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Latter-day Saint Young Adults, Narcissism, and Religiosity

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ABSTRACT

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According to recent research, Latter-day Saint young people are achieving desirable social outcomes at a higher rate than their peers of other backgrounds. As reasons for those findings have been offered, only social aspects of the LDS faith and culture have been given any attention. This thesis will provide an alternate interpretation of the data and provide new data through the administration of the Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) and the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI). Results from the LDS ROS/NPI Study indicate that LDS young adults continue to score overly intrinsic on the ROS and score significantly lower on the NPI than their peers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chapter One

Introduction

The recently completed National Survey on Youth and Religion is the most comprehensive sociological study regarding youth and religion ever to be completed. Beginning in 2002, Notre Dame sociologist Christian Smith and his colleagues surveyed more than 3000 youth from differing religious, ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds regarding their personal religiosity. From these more than 3000 surveys, 267 teens were selected for extended follow-up interviews. The findings of these surveys and the subsequent one-on-one interviews were published in 2005 under the title, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers.*[1] While *Soul Searching* provided much insight into how America's teens feel about religion, one of the surprising conclusions had to do specifically with teens that identified themselves as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormon). Smith and Denton write, "In general comparisons among major U.S. religious traditions using a variety of sociological measures of religious vitality and salience … it is Mormon teenagers who are sociologically faring the best."[2]

One might assume that Smith and Denton would attempt to explain "why" LDS youth seem to fare better than their peers of other faiths, but their report did not include such information. After affirming that LDS teens are doing comparatively well, Smith and Denton write, "Why this is so is a story beyond the scope of this book to tell, but an

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[1] Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 292, 302.

[2] *Ibid.,* 261.

interesting and important one to consider."[3] To date, only one scholar has attempted to

answer Smith and Denton's call for a more thorough consideration. In her research,

Princeton theologian Kendra Creasy Dean provides a hypothesis as to why Latter-day

Saint youth appear to be doing so well. Professor Dean states:

> Mormon formation is less focused on adolescent conversion or God's
> transformation than on preparing Mormon young people to be fully engaged,
> articulate, and participative church members … It is also possible that the
> "textbook" faith and well-adjusted outlooks of highly devoted teenagers—for
> Mormons and others—may be a better indicator of these teenagers' ability to win
> adult approval than an indicator of mature faith … Mormon young people get
> along so well in American culture in part because their use of cultural tools
> perpetuates so-called American values like wholesomeness, family, patriotism,
> and hard work.[4]

Throughout her chapter entitled, "Mormon Envy," Dean argues that LDS young people's

devotion is more a function of social utility than of religious conversion.

Professor Dean is not alone in her hypothesis. Noted sociologist Rodney Stark

argues a similar point. In his attempt to provide a sociological explanation for the rapid

growth of the LDS Church, Stark argues:

> Religious movements must socialize the young sufficiently well not only to
> minimize defections but also to minimize pressures to reduce strictness…
> Because strictness generates strong congregational life wherein the enthusiasm of
> each member communicates the high value of the religion, LDS children grow up
> in an atmosphere that strongly reinforces their commitment. Moreover, the most
> attractive role models within the LDS subculture are notable for their religious
> enthusiasm. Mormon religious life is not directed by a bookish, professional
> clergy, many of whom lack any obvious worldly abilities, let alone
> accomplishments. Church Leadership (male and female) involves the most

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[3] *Ibid.,* 261.

[4] Kenda Creasy Dean, Almost *Christian: What the Faith of our Teenagers is
Telling the American Church*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 52-53.

prominent and successful members. Hence, the message to ambitious young Latter-day Saints: successful people are religious people.[5]

While not stated as blatantly as Dean, Stark too seems to believe that LDS youth see their religion as a utilitarian means to desired social outcomes. If Dean and Stark are correct, LDS young people are *using* their religion for *selfish* reasons rather than the *selfless* reasons prescribed by the teachings of Jesus Christ as embodied in the official doctrines and practices of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Statement of Problem

Current research indicates that LDS young people are faring sociologically better than their peers of other faiths. In response to this research, the only explanations that have been given for why LDS young people fare so well is that they act the way they do for self-centered social reasons rather than selfless religious reasons. This study will investigate such a claim.

Statement of Purpose

While it may be true that some LDS young people adhere to the principles and practices of their faith for social rather than religious reasons, it is the purpose of this thesis to argue that LDS young people fare sociologically better than their peers of other faiths because of a concentrated effort by Church leaders to assist their young people to overcome and even avoid selfish attitudes and behaviors.

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[5] Rodney Stark, ed. Reid L Neilson, *The Rise of Mormonism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 136-137.

Method

The initial chapters of this thesis analyze official Church publications in an attempt to demonstrate that Church leaders have indeed made a concentrated effort to teach their people the importance of selflessness and deep conversion. Chapters will be dedicated to subjects such as: "The Doctrine of Self as Found in the Book of Mormon," and "The Latter-day Saint Understanding of 'Self Esteem.'"

The latter chapters of this thesis will focus on research gathered from the social sciences in support of the notion that LDS young people don't use their religion as a means to an end, but rather as an end in itself. Many scholars have published studies regarding an individual's intrinsic or extrinsic motivations for religiosity, and LDS samples have been part of those studies. In order to provide current LDS scores for this particular instrument, the Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) will be administered to a LDS sample at Brigham Young University and its results will be reported and discussed. A chapter of this thesis will be dedicated to the Religious Orientation Scale and the conclusions that have been drawn about Latter-day Saints from its use.

Because the element of selfishness seems germane, an inquiry into narcissism ought to be made. Interestingly, the psychometric instrument most often used to ascertain nonclinical narcissism, the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), has never been administered to an overtly LDS sample. In addition to the ROS mentioned earlier, part of this thesis will also include the administration of the NPI to a LDS sample at Brigham Young University and report the findings.

Literature Review

Taken in their respective parts, much has been written about religion, narcissism, and Latter-day Saints. Taken collectively, however, the subject becomes both elusive and overwhelming. To engage such a subject, one ought to become well versed in psychology, the psychology of religion, religion, sociology, statistics, adolescent issues, LDS studies, and the social sciences in general. While there have been attempts by scholars to probe Latter-day Saints and mental health, or LDS youth and religiosity, little has been published about the relationship between religion, narcissism, and LDS young people. The purpose of this literature review is to show what work has already been done and how that work might be synthesized with regard to the proposed topic.

Psychology, Religion, and The Religious Orientation Scale

Religion is a topic that can naturally be quite subjective. Because of this, the scientific study of religion becomes rather complicated. While the origins of the psychology of religion begin with Freud, Jung, and Adler, the scientific study of religion first gained a sound qualitative footing when psychologist Gordon W. Allport developed an instrument for measuring one's motivations for religiosity. Since its development in the late 1960's, Allport's *Religious Orientation Scale* (ROS) has provided researchers with a qualitative tool vital in much of the work that has been accomplished in the psychology of religion. One scholar referred to the ROS as "the backbone of empirical

research in the psychology of religion."[6] Another scholar marked the ROS as being "among the most useful [instruments] available in the empirical study of religion."[7]

Allport's foundational paper, "The Religious Context of Prejudice," coined two terms that are still in use today: *intrinsic religiosity* and *extrinsic religiosity*.[8] The terms have become so entrenched into the study of the psychology of religion that some scholars don't feel it any longer necessary to include Allport in their bibliographies.[9] In his explanation of intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity, Allport states:

> While there are several varieties of extrinsic religious orientation, we may say they all point to a type of religion that is strictly utilitarian: useful for the self in granting safety, social standing, solace, and endorsement for one's chosen way of life…. By contrast, the intrinsic form of the religious sentiment regards faith as a supreme value in its own right. It is oriented toward a unification of being, takes seriously the commandment of brotherhood, and strives to transcend all self-centered needs. Dogma is tempered with humility, and in keeping with the Biblical injunction the possessor withholds judgment until the day of the harvest. A religious sentiment of this sort floods the whole life with motivation and meaning. Religion is no longer limited to single segments of self-interest.[10]

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[6] Lee A. Kirkpatrick and Ralph W. Hood, "Intrinsic-Extrinsic Religious Orientation: The Boon or Bane of Contemporary Psychology of Religion?" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 49, 1990, 442.

[7] Michael J. Donahue, "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religiousness: The Empirical Research," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 24, 1985, 422.

[8] Gordon W. Allport, "The Religious Context of Prejudice," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 3, 1966, 447-457.

[9] Rodney L. Bassett, David Baldwin, Julie Tammaro, Danalyn Mackmer, Chantelle Mundig, Andrew Wareing, and Doni Tschorke, "Reconsidering Intrinsic Religion as a Source of Universal Compassion," *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 20, 2001, 131-143.

[10] Gordon W. Allport, "The Religious Context of Prejudice." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 1966, 3, 455.

In an attempt to operationalize these theories of intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity, Allport, with the help of his Harvard colleague J. Michael Ross, devised the Religious Orientation Scale.[11] The ROS is composed of twenty questions, eleven of which measure extrinsic motivation, while the remaining nine measure intrinsic motivation.[12]

A psychometric instrument that can measure one's religious orientation is the type of instrument required for the proposed thesis, assuming that the ROS can actually deliver the data that Allport claims it measures. Because of the foundational nature of the ROS, this particular instrument has come under heavy review. Of the many papers that have collected data on the validity of the ROS, one of the most cited submissions was provided by researcher Michael J. Donahue. His paper, "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religiousness: Review and Meta-Analysis" has been cited over 300 times by those working with the ROS.[13] After considering the many studies that questioned the validity of the ROS, Donahue concludes that,

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[11] Gordon W. Allport and J. Michael Ross, "Personal Religious Orientation and Prejudice," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 5, 1967, 432-443.

[12] A 5-point Likert scale, ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree,* was implemented to measure responses. Attempts at revising and updating the scale have been made, but will not be discussed as Allport's original formulation is still widely used and accepted by researchers today. See: Lee E. Kirkpatrick, "A Psychometric Analysis of the Allport-Ross and Feagin Measure of Intrinsic-Extrinsic Religious Orientation," in D. O. Moberg and M. L. Lynn (Eds.), *Research in the Social Scientific Study of* Religion, Vol. 1, Greenwich, CT: JAI Press; Richard L. Gorsuch and Susan E. McPherson, "Intrinsic/Extrinsic Measurement: I/E-Revised and Single-Item Scales," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion,* 1989, 28, 348-354,

[13] Michael J. Donahue, "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religiousness: Review and Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 48, 1985, 400-419. The statistic of this paper being cited over 300 times was obtained through using Thomson Reuters *Web of Knowledge* service. The *Web of Knowledge* lists Donahue's paper as being cited 320 times. The *Web of Knowledge* is available at http://www.webofknowledge.com.

> Intrinsic religiousness serves as an excellent measure of religious commitment, as distinct from religious belief, church membership, liberal-conservative theological orientation, and related measures. Its lack of doctrinal content and open-ended definition of religion makes it usable with virtually any Christian denomination, and perhaps even with non-Christian religions…. Extrinsic religiousness on the other hand, does a good job of measuring the sort of religion that gives religion a bad name. It is positively correlated with prejudice, dogmatism, trait anxiety, and fear of death and is apparently uncorrelated with altruism.[14]

With this and other such positive reviews, it is clear to see why the ROS enjoys such wide application.

The Religious Orientation Scale and Latter-day Saints

Beginning in the 1980's the ROS has been implemented to ascertain the religious orientation of samples that identified themselves as members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. While these samples cannot represent the religious orientation of the entire Church, they do provide a good starting point for further research.

The most foundational piece of research to involve the ROS and a LDS sample is Allen E. Bergin's "Religiousness and Mental Health Reconsidered: A Study of an Intrinsically Religious Sample."[15] In this study, Bergin and his team administered a battery of psychometric instruments with the thesis that the more religious a person is, the more mentally healthy that person will be. One-hundred nineteen juniors and seniors enrolled in courses on personality at Brigham Young University were administered the ROS along with the California Psychological Inventory, the Taylor Manifest Anxiety

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[14] Michael J. Donahue, "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religiousness: Review and Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 48, 1985, 415-416.

[15] Allen E. Bergin, Kevin S. Masters, and P. Scott Richards, "Religiousness and Mental Health Reconsidered: A Study of an Intrinsically Religious Sample," *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 1987, 34, 197-204.

Scale, or Rosenbaum's Self-Control Schedule.[16] As was hypothesized, the more

intrinsically motivated one was to live one's religion, the more favorable one's scores

were on the other instruments. Particular to the ROS, Bergin's team reports that the LDS

sample polled at Brigham Young University scored overly intrinsic.

In a follow-up to the aforementioned study, Bergin's team sampled another group

of LDS young adults from Brigham Young University.[17] With regard to the results of the

ROS, Bergin reported:

> This sample scored high on intrinsic and low on extrinsic religious orientation.
> The mean scores were nearly identical to those obtained from other samples of
> Mormon students and somewhat similar to those obtained from samples of
> conservatively religious individuals who are not Mormon. Thus, the sample
> represents a conservative religious life-style marked by an intrinsic orientation,
> which is characterized by those who internalize beliefs and live by them. Religion
> is for them an end. The opposite, extrinsic orientation, is characterized by people
> who use their religion as a means of obtaining status, security, self-justification,
> and sociability. This approach is basically utilitarian.
>
> As in previous research, we also found overall psychological adjustments of such
> an intrinsic group to be normal. The mean values on all reported measures were
> well within normal limits, and some tended toward above-average levels. This
> supports other findings and runs counter to the notion that religiousness is
> necessarily correlated negatively with mental health.[18]

Most studies that have used the ROS to investigate Latter-day Saints refer to

Bergin's foundational work. These other studies have implemented the ROS to study

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[16] *Ibid.,* 198.

[17] Allen E. Bergin, Randy D. Stinchfield, Thomas A. Gaskin, Kevin S. Masters, and Clyde E. Sullivan, "Religious Life-Styles and Mental Health: An Exploratory Study," *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 1988, 35, 91-98.

[18] *Ibid.,*97.

LDS religiosity with regard to everything from literacy,[19] attitudes toward sexual

minorities,[20] and identity formation.[21] Common among all of these studies is the

conclusion that Latter-day Saints score overwhelmingly intrinsic on Allport's Religious

Orientation Scale.

Mental Health, Social Science, and Latter-day Saints

Two LDS scholars have provided the most concise and accessible works

regarding Latter-day Saints and the social sciences. Brigham Young University

professors James T. Duke and Daniel K Judd have edited volumes containing much of

the important research accomplished in the field of psychology, sociology, and Latter-day

Saints.[22] Because this thesis is dedicated to LDS youth and young adults, only those

chapters of these works that discuss LDS youth or young adults will be mentioned.

Duke's *Latter-day Saint Social Life* provides specific chapters on LDS youth.

Darwin L. Thomas and Craig Carver's "Religion and Adolescent Social Competence"

and Bruce A. Chadwick and Brent L. Top's "Religiosity and Delinquency among LDS

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[19] Bruce R. Brewer, *The Relationship Among Literacy, Church Activity and Religious Orientation: A Study of Adult Members of the LDS Church in Utah County*, Doctoral dissertation, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, 2005.

[20] Cory John Myler, *Latter-day Saint Religiosity and Attitudes Towards Sexual Minorities*, Masters Thesis, Utah State University*, Logan, Utah, 2009.*

[21] Carol Markstrom-Adams and Malanie Smith, "Identity Formation and Religious Orientation Among High School Students from the United States and Canada," *Journal of Adolescence*, 1996, 19, 247-261.

[22] James T. Duke, ed., *Latter-Day Saint Social Life: Social Research on the LDS Church and its Members* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 1998), and Daniel K Judd, ed., *Religion, Mental Health, and Latter-day Saints* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 1999).

Adolescents" both provide significant research into the social implications of the LDS religion on adolescents. The chapter authored by Chadwick and Top was part of a much larger project that will be discussed later. Also worth noting is Daniel K Judd's chapter entitled, "Religiosity, Mental Health, and the Latter-day Saints: A Preliminary Review of Literature (1923-95)."[23] In this chapter Judd collects and systematizes the germane literature into a very thorough and accessible publication. Any scholarly work that undertakes the topic of Latter-day Saints and mental health would do well to peruse Judd's contribution to Duke's volume.

Like Duke, Judd's own volume, *Religion, Mental Health, and Latter-day Saints*, also offers a chapter regarding LDS young people by Chadwick and Top. While the focus of the chapter by Chadwick and Top varies slightly from the chapter found in Duke, the conclusions and data provided in both chapters echo one another without variation. Chadwick and Top's contribution to the topic in general will be discussed at length at a later point in this literature review.

Unique to Judd's volume are contributions by Allen E. Bergin, Phillip R. Kunz, and Yaw Oheneba-Sakyi. Bergin's "Religious Life-Styles and Mental Health" is a reprint of the work already discussed in the previous section of this literature review. Kunz and Oheneba-Sakyi, however, provide insight into the lives of LDS young adults with regard to racial prejudice.[24] There was an initial hope that this chapter would be especially

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[23] Daniel K Judd, "Religiosity, Mental Health, and the Latter-day Saints: A Preliminary Review of Literature (1923-95)," in James T. Duke, ed., *Latter-Day Saint Social Life: Social Research on the LDS Church and its Members* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 1998), 473-17.

[24] Phillip R. Kunz and Yaw Oheneba-Sakyi, "Social Distances: A Study of Views of Young Mormons toward Black Individuals," in Daniel K Judd, ed., *Religion, Mental Health, and Latter-day Saints* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 1999), 238-244.

insightful based on the fact that Allport's ROS was an outgrowth of an enquiry into prejudice. Kunz and Oheneba-Sakyi, however, took an unusable, although fascinating, direction away from religious orientation or narcissism.

Mental Health, Social Science, and Latter-day Saint Youth and Young Adults

While the volumes provided by Duke and Judd provide a broad survey of the work already accomplished with regard to Latter-day Saints and mental health, it is the work of religious scholar Brent Top and sociologist Bruce Chadwick that is most applicable to the proposed thesis.

Beginning in the 1990's, Top and Chadwick began to collect data from LDS youth with regard to religiosity and delinquency.[25] Questionnaires were sent to approximately 4,000 LDS youth selected from the East Coast, the Pacific Northwest, and Utah County.[26] In the words of the authors:

> The questionnaire asked these youths about their involvement in various delinquent behaviors, their exposure to peer pressures, religious beliefs and practices, and family characteristics and home environment. Forty questions asked whether the youth had *ever* participated in three different types of delinquency—offenses against others, offenses against property, and victimless offenses. *Offenses against others* involved such behaviors as bullying and fighting. *Offenses against property* involved things like shoplifting, vandalism, and stealing. Smoking, drinking, drug use, and various forms of immorality were categorized as *victimless* or *status offenses*.[27]

From the data gathered, Top and Chadwick conclude:

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[25] Brent L. Top and Bruce A. Chadwick, *Rearing Righteous Youth of Zion*, (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1998), 25-44.

[26] *Ibid.,* 18.

[27] *Ibid.,* 19.

The LDS teenagers we surveyed reported significantly lower levels of delinquency than that of other youth in the nation. Each year *Monitoring the Future* conducts a large survey of high school seniors across the nation… Nationally, over 80 percent of high school seniors have ever experimented with alcohol, while only slightly more than 20 percent of the LDS seniors reported having ever used alcohol. Similar dramatic differences are observed in teen sexual behavior. The national average for premarital sexual intercourse is over 70 percent as compared to only about 15 percent of LDS seniors.[28]

What sets their work apart from other such studies are the reasons Top and Chadwick give for why LDS teens overwhelmingly achieve such desirable outcomes.[29] Top and Chadwick provide a threefold approach on why LDS teens fare so well: (1) LDS teens have a strong social structure that provides positive peer pressure, (2) LDS teens usually come from strong families where values are taught early, and (3) LDS teens are encouraged to internalize their faith through personal religious experiences.[30]

Although not as directly related to the proposed thesis, Top and Chadwick made another observation that could prove useful. Many LDS parents express a desire to raise their children in Utah because it is the perceived "Heart of Mormondom." They believe that their children will have an advantage because of the decreased delinquency and increased religious involvement of the youth there. Top and Chadwick argue that raising children in Utah may not actually have any benefit. "If the religious ecology theory were correct, then LDS teenagers from the Pacific Northwest and East Coast would be significantly more delinquent than their peers in Utah. That just isn't the case."[31]

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[28] *Ibid.*, 26.

[29] This is in direct comparison to Christian Smith's work. While Smith provides excellent data, he gives few (if any) reasons for *why* the data report what they do.

[30] *Ibid., 41-44.*

[31] *Ibid.,* 40.

According to the data, "good kids can turn bad just as easily in Utah as anywhere else," and "spiritually strong and faithful youth can survive and even prosper in a small branch of the Church or in a school with no other LDS kids."[32]

After concluding their project with regard to LDS youth, Top and Chadwick joined with Richard J. McClendon and turned their attention to not only collecting data about LDS youth, but including LDS young adults as well. In their book *Shield of Faith: The Power of Religion in the Lives of LDS Youth and Young Adults,* Top and Chadwick revisit their research conducted during their previous project, and update the data. [33] What makes this volume so valuable to the proposed thesis is not the authors' conclusions (they are nearly identical to the those of their first project), but the additional chapters and data collected on LDS young people, self-esteem, and mental health.[34]

In their discussion of LDS youth and self-esteem, Top, Chadwick, and McClendon indicate that LDS young adults report not having as positive an attitude about themselves as their non-LDS peers.[35] In addition, they also describe not being as satisfied with themselves, not feeling like they have as much worth as others, and are more prone to feel like they are "no good at all." Surprisingly, however, LDS teens feel like they

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[32] *Ibid.,* 41.

[33] Bruce A. Chadwick, Brent L. Top, and Richard J. McClendon, *Shield of Faith: The Power of Religion in the Lives of LDS Youth and Young Adults,* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2010).

[34] *Ibid.,* 161, 170.

[35] *Ibid.,* 170.

have more to be proud of than their non-LDS peers. [36] The researchers conclude that LDS

teens score lower than their non-LDS peers with regard to self-esteem for two reasons:

> One common explanation is that the gospel and the Church place very high
> expectations and demands on its youth, which may foster feelings of inadequacy
> or not measuring up. This lack of perfection impacts the teens' sense of self and is
> then expressed in the response to the self-esteem items…. The alternative
> explanation is that LDS youth are taught to be humble and avoid pride, so they
> might be more modest in answering questions praising themselves. This
> avoidance of pride guards against the narcissism that was discovered in studies
> reviewed by the American Psychological Association. [37]

Although LDS young people may not score as high on self-esteem, when taken as

a whole, they score better than those not of the LDS faith when depression is taken into

account. The authors write, "On the whole, LDS men and women with higher rates of

religiosity had significantly lower levels of depression than the average American.

Apparently, the religious LDS lifestyle acts as a buffer against depression rather than

heightening it, as some have previous assumed." [38]

The Religious and Spiritual Lives of America's Young People

Whether it be LDS youth, LDS young adults, or Latter-day Saints in general,

there seems to be an advantage to living a LDS lifestyle. Such findings are consistent

with those of sociologist Christian Smith and the National Survey on Youth and Religion

(NSYR). Beginning in 2002, Smith and his colleagues surveyed more than 3000 youth

from differing religious, ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds regarding their

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[36] *Ibid.*

[37] *Ibid.*, 169.

[38] *Ibid.*, 312.

personal religiosity. From these more than 3000 surveys, 267 teens were selected for

extended follow-up interviews. The findings of these surveys and the subsequent one-on-

one interviews were published in 2005 under the titled, *Soul Searching: The Religious*

and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers.[39] While *Soul Searching* provided much

insight into how America's teens feel about religion, one of the surprising conclusions

had to do specifically with teens that identified themselves as Mormons or more

appropriately, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). Smith

and Denton write, "In general comparisons among major U.S. religious traditions using a

variety of sociological measures of religious vitality and salience … it is Mormon

teenagers who are sociologically faring the best."[40]

Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton's *Soul Searching: The Religious*

and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers has been referred to as "the definitive book on

teens and religion for years to come."[41] Another scholar remarked that, "This book is,

quite simply, the best book ever on the best study ever on the topic of adolescents and

religion. It is exemplary social science, combining the best of qualitative and quantitative

methods, not only empirically strong but theoretically rich."[42] Interestingly, of the many

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[39] Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 292, 302.

[40] *Ibid.,* 261.

[41] Lynn Schofield Clark, "Book Review: Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 2005, 44, 506.

[42] Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, "Book Review: Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers," *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 2006, 21, 205.

glowing reviews written for *Soul Searching,* only those reviews written by LDS scholars pick up on Smith's conclusion that it is LDS teens that seem to be faring best.[43] The rest of the reviewers seemed to have either overlooked Smith's conclusion or chose to ignore it for some reason.

While not a proper book *review*, Princeton theologian Kenda Creasy Dean's *Almost Christian* is at its core a response to *Soul Searching* in which Dean attempts to provide the theological reasons for why Smith's research turned up what it did. Dean devotes an entire chapter to Smith's conclusion that LDS teens fare best, but as mentioned before, her arguments as to why LDS teens do so well seem weak. Of the reviews written of Dean's work, all of them seem quite pleased with Dean's conclusions regarding Christian teens, but fail to consider Dean's treatment of LDS youth.[44] To date, *Almost Christian* is the only full-length theological treatment of the data collected by Smith and the NSYR.

Another response to *Soul Searching* is University of Texas at Austin Sociology Professor Mark D. Regnerus' *Forbidden Fruit*: *Sex and Religion in the Lives of American Teenagers.*[45] As a member of Smith's research team, Regnerus' focus on sexual outcomes builds heavily on the data collected from both the NYSR and Smith's

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[43] Bruce A. Chadwick and Richard J. McClendon, "Book Review: Soul Searching the Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers," *BYU Studies*, 2006, 45:2, 167-172.

[44] Aaron Klink, "Book Review: Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church," *Religious Studies Review*, 37:2, 110; Holly Herbert, "Book Review: Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church," *Library Journal*, 2010, 113.

[45] Mark D. Regnerus, *Forbidden Fruit: Sex and Religion in the Lives of American Teenagers*, (New York: Oxford University Press), 2007.

subsequent one-on-one interviews. Like Smith, Regnerus admires Latter-day Saints for

how they seem to be able to influence their youth to postpone sexual activity until

marriage. He writes, "Mormons … outpace evangelicals in terms of the organization of

sexual social control. Among them, chastity is taught in Sunday schools, youth groups,

and 'seminary' (or daily) classes of religious instruction along with other core

doctrines."[46]

According to Regnerus' statistics, LDS youth are more likely to support waiting

until marriage to have sex and pledge abstinence before marriage than their peers of other

faiths and are also more likely to postpone their first sexual experience until they are

older and use birth control when they do finally engage in sexual activity.[47] Compared

with their peers of other denominational groups, Latter-day Saints seemed to be the most

conservative in both their attitudes and behaviors regarding sex. Regnerus and most of his

reviewers don't seem to ever articulate this point.

The last major response to *Soul Searching* comes from Christian Smith himself.

After concluding his inquiry into the religious lives of the American teenager, Smith

turned his attention the "the religious and spiritual lives of emerging adults." Along with

Patricia Snell, Smith's *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of*

Emerging Adults, is for young adults what *Soul Searching* is for American teens.[48] Like

Soul Searching, the reviews for *Souls in Transition* are overwhelmingly positive and like

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[46] *Ibid., 23.*

[47] *Ibid.,* 87, 94, 127, 133, 143.

[48] Christian Smith and Patrician Snell, *Souls in Transition*: *The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults*, (New York: Oxford University Press), 2009.

Soul Searching, *Souls in Transition* is highly complementary of Latter-day Saints, although in a less overt manner.[49] Instead of interpreting the data denominationally as done in *Soul Searching*, Smith and his team decided that *Souls in Transition* would look at the data based on one's degree of religious devotion. The varying categories were defined as the devoted, the regular, the sporadic, and the disengaged.[50]

To be "devoted" meant that one attends church weekly, prays at least a few times a week, and reads scripture with some regularity. While those who were labeled "devoted" only made up five percent of Smith's total sample, LDS young adults accounted for twenty-one percent of that group. Such a number may not seem too impressive, but it ought to be mentioned that Latter-day Saints made up only 2.8 percent of Smith's total respondents. Comparatively, of all Latter-day Saints polled, 56 percent identified themselves as devoted while the next largest sample were Conservative Protestants with 15 percent.[51] Stated succinctly, LDS young adults are roughly 10 times more likely to be "devoted" to their faith than their peers of other faiths.

Although Smith does not give LDS young adults the same gleaming endorsement that he gave LDS youth in *Soul Searching*, the data found in *Souls in Transition* do so for him. The data is overwhelmingly positive with regard to LDS young adults. While

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[49] Richard Flory, "Book Review: Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults," *Sociology of Religion*, 2011, 72:1, 121-122; Leonard Kageler, "Book Review: Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 2010, 49:1, 196-197; Mark Molter, "Book Review: Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 2010, 39:1, 96-99.

[50] Christian Smith and Patrician Snell, *Souls in Transition*: *The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults*, (New York: Oxford University Press), 2009, 259.

[51] *Ibid.,* 304.

written specifically regarding the religiously devoted, the numbers logically imply that

LDS young adults are more likely than their peers of other faiths to maintain healthy

relationships with their parents, contribute to charitable causes, promote equality among

different racial groups, and volunteer their time.[52] They are also less likely to drink

(especially binge drink), smoke, engage in promiscuous activities, or get into fights.[53]

Narcissism

  Before leaving Christian Smith's body of work, one of the major findings of *Soul*

Searching ought to be mentioned. One of the major conclusions of *Soul Searching* was

that many of America's teenagers subscribe to a religion that Smith and Denton label as

"Moralistic Therapeutic Deism." Put succinctly, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is the

belief that people ought to be nice (moralistic), reach out to God when one needs help

(therapeutic), and believe that God is there, but is not necessarily involved in the world

(deism). Taking their cue from interviews conducted by their research team, Smith and

Denton offer the following as the tenants of this "new" faith:

> 1) A God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life on earth.
>
> 2) God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
>
> 3) The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
>
> 4) God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.

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[52] *Ibid.,* 261-263.

[53] *Ibid.,* 265, 271-275.

5) Good people go to heaven when they die.[54]

While Smith and Denton admit that no American teenager would identify himself or herself as a "Moralistic Therapeutic Deist," they argue that such a term (with its accompanying tenants) accurately represents the overarching religious climate of American Teenagers.[55] Many teenagers seem to bother with religion only when they can detect some utility in it. It is the idea that God is humanity's "Butler in the sky." Religion is much more about what God can do for them than what they can do for God.

Since Moralistic Therapeutic Deism seems to be the direction in which most American teens are headed, could it be that LDS teens fare as well as they do because their religious direction is more "God-centered" than "self-centered?" Smith and Denton seem to think so. Even though most of the teenagers interviewed for *Soul Searching* spoke about their religious feelings in very individualistic and self-centered terms, Smith and Denton report that "there is a very small minority of teenagers, mostly conservative Protestants and Mormons, who are devoted to following their religious faiths and who can speak in at least fragments of terms other than that of individual instrumental benefits."[56] Again, Smith and Denton merely provide the symptom, but do not consider the cause.

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[54] Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 162-163.

[55] Ibid., 163.

[56] Ibid., 149.

In searching for an alternate and viable reason for why Latter-day Saints do so

well in preparing their young people, considering young adult trends unassociated with

religion yields some interesting options. The most viable of those options is offered by

San Diego State Professor of Psychology Jean Twenge. Twenge argues that while older

generations have always accused younger generations of being too self-centered, her

research shows that each subsequent generation has actually become more and more

narcissistic than the generation before. While it tends to be the case that individuals score

lower on the NPI as they age, the generational mean scores are increasing. Twenge

reports that,

> A cross-temporal meta-analysis found that narcissism levels have risen over the
> generations in 85 samples of American college students who completed the 40-
> item forced-choice Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) between 1979 and
> 2006 (total n=16,475). Mean narcissism scores were significantly correlated with
> year of data collection when weighted by sample size (beta=.53, p <.001). Since
> 1982, NPI scores have increased 0.33 standard deviation. Thus, almost two-thirds
> of recent college students are above the mean 1979-1985 narcissism score, a 30%
> increase.[57]

Notice here that Twenge's research is not meant to be all-inclusive by providing NPI

scores for each generation. Her research focuses on the trend of higher NPI scores over

those generations.

Before proceeding further, an operational definition of narcissism is needed.

Narcissism is not synonymous with high self-esteem or confidence. Narcissism is the

result of taking self-esteem or confidence to an extreme. Narcissism can be defined as the

over preoccupation with self. With Twenge's report of increased narcissism, and Smith's

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[57] Jean M. Twenge, Sara Kontrath, Joshua D. Foster, Keith W. Campbell, and
Brad J. Bushman, "Egos inflating over time: A cross-temporal meta-analysis of the
narcissistic personality inventory," *Journal of Personality*, 2008, 76:4, 875-901.

report of decreased religious devotion among young people, one might assume that a correlation exists among the two. Such is exactly what researcher P.J. Watson and his team found. In their paper titled, "Religious Orientation, Humanistic Values, and Narcissism," Watson, Ralph W. Hood, Jr. and Ronald J. Morris set out to examine four separate yet related arguments. They write:

> This study was designed to examine four separate contentions: that humanistic values and religiosity are inversely related, that humanistic values and narcissism are directly related, that a positive correlation exists between extrinsicness and narcissism, and that a negative correlation exists between intrinsicness and narcissism.[58]

After tabulating the data, Watson and his team concluded that as theorized, narcissism indeed correlates negatively with intrinsic religiosity. In order to ascertain other data with regard to religious orientation and narcissism, Watson's team administered the ROS and the NPI a second time and found almost identical results.[59] In both studies, the samples were predominately Protestant. Data for other religious groups on the ROS and NPI does not seem to exist. In fact, religious affiliation was rarely reported in any study where the NPI was administered. One of the few studies that did make mention of religious affiliation and the NPI was a study carried out by University of Utah psychologist Brian T. Tschanz. While studying gender differences in Narcissism, Tschanz reported that his scores might have been skewed because of "the strong

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[58] P. J. Watson, Ralph W. Hood, Jr., and Ronald J. Morris, "Religious Orientation, Humanistic Values, and Narcissism, *Review of Religious Research*, 1984, 25:3, 258.

[59] P. J. Watson, Ronald J. Morris, and Ralph W. Hood, Jr., "Intrinsicness, Religious Self-Love, and Narcissism, *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 1989, 8:1, 31-37.

influence of the Mormon church" in his area.[60] This is one of the few references made to a particular religion in an instance where the NPI was administered. It is also the only reference to the Latter-day Saints that was identified.

Psychologists Robert Raskin and Calvin Hall developed the NPI in 1979 in an attempt to create an instrument for measuring nonclinical narcissism.[61] Their initial formulation of the NPI consisted of more than 200 questions. Seeing the need to streamline the questionnaire, Raskin joined with psychologist Howard Terry in 1988 and reduced the number of responses to 40.[62] Although there have been attempts to further refine the NPI, Raskin and Terry's 40-item iteration is the most widely used today.[63] The NPI has enjoyed wide dissemination and recently has even found its way into pop culture.[64] There have been those who have taken issue with the ability of the NPI to diagnose Narcissistic Personality Disorder, but that is not its intended purpose.

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[60] Brian T. Tschanz, Carolyn C. Morf, and Charles W. Turner, "Gender Differences in the Structure of Narcissism: A Multi-Sample Analysis of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory," *Sex Roles*, 1998, 38:9/10, 868.

[61] Robert Raskin and Calvin Hall, "A Narcissistic Personality Inventory," *Psychological Reports*, 1979, 45, 590.

[62] Robert Raskin and Terry Hall, "A principle components analysis of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory and further evidence of its construct validity," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1988, 54, 890-902.

[63] Robert A. Emmons, "Narcissism: Theory and Measurement," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 1987, 52:1, 291-300; Daniel R. Ames, Paul Rose, and Cameron P. Anderson, "The NPI-16 as a short measure of narcissism," *Journal of Research in Personality,* 2005, 40, 440-450.

[64] Drew Pinsky, *The Narcissistic Personality Inventory*, 2009, retrieved December 27, 2011, from http://www.oprah.com/relationships/The-Narcissistic-Personality-Inventory-Dr-Drew-Pinsky.

While use of the NPI has been mostly restricted to academic studies and published in academic journals, Jean Twenge and Keith Campbell have authored volumes meant to bring narcissism more into the public consciousness. Twenge's first book, *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled—and More Miserable Than Ever Before*, collected much of Twenge's work and packaged it for a general audience.[65]

In *Generation Me*, Twenge provides insights into why she believes young people are becoming more and more narcissistic. Twenge points to the decline of social rules, the success of the self-esteem movement in public education, increased levels of depression and anxiety, unprecedented cultural nihilism, and movements by minorities (especially women and homosexuals) to inordinately push tolerance. While her reasons for increased NPI scores may or may not be correct, Twenge does offer some suggestions for preventing narcissism: (1) Discard the self-esteem emphasis and teach self-control and good behavior. (2) Do not automatically side with your child. (3) Limit exposure to violence. (4) Avoid words like "spoiled."[66] For young people, Twenge suggests: (1) Limit exposure to certain kinds of TV. (2) Avoid over thinking. (3) Value social relationships. (4) Combat depression naturally. (5) Cultivate realistic expectations. (6) Get involved in your neighborhood and community.[67]

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[65] Jean M. Twenge, *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled—and More Miserable Than Ever Before* (New York: Free Press, 2006).

[66] *Ibid.*, 235-237.

[67] *Ibid.,* 237-242.

With the success of *Generation Me*, Twenge teamed with fellow researcher Keith Campbell and released a more in-depth treatment of Twenge's research. *The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of Entitlement*, was released to similar acclaim three years after *Generation Me*.[68] Even though *The Narcissism Epidemic* is more scholarly in nature, many of the same conclusions and suggestions made in *Generation Me* are presented again—but done so with more research as the evidence for those conclusions and suggestions.

While Twenge seems to have uncovered an epidemic of self-absorption, there are some researchers who take issue with her methods. In their article "Is 'Generation Me' Really More Narcissistic than Previous Generations" Kali H. Trzesniewski, M. Brent Donnellan, and Richard W. Robins warn against fully accepting her conclusions.[69] They argue that Twenge has misinterpreted her data. In response to these charges, Twenge assembled a group of researchers and published, "Further Evidence of an increase in Narcissism Among College Students" where she provides additional data in support of her conclusions.[70] Trzesniewski and Donnellan challenged Twenge's research again in a

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[68] Jean M. Twenge and W. Keith Campbell, *The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of* Entitlement (New York: Free Press, 2010); The *Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of Entitlement – Book Review*, Retrieved Dec. 27, 2011 from http://www.narcissismepidemic.com/reviews.html.

[69] Kali H. Trzesniewski, M. Brent Donnellan, and Richard W. Robins, "Is 'Generation Me' Really More Narcissistic than Previous Generations?" *Journal of Personality*, 2008, 76:4, 903-918.

[70] Jean M. Twenge, Sara Konrath, Joshua D. Foster, W. Keith Campbell, and Brad J. Bushman, "Further Evidence of an increase in Narcissism Among College Students," *Journal of Personality*, 2008, 76:4, 921-927.

back and forth exchange which finally ended with neither side conceding.[71] While Trzesniewski and Donnellan continue to argue that there have been no dramatic shifts in attitude or self-centeredness, Twenge and her team continue to claim just the opposite. If Christian Smith and the NSYR are taken into account, Twenge's argument for generational shift seems to have more evidence.

Regardless of which side is more correct, the question of narcissism among America's young people is interesting enough to incite such a lively debate, even if it "generate[s] far more heat than light."[72] Regrettably however, no data exists on LDS young people and narcissism. This thesis attempts to provide, analyze, and contextualize such data.

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[71] M. Brent Donnellan, Kali H. Trzesniewski, and Richard W. Robins, "An emerging epidemic of narcissism or much ado about nothing?" *Journal of Research in Personality*, 2009, 43:3, 598-501; Kali H. Trzesniewski and M. Brent Donnellan, "Rethinking 'Generation Me': A Study of Cohort Effects From 1976-2006," *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 2010, 5:1, 58-75; Jean M. Twenge and Keith W. Campbell, "Birth Cohort Differences in the Monitoring the Future Dataset and Elsewhere: Further Evidence for Generation Me-Commentary on Trzesniewski & Donnellan (2010)," *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 2010, 5:1, 81-88; M. Brent Donnellan and Kali H. Trzesniewski, "Groundhog Day Versus Alice in Wonderland, Red Herrings Versus Swedish Fishes, and Hopefully Something Constructive: A Reply to Comments," *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 2010, 5:1, 103-108.

[72] M. Brent Donnellan and Kali H. Trzesniewski, "Groundhog Day Versus Alice in Wonderland, Red Herrings Versus Swedish Fishes, and Hopefully Something Constructive: A Reply to Comments," *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 2010, 5:1, 105.

Chapter Two

The Doctrine of "Self" in The Book of Mormon

Because the Book of Mormon is a foundational scriptural text for Latter-day Saints, any inquiry into the theological underpinnings of LDS thought ought to begin with a thorough examination of this unique record. In so doing, the LDS understanding of the self and its proper place in LDS thought will begin to emerge.

Near the end of his life, the prophet Mormon addressed those individuals to whom the Book of Mormon would later be delivered. To these future generations Mormon wrote, "Behold, the Lord hath shown unto me great and marvelous things concerning that which must shortly come, at that day when these things shall come forth among you. Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing" (Mormon 8:34-35). The Lord showed Mormon a time when men, "walk in the pride of [their] hearts; and there are none save a few only who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts, unto the wearing of very fine apparel, unto envying, and strifes, and malice, and persecutions, and all manner of iniquities; and your churches, yea, even every one, have become polluted because of the pride of your hearts" (Mormon 8:36). This is indeed a description of the time in which we now live.

As was discussed in the previous chapter, researchers Jean Twenge and W. Keith Campbell have suggested that one such ill within modern society is the epidemic of narcissism.[1] In light of Twenge and Cambell's work, it seems as though the prophecy of

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[1] Jean M. Twenge and W. Keith Campbell, *The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of* Entitlement (New York: Free Press, 2009).

the Apostle Paul is being fulfilled. Paul taught that one of the signs of the last days was that, "men shall be lovers of their own selves" (2 Tim. 3:2).

The Doctrine of "Self" as Understood by Lehi's Sons

The Book of Mormon begins with a story about a family. While still living in Jerusalem, Lehi tried to teach his oldest four sons to submit to the Lord, but those lessons seemed to resonate only with two of the four. For Laman and Lemuel, such talk led them to refer to their father as a "visionary man" and one who was led after the "foolish imaginations of his heart" (1 Nephi 2:11). Instead of believing in the prophecies of their father, they instead chose to rely on the strength of their self-serving neighbors in Jerusalem. Of those they left behind in Jerusalem, Laman and Lemual said, "we know that the people who were in the land of Jerusalem were a righteous people; for they kept the statues and judgments of the Lord . . . wherefore we know that they are a righteous people" (1 Nephi 17:22). Laman and Lemuel were desirous that they might return to Jerusalem in order to reclaim Lehi's "house, and the land of his inheritance, and his gold, and his silver, and his precious things" (1 Nephi 2:4). Throughout the early chapters of the Book of Mormon, Laman and Lemuel continually want to do things "their way." While it is true that they eventually obey their father and accomplish everything that he asked them to do, they always did so with a spirit of reluctance and subterfuge.

While Nephi's life seems to be the direct opposite of that of Laman and Lemuel, it does not appear that he was "destined" to be so. He was not simply "born that way." When Lehi presented the Lord's plan for their family, Nephi needed to undertake a vital step in solidify his allegiance to the Lord. Nephi recorded:

And it came to pass that I, Nephi, being exceedingly young, nevertheless being large in stature, and also having great desires to know of the mysteries of God, wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord; and behold he did visit me, and did soften my heart that I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father; wherefore, I did not rebel against him like unto my brothers. (1 Nephi 2:16).

Because Laman and Lemuel continued to harden their hearts, such a personal revelation of the divinity of Lehi's message was never obtained. Throughout their trip along the Arabian peninsula, across the ocean, and finally upon their arrival in the New World, Laman and Lemual continued to withhold the one thing that would have led to their happiness: their wills. It will be demonstrated throughout the rest of this chapter that the Book of Mormon teaches that the submission of one's will is vital to understanding the dealings of God.

The Doctrine of Submission

While the Book of Mormon has many themes and purposes, one of its main purposes is to remind people everywhere that submission to God's will brings about God's choicest blessings. In his last sermon to his people, King Benjamin taught that we all ought to "[yield] to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and [put] off the natural man and [become saints] through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and [become] as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father" (Mosiah 3:19). This is the message of "self" that one finds in the Book of Mormon – a message of submission and voluntary humility. It is a message that flies in the face of a world where submission and humility are signs of weakness, in the face of a world where "you have to

learn to love yourself before you can learn to love anyone else."[2] The Book of Mormon's

doctrine of submission is really one of those doctrines that critics of Christianity

bemoaned as "turning the world upside down" (Acts 17:6, see also 2 Nephi 27:27 and

Isaiah 29:16).

The only place where the term "self" is used in the Book of Mormon is in Zenos'

allegory of the olive tree (Jacob 5:18, 19, 20, 23, 29, 33). Compare these mere five

references with the more than fifty-thousand books that a search of Amazon.com yielded

as having the term "self" in their titles. In the Book of Mormon instances, The Lord

departs from pop-psychology's view of "self" and offers a very different view. The Lord

of the vineyard (Jesus Christ) is instructing his laborers (prophets and priesthood holders)

regarding the preservation of fruit (souls) unto Himself. Nowhere in the allegory of the

olive tree is the fruit told that it is good "just for being what it is." Instead, the fruit is

either gathered or tossed aside based on whether it was good or bitter.

According to the Book of Mormon, the pursuit of "self" is ultimately the pursuit

of sadness. On the contrary, the pursuit of submission, yields happiness. In teaching the

doctrine of submission, Alma taught that,

> Because ye are compelled to be humble blessed are ye; for a man sometimes, if he
> is compelled to be humble, seeketh repentance; and now surely, whosoever
> repenteth shall find mercy; and he that findeth mercy and endureth to the end the
> same shall be saved.
>
> And now, as I said unto you, that because ye were compelled to be humble ye
> were blessed, do ye not suppose that they are more blessed who truly humble
> themselves because of the word?

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[2] Ibid, p. 90.

Yea, he that truly humbleth himself, and repenteth of his sins, and endureth to the end, the same shall be blessed--yea, much more blessed than they who are compelled to be humble because of their exceeding poverty.

Therefore, blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble; or rather, in other words, blessed is he that believeth in the word of God, and is baptized without stubbornness of heart, yea, without being brought to know the word, or even compelled to know, before they will believe. (Alma 32:13-16)

Alma taught that those who voluntarily humble themselves (submit themselves) to the Lord are "much more blessed than they who are compelled to be humble." While it is true that the Lord wants a humble people, He would rather have a people who willingly submit rather than being coerced into submission. To this point Elder Alvin R. Dyer said, "I believe there is perhaps a distinction between humility and meekness. It may be said that meekness is a condition of voluntary humility."[3]

In the Book of Helaman we find another prophet who taught the doctrine of submission, albeit in a roundabout manner. While the story being told is of Nephi and his dealings with an apostate people, it appears that chapter twelve is a summary of the events written by Mormon. In considering the apostate nature of this particular Nephite group, Mormon remarked,

Yea, how quick to be lifted up in pride; yea, how quick to boast, and do all manner of that which is iniquity; and how slow are they to remember the Lord their God, and to give ear unto his counsels, yea, how slow to walk in wisdom's paths!

Behold, they do not desire that the Lord their God, who hath created them, should rule and reign over them; notwithstanding his great goodness and his mercy towards them, they do set at naught his counsels, and they will not that he should be their guide.

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[3] Elder Alvin R. Dyer, Conference Report, October 1970, Afternoon Meeting, p.151.

> O how great is the nothingness of the children of men; yea, even they are less than the dust of the earth.
>
> For behold, the dust of the earth moveth hither and thither, to the dividing asunder, at the command of our great and everlasting God. (Helaman 12:5-8)

This statement of man's nothingness is not one that would likely make the cover of any of today's self-help books! "O how great is the nothingness of the children of men; yea even they are less than the dust of the earth" (Helaman 12:7). Were Mormon to leave this statement so, it may seem as if we are of less worth to God than the dust of the earth. Thankfully, verse eight provides a reason to consider ourselves so lowly. Verse eight teaches that when the Lord commands dust to move, it moves. Man, on the other hand, is not so obedient. When the Lord tells humanity to love one another, not steal, not commit adultery, or keep the Sabbath day holy, only a fraction of His children listen. To become as dust would be equivalent to completely surrendering one's will to God. The Book of Mormon teaches to stop focusing on what individuals want and start focusing on what God wants. As humanity learns to do so, one of the central messages of the Book of Mormon is evidenced again. Individuals gain personal experience that "inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper, and shall be led to a land of promise; yea, even a land which I have prepared for you; yea, a land which is choice above all other lands" (1 Nephi 2:20). While the "land of promise" spoken of in this verse was a geographical location for Lehi's family, the "land of promise" for the rest of us is as varied as the individuals to whom that promise is given.

The Book of Mormon teaches that as individuals learn to submit their will to the Lord, they receive a great promise. Jesus taught that "Whosoever shall seek to save his

life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it" (Luke 17:33). The

doctrine of submission is ultimately a doctrine of happiness. Being that secular

philosophies have come and gone, not one of those philosophies has seemed to contain

the answer for lasting happiness. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, on the other hand, provides

just that – a message of good news and happiness to all who submit to its precepts. LDS

Apostle Boyd K. Packer described his submission to the Lord's will in these words:

> I knew what agency was and knew how important it was to be individual and to be independent, to be free. I somehow knew there was one thing the Lord would never take from me, and that was my free agency. I would not surrender my agency to any being but to Him! I determined that I would give Him the one thing that He would never take my agency. I decided, by myself, that from that time on I would do things His way.
>
> That was a great trial for me, for I thought I was giving away the most precious thing I possessed. I was not wise enough in my youth to know that because I exercised my agency and decided myself, I was not losing it. It was strengthened![4]

The Selfless "Narcissism" of God

With the Book of Mormon's focus on submission to the Lord, one might ask the

question of whether or not humanity should consider the Father and the Son to be the

ultimate narcissists. The scriptures are full of passages that indicate the Lord's wish for

His children to worship him. Isaiah 42:8 reads, "I [am] the LORD: that [is] my name: and

my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." Elsewhere the

Lord tells us that "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the

fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate me"

(Mosiah 13:13). Before thinking that these examples are anomalies, consider that the

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[4] Elder Boyd K. Packer, "Spiritual Crocodiles," *Ensign* (CR), May 1976, p.30.

Lord is referenced to as being "jealous" over 25 times in the standard works.[5] If the Book of Mormon teaches that individuals ought to try and emulate the Lord's behavior, should they in turn seek for others to worship them? Luckily the Book of Mormon helps explain this seeming paradox.

As most of the references to God being "jealous" come from the Old Testament, an understanding of the Hebrew meaning of "jealous" is necessary. The Hebrew word *qanna' (ka-naw')* is almost always translated as "jealous" in the Old Testament, but the root of that word provides an interesting insight into the Lord's jealousy. *Qanna'* is derived from the root *qana'* (kaw-naw'), which means to be "causatively made zealous."[6] When the Old Testament records that the Lord was made "jealous," that ought to be understood as the Lord being made more "zealous." Anytime that Israel began to stray after other gods, the Lord would become more "zealous" in His efforts to reclaim them. Jealously is often associated with pride, but in the Lord's case His pride was not in some way injured as a mortal's might be. The Lord wishes to reclaim Israel, not for any selfish reason of His own, but out of His genuine love for them. Because He loves them, He wishes to save them.

The selfless nature of the Lord zealously coming after His children can be better understood through the use of an analogy. Consider for a moment that a house has caught on fire and you are stuck in a room on the second floor. You desperately cry for help, but

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[5] Mosiah 11:22, Mosiah 13:13, 2 Cor 11:2, Ex 20:5, Ex 34:14, Num 25:11, Deut 4:24, Deut 5:9, Deut 6:15, Deut 29:20, Deut 32:16, Deut 32:21, Josh 24:19, 1 Kgs 14:22, 1 Kgs 19:10 ,1 Kgs 19:14, Ps 78:58, Ps 79:5, Isa 42:13, Ezek 16:42, Ezek 36:5, Ezek 36:6, Ezek 39:25, Joel 2:18, Nahum 1:2, Zeph 1:18, Zeph 3:8, Zech 1:14, Zech 8:2.

[6] See Strong's Hebrew Dictionary, 7065, 7067.

you are alone in the house. As the fire department arrives, they realize that they do not have very much time before the structural integrity of the home will give way and the house will collapse on you. They "zealously" attempt to work faster. As the house continues to burn, you foolishly attempt to open a window and climb out. As you start to open the window, the firefighters "zealously" yell at you to stay where you are. Opening a window would have caused an influx of fresh oxygen and incinerated the room where you are, thus burning you in the process. After what seems like hours you finally hear a fireman coming to your room. As he calls for you would you possibly think to yourself, "What a narcissist! I can't believe he wants me to come with him!?" Although it might be true that some rescue workers put their lives in danger for the praise of others, the Lord attempts to save his children for selfless reasons. It is out of genuine love that he beacons for humanity to follow Him.

Were it not for the unselfish act of Jesus Christ, The Book of Mormon teaches, humankind would have remained in their fallen state. As it was, Jesus Christ did not need to atone for anything that He had brought upon himself through sin. Jesus Christ was never in danger of becoming an "[angel] to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of God." Were the Savior a narcissist, the Atonement would never had happened. He had too little to gain personally. His merits had qualified Him for eternal life.

Not only did Jesus selflessly atone for humanity's sins, but His entire life seemed to be one gargantuan example of deference and submission. Of Jesus' baptism, Nephi wrote,

> And now, if the Lamb of God, he being holy, should have need to be baptized by water, to fulfil all righteousness, O then, how much more need have we, being unholy, to be baptized, yea, even by water!

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And now, I would ask of you, my beloved brethren, wherein the Lamb of God did fulfil all righteousness in being baptized by water?

Know ye not that he was holy? But notwithstanding he being holy, he showeth unto the children of men that, according to the flesh he humbleth himself before the Father, and witnesseth unto the Father that he would be obedient unto him in keeping his commandments. 2 Nephi 31:5-7.

As the supreme example of how to do mortality correctly, the Lord, He who has justifiable reason to seek honor and praise, humbled himself "before the father." Just as the Savior was willing to submit to His Father, the Book of Mormon teaches that mankind must also be willing to submit to God.

The Anti-Christs' Focus on "Self"

Although a focus on "self" was not taught by any of the Lord's servants in the Book of Mormon, each of the anti-Christs that make an appearance in the Book of Mormon all taught an unhealthy focus on "self." Beginning with Sherem, each anti-Christ began his ministry by "flattering" the group of people he was trying to persuade. By its very definition, "flattery" connotes the giving of a compliment in order to receive something in return. It also implies a giving of false hope. As a sincere compliment would be the virtue, flattery would be the vice. As a sincere compliment is selfless, flattery is selfish. Flattery panders to the desire of many individuals to have their individuality substantiated by another. Interestingly, substantiation in the form of flattery only lasts so long.

While each of the Book of Mormon anti-Christs taught narcissistic doctrines, Korihor will be used as the prime example. As Korihor began to try and influence the Nephites he told the people that they were "bound down under a foolish and a vain

hope," that was merely based on the "foolish traditions of your fathers" (Alma 30:13-14). He further taught that any desire to repent and submit one's life to the will of God was merely "the effect of a frenzied mind; and this derangement of your minds comes because of the traditions of your fathers, which lead you away into a belief of things which are not so (Alma 30:16). This "psychologized" version of repentance sounds very similar to ideas supported by the secular humanists of today. Korihor went on to teach that, "every man fared in this life according to the management of the creature; therefore every man prospered according to his genius, and that every man conquered according to his strength; and whatsoever a man did was no crime" (Alma 30:17). This version of social Darwinism (both then and now) has led many people to develop a very competitive view of mortality. Interestingly, competition and narcissism often go hand in hand.

Korihor's doctrine is ultimately humanistic at its core. Humanism teaches "whatever the mind can believe and conceive, it can achieve" and that as the popular poem goes, "I am the captain of my soul, the master of my fate!" The Book of Mormon teaches that nothing could be further from the truth. As Jacob taught, were it not for the Lord, we would have been lost in our fallen state and nothing that our humanistic ideals could conjure up would have done anything about it. In response to the idea that we are the captains of our souls, LDS Apostle Orson F. Whitney suggests the following extra verse. He wrote,

> Art thou in truth? Then what of him
> Who bought thee with his blood?
> Who plunged into devouring seas
> And snatched thee from the flood?
> Who bore for all our fallen race
> What none but him could bear.
> The God who died that man might live,
> And endless glory share?

Of what avail thy vaunted strength,
 Apart from his vast might?
Pray that his Light may pierce the gloom,
 That thou mayest see aright.
Men are as bubbles on the wave,
 As leaves upon the tree.
Thou, captain of thy soul, forsooth!
 Who gave that place to thee?
Free will is thine free agency,
 To wield for right or wrong;
But thou must answer unto him
 To whom all souls belong.
Bend to the dust that head unbowed,
 Small part of Lifes great whole!
And see in him, and him alone,
 The Captain of thy soul.[7]

Summary

While there were many Book of Mormon prophets who spoke against the over-promotion of self, one stands out particularly. The Book of Mormon tells the story of Nephi, the son of Helaman. We are told that Nephi wore out his life in the service of his fellowman and as a result the Lord told him that "because thou hast done this with such unwearyingness, behold, I will bless thee forever; and I will make thee mighty in word and in deed, in faith and in works; yea, even that all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word, for thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will" (Helaman 10:5). As a result of Nephi's devotion, the Lord blessed Nephi with whatever he desired. One might assume that losing oneself in the work of the Lord would decrease one's own sense of self, but that does not seem to be the case. The Book of Mormon teaches that as individuals become less interested in *themselves* and more interested in the Lord, they will ultimately find greater peace and happiness. Speaking to a similar point, C. S. Lewis

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[7] Improvement Era, May 1926, p. 611.

wrote, "Our real selves are all waiting for us in Him. The more I resist Him and try to live on my own, the more I become dominated by my own heredity and upbringing and surroundings and natural desires . . . It is when I turn to Christ, when I give myself up to His Personality, that I first begin to have a real personality of my own."[8]

As has been demonstrated in this chapter, The Book of Mormon teaches time and time again that over-preoccupation with self is not part of God's will for His children. Furthermore, such a message is not ancillary, but central to the Book of Mormon's main theme of preaching dependence on Jesus Christ. Because the Book of Mormon is a foundational scriptural text for Latter-day Saints, this doctrine of anti-narcissistic selflessness ought to be considered foundational for LDS thought.

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[8] C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, New York: Macmillan, 1960, p. 189.

Latter-day Saints and Self-Esteem

LDS doctrine derives from two main sources: scripture and the words of Latter-day prophets. While the previous chapter outlined how the Book of Mormon provides the scriptural foundation for LDS thought regarding the proper perspective of self, the purpose of this chapter is to show how Latter-day prophets have consistently offered Latter-day Saints that same message. Since the systematic tracking of an idea as broad as "the self" is problematic, this chapter will focus specifically on the use of the term "self-esteem" by LDS Church leaders. This will be accomplished through tracking the usage of the term "self-esteem" in general conferences (April and October) and comparing and contrasting those uses with those found in secular literature.

Latter-day Saints receive instruction from their general church leadership twice a year in what is known as "general conference." While the semiannual nature of these conferences has not always been the same, such conferences have been taking place since the founding of the Church in 1830. At these conferences, general authorities and general officers are invited to share messages with the Church membership. General authorities are those men who are responsible for the entire Church and not only certain geographic areas.[1] These messages are intended to instruct and counsel all Latter-day Saints and are

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[1] Although certain general authorities may preside over a specific geographical area at any particular time, those assignments can be revised at any time. The nature of a general authority is such that they can serve anywhere in the world and have authority to do so when that assignment is so delegated by the President of the Church. For a thorough description of the organization structure of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints see: http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/backgroundinformation/organizational-structure-of-the-church.

regarded by many as official Church doctrine. For this purpose, the scope of this paper will consider statements about self-esteem in general conference rather than considering the entire body of LDS literature.

Upon the conclusion of each conference, the instruction that has been given is made available to the Church membership in a "Conference Report." Remarkably, most of the proceedings of these conferences have been preserved and even digitized, making textual analysis both effective and efficient. As instances of the term "self-esteem" are found in general conference they will be considered in three areas, early (1830-1920), modern (1920-1960), and contemporary (1960-present). Doing such will allow the consideration of each instance in its historical context.

Early (1830-1920) Uses of "Self-Esteem" in General Conference

"Self-esteem" was a term rarely used in general conference between 1830 and 1920. In fact, it was only mentioned twice. This limited frequency should not be surprising, since self-esteem had not yet reached public consciousness and would not do so until the 1970s. The term "self-esteem" first appeared in a general church meeting in 1856. On November 2, 1856, Brigham Young commented on the sad state of so many of the Saints who were still traveling across the plains. Of those living in the Salt Lake Valley who were unwilling to assist those who were still traveling, Brigham Young counseled, "I know all about you, without telling what great things you have done, and what you have not done. But the very spirit some have in them of pride, arrogance, and self esteem, has led men and women to die on the Plains, by scores, at least their folly

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has."[2] Here "self esteem" is used pejoratively, much as would be the case with pride or arrogance. It seems here that self-esteem was hardly a desirable attribute.

The next instance of "self-esteem" appearing in a general conference address did not happen until twelve years later. John Taylor, third President of the Church, invited church members to "drop our individuality and self-esteem a little . . . seek to do not our own will, but the will of Him who sent us."[3] Again, self-esteem is shown as something that the Saints should try to "drop."

To summarize the LDS understanding of self-esteem between 1830 and 1920 would be to equate self-esteem with pride, conceit, and selfishness. Perhaps this negative view of self-esteem came from Bible passages that mention self-esteem. While the term "self-esteem" is never used in the bible, there are a few verses that mention self-esteem styled ideas. In Philippians 2:3, Paul counsels the saints to "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." Elsewhere Paul taught, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves" (2 Timothy 3:1-3). While these are only two examples, similar scriptures encourage Christians to put off thinking about themselves. Alternatively, the only scripture that *seems* to promote self-esteem is Matthew 22:39. It reads, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." While there have been attempts by some to use this scripture as license for self aggrandizement, to interpret this scripture as such surely deviates from Jesus' wholly *God-centered* and *other-*

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[2] Brigham Young in *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 4, 69.

[3] John Taylor in *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 20, 137.

centered message.[4] From a scriptural point of view, self-esteem seems to be something that ought to be avoided.

The Secular Understanding of Self-Esteem from 1830-1920

Latter-day Saints were not alone in their suspicious view of self-esteem. While the origins of the term "self-esteem" are uncertain, the first purely psychological use of term can be attributed to William James, the father of American psychology. Between 1830 and 1929 William James was most likely the only psychologist that gave any serious attention to the topic of self-esteem.[5] In classifying man's seeming innate propensity for what James calls "self feeling" he wrote, "Thus pride, conceit, vanity, self-esteem, arrogance, vainglory, on the one hand; and on the other modesty, humility, confusion, diffidence, shame, mortification, contrition, the sense of obloquy and personal despair." [6] Again "self-esteem" is relegated to the list of baser characteristics.

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[4] While not a general authority, popular LDS writer James Farrell has most recently captured this sentiment. In his book, *Falling to Heaven* he writes, "In a church meeting I once attended, a visiting speaker opened his remarks with the following question: 'Do you think Jesus loved himself? Of Course he did!' he insisted enthusiastically, responding to his own question. 'How else could he love others so much if he didn't first love himself?' Over the years since, I have been on the lookout for scriptural support for this idea. In all that time, I have yet to find a single verse of scripture that speaks of Jesus' self-love. Countless scriptures tell us that he loves his Father and loves us. Indeed, those two themes are apparently among the most important in all the scripture. But that he loves *himself*? Not even a whisper. It seems that the topic didn't interest him" (James Farrell, *Falling to Heaven*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011, ix).

[5] Every anthology on self-esteem that was consulted for this chapter lists William James as the only early psychologist to mention self-esteem.

[6] William James, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol.1, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1918), 306 – 1890.

In all fairness, however, James later compared self-esteem to confidence and even provided an equation whereby one might increase self-esteem. James proposed, "It is determined by the ratio of our actualities to our supposed potentialities; a fraction of which our pretensions are the denominator and the numerator our success: thus, Self-esteem = Success / Pretensions. Such a fraction may be increased as well by diminishing the denominator as by increasing the numerator."[7] For James, the positive version of self-esteem, the version that promotes confidence is not something that comes without accomplishment, an understanding of self-esteem that would be neglected in years to come by James' psychological successors.[8]

Modern (1920-1960) Uses of "Self-Esteem" in General Conference

The modern use of the term "self-esteem" in general conference is only marginally more frequent than that of the previous period. Between the years of 1920 and 1960, self-esteem was mentioned only seven times by LDS leaders in general conference. Although self-esteem was not mentioned frequently in general conference, the emergence of self-esteem literature in the secular world started to gather steam with the emergence

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[7] William James, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol., (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1918), 310-311 – 1890.

[8] James was not alone in this view. Although he didn't use the term "self-esteem," British philosopher David Hume offered a similar sentiment. He said, "But though an overwhelming conceit of our own merit be vicious and disagreeable, nothing can be more laudable than to have a value for ourselves, where we really have qualities that are valuable. The utility and advantage of any quality to ourselves is a source of virtue, as well as its agreeableness to others; and 'tis certain, that nothing is more useful to us in the conduct of life, than a due degree of pride, which makes us sensible of our own merit, and gives us a confidence and assurance in all our projects and enterprises. Whatever capacity any one may be endowed with, 'tis entirely useless to him, if he be not acquainted with it, and form not designs suitable to it." David Hume, *The Philosophical Works of David Hume, (London: Printed for A. Black and W. Tait, 1826), 386-387.*

of such self-esteem giants as psychologists Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers (their

contributions will be discussed later.) What we do find in general conference, however, is

a shifting attitude about self-esteem among LDS general authorities. While self-esteem

was not completely touted as a virtue, this was a transitional period for the Saints'

understanding of self-esteem.

The next two entries for the term "self-esteem" in general conference both come

from Elder Rulon S. Wells. In both instances, Elder Wells was commenting on the danger

of selfishness, but his use of the term "self-esteem" took on a different meaning than that

of his predecessors. In teaching about the devil's counterfeits, Elder Wells said,

> Generosity is a noble attribute . . . Its counterfeit is wastefulness and prodigality.
> Acquisitiveness is the power of accumulating and acquiring wealth. See what the
> Lord hath acquired, the earth is his and the fullness thereof, and the devil has his
> counterfeit of this noble attribute, we call it avarice; it is one of the great causes of
> human suffering, it is the love of money, the root of all evil, thus we might
> continue the long list and show how praise becomes flattery, wisdom pedantry,
> pride, vanity; admiration is changed to envy and self esteem, a proper regard for
> one's self, becomes egotism. How despicable! The Big I and the little you.
> Always talking about oneself, and only interested in others when they are talking
> about him.[9]

Notice that here the term "self-esteem" is listed with the virtues, a departure from

Presidents Young and Taylor. Not only is self-esteem listed as a virtue, but it is given the

definition, "a proper regard for one's self." Positive self-esteem would be reflected two

more times by Elder Wells during the 1930s, once in 1931 and again in 1938.[10]

Elder Wells was not the only general authority to put self-esteem in a positive

light. In 1932 and again in 1954, President Stephen L Richards of the First Presidency

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[9] *Conference Report*, October 1922, 121.

[10] *Conference Report*, October 1931, 66; *Conference Report*, April 1938, 68.

referred to self-esteem as something that could be damaged in an adverse way, thus

implying a "correct" form of self-esteem. In 1932 he counseled the church to, "First,

never repudiate. No man can retain his honor, the respect of his fellows and self-esteem

who repudiates his obligations. The men of this Church in times past have enjoyed an

excellent reputation for honorable dealings."[11] Here President Richards commented that

self-esteem was something that could be injured if a man did not live up to his

responsibilities, a sentiment exemplified in the numerator in William James's self-esteem

equation. This understanding is further illustrated in President Richards' 1954 statement.

In referring to pride he taught,

> I think a false pride, which induces a sense of fear, nearly always without
> justification, that a confession of religious faith will make for loss of prestige and
> standing among a certain class of associates. There is sometimes fear that ridicule
> will follow such an acknowledgment, and of course no one likes to be ridiculed
> because that is great injury to pride and self-esteem and hard to take.[12]

It is quite clear that President Richards is not speaking of self-esteem positively here, but

he did leave the door open for self-esteem to be virtuous. President Richards referred to

"false pride," thus implying a true version of pride and synonymously (at least in this

statement) a true sense of self-esteem. It is evident that President Richards did not remark

on the constructive nature of "true" self-esteem, but that sentiment came out in other

general authorities' addresses, especially from 1960 until the present.

Without teaching such directly, a proper form of self-esteem was being brought to

the Latter-day Saints' attention by their general authorities. This type of self-esteem was

developed through accomplishment and the fulfillment of responsibility, rather than

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[11] *Conference Report*, October 1932, 96.

[12] *Conference Report*, April 1954, p.31.

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decreasing expectation. Elder Albert E. Bowen and Lowell L. Bennion (a non-general authority speaking in general conference) both furthered this type of thinking in their general conference addresses. In speaking of fulfilling one's financial obligations, Elder Bowen taught, "The debtor, for the effect upon himself, for the sake of the honor of his name and his own self-esteem cannot afford to refuse payment of his debt so long as he has anything left to apply to the purpose."[13] Taking a different subject altogether, Bennion said,

> If a boy can find himself through work, through gaining skill, through learning, through fulfilling responsibility, and can get basic satisfactions within himself during these years, he will not be overly dependent upon his relationships with girls. He will not hunger for a steady relationship nor for a deep affectional relationship with a girl to prove his own worth or to find security within himself or self-esteem.[14]

The version of self-esteem found in general conference between 1920 and 1960 is synonymous with many other terms; "self-confidence," "self-security," and "self-respect" would be just a few. This "proper" form of self-esteem was one gained through the realistic appraisal of an individual's accomplishments, which is understandable given the Saints' penchant for hard work and self-reliance. The LDS attitude toward self-esteem had definitely shifted during this time, but was not ready to give full-fledged support to the idea of esteeming oneself. Self-esteem was something to be earned. Accomplishment based self-esteem however, was not a trend found among the more secular promoters of self-esteem at that time.

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[13] *Conference Report*, October 1938, 67.

[14] *Conference Report,* April 1958, 85.

The Secular Understanding of Self-Esteem from 1920-1960

Contrary to the version of self-esteem taught by LDS general authorities, the secular understanding of self-esteem was less disciplined. For secular theorists, self-esteem was certainly synonymous with self-confidence, but it was also synonymous with pride, self-exculpation, and an inflated sense of self-importance.

Although self-esteem would not become popularized until the late 1970s, self-esteem's psychological underpinnings were under development by Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. Interestingly, both Maslow and Rogers earned graduate degrees at Columbia Teachers College and were heavily influenced by the humanist philosopher John Dewey.[15] Under Dewey, Maslow and Rogers were both schooled in the humanist goal of self-actualization and would spend their careers attempting through psychology to show how that goal might be reached.

In 1942 Maslow published one of the first studies on self-esteem. His "Self-Esteem (Dominance Feeling) and Sexuality in Women" concluded that men and women with higher self-esteem (high-dominance people) experienced a more "liberated" sense of sexuality.[16] Maslow wrote, "Thus we may characterize high-dominance people as uninhibited or unrepressed, as people whose fundamental impulses, animal or otherwise, are more apt to come out freely into behavior within limits set by the society. Low-

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[15] Humanism is the branch of philosophy which promotes reason, ethics, and justice over those of religion or divine intervention.

[16] Abraham H. Maslow, "Self-Esteem (Dominance Feeling) and Sexuality in Women," *journal of Social Psychology*, 16, 1942, 259-294.

dominance people (low self-esteem) are far more strongly socialized or inhibited."[17]

Beginning with Maslow, the idea started to arise that individuals who were more

dominant, were more likely to arrive at self-actualization.

For Maslow, such an arrival at "high self-esteem" was not only a desirable goal,

but a basic human need. On the way to an individual's self-actualization (the reaching of

one's full potential), a person *must* fulfill the need for self-esteem. In his most influential

work, "A Theory of Human Motivation," Maslow presented five foundational needs that

all human beings pursue.[18] The needs are physiological (food, water, shelter, sex, etc.),

safety (safety of body, of family, of employment, etc.), love (friendship, family, sexual

intimacy), esteem (self-esteem, confidence, achievement, and the respect of others), and

finally self-actualization. For Maslow, "The perfectly healthy, normal, fortunate man has

no sex needs or hunger needs, or needs for safety, or for love, or for prestige, or self-

esteem . . ."[19] Because the "healthy man" has none of these basic needs, his attention can

be focused on the goal of self-actualization.

Like Maslow, Carl Rogers applied his humanist leanings to psychology. Where

Maslow and Rogers departed, however, was in their implementation of the idea of self-

actualization. Rogers was much more interested in the pragmatic uses of self-esteem than

discussing the theoretical usefulness of self-esteem. As Rogers worked with patients, his

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[17] Abraham H. Maslow, "Self-Esteem (Dominance Feeling) and Sexuality in Women," *journal of Social Psychology*, 16, 1942, 294.

[18] Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review*, 50, 1943, 370-396.

[19] Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review*, 50, 1943, 394.

form of psychotherapy departed from the classical Freudian model and instead preferred working *with* patients rather than working *on* them.[20] According to Rogers, a therapist could only successfully work with a patient if the therapist possessed "unconditional positive regard" for the patient. In other words, a psychologist needed to accept a patient for "who he was" and work from there. There could be no attack on the "self" or the patient would close off to the therapist and no progress could be made. It is from this understanding that the term "unconditional love" arose. According to Rogers, if a person was to find success in therapy, the individual needed to first feel accepted for who they are. No talk of accomplishment or defeat ought to be considered, as that might damage the patient's view of himself or herself, and subsequently hinder the progress of therapy.

Both Maslow's and Rogers' ideas were in their infant stages between 1920 and 1960, but their foundational work would lead to an eventual embrace of self-esteem and self-actualization by much of western culture. Their ideas would infiltrate psychology, educational theory, philosophy, and even religion. Even though the humanist view of self-esteem would become a household term from 1970s on, Latter-day Saints received a much different version of self-esteem from their Church leadership.

Contemporary (1960-Present) Uses of "Self-Esteem" in General Conference

As the concept of self-esteem gained prominence in the 1960s and 1970s, the frequency with which the term was used in general conference also increased. From 1960 to the present, the term "self-esteem" appears at least seventy-three times, contrasted with the mere two occurrences between 1830 and 1920 and the seven occurrences between

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[20] Carl Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy, Its Current Practice, Implications and Theory* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951).

1920 and 1960. Although self-esteem was being mentioned more and more in general conference, Latter-day Saints were receiving a less selfish view of self-esteem than was being promoted through more secular channels. Generally, self-esteem was taught as something that was earned through accomplishment and the adherence to God-given principles. As citing all seventy-three occurrences of the term "self-esteem" in general conference would be inappropriate, this paper will consider those instances that set the tone for how self-esteem would be understood in subsequent general conference addresses. After these first statements are considered, one quite recent talk by President James E. Faust will be used to synthesize the LDS understanding of self-esteem.

Beginning in 1961, self-esteem was taught as something to be carefully guarded and even prized. Elder Marion D. Hanks advised, "Young people need to know that self-esteem is a prized possession and that self-esteem comes only when we live a life consistent with honor and with high principles which we know to be good."[21] Elder Hanks seems to have been teaching that in order for proper self-esteem to be obtained, an individual must earn it. A person should expect a proper respect of self to come automatically, but only as she adheres to "high principles which we know to be good." In 1967 Elder Richard L. Evans' use of the term "self-esteem" also reflects this positive attitude. He taught,

> I would cite a sentence or two from Harold B. Lee: "Oh, God, help me to hold a high opinion of myself." That should be the prayer of every soul: not an abnormally developed self-esteem that becomes haughtiness, conceit, or arrogance, but a righteous self-respect, a belief in one's own worth, worth to god and worth to man.[22]

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[21] *Conference Report*, April 1961, 105.

[22] *Conference Report*, April 1967, 10.

Again we find an appeal for men and women to have a *correct* view of themselves. Like so many other virtues, respect and esteem for self, if not carefully watched, can turn into "haughtiness, conceit, or arrogance."

In 1970, Elder Thomas S. Monson referred to self-esteem from an educational point of view. Reflecting views being developed in educational philosophy, Elder Monson taught that not only should a teacher instruct with regard to grammar and mathematics, but "she also influences their attitudes toward their future and themselves. If she is unskilled, she leaves scars on the lives of youth, cuts deeply into their self-esteem, and distorts their image of themselves as human beings."[23] Notice that here Elder Monson removes the catalyst of building self-esteem from the individual and moves it to another person. Elder Monson does not suggest that teachers should attempt to instill self-esteem in their students, but merely watch themselves so that their position does not do any undue damage to a young person's image of self. Echoing Elder Monson, Elder Neal A. Maxwell suggested that, "education, when joined with service to others (for learning loses its moral authority unless it reaches out) is clearly related to the development of deserved self-esteem, which controls our capacity to love God, to love others, and to love life."[24] According to Elder Maxwell, self-esteem is something oriented toward others and to God.

Very rarely did LDS general authorities instruct their members to seek the promotion of their own self-esteem. Elder Monson cautioned teachers to be aware of the self-esteem of their students. Similarly, Elder James E. Faust cautioned mothers to watch

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[23] *Conference Report*, April 1970, 98.

[24] *Conference Report*, October 1970, 97.

over the self-esteem of their children. In 1974 he warned, "Let every mother understand that if she does anything to diminish her children's father or the father's image in the eyes of the children, it may injure and do irreparable damage to the self-esteem and personal security of the children themselves."[25]

Not only did Church leaders teach that its members should be careful about how they affected one another's self-esteem, but they took measures to ensure that they themselves were promoting a correct view of self-esteem through their own efforts. In 1936 the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints officially organized a "welfare program" to combat the discouraging effects of the Great Depression. This program focused mainly on relieving the effects of poverty through empowering individuals through work, responsibility, and self-reliance. Rarely did the Church dispense money or goods without the individuals who received the relief being accountable for it in some way.[26] In speaking of the welfare program in 1976, President Spencer W. Kimball remarked that, "The Lord's way builds individual self-esteem and develops and heals the dignity of the individual, whereas the world's way depresses the individual's view of himself and causes deep resentment."[27]

This attitude is indicative of not only how the Church viewed welfare, but of how the Church viewed self-esteem. While the Church was unwilling to be a temporal crutch

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[25] Elder James E. Faust, "Happiness is Having a Father who Cares", *Ensign*, January 1974, 22.

[26] For a thorough treatment of the Church's welfare program see "Welfare and Self Reliance" on the Church's website. See "Welfare and Self Reliance," http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/background-information/welfare-and-self-reliance.

[27] President Spencer W. Kimball, "Family Preparedness," *Ensign*, May 1976, 124.

for anyone, the Church did not want to be an emotional or psychological crutch either. Any concept of self-esteem or self-respect is something that ought to be earned. If individual responsibility is minimized an individual might end up with a false sense of who they are and what they can reasonably accomplish. Elder Neil A. Maxwell taught in 1976 that "We can add to each other's storehouse of self-esteem by giving *deserved*, *specific* commendation more often."[28] Just as Church members were encouraged to give physical relief to their fellowman, they were encouraged to give emotional support as well. This support, however, needed to be of the variety that was necessary and deserved.

For LDS general authorities, self-esteem and personal righteousness were closely related. Self-esteem is gained as personal righteousness increases. Speaking on this sentiment, Elder James E. Faust wrote,

> One of the social problems of our day concerns the lack of self-esteem.
>
> A shallow self-image is not reinforced by always letting others establish our standards and by habitually succumbing to peer pressure. Young people too often depend upon someone else's image rather than their own.
>
> Insecurity and lack of self-esteem may be related to lack of self-respect. Can we respect ourselves when we do things that we do not admire and may even condemn in others? Repenting of transgressions and forsaking of weaknesses represent, however, a great restorative salve for the strengthening of human worth and dignity.
>
> Since virtue and faith too often do not readily trade in the marketplace, some may feel that they can live by whatever standards their whim or fancy suggest. In a value-free society – free of morals, free of standards – many also live free of feelings of self-worth, self-respect, and dignity. . .[29]

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[28] Elder Neil A. Maxwell, "Notwithstanding My Weakness," *Ensign*, November 1976, 12. Emphasis added.

[29] Elder James E. Faust, "The Dignity of Self," *Ensign*, April 1981, 8.

Elder Faust was by far the most prolific writer regarding self-esteem. He

mentioned the term more than any other general authority and in one talk to the young

adults of the Church, devoted his entire message to the topic of self-esteem.[30] Since a

pattern has already been shown regarding how LDS general authorities viewed self-

esteem, the only other example that will be offered will be that of Elder Faust's

aforementioned talk. Although this talk was not given in general conference, it

summarizes the remaining statements from general conference regarding self-esteem into

six "essential keys."

President Faust taught that for a person to maintain "healthy self-esteem," she

must keep her agency, practice humility, maintain honesty, love work, develop the

capacity to love others, and most importantly, love God. By doing these things, an

individual can develop a self-esteem that is not a "blind, arrogant, vain, self-love but

rather a self-esteem that is self-respecting, honest, and without conceit. It is born of inner

peace and strength." As cited in earlier statements, President Faust's teaching regarding

self-esteem is very accomplishment oriented. One must become an individual of

humility, love, industry, and integrity before he will be rewarded with a proper view of

himself.

From 1960 until the present, LDS General Authorities have refined the positive

view of self-esteem that they inherited from their modern era predecessors. As a

concluding statement, consider again the words of President James E. Faust. He taught,

> Self-esteem goes to the very heart of our personal growth and accomplishment. It
> is the glue that holds together our self-reliance, our self-control, our self-approval
> or disapproval and keeps all self-defense mechanisms secure. It is a protection

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[30] President James E. Faust, "The Value of Self-Esteem," CES Fireside for Young
Adults, May 6, 2007, Salt Lake Tabernacle.

against excessive self-deception, self-distrust, self-reproach, and plain old-fashioned selfishness.[31]

While Presidents Young and Taylor taught similar sentiments in the early period of the Church, the use of the term self-esteem was unpopular and understood differently among those brethren. While it is true that Latter-day Saints have come to use the term "self-esteem" somewhat frequently in their teaching, their understanding of the concept of self-esteem is different than that of most of the world. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has always taught that agency, humility, obedience, love, and industry are very important for its members; as those virtues are pursued, proper self-esteem will be the result.

The Secular Understanding of Self-Esteem from 1960-Present

Based on theories supplied by Maslow and Rogers, the 1960s experienced an influx of self-esteem and self-help related literature. Beginning in 1964, Eric Berne's *Games People Play* brought self-esteem theory to the masses.[32] In his book, Berne described how all human interaction can be reduced to basic roles: parent, adult, and child. The goal of Berne's "transactional analysis," was to help individuals become autonomous adults, characterized by "awareness, spontaneity, and intimacy."[33] All three of these "desirable" traits hinge on an individual's capacity to throw-off oppressive

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[31] *Ibid.*

[32] Eric Burne, *Games People Play: The Basic Handbook of Transactional Analysis* (New York: Ballentine Books, 1996).

[33] *Ibid.*, 178.

structuring (religion, social mores, etc.) and act in a way that is true to an individual's "inner child."

Following in Berne's footsteps was Thomas Harris. Harris' *I'm Ok – You're Ok* taught people to further accept themselves for who they are and that they are ultimately "born to win."[34] Further promoting these ideals were Nathaniel Branden's *Breaking Free* and *The Psychology of Self-Esteem*.[35] Like Maslow, Branden suggested that self-esteem was a basic human need, and if it was ignored substance abuse, suicide, anxiety, and depression could be the results. While addressing such social ills is certainly a noble goal, the result of focusing so much on making sure individuals feel good about themselves has led to what one author called "the end of ideals and the birth of self-esteem."[36] Self-esteem became the "virtue" by which to judge all other virtues. If a person's failure posed a threat his self-esteem, then the failure ought to be ignored. If awarding one individual for personal accomplishment made the others' self-esteem decrease, then awards ought to be given to everyone or no one.

1986 saw the creation of a government backed "task force" to study the effects of self-esteem on phenomena such as academic achievement, delinquency, and health. "The State Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility" was an attempt by California Assemblyman John Vasconcellos to determine how self-esteem is

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[34] Thomas Harris, *I'm Ok – You're Ok* (New York: Avon Books, 1973). As of this writing, *I'm Ok – You're Ok* had sold over seven million copies.

[35] Nathaniel Branden*, Breaking Free*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1972); Nathaniel Branden, *The Psychology of Self-Esteem* (New York: Jossey-Bass Inc., 2001).

[36] Maureen Stout, *The Feel-Good Curriculum: The Dumbing-Down of America's Kids in the Name of Self-Esteem* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Perseus Books, 2000), 5.

"nurtured, harmed, [and] rehabilitated."[37] This "task force" published its findings in 1990

and concluded that positive self-esteem was indeed a factor in encouraging academic

success, lower rates of depression and suicide, and decreasing delinquency.[38]

Upon the completion of this study, self-esteem became the buzzword for solving

many of society's problems. The California Task Force concluded that,

> Self-Esteem is the likeliest candidate for a social vaccine, something that empowers us to live responsibly and that inoculates us against the lures of crime, violence, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, child abuse, chronic welfare dependency, and educational failure. The lack of self-esteem is central to most personal and social ills plaguing our state and nation as we approach the end of the Twentieth Century.[39]

Armed with such information, scholars, researchers, and organizations promoted the

importance of increasing self-esteem, while subtly downplaying the need for individual

accomplishment. In extreme cases, elementary schools became places "where the word

'bad' is never spoken, where everyone gets an award every year, where kindergarten

children learn to count by being handed pictures of objects and told how many there are

instead of figuring it out themselves."[40] Of his students, one teacher remarked,

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[37] "NOW, THE CALIFORNIA TASK FORCE TO PROMOTE SELF-ESTEEM," New York Times, October 11, 1986, Saturday, Late City Final Edition, Section 1; Page 8. In this same article, Vasconcellos was described by an aide as "the most radical humanist in the Legislature."

[38] The California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility, *Toward a State of Self-Esteem* (Sacramento, California: California State Department of Education, 1990). According to one reporter, one of the Task Force members refused to sign the final report "in part because of the gap between the research results and the report's sweeping conclusions. See: Jerry Adler, "Hey, I'm Terrific!" *Newsweek*, Feb 17, 1992.

[39] *Ibid*.

[40] Jerry Adler, "Hey, I'm Terrific!" *Newsweek*, Feb 17, 1992. To claim that every scholar agrees with such applications of self-esteem theories would be incorrect. Ever

Much like the generation before them, the only thing they are really interested in is you telling them how right they are and how good they are. That is the same mentality that basically forces Harvard to give out B's to people that don't deserve them, out of the fear that they'll go to other schools that'll give them B's, and those schools will make the money. We live in a country that seems to be in this massive state of delusion – where the idea of what you are, is more important than you actually being that. And it actually works as long as everybody's winking at the same time. And then if one person stops winking, you just beat the crap out of that person and then they either start winking or they go somewhere else. But it's like, yeah, my students – all they want to hear is how good they are and how talented they are. And they aren't really – most of them aren't really willing to work to the degree to live up to that.[41]

"The idea of what you are, is more important that you actually being that," is indicative if what an inaccurate view of self-esteem has done to society. Although theorists like Maslow, Harris, and Branden meant well in helping people think better of themselves, that "virtue" has in many cases become a "vice."

Summary

The idea of self-esteem has progressed from being quite obscure to being a household concept. While there are differing opinions about what self-esteem is, much of western culture has accepted the view that there is something unique to each individual that needs to be preserved and promoted. Phrases such as "You have to be true to yourself," and "I need to be accepted for who I am," are certainly true, but only when taken in proper perspective. When taken to the extreme, such ideas leave the door wide

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since the late 1970s there have been writers who have warned about the dangers of exaggerating the importance of self-esteem. [40] See Paul C. Vitz, *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self-worship*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994) and Paul Brownback, *The Danger of Self-Love*, (Chicago, Illinois: The Moody Bible Institute, 1982).

[41] Branford Marsalis, in *Before the Music Died*, dir. Andrew Shapter, B-Side Entertainment (Austin, Texas: B-Side Entertainment, 2006), video recording.

open for the complete obviation of anything that could possibly "damage" a person's image of himself. When self-esteem is not the highest of virtues, but a natural byproduct of a virtuous life, individual responsibility is maintained and criticism can indeed be constructive. Such is the view of self that has been consistently taught by LDS Church leaders.

Chapter Four

The LDS ROS/NPI Study

As has been demonstrated in the previous two chapters, a correct understanding of self is an important aspect of LDS doctrine. In the opinion of Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, doctrine ought to make itself manifest in the lives of LDS Church members. He taught, "True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior."[1] While there are definitely complications in using psychometric instruments such as the Narcissistic Personality Inventory and the Religious Orientation Scale to prove the veracity of such statements, the data indicate that there is definitely something different about LDS young people.

Method

The LDS ROS/NPI Study sample consisted of 174 Latter-day Saints attending Brigham Young University. The only basis for excluding any particular participant was not being a member of the LDS Church. Participants were recruited through announcements in classes taught in the department of Ancient Scripture. Recruiting students through these classes was seen as appropriate due to the requirement that all students who attend BYU are required to take religion classes, thus facilitating a more diverse sample than recruiting only those students in psychology or sociology classes. Subjects were offered class credit for their participation in the study while alternative opportunities for the same credit were offered should the student choose not to

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[1] Elder Boyd K. Packer, "Little Children," *Ensign*, October 1986, 20.

participate. Subjects who chose to participate in the study were given an Internet URL that directed them to an online Qualtrics survey. Subjects were recruited and the survey was made available only after the appropriate approvals were obtained from the Brigham Young University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Chair of the Department of Ancient Scripture.

The subjects were all provided with an informed consent letter and participation in the study was completely voluntary. The identified participants almost unanimously agreed to become involved with the research study. Skip-logic was built into the survey to give only those who agreed with the informed consent letter and identified themselves as LDS access to the instrument.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

Question 1: What is the NPI score for the sample group identified for the study? How do those scores compare with NPI scores from other college campuses?

Question 2: What are the extrinsic and intrinsic scores for the sample group identified for the study?

Question 3: What (if any) correlation is there between NPI scores and extrinsic/intrinsic scores among the sample group identified for the study?

Question 4: In the sample group identified for the study, how do specific factors such as age, gender, marital status, whether or not the subject served a mission for the LDS Church, where the subject grew up, and what the subject's LDS seminary experience was, influence NPI and intrinsic/extrinsic scores?

Along with basic demographic information, both the Religious Orientation Scale and Narcissistic Personality Inventory were administered as a part of this survey. Because the NPI and ROS are not themselves the focus of this research, only descriptive data from this survey are included. Data were collected in April and May of 2012 and the survey required approximately 15 minutes for participants to complete.

Data Analysis

After data was collected and exported from Qualtrics, SPSS was used to analyze the data. Due to a technical issue with Qualtrics, many entries for both the extrinsic and intrinsic scales of the ROS had missing values. By calculating the mean of the existing scores to compensate for missing values, valid scores for the ROS were achieved.[2] Scores for the ROS from the LDS ROS/NPI Study are well within the range of other administrations of the ROS among LDS samples. Once determining that the data collected was valid, appropriate statistical tests were performed.

Results

Tables 4.1 – 4.8 provide the descriptive data gathered from the LDS ROS/NPI Study. Demographic information is presented first with results from the ROS and NPI thereafter.

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[2] Because averages were used to make up for the missing data, such factors as median, mode, range, maximum, and minimum scores will not look as expected.

Table 4.1 – Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	13-17	1	.6	.6	.6
	18-25	149	85.6	89.8	90.4
	26-34	9	5.2	5.4	95.8
	35-54	3	1.7	1.8	97.6
	55-64	2	1.1	1.2	98.8
	65 or over	2	1.1	1.2	100.0
	Total	166	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	8	4.6		
Total		174	100.0		

Table 4.2 – Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	124	71.3	75.2	75.2
	Female	41	23.6	24.8	100.0
	Total	165	94.8	100.0	
Missing	System	9	5.2		
Total		174	100.0		

Table 4.3 – Marital Status					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	140	80.5	84.3	84.3
	Married	26	14.9	15.7	100.0
	Total	166	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	8	4.6		
Total		174	100.0		

Table 4.4 – Served a Full-Time Mission for the LDS Church

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	119	68.4	71.7	71.7
	No	47	27.0	28.3	100.0
	Total	166	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	8	4.6		
Total		174	100.0		

Table 4.5 - LDS Seminary Experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Released Time (During School Hours)	75	43.1	45.2	45.2
	Early Morning	76	43.7	45.8	91.0
	Other	4	2.3	2.4	93.4
	Did not attend LDS seminary	11	6.3	6.6	100.0
	Total	166	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	8	4.6		
Total		174	100.0		

Table 4.6 – Location of Hometown

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	West Coast	38	21.8	22.9	22.9
	Intermountain West	70	40.2	42.2	65.1
	Midwest	26	14.9	15.7	80.7
	East Coast	19	10.9	11.4	92.2
	Outside of the US	13	7.5	7.8	100.0
	Total	166	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	8	4.6		
Total		174	100.0		

Table 4.7 – Results from the ROS		
	Extrinsic	Intrinsic
Mean	24.6634	37.5284
Std. Error of Mean	.38986	.29774
Median	24.6634	37.6166
Mode	24.66	37.53
Std. Deviation	5.14256	3.92744
Variance	26.446	15.425
Skewness	.277	-1.283
Std. Error of Skewness	.184	.184
Range	32.22	23.12
Minimum	11.00	221.872.00
Maximum	42.11	45.00

Table 4.8 – Results from the NPI

	NPI Score	Authority Score	Self-Sufficiency Score	Superiority Score	Exhibitionism Score	Exploitativeness Score	Vanity Score	Entitlement Score
Mean	13.55	4.57	2.32	2.03	1.80	1.30	1.25	1.21
Std. Error of Mean	.525	.151	.122	.105	.146	.101	.079	.089
Median	13.00	5.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Mode	16	5	2	2	0	0	0	0
Std. Deviation	6.919	1.995	1.605	1.389	1.926	1.335	1.038	1.179
Variance	47.879	3.981	2.576	1.929	3.711	1.783	1.077	1.390
Skewness	.029	-.586	.321	.186	.839	.808	.210	.960
Std. Error of Skewness	.184	.184	.184	.184	.184	.184	.184	.184
Range	30	8	6	5	7	5	3	5
Minimum	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maximum	30	8	6	5	7	5	3	5

Research Question 1 – What is the NPI score for the sample group identified for the study? How do those scores compare with NPI scores from other college campuses?

The average NPI score for the current sample of BYU students was 13.55 with a standard deviation of 6.91. A single sample *t*-test was conducted comparing this sample with the national mean for university students reported by Twenge and Foster of 17.23.[3]

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[3] Jean M. Twenge and Joshua D. Foster, "Birth Cohort Increases in Narcissistic Personality Traits Among American College Students, 1982–2009," *Social Psychology and Personality Science*, 2010, 1:1, 99-106.

There was a significant difference between the BYU sample and the national average with BYU students scoring lower [t (173) = 7.01, p<.001].

Research Question 2 – What are the extrinsic and intrinsic scores for the sample group identified for the study?

Table 4.7 shows that the sample had a mean intrinsic score of 37.52 with a standard deviation of 3.9 and a mean extrinsic score of 24.66 with a standard deviation of 5.14.

Research Question 3 – What (if any) correlation is there between NPI scores and extrinsic/intrinsic scores among the sample group identified for the study?

A Pearson correlation was calculated examining the relationships between NPI, intrinsicness, and extrinsicness. Neither correlation was significant [$r_{NPI.INT}$ (174) = .05, NS; $r_{NPI.EXT}$ (174) = .-.05, *NS*].

Research Question 4 – Question 4: In the sample group identified for the study, how do specific factors such as age, gender, marital status, whether or not the subject served a mission for the LDS Church, where the subject grew up, and what the subject's LDS seminary experience was, influence NPI and intrinsic/extrinsic scores?

Appropriate tests of differences (independent samples, *t*-tests, ANOVA/ANCOVA), were conducted. Most of the tests rendered nonsignificant differences among the groups. Three tests rendered significant differences. Males were significantly higher than females in terms of average NPI scores [t (163) = 3.75, p<.001].

Single subjects were significantly higher than married subjects in terms of extrinsic religiosity [t (164) = 2.07, p<.05]. Subjects varied significantly in terms of extrinsic religiosity depending on where they grew up. Post hoc tests revealed that subjects who grew up outside of the United States were significantly higher than subjects who grew up on the West Coast and significantly higher than subjects who grew up in the Intermountain West [F (4, 161) = 3.24, p<.05; Tukey HSD Outside US vs. West Coast p<.05, Outside US vs. Intermountain West p<.005]. No other differences were found among the groups. Initial analysis revealed significant differences between missionaries and non-missionaries in terms of NPI scores. However, because of the very high overlap between mission status and gender, analysis of covariance which removed the effects of gender on NPI scores resulted in no significant differences between missionaries and non-missionaries. It has been well documented that males generally score higher on the NPI than females.

Discussion

Much like the results from Christian Smith's aforementioned research, the LDS ROS/NPI Study has uncovered that yet again, LDS young people are different. Unlike Smith, however, this thesis will attempt to give reasons for *why* that seems to be.

Why LDS Young Adults Score Lower on the NPI

While there are probably many reasons why LDS young adults score lower on the NPI than their peers, this thesis will offer just three suggestions. First, LDS young people have heard a consistent message of anti-narcissism as they have both studied the scriptures with their families (LDS families are encouraged to read the scriptures every

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day together) and listened to the words of their Church leaders. As was shown in chapters 2 and 3, putting the self in proper relation to God and to the rest of the world is a central theme throughout LDS doctrine. The Church's teachings act as a counterbalance to the narcissism encountered at school, in pop culture, and on the internet.

Communicating doctrine to LDS young people is one of the major areas of focus for the Church. The Church expends considerable resources on their Church Educational System which provides both sacred and secular instruction for their young people. As soon as young people enter high school, they can enroll in seminary. Seminary is a daily religion class aimed at teaching young people the doctrines of the LDS Church as found in scripture and words of Latter-day prophets. Where enrollment is high enough and local governments cooperate, students are released from their high school classes for a class period to attend seminary. For those who live in areas where release-time seminary us unavailable, early morning seminary is made available. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, there was no significant difference reported in either ROS or NPI scores of students who attended released-time or early morning classes. Such consistent instruction and the sacrifice of one's time to attend is sure to have an effect on these young people's capacity for comprehending messages related to proper view of self.

Second, LDS youth and young adults grow up in a culture of sacrifice. Children in the LDS church are taught very young that service is important. Children sing the song, "I Hope They Call Me on a Mission" from a very young age and the expectation is there that their faith is going to require something from them. Perhaps this is why there was no significant finding with regard to whether or not subjects had served a mission or not and their ROS/NPI scores. Full-time missionary service does not create this culture of service,

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although it does enhance it. From the very beginnings of Mormonism, this call for sacrifice has been sounded. Joseph Smith emphatically taught, "A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary [to lead] unto life and salvation …"[4] It is this kind of culture of sacrifice that produces the willingness in the Church's young people to sacrifice their time and energy to serve in Church callings, participate in service projects, and ultimately put their lives on hold for up to two years to serve as full-time missionaries.

In the newest edition of the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet (a pamphlet the LDS Church gives to its young people outlining the standards of the Church), such sacrifice is suggested as a method through which family unity can be achieved. It states,

> Strong families require effort. Your family will be blessed as you do your part to strengthen it. Be cheerful, helpful, and considerate of family members. Many problems in the home come from family members speaking and acting selfishly or unkindly. Seek to be a peacemaker rather than to tease, fight, and quarrel. Show love for your family members each day. Share your testimony with your family through words and actions. Your righteous example can make a difference in strengthening your family. Honor your parents by showing love and respect for them. Obey them as they lead you in righteousness. Willingly help in your home.[5]

Notice the uniquely un-narcissistic message here. LDS young people are encouraged to "do your part," "be cheerful, helpful, and considerate of family members," "show love for your family members," and "honor your parents by showing love and respect for them." Such ideas stand in stark contrast to the entitled behavior of so many of today's teens and young adults. LDS young people have been taught from a young age

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[4] Joseph Smith in *Lectures on Faith,* comp. N. B. Lundwall, Salt Lake City: N. B. Lundwall, n.d., p. 58.

[5] *For the Strength of Youth*, Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2012, 14.

that they are to do their part in their families and not simply let (or expect) mom and dad

to do everything for them. LDS young people are taught from an early age that something

is going to be expected of them. As long as they choose to actively participate in Church

functions and callings, LDS young people know that they are going to be asked to

sacrifice their time and energy.

Lastly, LDS youth are instructed to be very careful in the media they choose to

consume. Twenge and Campbell report that as American culture becomes more and more

obsessed with fame and celebrity, the narcissistic behaviors that often coincide with such

personalities have become the "role models" after which our young people pattern their

lives.[6] Twenge and Campbell describe, "

> Reality TV stars and other celebrities have an important role to play in the spread
> of narcissism. In the epidemiology of viruses, some people are known as
> "superspreaders." The historic prototype of the superspreader is Typhoid Mary,
> the cook who gave more than 50 people typhoid fever between 1900 and 1915.
> Celebrities and the media they dominate are the superspreaders of narcissism.
> Through gossip magazines, movies, commercials, and reality TV, Americans get
> a regular infusion of the narcissism virus… Americans are obsessed with people
> who are obsessed with themselves. In this new world, being narcissistic is cool.[7]

In the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet under the heading of "Entertainment

and Media," LDS youth are instructed,

> You live in a day of marvelous technologies that give you easy access to a wide
> variety of media, including the Internet, mobile devices, video games, television,
> movies, music, books, and magazines. The information and entertainment
> provided through these media can increase your ability to learn, communicate,
> and become a force for good in the world. However, some information and
> entertainment can lead you away from righteous living. Choose wisely when

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[6] Jean M. Twenge and W. Keith Campbell, *The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of* Entitlement (New York: Free Press, 2010), 90.

[7] *Ibid.*

using media, because whatever you read, listen to, or look at has an effect on you. Select only media that uplifts you.

Satan uses media to deceive you by making what is wrong and evil look normal, humorous, or exciting. He tries to mislead you into thinking that breaking God's commandments is acceptable and has no negative consequences for you or others. Do not attend, view, or participate in anything that is vulgar, immoral, violent, or pornographic in any way. Do not participate in anything that presents immorality or violence as acceptable. Have the courage to walk out of a movie, change your music, or turn off a computer, television, or mobile device if what you see or hear drives away the Spirit. . . .

Take care that your use of media does not dull your sensitivity to the Spirit or interfere with your personal relationships with others. Spending long periods of time using the Internet or a mobile device, playing video games, or watching television or other media can keep you from valuable interactions with other people. Be careful that your use of social media does not replace spending time with your family and friends.[8]

While such statements do not forbid LDS young people from watching reality T.V. shows or other such displays of narcissism, such warnings show that the LDS Church is aware of the negative effects that entertainment and media can have on young people. Not only are Church leaders aware, but they consistently educate their youth to stay away from such influences. This awareness and consistent warning that LDS young people carefully select what they choose to watch, provides an awareness among youth, their parents, and their Church leaders. Such awareness is sure to help LDS young people avoid some of the "superspreaders" of narcissistic behaviors referred to by Twenge and Campbell.

Hearing a consistent message of anti-narcissism in classes such as seminary, growing up in a culture of sacrifice, and being instructed to carefully select media that is uplifting surely adds to why LDS young adults score lower on the NPI than their peers.

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[8] *For the Strength of Youth*, Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2012, 11-13

While these three reasons are certainly not the only factors, they undoubtedly have a large influence.

Why LDS Young Adults Consistently Score Highly on the Intrinsic Orientation Scale

Ever since the ROS was first administered to a LDS sample, Latter-day Saints have overwhelmingly scored high on the intrinsic scale.[9] Beginning with Joseph Smith, LDS Church leaders have taught their people that religiosity ought to come from personal commitment to God and not merely from social pressures. Of his own miraculous experiences Joseph Smith said, "I don't blame any one [sic] for not believing my history. If I had not experienced what I have, I would not have believed it myself."[10] Joseph consistently invited those who heard his story to petition God themselves to find out if his experiences were true. As missionaries continue to spread Joseph Smith's story and the Book of Mormon, missionaries are instructed to share with individuals who are investigating the Church a passage from the Book of Mormon which has come to be known as "Moroni's Promise." At the end of the Book of Mormon, before Moroni buries the plates upon which the book was written in the ground, he instructs,

> And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost (Moroni 10:4).

This assignment is not only extended to those who are investigating the Church, but to the youth of the Church as well. Personal conversion is very important to LDS

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[9] Allen E. Bergin, Kevin S. Masters, and P. Scott Richards, "Religiousness and Mental Health Reconsidered: A Study of an Intrinsically Religious Sample," *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 1987, 34, 197-204.

[10] *History of the Church,* 6:317.

Church leaders, especially among the Church's young people. In a recent general

conference talk, this point was made very clearly. LDS Church leaders don't want their

members converted to the sociality of the Church, but want members converted to the

gospel of Jesus Christ. Of this Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Quorum of the Seventy

taught,

> Some have come to think of activity in the Church as the ultimate goal. Therein lies a danger. It is possible to be active in the Church and less active in the gospel. Let me stress: activity in the Church is a highly desirable goal; however, it is insufficient. Activity in the Church is an outward indication of our spiritual desire. If we attend our meetings, hold and fulfill Church responsibilities, and serve others, it is publicly observed.

> By contrast, the things of the gospel are usually less visible and more difficult to measure, but they are of greater eternal importance. For example, how much faith do we really have? How repentant are we? How meaningful are the ordinances in our lives? How focused are we on our covenants?

> I repeat: we need the gospel *and* the Church. In fact, the purpose of the Church is to help us live the gospel. We often wonder: How can someone be fully active in the Church as a youth and then not be when they are older? How can an adult who has regularly attended and served stop coming? How can a person who was disappointed by a leader or another member allow that to end their Church participation? Perhaps the reason is they were not sufficiently converted to the gospel—the things of eternity.[11]

While assuming that all LDS Church members have this deep inner conversion

would be wishful thinking, results from LDS samples on the ROS tend to support the

conclusion that messages such as the one cited above are having their desired effect. LDS

young adults are finding their religion as an end in itself and not just as a means to

something else.

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[11] Elder Donald L. Hallstrom, "Converted to His Gospel through His Church," *Ensign*, May 2012, 14.

Why LDS Single Young Adults Score Slightly Higher on the Extrinsic Orientation Scale than LDS Married Young Adults.

While it has been shown that LDS Church leaders stress the importance of deep inner conversion, it would be foolish to think that the LDS Church does not see value in the social aspects of religion. Church members who have family and friends who actively participate in Church meetings and functions are more likely to be active themselves. In the cases of LDS single young adults and LDS young adults that grew up in foreign countries, social aspects of the LDS Church can be very important.

For those LDS young people who are single, Church meetings and activities provide an opportunity for them to meet and date other young people who hold their same standards. For Latter-day Saints to marry inside of one of the Church's temples, both bride and groom need to possess a "temple recommend" which signifies that they believe the teachings of the LDS Church and abide by its standards. For this reason, LDS young single adults might see Church functions as important social functions. Those Church meetings are the few places where they can interact with potential marriage partners.

Why LDS Young Adults that Grew Up Outside of the US Score Slightly Higher on the Extrinsic Orientation Scale than those Who Live in the Western US

For those LDS young adults who live in foreign countries, Church meetings and activities provide the few if not only interactions with individuals who hold their same beliefs and standards. Church members who have lived in both the intermountain West (large Church population) and in foreign countries (small Church population), they report

that there was a much greater sense of community among their smaller congregations in foreign countries. Other than their regular Church meetings, members who live outside of the US report coming together more frequently for unofficial dinners, activities, and other social functions. Because such social functions are readily available to those who live where Church membership is large, those members do not need to seek out members of their respective congregations to organize such events; they happen naturally.

Future Directions

While the ROS has been administered to uniquely LDS samples many times before, as far as can be discovered, the LDS ROS/NPI Study was the first to administer the NPI to an LDS sample. Future studies might include: replicating the study with a larger sample, rerunning the sample with a more balanced male/female sample, or rerunning the study among an LDS sample away from Brigham Young University. Since the average mean between the national sample and LDS sample was so large, any study regarding Latter-day Saints and narcissism would be of great interest and value. Other factors that could be correlated with NPI scores would be media use and exposure, whether or not the subject has held a position of authority in the LDS church, or frequency of personal and/or family scripture study. Further interpretation of the data provided in this thesis would be to consider the reported scores from the various subscales of the NPI.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

There is something different about LDS young people. Be it non-LDS researchers like Christian Smith or LDS researchers such as Bruce Chadwick and Brent Top, the data signify that LDS kids are unique. It seems they have chosen to take Paul's admonition to heart to be a "peculiar people" (1 Peter 2:9).

Contrary to the opinions of scholars such as Kendra Creasy Dean and Rodney Stark, LDS young people do not live their religion so that they can better climb the Mormon social ladder. Were that the case, we would see the spiritual malaise that is affecting so many mainstream Christian youth today.[1] Instead, many LDS youth and young adults heed the call to find out for themselves whether or not their faith is true and in so doing, develop deep personal conversion. When asked how this occurs, very rarely do LDS young people refer to mass revivals or large social gatherings. Instead, time spent alone in prayer and scripture study is often the setting for such personal revelatory experiences.

Such experiences are consistent with official LDS Church doctrines. As was described in chapters 3 and 4, proper understanding of self and accepting responsibility for one's conversion are important elements of LDS thought. In her theorizing regarding why LDS young people scored as well as they did in Christian Smith's research, Professor Dean failed to take LDS doctrine into consideration. She merely looked at many of the outward evidences of something that was actually much deeper.

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[1] David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity... and Why It Matters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007); Drew Dyck, *Generation Ex-Christian: Why Young Adults Are Leaving the Faith. . . and How to Bring Them Back* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010).

While there are surely those LDS young people who live their faith wholly on the outside, the research gathered from the LDS ROS/NPI Study seems to suggest that such is not the norm. Instead, the data gathered shows that LDS young adults are intrinsically motivated for faith and a good deal less self-centered than their peers. If Dean's theory was correct, we would see the opposite. The data would have reported a self-centered group of young adults whose faith was very socially driven.

As with any faith, there are those who do it "right" and those who merely go through the motions. Of those who merely tried to appear righteous, Jesus had very unsympathetic words. He counseled, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matt. 23:27-28). For Christians everywhere, the call is not just to *do* the works of righteousness, but *be* the type of person from whom such works come freely and naturally.

LDS Church leaders have consistently taught the importance of avoiding the hypocrisy of merely *doing*. Most recently, Elder Lynn G. Robbins of the Quorum of the Seventy taught,

> To *be* and to *do* are inseparable. As interdependent doctrines they reinforce and promote each other. Faith inspires one to pray, for example, and prayer in turn strengthens one's faith.
>
> The Savior often denounced those who *did* without *being*—calling them hypocrites: "This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Mark 7:6). *To do* without *to be* is hypocrisy, or feigning to be what one is not—a pretender.
>
> Conversely, *to be* without *to do* is void, as in "faith, if it hath not works, *is dead,* being alone" (James 2:17; emphasis added). *Be* without *do* really isn't *being*—it is self-deception, believing oneself to be good merely because one's intentions are good.
>
> *Do* without *be*—hypocrisy—portrays a false image to others, while *be* without *do* portrays a false image to oneself.

Helping young people become genuine disciples of Jesus Christ is part of the mission of the LDS Church. Professor Dean argues that the Church accomplishes this through giving their young people a particular "cultural toolkit."[2] Regrettably, Dean does not seem to think that these toolkits are necessarily good things, citing Nazi Germany and gang initiations as examples for how they are used.[3] Instead of seeing things like regular family scripture study and early morning seminary attendance as virtues that promote genuine faith, Dean sees such activities as the price LDS young people must pay to be the "'spiritual athletes' of their generation."[4] Such a tone surely does not convey admiration, but jealousy for what the LDS Church has been able to achieve with their young people.

LDS young people are not perfect. As is not well in Zion and the Church still has a lot of work to do to help young Latter-day Saints develop deep personal conversions. LDS young people are however, "more knowledgeable about their faith, more committed to their faith, and have more positive social outcomes associated with their faith."[5] LDS young adults also score overwhelmingly intrinsic on the ROS and have much lower NPI scores than their peers. Why? To quote Elder Boyd K. Packer again, "True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of

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[2] Kenda Creasy Dean, Almost *Christian: What the Faith of our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 48-50.

[3] *Ibid.,* 49-50.

[4] *Ibid.,* 51.

[5] John Bartkowski as quoted in Elaine Jarvik, "LDS Teens Tops in Living Faith," *Deseret Morning News*, March 15, 2005, http://deseretnews.com/dn/view/0,1249,600118667,00.html (accessed June 21, 2012).

behavior will improve behavior."[6] The LDS Church has in place a consistent method for teachings doctrines that seem to genuinely change the lives of their young people. This change is manifest in LDS young people not only doing what they need to do, but they seem to become who they need to be.

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[6] Elder Boyd K. Packer, "Little Children," *Ensign*, October 1986, 20.

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The Religious Orientation Scale

1. What religious offers me most is comfort when sorrows and misfortunes strike.
a. I definitely disagree
b. I tend to disagree
c. I tend to agree
d. I definitely agree

2. One reason for my being a church member is that such membership helps to establish a person in the community.
a. Definitely not true
b. Tends not to be true
c. I tend to agree
d. I definitely agree

3. I try hard to carry my religion over into all my other dealings in life.
a. I definitely disagree
b. I tend to disagree
c. I tend to agree
d. I definitely agree

4. The purpose of prayer is to secure a happy and peaceful life.
a. I definitely disagree
b. I tend to disagree
c. I tend to agree
d. I definitely agree

5. It doesn't matter so much what I believe so long as I lead a moral life.
a. I definitely disagree
b. I tend to disagree
c. I tend to agree
d. I definitely agree

6. Although I am a religious person I refuse to let religious considerations influence my everyday affairs.
a. Definitely not true of me
b. Tends not to be true
c. Tends to be true
d. Clearly true in my case

7. Quite often I have been keenly aware of the presence of God or the Divine Being.
a. Definitely not true
b. Tends not to be true
c. Tends to be true
d. Definitely true

8. My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life.
a. This is definitely not so
b. Probably not so
c. Probably so
d. Definitely so

9. The church is most important as a place to formulate good social relationships.
a. I definitely disagree
b. I tend to disagree
c. I tend to agree
d. I definitely agree

10. The prayers I say when I am alone carry as much meaning and personal emotion as those said by me during services.
a. Almost never
b. Sometimes
c. Usually
d. Almost always

11. Although I believe in my religion, I feel there are many more important things in my life.
a. I definitely disagree
b. I tend to disagree
c. I tend to agree
d. I definitely agree

12. If not prevented by unavoidable circumstances, I attend church.
a. More than once a week.
b. About once a week.
c. Two or three times a month.
d. Less than once a month.

13. I pray chiefly because I have been taught to pray.
 a. Definitely true of me
b. Tends to be true
c. Tends not to be true
d. Definitely not true of me

14. If I were to join a church group I would prefer to join (1) a Bible Study group, or (2) a social fellowship.
a. I would prefer to join (1)
b. I probably would prefer (1)
c. I probably would prefer (2)
d. I would prefer to join (2)

15. Religion is especially important to me because it answers many questions about the meaning of life.
a. Definitely disagree
b. Tend to disagree
c. Tend to agree
d. Definitely agree

16. A primary reason for my interest in religion is that my church is a congenial social activity.
a. Definitely not true of me
b. Tends not be true
c. Tends to be true
d. Definitely true of me

17. Occasionally I find it necessary to compromise my religious beliefs in order to protect my social and economic well-being.
a. Definitely disagree
b. Tend to disagree
c. Tend to agree
d. Definitely agree

18. I read literature about my faith (or church).
a. Frequently
b. Occasionally
c. Rarely
d. Never

19. It is important to me to spend periods of time in private religious thought and meditation.
a. Frequently true
b. Occasionally true
c. Rarely true
d. Never true

20. The purpose of prayer is to gain relief and protection.
a. I definitely disagree
b. I tend to disagree
c. I tend to agree
d. I definitely agree

APPENDIX B
The Narcissistic Personality Inventory

1. A. I have a natural talent for influencing people.
B. I am not good at influencing people.

2. A. Modesty doesn't become me.
B. I am essentially a modest person.

3. A. I would do almost anything on a dare.
B. I tend to be a fairly cautious person.

4. A. When people compliment me I sometimes get embarrassed.
B. I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so.

5. A. The thought of ruling the world frightens the hell out of me.
B. If I ruled the world it would be a better place.

6. A. I can usually talk my way out of anything.
B. I try to accept the consequences of my behavior.

7. A. I prefer to blend in with the crowd.
B. I like to be the center of attention.

8. A. I will be a success.
B. I am not too concerned about success.

9. A. I am no better or worse than most people.
B. I think I am a special person.

10. A. I am not sure if I would make a good leader.
B. I see myself as a good leader.

11. A. I am assertive.
B. I wish I were more assertive.

12. A. I like to have authority over other people.
B. I don't mind following orders.

13. A. I find it easy to manipulate people.
B. I don't like it when I find myself manipulating people.

14. A. I insist upon getting the respect that is due me.
B. I usually get the respect that I deserve.

15. A. I don't particularly like to show off my body.
B. I like to show off my body.

16. A. I can read people like a book.
B. People are sometimes hard to understand.

17. A. If I feel competent I am willing to take responsibility for making decisions.
B. I like to take responsibility for making decisions.

18. A. I just want to be reasonably happy.
B. I want to amount to something in the eyes of the world.

19. A. My body is nothing special.
B. I like to look at my body.

20. A. I try not to be a show off.
B. I will usually show off if I get the chance.

21. A. I always know what I am doing.
B. Sometimes I am not sure of what I am doing.

22. A. I sometimes depend on people to get things done.
B. I rarely depend on anyone else to get things done.

23. A. Sometimes I tell good stories.
B. Everybody likes to hear my stories.

24. A. I expect a great deal from other people.
B. I like to do things for other people.

25. A. I will never be satisfied until I get all that I deserve.
B. I take my satisfactions as they come.

26. A. Compliments embarrass me.
B. I like to be complimented.

27. A. I have a strong will to power.
B. Power for its own sake doesn't interest me.

28. A. I don't care about new fads and fashions.
B. I like to start new fads and fashions.

29. A. I like to look at myself in the mirror.
B. I am not particularly interested in looking at myself in the mirror.

30. A. I really like to be the center of attention.
B. It makes me uncomfortable to be the center of attention.

31. A. I can live my life in any way I want to.
B. People can't always live their lives in terms of what they want.

32. A. Being an authority doesn't mean that much to me.
B. People always seem to recognize my authority.

33. A. I would prefer to be a leader.
B. It makes little difference to me whether I am a leader or not.

34. A. I am going to be a great person.
B. I hope I am going to be successful.

35. A. People sometimes believe what I tell them.
B. I can make anybody believe anything I want them to.

36. A. I am a born leader.
B. Leadership is a quality that takes a long time to develop.

37. A. I wish somebody would someday write my biography.
B. I don't like people to pry into my life for any reason.

38. A. I get upset when people don't notice how I look when I go out in public.
B. I don't mind blending into the crowd when I go out in public.

39. A. I am more capable than other people.
B. There is a lot that I can learn from other people.

40. A. I am much like everybody else.
B. I am an extraordinary person.

SCORING KEY:
Assign one point for each response that matches the key.
1, 2 and 3: A
4, 5: B
6: A
7: B
8: A
9, 10: B
11, 12, 13, 14: A
15: B
16: A
17, 18, 19, 20: B
21: A

22, 23: B
24, 25: A
26: B
27: A
28: B
29, 30, 31: A
32: B
33, 34: A
35. B
36, 37, 38, 39: A
40: B