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Home Teaching: Attempts by the Latter-Day Saints to Establish an Effective Program During the Nineteenth Century

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HOME TEACHING--ATTEMPTS BY THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS
TO ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM DURING
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of History
Brigham Young University

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

by
Gary L. Phelps
August 1975
This thesis, by Gary L. Phelps, is accepted in its present form by the Department of History of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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INTRODUCTION

Even though home teaching is not unique with the Mormons, its present methods and utilization are unlike the teaching practices used by other churches. The purpose of this thesis is to study Mormon attempts to establish effective home teaching practices within their Church during the nineteenth century.

THE PROBLEM

A study of home teaching practices in the Church asserted that over a third again as many people were involved when compared to its closest competitor, the Sunday School.¹ It has probably, since its inception, involved more individual Church members than any other single phase of church activity.

Coupled with its numerical significance, home teaching has been an important preparation vehicle in the Church's attempt to prepare its members for the millennium. Mormons, not unlike many other Christians, believe that Christ's second coming is imminent, and millennial fervor has been an important aspect of their heritage and doctrine. Mormons, however, unlike other denominations believe that when Christ comes, He will come to them and officiate from their

¹Vernon L. Israelson, "Changes in the Numbers and the Priesthood Affiliation of the Men Used as Ward Teachers in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1920-1935" (unpublished Master's Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1937), p. 3.
temples. Their best means for readiness has been and continues to be 
the preparation of the individuals within the Church. One of the 
prime objectives of the Church has been to stimulate its members to 
seek perfection in their personal lives. Many Mormons feel that when 
a sufficient number of Church members have achieved personal perfect-
tion, their Savior will suddenly appear. Since home teaching was 
designed to strengthen the Church membership, it could serve as an 
indicator of Church progress toward perfected conditions. After all, 
if the Church fails to strengthen each individual within its ranks, 
it could fail in its ultimate purpose of preparing the earth for the 
Savior's millennial advent and reign upon the earth.

Since the Church is a developing society, home teaching, one 
phase of Church activity, could also serve as a growth indicator. 
Some members of the Church as well as some non-Mormons, may have the 
concept that the Church expands and grows as a business by starting 
small then expanding as new ideas and operations are effected. One 
twentieth century apostle, sustained by many within the Church as a 
prophet, has said that business growth and Church development do not 
parallel each other. Boyd K. Packer maintains that the Lord gives an 
idea to His people, then moves aside and watches as they struggle to 
come up to His expectations.\(^2\) In essence, the struggles which resolve 
problems really develop character in people. This development is one 
of the major objectives of the Church.

\(^2\)Notes from North Jordan Stake Conference, May, 1973, in 
possession of author.
DEFINITION OF TERMS

The term home teaching implies that visitors go into homes of Church members and teach. Even though the teacher may not have always taught when he entered a home, the term will be used throughout this thesis for purposes of simplicity. It was done by men and usually on a periodic basis. The teacher's function involved being with, watching over and strengthening the members of the Church.

A home teacher must have advanced to the rank of teacher, an office in the Aaronic Priesthood. Since women do not hold the Mormon Priesthood, teaching was strictly a male duty. Women do make visits to other women of the Relief Society, the women's auxiliary organization of the Church, and call their activity "visiting teaching." However, when visiting teaching is used hereafter it will apply only to the Aaronic Priesthood calling.

The offices of the Aaronic Priesthood include deacon, teacher and priest. As an Aaronic Priesthood holder advanced he assumed new responsibilities and retained all his previous obligations. The Melchizedek Priesthood had three offices, but the functions of one office did not override the other. Each of the three, elder, seventy and high priest, however retained all their Aaronic Priesthood practices. All of the priesthood, Melchizedek as well as Aaronic, function as quorums. Any body of men, except deacons, grouped into a quorum, could serve as home teachers. Usually the teaching quorums were directed by an acting president, a group leader or the ward bishop.

The specific functions related with the office of teacher have had peculiar nomenclatures since their genesis in 1830. From 1900
through 1960 the function carried the appellation of "ward teaching." Earlier it had been known by such designations as "block teaching" and "acting teaching." Recently, the executive secretary of the home teaching committee of the Church suggested that none of the names used since 1830 have properly described the important calling of teacher.

Wards were not created within the Church until the early 1840's; thus, the term "ward teaching" could be loosely applied. Even though the term home teaching might be an over-simplification, it is certainly the most applicable.

RELATED LITERATURE

Since home teaching is as old as the Church, there should be sufficient literature, but surprisingly little has been said about the internal operations of the Church. John A. Widstoe outlined teaching in a handbook fashion in Priesthood and Church Government (1939) and the European mission devoted one chapter to home teaching in their pamphlet, Studies in Priesthood (1930).

Vernon Israelson's entire thesis dealt with home teaching as a quantitative problem during the fifteen year period from 1920-1935. Rex Anderson is currently completing a Master's thesis on twentieth century teaching. The only other work in the area, Dale Mouritsen's, "The Relationship of the Priesthood Correlation Program to the

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3 Other titles included visiting teacher, ordained teacher and simply teacher.

Latter-day Saint Concept of Zion\textsuperscript{5} considered home teaching as a vehicle for Church correlation, a twentieth century movement. Very simply, there is no adequate history or survey of the systematic practice of home teaching within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The most important literature for this study is located in the Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City. The minute books of teachers and bishops meetings were the most valuable. Among that manuscript collection is important correspondence of presiding authorities with bishops and other local officers. Less than a dozen journals and diaries mentioned teaching episodes, but those that did offered interesting glimpses into teaching habits and practices. Policy letters have been carefully examined along with the conference addresses. T. Edgar Lyon and William Hartley have made the best contributions on internal development within the Church. Their insights have served as points of departure for this work.

**OVERVIEW**

The organization of the thesis is essentially chronological. As the Church members moved, so did their institutions, and the effect of the journey on the institution of teaching may have been critical. The New York and Ohio periods were essentially doctrinal. During those periods teaching was defined. Section twenty of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, the most important document associated with teaching,

\footnote{\textsuperscript{5}Dale C. Mouritsen, "The Relationship of the Priesthood Correlation Program to the Latter-day Saint Concept of Zion" (unpublished Master's Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1968).}
emerged in New York. In Ohio the practice developed with the aid of other Mormon revelations. During the 1840's, the Church expanded numerically in Illinois and its growth problems seemed more understandable as the European converts began to emerge on the new frontier; for they brought with them their teaching practices which had functioned extremely well under small branch conditions. When the Church moved to the Rocky Mountains, conditions changed and the saints changed to meet their new environment. Apparently the new environment was too taxing, however, for the reform movement of the 1850's sought to purge the saints' characters. Home teaching was an important instrument of that reform. Teaching also served to stabilize the Church as it moved South while a detachment of the U.S. Army moved closer to Utah in 1858. During the 1870's home teaching along with the entire Church underwent a massive organizational reform. During the same periods teachers played important roles as judicators in neighborhood feuds and family quarrels. The thesis concludes with reform attempts by a General Priesthood Committee, organized in 1908 to correlate priesthood operations. That reformation was essentially a reevaluation which resulted in a redefinition of teaching as a priesthood obligation. The Church faced several dilemmas during the period, one of which was the inactivity of the youth. The Priesthood Committee attempted to utilize home teaching as a youth activating program. The significance of the committee was that it tried to put a Church-wide permanency on the priesthood operational successes which had been tried locally during the last three decades of the nineteenth century.
Chapter 1

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The idea of visiting in the homes and strengthening the saints within their own dwellings did not originate with the Mormons.

New Testament References

Earliest references for such practices may have been experiences recorded in the New Testament. In the second chapter of Acts, the record specifies that after Pentecost, the apostles sold their possessions, and gave their goods to the needy. They then went from house to house, broke bread and taught the people.¹

After Peter and his associates had been accosted and jailed, then released through the pleadings of Gamaliel, they departed "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame" for the name of Christ.

And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.²

Historical Precedents

From colonial times, the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Methodists had delegates who made occasional house visits. The Presbyterians elected preaching elders who literally taught in the

¹Acts 2:45-47.
²Acts 5:41-42.
homes.\textsuperscript{3} The Quakers had house to house visitors who policed their membership for improper practices, and sick visitors who visited as they were needed.\textsuperscript{4}

Tithingmen

In colonial New England, a group of town officers known as tithingmen were charged with the responsibility of getting the townspeople to attend church. It was also their duty to prod the citizens into reverent and worshipful conduct on the sabbath. Their symbol of office according to tradition was a wand tipped with feathers or a fox tail with which to awaken the drowsy during protracted sermons. Mischiefous youngsters were sometimes rapped with the hard end.\textsuperscript{5}

Joseph Smith and Continuous Revelation

Mormon home teaching originated with Joseph Smith. Mormons believe that since he was the first "prophet" of the present dispensation or period of time when the teachings of Christ are upon the earth, he received all the necessary information to make God's work flourish. He and all who followed him as prophets as well as all others in the "kingdom" were to solve operational problems in their own mind, make a decision, then seek a spiritual confirmation of their decision. In April 1829, Joseph announced a revelation from Christ who

\textsuperscript{3}T. Edgar Lyon, notes from interview, June 30, 1972, in possession of author.


informed him that after the problem had been studied,

You must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.

But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong. 6

According to Mormon belief, the process of continuous revelation, such a vital facet of Mormon theology, occurs in the minds of men as well as through the windows of heaven. Leonard Arrington noted a similar occurrence in relationship to social and economic transformation within the newly organized Church. "Church leaders," he said,

... whether 'inspired' to do so or not, abandoned the attempt to fix a static pattern of social organization upon the infant church and demonstrated a preference for a provisional or instrumental concept of social reform and betterment. The Kingdom of God was not to be the endless repetition of a fixed pattern of social relationships, but a progressive and developing society characterized by a diligent reworking of institutions and a pluralistic experimentation with new policies and practices. 7

In other words, the internal development of the Church followed no fixed patterns. One of the most important aspects of Church development was that it responded to continuous reevaluation. Home teaching developed in such a manner.

6 The Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City: LDS Church, 1960), 9:7-9, hereinafter cited as D&C.

THE INAUGURATION OF HOME TEACHING IN THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY

Prior to the organization of the Church in April 1830, Smith and a limited number of his intimate friends had already realized several achievements. In fact, they believed that each of the successes had been building blocks to insure the firm establishment of the Church. It all began when Joseph Smith announced that in answer to his prayer, he had been informed by God and Jesus Christ that he should join none of the existing churches, and that if he proved faithful, he would become an instrument through whom the Lord would restore His Church. Nine years later, Smith published a book which purported to be a new witness for Christ, the *Book of Mormon*. During the translation of the Book, Joseph and his companion, Oliver Cowdery, sought a divine answer to a question concerning baptism. In answer to their prayer, they reported that a heavenly messenger, John the Baptist, as he called himself, gave the two their answer and much more. As he laid his hands on each of their heads, he said, "Upon you, my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron."\(^8\) Smith and Cowdery described that they were told by the angel to exercise their newly acquired Priesthood by baptizing each other. They did as they were directed. From henceforth, they were able to baptize others and administer "outward" ordinances. Later they learned that the Aaronic Priesthood administered all temporal affairs of God's work.\(^9\)

\(^8\)D&C 13

\(^9\)D&C 107:15, 68, dated March 28, 1835.
Before two months time had elapsed, the two announced that they had again been visited by divine messengers. The ancient apostles, Peter, James and John gave the two seekers additional power, the Melchizedek Priesthood, which they had received from Christ during His earthly ministry. Smith and Cowdery now felt that they were fully prepared to establish Christ's Church again upon the earth.10

Mormons believe that when the Church was organized it was accomplished by the power and authority of that priesthood. In the same month, just prior to the organization, Smith announced another revelation on Church government that related to the specific administration of priesthood offices. The decree, in addition to specifying that Joseph and Oliver were to be apostles, declared that an apostle is an elder, and it is his duty, when authorized, to baptize and ordain other officers in the Church. Elders, as well, were to preach, expound the scriptures, administer the sacrament and take charge of meetings as they were led by the Holy Ghost. The priests were to teach, expound, baptize and administer the sacrament and take the lead of meetings in the absence of a higher authority. It was their duty to visit the house of each member, exhort the members to pray vocally and in secret and to attend all their family duties. In other words, the priests were by declaration home teachers. They could also assist the elders in their duties.11

10Mormons believe that the ancient Christian Church established during the meridian of time ceased to function after the apostles had been killed. For that reason, they hold that the Catholic and Protestant Churches are void of His power or priesthood.

11D&C 20:38-52.
The teachers were to be the guardians of the Church. Their duty was to:

... watch over the Church always, and be with and strengthen them; And see that there is no iniquity in the Church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking; And see that the Church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty.\textsuperscript{12}

The deacon was to assist the teacher and other officers in the Church, but he could not baptize, confirm, or administer the sacrament.

This organizational structure of the priesthood enabled the elder or anyone who held the Melchizedek Priesthood to perform his own obligations as well as the duties of any lesser office. Therefore, any priesthood bearer whose office was superior to the office of deacon was entitled, when called, to "teach" the members of the Church.

\textsuperscript{12} D&C 20:53-55.
Chapter 2

BEGINNINGS

Home teaching seemed to operate best when the Mormons were stationary, but their homes during their first quarter century of existence could hardly be considered permanent.

Fayette, New York was the site of the incorporation of the Church in 1830. Since Smith experienced very little tranquility following his "first vision" in 1820, he moved from his home near Palmyra, New York to Harmony, Pennsylvania near the home of his in-laws. Through the efforts of his scribe, Oliver Cowdery, the Smiths along with Cowdery were able to find relative peace with Cowdery's friends, the Whitmers, in Fayette. It seems that even before the Church was organized, its most prominent members were often moving their families. In fact, throughout the first quarter century of their existence, none of the Mormon gathering centers became permanent homes; yet, they built each community as though they would reside there forever.

THE FAYETTE CONFERENCE

In January of 1831, a conference of the Church was held in Fayette. During the three day affair, Joseph taught as the "will of the Lord" that the eight families then living in and around Fayette (Waterloo and Seneca Falls) were to sell their homes and farms and
move to Kirtland, Ohio to be numbered with the saints.\(^1\) Soon after the
conference, Joseph, Emma, and some of the brethren left for Kirtland.\(^2\)
Among those who remained behind was Lucy Smith, mother of the Prophet.
She remembered that another son, William, had the task of visiting the
Church, "calling upon each family," and remaining with them until
"each" individual belonging to the house had prayed in his hearing."\(^3\)
William had earlier been ordained to the office of teacher and he felt
duty-bound to stay and remind the few unconverted families that their
Prophet had given them the "will of the Lord," and that they should
sustain their fellow saints as the move progressed. As a teacher he
felt obligated to see that the members did their duty,\(^4\) for the Lord's

From the Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus
Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1960), 38:18-24, hereinafter cited as D&C.
The commandment reads: "And I hold forth and deign to give unto you
greater riches, even a land of promise, a land flowing with milk and
honey, upon which there shall be no curse when the Lord cometh; And I
will give it unto you for the land of your inheritance, if you seek it
with all your hearts. And this shall be my covenant with you, ye
shall have it for the land of your inheritance, and for the inheritance
of your children forever, while the earth shall stand, and ye shall
possess it again in eternity, no more to pass away. But verily I say
unto you that in time ye shall have no king nor ruler, for I will be
your king and watch over you. Therefore, hear my voice and follow me,
and you shall be a free people, and ye shall have no laws but my laws
when I come, for I am your lawgiver, and what can stay my hand? But
verily I say unto you, teach one another according to the office where-
with I have appointed you; And let every man esteem his brother as him-
self, and practice virtue and holiness before me."

\(^2\)Lucy Mack Smith, History of Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City:

\(^3\)Lucy Mack Smith, p. 195.

\(^4\)William Smith. William Smith on Mormonism (Lamoni, Iowa:
Herald, 1883), pp. 17-18. filmed copy located in Historical Department
of the Church, hereinafter cited as HDC.
command had been explicit that the saints

... should go to the Ohio; and there I [the Lord Jesus Christ] will give unto you my law; and there you shall be endowed with power from on high.  

A LAW TO GOVERN THE CHURCH

On the ninth of February, shortly after his arrival in Kirtland, Joseph Smith directed the elders to assemble together to receive the law by which the Church should be governed. His "divine" directives applied to all teaching that would "build up the Church." Specifically,

The elders, priests and teachers of this Church shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in the which is the fulness of the gospel. And they shall observe the covenants and Church articles to do them, and these shall be their teachings, as they shall be directed by the Spirit. And the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach. And all this ye shall observe to do as I have commanded concerning your teachings, until the fulness of my scriptures is given. And as ye shall lift up your voices by the Comforter, ye shall speak and prophesy as seemeth me good.

On the day the conference participants were notified to assemble, the office of bishop became a vital organizational link within the Church. Edward Partridge, a merchant in Kirtland was called to spend all his time in that ministry and "labor in the interests of the members of the Church." His new calling meant that

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5 D&C 38:32.
6 D&C 42.
7 D&C 42:12-16.
most of his time would be spent helping the newly arriving saints acquire land. He also had the assignment of teaching them the arts of diligence and unselfishness. His other duties were enumerated in conjunction with the other officers in the new Mormon decalogue--Section forty-two--which could be termed a code of laws for the structural government of the Church as well as a guideline for its membership.\(^9\)

Mormon attitude towards the law of the land as well as their moral law was clearly established. As Church members they were to keep their covenants and the Lord would reveal unto them other covenants sufficient to establish them in Ohio and later in the New Jerusalem, or city of Zion, the site of which would soon be revealed. Idlers were condemned; the manner of administering to the sick was explained, and they were instructed to live together in love.\(^10\)

Following this initial Ohio conference, the new bishop visited the branches of the Church around Kirtland. John Whitmer, the Church Historian reported Partridge's mission and clarified the overwhelming challenge that faced the budding Church.

The time was not yet come that the law [section forty-two] can be fully established, for the disciples live scattered abroad and are not organized; our numbers are small and the disciples untaught, consequently they understand not the things of the Kingdom. There were some of the disciples who


were flattered into the Church because they thought that all things were to be common, therefore they thought to glut themselves upon the labors of others.\textsuperscript{11} William Smith reported that "sometime after the conference where the elders increased in power,"

Another conference was held in Orange, where elders, priests, teachers and deacons received general instructions from [the] Church leaders concerning the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Since William was ordained a priest at the conference, he reflected about his experiences as a teacher. In a seemingly boastful manner he declared:

I had been exclusively engaged in the business of my office, attending the numerous conferences and visiting the branches to see that the members were all faithful and that there was no quarreling, or backbiting among the brethren.\textsuperscript{12}

OHIO PROBLEMS

During a conference held in Kirtland in June 1831, twenty-eight elders were named in a revelation to travel in pairs and preach the gospel. When they arrived in Missouri, they were to meet in conference to be told the whereabouts of their "New Jerusalem." By the time the elders who were involved in the mission to Missouri had returned, "the Churches [in and around Kirtland] needed much exhortation."\textsuperscript{13} This was true because many of the Church members appeared to be full of strife and contention. Since all the priesthood holders did not make the journey to Missouri, there should have remained in

\textsuperscript{11} John Whitmer, \textit{John Whitmer History} (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm, n. d.), p. 3.

\textsuperscript{12} William Smith, \textit{... On Mormonism}, p. 20.

\textsuperscript{13} Whitmer, \textit{History}, p. 11.
Ohio enough men who could perform the teaching functions. Perhaps the teachers inexperience created irregularities. John Whitmer, who lived in Missouri, implied that one of the reasons Joseph Smith had come to Jackson County in 1832 was for the purpose of "comfort[ing] the saints and settl[ing] some little difficulties."\textsuperscript{14}

The teaching operation had not functioned either qualitatively or quantitatively. For example, the \textit{Messenger and Advocate} accused some of the Church members of conduct "evince of corrupt hearts and debased principles."\textsuperscript{15} Some of those who became disappointed in the Church not only left it but also evoked a vindictiveness that brought persecution upon the Saints. Jacob Scott, one of the missionaries commissioned at the general conference of June, 1831, threw his \textit{Book of Mormon} down while he was out preaching, jumped on it and declared, "I would go to hell before I would preach it where I am so much persecuted."\textsuperscript{16} Scott never performed his mission to Missouri and he soon began preaching against the Mormons. He was not alone in this rebellion among those elders, about whom Whitmer wrote, ". . . some of those who had been commanded to take their journey . . . had denied the faith and turned from the truth." He later stated, "In the absence of the elders that went to Missouri many apostatized, but many have returned again into the fold from whence they have strayed."\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{14}Whitmer, \textit{History}, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{15}Max Parkin, \textit{Conflict at Kirtland} (Salt Lake City: Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1972), p. 75.

\textsuperscript{16}Parkin, \textit{Conflict}, p. 75. \textsuperscript{17}Parkin, \textit{Conflict}, p. 75.
Earlier in the fall of 1831, after a few proselyting missionaries returned from Missouri, apostasy raged, as evidenced by Simeon Carter's statement that he "mourned because of the falling away in Kirtland."18 During this early period numerous trials were held in the Church courts for problems and improprieties committed among the Saints. Those in high office as well as the lesser members were subject to Church trials. Oliver Cowdery, although his trial was held in Missouri, May 26, 1832, was brought to account for a certain transgression he had committed in the fall of 1830 in the township of Mayfield, Ohio. Newell Knight, the leader of the Coaleville, New York Saints that settled in Thompson, Ohio, lost his license to function as an officer because of his bad spirit and wrong teaching. Sidney Rigdon was brought to task for preaching false doctrine when possessed with an evil spirit. Martin Harris was put on trial for stating that the Prophet Joseph had drunk too much liquor while translating the Book of Mormon and for exalting himself above Joseph.19

The Churches needed so much exhortation in Ohio that several elders were called to reinforce the teaching operation and rectify wrongs. Orson Pratt and Reynolds Cahoon were appointed to visit the doubting members in the communities of Painesville, Chardon and Kirtland in January, 1832. In so doing they excommunicated several members for transgressing the laws of the Church.20 Parley Pratt observed that because the problems were so numerous, all the elders were commanded

18Parkin, Conflict, p. 76, from "Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," October 25, 1831 located in HDC.
19Parkin, Conflict, p. 76. 20Parkin, Conflict, p. 76.
to go among the Churches, visiting, strengthening and rebuking wrongs.21

George A. Smith, later reminiscing over this period of internal problems, said,

We had high council court upon high council court, bishop's trial upon bishop's trial; and labored and toiled constantly to settle difficulties to get our minds instructed in principle and doctrine, and in the power that we had to contend with.22

The problems were so intense that the Messenger and Advocate added, "there was much evil done, and many difficulties presenting themselves before the high council and bishop's council."23

KIRTLAND QUORUM EFFECTIVENESS

It is difficult to determine the reasons for the elders' increased involvement in the teachers' area of responsibility. It is possible that the over-whelming problems stifled the maturing teachers. As a second possibility, the teachers could have struggled to their full potential and then sought aid from colleagues ahead of them on the priesthood ecclesiastical scale. As a third alternative, the teachers may have simply become ineffective which would have necessitated elders officiating in a negated area of Church concern. The quorum record reveals that by 1834 the teachers were at least operating.

During a December meeting, two teachers were assigned to visit a Church member for "making use of tobacco."24 One brother was

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22 Parkin, Conflict, p. 77. 23 Parkin, Conflict, p. 77.
24 "Teachers Quorum Minute Book for Kirtland, Far West and Nauvoo," December 12, 1834, located in HDC, hereinafter cited as TQMB.
"appointed to labor with broth[er] Bates and wife." Two others were appointed to labor with a widow lady. The nature of her difficulty or their specific assignment was not mentioned. In March, 1835, Brother Cyrus Danielson accepted the challenge to labor with Brother Luman Gibbs for "lying and extortion." During the same meeting, Brother Rawson agreed to take another teacher with him to see Brother Lewis to inquire about "the cause why he does not attend with us." A partial reading of the August 29th meeting discloses that:

Brothers George Johnson and President Burk be appointed to labor with Brother Joseph Cechum and Brother Jacob Crandal to settle a difficulty existing between them on the account of the keeping of a child.

By this time, the teachers were trying to meet the expectations of the 1830 revelation. When they were not able to achieve their expectations, they reported their efforts to the elders who continued to labor with the non-conformers. The teachers were confident that delegating their problems to the elders was necessary for effective teaching.

THE TEACHING CONCERNS OF PROMINENT CHURCH-MEN

The teachers were not alone, however, in their desires to strengthen the Church. Fortunately, Church leaders applied their resources to teaching concerns.

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25 TQMB, December 12, 1834. 26 TQMB, March 28, 1835.
27 TQMB, March 28, 1835. 28 TQMB, August 29, 1835.
29 TQMB, February 28, 1835.
Judging from Parley Pratt's observations in Jackson County in 1833, the teachers could have been extremely effective. The Saints, he declared,

... lived in peace and quiet; no lawsuits with each other or with the world; few or no debts were contracted; few promises broken; there were no thieves, robbers, or murderers; few or no idlers; all seemed to worship God with a ready heart. On Sundays the people assembled to preach, pray, sing, and receive the ordinances of God. Other days all seemed busy in the various pursuits of industry. In short, there has seldom, if ever, been a happier people upon the earth than the Church of Saints now are.30

Wilford Woodruff experienced that same atmosphere. He reported that during his march in Zions Camp, he was busily working to help the Saints.31 Prior to being called as a proselyting missionary, he presented an account of his time (less than a year) as a teacher by noting that he had "written twelve letters."32

The experiments of the Church leaders had to be a factor for teacher successes. As the prophet and apostles moved about the Church, they had to acquaint themselves with the local operations and at the same time suggest more effective methods. Heber C. Kimball was one who functioned in this way.

At Kirtland, Heber C. Kimball participated in the temple dedication and his biographer noted that during that experience which lasted for several days, he visited from house to house. As he visited, he administered the sacrament and blessed the householders.

30Pratt, Autobiography, p. 94.
31Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833-1864, July 1, 1834, located in HDC.
32Woodruff, Ibid.
In reality he home taught.\textsuperscript{33} In 1839, he did the same thing in Springfield, Illinois, among the Church membership.\textsuperscript{34} On several occasions as he organized branches of the Church, he carefully listed the teachers and priests who had been called and set apart to watch over the kingdom.\textsuperscript{35} It is interesting that Joseph Fielding, a priest, accompanied him on a mission to England. While Fielding could not "expound like an apostle or confer the Holy Ghost, he could arrange meetings. In a letter to Willard Richards, dated October 12, 1837, Elder Kimball specified that although Fielding had done little preaching, he had baptized and "visited from house to house."\textsuperscript{36}

The apostle offered still another insight into the difficult watch over duties of the teacher as he considered the hardships of expulsion. The Mormons had been expelled from Jackson County into the surrounding counties. In 1839, they were ordered to leave the state. Elder Kimball recorded the details of his task in the following way:

On the 14th of April, 1839, the committee who had been left to look after the wants of the poor, removed thirty-six of the helpless families into Tenney's grove, about twenty-five miles from Far West. . . . [Then when undercover, we] could venture out in the evening, to counsel the committee and brethren in private houses.\textsuperscript{37}

\begin{thebibliography}{100}
\bibitem{34} Whitney, \textit{Kimball}, p. 267.
\bibitem{36} Whitney, \textit{Kimball}, p. 158.
\bibitem{37} Whitney, \textit{Kimball}, p. 249.
\end{thebibliography}
Kimball as an apostle was performing his teacher duties. But the procedural metamorphosis for effective teaching did not come instantly. Following the Mormon expulsions within Missouri, the majority of the Saints gathered in Far West and built a thriving community. The "Far West Record" indicated that when the high council realized in 1834 that the saints were scattered at impractical distances, they queried in the presence of their Prophet,

> Shall we appoint two, four or six to visit our scattered and afflicted brethren in this region and lay before them their duty... or shall we appoint more? How many shall we appoint? 38

After six speakers and lengthy discussion, they decided on four, but failed to name a committee. They determined that the saints required a visit, if not by a teacher, then by a non-teacher. Four men would visit initially, then after a brief time lapse, reassignments could be made again and the cycle would continue.

That was the embryo of a vast communication system that linked in a personal manner the most distant Mormon to his Church. By 1838, the high council had decided to charge the teachers with the complete responsibility of caring for the entire needs of each member. Their minutes reveal a strong denunciation to all except the teachers for taking "charge of any branch, society or neighborhood within the bounds of [the] stake." 39

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38 "The Far West Record," p. 48, July 12, 1834, located in HDC.
They resolved further that:

... [they] recommend to each neighborhood or settlement of saints, within the bounds of this stake, to choose for themselves a teacher, who is skilled in the word of God, faithful in his ministry, full of the Holy Ghost, and a friend to Joseph Smith, Jr., the Prophet of God, to take the watch-care over them and preside agreeable to the covenants, who shall be assisted by the other teachers and deacons in the branch.40

Apparently the high council was aware of the necessity of teachers and of their significant role in strengthening the membership. They were as emphatic about written reports as they were about the position of the teachers. Apparently they accepted the fifth item on their lengthy agenda. It proposed that:

... [each branch of the stake] send one or more teachers once in three months to the quarterly conference with a written account of the true situation of his branch.41

THE CREAM EPISODE

One episode that lends credence to teacher mobility and effectiveness occurred during the Missouri period. It seems that two sisters were desirous of making cheese, but neither of the women possessed the requisite number of cows. So they agreed to exchange milk. George A. Smith recounted the episode during April Conference, 1856.

The wife of Thomas B. Marsh, who was then President of the Twelve Apostles, and Sister Harris concluded they would exchange milk, in order to make a little larger cheese than they otherwise could. To be sure to have justice done, it was agreed that they should not save the strippings, but that the milk and strippings should all go together. ... Mrs. Harris, it appeared, was faithful to the agreement and carried to Mrs. Marsh the milk and strippings, but Mrs. Marsh, wishing to make

40 "Far West Record," pp. 97-98.
41 "Far West Record," pp. 97-98.
some extra good cheese, saved a pint of strippings from each cow and sent Mrs. Harris the milk without the strippings. Finally it leaked out that Mrs. Marsh had saved strippings, and it became a matter to be settled by the teachers. They began to examine the matter, and it was proved that Mrs. Marsh had saved the strippings, and consequently had wronged Mrs. Harris out of that amount.

An appeal was taken from the teachers to the bishop, and a regular Church trial was had. President Marsh did not consider that the bishop had done him and his lady justice, for they decided that the strippings were wrongfully saved, and that the woman had violated her covenant. 42

Marsh appealed to the high council and lost, whereupon he appealed to the First Presidency of the Church who in turn upheld all previous decisions. This affair could have helped to initiate the apostasy and eventual excommunication of the leading apostle in the Church. 43

Not only had the teachers given counsel, taught, and presented the problem to the constituted ecclesiastical authorities, but Marsh himself had sought a personal revelation. Heber C. Kimball remembered in 1857,

About the time Thomas E. Marsh was preparing to leave the Church, he received a revelation in the printing office. He retired to himself and prayed and was humble, and God gave him a revelation and he wrote it. There were from three to five pages. . . . He then came out and read it to Brother Brigham [Young] and me. In it God told him what to do, and that was to sustain Brother Joseph and to believe what Brother Joseph had said was true. 44

42 George A. Smith, Address delivered at Salt Lake City, April, 1856, Journal of Discourses, reported by G. D. Watt, III (Los Angeles, California, 1961), pp. 283-284, hereinafter cited as JD.

43 George A. Smith, JD, pp. 283-284. Marsh was in fact the senior apostle, hence, the president of that quorum.

The Marsh episode seems to have become a classic in Church literature to show the embrassing entanglements that can vex even the most prominent members. \(^{45}\)Contravertably, however, the example reveals a degree of teaching involvement that may not have been attained previously. Furthermore, the cream incident may not have been the cause of strife with Marsh, but only the catalyst, for several years later and after his return to the Church, he recalled that,

About this time I got a beam in my eye and thought I could discover a mote in Joseph's eye, though it was nothing but a beam in my eye. I was so completely darkened that I did not think of the Savior's injunction; 'Thou hypocrit, why beholdest thou the mote which is in thy brother's eye, when a beam is in thine own eye.' \(^{46}\)

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

It is interesting that for cream to rise to the top of a container of raw milk, the container must remain motionless. Mormons, unlike, cream were stirred and moved about. Some might argue that their mobility strengthened them and helped raise them above their environment. During their moves from New York to Kirtland and Missouri and within Missouri, the Mormons experimented with their own government. Their constitution, Section Twenty and their new decalogue. Section Forty-two specified priesthood duties but said little or nothing about procedural problems. Those problems were intentionally left untouched to be worked out by the priesthood leadership.

\(^{45}\)George A. Smith and Heber C. Kimball made references to Marsh during the 1850's to illustrate the importance of "following the brethren."

\(^{46}\)Litchfield, p. 98.
In Kirtland, the quorum of teachers detailed themselves with the watch-over and strengthening concerns of the membership. Since they were void of previous precedents, their services were valuable and significant.

It is significant too, that some general authorities who by virtue of their priesthood held the office of teacher, continued to experiment in attempts to find more meaningful approaches to the commandment of teaching. Of greater significance is the fact that a high council initiated its own approach to teaching, all with the sanction and blessing of the Prophet Joseph Smith, who was learning how to be an effective teacher in conjunction with his colleagues.
Chapter 3

DEVELOPMENT DURING THE 1840's

After the saints had been expelled from Missouri, they settled in and around Nauvoo, Illinois. As their numbers swelled from a continual inpouring of immigrants, the Mormons moved ahead with plans to commercialize and industrialize their surroundings. They commenced erecting a temple, pushed for higher education, and were protected by their own Nauvoo Legion which served to deter mob violence. However, their home teaching program did not keep pace with their developments.

NAUVOO PROBLEMS

The teachers were still meeting weekly in 1841, but by the fall of that year, their quorum meetings had become sporadic.¹ In May of 1841, they discussed the possibility of visiting each member of the Church, but the discussion was "laid over" until more information had become available.² In June, they met with the deacons, but their proceedings were void of accomplishment.³ During their February 4, 1844 assemblage, they heard "some very appropriate remark[s]

¹"Teachers Quorum Minute Book for Kirtland, Far West and Nauvoo," 1838-1842, hereinafter cited as TQMB, located in the Historical Department of the Church, hereinafter cited as HDC.

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level of saints concentrated at Far West. The teaching brethren seemed confused and overwhelmed with the number of people within the city. Making the problem even more critical was the uneven distribution of the people living within the stakes, since no uniform number of members had been established. For example, Ramus, later known as Macedonia constituted a stake. At Pleasant Vale, in Pike County, 166 saints were all that could be numbered in a stake. Kirtland, until 1841 was a stake with about 500 members. Most stakes had only one bishop, and even though jurisdictional presiding problems had been discussed in Far West years earlier, they had not been finalized. Hence, the problem was critical elsewhere, but in Nauvoo it was compounded by a higher concentration of saints.

The teaching problems of Nauvoo did not stem from neglect. Instead, they were part of the maturation process. Not only did the Mormons move into Illinois without "Brother Joseph," but they learned while there to be less dependent upon him.

BISHOPRIC EFFECTIVENESS AND DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY

Besides the complexities initiated by sheer numbers, another reason for the confusion among the teachers may have been the small

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9 T. Edgar Lyon, "The Development of Church Organization and Doctrine at Nauvoo, 1839-1846" (paper presented to the University of Utah, Institute of Religion, March 1, 1968), p. 3. Lyon presumes "there may have been [only] about two thousand people in the vicinity of Far West."

10 TQMB. Deduction made by author from entires during entire Nauvoo period.

11 Barrett, pp. 409-410.

amount of leadership ability possessed by the bishops of the wards. For example, when the high council at Council Point met in August, 1846, a bishop reported that one of his fellow bishops refused to act in his office. At another high council meeting held at Kanesville, Iowa, in February 1850,

The bishop's report from the teachers was called for but on account of the bishop's absence, the report was postponed [sic] for two weeks. And when the Quorum of apostles requested the four Nauvoo bishops to have their teachers take a census in each of their wards in 1845, only one bishop complied.

By 1846, the problems had crystallized and solutions were being sought and employed. At Council Point, where the before mentioned bishop had become delinquent in his duties,

The council voted that the committee of bishops be instructed to labor with Bishop ______ and teach him his duty and report the result to this council as soon as convenient.

The jurisdictional problems that characterized the Nauvoo period could have been amplified as the saints made their Illinois exodus. Apparently, many priesthood holders, separated from their quorums, became inert in relationship to their priesthood obligations. As a result, Brigham Young declared emphatically in 1847 that the

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13"Council Point High Council Minutes," August 15, 1846, located in HDC.
14"Kanesville High Council Minutes," February 1, 1850, located in HDC.
15Statement by T. Edgar Lyon, personal interview, Salt Lake City, July 5, 1974.
16"Council Point," August 15, 1846.
priesthood quorum members who had up until that time been numbered with their local group become lost in the human maze. He said:

Let the seventies, high priests, elders, priests, teachers and deacons report themselves, immediately on their arrival at the Bluffs, to the presidency of their respective quorums, if present, and if not, to the presidency or council of the place that their names may be registered with their quorums.17

Perhaps some teachers felt that their priesthood activity exacted too many excessives. The Christmas communication from the Quorum of Twelve in 1847 stipulated that:

It is the duty of all parents to train up their children in the way they should go, instructing them in every correct principle, so fast as they are capable of receiving, and setting an example worthy of imitation; for the Lord holds parents responsible for the conduct of their children, until they arrive at the years of accountability before him; and the parents will have to answer for all misdemeanors arising through their neglect. Mothers should teach their little ones to pray as soon as they are able to talk. Presiding elders should be particular to instruct parents concerning their duty, and teachers . . . should see that they do it.18

Perhaps some teachers felt that since the demand of getting parents to do their duty was beyond their capability, they could casually take a priesthood vacation by failing to report to their new quorums. The Church leaders, however, did not seem to slacken in their insistence that teachers had to be insistent with parents, for John Taylor resounded the same message in 1851. He said:

There are also teachers whose business it is to visit the members in the different branches of the Church where they live, and to see that they attend to their family duties,

17 James R. Clark, Messages of the First Presidency (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), I, 330.
18 Clark, I, 331.
prayers, etc.; to watch over the spiritual interests of those under their care; and to see that there is no hard feeling, contention, evil speaking, or wickedness.\(^{19}\)

**A HOME TEACHING VISIT TO THE JOSEPH SMITH HOME**

Accomplishing such a difficult task could have been simplified if the teachers would ask pertinent questions to the members as they visited with them in their homes. The members could have become part of the teaching repertoire during the early 1840's, even though such a practice did not become prominent on a Church-wide basis until the "reformation" of the 1850's. One account that lends support to such an idea is an article written for the *Juvenile Instructor* in 1892 by William Farrington Cahoon.\(^{20}\) When the article appeared, Cahoon was seventy-nine. Nine months later he would be dead. The article included several authors, all of whom eulogized Joseph Smith. Cahoon closed with an incident that he had failed to include in his family record.\(^ {21}\) His account follows:

Before I close my testimony concerning this good man, I wish to mention one circumstance which I never shall forget; I was called and ordained to act as a teacher to visit the families of the saints. I got along very well till I found that I was obliged to call and pay a visit to the Prophet. Being young, only about seventeen years of age, I felt my weakness in visiting the Prophet and his family in the capacity of a teacher. I almost felt like shrinking from duty.


\(^{21}\)William Cahoon, "Family Record" in a Brief Sketch of William Farrington Cahoon" located in LDS Genealogical Library, Salt Lake City.
Finally I went to the door, I stood there trembling, and said to him:

'Brother Joseph, I have come to visit you in the capacity of a teacher, if it is convenient for you.'

He said, 'Brother William, come right in. I am glad to see you; sit down in that chair there and I will go and call my family in.'

They soon came in and took seats. He then said, 'Brother William, I submit myself and family into your hands,' and then took his seat. 'Now Brother William,' said he, 'ask all the questions you feel like.'

By this time all my fears and trembling had ceased, and I said, 'Brother Joseph, are you trying to live your religion?'

He answered, 'Yes.'

I then said, 'Do you pray in your family?'

He said, 'Yes.'

'Do you teach your family the principles of the gospel?'

He replied, 'Yes, I am trying to do it.'

'Do you ask a blessing on your food?'

He answered 'Yes.'

'Are you trying to live in peace and harmony with all your family?'

He said that he was.

I then turned to Sister Emma, his wife, and said, 'Sister Emma, are you trying to live your religion? Do you teach your children to obey their parents? Do you try to teach them to pray?'

To all these questions she answered, 'Yes, I am trying to do so.'

I then turned to Joseph and said, 'I am through with my questions as a teacher; and now you have any instructions to give, I shall be happy to receive them.'

He said, 'God bless you, Brother William; and if you are humble and faithful, you shall have power to settle all difficulties that may come before you in the capacity of teacher.'

I then left my parting blessing upon him and his family, as a teacher, and took my departure. 22

Cahoon remembered that he had been "about seventeen years of age." With simple math and Cahoon's birthdate as November 7, 1813, 23 the account would have taken place in 1830 or 1831, at least a full year prior to his baptism! Not withstanding the fifty year time lapse, the event probably took place in Nauvoo. Cahoon, even though,

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23 Cahoon, "Family Record."
nearly thirty, probably thought of himself as a "young man."  

EMISSION

After the saints had been driven from Nauvoo they substituted wheels and tents for homes and a different dimension was added to home teaching. The new dimension probably began as the saints emigrated to their zion.

On a Tuesday evening in August, 1852, an emigration company camped near Independence Rock, now in the state of Wyoming. As the entire group assembled for their evening prayers which had normally been done in their limited circle headed by their immediate captain of "ten,"

It was moved and seconded that the priests and teachers go around and visit all the saints to know why all did not attend unto their duties as to prayer at the appointed times and if all was going on in peace and harmony with them, one with another.

The motion carried. Only limited evidence is available to show the involvement of the teachers during the emigration, but the structure of the movement suggests that the captains of fifty and ten maintained similar responsibilities as those held by the bishops and teachers during periods when permanent abodes were prevalent.

The New Orleans Branch

The most significant document related to transcient saints is

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24 Cahoon, "Family Record." His marriage in Kirtland was the first public ceremony in which Joseph Smith participated. Cahoon never seemed to tire of telling of his involvement in this historic "first."

the "New Orleans Branch Record, 1849-1850." In New Orleans, Thomas McKenzie had been called by Orson Hyde to preside over the European converts until they could be removed to either St. Louis or Salt Lake. Since the relocations were not accomplished simultaneously, his task was not simple. Most, if not all, of the New Orleans saints had come from England, and while there they had been organized into branches presided over by an elder and usually assisted by a few priests and teachers. McKenzie immediately recognized the need for assistance, so accordingly at the first meeting,

He laid the city off into six districts [he also used the term wards] and appointed officers over each ward to teach them their duty and to meet every Tuesday evening to give in a report of the situation of each member to the President.

Within the following week, he called several Melchizedek Priesthood holders to assist him. These men formed the branch council. He called one elder to preside over each district, but all of the teachers they called to be their assistant held only the Aaronic Priesthood.

On November the 7th, the elders were called upon to give an account of every visit made during the week. These included their own as well as the visits reported to them.

Elias Hall stated he had called upon Sister Garfield and confirmed her and found her in a delicate state of health.

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26 "New Orleans Branch Record, 1849-1850," pp. 3-15, located in HDC, hereinafter cited as NORB. The "Bristol Road Branch Record," 1852-1858, unpaged, located in HDC for 1852 shows a working relationship between the missionary presiding elders and the teachers. The "St. Helens Branch Minutes," 1841-1854 located in HDC, reveals that for March 28, 1852, the branch had 95 members, 4 elders, 3 priests, 6 teachers and 4 deacons.

27 NORB, p. 49, October 28, 1849.

28 NORB, October 28, 1849.
Brother Salter reported the condition he found Sister Lister in and the death of her child and said there was much sickness with the saints generally. Brother Yandal gave a report of his visits and said there were several complaints of the scarcity of employment. Brother Clive reported the death and burial of Sister Lister's child.  

Two others reported the case of a sister who appeared to be slothful in her duties. They declared that "it would be requisite that she be at Church before she could be received as a member into the Church."  

The minutes do not reveal their decision, but they do show that Thomas McKenzie knew the value of effective teachers and he looked for their continued support. Praising the men who had attended the report meeting, he offered his blessing and surmised that "those who were dilitary would be the losers, for fortitude in adversity was a very great virtue."  

Two meetings later, when the report made known that an overzealous female member wished the teachers to cease their visits, a discussion on the merits of teaching followed. During the discussion, the branch president suggested that teachers would be worthless if they could not visit in the dwellings of the Church members.  

He could name a sister who had been "lost" through the teachers failure to make personal visits.  

Three days later, the council held a hearing. Their agenda included the case of Brother Fisher. He had been summoned to appear  

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29 NORB, p. 16  
30 NORB, p. 16.  
31 NORB, p. 17.  
32 NORB, p. 38.  
33 NORB, pp. 36-38.
for negligence and for treating his teachers with rudeness. Fisher opened by describing some of his weaknesses of the flesh that had been amplified as he neared a grog shop. His visitors, two priests, were present at the meeting and declared that his weaknesses were unrelated to the charges of negligence towards his family. The two teachers testified that when they had visited, they were repulsed by Brother Fisher who had insisted during their visit that his knowledge exceeded that of the young men, for he had been a member of the Church for more than eleven years.  

Other problems arose in the branch regarding the visits of the young men. Elizabeth Glover asked the branch president to restrict the visits of the two teachers who had been assigned to visit her. He retaliated by sending two council members. To them she confided the reason for her opposition to the visits—"the other boarders where she resided were gentiles and were indignately opposed to Mormon teachings and they always "heard whatever questions were put to her by the teachers." When their findings were reported to the council, one brother said,  

She thinks she is something above the rest of the folks. She wants someone to visit her who is dressed in fine clothes and who has a gold chain. ... I do not see any other plan than to let her drag along. It is a doubtful case with her. She told me on board the ship Berlin she considered the sacrament a humbug.  

In defense of the young men who shouldered the Aaronic Priesthood duties in the branch, it should be noted that they were not

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34 NORB, p. 49.  
35 NORB, pp. 90-91, March 24, 1850.  
36 NORB, pp. 90-91.
teen-agers. Of the five teachers and priests identified on the branch list at the beginning of the record, two ages can be confirmed. John Hindley was a painter, married, and probably accompanied by his wife (if she had not already died). His age was thirty. Charles Tuckett was the oldest son of a widow. He was twenty-three. The age of Richard Smith, the teacher who received the impetus of Elizabeth Glover's attack, cannot be determined, but he is listed with four other Smiths. He was probably the oldest of Widow Smith's three sons, and could have been in his late teens or early twenties.

When two teachers confronted unique challenges which they could not solve as they visited with a Brother Pears, they invited him to attend the upcoming council meeting. When the council pondered his discouragement from failing to find employment, even after he had offered one would-be-employer half of every dollar he earned, one teacher proposed "to lend him a few dollars towards his assistance" so he could rent a public "stall" to sell home-made articles. After Pears refused the offer, he was rebuffed by another council member for his stubbornness.

The Ship International

More enlightenment into the operations of emigration emerges from the entries of the ship International. When the large sailing


38 Deduction by author from study of entire Branch Record. In most cases the widow who is accompanied by her family preceeded them in the account.

39 NORB, pp. 28-29, November 29, 1849.
vessel was tugged oceanward into the River Mersey from Liverpool on February 25, 1853, she carried on board an emigrant company of 425, including a number of unbaptized friends and relatives, plus a crew of twenty-six. Hail and snow pelted the ship as it anchored in the Mersey awaiting fair winds. Below deck Christopher Arthur, the fifty-six-year-old president of the company, divided the passengers into eight wards, each with a presiding elder assisted by a priest or teacher. After four weeks at sea the presiding elders reported that everyone in their ward was in "good standing, no sickness, quarreling, nor complaints of any kind." On April 20, the same day Captain David Brown was baptized, he was ordained an elder, the first and second mates became priests, and the cook a teacher. The ecclesiastical set-up, for the most part, remained stable as the company trekked toward Utah Territory. In the middle of June, shortly after the group left Keokuk, Iowa, Brother Ford was summoned before the council for refusing to act as a watchman. When he tried to excuse himself on account of sickness, Brother Lyon, the presiding elder encouraged him to respond to necessities in spite of his sickness.

An 1859 Emigration

The records of an emigrating company in 1859 show that the captain of tents performed a similar role as the teachers. The company

43 David Brown, Journal of Ship International, June 14, 1853, located in HDC.
of 700 was divided into ten wards. After the company voyaged for twenty-three days, the saints disembarked and proceeded to trek toward their zion. It is significant that they continued to utilize the same organization. This was true even though many within the company separated to gain adequate funding. During the emigration the captains of tents were expected to give all their time and attention to their company and to make certain that all allotments were given regularly and fairly. They were to equalize as nearly as possible all labor and to act as the father over their small family.

A Council Point Emigrating Company

After John Tidwell, a branch president at Council Point, or Winter Quarters, had been elected to be the emigrating company president, he assembled his company together and insisted that even though there were none in the branch to "try or counsel" except him and his two counselors, he had his "eye on a good many of the movements in their midst." He then warned, "I am watching them."

Before their arrival at Loup Fork, a fellow traveler contacted small pox. Since Brother Boynton's wife was the victim, he was directed to position his wagon in the extreme posterior of the train. Hopefully he might lag behind the main train farther and farther.

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45Hafen, P. 59. By 1855, acting bishops had been called to aid the emigrators. At Mormon Grove, Kansas, James McGaw was called as part of his mission. Andrew Cunningham served for two years in Florence, Nebraska as part of his proselyting mission. Daniel Tyler was called on his return from a mission to be bishop at Iowa City in 1856.

46Bowering, March, 1852.
Even though no teachers were named in the account, their performance is indicative of teaching functions. As the council met,

It was finally moved by Bro[ther] Charles Miller that we covenant to stand by each other unto death under all circumstances. Seconded . . . Carried . . . Then Bro[ther] Charles Miller volunteered to go and do for Bro[ther] Boynton's family during the sickness.47

The council (president, counselors and captains of ten) met on two succeeding evenings to consider a dispute that had arisen between a female Mormon and her male, non-Mormon teamster. The teamster wanted to withdraw from her employ and take his earnings in goods. Sister Weldon maintained that he had failed to live up to his agreement and was negligent in doing his chores. Even though the journal failed to supply the results of the trial, the council of necessity had to gather facts, make decisions and maintain stability and order during the exodus. Born from an urgent need, the council finally decided near the conclusion of their trek to enlist the aid of the priests and teachers.48

THE SALT LAKE CITY HIGH PRIESTS INITIATE PROPER HOME TEACHING

Organized companies were not alone in their solicitations for increased service from the teachers. In Salt Lake City notions to improve the saints had spread from the apostles Quorum into the quorum of high priests. During their quorum gathering on Christmas eve, 1848, one brother urged his fellow high priests to bring about a reformation

47 Bowering
with the people of Salt Lake. 49

Brother Vance followed on the same subject. . . . Brother Haywood said, he believed there was [sic] some henious sins in this place amongst the people, and I believe that is the reason we have so much cold weather. 50

In the subsequent meeting the following week, several offered similar feelings.

Bro[ther] Whitney . . . [declared that] here is the place to commence the reformation, here in our hearts, and from us to others. Bro[ther] Jackman followed encouraging the brethren to persevere in bringing about a reformation. . . . Bro[ther] Erastus Snow wished the brethren to rebuke anyone who spoke lightly of the authority of the Church, whenever they met such, and if they won't humble themselves, bring them before the judges of Israel. 51

The high priests in Salt Lake were trying to follow the directives of the First Presidency and Quorum of Twelve and they initiated schemes to bring their colleagues into compliance. For example, one high priest who had previously raised his hand to support Church currency policies and then had withdrawn his endorsement was visited by another quorum member. After some discussion, Elder Erastus Snow moved that "fellowship be withdrawn" from their colleague. 52 By 1853, this localized group of sages had begun to vocalize their assumed teaching roles. The minutes of November 30 meeting offer a pensive glimpse:

Bro[ther] Woolley. . . . [concluded that] we ought to grow better and wiser and consequently greater. We are presidents, ordained to the Priesthood of the Son of God. We should be

49 "Salt Lake Stake High Priests Minutes, 1848-1853," pp. 11-13, located in HDC, hereinafter cited as SLHP.

50 SLHP, p. 13.

51 SLHP, p. 16.

52 SLHP, pp. 17-18.
fathers to the people, and have a care over all arround [sic] us. . . . I look upon the bishop of my ward as my father, he is a father to his ward. . . . We who are aged men, should carry our influence against evil. . . . I wish every bishop would know what every person in his ward is about and watch over them, and thus put our feet on evil. . . . Elder Cahoon . . . [endorsed] Bro[ther] Woolleys remarks and said that there are enough in the quorum to watch over the city. I want every high priest to feel he is a teacher and wherever he thinks there is evil let him walk right into that house, and when a high priest enters a house let the inmates know that the teacher has come. It is our business to keep all right at home and abroad. . . . Our presence should be always enough to quell an evil, unruly, unhallowed spirit. Bro[ther] Fielding [said] 'I am also much pleased with Elder Woolleys remarks.' . . . There are great facilities for finding out all the evil in our midst in this quorum.53

Some within the quorum were apprehensive and fearful that the inquisition would become too private. 54 As the meeting closed with Dr. Sprague's sardonic threat that he would "expose" all within the quorum whom he caught drunk, 55 some may have sensed that their biggest battles would be within themselves.

Even though the high priests were not completely unanimous in their desires to improve the quality of teaching, their quorum had catalyzed an urgent reemphasis aimed at ideal teaching.

53 SLHP, pp. 24-26.
54 SLHP, p. 27. George B. Wallace said "Many of us look over our own faults, and see others and they see ours, perhaps . . . they have not looked into their own bosoms to see how the spirit conducted there. . . . Until we learn to govern self we cannot govern others, [even] tho[ugh] it may be a long day before we are perfect."
55 SLHP, p. 28.
Chapter 4

THE REFORMATION

When Brigham Young introduced the reformation during the October general conference of 1855, he reemphasized Mormon fundamentals and stressed that the saints' lives should conform to their beliefs. He concluded his remarks from the tabernacle by directing the "conivers" in the basin to take their property and leave the territory. He assured them that they were unworthy of citizenship in the kingdom of God.¹

Local brethren known as home missionaries were called to accompany the general authorities as they held quarterly conferences in the wards and settlements throughout the Church. Before they started on their journeys, they met to be instructed about their new assignment. Essentially, they would meet with the members, chastise them, then commit them to higher standards of conduct. Most of the time four or five men accompanied a leading authority to the motivational and often frenzied meetings.² It was not uncommon for the conferences to last an entire day with two or three extensive sessions. In one ward, Jedediah

¹Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 8, 1855, hereinafter cited as Journal History, located in the Historical Department of the Church, hereinafter cited as HDC.

²Journal History, September 18, 1856 from Desert News 6:237. The reported meetings held in Farmington began with four of the teachers praying in succession followed by four other speakers. After Jedediah
Grant and his entourage spent four days and had "gratifying results." The Historical Record of the Fourteenth Ward in Salt Lake reveals that meetings were held nearly every day for an entire week then climaxed on Saturday with three. Wilford Woodruff attended most of the sessions. Once, he declared to his listeners that he liked the spirit of the meeting and knew that the people were in the dark and needed to be dugged and pruned. The bishop concurred with Elder Woodruff, then he dogmatically insisted that:

The teachers get the spirit or stop teaching. Persons are full of the spirit of hell [including] men in high standing. . . . If they did not repent, he would cut them off. If the people did not straighten up they would go to hell.

In most instances the teachers, in company with the bishopric where the conferences were held, participated jointly with the visiting brethren. By the time October had drawn to a close, the Deseret News was able to report that the Quorum of Twelve was holding conferences throughout the territory.

Grant had blessed the bishop, his counsellors, the teachers, the choir, the people and all the home missionaries, "he blessed the whole congregation in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and prayed that the Spirit of Joseph and Hyrum and of Brigham and Heber might abide with them forever." The congregation then shouted Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna to God. It seems inconsistent with procedural ethics that "while the sacramental emblems were being passed, a number of the sick were administered to."

Journal History, September 16, 1856.

"Salt Lake Fourteenth Ward Historical Record," 1856-1860, p. 5, located in HDC.


Journal History, September 14-16, 1866, from random samplings of conference minutes.

Journal History, October 31, 1855.
The conditions that prompted the reformation are varied and complex. The Latter-day Saints had moved to the "mountains" to be apart from the world and to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. Their theology was implicit that saints must be spiritually awake and free from sin. For many years the Church membership had lived under camp conditions, and the constant moving, unrest, and fatigue that accompanied this manner of living caused some laxity in moral discipline and physical cleanliness. During the exodus across the plains and later in the young Utah settlements, the necessary facilities for bodily cleanliness were not always available, and many Mormons had developed poor hygiene habits. Many of the saints had become irregular in their observance of the sabbath day as well as in their practice of private and family prayers. Some had not learned to cooperate with their neighbors in community property matters; and finally, there seemed to have been an increase in the number of sex sins.

One bishop described his ward members as generally hypocritical.

Bishop _____ said there was not one woman out of ten [in his ward] that had the spirit of reformation. Some in his ward will stand up and say they never spoke against the First Presidency and the plurality, but they knew they lied like hell, and when he reproves them, they will go down on their knees and pray for ten thousand blessings more than the devil ever thought of.

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9 Searle, pp. 8-11.
10 Searle, pp. 8-11.
11 "Record of Bishops Meetings, Reports of Wards, Of Bishops and Lesser Priesthood," 1851-1862, p. 168, October 21, 1856, hereinafter cited as BLP, located in HDC.
While the denunciations of the reformation became generally well known, the procedural and administrative functions of the movement have remained relatively unknown. The home teaching apparatus which had already been in the Church for a quarter of a century became the vehicle of the reformation. The home missionaries and the general authorities became the mechanics who labored to get the "old" but relatively unused vehicle to run smoothly.

Once the teachers had learned their roles in the reformation, they committed themselves to doing their duty. The teachers quorum president in Salt Lake admonished the teachers to do their duty in spite of the bishops' refusals to prod them. He further proposed that:

The teaching heretofore had been done more as a form than anything else and such teaching had brought darkness on the minds of the people.

Many of the teachers had become so ineffective that the problems they encountered were considered in high council meetings. In the Salt Lake Stake, for example, the scarcity of foodstuffs had made it mandatory for the bishops to provide temporal assistance to their ward families. To meet those demands, most of the bishops used their teachers to itemize, collect and transport the food products within their wards. One teacher reported at a high council meeting that he, in company with two other teachers, had visited a ward member to request twenty pounds of meal or its monetary equivalent. The man said that he wanted to be charitable, but also wanted the bishop's guarantee that


13 SLSLPMM, April 4, 1857.
the food would be returned if and when he needed the meal for his own family. After hearing this pessimistic report, a counselor in a bishopric concurred that many ward members professed to sustain their bishopric and the teachers but refused to share their possessions. The home teacher "believed [that] it was not right for men to refuse the bishop's call." He thought that such men "did not uphold the bishop although they may say they do to the teachers." The general consensus of the high council was that the man who had apparently kept his goods, should be severed from Church fellowship.  

Perhaps the teachers could have helped their selfish brother in a better way than simply retelling his story to the high council. Jedediah Grant indicated that constructive help would do more good than unconstructive procedures. In fact, he implored the teachers and bishops to "do right" so they would be filled with the Holy Ghost. More than anything else, that would help them to be constructive in their priesthood obligations.  

Franklin D. Richards observed that the process of reforming was both constructive and effective as he reported the impact of the new reformation to his recent associates in Europe. He noted that:

The change in the feelings of the people is indeed wonderful already, and yet it has but just begun. Bishops are dropped, and their counselors, when slothful at their duties, or when ruled by their wives, so are the teachers, if they do not perform their duties, which are to know every man and woman in their several districts, and to live their religion themselves.  

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14 Salt Lake Stake High Council Meeting Minutes, 1856, April 20, 1856, located in CHD.

15 Journal History, October 2, 1856.

In the Deseret News, President Grant publicly advised the teachers of
the wards to report to their bishop at least once a month "the stand-
ing of the members."17

As the general authorities, with the assistance of the home
missionaries, directed the reformation through the bishops and teachers
to the members, they were hoping to strengthen the Church. In most
cases, the teachers not only made commitments to reform, but they in
turn tried to get the Church members to try to live better lives. Not
all the saints were overjoyed, however, to make recommitments and be
rebaptized or formalize their promises. For example, Heber C. Kimball
noted that when the home missionaries tried to put a halt to wrangling
and thievery among the Grantsville saints,

... they [the Grantsville Mormons] wanted a new local
president and a new local bishop. ... Said I, if an angel
of God should come to that village he would say to its in-
habitants, 'repent and wash your bodies, repent and clean up
your door yards, repent and cleanse your out-houses.18

Since the Deseret News reported the progress of the reformation,
it might have been assumed that the local ecclesiastical leaders not
yet directly involved would implement the reforming processes before
conferences could be convened in their areas.19 Perhaps the publicity
made the priesthood holders feel that since they had become informed,

17Journal History, September 14, 1856.
18Journal History, August 3, 1856.
19Juanita Brooks, John D. Lee, Pioneer Builder, Zealot,
Scapegoat (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark, Co., 1964) p. 91.
Mrs. Brooks maintains that even though the questioning tactics had
not reached the southern part of the territory, the leaders were
having meetings which followed reforming themes.
they could stay away from the conferences. By mid-September 1856, President Grant had promised significant blessings to the conference attenders. Among his promises were:

... They can direct their wives and children right, and will know how to correct them in love, and how to chastize their children in mildness. They will also understand how to sanctify themselves, and how to keep the Sabbath [holy].

**OPERATIONAL AND DOCTRINAL INROADS**

With all the publicity in support of the reformation, it is difficult to appreciate significant operational developments, but there were at least three. They included; bishops being fathers to their wards, fathers acting as heads of their families and the building of a checks and balance system within the Church. In the fourteenth general epistle to the Church, five character weaknesses were outlined as reasons for the reformation movement. The five areas of concern were: murmuring, fault finding, complaining, indifference to following the Lord's counsel, and finally a dull lethargy which had caused some saints to possess a false security. More importantly, however, the newsletter directed attention to the bishops and their assistants who ministered in temporal affairs.

In Israel, as in the world, there are many rulers, but few with the feeling of fathers to the people. Be fathers to the people, ye bishops, and lead them on, step by step, until they wax strong in the knowledge of things, both temporal and spiritual, pertaining to the kingdom of our God.

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20 Journal History, September 17, 1856.

21 Journal History, September 17, 1856.

22 Letter from Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball to Orson Pratt, December 10, 1856 in Millennial Star, XIX (April 18, 1857), 247.

23 Letter from Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, Ibid.
Simply stated, one aspect of the reformation was a project to teach the bishops how to be fathers to their wards.

Brigham Young directed a major portion of an 1856 sermon to such an endeavor. He said that:

If they [the bishops] magnify their office and calling, they will know the circumstances of every family in their wards. But with all our experience in regard to bishops, especially those who have been in the Church so long and who know so much about the kingdom of God, they ought to know a little more about the families residing in their wards and not quite so much about the kingdom, if they cannot understand both at the same time. I very well know that they have their own families to take care of, and that they are allowed nothing for their services. That is partly why we have been appointing some new bishops. I want men to act as bishops who are smart enough to take care of themselves and at the same time magnify their calling; and if we do not find them to be honest we mean to appoint other persons, and to continue doing so until that quorum is filled with honest men. I am sorry to say that we have proven a few bishops dishonest. Perhaps some of the bishops here, or of those who live in other parts of the territory, will say, (it comes very hard for Br [other] Brigham, for you to make such a statement as that and not point out the dishonest person;) the people may think that you mean me.' You are the very ones I mean, if your consciences are clear and you are not accused, therefore I mean those who say, 'this is hard.'

Do you wish me to explain myself? I have proof ready to show that bishops have taken in thousands of pounds of tithing which they have never reported to the general tithing office. We have documents to show that bishops have taken in hundreds of bushels of wheat, and only a small portion of it has come into the general tithing office; they stole it to let their friends speculate upon. If any one is doubtful about this, will you not call on me to produce my proof before a proper tribunal? I should take pleasure in doing so, but we pass over such things in mercy to the people. 24

A second purpose of the reformation was an attempt to transmit authority from the First Presidency, down through the priesthood hege-

mony to the heads of families. The teachers were not only a vital link in the sequence, but played major roles as the idea became a re-

ality. Franklin D. Richards expressed his awareness of this procedure

24 Journal History, June 15, 1856.
when he wrote on November 1, 1856:

> Many powers and responsibilities, heretofore retained in the hands of the Presidency, have been handed down to the bishops.25

Orson Pratt gave similar counsel to his associates as he warned in an editorial that the presiding elders should not hesitate to perform the duties of those down the scale to show them how to develop.26

Perhaps the most important practical development of the entire reformation was what John Taylor described as a workable checks and balance system within the Church.27 At the first meeting of the New York Conference, Elder Taylor focused on the working relationship that should exist perpetually within the Church as the member confides in his bishop and his assistants—the teachers. The relationship would develop into a dual confidence. He summarized his remarks by saying,

> There are two causes why this people are preserved and united in doing the will of God. The members sustain the authorities in the truth, having the witness of the Spirit of God and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the authorities seek by the same Spirit and intelligence the welfare of the people under their charge.28

Teachers, in addition to being in a strategic organizational position, were in a position to build confidence into the system.

**CATECHISMS**

If building confidence between the Church leaders and the membership was an objective of the reformation, it may seem paradoxical

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26 *Millennial Star*, XIX (August 8, 1857), 505.
27 *Millennial Star*, XIX (November 2, 1857), 199.
28 *Millennial Star*, XIX (November 2, 1857), 199.
that in some instances the results were exactly the opposite. One of the teaching practices that received notoriety during the period was the personal questioning by the teacher of the member as he visited in the home. Some Mormons may have become repulsed with the questions or the catechizer. On the other hand, these may have only served to precipitate what many already felt—an urge to leave. One elder in Britain, for example, found ninety-one scattered members throughout the conference. He brought some of them back into the Church while others did not wish to be named with the saints, therefore he and his companion "reduced the scattered members by severing the disaffected from the vine." John Pulsipher observed as he journeyed from Fort Supply to Salt Lake in the spring of 1857 that fifty wagonloads of apostates were leaving the territory to return to the states because they did not wish to accept the stringent demands of the reformation. The catechism used during the reformation was a checklist designed to assist the teachers in the questioning of the saints and to aid the saints in their repentance. It is interesting that as early as November, 1855, Brigham Young had heard arguments to the effect that teachers stop confining themselves to old stereotyped questions. David Fullmer, the president of the teachers quorum in the presence of his Prophet said:

"Teachers should visit their portion of the ward once a week. They don't come to my house once in six months. I

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29 John Pymm to Orson Pratt, Millennial Star, XIX (February 7, 1857), 94.
31 Searle, P. 61.
have only been visited by the teacher three times since I came to the valley. Practical and discreet men should be sent out as teachers, and by this plan you will learn how you stand, and what strength you can get for the canal. Drones do no good; bees kill them off in the fall. The people ought to be active, and it is the teachers duty to stir them up to diligence, and to learn if the people are properly employed, and how they get their living. They should also make their reports to the bishops regularly, and if there should be a man who is really not competent to earn his living without instructions, the bishop should counsel him, and put him into the best way of earning his bread; and thus the entire community may be kept busy; and if any are out of work the bishop ought to know it, and set them to raising corn and broom corn, and to making brooms and willow baskets; also shew them how to make shuck mattresses, etc. The bishop ought to see to this. When the teachers go round they are apt to confine themselves to the old stereotyped questions, instead of attending to the condition of the house, whether clean or not and how they get their living, if a farmer, how many plows, harrows, etc. has he got, and what kind of a fence; if a merchant, how do his financial affairs stand and how many clerks does he keep? Some merchants have more clerks than goods, and not money to pay for the goods in New York or Philadelphia. Ascertain the worth of every man, and learn if the children are sent to school, and ascertain the character of every person who lives in the house; then make your report to the bishop, so that he may know the paupers, the idle and the vicious. . . . I would say to the teachers, if you cannot set the Holy Ghost, write your questions down and get a long list, if you think of a question in bed, jump up in your shirt and write it down and wherever you are and whatever you are doing, if you think of a question, note it down, and get a first-rate catalogue. But I want you to have the Holy Ghost when you are out visiting. You will need no book; you will be a book yourself.32

The earliest list of questions contained thirteen queries, but this soon became lengthened to twenty-six. Church members were catechized to determine their worthiness for rebaptism. "It was required of all those who had been guilty of any of those sins to confess to those who had been wronged and make restitution to their satisfaction,"33 The catechism was not mentioned in the first reformation meeting held

32LP, p. 118, November 6, 1855.

33George Morris, "Autobiography" MSS (Copies by Brigham Young University, 1953), p. 75.
in Davis County, but was apparently introduced during November at Salt Lake.  
As the reformation progressed, an inquisitional pamphlet was prepared which considered such concerns as murder, betrayal, beatings, adultery, thievery, cleanliness, sabbath observance, fair wages and switching brands on cattle. 

Have you committed murder, by shedding innocent blood—or consenting thereto?  
Have you betrayed your brethren or sisters in anything?  
Have you committed adultery by having connection with a woman that was not your wife or a man that was not your husband?  
Do you pay your tithing promptly?  
Have you spoken against any principle contained in the Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine & Covenants, or any principle revealed through Joseph the Prophet or the authorities of the Church?  
Do you teach your families the Gospel of Salvation?  
Do you wash your bodies & have your family do so as often as cleanliness requires or circumstances permit?  
Do you preside over your family, as a servant of God—and is your family subject to you?  
Do you fulfill your promises, do you pay your debts or do you run into debt without prospect of paying?  
Have you taken anything that did not belong to you without the owners knowledge or consent?  
Have you borrowed anything that you have not returned or paid for?  
Have you found lost property & not returned it to the owner or used all diligence to so so?  
Have you lied about or maliciously misrepresented any person or thing?  
Have you taken up strays & converted to your own use without accounting to the proper Authorities?  
Do you work 6 days & go to the house of worship on the 7th?  
Have you taken the name of Deity in vain?  
Have you been intoxicated by strong drink? 

The catechism became one of the most essential elements of the reformation and was so widely circulated that it reached some of the

34 Searle, p. 61.
35 Morris, pp. 74-75 (see appendix).
most remote branches.\textsuperscript{37} Since it may not have been used extensively previously, there may have been abuses with its usage. For example, one anti-Mormon writer asserted that:

A catechism was printed by authority of Brigham Young and a copy of it was put into the hands of every missionary, elder, bishop and teacher, who catechized with unblushing effrontery every member of the Church. Those refusing to answer were cursed and reported to the authorities, and became objects of attack and abuse at the public meetings, while their private characters became topics of scandal and gossip.\textsuperscript{38}

Apparently the writers of the inquisitional pamphlet anticipated offenses, for the pamphlet ended with a plea to be cautious. It said:

When catechising the people, the bishops, teachers, missionaries and other officers in the Church are not at liberty to pry into sins that are between a person and his or her God.\textsuperscript{39}

Apparently the directions were not always followed, for even among the saints some were repulsed. Hannah King penned her feelings after she had been catechized. She wrote:

How well I remember them [teachers] coming to our house. There was no one at home but Tom Owen and me. They asked if I desired to be questioned in a separate room. I said no, and smiling at Tom, I asked him if he did. Poor boy, he was but sixteen, [and] he looked as guileless as a child and so said no. They then proceeded with me. It began, 'Have you committed murder . . .? Adultery? Robbed? Spoken slander of your neighbor? Broken down your neighbor's fences? Brought your children up in principles of righteousness?' It was over a foot in length!! . . . It was a fearful time for all. Whether it did good or was instituted by the spirit of God is not for me to judge. I leave an open verdict in my

\textsuperscript{37}Searle, p. 62.

\textsuperscript{38}Searle, p. 93. Statement attributed to J. Beadle.

\textsuperscript{39}Searle, p. 62.
heart of hearts. Only I know it was a fearful ordeal, and fear is a slavish passion and is not begotten by the Spirit of God.40

REATIONS AND COUNTER-PROPOSALS

When the reformation concluded, Hannah wrote her reaction. She said that when President Young halted the machinery of the reformation, "he spoke like an angel and his words fell like balm on the spirits of the people."41

Brother Kimball . . . and Brother Young had not preached since the early part of the reformation, and not since the sacrament had been suspended. I felt well during the day, but my spirit is still easily saddened. My spirit has lately felt bruised and broken, but still I know I shall rise out of this, for I feel the smile of the Lord upon me. He has most signally heard and answered my prayer, and accepted of my repentance for my follies I may have committed. This I feel in my heart. . . . I will arise to a newer and fresher life, and more watchfulness over myself. I will not be swayed by the powers of darkness.42

To her the reformation had continued too long. She recalled in contrast how she reacted to the reformation as it progressed. She said:

Never shall I forget the darkness, desolation, and horror of those times! My soul was prostrated in sorrow and mourning, for it suited my frame of mind at that time. These things lasted for weeks, it seemed months.43

She reflected still further:

40Hannah Tapfield King, "The Journals of Hannah Tapfield King," p. 143, copy of typescript located at HDC.

41King, p. 143.

42King, p. 143. She admitted that she wrote in "spells" and had mixed feelings about the reformation.

43King, p. 143.
The reformation was instituted principally by Brother Grant's thinking [that] the people had become adulterous, [and] thieves. It fairly raged! Every bishop had the 'cue' given to him and he rose up and lashed the people as with a cat-o-nine tails. The people shrunk, shivered, wept, groaned like whipped children. They were told to get up in meeting and confess their sins. They did so 'till it was sickening and brought disease.' The sacrament was withdrawn, the people were pronounced unfit to partake of it. And in their souls they sat in 'dust and ashes.' It appeared to them, that is [with] many of the most sensitive and those who were desiring to do right, that they had committed the unpardonable sin! The whole people seemed to mourn, for all, more or less, came 'under the rod.'

Hannah King was not the only Mormon, however, who disliked the reformation. Joseph Black remembered that after he had served as a teacher and prior to his call as a bishop, the work had produced "some good, but there were many extremes connected with that reformation and extremes as a rule were not good."45

Jedediah Grant considered such an extreme when he said that, the confessions had become so prostituted that:

In some of the wards men will rise up and confess their sins, and after a weeks reflection, they will go to meetings and commence parrying, and make themselves as good as an angel.46

Some of the brethren even confessed to sins they had not committed.47

Even prior to the widespread applications of the catechism, Brigham Young had begun to rectify the abuses related to improper confessions. He asked an audience in the Tabernacle, during

44 King, p. 142.
47 Searle, pp. 56-57, as observed by Brigham Young. Also King, p. 143.
November of 1856, to make discriminate confessions and to stop blabbing their personal sins from the house-tops. 48

Earlier he addressed himself to the art of making dignified and meaningful visits. During his address he reflected upon the visit of an ignorant and over-righteous visitor in Nauvoo.

A president of the elders' quorum, old father Baker, was called upon to visit a very sick woman, a sister in the Church. They sent for him to lay hands upon her. It was a very sickly time, and there was scarcely a person to attend upon the sick, for nearly all were afflicted. Father Baker was one of those tenacious, ignorant, self-willed, over-righteous elders, and when he went into the house he enquired what the woman wanted. She told him that she wished him to lay hands upon her. Father Baker saw a tea pot on the coals, and supposed that there was tea in it, and immediately turned upon his heels, saying, 'God don't want me to lay hands on those who do not keep the word of wisdom,' and he went out. He did not know whether the pot contained cat-nip, pennyryal, or some other mild herb, and he did not wait for anyone to tell him. That class of people are ignorant and over-righteous, and they are not in the true line, by any means. 49

Nearly a year later, President Young made the issue even clearer as he counseled the visiting teachers to ask dignified and pertinent questions. 50 The questions defeated themselves if they failed to get the respondent to think about his personal life, then make commitments to change his life for the better. Apparently the Church leader felt that the questions were accomplishing their design for when he summarized for the Millennial Star the progress of the reformation, he listed several specific questions, then concluded that:

49 Journal History, August 17, 1856, p. 2.
50 Millennial Star, XIX (August 15, 1857), 524-525.
These [questions], and a hundred similar queries put by the saint to himself have awakened many, and will, no doubt, continue to arouse the watchful.  

RESULTS OF THE REFORMATION

The numerous saints who had been awakened as a result of the reformation certainly had their group solidarity cemented, and they probably felt that Zion could stand against the sins of the world. And now that the loyalty of some had been tempered by trial, they eagerly anticipated the millennial advent of their Savior.

But the backsliders may have found the extreme pressure absurd. John D. Lee chronicled an episode that was circulating in the wind about a "Jack Mormon" in Springville who was asked by the teachers who happened to pay him a visit as he prepared to dine, if he offered a blessing on his food. The teachers left abruptly when he replied, "What little we got here ain't worth bothering the Lord about." A few nights later he answered his door about bedtime only to be greeted by a vigilante committee of five armed, masked men. They forced him to the watermelon patch where the committee called upon him at gun point to offer a prayer on the food which was about to be devoured by the masked task force. Lee's account from the knock at the door follows:

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51 Millennial Star, XIX (August 15, 1857), 524-525.
'Come right on out here without any fuss,' the leader told him in a deep, muffled voice. Two of the men instantly took his arms, pantless and shoeless as he was, two steppped behind him, and they followed the leader around the house, down the walk, past the corrals, down the road toward the fields, all the way in utter silence. Arriving at last at his own watermelon patch, Brother Warren stood between his guards while one of the men in the rear, taking plenty of time, thumped one melon after another until he found one to his satisfaction. Then drawing a long blade from its sheath, he sliced it open with a cracking stroke. All the group knelted around it.

'Brother Warren, will you please ask the blessing on the food?' the leader asked.

Brother Warren's tongue was loosed so that he offered a long and eloquent prayer, asking God to bless the food that it would nourish their bodies and brighten their minds and warm their hearts, that they might have his Spirit which was the Spirit of love and forgiveness, to accompany them, that they might ALL henceforth spend their full strength in carrying on His work.

The melon was sliced and served around to them all. When it was finished, the visitors escorted Brother Warren back to his door, opened it, and saw him safely inside, without another word being spoken.54

John Pulsipher had a different experience. He was a young seventy in the Church who had been ordained an acting teacher before being called to participate in the mission to Fort Supply in the spring of 1855. Fort Supply was an agricultural endeavour as well as a mission to the Indians. Since the mission experiences were short lived and the group engaged almost exclusively in agriculture, the venture could be considered a typical Mormon community.55 As indicated by his numerous journal entries, he accepted the call as teacher very seriously. On Sunday, March 22, 1857 he reported that because of a boil on his wrist he could not chop, but he could read, write and "visit among the people and try to do [his] duty as a teacher." He was

54Brooks, Lee, p. 191.

55Andrew Jensen, "Fort Supply," The Improvement Era, XXIV June, 1921), 800-804.
pleased to see the Saints so comfortable and willing to live the religion of Jesus Christ. 56

In conjunction with his duties as teacher, went the task of collecting and distributing the fast day offerings to the poor. On Thursday, April 2, after he had distributed the small amounts of food, he promised those he served that, "If we would be saints, we wouldn't suffer for want of bread." 57 Not long after returning from a short vacation to Salt Lake where his wife joined him and accompanied him back to Wyoming, he reported that:

Pres[ident] Bullock [mission president] said the time had come to catechize this people--and asked Bro[ther]s Robinson, Crandall and Thompson to assist so the four sides of our Fort were all waited on at the same time. 58

He copied a list of questions into his journal and then described the ceremony.

Myself and wife were catschised [sic] by Bro[ther] Thompson. It was a satisfaction and consolation to hear the word of the servant of the Lord that had a right to speak in his name--saying that my sins were forgiven me and inasmuch as I do right, they should be remembered against me no more forever. . . .

Sunday 17. After a good meeting we assembled on the bank of Smith's Fork of [the] Green River a little east of our fort and most of us were baptized. 59

After the Church closed the mission as a defensive maneuver against the encroachments of Johnston's Army and the Utah Expedition, John Pulsipher settled in the Salt Lake Sixteenth Ward, where "by appointment of the bishop and the vote of the . . . [ward membership, he] acted in the office of teacher among the families [of the

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ward]."60 His duties included attending a semi-monthly report meeting as well as organizing and over-seeing 640 acres of pasture where livestock could be produced and donated to the poor. 61 During the early sixties, he held a Thursday evening prayer meeting in his home for "those who couldn't go to town." When a tragic stabbing occurred, Pulsipher responded immediately to a call to administer to and sustain the victim. John Pulsipher felt that his involvement in this episode had been realized because he had become intently judicious and effective as a teacher. 62

While George Morris acted as a teacher in the Seventeenth Ward in Salt Lake City, he not only chronicled a list of twenty-seven questions but also offered as his candid opinion, that if the reformation

... continued much longer, there were those among . . . [us] that would have left the jumping, screaming, ranting Methodists all in the shade, but it was considered that it had gone far enough. 63

Earlier he described a benevolent deed which brought a rich outpouring of "blessings" to his family. A member of Willie's company of stranded handcart emigraters, Maria Allen, was placed in a member's home on a block where he home taught.

She came from Macclesfield, Cheshire England. . . . I had visited her and administered to her a few times. She was sick with dropsy, caused perhaps by wading through the streams and much exposure in other ways at critical periods. She was getting worse very fast and it was quite evident that she could not live long. One day there was a conversation started up in the house about the sealing ordinances, plurality of wives

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60Pulsipher, p. 59. 61Pulsipher, p. 60. 62Pulsipher, pp. 61-75. 63Morris, p. 75.
and other principles of the Gospel. This was on the thirteenth day of January 1857. [The] next day I was informed by the woman who was taking care of her that she desired to be sealed to me. I went to see her and had a short interview with her. She said that it was her desire to avail herself of the privilege that the gospel afforded her, and ask[ed] me if I was willing that she should be sealed to me and manifested considerable uneasiness lest she might not live until it could be accomplished. I went up immediately to see President Young about it, but I could not see him that day. She was very uneasy all day and would frequently ask the people to look out the door to see if I was coming. When I got back towards evening and told her that I had not been able to see President Young about it, she was disappointed. I went again the next morning, saw him and related the matter to him. He said that she had a perfect right to avail herself of that privilege. He appointed F. D. Richards . . . to seal her to me. When the ceremony was ended the uneasiness left her and she felt better satisfied in her mind and died about 5 o'clock the next morning, full in the faith of the everlasting gospel.

My wife was present and gave her to me. I have no doubt that she would have died two days sooner had it not been for the anxiety she felt to have the sealing ordinance performed in her behalf. She was twenty-three years old on the last day of December 1856.64

After Morris and his family had been rebaptized, he seemed delighted that he had out-baptized all other teachers in the Seventeenth Ward. That meant that he "spent a great deal of his time in visiting the the people and settling difficulties."65

CONCLUSIONS

The reformation of 1856 was an attempt by some general authorities to get Mormons, including their leaders, to act like saints and become better builders of God's Kingdom. Many of those who were not repulsed by the methods of the reformation were indeed strengthened. The methods that seemed most difficult to instigate

64Morris, pp. 73-74. 65Morris, p. 76.
were those that related to personal questioning by the teachers to the members. The catechisms, unless administered judiciously, often left the recipient with a sour taste toward anyone representing the Church.

The most important outcome of the reformation was that the Church knew from experience that the home teachers could serve as bonds between the Church member and his local leader, the bishop.
Chapter 5

TEACHING ACTIVITIES DURING THE MOVE SOUTH

Not long after the Reformation fever had subsided, word was received that units of the Army had been assembled as a result of President Buchanan's concern that the citizens of Utah Territory had placed themselves above the Federal law. He had been led to believe that the Mormon marriage practice was especially repugnant. Two factors seemed to retard the Army's progress -- the extreme winter conditions and Brigham Young's resistance. One of President Young's maneuvers was to move the saints away from Salt Lake City and then set fire to what remained in the event that the Army did enter. Teachers played an important role during the move south.

THE TEACHERS ROLE IN PREPARING FOR THE HEGIRA SOUTH

George Morris journalized his role as teacher in the following way:

In March 1858 the President [Young] had . . . concluded to let the government troops in. . . . He also concluded that the saints should leave the city and move southward. It was necessary to ascertain the number of inhabitants, the amount of breadstuff, and the strength of the teams. I being teacher of two blocks at the time proceeded to ascertain the number of inhabitants there were on the two blocks. There were 145 adults, 12 tons (850) lbs. of flour, 700 bushels of wheat, 70 bushels of corn and 300 bushels of potatoes, but we were very
weak handed for teams in the Seventeenth Ward.¹

Once having decided to leave their homes, the Mormons set about the task with characteristic vigor. Church officials packed their records for removal to Provo, the Deseret News press was sent to Fillmore, and the grain in the tithing house was distributed among the villages in the southern part of the territory.

The annals are replete with glimpses into the nature of the move, but little is said about the preparation for such an endeavor. Morris as a teacher understood his duty and fortunately chronicled an episode that may have been the pattern.

ORGANIZATIONAL WEBBINGS

The stake president in Ogden, Lorin Farr, clearly described the move south as it affected his people in Weber County.

I received instructions from President Young to move the people of Weber County south; but previous to the move, I took Bishop Chauncey W. West down and we selected a location west of Provo. . . . I came back and directed the people of the various wards, organized them under their different heads and commenced the move south. Before the 1st of May nearly all of Weber County were down on the Provo bottoms which we had before selected. Some made their quarters in wagons, tents and wickiups, built of long canes and flags. In many places the cane houses had the appearance of villages. Here on these bottoms the bulk of the Weber County people located themselves for two months, having commenced the move early in May; some, however, went farther south.²

²Quoted from Journal of Lorin Farr in Heart Throbs of the West, compiled by Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1949), X, p. 264.
On July 3rd, when the Weber County contingency officially left their provisional homes on the Provo bottoms, most of the group returned "right away" while others "came scattering back at their leisure, not having put in crops, reaching home in the fall." Others never came back but remained in the south and settled in Utah and Juab Counties. There seems to be sufficient evidence in the movement of the Tooele Saints to show that neither the bishops nor the teachers organized or finalized the exodus. Instead the citizenry during a mass meeting at the church house organized themselves by appointing a committee to carry through with President Young's resolutions to move south. Apparently the use of teachers to organize the move south was not churchwide.

Perhaps some stake presidencies intentionally side-stepped their bishops. It could be that they had good reasons to call mass meetings and let the saints formulate their own plans without the benefit of their bishops. Apparently many bishops abused their office and offended the saints. During a meeting of the bishops with the Presiding Bishopric in March, 1858, for example, Edward Hunter, the Presiding Bishop chasticized the bishops for "forcing" and "kicking" their people around. He then told of one bishop who had taken a steer from a woman against her will. The indiscreet bishop not only had the lady disfellowshipped when she objected, but threatened to make public her

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3 Farr, p. 265.
4 Heart Throbs, pp. 262-263.
misdemeanor. J. C. Little, a counselor to Bishop Hunter pursued the same topic and observed that there were many men in the wards who were "just as capable as the bishops and the saints must be dealt with as men." He chided the bishops for failing to use either mercy or justice in their dealings. The move south served as an opportunity for the Church leaders to examine the progress of the development of the dual confidence that should have begun during the reformation.

It seems that while some bishops used their teachers effectively, others struggled with whatever means were at their disposal to make the critical maneuvers to move south. It is regrettable that other accounts similar to George Morris' have not been found. He seems to be the best example of effective teaching during the period. In fact, he not only itemized as a pre-move service, but after his bishop had departed with numerous ward personnel, he declined a mission call to Beaver Valley. He felt a compulsion to stay with his friends and help fill the void that had been created when his bishop had left.

From Morris, we also learn that by March 21, it had been decided that the inhabitants vacate the city. There may have been talk of such action earlier. George Laub inferred as he chronicled on March 12 that the teachers had come to visit and help him prepare for the move.

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5 "Record of Bishops Meetings, Reports of Wards, Ordinations Instructions and General Proceedings of Lesser Priesthood, 1851-1862." p. 229, located in the Historical Department of the Church, hereinafter cited as HDC. This record will be cited hereafter as BMLP.
6 Ibid. 7 Morris, pp. 83-84. 8 Morris, pp. 83-84.
This day the general teachers came to my house and gave their instructions and pronounced their peace and blessing upon this house in the name of the Lord.9

After Laub had established temporary quarters in Springville, he was again visited by teachers.10

THE AFTERMATH OF THE EXODUS

Perhaps the stormiest encounter of the Utah War as far as the teachers were concerned was what A. J. Allen described as a dark time void of public meetings and full of apostasy. His account of a visit to the city on August 1 follows:

I was in S. L. City the streets were thronged with Jentiles setting up liquor ships drunken men on the right and on the left. Brigham and Heber Kimball and Daniel H. Wells and the First Presidency keeping them selvs cloast at home, it seems to be a darke time for the saints no public meetings some appostitising from the Church.11

With the settlement of the difficulties, came the immediate benefit to the saints of being halted from the move south. Had they continued into the barren desert ahead of them and into which they were fleeing, barring some stupendous miracle, the Latter-day Saint community would have met overwhelming disaster.12

Two weeks following Allen's observations in Salt Lake, he was present at a meeting in his own home. His bishop informed the group that public meetings had been discontinued in the Church and the new

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9Heart Throbs, p. 245. 10Heart Throbs, p. 249.
policy was being practiced in most of the settlements. A week later, he was called to be a teacher. Their ward near Draper had only one priest and a single teacher so Allen and two other Melchizedek Priesthood holders were called to assist. On September 12th, three weeks from the time of his call, he made his initial report to the bishop and was instructed to visit again, immediately. So eight days later he in the company of a high priest and a priest spent the entire day visiting the families of the saints. They found that most of the saints with a few exceptions were enjoying a good spirit. By the first part of December, the teachers were weighing the fellowship of at least two brethren. On December 12, he noted the results of one trial.

Met tuck up those cases of false brethren cut one of the remainder. The rest made satisfaction and were retain in the Church. Before the month had ended, the other young men had been cut off-- one for stealing, the other for drunkenness.

The teachers were not isolated, however, in their responsibility to save the kingdom when the walls of darkness seemed so thick. General authorities visited the settlements to give counsel and teach the ward leaders, just as they had done during the reformation. As 1859 commenced, two "brethren" visited the settlements in the south end of Salt Lake County and "preached." They held three meetings at the Allen

15 Allen, p. 42. 16 Allen, p. 42.
residence.\textsuperscript{17} Within three weeks, two apostles had done likewise.\textsuperscript{18} Before the year had ended, Allen had again had close associations with the pair of apostles.\textsuperscript{19} His journal specifies at least four episodes during 1859 when he as a teacher was engaged in the task of settling disturbances between ward members or applying repentence pressure to the wayward.\textsuperscript{20}

During the first visit by the duo of unnamed apostles, Allen sensed that since the brethren had found so many who were spiritually dead, they were rectifying the problem by appointing some new bishops in the territory.\textsuperscript{21} In fact, bishops negligence had been the central theme of the November 11, 1858, Presiding Bishopric meeting with the ward bishops. Bishop Little complained that too few men were turning out to support the public works projects within the city. The minutes reveal his sharp wrath.

Let the bishops wake up and arouse themselves and the men will be on hand, otherwise they will all go to sleep together. Let the bishops shake off the dead weights. . . . The bishops are dead, dead, dead! If the bishops will not respond to the calls made, we will go into the wards and get the men ourselves.\textsuperscript{22}

Perhaps the curt evaluation by the teachers quorum president during an Aaronic Priesthood meeting with the bishops and Presiding Bishopric two years later shows the position the teachers maintained during the period. He was glad that the Presiding Bishop had finally taken measures to aid the bishops in understanding the spirit of their wards. Even though the proposal was long over due, it was simply an

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17}Allen, p. 42.
\item \textsuperscript{18}Allen, p. 43.
\item \textsuperscript{19}Allen, p. 46.
\item \textsuperscript{20}Allen, pp. 43-46.
\item \textsuperscript{21}Allen, pp. 43-36.
\item \textsuperscript{22}BMLP, p. 254.
\end{itemize}
insistance that the ward bishops enlist the support of their teachers.\textsuperscript{23}

Teaching Effectiveness

Some wards, however, were using or began to use their teachers in an effective way and some teachers knew their callings and tried to be effective. The Fourteenth Ward in Salt Lake City is a good example. During a report meeting of the lesser priesthood to the bishopric during the last part of September, 1858, one teacher reported that he had organized the teachers on the three east blocks. He felt disgusted with the gentiles on Whiskey Street. At the same meeting another teacher reported his visits to the three middle blocks and thought generally that the people did not characterize the energy that befitted saints. A motion for a new teacher and a new president for a tier of blocks was proposed, seconded and unanimously endorsed. Three weeks later another brother reported that he had visited the east side of the middle tier of blocks.\textsuperscript{24}

By the middle of December they were into the nitty-gritty. At their meeting on the twelfth, the clerk recorded that:

Brother Johnson had not visited every house. But at our house Brother W\_ was keeping five Spainards which prevented him from living his religion. Brother Johnson felt that with W\_ money was a first priority. He also reported that he with three other teachers had visited the Appelby family. After prayer, Brother Appelby said he had hoped to gain his family, but they were opposed to plurality and William was rather skeptical. Sister Appelby cried and fretted and said if she had done any wrong [sic] she wanted to be cut off. They did not wish to commit themselves. Brother Woodmansee had not

\textsuperscript{23}\textit{BMLP}, p. 333, Brother Spiers.

\textsuperscript{24}"Minutes of the Lesser Priesthood, Salt Lake Fourteenth Ward," 1856-1865, p. 37, located at HDC, hereafter cited as Fourteenth, LPM.
set his house in order. There is an undercurrent at work among the people.²⁵

The meeting followed with a prudent warning from Brother Horne that the cutting-off process should be handled with discretion. When he concluded, another teacher reported his awkwardness as he tried to settle a plurality mess.²⁶ It would appear from the above that the teachers in the Fourteenth Ward tried to help the bishop watch over his ward. They kept him aware of avenues of apostasy that were developing. Apparently they perpetuated their own organization of teachers and tried to aid each other in their calling to keep their bishop informed.

Farther south, John D. Lee had been recruited into teaching service. He specified in a journal entry for July 13, 1858, that:

Bishop W. R. Davies said to me that he wished me to take with me who ever I wished and go from house to house and stir up the saints and such as would not be reclaimed should be severed from the branch. . . . [He said] that there was not a man in the branch that could do as much good as you can. In obedience [sic] to council I called to my aid Bro[ther] Richard Woolsey, and commenced with my family first. All felt humble and desired to do right with the exception of Mary Ann. . . .²⁷

If Bishop Davies had teachers, they were apparently inoperative. Perhaps he felt that teachers were only occasionally necessary. It is interesting that Lee, not the bishop, called the companion.

Perhaps the insights George Morris learned following his call to be a teacher in 1856 summarize best the reasons why some wards were

²⁵Fourteenth, LPM, p. 66. ²⁶Fourteenth, LPM, p. 66.
successful during and following the move south. He seriously declared:

I learned that it was necessary to live humble and prayerful and diligent in keeping the commandments of the Lord that I might have the Holy Spirit for my guide. Without it no man has any business to attempt to act in that office. A teacher must be a practical man to be able to magnify that calling, and to be a success in his labors he must not undertake to teach others what he himself is not willing to perform. To set a good example is the best kind of teaching that any man do. He that is faithful in small things has the promise that he shall be made ruler over greater things. It is better to wear out through diligence than to rust out through negligence.32

Morris had the message, but to determine how or through whom he learned his task is extremely perplexing. He may have had an effective bishop who wanted to be aware of his ward membership so taught his teachers accordingly. It is possible too, that his quorum president assumed this role. Moreover, Morris could have learned his duties on his own without any additional help. After all, he had accepted a call to be a teacher and he believed that if he lived humbly, prayerfully, and righteously he would receive guidance from the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSIONS

The move south was a critical time in Mormon history. Since time was the most important element for displacement, every means available and workable had to be employed. Apparently many stake presidents were confident that their bishops used their teachers effectively enough to itemize the available foodstuffs, equipment and

32Morris, p. 72.
personnel to follow through and insure that the Church membership made
the hegira. Some stake presidents, on the other hand, did not use their
bishops or their teachers, and the move progressed in spite of their
methods.

If the move south provided an opportunity to see how effective
the teachers could be then the role of the teachers following the move
demonstrated the value of the system. For about a half a year the
teachers in the Salt Lake valley were in essence, with the notable
exception and general authority visits, the only locally active part of
the Church. Since public meetings had been discontinued, the teachers
in many parts of the valley had to make regular house visits and keep
the Church intact by encouragement as well as correctional discipline.
Bishops were forced into a position where they had to have effective
teachers. Some bishops who did not have effective teachers enlisted
the support of their most capable Melchizedek Priesthood leadership.
Chapter 6

THE 1870's--ESTABLISHING TEACHING CONTINUITY

Nineteenth century Mormonism had at least two reformations. The first began in 1855 and concentrated on character development. The second developed during the 1870's and could be classified as an organizational reformation.

In 1877 the First Presidency issued the most important document of the organizational reformation. It was directed to stakes, wards, officers and members. The document was one of the last official statements by Brigham Young and it established the Aaronic Priesthood as a ward function under the bishops' direction.1

EXAMINING JURISDICTIONAL STRUGGLES PRIOR TO PRIESTHOOD QUORUM TRANSITION FROM THE STAKE TO THE WARD LEVEL

Nearly a year before the issuance of the circular, Brigham Young made an unscheduled visit to a meeting of the Presiding Bishopric's monthly session with the bishops. When given the floor, he announced that he had come to correct erroneous priesthood concepts and to set the priesthood leaders on the right course. Then he proceeded to teach the bishops the same things which later appeared in the general directive, and which he had also mentioned at a previous priesthood

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1 James R. Clark, Messages of the First Presidency (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), II, p. 284.

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conference. Perhaps the Church President had cause for such apprehension.

In 1871 a seventy in Springville, who was new in the area, for example, was publically reprimanded by his new bishop. Embarrassed, the brother appealed the actions of the bishop to his former colleagues of the seventies quorum. But the bishop denied his appeal and insisted that he as bishop was the highest authority in the area, and even if the seventies quorum reversed the decision, it would not be enforced. A month earlier, the same bishop had allowed his ward teachers, upon the resignation of the ward clerk, to choose a replacement, but two ward members refused to sustain the recommendation, so he dropped the subject without any further discussion. It is difficult to understand why his position on authority had been so strong when within a month's time he allowed the teachers to participate as ward organizers. It would seem that if he feared a loss of his power, he would have made organizational decisions without consultations. Perhaps he honestly felt that his office could veto anything from a Melchizedek Priesthood quorum.

During the Presiding Bishopric's meetings with the bishops and the lesser priesthood, several interesting struggles developed. In 1873, the Presiding Bishop directed all Aaronic Priesthood quorums to

2 "Bishops Meeting with Presiding Bishopric," Minutes, 1862-1870, October 18, 1876, located in the Historical Department of the Church, hereinafter cited as HDC.

3 Springville, Visiting Teachers Minutes, n. d., in William Bromley File, located in HDC, folder 1, p. 6.

4 Springville, p. 2, Jan. 1, 1871.
expand their boundaries by enlisting more members. When he suggested that each ward meet an assigned quota, the priests quorum president suggested that the assignment could be handled as a mission call. When he offered that each bishop upgrade the quality of teaching within his own ward, some bishops indicated that they expected help from the teachers quorum, whereupon a new-comer to the meetings observed that a uniform ward teaching policy would solve many of their problems. As the quorums struggled to increase their membership, they met with very little success and both the Presiding Bishop as well as the quorum leaders blamed their plight on neglectful bishops. Presiding Bishop, Edward Hunter, vocally expressed himself and said:

... the bishops did not and would not attend to their duties. Many are broke down in spiritual things, and many are going to brake [sic] down in temporal things through their folly. Some that I never shall forget or cease to love are so far gone that I fear they never can recover.5

One of the break-downs was organizational. Section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants clarified that bishops were to preside over the Aaronic Priesthood and especially the priests quorum. Earlier in the same section, the duties of the teachers quorum president were enumerated, but its wording may have left some questions about bishops jurisdictional rights over the teachers.6 Some bishops, during the period, expected Aaronic Priesthood quorum presidencies to organize and execute their quorum functions within their wards. In 1874, the teachers


6The Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1959), 107:88, hereinafter cited as D & C.
quorum president in Salt Lake reported to the Presiding Bishopric that he had,

. . . met in the Tenth Ward [and had] been trying to awaken interest in . . . [the] young men toward the work of God and had organized them as deacons, with one of their number to take the lead and two to assist, and hoped they would do their duty.7

The entire period seemed to be clouded with a shadow of misunderstanding about presiding authority, especially among those who officiated in Aaronic Priesthood activities. Some in the Church were baffled that a seventy could even function as a teacher or priest.8 Charles Miller, a Provo resident, reported in an Aaronic Priesthood meeting with the Presiding Bishopric that when he was called to preside over a teachers quorum, he had been told that he presided over all teachers, even those who may have been elders, seventies or high priests. He revealed that his source was a Provo bishop, Abraham O. Smoot. Apparently many Latter-day Saints felt that teachers quorum presidents could only preside over "ordained" teachers. Miller reported that Bishop Smoot, "... set the matter at rest and told him [that] he [Miller] presided over all the teachers."9

At the same time, a number of men sought admittance into the high priests quorums. It is possible that some of them may have felt they could avoid deacon and teacher duties by becoming high priests. The Presiding Bishop chastised those who entertained such notions when he

. . . spoke of the absurdity of many seeking for recommends to become members of the high priests quorum, when at the same time

8 "Presiding Bishops Office," p. 262.
9 "Presiding Bishops Office," p. 263.
they had never acted in any of the offices of the lesser priesthood and were entirely incompetent to magnify and honor that priesthood as they had never learned their alphabet in this respect and hoped they would learn their duty. 10

There also appeared at the same time to be a struggle for dominance by a few Aaronic Priesthood quorum presidents over the bishops. For example, during an Aaronic Priesthood meeting when the Presiding Bishop was absent, the priests quorum president presided as well as conducted and gave direction to the bishops. He strongly emphasized that if bishops were using Melchizedek Priesthood holders as teachers, they should refer to them as assistant bishops, for legally they could not be called teachers. He went further and advocated that bishops could not ordain teachers within their own wards when a quorum presidency existed. 11

Needless to say, his position raised some sensitive questions. A number of the brethren present at that meeting as well as other similar meetings felt that for effective Church government, the bishop had to preside over his own ward. Others felt that clashes were imminent when teachers came into a ward to dictate to the bishop operational procedures for his own ward. One teacher, a Brother Morris opinionated that:

He thought any one holding the high priesthood had a right to act in the lesser priesthood. He had seen some sent to these quorums and set apart come back and set the ward authority at defiance. This he held to be wrong. No man being a member of a ward had a right to set the ward authority aside. He knew men who were as full of the spirit of teaching as men could be though [they] were not connected with this [Aaronic Priesthood] quorum.


But a Brother Picknell did not agree, and

... thought Bro[ther] Morris had made a mistake, ... for when he [Picknell] had been set apart he visited the bishop first, [and] the bishop was pleased to give him authority to go all over the ward and teach the people. He had never heard one of these [Aaronic Priesthood] presidents tell any man to dis-regard his bishop ... [because he] belonged to a priests, teachers, ... [or] deacons quorum.¹²

Some bishops could have feared the influence of the Aaronic Priesthood quorums because of their own neglect. In other words, the teachers could have made the bishops mismanagement seem even more pronounced. During the meeting, the teachers quorum president suggested that quorums organized within wards could "give strength and vitality to every ward organization."¹³ No one argued with him and presumably several agreed that most wards needed new strength and vitality.

To suppose that all bishops were negligent would be folly. Some, in spite of their best efforts, had inactive wards. Bishop Samuel Woolley informed his Aaronic Priesthood co-workers that such was the case in his ward. He proposed that it was very difficult to find eighteen or twenty men in the ward who could magnify the calling of teacher or priest.¹⁴

LOCALIZED TEACHING CONCERNS AND ATTEMPTS TO
ESTABLISH CONTINUITY

Prior to 1877, many bishops as well as teachers, made attempts

¹⁴"Presiding Bishops Office," June 3, 1876.
to establish continuity, and some of the attempts were successful.

Kanab

The Kanab Ward in Southern Utah was a good example of a bishop working conjointly with the teachers. In 1872, the teachers were organized with a president and were meeting every two weeks with the bishop and his counselors. They were endeavoring to visit every family at least once during each month. The ward was divided into teaching districts so no teacher would be over-burdened. The teachers cared for the temporal welfare of the ward members by acquiring fuel for the poor, over-seeing the irrigation concerns, and administering to the sacrament. During 1872 and 1873 the teachers pinpointed the needs of the families they visited. On March 16, 1873, for example, a teacher visited a ward member and "so far as he could find out there was no feelings between Brother ____ and himself." Later the bishop endorsed the actions of the teachers. He thought they were giving wise counsel and he hoped they would labor and reason with some of the young boys about being obedient and conducting themselves properly. The bishop further advised that the teachers should work closely with the parents in reforming the youthful boys. The minutes also reveal that he was not in favor of extreme measures.15

The teaching in Kanab appeared stable and progressive, but from March, 1874, to February, 1875, the ward teachers did not meet to report and apparently visits during the year were a rarity. When they

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15"Kanab Ward, Ward Teachers Report Meeting Minutes," 1872-1881, pp. 17-175, located in HDC.
finally did meet the bishop stated that:

It had been a long time since the teachers had met together or visited their respective districts. This is probably owing to the advent of the united order . . . which had apparently engrossed our whole attention and paralysed [sic] the labors of the teachers as a visiting bdoy.16

Since participation in the united order was voluntary, several problems were created within the ward. At the February meeting, the bishop sought the views of the teachers concerning the teachers who refused to become part of the order. He also sought their advice about making visits to members who were not participating in the order. Fellowship of members who refused to function within the order was another problem as were the excessive divisions that had been created. The bishop decided that under present conditions, the teachers would continue to make no visits. He concluded by stating that he would hold the matter under advisement.

In May, 1875, the bishop instructed the teachers to go forth among the people and cultivate the spirit of their calling which was the spirit of peace, and try to heal the breach which existed within the ward. The teachers were to work as though the united order was non-existent, and instruct the people to attend the ward meetings and sent their children to sunday school. All the teachers who attended the report meeting endorsed their bishop's decision.17

Two months later when they met again, it was reported that a good spirit prevailed among the saints and they were glad to receive

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16 "Kanab," p. 43.
visitors again. At the following meeting, again two months later, however, the bishop withdrew from the meeting while the teachers judged a charge of trespassing. Apparently the bishop had strong reservations about the united order, for during the following month a special meeting was called in which the teachers were introduced to a new bishop. One teacher had written to inform Brigham Young that their bishop did not allow the teachers to teach the principles of the united order. The teacher thought the bishop was out of pace with Church doctrine and wanted the matter resolved.  

The new bishop, L. John Nuttal, accepted his call to Kanab to settle controversies in much the same way as a missionary goes to another area away from his home. He was emphatic that every teacher belong to the united order. Report meetings again resumed every two weeks. In April of 1876, he asked the deacons to assist the teachers. During the busy summer months and traditionally slow times for teaching, Bishop Nuttal declared that even though the season of the year made it difficult to visit the people, the teachers were duty bound to visit. He observed a minimum of ward problems during the past winter, but since the visits had become sporadic, the problems had intensified.  

L. John Nuttal served as bishop in Kanab for almost three years. During that time he built the teaching program to its former responsible position. The Kanab account suggests that the general authorities called bishops who possessed personal convictions of Church doctrine.
policy and practices. It may be significant that the decay in Kanab culminated within a year, while the rebuilding took three years.

Sanpete Stake

The problems that existed in the Sanpete Stake among the Scandinavian saints might be indicative of the transitional struggles that plagued some of the European immigrants. In 1874, the Aaronic Priesthood quorum tried to decide if it should do ward teaching in any form. At the same time the quorum president wanted to have an Aaronic Priesthood president in each ward. On January 5, 1875, the quorum met in the home of one of its members. One teacher reported that his bishop wanted all the teachers to take a census of the people and at the same time determine the amount of available grain. The bishop also wanted the saints taught to hoard rather than sell their grain. As if that were not enough to keep the teachers active, the bishop also requested the teachers to stop the "rowdyism" among the young people. Most of the teachers appeared discouraged. A few of them had reported delinquent men to their bishops, only to be disheartened as the bishops did nothing about the problem. The quorum seemed to be unanimous in a desire to stop visiting if the bishops failed to follow-through with their assignments.20

From 1874 through 1875 no bishops attended the Aaronic Priesthood meetings, but on March 5, 1876, the quorum sustained a Bishop Maiben as president of their quorum of lesser priesthood. At that

20"Sanpete Stake, Aaronic Priesthood Book," 1873-1877, pp. 19-29, located in HDC.
meeting, one teacher reported that the teachers in Ephraim had visited the saints. He must have informed his bishop because he also reported that the news satisfied his bishopric. In April, 1877, Apostle Erastus Snow attended and addressed the Aaronic Priesthood meeting. He had to clarify that the Melchizedek Priesthood holders did not need to be ordained again into the Aaronic Priesthood to officiate as ward teachers as some had supposed. Apparently he felt that the lesser priesthood did not operate correctly, for he concluded his address by showing why the Aaronic Priesthood functions were important to the kingdom of God. Elder Snow's presence at the meeting might have been indicative of the stress the general authorities were placing upon the teaching operations. 21

Saint George

In Saint George, the teachers were equally as active, but their energies were channelled into different activities. The bishops rather than the teachers considered matters of fellowship after which they made assignments to the teachers. The teachers of Saint George did, however, play a leading role in the ordination of young men to the Aaronic Priesthood. During a February quorum meeting of 1877, the quorum president hoped that the youths who had just been ordained deacons, teachers and priests would become mighty pillars in the kingdom of God. 22


Tooele

In Tooele the teachers were organized with a president and they met every two weeks with a representative bishop. On several occasions, a member of the stake presidency attended.23 When they met on a Sunday evening in July, 1877, two teachers reported that they had visited about half of their forty-five families and found them possessing a good feeling.24 Another teacher had found two cases of apostasy. One of his families told them (he and his companion) not to make any return visits.25 The important concern in Tooele was that the president of the quorum played a leading role in solving the problems of the membership within the four wards of the stake. When the apostasy problem was reported, the quorum president, James Dunn recommended referring the family to their bishop since he was the best person to initiate a change. Two weeks later, Dunn urged the brethren to settle all the difficulties they could and if they could not settle them, they were to get more of the brethren to assist them.26 The admonition was effective. One month from the first report of apostasy, two other teachers reported about the same family. It seems the family had seen too many faults in their neighbors to improve themselves. They did not think that re-baptism would make them better people. They were, however, willing to see the teachers even though they still were not convinced that Mormonism was true.27

23"Tooele Ward, Record of Visiting Teachers Meetings," 1877-1885, located in HDC.
24Tooele, p. 9.  
25Tooele, p. 12.
26Tooele, p. 12.  
27Tooele, p. 12.
workable relations that existed between the teachers and the bishops in Tooele were also evident when a new district was organized. After the teachers had been called, the representative bishop thought that one of the teachers who had previously encountered problems, settle the issues prior to being set apart as a teacher.28

From the inception of wards in Nauvoo, the teachers had been trying to function as groups within stakes or communities. They tried to offer a limited amount of suggestions to the bishops that related to the members of his ward.29 Even though some of the quorums operated smoothly, many of them conflicted with the bishops as to who had the most important position in the operation of the ward. To make matters worse, many of the Melchizedek Priesthood quorum leaders had been ordaining deacons and teachers to the Melchizedek Priesthood without any approval from stake or general authorities. This situation left the Aaronic Priesthood quorums void of mature leadership and as a result, most of the stake and ward officials who were concerned about ward teaching simply called Melchizedek Priesthood holders to be ward teachers.

Another area of concern for the Church leaders was the enormity of problems that confronted the youth. The 1877 letter suggested that the experienced teacher should have as a companion a young man which would help the youth become wise in the obligations of their

28Tooele, p. 13.

29As late as 1861 Brigham Young had maintained that bishops were the highest office of the Aaronic Priesthood, but he did not clarify the position of Melchizedek Priesthood holders who functioned in Aaronic Priesthood duties.
calling. Even though many of the wards began to call young married men, it was not until the twentieth century that teen-aged youths were called to serve as ward teachers. 30

The First Presidency was aware of the continuing jurisdictional struggles between quorum heads and ward bishops and although the wording of the document did not pinpoint the issues, it did suggest that when organizing quorums of teachers, the presidents and counselors should be selected from the teachers quorum, and that seventies, high priests and elders who were called to act as teachers were to remain on their own quorum records and have, in essence, a leave of absence. When these men were called by their bishops to act in the lesser priesthood, they should be willing to serve faithfully until priests and teachers of the necessary experience could be found.31

The directive emphatically stated that the leadership of the Melchizedek Priesthood must stop ordaining Aaronic Priesthood holders into their ranks unless they first had the approval of the general authorities. It stated:

We desire to be distinctly understood, therefore, that hereafter when seventies and high priests are to be ordained, it must be under the direction of the First Presidency or the Twelve.32

The document also proposed that members found guilty of lying, drunkenness, sabbath-breaking, profanity, defrauding or backbiting, or any other kind of wickedness or unrighteous dealing, be visited

31 Clark, II, p. 286. 32 Clark, II, p. 287.
by the teachers of their ward. Their wrongs should be pointed out to them in the spirit of meekness and brotherly kindness, and they should be exhorted to repent.

In scope, the document was far reaching, teachers were to be assigned their duties by the bishops and were to be ministers to the wards. If the teachers or any other officer in the ward allowed inequity to exist in the Church where they presided without taking action against it, they would become partakers of "other men's sins" and they would be unworthy of their position. If any officer in the Church failed to perform his duty faithfully, he would be removed.33

Following the reading of the First Presidency directive in Provo, there seemed to be a strong desire to discover what the President meant by "young men." During a quorum meeting in August of 1877, one teacher related that young men had come to teach him about twenty years previously and he had been up-lifted by them. A month later, another brother thought it would be a beneficial experience for the young men to work among the people as teachers. It seemed, however, that as the dialogue increased, the teaching effectiveness decreased. A major concern for the Provo Saints was the completion of a school house so the teachers spent the majority of their teaching time collecting a tax for the structure. One teacher thought that the tax should be paid up a little sooner than usual to save the teachers "running after the people the entire year." He felt they should be given ample time to pay, but if the payments were not forthcoming "a

charge [like dereliction of duty] should be brought against them before the bishop and the teachers should be done with it." 34

The 1877 directive seemed to suggest that if the teachers could subject themselves to their bishop and resolve issues that bred disloyalty, they could begin to rectify technical and procedural problems which had become part of the teaching habit. For several years bishops had been urged to carry "out a thorough mode of teaching in their respective wards," and many complied. 35 Some leaders spoke of the "carelessness and indifference" of the wards and yet in the same breath some of them "realized that all was right." 36 Others felt a certain amount of "looseness in handling" the members of the Church, especially the unfaithful. 37

In Springville, a new bishop told his teachers that in the past some of them had been wicked and full of lying reports for they "made it their business to go from house to house and make mischief." He felt that their efforts only created a chaotic division in the town. 38

Sporadic visiting constantly plagued the wards. In 1877, George Q. Cannon reported that since moving into his home six years earlier, he had been visited no more than a total of six times, or on

34 "Provo Second Ward, Teachers Quorum Minutes," 1877-1878, August 1, 1877--September 18, located in HDC.
37 "Presiding Bishops Office," p. 222.
38 Springville, p. 1.
an average of once a year. Some bishops insisted that their teachers always visit prior to stake and general conferences, so when called to account for their ward they could make "good reports." 

OVER-ALL IMPACT

Many bishops knew by 1880 that their teachers were valuable to them in the administration of their ward and many of them found themselves more efficient when they employed them. The teachers should have learned from the directive that how they served and not who directed them was the most important criteria for successful teaching.

The most obvious impact of the 1877 directive upon teaching was the administrative strength extended to the bishops. The foundation for unification of wards, quorums and membership had been laid and the First Presidency wanted the unifications implemented Churchwide. Many bishops now felt compelled to delegate many of their ward problems to their teachers.

Generally, the youth were not employed as teachers except in Britain where they had to perform or the teaching would go undone. Throughout most of the Church, it was much easier to call adult teachers rather than train youngsters to help Church members solve their problems.

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40 "Kanab," p. 133.
41 "Kanab," p. 153. When a teacher was negligent in 1879, the bishop with the chief teacher visited him to get him to perform properly.
Before the 1870's had ended, it had become clear that the ability of the ward bishop was the largest single determinant for establishing teaching continuity within his ward.

It is safe to say that where effective teaching had existed previously, it continued. With the new direction, however, it was with a clearer division of responsibility. Where teaching had been mediocre, it made little or no progress. Ward teaching, even though systematically organized, still had "miles to go."
Chapter 7

TEACHERS AS JUDICATORS

The programs for Church administration come from the top and extend downward. Even though this uniformity was less strict in pioneer times, the line of authority was a reality and this all-embracing unity and organization of the priesthood often agitated and antagonized federal officials sent to hold public office in Utah. They were often frustrated that the Mormons seemed able to govern themselves with civil agencies. Non-Mormon public officials found themselves blocked by organizations from which they were excluded. They sometimes complained that, "no matter what authority we hold from Congress, Brigham Young is governor and law-giver."¹

INTRODUCTION OF THE JUDICATING DOCTRINE

Mormons were essentially different from the mainstream of American society since they made attempts to solve most of their disputes without going to the courts. When disputes arose, the ward teachers made the initial attempt to bring about amicable settlements. If they were unsuccessful, the disputes could be settled in bishops' courts. If the bishops' courts failed to settle the difficulty or

the participants remained unsatisfied, the high council became a second court of appeals.\(^2\) The process could continue through the Quorum of Twelve Apostles and then to the First Presidency.

Section Twenty of the Doctrine and Covenants specified that the teachers were to be more than mere visitors who watched over and strengthened the Church membership. They were to settle disputes and minimize iniquity. Throughout the nineteenth century, the teachers held hearings and trials. Many bishops sought the teachers' help in settling disputes that developed within their wards. Toward the end of the century, however, the Church began to move toward a dual church and state system and young Mormon men were encouraged to enter law school. With such training, it was argued, they could help defend their own people.\(^3\)

Section twenty also directed that the teachers were to see that no iniquity existed within the Church, neither harness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking. The teachers had to also see that the Church met together often and that "all the members did their duty."\(^4\) By direction, the teachers were investigators as well as judges. There were times when they represented the prosecution and other times when they represented the defense. On several occasions, teachers participated as the jury. Occasionally they held


\(^3\)Bitton, p. 286.

\(^4\)Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1960), 20:54-55, hereinafter cited as D & C.
courts within their quorums. In short, the teachers were one of the most important facets of the judiciary arm of the Church during the nineteenth century.

JUDICATING PRACTICES PRIOR TO 1877

During the Ohio and Missouri periods of Church history, teachers participated in a variety of disputes. Often, the internal problems were so intense that elders and high priests expended large amounts of their time as arbitrators. The "Far West Record" reveals that as early as 1831, conferences of Melchizedek Priesthood holders conducted trials. On December 6 of that year in Randolph County, Indiana, a teacher acknowledged that he was guilty of whipping his wife. When questioned by Elder Thomas B. Marsh, an apostle, as to his worthiness for continuance as a teacher, he responded in the negative and as a result, the council withdrew his license to teach.5

Impact of the 1847 General Epistle

The Nauvoo period is almost entirely without any record of judicating practices, but apparently many within the Church did not understand how the teachers functioned. Brigham Young tried to clarify their position by insisting in an 1847 general epistle addressed to saints "dispersed throughout the earth," that elders should instruct parents concerning their duty to their children for "parents will have to answer for all misdemeanors arising thorough

5"Far West Record," p. 25, located in the Historical Department of the Church, hereinafter cited as HDC.
their neglect." Mothers should teach their little ones to pray as soon as they are able to talk. The elders' responsibility could be considered insignificant when compared with that of the teachers who were to make certain that the parents did their duty.\footnote{James R. Clark, Messages of the First Presidency (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), I, p. 331.}

Apparently some teachers felt that they were not doing enough to get the members to do their duty, for after 1847, they toughened their tactics. In 1849 and 1850 the teachers in New Orleans, as an example, held hearings in conjunction with their branch president. In one meeting, they summoned a brother to trial for failing to provide properly for his family. He admitted during the hearing that the mannerism of the youthful appearing teachers repulsed him. But after considerable thought, he admitted his folly and made a commitment to change for the better.\footnote{"New Orleans Branch Record, 1849-1850," p. 49, located in HDC.}

On another occasion the teachers deliberated with the branch president on the need to try an arrogant sister. After considerable debate, they concurred that they would have "to let her drag along [for] it is a doubtful case with her."\footnote{"New Orleans," pp. 90-91.} For her there would be no trial, at least for the time being.

In Southern Utah, John D. Lee accompanied his bishop to investigate a case where a married woman accused a married man, not her husband, of seducing her and trying to get her to leave her husband.
Lee and the bishop talked privately with the woman, and then privately with the accused man. She said he was guilty; he insisted he was not. So a bishop's court was held and both came to re-tell their stories to the bishop, his two counselors and the two visiting teachers. Since each of them told the same story, the court felt it had only one alternative--excommunicate both of them and let the matter rest, but Lee did not like this. The man was a long-time associate and friend, and should have been absolved if he were innocent. Lee went back again to the woman and,

... said to her that I feared that she had laid a plan to destroy an innocent man and that an act of that kind was nothing more or less than assenting to the shedding of innocent blood, which sin is worse than all the adulteries that she could commit, [for this] ... she could not get forgiveness for in this world nor the world to come and how would she feel in the day of judgment to meet a man, who through her falsehood, had been sacrificed and his blood caused to flow.

She burst into tears, said that she had lied and asked for forgiveness.  

On another occasion, John D. Lee, who seems to have participated in several teaching concerns, felt that the local bishop should have held a court rather than publicly ostracize a young stranger on hearsay evidence. When the victim appeared in Lee's community, Lee listened to his story, asked him many questions and decided that he had been dealt with unjustly. He then gave the man charge of some of his property in another county. Lee also gave him

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10Brooks, p. 190.
room, board, seed and other assistance in return for a portion of the crop. Traditionally anyone disfellowshiped for stealing horses or deserting his wife should have been refused employment and total social intercourse.  

Apparently a few church members did not support their teachers for during the October, 1855 general conference, Brigham Young informed the Saints that the bishop's and high council courts were merely instruments to strengthen their character, and if they were summoned to appear for an offense, they should "own up" and participate.  

It is significant that even though the local bishop was generally the most influential figure within the community, he nor his teachers were to be dictators.  

By the 1860's many bishops were holding regular courts. In fact, charges were sometimes leveled unwittingly by the teachers, who with a little more patience and skillful teaching, could have avoided hearings.  

In Tooele it seemed that fewer courts were held. Once the president of the teachers quorum and his "council" visited a Church

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11 Brooks, p. 260.  
12 Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 6, 1855, p. 4, hereinafter cited as Journal History, located in HDC.  
13 Provo Second Ward, Bishops Court Meeting Minutes, 1860-1882, April 2, 1861, located at HDC. The teacher leveled a complaint from a hearsay account of a neighbor lady. He was convinced that two couples should be tried for un-christianlike conduct because he had heard the neighbor sing an obscenity as she worked in her garden. He offered, almost as an after thought following the charge, that, "I never was [sic] close to them or with them when they was having their wows."
member who earlier told his visiting teachers that he wanted no further visits. As they visited with him, he expressed regret for his previous behavior and said that he would re-dedicate himself and invited the teachers to once again make their visits. In 1876, the same quorum listened to a report by a ward teacher concerning a charge against a priesthood holder who had become drunk and profane. The teacher reported that after he called upon the accused privately in his home, and after good counsel, the accused expressed willingness to "make right" his wrongs. The council decided that he could "renew his covenants and make a fresh start."

When a dispute between two priesthood holders could not be settled by the teachers, the quorum president thought that the matter should be left alone and re-evaluated at a later date. When a money dispute arose between the poverty-stricken woman and a neglectful land contractor, the teachers were unsuccessful in persuading the man to pay his debt, so the quorum president appointed three other teachers to reapproach the accused and "try again." But when the teachers failed to satisfactorily resolve a divorce dispute, "it was motioned and seconded that they [the couple] be turned over to the bishop."

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14Tooele Ward, Record of Visiting Teachers Meeting, 1877-1885, pp. 9-11, located in HDC.
17Tooele, p. 22, December 29, 1877.
18Tooele, p. 27.
On another occasion, after hearing a teacher's vindictive report, the quorum president said "something ought to be done with such men."

Bishop Tuttle said such a man ought to be cut off from the Church of God, and that he should be published as a swindler. After the above question was duly considered it was moved and seconded that Charles be disfellowshipped by the teachers quorum for fraud and willful imposition and that . . . we, the teachers recommend that he be cut off from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Carried unanimously [sic].

Procedural Discrepancies

By the 1870's procedural discrepancies had become evident. Some bishops became over-active while others depended entirely on their teachers for direction. In 1871, for example, a bishop's council which consisted of the bishop's counselors and the teachers summoned the former teachers quorum president to attend one of their meetings. When he appear, they questioned him about a teacher's court where he had presided. His court had decided to drop one teacher from the quorum and disfellowship another. After listening to the previous court minutes, the bishop asked the former president to restate his position, whereupon he re-emphasized his previous position and again reaffirmed that he had acted wisely. One accusing teacher argued that the whole proceeding had been void of the "spirit of God." When the former president tried to recount the details of his decision, the bishop intervened and,

. . . called him to order and said he had not time to listen to the details of the past. [He] thought if T had erred in

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19Tooele, p. 36.
in the past it was of the head and not the heart. He then motioned that the minutes [sic] be destroyed. Carried.  

Apparently the council witnessed the burning after which the prosecuting teacher tried to reconcile the hurt feelings by declaring his position to be similar to the accused. But he concluded with a caustic rebuff to his former president by declaring that he dealt too harshly with justice.  

A Salt Lake ward teacher expressed his concern in 1873 to his colleagues that Church meetings had become a "farce." He observed that a "loss of the spirit of the gospel" had accompanied the decline. He felt that the "loose" procedures for handling the unfaithful was the prime reason for the dilemma.  

Some bishops tried to remain totally aloof from the problems within their wards. It seems that they expected their teachers to be aware of all difficulties, make attempts to solve the disturbances, conduct the hearings and even render decisions. A few bishops felt that the procedures could be accomplished without their attendance at the hearings. In a Kanab ward teachers report meeting, for example, after the secretary read a trespassing charge, "the bishop then withdrew and advised the brethren to be merciful."  

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20 Minutes of Visiting Teachers in Springville, January 2, 1871, loose in William Bromley File, located in HDC.  
21 Bromley, Ibid.  
22 Presiding Bishopric Meeting with Bishops, Minutes, 1862-1879, p. 382, located in HDC.  
23 Kanab Ward, Ward Teachers Minutes, 1872-1881, p. 55, located in HDC.
THE EFFECT OF THE 1877 FIRST PRESIDENCY DIRECTIVE ON THE JUDICIAL PROCESS

The judicating procedures throughout the Church seemed to lack uniformity and some Church leaders openly expressed their disappointments. In 1876, Presiding Bishop Edward Hunter, noted with regret during a meeting with most of the Salt Lake bishops, that many of them had neglected their important calling of "settling difficulties."

He knew of some cases which if the bishops did not look into and settle them up, they would see sorrow. . . . He was determined to clear his skirts, and hoped and trusted for their own sake [that] they would seek to magnify both priesthoods which they held.24

Angus M. Cannon, President of the Salt Lake Stake, in a similar meeting suggested that some bishops had sent their problems to the high council instead of resolving them within the wards. As a result, he

. . . kindly invited the bishops to instruct their wards to settle their difficulties when they arise, either by themselves or [by] the aid of the lesser priesthood according to the laws of the Church, instead of carrying their grievances directly to the high council where fifteen men have to sit and determine upon cases which ought to have been settled either by themselves, or by the teachers. When settled by the latter, amicable feelings are generally restored, and when decided by the high council, such is very seldom the results.25

Lethargic Teachers and "Other Men's Sins"

A year later, 1877, the First Presidency issued a directive that reaffirmed Church policy. The ward teachers were to call all back-

24 "Bishops Meeting with Presiding Bishopric," 1862-1879, p. 382, located in HDC.

25 Ibid., p. 402.
sliders to repentence. If the accused failed to reform, he or she
should be called before the bishop's court and if found guilty,
expelled from the Church. In a most potent language, it directed:

If teachers, priests, and bishops, or other officers suffer
inequity to exist in the Church, without taking action it,
they become partakers of other men's sins and they are unworthy
of their positions.26

The directive had a potent impact upon many bishops and ward
teachers. One teacher, who apparently felt that he had neglected his
duties long enough, tried unsuccessfully to resolve a plural marriage
jealousy within a family. The plural wife insisted that several with-
in the ward tried to tell the teacher that the problem was none of his
business. Even the teacher's own son warned him against reconciliation
attempts. But he ignored their pleas and made the dreaded visit
which he must have felt could no longer be avoided. After he made
the visit, the plural wife penned that if nothing else were accom-
plished, at least he could be "satisfied" that he had done his duty.
Incidently, she felt that he wasted his time.27

In a Logan ward, the teachers quorum president heard about an
intoxication problem, so he assigned two teachers to persuade the
accused to "come forward and make an acknowledgment." The accused
refused, so the president instructed the teachers to summon him to
appear at the next quorum meeting. He again refused, whereupon the
quorum president decided to turn him over to the bishop. In the

26Clark, II, p. 284.

27Angelina Farley Diaries, May 4 and 6, 1877, located
in HDC.
meantime, he assigned other teachers to make further visits.  

In spite of the new emphasis, however, a sizable number of bishops continued to drag their feet as judicators. In 1870, a counselor in the Salt Lake State Presidency, Joseph Taylor, warned that:

> If a bishop refused to entertain a case against . . . [his] brethren, he [the bishop] would be liable to a charge being preferred against him before the high council for derelection of duty.  

Some bishops may not have felt confident with the procedure because of a glaring inconsistency which seemed evident at local levels. While they realized that hearings and courts were fundamental to Church operations, they realized too that each opposing party had to favor arbitration. A bishop in Arizona, for example, in response to a teacher's question, insisted that teachers could not arbitrate where they were not wanted. In the next breath, he demanded that the teachers investigate two ward members who had become public nuisances. He wanted the guilty party reprimanded immediately, even though neither of the men had sought arbitration.

There were times too, when the teachers seemed to forget that they were arbitrators and argued with each other. One teacher became so offended with some of his colleagues that he refused them entry into his home.

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28 Logan Second Ward, Bishops Court Minutes, 1877-1903, p. 66, November 27, 1886, located in HDC.

29 "Bishops Meeting," p. 496.

30 Snowflake Ward Teaching Report Meeting Minutes, 1881-1902, p. 21, September 5, 1884, located in HDC.

31 Woodruff Ward Quorum of Acting Teachers, Minute Book, 1889-1905, pp. 32-33, August 14, 1892, located in HDC.
One bishop followed the directive with such exactness that he tried to overrule the secular peace officer. Orson Huntsman wrote in his journal for July 14, 1899 about an altercation between Jefferson Hunt and William Pulsipher. Hunt (not the Mormon Battalion veteran) injured Pulsipher with a stone, bruising his head so that several stitches had to be taken. The justice of the peace was supposed to hear the case, but the bishop interceded and "placed it in the hands of the ward teachers, but they could not settle the trouble as it was of too long standing." There appeared to many to be an eternal feud between the five Pulsipher and six Hunt families. The bishop finally had to settle the case himself without secular support.  

Even though the 1877 directive was organizational and focused on the specific functions of Church administrators, there still remained a few Mormons who refused any form of religious settlement. A divorced Mormon lady in Northern Utah refused both a teachers' hearing and a bishops' court to settle her child custody claim. "She did not see that it would do any good to have a trial only before the county court as she would not be able to get justice." She felt so even though she insisted that "she had never tried to prejudice the children towards their father or the Church." 

By the time the nineteenth century ended, many bishops knew their ward personnel well enough to send specially skilled teachers or other special representatives to settle specific problems. One Logan

33 Logan Second, p. 47.
bishop, for example, sent two teachers with one of his counselors to call on a ward member to "learn his feelings regarding the gospel."

They met him at the gate and after reasoning with him . . . [they were] told that he did not care to hold any authority in the Church and would rather be a lay member. [He] said he did not care to have the teachers call again, but maybe his wife would like them to call. It was decided to make another call when he could be found at home.34

Some bishops may have decided on courses of action only after lengthy consultation with their ward teachers. In Kanab, the bishop made reference to the case of Willard "F." The evidence showed him guilty of a "serious wrong." The bishop sought and received the opinions of several teachers "as to what would be best to do under the circumstances." The minutes do not reveal the bishop's decision nor his actions, but they do reveal that he listened to at least four different opinions before he made a decision.35

Joseph Keeler Re-defines Ward Teachers as Grand Juries

Since the First Presidency directive was administrative, it would seem that the teachers as well as the bishops should have known with exactness where their judicial responsibilities separated. Many of them, however, did not understand their judicating responsibilities until Joseph Keeler, a member of the Salt Lake Stake Presidency published, First Steps in Church Government in 1906. He may have

34 Logan First Ward, Bishops Council Meeting Minutes, 1901-1906, p. 25, June 12, 1905, located in CHD.

35 Kanab Ward Teaching Minutes, 1882-1922, p. 186, November 29, 1903, located in CHD.
listened to several opinions before he published, for he described the teacher's function within the bishop's court as two-fold. First, he could sign a complaint if he were aware of an offense, and second, he could deliver a summons to the accused. Keeler's intentions could have been to either minimize or simplify the teachers' duties. He declared:

One of the express duties of the teachers is to act as peacemakers, and to help the brethren to be reconciled. The teachers do not hold a trial; they hold only an investigation; and endeavor to find the real cause for dispute or angry feelings between members. Then with love in their hearts, and a desire for peace and good will, they try to bring about an understanding of the differences and to clear the way for reconciliation. When the teachers are not successful in doing this, then the matter in controversy may be taken before the Church in the ordained way; namely before the bishop and his counselors.36

He defined the teachers role with clarity. They were as they had always been, an important part of the judicial system of the Church. Now, however, a new dimension had been added to their assignment and it was largely investigative. With the re-definition, they were more than ever before, a grand jury operation and as such were labor savers and arbitrators at the root level. According to Keeler, the teachers never had been a court of last resorts. Keeler as a Church leader wanted men of love and understanding who would adhere to simple definitions and principles. Since men of sound judgment were fundamental to judicial operations, that type of men had to be

36 Joseph B. Keeler, First Steps in Church Government (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1906), p. 146. In 1902 he published The Bishop's Court. His information was essentially the same, but not as clear.
sought and taught how to be successful teachers.\textsuperscript{37}

That is not to say that the Church was void of such men during the nineteenth century. In fact, Keeler's thoughts could have been initiated as bishoprics judicated carefully and deliberately. In 1895, for example, a bishop in Ogden entertained a complaint of child abuse. He invited the two teachers who should have known the circumstances to testify. Each reported that his knowledge was second-hand and therefore valueless. The accusing testimony was of the same order, so when the hearing ended, the court pleaded for time to make a decision. Nearly a week after the trial, the bishop sent the accused the following letter. It is representative and shows that some local leaders knew that the judicial processes within the Church were worthy of their best thoughts.

Dear Brother,

As the Bishops before whom you were tried on the 30th day of August, 1895 for 'unchristian-like conduct,' it becomes our duty to advise you of our decision, in relation thereto.

Will say, that we have thoroughly considered the case, in every detail both as to facts, and circumstances, and we are inclined to accord to you the benefit of every doubt, in rendering 'guilty' or 'not guilty,' and we are disposed to accord to you the benefit of the latter. While we do not think that you are guilty to the extent of the strong terms of the complaint, we are inclined to the belief that you have chastised you little son James with greater severity than even the latitude of parental authority would justly permit among one so young.

It is the right of the parent to command, and it is the duty of his off-spring to obey. But while authority rests with

\textsuperscript{37}David O. McKay in a letter to Vernon Israelson in 1936 responded that teaching would never be handled totally by Aaronic Priesthood youths because the teacher's spiritual duties were auxiliary to his judicial obligations. Letter is in the appendix of Israelson thesis. Vernon Israelson, "Changes in the Numbers and the Priesthood Affiliation of the Men Used as Ward Teachers in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1920-1935," (unpublished Masters Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1937).
the former, yet he is not at liberty to use this authority under caprice, or anger, or to show his power, but only for the benefit of the child. Parents have no more right to be unreasonable with their children, than they have to be so with other persons.

We assure you that this is unpleasant for us to entertain charges against our brethren, but when such become necessary, we are in duty bound to do so. You have our best wishes and prayers, Brother ____ , and we feel to invoke the blessings of the Lord upon yourself and family, that in your struggle to provide them with the necessaries of life, you may be successful, and that you may have wisdom and judgement, sufficient to guide them in the ways of the Lord.

Your brethren in the Gospel,

...[signed, bishop and two counselors] 38

If the re-definition had evolved from judicious bishoprics, it is a compliment to them and did not mean that teachers had become evaders. In the process, however, the burden of "other men's sins" had shifted to the bishop's side of the spectrum. According to the Keeler definition, the bishops would probably have to initiate grand juries and would always have to interpret the grand jury findings.

38 Ogden First Ward, Bishop's Court Minutes, 1890-1902, pp. 88-89, located in HDC.
Chapter 8

HOME TEACHING AND THE PRIESTHOOD AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

During the past three decades of the nineteenth century, ward teaching quality ranged from highly successful to extremely poor. The largest single determinant seemed to be the dedication or carelessness of the ward bishops. Not since 1877 had the Church made extensive efforts to strengthen the teaching program. In that year Brigham Young directed bishops to call Melchizedek Priesthood holders to act as teachers. He hoped young men, twelve and older would become actively engaged in the teaching operations.

President Joseph F. Smith tried to reaffirm Brigham Young's position by calling in 1908 the General Priesthood Committee. Initially it consisted of Rudger Clawson and David O. McKay of the Council of Twelve, plus Charles W. Nibley, Orrin P. Miller, and David A. Smith, the Presiding Bishopric. It was soon enlarged to nearly twenty members and served as a standing committee on all priesthood work until its release in 1922.1 Heretofore ward teaching impetus had never come from a committee and never before had attempts been made to revitalize teaching as a priesthood function. The new emphasis unlike the reform of 1856 and the reorganization of 1877 developed

from a need to make priesthood operations more powerful and more effective. To achieve such a goal, the Committee instituted a Churchwide reform which affected ward teaching drastically in at least two ways. First, it directed a new thrust of priesthood activity toward the youth. The Committee members felt strongly that young men needed more than directives. They needed incentives and activities which would involve and stimulate them to become leaders in the kingdom. They felt that ward teaching, already a workable activity, would meet such a need. Second, it clarified teaching procedures. Many of the procedures they proposed had been practiced extensively within wards throughout the Church, and the Committee was confident that the then local successes could become realities throughout the entire Church. A few of these procedures were involvement of the youth, uniformity in size of teaching districts, monthly visits accompanied by monthly reports, and pre-determined lessons. The decisions made by the Committee really culminated the teaching activities of the past two decades. Those activities need to be carefully examined before looking at the Committee's work in further detail.

IN VolVEMENT OF YOUTH

Even though the 1877 directive recommended that twelve-year-olds could become deacons and that "young men" could ward teach as a preparation for the Melchizedek Priesthood aided by their older and more experienced companions, the majority of wards failed to comply.

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2Hartley, pp. 137-156.
Brigham Young had hoped to involve teen-aged boys in the Aaronic Priesthood, but his expectations had, for the most part, failed to materialize. As late as 1900, for example, the Salt Lake Nineteenth Ward did not ordain young men as deacons until they were between sixteen and nineteen.\(^3\) One fairly prominent Church-man remembered after coming to Utah as a German convert that he had been ordained a deacon when fifteen.\(^4\) In 1906, George Brimhall told the male members of Brigham Young University that to receive the priesthood they must first make request to their local priesthood leader.\(^5\) When Francis M. Lyman, who became President of the Quorum of Twelve in 1903, reaffirmed the importance of immediate teen-aged involvement, he lamented that his first ordination, at age sixteen was to the office of elder. He felt slighted because it was not the custom of his bishop to bring "boys" into the lesser priesthood. Even though he was aware of the 1877 policy, he knew that the policy had been avoided by many bishops.\(^6\)

While some wards appeared lethargic in their concerns for teens, others pushed for their advancement. At the turn of the century one brother recommended in a ward teachers' report meeting "that young men showing ability as deacons should be advanced to teachers." He

\(^3\)"Salt Lake Nineteenth Ward, Priesthood Meeting Minutes," 1898-1906, located in the Historical Department of the Church, hereinafter cited as HDC.


\(^5\)Keeler, pp. 150-152. \(^6\)Keeler, Introduction, p. i.
thought too, that deacons would be encouraged to know that they would be advanced to teacher and priest as they proved themselves capable. The bishop concurred and directed the acting teachers to be alert to young men "showing proper ability." Two months later, three young men were ordained teachers and appointed to act under the supervision of experienced visitors.\(^7\) During the nineties, a number of young men were ordained teachers and deacons in one Salt Lake ward, but the minutes do not show that they became acting teachers.\(^8\) One acting teacher thought that youths should serve as teachers to give them experience as well as "lighten the labors of the [acting] teachers."\(^9\) Periodically, the First Presidency suggested that young teachers accompany the more experienced men.\(^10\) The author has been unable to define "young men" in the foregoing, but generally its connotation was determined by the local leaders.

Generally within the Church the 1877 concern for "young teachers" was ignored except in Great Britain where large numbers of youth served as branch teachers. When the mission president stressed the duties of the teacher for the Millennial Star, he insisted that the

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\(^7\)Provo First Ward, Ward Teaching Minutes of Report Meetings, 1900-1902, p. 25, November 21, 1900, located in HDC.

\(^8\)Salt Lake Fourteenth Ward, Ward Teaching Minutes, 1893-1897, September 29, 1893, located in HDC.

\(^9\)Panguitch Ward, Ward Teachers Report Meeting Minutes, 1872-1902, p. 142, located in HDC.

\(^10\)James R. Clark, Messages of the First Presidency (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), III, p. 112. 1887 general conference message delivered at Provo.
youth were used only because experienced men were not available. He warned the branch leaders that the young men must always be accompanied by a more experienced teacher. Even as the 1908 priesthood reform commenced, the custom still continued in some wards not to advance a deacon in the priesthood until there was reason to ordain him an elder.

This condition seemed to be accompanied by an attitude of indifference on the part of several boys. The neglect and indifference formed what the Improvement Era, the official communicative organ of the General Priesthood Committee, labeled as an "alarming situation" among Aaronic Priesthood boys. The Era reported in 1912 that:

Neither the priesthood quorums nor the Sunday school, nor any of the other organizations of the Church are taking care of a certain lot of our young people. There are at least forty percent of them [boys as well as girls] who are not attending any of our organizations, between the ages of fourteen and seventeen.

A prime cause of this situation was a pervasive lack of dignity and importance accorded the calling of teacher and priest. The immaturity of ordained boys was widely criticized. One Committee member, for example, urged that the ordination age of deacons be raised to fifteen, for "as a rule boys were too young to have this honor conferred upon them." Presiding Bishop, Charles W. Nibley,

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13 "Priesthood Quorums Table," The Improvement Era XVI (May, 1912), pp. 655-657. Cited hereafter as Era. This "Priesthood Quorums Table," was a regular monthly feature of the Committee. All references to the Era which follow are taken from this section unless otherwise noted.
14 Era, XVI (May, 1912), pp. 655-657.
proposed that boys prove themselves on missions before being given the Melchizedek Priesthood and temple ordinances. In several wards Aaronic Priesthood boys were not allowed to take charge of the sacrament, and instructions related to the passing of the sacrament were addressed in a 1910 Era article to elders, and not to the holders of the lesser priesthood.15

MAKING THE ORDAINED TEACHERS QUORUMS OPERATIVE

A vital part of the priesthood reform, then, centered on making the teachers and priests quorums important in the wards. Since Mormon scripture specified that the local bishop was to be the president of the priests quorum, he should have attended the quorum meetings and presided.16 Since many bishops neglected this duty, the Committee re-emphasized that the bishops should no longer absent themselves from this trust. The priests should have known from scripture that their bishop presided over them. Mormon scripture was not as clear about who should preside over the deacons and teachers quorums. Some leaders felt that responsible men should be called to be advisors to the boys. The General Priesthood Committee endorsed the suggestions of H. H. Blood of the Kaysville Stake by publishing his priesthood lecture in the Era. He insisted that a skillful quorum instructor should be able to consider the subjects


16 Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1960), 107:88, hereinafter cited as D & C.
of anger, stealing and lying with the young men in such a manner that would impress them with the value of high moral living. He thought too, that the effective quorum advisor would be able to instill unselfishness within the young teachers. He suggested that since many "young men cannot bring themselves . . . [because of their] oppressive diffidence to go into the homes two together," the bishop should commit each ordained teacher within his ward to the following obligations while the advisor inconspicuously stayed in the background and gave support to the boys as well as the bishop.

1. Seek out, labor with, and strengthen at least one person who is weak, especially a fellow quorum member.
2. Make invitations to visit with the bishop for tithing settlement.
3. Labor with the parents of unbaptized children.
4. Assist the ward clerk in finding genealogical data of ward members.
5. Visit newly arrived ward members.
6. Invite all members to attend auxilliary meetings.
7. Collect fast offerings.
8. "Be vigilant against every form of evil."
9. Exhort people to righteousness.
10. Act as companions to the acting teachers in house to house visits and help bring about reconciliations where ill feelings exist.

His suggestions preceded the Committee's formal Aaronic Priesthood list of duties published in 1916 by three years. His strongest fear seemed to center upon the quorum advisors. He felt that the young men should have been taught by their peers. Scriptural provisions had been made that a presidency, chosen from among the members should teach them the duties of their office.

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Blood, however, felt that leadership rarely developed within the quorum, for,

In some, and perhaps in many wards . . . the quorum officers are almost displaced by the instructors. Such quorum work as is done, and such instruction as is given, is under other guidance than was intended by the Lord.20

Very sternly he declared, "This is destruction of quorum loyalty, pride and discipline, and should be corrected." No one had the right to ever come between a presiding officer and his quorum.21

At a tri-stake priesthood convention held in Ogden, a high counselor suggested that fathers take the leading roles in the development of their own sons and not allow other men whose ambitions were opposed to his own to have that responsibility. He inferred that the ward teachers could support the fathers and serve as a critical link in the youth rejuvenation program by taking young men with them on visits and then making critical evaluations together about their experiences. Such teaching, he felt, would more thoroughly prepare the young men for the responsibilities of the Melchizedek Priesthood.22

Even though many Church officials admitted that ordained priests and teachers were too young to be the backbone of the ward teaching program,23 (generally fifteen to twenty-one years of age), the Committee itemized in 1916 specifics for the teachers which, with a few notable exceptions, were directed away from their teaching

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22 Era, XIII (October, 1910), pp. 1140-1143.
23 Hartley, p. 151.
obligations. 24

Perhaps the Committee allowed the three years between
Blood's address and their proposals as a trial period to see if his
suggestions were workable. Since the Committee modified his proposals,
the Blood suggestions could be considered only partially successful.
Perhaps his suggestions were too detailed or too stringent. After
all, the "oppressive diffidence" of the teens may have been too large
an obstacle for them to overcome in three years.

EXPERIMENTING WITH DISTRICT
SIZES AND STRUCTURE

The reform movement prompted an unusual interest in procedural
standards along with the youth emphasis. One area of concern was the
optimum size of teaching districts which had been the subject of
extensive and varied experiments.

A Logan ward experimented with district size in order to
utilize a few efficient teachers throughout the entire ward. During
the 1890's, the bishop of the First Ward requested two pairs of
teachers leave their "blocks" to visit the entire ward "to tell the
people to remember their prayers and [to] live their religion."
He felt that the saints "would have all the trials" they could stand

24 Hartley, p. 151. The duties of the teacher were to: Assist
in ward teaching; assist with sacrament; be instructors for boy
scouts; take charge of meetings, furnish speakers, singing, etc;
collect ward funds; assist in renovating meeting houses; cut wood
for the poor; be choir members; be clerks in the branch; be officers
in auxiliary organizations; and notify priesthood quorums of
meetings.
in the near future.\textsuperscript{25} At that time the ward consisted of twelve blocks within the city proper. Within the ward the teachers and priests acted as ward teachers. There is evidence to show that some blocks were visited by both quorums. One quorum taught the north-south streets while the other quorum operated on the east-west streets. In other words, some families could have had two sets of visitors. Apparently the plan had some merit, for when the bishop reorganized all the districts in both quorums a few years later, he wrote the over-lapping into his new program.\textsuperscript{26}

In addition to changing the nomenclature of the visiting area from "beat" to "district," the teachers of the Woodruff Ward decided that three teachers would be responsible for the saints within their districts. One member of the trio would serve as an alternate. The following year they established a rotation schedule, to be changed monthly. The initial calendar read: "Set one to district three, set two to district four, set three to district one, and set four to district two."\textsuperscript{27} Six years later, however, the teachers were meeting every three to six months and during their first meeting of a new year, the bishop presented a new plan and told the teachers to "appoint one or more teachers to look after one or more families" during the year. Two years later he instituted still another change and divided

\textsuperscript{25}"Logan First Ward, Priests Quorum Minutes," 1891-1893, pp. 43-44, located in HDC.

\textsuperscript{26}"Logan First Ward, Ward Teachers Report Meeting Minutes," 1895-1900, located in HDC.

\textsuperscript{27}"Woodruff Ward, Acting Teachers Minutes," 1889-1905, pp. 11-17, 22, located in HDC.
the twelve acting teachers into four districts. Apparently he liked
the trios for he gave each threesome the task of watching over seven
or eight families.28 The Committee discovered, almost significantly,
that as more men were given teaching assignments and the size of the
district was reduced, a proportional increase in monthly visits
resulted. In 1911, two ward teachers typically were assigned to visit
twenty families, and Churchwide only twenty percent of all families
were visited.29 Two years later the typical district size was down
to nine families and the visiting rate doubled to thirty-nine percent.
Between 1909 and 1914, ward teaching visits increased fivefold, and
by 1915 over half of Church families, or fifty-four percent were
receiving monthly visits. Six years later the Church teaching
average had increased to seventy percent.30 In 1913, the Era reported
that:

In the sixty-four stakes of Zion, there are 12,500
brethren engaged in this noble cause. They are laboring in
6,250 districts, with an average to each two teachers of eleven
families. In some of the wards, the average number of families
to each teacher very largely exceeds eleven, but it has been
observed that the best results were obtained where fewer than
eight families were assigned to a pair of teachers. The bishops
of the various wards are, therefore, urged to cut up their wards
into smaller districts, thus setting more people at work, and
at the same time obtaining better results. It has been urged
by some bishops that they have not the material in their wards,
but it has been proved by experience by those who have followed
instructions that there is more slumbering material in the
wards suitable for this work than some bishops ever dreamed of.
The object should be to set everybody to work, including especi-
ally the ordained teacher and the priest who should be set to

29Hartley, p. 152.
work with the more experienced brethren, thus interesting them in the cause and creating life and activity in the ward.  

MONTHLY VISITING

The concept of monthly visiting really began in 1877 but was not part of the First Presidency directive of that year. Throughout the administrations of Bishops Hunter and Preston, the Presiding Bishopric held meetings with the bishops. Brigham Young, in attendance at one of those meetings clarified that the Presiding Bishop's job was to "visit the bishops and set them in order." He also said that:

Teachers should do the same with those they visit. He then instructed the bishops in their duties pertaining to the knowledge of their respective wards. He wished them to look after every member in their wards, and not retain in fellowship those who utterly refuse to attend to their prayers, tithing, and other duties. He said it was the duty of the priests and teachers to visit their blocks weekly, and report the results of their visits to their bishops.

Feramoz Little, a counselor to the Presiding Bishop thought a weekly visit would be too difficult and almost impossible for any teacher. He questioned his aging prophet, "Would not a monthly visit answer all the purposes required?" In response,

President Brigham Young said, all he wanted in a weekly visit was to note the various changes of comers and goers that take place as fast as they occur. These weekly calls need absorb but a very short time, but every member of each ward should be well and thoroughly visited at least once a month.

The bishop at Kanab followed the suggestion with exactness. He

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31 Era, XVI (May, 1913), p. 735.
32 "Bishops Meeting with Presiding Bishopric," 1862-1879, p. 420, Box 3, folder 1, located in HDC.
33 "Bishops Meeting," p. 420.
insisted during a report meeting in the 1880's that each teacher be able to report that he had visited every house and "when anything is wrong, visit all the more and root out inequity." Three months earlier, the same bishop was exceptionally "glad that the ward was all visited especially now he could give a good report at conference."  

The bishop of the Snowflake Ward was less literal. He thought that the teachers "could visit the people at their leisure between this and the next conference."  

During the traditional summer slump, a Kanab bishop called for a vote of the quorum to commit to visit during the coming month. "All raised their hands."  

The bishop at Panguitch did not call for a raised hand commitment but "reflected quite sadly in the excuses offered as [to] why the people had not been visited."  

By the last decade of the century, some wards had decided to abandon all attempts to make monthly visits. The bishop of the Woodruff Ward directed his teachers to make a "complete visit" accompanied by a report, but he did not want it accomplished until the end of March. A few years later a different bishop in the same
district of Kanab noted that,

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34 "Kanab," p. 33.
37 "Panguitch Ward, Acting Teachers Report Meeting Minutes," 1872-1902, p. 100, located in HDC.
38 "Woodruff," p. 29.
ward thought the teachers should visit once every three months. He preferred that the slothful teachers report to the "head teacher or [the] bishop or his counselors" and then perform this obligations immediately. 39 Similarly in the Logan First Ward, a bishop's counselor directed the teachers to visit every family four times a year. He promised new energy and vigor to the entire ward as a reward for such deeds. 40

In Kanab a rotation schedule had been established where there were at least eight districts of acting teachers. Although the districts were being rotated periodically at the discretion of the quorum president, many ward members were not being visited as indicated by a number of journal entries. For example, the president reported that "some . . . [ward members] claimed to not have been visited for some time." Another president later reported that "people complained that they had not been visited by the teachers for a long time . . . three to six and nine months." All of this was extremely embarrassing to the quorum president who had been present and had raised his hand with his colleagues to unanimously sustain the bishop in a vote to make visits during the next month. One teacher offered still another suggestion to the seemingly futile experiment. He reasoned that for a monthly visit to become a reality, the teachers must conduct their visits by the first week of every month. 41

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40 "Logan First, Teachers," p. 25.
41 "Kanab, Teachers," pp. 36, 53, 80, 89.
the nineties, a teacher in Arizona reported "that some of the people complained that it had been a year since the teachers had visited them." 42

Little wonder the General Priesthood Committee moved to restore uniform timing to the teaching program. By 1912, the Era had reported with figures acquired from rural, urban and city-county stake samples that quantitative monthly teaching could be achieved churchwide, not just in urban areas as some bishops had imagined. 43

In 1913, in addition to listing the stakes in order of highest percentages, the Era suggested that:

In a number of the country districts the most successful work of the teachers was done by day-time visits, a day being set apart for this work, and the people as well as the officers and teachers, being notified and urged to prepare for the visits. 44

The following year the Era rehearsed the progress of the teaching reformation. The percentages of families visited had risen from twenty in 1911 to thirty-nine in 1913. It continued with its praise to the successful wards and stakes and noted that the best average for 1913 belonged to the Ogden Stake where ninety-three percent of the families had been visited each month. 45

The stimulus to teaching in the August, 1915, Era centered on rural areas where it had often been observed that teaching, during the

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43 Era, XVI (December, 1912), pp. 175-176.
44 Era, XVI (May, 1913), pp. 735-736.
45 Era, XVII (May, 1914), pp. 692-693.
summer months, could not be effectively accomplished. Praise was heaped upon the Bear Lake Stake for achieving ninety-eight percent; 249 of the 479 teachers reported visiting 1,487 families. The following month, the official magazine focused on the three previous Junes. The increase had gone from forty-two to fifty-one and concluded in 1915 with sixty-three percent. After listing the hundred percenters, the Era complimented a Bishop Borup of Eureka,

. . . upon his splendid work in ward teaching, particularly in view of the difficulties he has to encounter in a mining district. His report for the six months ending June 30 shows that every family was visited, with the exception of March, when three families were missed. The bishop is himself active, makes many visits that are never recorded. The bishop, himself, as well as the teachers, work night shifts, half the time, so that it is impossible to visit certain families all the time. One of the teachers . . . is doing missionary work among the non-members, and during the past five months he visited one hundred and eighty families distributing tracts and books. Taking all things into consideration, ward teaching in Eureka is being done as well as among the best in the Church, and the ward is certainly entitled to a place among the foremost.

REPORTING THE VISTS

By 1911 the Presiding Bishopric had requested a monthly report from the stake presidents throughout the Church which indicated the percentages of families visited in each of their wards. Some stakes, though, were cognizant much earlier of the work of their teachers and were attempting to make them feel important at stake priesthood meetings.

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49 "Salt Lake Stake High Council Minutes," 1904-1905, p. 47, located in HDC.
The stake presidencies' report concentrated on the numbers of saints visited. The Committee considered the Thirty-Third Ward in Salt Lake typical, so they published its previous three months statistics in December, 1912.50

Judging from present day expectations, the reports failed to seek fundamental information about feelings and possible joys or frustrations. One prominent Committeeman and future Church President, David O. McKay, critically examined the reporting system after more than two decades of operation and reported that:

If you will turn to your reports, you will find that the statistics relate more to the labors of the teacher than to conditions or duties or well-being of those visited. On a typical report card appear these items:
- Husbands name.
- Wife's name, etc.
- Times attended sacrament meeting.
- Number of persons in family.
- Number of those present at the visit.
- Number of families visited.
- Number called on and not at home.
- Number not accessible.
- Number not called on.

These are statistics which do not cover, excepting in two instances, the specific points that the teacher is required to teach. All of this is very good but is it not possible for us to change our attitude and include some of the fundamentals given by revelation?51

Even though the weakness of the reports is now obvious, they did try to create attention away from a hypocritical "make us look good" approach to teaching. If the teachers did nothing else, they should have familiarized themselves with people and their problems on a monthly basis. The reports also forced the teacher to follow-up

50 Era, XVI (December, 1912), p. 175.
with writing his successes or failures, a skill used earlier more by
the ward clerks and quorum secretaries than by the visiting teachers.
Writing the report might have also helped keep the slothful teachers
honest. With the written report, there would be little room for
them to fool the bishop or quorum president into thinking that all
was well in their district. During the nineties a counselor in a
Logan ward bishopric pleaded with the teachers not to hurry around
their districts "so as to make their report look better."52 Perhaps
the counselor had familiarized himself with the Church policy which
appeared earlier in the Deseret News. It stated that the objectives
of the office of teacher could not be attained by the person who goes
around his district in a rush, as a matter of form, to enable him
to subsequently report that he has gone through his field and
"found all the saints about as usual."53 In both Panguitch and
Kanab ward teaching accelerated as quarterly stake and general con-
ferences neared.54 In Kanab, however, some of the ward members
reported that the visits were dismally too brief to consider the
actions of each family member.55

ASSIGNED AND SPECIFIED TEACHING TOPICS

During the 1880's local bishops directed the teachers to teach
specifics that would build strength into their wards, but during

52 "Logan, Teachers," p. 17.
the priesthood reform movement the First Presidency as well as the
Presiding Bishopric suggested topics that would solidify both the
local unit as well as the entire Church. During the 1890's as Utah's
political struggles pointed toward and culminated in statehood,
leading statehood framers felt a "danger in treating" a particular
subject publicly for fear "of saying too much." They proposed to inform
all stake presidencies and bishoprics through personal visits and
then have all members "visited individually." Teachers had always
handled delicate and confidential information. It may seem strange
for such a confidence to be given to the teachers, but for years, many
of them had been involved in similar information dispensing programs.

During the decade of the eighties, a bishop in Kanab
utilized his teachers to exacting specifications. On one occasion,

[He] wished the brethren to carry the instruction to the
people . . . [as had been] given from the stand . . . Ask
the people to pay their tithening [sic] and offerings. He
desired the brethren to carry a good kind of feeling among the
saints and get the people to sustain [the] cooperative stock
herd and do not sell what little stock they have to outsiders.
. . . [He] wanted all to vote for our delegate to Congress. 57

He gave the teachers more specifics six months later when he asked
them to warn the saints about the ravages of small-pox and measles and
teach them about the dangers of unclean medicines. He also wanted the
ward membership counseled to keep their houses and surroundings clean.
On May 6, 1883, the minutes show that after hearing a good report,

He wanted them to talk up coming to meeting, sunday school,
day school and primary. . . . [Instruct] the little boys not

56 G. O. Larson, The Americanization of Utah for Statehood, (San

57 "Kanab," pp. 82-83.
to cut out shade trees. . . . [Make the people aware of] obstructions on the sidewalks and . . . [consider] the necessity of sustaining a cowherd so as to preserve our shade trees.58

In another ward the bishop "made some remarks on drunkenness and wished the teacher[s] to look after such things."59 Following a reorganization of the teachers quorum in the Woodruff Ward, the newly installed president instructed his teachers that they were to notify the head of the family that they intended to visit at a specified time so he could bring his family together. They were to inquire if the family wanted to have continued teaching visits. If affirmative, they were to,

Take charge of the house, opening the meeting by prayer, kneeling down, then . . . proceed to teach and instruct the family including the children for a short time, adapting their teachings to the capacity of each, and not wearying [sic] them with too lengthy speeches. . . . Ask as few questions possible, consistent with a proper understanding of the feelings of the people. . . . [If so impressed] ask the head of the family or any of the members to speak for a short time, but the teachers are not to allow the meeting to run into gossip. . . . The special instruction for the month is the attendance . . . [at] meetings.60

A bishop in Panguitch was not as specific. He simple requested the teachers "to advance any new idea that may be for the good of the ward."61 In Logan, a bishop reproved his teachers and priests for failing to make consistent visits, then offered that:

There are a good many things the brethren caution about that will do good. Selling our land to non-Mormons is a subject to speak about. What would have become of Noah had he sold the ark?62

62 "Logan First Ward, Aaronic Priesthood Minutes," 1869-1895, September 14, 1890, located in HDC.
In the same ward, five years later, a bishop's counselor cautioned the teachers to limit their energies to only one subject. 63

One of the earliest outward manifestations of teaching specifics on a Churchwide basis came in the form of a circular from the Presiding Bishopric directed to all bishops. The 1897 newsletter insisted that the bishops begin to collect fast offerings within their wards and stop draining their tithing funds.

Whenever a person drawing aid is able to do something toward their own support, however small, you should make efforts, assisted by the teachers, to provide them with employment suited to their capacity and condition. 64

In 1906 the Presiding Bishopric drafted a form letter to bishops whose annual number of tith-payers had decreased. To those local leaders, they asked:

Have they been labored with during the past year? Do you make personal visits and teach them by kindness and persuasion to observe this important law?

They insisted that bishops were obligated to answer in the affirmative "without delay." 65

In 1910, the Era reported a significant lecture by C. C. Richards of the Ogden Stake Presidency. "Teachers" he said, to officiate successfully in their calling, must teach,

1. By wholesome example on his own part; for the eye is keen to observe and the brain long to retain its impressions.

63 "Logan, Teachers," p. 17.
64 Letter from Presiding Bishopric to Bishops, December 3, 1897, located in HDC.
65 Letter from Presiding Bishopric to Oscar F. Hunter, March 14, 1906, located in HDC, box 1, folder 2.
2. By precept; for the advice of a friend and brother, free from guile, and inspired of the Lord to teach the way to immortality and eternal life, will never be forgotten.

3. By constant attention to duty and supervision of the work undertaken; that in every day and hour of the week he should greet his neighbor as a friend and brother, and ever be ready to magnify his calling as a teacher of Christ.

4. By consistency in his life; that his example may harmonize, not conflict with and destroy his precepts.

For what does it profit a saint to be taught in his home the word of wisdom, by one of his fellows, if the next day he meets the same brother on the street and sees him smoking tobacco, or drinking intoxicating beverages? Or, if a man teach his neighbor to observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, while he himself attends theatres, pleasure resorts, cuts or hauls his hay or grain, works at his shop or trade, or otherwise desecrates the day? Of if a man teaches his brothers honesty, and himself has a well-deserved reputation for untruthfulness and trickery?

It is a mockery in the sight of God and true saints for a man to teach what he does not and will not practice. For better off are we without than with such teachings.66

It was not new to tell the teachers to play their roles properly, but it is significant that the new emphasis on teaching as a priesthood activity began with an increased stress on teaching fundamentals.

The Era, in 1913, credited much of the then current success to specific messages which bishops presented to their teachers as they met with them monthly to learn the condition of their wards.67

In the August, 1914, Era, the Committee published a list of thirty-four topics to "help bishops in selecting subjects to be assigned to ward teachers for their monthly visits." The Committee hoped the list would interest, efficiency and quality to teaching.68 That same year, the

67 Era, XIV (May, 1913), pp. 735-736.
magazine carried a letter which had been mailed to all stake presidents and bishops. After summarizing the growth of the mutual auxiliaries, Heber J. Grant, who represented the mutual boards, hoped that the information would help them as they presented the same subject to their ward teachers, "and aid them, in turn, in presenting our work to the people of your ward."

Finally, in 1921, the First Presidency went a step further by suggesting during a special fast and collection drive for "Near East" distress victims that:

[Bishops] invoke the services of their ward teachers and all other available agencies in making a thorough canvass of their wards . . . in order that every family shall be invited and encouraged to contribute the equivalent of at least two meals contemplated by the fast, for the feeding of those who are confronted by long months of semi-starvation.

The First Presidency suggested that bishops who were neglectful in their ward teaching duties utilize whatever substitutes were available, but they insisted that the message had to be delivered!

Re-emphasis of the Inquiries

That same kind of insistence seemed to be part of the previous reformations. One procedure which received prominence during the 1856 reform, inquiries, almost faded into oblivion afterwards.

During the 1880's Francis M. Lyman, an apostle, warned the snowflake Ward teachers that questioning the saints would alienate some of them if they were not adequately prepared to be asked the right

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69 *Era*, XVII (October, 1914), p. 1175.

kinds of questions. He warned that:

It's a rare thing to find a teaching teacher. They usually drop into a routine of asking a certain number of questions. Instead of doing so, they should teach the people at all times just the tune that need[s] instruction. . . . [They] should be acquainted with their circumstances and not need to ask questions. Teachers should know that they are in full fellowship themselves; and should always go praying that their teaching may be directed by the Spirit of the Lord. . . . The office of Holy Ghost is to bring things to our remembrance. Let me impress upon you the importance of teaching the people something whenever you visit them. It is sometimes necessary to teach the head of the family by himself. When you pray in the house of the people, pray for the very things that are needed. The Bishop and his counselors should be the finest kind of teachers and should be able to vouch for their teachers and know just what kind of men they are. Don't despise the office of teacher. It is the calling of the prophets.  

At about the same time in the general conference message to the saints at Provo, the First Presidency evaluated ward teaching by noting that the visits contained too much formality. The tendency existed throughout the Church to drop into the routine of asking stereotyped questions without conversing in a way that would bring out the real feelings and spirit of the householders. Visits of this nature were completely barren of results.  

Joseph F. Smith apparently felt that the inquiries should be revived, for as he discussed ward teaching problems during the October conference of 1911, he reminded the teachers that they still had the right to "inquire into the performance of the duties of all members, and learn whether they were doing their duty as members of all things."  

72 Clark, Messages, III, p. 112.  
At the same conference, his son, Elder Hyrum M. Smith, an apostle, considered the preparations and techniques requisite to effective teaching. He maintained that after the teacher made the preparations of knowledge and testimony, he could enter the homes of the saints and inquire concerning their conditions, conduct and standing as members of the Church. He had the authority and "it is his duty," to ask questions of each family member regarding the following:

- Diligence in keeping the commandments and performing individual duties.
- Welfare and standing as a saint.
- Peace and harmony abiding within the home.
- Love and affection between husband and wife.
- Morning and evening prayers.
- Respect and honor shown to parents by children.
- Love and affection between children.
- Vocal prayers.
- Secret prayers.
- Backbiting and evil speaking with neighbors.
- Quarreling, contention, dissension or lack of brotherly love within the family.
- Sustaining and upholding the Priesthood of God.
- Acceptance of the restoration.
- Belief in living prophets.
- Sustainance of local authorities.
- Acceptance of the organization of the Church.
- Attendance of sacrament meetings.
- Partaking of sacramental emblems worthily.
- Profanity.
- Personal honesty and purity.

In the minds of some observers the notorious catechism which was given in 1856 to all teachers with the command to catechize all members, had gone from bad to good then back again. Implementing them again could be frustrating for saints and teachers alike. At the 1911

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74 Hyrum M. Smith, in Conference Reports of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1911), pp. 40-41. Paraphrased and styled by the author.
conference, President Joseph F. Smith could have been modifying or rephrasing his son, Elder Hyrum Smith. Perhaps both general authorities were attempting to get the teachers to develop their mental powers and ask questions rather than slump into the rut of making meaningless visits. Judged from the phraseology of the three sermons, there seems to have been an atrophy of teaching effectiveness during the three decades preceding the conference which created a vital need to reform teaching techniques.

EVIDENCES TO SHOW URGENT REFORM NEEDS

By 1908, a vast number of bishops already knew that their teachers could strengthen their wards, and many were directing their quorums to teach and execute local as well as Church policies. Some bishops, however, as has been shown, utilized their teachers only as conferences approached to either avoid stake presidency rebuff or be subject to their acclaim. One of the prime objectives of the 1908 reformation was the same as the 1856 reformation and the 1877 reaffirmation--to teach bishops how to be effective.

Diverse Teaching Operations
Within Wards

One evidence which showed both the need to teach bishops while at the same time improve teaching operations was the large amount of unrelated teaching practices promoted in many wards. Many bishops delegated a high percentage of their menial tasks to their teachers. Most of the tasks could have been accomplished by other ward members. It is safe to say also that had the teachers been freed from such activities they could have been more effective in strengthening their wards.
A few notable exceptions to such trivia do exist, however. During the 1880's a Kanab bishop promised his teachers that the time would come when they would see the fruits of their labors because they had taught the people to be united and to sustain each other. He then completed his six item agenda by directing the teachers to get the saints to sustain the meeting house janitor by a two cent per head tax; weed out profanity among themselves and all ward members; stop tobacco users from administering the sacrament; help the widows, and teach the deacons to avoid continued roudiness.\textsuperscript{75} All the tasks would compliment and challenge his teachers. Not all bishops, however, kept their teachers occupied with the critical practices of "being with, strengthening and watching over the Church." For example, the bishop of a Salt Lake ward felt that his most pressing concerns were to; make collections for the completion of the temple, take a census, make homes available for conference visitors and collect a free will offering.\textsuperscript{76}

When "strengthening" concerns were reported, they were usually left in suspension. The same Salt Lake ward is a good example.

The Avenue [was] reptd [reported] by P.A. Bernquists. [He] had visited alone one week (typical of about one third of his brethren) and Bro[ther] Johnson had accompanied him two evenings beside and found twenty-five families. [They] found some . . . [they] thought should be assisted . . . [especially] a woman with twin children and a sick mother living with her . . . on eight dollars a month received from the father of the children.\textsuperscript{77}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{75}"Kanab," p. 33.
\item \textsuperscript{76}"Salt Lake Eighth Ward, Liberty Stake, Historical Record," 1886-1894, pp. 4-5, 233, 246-249, 254, located in HDC.
\item \textsuperscript{77}"Eighth Ward," p. 254.
\end{itemize}
Following the Avenue report, another report followed. Both reports were void of any suggestions for assistance to the needy families. 78

At a meeting of the Presiding Bishopric with the bishops and lesser priesthood, one presiding teacher felt that the teachers most important concern was temple collections so he recommended his ward as a good organizational example for successful collections. His account is classic to show the detail the teachers exacted in their extra curricular assignments.

Two to three teachers operate on each block and collect means for the temple . . . [and] ward expenses, all of which is transferred to the presiding teacher who keeps a strict account of all temple funds . . . [as well as] ward expenses. . . . [He then] pays temple funds to B[ishop] Hunter [the presiding bishop]. [He also] keeps a strict record of ward funds and disbursements, striking a monthly balance in his book. He also supplies bread for the sacrament [at] Sunday school and ward meetings. 79

Another problem developed from the practice of newly arriving ward members surrendering recommends for their former bishop before officially belonging to the new ward. Some teachers debated at length the feasibility of visiting the new arrivals who were without such recommends. 80 They also argued other issues.

Visiting Without a Companion

One such issue was solo visiting. Even though the General Priesthood Committee did not insist that the teaching be done in pairs,


80 "Snowflake," pp. 31, 45. The bishop said on the later date that when saints without recommends move into the ward, the teachers were to visit them.
they did stress that the visits be made with a young teacher. Visiting in pairs was a good safeguard and counsel directed to missionaries to always work with a companion caused many teachers to feel insecure without one. Elder Francis Lyman instructed the Tooele teachers during the 1870's that "it was right and proper for teachers to visit two and two that each might witness for the other."81 During the eighties one teacher reported that he had visited "some" and felt like going out more if there were someone to go with him.82 Years later in the same ward, a teacher questioned the advisability of teachers visiting alone if their partners "failed to connect." The bishop thought it better to go in pairs, "but better to go alone than not at all."83 The following month, one brother reported that all his visits were done without his companion who had to stay at home because of illness.84 Other bishops gave similar counsel.85

Visiting without a companion created another problem. Note the minutes of the Woodruff Ward.

Ap[ril] 9, 1899, ___ said he had not visited any in the past three months but thought that all were visited by his partners.86

Before the year ended, the bishop had become so frustrated with the nebulous conditions created from the practice that he "urged the teachers to be more prompt in their visiting." He thought that too many

82 "Panguitch," p. 57.
84 "Panguitch," p. 105.
85 "Logan, First, Teacher," p. 31.
ward members had been neglected. He directed the teachers who did not have a companion to find one or go alone. 87

EXPERIMENTAL SUPPLEMENTS TO AUGMENT TEACHING PRACTICES

One of the oddities of ward teaching was the number of substitutes which were initiated. Usually the substitutes were less successful than the genuine might have been. "When all else fails, follow directions," is an addage that some Mormons are prone to repeat. The Church, however, learned the principle by hard knocks. Significantly, the Committee utilized many of the successful experiences of local bishops and teachers. In fact, without such experiences, the Committee would have been severely hampered.

District Meetings

One custom that may have received official recognition during the reformation was that of holding meetings within the teacher's district. The best off-shoot of the endeavor became the priests cottage meetings of the 1930's. Elder David O. McKay recommended in 1938 that priests who were not yet involved move into the activity rapidly. He encouraged the priests and teachers to know all persons within their districts, both members and non-members. He directed them to meet monthly within the homes of the members and invite all other district members to attend. The priests conducted the meetings while the teachers noted absences then made follow-up invitations to

87"Woodruff Ward," p. 77.
future members. 88 Such practices could have begun as early as the 1880's.

The ward teaching minutes of the Logan First Ward reveal that during that decade, the ward had been divided into meeting districts. When the entire third district met at the presiding teacher's residence, the bishop informed the participants that the ward was too large for him to operate effectively. As a result, he had divided the ward into districts and called a president to preside over each sub-unit. After some general instructions, he directed the president to organize the priesthood and appoint priests and teachers. 89

The districts were in essence tiny wards, and the bishop operated much like a stake president except on a smaller scale. By the middle of the decade the districts had been divided into divisions and the saints were expected to attend one of the most important of all assemblages, their district meeting. 90 That same year, however, the experiment subsided and the teachers were once again associating with the entire ward, and all the ward members were invited to attend meetings in the ward meeting-house. 91

The issue surfaced again, however, a decade later when a visiting priest questioned during a quorum meeting the feasibility of having district meetings initiated and operated by the priests.

89"Logan First, Teachers," November 13, 1881.
90"Logan First, Teachers," December 23, 1881, January 30, 1882.
91"Logan First, Teachers," September, 1883.
The bishop left the matter to the discretion of the priests. Two weeks thereafter, the general consensus of the quorum was that the people would not support block meetings.

In 1901, however, a Provo ward decided differently.

Bishop Knudsen stated he would like all teachers to hold district meetings next Wednesday, Jan. 30. He suggested that where one of the teachers was a young man that it would be well for him to visit the families [the] night before the district meeting notifying [sic] them of the meeting.

The First Presidency recommended in their annual circular of 1910 that every family should have at least one cottage meeting during the year.

Melchizedek Priesthood Policing

Their Own Quorums

Since the days of Brigham Young, many of the Melchizedek Priesthood Quorums had visited the homes of their members and in some cases had taken disciplinary action against their associates. In 1882, a counselor in the Presiding Bishopric suggested that if teaching were done properly there would be no need for the quorums to waste their energies doing what teachers should have already accomplished. The practice may have been perfected prior to 1908, but that seems doubtful.

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92 "Logan First, Priest," January 14, 1894.
93 "Logan First Priests," January 28, 1894.
94 "Provo," p. 32.
95 Clark, Messages, IV, p. 195.
96 "Bishops Meetings," p. 119.
Bishop's Annual Visits

It is interesting that one practice emphasized during the priesthood reform was the yearly visits the bishops made to the homes of their members. It might appear as a retrogression to have bishops do what teachers should have done, but judging from the duration, the practices must have had some merit. As late as 1923, the First Presidency made known through the Era their request that the bishops continue their annual visits for another year. The article noted that the Presiding Bishopric had already notified the wards. The First Presidency also recounted the purpose for the visits by noting that:

If the membership of the ward is so large that it is not possible for each family to be visited by the bishop or his counselors, it is suggested that the ward be divided into districts, and brethren holding the priesthood be called to assist in this important labor. During the visit it is especially required that an effort should be made to see that every member of the Church in each ward is enrolled upon the records of the ward. Where their membership is not recorded, such information should be given to the bishop, and inquiry made of the Presiding Bishop's office for their certificates of membership. Their visits are very necessary, and are instituted to encourage and instruct the members of the Church concerning their religious duties. It is also an opportunity to give such counsel and advice as may be necessary, and to encourage the saints to pay their tithes and offerings; to attend sacramental meetings, and to remember their prayers and family duties. The bishops are enjoined to commence the work early, so that a complete visit may be made before the end of the year.

The wording of the request suggests that the bishops were in reality

97 The visits were being done in some parts of the Salt Lake Valley as late as the 1950's.

performing teaching duties. During World War I, some bishops took deacons as companions. 99 Perhaps the annual visits were intended to be supplemental to the teaching responsibilities, for Joseph F. Smith reported in 1914 that:

Great good has been accomplished by the regular visits of the ward bishoprics. . . . This has given the bishops a personal insight into the family organization and home life of the people. . . . 60,000 families were thus visited . . . during the closing months of the year 1913. 100

In fact, the annual instruction of the First Presidency in 1910 clearly acknowledged that not only were the visits augmenting ward teaching, but the visits also served as encouragement for the acting teachers. 101

The annual visits probably began as concerned teachers or concerned stake authorities chided their bishops about becoming aware of their members' needs. The best means for such an acquaintance is personal visits. During a Kanab report meeting in the 1880's, as an example, one teacher "expressed pleasure" because the bishopric had been visiting the saints. 102

IMPLEMENTING MOBILITY INTO THE REFORM

M.I.A. Missionaries

Bishops, however, were not the only reinforcements to the

100 Joseph F. Smith in Conference Reports, April 1914, p. 7.
101 Clark, Messages, IV, p. 214.
102 "Kanab," p. 84. As early as 1856 Jedediah Grant said, "The bishop[s] should occasionally go about their ward[s] themselves, at all houses, and look after the people, know what they are about and give instructions accordingly." "Presiding Bishopric with the Bishops and Lesser Priesthood," 1851-1862, p. 168, located in HDC.
teaching reformation. Before the turn of the century young adult men were being called by the Church to journey into near-by counties to labor as M.I.A. missionaries. Their efforts were usually directed to the teen-aged boys who had become delinquent in their Church duties. It was not uncommon for the youths to declare after a visit from the missionaries that they wanted no further affiliation with the Church or its doctrines.\textsuperscript{103} In 1900, the program had been abandoned and replaced with a system of local missionaries, but after floundering for a year, the proven general program was again re-established. In June, when the announcement was made, the Mutual Improvement Association general board called upon stake presidents to recommend men of "intelligence and experience in the gospel," men who were zealous, wise, prudent, congenial, capable of making friends, able to express themselves with clarity, influential and men "who would have weight with . . . presidents of stakes and bishops of wards." All prospective missionaries had to be endorsed by their bishop and stake president and could plan to spend at least five months away from home. Prior to leaving, they reported to the general board in Salt Lake City to "receive instructions."\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{103}Era, IV (January, 1901), p. 226. M.I.A. is an abbreviation for Mutual Improvement Association. It includes both a young men's as well as a young ladies' program. Both are auxiliaries within the Church.

Ward Teachers as Local Missionaries and Quorum Watchmen

Perhaps the ward teachers had as great an impact on the rejuvenation within the wards as did the M.I.A. missionaries. Elder George F. Richards during the October 1909 general conference gave sufficient proof. He told about four wards throughout the Church which had succeeded in baptizing from six to twenty-one non-member adults into the Church. In each of the wards, the teachers working closely with the bishop had initiated the fantastic marvel.

"The thought occurs to me," said Richards, that:

Bishop and ward teachers; if in these wards, by systematic faithful, devoted effort, these have been converted and brought into the Church, is it not possible that there are some of the blood of Israel within the limits of your wards, or your districts, who could be brought, also, to see the truth, if you were to do your full duty by them? . . .[Within the Priesthood quorums] are men who have slackened in their efforts; have neglected to labor, the spirit of the gospel seems to be withdrawn from them, they are without the Spirit of the Lord, and are in darkness. We should labor with these men. They may have indulged in habits which are forbidden, and have acquired these habits right under the noses, so to speak, and in the presence of the presidencies of these quorums. I think that these men ought, indeed, of all men to be watchmen upon the towers of Zion, especially to the quorums of Priesthood over which they preside.105

Elder Richards refused to blame faulty teaching on the timeliness which seemed evident in some of the youth. He insisted instead that Mormons neglected their duty as teachers because of fear. That condition caused teachers to axiomatically close their mouths as a result of humiliation and embarrassment.106 Philosophically, he

105 Conference Reports, October 1909, pp. 82-83.
106 Conference Reports, October 1909, p. 83.
proposed that if a sense of responsibility failed to force the saints to do their duty, their love of fellowmen should cause them to reach out and "lead them [their neighbors] into the narrow way which leads to safety, to salvation and to eternal life." 107

DOCTRINAL AND OPERATIONAL INROADS

When the concerns of the Priesthood reform emerged from the general authority chambers, they were usually Church policy. As such, they were dressed in Sunday attire, and the unfamiliar appearance may have created other problems. Joseph F. Smith is well-known for his operational recommendations, and in the area of home teaching, he was responsible for at least two.

In 1912, he reiterated a policy that had up until that time either been assumed or not understood. It related to the teacher's authority to preside in a home as he visited with the members. If a teacher, holding only the Aaronic Priesthood, entered the home of a high priest, the latter relinquished to the teacher his right to preside in his own home. President Smith demanded that:

It is the duty of all members of the Church, no matter who they are, or what priesthood they hold, nor what office they hold in the Church, -- it is their duty to disrobe themselves, if you please, of all authority except the right of membership, or to be members in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for it is the duty and prerogative of the teacher to inquire into the standing of members of the Church. 108

107 Conference Reports, October 1909, p. 83.

108 Joseph F. Smith, "Duty and Authority of the Teacher," Latter-day Saints Millennial Star, V (January, 11, 1912, 27). On January 2, 1879, Apostle Francis Lyman answered as question that dealt with the authority of teachers to preside if the head of the
As unconventional as the principle may seem by today's standards, of a man's home being his castle and his right to preside is yielded to no one, the teaching was not new. On at least two occasions, Joseph Smith welcomed teachers into his home then after gathering his family around him, announced that the visiting teacher would preside and the entire family would be at the teacher's mercy.  

The other concern was not unique with the teachers. It seemed that teaching, however, was considered by many to be a menial assignment and the Church membership generally shunned menial tasks. If a Church-man sought ecclesiastical positions, the last job he usually sought was that of ward teacher. The problem became critical during President Smith's administration. Some men with lengthy Church experience when asked to ward teach coolly informed their bishops that they had "graduated from that calling and refused to act."  

"There is never a time," declared President Smith, and,

There will never come a time to those who hold the priesthood in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, when men can say of themselves that they have done

family was non-Mormon. He answered that, "The head of the family should be consulted and if not willing, do not visit such family." "Tooele Ward, Record of Visiting Teachers Meetings," 1877-1885, p. 56, located in HDC.

109 William Farrington Cahoon's experience is classic. See "Recollections of the Prophet Joseph Smith," Juvenile Instructor, XXVII (August 1892), pp. 492-493. Also "Presiding Bishopric with the Bishops and Lesser Priesthood," 1879-1884, p. 118, located in HDC. Presiding Bishop Hunter during the meeting said, "When Brother Oakley called at the house of President Joseph Smith, he found him sitting in his office in deep meditation. Bro[ther] Oakley in a modest way said, I come to visit you as a teacher. He sprang up and said, take my seat, there is your place. I will call my family before you."

110 Conference Reports, April 1814, p. 7.
enough. So long as life lasts, and so long as we possess ability to do good, to labor for the upbuilding of Zion and for the benefit of the human family, we ought, with willingness, to yield with alacrity to the requirements made of us to do our duty, little or great.111

As was true with other operations, the suggestion was not new with President Smith,112 but because he uttered the doctrine while serving as Church President, does show that the idea had matured to a new stature.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The reformation was in essence a re-definition. The 1856 reform sought character excellence. The 1877 reformation pinpointed organizational correlation, while the priesthood reform initiated in 1908 focused on priesthood operations. The Committee achieved a major task when it defined teaching in priesthood correlated terms. Perhaps a definition by a Kanab teacher in 1905 was not to atypical. He viewed ward teachers as barrometers.113 By implication they were simply instruments whose prime objective was to note changes. Others would have to make the readings, interpretations, and preparations for an approaching storm when such was the case. In view of the definition made by the Committee, however, nearly half-way through the reformation, the Kanab teacher and others who held similar views

111 Conference Reports, April 1914, p. 7.
112 Era, XIV (November, 1910), p. 22. Charles C. Richards, a counselor in the Ogden Stake Presidency, presented the same view at a tri-stake priesthood convention.
would have to shift from first gear to third gear, for they thought the teacher should be "a careful shepherd [who] watches over his flock." What shepherd, when a lamb nears a dangerous cliff, hurries off to locate the flock owner to announce the possible tragedy; or, what shepherd expends his time simply noting dangerous conditions?

Catalyzing a metamorphosis of barrometers into shepherds was a herculean task worthy of the best efforts of a committee of general authorities. They formed a nucleus for all priesthood activities. They were more concerned with implementing existing ideas instead of creating new ones. In their efforts, monthly visiting became a permanent Churchwide fixture, and to some extent the teachers became the nerves that connected the priesthood heads to the functioning muscles--the families. The affect was mental, like a few hours at the gym for the executive who had been spinning wheels for weeks. The reform, for that reason, had to be concerned with fundamentals. One fundamental practice which initially appeared to be a burden, was the involvement of the youth as teachers. A benefit which may not have been considered initially was the development of teachers for the future. If the Church was to have effective teachers in the future, they must be trained early. Even though ward teaching was not the total program for a new youth involvement, it was a major channel, for ward teaching was already well established and more importantly, it was operating.

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During the culminating decades of the nineteenth century the saints became so concerned with their political and economic survival that they had little time left to improve the kingdom, but the time was ripe for such an undertaking. 115 David O. McKay, probably the most able articulator of the reform described a ward teacher in 1916 as a good farmer who prepared his soil properly. He then gave an account of two farmers who planted identical seeds at the same time in adjacent fields. One harvested a bumper crop while the other reaped failure. Why? The first had plowed in the fall, disked in the spring making a mulch on the surface, and tilled to conserve the moisture of the winter. The latter plowed late in the spring, left the furrows unharrowed which caused the moisture to evaporate. After the seed had been planted, a five week drought followed and there was insufficient moisture to germinate the seed.

Then almost prophetically, Elder McKay said:

I can now picture in my mind twelve thousand divisions [ward teaching districts] that may be compared in a way to these two fields. In each one are found—not oats, not wheat, not grasses, not things that perish—but living being as eternal as the Father himself. Over each of these divisions in God's great garden have been placed overseers called teachers, and they are asked to nourish and to inspire God's children. I venture the thought that the great Gardener is looking over his fields and can see some that are thriving in righteous activity and others [who] are starving because of the drought of neglected duty, of the chilling atmosphere of vanity or the blight of intemperance. Why? Perhaps because the gardeners, the overseers, had not made necessary preparations or performed their duty well. 116

115 "The Church Teacher," Millennial Star, LI (April 15, 1889), pp. 229-230. "Doubtless if the duties of the teacher were more intelligently, thoroughly and effectively performed than they have been and are, the Church would be more vigorous and healthy than it is today."

For teaching to be effective, the teachers had to shift their personal teaching ambitions from mediocre to supernal. They could be taught how to plow, harrow, fertilize and harvest, but if they lacked the incentive to be decisively disciplined, teaching would remain ordinary.

If the full purpose of the reformation was to expand the vision of the Church membership toward teaching, it was only a partial success.\textsuperscript{117} If the full objective of the reformation was to bring teaching to the level of expectancy pictured by the Committee, then it too was only partially successful, for a 1937 study indicated that the changes were quantitative rather than qualitative.\textsuperscript{118} At least one Committee member reflected during the 1930's that the priesthood reform had failed to meet the hoped-for results.\textsuperscript{119}

For the most part, however, the majority of leaders felt a noticable upsurge and rejuvenation during the reformation. One stake president, Milton Welling addressed the April general conference in 1912. His stake was eighty-five percent effective. Even though a few other stakes exceeded his record, he gave strong testimony that his stake had received five previously unknown blessings from the increased activity. They included:

1. A new potency had been added to his stake by regular monthly visits.
2. The wards with large attendance at sacrament meetings correspondingly had high teaching percentages.


\textsuperscript{118}Israelson, p. 220. \textsuperscript{119}D.O. McKay in Israelson, pp. 217-218.
3. Great opportunities had come to his teachers as they visited friends in their own homes.
4. Every phase of Church activity had been 'benefited, augmented, and strengthened.'
5. Specific stake problems had been solved and pertinent information had been accumulated through the services of capable teachers.120

He concluded with the following testimony:

I have great pleasure in saying that this work in our stake of Zion has given us the satisfaction of feeling in our hearts that the Latter-day Saints are living today more nearly up to the principles of the Gospel of Christ than they were living yesterday.121

The annual First Presidency Christmas message of 1914 carried the same overtones.

Much improvement has been made in the continuous work of the ward teachers, and the saints generally are being visited in their homes and taught the things of the kingdom and their respective duties as required by the revelations of God.122

By the middle of the priesthood reform movement, teaching had been re-defined, and several leaders bore testimony that the saints were living better lives as a result of the new emphasis. The second half of the priesthood reform movement concentrated on local implementations.

The movement was significant as a culmination of local experiments where several concerned priesthood leaders tried to make the kingdom more functional. It was also significant as a step for future development. After ninety years of operation, teaching, although lacking in glamour, was viewed by most priesthood leaders as a vital necessity for proper Church government.

120Conference Reports, April 1912, pp. 74-75, Structured by author. Not a direct quote.
121Conference Reports, April 1912, pp. 74-75.
122Clark, Messages, IV, p. 322.
APPENDIX

A catechism was gotten up containing the following questions which were put to people by those who were appointed to catechise them. Have you committed murder by shedding innocent blood? or consenting thereto? Have you betrayed your brethren? or sisters in anything? Have you committed adultery? by having connection with any woman not your wife? or a man that was not your husband? Have you taken and made use of any property not your own? without the consent of the owner? have you cut hay where you had no right to be or turned your animals into another person's grain? or field without his knowledge or consent? Have you lied about or maliciously misrepresented any person or thing? have you borrowed anything that you have not returned or paid for? Have you born false witness against your neighbor? Have you taken the name of Diety in vain? Have you been intoxicated with strong drink? Have you found lost property and not returned it to the owner? or used all due diligence to do so? Have you branded an animal that you did not know to be your own? Have you taken another's horse or mule from the range and rode it without the owner's consent? Have you fulfilled your promises in paying? Have you taken water to irrigate when it belonged to another person at the time you used it? Do you pay your tithing promptly? Do you teach your family the Gospel of Salvation? Do you speak against your brethren or against any principle taught in the Bible, Book of Mormon or Doctrine and Covenants? Revelation given through Joseph Smith the
Prophet and the Presidency of the Church as now organized? Do you pray in your family night and morn? And attend to secret prayer? Do you wash your body and have your family do as often as health and cleanliness requires? And circumstances will permit? Do you labor 6 days and rest or go to the House of Worship on the Sabbath? Do you and your family go to Ward meetings? Do you preside over your household as a servant of God? Have you labored diligently and earned faithfully the wages paid you by your employer? Do you oppress the hireing in his wages? Have you taken up and converted to your own use any stray animals? Or in any manner appropriated one to your own benefit without accounting therefor to the proper authorities?

It was required of all those who had been guilty of any of those sins to confess to those who had been wronged and make restitution to their satisfaction.

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HOME TEACHING--ATTEMPTS BY THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS
TO ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM DURING
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

Home teaching was announced in 1830 by Joseph Smith as a revelation from God. The teacher's duty, according to the revelation was to watch over, be with and strengthen the Church members.

Even though other churches had house visitors, the Mormon practice developed into monthly visits and specified Church-wide teaching topics. After 1877 teaching became a vehicle for an increased youth activity. Current correlation concerns have stimulated a new home teaching interest and while many of the innovations appear new, they really originated during the past century.

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