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A Century of Seminary

The Granite Seminary in Salt Lake City opened in 1912.
Courtesy of Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

Courtesy of LDS Church Archives

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Over 100 years ago the first released-time seminary program was launched at Granite High School in Salt Lake City, Utah.[1] Begun largely as an experiment by a single stake, the program has since grown into a worldwide system of religious education, bringing gospel instruction to young members of the Church throughout the entire world. From small beginnings the seminary program, and its collegiate counterpart—institute of religion—grew to become the primary educational entities in the Church, with a larger enrollment than any other LDS educational venture and a wider reach than almost any educational organization worldwide. Today the seminary and institute programs teach over 700,000 students in 143 different countries through the efforts of nearly 50,000 full-time, part-time, and volunteer teachers and administrators.[2]

How did seminary grow from a grassroots effort by one stake into the global venture it is today? Like any organization, an exploration of the origins of the seminary and institute programs greatly illuminates not only how it came to be, but also its goals and ideals. In 1977 Elder Boyd K. Packer commented, "In the history of the Church there is no better illustration of the

prophetic preparation of this people than the beginnings of the seminary and institute program. These programs were started when they were nice but were not critically needed. They were granted a season to flourish and to grow into a bulwark for the Church. They now become a godsend for the salvation of modern Israel in a most challenging hour."[3]

An attempt to cover the entire first century of seminary must by necessity paint only the broad strokes of the portrait, but even from a simple outline emerges a compelling story of adaptation, innovation, and revelation.

The 1910s—A Simple Beginning

Many complex historical forces led to the creation of the seminary program. But in the simplest sense, the program began in the simple setting of a family home evening. Joseph F. Merrill, a newly called member of the Granite Utah Stake presidency, sat listening to his wife, Annie, tell stories from the Bible and the Book of Mormon to their children before they went to bed. "Her list of these stories were so long that her husband often marveled at their number, and frequently sat as spellbound as were the children as she skillfully related them."[4] When Brother Merrill later asked his wife where she had learned all of the stories, she replied that she had learned most of them in a theology class conducted by Brother James E. Talmage at the Salt Lake Academy, a Church-owned school she had attended as a young girl. Deeply moved by his wife's effectiveness as a teacher, Brother Merrill immediately began contemplating how other children attending public schools could receive the same kind of spiritual training as his wife. He became possessed with the idea of providing students with a religious experience as part of the school day, regardless of what kind of school they attended. A few weeks later he presented the rough idea for a new religious education program to the Granite Stake presidency.[5]

Of course, while this simple experience captures some of the revelatory forces leading to the creation of seminary, it must be acknowledged that the seminary program was not created in a vacuum. The desire to obtain education, particularly religious education, was a vital part of Latter-day Saint thought from the beginning. Revelations to the Prophet Joseph Smith admonished members to receive education (see D&C 88:117–26) and proclaimed that "the glory of God is intelligence" (D&C 93:36). From the beginning spiritual and secular topics were taught hand in hand among the Saints, illustrated by the wide array of secular topics taught in the early movements of their primary religious structure, the Kirtland Temple.[6] As the Church grew and

moved to the Western United States, education remained a constant within the faith.

As the nineteenth century progressed, the Church took steps to orga-

Courtesy of Annie Whitton

Joseph and Annie Merrill with their children, about 1912.

nize its educational efforts. In 1888 the Church organized a General Board of Education to supervise a system of its own schools. A letter from the First Presidency explained the need for this effort: "We feel that the time has arrived when the proper education of our children should be taken in hand by us as a people."[7] The leaders of the Church worried about children attending public schools with no instruction in religious principles. The educational efforts launched a system of Church academies spread throughout the Intermountain West.[8] It was at one of these schools that Annie Merrill received her theological training from Brother James E. Talmage and other gifted teachers. To meet the needs of students unable to attend the Church academies, Church leaders also initiated a movement of religion classes, intended to supplement public education by providing religious training outside of school hours.[9] Both systems enjoyed success, but as the number of public schools grew, it became increasingly difficult for LDS families to support both systems. Eventually, the number of students enrolled in the academies began to decline. By 1911, the same time Joseph Merrill began

thinking about a new system, the number of students in Utah public schools surpassed the enrollment in Church academies for the first time.[10]

Joseph F. Merrill, an energetic young professor at the University of Utah, wanted to find a way to make Church education work alongside public education rather than in competition with it. Possibly inspired by a religious seminary he had seen in Chicago during his graduate education, Brother Merrill struck upon the idea of building a separate structure near a public school where students could attend religion classes during their regular school day. This plan won approval among the Granite Stake board of education and the Church Board of Education. In a subsequent meeting with the local public school board, Joseph Merrill arranged for students to be released during school time, and even to receive school credit for their study in biblical topics.[11]

The next task facing Brother Merrill was the selection of the right teacher for the venture. In a letter outlining the qualities wanted for the position, he wrote:

> May I suggest it is the desire of the presidency of the stake to have a strong young man who is properly qualified to do the work in a most satisfactory manner. By young we do not necessarily mean a teacher who is young in years, but a man who is young in his feelings, who loves young people, who delights in their company, who can command their respect and admiration and exercise a great influence over them. . . . We want a man who is a thorough student, one who will not teach in a perfunctory way, but who will enliven his instructions by a strong, winning personality and give evidence of a thorough understanding of and scholarship in the things he teaches. . . . A teacher is wanted who is a leader and who will be universally regarded as the inferior of no teacher in the high school.[12]

The man ultimately selected for the task was Thomas J. Yates, a member of the Granite Stake high council.[13] He held no specific expertise in religion, nor was he a career educator. His only experience in teaching came 20 years earlier during a one-year stint at the Church academy in Millard County, Utah. A graduate of Cornell University, at the time of his call Brother Yates was working as an engineer on the construction of the nearby Murray power plant. But Thomas Yates did excel as a disciple. He served faithfully on the stake high council and in a number of important missionary assignments. Frank Taylor, the president of the Granite Stake, once commented, "Brother Yates always reminds me of Joseph who was sold into Egypt; he is a tower of purity and strength."[14]

Courtesy of Church History Library

Thomas J. Yates, the first seminary teacher, pictured about 1901.

With the right teacher selected, Brother Merrill and Brother Yates set about working out the details of the new venture. They made the vital decision to center the class around the scriptures. Merrill even negotiated with the local public school board to arrange two courses for high school credit—a class on the Old Testament and another on the New Testament.

A third course, offered without credit, combined the study of the Book of Mormon and Church history.[15] Brother Yates met with the faculty of Granite High School several times to secure full cooperation. During the same time, President Frank Taylor secured a $2,500 loan from Zion's Savings Bank for the construction of a building near the high school. Construction on the first seminary building began just a few weeks before school started. The finished structure consisted of three rooms: an office, a cloak room, and a classroom. The classroom itself had a blackboard, armrest seats, and a furnace for heat. There were no lights. The only textbooks were the Bible and the Book of Mormon. The seminary's entire library consisted of a Bible dictionary belonging to Brother Yates. Students made their own maps of the Holy Land, North America, Mesopotamia, and Arabia.[16]

The first class in the fall of 1912 consisted of about 70 students.[17] Many students were unable to take seminary the first year because the building wasn't finished until three weeks into the school year![18] For the entire first year, Thomas Yates spent the morning working at the Murray power plant; then he rode his horse to the seminary to teach during the last two periods of the day.[19] In a 1950 interview he described how the class operated that first year:

> Students were asked to prepare a whole chapter in the Bible and then report to the class. Then the class would discuss it.
>
> No textbooks were used.
>
> The students did not have any form of recreation, there were no parties, no dances, no class affairs or anything in recreation to deviate from the regular pattern of things.[20]

Thomas Yates taught for only one year. President Taylor asked him to return for the second year, but the strain of traveling back and forth from the Murray power plant proved to be too much, and he declined. As his replacement, Brother Yates recommended Guy C. Wilson, a professional educator who had recently moved to Salt Lake City from Colonia Juárez.[21]

Brother Wilson later commented that it was generally felt that the lack of funding and facilities had prevented Brother Yates from giving the work a longer trial. Despite the difficulties, the new venture had already begun to have an impact. Nearly a century later, President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency commented on the impact of the first class at Granite Seminary. Feeling overwhelmed as the newly appointed Deputy Commissioner of Church Education, Brother Eyring recalled:

> My assignment to help such a vast number of teachers seemed overwhelming until someone handed me a small roll book. It was for the first class of seminary taught in the Church. It was for the school year 1912–13. . . .
>
> In that roll book was the name of Mildred Bennion. She was 16 years old that year. Thirty-one years later she would become my mother. She was the daughter of a man we would today call "less active." Her mother was left a widow the fall of the year after that first seminary class began. She raised and supported my mother and five other children alone on a small farm. Somehow that one seminary teacher cared enough about her and prayed fervently enough over that young girl that the Spirit put the gospel down into her heart.
>
> That one teacher blessed tens of thousands because he taught just one girl in a crowd of 70.[22]

Granite remained the only seminary in the Church until 1915 when the Box Elder Seminary in Brigham City, Utah, opened with Abel S. Rich as the teacher.[23] Throughout the remainder of the decade the seminary system began to pick up momentum, with more and more seminaries established throughout Utah, Idaho, and Arizona. By the end of the decade there were a total of 20 seminaries in operation.[24]

Seminary also continued to gain legitimacy as an educational entity. In January 1916, the Utah State Board of Education officially approved high school credit for Old and New Testament studies in the seminaries.[25] As the decade continued, seminaries began to emerge as a viable alternative to the academy system, which continued to be eclipsed by the rapid expansion of public schools. President Joseph F. Smith felt the academy system had reached the limits of its expansion and confronted the reality that the Church would "have to trim our educational sails to the financial winds."[26] With the academies becoming too expensive to maintain, the seminaries offered a method of teaching the scriptures to the youth of the Church in a less expensive way that could reach more students than the Church academies.

The 1920s—Seminary Moves to the Forefront

In 1920 the hierarchy of the Church's educational program was reorganized. David O. McKay was appointed as Commissioner of Church Education. Adam S. Bennion, a former principal of Granite High School, was appointed as Church Superintendent of Education.[27] By the early 1920s, 90 percent of the secondary students in Utah attended public schools. In March 1920 the Church education commission proposed the closure or transfer to state control of nearly all the remaining Church academies and called for a major expansion of the seminary program to meet the needs of the youth in the

Church.[28] In the years after the organization of the academy system, Church members grew more comfortable with public education, and now seminary accorded LDS students a chance to study the scriptures alongside the secular subjects taught in the high schools. With the closure of most of the academies, the Church moved to focus its efforts on the kind of education only the Church could provide—religious training.

With the majority of the academies closing, the number of seminaries grew at an explosive rate during the 1920s. The number of operating seminaries grew from 20 to 81 by the end of the decade alone.[29] The change from the academy system to the seminaries did not mean Church leaders felt the seminaries could completely replace the academies. Superintendent Bennion worried that "under our present system our seminary work is too theoretical. Indeed it is practically all instruction and no action—no application."[30] The superintendent wanted to raise the seminaries to a more professional level and ensure greater cooperation with the priesthood leaders of the Church.[31] With these goals in mind, he began to raise the academic standards for seminary, and he initiated programs for training teachers.

One of the first changes Superintendent Bennion made was to initiate a summer training school for seminary teachers. Beginning in 1920 seminary teachers were called together to standardize course outlines. Prior to this time, the scriptures served as the textbooks in seminary courses. Superintendent Bennion introduced the first textbooks used alongside the scriptures. In 1921 several General Authorities, including James E. Talmage, Melvin J. Ballard, Joseph Fielding Smith, George F. Richards, and Anthony W. Ivins delivered lectures to the teachers.[32] Beginning in 1926 school was held at Aspen Grove in Provo Canyon. Classes were held for six weeks with the majority of the teachers living in tents. One teacher fondly recalled his experience in the mountains: "The total teaching force numbered about ninety. We had one building used for both classwork and as a study hall. . . . Most of the group engaged in playing softball and volleyball for afternoon recreation. . . . Friendships made during that summer became warm and enduring. . . . I felt close to my Maker and awed by the majesty of His creations."[33]

In 1926 new questions arose over the future of education in the Church. At a meeting of the Church Board of Education held in February 1926, Superintendent Bennion submitted a report which noted that the per capita cost of educating a student at a Church school was $204.97 per year compared to $23.73 for a seminary student. The report pointedly asked, "Does

the Church receive benefit in returns from an 8 to 1 investment in Church Schools as against Seminaries?"[34] Adam S. Bennion called for a full withdrawal from the field of secular education and for the Church to focus its resources exclusively on religious education. Since this move would mean the closure of all the Church colleges, Superintendent Bennion proposed the creation of "collegiate seminaries" to meet the needs of LDS college students. His plan was to "have at the University . . . a strong man who could draw students to him and whom they could consult personally and counsel with such a man would be of infinite value."[35] The first school considered for the new venture was the University of Idaho in Moscow.[36]

A few months later, in October 1926, the First Presidency met with James Wyley Sessions,[37] who had recently returned from a seven-year term as a mission president in South Africa. Physically exhausted and financially destitute by his missionary service, Brother Sessions was meeting with the First Presidency in hopes of securing a position in the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company. In the middle of the meeting, President Charles W. Nibley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, stopped speaking in midsentence, turned to Church President Heber J. Grant and abruptly announced, "Heber, we're making a mistake! I never felt very good about Brother Sessions going into the sugar business, he may not like it. There's something else for him." After a moment of silence, President Nibley looked directly at Brother Sessions and said, "He's the man to send up to the University of Idaho to take care of our boys and girls that are up there and to see what the Church ought to do for our college students who are attending state universities." Brother Sessions was not immediately enthusiastic about this new call and responded, "Oh no! Here, I've been home just twelve days today, since we arrived from more than seven years in the mission system, are you calling me on another mission?" President Grant spoke next saying, "No, no Brother Sessions, we're just offering you a wonderful professional opportunity."

Years later Brother Sessions recalled his conflicted feelings upon leaving the meeting, "I went, crying nearly all the way. I didn't want to do it. But just a few days later our baggage was checked to Moscow, Idaho, and we went to Moscow, Idaho (laughs) and there started the LDS Institutes of Religion."[38]

J. Wyley Sessions was an unlikely choice for the new venture. He had no background in formal education, no experience with the seminary system, and no advanced degrees. He had attended a university, but his degree was in agriculture. When leaving for Idaho, the only instruction he received from

President Grant was, "Brother Sessions, go up there and see what we ought to do for the boys and girls who attend state universities and the Lord bless you."[39] Arriving in Moscow, Wyley Sessions was met with a mixed reception. Local Church leaders had been pleading with the Church Board of Education for years to send someone to teach religion. The young students at the school welcomed him warmly.[40] Nonmembers in the community viewed the new teacher with suspicion. A local committee was even appointed to ensure that Brother Sessions didn't "Mormonize" the university![41] Despite his initial hesitation, J. Wyley Sessions dove into his assignment with gusto. He joined the local Chamber of Commerce, the Kiwanis Club, and even enrolled at the university, seeking a master's degree to provide himself with the academic credentials to teach on the collegiate level.[42] Quick to laughter, and with a perpetual smile on his face (his nickname from his students was "Smiley Wyley"),[43] he quickly began making friends for the Church.

Back in Salt Lake City, Superintendent Adam S. Bennion resigned and was replaced by Joseph F. Merrill, who received the title of Commissioner of Church Education. Sixteen years after the creation of the Granite Seminary, Commissioner Merrill received the chance to see his ideas implemented at a university level. Through their correspondence, Brother Sessions and Commissioner Merrill worked out the philosophical foundations of the new program. Remembering back to his graduate education in the East, Commissioner Merrill wanted the new venture to serve as a bridge between the secular teachings of the university and the truths of the gospel. In his mind, the purpose of Brother Sessions's work was to "enable our young people attending the colleges to make the necessary adjustments between the things they have been taught in the Church and the things they are learning in the university, to enable them to become firmly settled in their faith as members of the Church."[44] Commissioner Merrill, a scientist by profession, wanted institute to be designed specifically to allow the reconciliation of faith and reason. To this end, he concluded:

> Personally, I am convinced that religion is as reasonable as science; that religious truths and scientific truths nowhere are in conflict; that there is one great unifying purpose extending throughout all creation; that we are living in a wonderful, though at the present time deeply mysterious, world; and that there is an all-wise, all-powerful Creator back of it all. Can this same faith be developed in the minds of all our collegiate and university students? Our collegiate institutes are established as means to this end.[45]

J. Wyley Sessions also drew on the university faculty for help in creating the new venture. Dr. Jay G. Eldridge, a nonmember professor of German and dean of the faculty, even suggested that Brother Sessions should call the new building the Latter-day Saint Institute of Religion. His intention was that other congregations would build similar structures and name them the Methodist Institute of Religion, and so forth.[46] Brother Sessions, liking the name, sent the request to Commissioner Merrill in Salt Lake City, who approved the official name in April 1928.[47] A few days later a letter arrived from Commissioner Joseph F. Merrill addressed "to the Director of the Latter-day Saint Institute of Religion—Moscow, Idaho," making the name official.[48]

Courtesy of L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, BYU

The first institute building in Moscow, Idaho, shortly after its completion.

Brother Sessions designed the first institute building to be "a church home away from home."[49] Not just a class building, it also featured a reception room, a chapel, a ballroom, a library, and a serving kitchen. The entire second floor of the building held 11 nicely furnished dormitory rooms, capable of accommodating 22 male students. The exterior of the building consisted of Tudor Gothic style of architecture, corresponding with the other buildings at the university.[50] Wyley Sessions believed that obtaining the funds to build the building was a minor miracle in and of itself, especially over the objections

of Commissioner Merrill, whom Brother Sessions later jokingly called "the most economical, conservative General Authority of this dispensation."[51]

The Moscow Institute building was dedicated on September 25, 1928, by President Charles W. Nibley.[52] It was fitting that President Nibley dedicated the building, since it was his inspiration that had sent J. Wyley Sessions to Moscow nearly two years earlier. Commissioner Merrill and other Church dignitaries also attended. In just a few short years, the institute came to be widely respected on the campus. The institute was visited by others hoping to fashion similar facilities for other denominations. Ernest O. Holland, president of Washington State College, visited the building several times and remarked to several gatherings of educators that the institute program came nearer to solving the problem of religious education for college students than any other program he knew of.[53]

After a successful start to the work, Brother and Sister Sessions departed from Moscow in 1929, moving to Pocatello, Idaho, to begin another institute program there. By this time, a second institute program had already been launched in Logan, Utah, with W. W. Henderson as the first teacher.[54] J. Wyley Sessions himself went on to found another institute in Laramie, Wyoming, and began work on yet another in Flagstaff, Arizona, before he received a call to serve as the president of the mission home (the early forerunner to modern Missionary Training Centers) in Salt Lake City.[55] Explaining the value of the institute program, he remarked:

> Religion is practical in life and living. It is not theory, but is absolutely necessary to a complete and well-rounded education. There can be no complete education without religious training. It must not, therefore, be crowded out, but a place for it must be left or made in an educational program and it must be kept alive, healthy, and growing.[56]

The 1930s—Charting the Course

The decade of the 1930s started with a bang for the seminary program. On January 7, 1930, the Utah state inspector of high schools, Isaac L. Williamson, published a scathing report on the relationship between public high schools and the seminaries. The report was printed in full two days later in the *Salt Lake Tribune,* taking up an entire page in extremely small print.[57] Isaac Williamson, a non-Mormon originally from Oklahoma, had served for nearly 20 years in Utah education, and now leveled a serious attack against the legality of the seminary program. His report brought up rumors of sectarian teaching

in for-credit classes—the academic consequences of releasing students from school time—and the state's cost for the program. On a fundamental level, Mr. Williamson questioned the very constitutionality of the seminaries, seeing them as an affront to the separation of Church and state. In Williamson's view, the seminaries and the public schools were "thought of as one institution"[58] in the mind of the public.

Some of Mr. Williamson's accusations were petty. For example, he charged that seminaries were costing the state tax dollars because high schools and seminaries were next to each other and students riding buses were using state funds to attend a seminary.[59] Other charges were more serious. For example, Mr. Williamson gave examples of specific LDS doctrine taught in classes where credit was offered. Williamson's accusations included reports of seminary teachers stating that the location of the Garden of Eden was in Missouri, discussing the the superiority of the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, and teaching about the physical translation of Enoch and the city of Zion.[60]

Commissioner Merrill responded publicly to all of the report's charges saying, "Was not the writer of the report straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel? How, for example, does the existence of a seminary near any high school add one penny to the cost of transporting pupils to and from the high school?"[61] At the Church's April 1930 general conference, President Heber J. Grant called for a public vote to determine the future of the seminaries.[62] In May 1930, after months of preparation, Commissioner Merrill appeared before the Utah State Board with the following argument:

> The adoption of the Committee's suggestions means the death of the seminary, and the enemies of the seminary all know it. But why do they want to kill something that every high school principal and school superintendent of experience say is good, being one of the most effective agencies in character training and good citizenship that influences the student? Is religious prejudice trying to mask in legal sheep's clothing for the purpose of stabbing the seminary, this agency that has had such a wonderful influence in bringing a united support to the public schools?[63]

Commissioner Joseph F. Merrill's defense seemed to bring an end to legal threats against the seminaries. The Utah State Board put off voting on the question for over a year, finally voting in September 1931. The verdict came out six to three in favor of continuing the credit policy for seminary. The state board also allowed a continuance of released-time seminary privileges for students enrolled in seminary.[64]

While the vote signaled a victory for the seminary program, it also sent ripples through the system that resulted in changes in almost every part of the Church's educational program. Many of the major problems in Mr. Williamson's report came from mistakes made by untrained teachers. To raise the scholarship of the teachers in the system, beginning in the summer of 1930 scholars came from the University of Chicago's divinity school to provide training. Over the next few years, prominent names in the field of biblical studies—such as Edgar Goodspeed Jr., William C. Graham, and John T. McNeil—taught during summer training.[65] In addition, several promising young LDS teachers received a call from Commissioner Merrill to attend the University of Chicago to receive divinity training. Among the more recognizable names from this group were Sidney B. Sperry, T. Edgar Lyon, Russel B. Swensen, and Heber C. Snell.[66]

In 1931 Joseph F. Merrill was called as an Apostle; two years later he succeeded John A. Widtsoe as the president of the European mission.[67] When John A. Widtsoe returned home he again became the Commissioner of Church Education, taking Commissioner Merrill's place. He was in turn succeeded by Franklin L. West, a physics professor from Utah State University, who took over as commissioner in 1936. During this time a feeling existed that the response to the 1930 crisis may have shifted the seminary and institute programs too far toward a secular approach. President Joseph Fielding Smith became concerned when he heard a talk given at an institute training that openly advocated a more secular approach toward teaching the gospel. President Smith then wrote to Commissioner West in March of 1937, "If the views of these men become dominant in the Church, then we may just as well close up shop and say to the world that Mormonism is a failure."[68]

With these concerns in mind, President J. Reuben Clark Jr., the First Counselor in the First Presidency, spoke with Church religious educators at Aspen Grove in the summer of 1938. His speech, entitled "The Charted Course of the Church in Education," became a foundational document in defining the role of religious education in the Church. President Clark began by laying down the primary expectation of the First Presidency for the teachers:

> The first requisite of a teacher for teaching these principles is a personal testimony of their truth. No amount of learning, no amount of study, and no number of scholastic degrees, can take the place of this testimony, which is the *sine qua non* of the teacher in our Church school system. No teacher who does not have a real testimony of the truth of the Gospel as revealed to and believed by the Latter-day

Saints, and a testimony of the Sonship and Messiahship of Jesus, and of the divine mission of Joseph Smith—including in all its reality the First Vision—has any place in the Church school system. If there be any such, and I hope and pray there are none, he should at once resign; if the Commissioner knows of any such and he does not resign, the Commissioner should request his resignation. The First Presidency expect this pruning to be made.[69]

President J. Reuben Clark Jr.

President Clark's words came as a stern rebuke to some of the teachers in the audience. One young teacher noted, "There was considerable discussion about it around our campfires"; he even remembered an older teacher offering his resignation to Commissioner West that very night, though it was refused.[70] When the address was published to the Church, a close friend of President Clark's wrote to him saying, "It was so timely, so necessary, and seemed to me to be a real revelation."[71] President Clark wrote back, "I said a good many things then that I had been thinking for a long while, and wishing to say. I think that most of the parents of the Church will agree with all that I said."[72]

President Clark's address clarified the role of a religious educator within the Church. As the seminary and institute programs sought to raise their professional standards, there was a temptation to adopt a worldly approach toward the scriptures. Higher biblical criticism, with its secular view of the scriptures, began to influence the system and its teachers. President Clark's address made it clear that testimony was a higher goal than scholarship and that the words of the prophets were more important as a guide to the scriptures than the writings of the latest scholars. The tools of the world could be utilized, but only to the degree that they assisted in the highest goal of bringing the gospel into the hearts of the students. Perhaps the most insightful comment of President Clark's address directly concerned the students when he said, "The youth of the Church are hungry for things of the spirit; they are eager to learn the Gospel, and they want it straight, undiluted."[73]

All of these philosophical shifts took place against the backdrop of the austere years of the Great Depression. Despite the harsh economic realities of the day, the seminaries and institutes continued to grow. During the 1930s seventeen new seminaries opened[74] and eight new institutes.[75] A milestone during this time came with the opening of the institute at the University of Utah after years of negotiations.[76] Commissioners Merrill, Widtsoe, and West all asked for greater austerity from the teachers in the system. One teacher recalled his salary being cut by 40 percent during the darkest years of the Depression.[77] During these times the inspiration in moving toward a less expensive system became clear. Church education was reaching more students than ever, despite the difficult nature of the times.

The 1940s—Weathering the Storm

The tumultuous years of World War II slowed the growth of the seminaries and institutes. Because of the massive population shifts resulting from the war effort, five seminaries actually closed during the war years.[78] In the aftermath of the "Charted Course" address, the First Presidency, particularly President J. Reuben Clark Jr., continued to keep a watchful eye on religious education. President Clark held multiple conversations with Elders John A. Widtsoe and Joseph F. Merrill, the two Apostles most involved in religious education, to express his concerns.

At a meeting held in March 1940, President Clark took Elders Widtsoe and Merrill aside to speak privately. President Clark's notes from the meeting record, "I told them all the Presidency wants is the gospel."[79] With a son teaching in the system, President Clark felt compelled to keep an eye on developments.[80] He expressed his concerns in a letter to a seminary principal in 1941, writing, "I express to you the hope that all the seminaries of the Church will abandon their generalities based on sectarian concepts, frequently, in fact, almost always contrary to the principles and doctrines of the Church, and get back to the great fundamentals of the restored Gospel and Priesthood."[81]

During this decade, a new venture in seminary began at the Intermountain Indian School in Brigham City, Utah. Six-hundred Navajo students arrived at the school in November 1949, with six young Latter-day Saints among their number. Two representatives from the local stakes—J. Edwin Baird, a member of the Box Elder Stake presidency, and Boyd K. Packer, a young seminary teacher and member of the high council in the North Box Elder Stake—received a call to look after the needs of these students.[82] Brother Packer remembered a meeting in the Brigham City Tabernacle where President George Albert Smith spoke on the need to help the Indian people. President Smith said that anyone who helped the Indian people would be greatly blessed, an experience which electrified Boyd K. Packer.[83] Out of the efforts of Brothers Baird and Packer grew the Indian seminary program, an effort to bring religious education to young Native American Church members throughout the United States. Over the next decade 16 different Indian seminaries opened to meet the needs of students scattered across the country.[84]

The immediate postwar years saw another surge in the growth of the seminaries. During that decade 17 new seminaries opened, increasing the total number to 109. Seminaries were an established part of the Church program but still caused controversy in some areas. In Salt Lake City a fierce

political battle raged during the early 1940s over the rights of students to be released from school to attend seminary.[85] An advertisement appearing in both the *Salt Lake Tribune* and the *Salt Lake Telegram* on June 22, 1943, urged "all clear-thinking American citizens, whether Mormon, Catholic, Jew, Protestant, or any other religious group" to attend a meeting of the Salt Lake School Board and "protest! protest! protest!" a new law authorizing released time within the school district.[86]

Ironically, the lack of released time in the Salt Lake district gave rise to another adaptation: early-morning seminary. Near the end of the 1940s at the West High School seminary in Salt Lake City, Marion D. Hanks, a local attorney, began teaching early-morning seminary classes. Since the classes took place outside the school day and free of academic credit, Brother Hanks was able to use the Book of Mormon as his main text. The class was so successful it eventually drew the attention of Commissioner West, who went to speak with Brother Hanks personally about the class. According to one account:

> Frank West asked Brother Hanks what he was doing. He told him he was teaching an early morning class. "How many come?" asked West. "Sixty," said Brother Hanks. "What do you teach them?" asked West. "Book of Mormon," Brother Hanks said. "How do you teach it?" West asked. "I just open up the book, we read and discuss what we read." "How many come each day?" asked West. "All of them," Brother Hanks said.[87]

The 1950s—New Methods and New Leadership

During the April 1950 general conference, 10 stake presidents from the Los Angeles area met with Elder Joseph Fielding Smith of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to discuss the possibility of establishing some kind of seminary program for the youth in their areas. One of the stake presidents pleaded that their youth "needed something that they could rally to, more than Sunday services."[88] The stake presidents received an assurance from Elder Smith that the matter would be looked into. He then asked three of the stake presidents, Howard W. Hunter of the Pasadena Stake, Noble Waite of the South Los Angeles Stake, and Hugh C. Smith of the San Fernando Stake, to begin preparatory work for starting a program in the fall of 1950.[89]

Within a few weeks, Commissioner Franklin L. West approached Ray L. Jones, a seminary principal in Logan, Utah, to launch a new early-morning seminary program in California. Brother Jones, having just completed a new home, expressed some hesitancy over moving his family. In reply to this, Commissioner West suggested that for a trial period Brother Jones

could leave his family in Logan while he periodically "commuted" from Los Angeles! His first impulse was to reject the offer, but after some discussion with his wife and contemplation in the Logan Temple, Brother Jones chose to accept the proposal.[90] The assignment was still highly experimental and in his orientation interview, Ray Jones peppered Commissioner West with questions, receiving very few satisfying answers:

> In what areas are classes to be organized? His response: I don't know, you'll have to determine that after you get to Southern California.
>
> Where will the classes be held? His response: I don't know, perhaps in the living room of a private home, in rented halls or if you find the need we could provide a mobile classroom that could be moved from campus to campus.
>
> Who will teach these classes? His response: I don't know, you'll have to make that decision after you get acquainted with the area and the people.
>
> When should the classes be held? His response: I don't know. Many high schools are on double session and you may have to settle for getting students together for twenty to thirty minutes in the morning, or for a half hour after school in the afternoon.[91]

Armed with only a vague notion of how to launch the new venture, Brother Jones embarked for Southern California in earnest. The Church provided no funds for his travel, so he secured transport to Southern California by hiring on as a "drover" on a cattle train transporting livestock from Utah to Buena Park, California, in exchange for a ride to the state and back home to Logan. He first worked tirelessly to secure the support of the local priesthood, and then spent the rest of the summer of 1950 engaged in a whirlwind of preparations. He worked to find the right teachers, train them, and secure the proper facilities for the new venture.

The early-morning seminary program launched in September 1950, less than five months after Joseph Fielding Smith met with the 10 stake presidents. The first school year six stakes participated with an enrollment of 195 students in seven different classes.[92] The students, for the most part, responded enthusiastically to the program. Ina Easton, a local member, recalled: "It wasn't the teacher. It was the attitude and the beauty of the young people. They wanted seminary to be good, and it was good. . . . Most parents and Priesthood leaders were very supportive, but the kids really carried the program."[93] By the end of five years, the program in California had grown to almost 2,500 students in 90 classes.[94]

From simple beginnings in the six stakes of the Los Angeles area, the program spread to become the dominant delivery method for Church education

today. Early morning was able to follow Church members throughout the country and meet the needs of LDS youth on a national level. Today this model has been adapted so that depending on the local circumstances, students may meet in the morning, afternoon, or evening for class and is called "daily seminary." Eventually students in this kind of seminary program even surpassed the number in released-time seminary.[95]

The 1950s also saw a significant change in the leadership for Church education. In 1953 Commissioner Franklin L. West retired, having led the system for almost 20 years. He was replaced by Ernest L. Wilkinson, the president of Brigham Young University, who was asked by President David O. McKay to head up a new entity: the Unified Church School System. The new system provided unified leadership to all of the Church's educational organizations.[96] To be the head of all religious education programs, Brother Wilkinson appointed William E. Berrett, a teacher in the BYU Religion Department. Brother Berrett brought a different sensibility to the seminary and institute programs. Except for a brief stint as an assistant attorney general in Alaska, he had spent all of his professional life writing and teaching in the seminary and institute programs. William Berrett was an exceptional teacher and writer, having authored a number of texts for use in seminary and institute. His experience with the system reached all the way back to the first summer trainings held under Adam S. Bennion.[97]

One of Brother Berrett's first decisions was to revamp the summer training sessions. In 1954 all of the teachers in the seminary and institute programs met at Brigham Young University. The summer programs started 30 years earlier began with General Authorities teaching the classes, and then eventually evolved to include biblical scholars, such as professors from the University of Chicago. Brother Berrett wanted a return to the basics. To facilitate this, he invited Elder Harold B. Lee to serve as the teacher. Guest speakers during the summer included Presidents Joseph Fielding Smith and J. Reuben Clark.

Where the summer schools of the 1930s had focused on biblical archaeology, theology, and textual analysis, Elder Lee focused instead on the importance of faith and testimony. He counseled teachers not to speculate, to bear their testimonies often in class, and to say "I don't know" rather than giving an answer they weren't sure of. Rather than emphasizing the scholarship of the teachers, Elder Lee placed the emphasis on protecting the faith of the students. The notes from his first lecture contain a quote from Elder Lee

Courtesy of Leland Bruderer

William E. Berrett and BYU's religious education staff in the late 1950s. William E. Berrett is fifth from the left; standing immediately right of him is Boyd K. Packer.

saying, "As a young man, I was anxious to display my great intelligence, but as I grew older, I am anxious to hide my ignorance."[98]

Brother Berrett also surrounded himself with a strong support team. He was counseled by Elder Lee to "break away from previous policies of the Department of Education" by choosing new assistants.[99] Acting under this advice, Brother Berrett chose A. Theodore Tuttle, head of the Reno Nevada Institute, and Boyd K. Packer, a seminary principal in Brigham City, Utah, as supervisors over the program. Though the two new supervisors were unacquainted, they soon struck up a fast friendship. Brother Berrett later described them as "a David and Jonathan combination. They were closer than brothers."[100] The entire office staff developed close friendships under William E. Berrett's leadership. One member of the office staff recalled, "President Berrett [was] the kind of man that it is easy to be loyal to."[101]

Seminary and institute continued to grow, but still remained a close-knit organization. Boyd K. Packer affectionately remembered, "President Berrett [was] a very unusual administrator, a patriarch of a man, very wise, and very patient, . . . a small staff, it was kind of a mom and pop operation."[102] Tuttle later commented, "I always thought those were the golden days of the seminary system, because for a few years there we knew every man in the system, had visited personally with his class once or twice or three times a year. . . . Brother Packer and I hired every man, interviewed them, knew them, tended them when they were new."[103]

As the traveling supervisors in the system, Brothers Tuttle and Packer were instrumental in training the teachers. The motto they established for themselves and the other teachers was "Follow the Brethren."[104] Brothers Packer and Tuttle also stressed the need for orthodoxy throughout the system. Elder Packer later spoke of moving "hesitantly and nervously among the men, most of whom were senior to me in years, in service, in academic achievement, and, I thought, in almost every other way."[105] Attending one training session among the teachers, Elder Packer recalled an experience where an older teacher attempted to play the role of a "debunker," delivering a presentation critical of Church history, and impugning the integrity of several past and present Church leaders. The teacher ended his presentation with a call for the teachers to "wake up and be more critical and selective." Asked to comment, Elder Packer arose and felt inspired to speak about the famous Greek sculpture *Winged Victory*. Over the years, he pointed out, the statue had suffered many cracks and scrapes, its head and arms taken, but it is still regarded as immensely valuable. Then comparing the statue to the Church he continued:

> Regarding the Church, . . . I suppose if we look we can find flaws and abrasions and a chip missing here and there. I suppose we can see an aberration or an imperfection in a leader of the past or perhaps the present. Nonetheless, there is still absolute, hard-rock, undeniable, irrefutable proof, because the Church is what it is and because that someone, sometime, with supreme inspired spiritual genius set to work obediently under inspiration and organized it, and so it came into being. It is best that we should enlarge ourselves to appreciate the beauty and genius of it, rather than debunk and look for the flaws.[106]

Elder Packer then cautioned, "My fellow teachers, it isn't the Church or the gospel that is on trial. We are."[107]

Encouraged by Brother Berrett, seminary and institute administrators worked to gain a closer working relationship between the seminary and institute teachers and the leaders of the Church. Elder Tuttle recalled, "There was a definite attempt on our part to bring the Brethren and the teachers closer together."[108] Brothers Tuttle and Packer's friendship continued after A. Theodore Tuttle was called as a member of the First Council of the Seventy in 1958. A few years later, when Boyd K. Packer was called as an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve, "Brother Berrett jokingly referred to his office as a training ground for General Authorities."[109]

Under Brother Berrett's leadership local and regional faculty meetings were initiated, a new training program for prospective teachers began, and the summer trainings continued. He also began encouraging teachers to seek

advanced degrees. He raised salaries and arranged for teachers to receive health insurance along with their employment.[110] Perhaps recalling his lean years as a teacher during the Depression, Brother Berrett worked tirelessly to make life a little more comfortable for the teachers in seminary and institute.

The 1960s—Going Global

In 1961 a request arrived at Church headquarters from the president of the Brisbane Australia Stake for a seminary program.[111] President David O. McKay and the Church Board of Education carefully considered the request and began looking for ways to take religious education into the international areas of the Church. Elders A. Theodore Tuttle and Boyd K. Packer, now General Authorities, also brought strong voices of advocacy for expanding the seminary and institute programs. Less than two months after his arrival as Area President in South America, a request arrived from Elder Tuttle to bring seminary to Uruguay. During Elder Tuttle's five-year tenure in South America, the requests for seminary in that region continued to multiply.[112] Meanwhile, at Church headquarters in Salt Lake City, Elder Packer continued to become a strong advocate with the Church board for seminary and institute programs. When the Church was faced with a budget crisis in 1963, Elder Packer presented a letter to President McKay passionately arguing that seminaries and institutes constituted "a tested and effective means to bring religious instruction" to the youth of the Church.[113]

During the same time period, requests continued to pour into Brother Berrett's office for seminaries all over the world. One letter from an American officer in Germany who had received an assignment to teach an early-morning seminary class began with one brief sentence, "Dear President Berrett, HELP!" The officer then explained that he was just informed that the son of the Area President and nine others were enrolled, and concluded the letter as he began, "So - - - - HELP!"[114] Other requests began to pour in from areas outside the United States.[115] At the request of President Ernest L. Wilkinson and the First Presidency, William E. Berrett traveled to Europe in 1963 and again in 1965, trying to find the best way to bring seminary into those countries.[116] Both times after his return, Brother Berrett was deeply discouraged over what he saw. No school in any of the countries had enough LDS students for a released-time program, and a lack of transportation made early morning infeasible. Frustrated, he noted, "Until we could come up with

a new program, we could not extend the seminary program into England and other foreign countries."[117]

The solution came through inspiration to a number of different people. Donald Wilson, a seminary teacher in Cardston, Canada, proposed a program where students studied the scriptures on their own time, occasionally meeting with a teacher and larger groups of their peers. The travel required could be reduced to weekly and monthly meetings.[118] Ernest L. Eberhard Jr., the head of curriculum, took the idea and ran with it, outlining a course of study that fit this new approach. With the help of Elder Boyd K. Packer, the Church Board of Education approved a pilot study. One lone teacher, Donald R. Bond, was sent to the Midwest to test the program. Brother Bond was only a fourth-year seminary teacher when he was pulled for the assignment, but he tackled the work with enthusiasm.[119] The local priesthood whole-heartedly embraced the program too. One stake president gladly took off nearly a week of work just to drive Brother Bond around the area, personally introducing him to local leadership.[120]

The program was launched in the fall of 1967 and met with immediate success. The whole program was taken as a grand experiment and required a phenomenal amount of work on the part of the curriculum staff. One member of the staff recalled putting the first draft of the new lesson outlines on Ernest Eberhard's desk on Monday, refining and printing them during the week, loading them on a plane Thursday night, so that the teachers in the field could teach with the materials on Saturday. He continued, "I don't remember going to bed for about a year or two years during that process. It was hectic. . . . We would start at 6:30 in the morning and we would be lucky to get out at eleven o'clock some of those weeks!"[121] Another curriculum writer, Arnold J. Stringham, remembered visiting Don Bond in the field, writing the next lesson as he sat in the backseat of the car![122]

Evaluations gave the new program enthusiastic marks. One branch president wrote to the central office, saying, "This program gives them the cause of the Gospel, and there can be no better. I only wish that those young people on the 'lunatic fringe'—the Hippies, draft card burners, protesters, etc., could catch a glimpse of this seminary program."[123] Great results continued to pour in, and the Church Board of Education began to seriously consider the program as a way to take religious education to the worldwide Church. Elder Marion G. Romney was assigned to investigate personally, and Don Bond began receiving phone calls with the Apostle on the other end, asking several

penetrating questions. On the day the Church Board of Education met to discuss the issue in May 1968, Don Bond recorded in his journal:

> I was en route to Vincennes, Indiana. I pulled off the highway and found a secluded place where I knelt by the roadside and bore my solemn witness of the powerful impact I had personally felt from the students as they regularly associated with this daily scripture and gospel study; I prayed that this influence would be felt by the Brethren in the ongoing meeting being held at Church headquarters in Salt Lake City. As I pulled back on the interstate, I had a feeling of certainty that President [N. Eldon] Tanner would see seminary in England within a few months. Sure enough, Elder Romney's report was given with an excitement of how favorably the program was actually increasing the effectiveness of home evening and home teaching.[124]

Brother Bond's prompting came true. Before the end of the summer the first teachers were assigned to introduce the seminary and institute programs to England and Australia.

Brother Berrett selected John Madsen, a 29-year-old teacher from Salt Lake City, and J. L. Jaussi, a long-time seminary and institute veteran, to start the program in England and Australia, respectively. Brother Jaussi remembered walking into Brother Berrett's office and being informed of his new assignment. Shocked, he asked when he would leave. Brother Berrett replied, "How soon can you pack your bags?"[125] Don Bond returned briefly from the Midwest to provide a crash course in the home-study program for the two pioneers. Other than a single meeting with Don Bond, they received no other formal training. The Madsens left for England in August 1968 and Jaussis embarked for Australia the next month.[126] John Madsen later recalled the electric atmosphere of the time: "There was a sense of adventure, and in a very real way, a kind of a pioneering feeling. . . . It really touched my heart deeply that we should be privileged to be involved with this great work, and that's how we felt. It was a sacred privilege, a sacred trust."[127]

Brother Berrett personally accompanied the Madsens to England to introduce the program. As Brother Berrett met with the local stakes selected to pilot the program, his influence smoothed over any concerns. John Madsen marveled over Brother Berrett's work with the local priesthood: "President Berrett was masterful in dealing with these wonderful priesthood leaders. He was a man who looked like a prophet, who talked like a prophet, and who had the bearing and dignity of a true patriarch. . . . He just was a man of wonderful dignity, and character, and spirit. These marvelous brethren listened as he described what the systematic study of the gospel would do for their young

people, and without hesitation or question, these presidencies would unanimously and immediately say, 'Oh, yes, that's what we want.'"[128]

After one week Brother Berrett returned home, and the Madsens set about the difficult task of making the arrangements for the program. There was no curriculum because it was still being written. Brother Madsen had no precedent other than Don Bond's work in the Midwestern United States, and few of the members in England knew anything about the program. At first the customs agents in England wouldn't even allow the seminary materials in the country, and when they arrived, Brother Madsen personally delivered the curriculum to every teacher in his stewardship.[129]

Despite all these challenges, the Church members in England soon caught the vision. The response was even greater than Brother Madsen predicted, despite the lack of materials and training. Though he expected to only run a home-study program, enough students were recruited for several early-morning classes. The first seminary class in Great Britain convened with 19 students at 7:00 a.m. on August 19, 1968, in the Glasgow Ward in Scotland, only 15 days after the Madsen's arrival in the country. From that small beginning, both home-study and early morning classes continued to spread.[130] Once a month students from each region convened for a meeting affectionately known as "Super Saturday." At these larger meetings students received more instruction, teachers received training, and scripture competitions were held. In England scripture chases became so popular that a national championship was held.[131] The growing programs required more supervision, and reinforcements arrived in Britain and Australia, and another contingent of American teachers traveled to New Zealand the next year to start the programs there.[132]

The launch of the international programs was the crowning achievement of William E. Berrett's 17 years as Administrator of Religious Education. In the summer of 1970 the announcement came of a new Commissioner of Church Education, Neal A. Maxwell. Along with Commissioner Maxwell came a complete changeover in the leadership of seminaries and institutes. Clarence F. Schramm, a coordinator in Southern California and later Executive Assistant to the Administrator, remembered Brother Berrett receiving the call informing him of his replacement as head of the seminary program: "He went back and called Neal Maxwell and then came back as if nothing had happened. Then he gave a classic sermon, just an absolute classic, on how we ought to support the administration, particularly the

administration of the church. And he said, 'You must be faithful to the man who replaces you.' I'll never forget that experience."[133]

During the 1960s the pace for seminaries and institutes accelerated. When Brother Berrett was appointed in 1953, there were roughly 34,000 students, mostly in the Intermountain West. Total institute enrollment was about 4,000. When Brother Berrett retired in 1971, seminary enrollment had grown to 126,000 students and institute to nearly 50,000, and the programs had taken their first step onto the global stage.[134] It was also a time of experimentation and innovation. New techniques in media began to be introduced to increase the effectiveness of the teachers.

Working with the Indian seminaries, George D. Durrant, Wayne B. Lynn, and Douglas J. Larson began putting together a simple filmstrip entitled *Tom Trails*, designed to illustrate gospel principles. The filmstrips soon became popular in all seminaries, not just the Indian program. Brother Durrant remembered attending a high school basketball game in 1972 where the band began to play the *Tom Trails* theme song. Brother Durrant asked a nearby student whose school song it was, and the student replied, "It's everyone's school song. It's *Tom Trails*!"[135] Brother Durrant recalled, "We thought they would think it was funny, but it became a big hit."[136] The filmstrips soon expanded, tackling sensitive topics such as immorality, repentance, even death. As seminaries expanded internationally, the curriculum adapted. In Latin America, *Tom Trails* was renamed *Pepe Perez* and used to great effect.[137] These innovations were only the beginning. By the end of the 1960s, seminary and institute programs were proven in English-speaking nations, and the time now approached when seminaries and institutes would go "unto every nation" (D&C 133:37).

The 1970s—Unto All Nations

When Neal A. Maxwell assumed the post of Commissioner of Church Education in 1970, he appointed Joe J. Christensen as an Associate Commissioner of Church Education with the responsibility of directing religious education. The call came as a complete shock to Brother Christensen, who was serving as a mission president in Mexico City. The Christensens were immediately recalled from their mission, even though they had only arrived two months before.[138] Brother Christensen carried the distinction of successfully directing the Moscow and Salt Lake institutes, but now he faced the complex task of directing the entire program of Seminaries and

Commissioner Neal A. Maxwell (right) with Robert Stout, the seminary coordinator in Japan, about 1970.

Institutes. With successful programs already launched in several countries, Commissioner Maxwell wanted to make religious education a priority. He later related, "We felt that seminaries and institutes could follow the Church wherever it went."[139] Only a few months after the arrival of Commissioner Maxwell's staff, the Church Board of Education made the announcement that seminaries and institutes would follow the membership of the Church throughout the world.[140]

Over the next few years, dozens of American teachers traveled around the world on assignment to launch seminary and institute programs. In a three-year period they were tasked with accomplishing three objectives: "(1) Develop a positive working relationship with priesthood leaders. (2) Start the home-study seminary program, enrolling interested secondary *and* college-age students. (3) Find and train a person who could provide local native leadership, thus removing the necessity of exporting others [teachers] from the United States."[141] E. Dale LeBaron, a teacher who was sent to South Africa, later described the monumental nature of the work: "It happened in such a brief window of time, four or five years, almost a blitz. It's interesting to see that not only were certain parts of the world ready, but almost all the world was ready."[142]

The next few years brought a new series of adventures to the seminary and institute family—set against a global backdrop. The teachers sent out to launch the programs worked tirelessly to the programs started regardless of environmental challenges, long distances, and even political instability. In Brazil, David A. Christensen and his entire family of four slept on a single mattress, their only piece of furniture, for a month and a half until funds could be wired to solve the problem.[143] In the Philippines, Stephen K. Iba paid his driver 20 extra pesos to drive through a flood in order to reach the pier where

the materials for his teachers waited. When the car was swamped, Steve Iba, in his white shirt and tie, jumped out to push, while his wife, clutching a baby, stood on the seat of the car to escape the water rushing into the car. They were finally rescued by several Filipino boys, each of whom received 10 pesos for their trouble.[144]

In Guatemala, Robert B. Arnold, a CES coordinator, was accosted by government soldiers for duplication equipment found in his house. The soldiers assumed the equipment was being used to print antigovernment propaganda, until Bob Arnold explained he was a Mormon setting up an educational program. The lead soldier replied, "You're Mormons? I have a niece who is a Mormon" and moved on to the next house.[145] In Chile, Richard L. Brimhall sat on the roof of his house with his children watching jets bomb the presidential palace during the 1973 coup to overthrow the Marxist government.[146]

Even more amazing than the adventures of the American teachers were the native teachers recruited to take over the program. Joe J. Christensen later reflected, "There is no doubt that these early CES pioneers who were sent out were inspired in many of the people they selected to work in the system. And what a work they did."[147] In Central America, a young architect, Carlos H. Amado, was selected to lead the system. He later went on to serve as a bishop, stake president, and mission president. He was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy in April 1989 and to the First Quorum of the Seventy in October 1992.[148] When the programs came to Korea, no American teacher with the right skills could be found, so administrators simply recruited a native Korean, Rhee Ho Nam, to launch the program. He eventually became the first stake president in Korea, later serving as a mission president.[149] Throughout every country, capable men and women came forward to teach and administer the programs. The progress of the program was so rapid that Joe J. Christensen told Commissioner Maxwell it was "like trying to contain an explosion."[150]

As seminaries and institutes began to influence the global Church, the Church also profoundly changed seminaries and institutes. Teachers and administrators began to take a wider perspective on the work, and a new spirit of unity emerged that transcended national boundaries. No better example of this phenomenon exists than with Franklin D. Day. Before joining Church education, Brother Day served in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II. A veteran of the bloody battles of the Pacific war, Brother Day remembered, "The Marines trained well—not only how to use weapons, but

how to hate the enemy."[151] As the global programs blossomed, the world was divided into "zones," each with its own administrator. Frank Day was chosen as the zone administrator over Asia. As he traveled to Okinawa, the site of one of the bloodiest battles he fought in, he found himself filled with dread, wondering how he could overcome the hatred ingrained in him from his experiences in the war. He remembered nervously walking off the plane and seeing Kan Watanabe for the first time; he was the mission president there to pick up Brother Day. They embraced. "In a matter of seconds, the bitterness and the hatred, the training and the fear of years, was suddenly eliminated," he remembered.[152]

During his work in the Orient, Brother Day saw the same kind of miracles happen in the hearts of all the men involved in the program. At one area convention he saw two teachers, one from Korea, the other from Japan, embracing each other in farewell and thanking each other. Reflecting on the long history of antagonism between the two countries, Frank Day pondered the power of the gospel to overcome any barriers: "I felt that if we could do no more than bring people together and let the Spirit of the Lord work on them, whatever else they learned would be worth it."[153]

In the United States, momentous changes came to the educational system during this period. One of Joe J. Christensen's proudest accomplishments was the inclusion of the Book of Mormon in the required seminary curriculum. The Book of Mormon had been taught sporadically in different circumstances for years, and as a part of most ninth grade courses since 1961, but in 1972 Brother Christensen submitted a proposal to make the course a requirement for seminary graduation. The measure met with overwhelming approval. President Spencer W. Kimball, speaking later to Joe Christensen, said, "I have wondered why we hadn't done this years ago."[154]

Another significant milestone for seminaries and institutes came in 1978 when the American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit against the Logan School District over the practice of released time and credit for Old and New Testament courses. Though the Church chose not to directly participate in the case, it represented the first serious challenge to the released-time program since 1930. Over the summer of 1978, different witnesses took the stand, testifying on the nature of the seminary system. Even Joe J. Christensen was questioned in court. Eventually the judge in the trial ruled in favor of the ACLU, declaring credit for seminary courses illegal. Two years later after an appeal, this initial ruling was overturned by another judge in a higher court.

Regardless of the outcome, the seminary and institute administration decided to end the practice of credit.

The outcome eventually became an unexpected blessing for the program. Credit was ended, but the released-time system, after almost 60 years of operation, now stood on firm legal ground. Teachers no longer encountered any restrictions teaching specific Latter-day Saint doctrines along with the Bible. When credit was taken away, zone administrators expected a drop in enrollment. Instead enrollment increased after the change.[155]

During the 1970s a remarkable group of leaders took the reins of leadership in religious education. In 1976 Jeffrey R. Holland succeeded Neal A. Maxwell as Commissioner of Church Education. He was followed by Henry B. Eyring in 1980. When Joe J. Christensen left in 1979, Stanley A. Peterson took over as head administrator. The progress of the program was no longer measured in the number of seminaries and institutes constructed, but in the number of countries where the programs were opening. The seminary

Courtesy of Alton Wade

Commissioner Jeffrey R. Holland and zone administrator Alton L. Wade during a visit to the South Pacific, about 1979.

and institute programs stood firmly established in an impressive number of countries, but adapting to the new circumstances of its worldwide role presented a different set of challenges.

The 1980s—Teaching the Scriptures

During the 1980s the global expansion of seminaries and institutes continued, sometimes into surprising locations. Seminary was introduced into East Germany in 1980 at the request of local Church leaders, nine years before the fall of the Berlin Wall. Manfred Schutze, a district president, recalled the sacrifices necessary to bring the program into a Communist nation: "We actually didn't have enough teachers, since everyone was already busy with three or four callings. But we said, 'Okay, seminary is important,' and the program was instantly received with great enthusiasm by the youth."[156] Weekly lessons and Super Saturdays were held under the watchful eyes of Communist officials. Each lesson had to be typewritten for each teacher, and the students had no materials other than their scriptures.

Henry Kosak, a young 16-year-old, remembered learning "completely different ways how to study the scriptures—to use my name as a substitute for Nephi. I still remember that."[157] Church leaders used seminary as an opportunity to discuss atheist philosophies taught at the schools in East Germany. Klaus Peter Bartsch's mother served as the seminary teacher in his branch. "I had the opportunity to read directly in the manual," he recalls. "I studied it for hours, because I found there the explanations that helped us understand the gospel better. The seminary and institute programs were really a source of strength."[158]

With the Church expanding into an increasing number of nations, the challenges of translating and adapting curriculum to different cultures began to become evident. President Spencer W. Kimball issued a call to all Church departments to "reduce and simplify." In one meeting a General Authority laid down a 1,500-page Book of Mormon institute manual next to the Book of Mormon and asked, "Now tell me one more time why I need this (pointing to the manual) . . . to teach this (pointing to the Book of Mormon)."[159] With these concerns weighing heavily on his mind, Stan Peterson gathered together the heads of the curriculum department, David A. Christensen, Jay E. Jensen, and Gerald N. Lund, seeking a solution. Brother Peterson stressed the need to reduce the amount of curriculum. He even asked the men to get out of the central office, meet together, and find the answer. The four prayed together

and then Brother Peterson felt inspired to say, "Satan doesn't want this to happen. He is going to do everything in his power to keep you from accomplishing this task."[160]

The three men booked a room at the Homestead Resort in Midway, Utah, to work out the problem. Each began fasting in preparation for the meeting. Stan Peterson recalls, "All of them had some disaster strike in their home with the family."[161] Each considered not going, but in the end they all went, hoping for an answer. At the Homestead they studied and considered statements from the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and J. Reuben Clark's "Charted Course" address.[162] The answer they received was to move away from teaching the gospel as a series of concepts, a long-held practice in seminary and institute curriculum, and instead to teach the scriptures *sequentially*. Jerry Lund summarized the approach: "Not just *from* the scriptures, not just *about* the scriptures, not just *with* the scriptures, but *teach the scriptures*."[163] David Christensen later joked that returning from the Homestead they felt like Moses descending from Mount Sinai with the tablets. Their ideas met with wide approval among Church leadership. Brother Lund later related, "It was just one of those things that the minute we [presented] it, they said, 'This is right.'"[164]

Before this experience the curriculum drew on the scriptures for stories, examples, and activities but based the courses around a series of concepts, such as faith, honesty, and repentance. Following this new directive teachers began teaching the scriptures in the sequence they appear in the standard works. In 1981 Elder Bruce R. McConkie gave an address to religious educators further explaining the practice: "If you want to know what emphasis should be given to gospel principles, you simply teach the whole standard works and automatically, in the process, you will have given the Lord's emphasis to every doctrine and every principle."[165] Stan Peterson made this focus on the scriptures a major goal of his leadership. Over the next 20 years nearly 88 percent of the curriculum was eliminated in favor of a reduced approach emphasizing the scriptures instead.

The call for a greater emphasis on the scriptures included not only the manuals, but every aspect of curriculum, including the media. In the years since *Tom Trails*, media in the classroom progressed to what Brother Peterson called "Mormon soap operas"—long, extended stories presented in serial format about young people striving to live gospel principles, going astray, and coming back. During the 1980s the curriculum team closely evaluated how

to bring the media into closer harmony with the new scriptural approach.[166] Paul V. Johnson, a member of the media team, remembered specific directions to "have more variety and to focus some of them more on the doctrine, some of them more on the scriptural history, and have them be less self-contained, 'Here's a movie to watch,' and more 'Here's something I can use as a tool in the classroom.'"[167] The team also attempted to bring a more multicultural approach to the media, instead of just focusing on the experiences of students from the United States.[168]

The 1990s—Broadening Horizons

Stanley A. Peterson remained at the helm for two decades, serving under several different commissioners. In 1986 J. Elliot Cameron took over for Elder Henry B. Eyring as Commissioner of Church Education. Elder Henry B. Eyring was reappointed as commissioner in 1992. Three years later he became a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles but remained as commissioner, marking the first instance a General Authority had led the Church Educational System since Elder John A. Widtsoe in the 1930s. Since Elder Eyring's appointment, the position of commissioner has been occupied by a General Authority.

Throughout the system Stan Peterson continued the emphasis on local leadership. Instead of uprooting younger families, he launched a new practice of calling retired teachers and their spouses on missions to establish seminary and institute programs in new countries.[169] After receiving a call for one of these missions, one of Brother Peterson's old associates jokingly asked, "Now, Stan, tell me one more time why I retired early so I could go out and do for nothing what I was paid for all those years?"[170] The training and recruiting of local members to lead the programs continued to pay dividends. Brother Peterson remarked, "I saw personally the value of using the local people, so that they could grow, and it could be their program. They could sense the ownership about it."[171]

Traveling frequently to see the progress of the program, Stan Peterson remembered a thrilling experience in England where he attended an early-morning class taught by a called teacher. The entire class arrived on bicycles that the local ward had raised funds to purchase, which allowed them to attend seminary. He remembered: "This teacher had about thirty young people in this classroom and they were around the room in a big circle and that lady was just having those kids eating out of her hand as she presented

a beautiful lesson. I just thought that could have happened in Salt Lake City, and it wouldn't have been any better."[172]

The 1990s saw the continued expansion of seminary and institute programs around the world. New frontiers continued to open, in areas like Eastern Europe after the fall of Communism. There and in other places seminary and institute teachers continued to operate in diverse circumstances to reach the students in their care. Everywhere they served they worked to make their home countries better. For decades Donald E. Harper served as the seminary and institute director in South Africa. When he and his wife were newly married they traveled to Salt Lake City, investigating the possibility of moving to the United States. In a meeting with the Harpers, Elder Harold B. Lee counseled them to stay. Brother Harper remembers: "He just looked straight at me and said, 'Brother Harper, we don't need you here. You go back to South Africa and help build up the Church there and you will receive the desires of your heart.'"[173] The Harpers moved back to South Africa and were recruited to lead the seminary and institute program. Witnessing the injustices of apartheid in his native country, Brother and Sister Harper worked to encourage black and white members of the Church to come together.

When a regional conference was held in South Africa, with Apostles Boyd K. Packer and Howard W. Hunter in attendance, Brother Harper requested that the institute provide a mixed choir, with black and white students. His wife, Milja, acted as the choir director, leading the mixed choir in a time when the Church was still dominated by white membership. Don Harper commented, "The most significant thing that I saw in that experience was, at that age group, you could create that mixing . . . and the unity. I could not have asked for an adult choir that achieved having a third of it black. . . . It's the younger generation that make it happen. For them, they are totally color blind now."[174] True to Elder Lee's promise, the Harpers also saw the blessings of the temple come to their own country with the opening of a temple in Johannesburg.

The 21st Century—Staying the Course

In 2001 Stanley A. Peterson retired and was replaced by Paul V. Johnson as Administrator of Religious Education and Elementary and Secondary Education. With the terrorist attacks in September 2001, the world entered a new period of uncertainty. The basic message of the programs remained the same, but administrative changes became necessary to meet the realities of

the new world. The CES symposium, held at BYU every year since 1977, was postponed partially over concerns surrounding travel in the first months after the attacks. It was permanently discontinued in 2003. Though new travel restrictions influenced the decision to end the symposium, it also represented a new shift in thinking. Paul Johnson had served as chairman of the symposium, and now made the difficult decision to end it. He later commented, "I could sense from the commissioner and the board that they would really like to take a look at programs we had out there, and be careful [with] anything that involved travel or extra budget or something—reevaluate everything and see if there were things that we could back off of, which is always a difficult thing."[175]

One of the problems with the symposium in the past was that it was too American-centric, not reflecting the needs of the global system. In its place a yearly satellite broadcast was launched with the ability to reach S&I[176] teachers in all corners of the globe. The first broadcast on August 1, 2003, featured addresses from CES administrators along with talks and training from Elders Richard G. Scott and Henry B. Eyring.[177] The broadcast became an annual tradition, featuring talks from administrators and General Authorities, and even choir numbers from different seminary and institute groups around the globe, bringing the entire global family closer together.

In the midst of a number of important changes during this decade, there remained a strong sense of continuity. President Boyd K. Packer—whose S&I roots stretched all the way back to Abel S. Rich, the principal of the second seminary in the Church—continued to act as an important guide and mentor to the leaders of the program. Shortly after Paul Johnson became the Administrator of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, President Packer invited him to his house and showed him the draft of a letter from the First Presidency instructing Church leaders to "raise the bar" concerning the worthiness and preparation of missionaries. Commissioner Johnson later recalled, "He read through it with me and said, 'Now what does this mean for your seminary and institute?' I said, 'Well, it probably means we need to step up to the plate.' He said, 'That's right, you've got to prepare them better. You've got to make sure they're ready to go on their missions.'"[178]

Over the next few months discussions were held with President Gordon B. Hinckley and Elder M. Russell Ballard and within the administration about how to make the seminary and institute programs a better tool for preparing missionaries. As a result of these discussions the administration

issued a document containing a new emphasis in teaching. Among a number of important directives, the new emphasis directed teachers to train students to "explain, share, and testify of gospel doctrines and principles."[179]

All throughout its history, prophetic direction made Seminaries and Institutes of Religion a completely unique educational entity. The teachers in the system, while teaching mainly about past prophets, also witnessed the guidance of modern prophets. Roger G. Christensen, Secretary to the Church Board of Education (and Assistant to the Commissioner), recalled an experience illustrating the power of modern prophets teaching scripture. During a trip to BYU–Idaho, President Eyring and Brother Christensen decided to visit a local seminary. When they walked into the classroom, the teacher, completely overwhelmed, wisely invited Elder Eyring to address the students. Brother Christensen recalls:

> In one of the classes, [President Eyring] said, "What is the lesson on today?" One of the students said, "Well, we're just learning about Jesus calling the Twelve Apostles." President Eyring said, "I happen to know a little bit about how that works today," and then he shared a little about his calling to be a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, which means to be a special witness of Christ. To see the impact that that had on the life of those kids! We went into another class and he asked the same question, "What are you learning today?" And they said, "We're learning about some of the miracles Jesus performed." And he asked, "What do you think the greatest miracle was?" Some young lady sitting on the back row raised her hand and said, "I think that was the Atonement." As we walked out of the building, he turned to me and said, "The Church is in good hands because there are real believers in our seminary classrooms."[180]

Commissioner Eyring continued to lead the Church Educational System until 2005, when Elder W. Rolfe Kerr of the Seventy was called as Commissioner of the Church Educational System. That same year Paul V. Johnson was called as a member of the Quorum of the Seventy. Garry K. Moore succeeded him as CES Administrator of Religious Education and Elementary and Secondary Education. The new leadership continued to build on the work of their predecessors. Elder Kerr called upon teachers to "extend our exposure" and "increase our impact" in the program wherever they served.[181]

In 2008 Elder Paul V. Johnson became the Commissioner of the Church Educational System after Elder Kerr, and Chad H. Webb succeeded Garry Moore as Administrator of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion. As the new leader of S&I, Brother Webb emphasized the importance of prophetic guidance in the teaching within the system. He said:

> If you were to review the last 10 years of talks given to CES by General Authorities, you would see a consistent message. It is that we must invite the Holy Ghost to take the gospel deeply into the lives of our students. . . .
>
> . . . The Spirit will bear witness of the things we are teaching if we are true to the scriptures.[182]

Elder Paul V. Johnson.

In 2009, as the first century of seminary came to a close, the leaders of the system issued a clarified statement of purpose for the role of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion: "Our purpose is to help youth and young adults understand and rely on the teachings and Atonement of Jesus Christ, qualify for the blessings of the temple, and prepare themselves, their families, and others for eternal life with their Father in Heaven."[183]

Epilogue

Across the street from Granite High School, a seminary building still stands in the same spot as the original building. The first Granite Seminary was extensively remodeled in 1924 and again in 1929 to accommodate its growing student population.[184] Parts of the original building remained in use until 1993, when the original structure was completely torn down and replaced by a new building.[185] Granite High School closed in 2009, but the seminary continued on. Remodeled and refurbished, the building now serves as headquarters for S&I programs for the deaf, conducting classes and American Sign Language videoconferencing for students in distant locations. Where local students once gathered, students now assemble from across the United States.

The spirit of innovation that launched seminary a hundred years ago still lives within its walls. The cultural, educational, and geographical backdrop of the seminary program has dramatically altered, but the spiritual foundations and the basic truths behind seminary remains the same. Seminary has grown from a small program started by one stake into a worldwide effort to teach the gospel, assist the priesthood, and strengthen the families of the Church. Just as the prophet Alma taught, "By small and simple things are great things brought to pass" (Alma 37:6). The seminary program spread from its humble

Courtesy of author

The Granite Seminary in November 2011.

beginnings to eventually grow into a program that reaches into all areas where the Church exists. As the seminary program began its centennial year, enrollment reached 375,389 students in 146 countries while the institute program enrolled 352,441 students in 144 countries, creating a worldwide enrollment of 727,830.[186] Undoubtedly the next century of the seminary program will see innovations as radical as released-time, early-morning, and home-study seminary were in their day. Teaching methods, curriculum, and technology have all changed as time passed, but the basics of seminary—the teacher-student relationships, the power of the word, and the strength from youth gathering together—remain constant today. Elder Henry B. Eyring best summed up the very essence of seminary when he said, "When seminary works, you find a teacher who has a testimony and who loves the young people."[187] RE

Notes

1. Granite Seminary is pictured on the facing page.

2. See *Seminaries and Institutes of Religion Annual Report for 2011*, 1–3. Exact figures from S&I report that there are currently 369,373 students enrolled in seminary worldwide and 348,111 in institute. There are 3,293 full- and part-time employees, and 46,244 Church-service missionaries and called teachers. In 2011, 21,041,020 hours of service were given to

S&I programs by full-time missionaries, part-time Church-service missionaries, and called teachers.

3. Boyd K. Packer, "Teach the Scriptures" (address to CES religious educators, Oct. 14, 1977), 3.

4. Joseph F. Merrill, "A New Institution in Religious Education," *Improvement Era*, Jan. 1938, 12.

5. See Albert Theodore Tuttle, "Released Time Religious Education Program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (master's thesis, Stanford University, 1949), 56.

6. See Joseph F. Darowski, "Schools of the Prophets: An Early American Tradition," *Mormon Historical Studies* vol. 9, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 1–14.

7. James R. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (1965–75), 3:168.

8. See John D. Monnett, "The Mormon Church and Its Private School System in Utah: The Emergence of the Academies, 1880–1892" (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1984).

9. See D. Michael Quinn, "Utah's Educational Innovation: LDS Religion Classes, 1890–1929," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 43:8, 379–84. The most comprehensive work on these early LDS religion classes is by Brett D. Dowdle, "'A New Policy in Church School Work': The Founding of the Mormon Supplementary Religious Education Movement" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 2011).

10. See Milton L. Bennion, *Mormonism and Education* (1939), 177.

11. See Charles Coleman and Dwight Jones, comp., "History of Granite Seminary, 1933," 4–5, unpublished manuscript, MS 2337, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

12. Merrill, "A New Institution," 55.

13. See Casey Paul Griffiths, "The First Seminary Teacher," *Religious Educator* 9, no. 3 (2008): 115–30.

14. Thomas J. Yates, "Autobiography and Biography of Thomas Jarvis Yates," Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 42.

15. See Merrill, "A New Institution," 55.

16. See Coleman and Jones, "History of Granite Seminary, 1933," 6–7.

17. See Coleman and Jones, "History of Granite Seminary, 1933," 7.

18. See Yates, "Autobiography," 80.

19. See "New Building Dedicated at Granite, the Oldest Seminary in the Church," www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24154/new-building-dedicated-at-granite-the-oldest-seminary-in-the-church.html (Sept. 10, 1994).

20. Ward H. Magleby, "Granite Seminary 1912," *Impact: Weekday Religious Education Quarterly*, Winter 1968, 15.

21. See Coleman and Jones, "History of Granite Seminary," 8; Yates, "Autobiography," 81.

22. Henry B. Eyring, "To Know and to Love God" (an evening with President Henry B. Eyring, Feb. 26, 2010), 5.

23. See Tuttle, "Released Time Religious Education," 69–70.

24. See Tuttle, "Released Time Religious Education," 71–74.

25. See Minutes of the Utah State Board of Education, Jan. 5, 1916, quoted in Tuttle, "Released Time Religious Education," 65–66.

26. Minutes of the General Church Board of Education, Jan. 27, 1915, Centennial History Project Papers, UA 566, box 24, folder 8, BYU.

27. See Kenneth G. Bell, "Adam Samuel Bennion: Superintendent of LDS Education—1919 to 1928" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1969), 48.

28. See Bell, "Adam Samuel Bennion," 51–54. While the majority of the academies closed, several schools were retained and even upgraded to serve as junior colleges for the training of teachers. Among the schools retained were Dixie College, Snow College, Weber College, LDS University in Salt Lake City, Brigham Young College in Logan, Gila College in Arizona, and Ricks College in Idaho. The Juárez Academy in Mexico was retained and remains open even today, 2011. See Scott C. Esplin, "Education in Transition: Church and State Relationships in Utah Education, 1888–1933" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 2006), 164–65.

29. See Tuttle, "Released Time Religious Education," 71–73.

30. Minutes of General Church Board, Mar. 3, 1920, quoted in Bell, "Adam Samuel Bennion," 53.

31. See Bell, "Adam Samuel Bennion," 54.

32. See Bell, "Adam Samuel Bennion," 76–77.

33. William E. Berrett, "My Story," 38, unpublished manuscript, BYU.

34. Quoted in Bell, "Adam Samuel Bennion," 84, 86.

35. Quoted in Bell, "Adam Samuel Bennion," 90.

36. See William E. Berrett, *A Miracle in Weekday Religious Education* (1988), 49.

37. For background on J. Wyley Sessions, see Griffiths, "The First Institute Teacher," 175–201.

38. J. Wyley and Magdalene Sessions oral history, interview by Richard O. Cowan, June 29, 1965, transcript of audio recording by Casey P. Griffiths, 8–9. See also J. Wyley Sessions oral history, interview by Marc Sessions, Aug. 12, 1972, Laguna Hills, California, "The Joint Oral History Project," Brigham Young University Alumni Association Emeritus Club, 1982, BYU Archives, MS 15866, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; Leonard J. Arrington, "The Founding of LDS Institutes of Religion," *Dialogue*, vol. 2, no. 2 (Summer 1967), 137–47; Ward H. Magleby, "1926, Another Beginning, Moscow, Idaho," *Impact*, Winter 1968, 22; Dennis A. Wright, "The Beginnings of the First LDS Institute of Religion at Moscow, Idaho," *Mormon Historical Studies* 10, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 72.

39. Sessions 1965 oral history, 9.

40. For background into earlier attempts to bring some form of Church education to Moscow, see Wright, "Beginnings of the First LDS Institute," 65–72.

41. Sessions 1972 oral history, 5.

42. See Magleby, "1926, Another Beginning," 23; Sessions 1965 oral history, 13.

43. Attending a presentation on J. Wyley Sessions at the Conference of Mormon History Association held in May 2011, Casey P. Griffiths was approached by an older man who had known Brother Sessions personally. He immediately broke into laughter at the thought of his old teacher, and confirmed the nickname "Smiley Wyley."

44. In Magleby, "1926, Another Beginning," 31.

45. In Magleby, "1926, Another Beginning," 32. As one of the first native Utahns to obtain a Ph.D., Commissioner Merrill was intimately familiar with the struggles he described in his letter. He experienced them himself as a young man as he attended Johns Hopkins University. See Casey P. Griffiths, "Joseph F. Merrill: Latter-day Saint Commissioner of Education, 1928–1933" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 2007), 24–30; Joseph F. Merrill, "The Lord Overrules," *Improvement Era*, July 1934, 413, 447.

46. See Sessions 1965 oral history, 12.

47. See Wright, "Beginnings of the First LDS Institute," 72.

48. Magleby, "1926, Another Beginning," 27.

49. J. Wyley Sessions to Ward H. Magleby, Dec. 29, 1967, Laguna Hills, California, Sessions Collection, box 2, folder 5, BYU.

50. See J. Wyley Sessions, "The Latter-day Saint Institutes," *Improvement Era*, July 1935, 414.

51. J. Wyley Sessions to Ward H. Magleby, Jan. 6, 1968, Laguna Hills, California, Sessions Collection, box 2, folder 5, BYU.

52. See Magleby, "1926, Another Beginning," 32.

53. See Arrington, "Founding of LDS Institutes," 143.

54. See Arrington, "Founding of LDS Institutes," 143.

55. See Griffiths, "First Institute Teacher," 187–91.

56. Sessions, "The Latter-day Saint Institutes," 412.

57. See "Seminaries of LDS Church Put under Study by School Officials," *Salt Lake Tribune*, Jan. 9, 1930, 1, 14.

58. "Seminaries of LDS Church," 14.

59. See "Seminaries of LDS Church," 14.

60. See "Seminaries of LDS Church," 14.

61. "Head of System Answers Attack upon Seminaries," *Deseret News*, Jan. 9, 1930, 1.

62. See "Church Leaders Protest Battle on Seminaries," *Deseret News*, Apr. 7, 1930, 1.

63. Merrill to Utah State Board of Education, "A Reply to Inspector Williamson's Report to the State Board of Education on the Existing Relationship Between Religious Seminaries and Public High Schools in the State of Utah and Comments Thereon by a Special Committee of the Board," May 3, 1930, Buchanan Collection, AO149.xml, box 57, folder 13, University of Utah Special Collections, 23–24.

64. See "State Retains Credit Rating of Seminaries," *Salt Lake Tribune*, Sept. 24, 1931.

65. See Ernest L. Wilkinson, ed., *Brigham Young University: The First One Hundred Years*, 4 vols. (1975–76), 2:288.

66. See Russel B. Swensen, "Mormons at the University of Chicago Divinity School: A Personal Reminiscence," *Dialogue* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1972), 37–47; T. Edgar Lyon Jr., *T. Edgar Lyon: A Teacher in Zion* (2002), 123–45; Casey Paul Griffiths, "The Chicago Experiment: Finding the Voice and Charting the Course of Religious Education in the Church," *BYU Studies* 49, no. 4 (2010): 91–130.

67. See "Dr. Joseph F. Merrill Succeeds Dr. Widtsoe in Europe," *Deseret News*, July 18, 1933.

68. Quoted in Richard Sherlock, "Faith and History: The Snell Controversy," *Dialogue* 12, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 27–41.

69. J. Reuben Clark Jr., "The Charted Course of the Church in Education" (address to seminary and institute of religion leaders, Aug. 8, 1938), 4–5; see also *Improvement Era*, Sept. 1938, 571.

70. Sterling M. McMurrin and L. Jackson Newell, *Matters of Conscience: Conversations with Sterling M. McMurrin on Philosophy, Education, and Religion* (1996), 115.

71. S. O. Bennion, Deseret News Publishing Co., to J. Reuben Clark, Aug. 15, 1938, Clark Papers, MSS 303, box 215, folder 8, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

72. J. Reuben Clark to Samuel O. Bennion, Aug. 20, 1938, Clark Papers, box 215, folder 8, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

73. Clark, "Charted Course," 2.

74. See Tuttle, "Released Time Religious Education," 71–72.

75. See Berrett, *Miracle in Weekday Religious Education*, 224.

76. See Berrett, *Miracle in Weekday Religious Education*, 54.

77. Berrett, "My Story," 41–42.

78. See Tuttle, "Released Time Religious Education," 76.

79. J. Reuben Clark office journal, Mar. 21, 1940, addendum book, Clark Papers, box 11, folder 1, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, emphasis in original.

80. See M. Lynn Bennion, *Recollections of a School Man: The Autobiography of M. Lynn Bennion* (1987), 108.

81. J. Reuben Clark to J. Karl Wood, May 27, 1941, Clark Papers, MS 303, box 224, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

82. See Boyd K. Packer, "A History of the Indian Seminaries of the Department of Education, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," 1, unpublished manuscript, William E. Berrett Collection, MSS 1955, box 1, folder 1, BYU Special Collections.

83. George Durant central office interview by Leland Gentry, June 14, 1991, Church record 102 157, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 5.

84. See Packer, "History of the Indian Seminaries," 11.

85. See Frederick S. Buchanan, "Masons and Mormons: Released-Time Politics in Salt Lake City, 1930–1956," *Journal of Mormon History* 19, no. 1 (1993): 61–115.

86. Quoted in Buchanan, "Masons and Mormons," 94–95. The man who paid for the advertisement, David W. Saunders, whose name appeared on the advertisement as its sponsor, later admitted he misunderstood what *released time* meant and what it was for. A transplant from Indiana a year earlier, Saunders didn't even know what *LDS* stood for. Saunders stated that the advertisement was paid for by disaffected Church members; he didn't even attend the board meeting the advertisement called to protest. Throughout the remainder of the 1940s and 1950s released-time seminary was phased in gradually in the Salt Lake district. See also Buchanan, 96–102.

87. Kenneth W. Godfrey to David B. Rimington, Mar. 17, 1986, in David B. Rimington, *Vistas on Visions: A Golden Anniversary History of Church Education in Southern California* (1988), 22. See also "Early-Morning Seminary Celebrates 60 Years," http://lds.org/church/news/early-morning-seminary-celebrates-60-years?lang=eng&query=early+morning+seminary, Sept. 27, 2010.

88. E. Garrett Barlow interview by David Rimington, June 1985, in Rimington, *Vistas on Visions*, 21.

89. See Dennis A. Wright, "Good Morning Los Angeles: The Beginning of the Early Morning Seminary Program," in *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: California*, ed. David F. Boone, Robert C. Freeman, Andrew H. Hedges, and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel (1998), 224.

90. See Wright, "Good Morning Los Angeles," 225.

91. Ray L. Jones, five-page report on the beginnings of early-morning seminary in Los Angeles, quoted in Wright, "Good Morning Los Angeles," 225.

92. See Wright, "Good Morning Los Angeles," 227–29. The six stakes chosen were Los Angeles, Inglewood, South Los Angeles, Pasadena, San Fernando, and East Los Angeles.

93. Ina Easton interview by David B. Rimington, July 1985, quoted in Wright, "Good Morning Los Angeles," 229–30.

94. See Wright, "Good Morning Los Angeles," 233.

95. As of 2010, enrollment for daily seminary was 216,961 compared to 115,787 in released time. See *Seminaries and Institutes of Religion Annual Report for 2010*, 2.

96. See Ernest L. Wilkinson and W. Cleon Skousen, *Brigham Young University: A School of Destiny* (1976), 479–80.

97. The best source on William E. Berrett's background in Church education is found in Berrett, "My Story."

98. Summer School Lectures, 1954, unpublished notes of Harold B. Lee, located in seminary and institute research library.

99. Berrett, "My Story," 77.

100. Berrett, "My Story," 129.

101. Marshall T. Burton quoting George D. Durrant, interview by Casey P. Griffiths, Feb. 3, 2011, 8.

102. Boyd K. Packer central office interview by Leland Gentry, Jan. 17, 1992, Church record 102 157, box 2, folder 31, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 8.

103. A. Theodore Tuttle oral history, interview by Gordon Irving, OH 360, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 116.

104. In Lucile C. Tate, *Boyd K. Packer: A Watchman on the Tower* (1995), 121.

105. Boyd K. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently* (1991), 208.

106. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently*, 210.

107. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently*, 211.

108. Tuttle interview, 124.

109. Tate, *Boyd K. Packer*, 121.

110. See Berrett, "My Story," 79–80.

111. See David O. McKay Diary, Apr. 20, 1961, David O. McKay Papers, MS 668, box 46, folder 5, University of Utah Special Collections.

112. See Mark L. Grover, *A Land of Promise and Prophecy: Elder A. Theodore Tuttle in South America, 1960–1965* (2008), 86–87; minutes of a meeting with Ernest L. Wilkinson and William E. Berrett, June 1, 1961, CES administrative files, Church record 102 125, box 11, folder 10, Church History Library, Salt Lake City. The CES administrative files from this period show an abundant amount of requests for seminary and institute programs from Latin America, some written by Tuttle himself, and coinciding with the five-year period he supervised the work in the region. Requests for the programs in Guatemala, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, and the Andes Mission (Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia) may be found in the records from this period (see CES administrative files, box 11, folders 8–10, Church History Library, Salt Lake City).

113. Boyd K. Packer to David O. McKay and Counselors, Feb. 18, 1963; a complete copy of this letter is found in McKay Diary, Mar. 5, 1963, box 53, folder 7, McKay Papers, University of Utah Special Collections, emphasis in original.

114. Letter from Lt. Col. A. E. Haines to William E. Berrett, Sept. 1, 1963, New York, CES administrative files, box 10, folder 10, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

115. See William E. Berrett interview by E. Dale LeBaron, May 6, 1991, 2 (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession).

116. See Berrett 1991 interview, 5; Berrett, *Miracle in Weekday Religious Education*, 160.

117. William E. Berrett oral history, interview by Thomas E. Cheney, Jan. 27, 1982, UA OH 69, BYU Special Collections, 16. See also Berrett 1991 oral history, 5.

118. See Donald Wilson, "History of the Latter-day Saint Home Study Program," 1, unpublished manuscript, MS 4941, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

119. See Donald R. Bond interview by E. Dale LeBaron, June 13, 1991, 4 (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession). Donald R. Bond, "A New Type of Seminary: A Grain of Mustard Seed," 2, unpublished manuscript (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession). The three areas selected for the pilot were Des Moines and Davenport, Iowa, and Vincennes, Indiana.

120. See Bond 1991 interview, 16.

121. Donald B. Jessee interview by E. Dale LeBaron, July 5, 1991, 18–19, 21 (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession).

122. See Arnold J. Stringham, "My Experience in Seminary Curriculum," 3–4, unpublished manuscript (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession; courtesy of Arnold Stringham).

123. R. Wayne Linke to Ernest L. Eberhard Jr., Dec. 20, 1967, Marshalltown, Iowa (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession).

124. Bond, "A New Type of Seminary," 5. Though not privy to the discussions of the Church Board of Education, Bond mentioned there were rumors that some of the hesitation about the home study seminary program came from the fact that Home Teaching and Family Home Evening had recently been re-emphasized, and Church leaders worried about overwhelming members with too many new program.

125. J. L. Jaussi interview by E. Dale LeBaron, May 28, 1991, 7 (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession).

126. See John and Diane Madsen interview by E. Dale LeBaron, Aug. 8, 1991, 34.

127. Madsen interview, 40.

128. Madsen interview, 43.

129. See Madsen interview, 74.

130. See John Madsen, "A Brief Account of the Introduction of the Church Education in Great Britain," 4, unpublished manuscript (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession).

131. See LaVelle Moss interview by E. Dale LeBaron, June 12, 1991, 23–24 (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession).

132. See E. Dale LeBaron, "Go Ye into All the World: Pioneering in Church Education," 65, unpublished manuscript, seminaries and institutes research library.

133. Clarence F. Schramm interview by Casey P. Griffiths, Nov. 8, 2010, 25. Soon after Berrett retired, he was asked by Commissioner Maxwell to compile a history of seminaries and institutes, an assignment he embraced wholeheartedly, eventually compiling five volumes of material, over 3,000 pages; see Berrett, *Miracle in Weekday Religious Education*, xi.

134. See Berrett, "My Story," 80–81.

135. Quoted in Daniel Lund Hess, "The Evolution of Media in the Church Educational System of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 2002), 23.

136. George D. Durrant interview by Casey P. Griffiths, Feb. 25, 2011.

137. See Hess, "Evolution of Media," 22.

138. See Joe J. Christensen oral history, interview by David J. Whitaker, 1977, OH 319, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 8.

139. Neal A. Maxwell interview by E. Dale LeBaron, March 3, 1992, 3 (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession).

140. See Christensen 1977 oral history, 10.

141. Joe J. Christensen, "The Globalization of the Church Educational System," in Reid L. Neilson, ed., *Global Mormonism in the 21st Century* (2008), 191.

142. In David A. Christensen interview by E. Dale LeBaron, May 19, 1991, 73 (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession).

143. See Christensen 1991 interview, 25.

144. See Stephen K. Iba interview by E. Dale LeBaron, June 26, 1991, 25 (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession).

145. Robert B. Arnold interview by E. Dale LeBaron, May 2, 1991, 12 (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession).

146. See Richard L. Brimhall interview by E. Dale LeBaron, June 11, 1991, 99 (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession).

147. Joe J. Christensen interview by E. Dale LeBaron, Apr. 13, 1991, 30 (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession).

148. See Bruce M. Lake interview by E. Dale LeBaron, May 1, 1991, 9–10 (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession).

149. See Spencer J. and Shirley J. Palmer, eds., *The Korean Saints: Personal Stories of Trial and Triumph, 1950–1980* (1995), 184–90.

150. Neal A. Maxwell oral history, interview by E. Dale LeBaron, Mar. 3, 1992, 19 (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession).

151. Franklin D. Day oral history, interview by David J. Whittaker, July 22, 1977, OH 366, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 16.

152. Day 1977 oral history by Whittaker, 18.

153. Franklin D. Day interview by E. Dale LeBaron, May 3, 1991, 37 (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession).

154. Joe J. Christensen, "Abiding by its Precepts," in Gaye Strathearn and Charles Swift, eds., *Living the Book of Mormon: Abiding by Its Precepts*, Sidney B. Sperry Symposium (2007), 3.

155. See Berrett, *Miracle in Weekday Religious Education*, 188.

156. Quoted in Raymond Kuehne, *Mormons as Citizens of a Communist State: A Documentary History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in East Germany, 1945–1990* (2010), 181.

157. Henry Kosak interview by Casey P. Griffiths, Apr. 7, 2011, 3. Brother Kosak went on to become a seminary teacher himself, and today serves as the S&I area director in Europe East Area.

158. In Kuehne, *Mormons as Citizens*, 181–82.

159. Kelly P. Anderson, Sean R. Dixon, Tracy R. Kirkham, and Gregory B. Wightman, "Foundations of Sequential Scripture Teaching in the Church Educational System," 8, unpublished manuscript, University of Phoenix, 1997 (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession).

160. Stanley A. Peterson interview by Jeffrey L. Anderson, Feb. 17, 2000, transcript courtesy of seminaries and institutes, 23.

161. Peterson 2000 interview, 23

162. See Anderson, "Foundations of Sequential Scripture Teaching," 9.

163. Anderson, "Foundations of Sequential Scripture Teaching," 10.

164. Anderson, "Foundations of Sequential Scripture Teaching," 11.

165. Bruce R. McConkie, "The Foolishness of Teaching" (address to CES religious educators, Sept. 19, 1981), 7.

166. See Hess, "Evolution of Media," 37.

167. Paul V. Johnson interview by Casey P. Griffiths, Jan. 19, 2010, 2.

168. See Johnson 2010 interview, 3.

169. See Stanley A. Peterson interview by E. Dale LeBaron, May 1, 1991, 7 (copy in Casey P. Griffiths's possession).

170. Peterson 1991 interview, 8.

171. Peterson 1991 interview, 21.

172. Peterson 1991 interview, 23.

173. Don and Milja Harper phone conversation with Casey P. Griffiths, Oct. 25, 2011.

174. Harper phone conversation.

175. Johnson 2010 interview, 7.

176. S&I is an abbreviated term for Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, the preferred name for the religious education programs of the Church Educational System. Through the years the seminary and institute programs have been referred to by a number of names, sometimes simply as CES, or the Church Educational System. It should be noted, however, that the Church Educational System is an umbrella term for five different educational entities operated by the Church, namely, Brigham Young University, Brigham Young University–Hawaii, Brigham Young University–Idaho, LDS Business College, and Seminaries and Institutes (which includes the elementary and secondary schools operated by the Church in the Pacific and Mexico). Recognizing the confusion that could stem from these terms, on March 10, 2008, the Church Board of Education sent a memo announcing an organizational name change for religious education to simply Seminaries and Institutes of Religion.

177. Talks available at si.lds.org after logging in.

178. Johnson 2010 interview, 10.

179. Teaching and learning emphasis (2009).

180. Roger G. Christensen interview by Casey P. Griffiths, Sept. 1, 2010, 29.

181. W. Rolfe Kerr, "On the Lord's Errand" (CES satellite training broadcast, Aug. 2005), 7.

182. Chad H. Webb, "Deepening Conversion" (CES satellite broadcast, Aug. 7, 2007), 1, 4.

183. Teaching and learning emphasis.

184. See Coleman and Jones, "History of Granite Seminary, 1933," 18, 23.

185. See "Granite Seminary: Spanking New Building Now Stands Where First Classes Were Held in 1912," *Church News*, Sept. 4, 1993, 8–9.

186. Worldwide enrollment for 2010–11 in S&I 2012 annual report, 5.

187. Henry B. Eyring, "A Discussion on Scripture Study: An Interview with Elder Henry B. Eyring," *Ensign*, July 2005, 25.