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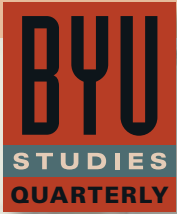
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Scholarship informed by  
the restored gospel of  
Jesus Christ



GRACE, LEGALISM, AND MENTAL HEALTH  
JOSEPH SMITH, OTHER VISIONARIES, AND THEIR CRITICS  
QUOTATIONS AND SPELLING IN THE BOOK OF MORMON  
ESTABLISHING THE SACRED AT BYU  
CHURCH LEADERS' TEACHINGS ON THE CRUCIFIXION  
JAMES TALMAGE AS MINING CONSULTANT  
CONTEMPORARY MARRIAGE AMONG LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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The study described in this article is an empirical analysis of the relationship between God's grace and the mental health of Latter-day Saints. It contrasts the influence of divine grace with the effects of a legalistic approach to religion present among some Latter-day Saints. Jorge Cocco Santángelo. *Your Faith Has Made You Whole*, 2016. Oil on canvas, 30" × 40". Courtesy Jorge Cocco Santángelo.

# Grace, Legalism, and Mental Health among the Latter-day Saints

*Daniel K Judd and W. Justin Dyer*

**M**artin Luther (1483–1546), a central figure of the Protestant Reformation, is one of many who have experienced tension between the perceived necessity of their own good works and the grace of God in the process of salvation. Soon after the young Luther entered the monastery in preparation to become a priest, he began to experience the consequences of his legalistic beliefs. Reflecting on this experience later in life, he wrote:

The more someone tries to bring peace to his conscience through his own righteousness, the more disquieted he makes it. When I was a monk, I made a great effort to live according to the requirements of the monastic rule. I made a practice of confessing and reciting all my sins . . . ; I went to confession frequently, and I performed the assigned penances faithfully. Nevertheless, my conscience could never achieve certainty but was always in doubt. . . . The longer I tried to heal my uncertain, weak, and troubled conscience with human traditions, the more uncertain, weak, and troubled I continually made it. In this way, by observing human traditions, I transgressed them even more; and by following the righteousness of the monastic order, I was never able to reach it.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, Vol. 27: *Lectures on Galatians*, 1535, chapters 5–6; 1519, chapters 1–6, ed. J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald, and H. T. Lehmann (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 13.



Luther's description of his psychological state is indicative of what has been described as a "psychiatric condition."<sup>2</sup> In the years that followed Luther's attempts to overcome his spiritual and psychological concerns by becoming obsessively and compulsively more religious, he came to understand the impotency of his legalistic beliefs and practices and the transformative power of the grace of Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup> Elsewhere the first author of this article has made the case that "Martin Luther's experiences with depression, anxiety, scrupulosity, sin, and grace provided the historical and theological context for the Protestant Reformation."<sup>4</sup> President Gordon B. Hinckley described Luther as "one of the great and courageous forerunners of the Restoration."<sup>5</sup>

Similarities can be observed between the beliefs and practices of the young Martin Luther and a subset of Latter-day Saints living in the twenty-first century. Serving as mission president in West Africa, the first author witnessed the tensions that exist between the grace of Christ and the demands of personal obedience in the lives of some of the young missionaries with whom he served. As one of these young men wrote:

Although not guilty of serious sin, the emotions I felt were what you expect to be associated with serious transgression. I spoke with the MTC [Missionary Training Center] president who reassured me that I was worthy to serve a mission. His reassurance only aided me for a day or so. Anxiety quickly returned. I prayed to be forgiven often and did all I could to find peace, but it was to no avail. I entered the mission field and found no peace. . . . I felt an emptiness; I more or less stopped trying to improve myself. This, however, was not a good solution. As I tried to improve, the anxiety came back and even worsened. At times I suffered so much that I could work no longer. Although, I did not recognize that I was suffering from a mental illness but [felt] that I was feeling guilt for sin. The only relief I could find was from confessing my mistakes to my mission president. At first, I was focused on mistakes and sins of a more sexual nature[,] and as time went on I confessed

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2. Ian Osborn, *Can Christianity Cure Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder?* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, 2008), 14.

3. Richard Marius, *Martin Luther: The Christian between God and Death* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 55–78.

4. Daniel K Judd, "Clinical and Pastoral Implications of the Ministry of Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation," *Open Theology* 2, no. 1 (2016): 324–37.

5. Gordon B. Hinckley, "God Hath Not Given Us the Spirit of Fear," *Ensign* 14, no. 10 (October 1984): 2.

every sin of this nature that I could think of. I then began to unhealthily obsess on other sins and mistakes, such as speaking out of anger.<sup>6</sup>

This young man suffered much during the first year of his mission, but later he wrote the following concerning what helped him understand and work through what would later be diagnosed as an obsessive-compulsive disorder clinicians have termed “scrupulosity”: “My healing, while greatly attributed to counseling and medication, was only made possible by a deeper understanding of the Grace of Jesus Christ. I had learned about grace earlier in my life but never really understood it. My first experience with understanding grace came during the beginning months of my mission when confessing to my mission president. He told me ‘grace, by definition, is undeserved.’ *I never before thought that I could gain something from God that I did not deserve.*”<sup>7</sup>

Some claim The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a legalistic religion that privileges humankind’s good works over the grace of God “by establishing requirements for salvation beyond repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.”<sup>8</sup> Indeed, some confusion likely exists on this point. For instance, although the Prophet Joseph Smith affirmed, “We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel” (A of F 1:3), the Book of Mormon prophet Moroni emphasized the importance of “relying *alone* upon the merits of Christ” (Moro. 6:4, emphasis added) in seeking salvation. The soteriological tension between the necessity of obedience to God’s commands described by Joseph Smith and the salvific singularity of the grace of Christ described by Moroni is an illustration of the doctrinal “contrarities”<sup>9</sup> that exist in the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and provides the theological context for the study that is described in the pages that follow. This article includes a description and discussion of the recent research we

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6. Personal correspondence with the first author.

7. Personal correspondence with the first author, italics added.

8. Gerald L. Sittser, “Legalism,” in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, ed. Daniel G. Reid and others (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 641–42. See also Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson, *How Wide the Divide? A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 175.

9. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “By proving contrarities, truth is made manifest.” “Letter to Israel Daniel Rupp, 5 June 1844,” 1, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed September 30, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-israel-daniel-rupp-5-june-1844/1>.

have published that examines the relationships among the grace of God, the understanding of obedience to God's commands, and the mental health of a sample of the membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

While largely understood as unique to Christianity, the theological principle of the grace of God is found in the teachings of many other world religions and is integral to the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.<sup>10</sup> While the doctrine of God's grace has been given greater institutional and personal attention among Latter-day Saints during the last several decades,<sup>11</sup> this is a report of the first experimental study to be conducted. We recently published an empirical analysis of the relationship between God's grace and the mental health of Latter-day Saints in an American Psychological Association (APA) journal, *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*.<sup>12</sup> What follows is an overview and summary of the results of our research and a discussion intended for those who are participants in and observers of the Latter-day Saint community.

## GRACE AND LEGALISM

In traditional Christian theology, grace is defined as a gift of God, mediated through Jesus Christ, that is "bestowed freely and without regard to merit, and which manifests in the giving of blessings and granting of salvation."<sup>13</sup> Inasmuch as the theology of grace is not exclusive to Christian belief,<sup>14</sup> grace has also been defined more inclusively as a "benevolent divine influence acting upon humanity to impart spiritual enrichment or purity, to inspire virtue, or to give strength to endure trial

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10. Lucinda Mosher and David Marshall, eds., *Sin, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation: Christian and Muslim Perspectives* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2016). See also Jonathan Rosen, "Grace, Punishment, and the Torah," *American Scholar* 71, no. 1 (2002): 61–63; and Robert L. Millet, "The Perils of Grace," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (2014): 7–19.

11. Douglas J. Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2000), 54–61.

12. Daniel K Judd, W. Justin Dyer, and Justin B. Top, "Grace, Legalism, and Mental Health: Examining Direct and Mediating Relationships," *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 12, no. 1 (2020): 26–35, <https://doi.org/10.1037/rel0000211>.

13. OED Online, s.v. "grace, *n.*," 1a, accessed December 9, 2019, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/80373>.

14. Tikva Frymer-Kensky and others, *Christianity in Jewish Terms* (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 2000).

and resist temptation.”<sup>15</sup> The (Latter-day Saint) Bible Dictionary defines grace as follows:

[Grace] is divine means of help or strength, given through the bounteous mercy and love of Jesus Christ. It is through the grace of the Lord Jesus, made possible by His atoning sacrifice, that mankind will be raised in immortality, every person receiving his body from the grave in a condition of everlasting life. It is likewise through the grace of the Lord that individuals, through faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ and repentance of their sins, receive strength and assistance to do good works that they otherwise would not be able to maintain if left to their own means. This grace is an enabling power that allows men and women to lay hold on eternal life and exaltation after they have expended their own best efforts.<sup>16</sup>

The last sentence of this definition has been understood by some to mean that humankind can't experience grace *before* or *while* but only *after* they have expended their own best efforts.” The understanding that experiencing God's grace *follows* good works is an interpretation of the Book of Mormon prophet Nephi's statement that “it is by grace that we are saved, *after* all we can do” (2 Ne. 25:23, emphasis added). Elder Bruce C. Hafen made the following statement by way of clarification concerning the relationship between the grace of Christ and the works of humankind: “The Savior's gift of grace to us is not necessarily limited in time to ‘after’ all we can do. We may receive his grace before, during, and after the time when we expend our own efforts.”<sup>17</sup>

Given what appears to some to be conflicting definitions, individuals may find themselves on a continuum where at the one end are those who believe grace can be experienced only “after” one's “best efforts” are put forward and at the other end are those who believe grace may be experienced without respect to their good works. It would be expected that those who feel they can experience grace “all along the way” would have more experiences with grace than those who feel grace is restricted to only after one's best efforts have been put forward. Those who believe grace must be earned are sometimes referred to as “legalistic” in the sense

15. OED Online, s.v. “grace, *n.*,” 1b, accessed December 9, 2019, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/80373>.

16. Bible Dictionary (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2015), s.v. “Grace.”

17. Bruce C. Hafen, *The Broken Heart: Applying the Atonement to Life's Experiences* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 155–56.



that they feel it is necessary to complete certain requirements or “laws” before any grace can be experienced (see below for additional detail).

The little research that has been done on the relationship between grace and mental health indicates that individuals who scored higher on measures of experiencing grace (that is, they say they experience God’s grace more frequently) had less depression and greater self-compassion.<sup>18</sup> Professor Rodger Bufford and his colleagues at George Fox University, some of the first social scientists to study grace from an empirical perspective, reported that individuals who reported experiencing grace to a greater degree had better “religious coping and . . . existential, religious, and spiritual well-being.”<sup>19</sup>

Legalism has been defined as a “strict, literal, or excessive conformity to the law or to a religious or moral code”<sup>20</sup> and is hypothesized to influence mental health as well as religious belief and practice. “Legalism, in the eyes of Protestant scholars of the New Testament, is the worst of all possible religious defects.”<sup>21</sup> Many non-Christian religions, while acknowledging the importance of obedience to God’s law, also resist a legalistic understanding of obedience where law is elevated above the Lawgiver.<sup>22</sup> While the relationship between correlation and causation in these empirical studies is tentative, research has shown legalism to be related to increased perfectionism, scrupulosity, anxiety, depression, and shame (feelings of self-loathing and worthlessness).

Though the significance of these connections is not limited to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, understanding the religious and psychological implications of the relationships between the grace of God, obedience to divine command, and the cultural

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18. Rodney L. Bassett and the Roberts Wesleyan College Psychology Research Group, “An Empirical Consideration of Grace and Legalism within Christian Experience,” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 32, no. 1 (2013): 43–69.

19. Rodger K. Bufford, Timothy A. Sisemore, and Amanda M. Blackburn, “Dimensions of Grace: Factor Analysis of Three Grace Scales,” *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 9, no. 1 (2017): 56–69, <https://doi.org/10.1037/rel0000064>.

20. *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 1996), s.v. “legalism.”

21. Albert I. Baumgarten, “Marcel Simon’s *Verus Israel* as a Contribution to Jewish History,” *Harvard Theological Review* 92, no. 4 (1999): 467 n. 12. Note refers to personal comments by E. P. Sanders.

22. Jacob Zallel Lauterbach and Kaufmann Kohler, *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, s.v. “nomism,” accessed January 30, 2020, <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/11582-nomism>.

expectations related to mental-health issues is especially important for Latter-day Saints because of the cultural propensity to focus on obedience to God's commands and a developing but limited understanding of the doctrine of his grace. Elder M. Russell Ballard has explained: "No matter how hard we work, no matter how much we obey, no matter how many good things we do in this life, it would not be enough were it not for Jesus Christ and His loving grace. On our own we cannot earn the kingdom of God—no matter what we do. Unfortunately, there are some within the Church who have become so preoccupied with performing good works that they forget that those works—as good as they may be—are hollow unless they are accompanied by a complete dependence on Christ."<sup>23</sup>

Pastoral and clinical interventions focused on helping people of faith understand the positive consequences of grace and the negative influences of legalism have been demonstrated to assist individuals with self-forgiveness<sup>24</sup> and married couples in resolving conflict.<sup>25</sup> Psychologists James Sells and Mark Yarhouse describe the developmental necessity of grace in interpersonal relationships (including relationships with God) as follows: "No one can achieve mature, contented, successful existence unless someone has extended to that person sacrificial, unmerited love or *grace*; furthermore . . . no one can achieve mature, contented, successful existence unless he or she returns that grace to others with a commitment of fairness, which we refer to as justice. Grace and justice, love and fairness—marriages cannot thrive without them."<sup>26</sup>

The philosophical, doctrinal, and religious tensions between those who believe the grace of God to be primary to temporal happiness and eternal salvation and those who believe good works are fundamental have existed for millennia.<sup>27</sup> One of the authors reported that his

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23. M. Russell Ballard. "Building Bridges of Understanding," *Ensign* 28, no. 6 (June 1998): 65.

24. Jeff A. Moody, "The Effects of a Grace Intervention in a Christian Congregation: A Study of Positive Psychology in the Church" (PsyD diss., George Fox University, 2015), accessed December 10, 2019, <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/psyd/194>.

25. Terry D. Hargrave and Franz Pfitzer, *The New Contextual Therapy: Guiding the Power of Give and Take* (New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2003), 139–48.

26. James N. Sells and Mark A. Yarhouse, *Counseling Couples in Conflict: A Relational Restoration Model* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011), 123.

27. Phillip Cary, *Inner Grace: Augustine in the Traditions of Plato and Paul* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). See also Daniel K Judd, "Clinical

experiences in coming to understand the doctrine of the grace of Christ has been a long journey. As a young missionary serving in Southern California, he was regularly confronted by evangelical Christians who asserted the preeminence of the doctrine of grace. Though some of these individuals may have been arguing for the distortion of grace that German theologian and pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer referred to as “cheap grace,”<sup>28</sup> the author is confident that others understood, much better than he did at the time, the meaning and experience of genuine or “costly grace.”<sup>29</sup> The authentic grace Bonhoeffer described is the grace that is described in both the New Testament and the Book of Mormon. Bonhoeffer’s description of the distinction between “cheap grace” and “costly grace” is representative of the beliefs of many, if not most, Christian traditions:

Cheap grace means the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner. . . . Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ. . . .

[Costly] grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son.<sup>30</sup>

The mental health consequences and implications of believing in “cheap grace” are yet to be investigated.

While theological and religious tensions continue to exist between and among religious scholars, members of the clergy, and lay people alike concerning the relationships between grace and good works, most of the research that addresses these tensions is historical, philosophical,

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and Pastoral Implications of the Ministry of Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation,” *Open Theology* 2, no. 1 (2016): 324–37.

28. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “Theological Education at Finkenwalde: 1935–1937,” in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, trans. Douglas W. Stott, ed. Mark Brocker and H. Gaylon Barker, 34 vols. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 14:431–32.

29. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 45.

30. Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship*, 45.

pastoral, apologetic, or polemical, but not empirical or clinical.<sup>31</sup> Some, however, have recently begun to examine the relationship between grace and good works from an empirical perspective,<sup>32</sup> but the research is limited.

### CURRENT STUDY

Bernard Spilka observed that one of the deficiencies in religion and mental-health research is that “the movement of information and perspective has largely been from psychology to religion without a corresponding reciprocation in the reverse direction.”<sup>33</sup> It has been our experience that the study of theology and the practice of religion have much to offer both to the philosophy and practice of psychology and in adding spiritual and emotional strength to individuals, families, and nations. In our work, we attempt to embrace the contributions of both psychology and religion as they mutually inform and build upon one another.

To that end, we redirect our original article<sup>34</sup> (the first of its kind to study legalism, the experience of God’s grace, and the mental health of Latter-day Saints) to Latter-day Saints in general and examine how a distorted emphasis on good works (legalism) may relate to mental health by interfering with how individuals experience the grace of God. Before conducting the study, we postulated that those who have more legalistic beliefs would likely report that they experience less grace because they are prone to believe it is their compliance with God’s law that initiates God’s grace, rather than believing that grace is an unmerited gift or relationship.

The personal motivation for this study is grounded in our collective personal, pastoral, professorial, and clinical experiences. It has been our collective experience that many of those with whom we have worked who suffer from anxiety, depression, perfectionism, and scrupulosity

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31. Mark R. McMinn and others, “Professional Psychology and the Doctrines of Sin and Grace: Christian Leaders’ Perspectives,” *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice* 37, no. 3 (2006): 295–302.

32. Kawika Allen, Kenneth T. Wang, and Hannah Stokes, “Examining Legalism, Scrupulosity, Family Perfectionism, and Psychological Adjustment among LDS Individuals,” *Mental Health, Religion and Culture* 18, no. 4 (2015): 246–58.

33. Bernard Spilka, “‘The Compleat Person’: Some Theoretical Views and Research Findings for a Theological-Psychology of Religion,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 4, no. 1 (1976): 16.

34. Judd, Dyer, and Top, “Grace, Legalism, and Mental Health.”



are influenced, at least in part, by cognitive, cultural, and doctrinal distortions in the relationship between the grace of God and personal discipleship.

Our conceptual model is outlined in figure 1. Regarding mental health, we examined anxiety, depression, fear of God, fear of sin, shame, and perfectionism. We also report the results of how experiencing God's grace and having a legalistic understanding of our relationship with God are related to both functional and dysfunctional measures of perfectionism.

Specifically, our research study addressed the following questions: (1) Do individuals who indicate they experience God's grace report better mental health than those who do not? (2) Do individuals who are more legalistic in their attitudes toward good works and grace report poorer mental health than do those who more readily embrace the construct of grace? (3) Do those who have more legalistic attitudes toward obedience to law report experiencing less of God's grace? To test this, we created a "path model" based on figure 1 where we could statistically examine how legalism relates to experiencing God's grace and mental health. With this method, we could calculate the degree to which legalism connects with mental health *through* its connection to experiencing God's grace. To examine the degree to which gender might be influential, path models were conducted separately for male and female participants.

## METHOD

A convenience sample of 635 university students attending Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah (USA), was recruited for the current study. As might be expected at an American university, 98.4 percent of the participants were between the ages of 17 and 25, with a mean age of 20.8 and a mode age of 18. The majority of participants (87.2 percent) reported being white/Caucasian, with another 3.5 percent Asian, 2.5 percent Latino, and 0.6 percent of African descent. In addition, 4.6 percent said they were of mixed race, and another 1.6 percent chose "other" on the survey. Most participants (99.1 percent) identified themselves as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The other participants indicated their religious affiliation as Roman Catholic (0.3 percent), "none" (0.5 percent), and "other" (0.2 percent).<sup>35</sup>

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35. See Judd, Dyer, and Top, "Grace, Legalism, and Mental Health."

Participants took an online survey where they responded to a series of questions with Likert-type responses (that is, the survey asked them to respond to questions on a scale from, for example, “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” or from “very unlikely” to “very likely”). Survey items were taken from previously validated questionnaires and addressed such topics as grace, depression,<sup>36</sup> and anxiety.<sup>37</sup> Two aspects of grace were examined: (1) experiencing God’s grace and (2) legalism.<sup>38</sup> To assess these aspects of grace, participants were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with several statements (see table 1). Questions also assessed participants’ fear of sin and fear of God,<sup>39</sup> as well as three aspects of perfectionism: high standards, order, and discrepancy.<sup>40</sup> Both adaptive and maladaptive perfectionists rate highly in standards (perfectionistic strivings, high personal performance expectations) and order (preference for organization), but maladaptive perfectionists also rate highly in discrepancy (perfectionistic concerns, the perceived gap between personal standards and one’s evaluation of having met those standards). Finally, the questionnaire also captured participants’ level of shame-withdraw (hiding or withdrawing from the public due to feelings of shame).<sup>41</sup>

## RESULTS

### Correlations

Table 2 contains correlations with means and standard deviations for all variables. Experiencing God’s grace correlated with all other variables of interest in the expected direction; it was negatively correlated

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36. Kurt Kroenke, Robert L. Spitzer, and Janet B. W. Williams, “The PHQ-9,” *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 16, no. 9 (2001): 606–13.

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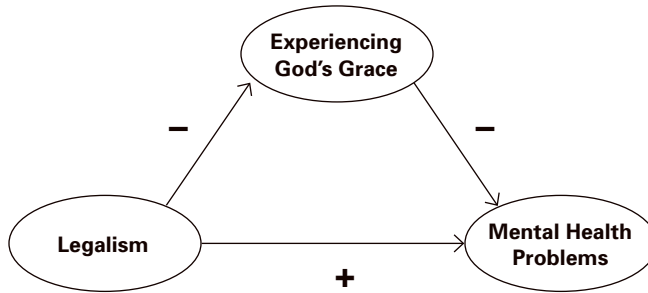
38. Rodger K. Bufford, Timothy A. Sisemore, and Amanda M. Blackburn, “Dimensions of Grace: Factor Analysis of Three Grace Scales,” *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 9, no. 1 (2017): 56–69.

39. Jonathan S. Abramowitz and others, “Religious Obsessions and Compulsions in a Non-clinical Sample: The Penn Inventory of Scrupulosity (PIOS),” *Behavior Research and Therapy* 40, no. 7 (2002): 825–38.

40. Robert B. Slaney and others, “The Revised Almost Perfect Scale,” *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development* 34, no. 3 (2001): 130–45.

41. Taya R. Cohen and others, “Introducing the GASP Scale: A New Measure of Guilt and Shame Proneness,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 100, no. 5 (2011): 947–66.

**Figure 1. Conceptual Model**



**Table 1. Statements Used to Measure Grace and Legalism**

***Experiencing God's Grace (8 Items)***

1. Because of God's work in my life, I feel I have more self-control. My actions are more likely to be appropriate.
2. Because of God's work in my life, I feel I have more self-control. My emotions are more likely to be appropriate.
3. My beliefs about grace encourage me to be forgiving of others.
4. God is in the process of making me more like Jesus.
5. Because of grace bestowed on me, I am able to forgive others.
6. Sometimes when I pray for something I really want, I find that I end up with something even better.
7. I strive to do good because of God's acceptance of me—not in order to earn his love.
8. I am able to forgive others when they hurt me.

***Legalism (7 Items)<sup>a</sup>***

1. My behavior does not matter since I've been forgiven.
2. If I work harder, I need less grace.
3. Those who sin less than others require less grace.
4. God cares more about what I do than who I am.
5. The harder I work, the more I earn God's favor.
6. The more obedient I am, the more God loves me.
7. I must work hard to experience God's grace and forgiveness.

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a. Bufford and others' original formulation was to reverse code these items to create a "Costly Grace" scale. However, these items are conceptually consistent with "Legalism" when not reverse coded. We do not reverse code the items, and we use this scale to measure legalism.

Table 2. Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Legalism	1												
2. Experiencing Grace	-.44***	1											
3. Anxiety	.08	-.21***	1										
4. Depression	.10*	-.22***	.77***	1									
5. Shame	.32***	-.35***	.25***	.25***	1								
6. Standards	-.30***	.47***	-.05	-.13**	-.18	1							
7. Order	-.17***	.30***	-.11*	-.23***	-.09*	.52***	1						
8. Fear God	.22***	-.31***	.44***	.45***	.22***	-.17***	-.18***	1					
9. Fear Sin	.11*	-.10*	.37***	.37***	.15***	-.04	-.13**	.82***	1				
10. Pref. Discrepancy	.20***	-.27***	.48***	.49***	.33***	.02	-.07	.48***	.41***	1			
11. White	-.11*	.09*	-.06	-.05	.04	.02	.04	-.15***	-.12**	-.08	1		
12. Age	-.03	.09*	-.14***	-.17***	-.06	-.02	.04	-.09*	-.03	-.08	.02	1	
13. Income	.03	.02	-.02	-.05	.02	.02	-.01	-.06	-.03	.01	.09*	.01	1
Mean(sd)	0(.80)	0(.90)	12.0(4.7)	15.3(5.2)	12.40(4.4)	42.2(5.5)	22.0(4.1)	17.5(5.8)	33.7(9.3)	49.4(14.6)	.88(.33)	20.5(2.0)	5.0(1.4)

Note.

\*p < .05. \*\*p < .01. \*\*\*p < .001

Legalism and experiencing grace have means of zero, given they were specified as latent variables.



with anxiety, depression, scrupulosity, and perfectionism. Experiencing God's grace was positively correlated with healthy forms of perfectionism—having high standards and being organized. Legalism was positively correlated with depression, scrupulosity, and perfectionism, but not anxiety; higher scores on legalism were correlated with lower scores on the measures of mental health.

### **Path Analysis**

In all models, there was a direct, relatively strong negative relationship between legalism and experiencing God's grace (results are contained in table 3). That is, the higher the legalism, the less the participants reported experiencing God's grace.

A consistent pattern emerged in the results. Regarding anxiety and depression, for female subjects legalism had an indirect effect with both anxiety and depression through experiencing God's grace. In other words, for female participants, results suggest a series of related responses where legalistic thinking decreased the ability to experience grace, which then increased anxiety and depression. Results were similar when examining shame and fear of God: more legalistic thinking was related to experiencing less grace, and this, in turn, was related to more shame and fear of God. For perfectionism, in every instance except one (order—preference for order for male respondents), evidence for these related responses was found. That is, the more legalism was reported, the less God's grace was experienced and, subsequently, the less positive perfectionism and the more negative perfectionism was found. However, no relationship was found between fear of sin and either legalism or experiencing God's grace.

### **DISCUSSION**

Throughout these analyses, higher scores on experiencing grace were consistently linked to lower levels of depression, anxiety, negative perfectionism, scrupulosity, and shame. These results confirm previous research on depression<sup>42</sup> and add information on three additional aspects of mental health previously reported in the literature in relation to grace: anxiety, shame, and perfectionism. Subjects' scores on legalism were consistently linked with mental health, but this link was often

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42. Bassett and Roberts Wesleyan College Psychology Research Group, "Grace and Legalism," 43–69.

Table 3. Path Analysis Results. Standardized Results.

	Anxiety		Depression		Shame		Standards	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Legalism	.03(.10)	-.08(.07)	.16(.10)	-.11(.07)	.20(.09)*	.19(.07)**	.04(.10)	-.17(.07)*
Experiencing Grace	-.19(.10)	-.34(.05)***	-.16(.11)	-.34(-.07)***	-.34(.09)***	-.23(.07)***	.73(.09)***	.30(.06)***
Race	-.08(.07)	-.01(.05)	-.09(.08)	.01(.05)	-.03(.07)	.08(.05)	-.00(.06)	-.03(.05)
Age	-.08(.07)	-.08(.05)	-.16(.07)*	-.05(.05)	-.02(.07)	.07(.05)	-.05(.06)	-.01(.05)
Income	-.07(.07)	.03(.05)	-.13(.07)	.00(.05)	-.02(.07)	.04(.05)	.02(.06)	.03(.05)
Legalism → Exp. Grace	-.58(.06)***	-.47(.06)***	-.59(.06)***	-.46(.06)***	-.59(.06)***	-.46(.06)***	-.61(.01)***	-.46(.06)***
Indirect Effects	.11(.08)	.16(.04)***	.10(.08)	.16(.04)***	.20(.09)*	.11(.04)**	-.44(.16)**	-.14(.04)***
R <sup>2</sup> Mental Health Variable	.07	.10	.15	.10	.23	.13	.50	.16
R <sup>2</sup> Experiencing Grace	.35	.23	.36	.23	.36	.23	.38	.23
CFI \ RMSEA	.925 / .063		.928 / .062		.917 / .069		.913 / .073	
	Order		Perf. Discrepancy		Fear God		Fear Sin	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Legalism	-.14(.10)	.06(.07)	.17(.10)	.01(.07)	.07(.10)	.12(.07)	.00(.10)	.12(.07)
Experiencing Grace	.35(.10)***	.28(.07)***	-.29(.10)**	-.28(.08)***	-.27(.10)**	-.28(.06)***	-.09(.10)	-.07(.07)
Race	-.04(.07)	.06(.05)	-.11(.07)	-.03(.05)	-.14(.07)	-.10(.05)*	-.16(.07)*	-.08(.05)
Age	-.01(.07)	.05(.05)	-.04(.07)	.01(.05)	-.13(.07)	-.14(.05)**	-.17(.07)*	-.13(.05)*
Income	.12(.07)	-.06(.05)	.07(.07)	-.01(.05)	-.07(.07)	-.04(.05)	-.02(.07)	-.03(.05)
Legalism → Exp. Grace	-.59(.06)***	-.45(.06)***	-.59(.06)***	-.46(.06)***	-.58(.06)***	-.47(.06)***	-.58(.06)***	-.46(.06)***
Indirect Effects	-.21(.11)	-.13(.04)**	.17(.08)*	.13(.04)**	.16(.07)*	.13(.04)***	.05(.07)	.03(.04)
R <sup>2</sup> Mental Health Variable	.23	.08	.18	.08	.15	.16		
R <sup>2</sup> Experiencing Grace	.36	.23	.35	.23	.35	.23	.35	.23
CFI \ RMSEA	.925 / .065		.928 / .064		.908 / .073		.905 / .073	

Note.

\*p < .05. \*\*p < .01. \*\*\*p < .001

due to legalism's connection to experiencing grace. That is, the higher the legalistic beliefs, the less individuals reported experiencing God's grace and, in turn, the poorer the mental-health outcomes. Thus, while we acknowledge that it is unclear whether this is correlational or causal, results are consistent with the theory that a legalistic view of God leads to poorer mental health because it interrupts the ability to experience grace. Legalistic beliefs and practices may erode a sense in these individuals that God is aware of their concerns, attends to their needs, and provides for them through divine grace.

In addition to being statistically significant, these findings are also clinically and pastorally meaningful. Helping clients and parishioners understand, experience, and embrace grace and avoid legalistic beliefs and practices may be helpful in assisting with a variety of mental and emotional problems. Our research confirms the postulate by Kahoe that "there are surely . . . psychological consequences of whether one rests on God's grace or one's own good deeds for relationship with the divine."<sup>43</sup>

The experiences of sixteenth-century reformer Martin Luther suggest that the negative mental-health consequences of legalism are not new. Luther came to attribute his feelings of despair, anxiety, and compulsivity to his legalistic views of peace and salvation, and this attribution appears to be consistent with the results reported in this study. The associations between legalism and decreased mental health may be especially relevant for individuals and families whose religious beliefs are more legalistic than grace-based and whose lives personify this relationship.

Because beliefs about grace and legalism may be strongly tied to religious and cultural beliefs that vary among different groups and religious denominations, understanding an individual's perspectives on these principles is vital to meaningful clinical and pastoral applications. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the religious affiliation of most subjects described in this study, provide an important example of the tension between grace and good works. Latter-day Saint belief and practice acknowledge the necessity of God's grace to both temporal well-being and eternal salvation and include an emphasis on the importance of living a righteous life (good works). Although personal righteousness has a doctrinal basis in Latter-day Saint and traditional

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43. R. D. Kahoe, "Toward a Radical Psychotheology," *Psychologists Interested in Religious Issues Newsletter: Division 36—American Psychological Association* 12, no. 3 (1987): 4.

Christian theology, the including of such rectitude in the process of temporal and eternal salvation invites the possibility of legalism and the negative mental-health consequences described in this study.

Within the framework of Latter-day Saint teachings and culture are diverse individual interpretations and applications of doctrines related to legalism and grace that may impact mental health. Educators, therapists, parents, leaders, and others may find great benefit in helping those for whom they have responsibility explore their personal beliefs about these issues and how they may be related to their mental and spiritual well-being. Latter-day Saint teachings and the belief systems of many other Christian and non-Christian religions include fundamental teachings about the importance of obedience as well as the central role of the grace of God. How individuals interpret and apply those teachings in their own lives may influence their mental health. Underlying maladaptive legalistic beliefs may be contributing to feelings of depression, anxiety, perfectionism, and shame. For many religious people, their relationship with God is a key factor in their feelings of self-worth. Because beliefs about grace and legalism can play an important role in defining one's relationship with God, professionals, parents, and clergy may find great benefit in exploring those beliefs and their implications with those whom they are attempting to assist.

The study also includes important differences and nuances regarding gender. In each instance where the link between legalism and mental health was present for male subjects (shame, standards, perfectionist discrepancy, and fear of God), the link was also present for female participants. However, there were three additional instances in which the link was present for female subjects but not for male participants (anxiety, depression, and order). In other words, the mental health of women may be more susceptible to legalistic beliefs than that of men, although, clearly, there are significant connections between legalism and mental health for male respondents. Gender differences may not be surprising since research has consistently found that male and female participants differ in their experiences with and sources of mental-health problems.<sup>44</sup> This conclusion indicates that there may be differences between men and women in the way they understand grace and legalism and in how these ideas are linked to mental health. More research needs to be conducted to better understand these differences.

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44. S. Rosenfield and D. Mouzon, "Gender and Mental Health," in *Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health* (New York: Springer, 2013), 277–96.

The data from this study also indicate that even after accounting for the experience of God's grace, beliefs about legalism are still associated with shame for both men and women. It may be that legalistic beliefs have a connection with shame since both deal with the individual's self-worth. That is, from a legalistic belief system, people tie their worthiness and worth to God to their own performance—which is represented by the item on the Legalism Scale “God cares more about what I do than who I am.” Individuals endorsing this view may feel they have no intrinsic worth as a person and that worth comes from “worthy” behaviors. Because shame also relates to beliefs about one's worthiness and value as a person, it is likely legalism and shame are linked even beyond legalism's effect on a person's sense of experiencing God's grace.

## LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations. Because the study is cross-sectional by design, we cannot determine whether experiencing mental-health problems results in feeling less of God's grace and having more legalistic attitudes or vice versa. Indeed, there is likely a mutually reinforcing relationship between mental health and legalism. It will be important to track individuals over time in order to examine this. Another limitation is that our sample was overwhelmingly Latter-day Saint. Although we were desirous to examine individuals from this group, it is likely that other religions would have differing views of legalism and experiencing God's grace; therefore, our findings here may not generalize to other religions.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, our sample was limited to university students. It may be that older individuals or individuals with more religious experience will have differing views on grace, good works, and legalism, which may influence their mental health.

## CONCLUSION

Findings from this study are both significant and meaningful concerning the relationship between experiencing the grace of God and the mental health of individuals. We also learn that both grace and mental

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45. Neal Krause, “Trust in God and Psychological Distress: Exploring Variations by Religious Affiliation,” *Mental Health, Religion and Culture* 18, no. 4 (2015): 235–45, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2015.1021311>; see also Coval B. MacDonald and Jeffrey B. Luckett, “Religious Affiliation and Psychiatric Diagnoses,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 22, no. 1 (1983): 15–37.

health connect to legalistic understandings of obedience to religious law. Legalistic beliefs and practices likely impede individuals from experiencing God's grace. The experiences of some Latter-day Saint students in this study appear to be similar to those experienced by Martin Luther in the sixteenth century. The more intensely Luther believed in and practiced a legalistic relationship with God, the more mentally and spiritually unstable he appears to have become. Conversely, Luther's experience with understanding and experiencing the grace of God also has a commonality with the subjects in our sample—the better both Luther and the Latter-day Saint subjects understood and experienced the grace of God, the greater their freedom from shame and the associated depression, anxiety, and perfectionism.

This study highlights important relationships among grace, legalism, and various mental-health concerns that religious clients may face and raises many possibilities for future research. More research is needed to identify how views on legalism/good works and grace/cheap grace contribute to positive mental-health outcomes as well as how to apply this information in clinical, pastoral, and educational settings to address depression, anxiety, shame (self-loathing), and other mental illnesses, along with marital and familial conflict and affliction. In addition, research on how grace and legalism influence the mental health of individuals of varying faith backgrounds—including those who have disaffiliated from or changed their faith tradition and those who are without religious or spiritual belief—is necessary. We invite people of all faiths and perspectives to join us in this important endeavor.

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## The Rain on Alan Avenue

### *How the Missionaries Came to Marion, Virginia, 1955*

In that far year when I was a child  
(you were not yet), I saw how rain  
on long afternoons can chitter and chat,  
gurgling and chortling out the downspout,  
its sing-song tune boring a brat  
with nothing to do.

That was the winter rain made us slip  
and slop through mud, and noses drip,  
till April drizzle made way for the sun.  
The roadside rocks were slickered with light  
and cherry trees rose out of the dark  
chemised in white.

That year heaven made constant noise—  
ice that sizzled in the pale beech leaves,  
blackberry hail that rattled the roof,  
the high fall wind (it made trees bow  
till they licked the ground) with a whirring voice  
*repent, rejoice;*

and boys in the street going two by two  
wearing snow-white blooms *Good morning* said  
to Sister Rain in the leaf-choked gutters,  
*Good morning, brother,* to Mr. Brown  
at the window pane who reversed his frown  
and said, *How do.*

—J. S. Absher



# “Effusions of an Enthusiastic Brain”

## Joseph Smith’s First Vision and the Limits of Experiential Religion

*Jeremy Talmage*

**[I]** wanted to get Religion too,” reminisced the Latter-day Saint prophet Joseph Smith. “[I] wanted to feel & shout like the Rest but could feel nothing.”<sup>1</sup> A wide-eyed witness of the nineteenth-century religious revivals that enveloped western New York, Smith made this lament to a close acquaintance shortly before his death in 1844. Reflecting back on the religious excitement of his youth, he detailed how he longed for a spiritual manifestation like many others enjoyed but for whatever reason seemed unable to experience the evangelical enthusiasm he so deeply desired. As a fourteen-year-old adolescent, Smith had been torn among the various religions vying for converts. While the denominations differed on finer points of doctrine, they all proclaimed a similar message: every individual needed his or her own experiential encounter with God to be assured salvation.

The heavenly response Smith yearned for eventually came in the form of a vision he received near his family’s cabin in 1820.<sup>2</sup> Heeding an

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1. As quoted in “Alexander Neibaur, Journal, 24 May 1844, extract,” The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed January 20, 2020, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/alexander-neibaur-journal-24-may-1844-extract/1>.

2. During his life, Joseph Smith recorded four firsthand accounts of his vision. Each telling contained unique details. For an analysis of each version, see Steven C. Harper, *Joseph Smith’s First Vision: A Guide to the Historical Accounts* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2012). Some scholars have claimed that differences between these accounts prove Smith radically changed his story over time. In contrast, Stephen Prothero has argued, “Any good lawyer (or historian) would expect to find contradictions in competing narratives written

admonition found in the Bible that advises, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God” (James 1:5), Smith went to the woods and knelt in prayer, seeking divine guidance. Almost immediately some invisible evil power seized him, and his “tongue was close[d]” and “cleavet[h] to his roof [of his mouth].” Incapable of speaking and nearly overcome by the suffocating dark force, he was soon liberated from his demonic adversary by a “fire towards heaven” that gradually approached, at which point he recognized a “personage in the fire.” The heavenly being possessed a “light complexion” with piercing “blue eyes” and a “piece of white cloth drawn over his shoulders[,] his right arm bear.” A[n] other person” also appeared and “came to the side of the first.” After composing himself, Smith mustered the courage to address the pair. The first introduced the other as “my Beloved son” and commanded Smith to “harken ye him.” During the ensuing conversation, God the Father and Jesus freely forgave Smith’s sins, comforting his existential anxiety. Desirous to share this experience with others, Smith sought out a “Methodist priest” only to be hostilely censured after divulging details about the affair. “This was not a[n] age for God to Reveal himself in Vision,” the minister informed him. “Revelation has ceased.”<sup>3</sup>

In earlier articulations of his story, Smith insisted that the Methodists were not alone in rejecting him but also that he “could find none that would believe the hevny [sic] vision.”<sup>4</sup> He related that “all the sects: all united to persecute me.” The vision of a self-described “obscure boy . . . of no consequence in the world” had created such a stir that “professors of religion” and “men of high standing” united in disapprobation. Until the end of his life, Smith marveled at this prejudice, never quite able to understand how he, a barely literate farmhand, could excite the anger of all the religionists in the region.<sup>5</sup>

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down years apart and decades after the event. And despite the contradictions, key elements abide.” Stephen Prothero, *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 171; see also Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality* (Salt Lake City: Lighthouse Ministry, 1987), 143–62; and Stan Larson, “Another Look at Joseph Smith’s First Vision,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 47, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 44–49.

3. “Alexander Neibaur, Journal,” 23–24.

4. “History, circa Summer 1832,” 3, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed January 20, 2020, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-summer-1832/3>.

5. “History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2],” 4, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed January 20, 2020, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/>

Modern historians have tended to explain Smith's cold reception as a reflection of shifting attitudes, claiming that by his day direct revelation from God was no longer acceptable.<sup>6</sup> This reasoning, however, discounts the widespread visionary worldview of Smith's contemporaries. Instead of growing up in a postrevelatory age, he lived in an evangelical environment that encouraged every convert to have his or her own experience with Christ.<sup>7</sup> Signs of divine forgiveness were commonplace, and multitudes reported receiving assurance of their salvation through visions and dreams and the expression of other charismatic gifts. As one religious scholar noted, revealed religion in early nineteenth-century America was in fact "an intellectual hegemon" and the "most powerful of cultural forces."<sup>8</sup> Other historians have in turn speculated that the rebuff

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history-circa-june-1839-circa-1841-draft-2/4. Those closest to Smith testified to the opposition and persecution he faced from the local religionists after he disclosed his vision. See "Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845," 78–79, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed January 20, 2020, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1845/85>; Wandle Mace, autobiography, 37, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; and J. W. Peterson, "Another Testimony: Statement of William Smith, Concerning Joseph, the Prophet," *Deseret Evening News* (Salt Lake City), January 20, 1894.

6. For example, Steven Harper has claimed that by 1820 churches were "tending away from the kind of spiritual experiences Joseph described and toward presumably more respectable, reasonable religion." Steven C. Harper, "Evaluating Three Arguments against Joseph Smith's First Vision," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 2 (2012): 19. Similarly, Stephen Fleming surmises, "The rejection of Smith's vision by the Methodist preacher . . . suggests that those looking for the kind of supernaturalism Smith sought, and which had been accepted on the edges of Methodism decades earlier, would now have to look elsewhere." Stephen J. Fleming, "The Religious Heritage of the British Northwest and the Rise of Mormonism," *Church History* 77, no. 1 (March 2008): 81–82. Historian Richard Bushman likewise concludes that by 1820 "any vision was automatically suspect." Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 59.

7. In 1820—the same year as the First Vision—evangelical authors in the United States and the United Kingdom published multiple treatises on the necessity of personal revelation. See Hosea Ballou, *A Series of Letters, in Defence of Divine Revelation* (Boston: Henry Brown, 1820), 5–249; Joseph Gurney Bevan, *Thoughts on Reason and Revelation, Particularly the Revelation of the Scriptures* (Dublin: Christopher Bentham, 1820); and Charles James Burton, *Revelation Vindicated, in Two Sermons* (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1820).

8. David F. Holland, *Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 105.

of Smith's vision revolved around Jesus's announcement that "all their Creeds were an abomination in his sight" and their "professors were all corrupt."<sup>9</sup> The preacher in whom Smith confided, however, would have agreed in principle with these sentiments; Methodists opposed creedalism and criticized other faiths for having educational requirements to participate in the ministry.<sup>10</sup> It is unclear if the censure given in the First Vision applied to all religions equally or to specific church constitutions and clergy.<sup>11</sup> But it is easy to imagine many Evangelicals embracing the Lord's message that the whole "world lieth in sin," having "turned aside from the gospel."<sup>12</sup> If the timing and the content of Smith's experience cannot fully explain the backlash, why then, during the heat of the Second Great Awakening, did Smith's coenthusiasts so soundly condemn his vision?<sup>13</sup>

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9. "History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2]," 3. Along these lines, Robert Remini concludes it is "no wonder" the priest "called Joseph's vision a fraud." Robert Remini, *Joseph Smith* (New York: Penguin, 2002), 40.

10. See A. Gregory Schneider, *The Way of the Cross Leads Home: The Domestication of American Methodism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 43; and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, *American Methodist Worship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 11–12.

11. According to John Matzko, upon returning home from his vision, a still shaken Smith did not state "all Christian sects were equally erroneous"; instead he only told his mother that Presbyterianism was not true. John Matzko, "The Encounter of the Young Joseph Smith with Presbyterianism," *Dialogue* 40, no. 3 (2007): 68. On this occasion, Smith likely singled out this denomination because his mother had recently joined the Presbyterian Church. "History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834]," 132, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed January 20, 2020, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/138>; "History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2]," 2.

12. "History, circa Summer 1832," 3. Smith's earliest articulation of his vision included only a general condemnation of wickedness, without denouncing specific denominations as later accounts of the vision did.

13. Rev. Wesley Walters challenged Smith's dating of his vision after finding no evidence that suggested a "revival occurred in the Palmyra area in 1820." Wesley P. Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins from the Palmyra Revival," *Dialogue* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1969): 59–81. For extensive rebuttals to Walters's claim, see Milton V. Backman Jr., "Awakenings in the Burned-Over District: New Light on the Historical Setting of the First Vision," *BYU Studies* 9, no. 3 (1969): 301–20; Richard L. Bushman, "The First Vision Story Revived," *Dialogue* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1969): 82–93; and D. Michael Quinn, "Joseph Smith's Experience of a Methodist 'Camp-Meeting' in 1820," *Dialogue*, Dialogue Paperless: E-Paper #3, Expanded Version (Definitive), December 20, 2006, 1–110.

One reason Joseph Smith's story of his First Vision was so off-putting seems to be the manner in which he explained it to others.<sup>14</sup> Whether consciously or not, his simple and straightforward description of the event brought together the celestial and the corporeal, ignoring the carefully constructed doctrinal demarcations of orthodoxy established by his Protestant peers.<sup>15</sup> Evangelicals, wary of the encroachment of science on their religion, had removed enthusiasm from the realm of objective experience. Visions, they contended, were only permissible as long as they preserved the strict separation between the spiritual and the sensory, mind and matter. Smith's conviction about the reality of his vision, including his detailed physical description of Divinity, is the most likely reason for his rejection. Evangelicals certainly maintained God could communicate through revelation—just not in the way Smith reported. His vision, with its literal language, moved beyond the theologically acceptable limits of experiential religion.

### **Antebellum America's Visionary Culture**

As the spiritual outpouring known today as the Second Great Awakening blazed across the American countryside, revivalists ventured further into the western frontier to find unconverted souls to bring to Christ. Joseph Smith's unbaptized family was soon swept up in the religious fervor. Smith recalled the "unusual excitement on the subject of religion" in the "whole district of Country" near his home in upstate New York. The excitement commenced with the Methodists but soon became ubiquitous among "all the sects," creating "no small stir and division among the people."<sup>16</sup> Four groups of Methodists, two Baptist congregations,

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14. For others who have come to a similar conclusion, see Christopher C. Jones, "The Power and Form of Godliness: Methodist Conversion Narratives and Joseph Smith's First Vision," *Journal of Mormon History* 37, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 113–14; and John G. Turner, *The Mormon Jesus: A Biography* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016), 71–72.

15. The sacred for Protestants, as religious historian Colleen McDannell has explained, represented something separate from "the profane world of bodies." Robert Orsi likewise notes how Protestants consciously distanced themselves from what he calls "theologies and rites of presence." Colleen McDannell, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), 5; Robert Orsi, *History and Presence* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016), 32.

16. "History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1," 1–2. Methodist itinerant preachers who canvassed the country were especially adept at reaching rural regions

three Presbyterian societies, and a handful of Quakers regularly held meetings within eight miles of the Smith farm.<sup>17</sup> Part of the religious excitement mentioned by Smith undoubtedly included the July 1819 Methodist Conference held in the nearby township of Vienna, where over a hundred ministers gathered. During this large gathering, possibly thousands of interested inhabitants of the surrounding country made their way to witness the spectacle firsthand.<sup>18</sup> The Smiths almost certainly attended since the family operated a small business selling home-made refreshments at community gatherings.<sup>19</sup> One local described the 1819 revival as “a religious cyclone” that swept over the whole region.<sup>20</sup> Over the course of the next year, Presbyterians went on to hold a number of revivals in the area to counteract Methodist gains.<sup>21</sup> With the Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists all fighting for the Smiths’ loyalty, Joseph related how he became caught in the crossfire of a “strife of words and a contest about opinions.” The sectarian conflict eventually divided his own family. That, combined with the “great and incessant” cries of religionists, finally convinced him the time had arrived for him to plead with God for forgiveness of his sins and guidance about which denomination to join, unable with his own reasoning “to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong.”<sup>22</sup>

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to scout potential converts, leading one Lutheran minister to refer to these preachers as “swarming pests.” Friedrich C. D. Wyneken, “The Distress of the German Lutherans in North America (1843),” in *Antirevivalism in Antebellum America: A Collection of Religious Voices*, ed. James D. Bratt (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 111.

17. Milton V. Backman Jr., *Joseph Smith’s First Vision: The First Vision in Its Historical Context* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1971), 92.

18. A camp meeting in nearby Palmyra, New York, in 1826 attracted an estimated ten thousand participants. “Genesee Conference,” *Methodist Magazine* 9 (August 1826): 313.

19. Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism: Biography of Its Founders and History of Its Church* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1867), 12.

20. M. P. Blakeslee, “Notes for a History of Methodism in Phelps, 1886,” 7–8, cited in Backman, *Joseph Smith’s First Vision*, 89.

21. “Records of the Presbytery of Geneva,” book C, 37–38, cited in Backman, *Joseph Smith’s First Vision*, 83. While the meetings of the various religious groups differed slightly, “all the major denominations . . . and most of the smaller ones were strongly revivalistic.” Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800–1850* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982), 13.

22. “History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1,” 2.

Walking into the woods on a sunny spring morning in 1820, Smith likely followed the advice oft repeated at camp meetings.<sup>23</sup> Methodist circuit riders frequently encouraged those troubled about the status of their salvation to seek God in his "own temple, the leafy grove." As one minister counseled, "If you will go with me into the grove, we will engage in prayer, and God will pardon your sins."<sup>24</sup> "The woods worked wonders," a historian of these conversions observed, and in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, hundreds of Evangelicals found God in the American forest.<sup>25</sup> George Brown, after hearing a sermon encouraging him to seek forgiveness in the sylvan abode, became convinced he "was a poor, miserable sinner, in great danger of losing [his] soul." Finding "a secluded place for prayer" under an oak tree, Brown felt in his soul "a peace hitherto unknown."<sup>26</sup> Following this familiar pattern, John Kobler "retired into a wood where [he] had deep impressions of Divine things." The next year, he again "found the Lord" amid the "very trees of the wood" and "had sweetness in communing with [his] beloved Savior."<sup>27</sup> Likewise, Charles Giles recalled seeking salvation from sin and praying for mercy in the wilderness "beneath the arms of the forest trees." To his surprise, "the Spirit of God came down" upon him, initiating a conversation with the Divine.<sup>28</sup>

The American forest often served as a sacred space that could induce visions. Famously, only a year after Smith's First Vision, renowned revivalist Charles Finney "penetrated into the woods" of upstate New York

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23. The Methodist hymnal contained multiple songs guiding religious seekers to find answers in the "grove." See Enoch Mudge, *The American Camp-Meeting Hymn Book* (Boston: Joseph Burdakin, 1818), iii, 11, 31, 121–22. For more information on how hymns sung at camp meetings might have influenced Joseph Smith, see Mark Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People: The Historical Setting for Joseph Smith's Ohio Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2009), 134–35.

24. S. M. Merrill, ed., *Recollections of a Superannuate: Or, Sketches of Life, Labor, and Experience in the Methodist Itinerancy by Rev. David Lewis of the Ohio Annual Conference* (Cincinnati: R. P. Thompson, 1857), 39, 82.

25. Russell E. Richey, *Methodism in the American Forest* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 41.

26. George Brown, *Recollections of Itinerant Life: Including Early Reminiscences* (Cincinnati: R. W. Carroll, 1866), 61–63.

27. John Kobler, *Journal and Sermons*, quoted in Richey, *Methodism in the American Forest*, 40.

28. Charles Giles, *Pioneer: A Narrative of the Nativity, Experience, Travels, and Ministerial Labours of Rev. Charles Giles* (New York: G. Lane & P. P. Sandford, 1844), 68, 82.



to seek “relief in prayer.” Receiving a “distinct revelation,” his mind was suddenly filled with the biblical verse “then shall ye seek me and find me” (see Jer. 29:13). After he returned to his home that evening, unexpectedly his room “appeared . . . as if it were perfectly light” and he “met the Lord Jesus Christ face to face.”<sup>29</sup> Methodist Jacob Young similarly recounted that some time after he “retired to the solitary grove and sought the Lord with all [his] heart—wandering from tree to tree,” a “light appeared to shine from the south part of heaven,” revealing “the kingdom of God’s dear son.”<sup>30</sup> Elias Smith, a New England youth of only fifteen, also remembered entering “into the woods one morning” near his home in Vermont and seeing a light that “appeared to shine from heaven.” In the light, “the Lamb once slain appeared,” enwrapping him in divine love.<sup>31</sup>

Joseph Smith’s description of his vision closely mirrors the experiences of many evangelical visionaries. His account of being “seized upon” by “some power which entirely overcame” him accompanied by a “thick darkness” only to be freed by a heavenly light resembles in detail the conversion experience of Methodist Fanny Newell. Surrounded by a “cloud of darkness,” Newell reported, “[I] saw a small ray of light, and my eyes seemed fixed upon it. The light increased, until at length it appeared as large as the blaze of a candle. . . . Then I saw the appearance of a man, and then the darkness which had surrounded me withdrew. . . . The man who presented himself to my view was CHRIST.”<sup>32</sup> John Maffitt, whose memoirs were published in 1821, reported a light from heaven that “*broke in dazzling splendor thro’ the gloom,*” dispersing the black clouds that had enveloped him, allowing him to distinguish through the fog his “adorable Savior.”<sup>33</sup> In a like manner, Jacob Young,

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29. Charles Finney, *Memoirs of Rev. Charles G. Finney* (New York: A. S. Barnes & Company, 1876), 15–19.

30. Jacob Young, *Autobiography of a Pioneer; or, the Nativity, Experience, Travels, and Ministerial Labors of Rev. Jacob Young; with Incidents, Observations, and Reflections* (Cincinnati: L. Swormstedt and A. Poe, 1859), 42.

31. Elias Smith, *The Life, Conversion, Preaching, Travel, and Sufferings of Elias Smith* (Boston: n.p., 1840), 53–54.

32. Fanny Newell, *Memoirs of Fanny Newell; Written by Herself* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam, Little, and Co., 1832), 29–30.

33. John N. Maffitt, *Tears of Contrition: Sketches of the Life of John N. Maffitt; with Religious and Moral Reflections* (New London, Conn.: Samuel Green, 1821), 50, italics in original.

mentioned earlier, beheld a heavenly light that delivered him from "the power of darkness."<sup>34</sup>

Joseph Smith's report of a "pillar [of] light exactly over [his] head above the brightness of the sun, which descended . . . gradually untill it fell upon [him]," containing "two personages . . . standing above [him] in the air" also emulates the experience of Norris Stearns, published only five years before Smith's.<sup>35</sup> Stearns, a barely literate teenager from Massachusetts, found himself "on the brink of eternal woe, feeling nothing but death before [him]." "Suddenly," he reported, "there came a sweet flow of the love of God to my soul, which gradually increased. At the same time, there appeared a small gleam of light . . . above the brightness of the sun . . . which grew brighter and brighter." In the light, Stearns reported, "[I] saw two spirits, which I knew at the first sight. . . . One was God, my Maker," and "below him stood Jesus Christ my Redeemer."<sup>36</sup> While Joseph Smith described the beings as possessing a "brightness and glory [that] defy all description," Stearns recalled that their countenances were "of fire, being bright and shining."<sup>37</sup> Visionaries like Stearns and Smith commonly recounted God and Jesus Christ appearing as separate entities in heaven-born manifestations. Fellow visionary Billy Hibbard recalled seeing "Jesus Christ at the right hand of God looking down upon me, and God the Father looking upon him."<sup>38</sup> Smith's experience of retreating to the forest in prayer, seeing a light, and then laying eyes upon God and Jesus was far from unusual.

Though notable religious scholars have claimed that during the 1820s Evangelicals distanced themselves from such visions, evidence

34. Young, *Autobiography of a Pioneer*, 42.

35. "History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1," 3. The language employed by both Smith and Stearns likely derives from Paul's description of his experience on the road to Damascus in Acts 26:13.

36. Norris Stearns, *The Religious Experience of Norris Stearns, Written by Divine Command* (Greenfield, Mass.: n.p., 1815), 12.

37. Compare Stearns, *Religious Experience of Norris Stearns*, and "History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1," 3.

38. Billy Hibbard, *Memoirs of the Life and Travels of B. Hibbard, Minister of the Gospel* (New York: J. C. Totten, 1825), 24. Across the Atlantic in November 1819, only a few months before Smith's vision, John Wroe likewise claimed to have seen "both the Father and the Son." John Wroe, *The Life and Journal of John Wroe, with Divine Communications Revealed to Him, Being the Visitation of the Spirit of God, to Warn Mankind That the Day of the Lord Is at Hand* (Ashton-under-Lyne, England: E. Lees and Co., 1829), 9.

indicates otherwise.<sup>39</sup> In 1826, a former resident of Palmyra and neighbor of Joseph Smith published an account of a dream in which Christ descended “in a glare of brightness, exceeding ten fold the brilliancy of the meridian Sun.”<sup>40</sup> A few years previous, in 1823, the local newspaper reported about another visionary in the immediate vicinity.<sup>41</sup> Visions like Smith’s were, in fact, common.<sup>42</sup> Joseph Smith, according to his biographer, lived in a visionary culture that cut across social divisions and “united all kinds of people.”<sup>43</sup> Men and women, rich and poor, young and old—all saw theophanies of Christ.<sup>44</sup> It comes as no surprise then that Smith’s own attempts to convey his story reflected the style of other visions that circulated in antebellum America.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, accounts

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39. For arguments that evangelical enthusiasm waned around this time, see John H. Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 124; and Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 241.

40. John Samuel Thompson, *The Christian Guide to a Right Understanding of the Sacred Scriptures* (Utica, N.Y.: A. G. Dauby, 1826), 71.

41. “Remarkable Vision and Revelation: As Seen and Received by Asa Wild, of Amsterdam, (N.Y.),” *Wayne Sentinel* (Palmyra, N.Y.), October 22, 1823.

42. The prevalence of visions in early America led one historian to claim that Smith’s experience was likely “the elaboration of some half-remembered dream stimulated by the early revival excitement and reinforced by the rich folklore of visions circulating in his neighborhood.” Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), 25.

43. Richard Bushman, “The Visionary World of Joseph Smith,” *BYU Studies* 37, no. 1 (1997): 187.

44. For examples of women who had similar visionary experiences, see Elizabeth Elkin Grammer, *Some Wild Visions: Autobiographies by Itinerant Female Preachers in 19th-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 19–22. According to one scholar, most visions were experienced by people “during teenage years. . . . Many seem to take place in communities experiencing rapid change or an unusual degree of social dislocation; and most converts had some preexisting religious knowledge.” David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005), 63. This description fits Joseph Smith without qualification. For more on young people in the evangelical movement, see Trevor Jason Wright, “Your Sons and Your Daughters Shall Prophesy . . . Your Young Men Shall See Visions: The Role of Youth in the Second Great Awakening, 1800–1850” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 2013), 138–45.

45. Historian John Turner notes that “much of Smith’s visionary experience resembles that of his evangelical contemporaries.” Turner, *Mormon Jesus*, 70;

of his First Vision read very "much like the conversion narratives that appear in numerous journals of other early American evangelicals."<sup>46</sup> It is improbable that Smith would not have heard of their stories.<sup>47</sup> Countless of his contemporaries had similar experiences of beholding a heavenly light and meeting Christ.<sup>48</sup>

If anyone was likely to have accepted his tale, it should have been the Methodist minister Smith approached shortly after his vision. According to his brother, it was at a Methodist camp meeting that Joseph Smith heard Reverend George Lane's sermon about "what church shall I join?" which focused on the scripture in James that touched the impressionable youth (see James 1:5).<sup>49</sup> By Joseph Smith's own admission, he had grown "somewhat partial to the Methodist sect," and the preacher to whom he first confided was quite possibly George Lane himself.<sup>50</sup> To Smith's surprise, the reverend treated his "communication not only lightly but with great contempt."<sup>51</sup> In Smith's revelation, the minister sensed something particularly dangerous.

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see also Neal E. Lambert and Richard H. Cracroft, "Literary Form and Historical Understanding: Joseph Smith's First Vision." *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980): 33–37.

46. Jones, "Power and Form of Godliness," 96–97; see also Lincoln A. Mullen, *The Chance of Salvation: A History of Conversion in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2017), 141.

47. Even if Joseph Smith had not read any written autobiographical accounts, he would have picked up the basic conversion narrative from attending camp meetings, where bearing testimony was common. Rodger M. Payne, *The Self and the Sacred: Conversion and Autobiography in Early American Protestantism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998), 62–63.

48. For a sampling of thirty-two visionary accounts from between 1783 and 1815, see Bushman, "Visionary World of Joseph Smith," 201–4.

49. Peterson, "Another Testimony," 11. For a more contemporaneous and similar account, see Oliver Cowdery, "Letter III," December 1834, in "History, 1834–1836," 59, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed January 20, 2020, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1834-1836/63>.

50. Lane passed through Smith's neighborhood shortly after his reported vision in July 1820. Larry C. Porter, "Reverend George Lane—Good 'Gifts,' Much 'Grace,' and Marked 'Usefulness,'" *BYU Studies* 9, no. 3 (1969): 335. For other possible ministers to whom Smith could have reported his vision, see Quinn, "Joseph Smith's Experience," 51–54.

51. "History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1," 3.

## Reason, Revelation, and the Rise of Rational Religion

Disbelief in visionary experiences has a long history in America. Early on, Puritans repeatedly denounced such revelations by Anabaptists and Quakers who had begun to settle in the colonies.<sup>52</sup> Later, during the enthusiastic outbursts of the First Great Awakening, so-called Old Light leaders singled out reports of visions as evidence that Evangelicals went too far.<sup>53</sup> Revivalists constantly struggled to counteract comparisons of themselves to visionary heretics of Christian past.<sup>54</sup> On this point, traditional religionists found unlikely allies in supernatural skeptics.<sup>55</sup> Thomas Paine, the renowned revolutionary, for instance, doubted “that the Almighty ever did communicate anything to man, by any mode of speech, in any language, or by any kind of vision.”<sup>56</sup> In the years leading up to Smith’s experience, heavenly apparitions increasingly came under attack by a new opponent—the scientific community. As part of the “medicalizing [of] religious enthusiasm,” physicians associated visions with psychiatric disorders.<sup>57</sup> Doctors at times clinically diagnosed visionaries with “religious madness,” one of several “standard medical explanations of mental illness.”<sup>58</sup> One treatise on the subject specifically included “conversations with Angelic ministers” as a symptom of

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52. David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgement: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 106–8.

53. Douglas L. Winiarski, *Darkness Falls on the Land of Light: Experiencing Religious Awakenings in Eighteenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 258.

54. David S. Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm in the New World: Heresy to Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 186–88.

55. Christopher Grasso, *Skepticism and American Faith: From the Revolution to the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 1–8.

56. Thomas Paine, “The Age of Reason: Being an Investigation of True and Fabulous Theology,” in *The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine*, ed. Philip S. Foner, 2 vols. (New York: Citadel, 1945), 1:596.

57. Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 191. Unsurprisingly, the medicalization of religion corresponded with religious “disillusionment with orthodox medicine.” See Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), 28.

58. J. Spencer Fluhman, “A Peculiar People”: *Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 61–62.

lunacy.<sup>59</sup> Hallucination, madness, and delusion were all invectives from the educated elite directed toward uncomely religious expressions. By 1840, Alexis de Tocqueville noted without any further comment that "religious insanity is very common in the United States."<sup>60</sup>

Evangelicals, confronted with the real possibility of becoming pariahs, remade their religion, reframing their enthusiastic experiences.<sup>61</sup> As traditional piety gave way to psychopathology, they increasingly explained their faith "in scientific rather than theological" language.<sup>62</sup> Borrowing terminology from the Enlightenment, Evangelicals claimed a belief in an experimental religion that rested on empirical facts.<sup>63</sup> Through "individual experience," they claimed to be able to "become possessed of a kind of proof."<sup>64</sup> Part of the appeal of evangelical Christianity was specifically its evidential nature. By "appropriating an enlightened language of experience, certainty, evidence, and sensation as their own," Evangelicalism represented, in the words of one religious historian, "a vector of modernity, a creative response to the transformations that were reshaping everyday life."<sup>65</sup> Instead of repudiating science, Evangelicals baptized it.<sup>66</sup>

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59. William Battie, *A Treatise on Madness* (London: Whiston and White, 1758), 58.

60. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 2 vols. (New York: Vintage Books, 1945), 2:142.

61. For a detailed description of how this happened in Britain, see Jane Shaw, *Miracles in Enlightenment England* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2006), 1–20.

62. Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 18.

63. See Schneider, *Way of the Cross Leads Home*, 42–58.

64. Rev. Francis A. West, "Divine Providence a Moral Discipline," in *Sermons on Important Subjects by Several Ministers of the Wesleyan-Methodist Connexion* (London: John Mason, 1832), 376.

65. Catherine A. Brekus, *Sarah Osborn's World: The Rise of Evangelical Christianity in Early America* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2013), 8–9. Unlike Puritans and Anglicans, enthusiasts believed that one's relationship with God was not mediated by institutions but depended entirely on the witness of the Spirit. Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 173.

66. For more information on Evangelicals' feelings toward science, see D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Spirit of Early Evangelicalism: True Religion in a Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 102–42.

Experimental religion relied upon evidence, though of a metaphysical type. Trumpeting theories of consciousness in which a disembodied mind correlated data into forms and concepts, Evangelicals marshalled popular philosophical arguments to their cause.<sup>67</sup> They were convinced that science confirmed the truths of Christianity and unabashedly embraced empiricist epistemology. Separating the sensory from the mind's understanding, perception from reality, Evangelicals constructed a space where enthusiasm was permissible outside the purview of human observation.<sup>68</sup> This demarcation between physical phenomenon and subjective spiritual truths created an untouchable realm outside the reach of objective inquiry. Thus "the mysteries of nature," in the words of one Evangelical, could never "usurp the province nor trench upon the bounds" of the "the mysteries of revelation."<sup>69</sup> Since the "Internal Witness" of the Spirit came directly "to the believer's mind," it fell safely outside "the sphere of reason."<sup>70</sup> Ingenious and inventive, they created a reality untouchable to forensic analysis, a scientific faith immune to scientific inquiry.

This retreat into an otherworldly realm to ward off modern medicine's secular explanations for religious experiences nevertheless came at a cost. The compartmentalization of the spiritual and the physical effectively erected a bulwark that kept science out of faith but at the same time hedged God in. Though Evangelicals preached of the Divine's influence in the world, in significant ways they required his absence. Revelation remained necessary for forgiveness of sins and to be born again, but they claimed this testimony could come only through certain channels—through internal witnesses of the Spirit and not through physical manifestations. This bifurcation of the celestial and corporeal

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67. Richard E. Brantley, *Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1984), 13.

68. J. Stillson Judah, *The History and Philosophy of the Metaphysical Movements in America* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), 27. Evangelicals were especially fond of citing Isaac Newton's *Treatise on Optics*.

69. Rev. Daniel M'Allum, "Structure of the Human Eye and Ear," *Methodist Magazine* 10, no. 3 (New York: N. Bangs and J. Emory, 1827), 117; Rev. James Everett, "The Voice of Blood, as Heard from Victim on the Christian Altar," in *Sermons on Important Subjects*, 342.

70. Rev. Matthew Richey, "On the Witness of the Spirit," in *The Methodist Preacher: Or Monthly Sermons from Living Ministers. Vols. III & IV*, ed. Ebenezer Ireson (Boston: Kane and Co., 1833), 34. Enthusiasts widely accepted the fact that the Spirit's nature was "essentially different from the evidences of natural philosophy, chymistry [*sic*], &c." Ballou, *Series of Letters*, 29.



often ignored areas where the two overlapped, including the somatic nature of enthusiasm. Unwilling to abandon certain charismatic gifts that they interpreted as empirical evidence of conversion, Evangelicals struggled to explain them. Particularly troublesome were visions that described God with language that could be construed as debasing Deity. Enthusiasm, if permissible, had to maintain the "immeasurable distance that separates man from his Maker."<sup>71</sup> According to Evangelicals, God was an eternal being without body or parts.<sup>72</sup> To suggest that the Supreme Creator in any way resembled the human with hands or feet, eyes or ears, was simply unfathomable. As one popular American theological dictionary put it, God was "invisible and impalpable," not "to be seen and felt."<sup>73</sup>

Visions were only permissible as long as they maintained the strict separation between the spiritual and physical. "Nothing can be more erroneous and unfounded," cautioned one American enthusiast, than an attestation "conveyed to the recipient by means of an audible voice from heaven, or through the medium of a visionary representation." God only testified through an "interiorly sensible operation of the Spirit," not "to the eye—to the ear—nor even to any of the inferior faculties of the soul."<sup>74</sup> Only communications "consistent with the character of God" and "of a spiritual" nature were permissible.<sup>75</sup> These came through an inner quickening of the Holy Spirit. This method of acquiring heavenly knowledge gave "no sanction whatever to any fanatical claims to supernatural *revelations*."<sup>76</sup> Visionaries who claimed to have seen or talked with God, if not clinically mad, were at least "hyper-rational." The mentally insane, as defined by Evangelicals, were specifically "those who believe themselves to be favoured perpetually with special, particular,

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71. Isaac Taylor, *Natural History of Enthusiasm* (New York: Jonathan Leavitt, 1831), 30.

72. The First Article of Religion of the American Methodist Episcopal Church stated, "There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts." See J. Soule and T. Mason, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 19th ed. (New York: John C. Totten, 1817), 7.

73. Charles Buck, *A Theological Dictionary*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Whitehall, 1807), 1:406.

74. Richey, "On the Witness of the Spirit," 36–37.

75. Richard Watson, *Theological Institutes; or, a View of the Evidences, Doctrines, Morals and Institutions of Christianity*, vol. 1 (New York: N. Bangs and J. Emory, 1825), 95; Richey, "On the Witness of the Spirit," 39.

76. Rev. James Douglas, "Regeneration," in *The Methodist* 73, 5th ser., vol. 7, ed. J. W. Mendenhall (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1891), 759, emphasis in original.

and ultra-scriptural revelations from heaven.” Sensible intercourse with the Divine came exclusively “through the soul.”<sup>77</sup> Any message that did not come in this manner was to be dismissed as simply “the effusions of an enthusiastic brain.”<sup>78</sup>

### “Seeing” Visions

In 1814, just six years before Joseph Smith’s First Vision, America’s most popular evangelist, Lorenzo Dow, published his memoir, which became one of the most read books in the United States. In it, Dow described his own vision as a teenager in Connecticut. As a young boy of only thirteen, he recalled journeying “out of doors” seeking the “salvation of [his] soul.” Nearly overcome by a thick “mist of darkness,” he beheld God accompanied by “Jesus Christ at his right hand.” Dow, however, unlike Smith, was convinced that he never actually saw God or Christ. The vision had only been “strongly impressed on [his] mind” to call him to repentance.<sup>79</sup>

Dow asserted that neither he nor any other person “by these outward sensitive organs” could “hear, see, smell, taste nor feel God.” The Divine’s inexplicable and immaterial nature ruled out the possibility of literal visions. Yet, for Evangelicals, it was undeniable that God communicated to the faithful. Dow himself received such heavenly intelligence. Visions, he clarified, were experienced mentally, not through the physical sensory organs. “There are but six ways to receive ideas,” Dow explained, “which are by *inspiration*, or one of the *five senses*.”<sup>80</sup> Accordingly, revelation came only by way of inspiration—that is, directly to the perceptive faculty of the soul that functioned independent of the natural body.

Part of a larger transatlantic evangelical movement, Dow did not invent this explanation of visions but rather borrowed it from British theologians. As other European enthusiasts elucidated, godly manifestations came through “intellectual vision,” or “second sight” as it was sometimes called, a process only “somewhat analogous to the sense of seeing.”<sup>81</sup> The eye of faith created a medium to obtain certain knowledge

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77. Taylor, *Natural History of Enthusiasm*, 35, 76, and 28.

78. Buck, *Theological Dictionary*, 1:256.

79. Lorenzo Dow, *Quintessence of Lorenzo’s Works: History of Cosmopolite* (Philadelphia: Joseph Rakestraw, 1816), 12–13.

80. Dow, *History of Cosmopolite*, 347, italics in original.

81. Theophilus Insulanus, *Treatises on the Second Sight, Dreams and Apparitions* (Edinburgh: Ruddiman, Auld, and Co., 1819), 47, italics in original.

independent of sight.<sup>82</sup> Indiscernible to the natural eye, God was still perceptible. "We grant that he is *invisible* to *bodily* eyes," one English Evangelical declared, "yet assert that he can be seen by mental *eyes*."<sup>83</sup> While the belief in inner senses opened a door for communion with the Divine, it simultaneously denied the possibility of a physical appearance. As a Scottish cleric cautioned, "Jesus Christ in the body cannot be seen by any with their bodily eyes in this life"; such manifestations could only be the products of "their imagination," "disorder[s] of their head," or possibly "the humours of their bodies at that time." Either way, the minister warned, physical visions were not authentic.<sup>84</sup>

In agreement, American Evangelicals attributed most tales of visions to the human tendency to connect the spiritual and the familiar.<sup>85</sup> This did not rule out, however, the possibility that "He who is by nature invisible, makes himself as it were visible to his creatures."<sup>86</sup> At times, the influence of the Spirit could weigh upon the "faculty of the mind" whereby the "outward organs" would conceive of "forms" and "ideas of things."<sup>87</sup> In a reverse direction of how the senses usually relay information to the brain, the soul, "supernaturally invigorated and elevated," produced powerful ecstatic effects upon the body.<sup>88</sup> Enthusiasts' "imagination[s]," thus "heated and delighted" by the Holy Spirit, would fill their minds with "impressions and visionary representations."<sup>89</sup> Though the stimuli evoked physical responses that often led "a man to suppose he has some remarkable intercourse with Deity," it could only be a hallucination, "nothing more than the effects of a heated imagination, or a sanguine constitution."<sup>90</sup> Godly manifestations were as "a glass which places [a] visage before [us]," only real in the sense that they were representations.<sup>91</sup>

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82. On spiritual senses, see Misty G. Anderson, *Imagining Methodism in Eighteenth-Century Britain: Enthusiasm, Belief and the Borders of the Self* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 54.

83. Edward Hare, *A Letter to the Rev. Melville Horne; Occasioned by His Investigation of the Doctrines Imputed by Him to Certain Methodist Preachers* (Sheffield, Eng.: J. Montgomery, 1809), 24, italics in original.

84. James Robe, *Narratives of the Extraordinary Work of the Spirit of God at Cambuslang, Kisyth, & C.* (Glasgow: n.p., 1790), 200–201.

85. See Taylor, *Natural History of Enthusiasm*, 98.

86. Watson, *Theological Institutes*, 79.

87. Buck, *Theological Dictionary*, 1:399.

88. Buck, *Theological Dictionary*, 1:426.

89. Buck, *Theological Dictionary*, 1:281.

90. Buck, *Theological Dictionary*, 1:256.

91. Buck, *Theological Dictionary*, 2:471. This analogy paradoxically required an invisible object to reflect a visible image.

Such an understanding of modern visions necessitated a reinterpretation of the Bible. While previous commentators described Divine appearances in scripture as “a reality, and not merely an illusion of the imagination,” Evangelicals increasingly read these manifestations as metaphorical.<sup>92</sup> Commenting on the section in Exodus in which God speaks to Moses “face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend,” Methodist Matthew Simpson reasoned, “If, then, we inquire what is meant by the term ‘face,’ we are at once satisfied that it can have no such application to a spirit as it has to man.” Indeed, all such language “must be used figuratively” and is “but symbol” since God “hath not body and parts.” Reading the New Testament back into the Old, Moses “must have had correct views of the Deity—he must have known that ‘God is a spirit,’ [John 4:24]—that ‘no man hath seen God at any time’ [John 1:18]—that a spiritual being cannot be materially discerned.” Granting that the Lord is often spoken of as having human characteristics, Simpson clarified, “These views arise from the imperfection of our faculties,” since “we can form no distinct conception without associating some of them” (see Ex. 33:11).<sup>93</sup> Scriptural descriptions of God’s physical nature amounted to nothing more than an allusion.

The manner in which enthusiasts interpreted biblical manifestations carried over into the way they reported their own visions. As one religious historian explains, “Evangelicals were very careful in the language they used to describe” such manifestations, employing words like “seemingly” and “by faith” in order “to signal their awareness of the enormous potential of unorthodox spiritual experience.” Visions “should be *seen*—not felt or heard in any physical way—and seen by the ‘eye of faith’ alone.”<sup>94</sup> Evangelical authorities often enforced this rule through the emendation or redaction of visionary reports. When Connecticut minister Eleazar Wheelock received an anonymous account of someone who had been transported to heaven and conversed with “God the father and God the son,” he corrected the simple story by inserting commentary

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92. Thomas Scott, *Vol. 5: The Holy Bible [. . .] according to the Authorized Version* (London: James Nisbet, 1866), 4R6.

93. Rev. Matthew Simpson, “The Influence on the Human Mind of the Manifestation of God’s Glory,” in *The Methodist Episcopal Pulpit: A Collection of Original Sermons from Living Ministers of the M. E. Church*, ed. D. W. Clark (New York: Lane and Scott, 1848), 15–23.

94. Susan Juster, *Doomsayers: Anglo-American Prophecy in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 115–16, italics in original.

that clarified that the convert had only "suppos'd" to have witnessed such things. As everything had taken place in "the invisible World," Wheelock added that he or she had only "seamd" to have seen the "Glorious attributes of the incomprehensible God." In no way had the author experienced the event with the "bodily sences [*sic*]." <sup>95</sup> In a comparable manner, Pastor Samuel Hopkins, the editor of an early evangelical woman's memoirs, sanitized her story of a vision of Jesus; deeming the content potentially harmful to proper theology, he omitted it in its entirety from the publication of her life history. <sup>96</sup>

For the most part, however, Evangelicals successfully self-censored. Norris Stearns's vision, described earlier, paralleled Smith's but differed in one essential: unlike Smith, he cautiously qualified that he could not be certain if what he witnessed happened "in the body or out." God appeared "almost in bodily shape like a man," but "in looking steadfastly to discern features, [he] could see none." Disguising the Divine in metaphorical language, Stearns reported, "His face was, as it were a flame of Fire, and his body, as it had been a Pillar and a Cloud."<sup>97</sup> Revivalist Charles Finney in a similar fashion mollified the language of his vision. The entirety of his experience with the Savior occurred within a "remarkable state of mind," and it only "seemed as if [he] met the Lord." Finney, though he referred to his vision as an "interview," made certain to clarify that "[Jesus] said nothing" and that it only "seemed to me a reality, that he stood before me." Pouring his soul out, Finney described falling at Christ's feet and bathing them in tears as he "wept aloud like a child," and yet he was careful to note he "had no distinct impression that [he] touched him." Deeply conditioned by his subsequent ministerial education and theological instruction, Finney wrote, "It did not occur to me then, nor did it for some time afterward," that the vision transpired "wholly [in] a mental state."<sup>98</sup>

Like the aforementioned visionaries, Elias Smith, who witnessed the Lamb of God in a heavenly light, made it clear that the vision only "appeared to my understanding" in an out-of-body experience. His mind transported to the eternal realm. He "seemed to rise in that

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95. Eleazar Wheelock, quoted in Douglas L. Winiarski, "Souls Filled with Ravishing Transport: Heavenly Visions and the Radical Awakening in New England," *William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (January 2004): 30–31, 44 n. 83.

96. See Brekus, *Sarah Osborn's World*, 111–12.

97. Stearns, *Religious Experience*, 12.

98. Finney, *Memoirs*, 19–20.

light” while “everything earthly was gone from [him].”<sup>99</sup> Finally, Billy Hibbard, another young New Englander who claimed he “saw” Jesus Christ and God the Father in secluded prayer, employed the language of observation loosely. Though he described the “rapturous sight” of “beholding the glory of God,” Hibbard’s vision occurred with his eyes closed. Realizing the impossibility of seeing the Divine through physical perception, Hibbard explained to his readers that “if I had kept my eyes open, I should not have seen God in glory, and Jesus Christ.”<sup>100</sup> Mental and metaphorical, visions were inexact representations of supernatural realities.

Unlike his contemporaries, Joseph Smith maintained that what he beheld in vision accurately reflected what had in fact transpired. Equating his own experience to that of Paul’s on the road to Damascus, Smith divulged that Paul truly had seen “in the way a light from heaven” and heard a “voice speaking” unto him (see Acts 26:13–14). This self-comparison to Paul seems far from unintentional; Evangelicals frequently described Paul’s conversion as prescriptive.<sup>101</sup> Knowing this, Smith forthrightly asserted Paul “saw a light and heard a voice.” Though scoffers “ridiculed and reviled,” calling him both “dishonest” and “mad,” this did not “destroy the reality of his vision.” “So it was with me,” Smith related. “Though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true. . . . I ha[d] actually seen a vision.”<sup>102</sup>

Over the course of Smith’s lifetime, he wrote or dictated multiple accounts of his First Vision, each one containing an unsophisticated, plain presentation of the nature of the event. In his first attempt to write

99. Smith, *Life, Conversion, Preaching, Travel, and Sufferings*, 59.

100. Hibbard, *Memoirs of the Life*, 23–25.

101. See Rev. George Coles, “The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus,” in *Methodist Preacher*, 51–62; Rev. Jotham Horton, “The Efficacy of Faith, as Illustrated in the Character and Life of the Apostle Paul,” in *Methodist Preacher*, 63–82; and Rev. Robert Alder, “The Power of the Gospel,” in *Sermons on Important Subjects*, 403–27.

102. “History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1,” 4. Counter to Joseph Smith’s claim, Ezra Booth, an early Latter-day Saint convert who later apostatized from the faith, claimed that Smith did “not pretend that he sees them with his natural, but with his spiritual eyes; and he says he can see them as well with his eyes shut, as with them open.” E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, Ohio: By the author, 1834), 186. Historian Dan Vogel makes a similar argument, believing “Smith used visual language to describe an experience that was non-sensory.” Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004), 31.

down his experience, he simply reported, "I saw the Lord" and "he spake unto me."<sup>103</sup> If anything, Smith became more direct in his later comments in what has been called the "*thatness*" of his vision.<sup>104</sup> "I had actually seen a light and in the midst of that light I saw two personages, and they did in reality speak to me," he affirmed in 1838. "Why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen?"<sup>105</sup> As one historian has noted, Smith, in contrast to other visionaries, "became more insistent on the reality and materiality of his experience" over time. "Instead of backing down in the face of skeptics, Smith doubled down on the physical nature of his vision."<sup>106</sup> Moreover, he described in detail the characteristics of the "personages" he had seen.<sup>107</sup> While many of Smith's contemporaries claimed to have peeked beyond the veil and beheld beatific visions of the Divine, he audaciously proclaimed to have had real, personal communication with an anthropomorphic God the Father and Jesus Christ.

## Epilogue

"What kind of a being is God?" Joseph Smith asked a gathered audience of ten thousand a month before the last recorded presentation of his First Vision. "Does any man or woman know?" Fighting the wind, he bellowed, "Have any of you seen him, heard him, communed with him?" "The great secret," Smith revealed, is that "God himself, who sits enthroned in yonder heavens, is a man like unto one of yourselves. . . . If the vail was rent to-day, and the great God, who holds this world in its

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103. For theories about what might have prompted Smith to write down his vision in 1832, see Ann Taves and Steven C. Harper, "Joseph Smith's First Vision: New Methods for the Analysis of Experience-Related Texts," *Mormon Studies Review* 3 (2016): 60–63; and Matthew C. Godfrey, "The Second Sacred Grove: The Influence of Greenville, Indiana, on Joseph Smith's 1832 First Vision Account," *Journal of Mormon History* 44, no. 4 (October 2018): 15–17.

104. Adele Brannon McCollum, "The First Vision: Re-visioning Historical Experience," in *Literature of Belief: Sacred Scripture and Religious Experience*, ed. Neal E. Lambert, Religious Studies Monograph Series, vol. 5 (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1981), 185, emphasis in original.

105. "History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1," 4.

106. Turner, *Mormon Jesus*, 71–72.

107. "Church History," *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 9 (March 1, 1842): 707, available at Joseph Smith Papers, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/church-history-1-march-1842/2>.



orbit, and upholds all things by his power; if you were to see him to-day, you would see him in all the person, image and very form as a man.”<sup>108</sup> Smith was convinced that he had actually seen God and conversed with him.<sup>109</sup> From his first telling of his vision to the last, he maintained the unambiguous nature of this event.<sup>110</sup>

Reared in an environment awash with visionaries, Smith’s vision stood out. “Instead of bringing him into the mainstream as conversions ordinarily did,” as Smith’s biographer noted, his vision “set him on a course of his own.”<sup>111</sup> Ignored by the very people who encouraged him to seek God, he would go on to found his own religious tradition. His literal interpretation of his experience set him apart so entirely that no other denomination would accept him.<sup>112</sup> Smith’s description of his vision transgressed the theological barriers that had been erected by Evangelicals to protect the Eternal from obtrusion, and Smith’s claim to have seen God cut to the core of their theology, threatening to destabilize the very foundation of creedal Christianity. Divinity’s omnipotence, omniscience, and ontological uniqueness all rested on a presupposition

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108. “Discourse, 7 April 1844, as Reported by *Times and Seasons*,” 613, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed January 20, 2020, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/discourse-7-april-1844-as-reported-by-times-and-seasons/2>.

109. Smith preferred to use the Bible to explicate God’s nature, though his own visionary experiences doubtlessly contributed to his conception of the Divine. See James B. Allen, “The Significance of Joseph Smith’s ‘First Vision’ in Mormon Thought,” *Dialogue* 1, no. 3 (1966): 38.

110. Smith’s First Vision is rarely included in discussions of early Latter-day Saint theology. Since accounts of the vision were committed to paper over a decade after the event, scholars commonly assume they must reflect later ideas. I, however, argue that Smith’s vision was rejected precisely for theological reasons, and he appears to never have equivocated on the idea that he beheld an embodied God. For opposing views that downplay or ignore the First Vision, see Thomas G. Alexander, “The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology,” *Sunstone* 5, no. 4 (July–August 1980): 24–33; Benjamin E. Park, “Salvation through a Tabernacle: Joseph Smith, Parley P. Pratt, and Early Mormon Theologies of Embodiment,” *Dialogue* 43, no. 2 (Summer 2010): 5–10; and Ann Taves, *Revelatory Events: Three Case Studies of the Emergence of New Spiritual Paths* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2016), 17–20.

111. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling: A Cultural Biography of Mormonism’s Founder* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 41.

112. As one scholar has put it, Joseph Smith “was off script.” Steven C. Harper, *First Vision: Memory and Mormon Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 99–100.

of incorporeality, not to mention the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. Whereas Evangelicals maintained that Deity was wholly immaterial and invisible, Smith turned the entire system on its head by simply proclaiming that the Almighty could, if he so pleased, reveal himself through physical means.<sup>113</sup> To those around him, it was impossible to conceive anything more blasphemous than the God Smith described, who stood, pointed with his finger, and carried on a conversation.<sup>114</sup>

Evangelicals countered Smith's claim to have "actually seen a vision" with a robust theological framework that categorically denied such manifestations.<sup>115</sup> For them, the story's antimodern undertones ruled out the possibility of it being a genuine revelation. Since Smith described his vision in material terms, its ultimate source had to be physical. Evangelicals, therefore, suggested Smith suffered from insanity. As one contemporary detailed, his communication with God the Father and Jesus Christ derived from "a distempered brain." The diagnosis was certain: Smith's insistence on beholding God made him a "lunatic." As a "weak minded" youth, he had become "maddened with religious frenzies" to the point that he "fancied and believed" that he had actually been visited by heavenly beings.<sup>116</sup> To Evangelicals, his vision constituted nothing more than a sensory illusion triggered by his own imagination—an unfortunate side effect of unchecked enthusiasm.

For Joseph Smith, visions were nothing but straightforward. While Evangelicals maintained that the transcendent had to be translated to be understood, he suggested it needed no interpretation. God, who at sundry times had shown himself to ancient prophets, again manifested his bodily presence as he had done formerly. Attempts to say that such visions, past and present, were a "*similitude—figurative, metaphorical, & C.*," for Latter-day Saints, amounted to little more than Protestant philosophizing.<sup>117</sup> If they could only "gaze into heaven [for] five minutes,"

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113. Joseph Smith would go on to claim, "There is no such thing as immaterial matter." "History, 1838–1856, Volume D-1 [1 August 1842–1 July 1843]," 1552 (May 17, 1843), Joseph Smith Papers, accessed January 20, 2020, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-d-1-1-august-1842-1-july-1843/195>.

114. "History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2]," 4.

115. "History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1," 4.

116. Charles Mackay, *The Mormons: Or Latter-day Saints* (London: Office of the National Illustrated Library, 1851), 26, 165.

117. Samuel Bennett, *A Few Remarks by Way of Reply to an Anonymous Scribbler, Calling Himself a Philanthropist: Disabusing the Church of Jesus Christ*

Smith declared, they would “know more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject” about “the relation of man to God.”<sup>118</sup> The distance between the human and the holy was not as great as supposed. Recalling Jesus’s words from the Sermon on the Mount that “the pure in heart . . . shall see God” (see Matt. 5:8), Smith promised his followers that like him they too “should see a heavenly vision.”<sup>119</sup> In the decades following Joseph Smith’s First Vision, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints successfully siphoned thousands of converts from mainline denominations by promising believers a more intimate relationship with the Divine. In the end, his vision opened the door for an even more experiential religion than Evangelicalism, one in which the faithful could encounter God without qualification.

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*of Latter-day Saints of the Slanders and Falsehoods Which He Has Attempted to Fasten Upon It* (Philadelphia: Brown, Bicking and Guilpert, 1840), 11, italics in original.

118. “History, 1838–1856, Volume E-1 [1 July 1843–30 April 1844],” 1750 (October 9, 1843), Joseph Smith Papers, accessed January 20, 2020, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-e-1-1-july-1843-30-april-1844/122>.

119. “Minutes, 18 March 1833,” 17, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed January 20, 2020, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minutes-18-march-1833/2>.

# The Teachings of Church Leaders Regarding the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ: 1852–2018

*John Hilton III, Emily K. Hyde, and McKenna Grace Trussel*

From the beginnings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (herein referred to as “the Church”), the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ has been at the heart of its theology. In numerous revelations received by Joseph Smith, the Savior is identified as having been “crucified for the sins of the world” (D&C 53:2; see also 21:9, 35:2, 46:13, 54:1, 76:41). President Brigham Young taught that salvation was only “through the name and ministry of Jesus Christ, and the atonement he made on Mount Calvary.”<sup>1</sup> President John Taylor said that Christ “was crucified and put to death to atone for the sins of the world.”<sup>2</sup> President Wilford Woodruff stated, “The Lord Jesus was crucified on Mount Calvary for the sins of the world.”<sup>3</sup> And President Lorenzo Snow taught that Christ “sacrificed his life on Mount Calvary for the salvation of the human family.”<sup>4</sup> In 1918, President Joseph F. Smith wrote “that redemption had been wrought through the sacrifice of the Son of God upon the cross” (D&C 138:35), and in 1941, President Heber J. Grant testified that Christ “came to this earth with a divine mission to die upon the cross as the Redeemer of mankind, atoning for the sins of the world.”<sup>5</sup> In brief,

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1. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 9:365 (August 31, 1862).

2. John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 25:177 (May 18, 1884).

3. Wilford Woodruff, in *Journal of Discourses*, 15:7 (April 6, 1872).

4. Lorenzo Snow, *Millennial Star* 56 (July 16, 1894): 450.

5. Heber J. Grant, in *One Hundred Eleventh Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1941), 6.

every President of the Church has similarly testified that Jesus Christ was crucified for the sins of the world. At the start of the twenty-first century, the united First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve proclaimed that Christ was “sentenced to die on Calvary’s cross. He *gave His life* to atone for the sins of all mankind.”<sup>6</sup> Clearly, Christ’s Crucifixion is central to the theology of the Church.

Nevertheless, the first page of an online search of the words “Mormons” and “cross” displays an article that asserts, “Crosses are never used on any Mormon buildings. Strangely enough, Mormon leaders have often pointed to the Garden of Gethsemane as the place where Christ’s atonement took place.”<sup>7</sup> Indeed, a frequent argument used against the Church is that it focuses primarily on Gethsemane and not Golgotha as the location of the Savior’s Atonement. Such statements are not only used to attack the Church; rather, interested and sometimes sympathetic scholars who have studied the theology of the Church have also pointed out a tendency to focus on Gethsemane.<sup>8</sup>

For example, Douglas J. Davies, an Anglican scholar who respectfully studies the Church, describes “the Mormon preoccupation with the Gospel of Luke’s account of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane,” arguing that Church leaders have developed the events of Gethsemane “to parallel and perhaps even to predominate over the Crucifixion of Calvary as the prime scene of the act of atonement.”<sup>9</sup> Latter-day Saint scholar Terryl Givens notes that Church members “shun virtually all representations of the cross and, by extension, the passion, in both art and sculpture.”<sup>10</sup> Michael Reed has written comprehensively about the history of the image of the cross within the Church, showing that while early Church members wore and displayed crosses, in recent decades it has become more of a taboo.<sup>11</sup>

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6. “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,” *Ensign* 30 (January 2000): 2, emphasis added.

7. Bill McKeeves, “Why No Crosses?” Mormon Research Ministry, accessed January 9, 2020, <http://www.mrm.org/no-crosses>.

8. This argumentation draws on John Hilton III and Joshua P. Barringer, “The Use of *Gethsemane* by Church Leaders: 1859–2018,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (2019): 49–76.

9. Douglas J. Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 154.

10. Terryl L. Givens, *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 114.

11. See Michael G. Reed, *Banishing the Cross: The Emergence of a Mormon Taboo* (Independence, Mo.: John Whitmer Books, 2012).

While traditions surrounding the visual symbolism of the cross do not necessarily equate to an official theology of Christ's Crucifixion, they may partially explain why some Church members emphasize the events in Gethsemane more than the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ.<sup>12</sup>

It is true that a small number of Church leaders have occasionally taught that Christ's greatest suffering took place in Gethsemane,<sup>13</sup> and noncanonical references such as the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* state, "For Latter-day Saints, Gethsemane was the scene of Jesus' greatest agony, even surpassing that which he suffered on the cross."<sup>14</sup> Similarly, some past Church curricula have emphasized Gethsemane over Christ's Crucifixion.<sup>15</sup> But do such statements accurately represent the teachings of the Church?

The standard works emphasize the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ significantly more than Gethsemane, with dozens more references to the salvific power of the cross as opposed to Gethsemane. This emphasis is consistent across the Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the Prophet Joseph Smith focused on the Savior's Crucifixion much more than he did on Gethsemane.<sup>17</sup>

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12. One BYU professor surveyed several hundred students and found that 88 percent emphasize Gethsemane over Calvary as the primary location of Christ's Atonement. John Hilton III, "Teaching the Scriptural Emphasis on the Crucifixion," *Religious Educator* 20, no. 3 (2019): 133–53.

13. See Hilton and Barringer, "Use of *Gethsemane*," 76.

14. S. Kent Brown, "Gethsemane," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 2:542–43.

15. For example, the 1979 institute and home-study seminary manuals quote statements to the effect that what happened in Gethsemane was more important than the cross. See *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*, 2d ed., rev. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979), 171; and *The New Testament Seminary Home Study* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980), 57–61. While atypical, a 1980 Sunday School manual for teenagers included an object lesson specifically teaching that Christ demonstrated more love in Gethsemane than he did on the cross. See *Introduction to the Scriptures: Part B* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980), 55; and Joyce N. Woodbury, "Christ's Atoning Sacrifice: The Role of the Crucifixion," *Sunstone Magazine* 42 (November–December 1983): 17–21.

16. See Hilton, "Scriptural Emphasis on the Crucifixion," 133–53.

17. See John Hilton III, "The Teachings of Joseph Smith on Gethsemane and Jesus Christ's Crucifixion," in *How and What You Worship*, ed. Rachel Cope, Carter Charles, and Jordan Watkins (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, forthcoming).

What have Church leaders collectively taught about Christ's Crucifixion? Have these teachings evolved over time? If so, in what ways? Do Church leaders consistently teach that Christ's agonies in Gethsemane surpassed the cross? The purpose of this study is to identify what Church leaders have taught about Christ's Crucifixion between 1852 and 2018 in *The Journal of Discourses* and in general conference talks. Before outlining the methodology of this study, we briefly survey what the scriptures themselves teach about the Crucifixion.

### SCRIPTURAL ACCOUNTS OF THE CRUCIFIXION

The narrative descriptions of Christ's Crucifixion are found in Matthew 27:31–56; Mark 15:20–41; Luke 23:26–49; and John 19:16–37. These Crucifixion accounts do not explicitly teach that Christ suffered for our sins while on the cross or that his Crucifixion was vital in our ability to be saved and resurrected. However, later New Testament authors and other books of scripture make Christ's death a salvific focal point. There are at least fifty-two references to Christ's Crucifixion redeeming us from sin; in contrast, only two references speak of Christ suffering for our sins in Gethsemane.<sup>18</sup>

Indeed, each of the standard works contains multiple references to the redemptive power of Christ's Crucifixion. In the New Testament, Paul writes, "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15:3); Peter declares that the Savior "bare our sins in his own body on the tree [cross]" (1 Pet. 2:24). In vision, Nephi saw Christ "lifted up upon the cross and slain for the sins of the world" (1 Ne. 11:33), and Samuel the Lamanite stated that Christ "surely must die, that salvation may come" (Hel. 14:15). The Doctrine and Covenants says that "Jesus was crucified . . . for the sins of the world, yea, for the remission of sins" (D&C 21:9), and the Pearl of Great Price speaks of Christ being "lifted up on the cross" for the redemption of the world (Moses 7:55, see also Moses 7:45, 47). In his own accounts of his Atonement contained in scripture, Jesus Christ also emphasizes his Crucifixion.<sup>19</sup> For example, Christ made his Crucifixion central to his appearance to those in the New World. After he descended from heaven, he told the people, "Come forth unto me, that

18. See Hilton, "Scriptural Emphasis on the Crucifixion," 135.

19. See Hilton, "Scriptural Emphasis on the Crucifixion," 142–45. Elder Neal L. Andersen wrote, "The Savior most often refers to His Crucifixion when speaking of His perfect Atonement." Neal L. Andersen, *The Divine Gift of Forgiveness* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2019), 92.



ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I . . . have been slain for the sins of the world” (3 Ne. 11:14). Later, he defined his gospel in part by saying, “My Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross,” indicating that the Crucifixion is a central part of his gospel (3 Ne. 27:13). Without doubt, the standard works accentuate the centrality of Christ’s Crucifixion in our redemption.

## METHOD

The purpose of the present study is to examine what Church leaders have said regarding the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, following a methodology similar to a previous study focused on Gethsemane.<sup>20</sup> We used a corpus of talks found on the software program WordCruncher.<sup>21</sup> This corpus contains over 24,000,000 words and includes talks published in *The Journal of Discourses* (a collection of talks by Church leaders published primarily between 1852 and 1886)<sup>22</sup> as well as general conference talks for the years 1887–2018. We searched for the words *crucified* (and derivatives), *crucifixion*, *cross*, *Calvary*, and *Golgotha*. We also searched for the words *die*, *death*, *sacrifice*,<sup>23</sup> *slain*, and *lifted up* that occurred within one hundred words of “Jesus Christ” (or one of the titles *Messiah*, *Redeemer*, *Lord*, *Lamb*, *Savior*, or *Son of God*, or the word *sins*).<sup>24</sup> After

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20. See Hilton and Barringer, “Use of Gethsemane.”

21. This program can be downloaded at <http://wordcruncher.com>. The work of Monte Shelley assisting us with organizing and formatting our data was invaluable.

22. We note that there are significant weaknesses associated with using *The Journal of Discourses* as a source. For example, there are differences between the shorthand notes and published versions of *The Journal of Discourses*. See Gerrit Dirkmaat and LaJean Purcell Carruth, “The Prophets Have Spoken, but What Did They Say? Examining the Differences between George D. Watt’s Original Shorthand Notes and the Sermons Published in *The Journal of Discourses*,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (2015): 24–118. While this does not necessarily weaken the numerical data we share in the present study, it is an acknowledged limitation. See also “Journal of Discourses,” Gospel Topics, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed January 9, 2020, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/journal-of-discourses>.

23. Based on further analysis, the phrase “atoning sacrifice” was later specifically searched.

24. Our methodology leads to undercounting, given that we did not search for other titles (for example, “Jehovah”). Thus, a phrase such as “Jehovah died for the sins of the world” would not have appeared in our corpus.

eliminating duplicate passages (for example, “Christ was crucified at Calvary” would have showed up in two different searches), instances in which two words were repeated in close proximity,<sup>25</sup> and passages unrelated to the Crucifixion (for example, “The pioneers *crossed* the plains”), we had 3,377 total references, the first of which occurred in 1852.<sup>26</sup>

Our primary data was the one hundred words spoken before and after each use of the search term.<sup>27</sup> A complete table of these references is available online.<sup>28</sup> Once our corpus was in place, we read the excerpted text, looking for common themes. A process of emergent coding led to ten themes that we used to code each reference. Table 1 summarizes our coding structure.

**Table 1. Thematic Coding Structure**

Code	Description	Sample Quote
Narrative	Christ’s Crucifixion is mentioned only as part of a general narrative of his life. <sup>29</sup>	“In His last discourse to His disciples prior to Gethsemane and <i>Calvary</i> , the Savior declared that He was ‘the way, the truth, and the life’ (John 14:6).” <sup>30</sup>
Narrative + Resurrection	The Resurrection is mentioned only in close proximity to a narrative regarding Christ’s Crucifixion. <sup>31</sup>	“Jesus of Nazareth, born of the virgin Mary, <i>crucified</i> upon Calvary, and risen from the dead, is the Redeemer of the world.” <sup>32</sup>

25. If a second reference to a key word appeared within fifty words of the first, it was considered a duplicate and deleted from the corpus. WordCruncher automatically filtered the search.

26. Our corpus contained only a handful of talks prior to 1852, and these were excluded from this study.

27. In sixteen instances, when it seemed that additional context would be helpful, we analyzed additional portions of the talk.

28. See John Hilton III, Emily Hyde, and McKenna Trussel, “Crucifixion Quotations for Distribution,” <https://www.dropbox.com/s/b61gr57n5opayr7/Crucifixion%20References%20for%20Distribution.xlsx?dl=0>.

29. Any quote that received any other code was excluded from this code.

30. Sheri L. Dew, “Our Only Chance,” *Ensign* 29 (May 1999): 66, emphasis added.

31. Any quote that received any other code was excluded from this code.

32. Anthony W. Ivins, in *Ninety-Fourth Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1923), 141, emphasis added.

Code	Description	Sample Quote
Resurrection focus	A focus on Christ's Resurrection, our resurrection, and/or Christ's post-Resurrection appearances.	"Our first parents . . . brought death into the world, but through the <i>death</i> of Jesus Christ, life and immortality were introduced." <sup>33</sup>
Adjective for Christ	The Crucifixion is used to directly describe Christ. <sup>34</sup>	"It is a time when our tears for the <i>crucified Christ</i> are wiped away." <sup>35</sup>
Crucified for sins	Quote includes specific references to redemption, related to Christ's Crucifixion.	"I know that Jesus Christ . . . was <i>crucified for the sins of the world</i> ." <sup>36</sup>
Ordinances	The Crucifixion is connected to an ordinance.	"The <i>ordinance of the Sacrament</i> is also a sacred covenant. It reminds us of the great sacrifice of the Son of God upon the <i>cross</i> ." <sup>37</sup>
Example	The Savior's conduct during the events of the Crucifixion is used for us to follow.	"In his agony on the <i>cross</i> , showing the <i>supreme example of forgiveness</i> , he cried out . . . 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.'" <sup>38</sup>
Suffering	Quote specifically focuses on the suffering of the Savior on the cross. <sup>39</sup>	"Christ has suffered more than any of us, and He knows the intensity of our afflictions. There is no suffering we have that He did not undergo in Gethsemane and on <i>Calvary</i> ." <sup>40</sup>

33. Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:344 (April 13, 1856), emphasis added.

34. If the adjective or descriptive clause appeared in a list, the quote received the code "narrative," not this code.

35. Carlos E. Asay, "Stay on the True Course," *Ensign* 26 (May 1996): 61, emphasis added.

36. Spencer W. Kimball, "An Eternal Hope in Christ," *Ensign* 8 (November 1978): 73, emphasis added.

37. Delbert L. Stapley, in *One Hundred Twenty-Ninth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1959), 109, emphasis added.

38. Eldred G. Smith, in *One Hundred Thirty-First Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1961), 69, emphasis added.

39. Several quotations described Christ's example in suffering well. If a quote was coded as "example," it was excluded from the "suffering" code.

40. Carlos H. Amado, "Overcoming Adversity," *Ensign* 19 (November 1989): 29, emphasis added.

Code	Description	Sample Quote
Wickedness of those who did or would crucify Christ	Description of the wickedness of those who crucified Christ or those who would crucify him afresh.	"They have the same spirit in their hearts that slew the prophets and put Christ to <i>death</i> ." <sup>41</sup>
Spirit world	A description of the Savior's ministry in the spirit world in connection with his Crucifixion.	"Do you know where the Savior was during the three days His body lay in the tomb following the <i>crucifixion</i> ? . . . Peter, the apostle, said Christ preached to the spirits in prison who were disobedient in the days of Noah." <sup>42</sup>
Not focused on Jesus Christ	Quotes that are not focused on Crucifixion of the Savior.	"Some were <i>crucified</i> as their master was; some were beheaded; and all, except John, suffered martyrdom in some way for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ." <sup>43</sup>

Each reference received at least one code but could receive more than one code depending on its content. For example, the following line from a talk by Elder Joseph Anderson received codes for both "Crucified for sins" and "Resurrection focus": "He died on the *cross to atone for the sin of Adam*, that we might receive forgiveness for our sins. . . . He arose from the tomb, the first fruits of the resurrection, *thereby making possible that all mankind may live again in a resurrected state after mortal death*."<sup>44</sup>

Two independent raters read each reference and assigned codes based on the above descriptions. Their codes were compared; in cases of disagreement, a third rater reviewed their work and made a final determination of the codes assigned.<sup>45</sup>

41. Charles W. Penrose, in *Journal of Discourses*, 24:214–15 (May 18, 1883), emphasis added.

42. David B. Haight, "Families Are Forever," *Ensign* 6 (November 1976): 21, emphasis added.

43. Wilford Woodruff, in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:319–20 (September 5, 1869), emphasis added.

44. Joseph Anderson, "A Testimony of Christ," *Ensign* 4 (November 1974): 103, emphasis added.

45. Emily Hyde and McKenna Trussel did the initial coding; John Hilton III reviewed the coding process and resolved discrepancies in the codes.

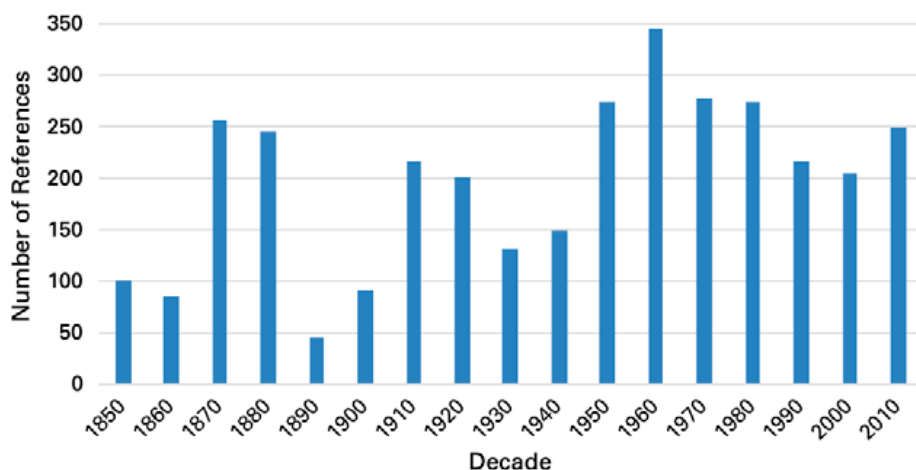


FIGURE 1. Discussion of the Crucifixion by Decade

## REFERENCES TO CHRIST’S CRUCIFIXION OVER TIME

Within our corpus, 332 speakers referenced the death of Christ a total of 3,377 times between 1852 and 2018. The three speakers who referenced the Crucifixion most frequently were Elder Orson Pratt (124), Elder Charles W. Penrose (93), and President Thomas S. Monson (90).<sup>46</sup> Figure 1 shows the frequency with which the Crucifixion of Christ has been mentioned over time.

This chart shows that the overall discussion of the Crucifixion has generally increased over time; the 1960s had the most references and the 1890s the least. However, some decades had more words spoken in general conference than others. For example, there were 1,728,512 words spoken in general conference in the 1960s versus 1,337,854 words spoken in the 1980s.<sup>47</sup> To account for this variance in words spoken per decade, we created a second chart normalizing the occurrences of words such as “crucifixion” (and the other words described in our methodology) to the total number of words spoken in each decade. These data are summarized in figure 2.

46. Within our corpus, Elder Pratt was number 10 in terms of total number of words spoken, Elder Penrose was number 43, and President Monson was number 3.

47. This is probably related to the reduction of conference from three days to two in April 1977 and the discontinuation of the Welfare session in 1982.

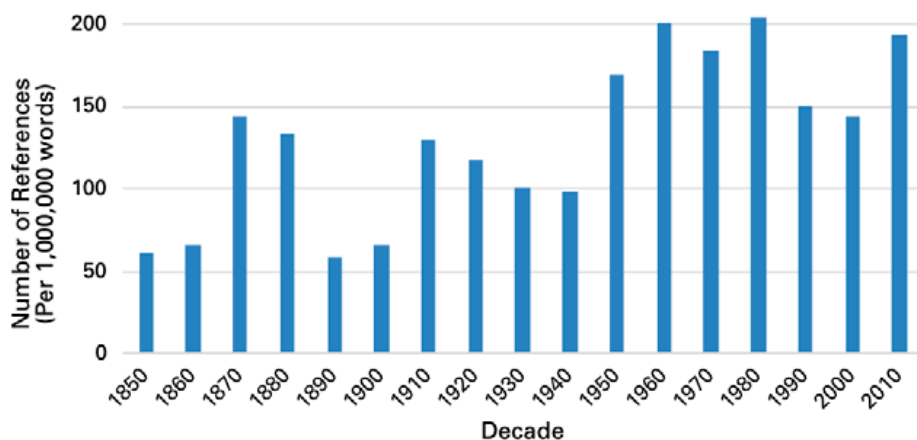


FIGURE 2. Discussion of the Crucifixion by Decade (Normalized)

Figures 1 and 2 have some small differences. When normalized by the number of words spoken, the 1980s mentioned Christ's Crucifixion more than the 1960s. While the 1890s is still the decade with the fewest references, it is significantly less of an outlier. Despite these differences, the charts are remarkably similar. Both show a general increase in the overall discussion of Christ's Crucifixion with similar trends over time.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to overall mentions of Christ's Crucifixion, individual themes as described in the aforementioned codes also have interesting trends over time. We divide our discussion of these themes into less frequently emphasized themes (used fewer than thirty times per decade), frequently emphasized themes (used more than thirty times per decade), and the most prominently emphasized theme.

### LESS FREQUENTLY EMPHASIZED THEMES IN RELATION TO CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION

In this section, we examine how Church leaders have discussed Christ's Crucifixion in connection with the themes of spirit world, wickedness, example, and ordinances. At the end of this section, we discuss teachings regarding the Father withdrawing his Spirit from his Son, which, while not part of our original coding structure, surfaced in later analysis as an interesting insight provided by multiple Church leaders. Figure 3

48. For simplicity, throughout this study we do not provide dual sets of calculations and instead provide results of actual rather than normalized data.

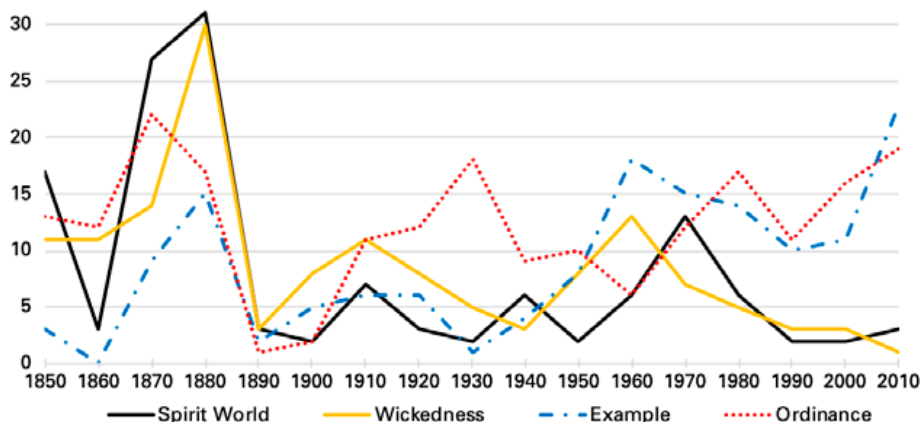


FIGURE 3. Less Frequently Emphasized Themes in Relation to Christ's Crucifixion

illustrates how these themes have been used over time (the theme of withdrawal does not appear because of its low frequency—it appeared only fourteen times across the corpus).<sup>49</sup>

### The Spirit World

Through the 1880s, Christ's Crucifixion was commonly discussed in connection with his ministry in the spirit world. After 1890, this was never a major theme. These discussions often used 1 Peter 3:18–19 to discuss Christ's ministry in the spirit world. Another frequent reference point was discussion centered on Christ's statement, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). While still not a prominent theme,

49. One interesting trend not illustrated in this chart is the overall decreasing use of references to Christ's Crucifixion simply as part of a narrative (both the codes Narrative and Narrative + Resurrection are excluded from figures 3 and 4). The combined Narrative and Narrative + Resurrection codes overall were the most frequent code; however, each individually was less frequent than "Crucified for sins." Using the Crucifixion of Christ in a narrative description went from being the dominant theme in the 1870s to being only the fifth most prominent theme in the 2010s. Two additional codes, "Suffering" and "Not focused on Jesus Christ," were not included in figures 3 or 4. "Suffering" peaked in the 1980s with 24 references, followed by 12 references in the 1990s, but other than those two decades, quotes focused on Christ's suffering on the cross were not prominent. "Not focused on Jesus Christ" was never a prominent code and never experienced any notable shifts.



the main focus of any remarks made since 1981 connecting Christ's Crucifixion and the spirit world has been the idea that salvation can be extended even to those who died without the gospel.

### **The Wickedness of Those Who Did or Would Crucify Christ**

Quotations describing the wickedness of those who crucified Christ or those who would crucify him afresh were most heavily emphasized in the 1870s and 1880s as speakers denounced "the spirit that crucified the Christ" and prescribed it as the same spirit that "brought about . . . the martyrdom of the prophet, revelator and seer, Joseph Smith."<sup>50</sup> Church leaders also identified this wicked spirit as the cause of the intense persecution endured by the Latter-day Saints in the nineteenth century. Of the persecutors of the early Church, President John Taylor said, "Those very men that persecute us would crucify him, if he was here today." However, the frequency of this theme continually declined throughout the twentieth century. In fact, between 2010 and 2018, it was mentioned only once.<sup>51</sup>

### **Christ's Example on the Cross**

There were 148 quotations (4 percent of the total) coded with the example theme, with increasing frequency in recent decades. Most commonly (49 percent of the example references), speakers used the example set by the Savior on the cross as he prayed for forgiveness of those who had just crucified him.<sup>52</sup> President Gordon B. Hinckley declared, "The great crowning love of the Savior was expressed when in His dying agony He cried out, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do' (Luke 23:34)."<sup>53</sup>

Another common principle taught regarding the Savior's example on the cross is his endurance and desire to do the Father's will (33 percent of the example references). This was beautifully described by President

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50. Orson F. Whitney, in *Eighty-Eighth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1917), 50.

51. See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Behold the Man!" *Ensign* 48 (May 2018): 107–10.

52. This passage (Luke 23:34) has a complicated textual history. See Nathan Eubank, "A Disconcerting Prayer: On the Originality of Luke 23:34a," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129, no. 3 (2010): 521–36.

53. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Forgiveness," *Ensign* 35 (November 2005): 83.

Russell M. Nelson when he said, “Jesus Christ is our ultimate exemplar, ‘who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.’ Think of that! In order for Him to endure the most excruciating experience ever endured on earth, our Savior focused on joy!”<sup>54</sup>

A third aspect of the Savior’s example as he died on the cross is his example of ministering and serving others even in the midst of his own trials (14 percent of example references). For example, Sister Ann C. Pingree taught, “As our exemplar, the Savior showed us what charity means through His own actions. Besides ministering to multitudes, Jesus demonstrated the depth of His love and care for His family. Even while suffering terrible agony on the cross, He thought of His mother and her needs.”<sup>55</sup>

### **Christ’s Crucifixion and Ordinances**

Across our corpus, 204 quotations (six percent of the total) related to ordinances. The three ordinances most frequently connected with Christ’s Crucifixion were the sacrament (60 percent), sacrifice in the law of Moses (19 percent), and baptism (18 percent). Though the subject of the sacrament and its connection to Christ’s Crucifixion has been taught since the earliest years of the Church, the frequency with which it has been discussed has varied; peak decades were the 1870s and 2010s (21 and 19 references, respectively).<sup>56</sup> President David O. McKay said regarding Church members in the first century, “When they met for worship they might meet as a body of brethren and sisters on the same level to partake of the sacrament in remembrance of the life and the death, particularly the death of their Lord.”<sup>57</sup> Elder Charles W. Penrose explained that this concept is true of modern members as well: “We take this sacrament . . . to witness that we believe in the atonement wrought out by the Lord Jesus on the Mount of Calvary.”<sup>58</sup> These and other quo-

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54. Russell M. Nelson, “Joy and Spiritual Survival,” *Ensign* 46 (November 2016): 83.

55. Ann C. Pingree, “Charity: One Family, One Home at a Time,” *Ensign* 32 (November 2002): 109.

56. In contrast, some decades had few (1900s, 1960s) or no references (1890s).

57. David O. McKay, in *One Hundred Sixteenth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1946), 112.

58. Charles W. Penrose, in *Journal of Discourses*, 22:83 (May 1, 1880).

tations indicate that Church leaders have taught that the Savior's Crucifixion should be a primary focus of our sacrament thoughts.<sup>59</sup>

Church leaders also taught that Christ's Crucifixion was a fulfillment of the law of Moses. For example, in 1873, President Joseph F. Smith (then a member of the First Presidency) said, "The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper . . . was instituted by the Savior in the place of the law of sacrifice which was given to Adam, and which continued . . . to the days of Christ, but which was fulfilled in his death, he being the great sacrifice for sin, of which the sacrifices enjoined in the law given to Adam were a similitude."<sup>60</sup>

Although statements connecting Christ's Crucifixion with the Mosaic law of sacrifice generally grew more frequent over time, statements connecting baptism with Christ's Crucifixion have become less common in recent decades. In the 1850s, there were eight mentions connecting Christ's death with baptism; however, from 2010 to 2018 there were no such references. Speakers who connected Christ's Crucifixion with baptism often followed Paul's lead and referenced Romans 6:3–6: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death. . . . Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." For example, Elder Parley P. Pratt taught in 1855 that the gospel includes "a voluntary baptism, . . . and what was it? The Apostle, in the New Testament, informs us that it was to be buried with Christ by baptism into his death, and rise to newness of life in the likeness of his resurrection."<sup>61</sup>

### The Father Withdrawing His Spirit from the Son

As recorded in Matthew 27:46, amid the agony of the cross the Savior cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"<sup>62</sup> While the

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59. For an analysis of the teachings of scriptures and Church leaders regarding the sacrament, see Ugo A. Perego, "The Changing Forms of the Latter-day Saint Sacrament," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 22 (2016): 1–16.

60. Joseph F. Smith, in *Journal of Discourses*, 15:324 (February 9, 1873). Elder Boyd K. Packer echoed a similar sentiment when he said, "The Mosaic law of sacrifice was fulfilled with the crucifixion of Christ. Anciently they looked forward to the atonement of Christ through the ceremony of the sacrifice. We look back to that same event through the ordinance of the sacrament." Boyd K. Packer, "The Aaronic Priesthood," *Ensign* 11 (November 1981): 31.

61. Parley P. Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:181 (August 26, 1855).

62. See also Psalm 22:1.

scriptures themselves do not directly state that the Father withdrew himself from Christ at this moment, some speakers have elaborated on this verse and “the apparent withdrawal of the Father’s spirit”<sup>63</sup> from the Son. President Brigham Young was the first recorded Church leader to teach this principle: “The Father withdrew His spirit from His Son, at the time he was to be crucified. . . . At the very moment, at the hour when the crisis came for him to offer up his life, the Father withdrew Himself, withdrew His Spirit, and cast a veil over him.”<sup>64</sup>

Over time, speakers have put forth several reasons why the Father apparently forsook his Only Begotten Son in his greatest hour of need.<sup>65</sup> In 1879, Erastus Snow taught that such “was necessary . . . otherwise [his enemies] never could have fulfilled what had been prophesied concerning him.”<sup>66</sup> In 1989, Elder Neal A. Maxwell explained that “this deprivation [which] had never happened to Christ before” was the means whereby “Jesus became a fully comprehending Christ and was enabled to be a fully succoring Savior,”<sup>67</sup> and “His empathy [was] perfected.”<sup>68</sup>

Some Church leaders have also clarified that God did not actually forsake his Son in his greatest hour of need but rather withdrew only momentarily. In 1906, Elder Charles W. Penrose explained, “God had

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63. Neal A. Maxwell, “Irony: The Crust on the Bread of Adversity,” *Ensign* 19 (May 1989): 64.

64. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:206 (February 17, 1856). Curiously, Brigham Young also states, “That [the withdrawal of the Spirit] is what made him sweat blood. If he had had the power of God upon him, he would not have sweat blood; but all was withdrawn from him, and a veil was cast over him, and he then plead with the Father not to forsake him.” It may be that Brigham Young draws a connection between these events, suggesting that the Father withdrew his Spirit in Gethsemane as well, or perhaps that Christ also bled from every pore on the cross. Alternatively, it may be that Brigham Young incorrectly conflated the passages on that occasion or that the scribe mistakenly did so.

65. While not part of our corpus, Elder James E. Talmage writes in *Jesus the Christ*, “In that bitterest hour the dying Christ was alone, alone in most terrible reality. That the supreme sacrifice of the Son might be consummated in all its fulness, the Father seems to have withdrawn the support of His immediate Presence, leaving to the Savior of men the glory of complete victory over the forces of sin and death.” James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1916), 601.

66. Erastus Snow, in *Journal of Discourses*, 21:26 (October 1879).

67. Neal A. Maxwell, “Bread of Adversity,” 64.

68. Neal A. Maxwell, “‘Apply the Atoning Blood of Christ,’” *Ensign* 27 (November 1997): 23.

[not] forsaken Him, but He left Him to bear the brunt, that He might feel the pain, . . . that He might be touched with a feeling for our infirmities, because He bore the pains of us all.”<sup>69</sup>

Just four years later, Elder Melvin J. Ballard beautifully portrayed what Heavenly Father might have felt during this time when he saw Jesus

stretched upon the cross, and the nails driven into His flesh. He saw the quivering flesh, wounded and bleeding, of His beloved Son. Aye, He saw the life blood of His beloved Son streaming and gushing out, and He stopped it not. . . . I imagine that He had looked upon that Son until even the Father could not stand it, and He turned to some secluded spot and bowed and wept for the suffering of His Son, until, in the last agonizing throes of terrible suffering He [Jesus] cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” O I am so thankful in my heart that whatever doubts may have risen in His heart as He looked upon the suffering of His Son—“Shall I save him, or shall I allow him to suffer and die for the world?” O, I thank God that He decided in your favor and in my favor, and by that He has redeemed us.”<sup>70</sup>

In 2009, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland articulated his feelings about this significant aspect of Christ’s Crucifixion:

It is my personal belief that in all of Christ’s mortal ministry the Father may never have been closer to His Son than in these agonizing final moments of suffering. Nevertheless, that the supreme sacrifice of His Son might be as complete as it was voluntary and solitary, the Father briefly withdrew from Jesus the comfort of His Spirit, the support of His personal presence. It was required, indeed it was central to the significance of the Atonement, that this perfect Son who had never spoken ill nor done wrong nor touched an unclean thing had to know how the rest of humankind—us, all of us—would feel when we did commit such sins. For His Atonement to be infinite and eternal, He had to feel what it was like to die not only physically but spiritually, to sense what it was like to have the divine Spirit withdraw, leaving one feeling totally, abjectly, hopelessly alone.

But Jesus held on. He pressed on.”<sup>71</sup>

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69. Charles W. Penrose, in *Seventy-Sixth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1906), 90.

70. Melvin J. Ballard, in *Eighty-First Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1910), 83.

71. Jeffrey R. Holland, “None Were with Him,” *Ensign* 39 (May 2009): 87–88.

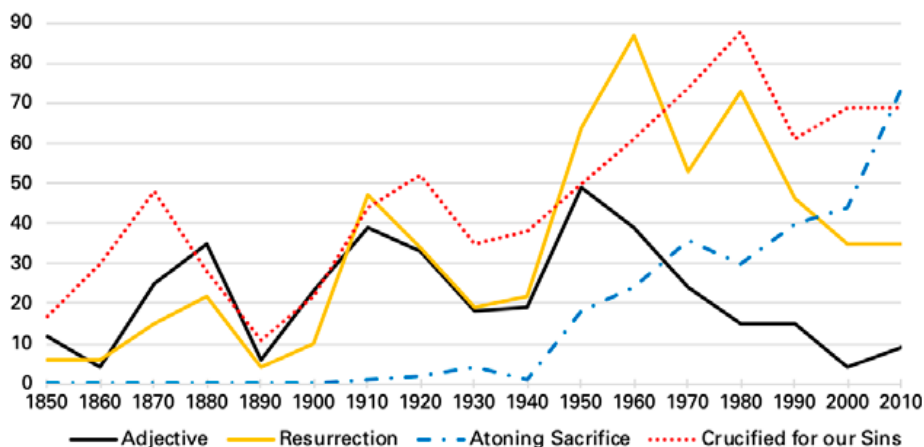


FIGURE 4. Frequently Emphasized Themes in Relation to Christ's Crucifixion

## FREQUENTLY EMPHASIZED THEMES IN RELATION TO CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION

In this section, we explore how Church leaders have discussed Christ's Crucifixion in connection with the themes of Crucifixion as an adjective for Christ, the doctrine of resurrection, and the increasing use of the phrase "atoning sacrifice." Figure 4 illustrates how these themes, along with the most prominent theme, Christ suffering for our sins, have been used over time.

### *Crucified as an Adjective*

Using *crucified* as an adjective for Jesus Christ occurred most commonly in the 1880s, 1910s, and 1950s. After the 1950s, however, it declined steadily throughout the rest of the twentieth century. The most common usage of Christ's death as a descriptor was a statement such as "Jesus Christ . . . who died for the sins of the world."<sup>72</sup> Another common usage was a direct quotation or allusion to 1 Corinthians 2:2, where speakers asserted that they, like Paul, were "determined not to know any thing

72. Seymour B. Young, in *Seventy-Fourth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1904), 38. Forty-two percent of the references that were coded as "Adjective for Christ" contained a descriptive clause like the example here.

among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”<sup>73</sup> In addition, Church leaders frequently described Christ “as a lamb slain from the foundation of the world, chosen to come here and be the Redeemer,”<sup>74</sup> frequently in the context of the salvific nature of Christ’s death.

### The Crucifixion and the Resurrection

Discussion of the Resurrection in combination with the Crucifixion did not appear prominently in the early years of our study; in fact, two-thirds of the quotes that received this code came after 1950. One way speakers emphasized the Resurrection in connection with Christ’s Crucifixion was to speak of the literal and physical nature of his post-Resurrection appearances. For example, speaking of the experience of the disciples with the death and Resurrection of the Savior, Elder Samuel O. Bennion said, “They saw Him betrayed by Judas, and later crucified. They were witnesses of His burial in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, and finally they were eye witnesses of His resurrection. They saw Him after He came forth from the tomb, and heard His voice. Some felt Him, so that they knew He was not merely a spirit. They saw Him eat, and at last beheld Him ascend to His Father in heaven. They were in every sense of the word, witnesses of the Lord.”<sup>75</sup>

While this quote powerfully teaches the true nature of the Resurrection, it does not draw an explicit connection between Christ’s death and our ability to become resurrected. About one-fifth of the total references in our corpus coded as Resurrection illustrate a direct cause-and-effect relationship between Christ’s death on the cross and his subsequent power over death. For example, President Heber J. Grant taught that Christ “came to earth with a divinely appointed mission, to die on the cross, in order that you and I and all eventually may have part in the resurrection.”<sup>76</sup> Elder Hartman Rector Jr. similarly stated,

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73. Twenty-seven percent of the quotes that received this code were connected with this scripture.

74. Bruce R. McConkie, in *One Hundred Twenty-Second Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1951), 148. Ten percent of the references that were coded as “Adjective for Christ” described Christ as a sacrificial Lamb.

75. Samuel O. Bennion, in *One Hundred Tenth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1940), 91.

76. Heber J. Grant, in *One Hundred Fifth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ



“He was lifted up (crucified) by men, wherein he made the resurrection a reality.”<sup>77</sup> Thus Church leaders have connected Christ’s Crucifixion to both the reality of his Resurrection and the prospect of our own.

### Atoning Sacrifice

The phrase “atoning sacrifice” was never used in general conference until 1916. From 1916 to 1949, it was used a total of eight times. Beginning in the 1950s, there was a major increase in the use of this phrase. In the 2000s, it was the second most frequent theme among our codes and, as of 2018, was the most frequent in the 2010s. The phrase “atoning sacrifice” appears in the standard works only in Doctrine and Covenants 138, a revelation given to President Joseph F. Smith in 1918. While President Smith does not specifically define the phrase “atoning sacrifice,” the context of the revelation suggests that by it he meant “that redemption had been wrought through the sacrifice of the Son of God upon the cross” (D&C 138:35; see also 138:13).

Indeed, early usages of the phrase in general conference similarly indicate its connection to Christ’s Crucifixion. For example, in 1925, Elder John M. Knight referred to “the atoning sacrifice that [Christ] made on Calvary,”<sup>78</sup> and in 1974, Elder Delbert L. Stapley equated the “atoning sacrifice” with “the giving of his life.”<sup>79</sup> Although the word “sacrifice” as used in scripture clearly references death (see Lev. 16:11, 15; Alma 34:10–15; and Moses 5:5–7), there have been some instances in which this phrase has also been used by Church leaders to include Christ’s suffering in Gethsemane.<sup>80</sup>

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of Latter-day Saints, 1935), 10. See also Nathan Eldon Tanner, in *One Hundred Thirty-Fourth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1964), 59–64; and Theodore M. Burton, in *One Hundred Thirty-Sixth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1966), 32–35.

77. Hartman Rector Jr., “The Gospel,” *Ensign* 15 (November 1985): 75.

78. John M. Knight, in *Ninety-Fifth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1925), 36.

79. Delbert L. Stapley, “The Savior’s Ministry,” *Ensign* 4 (May 1974): 101.

80. For example, Elder W. Rolfe Kerr said that Christ “was alone in Gethsemane when He offered Himself as the sacred offering in that great atoning sacrifice—a sacrifice which He sealed at Golgotha.” W. Rolfe Kerr, “Behold Your Little Ones,” *Ensign* 26 (November 1996): 80.

Although we believe it is a reasonable assumption to count the phrase “atoning sacrifice” as a reference to Christ being crucified for our sins, given the uncertainty of precisely what each speaker meant by the phrase and in order to avoid overreporting the frequency with which Church leaders discuss the redemption of our sins through the Crucifixion of Christ, we coded the phrase “atoning sacrifice” as “crucified for sins” only if there was an explicit connection to Christ’s Crucifixion.<sup>81</sup> Consequently, the actual number of references to the expiatory nature of Christ’s ultimate sacrifice on the cross is likely greater than we report in the following section.

### **THE MOST PROMINENT THEME: CRUCIFIED FOR THE SINS OF THE WORLD**

The most prominent doctrinal theme discussed by Church leaders in connection with the Crucifixion of Christ is his Atonement for our sins. Excluding narrative references, approximately one out of every three uses of “crucifixion” focused on the redemptive nature of Christ’s death. A total of 796 references in our corpus refer to Christ’s atoning for our sins on the cross. This has been a relatively consistently discussed principle, with increasing emphasis in recent decades. The median point for these references is 1967, and the decade with the most references to Christ being crucified for our sins was the 1980s. In this section, we will describe how Church leaders mirrored the scriptural emphasis of Christ’s Crucifixion, taught about its redemptive nature, explained the individuality of Christ’s Atonement, and described Christ’s sufferings for our pains and sins on the cross.

### **Quoting the Scriptural Emphasis on Christ’s Crucifixion**

Some of the emphasis by Church leaders on Christ being crucified for our sins reflects the overall scriptural emphasis on the redemptive nature of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ; 241 (30 percent) of the total

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81. Any references to the “atoning sacrifice” that focused only on Gethsemane were excluded from our corpus. While beyond the scope of this study, we note that through the 1970s each decade had more references to Christ’s death than the term “aton\*” (including derivatives like “atoning sacrifice”). However, in the 1980s “aton\*” surpassed references to Christ’s death. References to Christ’s death declined in the 1990s and 2000s; however, usages of “aton\*” more than tripled between the 1980s and 2010s.

references coded as “crucified for sins” were quotations of scripture that teach the salvific character of the death of Christ. For example, in 1928, Elder Joseph W. McMurrin taught that “the Lord himself has declared the following in relation to the value of the souls of men: ‘Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God; For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him.’”<sup>82</sup> This quotation from Doctrine and Covenants 18:10–11 underscores the great worth of our souls because of the immense price Christ was willing to pay in order to redeem them. This was the most common scripture in our corpus used to teach about the redemptive nature of Christ’s Crucifixion.<sup>83</sup>

The second most frequently used scripture was also found in the Doctrine and Covenants, in section 76, verses 41–42, which teaches that “he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world.”<sup>84</sup> The most frequently used scripture focusing on the salvific power of Christ’s Crucifixion from the New Testament was 1 Corinthians 15:3, which says, “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.”<sup>85</sup> From the Book of Mormon, the most commonly cited verse was 3 Nephi 27:14, in which Christ himself states he was “lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me.”<sup>86</sup> These references and their reiteration by Church leaders emphasize the reality that Christ was crucified for our sins.

### **Christ Was Crucified for the Sins of the World**

The teachings of Church leaders have been explicit and consistent regarding the absolute necessity of the Savior’s Crucifixion for the expiation of our sins. In 1860, President Brigham Young taught, “Jesus was appointed, from the beginning, to die for our redemption, and he suffered an excruciating death on the cross.”<sup>87</sup> President John Taylor taught that Christ was “crucified . . . to open up the way of life and salvation,

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82. Joseph W. McMurrin, in *Ninety-Eighth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1928), 98.

83. Doctrine and Covenants 18:11 appeared 42 times in the corpus.

84. Doctrine and Covenants 76:41–42 was used 28 times.

85. 1 Corinthians 15:3 appeared 15 times.

86. 3 Nephi 27:14 was used 21 times.

87. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 8:115 (July 8, 1860).

that man might attain to exaltation,”<sup>88</sup> and President Wilford Woodruff said that the “Lord Jesus Christ . . . died as a ransom for the sins of the world.”<sup>89</sup> As stated above, similar statements have been made by every President of the Church.

Other Church leaders have also emphasized the supreme importance of Christ’s Crucifixion. In 1916, President Anthon H. Lund referred to the Crucifixion as the “all-atoning sacrifice.”<sup>90</sup> A few years later, in contrast to the more solemn tone with which the Crucifixion is usually mentioned, Elder Charles W. Penrose joyfully exclaimed, “Oh, what a blessing was his crucifixion to all the world . . . ; by and through him and his atonement we can be redeemed from the dead, from death, from hell, from darkness, from the grave, from everything that is hurtful and injurious and that brings unhappiness.”<sup>91</sup> In 1927, Elder Orson F. Whitney declared, “The Crucifixion on Calvary, the self-immolation of a God, is the Rock upon which the gospel rests—the Everlasting Gospel, the ladder unto life eternal.”<sup>92</sup> In 1969, Elder Alma Sonne taught, “The atonement wrought out by the Lord on Calvary is the greatest contribution ever made to the human race.”<sup>93</sup>

Recent Church leaders have continued this emphasis. In 1986, President Gordon B. Hinckley, then a counselor in the First Presidency, stated that through “the offering of His life on Calvary’s Hill, [Christ] expiated the sins of mankind, relieving us from the burden of sin if we will forsake evil and follow Him.”<sup>94</sup> In 2007, President Thomas S. Monson, then a counselor in the First Presidency, said Jesus “died upon the

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88. John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 16:307 (November 16, 1873).

89. Wilford Woodruff, in *Journal of Discourses*, 19:360 (June 30, 1878).

90. Anthon H. Lund, in *Eighty-Seventh Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1916), 13. This is the first recorded use of the phrase “atoning sacrifice” in our corpus.

91. Charles W. Penrose, in *Ninetieth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1920), 33.

92. Orson F. Whitney, in *Ninety-Eighth Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1927), 149.

93. Alma Sonne, in *One Hundred Thirty-Ninth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1969), 33.

94. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,” *Ensign* 16 (November 1986): 50.

cross to redeem all mankind.”<sup>95</sup> In 1999, Elder Russell M. Nelson, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, admonished us to “remember the Savior upon the cross suffering from the sins of the world.”<sup>96</sup> Such quotations indicate a consistent focus by Church leaders on the importance of Christ’s death so that we could be saved.

### The Individual Nature of Christ’s Crucifixion

In addition to the clear explanations regarding Christ atoning for our sins on the cross, many Church leaders have offered additional perspectives on the Savior’s Crucifixion. Elder Merrill J. Bateman of the Seventy taught that Christ suffered for us *individually* while on the cross: “For many years I thought of the Savior’s experience in the garden and on the cross as places where a large mass of sin was heaped upon Him. . . . However, my view has changed. *Instead of an impersonal mass of sin, there was a long line of people*, as Jesus felt ‘our infirmities’ (Heb. 4:15), ‘[bore] our griefs, . . . carried our sorrows . . . [and] was bruised for our iniquities’ (Isa. 53:4–5). The Atonement was an *intimate, personal experience in which Jesus came to know how to help each of us*.”<sup>97</sup>

This idea was taught in our corpus as early as 1929 by President Heber J. Grant: “Not only did Jesus come as a universal gift, He came as an *individual offering* with a personal message to each one of us. For each of us He died on calvary and His blood will conditionally save us. Not as nations, communities or groups, but *as individuals*.”<sup>98</sup> While not as explicit as Elder Bateman or President Grant, Sister Carole M. Stephens taught, “The Savior . . . understood their [the early Saints in Nauvoo] *personal adversity* because He suffered it for them in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross.”<sup>99</sup> Elder Gerrit W. Gong, then of the Seventy, also commented on the individual nature of the Crucifixion,

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95. Thomas S. Monson, “Mrs. Patton—the Story Continues,” *Ensign* 37 (November 2007): 23.

96. Russell M. Nelson, “Our Sacred Duty to Honor Women,” *Ensign* 29 (May 1999): 39.

97. Merrill J. Bateman, “A Pattern for All,” *Ensign* 35 (November 2005): 75–76, emphasis added.

98. Heber J. Grant, “A Marvelous Growth,” *The Juvenile Instructor* 64 (December 1929): 697, emphasis added. While this quote was not part of our corpus, we include it based on its relevance to this particular principle.

99. Carole M. Stephens, “Wide Awake to Our Duties,” *Ensign* 42 (November 2012): 116, emphasis added.

stating that Christ was “lifted up upon the cross that He might draw *each of us, by name, to Him.*”<sup>100</sup>

Another perspective on Christ’s Crucifixion for individuals was offered by President Lorenzo Snow, then of the First Presidency, as he shared his insight on what the Savior experienced on the cross:

When Jesus went through that terrible torture on the cross, He saw what would be accomplished by it; He saw that His brethren and sisters—the sons and daughters of God—would be gathered in, with but few exceptions—those who committed the unpardonable sin. That sacrifice of the divine Being was effectual to destroy the powers of Satan. I believe that to every man and woman who comes into this life and passes through it, life will be a success in the end. . . . God will have His own way in His own time, and He will accomplish His purposes in the salvation of His sons and daughters.<sup>101</sup>

Nearly a century later, Elder John H. Groberg echoed aspects of this sentiment: “I feel that as he hung upon the cross and looked out over the dark scene, he saw more than mocking soldiers and cruel taunters. . . . His huge, magnanimous, loving soul encompassed all eternity and took in all people and all times and all sins and all forgiveness and all everything. Yes, he saw down to you and to me and provided us an all-encompassing opportunity to escape the terrible consequences of death and sin.”<sup>102</sup>

### **Suffering Our Pains on the Cross**

In addition to the importance of the redemptive nature of Christ’s Crucifixion and its personal nature, some Church leaders have described how Christ suffered our pains while on the cross. As far as we can ascertain, Elder Orson Pratt was the first Church leader to connect Christ’s suffering our pains with his death: “Jesus has done his part: he has died for us—has got the plan all laid; his blood has been shed, and he has suffered the pains of all the children of men, and in their behalf, if they will only accept the conditions.”<sup>103</sup> However, this connection between

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100. Gerrit W. Gong, “Always Remember Him,” *Ensign* 46 (May 2016): 110, emphasis added.

101. Lorenzo Snow, *Millennial Star* 56 (January 22, 1894): 52.

102. John H. Groberg, “The Beauty and Importance of the Sacrament,” *Ensign* 19 (May 1989): 39–40.

103. Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 7:258 (September 11, 1859). As Scott Woodward pointed out in a personal communication, it is important to

the Crucifixion and Christ's suffering for our pains did not occur again in our corpus until 1952, when Elder Milton R. Hunter similarly taught that "by his sufferings at Gethsemane and Golgotha . . . he took upon himself our sins and our sufferings if we will repent and keep all of his commandments."<sup>104</sup> Elder Neal A. Maxwell connected the Crucifixion most explicitly to both our physical and spiritual pains in 1987 when he said, "We can confidently cast our cares upon the Lord because, through the agonizing events of Gethsemane and Calvary, atoning Jesus is already familiar with our sins, sicknesses, and sorrows."<sup>105</sup>

### **CHURCH LEADERS' EMPHASIS ON CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION RELATIVE TO GETHSEMANE**

As discussed in the introduction, some have stated that the Church emphasizes Gethsemane more than the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. We compared our results to those of a previous study<sup>106</sup> focused on Gethsemane to analyze the extent to which this claim is true of talks given in *The Journal of Discourses* and general conference. As illustrated in table 2, in every decade the Crucifixion of Christ is referred to more frequently (often dramatically so) than Gethsemane. Within our corpus, for each reference to Gethsemane, there are approximately nine to Christ's Crucifixion.

It is true that in recent decades the gap between overall mentions of the Crucifixion and Gethsemane has narrowed (largely due to a significant increase in mentions of Gethsemane); however, there remain significantly more mentions of his death. When looking exclusively at references that specifically mention the redemptive nature of Christ's suffering in Gethsemane or on the cross, we see the same trend. These data are summarized in table 3.

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note that one of the definitions for "pain" in the 1828 dictionary is "penalty." Thus, in this quotation, as well as in 2 Nephi 9:21 and Doctrine and Covenants 18:11, "suffering the pains" of humankind could refer to suffering the penalty for their sins as opposed to physical or emotional discomfort.

104. Milton R. Hunter, in *One Hundred Twenty-Third Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1952), 39.

105. Neal A. Maxwell, "Yet Thou Art There," *Ensign* 17 (November 1987): 32.

106. Hilton and Barringer, "Use of *Gethsemane*."



**Table 2. References to Gethsemane and Christ's Crucifixion in *The Journal of Discourses* and General Conference, 1850–2018.**

<b>Decade</b>	<b>References to the Cross</b>	<b>References to Gethsemane</b>	<b>Ratio of Quotes about the Cross Relative to Gethsemane<sup>a</sup></b>
1850s	102	1	102:1
1860s	87	0	N/A
1870s	258	0	N/A
1880s	247	2	124:1
1890s	46	2	23:1
1900s	92	3	31:1
1910s	217	8	27:1
1920s	201	10	20:1
1930s	132	9	15:1
1940s	150	19	8:1
1950s	275	26	11:1
1960s	347	37	9:1
1970s	278	36	8:1
1980s	274	66	4:1
1990s	218	50	4:1
2000s	205	49	4:1
2010s	250	77	3:1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3379</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>9:1</b>
1850–1979	2432	153	16:1
1980–2018	947	242	4:1
2000–2018	455	126	4:1

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a. Ratios rounded to the nearest whole number.

**Table 3. References to Christ's Atoning for Sins in Gethsemane and through His Crucifixion in *The Journal of Discourses* and General Conference, 1850–2018.**

Decade	References to Christ Atoning for Sin on the Cross	References to Christ Atoning for Sin in Gethsemane	Ratio of Quotes about the Cross Relative to Gethsemane <sup>a</sup>
1850s	17	1	17:1
1860s	30	0	N/A
1870s	48	0	N/A
1880s	28	0	N/A
1890s	11	0	N/A
1900s	22	0	N/A
1910s	44	2	22:1
1920s	52	0	N/A
1930s	35	2	18:1
1940s	38	4	10:1
1950s	50	7	7:1
1960s	61	3	20:1
1970s	74	9	8:1
1980s	88	31	3:1
1990s	61	21	3:1
2000s	69	32	2:1
2010s	69	35	2:1
<b>Total</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>5:1</b>
1850–1979	510	28	18:1
1980–2018	287	119	2:1
2000–2018	138	67	2:1

a. Ratios rounded to the nearest whole number.

Another way of looking at this phenomenon is analyzing the frequency with which the Savior's Atonement has been tied to each event. Between 1852 and 1979, the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ was used to describe expiation for sins 510 times; only 13 of those were linked to Gethsemane (2.5 percent). In contrast, between 1980 and 2018, Christ's Crucifixion was used to describe redemption from sin 287 times; 89 of these included a reference to Gethsemane (31.0 percent). This indicates a continuing emphasis on Christ's Crucifixion, with more connections to Gethsemane in recent years but still a much stronger emphasis on the saving nature of the death of the Savior.

This emphasis on the atoning power of Christ's Crucifixion is even more pronounced when looking only at the words of Church Presidents. For every one statement by a Church President about Christ suffering for our sins in Gethsemane, there are twelve statements from Church Presidents about him dying for our sins. Table 4 compares the total number of times each President of the Church mentioned the redeeming power of Christ's death and his suffering in Gethsemane.

These data illustrate that the prophets of this dispensation have clearly emphasized the atoning efficacy of the cross relative to Gethsemane. While a few Church leaders occasionally have explicitly or implicitly emphasized the role of Gethsemane over Christ's Crucifixion in the Atonement of Jesus Christ,<sup>107</sup> these are very few in number compared with the scores of instances in which Church leaders have referenced the salvific power of the cross without mentioning Gethsemane. Consider a few representative examples: in 1922, Elder Rudger Clawson taught, "The greatest event . . . in the life of the Savior, was the Crucifixion upon Mount Calvary, for therein did He give His life in atonement

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107. See Hilton, "Use of *Gethsemane*," 70. One of the individuals who on occasion elevated Gethsemane over the cross was Elder Bruce R. McConkie. However, in an *Ensign* article (not part of our corpus), he emphasized the cross, not Gethsemane: "A testimony in our day consists of three things: It consists of the knowledge that Jesus is the Lord, that he is the Son of the living God who was crucified for the sins of the world; it consists of the fact that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God . . . ; and it consists of knowing that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true and living Church upon the face of the whole earth." Bruce R. McConkie, "Gaining a Testimony of Jesus Christ," *Ensign* 10 (December 1980): 15.

**Table 4. Presidents of the Church References to the Crucifixion and Gethsemane**

<b>President</b>	<b>References to Christ Atoning for Sin on the Cross</b>	<b>References to Christ Atoning for Sin in Gethsemane</b>	<b>Ratio of Quotes about the Cross Relative to Gethsemane<sup>a</sup></b>
Joseph Smith <sup>b</sup>	8	0	N/A
Brigham Young	29	0	N/A
John Taylor	11	1	11:1
Lorenzo Snow	6	0	N/A
Joseph F. Smith	8	0	N/A
Heber J. Grant	17	0	N/A
George Albert Smith	2	0	N/A
David O. McKay	11	0	N/A
Joseph Fielding Smith	25	0	N/A
Harold B. Lee	3	0	N/A
Spencer W. Kimball	12	0	N/A
Ezra Taft Benson	5	2	2:1
Howard W. Hunter	11	3	4:1
Gordon B. Hinckley	19	3	6:1
Thomas S. Monson	27	4	7:1
Russell M. Nelson	10	4	3:1
<b>Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12:1</b>

a. Ratios rounded to the nearest whole number.

b. These data were not part of our corpus but were drawn from Hilton, "Teachings of Joseph Smith on Gethsemane."

for the sins of the world.”<sup>108</sup> In 1984, President Gordon B. Hinckley, then a counselor in the First Presidency similarly emphasized Christ’s Crucifixion without mentioning Gethsemane: “He ‘went about doing good,’ and was hated for it. (Acts 10:38.) His enemies came against him. He was seized, tried on spurious charges, convicted to satisfy the cries of the mob, and condemned to die on Calvary’s cross. The nails pierced his hands and feet, and he hung in agony and pain, giving himself a ransom for the sins of all men.”<sup>109</sup> In 2007, President Thomas S. Monson taught that Christ “died on the cross to atone for our sins”<sup>110</sup> with no mention of Gethsemane in his talk. This implicit emphasis on Christ’s Crucifixion is also evident in the document “The Living Christ” that mentions the Savior’s Crucifixion but not Gethsemane.<sup>111</sup> The foregoing is not to minimize the importance of Gethsemane but to demonstrate that an analysis of our corpus refutes claims that Church leaders underemphasize Christ’s Crucifixion relative to Gethsemane.

## CONCLUSION

Our analysis of quotations by Church leaders regarding the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ affirms that this sacred event is an essential part of Church doctrine. Beyond the frequency with which it is referenced, the theological richness of Christ’s Crucifixion is attested to by the many witnesses present in sermons from both *The Journal of Discourses* and general conference. It has been used to eliminate our excuses to withhold forgiveness or act selfishly in our hours of despair by encouraging us to follow the Savior’s example when he was crucified. It is repeatedly used to explain the symbolism behind the ordinances of baptism and the sacrament. Prophets and Apostles have also testified of our own deliverance from the grave through his death and Resurrection. Most commonly, Church leaders have repeatedly testified of the salvific significance of Jesus’s death upon the cross whereby he redeemed us from

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108. Rudger Clawson, in *Ninety-Second Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1922), 47.

109. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Cornerstones of Our Faith,” *Ensign* 14 (November 1984): 51.

110. Thomas S. Monson, “I Know That My Redeemer Lives,” *Ensign* 37 (May 2007): 25.

111. “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” *Ensign* 30 (April 2000): 2–3.

hell. These different doctrinal emphases all reassert the essential role of the Crucifixion in the Savior's Atonement.

Furthermore, the results of this study reveal that the collective teachings of Church leaders do not emphasize Gethsemane as the greater part of Christ's suffering for our redemption. In fact, they mention the saving importance of Christ's Crucifixion five times more often than they do Gethsemane. This does not diminish the role of Christ's suffering in Gethsemane; rather, it enriches our understanding of the significance of "his blood shed on the cross in the midst of suffering of infinite proportions."<sup>112</sup>

Gethsemane is an important part of Christ's Atonement; within the standard works, this knowledge is uniquely provided in Restoration scripture. Indeed, Robert Millet has suggested it is precisely because it is a distinctive doctrine that some Church members have sometimes emphasized it over the cross.<sup>113</sup> It is important to note that sometimes emphasizing what is distinctive rather than what is held in common can be detrimental. Speaking about the Trinity, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland stated, "Part of the reason we are so misunderstood by others in the Christian tradition is because in stressing the individual personages of the Godhead, we have not followed that up often enough by both conceding and insisting upon Their unity in virtually every other imaginable way. For this we have reaped needless criticism, and we have made our LDS position harder to be understood than it needs to be."<sup>114</sup>

We wonder if we could similarly paraphrase Elder Holland, saying: "Part of the reason we are so misunderstood by others in the Christian tradition is because in stressing the [importance of Gethsemane], we have not followed that up often enough by both conceding and insisting upon [the fact that Jesus Christ was crucified for our sins]. For this we have reaped needless criticism, and we have made our LDS position harder to be understood than it needs to be."

Given the above sentiment, those seeking to build bridges with other Christian communities may want to emphasize the salvific nature of Christ's Crucifixion as a core Church teaching. Moreover, many Church

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112. Mark E. Petersen, "O America, America," *Ensign* 9 (November 1979): 13.

113. Robert L. Millet, *What Happened to the Cross? Distinctive LDS Teachings* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2007), 107.

114. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Knowing the Godhead," *Ensign* 46 (January 2016): 37–38.

members will increase their understanding of the Savior's Atonement through a more in-depth and focused study of the Crucifixion. Such an understanding will lead to a deeper reverence and appreciation for Christ, who "was crucified and gave his life as a sacrifice for the sins of all men" and who "through that great act of atonement . . . became the Redeemer of all mankind."<sup>115</sup>

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115. Gordon B. Hinckley, "What This Work Is All About," *Ensign* 12 (November 1982): 7.



## Good Grief

*Sarah Hafen d'Evegnée*

*The ethical expression for what Abraham did is that he meant to murder Isaac;  
the religious expression is that he meant to sacrifice Isaac—but precisely in this  
contradiction is the anxiety that can make a person sleepless,  
and yet without this anxiety Abraham is not who he is.*

—Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*

*If I defer the grief I will diminish the gift.*

—Eavan Boland, “The Pomegranate”

*I bless the rains down in Africa.*

—David Paich, “Africa,” Toto IV

Having happily served a mission myself, I was convinced that the only tears I would shed when I said goodbye to my oldest son would be tears of maternal joy. However, as his departure date loomed larger on the calendar, the metal harness of time strapped me in, and I felt nauseous as I anticipated the whoosh of the release of air just before being whisked straight upward and then plummeted to certain death—the thrill and the terror of knowing that I had not only signed up for this ride, but I had waited in line and I was the one who had paid for it. No one had threatened, cajoled, or bribed me. I was simply handing my baby over to the program, like some hyperspiritual psychopath.

On the day of my Holden’s mission farewell, the messages started to appear. They were angelic cries to me as I cowered in an arc of trembling uncertainty. They were the Gabriel to my Mary, to my Elizabeth. The voice to my Hannah. And they all said the same thing: *I know how you feel. And I’m sorry.* Boomerang-like, the apology seemed to be circular,

spreading its wings over both their own memories and my current state. With halos tear-tarnished and askew, these women showered me with heavenly texts to cushion the blow that they had experienced before their ministry. For them, their grief was also their invitation to become my angels. *Dear Mother, you are hereby invited to participate in a grief so deep that it will have to be shared in order to be handled.*

You can mention the phrase “baby weight” to a room full of mothers of every age, and they will all sigh in unison. Once it attaches itself to you, it never leaves. It might relocate. It might downsize. But it will never completely disappear.

The maternal grief associated with the loss that tumbles down so naturally with time is also baby weight. Any woman who has been a mother feels this emotional baby weight just as surely as she tugs at pants that once fit smoothly or self-consciously sucks in the stomach that housed the person she now loves so dearly that she never wants to let him go. Baby weight: the emotional pull of the umbilical cord. The gravity that ties you to that baby.

The airport in Idaho Falls, where we willingly deposited my oldest son on the plane that would transport him on the first leg of his journey to his new African home, looked like a real airport’s little brother, penitent in its very stature. Holden gave us one last adorable flick of his Indiana Jones hat, one of several hats I had purchased to make myself feel as if I could protect him from the Ivoirian sun, the wide brim simply covering my need to believe he would actually wear it. Our faces were completely wet, and we were in the middle of heaving a collective sigh of misery when we looked to our right and saw an elder making his triumphal return home through the arrivals gate, less than twenty feet from our little band of grieving souls. It almost seemed mean. We jealously watched this elder being smothered in a possessive hug from his giddy mother, and my husband burst out, his voice breaking: “Well . . . damn it!”

The eight of us (we had to learn to stop counting to nine) trudged over the small strip of pavement that was the parking lot—not nearly long enough to match our sorrow—and slowly piled into our Suburban. My husband turned around from the driver’s seat (still crying like the rest of us) and said, “Okay! Everyone say two things they hate about Holden!” At least we could laugh through our tears.

The post-airport dread I expected to envelop me like a deathly shroud came, but it was somehow accompanied by fluttering feathers of joy. I was surprised in equal parts by the combination of sorrow and the peace. It was the holiest grief I had ever felt.

There are only two other times when I've felt so beautifully conflicted. Once when I sat on the floor of my dorm room in the Missionary Training Center on the first day of my mission, my skirt crumpled beneath me as I cried in panic. It was a day I had looked forward to since I wrote the words "I am going to serve a mission" in my round twelve-year-old scrawl on the handout about setting goals from Beehive teacher Sister Anderson, whose perfectly feathery hair and beautiful olive skin gave each of us a hopeful vision of our own futures, our grins framed by the snarls of our permed bangs and acne-pocked chins. She had cut out a construction paper mirror made glamorous by tinfoil glued to the center that created a distorted yet gleaming reflection. "*Your goals will create your future reflection. Who do you want to be?*"

The second time I felt this juxtaposition of opposing emotions was when my husband and I guiltily whisked our newborn Holden home from the hospital, feeling like kidnappers, the afterpains still curling my toes—with toenails still shining from the fresh coat of lacquer designed to impress my obstetrician. We pulled into the parking lot of our apartment, looked anxiously at each other, and giggled as we said, "They're just going to let us keep him? Just like that? They know we have no idea what we're doing, right?"

After my firstborn became my firstborn in the jungle, a bizarre resurgence of the song "Africa" by Toto made me feel like the universe was stalking me. "I bless the rains" lurked around every corner, on every radio station, in every grocery store, in every elevator. To assure myself that I hadn't allowed my grief to take confirmation bias to a whole new level, I did ridiculously extensive research about the song that taught me that it actually was written for an African missionary. In an interview, David Paich, the writer of the song, said: "I went to an all-boys Catholic school and a lot of the teachers had done missionary work in Africa. They told me how they would bless the villagers, their Bibles, their books, their crops and, when it rained, they'd bless the rain. That's where the hook line—'I bless the rains down in Africa'—came from. They said loneliness and celibacy were the hardest things about life out there. . . . So I wrote about a person flying in to meet a lonely missionary."<sup>1</sup>

On my morning runs, the empty potato fields are my dirt-clad Broadway stage where I set free the caged emotions I've been shoving down as I deposit kids at school and wipe counters and scrape excess

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1. David Paich, in "Toto: How We Made Africa," interview by Dave Simpson, *Guardian*, January 30, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2018/jan/30/toto-how-we-made-africa>.

food off dishes and into the disposal. I belt out Toto's "Africa" as if it was written just for me, just for him. This is the maudlin manifestation of grief that they will play at the Oscars when I am announced as one of the nominees for best actress. Awash in sweat and sorrow, the sounds that escape my mouth in heaving breaths are vowel saturated and beastly. I imagine the truckers who pass me in clouds of potato dust thinking to themselves, "If it hurts that much, why does she run?" I actually shriek out loud: "It's gonna take a lot to drag me away from you. There's nothing that a hundred men or more could ever do. I bless the rains down in Africa!" The '80s synthesizers fill my ears, and suddenly I'm laughing at the cathartic absurdity of my performance. Somehow I know that allowing myself to taste the full intensity of the grief helps me not only recognize, but appreciate and learn from the wide beauty of my sacrificial sadness.

Holden left the Ghana MTC and landed in the middle of the jungle, and we didn't hear from him for more than six weeks. Not a breath. Not a word. Friends would casually ask us, "How's Holden?" and we'd shock them with our response: "We don't know." By the time we saw a photo of him taken by a member in his branch, he had lost more than twenty pounds, surviving on fish heads, rice, and tomato paste.

I channeled my anxiety by cleaning our house, which seemed so empty while being full of Holden's six younger siblings. I tackled the room of our youngest child, Charlie. I folded the too-small jeans and t-shirts, smoothing out wrinkles that would never touch my baby's skin again. A congregation of piles of fabric encircled me as I simultaneously mourned the past and celebrated the growth of this baby that had gained only two pounds in his first eight months, the doctor's words "failure to thrive" symbolically stamped on not only Charlie's too-small forehead but mine. I reached for my phone and clicked on the Book of Mormon, thinking that, if nothing else, listening to my scriptures would help me sort the rest of the clothes without crying. I was wrong.

I found myself listening to Jacob 5, not because I had chosen it, but because it just happens to fall chronologically after Jacob 4, which is one of my favorite scriptural discourses. I just didn't want to get up and choose a different chapter. I prepared myself to be bored by the sheer number of verses about the gathering of Israel teetering toward me, and I hunkered down and focused on the job at hand. As I gathered and sorted clothes, I suddenly noticed that Zenos's allegory was not just about gathering but sorting. It wasn't just a universal allegory—it was a personal one. How had I never seen it before? I sat in the half-jumbled, half-organized

disarray of my baby's room, and the words fell on me like freshly blessed rain. I sat up straight and stared at my phone. The words were new, and the allegory was personal. It was suddenly not just a story about the gathering of Israel but a personal story about the gathering of *both* my grief and my joy.

I had been eying my grief suspiciously for weeks, wondering if feeling it with such intensity somehow made me less faithful. I had been interviewing the pain repeatedly, asking it how I could possibly acknowledge it constructively without feeling guilty about not having a positive attitude. And then the words floated over the piles of well-worn fabric: "*Behold, because thou didst graft in the branches of the wild olive tree they have nourished the roots*, that they are alive and they have not perished; wherefore thou beholdest that they are yet good" (Jacob 5:34 emphasis added). The wild branches—the grief and the loneliness and the worry—could not only be grafted in, but they could actually nourish my roots.

I cradled one of Charlie's old t-shirts in my arms as I listened to the rest of the allegory. I finally understood why and how grief could be good and how the wild branches of doubt and discomfort didn't have to be denied. But I also heard the implicit warning about drowning rather than being nurtured by the rain: "*And as they begin to grow ye shall clear away the branches which bring forth bitter fruit*, according to the strength of the good and the size thereof; *and ye shall not clear away the bad thereof all at once*, lest the roots thereof should be too strong for the graft, and the graft thereof shall perish, and I lose the trees of my vineyard" (Jacob 5:65, emphasis added). Of course, Lehi's firstborn in the wilderness would cling to this allegory about the grafting in of wild things. His father, Lehi, was the very prophet who coined the phrase "compound in one," and Jacob's life personified the internalization and then processing of that phrase. Perhaps I could too. The grief and the joy could find their genesis in the same womb of experience as long as I carefully and gradually cleared away any residual bitterness.

For Christmas, my missionary son, my firstborn in the jungle, my boy whose name in my ears still creates tears made of equal parts of joy and grief, wrote us this letter describing the gift he wanted to give Christ that year:

For me, when I thought about a mission I also thought of the typical definition of holiness where something is removed from the common or profane in order to be sacred. I think of the children of Israel and the priests who sanctified themselves from the world to literally approach

the holy of holies or the presence of God. I thought that while a mission would be hard, it would almost be ethereal, where your head is above the clouds and you are removed from everyday distractions and just have the Spirit always with you.

However, this was not the case.

I thought a mission was something above the harsh reality of the world, but it is the exact opposite; it is the battlefield of reality. . . . Holiness for me has not become a removal of reality, but the act of embracing reality truly and fully in order to find hope and meaning. . . . Holiness for me is when one embraces reality but is not left bitter from that embrace. I love you so much it hurts, but that is the only true love, I think.

Bises,

Elder d'Evegnée

Maybe good grief is the kind that can make *us* holy, the kind that demands to be placed on an altar of sacrifice, the kind that hurts enough to give you nowhere else to turn but toward God. It needs to be felt and processed, and it needs to nourish our roots. As Lehi said to his sweetly anxious son—just as I say to my missionary son in the middle of the jungle who is just as sweet and just as anxious—there is no progress without the constructive tension of seemingly opposing forces.

Now, for me, Holden's mission is a compound element, like water—like African rain that I both bless and curse in the same long breath. I can't see the hydrogen or the oxygen as separate elements anymore. My grief and my joy are bound so expertly on the altar of my experience that sometimes I can't tell them apart. They are one, the elements of each fused into a compound substance. The holy kind of grief is the kind that isn't a dichotomy. It is a paradox the way that the Atonement is a paradox. It is loving agony. It is beautiful pain. It is good grief. It looks beyond the binary and finds a way for both the good and the bad to coexist. It is Eve saying, "And now my eyes are opened."

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This essay by Sarah Hafen d'Evegnée tied for third place in the 2020 Richard H. Cracroft Personal Essay Contest, sponsored by BYU Studies.

# The History of the Book of Mormon Text

## Parts 5 and 6 of Volume 3 of the Critical Text

*Royal Skousen*

*This article is based on a presentation given on January 15, 2020, at the Hinckley Alumni and Visitors Center at Brigham Young University. It was sponsored by BYU Studies, the BYU College of Humanities, the Interpreter Foundation, and Book of Mormon Central.*

**I**n this paper, I will provide an overview of the two latest published books in the Book of Mormon critical text project:

Part 5: *The King James Quotations in the Book of Mormon*

Part 6: *Spelling in the Manuscripts and Editions*

As the numbers indicate, these two books form a part of a much larger publishing project. The fundamental work in the project is *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text*, published in 2009 by Yale University Press and now in its fourth printing. Supporting this single volume of the text are the volumes of the critical text project itself, with the completed volumes and parts of volumes marked with a check mark ✓ (partially completed volumes or parts of volumes are marked with an outlined check mark ⚡):

### **Published Volumes in the Critical Text Project:**

✓ volume 1 (2001)

*The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*

The Joseph Smith Papers will publish a revised version of this volume, with myself and Robin Scott Jensen as editors, estimated



to be finished in late 2021. It will have photographs with corresponding transcripts for all the extant leaves and fragments of the Book of Mormon (about 28 percent of the text).

✓ volume 2 (2001)

*The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*

The Joseph Smith Papers published a revised version of this volume in 2015, edited by myself and Robin Scott Jensen. It includes a color photograph for each leaf of the printer's manuscript. Except for a total of three lines at the bottom of the first leaf, the manuscript is fully extant.

✓ volume 4 (2004–2009)

*Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon*, first edition, ATV1

This volume is made up of six physical books, published one each year from 2004 through 2009. This volume, as a complete set, is now out of print (although individual numbers are still available). Even so, a searchable PDF version is available online at *Book of Mormon Central* and also at *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship*. A second, revised edition of the physical set, ATV2, was published by BYU Studies in 2017 and is available from them.

✓ volume 3 (in progress)

*The History of the Text of the Book of Mormon*

Ultimately, there will be 8 parts (that is, books) in this volume. The first six are now complete; the first five have been published; the sixth is in the press.

✓ parts 1–2, *Grammatical Variation*, GV (2016)

These two books, written in collaboration with Stanford Carmack, provide a complete history of the editing of the Book of Mormon text. The main argument of this work is that the so-called nonstandard English in the original text of the Book of Mormon does not represent Joseph Smith's upstate New York dialect, but instead it is acceptable language usage dating from the 1500s and 1600s.

- ✓ parts 3–4, *The Nature of the Original Language*, NOL (2018)

This work, again written with the collaboration of Stanford Carmack, argues that the Book of Mormon language (its word meanings, phrases, expressions, and sentence structure) represents the archaic Early Modern English spoken from the 1530s up to the 1730s, and definitely not Joseph Smith's dialectal English dating from the 1820s. Moreover, the themes of the Book of Mormon date from the same older time period and represent issues that were prominent among Reformed and Radical Protestants rather than the issues that were prevalent during Joseph Smith's time.

- ✓ part 5, *The King James Quotations in the Book of Mormon*, KJQ (2019)

This part analyzes the numerous biblical quotations in the Book of Mormon, of which all but one come from the archaic 1611 King James translation of the Bible.

- ✓ part 6, *Spelling in the Manuscripts and Editions*, SPL (2020)

In this part we investigate just what the misspellings and slips can tell us about the scribal and typesetting processes that the Book of Mormon text has undergone for the nearly 200 years since it was first revealed to Joseph Smith.

- ✓ part 7, *Transmission of the Text: From the Manuscripts Through the Editions*, TXT (estimated to appear in 2021)

Here we follow the substantive changes that have occurred in the transmission of the Book of Mormon text, from Joseph Smith's dictation of the text, to the scribes taking down that dictation (the original manuscript), then copying that text to produce a second copy (the printer's manuscript). We then turn to the 1830 typesetter's setting the type from the printer's manuscript (and from the original manuscript for one-sixth of the text). And then we follow the transmission through the printed editions, from the 1830 edition up to the 2013 LDS edition. For each edition, we establish the copytext and then analyze the kinds of errors, corrections, and conjectural emendations that each edition has undergone. Also of some importance, we look at the changes in format that the

Book of Mormon has undergone, from the manuscripts (and their sentence-long chapters) to the double-column, versified paragraphs now used in the current LDS edition.

- ✓ part 8, *Textual Criticism of the Book of Mormon*, CRT (estimated to appear in 2022)

In this last part, we will consider the principles of textual criticism and how they have been followed (or not followed) in the transmission of the Book of Mormon text. There will be a history of previous attempts at doing critical text work on the Book of Mormon as well as, of course, a detailed history of this critical text project (which began in 1988). Finally, we will turn to various issues that have continually beset those attempting to do critical text work on the Book of Mormon, including the question of conjectural emendations and the degree to which they have been allowed in the text.

- ✓ volume 5 (in progress)

#### *A Complete Electronic Collation of the Book of Mormon*

When all of volume 3 has been published, all 8 parts, I will be releasing the computerized collation, with its WordCruncher searchable electronic comparison of the two manuscripts against 20 significant editions of the Book of Mormon (from 1830 through 1981), showing every difference in the text (not only word differences but also every difference in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, and versification). Ever since the late 1990s, I have been using a preliminary version of this collation in writing all the parts of volumes 3 and 4. It is the indispensable tool for doing research on the Book of Mormon text.

### **Part 5, *The King James Quotations in the Book of Mormon* (KJQ)**

This paper will concentrate on describing the important findings discussed in parts 5 and 6 of volume 3. In this first half of the paper, I consider part 5, *The King James Quotations in the Book of Mormon*. The most important question, right from the start, is: What is a King James quotation? One way to look at this question is to ask how many identical words in a row do we need between the two texts before we can say we have a quotation? In trying to identify the quotations, I quickly found that I could not rely on my intuitions to determine what was an actual literal quotation, in distinction to what was a paraphrastic quotation. In other words, intuition

was insufficient. Yet whatever I would say in this whole book rested on determining which citations were actual biblical quotations.

Here Stanford Carmack came to the rescue and suggested that we first identify all the precisely identical sequences of words between the two texts, the King James text (on the one hand) and the original text of the Book of Mormon (on the other hand). Carmack, using various WordCruncher techniques, was able to find all the identical  $n$ -grams (strings of  $n$  identical words) that occurred in the entire King James Bible and the entire Book of Mormon text. This led him to provide me with all the examples of identical word-sequences, from a high of  $n = 261$  down to a low of  $n = 3$ . As I examined all of these identical  $n$ -grams, I noticed that when  $n$  equaled at least 16, the sequence of identical words clearly fell into the class of King James quotations, in agreement with my intuitions; but when  $n$  fell below 16, I started to find long nonclausal phrases that seemed more like paraphrases than quotations. So I used  $n = 16$  as a cut-off point between the quotations and the paraphrases, which gave me a total of 36 passages in the Book of Mormon that could definitely be called literal quotations from the King James Bible. These 36 passages are all listed and discussed in section 1 of KJQ.

Here is the beginning of the list of identical word strings with  $n$  equal to at least 16, listed in order of the passages with the longest identical  $n$ -grams; I also list for each passage the total number of identical  $n$ -grams of length 16 or greater contained within that passage:

<i>B of M passage</i>	<i>KJB passage</i>	<i>longest n-gram</i>	<i>total number of n-grams with <math>n &gt; 15</math></i>
3 Nephi 24–25	Malachi 3–4	261	6
2 Nephi 12–24	Isaiah 2–14	236	110
3 Nephi 12–14	Matthew 5–7	233	25
3 Nephi 22	Isaiah 54	131	6
Mosiah 14	Isaiah 53	129	6
Mosiah 12	Isaiah 52	112	1
1 Nephi 20–21	Isaiah 48–49	108	31
2 Nephi 6–8	Isaiah 49–52	97	20
Mosiah 13	Exodus 20	87	4
2 Nephi 30	Isaiah 11	77	2
2 Nephi 27	Isaiah 29	65	8
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮

At the end of the list are three quotations where the longest  $n$ -gram (marked below in bold) takes the minimum value of 16:

2 Nephi 9:50 ~ Isaiah 55:1

**every one that thirsteth / come ye to the waters**  
**and he that hath no money / come NULL** ~ *ye buy and eat*

Alma 42:2 ~ Genesis 3:24

and he placed at the east *end* ~ **NULL of the garden of Eden**  
**cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way**  
**to keep NULL** ~ *the way of the tree of life*

3 Nephi 20:17 ~ Micah 5:9

*thy* ~ *thine* **hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries**  
**and all thine enemies shall be cut off**

For each of these literal quotations, some particular clause remains incomplete. Even so, the incompleteness is due to a minor word difference that does not affect the overall meaning.

On the other side of the dividing line, here are the two longest border-line paraphrastic quotations:

$n = 15$

3 Nephi 11:25

having authority given me  
 of Jesus Christ  
*I baptize you* **in the name**  
**of the Father and of the Son**  
**and of the Holy Ghost**

Matthew 28:19

go ye therefore  
 and teach all nations  
*baptizing them* **in the name**  
**of the Father and of the Son**  
**and of the Holy Ghost**

Here we have a long conjunctive prepositional phrase. Both deal with baptism, but the Book of Mormon passage gives the actual words of the prayer while the King James passage refers to the apostles of Jesus Christ and their calling to baptize.

$n = 14$

Helaman 10:7

behold I give unto you power  
 that whatsoever ye shall *seal* on earth

Matthew 18:19

verily I say unto you  
 whatsoever ye shall *bind* on earth

shall be *sealed* in heaven  
and whatsoever ye shall loose on  
earth shall be loosed in heaven

shall be *bound* in heaven  
and whatsoever ye shall loose on  
earth shall be loosed in heaven

The second half of this passage is literally quoted for  $n = 14$  words, but the first half is paraphrastically quoted, using the verb *seal* in the Book of Mormon version but the verb *bind* in the biblical quotation.

In section 2 of KJQ, I provide an overview of the variety of paraphrastic biblical quotations in the Book of Mormon. In all, I categorize 83 paraphrastic quotations in that second section, including every case of  $n$ -gram identity from  $n = 15$  down to  $n = 7$  as well as a few additional cases with  $n$  less than 7. Here, for instance, is a paraphrastic quotation with two instances of three-word identity (namely, “the resurrection of”) surrounded by seven instances of one-word identity (here underlined), all of which occur in the same specific order (*they*, *good*, *life*, and, *they*, *evil*, and *damnation*):

Mosiah 16:11

if they be good  
to **the resurrection**  
**of** endless life and happiness  
and if they be evil  
to **the resurrection**  
**of** endless damnation

John 5:29

they that have done good  
unto **the resurrection**  
**of** life  
and they that have done evil  
unto **the resurrection**  
**of** damnation

The next question we ask is: Are all the Book of Mormon biblical quotations from the King James Bible? For the vast majority of phrases in the biblical quotations, the closest biblical reading is from the King James Bible and not earlier English translations of the Bible, as can be seen in the following conjoined verb phrase taken from the Beatitudes:

Matthew 5:11 ~ 3 Nephi 12:11

Tyndale 1526	and	shall <b>falsely</b> say	all manner of evil <b>sayings</b>
Tyndale 1534	and	shall <b>falsely</b> say	all manner of evil <b>sayings</b>
Coverdale 1535	and	<b>falsely</b> say	all manner of evil <b>sayings</b>
Matthew 1537	and	shall <b>falsely</b> say	all manner of evil <b>sayings</b>
Great 1539	and	shall <b>falsely</b> say	all manner of evil <b>sayings</b>
⇒ Geneva 1560	and	say	all manner of evil
Bishops' 1568	and <b>lying</b> shall	say	all manner of evil <b>saying</b>

Rheims 1582	and		<b>speak</b>	<b>all that naught is</b>
→ King James 1611	and	shall	say	all manner of evil
→ <i>Book of Mormon</i>	and	shall	say	all manner of evil

Matthew 5:11 ~ 3 Nephi 12:11 (continued)

Tyndale 1526	against you	for my sake
Tyndale 1534	against you	for my sake
Coverdale 1535	against you	for my sake
Matthew 1537	against you	for my sake
Great 1539	against you	for my sake
⇒ Geneva 1560	against you	for my sake <b>falsely</b>
Bishops' 1568	against you	for my sake
Rheims 1582	against you	<b>untruly</b> for my sake
→ King James 1611	against you	falsely for my sake
→ <i>Book of Mormon</i>	against you	falsely for my sake

In this case, the King James reading closely follows the Geneva Bible; the only word difference is the modal verb *shall*, along with the placement of the word *falsely*, a question of style.

Yet the King James Bible is derived from earlier English-language Bibles, and this means that for many biblical phrases in the Book of Mormon we cannot uniquely assign the King James Bible as the source for the quotation: For instance, in the following lineup of the translations for a specific conjunctive adverbial phrase in Isaiah 2:15 (quoted in 2 Nephi 12:15), the Book of Mormon phraseology is not only identical to the 1611 King James Bible but also to the 1568 Bishops' Bible:

Isaiah 2:15 ~ 2 Nephi 12:15

Coverdale 1535	upon <b>all</b>	<b>costly</b> towers and upon <b>all</b>	<b>strong</b> walls
Matthew 1537	upon <b>all</b>	<b>costly</b> towers and upon <b>all</b>	<b>strong</b> walls
Great 1539	upon <b>all</b>	<b>costly</b> towers and upon <b>all</b>	<b>strong</b> walls
⇒ Geneva 1560	and upon every high	tower and upon every	<b>strong</b> wall
→ Bishops' 1568	and upon every high	tower and upon every	fenced wall
Douay 1609–10	and upon every high	tower and	every fenced wall
→ King James 1611	and upon every high	tower and upon every	fenced wall
→ <i>Book of Mormon</i>	and upon every high	tower and upon every	fenced wall



Here the three editions from the 1530s are identical to each other, but dramatically different from the later English editions. In this case, as in many verses in Isaiah, it is the 1560 Geneva Bible that made the basic revision to the biblical reading, yet in this particular case the Geneva text retained the adjective *strong*, but this was soon changed to *fenced* in the 1568 Bishops' Bible. The result was that in this case the King James reading followed the Bishops' Bible, but that is not surprising since the Bishops' Bible was the copytext for the King James Bible.

But returning to our original question: Are there any biblical phrases in the Book of Mormon that derive from biblical sources other than the King James Bible? And the answer is that there is one—but only one—and in this case the Book of Mormon text has two conjoined phrases, one from the Greek Septuagint and the other from the Masoretic Hebrew:

Isaiah 2:16 ~ 2 Nephi 12:16

Coverdale 1535	upon all	ships of the sea
Matthew 1537	upon all	ships of the sea
Great 1539	upon all	ships of the sea
Geneva 1560		and upon all the ships of Tarshish
Bishops' 1568		and upon all the ships of Tarshish
Douay 1609–10		and upon all the ships of Tarshish
King James 1611		and upon all the ships of Tarshish

*Book of Mormon* and upon all the ships of the sea and upon all the ships of Tarshish

Basically, the Book of Mormon text combines the Coverdale 1535 reading with the Geneva 1560 reading (or, equivalently, the Greek reading with the Hebrew one), although the Book of Mormon reading adds a couple of function words, *and* along with *the*.

The great mystery here, of course, is how Joseph Smith, if he was the author (the English-language translator) of the Book of Mormon, could have known about the Greek reading (or its occurrence in one of the earlier English Bible translations from the 1530s) in order to insert it into his Book of Mormon quotation, otherwise totally based upon the King James Bible.

The next question we undertake to determine is the King James copy-text for the biblical quotations in the Book of Mormon. Since we have determined that the King James Bible is the base text for Book of Mormon quotations, we can ask a specific question: Which edition of the King James Bible do these quotations depend upon? Is it the original 1611 first printing, or is it a printing close to 1828, when the Book of Mormon began to be translated, or is it some printing in between? It is easy to establish that the copytext was definitely not the first printing or the second, both in 1611, nor in fact any edition prior to 1660. This is because there are 9 archaic or incorrect word forms and 7 alternative syntactic readings that were in editions prior to 1660, yet there is no sign at all in the Book of Mormon text for these readings:

archaic or incorrect word forms removed by 1660

*middest* (4 times), *haddest* (1 time), *charets* (2 times), *stablish* (1 time), *renowmed* (1 time), *thorow* (2 times), *kinreds* (1 time), *Racha* (1 time), and *Gebeah* (1 time, a typo for *Gibeah*, but only in the first 1611 printing)

alternative syntactic forms removed by 1660

“sing, O **heaven**” > “sing, O **heavens**” (Isaiah 49:13)  
 “rock **Oreb**” > “rock **of** Oreb” (Isaiah 10:26)  
 “right doeth” > “right **hand** doeth” (Matthew 6:3)  
 “thy **hooves**” > “thy **hoofs**” (Micah 4:13)  
 “**doeth** witness” > “**doth** witness” (Isaiah 3:9)  
 “**God** hath” > “**the Lord** hath” (Isaiah 49:13)  
 “and shall go” > “and **ye** shall go” (Malachi 4:2)

The only archaic form that could have been in the copytext for the Book of Mormon biblical quotations is *astonied*, instead of the expected *astonished*. This form is found in Isaiah 52:14 in the current LDS Bible and in some of the King James editions printed in the early 1800s (2 out of 7 in my sampling); it also occurred in all 12 editions I sampled from 1611 up to the early 1700s. The Book of Mormon reading for Isaiah 52:14, in 3 Nephi 20:44, however, reads *astonished*. But this means little since the King James copytext could have read *astonied*, yet either Joseph Smith or Oliver Cowdery, his scribe in this case, could have automatically replaced *astonied* with the expected *astonished*. Or the copytext could have actually read *astonished*, which means that in this case neither Joseph nor Oliver made

any change at all. So we have to set aside this example since it does not provide clear evidence for the copytext.

Evidence from variation in the King James italics is less helpful in determining the copytext for the Book of Mormon quotations. There is some relationship, although rather weak, between italics in the King James Bible and missing words in the original text of the Book of Mormon. So if a later King James edition introduced italics into a particular passage and the Book of Mormon quotation is lacking the word or phrase there, we can potentially use the date of that later edition to determine the copytext for the Book of Mormon quotations. It turns out that there is only one example of later italics that could be used in this way. The clause-final verb *do* in Matthew 6:7 is set in italics beginning in the 1770s; and the corresponding Book of Mormon passage happens to lack the *do*:

Matthew 6:7    use not vain repetitions as the heathen *do*  
 3 Nephi 13:7    use not vain repetitions as the heathen

The italics in two other cases of clause-final verb were added considerably earlier to the King James text:

Isaiah 49:18    and bind them *on thee*            as a bride *doeth / doth*  
 1 Nephi 21:18    and bind them                    even as a bride

The clause-final *doeth / doth* was set in italics beginning in the 1630s.

Matthew 6:5    thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*  
 3 Nephi 13:5    thou shalt not be as the hypocrites

The clause-final *are* was set in italics beginning in the 1660s.

These three examples, taken together, imply that the copytext for the Book of Mormon biblical quotations dates from after the 1760s. But we must remember that this is the only example involving italics that provides any support for dating the copytext, especially a later dating. The 16 examples involving word differences imply that the copytext could date up to a century earlier.

Sometimes researchers have suggested that Oliver Cowdery, the scribe for most of the original manuscript, copied the biblical quotations, at least the longer ones, from an actual King James Bible (but one altered in advance by Joseph Smith). There are extant portions of

biblical quotations in the original manuscript in the hand of Oliver Cowdery (all of Isaiah 48–49 in 1 Nephi 20–21, plus fragments of Isaiah 50–51 in 2 Nephi 7–8 and of Isaiah 13–14 in 2 Nephi 23–24). For all three of these extant portions of the original manuscript, there is no sign of any influence from the King James spellings for words. Instead, we get only Oliver Cowdery’s typical misspellings in O, such as the following:

*hoast, declair, least [lest], moulton, verry, destroid, lead [led],  
 shaddow, hungar, the [thee], to [too], thirst, weopon, streach,  
 hiden, name sake, abhoreth, cloath, exceptable [acceptable],  
 spaned, removeing*

Thus the evidence is very strong that Joseph Smith dictated all three of these Isaiah passages to Oliver Cowdery. Moreover, it should be noted, there are some paraphrastic quotations that switch from one King James phrase to another; it seems very unlikely that Joseph would have had Oliver flipping through a Bible to copy these kinds of quotations (or that Joseph himself would have flipped through a Bible in order to read off the same):

Mosiah 18:21 phrases	biblical sources
one faith and one baptism	one Lord / one faith / one baptism <i>Ephesians 4:5</i>
their hearts knit together	their hearts . . . being knit together <i>Colossians 2:2</i>
together in unity	together in unity <i>Psalms 133:1</i>
in love one towards another	in love one toward another <i>1 Thessalonians 3:12</i>

When we consider the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible (the JST), we find that this is precisely what Joseph Smith was willing to do, at least sometimes: When Joseph came to parts of Isaiah that were in the Book of Mormon, he had the scribe create the “inspired” version of the biblical text by directly copying at least some of those portions from a copy of the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon. Joseph undoubtedly assumed that his earlier dictation of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon included inspired changes, but he did not take into account the possibility that errors had entered the Isaiah text during the early transmission of the Book of Mormon text. In fact, for Isaiah 50 he did not even mark up his Bible with the Book of Mormon changes, but had the scribe simply copy the equivalent of 2 Nephi 7 from the 1830 edition, along with the following errors (in the following list of eight errors, I first give the original reading in the Book of Mormon, which is the same as the King James reading, then the 1830 reading):

- verse 2    wherefore when I **came** > **come**  
              I make **the** > **their** rivers a wilderness  
              and they **dieth** > **die** because of thirst
- verse 4    he **wakeneth** > **waketh** morning by morning  
              he **wakeneth** > **waketh** mine ear
- verse 5    the Lord God hath **opened** > **appointed** mine ear
- verse 6    I gave my back to the **smitters** > **smiter**
- verse 11   behold all ye that **kindle a** > **kindleth** fire

Another important question in dealing with the King James quotations in the Book of Mormon is this: Are there any significant differences in the Book of Mormon version? Here are three:

Isaiah 51:19–20

2 Nephi 8:19–20

these two **things** are come unto thee . . .    these two **sons** are come unto thee . . .  
 thy sons have fainted                                thy sons have fainted **save these two**

The Book of Mormon text is apparently alluding to Revelation 11:1–12 and its prophecy about two prophets who will use incredible powers to hold back the armies of the nations that will surround the temple mount in Jerusalem prior to the second coming of Christ. Interestingly, this interpretation dates back at least to a footnote that Orson Pratt added to this passage in his editing for the 1879 edition of the Book of Mormon (and which was continued by James E. Talmage in his editing for the 1920 LDS edition and then by later editors into more recent LDS editions, dating from 1981 and 2013).

A second example might be initially misinterpreted as a visual error since the Book of Mormon word *proud* could be a misreading of the Isaiah word *found*. But the following conjoined clause with its replacement of the italicized pronoun *them* with the noun phrase *the wicked* makes it clear that the word *proud* is fully intended:

Isaiah 13:15

2 Nephi 23:15

every one that is **found**  
 shall be thrust through  
 and every one that is joined  
**unto them** shall fall

every one that is **proud**  
 shall be thrust through  
**yea** and every one that is joined  
**to the wicked** shall fall

A third example is found in the Sermon on the Mount where the Book of Mormon version omits the phrase “without a cause”:

Matthew 5:22	3 Nephi 12:22
whosoever is angry with his brother <b>without a cause</b>	whosoever is angry with his brother
shall be in danger of <b>the</b> judgment	shall be in danger of <b>his</b> judgment

The phrase “without a cause” (the single word *eikē* in the Greek) is missing from the earliest Greek New Testament manuscripts. Of course, the added phrase “without a cause” makes Jesus’s statement vacuous since we always have a cause for our anger! The whole point of this passage in the Sermon on the Mount is anger and how it can lead to violence, even murder, irrespective of whether it is “righteous anger”.

One very important section in KJQ deals with the possible influence of the King James italics in accounting for the textual differences between the Book of Mormon and the King James versions of the biblical text. When we line up the 36 biblical quotations in the last section of KJQ, we can calculate the following statistics for the differences:

	total number of differences	712	
Δ	differences not related to italics	549	
<i>i</i>	differences related to italics	163	22.9 percent
	total number of italicized cases	425	
x	italicized cases not changed	262	
<i>i</i>	italicized cases changed	163	38.4 percent

In other words, less than a fourth of the textual differences can be assigned to the italics; and of all the cases of italics in the King James text, over three-fifths are left unchanged. Obviously, any theory that relies solely upon italics for determining the textual differences will be woefully inadequate.

Nonetheless, there are some cases where italics seem to be playing a role in determining the Book of Mormon biblical quotations. One particular type involves the italicized linking verb *be* in the King James translation. First of all, there are six cases (with a total of 11 instances) where the italicized *be* verb is omitted in the original text of the Book of Mormon but supplied by later editing (either by Joseph Smith for the 1837 edition or by James E. Talmage for the 1920 LDS edition):

- (1) Isaiah 6:5      woe **is** me  
 2 Nephi 16:5      woe      me  
 emended to “woe **is unto** me”, not “woe **is** me”, in the 1837 edition

- (2) Isaiah 6:5      I **am** a man of unclean lips  
 2 Nephi 16:5      I      a man of unclean lips

- (3) Isaiah 6:8      here **am** I  
 2 Nephi 16:8      here      I

- (4) Isaiah 9:5      every battle of the warrior **is** with confused noise  
 2 Nephi 19:5      every battle of the warrior      with confused noise

- (5) Isaiah 14:27      and his hand **is** stretched out  
 2 Nephi 24:17      and his hand      stretched out  
 plus five instances of “but his hand **is** stretched out still”

- (6) Isaiah 54:9      for this **is as** the waters of Noah unto me  
 3 Nephi 22:9      for this      the waters of Noah unto me

All but the last instance of these edited types are found in 2 Nephi 12–24 (that is, Isaiah 2–14).

On the other hand, there are four cases of deleted linking *be* verb that have never been emended in the Book of Mormon text (one instance for each case):

- (7) Exodus 20:10      but the seventh day **is** the sabbath of the LORD  
 Mosiah 13:18      but the seventh day      the sabbath of the Lord

- (8) Isaiah 3:14      the spoil of the poor **is** in your houses  
 2 Nephi 13:14      **and** the spoil of the poor      in your houses

- (9) Isaiah 7:8      and the head of Damascus **is** Rezin  
 2 Nephi 17:8      and the head of Damascus      Rezin

- (10) Isaiah 54:5      for thy Maker **is thine** husband  
 3 Nephi 22:5      for thy maker      **thy** husband

This makes a total of 10 cases of the deleted linking verb *be*, with 15 instances in all.



But the situation is more complex than simply identifying these instances of the deleted *be* verb. We must look at the other side of the coin: namely, we must consider the fact that the biblical quotations in the Book of Mormon happen to retain 54 instances of italicized *is*, as in the following sampling:

- Isaiah 49:4 (~ 1 Nephi 21:4) surely my judgment *is* with the LORD
- Isaiah 51:13 (~ 2 Nephi 8:13) and where *is* the fury of the oppressor
- Isaiah 6:3 (~ 2 Nephi 16:3) holy holy holy *is* the LORD of Hosts
- Isaiah 13:22 (~ 2 Nephi 23:22) and her time *is* near to come
- Exodus 20:4 (~ Mosiah 13:12) or that *is* in the earth beneath
- Matthew 7:13 (~ 3 Nephi 14:13) for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way
- Isaiah 54:17 (~ 3 Nephi 22:17) and their righteousness *is* of me
- Malachi 3:2 (~ 3 Nephi 24:2) for he *is* like a refiner's fire

In fact, the *is* could be omitted in some of these cases without any particular impairment in understanding, as in the 3 Nephi 14:13 example from Matthew 7:13: “for wide the gate and broad the way”.

One particular place of biblical quotation involves considerable alteration from the King James text, and this is in the Sermon on the Mount. The Book of Mormon version adapts the Sermon so that it is applicable to the Nephites, yet all of the following changes are made without any consideration of italics:

- no violent bodily harm: cutting out the eye, cutting off the hand
- no reference to publicans, scribes, Pharisees, or Gentiles
- no altars or gifts
- no Jewish judicial system, although prisons still exist
- the Nephite monetary system is used (*senine* instead of *farthing*)
- for the Nephites, the Mosaic law is a written law (not just an oral law)
- the Lord emphasizes that we should give alms
- worrying about tomorrow applies only to the twelve disciples

Two striking aspects about the textual changes in the Sermon on the Mount are (1) most of the changes occur in the first chapter (3 Nephi 12 ~ Matthew 5), and (2) relatively few changes involve italics (only 6.6 percent). Here are the relevant statistics:

		$\Delta$	<i>i</i>	<i>x</i>
3 Nephi 12	Matthew 5	92	2	10
3 Nephi 13	Matthew 6	16	5	4
3 Nephi 14–15:1a	Matthew 7	6	1	5
TOTALS		114	8	19

As before,  $\Delta$  stands for differences not related to italics, *i* for differences related to italics, and *x* to italicized cases not changed.

Finally, we should mention one important difference between the large plates of Nephi and the small plates in the use of italics. In the large plates, from the books of Mosiah through Moroni, only 9.0 percent of the changes in the biblical quotations involve italics, while in the small plates, in the books of 1 and 2 Nephi, a much larger percentage of the changes, 30.6 percent, involve italics. In other words, changes involving italics are over three times more frequent in the small plates than elsewhere in the text.

We now turn to the anachronistic elements in the King James quotations in the Book of Mormon. These translation elements have serious consequences for any translation theory of the Book of Mormon. Here we identify three types of anachronistic elements: (1) cultural translations, (2) translation errors, and (3) later textual readings.

In the King James Bible, cultural translations refer to intentional re-interpretations of the original biblical language so that the resulting English-language reading will be understood by speakers of Early Modern English living in England in the 1500s and 1600s. There are 12 of these listed in KJQ, including these two:

*candle* and *candlestick* in 3 Nephi 12:15 (~ Matthew 5:15)

do men light a **candle** and put it under a bushel  
nay but on a **candlestick**

Here in the Greek original, the word for *candle* means ‘lamp’ and the word for *candlestick* means ‘lampstand’ (and these lamps are not modern lamps either).

*dry-shod*, meaning ‘with dry shoes’, in 2 Nephi 21:15 (~ Isaiah 11:15)

he shall shake his hand over the river  
and shall smite it in the seven streams  
and make men go over **dry-shod**

Here the Hebrew original as well as the Greek and the Latin translations simply use the phrase “in sandals”, without any reference to getting one’s sandals wet. If the river water had been running, the Israelites would have crossed by taking off their sandals. But in England, when crossing rivers, people would have kept their shoes on, no matter whether water was running or not. It would have made no sense to Englishmen to have

translated this passage as “and make men go over with their shoes on”.

Even more serious is the problem of translation errors in the King James Bible. There are 19 examples listed in KJQ, of which 18 occur in the very difficult Isaiah passages. Here are two of them:

*rent*, referring to a torn part or to a tear, in 2 Nephi 13:24 (~Isaiah 3:24)

and instead of a girdle, a **rent**

and instead of well-set hair, baldness

In the Hebrew, there are two different verbs, but with different vocalizations, that take the same consonants *n-q-p*. One of the verbs means ‘to tear’, the other ‘to go around, surround’. The noun here in Isaiah 3:24 could mean either ‘a tear’ or ‘a rope or cord’. Modern translators interpret this line as taking the second meaning: “and instead of a belt, a rope” (thus the English Standard Version, 2011).

*satyr*, a Greek word referring to a woodland god, in 2 Nephi 23:21 (~ Isaiah 13:21)

and owls shall dwell there

and **satyrs** shall dance there

The Hebrew word here in the singular is *šāṣīr* (with a glottal stop as the second consonant rather than a *t*); in the Hebrew this word refers to hairy demons or monsters that inhabit the deserts. This word was incorrectly translated by the 1560 Geneva Bible translators into the phonetically similar Greek word *satyr*, which refers to a woodland god that is half-human and half-beast.

Finally, the King James Bible, following the Textus Receptus (the received Greek text originating with Erasmus’s 1516 Greek New Testament), adopts several readings that are lacking in the earliest Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, such as these two examples:

3 Nephi 13:4 (~ Matthew 6:4, Textus Receptus)

and thy Father which seeth in secret

himself shall reward thee **openly**

The phrase representing *openly* is lacking in the earliest Greek manuscripts.

## 3 Nephi 13:12–14 (~ Matthew 6:13–14, Textus Receptus)

and lead us not into temptation  
 but deliver us from evil  
**for thine is the kingdom**  
**and the power and the glory forever**  
**amen**

The traditional doxology to the Lord's prayer is lacking in the earliest Greek manuscripts.

The last half of part 5, from pages 227 through 431, is assigned to various kinds of source material. We first have 45 pages dedicated to the King James vocabulary in the Book of Mormon. This not only includes all the words in the Book of Mormon that occur solely in biblical quotations (both literal and paraphrastic), but also more general words that take on specialized King James meanings in the quotations. Both the first and the last words in the vocabulary list are like this. The first verb listed, *abide*, typically means 'to dwell' or 'to live by (the law)' in the Book of Mormon text proper, but there is one biblical quotation where it takes on the archaic King James meaning 'to endure': "but who may **abide** the day of his coming?" (3 Nephi 24:2 ~ Malachi 3:2). And the last verb listed, *write*, takes the archaic meaning 'to write down' or 'to record' in two biblical quotations: "every one that is **written** among the living in Jerusalem" (2 Nephi 14:3 ~ Isaiah 4:3); and "the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may **write** them" (2 Nephi 20:19 ~ Isaiah 10:19). Of course, most of the words listed in the King James vocabulary are ones that appear only in the biblical quotations, some of which are now totally obsolete for virtually all speakers of the language (examples like *besom*, *carbuncle*, *cockatrice*, *ephah*, *homer*, *plowshare*, *rearward*, *roe*, *silverling*, *stomacher*, *tabret*, and *teil*). This section is followed by one that lists all the King James names that occur in the biblical quotations (both literal and phrasal), beginning with king Ahaz (mentioned 5 times in the Book of Mormon text) and ending with Zechariah (the son of Jeberechiah). Some names of special linguistic interest in the Book of Mormon text include *Gilgal*, *Lucifer*, *Manasseh*, *Midian*, *Palestina*, *Ramah*, and *Tarshish*.

The final section of part 5, informally referred to as the collation, lines up the 36 biblical quotations in the Book of Mormon against their corresponding King James passages. This section takes up 143 pages. Just prior to this long section, there is a short description of the three types of textual distinctions that are identified in the comparison:

- Δ the textual difference does not involve italics
- i King James italicized words are changed in the Book of Mormon
- x King James italicized words are unchanged in the Book of Mormon

This brief introduction to the collation provides examples from the 36 quotations showing how the symbols are to be applied. Then follows the collation for the 36 quotations, as in this example:

	<i>The Book of Mormon</i>	<i>The King James Bible</i>
	1 Nephi 20:3–4	Isaiah 48:3–4
	3	3
Δx	I <b>did shew</b> them suddenly	I <b>did</b> <i>them</i> suddenly
Δ		<b>and they came to pass</b>
	4	4
Δ	<b>and I did it</b>	
	because I knew that	because I knew that
x	thou art obstinate	thou <i>art</i> obstinate
i	and thy neck <b>was</b> an iron sinew	and thy neck <i>is</i> an iron sinew
	and thy brow brass	and thy brow brass

In concluding the first half of this paper, which deals with part 5 of volume 3, it is worth reviewing the findings of the previous parts 1–4 and noting those ways in which the Book of Mormon text dates more to Early Modern English than to Joseph Smith’s own times:

*Grammatical Variation*, parts 1 and 2

The nonstandard English is found in Early Modern English, in academic and scholarly texts, from the 1500s and 1600s.

*The Nature of the Original Language*, parts 3 and 4

The word meanings, phrases, and expressions date from the 1530s through the 1730s.

The syntax dates mostly from the second half of the 1500s and the early 1600s.

To these findings, we now add the scriptural language, which also dates from the 1500s and 1600s:

*The King James Quotations in the Book of Mormon*, part 5

With only one exception, all the biblical quotations and paraphrases come from the King James Bible. The single exception is

a phrase in 2 Nephi 12:16 (~ Isaiah 2:16), “and upon all the ships of the sea”, which is found in Miles Coverdale’s 1535 Bible (“upon all ships of the sea”).

Based on the substantive differences in the various printings of the King James Bible, the copytext for the biblical quotations and paraphrases dates after the 1660s, but not more precisely.

The influence of the King James italics appears to play a role for 15 instances of the linking *be* verb, but its overall influence is restricted since 54 instances of the linking *is* are not deleted.

The more paraphrases we include as quotations, the worse the influence of italics on variation in the biblical quotations. This loss of influence is a good reason for accepting as literal quotations only those with strings of 16 or more identical words.

The numerous examples of mistranslation and cultural translation in the King James literal quotations almost always date from the 1500s and 1600s, and it is not likely that they derive from the original language on the plates. This finding argues that the Book of Mormon translation is not always a literal translation, but is sometimes a creative and cultural translation, one that can be dependent upon Early Modern English sources rather than ancient ones.

With respect to the last point, there are also word uses within the Book of Mormon text proper that argue for a later, nonliteral translation of what would have been on the plates. Here are two examples:

#### *a judgment bar*

In the Book of Mormon, the noun *bar* consistently refers to the bar of judgment that we will stand in front of, before the Lord, on the day of judgment. The judgment bar is not a biblical or ancient term, but instead dates from medieval times. The Oxford English Dictionary lists this striking example from a sermon by John Wycliffe, dating from around 1375: “Ech man mote nedis stonde **at þe barre** bifore Crist” (that is, “each man must needs stand **at the bar** before Christ”). The Bible refers to standing before the judgment seat of a judge or the throne of a king, as does the Book of Mormon itself when referring to secular judgment. But the Book of Mormon goes further and refers to the “bar of God” and to the future day of judgment. However, the question arises concerning how this would have been expressed on the plates. I suppose the authors of the words on the plates could have been told, by inspiration,

to write a word equivalent to *bar*, the word that would be used in the future to refer to the judgment bar of God and to God's final judgment. But note that the noun *bar* is never used anachronistically within the Book of Mormon text itself to refer to a secular judgment, but is consistently used to refer to the final day of judgment. So rather than the equivalent for the word *bar* occurring on the plates, it is more likely that the translator(s) decided to use the word *bar* (and on two places in the text the more specific *pleading bar*, which clearly dates from the 1600s) to refer to the final judgment, a scene then that would have been fully understood by Early Modern English readers and today's readers, but not by ancient readers.

*the Bible as a collective singular*

In only one passage in the Book of Mormon, in 2 Nephi 29, does the text adopt the word *Bible* to refer to the scriptures, and there it is consistently used 11 times in the singular:

- verse 3    and because my words shall hiss forth,  
                 many of the Gentiles shall say:  
                 **A Bible, a Bible, we have got a Bible!**  
                 And there cannot be any more **Bible!**
- verse 4    O fools, they shall have a **Bible**,  
                 and it shall proceed forth from the Jews,  
                 mine ancient covenant people.  
                 And what thank they the Jews for the **Bible**  
                 which they receive from them?
- verse 6    Thou fool that shall say:  
                 **A Bible, we have got a Bible,**  
                 and we need no more **Bible!**  
                 Have ye obtained a **Bible**  
                 save it were by the Jews?
- verse 10   Wherefore because that ye have a **Bible**,  
                 ye need not suppose that it contains all my words;  
                 neither need ye suppose  
                 that I have not caused more to be written.

This passage is referring to how people will react to the Book of Mormon when it is published, and of course the word *Bible*, used in the singular as a collective, would be the familiar term at that



time. But elsewhere in the Book of Mormon, the prophets do not use the word *Bible* since that is not their term; instead, the scriptures are referred to as the record of the Jews:

1 Nephi 13:23 (the angel speaking to Nephi)

The book which thou beholdest is **a record of the Jews**,  
which contain the covenants of the Lord  
which he hath made unto the house of Israel.

Mormon 7:8 (Mormon speaking to modern-day readers)

Therefore repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus  
and lay hold upon the gospel of Christ,  
which shall be set before you,  
not only in this record but also in **the record**  
which shall come unto the Gentiles **from the Jews**,  
which record shall come from the Gentiles unto you.

In the Bible itself, the Jewish and Christian scriptures are rarely referred to as a unit or collective whole, but when they are, the text uses the plural *biblia* ‘books’, as in 1 Maccabees 12:9: “the holy books of scripture” (the King James translation of *ta biblia ta hagia* ‘the holy books’). According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the early Christian father Origin (living in the first half of the third century CE) also used the plural *biblia* to refer to the scriptures, but for him the term meant both the Old and the New Testaments together. Yet early on in the Christian era the word *biblia* was re-interpreted as a singular, especially in its usage in the early Romance languages. The Book of Mormon itself avoids using the word *Bible* except for when it needs to describe how people will react to its publication in Joseph Smith’s time. Thus it seems unlikely that Nephi would have written the word *Bible* in his record written in the sixth century BCE. Again, the Book of Mormon supplies the appropriate translation, one that lexically dates the English to medieval times or later. (This nonancient use of the word *Bible* was first suggested by Todd Giberson, identified as “Central Texan” on <wordpress@interpreterfoundation.org> on January 29, 2020.)

Word examples like *bar* and *Bible* argue that the English translation of the Book of Mormon depends on words that first showed up in medieval English. This finding implies that these words did not appear as such on the plates themselves and were therefore introduced into

the text during the translation process. But this does not mean that the entire translation of the Book of Mormon is paraphrastic or that it was a fiction created by the Lord. My own personal experience with the text has convinced me that the Book of Mormon is the history of real people and describes real events that occurred in their lives, but at the same time the text also shows the direct influence of the translation process.

It is important to realize that the overall text of the Book of Mormon proper (excluding the quotations from biblical sources) could very well represent a literal translation despite various cases of cultural translation. Examples like the construct genitive in “plates of brass,” “rod of iron,” and “altar of stones,” with its use of the *of*-genitive in English (never *brass plates*, *iron rod*, or *stone altar*), argue for a Hebrew-like literalness. And there are the literalisms in the original text like the extra *and* after an interrupted subordinate clause and before the main clause, as originally in Moroni 10:4: “and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart with real intent—having faith in Christ—**and** he will manifest the truth of it unto you”. And then there are the specific Book of Mormon names, ones that Joseph Smith controlled for and spelled out letter for letter to his scribe (examples like *Coriantumr* and *Zenoch*).

We have a similar situation with the King James Bible, which is basically a literal translation of the original Hebrew (and the occasional Aramaic) for the Old Testament and of the original Greek for the New Testament. But there are all these individual exceptions, some of them noted in KJQ, such as the cultural translations of *candle* in place of *lamp* and *dry-shod* instead of the phrase “in sandals”. Another example is the King James phrase “to sit at meat” or “to sit at table”, a cultural, creative translation for the original Greek “to recline (at meal or at table)”, that dates back to William Tyndale’s 1526 translation of the New Testament. Jesus indeed ate the last supper with his disciples, but not as Leonardo da Vinci portrayed it, sitting around a table (or on only one side of a long table). We still believe the last supper occurred, even though the Bible translators from the 1500s and 1600s typically translated the text this way, culturally and creatively, as “sitting at meal”.

### **Part 6, *Spelling in the Manuscripts and Editions* (SPL)**

For the second half of this paper, we take up a more mundane subject, how the scribes misspelled words in the manuscripts. Here we will consider three issues:

Was orthography still indeterminate in the early 1800s?

How good were the Book of Mormon scribes?

What can spelling tell us about the Book of Mormon text?

The first chapter of part 6, entitled “Misunderstanding Spelling Variation in the Book of Mormon”, deals with an article that has had an inordinate influence on how Latter-day Saints have understood misspellings in the Book of Mormon manuscripts and in the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon, namely, George Horton’s “Understanding Textual Changes in the Book of Mormon”, published in the LDS Church’s *Ensign* in December, 1983. Despite Horton’s implicit claim in the title of his article that he will undertake to explain “textual changes”, he virtually ignores the subject and instead devotes most of the article to the largely irrelevant question of spelling variation in the early text of the Book of Mormon. Here I will refer to several provocative statements of Horton’s that are essentially false in every respect and have not been helpful to Latter-day Saints trying to deal with the issue of changes in the text of the Book of Mormon.

(1) Horton: “the spelling in the first edition was Oliver Cowdery’s”

The first page of the printer’s manuscript (P), written down by Oliver Cowdery (OC), when compared against the spellings that show up in the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon (set from P by the typesetter, John Gilbert), shows that this statement is completely false:

P (OC)	1830 edition (Gilbert)	frequency
cours	course	2
haveing	having	5
knowledg	knowledge	1
proceedings	proceedings	1
prophits	prophets	1
destroid	destroyed	1
excedingly	exceedingly	1

One wonders how Horton could have gotten this claim of his so wrong. It didn’t come from examining photographs of P (which by the early 1980s were available in microfilm in BYU library’s special collections). Perhaps he was misled by this account from John Gilbert of the printing of the 1830 edition (produced by Gilbert himself in typescript in 1892):

On the second day – Harris and Smith being in the office – I called their attention to a grammatical error, and asked whether I should correct it? Harris consulted with Smith a short time, and turned to me and said; “The Old Testament is ungrammatical, set it as it is written.”

The phrase at the end, “set it as it is written”, could be mistaken to mean ‘set the text from P, exactly as it is written’. But Gilbert was not referring to the spelling of words, but rather to correcting the nonstandard grammar in the text. He was expected to standardize the spellings as he set the type for the first edition, which he did (as we can see from the misspellings he corrected as he set the very first page of P).

(2) Horton: “Consider, too, that the two distinct words *strait* and *straight* would sound exactly the same as Joseph dictated it. But Oliver spelled both words *straight* every time.”

Actually, Oliver Cowdery used the spelling *strait* for both these words, with only one exception in extant portions of the original manuscript (O) and none in the virtually extant printer’s manuscript (P):

in O    9 times *strait*, 1 time *straight*  
in P    23 times *strait*

On the other hand, John Gilbert used the spelling *straight* for both words, all 27 times. (Oliver Cowdery wrote only 23 instances of *strait* in P; the four other instances were in the hand of scribe 2 of P, and they were also spelled *strait*.) So neither the scribe in P nor the typesetter for the 1830 edition made any distinction between these two words that sounded exactly the same. But this is just the opposite of what Horton claimed. Again, he was apparently following his first claim that the 1830 spellings were Oliver Cowdery’s.

(3) Horton: “*American English spelling in 1829 was not yet standardized.*”

This represents Horton’s most egregious claim, one that is frequently quoted to me by Latter-day Saints. During the second half of the 1700s, English spelling in both Britain and America became more or less standardized, largely the result of Samuel Johnson’s *A Dictionary of the English Language*, published in two volumes in 1755 in London. Following its publication, there were various one-volume versions of Johnson’s dictionary, usually with pronunciation added but always without Johnson’s citations from well-known British writers (Johnson’s “authorities”). These abridged versions were consulted by printers whenever they

needed to check the spelling of a word. Thus the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon was set in standard spelling, with only a few exceptions.

So where does Horton get his claim that American English spelling had not been standardized when the 1830 edition was set? It obviously didn't come from looking at an actual 1830 edition or a facsimile of it (which would have been readily available). Instead, it came from Horton's misreading of page 37 of Noah Webster's introduction to his 1828 *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, as we shall see below.

(4) Horton: "As late as 1828, American lexicographer Noah Webster noted that five dictionaries were available to him. Examples from four of those dictionaries show the variations in spellings commonly accepted at the time Oliver was taking dictation from the Prophet."

Horton then provides the following "variations in spellings" from page 37 of Webster's introduction to his dictionary:

<i>Sheridan</i>	<i>Walker</i>	<i>Perry</i>	<i>Jameson</i>
1784	1794	1805	1827
creatshur	cretshure	creature	creture
scriptshur	scriptshure	scripture	scriptyur
clauschure	clauzhure	clauzhure	chauzhur

But these "spellings" for *creature*, *scripture*, and *closure* are actually pronunciations. In fact, the actual spellings for all of these words agree with Webster's and are all standard. We can see this by consulting these dictionaries. I was able to find three of these dictionaries online, and we get the following spellings and associated pronunciations for each of the dictionaries:

Thomas Sheridan, *A General Dictionary of the English Language* (London: William Strachan, 1780)

Creature	kre-tʃhur
Scripture	skrip-tʃhur
Closure	klo-zhur

John Walker, *A Critical Pronouncing Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language* (London: G. Robinson, 1794)

Creature	kre-tʃhure
Scripture	skrip-tʃhure
Closure	klo-zhure

R. S. Jameson, *Dictionary of the English Language* (London: W. Pickering, 1828)

Creature	kre-ture
Scripture	skript-yur
Closure	klo-zhur

So what misled Horton here? Perhaps it was Webster's last sentence before he provided the list of pronunciations for five dictionaries (on page 37):

In the orthography, I have given the letters used by each author, in the syllable which contains the difference of pronunciation; in the others, I have followed the common orthography.

In some cases, Webster does give the common orthography for the pronunciation, as he states. But the list is also full of pronunciations, which are not spellings. Apparently, Horton didn't read the preceding five pages of Webster; otherwise, he would have realized that Webster was complaining about how these five dictionaries had treated the pronunciation for words (Webster's dictionary was superior, by far, or so he thought).

(5) Horton: *"It is not surprising, then, that many words in the Book of Mormon would need to be corrected as American English spelling became more uniform later in the nineteenth century."*

Finally, we have Horton's conclusion, which is doubly false. First of all, the 1830 edition was already in standard orthography; it is not true that "many words would need to be corrected" in subsequent editions. And second, the standard orthography for American spelling is already basically determined by this time; it will not become "more uniform" as the nineteenth century progresses.

In the next chapter of part 6, entitled "The Manuscripts and Their Scribes", I turn to the question of good and bad spellers in the manuscripts. We get the following results for the scribes, along with John Gilbert, the typesetter for the 1830 edition. I have also tentatively identified scribes 2 and 3 in O as well as scribe 2 of P; in part 7 of volume 3, I will provide the evidence that supports these identifications. I mark these three scribes as tentative (but to different degrees), indicating each with an arrow:

*first-rate speller*

John Gilbert (JG), the 1830 typesetter

*second-rate spellers*

Oliver Cowdery (OC), scribe 1 of O and scribe 1 of P

→ John Whitmer (JW), scribe 2 of O

→ Martin Harris (MH), scribe 2 of P

*third-rate spellers*

→ Christian Whitmer (CW), scribe 3 of O

Hyrum Smith (HS), scribe 3 of P

(I use the symbols JS to stand for Joseph Smith, who is scribe 4 of O and is responsible for 28 words in Alma 45:22. Only one of his words is misspelled, *cities* as *citties*. We do not make any assessment here of Joseph's scribal abilities simply because we have so little of his handwriting in the manuscripts.)

Here are the scribes' and the 1830 typesetter's rates of misspelling, with their average number of spelling errors per thousand words:

<i>scribe</i>	<i>source</i>	<i>sampling</i>	<i>date</i>	<i>error rate</i>
John Whitmer (JW)	O	1 Nephi, JS's dictation	Jun 1829	27
Christian Whitmer (CW)	O	1 Nephi, JS's dictation	Jun 1829	73
Martin Harris (MH)	P	Mosiah 25 – Alma 5	Sept 1829	10
	P	Alma 6–13	Oct 1829	9
	P	3 Nephi 19 – 4 Nephi	Jan 1830	7
	P	Mormon	Jan 1830	12
Hyrum Smith (HS)	P	Mosiah 28 – Alma 5	Sept 1829	66
John Gilbert (JG)	1830	the entire text	1829–1830	0.3

We divide Martin Harris's scribing into four parts (each one covering around 10,000 words); this allows us to see that his scribal errors remained fairly constant throughout his copywork, around 10 misspellings every thousand words. On the other hand, Oliver Cowdery's spelling improves over time, as we can see in these eight samplings from his copywork (each sampling covers at least 5,000 words):

<i>scribe</i>	<i>source</i>	<i>sampling</i>	<i>date</i>	<i>error rate</i>
Oliver Cowdery (OC)	O	1 Nephi, JS's dictation	June 1829	22
	P	1 Nephi, copying OC	Aug–Sept 1829	18
	P	1 Nephi, copying JW	Aug–Sept 1829	13
	P	1 Nephi, copying CW	Aug–Sept 1829	14
	P	Mosiah 13–15	Sept 1829	10
	P	Alma 13–20	Oct 1829	12
	P	3 Nephi 8–19	Dec 1829	7
	P	Ether 1–12	Jan 1830	5

This spelling improvement is very likely the result of Oliver Cowdery's proofing of the 1830 typeset sheets against the manuscript. Every so often, while proofing, Oliver would realize that his nonstandard spelling for a word differed from the typesetter's standard spelling, and from then on in his copywork for P he would use the correct spelling. Here are some examples of the spellings that Oliver learned to spell during the printing process. For each word, I give the statistics for his spellings in both manuscripts, and in each case his corrected spelling and his original incorrect spelling. Finally, in the last column, I indicate where Oliver in his copywork for P switched to the correct spelling; the words are listed in the order in which Oliver learned to spell them correctly in P:

<i>correct / incorrect</i>	<i>OC in O</i>		<i>OC in P</i>		<i>when learned in P</i>
kept / cept	25	8	65	2	1 Nephi 5
whore / whoar	1	3	27	1	2 Nephi 28
hunger / hungar	1	7	18	3	Mosiah 21
destroyed / destroid	1	32	48	58	Alma 14
possession / posession	36	7	77	1	Alma 22
weapon / weopon	5	29	37	21	Alma 43
possess / posess	10	8	54	6	Alma 52
govern / govorn	14	0	48	11	Helaman 1
exceeding / exced(e)ing	0	87	46	233	3 Nephi 12
presence / presance	2	12	4	44	Ether 2
exceed / excede	0	4	4	7	Ether 15

Note that Oliver learned to spell individual word forms at different times: the noun *possession* (at Alma 22) before the verb *possess* (at Alma 52); and the adjective / adverb *exceeding* (3 Nephi 12) before the verb *exceed* (Ether 15).



For quite a few words, Martin Harris (scribe 2 of P) knew the correct spelling while Oliver Cowdery did not. Oliver's spelling would typically vary between the standard spelling and his own particular misspelling, although in some of the following cases Oliver learned the correct spelling during his copywork for P (each of these cases is set in bold); but Martin, throughout his own copywork, consistently used the correct spelling:

<i>correct / incorrect</i>	<i>OC in O</i>		<i>OC in P</i>		<i>MH in P</i>	
apparel / apparrel	0	3	0	6	8	0
concerning / conserning	81	0	298	10	45	0
<b>descendant</b> / de[s]cendant	0	5	8	23	5	0
desirous / desireous	0	18	2	54	6	0
destruction / distruction	31	2	135	5	22	0
expedient / expediant	6	17	1	53	6	0
<b>harden</b> / hearden	7	10	47	10	23	0
imagine / imimage	0	4	3	2	7	0
<b>journey</b> / journey	4	1	18	6	4	0
<b>kept</b> / cept	25	8	65	2	16	0
ninth / nineth	2	3	14	1	3	0
<b>possess</b> / posess	10	8	54	6	6	0
<b>possession</b> / posession	36	7	77	1	8	0
valley / vally	0	15	1	36	7	0
very / verry	2	18	4	53	18	0
<b>weapon</b> / weopon	5	29	37	21	6	0

There are also cases where both scribes showed variation; it turns out that in none of these cases did Oliver Cowdery ever learn the correct spelling during the printing process:

<i>correct / incorrect</i>	<i>OC in O</i>		<i>OC in P</i>		<i>MH in P</i>	
cities / citties	24	2	63	3	11	1
committed / comitted	5	0	10	3	3	1
durst / dearest or derst	0	16	1	33	4	3
prophecy / prophesy [noun]	1	17	32	30	9	7
pursue / persue	0	15	1	41	2	4
rebel / rehell	0	6	0	12	2	2
robbed / robed	0	1	0	4	0	3
separate / separte	2	1	11	3	3	1
truly / truely	13	0	31	5	4	1

In analyzing scribal errors, it is important to differentiate between several types of errors. The most prominent type of scribal error would be a misspelling, which is any spelling of a word that would be pronounced the same as the standard spelling of that word. Thus the spelling *boddy* counts as a misspelling since it is not the standard spelling, *body*, but it would be pronounced the same as the standard spelling. Under this definition of misspelling, spelling variants do not count as misspellings. For the Book of Mormon scribes, writing in the early 1800s, this would include spelling variants like *centre*, *enquire*, *journied*, *sayeth*, *saviour*, and *sea shore*. All of these were acceptable spellings in the early 1800s in America (and some are still today).

In distinction to misspellings, we have spelling slips, examples like *concening*, *ome* [one], *woice*, *Nindred*, and *Nepi*. For cases of slippage, the scribe accidentally omits, adds, or miswrites a letter in a word (and sometimes more than one letter), so that the resulting spelling is not pronounceable like the standard spelling for the word.

A third type of scribal error is where there is an obvious slip in the substantives, that is, where there is an easily recognizable error in the actual words of the text rather than in the spelling of those words. Here are three instances that Martin Harris (scribe 2 of P) produced when he was copying from O into P:

in my shall they called (Mosiah 26:18)  
 “in my **name** shall they **be** called”

the **number Number** of the slain (Alma 3:1)  
 “the number of the slain”

In the first example, there are two omissions of words: the noun *name* and the auxiliary verb *be*. In the second example, the word *number* was written twice. Any scribe, including Martin, would have recognized these errors, if only he had briefly looked over what he had written.

Finally, a slip in the substantives can make a textual difference, one that seems like a perfectly acceptable reading but cannot be recognized unless the scribe (or a proofreader) checks his copytext. In cases like these, without the copytext, we may think that the scribe has done a good job of copying, when in fact the resulting copy may be full of unrecognizable substantive slips, such as these slips that Oliver Cowdery made when he copied from O into P, all in 1 Nephi:

wherefore **I cried** > **did cry** unto the Lord (1 Nephi 2:16)  
 he did provide **ways and means** > **means** for us (1 Nephi 17:3)  
 to be cast **with sorrow** > **NULL** into a watery grave (1 Nephi 18:18)  
 thou hast **heard and seen** > **seen and heard** all this (1 Nephi 20:6)  
 being **nursed** > **nourished** by the Gentiles (1 Nephi 22:8)

For these examples, O is still extant, and thus we can discover the errors that Oliver made. Without O, we would have no idea in any of these cases that the resulting P was incorrect. And that is one reason why all of these errors except the one in 1 Nephi 18:18 involving the loss of the phrase “with sorrow” have persisted in the standard LDS text of the Book of Mormon.

Thus, in order to fully analyze the slips the Book of Mormon scribes made, either in taking down Joseph Smith’s dictation (the original manuscript, O) or in copying the text (the printer’s manuscript, P), we need the copytext. Of course, we do not have any direct record of what Joseph saw in his translation instrument or of what he dictated to the scribes. And in the case of copying from O into P, most of O is not extant (72 percent). These two factors make it difficult to determine all the scribal slips that led to substantive differences in the text, so in this analysis of the scribal slips we will include only the obvious slips in the substantives, errors that the scribe should have caught by simply re-reading what he had just written down. This will allow for a fair comparison in assessing each scribe’s ability to avoid scribal slips because for most of the scribal transmission we do not have the copytext for the scribe. (All these substantive scribal slips, that is, any slips not readily recognizable as errors in the scribe’s copy, will be considered in part 7 of volume 3 of the critical text, *From the Manuscripts Through the Editions*.)

We therefore calculate the rate of scribal slips by combining the two kinds of obvious slips, ones that the scribe should have caught and corrected from viewing his copy alone: (1) slips in the spelling of words, and (2) slips in the substantives (the words). Equivalently, for a typesetter we can calculate all his typos, either in the spelling of individual words or in obvious errors in typesetting the words of the text. For all the secondary manuscript scribes and, at the end, for the 1830 typesetter, we get the following rates of scribal slips (errors per thousand words):

<i>scribe</i>	<i>source</i>	<i>sampling</i>	<i>date</i>	<i>error rate</i>
John Whitmer (JW)	O	1 Nephi, JS’s dictation	Jun 1829	9
Christian Whitmer (CW)	O	1 Nephi, JS’s dictation	Jun 1829	14

Martin Harris (MH)	P	Mosiah 25 – Alma 5	Sept 1829	9
	P	Alma 6–13	Oct 1829	8
	P	3 Nephi 19 – 4 Nephi	Jan 1830	9
	P	Mormon	Jan 1830	11
Hyrum Smith (HS)	P	Mosiah 28 – Alma 5	Sept 1829	29
John Gilbert (JG)	1830	the entire text	1829–1830	0.6

Christian Whitmer and Hyrum Smith not only had high rates of misspelling, but they also had high rates of scribal slippage, especially Hyrum. Both Martin Harris and John Whitmer also had fairly high rates of scribal slips; and Martin’s scribal slippage remained fairly constant over time. Of course, the 1830 typesetter made relatively few typos compared to the slips the scribes made.

When we consider the rate of slips for Oliver Cowdery, the main scribe in both O and P, we discover that he had a consistently low rate of scribal slips:

<i>scribe</i>	<i>source</i>	<i>sampling</i>	<i>date</i>	<i>error rate</i>
Oliver Cowdery (OC)	O	1 Nephi, JS’s dictation	Jun 1829	3
	P	1 Nephi, copying OC	Aug–Sept 1829	3
	P	1 Nephi, copying JW	Aug–Sept 1829	2
	P	1 Nephi, copying CW	Aug–Sept 1829	2
	P	Mosiah 13–15	Sept 1829	2
	P	Alma 13–20	Oct 1829	1
	P	3 Nephi 8–19	Dec 1829	2
	P	Ether 1–12	Jan 1830	2

Of course, we do not expect scribal slippage to improve over time. Thus Martin Harris’s rate was about 10 per thousand words, while Oliver Cowdery averaged a low rate of about 2 per thousand words.

There are three factors, then, that lead us to evaluate Oliver Cowdery as a first-rate scribe, especially in comparison to all the other scribes:

- (1) his rate of scribal slips is consistently low
- (2) his spelling improves over time
- (3) he writes with the clearest and smoothest hand (by far)

I have not mentioned this third factor, clarity of the hand, until now. When I was transcribing the scribes’ words as part of my initial work on the manuscripts (in 1988), I was always relieved when the scribe

switched to Oliver Cowdery. All the other scribes were very difficult to transcribe, especially since I needed to make sure of what they had actually intended to write; and as a result, it would usually take about three times longer to transcribe any given line in their hand than if it were in Oliver's hand. I could always deal with Oliver's misspellings. It was the scribal slips (along with ill-formed letters) that caused the real difficulties in transcribing the manuscripts, and fortunately that was never a particular problem with Oliver.

The final chapter of part 6 is an extensive 455-page analysis of all the misspellings in the manuscripts as well as the spelling variants in the printed editions of the Book of Mormon. Most of the sections in this chapter are organized according to phonemes (that is, sounds), as in this listing found under the spellings for the phoneme /p/:

#### Misspellings of /p/

in the manuscripts:

*p > pp*                      *opperation, opperate; sepparateth; uppon*

*pp > p*                      *hapen, hapened; hapy; suplicate, suplication; disapointment; soposing, suposed*

single *p* with endings    *claped, shiping, sliped, stoped, striped*

in the editions:

variation for *p ~ pp*    *worshipped ~ worshipped*  
                                  *worshiping ~ worshipping*  
                                  *worshippers ~ worshippers*

Near the end, there are a few sections dealing with the spelling of certain graphemes (that is, letters), such as silent *e* and the letter *x*. And to conclude this entire analysis, there is an index of all the words in the analysis, organized according to their standard spellings.

Given all this analysis of the misspellings, one may reasonably ask: "Can there any good thing come out of misspellings?" One purpose of part 6, dedicated entirely to the spellings in the manuscripts and the editions, is to show the numerous ways in which spelling issues have had an important impact in the critical text project of the Book of Mormon. Here are some of the things that spellings errors can tell us:

(1) how Joseph Smith or his scribes pronounced names

*Amalickiah* was consistently pronounced with stress on the first syllable, not the second, probably by Joseph Smith as he dictated the text.

*Melchizedek* was pronounced as *Melchezidek*, with a switch in the second and third vowels. This is the pronunciation generally used by today's speakers of English, including those in the LDS Church.

Joseph Smith pronounced *Mosiah* identically to *Messiah* (with an *s* rather than a *z*). Either pronunciation for *Mosiah* (with either an *s* or a *z*) still occurs among speakers in the LDS Church.

(2) various dialectal pronunciations for the scribes

Oliver Cowdery (scribe 1 in O and in P)

<i>grievous</i>	<i>grievious</i>	with an extra /i/ before the -ous
<i>height</i>	<i>heighth</i>	plus the nominalizing suffix /θ/
<i>obliged</i>	<i>oblidged</i>	the /ɪ/ vowel rather than /ai/
<i>wage</i>	<i>wedge</i>	the /ɛ/ vowel rather than /ei/

Martin Harris (scribe 2 of P)

<i>deaf</i>	<i>deef</i>	the /i/ vowel rather than /ɛ/
<i>scroll</i>	<i>scrawl</i>	the /ɔ/ vowel rather than /ou/

Christian Whitmer (scribe 3 of O)

<i>Nazareth</i>	<i>nathareth</i>	with /ð/ rather than the standard /z/
<i>obliged</i>	<i>oblieged</i>	the /i/ vowel rather than /ai/
<i>spacious</i>	<i>specious</i>	the /ɛ/ vowel rather than /ei/

John Whitmer (scribe 2 of O)

<i>spacious</i>	<i>specious</i>	the /ɛ/ vowel rather than /ei/
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(3) a word's pronunciation sometimes led to a scribal error

The verb *scourge* was apparently pronounced as “scorge” by both Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery rather than as “scurge”, today's standard pronunciation. Oliver's typical misspelling of *scourge(d)* in P and extant O was *scorge(d)*, in 9 out of 22 cases. Thus the only difference between *scorched* and *scourged* would have been voicing: “scorched” versus “scorged”. This is probably why Oliver Cowdery misheard the original *scorched* in *Mosiah* 17:13 as *scourged*:

Mosiah 17:13–14

and it came to pass that they took him and bound him  
and **scorched** [dictated] > **scorged** [misheard] > **scourged**  
his skin with fagots / yea even unto death  
and now when the flames began to **scorch** him  
he cried unto them saying . . .

- (4) the written form in O was misread by Oliver Cowdery when he copied it into P, especially when the scribe in O was not Oliver

four examples from other scribes of O:

Christian Whitmer's *prfsing* > Oliver Cowdery's *feeling*, in  
1 Nephi 8:31

"and he also saw other multitudes **pressing** > **feeling** their way  
towards that great and spacious building"

John Whitmer's *sword* > Oliver Cowdery's *word*, in 1 Nephi 12:18

"and a great and a terrible gulf divideth them / yea even  
the **sword** > **word** of the justice of the Eternal God"

John Whitmer's *where* > Oliver Cowdery's *was*, in 1 Nephi 13:12

"a man among the Gentiles which **were** > **was** separated  
from the seed of my brethren by the many waters"

John Whitmer's *prepiator* > Oliver Cowdery's *preparator*, in  
1 Nephi 15:35

"and there is a place prepared / yea even that awful hell  
of which I have spoken / and the devil is  
the **proprietor** > **preparator** of it"

one example where Oliver Cowdery miscopied his own hand in O:

*desenters* > *desendants*, in Alma 43:14

"now those **dissenters** > **descendants** were as numerous  
nearly as were the Nephites

five conjectural emendations based on either misspellings in O or misreadings of O:

*hapiness* in O [conjectured] > *holiness* in P, in 2 Nephi 2:11

"neither **happiness** > **holiness** nor misery / neither good nor bad"

*raiment* in O [conjectured] > *remnant* in P, in 2 Nephi 24:19  
“and the **raiment** > **remnant** of those that are slain”

Isaiah 14:19 reads *raiment*.

*unto* in O [conjectured] > *untill* in P, in Mosiah 17:10  
“yea and I will suffer even **unto** > **until** death”

*cermon* in O [conjectured] > *cerimony* in P, in Mosiah 19:24  
“and it came to pass that after they had ended the **sermon** >  
**ceremony** that they returned to the land of Nephi”

Here the archaic *sermon* means ‘discussion, talk’.

*Cut* in O [conjectured] > *put* in P > *hewn* in the 1830 edition, in  
Alma 5:35

“and ye shall not be **cut** > **put** > **hewn** down and cast into the fire”

Here *Cut*, with the capital C, apparently looked like *Put*.

(5) errors made by the 1830 typesetter, misreading a spelling in either O  
or P

*claped* in P > *clasped* in the 1830 edition, in Alma 19:30  
“she **clapped** > **clasped** her hands / being filled with joy  
speaking many words which were not understood”

*head* in P > *read* in the 1830 edition, in Alma 51:15  
“he sent a petition with the voice of the people unto the  
governor of the land desiring that he should **heed** > **read** it”

*desenting* in P > *deserting* in the 1830 edition, in Helaman 4:12  
“raising up in great contentions and **dissenting** > **deserting**  
away into the land of Nephi among the Lamanites”

*Cumorah* in O [conjectured] > *Camorah* in the 1830 edition, in  
Mormon 6:2

“by a hill which was called **Cumorah** > **Camorah**”

Here the 1830 edition was set from O, not P. The scribe in  
P was Martin Harris and his *Cumorah* reads clearly with  
a *u*, but very likely the *u* in Oliver Cowdery’s *Cumorah* in O  
looked like an *a* (which was typical of Oliver’s hand).



- (6) a name was misinterpreted because of priming from preceding words or names in the text

*Rezin* in O [conjectured] > *Razin* in P, in 2 Nephi 18:6

“and rejoice in **Rezin** > **Razin**” (*razor* in 2 Nephi 17:20)

*Ramah* in O [conjectured] > *Ramath* in P, in 2 Nephi 20:29

“**Ramah** > **Ramath** is afraid” (*Hamath* in verse 9 and *Aiath* in verse 28)

*shilum* in P > *shiblum* in the 1830 edition, in Alma 11:16

“a **shiblon** is half of a senum / therefore a **shiblon** for a half a measure of barley / and a **shilum** > **shiblum** is a half of a **shiblon**”

*Muloch* /mjulək/ in dictation > *Mulek* written in O [conjectured], three times in Helaman 6 and 8 (influenced by 13 preceding references to the city of **Mulek** in Alma 51–53 and Helaman 5)

- (7) difficulty in interpreting the correct wording (especially for homophones)

*straight* or *strait* (several places in the text)

“and I also beheld a **straight** ~ **strait** and narrow path”  
(1 Nephi 8:20)

“Sun of righteousness” or “Son of righteousness” (several places in the text)

“but the **Sun** ~ **Son** of righteousness shall appear unto them”  
(2 Nephi 26:9)

*travails* or *travels* (several places in the text)

“do they remember the **travails** ~ **travels** . . . of the Jews?”  
(2 Nephi 29:4)

*up on* or *upon* (several places in the text)

“and they carried him **up on** ~ **upon** the top of the hill Manti”  
(Alma 1:15)

*striped* or *stripped* (one place in the text)

“to pay . . . or be **striped** ~ **stripped** or be cast out” (Alma 11:2)

*rights* or *rites* (several places in the text)

“they were fighting . . . for their **rights** ~ **rites** of worship”  
(Alma 43:45)

*whither* or *whether* (several places in the text)

“and the remainder of them being much confused knew not  
**whither** ~ **whether** to go or to strike” (Alma 52:36)

*bare* or *bear* (several places in the text)

“and the multitude **bare** ~ **bear** record of it” (3 Nephi 17:21)

*past* or *passed* (several places in the text)

“the day of grace was **past** ~ **passed** with them” (Mormon 2:15)

*holy* or *wholly* (one place in the text)

“that he become **holy** ~ **wholly** without spot” (Moroni 10:33)

(8) archaic spellings can make understanding difficult

The weapon *scimitar* is consistently spelled *cimeter* in the 1830 edition (compare this with Noah Webster’s 1828 dictionary spelling *cimiter*). Databases show that both *cimeter* and *scimitar* occurred with equal probability in the early 1800s, but by 1900 *cimeter* had become obsolete; yet it is still in the standard text of the Book of Mormon. Most readers will wonder what this *cimeter* is.

(9) detecting forgeries, especially in the University of Chicago acquisition (Alma 3–5), dating from the early 1980s and intending to be in Oliver Cowdery’s hand

This forgery (covering four pages of the original manuscript, supposedly) has unique spellings, ones that the scribes never used: *forheads*, *thruout*, *Morman*, and *gilt* [guilt].

This document also has the spelling *reccord* for *record*, yet that spelling was never used by Oliver Cowdery; in P and in extant O, he used *reckord* 12 times and *record* 181 times. However, Alma 3–5 in the printer’s manuscript is in the hand of Martin Harris and Hyrum Smith; and there Martin wrote the misspelling *reccord* once and Hyrum twice.

These four pages have three instances of *and* actually written out as *and*. Yet Oliver Cowdery never wrote *and* in this way in either manuscript: for thousands of occurrences he wrote *and* as an ampersand, &; and for hundreds of occurrences, at the

beginning of a sentence or a chapter, he wrote *And*. Only two times did Oliver write *and*, but in both those cases the initial *a* was simply an enlarged *a*, written that way to overwrite an earlier miswriting of Oliver's. On the other hand, Martin Harris and Hyrum Smith both used & and *and* in their copywork. It looks like the copytext for this forgery was the printer's manuscript!

In part 6, I discuss at some length two of these inappropriate spellings: *thruout* and *reccord*; all of these unexpected spellings will be discussed in part 8 of volume 3 when I analyze all of the known forged fragments of the original manuscript.

#### (10) the spelling out of Book of Mormon names in O

There is striking evidence in the original manuscript for Oliver Cowdery initially writing a name phonetically, then immediately revising that spelling, apparently the result of Joseph Smith spelling out that name for him. Three examples are thoroughly discussed in part 6:

*Zenock* > *Zenoch* (Alma 33:15)

*Ameleckiah* > *Amalickiah* (Alma 46:5)

*Coriantummr* > *Coriantumr* (Helaman 1:15)

Known biblical names are never spelled out, but there is one potential biblical name that is corrected, *Gilgal*. In Ether 13:27 of O, Oliver Cowdery initially wrote "in the valley of **Gilgall**", which he later corrected (with distinctly heavier ink flow) from *Gilgall* to *Gilgal*. It is unlikely that Oliver recognized *Gilgal* as biblical, thus it was spelled out to him. Although biblical names were not typically spelled out, if necessary they could have been.

#### (11) the spelling out of common words of English

In part 6, I also discuss the issue of whether Joseph Smith ever spelled out actual English words (as Emma Smith claimed in one of her accounts of the translation process). There seems to be one extant example in O where this might have occurred, in 1 Nephi 5:14 where Christian Whitmer misspelled his first instance of *genealogy* as *jenealeja*, but then spelled his subsequent instances of the word correctly. This difference suggests that Joseph might have correctly spelled out this word to Christian when he had to write it a second time. But this is the only

example we have in extant portions of O where this kind of spelling out of difficult English words might have occurred.

- (12) names that Oliver Cowdery, for no apparent reason, changed the spelling of when he copied the text from O into P

*Am(e)licites* > *Amalekites*

*Gaddianton* > *Gadianton*

*Kishcumen* > *Kishkumen*

*Morionton* > *Morianton*

*Pa(r)horon* > *Pahoran*

Oliver did not make the change from *Amlicites* to *Amalekites* in Alma 2–3, but only for the phonetically closer *Amelicites* in Alma 21–43.

The more substantive changes in the spelling of words and names will be thoroughly discussed in part 7 of volume 3, *The Transmission of the Text: From the Manuscripts Through the Editions*, as well as in part 8, *Textual Criticism of the Book of Mormon*. And so on to these next two parts and to the end.

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# The Strengths and Challenges of Contemporary Marriages of Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Dean M. Busby and David C. Dollahite

Many people follow religious beliefs, principles, and practices because they believe these will lead to a higher quality of marriage and family life.<sup>1</sup> It is clear from the extant research that belonging to and practicing a religion can lead to improved outcomes that benefit couples and families. A large body of social science research indicates that religion has salutary influence on a number of personal and relational outcomes, including greater physical and mental health,<sup>2</sup> positive psychological outcomes in adolescence,<sup>3</sup> better marital relationships and higher fidelity,<sup>4</sup> transformation in marital relationships,<sup>5</sup> reduced anxiety,<sup>6</sup> marital

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1. Carolyn A. McMurdie, David C. Dollahite, and Sam A. Hardy, "Adolescent and Parent Perceptions of the Influence of Religious Belief and Practice," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 32, no. 3 (2013): 192–205.

2. Harold G. Koenig, Dana E. King, and Verna B. Carson, *Handbook of Religion and Health*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

3. Julie E. Yonker, Chelsea A. Schnabelrauch, and Laura G. DeHaan, "The Relationship between Spirituality and Religiosity on Psychological Outcomes in Adolescents and Emerging Adults: A Meta-Analytic Review," *Journal of Adolescence* 35, no. 2 (2012): 299–314.

4. Amy M. Burdette and others, "Are There Religious Variations in Marital Infidelity?" *Journal of Family Issues* 28, no. 12 (2007): 1553–81.

5. Michael A. Gore and others, "Religious Faith and Transformational Processes in Marriage," *Family Relations* 62 (2013): 808–23.

6. Melissa Soenke, Mark J. Landau, and Jeff Greenberg, "Sacred Armor: Religion's Role as a Buffer against the Anxieties of Life and the Fear of Death," in *APA Handbook of Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality: Context, Theory, and*

stability,<sup>7</sup> reduced domestic violence,<sup>8</sup> greater father involvement,<sup>9</sup> and many other positive outcomes.<sup>10</sup>

Beyond these general benefits, in an age when relationship distress and dissolution are quite common, we wondered if a religion that has a particularly strong relational focus might have specific influences on romantic relationships. Consequently, in this study we will look at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and explore whether adherents are unique in their approach to relational values, relational decisions, relational processes, and relational outcomes.

There are several reasons to suspect that there might be unique elements of the Latter-day Saint faith that have a particular influence on relationship variables. LDS doctrine emphasizes the centrality of marriage and family relationships, including the doctrine that we have heavenly parents (hence marriage is an element of godhood) and the doctrine that marriage is necessary for happiness during this life and exaltation in the next.<sup>11</sup> Some faiths include the possibility of marriage or family life continuing beyond death, but none of them believe family relations are salvific like Latter-day Saints do.<sup>12</sup> What is particularly unique about LDS doctrine is that achieving and maintaining one type of marriage in this life, temple marriage, is considered a requirement for exaltation (eternal life with God).<sup>13</sup> One scholar of early LDS history

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*Research*, ed. Kenneth I. Pargament, Julie J. Exline, and James W. Jones, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2013), 1:105–22.

7. Annette Mahoney and others, “Religion in the Home in the 1980s and 90s: A Meta-Analytic Review and Conceptual Analyses of Links between Religion, Marriage and Parenting,” *Journal of Family Psychology* 15, no. 1 (2008): 559–96.

8. Carol B. Cunradi, Raul Caetano, and John Schafer, “Religious Affiliation, Denominational Homogamy, and Intimate Partner Violence among U.S. Couples,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41, no. 1 (2002): 139–51.

9. W. Bradford Wilcox, “Religion, Convention, and Paternal Involvement,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 64, no. 3 (2002): 780–92.

10. Loren D. Marks and David C. Dollahite, *Religion and Families: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

11. David C. Dollahite, Loren D. Marks, and Heather H. Kelley, “Mormon Scholars and Mormon Families in Family Studies: A Brief Retrospective,” *Mormon Studies Review* 4, no. 1 (2017): 16–40.

12. David C. Dollahite, ed., *Strengthening Our Families: An In-Depth Look at the Proclamation on the Family* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 2000).

13. Tim B. Heaton, “Religion, Sexually Risky Behavior, and Reproductive Health,” in *Religion, Families, and Health: Population-Based Research in the*

and doctrine, speaking of the canonized revelations and doctrines about marriage and family, said: “Marriage was the basis for human exaltation. . . . To those sealed by the priesthood, the promises were startling. . . . The great, godly power was procreation, the continuation of seed. The ultimate social order of heaven was familial. . . . To be exalted, men and women must be bound together. . . . The marriage revelation culminated the emergence of family theology. More than any other previous revelation, this one put family first.”<sup>14</sup>

Because most faiths do not distinguish between chapels and temples or salvation and exaltation, and because the importance of LDS temples cannot be overemphasized in trying to understand the religious experiences and importance of marriage relationships for LDS adherents, a fuller explanation of these concepts is provided here as described by an eminent non-LDS scholar of religion, Douglas Davies:

Mormonism uses “salvation” to describe Christ’s atonement and the resurrection it brings to all people and goes on to use “exaltation” to account for the ultimate realms of glory in the celestial kingdom obtained through obedience and the fulfilment of the “ordinances” of the gospel. . . . “Exaltation” is an instructive doctrine, in the sense that it cannot be explored simply as some abstract idea, but requires an understanding of the theological significance of temples and the way in which the emergence of temple ritual turned Mormonism into a distinctive form of western, Christianly sourced, religion. . . . The Church argued that rituals conducted on earth, in specially designated places, were prerequisite for specific effects to be possible in heaven. Ritual was the prime soteriological medium. This was as true for baptism and confirmation in relation to “salvation” as for temple rites of eternal marriage and endowments for “exaltation.”<sup>15</sup>

Continuing with more detail about temple marriage, Davies says:

The essence of temple marriage is that a man and woman are joined together through the power and authority of an officiating Melchizedek priest. This “sealing,” as it is called, is not a simple union until death parts the pair, but is for eternity. Herein lies what ultimately distinguishes LDS temple marriage either from LDS marriage in local chapels or from

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*United States*, ed. Christopher G. Ellison and Robert A. Hummer (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2010): 368–84.

14. Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 443–45.

15. Douglas J. Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 195, 198.

non-LDS unions. . . . Precisely because it takes place in that sacred place where time and eternity meet, and is conducted under the power of the officiating person who holds the necessary high-priesthood authority and power, what is done on earth will have heavenly consequences.<sup>16</sup>

Of equal importance to the doctrines underlying temple marriage is the process of becoming qualified for temple marriage. While common marriage is the right of any person, regardless of conduct or spiritual worthiness, eternal temple marriage, the singular type of marriage discussed and taught in the Church, is available only to those who have made serious covenants to raise their lives to a higher level of conduct. The unique pattern then of LDS doctrine and practice is that a person has to strive toward high standards of personal worthiness in their relationship with God to be worthy of an eternal relationship with a spouse. This practice and doctrine are likely among the most unique and distinguishing features of the LDS faith, and the implications for marriage and family life are profound. Perhaps the most important implication is how the process of qualifying for a temple recommend creates strong incentives to put the gospel into practice as it relates to making decisions about how to act in relationships.

An example of the way these doctrines can have substantial relational and behavioral effects is in regards to sexual behaviors prior to marriage. Whereas sexual abstinence before marriage was once considered a common belief of most traditional forms of the Abrahamic faiths, members of almost all of these faiths can still marry in their places of worship and before their congregations by their ordained ministers even if they are currently involved in a sexual relationship. However, because LDS couples must be worthy to enter the temple, and sexual abstinence outside of marriage is part of that worthiness, they would not be allowed to marry in a temple while having a premarital sexual relationship. Such a marriage could take place only after a sufficient period of repentance and abstinence. Consequently, attitudes about sexual exclusivity and abstinence might be quite strong for highly religious LDS couples, and this might lead to different relational behaviors and possibly even relationship outcomes since in the general population fewer sexual partners prior to marriage has been linked to more stable and satisfying marriages.<sup>17</sup> Some research has validated these expectations by showing that

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16. Davies, *Introduction to Mormonism*, 213–14.

17. Dean M. Busby, Brian J. Willoughby, and Jason S. Carroll, “Sowing Wild Oats: Valuable Experience or a Field Full of Weeds?” *Personal Relationships* 20, no. 4 (2013): 706–18.



LDS youth are less likely to be involved in premarital sexual activity than those without a religious affiliation, and when comparing them to youth of other faiths, they have some of the lowest rates.<sup>18</sup>

A good deal of social science research has been conducted on LDS individuals, couples, and families.<sup>19</sup> While some in-depth qualitative studies have focused on LDS marriage,<sup>20</sup> fewer studies have employed quantitative measures to extensively explore the effects of LDS doctrines and practices on marriage and family life. Carroll, Linford, Holman, and Busby found that highly religious Latter-day Saints have much in common with other highly religious persons of faith but that they have more conservative views about some issues (such as sexuality before marriage and mothers having a central responsibility for nurturing children).<sup>21</sup> Researchers have also found that strong belief in the importance of family relationships led LDS families to engage in a variety of family-based religious rituals and practices.<sup>22</sup> In terms of family formation, others have shown that LDS individuals are more likely to marry and less likely to divorce than Catholics and Protestants and people with no religious affiliation.<sup>23</sup>

A Pew Research Center study casts some light on general patterns within the LDS faith that might hint at unique relational attitudes and behaviors. In the section on family life in this report, the researchers stated, “One common association that the general public has for Mormons is ‘family’ or ‘family values.’ This survey finds that family is, indeed,

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18. Heaton, “Religion, Sexually Risky Behavior, and Reproductive Health,” 368–84.

19. Dollahite, Marks, and Kelley, “Mormon Scholars and Mormon Families in Family Studies,” 16–40.

20. Michael A. Goodman, Loren D. Marks, and David C. Dollahite, “Transformational Processes and Meaning in Latter-day Saint Marriage,” *Marriage and Family Review* 48 (2012): 555–82.

21. Jason S. Carroll, Steven T. Linford, Thomas B. Holman, and Dean M. Busby, “Marital and Family Orientations among Highly Religious Young Adults: Comparing Latter-day Saints with Traditional Christians,” *Review of Religious Research* 42, no. 2 (2000): 193–205.

22. Rachel W. Loser, E. Jeffrey Hill, Shirley R. Klein, and David C. Dollahite, “Perceived Benefits of Religious Rituals in the Latter-day Saint Home,” *Review of Religious Research* 50, no. 3 (2009): 345–62; Rachel W. Loser and others, “Religion and the Daily Lives of LDS Families: An Ecological Perspective,” *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal* 37 (2008): 52–70.

23. Stan L. Albrecht, “The Consequential Dimension of Mormon Religiosity,” in *Latter-day Saint Social Life: Research on the LDS Church and Its Members*, ed. James T. Duke (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1998), 253–92.

very important to most Mormons. Mormons are more likely than the general public to feel that marriage and childrearing are some of the most important things in life. More Mormons are married compared with the population as a whole, and Mormons have more children on average than the general public.”<sup>24</sup>

In addition, the findings from this survey indicate that Latter-day Saints had the lowest rates of intermarriage with others not of their faith: 15 percent, as compared to 19 percent for Protestants, 22 percent for Catholics, and 50 percent for those unaffiliated with any religion. Finally, in terms of life goals, the Pew report included statistics indicating that Latter-day Saints were much more likely to list having a successful marriage (73 percent) and being a good parent (81 percent) as one of the most important things in life than the U.S. general population (34 percent and 50 percent, respectively, for the same items).

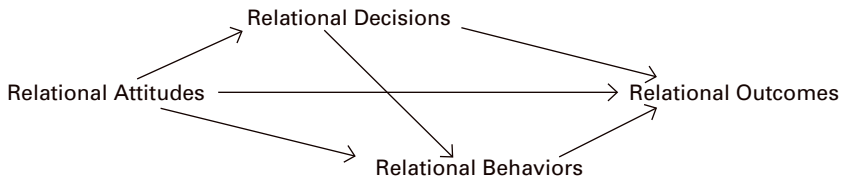
While these findings from the Pew Research Center are illuminating, they do not provide enough detail to allow analysis beyond the simple description of a few variables. Using the developmental contextual theory<sup>25</sup> and more detailed data, we are interested in exploring how the relational nature of LDS theology and rituals might manifest themselves in the lived relationships of LDS adherents. This theory emphasizes that a variety of systems or contexts surround people, including individual, couple, family, and cultural (such as religious) contexts. These contexts developmentally interact with one another and influence individuals to create distinct attitudes and values that then influence decisions, behaviors, and eventually outcomes. In this study, we explore specifically the cultural context of religion and whether LDS adherents have unique relational attitudes (attitudes that support marriage) and make unique relational decisions (decisions about cohabitation and premarital sexuality) that in turn are associated with relational behaviors that help sustain relationships, such as good communication and emotional connection, which may be associated with different relational outcomes (relationship satisfaction and stability) as illustrated in figure 1.

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24. Pew Research Center, Religion and Public Life, “Mormons in America: Certain in Their Beliefs, Uncertain of Their Place in Society,” January 12, 2012, <https://www.pewforum.org/2012/01/12/mormons-in-america-executive-summary/>.

25. Dean M. Busby, Brandt C. Gardner, and Narumi Taniguchi, “The Family of Origin Parachute Model: Landing Safely in Adult Romantic Relationships,” *Family Relations* 54 (2005): 254–64; Thomas B. Holman, *Premarital Prediction of Marital Quality or Breakup: Research, Theory, and Practice* (New York: Kluwer Academic/Prenum Publishers, 2001).

**Figure 1. The Initial Model**



First, we compare highly religious LDS members to less religious LDS members. Second, we compare these two LDS groups to the two dominant religious traditions in the United States, Catholicism and Protestantism. In addition, we include two groups of unaffiliated individuals, a highly religious group and a less religious group. Our general expectation is that there would likely be little or no differences between these religious groups for typical individual nonrelational variables such as self-esteem<sup>26</sup> but that for more relationally oriented values, decisions, and behaviors, there might be significant differences between the Latter-day Saint group and other religious groups as well as those who are not religious.

## METHOD

### Sample

The sample for this study comes from a large national study in which participants completed an online survey, the RELATE Questionnaire.<sup>27</sup> This instrument is used to provide feedback for couples about the strengths and weaknesses of their relationships and to gather data to help advance research about relationships. Most individuals who took RELATE did so because they were interested in learning more about their relationship or were taking a course or working with an educator or therapist to help improve their relationship. Consequently the sample, though large and national, likely contains a higher proportion

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26. Although based on Judd's work, we would expect the self-esteem of highly religious individuals in general to be better than that of nonreligious individuals. Daniel K Judd, "Religiosity, Mental Health, and the Latter-day Saints: A Preliminary Review of the Literature (1923–1995)," in *Latter-day Saint Social Life: Research on the LDS Church and Its Members*, ed. James T. Duke (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 2008), 473–98.

27. Dean M. Busby, Thomas B. Holman, and Narumi Taniguchi, "RELATE: Relationship Evaluation of the Individual, Family, Cultural, and Couple Contexts," *Family Relations* 50 (2001): 308–16.

of individuals interested in improving their relationships than a random sample of U.S. residents. However, because the instrument was originally developed at Brigham Young University, the LDS Church is one of the faiths that widely use this instrument, and this survey likely includes the largest sample available of LDS couples that contains extensive relational data.

Because of the nature of the relational variables used in this study, it was necessary to select individuals who were only in a serious dating, engaged, or marriage relationship in contrast to those who were not in a relationship. In addition, in order to provide the statistical power needed, only those religious groups with a minimum of several hundred individuals in the survey were retained, along with a group of nonaffiliated individuals. Therefore, we eliminated survey results for individuals who were affiliated with faiths that had fewer than two hundred people in the sample. This resulted in a final sample of 16,116 participants.

In this final sample, 16 percent were Catholic, 28 percent were Protestant, 36 percent were Latter-day Saint, and the remaining 20 percent were not affiliated with any religion. In terms of race/ethnicity, 82 percent of the sample were Caucasian, 5 percent were African American, 4 percent were Latino/a, 3 percent were Asian, and the remaining 6 percent listed “other” or “biracial” as their race. Thirty-nine percent of the sample were male, and the remaining 61 percent were female. The average age of the sample was 29.7 ( $SD = 9.8$ ). For education, 13 percent of the sample had less than a college education, 8 percent had an associate’s degree, 30 percent were currently enrolled in college, 22 percent had a bachelor’s degree, and the remaining 27 percent had some level of graduate training. In terms of relationship status, 31 percent were in an exclusive dating relationship, 39 percent were engaged, and 30 percent were married. For relationship length, 41 percent of the sample had been in a relationship for a year or less, 28 percent between one and four years, 23 percent between four and eight years, and the remaining 8 percent for more than eight years. While this sample is nonrepresentative, it is highly varied and provides sufficient numbers in each category to allow for appropriate statistical analysis.

## Measures

All of the scales were taken from the RELATE inventory and have been used extensively in previous research where reliability (consistency) and validity (scales measuring what they are purported to measure)

information has been presented.<sup>28</sup> This study provides as many details about the scales as possible, and further details can be obtained by contacting the first author of this study.

**Religiosity.** The religiosity scale consisted of three items. One item asked participants to rate how often “spirituality was an important part of their lives”; the second question asked them how often they prayed; and the third question asked them how often they attended religious services. The first two questions were coded on a five-point Likert response scale ranging from never to very often. The last question on church attendance was coded on a five-point response scale. The response options were never, once or twice a year, several times a year, at least monthly, and weekly. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient for this scale was .92, meaning this scale has high levels of consistency and reliability. For the means comparisons, we divided each of our four religious segments (LDS, Catholic, Protestant, nonaffiliated) into high- and low-religiosity groups. The cutoff between high and low was 3.0, since this indicated that respondents were spiritual or prayed sometimes or less, and attended church a few times a year at the most as opposed to monthly or weekly attendance. The percentage of individuals in the four groups in the high- and low-religiosity categories are listed in table 1. Although the percentages of each group that was divided into high and low religiosity were not evenly distributed, there was a sizeable number of people (for most groups well over a thousand) in each of the eight groups except the highly religious nonaffiliated group, which included only sixty-five individuals. Although the nonaffiliated group was primarily of interest to compare nonreligious individuals with the other groups, we left the highly religious nonaffiliated subsample in the analyses. While the percentages of the high- and low-religiosity groups are not likely consistent with a nationally representative sample, these groups can still be used for an initial evaluation of the impact of religiosity on the different scales that are evaluated.

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28. Busby, Holman, and Taniguchi, “RELATE,” 308–16; Dean M. Busby, Jason S. Busby, and Brian J. Willoughby, “Compatibility or Restraint: The Effects of Sexual Timing on Marriage Relationships,” *Journal of Family Psychology* 24, no. 6 (2010): 766–74; Busby, Gardner, and Taniguchi, “Family of Origin Parachute Model,” 254–64; Sarah L. Tackett, Larry J. Nelson, and Dean M. Busby, “Shyness and Relationship Satisfaction: Evaluating the Associations between Shyness, Self-Esteem, and Relationship Satisfaction in Couples,” *American Journal of Family Therapy* 41 (2013): 34–45.

**Table 1. Percentages of Individuals in the Four Religion Groups Classified as High or Low in Religiosity.**

Religion	High Religiosity	Low Religiosity
LDS	92% (N=5432)	8% (N=483)
Catholic	33% (N=843)	67% (N=1685)
Protestant	54% (N=2386)	46% (N=2065)
No Affiliation	2% (N=65)	98% (N=3155)

However, because the sample is not representative, the results should be interpreted with caution.

**Self-Esteem.** We used an individual characteristic scale, self-esteem, to test if the LDS participants had different patterns on a nonrelational construct than the other two religious groups and the nonaffiliated group. This provided an evaluation of whether the differences on the relational variables, if there were any, were simply due to overall differences between the LDS group and the other groups or were more specifically about the relevant relationship dimensions. The self-esteem scale is good to use for this purpose because it taps into general well-being and is strongly associated with other individual constructs like depression and anxiety.<sup>29</sup>

There were four items on the self-esteem scale, including phrases such as “I take a positive attitude toward myself” or “I think I am no good at all.” These items were adapted from Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Scale (1965). Individuals were asked to indicate how much the phrases described them on a five-point Likert response scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). In this sample, the Cronbach’s alpha for internal consistency reliability was .87, indicating high levels of reliability.

**Relational Attitudes.** The relational attitudes scale consisted of four items. These items assess how important marriage is for individuals as compared to cohabitation or more casual relationships. This scale included items such as “Being married is one of the one or two most important things in life” and “Living together is an acceptable alternative to marriage.” Questions were answered on a five-point Likert-type response scale that ranged from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Cronbach’s alpha with this sample was .79, indicating moderate levels of reliability.

29. Busby, Holman, and Taniguchi, “RELATE,” 308–16.

**Relational Decisions.** For this dimension we used four questions. Two questions were asked about cohabitation: first, whether they had ever cohabited with a partner before marriage, and, second, if they had, with how many partners they had cohabited. The third question asked how many people they had had sexual intercourse with, and the fourth question asked when in their current relationship they became sexual, if ever. These questions were also combined to create the overall scale of relational decisions for evaluating the final model. For this analysis, the items were recoded such that a higher score indicated less cohabitation, later sexual involvement, and fewer sexual partners. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .67, indicating adequate levels of reliability.

**Relational Behaviors.** There were two scales used for this dimension: negative communication and emotional connection. These two scales addressed two of the primary ways couples interact that enhance relationships: communicating in nondestructive ways and staying emotionally connected. The negative communication scale consisted of seven items that asked the participants to rate how often their partners used criticism, contempt, and defensiveness in their communication. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .91, indicating high levels of reliability.

The emotional connection scale consisted of three items that asked participants to rate how much love their partner expressed toward them, how much their partner admired them, and how much their partner included them in his or her life. These questions were answered on a five-point Likert-type response scale ranging from "never" to "very often." The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .84, indicating high levels of reliability.

These two scales were combined in the analysis of the model. The negative communication scale was reverse coded so that a higher score indicated less negative communication, and the combined scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .86, indicating high levels of reliability.

**Relational Outcomes.** This consisted of two scales: the relationship satisfaction scale and the relationship stability scale. The relationship satisfaction scale consisted of seven items evaluating how satisfied participants were with the communication, the intimacy, the way conflict was resolved, the love experienced, the amount of time spent together, the equality in the relationship, and the overall relationship. These questions were answered on a five-point Likert-type response scale ranging from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied." The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .89, indicating high levels of reliability.



The relationship stability scale consisted of three items that evaluated how stable the relationship was by asking participants how often they had thought of ending the relationship, how often they had discussed ending the relationship, and how often they had broken up or separated and gotten back together. These questions were answered on a five-point Likert-type response scale ranging from “never” to “very often.” This scale was reverse coded so that a higher score indicated more stability. The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .80, indicating high levels of reliability.

**Control Variables.** In this study we controlled for levels of education and race/ethnicity since these are two variables that sometimes influence levels of religiosity and religious denomination. Controlling for these variables allowed us to say that our results are significant even when controlling for the influence of race and education levels. The results of this study include adjustments to means and other values when holding education and race constant.

## **Analysis Strategy**

The first series of analyses were means comparisons. The first scale was a nonrelational scale, self-esteem, to contrast with the more relational scales that followed. There were four groups that were compared: an LDS group, a Catholic group, a Protestant group, and a nonaffiliated group. Participants of each group were divided into a highly religious and a less-religious group, as indicated in table 1.

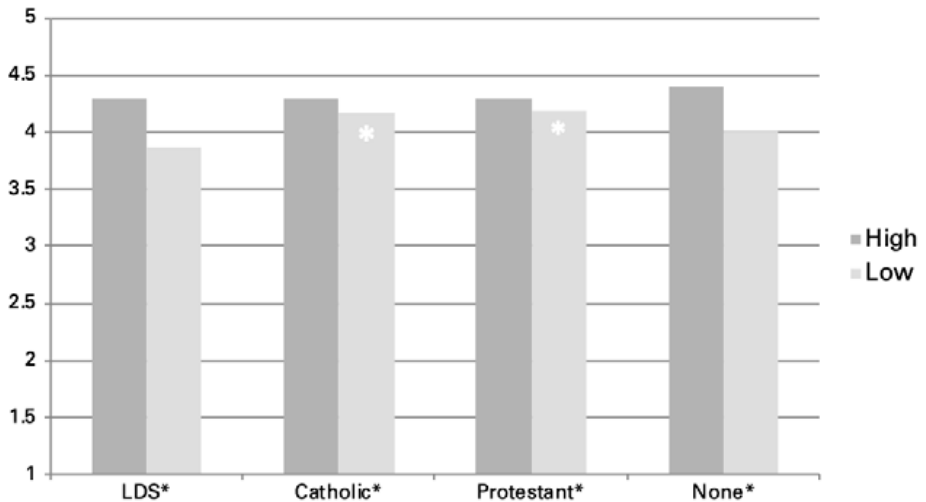
## **RESULTS**

### **Individual Variables**

Figure 2 shows the means of the eight religious groups on self-esteem while controlling for levels of education and race/ethnicity. The asterisk by the name of the religion indicates that the high- and low-religiosity groups within that religion were significantly different from one another. An asterisk on the bar indicates that that particular bar was significantly different than the corresponding LDS high- or low-religiosity groups. None of the highly religious groups were significantly different than the LDS group on self-esteem. Curiously, all of the low-religiosity groups were significantly higher than the LDS low group. Also, all of the high- and low-religiosity groups were significantly different within the same religion. It appears that being high in religiosity is associated with higher levels of self-esteem. However, there is a greater degree of difference between the LDS high and low groups than for the other groups.



**Figure 2. Self-Esteem**



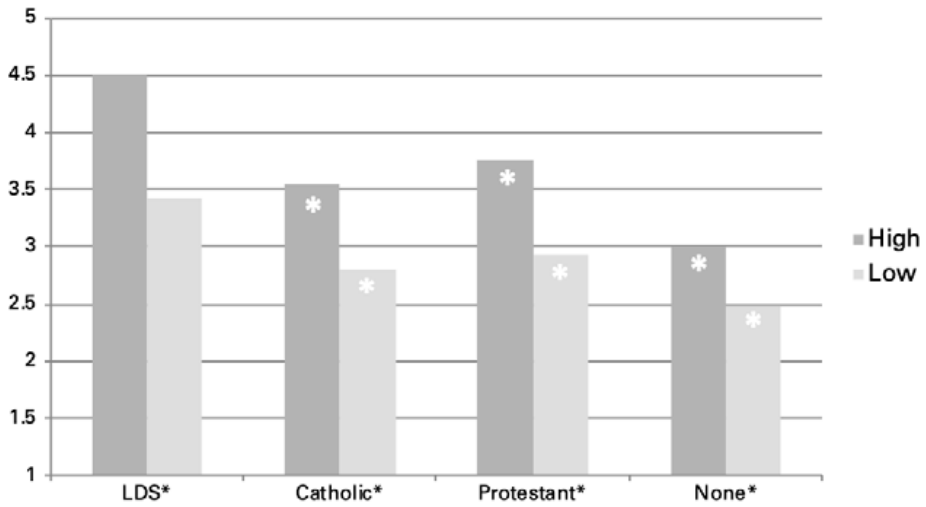
### Relational Attitudes

Figure 3 shows the means of the eight religious groups on the relational attitudes scale with the same control variables. The LDS groups are significantly higher than all other groups by a substantial margin, and all high and low groups within each religion are significantly different. It does appear that religion overall is associated with higher relationship values, but in particular Latter-day Saints appear to value marriage significantly more than even the highly religious members of the other religious denominations. It is also noteworthy that the low-religiosity LDS group has significantly higher relational attitudes than all other low-religiosity groups. It appears that even when LDS individuals are not particularly religious, they still highly value marriage. This may be related to the results reported later on relationship behaviors.

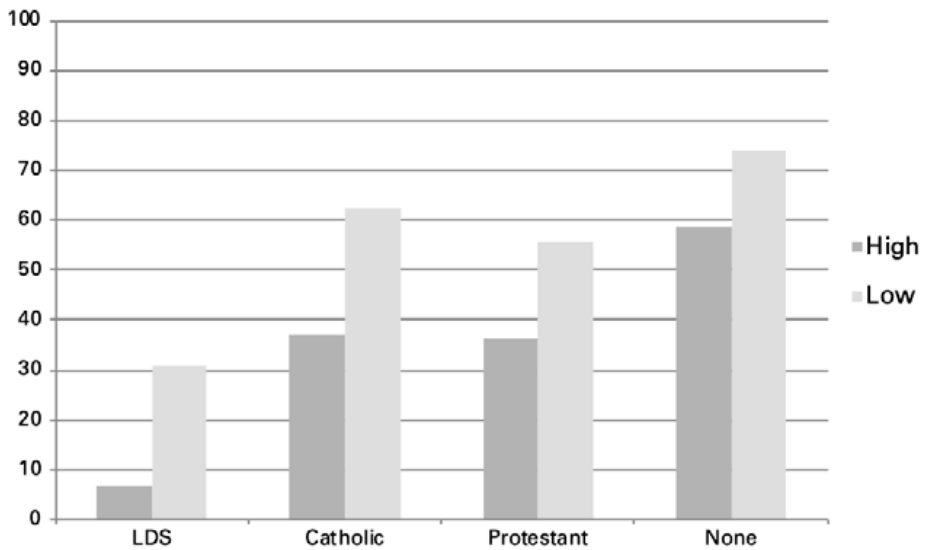
### Relational Decisions

In this section, we look specifically at three of the four questions for the relational decisions scales, including cohabitation, the number of sexual partners, and sexual timing in the relationship, rather than the overall relational decision scale, which will be used to evaluate the model later, since these variables more clearly illustrate some of the most substantial differences between the LDS group and the other faiths than the overall scale. Figure 4 shows the percentage of individuals in each faith who

**Figure 3. Relational Attitudes**



**Figure 4. Percentage of Individuals Who Have Cohabited Prior to Marriage**



have cohabited. Since this variable is a dichotomous variable, it wasn't possible to conduct means comparison tests for significance; as a result, we simply show the percentage difference. However, the statistical test evaluating whether these overall patterns were different than we could expect by chance was significant. The results in this figure show a strong association of the LDS faith with patterns of cohabitation prior to marriage and also show a general association of religiosity with patterns of cohabitation.

Figures 5 and 6 show the means for the number of lifetime sexual partners and the timing of sexuality in the current relationship and include the control variables in the analysis. Clearly, there were strong associations between religion and the amount of sexual activity prior to marriage, which is readily apparent in comparing the nonaffiliated groups with the other religions and the within-group differences between the high- and low-religiosity groups. These associations were substantially stronger in the LDS group, as were the differences between the high- and low-religiosity groups.

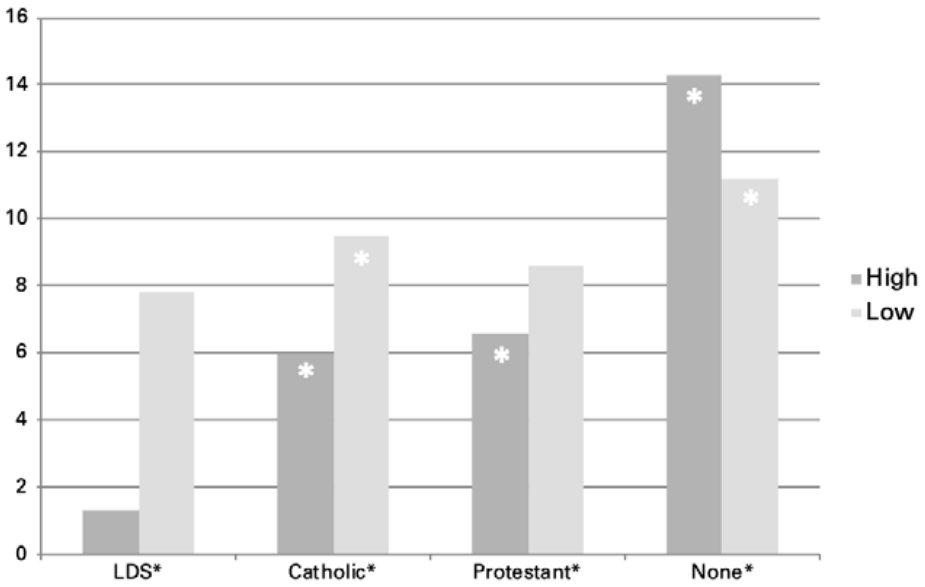
### **Relational Behaviors**

Figures 7 and 8 contain the means for the negative communication and emotional connection scales and include the control variables in the analysis. The patterns with these means are consistent with the other findings. The LDS high-religiosity group has significantly lower levels of negative communication and higher levels of emotional connection than the other highly religious groups. In contrast, the low-religiosity LDS group has statistically significant higher levels of negative communication and lower levels of emotional connection than almost all the other low-religiosity groups, and the difference between the high- and low-religiosity groups is much larger within the LDS faith. This may be indicative of the mixed costs and benefits of belonging to a high-demand religion that has a relational focus, a result that will be described in more detail in the discussion section.

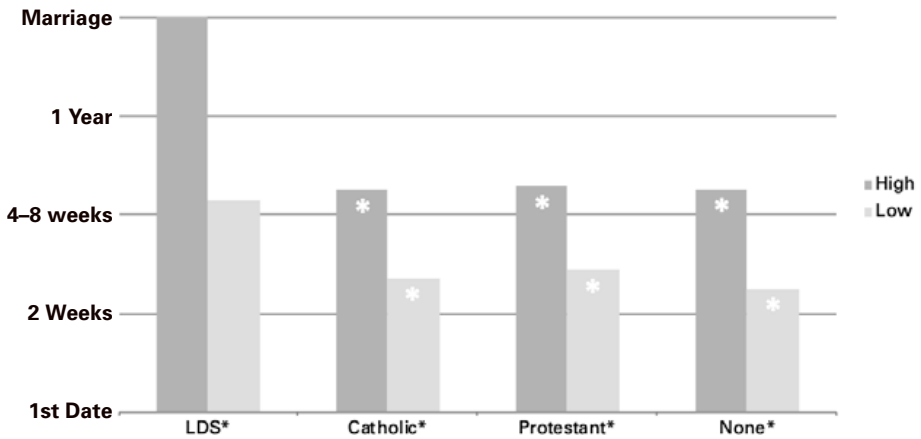
### **Relational Outcomes**

Figures 9 and 10 include the means on the relationship-satisfaction and stability scales. The patterns on these two scales are identical to those of the relationship behavior scales in that the highly religious LDS group is significantly higher than the other highly religious affiliated groups, and the low-religiosity LDS group is significantly lower than most of the

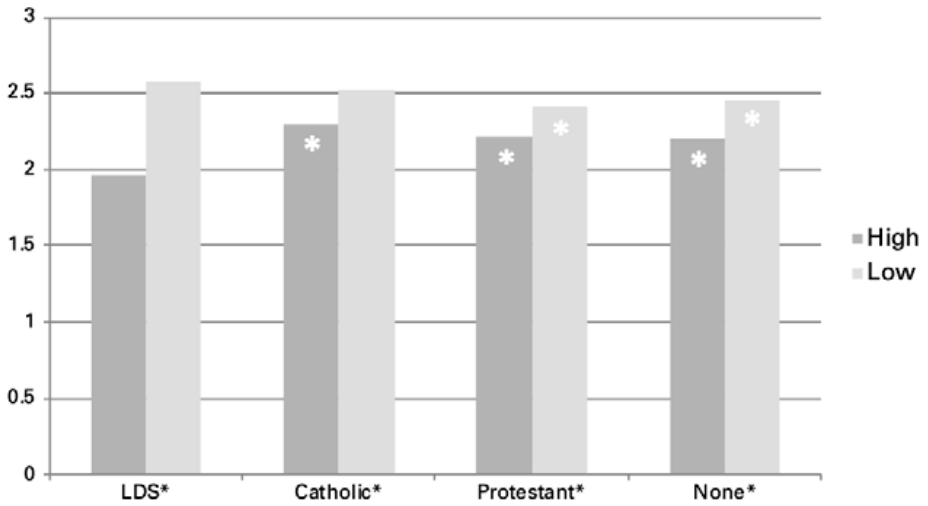
**Figure 5. Number of Sexual Partners**



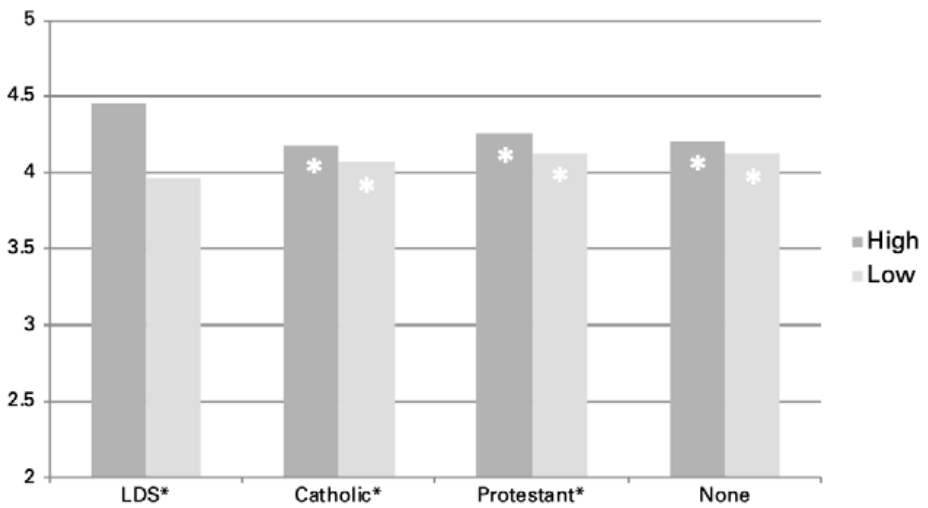
**Figure 6. Timing of Sexual Relationships**



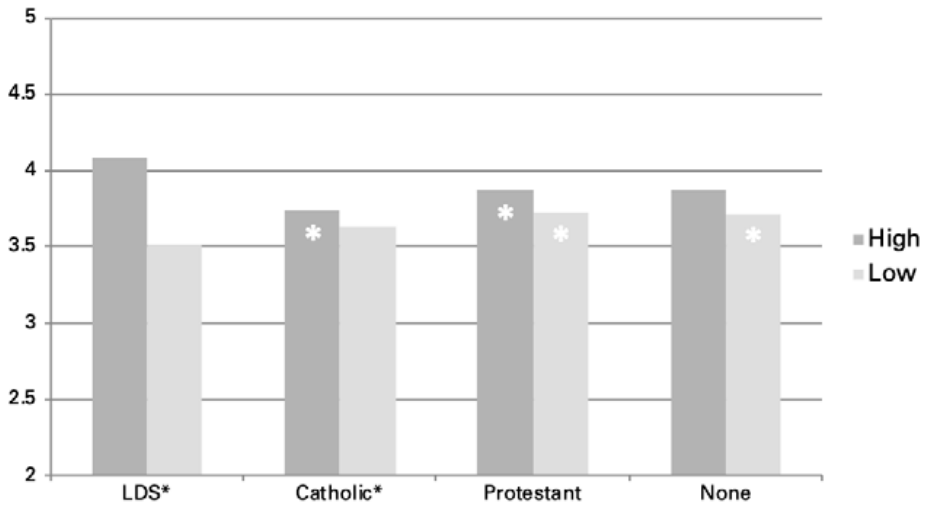
**Figure 7. Negative Communication**



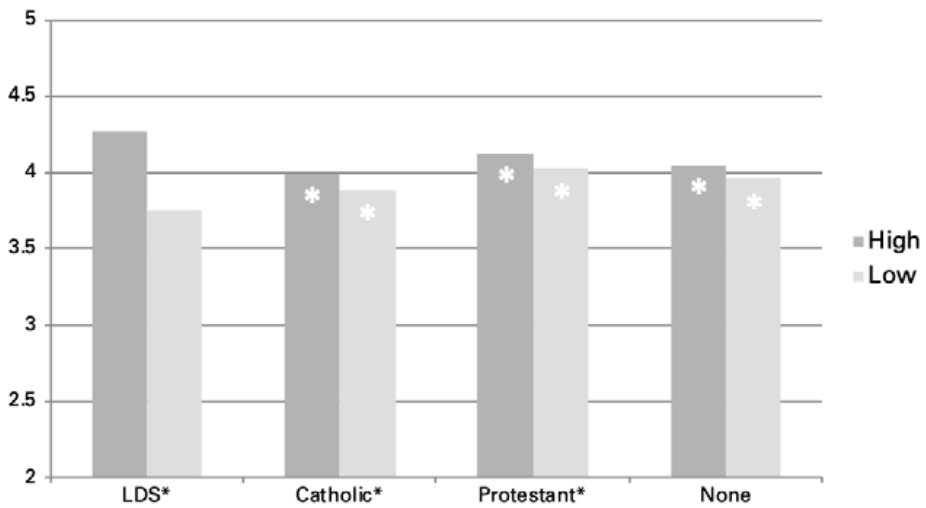
**Figure 8. Emotional Connection**



**Figure 9. Relationship Satisfaction**



**Figure 10. Relationship Stability**



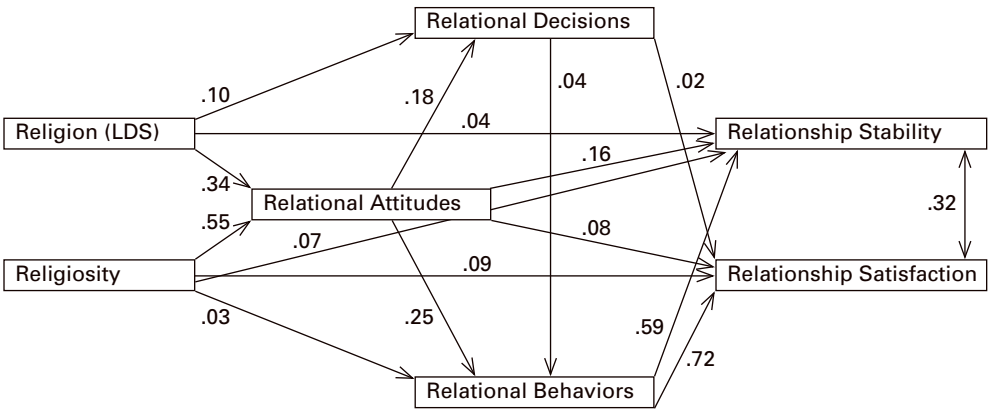
other low-religiosity groups. However, curiously, the highly religious LDS group on both scales is not significantly higher than the highly religious unaffiliated group. This may be a situation where the small sample size of the unaffiliated group is influencing the significance because the mean differences are very similar to those between the Protestant and LDS highly religious groups, which are significantly different.

**Model Results**

While the means comparisons were important and illustrate some intriguing patterns that may hint at the way LDS theology and practices influence relationships, the overall model illustrated in figure 11 is also of central interest. This model allows us to understand the associations between being LDS and relational attitudes, decisions, behaviors, and outcomes, while controlling for overall levels of religiosity, education, and race/ethnicity. The statistical program we used provides statistics to evaluate the overall fit of the model to the data and indicates that the model is an excellent fit to the patterns in the data.

All numerical values listed by the paths in figure 11 are standardized coefficients and were highly statistically significant. Pathways that were insignificant were removed. The results in figure 11 illustrate that both religion (if someone was a member of the LDS religion as compared to another or no religion) and religiosity (in this model the religiosity scale was continuous rather than the high/low designation used for the previous analyses) had significant effects on the variables in the model. The strongest effect of these two variables was on relational attitudes. In turn,

**Figure 11. The Final Model**



relational attitudes had a moderate influence on relational decisions and behaviors, as well as relationship stability and satisfaction. Relational decisions were weakly related to stability but not satisfaction, and they were related to relational behaviors. Relational behaviors had a strong association with satisfaction and stability.

## DISCUSSION

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is an interesting combination of religious distinctiveness and strictness. On the one hand, there are many similarities between LDS belief and practice and those of other Christian faiths regarding marriage and family life.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, fundamental differences in doctrine and practice make Latter-day Saint theology highly distinctive in some aspects of religious belief and observance.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, sociologist of religion Rodney Stark argued that the Church is a “new world faith” that is as distinct from traditional Christianity as Christianity is from Judaism or as distinct as Islam is from Christianity and Judaism.<sup>32</sup>

In addition, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is also a “strict church”<sup>33</sup> or a “high demand faith”<sup>34</sup> that asks much of adherents—particularly in the areas of marriage and family life. Chastity before marriage, generally more traditional gender roles, unity in marriage, a larger than average number of children, high levels of involvement in the congregation, and other factors combine to impact active Latter-day Saints. Though this higher level of demand could be seen as detrimental, research indicates that it actually correlates with normal to higher levels of mental health,<sup>35</sup> higher levels of adolescent

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30. Carroll, Linford, Holman, and Busby, “Marital and Family Orientations,” 193–205.

31. David C. Dollahite, “Latter-day Saint Marriage and Family Life in Modern America,” in *American Religions and the Family: How Faith Traditions Cope with Modernization*, ed. Don S. Browning and David A. Clairmont (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 124–150.

32. Rodney Stark, “The Rise of a New World Faith,” *Review of Religious Research* 26, no. 1 (1984): 18–27.

33. Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

34. Dollahite, “Latter-day Saint Marriage and Family Life,” 124–50.

35. Daniel K Judd, ed., *Religion, Mental Health, and the Latter-day Saints* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, Religious Studies Center, 1999).



well-being,<sup>36</sup> greater marital stability,<sup>37</sup> and other personal and relational benefits.<sup>38</sup>

Together, a faith that is strict and that is distinct from other faiths, as evidenced by the results in this study, has important implications for marriage. For example, in their study of the religious determinants of marital stability, Lehrer and Chiswick found that, after five years of marriage, couples consisting of Latter-day Saints married to Latter-day Saints had the highest rate of marital stability (13 percent divorce rate), while Latter-day Saints married to non-Latter-day Saints had the lowest rate of marital stability (40 percent divorce rate). One way to interpret this finding is that the combination of Latter-day Saint distinctiveness with religious strictness has a profound impact on marital stability.<sup>39</sup>

The findings in this study illustrate several ways that Latter-day Saint theology may be associated with relationship attitudes, decisions, behaviors, and outcomes. The initial means comparisons illustrate three important points. First, nonrelational variables such as self-esteem do not appear to be substantially different between those belonging to the LDS faith and those belonging to other faiths or no faith. The self-esteem difference primarily appears to demonstrate that high religiosity, rather than religion, is associated with stronger feelings of esteem. While other studies have shown that membership in The Church of Jesus Christ provides a variety of benefits, these findings perhaps suggest that the Church does not insulate individuals from the normal vicissitudes of individual emotional well-being more than other faiths do.

In contrast, the strongest influence of the LDS religion appears to be in regard to relational attitudes and decisions. While the mean differences and the coefficients in the model do not demonstrate large

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36. Christian Smith and Melinda L. Denton, "Adolescent Religion and Life Outcomes," in *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, ed. Christian Smith and Melinda L. Denton (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 218–58.

37. Evelyn L. Lehrer and Carmel U. Chiswick, "Religion as a Determinant of Marital Stability," *Demography* 30, no. 3 (1993): 385–403.

38. Dollahite, Marks, and Kelley, "Mormon Scholars and Mormon Families," 16–40; Dollahite, "Latter-day Saint Marriage and Family Life," 124–50; David C. Dollahite and Loren D. Marks, "The Mormon American Family," in *Ethnic Families in America: Patterns and Variations*, ed. Roosevelt Wright Jr. and others, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle Hall, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2012), 461–86.

39. Lehrer and Chiswick, "Religion as a Determinant," 385–403.

differences, taken across a substantial number of variables the patterns are very consistent and illustrate important findings. These consistent differences illustrate that highly religious LDS individuals are far more likely to hold strong marriage values and to make decisions in traditional ways regarding cohabitation and sexuality.

The third pattern is that in terms of relational behaviors and relational outcomes, there are some small but significant differences between the highly religious LDS group and others. However, for the LDS individuals who are not highly religious, the opposite effect appears; this group rates significantly lower in expressing relational behaviors that help relationships stay strong, and consequently their overall relationship satisfaction and stability are lower. It is worth considering the reasons for these intriguing and unique findings.

The findings from this study suggest that those who adhere to the unique doctrines and practices of the LDS faith are benefited in some very specific and important ways in their marriage relationships. Clearly, adherence to the LDS religion has significant associations with important relationship variables, especially in terms of relational attitudes and decisions. Highly religious LDS individuals are much less likely to cohabit, become involved sexually before marriage, and marry outside of the faith.<sup>40</sup> More importantly, in terms of predicting relationship behaviors and outcomes, attitudes that deem marriage as crucial are much stronger in LDS individuals. Why are these attitudes and behaviors unusually strong in LDS individuals?

The unique centrality of temple marriage and the need to have a significant relationship with the Lord that includes the process of qualifying for and achieving a temple marriage likely contribute to these unique relational outcomes. Catholicism, conservative Protestantism, and more orthodox branches of Judaism encourage people who are planning to marry to elevate their levels of spirituality before marriage. However, Latter-day Saints are required to obtain from Church leaders a “recommend” (a document that verifies members are ready to enter a temple and that is shown to temple workers upon entrance) in order to be eligible to be married in a temple; they thus face an even more exacting level of preparation.

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40. Stephen Cranney, “Who Is Leaving the Church? Demographic Predictors of Ex-Latter-day Saint Status in the Pew Religious Landscape Study,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2019): 99–108; Pew Research Center, “Mormons in America.”

In essence, LDS couples are asked to show their ability to become close to the Lord as a marker of their readiness for marriage. The fact that this elevation must be accompanied by deeds consistent with religious doctrine and principles adds additional weight to the process. This unique dynamic inextricably joins together religious worship and ritual with relationships with spouse, family, and community. This deep intertwining of faith, belief, God, marriage, family, and eternity may be a significant contributing factor explaining both the positive and negative findings in this study. These doctrines and principles represent some of the most inspiring and influential teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith in the area of family life and have had a profound impact on LDS attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes in regard to marriage. The success of a subset of the LDS population in this regard is something to celebrate and to work very hard to maintain.

Still, the other side of the coin speaks to the challenges faced by those who struggle with their relationship with God or with their partners. These findings suggest that Latter-day Saints who struggle to adhere to the religion may be more vulnerable to relationship distress and poorer outcomes. Perhaps when relationships are not working well, the already difficult stress of a struggling relationship is exacerbated by the sense that religious expectations are not being met. The lack of a support structure and possibly alienation from family and friends who are more religious also could undermine relationships. Of course, the direction of the association is not known, and it may be that when relationships don't go well, distance is created from a religion that consistently reminds individuals of the importance of relationships. What was once a supportive and helpful message could become a distressing message, depending on the relationship quality of adherents. If one indicator that we are living our religion requires us to be in a strong marriage, those who do not have a partner or are in a highly distressed relationship may feel alienated rather than supported by their religion. In fact, recent data on factors that are associated with people who leave the Church show that "divorce is one of the strongest and most robust predictors of having left the Church."<sup>41</sup>

The implications for members of the LDS faith are significant. It may be that for some individuals, when a marriage struggles or a divorce occurs, the sense of alienation extends beyond just the difficulties within

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41. Cranney, "Who Is Leaving the Church?" 106.

the family and is felt toward the religion and even God. The results from this study may suggest the need for individuals and families who are struggling with their relationships or with their beliefs to establish additional support structures or at least connect to existing structures in their communities.

This study also illustrates the potential value and importance of premarital education such as that offered by other faiths, because relational distress and dissolution are likely to have particularly deleterious effects on LDS individuals' relational and spiritual well-being. As much as adherence to the faith helps LDS individuals and their relationships, clawing back from divorce or other serious family problems to a sense of relational and spiritual well-being may be more challenging for LDS people. In many instances, they may elect to distance themselves from the faith rather than face the incongruence of the ideals and the lived realities they are reminded about each day.

The principle of mourning with those who mourn may be instructive here. Anyone who has "lost" a family member to death, illness, poor choices, and conflict knows how profound these losses can feel, especially when one worries about the eternal consequences. Curiously, when ward members face divorce and other types of relationship dissolution, we often feel awkward about how to mourn with those experiencing these challenges, so we distance ourselves from them. Perhaps we previously did things with the couple, but now that the couple's relationship is dissolving, we fear that if we do things with just one member of the dyad, we might be seen as taking sides in the marital conflict. There are no simple answers about how to mourn with others during these trying experiences, but surely moving toward those in distress and doing more to be with them would be better than distancing ourselves. What may be most helpful is continuing to be friends and neighbors with each other regardless of our relationship difficulties so that those feeling ostracized by someone within their family don't feel similar feelings from those outside their family.

Prevention and intervention efforts for couples prior to and continuing throughout marriage are likely to be of particular value to LDS families. Research on relationship education and premarital education illustrates positive benefits that could help people avoid relationship difficulties or recover from them.<sup>42</sup> As seen from the results in this

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42. Alan J. Hawkins, "Does It Work? Effectiveness Research on Relationship and Marriage Education," in *Evidence-Based Approaches to Relationship and*

study, LDS couples experience relational benefits. Consequently, while we often do a fine job of reaching out to people and encouraging them to stay active in the faith, which likely has some indirect preventive value for marriage problems, helping LDS individuals learn how to get along in marriage and develop loving and nurturing relationships with children could be exponentially valuable to both the strength of each family and the strength of the overall religious community. But it is striking that while relationship education based on relationship science is often conducted within many religions,<sup>43</sup> the Church does not require or encourage premarital and marital workshops that include relational science materials. Relational science simply refers to the established scientific evidence that illustrates how couples develop and sustain successful relationships. We have institute courses on celestial marriage and family relations courses, but currently course materials contain mainly the common religious material students will have usually received previously in other settings, with little information from relationship science. We are teaching how to try to be close to the Lord but not as much about getting close to imperfect human partners. While we hope the spiritual steps we learn with the Lord translate into better relationships with our family members, this may not be likely for some, especially for those who have not seen healthy relationships or consistent spirituality modeled during their growing-up years.

Perhaps we do not teach more directly about relationships because it may appear to many that we are doing quite well. When during our weekly worship services, we primarily interact with those who are active and engaged in the faith, we are getting a distorted picture of our communities. It may be that those we do not see and those experiencing interactions behind closed doors that are different than our assumptions or ideals are the individuals with an illness of faith, of family, or of fortitude who are most in need of the Healing Physician. While we can see that we are doing much that is correct and helpful for strengthening relationships, both our relationships and our faith are at risk if we do not capitalize on the valuable relationship science that surrounds us.

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*Marriage Education*, ed. James J. Ponzetti (New York: Routledge, 2015), 60–73; Howard J. Markman, W. Kim Halford, and Alan J. Hawkins, “Couple and Relationship Education,” in *APA Handbook on Contemporary Family Psychology*, ed. Barbara H. Fiese and others (Washington, D.C.: APA, 2019).

43. Alan J. Hawkins and others, “Exploring Programmatic Moderators of the Effectiveness of Marriage and Relationship Education Programs: A Meta-Analytic Study,” *Behavior Therapy* 43, no. 1 (2012): 77–87.

An analogy with physical health might be particularly helpful at this point. If physical health were a necessary condition of exaltation, like marriage unity is, it would be as if we taught our people only to adhere to the Word of Wisdom while entirely ignoring the significant knowledge from nutrition and exercise sciences. The Word of Wisdom is an excellent foundational document for underlining the doctrines relating to physical health, especially in terms of addictive substances and moderation in diet. However, it is devoid of the types of details we would need to live a physically healthy life in the context of a modern world with sedentary lifestyles, prepackaged foods, and much more scientific data about the sources of significant diseases than was known when the Word of Wisdom was revealed. We could not imagine achieving physical health without attending to these others sources of truth along with the Word of Wisdom. Additionally, even with the Word of Wisdom, we often focus extensively on the negatives rather than the positives. In fact, the evidence in our communities suggests that our focus on the Word of Wisdom is not enough for physical health, since many of us are not achieving the outcomes of the Word of Wisdom, which are to “run and not be weary, and . . . walk and not faint” (D&C 89:20), because our obesity rates are very high. In addition, if we tried to get physically healthy without a careful collection and analysis of what is known in nutrition and exercise sciences, we would be left to the whims and fads of the day that we hear in the media or from acquaintances. We would then be prone to adopt these fads to our detriment, such as eating only raw foods, over- or underemphasizing specific foods such as wheat or proteins or the newest discovered “superfoods” at the expense of a balanced diet, or exercising in an extreme way that breaks down joints or other body parts.

Unfortunately, in terms of relationship health, we are approaching the mandate to develop unity in marriage and family life as if the scriptures are the only type of truth that can inform our practices. This leaves those who are vulnerable and who develop relationship problems to rely on only existing spiritual practices and sources or the “spiritual” or relational whims and fads of the media and acquaintances. While the scriptures are an excellent source for guidance, they may lead individuals to reach incorrect conclusions and see their relationships eroding even though they continue to be diligent in their daily and weekly religious practices. They may conclude that either they or their family members are unrighteous or that the religious practices that they are participating in and that are supposed to bring them the wonderfully rewarding family relationships they hear so much about are not true.

Perhaps if we supplemented the true doctrines and practices with relationship science about normal human and relationship development, managing stress and conflict, and developing intimacy, we might give our community more practical approaches to relationships, just like exercise and nutritional science could help us have a better chance of getting and staying physically healthy. In addition, we would find out, much like many of us have discovered in regard to our physical health, that as a condition of mortality, even when we follow the best practices, some of us will still get chronic or fatal diseases. Then we might be more inclined to avoid judging one another as to why we are sick or infirm and instead support and help one another along the way.

Where can members go to find resources to integrate gospel and relationship science? Some resources attempt to directly accomplish this task, such as those published by faculty at BYU. While highlighting or promoting specific resources would be inappropriate in this venue, there are existing resources that range from broad overviews of family life to more specific topics such as dating and preparing for marriage, dealing with financial difficulties in marriage, sexuality, stress, integrating spirituality into the home, and many more. Still, it would be severely limiting to seek out books only from LDS authors since they represent such a small percentage of those conducting relationship science. More important would be for the individual member to seek out the best books on marriage by those conducting research in the area the couple needs help with. Except for the area of sexuality and dating, most of the material in these sources from nonmembers will be very consistent with gospel principles. Some material will not be consistent with Church principles, but discerning members will have no difficulty identifying and ignoring these just as they currently do with dietary advice that conflicts with their values, such as recommendations for drinking wine or coffee. Importantly, reviews from online rating systems might indicate the popularity of the sources on relationships but will rarely indicate whether the material is scientifically sound. Focusing on material from active social scientists engaged in the peer review process will help insulate members from the fads and whims of armchair psychologists who are not required to vet their work through a sound scholarly process. Indications that an author is currently engaged in the scholarly process include being a professor at a university that conducts research, publications in research journals, and recommendations by other scholars.

In conclusion, we can be pleased with the way our religious principles and strong emphasis on relationships are filtering into our marriages.



There are also points of caution in attempting to help those who are struggling with their faith and their relationships. It will continue to be important to better study and understand our unique relationship strengths and weaknesses because succeeding in family life is of the utmost importance to our well-being and to our salvation.

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# “By Study and Also by Faith”

## Balancing the Sacred and the Secular at Brigham Young University in the 1930s and 1940s

*J. Gordon Daines III*

At their inception, universities were places where all branches of learning—both the sacred and the secular—were studied. At the great medieval universities, for instance, faith and academic excellence were intertwined,<sup>1</sup> and this strong connection continued in the universities of the New World. Most American research universities began as religiously affiliated colleges whose missions were to develop Christian character and foster faith in order to prepare men for the ministry or work in the government.<sup>2</sup> But, beginning in the late nineteenth century and continuing over the course of the twentieth century, the vast majority of these research universities abandoned their religious affiliations to emphasize solely academic excellence.<sup>3</sup> By the early twenty-first century, only nine research universities in the United States claimed a religious

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1. For more information on medieval universities, see Alan B. Cobban, *The Medieval Universities: Their Development and Organization* (London: Methuen, 1975); Lowrie J. Daly, *The Medieval University, 1200–1400* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961); and Alan B. Cobban, *The Medieval English Universities: Oxford and Cambridge to c. 1500* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

2. Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 6.

3. See George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Todd C. Ream, Michael Beaty, and Larry Lion, “Faith and Learning: Toward a Typology of Faculty Views at Religious Research Universities,” *Christian Higher Education* 3, no. 4 (2004): 349–72; and Arthur M. Cohen, *The Shaping of American Higher Education: Emergence and Growth of the Contemporary System* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998).

affiliation out of the 207 classified as “high research activity” or “very high research activity” universities using the Carnegie Classification.<sup>4</sup> Brigham Young University was one of these nine institutions.<sup>5</sup>

In many ways Brigham Young University is an outlier. Established in 1875—a time when most research universities were beginning to shed their religious affiliation—Brigham Young University spent most of the twentieth century becoming “more closely tied to its affiliated church and more intentionally religious than any of the remaining religious universities.”<sup>6</sup> This paper examines some of the key steps that the university and its sponsoring institution (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) took during the mid-1930s and the 1940s to ensure that the university maintained its religious affiliation while still pursuing academic excellence.<sup>7</sup> At the core of these actions was an effort to create a space where secular and sacred education could successfully be intermingled. These actions built on the work of previous administrations and provided a firm foundation upon which future administrations could build.<sup>8</sup>

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4. Alan L. Wilkins and David A. Whetten, “BYU and Religious Universities in a Secular Academic World,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 3 (2012): 5. The other institutions were Baylor University, Boston College, the Catholic University of America, Fordham University, Georgetown University, Loyola University Chicago, Notre Dame University, and Saint Louis University.

5. Brigham Young University is closely affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For more information on the relationship between the Church and education, see “Latter-day Saints and Education: An Overview,” Newsroom, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed July 31, 2018, <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/mormons-and-education-an-overview>.

6. Wilkins and Whetten, “BYU and Religious Universities,” 5.

7. For more on this subject, see Ernest L. Wilkinson, ed., *Brigham Young University: The First One Hundred Years*, 4 vols. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975–76); Gary J. Bergera and Ronald Priddis, *Brigham Young University: A House of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1985); and David B. Rimington, “An Historical Appraisal of Educational Development under Howard S. McDonald at Brigham Young University, 1945–1949” (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 1982). While these works examine this period and Howard S. McDonald as an educational leader in university administration, the present article fills a gap by examining the unique efforts of the university and the Church during this time to strengthen mutually beneficial ties and by highlighting the important role McDonald played in these efforts.

8. Studying the history of an institution such as Brigham Young University requires access to corporate records. These corporate records are governed by various access policies, and it is not always possible to obtain access to all of the

## The Beginnings of Brigham Young University

Brigham Young Academy was founded in 1875 as a reaction to what Brigham Young saw as the dangers of secularization in public education. Young was not opposed to secular learning; rather it was the removal of the sacred from education that bothered him. He intended the new school to consciously intermix religion and secular academics.<sup>9</sup> Young explained the importance of a curriculum that integrated the sacred and the secular to his son Alfales, writing that the academy would be a place “at which the children of the Latter-day Saints can receive a good education unmixed with the pernicious, atheistic influences that are to be found in so many of the higher schools of the country.”<sup>10</sup> President Young advised the first full-time principal, Karl G. Maeser, “that neither the alphabet nor the multiplication table were to be taught without the Spirit of God.”<sup>11</sup>

Young had a specific vision for his new school. The deed of trust establishing the school specified that “all pupils shall be instructed in reading, penmanship, orthography, grammar, geography, and mathematics, together with such other branches as are usually taught in an academy of learning and the Old and New Testaments, the Book of Mormon, and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants shall be read and their doctrines inculcated in the Academy.”<sup>12</sup> The deed reflected Young’s

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records that could be useful to nuancing the historical story. In the case of this study, the General Church Board of Education records and the records of the governing bodies of the Church were not accessible.

9. For more information on the early history of Brigham Young University, see Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*; Bergera and Priddis, *Brigham Young University*; and E. Vance Randall, “Educating for Eternity: Higher Education and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice* 6, no. 4 (2003): 438–56.

10. Brigham Young to Alfales Young, October 20, 1875, photocopy, box 17, folder 1, Centennial History Committee records, UA 566, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

11. Brigham Young Academy building dedicatory services, 1892, 2, UA SC 33, Perry Special Collections; see also A. LeGrand Richards, *Called to Teach: The Legacy of Karl G. Maeser* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2014).

12. Handwritten copy of the deed of trust, October 16, 1875, 1–3, box 10, folder 4, Brigham Young University Board of Trustees records, UA 6, Perry Special Collections.

belief that education involved the “liberal arts, high moral and ethical principles, and sound factual knowledge.”<sup>13</sup>

Maeser devoted his administration to laying a firm foundation for an institution that consciously bathed secular subjects in the light of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. His students acknowledged his erudition, but they focused on his humility, love, and obedience to the prophet of the Lord when they described his influence on them. Maeser played a key role in successfully establishing an institution with the bed-rock principle of the integration of the sacred and the secular.<sup>14</sup>

Although Brigham Young Academy was founded to expressly combine faith with academic excellence, it was not immune to the influences of secularization in education. Maeser’s successor, Benjamin Cluff Jr., appointed in 1892, had been educated at the University of Michigan and was heavily influenced by conceptions of the modern university, especially its emphasis on secular academic disciplines. He was particularly interested in improving the academic stature of the school. He received permission from the school’s board of trustees to change the institution’s name in 1903 to Brigham Young University. Cluff also worked diligently to bring many leading educators with whom he had interacted, such as Francis Parker and John Dewey, to Utah to teach the faculty at the university about pedagogy.<sup>15</sup>

Cluff’s efforts to create a modern university troubled Church leaders, who worried that this model would lead to the exclusion of religion at the school, and Church leaders struggled over the first half of the twentieth century to develop a vision for what a distinctive, modern Latter-day Saint university should look like. They did not completely reject the modern university’s emphasis on academic excellence, but they firmly believed that the secular path being charted by these modern universities was not appropriate for a Church-sponsored school.<sup>16</sup> The competing concepts of academic excellence and orthodoxy created a tension that flared up many times during the first half of the twentieth century.

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13. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 360.

14. For more on Maeser’s role in the Brigham Young Academy, see Richards, *Called to Teach*.

15. Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 1:211–378; Brian Q. Cannon, “Shaping BYU: The Presidential Administration and Legacy of Benjamin Cluff Jr.,” *BYU Studies* 48, no. 2 (2009): 4–40.

16. Thomas W. Simpson, “Evolution and Its Discontents, 1896–1920,” in *American Universities and the Birth of Modern Mormonism, 1867–1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 54–91.

For example, the modernism crisis of 1911<sup>17</sup> was an early struggle to determine whether Brigham Young University would become a modern university in the image of its eastern peers, who often denigrated faith-based institutions dedicated to academic excellence. The controversy began when President George H. Brimhall attempted to improve the quality of the faculty at Brigham Young University. As part of this effort, President Brimhall hired two pairs of brothers—the Chamberlins (Ralph and William) and the Petersons (Joseph and Henry)—because of their academic credentials and encouraged them to challenge students to think deeply about difficult issues. The Chamberlins and Petersons boasted academic degrees from Harvard, Cornell, and the University of Chicago and were steeped in the pedagogies of the modern university; they aimed to improve the academic quality of a Brigham Young University education by adapting concepts and methods in use at the universities where they had studied. They were widely regarded as excellent teachers, but Church leaders soon began to receive complaints that the professors were teaching biblical higher criticism and evolution, among other controversial topics. These subjects challenged orthodox Church teachings, and Church leaders advised President Brimhall to ask that the Petersons and the Chamberlins stop teaching them. They were unwilling to do so, and so the Church Board of Education took matters into its own hands. They censured the faculty members and asked them to resign. Three of the four did so after realizing that President Brimhall would support Church leaders over the faculty members' claims to academic freedom.<sup>18</sup> These resignations had a chilling effect on instructors' sense of academic freedom and hindered BYU's ability to attract qualified scholars for nearly a decade.<sup>19</sup>

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17. The modernism crisis of 1911 is one of many instances when the university had to grapple with concepts that had the potential to minimize the sacred. Each of these instances led to ongoing conversations between the board of trustees and university leaders.

18. For more on the modernism crisis and its American context, see Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 1:418–33; Bergera and Priddis, *Brigham Young University*, 134–48; Simpson, *American Universities*, 69–80; Richard Sherlock, “Campus in Crisis: BYU’s Earliest Conflict between Secular Knowledge and Religious Belief,” *Sunstone* 10, no. 5 (1985): 30–35; and Clyde D. Ford, “Modernism and Mormonism: James E. Talmage’s *Jesus the Christ* and Early Twentieth-Century Mormon Responses to Biblical Criticism,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 41, no. 4 (2008): 96–120.

19. Simpson, *American Universities*, 85–86.

Changes in Church leadership and educational policy in the early 1920s led to a revival of efforts to make Brigham Young University a modern university—one that espoused both academic excellence and spiritual growth. During this time, Latter-day Saints with advanced degrees joined the ranks of Church leadership in positions where they could impact Church policy and attitudes. These leaders included John A. Widtsoe, James E. Talmage, Joseph F. Merrill, Franklin L. West, and Richard S. Lyman—all of whom either had served as commissioner of Church education or were members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. These leaders advocated for “Mormon students and teachers to keep abreast of broader scholarly developments in the fields of pedagogy, psychology, sociology, biblical studies, and the history of Christianity.”<sup>20</sup> These leaders oversaw the hiring of Franklin S. Harris as president of Brigham Young University in 1921 and allowed him latitude to build an academically excellent university.

Harris was the university’s first president to hold a doctoral degree (which he received from Cornell University), and he quickly recognized the importance of improving BYU’s academics. However, he first had to ensure the university’s survival as the Church retrenched from the network of schools it had built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1909, Brigham Young University was named as the Church Teachers College, the primary teacher-training institution for Church, making it central to the Church’s educational plans.<sup>21</sup> It did not, however, guarantee that the university would survive the Church’s move to reduce its involvement in primary, secondary, and higher education.<sup>22</sup> Harris worried that BYU would be closed, and he worked to reorient the university’s mission to produce both teachers and leaders for the Church and its developing religious-education program, enabling the university to survive.<sup>23</sup>

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20. Simpson, *American Universities*, 92.

21. Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 1:398–401.

22. For more information on the Church’s move to reduce its focus on primary and secondary education in favor of a religious-education program, see Scott C. Esplin, “Education in Transition: Church and State Relationships in Utah Education, 1888–1933” (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 2006).

23. For more information on the changes to the Church’s educational network in the 1920s, see J. Gordon Daines III, “Charting the Future of Brigham Young University: Franklin S. Harris and the Changing Landscape of the Church’s Educational Network, 1921–1926,” *BYU Studies* 45, no. 4 (2006): 69–98.

Convinced that the university would remain open, Harris turned his attention to academic excellence. He saw a need to improve the physical facilities of the campus and the quality of the faculty. He submitted an ambitious plan to the Church's Commission of Education and went to work.<sup>24</sup> A new library building was completed in 1925, and the university became accredited as a college in the 1920s.<sup>25</sup> In the mid-1920s and 1930s, Harris sent faculty members to eastern universities to strengthen their academic training. Many of the faculty studied religion at the University of Chicago, and the secular approach to studying religious topics that they brought back to Brigham Young University began to concern many Church leaders once again. As their academic qualifications increased, many faculty members attempted to reconcile religion and science. Their efforts were viewed by many Church leaders as attempts to move into areas of Church doctrine that were not their concern.<sup>26</sup>

Church leaders visited Brigham Young University on multiple occasions in the 1930s to reiterate that the university was to be an example of faithfulness to Church ideals. This emphasis concerned many faculty members who worried that academic freedom would be curtailed, and several left the university.<sup>27</sup> An address given by President J. Reuben Clark Jr., a member of the First Presidency of the Church, to instructors in the Church's educational network, which included BYU, highlighted the tension between the sacred and the secular. He pointed out that the primary responsibility of teachers in the Church system, including those at BYU, was to strengthen the Christian faith of the students with whom they interacted.<sup>28</sup> This address gave clear guidance that these institutions should prioritize the sacred over the secular and continues to

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24. The Church Commission of Education consisted of the commissioner of education, his two counselors, and the superintendent of Church schools.

25. For more information on President Harris's efforts to get Brigham Young University accredited and to improve the academic quality of the university, see J. Gordon Daines III, "The Vision That You Have . . . Augurs Well for the Development of Still Better Things': The Role of Accreditation in Securing the Future of Brigham Young University, 1921–1928," *BYU Studies* 49, no. 2 (2010): 63–92.

26. For more on the university's efforts to walk the fine line between academic freedom and orthodoxy, see Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 2:262–69.

27. Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 2:262–69.

28. J. Reuben Clark Jr., *The Charted Course of the Church in Education* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1938).



have important ramifications for institutions of higher education in the Church Educational System.<sup>29</sup>

President Franklin S. Harris resigned as president of Brigham Young University in 1945 to become president of the Utah State Agricultural College. Though Church leaders appreciated his efforts to strengthen the university, they also felt that his quest for academic excellence needed to be tempered by refocusing on the spiritual dimensions of education. This effort to retrench from modernity's emphasis on secularism and to emphasize the sacred in education characterizes many of the changes made at Brigham Young University during the 1930s and 1940s. Of this period, one scholar has argued that "the success of Mormon scholars, women and men, has filled the Saints with pride, but it has also left church leaders anxious to defend their authority. In the twentieth century, fierce, protracted battles ensued over academic freedom, scientific evolution, and the historicity of Mormonism's sacred past. As a result, education became the main battleground in the twentieth-century war to define Mormon identity, the struggle for the soul of modern Mormonism."<sup>30</sup> Brigham Young University was an important site for these struggles.

### Theoretical Framework for Religious Institutions

Robert Benne has developed a conceptual framework that explains why some institutions of higher education have managed to keep and strengthen connections to the religious traditions that founded them.<sup>31</sup> This framework offers a useful lens for examining the connections between The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Brigham Young University. According to Benne, research universities that remain strongly connected with their religious affiliation have the following key elements in place: (1) a vision that highlights the value and role of

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29. Scott C. Esplin, "Charting the Course: President Clark's Charge to Religious Educators," *Religious Educator* 7, no. 1 (2006): 103–19. The Church Educational System consists of the institutions run by the Church that provide religious and secular education for Latter-day Saint students at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels. The system includes the seminary and institute program as well as the Church's universities.

30. Simpson, *American Universities*, 3.

31. Robert Benne, *Quality with Soul: How Six Premier Colleges and Universities Keep Faith with Their Religious Traditions* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001).



religion on campus, (2) a mission statement that clearly reflects that vision, (3) a governance board that rigorously defends the vision and mission, (4) university leadership committed to successfully accomplishing the institution's mission, and (5) a culture—what Benne calls *ethos*—created by university leadership, faculty, and students who value the integration of the sacred and the secular.

Beginning in the mid-1930s and continuing through the 1940s, the university and the Church took a number of important steps to create a situation in which the university could be both academically excellent and spiritually strengthening. These steps, which tied BYU closer to the Church and set the university on its current course, reflect all the key elements of Benne's conceptual framework: leaders of the Church articulated a clear vision for the university; the university's governance board came firmly under the control of the Church; the Church selected a leader in Howard S. McDonald who they believed would be able to carry out their vision;<sup>32</sup> President McDonald emphasized the importance of the faculty's connection to the Church; and a strong campus culture developed that was centered on strengthening the faith of everyone involved with Brigham Young University.

## Vision

Church leaders have consistently reaffirmed Brigham Young's original vision for the university, particularly in the 1930s and 1940s, when the university and the Church strengthened their connection with one another. In an address to university students and faculty in 1937, David O. McKay, then serving as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, stated that "Brigham Young University is primarily a religious institution. It was established for the sole purpose of associating with the facts of science, art, literature, and philosophy the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even more specifically, its purpose is to teach the gospel as it has been revealed in this age to the Prophet Joseph Smith and other leaders who have succeeded him. . . . It is the aim of this university to make students *feel* that life is never more noble and beautiful than when it

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32. For more information on the circumstances of McDonald's appointment, see Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 2:425–26; Franklin S. Harris, "The New President Howard S. McDonald," *News and Bits from Your BYU Friends* (1945): 1–4; and Rimington, "Historical Appraisal."

conforms to the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”<sup>33</sup>

J. Reuben Clark Jr. reemphasized the dual nature of Brigham Young University at the inauguration of Howard S. McDonald as the university’s fifth president in 1945. President Clark said, “The university has a dual function, a dual aim and purpose—secular learning, the lesser value, and spiritual development, the greater.”<sup>34</sup> He challenged McDonald to continue the university’s pursuit of academic excellence and told him that “we look confidently forward to an increased spirituality in this school.”<sup>35</sup> It was clear that Church leaders expected BYU scholars to pursue academic excellence in an environment of faith.

Clark and McKay reaffirmed that Brigham Young University would successfully integrate the sacred and the secular. Faculty and students needed to take this responsibility seriously and help the university be a model to the higher education community.

## Mission

Though Church leadership had clear expectations for Brigham Young University, the institution did not have a clearly articulated mission



J. Reuben Clark Jr. served as a member of the First Presidency from 1934 to 1961. He played an important role in establishing the Church’s views of higher education. Photo courtesy of Perry Special Collections, UA 947.

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33. David O. McKay, “The Church University,” in *Educating Zion*, ed. John W. Welch and Don E. Norton (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1996), 10–11, italics in original.

34. J. Reuben Clark Jr., *The Mission of Brigham Young University: Inaugural Charge* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1949), 10.

35. Clark, *Mission of Brigham Young University*, 14.

statement when Howard S. McDonald became president.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, the mission of the university was communicated not only to President McDonald but also to local Church leaders. In a letter to stake and mission presidents, the First Presidency stated that the university was to “foster education and learning in accordance with Church Standards. Its crowning purpose, of course, is to graduate men and women who have also faith in the Church, who appreciate its great purposes, and who have a personal testimony of the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”<sup>37</sup>

BYU’s current mission statement, codified in 1981, captures that vision, which Church leaders still have for the university: “To assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life. That assistance should provide a period of intensive learning in a stimulating setting where a commitment to excellence is expected and the full realization of human potential is pursued.”<sup>38</sup> The mission outlines four major educational goals for the institution: (1) all students should be taught the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ, (2) students should receive a broad university education, (3) students should receive instruction in the special fields of their choice, and (4) students and faculty should be encouraged to participate in scholarly research and creative endeavors. The mission statement is often accompanied by a document titled “Aims of a BYU Education.”<sup>39</sup> The aims state that a “BYU education should be 1) spiritually strengthening, 2) intellectually enlarging, and 3) character building, leading to 4) lifelong learning and service.”<sup>40</sup> This document articulates how the vision developed by Church leaders is put into practical effect at the university. Members of the BYU community are expected to support the mission and work to ensure it is successfully attained.

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36. The university’s first formal mission statement was drafted and approved by the board of trustees in 1981 under the direction of President Jeffrey R. Holland.

37. The First Presidency to presidents of stakes and missions, February 25, 1947, box 10, folder 7, Office of the President records, UA 1087, Perry Special Collections (hereafter cited as President records).

38. *The Mission of Brigham Young University and the Aims of a BYU Education* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 2014), 1.

39. The “Aims of a BYU Education” were developed under the direction of John S. Tanner, associate academic vice president for undergraduate and international education, and were made available in 1995.

40. *Mission of Brigham Young University*, 5.

Having a clear vision and an accompanying mission (implied prior to 1981 and clearly articulated thereafter) created a strong connection between the university and its faith-based sponsor, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This connection was strengthened when the university's governance board came under the direct control of the Church.

### **Governance Board**

The deed establishing Brigham Young Academy named “six prominent men of Utah County as Trustees—Abraham Owen Smoot, Myron Tanner, Leonard Harrington, Harvey H. Cluff, Wilson Dusenberry, and William Bringham.” Martha Jane Knowlton Coray was to “represent women's interests on the Board.”<sup>41</sup> The newly installed trustees were charged with implementing the vision of the institution as articulated by Brigham Young and played an important role in guiding the institution's growth after his death in 1877. At the time it was formed, the board was not formally affiliated with the Church, nor was the new school.

This changed in 1896, when the Church incorporated the Brigham Young Academy. The academy had been struggling financially for several years, and the original board of trustees had made numerous pleas for the Church to incorporate the school and absorb its debts. Unfortunately for the academy, the Church was not in a financial position to do so for a number of years. In July 1896, the Church agreed to the board's proposal that the academy be incorporated. The articles of incorporation explained the school's financial straits and indicated that the First Presidency of the Church was willing to assume responsibility for the school. The articles also established a new board of trustees. The new board was composed of twelve individuals who would be appointed by the First Presidency of the Church, and the articles stipulated that “at least three of the twelve directors must be descendants of Brigham Young.”<sup>42</sup> Board members continued to be drawn largely from Utah County. This change strengthened the ties binding the school to the Church and laid the groundwork for even greater changes down the road.

The Church moved to strengthen the ties between itself and the university in 1939, when the board of trustees was reorganized yet again. Church leadership had begun exploring the possibility of eliminating

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41. Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 1:65.

42. Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 1:245.

local boards of education and consolidating them into the General Board of Education in 1938. By late 1938, the decision had been made to proceed. There were two major purposes for this action: to reduce the number of boards that Church leaders were participating on and to ensure that the institutions were complying with the vision that Church leaders had for them.<sup>43</sup>

Franklin L. West, Church commissioner of education, wrote to President Franklin S. Harris to let him know that “the First Presidency have now sent out letters to the Ricks College [later BYU–Idaho] and L.D.S. Business College boards of trustees relieving them of their duties and making the General Church Board operative at those institutions. You remember Brother [Stephen L] Richards recommended, and I believe the Board approved as the logical procedure, that the B.Y.U. Board meet and officially disband, thereby closing their books.”<sup>44</sup> The dismantling of the existing board allowed the First Presidency to appoint a new board of trustees.

Formal organization of the new board took place on February 2, 1939. The new board included “all three members of the First Presidency and seven members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,”<sup>45</sup> placing the leadership of the Church in firm control of the destiny of Brigham Young University. Church leadership would provide firm guidance and direction to the institution and work to ensure that the institution met its charge to be spiritually strengthening as well as academically



Franklin L. West served as Church commissioner of education from 1936 to 1953. Courtesy of Perry Special Collections, UA 947.

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43. Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 2:367–68.

44. Franklin L. West to Franklin S. Harris, December 13, 1938, box 1, folder 7, Franklin L. West papers, UA 536, Perry Special Collections (hereafter cited as West papers).

45. Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 2:363.

enlightening. This important step occurred at the same time that the majority of American universities were deliberately breaking the ties that bound them to their faith-based origins. This move also reduced the control that the university president had over the direction of Brigham Young University, which influenced Franklin S. Harris's decision to step down as president.

### University Leadership

In late 1944, President Harris informed the university's faculty that he had accepted an offer to be president of the Utah State Agricultural College,<sup>46</sup> effective July 1, 1945. Harris's departure gave the board of trustees an opportunity to further strengthen the relationship between Brigham Young University and the Church. The board asked Commissioner West to put together a list of individuals to be considered for the presidency of BYU. West compiled a list of prominent Latter-day Saint academics—all of whom held doctoral degrees and had college teaching experience. Among these individuals were George Albert Smith Jr., G. ElRoy Nelson, A. C. Lambert, A. Ray Olpin,<sup>47</sup> Henry Eyring, and Harold Glen Clark.<sup>48</sup>

While educational background was important, the board of trustees was most interested in the candidates' attitudes toward the Church. West went out of his way to gather this information for the board of trustees, writing letters to close associates of the candidates and their local Church leaders. Each letter included a variation of the question that West asked President Edward E. Drury Jr. about G. ElRoy Nelson. West wrote, "Do you know this brother, and what can you tell me concerning his attitude and loyalty to the Church, his faith in its doctrines, and his disposition to work in and affiliate with the same?"<sup>49</sup> West was confident that he had put together a quality pool of candidates who could strengthen the university spiritually and continue to build it academically. He was surprised when the board decided to appoint Howard S. McDonald—someone who had not been on his list—as the university's fifth president.

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46. The Utah State Agricultural College became Utah State University in 1957.

47. Olpin would go on to become president of the University of Utah.

48. "Candidates for B.Y.U. Pres. Correspondence, 1944–1945," box 1, folder 9, West papers.

49. Franklin L. West to Edwin E. Drury Jr., December 22, 1944, box 1, folder 9, West papers.



Howard S. McDonald served as president of Brigham Young University from 1945 to 1949. Courtesy of Perry Special Collections, UA P 2.

West was not the only person surprised by McDonald's appointment. McDonald himself wrote in September that "the appointment to this position during the spring term came as a great surprise."<sup>50</sup> McDonald was a graduate of the Utah State Agricultural College and had later attended the University of California, Berkeley. He began his professional career in California, working for the Unified School District in San Francisco for a number of years. In 1944, he returned to Utah to be the superintendent of the Salt Lake City School District. He had been in this position less than a year when he was summoned to a meeting with President J. Reuben Clark Jr. At the meet-

ing, President Clark informed McDonald that "the First Presidency was looking for a man to take the Presidency of Brigham Young University. . . . He asked me to accept the position."<sup>51</sup> McDonald asked for a week to think over the opportunity. He accepted the position on March 12, 1945.

McDonald was selected as president of the university because the board of trustees believed that his background as a stake president "could bring a strong religious emphasis to the school."<sup>52</sup> They also believed that McDonald would be more willing to accept guidance from the board than his predecessors had been. McDonald accepted this responsibility and worked diligently to augment the university's spirituality.

Like his predecessors, McDonald felt that academics were important to the university, and he worked to provide students with an excellent

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50. Howard S. McDonald to Edgar M. Kahn, September 13, 1945, box 2, folder 4, President records.

51. Howard S. McDonald, *Brief Autobiography* (Los Alamitos, Calif.: Howard S. McDonald, 1969), 57.

52. Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 2:425–26.



education. He wrote to members of the Salt Lake City School District that “my new position as President of Brigham Young University will not take me very far from Salt Lake City and my great ambition will be to train competent teachers for Salt Lake City and other school districts of the state.”<sup>53</sup> McDonald also immediately began to work with the board of trustees to develop a building program that would allow the university to accommodate the expected influx of students resulting from the passage of the GI Bill in 1944. On September 12, the board authorized President McDonald to “prepare plans for the growth of the Campus.”<sup>54</sup> However, the board was still concerned about the percentage of Church resources being dedicated to the university, and after approving the construction of a science building, they voted in 1947 to “proceed with the construction of the Science Building, doing only the minimum amount of work that would make possible occupancy of the building.”<sup>55</sup>

While McDonald’s appointment signaled the Church’s commitment to the university’s spiritual emphasis, Church leaders also remained committed to building a strong academic program at the university. They were determined to have an institution that integrated the sacred and the secular in meaningful ways.

## Culture and Ethos

McDonald took a number of steps to strengthen the university’s ethos. Understanding the university’s unique mission, he instituted moral worthiness interviews for potential students, proposed that ecclesiastical units of the Church be established on campus, and strongly encouraged students and faculty to attend university devotionals. His actions were a direct response to the vision of the board of trustees.

Most significantly, McDonald implemented procedures to better ensure that the faculty who taught at the university firmly believed in its mission. McDonald knew that Church leaders wanted faculty who could “be trusted to instill faith in the hearts of students and colleagues,” so he began asking those leaders to interview prospective faculty and to report back on their worthiness. Elder John A. Widtsoe met with

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53. Howard S. McDonald to fellow workers, June 2, 1945, box 1, folder 1, President records.

54. Brigham Young University Board of Trustees meeting minutes, September 12, 1945, box 1, folder 5, President records.

55. Executive Committee of the Brigham Young University Board of Trustees meeting minutes, May 2, 1947, box 1, folder 6, President records.



prospective faculty member Hugh B. Brown<sup>56</sup> and said that “he is a good latter-day saint, who can be trusted.”<sup>57</sup> George Albert Smith, then president of the Church, met with Robert E. Brailsford and reported that “he appears to be a man who understands what we need in our University. I was impressed with him to the extent that he answered my questions regarding what his feelings were about teaching under the influence of the spirit of the Lord. . . . The spirit he manifested while talking with him lead me to believe that he may be the kind of a man that you could employ at the B.Y.U.”<sup>58</sup> Albert E. Bowen, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, interviewed Brigham Madsen and reported that “my interview with him was very satisfactory and so far as his eligibility for a position on your faculty is concerned, with his faith and devotion to the Church and acceptance of its teachings, I find no criticism to offer. He ought to make you a good addition to the faculty.”<sup>59</sup>

The practice of having General Authorities interview prospective faculty had become so routinized toward the latter end of McDonald’s administration that he developed a form letter to introduce prospective faculty to the General Authorities who would interview them. The letter was addressed “Dear Brother,” and a typical example read, “This is to introduce you to Mr. Robert J. Kest, whom I am considering for a position in the Speech Department at Brigham Young University. Would you please have an interview with him in regard to his testimony of the Gospel and report to me in writing how you consider him for a position here at the university?”<sup>60</sup> McDonald understood that faculty played an important part in maintaining the spiritual environment that the board of trustees wanted at the university, and he believed that worthiness interviews were important in helping him identify individuals who would spiritually and academically strengthen the campus.

McDonald further recognized that the students themselves played an important role in maintaining the spiritual environment of the

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56. Hugh B. Brown was serving as president of the British Mission when interviewed. He would become a member of the Church’s First Presidency in 1961.

57. John A. Widtsoe to Howard S. McDonald, April 22, 1946, box 3, folder 7, President records.

58. George Albert Smith to Howard S. McDonald, September 10, 1947, box 10, folder 6, President records.

59. Albert E. Bowen to Howard S. McDonald, April 20, 1948, box 11, folder 6, President records.

60. Howard S. McDonald to “Dear Brother,” May 26, 1948, box 14, folder 4, President records.

campus. He reported to Bishop Floyd J. Griffiths that “we have not made any specifications for scholarships for the coming year, only that those selected are worthy students and good Latter-Day Saints who will profit by a college education.”<sup>61</sup> McDonald tried a number of different strategies to ensure that students were appropriately contributing to this environment. He reported to prospective student Bruce B. Peterson that “not only do we maintain that smoking and drinking should not be maintained on the campus, but all students who come to Brigham Young University should live all the ideals of the Church. In fact, all new students must present a recommend from their bishop before they come to this Institution.”<sup>62</sup>

By September 1946, McDonald had developed a character recommendation that was required for every student applicant wishing to attend the university. He wrote Church Education Commissioner West explaining the need for the character recommendation, stating that “we want people to know that this is a Church Institution, and that the young people here have the highest of ideals. We do not want people here who have no desire to conform to the standards of the Church.”<sup>63</sup> McDonald also wrote to the Presiding Bishopric asking, “When the meeting of the Bishops is held at the Quarterly Conference, if it is possible I should appreciate having three or four minutes to explain this character recommendation. I feel that Bishops and Stake Presidents of the Church should feel a great responsibility in sending students to Brigham Young University. This is a Church Institution, established for the benefit of the members of the Church. We only want students here who are willing to live according to the standards of the Church.”<sup>64</sup>

The spiritual qualifications of students were not the only thing McDonald was interested in. He also wanted students who were academically qualified since faculty and students at the university were to pursue academic excellence. Wesley P. Lloyd, dean of students, expressed this best in a letter to Bishop Louis H. Osterich. He wrote, “We are especially interested in all young men of the Church who are making

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61. Howard S. McDonald to Floyd J. Griffiths, February 25, 1946, box 4, folder 6, President records.

62. Howard S. McDonald to Bruce B. Peterson, July 5, 1946, box 5, folder 1, President records.

63. Howard S. McDonald to Franklin L. West, September 6, 1946, box 6, folder 2, President records.

64. Howard S. McDonald to the Presiding Bishopric, September 6, 1946, box 6, folder 1, President records.



The students at Brigham Young University play an important role in campus culture. Each year a “Welcome Back” assembly, pictured here, was held on campus. Courtesy of Perry Special Collections, UA P 2.

outstanding records in their high school and junior college work. We feel that Brigham Young University is an excellent place for them, and that they in turn can do much for the University and eventually for the Church.”<sup>65</sup> Lloyd reiterated this point in another letter. He wrote that “we are glad to learn that Miss Jean Wakefield, a junior in your high school is interested in attending B.Y.U. She will find here an excellent School of Commerce and a wholesome campus life. We are glad to have students with high standards and good academic training attend the university.”<sup>66</sup> Students interested in growing spiritually and academically were exactly the kind of students that President McDonald and Church leaders wanted at the university.

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65. Wesley P. Lloyd to Louis H. Osterich, March 30, 1948, box 16, folder 1, President records.

66. Wesley P. Lloyd to Donna Facer, April 13, 1948, box 15, folder 3, President records.



In the late 1940s, BYU students were organized into Church branches. For example, the Wymount Branch, pictured here, played an important role in the lives of married students. Courtesy of Perry Special Collections, UA P 2.

The establishment of ecclesiastical units, referred to as wards or branches, on campus in the late 1940s was one of McDonald's most significant contributions to the university's culture. In 1947, President McDonald and faculty member Golden Woolf recommended to Church leaders that "regular organized wards should be established on the campus of Brigham Young University."<sup>67</sup> McDonald and Woolf wanted to provide students, especially military veterans, with opportunities to learn Church governance and to deepen their spirituality. They also hoped to strengthen the relationship between the Church and the university by creating formal organizational ties.

Church leaders supported the concept and decided that organizing branches on campus made more sense than organizing a ward. McDonald recollected that Church leaders chose to establish branches because they provided students with leadership experience that would allow them to serve in the Church after they graduated. McDonald felt

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67. McDonald, *Brief Autobiography*, 96.

that there was “something significant about that. . . . ‘We’ll give them a branch and have the Elders be Branch Presidents and counselors and so forth.’”<sup>68</sup> The first branch on campus was organized in June and a second branch was organized in August 1947.<sup>69</sup> McDonald was convinced that the experiment was a success. In an oral history, he remarked that “more students were developing a religious attitude by having the branch. . . . Both branches, the unmarried students and also the married students and the little kiddies were being taught so it had a great influence.”<sup>70</sup>

In addition to giving students leadership opportunities, the ecclesiastical units on campus accomplished a number of different things, including solidifying students’ connections to the Church and building their spirituality. The branches also had the potential to influence the faith of the faculty since they often interacted with students and participated in their Church activities. This connection and its importance were made explicit very early on when Golden Woolf was called to serve as president of the Provo East Stake, home to the newly created student branches.<sup>71</sup> Student participation in wards and stakes on campus has become one of the hallmarks of the Brigham Young University experience. Classrooms used for teaching secular subjects become places of worship on Sundays, which helps to infuse the campus with a connection between the sacred and secular.

Sunday worship was not the only sacralizing element of campus culture. University devotionals date back to the founding of the institution. Short, daily devotionals were inaugurated by Karl G. Maeser and continued by Benjamin Cluff Jr. and George H. Brimhall. Under Franklin S. Harris, devotionals went from being held daily to twice a week. Church leaders recognized the value of the devotionals and encouraged Howard McDonald to continue holding them, which he did. University leaders and faculty typically delivered the devotional addresses. ElRay L. Christiansen, president of the Logan Utah Temple, wrote that “it is a blessing that students have the opportunity to come together in devotional exercises as they do. To sing the songs of Zion, listen to something that

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68. Howard S. McDonald, Kiefer Sauls, Leland Perry, and Karl Miller, interview by James Clark, August 7–8, 1972, Provo, Utah, MSS OH 1926, Perry Special Collections.

69. Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 2:471–72.

70. Howard S. McDonald, interview by David B. Rimington, June 13, 1979, Provo, Utah, MSS OH 1926, Perry Special Collections.

71. Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 2:472.

is elevating and stimulating to them and to meet in common fellowship in a religious atmosphere.”<sup>72</sup>

In fact, Church leaders felt so strongly about the devotionals that they often gave the addresses themselves. President McDonald was also very interested in having Church leaders participate in the devotionals. In 1946, he wrote to the First Presidency saying, “I am most anxious that the students of Brigham Young University know the Presidency of the Church and the General Authorities. I would like them to feel your spirit and to know of your great testimony.”<sup>73</sup> The First Presidency agreed with McDonald and spoke often to the student body and faculty. Christen Jensen, a faculty member who was assigned to make arrangements for the devotionals, wrote to Commissioner West in 1938 inviting him to speak at one of the devotionals. In his letter, he detailed the purpose of the devotionals and mentioned some of the Church leaders who had participated. He wrote, “During the present year we are devoting these programs to a study of the leaders of our church. The addresses are both biographical and spiritual. We think it very desirable that our students should be given a knowledge of our church leaders by our General Authorities. Up to the present time President Grant, President Clark, and Elder Albert E. Bowen, and Bishop LeGrande Richards have appeared on our programs. Tomorrow Elder Melvin J. Ballard will be our speaker.”<sup>74</sup>

Today devotionals continue to be an important part of the campus culture at Brigham Young University. Church leaders, university leaders, and faculty have the opportunity to share their religious beliefs with students and to demonstrate what it means to be successful disciple-scholars.

Religion classes were another important part of campus culture that continue today.<sup>75</sup> While faculty are expected to excel in their chosen disciplines and to bring gospel insights into the teaching of these

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72. ElRay L. Christiansen to Howard S. McDonald, December 6, 1948, box 12, folder 5, President records.

73. Howard S. McDonald to the First Presidency, May 3, 1946, box 3, folder 5, President records.

74. Christen Jensen to Franklin L. West, December 13, 1938, box 1, folder 7, West papers, UA 536, Perry Special Collections.

75. For more information on the development of religious education on the Brigham Young University campus, see Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 2:286–295.



secular subjects, Church leaders also consider it important that students learn the gospel of Jesus Christ, so classes dedicated exclusively to religious topics are a core part of the university's curriculum. These classes have a long history that traces back to the early days of Brigham Young Academy.<sup>76</sup> University leadership and faculty were well aware that "parents send their young people here for a lot more than academic training. There is a fine spirit here which is desirable for any young person whether he is academically inclined or not. There is a Religious Education curriculum from which these young people can profit and most parents want their children to have the benefits of it."<sup>77</sup> Today, Church leadership views Brigham Young University primarily as an institution at which Latter-day Saint students can receive "religious instruction in LDS doctrine while receiving postsecondary education."<sup>78</sup> McDonald used religion classes as a selling point to students considering studying at Brigham Young University. He told one prospective student that "here you will find an excellent offering in subjects related to your major field of interest and an opportunity to study courses in religion."<sup>79</sup> The dean of students told another prospective student that "all students attending the University are expected to study courses in religion each quarter."<sup>80</sup> University leaders wanted the unique nature of BYU clear to prospective students.

Branches, devotionals, and required religion courses formed the backbone of McDonald's administrative efforts to create a campus ethos that valued the sacred and secular, but other elements of campus culture were also important. Students actively participated in social activities, and returning military veterans established an honor code to enforce

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76. For more information on the role of theology courses in the early academy, see Richards, *Called to Teach*, 374–78.

77. Wilford D. Lee to Howard S. McDonald, January 8, 1948, box 11, folder 4, President records.

78. Rimington, "Historical Appraisal," 263.

79. Howard S. McDonald to Robert G. Bennion, July 28, 1948, box 12, folder 4, President records.

80. Wesley P. Lloyd to Miss Lola Armstrong, March 6, 1948, box 15, folder 1, President records. Institutes of religion had been established in association with colleges and universities beginning in 1926, and there were only ten in operation at the time that McDonald became president of Brigham Young University. *By Study and Also by Faith: One Hundred Years of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2015), 603.

academic honesty.<sup>81</sup> President McDonald highlighted these parts of campus culture to a prospective student. He wrote that “our assemblies, our religious services, and our rich offering of various students’ organizations and activities will supplement your academic life in a way that will amply repay you for the genuine efforts which you will focus on your education.”<sup>82</sup>

Through the creation of this campus culture, or ethos, Howard S. McDonald was able to successfully attract faculty and students who were willing to uphold and defend the Church’s vision for the university. Their willingness to abide by Church standards and to work to illuminate the secular through the sacred strengthened the university’s connection with the Church. The elements of campus culture that coalesced under President McDonald continue to be present on campus today.

While McDonald successfully accomplished many of the aims outlined by the board of trustees, he came into conflict with the board in other areas, including finances and decision-making. McDonald wanted to facilitate the growth of the campus in order to accommodate more students and was continually pushing the board to increase funding for the university. The board of trustees was extremely concerned about the state of the Church’s finances and so was not willing to accede to his requests. McDonald and the board also clashed on finding the appropriate balance between the sacred and the secular at the university and who should determine what that balance was.<sup>83</sup> McDonald had had complete control to make and implement decisions with the Salt Lake City School District and found it difficult to adjust to a situation in

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81. Initially established by students, including military veterans, in 1947 to focus on academic integrity, the honor code grew to include gospel standards by 1949. Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 2:462, 488. “The University Standards Office was created in 1960 to help administer the University’s Honor Code along with the preexisting University Standards Committee and the student-run Honor Council.” “Brigham Young University. University Standards Office,” Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, accessed April 2, 2018, <https://byuorg.lib.byu.edu/index.php/>.

82. Howard S. McDonald to Robert G. Bennion, July 28, 1948, box 12, folder 4, President records.

83. For example, McDonald and the board clashed over a proposed doctoral degree in religion. The idea was proposed by Elder John A. Widtsoe and supported by the board of trustees. McDonald believed that the faculty should have a say in the establishment of the degree and slowed the process down so this could happen. See Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 2:499–55.



which he needed to consult frequently with a board before taking action. These conflicts were a major part of why McDonald chose to leave the university in 1949.<sup>84</sup>

## Conclusion

Leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints value education—both academic and spiritual—and the important role that it plays in shaping young people. This is seen in the steps that leaders took in the 1930s and 1940s to tighten the ties that bind Brigham Young University to the Church. These actions were aimed at helping the Church establish an institution that mixed what they saw as the best elements of the modern secularized university and of faith-based institutions and still impact the university and its relationship with the Church today. These actions mirror those taken at other universities struggling to maintain a balance between the sacred and the secular, as elucidated in Robert Benne's framework. Church leaders clearly articulated their vision for the university and worked with university leaders to create an appropriate mission to guide the university's actions. They placed the highest Church leaders on the university's board of trustees to ensure the board would represent their vision for the university. They chose a university president who valued their vision and charged him with making the university both spiritually strengthening and academically sound. They encouraged President McDonald in his efforts to ensure that students and faculty who came to Brigham Young University had strong belief in the teachings of the Church and a willingness to abide by Church standards. They also encouraged him to develop a strong campus culture that emphasized the integration of the sacred and the secular. This campus culture featured Church branches, devotionals, required religion classes, and wholesome recreational activities. These actions allowed the university to remain tightly connected to the Church at a time when its academic peers were divesting themselves of any connection to their founding religious traditions.

The 1930s and 1940s were a pivotal era in the history of Brigham Young University. The actions taken by Church leadership and by President McDonald built on the foundation laid by previous university

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84. For more information, see Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University*, 2:479–82; and Bergera and Priddis, *Brigham Young University*, 19–22.

presidents Karl G. Maeser, Benjamin Cluff Jr., George H. Brimhall, and Franklin S. Harris, who each grappled with how to appropriately balance the sacred and the secular. Leveraging lessons learned and actions taken, President McDonald and the board of trustees worked diligently to create a lasting campus culture that would enable the university to successfully find a middle ground between secularized institutions of higher education and faith-based institutions focusing on spirituality. Their decisions and actions laid the groundwork for the university's dynamic growth in the 1950s and 1960s under Ernest L. Wilkinson.<sup>85</sup> The culture they established has continued to influence the course of the university as McDonald's successors have worked diligently to ensure that the campus culture that he helped create remains in place.

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85. For more information on the growth of the university in the 1950s and 1960s, see Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:601–723 and volume 3.

# James E. Talmage and Scientific Consulting in Early Modern Utah

Gregory Seppi

A devout member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, James E. Talmage (1862–1933) is perhaps best remembered today for his classic theological text *Jesus the Christ*.<sup>1</sup> He is also remembered by some for his extensive academic ties to Brigham Young Academy, the Latter-day Saints College, and the University of Utah.<sup>2</sup> Yet the image many Latter-day Saints have of Talmage sedately writing *Jesus the Christ* in the Salt Lake Temple has seemingly little in common with the trail-worn scientist covered in mining debris who emerges from his journals. Talmage spent much of his time from the late 1890s to 1911 working as an independent mining consultant, and in the early twentieth century, he played a major role as a scientific consultant in many legal disputes involving Utah's burgeoning mining industry.<sup>3</sup>

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1. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ: A Study of the Messiah and His Mission according to Holy Scriptures Both Ancient and Modern* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1915).

2. The Brigham Young Academy was the forerunner to Brigham Young University. Talmage graduated from the academy in 1879 and stayed on as a teacher until 1882. The academy helped pay for Talmage's studies at Lehigh University and Johns Hopkins University from 1883 to 1884, and Talmage resumed teaching at the academy from late 1884 to 1888. He then taught at the Latter-day Saints College until 1894, when he was asked to assume the presidency of the University of Utah. See John R. Talmage, *The Talmage Story: Life of James E. Talmage—Educator, Scientist, Apostle* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1972), 12, 20–30, 42, 46, 53–55, 78–80, 122–23.

3. In 1911, when Talmage was ordained as an Apostle for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, much of his consultant work ended, though he continued taking some consulting jobs thereafter.

While this area of Talmage's life is mentioned in a biography written by his son, John R. Talmage,<sup>4</sup> scholars have tended to focus on the theological, scientific, and educational contributions James E. Talmage made<sup>5</sup> and have ignored his involvement in Utah's mining and smelting industries.<sup>6</sup> A well-known and highly educated expert witness, Talmage was sought after for his expertise in applied chemistry and mining, as well as for his reputation as an important religious and civic leader. In this article, I draw on Talmage's journals, correspondence, and research files to provide glimpses into Talmage's experiences as an assayer, surveyor, and legal consultant for the mining industry between 1900 and 1913.

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4. John R. Talmage, *Talmage Story*, 160–75.

5. Previous works on Talmage's life include John R. Talmage, *Talmage Story*; James E. Talmage, *The Essential James E. Talmage*, ed. James Harris (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997); and Dennis Rowley, "Fishing on the Kennet: The Victorian Boyhood of James E. Talmage, 1862–1876," *BYU Studies* 33, no. 3 (1993): 480–520. Important studies on *Jesus the Christ* include Malcolm R. Thorp, "James E. Talmage and the Tradition of Victorian Lives of Jesus," *Sunstone* 12, no. 1 (January 1988): 8–13; Clyde D. Ford, "Modernism and Mormonism: James E. Talmage's *Jesus the Christ* and Early Twentieth-Century Mormon Responses to Biblical Criticism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 41, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 96–120; and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, *James E. Talmage's Jesus the Christ Study Guide* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2014). Scholarship on Talmage's role in modernizing Church teachings and minimizing polygamy-related doctrines include Richard S. Van Wagoner, Steven C. Walker, and Allen D. Roberts, "The 'Lectures on Faith': A Case Study in Decanonization," *Dialogue* 20, no. 3 (Fall 1987): 71–77; Bradley Kime, "Exhibiting Theology: James E. Talmage and Mormon Public Relations, 1915–20," *Journal of Mormon History* 40, no. 1 (Winter 2014): 208–38; Brian William Ricks, "James E. Talmage and the Nature of the Godhead: The Gradual Unfolding of Latter-day Saint Theology" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 2007), 117–34; and Matthew Bowman, *The Mormon People: The Making of an American Faith* (New York: Random House, 2012), 161–67.

6. Though not examined in detail here, Talmage's involvement in Utah's smelting companies from 1904 to 1908 was extensive and is significant given recent work on smelters in Montana and Colorado. As environmental history continues to emerge as an important area of western American history, Talmage's support for smelters and miners is an area of research that deserves further consideration. See George Vrtis, "A World of Mines and Mills: Precious-Metals Mining, Industrialization, and the Nature of the Colorado Front Range," in *Mining North America: An Environmental History since 1522*, ed. J. R. McNeill and George Vrtis (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 73–107; see also Timothy James LeCain, "Copper and Longhorns: Material and Human Power in Montana's Smelter Smoke War, 1860–1910," in McNeill and Vrtis, *Mining North America*, 166–90.

## Education

James E. Talmage was a graduate of Brigham Young Academy, where he taught chemistry until he left in 1882 to further his education at Lehigh University. While he was there, he completed the coursework for degrees in chemistry and geology. In 1883, he pursued advanced training at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, and he might have gone on to earn additional formal degrees, but the advance on his salary was rescinded after the Brigham Young Academy caught fire in late 1883, which required the school to shift its relatively meager resources toward rebuilding. Talmage returned home to Provo, Utah, in 1884 and continued teaching.<sup>7</sup> He taught at other colleges in Utah, and he would eventually earn a PhD from Illinois Wesleyan University in 1896. Talmage's training in science was thoroughly modern, experiment driven, and evidence based. Several of his school notebooks are preserved in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections at Brigham Young University, and they are densely populated with scientific and mathematic notes, formulas, and references to scholarly works of the 1880s. This training was the basis for Talmage's approach to his work as a mining consultant.



James E. Talmage (*left*) was a prominent educator in Utah in the late nineteenth century. He is pictured here with two other Utah educators, John R. Park (*center*) and Karl G. Maeser (*right*). This photograph was taken during or shortly after Talmage's service as the president of the University of Deseret (later University of Utah). Educators P.3, 1897, Utah State Historical Society Classified Photo Collection. Used by permission, Utah State Historical Society.

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7. John R. Talmage, *Talmage Story*, 53–54.

His academic study of geology and chemistry was enhanced by the knowledge he gained from practical experience with Utah's natural environments. Well before he began working as a consultant, Talmage visited the mines and geological sites all around Provo. As early as 1881, he undertook geological expeditions and visited mines primarily to document the geological history of Utah and to better understand its diverse physical environments.<sup>8</sup> Talmage continued to investigate mines while he studied outside of Utah as a student at Lehigh University and Johns Hopkins University. During this time, he acquired fossils from phosphorus plants near Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and toured regional mines.<sup>9</sup>

### Consultant Work

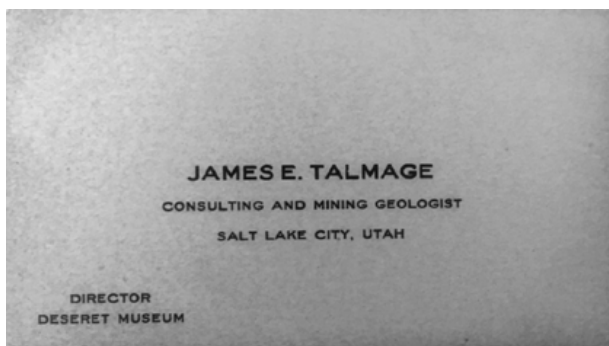
The early twentieth century was a heady time for Utah's industrial development as massive smelting operations and railroad construction made formerly unprofitable coal, salt, copper, silver, and iron mines valuable.<sup>10</sup> The increased industrialization and larger focus on mining resulted in significant changes to life in Utah. Regarding the conflict between industrial development and the more traditional economies of farming and self-sufficiency, two historians of this period in Utah's development

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8. The earliest entry in Talmage's journal regarding gathering mineral samples dates to April 7, 1881. The entry for this day reads, "Spent the day in 'Slate Cañon' collecting specimens and examining aspect of the region. Fine place for collecting 'Micaceous shale' and 'Micaceous-sandstone.'" James E. Talmage, journal, 1:49 (April 7, 1881), MSS 229, series 1, box 1, folder 1, James E. Talmage Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

9. Talmage, journal, 1:222 (July 31, 1883); Julianna Bratt, "To Lay a Single Stone: A Preliminary Investigation of James E. Talmage as a Scientist and Museum Professional" (Library Research Grants, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 2011), 15, [https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/libraryrg\\_studentpub/16/](https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/libraryrg_studentpub/16/).

10. For an overview of the development of coal, copper, salt, and silver mining, see Thomas G. Alexander, "Generating Wealth from the Earth: 1847–2000," in *From the Ground Up: The History of Mining in Utah*, ed. Colleen Whitley (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2006), 38–43. For further analysis on copper mining, see Bruce D. Whitehead and Robert E. Rampton, "Bingham Canyon," in *From the Ground Up*, ed. Whitley, 224–25. For an extensive analysis on iron mining, see Janet Seegmiller, "Iron County," in *From the Ground Up*, ed. Whitney, 197–219 (especially 205–6).



James E. Talmage Business Card, circa 1900–1910. Courtesy Talmage Papers, Perry Special Collections.

observed, “At stake were such diverse considerations as job opportunities, enhanced payrolls, air and water pollutants, despoiled land, radically altered farming strategies, and various changes in life-style. In this early period of Utah’s industrial revolution the by-products of change were largely unanticipated. But expected or not they touched the lives of individuals, brought interest groups into being, and triggered a communitywide examination of values and interests.”<sup>11</sup> Due to the complex nature of these new developments, Utah needed the services of a qualified, reputable consultant such as Talmage.

With his formal academic credentials and deep knowledge of Utah’s environs, Talmage was well positioned to supplement the relatively low salary earned from his position as the Deseret Chair of Geology at the University of Utah with assaying and surveying services. As a professor, Talmage earned an annual salary \$2,400—not a small amount for the time but no large sum either, given his responsibilities.<sup>12</sup> We do not know how much Talmage generally charged as an expert witness, but in 1912, at or near the height of his prestige, he estimated the cost for his services from \$500 to \$1,000 for a full property inspection.<sup>13</sup> His

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11. John E. Lamborn and Charles S. Peterson, “The Substance of the Land: Agriculture v. Industry in the Smelter Cases of 1904 and 1906,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (Fall 1985): 310.

12. John R. Talmage, *Talmage Story*, 142.

13. Fred J. Holton to James E. Talmage, August 10, 1912, 2, typescript, MSS 1232, box 5, folder 12, James E. Talmage Collection, 1879–1933, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.



financial success as a consultant led him to consider resigning from his chair in the geology department at the University of Utah in 1904–5, and he finally left his formal academic career behind in 1907.<sup>14</sup>

Despite working actively as a professor at the University of Utah until 1907 and his increased assignments from Latter-day Saint leaders, Talmage traveled extensively by horse and rail to mines all over the American West as a consultant.<sup>15</sup> In 1911, however, Talmage was called to serve in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and John R. Talmage notes that Talmage's direct involvement in mining-related consulting declined greatly as a result.<sup>16</sup> Yet his ecclesiastical responsibilities sometimes overlapped with his geological expertise, most notably in the case of the "Dream Mine," also known as the Relief Mine, in 1913. During this highly controversial situation, Talmage made a thorough analysis of the site and came away convinced that the workers were being taken advantage of. His journal includes significant commentary on his experiences at the Dream Mine in Spanish Fork as well as at the Majestic Gold Mine in Brigham City, sometimes called "the Dream Mine in the north" by contemporaries.<sup>17</sup> His involvement as an Apostle with these mines and his involvement as a consultant in two other significant cases are discussed below to establish a better understanding of Talmage, his work, and the contours of life in early twentieth-century Utah.

## Reputation

Talmage considered the consulting jobs he took before agreeing to work for one side or the other. After his expert testimony helped the Excelsior Iron Mining Company secure its patent on a portion of iron veins in Iron County in 1904, Talmage recorded in his journal, "The case has been decided in favor of the parties for whom I appeared. . . . In this case I was asked by each side to investigate and testify; I took the side I

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14. John R. Talmage, *Talmage Story*, 165–67.

15. Given his extensive scientific education in chemistry and geology, Talmage was qualified to both map out placer veins and assess the value of mines. He chemically analyzed ore percentages, toured mines, and provided highly detailed reports to mine owners regarding their holdings. An example of his reporting is found in his papers at BYU. See James E. Talmage to A. S. Burrows, October 25, 1910, typescript, MS 229, box 21, folder 1, Talmage Papers, Perry Special Collections.

16. John R. Talmage, *Talmage Story*, 161.

17. Talmage, journal, 15:86–89 (July 16 and 19, 1913).



thought to be right; though perhaps hope of financial gain if considered at all would have indicated other action.”<sup>18</sup>

Never one to hold his tongue when matters of geology were at stake, Talmage’s draft of instructions to the lawyers representing Excelsior Iron Mining (owners of the Adams and Armstrong Mines) were quite dismissive of the opposing expert witnesses. Their claim was that certain Iron County lodes were separate bodies of ore, unconnected to a main body of iron ore patented by the Armstrong Mining Company. Of this claim, Talmage wrote, “Is it so that a definition of placer deposits has been constructed to specially suit the wishes of [the defendants] in this case? Would the experts who have defined lodes [as unbroken veins of ore with no geological separation between segments of the lode] dare incorporate [*sic*] such definitions in a professional paper to be read before a gathering of their peers and to be published over their signatures to the world?”<sup>19</sup>

These biting remarks provide a glimpse into the language used by scientific authorities to contest their opponents’ claims in early twentieth-century Utah courts. While Talmage’s declamation against his opponents in this case may seem virulent, he was appreciated at court and by his associates in the mining industry. In 1906, a laudatory article in the *Salt Lake Mining Review* noted, “Dr. Talmage, in a most forceful manner, has made his knowledge and experience felt throughout the mining camps of the west, and his recognized ability in his profession has placed him in the front ranks of men possessed of scientific attainments. With big mining men his word is authority, and his recommendation or

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18. James E. Talmage, “Personal Journal, James Edward Talmage, Salt Lake City, Utah. For the Year 1904,” 41 (November 4, 1904), MSS 229, Talmage Papers, Perry Special Collections. This case was particularly interesting since the Excelsior Iron Mining Company secured only a small part of a larger disputed section of mining, but Talmage’s satisfaction with the case’s outcome suggests that this was nevertheless seen as a victory within the company and was possibly their intended outcome from the start.

19. James E. Talmage, “Suggestions as to Important Points for Argument,” 3, box 19, folder 21a, Talmage Papers, Perry Special Collections. Ironically, the legal definition of a *claim* included only those parts of a lode that a government surveyor included in the formal claim. While some portion of the iron lode being mined by the opposition was, according to the judge’s final decision, actually part of the Armstrong Mining Company’s surveyed claim, the vast majority of the portions of the lode claimed by Armstrong Mining in its suit were outside of their survey. See also Talmage, “Personal Journal . . . for the Year 1904,” 41.

condemnation of a mining property is final with those by whom he is employed.”<sup>20</sup>

Talmage developed this reputation through his work as a reliable scientific consultant and expert witness on several important Utah mining-related lawsuits.

### ***Herriman Irrigation Company v. George W. Keel* (Butterfield Mining Company)**

The earliest mining-related lawsuit known to involve Talmage began in 1898—the Herriman Irrigation Company, plaintiff, against George W. Keel as receiver of the Butterfield Mining Company, defendant. The city of Herriman had been settled in 1852, and at about that time, the Herriman Irrigation Company was incorporated to control the flow of water in a local stream.<sup>21</sup> In 1894, the Butterfield Mining Company established a “head gate in the natural channel of the creek, and diverted about one-half of the water then flowing in the stream.”<sup>22</sup> The mining company also changed the normal flow of underground water when it constructed two massive tunnels upstream from Herriman—the Queen Tunnel, running 2,900 feet, and the Butterfield Tunnel, running over 8,200 feet. Herriman’s farmers argued that allowing the company to further divert water from the creek would cause a water shortage. Therefore, in 1897, Herriman Irrigation began a lawsuit against Butterfield Mining, naming the company’s receiver, George W. Keel, as the defendant.<sup>23</sup>

The case was initially ruled in favor of Butterfield Mining. Herriman Irrigation then appealed, and the case went to the Utah Supreme Court,

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20. “Men Who Have Been Foremost in Utah Mining,” *Salt Lake Mining Review* 8, no. 13 (October 15, 1906): 6.

21. *Herriman Irrigation Co. v. Keel and Butterfield Mining Co.*, 25 Utah 96, 69 Pac. 719 (Utah 1902).

22. *Herriman Irrigation Co.*, 25 Utah at 98.

23. The Butterfield Mining Company was conveyed to George W. Keel by Michael Gibbons in December 1892, and “by order of the Third Judicial District Court of the State of Utah, for Salt Lake County, in the case of Wood Grocer and Produce Company, etc. v. Butterfield Mining Company, George W. Keel was, January 7, 1902, appointed receiver of all property and effects of the Butterfield Mining Company”; George W. Woodruff, “Patten et al. v. Conglomerate Mining Co.,” *Decisions of the Department of the Interior and the General Land Office in Cases Relating to the Public Lands* 35 (July 1, 1906–June 30, 1907): 619.



Water being diverted in Herriman, Utah. In 1897, the Herriman Irrigation Company sued the Butterfield Mining Company for diverting too much water from a local stream. Talmage was hired as a consultant in the case. A. A. Clark Company, Herriman Ditch, September 1913, Shipler Commercial Photographers Collection. Used by permission, Utah State Historical Society.

which on March 19, 1899, remanded the case for a new trial to determine what percentage of water was due to Keel and Butterfield Mining.<sup>24</sup> This required further geological analysis of the area, and James E. Talmage was hired as a consultant to determine how much water had been diverted by Butterfield Mining and what percentage should be required to flow through to Herriman. Talmage described several of his visits to the holdings of Butterfield Mining in his journal:

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24. "Big Water Case on Trial," *Salt Lake Herald* 29, no. 332 (May 1, 1900): 3. The Utah Supreme Court's first ruling is found in *Herriman Irrigation Co. v. Butterfield Mining and Milling Co.*, 19 Utah 453, 57 Pac. 537 (Utah 1900).

May 2 [1900]. Went to Revere by morning train, thence to Butterfield Cañon and vicinity horseback. I was accompanied by Bro. E. S. Hinckley<sup>25</sup> of Provo, and at Revere we were joined by Bishop C[r]ane of Herriman.<sup>26</sup> Spent the entire day examining the geological structure of the region. Traversed the celebrated Butterfield tunnel its full length of 9000 feet into the hill.<sup>27</sup> Reached Herriman at 7 p.m., from which place we drove to the City [Salt Lake City], reaching home shortly before midnight. The journey was made necessary by the circumstances attending an important trial now in progress in the District Court, in which the Herriman Irrigation Company contends for the right to certain waters, which they claim have been diverted by the Butterfield Mining Co. and others through the construction of the tunnel. In this case I have been subpoenaed as a witness, to give evidence on certain geological matters. . . .

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25. Edwin Smith Hinckley (1868–1929) was a geologist and alumnus of Brigham Young Academy. He earned a bachelor's degree in geology from the University of Michigan in 1895 and then returned to Provo, where he taught at Brigham Young Academy. He served as a counselor to BYU President George H. Brimhall in 1904, following the academy's transition into a university. Hinckley also served as dean of the Church Teachers College at BYU. Given his close ties to Brigham Young Academy and his background in geology, he was a natural choice to accompany Talmage on this geological excursion, and he also served as a witness for the plaintiffs. Cory Nimer, "Contributions of the Class of 1891: Edwin S. Hinckley," *Special Collections Blog*, Perry Special Collections, February 27, 2016, <https://sites.lib.byu.edu/special-collections/2016/02/27/contributions-of-the-class-of-1891-edwin-s-hinckley/>.

26. James Stannard Crane (1857–1915) was called to serve as bishop in Herriman in 1897. Born in Pulham, Norfolk, England, he immigrated to Utah in 1866 and was baptized in 1867. In 1901, he was the vice president of the Herriman Irrigation Company. Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, vol. 1 (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History, 1901), 580.

27. The Butterfield tunnel is largely forgotten today. A French company began construction on the tunnel in 1892, and \$250,000 of labor and heavy machinery was invested. The tunnel was the main thoroughfare along a section of land with numerous lodes on either side. In theory, it allowed the company to more easily access each of its valuable claims. The tunnel's main purpose, however, was to drain water buildup that would otherwise make mining impossible. One history noted that "in 1895 [the tunnel] reached a length of 8,200 feet. . . . Beginning in 1923, the U.S. company [United States Smelting, Refining and Mining] extended the Butterfield tunnel another 10,000 feet to its final length of 18,400 feet." Don Strack, "Butterfield Tunnel," UtahRails.net, updated November 1, 2018, <https://utahrails.net/bingham/butterfield-tunnel.php>.

May 5 [1900]. Spent entire day examining the Butterfield Minning [*sic*] Company's property and adjacent formations. Went to Revere by early morning R. G. W. train, thence horseback over the hills to Bingham Cañon[,] Butterfield Cañon[,] etc.<sup>28</sup> Bishop Crane and Bro. George Miller of Herriman met me at the railway and accompanied me during the day.<sup>29</sup> Barlow Ferguson one of the attorneys for the plaintiff took part of the journey, but remained to visit in Bingham.<sup>30</sup> We reached Herriman sometime after 9 p.m., too late to permit of my returning home. Spent the night at Bishop Crane's. Ill tonight, partly from exertion at great altitudes, but more particularly through my having encountered foul air in a tunnel of the Queen mine today. I was passing through a tunnel and had just gone beyond a door dividing the passage when my candle went out from "choke-damp" present, and I almost lost consciousness.<sup>31</sup>

Though Talmage survived his encounter with chokedamp (also known as blackdamp), this incident illustrates just one of the many hazards that Talmage faced as a consultant for mining companies.

The contradicting testimony of expert witnesses on either side of this case led Judge Henry H. Rolapp, the appellate court judge responsible for setting the water due to either side, to organize a visit to the site of controversy in person. Talmage described the trip in his journal:

May 21 [1900]. Proceeded by train to Revere thence by team to Herriman and Butterfield cañon, and then went horseback over part of the ground concerned in the suit at law between the Herriman Irrigation Co., and the Butterfield Mining Co. The journey was undertaken by

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28. The R. G. W. was the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad line—the most extensive narrow-track railroad in the United States in the nineteenth century. Further information can be found in Robert G. Athearn, *The Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad: Rebel of the Rockies* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977).

29. George John Miller (1871–1941), a longtime resident of Herriman, was the president of the Herriman Irrigation Company. "Obituaries and Vital Statistics Gathered from S. L. and Intermountain Territory," *Salt Lake Telegram*, October 6, 1941, 18.

30. Barlow Ferguson (1859–1926) was a successful Utah lawyer. He graduated from the Brigham Young Academy in 1880 and privately studied law until he passed the bar before the state supreme court in 1886. In 1892, he formed the firm of Ferguson and Cannon with John M. Cannon, son of George Q. Cannon. "Barlow Ferguson," *Biographical Record of Salt Lake City and Vicinity* (Chicago: National Historical Record Co., 1902), 111–12.

31. Talmage, journal, vol. 10, May 2 and 5, 1900.

order of the court. Party comprised Judge Rolapp<sup>32</sup> before whom the case is tried, Mr. Keel (one of the defendants) Attorney George Sutherland<sup>33</sup> and Engineer Doremus [Doremus]<sup>34</sup> (for the defendants); and on the plaintiff's side,—Bishop Crane of Herriman, Attorney Barlow Ferguson, and myself. We spent the entire day on the ground, and part of the night in the Butterfield tunnel. Passed the night at Mr Keel's residence near the tunnel mouth.<sup>35</sup>

Following this visit to Herriman and the Butterfield Canyon, Judge Rolapp ultimately decided in favor of Butterfield Mining, which meant it could appropriate 80 percent of the water from the Butterfield Stream for whatever purpose it desired. Judge Rolapp noted, "It is true that a conclusion was reached by plaintiff's experts, based upon various theories, to the effect that they could account for no other cause for the drying up of these springs except the excavation of the defendants' tunnels,

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32. Henry H. Rolapp was an "Ogden judge and prominent Mormon businessman" who "held a number of offices in Weber County, was a State Board of Corrections member, and in 1895 served in the territorial Supreme Court. Prominent in LDS affairs, he became the president of the Eastern States Mission in 1928." John Gary Maxwell, *Robert Newton Baskin and the Making of Modern Utah* (Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark, 2013), 282 and n. 4.

33. George Sutherland (1862–1942) was not a member of the Church but attended the Brigham Young Academy in the late 1870s and early 1880s. He eventually received his legal credentials from the University of Michigan Law School. In 1900, he was "elected to a term as Utah's congressman, and in 1905 he returned to Washington as a U.S. senator." He would go on to be elected president of the American Bar Association in 1916. Popular among Washington, D.C., Republicans, Sutherland was nominated by Warren G. Harding for the U.S. Supreme Court in 1922, and he served until 1938. Since Sutherland's early education occurred at the Brigham Young Academy, he and Talmage were likely at least somewhat familiar with one another. See W. Paul Reeve, "A Utahn, George Sutherland, Served on the U.S. Supreme Court," *History Blazer*, January 1995.

34. Abraham Fairbanks Doremus (1849–1933) was a native of Salt Lake City. He was a well-recognized specialist in irrigation and railroad construction. He served in a variety of public offices, including as the city engineer of Salt Lake City, as the state engineer of Utah, and on the state board of health. He was also the Republican candidate for mayor of Salt Lake City in 1898, eventually losing to John Clark. See *Men of Affairs in the State of Utah: A Newspaper Reference Work* (Salt Lake City: Press Club of Salt Lake City, 1914), 146; see also *Sketches of Inter-Mountain States Utah, Idaho, Nevada* (Salt Lake City: Salt Lake Tribune, 1909), 115.

35. James E. Talmage, journal, vol. 10, May 21, 1900.

but the reasons offered for such conclusion were wholly unsatisfactory to my mind.”<sup>36</sup>

Judge Rolapp was apparently dissatisfied with Talmage’s and Hinckley’s testimonies on behalf of Herriman Irrigation. In 1901, a professional engineering and mining journal reported that a “decision was rendered at Salt Lake City, Utah, Jan. 28, by Judge Rolapp, in the case of the Herriman Irrigation company vs. George W. Keel et al. The action was to restrain the defendants in their mining operations through the Butterfield tunnel from interfering with the flow of water from the plaintiff company’s springs. Judge Rolapp’s decision was in favor of the defendant. In his opinion the flow from the tunnel is percolating and seepage water, and not from the Herriman Irrigation company’s springs.”<sup>37</sup> The judge’s decision, however, was immediately appealed.

The case then appeared again before the Utah Supreme Court in 1902, and on July 19, it ultimately found that the Butterfield Mining Company had a right to use the percolating and other water on their property but did not have exclusive control of the water, which included the Butterfield Creek and the underground streams and springs, which had potentially been diverted through construction of the Butterfield tunnel.<sup>38</sup> The Utah Supreme Court ordered that the water be divided evenly at the head gate, minus 8 percent from Herriman Irrigation to account for seepage and percolating water native to the Butterfield Mining property.<sup>39</sup> The court ruled that the damage to local water systems done by Butterfield Mining was done *damnum absque injuria*—in other words, the damage was incidental to Butterfield Mining’s acceptable use of the land, and the only question was how much of the water they were entitled to take. This decision is what the court had ruled in 1899 when it first remanded the case to Justice Rolapp’s appellate court.<sup>40</sup>

Utah Supreme Court Justice George W. Bartch<sup>41</sup> found that Butterfield Mining’s claim that the water it diverted would not affect the water

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36. Herriman Irrigation Co., 25 Utah at 105.

37. “A Decision in Utah on Underground Water,” *Municipal Engineering* 20 (January–June 1901): 174.

38. Herriman Irrigation Co., 25 Utah at 121.

39. Herriman Irrigation Co., 25 Utah at 117.

40. Herriman Irrigation Co., 25 Utah at 121.

41. George W. Bartch (1849–1927) was born in Pennsylvania, was admitted to the bar in his home state in 1884, and moved to Canon City, Colorado, in 1886. In 1888, he moved to Salt Lake City, and in 1889, President Harrison selected him as a probate judge. After Utah achieved statehood in 1896, Bartch



flow to the community was backed by expert opinion. The company's expert witnesses, Charles Stevenson<sup>42</sup> and A. F. Doremus, claimed that rather than losing water to the mines, the natural topography of the land and a loss of groundcover and trees had changed the water retention level, resulting in decreased water flow to natural springs.<sup>43</sup> While this expert testimony was damaging to Herriman Irrigation's claims, the company had their own expert witnesses, James E. Talmage and Edwin S. Hinckley, who testified of precisely the opposite—that mining operations had seriously damaged the natural flow of water in the Butterfield Stream to Herriman's farmers and other citizens downstream.<sup>44</sup>

Justice Bartch described Talmage as a "geologist of known ability" but relied on Judge Rolapp's observation that there was nothing to support Herriman Irrigation's claim that its streams and other waters were threatened by Keel's mining operations—rather, the fault lay with the citizens of Herriman for clear-cutting vegetation around their streams.<sup>45</sup>

Chief Justice James A. Miner concurred in general but found Talmage and Hinckley to be more credible, writing, "It is quite manifest from the facts and circumstances shown that about one-half of the water flowing out of the tunnels was diverted from the plaintiff's springs . . . by the construction of the tunnels."<sup>46</sup> This led Miner to conclude that the water that could be rerouted by Butterfield Mining should amount to one-half of

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was elected to the state supreme court. He was re-elected in 1900 and served twice as chief justice, from 1899 to 1900 and 1905 to 1906. "In Memorium, Honorable George W. Bartch," 1927, Alta Club, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

42. Charles L. Stevenson (1834–1902) was the secretary of the Irrigation Commission for Utah. In preparation for the third National Irrigation Congress, held in Denver in 1894, he helped write and compile *Irrigation in Utah* (Salt Lake City: Utah Irrigation Commission, 1895).

43. Herriman Irrigation Co., 25 Utah at 104.

44. Herriman Irrigation Co., 25 Utah at 105.

45. Herriman Irrigation Co., 25 Utah at 105.

46. Herriman Irrigation Co., 25 Utah at 116. Chief Justice James A. Miner (1842–1907) was an Episcopalian and a Republican when he was appointed an associate justice to territorial Utah in 1890 by President Harrison. He was elected as the first chief judge of Utah's supreme court in 1896; his term ended in 1903. "James A. Miner," MichMarkers.com, accessed April 23, 2019, <https://www.michmarkers.com/default?page=Lo898>; "Biographical Sketch of Judge Miner," *Deseret Weekly*, August 30, 1890, 341.



the total amount diverted by the head gate to account for water formerly flowing to the springs that fed Herriman's irrigation canals.<sup>47</sup>

A third concurring opinion written by Judge Robert Baskin quoted Talmage's testimony at length: "From the statement that from 1852 to 1893 the springs which are now dry flowed continuously without appreciable variation, and in 1893 the tunnel encountered water which flowed out of the tunnel, and more water was encountered, as the tunnel was constructed until 1895, when all the springs dried up, I would say the sources of the springs had been tapped, and their water passed out of the tunnel."<sup>48</sup> Providing much-needed clarity, Baskin goes on to state that this had all been worked out by the courts in the 1899 case. At that time the court had returned the case to the appellate court, ruling "that the defendant company did not acquire a right to any of the water flowing from said tunnels except such as was developed by percolation, and that the plaintiff retain[ed] the right to all the water flowing in the natural channel of Butterfield creek."<sup>49</sup> The only question facing the courts was how much of the water coming out of the tunnels had percolated from the defendant's land and how much was from the Butterfield creek's other sources, which lay outside of the company's control. While the defendants were free to take the percolating water and route it for their own use, the formerly aboveground water remained the property of Herriman Irrigation.

The case was significant because it weighed Herriman citizens' water rights against Butterfield Mining's right to use the water flowing through the ground underneath its properties. The case had the potential to drastically affect water usage rights throughout Utah. If Butterfield Mining had been found to be at fault for improper usage or abandonment of the percolating water and other waters, the company would have lost control of a precious asset that helped run their mining tunnels and develop aboveground property that the Keels owned in the region upstream from Herriman.

On the other hand, a ruling that gave entire control of the water flowing into the Butterfield Creek to the mining company would have set a precedent of allowing people's water to be appropriated and redirected by other people upstream, potentially leading to the destruction of whole communities across the state. As Judge Baskin noted in his 1902 opinion on the case, "It is a matter of common knowledge, and

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47. Herriman Irrigation Co., 25 Utah at 117.

48. Herriman Irrigation Co., 25 Utah at 120.

49. Herriman Irrigation Co., 25 Utah at 121.

the courts will take notice of the facts without proof, that irrigation is the life of agriculture in this State.”<sup>50</sup> He went on to note that if the court ruled in favor of Keel and his mining company, most of the water in the state used to irrigate crops and make life possible would be put at risk.<sup>51</sup> Although Talmage was not able to entirely secure Herriman’s water rights with his testimony, his witness testimony was quoted by the judges and considered useful, bolstering his reputation as a consultant.

### ***Grand Central Mining Company v. Mammoth Mining Company***

In late 1901, the Mammoth Mining Company hired Talmage as an expert witness in one of the lengthiest legal disputes in early twentieth-century Utah—*Grand Central Mining Company v. Mammoth Mining Company*.<sup>52</sup> This case, involving two Tintic District silver mining companies in Juab County, resulted in twenty-seven findings by Utah’s supreme court in 1904 at a time when most decisions had only one to three findings. The case was important in establishing how lower courts in Utah could instruct juries and how the legal boundaries of mines and veins were established. The case involved \$300,000 of silver that Grand Central Mining accused Mammoth Mining of mining from their Silveropolis holdings.<sup>53</sup> The complexity of the case was such that numerous diagrams mapping out the holdings of the two companies were included in the official Utah Supreme Court case report, which carries on for over a hundred pages.

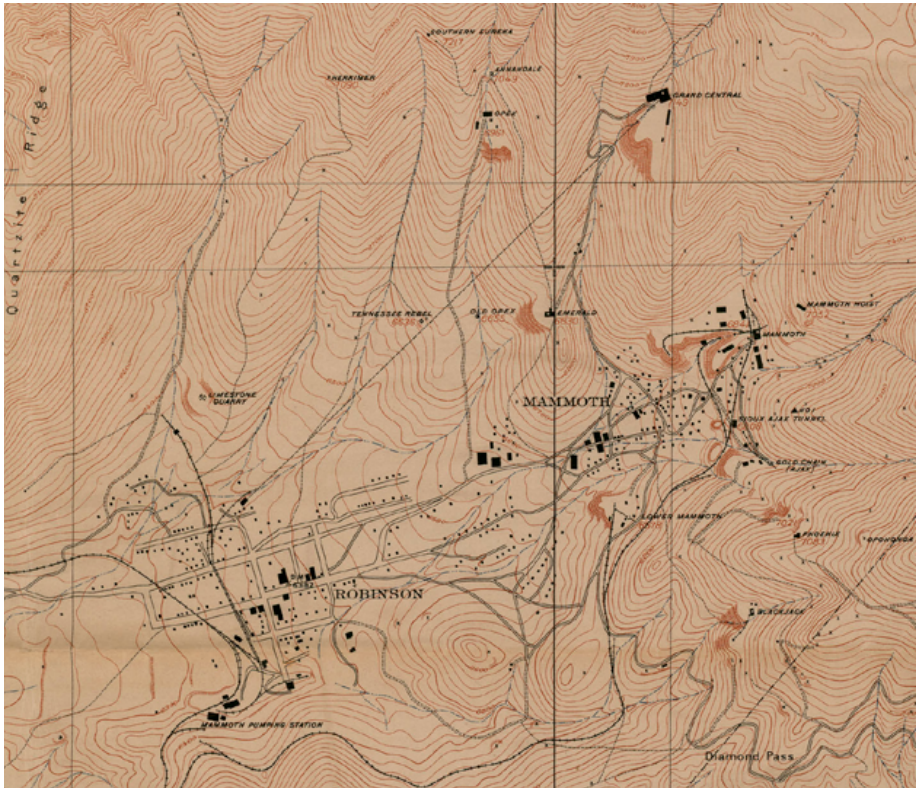
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50. Herriman Irrigation Co., 25 Utah at 124.

51. Herriman Irrigation Co., 25 Utah at 125. Baskin was one of three Utah Supreme Court justices when the case came before the court in 1902. One of the most significant leaders in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Utah who was not a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Baskin was a noted opponent of the Church in political matters. However, his advocacy for statehood and willingness to accept the Church’s turn from polygamy at face value were critical factors in ending Utah’s territorial status. See Maxwell, *Robert Newton Baskin*, 284.

52. The Grand Central Mining Company began mining near the town of Mammoth, Utah, in 1895, and Apostle and future senator Reed Smoot was on its initial board of directors. Its stockholders included, among others, Apostle George Q. Cannon. The Mammoth Mine was discovered in 1870 and mined by various companies, including the Mammoth Mining Company, until 1980. See Philip F. Notarianni, *Faith, Hope, & Prosperity: The Tintic Mining District* (Eureka, Utah: Tintic Historical Society, 1982), 15, 53.

53. *Grand Central Min. Co. v. Mammoth Min. Co.*, 29 Utah 490, 83 Pac. 648 (Utah 1905).



Map of a portion of the Tintic Mining District, published by the U.S. Geological Survey, 1911, revised 1913. In the early twentieth century, Talmage worked as a consultant in a case involving two Tintic District silver mining companies in Juab County, Utah. Grand Central Mining (*top right*) accused Mammoth Mining of mining \$300,000 of silver from Grand Central's holdings. Courtesy Perry-Castañeda Library, University of Texas at Austin.

In 1902, the initial proceedings were carried out before a jury, which found in favor of Mammoth Mining. The case then appeared in October 1905 before the Utah Supreme Court, which ruled in favor of Grand Central Mining due to an error in instruction by the lower judge, who ruled that an important boundary marker should be understood to be at a particular point that was favorable to Mammoth Mining's case.<sup>54</sup> In 1909, the case went on to the U.S. Supreme Court on an argument of error by Mammoth Mining and was again found in favor of Grand Central Mining.<sup>55</sup>

54. Grand Central Min. Co., 29 Utah at 592–94.

55. The U.S. Supreme Court reaffirmed the Utah Supreme Court's decision to reject Mammoth Mining's assertion that their claim predated and overruled



Interior of the Grand Central Mine. Chief Con. Mining Co., View in Cave Grand Central Mine #5, photographed by Harry Shipler, 1926, Shipler Commercial Photographers Collection. Published by Utah State History; digitized and digital file hosted by J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah; physical item located at the Utah Department of Heritage and Arts. Used by permission, Utah State Historical Society.

The crux of the court's decision was the failure of geologists, including Talmage, whose services were retained by Mammoth Mining in 1902, to locate a specific apex linking several ore bodies in the geology of the land that was contested by the parties.<sup>56</sup> Mammoth Mining's final appeal was dismissed by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1909.<sup>57</sup> Talmage became involved in 1902, and his journal records regular trips between Provo, Salt Lake City, and Nephi while the case was being tried:

January 1 [1902]: On this New Year's day I find myself away from home. I am detained in Nephi, Utah, to which place I have been called as a witness on geological structure in a noted mining suit now on trial in the court here—The Grand Central Mining Company vs. The Mammoth Mining Company. The present needs of the case call for the examination of certain maps and the construction of others, and I am compelled to remain over the holiday. Thanks to present facilities for long distance communication, I was able to call up the loved ones at home by telephone and express the season's greetings over the wire. I was on duty in the map room until midnight. . . .

Jan. 7: Obtained leave of absence from the University and proceeded to Nephi by evening train in response to a call from court. . . .

January 8: Went to the witness stand during the afternoon and remained under direct examination until adjournment.

Jan. 9: On the witness stand during the entire day. Cross examination began during the afternoon.

Jan. 10: Cross examination continued. This was followed by re-direct and re-cross. Finished at 4.15 p.m.

Jan. 11: In company with Mr. Tyler—an expert witness on the Grand Central side I went to Mammoth by morning train.<sup>58</sup> We spent the rest

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all other claims to a whole vein of silver that crossed into Grand Central Mining's property. Mammoth Mining was unable to locate the geological apex that would have allowed them to prove that their property line went as far as they said it did, and while geologically the vein was one body, legally only the aboveground property lines could be used to determine ownership, which fell to Grand Central Mining. See *Mammoth Mining Co. v. Grand Central Mining Co.*, 213 U.S. at 72–77 (1909).

56. This failure should not be construed as Talmage's; rather, the apex Mammoth Mining wanted to find did not exist at the location they needed it to.

57. *Mammoth Mining Co.*, 213 U.S. at 72–77.

58. Sidney W. Tyler (1841–1910) was a mining engineer and geologist who lived in Denver, Colorado. "Obituary," *Engineering and Mining Journal* 89, no. 14 (April 2, 1910): 735.



of the day examining certain recent work done by the Mammoth Company on their property. . . .

Jan. 15: Returned to Nephi by evening train in response to summons from court.

Jan. 16: On the witness stand during morning . . . session of court giving testimony as to the results of my recent visit to the Mammoth mine. Returned home by evening train. . . .

January 22: Called to Mammoth by telephone message from Nephi. Rebuttal testimony is now being put in by the Mammoth Company (defendant and cross-complainant in the case) and further examination is wanted. Was joined at Provo by my fellow witness—Mr. Sidney W. Tyler of Denver—and together we proceeded to Mammoth. . . .

January 23: Entire day spent in the Mammoth mine and in surface examinations of new excavations.<sup>59</sup>

One depiction of Talmage as an expert witness for Grand Central Mining in early 1902 demonstrates Talmage's "forceful" behavior on the stand. The *Salt Lake Herald* reported the results of a cross-examination from the opposing side following Talmage's testimony:

Mr. Zane, the cross-examining attorney, rigidly insisted upon specification by the witness of limits to the Mammoth vein along the course from where it leaves the west side line of Mammoth lot 38 to where it enters the Grand Central claims northwest of that point and becomes the Grand Central vein. The witness with equal firmness insisted upon a distinction between the vein proper and offshoots or branches thereof, showing that the Betsy stope ore bodies running out to the north and the southerly ore bodies on the 600 and 500 levels of the Mammoth workings are clearly on the so-called "back fissure," and therefore are to be regarded as branch of and not within the main vein.

Touching the question of apex, the witness was directed to locate the apex of the vein point through the Grand Central claims, and did so, at the same time stating that the apex must not be confounded with outcrop inasmuch as the former may not reach the surface.

The vexed question of dip and strike was fully dwelt upon and a distinction between pitch and dip emphasized by the witness.

At the afternoon session Dr. Talmage's cross-examination [continued]. . . . The subject was illustrated by blackboard drawings of outcropping dikes in which dip, pitch and strike were clearly apparent above the surface. The meaning was then applied to the ore bodies in

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59. Talmage, journal, 1–3 (January 1–23, 1902).



Mammoth Mine, photographed by Harry Shipler, ca. 1905, Shipler Commerical Photographers Collection. Used by permission, Utah State Historical Society.

dispute, the witness maintaining that the great vein in question, after departing on its strike from the west side line of Mammoth lot 38, pitches in the direction of its strike northwesterly into the claims of the Grand Central.<sup>60</sup>

While Talmage was able to argue that the apex of the contested mineral body was in an area owned by Mammoth Mining, he was unable to locate the “legal” apex—defined by Chief Justice George W. Bartch as a specific point along a vein indicating the direction of mineralization or providing some other geological feature that could be used as a marker or boundary. According to the testimony quoted by Justice Bartch in his 1905 report, when asked directly, Talmage responded that he knew of no such feature.<sup>61</sup>

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60. “Dr. Talmage Pinned Down,” *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, January 11, 1902, 6.

61. Grand Central Min. Co., 29 Utah at 543–44.

Talmage's testimony during the trial was considered highly useful by Utah's supreme court. Even in a losing cause, his remarks clarified the geological and legal situation of the mines. Chief Justice Bartch described Talmage as a "geologist and expert of eminent ability."<sup>62</sup> Indeed, Talmage's testimony was vital in establishing the boundaries of Grand Central Mining's and Mammoth Mining's holdings. For example, the official Utah Supreme Court case report recorded, "Dr. Talmage, testifying for plaintiff, corroborated the testimony of Prof. Jenny, and speaking of the Finn tunnel, from station 03 north, he says: 'As you go through that tunnel from its mouth to its face there are absolutely no indications of mineralization.'"<sup>63</sup>

Not all parties were thrilled by Talmage's presence as a witness in this case. The case was tried before a jury from 1901 through 1902, when Talmage was a popular speaker and university professor known throughout Utah. He also had strong ties to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Understandably, there was some concern during the jury trial that Talmage's prestige would carry undue weight with the largely Latter-day Saint jury. The *Salt Lake Tribune*, despite its well-earned reputation during this period as an anti-Mormon paper, nevertheless mocked Grand Central's lawyers when they protested Talmage's presence on the stand: "It is said that some of the jurors made notes when Dr. Talmage was on the stand. A trifling incident, indeed! Yet it annoyed the lawyers on the other side, and they have repeatedly cited the jurors to that portion of the court's instructions relating to undue weight to certain testimony, and extracts from the testimony of Dr. Talmage, or even the mention of his name causes uneasiness."<sup>64</sup>

Though Mammoth Mining eventually lost the case on appeals, Talmage's reputation as an expert witness was not tarnished. Chief Justice Bartch quoted Talmage as saying, "I fail to find any continuation of the great ore bodies. . . . After diligent search for an outcrop on lot 38 I have failed to find it."<sup>65</sup> His failure to find such bodies or an outcrop was the key point in Mammoth Mining's losing the case, but his honesty reinforced his reputation as a reputable witness.

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62. Grand Central Min. Co., 29 Utah at 556.

63. Grand Central Min. Co., 29 Utah at 540–41.

64. "Closing of Arguments," *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 31, 1902, 3. There are no reports in the court records that the jury gave undue weight to Talmage's testimony.

65. Grand Central Min. Co., 29 Utah at 542.



## The Dream Mine

Possibly the most controversial mine analyzed by Talmage was John A. Koyle's Relief Mine in Spanish Fork, Utah, commonly referred to as the Dream Mine. Several historians have written on the Dream Mine's history, so only a brief introduction is presented here.<sup>66</sup> In 1894, John Koyle of Salem, Utah, began telling associates that he had seen a vision of a valuable mine in Spanish Fork.<sup>67</sup> He immediately organized members of his community to begin excavating his "Dream Mine" and formally incorporated the Koyle Mining Company in 1909.

By 1895, despite repeated failures to locate valuable minerals of any kind and the failure of at least one of Koyle's visions to guide them to anything of value, an incredible effort was made to dig down through the mountain site where the mine was located. The company issued stock certificates in 1909 to fund expansion of their mining operations, and stockholder meetings continued to be held annually despite the absence of anything of value coming out of the mine.<sup>68</sup> Many sources on the Dream Mine cover Talmage's experiences there in July 1913. For example, one source notes, "While the Dream Mine attracted volunteer laborers and faithful investors, it also drew the attention of the LDS Church, worried that the faithful were being fleeced. In 1913, Mormon Apostle James E. Talmage, a trained geologist, examined a sample from the Dream Mine and declared the ore worthless."<sup>69</sup> Many historians

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66. Previous studies include Joe Stanley Graham, "The Dream Mine: A Study in Mormon Folklore" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1970); and Jay M. Haymond, "Dream Mine," in *Utah History Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan Kent Powell (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 147. More recent work includes Kevin E. Cantera, "A Currency of Faith: Taking Stock in Utah County's Dream Mine" (master's thesis, University of Utah, 2008); and Ian Barber, "Dream Mines and Religious Identity in Twentieth-Century Utah: Insights from the Norman C. Pierce Papers," *Princeton University Library Chronicle* 70, no. 3 (Spring 2009): 433–69.

67. Kevin Cantera, "A Currency of Faith: Taking Stock in Utah County's Dream Mine," in *Between Pulpit and Pew: The Supernatural World in Mormon History and Folklore*, ed. W. Paul Reeve and Scott Van Wagenen (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2011), 125–58; James R. Christianson, "An Historical Study of the Koyle Relief Mine. 1894–1962" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1962). Other sources give the date as 1893; see Carma Wadley, "The Stories They Tell," in *From the Ground Up*, ed. Whitney, 85–86.

68. See Cantera, "Currency of Faith," 125–27.

69. Cantera, "Currency of Faith," 138–39.

have not noted several letters between Talmage and Koyle from earlier in 1913, which shed additional light on Talmage's visit in July 1913.

On May 5, 1913, Talmage wrote Koyle with a request for information about his mining venture. Koyle responded on May 7 with a detailed account of the work done to that point and an invitation to come view the site. Bemused by Koyle's detailed account, Talmage replied that he would be interested to learn the source of Koyle's certainty regarding the geological features he expected to encounter as the work progressed and also kindly thanked him for the invitation to visit, which Talmage declined for the time being.<sup>70</sup> Talmage's case files at the Church History Library indicate that he had been following the Relief Mine since 1909, but it seems he gathered only general information about Koyle and the mine until taking a more active role in 1913.<sup>71</sup>

Talmage's journal account of his experience in the Relief Mine is much more detailed than all but one other account he recorded about his mine examinations, suggesting the significance of this visit in his mind. He recorded,

July 16 [1913]: By a very strong impression to do today what I have long contemplated doing, I left by early train, went to Spanish Fork, there procured a horse and buggy and drove to the foot of the mountain east of Salem. The purpose of my visit is to examine the "Relief Mine," commonly known as the "Dream Mine." Many rumors of this alleged mine have reached me and much has been said concerning supposed inspiration by which the work has been undertaken and prosecuted. I had previously some correspondence with Bishop John H. Koyle of Leland ward, Nebo

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70. James E. Talmage to John A. Koyle, May 5, 1913; John A. Koyle to James E. Talmage, May 7, 1913; James E. Talmage to John A. Koyle, May 9, 1913, MS 1232, box 6, folder 14, Talmage Collection, Church History Library.

71. Talmage's papers contain items related to the Dream Mine dated before 1913, but it is unclear when Talmage obtained them. The Church History Library catalog's finding aid notes that the case files contain a "copy of mining agreement, lists of stock holders, copies of Talmage's reports about the Koyle and Holton dream mines, and First Presidency correspondence with Nebo Stake presidency about John A. Koyle." "Koyle Dream Mine, 1909–1913," Topical Files, MS 1232, box 22, folder 1, Talmage Collection, Church History Library. Scott Kenney noted a reference on April 22, 1913, from the First Presidency's meeting minutes, recording a response to a query from Martin Anderson of Toquerville, Utah, asking if the First Presidency had "authorized" the Dream Mine, to which they responded that they had not, and they would not recommend investment in it. Scott G. Kenney, Scott G. Kenney research materials, MSS 2022, box 2, folder 14, Perry Special Collections.

stake, at whose instance the work has been done. . . . I found thirty men engaged in the work, each of whom is working for stock in the company, all having faith in the divine direction by which they say the mine was located. Brother Bradford and I accompanied by Brother Koyle and others inspected the workings from top to bottom. These workings consist of an irregular shaft, in places vertical, in others running on inclines, changing direction frequently, and extending to a present depth of over 1100 feet. The shaft penetrates the limestone of the region and is absolutely devoid of any evidence of mineralization in the mining sense of the term. The “leader” which Brother Koyle professes to have been following appears at the surface as one of the innumerable fault slips which appear on the western face of the Wasatch, incident to the profound fault by which that noble range has been elevated.<sup>72</sup> After returning to the surface I met Brother Koyle and all the brethren here engaged and told them that from the standpoint of geological structure and all the known laws of mineral occurrence their effort is absolutely without promise of success.<sup>73</sup>

Following this blunt assessment of their labors, the miners bore Talmage a number of testimonies to the validity of Koyle’s claims. Talmage’s journal records his response: “I told them I had made the subject a matter of prayer and had asked . . . to be able to recognize the facts and the truth, and testified to them that while their free agency was, of course, their own and not to be interfered with by me, that I considered it would be well for them to abandon this work and to take themselves to useful and profitable labor.”<sup>74</sup>

The miners and Talmage went their separate ways, though rumors that Talmage had endorsed the Relief Mine plagued him for years, leading him to issue a strongly worded denunciation of the Relief Mine on May 14, 1928: “Immediately after making the [1913] examination . . . I emphatically declared that I regarded the alleged manifestations as spurious, and that the setting forth of any such claims . . . to prospective purchasers of stock was wholly unjustifiable and fundamentally wrong. I reaffirm this position now.”<sup>75</sup>

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72. A “leader” is a man-made or natural weakness in a rock formation that can be worked through to a theoretical deposit.

73. Talmage, journal, 15:86 (July 16, 1913). Note that this portion of Talmage’s journal has been quoted from by numerous sources on the Dream Mine over the years. See notes 66 and 67 herein.

74. Talmage, journal, 15:87 (July 16, 1913).

75. James E. Talmage, “Dream Mines,” 2 (May 14, 1928), typescript, MS 1232, box 22, folder 5, Talmage Collection, Church History Library.

## Majestic Gold Mine

The Dream Mine was not the only controversial mine Talmage visited in July 1913. On July 21, Talmage traveled to Brigham City, Utah, to evaluate a mine there. He met with Dr. Fred J. Pack, professor of geology at the University of Utah, and with Carter Grant, Heber J. Grant's nephew,<sup>76</sup> and together they met with the owner of the Majestic Gold Mining Company, Fred J. Holton, a Brigham City lawyer.<sup>77</sup> Holton declined to travel with them to inspect the site of his mine. Arriving on site, they found seven men tunneling into a "quartzite bedded rock of the region [with] no trace of a mineralized fissure or other indication of metaliferous deposit."<sup>78</sup> Following their examination of the diggings, Pack and Talmage held a two-hour "informal meeting" with the miners during which Talmage questioned each man to learn why he had become involved with Majestic Gold Mining. He recorded his impression of their answers in his journal:

They all claim that they were impressed by the story told by Holton, and bore impassioned testimony to its truth. This story is to the effect that in his desire to procure means which would enable him to devote his time to Temple work for the dead, Brother Holton fasted and prayed and received visitations of heavenly personages and manifestations of divers kind by which he learned that in this locality immense bodies of rich gold ore lay hidden; and that he is the man through whom it is to be brought forth to be used primarily in building temples and in vicarious labor for the dead.<sup>79</sup>

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76. Talmage, journal, 15:89–90 (July 21, 1913).

77. The Majestic Gold Mining Company should not be confused with the Harrington-based Majestic Mine, which produced substantial quantities of copper and gold. Regarding Majestic Gold Mining, in 1911, the *Salt Lake Mining Review* reported, "A gold mine has been found in Box Elder canyon, three miles southeast of Brigham City, Utah, by Fred J. Holton, an attorney of that place. The vein is reported to be three feet wide with values averaging \$19 in gold to the ton." "Dips, Spurs and Angles," *Salt Lake Mining Review*, October 30, 1911, 16. A number of positive references regarding Majestic Gold Mining also appeared in the *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*. For example, an April 5, 1913, note mentions that Majestic Gold Mining had closed on a massive real estate purchase near Brigham City. See "Brigham City Briefs," *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, April 5, 1913, 7. Despite these positive reports, no new reports regarding Majestic Gold Mining appear after 1913, indicating the mine's lack of success.

78. Talmage, journal, 15:90 (July 21, 1913).

79. Talmage, journal, 15:90 (July 21, 1913).

In response, Talmage asked Pack to describe the geological structure of the area, which Talmage described as “devoid of any shadow of promise of mineral occurrences.” Talmage then harshly condemned the project, describing it as “inspired of evil.” In contrast to his approach at the Dream Mine, where he told the men that they could do as they desired, Talmage directly declared that his response to the men was “the Word of the Lord” unto them.<sup>80</sup>

At least one individual associated with Majestic Gold Mining, Carter Grant, was highly impressed by Talmage’s words to the men. In a letter written in 1914, Grant explained that while he had initially determined to follow Talmage’s counsel, he instead increased his investment in the Majestic Gold Mine, losing more money. He then determined to have nothing more to do with the project, and he and Talmage corresponded several times in subsequent years.<sup>81</sup> As a coda to this experience, however, Grant became involved with Koyle’s Dream Mine in the late 1920s and, in 1931, made a statement regarding its authenticity and Koyle’s prophecies to Talmage.<sup>82</sup>

Talmage’s inspection of the Majestic Gold Mine in 1913 was not his first experience with Holton or his mining company. Talmage sent a letter, dated August 5, 1912, to Holton threatening legal action and telling him to cease using Talmage’s name in connection with the mine.<sup>83</sup> Holton responded, claiming he had met with Talmage to discuss the cost of having Talmage inspect the mine. At that meeting, Talmage viewed a sample of gold from the mine, pronounced it favorable, but then had nothing more to do with the project since Holton could not afford his services. In his efforts to organize labor and funds for the Majestic Gold Mine, Holton, according to his letter, mentioned that Talmage had pronounced the gold good.<sup>84</sup> Holton was much aggrieved by Talmage’s letter

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80. Talmage, journal, 15:90 (July 21, 1913).

81. Carter E. Grant to James E. Talmage, July 2, 1914, MS 1232, box 5, folder 4, Talmage Collection, Church History Library.

82. “Statement Made by Carter E. Grant, September 9, 1931, to James E. Talmage (As Revised by Carter E. Grant),” 1–2, typescript, Norman C. Pierce Papers, box 2, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, as cited in Barber, “Dream Mines and Religious Identity in Twentieth-Century Utah,” 464 n. 67.

83. James E. Talmage to Fred J. Holton, August 5, 1912, Talmage Collection, Church History Library.

84. Fred J. Holton to James E. Talmage, August 10, 1912, 2–3, Talmage Collection, Church History Library.

and stated that it was unbecoming of an Apostle of the Lord to write such a letter and pronounced a dire fate upon Talmage's head if he did not repent.<sup>85</sup> There seems to have been no further correspondence or meetings between the two men until Talmage made his visit in July 1913.

Following his inspections of the Majestic Gold Mine, Talmage met with the First Presidency on August 1, 1913. Talmage's journal entry for August 1 noted that he was "engaged greater part of the day in consultations with the First Presidency."<sup>86</sup> The next day the *Deseret Evening News* carried a lengthy statement from the First Presidency declaring,

We feel it our duty to warn the Latter-day Saints against fake mining schemes which have no warrant for success beyond the professed spiritual manifestations of their projectors and the influence gained over the excited minds of their victims. We caution Saints against investing money or property in shares of stock which bring no profit . . . to anyone but those who issue and trade in them. Fanciful schemes of "redeeming Zion" [referring to one of Koyle's reported motives] or providing means for the "salvation of the dead" [referring to Holton's reported motives] or other seeming worthy objects, should not deceive anyone acquainted with the order of the Church, and will result only in waste of time and labor.<sup>87</sup>

Talmage responded positively to this announcement in his journal, noting, "The need of such utterances is plainly shown from the misleading efforts of a certain few relating to mining and other ventures in which they claim divine direction."<sup>88</sup>

The timing of Talmage's meeting with the First Presidency and the statement against "fake mining ventures" seem to be correlated. His journal notes several meetings with the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles between July 16, 1913, and when the statement was issued on August 2, suggesting that Talmage's on-site visits played some role in the Church's decision to issue the statement. However, Talmage's writings do not indicate if he directly assisted the First Presidency in writing the August 2 declaration.<sup>89</sup>

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85. Holton to Talmage, August 10, 1912, 1–8.

86. Talmage, journal, 16:104 (August 1, 1913). See also Talmage, journal, 15:88, 91 (July 17 and 23, 1913), where he notes attending council meetings in the Salt Lake Temple with the First Presidency and Twelve.

87. "A Warning Voice," *Deseret News*, August 2, 1913, 1.

88. Talmage, journal, 16:104 (August 2, 1913).

89. Kenney's transcription of the First Presidency minutes does not mention the Relief Mine in the entries for July or August 1913. First Presidency Counselor

Following Talmage's 1913 visit to the Majestic Gold Mine, work there seems to have come to a halt. Fred J. Holton lost his sight around 1930, and in 1932 James E. Talmage received a conciliatory letter from Holton asking forgiveness for responding to Talmage with righteous indignation in 1912. The letter also requested Talmage's prayers to help cure Holton's blindness.<sup>90</sup> Talmage wrote a kind note in response, stating,

You refer to correspondence that passed between us . . . just twenty years ago this month. . . . I assure you, with full brotherly sincerity, that if there was any incident or circumstance even suggesting forgiveness on my part, such forgiveness is full and complete.

You and I saw matters pertaining to the operation of the Majestic Mining Company in different lights; and I have no doubt that at the time you thought you were in the right . . . . I am glad to feel the spirit of your last letter expressive of your present views on these . . . .

I prayerfully trust that the Lord will comfort you.<sup>91</sup>

## Conclusion

Talmage's career in assaying and geological surveying adds depth to our understanding of his life and experiences. It also contributes to the history of science in the American West. Studies of the assayers and surveyors, whose work was essential in establishing the American mining industry in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are uncommon in histories of the American West. While labor history includes exceptional studies of the grueling conditions miners faced and the heavy-handed and sometimes violent tactics used by owners to manipulate their labor force, historians have generally ignored the role played by scientific

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Anthon H. Lund's journal entry for August 2, 1913, states only that the *Deseret News* announcement was made when "we" (presumably the First Presidency) learned that Holton and Koyle were claiming divine sanction for their mining efforts and preying upon vulnerable members in their communities; while the First Presidency likely learned that information from the investigations conducted by Talmage, other reports may have motivated their response. See Scott G. Kenney research materials, April 21–22, 1913, MSS 2022, box 2, folder 14, Perry Special Collections; and John P. Hatch, ed., *Danish Apostle: The Diaries of Anthon H. Lund, 1890–1921* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2006), 509.

90. Fred J. Holton to James E. Talmage, August 16, 1932, Talmage Collection, Church History Library.

91. James E. Talmage to Fred J. Holton, August 17, 1932, Talmage Collection, Church History Library.



professionals in American mining.<sup>92</sup> One historian of scientific consulting notes an “oft-repeated observation” that “science was supposed to be the handmaiden of industry” in nineteenth-century American society.<sup>93</sup> Talmage’s journals thus provide a valuable window into the role that scientific consultants played in the mining industry during this time.

Additionally, despite opposition to mining during Brigham Young’s lifetime, the experiences of James E. Talmage demonstrate a shift in the thinking among Church members about the risks and rewards of mining during the late 1890s and early 1900s. Though some Latter-day Saints, such as Jesse Knight, had been involved in mining much earlier, that James E. Talmage, a confidant of the First Presidency and eventually an Apostle, was involved with the mining industry shows that Church leaders’ thinking regarding mining had changed considerably since the 1850s. This growing acceptance was not without its own stops and stutters, as demonstrated by Church members’ involvement in the Relief and Majestic Gold Mines, but this shift in economic interests among Latter-day Saints can be seen as part of bringing the Church into the twentieth century.

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92. George E. Webb, “The Chemist as Consultant in Gilded Age America: Benjamin Silliman Jr. and Western Mining,” *Bulletin for the History of Chemistry* 15/16 (1994): 9–14.

93. Paul Lucier, “Commercial Interests and Scientific Disinterestedness: Consulting Geologists in Antebellum America,” *Isis* 86, no. 2 (June 1995): 246.



*A Documentary History of the Book of Mormon*

By Larry E. Morris

New York: Oxford University Press, 2019

*Reviewed by John W. Welch*

Larry Morris, a veteran researcher of everything related to Oliver Cowdery and early Latter-day Saint history, has provided the world with this fine collection of primary historical sources relevant to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Published by Oxford University Press, this formal presentation of his fascinating compilation will certainly be interesting, convenient, credible, and crucial in the hands of historians (in the rigorous documentary sense of that word) as well as in the hearts of amateurs (in the best Latin sense of that word).

This book fills an important need in Latter-day Saint scholarship. Although other collections of early Latter-day Saint documents have been published, none has focused exclusively on the documents pertaining to the Book of Mormon, beginning with Moroni's first appearance to the seventeen-year-old Joseph Smith in September 1823 and ending in March 1830 with the publication of the Book of Mormon. Having these documents organized, numbered, sourced, introduced, transcribed, edited, typeset, annotated, and indexed adds to the library of early Latter-day Saint research tools. This book belongs on the shelf of every library that is serious about the beginnings of new religious movements in general and Mormon origins in particular. Initial responses to this book's release were rightfully prompt and enthusiastic.<sup>1</sup>

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1. For examples, see Stephen Smoot, "Book Notice: Read Primary Sources on the Origin of the Book of Mormon in One Volume," *Book of Mormon Central Blog*, February 20, 2019, <https://bookofmormoncentral.org/blog/book-notice-read-primary-sources-on-the-origin-of-the-book-of-mormon-in-one-volume>; and Cheryl L. Bruno, review of *A Documentary History of the Book of Mormon*, by Larry E. Morris, *Dawning of a Brighter Day* (blog), Association for Mormon Letters, February 27, 2019, <http://associationmormonletters.org/blog/reviews/older-reviews/morris-a-documentary-history-of-the-book-of-mormon-reviewed-by-cheryl-l-bruno/>.

Briefly stated, Morris divided this eight-year period into eleven episodes, or chapters, cataloged in a most welcome table of contents that is eleven pages long. For many reasons, this table of contents proves very handy in locating specific documents that are not so conveniently found in the alphabetical index at the end of the book; the index does not distinguish the actual documents included in this volume from mere mentions of the names or subjects that appear variously throughout the volume. Within each of the eleven chapters, the documents are divided into two groups: “First Hand Reminiscences” and “Accounts from Others.” In some cases, a few “Contemporaneous Documents” are added. At the end of the volume is a substantial section of endnotes and an eleven-page bibliography.

If a source, such as the draft of Joseph Smith’s history, written between June 1838 and about 1841, contains material pertinent to more than one of these eleven subdivisions, Morris divided the document among the relevant sections in order to cluster together the materials pertinent to the particular chapters. No indication is given, however, in the source notes or editorial notes where else in the volume one might find the material that precedes or follows each segment of a divided source. This inconvenience is minor, but readers will often want to know what came before or after these segmented texts.

In any event, this volume accomplishes a monumental task of presenting 231 documents (or document segments) in chapters that range from nine documents up to as many as thirty-seven. The greatest numbers of documents per chapter, interestingly, appear in chapters 1–2 (which cover the period from September 1823 to December 1827) and in the final chapters, 9–11 (which cover the time from the completion of the dictation of the original Book of Mormon manuscript at the end of June 1829 and running until books became available for sale in the Grandin bookstore at the end of March 1830).

An introduction appears at the beginning of each chapter, and source and editorial notes are supplied before each of the individual documents, stating their historical context. In these notes, for example, Morris critiques attempts that have been made to see the angel Moroni as a treasure guardian (11–14). He points out that both friends and foes were convinced that Joseph had real plates, whatever the nature of those plates might have been (158–59).

Morris accurately identifies and organizes what is known about each of these primary sources, helpfully pointing out both strengths and shortcomings of accounts coming from all quarters. The number and size of

these documents is amazing. From the very outset of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, the sense of its imminent significance alertly captivated participants and observers, and even into their later years they remembered—whether entirely accurately or not—details about the emergence of the Book of Mormon.

The center of the book contains documents relating to the translation and transcription of the Book of Mormon and brief comments overviewing what is known about the translation project. Thus, chapter 5 gives an introductory discussion of the lost 116 pages in the context of Martin Harris and his apparent motivations in taking them (271–72). Chapter 6, which covers the months between autumn 1828 and March 1829, begins with a useful overview of what transpired during this interlude, including the court case involving Lucy Harris (287–91).

Readers may want to read Morris's reference work side-by-side with the recently published biography of Martin Harris<sup>2</sup> as they study his involvement with the translation of the 116 pages (April to June 1828) and his loss of them (summer 1828). The same applies to chapter 9 on the Three Witnesses (late June 1829) and chapter 11 on Martin Harris's significant financial and legal contributions and role in securing the printing of the first edition of the Book of Mormon.

Regarding the period of translation from April to June 1829, covered in chapters 7 and 8, Morris includes thirty-two documents, eleven of which are revelations now found in the Doctrine and Covenants.<sup>3</sup> Leaving all these documents largely to speak for themselves, Morris provides little commentary in these chapters. In addition to wanting information about these eleven revelations and the few other documents relevant to these three months, however, readers may wonder about the confluence of the unprecedented burst of events that occurred during the three months in which almost the full text of the Book of Mormon came forth.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the surviving portions of the text of the dictated

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2. Susan Easton Black and Larry C. Porter, *Martin Harris: Uncompromising Witness of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 2018).

3. Sections 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18.

4. For an analysis of what is known and what can be surmised about the timing of events during these three most prolific months in the history of the Book of Mormon, see John W. Welch, "Timing the Translation of the Book of Mormon: 'Days [and Hours] Never to be Forgotten,'" *BYU Studies Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2018): 10–50. The word count for the Book of Mormon is 269,510 words, and the number of words in the revelations given during those three months found in the Doctrine and Covenants total another 6,124 words.

Original Manuscript should be included, or at least described in some detail, in order to create a more complete picture of the documentary history of the Book of Mormon. Thus, in chapters 7 and 8, Morris should have brought more than just Mosiah 1, given as document 7.8 (323–24), into the documentary calendar for those three months, at least by reference.<sup>5</sup>

Chapters 9 and 10 meticulously introduce and present seventy documents relating to the Three and the Eight Witnesses. Morris questions Dan Vogel’s casting of Martin Harris’s testimony as purely “subjective” (370) and discusses whether the testimony of the Three Witnesses can be evaluated on purely historical terms, given that supernatural agents were involved and that observers themselves found it impossible to describe the event as a “part of normal human life” (371). In his presentation of documents relating to the Eight Witnesses, Morris argues that “the historical value of the eight’s testimony can hardly [be] overstated” (416), pushing back against much scholarly opinion (417–421) and inviting readers to evaluate the testimonies of each witness of the Book of Mormon individually, not collectively as a collusive or amalgamated whole: “Each of them must speak for himself” (421).

Finally, readers may wonder, by way of comparison, how Morris’s work compares with other documentary resources available in this field. How much overlap is there between the documents they include, and how do they compare in terms of their organization of these sources?

First, the Joseph Smith Papers. While some of the documents included in Morris’s *Documentary History of the Book of Mormon* are found in the Joseph Smith Papers—either in print or online at <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org>—many are not. In order to be included among the papers of Joseph Smith proper, documents must meet certain limited criteria: they must have been “created by Joseph Smith, whether written or dictated by him or created by others under his direction, or . . . owned by Smith, that is, received by him and kept in his

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5. Morris mentions the work of Royal Skousen in passing (309) and lists in the bibliography Skousen’s 2001 publication of the Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon. Readers should consider consulting that 2001 volume especially in order to add all of the known portions (28 percent) of the Original Manuscript to the number of “contemporaneous documents” belonging to the months of April, May, and June 1829. Royal Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Extant Text* (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, 2001).

office.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, many of the documents that are rightly included by Morris because they are pertinent to the Book of Mormon are not found in the Joseph Smith Papers simply because they do not fall within the criteria of Smith authorship and ownership. Both collections are important, and they often overlap where the Book of Mormon is involved.

Second, Dan Vogel’s series. His five volumes of *Early Mormon Documents*<sup>7</sup> (published between 1996 and 2003) contain 450 documents, almost twice as many as Morris’s 231. This is because Vogel’s volumes cover a much wider variety of events, ranging far beyond the Book of Mormon. Most of those events, however, occurred around the same places and timespans covered by Morris’s documents. Thus, there is considerable overlap. Unlike the organization of Morris’s book, which clusters the documents by certain events and timeframes, about half of Vogel’s documents fall into collections that he assembled himself. Vogel groups his documents by main individuals involved in each document: for example, the Joseph Smith Jr. Collection (in volume 1), the Martin Harris Collection, the Oliver Cowdery Collection, and the John H. Gilbert Collection (in volume 2), and the David and John Whitmer Collections (in volume 5). Vogel clustered the other half of his documents under “miscellaneous collection” headings.

Third, *Opening the Heavens*.<sup>8</sup> This volume presents an even wider array of documents pertinent to six main events in the early history of the Church, including Joseph Smith’s First Vision; the translation of the Book of Mormon, particularly its timing; the restoration of the priesthood; and manifestations of numerous visions. Most relevant to Morris’s *Documentary History* is this book’s lengthy narrative chapter about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. *Opening the Heavens* makes use of 206 documents to tell the timing of the translation of the Book of Mormon and then presents relevant parts of each of those documents in a lengthy appendix. There, the first 119 texts come from firsthand participants or witnesses, while the other 87 are arranged chronologically based on the date when each statement was made, ranging from 1829 to 1898. About 64 of the documents included in *Opening the Heavens* are

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6. “Editorial Method,” The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed November 4, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/articles/editorial-method>.

7. Dan Vogel, ed., *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996–2003).

8. John W. Welch, ed., *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844*, 2d ed. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2017).

also found in Morris's volume. So again, there is a fair degree of overlap with different grouping, labels, and arrangement.

Each mode of organizing, introducing, and presenting the original texts of these documents has logical advantages but also limitations. Thus, being conversant with all these sources and being aware of how these collections can each be used is advisable to accomplish the purposes any reader or researcher wishes to pursue.

Someday, a master union catalogue may well be developed, listing in one place the totality of the documents relevant to the history of the Book of Mormon and clarifying everywhere each text can be found. Harmonious with the spirit of the Joseph Smith Papers Project, such a master catalogue could present the text of all of these important documents for free online.

In whatever format one encounters these voices from the past, reading eyewitness reports is critical for understanding key events related to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Such diligent study allows readers to construct a realistic image of what transpired. In connection with Larry Morris's latest superb publication, I can certainly reassert a statement I made in the introduction to *Opening the Heavens*:

Although only a verbal shadow of greater realities, and although inevitably some reporters were more observant, better informed, or more articulate than others, the words of close participants offer us the feeling of almost being there.

The impact of these documents is cumulative. . . . As these accounts become more and more familiar . . . , [one comes] closer to hearing the individual voices of these original writers. I recommend reading these crucial accounts slowly, thoughtfully, and at times even out loud. Listen as these numerous witnesses offer their own testimonies.<sup>9</sup>

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9. Welch, *Opening the Heavens*, viii.

*Gay Rights and the Mormon Church:  
Intended Actions, Unintended Consequences*

By Gregory A. Prince

Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2019

*Reviewed by Tom Christofferson*

When valedictorian Matt Easton spoke to his graduating classmates in the College of Family, Home, and Social Sciences at Brigham Young University in April 2019 and pronounced himself “proud to be a gay son of God,”<sup>1</sup> it was notable—not for the frank self-identification, nor because college administration had preapproved the speech. Rather, what was remarkable was the instant, energetic, and sustained cheers and applause from the large Marriott Center audience.

Dr. Gregory A. Prince’s new book, *Gay Rights and the Mormon Church: Intended Actions, Unintended Consequences*, arrives at a moment when acceptance of those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, asexual, or intersex has reached a tipping point among members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Jana Riess recently reported on Latter-day Saint attitudes toward homosexuality, based on data from the Next Mormon Survey (NMS) and from the Pew Research Center that was published in her book *The Next Mormons: How Millennials are Changing the LDS Church*. In that book, she explains, “The NMS asked whether respondents believed ‘homosexuality should be accepted by society’ or ‘homosexuality should be discouraged by society.’ The Pew Research Center asked these questions in 2007 and 2014. . . . Overall, Mormons’ acceptance of homosexuality grew from 24% in 2007 to 36% in 2014 and 48% in the 2016 NMS. So while acceptance doesn’t command majority support, that support has doubled in less than a decade. This movement is driven in large part by Millennials, more than half of whom say homosexuality should be accepted.”<sup>2</sup>

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1. See Jenna Alton, “BYU Valedictorian Comes Out as Gay in Viral Convocation Speech,” *Universe* (Provo, Utah), April 29, 2019, <https://universe.byu.edu/2019/04/29/byu-valedictorian-comes-out-as-gay-in-viral-convocation-speech/>.

2. Jana Riess, *The Next Mormons: How Millennials Are Changing the LDS Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 131.



Church leadership has also noted this trend. In a recent broadcast to seminary and institute instructors, covered by the Church News, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland noted that Generation Z individuals (currently aged seven to twenty-two) “tend to support gay marriage and transgender rights as part of everyday life. ‘Because of this sociability, the thin line between friendship and condoning behavior begins to blur.’”<sup>3</sup>

Prince earned a doctorate degree in dentistry and a PhD in pathology. As a scientist, Prince brings a helpful background to tracing the early engagement of social scientists in positing nature vs. nurture views of homosexuality’s causation, as well as the more recent focus on biology and emerging studies in genetics and epigenetics. He is a respected scientist and, by avocation, an accomplished historian. His two most recent books (*David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*, coauthored with William Robert Wright, and *Leonard Arrington and the Writing of Mormon History*) have garnered a dedicated audience, and both books reflect careful and extensive research, with ample use of primary sources and a sizeable number of interviews with family and associates of McKay and Arrington.<sup>4</sup>

Those who anticipate that *Gay Rights and the Mormon Church* would bring a similar approach to this topic will be disappointed: as Prince notes, “Although I have attempted to engage voices from all sides of the issues treated in this book, I have been frustrated by two groups”—the first being those who were active supporters of California’s Proposition 8, a ballot measure to eliminate the right of same-sex couples to marry. “None were willing to go on the record and talk about their motivations and action,” notes Prince. The second group was senior Church leadership. Church Public Affairs indicated to Prince that “after discussion, the decision was made to not offer anyone directly affiliated with the Church to be interviewed” (x). Though he could have waited until more primary source material could be reviewed and included, the author proceeded with the book, noting a feeling of urgency.

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3. Jason Swensen, “Elder Holland Challenges Seminary, Institute Instructors to Teach with ‘Power and Authority,’” Church News, June 12, 2019, <https://www.thechurchnews.com/leaders-and-ministry/2019-06-12/elder-holland-seminary-institute-teach-with-power-and-authority-1027>.

4. Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005); Gregory A. Prince, *Leonard Arrington and the Writing of Mormon History* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press and Tanner Trust Fund, 2016).



Prince provides a historical context for the gay liberation movement, primarily in the United States, and the Church's actions and reactions. His book is the highest profile effort to undertake this task to date.<sup>5</sup> He makes use of personal contacts gained in his service as a board member of Affirmation: LGBTQ Mormons, Families & Friends (I came to count Dr. Prince as a valued friend during the time we both served on that board) and through other engagement with national LGBTQ leaders as well as Church leaders. He has also drawn on contemporaneous newspaper accounts and Church documents that have appeared on Reddit and other websites.

Beginning with 1993, the book traces the path of same-sex marriage and the Church's efforts to ensure that such marriages would not be legalized, particularly in Hawaii and California with, respectively, Proposition 22 in 1998 (76–82) and Proposition 8 ten years later (126–60). Prince provides background on the Prop 8 battle and explores the ramifications of the Church's higher public visibility as the election drew closer and in its aftermath. He also covers what has been called “the Utah compromise,” the efforts to craft and pass what became Utah Senate Bill 296—which provided employment and housing protections for LGBTQ residents while also protecting the employment practices of churches and related organizations, such as BYU—as well as the Church's more recent efforts to protect religious freedom (226–41).

*Gay Rights and the Mormon Church* also follows the trajectory of Church teachings throughout the decades, surveying addresses in the 1950s by President J. Reuben Clark (15); Spencer W. Kimball's chapter on homosexuality, titled “Crime against Nature,” in his 1969 book, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (31–37); Church pamphlets (114–18); and a 2006 interview with Elder Dallin H. Oaks and Elder Lance Wickman, which was posted to the Church's website and became the basis for a pamphlet called *God Loveth His Children* (109–13).<sup>6</sup> In these decades, the Church's position on the cause of *being* homosexual evolved from a choice that

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5. A two-volume work published in 2016 is more exhaustive but has received relatively little visibility: Duane E. Jennings, *Stumbling Blocks and Stepping-Stones*, ed. Lavina Fielding Anderson (Salt Lake City: Mormon Alliance, 2016).

6. Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969), 77–98; “Interview with Elder Dallin H. Oaks and Elder Lance B. Wickman: ‘Same-Gender Attraction,’” 2006, Newsroom, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/interview-oaks-wickman-same-gender-attraction>; *God Loveth His Children* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2007).

can be cured through diligent work and sufficient faith to neither a choice nor a sin, though *acting* on such feelings is both.

Prince also covers the launch in 2012 of the Church's website [mormonsandgays.org](http://mormonsandgays.org), which was remarkable in several aspects: first, for using the word "gay" as an identity marker, which had been strongly opposed by Church leaders in the past; second, for publicly putting in writing the concept that homosexuality was not a choice, though individuals retain the ability to choose their response to such attractions; third, for declaring that homosexuality is not a disease; fourth, for asserting that the causation of same-sex attraction is not known; and, finally, for stating that the Church no longer advises marriage to someone of the opposite sex as a helpful step for homosexual members (216–17). The primary message of the site was encouraging loving engagement with family members or congregation members who have same-sex attraction.<sup>7</sup>

For readers, the book will provide greater depth of understanding of various events, although some discussions (in particular the November 2015 policy that labeled same-sex marriage as apostasy and deferred the eligibility of the children of gay unions to receive ordinances) suffer from a lack of primary sources; however, its most helpful contribution, I feel, is giving voice to groups that have heretofore largely been silent—relating the stories of lesbians and transgender and intersex individuals in a manner that conveys the depth of their struggle to remain active in the Church or to cope with the circumstances that have forced them out of it, proving again the power of individual stories shared with candor and authenticity to change hearts and minds in ways that political or theological history likely cannot. In these chapters, perhaps Dr. Prince's great hope for the book will be realized: that the book will be a lifeline for those who have lost hope of finding their place in the Church.

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Tom Christofferson is the author of *That We May Be One: A Gay Mormon's Perspective on Faith and Family* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2017). He is a frequent speaker and contributor on topics relating to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual community.

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7. The site has since been relaunched as <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/topics/gay/> and includes content on beliefs, the stories of LGBTQ Latter-day Saints and their families, and messages from Church leaders.

*Gay Rights and the Mormon Church:  
Intended Actions, Unintended Consequences*  
By Gregory A. Prince

Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2019

*Reviewed by W. Justin Dyer*

In this book, Gregory Prince compiles and examines available records of how individual leaders within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Church as an institution have approached issues of homosexuality and same-sex marriage. The compilation is most welcome as it provides many useful sources to understand how the Church and its leaders have discussed and acted on these issues. The book is an important reference, and I have gone back to it again and again to reference its timelines and sources.

Among these sources are documents, as well as interviews Prince conducted with involved individuals, adding rich texture to the narrative. Individuals' stories are also included, helping the reader understand the personal side of the events Prince details. The book thus provides data from multiple sources in creating its narrative.

While others have reviewed the book as a whole, this review focuses on two aspects of the book that are particularly important for readers to understand and that deserve more attention than could be accomplished in a general review. The first is Prince's use of official Church sources and the second is his use of statistics to tie the Church's actions to LGBTQ suicide.

### **Use of Official Church Sources**

Prince acknowledges some readers may see an imbalance in his narrative because it contains little material supportive of the Church's positions. Given no Church leaders agreed to be interviewed for this book, Prince affirms that any perceived imbalance in the narrative is a result of "their decision, not mine" (x). I myself have attempted (unsuccessfully) to interview Church leaders about several issues addressed in this book, and I sympathize with the desire to have additional official details. The book's

narrative, however, appears to discount what primary Church sources do exist, giving them less weight than unsubstantiated claims.

For instance, in addressing the November 2015 policy that required children of those in same-sex marriages to have First Presidency approval to be blessed and baptized,<sup>1</sup> Prince claims, “The church has never disclosed the details of its genesis” (258). As a source for the policy’s genesis, Prince uses what he refers to as a “published report”; however, this report is a theory from an online commentary that uses an anonymous source. This source is apparently an “official with routine access to members of the governing councils of the church” (259), though it is unclear who this official is or what specific role he or she might have.

In contrast to this anonymous source, Elder D. Todd Christofferson gave an interview two days after the policy was released in which he discusses the policy’s genesis. Elder Christofferson states the policy was, in part, born out of concern for children who may experience conflict between parents and Church. Elder Christofferson goes on to describe that the policy is in line with other longstanding policies such as the policy regarding children living in polygamous families, who may face similar circumstances. Unfortunately, Prince treats this official Church interview as simply “damage control” (260), sidestepping any serious treatment of it by saying: “What Todd Christofferson was selling, many weren’t buying” (261). In addressing this issue, the book unfortunately omits a detailed discussion of the Church’s official reasoning, giving preference to an anonymous online source.

The book contains other anonymous and secondhand accounts that feel out of balance with the available, well-documented information. For instance, in speculating how General Authorities felt about the November policy, Prince cites an interview with Bryce Cook (an economic advisor and a founding member of Arizona LDS LGBT Friends & Family), who said that a General Authority told a small group of Church members that “the majority are unhappy with this policy . . . and the way the procedure got pushed down on them” (266). It is unclear how to treat this second- or thirdhand statement that has no other supporting information.

In other areas of the book, official statements of Church leaders are misrepresented. For instance, Prince states that in 2015, Dallin H. Oaks “vigorously argued against protections for LGBT persons in the arena

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1. See Russell M. Nelson, “The Love and Laws of God” (devotional address, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, September 17, 2019), *BYU Speeches*, <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/russell-m-nelson/love-laws-god/>.

of public accommodations” (41). The citation Prince uses is an official transcript of a news conference on religious freedom. It is unclear how Prince came to his conclusion from the transcript of Oaks’s words:

Today, state legislatures across the nation are being asked to strengthen laws related to LGBT issues in the interest of ensuring fair access to housing and employment. The leadership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is on record as favoring such measures. . . . We call on local, state and the federal government to serve all of their people by passing legislation that protects vital religious freedoms for individuals, families, churches and other faith groups while also protecting the rights of our LGBT citizens in such areas as housing, employment and public accommodation in hotels, restaurants and transportation—protections which are not available in many parts of the country.<sup>2</sup>

Far from arguing against protections, Oaks explicitly argues for them.

In another instance, sources on early Latter-day Saint theology on the afterlife are misused. The book states: “Mormon afterlife theology began in 1829 where many Christian denominations of the era stood: universal salvation” (315). The evidence used to support that universal salvation was part of early Latter-day Saint theology is the Book of Mormon passage Alma 1:4, which includes the statement that “all mankind should be saved at the last day” (315). However, this statement is by anti-christ Nehor, whose teachings the Book of Mormon decidedly rejects. Although there may be other sources that could support the argument that the early Church had a more universalist approach to salvation, using Alma 1:4 to support the argument is inappropriate.

## Suicide

Each life lost to suicide is a tragedy, and combating this rising problem deserves the best efforts of all individuals and institutions. In one chapter, Prince rightly draws attention to the higher rates of suicide among LGBTQ individuals across the nation. These are individuals who require particular attention and care.

Prince frames LGBTQ suicide as an “unintended consequence” of the Church’s teachings and policies—a long-standing, popular inference. He notes, “[Suicide] is the extreme dimension of a far more pervasive

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2. “Transcript of News Conference on Religious Freedom and Non-discrimination,” Newsroom, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, January 27, 2015, <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/publicstatement-on-religious-freedom-and-nondiscrimination>.

disorder that is caused by people and organizations through their disapproving treatment of LGBT people” (288). The book’s argument relies on two kinds of evidence: statistical and anecdotal. First, Prince infers that suicide rates in Utah are higher than national rates because of a greater number of LGBTQ suicides in Utah—a trend some attribute to the Church. Prince does not cite any statistics to support the claim that Utah LGBTQ youth die by suicide at a higher rate than elsewhere in the country because no such data are available.

Prince also notes that official statistics of Utah suicides do not support claims that suicides increased after the November 2015 policy was announced, but he then refers to these official statistics as “squishy” (292), dismissing them as untrustworthy. His argument begins by correctly stating that there is “a general aversion to declaring suicide as the cause of death,” but he then goes on to claim that this aversion is “particularly strong within Mormonism” (292). His evidence for a greater aversion among Latter-day Saints is Bruce R. McConkie’s statement in the first edition of *Mormon Doctrine* that suicide is similar to murder.<sup>3</sup> However, in the second edition, that argument is no longer present and McConkie states that suicide may result from being “mentally clouded” and “such are not to be condemned.”<sup>4</sup> Prince’s connection between an outdated 1958 statement and a greater likelihood for Latter-day Saints to not report suicide in 2015 is tenuous at best.

Further, even with reporting error, if there were an increase in suicide post November 2015, it would be reflected in the statistics. Yet the year after the November policy saw a 21 percent decrease in youth suicide and a small decrease in suicide of those eighteen to sixty-four years old.<sup>5</sup>

Prince offers other statistics in which, as he states, “one may have confidence” (293). However, these statistics are not contextualized in his book. A statistical report in Prince’s book says, “The youth suicide rate in Utah

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3. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 1st ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958), 696.

4. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 771.

5. Justin Dyer, “Commentary: Did the Same-Sex Marriage Policy of the LDS Church Coincide with an Increase in Youth Suicide?” *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 2, 2018, <https://www.sltrib.com/opinion/commentary/2018/09/02/commentary-did-same-sex/>; “Suicide Data,” Violence and Injury Data, Violence and Injury Prevention Program, Utah Department of Health, updated November 4, 2019, <http://health.utah.gov/vipp/data/suicide.html>.

has trended upward in recent years, growing at an average rate almost four times faster than the rest of the nation” (293). Although the suicide rate did in fact rise more quickly in Utah than the national average beginning in 2011 (earliest year of the statistics Prince cites), Utah’s overall suicide rate remained relatively the same as that of the surrounding states. Further, the data Prince cites for rising suicide rates does not include the most recent years available (2016, 2017, and 2018).

Regarding suicide rates, the U.S. Center for Disease Control (the CDC) is a highly reliable source.<sup>6</sup> In 2017 and 2018, the CDC reported that Utah was number six in the country for suicide deaths per capita.<sup>7</sup> Although tragically high, this rate is comparatively unsurprising; Utah sits within the “suicide belt,” a grouping of states that for various reasons (for example, high elevation, high gun ownership, and low population density) have higher suicide rates than the rest of the nation. Utah’s rates do not stand out within its region.

According to more recent data than what Prince cites, the suicide rate grew 1.34 times nationally and 1.53 times in Utah. Examining states within the suicide belt (Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, and South Dakota), Utah’s increase is only slightly higher than the average of 1.44 times and lower than the increase in South Dakota (1.81), Montana (2.00), and Colorado (1.58). Utah’s age-adjusted suicide rate in 2017 was statistically indistinguishable from five other states in the region and was significantly lower than Montana.<sup>8</sup> By attempting to tie Utah suicide rates to the Church (as Prince does), one likely misses regional risk factors that are important to address.

Prince also states, “In 2013, [suicide] is the leading cause of death for Utahns ages 10 to 17 years old, the second-leading cause of death for ages 18–24 and 25–44, and the fourth-leading cause of death for ages 45–64” (293). Although true, suicide was also the leading cause of teen death

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6. See <https://wonder.cdc.gov/>.

7. “Underlying Cause of Death, 1999–2018,” CDC Wonder, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last reviewed November 19, 2019, <https://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html>; “Suicide Mortality by State,” National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last reviewed January 10, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/suicide-mortality/suicide.htm>.

8. “Underlying Cause of Death.”



nationwide.<sup>9</sup> In some locations, such as Washington, D.C., suicide was not the number one cause of death only because homicide was number one.<sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately, there is very little research that specifically examines suicidality by religion in Utah. Prince, however, does not reference the little that does exist. For instance, an analysis by CDC researchers found that between 2011 and 2015 Latter-day Saint youth in Utah were less likely to consider or attempt suicide than their peers of less religious or other religious preferences,<sup>11</sup> and another study found that in Utah Latter-day Saint LGB individuals had better mental health than non-Latter-day Saint LGB individuals.<sup>12</sup> This research is omitted in the book.

In addition to statistics, Prince provides anecdotes demonstrating suicide as an unintended consequence of the Church's teachings. These stories are important. Indeed, it is crucial to seek understanding of individual experiences, particularly when they involve pain and difficulties. Research has repeatedly outlined that conflicts may arise between LGBTQ individuals' religious identity and sexual orientation.<sup>13</sup> It is always important to acknowledge difficulties individuals face and to seek to alleviate pain as much as possible.

With that in mind, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (affiliated with GLAAD and other LGBTQ advocacy groups) has cautioned against simplistic narratives of suicide because they may increase risk for individuals already vulnerable:

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9. "Ten Leading Causes of Death and Injury," Injury Prevention & Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last reviewed April 10, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/LeadingCauses.html>.

10. "Compare Cause / States for Fatal Injury Data Visualization Tool," WISQARS, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, accessed December 11, 2019, <https://wisqars-viz.cdc.gov:8006/analyze-compare/home>.

11. Francis Annor, Amanda Wilkinson, and Marissa Zwalk, "Epi-Aid # 2017–019: Undetermined Risk Factors for Suicide among Youth Aged 10–17 years—Utah, 2017: Final Report," Utah Department of Health, November 2017, 46, <http://health.utah.gov/vipp/pdf/Suicide/CDCEpi-AidReport.pdf>.

12. Stephen Cranney, "The LGB Mormon Paradox: Mental, Physical, and Self-Rated Health Among Mormon and Non-Mormon LGB Individuals in the Utah Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System," *Journal of Homosexuality* 64, no. 6 (2017): 731–44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2016.1236570>.

13. For example, see Alissa Sherry, Andrew Adelman, Margaret R. Whilde, and Daniel Quick, "Competing Selves: Negotiating the Intersection of Spiritual and Sexual Identities," *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice* 41, no. 2 (2010): 112–19, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017471>.



Don't attribute a suicide death to a single factor (such as bullying or discrimination) or say that a specific anti-LGBT law or policy will "cause" suicide. Suicide deaths are almost always the result of multiple overlapping causes, including mental health issues that might not have been recognized or treated. Linking suicide directly to external factors like bullying, discrimination or anti-LGBT laws can normalize suicide by suggesting that it is a natural reaction to such experiences or laws. It can also increase suicide risk by leading at-risk individuals to identify with the experiences of those who have died by suicide.<sup>14</sup>

This statement should not be taken as removing any institution's or individual's responsibility to prevent suicide. As the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention also states, to prevent suicide we should "broadly emphasize individual and collective responsibility for supporting the well-being of LGBT people."<sup>15</sup> This is critical. One suicide is too many, and if the rate is not zero, there is still much to be done. It is important that we discuss difficulties of LGBTQ individuals in the Church and work to understand the unique challenges they face. However, as is done in this book, simplifying suicide to a single source reinforces a narrative that is likely inaccurate and may increase risk.

## Conclusion

There is much to commend in this book; it offers important materials and timelines for the Church's involvement in LGBTQ issues and provides an important outline of events, along with references to important documents that allow the reader to dive deeper into the subject. However, the questionable (and, at times, incorrect) use of official Church sources and national and state suicide statistics is a weakness. Thus, though this book provides important details on the Church's efforts in this arena, parts of the book should be read cautiously.

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14. Movement Advancement Project, Johnson Family Foundation, and American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, "Talking about Suicide & LGBT Populations," 2d ed., MAP's *Talking about LGBT Issues* series (August 2017), 3, <http://www.lgbtmap.org/file/talking-about-suicide-and-lgbt-populations-2nd-edition.pdf>.

15. "Talking about Suicide," 2.

*Mormons, Musical Theater, and Belonging in America*  
By Jake Johnson

Music in American Life Series. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019

*Reviewed by Megan Sanborn Jones*

In his ambitious first book, musicologist Jake Johnson examines how and why the vocal and theatrical traditions of American musicals are evidenced in the theology of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. At the heart of this examination are close readings of a number of popular American musicals and what Johnson sees as their Utah counterparts—*Oklahoma!* and *Promised Valley*; *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Life . . . More Sweet than Bitter*; *The Book of Mormon* and *Saturday's Warrior*. Part history, part literary criticism, part religious studies, and part music studies, *Mormons, Musical Theater, and Belonging in America* attempts to show not only that the history of Mormons and musical theatre are intertwined but also that the vocality that emerges at the intersection of Latter-day Saint theology and theatricality is uniquely American.

Scholars in a wide range of related fields as well as general readers will find much to appreciate here. Johnson's work is truly interdisciplinary. He moves quickly and easily across topics as varied as *The Sound of Music*, the Mountain Meadows Massacre, Brother Jake's satirical YouTube videos, President Trump, Orson Hyde's dedication of Jerusalem, the mechanics of early sound recording, rock musicals of the 1970s, the John Birch Society, the Latter-day Saint temple ceremony, Kate Kelly's excommunication, and the Osmond brothers. He calls his methodology a "spiraling historiographical model" and explains that it allows him to write across time, genre, and media to focus on the events and texts he finds most compelling (27–28). The result is that on almost every page, the reader is introduced to something surprising and provocative.

After introducing his theoretical framework, Johnson organizes his work in a roughly chronological fashion. He first develops what he calls the "theology of voice," in which he suggests that the voice is "the

*principal* means of understanding another person's righteousness and devotion to religious values" (15). He takes this position largely from the revelation to Joseph Smith recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 1:38, in which God explains, "Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same." Building on this idea of prophets speaking for God, Johnson teases out the idea of a vicarious voice, or the event of one person speaking for and on behalf of another unseen person. He then applies the theology of voice to selections from the history of American musical theatre and of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Johnson's examination of Latter-day Saint doctrine through the lens of the theology of voice is both thoughtful and thought-provoking. The two case studies he provides in the first chapter—Brigham Young speaking as if he were Joseph Smith and Nephi speaking with the voice of Laban—allow the reader to consider in new ways the power of voice to proxy authority. Much less successful, however, is his claim that culture is littered with vicarious voices, including machines that disseminate a person's voice or actors who play a role on the stage.

The problem with grouping these very different modes of vocality together is that it erases any nuance of performance, technology, reception, and context. For example, theatre, in addition to being live and ephemeral, is collaborative. Meaning is created by multiple "authors": from the playwright who creates a character, to the designer who shapes the physical realities of the actor's body, to the director who provides a framework of intention, to the actor who interprets the script, to the audience that brings its own insights. Theatre decidedly has more than one voice, and even when there is only one literal voice of an actor, the actor speaks for everyone who has contributed to the work as a whole. In acting there is generally no singular identifiable other like God, Joseph Smith, or Laban whom the actor must mimic with specificity and authority in order to convince an audience that she or he speaks for that person. Characters have no independent voice to proxy.

Johnson, however, uses verbs like to *proxy*, *mimic*, *pretend*, *imitate*, *play*, *shape-shift*, *ventriloquize*, *surrogate*, and *act* interchangeably. His untheorized assumptions about performance, imitation, and recreation prove his thesis that acting in musical theatre and acting like a Latter-day Saint are entwined, but do so at the cost of critical rigor in the area of performance studies. Compounding this is Johnson's focus on the script of plays rather than the performance of them. Johnson's training as a musicologist and this book's publication in the University of Illinois Press's Music in American Life Series in some ways mitigate his lack of

attention to theatre as a performing art, for it is clear that his primary interest is music and sound. However, since his central argument is a theatrical one, it is a notable oversight.

In the history that makes up the bulk of his work, Johnson begins with a development of American operetta in the nineteenth century. In the second chapter, he continues through to the development of the integrated musical and suggests that the Latter-day Saint Church's commission of the play *Promised Valley* built on the deep popularity of *Oklahoma!* the musical. He convincingly argues that *Promised Valley* shows how singing meant belonging and proved that Latter-day Saints belonged in the America of the 1940s and 1950s. His next chapter claims that Church members' fascination with the musical *Fiddler on the Roof* and the performances at the Polynesian Cultural Center illustrate the unique relationship Latter-day Saints claim to have with Judaism. (Johnson justifies putting these two performances side by side, explaining that Latter-day Saints think that Polynesians, as well as Native Americans, descend from the house of Israel.) He concludes that not only do these musical performances support the Church's beliefs about ancient and future Israel, but they also buoy up Latter-day Saint ideologies that "prefer whiteness as a demarcation of purity" (112).

Johnson then devotes chapter 4 to an examination of Church members' preoccupations with time and eternity in a close reading of *Saturday's Warrior*. He again finds parallels among a wide range of performances: temple work, fast Sunday testimonies, general conference talks, and pageants (as described in HBO's *Big Love* and in a post-apocalyptic short story by Orson Scott Card rather than as performed in actual Church pageants). He argues that all these performances evidence a standardized vocal behavior, which he calls the "correlated voice," a term inspired by the Church's correlation initiative that pulled disparate Latter-day Saint practices into a unified system. Johnson's final chapter moves forward to the present, with an analysis of the hit musical *The Book of Mormon* to show how aurality functions in contemporary Latter-day Saint political life. He concludes that the version of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints depicted in the musical disrupts the unity of correlation, which is "exactly what Mormonism needs to remain relevant" (167).

Johnson's work is at its finest when he takes the time to deeply examine a singular musical site. Readers will appreciate his detailed analysis of musical theatre songs, which he usually illustrates with figures of the score. Also of note are his sections on "Imitating God" (42-47)

and “Correlated Voices” (136–41). These, along with some other of his multiple short sections, provide compelling insights about the relationship between musical theatre and Latter-day Saint theology that truly expand an understanding of the larger relationship between performance and belief. However, these sections work less effectively to support Johnson’s overarching argument. His “spiral historiography” allows him to abandon one thread and pick up another one in each subsequent chapter in the book. In the end, readers may be surprised by where the book concludes in relationship to where they thought they were going.

For all this, *Mormons, Musical Theater, and Belonging in America* is a welcome addition to the growing field of American religious performance studies. Jake Johnson is a fascinating and agile new voice in Mormon studies from whom I hope we hear more in the future.

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Megan Sanborn Jones is a professor of theatre at Brigham Young University. She has published work in *Theatre Journal*, *Theatre Topics*, *Ecumenica*, *The Journal of Mormon History*, *Mormon Studies Review*, and more. Her most recent work, from the University of Michigan Press, is *Contemporary Mormon Paganry: Seeking After Our Dead*.

*Moth and Rust: Mormon Encounters with Death*

Edited by Stephen Carter

Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2017

*Reviewed by Connie Lamb*

Latter-day Saints view death as part of the plan of salvation and some have even claimed to have glimpsed the afterlife. Thus, as the book's introduction explains, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have a good understanding of death and the afterlife, but many still fear dying (x). Despite Church teachings on the temporary nature of death, the death of someone dearly loved can still cause a Latter-day Saint to face stark reality and ask serious questions. *Moth and Rust* captures Latter-day Saints' varying experiences and demonstrates the many ways death can be conceived.

Although not explained in the book, the title of this collection comes from the Sermon on the Mount, given in Matthew 6:19–20 and 3 Nephi 13:19–20: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, . . . but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt.” These verses capture an appropriate Christian, and specifically Latter-day Saint, view of the mortal world of destruction and decay, a world that can be overcome through death.

In this 257-page book, forty-six different contributors talk about death in a variety of ways. They view death from different perspectives—both as a concept and as a personal reality. The entries include essays and poems that vary in style and mood, but all are written by established writers and authors. Some speak of their own impending death or the death of a loved one; others discuss the death of animals or talk about death through fiction. The book elicits responses that range from sadness to laughter, from distress to increased faith. As the editor states, both orthodox and heterodox perspectives are included, and all of the pieces are informed by the Latter-day Saint perspective.

*Moth and Rust* is divided into five sections, grouping similar entries together. The first section, titled “Passages,” has fourteen entries that contain thoughts on the death of a loved one. Some are sweet, others sad. The second section is “Piercing the Veil” and comprises six entries that deal with ideas about the condition of the soul after death. Third is “Fleeting,” with seven entries that discuss the death of children. The fourth section, “A Wider View,” has ten entries that look at death within other contexts, such as in the animal kingdom, the universe, and sacred history and theology. In the last section, titled “A Single Soul,” the nine entries focus on how death has personally affected the respective authors.

Accompanying each section are black and white photos from the series *Compressions* by artist Maddison Colvin. These images are close-up photographs of vegetation pressed against glass—epitaphs to a vanishing landscape. The photos represent an additional view of death, that of squeezing life out of nature.

A review of the existing literature reveals that there are few books about Latter-day Saints and death, although there are many talks and articles on the subject. A book published by LDS Book Publications in Provo in 1979, titled *Death and the LDS Family: Dealing with Death and Dying*, is a compilation of talks and essays, including a few poems by General Authorities and others, that discuss Latter-day Saint religious aspects of death. Another book, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation*, discusses death as part of the complete eternal plan. A piece in *Nursing Times*, published in 1992, accurately portrays Latter-day Saint beliefs for hospital workers who serve Latter-day Saint patients. The chapter in *Death in America* called “Gates Ajar: Death in Mormon Thought and Practice” makes the point that death in the Latter-day Saint worldview is just a step in the progression of life. Those who die continue active in redemptive work; although it is difficult to face the death of a loved one, death is not a termination but a continuation for those who are gone from us. A paper in a 1986 *BYU Studies* issue discusses how early Latter-day Saint perceptions of death diverged from the Calvinist and other Christian views about death because of the Saints’ firm belief in a hereafter and eternal families.<sup>1</sup> There are many articles in Church

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1. C. Douglass Beardall and Jewel N. Stratford, comps., *Death and the LDS Family* (Provo, Utah: LDS Book Publications, 1979); Douglas James Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation: Force, Grace, and Glory* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2000); Mary Ann Myers, “Gates Ajar: Death in Mormon Thought and

magazines and other publications that discuss both doctrine and feelings surrounding death. *Moth and Rust*, however, is quite unique in the literature because it deals with actual experiences and personal perceptions concerning death rather than Latter-day Saint doctrine and because its discussions of death extend beyond that of the human body.

Descriptions of a few of the book's entries provide a sampling of the diversity contained in the book. In the section "Passages," the author of the entry titled "The Living and the Telling" talks about the death of her brother and reflects on portions of his life (48–59). When she joined the Church, her brother teased her about it; however, she still deeply loved him and was hurt and angry at his death from cancer. His widow asked the author to pick up the ashes of her brother and bring them to her—a difficult request. The author finally realized that her sister-in-law's efforts in taking care of her brother and watching him die were far more important than her anguish over the ashes and made her love her sister-in-law even more. Another short entry in that section contains two poems, one about the death of the author's mother in 2004 and one about his father's death in 2008 (60–61). Looking at them in death, he yearns to remember everything about them in life, to hang onto the cord that binds them.

Steven L. Peck titles a quite unusual chapter in the "Wider View" section, "A Meditation after Watching My Wife Plant Peas" (145–52). The author, lying in a hammock, meditates over the world around him and enumerates what can and cannot die. Peas, apple trees, a wasp, the fire in the fireplace and many other things, including himself, can die. Things that cannot die are the author's shoes, the air, an iPod case, rocks, a rabbit statue, and so on. He muses that a house cannot die, but a home can. Then he grapples with the question, What is death? He surmises that all things are temporary and death can be the cessation of a process, a change of state, or the dissolution of coherence. He concludes with an insightful thesis about death and life: ends will come, but we must enjoy the present and all it has to offer. Another touching entry in this section is titled "Eve, Dying," written by playwright Eric Samuelsen, who passed

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Practice," in *Death in America*, ed. D. E. Stannard (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975); Jennifer Green, "Death with Dignity: The Mormon Church," *Nursing Times* 88, no. 6 (February 5, 1992): 44–45; M. Guy Bishop, "To Overcome the 'Last Enemy': Early Mormon Perceptions of Death," *BYU Studies*, 26, no. 3 (1986): 1–17.



away in September 2019 (174–91). In the piece, written like a play, the two characters, Adam and Eve converse as Eve is dying. They hark back to their time in the garden and the decision they made to eat the fruit, pondering the question, Is mortal life worth it?

The section titled “Fleeting” contains many heart-wrenching stories because they mainly involve babies and young children. “Unwilling” tells the agony of losing an unborn baby (111–13). The mother begged God that the baby would stay, but in her soul she knew that it would not. Her words to her husband, “The baby’s gone. I had to let her go,” tell the painful ending of hopeful anticipation. “Breathe!” by Fatima S. Salleh is a poignant sermon she delivered at Duke University in 2014 in the wake of civil unrest stemming from recent shootings of blacks (133–37). As the mother of three brown children, she felt like God had abandoned her. She told her children to do and not do certain things and to dress a certain way to protect them from being targeted. Though feeling abandoned, she goes to church at the urging of the Holy Ghost and worships with her people—a faithful people who believe and trust in God.

The section “Piercing the Veil” includes essays on coming or going through the veil, a mixing of the mortal and the immortal. “On the Porch” by Philip McLemore is the story of a retired military chaplain who watched many people die, leading him to reflect seriously on living and dying (92–95). To find a place of solitude in the mornings, he spent time at the Lehi City Cemetery. At first he felt like he was intruding, but after a while he felt at home among the people whose names were on the headstones. He imagined them talking about him, laughing over the thought that he felt sorry for them. He visualized them on a large porch watching those on earth. Perspectives change as we grow older, he observes, and what we didn’t understand as children becomes clearer as we come closer to death ourselves. An unusual entry is “Three Grand Keys,” by English Brooks, referencing Doctrine and Covenants 129 in which Joseph Smith gives the keys to know whether a nonmortal messenger is from God (83–86). Brooks’s piece is three pages long, each page presenting one of the keys in English, Spanish, and Korean, accompanied by striking illustrations.

In the “Single Soul” section, Heidi Naylor’s story is thought provoking and sad (214–19). A soldier returning home from World War II had seen so much death and destruction that he was haunted day and night with terrible visions and thoughts. He boarded a train in Ogden, Utah, and headed west with thoughts of Sabbaths at home. Suddenly he heard

the sound of metal on metal as two trains collided, and his last thought was that he had survived twenty months in an artillery battalion only to die in a train crash. The author ends this piece with “*Step forward, soldier,*” meaning the time had come to enter into a new life (219). Boyd Petersen’s essay “Out of the Blue and into the Black” describes how we can’t go back to experience something from our past with the same feelings (207–13). It is not about real death but rather the difficulty of trying to recapture the past.

The book *Moth and Rust: Mormon Encounters with Death* demonstrates the wide variety of personal feelings about death among Latter-day Saints. The entries are engaging, heart wrenching, and thought provoking. *Moth and Rust* is an unusual grouping of Latter-day Saint responses to the realities of death and dying, adding a new way of talking about death with more personal perspectives. It is an insightful addition to the published literature on death.

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Connie Lamb is Social Sciences Librarian at the Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, and is responsible for the subjects of anthropology, African studies, Middle Eastern studies, and women’s studies. She has advanced degrees in anthropology and Middle Eastern studies and has published several articles and coedited two book-length bibliographies. She has also given many presentations at conferences for professional organizations to which she belongs.

*Mormon Cinema: Origins to 1952*, by Randy Astle (New York: Mormon Arts Center, 2018)

*Mormon Cinema: Origins to 1952* is the first book in a series by Randy Astle discussing Latter-day Saint cinema and its history. In the introduction, the author describes the five chronological “waves,” or eras, in Latter-day Saint film (10–12). In this first volume, he discusses the first two waves, the first running from July 1898 to October 1929, and the second spanning October 1929 to January 1953. A discussion of the following waves and an in-depth analysis of all the information presented will appear in subsequent books (7).

Well equipped to tackle this subject, author Randy Astle is a professional in the field of film. He received his master’s degree in filmmaking from the London Film School and has worked extensively in children’s entertainment and other media. He has also been writing for *Filmmaker Magazine* since 2011.

With 671 pages, including notes and an index, the book is divided into three substantial chapters. The first is about origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the role of film within the Church. Chapter 1 also reviews nineteenth-century precedents for film and parallels in other branches of Latter-day Saint art. Chapter 2 explores the first wave of Latter-day Saint cinema, primarily dealing with members of the Church and the mainstream industry. It also discusses cinematic depictions of Latter-day Saints (which were usually quite hostile) and the propagandistic films the Church made in response. The chapter ends with a comparison between independent Latter-day Saint films and Church institutional films of the period. Chapter 3 discusses the second wave of Latter-day Saint film, beginning with

how the depictions of the Church and its members in popular film became kinder and more nuanced during this era. The chapter then moves on to how, during this period, Latter-day Saints joined the film industry in earnest at varying levels and spread film through their own private network and again ends with a comparison between institutional and independent films.

For those who have a love for film or media, Latter-day Saint culture, or the lesser-known aspects of the Church’s history, this book will be a satisfying and informative read. Astle offers an abundant amount of research and information in this book, and in so doing uncovers a world that many members of the Church scarcely knew they were a part of.

—Veronica Anderson

*Business and Religion: The Intersection of Faith and Finance*, edited by Matthew C. Godfrey and Michael Hubbard MacKay (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2019)

If you are interested in the intersection of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and finance, you will be intrigued by this compilation of papers presented at a March 2018 symposium sponsored by the Department of Religious Education at Brigham Young University and the Church History Department in Salt Lake City. The topics are many and varied and are divided loosely into the four sections of this volume.

Part 1 consists of two keynote addresses: one on the spiritual foundations of Church financial self-reliance by Presiding Bishop Gérald Caussé, and the other by Sharon Ann Murphy, a professor of history at Providence College, who offers new insights into the economic circumstances in which the

Kirtland Safety Society debacle played itself out.

Part 2, "Consecration and Cooperation," comprises four chapters. Gerrit Dirkmaat, an assistant professor of Church history and doctrine at BYU, discusses early conflicts over consecrated properties in the Church, focusing specifically on Ezra Thayer and Leman Copley. Jeffrey Paul Thompson, an archivist at the Church History Library, offers a fascinating history of the rise and demise of ZCMI (Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution). Patricia Lemmon Spilisbury, a missionary serving at the Church History Library, discusses the straw-braiding industry as an effort to implement cooperation and economic improvement. Finally, Brooke Kathleen Brassard, who holds a PhD in religious studies from the University of Waterloo, addresses the politics of cooperation among Latter-day Saints in Alberta, Canada.

Part 3, "Utah Territorial Economies," includes four presentations, beginning with R. Devan Jensen, executive editor in BYU's Religious Studies Center, who explores the history of the Brigham Young Express and Carrying Company. Next is William P. MacKinnon, an independent scholar and leading expert on the Utah War, who discusses the financing of the Church's standing army during that conflict. Sherilyn Farnes, a doctoral candidate in U.S. history at Texas Christian University, paints an economic portrait of the polygamous household of Eliza Partridge Lyman, whose husband, Amasa Lyman, failed to adequately provide for her and her children. The last chapter in this section is by Julie K. Allen, a professor of

comparative literature and Scandinavian studies at BYU, who offers a case study of Danish convert-immigrant economies in the Utah Territory, using the experience of Hans Jørgensen.

Part 4, "Economics and the Institutional Church," comprises five chapters. Samuel D. Brunson, professor of law at Loyola University Chicago, explores the confrontation between Brigham Young and John P. Taggart, assessor of Internal Revenue for the district of Utah during the implementation of the nation's first income tax. Brian Q. Cannon, professor of history at BYU, examines the lives and finances of the Church's "thousand-dollar class"—a short list of members who paid over \$1,000 in tithing—in 1917–18. Scott C. Esplin, a professor of Church history and doctrine at BYU, discusses the financial decision the Church faced in the early twentieth century of whether to continue with Church academies or to establish seminaries adjacent to secular high schools. Joseph F. Darowski, recently retired from the Joseph Smith Papers Project, examines the genesis of the Church Security Plan between 1920 and 1936. Finally, Mary Jane Woodger, a professor of Church history and doctrine at BYU, and Kiersten Robertson, a BYU student, discuss the economics behind the construction of the General Relief Society Building.

This compilation, as these brief summaries indicate, contains a variety of topics that should be of interest to readers who want more information about financial aspects of the Church throughout its history.

—Roger Terry

## TO OUR READERS

*BYU Studies Quarterly* is dedicated to the correlation of revealed and discovered truth and to the conviction that the spiritual and the intellectual can be complementary and fundamentally harmonious avenues of knowledge. This periodical strives to explore scholarly perspectives on Latter-day Saint topics. It is committed to seeking truth “by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118) and recognizes that all knowledge without charity is nothing (1 Cor. 13:2). It proceeds on the premise that faith and reason, revelation and scholarly learning, obedience and creativity are compatible; they are “many members, yet but one body” (1 Cor. 12:20).

Contributions from all fields of learning are invited. *BYU Studies Quarterly* strives to publish articles that openly reflect a Latter-day Saint point of view and are obviously relevant to subjects of general interest to Latter-day Saints, while conforming to high scholarly standards. *BYU Studies Quarterly* invites poetry and personal essays dealing with the life of the mind, reflections on personal and spiritual responses to academic experiences, intellectual choices, values, responsibilities, and methods. All personal essays received will be entered in our annual personal essay contest. Short studies and notes are also welcomed.

Opinions expressed in *BYU Studies Quarterly* are the opinions of contributors. Their views should not necessarily be attributed to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Brigham Young University, or *BYU Studies Quarterly* editors, staff, or board members.

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