encouragement: “May the Lord
bless you and help you to keep all your covenants.”

Stirred by these spontaneous events, Brigham continued:

I will draw the line and know who is for the Lord and who is not, and
those who will not keep the Word of Wisdom, I will cut off from the
Church; I throw out a challenge to all men and women. Have I not always
counseled you right? I would rather you would cut me into inch pieces,
than to flinch from my duty, the Lord being my helper.

The conference concluded the following morning, on Wednesday.
Once more the Word of Wisdom was preached, and it was apparently in
this session that President Young expressed his regret that the pioneers had
spent an estimated fifty thousand dollars on tea, coffee, and tobacco, in his
mind a misuse of resources and a negation of the Word of Wisdom’s
promise of temporal or monetary blessing.
It had been a stirring conference with a temporal focus. When the Church issued its Sixth General Epistle, the conference report that summarized major events and teaching, President Young gave the Word of Wisdom equal billing with tithing, a major theme of the conference. The epistle reported that the conference had voted to “commence anew the tithings and consecrations” of Church members while at the same time voting “to observe the words of wisdom, and particularly to dispense with the use of tea, coffee, snuff, and tobacco.” The epistle’s failure to mention alcohol may be noteworthy. The items named in the epistle were imported from the East and therefore drained the territory of scarce money. In contrast, most alcoholic beverages were locally produced, which allowed resources to remain in Utah. The possibility of a financial motive is strengthened by a close reading of the various diaries and minutes of the September conference; they, too, appear to give emphasis to prohibitions of imported products.

When the fall general conference of the Church reconvened in October 1851, Brigham began by expressing views that went beyond a pecuniary utility of the Word of Wisdom. He spoke of the decisions made in September as “productive of more good than any Conference we ever held” and specifically pointed to action taken regarding the Word of Wisdom. Brigham believed that in due time the Saints would begin to realize that their understanding of Joseph Smith’s revelation had been meager. He also hoped to expand Word of Wisdom teaching. “We are forbidden to eat meat in hot weather,” he reminded the Saints, and he asked them not to overload their stomachs.

The September 1851 Conference in Review. Church leaders would later refer to the September 1851 conference as the point in time when Joseph Smith’s revelation was accepted by the members of the Church as a binding commandment. However, little evidence exists that Brigham himself regarded this September conference as a pivotal event in Word of Wisdom reform. Certainly, he took no steps, then or later, to make full compliance a membership test for either Church leaders or the members in general. And there is no record of other Church leaders in President Young’s lifetime using the 1851 September conference as a text. In short, the Saints seemed to have understood that while “Brother Brigham” had taken a firm stance on obeying the revelation, his celebrated (and often exaggerated) pulpit language—in this case using the threat of excommunication for non-observers—reached beyond his actual policy. Utah Territory, like several U.S. states that adopted laws of statutory prohibition in the 1850s, seemed willing to express the ideal of suppressing drink, but with no
immediate or realistic ability or process of doing so. The prevailing social condition defied simple or instantaneous solutions.

A clearer indication of President Young’s policy was contained in private letters sent to local Church and civic leaders responsible for local conditions. One of the fullest of these letters was written in November 1852 to Lorin Farr, who presided over the Ogden Valley settlements. Brigham wanted a rational, controlled use of alcohol:

For washings, and medicinal purposes, spirituous liquors are useful and necessary, yet the blessing which they are designed to bestow upon the human race, is so often and so shamefully abused, that many good and conscientious people would deny themselves the blessing of its use, and entirely exclude it, from society; but this is not right, and this people must learn to govern and control all things in righteousness.48

When the Saints made these decisions individually, Brigham hoped that they would learn to “govern and control all things in righteousness.” It was this point that had led him while a youth to refuse his father’s request that he take the temperance pledge. “‘No, sir,’ said I, ‘if I sign the temperance pledge I feel that I am bound, and I wish to do just right, without being bound to do it; I want my liberty’; and I have conceived from my youth up that I could have my liberty and independence just as much in doing right as I could in doing wrong.”49

**Attempts at Social Control**

In his November 1852 letter to Lorin Farr, Brigham also expressed views about individuals who made and sold alcohol:

Whoever should undertake to distill liquors, or deal in them, must expect so soon as it is discovered that their business is becoming a bane to society, that it will summarily be dispensed with, like any other nuisance; be abated entirely, at the expense of the owners, or those engaged in its manufacture, or sale, or traffic[.]. I am determined not to tolerate drunkenness and shops, but will smash them up wherever I can find them, anywhere in the Territory, as I shall have power and influence with the people. Yet did I not believe in always being beholden to our enemies for that article, or else having to do without it. You will therefore discover that I am highly in favor of its manufacture, as I am in favor of all other manufacture for the good of the people.50

Brigham’s counsel conformed to Utah precedents. Shortly after arriving in the Great Basin, Church authorities adopted a policy of limited but officially sanctioned alcohol production. “The foundation for the City Brewery is in the course of erection, and we shall be happy to see it completed,” opined the *Deseret News* in late summer 1850. With the prospect of
an “abundant” crop of hops being realized, the newspaper held out the hope that “those who enjoy the gathering of Hops can now resume their pleasure parties.”

That fall “a new distillery [was] in operation on a very small scale.” In 1852 the city had granted “brother Moon” the exclusive right of making liquor in the city and tried to close the other operating distilleries.

Apparently, the move to close Salt Lake City’s distilleries proved ineffectual or troubling, and Brigham himself eventually established what he later described as “one of the best stills in this territory,” perhaps to better control the manufacture and sale of a product that Brigham continued to believe had some limited virtue. “I never permitted any [alcohol] to be made only for the use and benefit of the people,” he explained.

Some have been for tying up the mouths of the people so they shall not drink. I never was in favor of this course, only in case of our not being agents to ourselves. If I keep a bottle containing spirits to mix with a little camphore & wash my body with, or to administer to any of my family that may be sick I am not obliged to drink it, neither are you. It is good for the washing of the body, and for medicine to apply in many cases of sickness and in health. [Now] I do not wish a law made making it fineable for a person making a drop of liquor, neither do I wish to give license to sell it to a man to drink it.

Yet enough liquor was being produced and consumed in the city to cause President Young to become alarmed. In 1852 he complained that some men were making “perfect swill tubs” of themselves, cursing and swearing in the city’s “Beer shops” and walking unsteadily in the streets.

Brigham accused some “Elders of Israel”—men who had “done much good” and who were “firm in the faith”—of descending to “the poor miserable state of a drunkard.” “You meet them in the streets so drunk they do not know where they are,” said the Church leader, yet they say that they “believe Mormonism” with all their hearts.

As elsewhere in the United States, Utah was reaping the result of several generations of excessive and addictive drinking, which seemed to grow worse in the frontier West. It was small comfort to Brigham Young that local conditions were “not so bad” as in other western settlements. “Harken who are the persons living here?” he said in rejoinder. “How came this City into existence?” Saints were expected to do better.

By late 1854, the arrival in Utah of 160 soldiers and 130 civilian auxiliaries under the command of Colonel Edward J. Steptoe prodded another attempt to assert social control. Steptoe and his men had been sent west to reconnoiter a military road to California but remained in Utah during winter 1854/55. While the men were probably not any more rowdy than most barracked
soldiers, Steptoe, recognizing the danger of social unrest, asked President Young’s help in making the incendiary of drink less easily available.60

The request created a dilemma; Salt Lake City was torn between conflicting ideals. There remained the question of “liberty” and Mormon uneasiness about dictating social conditions, including to non–Latter-day Saints. “We are no advocates for curtailing any person’s reasonable agency,” said the Deseret News. “It is not strong drink, but the misuse of it which we deprecate.”61 Eventually, the Mormons settled on a policy of revoking the liquor retail licenses that once had been liberally allowed.62 On November 18, 1854, Brigham told territorial judge Zerubbabel Snow to stop selling liquor. “On the account of the increase of drunkenness in this city, and the natural evils resulting therefrom, which far outweigh all profits accruing,” President Young wrote, “I hereby request that, upon the receipt of this note you cease entirely from selling whiskey or any intoxicating liquor to any person whatever, when the design of the buyer is to use it for a beverage,” adding “a strict compliance with this request will much oblige the [non-alcoholic] cider-loving portion of our citizens.”63

At a Sabbath worship meeting held the day after Brigham’s instruction to Snow to cease selling liquor, each member of the First Presidency preached against the liquor traffic and drunkenness. Brigham ordered the cessation of breweries and drinking. Second Counselor Jedediah Grant, who also served as Salt Lake City mayor, told the Saints to quit sending petitions for groggeries to the city council. “I feel they [are] a part of hell and ought to be salted [dumped] in the [Great] Salt Lake,” he said.64

The First Presidency campaign against drunkenness and unwise and unlawful liquor distribution continued through 1854 and well into the following year. Speaking to the Saints in the Old Tabernacle on November 26, 1854, First Counselor Heber C. Kimball spoke of seeing the armies of heaven in a vision. The army consisted of righteous Saints—those who “will not sell whisky, stick up [build] groceries, and establish distilleries.”65 A few days later, Brigham wrote to his son Joseph A. Young, then serving a proselyting mission, that with only one exception all members possessing liquor licenses had responded positively to Kimball’s forthright warning to return them or be cut off from the Church.66 Moreover, Brigham likely closed his distillery at this time, believing that he could no longer control the use of the spirits that it produced.67

However, Salt Lake City’s attempt to control the liquor traffic failed to prevent several army-related incidents. Two days before Christmas, a drunken U.S. trooper attending a Social Hall drama began a “considerable melee” between “quite a number of soldiers” and an equal number of
Mormon boys. On Christmas day, things turned more serious. “Drunken soldiers” provoked a clash on Salt Lake City’s Main Street (nicknamed “Hell-Street” or “Whiskey-Street” because of its growing reputation for disorder) by making belittling remarks about nearby Mormon ladies. Mormon men picked up the challenge, and a “regular melee” broke out. The outmanned soldiers fired five rounds from their guns, apparently to warn off their opponents. The Mormons ran to their homes for their weapons, and a “general engagement” was stopped only by the firm action of Steptoe’s officers and the city’s police.

On February 3, 1855, Brigham responded to Zerubbabel Snow’s refusal to close up his liquor trade. “I do not wish any more spirits distilled in this place or its vicinity,” Brigham wrote in a clearly rising temper. Liquor’s “effects upon society when it is used as an intoxicating drink is so injurious that the benefits derived from it as a medicine will not justify this community in tolerating its manufacture.” By early spring 1855, liquor was apparently relatively difficult to come by. “We can’t have beer or whiskey to drink because of the devilish Saints who don’t know how to use it,” deplored Salt Lake bishop Edward D. Woolley. “I like it a little myself but can’t get it now.” The ideal that most Mormons continued to uphold was the moderate or rational use of alcohol—if only other Mormons could be wise in their conduct.

Higher Word of Wisdom Standards for Youth

The Mormons’ drive to control liquor distribution and use in 1854–55 was not their only Word of Wisdom initiative in the middle 1850s. Brigham Young and other Church leaders took steps to expand the observance of the health code to the rising generation. If not the older folk, Church leaders reasoned, perhaps the youth might reject the unhappy and unholy legacies of their parents and grandparents. This fervent hope came to characterize President Young’s administration.

On July 24, 1854, Brigham Young asked young men to forego the drinking of alcohol and to “also make a covenant with yourselves that no more of that filthy, nasty, and obnoxious weed called tobacco shall enter your mouths; it is a disgrace to this, and every other community.” Parents had an excuse; they had been born in an age that had supported these traditions. On the other hand, Latter-day Saint youth had grown up in the Church, which proscribed the use of such substances, and, as a result, the young people should realize how harmful such substances could be. That same day, Brigham spoke to children who gathered for the annual
Pioneer Day festivity. After speaking about mothers who give their children wine, tea, and coffee, Brigham counseled the young girls assembled there to “never be guilty of such practices when you become mothers.”

In April 1855, President Young again counseled young men to obey the Word of Wisdom. “If the ‘old fogies’ take a little tobacco, a little whisky, or a little tea and coffee,” he said, “we wish you boys to let it alone, and let those have it who have long been accustomed to its use. It is far better for these my brethren, who are young and healthy, to avoid every injurious habit.”

President Young’s advice had a second meaning: Although the youth should avoid the Word of Wisdom’s banned items, they must have patience with their parents. These were good people who had contracted their habits in an earlier, laxer era. His advice to Elder Orson Hyde, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve and then the head of the Latter-day Saint community at present-day Carson City, Nevada, was typical of Brigham’s approach to the Church’s older generation. “Concerning tobacco,” he wrote Hyde, “make yourself comfortable by chewing and smoking all you wish until you come home, and then we will talk it over.”

Relative Temperance

It is difficult to gauge the effect of Salt Lake City’s temperance campaign in the middle 1850s with its corollary cautions to Mormon youth about the use of tobacco, tea, and coffee. Most observers of the time, Gentile as well as Mormon, noted that the Mormons used the Word of Wisdom proscribed items, but in a moderate way that left the city orderly. Traveler William Chandless, after eating dinner with a Mormon family in 1855, commented on the absence of tea and coffee but observed that, although the Saints had a health code, this was the only family he had seen “that while rich enough to disobey, followed the advice.” Jules Remy and Julius Brenchley, European observers who were also in the city in 1855, noted that moderate use, not abstinence, was the ideal. “Although there are neither grog-shops nor dealers in any kind of drinks to be met with,” wrote Remy, it does not necessarily follow that the Saints refrain from the moderate use of spirituous or fermented liquors. No command compels them to reject certain productions of nature or of art. . . . The more fervent do abstain with this view, but occasionally they make no scruple of the moderate use of drink.

Remy and Brenchley thought that the Mormons were more temperate than most societies and that they used coffee and tea less often than other staples. Moreover, “the majority abstain from fermented or spirituous
liquors, either voluntarily and from motives of temperance, or on account of their poverty.” Regarding tobacco, “they chew [it] more than they smoke it; this vile habit, however, is less usual among them than in other parts of the Union.”

These comments are borne out by the era’s tests of Church orthodoxy. Abstaining from Word of Wisdom proscriptions was not included in a list of rules that President Young issued to bishops in 1856 to screen men and women to receive the high ordinance of the endowment. Nor was abstaining one of the tests of membership used in the famed Mormon Reformation of 1856–57. During this general “call to repentance,” Church leaders used pulpit preaching and a wide-ranging catechism to examine personal behavior and to spur the Saints to better works. While the catechism had more than two dozen questions, only one had to do with the Word of Wisdom; predictably, it was, “Have you been intoxicated with strong drink?” In sum, only drunkenness had achieved Word of Wisdom taboo status, and probably only repeated public drunkenness might place a man or a woman’s membership at risk.

The 1850s, then, had seen important Word of Wisdom events. The health code had been officially reaffirmed by the 1851 general conference, although impulsively and with little follow-up at the time. Moreover, the temperance drive of 1854–55 with its corollary of youth observance had restored city order and suggested rules for the new generation. These events as well as the Saints’ general tendency toward temperance produced a society that was, especially for the freewheeling West, relatively stable and well ordered. As the Deseret News suggested in an editorial in the middle 1850s, it was the actions of a comparative few that caused consternation—“a few whisky and beer sellers, and . . . a small sprinkling of drunkards and rowdies.” Generally, the Mormons were doing well with the main Word of Wisdom health problem of the time—alcohol drinking—at least in a relative sense.

Financial Concerns and the Word of Wisdom

Throughout the 1850s and into the 1860s, the financial costs of not observing the Word of Wisdom were a concern for Brigham. In 1855, Brigham told Provo Saints that women should quit buying tea and coffee. “I’ll take $125,000 and it will not pay for tea and coffee brought in [the last] ten months,” he claimed. “Give me the [cash spent by the Saints on tea and coffee], and I will bring the Saints from England, who are starving for food.” In 1859, with Brigham’s approval, the Deseret Agricultural and Manufacturing Society studied ways to cultivate tobacco locally as a countermeasure to
importing it. In the same vein, the Deseret News decried that “thousands of dollars annually leave our Territory for tobacco, an article which can be easily raised in every settlement in the mountains, and we have plenty of citizens skilled in its manufacture.” The newspaper listed the best varieties of tobacco to use, the proper soil to plant it in, and sundry other items dealing with its preparation and care.

These concerns seemed to grow in the early 1860s as the likelihood of an American civil war loomed, an eventuality that Brigham thought might signal the end of political and economic ties with the East. “You know that we all profess to believe the ‘Word of Wisdom,’” Brigham preached in early 1861. “We, as Latter-day Saints, care but little about tobacco; but as ‘Mormons’, we use a vast quantity of it. As Saints, we use but little; as ‘Mormons’, we use a great deal.” The Church leader estimated that “Mormons” had collectively paid sixty thousand dollars to support their habit in the past ten or twelve years. Two months later, he once more urged home manufacture as an economic remedy. “Why don’t you raise your own tobacco and save the dollars?” he asked.

President Young returned to this theme some years later. “Then why not go to work and raise the tobacco we consume?” he asked in 1863.

We have talked about this for years, but are we any nearer to its accomplishment? Very little, if any. I have asked the Bishops to raise in their wards, the tobacco they wish to consume, but they do not do it. I do not know what they say, neither do I know what they feel, but they do not do it. Now I say that we do not ought to buy another pound to be brought into this Territory, and if I had my way about it I would never suffer another pound to be brought here.

As the tracks of the transcontinental railroad reached closer to Utah during the middle and late 1860s, Brigham realized that imports of tea, coffee, and tobacco from the East were likely to increase as costs of transportation decreased. Because these imports would still be costly, Brigham saw the Word of Wisdom as a temporal blessing that, if observed, could put more money into the pockets of the Saints, reduce Zion’s colonial dependence on the East for goods, and make for a more rational use of resources. And if the Saints would not break off their habits, Brigham suggested practically, Word of Wisdom commodities be produced locally.

While clearly bothered by economic waste, Brigham never used just financial arguments to put down tobacco. He opposed “the weed” as an offense to common sense. “There is more grumbling in Deseret [Utah] for tobacco than there is for bread,” he said in 1863. Moreover, moral and theological grounds were never far from his consideration. In 1865 he told a
congregation that the Saints must adhere to the health revelation if they expected to return to Jackson County, Missouri, for the millennial gathering. “So impressive were his remarks,” said the recorder of the sermon, that “there was quite a rustling afterwards among loose, dried tobacco leaves, various remnants of ‘plugs’ being consigned to other places than pockets of masticatory organs, and numerous resolves were made, that tea and coffee would be henceforth abstained from, and the Word of Wisdom strictly observed.”

Furthermore, President Young remained deeply concerned about the social and moral results of drinking, which led him to raise repeatedly the issue of the local manufacture and control of alcohol. “I despise the whiskey maker more than I do the thieves, and I have no use for either,” he told the Saints in 1861. “Harlots and publicans will enter the kingdom of God before the whiskey dealer. Cursed is he that putteth the cup to his brother’s lips.”

When a Church member asked to be excused from a Uintah Valley colonizing company, Brigham perceived his reluctance had to do with the man’s whiskey making. “I do not wish to excuse you,” he exploded. “I want you to go so that you can neither make whiskey or get it. For any man that makes whiskey or Beer is [g]uilty of putting the cup to his neighbor[s’] lips and any man that will make whiskey to sell here would sell the kingdom of God for a pickeyune.” Brigham reminded the wayward Saint of his own example of closing up his distillery when its alcohol could no longer be controlled.

**Utah Liquor Laws**

The foregoing incident suggests that Salt Lake City had a hard time suppressing liquor traffic. The challenge became greater in 1861 after Colonel Patrick Connor’s U.S. army “Volunteers” bivouacked on Salt Lake City’s eastern bench. Complaints grew thereafter about drunkards in the streets. The “traveling community”—soldiers and travelers—augmented by a rising population of non–Latter-day Saint residents demanded liquor, and the city tried to “control it so that all who are weak may not abuse themselves with it.” The feeble certainly included Church members.

Since establishing Salt Lake City, the Mormons had tried to govern the liquor traffic with a variety of expedients, which sometimes were employed in combination. These included licensed private liquor manufacturing and retailing, city-owned monopolies of these practices, and outright prohibition. In April 1865, after President Young made some “terse remarks on liquor stores and grogeries,” the congregation voted once again to close all Salt Lake City saloons and taverns, and city fathers moved to a system of
local monopoly. Only agents recognized by the municipality were to be allowed to sell liquor, with profits from the trade going into the city treasury.97

Not surprisingly, those who were not members of the Church were hardly prepared to live with such controls, and some avoided them by organizing private clubs that served alcohol. In turn, the local community branded these as “nuisance” establishments and took steps to outlaw them. With tempers rising, local Gentiles appealed to U.S. officers in Salt Lake City and Washington, D.C., for protection. After a heated exchange between Mormon and federal officers in President Young’s office, Brigham gave guarantees that property would be protected.98 The incident was more than a passing event; it signaled that Mormons by themselves were no longer able to establish Salt Lake City’s liquor laws and control the city’s social environment. Power was shifting to the non-Mormon and federal officials.

President Young’s Victory over Tobacco

There may have been a personal dimension to President Young’s increasingly vigorous preaching about the Word of Wisdom in the 1860s: he had finally vanquished his own dependence on chewing tobacco. He had arrived in the Salt Lake Valley determined to overcome his tobacco use. “Who is going to be master, you or me?” he reportedly asked the plug of tobacco that he often carried in his hip pocket. Leonard Arrington, President Young’s biographer, suggests that such dialogue helped Brigham maintain his abstinence until unbearable tooth pain caused him in 1857 to dip into the tobacco kitty again after avoiding it for nine years.99

Another report suggests that Brigham did not maintain his resolve quite so long. In 1855, Jules Remy claimed to have watched Brigham matter-of-factly prepare a quid of Virginia tobacco.100 Such a practice was in keeping with Brigham’s advice to Church members for the modest use of tobacco. “Many of the brethren chew tobacco,” he said in one sermon.

I have advised them to be modest about it. Do not take out a whole plug of tobacco in meeting before the eyes of the congregation, and cut off a long slice and put it in your mouth, to the annoyance of everybody around. Do not glory in this disgraceful practice. If you must use tobacco, put a small portion in your mouth when no person sees you, and be careful that no one sees you chew it. I do not charge you with sin. You have the “Word of Wisdom.” Read it. Some say, “Oh, as I do in private, so I do in public, and I am not ashamed of it.” It is, at least, disgraceful to you to expose your absurdities. Some men will go into a clean and beautifully-furnished parlour with tobacco in their mouths, and feel, “I ask no odds.” I would advise such men to be more modest, and not spit upon the carpet and furniture, but step to the door, and be careful not to
let any person see you spit; or, what is better, omit chewing until you have an opportunity to do so without offending.\textsuperscript{101}

There was, of course, yet another option, and that was abstinence. It was the tack that Brigham chose shortly after delivering the above advice. By July 1860, except for medicinal or sacramental reasons, President Young broke off all personal use of alcohol, tobacco, tea, or coffee. Several months later, he spoke of his feat to the Saints, giving as his reason the desire to set a blameless example. “I would chew a little in wisdom & would drink a little,” he said, “but I will not do it to have our little children chew [that are] a few years old.”\textsuperscript{102}

He hoped that the Saints would likewise control themselves. “I have used tobacco a great portion of my life, and I have quit it,” he told the Saints in Centerville, Utah, in June 1861. “Some will say to me how in the world could you do it. Because I was a mind to,” he said. “Can you do the same? Yes.”\textsuperscript{103} He gave similar advice at October general conference in 1862. “I have been in the habit of using tobacco a great deal in my life, but it is now almost two years and a half since I have tasted it,” he said.

Has the forsaking of it caused me much suffering? Look at me. Do I look unusually wrinkled, gray, pale, and wan? . . . It is a year and a half since I have tasted tea. Do you think that I have suffered much through the want of it? Do you think that I am less influenced by the gift and power of the Holy Spirit than formerly? I do not drink tea, coffee, nor intoxicating drinks. Does abstinence from these . . . injure my health or improve it? My appearance will answer the question. Do you think that my mind is less active and clear . . . in consequence of not using these drinks? Brethren, why not abstain as I have done from these hurtful luxuries.\textsuperscript{104}

Four days after the conference, President Young wrote to his missionary son Brigham Young Jr. to encourage him to shun the use of tobacco, too. Again, he cited his personal example:

In all probability you will be able to entirely quit the use of tobacco while on your mission, if you have not already done so. In such case I trust you will be wise enough to not resume its use on your return, either while crossing the ocean, passing through the States, nor upon the plains, but permit us to welcome you home with your mouth and breath free from the use and smell of tobacco. It is now going on two years and a half since I have used a particle of tobacco, and I guess a little resolution and faith on your part will also enable you to dispense with its use, in doing which you will ever feel strengthened, prospered, and blest.\textsuperscript{105}

President Young’s adherence to the Word of Wisdom no doubt played a role in his increasing advocacy of the health code. During the years 1867–69, he began perhaps the Church’s most earnest and sustained drive
for Word of Wisdom reform to date. As the completion of the transcontinental railroad approached (the famed “Golden Spike” signaling its completion was driven at Promontory, Utah, in 1869), economic concerns, which had been a theme in Young’s counsel throughout the 1860s, lay at the root of some of his pleas. However, also at center stage were moral imperatives, which became increasingly important.

Word of Wisdom Reform in the Late 1860s

The reform began at the April 1867 general conference. At one of the opening sessions of the conference, President Young pled with Latter-day Saint women to build the latter-day kingdom by eschewing tea and coffee and by not letting their children drink tea or coffee. Church compliance, he understood, required the support of the leaders of the Church, which was lacking. “You go through the wards in the city, and then through the wards in the country,” he said, “and ask the Bishops—‘Do you keep the Word of Wisdom?’”

The reply will be “Yes; no, not exactly.” “Do you drink tea?” “No.” “Coffee?” “No.” “Do you drink whisky?” “No.” “Well, then, why do you not observe the Word of Wisdom?” “Well, this tobacco, I cannot give it up.” And in this he sets an example to every man, and to every boy over ten years of age, in his ward, to nibble at and chew tobacco. You go to another ward, and perhaps the Bishop does not chew tobacco, nor drink tea nor coffee, but once in a while he takes a little spirits, and keeps whisky in his house, in which he will occasionally indulge. Go to another ward, and perhaps the Bishop does not drink whisky nor chew tobacco, but he “cannot give up his tea and coffee.” And so it goes through the whole church. Not that every Bishop indulges in one or more of these habits, but most of them do.

Continuing, Brigham made his point explicitly:

Bishops, Elders of Israel, High Priests, Seventies, the Twelve Apostles, the First Presidency, and all the House of Israel, hearken ye, O, my people! keep the word of the Lord, observe the Word of Wisdom. . . .

. . . If you have the right to chew tobacco, you have a privilege I have not; if you have a right to drink whisky, you have a right that I have not; if you have a right to transgress the Word of Wisdom, you have a right that I have not.

Increased Word of Wisdom Commitment. Clearly impatient with the progress of the Saints, President Young no longer linked “personal liberty” to the Word of Wisdom but instead spoke of the obligation of Church leaders and members to obey. Likewise, his words no longer had the opaque ambiguity of the original revelation; heavenly “counsel” had become more
straightforward—approaching the weight of a commandment. During the two weeks after the conference, he continued the campaign. On April 21, 1867, he suggested that the Saints might properly donate money recently saved by obeying the Word of Wisdom to the Church’s missionary fund. Several Church members did so. Moreover, he stressed his Word of Wisdom message that spring while visiting southern Utah with several general authorities. Traveling for a month among the settlements from Santaquin to St. George, the group preached Word of Wisdom compliance. At St. George, Brigham’s two sermons on the topic encouraged the Saints to abstain from hot and intoxicating drinks and tobacco and to use grain for food and not for making liquor.

Brigham Young expressed satisfaction with the Word of Wisdom observance in the territory. “The merchants on ‘Whiskey St.’ [in Salt Lake City] can scarcely get enough [trade] day by day to pay their rents,” he informed two of his sons serving missions in England. “The people manifest the strongest disposition we have ever witnessed to carry into effect the counsels which have been given respecting the Word of Wisdom and obedience in temporal as well as spiritual matters.” Aware that previous Word of Wisdom crusades had too often been characterized by haphazard pledges in revivalistic settings, President Young was gratified that on this occasion emotion had been kept to a minimum. “There has been no coercion used,” he wrote, “no covenants required; the principle has been set forth and the people seemed prepared to receive and carry it out willingly.”

Another of President Young’s letters gave added detail. “During my recent trip to St. George and back,” he told a missionary serving in St. Louis, “not one of those who accompanied me used tea or coffee during the entire trip so as I had an opportunity of seeing.” Moreover, the settlers “whether out of respect to us, or because they felt the importance of obeying the counsel given, did not use tea or coffee while we were with them.” Many Saints in southern Utah indicated that they were now living the Word of Wisdom, and, significantly, no one offered the dignitaries “tea, coffee, tobacco or liquor.”

It appeared that this reform was making good and perhaps lasting progress. “Great numbers of the people in the Territory have entirely abstained from the use of stimulants,” Brigham reported to Elder Franklin Richards, who at the time presided over the European Mission. “I am happy to inform you that they seem determined to obey the whisperings of the spirit.” At the October 1867 general conference, President Young thanked the Saints for their obedience but at the same time issued a caution. In the past, the Saints had continued their use of proscribed items by
rationalizing that they were required as medicine. “Who is to be the judge?” Brigham asked. The issue of medicinal use was subjective and too often open-ended, Brigham was saying, and while he admitted that there were times that justified the use of hot drinks, tobacco, or alcohol, these occasions were few and exceptional. But on the question of obeying, the Church leader remained firm. “Some seem to think that this thing will soon die away, and that the people will return to the use of tea, coffee, tobacco and liquor,” he said. Such casual Saints would bring the “curse of God” upon them, and they would be sorry for their acts.¹¹₆

The reform of 1867–69 changed as it continued. Speakers, who once stressed financial reasons for obeying the health code, gave more attention to the issues of moral and physical health. In addition, President Young and other Church leaders began to expand their Word of Wisdom advice to include more than just the proscriptive items that regularly were mentioned. In summer 1867, President Young told Provo Saints that he had continued his abstinence of hot drinks. “I do not think that I have ever taken so much comfort in drinking cold water in all my life as I have this season past,” he said.¹¹₇

In the months following, President Young also addressed the question of eating meat. His opposition to pork was longstanding and almost as strong as his opposition to alcohol and tobacco.¹¹₈ Instead of using these substances, he urged such things as buttermilk, eggs, fish, fowl, and milk as well as fruits and vegetables, which were prescribed by the original revelation. Furthermore, he gave advice about the manner of eating. He thought that the stomach should not be overloaded and that the Saints should therefore eat in moderation.¹¹₉

Clearly, President Young meant his Word of Wisdom reform to be taken seriously. When organizing Schools of the Prophets in the late 1860s, he highlighted the Word of Wisdom. At the initial meeting of the Provo school, he asked those “keeping” the health code to stand, and a majority rose. “The members of this school [in the future] will have to keep the word of wisdom,” he instructed. “Those who do not keep [it] will have to [eventually] leave this school.” To further make the point, Church leaders honored seventy-five-year-old Amos Fielding, who had the unusual distinction of having embraced and “lived” the health code since his conversion to Mormonism thirty years earlier.¹²₀ Members of the Schools of the Prophets at Salt Lake City and Parowan pledged to “observe and keep the Word of Wisdom according to the spirit and meaning thereof.”¹²¹ Presumably, members of the other regional schools did likewise.

Reform in Great Britain. The call to reform was heard even in distant Great Britain. Missionary Henry Jacobs, fresh from Utah, had “indulged”
himself in “the very offensive habit of using a little tea from the effects of
the water [the Atlantic Ocean] I had crossed,” he said. But Elder Jacobs
understood that he would be unable to ask the British Saints to reform
unless he did so himself, and he therefore pledged to make “a firm stand by
the assistance of the Lord” to abstain from outlawed items. Soon he felt
himself prepared to minister to the local Saints, and he could claim that he
had helped “several of the brethren” stop using the “nasty weed.” Still other
Saints promised to avoid stimulants. Jacobs’s Word of Wisdom teaching
continued into December, when he wrote in his diary, “Visiting among the
saints all day . . . some of whom I labored with to get them to observe the
Word of Wisdom.”\textsuperscript{122}

A similar chronology may have existed in Wales. According to one
local authority, little “systematic attention” was given to the Word of Wise-
dom among Welsh Saints until August 1867, when missionaries and mem-
bers began to give it greater heed. By this time, missionaries typically were
abstaining from alcohol and tobacco, and some extended their abstinence
to tea and coffee. While local members were less successful in their observ-
ance, particularly in giving up tea, some did conform to the health law
and became exponents of its cause.\textsuperscript{123} At a Church conference held in
Wales in 1869, the following Word of Wisdom verse was read:

\begin{verbatim}
Where is truth and where is wisdom
To lead Saints right while such is done?
The truly precious Word of Wisdom
Shows what to eat, to drink, to shun.

Forewarned of drinks both strong and hot
Tobacco (snuffs) pernicious are
Flesh meats in summer should scarce be eaten
In famine times and winter spare.\textsuperscript{124}
\end{verbatim}

Whatever its rhyme and rhythm, the verse showed the reach of Brigham
Young’s reform.

**Trials of Reform.** While President Young and other Church leaders
zealously pushed for increased Word of Wisdom observance, the results
were sometimes disappointing. Practical application among the Saints
proved to be the greatest challenge. At the Provo School of the Prophets,
where President Young had been so insistent upon observance, men were
soon voicing their difficulty with compliance. School member Dan Graves
told colleagues he “has been [in] the habit of drinking Tea all his life—his
nature seems to crave for it but he is getting over it.” Another school mem-
ber, an elderly man named Alexander, explained he “had used Tobacco
ever since he was three years old.” Even Hyrum and Joseph Smith had
unsuccesfully tried to help him break his habit. However, Alexander had this much hope: “Where I used a plug of Tobacco in a month, I do not now use that amount in six years.”  

Of course, the men of the Provo School were hardly alone. At the October conference in 1870, Brigham publicly chided members of the Presiding Bishopric for nonobservance. They had been previously sustained in their offices with the precise understanding that, according to Brigham, “they would let their liquor and tobacco alone.” Instead, their compliance had been limited to a “few days.” Likely, these men were representative of the many Latter-day Saints who fell short. Elder Orson Pratt was not exaggerating when, at a School of Prophets meeting in Salt Lake City in late 1871, he talked about “the great lack of observance of the Word of Wisdom by the saints.”

Brigham did not give up his crusade easily, and the continuing inability of Church members to abide the Word of Wisdom summoned some of his most forceful language. “I require all under 100 years old to stop using tobacco & drinking whiskey,” he said on one occasion. “If they do not, we will soon make it a test of fellow[ship] in the Church.” He also warned that those Saints participating in the millennium would be observers of the health code. In May 1870, President Young reproached men who spit tobacco quids on the Tabernacle floor. “It is an imposition for gentlemen to spit tobacco juice around, or to leave their quids of tobacco on the floor,” he said. He wanted no more tobacco chewing at conference.

Such practices brought the obvious question: Why after so much preaching did the Saints still not observe the Word of Wisdom? Brigham gave his own answer. Many Church members such as tea-drinking women claimed, “It will kill me if I quit it.” To them, the Church leader said, “Then die, and die in the faith, instead of living and breaking the requests of Heaven.” The Saints, no doubt, understood such language for what it was: Brigham’s notorious tongue and temper, which often were different from his actual practice. During one of his tours, an elderly lady expressed concern about her coffee drinking, and he had been indulgent, “I told her to take it, and blessed her and her coffee.”

By the early 1870s, President Young continued to encourage and cajole the Saints to observe the Word of Wisdom, but both the number of his exhortations and their force diminished. The reform movement of 1867–69 had obviously run its course. Part of the problem lay with the need to pursue other projects. The 1870s saw the Church organize economic cooperatives and United Orders. It was also a time of institutional growth with the reorganization of the Church’s local wards and stakes. President Young also began to improve the opportunities for education in the territory and
directed the completion of the first temple in Utah, at St. George. In short, other issues pressing upon the Church did not allow Brigham and other leaders to give single-minded focus to the Word of Wisdom.

Reaching Saints through the Auxiliaries

However, President Young’s declining attention to the Word of Wisdom was more than a preoccupation with other policies. He was also resigned to the fact that the first generation of converts, as a group, was unlikely to change. While President Young’s vigorous preaching had probably convinced some of his people to abstain and some to cut back their consumption, the record overall had not been heroic. Faced with this bleak assessment, the Church leader increasingly put his hope in Zion’s youth, and to reach them he used the recently established Church auxiliaries of Sunday School and the young men’s and young ladies’ organizations. These organizations taught Word of Wisdom abstinence and even encouraged temperance pledges.₁³²

The Church’s newly founded magazines also contributed to the cause. The voice of Latter-day Saint women was the Woman’s Exponent, which began publication in 1872. This newspaper showed a concern for national temperance and prohibition but also published articles on health, diet, and a stricter adherence to the Word of Wisdom. Because it insisted that Zion’s mothers properly raise their children, the Exponent, with its Victorian values, became a powerful Word of Wisdom tool. The Church also published the Juvenile Instructor, intended for children and adolescents. The Instructor featured editorials, essays, short stories, and biographical sketches that often had a Horatio Alger flavor. From its pages, Latter-day Saint youth learned that it was unmanly to use tobacco and alcohol and unladylike to consume tea and coffee. It also reported on Church Word of Wisdom events. In November 1870, for instance, readers learned how a young girl overcame her tea and coffee habit. Or at other times, Church youth were told about group temperance pledges, as when the Smithfield, Utah, Young Ladies Retrenchment Society agreed to keep the Word of Wisdom “in all respects.”¹³³

However, the influence of these Church magazines lay mostly in the future—their promise in shaping a new generation. During President Young’s last years, he continued to teach the Word of Wisdom and hope for the Saints’ reformation. According to his plural wife Emily Dow Young, he tried in his life’s sunset “every way to impress upon the minds of the people the necessity of reforming both in dress and food.”¹³⁴ In fact, this personal observation is not the only evidence of the abiding nature of the Church
leader’s concern about Word of Wisdom matters and of his disappointment that the Saints had not had better progress. “Now what good will this [Word of Wisdom] instruction do you?” Brigham asked the St. George Saints in 1876, the year before he died. “Some of you will go home [and] smoke your pipe, take your snuff, and drink your tea, and may say ‘that was a pretty good sermon from brother Brigham this afternoon,’ and with this remark the benefit of the instruction appears to end.”\textsuperscript{135} In early 1877, he urged one of his sons to abandon any habits contrary to the Holy Spirit, including “smoking and everything of the kind.” In President Young’s mind, his son’s “age, experience, position and responsibility demand[ed] an abandonment of such practices.”\textsuperscript{136}

When he drew up a list of worthiness criteria to gauge the spiritual level of individual Saints in the St. George Stake, the Word of Wisdom appeared first. Perhaps intended as a guideline for admission to the recently completed temple, the worthiness list was similar to the catechism used in the 1856–57 Reformation, but now the question posed for Word of Wisdom obedience no longer concerned just “drunkenness.” Religiously active Church members “must observe and keep the Word of Wisdom according to the Spirit and meaning thereof,” it said.\textsuperscript{137} And in May 1877, only months before his death, President Young included strong Word of Wisdom counsel in instructions given to Elder Joseph F. Smith, recently called to preside over the European Mission: missionaries who could not abstain from tobacco and alcohol were to be sent home.\textsuperscript{138} Clearly, despite other concerns, President Young had not forgotten the need for Word of Wisdom reform.

**Conclusion**

Why did Church members make such slow and fitful progress in observing the Word of Wisdom? One explanation has to do with how the first generation viewed Joseph Smith’s revelation. Some of these first converts felt uncommitted because of its permissive language. Their ingrained social customs and personal habits, in turn, made it difficult for them to accept a firmer interpretation. Also, formal Church policy had been somewhat tolerant. Whatever the periodic rhetorical flourishes of Brigham and other Church leaders, the Utah pioneer era apparently saw no official Church action taken against any member for a Word of Wisdom violation except public and disorderly drunkenness. This easygoing and kindly attitude was partly based upon Mormon leaders’ view that God-given “liberty” (agency) required the individual and not the Church to make personal life decisions. Another delay in compliance was the policy that
excused the aged from obeying the Word of Wisdom and that upheld pro-
scribed items as occasionally useful and medicinal. This last attitude no
doubt was well meant and in some cases was justified. However, it also cre-
ated a loophole for conscious and unconscious excuse making that resulted
in further acceptance of the use of tea, coffee, tobacco, and alcohol.

Besides, many Saints probably thought that they were doing well
enough. Many had made sacrifices for their acceptance of the gospel. By
embracing its unpopular cause, they had turned their backs upon family
and neighbors. They had converted, emigrated, colonized, proselytized, and
begun raising a new generation of Saints. The heavy obligations of pioneer
life made Word of Wisdom concerns seem secondary and sometimes irrele-
vant. Moreover, it was not as though the Saints’ conduct was discreditable.
Most callers and sojourners among them found them to be a generally
temperate and sober people. They likely drank less, smoked less, and
chewed less than citizens of other American communities, and their vil-
lages, especially outside of the urbanlike Salt Lake area, were models of
contemporary decorum.139 Because of these conditions, some of the Saints
may have had difficulty understanding President Young’s urging for tem-
perance and dietary reform. They were doing relatively well, so they may
have wondered that they were asked to do more.

Whatever the reasons that slowed reform, during President Young’s
administration there was progress in the application of the Word of Wis-
dom grounded on several footings. For one thing, preaching in support of
the reform moved from establishing an ideal of social order to stressing the
financial advantages of compliance to abstaining for moral and health
imperatives. The reasons for this shift in goals need further study, although
it is clear that Mormon attitudes were partly shaped by nineteenth-century
ideals of Victorian and evangelical refinement that were a part of postbellum
America. The nineteenth-century Mormon experience with its Word of
Wisdom revelation was never too far removed from national currents.

During the Brigham Young administration, Mormons did not say
much about their change in Word of Wisdom attitudes. However, from
present-day hindsight, it is clear that during Brigham’s years a modification
did occur. When the Brigham Young administration began, the Saints
strived to obey the health code by being moderate users of its proscribed
substances and by avoiding public drunkenness. At Brigham’s death, the
people understood that the ideal was abstinence.

The current position of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day
Saints drew from these ideas, both in accepting the ideal of abstinence from
tea, coffee, tobacco, and alcohol and in insisting that Church members
desiring to be found in good standing comply with this ideal. The Word of
Wisdom drive in the late 1860s moved the Church in this direction, particularly after President Young began to chide Church leaders publicly for disobeying. While he never explained this shift in policy and ideals, it likely had to do with his impatience over the Saints’ slowness to accept the higher standard that had always been implicit in the Word of Wisdom revelation and with the incidence of human tragedy that came as a result. For President Young’s part, his Word of Wisdom labor had been difficult and without dramatic success. Another generation or two would be required before the majority of Saints came to accept his Word of Wisdom standard and perhaps still more time before they sensed the eternal blessings of his legacy.

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3. Doctrine and Covenants 89:3. The matter was made more confusing by the way the revelation was first printed. When first issued as a broadsheet and later as a section in the 1835 Book of Commandments, these advisory phrases appeared as an introduction to the revelation. It was not until 1876 that these phrases were printed in the body of the revelation, appearing from then on as Doctrine and Covenants 89:3–3. As a result, during the Brigham Young era, the question was raised whether the advisory clauses were a part of Joseph Smith’s original revelation or whether they had been added as an editorial afterthought intended to “soften” the original wording. Unfortunately, the issue cannot be resolved. Although the earliest prepublication manuscripts of the Word of Wisdom treat these verses as part of the original revelation, these documents were written


10. Statement of Zebedee Coltrin, “Minutes of the St. George School of the Prophets,” December 23, 1883, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. Earlier Coltrin gave the same information to the newly formed School of Prophets at Salt Lake City except that, in this case, he said that there were twenty-one (rather than twenty-two) present and that all but one (rather than two) were using tobacco. “Minutes of the Salt Lake School of the Prophets,” October 11, 1883, 71–73, Church Archives.


13. Temperance Recorder [Albany, New York] 2, no. 2 (April 2, 1833): 14. The Recorder was published by the Executive Committee of the New York State Temperance Society. Several issues are located in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as Perry Special Collections).


16. When Book of Mormon witness and Missouri Church leader David Whitmer was later asked about the cause for his disaffiliation with the Church, he responded, “I was appointed in charge of church affairs in Zion Missouri, but from my teachings disaffection grew.” According to Whitmer, some of the difficulties
ensued when “Joseph [Smith] and Sydney [Rigdon] came out and visited the various branches of the church [in Missouri] pledging them to themselves as against my teachings upon the word of wisdom and other matters.” Zenas H. Gurley, Interview, January 14, 1885, Richmond, Missouri, Gurley Collection, Church Archives, cited in Lyndon W. Cook, ed., David Whitmer Interviews: A Restoration Witness (Provo, Utah: Gracind Book, 1991), 152. When Whitmer was excommunicated by a council in 1838, failure to observe the Word of Wisdom was among the indicting charges, with local records also showing a concern at the time for the consumption of tea and coffee. See Far West Record, February 1838, 158. While attempts to observe the Word of Wisdom in Ohio and Missouri and the resulting schism can only be suggested here, the authors plan to deal with the early practice of the Word of Wisdom within their larger forthcoming book-length study of the historical development of the revelation.


19. Hancock Eagle, April 10, 1846, 3.


22. General Church Minutes, March 21 and 26, 1847.

23. General Church Minutes, March 26, 1847.

24. For example, see Woodruff, Wilford Woodruff’s Journal, 3:148, April 14, 1847; 3:210, June 20, 1847.

25. Benjamin Brown, Testimonies for the Truth: A Record of Manifestations of the Power of God, Miraculous and Providential, Witnessed in the Travels and Experience of Benjamin Brown, High Priest in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853), 27. There were, of course, exceptions. One English branch elected to live the Word of Wisdom completely and use the funds saved from such expenditures to aid emigration. See Eli B. Kelsey, Letter to Editor, Millennial Star 11 (July 1, 1849): 201.

26. “Minutes of the Provo School of the Prophets,” September 8, 1868, Church Archives.

27. Journal History of the Church, February 2, 1849, 1, Church Archives.


29. General Church Minutes, July 29, 1849.


31. Lender and Martin, Drinking in America, 72–73.
32. General Church Minutes, April 7, 1850.
33. General Church Minutes, September 7, 1850.
34. Remarks, December 15, 1850, recorded on the same date in Brigham Young Office Journal and in Historian’s Office Journal, Church Archives.
37. General Church Minutes, December 29, 1850.
38. Helpful sources in piecing together what happened regarding the 1851 Word of Wisdom initiative include Journal History of the Church, September 7–9, 1851; General Church Minutes, September 9, 1851; Woodruff, Wilford Woodruff’s Journal, 4:55–68, September 7–9, 1851; Brigham Young, Remarks, General Church Minutes, September 9, 1851; Historian’s Office Journal, 1:103, September 9, 1851; Brooks, On the Mormon Frontier, 2:403, September 9, 1851; Diary of Lorenzo Brown, September 9–10, 1851, Church Archives; Diary of Samuel H. Rogers, 2 vols., 1:178–79, September 11, 1851, Perry Special Collections; and “Minutes of the General Conference,” Millennial Star 14 (February 1, 1852): 33–36.
39. Young, Remarks, September 9, 1851; Thomas Bullock’s Report, General Church Minutes, September 9, 1851; “Minutes of the General Conference,” 35.
40. Thomas Bullock’s Report, September 9, 1851.
41. The records of these events are not always consistent in their detail. For instance, Woodruff’s diary suggests that the men were placed under covenant prior to the women’s vote. Woodruff, Wilford Woodruff’s Journal, 4:66, September 1851. Too, while the transcript of Young’s remarks suggests unanimity, Bullock’s minutes state the dissenting votes. We have chosen to assume that clerk Bullock’s account is more likely accurate. “Minutes of the General Conference,” 35.
42. General Church Minutes, September 9, 1851. We have reconstructed this chronology from available sources but acknowledge that events may have happened in a different order.
43. Young, Remarks, September 9, 1851; “Minutes of the General Conference,” 35.
44. Sixth General Epistle, September 22, 1851, Messages of the First Presidency, 2:90.
45. General Church Minutes, October 6, 1851; Woodruff, Wilford Woodruff’s Journal, October 6, 1851, 4:72.
46. For instance, see Francis M. Lyman, in Seventy-Ninth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1908), 55; and McCue, “Did the Word of Wisdom Become a Commandment in 1851?” 66–77.

See Joseph Fielding Smith, Improvement Era 59 (February 1956): 78. This influential article responded to this question: Has the Word of Wisdom “ever been presented to the Church as a commandment making its observance obligatory upon the members of the Church?” To this inquiry, Elder Smith replied, “The simple answer to this question is yes, such commandment has been given and repeated on several occasions. [On] September 9, 1851, President Brigham Young stated that the members of the Church had had sufficient time to be taught the import of this revelation and that henceforth it was to be considered a divine commandment.” Elder Smith’s statement was later quoted in various books, Church Sunday School manuals, and seminary and institute manuals. The most recent reference to the

47. When the city’s bishops met at their regular coordinating meeting in October 1851, there was telling uncertainty about the recent Word of Wisdom counsel. Had the recent conference made the health code “a Law in Israel?” asked one of the bishops. Presiding Bishop Edward Hunter ended the meeting’s discussion by saying that “as for making . . . [the Word of Wisdom] a Test of fellowship he could not at present decide.” Record of Bishops’ Meetings, October 12, 1851, “Report of Wards, Ordinations, Instructions, and General Proceedings of the Bishops and Lesser Priesthood,” Church Archives.

48. Brigham Young to Lorin Farr, November 1852, Brigham Young Miscellaneous Letterbook, Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives. To another local Church authority, Isaac Haight, who presided in Cedar City, Utah, President Young wrote: “You . . . mention that you would like a License to distil whisky, as to that, you can do as you please in the matter but should you embark in this enterprise I wish you to understand and distinctly that it has to be under your own immediate control, so that no evil result may arise from it.” Brigham Young to Isaac S. Haight, November 4, 1854, Brigham Young Letterbooks, Brigham Young Papers.


50. Brigham Young to Lorin Farr, November 1852.


52. Brigham Young, Office Journal, December 14, 1850, Church Archives.


55. Brigham Young, Remarks, Church General Minutes, May 23, 1852.

56. Brigham Young, Remarks, General Church Minutes, November 19, 1854.

57. Lender and Martin, Drinking in America, 48; Elliott West, The Saloon on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), 2.

58. Young, Remarks, November 19, 1854.


60. Brigham Young to Joseph A. Young, December 1, 1854, Brigham Young Letterbooks. While in Utah, Steptoe himself reportedly did a “good deal” of drinking and was “often high.” J. F. Kinney, Remarks in private conversation, Church General Minutes, July 10, 1855. Mormons frequently noted the U.S. appointees and army officers’ drinking, which may have been prompted by the loneliness of their Utah stations. Mormon-Gentile relations did not allow social mixing.


63. Brigham Young to Zerubbabel Snow, November 18, 1854, Brigham Young
Letterbooks.
64. General Church Minutes, November 19, 1854.
66. Brigham Young to Joseph A. Young, December 1, 1854, Brigham Young Letterbooks.
70. Brigham Young to Zerubbabel Snow, February 3, 1855, Miscellaneous Business and Financial Letterbook, Brigham Young Papers.
71. Edward D. Woolley, Remarks, General Church Minutes, March 4, 1855.
72. Journal History of the Church, July 24, 1854, 8.
73. Journal History of the Church, July 24, 1854, 8.
75. Brigham Young, in Journal of Discourses, 2:271, April 8, 1855.
76. Brigham Young to Orson Hyde, September 29, 1855, Brigham Young Letterbooks.
79. Remy and Brenchley, Journey to Great-Salt-Lake City, 2:271–72.
80. “Questions to Be Asked the Latter Day Saints,” manuscript, Church Archives; Journal History of the Church, May 19, 1856, 1.
83. Brigham Young, Remarks, General Church Minutes, March 9, 1855.
88. Brigham Young, Sermon, June 30, 1861, Centerville, Utah, reported by G. D. Witt, Report of Speeches.
89. Brigham Young, Sermon, General Church Minutes, April 7, 1863.
90. Leonard J. Arrington’s path-breaking essay in the first issue of BYU Studies, “An Economic Interpretation of the ‘Word of Wisdom,’” stressed President Young’s use of the Word of Wisdom for economic or financial advantage. It was an argument that also was highlighted in Arrington’s Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), 250.
91. Young, Sermon, April 7, 1863.
92. Report of Brigham Young Sermon, General Church Minutes, May 7, 1865.

In February 1860, Brigham Young admitted to a close group of confidantes, that he found Hyrum Smith’s position on the Word of Wisdom incongruous. “Hyrum would eat about three lb of fat pork in a day,” Brigham noted incredulously, “and yet be so severe upon a tobacco chewer.” Brigham Young Office Jour-
nal, February 24, 1860, Book D, August 8, 1858 to September 30, 1863. In April conference 1868, both President Young and Apostle George Q. Cannon railed against pork eating. Elder Cannon said that “swine’s flesh should be entirely abstained from,” while Brigham Young, presumably speaking after Cannon, noted that “it was the will of the Lord that his people should cease eating swine’s flesh.” “History of the Church,” April 6, 1868, 1839–[ca. 1882], Historian’s Office, Church Archives.

At an April 1868 School of the Prophets meeting in Provo, Brigham Young told assembled members that swine flesh was unhealthy. Two weeks later, speaking again with school members, Brigham advised everyone “to refrain from eating such meat.” Young, Remarks, “Minutes of the Provo School of the Prophets,” April 15, 27, 1868.

119. Brigham Young, Remarks, “Minutes of the Salt Lake City School of the Prophets,” June 25, 1870.

120. Brigham Young, Remarks, April 15, 1868.

121. Journal History of the Church, September 19, 1868; “Minutes of the Parowan School of Prophets,” November 1868, 2–3, Church Archives.

122. Henry Chariton Jacobs, Journal, September 1 and 29, and December 7 and 11, 1867, typescript, Church Archives.


125. “Minutes of the Provo School of the Prophets,” January 26, 1869.

126. Journal History of the Church, October 30, 1870, 1.

127. Orson Pratt, Remarks, “Minutes of the Salt Lake City School of the Prophets,” September 30, 1871.


134. [Emily Dow Young], “Practical Hints,” *Woman’s Exponent* 7 (February 15, 1879): 193.

135. Brigham Young, Sermon, Church General Minutes, May 13, 1876.

136. Brigham Young to Arta D. Young, February 15, 1877, Brigham Young Letterbooks.

137. Brigham Young to J. D. T. McAllister, April 13, 1877, Brigham Young Letterbooks.

138. Brigham Young to Joseph F. Smith, May 11, 1877, Brigham Young Let-
terbooks.

The Great High Priest

Margaret Barker

This article was presented as a public lecture at Brigham Young University on May 9, 2003. Footnotes have been added that refer to places in the writings of Margaret Barker where the topics of this lecture are discussed in greater depth and with extensive documentation. This lecture develops the themes of several of her prior works and presents the essence of her most recent book, *The Great High Priest* (London: T&T Clark, 2003). Further information about specific topics can be located by consulting the index of persons, places, and subjects or the index of biblical and ancient texts found at the end of that book. The English translations of the ancient texts discussed in this lecture are by the author.

The ancient Israelite high priest—who he was and what he did—is at the center of Christian theology because Jesus is described in scripture as the “great high priest” (Heb. 4:14; see also 8:1; 10:21).¹ In order to understand this key figure, the high priest, we need to look first at the setting in which he frequently functioned, which was the temple,² and then at the theology of the temple. We also need to know the high priest’s duties and privileges as well as something of how his contemporaries perceived him. It is important always to read texts with the eyes of their ancient readers (insofar as this is possible) and to enter into their world.

The Symbolism of the Temple

The symbolism of the tabernacle for the most part was identical to the symbolism of the temple, so what was prescribed for the one can usually be assumed for the other. The construction of the tabernacle corresponded to the six days of creation, and the completed structure represented the whole
creation, both the visible creation and the invisible creation. Moses was told to construct the tabernacle in accordance with what he had been shown on the mountain, which was the vision of the six days recorded in the first chapter of Genesis. These six days were the spiritual creation. Day One corresponded to the Holy of Holies, the second day corresponded to the veil that screened the Holy of Holies and divided the tabernacle, and the remaining four stages corresponded to the visible creation of the third to sixth days. Thus the great hall of the temple, with the menorah and the table for the shewbread, represented the visible creation (plate 1). The pattern of these correspondences has not survived from antiquity complete in any one source, but scholars have been able to piece the pattern together from a variety of materials.

The Holy of Holies represented Day One, a state outside time and matter as we experience them, and it was hidden from natural human eyes. It was the state to which only the high priest had access; he alone had direct contact with eternity and knew the secrets of that state. The beginning of creation was described in the Hebrew text of Genesis not as “the first day” but as “Day One” (yom ‘echad), and Jewish tradition remembered this as the time of unity, the time when God was one with his creation. This was the undivided or predivided state, the unity underlying the visible temporal creation. Genesis 1 then goes on to describe how this unity was divided and separated, each according to its kind. “In the beginning,” represented in the temple by the Holy of Holies, was the state in which creation originated and not an indication of the time when it originated.

The first phase of the creation was the creation of the angels. When the Lord spoke to Job out of the whirlwind, He asked him, “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth, when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job 38:4–7). Job knew that the angels had been present at the first stage of the visible creation, because the angels were the sons of God and were part of the Holy of Holies. Isaiah saw angels around the throne of the Lord (Isa. 6) and in the Holy of Holies. The book of Jubilees, which is an ancient alternative version of Genesis, tells how the angels were created on Day One, but the first chapter of Genesis does not mention the creation of angels.

The tabernacle and the temple were divided by the veil, a huge curtain woven from four different colors—red, blue, purple, and white—representing the four elements from which the material world had been created. There is no detailed information about the symbolism of these colors until the end of the Second Temple period, when both Philo and Josephus explained that the red symbolized fire, the blue the air, the purple
the sea, and the white the earth. The veil as the screen of the glory, however, was an ancient tradition, known to Job (in Job 26:9, God covers the presence of his throne). The temple worldview was that God was present in the heart of the creation but was veiled from human eyes by matter.

The Sons of Elohim

The key to temple theology is to be aware that the earliest religion of Jerusalem was not monotheistic in the way that word is usually understood. In ancient Israel, there had been 'El Elyon, God Most High, and there had been his sons, the angels to whom he had entrusted the nations. 'El Elyon was the God whom Melchizedek served in Salem; when Melchizedek blessed Abram (plate 2), he blessed him in the name of “God Most High, Father of heaven and earth” (Gen. 14:19). The Hebrew word used here implies more than simply “possessor” (Gen. 14:19 KJV) or “maker” or “creator” (Gen. 14:19 NEB); it means literally “begetter,” so we should expect that God Most High had sons and daughters.

The sons of God (literally, sons of 'elohim) are often mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. They are the morning stars who sang when the foundations of the earth were laid (Job 38:7). They are equated with the elohim in Psalm 82:6: “You are elohim, sons of God Most High.” But most important of all is Deuteronomy 32:8: “When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, ... he fixed the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God ('el), and the Lord’s portion is his people.” This implies that the Lord himself was one of the sons of God, the angel allocated to Israel. The Lord, the God of Israel, was the Son of God Most High, and therefore the Second God. This is certainly how the verse was understood by the early Christians. In a speech attributed by Clement to Peter, for example, Peter explains that every nation has its angel whom it regards as its God, and responsibility for Israel was committed to the greatest of the archangels. In other words, the Lord, the God of Israel, was regarded as the greatest of the sons of God Most High. Isaiah called him the Holy One of Israel, which means the angel of Israel.

When Gabriel announced to Mary that she was to have a son, he said, “He will be called the Son of the Most High,” a Holy One who would reign as a king (Luke 1:32–33). The demons recognized Jesus as the Holy One of God (Mark 1:24) and as the Son of the Most High God (Mark 5:7). Paul declared that other nations acknowledged many gods, but for the Christian there was one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus the Messiah (1 Cor. 8:5–6). The earliest Christian proclamation was “Jesus is the Lord,” which can only have meant that Jesus is the angel of Israel, the Lord who appeared
in the Old Testament. This is exactly how Jesus and the first Christians read the Old Testament.\textsuperscript{20} “You search the scriptures,” Jesus said to the Jews, “you search the scriptures and it is they that bear witness to me” (John 5:39). John explained that Isaiah’s vision of the Lord in the temple had been fulfilled in Jesus: “Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke of him” (John 12:41). Whenever the Lord appeared to Noah or Abraham or Moses or Daniel, the early Christian teachers explained that it was a pre-incarnation appearance of the Son of God Most High, an appearance of the Messiah recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures.\textsuperscript{21}

\textbf{The High Priest: The Lord among His People}

For understandable reasons, the term \textit{son of God} was controversial in the earliest years of Christianity. The key text for identifying the Lord as one of the sons of God Most High does not appear in the Masoretic Hebrew text, which is the basis of most English translations. Thus the key phrase \textit{sons of God} is not found in the King James Bible. The angels as the sons of God Most High can, however, be found in the pre-Christian Old Greek text of Deuteronomy and in the pre-Christian Hebrew text of Deuteronomy found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.\textsuperscript{22} One wonders how there came to be two versions of this sensitive Hebrew text.\textsuperscript{23} The Lord as the Son of God Most High is the key to understanding temple theology because the Lord was believed to be present with his people in the person of the high priest.\textsuperscript{24} Jesus was described in the letter to the Hebrews as a Son of God (Heb. 1:5) and the great high priest (Heb. 4:14).

The rights and duties exclusive to the high priest concerned his status as the Lord with his people. There are five specific ways the high priest represented the Lord: wearing the name of the Lord, wearing a vestment made of the same fabric as the temple veil, entering the Holy of Holies, eating the bread of the presence, and making the offering on the Day of Atonement.

\textbf{Wearing the Name of the Lord.} First, the high priest wore the name of the Lord on his forehead, inscribed on a golden plate (Ex. 28:36). Most translations say that he wore the words “Holy to the Lord,” but Jesus’ contemporaries understood the Hebrew words differently. Aristeas, a visitor to Jerusalem in the first century before Christ, and Philo a few years later both record that the high priest simply wore the Name, the four Hebrew letters YHWH.\textsuperscript{25} Wearing the Name enabled the high priest to take upon himself the uncleanness of the people’s offerings. In other words, when he was the Lord, the high priest was also the sin bearer.\textsuperscript{26} This must have been the original significance of the fourth commandment: “You shall not bear the Name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who
bears his Name in vain” (Ex. 20:7). The people who accompanied Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday acclaimed him as the high priest by quoting from Psalm 118:25–26: “Hosanna”—which means “save us”—“Blessed is he who comes with the Name of the Lord.” This “he” was the high priest who would save them.

The high priest was the only person who wore an outer vestment made of the same fabric as the veil of the temple (Ex. 28:5–6) and presumably with the same significance: it veiled the glory of the Lord. The vestment represented the matter in which the Lord clothed himself when he appeared with his people, so the veil and the vestment became symbols of the incarnation. In Hebrews, the flesh of Jesus is described as the temple veil: “He opened a new and living way for us through the veil, that is, through his flesh” (Heb. 10:20), and Christian tradition was to describe the priest’s vestment as a symbol of the incarnation. The high priest wore this colored garment only when he was functioning in the visible creation as an incarnation of the Lord; within the veil, he wore the white linen robe of an angel.

**Entering the Holy of Holies.** The third right of the high priest that shows him as the Lord among his people was that only the high priest was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies; even the lower ranks of the angels were not permitted to enter and stand before the heavenly throne. The book of 1 Enoch, which has preserved much about the ancient priesthood, says that none of the angels was able to enter and see the face of the Great Holy One, but Enoch was summoned to stand before him, so he entered the Holy of Holies. This passage reflects temple practice, where the priests could enter the great hall of the temple but only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies.

**Eating the Bread of the Presence.** Fourth, the high priest and his sons were the only people to eat the bread of the presence (Lev. 24:5–9). Later tradition permitted it to all the priests, but originally this bread was only for the high priest and his family. The bread “of the presence” did not mean that the bread was set out in the presence of the Lord, but that the bread in some way acquired the presence of the Lord while it was set out in the temple. We can deduce this from the later regulations for handling the bread. According to the Mishnah, which describes temple practice in the time of Jesus, when the bread was taken into the temple, it was set on a table of marble; when it was brought out again to be eaten by the priests, it had to be set on a table of gold, showing that it had become of higher status. While it lay in the temple, it had become “most holy”; in other words, it had become an item that imparted holiness. It was the vehicle of the Lord’s presence, and it was eaten each week by the high priest and his family.
Making the Sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. Fifth, it was the high priest alone who entered the Holy of Holies to make the blood offering each year on the Day of Atonement.\textsuperscript{34}

The Great High Priest in the Melchizedek Text

Finally, before we begin to piece these elements together and try to glimpse the Great High Priest, we need to consider the figure of the great high priest as depicted in the Melchizedek text found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.\textsuperscript{35} Only a fragment of this text survives, and it describes how Melchizedek was to appear in the first week (that is, in the first seven years) of the tenth Jubilee (each Jubilee being forty-nine years).\textsuperscript{36} He would proclaim the liberty of the Jubilee year, rescue his own people from the power of the Evil One, and restore them to their rightful inheritance. The Anointed One would appear, and the kingdom of God would begin. At the end of the tenth Jubilee, there would be the great atonement, when the angels would be judged and the sons of heaven rescued.\textsuperscript{37}

The Melchizedek text is constructed around a series of quotations: from the laws of the Jubilee year found in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, which promise that the disinherited will return; from Psalm 7, which declares that God will judge the people; from Psalm 82, which declares that God has taken his place in the heavenly court to begin the judgment of the angels; from the prophecy of Daniel 9, which foretells the Messiah coming to Jerusalem; from Isaiah 52, where the prophet proclaims the messenger bringing good news to Zion; and from Isaiah 61, where the one anointed by the Spirit proclaims the liberty of the Jubilee year.

All these biblical texts seem to be describing the functions of one central figure: Melchizedek. If they do describe Melchizedek, then we have here a glimpse of a hitherto unknown figure: Melchizedek the Messiah, the anointed high priest who brings the judgment, releases his own people from the power of Belial and his evil ones, and restores the disinherited to their place. (What is implied is that the high priest of the Second Temple is the Evil One, Belial. Other texts describe that high priest as the Wicked Priest.\textsuperscript{38}) Melchizedek the high priest is divine: God sitting in judgment on the angels in Psalm 82 becomes in this text Melchizedek sitting in judgment. One possible reconstruction of a damaged line (11Q13.II.5) is that teachers have been kept hidden and secret, implying that the return of Melchizedek is the restoration of teachings that have been preserved in secret.

It would be wonderful to know what was in the missing part of the Melchizedek text. The surviving pieces describe the tenth Jubilee, so we may perhaps assume that the whole text had described a period of ten
Jubilees, 490 years. Now 490 years also appears in the prophecy of Daniel 9:24, seventy weeks of years decreed concerning the people and the holy city. Daniel’s prophecy also speaks of atonement “bringing in everlasting righteousness, fulfilling vision and prophecy and anointing the Most Holy One.” This prophecy in Daniel is cited in the Melchizedek text, so it would not be unreasonable to use these two texts to illuminate each other. The Most Holy One in Daniel could have been Melchizedek, and the missing part of the Qumran text could have described the remainder of the 490 years. Both texts expected the great atonement at the end of 490 years.

And what were these 490 years? According to the traditional reckoning preserved in the Jewish Talmud39 (and we must work with the data that the people of that time had at hand, not with the results of modern investigations), the first temple was destroyed in 422 B.C.E (not in 586 B.C.E., as we state today). They also reckoned that the Second Temple was destroyed in 68 C.E.—in other words, that the Second Temple stood for exactly 490 years, ten Jubilees. This must have been Daniel’s 490 years, at the end of which the city and the temple would be destroyed with desolation and war.

The Damascus Document, another text found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, describes the era after the destruction of the First Temple (Solomon’s Temple) as “the age of wrath,” during which only a remnant was left faithful. Wrath was the consequence of breaking the eternal covenant, so the era of the Second Temple was the time of the broken covenant. The time of renewal began when the Lord remembered the covenant and the faithful remnant became the community of the new covenant (or perhaps the community of the renewed covenant).40 After 390 years, says the Damascus Document, the Lord caused a few to recognize that they were guilty men, and after a further twenty years, he sent them a teacher of righteousness.41 If the Damascus Document were using the traditional calculation of history dates, then this teacher would have been sent in 12 B.C.E., 410 years after the fall of Jerusalem. Since it is now acknowledged that Jesus must have been born before 4 B.C.E., when Herod the Great died, this is an interesting date.

According to the Melchizedek text, the great high priest Melchizedek was to appear during the first seven years of the tenth Jubilee, between 19 and 25 C.E.42

Luke records that Jesus was about thirty years old at the time of his baptism (Luke 3:23), so Jesus would have begun his public ministry in the first seven years of that final tenth Jubilee. The link between Jesus and the Melchizedek text is confirmed by Luke’s account of Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth. He chose to read from Isaiah 61, the very text that was associated with Melchizedek coming to bring the good news of the Jubilee and
the Kingdom of God. “Today,” said Jesus, “this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21), and he then went on to proclaim, “The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the good news” (Mark 1:15). Jesus then performed exorcisms to release people from the power of evil spirits, spoke about “binding the strong man” (Mark 3:27), brought in the outcasts, and declared that he would give his life as the great sacrifice (Mark 10:45). Jesus having thus declared himself to be Melchizedek the Great High Priest, it is no wonder that the high priests and chief priests in Jerusalem had him arrested and saw to it that he was put to death.

The era of wrath must have been associated with the loss of the Melchizedek Priesthood and the breach of the eternal covenant. Jewish tradition remembered that there had been no anointing oil in the Second Temple, and so the appearance of a Messianic high priest, that is, an anointed high priest, must have been part of the hope for the restoration of the true temple and the eternal covenant. Piecing together what can still be known about the Melchizedek priesthood is one way of recovering the teaching of the earlier temple.

**Resurrected to the Eternal Priesthood**

The high priest was the Lord, the Holy One of Israel with his people. He would have been born as a normal human being, so we have to ask how it was that the high priest became a great angel, how he became divine. The answer must lie in the rituals performed in the Holy of Holies, where only the high priest was allowed to enter. Several texts do describe how the king was “born” as son of God or “raised up/resurrected” in the Holy of Holies. Being born as a son of God and being resurrected were both descriptions of the same process of becoming divine; Jesus himself used the terms interchangeably. Angels are the sons of God, the resurrected, he said (Luke 20:36).

The author of the letter to the Hebrews knew that Melchizedek had become a priest through resurrection and that this distinguished his priesthood from that of Aaron. The Levitical priests—Aaron and his sons—held the priesthood “according to a legal requirement concerning bodily descent” (Heb. 7:16), whereas Melchizedek had been raised up and had the power of an indestructible life. Melchizedek was therefore an eternal priest. These words, “he was raised up,” are often understood to mean no more than that he was elevated to a high office, but the Greek word here is the word for resurrection. Melchizedek was resurrected to the eternal priesthood, which he held by the power of an indestructible life.
Psalm 110 is an enthronement psalm, set in the Holy of Holies, and the king is declared to be an eternal priest after the order of Melchizedek. The text that precedes this pronouncement, however, is damaged and impossible to read in the Hebrew. Had we only the Hebrew text, we should never have known how the human king became the Melchizedek high priest. The Old Greek translation, however, says that he was begotten as a son of God. Part of the text once read, “In the glory of thy holy ones [en tais lamprotēsi tōn hagiōn sou] I have begotten you.” The king had been born as an angel among the angels in the Holy of Holies. The damaged Hebrew text also mentions “dew” as part of the process, and dew was a symbol of resurrection (Ps. 110:3). The psalm known as the last words of King David (2 Sam. 23:1) describes him as the Anointed One of the God of Jacob, the man who was raised up/resurrected. Psalm 2 records that when the king was set on Mount Zion, he heard the words, “You are my son, today I have begotten you,” and the angels in the Holy of Holies welcomed the birth of the new angels by singing, “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Is. 9:6). The Old Greek here does not give four titles but one: “He shall be called the Angel of Great Counsel [megalēs boulēs aggelos].” In this holy setting, the new angel is named.

In 1 Enoch we find a comparable picture: the Son of Man was named—that is, given the great Name—before the sun and stars were made, in other words, in that state which preceded the creation of the sun and the stars. This state was the Holy of Holies.

The most remarkable description of the high priest’s resurrection as son of God is found in the book of 2 Enoch. In that text, Enoch, a high priest figure, ascends through the heavens and stands before the throne. The Lord summons Michael to remove Enoch’s earthly clothing, the symbol of his mortal body, and to dress him in the garments of glory, the symbol of the resurrection body. Enoch is then anointed with a fragrant myrrh oil, and he sees himself being transformed into an angel: “The appearance of that oil is greater than the greatest light, its ointment is like sweet dew, and its fragrance myrrh, and it is like the rays of the glittering sun.” The myrrh oil is prescribed in Exodus as the special oil for consecrating the high priest and the furnishings of the tabernacle. It was a most holy oil, which means that it imparted holiness, and anything it touched became holy (Ex. 30:29). Nothing like it was to be made for secular use. The penalty was being cut off from your people.

We assume that the newly consecrated high priest—and consecrated means “make holy”—the anointed newborn son of God, was then sent out
into the great hall of the temple, and so symbolically out into the world. This is exactly how Jesus described his own experience. When accused of blasphemy for claiming union with the Father—“I and the Father are one thing” (John 10:30)—Jesus reminded his accusers of the claims of the high priesthood. He quoted Psalm 82, that there were heavenly beings called Gods, sons of God Most High, and then described the making of the high priest: “Do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world ‘You are blaspheming’ because I said ‘I am the Son of God’?” (John 10:36). In Jesus’ time, the high priest—or perhaps we should say the true high priest—was believed to be at one with God, the son of God.

**Atonement: The Bonding Together of Creation**

This union was described as sharing Life or Spirit (John 6:57, 63), presumably sustained by the bread of the presence that the high priests ate. In John’s Gospel, Jesus gives this teaching with reference to the bread from heaven: “He who eats me will live because of me”—the eternal life of the high priest sustained by the bread of the presence—“he who eats this bread will live for ever” (John 6:57–58). This unity was set within the context of temple and creation. In his prayer after the Last Supper—known as the great high priestly prayer—Jesus prays, “Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory I had with you before the world was made” (John 17:5)—a reference to the glory in the Holy of Holies as the state before the visible creation. Jesus the high priest was returning to his place of origin.

Jesus prayed similarly for his disciples “that they may all be one, even as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:21). It was therefore the unity of the disciples that was proof of the divine origin of their mission and message. It was the high priest—here Jesus—who enabled the divided elements of the creation—here human beings—to recover their original unity with God. Elsewhere in the New Testament, Jesus is described as the One who holds together all things, not just his disciples: “He is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation, for in him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. He is before all things and in him all things hold together” (Col. 1:15–17; see also Eph. 1:10). Paul describes this state of union as the goal of the redemptive process: “When all things are subjected to him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28).

This bonding together of the creation is the key to understanding the Day of Atonement, the great ritual performed exclusively by the high priest at the New Year. The eternal covenant, or the covenant of eternity, was also
described as the covenant of peace or wholeness. It bound all creation together in its bonds, but these bonds could be broken by human sin. Isaiah has a vivid picture of how the creation collapses under the weight of human sin: “The earth mourns and withers, the world languishes and withers, the heavens languish together with the earth. The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants, for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the eternal covenant” (Isa. 24:4–5). The creation was fragmented and collapsing because it had lost its union with the Creator. The bonds of the covenant were restored by atonement, and thus the creation was reunited with the Creator and renewed at the start of the year. 

The ritual of the Day of Atonement is described in Leviticus 16. Two goats were chosen by lot, one for the Lord and one for Azazel. The one for the Lord was sacrificed, and its blood was taken by the high priest into the Holy of Holies. When the high priest had offered it upon the ark, the blood was brought out and sprinkled in various places around the tabernacle or temple “to cleanse it and consecrate it from all the uncleannesses of the people of Israel” (Lev. 16:19). Then the high priest put both his hands onto the head of the goat for Azazel and by this means transferred to the goat all the sins of Israel. The goat was then sent into the desert.

The creation was renewed by blood, by life. But whose life? The two goats were chosen by lot, one for the Lord and one for Azazel, the leader of the fallen angels. This is how Leviticus 16:8 is usually translated, but this translation raises some difficult questions, not the least of which asks why the people were commanded to send an offering to Azazel, the leader of the fallen angels. There is, however, a small clue in the writings of the third-century Christian scholar Origen, who worked in Palestine and had contacts with the Jewish scholars in Caesarea. He said that the goat sent out into the desert, the scapegoat, was sent out as Azazel, not as an offering for Azazel. The Hebrew text can certainly be understood in that way. If Origen was correct, then the other goat was not sacrificed for the Lord but was sacrificed as the Lord, and the high priest, who also represented the Lord, would have carried a symbol of his own life/blood into the Holy of Holies. It was therefore the life of the Lord himself that renewed the broken covenant and restored the creation to unity with the Creator.

Those who received the letter to the Hebrews must have known all this—it must have been current knowledge at the time—because the key point of the letter to the Hebrews is that Jesus, the high priest raised up after the order of Melchizedek, did not offer the blood of a goat as a substitute for himself, but instead “when the Anointed One appeared as a high priest . . . he entered once for all into the holy place, taking not the blood of goats and calves, but his own blood thus securing an eternal redemption”
(Heb. 9:11–12)(plate 3). This must have been the great atonement predicted in the Qumran Melchizedek text.

The outer part of the tabernacle or temple represented the visible creation, but since the people of Israel were not allowed into this area, it cannot have been literally polluted by their sinful presence. Rather, the temple was polluted by the sins committed elsewhere in the creation, and the cleansing of the temple was the cleansing and reconsecration of the creation. The high priest took blood—Leviticus 17:11 says that blood was the life or soul and thus it could make atonement—the high priest took the blood into the Holy of Holies, and having sprinkled it there, he sprinkled the same life/blood throughout the creation. This not only healed the bonds of material creation that had been destroyed by human sin, it also reunited the creation to the Creator. Thus Paul wrote of “the purpose set forth in Christ . . . to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth” (Eph. 1:10) and “through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:20).

And what of the other goat, the scapegoat sent out as Azazel? The high priest placed both his hands on the head of the goat, and thus, we are told, he transferred to the goat all the sins of Israel. The logic of this ritual must be that when he placed his hands on the goat, the high priest himself must have been carrying the sins of Israel. He was the sin bearer.

Isaiah knew this complex role of the royal high priest on the Day of Atonement. It was the inspiration for the fourth of his Servant Songs, which is familiar because the Christians saw it as a prophecy of the crucifixion. The Fourth Servant Song in Isaiah 53 and Psalm 110, the Melchizedek Psalm, are the texts most frequently cited in the New Testament. “The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all,” wrote Isaiah, “. . . You make his soul an offering to restore the covenant [the literal meaning of words used here]. . . . He shall bear their iniquities. . . . He poured out his soul to death . . . and bore the sin of many” (Isa. 53:6, 10–12). The original poem was probably written as a result of King Hezekiah’s recovery from the plague, which explains the historical details in it, but the overall theme is drawn from the Day of Atonement.

What is remarkable is that Christians immediately recognized this as a Messianic prophecy, even though the word Messiah does not appear in the Masoretic Hebrew text. The Targumist also knew that this was a text about the Messiah, so the Aramaic version of the poem begins, “My Servant the Messiah.” In the Isaiah scroll found at Qumran, this passage is also a poem about the Messiah: there is an extra letter in one verse that could change the whole meaning. Instead of describing someone who was “marred beyond recognition as a human being,” verse 52:14 reads, “I have
anointed him and he no longer has a human appearance.”57 This text thus refers to the anointed and transfigured one, as Enoch became after his anointing. The Aramaic continues: “His appearance is not a common appearance . . . and his brilliance will be a holy brilliance.”58 Isaiah’s radiant, angelic Messiah had not been forgotten by the early Christians. There is another word in the Qumran Isaiah scroll that is not in the Masoretic Hebrew text. After his suffering, the servant sees the light, presumably the light of the glory (Isa. 53:11). The word light does not appear in the Masoretic Hebrew, although it is in the old Greek. An Isaiah text similar to the one at Qumran must have been used by Jesus, because this is the prophecy he expounded to his disciples on the road to Emmaus: “Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer,” he said, “and enter into his glory?” There is no such prophecy in the Hebrew text underlying most English versions, but it is in the Qumran Isaiah.

Isaiah’s fourth Servant Song continues: “He shall sprinkle many peoples” (Isa. 52:15), the term for the high priest cleansing the temple with blood. (This is often translated, “He shall startle many peoples.”) “Upon him was the chastisement that made us whole” could also be translated as “the covenant bond of our peace was his responsibility”; and “with his stripes we are healed” could also be read as “by his joining us together we are healed” (Isa. 53:5).59 This last passage has reference to the unifying role of the high priest, healing the damage to the covenant by joining all things together with his own life. When the Servant pours out his life, this offering is described as an ’ašam, the technical term for an offering to renew the covenant bond.60

There is good reason to believe that other information about the First Temple and the older high priesthood was deliberately suppressed in the Second Temple period. When the final form of Exodus was compiled, Moses was told that no person could make atonement for another. After the sin of the golden calf, he offered himself if the Lord would forgive the people’s sin, but he was told: “Whoever has sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book” (Ex. 32:33). Why had Moses thought that such an atonement was possible? Perhaps the older ways were being superseded.

And how has it come about that so many important texts are damaged or have alternative versions? The sons of God text in Deuteronomy is vital for reconstructing the older religion of Israel, and yet it exists in two different versions, one without the sons of God. The verse in Psalm 110 that describes how the king became a son of God is damaged, and the vital messianic passage in Isaiah exists in two different forms. There are many more such examples. These are not random variations or unintentional damage. There is a pattern.61
This intentional alteration of ancient texts is why the Qumran Melchizedek text came as such a surprise. The Old Testament record gives no indication that Melchizedek was anything more than a minor character who makes two brief appearances. It was a mystery why the Christians claimed that Jesus was Melchizedek. It was even suggested that they wanted to have him as a high priest and, since Jesus was clearly not of the house of Aaron, Melchizedek was the best they could do!

The Qumran Melchizedek text has changed everything. We now see that the great high priest Melchizedek was the expected Messiah, that he was divine, that he would put an end to the era of wrath by releasing his people from the power of the Evil One, that he would gather in his dispossessed people and make the great atonement. Jesus claimed to be Melchizedek, and thus to restore the ways of the original temple. He was the great high priest (plate 4).

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1. For an extensive discussion of the themes presented in the lecture, see Margaret Barker, The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy (London: T&T Clark, 2003).

2. For a convenient list of over thirty New Testament passages that report things Jesus said or did at the temple in Jerusalem, see John W. Welch and John F. Hall, Charting the New Testament (Provo: FARMS, 2002), charts 8–12.

7. See R. Judan in Genesis Rabbah 3.8.
10. Biblical translations are the author’s except where noted.
12. There is reason to believe that angels were a controversial topic in the era of the Second Temple (422 B.C.E.–68 C.E.), when the present form of Genesis was compiled. Not only are there no angels in Genesis 1, but there is only the briefest reference to the fallen angels in Genesis 6. Later Jewish teachers were sensitive about both: the fallen sons of God in Genesis 6 had to be explained as the sons of noblemen or judges, they said. Thus in Genesis Rabbah 26.5, Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai called them sons of noblemen and cursed all who called them sons of God. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan has them as “sons of great ones”; Targum Onkelos and Targum Neofiti, as judges. Some said the angels had been created on the second day,
others on the fifth day, but they agreed on one thing: the angels were not created on Day One (Gen. Rabbah 1.3). There must have been something about the creation and fall of the angels that had become the subject of controversy after the advent of Christianity.

30. 1 Enoch 14:21. However, 1 Enoch 71:8–9 says that angels encircled the holy place, but “holy angels” and archangels could enter.
32. Mishnah, Menahoth 11.7.
40. CD I, VIII.
41. CD I.
44. See, for example, Psalm 110:3 in the old Greek text, where it is numbered as Psalm 109, and 2 Samuel 23:1.
46. This is the theme throughout Barker, *Risen Lord*.
48. 1 Enoch 48:2–3.
49. 2 Enoch 22:9.
51. Against Celsus 6.43.
55. The Targum is an Aramaic translation of parts of the Old Testament.
57. For the reading of the Isaiah Scroll, see Donald W. Parry and Elisha Qimron, *The Great Isaiah Scroll (1Qisa-a): A New Edition* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999), 89. The extra letter in the scroll’s reading of Isaiah 52:14 is a *yod*. Insofar as it is the smallest of Hebrew characters, it could have very easily been lost in the transmission of the text.
58. Targum Isaiah 53:2.
59. The Hebrew word *mwsr* in this passage means not chastisement but covenant bond; I read *hbrt*, “stripes,” as coming from *hbr*, “unite,” the primary meaning of this root. This translation preserves a poetic parallelism between the covenant bond and the binding together. Barker, *Great High Priest*, 53–54.
Plate 1. Digital image showing a reconstruction of part of the interior of the first temple of Israel. The design of the temple represented stages of the creation. The larger room contains the menorah and the table for the shewbread represents the visible creation. The smaller room to the right, the Holy of Holies, represents Day One of the spiritual creation. Created by Michael Lyon.
The Vienna Genesis is one of the earliest extant illuminated Greek manuscripts of the Bible. Although its time and place of origin are unknown, the art on its pages shows a strong Byzantine influence (Emily Wellesz, *The Vienna Genesis* [New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1960], 14.) This illustration consists of two parts, divided by a thin horizontal line. Below the text, Abram returns from war and presents a tithe of the spoils to the priest-king Melchizedek. At the bottom illustration, Melchizedek presents Abram with bread and wine.

Plate 3. Mosaic, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome (ca. 300 C.E.). Melchizedek presents a gift of bread and wine to Abraham and his men, who are dressed as Roman soldiers. Christ in the heavenly realm points to Melchizedek, which seems to indicate that Melchizedek prefigures Christ with his eucharistic offering. In later mosaics, the representation of Christ is reduced to a hand, as in plate 4.
Plate 4. Detail, mosaic in the Basilica of St. Vitale, Ravenna, Italy (ca. 520 C.E.). The iconography in this mosaic is rich with symbolism that links Christ with Melchizedek, the high priest of the temple. Here Abel and the priest-king Melchizedek are shown offering gifts at an altar; Melchizedek is placing bread on the table, where the wine chalice already sits. Christ’s hand penetrating the veil of heaven seems to indicate that both Abel’s and Melchizedek’s sacrifices are types of Christ.

Melchizedek wears a royal purple robe; Christ was given a purple robe during part of his trials. Melchizedek has a halo, usually reserved for Deity and angels in Christian art. On the altar cloth are gammadia, right angles or compass-shaped markings, which appear in many works of art from the early Christian period, particularly on the garments of holy people. Hugh Nibley notes that “they can also be associated with ... the veil of the temple.” (John W. Welch and Claire Foley, “Gammadia on Early Christian and Jewish Garments,” BYU Studies 36, no. 3 [1996–97]: 256.) In the center of the altar cloth is the “seal of Melchizedek,” which consists of two intersecting squares—eight right angles.

Continuing the symbolism of Christ, Moses and Isaiah appear in the two corners above Abel and Melchizedek. Moses the lawgiver and Isaiah the prophet represent Christ’s fulfillment of all that was written in the law and the prophets. “The theme is the great sacrifice of Christ, which brings together the righteous prophets from the past as well as the four corners of the present world, uniting time and space.” (Hugh W. Nibley, “Sacred Vestments,” in Temple and Cosmos: Beyond this Ignorant Present, ed. Don Norton, vol. 12 of Collected Works of Hugh Nibley [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1992], 109.)
And he gathereth his children from the four quarters of the earth; and he numbereth his sheep, and they know him; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd; and he shall feed his sheep, and in him they shall find pasture.

1 Nephi 22:25

Children of the World

Painting by Greg Olsen
(Image on next page)
Key (models’ names in parentheses)

1. West African girl
2. Peruvian shepherd
3. British schoolboy (Mark Alexander Ungerman)
4. Japanese girl from Kyoto (Erika Aoyama)
5. Irish girl (Sarah Elizabeth Hamblin)
6. Indonesian girl (Kae Benali)
7. Swiss girl (Katherine Helena Hamblin)
8. Mexican girl (Natasha Acosta)
9. American girl (Miriam Margaret Hamblin)
10. Danish girl (Rachel Rosalee Hamblin)
11. Algerian boy (Lib Montoya)
12. German boy (Benjamin James Pearson)
13. Navajo girl (Lora Benali)
14. Samoan boy (David Alisa)
15. Nepalese camel driver (Servando Ortiz)
16. Polish boy (Edward Clark Marshall)
Isaiah’s Elations

I
There is nothing here except the song of flies
Hovering over still pools by dangling barbed wires
The sun cracking seams along wheated spires
Their taupe coat combed by a wind that clarifies
A brush of red beneath. Nothing here
Except that vast distance of particulates
Veiling the valley in a milky blue that sets
The mountains apart and freely floating there
With the evergreen stubble and raphaelite folds
Of their muscled face. Nothing but dry air
Milling through signs of an ancestral hold
On this place: skeletal irrigation pipes rolled
To a halt among rusted machines, barns without care
That lie broken. Nothing left to compare
To milk and honey, for which our birthright was sold.

II
There is no joy in this new day unless
We see more than what our hands hold before us
The life of the still unlovely mind made flesh
Its hall of mirrors, muffles the pleading chorus
Of the desert. The prophet’s metered promise
Calmed the fear of burying another child
Yet settlement exiled us from wild
Wonder at our primal homelessness.
Perhaps American Beauty never depended
On deus ex machina, but foreseeing ourselves
In the act of deciphering the quickening light
Drawing the brilliance of these colors into sight
With pencil and brush we catch what twilight saves
We scratch as it bleeds before the day has ended
Rootedness depends at what angle our mind reposes
For there’s always been nothing here but the song of roses.

—George B. Handley
To fling my arms wide
In some place of the sun,
To whirl and to dance
Till the white day is done.
Then rest at cool evening
Beneath a tall tree
While night comes on gently,
Dark like me—
That is my dream!

—Langston Hughes
I’m sitting on an antique chair in my bathroom giving my four-year-old daughter one of her usual marathon baths, several of her McDonald’s figurines lined up like miniature divers along the tub’s faux marble edge and Suave’s Go-go Grape bubbles piled high, when she cries, “Look, Mommy!” Glee lighting her face, she holds up both hands, palms out, so that I can see their pale, puckered skin. “I’m getting whiter!” she cries. “Pretty soon, when I grow up, I’ll be white all over—like you!”

I gaze into the sweet, eager face of my child. I stare at her, stunned. All parents, I tell myself, have known moments like these. Moments when we feel infinitely ill-equipped to answer a question, respond to a comment made by a person who is purportedly less experienced, less intellectually developed than ourselves—a person over whom we have been given stewardship but who nonetheless holds it so easily within his or her power to throw us for a loop.

To buy time, I dip water into the blue mixing bowl I use to douse Hannah’s dark ringlets. I glance out the window, barely registering the riot of fall color on the mountainside, a view that would normally evoke from me at the very least a sharp intake of breath. I swirl my finger in the cloudy water. Finally, I go back to my daughter’s expectantly upturned face. “Why?” I say. “Why do you want to be white?”

When it comes to the subject of our daughter’s adoption, my husband and I tread carefully. Five years ago, when we were handed a form by LDS Family Services that included a battery of tiny boxes to check, we felt overwhelmed. “Would you accept a child with an unknown father?” one of the questions asked. “Would you accept a sibling group?” “Would you accept a child with moderate to severe mental retardation?” As we pored over these questions, we struggled against the sense that we were shopping for a new vehicle or piece of electronic equipment and were being asked to list our choice of upgrades. It’s not as though God gives couples similar options when they’re planning on having biological children: “Will you accept a child with muscular dystrophy? Spina bifida? Visual impairment? Cerebral palsy? Cancer? Check all that apply.” And what would it say about us as parents, we wondered—as human beings, even—if we were unwilling to accept a child with special needs?

Fighting our guilt, we filled out the “Medical and Social Background” section as best we could. But when we moved on to the section labeled “Racial/Ethnic Background,” we found checking the boxes easier. “What does it matter what race the child is?” we asked each other.

Now, as a preschooler, Hannah is just beginning to recognize the differences between us, just starting to notice that her parents are white (“the whitest people I know,” as one friend has labeled us) while she is not. She is a beautiful nut-brown, with dark, snapping eyes, dimples in both cheeks, and a witty, stubborn personality. And while it’s true that no one is simply the sum of his or her parts and Hannah is certainly not the color of her skin, it is a part of her—an aspect of her appearance that must be reckoned with, especially since it makes her different not only from most of her friends and schoolmates but also from her own parents.

“I want to be white,” Hannah reiterates, in case I missed it the first time, “because I want to be like you.”

It’s not that Hannah necessarily feels herself to be inferior. Steve and I both try on a daily basis to help her build a positive image about her whole self. We tell her she is creative and artistic. We compliment her on her curly hair and tell her how much we wish our skin were more brown like hers so that perhaps we wouldn’t resemble a couple of radishes every time we take out the trash on a sunny day. And I thought we were succeeding pretty well one morning several months ago when I took Hannah with me to Jiffy Lube.

While we were waiting in the lobby, Hannah approached a gray-haired woman sitting in another of the orange vinyl chairs. This is not an
uncommon occurrence with Hannah, who has no qualms about approaching grandmotherly types, whether she knows them or not, and striking up conversations with them. (She also has a marked affinity for teenage girls who resemble the Spice Girls—girls in low-rise jeans and belly shirts whose toenails are painted metallic blue—but I try not to think about what that might portend for the future.) This particular woman was engrossed in a copy of *People* magazine when Hannah sidled up to her, and I could tell that Hannah was casting about for an opener, an icebreaker. Finally she came out with, “Are you a grandma?”

“Why, yes,” the woman replied, snapping shut her magazine.

Now that she had the woman’s full attention—now that the grandma was beaming down at her—Hannah was, I could tell, again in a quandary. She needed a second line, something to keep the conversation rolling. I waited, amused at the theatrical production, while the wheels in Hannah’s head spun. At last she seemed to strike on something. Lifting the hem of her sundress to just above her knee, she stuck out one leg, like Cinderella proffering her foot for the all-important glass slipper, and asked, “Do you like my brown skin?”

“Why, yes,” the woman gushed. “I like it very much.”

I smiled to myself. Hannah’s question seemed to demonstrate that she was comfortable with the color of her skin, that she might well be able to sail through life with her part-African-American heritage—in a country, in a state, in a church where whites overwhelmingly outnumber blacks—and ask those around her this question with complete confidence in their answers: “Do you like my brown skin?”

But even if Hannah is able to sail through life with relatively few choppy waves, our mismatched skin tones may still pose a problem. Several experiences have borne this out. Often they’re relatively innocuous occurrences, amusing little anecdotes we can use afterwards to entertain our friends and relatives, like one time when I took Hannah grocery shopping with me. I was waiting in the checkout line with my groceries and Hannah, who was still small enough to sit in the cart’s child seat, behind a black mother and her two middle-school-age daughters. After loading my items onto the conveyor belt and digging my checkbook out of my purse, I looked up to see that the cashier had pulled my cart through the aisle behind the checkout stand and was beginning to load the other woman’s bagged groceries into it. The other mother and I glanced at each other, then at the cashier. “That’s not my baby,” said the other mother.

“What?” The frazzled cashier’s head bobbed up.

“That’s not my baby.”

“Huh?”
“She’s mine.” I pointed to Hannah, who still sat contentedly in the cart but was eyeing me carefully, a puzzled and slightly anxious expression on her face, as if she were confused as to why I was standing so far away from her. “That’s my baby.”

“Oh,” the cashier mumbled. “Sorry.”

Others of these experiences have been less humorous. Take the time that, while living in Belgium for a two-year work stint, our family went to Disneyland Paris. On our first day in the park, we decided to grab a bite to eat at Disneyland Paris’s McDonald’s before heading for Fantasyland. It was raining; it was pouring, flooding, deluging. The whole world, it seemed, had melted into one gray slick, with McDonald’s yellow-and-red building rising from the rivulets like a beacon of hope. We pushed our way through the doors only to find that everyone had had the same idea we did: the place was crammed full. People were eating propped against the wall or squatting on the floor, their trays of Big Macs and fries balanced on their laps. It was as though we had stumbled unknowingly into a U2 concert. “Apparently,” Steve said, “they don’t have the same fire safety codes in Europe as they do in the U.S.”

“Guess not,” I said. “Let’s get out of here.”

But two-year-old Hannah, having spotted what I call the “gerbil cage” (McDonald’s patented plastic jungle gym), wanted to stay and play, so we relented. We didn’t order food but stood next to the gerbil cage, watching Hannah and her European counterparts scramble up tunnels and tumble down slides.

Soon we grew uneasy. We’d seen Hannah climb a ladder but hadn’t seen her come down the slide. After another minute or two, we became increasingly worried, so I decided to venture into the gerbil cage. I crawled through tunnels and peered down slides and even ducked into the ball pit, calling Hannah’s name. But to no avail. “She’s not in here,” I shouted out to Steve. “She’s gone!”

It was one of those soul-chilling moments when all your free-floating anxieties gel into a hard mass in your gut and threaten to make your brain go numb and your legs buckle. We moved together through the crush of hungry and irritable McDonald’s patrons, periodically dropping to our hands and knees to peer between legs and feet, calling for Hannah. She was nowhere. It was as though we had blinked, and in that microfraction of time, she had evaporated. We decided to split up. Steve headed for the stairs that led to a mezzanine-like upper level, thinking that he might be able to pick her out better from that vantage point. Meanwhile, I continued to search the crowds. “Ma fille,” I stammered to whoever would listen. “Ma petite fille—elle est perdue!”
Finally, after what seemed to be hours but was surely only minutes, the crowd parted ever so slightly, and a man (who I swear had a saintly glow emanating from his head) emerged with Hannah perched nonchalantly on his arm. He walked toward me, obviously scanning the crowd for any distraught parents—had perhaps been doing so for the last several minutes—but even though I stood directly in his line of vision—my face frantic, my mouth, I’m sure, widened into an elongated O like the man in Edvard Munch’s *Scream*—his eyes skipped over me.

He was looking for black parents.

“Excusez-moi!” I yelled, practically diving toward him. “C’est ma fille!”

Steve, who had finally made it to the mezzanine (but, he told me later, not until after nearly coming to blows with the employee whose job it was to stand at the bottom of the stairs and prevent any additional customers from going up), had also spotted Hannah and joined me. I clutched the man’s arm. “Monsieur,” I said breathlessly. “C’est ma fille!”

“Oui?” He looked dubious. He glanced from me to Steve, then back to me again. Obviously, he was confused. And for good reason. Interracial adoption, while somewhat unusual in the United States, is more or less unheard of in Europe. But when Hannah cried “Mommy!” and lunged toward me, he handed her over.

“Merci,” I gasped.

“De rien,” he said, nodding away my repeated expressions of gratitude.

But it wasn’t nothing. It was far from nothing. This stranger had given me back my heart—my blood, I’m convinced, would cease to pump without Hannah—and I told him so over and over again in my broken French.

There is, however, something about this particular man being our good Samaritan that haunts me. He was also of African descent, and when I saw him walking toward me with Hannah on his arm, I couldn’t help thinking that she looked more at home with him than she did with me. I couldn’t help thinking that, if anyone had been looking, they’d have sworn she was his. And the thought flitted to me, unbidden: Were we wrong to adopt a child of another race? Did she really belong with us?

I am dousing Hannah’s ringlets with the blue mixing bowl, and she is continuing to insist that one day she will be white like me, when it comes to me with a startling, bell-like clarity what I should say. At other times when Hannah raises difficult issues, I often find myself humoring her, following the path of least resistance, telling myself that going the battle-of-the-wills route with her over a point she’s gotten into her head is futile. “Uh-huh,” I often say, “that’s right.”
But this, I know, cannot be one of those times. This subject is too important. “No, sweetie,” I say, “you won’t. You will never be white, not when you grow up—not ever.”

“Why not?”

“Because Heavenly Father made you brown and he made me white.”

Hannah pauses, seemingly contemplating the pile of bubbles in front of her. “You mean,” she says, “I chose?”

I do a mental blink. Hannah’s conclusion is at best a logical leap. But it is also, I realize, as sound as they come. “Yes,” I say, “you chose.”

When I think of Hannah and her connection to me—a connection that goes beyond genetics, beyond the umbilical cord that never bound us together—I think of an evening drive up Provo Canyon with a heavy-lidded Hannah buckled into her car seat in back, music trilling softly from the radio. It was a cloudless night, with a new moon rising over the snow-topped mountains and casting an eerie, bluish glow over the cliffs around us. It was, I felt, a gift of unadulterated beauty. I was struck speechless. But not Hannah. From the backseat piped a small voice: “Look, Mommy! The mountains—they’re glowing!”

My thoughts exactly.

I think also of a phase that Hannah went through in which she was attempting to define the world around her. Often during this phase, at odd and unforeseen times—in the car on the way to the bank or to her ballet class—she would say contemplatively, “I don’t belong to Miss Katie (or Uncle David, or Sister Herway, or any one of the other people who populated her world), do I? I belong to you.”

“Yes,” I would answer. “You belong to me.”

Mostly, however, I think of an afternoon early last May when Steve and Hannah and I sat together on a sofa in one of LDS Family Services’ small offices. Outside the window, a cherry tree was just coming into bloom, its pink, chiffonlike blossoms fluttering in the breeze. Inside, the tension was mounting to a nearly palpable state. Our social worker, the same one who had facilitated Hannah’s adoption, sat in an armchair across from us with one leg slung over the other, playing with the little braided piece of leather on his loafer. “Have you picked out any names yet?” he asked, just to ease the silence.

Finally, the door swung open and in walked another social worker with a young girl. A young girl carrying a car seat with an impossibly small occupant inside. The girl was crying, her face streaked and swollen, her eyes ringed with red. Steve and I sat frozen to the sofa, uncomfortable half-smiles pasted to our faces (what do you say to a person who is about to give you her day-and-a-half-old son?), but Hannah didn’t hesitate. She hopped up, crossed the room, and slipped her fingers into the girl’s free hand. “Is this your baby?” she asked, standing on tiptoe to peer inside the car seat.
“Yes.” The girl nodded.
“But you can’t take care of him?”
“No,” came the choked reply, “I can’t take care of him.”
“Don’t worry,” Hannah assured her. “We can. We’ll take good care of
him for you.”

Despite her tears, the girl smiled down at Hannah. “I know you will,” she said.

“But,” Hannah said, squeezing the girl’s fingers, “you’re going to miss
him, aren’t you?”

When I think of our little Max’s adoption, of the sacrifice of a young
woman who, like the true mother of the baby brought before King
Solomon, would rather see her child go into the arms of another than be
cut in half, metaphorically speaking, by the only life she knew she could
give him, it is the words of a four-year-old uttered in a small room that ring
for me in the universe: “You’re going to miss him, aren’t you?”

Surely Hannah, when asked by her Creator, didn’t choose just the color
of her skin. Surely Hannah, my alter ego, chose us as well.

“Yes,” I say as I work detangling solution through Hannah’s dark, curly
hair, so different from my own. “You chose.”

Yes, Hannah, my lovely, exasperating, precocious Hannah, you belong
to me. You are my dream.

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Rowland Rider at Lee’s Ferry, Utah, June 1970. All photographs in this article courtesy of the author.
“How, Kemosabe”  
Rowland Rider’s Symbol for All Seasons  

Deirdre M. Paulsen  

How, Kemosabe,” Rowland Rider would say, raising his right arm. Unlike a schoolboy raising his hand to ask a question, Rowland would lift his arm up from the elbow. This gesture was Rowland’s trademark of sorts, a declaration to the world of his knowledge of Indian ways. (Rowland said “Indian.” The politically correct term Native American had not yet been advanced.) After all, Rowland, my grandfather, was the only white man in Kanab, Utah, who could skin a deer the way the Navajos liked it done. I can’t remember if it was with or without the ears. But it mattered to them and to him.

When Rowland was a young man in Kanab, Navajo braves would wait for him in his barn, a safe haven for them. My grandmother, Romania, would hide with her three young children under the bed in their nearby two-story frame house. When Grandpa returned, he would chide his wife, saying his friends only wanted food. He would let his children sit on Navajo laps; when my mother sat on their laps, the braves would stroke her thick auburn hair. In the security of her father’s presence, my mother enjoyed the braves’ attention. Grandpa displayed his Indian knowledge as proudly as the earth-toned blankets the Navajos gave him in trade. He had a right. After all, his father, John Rider, called by Mormon pioneer leader Brigham Young to establish Fort Kanab as protection against the Indians, instead had made friends with the Navajos and Paiutes. The Paiutes called John Pagamatoots, “Long Beard.” John’s youngest son, Rowland, was Pagamatoots Unis, “Little Long Beard.” And so Rowland’s standard greeting to one and all became “How, Kemosabe,” always accompanied by a raised right hand.
The raised hand functioned as a symbol in other ways. It showed Rowland’s affirmation of life; Rowland welcomed new acquaintances, liked to be their center. And as a storyteller, Rowland instinctively knew body language, knew the raised hand would draw an audience, would hold an audience’s attention while he spun his magic of the roll away saloon, a saloon on rollers that could be shuttled back and forth across the Utah-Arizona line to evade lawmen. Rowland’s magnetism extended to Zane Grey; the two sat around campfires on Bar Z rangelands, and Rowland swept Zane away with Western imagery and tales—Rowland the Western Trickster beguiling the Easterner. How much of *Riders of the Purple Sage* was Zane, how much Rowland? The raised hand broke down barriers, brought people in, held them there.

The hand greeting also served as a constant in Rowland’s life. It linked the past with the present. Even in Rowland’s later life of engineering and plastics manufacturing, when life became complicated with legal documents and lawsuits, there was always the simple “How, Kemosabe,” with its accompanying raised hand, to keep life in perspective.

Not many kids in Barrington, New Jersey, where I was raised, had a cowboy grandfather. Now granted, Jersey is the home of the Lene Lenape
The Roll Away Saloon

This is quite a notorious story on the Arizona Strip because it involves liquor. As far as I can remember, all the cowboys liked to drink alcohol. Oh, boy, they’d drink home brewed, they’d drink lemon extract and vanilla extract. The freighters couldn’t get it in there fast enough. The stores would sell out right away. That’s a fact.

So they built this little saloon and it was right on the Arizona-Utah line four miles south of Kanab and four miles north of Fredonia about seven or eight rods to the west of the present highway. It was just kind of a two-room affair, with a bar at one end and the bar-keeper’s bedroom at the other end. It wasn’t very large, maybe twelve by eighteen feet, but it created quite a bit of disturbance among the Mormon housewives of Fredonia and Kanab because their men would come staggering up home on their horses, too late for dinner, unable to take their saddles off. So the men of these towns, fearing their women, built this saloon on rollers, log rollers that went clear under the joist.

Well, one day when the women in the Relief Society up to Kanab got together sewing and having a quilting bee, they decided among themselves that too many of their men were going down imbibing at this Roll Away Saloon. So they organized a posse to go and burn the thing down. And their plans were all kept a secret from their husbands, of course. So when the men all went out on the range or out in the fields or doing something, the women saddled up their horses, a lot of them rode, and some of them took their white-tops,* and they headed for this saloon.

Just fortunately for the saloon keeper there, there’s a little raise of land to the north about a quarter mile from the saloon, and on the south side there’s also a little incline up to a little ridge there, what we call Halfway Hill. And sure enough, this saloon keeper saw the dust coming from these women on horseback and these four or five white-tops as they came over the rise. And he got the crowbar and rolled the saloon back into Arizona. The women got down there and were all ready to light their torches, they had their bundles all ready, when the saloon keeper said, “You can’t touch this business; it’s in Arizona. We don’t belong to Utah at all. There’s the line.”

*Four wheels with a framework like a small covered wagon. Wooden benches, enough to seat several people, were added.
It was well paved, the line was, and it always had been. So they had a little confab, then said to the saloon keeper, “Well, if you sell our men any more liquor, we’ll get you next time.” So they went back home all disgusted that they couldn’t go over into Arizona and wreck that place, and went back to their quilting.

Well, anyway, in a few days or a few weeks maybe, why the women down in Fredonia would be doing the same thing, quilting and making things for the needy and so forth. They would find out that their husbands had been spending all the spare cash up there at the Roll Away Saloon, so they’d organize a posse and here they would come. They’d come over that little ridge down there a quarter mile from the saloon and the saloon keeper’d see them coming, and it’d just take a few little pushes on those crowbars under the logs under the saloon, and over she’d go, over into Utah. The women would come up and the same thing would happen. “You can’t touch me, I’m over here in Utah. Look there, there’s the line.” So the women would give up, threatening, and go back to Fredonia. And this went on for years.

Well, now, that’s the Roll Away Saloon story and I guess I’m the only one that ever told it. And I think if you want to take a picture, you might find a few of those old rollers still rotting over there.

greeting was Lone Ranger, Hollywood. I doubted then that he had learned it from the Indians. What I wanted was authenticity. So when I analyzed Rowland’s storytelling techniques in my master’s thesis, “Stories and Storytelling Techniques of Rowland W. Rider, Cowboy on the Arizona Strip in the Early 1900s,” I wrote a lot about how Rowland stooped over and started pawing the ground like a buffalo when he told of a buffalo standoff and how he’d pretend to swing a lariat when he talked about knocking a horse’s eye out to save his life—but I never mentioned the “How, Kemosabe” or the raised hand. It wasn’t until years later that I realized there was a kind of authenticity in the greeting and the raised hand.

To gain information for my masters thesis, I interviewed Rowland in his home in Salt Lake City and “on location” in Southern Utah. We went to Lee’s Ferry to see the range of the Bar Z cattle he herded. We visited the ponds at Two-Mile where the sheep and cattle watered, and he talked of the range wars between the sheep and cattlemen. One year the cattlemen “cut the dikes,” drained the pools so the sheep couldn’t water. We followed the trail of the thirst-parched sheep who stampeded at the smell of water and plunged down rugged cliffs to drown in the Colorado River.

Rowland loved being a cowboy when he was in his early twenties, so it was surprising that a forest ranger convinced Rowland when he was twenty-two to further his education. In 1911 he attended the Southern Branch of the State Normal School of the University of Utah in Cedar City (now known as Southern Utah University). Two years later, he transferred to the Agricultural College of Utah in Logan to pursue a degree in engineering. In 1918, his last semester at the Agricultural College, he married Romania Fawcett, a graceful pianist from St. George, and they settled in Kanab, Utah, with Rowland’s family. Ten years later, in 1928, he and his
young family left this land of Navajo sandstone and the Moenkapi Formation to locate in Salt Lake City. Rowland traded cowboy ways for the title of inventor, developing the rotary engine in 1928 and the disposable needle in the 1960s. He entered the new field of plastics manufacturing after World War II. Rider Plastics Manufacturing Company’s plastic tile was the family’s bread and butter.

Grandma Romania died when Rowland was eighty-nine, and the next few years were tough. Rowland lived with me for a while, and the neighborhood kids loved his cowboy hat, his bolo tie, his boots—and his “Indian” greeting. Everyone would laugh at his stories, Grandpa the loudest with a deep, infectious laugh that drew all ages to him. But then Rowland had to have major surgery, and the laughter and the stories stopped. What good was a cowboy with an ileostomy? Grandpa stopped eating.

On June 11, 1984, I received an urgent phone call from a Salt Lake City care facility: “Come. Your grandfather is dying.” A few weeks before, an orderly had slipped me a note saying the nurses had been starving Rowland at the nursing care facility where Rowland had gone to recuperate after his surgery. I knew better. Grandpa would not eat even the Apple Cotlets, his favorite candy, that I kept bringing to bribe him out of his hunger strike. The cowboy had decided it was time to die in his boots. I wasn’t surprised when I received the phone call. I told the administrator I would get there as soon as I could notify the family.

The staff was nervous when I arrived a half hour later. I had taken too long, should not have paused to call family, they said. Rowland was precariously near death, but I didn’t understand how close. I discovered later that he had had a stroke and couldn’t feel anything in his left hand, the hand nearest me as I sat next to his bed—the one I kept massaging throughout the next few hours. I knew strokes could cause death; I didn’t know they could cause numbness. I knew little. I had never seen death, never looked it in the eyes.

Grandpa was unblinking and mute, and I would moisten his eyes and his lips with a salve the staff provided. My cousin Nancy came. We visited
in the small room while I stroked Rowland’s paralyzed hand. He looked straight ahead, unmoving, and our talking didn’t divert his attention.

Then Rowland slowly, deliberately, raised—or rather, cantilevered—his right hand. He was still looking straight ahead, wordless. Then he slowly lowered his arm. Then raised it. Then lowered it. I said in a hushed voice to Nancy, “What do you think is going on?” She replied, “I think it’s getting really crowded in here.” We sat silently, awestruck for what seemed like a very long time, watching Rowland’s arm go up and down, up and down, up and down.

Rowland’s simple gesture spoke “How, Kemosabe” when he couldn’t. The act was an affirmation of an afterlife; it was obvious to us at the time that Rowland was greeting many spirit ancestors in his own way, with the symbol that had been a constant in his life. The raised-hand gesture that broke down barriers, that welcomed people into his center, that breathed of Rowland’s honesty and simplicity—and storyteller’s showmanship—this symbol now served Rowland well as a transition. Rowland’s last “goodbye” was a “hello” to a whole new audience.

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1. Rowland was first noted as a storyteller by John Willey in a magazine article published in 1919:

As it was getting dark, we all put up at the Grand Hotel, and after supper, sitting on the hotel porch, conversation drifted to desert life, “the riders of the purple sage.” Then it was we learned that the driver of the Oldsmobile truck [Rowland Rider] had been a “rider.” He was the “son of the desert” and was acquainted with Zane Grey, the author, in fact had suggested to Mr. Grey ideas for some of his wonderful desert stories. He told of the buffalo ranch near Kanab; of the deer, wild horse, cougar, and other wild animal life of the Kaibab Forest; of his being the last man to bid God speed to two intrepid explorers of the Grand Canyon as they started downstream for the Granite Gorge from Lee’s Ferry; and he informed of the buffalo-riding contest that was to take place the next day . . . his language simple and direct, without waste of words, and breathed of sincerity. He was a most interesting man. (John Willey, ed., “A Journey to North Rim of Grand Canyon; The Editor Rides for a Thousand Miles in George Relf’s Car thru Desert, Oases and Forest and Sees Many Strange Sights; Travel Adventures Away from Railroad, Telegraph and Modern conveniences. A Wayfaring That Brings Few Dissappointments [sic] and Many Delightful Surprises,” Hotel Monthly 37, no. 319 [October 1919]: 45–64; italics in original)
Chilean Spring

With my cold I have taken to herbal tea—
anise and mint—laced with honey to keep it sweet. Tomorrow the thread where the honey dripped will be a file of ants, grateful for any morsel left behind. They promise (given time) to keep my kitchen clean. For me that’s o.k.—a symbiotic relationship to improve the planet we share, crossing rivers, mountains, oceans, one hymenopterous footfall at a time.

When he was young, my son captured ants, imprisoned them in sand between panes of glass. A few sweetened drops of water were enough to keep them busy excavating tunnels—a crosshatch of intersections—to make everything ready for the advent of the queen. She never came. They wouldn’t concede that fact until old age—how long might that be for an ant?—one by one did them in, and my son turned to other things.

Someone, I think Lear, said, “Ripeness is all.” I look at new leaves this spring. Their brightness may not yet be everything, since they are far from ripe, but they sing of hope, of life, even an afterlife, and my heart keeps pace with quick pulse each morning when I walk. Thrushes respond. The sun sends white rays high into the blue of dawn, and shadows find a place to hide. I love light, the freshness of clean air where echoes answer me from where I may not see but know is there.

—Donnell Hunter

This poem won first place in the BYU Studies poetry contest for 2002.
In *The Trial of Don Pedro León Luján: The Attack against Indian Slavery and Mexican Traders in Utah*, Sondra Jones has written an excellent and accessible discussion of a little-known episode in the history of nineteenth-century Utah. In the first chapter, Jones makes it clear that the arrest, trial, and expulsion from Utah of Don Pedro León Luján, a New Mexican trader, has often been distorted or even glossed over in Utah histories; she then describes the event using as evidence extant primary records.

Jones contextualizes the story of slave trading in early Utah and supports it with substantial references and informative notes. The Utah Territory into which the Saints settled after being forced to flee from the Midwest was seasoned with tribal customs and traditional trading practices between Native Americans and traders. In particular, the Utes often traded Indian children—children from other tribes and even their own children—for goods and firearms. These children, then, were essentially slaves. Despite moral conflicts, the Saints became part of this slave trade: “The Mormons’ initial reluctance to purchase Indian captives posed no real problem for the Indian slavers. To make a sale [the Utes] needed only to threaten to sell [the children] to Mexican slavers or Navajos (another active market for domestics and herders) or to kill [the children]” (49).

Still, as Jones explains, “the Mormons from the beginning regarded the slave trade as not only morally reprehensible but politically untenable as well”:

First, the Mormons found themselves in the center of the traditional Mexican/Indian slave route and saw only the uglier aspects of the operation: the cruelty of Indian slavers toward their merchandise. Almost as bad, the fate of these slaves was to be purchased by Mexicans, who, in the
eyes of the Mormons, with their nineteenth-century prejudice, were little better than the Indians themselves. (41)

In 1851, León Luján inadvertently wandered into this cultural milieu and into territory where he was not licensed to conduct business. He engaged in trading for Indian children and was arrested and brought to trial for being a slave trader. Upon his conviction, he was summarily stripped of all his properties (including his horse and supplies) and sent back to New Mexico, three hundred miles away, on foot (3–4, 89).

Jones suggests that the Mormon officials of the 1850s had an ulterior political motive concerning this case: to stop all Mexican traders from trading in Indian children. Apparently, there were also racist motives: “The prosecuting attorney also seems to have been personally prejudiced against the Mexicans” (87). It is clear that Church leaders abhorred slave trading of any kind, even though technically at that time slavery was still legal in Utah Territory. Other issues are less clear. For example, were the Utah leaders hypocritical in their charges against León Luján? Jones argues that León Luján and his traders were punished for doing the same things that the Mormons had been doing for some time without penalty.

However, the Latter-day Saints bought children for different reasons than the traders did. Mormons traded for Indian children to save them from a worse fate (enslavement by others or even death) and ostensibly to adopt them as family members and to socialize them as Latter-day Saints; New Mexican traders traded for Indian children, ostensibly to sell them as servants and ranch workers and to eventually socialize them as Roman Catholics. However, Jones demonstrates that in New Mexico the children were usually given their freedom when they became adults, at the time of their marriage (92).² And however noble the Mormons’ motives were, whether or not the Indian children raised in Mormon families were really better off than those sold as servants may be debatable. For example, one adopted Indian girl “stated on her deathbed that ‘it had been a mistake for her ever to suppose that she could be a white girl. Indian children, she said, should be left with their own people where they could be happy; when they were raised in white homes they did not belong anywhere’”³ (103).

Jones concludes that typical historical accounts of the trial of León Luján omit important cultural and contextual elements, such as the elements of racism and coercion. In the incident for which he was arrested, at least, León Luján refused to trade with the Utes for their captives. In retaliation, the Utes stole several of the traders’ horses, leaving the traders without the means to return home. Some have suggested that the traders then “were forced to take the children in lieu of the horses” (69).
Jones’s discussion of the trial is well documented, and she closes her account by showing the historical significance of this trial: “The Indian slave trade ended with the influx of Americans into the Spanish borderlands. Its demise was heralded by the politically necessary trial of Pedro León Luján” (119).

*The Trial of Don Pedro León Luján*, presented attractively by the University of Utah Press, makes a lasting contribution by clarifying an important but little-explained event in Utah history. Further, it relates an insightful account of mid-1800s litigation regarding slave trade in Utah and New Mexico as well as of social conditions among both Native Americans and early Mormon settlers. León Luján may have been a victim of circumstance, but it is unlikely that his trial could have been resolved in any other way. The Mormon leadership was ready to put an end to the practice of coercive sales of children that had gone on for decades.

Jones has performed an admirable work of scholarship on this topic, and it is balanced as far as possible, given the resources Jones was able to access. The story is well told and should be included in any thorough historical scholarship of nineteenth-century Utah.

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Throughout most of the Christian era, the dominant view of God has been that he is all-determining and all-controlling. Richard Rice gives a concise definition of this view:

This traditional, or conventional, view emphasizes God’s sovereignty, majesty and glory. God’s will is the final explanation for all that happens; God’s glory is the ultimate purpose that all creation serves. In his infinite power, God brought the world into existence in order to fulfill his purposes and display his glory. Since his sovereign will is irresistible, whatever he dictates comes to pass and every event plays its role in his grand design. Nothing can thwart or hinder the accomplishment of his purposes. God’s relation to the world is thus one of mastery and control. (11)

This understanding of God has been widely challenged in the last quarter of the twentieth century by a group of Christian theologians and philosophers who have proposed an alternative to the conventional view. The critique and the positive proposal offered is now a recognized movement in Christian theology known variously as free will theism or openness theology. Expositions, defenses, and critiques of this new movement abound on the contemporary theological landscape in the form of journal articles, academic colloquia, and full-length books, including the two books reviewed here.

*The Openness of God* is coauthored by five men considered by many to be the prime movers of openness theology: Clark Pinnock, Richard Rice, John Sanders, William Hasker, and David Basinger. Together they offer a concise and accessible introductory overview and defense of the concept. Sanders’s *The God Who Risks* is a much more focused approach to openness thought, setting out what he calls a “risk” model of providence. Both Clark Pinnock, Richard Rice, John Sanders, William Hasker, David Basinger.*

*The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God.*

John Sanders.*

*The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence.*

Reviewed by David L. Paulsen and Matthew G. Fisher
books are marked by admirable scholarship; both offer ideas that bear scrutiny, whether by theologians, philosophers, or interested Christian lay people. Both books offer an understanding of God that resonates closely with that of Latter-day Saints. We, especially, should acquaint ourselves with and ponder the view of God these books advance and consider the light they may shed on what may be regarded as the Hellenic origins of the Great Apostasy.

**The Openness of God**

As the subtitle, *A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God,* indicates, openness theology challenges the conventional Christian understanding of God. The five authors of *Openness* designed the book to read like a “five-course dinner prepared by five chefs” (10). First, Richard Rice presents a biblical case for the openness of God. Then John Sanders provides a historical account of how the traditional view of God emerged and became entrenched, showing that it was deeply impacted by neo-Platonic philosophy. Next, Clark Pinnock presents a theological model for the open view of God, which is followed by William Hasker’s philosophical defense of the model. David Basinger concludes by delineating some of the practical implications of the model for Christian life and devotion (10). We will review separately each of these five perspectives on openness theology.

**Biblical Support for a New Perspective: Richard Rice.** Richard Rice begins by laying out the traditional view of God, which emphasizes God’s impassibility and immutability. “God is not affected by any outside influence when he decides something, particularly not by human input” (12). He never changes, and “God’s plans or intentions also appear changeless” (14).

Rice’s treatment of the traditional portrait of God is profoundly relevant because it presents a fundamental contradiction to conventional Christian worship practices. It would appear that God cannot be both impassible and immutable while at the same time engaging in loving, responsive give-and-take relationships with his human creations. We live our devotional lives in a way that presupposes a loving God who is involved in our daily activities. We plead with him and include him in our daily decisions; we interact with him as if our input were significant. Such a dynamic would not be possible were God impassible and immutable.

Appealing to biblical examples, Rice effectively mounts the openness challenge against the conventional model, pointing out two biblical convictions that underlie the “open” conception of God. The first is that “love is the most important quality we attribute to God”; the second is that “love is more than care and commitment; it involves being sensitive and responsive as well” (15). He explains:
These convictions lead the contributors to this book to think of God’s relation to the world in dynamic rather than static terms. This conclusion has important consequences. For one thing, it means that God interacts with his creatures. Not only does he influence them, but they also exert an influence on him. As a result, the course of history is not the product of divine action alone. God’s will is not the ultimate explanation for everything that happens; human decisions and actions make an important contribution too. (15–16)

At the outset of this section, Rice acknowledges that “nearly all of the biblical descriptions of God fall within the broad designation of ‘metaphor’” (17) and warns against a sharp division between literal and figurative theistic language. Many Christians make the mistake of dismissing metaphoric language in the Bible as mere anthropomorphisms, not closely related to the reality of God’s nature or character. Rice maintains that many metaphors have a close resemblance to reality: “They are closer, so to speak, to the intended object—and they play a more prominent role within the overall biblical account of God” (17). Like openness theology, the Latter-day Saint tradition parts company with conventional Christianity with regard to the understanding of metaphorical and anthropomorphic language in scripture. While not all scriptural metaphor should be taken literally, it does, no doubt, bear closer on reality than conventional Christianity will admit.

Rice traces the Old Testament narrative, calling on the works of Terence E. Fretheim to explore some neglected themes in Hebrew scripture that seem to support an open view of God. The first of these passages concerns the wide range of emotions attributed to God throughout the Old Testament. Rice contends that one of the most telling descriptions of God’s inner life involves his interaction with Israel: “The Hebrew prophets speak of God in familial terms, drawing on the relations of parent and child, husband and wife” (23). By way of illustration, Rice points to Hosea’s metaphor of Israel as the unfaithful wife of God: “This powerful poem tracks a succession of intense feelings, from jealousy and anger to hope and joy,” Rice states. “God’s response to Israel runs the same gamut of emotion a betrayed husband would feel, with the significant exception that God longs for reconciliation beyond rejection” (23).

Next, Rice introduces the reader to the idea of divine repentance. Simply put, this is the idea that God can and does change his mind or his course of action, an essential tenet for anyone who subscribes to a theology of openness. For Rice, God’s plans “are not ironclad decrees that fix the course of events and preclude all possible variation. For God to will something, therefore, does not make its occurrence inevitable. Factors can arise
that hinder or prevent its realization. Consequently, God may reformulate his plans, or alter his intentions, in response to developments” (26). Rice appeals to various Old Testament passages to support this idea. He cites Jonah’s mission to Nineveh as the most familiar example. Jonah warned the people of Nineveh of God’s threat to overturn the city; in response, the people prayed and fasted. “When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened” (Jonah 3:10, New International Version). In yet many other instances in the Old Testament where God considers new developments, he changes his course of action, or as Rice puts it, “repents” (26). The question is not whether such scriptural accounts exist but rather whether such instances should be taken as literal or figurative.

Rice confidently proclaims, “I believe the New Testament extends and intensifies the dynamic portrait of God we found in the Old [Testament]. It, too, supports the open view of God” (39). He cites the incarnation of Jesus as the best example. “The incarnation reveals many things about the character of God. The fact that God chose to express himself through a medium of a human life suggests that God’s experience has something in common with certain aspects of human experience” (39). Further, “it would therefore seem that God, like us, is personal existence. If so, then God enjoys relationships, has feelings, makes decisions, formulates plans and acts to fulfill them” (39).

Rice is careful not to ignore the many biblical passages that seem to call into question the theory of divine openness, such as the idea of divine changelessness. “The notion that God is changeless is perfectly compatible with the open view of God. In fact, it is just as important to this position as to the conventional alternative,” Rice argues, “The difference between them is not that one views God as changeless while the other doesn’t. The difference is that everything about God must be changeless for the traditional view, whereas the open view sees God as both changeless and changeable” (48). He continues, “When we distinguish between God’s unchanging nature and his dynamic experience, we can make sense of a wide range of biblical evidence. . . . We do not have to dismiss them as ‘anthropomorphisms’ or ‘anthropopathisms,’ which have no application to his real life” (48–49). He concludes that “the open view of God does justice to a broad spectrum of biblical evidence and allows for a natural reading of the Bible” (49).

**Historical Considerations: John Sanders.** John Sanders approaches the concept of God from a historical perspective. He offers an excellent summary and treatment of the historical figures and philosophies that influenced the developing Christian concept of God and ultimately led to
the traditional model. He begins by documenting how “the Greek metaphysical system ‘boxed up’ the God described in the Bible and the tremendous impact this has had in shaping the Christian understandings of the nature of God, the ‘Trinity, election, sin, grace, the covenant, the sovereignty of God, prayer, salvation and the incarnation” (60). Sanders continues:

While Greek philosophy did not reject religion, . . . it did seek to purify it by submitting it to the constraints of an abstract and impersonal notion of ultimate reality. Utilizing the methods of natural theology, philosophers deduced their understanding of deity from the concept of ‘perfection’ since nothing less than perfection would be appropriate for God. (61)

Because God is perfect, Plato argued, change is impossible; if he changes at all, he can change only for the worse.¹

Like Plato, Aristotle also influenced the conventional Christian concept of deity. He introduced the concept of the “unmoved mover,” a concept brought about through seeking the highest form of being in the universe that causes all else to move, “a substance which is eternal and unmovable . . . without parts and indivisible . . . impassive and unalterable” (66). Sanders concludes, “Though this God may not be religiously satisfying, several aspects of Aristotle’s unmoved mover have found their way into the Christian tradition” (66).

Sanders names Philo of Alexandria as the individual most responsible for the subsequent marriage of Christian thought with Greek philosophy. “Philo rejects or significantly modifies Hellenistic formulations in defense of the biblical revelation. Nevertheless, in the end philosophical presuppositions are placed over the God described in the Bible and so serve as the preunderstanding that guided his reading of Scripture” (69). From Philo begins a whole chain of early Church Fathers who struggled to appropriate Greek philosophy within Christianity. Sanders gives a helpful condensed account of the influence of such figures as Ignatius, Tertullian, Origen, and Clement. The Church Fathers did not have an easy task; Greek philosophy was such a prominent part of the intellectual landscape of the time that it was difficult indeed to control the confluence of Greek and Christian thought. Sanders quotes H. P. Owen: “So far as the Western world is concerned theism has a double origin: the Bible and Greek philosophy” (72). Sanders adds, “Despite different attitudes taken by the fathers toward philosophy, the influence of Greek philosophical notions of God is universal, even among those who ‘repudiate’ philosophy” (72).

Sanders makes sure not to pass lightly over Augustine, the last of the Church Fathers whose influence on conventional Christian theology cannot be understated. Augustine espoused the traditional list of God’s
attributes: “self-sufficient, impassible, immutable, omniscient, omnipotent, timeless, ineffable, and simple” (80). Of Augustine, Sanders says this:

The neo-Platonic notions of God as creative force rather than one who fashions the world, the immutability of ultimate reality, seeking the truth by turning inward into our souls, and evil understood as a lack of goodness (connected to mutability and finitude) all vied with Augustine’s biblical sensibilities for preeminence in his thinking. (80)

Sanders concludes that while “the tradition, with good intentions, employed immutability and impassibility in order to protect God’s freedom, they were taken too far and left no room for speaking of divine openness where God, in vulnerability, binds himself to others in love” (100).

**Systematic Theology: Clark Pinnock.** In the third chapter, Clark H. Pinnock’s design is to “propose a more biblical and coherent doctrine of God” (101). He wants to overcome any distortions caused by “excessive Hellenization” and allow biblical teachings to operate more normatively. His aim is “to do greater justice to mutuality and relationality in both the triune God and the God-human covenant” (101).

Pinnock begins by emphasizing the absolute essentiality of a proper concept of God. He expresses his concern that “unless the portrait of God is compelling, the credibility of belief in God is bound to decline” (101). His next move is to construct a systematic theology that will leave us with a religiously compelling, yet biblically faithful, portrait of God. It bears mentioning that while Latter-day Saints do not claim to have a systematized theology, we certainly resonate with Pinnock’s insistence on understanding the correct nature of God. Joseph Smith taught that “it is the first principle of the gospel to know for a certainty the character of God.”

The first thing to keep in mind, according to Pinnock, is that we are not dealing with a God who, as theologians and philosophers of the past have argued, remains at a safe distance, worrying about his own honor, but rather one who “bears his holy arm and rescues humankind through sharing their distress and affliction. We are not dealing with an unapproachable deity but with God who has a human face and who is not indifferent to us but is deeply involved with us in our need” (102). Pinnock points out that most Christians in practice do not have a problem with acting as if God were open. The problem, he says, “lies more in systematic theology than it does in religious experience. For some reason, when we do theology we lose sight of the openness of God that we experience. There is resistance to conceptualizing it, even though it is existentially familiar” (105). This resistance he blames on tradition: “Theology emphasized one set of divine properties to the neglect of another and disturbed the delicate balance between them” (105). He says it is important to recognize that the Bible defines this balance:
God . . . is both transcendent (that is, self-sufficient, the Creator of the world, ontologically other than creation, sovereign and eternal) and at the same time immanent (that is, present to the world, active within history, involved, relational and temporal). Combining the two, we say that God is so transcendent that he creates room for others to exist and maintains a relationship with them, that God is so powerful as to be able to stoop down and humble himself, that God is so stable and secure as to be able to risk suffering and change. (105)

Pinnock ably and plausibly continues in his task of correcting the balance between transcendence and immanence as he treats the doctrines of the Trinity, the Creation, and God’s attributes of power, immutability, impassibility, and knowledge. He sums up, “The open view of God stresses qualities of generosity, sensitivity and vulnerability more than power and control. It allows us to think of God as taking risks. Instead of locating God above and beyond history, it stresses God’s activity in history, responding to events as they happen, in order to accomplish his purposes” (125).

A Philosophical Perspective: William Hasker. In his chapter, William Hasker attempts to “provide a philosophical explication of the issues in this discussion—to exhibit the rational coherence of the theology of divine openness and to show where it is superior to competing ways of understanding God and his works” (126). Hasker identifies several of the philosophical malpractices that lead to a skewed concept of deity, including “perfect being” theology. This is the practice of deducing God’s attributes from the assumption “that God is an absolutely perfect being—in Anselm’s phrase, ‘the being than which nothing greater can be conceived’” (131). Hasker does not deny that perfect being theologizing sometimes works well; he even says that the belief that God is perfect is “proper and correct” (131). He goes on, however, to say that “difficulties have arisen because people have been too ready to assume that they can determine, easily and with little effort, what perfection is in the case of God—that is, what attributes a perfect being must possess” (132).

Hasker acknowledges that it is out of the question for anyone to “prove” that a particular concept of God is the correct one (154). Yet, a thorough investigation concerning the biblical, historical, and certainly philosophical considerations is not only appropriate but also necessary. Through the course of the chapter, Hasker offers a cursory yet philosophically satisfying treatment of some of the more important issues surrounding the openness theory.

Practical Implications: David Basinger. We think it highly appropriate that The Openness of God ends with a chapter concerning the practical implications of the proposed model. Here David Basinger asks how the open model influences our daily life. In particular, he delineates how an
open view of God affects the efficacy of petitionary prayer, the discernment of God’s will, the appropriate Christian explanation(s) of evil, the appropriate Christian responses to social problems, and Christian evangelistic obligations.

Petitionary prayer is one of the best examples of the openness model in action. Most Christians pray to God believing that their prayer will in some way have an effect. However, Basinger points out that some Christians—some Calvinists and others sympathetic to the Reformed tradition—affirm what he labels “specific sovereignty,” or the belief that God “has total control over everything in the sense that all and only that which God wants to occur will occur” (156–57). This is not to say that the individual agent lacks the ability to make a free decision; rather, it means that God unilaterally influences the decision-making process so as to ensure that the agent makes the exact decision that God would have him or her make (157).

Basinger questions whether such an agent can justifiably maintain that petitionary prayer has an effect on God (158). A significant difference between specific-sovereignty models and the openness model is that proponents of the open view are justified in claiming that “petitionary prayer initiates unilateral divine activity that would not have occurred if we had not utilized our God-given power of choice to request such divine assistance” (160). This position implies that God’s plan is open to the extent that our free decisions lend to its unfolding. God does not necessarily ensure that we freely make a given decision, for that would limit our freedom not to make that decision.

Basinger boldly asserts another practical implication of openness theology: “We maintain . . . that God possesses only what has come to be called ‘present knowledge’” (163). This is to say that God knows “all that has occurred in the past and is occurring now. Moreover, God does know all that will follow deterministically from what has occurred, and can, as the ultimate psychoanalyst, predict with great accuracy what we as humans will freely choose to do in various contexts” (163). It follows that God can predict an event with great accuracy, but according to the open model, “God can know only what can be known and that what humans will freely do in the future cannot be known before-hand; hence, God can never know infallibly what will happen in any context involving human freedom” (163). This position seems to place significant emphasis on the free will of the decision-making agent. The open view of God requires that the agent consult God concerning short-term decisions; moreover, it implies that the agent’s long-term future is essentially unwritten and open.

The prospect of God’s having less than absolute knowledge of the future and the idea that even for God the future is partly unsettled have surely been popular criticisms of the open view. The nature of God’s
knowledge is variously conceived even among Latter-day Saints. Some have
thought that God increases endlessly in knowledge as well as in glory and
dominion. On this point, faithful Latter-day Saints often (and sometimes
passionately) disagree. All would no doubt agree, as Joseph Smith clearly
taught, that God is eternally self-surpassing in glory, dominion, and king-
dom. Some very influential Latter-day Saint thinkers, including Presidents
Brigham Young and Wilford Woodruff, have affirmed that God is eternally
self-surpassing in both knowledge and power. For instance, President
Woodruff explained, “God himself is increasing and progressing in knowl-
edge, power, and dominion, and will do so, worlds without end.” If it is
ture that God progresses in his knowledge, then he cannot have exhaustive,
specific foreknowledge, for this omniscience would logically preclude his
acquisition of “new” knowledge.

Other Latter-day Saints, including President Joseph Fielding Smith and Elder Bruce R. McConkie, hold to the more traditional view that
God’s knowledge, including his foreknowledge of future free contingen-
cies, is exhaustive and complete. “Despite these differing [Latter-day
Saint] views, there is accord on two fundamental issues: (1) God’s fore-
knowledge does not causally determine human choices, and (2) this knowl-
edge, like God’s power, is maximally efficacious. No event occurs that he
has not anticipated [at least as possibility] or not taken into account in his
planning.”

Openness thinkers have certainly offered one possible approach to the
nature of God’s knowledge that seems to emphasize God’s flexibility in
working with free moral agents in a plan that may work itself out in vari-
ous ways but will unconditionally end in God’s fulfilling all of his purposes
and promises.

The God Who Risks

John Sanders continues in the “openness project” by offering a scholar-
ly and accessible treatment of the open model. While the basic architec-
ture is well defined in The Openness of God, Sanders goes a step further,
offering a book that deals with the theology of providence: The God Who
Risks. For the purpose of his book, Sanders places all the views of provi-
dence under one of two basic models: the “no risk” view and the “risk”
view: “Either God does take risks or does not take risks in providentially
creating and governing the world. Either God is in some respects condi-
tioned by the creatures he created or he is not conditioned by them” (10).

Sanders approaches the book from two different sides: biblical and
theological/philosophical. He does this in an attempt to create a treatment
that is true to the two different approaches without creating a hybrid that
is ultimately unhelpful to either discipline. He also makes it clear that this
book is not a “general treatise on the doctrine of providence covering all the topics normally examined”; rather, it is an examination of divine providence “through the lens of divine risk taking” (14). While his study is not designed to settle “all the disputed issues,” the reader will find that it offers a model that proclaims a personal God who enters into a genuine give-and-take relationship with his creatures, and while this book is not about the problem of evil, implications can be drawn out of it to help deal with that age-old issue.

**The Bible.** In propounding an open view of God and a “risk” view of providence, Sanders dedicates two chapters to material from the Old and New Testament that supports a relational view of God involving risk. Admitting that the Old Testament can be read to support a risk-free picture of providence, Sanders nevertheless sets out to show that a better case can be made for divine risk by examining the “nature of the divine project—what God is working toward and how God goes about accomplishing this goal” (39–40). Sanders makes his case by appealing to the Old Testament scriptural narrative, and thus the reader will find that Sanders’s argument deserves deep consideration, especially by those whose reading of the Old Testament has been influenced by traditional pre-understandings.

The open model of providence holds that God has created a world in which his creatures are free to make decisions and guide their lives with their imperfect knowledge and abilities. Within these sometimes non-ideal circumstances, God works for the ultimate success of his goals, and, due to the uncertainty inherent in a world of morally free agents, risk becomes a factor within God’s plan.

A fascinating implication of the open model and the risk view of providence is the idea that God “works with what is available.” Sanders points to the story of baby Moses and his mother’s attempt to keep him safe from the Pharaoh’s decree to kill all baby Hebrew boys: “One Hebrew woman does not want her baby drowned, so she places him in an ‘ark’ and has her daughter stand guard by it. This mother does not ‘leave everything in the hands of God.’ Indeed she takes active steps to ensure the well-being of her child” (56). The Pharaoh’s daughter, unlike her father, takes pity on the boy. She hires the boy’s mother to nurse him and takes him into her own home to raise him as her son (56). By the end of the narrative, it becomes clear that God did not script the role of each of these women; rather, he made use of their freely chosen actions in order to bring about deliverance. Sanders writes, “Consequently, God takes a risk, since these people could have failed—they could have acted differently and let the boy die. If so, God would have to find another means of liberating his people and the story of Exodus would be different from what it is” (56–57).
Again Sanders makes it reasonably clear that the relationship God has chosen to share with his creatures is one of interaction and reciprocal love: “It is a world in which he grants integrity to his creatures and singles out human beings for a special relationship involving genuine give-and-take dynamics” (88). The Old Testament sustains other significant implications of his model. He treats the topics of divine repentance, divine wrath, and divine mercy while describing a God who loves enough to share responsibility in his plan and sovereign enough to ensure that his plan will prevail:

The type of relationship that God offers his people is not one of control and domination but rather one of powerful love and vulnerability. God establishes the relationship in such a way that he risks the possibility of rejection. . . . The Old Testament reveals God’s actions and God’s incredible persistence in seeking to bring his project to fruition. (89)

**Divine Relationality in the Christian Tradition.** Sanders goes beyond the biblical proof regarding his model and next appeals to the Christian tradition for support. He writes, “The notion that God enters into reciprocal give-and-take relations with us and genuinely responds to our prayers permeates the sermons, prayers and devotional literature of Christians throughout the ages” (140). As we saw in his treatment of historical considerations in *The Openness of God*, Sanders clearly understands that, during the time of the early Church Fathers, the Christian tradition gave way to many nonbiblical teachings that conflict with Sanders’s present model of providence. He incorporates this conflict into his argument this way:

Since certain aspects of theological tradition challenge my proposal, I shall address it to see whether there are elements in it that may be retrieved toward the establishment of relational theism. I will argue that the model of providence defended here finds agreement with the intentions and functions, though not always the material content, of the theological tradition. (141)

He next skips ahead to address the presence of divine risk theology in modern thought:

Modern theology has witnessed a remarkable reexamination of the divine-human relationship as well as of the attributes of God. The contemporary scene manifests a wide spectrum of views on the subject. On the one hand are those who deny that we can have a personal relationship with God at all. Others claim that though we can have a relationship, it cannot be reciprocal. Next are those who maintain that God is necessarily dependent on creatures for what God wants to achieve. Finally, some affirm that God freely enters into reciprocal relations with us. (158)

In the chapter “Risk and Divine Character,” Sanders explores certain attributes of God in relation to the concept of divine risk taking: “God is
sovereign over his sovereignty and so did not have to create a world in
which humans have the freedom to enter into a personal relationship of
love with himself. God sovereignly created the conditions of all creaturely
working: God alone establishes the rules of the game” (170).

Love is the guiding force behind God’s plan: “One of the central, if not
the central, aims of the creation was to produce significant others who
could experience the divine love and reciprocate that love both to God
and to other creatures” (176; italics in original). It is in God’s loving his
creatures enough to give them space to freely participate in fellowship
with him that he allows for an element of risk in his plan. “God has
demonstrated in history that he has all the wisdom necessary to work with
the sort of world he decided to create, despite the fact that things do not
always go as God desires (for example, Israel’s defection),” Sanders
believes. “The divine wisdom is not defined by our standard of success but
by the way God works to bring about the fruition of his project” (181–82).
In establishing such relations, God indeed takes risks, but this risking
must be understood within the framework of the project God has under-
taken. It is not risk for risk’s sake but the quest for loving, faithful, and free
relationships with the creatures (206).

Applications to the Christian Life. In “Applications to the Christian
Life,” the last chapter of The God Who Risks, Sanders evaluates his model by
assessing the practical implications of a risk view of providence and, more
specifically, the implications of the general view of sovereignty. Sin is the
first topic he takes up. He reminds the reader:

According to general sovereignty God does not control every single
detail that occurs. Some things happen that God does not want to hap-
pen but permits to occur. God takes a risk in creating the sort of world in
which he desires a relationship of love but love cannot be forced. This
relational, or fellowship, model produces an understanding of sin, elec-
tion, grace and salvation that is quite different from the manipulative
model [that is, specific sovereignty]. (243)

At the outset of this book, Sanders acknowledges that although this
theory cannot solve the problem of evil entirely, it does allow the reader to
place the issue in the proper context of God’s project. In dealing with this
issue, many Christians appeal to what is known as the “freewill defense.”
Sanders, going one step further, offers what he refers to as the “logic-of-
love defense”:

God has established the structures within which the divine project is
possible. God made human beings capable of responding to the divine
love with love of their own. God is solely responsible for bringing this
possibility about, yet what God desires is a reciprocal relationship of love.
Love is vulnerable and does not force itself on the beloved. Thus there is the risk that the beloved may not want to reciprocate love. (257–58)

Thus “the structure of love coupled with general sovereignty yields the conclusion that there is gratuitous evil. Horrible events happen that God does not specifically want to occur. This was a risk God took in establishing these structures” (267–68).

Sanders concludes by reminding the reader of the inherent hope and freedom this model offers. He suggests that God’s will is not a specific blueprint that we are obligated to follow. Further, it is not “a list of activities regarding vocation, marriage and the like. Rather it is God’s desire that we become a lover of God and others as was exemplified in God’s way in Jesus” (276). According to Sanders’s model, God’s will for us resides in personal and genuine give-and-take relationships with him. These relationships allow for freedom on both ends and require genuine and reciprocated love. The price for this relationship is risk.

Conclusion

Sanders’s study has examined the biblical, historical, philosophical, and practical issues surrounding the risk view of providence and the open view of God. Along with the four other authors of *The Openness of God*, he offers this view as an intelligible alternative to other nonrisk or traditional views of providence. This study of God’s openness should be of special import to Latter-day Saint readers, for the Latter-day Saint tradition also rejects many absolute elements in the classical view of God and providence (immutable, impassible, timeless, ineffable, simple, invisible, all-controlling, completely transcendent). The Latter-day Saint portrait of God as found in scripture reflects a loving, sensitive, responsive, and concerned God who suffers when his children turn from him and is elated when they seek his fellowship. We read about a God who has endowed his children with significant freedom that allows for free choices, both good and bad. This, too, is how God is understood in openness thought.

Much has been written concerning the breadth and depth of the divide separating Latter-day Saint and conventional Christian theologies and in many cases the divide is, indeed, both wide and deep. However, in dealing with God’s relationship with his creatures and his providential project, the openness model as offered in both of these exceptional books enjoys striking similarity with the Latter-day Saint view of divine relations and providence.

Many scholars, it seems, were interested in the spirit of the project taken up by Steven E. Robinson and Craig L. Blomberg in *How Wide the
**Divide: A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation.** Many have recognized the value of engaging in these types of mutually beneficial conversations. In a cordial letter to David Paulsen, Clark H. Pinnock writes:

You have got me interested in the Mormon-evangelical dialogue further to How Wide the Divide (ch 2–3). Are we (in your opinion) cobelligerents as it were in the struggle against pagan influences in classical theism? Can we benefit each other? My sense is that we are closer to each other than process theists are to either of us... Clearly we have much in common. I have always hoped with respect to your faith that Mormon thinking might draw closer to Christian thinking (or ours to yours) and not drift farther away. It is in this spirit that these books should be read. Latter-day Saints do in fact have much in common with the views offered in these two pieces, and we can benefit a great deal by carefully studying and contemplating them.

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6. Very recently, Elder Neal A. Maxwell has suggested that God exists outside of time. “God lives in an eternal now where the past, present, and future are constantly before him (see D&C 130:7).” Neal A. Maxwell, “Care for the Life of the Soul,” *Ensign* 33 (May 2003): 70.
Satellite truck at Nauvoo Temple, June 2002. Seven news satellite trucks, including the one pictured here, transmitted coverage of the opening of the Nauoo Temple. Beginning before its official founding, the Church has continued to use various forms of media to spread the gospel message and has been the subject of much media attention.
Print, electronic, and other forms of communications media have been consistently perceived and characterized by leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as tools to assist in spreading the gospel message throughout the world. President Spencer W. Kimball said, “Technology will help spread the gospel. … We shall use the inventions the Lord has given us to awaken interest and acquaint people of the world with [gospel] truths.”¹ More recently, President Gordon B. Hinckley said, “The Lord has inspired skilled men and women in developing new technologies which we can use to our great advantage in moving forward this sacred work.”²

Given this perspective, the Church from its earliest days has used various forms of media as vehicles of communication. It has produced or been affiliated with the production of numerous newspapers and magazines in the United States and in several countries worldwide. In the twentieth century, the Church embraced electronic media technologies promptly. “Music and the Spoken Word from Temple Square,” on the air since 1925, is the “longest running continuous program in the history of United States network radio.”³ General conference has been broadcast on radio since 1924, on television since 1949, and via the Internet since 1999. The Church’s official web site (www.lds.org) was launched in 1996, and the Church’s tremendously popular genealogy web site, FamilySearch (www.familysearch.org), was launched in 1999. In June 2000, all of the articles printed in English in Church magazines since 1971 were placed on www.lds.org where they could be viewed without charge by anyone with Internet access.⁴

While the Church has sent messages through various media, its organization, leaders, members, and culture have been the subjects of innumerable

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¹ BYU Studies 42, no. 3 & 4 (2003) 125

² BYU Studies 42, no. 3 & 4 (2003) 125

³ BYU Studies 42, no. 3 & 4 (2003) 125

⁴ BYU Studies 42, no. 3 & 4 (2003) 125
newspaper and magazine articles; radio, movie, and television stories; books; and Internet sites. This bibliography brings together writing and research documenting the ways that the Church has participated in the media over the years and the ways that it and its members have been portrayed by the media over time.

The Bibliography

Our goal as mass communications scholars was to compile a bibliography of academic scholarship completed to date about issues relating to Mormons and the media. The bibliography provides interested readers with an annotated list of academic studies of Mormons and media communications from 1898 to early 2003. The works, which are cited and indexed, identify both those questions that already have been addressed by scholars and many questions yet to be adequately explored. Each entry’s abstract provides information beyond titles, authors, and dates and should be useful to scholars compiling a literature review on focused topics.

We hope that the bibliography will increase awareness of and encourage the production of relevant research and perhaps, in time, contribute to a more substantive discourse on the role of media in a number of Latter-day Saint forums from classroom to family.

Criteria for Inclusion. The primary criteria for inclusion in the bibliography are that entries be works (1) of academic scholarship and (2) about the mass media and Mormons and/or the Church. With a few early exceptions, the bibliography specifically excludes popular publications or Church media publications, such as Church magazines. The term “media” is interpreted broadly to include many forms of mediated communications. Studies of Mormon-related literature generally are not included, nor are studies of stage plays and other performing arts. Many studies of other scholarly topics relating to Mormons have relied in part on media sources in their citations but are not included here because the focus of this bibliography is specifically on studies of Mormons and media-related subjects and issues. Note, however, that we have also included several references to other bibliographies relating generally to Mormon studies. These are included to assist scholars in finding other relevant works not specifically listed here.

Possible Omissions. While this is a selected bibliography, we fear we inadvertently have overlooked important works about Mormons and the media. We invite readers to contact us about appropriate missing works that should be added to the bibliography and about new works as they are published. The bibliography will be posted online at the BYU Department
of Communications web site (www.comms.byu.edu) under authors’ names and will be updated periodically.

**Organization and Analysis.** The bibliography is organized chronologically by decade, then chronologically by year within each decade, and finally alphabetically by author’s name for each year. The chronological presentation is helpful in visualizing the growth and shifting emphasis in scholarship relating to Mormons and the media over time, both in terms of the topics studied and of the number of studies in each decade (see table 1). We have also included lists of the works by author and by subject to further aid in searching the bibliography.

**Trends in Academic Studies on Mormons and the Media**

Analysis of the bibliography from a chronological perspective suggests five trends of academic studies regarding Mormons and the media. The trends are not exclusive to specific time periods; rather, they are cumulative in that each includes the focus of past studies but represents the introduction of a new focus (new topic, subject, unit of analysis) on academic studies of Mormons and the media.

**Bibliographic Era (1890–1910).** Little research was conducted by scholars about the media between 1890 and 1910. The term “mass media” was yet to join the American vernacular, radio and film were in early development, and television had not yet emerged.

Nevertheless, as the nineteenth century drew to a close, the steady flow of Church information products resulted in some systematic listings of media sources. Berrian (1898) published a catalogue of books, newspapers, and pamphlets treating Mormon topics. In 1909 a similar resource was created by the New York Public Library (“List of Works” 1909), which followed a bibliography of anti-Mormon works (“Pamphlets” 1906).

**Print History (1911–50).** During the first half of the twentieth century, much was being written about Mormons in newspapers and other periodicals. Studies of this media coverage, as well as of the nineteenth-century press as it related to Mormons, began to emerge. Media research of this period consists mainly of descriptions and analyses of the Mormon press...
and coverage in the secular press. Histories of the *Deseret News* (Penrose 1912), Latter-day Saint periodical literature (Smith 1921), the “Latter-day Saint press” (Merrill 1930), and the press in Illinois (Snider 1933) reflect an emerging belief that print media history broadens understanding of the larger question of how Mormons struggled to integrate with the larger society.

In this period, the fundamental idea emerged that significant historical events in Church history can be explained partly in terms of mass media. Banks (1950), for example, posits that the martyrdom of Joseph Smith was related to suppression of the *Nauvoo Expositor*. An earlier study by Mulder (1947) suggests that Nordic-language newspapers in Utah encouraged assimilation to both Mormonism and Americanism. Clark (1944) explores the idea that knowledge about “mental contacts” between Mormons and non-Mormons can be expanded through the study of newspapers, and Wolsey’s master’s thesis at Northwestern University contends that the growth of the Church is partly related to radio broadcasting (Wolsey 1949).

Richard L. Evans served as the spokesman, announcer, writer, and producer of *Music and the Spoken Word from Temple Square* from 1930 to 1971. Begun in 1925 and broadcast weekly, *Music and the Spoken Word* is the longest-running radio program in American history.
This Wolsey thesis is the first broadcast-related (rather than print-related) entry in the bibliography.

**Press Relations and Cultural Acceptance (1951–60).** While histories of newspapers and studies of periodicals continue in the 1950s, the phenomenon of public relations first appears during this period. Research on public relations coincides with the increased use of mass media in missionary work as well as the favorable relationship between President David O. McKay and the press.

Press relations and cultural acceptance studies work from the basic assumption of the power of the media to influence public opinion. The studies (such as Ward’s 1959 study of Mormons in textbooks and Morris’s 1958 analysis of references to Mormonism in general magazines) examine how mediated messages portray Mormons and how mass media can better establish a favorable image for the Church and attract converts. Jeppson (1955), for example, analyzes press relations of a Latter-day Saint mission in France, and in an “information survey” Mullen (1957) makes recommendations for improving Church public relations.

It is also during this period that media content analysis is first used to determine attitudes toward Mormonism. Sostrum (1960) attributes a favorable shift in “Gentile attitudes” to changes in images of Mormons in periodicals.

**Interdisciplinary Studies (1961–90).** Between 1961 and 1990, media research expands dramatically, in terms of both the number of studies and the number of research questions addressed (175 entries appear in this time period, compared with 32 entries for the thirty years preceding it). As the Church passed through the turbulent political climate of the 1960s and 1970s and as the number of Mormons and Mormon scholars increased, researchers addressed the topic of mass media and Mormons from a variety of new perspectives. A wide range of disciplines including law, the humanities, economics, music, film, broadcast, sociology, and women’s studies was applied to the study of Mormons and media, both in historical and contemporary contexts.

**Mormon Audience Analysis (1991–2000).** Prior to 1990, research focused primarily on mediated messages. These studies assume that the content of television programs, movies, newspaper articles, and so on held the key to understanding media effects (such as public attitudes toward Mormons). During the last decade of the twentieth century, however, the unit of analysis began to shift from media content to audience members, and studies on Mormon audience analysis began to emerge (see Hinch 1990). These studies assume that the most revealing sources of information about media and its effects are audience members themselves. Instead of relying on descriptions of media content to speculate about the effects of media...
on audiences, audience researchers ask, How do Mormons describe their media-related experiences in their own words? A number of studies (Stout 1994; Valenti and Stout 1996; Stout, Scott, and Martin 1996) reveal considerable diversity in media use among Mormons. Other recent studies also explore the factors contributing to media selection by Mormon audiences (see Wilson 1997, and Simmons 2002).

**Church Members and Mass Media**

There is an emerging interest in the ways that Mormons use and make meaning of the media in their personal lives. This interest essentially is the study of the effects of mass media on Mormon readers, listeners, and viewers. There also is a growing interest in the relationship between Mormons and the media. Leaders within the Church increasingly are concerned about media effects, and numerous sermons and articles on the subject continue to be delivered in general conference and to appear in Church publications. In addition to these warnings about the media, however, there also are invitations to *enjoy* mass media that educate and uplift.
Latter-day Saint ambivalence toward the media underscores the importance of research about media use and media literacy in Mormon culture.

David Whittaker, librarian of the Mormon collection in Brigham Young University’s Harold B. Lee Library, has issued a call to scholars to study books and other printed materials in order to explain and understand the Mormon experience. People become part of a web of community in which they find their identities by means of what they read, he says.\(^7\) The same can be said about other media of mass communications. We can better understand individuals and their cultures and communities when we discover what media they consume(d) because, in part, it gives us insight into the “information environment,” “the various levels of discourse at work in any given culture,” and the kinds of knowledge that were and are available to them.\(^8\) Whittaker suggests that to understand historical Mormon culture, we need to draw out the full meaning of how works were “received, understood, and used” by members.\(^9\) Again, this can be said of contemporary culture as well and of Church members’ consumption and use of all types of mass media.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

Beyond listing academic resources, this bibliography reflects the values, priorities, and debates of a subculture. These data can be studied from several perspectives.

The bibliography might be conceptualized and discussed by using basic communications models as tools of analysis. Lasswell, for example, describes the central question in communications research in a five-questions model: “Who says what in which channel to whom with what effect?”\(^10\) Similarly, Wilbur Schramm (often deemed to be the founder of the field of communications) describes the elements of the communications process in what is sometimes called the (simplified) SMCR model: source (the originator or sender of the communication), message (the content of the communication), channel (the particular medium used to convey the message, such as newspaper, radio, or Internet), and receiver (the destination of the communication: the readers, listeners, and viewers).\(^11\)

Many of the studies of Mormons and the media listed in this bibliography focus on the source (such as studies of particular newspapers and editors), and there are several studies on channels (such as studies of radio, film, and television). There are far fewer on receivers, inviting further research.

While all of the elements of the basic communications models are represented in the bibliography, studies of Mormons and the media have emphasized the “message” over the other elements identified by the five-questions and the SMCR models. That is, content-centered studies, such as
how Mormons are portrayed in media, outnumber those focusing on source, channel, receiver, and effects. Given the pervasive role of media in contemporary society, additional audience and effects research will be needed. What media do Mormons consume and why? How do Mormons throughout the world use the media? How does their media use conform to Church admonitions? How do Mormons negotiate issues relating to religious teachings in a secular media context? What is the role of the media in Mormon religious life? How do audiences outside the Church interpret and make use of Church-produced media?

The questions suggested by the basic communications models (and those addressed by many of the studies in the bibliography) often are somewhat narrow in scope. There is a need in studying Mormons and the media to address broader topics, such as those suggested by contemporary communications scholarship using cultural and critical approaches. Such studies might explore, for example, family rules, rituals, and cultures surrounding media; media-related meaning-making by Mormons (epistemological issues); the power and influence implications of media ownership by the Church; Mormon gender studies, ethnic studies, and minority studies in relationship to the media and broader cultures and subcultures; Mormons in larger cultural contexts (in the various international cultures in which they live) as represented in the media and as influenced by local and international media; comparative studies of Mormons and media in various cultural settings; questions about Mormons and popular culture; and engagement with philosophical and ontological questions about mass communications arising from the unique perspective of Latter-day Saint theology, foundational Latter-day Saint texts, and prophetic commentary.

Despite its already heavy representation in the bibliography, the study of mediated images of Mormons remains an important topic for future study. People form opinions about Mormons based on information available from a multiplicity of sources. As the Church grows, so will depictions of Mormons in a variety of media. Analyses of these portrayals in all forms of media (including the Internet) may allow better prediction as to how the Church will be accommodated by the larger society.

The bibliography is heavy on studies of print media, but thin on studies of Mormons and broadcast media. Such studies might include, for example, personalities, content, production organizations, institutional uses of broadcast media, Mormon audience uses of broadcast media, and broadcast media effects.

There is scant research about Church magazines. The magazines, their readers, their content, their impact, and their contribution to Mormon culture remain a vast potential field of inquiry.
The comprehensive history of the Church’s efforts to influence media coverage through its public affairs activities has yet to be written. These efforts have been both centralized and regionalized. Both levels need further study and analysis.

The bibliography focuses heavily on Utah-based media. More studies are needed on all aspects of Mormons and the media nationwide and, especially, worldwide.

The Internet and its relationship to Mormons, the Church, and Mormon/non-Mormon interaction is ripe for study from the perspectives of institutional uses, member uses, nonmember uses of official Mormon sites, anti-Mormon sites, content studies, impact/effect studies, and historical studies.

Arguably, the preponderance of rhetoric in the Church about media revolves around its use by youth and the potential negative effects and dangers of that use. It is surprising, therefore, that there are so few studies that specifically explore Mormon youth media use, the role of media in the lives of contemporary Mormon youths, meaning-making of media content, effects of media use, and the impact of media on Mormon youth culture.

Finally, the works represented in this bibliography largely are atheoretical. The literature has not begun to address questions that relate to theory, such as the ways in which the study of Mormons and the media is informed by theory and the ways in which theory might be informed by scholarship in this field.

Conclusion

The relationship between media and Mormon culture has not been fully studied. The reasons are unclear. What is quite certain, however, is that this type of research will be in high demand in the future. We are hopeful that this bibliography, which organizes relevant literature into a foundation for future study, will facilitate and accelerate such research efforts.

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2. Gordon B. Hinckley, as quoted in Rasmussen, “Computers and the Internet,” 278.


6. Gordon B. Hinckley points out a number of benefits of magazines, movies, and television programs:

   Let there be good magazines about the house, those which are produced by the Church and by others, which will stimulate their thoughts to ennobling concepts. Let them read a good family newspaper that they may know what is going on in the world. . . . When there is a good show in town, go to the theater as a family. Your patronage will give encouragement to those who wish to produce this type of entertainment. And use that most remarkable of all tools of communication, television, to enrich their lives. (Gordon B. Hinckley, “Opposing Evil,” Ensign 5 [November 1975]: 39)


Bibliography by Decade

1891–1900


1901–1910


1911–1920


Young, Levi E. 1913. “Mormonism in Picture.” *Young Woman's Journal* 24, no. 2:74–81. Discusses the power of film as a medium for spreading the story of the Church, as well as the creation of a historical movie detailing the early days of the Church. Begun in 1912, the movie was filmed by the Utah Moving Picture Company (in Los Angeles) and sanctioned by the First Presidency.

1921–1930


discontinued, and why—after being forced to move so many times—the Church felt it was important to have a free press with which to express their views.

1931–1940


———. 1932. “Early Printing in Utah Outside of Salt Lake City.” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 5:83–86. Attempts to set forth the scant knowledge of pioneer printing in Utah outside of Salt Lake City in hopes of receiving new information from authorities on local history.

———. 1933. “Pioneer Printing in Utah.” Reprint from the June issue of *National Printer Journalist.* L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Covers the history of printing in Utah from the first use (printing money) through several of the early newspapers, both pro- and anti-Mormon.


1941–1950

Clark, James R. 1944. “A Study of the Significance of the Newspaper in Mental Contacts between Mormons and Non-Mormons, 1824–1850.” Master’s thesis, Brigham Young University. Examines relationships between size and location of the Church membership in the United States and Great Britain during the period 1824–1850 and the “mental contacts” made between Church members and others as expressed in newspapers of the period.


Esplin, Ross S. 1949. “A Survey of Fiction Written by Mormon Authors and Appearing in Mormon Periodicals between 1900 and 1945.” Master’s thesis, Brigham Young University. A critical study of Latter-day Saint periodical fiction. Argues that such fiction does not make a significant contribution to the literature of the world due to its restrictiveness in purpose, theme, and appeal and its “superficiality.”


Wolsey, Heber G. 1949. “Religious Broadcasting by the LDS Church.” Master’s thesis, Northwestern University. Examines growth of the Church from six members in 1830 to more than one million members by the 1940s and relates this growth (in part) to the Church’s use of radio broadcasting.


1951–1960


Sudweeks, Joseph. 1955. Discontinued L.D.S. Periodicals. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University. Lists, in annotated bibliography format, the discontinued periodicals once published by and for the Church.


Mulder, William, and A. Russell Mortensen, eds. 1958. Among the Mormons: Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers. New York: Knopf. Chronicles the history of the Church and the settlement of Utah. Includes pieces written by Church leaders (Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and Sidney Rigdon) and observers—both unknown and well-recognized (Samuel Clemens, Charles Dickens, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Wallace Stegner).

as presented in high school and college textbooks and impressions left by textbook authors.


1961–1970


publishers and editors who managed to keep Wasatch County’s weekly newspaper circulating more than seventy-five years without missing an issue.

Jacobson, Pearl F. 1964. “Utah’s First Radio Station.” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 32, no. 2:30–44. Reviews the birth of KZN, the first radio station in Utah.


Heller, Luther L. 1966. “A Study of the Utah Newspaper War, 1870–1900.” Master’s thesis, Brigham Young University. Describes and analyzes the editorial conflict between the *Deseret News* and the *Salt Lake Tribune*. The *News* wanted the Church to be a dominating factor in daily community life while the *Tribune* wanted to reform the state.


Jennings, Warren A. 1967. “Factors in the Destruction of the Mormon Press in Missouri, 1833.” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 35, no. 1:56–76. Analyzes how the *Evening and Morning Star*, introduced into Jackson County as an instrument for the propagation of the Church, became a focal point of gentile opposition to Latter-day Saint settlement in the area.


Stewart, Douglas C. 1968. “A Comparative Analysis of Three Television Programs to Determine Their Effectiveness as Means for Promulgating Mormonism.” Master’s thesis, Brigham Young University. Studies the effectiveness of Latter-day Saint television programming and what innovations could be used to improve the missionary effort.


**1971–1980**

because of the Tribune’s relationship with the Deseret News and other Church issues.


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Arrington, Leonard J. 1974. “Mormonism: Views from Without and Within.” BYU Studies 14, no. 2:140–53. Discusses how the Church hoped to establish a favorable image through missionary work, tracts, and other literature and how anti-Mormons worked to present an unfavorable one through their own publications.

Casterline, Gail F. 1974. “In the Toils or Onward for Zion: Images of the Mormon Woman, 1852–1890.” Master’s thesis, Utah State University. Compares the media portrayal of plural wives with the way those women described themselves. Uses sources available between 1852 and 1890 to support conclusions.

Cracroft, Richard H. 1974. “Distorting Polygamy for Fun and Profit: Artemus Ward and Mark Twain among the Mormons.” BYU Studies 14, no. 2:272–88. Discusses the use of Mormon oddities, such as polygamy, by humorists of the time, as well as Twain’s use of Ward’s material and approach to mocking the Church.


Norton, Walter A. 1976. “Joseph Smith as a Jacksonian Man of Letters: His Literary Development as Evidenced in His Newspaper Writings.” Master’s thesis, Brigham Young University. Studies the development of Joseph Smith’s writing as shown through numerous newspaper articles. The author refers to this development in terms of the Jacksonian era, which symbolized the rise of the common man and the triumph of democracy.


Eid, Leroy V. 1977. “Puck Depicts the American West.” *Arizona and the West* 19, no. 4:347–62. Describes how Puck, the leading humor magazine in Gilded Age America, embedded western stereotype images of such subjects as the Mormons.


Parkin, Max H. 1978. Contemporary Accounts of the Latter-day Saints and Their Leaders Appearing in Early Missouri Newspapers, 1831–1839 (Including Select Non-Missouri Newspaper Articles by Missourians and Articles in Missouri Newspapers after 1839 about the Mormon Experience in Missouri). L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Collects accounts of Latter-day Saints and their leaders. Includes a bibliography of the contents of the collection and reproductions of the actual news stories.


printing in the Church and an archaeological investigation into the location of the *Times and Seasons* in Nauvoo (1839–46).


Gottlieb, Robert, and Peter Wiley. 1979. “Static in Zion: Long Stuck with a Churchly Image, the Mormon Media Reach Out for the Young—and Are Called Back by the Elders.” *Columbia Journalism Review* 18, no. 2:59–63. Discusses Bonneville International Corporation, a major media conglomerate, and the tension between the Church’s stress on the moral mission of the media and the equally strong pressure to make its media operations pay off.

Haroldsen, Edwin O., and K. Harvey. 1979. “The Diffusion of ‘Shocking’ Good News.” *Journalism Quarterly* 56, no. 4:771–75. Studies the diffusion of news about the Church’s announcement concerning the priesthood revealed that “shocking” good news can ignite the interpersonal communications system, that news has more credibility when obtained from the media than when obtained interpersonally, and that people use mass media to verify news obtained interpersonally.


White, O. Kendall, and Daryl C. White. 1980. “Abandoning an Unpopular Policy: An Organizational Analysis of the Decision Granting the Mormon Priesthood to Blacks.” *Sociological Analysis* 41, no. 3:231–45. Uses an open-systems model of organizational behavior to explain the Church’s decision to open its Priesthood to Blacks. Among the most salient environmental factors is adverse publicity from the media.

1981–1990


Cragun, LeAnn. 1981. “Mormons and History: In Control of the Past.” Ph.D. diss., University of Hawaii. Analyzes the Church as a case study of the sociopolitical phenomenon of groups attempting to control their past and justify their actions in the present. Censorship of publications is discussed.

Lyman, Edward L. 1981. “The Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood.” Ph.D. diss., University of California at Riverside. Addresses the successful effort to alter the Church’s image in the nation’s press as Utah attempted to obtain statehood.


Miller, Heather R. 1981. “Conversion, the Mass Media, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” Ph.D. diss., United States International University. Addresses the importance of mass media on religious conversion. Investigates the use of mass media in the Church and determines its relationship to conversion numbers.


Whitaker, Wetzel O. 1983. *Pioneering with Film: A History of Church and Brigham Young University Films.* Provo, Utah: n.p. Provides a personal history of Latter-day Saint motion pictures as told by Whitaker, head of the Motion Picture Department at BYU for twenty-two years.


Cracroft, Richard H. 1984. “‘Ten Wives Is All You Need’: Artemus, Twain and the Mormons—Again.” *Western Humanities Review* 38, no. 3:197–211. Reprises Cracroft’s first article on the subject and a discussion of similarities between Ward’s and Twain’s approaches to poking fun at the early Church.


Roof, Wade C. 1984. “American Religion in Transition: A Review and Interpretation of Recent Trends.” Social Compass 31, no. 2–3:273–89. Examines new and older religious groups, noting the increasing use of radio and television by fundamentalist church groups such as Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Mormons.


Appleton, Marianne, and A. Garr Cranney. 1985. “Reading Habits of Church-Active LDS Women.” BYU Studies 25, no. 3:47–53. Tells of active Latter-day Saint women who follow the encouragement of Church leaders to read the scriptures and Church periodicals.


image of the ideal Latter-day Saint woman. Based on authoritative, published discourses (in papers, magazines, and journals) selected from 1830 through 1984.


Anderson, John R. 1986. “American Women and Conservative Religion in the Post-War Decades: Southern Baptist and Mormon Women’s Magazines, 1945–1975.” Ph.D. diss., Washington State University. Discusses how the magazines for women of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Church during the three decades after World War II reflected both the theologies of the two denominations and the time period in which they were written.


D’Arc, James V. 1986. “Two Articles: Darryl F. Zanuck’s Brigham Young: A Film in Context, and, ‘So Let It Be Written . . .’: The Creation of Cecil B. DeMille’s Autobiography.” Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University. Deals with the social context of the late 1930s and what the motion picture Brigham Young meant not only to the leadership of the Church at the time, but also to those in the motion picture business.

Brigham Young University. Discusses how the Liahona: The Elder’s Journal, the official publication for all the Latter-day Saint missions of North America for nearly four decades, was an effective aid to missionary work and a source of edification and comfort to missionaries and members.

Gottlieb, Robert, and Peter Wiley. 1986. America’s Saints: The Rise of Mormon Power. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. Written by two investigative journalists, this interpretive history of the Church’s rise to power and prominence after World War II. Special emphasis is given to the mechanisms the Church has used to reach this level of power.


Sataty, Nechama. 1986. “Utopian Visions and Their Critics: Press Reactions to American Utopias in the Antebellum Era.” Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania. Studies four major communitarian groups, including Mormons, through newspapers and magazines (1820s through 1840s) to assess their significance to American society.


Shupe, Anson D., and John Heinerman. 1988. “The Mormon Communications Empire.” In Money and Power in the New Religions. Edited by J. T. Richardson. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press. Examines the “Mormon communications empire” for the purpose of explaining how modes of mass communication can be used to reshape the evolution of religious groups, affecting the ability to increase proselytizing and the degree of public tolerance.

Smith, Wayne P. 1988. “Annotated Scripture Citation Index to Three LDS Presidents in Three Official LDS Periodicals, 1970–1985.” Ed.D. diss., Brigham Young University. Identifies several types of indexes to books and periodicals and then focuses on scripture citation indexing of religious periodicals. Develops an exhaustive annotated scripture citation index to a selected body of Latter-day Saint periodical literature that could be used as a model for further indexing.


D’Arc, James V. 1989. “Darryl F. Zanuck’s Brigham Young: A Film in Context.” BYU Studies 29, no. 1:15–33. Discusses how the film Brigham Young reflected the Latter-day Saint culture and national opinion in the United States during 1940, the year it was first released.


1991–2000


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Holzapfel, Richard Neitzel. 1992. “Stereographs and Stereotypes: A 1904 View of Mormonism.” Journal of Mormon History 18, no. 2:155–76. Discusses a stereograph (3-D photo) tour of Latter-day Saint sites, produced at the turn of the twentieth century, as one of the only positive representations of the Church at that time.


Isakson, Janika. 1993. Female Arguments: An Examination of the Utah Woman’s Suffrage Debates of 1880 and 1895 as Represented in Opposing Utah Women’s Newspapers. A University Scholar project, Brigham Young University. Available in the Harold B. Lee Library. Contrasts and compares the rhetoric used to enact social reform by the Anti-Polygamy Standard and the Woman’s Exponent in the woman suffrage movement.


Nibley, Paul. 1993. “How Mormons See Themselves in Film.” Sunstone 16, no. 5:14–17. Argues that Latter-day Saints’ attempts to view themselves and accept portrayals of themselves in media as a “Brady Bunch family” keeps Church members from examining real conflicts in their lives and finding real solutions.


Copeland, David A. 1995. “The Mormon Problem and the Press.” In Outsiders in Nineteenth-Century Press History: Multicultural Perspectives. Edited by Frankie Hutton and Barbara S. Reed. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press. Examines the ways that the Church increased its outsider status and was attacked by the American press when polygamy was unveiled as a religious practice.


Ostler, Craig J. 1996. “Nauvoo Saints in the Newspapers of the 1840s.” Nauvoo Journal 8, no. 1:30–33. Analyzes newspaper coverage of the Church and its members during the Nauvoo years.


Shipps, Jan. 1996. “The Neglected Story of Mormonism Today: What Mike Wallace Missed.” Sunstone 19, no. 3:82–86. Argues that Wallace’s interview of President Gordon B. Hinckley missed significant matters that are critically important to the story of Mormonism while he tried to illustrate that Church members are not “weird.”


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their education and entertainment aspects but also condemned for their secular and potentially corrupting aspects.


Xu, Shi. 1996. “The Images of the Chinese in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1855–1882.” Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University. Relates how the newspapers and journals affiliated with the Church were consistently sympathetic to the Chinese. The friendly attitudes of the publications came from both their religious beliefs and the shared sense of persecution.

Armstrong, Richard N. 1997. “Researching Mormonism: General Conference as Artifactual Gold Mine.” Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 30, no. 3:151–68. Discusses how records from general conference, which was first broadcast on radio in 1924 and on television in 1949, provide researchers with the most significant source of authoritative Latter-day Saint leader rhetoric since the organization of the Church.

Givens, Terryl L. 1997. The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy. New York: Oxford University Press. Addresses nineteenth-century depictions and perceptions of the Church, claiming that the fear inspired by “Mormons” stemmed from their “demystification” of Christianity, and studies how the representations of Church members in popular fiction affects the religion’s relationship with American society.

Hafen, Thomas K. 1997. “City of Saints, City of Sinners: The Development of Salt Lake City as a Tourist Attraction, 1869–1900.” Western Historical Quarterly 28, no. 3:342–78. Shows how the mass marketing efforts of transportation, media, and tourism enterprises endeavored to create images of Salt Lake City according to their respective conceptions of their audiences.
Rather, Susan C. 1997. “Film Propaganda and the Christian Way of Knowing the Truth: A Look at LDS Documentary Film Making.” Master’s thesis, Brigham Young University. Discusses how the tension between apparently conflicting theological mandates in the gospel of Jesus Christ, as understood by the Church, is reflected in content and stylistic elements of Latter-day Saint documentary films.


Smith, Craig S. 1998. “The Curious Meet the Mormons: Images from Travel Narratives, 1850s and 1860s.” *Journal of Mormon History* 24, no. 2:155–81. Examines eighteen selected travel narratives written in or translated into English that detail visits to Salt Lake City between 1849 and 1867 and were printed between 1851 and 1872.


Published Social Science Literature on the Mormons, by Armand L. Mauss and Dynette Ivie Reynolds). Urbana: University of Illinois Press. Provides an indexed bibliography of Latter-day Saint history, including subject headings related to communication studies: publications, public relations, and media and public images of Mormons and/or the Church.


Marsh, W. Jeffrey. 2000. “When the Press Meets the Prophet.” In Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book. Discusses the evolution of media relations since the sustaining of Gordon B. Hinckley as President of the Church, as well as a listing of twenty-five interviews granted by President Hinckley to a variety of media outlets.

Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century. 2000. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book. Proceedings of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium. Traces events that have marked the unprecedented growth and expansion of the Church during its 170 years of existence. Many of the included essays emphasize media-related topics.


Saunders, Richard L. 2000. Printing in Deseret: Mormons, Economy, Politics, and Utah’s Incunabula, 1849–1851. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press. Presents a history and descriptive bibliography. Includes a bibliographic history of the press, chronicling more than fifty of the earliest printed documents, or incunabula, created during the initial settlement years.

3, 4, 5, and 15 specifically address the relationship of Mormonism to the press and mainstream America. Addresses the role of media in shaping Latter-day Saint image, the radical changes brought about by Church media efforts, the perception of Latter-day Saint people in America, the Southern Baptist Conference held in Salt Lake City, and a review of Latter-day Saint tradition and its relation to American mainstream religions.


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Takagi, Shinji. 2001. “Mormons in the Press: Reactions to the 1901 Opening of the Japan Mission.” *BYU Studies* 40 no. 1:41–75. Addresses the explosion of media attention (over 160 pieces) covering the first four missionaries in the Japan Mission and suggests that the coverage both served to spread knowledge of the Church and to provide a historical and social context for missionary work.


Scott, David W. 2003. “Mormon ‘Family values’ versus Television: An Analysis of the Discourse of Mormon Couples Regarding Television and Popular Media Culture.” *Critical studies in Media Communication* 20, no. 3:317–33. Examines the readings of television texts from the perspective of audience members who are, because of their religious practices, ideologically situated to the right of much that is offered on television. The findings in this case are consistent with Stuart Hall’s notion that individuals bring contradictory and conflicting discourse into their readings of media texts.
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