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“Nothing Less Than Miraculous”
The First Decade of Mormonism in Mongolia

Steven C. Harper

The Latter-day Saints’ assumption of Christ’s great commission—the command to teach and baptize all nations—can hardly be overstated as a motivational force for sending missionaries to far-away places to testify of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. An 1831 revelation authorized and empowered Joseph Smith to send missionaries “unto the ends of the world” and “to lay the foundation of this church, and to bring it forth out of obscurity” (D&C 1:23, 30). What better manifestation could be found of the power of these words than the events of the first decade of Mormonism in Mongolia, perhaps the most obscure place in which the Church has emerged?

One of the first young Latter-day Saint missionaries to serve in Mongolia, Brad Pierson (served 1993–95), said, “When I was growing up my mother used to threaten to send me to Outer Mongolia if I did not behave. Little did she know this would come true! In fact, she didn’t even know where it was when I told her [I was being reassigned there].”1 A senior missionary wrote from Mongolia in 1995, “We received one of the two boxes shipped from Salt Lake City. . . . We are lucky we got it at all. It was addressed to Ulaanbaatar 44, Marshall Islands. Somebody needs to study their geography.”2 Missionaries Alice and DuWayne Schmidt related:

When our stake president called us into his office late in the summer of 1992, he explained that the Lord had a special call for us to serve in Outer Mongolia. “Will you accept the call?” he asked. We replied, “Of course, if the Lord has called us, we will serve. But now tell us, where are we really being called?” He answered solemnly, “I am not kidding you, it is a call to Mongolia.”3

These examples illustrate how far removed Mongolia is from Western consciousness—so far that it serves as convenient shorthand for a place that is absolutely other and elsewhere, like Timbuktu. Mongolist Alan Sanders wrote that major historical developments in Mongolia occur “mostly out of sight of the Western world.” This essay attempts to demonstrate that such developments are not beyond the scope of the watchful eye of the Author of the great commission.

As the population of Mongolia approaches three million, the number of native Latter-day Saints surpasses four thousand. The Mongolian ambassador to the U.S. recently quipped that Mongolia is “99% Buddhist and 1% Mormon.” Though his calculation was off by a decimal point (the figure is closer to 0.1%), the comment is telling. Remarkably, the Church is reportedly the largest Christian denomination in Mongolia. Latter-day Saints are “among the most active” foreign missionaries in Mongolia, noted Associated Press writer Michael Kohn, who quoted one convert, a former Buddhist nun named Ankhtuya, as saying, “Mongolia should become a Mormon country.” Paul Hyer, professor of Asian Studies at Brigham Young University, in 1998 said, “The development of the Church in Mongolia is nothing less than miraculous.”

“Historical Pain”: Mongolia’s Past

Mongolia’s capital, Ulaanbaatar, is a busy city, but many Mongolians still live in rural areas (fig. 1). Urbanization and industrialization are recent

![Fig. 1. Nomadic riders, near the road from Ulaanbaatar to Darkhan, 2001. This countryside was home to Genghis Khan, who ruled a vast empire covering much of Asia.](https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol42/iss1/3)
developments, mainly caused by Soviet influences. Centuries of nomadic life conditioned Mongolians to be transient, and they still move easily from place to place.

Mongolia’s geographical position between China on its south and the Russian frontier on its north is a powerful historical determinant. Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a keen observer of the human condition, sensed what he called “historical pain” in the Mongolian people “because of the location and buffetings of the country.” Mongolians are the forsaken heirs of the largest empire in the history of the world. Chingiz (Genghis) Khan, the mastermind of a materially and psychologically devastating mounted regime, gained control of an immense empire spanning Asia and Europe in the thirteenth century. He and his descendants ruled an empire that was considerably larger than and lasted longer than the USSR. Marco Polo marveled at Mongol military prowess. The fact that Mongols ruled China and Russia in earlier centuries is significant because Mongolia’s recent past is a humiliating process of buffetings at the hands of those nations. China’s Ming dynasty expelled their Mongol rulers in 1368, diminishing the Mongolian empire, and, beginning in 1691, the Manchus controlled Mongolia until their reign collapsed in 1911. When their oppressors fell, Mongolians declared their independence under the leadership of Buddhist lamas. However, the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia made Mongolia’s feudal aristocrats
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cross the border. Chinese troops recaptured Mongolia in 1919, while the Russians struggled with a civil war that spilled into Mongolia. Anti-communist ("White") Russians fleeing Bolsheviks forced the Chinese out of Mongolia in 1921, but a swell of Mongolian nationalism, backed by the Bolsheviks, led to the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party. On November 26, 1924, the Mongolian Party formed the Mongolian People's Republic, the second communist nation.

Josef Stalin’s oppressive Soviet regime fostered a similarly brutal one in Mongolia, carried out under the direction of the Mongolian dictator Khorloo Choibalsan. Aristocrats lost property and often their lives. Buddhist monks were exterminated and monasteries destroyed (fig. 2). An estimated 3 percent of Mongolians, perhaps as many as one hundred thousand, were purged. Mongolian students at Brigham Young University—Hawaii relate how their grandfathers “disappeared” in the 1930s, as communists rid themselves of those not inclined to toe the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party line. The ominous extent of this oppression is only now being realized as Mongolian scholars mine newly accessible records in which they discover the details of ancestors’ disappearances. Mongolia became increasingly dependent on Soviet industry, infrastructure, and leadership until by the 1940s she was sovereign in name only.

Soviet perestroika (restructuring) in the 1980s spread to Mongolia. By the mid-1980s, many Mongolian officials were convinced that centralized management of the economy underlay persisting stagnation. Led by Jambyn Batmonkh, critics within the Party chided what they regarded as dogmatic socialism and lambasted the bureaucracy as inimical to a healthy socialist state. Cries for reform called for an end to authoritarianism and intellectual indolence by liberalizing the nomination and election of party deputies. The Party Politburo passed a resolution to remove a statue of Josef Stalin from the entrance to the State Library in Ulaanbaatar.

Fig. 2. Gandan Tegchinlen, Ulaanbaatar, 2001. This Buddhist monastery was one of the few in Mongolian cities to escape destruction by Communists. Buddhism is the prevailing religion in Mongolia.

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Meanwhile, the Soviets withdrew troops, technology, and other resources from Mongolia.\textsuperscript{14}

By 1990 a host of democratic organizations were calling for more dramatic reform. Measures pushed through the Great Khural, the Party’s own legislature, significantly diminished Party power. A law on elections amended the constitution: parties were legalized, the office of president created, and a standing representative legislature, the Little Khural, revitalized. The 1990 election sent sixteen Mongolian Democratic Party delegates, 24 percent of the total, to the Great Khural, and nineteen Democratic delegates to the fifty-member Little Khural. Tsedendambyn Batbayar wrote:

The main achievement of the Little Khural . . . was the drafting of the new Constitution, which . . . went far toward guaranteeing the irreversibility of the democratic changes. Under the new constitution . . . Mongolia is a parliamentary democracy with a presidency with limited powers. The Constitution proclaims the sovereignty of Mongolia and protects the individual rights of its citizens, including their private property. The principle of separation of powers is affirmed, and the familiar three branches of government are provided for. The center of power lies in a unicameral seventy-six seat State Great Khural elected every four year[s].\textsuperscript{15}

This remarkably peaceful revolution was accompanied by hardships that worsened before they improved. There is no seamless or painless transition from a collective, state-owned-and-operated economic system to a free and open market. As one effect of this market revolution, overall poverty increased even as some people profited handsomely. Enormous sums of money poured into Mongolia, including U.S., Korean, Japanese, French, and German investments, but little of that saw its way to the proletarian, though highly literate, majority. Mongolians had no tradition of free enterprise. Communism conditioned them to perform tasks as dictated and to expect security. They were ill equipped, generally speaking, to make their way in a competitive political economy in which rewards follow independent initiative and risk-taking. “Suddenly you are in front of big choices you can make by yourself,” said Anand Sangaa, a Latter-day Saint convert, suggesting that agency increases anxiety even as it liberates.\textsuperscript{16} Communism produced a rapid spiritual life of official atheism and secularization, but usually everyone had enough to eat.

Democratization brought dramatic shifts in public opinion, exposed corruption and opportunism, and subjected Mongolians to the vicissitudes of a market economy. Responses included a retreat by many toward the security of communism. Rural voters chose overwhelmingly to reelect Communist officials. Others looked to Mongolia’s pre-Communist past,
searching for a sense of heritage and identity from the history and ideology of the Khans or traditional Shamanism or Buddhism. A third response, the one most relevant here, was a willingness to investigate new and foreign ideas, including the restored gospel.

In this context, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was positioned to offer opportunities for both spiritual and temporal security to an anxious population ready to hear something new. As the revelations say and the missionaries testify, “the field is white already to harvest” (D&C 4:4). It remained only for the Church to meet Mongolians on these terms and begin what has been called “the Mongolian miracle.”

The First Official Church Contacts

In 1984, Monte J. Brough took two of his sons on a hunting trip in Mongolia. They formed cordial relationships with their Mongolian guides, and Brough “wondered if ever they [the guides] would hear the message of the restoration of the gospel.” He “prayed for the day.” In 1988, Brough was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy, and in 1990 assigned as First Counselor to Elder Merlin Lybbert, President of the Asia Area, headquartered in Hong Kong. Brough observed:

In the course of the next year and a half, or nearly two years, it was our privilege to be involved in opening or reopening six countries. We were involved in reopening Sri Lanka, for example, we went to Pakistan, we were involved with the first baptisms, and established the first branches there. We traveled to Bangladesh, to Hanoi, Vietnam, Mongolia and Nepal. What an exciting time to be in Asia.

In November 1990, Professor Paul Hyer, then the chairman of graduate Asian studies in the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies at Brigham Young University, asked Jon Huntsman Jr., then a U.S. Department of Commerce official assigned to a committee negotiating U.S.-Mongolian trade, to inquire if the recently appointed Mongolian ambassador to the U.S. would welcome an invitation to address the Kennedy Center. Ambassador Gendengiin Nyamdoo accepted a formal invitation, and on March 20, 1991, delivered a lecture in Provo: “Mongolia on the Way to Democracy.” The First Presidency took advantage of the ambassador’s visit to host him at the Church Administration Building on March 19. Presidents Gordon B. Hinckley and Thomas S. Monson, together with Elder Neal A. Maxwell, Paul Hyer, and Hyer’s Mongolian colleague Sechin Jagchid, listened as the ambassador assured them that “the new Mongolia is democratic and would welcome representatives of the Church,” including, implicitly, missionaries. Polite diplomacy, Hyer
thought, but Jagchid "was firm in taking the [ambassador's] report at face value." Elder Maxwell, whose assignments in the Quorum of Twelve Apostles included oversight of the Asia Area, pressed the issue, too. After the meeting he "contacted the Asia Area Presidency in Hong Kong under President Merlin Lybbert." The Area Presidency subsequently met with Hyer in Hong Kong on June 27, 1991, as he "was returning from a term at the University of Nanjing in Taiwan." In the ensuing months, plans were laid for Hyer and Jagchid to visit the Mongolian embassy in Washington, D.C., to propose that representatives be invited to Mongolia to make contacts. On October 25, 1991, the two "had a cordial meeting with Ambassador Dawagiv at the Mongolian Embassy." The Mongolian officials received the proposals positively, and in conversation Hyer brought up the subject of religion. Hyer noted that Latter-day Saints in China are restricted severely. In response, "the ambassador smiled and gave us unequivocal assurance that there is no such situation, no such restrictions in the Mongolian People's Republic."

Somewhat painstaking negotiation followed, slowed by measured communication between Washington, D.C., and Ulaanbaatar. An invitation came for representatives from BYU—not the Church—to visit Mongolia. That situation was unsatisfactory. "It is important that we enter the country properly," the Area Presidency clarified, "and not under some guise that may compromise our efforts later." Hyer diplomatically brokered a "redrafting" of the invitation, which was cleared by Mongolia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Finally, on March 14, 1992, Ambassador Dawagiv wrote to President Lybbert:

> On behalf of the Ministry for External Affairs of Mongolia I am extending an invitation to representatives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to visit Mongolia to discuss issues related to registration in Mongolia for humanitarian service by your organization including such activities as educational assistance, scholarships at your university in America, consulting services in business or law and the like.

The ambassador's formal invitation opened the way for Elders Lybbert and Brough to obtain travel visas and plan a visit to Ulaanbaatar. Authorized by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, Lybbert and Brough made a diplomatic call on government and education officials in Mongolia in May 1992. Brough describes their first contact:

> We were met at the airport by a man by the name of Nayanjin . . . a middle level government official. He had been educated in Moscow, Russia and demonstrated all of that Russian training. He was aloof, even suspicious of Americans being in Mongolia. He treated us with disdain, and was somewhat indifferent, but he spoke wonderful English and there was very little English spoken in Mongolia then.
Utah Valley State College and Mongolia

Dr. Gendengiin Nyamdooo, Mongolia’s first ambassador to the United States after the departure of the Russians from Mongolia in 1990, came to Utah in 1991. As part of that visit, he met with me, as I was then director of the Center for International Studies at Utah Valley State College. During this meeting, I asked Nyamdooo what UVSC and I might do to assist Mongolia in its transition from communism to democracy. Nyamdooo responded, “Please help us educate our young people.”

I met with Nyamdooo in Mongolia in 1993 to arrange for the first group of Mongolian students to study at UVSC. Nyamdooo’s daughter, Bolormaa, came to Utah with the first group of six students in fall 1993; as of 2003, about three hundred Mongolian young adults have studied at UVSC. These students profit from our higher education system and learn about American life. Many who currently come to study at UVSC are converts to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, including returned Mongolian missionaries, and some students join the Church after coming to Utah. As these students return to Mongolia, they not only serve in important positions in government, business, and education but also strengthen the Church.

Since spring 1996, UVSC has brought a total of over 150 Mongolian educators and government leaders for a month of training in democracy, American studies, and higher education. Those trained include a prime minister, a foreign minister, a minister of agriculture, a chairman of parliament, twenty-seven college and university presidents, many members of parliament, other high government officials, university professors, and business leaders. Clearly, UVSC has made an impressive commitment to assisting these leaders in developing methods of bringing Mongolia into the modern, pluralistic world.

Wanting to see Utah’s sights and knowing of the Church’s assistance in

FIG. 3. Malan Jackson and a Mongolian member in front of the first Church-owned building in Mongolia, probably 1999.
training professionals in Mongolia, these leaders visit Temple Square and tour the BYU campus, and some of them choose to attend Church meetings. Many opt to stay in the homes of Church members during their visit. They return to Mongolia with a copy of the Book of Mormon and a basic understanding of and friendship with the Church. This connection has led to missionaries being invited to teach English classes at most of the universities represented in the training program.

I have visited Mongolia many times now and have always been well received (figs. 3, 4). I have retired from UVSC but continue projects in Mongolia with the help of Church members in Utah and Idaho. In 2003, I brought a group of eleven top Mongolian officials to Utah and Idaho to prepare for several projects to be carried out in Bulgan Province. When these officials, including members of parliament and the governor of the province, toured Temple Square, they had a Mongolian sister as their guide. They returned to Mongolia with a deep appreciation of the concern and interest shown by the American people and members of the Church.

—Malan R. Jackson
The demise of the Soviet Union "left Mongolia without many services that the Soviets had previously provided including the knowledge of how to run a higher education system." With Nayanjin interpreting, Lybbert and Brough sought "the opportunity for us to do something in a humanitarian way." Elder Brough recalled, "We found enormous receptivity." Mongolian officials accepted a tentative offer of material aid and human resources to help fill voids. Lybbert and Brough returned from Mongolia convinced that we could find five or six couples that would have the kinds of expertise that would be used in Mongolia, that would be of great benefit to the Mongolia[n] people, and we could use that as opening the door to get in there for missionary work. Because the Mongolians needed us, we were able to negotiate the idea that the couples could proselyte, that they could teach the gospel, and actually had in our agreement with them that if a Mongolia[n] wanted to, they could join our church.

Mongolian officials felt this was a small concession compared with the Church's offering. So Mongolia's Deputy Minister of Education signed the Church's agreement, granting remarkable freedom not enjoyed elsewhere in newly opened Asian areas.31

Shortly after returning to Hong Kong, the Asia Area Presidency proposed to the First Presidency that five or six carefully selected couples be called to Mongolia. Elder Maxwell presented the proposal, which won quick approval. By June 1992 the Asia Presidency informed contacts in Mongolia that the Church's tentative offer of aid could be realized. Pressing matters, however, drew the Area Presidency's attention away from Mongolia momentarily. That was long enough for Mongolians to reelect a Communist majority. When no response came from Mongolia and newspapers reported the election results, the Presidency surmised they had labored for naught. Newly reorganized with Elder Brough as President, the Area Presidency determined—"and maybe the vote was two to one," Elder Brough quipped—that he should "go back up to Mongolia and confirm our suspicion that we were no longer welcome."32

"I was alone," Brough says tellingly about his arrival in Ulaanbaatar later that summer. No one met him at the airport until a young woman came asking, "Mr. Brogha, Mr. Brogha?" Unable to communicate, Brough heeded her direction to a taxi, then to the same hotel at which he stayed in 1984. At least the hotel was familiar. Brough tried to ask the young woman to contact the party that had sent her, but her English was poor. She left, and "I waited," Brough says. "That was early afternoon. I waited all afternoon. I waited into the evening. Nobody called me so I went to bed."
I didn’t sleep well. I woke up the next morning hoping that someone would call. No one called. Ten o’clock. Eleven o’clock. Twelve o’clock. Nothing at all. There I was stuck in Mongolia.” Brough continues:

There was a moment in that hotel room in Ulaanbaatar when I felt beyond anything that I knew and understood. I had a situation that was totally beyond my capacity, my understanding, and my knowledge to solve. Yet I deeply felt that Heavenly Father wanted us to be there, and counted back the feelings I’d had in 1984 and the years before when I’d traveled there with my sons. So in a great moment, a wonderful moment, one we should all have when we’re beyond anything we know, I got on my knees and asked God’s help. In a wonderful prayer, I just pled with Him for help. I got up from that prayer with the name of Nayanjin on my mind. Now my impression at that time was still this stiff, aloof, suspicious Russian-sort-of-KGB guy. But his name was on my mind. So with a little bit of help at the front desk I was able to locate his name in the directory and get a phone number. I dialed that number. He answered the phone in the Mongolian language, of course. I said, “Mr. Nayanjin?” He went, “Mr. Brough, you in Mongolia? We think you never come.” . . .

. . . “You need some help, Mr. Brough?” . . . “I be right over.” Ten minutes later he was at my door.

Greatly relieved to make contact, Brough learned that none of the messages sent to confirm the tentative relationship between Mongolian officials and the Church had been received. He informed Nayanjin of the Church’s commitment to providing human and material resources to Mongolia. Within hours they had appointments with government and university leaders, including the influential Minister of Education. At one meeting a university rector sought clarification: “You are going to send these couples and they will teach us English. They will teach us business. They will teach us medicine. They will teach us education. They come at their own expense. My question is why do they do that?” Brough replied, “We all have the same Heavenly Father. . . . we are brothers and sisters, and it’s because of our love of Heavenly Father’s children, our brothers and sisters, that people are willing to do this.” Within days agreements were in place and housing was sought for missionary couples. Apartments are hard to come by in Mongolia. Many Mongolians live in the traditional ger, the portable housing of herders. Soviet-built apartment buildings dominate the skyline of Ulaanbaatar, but the highly coveted apartments are awarded for years of service to the government. Before Brough left Mongolia, an agreement that the couples would have apartments was in place.

On September 17, 1992, Donna and Kenneth Beesley arrived in Mongolia; they held Mongolia’s first sacrament meeting three days later. Between October and the following February, four more couples with varied professional backgrounds arrived—Marjorie and Stanley Smith,
My Involvement with the Mongolia Mission

I have been privileged to be present at key developments of the establishment of Church in Asia. I was one of the first few missionaries to begin work among the Japanese in 1946 immediately after the war in the Pacific. Missionaries were not yet permitted in Japan, so our work began among the Japanese in Hawaii—a preparatory work. Near the end of my first mission, in 1948, I trained the first five missionaries assigned to open a mission in Japan. Two of these later became mission presidents. In a number of ways, I have been and still am involved in approaches related to the beginnings of the restored Church in the great realm of China. At this writing, I am serving as first counselor in the China International District, which covers all of China but Hong Kong. We work with four fine branches located around the country and a number of smaller groups, consisting mainly of teachers at Chinese universities. We are working with Chinese officials in charge of religious affairs and beginning to find the Church’s lost native Chinese members.

I also had a small part in preparing the way for the opening of Mongolia for missionary work. Planting the Church in Mongolia is an inspiring story, especially so to me because I am familiar with the painful attempts of other Christian churches over the past two hundred years to convert Mongols to Christianity. One missionary labored some twenty years and converted one person. As I think back, I used to believe that the gospel would not be taken to Mongolia until the millennium. But at the time of this writing, the work is progressing rapidly: Mongolian converts not only are coming into the Church but also are accepting mission calls to Russia, the U.S., Korea, and other places. By my last reckoning, 10 percent of the membership have served or are serving missions—a far higher percentage than of Church membership in general.

My interest in Mongolia began in 1951 during graduate school at the University of California, Berkeley. I became acquainted with several Mongols who had been leaders in political movements in Inner Mongolia. By 1953, I completed a master’s thesis on Lamaist Buddhism and the Japanese occupation of Mongolia. For almost fifty years, I have continued to research and write about the modern history of Mongolia in connection with my work on modern Chinese history. This has included related work in Japan and Taiwan.
I continue to expand my circle of Mongolian friends and participate in symposia, including periodic meetings in Mongolia. My wife, Karen, and I thoroughly enjoy our visits there (fig. 5). I brought to BYU the preeminent native Mongolian scholar Professor Sechin Jagchid, who has worked with us for over twenty-five years.

Before any missionaries arrived in Mongolia, Karen and I were in Ulaanbaatar in August 1992 for an academic conference—the World Conference of Mongolists. We met with Elder Monte J. Brough, who was in town surveying the living conditions in preparation for assigning some missionaries there. Earlier in the day Karen and I had met in the American Embassy with a Latter-day Saint man from Ogden, Utah, who had been called out of retirement to assist in the new embassy in Mongolia. We told him that Church leaders were planning on sending missionaries to Mongolia that fall. He said the winters in Mongolia are very cold—it would be better for the missionaries to arrive in the spring. We mentioned this to Elder Brough, who was raised on the frigid plains of Wyoming. He said if the missionaries could not take a winter in Mongolia, they should not bother to come at all.

There is no end to this story. The Church is not only surviving in Mongolia, it is thriving. At this writing, the Church has over four thousand members in twenty-one branches. We have continued to go to Mongolia to academic meetings and particularly in connection with humanitarian related projects with the Mongolian Women’s Federation, in which Karen has been involved. The development of the Church in Mongolia is nothing less than miraculous to me and a testimony that indeed the Church is the divinely authorized work of our Father in Heaven on the earth.

—I Paul Hyer
Anna and Richard Harper, Jane and Royce Flandro, and Alice and DuWayne Schmidt. Barbara and Gary Carlson arrived in May 1993. Accustomed to the luxuries of American homes, the missionaries learned that Mongolian apartments were spartan by comparison. Even worse, the Beesleys discovered that an apartment reserved for them had been given to others. But Nayanjin again came to the rescue: “Because you are my brother,” he offered them his apartment with food and furniture at untold personal hardship.  

These envoys provided expertise in education, computer science, business, curriculum development, medicine, and English. Kenneth Beesley, a former president of LDS Business College, helped with higher education. Alice Cannon Schmidt, with a Bachelor of Science degree and pedagogical experience, taught English. Her husband, DuWayne, formerly chief of the Pulmonary Division at LDS Hospital and clinical professor at the University of Utah medical school, taught medicine. All selected were “able-bodied and expert” pioneers. Together they worked under the direction of the Ministry of Science and Education to “consult and teach . . . in various schools, colleges, and high schools” in Ulaanbaatar.

Winter 1992–93 was hard on Mongolians and the newly arrived missionaries. Mongolian winters are usually severe, and that year food and drinking water were especially limited. Electricity and heating were irregular. The Beijing Branch Relief Society personally delivered food and money to the missionaries.

Mongolian higher education was in severe disarray. Buildings were in disrepair, libraries were undeserving of the name, and textbooks, where available, were outdated and avowedly Communist. The Church was perfectly situated and inclined to meet some of these immediate temporal needs of the Mongolian people. Forty tons of Western college texts, medicine, and other supplies were delivered. All of this aid, however, was but an important part of a larger effort to meet eternal needs. Elder Brough clarified from the outset the liberal agreement he reached with the Mongolian government: “They are going as missionaries, and it is understood that they will be teaching others about our faith and holding Church meetings.”

The missionaries were permitted to answer questions and invite the curious to meetings but were restricted from open proselyting. Their peculiar presence insured plenty of curious inquirers, however, and soon they were teaching the gospel when they were not teaching another subject. Lamjav Purevsuren and Tsendkhuu Bat-Ulzii, students in Elder Stanley Smith’s marketing course at Mongolian National University, wondered “why these American professionals would come to Mongolia.” Smith delightedly invited the two men to come and see. They attended Sunday meetings, accepted the gospel as taught by the missionaries, and were baptized—the first Mongolian converts.
Dedicating the Land and Creating a Mission

On April 15, 1993, Elder Neal A. Maxwell, “in the power and authority of the Holy Apostleship,” dedicated Mongolia for the teaching of the restored gospel (fig. 6).41 On a windy hilltop outside Ulaanbaatar, capped by a monument to a Soviet-style state, Elder Maxwell prayed that the winds of freedom would ever blow in Mongolia and that her independence might not be compromised regardless of power struggles elsewhere. Maxwell pled that Mongolia’s leaders would be aided in their efforts to “preserve freedom and to have a more adequate economy.” He prayed that converts would be “strong as they will shape the future of the Church in Mongolia.” He prayed that missionaries would be welcomed, dedicated, and full of love for their hosts. “Heavenly Father,” he said, “may the yesterdays of Mongolia not hold the tomorrows of Mongolia hostage.”42 Mongolian Latter-day Saints, missionaries, invited officials, and Elder Maxwell with his wife, Colleen, met in a reception to mark the occasion. Shortly after the dedication of Mongolia, the first Mongolian woman to join the Church, Gendenjamts Davaajargal, was baptized.43

Meanwhile, while studying in Germany, Togtokhin Enkhtuvshin, a Mongolian National University professor of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, met Latter-day Saint missionaries on a German street. He read the Book of Mormon and joined the Church in mid-1993. He returned home to Mongolia shortly thereafter with mixed emotions. “I was excited because I thought I might be the first Mongolian member,” he said, “but I was concerned about returning home and not having the Church.”44 This understated point may be hard for Westerners to grasp. As a Communist party official, Enkhtuvshin consciously traded political, social, and economic status for faith. Indeed he hoped the Church would be there: he had sacrificed everything else.

In mid-1993 the first young elders were called to

Fig. 6. Church leaders at the dedication of Mongolia for the teaching of the gospel, April 15, 1993. Elder Neal A. Maxwell is joined by his wife, Colleen, and Elder and Sister Kwok Yuen Tai of the Asia Area Presidency. The site is a monument on a hill overlooking Ulaanbaatar, the capital city.
Mongolia. They had reported to the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah, to prepare to serve in Russia. While at the MTC, they were invited to accept an assignment to Mongolia instead. On August 14, 1993, Elders Blanchard, Birch, Hansen, Mortinson, Meier, and Pierson arrived in Mongolia to fulfill their commission—and Pierson’s mother’s threat to send him to Outer Mongolia. They taught English in various colleges and learned Mongolian from private tutors. Their presence intensified curiosity. Attendance at meetings jumped. A few of the curious became converted. By early 1994, nearly fifty Mongolians had joined the Church. A branch was organized with Enkhtuvshin as president on January 16, 1994.

In February 1994, Charles L. Hardy, formerly a federal judge, replaced Kenneth Beesley as the presiding Church authority in Mongolia, with instructions to obtain official registration for the Church with the Ministries of Culture and Justice. Enkhtuvshin’s contacts, together with Church donations to a library, aided the approvals. The Church was granted official registration in November 1994. More missionaries followed, including Richard Cook, formerly a comptroller at Ford Motor Company, and his wife, Mary.

Very early one morning in April 1995, the Cooks received a phone call from President Gordon B. Hinckley, who called Elder Cook to preside over the Mongolia Ulaanbaatar Mission. The Cooks returned to Provo for mission president training and reported back to Mongolia for the July 1, 1995, opening of the mission, staffed now by a steady stream of young men and women helped increasingly by Mongolian converts who lined up teaching appointments.

Though diligent, intelligent, and spiritually strong, the elders were challenged, first to learn the language and then to teach a gospel for which no precise native terminology existed. It took several years, in fact, to achieve a satisfactory translation of the Church’s name. Trained to begin the first lesson with the idea that most people believe in a supreme being, even though they may call him by different names, missionaries found that most Mongolians did not share even that starting premise. Nevertheless, the Church continued to grow and eventually was able to purchase a well-known building in Ulaanbaatar (fig. 7).

Dynamics of Conversion

The stories of three converts demonstrate the dilemmas that investigators face.

Oyunchimeg Dugarsuren. An engineering student in Ulaanbaatar, Oyunchimeg Dugarsuren challenged the missionaries. “You must pray to know if God is there,” they taught her. “How can I pray if I don’t know?” she responded. She later wrote that she finally
prayed and asked for the answer even though I didn’t expect an answer for I didn’t think I had the faith. . . . However, the next day, during our appointment, one of the brand new missionaries . . . asked me if we all could kneel down and pray to ask if He [God] loves us and wants us to know the truth. I agreed, thinking that if he prays I wouldn’t understand what he is saying and most likely would not receive any earth-shattering revelation. . . . [H]e voiced the most wonderful prayer I have ever heard, with more than simple Mongolian, I was totally in awe . . . [because] he could not have said the prayer without help—help from something beyond human capability. At that time, the feeling I am still not sure how to describe overwhelmed me and I knew this is where I needed to belong and this is where I belonged [a] long time ago. I knew who I was then. I was a daughter of Heavenly Father and I had a purpose in this life.

Oyunchimeg opted for baptism. About her baptism on August 11, 1995, she wrote, “The assurance I felt was extraordinary.” She promised God “that I will spread His words to many like myself.”47 As Oyunchimeg continued her university studies, she noticed differences in her attitudes and perceptions. Tellingly, she wrote, “My identity was being changed.”48

Oyunchimeg’s conversion experience is similar to that of the thousands of converts, yet it is rare among her people. Struggling to find their way in an unhopeful and insecure world, some Mongolians receive answers from a god they are just learning about from the teachings of missionaries.
Unlike Evangelicals who require that proselytes learn Korean, the Mormon missionaries endeared themselves to Mongolians by struggling to learn their language. Moreover, as Oyunchimeg explained, Americans speaking Mongolian, eating traditional foods, and enjoying local customs “throws away the idea that it’s an American church.” Distinguishing the Church from the United States is important for older Mongolians (such as Oyunchimeg’s parents), a generation of committed Communists raised to be suspicious of anything American. Many young Mongolians fawn over missionaries, but older people scrutinize them carefully and are sometimes offended when the missionaries act carelessly. Still, a number of older Mongolians have followed, and even occasionally led, their children and grandchildren into the Church.49

Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren. Oyunchimeg’s sister, Munkhtsetseg (see fig. 8), “believed in God,” whom she thought of as a benevolent, enormous grandfatherly figure beyond the clouds. The Dugarsurens are “book people,” Munkhtsetseg explained—readers and thinkers. In high school she read Brave Hunters by Mayne Reid, a novel that painted Mormons as vengeful, secretive, and seductive but said nothing of Latter-day Saints.50 On June 11, 1994, Munkhtsetseg’s cousin Urtnasan Soylmaa said she would not be able to celebrate her birthday that day, for she was going to be baptized. Curious, Munkhtsetseg attended the service and began taking English classes from the missionaries shortly thereafter. They spoke frequently of Latter-day Saints but said nothing of Mormons. Munkhtsetseg sat through a first discussion. “So strange,” she thought. Afterward she went directly to the library to learn everything she could about Latter-day Saints.

When, through the library catalog, she connected Mormons and Latter-day Saints, Munkhtsetseg became impassioned. Five hours later, seething with skepticism, she had composed a long list of questions for Elders Rogers and Blanchard.51 “Why didn’t you tell me?” she demanded at their next meeting. She pressed them with issues raised by the anti-Mormon brochures she had read at the library and by the prejudices fashioned by her high-school novel reading. Angels? Why Joseph Smith? Where are the plates? What of avenging angels, the stealing of women, and unfulfilled revelations? The flustered elders had no answers. Seeing the elders befuddled (one of them wept) softened Munkhtsetseg’s attack. She agreed to meet for another discussion, to which Elder Luke Neilsen brought photocopies from the Encyclopedia of Mormonism to counter misinformation. Elder Neilsen refused to argue with Munkhtsetseg and never tried to counter the points she raised. Instead, he asked her to study the popular painting of Christ knocking at a door without an outside handle. He explained that it would be Munkhtsetseg’s choice whether to open the door. This approach “was really disarming,” she explained. “I was ready to
fight. I am a really good fighter,” she continued, but Elder Neilsen left her “nothing to fight.”

As she walked home from the meeting, this woman with university degrees in nursing and psychology decided to submit her superior learning to the tutelage of young American missionaries who seemed ignorant of their own faith. Over three months Munkhtsetseg studied. “Everything should be proven,” she thought. The elders asked her to read the Book of Mormon in Russian, which she did as she sat with her hospitalized father in August 1994. It was a nice story, a folktale, she thought, akin to the rich Mongolian folktales she knew. Elder Blanchard urged her to read again and focus on Alma 32. She felt nothing perceptible. He urged her to read again. This repeated process finally bore fruit. “I began to feel something,” Munkhtsetseg explained. At this point Richard Cook, presiding elder of the Church in Mongolia, put his hand on Munkhtsetseg’s shoulder as they met in passing and said to the missionaries, “It’s time for you to baptize her. We need her.” “I felt so touched,” she said. She submitted to baptism on September 10, 1994.

The conversion accounts of the sisters Oyunchimeg and Munkhtsetseg are in some ways exceptional. Not all converts seem so careful and studious about joining the Church, at least when they tell their conversion stories. When asked why, Oyunchimeg offers three reasons. First, she says, a Mongolian tendency to be reserved about emotion and spirituality, compounded by the limits of translation, renders conversion narratives mechanical rather than introspective. Second, Mongolians are trusting. They rarely subject the gospel to scholastic scrutiny, which is not to say they are unusually gullible. Oyunchimeg emphasizes her initial disbelief of the missionaries’ message—an attitude she says is uncharacteristic of her people. Often, she says, a Mongolian invited to join the Church is “just like a little child being asked to do something by their parent.” Third, she says that some join pragmatically, without spiritual convictions, but they are sure from their observations that membership in the Church leads to a better life. Oyunchimeg compares these last converts to the youth she worked with on her mission to Idaho, who either gain an abiding conviction or fade from activity in the Church.

Ochirgerel Ochirbat. One woman’s conversion narrative raises another issue: language. Ochirgerel Ochirbat, a daughter of Buddhist parents, considered herself a “non-religious person.” She had never heard of Jesus Christ. At the invitation of a friend who was himself investigating, she attended a sacrament meeting at which she unexpectedly met another friend who extended an invitation to hear more. When asked why she listened, Ochirgerel said she was curious to hear Americans “teaching a
lesson in Mongolian. . . . I was interested in how they could speak in Mongolian.” Discussing the gospel proved to be a challenge for all involved. “Some of the religious words, I [had] never even heard before,” she said. “It was my own language but it was hard for them to explain it. Now, I know how hard that was. I didn’t have a lot of questions. I think I was [a] really patient listener.” After a month of patient listening and little questioning, Ochirgerel was baptized by Elder Kent Neilsen on May 28, 1994, in a swimming pool. “I am really happy for joining the church,” she said. “It has changed my life since then.”

Indeed, Ochirgerel served a mission on Temple Square, graduated from BYU–Hawaii, and returned to Mongolia equipped to take advantage of a growing tourist market. Her life, like that of her fellow converts, is radically different from what it might have been because of the options available to her and the choices she has made.

### Mongolians Engaged in the Marvelous Work

Partly because the Mongolians most exposed to the missionaries are college-age students, an unusually high rate of converts serve missions—around 10 percent, much higher than the Churchwide average. The first two Mongolian missionaries, Sisters Urtnasan Soyolmaa and Magser Batchimeg, served missions—in Provo and Salt Lake City, respectively—beginning in 1995. They were followed shortly by Soyolmaa’s cousin, Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren, beginning in 1996, and many others. Anand Sangaa, quoted earlier, served his mission in Russia.

After Munkhtsetseg’s baptism in 1994, Elder and Sister Cook continued to teach her and others. They also hired her to teach the missionaries Mongolian. When Elder Cook became President Cook, Munkhtsetseg became his assistant and chief translator. She submitted her mission papers on April 9, 1996, and met a representative from the Church Translation Department on April 10. As her gift of tongues became evident, Munkhtsetseg received an invitation to help a team translate the Book of Mormon into Mongolian. She resisted for “dozens of reasons,” including a desire to serve a proselyting mission. She sought advice from President and Sister Cook, who gave counsel but left the decision to her. She finally decided to do whatever the Church asked. Four months later, Munkhtsetseg received a call to the Temple Square Mission, where her time would be split between serving as a guide and working on the translation of the Book of Mormon.

Munkhtsetseg’s patriarchal blessing, received just before she reported to the Missionary Training Center in Provo in September 1996, repeatedly mentioned that she had an important role as a translator. She began translating in February 1997. Diligent part-time effort led to the completion of
the translation of 1 and 2 Nephi. An obedient missionary, she retired at 10:30 and arose by 6:30, but she felt free to steal a few hours in between for more translation work. Sister Batchimeg, the first Mongolian missionary, checked the translation. Soyolmaa, Munkhtsetseg’s exemplary cousin, then serving in the Utah Provo Mission, reviewed the content. As Munkhtsetseg’s mission concluded, pressure mounted to complete the translation and to financially support her family. As her parents’ oldest daughter, she felt largely responsible to help her struggling family. “I know [the translation is] the Lord’s work and should go forward,” she said, informed by her close reading of 2 Nephi, “but there was opposition.” Returning from her mission in March 1998, an overwhelming appreciation for her homeland flooded Munkhtsetseg’s consciousness as her flight from Beijing to Ulaanbaatar crossed the Great Wall into Mongolia. She reflected on the optimism of her influential grandmother, whose losses under the Communist party gave the grandmother “every reason to hate the country, but she loves Mongolia.” Munkhtsetseg went to the mission office to be released and then directly to making preparations for translating. On some of the subsequent days, the translation simply “flowed.” At other times, an elusive word frustrated the work. Using an adapted Cyrillic alphabet, Munkhtsetseg and others produced a translation into Kalkh Mongol by July 1, 1999. After extensive checks and approvals, the Mongolian Book of Mormon was officially released on October 18, 2001. At that time, Munkhtsetseg was working at the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah, as a translator (fig. 8).

A similarly significant process of getting Mongolians to the temple and the temple to Mongolians is under way. On October 24, 1996, Enkhtuvshin and his wife, Dashgerel, were sealed to each other and their five children in the Hong Kong Temple—the first Mongolian family so blessed (fig. 9). Others followed. Dedicated pilgrims undertook fifty-hour train trips to the temple. Enkhmaa and Udambor, sister missionaries returned from Russia and Salt Lake City respectively, longed to return to the temple. They sang and prayed their way from Ulaanbaatar to Beijing and on to Hong Kong and back, “depending on God because we might get lost,” they said. For one week in the Hong Kong Temple, they participated in the ordinances intensely, which they heard for the first time in Mongolian. Munkhtsetseg had returned to Salt Lake City in April 2000 along with eight Mongolian priesthood leaders to record temple ordinances in Mongolian (fig. 10). Now Mongolians worldwide—including members of the Mongolian Club at BYU–Hawaii—are able to actively participate in the temple ordinances in their native language. In 2002, Paul Hyer sealed a Mongolian couple in the Provo Utah Temple (coincidentally, he had to postpone a meeting on
Fig. 8. Mongolians at the Missionary Training Center, Provo, Utah, October 2001, celebrating the publication of the Book of Mormon in Mongolian. Seated in the center is Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren, who helped with the translation. The others are missionaries from Mongolia preparing for their missions around the world.

Mongolian Church history planned for the same hour). Given the Church’s current commitment to providing temple access, faithful Mongolians anticipate a temple in Ulaanbaatar.50

The Church continues to experience growth. The branch in Dar-khan (figs. 11, 12) now enjoys using the first Church-built building in Mongolia (fig. 13).

A Remarkable Ten Years and a Bright Future

As noted earlier, Richard E. Cook served as the first president of the Mongolia Ulaanbaatar Mission (1995–96). Next called were Gary S. Cox (1996–99), Glen Harlan Clark (1999–2002), and Gary R. Gibbons (2002–present). In May 2002, at the end of his term, President Clark wrote this letter to his missionaries, reviewing some progress of the first decade of Mormonism in Mongolia:

Our tenure here in Mongolia is about over. We have tried to hold onto the reins while the work of the Lord has continued to grow among
Fig. 9. The first Mongolian family to be sealed together. The family of Togtokhin Enkhtuvshin and Doyodiin Dashgerel gathers in front of the Hong Kong Temple in 1996.

Fig. 10. Mongolian priesthood leaders, April 2000, in front of the Provo Utah Temple. These men came from Mongolia to record the temple ceremony in Mongolia. Sister Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren also helped with the recording.
FIG. 11. Members of the Darkhan Branch celebrating a holiday, late 1990s.

FIG. 12. Brother Norovsuren Nyamsuren, president of the Darkhan Branch, performing a baptism, late 1990s.
this glorious people. We have around 68 missionaries serving in Mongolia, and over 150 missionaries from Mongolia serving throughout the world.

We now have branches in Ulaanbaatar and Darkhan, Choibalsan, Zoon Hara, Muren, Erdenet, Baganuur, Nalaikh, Sukhbaatar, and Khovd.

We own the Central Building, the Darkhan Chapel, and a small structure in Khovd. The rest are rented. However, plans are underway to build chapels this summer in Choibalsan, Erdenet, and maybe other cities. The new church building going up in Ulaanbaatar now has four stories of steel. It will be a 5-story building housing the mission office, mission home, CES offices, and a chapel. It is located near the Wrestling Palace and the Chinggis Khaan Hotel.

The Book of Mormon in Mongolian arrived last November, and members treasure their scriptures and carry them to church. The first approved songbook has just arrived. Translation is in progress for the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price.

In January the Church allowed the Mongolian sisters currently serving in Mongolia to go to the Hong Kong Temple for their endowments. Two Mongolian missionaries who served in Russia without being able to go to the temple also went. It was a glorious experience for all. They came back glowing with the gospel.  

In addition to the buildings noted by Clark, the Church has announced plans to construct a building for the Institute of Religion in Ulaanbaatar.

By the end of 2002, there were 4,356 members in Mongolia, in 21 branches in two districts. With 89 Mongolian elders and 73 Mongolian sisters serving full-time missions around the world, Mongolia is currently sending out more missionaries than it receives (fig. 14). The Church is there to stay.

Thus the future of Mongolian Latter-day Saints is as interesting as their past. From one perspective it is a future fraught with challenges. Continued
adjustments to a market economy, including widespread poverty, combine with other difficulties to challenge Church growth and influence. Moving from an atheistic, secular culture in which vodka and tea are staples to a pious, time-consuming religious life proves too difficult for many. The spoils of Western culture can also have adverse effects. Some converts privileged to receive education in the United States do not want to return to the comparatively austere lifestyle of their native land. Others, feeling the burden of knowing how much will be expected of them in Church service, become aloof after a period of study or a mission abroad. As the Church grows rapidly, the close community of the first branch in Ulaanbaatar seems lost in the increasingly organized districts and branches, whose leaders and clerks are frustrated by Mongolians’ transient tendencies. Some early, influential converts struggle to endure when significant initial sacrifices prove to be only the beginning of covenanted discipleship.

These challenges may be but birth pangs as Mormonism and Mongolia forge a connection unforeseen a decade ago even by Paul Hyer, the Berkeley-trained scholar of Asian studies who was instrumental in getting Mongolian government approval for a visit by General Authorities. Who would have imagined the growth that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has seen? Or that so many Mongolian converts would serve missions?

Many Mongolian students in the United States are concentrated at BYU campuses and at Utah Valley State College in Orem, Utah. Generous, personally interested donors finance the studies of some Latter-day Saint students, with the expectation that these students will lead the Church in Mongolia as they contribute to their nation’s economic and social stability in years to come. The Cooks suggest “that having the missionaries teach English is an outstanding method of sharing the gospel with the ‘best’ of Mongolia. The students are intelligent and anxious to learn.” That assessment accurately describes Mongolian students at BYU–Hawaii, where Anand Sangaa and Namuuna Dashdorj won the campus entrepreneurial...
competition in 2002 with a plan to bring laundromats to Mongolia. Their cash award and other investments likely to be funneled into Mongolia through Church channels will strengthen the economic stability of a growing number of well-educated, experienced Church leaders, who will undoubtedly be major influences on Mongolia’s future. The Church has not only provided education and leadership experience to Mongolians but also introduced Americans with resources to the country. One former missionary returned to consult with the Mongolian government in the computerization of archival records. Another is majoring in Asian studies at BYU, writing an honors thesis on Mongolia. Other returned missionaries will become professionals with affection toward Mongolian Latter-day Saints—and resources to help them. The Savior’s great commission, which

A Lucky Break in Ulaanbaatar: A Page from a Missionary Journal

October 8, 2002: We had just finished a pretty tough day: no meetings, no one home. I was thinking to myself, Man, this is hard. We got out of our cab and there were three men—two in police uniforms and one in a suit and trench coat—who tell me we’ve been robbed. I asked how they knew, and they said they got a tip from a civilian. One of them asked me at least twenty questions about us and our work. Then a Jeep full of policemen arrived. We all went into the apartment together. Our balcony window was destroyed and our suitcases were strewn about, but nothing was taken out of them and nothing else was out of place. The only things missing were my camera, my Mongol-Aingle dictionary, and my companion’s pocketknife. We were pretty lucky.

The police declared the investigation over because nothing of great worth was stolen. Then everyone relaxed and just started looking around our apartment. Imagine the scene: the landlord cleaning up the broken glass, me filling out police forms, a couple of policemen sitting in our study chairs looking through a Book of Mormon, a couple more policemen looking in our fridge to see what kind of food foreigners eat, and the commissioner sitting on our couch reading Gospel Fundamentals. We ended up giving the police chief a Book of Mormon and Gospel Fundamentals. It was our best proselyting of the whole day.

—Elder Mark Skinner
drove these missionaries and which they seem to have instilled in Mongolian converts, will continue to be a powerful motivator in years to come.

Mongolia is at a crossroads in its history, politically and economically. "It is clear," writes Mongolian historian Tsedendambyn Batbayar, "that the future of Mongolia now will depend on whether it can fully avail itself of this rare historical opportunity and remain firmly committed to democracy and a market economy."2002 Ariunchimeg Tserenjavin, a Mongolian Latter-day Saint woman who studied at BYU–Hawaii, offers this insight:

More and more [Mongolians] are recognizing the goodness of our church ... because the freedom we declared ... did not bring only [good] things like the right to choose a religion. It brought sad and undesirable consequences to Mongolia like crimes, drug[s], and immoral things. To Mongolians, these things were as new as Christianity. Unfortunately, they attracted more people than our church could and it is sad. ... It is the gospel that would save Mongolia and its precious youth who can develop their country for a better place. ... In today's difficult life condition, I think the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the best thing that can save Mongolia and [enable us to] receive all the blessings that God has for our land as Elder Maxwell said. It is my hope that after another 10 years, Mongolia has its own Temple.

Who dares to dampen such unbridled hope? Whether Mongolia will continue to experience such steep growth in Church membership remains to be seen. But the record of the last ten years raises the expectation that Mongolian Saints will increase in number, will continue strong in the faith, and will indeed soon have a temple of their own.

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8. Paul Hyer, “The Mongolia Mission and Paul Hyer,” manuscript in possession of the author; also found in the sidebar to this article on pages 30–31.
17. Stewart, “Mongolian Miracle.”
27. Brough, Oral history.
30. Brough, Oral history.
31. Brough, Oral history. Completely unfettered proselytizing together with ease in obtaining visas have still not materialized. Still, the Church’s ability to efficiently command the very resources Mongolia most needs has led to an unusually open negotiation and acceptance.

32. Brough, Oral history.
33. Brough, Oral history.
34. Brough, Oral history.

35. Brough, Oral history; Kahlile Mehr, interview with Charles and Jean Hardy, February 24, 1997, in Salt Lake City, copy in author’s possession by permission of Kahlile Mehr. John and Nancy Hopkins, “Life in Mongolia (by Videotape),” 5–6, manuscript in author’s possession.


40. Brough, quoted in “Missionaries in Mongolia,” 102.


49. Oyunchimeg Dugarsuren, conversation with the author.

50. Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren, interview by author, October 1, 2002, Salt Lake City, notes in possession of the author. The book to which she refers may be a translation of Mayne Reid (1818–83), The Boy Hunters, or, Adventures in Search of a White Buffalo (Boston: Ticknor, Reed and Fields, 1853). I am indebted to David Whittaker for this information.

51. Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren, interview, October 1, 2002.
52. Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren, interview, October 1, 2002.
53. Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren, interview, October 1, 2002.
55. Ochirgeri Ochirbat, interview by Oyunchimeg Dugarsuren, October 5, 2001, transcript in author’s possession.
56. I became interested in Mongolian Latter-day Saint history when I heard Anand describe his conversion and his missionary experiences, which he related at a Mongolian Club fireside at BYU–Hawaii in November 2001.
57. Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren, interview, October 1, 2002.
59. I am indebted to Matthew K. Heiss for this information. He interviewed Enkhmaa and Udambor in 2000 in Mongolia.
60. Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren, interview, October 1, 2002; Gary Cox, “Historical Highlights of the Mongolia-Ulaanbaatar Mission,” photocopy in author’s possession.
63. Information obtained from the Management Information Center of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 2, 2003.
64. Among Latter-day Saints, one can hardly discuss the topic of Mormonism in Mongolia without learning of connections to this history. While preparing this article, for instance, I learned that the son of a BYU history department faculty member is currently serving in Mongolia, as is the son of my dean. A BYU Studies staff member has a brother serving there. My experience as advisor to the BYU–Hawaii Mongolian Club, whose members have wide-ranging missionary ventures of their own, including in my hometown of Blackfoot, Idaho, testify to the marvelous power of the great commission to forge a community of Saints across the world.
66. Batbayar, Modern Mongolia, 104.