The LDS Temple Baptismal Font: Dead Relic or Living Symbol?

Dale Verden Boman

Brigham Young University - Provo

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THE LDS TEMPLE BAPTISMAL FONT:
DEAD RELIC OR LIVING SYMBOL?

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of Humanities, Classics, and Comparative Literature
Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Dale Verden Boman
December 1985
This thesis, by Dale Verden Boman is accepted in its present form by the Department of Humanities, Classics, and Comparative Literature of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

Jon D. Green, Committee Chairman

Steven C. Bule, Committee Member

Steven P. Sondrup, Graduate Coordinator

10 July, 1985

Date
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to express appreciation to Dr. Jon D. Green, the committee chairman, and to Dr. Steven C. Bule who rendered invaluable service by their many constructive suggestions and assistance in the preparation of the manuscript. Appreciation is also expressed to Jean Marshall for her perusal of the text, to Alan Murdock for his research assistance, to Don Marshall, Mark Hamilton, Kay and Karen Baird, Alex and Marylin Bigney, Joseph R. Dick and Maxine Murdock, and to my parents and family for their constant encouragement and support.

Special consideration and acknowledgement is extended to La Var E. Wallgren, Avard T. Fairbanks, Karl Quilter and Emil B. Fetzer for their first-hand information and personal interviews. The LDS Church Copyrights and Permissions Office (Bernell W. Berrett), Temple Department (Derek F. Metcalf), Graphics Library (Blake Miller), Historical Department Archive Libraries (Bill Slaughter), Arts and Sites Division (Richard Oman and Paul L. Anderson), the Missouri Historical Society, the Utah Historical Society, the BYU Harold B. Lee Library Photo Archives, and the Church of St. Bartholemy at Liege, Belgium have been invaluable for special permission to reproduce photographs of LDS temple interiors, original architectural plans, other photographs and artifacts.

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THE LDS TEMPLE BAPTISMAL FONT:
DEAD RELIC, OR LIVING SYMBOL?

INTRODUCTION

Always of interest to visitors of Mormon temples are the baptismal fonts supported by twelve sculpted oxen in which the sacred ordinance of vicarious baptism for the dead is performed. However, these fonts are far more than tourist curiosities or trivial pieces of decorative sculpture. The design of these temple fonts is not determined simply by aesthetic considerations, but more importantly by historical and symbolic precedent. As such, the LDS temple baptismal fonts are one of the oldest and most enduring visual symbols connected with the Mormon Church. As a collective set of religious works, the evolving nature of LDS temple baptismal fonts reflect changing attitudes pertaining to the seeming conflicts between the power of traditional religious symbolism and the requirements of economy and efficiency.

The early Latter-day Saints in Nauvoo were commanded through a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith to build a temple to house a baptismal font for the purpose of baptism for the dead. Patterned after the form of the molten sea of Solomon's Temple, the Nauvoo Temple baptismal font became a visual and ritualistic link which connected the temple-building, covenant-making Latter-day Saints to
their Old Testament counterparts. The pattern of the Nauvoo Temple baptismal font has been followed in almost all successive LDS temple fonts. Between the late 1960s and the early 1980s, however, the emphasis on the molten sea motif became less important to font design. In fact, several LDS temples were built in the early 1980s with baptismal fonts similar to normal meetinghouse fonts, rather than the traditional temple font supported by oxen. Economic and practical factors took precedence over any symbolic implication of the oxen-supported font. More recently, though, the traditional font with oxen has been reintroduced into the planning of new LDS temples. By continuing a non-essential design, the role of the traditional LDS temple font as a symbol is given even greater emphasis.

With the new standard plan temples, the molten sea pattern has again been integrated into Mormon temple fonts, but the symbolic importance of the molten sea itself as it pertained specifically to the ordinance of baptism is yet to be fully explored. A rediscovery of the possible symbolism inherent in the temple baptismal font from the molten sea of Solomon's Temple could render the font not only a richer symbol, but add to a better understanding of the LDS temple experience as well.

The aim of this study, therefore, is to trace briefly the historical origins and development of the LDS temple baptismal font and to investigate the various iconographic meanings which may pertain to it and its role as a potential vital symbol in the Mormon Church.
INTRODUCTION OF DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD AND COMMANDMENT TO BUILD TEMPLE

On 19 October 1840, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote a letter to the twelve apostles, who were on missions in Great Britain at the time, which addressed the new doctrine of baptism for the dead. The letter reads in part:

I presume the doctrine of "baptism for the dead" has ere this reached your ears, and may have raised some inquiries in your minds respecting the same. I cannot in this letter give you all the information you may desire on the subject; but aside from knowledge independent of the Bible, I would say that it was certainly practiced by the ancient churches; and St. Paul endeavors to prove the doctrine of the resurrection from the same and says: "Else what should they do which are baptized for the dead if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?"

I first mentioned the doctrine in public when preaching the funeral sermon of Brother Seymour Brunson [15 Aug 1840]; and have since then given general instructions in the Church on the subject. The saints have the privilege of being baptized for those of their relatives who are dead, whom they believe would have embraced the Gospel, if they had been privileged with hearing it, and have received the Gospel in the spirit, through the instrumentality of those who have been commissioned to preach to them while in prison.
Without enlarging on the subject, you will undoubtedly see its consistency and reasonableness; and it presents the Gospel of Christ in probably a more enlarged scale than some have imagined it. (History of the Church 4: 231-232; hereafter referred to as HC)

In September 1840, baptisms for the dead had commenced in the Mississippi River. A few months later, on 19 January 1841, an important revelation was given to Joseph Smith in which the saints were commanded to build a temple in Nauvoo, Illinois. One of the main purposes for the construction of a temple was to provide a place where baptisms for the dead could be performed. Part of the revelation reads:

For a baptismal font there is not upon the earth, that they, my saints, may be baptized for those who are dead—For this ordinance belongeth to my house, and cannot be acceptable to me, only in the days of your poverty, wherein ye are not able to build a house to me. But I command you, all ye my saints, to build a house unto me...and during this time your baptisms shall be acceptable unto me.... For verily I say unto you, that after you have had sufficient time to build a house to me, wherein the ordinance of baptizing for the dead belongeth, and for which the same was instituted from before the foundation of the world, your baptisms for your dead cannot be acceptable unto me.... (Doctrine and Covenants 124:29-31, 33; hereafter referred to as D&C)

PARALLEL BETWEEN LATTER-DAY SAINTS AND ANCIENT ISRAELITES

In this same revelation, the Lord made a parallel between the Latter-day Saints and the ancient Israelites concerning the building of holy places. The revelation further reads:

For it is ordained that in Zion, and in her stakes, and in Jerusalem, those places which I have appointed for refuge, shall be the places for your
baptisms for your dead.... For, for this cause I commanded Moses that he should build a tabernacle, that they should bear it with them in the wilderness, and to build a house in the land of promise, that those ordinances might be revealed which had been hid from before the world was.

(D&C 124: 36-38)

The call to build the modern temple was similar to the call given to the ancient Israelites. In that same revelation, the saints were commanded to come with gold, silver, precious stones, antiquities, box-tree, fir-tree, precious trees of the earth, iron, copper, brass, zinc, and all the precious things of the earth (D&C 124:26-27). In carrying out these commands, the Saints were engaged in establishing a microcosmic version of the original creation by gathering the precious elements of the earth into a surrogate universe. Similarly, the Israelites were called through Moses to come with gold, silver, brass, fine linen, goats' hair, skins, shittim wood, oil, spices, onyx and stones to build the Tabernacle (Exod. 25:3-7). In a like manner, King David brought together the materials necessary for his son, Solomon, to build the Temple (1 Chron. 22:2-5). It is noteworthy that the same call for temple-building materials was given both anciently and in modern times.

PATTERN GIVEN BY LORD

The design of ancient holy places was given specifically by the Lord to the prophets. Moses was told to make the tabernacle "after the pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount" (Exod. 25:40). David gave to Solomon the pattern of the temple: "All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern" (1 Chron. 28:19). In regards to the building of the Kirtland Temple in 1833, the Lord said to Joseph Smith: "And behold, it must be done according to the pattern which I have given unto you.... Therefore let it be built after the manner which I shall show unto...you" (D&C 94:2, 95:14).
Concerning the Nauvoo Temple, the Lord said: "And I will show unto my servant Joseph all things pertaining to this house, and the priesthood thereof, and the place whereon it shall be built" (D&C 124:42). The similarities between the ancient and modern temple-building calls are apparent. Brigham Young commented:

Joseph not only received revelation and commandment to build a Temple, but he received a pattern also, as did Moses for the Tabernacle, and Solomon for his Temple; for without a pattern, he could not know what was wanting, having never seen one, and not having experienced its use. (Journal of Discourses 2:31)

The Bible gives the details of the pattern given to Moses for the tabernacle and includes descriptions of its dimensions and furnishings. Likewise, the details of the instructions given for Solomon's Temple were recorded in the Bible. The instructions for the Kirtland Temple as to the site, dimensions and purpose for the different assembly halls were recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants (95:13-17). In regards to the Nauvoo Temple, the necessity of the baptismal font was given, but no specific instructions as to the details of its design were recorded in the scriptures.

SAINTS SEE THEMSELVES AS MODERN ISRAEL AS THEY BUILD BAPTISMAL FONT

The cornerstones of the Nauvoo Temple were laid 6 April 1841, and work on the font also began that spring. In the summer of that year measures were taken to build the baptismal font in the cellar floor near the east end of the temple. The first published description of the Nauvoo Temple baptismal font was given in the Times and Seasons of 1 July 1841. This article demonstrates the saints' belief that they were building the temple according to the pattern given and that they saw themselves as the modern equivalent of the ancient Israelites:

The building committee are making every preparation to erect the baptismal font in the basement story as soon as possible. The font, is intended to be
supported by twelve oxen, several of which are in a state of forwardness, and are certainly good representations of that animal, and do great credit to the mechanics who are engaged in carving the same. It is intended to overlay them with gold, and when finished will have very grand appearance indeed.

While contemplating the foundation which has been so happily begun, we were forcibly reminded of the circumstances, as recorded in holy writ, connected with the building of the ancient Temple at Jerusalem....

And shall the saints of the last days manifest a supineness [sic] and feel less interested for the honor of their God, the glory of the church and the good of mankind than did the Jews of old?

If the saints interest themselves in this matter, there is no doubt but that the temple will be erected according to the pattern given, and they will be privileged to witness the dedication of the same, and see the glory and presence of the Lord displayed as it was anciently. (emphasis added; 455)

W. W. Phelps wrote with the same conviction about the erection of the temple and font:

The fount in the basement story is for the baptism of the living, for health, for remission of sin, and for the salvation of the dead, as was the case in Solomon's temple, and all temples that God commands to be built. You know I am no Gentile, and of course, do not believe that a monastery, cathedral, chapel, or meeting house erected by the notions and calculations of men, has any more sanction from God than any common house in Babylon.... [W]hen finished it [the Temple] will show more wealth, more art, more science, more revelation, more splendor, and more God, than all the rest of the world, and that will make it a Mormon temple:--"God and Liberty;" patterned somewhat after the order of our forefathers, which were after the order of eternity. (emphasis added; Phelps 759)
An editorial in the *Times and Seasons* also shows the earnestness of the Saints. It reads in part:

[God] gave the pattern of the first ship to Noah; and he was the architect of the tabernacle of Moses, and of the temple of Solomon. A wise man will pattern after his order; but fools will erect synagogues after the imagination of their own heart. (25 Dec. 1844: 900)

Joseph Smith even compared himself to Solomon, if only in jest. According to Josiah Quincy from Boston, the prophet made this inquiry during Quincy’s visit to the Nauvoo Temple: “Is not here one greater than Solomon, who built a temple with the treasures of his father, David, and with the assistance of Hiram, King of Tyre” (Quincy 390)?

By the General Conference of the Church in October of 1841, work on the baptismal font had progressed far enough that Joseph Smith announced:

There shall be no more baptisms for the dead, until the ordinance can be attended to in the font of the Lord’s House; and the church shall not hold another general conference, until they can meet in said house. For thus saith the Lord! (*Times and Seasons* 1 Oct. 1841: 578; hereafter referred to as T&S)

The font was evidently completed by 8 November 1841 when Joseph Smith wrote his own approving description:

The baptismal font is situated in the center of the basement room under the main hall of the Temple; it is constructed of pine timber, and put together of staves tongued and grooved, oval shaped, sixteen feet long east and west, and twelve feet wide, seven feet high from the foundation, the basin four feet deep, the moulding of the cap or base are formed of beautiful carved wood in antique style. The sides are finished with panel work. A flight of stairs in the north and south sides lead up and down into the basin guarded by side railing.
The font stands upon twelve oxen, four on each side, and two at each end, their heads, shoulders, and fore legs [sic] projecting out from under the font; they are carved out of pine plank, glued together, and copied after the most beautiful five-year-old steer that could be found in the country, and they are an excellent striking likeness of the original; the horns were formed after the most perfect horn that could be procured.

The oxen and ornamental mouldings of the font were carved by Elder Elijah Fordham, from the city of New York, which occupied eight months of time. The font was enclosed by a temporary frame building sided up with split oak clapboards, with a roof of the same material, and was so low that the timbers of the first story were laid above it. The water was supplied from a well thirty feet deep in the east end of the basement.

This font was built for the baptisms for the dead until the Temple shall be finished, when a more durable one will supply its place. (HC 4: 446-47)

The temporary wooden font was dedicated on 21 November 1841. Wilford Woodruff gave an account of the dedication:

The Twelve met in council at President Young's, and at 4:00 repaired to the baptismal font in the basement of the Temple. It was truly an interesting scene. It was the first font dedicated in this dispensation for the glorious provision of the dead. It was dedicated by President Joseph Smith and the Twelve. A large congregation assembled to witness a baptism of about forty persons by Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and John Taylor. (Cowley 155)

Both the description of the font in the Times and Seasons and Joseph Smith's description of it reveal that the font was intentionally patterned after the molten sea of Solomon's Temple which was described in the Bible (Fig. 1). Hiram of Tyre "made a molten sea," which "was round all about," and "stood upon twelve oxen." The sea "was set above them and all their hinder parts were inward." The sea was "for
the priests to wash in" (1 Kings 7:23-25; 2 Chron. 4:2-6). Since the saints saw themselves as the modern counterpart to the ancient Israelites, the adoption of the molten sea pattern for the temple baptismal font represented a significant symbolic connection between ancient and modern Israel.

AUTHORSHIP OF FONT DESIGN

The question arises as to whether the design of the Nauvoo Temple baptismal font was specified in the revelation in which Joseph Smith was told that he would be shown "all things pertaining to this house." Was the use of the molten sea idea inspired, or did the Saints adopt the pattern on their own, without inspiration? The revelation which commanded the Saints to build the Nauvoo Temple emphasized that it was to be a house "wherein the ordinance of baptizing for the dead belongeth, and for which the same was instituted from before the foundation of the world" (D&C 124:30). Joseph Smith also taught, speaking of baptism for the dead, that "God decreed before the foundation of the world that that ordinance should be administered in a font prepared for that purpose in the house of the Lord" (Smith, Teachings 308).

The Historical Record states that "President Smith approved and accepted a draft for the font made by Brother Wm. Weeks" (8: 861). Joseph Smith recounted an experience which shows how particular the prophet was in making sure every detail of the temple fit his approval. He had chosen William Weeks, over several others who had presented ideas, to be the architect of the temple. All of Weeks' designs and labors were "subject to approval, modification, or rejection by the temple building committee, Church leaders, and ultimately by the prophet himself" (Arrington, "Weeks" 348-349). Apparently there had been some disagreement between Smith and Weeks about the shape of certain windows on the side of the temple. The prophet insisted: "I wish you to carry out my designs. I have seen in
vision the splendid appearance of that building illuminated, and will have it built according to the pattern shown me" (HC 6:196-97). Clearly, the prophet made the final decisions.

The energy and urgency with which the temporary font was made suggests the importance of the design of the font to the Saints. Even if the wooden font was only to be temporary, it was important that it be supported by twelve oxen.

Mormon tradition gives credit for the design concept of the Nauvoo Temple baptismal font to Joseph Smith. We have already seen that the early Saints had confidence that the font was erected according to a divinely inspired pattern. Their affection for the temporary wooden font demonstrates a belief that Joseph Smith was the inspired author of its design. In 1845, about 3 1/2 years after the temporary wooden font was dedicated, Brigham Young supervised its replacement with a permanent oval stone font. The oxen were to be "cast of iron or brass, or perhaps hewn stone; if of brass, polished; if of iron, bronzed" (HC 6:358). The desire to cast the oxen in metal may have been a wish to more closely imitate the molten sea. The wooden font and its oxen had fallen into a state of disrepair, partly due to the hands of the many visitors who were attracted to them, and, due to its constant use by the Saints, the font was deteriorating and accumulating bacteria. In spite of the font's condition, many of the Saints were shocked at Brigham Young's plan to have the font replaced. President Young gave a speech on 6 April 1845, which clarified his position. His words provide one of the strongest statements supporting the idea that the font design was authored by Joseph Smith:

I have shown to the brethren and sisters that Brother Joseph did not tell them all things at once, consequently you may expect to hear and see many things you never thought of before. One thing is that we have taken down the wooden fount that was built up by the instructions of Brother Joseph. This has been a great wonder to some, and says one of the stone-cutters the
other day, "I wonder why Joseph did not tell us the fount should be built of stone." The man that made that speech is walking in darkness. He is a stranger to the spirit of this work and knows nothing. In fact he does not know enough to cut a stone for the house of God. There is not a man under the face of the heavens that has one particle of the spirit about him, but knows that God talks to men according to their circumstances. (emphasis added; Young 953–957)

President Young continued by speaking of the yet-to-be-built temple in Jackson County, Missouri: "If we had the means to build a font in that house, say one of marble, the Lord would just as like as not tell us to cover it with gold just to stretch our faith." He then went back to the idea of replacing the wooden font in Nauvoo:

Brother Joseph said to me with regard to the fount, "I will not go into the river to be baptised for my friends, we will build a wooden fount to serve the present necessity;" brethren does that satisfy you? This fount has caused the Gentile world to wonder, but a sight of the next one will make a Gentile fade away.... We will have a fount that will not stink and keep us all the while cleansing it out. (Young 953–957)

Modern Mormon scholars also have given credit to Joseph Smith and divine inspiration for the design of the Nauvoo Temple baptismal font. Mark E. Petersen wrote that the LDS temple baptismal fonts follow "the pattern given by the Prophet Joseph Smith as he instituted temple building in his day under the direction of the Lord" (61). Similarly, Bruce R. McConkie wrote: "In this "temple-building dispensation the Brethren have been led by the spirit of inspiration to pattern the baptismal fonts placed in temples after the one in Solomon's Temple" (Mormon Doctrine 103). LDS scholar, Hugh Nibley, commented on Joseph Smith as the divine restorer of the ancient temple concept by stating:

Did Joseph Smith reinvent the Temple by putting all the
fragments—Jewish, Orthodox, Masonic, Gnostic, Hindu, Egyptian, and so forth—together again? No, that is not how it is done. Very few of the fragments were available in his day, and the job of putting them together was begun... only in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Even when they are available, those poor fragments do not come together of themselves to make a whole: to this day the scholars who collect them do not know what to make of them. The Temple is not to be derived from them, but the other way around. If the Temple as the Latter-day Saints know it had been introduced at any date later than it was, or at some great center of learning, it could well have been suspect as a human contrivance; but that anything of such fulness, consistency, ingenuity, and perfection could have been brought forth at a single time and place—overnight, as it were—is quite adequate proof of a special dispensation. ("Looking Backward" 51)

Brigham Young instructed that the new baptismal font be patterned after the old one (Arrington, "Weeks" 350). The permanent font and its supporting oxen were carved in limestone by the stonecarvers of the temple. The stone font was very similar in style to the wooden one. The main differences had to do with the requirements of the different mediums used. The staircases at either end of the font were changed from the short axis to the long axis, to fit better in the rectangular shaped baptistry. The stone oxen were painted white and had horns and ears of tin. It was intended to gild them to resemble brass. The oxen had the appearance of standing in water half-way up to their knees. An iron railing was to be built to protect the font from the "soiling hand of the curious visitor" (Littlefield 67). An artist by the name of Henry Lewis visited Nauvoo in 1848, and drew a sketch of the baptismal font in the temple (Fig. 2). Although only a rough sketch, it has given valuable information about the visual details of the font.

When the Nauvoo Temple was dedicated 30 April through 3 May 1846, the Exodus
of the Saints from Nauvoo had already begun. The night after the final dedication of the temple, all items which pertained to the ordinances of the temple and other furnishings which could be removed were taken away, and the temple was abandoned by the Saints (Kane 21). The font and its oxen remained behind in the temple. Arrington states that "when the religious functions ceased in the font, it fell into disuse and disrepair and lost its great charm. To the Saints it seemed but an urn that held the cold, dead ashes of what had been" (Arrington, "Construction" 64). John Taylor wrote on 30 May 1846, of his return visit to the abandoned temple and font:

My feelings were very peculiar while standing in the font, which is of stone, and passing through the rooms, when I thought how the Saints had laboured and strove to complete this building, and then be forced to leave it, together with their homes, in the hands of their enemies.

E. Cecil McGavin reported that for a season "a gang of mobbers took possession of the temple (living in the upper stories). Since they did not make their habitation in the basement rooms they used the font as their lavatory, making it a foul smelling cesspool." He also wrote that the oxen were torn from their footings and their horns and ears were broken off (Temple 124-26). Thomas L. Kane described his visit to the font: "On this account, the victors had so diligently desecrated it, as to render the apartment in which it was contained too noisome to abide in" (Kane 8).

The temple was destroyed by fire and storm, and the remaining usable stone was used to build other buildings in the area. The Warsaw Signal reported that after the temple was destroyed by fire, the walls of the temple "were completely calcined and rendered useless. Even the mystical oxen, with the baptismal font in the basement, had shared the same fate" (10 Oct. 1848). Only fragmentary parts of the font and oxen survive today (Figs. 3, 4).

William Weeks' drafts for the permanent stone font are still in existence (Fig. 5).
From these drafts, along with Lewis' sketch of the font, and written descriptions and existing artifacts, it is possible to reconstruct the essential characteristics of the Nauvoo font. Extensive excavation work was done at the Nauvoo Temple site from 1961-1969. Virginia S. and J. C. Harrington reported on archaeological excavations done from 1966-1969 in their *Rediscovery of the Nauvoo Temple*, which includes a reconstructed plan and side view of the baptismal font (Figs. 6, 7). A small-scale model of the permanent stone font is on display at the LDS Visitors Center in Nauvoo (Fig. 8).

Although there appears to be no specific documentation about the author of the Nauvoo font design, all indications suggest that the design came from Joseph Smith himself. At the same time, there seems to be nothing that would suggest that the idea came from anywhere other than the inspired pattern given. Art historian Mark Hamilton writes that "as is still the case, the president of the Church was the ultimate authority regarding design. Others function as advisers whose suggestions may or may not meet the president's design concept" (Hamilton "Monograph" 21). It is known that the design for the Nauvoo font was fully supported by Joseph Smith and the Saints. The Nauvoo Temple baptismal font served as a model for succeeding LDS temple fonts.
NAUVOO FONT AS SYMBOL

Even while it was under construction, the temporary wooden font immediately became a physical symbol of the Mormon Church to members and nonmembers alike. The idea of vicarious baptisms for the dead was unprecedented in the modern world and was met, along with most doctrines of the Church, with much antagonism by nonbelievers. Associating the new temple and its font with an accepted Old Testament model helped the Saints validate their doctrine before the eyes of the world.

The font became the object of much attention in America, and many people came to Nauvoo in order to see the font and the temple under construction. The Saints were proud to show the font to visitors when it was not in use. Visitors were reminded of the similarities between the font and its ancient model. For example, a correspondent of the St. Louis Gazette wrote that "the idea of this font seems to have been revealed to the prophet, directly by the plan of the molten sea of Solomon's temple" (recorded in Nauvoo Neighbor, 12 June 1844:3). Many journalists visited the font and wrote of the unique piece of sculpture, and the Mormons received much national exposure, both good and bad, due to the font and temple. A writer for the New York Spectator wrote: "In the basement is the font of baptisms . . . a pretty exact imitation of the brazen laver in Solomon's temple . . . one of the most striking artificial curiosities in this country." A Nauvoo citizen, Emily Austin, wrote that "acquaintances and strangers . . . were almost constantly coming to see" the temple and the city (202). Travelers coming up the Mississippi River often stopped at Nauvoo to see the temple and the font which some thought to be the eighth wonder of the world (Cincinatti Atlas). Graham's Magazine published an
engraving of the Nauvoo Temple from a drawing by the St. Louis artist, John Rowson Smith (Fig. 9). Because the baptismal font was of special interest, it was depicted outside of the temple in the engraving so that it could be seen (34: 257; also Improvement Era July 1962: 516).

One evidence of the font's notoriety was the wear and damage to the wooden font due to the hands of the many curious visitors, such as some of the horns which had been torn off as souvenirs. One of the horns was torn off by a member of the Posse of Governor Thomas Ford of Illinois.

To the Saints, the baptismal font represented the restoration of "all things", even those things which had "been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times" (D&C 124:38). Everything pertaining to the Israelites and their temple had been restored through the visitations of Moses, Elias and Elijah who committed the keys of their dispensations to Joseph Smith. By following the molten sea pattern, the Nauvoo font was a visual reminder of this "whole and complete and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys and powers, and glories," from "the days of Adam to the present time" (D&C 128:18). The main symbolic function of the Nauvoo Temple baptismal font was as a visual and ritualistic link between the Latter-day Saints and the ancient Israelites, reminding the Saints that they were the modern children of Israel.

LDS CONCEPT OF BAPTISM AND ITS CONNECTION TO BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD

The revelations received by Joseph Smith and other Mormon prophets, supported by Biblical teachings, constitute the LDS concept of the doctrine of baptism and its symbolism and explain the relationship between baptism for the living and for the dead.

Joseph Smith's revealed translation of the Book of Moses tells how Adam
learned about the ordinance of baptism from the Lord and how it was likeness of Jesus Christ. Adam asked the Lord, "Why is it that men must repent and be baptized in water?" The reply was:

That by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death, and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory; For by water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified.... This is the plan of salvation unto all men, through the blood of mine Only Begotten, who shall come in the meridian of time. And behold, all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: all things bear record of me. (Moses 6:59-63)

When Jesus Christ began his ministry on earth, he was baptized "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15). He taught the importance of baptism by telling Nicodemus that he must be born again. Nicodemus, not understanding the figurative meaning, asked: "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Jesus answered, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. That which is born of flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:2-7). Bruce R. McConkie noted that the elements of water, blood, and spirit spoken of in these scriptures, which are present at birth and at baptism, were also present in the
circumstances surrounding the atoning sacrifice of the Savior and his death on the cross, and he explained that, through baptism, "attention is focused on that most transcendent of all events" (Mormon Doctrine 72). The apostle John taught the significance of these three elements:

This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. (1 John 5:6-8)

The apostle Paul taught how baptism is a likeness of the death and also of the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized unto his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 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 he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. (Rom. 6:3-11)

Joseph Smith learned that those who believe in Christ are baptized "after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name" (D&C 76:51). Smith also introduced the ordinance of baptism for the dead to the modern world and explained
its basic premise and taught the relationship between baptism and baptism for the dead in an epistle to the Saints:

Herein is glory and honor, and immortality and eternal life—the ordinance of baptism by water, to be immersed therein in order to answer to the likeness of the dead, that one principle might accord with the other; to be immersed in the water and come forth out of the water is in the likeness of the resurrection of the dead in coming forth out of their graves; hence, this ordinance was instituted to form a relationship with the ordinance of baptism for the dead, being in likeness of the dead. Consequently the baptismal font was instituted as a similitude of the grave, and was commanded to be in a place underneath where the living are wont to assemble, to show forth the living and the dead, and that all things may have their likeness, and that they may accord one with another—that which is earthly conformed to that which is heavenly. . . (emphasis added: D&C 128:12–13)

In the same epistle, Joseph Smith explained the importance of doing vicarious baptismal work for the dead: "For their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation; . . . they without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect" (D&C 128:15). He then quoted from Malachi (4:5–6) one of the verses that was recited to him when he was first visited by Moroni and explained its meaning:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

I might have rendered a plainer translation to this, but it is sufficiently plain to suit my purpose as it stands. It is sufficient to know, in this case,
that the earth will be smitten with a curse unless there is a welding link of some kind or other between the fathers and the children, upon some subject or other—and behold what is that subject? It is the baptism for the dead. (D&C 128:17,18)

The epistle concludes:

Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free.... Behold, the great day of the Lord is at hand... and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Let us, therefore, as a church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; and let us present in his holy temple, when it is finished, a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptation. (D&C 128:22,24)

Joseph F. Smith, in his vision of the redemption of the dead saw that in the spirit world, those who had died without a knowledge of the truth were taught "faith in God, repentance from sin, vicarious baptism for the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, and all other principles of the gospel that were necessary for them to know" (D&C 138:33).

The teachings cited here compromise some of the LDS doctrines on baptism and baptism for the dead. Baptism has been taught from the time of Adam. It is a likeness of the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a necessary ordinance to enter into the kingdom of heaven. The elements of blood, water and spirit are present at birth, death and at baptism and testify of Jesus Christ. The baptismal font and its waters represent the womb which gives forth life. It also represents the tomb which gives way to resurrection. The font is traditionally
placed below where the living assemble to represent its connection with the grave. Joseph Smith taught that the ordinance of baptism for the living was instituted to form a relationship with the ordinance of baptism for the dead. He also taught that there is an inseparable interdependence for salvation between the living and the dead. And, according to LDS doctrine, the dead cannot be saved without the living, nor can the living be saved without the dead.

LDS BELIEF THAT MOLTEN SEA WAS BAPTISMAL FONT

The early Latter-day Saints believed that the molten sea in Solomon's Temple served as a baptismal font. W. W. Phelps wrote that the font in the basement of the Nauvoo Temple was "for the baptism of the living, for health, for remission of sin, and for the salvation of the dead, as was the case in Solomon's temple, and all temples that God commands to be built" (759). President Joseph Fielding Smith taught that "it is a logical venture to say that it [the molten sea] was used for baptizing the living for the remission of their sins" (Answers 5: 12-13). More recently, Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote that the brazen sea was "used for performing baptisms for the living," and that the Biblical explanation that the sea was for the priests to wash in, "is tantamount to saying that the priests performed baptisms in it" (Mormon Doctrine 103). Similarly, Elder Boyd K. Packer wrote that in Mormon temples are "baptismal fonts designed as those were anciently" (18).

In the Latter-day Saint edition of the Bible, published in 1979, the chapter heading for I Kings 7, in part, reads "The molten sea (baptismal font) rests on the backs of twelve oxen." The footnote for the verse which describes the molten sea refers the reader to the topical guide and its section on baptism. The LDS interpretation that the molten sea served as a baptismal font seems to be quite clear.
CHAPTER 3
FONT DEVELOPMENT SINCE NAUVOO

HISTORICAL USE OF VISUAL SYMBOLS IN THE LDS CHURCH

The baptismal font of the Nauvoo Temple was one of the first significant visual symbols of the Restored Church. Symbols were common in mid-nineteenth century American society (A. Roberts 26). Joseph Smith incorporated a free use of Masonic symbols into the Mormon symbolic vocabulary which included the Bible, square, compass, sun, moon, stars, all-seeing eye, clasped hands, clouds, mitre, and crowns. On the top of the tower of the Nauvoo Temple was a weathervane of an angel dressed in temple robes flying through the air with an open book in one hand and a heralding trumpet in the other (an unmistakable reference for Mormons to Revelations 14:6-7, which prophecies an angel flying through the midst of heaven to announce the gospel to all nations). The Mormons see this fulfilled in the visit of the ancient American prophet Moroni and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. The weathervane was topped by an interlocking compass and square. The exterior of the temple included sunstones, moonstones, and starstones. Allen D. Roberts, in an article on the origin, use and decline of early Mormon symbolism, writes:

Although Joseph Smith freely admitted relating Masonry and Mormonism, to assert that Joseph’s Mormonism was simply the direct product of borrowed Masonry is too naive and incomplete a conclusion by itself... He attempted to restore it in much the same way the gospel was restored. That is, he saw Masonry, like Christendom, as possessing some important truths which could be beneficially extracted from what was otherwise an apostate institution... His free use of Masonic symbols, then, reflects Smith’s feeling that he had a legitimate right to employ these divine emblems. (26)

The baptismal font, patterned after the molten sea, was unique to the Mormons and
was not found either in Masonry (though both Masonry and the molten sea stem from Solomon's Temple) or in the America known by Joseph Smith.

When the saints moved to Utah, the use of a Mormon symbolic vocabulary became even more extensive. The beehive became a prominent Mormon symbol along with others previously mentioned. The Salt Lake Temple, designed by Brigham Young incorporated a complex symbolic plan whose didactic purpose was "to speak the order of God, Christ, the restoration of His Gospel, man's relationship to Him and the proclamation to the world of His reality" (Hamilton "Monument" 140). Though symbols were absent on the St. George, Logan and Manti temples, they continued to appear on tabernacles and meetinghouses up to the modern architectural styles of this century. Some later church leaders, according to Roberts, "looked back upon the symbols of earlier generations of Saints with embarrassment, suspicion, even disdain" (27). Roberts states that perhaps "the most convincing reason for the disappearance of symbols relates not to pressure from Church leadership nor to changes in architectural policies, but rather to the overall changing needs of the Mormons as a group." In explanation of this he writes:

An original purpose of symbolism was to achieve community solidarity in the Kingdom through a sense of shared values. A second objective was to demonstrate that the Kingdom was unique and other-worldly as expressed by its distinctive means of decorating buildings and other elements in the Mormons' manufactured environment. Thus, as the initial survival needs of the Kingdom were met, and its philosophical basis was forcibly altered in the post-isolation years after 1890, the perceived need for symbolism diminished. (28)

There are few visual used symbols in the Church today. Roberts concludes that of the symbols which do exist today, "these symbols, however, seem intentionally naive, and lack depth and vitality... Our symbols of today are not intended to
remind fellow Saints of our common worship and heritage as much as to display a particular image to those outside the faith" (29). Roberts does not discuss the LDS temple baptismal font in his article, and mentions it only in a passing quotation. The molten sea-patterned temple baptismal font is a symbol that has remained relatively constant in the Church throughout the years, despite the trend away from symbols. It does seem true, however, that the traditional temple font serves more as an outward image displayed for the world, than as an integral spiritual symbol, reminding the Saints of their affinity with ancient Israel.

**LDS TEMPLE BAPTISMAL FONTS SINCE NAUVOO**

Since the first wooden font at Nauvoo, the Mormon temple baptismal font concept, with its twelve oxen, has survived intact for over 100 years. As soon as the saints arrived in the valley of the Great Salt Lake in the summer of 1847, a site for the temple was chosen. The cornerstones were laid in 1853. Truman O. Angell, who assisted William Weeks on the Nauvoo Temple, was appointed architect for the Salt Lake Temple. Early plans of the basement of the temple show that its baptismal font was intended to be fashioned after the Nauvoo Temple font and the molten sea. One early plan shows that the Salt Lake Temple font was to have been much larger, 42' by 19', than the Nauvoo font's 18' by 14' dimensions (Fig. 10). The size of the proposed font and its four stairways suggest that perhaps it was planned to accommodate multiple simultaneous baptisms. Another plan shows a font more similar to the Nauvoo font, though still larger with 24' by 15.5' dimensions (Fig. 11). The actual font was not built until nearly forty years later. A font was installed in 1856 at the Endowment House on Temple Square where the saints could perform baptisms for the dead until the temple was completed.

The St. George temple, dedicated in 1877, was the first to be erected in Utah. The baptismal font for this temple, instead of being large like the early plans of the
Salt Lake Temple, was designed to more closely resemble the Nauvoo Temple font in size, being 12'10" by 9'1" (Fig. 12). The font and oxen of the St. George Temple resemble very closely the descriptions and drawings of the Nauvoo Temple font. Architect Truman O. Angell Sr. once remarked that all they "knew of temples then was what we had received through President Smith" (Hamilton "Monograph" 49). The St. George oxen were set in a configuration of four groups of three, as in the Biblical description, instead of the four-on-either-side and two-at-either-end arrangement of the Nauvoo Temple font. The oxen stand in a depression below the floor level of the baptistry. The St. George font and oxen were cast in iron at a Salt Lake City foundry run by Nathan Davis and Amos Howe and were brought to St. George by train and oxcart, installed in the temple and dedicated for use in 1875. The erection and dedication of the St. George Temple font, which was personally financed and presented as a gift to the Church by Brigham Young, was met with much excitement among the saints. There seems to have been an enthusiasm for recreating the Nauvoo model. Before sculpting the model for the oxen, a search was made in Utah and Idaho to find the most perfect ox available (Millers 9). Progress on the font was reported in the Deseret News. The saints were anxious to hear foundry owner, Nathan Davis, speak at the St. George Tabernacle about the making of the font. When the font was installed into the temple, Apostle Orson Hyde "went in and saw the font in place and came out weeping with joy. He thanked God that he had lived to see another font in place in a temple of the Lord" (Deseret News 29 Aug. 1931).

After the St. George font was installed, subsequent font building became less of a novelty and more of an accepted practice. The fonts and oxen of the Logan (Fig. 13) and Manti (Fig. 14) temples are duplicate casts from the molds of the St. George Temple font. In contrast to the excitement over the installation of the St. George font, the fonts placed in the Manti and Salt Lake temples received little attention.
The Salt Lake Temple font, as it was completed between 1886 and 1892, marks the climax of early Mormon Temple font construction (Fig. 15). This font more closely approaches the description of the molten sea than the previous fonts in that it literally rests on top of twelve full-bodied cast-iron oxen. The sides of the font also have ornamental work, recalling the Biblical description of the molten sea. The 10′ by 6′ dimensions of the font are much smaller than the 42.5′ by 19′ dimensions originally proposed.

The twentieth century brought a new generation of Mormon temples. The Alberta, Hawaii and Arizona temples were designed to follow the styles of modern architecture, rather than the backward-looking medieval architecture of the previous temples. The fonts for these temples were adoptions of the basic molten sea design following a format of twelve half-bodied oxen in groups of three supporting the font basins. The details of the modern temple fonts harmonize with the architecture of each temple and depend upon the sculptural style of the artists who designed the fonts. There seems to have been no criteria determined by the Church with regard to the design and symbolic requirements of the temple fonts other than that the fonts should be supported by twelve oxen. Each sculptor has been at liberty to interpret any symbolism or decoration as desired, as long as the design met approval of those in charge.

The first of the twentieth-century temples was the Hawaii Temple, dedicated in 1919. Its font was designed by Avard T. Fairbanks under the direction of architects Pope and Burton so that the font basin and supporting oxen would form a unified composition (Fig. 16). Fairbanks sculpted three oxen in different attitudes and each was cast four times to give variety to the design. Each of the early Utah fonts had twelve identical oxen. Between the oxen, Fairbanks sculpted vertical cattail reeds between the cast-stone oxen to help integrate the font and its base. The font was placed in a central location in the temple so that all temple patrons would pass
through the baptistry on their way to the ordinance rooms. The Hawaii Temple font became the model which was basically followed in other twentieth-century Mormon temple fonts.

The Alberta Temple font was sculpted by Norwegian convert Torleif S. Knaphus under architects Pope and Burton. This octagonal font, incorporating ornamental details from the architecture of the building, together with the handsomely carved oxen, makes a beautiful artistic statement (Fig. 17). Between the oxen are corn stalks and lily flowers. Knaphus also sculpted the highly ornamented Arizona Temple font and oxen which were cast in terra cotta (Fig. 18), and the streamlined, stylized Art Deco style font of the Idaho Falls Temple which was cast in white bronze (Fig. 19).

The Los Angeles Temple font and oxen were sculpted by Utah sculptor, Millard F. Malin (Fig. 20). This temple is a landmark temple, largest in size, and, like the Nauvoo and Salt Lake temples, is a physical image, representing the establishment of the Church in that part of the world. The spire of the temple is capped by a statue of Angel Moroni and the font is the largest built by the Church. To have this large font, 24' in diameter, cast in bronze was no small financial undertaking. Malin also sculpted a font with oxen which was cast in bronze three times for the Swiss, London, and New Zealand temples (Fig. 21).

The font for the Oakland Temple preface a new trend in LDS temple fonts. The font and oxen of the Alberta Temple were recast for the Oakland Temple, instead of commissioning the sculpting of a new font (Fig. 22). The Oakland oxen were covered with gold leafing and the sculpture between the oxen was polychromed. One of the reasons why the Alberta font was recast may have been that the sculpting and casting of the previous Malin-designed fonts were both involved and expensive and recasting an existing font was a simple and economical alternative. Also, the Oakland and Alberta temples shared the same architect. The two temples are
somewhat similar in plan and the Alberta font fit well into the architectural plan of
the Oakland Temple.

REDUCED EMPHASIS OF MOLTEN SEA-PATTERNED FONT

The Ogden and Provo temples, announced in 1967, introduced a new generation in
Mormon temple building. The main emphasis in planning these temples was placed on
functional, efficient and economic temple design. Non-essential symbolic details
were of secondary importance. The idea of recasting an existing font also became
policy. While Church Architect, Emil B. Fetzer, was working on the design of these
two temples, he received guidance and counsel in meetings with the First Presidency
of the Church (President David O. McKay, Hugh B. Brown, N. Eldon Tanner and
Joseph Fielding Smith) on specific details and requirements of the temple designs.
Fetzer wrote of some of the items discussed at these meetings on the subject of
baptismal fonts:

A review of the fonts of all the previously built temples was made, and it
was mentioned that these were patterned after the "sea" of the great temple
built by Solomon and that the oxen represented the 12 tribes. It was
emphasized that this design motif was not imperative to the validity of the
ordinance. More important would be that the font be proper, clean, beautiful,
and of a size adequate to accommodate baptism by immersion performed by
those having authority from God through the holy priesthood.

It is possible to contemplate that in the future when many temples will be
built, as has been foretold, the design of valid and beautiful baptismal fonts
in smaller-sized temples need not necessarily follow the traditional design.
Rather, these fonts could be similar to the beautiful fonts presently used in
meetinghouses and stake centers for the baptism of persons as they enter

into Church membership and fulfill the requirements of this important and sacred ordinance in life. (Fetzer "Fonts" 26-27)

This passage restates the Church's interpretation of the oxen of the molten sea, as representing the twelve tribes of Israel. The statement by Fetzer is significant in that it emphasizes the importance of the temple ordinances over the physical aspects of the temple. Along these lines, Joseph Fielding Smith wrote that the "virtue of salvation for the dead is not in the structure of the temple, but in the ordinances which are performed in the temple" (Doctrines 2: 141). This decision did not treat statements we have already seen about the pattern for traditional oxen-supported fonts being inspired.

Fetzer noted that the First Presidency "did give permission for the temple fonts at Ogden and Provo to be designed according to the traditional pattern, since these were to be large, full-sized temples" (27). The oxen of the Ogden and Provo temple fonts are duplicate casts of the Alberta Temple oxen (Fig. 23). These same Alberta oxen were recast for the Washington D.C. (Fig. 45), Sao Paulo, Tokyo, Seattle, Mexico City, Jordan River, and remodeled Logan temple fonts. The fonts of these temples are basically similar to each other and the ornamental details of the fonts harmonize with the architectural details of each temple.

The emphasis of function and economy over symbolism was fully realized on paper with the design of new small temples in Atlanta, Chile, Tonga, Samoa, Tahiti and Australia, which were announced in 1979. These temples were designed by Fetzer to be small and functional. The cost of constructing non-functional steeples would be spared in the design of these temples. Also to be eliminated was the traditional LDS temple baptismal font supported by oxen, which had been determined to be not imperative to the validity of the ordinance. These temples were designed, as had been predicted during the planning of the Ogden and Provo temples, to have baptismal fonts similar to those of regular meetinghouses (Fig. 24).
The modest, non-symbolic design of these temples, though, was short lived. Sometime after the plans for these temples had been announced and published in the Church magazines, the designs were changed so that each of these temples would incorporate a steeple. The meetinghouse format of the baptismal fonts for these temples remained. But it was decided to have a 4' by 5' plaque installed on the wall of the baptistry of each of these temples which depicted a traditional LDS temple baptismal font supported by twelve oxen (Fig. 25). The temples in Denver, Colorado and Buenos Aires, Argentina were designed after the style of these small temples, but, interestingly, the plans of these temples were altered to replace the meetinghouse-type font with a traditional molten sea-patterned font. The temples without oxen-supported fonts, then, are those in Atlanta, Chile, Tonga, Samoa and Australia. This series of temples anticipated the next generation of temples when not just a few, but many temples, would be built at the same time according to the same plan.

At roughly the same time the decisions were being made to eliminate the non-essential traditional LDS temple baptismal font with oxen, a full-scale replica of a traditional temple font was installed as the focal point of the Visitors Center South on Temple Square (Fig. 26). If a tour of the Visitors Center is taken, one is led past a small model of the Temple of Solomon with a replica of the molten sea prominent in its courtyard (Fig. 27). One is then led through a door into the main room with large windows that give an imposing view of the south face of the Salt Lake temple. The large baptismal font supported by twelve oxen dominates the room. Stairs are provided for the curious visitor to walk up to the top of the font and completely explore it. Clearly, this font is being used as a symbol to visitors, connecting the modern temple with the ancient one. Even though not essential to the baptismal ordinance, the molten sea-patterned font with oxen is useful as a symbol of LDS doctrine. This font and its oxen were formed out of fiberglass. This new
medium for baptismal fonts was relatively inexpensive, durable and lightweight, and was without doubt a factor in reintroducing the traditional font to new temples.

REINTRODUCTION OF TRADITIONAL FONT AND OTHER SYMBOLS

In October 1981, a new generation of temples was announced by the First Presidency. These were to be small, but beautiful, temples and built with the finest materials available, in two sizes occupying 10,000 and 15,000 square feet of space. Characteristic of the outside of these steep-roofed temples are six spires—reminiscent of the Salt Lake Temple—which set the temples off from regular LDS meetinghouses (Church News 16 Jan. 1982: 9). The First Presidency announced that all the new temples will have spires and statues of the Angel Moroni (Church News 13 Mar. 1982: 3). The first published plans for these temples showed a baptismal font with oxen, similar to the traditional LDS temple font (Fig. 28). But these fonts were to have only six oxen, with mirrors on the axis of the font to suggest a full set of twelve oxen. This design was later changed to incorporate twelve oxen, even though half of them would be under the floor level of the baptistry (Fig. 29). Reversing the earlier trend, now efficiency is giving way to symbolism. This plan is for the temples titles by the church as Dallas Texas (Fig. 30), Boise Idaho (Fig. 31), Chicago Illinois, Frankfurt Germany, Manila Philippines, Seoul Korea, Stockholm Sweden, Johannesburg South Africa, Taipei Taiwan, Guatemala City, San Diego California, Las Vegas Nevada, Portland Oregon, Toronto Ontario, Bogota Colombia, Guayaquil Ecuador, and Lima Peru. The font pattern for these temples is a new creation. The font has a very low profile with the half-bodied oxen surrounding the side of the font, rather than being beneath the font. The oxen for these fonts, and also the six spires and the angel statue, are formed in fiberglass, which is a durable, lightweight and a cost-efficient medium. The original font models were sculpted by Karl Quilter, a Salt Lake City artist who assisted Main with the Los
Angeles and Swiss Temple fonts. Quilter and La Var E. Wallgren, owner of 3-D Art in Kearns, Utah, sculpted the new set of oxen, which consists of three oxen in different attitudes cast four times for each font (Fig. 32). This font is currently being used in all new temples.

THINGS AT PRESENT

With this new generation of temples the idea of eliminating non-essential symbols has been changed. Though these temples are small, functional and cost-efficient, it has been deemed important by the Church leaders to add the traditional visual symbols of the six spires, the Angel Moroni statue, and the oxen-supported baptismal font. It is interesting that even the six-oxen/mirror font was not found acceptable; there had to be twelve oxen. The main emphasis in temple building during the past twenty years has been placed on efficiency and function, and this goal seems to have been met with the new standard plan temples. It is now possible to have both efficiency and symbol at the same time. Emphasis can be shifted now from the efficient expedition of the ordinances for the dead to the spiritual comprehension of the meaning of those ordinances. Symbols have the potential to help in that understanding. Vincent Foster Hopper wrote of symbols, their use and staying power:

Images change from generation to generation, but the impulse which produces them is universal and familiar. The recognized value of figurative utterance lies in its ability to clarify or intensify emotions through appeal to sense experience. By symbolism, the abstract may be brought into the realm of the concrete, where it is immediately recognizable and meaningful. (Preface)

The traditional font has been effective as a visual and ritualistic link between ancient and modern Israel, especially as a symbol to the gentile world. The connection between ancient and modern Israel has been successfully made, but the
meaning of that connection has not been stressed. The traditional temple font could be a more efficacious internal symbol to the members of the Church than it now appears to be. It is clear that much of the meaning connected with the modern LDS temple baptismal font lies in how the molten sea of Solomon's Temple served as a symbol for the Israelites, and how it fit into the idea of the temple. Considering the LDS belief that the molten sea served as a baptismal font and that it was designed after an inspired pattern, it seems that the Latter-day Saints would have a particular interest in exploring the symbolic implications associated with the molten sea. A discovery of any possible symbolism inherent in the molten sea imagery could help the traditional LDS temple baptismal font to be a more vigorous and pertinent symbol with the potential to enrich the LDS temple experience.
PART II

INTERPRETATION OF THE MOLTEN SEA AS SYMBOL

CHAPTER 4

MOLTEN SEA AND THE TWELVE TRIBES

It has been shown that the general belief of the LDS Church regarding the temple baptismal fonts is 1) that the design motif of the molten sea used in the fonts is inspired, 2) that the molten sea of Solomon’s Temple was used in ancient times for baptisms, 3) that the concept of a temple baptismal font was instituted before the foundation of the earth, 4) that the traditional LDS Temple baptismal font serves as a visual symbolic connection between ancient and modern Israel, 5) and that the twelve oxen supporting the font represent the twelve tribes of Israel.

By consciously imitating the biblical pattern, the traditional LDS temple baptismal font naturally inherits any religious symbolism associated with the ancient molten sea.

BIBLICAL DESCRIPTION

To discover its symbolic meaning, it is important to consider the biblical description of the molten sea. 1 Kings 7 describes the molten sea of Solomon’s Temple as follows:

And he [Hiram of Tyre] made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: it was round all about, and his height was five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about. And under the brim of it round about there were knobs [i.e., buds, knobs or spherical ornaments; LDS Bible Dictionary 721] compassing it, ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about: the knobs were cast in two rows, when it was cast. It stood upon
twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea was set above upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward. And it was an hand breadth thick, and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies: it contained two thousand baths... and he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward over against the south. (23–26, 39)

2 Chronicles chapter 4 gives a similar description and adds that "the sea was for the priests to wash in."

The biblical accounts do not specifically mention any symbolism connected with the molten sea. Perhaps what was obvious and known to all when the temple was erected became obscured or lost by the time the accounts were actually written. For example, consider Jacob N. Myers conclusion concerning the differences between the details of the two biblical descriptions: "While the Canaanite pattern is obvious, its real meaning was probably forgotten by the writer's [of 2 Chronicles] time" (13:23). Modern scholars agree that the molten sea did have a symbolic function. Myers states that the oxen of the molten sea "probably had a symbolical as well as a decorative significance" (13:22–23). André Parrot, while discussing the large size of the molten sea, wrote that it "was not of very easy access, and it would seem that there was another, and symbolic, reason for it" (46). Emanuel Schmidt wrote of the molten sea: "That it had a symbolic significance is almost certain" (51). W. F. Albright concluded that the molten sea "has been universally recognized as having cosmic significance of some kind" (48).

The fact that the biblical accounts are mute and the biblical scholars uncertain as to the symbolic significance of the molten sea raises the dilemma this study will attempt to resolve: if the molten sea was indeed symbolic for ancient Israel, what was it symbolic of, and how can its meaning be established? My method of inquiry
and validation on this section of this study will involve 1) researching other related scriptures, ancient and modern, which bear indirectly on the meaning of the molten sea, 2) exploring the meaning of related symbols from ancient times to the present as found in ancient Near Eastern, Hebrew and Christian cultural traditions, and 3) verifying the validity of these symbolic interpretations by measuring them against the doctrinal emblems of the only modern religion which claims a direct theological descent from ancient Israel, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—the Mormons.

The traditional explanation given about the Mormon temple baptismal fonts is that the twelve oxen represent the twelve tribes (Church News 9 June 1985: 9). This interpretation is commonly known and taught by members of the Church. Discovering the relationship between the twelve tribes of Israel and the molten sea forms the basis for a convincing interpretation of the molten sea as a symbol. Bruce R. McConkie stated that the twelve tribes or House of Israel were "a type and shadow of their Messiah" (Messiah 453). Roland de Vaux asserted that the key to understanding Solomon's Temple is in the history of Israel (329). The Solomonic temple was patterned after the Mosaic tabernacle and was nearly identical except that the dimensions of each part of the temple were exactly double. The portable tabernacle was the center place of worship during the wandering of the twelve tribes in the desert. The laver of the tabernacle was the prototype of the molten sea.

**BAPTISM OF TWELVE TRIBES**

As Moses led the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage they crossed the Red Sea into the wilderness. The apostle Paul taught how this crossing was a type of baptismal cleansing for them:

> Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all
baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. (1 Cor. 10:1-2).

The pattern of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea was repeated when Brigham Young, often referred to as the Modern Moses, miraculously led the Latter-day Saints across the frozen Mississippi River as they journeyed into the American frontier. Contemporaries called this "the flight out of Egypt into the the wilderness" (Kane 86). The Saints under Brigham Young, like the twelve tribes under Moses, were called the "Camp of Israel" by the Lord (compare D&C 136:1, Exo. 19:2).

Similar patterns were followed by the Book of Mormon peoples who crossed the ocean to the promised land, the Pilgrims and others who left the Old World and crossed the waters to the New World. The negro spirituals longed for the day when there would be a spiritual crossing of the River Jordan to the promised land.

The baptism of the children of Israel, by crossing the Red Sea was a type of the baptism of Jesus Christ, as he passed through the waters of the River Jordan. Baptism is a passing away of the old man and the emergence of the new man. Hugh Nibley commented that in the temple font "are the waters through which the dead, by proxy, pass to eternal life, the Gates of Salvation" ("What is a Temple?" 30).

ARRANGEMENT OF OXEN AND CAMP OF ISRAEL

The arrangement of the tribes in Moses' Camp of Israel may have been a model for the arrangement of the oxen around the molten sea. The arrangement of the camp was set up according to the commandment of the Lord. The twelve tribes were arranged in four groups of three tribes each and the groups were camped directly
east, south, west, and north of the central tabernacle and the camps of the Levites, who were placed in charge of the tabernacle (Num. 2). The tabernacle and the oxen of the sea were oriented to the heavens, rather than to local landforms. Myers stated that the "arrangement of the oxen may have something to do with that of the tribes around the tabernacle in the desert" (Anchor Bible 23). H.D.M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell also mention the similarity between the arrangement of the oxen and the tribes in the camp (The Pulpit Commentary 182).

TRIBES' GIFT OF TWELVE OXEN TO MOSES

The gifts of the twelve tribes to Moses provide a possible source for the twelve oxen supporting the original molten sea. When the tabernacle was finally finished and set up by Moses, the princes of each of the twelve tribes brought a gift. The scriptural account says that "they brought their offering before the Lord, six covered wagons, and twelve oxen; a wagon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox; and they brought them before the tabernacle" (Num. 7:1-3). In this account, each of the twelve tribes gave an ox, and every two tribes gave a covered wagon to Moses. Ginzberg, in The Legends of the Jews, recounts this same story, adding that the wagons were for the transportation of the tabernacle. This account also adds that the covered wagons were "even painted blue, the color of the sky" (192-93). Considering these things, the twelve oxen bearing the covered wagons could be seen as the original models for the molten sea and the twelve oxen bearing it. The covered wagons and oxen could be arranged so that the wagons were backed together in a circle with the oxen facing out, creating a circular pattern similar to the arrangement of the molten sea. The twelve oxen under the sea may have provoked a remembrance of the gifts of the tribes of Israel to Moses. The wagons were painted the color of the sky, but also the color of water when it reflects the sky.
Even if not entirely related to the molten sea as a prototype, the gifts of the
princes of Israel do associate the twelve tribes with twelve oxen.

BAPTISM AND ADOPTION INTO THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL

The twelve tribes, represented by the figures of oxen under the Mormon temple
baptismal fonts, have a connection with the Latter-day Saint doctrine of adoption.
From the building of the tabernacle down to the building of the molten sea, the
twelve tribes were united. Later, they became disunified and scattered. Ten of
those twelve tribes were lost. The Latter-day Saints believe in the "literal
gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes" (Articles of Faith 10).
The molten sea oxen can be seen to represent not only the twelve tribes which will
be united again, but all who accept the gospel of Jesus Christ through the law of
adoption. Nephi taught that "as many of the Gentiles as will repent are the covenant
people of the Lord" (2 Nephi 30:2). Joseph Smith revealed what happens after a
person is baptized:

The effect of the Holy Ghost upon a Gentile, is to purge out the old blood,
and make him actually of the seed of Abraham. That man that has none of the
blood of Abraham (naturally) must have a new creation by the Holy Ghost.

( Teachings 149-150)

Bruce R. McConkie explained this concept:

Those who accept the gospel become of the House of Israel regardless of
what their literal blood ancestry may have been. Because the blood of Israel
has been scattered among the Gentile nations, nearly all who come into the
Church are in greater or lesser degree of the House of Israel literally. But
if someone whose blood was wholly of Gentile lineage were converted, he
would be adopted into the lineage of Abraham and Jacob and become the
House of Israel. ( Mormon Doctrine 389-90)
Since the blessings of baptism will be available to all mankind, either in person or vicariously through baptism for the dead, through the adoption principle, all mankind may eventually become members of the House of Israel. The oxen supporting the molten sea and baptismal fonts not only represent the ancient twelve tribes and the ultimate reuniting of those tribes, but encompass everyone—Jew or Gentile—who accepts the ordinance of baptism. The oxen, in this way, represent the covenants of the house of Israel and the Lord’s blessing to Abraham, the father of the house of Israel:

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among all nations, and thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations: And I will bless them through thy name; for as many as receive this Gospel shall be accounted thy seed. (Abraham 2:9-11)

The concept of adoption makes one of the strongest arguments to connect the LDS temple baptismal fonts with the twelve tribes of Israel.

We have seen how the molten sea and the LDS temple baptismal fonts are related to the twelve tribes through repeated patterns and models: the temple was modeled after the tabernacle, Israel was figuratively baptized while crossing the Red Sea, Israel’s camp was the model for the arrangement of the oxen of the sea, the gifts from the tribes associated them with oxen, and through adoption, all may be gathered into the house of Israel.

The Latter-day Saints would be further led to associate themselves with the twelve tribes because of their example. The Israelites were a blessed and chosen people when they obeyed the commandments. During their travels in the wilderness they learned to rely upon the Lord for all their needs, even for food. And finally, they were a temple-building, covenant-making people.
CHAPTER 5
MOLTEN SEA AS BAPTISMAL FONT

The purpose of the molten sea, according to the biblical account was that it "was for the priests to wash in" (2 Chr. 4:6). We have already seen the traditional LDS belief that the molten sea served as a baptismal font for Solomon's Temple. Joseph Fielding Smith explained how the molten sea could have been a baptismal font:

There are several reasons why baptism would not be mentioned in the Old Testament. First, baptism is a Greek word meaning to dip or immerse. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, therefore the word baptism would not be found in the original writings. There are some passages in the Old Testament that could be interpreted to refer to baptism such as washing and cleansing. The font in the temple of Solomon was evidently used for this purpose. (Answers 2: 64-68)

Bruce R. McConkie explained that when the record says that the sea was for the priests to wash in, that this "is tantamount to saying that the priests performed baptisms in it" (Mormon Doctrine 103). Sydney B. Sperry, perhaps to advise some who had taken this interpretation too far, wrote that "some have mistakenly supposed [that the molten sea] was beneath Solomon's temple, symbolizing baptism for the dead" (69), and then he described the actual location of the molten sea in the court of the temple, not beneath it. Joseph Fielding Smith also explained that the molten sea "was not used for baptisms for the dead, for there were no baptisms for the dead until after the resurrection of the Lord. It is a logical venture to say that it was used for baptizing the living for the remission of their sins (Answers 3: 905).

Old Testament scholars derive their interpretations of the purpose of the molten sea from 2 Chronicles 4:6, and from the description of the laver of the tabernacle which explains how the laver was used for washing the hands and feet of Aaron
and his sons (Exo. 30:17-21). But some suggest that it may have had other purposes also. Schmidt maintained that the position of the molten sea in the temple and other ancient temple seas would suggest that their purpose "was not merely for the sake of ablutions, because then they ought to have been outside, so that the worshippers might pass through the necessary ceremonies of ablution before entering sacred grounds, but these lakes may have played a part in the ritual" (51).

Christian tradition connects the molten sea with baptism. Rupert von Deutz (AD 1070-1129) considered the molten sea as a prototype of baptism and the twelve oxen as a prototype of the twelve apostles (Kirschbaum 586). In the Saint Barthelemy Church in Liege, Belgium is a tin-coated brass baptismal font done by Renier de Huy between AD 1107 and 1118 (Fig. 33). Around the sides of the font are five sculpted scenes dealing with baptism, and with the central scene portraying the baptism of Christ. The base of the font originally was surrounded by twelve half-bodied oxen (ten remain). According to E. H. Gombrich, the molten sea was the sacred model for the baptismal font at Liege (127). Walter Cann, in "Solomonic Elements in Romanesque Art", explains that in this font, the reproduction of a part of Solomon's Temple has "the capacity of embodying the physical presence, and moral authority of the whole" (56-57). Another baptismal font supported by twelve oxen, dating perhaps around 1662, was housed in the Church of St. Julian in Arles, France (Fig. 34, Church News, 9 July 1932). Unfortunately, the church and its contents were destroyed by bombs during World War II. Though both of these fonts predated any Mormon temple fonts, it is unlikely that the early Latter-day Saints had any knowledge of their existence. The Speculum humanae salvationis cites the molten sea as a prefiguration of the baptism of Christ, comparing the priests, who had to wash before entering the temples, with Christ, who, in example, was baptized to enter the kingdom of God (Figs. 35, 36). The Speculum also relates the twelve oxen which bore up the molten sea, not only with the twelve tribes, but also, with the
twelve apostles who baptized and bore witness of Christ to all the earth (XII).

Scholars have not been able to explain in detail how the molten sea was ritualistically used for the priests to wash in. The Mormon interpretation of the molten sea as a baptismal font comes from revelation. The Mormon association of the molten sea with baptism is not derived from, but is supported by Christian tradition.
The biblical descriptions of the molten sea are specific about the arrangement of the oxen. 1 Kings states that it "stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, three looking toward the west, three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east" (1 Kings 7:25). Several numbers are incorporated into this description. The first and most obvious number is twelve. The oxen were arranged in groups of three and the four directions of the compass are also mentioned. Twelve is the product of three and four, and similarly, the sum of three and four is seven. The numbers three, four, seven and twelve are important numbers which form the basis for the cosmic patterns and the government of the Kingdom of God on earth. The symbolic importance of numbers has played a vital role in Judeo-Christian culture for several centuries. Emile Male states that "St. Augustine considered numbers as thoughts of God" (10).

THREE

The number three is considered to be a heavenly number. It is the first perfect number having a beginning, a middle, and an end, and is associated with the Savior, Christ, who called himself Alpha and Omega, was the first to have a beginning, (pre-mortal existence), a middle (earth life) and an end (death and resurrection). There are three personages in the Godhead consisting of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Similarly, three is the number of presidency in the Lord's Kingdom. The First Presidency, the supreme governing body of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is usually comprised of the President of the Church and his two counselors.
Local Stake Presidencies are set up similarly, as are bishoprics, quorum presidencies, and presidencies of the auxiliaries of the Church.

The number three also has to do with the law of witnesses: "in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (D&C 6:28). The apostle John taught that, "there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one" (1 John 5:6-7). Moroni foretold the coming of the Book of Mormon and and the three witnesses who saw the golden plates from which it was translated: "And in the mouth of three witnesses shall these things be established" (Ether 5:4).

Three is the number of a family, consisting of father, mother and child, which is the basic unit both on earth and in the heavens. Joseph Smith taught of the three levels of glory in which mankind will be assigned after the resurrection (see also 1 Cor. 15:40-41). There are also three vertical levels of the universe: "things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on earth, and things which are under the earth" (Moses 6:53).

FOUR

While the number three is a heavenly number, by tradition, four is an earthly number. Anciently, it was believed that the earth was comprised of four elements: earth, air, fire, and water. Four is also the number of the directions of the compass, signifying the four horizontal regions of the earth.

According to The Legends of the Jews, "Adam was created from the dust from the four corners of the earth" (Ginzberg 54). Four rivers flowed from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2). Ezekiel, in his vision, saw four living creatures (Ezek. 1:5-6,10). John the Revelator also saw four beasts representing "the glory of the classes of beings in their destined order or sphere of creation, in the enjoyment of their eternal felicity"
(Rev. 4:6; D&C 77:2–3). John also saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth who were "sent forth from God, ... [and were] given power over the four parts of the earth" (Rev. 7:1; D&C 77:8).

W. F. Albright commented about the design of the molten sea:

The four-fold arrangement of oxen supporting the molten sea in groups of three clearly represents the four seasons of the year, well attested in Jewish and Arabic calendars, and traceable at least as far back as the third century B.C. In connection with the circular arrangement of the twelve oxen, it is interesting to note that the Hebrew word for "season" is etymologically connected with the Ugaritic word for "year," and that it originally meant "cycle, orbit" (Psalms 19:6) from a common Semitic verb meaning "to encircle." (150)

The numbers three and four are connected together with the twelve apostles, as manifested on the tympanum of the central west portal of the Chartres Cathedral. At the base of the tympanum the twelve apostles are sculpted in groups of three separated by columns. This portrays, as Augustine taught, the twelve apostles preaching the Trinity to the four corners of the earth (Speculum Ecclesiae P.L., CLXXII, col 1032).

SEVEN

Seven is the sum of spiritual number three and the earthly number four. Seven is the number of days of the week given by the Lord after the pattern of the creation. Seven completes a circle from one Sabbath to another Sabbath—a perfect cycle. The Old Testament Manual of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints states that the "number seven was a symbol of perfection (the number coming from the Hebrew root meaning 'whole' or 'complete,' and also probably, from the idea of the Creation being completed in seven days). Thus seven became a symbol of the
covenant. (See, for example, Douglas, New Bible Dictionary, s.v. "numbers," 898).
The golden candlestick (Menorah) in the Mosaic tabernacle held seven lamps (Exo. 25:37). Seven became a number for sacrifice, because of the repetition of that number in the sacrificial rites. The clean animals entered the ark by sevens.

The Lord commanded Moses to have seventy of the elders of Israel worship while Moses was on the mount (Exo. 24:1). In Luke 10:1 the "Lord appointed other seventy." In modern times the Lord has called and explained the responsibilities of those who are called to serve in the quorum of the Seventy (D&C 107: 93-98). The quorum of the Seventy consists of seventy members led by seven presidents who may call other seventy until seven times seventy (D&C 107:96). In Numbers 33:9, the children of Israel pitched in Elim where there were "twelve fountains of water, and threescore and ten palm trees." This is perhaps related to the twelve tribes and the seventy elders.

Vincent Foster Hopper writes of the use of the number seven in the Old Testament:

Sometimes 7 is used as a number of servitude.... Sometimes it betokens a period of trial and punishment. ... In other instances, 7 is distinctly the number of sin and expiation, as is ordained by Jehovah's "I will punish you yet 7 times for your sins" [Lev. 26:24], by the 7 days of uncleanness, and by the reservation of the seventh month for the annual feast of expiation [Lev. 16:29]. ... Enoch, who is translated in reward for his goodness, is the seventh generation. The 7 years of plenty and the 7 of famine in Egypt [Gen. 41:26-27] provide a picturesque version of the antithesis of Lamech and Enoch, the twin 7's of evil and good.... It is recognized ... where sacrifice and blessing are necessarily related. (23-25)

John, in his vision, saw a book which was sealed with seven seals which represent the seven thousand years of the earth's temporal existence (Rev. 5:1; D&C 77:7).
John also saw seven lamps of fire burning before the throne of God, "which are the seven servants of God" (Rev. 4:5, Joseph Smith Translation).

Emile Mâle explained that the number seven was regarded by the Christian Fathers as mysterious above all other numbers and intoxicated the medieval mystic:

It was observed first of all that seven—composed of four, the number of the body, and of three, the number of the soul—is pre-eminently the number of humanity, and expresses the union of man's double nature. ... The number seven thus expresses the harmony of man's nature, but it also expresses the harmonious relation of man to the universe. (11)

TWELVE

The number twelve is associated with the organization and government of the children of Israel under Jehovah, in the Old Testament. The twelve tribes, which the molten sea oxen represent, were named after the twelve sons of Jacob who became the twelve patriarchs of Israel. The government of Israel was based on the twelve tribes. Besides the twelve oxen of the molten sea, other things were ordered by twelves in commemoration of the twelve tribes of Israel. At the base of Mt. Sinai, Moses built an altar and twelve pillars, according to the tribes of Israel (Exo. 24:4). The breastplate of the judgement contained twelve stones named after the twelve tribes (Exo. 28:21). The princes of Israel gave twelve oxen as gifts to Moses. Twelve stones were placed at the Jordan River to commemorate Joshua's leading the children of Israel across the river into the promised land. King Solomon divided his kingdom into twelve parts (1 Kings 10).

Jesus Christ chose twelve apostles as the foundation of his Church, who, at the last day, will "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Mat. 19:28, D&C 29:12). Following his resurrection, Christ visited the American
continent and chose twelve disciples who will judge the remnant of the Book of Mormon peoples (Mormon 3:18-19).

When Christ restored his Church in the latter-days through Joseph Smith, he organized its government with twelve who make up the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the LDS Church. In local LDS Church governments, a Stake High Council is comprised of twelve high priests. The size of quorums in the Aaronic Priesthood are in multiples of twelve: twelve (1 X 12) in a deacons quorum, twenty-four (2 X 12) in a teachers quorum, and forty-eight (4 X 12) in a priests quorum (D&C 107:85-87). Ninety-six (8 X 12) form an elders quorum in the Melchizedek Priesthood of the LDS Church (D&C 107:89). Each quorum from deacons to elders is twice as big as the preceding quorum.

According to St. Augustine and other early Christian fathers, it was for profound reasons that Jesus chose twelve apostles. Emile Mâle explained the early Christian philosophy:

Three, which is the number of the Trinity and by consequence of the soul made in the image of the Trinity connotes all spiritual things. Four, the number of the elements, is the symbol of material things—the body and the world—which result from the combinations of the four elements. To multiply three by four is in the mystic sense to infuse matter with spirit, to proclaim the truths of the faith to the world, to establish the universal Church of which the apostles are the symbol. (11)

Twelve is associated with measurements of time. In modern times, twelve is the number of months in a year. A day is divided into two twelve-hour periods. King David divided the sons of Aaron into 24 orders so that no hour of the day or night be neglected (1 Chron. 24).

John the Revelator used multiples of twelve in giving an account of his vision. A multiple of a number or the number multiplied by tens and hundreds are
magnifications of the base number. John wrote of seeing 144,000 servants, 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel who represent those high priests ordained out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, to "bring as many as will come to the church of the Firstborn" (Rev. 7:1-8 and D&C 77:11). John also saw that in the midst of the throne of God were twenty-four elders sitting upon twenty-four thrones (Rev. Joseph Smith Translation 4:4 and D&C 77:5). He saw in his vision, the tree of life which bore "twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Rev. 22:2).

With the purposeful repetition of the numbers three, four, seven and twelve, it seems that these numbers are important, as reminders of spiritual things. They all represent cycles: twelve months in a year, seven days in a week, four seasons, three phases of the cycle of life (beginning, middle, end). These numbers also lead back to the Old Testament and the organization of God's Kingdom on earth at different times and the priesthood authority necessary to perform the ordinances of the temple.
CHAPTER 7
OX AS SYMBOL

OX AS SACRIFICIAL TYPE OF CHRIST

Perhaps one of the main reasons why the figures of oxen were chosen to support the molten sea may have been "because oxen formed so large a part of the offerings" (Riehm). C. F. Keil maintains that "it is impossible to overlook the significance of this selection of the first and highest of the sacrificial animals to represent the priestly service" (105).

The ox of the Old Testament sacrificial rite was a type of Christ. The ox, besides other animals, was used as the emblematic object for the ordinance which required a male animal without blemish, originally a firstborn. Adam learned that his sacrificial offering was a "similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father" (Moses 5:7). The children of Israel, because they were "a stiffnecked people, quick to do iniquity, and slow to remember the Lord their God," were given a strict law "of performances and ordinances" which they were to "observe strictly from day to day, to keep them in remembrance of God and their duty towards him" (Mosiah 13:29-30). All aspects concerning the ancient ordinance of sacrifice were centered on Christ, and bore record of him (Moses 6:63). The sacrificial animal was a type of Christ, being unblemished and perfect. The blood of the animal was the most prominent part of the sacrifice. Richard Draper explained the paradox of giving life to bring life:

Blood dramatized the consequences of sin and the process of forgiveness and reconciliation. Therefore, the blood symbolized both life and death (the shedding of blood representing the giving of life). . . . Through giving his life and suffering, Christ made it possible for us to find new life. The shedding of blood brought expiation or atonement. . . . Thus, the blood
becomes a symbol for the whole process by which man becomes reconciled to God . . . Because Jesus was mortal he could give his life. Because he was divine it counted. (20–26)

Joseph Smith, on the subject of blood sacrifice, said:

Certainly, the shedding of the blood of a beast could be beneficial to no man except it was done in imitation, or as a type, or explanation of what was to be offered through the gift of God Himself; and this performance done with an eye looking forward in faith on the power of that great sacrifice for a remission of sins. (Smith, Teachings 58).

In this way, each ox under the molten sea may have suggested the idea that the source of salvation for each individual tribe came through the animal sacrifice, which was a type of the Savior, Jesus Christ. Twelve oxen may have represented, not twelve saviors, but that the same sacrifice, that of Jesus Christ, was the source of salvation for each of the twelve tribes.

COMMON ATTRIBUTES OF CHRIST AND OXEN

Besides being sacrificial types, animal images could be types of the attributes of Christ, such as strength, potency, and meekness. For example, the lion, eagle, bear, and ram have the attributes of strength and potency, while the pigeon, turtledove, and lamb have the attributes of meekness and submission. Ezekiel, in his vision, saw four creatures who had the faces of a man, a lion, an ox and an eagle (Ezek. 1:10). John saw the same creatures guarding the throne of God. In Christian tradition, after the writings of St. Jerome, these animals became symbols for the four evangelists: respectively, Matthew (whose gospel emphasized the genealogy of Christ as the "son of man"), Mark (whose gospel opens with a voice crying in the wilderness), Luke (whose gospel emphasizes the sacrifice of Christ) and John (whose gospel, like an eagle, soars closest to the vision of God). In fact, Kenneth Clark
writes that "for over seven hundred years almost the only animals in art were representations of the Evangelists" (20). However, since all things are a likeness of Christ (Moses 6:63) and point to the great and last sacrifice (Alma 34:14), it is most likely that these animals in the Old Testament were symbols representing Jehovah, rather than the writers of the gospels.

Besides being the principal sacrificial animal of ancient Israel, the ox's dual attributes of potency and submissiveness also represent those same qualities of Jesus Christ. Jehovah, God omnipotent of the Old Testament, created the heavens and earth, and spoke with a voice of thunder. Numbers 23:22 states that "God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn" or in Hebrew "wild ox" (LDS Bible footnote to Num. 23:22). Jehovah is called the Strong Bull ('abir) of Jacob and of Israel (Isa. 1:24, 49:26. See also Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible 329-30). Jesus Christ, in his mortal ministry, demonstrated His strength by cleansing the temple and performing many miracles and by overcoming death. The resurrected Jesus Christ will come to rule the earth in glory and will judge all mankind.

Jesus Christ also displayed the qualities of meekness and submission. He was born in a manger where the lowly beasts of burden dwell. During his final sacrifice and all of his life, Jesus Christ submitted to the will of the Father.

The ox is perhaps the only animal that represents these dual aspects of the strength and humility of the Savior at the same time.

CHRIST USED OX METAPHOR

The ox as a Christ type in the Old Testament was fulfilled in the New Testament as Jesus Christ became the embodiment of the redeeming sacrifice. When Jehovah, the God of Israel, was born into mortality as Jesus Christ, the angel gave a sign to the shepherds wherein they would be able to recognize the "Saviour, which is Christ
the Lord. And this shall be the sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12). And Mary "brought forth her first son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger; because there was no room in the inn" (Luke 2:7). It is significant that the King of Kings made his first appearance as a mortal, not in a palace, but in a manger with animals. Christian tradition places the ox and the ass at the manger at the birth of Christ (Fig. 37). Perhaps Isaiah foresaw this when he said "the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his masters crib [stall, or manger: LDS Bible footnote]: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider" (1:3). At the lowly manger were manifest together the figurative Old Testament sacrifice type, the ox, and the literal New Testament true and final sacrifice, Jesus Christ. With the coming of Christ, the animal sacrifice was done away and Christ took his rightful place as the Atoning Sacrifice. Jesus Christ grew up as a calf of the stall (Mal. 4:2), strengthened and succored by his earthly parents and by his Heavenly Father.

During his ministry, Christ gave himself the attributes of the ox when he gave this invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (emphasis added; Mat. 11:28-30).

In the Old Testament, the yoke and burden of the ox were common symbols. The harness or yoke represented physical and spiritual bondage, the task or burden represented oppression and suffering. Israel was warned that if it was not righteous, then "he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee" (Deut. 28:48). The Lord promised Israel that in the last days, "that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds" (Jer. 30:8). The prophet Isaiah wrote of Israel and its oppressor, that during the millenium, Christ's yoke shall "depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders" (Isa.
Paul taught that "everyman shall bear his own burden," but also to bear "one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). Paul further used this metaphor when he said: "Be ye not unequally yoked together" (2 Cor. 6:14). Brigham Young taught using the same symbols:

They who love and serve God with all their hearts rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks: but they who try to serve God and still cling to the spirit of the world, have got on two yokes—the yoke of Jesus and the yoke of the devil, and they will have plenty to do. They will have a warfare inside and outside, and the labor will be very galling, for they are directly in opposition one to another. (Journal of Discourses 16:123)

Jesus Christ became the fulfilment of the symbol of the beast of burden and its yoke. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ took upon himself the weight of the sins of all mankind, which sins are the spiritual yoke or bondage that keeps us from the presence of God. During the Atonement, he replaced the sacrificial animal and became the Sacrifice. Through his blood we are made clean, with his stripes we are healed, with his suffering and death we are raised to the joy of eternal life. He took upon himself the burden or affliction of our sins, so that our yoke may be easy and that, by following his teachings and repenting of our sins, our spiritual burden may become light. The whole principle and ordinance of baptism depends on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

ATTRIBUTES OF OX REQUIRED OF MAN

But Christ did not use the ox metaphor only with himself, but also with all mankind. He invited all who, like beasts of burden, are "heavy laden and distressed" to take his yoke upon themselves. When Christ visited the Nephites after his crucifixion, he proclaimed his divinity, and announced that in him the law of Moses was fulfilled. He said of sacrifices: "And ye shall offer up unto me no more the
shedding of blood; yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away, for I will accept none of your sacrifices." Then he explained to them what would replace their animal sacrifices: "And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost..." (3 Nephi 9:19-20). King David, after his downfall, realized this requirement also: "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17). A beast of burden must be broken to be helpful, and it must remain contrite to continue to be useful. The shedding of the animal's blood is done away in Jesus Christ, but the desirable qualities of the animal, a broken heart and a contrite spirit, remain the required sacrifice of the new law.

OX AND LAW OF VICARIOUS SUBSTITUTION

The sacrificial ox as a type of Jesus Christ accords with the law of vicarious substitution. In the animal sacrifices of the Mosaic law an unblemished animal took the place of the offerer on the altar. President Joseph Fielding Smith taught that the "whole system of Christianity is based on vicarious work, one without blemish and without sin standing for all as the redeemer" (Doctrines 141). Baptism for the dead is also an ordinance based on the law of vicarious substitution, wherein living Saints may do the necessary ordinances for those who were not able to do them for themselves while they were still living. Ronald A. Heiner explains that both atonement and temple work "are examples of vicarious substitution. One example concerns substituting to receive the punishments of another; the other concerns substituting to perform spiritual ordinances for another" (BYU Studies Winter 1982:5). The requirement for the Savior Jesus Christ was that he be sinless. The requirement of those who do work for the dead is that past sins be put away.
FAMILIARITY OF OX

The ox makes an appropriate symbol because it is a common animal, and familiar to almost all cultures. In Jewish legend, the ox was the first animal named by Adam. He was taught by an angel how to tame the ox and train it to work the soil (Ginzberg V:1-63). The ox is mentioned many times in the Bible and was treated with respect. The Israelites were commanded not to muzzle the ox when he was treading the corn. Paul explained: "For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Does God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope." (1 Cor. 9:9-10). It was permissible to water the ox on the sabbath day or to pull it out of a pit on the sabbath day (Luke 13:15, 14:5). Isaiah foretold that in the millenium "the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox" (11:7).

Some of the earliest known cave drawings depict bulls. The ox was one of the first domesticated animals and was the most common work animal in ancient times (Fig. 38). In honor of the many hours of service given by oxen for the erection of the gothic Cathedral in Laon, several statues of oxen were placed on the towers of the cathedral. The ox and wagon became associated also with the latter-day Camp of Israel, the Mormon pioneers, who, incidentally, placed their wagons in circles for protection, with the oxen facing outward. Oxen played an important part in the building of the Salt Lake and other latter-day temples and even hauled the cast iron oxen which would support the St. George Temple baptismal font (Fig. 39). Oxen are still very common in the developing countries of the so-called third world, and are even still used in some parts of the United States (Fig. 40). M. E. Ensminger reminds us that "although oxen are seldom seen in the U. S., it must be remembered
that these patient, steady, plodding beasts are still the chief source of power in many parts of the world" (Ensminger 319). Although the U.S.A. is known as a cattle producing country, its 43 head of cattle per square mile is not much compared to India, the largest cattle country in the world, where there are 195 head of the revered animal per square mile (Ensminger 324).

Because of its familiarity, the ox as symbol has the ability to penetrate different cultural barriers from the beginning of time to the present.

MOLTEN CALF AND MOLTEN OXEN

It is also important to consider here the relationship between the molten oxen of the molten sea and the molten calf of the twelve tribes of Israel. While the molten calf was an evil image, the molten oxen formed by Hiram of Tyre were images of righteousness. In the Bible and "calf", "bull" and "ox" were often used interchangeably (Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible 329); the difference between a bull and an ox being in the use of the animal, not in its breed type. A bull, cow or calf used for drafting purposes was known as an ox.

While Moses tarried on the mountain, the children of Israel had Aaron make the molten calf. They said: "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." And the Lord said unto Moses, "[T]hey have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto" (Exo. 32:1-4). According to Jewish legend, they made thirteen idols, one each for the twelve tribes, and one for all Israel. Ginsberg explained:

The devotion of Israel to this worship of the bull is in part explained by the circumstance that while passing through the Red Sea, they beheld the Celestial Throne, and most distinctly of the four creatures about the Throne, they saw the ox. It was for this reason they hit upon the notion that the ox
had helped God in the exodus from Egypt, and for this reason did they wish to worship the ox beside God. (123)

The Children of Israel had good intentions when making the molten calf but did not fully understand the law. According to the Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible, the molten calf was not intended directly as an image of Yahweh, "but rather as the throne on which the invisible Yahweh was seated" (Hartman 329). The Israelites did not invent bull worship. The same dictionary explains that:

In the ancient Near East the bull was the traditional symbol of virile strength. Therefore certain pagan gods had the epithet of "the Bull," e.g., the moon god (Sin) and Marduk in Babylonia, Thoth and Osiris in Egypt, and El in Phoenicia. One of the titles of Yahweh Himself was "the Strong Bull of Jacob" or "the Strong Bull of Israel." In Egypt live bulls under the names of Apis and Mnevis were venerated as gods incarnate. With the Babylonians, the Aramaeans and the Hittites the bull was the symbol or sacred animal of the god of fertility and of the storm; with some Arabian tribes it was the symbol of the moon god. It is thus quite understandable that the Israelites, whose forefathers had "served other gods" (Josh 24:4) ... were inclined to worship Yahweh under the image of a young bull or male calf. (329)

Myers wrote that the "connection of the bull with fertility is well known; he was the symbol of Hadad, the storm-god who was responsible for the life-giving waters" (23). W. F. Albright similarly wrote that the bull "was one of the most popular symbols of fecundity in the ancient Near East" (149).

The LDS Bible Dictionary states that "idolatry generally meant nature worship in one form or another" (706) and what was at first a symbol under which the Children of Israel worshipped Jehovah "naturally soon degenerated into the worship of the image itself" (629). The Israelites sinned in that they worshipped the image that stood for Jehovah instead of worshipping Jehovah himself; the throne instead of
Him who sits on the throne; nature instead of the one who created nature. They were caught up in the literal realities instead of the figurative truth.

The oxen of the molten sea, on the other hand, were not objects of worship. Their proper position was maintained and they were subservient to the important rites which were performed in the sea.

The oxen of the molten sea, then, refer back to the tribes of Israel and their sacrifices in anticipation of the true sacrifice of Jesus Christ through vicarious substitution. The ox shares the dual aspects of strength and submission with the Savior. Jesus Christ compared himself with the ox, and invited all to incorporate the good attributes of the ox into their lives. Because of the widespread use of the ox, it is a symbol to which most cultures can relate.
CHAPTER 8
THE MOLTEN SEA AS PART OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TEMPLE IDEOLOGY

The temples of the ancient Near East, including the Jewish temples, shared a common ritual language and practice. John M. Lundquist has delineated the common features and symbols of temple worship into what he has termed a "temple ideology." The molten sea, and, therefore, the LDS temple baptismal fonts apply to certain parts of this ideology.

THE TEMPLE AS COSMIC MOUNTAIN

One of the main concepts in this ideology is that the temple is the architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain. In the Bible, the temple is referred to as "the mountain of the Lord's house" (Isa. 2:2). Old Testament scholar, Richard J. Clifford, in speaking of the cosmic mountain concept, commented that the "link between the mountain and temple has been noted, for instance, by Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormons, and by Brigham Young, who observed that when people did not have opportunities to go to temples, they often resorted to mountaintops for worship" (108). The earth is also the temple made by the Lord's "own handiwork" (D&C 104:14). Mt. Sinai was both a natural and cosmic mountain, while its architectural realizations--the tabernacle and Solomon's temple--were cosmic mountains. The cosmic mountain, explains Lundquist, is "the place which first emerged from the waters that covered the earth during the creative process" ("Ideology" 57). The earth came forth out of the water and was born in similitude of the birth of Christ. The tip of the mountain in the birth-creation, is the navel of the earth, created before the rest, and corresponds to the holy of holies in the temple (Lundquist, "Symbolism" 45).
WATERS OF THE COSMIC MOUNTAIN

Another common aspect in the temple ideology is the association of the creation of the temple, or cosmic mountain, with the waters of life. Lundquist states:

The temple is often associated with the waters of life which flow from a spring within the building itself—or rather the temple is viewed as incorporating within itself such a spring or as having been built upon the spring. The reason such springs exist in temples is that they were perceived as the primeval waters of creation. . . . The temple is thus founded upon and stands in contact with the waters of creation. These waters carry the dual symbolism of the chaotic waters that were organized during the creation and of the life-giving, saving nature of the waters of life. ("Ideology" 66)

In the Biblical accounts of the creation, a river went out of Eden and parted into four heads. From these waters of creation sprang forth the garden and the waters nourished the tree of life. Inside the Mosaic tabernacle the symbolic waters of creation would have been contained in the laver. It is logical that in Solomon's Temple the molten sea corresponded to the waters of generation (Lundquist, Interview). The Interpreter's Bible suggests that the molten sea "possibly symbolized divine victory over the waters of chaos at the Creation" (3: 450). Roland de Vaux admits that the molten sea might have represented the "primordial waters" (328).

The molten sea had similar counterparts in other Near Eastern temples. W. F. Albright states that the molten sea "cannot be separated from the Mesopotamian apsu, employed both as the name of the subterranean fresh-water ocean from which all life and all fertility were derived and as the name of a basin of holy water erected in the temple" (148). Emanuel Schmidt wrote that in Assyria "we find a piece of furniture called 'Apsu,' or 'the deep,' which evidently corresponds to the Molten Sea. It was cut of large blocks of stone and was beautifully decorated (Jastrow,
Religion of Babylon and Assyria 653.)” (51). Parrot agreed that the molten sea might have suggested either the sacred lake of the Egyptian temples or the Babylonian *apsu*—the mass of waters beneath the earth (46). Schmidt also points out that:

in Phoenicia and Cyprus we find remains of large vessels used in the temples. The best example of them is the famous limestone vase of Amathus, now in the Louvre (Fig. 41). It is spheroidal in shape and has a small base and low rim around the circular mouth. On the sides are four large handles, inside of which is a picture of a bull. The vessel is 6 feet 2 inches high and the greatest diameter is 9 feet 2 inches. Remembering that Solomon’s Sea was 15 feet in diameter and 7 1/2 feet in height, we find that this one, though not coming near it in actual dimensions, yet it is the best representation of such a vessel and was evidently used for the same purpose. (51)

Other similar “seas” include the Nun in Egypt (Lundquist “Ideology” 57), the sacred fountain in Lacarna, and the lake of Amrit (Schmidt 51).

The word “font” or “fount” as a receptacle for the waters used in baptism comes from the Latin, *font* or *fons*, meaning spring or fountain (Onions). The ancient temples of the Near East were often built over a spring so that the temple was the literal water source. Lundquist confirms that there is “clear evidence in the Old Testament for springs of water within the temple” (70). He also shows that Joseph Smith apparently understood this concept when the prophet stated: “Jerusalem must be rebuilt—& Judah return, must return & the temple water come out from under the temple—the waters of the dead sea be healed ... & all this must be done before Son of Man will make his appearance [sic]” (“Symbolism” 52; quoted from Ehat and Cook 180). Similarly, the Nauvoo Temple received its source of water from a well in its basement, and the Salt Lake and St. George temples were built in low-lying areas with high water tables. Most LDS temples have a fountain on their grounds—and
some temples have involved water systems—which perhaps allude to the pure waters of creation. At certain places in the earth/temple, such as the thermal areas of Yellowstone National Park, juvenile water, which is formed by hydrogen and oxygen under the earth's surface, surges forth as literally pure water that has never been exposed to the earth's atmosphere. The pure fontes baptismi, or waters of baptism, are the source of new life. The creation of the new man is, like the creation of the temple, a microcosm of the creation of the earth. Jesus Christ is responsible for the creation of all three: the earth, the temple, and the new man.

A further example of the use of symbolic fonts can be found in the middle ages. The fountain in the Court of the Lions of the Islamic Alhambra palace (1338-90), at Granada, Spain, is reminiscent of the molten sea (Fig. 42). The Alhambra palace was associated with the palace and temple of Solomon. The ruler of the Alhambra was seen as being similar to Solomon, the King-Prophet. Some inscriptions decorating the building refer to Solomon's Temple (Grabar 124-129). The Fountain of the Lions consists of twelve bronze lions facing out and supporting a basin of water with a fountain in the middle (Solomon also used twelve lions for the Queen of Sheba throne: 1 Kings 10:18-20). Channels of water lead from the fountain to the four directions. The water from the fountain brings life to the gardens of the palace (Grabar 124-129).

The pure waters of these seas and fountains have no properties of salvation in themselves. Lundquist suggests that in Jeremiah 2:18, the prophet is saying that the waters of the abzu and the Nun have no saving value. The waters are merely types of Jesus Christ. Lundquist states, "Only the waters that come from the deep source of life itself, the Lord, have saving value" ("Symbolism" 47). In verse 13 of the same chapter in Jeremiah, the Lord refers to himself as the "fountain of living waters." Christ again referred to himself as living water when he told the woman of Samaria at the well that, "whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him
shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:10, 14).

ORIENTATION TO HEAVENS

One of the concepts of the temple ideology is that the temple "is oriented toward the four world regions or cardinal directions, and to various celestial bodies such as the polar star.... The earthly temple is also seen as a copy or counterpart of a heavenly model" (Lundquist "Ideology" 57). Hugh Nibley wrote that the temple "is a scale-model of the universe" where "one gets one’s bearings on the universe," and that it is "peculiarly tied to the North Star as the pivot and pole of the universe. What is bound on earth is bound in heaven" ("What is a Temple?" 22-25). Concerning the word "temple" Dr. Nibley wrote:

The root tem- in Greek and Latin denotes a "cutting" or intersection of two lines at right angles, the point where the cardo and decumanus cross, hence where the four regions come together, every temple being carefully oriented to express the idea of pre-established harmony between a celestial and a terrestrial image. ("What is a temple?" 22)

Nibley also noted that in the temple the four horizontal regions meet and make contact with the three vertical orders of heaven. "Whether in the Old World or the New," he wrote, "the idea of the three levels and four directions dominated the whole economy of the temples and of the societies which the temples formed and guided" ("What is a Temple?" 23). The specified arrangement of the oxen around the molten sea represents this aspect of orientation to the cardinal points.

PATTERN GIVEN

Part of the ancient temple ideology is that the "plan and measurements of the temple are revealed by God to the king or prophet, and the plan must be carefully
carried out" (Lundquist, "Ideology" 58). We have already seen that Joseph Smith erected the Kirtland and Nauvoo temples according to a pattern given by the Lord. The call from the Lord to build temples, both anciently in the tabernacle and in Solomon's Temple and more recently in the Nauvoo Temple, involves a command to Israel to bring together the building materials for the temple. This bringing together of materials or elements may, symbolically, represent a microcosm of the literal macrocosmic organization of the elements for the creation of the earth.

**TEMPLE ASSOCIATED WITH REALM OF THE DEAD**

Another aspect of the temple ideology is that the temple is associated with the dead, the underworld, the grave ("Ideology 58"). "The unifying principle between temple and tomb is resurrection," writes Lundquist, "The temple is the link between this world and the next" ("Symbolism" 37). The ancient temple was erected over the primordial waters of creation of the underworld. Perhaps this is why the font of the Nauvoo Temple "was commanded to be in a place underneath where the living are wont to assemble" (D&C 128:13). Henri Frankfort explained the connection between the temple (cosmic mountain) and the tomb. According to Frankfort, "the plot of ground from which creation proceeded was obviously a depository of creative energy powerful enough to carry anyone who might be buried there through the crisis of death to rebirth" (151-152). Hugh Nibley stated that at the lowest point, representing the underworld, of the Salt Lake Temple, "is a brazen sea on the back of twelve oxen, and there are the waters through which the dead, by proxy, pass to eternal life, the Gates of Salvation" ("What is a Temple?" 30). The concepts of baptism as a similitude of the grave and of the vicarious work for the dead performed in latter-day temples fit well into this aspect of temple ideology.

Lundquist summarized Hugh Nibley's explanation of the similarity between LDS temples and ancient temples: "[T]he temple rites were revealed by God to the
earliest parents of the human race, and from a center of earliest civilization spread to other centers by the dual process of diffusion and usurpation" ("Symbolism" 34). The LDS temple is not an assimilation of the ancient temple ideology, but a restoration of the original temple.

In conclusion, the molten sea and the LDS temple baptismal fonts which are patterned after it, have several logical applications to the shared temple ideology of the ancient Near East. 1) As a part of the cosmic mountain, the waters represent the primordial waters of creation. 2) The waters of the molten sea also represent, as a type of Christ, the life-giving waters. 3) The arrangement of the oxen around the sea recalls orientation to the heavens. 4) The temple is associated with death and resurrection. 5) The pattern for temples is traditionally given by God. An awareness of the common aspects of LDS temple fonts with ancient temples helps to give a greater comprehension of the LDS temple baptismal font as a symbol.
In addition to the symbolism associated with the molten sea, certain details of various LDS temple baptismal font designs and ornamentation lend themselves easily to iconographic interpretation, especially from Christian tradition.

Both the temporary wooden font and the permanent stone font at the Nauvoo Temple, along with most of the other LDS temples through the Arizona Temple, had two sets of stairways leading into and out of the fonts. Arrington wrote of the staircases of the Nauvoo Temple font (Fig. 8) that it "was possible for a stream of candidates to move into and out of the basin, without obstruction, as they received the baptismal rites" (History 63). One of the proposed plans of the Salt Lake Temple font showed two sets of staircases at either end of the font, suggesting that the font would accommodate multiple simultaneous baptisms (Fig. 10). The passage into the font from one side and exiting from the other side may be reminiscent of the passing of the twelve tribes through the Red Sea, who "were all baptized unto Moses" (1 Cor. 10:2).

Another interesting characteristic of the Nauvoo font is that the oxen had the appearance of "being sunk in the floor half-way to their knees" (Fig. 2; Scofield 373). The oxen of the three early Utah temple fonts followed the Nauvoo model in this respect (Figs. 12-14). That the oxen lacked feet probably alludes to the association of baptism with water. The oxen supporting the font stood up their knees in water, perhaps, "because there was much water there" (John 3:23). There may also be here an allusion to the waters of the Red Sea or to the fount of life-giving waters at the base of the cosmic mountain. The waters may also be seen as representing Jesus Christ, the "fountain of living waters" (Jer. 2:13, John 4:6-14).
Joseph Smith described the sides of the temporary wooden font of the Nauvoo Temple as being "finished with panel work" (HC IV:446-47). According to one account, the panels included "various scenes handsomely painted" (Bennet 190). Accompanying this account, written in 1842, is an illustration of the wooden font showing the painted panels (Fig. 43). The later stone font may have had inlaid fresco work on its basin representing scenes relevant to baptism (Nauvoo Independent 15 Aug. 1890: 4). Similar to the early decorated fonts, several later LDS temple have murals painted on the walls of the baptistries (Figs. 14, 17, 18, 21). The murals include, among other subjects, the baptism of Jesus and the baptism of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

A characteristic introduced with the early Utah temples, and continued through most other LDS temples, is that the oxen stand in a depression below the floor of the baptistry (Figs. 12-23). Mark Hamilton suggests that this might have been done originally to "accent the concept of burial" (Monument 90). This may also be an extension of the representation of the oxen standing in water.

The baptismal fonts of the Hawaii, Alberta, and Oakland temples (Figs. 44, 16, 17, 22) are octagonally shaped. The decision for eight-sided fonts was purely aesthetic, according to Avard Fairbanks (Fairbanks). The octagonal baptismal font, however, follows a long tradition of Christian symbolism. J. G. Davies explained the meaning of the early Christian octagonal baptismal font:

Eight represents the day of Christ's Resurrection; so, according to the Epistle of Barnabas [XV. 8ff.], 'we also celebrate with gladness the eighth day on which Jesus also rose from the dead, and was made manifest, and ascended into heaven.' . . . Jesus then rose on the eighth day, i.e. the first day of a new week, and the octagonal plan served to lay emphasis upon resurrection with Christ in baptism. (16).
Marcus Wellnitz noted that, according to Jewish tradition, Christ was circumcised on the eighth day (8). While no symbolism may have been intended in the geometric design of these LDS temple fonts, the traditional symbolism connecting the octagonal font with resurrection is both fitting and applicable to these fonts.

The design of the Hawaii Temple font incorporated the use of cattail reeds between the oxen (Fig. 16). This has been followed in the temple fonts designed by Millard F. Malin (Figs. 20, 21) and in the Quilter/Walgren designed fonts for the new standard plan temples (Figs. 30, 31). The intention of the reeds, according to Fairbanks, who worked with the architects in designing the Hawaii font, was for aesthetic reasons—to enhance the vertical aspects of the font's design. Fairbanks also said that reeds were chosen because they grow near water. This idea fits with the possibilities mentioned before, that the oxen of the temple fonts are standing in water.

Christian tradition again, as in the octagonal font, adds meaningful symbolism to the visual. Since the infant Moses, who was a type of Christ, was found in the flags, the bulrush has become a symbol for "the place whence salvation came" (Ferguson 14). The reed also represents the just, "who dwell on the banks of the waters of grace" (Ferguson 19). These interpretations of the plants are also symbolically appropriate to the LDS temple fonts.

The architects of the Alberta Temple incorporated twelve columns into the design of the baptistry (Fig. 17). Three columns in each of the four corners give structural support to the celestial room which is directly above the baptistry. The columns recall the twelve pillars that Moses had erected at the base of Mt. Sinai. The columns may also correspond to the foundation of the cosmic temple in the underworld over the waters (see Lundquist "Symbolism" 44-46). Other temples have baptistries which repeat a motif of twelve. In the Hawaii Temple, a colonnade of twelve arches surrounds the baptistry (Fig. 16). In Salt Lake, six double doors open
up on either side of the baptistry (Fig. 15). In the Washington D.C. Temple, the rim of the font basin and the base upon which the oxen stand are divided into twelve parts (Fig. 45).

Another vegetal and floral motif was used for the Alberta Temple. Torlief Knaphus substituted the reeds between the oxen with a foliage pattern of corn and lilies (Figs. 17, 22, 46). Avard Fairbanks said that Knaphus used corn stalks in the foliage where Fairbanks himself had used reeds (Interview). Knaphus may have taken this idea from the Biblical passages which refer to the ox in the corn: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he tredeth out the corn" (Deut. 25:4; 1 Cor. 9:9; 1 Tim. 5:18). Maize corn, of course, was not known to the peoples of the Bible. The LDS Bible Dictionary explains:

Corn in English refers to the cereal grains most common in a given region, such as wheat in England, oats in Ireland and Scotland or maize (Indian corn) in Australia, Canada, and the U.S. Thus "ears of corn" in the English of the King James version would be called "heads of grain" in the United States. Indian corn (maize) was known and used only in the Western Hemisphere prior to the discovery of America; it is not the corn of the Bible. (650) Knaphus may have mistaken the biblical word "corn" to mean the maize indigenous to North America.

Interspersed among the corn leaves between the oxen of the Alberta font are flowers with petals and sepals growing in groups of three which are characteristic of the lily family. Zohary wrote:

The white lily adorned the capitals of columns in many ancient civilizations, in Egypt, Assyria, and the land of the Minoans, and in Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. It was a symbol of beauty, and often of fertility and fruitfulness as well. In the Christian era it became a symbol of spiritual purity, holiness and resurrection, and as such was planted in church courtyards. (176)
King Clovis chose the fleur-de-lis as an emblem of his purification through baptism (Ferguson 41). The three parts of the flower also recall the symbolic number three. The corn and lily pattern designed by Knaphus for the Alberta Temple font was used also in the Arizona, Oakland and in LDS temples from the Ogden through the Mexico City temples, including the font replica in the South Visitors Center on Temple Square.

The terra cotta font of the Arizona Temple, also designed by Knaphus, is very rich in ornamental design (Figs. 18, 47-49). With the numerous visual images covering the font, it is possible that some symbolism was intended in its design. At the base with the oxen are corn and lilies. Around the underside of the font proper is a row of green leaves. They are like leaf buds at the base of the font. Around the sides of the font are several more rows of leaves. As the leaves get higher, they change from green to brown. Stems coming up from the base are topped with alternating white flowers and buds, which appear to be lilies.

The symbolism of these motifs seems obvious. The green leaves turn brown and die, but up from them comes new life, a resurrection as it were. The lilies at the top might come from the Biblical description of the molten sea which says, "and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies" (1 Kings 7:26).

Around the top of the font an undulating red line separates a pattern of alternating clusters of grapes and yellow floral structures. The grape motif may have come from a reading by Knaphus of an interpretation of the knobs around the molten sea. Adam Clarke, in his commentary on the Bible, suggested that what "we call knobs may signify grapes," and he uses Hebrew and Arabic lettering to show how a textual mistake could be made (2: 640).

The yellow flower around the font may be a stylized representation of an ear of corn. The grapes and corn (or grain) would represent the emblems of the sacrament. In Christian art, bunches of grapes with ears of grain were used to symbolize the
wine and bread of the last supper (Ferguson 16). The last supper was pre-figured in Old Testament times by the Minchah or meal offering, which was a necessary part of the burnt and peace offering. The essential materials of the Minchah were corn and wine (LDS Bible Dictionary 767).

The red linear pattern connecting the corn and grapes on the Arizona Temple font may be the red vine which represents Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the true vine" (John 15:1).

The sacramental connotations and possible symbols seem to work within the context of the baptismal font decorations. The emblems of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, the grapes and grain, are intertwined by the vine, which is Jesus Christ. If the yellow object is just a flower, it may represent the flower of a grape vine and the grapes, the fruit of the vine. This would allude, perhaps, to the "fruits of repentance" (Matt. 3:8), or to "every good tree [that] bringeth forth good fruit" (Matt. 7:17), or to Christ becoming "the firstfruits of them that slept" (I Cor. 15:20).

It is impossible to tell to what extent symbolism was actually involved in the font decoration of the Arizona Temple due to the apparent lack of information concerning the font, except that it was done by Knaphus. It is interesting to note that a motif similar to the corn-like pattern on the baptismal font is also incorporated into the frieze on the exterior of the temple. Fairbanks has said that a California firm helped with the terra cotta work of the Arizona Temple, and information about that firm and its work might be useful in determining the extent of intended symbolism in the decoration of this font.

Intentional decorative symbolism has been an aspect of LDS temple building. As has been mentioned, visual symbols were very much a part of the nineteenth century Mormon Church. Even in more recent times, a few intended visual symbols have been incorporated into LDS temple building. The Washington D. C. Temple includes a similar, but less ambitious, symbolic structure to the Salt Lake Temple. Several
temples have statues of the Angel Moroni, symbolizing the restoration of the gospel as foreseen by John the Revelator (Rev. 14: 6, 7). Design motifs on other modern temples have symbolic purposes. Several temples have colored glass windows with colors which get lighter in value from bottom to top to represent the heavens. The Jordan River Temple is made up of an "inverted arch" motif which points heavenward. The six spires of the new standard plan temples symbolize the Salt Lake Temple (Deseret News 1985 Church Almanac 274, 282), which has become a symbol of the LDS Church, with its spires which represent the First Presidency and the Presiding Bishopric (Hamilton, Monument 144-145).

Although none of the connections between the LDS temple baptismal fonts and the traditional symbolic inferences mentioned may have been intended by those who designed the fonts, there are some obvious and perhaps appropriate parallels. Consideration of these likenesses seems not only proper, but meaningful.
CONCLUSION

This study has shown the historical development of the LDS temple baptismal font and its role as a symbol. It has been seen that the traditional font has gone from being an object of great pride to the Saints in Nauvoo, to being eliminated, and then to being re-introduced in recent times. This study has also explored possible symbolic applications of the traditional LDS temple baptismal font. The main points covered have been as follows:

1. The LDS Church is heir to the ancient rites of the Temple, through the divine restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, including things that had been hid from before the world was.

2. The ordinance of baptisms for the dead, and important part of the Restoration, was ordained before the foundation of the earth and belongs in the Temple.

3. Through divine inspiration LDS temple fonts are patterned after the molten sea of Solomon's Temple.

4. The LDS temple fonts are visual representations of the connection between ancient and modern Israel.

5. The interpretation of the LDS Church of the function of the molten sea is that it served as a baptismal font.

6. The baptismal font was instituted as a similitude of the grave, in the likeness of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

7. The font and its waters of rebirth represent the womb, as a likeness of the birth of Jesus Christ.

8. The ordinance of baptism was instituted to form a relationship with the ordinance of baptism for the dead, being in the likeness of the dead.
9. The baptismal font was commanded to be in a place underneath where the living are wont to assemble, to show forth the living and the dead.

10. The living and the dead are inseparably dependent upon each other for salvation.

11. By imitating the molten sea pattern the LDS temple baptismal font inherits the religious symbolism applicable to the molten sea.

12. The oxen of the molten sea represent the twelve tribes of Israel.

13. The twelve tribes were symbolically baptized as they crossed the Red Sea.

14. The arrangement of the oxen around the molten sea may recall the encampment of the tribes around the tabernacle.

15. Twelve oxen had an early association with the twelve tribes when the princes of the tribes gave twelve oxen to Moses.

16. The LDS Church teaches that all who are baptized, become members of the House of Israel through the law of adoption, and that through vicarious work for the dead, this will eventually include all mankind.

17. The arrangement of the oxen around the molten sea may incorporate number symbolism, specifically the numbers 3, 4, 7, and 12 which have to do with priesthood government and with earthly and cosmic cycles.

18. The arrangement of the oxen around the molten sea in the directions of the compass suggests orientation to the heavens and not to local landforms, and where, at the temple, the 4 horizontal regions of the earth meet the 3 vertical levels of heaven.

19. The sacrificial ox was a type of the atonement of the Savior, through vicarious substitution, which also includes vicarious baptism for the dead, wherein the faithful become saviors on Mount Zion.

20. The ox, common to most cultures, may be the only animal which represents both the potency and the submissiveness of Jesus Christ.
21. Christ was born in a manger of the lowly beast, replacing the animal sacrifice.

22. Christ compared himself to an ox when he invited those who are labored and heavy laden to take his yoke upon them, for his yoke is easy and his burden is light.

23. The requirements for baptism of a broken heart and a contrite spirit, are the submissive attributes of the ox and Christ.

24. The molten sea corresponds to the waters of the cosmic mountain. And, similar to the "apsu" and seas of other ancient Near Eastern temples the waters of the molten sea may be identified with both the primordial chaotic waters of the deep and the waters of life at the base of the mountain, which are a type of Jesus Christ.

25. Some aspects of certain LDS temple baptismal fonts lend themselves to symbolism beyond, but in harmony with, the molten sea pattern.

There is much evidence which suggests that the molten sea had a symbolic as well functional purpose. There are no documents which identify the exact interpretation of the molten sea as it was originally intended. The areas explored in this study indicate some of the possibilities applicable to the molten sea. They may not all be correct. And there are, undoubtedly, other concepts which apply to the subject that have not been covered in this study.

The current trend in the LDS Church is toward the continuation of traditional oxen-supported baptismal fonts and other visual symbols on the temple exteriors. Nevertheless, the future of the molten sea-patterned font is not assured. Since the traditional oxen-supported font is not necessary to the validity of the ordinance of baptism for the dead, then the justification of its existence must lie in its emblematic importance. A symbol which is not understood is no more than a lingering relic of the past. On the other hand, a symbol which is understood can help
lingering relic of the past. On the other hand, a symbol which is understood can help to reinforce truths and give believers an commonality with each other and with their ancient predecessors. The traditional LDS temple baptismal font, therefore, could potentially be a more vigorous and insightful reminder than it presently is. More thought and research are necessary. Instruction from the Brethren on the subject would be of great value. Symbols have played a vital role throughout various dispensations to remind and instruct people of important teachings and covenants.

Bruce R. McConkie wrote that Gospel understanding "is gloriously enhanced and beautified by the abundant use of symbols and figurative expressions" (The Promised Messiah 773). Christ warned against those who "seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand" (Matt. 13: 13).

It would appear that the complex iconographic interpretations of the motifs included in the baptismal font and its decorative images have not been known or understood by church artisans and architects to a very large degree. The images included on the font (oxen, reeds, etc.) seem to have been merely decorative images borrowed from common sources. The traditional and implied symbolic meanings clearly have been lost and forgotten.

Though iconographic meanings were never really included in LDS font images and motifs, we should be aware of them. It is apparent that the images and motifs related to the baptismal font have been richly symbolic images over the centuries for different cultures. Unfortunately, this knowledge of the traditional symbolisms has never been fully realized by the LDS culture. Understanding the various detailed symbols could certainly elevate our appreciation for the traditional LDS temple font and its decoration, as well as increase our understanding of the doctrinal principles associated with baptism and salvation. It could mean the difference between a dead relic and a living symbol.
ILLUSTRATIONS
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Note double staircases at either end of the font. LDS Church Historical Department.
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Photo LDS Church Temple Department.
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Photo Church News 9 July 1932: 5.
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THE LDS TEMPLE BAPTISMAL FONT:
DEAD RELIC OR LIVING SYMBOL?

Dale Verden Boman

Department of Humanities, Classics, and Comparative Literature

M. A. Degree, December 1985

ABSTRACT

The LDS temple baptismal fonts form a unique collection of sacred sculpture. Beginning with the Nauvoo Temple, LDS temple fonts have followed a tradition of being patterned after the molten sea of Solomon's Temple, which rested upon twelve oxen. Claiming a direct theological descent from ancient Israel, the LDS Church has used the font as a visual connection between ancient and modern Israel to both members and nonmembers alike. In the late 1960s, however, it was determined by the First Presidency that the traditional design motif of oxen-supported temple baptismal fonts was not essential to the validity of the ordinance. This shift in emphasis resulted in a few temples being erected with fonts not supported by oxen. Most recently, however, the traditional font has again been incorporated into the new standard plan temples. With the reintroduction of the non-essential traditional font, its role as a symbol becomes even more significant. However, an iconographical implementation of the traditional font has yet to be fully realized.

The aim of this study is to trace briefly the historical origins and stylistic development of the LDS temple baptismal font, and to investigate through related scriptures, ancient and modern, and through related symbols from ancient Near Eastern, Hebrew and Christian cultural traditions, the various iconographic meanings which may pertain to the traditional LDS temple baptismal font and its potential role as a symbol for the Mormon Church.

COMMITTEE APPROVAL:

Jon D. Green, Committee Chairman

Steven C. Bule, Committee Member

Steven P. Sondrup, Graduate Coordinator
SUPPLEMENT TO

THE LDS TEMPLE BAPTISMAL FONT:
DEAD RELIC OR LIVING SYMBOL?

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of Humanities, Classics, and Comparative Literature
Brigham Young University

by
Dale Verden Boman

June 1985
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"THE LDS TEMPLE BAPTISMAL FONT:
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This supplement contains historical information about the construction of the various LDS temple baptismal fonts. This information is not pertinent to the thesis, but, nonetheless, is interesting and important to the subject. The notes here refer to the Works Consulted in the thesis. Figures 1 through 49 are in the thesis. Figures 50 through 97 are in the supplement.

NAUVOO TEMPLE FONT

Among those who labored on the Nauvoo Temple baptismal font, architect William Weeks, Elijah Fordham and John Carling did the principle work. After the plans for the baptismal font were drawn up by Weeks and accepted by Joseph Smith, Weeks began to labor on the font with his own hands and did the initial carving of the oxen. He labored six days and then committed the work to principal carver Elijah Fordham (Arrington, "Weeks" 343; this article is a short, but informative biography of William Weeks). John Carling may have carved the pattern for the oxen to support the font. According to Gertrude Porter Wilson,

While John Carling was carving beautiful work on a mantle in Nauvoo, Brigham Young [probably Joseph Smith, since Brigham Young was still in Great Britain at the time the font work began] came to him and asked if he couldn't make a pattern of an ox, as they wished life-size oxen, on which to rest the baptismal font. Brother Carling went home and drew a picture of one of his own oxen. He then pinned
planks together with hardwood pins and glue and taking his carpenters pencil, saw and drawing knife, he carved the first pattern of the first oxen used in Latter-day Saint temples. John Carling was a modest man, never seeking honors, thus this instance is not recorded in church history (Carter, 259-60).

This story may have referred to the stone oxen for the permanent baptismal font for the temple, in which case Brigham Young would have been present and in charge at Nauvoo.

Joseph Smith’s description of the wooden font mentions Elijah Fordham as the principal carver. Elijah Fordham (Fig. 50) was born in 1798 in New York City and was one of the few saints there in 1837 (having joined the Church in 1833) and hosted missionaries on their way to Europe. He was a member of the first quorum of the seventy and of Zion’s Camp. On 22 July 1839 he was deathly ill. Joseph Smith and Brigham Young came to visit him and Joseph told him to arise. He leapt up from bed and followed the brethren into the street. He worked on the Kirtland, Nauvoo and early Utah temples, coming to Utah in 1850. He died in Wellsville, Utah on 9 September 1879, a prominent figure in Church history (Journal History: Elijah Fordham. Arrington "Construction" 603-609; This unpublished manuscript goes into very much detail about almost every detail about the construction of the Nauvoo Temple and includes names and some biographies of those who carved in wood and stone for the Nauvoo Temple. Cajon Pass near San Bernardino, California, was named after Andrew Cahoon, one of the stonecarvers.

As soon as the first wooden baptismal font in the Nauvoo Temple was dedicated, baptisms for the dead, for the living and for health commenced:

Reuben McBride was the first person baptized, under the direction of President Joseph Smith. Brother Samuel Rolfe, who was seriously afflicted with a felon upon one of his hands, was present. President
Smith instructed him to wash in the font and told him that the hand would be healed. The doctors had told him that he would not recover before spring, and had advised him to have the hand cut. He dipped his hand in the font and within a week he was perfectly healed.

After this time baptisms were continued in the font, and many Saints realized great blessings—both spiritually and bodily. (Historical Record 862)

The baptismal font became so much in demand that,

de adult converts and the children who had reached the age of eight years were obliged to be baptized in the river during the summer months. Many baptisms were performed there early and late in the season, when the water was not comfortable, so that they would not interfere with the labor in the font room in the growing temple on the hill. On March 20, 1842, an inclement season for river baptism, Joseph Smith baptized eighty persons. (McGavin, Temple 31)

Upon the death of Joseph Smith in June of 1844, the Saints inquired of Brigham Young as to whether they should continue baptisms for the dead. Brigham replied that he "had no counsel to give upon that subject at present, but thought it best to attend to other matters in the meantime" (HC 7: 254). On 24 August 1844, several of the Twelve Apostles were baptized for their dead in the afternoon. This was the first renewal of baptisms for the dead since the death of the Prophet Joseph. The ordinance took place in the temporary baptismal font in the Temple (HC 7: 27).

Brigham Young supervised the construction of the new permanent stone baptismal font. On 6 June 1845 William Weeks "met with the Twelve to discuss the work of replacing the wooden baptistry with a stone one (Arrington, "Weeks" 350). The first stone for the new font was laid 25 June 1845, six months after the wooden font was removed (Kimball 24). William Weeks drew the plans for the font showing the
arrangement of the building stones. Joseph Earl Arrington states that, "William had considerable part in making the new creation" ("Weeks" 351). Arrington interviewed William Weeks' daughter Caroline and his nephew F. M. Weeks. F. M. Weeks stated that,

they advertised for stoncutters. Some of the best in America came. They said no one could cut those oxen out; he told them it could be done. So he took a chisel and a mallet and cut one out just to show them it could be done, and yet he was not a stoncutter. ("Weeks 351) Caroline recalled hearing that "the stone masons could not form the eyes of the oxen, so father borrowed their tools and formed the eyes himself" ("Weeks" 351). Arrington suggests, though, that they "might be confusing the stone baptistry project with the wooden one" ("Weeks" 351). Most of the work on the new stone baptismal font was done by temple stone cutters after finishing their work on the temple. William Weeks gave directions. William W. Player supervised the erection of the font. David Buel Dille "helped carve the oxen." Charles Lambert also worked on the oxen (Arrington, "Construction" 373, 458-609).

One person visited the temple while the replacement of the font was underway and could not,

forbear noticing several fine images of oxen ... thrown carelessly aside in one corner of the apartment. Upon examination he found they were executed of wood, formed by joining together pieces of plank, but a fidelity and perfection of detail difficult to surpass. In the early stages of the building, they had been placed around the font. ... being about to be substituted by those of stone, had been laid aside as useless and were rapidly going to destruction. (Arrington "Construction" 368)
A description of the work in progress was printed in the New York Messenger of August 1845:

...In the centre of this room, stands the base of the baptismal fount; it is of hewn stone, and the surface of it is in the shape of an egg divided in the middle from end to end. Its dimensions are fifteen by eleven feet and a half wide on the outside. Strewn over the floor is peices [sic] of massive stone, ready to be hewn to complete it. When completed it will be supported by twelve oxen hewn from solid stone, which will be represented as being sunk to the knees in the floor of Roman cement. The fount will be entered by a flight of steps in an arch form at each end. The whole will be surrounded by an iron railing to protect it from the soiling hand of the curious visitor.

(Littlefield 67)

The new stone font was finished enough to be used for baptisms by the end of 1845 (Harringtons 33). On 20 January 1846 the Times and Seasons reported that the "font, standing upon twelve stone oxen, is about ready...."

According to one account of the dedication of the Nauvoo temple, "Young men and maidens came with festoons of flowers to decorate the twelve elaborately carved oxen, upon which rested the baptismal laver" (Harper's 615).

The Harringtons reached a conclusion about the dimensions of the font by examining the archaeological remains of the font with Week's plans for the font, with several contemporary descriptions (which do not agree on exact proportions), and with the Henry Lewis 1848 sketch of the font. They conclude that Weeks' drawings were basically followed in "general proportion and relationship of parts... even though the size might have been increased." The shape of the moldings found during excavation exactly matched Weeks' drawings. The total outside measurement if the font basin was approximately 18 feet long and 14 feet wide. This is, according
to the Harrington's, "somewhat larger than the earlier wooden font, but in view of the more massive construction required by stone basin, the two would actually have been about the same capacity" (34-35).

Stairs led from the long or east and west ends of the stone font, instead of from the north and south ends as in the wooden font. The font and oxen were carved from limestone, "...perfectly executed so that the veins in the ears and nose were plainly seen" (Austin). The oxen had tin horns and ears which were fastened to the animals with screws. According to Austin, the "horns were perfectly natural, with small wrinkles at the bottom." individually carved oxen.

The oxen were probably arranged around the stone font similarly to the arrangement of the wooden font with four oxen on each side and two oxen at each end of the font. It is not known why there was a departure in the Nauvoo fonts from the plan of the molten sea which had three oxen facing each of the four directions of the compass. The change was probably made to accommodate the oval font, which fit better into the rectangular baptistry than a circular font would have.

Several sections of the font base survive. The Harringtons describe one of them (Fig. 51):

It is 3 1/2 feet on the curve, 20 inches high and 27 inches from front to back, has characteristic fine tooling on its face, and possesses two curved recesses into which the bellies of the oxen would sit. This large base stone matches the curve of the font base.... The special tooling on [this and other] stones recalls Buckingham's statement that "a stone drapery hangs like a curtain down from the font..." (34).

The fragments remaining from the oxen include: a number of leg fragments, several portions of the dewlap, parts of the neck, and parts of the forelock between the horns with sculptured hair. One of the largest and most interesting finds (Fig.
52), according to the Harrington's, "was an almost complete forequarter of an ox from the midline to the right shoulder and from the flank set in the recess in base to almost the neck" (32-41).

By examining the sculptural style of the extant sunstones (Fig. 53) of the Nauvoo Temple, which were used as capitals for the exterior columns of the temple, it is possible to get an idea of what the sculptural style of the Nauvoo font oxen may have been like, since the oxen and sunstones were carved by the same stonecarvers.

The Harringtons suggest that from examination of the remains of the Nauvoo font and existing documents,

it possible to state that the style of modeling the oxen was very similar to that shown in the photographs of the oxen in the St. George Temple (Figs. 12, 54), allowing for minor differences caused by the latter being of cast iron. It should be possible, therefore, to arrive at a fairly accurate conclusion on the appearance of the animals at Nauvoo. (38)
SALT LAKE TEMPLE FONT

From the time the Salt Lake Temple was first planned to when it was finally completed, the baptismal font went through an evolution of design. The two earliest plans of around 1853-54 (Figs. 10, 11) for the basement of the temple have already been discussed. The plans show the baptistry occupying the central area of the basement and being surrounded by other smaller rooms in a similar format to the basement of the Nauvoo Temple.

The actual font for the Salt Lake Temple was not built until after 1885 and perhaps not until 1892, not long before the temple was dedicated. There are two main reasons for this delay. One is that the temples in St. George, Logan, and Manti were finished first and had fonts which could be used for baptisms. The other is that the Endowment House on Temple Square, a temporary temple, had a baptismal font in which baptisms for the dead could be performed.

The font near the Endowment House was dedicated on Oct. 2, 1856 by Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Jedediah M. Grant (Journal History 2 Oct. 1856: 1). There are no descriptions of the font at the Endowment House. It was to be temporary and probably was dug in the ground and lined with stone or cement. There are no accounts of the font having any representation of oxen. This open-air font was used until 1889 when the Endowment House was taken down in preparation for the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple (Campbell). A proposal was made to enclose the baptismal font to keep it in use after the Endowment House was taken down (Nuttall). This suggests that the baptismal font for the temple still might not have been constructed by that date.

Baptisms in the Salt Lake Valley were provided for, though, as early as August 4, 1847, when "a place was fixed in the creek for baptizing" (Journal History 4 Aug. 1847). The Journal History of 17 Oct. 1855 reports that among things deposited in a fireproof vault of the new Historian's office were a blank book for baptism for the
dead and three books of baptism for the dead. The first meetinghouse baptismal font to be used only for baptism of the living may have been the 14th Ward font which was dedicated on March 23, 1857 by Wilford Woodruff (Journal History 23 Mar. 1857). A new baptismal font was dedicated in the tabernacle on 3 March 1890 (Journal History 7 Apr. 1890 :1), but it is not known when the one it replaced was built or if there even was one.

The two 1853-1854 baptistry plans were first changed by Angell in response to Brigham Young’s request for a Garden Room Annex off the basement floor which would have included an interior garden. This plan would have cut the basement story in half (Fig. 55). Occupying the east half would have been a Creation Room which would have led into the Garden Annex. The font room in the west half would have been reduced to about 45' in length instead of 60'.

The plans of the temple were changed again after the completion of the other three early Utah temples. Plans for the Salt Lake Temple were altered to follow a circular arranged system of endowment rooms which had been formulated in the Logan and Manti temples and in the Endowment House. The 7 February 1885 plan (Fig. 56) for the basement floor of the Salt Lake Temple by Truman O. Angell Jr. called for a 27' x 36' baptistry to accommodate the Creation Room for the circular ordinance room plan.

The 1885 plan also shows the layout of the baptismal font, which is much smaller (6' x 10') than the early drawings of the 1850s. The font in this drawing is similar to the pictures of the Logan temple font. The drawing shows an evolution from the Nauvoo font. Incorporated into the font are side platforms for the witnesses and recorder, including a seat to be used for confirmations. It is not known which temple was the first to incorporate these platforms which are for attending to the baptismal ordinance. Photographs of the St. George (Fig. 12) and Logan (Fig. 13) temples show the fonts with these platforms, but because the photographs are
probably from later dates than when the fonts were constructed, the attending areas may not have been original to the fonts. If the platforms were original, these areas were not mentioned by those who described the fonts when they were built. The rail and step work of the Manti Temple font (Fig. 14) suggest that the attendant areas were incorporated into that font initially.

A final 1893 plan (Fig. 57) shows the basement of the Salt Lake Temple almost exactly as it was completed under Joseph Don Carlos Young, architect-son of Brigham Young. The 32' x 45' baptistry is located in the west half of the basement. The east half of the basement occupies the Creation and Garden rooms. The two halves are separated by a central corridor which includes the grand staircase. James E. Talmage described the completed baptistry:

To provide for the font, a depression or well has been excavated to a depth of three feet below the floor level. This well, tiled with marble, is circular, twenty-one feet in diameter, and is surrounded by an ornamental iron railing two feet high. In this depression stand twelve, life-sized oxen, of cast iron, with bronzed bodies and silvered horns. The oxen face outward in groups of three and support the massive font. The font is of cast iron enameled in white, elliptical in form, of ten and six feet in its longer and shorter axes respectively, and four feet deep; its capacity is over four hundred gallons. The rim is reached by a flight of seven steps at either end, with balustrade and toprail of iron; five inside steps at either end provide for descent into the font. Facilities for quickly replenishing and renewing hot and cold water in the font are adequate and efficient, and due attention has been given to ventilation and sanitary requirements throughout.
The landing at the top of the steps on the west end of the font expands into two small platforms, one at either side; these are enclosed by extensions of the balustrades. On the south side is a small table for the use of the recorder, and on the north are seats for the witnesses whose presence is essential at every baptism performed in behalf of the dead. (154-155)

The Salt Lake font is more ornate than the other early Utah temple fonts. The detail on the font is harmonious with the highly decorative Victorian interior of the temple rather than its medieval exterior. An early photograph by C. R. Savage shows that the font and railings were originally polychromed (Fig 15). A later photograph shows that the polychrome was changed to one color (Fig. 58).

Little information is available about the casting of the font and oxen for the Salt Lake Temple. There is a family tradition that Hyrum Jones "rounded up his oxen and they picked one to use for the model" for the Salt Lake Temple (Jones). A sculptured wooden ox head without its horns in possession of the LDS Church Historical Department proves to be the model for the Salt Lake Temple oxen (Figs. 59, 60). A photograph was taken of the twelve Salt Lake font oxen in front of the foundry where they were cast (Fig. 61). A sign on the building in the photograph reveals that the oxen, and probably the rest of the font, were cast at the Silver Brothers Iron Works, Machine Shop & Foundry. The sculptor of the oxen is unknown, but Hyram A. Silver was probably in charge of the casting work (Fig. 62).

The Silver Brothers Iron Works was founded in 1866 by William J. Silver. Prior to this in 1861, Silver started Eagle Iron Works in partnership with John Forbes. This was the first iron works in the Inter-mountain area and was located at 149 W. North Temple. Later named the Silver Iron Works (Fig. 63), it was sold in 1886 to William's sons, John Joseph and Hyram, after which it was called the Silver
Brothers Iron Works. The foundry was moved to 540 W. 700 S. in 1907 and in 1916 was sold to Salt Lake Iron and Steel Co. (Journal History 4 Nov. 1915: 4). The photograph of the oxen in front of the foundry (Fig. 61) shows by the name of the foundry that they were completed after 1886.

The Salt Lake Temple baptismal font was remodelled between 1962 and 1966 when the temple annex was replaced (Fig. 64). The original stairways to the font were removed and a double staircase was put on one end of the font. The platforms for the recorder and witnesses were replaced also. The oxen and basin remain relatively in their original state.
ST. GEORGE TEMPLE FONT

The St. George Temple, dedicated 6 April 1877, was the first to be completed and the only Utah temple completed before the death of Brigham Young on 29 August 1877. This temple was designed by Trumann O. Angell by the instruction of Brigham Young to be patterned after the Nauvoo temple in general size, design and format. Also the baptismal font of the St. George Temple was constructed to be similar in appearance to that of the Nauvoo Temple. The St. George font was made in Salt Lake City by the foundry run by Nathan Davis and Amos Howe (Figs. 65, 66). Albert and Mary Ann Cottam Miller explain in their Building of the St. George Temple that,

Bishop Nathan Davis of the 17th Ward of Salt Lake City and Amos Howe had formed a company known as "Davis, Howe and Company, Iron foundry and machine shop, Salt Lake City."

To this company the church gave the order to make the cast iron font and oxen. Amos Howe designed and made the patterns and supervised the work. The first pattern made for the oxen was rejected by President Brigham Young.

A committee of three expert animal judges of a perfect ox, was selected to canvas Utah and Idaho and bring to the shops of Davis, Howe and Co. the most perfect ox they could find.

A special stable was made and Amos Howe measured and studied the animal so that the second pattern made was entirely satisfactory. President Young said "Why Brother Howe, you have even registered the disposition of the living ox" (9).

This account tells of a rejected pattern for the oxen. A family story recounted by James B. McQueen might have something to do with this circumstance:

My grandfather Alexander McQueen was born and reared in Scotland and was trained in the making of ornamental furniture.
When he joined the church and came to America, he ran out of money in St. Louis and went to work in an iron foundry making forms for cast iron animals and products. On his arrival in Utah he was called to work in the factory which was preparing materials that went into the Utah temples under construction.

He transferred his attention to this work, and when it came to making of the castings for the oxen to bear up the baptismal fonts, he, having been raised in an agricultural area of Scotland, was asked to cut the model for the oxen, which he did. When he was through with it, they found that the wavy hair growth on the Scottish cattle (Fig. 67)—the Scottish Highlanders were the only cattle he was familiar with—was such that they couldn't get the castings out of the molds. And so they ordered Grandfather to smooth up the outside of the model so they could cast it. Well, he was kind of fussy about his workmanship, and said: "Tis a bonnie job I've done ye, brethren, and now ye bid me spoil it. I winna dee it."

He said if it must be trimmed they had best get somebody else to do it, which they did. The man who trimmed it cut out the textured surface and made the casting of the oxen smooth, except for a spot in the forehead which can be seen yet, and this represents the furry mane of the Scottish cattle as carved by my grandfather. He was also engaged in making the baptismal font and the ornamental fence that surrounds it. (Olsen 123-124)

There is a descrepancy between the two accounts. The first account says that there were two different patterns made, while the second states that the first pattern was merely altered. The one account gives credit to Amos Howe for "registering the disposition of the living ox." It is not known which account is correct, or perhaps
both may fit together in some way. The oxen of the three early Utah temple fonts do have hair on the forehead as mentioned by McQueen (Figs. 12-14, 54).

McQueen also mentioned that:

The model for the baptismal font was made up of small pieces of wood which were fastened together with wooden pegs at each end of the block. Today you can see the impressions of the small pieces that were built up to give the curves to the font. (Olsen 124)

The Deseret News of 17 June 1875, reported on the status of the font in progress:

Casting for the Temple. -- Today our reporter visited the foundry and machine shops of Messrs. Davis, Howe & Co., 17th Ward, where a number of castings for the St. George Temple are being produced.

Six of the twelve oxen which are to support the baptismal font are completed, and two more are on the way. The animals are life size and were modelled in wood from a fine looking, genuine live ox, and the modeller has done his work well, the imitation being excellent, and the castings are trim and neat.

The font itself is interesting in form and workmanship. It is oval in shape, thirteen feet by nine feet at the top, curving slightly inward towards the bottom, and is four feet deep. The bottom weighs about twenty-nine hundred pounds, and the sides about one ton. The sides are fastened to the bottom by belting from underneath, so that the font will have the appearance of being in one solid piece when finished. Leading up to the font, on each end, when in position, will be six ornamental steps, also of iron, and leading down into it, on each end, will be three similar steps, with a heavy ornamental rail and bannisters to match. Between the inside and outside steps, at
the ends, are ornamental platforms. The whole thing, when placed in position and bronzed, as we understand it is the intention to finish it that way, will be a splendid piece of work and it will probably be the only one of the kind in existence.

Messrs. Davis, Howe & Co. are doing their part of the work well, their facilities for heavy castings and machine work being quite extensive. They lately produced a pair of heavy bevel mortice wheels, for the Provo woollen factory.

The baptismal font weighed 18,000 pounds and was presented to the Church as a gift by Brigham Young, costing $5,000 (Curtis 134-135). After the font and oxen were finished, they were taken to St. George to be assembled and positioned. C. L. Christensen tells how the font was taken to St. George:

Fifty-six years ago this month I was one of a company of young men who delivered the baptismal font for the St. George Temple.

In the party were Andrew Sundergaard of Mount Pleasant, Chris Jensen of Moroni and myself from Ephraim. The shipment went York [sic] on the Utah Southern railroad, where we had ox teams to haul it the rest of the distance [Fig. 23]. Bishop Sheets of Salt Lake was there to load us, assisted by Nathan Davis, in whose foundry in Salt Lake the sacred article was made.

At Nephi we were joined by two others, one named Grover and the other Fife. Andrew Sundergaard was appointed captain of the outfit by Bishop Sheets.

We were instructed to guard our loads carefully and not to exhibit them to anybody except the bishops of the wards along our way, and people the bishops might permit to see them.
My load contained the bottom of the font. It was in two pieces, which standing on edge reached the top of the wagon bows, with two oxen bolted securely between.

We traveled along with soldiers going to Beaver on foot. We passed and re-passed them often and almost had to fight to keep them from snooping in our wagons. Some of them believed we were loaded with cannon. The John D. Lee trial was on at the time and there was a great deal of excitement and many wild rumors, but we held to our course and carried out our instructions.

Everywhere along the way we were royally received and entertained. Some of the way it was so hot that we traveled at night for the benefit of our oxen. It reached 119 1/2 in the shade. Our oxen nearly died. Every time they heard a stream of water we had all we could do to keep from stampeding.

We did not leave for the return trip till we saw the font safely in place. As fast as they unloaded us the pieces were put in place and bolted together. Apostle Orson Hyde went in and saw the font in place and came out weeping with joy. He thanked God that he had lived to see another font in place in a temple of the Lord. He said this people would never be driven from the Rocky Mountains. I believed him, for I had heard him prophecy before. (Deseret News 29 Aug. 1931)

A photograph taken about 1874 shows the oxen which hauled the baptismal font to St. George (Fig. 39). The oxen shown are mostly of a breed known as Shorthorn. The Shorthorn breed was the most common breed in America during that period of time. The McQueen account refers to the Scottish Highlander cow as model, but probably there were none of the breed in Utah at the time. McQueen would have sculpted his
model from memory. The now common Hereford breed of cattle was not yet plentiful in Utah at the time. The ox which was chosen for the model was probably of the Shorthorn breed.

The font was in place by August 8, 1875. On 8 August Nathan Davis spoke on making the baptismal font at the St. George Tabernacle. The font was dedicated by Erastus Snow on 11 August 1875, and baptisms were performed that day (Millers 10).

As the accounts of making the St. George font relate, much care was taken to create an aesthetically pleasing work. The first pattern for the oxen was rejected, and a search was made in Utah and Idaho to find the most perfect ox available (Millers 9). The St. George oxen are somewhat more naturalistic in style than were the Nauvoo oxen.

The St. George font was remodelled with the temple in the mid 1970's. Efforts were made to bring the original font up to the technical standards of the time (Fig. 68). The original oxen were kept. A fiberglass liner was installed into the original font basin (Fig. 94; The making of the liner is recounted in the section of this supplement titled "Visitors Center South Font"). The ornamental railings were changed. The font retains the integrity and heritage of those early saints who built it and the temple.
LOGAN TEMPLE FONT

The Logan Temple was the second of the Utah temples to be built (1877-1884). Truman O. Angell Jr. designed the temple under the direction of his father, Angell Sr. The oxen for the Logan font were cast from the same mold as those of the St. George Temple. Brigham Young, himself, may have completed the molds (Olsen 124).

The oxen were to be cast at the foundry of Davis and Howe in Salt Lake City, but the United Order Foundry in Logan "offered to cast the oxen at a more reasonable price, and to take all the iron that could be donated by the Saints as part pay" (Olsen 124).

Leonard J. Arrington gave a short history of the foundry:

The United Order Foundry, Machine and Wagon Manufacturing Company was organized in the Logan First Ward on 5 Jan 1876, with a paid up capital of $2,500 and was the first full-time foundry in Cache Valley. The blacksmith shop had seven forges, all furnished with wind from a fan in the machine shop worked by water power. By 1881 the company employed sixteen men. . . . The company works were destroyed by fire in 1886" (199).

Nolan Porter Olsen, in his Logan Temple: The First 100 Years, gives details about the construction of the Logan Temple font:

The font was cast in six pieces by Davis and Howe, and weighed 8100 pounds. It is 12' 10" long, by 9' 1" wide and is four feet deep. It was transported from Salt Lake City to Logan by teams and sleighs and men from Brigham City, arriving here January 10, 1882. It was delivered this way because railroad transportation was much more expensive and not nearly as safe. It was placed on a rock-cement foundation and cemented into place to stay, having been put together
with 100 bolts around the outside and 50 bolts down the center....

their feet were imbedded in four inches of cement and tile.

The elegant iron railing surrounding the font was 79 feet in length and weighed 3200 pounds. It was cast in the United Order foundry in Logan. Thomas J. Lowe, of Franklin, said he helped cut the patterns for the stairway and railing. The combined weight of the bowl, oxen and railing was 18,000 pounds, or nine tons.

The United Order Foundry and Machine Shop stood on South Main Street in Logan. Joseph Wilson of River Heights supervised the casting and installing of the oxen. William F. Wilson as a lad, remembers helping his dad with the operations.

Charles R. Thomason, of Thornton, Idaho, said that his father Gustave Thomason did the main part of the actual casting, and that as his father’s helper he was allowed to cast the ears. He says the horns were cast in brass and screwed on to the heads, and that the oxen were cast in two pieces and bolted together. (124-125)

Although the font arrived in Logan in 1882 (Journal History 13 Jan. 1882: 5), baptisms did not start in the Logan Temple until four days after the temple was dedicated on 17 May 1884 ("Temple Chronology").

The Logan Temple font was removed in 1976 when the temple was remodelled. Olsen gives an account of the removal of the font:

The oxen weighing 550 pounds each, were removed from the baptismal font in good condition. Their feet were imbedded in four inches of concrete and tile, and the backs of the animals were tightly cemented into place, making their removal quite a task. The large baptismal font, weighing 8,100 pounds, was also difficult to remove and had been placed there to stay. It came apart in six sections,
having been put together with 100 bolts around the outside and 50 bolts down the center. The ornamental railing surrounding the font, weighing 3,200 pounds, was kept for future use.

The original font was replaced with a font similar in design to the fonts in the Ogden and Provo temples under the supervision of Emil B. Fetzer, Church Architect (Fig. 93). The original oxen and parts of the font from the Logan Temple are currently in storage in Salt Lake City (Fig. 69). By comparing the original Logan Temple font and oxen with the St. George temple baptismal font, it can be seen that the original Logan font basin and oxen were duplicate casts of those of the St. George Temple. The ornamental iron work was different for the two fonts. The stairways were different also, but had similar elements. The flower and beehive design on the front of each step was the same on both fonts. Also the main post on the railings have similar design elements. The landing at the top of the stairway was larger on the Logan than on the St. George font.
MANTI TEMPLE FONT

The Manti Temple was the third of the early Utah temples to be built (1877-1888). Designed by William H. Fossm under the direction of Truman O. Angell Sr., it was dedicated on 21 May 1888 and baptisms in the font commenced eight days later. No information about the construction and installation of the baptismal font for the Manti Temple could be found. Photographs of the font reveal that the oxen were cast from the same mold as the St. George and the Logan Temples (Figs. 14, 70).

The font basin appears to be the same as in the other two temples also. The depression in which the font is situated is pear-shaped instead of oval and in circumference is only slightly larger than the outside perimeter of the oxen. The stairways leading up to and out of the font are also of a different design than the other two temples. A comparison of the stairs and ornamentation of the railings (Fig. 71) with those of the Salt Lake Temple (Fig. 72) show that those of the Manti Temple are very similar to those of the Salt Lake Temple. This would suggest that the Manti font and oxen were probably cast by same foundry as their Salt Lake Temple counterparts, which would have been the Silver Brothers Iron Foundry.

The Manti Temple was restored in 1985. The font and oxen were kept and a stainless steel liner was installed into the font.
HAWAII TEMPLE FONT

Although the Alberta Temple was the first of the twentieth-century temples planned, in 1912, both the Hawaii and the Arizona temples were started before the Alberta Temple was finished. The Hawaii Temple was the first of the three to be completed, and the Hawaii font was the first of the modern LDS temple baptismal fonts built. The Hawaii temple was dedicated on 27 November 1919, and baptisms for the dead started on 3 December of that year ("Temple Chronology"). The ideal which was held in mind for the design and construction of the temple was "to erect a structure that would be ... of a simple, chaste beauty, which is the result of good proportions and appropriateness, rather than ornament and embellishment" (McAllister 6). The baptismal font in this temple forms an integral part of the structure. Pope and Burton designed the font to be in a central prominent location in the temple. Persons going to the ordinance rooms of the temple pass through the baptistry which is directly below the celestial room. D.M. Mc Allister, Temple Recorder, described the font room as follows (Fig. 16):

The baptismal font occupies the center of the main hall on the second floor. This is a prominent feature of the Temple. The hall is surrounded with an arched colonnade; the ceiling is higher than the other rooms, giving it a majestic appearance; the floor is mosaic tiling. Marble steps go down into the depression, where stand the figures of oxen on which the font rests; a marble stairway is at the east side of the hall leading to the rooms above... The Font is a beautiful structure. [The interior of the font] is made of steel, lined with white enameled tiles, ... designed by the sculptor, Avard Fairbanks, who also made the ornamental base, and life-size figures of the oxen, on which the Font rests... There is a flight of bronze steps, inlaid with tile, at the east and west ends of the font, from
the floor to the rim, connecting with steps leading down into the water. The steps are provided with a... bronze hand-rail, which also extends around the narrow platform that surrounds the upper portion of the Font. On this platform seats are placed for the recorder and witnesses... At the east end is... a chair [for confirmations]. (McAllister 12-13)

Avard Tennyson Fairbanks (Fig. 73) was born in 1897 at Provo, Utah. He had an early inclination for art. He was part of an artistic heritage. His father, John B. Fairbanks, was an artist and painted murals in several of the early Latter-day temples, including the world room in the Salt Lake Temple. His grandfather and great grandfather worked on the construction of the Nauvoo Temple. While working with his father, in New York at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, he was called a "Young Michelangelo," by the New York Herald (Eugene Fairbanks 1). He studied animals at the Bronx Zoo and received awards for his animal sculptures. An article in the LDS Church's Young Woman's Journal called him "Utah's boy sculptor" ("Avard Tennyson Fairbanks" 396). In 1913 he went to Paris to study at the Ecole Nationale des Beaux Artes, and returned to Utah in 1914 at the outbreak of World War I. He finished the Hawaii font-work in 1918 (Eugene Fairbanks 1-8).

In a personal interview with Avard Fairbanks, he related what he remembered about his work on the temple (Fairbanks interview). The sections in the following paragraphs in quotation marks are Fairbanks' comments. "My brother J. Leo Fairbanks was commissioned to do relief sculpture for the temple." Avard went along, too, and was given the commission of doing the font work. He was "19-21 while doing the work. Le Conte Stewart, a young missionary was chosen to do the murals for the temple. So the art work for the temple was done by young individuals."
Fairbanks worked with Pope and Burton on the design of the font and made a working model of the font and font room in Salt Lake City before going to Hawaii (Fig. 74). The model was accepted and a photograph taken by Fairbanks of that model became the basis for the cover of the Releif Society Magazine for two years during 1920 and 1921 (Fig. 75). Around the font is a decorative row of inlaid multi-colored stained glass. This was done to "add a little color to the font." Fairbanks "took architect Harold Burton to a stained-glass place and gathered up small chips of colored glass." He embedded the glass chips into a decorative band around the top portion of the font model to add color and interest. The sculpting and casting of the actual font were all done in Hawaii.

About sculpting the oxen (Fig. 76), he said "there was no particular ox breed in mind," when he designed the font although they resemble the Hereford breed of cattle. He had "seen many oxen and looked at cattle." He "made the oxen a good strong type." It was "decided to cast the oxen in cast stone," a popular medium of the time, and the material out of which the temple itself was made. The oxen were composed in a group of three different oxen in different attitudes and the group was cast four times to make the twelve oxen. This was an innovation from the Utah temple fonts which were comprised of twelve identical oxen. In this way, from any direction which the oxen are seen, there is a different perspective."

"The bowl was designed to rest on the shoulders of the oxen, not on the back end as in the Salt Lake Temple font." Fairbanks said that the font was "designed as a unit, not the bowl separate from the oxen. In this way the whole work is a unified total composition. If the font and oxen were designed separately it would have been a patchwork, an assembled piece, and not creative." The bowl actually does not rest on top of the oxen but down and between the oxen where the hinder parts of the oxen would be. The lowering of the bowl makes the font less spread out vertically and
makes for a more compact and unified whole. The railing above the font defines the suggestion of a bowl above the oxen.

The areas between the oxen and between the groups of oxen are filled with stylized cattail reeds. "The vertical lines of the reeds helped integrate the oxen with the architecture of the font and bring an upward motion from the base to the bowl. Reeds were chosen because the reed is a plant that grows near water." The reeds have since been polychromed.

The octagonal font rests in an octagonal marble depression in the room. The base on which the oxen stand is in the form of a modified Greek cross which echoes the exterior plan of the temple.

The Hawaii font is one of the most beautiful of the LDS temple fonts. It displays a unity of design for which Fairbanks was striving. The Fairbanks oxen have a greater sculptural detail and exhibit a deeper surface relief than in the earlier Utah oxen. The sculptural texture of the oxen is a characteristic of Fairbanks' work. Working with cast concrete instead of iron allowed for more sculptural freedom and detail than in the previous fonts and oxen. The reed work on the font is very handsome and the idea of modelling foliage between the oxen has been followed on most of the succeeding temple fonts of the Church. The Hawaii Temple baptismal font is one of Fairbanks' best sculptural works, which he completed at a young age.

The question may be raised as to why commissions to sculpt the fonts were not given to more prominent Utah sculptors of the time, like Cyrus Dallin or Mahonri Young. Cyrus Dallin was commissioned to do the model for the statue of Angel Moroni for the top of the Salt Lake Temple even though he claimed that he was not a Mormon (his parents, though, were Mormon immigrants) and "didn't believe in angels" (Francis 66). He was also busy doing portraits and other major sculpture work in Utah and in other parts of the country.
Mahonri Young, born 9 August 1877, twenty days before his grandfather, Brigham Young, died, was not an active member of the LDS Church, though he was "concerned with maintaining close personal friendships with Mormon Church officials" (Hinton 21, 138). Young did do major sculpture work for the Church, including the statues of Joseph and Hyrum Smith for the niches on the east facade of the Salt Lake Temple, the Seagull Monument, This is the Place Monument, and a statue of Brigham Young for the Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C. One of the main reasons that Young would not have been available to do any sculpture work for the Hawaii Temple is that he was in the middle of several major commissions at the time. The task would have required him to take the long and lengthy journey to Hawaii until the work would be completed. One of the bas-relief plaques at the base of the Seagull Monument shows Young's sculptural interpretation of oxen pulling a wagon (Fig. 77). These oxen give an idea of what Young's oxen might have looked like if he had done an LDS temple baptismal font.

The LDS Church needed artists who were talented but who were also devoted and worthy to do the important work for the temples. Fairbanks was a promising young artist. His father and brother had done art work for the temples before. He was willing to go to Hawaii and work with his brother on the temple. The Church commission helped Avard out. He and his brother and Le Conte Stewart were faithful members of the Church. Later in life Avard Fairbanks helped organize LDS groups in Eugene, Oregon and Ann Arbor, Michigan while associated with the universities in those cities.
ALBERTA TEMPLE FONT

Torleif S. Knaphus (Fig. 84), another talented and devoted Mormon sculptor, was chosen to do the font work for the Alberta Temple, which was announced in 1912 and finished in 1923. Knaphus was born in Norway in 1881. As a young art student, he joined the LDS Church in 1902. He continued studying in Oslo and Rome but his love for the gospel caused him to emigrate to Utah in 1906. He then returned to Europe to study at the Julian Academy in Paris. On his way back to Utah, he spent some time studying in New York, and while there decided to devote his talents to the LDS Church. He was hired by the Church to work on the Hawaiian Temple in 1915, and helped Avard Fairbanks sculpt the twelve oxen supporting the baptismal font there (Knaphus 2). Around 1919, he was called to do the font work for the Alberta Temple.

The Alberta Temple has been called "one of the finest architectural achievements in the Church" (Paul Anderson 6). The design of the temple by the architectural firm of Pope and Burton reflects the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright in its simplicity of design, its geometric decorative detail, and its harmony with the natural surroundings.

Situated directly below the Celestial room in the center of the temple, the baptistry with font is very impressive (Figs. 17, 44). Twelve marble pillars extending from floor to ceiling are arranged in groups of three in each of the four corners of the room. The font is set apart in the room by a contrasting checkerboard floor pattern. The font is octagonal and echoes the outside plan of the temple. The ornamentation of the font "recalls the triangular carvings on the outside of the building" (Fig. 78; Paul Anderson). While the font rests on top of the oxen, the basin which holds the water is actually recessed down behind the oxen as in the Hawaii font. Between the tile-lined basin and the sides of the font is a deck which
accommodates witnesses and recorders officiating in the baptismal ordinances (Fig.
44). Two stairways lead down from either side of the font.

The cast-concrete oxen (Fig. 79) are set on an octagonal base in an octagonal
stepped depression in the room. Knaphus carved three oxen in different attitudes
which were cast four times each. Knaphus carved the strong oxen in a very
naturalistic way. The side oxen of each trio have their heads turned to the outside.
This gives them a natural pose and also fills in the space between the sets of oxen.

The oxen emerge from a foliage pattern which, Fairbanks confirms, consists of
cornstalks interspersed with lily flowers (Fairbanks). The idea of the foliage
pattern was taken from Fairbanks' Hawaii Temple font.

This font was Knaphus' personal favorite of the three fonts credited to him
(Knaphus 7–8).
ARIZONA TEMPLE FONT

The Arizona Temple was completed and dedicated in October 1927. Don Carlos Young Jr. and Ramm Hansen submitted a design in 1920 which won the competition for choosing the architect of the temple. Their classically oriented design had a low vertical profile to match surrounding desert of the area and has a slight suggestion of the architecture of Mesoamerica, whose people the temple would serve. The exterior of the temple is highlighted by a frieze done in terra cotta. The architects, working with Torleif Knaphus, also designed the baptismal font to be faced with terra cotta sculpture (Figs. 18, 47-49). This font is unique in its material and also in the way it is highly decorated in bright colors. The colorful and ornate design of the font recall the native art of the Southwest and Latin America. In fact, one of the proposed plans for the exterior design of the temple was influenced by the Spanish Baroque revival style.

As the font sits in the baptistry, the oxen are barely visible. They are recessed completely below the floor level and the opening around the font is small. The sculpted oxen highly resemble those which Knaphus carved for the Alberta Temple and may have been cast from the same molds. One of the oxen seems to have a horn which points backwards instead of forward (Fig. 49). Between the oxen is a foliage pattern similar to that of the Alberta font.

The stairways and the oblong basin were lined with decorative tile. The original font had at one end a tile-covered seat for confirmations (Fig. 80). The circular font also had places for recorder and witnesses. The curious part of the font is the ornamentation on the exterior of the font.

The font was remodelled with the temple in 1974. The exterior ornamentation of the font was retained while the stairs, outside railing, confirmation seat and interior of the font were modified (Fig. 81).
IDAHO FALLS TEMPLE FONT

The Idaho Falls Temple, designed by the Church Board of Architects, was begun in 1939 and dedicated in September 1945. The square bold lines and the rectilinear shape of the white temple reflect an influence of the International Style of architecture.

Torlief Knaphus was commissioned to do the sculpting work for the baptismal font. The font was originally to be of terra cotta, like the Arizona Temple (Presiding Bishopric). It was later decided to have the font cast in white bronze.

An article in the Deseret News of 14 June 1941 reported on the sculpting of the font oxen (Fig. 82):

An enthusiastic stamp of approval was today placed upon a plaster model of oxen designed by Torlief Knaphus, well-known Utah sculptor, for the support of the baptismal font at the new Idaho Falls Temple.

Mr. Knaphus' life-size model of three oxen was viewed this morning by members of the First Presidency, the Presiding Bishopric and the Board of Temple Architects, and... those who examined the proposed model were well-satisfied with Mr. Knaphus' work.

The sculptor has been working on the model at his studio... for the past three months... Now that the model has been approved, a plaster cast of it will be sent east where 12 copies will be made. These will be shipped to the Idaho Falls Temple and will be ranged [sic] in a circle underneath the new baptismal font. (1)

The font was installed by June 1942 and was described as being "a work of most exceptional architecture" (Improvement Era June 1942: 378).

This font is a marked contrast with the Arizona font (Fig. 19). While the Arizona font is very rich in ornamentation, the Idaho Falls font and oxen achieve their
beauty by means of clean and simple lines, which are harmonious with the architectural style of the building. Knaphus’ approach to portraying the oxen is also unique (Fig. 82). The way the oxen are sculpted in the Idaho Falls font shows an intentional departure from naturalism. The highly stylized and abstracted oxen and font were sculpted in a manner which recalls the Art-Deco style. Knaphus carved the essence of the oxen, taking advantage of basic shapes and planes. The forehead of each oxen consists of a triangle topped by two rectangles. Parts of the oxen which normally are rounded have been straightened into a series of planes; as on the back, the nose, mouth, legs and hooves. The twelve oxen, facing in four directions, are on a circular base in a circular depression with steps leading down to it. The oxen emerge from a corrugated white-bronze curtain which surrounds the font.

The Idaho Falls Temple font was the last of the three fonts that Knaphus designed and sculpted. Each set of Knaphus’ fonts and oxen are very different from each other. In addition to the fonts for the Alberta, Arizona, and Idaho Falls temples, Knaphus’ hand has been in most of the LDS temple baptismal fonts of the 20th century in some way. He assisted Fairbanks on the Hawaii font. He helped Millard F. Malin work the font pattern for the Los Angeles and the Swiss, New Zealand and London temple fonts. The oxen Knaphus sculpted for the Alberta Temple font were recast for the Oakland, Ogden, Provo, Washington D.C., Seattle, Jordan River, Tokyo, Mexico City, and Sao Paolo temple temple fonts, and for the full-scale LDS temple baptismal font replica in the Visitors Center South on Temple Square in Salt Lake City. The fonts used in the standard plan temples are a modification of Knaphus’ Alberta font. Perhaps no one has deserved this privilege connected with erecting fonts for the baptism of the dead as much as Knaphus. At his funeral in 1965, LeGrand Richards, LDS apostle, said that he knew of no single man in the Church that had done more work in genealogy than Torleif Knaphus (Hartley 15).
LOS ANGELES, SWITZERLAND, NEW ZEALAND, LONDON TEMPLE FONTS

The next set of temples was supervised by LDS temple architect, Edward O. Anderson. The temples in Switzerland, New Zealand and London were to be small temples to serve the saints in each area. The other temple designed by Anderson was the Los Angeles Temple which was designed to be a showcase temple, a Mormon landmark in Southern California, the largest temple built by the Church at that time.

Millard Fillmore Malin was chosen to sculpt the fonts for these temples. Malin (Figs. 84, 85) was born in Salt Lake City, Utah in 1891 (Malin). His formal education started in Utah, then New York and later to the Beaux Arts Institute, in Paris. He apprenticed under Gutzon Borglum, who later carved Mount Rushmore, working with him on the Stone Mountain Monument in Georgia. He returned to Utah and did most of his work in the Intermountain West. In 1930 he was commissioned to do the Sugar House monument. Among other things, he was commissioned by the State of Utah to do portraits of some of the old-time Indians on the Uintah reservation.

Malin wrote the reason why he thought he was given the commission to do the sculpture work for these temples:

> My work on LDS temples was found acceptable to the Church Building Board even though I had not been an active church-goer for many years—mainly because I was working in collaboration with the temple architects, Edward O. Anderson, friend and fishing pal whom I had first met in the art classes of Edwin Evans during my brief period in college. In all the hurly burly of an architect’s life, he has never been too busy to see and plan for his friends among the artists (Malin 52).

The sculptural work Malin did for the temples included the baptismal fonts and also the 15 1/2 foot Angel Moroni statue for the Los Angeles Temple. The work
modern beef cattle ("Baptismal Font Sculptured" 1). About the appearance of the oxen Malin wrote, "I had introduced a note of life which pervaded the whole font by treating each of the three oxen differently—impairing a rippling or tossing motion to the heads of all twelve oxen" (55-56).

Plaster molds (Fig. 87) were made of the font and sent to the Roman Bronze Company in New York, where it was cast by the lost wax process and then sent in pieces by truck to Los Angeles in November of 1955 ("Bronze Oxen" 6). According to Malin, "the bronze-casting and the welding together of the four quarters of the baptismal font was completely successful" (55-56). Each ox weighed 600 pounds, measuring 5 ft., 1 in. from hoof to head; 4 ft., 4 in. from horn to horn and 5 ft., 4 in. from side to side (Church News 12 Nov. 1955: 6).

The font is very impressive. It is one of the largest of the LDS temple fonts. The stylized cattail pattern between the oxen follows what was done on previous fonts. An innovation with this font is that no stairway leads up to the font. The oxen are on a level which is lower than the floor level. The font is reached from one side by a bridge that is even with the floor level. In this way it is not necessary to step up to the font then down into it. The actual water basin in the font is off-center with the outside rim of the font. Also inside the rim are a confirmation seat and room for officiators.

While the Los Angeles Temple was under construction, Edward O. Anderson designed the plan that would be used for the Switzerland, New Zealand and London Temples. Malin wrote: "I drew up the plans for the bronze structure which could be used, with different settings, in all three of the new temples, and had the plans approved by Edward Anderson by mail. I then made a small working model of the font on a scale of "1" = 1'," and had it approved by the Building Board" (57). According to Anderson the work on the Swiss Temple was progressing very slowly so he had not gotten approval for the plans of the oxen. Anderson wrote:
This was in November of '54 and they were going to dedicate in August of '55 and there was only a short time in which to get the models made. So I sent a telegram to Howard McKean, who was chairman of the Building Committee, and I said, "Please contact Millard Malin, the sculptor, and have him start immediately." I had sent him photographs of a type of oxen that they use in Europe. It was a different type of oxen than the one that we had in Los Angeles. So I said, "Now have him start immediately and then contact Gordon Burt Affleck, the purchasing agent, to make the arrangements to ship the models" (Edward O. Anderson 4).

Malin wrote about sculpting the oxen for the Swiss Temple (Fig. 88):

Since the font of the Swiss Temple as conceived by Ed Anderson was to be oval in plan, a right and a left curve was involved with in the setting of the oxen; consequently six individual oxen had to be modeled at one side of the long axis of the oval, after which the model could be cast twice in bronze, and the two bronze halves welded together to form the whole oval. The oxen (Fig. 89) were quite different from those of the L. A. Temple font. Instead of being long-horned cattle reminiscent of the early Southwest, they were short-horned and "chunky." Later, when the font was in place, I received a letter from some of the people in Switzerland complimenting me for having reproduced the famous Ementaller cattle of Switzerland in the font... The letter enclosed photographs of some of the Ementaller bulls. This font is somewhat smaller than the one in the L.A. Temple, being about 22' overall in width over the long axis of the oval (Malin 57-58).
Plaster cast models of the oxen and font were made. Anderson explained how the models were,

sent by express to New York and shipped by a certain ship so they would reach Basel by the way of the Rhine and then be shipped by truck from there to Mendrisio, Switzerland. I said they would have to highball the truck from Salt Lake to New York to meet the ship, and it would take about six days.

I worked out a schedule about how it should be done and it gave Malin a very short time to model these oxen, but he did it and everything worked out all right. The oxen were installed and the font was installed and it was a very beautiful job. They did a fine job. Not only did they cast the oxen for the Swiss Temple but they did the ones for England and the ones for New Zealand.

The architect in London, Sir Thomas Bennett, said, "We'll have a hard time having . . . the . . . bronze work done in Switzerland, as we have so many fine people in England to do this work." He named one firm, the Mortons Company. They had done very good work, but they did it by the sand method. To make a good job they grind off the joints that are made in the sand and it makes everything smooth and takes out the character of the tool marks of a good piece of sculpture.

We finally got all three of them made in Mendrisio for the three temples. (Anderson 4)

Malin wrote of his completed works for the Temples: "I was specially pleased at having my font in the New Zealand Temple, as I had served a mission for the Church in that beautiful country, starting as a boy of 12 years" (58). About his life's work,
Malin wrote: "Of my own efforts in art and science, I would say, in emulation of Galileo; if my life and work are found to have any value, give the glory to God" (67).

The Swiss font design is very handsome, especially in its surroundings in the baptistry of the temple. The pattern on the floor of the baptistry around the oxen makes an impressive sight together with a mural on the wall portraying the baptism of Jesus Christ. President David O. McKay said when he inspected the Swiss Temple before its dedication that this was "the finest baptismal room of any temple in the Church" (Kirby 17).
OGDEN THROUGH MEXICO CITY TEMPLE FONTS

In designing the Ogden and Provo temples architect Emil B. Fetzer was charged by the First Presidency to keep the cost at reasonable amounts. These temples were not to be as large or expensive as those in Oakland and Los Angeles, but they were to be full-size temples and not to be confused with the smaller temples of limited capacity, such as those built in Switzerland, New Zealand and England. Money was saved by using identical plans for both temples (Green 9). The designs for these temples were announced in early 1968 (Jarrand 3). temples" (27).

The baptistries in these two temples are very large and essentially identical (Fig. 23). The font basin, which is the same in both baptistries, is round and sits entirely above the oxen. The oxen stand in a small depression on a level which is well below the basement of the temple. Access into the font is obtained from a landing even with the floor-level of the basement. The font does not have a chair for confirmations as in most of the previous temples. For efficiency, confirmations are taken care of in a separate room off of the waiting room of the baptistry. The waiting room has a glass wall that gives an impressive view of the beautifully designed font.

A new commission was not given for the sculpting of font and oxen for these temples. One of the main factors was the high cost of commissioning a new font--considering the charge of the First Presidency to keep the cost at appropriate amounts. Other reasons include the availability of the molds prepared in making the Oakland font, the acceptable artistic quality of those Alberta Temple oxen designed by Knaphus, and the recent de-emphasis of the pertinence of the oxen to the baptismal ordinance. It was decided to duplicate the oxen of the Alberta Temple for these new temples. They were cast in a white marble stone composite. The base of the oxen has been modified from the octagonal arrangement of the original to a circular format. The oxen are in arrangements of four groups of three but are spaced
almost equidistantly around the font. These temples were both dedicated in late 1972.

The Washington D. C. Temple, dedicated in 1974, was the next temple built by the Church. Under the general direction of Church Architect Emil B. Fetzer, the architects of the temple were Fred L. Markham—chairman, Harold K. Beecher, Henry P. Fetzer, and Keith W. Wilcox. This temple was built on a grand scale, another landmark temple like the Salt Lake and Los Angeles temples.

The baptismal font of the Washington D. C. Temple is generally similar to the fonts in Ogden and Provo. Details of the font reflect the architecture and polygonal plan of the temple exterior (Figs. 45, 91). The twelve-sided font basin follows the architectural design of the temple and matches the number of oxen. The oxen are cast from the oxen of the Alberta Temple font and stand on a dodecagonal base.

Most of the rest of this generation of temples designed by Emil B. Fetzer have a similar baptistry as the Ogden and Provo temples. The Otto Beuhner Company in Salt Lake City cast most of the fonts for these temples. The main difference between the fonts is the ornamental pattern on the outside of the font basins which matches the architecture of the respective temples. These temples include the Sao Paulo, Tokyo, Seattle (Fig. 92), Mexico City, Jordan River, and remodelled Logan (Fig. 93) temples.
La Var Wallgren owns a fiberglass company, called 3-D Art Inc., in Kearns, Utah. Among other things he has done in fiberglass for the Church is the liner which was prepared for the St. George Temple font basin when that temple was being remodelled (Fig. 68). The liner was made to fit inside the cast iron font basin to keep the original from rusting and to make it watertight. This fiberglass liner made it possible to keep the original font and bring it up to modern standards without replacing it. The process of making the liner was a difficult and dangerous process which was made possible with spiritual help.

Wallgren described in detail the difficult and miraculous events that transpired in making the fiberglass liner for the temple. He shared this experience "to show the Lord’s hand in modern-day temple building" (Wallgren). Wallgen and his assistant, Warner Birth, worked on making the pattern for the fiberglass liner (Fig. 94) for the St. George font. Wallgren gives his account as follows:

We put one inch of foam rubber around the inside of the font. We prepared the foam rubber surface so we could lay fiberglass onto the foam rubber pattern. It was on a Friday evening after working all day so we could fiberglass over the rubber. Warner and I were all alone in the temple.

We started to put the fiberglass on. We just got about an eighth of the way around the font and the styrene fumes, because the chemical was so strong, started to displace the air inside the font. It started penetrating our clothes and burning the skin on our legs. We didn’t take a breath when we bent over. We had to get out as fast as we could. We helped each other out of the font because we were almost overcome by the fumes. We climbed out, got some acetone, and washed our hands.
We stood there talking and thinking about the problem we had. We realized that we had to have air blowing down into the font. It was late Friday and we realized that the construction workers were gone and the stores were closed. There was no way to get a fan. We thought we could get a cross ventilation by taking off some pieces of plywood which covered a large seven foot square opening on the wall. The hole had been previously cut in the west wall of the temple so as to be able to remove the font pattern. As we took down the plywood, there was not so much as a leaf fluttering on the trees outside. It was the calmest day it could have been. We opened the double doors on the north side of the temple, hoping it would cause an air flow. We walked back to the edge of the font and there was no breeze; it was still calm.

I said "Now it's up to the Lord to help us." And all of a sudden it was like there was a big fan blowing strong enough to move the hair on our heads. We climbed into the font and ran the fiberglass all the way around without discomfort for about an hour. All this time, the air was blowing down into the font. It was over one hundred degrees outside.

As soon as we climbed out of the font and gathered up our materials, the air stopped just like a switch was turned off.

The next day we came back in and pulled the font pattern out, made a crate framework, turned the pattern on its side, took rollers and rolled it out onto the truck, gathered up our tools and headed for Salt Lake City.

We just barely got out of town and a wind storm almost blew the truck carrying the font pattern off the road. I told my partner, who
was driving to stop. He said that if we were to stop, the wind would tip us over. We veered back and forth to keep on the road. He told me that if we could make it to the cut in the hill that we would be alright. As soon as we got to the cut, the wind stopped. This time we said a prayer before we went any farther and asked Heavenly Father to consecrate our works to completion. We went to Kearns without any more wind problems.

In Kearns we worked twelve hours a day to meet the deadline. We finished the liner and took the project back to St. George. We put planks across the font in the temple and put the liner on the planks to lower it into the font. It fit like a glove. The church inspector saw it and said that he would be right back. He went and called Church Headquarters in Salt Lake City to say that the liner worked.

We pulled the liner back up out of the font, mixed up a rubber compound, and poured it over the floor of the font. The rubber took several hours to gel and twenty four hours to cure to a soft consistency. We lowered the liner into the font and onto the rubber. We mixed more rubber and poured it between the font and the liner to seal the two together. As we did this, the liner started to float up above the rubber, even though it was clamped down, and started to distort the quarter-inch thick liner.

Realizing the problem, we decided that the only way to equalize the pressure was to fill the font with water. We filled the font with water and put everything back into shape. The font was about half-way full of water when it dawned on me that a rubber seal, between the liner and the cast iron font at the location of the drain, could have been leaking, allowing the rubber to leak out of the font.
I crawled into the crawl space under the font, and sure enough, the rubber was leaking out of the font. My partner gave me sticks and rags to try and block the leakage. The leak got worse until it was pouring a stream of rubber as thick as my thumb, threatening the whole project.

I was already on my knees, so I asked Father to please help, because I knew it would run until there would be no rubber left. When I finished my prayer and turned the light on, the rubber had stopped flowing. Normal room temperature would have taken several hours to gel. The cold water in the font would have made it take even longer to gel. We mixed up the rest of the rubber and encased the liner into the iron font. The font was full of water. My partner said, "You had better check the rubber again." I said, "I don't have to check it because I know God made it stop."

I know I'm doing this work on the temples because that is what Father wants me to do. It has been a matter of prayer. I've been guided into this business. (Wallgren Interview)

It was because of the success of the liner and other fiberglass projects, that Wallgren was asked to make the font replica, which would be the focal point of the visitors center. For this commission, Wallgren experimented several times with color pigment and fiberglass, and found an aesthetically acceptable combination for casting the oxen. He cast the oxen in white fiberglass and then sand-blasted the surface of the oxen to produce a desired texture. A whole set of twelve oxen were cast in fiberglass from the molds of the Alberta Temple oxen which were being used for the temple baptismal fonts (Fig. 95). The font basin was also cast in fiberglass and is quite similar in detail to the Ogden-Provo baptismal font design. When the font was installed in the visitors center, instead of using heavy equipment to lift
the oxen, each ox was light enough to be carried into the building and be placed in its proper position by one person. The Visitors Center South font introduced fiberglass as a new medium in font construction.
STANDARD PLAN TEMPLE FONT

For the standard plan temple fonts, La Var E. Wallgren and Karl Quilter, who had studied under Avard Fairbanks and worked with Malin and Knaphus on the Los Angeles and Swiss fonts, decided to sculpt a new set of oxen. Photographs of oxen at work were studied, and the sculptors sought to make the oxen anatomically correct, recognizing the difference in musculature and size between oxen which are used for drafting purposes, and the regular cattle used for meat and milk. Three oxen were sculpted for the clay model and each is reproduced four times for every font (Figs. 30-32, 96). A well-designed pattern of low-relief reeds and cattails was sculpted to fill in the area between the oxen (Fig. 97). Care was also taken to make the models so that they would form a good cast for reproduction. For the fiberglass molds, statues have to be specially designed, according to Quilter (Quilter). Also the oxen were made to fit with a new font basin that would also be made of fiberglass and rest down and inside where the hinder parts of the oxen would be. The oxen are cast to have a white marble finish, the resin being mixed with marble powder, and after casting are sandblasted to achieve the desired texture.

Wallgren is dedicated to using his talents for the building-up of the Kingdom of God. He feels as though he has been prepared to do this work for the Church. He, as artisan, and Quilter, as artist, work together to come up with the best possible results. Wallgren said:

Karl and I worked so close that between the two of us we know everything we have to do. The whole process is under one roof, sculpting the clay, building the fiberglass mold, making the fiberglass parts, and then sandblasting to finish the parts... You may have to change the artwork so the mold will come free. To make these adjustments, you must have friendship and unity between two artists. (Hart)
Fiberglass has many advantages in the sculpture medium. Fiberglass is stronger per pound than steel. It is very durable and resistant to the elements. It is also lightweight and economical. Wallgren said that "there is no difference in principle in putting a marble finish on fiberglass to simulate marble than gold-leafing a bronze statue to simulate gold. We should use technology to our advantage to create artwork in any medium" (Hart 13).

Wallgren's company is also responsible for the six fiberglass spires for the standard plan temples. Quilter and Wallgren also sculpted the small, seven-foot statue of the Angel Moroni for the new temples, which is fabricated in fiberglass at Wallgren's company. His company also made the fiberglass Moroni statues cast from the ten-foot Knaphus copy of the Salt Lake Temple Moroni by Cyrus Dallin installed on the Atlanta and Idaho Falls temples. The Knaphus copy was originally set atop of the Washington D. C. chapel of the LDS Church, and is now on display at the LDS Museum of Church History and Art.