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LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN POPULAR NATIONAL PERIODICALS

1970-1981

By

Adam H. Nielson

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Religious Education

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

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This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and has been found satisfactory.

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As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Adam H. Nielson in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

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ABSTRACT

LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN POPULAR NATIONAL PERIODICALS

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Religious Education

Master of Arts

The public image of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the product of several factors. This thesis investigates that image as presented in national periodicals from 1970 to 1981. During this time "Mormons" and "Mormonism" was a popular topic as the religion gained notoriety, and as an awareness of its peculiar beliefs and practices increased.

The rationale for using national magazines to assess public image is the assumption that they "reflect prevailing points of view" and help "formulate public opinion." Since popular attitudes are one of the factors that influence how the Church is accepted in the world, this study will enhance the reader's understanding pertaining to the factors that molded those views.

This study was preceded by a thesis covering the same subject from 1961-1970 by Dale P. Pelo, and a doctoral dissertation covering 1850-1961 by Richard O. Cowan.

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My wife, Stacy, was a tremendous help in every aspect of this project. She helped collect articles, input information, edit material and drive me forward in times of discouragement and stress.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis reveals how articles in widely circulated popular national periodicals portrayed The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its members from 1970 through 1981.¹ The rationale for using national periodicals for a determination of public image centers on the assumption that they both reflect “prevailing points of view” and help “formulate public opinion.”²

Popular attitudes are one of the factors influencing how the Church is portrayed in the world. Since the organization of the Church in 1830, its public image has shifted in positive or negative directions at different times. Furthermore, over the years, various aspects of the Church’s doctrines and practices have attracted varying degrees of public attention.

A doctoral study at Stanford University by Richard O. Cowan assessed the Church's public image as presented in national periodicals from 1850 to 1961. Dale P. Pelo continued the study through the 1960s as a Master’s thesis at Brigham Young University. The present work continues this study from 1970 through 1981, and also provides a historical summary of the issues contributing to the Church’s image in this critical decade.

¹ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will hereafter be referred to as “the Church,” or “the religion.”

² Richard O. Cowan, “Mormonism in National Periodicals,” (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1961), 3.

Methodology

This study considers articles from magazines such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, and even *Sports Illustrated*. To avoid bias, it excludes Latter-day Saint publications, and other religious periodicals.³ It does include periodicals catering to a general national audience.

The prime means of identifying articles for study was the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, an index of periodical articles. The most useful category was "Mormons and Mormonism," but items were also found under the headings "Brigham Young University," "Polygamy," "Mormons and the Negro," as well as under names of prominent Latter-day Saints, etc.⁴ Unfortunately, the *Reader's Guide* was not comprehensive in registering all articles written on "Mormonism." Therefore, as articles were gathered and read, careful attention was paid to references about other topics, articles, and resources. Computer databases accessed through C.A.R.S. (Computer Aided Research Service) in the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University were another resource, yielding twenty-seven additional articles.

Information gathered was analyzed in a manner consistent with the previous studies by Cowan and Pelo. Each article, as a whole, was assigned to the following categories:

- Obviously biased "anti-Mormon" writing
- Unfavorable
- 0 Neutral approach
- + Favorable description

³ "Latter-day Saints" is a term used identifying members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

⁴ "Mormon" is a term used identifying members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and is used in quotation marks when magazines have referred to the members as such.

++ "Pro-Mormon" biased writing

Individual themes within the articles were also rated in the same manner. The study identifies shifts in the Church's image year by year, both in "direction" (+ or -), and in the amount of attention given to specific topics. These changes were then linked to the events causing them.

Chronological and topical organizations have their advantages. This thesis incorporates the benefits of each, and within this decade several topics are considered. One major topic of the paper is the Equal Rights Amendment. Coverage begins in 1977 and continues through the end of 1981. For this reason the thesis covers the 1970s and extends through the end of 1981.

Review of Previous Studies

Richard O. Cowan, of Brigham Young University, is a scholar and authority in Latter-day Saint history, specializing in the twentieth century. His 1961 dissertation, *Mormonism in National Periodicals*, explored how events and issues between 1850 and 1961 brought a gradual improvement in the Church's image. Using the national magazine as a historical document, he showed that relationships existed "between the press' image of a subject and public opinion."⁵ His conclusions showed patterns in the Church's public image from documents not typically perceived as historical sources.

Introducing his dissertation, Cowan noted, "the Mormon religion has been a source of interest, not because of controversy, but because of church programs for the economic, cultural, and spiritual welfare of the Latter-day Saints."⁶ Written in 1961, the

⁵ Cowan, "1850-1961," 2.

⁶ Cowan, "1850-1961," 1.

controversy concerning blacks and the priesthood was not highly publicized on the national level.⁷ Earlier controversies relating to the doctrine and practice of polygamy, as well as political concerns at the turn of the century, had largely faded during this time of growth and prosperity. Following the Great Depression, and World War II, the public admired thrift and self-reliance in the youthful and growing Church. The following are examples of issues illustrated in Cowan's treatise.

The Reed Smoot trials represented an unfavorable experience. Smoot was an Apostle in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.⁸ In 1903 Utah citizens elected him to the United States Senate. From 1904 to 1906 the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections debated his admission to that seat. The Church had entered the political spotlight five years earlier when B. H. Roberts, another Latter-day Saint leader, was elected to Congress and was denied a seat in the House of Representatives because he had plural wives.⁹ Cowan showed that "Smoot's critics regarded him as ineligible because of his personal opinions and because he was subject to external pressures."¹⁰ Though Smoot was not himself a polygamist, his antagonists tried to show he sanctioned polygamy because of his position of Church leadership. Cowan concluded that the press

⁷ For Latter-day Saints, priesthood is God's power, and the authority given man to act in God's name, to accomplish his purposes. In the Church the priesthood is only extended to worthy male members from the age of twelve and older. The higher priesthood, or the Melchizedek, is typically given to young men eighteen years and older, while the lesser priesthood, or the Aaronic, is given at the age of twelve. Prior to June 1978, male members of black African descent could not have the priesthood bestowed upon them.

⁸ An Apostle is a member of the second highest ranking governing body of the Church.

⁹ Brigham Henry Roberts (1857-1933) was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy in 1888. He was elected to Congress in 1898. He was never seated in his elected position because he had plural wives. A quorum of Seventy is defined as "general Church officers, ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood office of seventy, who, under the direction of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, carry major responsibility for administering the affairs of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout the world." Source: Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. [1992], 3:1303-04.

¹⁰ Cowan, "1850-1961," 75.

was not only concerned with polygamy as a "marital system," but especially with the "idea that the Mormons had revived the practice and thereby had broken their solemn pledge to the Nation."¹¹ Periodical interest in polygamy and the Smoot case declined in 1907 when the Apostle was officially seated in the United States Senate. As seen above, Cowan used this as an example of a difficult period for the Church's public image due to a specific event and doctrine of the Church.

Cowan documented that the Church's image changed from "negative to positive" during the 1930s.¹² The distress caused in part by the Great Depression led Church leaders to initiate a welfare program to care for their members with the essentials of food and clothing (explained in more detail in Chapter 5). Magazines gave extensive attention to this new program. According to Cowan's dissertation, "four fifths of all articles concerning Mormonism from 1936 to 1938 had titles which directly referred to the Mormon security [or welfare] program."¹³ Welfare projects reportedly included the expansion of chapel building to decrease unemployment, organization of committees "to find positions in private industry," and loaning "capital and equipment to those needing it in their businesses or farms."¹⁴ Tithing and fast offerings were also explained, and Church members were distinguished as industrious, thrifty, and self-reliant.¹⁵ Magazines acknowledged that Church welfare efforts did not include making a profit, but instead the program was instituted for the security of its members.

¹¹ Cowan, "1850-1961," 190-91.

¹² Cowan, "1850-1961," 192.

¹³ Cowan, "1850-1961," 127-28.

¹⁴ Cowan, "1850-1961," 130.

¹⁵ For Church members, tithing is a commandment to "pay one-tenth of all their interest annually," as defined in Doctrine and Covenants 119:4. Fast offerings are funds collected by the Church to care for the poor, needy, and those needing special financial consideration.

Another observation from the dissertation was the decrease in extreme "anti-Mormon" or "pro-Mormon" articles. In other words, additional articles during this era were neutral and moderately favorable toward the Church, giving a more "serious evaluation" of the religion.¹⁶ Despite the differences between Latter-day Saints and those with other beliefs, the admirable qualities of independence and industry may have caused the shift in public image.

Thus Cowan used national periodicals as historical documents to show when and why the Church's public image fluctuated. When the portrayal of the Church was dissenting, doctrines and practices were the focus. However, when the welfare plan and other Church programs drew attention, the religion was portrayed optimistically.

Pelo continued Cowan's study, completing his thesis entitled, *Mormonism in National Periodicals 1961-1970*. Like the first study, Pelo linked issues and events during the 1960s with trends in the Church's popular image. In his introduction, Pelo referred to the "magazine" as an important source of information since readers rarely browse magazines in which they are not interested. Accordingly, magazine writers must insure that articles are carefully constructed to appeal to the interest of their readership.¹⁷

In contrast to Cowan's earlier description of an improving image, Pelo showed a significant drop due to the Church's policy of withholding the priesthood from members of black African descent. Magazines also focused on famous Latter-day Saints, and revisited older controversial issues. One thing remaining constant was the pleasant attention given to programs. Another agreeable focus was found in the magazine writers'

¹⁶ Cowan, "1850-1961," 192.

¹⁷ Dale P. Pelo, "Mormonism in National Periodicals 1961-1970," (Masters Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1973), 1-3.

positive characterization of the Latter-day Saints generally. Church members gained this awareness partly because of the affluence of one of its well-known members, George Romney.

Romney was elected in 1962 as Governor of Michigan. Earlier that year, as he campaigned for office, the media focused on his activity as a "Mormon." Magazines reported his position as the Detroit Stake President, and linked that with the Church's position on blacks and the priesthood.¹⁸ Though Romney was known to fight for the desegregation of local industry and public housing (even before running for governor), magazines reported that "Mormons" believed the blacks were a cursed and inferior race. With his gubernatorial win, Romney, in due time, emerged as a presidential candidate, and was unsuccessful in his 1967 bid for the Republican nomination. However, because he was a practicing Latter-day Saint, and spent much of the sixties in the political limelight, the religion's policy to withhold the priesthood from those of black African descent received considerable magazine coverage.¹⁹

In view of the coverage given the race and priesthood issue, the Church's public image lessened over time. Articles at first pointed their finger at founder Joseph Smith, and "his" book of Abraham. Pelo pointed out that writers did little to ascribe the *Book of Abraham* to a divine source.²⁰ Then blame shifted to Brigham Young. One magazine reported that President Young received a revelation in 1879 forbidding blacks from

¹⁸ A stake is an ecclesiastical unit, similar to a Catholic diocese. The president of a stake is the presiding high priest within that unit. A high priest is the highest ordained office that can be held without also being a general authority in the Church.

¹⁹ Pelo, "1961-1970," 9.

²⁰ The *Book of Abraham* is part of the Church's canonized scripture believed to be the actual writings of the ancient Patriarch Abraham as translated by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

becoming "Mormon" priests.²¹ Since Brigham Young died in 1877, he could not have received the "revelation" ascribed to him at that time. Pelo concluded from these examples that "in none of the articles . . . is the origin of the Negro-priesthood doctrine clearly explained."²² During this era of the Civil Rights Movement, confusion resulting from so little understanding led many to conclude that Church members were racist. Though continued magazine coverage on the priesthood subject was indifferent, Pelo does show that articles written during this time gave hope to general public for a change some day in the policy.²³

Not all coverage during the 1960s were pessimistic. Welfare and other programs still received positive attention, and though the Church, as a whole, was looked upon unfavorably, its people and their characteristics attracted favorable recognition. For instance, in 1966 Billy Casper, a famous golfer, was baptized with his family by the *Deseret News* sports editor.²⁴ Casper was very open about his new religious views, and expressed his enthusiasm and openness in wanting to share his newfound faith. Magazines even reported his payment of tithing on tournament winnings.²⁵ To show the impact Casper's baptism had on the media, Pelo documented thirteen articles written about Casper, with more than half mentioning his new religion, and many of those going

²¹ "After baptism and confirmation, each member has the right, when worthy, to the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost." This "gift" is the instrument through which men on earth receive God's will concerning themselves and their stewardships, a process known as revelation. The prophet as head of the Church "may receive for the benefit of those over whom they preside." Source: Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 3:1226. The highest ordained office in the Aaronic Priesthood is a priest. "Priest" in the context above likely refers to the priesthood.

²² Pelo, "1961-1970," 12-13.

²³ Pelo, "1961-1970," 13-14.

²⁴ The ordinance of baptism by total immersion and by the proper priesthood authority are recognized in the Church as the "gate" which one enters to join the religion's membership ranks (see 2 Nephi 31:17).

²⁵ Pelo, "1961-1970," 26-27.

"into detail on his membership in the LDS faith."²⁶ Pelo concluded that Casper's publicity was a favorable element in the Church's image as it portrayed "a changed man . . . devoted to his family, country, and Church."²⁷

Latter-day Saints generally received praise as "forthright, honest individuals," and as a people who truly lived their religion.²⁸ Another article admired the dedication of Church members to help build their own Church buildings even though they already had jobs "as lawyers, bankers, doctors, and businessmen."²⁹

Continuing the study of Cowan and Pelo from 1970 to 1981 reveals tremendous Church growth, with its attending successes and challenges. Chapters in this study will also confirm how misunderstanding cripples public image, and that programs of good works and faith help shatter barriers of bias and misinterpretation.

²⁶ Pelo, "1961-1970," 27.

²⁷ Pelo, "1961-1970," 28.

²⁸ Pelo, "1961-1970," 66.

²⁹ Pelo, "1961-1970," 67.

CHAPTER 2

REVELATION ON THE PRIESTHOOD

The year 1971 was a milestone in growth for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The correlation and consolidation efforts of the 1960s helped the Church exceed three million members, and continued to strengthen and organize its membership.¹ During this growth, national magazines addressed the topic of race and the religion's priesthood. Until June of 1978, black Church members of African descent were not allowed to hold the priesthood in the Church.

The Setting

According to *Newsweek* magazine, the high political profile of Latter-day Saint George Romney, and the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, were factors in attracting media attention on the Church's priesthood policy.² By 1970, the Civil Rights movement's fervor waned, but an awareness of alleged civil rights violations still drew national interest. For example, in January of 1970, three magazines reported that Stanford University had dropped Brigham Young University (BYU) from its athletic schedule. *Sports Illustrated* reported, "The protests are not rooted in basketball, or in any sport, but in the attitude toward Negroes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which runs the Y and claims 96% of its students as members."³ Civil rights groups suggested the "essence" of being a Latter-day Saint male was the ability to hold the priesthood,

¹ For further information on the correlation and consolidation efforts of the Church, see Richard O. Cowan, *The Latter Day Saint Century*, revised ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1999), 194-98.

² "Second-Class Mormons," *Newsweek* (19 January 1970): 84.

³ William F. Reed, "The other side of 'the Y'," *Sports Illustrated* (26 January 1970): 38.

therefore they saw the ban against the Church-owned school as an effective way to "dramatize the issue and attract widespread attention."⁴

In response to the Stanford action against BYU, the First Presidency gave an official statement explaining the Church's stand on the priesthood issue.⁵ The declaration reaffirmed the Latter-day Saint position regarding the Negro and the priesthood, insisting the Church was within First Amendment rights to withhold the priesthood from whomever they chose. Further content attested that the Latter-day Saints understood discrimination because of what it had historically experienced, and that members should ensure that the civil rights of blacks were held "inviolable."⁶ *Time* affirmed that the statement declared the United States Constitution a "divinely inspired" treatise, and that blacks should enjoy full constitutional rights as members of society.⁷ *Newsweek* viewed the announcement from Church leaders as a victory of some sort; it supposed that "what political pressure could not accomplish, athletic pressure now apparently has."⁸ During the 1960s, when political and social pressure could not coerce the religion to open dialogue about the priesthood issue, the silence frustrated many activists. Shouldering the burden of the protests, BYU athletics represented the official Latter-day Saint position in the national media. Characterizing the Church and its members toward blacks in general, instead of focusing on the priesthood issue, became a favorite topic in magazine articles.

⁴ Reed, "Other Side of 'the Y'," 38.

⁵ "Policy Statement of Presidency," *Church News* (10 January 1970): 12. First Presidency refers to the presiding council of the Church. It is composed of the President of the Church, and a First and Second Counselor who have the administrative responsibility for the Church.

⁶ "Second-Class," 84.

⁷ "Mormons and the Mark of Cain," *Time* (19 January 1970): 46.

⁸ "Second-Class," 84.

Characterization of Church Members' Attitude Toward Blacks by National Magazines. Without clear statements from Latter-day Saint leaders explaining why a particular race was excluded from the priesthood, several periodicals attempted giving justifications for bigoted attitudes in the religion. One example from *Newsweek*, used to characterize Latter-day Saint attitudes toward blacks, referred to the wife of a university professor in Utah who was not of the "Mormon" faith. A Latter-day Saint housewife had come to visit this woman and in their conversation used the cliché "colored folk." She also alleged that during the conversation the Church member declared that a person's skin color was directly proportionate to their virtue. Her guest then reportedly bragged she had the lightest skin in her family. Another example, from the same source, reported a black student body president had recently been elected at the University of Utah, from its population of 115 black students. This action was supposed to contrast the perceived attitude of university students with the general attitudes of Salt Lake City citizens; thus calling the university a "liberal leavening agent" to the people of Salt Lake City.⁹ The article did little to differentiate between Church members and all Salt Lake City citizens, and tried to portray everyone living in Salt Lake City as conservative and closed minded regarding race.

Another insight into how the media characterized Latter-day Saints was in an article on the religion in general. Though the article was correct in its review of the "Mormons" and their desire to build Zion, the author's comments on the priesthood situation were typical of the reporting from other magazines: "Since Mormons have a lay ministry and since possession of the priesthood is required to hold church office, it is

⁹ Harry Waters, "Urban Shadows Fall on Sunny Salt Lake City," *Newsweek* (15 March 1971): 106.

quite evident that such a restriction can be interpreted by critics as racial prejudice."¹⁰

This type of racial characterization came from several magazine writers who believed that without the priesthood one could not fully participate in the Church or its temples.¹¹

The attitudes of black Church members were sometimes portrayed by the periodicals, adding a surprisingly favorable element to the picture. With some concession, several articles mentioned the irony that Utah's, Salt Lake City's, and the Church's population contained a very small percentage of blacks.¹² *Newsweek* reported the number of blacks in Salt Lake at 4,000, or less than 1%; and that the number of black members in the Church, whose membership in 1971 was over three million people, was 240, another very small number.¹³ *Time* magazine interviewed two black members and found them discontent with the Latter-day Saint policy.

One interviewee exclaimed he did not know about the priesthood restriction until the night before he was baptized. Though dissatisfied he still followed through with his baptism because he believed too much in the truthfulness of "Mormonism" to leave it. Another was upset because he wanted to baptize his own son, and it annoyed him to think that a "white" man was going to do it. Like the first interviewed, this fellow stayed an active member despite his disagreement with the policy. Remarked the second man, "This is the true church. And truth is truth, you can't get around that."¹⁴ The conviction

¹⁰ Thomas McGowan, "The Mormons: Builders of American Zion," *America* (22 March 1975): 211. Zion is "a word meaning the 'pure in heart'; also a geographic location where the righteous are gathered by obedience to the gospel." Source: Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4:1773.

¹¹ "Behind the Temple Walls," *Time* (16 September 1974): 111; Reed, "Other Side of 'the Y'," 38; "Second-Class," 84; John Walsh, "Brigham Young University: Challenging the Federal Patron," *Science* (16 January 1976): 163.

¹² "A Brisker Status Quo," *Time* (23 October 1972): 88; Walsh, "Challenging the Federal Patron," 163.

¹³ Waters, "Urban Shadows," 104. The number of members according to the *Church Almanac* were 3,090,953 in 1971. Source: Gerry Avant, ed., *Deseret News 2003 Church Almanac*, [2002], 632.

¹⁴ "Brisker Status Quo," 88.

of these men to remain committed members contributed positively toward the image of the Church.

As seen through national periodicals the public perceived Latter-day Saints as racially prejudiced. Even when N. Eldon Tanner, a member of the Church's First Presidency, told *Newsweek* blacks were welcome in the Church, and regardless of race they were considered "friends and neighbors," public scrutiny reflected badly on the religion.¹⁵ As the picture broadened, magazines attempted to explain why, in an era of civil rights and social breakthrough, the Church seemed closed to changing their priesthood policy. The periodicals then tried to give reasons for withholding the priesthood, using Latter-day Saint scriptures and statements of belief.

Explanation of Church Practices

When reporting on the practice of withholding the priesthood from a certain race, many articles suggested that two of the Church's scriptural works, *The Book of Mormon* and *The Book of Abraham*, contradicted each other.¹⁶ The references were to the teaching in the *Book of Mormon* that the Lord "denieth none that come unto him, black and white" (2 Nephi 26:33), and the *Book of Abraham* revealing the descendants of Ham were "cursed . . . as pertaining to the Priesthood" (Abraham 1:26). These apparent inconsistencies were reviewed by some article writers for further clarification.

¹⁵ Waters, "Urban Shadows," 104.

¹⁶ "Mormons and Mark of Cain," 49; LaMar Petersen, "For the Letter Killeth: Mormon Justice," *The Humanist* (January/February 1978): 18; Walsh, "Challenging the Federal Patron," 163. In the Church *The Book of Mormon* is canonized scripture.

Typically speaking, *Time* remarked that "Mormons" began as "egalitarians."¹⁷ Also from *Science* magazine: in Joseph Smith's original work, *The Book of Mormon*, "equality of the races [was] espoused."¹⁸ It was even suggested that the religion's teaching resembled a "southern Christian theology" used to validate slavery. The thought expressed in *Time* was that Joseph Smith, the first Latter-day Saint prophet, had received the "revelation" while in the slave state of Missouri, and changed the "Mormon" view of racial equality to accommodate more peace from mob action.¹⁹ Several journalists bolstered this idea by clarifying that only the "Negro" of African descent, and not the American Indians or others of color, such as people from the south pacific (Polynesians), fit within the ban.²⁰

The Book of Abraham. As addressed earlier, a few authors turned to the *Book of Abraham* to explain why blacks could not hold the priesthood. Reportedly, the scripture taught that blacks were the cursed offspring of Ham, condemned to be servants, because Ham's wife Egyptus was a descendant of the Bible's first murderer, Cain.²¹ The story of Cain and his curse is not found in the *Book of Abraham*, but in the *Book of Moses* (7:8, 22), and Genesis (9:18-27).²² These authors either did not know, or they did not clarify

¹⁷ "Brisker Status Quo," 88. Egalitarianism is "a belief in human equality esp. with respect to social, political, and economic rights and privileges." Source: *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed., s.v. "egalitarianism."

¹⁸ Walsh, "Challenging the Federal Patron," 163.

¹⁹ "Brisker Status Quo," 88. See also Petersen, "The Letter Killeth," 18. Prophet refers to the highest ranking, authoritative leader, or president of the Church.

²⁰ "Brisker Status Quo," 88; McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 211; Rodman W. Paul, "The Mormons," *American Heritage* (June 1977): 78.

²¹ "Behind Temple Walls," 111; "Mormonism Enters a New Era," *Time* (7 August 1978): 55; "Mormons and Mark of Cain," 49; Petersen, "The Letter Killeth," 18; Walsh, "Challenging the Federal Patron," 163.

²² "The Book of Moses is an extract of several chapters from Genesis in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible (JST) and constitutes one of the texts in the Pearl of Great Price." Source: Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1:216. The Joseph Smith Translation is "a 'new translation' of the Bible, using the text of the King James Version (KJV)" made by Joseph Smith. Source: Ludlow, ed.,

that distinction—simply associating the "curse of Cain" with the *Book of Abraham*. A typical representation of this idea was found in *American Heritage*: "According to Mormon belief, [the Negroes'] color means that they bear a lifelong curse as the descendants of . . . Cain, who in a fit of jealousy slew his brother Abel. For this bloody deed, Cain and his descendants were cursed with black skins, the 'mark of Cain.'"²³ In some instances the explanation of the "curse of Cain" was unfavorable; other times it was simply presented as a matter of fact.

Often the fact that Joseph Smith translated the *Book of Abraham* from Egyptian papyri accompanied the explanations of the "curse." An article in *Time* claimed that the papyri were real, for they were reportedly found in a New York museum in 1967. However, it conveyed that "Mormon scholars" studying the scrolls did not find them old enough to be Abraham's. The article also chided Joseph Smith's translation as possibly inaccurate. The Latter-day Saint scholars were unidentified, and it was reported that it was possible the scrolls acted as a "'catalyst' that fired Smith's imagination and opened him to direct revelation."²⁴ Article authors used such concessions to infer that Joseph Smith created the *Book of Abraham*.

Pre-Mortal Existence. Two articles added a "pre-mortal" element to their explanation of the LDS practice. They taught that "Orthodox Mormons" believed in a life before earth where a battle ensued between God and Satan. Each spirit chose a side to fight on, but there were those who were "neutral bystanders" and chose neither. For

Encyclopedia of Mormonism, 2:763. *The Pearl of Great Price* is the name of the book comprised of the *Book of Moses*, the *Book of Abraham*, and other documents.

²³ Paul, "The Mormons," 78. See also "The Chosen," *Newsweek* (17 July 1972): 50; "Mormons and Mark of Cain," 49; "Second-Class," 84.

²⁴ "Mormonism Enters New Era," 56.

their "lack of valor" they were born through the lineage of those unworthy to hold the priesthood.²⁵ In 1978 *Time* magazine noted that Latter-day Saints no longer believed that ideology. The author wrote, "Mormons believe in a prior spirit life, and their leaders have long taught that people are born into the black race because they somehow failed God during their pre-existence. [President Spencer W.] Kimball says flatly that Mormonism no longer holds to such a theory."²⁶

Celestial Reward. One final idea instigating press coverage of the Church's priesthood policy involved the religion's belief in the Celestial Kingdom.²⁷ Priesthood was important for "faithful male member[s]," because gaining and honoring that authority would get a man and his family "in the highest level of the afterlife, the celestial kingdom." Withholding that privilege from black members was seen as withholding the Latter-day Saint exaltation.²⁸ Representative of this stance was an article in *Newsweek* that avowed: "According to . . . Mormon theology . . . blacks are unworthy to be priests of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or to enjoy the highest realms of heaven."²⁹ The appearance of unfairness was likely real to the readership of these magazines. The possibility of changing the priesthood policy, however, was expressed by most magazine writers on the subject.

²⁵ "Mormons and Mark of Cain," 49; Petersen, "The Letter Killeth," 18.

²⁶ "Mormonism Enters New Era," 55.

²⁷ The Celestial Kingdom is "the highest of three degrees of glory in the kingdom of heaven." Source: Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4:1765.

²⁸ "Mormons and Mark of Cain," 46.

²⁹ "Second-Class," 84. See also McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 211; Walsh, "Challenging the Federal Patron," 163.

The Possibility of Change

As seen above, treatment of the priesthood issue by the press was mainly negative. One element of the coverage, however, portrayed the Church in an almost positive, or at least neutral way. This point was the possibility that a revelation to the Church's prophet could change the policy keeping blacks from holding the priesthood. The religion had four prophets during the 1970s and the press viewed each one differently, regarding the prospect of changing the policy. Surprisingly, the press concluded that the man who received the revelation was the most unlikely to do it. Looking at the coverage of each prophet in national magazines is illustrative.

David O. McKay (1951-1970). During the Stanford-BYU dilemma President David O. McKay died on 18 January 1970. In articles dated 19 January, and apparently before knowing of President McKay's death, *Time* and *Newsweek* each reported BYU's troubles. These two articles essentially acknowledged the religion's belief that revelation was continuous and that leaders had "predicted" that someday the policy could change.³⁰ However, *Newsweek's* author expressed skepticism and quoted McKay proclaiming, "sometime in God's eternal plan, the Negro will be given the right to hold the priesthood," but not until "God reveal[ed] his will."³¹

A week later *Sports Illustrated* reported on the Stanford conflict, suggesting that because President McKay had died it was now possible that the policy could be amended. This inferred that he had been the obstruction to change. Perhaps the magazine reached

³⁰ "Mormons and Mark of Cain," 49; "Second-Class," 84.

³¹ "Second-Class," 84.

this conclusion because he was the prophet during the height of the Civil Rights Era and had not made changes.³²

An alternative view to President McKay's unwillingness to change the practice was illustrated in *The Humanist*. This magazine reported in 1978, that during McKay's leadership in 1963, a change in the policy was actually considered. According to the magazine writer, this announcement was made by Hugh B. Brown, then a member of the First Presidency, on the front page of the *New York Times*, Friday, 7 June 1963.³³ Despite this reported consideration, the revelation necessary to change the policy did not occur before President McKay's death.

Joseph Fielding Smith (1970-1972). Following the death of David O. McKay, Joseph Fielding Smith became the prophet. The national magazine press apparently found no major events, during his relatively short two and a half year tenure, that instigated coverage about him or his views. When President Smith died at the age of 95, *Newsweek* published an article not only about his death, but included information about the next president, Harold B. Lee. This article listed details about Smith's life, including his heritage as the son of the sixth President of the Church, Joseph F. Smith, and grandnephew of Joseph Smith. It was also noted that Joseph Fielding Smith was acquainted, as a boy, with pioneers who crossed the plains. Smith, the article continued, wanted to be known as a "defender of the faith," and that was something the magazine agreed he was.

³² Reed, "Other Side of 'the Y'," 39.

³³ Petersen, "The Letter Killeth," 18. The referenced article in the *New York Times* was real but was found on page seventeen of the newspaper, not the front page. This is the reference to that article: Wallace Turner, "Mormons Consider Ending Bar On Full Membership for Negro," *New York Times* (7 June 1963): 17.

Providing a little understanding concerning the outlook of Joseph Fielding Smith on the topic of policy change, *Newsweek* compared him to Harold B. Lee and concluded that the former was far too old and closed-minded to receive the necessary revelation.³⁴ Smith died at the age of ninety-five in 1972.

Harold B. Lee (1972-1973). At the age of 73, President Harold B. Lee was relatively young when compared to his predecessors. He was expected to live a long time, and *Newsweek* honored President Lee, calling him the "chief architect of modernization within the church for more than 35 years." Further praise credited him with "management and organizational skills," and as competent in his new role.³⁵ Three months after he was called as the prophet, *Time* quoted an associate of President Lee remarking, "Lee has a genius for organization. The Church runs like a great beautiful computer, clicking away. Everything is in its place."³⁶ Crediting him with the development of the welfare program during the depression years, two magazines linked President Lee's name with compassionate service for people in need.³⁷ There is some evidence that these credentials of service and compassion were encouraging in building hope for the necessary revelation. *Newsweek* declared, "For the moment, president Lee is understandably wary of dealing with such [priesthood] questions. Most observers consider him somewhat more progressive than Smith who uttered many prophecies in his time but none concerning liberalization of doctrine."³⁸

³⁴ "Chosen," 49-50.

³⁵ "Chosen," 49.

³⁶ "Brisker Status Quo," 87.

³⁷ "Brisker Status Quo," 87; "Chosen," 49.

³⁸ "Chosen," 50.

Carefully addressing the race issue, President Lee was quoted in *Newsweek*, expressing the need to wait for revelation on the matter.³⁹ *Time* magazine referenced Lee's encouragement for blacks to consider baptism despite the current priesthood situation, stating that they would get more from their membership in the true church than they would otherwise.⁴⁰

Reporting President Lee's death, a *Time* writer referred to him as the "administrative genius of the Church."⁴¹ He died on 26 December 1973 without receiving the revelation, and his successor, Spencer W. Kimball, was viewed as unlikely to change the policy.

Spencer W. Kimball (1973-1985). About three weeks after President Lee's death, *Time* featured an article about the next prophet, Spencer W. Kimball. Concern for President Kimball's health was expressed in the article, but at the same time it viewed him as competent for the position. In reference to the issue of race and the priesthood, the article's author did not regard Kimball as the one to change the policy. Ironically, the last sentence of the article declared, "few expect . . . that Spencer Kimball will receive the necessary revelation." Though not expressed outright, the article inferred that President Kimball was too conservative to allow the essential revelation a chance. Examples cited of this conclusion were his comments on a woman's place being in the home, and a statement he made that the black situation was "the policy of the Lord."⁴² In 1977, *U.S. News & World Report* published an article on the Church and its influence in Utah. In an interview with President Kimball the question was asked, "Will black people ever be

³⁹ "Chosen," 50.

⁴⁰ "Brisker Status Quo," 88.

⁴¹ "Smooth Succession?," *Time* (14 January 1974): 41.

⁴² "Smooth Succession," 41.

admitted to the Mormon priesthood? Why are they now excluded?" He answered that if the Lord was willing it would happen; adding there were many faithful black members, because the Church offered many opportunities. The article portrayed President Kimball as one very aware of the situation, but also unwilling to change the policy.⁴³

Until June 1978, when Spencer W. Kimball received the revelation which extended the priesthood to all worthy males, little else was reported on the possibility of change. There were several articles, however, mentioning the "Mormon" situation and reporting that a revelation was necessary to change policy.⁴⁴

From 1970 to 1978 articles in national periodicals described the possibility of change through revelation from a Church prophet. Several magazines connected a possible change resulting from revelation to the revelation in 1890, which stopped plural marriage.⁴⁵ An example was *Sports Illustrated's* assertion, "Polygamy, once a pillar of Joseph Smith's theological structure, was outlawed as the result of a revelation in 1890."⁴⁶ With such connections came a little hope and a lot of impatience. Hope that a revelation could change the policy was rated more neutral than negative. When the revelation came in 1978, favorable views were expressed in periodicals.

The 1978 Revelation

On 1 June 1978 the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve met together in the Salt Lake Temple to continue a conversation they had for several months, a

⁴³ "How Mormons Cope With 'Deterioration in Morals'," *U.S. News & World Report* (19 December 1977): 61.

⁴⁴ McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 211; "Mormons Unveil a Striking Monument," *U.S. News & World Report* (23 September 1974): 56; Paul, "The Mormons," 78; Petersen, "The Letter Killeth," 18; Walsh, "Challenging the Federal Patron," 163.

⁴⁵ "Mormons and Mark of Cain," 49; Walsh, "Challenging the Federal Patron," 163.

⁴⁶ Reed, "Other Side of 'the Y'," 39.

discussion of extending the priesthood to all worthy males without consideration of race.⁴⁷ At this time, there was not immediate pressure from outside influences to change the policy, since the protests of the 1960s and early 1970s were over, and at least from national magazines, coverage of the topic had lessened. Those articles mentioning the issue did so in passing, simply mentioning the circumstances. President Kimball, with the other Brethren in the temple, desired a "clear answer" from the Lord concerning the priesthood policy.⁴⁸ After asking each man attending to express their "feelings and views as to the matter in hand," a two-hour dialogue ensued whereupon they reported a spirit of unity filled the room. Following this discussion, they gathered in a special prayer with President Kimball acting as voice. They testified that the result was a revelation from the Lord, confirming their feelings that the day had come to extend the priesthood to all worthy males regardless of race.⁴⁹ It was announced through the media seven days later, drawing the attention of international audiences.

Implications of such a change were dramatic; however, only two periodicals, *Time* and *Newsweek*, reported the event immediately. Calling the priesthood ban the "Mormons' most socially embarrassing doctrine," a review of the religion's troubles from its opponents were summarized: the political uprisings of the 1960s, a restatement of the reasons for withholding the priesthood, and the declaration that black members could now attend the temple and have their families "sealed" were the basic points covered in the two articles.⁵⁰ *Newsweek* reported that a black member extended his gratitude for

⁴⁷ The Quorum of the Twelve (Apostles) consists of twelve members who constitute the second highest ranking governing body within the Church. It is also referred to as the Council of Twelve.

⁴⁸ The term Brethren refers to the leaders of the Church in the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve.

⁴⁹ Cowan, *The Latter Day Saint Century*, 227-28.

⁵⁰ "Sealed" in this instance refers to an ordinance in Latter-day Saint temples which "binds" families together so that not even death can separate them.

belonging to a church that now properly offered him salvation. The magazine also recognized the announcement as having substantial implications for LDS missionary work in the black nations of the world.⁵¹ *Time* called it a "historic moment for Mormons."⁵²

Two months later, a more complete article, entitled "Mormonism Enters a New Era," appeared in *Time*. Not as optimistic as the first, it suggested its own reasons for the Church's policy change. Brigham Madsen, a historian at the University of Utah, was quoted as saying that the religion's young people were "mortified" by the policy of withholding the priesthood, and they would not tolerate it anymore. The implication was that the change occurred from outside pressure instead of Godly manifestation. Another pessimistic viewpoint was that it was a good thing that President Kimball received the revelation before he died, since the next two in line to be prophets, Ezra Taft Benson and Mark E. Petersen, were more conservative.⁵³ This was ironic since the same magazine four years earlier had said that President Kimball was too conservative.⁵⁴

Articles Following the 1978 Revelation. After 1978, the topic of race and the priesthood did not surface again in national periodicals until 1980. When it was mentioned again, the national spotlight focused on the Church due to its stand on the Equal Rights Amendment (see chapter 4). Latter-day Saints were experiencing bad press concerning women's rights, and a few articles referred back to the time when, according to magazines, blacks were given the priesthood due to social pressure.⁵⁵ *Harpers*

⁵¹ Kenneth L. Woodward, "Race Revelations," *Newsweek* (19 June 1978): 67.

⁵² "Revelation," *Time* (19 June 1978): 55.

⁵³ "Mormonism Enters New Era," 56.

⁵⁴ "Smooth Succession," 41.

⁵⁵ David Macfarlane, "Equal Rights Meets Its Martyr," *Maclean's* (21 January 1980): 37; James P. Mann, "Mormons: Grappling With Growth Pains," *U.S. News & World Report* (7 April 1980): 42; Lisa Cronin Wohl, "A Feminist Latter-Day Saint," *Ms.* (March 1980): 42.

expressed cynicism by referring more to the days before the revelation and making demeaning remarks, inferring that Church members still believed in slavery prior to 1978. Their article mocked, "In 1978 Kimball did finally get word from on high that blacks can be non-servant citizens of God's church."⁵⁶ A couple of other articles simply mentioned the former policy in passing.⁵⁷

Overall, few magazines covered the priesthood topic as extensively as before the revelation. One possible reason for this difference was lessened public interest in the topic once the controversy was resolved.

Effects of Race and Priesthood on Image

As the 1970s emerged, protests against Brigham Young University's athletics program led to negative press in national magazines for the Church. The remonstrations were not about basketball, but the Church's policy of withholding the priesthood from blacks of African descent. In the 1960s, the success of the Civil Rights Movement led national magazines to question why the Church apparently had policies of inequality.

Attempting to answer the question themselves, national magazines presented their findings as "Mormon" doctrines and beliefs instead of as the *policy* that the priesthood situation was. Explanations from the periodicals were mainly unfavorable due to misunderstanding and the characterization of Church members as "racist."

One part of the overall "race" picture that was more favorable, and provided for hope that the priesthood policy could change concerning blacks, was the chance that the

⁵⁶ Kenneth C. Danforth, "The Cult of Mormonism," *Harpers* (May 1980): 70.

⁵⁷ Bob Ottum, "When the Latter-day Saints Go Marching In," *Sports Illustrated* (8 December 1980): 92; Kenneth L. Woodward, "What Mormons Believe," *Newsweek* (1 September 1980): 71.

Latter-day Saint prophet could some day receive a revelation allowing all races to hold the priesthood. As shown in Figure 3, in Chapter 8, when that revelation was received in 1978, by Spencer W. Kimball, the Church's image improved dramatically relative to the "race" theme. After the revelation, few magazines addressed the topic except to review the policy as part of the history of the Church.

CHAPTER 3

LATTER-DAY SAINT BUSINESS AND WEALTH

Another major topic concerning the Church during the 1970s in national magazines was the temporal success of the Latter-day Saints. America was a land of opportunity and wealth, and the media noticed these qualities exemplified by the Church and its members throughout the 1970s. Business success of individual Latter-day Saints was attributed to "Mormon" ideals and teachings, while admiration, with some pessimism, often accompanied a look at the Church's own financial holdings. For example, *U.S. News and World Report* suggested, "Mormonism has been driven by an unusual mixture of faith in the supernatural and modern commerce."¹ This interest in Latter-day Saints' business success and the Church's financial position is this chapter's focus.

Admiration For Successful Latter-day Saint Business Leaders

The media's admiration for specific Latter-day Saints involved in business, reflected favorably on the overall image of the Church. J. Willard Marriott, N. Eldon Tanner, and Spencer W. Kimball, to name a few, were examples of those found in national magazines. Even lay members of the Church were recognized as business smart in national periodicals. Following a lengthy list of top Latter-day Saint business executives and leaders *Forbes* remarked, "Mormons are plugged in everywhere."²

¹ James P. Mann, "Utah: 'Promised Land' Wrestles With Its Future," *U.S. News & World Report* (11 August 1980): 73.

² "Busy like the Bees," *Forbes* (1 February 1971): 25.

Another article called the "business prowess" of Church members "prodigious," and listed several corporations with "Mormons" in top management, including "Phillips Petroleum, Safeway, Nabisco, Anaconda, Del Monte, [and] Western Electric."³

With a lot of attention in magazines on Latter-day Saint business people, periodical journalists often tried explaining why so many Church members were successful in commerce. One author said nothing about young men on Latter-day Saint missions serving to bring people to Christ, but instead represented Church missionary service as specifically designed to improve a young man's speaking and selling skills so he could come home and advance in business.⁴ Another told that "Mormons" in top management positions credited their success to religious training. This article suggested that part of training youth in the Church was to get up in front of people and learn to express themselves.⁵

J. Willard Marriott (1900-1985). In 1971, *Forbes* published a story on the success of Church member, J. Willard Marriott. The article was titled, "The Marriott Story: Mixing Mormons principles with the best of Sears, P&G and IBM, the Marriott family is running the hottest outfit in the food and hotel business." The article covered from Marriott and his wife opening their first A&W root beer stand in Washington D.C., to their expansion into hotels and catering services. Complimenting the religion Marriott belonged to, the *Forbes* author recognized that the millionaire's success was a result of the "Mormon principles" of efficiency, hard work, and service. To illustrate, the article commented, "The soft drink business was great in the summer but slow in the winter; no

³ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 66.

⁴ "Mormonism Enters New Era," 56.

⁵ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 66-67.

good Mormon can tolerate that kind of waste. For unique winter fare, the Marriotts added tacos and tamales, then began offering medium-priced family food in clean and pleasant surroundings." This prompted the name "Hot Shoppe" for their new restaurants.⁶

Reporting continued in *Forbes* on Marriott's impressive domain, showing a man with not only wealth, but power. In the article he was pictured with the U.S. president, Richard M. Nixon, and was called an "influential Republican;" who had also been close to Presidents Hoover and Eisenhower.⁷ The author speculated that his influence was a result of his wealth. There followed a history of his upbringing in Utah.

Many qualities admired in Marriott were attributed to his pioneer ancestry. A different article, within the larger piece from *Forbes*, called "Busy Like the Bees," reviewed Marriott's familial descent from Scotland and England. Calling them a "hardy breed," the article told of the family's conversion to "Mormonism" in the 1850s, by missionaries sent to England by Brigham Young. Marriott's father, upon joining the Church, took his family to Utah and upon arrival was asked to start a settlement about three miles from Ogden, Utah. The settlement was known as "Marriott," and it was there in the year 1900 that J. Willard Marriott was born, and learned, as the article put it, "adversity the hard way."

That heritage was compared to a bee. Within the religion, the article's author asserted, "bee-like thrift and industry are the best cure for want." Marriott was quoted as giving credit to the Church and his wife for his success. The article described the "Mormon" Church as "the largest, strongest and certainly the richest made-in-America

⁶ "The Marriott Story," *Forbes* (1 February 1971): 20.

⁷ "Marriott Story," 25.

faith," and that Marriott, with his success, was a product of that relationship.⁸ Several other articles attributed Marriott's wealth and success to his upbringing as a Latter-day Saint.⁹

The articles stated that association with the Church, and having a lot of money, brought great responsibility to Marriott, and that he donated millions to "Mormon universities," and the Marriott Library at the University of Utah.¹⁰ It was also noted that in 1974, he and others helped raise 4.8 million dollars to help build the Latter-day Saint Washington D.C. temple.¹¹ A mural depicting the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, in the lobby of that temple, was suggested by Marriott. Here periodicals observed his influence in the Church as well as in business.¹²

A few other articles mentioned J. Willard Marriott's accomplishments. Great ambition and hard work were reportedly the reasons that his biography was "prominently" displayed next to biographies of past and present Church leaders.¹³ Another said that three books always sat in the faithful members' libraries, namely *The Book of Mormon*, the biographies of current Church president, Spencer W. Kimball and J. Willard Marriott. Every room in Marriott's many hotels were reported to have a copy of *The Book of Mormon* and his biography.¹⁴

⁸ "Busy Like Bees," 24.

⁹ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 66; Chris Jones and Gary Benson, "The Mormons: Healthy in Body and Soul," *The Saturday Evening Post* (May/June 1980): 69; "Marriott Story," 20; Howard Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," *The Washingtonian* (March 1981): 142; "Washington Monument," *Newsweek* (9 September 1974): 72.

¹⁰ Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 143.

¹¹ "Behind Temple Walls," 111; "Washington Monument," 72.

¹² "Behind Temple Walls," 111.

¹³ Jeffrey Kaye, "An Invisible Empire: Mormon Money in California," *New West* (8 May 1978): 41.

¹⁴ Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 142.

The coverage of J. Willard Marriott created a favorable image for the Church. Positive, energetic, and fair were attributes the media liked portraying from his life. Marriott's impartiality showed when *The Washingtonian* pointed out that "Mormon" employees were not favored in his business. Neither did the Church dictate to Marriott in matters of business according to the article. He was free to serve alcoholic beverages and other amenities the Church did not approve.¹⁵

Bill Marriott Jr. and Richard Marriott. Two of J. Willard Marriott's sons also gained awareness in national magazines. Said the family patriarch, "my sons, Bill Jr. and Richard have [my wife's] brains and my drive."¹⁶ Press coverage of these sons was not extensive, but did contribute to the media's image of the Church.

Bill Marriott Jr. was described as a genius of business affairs. In 1971 *Forbes* documented that at the age of 32, in 1964, Bill Jr. became president of his father's company and accelerated the pace of progress. He boosted the number of hotels to fourteen, and had seven new buildings "in the works." In the six years following his promotion, annual sales were at \$315 million from the latest fiscal year, and the company had quadrupled in size, passing "both Howard Johnson and Hilton Hotels in revenue." It was exclaimed, "For a family company with some old-fashioned ideas, [Bill] Marriott [Jr.] is remarkably open to modern management ideas."¹⁷

In 1981 *The Washingtonian* told a story from the Senior's biography of Bill Jr. While serving a Latter-day Saint mission in Vermont, the young man had healed a girl with the laying on of hands. Following his mission, it was reported that Bill Jr. himself

¹⁵ Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 142-43.

¹⁶ "Busy Like Bees," 24.

¹⁷ "Marriott Story," 22.

was healed of Hodgkin's disease the same way.¹⁸ Bill Jr. was not only portrayed as a business giant, but a man of faith in his religion.

Richard Marriott received less coverage than his brother. The family business utilized Richard's skills in the "company's architecture and design department."¹⁹ Many years later Richard pursued other business ventures; one being a media corporation that owned nine radio stations. Richard also kept Church and business separate, for according to *The Washingtonian*, even though the Church counseled against such music, Richard's company introduced acid rock into a radio station in Provo, Utah.²⁰

Nathan Eldon Tanner (1898-1982). In the *Forbes* article on J. Willard Marriott, N. Eldon Tanner was called one of the sharpest business leaders in the First Presidency. He was a former "Canadian businessman who has been president of Merrill Petroleums, Ltd., a director of the Toronto Dominion Bank of Canada and president of Trans-Canada Pipe Line." The writer marveled at the Church's great financial stability, and used Tanner's business background to boost the image of a church with business-minded leadership.²¹

Tanner served as a counselor to four Church presidents. His leadership abilities were strong, but surprisingly the national interest he received was his connection to money and financial genius. At times that coverage was an affirmative reflection on the Church, and at other times it was not.

An unfavorable article accused Tanner of exerting "his influence in the 1960s when he led an effort to reorganize the church hierarchy along corporate lines."

¹⁸ Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 142.

¹⁹ "Marriott Story," 21.

²⁰ Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 143.

²¹ "Busy Like Bees," 24.

According to the writer, Tanner used financial advisors, J. Willard Marriott and a former United States Secretary of Treasury, David Kennedy. What followed was a bias that since Tanner had come to Salt Lake City, he had set up a second level of leadership, under the First Presidency, ordered the same way as "corporate and academic worlds."²²

Tanner was called in *New West* and *Harpers*, the Church's "financial wizard," and the "Mormon's economic sorcerer" respectively.²³ These articles were negative toward the Church, and represented it as oppressive and money hungry. Although the articles described Tanner as "highly esteemed and revered" among Church members, he was also accused of being unwilling to disclose the Church's holdings. When asked about the Church's investing, he was only willing to say that careful risk was the Church's practice.²⁴

Harpers questioned Tanner's reasons for not publicly disclosing Church finances. The implication was if the Church would not go public with the information it was being dishonest with its members' money. When the article's author asked the executive vice-president of the *Deseret News*, a Salt Lake City newspaper, how many Church leaders besides Tanner knew everything about the Church's wealth, the vice-president responded they could probably be counted on the fingers of one hand. Church members were shown to be so trusting of Tanner and other Church leaders that they did not question if the money was treated honestly.²⁵ Another Church leader that received attention concerning business was Harold B. Lee. His coverage in national magazines was more favorable than Tanner.

²² Bob Gottlieb and Peter Wiley, "Mormonism Inc.," *The Nation* (16-23 August 1980): 151.

²³ Kaye, "Invisible Empire," 41, and Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 68, respectively.

²⁴ Kaye, "Invisible Empire," 41.

²⁵ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 68.

Harold B. Lee (1899-1973). In 1971, when Lee was first counselor to Joseph Fielding Smith in the First Presidency, he too was looked upon as one of the "sharpest businessmen in the U.S." He was described this way because he was the chairman or vice-chairman of the boards of many church-owned enterprises.²⁶ Referring to Lee's positions, the press emphasized that the Church owned a substantial number of business entities.

Even after Lee became the prophet in 1972, the press continued to describe him primarily as a businessman. *Newsweek*, for example, viewed him as a "mere lad" at the age of 73, because he was so much younger than recent Church presidents, and looked and acted "more like a businessman than a prophet." Furthermore, "his sharply honed management and organizational skills [had] enabled the Church to streamline and computerize many of its diverse services and enterprises."²⁷ He was described in this and another magazine as the efficiency expert behind the Church's welfare program "that today feeds and clothes nearly 100,000 needy Mormons."²⁸

With such admiration for Lee, the Church enjoyed an optimistic image. Under Lee's leadership, *Time* announced the Church was open to new, progressive changes. Lee's success in business was credited with moving the Church from "provincialism to universalism."²⁹ Another Church leader, Spencer W. Kimball, gained a little awareness of his business acumen.

Spencer W. Kimball (1895-1985). When Kimball became the Church's prophet in 1973, an article was written in *Time* to introduce him. A review of his life included some

²⁶ "Busy Like Bees," 24.

²⁷ "Chosen," 49.

²⁸ "Chosen," 49. See also "Brisker Status Quo," 87-88.

²⁹ "Brisker Status Quo," 87.

paragraphs on his background in business. His paternal grandfather, Heber C. Kimball, was recognized as a member of the original twelve Apostles under Joseph Smith, and his maternal grandfather, Edwin D. Woolley, was distinguished in his role as business manager of the Church's second prophet, Brigham Young. That heritage purportedly contributed to Spencer W. Kimball's personal success as an Arizona businessman in insurance and real estate.³⁰

Harpers alleged that Kimball's success in his insurance and real estate company qualified him to join the Apostleship. The author also insisted, "Practically every Mormon who makes it to the crest of his church's hierarchy does so by first achieving some extraordinary success in the business world."³¹

George Romney (1907-1995). A more positive article, named the governor of Michigan in the 1960s, George Romney, as a successful businessman. The article's writer communicated that before Romney became governor, he was the chief executive for American Motors Corporation, and his skills in business were touted as "heroic" during World War II. He encouraged cooperation within the United States auto industry in response to production needs during that time. The article insisted that the reason for Romney's professional achievements was the "moral foundation" he gained as a "Mormon boy." A brief review of his youth in scouting, and his two-year LDS mission in Europe, were credited for his stability and success.³²

Jon M. Huntsman (1937-). A final person mentioned briefly in 1981, as a "Mormon" successful in business, was Jon M. Huntsman. Coverage of Huntsman was

³⁰ "Smooth Succession," 41.

³¹ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 66-67.

³² Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 118.

limited to one magazine, *The Washingtonian*. Praising him as a highly successful businessman from Utah, the article also declared Huntsman's possible candidacy for governor of Utah. The magazine informed its readership that at the height of "secular power" his Church called him to lead the Washington D.C. Latter-day Saint mission; he accepted. In the context of the article, Huntsman was used to show the commitment which the Church required of its people. The article was not trying to be negative. Their point was neutral, indicating the difficulty most people would have joining the Church.³³

The Financial Holdings of the Church

Another angle national magazines took, was to look at the financial holdings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This coverage was often negative because of the media's perceived financial control in Utah and the Church. One investigative reporter announced a belief that the Church wielded more economic power, more effectively, than the pope in Rome, or the State of Israel.³⁴ Another said, "Mormon leaders have direct control of a business empire more extensive than that controlled from the headquarters of any other U.S. church."³⁵

Because the reported wealth of the Latter-day Saints was so high, the public was apparently interested in learning exactly what assets the Church held. Periodicals contended that Church leaders kept numbers and information "secret," and were not to be had by the public. According to *New West* even Church members were not allowed financial information.³⁶ Some articles tried to state what authors believed the numbers

³³ Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 150-51.

³⁴ Kaye, "Invisible Empire," 36.

³⁵ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 68.

³⁶ Kaye, "Invisible Empire," 37.

were.³⁷ *Forbes* in 1971, suggested the Church was worth from \$500 million to \$1 billion in real estate and other investments, with about \$1 million a day, or \$400 million a year adding to the Church's wealth.³⁸ Ten years later, in 1981, *The Washingtonian* estimated annual income of Church entities something in excess of \$2 billion.³⁹ Other articles estimated that the Church would bring in between \$3 and \$3.5 million a day, or about \$1 billion a year through donations and investments.⁴⁰

Other evidence of wealth included buildings and properties which belonged to the Church.⁴¹ Following is a typical list from *Harpers* of some of the known properties: "The church owns or controls three insurance companies, thirteen radio and television stations (including New York City's WRFM, one of the city's most listened-to FM stations), newspapers (including a hunk of the *Los Angeles Times*), clothing mills, department stores, a village in Hawaii, book-publishing companies, U&I, Inc. (formerly Utah-Idaho Sugar Company), bookstores, a Salt Lake City shopping mall, three hotels, and a 285,000 acre ranch in Florida. The Church also owns dozens of big modern office buildings in down town Salt Lake City, including those housing Union Pacific, Utah Power and Light, Kennecott Copper, J.C. Penney, Beneficial Life, and Medical Arts."⁴² This and other lists showed that the Church, with its holdings, was as big as some of the largest corporations in the world.⁴³

³⁷ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 67; Mann, "Utah Wrestles With Its Future," 73; Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 144-45.

³⁸ "Busy Like Bees," 25.

³⁹ Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 145.

⁴⁰ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 67; Mann, "Utah Wrestles With Its Future," 73.

⁴¹ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 67; Gottlieb and Wiley, "Mormonism Inc.," 150; Mann, "Grappling With Growing Pains," 42; Mann, "Utah Wrestles With Its Future," 73; McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 210; Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 145; "Mormonism Enters New Era," 56.

⁴² Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 67.

⁴³ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 67; Gottlieb and Wiley, "Mormonism Inc.," 150.

Another element described in an article was how the Church's "secret" financial information was obtained. *Harpers* claimed that Utah newspapers were afraid to cover the topic of Church wealth, therefore, they got their information from people who had gone through "hard-to-get records," and then had interviewed "fearful persons." The charge was that if Church leaders found out who leaked the information, there would be trouble. The same article depicted Latter-day Saints as naïve concerning where their donations went. In the article a Church member was asked if he was worried about where his money went since leaders did not disclose information. The member answered that his leaders were men of God, and he trusted them. Thus the press represented some Church members as trusting their leaders, and other members being afraid.⁴⁴

New West briefly reviewed the business pasts of Kimball and Tanner, along with the legal expertise of Marion G. Romney, a counselor in the First Presidency. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was referred to as a "twelve-man board of directors." Former presidents of the Church, Harold B. Lee and Joseph Fielding Smith, were accused of dying wealthy men because of member's contributions.⁴⁵ Another article described Church leadership in the same way. They called the Council of Twelve "secretive," and the prophet the head of a corporate empire.⁴⁶ The accusation was that the Church was not really led by volunteer service, rather that leaders were getting rich from their roles.

Along with reporting on the Church's assets and holdings, three other topics arose: tithing as a major source of income, tax exemptions due to the Church's non-profit status, and the fact that the Church had no debt.

⁴⁴ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 67-68.

⁴⁵ Kaye, "Invisible Empire," 39.

⁴⁶ Mann, "Utah Wrestles With Its Future," 73.

Tithing. Quoting Richard L. Evans, one of the Church's Twelve Apostles, *Forbes* showed that despite the Church's great business earnings, the "largest amount of income" still came from members' tithing. Church programs, like the welfare system, missionary service, and education at places like BYU, were the reported recipients. Further, because the Church was the beneficiary of tithing funds, it was pointed out that as individual members prospered so did the religion.⁴⁷

Nearly every article discussing the topic of the Church's wealth mentioned tithing as the primary source.⁴⁸ A typical explanation of the practice was simple: "breadwinners tithe at least 10 percent of their pretax income."⁴⁹ The majority of discussions were neutral, simply explaining the practice. *Harpers*, however, asserted that tithing would go into an "apostolic kitty," wherein the Church's General Authorities would hoard the money in order to get rich.⁵⁰ Another article reported tithing was required for a temple recommend, and therefore Church leaders knew whether or not members paid.⁵¹ This implied that leaders forced members to comply with tithing.⁵²

Tax Exemptions. A more unfavorable approach to the Church's wealth addressed the topic of tax exemptions. Early in the 1970s *Forbes* said that the Church paid taxes on

⁴⁷ "Busy Like Bees," 25.

⁴⁸ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 67; Gottlieb and Wiley, "Mormonism Inc.," 150; Mann, "Grappling With Growing Pains," 42; McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 210; Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 144; "Mormonism Enters New Era," 56; "Mormons Unveil Striking Monument," 56.

⁴⁹ "Mormons Unveil Striking Monument," 56.

⁵⁰ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 67. The term General Authority refers to a member of the top governing bodies of the Church.

⁵¹ The term "temple recommend" refers to a card signifying a Church member's worthiness to enter a Latter-day Saint temple. A member's ecclesiastical leader interviews and signs each recommend after determining worthiness.

⁵² Kaye, "Invisible Empire," 39.

everything but their "ecclesiastical affairs."⁵³ Two other magazines covered the topic in 1978 and 1980, and neither portrayed the Church in a favorable light.

In an article on the Church's substantial wealth in California, *New West* alleged that the Church received unjustified tax exemptions, because of all the land and buildings owned by the Church. Their feelings were that the Church was more of a corporation than a religion, and should therefore pay taxes. An example of a large Church strawberry farm illustrated their point. According to the article the Church did not just use the strawberries for the welfare program, but sold the majority of the fruit on the open markets. Apparently the article's author wanted his readers to believe that Church leaders were deceptive.⁵⁴

An article in 1980 focused more on Salt Lake City and attacked the Church owned Deseret Gym and Church Office Building. The author claimed the Church had a "reputation" for fighting tax exemptions. The Deseret Gym was called a "big health club," competing with other businesses. The article stated that the Church "refuses to pay taxes," and should be taxed. It was pointed out the gym was run by volunteers and was used in the Church's welfare program, but the article writer still believed the tax-exemption was unjustified. The condemnation of the Church Office Building focused on its \$33 million cost, and reasoned that it was not used as a place for worship nor for charitable purposes, and therefore should not be tax exempt.⁵⁵

Debt Free. Freedom from debt was a final element of periodical attention on Church wealth. The Church was able to build many large structures for the use of its

⁵³ "Busy Like Bees," 25.

⁵⁴ Kaye, "Invisible Empire," 37, 39.

⁵⁵ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 67. The Church Office Building is the administrative headquarters of the Church and is located in downtown Salt Lake City.

people without going into debt. Some article writers marveled that the religion could accomplish this. *Time* declared the Church had built a new office building for \$30 million dollars. Using the building as a sign of prosperity, they confirmed, "By Mormon policy, all buildings are paid for as they are built."⁵⁶ When the Washington D.C. Temple was built in 1974, another report publicized that the Church was completing almost two buildings a day, and noted that the fourteen million dollar temple was paid for without a mortgage.⁵⁷ The Church's practice of avoiding debt was noticed in other articles as well.⁵⁸

Effects of Wealth and Business on Image

The effects of wealth and business on the Church's image showed both favorable and unfavorable trends. J. Willard Marriott and other well known persons associated with wealth and smart business practices contributed positively to the Church. Other optimistic portrayals came from admiration for the impressive wealth and assets owned by the Church, as well as the fact that the Church did not go into debt to pay for and finance their operations. Figure 4 in Chapter 8 portrays the effects of business on the Church's image.

Dissenting trends were attributed to the media's perception of Church leadership getting rich at members' expense. Also that leaders refused to pay taxes on entities

⁵⁶ "Brisker Status Quo," 88.

⁵⁷ "Mormons Unveil Striking Monument," 56.

⁵⁸ Kaye, "Invisible Empire," 41; McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 208.

reportedly drawing profits. This supposed economic control was mostly portrayed unfavorably and its image trend is visually shown in Figure 5 in the "hierarchy" theme.

CHAPTER 4

THE CHURCH AND POLITICS

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its members were also portrayed in the media regarding political control of Utah and its citizens. As *U.S. News & World Report* remarked, "The religion is so pervasive that growing ranks of non-Mormon newcomers often find that the Church owns the offices they work in, pays their news reporters, sponsors their sons' Boy Scout troops and inspires their politicians."¹ The idea that politics played a part in the Church seemed worthy of detail in national magazines; rarely did the Church enjoy a favorable image in such circumstances.

One reason the press saw the Church as exerting great political power was because of the loyalty of its members. *The Nation* reported "an eerie scene" when they described a meeting where members were to "vote for their leaders" and "10,000 hands shot up in unison without a dissenting vote."² This practice was criticized by the media because the Church took several political stands on public policy during the 1970s, and it appeared that whatever the leadership did, the membership followed. Three areas in which national periodicals showed interest were the issues of church and state, the role of Ezra Taft Benson, and positions taken by the Church when it disagreed with local or national politics.

¹ "Where a Church Shapes the Life of a State," *U.S. News & World Report* (19 December 1977): 59. See also Mann, "Utah Wrestles With Its Future," 73; Waters, "Urban Shadows," 102.

² Gottlieb and Wiley, "Mormonism Inc.," 152.

Church and State

Political Domination. The Latter-day Saint pioneers entered the Salt Lake Valley in 1847 under the direction and leadership of Brigham Young. The magazine *American Heritage* described that upon settling, Young established a theocracy, or in other words, a place where religion would affect social, political and economic lives. According to the magazine, this control was necessary because many of his followers were too poor, uneducated, and inexperienced, to undertake the projects necessary to build up their new territory. With great success accompanying his tenure, Young was called "one of the outstanding organizers of the nineteenth century." Further praise declared that if his life had worked out differently, he "might have become a captain of industry—an Andrew Carnegie or John D. Rockefeller or perhaps a railroad builder." Despite such accolades, the article emphasized a "Mormon" domination of life in Salt Lake City and Utah, even up to that time period.³

Similar ideas in *Newsweek* stressed Salt Lake City was "Mormon dominated," and "one of the U.S.'s most fascinating . . . metropolises, the nation's only theocracy." While praising Salt Lake citizens for their city's order, the author critically concluded that "Mormonism" was so invasive in the area, "the world [was] an intrusion." Since the time of Young, this article writer saw Salt Lake City as an American place "where a single religious body sets the political, economic, cultural and moral tone."⁴ A writer in *The Nation* felt Utah had a "state within [a] state" because 72% of its citizens, 80% of the legislature, and all the Congressional delegates were Latter-day Saints.⁵

³ Paul, "The Mormons," 79.

⁴ Waters, "Urban Shadows," 102.

⁵ Gottlieb and Wiley, "Mormonism Inc.," 150.

To show the exercise of "tight hierarchical superstructure" in the Church, *The Nation* wrote about the efficiency with which the Church operated. One example of this from the magazine identified a Florida Church member boasting he could make "16 calls and by the end of the day, 2,700 people [would] know something." To further illustrate this communication in Utah, former Utah governor, J. Bracken Lee, detailed the following story of a flood: "While the Red Cross was figuring out how to move people, the church had them moved. They knew everyone who had a truck. Within thirty minutes every Mormon in the Church had the word." This favorable description showed the Church's organization and control.⁶

To illustrate the Church's political involvement in state and national government, *The Nation* also told of a "Special Affairs Committee" the Church had organized. This committee was formed from leading General Authorities, some of whom were Gordon B. Hinckley, James E. Faust, and Neal A. Maxwell. Dealing with local, national, and international issues impacting "church interests," the committee reportedly protected its non-profit status by only taking positions on situations deemed "moral." The magazine listed some examples including "the E.R.A., abortion, and anti-union right-to-work campaigns."⁷

Further criticism of the Church's special affairs committee focused on their power. The article's writer used Salt Lake Mayor Ted Wilson to show how "typical" Utah politicians used the committee. Wilson would meet with the board about a "park bond, . . . interim budget[s] . . . and . . . fundraiser[s]," and then proclaim the Church did not involve itself with politics. Other politicians disclosed to *The Nation* that they would

⁶ Gottlieb and Wiley, "Mormonism Inc.," 152.

⁷ Gottlieb and Wiley, "Mormonism Inc.," 151.

clear their candidacies with the special affairs committee to avoid opposition from Church leadership. According to the article, Church opposition was "the kiss of death in Utah politics." Without mentioning the committee specifically, the article also criticized leaders for taking stands against organizations like Planned Parenthood, day care institutions, and "school breakfast programs." All this because they were considered "bad mother" programs.⁸ While other magazines touched on similar concerns, coverage in *The Nation* was the most extensive and typical of pessimistic sentiment filling national magazines.⁹

The Nation also noted the religion's political influences outside of Utah, calling Mesa, Arizona, a "Mormon town" for 100 years, with Latter-day Saints involved in state politics, and the Church itself being the third largest stock holder in Arizona's major utility service. Las Vegas, Nevada, was also called an "old Mormon town," and that Nevada had "influential Mormons" in the legislature, with the position of Senate majority leader filled by a Church member. Other Latter-day Saints were identified as being "heavily involved in the gambling industry as investors, executives, and state gambling control officers." California was recognized as the second most "Mormon" populated state, with 400,000 members, and influence growing in key areas of "San Jose, Sacramento and Orange County."¹⁰

Oppression. While Utah, Salt Lake City, and Church members everywhere were portrayed under theocratic control, there were also attempts to describe the oppressive

⁸ Gottlieb and Wiley, "Mormonism Inc.," 151-52.

⁹ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 67; Mann, "Grappling With Growing Pains," 42; Mann, "Utah Wrestles With Its Future," 73; Waters, "Urban Shadows," 102; Woodward, "What Mormons Believe," 71; Kenneth L. Woodward, "Thus Saith Ezra Benson," *Newsweek* (19 October 1981): 109.

¹⁰ Gottlieb and Wiley, "Mormonism Inc.," 150.

nature of Church leadership. *U.S. News* claimed that "most church influence is exerted behind the scenes . . . through devoted members who hold virtually all the top political posts and do most of the private hiring." The magazine used a television documentary on the emotional strains of "Mormonism" on women to illustrate this point. According to the article, when the editors viewed the recording, the broadcast was blocked until more footage of the Church's view was added.¹¹ An example of a Church member in a significant political position influencing the outcome of proposed legislation came from *Newsweek*. According to the article's writer, business leaders in Salt Lake City, not of the "Mormon" faith, desired a Federal "urban renewal" program the Church was opposed to. According to the magazine, the bill did not pass the State Legislature because a "Mormon" legislative member hired a young African American to go door to door asking people to support the bill.¹² The indictment was that the Federal program was indirectly defeated by Church leaders because this member with an important position supported those leaders.

A similar example of Church oppression in *U.S. News* claimed that religious rules in Utah were imposed on everyone regardless of their religious or moral affiliation. The author observed, "Leaders of the State's biggest industry, tourism, sometimes complain that trade is restrained by Church policies against alcoholic beverages, tobacco and stimulating drinks such as coffee and tea." The industry leaders referred in part to the requirements in bars to post signs of the health risks of alcohol, and only allow mixed drinks if patrons first bought the alcohol at state run stores, and brought it with them.¹³

¹¹ Mann, "Utah Wrestles With Its Future," 73.

¹² Waters, "Urban Shadows," 106.

¹³ "Where Church Shapes Life of State," 60.

The author in *Harpers* also criticized the Church's stand on alcohol pointing out that at the Hotel Utah he could not get a beer with his steak, but was offered apple juice. He then went to the Salt Lake Hilton and found a cocktail bar. Observing that it was a wonder such a place could exist in Salt Lake City, he quipped, "of all the cities of the Western world, none is so firmly in the moral, economic, and political grip of a prudish cult."¹⁴

Harpers further reported the excommunication of a congressman for soliciting a prostitute who was an undercover police officer. The article's author was incensed that the man was removed from Church records before a civil court declared his guilt. It was shown that Allan Howe's campaign workers "abandoned" him when they found out he was disciplined. Overall magazine sentiment on the suppression of Church leaders was summed up with these words, "Every non-Mormon in Utah feels the oppression of the Mormon church. It is run virtually as a dictatorship."¹⁵

Some evidence from *Time*, showing that perhaps the Church did not control Salt Lake City, were figures of money spent on the welfare program in 1971. The magazine revealed that 17.7 million dollars were spent on welfare, 8 million coming from fast offerings. These were numbers the Church did not normally make public, but according to the magazine, a conflict between the Church and Salt Lake County government forced their disclosure. The County wanted to put several welfare properties on the tax rolls—farms, canneries, and other Latter-day Saint industries. To avoid this action the Church

¹⁴ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 67.

¹⁵ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 71. The name of the Congressman, Allan Howe, was not given in the preceding reference, but in the following citation which also told of the occurrence: Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 151.

released their welfare operation numbers.¹⁶ This example possibly contributed favorably toward the Church's image.

The ideas of a Salt Lake City theocracy, and Church leadership oppression, were only part of the Church's political picture painted in the media. Another part of that coverage focused on Ezra Taft Benson, who in 1985 became the thirteenth Church president; from 1953 to 1961 he had served as United States Secretary of Agriculture in Dwight D. Eisenhower's Presidential Cabinet.

Ezra Taft Benson: Former United States Secretary of Agriculture

In 1971 *Forbes* magazine praised Ezra Taft Benson as a "distinguished" leader in the Church.¹⁷ In 1973 Benson began consistently drawing more attention in magazines because he became president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and that meant he was next in line to be the prophet and president of the Church.

Political Conservative. Most of Benson's coverage during the 1970s was unfavorable. Several magazines mentioning Benson's political past in the Eisenhower Cabinet also scrutinized the leader as "an outspoken political conservative."¹⁸ One such stance came from an incident at the funeral of former Church President David O. McKay. The article accused Benson of using "political overtones" during a prayer "that embarrassed the conservative Mormon hierarchy."¹⁹ On another occasion *Newsweek*

¹⁶ "Brisker Status Quo," 86, 88.

¹⁷ "Busy Like Bees," 24.

¹⁸ Woodward, "What Mormons Believe," 71. See also Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 70; Gottlieb and Wiley, "Mormonism Inc.," 152; Mann, "Utah Wrestles With Its Future," 73; Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 146; "A Mormon Connection?," *Ms.* (July 1977): 80; "Smooth Succession," 41; Woodward, "Thus Saith Benson," 109.

¹⁹ "Smooth Succession," 41.

declared that Benson told faithful "Mormons" that if they followed the gospel, they could not be "liberal Democrat[s]." ²⁰

Time also called Benson an extremist, and intimated that he made "right-wing" speeches at gatherings of the John Birch Society—a conservative political body committed to preserving freedom. ²¹ *Ms.* magazine linked the Birch Society with starting opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment and opposing civil rights legislation because it was a pattern of Communism to take over America. Within the *Ms.* article the writer mentioned the Church denied affiliation with the Birch Society, but the author was still suspicious since Benson was actively involved in meeting with the society. ²²

In addition to Benson's support of the Birch Society, magazines also associated him with the Freeman Institute—another "right-wing" political organization. The institute's founder, W. Cleon Skousen, a Church member and former FBI agent, established his organization on 4 July 1971 to preserve the United States Constitution through battling liberal agendas and legislation. Though Skousen's group had no association with the "Mormon" Church, *The Nation* noted that he justified beginning his institution because David O. McKay asserted the Constitution would one day hang by a thread. ²³

The Nation also claimed that the John Birch Society was the "ecclesiastical guiding light" of the Freeman Institute, and its successor. The article's writer further

²⁰ Woodward, "Thus Saith Benson," 109.

²¹ "Smooth Succession," 41. To learn more about the John Birch Society, see their official website at <http://www.jbs.org>. Other magazine sources that referred to Benson and the John Birch Society were: Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 70; John Harrington, "The Freeman Institute," *The Nation* (16-23 August 1980): 152; "Mormon Connection," 80; Woodward, "Thus Saith Benson," 109.

²² "Mormon Connection," 80. See also Woodward, "Thus Saith Benson," 109.

²³ This statement about the Constitution was actually made by the Prophet Joseph Smith. To read the quote see: D. Michael Stewart, "I Have a Question," *Ensign* (June 1976): 60.

represented the Freeman Institute as extremely conservative, with the capability of influencing outcomes of elections and legislation on all levels of government. Benson was seen as the group's "Godfather," and fear was expressed that if he became the prophet he would give official Church approval to Skousen and the institute. Benson was identified as the real strength behind the group, for if he were not involved the magazine suggested there would even be conservative opposition.

Still, *The Nation* conceded that the Church officially denied any affiliation with the group, and directed all its local bishops, stake presidents, and branch presidents in the United States, that Freeman Institute meetings were not to be held in Church owned buildings, nor were Institute literature and announcements to be delivered in any Latter-day Saint congregations.²⁴

Prophetic Successor. As mentioned earlier, the fear of Benson's political opinions often created concern over his position in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He was next in line, and current Prophet Spencer W. Kimball had a bad heart and wrestled with throat cancer. Because of Kimball's poor health, *Time* declared that liberal Church members wanted a change in the pattern of succession to prevent Benson from rising to the head.²⁵ *Newsweek* declared, "There is a chance that the Council of Apostles might break with tradition and choose someone else to lead them."²⁶ *U.S. News* even stated that

²⁴ Harrington, "Freemen Institute," 153. See also Gottlieb and Wiley, "Mormonism Inc.," 152. "A bishop is the ecclesiastical leader of a Latter-day Saint congregation or ward, and has comprehensive pastoral and administrative responsibility at that level." Source: Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1:117. "A branch is generally the smallest organized congregation of the Church (normally fewer than two hundred members)." The branch president is this unit's presiding leader, with responsibilities similar to a bishop. Source: Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1:19.

²⁵ "Smooth Succession," 41.

²⁶ Woodward, "Thus Saith Benson," 109. This did not happen, Ezra Taft Benson became the thirteenth president of the Church in 1985, following Spencer W. Kimball.

if he did become the prophet, Church leadership would become a "dictatorship."²⁷ The prevailing feeling was that "[Benson's] politics [would] be institutionalized in the corporate church." Some members, it was announced, simply prayed for the Lord to take Benson before he took Kimball.²⁸

To further support the assertions that Ezra Taft Benson was seeking more power than some thought he should have, several magazines referred to a talk called "Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet," that he gave at BYU in February of 1980.²⁹ *Newsweek* mockingly interjected, "salvation depended upon accepting [Benson's] personal 'fourteen fundamentals in following the Prophets.'" Some examples given in the magazine of those "fundamentals" included the prophet's right to speak on any subject at any time, with or without credentials or training, and his ability to give a revelation to the Church without first prefacing it with "thus saith the Lord." "Mormon theologians" were reportedly upset by the talk, and the article's writer even suggested that the prophet, Spencer W. Kimball, gave a "stern reprimand" to Benson for his words.³⁰

The other articles included similar criticisms about Benson's speech, adding that the prophet was not limited to religious matters, but could speak on civic or temporal

²⁷ Mann, "Utah Wrestles With Its Future," 73. See also Gottlieb and Wiley, "Mormonism Inc.," 152.

²⁸ Gottlieb and Wiley, "Mormonism Inc.," 152.

²⁹ Gottlieb and Wiley, "Mormonism Inc.," 152; Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 146; Woodward, "What Mormons Believe," 71; Woodward, "Thus Saith Benson," 109.

³⁰ Woodward, "Thus Saith Benson," 109. The author that said President Benson was "reprimanded" by President Kimball, made the same claim one year earlier in the following cited article: Woodward, "What Mormons Believe," 71. There is no evidence, however, that this "reprimand" actually happened. On the contrary, Sheri L. Dew, President Benson's biographer, wrote that the talk was well accepted by Church members, and that Elder Boyd K. Packer, another member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, praised President Benson after his talk with these words: "How I admire, respect and love you. How could anyone hesitate to follow a leader, an example such as you? What a privilege!" Source: Sheri L. Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson—A Biography*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1987), 469.

issues as well.³¹ This stance was demonstrated in the Church's opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment.³² Benson had advised that righteous people wanted good men to lead them in government, and that those that would take prophets out of politics would remove God from government.³³ This idea, *Newsweek* said, frightened "liberal Mormons" and caused many to believe that if Benson ascended to the Presidency he would declare his talk "revealed truth."³⁴

Newsweek best illustrated the media's concern over Benson becoming the prophet. The article commented that a Latter-day Saint's belief in a "Prophet" required an acceptance of all his words as if they came from God himself. Members were encouraged to prayerfully confirm the messages, but Hugh Nibley, from BYU, maintained that if after prayer a member did not agree with the prophet, they could do that, but they needed to "keep [the] decision to [themselves]." The article's writer used this example to show the power and influence Benson would have if he became the prophet.³⁵

One article, in *The Washingtonian*, depicted Benson favorably. Ralph Hardy, a faithful Latter-day Saint, was quoted insisting that "Ezra Taft Benson is a man of strong views, but that's characteristic of Church members in general. I'm not worried about him, because I'm a true believer. I believe absolutely that the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a prophet. That doesn't mean he's infallible; but when any man becomes president of the Church, the Lord will guide and direct him. You might say

³¹ Gottlieb and Wiley, "Mormonism Inc.," 152; Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 146; Woodward, "What Mormons Believe," 71.

³² Woodward, "What Mormons Believe," 71.

³³ Gottlieb and Wiley, "Mormonism Inc.," 152.

³⁴ Woodward, "What Mormons Believe," 71.

³⁵ Woodward, "What Mormons Believe," 71.

I have a childlike faith in that principle." This magazine suggested that all faithful Church members believed this way.³⁶

Overall, the media views of President Benson were harmful toward the Church. His conservative political views were not appreciated in national magazines, and the anticipation of whether or not he became the prophet stirred a lot of journalism. The next section shifts to a discussion of political issues the Church took a stand on from 1970-1981.

Political Stands Taken By The Church

The media perceived the Church as politically controlling on several issues in the 1970s. These events included the passage of Title IX and its implications at BYU, the Equal Rights Amendment or the ERA, the Federal Government's proposal that an MX missile site be located in the Utah and Nevada deserts, and a proposed power project in Southern Utah.

Title IX. On 1 July 1972 a piece of federal legislation took effect that was supposed to end gender discrimination in education. Stated in the preamble to the educational amendment Title IX, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational programs or activity receiving federal financial assistance."³⁷ The law impacted nearly every educational establishment in the United States.

³⁶ Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 147.

³⁷ "Title IX: A Sea Change in Gender Equity in Education," *Official U.S. Department of Education Website*; <http://www.ed.gov/pub/TitleIX/part3.html>.

Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, however, would not be subject to Title IX regulations because it accepted virtually no federal funding. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints covered the university's expenses and resource needs, and therefore wrote its own policies. The school's stance appeared in *Science* magazine, where concern was expressed regarding the Church.

Science was the only magazine discussing the Title IX issue. It wanted to know why BYU would not comply with Title IX for federal funding. The writer concluded that the reason for rejecting federal funds routed directly to the Church's General Authorities, since they controlled BYU policy. The article's writer made clear that the Church wanted to require moral values, and enforce high standards on the student body. Dallin H. Oaks, then president of BYU, was quoted in the article intimating that "if we can't preach and promote values, we become just another state institution, and the tax payers might as well support us."³⁸ Contending that BYU could not maintain its religious stance, and become a "full-fledged" University, the article's author believed the Church's view of morality clashed with the law. For the sake of equality, the author felt the Church should stop demanding standards and comply with federal laws.³⁹

A follow-up article from the same periodical contained these words: "The church has been suspicious of federal aid to education at any level on the grounds that strings would inevitably be attached." Again *Science* tried to find reasons why the Church refused to comply. The magazine concluded that the less money BYU accepted, the less chance for federal intrusion in the university's personal affairs.⁴⁰

³⁸ Walsh, "Challenging the Federal Patron," 160.

³⁹ Walsh, "Challenging the Federal Patron," 163.

⁴⁰ John Walsh, "Brigham Young University: An Alternative R & D Style," *Science* (January 1976): 365.

Though both articles took a position against BYU's stand, there was one beneficial observation made in the second article. Noting that many other universities "vigorously [sought] federal funding," it was pointed out that they were also centers of political criticism on government policy, "particularly during the Vietnam war." In contrast, BYU, who took no federal money, was "almost entirely uninvolved in the protests of the 1960's and early 1970's. BYU, in fact, might be described as a hotbed of respect for government authority."⁴¹

Title IX was not the only legal issue attracting attention to the Latter-day Saints. From 1977 to 1981 the Church endured harsher criticism of its opposition to the proposed Equal Rights Amendment.

The Equal Rights Amendment. A Constitutional amendment demanding equality for women, was approved by the Senate in 1972 to seek state ratification within seven years. Feminist organizations felt women were treated unequally under the law and wanted to change legislation that did not reflect gender neutrality. Thirty-eight states were needed for official ratification and inclusion in the United States Constitution.⁴² The Church's opposition on the issue confused some people because the Church honors women and womanhood. Though well intentioned, the Church disagreed with the legislation because of the consequences it would have on society and the family.

Attempting to explain the Church's opposition, several ideas were posed in national articles. In *Maclean's* magazine, the Latter-day Saint Canadian director of public communications clarified, "The very foundation of our society is couched in a

⁴¹ Walsh, "Alternative R & D Style," 367.

⁴² "Chronology of the Equal Rights Amendment, 1923-1996," *National Organization for Women Official Website*; <http://www.now.org/issues/economic/cea/history.html>.

mother's arms. ERA disrupts that fundamental institution."⁴³ Another suggestion from the same magazine said Latter-day Saint women were organizing door-to-door campaigns in unratified states "warning house wives that ERA will mean unisex wash rooms, the rise of homosexuality and the eventual destruction of the family." This issue of familial disruption was difficult for the Church to leave alone, and the article even mentioned the family was the "rock" upon which the Church built its faith.⁴⁴ *The Washingtonian* reiterated this stance telling of Church leadership concerns that the ERA would take the mother from home and destroy family structure.⁴⁵

For these family reasons, *Maclean's* pointed out that the Church felt taking a stand on this issue was not so much political or legal as it was moral, and well within its jurisdiction as a religious body in the United States to be concerned.⁴⁶ *Time* magazine gave evidence of the religion's stance, revealing the Church "favors equal pay for equal work," but "strongly opposes the ERA, fearing a threat to morality and family life."⁴⁷

Magazines also reverted to "Mormon" beliefs, or doctrines, to explain the Church's opposition. *Harpers* stated that a Church Apostle, Bruce R. McConkie, dictated a "woman's primary place [was] in the home where she [was] to rear children and abide by the righteous counsel of her husband."⁴⁸ *Newsweek* explained a Latter-day Saint belief that members only became like God as couples. Therefore, men and women marry in their temples for eternity and embark on their "eternal vocations" as mothers and

⁴³ Macfarlane, "Equal Rights Meets Its Martyr," 37.

⁴⁴ Macfarlane, "Equal Rights Meets Its Martyr," 38.

⁴⁵ Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 149.

⁴⁶ Macfarlane, "Equal Rights Meets Its Martyr," 37.

⁴⁷ "A Savage Misogyny," *Time* (17 December 1979): 80.

⁴⁸ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 70.

fathers.⁴⁹ The role of women as mothers was another reason given for the Church's disapproval of ERA.

Though these doctrinal ideas may have given the impression that Latter-day Saints were oppressive toward women, President Kimball in *U.S. News* presented a different conclusion. The prophet was asked about the woman's role in church and secular life. President Kimball felt it was important for women to be at home raising and teaching children: "we feel differently from many people toward the women's lib movement and programs that take women from the home." A follow-up question asked about women limiting their education. President Kimball answered that women should not limit their education, and that his own wife went to college through their young marriage and he encouraged it. When the children came they believed in the necessity of caring for, and raising those children, with mother in the home.⁵⁰

One other reason magazines gave for the religion's opposition to the ERA concerned the amendment's future ability to affect litigation and legislation. The *Maclean's* article asserted that both opponents and supporters agreed, "[The ERA] will have far-reaching effects on the structure of American society, and the Mormons fear—not unreasonably—that the family will bear the brunt of the initial social upheaval."⁵¹ *Newsweek* described the legal affects this way: "The Mormon faith emphasizes the all-importance of the family unit, and church leaders have warned that a constitutional ruling against all legal sex distinctions might weaken the family structure and 'stifle God-given

⁴⁹ Woodward, "What Mormons Believe," 68.

⁵⁰ "How Mormons Cope," 61.

⁵¹ Macfarlane, "Equal Rights Meets Its Martyr," 38.

feminine instincts."⁵² Regardless of a person's stance on the issue, there was no question that the amendment would affect the family as then known.

Along with explaining the Church's position on the matter, the media drew attention to several events and people questioning the Church's political and moral intentions.

In 1977, *Ms.* was the first magazine expressing concern over the Nevada State Legislature's failure to ratify the ERA. It proposed that the "Mormon" Church had a connection to the opposition since the Senate Majority leader, and two other Senate Committee leaders were Latter-day Saints. It was reported that Church leaders openly opposed the ERA in the general 1976 election, and this disturbed people. A Utah mother told the magazine she was concerned the Church was entering politics.⁵³

In that same year, *U.S. News* expressed that Utahns of other faiths were not happy with the Church involving itself in community life and politics. At an International Woman's meeting, Utah delegates were voted in by "thousands" of Latter-day Saint women opposed to proposals favoring women's liberation. According to the magazine this "vote" left the rest of Utah without proper representation.⁵⁴

Two more articles in 1978 illustrated Church opposition to the ERA. One example from *New West* related that "a speech on equal rights scheduled to be delivered by liberal television commentator Shane Alexander to Goodwill Industries in Nevada was cancelled by Goodwill officials lest generous Mormon financial backing dry up."⁵⁵

⁵² Diane Weathers and Mary Lord, "Can a Mormon Support the ERA?," *Newsweek* (3 December 1979): 88.

⁵³ "Mormon Connection," 68.

⁵⁴ "Where Church Shapes Life of State," 59.

⁵⁵ Kaye, "Invisible Empire," 41.

Another magazine talked about the Church's new sculpture garden in Nauvoo, Illinois, that honored womanhood, and then maintained the religion "adamantly opposed . . . the ERA" and yielded no possibility of women ever attaining the priesthood. The same article also suggested that "the feminist issue may one day come to afflict the church, but not for the present."⁵⁶

The deadline for state ratification of the ERA was 22 March 1979. On 15 August 1978 the United States House of Representatives approved an extension until 30 June 1982.⁵⁷ During the extension period the feminist issue afflicted the Church when one of its members, Sonia Johnson, drew national attention on her stand for ERA.

Born in Logan, Utah, the daughter of a Latter-day Saint seminary teacher, Sonia Johnson was a fifth generation "Mormon" who had served as an organist, Relief Society teacher, and as *Time* put it, "the very model of a modern Mormon Matron."⁵⁸ Her great-great grandfather joined the Church as one of England's first converts and the Church was major part of her life.⁵⁹ She met her husband, Richard Johnson, at Utah State University, where she received her doctorate in English education, and converted her husband to the Church.⁶⁰

During the early ERA debate years, Johnson was out of the country with her family where her husband worked as a statistician. During that time she knew little about

⁵⁶ "Mormonism Enters New Era," 56.

⁵⁷ "Chronology of the Equal Rights Amendment, 1923-1996," <http://www.now.org/issues/economic/cea/1972>.

⁵⁸ "Savage Misogyny," 80. A seminary teacher is hired by the Church's educational system to provide daily religious teaching outside of normal secular learning. The Relief Society is the Church's women's organization which generally tends to the compassionate needs of Church members.

⁵⁹ Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 147.

⁶⁰ Michael J. Weiss, "Irked By Sonia Johnson's E.R.A. Crusade, Church Elders Throw The Book Of Mormon At Her," *People Weekly* (3 December 1979): 45. See also, Weathers and Lord, "Can a Mormon Support the ERA," 88.

the women's liberation movement.⁶¹ In 1976, upon returning to Virginia, she learned about the ERA and began her crusade to see the amendment passed. By December 1979 she gained national coverage when she was excommunicated for preaching false doctrine and undermining Church authorities.⁶²

Prior to her removal from the Church, Johnson founded a national organization called "Mormons for ERA." *People Weekly* reported the organization had 500 members in December 1979, and one year later the numbers were at 1,200.⁶³ The group vocally supported ratifying the amendment, and openly opposed the Church's stand against the proposal. Examples of Johnson and her group's criticism of the Church appeared in several magazines.

In one public appearance, Johnson encouraged turning away Latter-day Saint missionaries because the Church that did not support women's rights.⁶⁴ In other publicity she accused Church leadership of "savage misogyny," or severe hatred of women.⁶⁵ During Church general conferences she hired airplanes to fly banners over Salt Lake City reading, "Mormons for ERA Are Everywhere," while she and others picketed and passed out leaflets below.⁶⁶ In Bellevue, Washington, November 1980, "Sonia and 20 other

⁶¹ Weathers and Lord, "Can a Mormon Support the ERA," 88; Weiss, "Irrked by Sonia Johnson's ERA Crusade," 45.

⁶² "Savage Misogyny," 80; Weiss, "Irrked by Sonia Johnson's ERA Crusade," 44.

⁶³ "In the Battle for the E.R.A., A Mormon Feminist Waits for the Balloon to Go Up," *People Weekly* (29 December 1980): 67; Weiss, "Irrked by Sonia Johnson's ERA Crusade," 44.

⁶⁴ Macfarlane, "Equal Rights Meets Its Martyr," 38; Weathers and Lord, "Can a Mormon Support the ERA," 88; Wohl, "Feminist Latter-Day Saint," 39.

⁶⁵ "Savage Misogyny," 80.

⁶⁶ "Savage Misogyny," 80; Weathers and Lord, "Can a Mormon Support the ERA," 88; Weiss, "Irrked by Sonia Johnson's ERA Crusade," 45; Wohl, "Feminist Latter-Day Saint," 42. General conference of the Church is held bi-annually at the Church's headquarters in Salt Lake City. It is a time of instruction and teaching from General Authorities of the Church to the entire Church membership.

ERA supporters chained themselves to the gate of a new Mormon temple," in order to "risk civil disobedience for [women's] rights."⁶⁷

Evidence shows that Johnson and her group's staunch opposition to the Church's stand centered in a belief that religion and politics should not mix. In *Maclean's* the statement was made that "the issue of the ERA, in [Johnson and her group's] view, is a political one, not subject to interpretation by scripture." Johnson was quoted in the same magazine reasoning that "when the Mormon church began its anti-ERA campaign it entered the political arena. And I said, 'That's where we have to meet them.'"⁶⁸ Her ideology was further typified in *Newsweek* with this declaration, "I want to belong to the church, I just want the church out of politics."⁶⁹

Jeffrey Willis, Sonia Johnson's Bishop, held the Church court that excommunicated her.⁷⁰ The proceedings were described by Willis in *Newsweek* as courts of love, encouraging the disciplined to change their ways, repent, and come back to the Church for full fellowship. Johnson did not accept her excommunication from Willis, and told him she could not repent, because she had done nothing wrong.⁷¹ In *People Weekly* Johnson lamented that choosing between her religious and social views was "like deciding which child to save from the fire."⁷² Johnson appealed her ruling to the

⁶⁷ "In the Battle for the ERA," 67. For further coverage of this event, see also, Cleo Fellers Kocol, "Civil Disobedience at the Mormon Temple," *Humanist* (October 1981): 5-6; "Woman Who Talked Back to God," *Ms.* (November 1981): 53.

⁶⁸ Macfarlane, "Equal Rights Meets Its Martyr," 37. See also Wohl, "Feminist Latter-Day Saint," 40.

⁶⁹ Weathers and Lord, "Can a Mormon Support the ERA," 88. See also, Wohl, "Feminist Latter-Day Saint," 40.

⁷⁰ "In the Battle for the ERA," 67; Macfarlane, "Equal Rights Meets Its Martyr," 37; "Savage Misogyny," 80; Weathers and Lord, "Can a Mormon Support the ERA," 88; Weiss, "Irked by Sonia Johnson's ERA Crusade," 44; Wohl, "Feminist Latter-Day Saint," 39.

⁷¹ Weathers and Lord, "Can a Mormon Support the ERA," 88.

⁷² Weiss, "Irked by Sonia Johnson's ERA Crusade," 45.

Church's First Presidency twice without success.⁷³ In response to her Church discipline, Johnson complained, "They took away my official membership, but they didn't make me any less Mormon."⁷⁴ She also reiterated in *People Weekly*, "I still feel Mormon. Those men in Salt Lake City can't decide who's Mormon and who isn't."⁷⁵

In *Ms.* magazine, Church spokesman Don LeFevre maintained the amendment was not the reason for Johnson's excommunication. LeFevre explained that many Latter-day Saint men and women supported the ERA and their memberships were not in jeopardy. Action against Johnson was the result of her attacks against the Church and its leaders publicly.⁷⁶ Three other magazines also described similar reasons for withdrawing Johnson's membership.⁷⁷

Despite the Church's explanations of Johnson's excommunication, several magazines countered with alternate views. *U.S. News* cited critics who described "the church as a repressive foe of the fairness toward women," and gave the example of Johnson's excommunication as evidence.⁷⁸ A statement in *Time*, typical of beliefs cited in many magazines, claimed that Johnson was removed from membership because she

⁷³ "In the Battle for the ERA," 67. See also "Savage Misogyny," 80; Michael J. Weiss, "Sonia Johnson's Excommunication By the Mormons Cut the 'Big String' That Held Her Marriage Together," *People Weekly* (11 February 1980): 45. Church discipline is to aid transgressors in repentance, "identify unrepentant predators and hostile apostates" to protect innocent persons, and "to safeguard the integrity of the Church." Formal proceedings are performed by "a three-member ward bishopric or a fifteen member stake presidency and high council." Actions that can be taken in procedures are "(1) no action; (2) a formal probation involving restricted privileges; (3) disfellowshipment; or (4) excommunication." An "excommunicated person is no longer a member of the Church, and all priesthood ordinances and temple blessings previously received are suspended." Source: Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1:385-86. "Should the parties or either of them be dissatisfied with the decision of said council, they may appeal to the high council of the seat of the First Presidency of the Church, and have a re-hearing, which case shall there be conducted, . . . as though no such decision had been made" (Doctrine and Covenants 102:27, see also verses 9-34 for a fuller description of Church courts).

⁷⁴ Eileen Keerdoja, "A Mormon Rebel Fights for ERA," *Newsweek* (6 October 1980): 16.

⁷⁵ "In the Battle for the ERA," 67.

⁷⁶ Wohl, "Feminist Latter-Day Saint," 39.

⁷⁷ Macfarlane, "Equal Rights Meets Its Martyr," 38; Mann, "Grappling With Growing Pains," 42; Weathers and Lord, "Can a Mormon Support the ERA," 88.

⁷⁸ Mann, "Grappling With Growing Pains," 42.

was a "militant lobbyist for the equal rights amendment."⁷⁹ These declarations made Johnson a "martyr" for the cause of women.⁸⁰ In *People Weekly* she was called a "heroine of the women's movement."⁸¹

One month after Johnson was excommunicated her husband filed for divorce. Johnson insisted marital problems existed before her ecclesiastical reprimand, and divorce was completely independent of her ERA stand.⁸² Her husband, she confessed, was going through a "mid-life crisis."⁸³

Excommunication and divorce did not help Johnson's cause. *Newsweek* quoted a former Latter-day Saint Bishop, Lorin Wiggins, as saying, "If you cease to believe or are excommunicated . . . members will pay little attention to your views."⁸⁴ Opponents to the amendment observed that Johnson's divorce actually proved the ERA broke up families.⁸⁵

Despite her excommunication, support of Johnson's crusade was evidenced in national magazines. *People Weekly* observed that *Playboy* magazine founder, Hugh M. Hefner, gave Johnson a three thousand dollar "first amendment award" for "individual conscience."⁸⁶ The Chicago Lecture Bureau hired Johnson at one thousand dollars per appearance, and on one occasion she gave a speech on women's rights at the July 1980 Democratic Convention.⁸⁷ Liberals upholding abortion and equal rights for homosexuals

⁷⁹ "Savage Misogyny," 80. See also Joe Contreras, "Selling ERA to Mormons," *Newsweek* (13 July 1981): 26; Gottlieb and Wiley, "Mormonism Inc.," 151; Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 149; Wohl, "Feminist Latter-Day Saint," 39.

⁸⁰ Macfarlane, "Equal Rights Meets Its Martyr," 37.

⁸¹ "In the Battle for the ERA," 67.

⁸² "In the Battle for the ERA," 67; Keerdoja, "A Mormon Rebel," 16; Weiss, "Sonia Johnson's Excommunication," 45.

⁸³ "In the Battle for the ERA," 67.

⁸⁴ Weathers and Lord, "Can a Mormon Support the ERA," 88.

⁸⁵ Weiss, "Sonia Johnson's Excommunication," 45-46.

⁸⁶ "In the Battle for the ERA," 67.

⁸⁷ "In the Battle for the ERA," 67; Weiss, "Sonia Johnson's Excommunication," 46.

rallied behind Johnson to support the ERA.⁸⁸ She was also asked to speak in various religious congregations including Methodist, Unitarian, and Presbyterian, which she commented on: "You would think I would be seen as a general religious heretic, but in rebelling against the basic religious structure in my own church, I somehow or other became a hero to other churches." From the same magazine, the last sentence in the article quoted Johnson ranting, "getting the ERA passed is an obsession with me."⁸⁹

The ERA lost its bid for ratification in 1982, and magazines stopped reporting on Johnson's stand. Coverage about the Church during the ERA years was very negative and proved damaging to the religion's image. Although this was the case, it was generally understood by the media that mothers, families, and women were important to the Church, and the ERA was not in the Church's best interest.

The MX Missile. In 1981 the Church took another political stand on a proposed MX missile site in the Utah and Nevada deserts, designed to enhance national security. A United States Air Force project, the site would cover 20,000 square miles of desert and house 4,600 concrete missile shelters along 10,000 miles of roads.⁹⁰ One report mentioned that missiles armed with ten nuclear warheads, would be hidden from enemy attacks within the shelters, which housed 200 missiles each.⁹¹

The government's motives for building the site were two-fold. First, U.S. Defense Secretary told the press the MX basing plan was initiated to meet a Soviet threat against attack or invasion. Second, the western area was a logical spot since two major

⁸⁸ Mann, "Grappling With Growing Pains," 42.

⁸⁹ Keerdoja, "A Mormon Rebel," 16.

⁹⁰ Constance Holden, "Mormons Rebel on MX," *Science* (22 May 1981): 904; Mann, "Utah Wrestles With Its Future," 72; "Nix to MX," *Time* (18 May 1981): 28.

⁹¹ "MX Basing Change Sought," *Aviation Week & Space Technology* (11 May 1981): 26.

government contractors, Hercules and Thiokol, were located close by and was an ideal area.⁹²

At first, Utah residents seemed to welcome the idea as a patriotic duty. They felt the project could bring prosperity, and with 50,000 new jobs, expected a boost to their economic stability.⁹³ Local civic officials and Church leaders, however, expressed their opposition to the plan and most of the citizens followed. Following this position, magazine writers wondered why an obviously patriotic Church and State, characterized as non-pacifists, would oppose the plan. *Science* magazine described Utah and its citizens as "extremely conservative, patriotic, and defense minded."⁹⁴

To explain what appeared to be an unpatriotic stand, attention fell on a letter from Church leaders to the federal government requesting an alternative base site.⁹⁵ The Church maintained they opposed the MX on moral grounds. Pioneer forbearers had come to what is now known as Utah, to establish a peaceful place where the gospel of peace could go to all the world; therefore, Church leaders felt it contrary to allow such weaponry so close to their home. Concentrating the project in one area of the United States was also a concern. The Church felt that in the event of an attack one segment of the population might incur a large burden of lost lives and property.⁹⁶

Civic leaders also expressed unease over the proposal. Housing problems were

⁹² "MX Basing Change," 26.

⁹³ Holden, "Mormons Rebel on MX," 904; Mann, "Utah Wrestles With Its Future," 72; "Mormons on the MX," *America* (23 May 1981): 414.

⁹⁴ Holden, "Mormons Rebel on MX," 904.

⁹⁵ Holden, "Mormons Rebel on MX," 904; "MX Basing Change," 26. The letter from Church leaders can be found, "News of the Church," *Ensign* (June 1981): 76.

⁹⁶ "Final Environmental Impact Statement on MX Scheduled," *Aviation Week & Space Technology* (11 May 1981): 27; Holden, "Mormons Rebel on MX," 904; "Mormons and MX," *The Nation* (16 May 1981): 588; "Mormons on the MX," 414; "MX Basing Change," 26; "Nix to MX," 28.

contemplated since an expected 22,000 construction workers and 12,000 missile crew members were anticipated to converge on the area. Water supply was also considered, not only for the newcomers, but for the arsenal as well. An anticipated 175 billion gallons of water would be needed the first twenty years. Magazines also reported concerns over the possible sociological effects from an influx of people, and perhaps a change in the way of life.⁹⁷

Though these matters concerned more than just the Church, the media portrayed the issue as essentially influenced by the area's dominant religion. Critics pointed out that the Utah governor, Scott Matheson, and the State's four man congressional delegation were Latter-day Saints. Also, because Church leaders were not opposed to the MX, only the basing of it in Utah and Nevada, some criticized the Church as caring about themselves exclusively. Declaring "the Mormons have influence in the highest councils of the Reagan administration," *The Nation* suggested that "Mormon elders" could keep the missiles from coming to Utah.⁹⁸

Like the ERA, the MX missile situation affected the Church's image. It appears that pessimism actually came from the idea that the Church had and wielded political force as a religious institution.

The Kaiparowits Power Project. One other issue, receiving very little attention, was addressed in *Newsweek* and *The Nation*. In 1975, a debate between environmentalists and the Latter-day Saint residents of Southern Utah arose when the Federal Government proposed a power plant near the Arizona border that could raise the

⁹⁷ "Final Environmental Impact," 27; Mann, "Utah Wrestles With Its Future," 72; "MX Basing Change," 26.

⁹⁸ "Mormons and MX," 588; "Mormons on the MX," 414; "Nix to MX," 28.

area out of an economic slump. The site was the Kaiparowits Plateau and would create 3,000 new jobs mining 12 million tons of coal a year, enough to supply and send electricity to Los Angeles, San Diego, and Phoenix.

Environmentalists were concerned because impact studies showed that although air quality would suffer minimally, plant and animal life would be greatly reduced, especially in and around national parks. However, because of an energy crisis and recession, residents in the area felt the benefits far outweighed the damage. Some Latter-day Saints cited their early prophet, Brigham Young, "What people need to be happy and prosperous are iron and coal, good hard work, plenty to eat, good schools and good doctrine. We are one of nature's vast mineral storehouses. We have mountains of coal, iron and lead, enough to supply the world." Those residents wanted Southern Utah to turn into a prosperous metropolis.⁹⁹

Though the Church never took an official position on the project, *The Nation* pointed out that "according to one participant in the project, the church assigned a top leader to build support for Kaiparowitz in the small Mormon towns of southern Utah."¹⁰⁰ *Newsweek* suggested that "environmentalists" caused the project to never materialize.¹⁰¹

Effects of Church and Politics on Image

The unfavorable perception in national periodicals of political control in Utah, from leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is well documented in this chapter. The typical topics concerning politics, from 1970 to 1976, dealt with the

⁹⁹ John L. Dotson, Jr., "Duel in the Sun," *Newsweek* (27 October 1975): 10.

¹⁰⁰ Gottlieb and Wiley, "Mormonism Inc.," 151.

¹⁰¹ Dotson, "Duel in the Sun," 10.

periodic appraisals of Ezra Taft Benson's potential of becoming prophet and internalizing his conservative ideals on the Church, and the general references made to the media's views that Utah government was a "theocracy."

From 1977 to 1981 the major topic was the Church's opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment, and the excommunication of Sonia Johnson. The Church's image suffered greatly during this time largely because the media perceived that the Church opposed women's rights and used disciplinary action to quiet its members. In 1981 the image improved slightly because the MX missile situation was more fairly reported, which drew the image higher. Figure 5 in Chapter 8 shows the trends from this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

CHURCH PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES

The early 1970s was a time of tremendous growth and prosperity for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Due to various Church programs and practices, national curiosity launched the religion into greater notoriety and visibility. Attention was favorable, though the reporting often portrayed the differences of Latter-day Saints from other groups. *The Saturday Evening Post* reflected the treatment of Latter-day Saint programs and practices as described in this chapter: "Widespread missionary efforts, an array of uniquely effective church programs and determined defense of the traditional family unit have all increased Mormon visibility during recent years."¹ Programs frequently addressed in national magazines included missionary work, the welfare program, and family home evening. Magazine focuses on practices involved genealogical work and temples, the "Word of Wisdom," and in an unfavorable manner, the origins of polygamy.

To Every Nation, Kindred, Tongue and People—Missionary Work

The magazine *America* declared, "Mormonism is a religion with a goal—to carry the restored gospel to every nation and to establish Zion, God's Kingdom, here and now."² The magazine asserted that the Church set up the missionary program to accomplish this goal. Throughout the 1970s and 1981 missionaries were described by several magazines as clean-cut young men with suits, white shirts and ties, traveling in

¹ Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 66.

² McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 211.

pairs. Young women were portrayed as moderate in their dress and temperate in their actions. The magazines understood these young people were volunteers, and paid their own way for their time in the mission field, which was one and a half years for the young women and two years for the young men.³

Several rules addressed in *The Washingtonian* were delaying dating and marriage until after the mission, as well as the restrictions of television, movies, music and unapproved literature. Even phone calls home were limited.⁴ Referring to this strict routine, a *Newsweek* writer felt young people should be allowed "fewer rules, more responsibility and greater freedom to serve the needy as well as to convert the unchurched."⁵ The sentiment was that Church standards for missions were too strict and oppressive, and stifled intellectual growth.

The number of missionaries serving during the 1970s was also reported in periodicals. In January 1974, *Time* reported that Kimball had been head of the Missionary Executive Committee since 1965, and throughout the eight years played a major role in raising the number missionaries serving from 12,000 to 18,000.⁶ In 1980 and 1981 several other magazines reported the number of missionaries increasing to thirty thousand.⁷

As a result of missionary work and dedication, Church membership grew steadily to new heights worldwide. In 1971, *Forbes* magazine reported that since 1950, Church

³ Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 128; "Mormons Unveil Striking Monument," 56; Kenneth L. Woodward, "Onward, Mormon Soldiers," *Newsweek* (27 April 1981): 87-88.

⁴ Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 128.

⁵ Woodward, "Mormon Soldiers," 88. See also Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 128.

⁶ "Smooth Succession," 41.

⁷ Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 125; Mann, "Grappling With Growing Pains," 42; Woodward, "Mormon Soldiers," 87.

membership tripled to three million and only 700,000 lived in Utah. Japanese people were joining at a rate of 2,000 a year.⁸ Membership rose to 3.3 million in 1974.⁹ In 1975, growth outside Utah was recognized by *America* magazine, reporting the Church's biggest growth in South America, and in coming decades the probability that half of Church membership would speak Spanish.¹⁰ *Science* recognized in 1976 that Utah's population was growing steadily, and attributed the growth to missionary labors; mainly because after converts joined the Church, many moved to the state.¹¹ In 1978, after the priesthood was extended to all worthy males, *Time* emphasized that the Church would grow at an accelerated rate because it could enter the nations of black Africa.¹² Several magazines reported the Church's phenomenal growth by recognizing that it was the fastest growing religion in the United States.¹³ *U.S. News & World Report's* comment was typical: "The Mormon faith has been adding 200,000 converts a year to its worldwide flock of 4.3 million—the fastest growing rate of any major U.S. church."¹⁴ *The Saturday Evening Post* claimed that 200,000 converts in 1979 raised the Church from the ninth to the fourth largest United States religion. The same magazine heralded an increase in the Church of one million members in the 1970s.¹⁵

The Washingtonian categorized two types of Church converts, those who had traveled to Salt Lake City and signed the guest registry at Temple Square, and mockingly,

⁸ "Busy Like Bees," 25.

⁹ "Smooth Succession," 41.

¹⁰ McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 210.

¹¹ Walsh, "Challenging the Federal Patron," 163.

¹² "Mormonism Enters New Era," 56.

¹³ Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 125; Mann, "Grappling With Growing Pains," 42; Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 128; Walsh, "Challenging the Federal Patron," 162; "Where Church Shapes Life of State," 59; Woodward, "What Mormons Believe," 71.

¹⁴ Mann, "Utah Wrestles With Its Future," 73.

¹⁵ Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 125.

"harried" mothers with a lot of children, who wanted their brood to grow up "clean cut" also.¹⁶ *Newsweek* was cynical and reported that some baptisms were teenage girls attracted to the missionaries, that in some cases hoped to come to the United States as wives. The same article writer described a "chip-'em-and-dip-'em" convert, where missionaries in London would buy a fish and chips dinner for "derelicts" in return for their baptisms. Though the two descriptions of converts in *Newsweek* reflected badly on the Church, the magazine did add this concession, "Most missionaries are obedient, single-minded and, if anything, overzealous."¹⁷ One *Time* article mentioned that converts were attracted to the Church by its welfare and Family Home Evening programs. The welfare program attraction was financial and economic help only extended to Church members. The Family Home Evening program drew converts, according to the magazine, because of the stability and strength of Latter-day Saint families.¹⁸

Aside from the benefits to converts, missionaries were portrayed as benefactors of missionary work. *Newsweek* expressed skepticism in 1972 concerning the missionary program's ability to continue since the Church spent fifteen million dollars a year to support the plan.¹⁹ In 1981 the same magazine reported apparent inefficiencies in missionary work, declaring that in 1980 the Church expended one hundred and fifty million missionary hours bringing in only 211,000 new converts. This ratio, the article's writer proclaimed, was largely inefficient by typical business standards. The magazine concluded, however, that perhaps missionary labor was more for the benefit of missionaries than the converts. It then quoted New York City's Latter-day Saint mission

¹⁶ Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 128.

¹⁷ Woodward, "Mormon Soldiers," 88.

¹⁸ "Mormonism Enters New Era," 56.

¹⁹ "Chosen," 50.

president, "I want [the missionaries] to become optimistic and positive young men and ladies." The journalist concluded with two reasons for the program's existence, "turning Mormon youths into committed Mormon adults," and creating future leaders.²⁰

Other magazines also wrote about the missionary experience benefiting young people. *Time* quoted President Kimball saying that missionary service was "a great character builder."²¹ *Harpers*, primarily pessimistic about the Church, reported that the CIA liked to recruit returned missionaries because they learned foreign languages and cultures, and were deemed "loyal" and "sober."²² Lastly, *The Washingtonian* simply felt missionary service broadened the horizon for the Church's young people, while exposing them to an array of different experiences.²³

The missionary program was the "life-blood of the Church's phenomenal growth."²⁴ Its coverage encouraged and supported the Church's public image throughout national periodicals. Another Church program that received good treatment in magazines dealt with the temporal welfare of its members.

The Welfare Program

In 1971, *Newsweek* magazine quoted N. Eldon Tanner, second counselor in the First Presidency, declaring, "No one gets a free ride, but we take care of our own." He referred to the Church's welfare program, wherein members received commodities and/or

²⁰ Woodward, "Mormon Soldiers," 88. See also Woodward, "What Mormons Believe," 71.

²¹ "Smooth Succession," 41.

²² Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 72.

²³ Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 128.

²⁴ Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 128.

financial assistance according to their personal or family needs.²⁵ This program's reputation in magazines was of service and helping others in times of distress and need.

The welfare program was described as "one of the largest private relief organizations in the country."²⁶ In *Newsweek* the welfare plan was called the "largest . . . in the world."²⁷ *U.S. News* pointed out that Utah's federal welfare rolls were at "half the national level," which the magazine credited to the Church. Several magazines reported that Church members used little or no government welfare.²⁸

The Church welfare system assisted members, in time of need, with food and clothes; it was also a program meant to care for the poor.²⁹ The system was designed to help the needy in exchange for volunteer service at Church-owned farms and canneries.³⁰ However, if a person was unable to volunteer their service due to age or a disability, they could still obtain the necessary assistance.³¹ It was also reported that other Latter-day Saints, those who did not use the assistance, volunteered time and service to help in the production of food for the storehouses.³²

The program also included the principle of preparedness. In a *National Geographic* magazine article about Salt Lake City and its people, food storage was discussed. The magazine repeated that Church leaders promised their people that they

²⁵ Waters, "Urban Shadows," 104.

²⁶ "Where Church Shapes Life of State," 59.

²⁷ Waters, "Urban Shadows," 104.

²⁸ "Where Church Shapes Life of State," 59. See also "How Mormons Cope," 61; Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 69; Kaye, "Invisible Empire," 36; Mann, "Grappling With Growing Pains," 42; McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 210.

²⁹ Mann, "Grappling With Growing Pains," 42.

³⁰ Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 69, 118; Waters, "Urban Shadows," 104.

³¹ "How Mormons Cope," 61.

³² Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 118; Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 140; Waters, "Urban Shadows," 104.

would be blessed for gathering and storing a one-year supply of commodities for their families. Further, self-reliance meant that a family could care for themselves even in times of emergency.³³

When Harold B. Lee assumed the leadership position of prophet in 1972, two articles credited him with establishing the welfare program during the Depression.³⁴ One doctrine underlying the system was self-reliance. J. Willard Marriott explained in *The Saturday Evening Post*: "Members are expected to be self-reliant. If, for some reason, they cannot take care of their own needs, they should turn to their families. The Church organization is the third line of defense, you might say, through its welfare services program." A quote following Marriott's, from Heber J. Grant, Church president during the Great Depression, explained that the program was to "do away with the curse of idleness, abolish the evils of a dole and establish independence, industry, thrift and self respect once more among the Mormon people." He further recited, "The aim of the church is to help the people help themselves. Work is to be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our church membership."³⁵

Financially, the Church used large amounts of money to support the welfare program. Some 17.7 million dollars were spent in 1971, with eight million dollars coming from fast offerings. Fast offerings were described in *Time* as the "price of missed meals" contributed to the Church to care for the poor.³⁶ Though the Church seldom reveals welfare program expenditures, some figures in 1971 were disclosed as a result of

³³ Charles McCarry, "Utah's Shining Oasis," *National Geographic Magazine* (April 1975): 461. See also Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 69.

³⁴ "Brisker Status Quo," 88; "Chosen," 49.

³⁵ Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 69.

³⁶ "Brisker Status Quo," 88.

Salt Lake County attempting to tax Church welfare properties.³⁷ Though additional numbers were unknown, two magazines provided other clues into the system's continued expanse. In 1977, *U.S. News* noted that in the previous year more than four million hours of Latter-day Saint volunteer labor helped over 110,000 fellow members.³⁸ In 1980, *Harpers* pointed out that because of volunteer labor, the welfare program did not drain other Church funds, and was self-sustaining.³⁹ Several sources emphasized the Church's help to the needy and the necessity of working together to bless the whole.⁴⁰

Despite those accolades, *Harpers* portrayed an administrator of the welfare program as manipulative to those using and benefiting from the system. The author of the article explained that he met a "Mormon" bishop that managed a canning factory. Upon giving the article's author a tour of the facility the bishop pointed to one worker and whispered that he kept the man on "poverty wages" so he would not have enough money to get drunk.⁴¹

Another attempt to display insensitivity on the part of Church members came from *America*. This article's author was disappointed the Church did not use its vast resources to help people of other beliefs. He winced, "Mormon society is closed and protective. The welfare program is open to Mormons only and not to the larger needs of society."⁴² Despite this accusation, several other magazine articles documented that welfare program resources were used to help and bless the lives of those who were of other beliefs. Two magazines shared how the Church helped in Idaho during the Teton

³⁷ "Brisker Status Quo," 86, 88.

³⁸ "Where Church Shapes Life of State," 59.

³⁹ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 67.

⁴⁰ Mann, "Grappling With Growing Pains," 42; Waters, "Urban Shadows," 104.

⁴¹ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 66.

⁴² McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 211.

flood disaster. Providing food, clothing, bedding, and other necessities, the Church benefited anyone regardless of their beliefs.⁴³ *U.S. News* announced similar help during the Guatemalan and Chilean earthquake emergencies.⁴⁴ *The Washingtonian* told of a time in 1968 when Church welfare resources in the Washington D.C. area helped the city of Damascus, Maryland, when riots "scarred" several neighborhoods.⁴⁵

The Church's welfare program was large and extensive—a corn farm outside Chicago, Illinois,—a tuna cannery in San Diego, California,—apple, peach, and pear orchards in Washington State,—beef and dairy farms in Michigan,—and pork in Indiana; each contributing to the Latter-day Saint's benefit and welfare, and others during emergencies.⁴⁶ The welfare program elicited respect from the nation. *The Washingtonian* summarized this sentiment in these words, "There is so much to admire in Mormons. They are a people who take care of their own—nearly 140,000 American Mormons annually receive some welfare assistance from the Church. They are a people who believe in the virtue of work."⁴⁷

Family Home Evening

Several authors of articles also wrote about the Church's emphasis on the family. *U.S. News* declared, "belief in large, strong families is a central tenet of Mormonism."⁴⁸ *National Geographic* called the family "a Mormon shrine," and talked about the family practice of prayer and the goals of working together for common purposes.⁴⁹ Finally, *The*

⁴³ "How Mormons Cope," 61; Kaye, "Invisible Empire," 36.

⁴⁴ "How Mormons Cope," 61.

⁴⁵ Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 140-41.

⁴⁶ Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 118. See also Kaye, "Invisible Empire," 36.

⁴⁷ Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 151.

⁴⁸ "Mormons Unveil Striking Monument," 56.

⁴⁹ McCarry, "Utah's Shining Oasis," 459.

Saturday Evening Post pointed out that Harmon Killebrew, a Latter-day Saint who had played baseball for the Minnesota Twins, felt that raising a family was an "awesome" responsibility, and that nothing else really mattered in life but his family and the gospel. The magazine related that Killebrew believed if he failed with his family, he failed in all things.⁵⁰

To illustrate the importance of families in the Church, several magazines described Family Home Evening (FHE), a program instituted to strengthen families.⁵¹ Monday nights were designated in 1971 by Church leaders as the time each week when families gathered together to strengthen their bonds.⁵² *National Geographic* described the evening as a time when families were to turn off the television and begin their time together with a scripture followed by a discussion of spiritual matters. It gave the family a chance to talk, play games, sing songs, and have refreshments.⁵³ The content of the evening together was not as important as the consistency of participation in FHE.

The Saturday Evening Post reported that the Church was so committed to the program that it made available FHE manuals containing suggestions for lesson plans, together with other resources. These lessons were designed to enhance a family's love and respect toward one another. According to the article the Church printed 900,000 copies a year providing members with this resource for strengthening family ties.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 68.

⁵¹ For an overview of the beginnings of Family Home Evening, see Cowan, *The Latter Day Saint Century*, 53-54.

⁵² In 1915 the First Presidency announced "Home Evenings" for strengthening the family unit through gathering and teaching. In 1936 and 1946 the program was emphasized by Church leaders. In 1971 Monday night was designated as the night to gather the family. Source: Cowan, *The Latter Day Saint Century*, 200-01.

⁵³ McCarry, "Utah's Shining Oasis," 460.

⁵⁴ Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 68.

Despite the favorable nature of these reports, there were times when magazines used Family Home Evening to suggest that the Church required too much from its members. *Harpers* maintained that Latter-day Saints were so busy with Church activities and meetings that FHE had to be formally set-aside to make time for their kids.⁵⁵ *Newsweek* was concerned about large Latter-day Saint families, which the magazine felt raised the financial and psychological burdens of members and society. It interjected that because of numerous Church organizations, parents were further burdened with meetings consuming most of their time. Like *Harpers*, *Newsweek* concluded that the Church had to institute FHE so parents would make time for their children.⁵⁶ An alternate view, however, came from *The Saturday Evening Post* which quoted Church spokesman, Jerry Cahill: "Unless families make a conscientious effort to plan for weekly time together, uninterrupted by work, school and other pursuits, the average family has a hard time experiencing . . . special moments. In a fast-paced world in which family relationships are undermined by hectic schedules and nights are monopolized by the television set, a weekly time together gives parents and children the chance to build relationships that strengthen family ties."⁵⁷ This view focused more on the daily demands of life interfering with family time rather than the religion as a burden. Further attention on the family came from the Latter-day Saint practice of building temples.

⁵⁵ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 71.

⁵⁶ Woodward, "What Mormons Believe," 71.

⁵⁷ Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 68.

Temple Building

In 1974, magazines gave widespread notice to completion of what was called the Church's "sixteenth and largest temple," in a Washington D.C. suburb.⁵⁸ Onlookers appeared curious to know why the Church built such big beautiful buildings, and what they were used for. The structure's estimated cost was fourteen to fifteen million dollars, and upon completion was paid for without assuming any debt.⁵⁹ Famous Latter-day Saint golfer Johnny Miller, and businessman J. Willard Marriott were said to contribute, along with other members, 4.8 million dollars, while the other ten million came from Church members' tithing.⁶⁰

Newsweek believed the Church's ability to build temples showed the great prosperity and success the religion enjoyed, calling the Washington D.C. temple a "high point in the rapidly expanding fortunes" of the religion.⁶¹ A *U.S. News* article writer felt the temple would add to a list of already famous Washington D.C. landmarks, and proved the success of "one of the fastest-growing Christian denominations in America."⁶² *America* declared that the Latter-day Saints "marked their achievements with the dedication of an imposing temple at the political center of the United States."⁶³

Further success for the religion was described when *Time*, in 1978, pointed out that the Church would build four more temples in Seattle, Tokyo, Mexico City, and American Samoa—all paid for in full before dedication.⁶⁴ In 1980 *The Saturday Evening*

⁵⁸ "Washington Monument," 72. See also "Behind Temple Walls," 110; McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 208; "Mormons Unveil Striking Monument," 56.

⁵⁹ McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 208; "Mormonism Enters New Era," 56.

⁶⁰ "Washington Monument," 72. See also "Behind Temple Walls," 111.

⁶¹ "Washington Monument," 72.

⁶² "Mormons Unveil Striking Monument," 56.

⁶³ McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 211.

⁶⁴ "Mormonism Enters New Era," 56.

Post noted that the same four temples were under construction, and added to the list another temple in South Jordan, Utah. Temples in Canada, Hawaii, New Zealand, Switzerland, Brazil, and England reflected the religion's commitment to the family, the purpose for which they were built.⁶⁵

An explanation of the purpose of temples was included in nearly every article discussing the topic. Faithful Church members went to temples to be married for this life and forever. These families believed a temple marriage "sealed" them to their spouse and children for eternity.⁶⁶ *The Saturday Evening Post* mentioned that because Latter-day Saints believed in marriage for eternity, the Church had a low occurrence of divorce. It was shown that while divorce in the United States was generally about 45%, it was only 7% in the Church. The difference, the magazine declared, was the "eternal" commitment encouraging couples to work out differences.⁶⁷

In addition to "sealing" families, *Time* and other magazines indicated that Church members performed ordinance work for their ancestors as well.⁶⁸ Those that did not get the chance to hear the "restored gospel" before their deaths had their baptisms performed, and their families sealed, by proxy, in the temples.⁶⁹ Ancestral names necessary to

⁶⁵ Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 121.

⁶⁶ Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 138. See also "Behind Temple Walls," 110-11; Constance Brown, "Wagons Ho!," *Americana* (September/October 1980): 50; "Mormonism Enters New Era," 54; "Mormons Unveil Striking Monument," 56; "Washington Monument," 72. The term "sealing" in this context refers to "the temple ordinance joining husband and wife or children and parents for time and eternity." The ordinance is effective because "the power of the priesthood" makes "valid in heaven an action performed on earth." Source: Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4:1771.

⁶⁷ Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 120-21.

⁶⁸ The term ordinance refers to "a performance or prescribed ceremony related to the reception of a blessing, covenant, or ordination, such as baptism, confirmation, endowment, marriage, etc., performed by one who has been ordained to the priesthood and authorized to perform the ordinance." Source: Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4:1770.

⁶⁹ The term proxy refers to "a person authorized to act for another." Source: *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed., s.v. "proxy." In the Church it refers to standing in place of the deceased as ordinances are performed in temples. Baptisms for the dead are "the practice of vicarious baptism for the deceased." Source: Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4:1765.

perform these ordinances by proxy were identified using genealogical records.⁷⁰

Baptisms were performed in large fonts set on the backs of twelve oxen, representing the twelve tribes of Israel. The "sealings" were performed in special rooms with large mirrors reflecting each other on opposite walls. The endless reflections reminded participants of eternal vows, and allowed couples acting as proxies, to see each other "stretching off into infinity."⁷¹

Members also received an "endowment" of special spiritual blessings in rooms where they were shown an "audiovisual explanation of man's origin, purpose on earth, and eternal destiny."⁷² Again, after receiving this ordinance for themselves, members returned to repeatedly experience these instructions and blessings in behalf of deceased ancestors. Details of the endowment session were not given in tours and were said to be "secret." Following this room the people were taken into the "hub" of all six endowment rooms called the celestial room, a place representing the "serenity of heaven."⁷³

When the Washington D.C. temple was completed it was opened to the public for tours.⁷⁴ Like other temples, after a short time for tours, the temple was dedicated and then only Church members with a temple recommend were to enter.⁷⁵ *Time* indicated the

⁷⁰ "Mormonism Enters New Era," 36. See also, "Behind Temple Walls," 111; Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 121; "Mormons Unveil Striking Monument," 56; Donald G. Schueler, "Our family trees have roots in Utah's mountain vaults," *Smithsonian* (December 1981): 88-91; "Smooth Succession," 41; "Washington Monument," 72. The term genealogy refers to the collection of names, dates, and information on one's ancestors.

⁷¹ "Behind Temple Walls," 111.

⁷² "An endowment generally is a gift, but in a specialized sense it is a course of instruction, ordinances, and covenants given only in dedicated temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." Source: Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4:454.

⁷³ "Behind Temple Walls," 110.

⁷⁴ "Behind Temple Walls," 110; "Washington Monument," 72.

⁷⁵ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 66; "Mormons Unveil Striking Monument," 56; "Washington Monument," 72.

practice of allowing general public to visit a temple before dedication was "in part to dispel any suspicion of bizarre rituals inside."⁷⁶

Genealogy—Ancestral Name Collecting

Genealogical research is the way in which Church members identify ancestors for temple work. Both *Newsweek* and *Saturday Review* quoted the Church's founder, Joseph Smith, declaring, "The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead."⁷⁷ To find their ancestors, Latter-day Saints search records giving dates and places of births, marriages, and deaths.⁷⁸ With this information extracted one can take those names to the temple and have necessary ordinance work completed by proxy.

Latter-day Saints believe that once this work is completed for each name, the deceased individual has the freedom to choose whether or not to accept the ordinance work in the Spirit World.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, some magazines insinuated that all dead people became "Mormons" after their temple work was completed.⁸⁰ In an article on the massive amount of genealogical records in Salt Lake City, *Saturday Review* remarked: "Whether you like it or not there is every likelihood that you will be a Mormon some day. And not only you, but your friend, relative, and ancestors, living as well as dead."⁸¹ The article's author did quote Tom Daniels, the genealogical library spokesman, saying, "You

⁷⁶ "Behind Temple Walls," 110.

⁷⁷ Susan Cheever Cowley, "Notes From Underground," *Newsweek* (1 March 1976): 72; Jon Stewart, "Every Man a Saint," *Saturday Review* (19 January 1980): 8.

⁷⁸ McCarry, "Utah's Shining Oasis," 447.

⁷⁹ McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 210. The term spirit world refers to "the place where the spirits of the dead await resurrection and judgment; it consists of paradise, prison, and hell." Source: Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4:1772.

⁸⁰ Waters, "Urban Shadows," 102. See also Cowley, "Notes from Underground," 72.

⁸¹ Stewart, "Every Man a Saint," 8.

can insist in writing that you do not wish to be ordained at some future time, and we respect such wishes." Also, if temple ordinances were performed for the already deceased, spirits could decide whether to accept the work or not.⁸²

In order to research the past, the Church keeps meticulous records on microfilm in giant granite vaults built literally into the Wasatch Range Mountains. The media often included a description of the vaults with its coverage of genealogical work. Described as "six theater-size vaults," the structure is carved into the mountainside under 700 feet of granite. Located in Little Cottonwood Canyon, about 20 miles outside Salt Lake City, the vaults are climate controlled and contain massive amounts of genealogical records.⁸³ The enormous granite construction was built in 1965, at a cost of two million dollars, and contains in each vault, rows of green filing cabinets, some reaching ten feet high. *Newsweek* and others called the mountainside structure the most complete set of genealogical records in the world.⁸⁴

As reported in several magazines, within each vault, an estimated one million rolls of microfilm can be stored. At an equivalent of about 1,200 pages, each roll is about 100 feet long. In 1980 it was made known that vault number one was almost full with 985,000 rolls, or a total of over one billion names. Each year 40,000 rolls, or about 48 million pages, were added to the vaults.⁸⁵ *The Saturday Evening Post* later in that same year reported 5,000 new roles of microfilm a month, or 60,000 a year.⁸⁶ According to

⁸² Stewart, "Every Man a Saint," 9.

⁸³ Waters, "Urban Shadows," 102. See also Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 125; McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 210; Means, "Inside the Mormon Church," 138; "Mormons Unveil Striking Monument," 56; Schueler, "Our family trees have roots in Utah's mountain vaults," 87-88; Stewart, "Every Man a Saint," 8.

⁸⁴ Cowley, "Notes from Underground," 72. See also Stewart, "Every Man a Saint," 8.

⁸⁵ Stewart, "Every Man a Saint," 8. See also McCarry, "Utah's Shining Oasis," 447; Waters, "Urban Shadows," 102.

⁸⁶ Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 125.

Saturday Review and *The Smithsonian* magazines, the "Mormons" compiling these records reflected their commitment to families past and present.⁸⁷

Collection of these records, in 1976, was said to have cost the Church ten million dollars a year.⁸⁸ In 1977 *Sunset* magazine reported that over eighty cameras were used to microfilm records throughout the world.⁸⁹ In 1980, *Saturday Review* claimed one hundred teams of microfilmmers traveled worldwide, into forty-four countries filming church, marriage, birth, and death records. From available documents, the Church was described as having nearly completed records from Scotland, Hungary, Denmark, Sweden, Fiji, Panama, Mexico, and much of the United States and Europe. Also that Church microfilmmers had started collecting records, both oral and written, from Tonga, Taiwan, Indonesia, and China.⁹⁰ The Church's goal was to collect as many names and records as it could, a goal *American Heritage* considered very difficult.⁹¹

Prior to 1970, the granite vaults were open for public tours, and *Newsweek* reported "hordes of tourists" visited the facility. However, the magazine retorted that the Church's fear of outside contamination to the microfilm caused the facility to be closed to the public.⁹² The magazine also speculated that in case of a nuclear attack the Church would use the vaults for shelter. The article's writer was trying to imply that the Mormons were a paranoid people awaiting "Armageddon."⁹³ Another magazine also

⁸⁷ Schueler, "Our family trees have roots in Utah's mountain vaults," 91; Stewart, "Every Man a Saint," 8.

⁸⁸ Cowley, "Notes from Underground," 72.

⁸⁹ "Tracking Down Your Kinfolk," *Sunset* (June 1977): 36.

⁹⁰ Stewart, "Every Man a Saint," 8.

⁹¹ Paul, "The Mormons," 81.

⁹² Waters, "Urban Shadows," 102.

⁹³ Waters, "Urban Shadows," 107.

commented on the vaults' bombproof characteristic, concluding that this design was only for protecting the records.⁹⁴

To research the records, microfilm copies were sent from the vaults to a library in downtown Salt Lake City. In 1976, *Newsweek* divulged that about sixteen hundred people a day crowded those annals, using two hundred and fifty microfilm machines.⁹⁵ In 1980 it was pointed out that millions of names could be searched on one of four hundred machines. The library was considered by *The Saturday Evening Post* "one of the finest in the world," and was located in the Church Office Building.⁹⁶

Access to the records was not just limited to the Salt Lake City archives. In 1978, *Moneysworth* magazine remarked, "the world's largest genealogical library has been linked to hundreds of local outlets." One specific new location, the Latter-day Saint Pittsburgh Branch, was highlighted. Genealogists of western Pennsylvania were reportedly excited because this new resource provided quicker, easier information. If needed records were unavailable in the library, an index of Salt Lake City's library was on hand and a request for needed records could be made for the price of postage. Since one of the objectives of *Moneysworth* magazine was to show ways to make the most of a person's money, an article in the magazine indicated that this service, for anyone desiring to use it, was a great deal.⁹⁷

Lastly, a constructive use of the Church's genealogical records, besides temple work, came from the medical research field. Speaking about Church genealogical

⁹⁴ "Mormons Unveil Striking Monument," 56.

⁹⁵ Cowley, "Notes from Underground," 72.

⁹⁶ Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 121.

⁹⁷ Karen Southwick, "Microfilm Library Linkup to Help Many Find 'Roots'," *Moneysworth* (September 1978): 3.

records, *Newsweek* informed the public in 1976 that, "Doctors, physicists and sociologists have tapped this unique resource to study everything from religious demographics to the sequence of male and female children in families." The genealogies of Latter-day Saint cancer patients were also researched by "the American Cancer Society and the cancer division of the National Institutes of Health," to try to "establish the disease's hereditary links." *Newsweek* stated that medical projects were greatly assisted by the records, and that if scientists had to collect the genealogical data without Church records, it would cost millions of dollars. Results of medical studies were valuable as a "tool for preventive medicine."⁹⁸

Another article in 1981, from *Science Digest*, also praised the Church's genealogical records as essential in medical research. Called the "largest human genetic study in the world," researchers were reviewing over a million rolls of microfilm containing "vital statistics" of over a billion people from more than sixty countries. University of Utah scientists began this massive project to link the genetic components of diseases with a family's genes. Dr. Robert M. Fineman, director of the University's Division of Medical Genetics, told the magazine that three things were needed to have a genetics program, "physicians to identify diseases that appear to be genetic, laboratory support and enormous genealogies. Utah is the only place in the world where these three things meet." Discoveries made in Utah pertaining to "birth defects, mental retardation, diabetes, ulcers, allergies, asthma, hypertension, cancer and hemophilia" were used to benefit the world.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Cowley, "Notes from Underground," 72.

⁹⁹ "Biggest Gene Study Ever," *Science Digest* (June 1981): 25.

Health Practices

Abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, coffee, and tea were well-known trademarks of Latter-day Saints in the 1970s.¹⁰⁰ Evidence that these practices were favorable contributions toward the Church's image come from an observation that negative articles rarely reported on Latter-day Saint health practices.

In 1975, *America* magazine reported that the "Mormons" were conscientious regarding their physical health, modesty, and behavior. Latter-day Saint lifestyle was attributed to a revelation given to Joseph Smith in 1833 called the "Word of Wisdom." According to the article, Church members were not to drink alcohol or use tobacco, their consumption of meat was to be moderate, and they were to include in their diets vegetables, fruits, and grains.¹⁰¹ *Newsweek* showed an indication in 1971 that these health practices reflected optimistically on the Church. According to the magazine, crime was rising in Salt Lake City, but the article's writer concluded it was not because of "Mormon youth," since the Church emphasized morality and health.¹⁰²

In *The Saturday Evening Post* several famous Latter-day Saints were listed who lived by the "Word of Wisdom" and attracted attention to the "unique" doctrine. Some of the names highlighted in the piece included Michigan Governor George Romney, baseball players Harmon Killebrew and Vernon Law, and golfers Billy Casper and

¹⁰⁰ Bonnie Coleman, "Mormon Tea—An Old American Favorite," *Organic Gardening and Farming* (December 1973): 81; Mann, "Grappling With Growing Pains," 42; "Mormons Unveil Striking Monument," 56.

¹⁰¹ McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 210.

¹⁰² Waters, "Urban Shadows," 106.

Johnny Miller. Each of these Church members believed the human body was a "temple of the Holy Spirit" and that anything harmful to it should be forbidden.¹⁰³

One other famous Church member drew awareness to the Latter-day Saint health practice in a popular rock and roll magazine called *Rolling Stone*. A former member of the famous rock band "The Guess Who," Randy Bachman, a convert to the Church, was then the guitarist in a new group called, "Bachman-Turner Overdrive." Bachman was quoted affirming he was tired of the typical rock and roll drug scene he had seen ruin the lives of his former band mates. Following these comments he made this positive observation, "Eight years ago when I met my wife, I joined the Mormon church. They don't drink, smoke or do drugs. It's a very straight, but satisfying way of life."¹⁰⁴

According to *The Saturday Evening Post*, the "Word of Wisdom" could cause Church members to look "prudish." But some statistics that followed that claim showed impressive numbers: "Independent studies published in American medical journals have shown members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have 65 percent fewer cases of lung cancer, 35 percent fewer cases of colon cancer, 35 percent fewer heart disease problems and 40 percent fewer liver ailments than the general U.S. population. The life expectancy in 1979 of a Mormon living the health code was three years longer for women and six years longer for men in the United States."¹⁰⁵

Another article in 1980 focused, in part, on the Latter-day Saint health code at BYU. Adding caffeine and illegal drugs to the list of forbidden substances, the article

¹⁰³ Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 120. The term Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost refers to "the third member of the Godhead, a personage of Spirit." Source: Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4:1768.

¹⁰⁴ Cameron Crowe, "Bachman-Turner Overdrive: A Canadian Mormon Tabernacle Rock & Roll Band," *Rolling Stone* (16 January 1975): 10.

¹⁰⁵ Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 120.

said that students attending the University would be disciplined for using restricted items. BYU students agreed with the policy, and the magazine concluded that "the atmosphere at BYU is far from oppressive; indeed, because one is surrounded by uniformly handsome and healthy people, its downright pleasant."¹⁰⁶

Generally speaking, the Word of Wisdom elicited approval from magazines that addressed the topic. A final practice addressed in national periodicals was really a former practice called polygamy.

The Origins of Polygamy

Throughout the 1970s, magazine articles on polygamous groups were periodically written. Though the media understood that the Church did not, and had not, practiced plural marriage since 1890, writers in several articles on the subject mentioned the "Mormon" church when describing splinter groups that still practiced marriage of more than one wife.¹⁰⁷ Articles on polygamy in the 1970s clearly understood that "Mormons" no longer sanctioned plural marriage, and a few reported that the Church excommunicated people if they practiced it.¹⁰⁸ Overall, little influence is believed to have had an impact on the image of the Church, because reports in the 1970s were on polygamist groups and not the Church. The elements of each article that did impact the Church's image were descriptions of former Latter-day Saint beliefs in plural marriage,

¹⁰⁶ Ottum, "When the Latter-day Saints Go Marching In," 92.

¹⁰⁷ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 69; Catherine Fox, "The Gospel of Polygamy and Murder," *Maclean's* (20 November 1978): 6; "Polygamy in the Desert," *Time* (19 May 1975): 74; "Renegade Mormons," *Newsweek* (20 January 1975): 72; Diane K. Shah and Janet Huck, "Eternal Triangles," *Newsweek* (21 November 1977): 113; Dorothy Solomon, "A Very Different Kind of Family," *Good Housekeeping* (April 1979): 141.

¹⁰⁸ Shah and Huck, "Eternal Triangles," 113. See also "Americana," *Time* (11 October 1971): 25; "How Mormons Cope," 61.

and references to the days when polygamy was practiced.

Two magazines declared in the 1970s that "Mormons" still believed in polygamy, but could not practice it.¹⁰⁹ It was generally portrayed in national periodicals that when President Wilford Woodruff issued an Official Manifesto ending plural marriage in 1890, he did it at the behest of government pressure.¹¹⁰ Though the actual practice was stopped, *America* magazine insisted, "Plural marriage as a doctrine . . . has never been rescinded and is still seen as a possibility in the next world." The magazine further asserted that women were saved through the priesthood of their husbands, and that plural marriage would assist in helping "countless spirit children" to come to earth to receive bodies.¹¹¹ A similar idea from *Ms.* magazine declared, "though the church hasn't solemnized polygamous marriages since 1890, the Church teaches that polygamy may be practiced in heaven."¹¹² Even *Harpers* commented that Latter-day Saints believed that in the Millennium polygamy would resume.¹¹³ *Time* claimed that Brigham Young, the Church's second prophet, taught that only those entering into polygamy would be "Gods."¹¹⁴

Many articles considered why the "Mormons" started this practice. *America* suggested that the religion's founder, Joseph Smith, revealed the practice simply because God commanded him to. Other reasons, according to the same article, included taking care of "Mormon" widows, and bringing back the ancient patriarchal order of plural

¹⁰⁹ "Americana," 25; Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 71.

¹¹⁰ "How Mormons Cope," 61; McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 211; "Where Church Shapes Life of State," 59-60; Linda Witt and Vicky Burgess-Olson, "A Feminist Studies Mormon Polygamy and Remarkably, Finds That It Liberated The Wives," *People Weekly* (10 July 1978): 58.

¹¹¹ McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 211.

¹¹² "Mormon Connection," 80.

¹¹³ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 71. The term Millennium refers to the one thousand years of peace following Jesus Christ's Second Coming, when all wickedness will be removed from the earth.

¹¹⁴ "Americana," 25.

marriage.¹¹⁵ In most articles the early Latter-day Saint practice of plural marriage appeared without malice. Even reports that Joseph Smith himself practiced polygamy were not generally attempts to disrespect the religion.¹¹⁶ The subject of Brigham Young's polygamous involvement was more negative, but also received positive comments as well.

In *Harpers*, the article's author told of Brigham Young learning from Joseph Smith that he would have to marry more than one wife. The author remarked that at the time, Young indicated he would rather die than live polygamy. The next statement in the magazine indicated that perhaps Young really was excited about the practice, "Brother Brigham rounded up his ewes, and before he was in his own coffin . . . he took on twenty-seven carnal wives and wed a large number of other women."¹¹⁷ Another magazine, *American Heritage*, told of a book by Mark Twain making fun of polygamy by trying to imagine what it was like to be Young and taking care of so many wives.¹¹⁸

A positive portrayal of Brigham Young and polygamy came from *The American West*, in an article about Richard Burton (1821-1890). An early English explorer who liked to travel the world in disguise while taking notes on the customs and cultures of different people, Burton mainly studied the sexual practices of his subjects. These included the "harems in Egypt", the "polyandry and homosexuality in India," and polygamy in Salt Lake City, Utah. One of Burton's books, *City of the Saints and Across the Rocky Mountains to California*, was published in England in 1861.¹¹⁹ While visiting

¹¹⁵ McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 211.

¹¹⁶ Steve Murdock, "Mormon Trails in the Midwest," *Travel* (January 1972): 62; Kenneth L. Woodward and Eloise Salholz, "A Mormon Revelation," *Newsweek* (30 March 1981): 76.

¹¹⁷ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 69.

¹¹⁸ Paul, "The Mormons," 78.

¹¹⁹ Laura Foster Wilson, "Richard Burton Visits the City of the Saints," *The American West* (January 1975): 4.

Salt Lake City he visited with President Young and found the prophet to be level-headed and pleasant. In his book he dispelled rumors he had heard of "Mormonism's" instabilities. He even listed pros and cons of polygamy, giving a positive review of the practice. The article mentioned that Burton's niece from the eastern United States felt her uncle was too favorable toward the religion, while others who had read the book took a more lenient view and said it was the most unbiased view ever written about the "Mormons."¹²⁰

One other article that pointed an interesting spotlight on polygamy came from the magazine *People Weekly*. In 1978, the magazine reported that a "feminist" working on her "Ph.D. thesis in counseling psychology at Northwestern University" answered some questions on her study of how "Mormon polygamy . . . liberated the wives." Her study involved looking through the diaries of "Mormon pioneer women between 1847 and 1885." It was reported that she found ninety-one percent of wives consented to the "second and further marriages," and also that jealousy and envy were often overcome as the women "genuinely came to love each other."¹²¹ The liberating advantage, according to the study's author, was that wives "were literally heads of households" while their husbands were "away visiting other wives." Many times this meant that wives managed the farm, ranch, or other business ventures. When families lived in the same house the women split up various responsibilities that freed their time for doing other things they enjoyed. The study in *People Weekly* showed that fifty-four percent of wives worked full-

¹²⁰ Wilson, "Richard Burton Visits the Saints," 9.

¹²¹ Witt and Burgess-Olson, "Polygamy Liberated the Wives," 55-56.

time outside of the home.¹²²

Effects of Programs and Practices on Image

When Church programs were discussed in national magazines the Latter-day Saints were seen as having determination and conviction, characterized by self-reliance, hard work, and dedication to the family. Figure 6 in Chapter 8 indicates the theme was not frequent, however, the effects of Church programs did raise the public image of the Church. Missionary work, the welfare plan, and Family Home Evening were topics within the programs theme.

Church practices, or rites (see Figure 7 in Chapter 8), revealed a people dedicated to their spiritual well-being and ancestors. The Washington D.C. Temple's dedication in 1974 helped bring national awareness on the reasons for temples, and the Granite Mountain vaults played a role in drawing attention to genealogy.

Though the Church does not advocate polygamy, magazines still frequently mentioned that plural marriage was once an important practice in the religion. Assessments of the practice were negative at times, but primarily explained the custom according to magazine writers' understanding. The idea that Latter-day Saints still believed in polygamy, but could not practice it was one of the major factors in lowering the Church's image concerning this theme. There were favorable looks at the practice indicating that Brigham Young and other early polygamists were honorable men. Figure 8 in Chapter 8 shows these trends.

¹²² Witt and Burgess-Olson, "Polygamy Liberated the Wives," 58.

CHAPTER 6

LATTER-DAY SAINT PAST

When magazines described Latter-day Saints from 1970 to 1981, they often referred to the Church's rich, historical past. The events that took the Saints from New York to the Salt Lake Valley refined the Latter-day Saints into the prosperous people seen today. Often the reports of the Church's origins were fair; there were times, however, when some magazines portrayed Latter-day Saint origins unfavorably. Despite the pessimism, the media's portrayal of the Church's history largely showed a determined people committed to their religion and true to their God.

Origins

While several articles discussed pioneer journeys leading to Salt Lake Valley, only a few tried to explain where "Mormonism" began. Two particular magazines, *American Heritage* and *The Saturday Evening Post*, appeared unbiased as they told the Prophet Joseph Smith's story. In 1820, when the young prophet was just fourteen years old, magazines recounted that he knelt in prayer and asserted that Jesus Christ and God the Father appeared to him and he was then called to perform a great work. A few years later in 1823 an angel named Moroni appeared and prepared Joseph Smith to receive gold plates, which he obtained four years later in 1827. These plates contained a record written in an "ancient language" of the early inhabitants of the American continent. "Through the power of God" the records were translated into what is today known as *The Book of Mormon*. *The Saturday Evening Post* specified that several prophets from

ancient America wrote in the book, including a prophet named Mormon, for whom the book was called. The same magazine revealed that Latter-day Saints had received the nickname "Mormons" from the book.

After *The Book of Mormon* was translated, *The Saturday Evening Post* noted that "heavenly messengers restored the authority, to reorganize the original church of Jesus Christ which they indicated had been taken from the earth with the martyrdom of the original twelve apostles." In April 1830, Joseph Smith officially organized that Church with just six members. These descriptions of the Church's origins appeared to be fair and unbiased.¹ This was not the case from other sources.

U.S. News began telling the story of the Church's beliefs and creeds "from scriptures that members believe were given to the founding prophet Joseph Smith, a farm boy from Palmyra, N.Y." The scripture referred to was published in the early 1800s and told the "saga of an ancient tribe of Israel who sailed to the New World and converted to Christianity after a visit to [by] the resurrected Jesus." With language expressing doubt in the religion's claims, the magazine quipped that the church talked about in the *Book of Mormon* was "supposedly destroyed by warring factions of the civilization." Though the information from the article was mostly correct, the wording gave impressions of doubt.²

Of the articles examined, *Harpers'* coverage of Joseph Smith and the Church's origins was the most negative. Asserting that the truthfulness of "Mormonism" rested on one person, Joseph Smith Jr., the article's author called Smith a "necromancer" who convinced people he could see "buried treasure" under the ground. The article's writer briefly recounted the numerous times Joseph Smith went to court on charges of being a

¹ Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," See also Paul, "The Mormons," 77.

² Mann, "Utah Wrestles With Its Future," 72.

"disorderly person" and an "imposter." The magazine declared that Latter-day Saints trusted fully in the *Book of Mormon* and should have questioned it more. Also that Joseph Smith only "claimed" to have had a "supernatural visitation." In the article the Prophet was called a "soothsayer" with personal charm and leadership power. When reviewing the account of the First Vision, the article's author remarked the Father and Son appeared to Smith and told him that all other "competing religions" were wrong, and to "standby." Seven years after that vision Joseph Smith was reported to receive the Golden Plates, which he received with two "peep-stones" he used to view "reformed Egyptian" as it "wiggled" itself into "modern English."³ The result was the *Book of Mormon* and a Church that "has survived 150 years of scorn." Mocking the use of "Saints," the article's author said, "[Smith's] small band of followers has grown to 3.6 million putative [supposed] Saints." This article was the only one found containing a harsh review of the Church's origins.⁴

In more favorable circumstances, the year 1980 marked the sesquicentennial of the Church's humble beginnings. *Americana* featured an article during that year reviewing the Church's origins and focusing on the restoration of the cabin where the Church was organized. Using "journals of the early church leaders" the cabin was reconstructed and prepared for dedication on 6 April 1980 as part of the sesquicentennial celebration. The article accurately told the Church's story, and lifted the Church's image.⁵ During that year *Reader's Digest* carried a seven-page advertisement in which the Church

³ The term golden plates refers to "the anciently engraved metal plates from which Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon." Source: Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4:1768.

⁴ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 68.

⁵ JoAnn Jolley, "In the Days Ahead: The Mormons' 150th Anniversary," *Americana* (March/April 1980): 89-90.

described its origins.⁶ Besides coverage of Church origins, the persecution of early Church members also received awareness in national periodicals.

Persecution of the Early Saints

The theology and practices of the Latter-day Saints not only set them apart from other religions in 19th century America, it also caused persecution to follow the Saints as they moved from place to place. *Travel* concluded that the story of "Mormonism" was an example of the United States being a "religious battle ground," and made this statement on the subject: "Perhaps no church group in America has had to endure the particularly violent kind of persecution that drove members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from New York to Ohio to Missouri to Illinois and, eventually, across the plains and mountains to Utah."⁷ While in Missouri the Saints endured mob violence that destroyed their homes and fields. *Harpers* mentioned the extermination order issued by Governor Lilburn W. Boggs of Missouri, which declared the "Mormons" must leave the state or be killed. This led to the Church's "escape" to a swampland in Illinois that came to be known as Nauvoo.⁸

After the Saints had built up their great city of Nauvoo, *National Geographic* reported that polygamy might have played a part in driving the Church across the plains. However, the magazine stated that of all the reasons, perhaps another was, "[the Mormons'] enviable success in agriculture and commerce." The magazine referred to the quick success Nauvoo enjoyed, under the leadership of Joseph Smith, when the city

⁶ "The First 150 Years," *Reader's Digest* (July 1980): 33-38.

⁷ Murdock, "Mormon Trails," 58.

⁸ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 70. The term Nauvoo means "beautiful" in Hebrew, and refers to a city in Illinois that was established in the early 1840s by Joseph Smith and the Latter-day Saints.

became one of the fastest growing in the state, and Illinoisans were afraid of political domination by the religion.⁹ *Harpers* and *Travel* declared that one reason the Latter-day Saints were driven from Nauvoo was the result of Joseph Smith's actions when he ordered the destruction of a newspaper press that was printing material opposing him. Those two magazines also held that the newspaper fight eventually led to Smith's death at Carthage Jail in the summer of 1844, which was more evidence of the persecution the Church endured.¹⁰ *U.S. News* and *Harpers* also told of the mob action in June 1844 which took the Prophet's life without any chance of a trial.¹¹

Concerning the difficulties the Saints had to endure, *American Heritage* observed, "Paradoxically, the assaults upon [the Mormons] had a unifying effect: nothing so unites a group as the sense of standing together against a hostile world."¹² *U.S. News* made a similar observation while looking at what the Salt Lake Valley and Utah had become: "Mormons, one of the most persecuted religious groups in U.S. history, are emerging on their 150th anniversary as one of the nation's strongest churches." The magazine quoted Gordon B. Hinckley, then a senior member of the Church's Twelve Apostles, using the Church's early hardships as one of the reasons for the continued Latter-day Saint devotion, and calling the Church "an anchor of certainty in these unsteady times."¹³

Science also referred to the Latter-day Saint persecution. The article insinuated that Utah newcomers found people "clannish." The reasons the magazine gave for that "sense of community," came from the early "gentile persecution," and "exodus" from the

⁹ McCarry, "Utah's Shining Oasis," 445.

¹⁰ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 70; Murdock, "Mormon Trails," 61.

¹¹ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 70; Mann, "Grappling With Growing Pains," 42. For more details on the persecution in Nauvoo and the death of the Prophet in Carthage, Illinois, see Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 3:987-93., and 2:860-62.

¹² Paul, "The Mormons," 77.

¹³ Mann, "Grappling With Growing Pains," 42.

east. The magazine felt Latter-day Saints naturally turned to each other for help and friendship because their leaders up to this time (1976) had been born in the 19th century, and perpetuated the early pioneer ethos of relying on one another. The article's author felt that these attitudes would change, as the leadership got younger and opened up to "urbanization and industrialization."¹⁴ Along with the topic of early Church persecution was the interest in Brigham Young and the pioneers.

Brigham Young, the Pioneers, and Salt Lake City

After Joseph Smith was killed at Carthage Jail, Church leadership fell to the shoulders of Brigham Young. *Sports Illustrated* described Young as a "mighty man" who stood five-foot-ten, and had a forty-four inch chest. The magazine continued with an explanation of Young's conversion to "Mormonism" from the Methodist Episcopal Reform Church, and described his character as a "brilliant, charismatic leader who advocated the hearty life." Accordingly, these qualities earned him the title "Lion of the Lord." To illustrate the dedication and determination of the prophet, *Sports Illustrated* quoted Brigham Young as saying, "Many persons are so constituted that if you put them in a parlor, keep a good fire for them, furnish the tea, cake, sweet meats, etc., and nurse them tenderly, soaking their feet and putting them to bed they will die in a short time. But throw them into snowbanks and they will live a great many years."¹⁵ These qualities were necessary to take the Latter-day Saints "on one of history's most dramatic migrations."¹⁶

¹⁴ Walsh, "Challenging the Federal Patron," 163.

¹⁵ Ottum, "When the Latter-day Saints Go Marching In," 88.

¹⁶ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 70.

Though the pioneer trek from Nauvoo to the Salt Lake Valley was difficult and discouraging, magazines focused more on the participants' courage and strength. *Travel* magazine complimented the Saints with these words: "Whatever judgment history imposes upon the struggles between the Mormons and their enemies . . . the migration of these people remains one of the great sagas of pioneer courage."¹⁷ In *U.S. News* the writer marveled at how the Church's faith stood against the morally declining times. A philosophy professor from the University of Utah, Lewis Rogers, replied in an article that the Church's strength was in "its optimism," the same "optimism of those early pioneers who built a society where only a wasteland of a desert had been before."¹⁸

Further strength and optimism, illustrated in *American Heritage*, came from the pioneer view that the Latter-day Saints were God's chosen people. The magazine's writer further showed that the same view, of being a chosen people, created successful Latter-day Saint political and business leaders, and well-educated teachers in modern times.¹⁹ In an article on traveling to various pioneer sites, the idea that Latter-day Saints believed they were a chosen people was honored as a "Mormon characteristic" of refusing to "give up easily." The "chosen people" ideal was also credited with fostering "superhuman toil" and "Mormon ingenuity."²⁰

Several magazines referred to Salt Lake City as the Latter-day Saints' "Zion."²¹ *National Geographic's* article on the physical beauty of Salt Lake City was filled with complimentary comments on the early pioneers. Marveling at "the spanking clean

¹⁷ Murdock, "Mormon Trails," 68.

¹⁸ "Where Church Shapes Life of State," 60.

¹⁹ Paul, "The Mormons," 83.

²⁰ Irwin Bauer, "Exploring Old Mormon Trails," *Travel/Holiday* (May 1978): 40-41.

²¹ Ottum, "When the Latter-day Saints Go Marching In," 88. See also Mann, "Grappling With Growing Pains," 42; "Where Church Shapes Life of State," 60.

metropolis," that came from a barren desert, the article's title was "Utah's Shining Oasis." Church President Spencer W. Kimball told the magazine that when Brigham Young entered the valley there was only one tree, and pioneers planted all the rest. President Kimball felt the soil was prepared for the Church, because it brought forth its beauty once the pioneers came with determination to prosper. President Young, himself, was admired as a city planner because Salt Lake City had a beautifully organized layout.²²

One other interesting perspective about what the pioneers had become, came from some photos in *Society* magazine taken by a Latter-day Saint, George Edward Anderson. The article was not the typical essay of words, but contained pictures of Utah that Anderson took in the late 1800s, and early 1900s, of "all he could of his land and his church."²³ Families standing in front of their humble homes, and children kneeling in prayer—black smiths, broom-makers, and bakers—a schoolhouse yard filled with children in a large circle—American flags covering an old car—and the Manti temple under construction in 1886 were portrayed. Together, the photo essay showed an educated, patriotic, hard working people, dedicated to their God and families.²⁴

Autographs and Architecture

Interest in the pioneers and early Church history also manifested itself in *Hobbies* magazine. An interest in collecting "Mormon" autographs began in 1975 with specific autographs from the Nauvoo days. The writer of the article recognized that "though little more than a village today, Nauvoo, Ill., has a heritage more intricate than cities many

²² McCarry, "Utah's Shining Oasis," 440-41.

²³ Rell G. Francis, "The Utah Photographs of George Edward Anderson," *Society* (January/February 1980): 58.

²⁴ Francis, "Photographs of George Edward Anderson," 57-61.

times its size. It is a glowing page of Americana history and deserving of a collector's interest." Some of the suggested historical Latter-day Saint names that one should try to add to their collections were Joseph Smith as mayor, and John C. Bennett, who served for a time in Nauvoo as "'acting counselor' in the First Presidency of the Church," and as mayor for a time. Other names such as Hyrum Smith, Joseph Smith's brother, and Sidney Rigdon, First Counselor in the First Presidency before becoming disaffected in the early Nauvoo years, were potential additions to collections and were explained as hard to find.²⁵

In 1976, another article from *Hobbies* covered autographs focusing on the Kirtland and Missouri era. Signatures that were common during this time period were Oliver Cowdery's, one of the three witnesses to the *Book of Mormon*, due to his legal career, and two of the eight witnesses to the *Book of Mormon*, Hyrum and Samuel Smith's.²⁶ It was also suggested that collections from this period would be incomplete without signatures from some of the Church's enemies like Samuel Bogart who "led anti-Mormon forces at the battle of Crooked River," and Lilburn W. Boggs, the "Governor who signed the extermination order driving the Mormons from [Missouri]." Even friends of the "Mormons" who were not members like "Alexander W. Doniphan and David Rice Atchison" were necessary for a complete collection.²⁷

In 1981, Steven Barnett, author of the first two articles, wrote what he called his "third and final article . . . on Mormon-related autographs." These signatures centered on

²⁵ Steven G. Barnett, "Nauvoo, Illinois—The City of the Mormons As a Collecting Subject," *Hobbies* (June 1975): 130.

²⁶ The terms "three witnesses" and "eight witnesses" refer to the men privileged to behold the Gold Plates from which Joseph Smith translated the *Book of Mormon*.

²⁷ Steven G. Barnett, "Collecting Early Period Mormon Autographs," *Hobbies* (June 1976): 154.

"the western period" of Church history. Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball (original member of the Quorum of the Twelve), and Daniel H. Wells (Second Counselor in the First Presidency to Brigham Young after leaving Nauvoo), were a few of the suggested autographs found on such things as letters and mission calls.²⁸ One desirable signature from each time period, that would never be had, because he could not write his name, was Orrin Porter Rockwell, described as "the gunfighter Mormon." However, Barnett informed that Rockwell would sign documents with an "X" and that obtaining one of those would be sought-after.²⁹ Another topic that reflected interest in Latter-day Saint history was early styles of pioneer architecture.

An article in *The American West*, written by a professor of English and Folklore at the University of Utah, explored the designs of "early Mormon houses." Structures were nearly always "log cabins and stone or brick houses," and as the Saints "spread along the Wasatch Front and beyond during the 1850s . . . the preferred house type" was called by the "Mormon settlers" the "Nauvoo style." Its description "was a central-hall brick or stone structure with two chimneys and a symmetrical façade." The article's author praised the house style and religion: "[The Nauvoo style house] embodied the virtues of solidity, simplicity, and practicality that well characterized the Saints themselves."³⁰

These articles on historic "Mormon" autographs and early pioneer architecture are not viewed as particularly influential on the Church's public image. They did illustrate,

²⁸ Steven G. Barnett, "Collecting Mormon Autographs: The Western Period," *Hobbies* (March 1981): 100.

²⁹ Barnett, "Collecting Early Mormon Autographs," 154; Barnett, "Collecting Western Period Autographs," 101.

³⁰ Jan Harold Brunvand, "The Architecture of Zion," *The American West* (March 1976): 28-29.

however, an interest in various subjects in Latter-day Saint history.

Challenges to the Origins of the Latter-day Saints

In the summer of 1977 *Time* magazine presented a story that challenged the authenticity of the *Book of Mormon* and Joseph Smith. Acknowledging the tremendous success and growth of "Mormonism," the article announced that "four California researchers ... say they have evidence that the [*Book of Mormon*] is a hoax." The "evidence" was based on "a manuscript by Solomon Spalding" allegedly similar to the *Book of Mormon* in writing and content.

Solomon Spalding was called in the article "a Congregational minister and sometime novelist who died in 1816." Spalding had an "unpublished . . . novel about the origins of the Indians . . . supposedly filched from a Pittsburgh publishing house by an itinerant preacher who gave the papers to [Joseph] Smith." Once the Prophet reportedly received the papers he used the ideas from it to write the *Book of Mormon* and inserted some of the Spalding pages into his own manuscript.

The proposed evidence that Joseph Smith had used Spalding's manuscript were twelve pages from the original *Book of Mormon* manuscript containing the handwriting of an unknown scribe. Three of the four researchers were "handwriting experts" and compared the script from the twelve *Book of Mormon* pages with "known specimens of Spalding's writing" and concluded, independently, that the "same man had written both sets of documents."

The author of the *Time* article asked the Church's historian, Leonard Arrington, his opinion on the controversy. Arrington's response was that the attack on the *Book of*

Mormon's validity meant "absolutely nothing." Arrington then presented a flaw in the researcher's conclusions. He pointed out, "the writing of the unknown scribe . . . 'follows on the same page and precedes on another page material written' by others. How . . . could twelve pages written by Spalding match the paper of pages that precede and follow them?" Since Spalding's manuscript was written before 1816 Arrington wondered why the paper was not different. The magazine presented that argument to the researchers who responded, "Smith was so poverty-stricken that he and his aides might have stuck sections of Spalding's manuscript between pages of their own in order to save paper, which was scarce and expensive in those days." The magazine referred to that answer as "somewhat lame."

In its concluding paragraph, the magazine stated that the Church "remain[ed] unruffled." It also noted that "researchers and handwriting experts" were welcome in Salt Lake City to further "study the original documents."³¹ One year later, in another article published in *Time*, the magazine briefly made this statement: "The effort of anti-Mormons to impugn the book through handwriting experts, on the theory that it was stolen from the manuscript of an old novel, fizzled out last year when one expert backed out and a second reversed his findings."³²

One other challenge to the origins of the Latter-day Saints emerged in 1981. Both *Time* and *Newsweek* described the findings of a man named Mark Hoffman who was involved in collecting rare Church documents. Hoffman had reportedly discovered a letter in which Joseph Smith declared his son, Joseph III, was the Prophet's rightful successor as president of the Church when the elder Smith died. If that were the case,

³¹ "Mormon Mystery," *Time* (11 July 1977): 69.

³² "Mormonism Enters New Era," 56.

according to the magazines, then Brigham Young and the official Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were wrong in their leadership direction following the martyrdom of the Prophet.

The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, now known as The Community of Christ, split from Brigham Young's group and had made Joseph III their prophet.³³ The reported letter found by Hoffman supported the Community of Christ's claim to legitimacy, and the magazines supposed a new debate could arise between the two sects.³⁴ Although the rest of this story did not play out within the scope of this study, it should be noted that Mark Hoffman was arrested for murder and forgery of historical "Mormon" documents in 1985.

Effects of Latter-day Saint Past on Image

When writing articles about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, several magazines described the religion's origins as understood by their authors. The portrayals of Joseph Smith's First Vision experience were mostly fair, as were the origins of the *Book of Mormon*. An increase in the reviews of these origins in 1980 were the result of the Church's sesquicentennial celebrations in Utah because of the founding of their faith.

Further coverage of the religion's beginnings focused on Brigham Young and the pioneers' arrival in what is now known as Utah. The pioneers were heralded for their courage, strength, and determination, and Salt Lake City was shown to prosper due to

³³ For more information on the Community of Christ (formerly known as The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), see: Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 3:1211-16.

³⁴ "And They Knew Not Joseph," *Time* (30 March 1981): 77; Woodward and Salholz, "A Mormon Revelation," 76.

early pioneer efforts. It was apparent from the coverage that the Church was proud of its roots, and that those outside the Church honored the Saints for their contribution to American history.

Despite a few negative attacks on Latter-day Saint origins and past, overall magazine coverage was neutral to positive. Figure 9 in Chapter 8 shows the image trends resulting from the origins theme.

CHAPTER 7

LATTER-DAY SAINT PEOPLE AND CULTURE

In addition to topics previously discussed in this thesis, several other unique perspectives on The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were portrayed in the press during the 1970s, including some of the doctrines of the religion, along with looking at the character of Latter-day Saints generally.

Emphasis on the importance of education was also reported as magazines focused attention on Brigham Young University. One final element of these miscellaneous topics includes the music of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

Doctrines and Beliefs

In reference to Latter-day Saint doctrine, one of the main topics written about was the Godhead. A *Newsweek* article observed, "The Mormons espouse a radical, anthropomorphic conception of God that sets them far apart from other religions." An explanation of the writer's assertion was that "Mormons" believed in a God that was married and who was always having children. The comment was also made that Church members did not believe God was a "Supreme Being" since he had a "divine father, grandfather, and so on into eternity."¹ *Time* magazine indicated that the Latter-day Saints did not believe in the Trinity as other Christian religions did, but believed that "God was once a man himself," and that he had "a body of flesh and bone." Latter-day Saints, the article noted, believed they could "become gods themselves in the afterlife."²

¹ Woodward, "What Mormons Believe," 68.

² "Mormonism Enters New Era," 56.

Concerning the beliefs of another member of the Godhead, Jesus Christ, a *Newsweek* article erroneously described the religion's view of grace: "Jesus' suffering and death in the Mormon view were brotherly acts of compassion, but they did not atone for the sins of others. This is why [the Mormons] do not include the cross in their iconography nor do they place much emphasis on Easter." That statement was preceded by the accusation that since Latter-day Saints believed they were born free from sin they could "earn their way to godhood by the proper exercise of free will, rather than through the grace of Jesus Christ."³ *America* magazine also portrayed the idea that "Mormons" left "little room for a doctrine of grace." The understanding of the article's author was that man had to emphasize "actions in elaborate rites and sealings" in order to "earn a place in heaven."⁴ Though members of the Church would dispute those ideas of Christ and grace as inaccurate, due to misunderstanding and misinformation, the writers effectively portrayed the religion negatively.

Another subject from *America* dealt with a Church belief in a "previous existence" wherein the spirits of men were loyal to God in "varying degrees." Calling this belief and others, "Mormon myth," the magazine said, "Lucifer drew one-third of the spirits into rebellion," while others came to earth either as "chosen people" or "gentiles." The gentiles did not follow Lucifer, according to the article, but they were "less faithful" than those then part of God's "Kingdom," or "Church."⁵ Along with those ideas, an article in *Time* reported that Latter-day Saints believed their Church to be "the one true 'restored' church," and that all other churches therefore were "an abomination."⁶

³ Woodward, "What Mormons Believe," 68.

⁴ McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 210.

⁵ McGowan, "Builders of American Zion," 210.

⁶ "Mormonism Enters New Era," 55-56.

Like the topic of pre-mortal life, the Church's view of the Second Coming invited commentary from magazines. One article described that when Christ returned again he would "establish his kingdom's capital at Independence, [Missouri]."⁷ A footnote explained that a "millennial temple" was supposed to be built by the Church in Independence, Missouri, before Christ returned. The problem, however, was that splinter groups from the official Church owned the proposed site, and that building the temple did not appear likely.⁸ A simple statement in the *National Geographic* article, about the Second Coming of Christ, illustrates that when reporting on "Mormon" beliefs many magazines were not trying to be malicious, they simply misunderstood. It imparted, "This new scripture [*Book of Mormon*] told of Christ's second coming to the New World, rejected the doctrine of original sin, and differed in other important respects from the dicta of other churches."⁹ The *Book of Mormon* does not give an account of Christ's future "second coming," rather it describes Christ's past visit to the ancient Americas.

It appears the authors of the articles that dealt with Latter-day Saint beliefs, were trying to be neutral and to explain the Church's doctrine according to their understanding. Nearly always, however, as magazines tried to explain the beliefs of the Church to their readers, misrepresentation led to a negative portrayal of Latter-day Saints.

General Characterization of Church Members

Aside from characterizations of Latter-day Saints noted in previous chapters,

⁷ The place, Independence, Missouri, was designated by the Lord in Doctrine and Covenants 57:2-3 as the site for "the city of Zion." For more detail on this topic see, Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 678-79.

⁸ "Mormonism Enters New Era," 56. See also Mann, "Grappling With Growing Pains," 42.

⁹ McCarry, "Utah's Shining Oasis," 445.

there were some generally optimistic statements made about Church members that merit observation. *Time* magazine made a good statement about the public's interest in the Church: "The appeal of Mormonism today stems as much from its stable, self-contained lifestyles as from its doctrine—perhaps more so." The magazine also commented that Church members were "the very epitome of successful striving, patriotism and clean-cut, law-abiding morality." The feelings of "instant community" and focus on family, along with the welfare system that helped take care of one another, were reasons given for the Church drawing converts.¹⁰

An article on Utah in *National Geographic* highlighted a Latter-day Saint family and their time together to show family unity. The Robert Clyde family, who operated a sheep ranch, was displayed as hard working and loving toward each other. The article pointed out that Clyde was a "state senator and local church leader" whose number one priority was his wife and children.¹¹ To strengthen those familial ties the Clyde household gathered every Monday night for "family home evening" where they would discuss "spiritual matters."¹² Though the parents indicated they raised their children in the Church, they advised the interviewers that they did not force the religion on their children. They also admitted that some of their children did go through some "rebellious stages," but that as parents they believed in leading by example, and that in time their children return to Church teachings. The magazine reported that the parents' philosophy worked, for their son Tom went on a two-year mission for the Church and told the magazine that his dad was his "idol."¹³

¹⁰ "Mormonism Enters New Era," 56.

¹¹ McCarry, "Utah's Shining Oasis," 459.

¹² McCarry, "Utah's Shining Oasis," 460.

¹³ McCarry, "Utah's Shining Oasis," 463.

Even articles that were generally negative or critical toward the Church had some good things to share about Latter-day Saints. *Science* magazine, in an unfavorable article toward the Church, noted that "the individual 'saint' is likely to have an energy, simplicity of manners, and friendliness which is very appealing."¹⁴ The author of the article in *Harpers*, who generally ridiculed the Church, managed to insert this compliment: "'Mormons' is a neutral nickname for members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The term was a pejorative in the nineteenth century, and only gradually has it become less spiteful. 'Saints' or 'LDS' still sounds more polite. I never came across one who wasn't courteous, helpful, poised, and the sort you'd trust to run an errand. They're nice, the Mormons I've met. They see their duty and they do it."¹⁵ From *U.S. News*, in an article unfavorable toward Church origins, this was shared, "From these unorthodox beginnings has grown a doctrine stressing close families, hard work, patriotism, free enterprise, tithing and abstention from alcohol, coffee, tobacco and extramarital sex."¹⁶ Each of these statements was complimentary and showed Latter-day Saints did have convictions. To explain why Latter-day Saints had such convictions, President Kimball told *U.S. News* that the strengths of the youth and membership of the Church came from sacrifice. He remarked, "I think people are looking for a faith that not only gives them a definite belief but makes demands on them in work, money and faithfulness to their belief. If they are inspired by their faith, these demands and sacrifices don't deter them. In fact, their faith is deepened."¹⁷

¹⁴ Walsh, "Challenging the Federal Patron," 163.

¹⁵ Danforth, "Cult of Mormonism," 66.

¹⁶ Mann, "Utah Wrestles With Its Future," 73. See also Mann, "Grappling With Growing Pains," 42; "Where Church Shapes Life of State," 59.

¹⁷ "How Mormons Cope," 61.

One other element that clarified the character and image of Church members pertained to a famous "Mormon" singing duo, Donny and Marie Osmond. The brother and sister team were heralded for their great success and "uniquely wholesome image." *The Saturday Evening Post* reported, "When Chinese Deputy Premier Teng Hsiao-Ping made his celebrated visit to the United States last year, he told his hosts that there were two American attractions he felt he must see. First, he said, he hoped to visit Disneyland. The second request? To meet Donny and Marie Osmond and hear them sing." The magazine commented that as the Osmonds performed for "Teng" he was "visibly moved."¹⁸ While several magazines spoke of the popular duo's fame, two articles in particular show that Donny and Marie became part of the image that defined the general public's view of the Church. The magazine *New West* noted the Osmonds' popularity in the field of entertainment, and declared that "the cherubic pair is the very embodiment of the Mormon ideal—wealthy, American, devout, white, patriotic, self-reliant, family oriented, hard-working and overwhelmingly nice."¹⁹ Another evidence that the Osmonds were used to characterize Latter-day Saints in general came from *Sports Illustrated*. Writing about the innocence and naïveté of students at Brigham Young University, the author of the article exclaimed that the student body was too perfect, like "hundreds of Donnys and Maries."²⁰

The Importance of Education: Brigham Young University

Another topic that defined part of the Church's image was its emphasis on

¹⁸ Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 66.

¹⁹ Kaye, "Invisible Empire," 41.

²⁰ Ottum, "When the Latter-day Saints Go Marching In," 87.

education. *Forbes* complimented the Church for prioritizing education. They wrote, "The church has put a high premium on education ever since Brigham Young's day. In fact, Utah is said to have a higher level of education per capita than practically any other state in the Union."²¹ This admiration for the Church's educational ideals led to the claim that BYU was the "largest private university in the United States...educat[ing] thousands each year."²²

Two magazines commented on the founding of the school in 1875 by Brigham Young. Explaining that BYU was the "largest church-operated university in the world," *National Geographic* explained that Dr. Karl G. Maeser was the first principal. Both this magazine and *Sports Illustrated* included this charge to Maeser from President Young: "I want you to remember that you ought not to teach the alphabet or the multiplication tables without the spirit of God."²³

Just as education at BYU gained favorable reviews, so did the university's sports program. LaVell Edwards, the University's newly hired football coach, was called the "best" the team ever had, and *Sports Illustrated* indicated that hopes were high in Provo for some productive years ahead. The school's football stadium was to be remodeled in 1981 with an additional 18,000 new seats and the future was promising.²⁴

Along with the favorable views of BYU, some unfavorable attention given to the University and education dealt with some of the school's standards. In 1974, *Rolling Stone* reported that a music poll taken at BYU April 1973, recognized rock and roll band

²¹ "Busy Like Bees," 25.

²² Jones and Benson, "Healthy in Body and Soul," 125.

²³ McCarry, "Utah's Shining Oasis," 444. See also Ottum, "When the Latter-day Saints Go Marching In," 88.

²⁴ Ottum, "When the Latter-day Saints Go Marching In," 90.

"Three Dog Night" at the top of the favorite list. Due to those results the social director of the school decided to bring the band to Provo. However, the magazine reported that in the Church's General Conference in October of that year, General Authority Boyd K. Packer gave a talk on music that was often associated with "shabbiness ... immorality ... [and] ... addiction." In the article, *Rolling Stone* reported that BYU officials announced they would be in harmony with the Church's leaders and were no longer inviting "Three Dog Night." Also, the magazine exclaimed that any performers invited to BYU could not drink or cuss. These standards were already in place for the student body. The article writer reviewed standards at BYU where students had to live by the "Word of Wisdom," the men were to keep their hair short and sideburns trimmed, and girls could not wear jeans. The magazine also pointed out that University President Dallin H. Oaks told professors that students failing to abide by these rules were not allowed to take final exams and could be refused a grade.²⁵ The standards at BYU were often viewed favorably. In this case the portrayal of the strict rules was negative.

Another unfavorable topic in education was the view that the Church stifled intellectual thinking at BYU. In *Science*, when it was reported that the University would accept no Title IX funds, the article's author was concerned that the religion might restrict BYU from teaching educational theories that conflicted with Church doctrine.²⁶ *The Humanist* held a similar position, saying that "Mormon scholars" had the difficult task of being fair with history since something they said or wrote could lead to

²⁵ "The Mormon Word: No Hair, Sex Or 3 Dog Night," *Rolling Stone* (17 January 1974): 12.

²⁶ Walsh, "Alternative R & D Style," 365.

"excommunication."²⁷ The article's writer called this a discouragement of "freedom of speech," and mocked that "Mormons" believed intellectualism caused a "loss of faith."²⁸

This last example of unfavorable outlooks on education at BYU was not frequently addressed, though it was very unfavorable toward the Church. A totally different topic that also was not addressed very often, but was very positive was the famed Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

The Mormon Tabernacle Choir

In 1979, a small advertisement in *Consumer's Research Magazine*, for a recording entitled "Hail to the Victor," praised this release as a "super performance and recording." The album sold for \$7.98 and raved that, "Columbia Records has produced a nostalgic disk likely to cause goose flesh on nearly every alumnus who listens to it."²⁹ The famed Mormon Tabernacle Choir was the group, and the attention it received was typically good.³⁰

Several magazines briefly mentioned the choir, but only one article in *Reader's Digest* had the choir as its main subject. In 1958, the choir sang with Eugene Ormandy and the "renowned Philadelphia Orchestra," and gave Philadelphia a performance it would "never forget." Originating with Welsh pioneers who "gathered to sing in an outdoor shelter which is today the site of Temple Square," the magazine noted that the choir was composed of "unpaid volunteers." One day, Brigham Young heard them sing

²⁷ Petersen, "The Letter Killeth," 16-17.

²⁸ Petersen, "The Letter Killeth," 19.

²⁹ Walter F. Grueninger, "Hail to the Victors!," *Consumers' Research Magazine* (February 1979): 43.

³⁰ Woodward, "Race Revelations," 67.

in their native tongue and encouraged them, "You should become the nucleus of a great church choir."³¹ That prophecy was "fulfilled" in 1929 when "the choir first achieved national acclaim from a . . . network radio broadcast."³²

Some of the statistics of the "Singing Saints" that the magazine gave were amazing. The choir's regular program on CBS called "Music and the Spoken Word," in its 46th year, was called "the oldest continuous network program in the United States." Millions heard the Choir as it aired "over 560 U.S. radio and TV stations, plus nearly as many over seas."³³

Ormandy told Isaac Stewart, the choir's president, that he had "heard all the world's great choirs and . . . none [could] compare with the Tabernacle Choir." He asked Stewart, "Why is yours the greatest choir in the world?" Stewart's answer was simple: "We have a great conductor, great organist and dedicated members. But the real key is that it is *the Lord's choir*."³⁴

Effects of People and Culture on Image

Latter-day Saint theology caused some pessimistic views of the Church due to misunderstanding. Church beliefs are different from most other religions and in explaining Latter-day Saint beliefs magazines often misrepresented actual Church doctrines. For this reason, theology was second to the hierarchy theme when bringing down the Church's image. Figure 10 in Chapter 8 shows this theme's trend.

³¹ Leland Stowe, "When the Saints Come Singing In," *Reader's Digest* (April 1975): 45-46.

³² Stowe, "Saints Come Singing In," 46-47.

³³ Stowe, "Saints Come Singing In," 47-48.

³⁴ Stowe, "Saints Come Singing In," 50.

Characterizations of Latter-day Saints in magazines were generally positive due to portrayals of a clean, hard working, and patriotic people. Challenges to these views came from stereotyping Church members as unaccepting, or cliquish regarding those with other beliefs. Figure 11 in Chapter 8 shows this theme's trends.

Education is important to Latter-day Saints, and magazines recognized this with their appraisals of BYU. The standards at BYU were generally admired, although viewed as strict. The obstacle to a favorable image of BYU and education came from some reporting that the Church intellectually repressed its members by exerting the threat of excommunication to those found unfaithful to Church doctrines. This topic's trends are reflected in Figure 12 in Chapter 8.

A topic not reported on frequently in national periodicals, but always positive, was the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Known all over the world as one of the great singing groups ever, the choir was treated with respect and awe at its great talent. This topic's trends are also found in Figure 12.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The time period of 1970 to 1981 were years both challenging and strengthening to the public image of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in national periodicals. Reading and evaluating articles and information from these various magazines revealed people, events, and causes affecting this image. As was mentioned in chapter one of this thesis, national magazines are important historical sources since authors of their articles write to reflect the "prevailing points of view" of their audiences, and therefore help to "formulate public opinion."

This thesis followed two previous studies, by Richard O. Cowan and Dale P. Pelo, which established methodology used to access and analyze the data. First, articles were gathered using the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* and computer databases. To avoid bias, magazines catering to any religious audience were excluded. This left news, literary, and other magazines directed to general national audiences. Ninety-four articles were identified using this method, the majority found in 1980 and 1981. After the articles were identified, each was read and given an overall rating of a -2 for obviously biased, "anti-Mormon" writing, a -1 for unfavorable treatment toward the Church and/or its members, a 0 if the approach was neutral, a +1 for a favorable description and a +2 if the writing was "pro-Mormon" biased. Along with giving each article a rating, individual themes within each piece of writing were rated using the same criteria. The following ten categories were the themes used in the study: race, socio-economic, hierarchy, programs, rites, polygamy, origins, theology, people, and cultural. These categories are explained in

more detail later in the chapter and were the same ones used in the previous studies.

Finally, the information gathered became the basis of a description of the Church's image in national magazines.

Overall Treatment of the Church in National Periodicals

Figure 1 indicates two things—first, the number of articles found in each year, and two, the average article ratings within each year. Beginning in 1970 three magazine reports yielded an average rating of a -1, or an unfavorable Church view. This was due to attention given to the Church's policy to withhold its "priesthood" from blacks of African decent. Two years, 1971 and 1975, moved the portrayal and Church image in the favorable direction mainly due to attention given J. Willard Marriott and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, respectively. From 1976 on, the image once again moved in the unfavorable direction mainly because of the view of political domination by Church leaders in Salt Lake City and Utah.

Figure 2 shows the same trend line from chart one, with an added line indicating the "direction" of the themes within each article. (A trend line shows the direction of the Church's image over set number of years.) The ratings of each theme, in each year, were weighted for a clearer picture of the image of the Church. The theme trend line is more accurate than the article trend line, because more details were considered from each article than just the overall rating. For example, an article rated "unfavorable" could still have some favorable themes, although the unfavorable themes dominated the entire piece. Nevertheless, the directions of the themes and articles followed a similar trend.

Figure 1
Total Number of Articles and Average Ratings Per Year

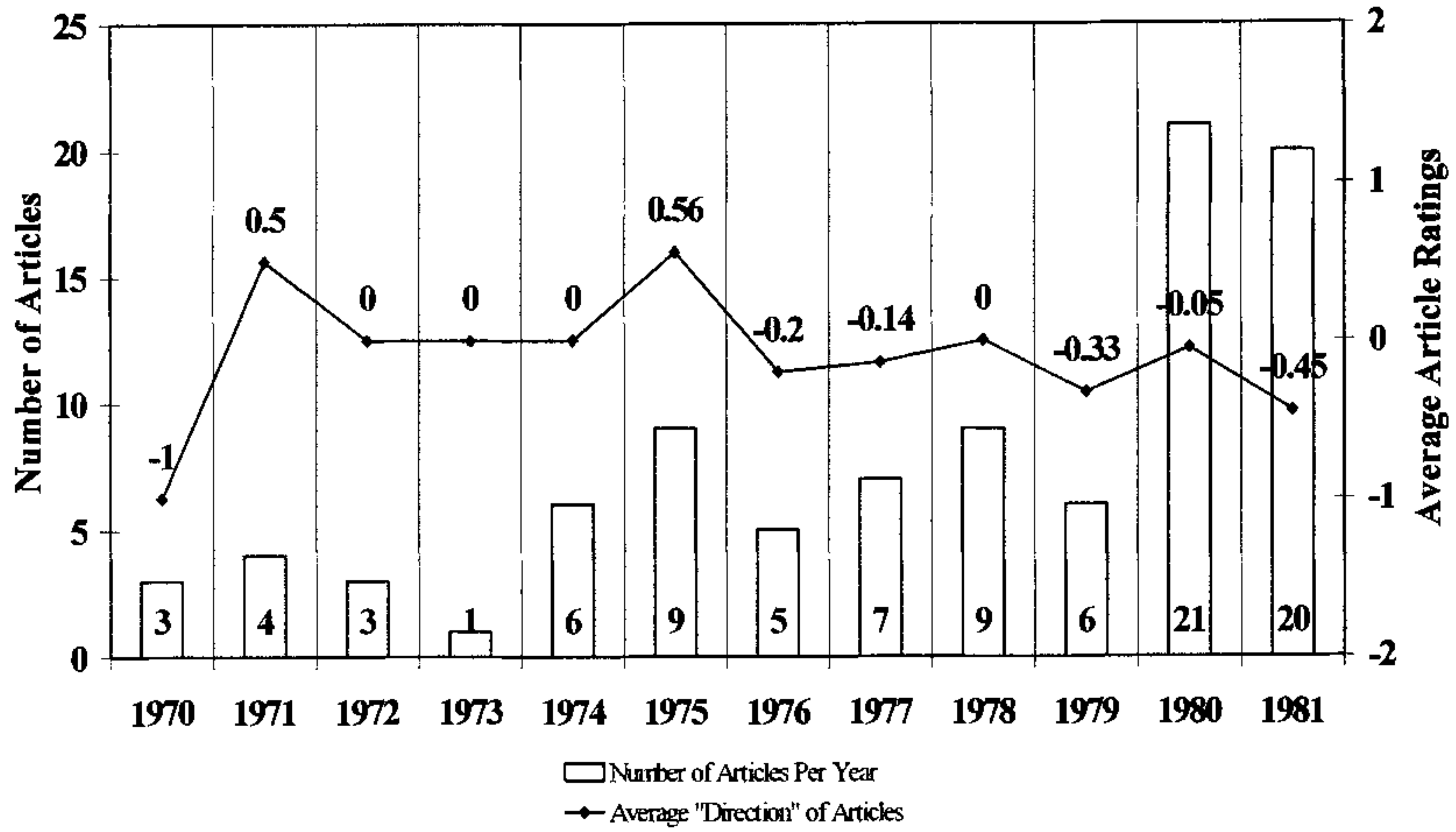
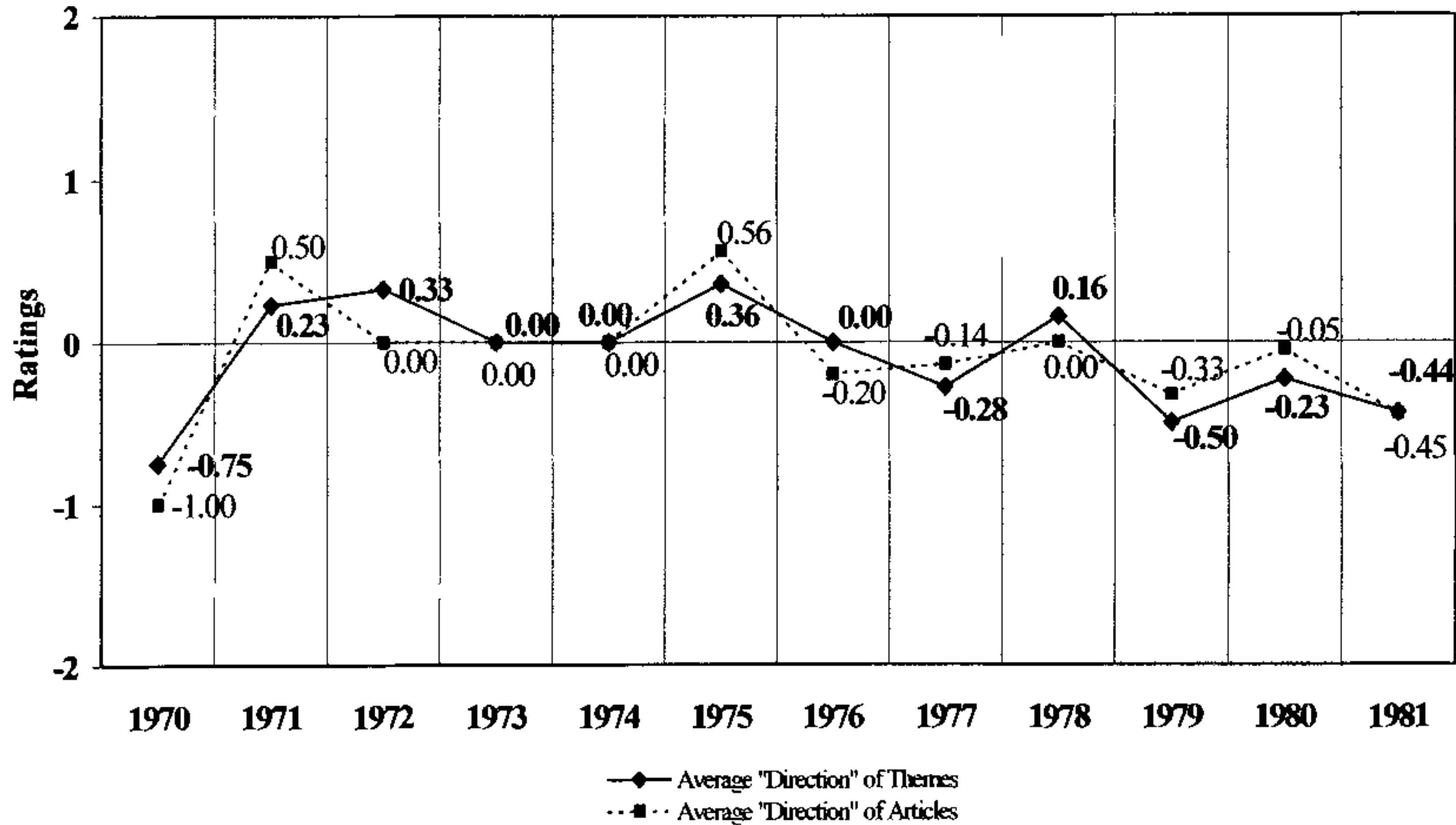


Figure 2
'Direction' of the Periodicals' Image: 1970-1981



Using the theme line indicates 1978 as a year wherein the image moved slightly above the neutral mark. This was mainly due to the positive attention given to the revelation allowing all worthy males, in the Church, to hold the priesthood. The lowest point, other than in 1971, was in 1979 and was attributed to the Church's stand against the Equal Rights Amendment, and attention given to the excommunication of Church member Sonia Johnson in December of that year.

Throughout the period under review, the trend line stayed relatively close to the neutral line of the scale. At least one reason for this is indicated in Table 1. This table was calculated by taking the number of articles from each magazine and averaging their ratings into an overall score for the magazine. Out of thirty-six magazines, ten had ratings of zero, fourteen were in the positive range, and twelve were negative. Therefore, the overall ratings also stayed near the neutral line because the more subjective articles on either side consistently canceled each other out.

Table 1 also indicates which magazines were favorable or unfavorable towards the Church. *Harpers* magazine, with one article, was rated the most pessimistic toward the Church. *Time* and *Newsweek* had the most articles about the Church and its members, and overall, each was unfavorable. Some of the most favorable magazines were *The Saturday Evening Post* with just one article, and *Americana* with three. For the most part, few magazines wrote frequently on the Church and its members.

Figures 3 –12 review each theme used in this study. Counting the number of times a theme was addressed each year, shows in part the media's interest in a specific topic. An explanation of each theme and its treatment follows.

Table 1

Articles and Ratings by Magazine

<u>Magazine</u>	<u>Number of Articles</u>	<u>Ratings</u>	<u>Published</u>
America	2	-0.50	Weekly
Americana	3	1.00	Bi-Monthly
American Heritage	1	0.00	Bi-Monthly
The American West	3	0.33	Quarterly
Aviation Week & Space Technology	2	0.00	Weekly
Consumer's Research Magazine	1	1.00	Monthly
Forbes	2	1.50	Bi-Weekly
Good Housekeeping	1	0.00	Monthly
Harpers	1	-2.00	Monthly
Hobbies	4	0.00	Monthly
Humanist	2	-1.00	Bi-Monthly
Maclean's	2	-0.50	Weekly
Moneysworth	1	1.00	Monthly
Ms.	3	-1.33	Monthly
The Nation	4	-0.75	Weekly
National Geographic	1	2.00	Monthly
National Review	1	-1.00	Bi-Weekly
Newsweek	16	-0.44	Weekly
New West	2	-0.50	Weekly
Organic Gardening and Farming	1	0.00	Monthly
People Weekly	4	-0.50	Weekly
Reader's Digest	2	1.50	Monthly
Rolling Stone	2	0.50	Bi-Monthly
Saturday Evening Post	1	2.00	Quarterly
Saturday Review	1	0.00	Monthly
Science	3	-1.00	Weekly
Science Digest	1	1.00	Monthly
Smithsonian	1	0.00	Monthly
Society	1	2.00	Bi-Monthly
Sports Illustrated	2	0.00	Weekly
Sunset	2	1.00	Monthly
Time	13	-0.46	Weekly
Travel	1	1.00	Monthly
Travel/Holiday	1	1.00	Monthly
U.S. News & World Report	5	0.00	Weekly
The Washingtonian	1	0.00	Monthly
	94		

Race. This theme involves the topic of blacks and the priesthood as it was addressed in magazines. In the early 1970s, the topic of blacks and the priesthood elicited disapproving reviews, as it had done in the 1960s.

Unfavorable views came from the efforts of article authors to explain their understanding of the Church's doctrine on the subject, and from the perception that Church members were prejudiced against blacks. After the revelation in 1978 giving all worthy males the priesthood, interest dropped off on the subject. The reason for this may be that once the issue was resolved by a change in the Church's policy, magazines lost interest due to the lack of controversy. As shown in Figure 3, those periodicals reporting on the 1978 revelation were pleased with the Church's willingness to change. The attention given to race in 1980 and 1981 was related to the media's focus on the Church's opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment. Magazines typically represented the view that since the Church was willing to make a change in 1978 on a policy concerning blacks and the priesthood, they should also consider lessening their opposition to what the public viewed as women's rights.

Socio-Economic. Latter-day Saints received praise for their success in business and their apparent financial stability. The Church's economic holdings were consistently discussed and admired by articles. In 1971 and 1972, J. Willard Marriott and several top Church leaders, including N. Eldon Tanner and Harold B. Lee, were treated well in relation to this topic. Figure 4 shows a steady decline by 1981 to the scale's neutral line; this could be the result of the public getting used to knowing about the Church's great wealth.

Figure 3
References and Ratings of Race

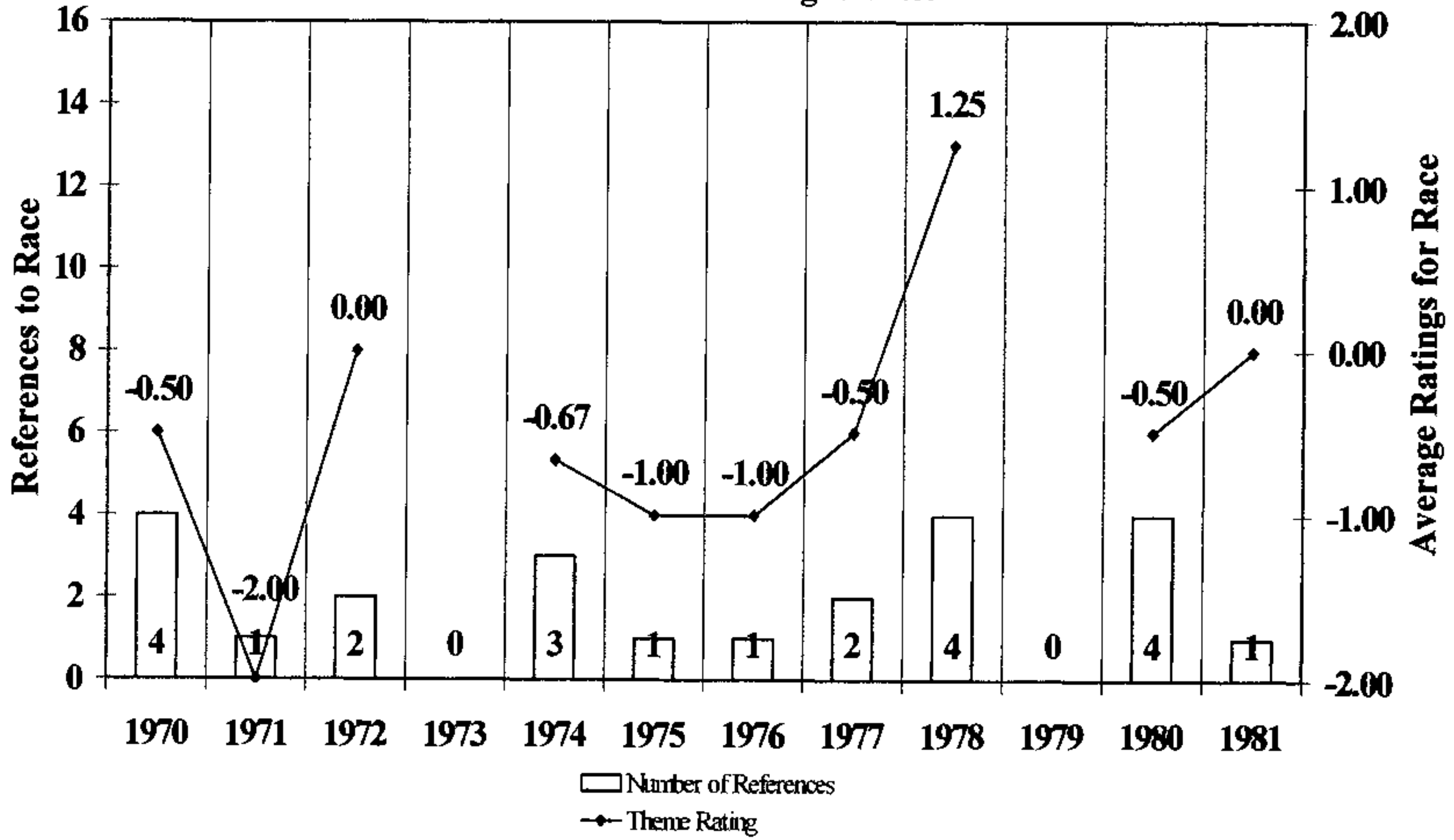
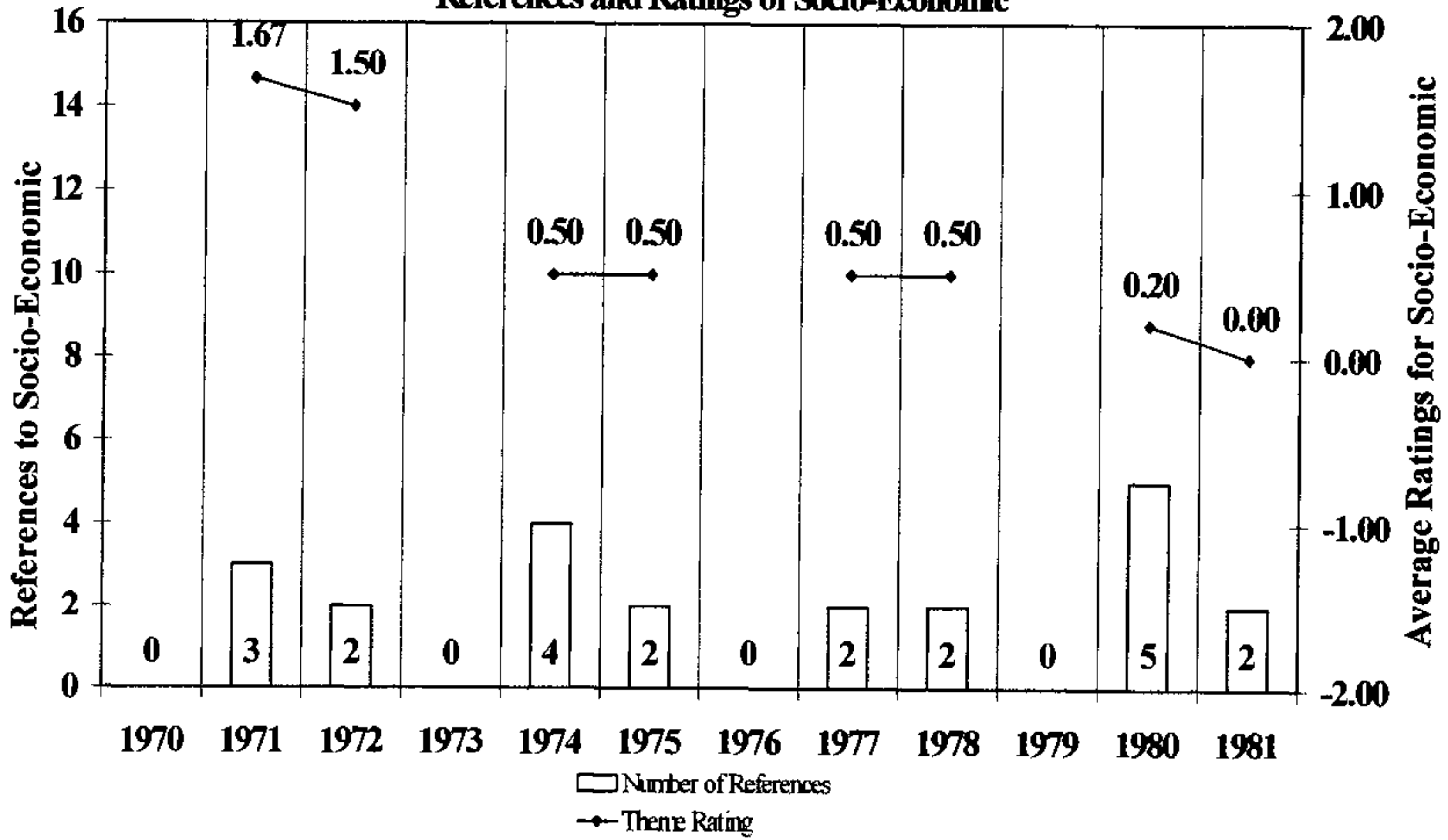


Figure 4
References and Ratings of Socio-Economic



Hierarchy. This topic was not only the most negative in the 1970s and early 80s, it also received the most attention. This theme involved the supposed control Church leadership had over people, politics, and business. Under the socio-economic category the Church's financial position was positive; however, much of the media reported the Church used wealth to control its people and influence politics. Figure 5 shows an unfavorable trend in hierarchy throughout most of the latter 1970s. From 1976 to 1980 the Church's refusal to use Title IX funds and its opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment kept the ratings very low. In 1981 the graph shows the beginning of an upward trend due to the MX missile proposal and the media's fair portrayal of the Church leadership's disapproval of the missile being developed in the Utah and Nevada deserts.

Programs. Along with the rites theme, programs was the most favorable toward the Church. The focus on families, the supportive welfare program, and the missionary efforts of the Church all fit in this category. As indicated in Figure 6, programs did not surface much in this study, but when it did the Saints enjoyed positive portrayals. The influx of references to programs in 1980 resulted in of more articles on the Church in general. The celebrations during that year of the 150th anniversary of the founding of their religion, could account for the increase of the positive image. Missionary work was the program mentioned in the magazines most frequently.

Rites. Another positive theme, rites, included reporting of practices of the Church—temple building, ordinances, genealogy, and healthy living. In 1974 the Church dedicated its sixteenth temple in the Washington D.C. area, and as a result an increase of awareness focused on explaining temples and the work performed inside. As shown in Figure 7, this attention was usually favorable with several impartial assessments of

Figure 5
References and Ratings of Hierarchy

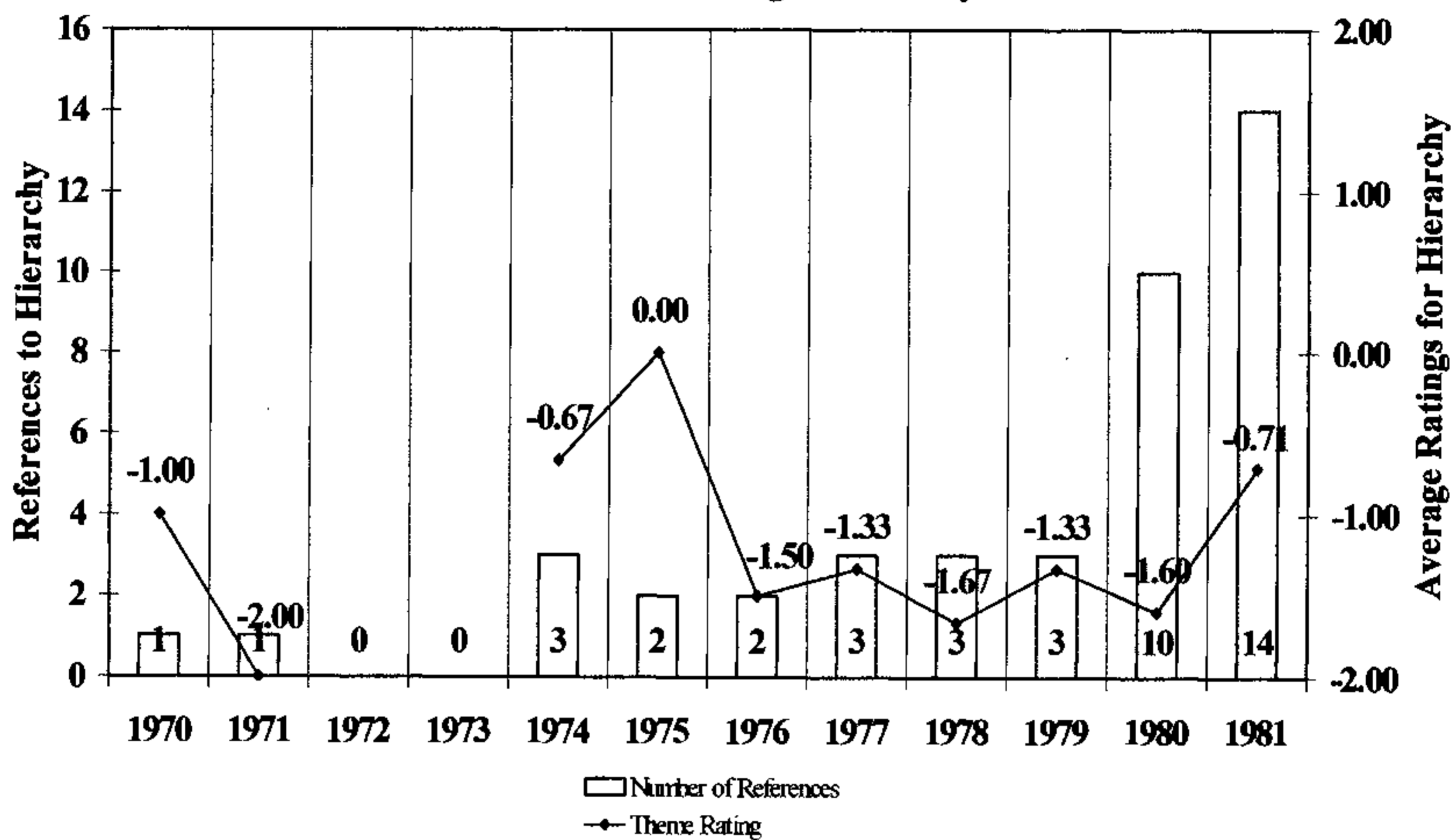
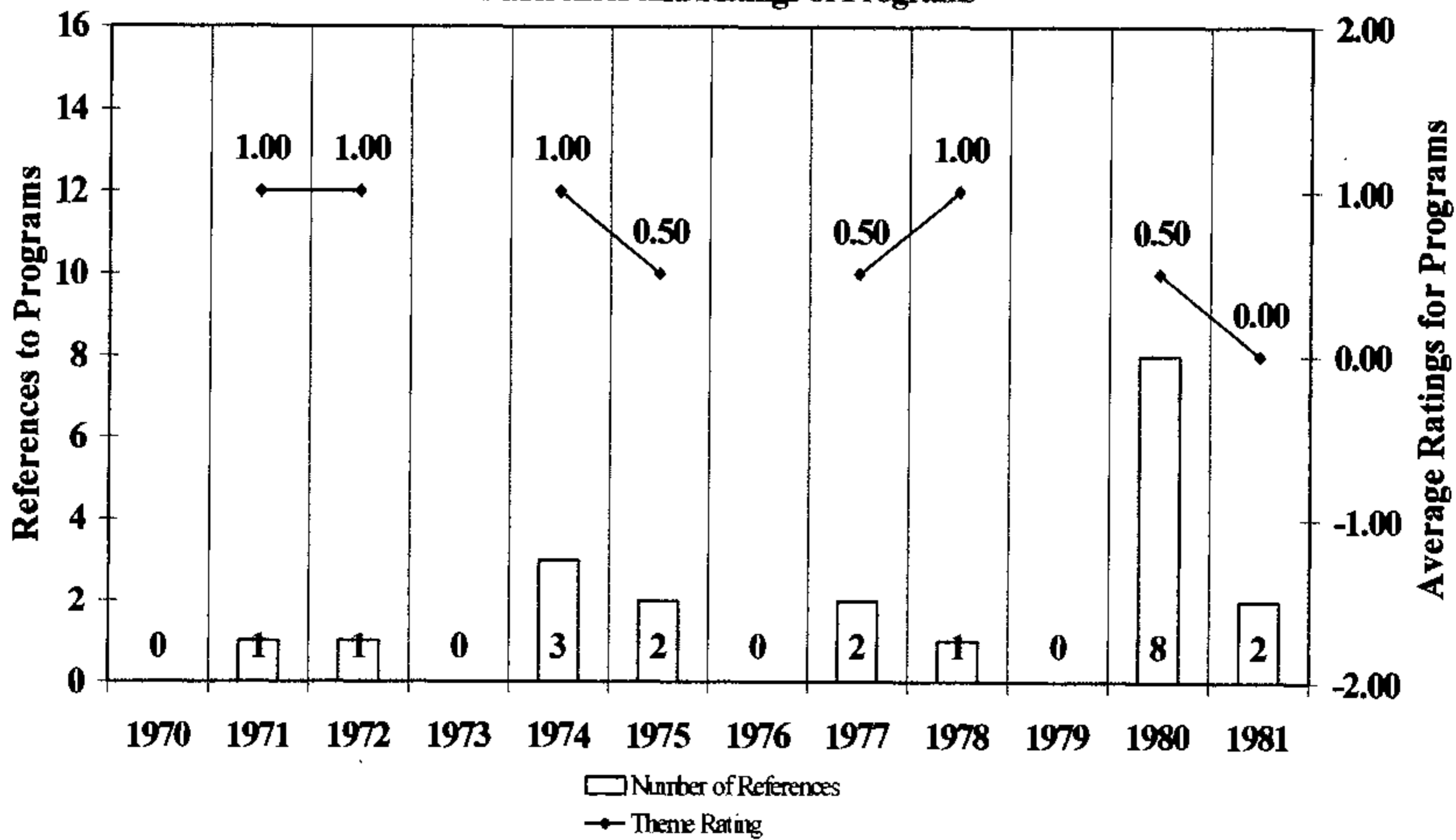


Figure 6
References and Ratings of Programs



temple work. Genealogy, or the collection of ancestral names, was noticed because of temples and also because of the granite vaults. In 1981 the Latter-day Saints' genealogical records were praised in magazines for their usefulness in medical research. The Church's "Word of Wisdom" also added to the favorable image of practices.

Polygamy. A more neutral topic, polygamy, was addressed throughout the entire twelve-year study. This theme was not as pessimistic as it characteristically had been in past studies, because authors understood faithful male members of the Church married only one wife. According to Figure 8, there were times when polygamy turned in an unfavorable direction. These were during times authors referred back to the practice in the early days of the religion and expressed disapproval. In 1978, the topic rose above the neutral line because of an article evaluating the positive aspects of polygamy in "liberating wives."

Origins. The beginnings of "Mormonism" and the pioneer trek to Utah were subjects in this topic. Figure 9 reveals little bias in the 1970s because several magazines were non-discriminatory in their representation of the beginnings of the faith. During this time, the Church even had complimentary portrayals in magazines, mainly because of sympathy and respect given to "Mormon" pioneers for their tolerant and dedicated courage. In 1980, the year of the 150th anniversary celebration, the image rested on the scale's neutral line because some negative attacks on the theme of origins cancelled out other favorable reports of the religion's beginnings.

Theology. Next to hierarchy, the topic of theology was the least positive. While there were times when magazines simply related what "Mormons" believed, typical reports about those beliefs were harmful to the Church's image. Figure 8 shows

Figure 7
References and Ratings of Rites

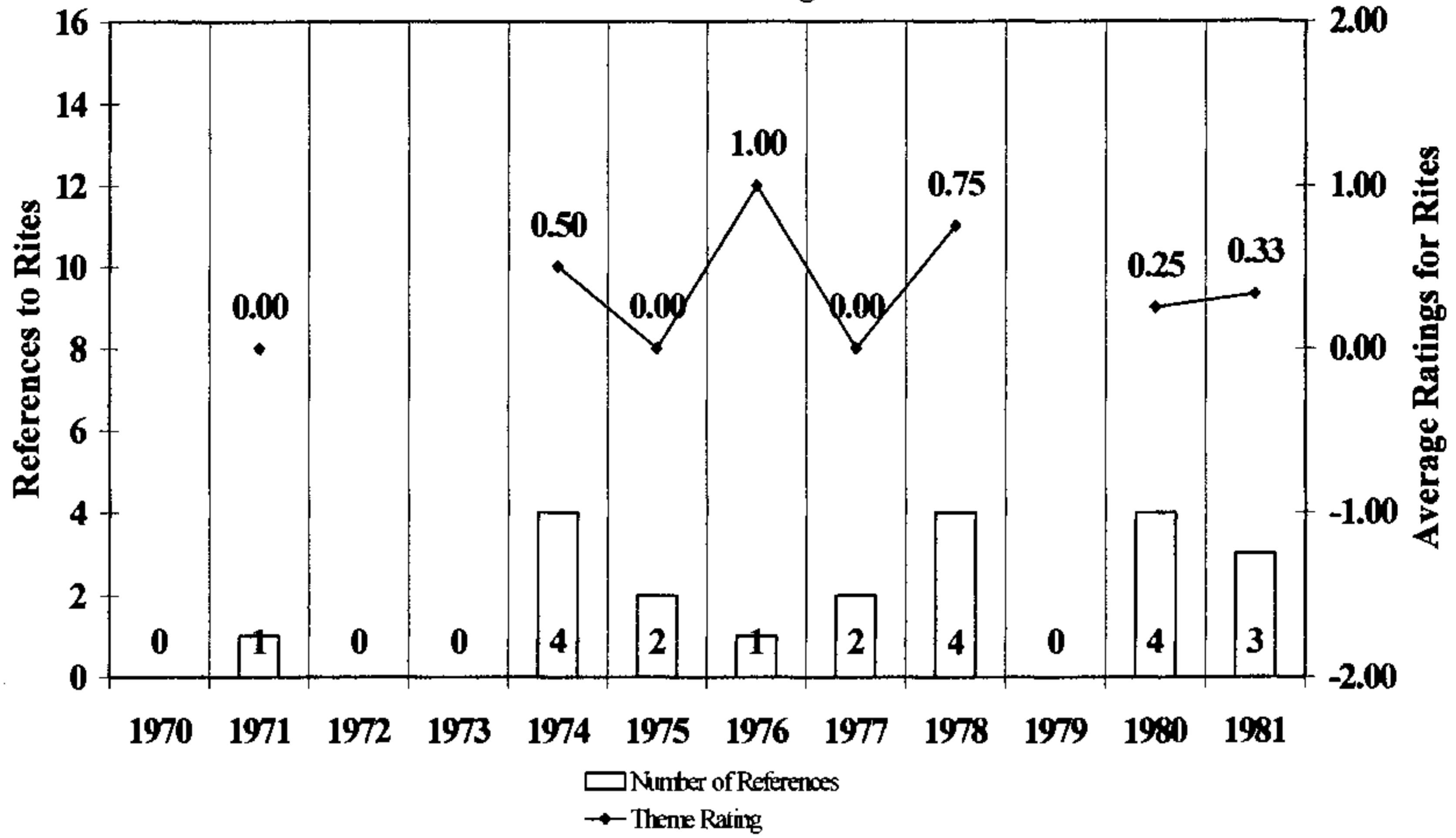
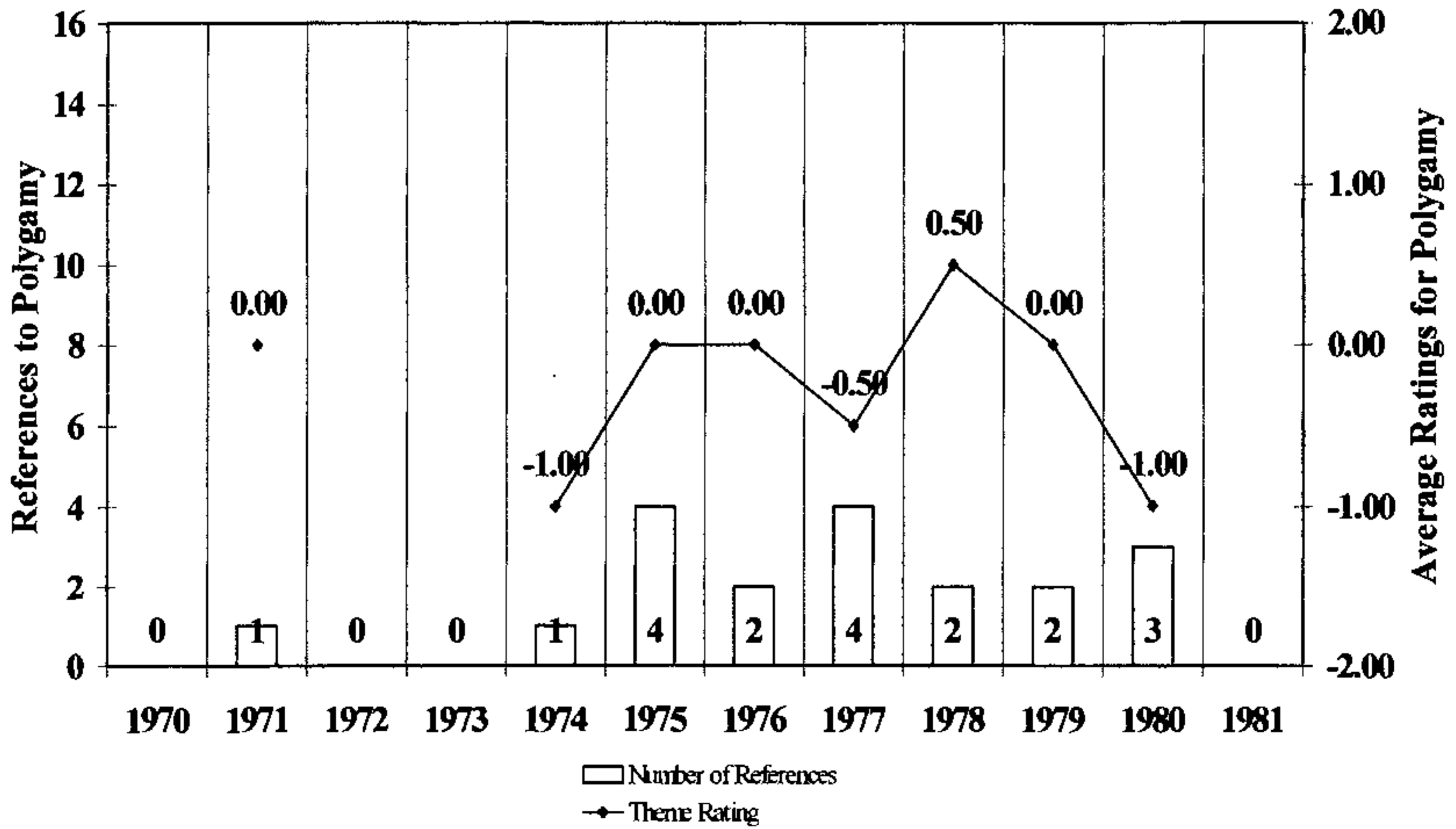


Figure 8
References and Ratings of Polygamy



the first three years of the study at an unfavorable position. This was the result of magazines explaining "Mormons" believed blacks were the cursed descendants of Cain. From 1977 to 1981 general criticisms of "Mormon" doctrine were given in articles. For example, in 1980 it was said that Mormons did not believe in the grace of Christ or in his Atonement. This misrepresentation was untrue and fairly common in the category of theology.

People. Latter-day Saint people were often characterized or stereotyped because they were "Mormons." Figure 11 illustrates that treatment of this topic was fairly even; however, this was because when negative reports emerged they were usually countered with the positive. In other words, "Mormons" were seen as different, eccentric, and controlling, but these characteristics were often offset with the qualities of innocence, loyalty, and being hard working.

Cultural. This final topic covered the Latter-day Saints love of music and education. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir added to the religion's optimistic image in 1975 and 1979, and Figure 12 also reflects the positive reviews of the importance of education in 1980 and 1981. The dip to a negative view in 1978 was the result of disapproving information on Brigham Young University stifling critical thinking because of pressure from Church leaders.

Each of these figures and topics represents the overall trend line in Figure 2 indicating a negative image of the Church from 1976 to 1981. The major obstacle for a favorable image of the Latter-day Saints during this time was the perception that Church leaders controlled the political lives of Utah and all its members.

Figure 9
References and Ratings of Origins

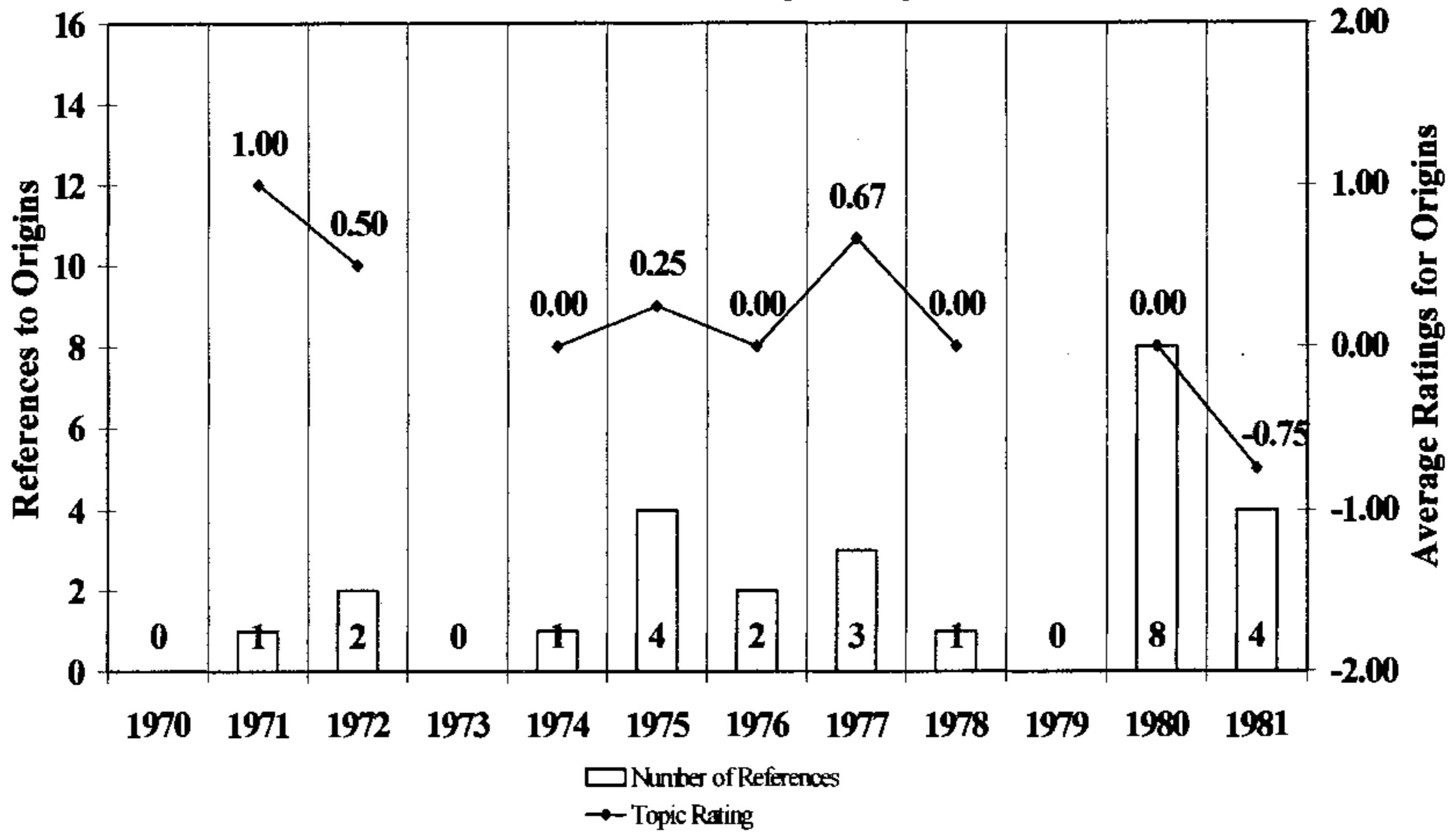


Figure 10
References and Ratings of Theology

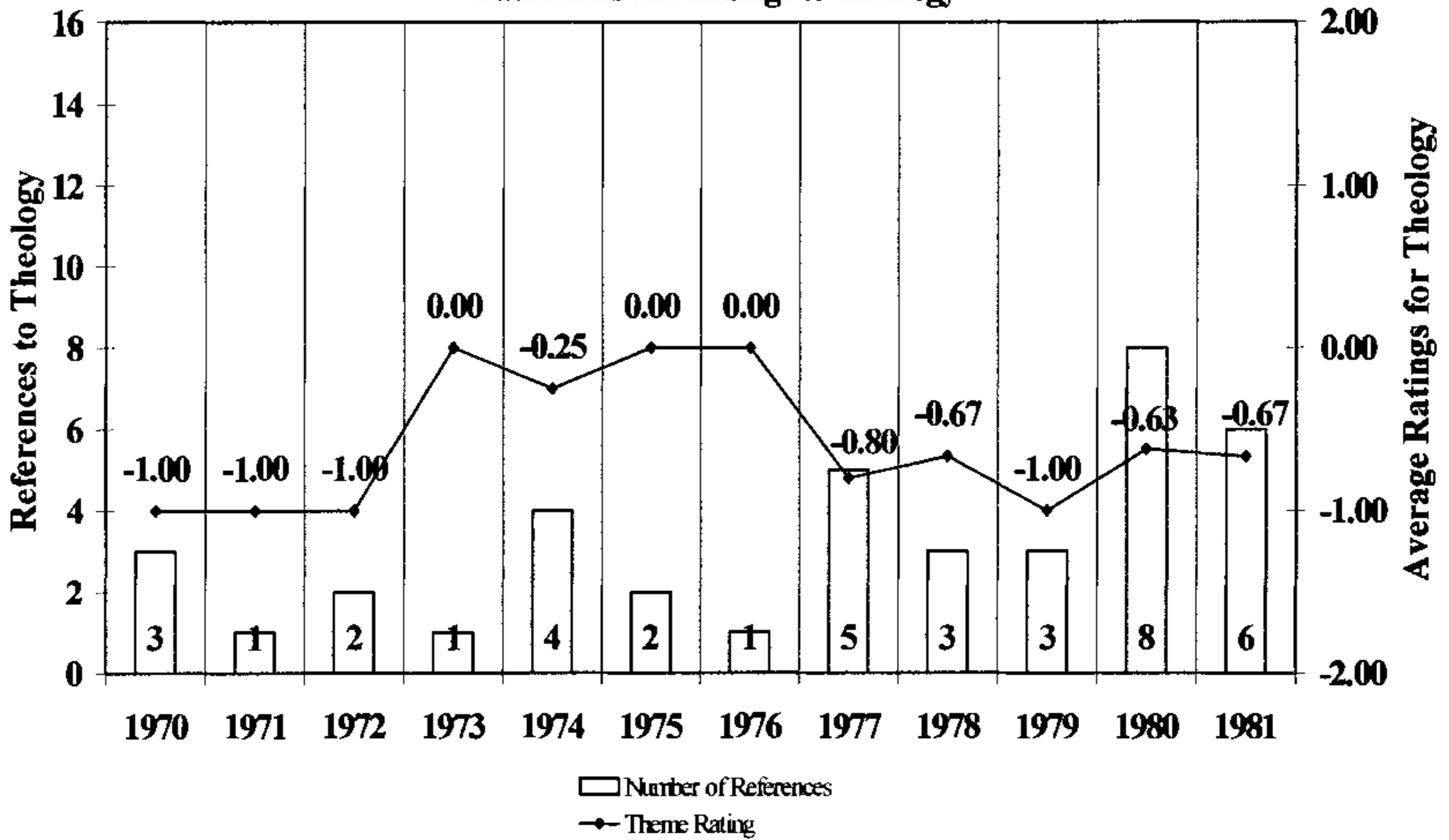


Figure 11
References and Ratings of People

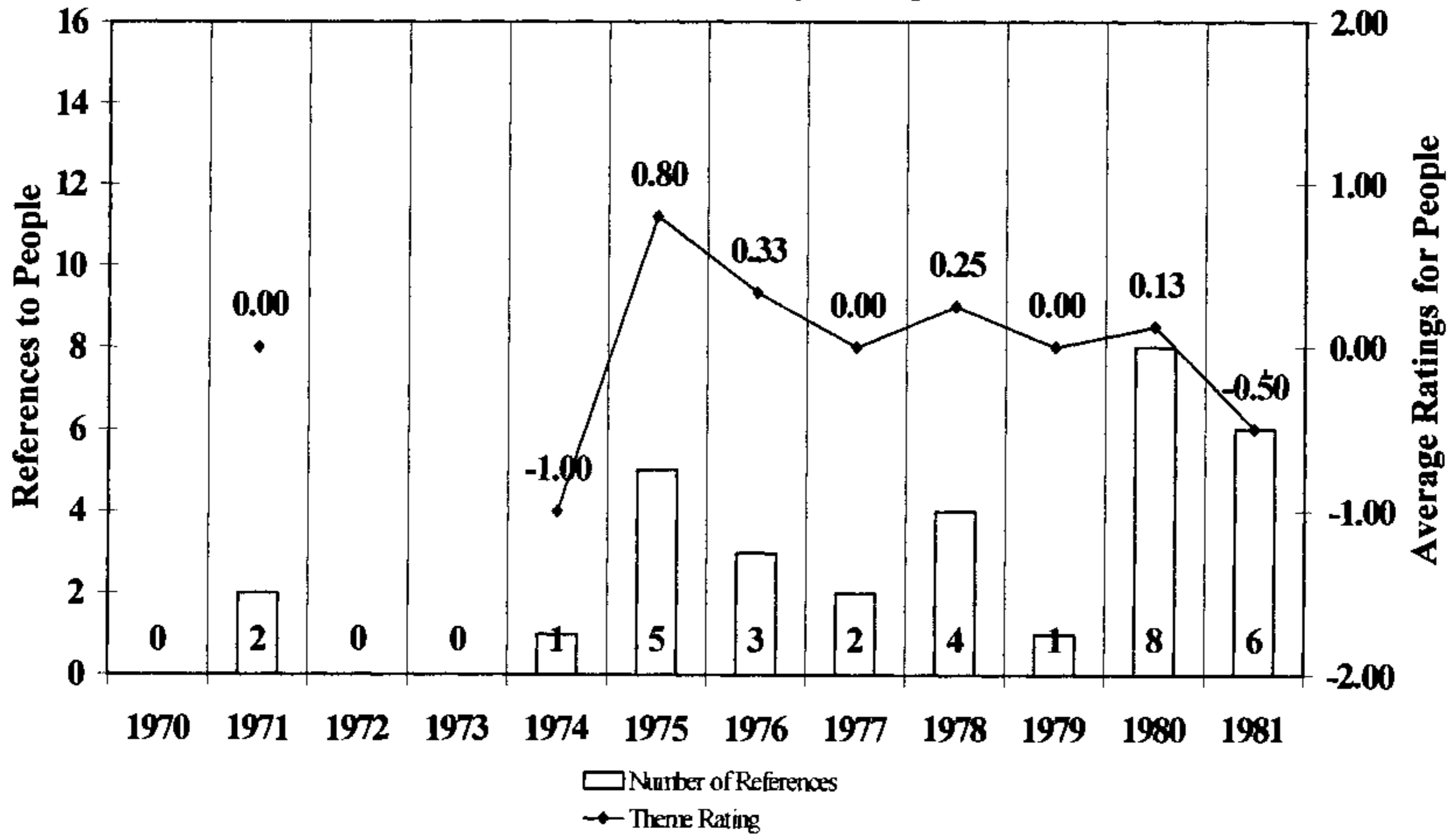
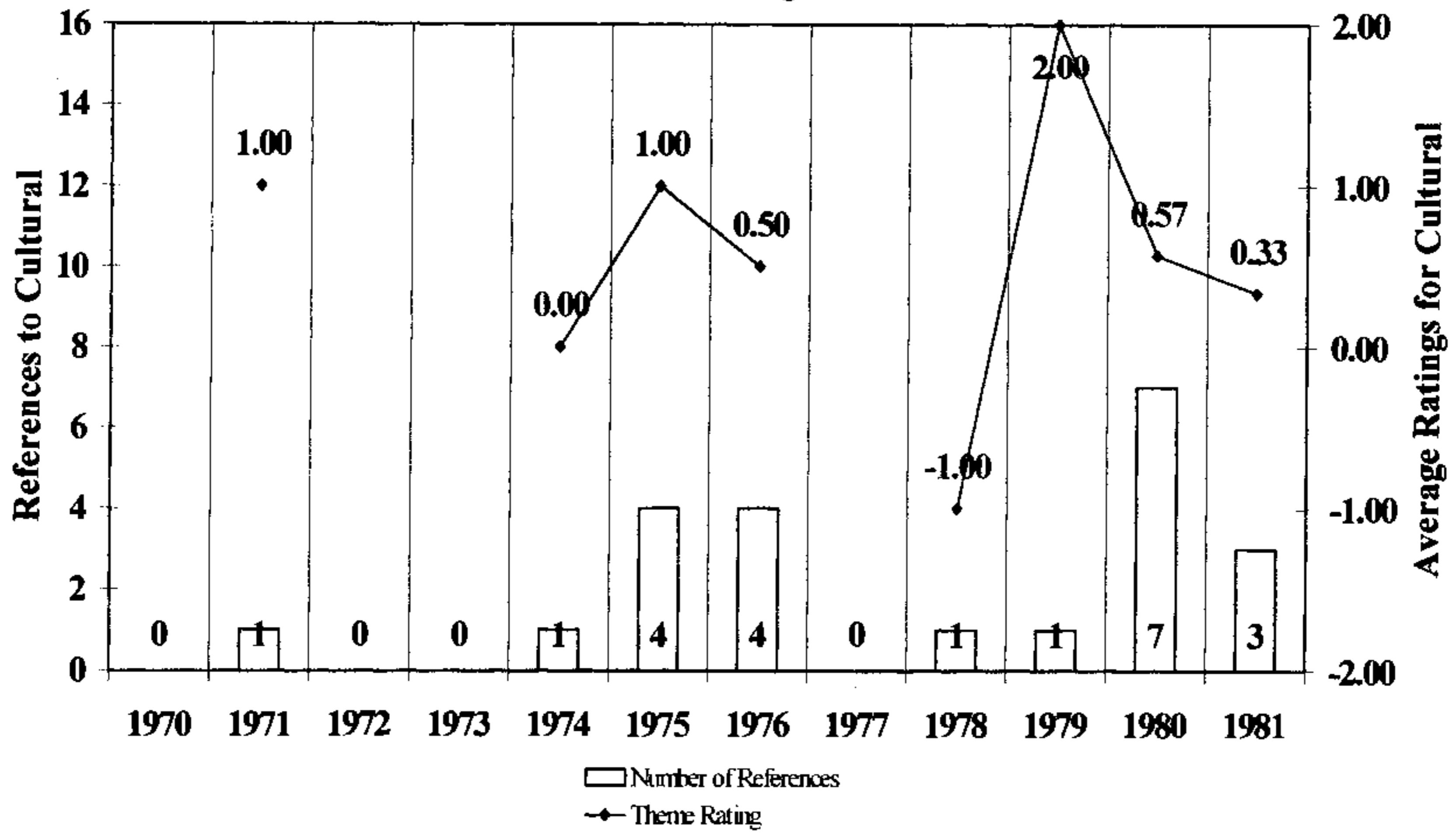


Figure 12
References and Ratings of Cultural



Comparison to the First Two Studies

Analyzing data from the current study, and how it compares to the two previous studies, shows a continued decline in the Church's public image from 1970 to 1981. Table 2 shows the image by taking the ratings from each theme, and in each study time period, and calculating an overall weighted average. This comparison is interesting as it takes into consideration all the themes giving a final rating for a specific period of time, as is shown in Figure 13.

The one hundred years from 1851 to 1950 averaged a -0.47 , which Richard Cowan credited to the large amount of unfavorable treatment at the beginning of his study from polygamy and origins. Figure 13 shows a more detailed breakdown of differing time periods in Cowan's study showing the negative to positive shift during 1936 to 1940 because of the welfare and other Church programs. These programs were also credited with raising the image from 1951 to 1961. In Dale Pelo's study from 1961 to 1970, less attention focused on programs and more attention shifted to race and people. Pelo's overall weighted average was still slightly encouraging, but noticed a decrease to 0.12 which he attributed to the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and the public's disapproval of the Church's policy of withholding the priesthood from people of black African descent. Finally, this study documents the return of the image from positive to slightly negative with a weighted average of -0.12 . This continued downward trend came from the bitter treatment of the theme of hierarchy, and the perception that Church leaders exerted power outside of religious realms, into political arenas. This attention was heightened due to opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment from 1977 to 1981.

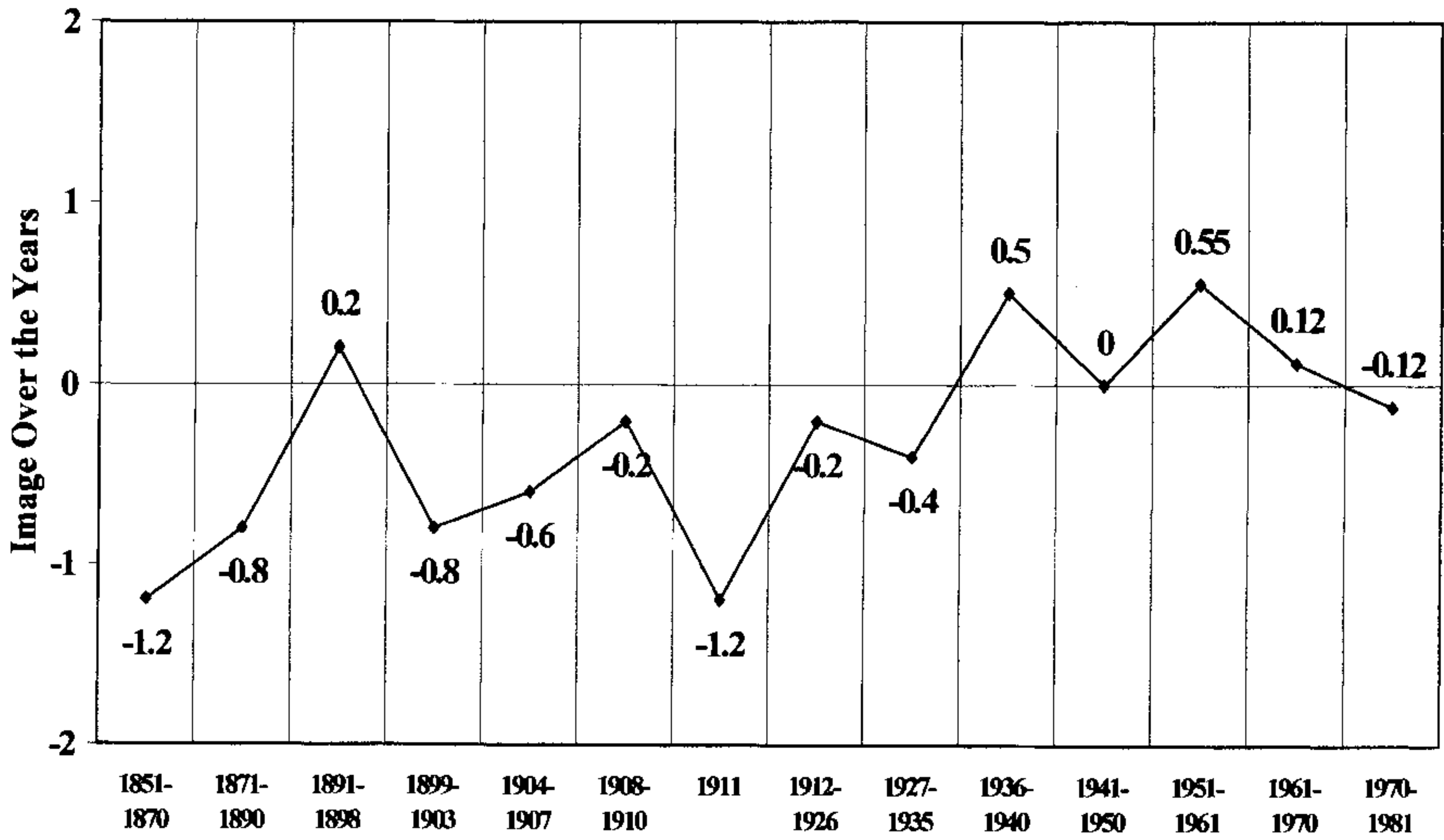
Table 2

Image By Theme - All Studies

Category	Richard Cowan 1851-1950			Richard Cowan 1951-1961		
	#	%	Rating	#	%	Rating
Cultural	63	10.1%	-0.1	12	15.4%	0.8
Hierarchy	143	22.8%	-0.8	9	11.5%	0
Origins	59	9.4%	-1.3	2	2.6%	-1
People	87	13.9%	0.3	16	20.5%	0.8
Polygamy	163	26.0%	-0.8	14	17.9%	-0.4
Programs	2	0.3%	1.3	12	15.4%	1.2
Race	---	---	---	---	---	---
Rites	24	3.8%	-0.5	5	6.4%	0.8
Socio-Economic	42	6.7%	0.9	5	6.4%	1.4
Theology	43	6.9%	-0.5	3	3.8%	1
	626	100%	-0.47	78	100.0%	0.55

Category	Dale Pelo 1961-1970			Present Study 1970-1981		
	#	%	Rating	#	%	Rating
Cultural	2	1.1%	1.5	22	8.3%	0.6
Hierarchy	16	8.7%	-0.3	42	15.8%	-1.1
Origins	15	8.2%	-0.3	26	9.8%	0.1
People	87	47.3%	0.5	32	12.0%	0.1
Polygamy	8	4.3%	-0.4	19	7.1%	-0.3
Programs	4	2.2%	1.3	20	7.5%	0.6
Race	28	15.2%	-0.9	23	8.6%	-0.3
Rites	8	4.3%	0	21	7.9%	0.4
Socio-Economic	5	2.7%	0.4	22	8.3%	0.6
Theology	11	6.0%	0.4	39	14.7%	-0.6
	184	100.0%	0.12	266	100.0%	-0.12

Figure 13
Public Image According to Periodicals Over the Years



Looking again at Figure 13 indicates a possible continued downward trend in the Church's image, following this study's end in 1981. However, looking at the patterns from the beginning of Cowan's study in 1851 also indicates that at some point in the future the image will possibly return to favorable views in public eyes.

Figures 14 – 17 indicate the relative emphasis given to each theme in each study. During the first one hundred years of Cowan's study (shown in Figure 14), the focus of writing in national magazines was on polygamy and hierarchy. During the last ten years of his study (Figure 15), there was a noticeable increased coverage of programs which helped raise the religion's image in periodicals. Figure 16, in Pelo's analysis, points out the decrease of attention in programs and the increase in race, leaving people the main topic in magazines. Pelo declared that two individuals instrumental in raising the awareness of people were Michigan governor and presidential hopeful George Romney, and Billy Casper, a famous golfer who became a Latter-day Saint. Figure 17 shows a more balanced approach in periodicals in trying to understand "Mormonism." The two themes most often reported were hierarchy and theology. Hierarchy grew mainly because of the Church's stand on the Equal Rights Amendment, and two reasons added to theology's growth. First, magazine writers frequently tried to explain why Mormon doctrine did not allow blacks to hold the priesthood; second, authors attempting to elaborate generally on "Mormon" belief often misrepresented and misunderstood the Latter-day Saint doctrines.

Finally, Table 3 and Figure 18 compare each study. Percentages on these charts were derived by counting the number of times the articles gave attention to each theme, and then dividing it by the whole. Cowan concluded from his study that the steady

Figure 14
Relative Emphasis Given by National Periodicals to Themes: 1851-1950

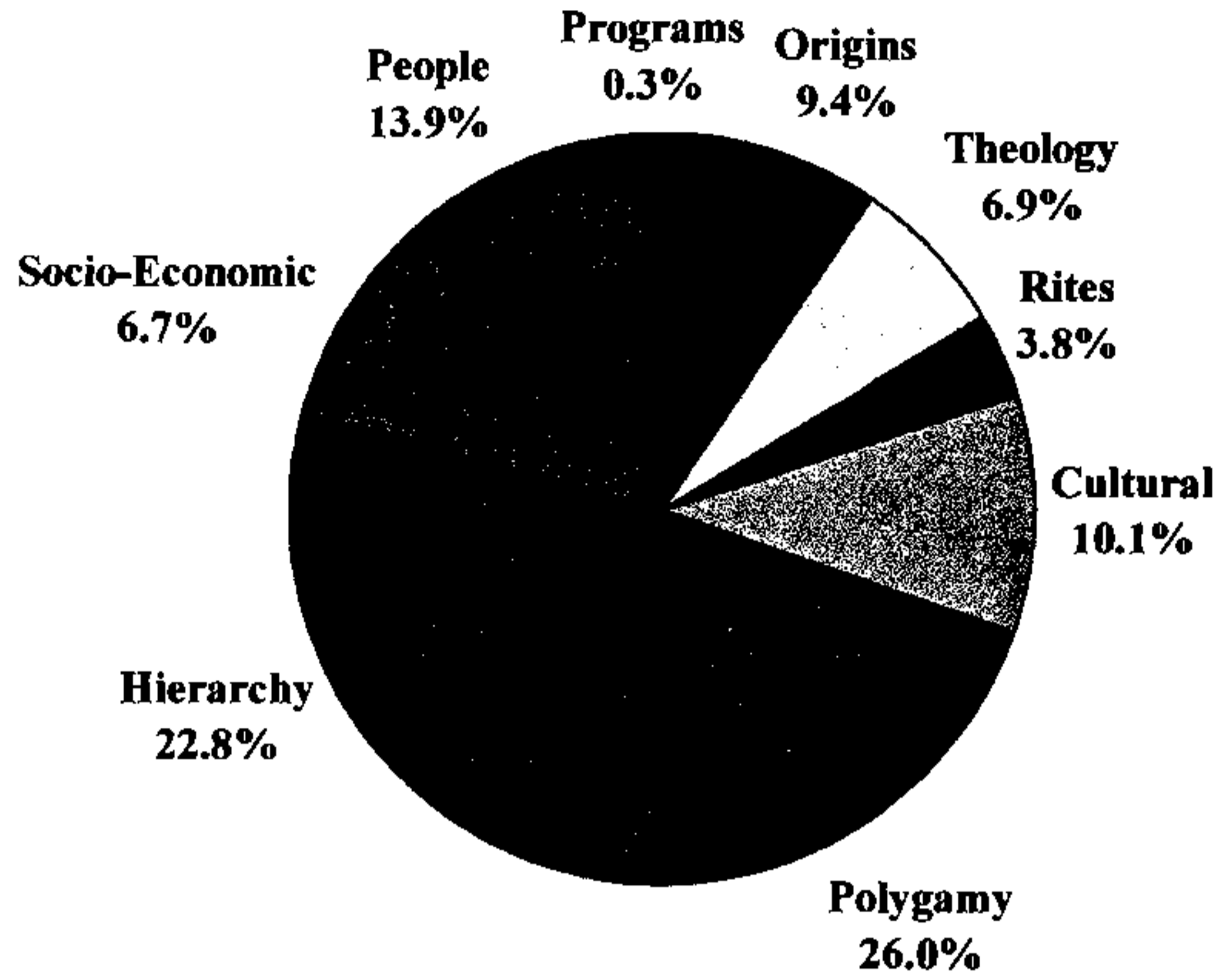


Figure 15
Relative Emphasis Given by National Periodicals to Themes: 1951-1961

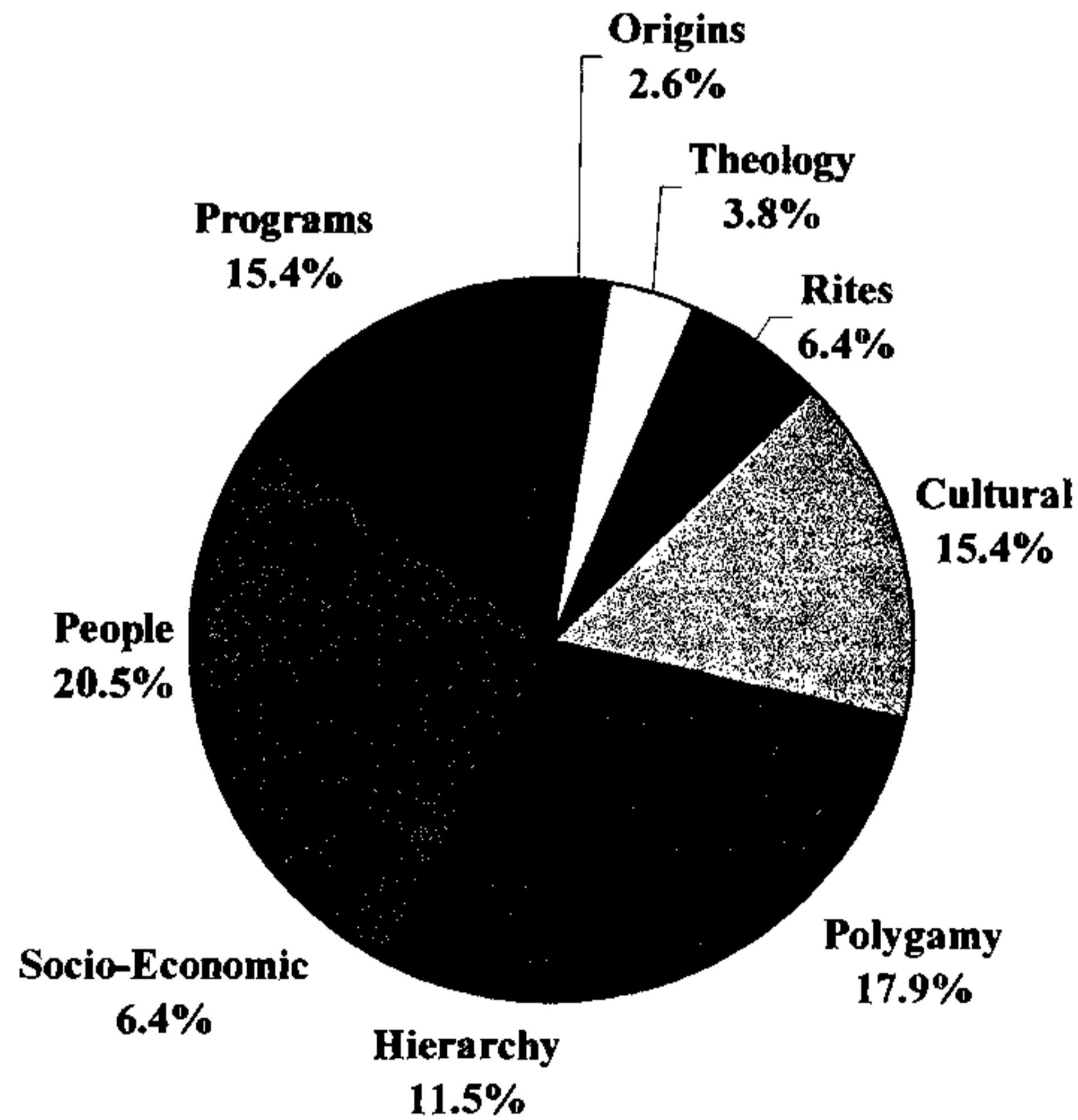


Figure 16
Relative Emphasis Given by National Periodicals to Themes: 1961-1970

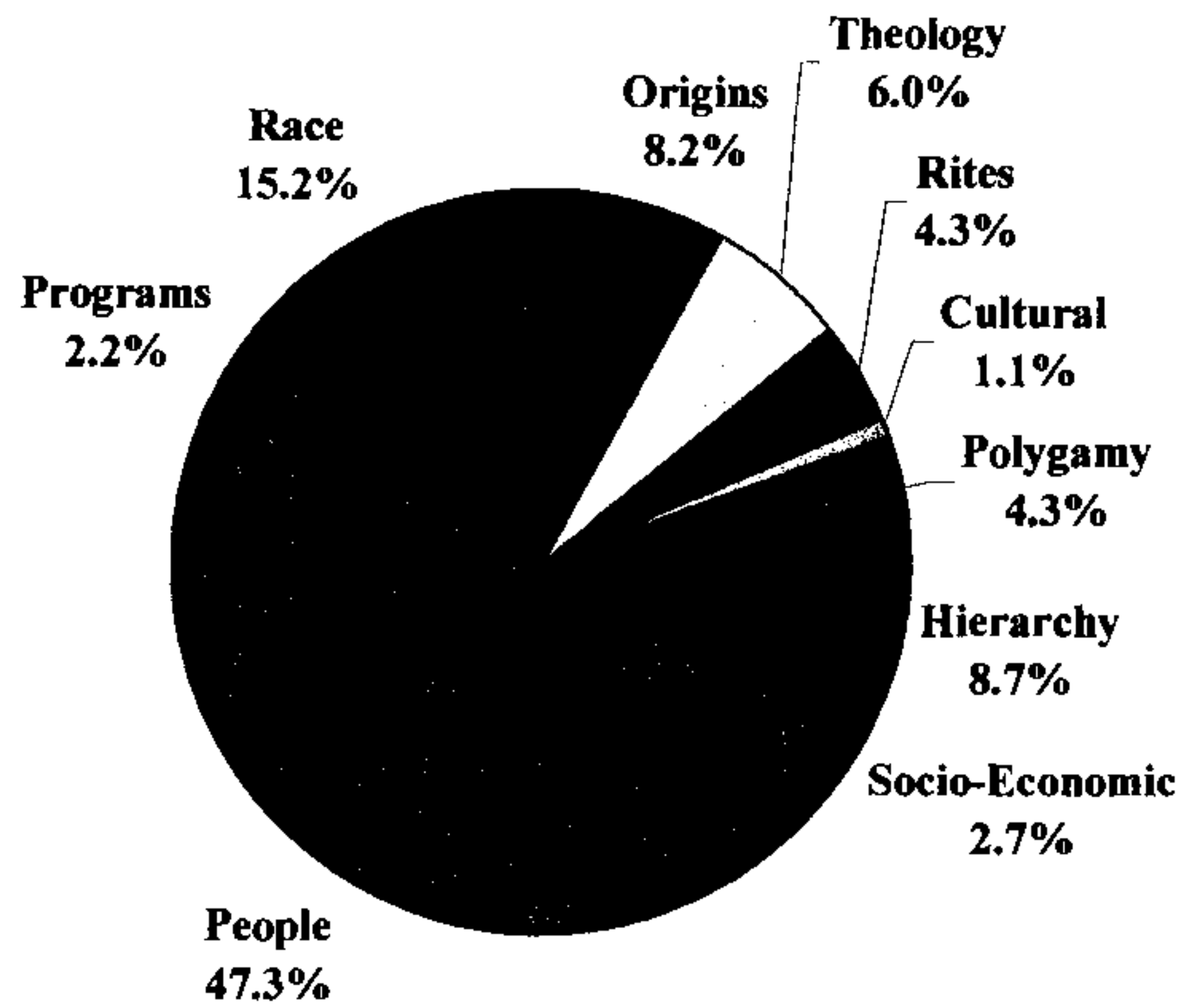
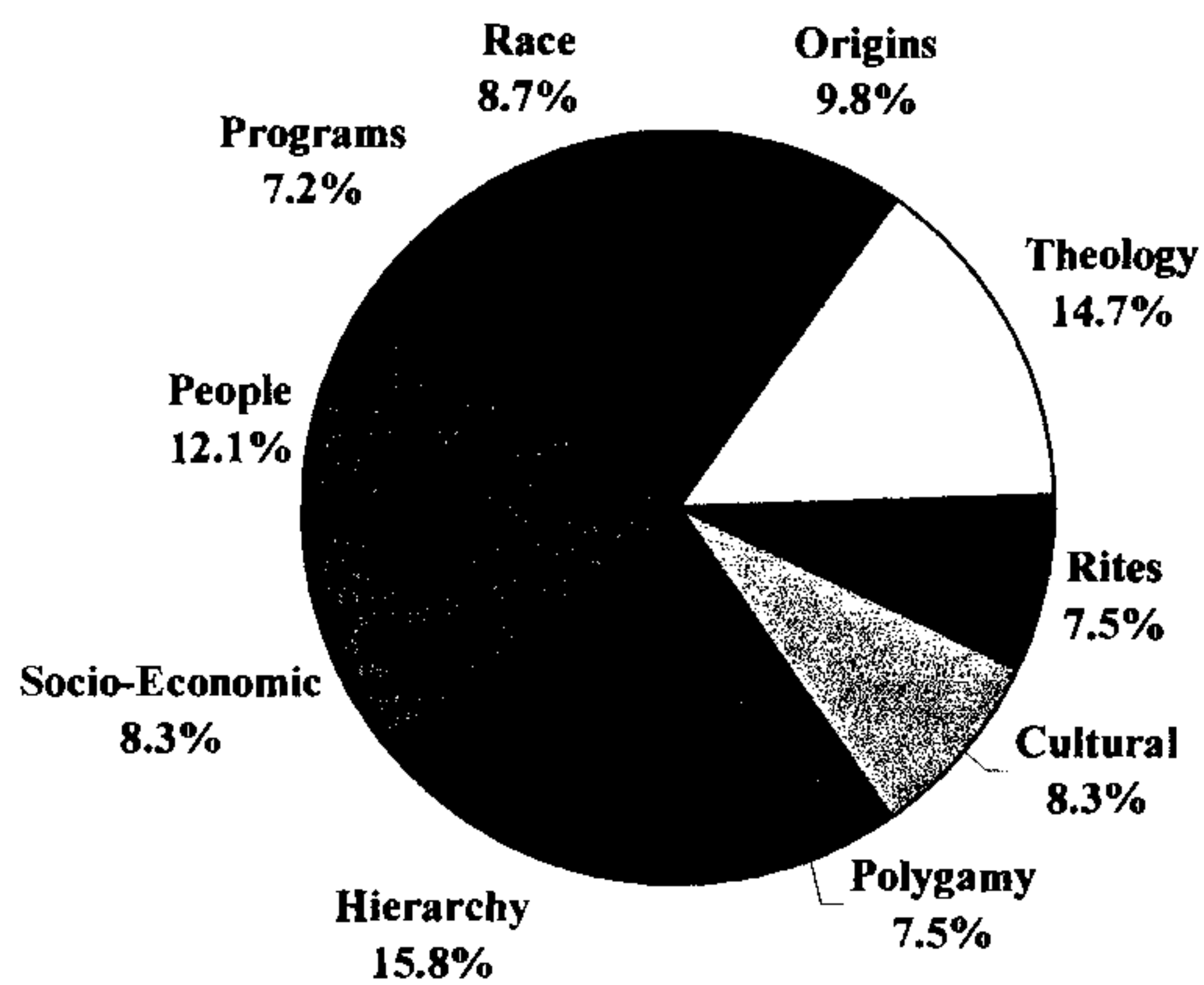


Figure 17
Relative Emphasis Given by National Periodicals to Themes: 1970-1981



decline in "anti-Mormon" ratings meant a more "serious evaluation" of the religion. The present study reveals that during the 1970s the magazines exhibited relatively few extreme "anti-Mormon" or "pro-Mormon" sentiments. Not only did this indicate a more serious evaluation of the Church, but also that magazine writers, at least in part, were trying to be fair in describing the Church.

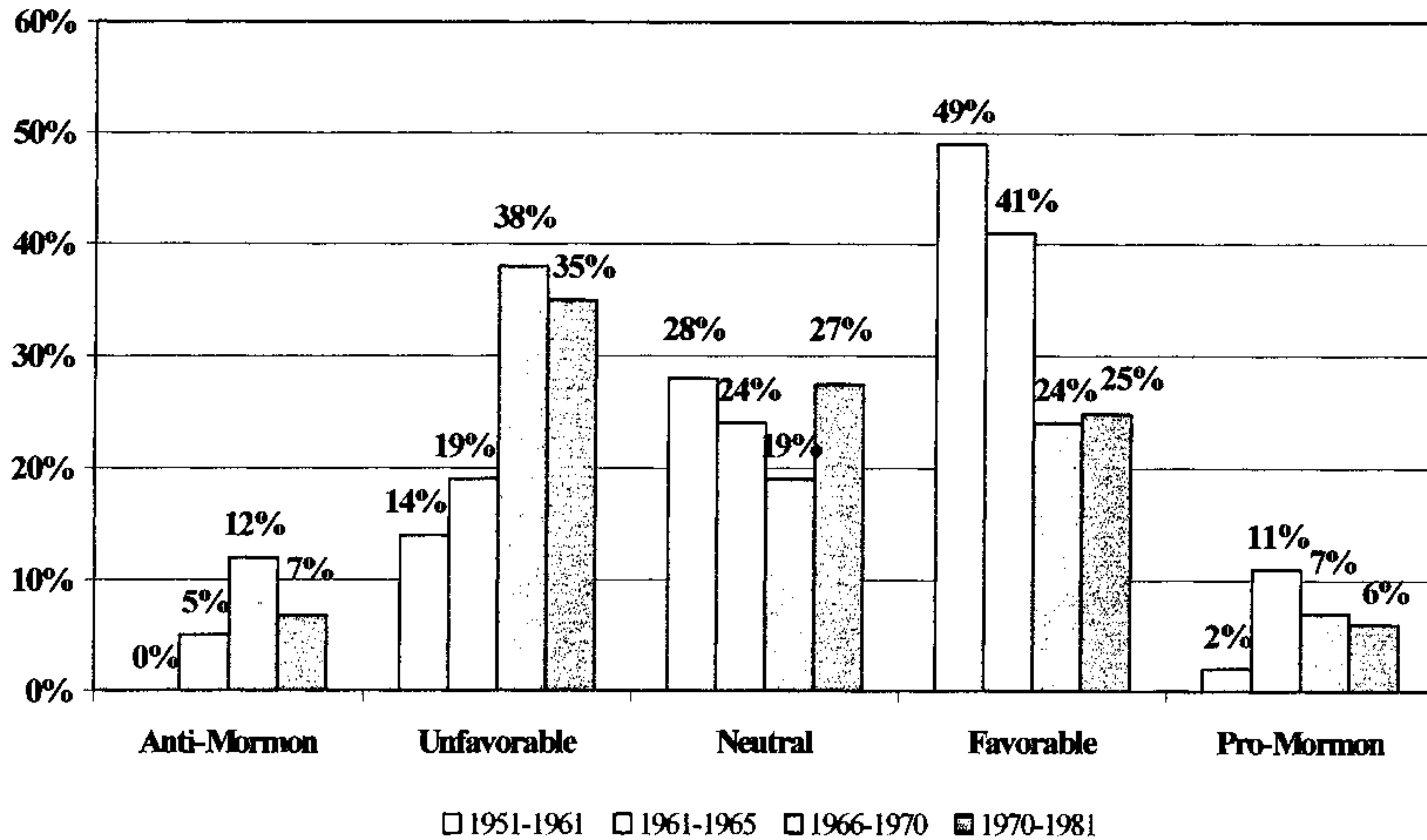
This and the previous two studies have looked at 130 years of the Church's image in national periodicals. Events and people have influenced that image and its directions. Overall, the image may have dropped into the unfavorable side of the scale, but "programs" and "people" still helped keep the image from falling even lower. Misunderstanding on the priesthood and race issue, the doctrines of the Church, and the perceptions of political domination did hurt the Church's public image. Conversely, good works through Church programs and certain practices have been the key to cutting through bias and misrepresentation.

This study can have a personal application for Church members. National periodicals apparently choose to focus on events and people, good or bad, to maintain interest and therefore sales. Therefore good deeds by individual Latter-day Saints increase the likelihood that the media will give favorable attention to the Church as a whole. For example, J. Willard Marriott, a Church member who drew national media attention because of his great wealth and prestige in the business world, was praised for donating his own financial resources to help build temples, and was sometimes quoted favorably on the Church's welfare program. Thus, Marriott as an individual contributed positively, in national periodicals, to the overall image of the Church. Conversely, members who choose to campaign against the Church and its leaders, attract media

Table 3
Rating Trend Percentages from
1851 to 1981

Years	Anti-Mormon	Unfavorable	Neutral	Favorable	Pro-Mormon
1851-1870	67%	27%	6%	0%	0%
1871-1890	33%	49%	10%	2%	6%
1891-1910	21%	31%	20%	24%	4%
1911-1930	31%	28%	27%	10%	4%
1931-1950	2%	19%	39%	38%	2%
1951-1961	0%	14%	28%	49%	2%
1961-1965	5%	19%	24%	41%	11%
1966-1970	12%	38%	19%	24%	7%
1970-1981	7%	35%	27%	25%	6%

Figure 18
Rating Trend Percentages from 1951 to 1981



attention which typically reflects unfavorably on the organization as a whole. An example of this was Sonia Johnson and her stand for the ERA.

Because programs and practices were shown to elevate the Church's public image in magazines, individual Latter-day Saints should unitedly follow their leaders to implement those programs which show mankind a better way to live. Doing so will help ensure that as magazines and other media look for stories to write about the "Mormons," they find pleasant people happy with their religion and eager to serve and bless the lives of not only themselves, but others. Individual Church members can and probably will continue to affect the public image of the religion.

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