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A History of Seminary Curriculum in The Church

of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints:

1912–2016

Griffin Sorenson

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Arts

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ABSTRACT

A History of Seminary Curriculum in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 1912–2016

Griffin Sorenson
Department of Religious Education, BYU
Master of Arts

The purpose of this work is to examine the history of curriculum in the seminary program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from 1912–2016. This work will define curriculum eras, explore the historical setting of each period, and outline the key figures and their educational philosophy. It will also detail the major seminary manuals produced in each period, as well as the overarching curricular philosophy behind each era.

Keywords: seminary, curriculum, seminary manuals

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Justification of Thesis

In 2015, more than 397,000 students enrolled in seminary classes across the world in the Church Educational System of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.¹ Just as the first seminary class in 1912, a group of about 70 students at Granite Seminary in Salt Lake City, the course curriculum was the Bible.² While the courses have always been rooted in scripture over the one hundred year history of LDS seminary, the curriculum has undergone many subtle and at times, significant shifts.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the development of curriculum in seminary of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from its commencement in 1912 until 2015. This work will explore the following research questions:

1. What were the major eras of curriculum in the seminary program?
2. What was the historical setting of these eras?
3. Who were the key figures of these eras and what was their education philosophy?
4. What major manuals were produced in each period?
5. What was the curricular philosophy behind the manuals and intended outcomes?

This work will help provide an important analysis of each major era of LDS seminary curriculum practice within its historical curricular context. Providing a wide-ranging view, this study will detail what seminary curriculum has looked like in the past, key figures of curriculum

¹ Mormon Newsroom, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/facts-and-statistics> : accessed November 12, 2015

² Casey Paul Griffiths, "A Century of Seminary," *Religious Educator*, Vol. 13, no. 3, 2012, 13-59.

reform and what type of factors influenced various curriculum periods. This work will help to establish a historical record of the past to help better inform present and future perspectives of LDS seminary curriculum.

Delimitations

This study will be an overview of each curriculum period in seminaries and will not seek to be an exhaustive historical work of overall history of LDS seminary; its scope is curriculum specific. This work will define each unique curriculum era, the historical setting of each period, significant individuals that influenced curriculum, their curricular philosophies, as well as the major works that were produced. This study will focus almost exclusively on seminary curriculum and will not undertake to introduce institute curriculum in any significant way other than to demonstrate important shifts.

Selection of Sources

The initial sources that will be used in this study will come from seminary curriculum manuals themselves. These manuals have been made available to me by Seminaries and Institute archives in the Church Office Building by Robert Ewer, Manager of S&I Curriculum Services and Thomas Valletta, Director of Curriculum. I have been given access to scan and copy materials dating back to 1912 and through the present day. These manuals will provide a look into the very contents of the curriculum, their emphasis, purpose, and intended outcomes.

Throughout the study many traditional sources will also be utilized, these will include foundational works dealing with the history of Church education. Milton L. Bennion's book *Mormonism and Education*³ and William E. Berrett's *A Miracle in Weekday Religious*

³ Milton Lynn Bennion, *Mormonism and Education*. Salt Lake City: Department of Education of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1939.

*Education*⁴ will be instrumental to see the purpose of Church education and its overarching vision. The text *By Study and also By Faith: One Hundred Years of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion*⁵ will also provide historical context and firsthand accounts from many of the individuals and practices that will be introduced.

This study will also include other reputable sources, including articles in Church publications, scholarly journals, and historical sources. It will also draw from a number of oral history interviews with first hand participants in historical events related to the topic.

An Introduction of Latter-day Saint Education Prior to 1912, the Rise to Seminaries

Curriculum in the seminary program is best understood in the context of Latter-day Saint teachings on education generally and with the focus on religious education. The curriculum that will be introduced is fixed in religious thought that has always guided the direction of Latter-day Saint educational pursuits. From the earliest days of the Church's development, scripture emerged that would light the way for all subsequent educational practices.

Consider the following passages from the Doctrine and Covenants: "...seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom, seek ye learning even by study and also by faith"(88:118), also "it is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance"(131:6). Furthermore it is stated that "the glory of God is intelligence" (93:36), and "whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come" (130:18, 19). The position has firmly taken root that "for members of the Church, education is

⁴ William E. Berrett, Salt Lake: Salt Lake Printing Center, 1988.

⁵ *By Study and By Faith: One Hundred Years of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2015.

not merely a good idea—it’s a commandment”.⁶ For Latter-day Saints, education is a doctrinal imperative and the highest kind of education is that which focuses on the things of God.

Education, both secular and religious, has been emphasized in the Church from its earliest days. This work will provide a historical context beginning with the rise of seminaries starting in the transitional years leading up to the turn of the 20th century.⁷ It is in this critical juncture that we find the seeds of the seminary program planted.

The decades just preceding the 20th century were marked by great tumult and upheaval for Latter-day Saints living in the Intermountain West. The Church was engulfed in a protracted struggle with the Federal government centering on the practice plural marriage. The social and cultural dynamic that the Saints had cultivated since their migration to the West was quickly being challenged and broken up by powerful outside forces.

Thomas Alexander, a scholar writing on this important era, captured the significance of the transitional period prior to the 20th century as follows:

Conditions during the period of the 1890s constituted for the Latter-day Saints a challenge to the paradigm under which they had operated at least since 1847. The previous paradigm necessitated the integration of religion, politics, society, and the economy into a single, non-pluralistic community. This was simply unacceptable to Victorian America, so in the 1890s the Mormons began groping for a new paradigm that would save essential characteristics of their religious tradition, provide sufficient political to preserve the interests of the church, and allow them to live in peace with other Americans.⁸

Many aspects of daily life were being forced into a state of modification for Latter-day Saints. The Church’s educational system would not find immunity in this period of adjustment. Scholar Casey Paul Griffiths described the challenge of facing educational changes as follows:

⁶Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Two Principles for Any Economy”, *Ensign*, November, 2009.

⁷ For an introduction to the earliest Latter-day Saint educational pursuits the reader should be directed to “*By Study and By Faith: One Hundred Years of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion*” pages 1-10.

⁸ Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930*, (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1986), 14.

As the isolation of intermountain region began to come to an end, the Church found itself struggling to adapt to the American system of tax-supported, public education. Many began asking, would the Church continue to maintain its own schools, or dispose of them in favor of the new public schools? Church schools had the advantage of allowing religion to be taught in the classroom. In public schools this would be forbidden. In LDS belief, religion is a crucial part of everyday life, and therefore something that should be taught on a weekday basis. Could the Church maintain the successful religious education of its youth without maintaining its schools? At the same time, maintaining the education of its youth placed a crushing financial burden on the Church. Could the Church afford to retain its schools? Answers did not come easily. The Church's response to this situation would be dealt with over the ensuing decades, beginning in 1890.⁹

The path towards the establishment of seminary would be an incremental one. While change would occur precipitously it would not occur without some steps along the way.

Church Academies

Direct action was taken against the Church's educational practices effectively restricting the framework in which Saints could operate. "The Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1887 abolished the office of territorial superintendent of districts schools and replaced it with an appointed commissioner empowered to 'prohibit the use in any district school of any book of a sectarian character or otherwise unsuitable'."¹⁰ The divorce of district schools and sectarian education was to be complete.

No longer with the ability to combine district schools and Latter-day Saint teachings, the First Presidency made the following statement:

We feel that the time has arrived when the proper education of our children should be taken in hand by us as a people. Religious training is practically excluded from District schools. The perusal of books that we value as divine records is forbidden... The desire is universally expressed by all thinking people in the Church that we should have schools where the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the Book of the Doctrine and Covenants can be used as text books, and where the principles of our religion may form part of the teaching of the schools.¹¹

⁹ Casey Paul Griffiths, *Joseph F. Merrill: Latter-day Saint Commissioner of education, 1928-1933*, (Master's Thesis, Brigham Young University, 2007).

¹⁰ *By Study and By Faith*, 19.

¹¹ *By Study and By Faith*, 19

The leading brethren of the Church encouraged the formation of Church sponsored academies, schools where they were free to teach both secular and religious topics openly. Initially the academy system appeared to provide a remedy for the educational dilemma the Church was facing. The idea was received with much support, it has been estimated that “between 1860 and 1907 the Latter –day Saints established 37 academies, most of which were founded in the three-year period from 1888 to 1891.”¹²

While the academy system expanded quickly, so did its challenges. Utah families found that the Church sponsored academies burdened them financially.

Funding was the major obstacle to the growth of stake academies, which always seemed on the verge of closing down. Adding to the challenges facing Utah academies, the Utah State Legislature passed the Free School Act on February 18, 1890. This meant that public schools would be supported by tax revenue. Latter–day Saints who sent their children to Church academies paid tuition and other costs while at the same time being taxed to support public education. Church officials knew that the “cost of supporting two systems would be high but they felt that if prayers and religion were excluded from the schools it would breed infidelity in the children.”¹³

The Rise of Public Schools

With the Free School Act of 1890 the stage was set for public schools to take root in Utah, this in spite of concerns or objections from the leading councils of the Church. The emergence of public schools eventually became inevitable. Casey Paul Griffiths described the scene as follows:

Public schools possessed several advantages over Church schools. First, they had more money for equipment and teachers. Secondly, the state would provide books, transportation, and tuition. Third, many parents were averse to sending their children away to a Church school, especially as the number of nearby public schools rapidly multiplied. At the same time, the Church could not afford to establish new academies to meet the demands of its membership. Fueled by these factors, public school enrollment increased rapidly. By 1910 it had surpassed the enrollment of the academies.¹⁴

¹² *By Study and By Faith*, 21

¹³ *By Study and By Faith*, 1-10.

¹⁴ Griffiths, *Joseph F. Merrill*, 8.

The benefits of public schools would cause a widespread Church academy system to become obsolete. However, Church leaders were still unwilling to concede the religious education of their youth. Questions remained as to how to adapt to the rise of public education while still providing essential religious education.

Seminaries

As the Church continued to look for answers on how to provide religious education for high school aged youth, the solution emerged through a somewhat unanticipated source.

In 1911 Joseph F. Merrill, who would eventually serve as the Church Commissioner of Education from 1928 to 1933, was called as second counselor in the Granite Utah Stake presidency. One of his responsibilities in his new ecclesiastical post was to be a member of the stake board of education.

Prior to his call, Brother Merrill observed an important experience in his own home that would eventually lead to the formation of the Seminary program. It has been observed that:

Brother Merrill received inspiration on how to magnify his calling by reflecting on his children's experiences in the evenings at home with their family, during which his wife, Annie Laura Hyde Merrill, entertained and instructed them by telling "Bible and Book of Mormon stories, one after the other without end. Brother Merrill asked his wife where she had learned all of these stories, and she explained that she had learned them in James E. Talmage's theology class at the Salt Lake Academy. Pondering his wife's inspiring educational experiences and the experiences his children were having learning from the scriptures, Brother Merrill concluded that all Latter-day Saint youth should have these opportunities. Thus began "the idea of supplementing public high school with religious education."¹⁵

Merrill developed this vision into the idea of a "seminary that would offer courses in the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, and Church history and Doctrine."¹⁶

With the backing of Granite Stake president Frank Taylor and Granite School District

¹⁵ *By Study and By Faith*, 34-35.

¹⁶ *By Study and By Faith*, 34-35.

superintendent B.W. Ashton, the vision became reality. Money was procured through the stake to erect a seminary building across the street from Granite High School and by 1912, 70 students and an eager teacher would be the firsts to participate in an LDS seminary program.

There would be many advantages to the seminary system compared to that of the previous academy model. The benefits of the seminary program have been described as follows:

Though initiated as an experiment, it soon found widespread acceptance and spread throughout the Church. Released time education possessed several advantages that the academies lacked. First, it took place during the school day, eliminating any need for students to take extra time out of their schedule for weekday religious training. Second, the Church built seminary buildings close to high schools, allowing students to use transportation system provided by the state. Third, teachers at seminaries were free to focus solely on preparing lessons in religion, without having to prepare lessons in multiple subjects...Most important, seminaries could be operated at a substantially lower cost than the academies...Simply put, it cost eight times as much to provide for an academy student as it did to provide for one seminary student.¹⁷

Seminaries would proceed to resolve many educational conundrums the Church was facing in the shifting landscape of the turn of the 20th century Intermountain West. Not only did the program solve an immediate problem in 1912, it would go on to be adapted to a number of different circumstances and become an integral program of the Church worldwide.

Conclusions and Summary

Latter-day Saints from the beginning of the Restoration until today, have placed a great deal of resources and energy in teaching it people, particularly the young people of the Church. The significant emphasis on education is due in large part to unique scripture and doctrinal teachings of the faith. While the importance extends to secular education, this learning emphasis is driven by the desire to come to understand the things of God with greater depth and power. The curriculum in Seminaries must be understood within this context. Seeking to educate the youth of the Church is a spiritual mandate rooted in core beliefs.

¹⁷ Griffiths, *Joseph F. Merrill*, 8.

As has been introduced, the rise of the seminary program emerges from a challenging period of pronounced transformation within the Church and its educational practices specifically. Latter-day Saints were forced to abandon their previously held practice of combining secular and religious education in schools supported by public funds. While religious education could not continue in public schools, the Church was unwilling to concede the loss of religious education of its youth.

Church academies were established throughout the Intermountain West to meet the spiritual and secular educational needs of Saints. While the academies were successful in their mission to educate, they proved to be a great expense for the Church. The inefficiency of the academy system became apparent as families were taxed for a public education system and then paid for the academies through fees and Church donations. The burden became too much for both families and the Church as a whole.

As Church academies diminished and more and more Latter-day Saints sent their young people to public schools a mechanism was still needed to provide religious education. In 1912, the Seminary program was born in the Granite stake in Salt Lake City, Utah. Seminary enabled Latter-day Saint families to take advantage of the convenient and cost effective public school system while not having to concede the religious education of their youth. Seminary provided the religious education which the Church was desirous that every Latter-day Saint youth obtain and did so in a cost effective, sustainable way.

As the history of seminary curriculum will be explored in this work, it must be recognized that the mission of the seminary program has exclusively been in the realm of religious education. It is within this framework that one is able to understand curricular philosophies, intended outcomes and the manuals produced.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ERA OF EMERGENCE: 1912-1934

The curriculum in the early years of seminary can be defined much like the program as a whole, a time of new vision, creation, and further mainstream Americanization. A shifting national landscape in educational reforms would further define the Latter-day Saints experience just as it influenced the rest of the country. From 1912-1934 seminary curriculum would evolve not in an Intermountain West ecclesiastic vacuum, but rather through the increasingly mainstream Americanizing of the Latter-day Saints.

Historical Setting

A Shifting Landscape Nationwide

In order to understand the historical setting affecting seminary curriculum, it is first necessary to briefly view the broader landscape in the United States of the shifting decades at the turn of the 20th Century. It has been stated that “the 1910s were a period of social and political transformation within the country. While the latter-half of the decade was defined by war, the first half of the decade had been a time of social and moral change.”¹⁸ It is within this context that the Latter-day Saint seminary program emerged.

As the United States experienced social and moral transformations, the Intermountain West closely reflected national trends. Many of the changes in this time period grew from the rise of an immigrant population and correspondingly the increase of urban centers. With the steady increase of industry in the United States and particularly mining practices in Utah,

¹⁸ Brett David Dowdle, *A New Policy in Church School Work: The Founding of the LDS Supplementary Religious Education Movement, 1890-1930* (Master's Thesis, Brigham Young University, 2011), 108.

immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe poured into the country and state, typically flocking to urban centers.

It has been observed that “the rapid influx of immigrants contributed to the growing urbanization of the United States. Because of the longstanding American fear of urban centers, the country’s urban growth was blamed by many for what was viewed as the country’s pervasive degradation and moral decline.”¹⁹ This moral decline was very much on the minds of educational reformers both in and outside of the Church.

The Saint’s Intermountain kingdom was far from immune from the issues that influenced the perceived degradation. It has been written that,

By 1910, Salt Lake City had grown into a typical American city, complete with all the panoply of urban problems...Along with urbanization, Utah experienced an influx of immigrants, who composed as much as 69 percent of Salt Lake City’s population during this period. While many of these immigrants were Mormons of northern and western European descent, by 1890 Utah had begun to receive larger numbers of non-Mormon immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. The influx of immigrants brought a number of distinct changes to Utah including new languages, religions, ideas, and practices.²⁰

Scholar Richard Kimball further stated that “the impacts of urbanization, immigration, and industrialization shaped the Mormon capital in the decades after 1890 as much as they did other Progressive cities.”²¹ Thus, Latter-day Saints found themselves, very much in line with national trends.

A primary response to the disturbing trends of urbanizations and the resulting moral decline concentrated on education reforms. The “progressive education movement” was

¹⁹ Dowdle, *A New Policy*, 109. See also, Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 530-32; Carol Sheriff, *The Artificial River: The Erie Canal and the Paradox of Progress, 1817-1862* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), 36-44.

²⁰Dowdle, *A New Policy*, 114

²¹ Richard Ian Kimball, *Sports in Zion: Mormon Recreation, 1890-1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 5-6.

born during this period with John Dewey directing a significant shift in the public education sector. Dewey and his followers “attacked the rigid formalism of the traditional schools by emphasizing child-centered pedagogy and curricular experimentation. As a result of these efforts the reach and influence of the public schools was dramatically extended throughout the country, forming the foundations of the modern American school system.”²² Dewey and the progressive education movement would wield great influence in this period and as will be shown, that influence would extend to Latter-day Saint educators.

Seminary’s Era of Emergence: 1912-1933

By the fall of 1912 Joseph F. Merrill’s vision of a weekday, release time seminary class had been implemented and demonstrated promise. While the expansion of release time seminary was still years away, this single stake program was well-designed. It is important to note that Merrill’s early efforts were concentrated entirely within the confines of his stewardship as a member of the Granite stake presidency and the stake’s recently constructed seminary building adjacent to Granite high school. In other words, this was not an immediate Church wide program, in fact the First Presidency referred to it initially as a “stake enterprise”.²³ From 1912 to 1915 seminary was very much an isolated program operating in a single stake.

It would not take long for the experimental program to expand beyond its original 70 students. Word spread of the success in the Granite program and others also sought to provide religious teaching through the seminary model. It has been observed that,

In January of 1916 the Utah State Board of Education officially approved high school credit for Old and New Testament studies in the Seminaries. At the beginning of the 1916 academic year, seminaries had been established in Salt Lake City, Brigham City, and Mount Pleasant, Utah and the Church Board of Education had received more requests for seminaries. During the 1918-19 school

²² Dowdle, *A New Policy*, 110-111.

²³ *By Study and By Faith*, 3.

year, 13 seminaries with a combined enrollment of 1,528 students were in operation.²⁴

The organization of seminaries also shifted from an autonomous Granite stake directed initiative to operating under the direction of Horace H. Cummings, Superintendent of Church Schools. As seminaries continued to materialize and have success throughout the Intermountain West, a series of factors arose in 1919 that would further impact the growth of the new institution.

The first major step occurred when Adam S. Bennion replaced Horace H. Cummings as Superintendent of Church Schools working under the direction of Church Commissioner of Education David O. McKay. Under Bennion's leadership from 1919 to 1928 seminary would be solidified as the prominent program for providing religious instruction to Latter-day Saint youth.²⁵

The most significant reason for Bennion's shift to seminary was fiscal feasibility. In 1919 seminaries were still very much in competition for Church educational funds with the academy system, this he argued was unproductive. It has been stated that "Bennion made a sweeping proposal that the Church no longer compete with public schools in secondary education. He pointed out that only 8 percent of all Mormon high school students were attending Church schools and academies and that the cost of operating the academies was an inefficient utilization of Church funds."²⁶

This was a differing vision of Church education than from that which his predecessor held. Horace H. Cummings, Superintendent prior to Bennion from 1905 to 1919 held firm to

²⁴ *By Study and Also by Faith*, 40.

²⁵ Berrett, *A Miracle*, 34.

²⁶ *By Study and Also by Faith*, 43.

the academy model. Cummings believed that religious and secular subjects were best taught together and thus in Church schools. He stated that,

I love to think that all principles of education are both religious and secular. Not one of them could be spared from society or from the Church. Either would suffer irreparable loss if deprived of training in language, mathematics, or science, as it would without truthfulness, charity or virtue. The multiplication table is as essential to salvation as is faith or baptism. As well might we think of an unreformed thief in the kingdom of heaven as an unformed ignoramus. The so-called religious cannot say to the so-called secular “we have no need of thee.”²⁷

Cummings was not alone in his advocacy for the academy system. Commissioner David O. McKay was also hesitant to abandon the academies and turn completely to seminary. Elder McKay stated that,

I think the intimation that we ought to abandon our present Church Schools and go into the seminary business exclusively is not only premature but dangerous. The seminary has not been tested yet but the Church schools have, and if we go back to the old Catholic Church you will find Church schools have been tested for hundreds of years and that the church still holds to them....Let us hold our seminaries but not do away with our Church schools.²⁸

Despite the strong advocacy for the academy system and some reluctance to abandon it, the decision was significantly influenced by dollars and cents. In 1926 Bennion submitted a report to the Church Board of Education showing that the 1925 operating cost per capita in a Church school was \$204.97, contrastingly seminaries only required \$23.73 per capita. Bennion recommended to “withdraw from the field of academic instruction altogether and center our educational efforts in a promotion of a strictly religious education.”²⁹ The First Presidency made up of President Heber J. Grant and his counselors, Anthony W. Ivins and Charles W. Nibley,

²⁷ Kenneth G. Bell, *Adam S. Bennion: LDS Superintendent of Education, 1919-1928*, (Master’s Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1969), 30.

²⁸ Berrett, *A Miracle*, 38.

²⁹ Bell, *Adam S. Bennion*, 82, 85. See also, *By Study and Also By Faith*, p.46-47.

along with the rest of the Church Board of Education, ultimately concurred with Bennion and his proposal.³⁰

By the end of Bennion's tenure he had successfully transformed an upstart program into the principal entity to educate Latter-day Saint youth. Joseph F. Merrill, would succeed Bennion in 1928 becoming "Commissioner of Education" rather than Bennion's title "Superintendent of Church Schools."³¹ Seminary would encounter legal challenges during Merrill's time as commissioner that would require significant shifts in how seminary interacted with public schools and the school systems acceptance of seminary curriculum for credit in their institutions.

Key Figures and Education Philosophy

In the earliest days of the seminary program multiple figures played significant roles in seminary curriculum. While many individuals contributed in this era of emergence, the key figures here will be limited to those who played the most impactful role in curriculum development. These figures range from administrators Adam S. Bennion and Joseph F. Merrill to the first teachers and curriculum developers, Thomas Yates, and Guy C. Wilson.

The educational philosophy of these individuals will be demonstrated by their diverse, yet similar educational experiences and philosophies.

Joseph F. Merrill

With his role in the establishment of the first seminary program Joseph F. Merrill occupies a particularly central place as a key figure in early seminary. It would be a mistake however, to represent Merrill simply as the founder of the first seminary program. It has been observed more broadly that "in a sense Merrill embodied the changes that characterized

³⁰ Bell, *Adam S. Bennion*, 82-91. See also, *By Study and Also By Faith*, p.46-47.

³¹ *By Study and Also by Faith*, 51.

Mormonism during these years.”³² Indeed, Merrill’s role and influence would extend far beyond the establishment of Granite seminary.

Joseph F. Merrill was born in 1868 to LDS apostle, Marriner W. Merrill and Maria K. Merrill. Joseph spent much of his youth performing manual labor working for his father in railroad camps. Even within the confines of frontier hard work, education was high priority for the Merrill family. It has been stated by scholar Casey P. Griffiths that,

In spite of frontier conditions, great care was taken by Merrill’s father to promote a love of education in his sons and daughters. An active participant in plural marriage, Marriner Merrill held no illusions about how much wealth he could leave his children after it was divided among thirty-nine descendants. Instead of physical wealth, he believed his legacy to his children would be education and a love of learning.³³

Joseph and his siblings were afforded the opportunity to attend public school during the winter months and for a time, Marriner provided his children with a private teacher to instruct his family from 1885 to 1887.³⁴ Joseph’s education during these formative years proved to be unique. It has been stated that “unlike most prominent LDS leaders of his generation, Joseph never attended a Church-owned school and therefore he may have felt less of an emotional attachment to them.”³⁵

Merrill studied at the University of Utah and “upon graduation...went east to further his education and eventually attended four prestigious schools: the University of Michigan, the University of Chicago, Cornell University, and Johns Hopkins University. Merrill’s education culminated when he became one of the first individuals from Utah to receive a doctorate, graduating from Johns Hopkins in 1899.”³⁶

³² Dowdle, *A New Policy*, 121.

³³ Griffiths, *Joseph F. Merrill*, 21.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 22.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 22.

³⁶ Dowdle, *A New Policy*, 122.

The education philosophy of Joseph F. Merrill was greatly influenced by his notable academic background. He had experienced a diverse secular education and was a proponent of such tutoring. Furthermore, he held no reservations when it came to bridging the gap between the religious and the secular spheres. He was familiar and comfortable with both worlds even when at times the dichotomy felt overwhelming.

During his time at the University of Utah he commented that “we at the University felt that we were between, the devil and the deep blue sea. The Gentiles, regarded [the University] as a Mormon institution, while the Mormons, (some of them) looked upon our school as an infidel factory.”³⁷ This of course was overcome by Merrill, it has been observed that during his time there “he fell in love with the academic environment” and that “he remained a staunch supporter of the University of Utah for the rest of his life.”³⁸

The fusion of secular learning and religious education comes into focus with Merrill in a couple of crucial junctures throughout his years of influence on seminary’s educational philosophy. The first taking place with the inception of seminary in 1912.

A distinguishing feature of the Merrill’s first released-time seminary class was the ability to earn high school credit in two out the three years of attendance. One scholar has argued the importance of this action stating, “both the incentive for the students and the academic legitimacy for the state were crucial to the initial success of seminary.” Even though “in later years the Church questioned whether credit had been worth the price of non-sectarian instruction, Merrill was adamant about its importance to the seminary program.”³⁹ Merrill’s

³⁷ Joseph F. Merrill, “The Lord Overrules,” *The Improvement Era*, July 1934, 413. See also, Dowdle, *A New Policy*, 122.

³⁸ Griffiths, *Joseph F. Merrill*, 24.

³⁹ Dowdle, *A New Policy*, 130.

initiative to receive high school credit in seminary would significantly influence seminary curriculum in Old and New Testament courses for decades.

A second example occurred during Merrill's time as Commissioner. In an effort to strengthen seminary teacher's credentials, "Commissioner Merrill encouraged seminary teachers to earn higher degrees at some of the nation's finest universities. He invited scholars with worldwide reputations in biblical studies to instruct the Church's religion teachers for six weeks in successive summers."⁴⁰ The University of Chicago Divinity School became a prominent option for many teachers to earn advanced degrees and a modernist approach to biblical studies took root in some teachers. This was influenced in large part because of the question of legality that seminary faced in 1930. One key element of the attack on seminary was that to receive high school credit, seminary teachers must have proper accreditation and credentials.

At this juncture Merrill would also be forced to reexamine seminary curriculum and assure that it met the proper non-sectarian standards required by the state board of education. This significant issue will be further addressed as the curriculum philosophy of this era is examined.

In summary, Merrill is a distinct figure in this era primarily due to his educational background. He was not tied to Church educational institutions and had greatly benefitted from his personal secular education. He was uniquely positioned to merge a secular education with religious instruction. His educational background and views on religious education embodies the curriculum philosophy in seminary during this transformative era from 1912-1933.

⁴⁰ *By Study and By Faith*, 56.

Adam S. Bennion

With Merrill paving the way with the first seminary program, it was Adam S. Bennion who would lead the transformation of Church education practices in this era. Taking Merrill's development, Bennion elevated seminary into the primary mechanism for Latter-day Saint religious education.

Adam S. Bennion was born in Taylorsville, Utah in 1886 to a pioneer family that stressed the importance of education. Bennion spent his youth in public schools in Salt Lake County, and subsequently attended the University of Utah, graduating in 1908. Upon graduation from the University of Utah Bennion took a job teaching English at LDS University in Salt Lake City, his first experience with a Church school.⁴¹ His time at LDS University would be short lived, just three years, as he left to pursue a master's degree from Columbia University in New York City.⁴²

As Bennion returned to Utah following his education at Columbia he took a job teaching at Granite High School in 1912. Bennion arrived in the same year and at the same school that Joseph F. Merrill's seminary program would be implemented. Bennion's classroom at Granite High was just a stone's throw from the historic birth of LDS seminary. Bennion taught for one year at Granite before being made principal.

Bennion would continue at Granite High until 1917 when he took a teaching job at the University of Utah. His time at the University was successful, the school newspaper commented that "students loved his classes as they were provocative, challenging, reasonable, and meaningful" one scholar commented that these elements were "mainstays in his philosophy of

⁴¹ While called LDS University, this institution was essentially a high school. It was originally called the Salt Lake Academy, see *By Study and By Faith*, 85 footnote 28. At times it has also been referenced as LDS High, see Bell, *Adam S. Bennion*, 34-46.

⁴² Bell, *Adam S. Bennion*, 38.

education”.⁴³ While impactful, Bennion’s time at the University of Utah would be short. In 1919 Church President Heber J. Grant asked Bennion to accept the position of Superintendent of Church Education, a position previously held by Horace H. Cummings. Cummings commented on Bennion as his replacement stating that “he is a man of clean intellect, sound judgement, not excitable and seems to be a very wise choice.”⁴⁴

Bennion proved to be the right fit at the right time for his position as Superintendent. The Church was in a transformational era dealing with Church academies rising costs and the unrelenting vision of Church provided religious education. Bennion made difficult decisions to close most Church schools and shift religious instruction to the seminary program.

Like Merrill, Bennion was an important figure who was greatly influenced by his educational background. He had no real affiliation or experience with Church schools other than his brief stint as a teacher at LDS University, but what he did possess was positive experiences in the secular learning environment. Much of Bennion’s impact in this era directly reflects his personal experiences, like Merrill, Bennion was not afraid of the secular educational world and fully embraced it. The emergence of the Church wide seminary program grew in fertile soil tended by Bennion. Curriculum in this program would also be greatly influenced by the likes of Bennion.

Thomas J. Yates

Thomas J. Yates holds the distinction as the first seminary teacher.⁴⁵ Yates was a very important figure in the establishment of the first seminary program and its curriculum.

⁴³ Bell, *Adam S. Bennion*, 34-46.

⁴⁴ Bell, *Adam S. Bennion*, 34-46.

⁴⁵ For a concise history of Thomas J. Yates connection to LDS Seminary see Casey Paul Griffiths, “The First Seminary Teacher,” *The Religious Educator*, vol. 9, no. 3 (2008), 122, rsc.byu.edu.

Yates was born in 1870 in rural Scipio, Utah to a faithful LDS family. At sixteen years old Yates attended Brigham Young Academy (latter Brigham Young University) and excelled in his academic pursuits. At the Academy he studied under the prominent LDS educators of the day such as Karl G. Maeser, Benjamin Cluff Jr and James E. Talmage. Yates latter commented on Maeser’s influence on his early of development saying that “Dr. Maeser was one of the greatest spiritual teachers I have ever met. He left a spiritual imprint in most all the students that came under his influence.”⁴⁶

Upon graduating from the Academy Yates took a position as principal of a school in Deseret, Utah. The following year he was assigned as assistant superintendent for Millard County. Yates chose to further his education and chose Cornell University to do so. But Cornell what have to wait as Yates received a mission call in 1895. Upon returning from his mission to the Southern States, Yates excelled at Cornell graduating in 1902 in mechanical and electrical engineering.⁴⁷

Upon his Cornell experience, Yates returned to Utah and worked for various power companies. As a member of the Granite stake high council Yates found himself in the heart of seminary innovation. As Joseph F. Merrill, counselor in the stake presidency, moved forward with seminary, he turned to Yates to teach the first year. Yates only taught one year but is contribution should be dully noted.⁴⁸

Guy C. Wilson

As Thomas Yates holds the distinction as the first seminary teacher, it is Guy Wilson who holds the honor of the first full time seminary teacher. Wilson and Yates were classmates at

⁴⁶ Thomas J. Yates, *Autobiography and Biography of Thomas J. Yates*, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, 14-15.

⁴⁷ Griffiths, *The First Seminary Teacher*, 122.

⁴⁸ *By Study and By Faith*, 39.

Brigham Young Academy and it was Yates that recommended Wilson as his replacement.

President Frank Taylor of the Granite stake agreed with Yates assessment and recommended his appointment to Horace Cummings.⁴⁹

It has been observed that “Cummings’ decision to send Wilson to the Granite seminary was a significant expression of confidence in the future possibilities of the program.”⁵⁰ This was in large part because Wilson was regarded as one of the finest educators in the Church. In 1913 John Widtsoe called Wilson “the most promising man in educational lines in the Church School system”.⁵¹

Wilson has been described as a “highly trained and eminently successful teacher”.⁵² His educational background was meaningfully influenced by the most significant figures of his era, both in and outside of the Church. Wilson studied and later taught under the prominent Karl G. Maeser at Brigham Young Academy. Later, Wilson studied at Columbia University under the direction of John Dewey, arguably the most prominent figure in education in the United States during this era.⁵³ This training lead Wilson to be highly regarded and an effective educator in the seminary program for decades. Like the men discussed before him, Wilson was very much on the cutting edge of education innovation during this shifting period.

Summary of Key Figures

While the influential figures of this era are diverse and unique in many ways, a common thread binds them together. They were men who sought education in the secular world at some

⁴⁹ Dowdle, *A New Policy*, 141

⁵⁰ Dowdle, *A New Policy*, 141.

⁵¹ Guy C. Wilson to Anna Lowrie Ivins Wilson, 8 March 1913, folder 2, Guy Carlton Wilson Correspondence 1912-1913, CHL.

⁵² Dowdle, *A New Policy*, 139.

⁵³ Yates, *Autobiography and Biography*, 81.

of the finest institutions in the country and were greatly influenced by their experiences in the academic world.

These were men who valued secular learning and saw it as a vehicle to enhance faith, rather than a distraction from it. These men were innovators, forging ahead and embracing new teaching philosophies and curriculum practices. As will be shown, these prominent figures in many ways embodied the curriculum practices of the era of seminary's emergence.

Manuals Produced

In 1912 as the upstart program took shape, Joseph F. Merrill worked with Thomas Yates to design curriculum which "included lessons in Old Testament, New Testament, and the Book of Mormon."⁵⁴ While there is much description pertaining to overall curricular philosophy in these early years as will be discussed in the next section, there was essentially no manual that was utilized. It has been stated that Yates' "only textbooks were the scriptures."⁵⁵

As seminary transitioned from Yates to Guy Wilson after just one year, Wilson undertook the further development of curriculum. Wilson's wife observed that the development of curriculum that satisfied both the local school board and ecclesiastical authorities "was a task that challenged the patience, tact, diplomacy, wisdom, foresight, intelligence and perseverance of those who had the vision...to dedicate themselves to [that] high purpose, and Guy C. Wilson was afire with zeal and enthusiasm for that purpose."⁵⁶ Unfortunately Wilson's efforts were not passed on or preserved for future teachers.

Wilson's successor John M. Whitaker who took over in 1915, noted that "the only thing I found was the daily report or record of students, and of the course...there was nothing

⁵⁴ Magleby, "Granite Seminary 1912," 9.

⁵⁵ Berrett, *A Miracle*, 30.

⁵⁶ Agnes Wilson, *Autobiography* 1962, CHL.

whatever.”⁵⁷ Whitaker mentioned that he did find “a little pocket handbook” discussing the topics of “Religion in General ...Mormonism... Word of Wisdom... Tithing ...Authority ...Sabbath Observance...Church work...[and] prayer,” but due to the lack of details he was forced to “start without the least scratch, or outline.”⁵⁸

Even as Adam S. Bennion unified much of what was being taught in seminary during his tenure as Superintendent from 1919 to 1928, none of the actual materials have been preserved. It has been noted that “Bennion required all religion instructors to gather in the summer for group seminars. Working together, the teachers standardized courses and agreed upon textbooks.”⁵⁹ It has also been observed that “Bennion improved curriculum by having committees prepare new student outlines. These committees were composed of experienced teachers who had used the older outlines and were to use the new ones.”⁶⁰ Again, unfortunately, none of the outlines could be located.⁶¹

The first concrete texts in seminary curriculum appear during the Joseph F. Merrill administration in the early 1930's. Merrill called for the rewriting of seminary courses with new accompanying texts in 1930. Guy C. Wilson was put in charge of the endeavor with Frank K. Seegmiller, Ezra C Dalby, and John Henry Evans playing significant roles.⁶² Dalby “was appointed to rewrite the Old Testament course, and in late 1930 the course *The Land and Leaders of Israel* came from the press.⁶³ Also in 1930 *The Message of the New Testament* by

⁵⁷ John M. Whitaker, Diary, April 1915, Special Collections, HBLL

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ By Study and also By Faith, p.44

⁶⁰ Berrett, *A Miracle*, 39.

⁶¹ These outlines could not be found in CES archives at the Church Office Building or in the Church History Library.

⁶² Berrett, *A Miracle*, 44.

⁶³ Berrett, *A Miracle*, 44, 45.

James R. Smith was commissioned. It was “hastily done” and “not well received by the teachers”.⁶⁴

Due to the lack of success of *The Message of the New Testament*, in 1932 O.C. Tanner was asked to prepare a new New Testament text. In 1932 it originally appeared as *New Testament Studies* but was later titled *The New Testament Speaks*.⁶⁵ John Henry Evans was appointed to produce a text focusing on the mission of the Church titled *The Heart of Mormonism*, a successful text used through the 1930’s.⁶⁶

While the early decades of seminary have no existing curriculum source materials, the 1930’s are full of texts that are demonstrative of the era. It must be noted here that the explosion of curriculum texts in the 1930’s was in direct correspondence to the issues of the day that necessitated such a revamping, the reasons of such will be discussed in the following section.

Curricular Philosophy

While no curriculum remains from the earliest seminary years, much can be surmised from statements regarding curriculum and through the philosophies of those who most influenced it.

As Merrill and Yates established the blueprint for the initial seminary curriculum an overarching goal was to “teach girls to be ladies and boys to be gentlemen,” this emphasis was valued “above the teaching of scripture.”⁶⁷ A most significant application of this philosophy can be seen in the fact that seminary students were receiving high school credit for their courses in the Old and New Testaments.

⁶⁴ Berrett, *A Miracle*, 45.

⁶⁵ Berrett, *A Miracle*, 48.

⁶⁶ *By Study and Also by Faith*, 60.

⁶⁷ Magleby, *Granite Seminary 1912*, 9; Yates, *Autobiography and Biography*, 80. Also see Dowdle, *A New Policy*, 135.

Granite school officials instructed that the credit-receiving seminary classes “should be devoid of the teaching of pronounced sectarian dogmas.” Further, Merrill instructed that the bible “was to be studied in senior seminary for its historical, moral, and spiritual values rather than for its support of any special sectarian doctrines.”⁶⁸ This direction could very well be the single most important indicator of the curricular philosophy of the earliest era of seminary curriculum. The teaching of the bible was undertaken in a way that primarily focused on “historical, moral, and spiritual values” as opposed to solidifying Latter-day Saint doctrines in the minds of the youth.

This philosophy was in lockstep with the broader educational movement in the United States. Scholar Brett Dowdle connected Merrill and Yates’ curricular philosophy with that of John Dewey when he stated that their “aims mirrored the goals of the larger national movements of the era to shape and control the interests and activities of American youth. The aims and purposes of the seminary thus dovetailed both Mormon and Progressive American ideals. While the development of faith and the Mormonization of Latter-day Saint youth remained at the core of the Church’s supplementary religious education program, the seminary program was organized with the more universal goal of developing ideal Americans.”⁶⁹

Adam S. Bennion would continue forward with the Merrill and Yates’ curricular vision. As the program grew under Bennion, he worried that “under our present system, our seminary work is too theoretical. Indeed it is practically all instruction and no action—no application.”⁷⁰ In 1921 Bennion further sought to clarify the program’s objective when he stated that “the seminary aims not only to teach the facts of scripture but endeavors to stimulate students to form habits of

⁶⁸ History of South [High School] L.D.S. Seminary, 1931-1937, 11, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

⁶⁹ Dowdle, *A New Policy*, 135.

⁷⁰ Bell, *Adam S. Bennion*, 53.

religious life and service that make for character.”⁷¹ Again it must be noted that any discussion on Latter-day Saint doctrines or unique teachings are absent, while the focus on “habits of a religious life and service” in order to create “character” appear as the central purpose.

The progressive nature of the seminary program can also be seen through viewpoint of Guy C. Wilson the first fulltime seminary teacher who played a significant role in curriculum development throughout the early era of seminary. Referring to his progressive educational background, it has been stated of him that,

As a devoted student of John Dewey, Wilson was far from antagonistic toward many aspects of modernist thought and the early twentieth-century educational reforms. He consistently taught that Mormonism did not oppose, but in fact could be harmonized with, modern scientific knowledge even if it could not be reconciled with some modernist theories.⁷²

Demonstratively, Wilson stated that “whoever would take faith and revelation and pit them against the onward march of science and reason, would drive a wedge into the very heart of the structure of truth.”⁷³ Thus we see a curricular philosophy that embraced science, reason, the academic sphere, and sought to reconcile them with gospel principles.

Legal challenges, centering primarily on the issue of receiving high school credit for seminary courses, forced substantial curriculum changes during the early 1930’s.⁷⁴ Commissioner Merrill was confronted with the charge that seminary was indeed teaching “pronounced sectarian dogmas,” thus violating the agreement which allowed for high school credit for the Old and New Testament courses. In order to continue receiving credit for the Old

⁷¹ Bell, *Adam S. Bennion*, 70, 71.

⁷² Dowdle, *A New Policy*, 145.

⁷³ Guy C. Wilson, “Professor Guy C. Wilson—Remarks at Department of Education Conference, April 5, 1931,” Guy C. Wilson Papers [ca. 1931], CHL. See also, Dowdle, 145, 146

⁷⁴ For a deeper treatment on this issue, see “The Seminary Program under Attack” section in Berrett, *Miracle in Weekday Religious Education*, 43-45 and also “The Seminary Program Comes under Attack” in *By Study and Also By Faith*, 53-56.

and New Testament courses “the situation required rewriting the seminary courses of study to delete any materials from the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price.”⁷⁵

In other words, students would participate in two years of seminary presumably without any references to the uniquely Latter-day Saint scripture canon. The non-biblical curricular text, *The Heart of Mormonism*, sought to offset such a glaring deficiency. In the introductory preface the objectives were set forth. Goals such as to “establish clearly the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith,” to “make it clear that the Church...is an instrument in God’s hands,” that “stress be laid on the distinct message of Mormonism,” and “that a particular emphasis be laid on the message to the world of the Book of Mormon,” were all outlined.⁷⁶

Even with such an explicit emphasis on Mormonism in the non-biblical course, the fact remains that the majority of a student’s seminary experience would not be centered in unrestrained Latter-day Saint teachings. This is an expressive measure of early seminary curricular philosophy. Thus, this early era of seminary curriculum can rightfully be categorized, as an era of secularization combined with faith. Merrill, Yates, Bennion and Wilson, the philosophical engine of early seminary curricular thought, were all comfortable with this unique blending of secularization and faith.

Summary of Findings

The emergent period of seminary from 1912-1930’s was a time of significant cultural shift amongst Latter-day Saints, gone were the days of isolation and skepticism of the outside world. Instead we find an embracing of secular learning most profoundly demonstrated by the

⁷⁵ Berrett, *A Miracle*, 44.

⁷⁶ John Henry Evans, *The Heart of Mormonism*, Salt Lake City, 1935, preface.

educational background of the leading men of seminary in this era, Joseph F. Merrill, Adam S. Bennion, Thomas J. Yates and Guy C. Wilson.

Although no curriculum has survived from the earliest years of the program, it can be concluded that the curriculum was an outward manifestation of its creators' deeply held beliefs in progressive educational thought. Later curriculum from the 1930's confirms this assumption.

It has been noted that,

Joseph Merrill's seminary represented a Mormonism that was no longer defined by the fears of encroaching Americanization and Protestantization. From the program's inception, seminary officials worked to maintain a healthy relationship with the public school system, rather than viewing the school officials as enemies and the schools as houses of "Godless education." The curriculum reflected this change. While inculcating faith remained the vital standard of all Mormon religious education programs, the curriculum likewise emphasized the development of social morals and Christian character through a non-sectarian treatment of the Bible. The result was the creation of a seminary program that was mutually beneficial to both the Church and the State. The seminary program was thus an evidence of the fact that Mormonism was moving into the mainstream of American society and would be governed by the principles governing Church and State relations.⁷⁷

Thus we find a program that embodies many of the shifting currents in Mormonism during this era. Strict isolation from the outside world was gone and in its place was an embracing of the best techniques that the secular world had to offer. The leading men of seminary personify this shift.

While an emphasis on Latter-day Saint doctrines was not abolished by any means, it was however underemphasized by previous and current standards. No more compelling evidence can be given for this than the fact that in the 1930's we see two out of three years of seminary curriculum completely devoid of Latter-day Saint scripture canon references. Such an action

⁷⁷ Dowdle, *A New Policy*, 154.

clearly demonstrates Mormonism's willingness to shift into "the mainstream of American society."

It must be recognized that while the larger context of Latter-day Saint culture was undergoing major shifts, the seminary program was born in this transformational era. Merrill, Yates, Bennion and Wilson did not represent reformers but rather the founding fathers of seminary. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that as seminary emerged within this unique period, it represented the merging of secularization and faith in a way that no previous Latter-day Saint generation could have imagined.

CHAPTER THREE

ALL THINGS IN COMMOTION: 1935-1953

When Franklin L. West took over as commissioner in 1935 he inherited an established program of 84 seminaries with 16,848 students.⁷⁸ By the end of his tenure as commissioner, West would leave a seminary program with over 34,000 students and an innovative pathway for continued growth.⁷⁹

While initially it may appear that this era could be categorized by steady growth, the reality is far from that. The world was in commotion during the period of 1935-1953 with the Great Depression, World War II, and figuring out a post-war world. The Latter-day Saint seminary program would also face a confrontation with rising secularism and a surge of growth after the war.

Historical Setting

It has been observed that “the 1930s and ’40s contained ups and downs for the seminary program.”⁸⁰ Evidence supporting this observation can be seen in the fact that while seventeen new seminaries opened during those decades, five seminaries were forced to close due to the lack of qualified teachers during the Depression and war years.⁸¹ While the Depression and war facilitated instability in many seminary programs “the immediate postwar years saw another surge...bringing the total number to 109.”⁸²

⁷⁸ “Dr. Franklin L. West Chosen Church Commissioner of Education,” *Deseret News*, Sept. 10, 1935, 1.

⁷⁹ Berrett, *A Miracle Education*, 245.

⁸⁰ *By Study and By Faith*, 115.

⁸¹ A. Theodore Tuttle, “Released Time Religious Education Program of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” (master’s thesis, Stanford University, 1949), 71-73, 76.

⁸² *By Study and Also By Faith*, 115, 116.

After years of the Depression and war, seminary growth in the Intermountain West occurred as things stabilized after years of upheaval. But it grew in another region of the West due in large part to an innovative approach to seminary.

Southern California experienced dramatic growth of Latter-day Saints through the 1940s and 50s. Naturally as membership numbers grew the petition for seminary grew louder and louder.⁸³ With too few students attending any one high school a release time program was not an option. Early morning seminary had been tried in Salt Lake City high schools “with varying degrees of success.”⁸⁴ Ray L. Jones, a seminary principal in Logan was asked to make an early morning program work in Southern California.

Jones found his new assignment to be a new frontier in many ways with lot of questions and few answers. As Jones prepared for his assignment he asked Commissioner West a series of questions all with similar answers. Consider the following exchange of the two men as recorded by Jones, with Jones asking the questions and Commissioner West given his responses,

In what areas are classes to be organized? His response: I don’t know, you’ll have to determine that after you get to Southern California.

Where will the classes be held? His response: I don’t know, perhaps in the living room of a private home, in rented halls or if you find the need we could provide a mobile classroom that could be moved from campus to campus.

Who will teach these classes? His response: I don’t know, you’ll have to make that decision after you get acquainted with the area and the people.

When should the classes be held? His response: I don’t know. Many high schools are on double session and you may have to settle for getting students together for twenty to thirty minutes in the morning, or for a half hour after school in the afternoon.⁸⁵

⁸³ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 122, 123.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 123.

⁸⁵ Ray L. Jones, interview by David B. Rimington, June 1985, transcript in Church Educational System Southern California Area Office, Long Beach, California, See Dennis A. Wright, “Good Morning Los Angeles: The Beginning of the Early Morning Seminary Program,” in *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: California*, ed. David F. Boone, Robert C. Freeman, Andrew H. Hedges, and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel (1998), 225. And also, *By Study and Also By Faith*, 125.

Despite the initial unknowns Jones quickly found answers and the program soared. The first year in 1950-51 found success with 13 classes and 461 students enrolled. Within just a few short years the program would more than quadruple, by 1953-54 school year there were 59 classes with 1,831 students.⁸⁶ It has been noted that the “early morning program in Southern California established a whole new model for Latter –day Saint education.”⁸⁷

Economic instability and war mark this era, and while significant growth took place particularly in the last decade of the Franklin L. West tenure, a serious challenge in the late 1930s would also prove to be a distinguishing feature. While not minimizing the substantial world affairs, the longest enduring effects of this era would come from a clash in philosophies within seminary. In 1938 President J. Reuben Clark Jr., counselor in the First Presidency, gave a talk to a group of seminary teachers and administrators titled “The Charted Course of the Church in Education.” What preceded his address was what he categorized as years of observations, he hoped his remarks would “light the way that would cure the situation which had developed.”⁸⁸ The situation in question was the rising tide of secularism in seminary.⁸⁹

Secularism was a tricky issue from the earliest days of the seminary program. In order to receive high school credit, seminary courses on the Old and New Testament were taught in a nonsectarian way. The nonsectarian approach to the Bible made it more susceptible to secularization. This, along with legal attacks on the system, higher criticism of the Bible and changing educational philosophies, all converged leading to a mounting secularization in seminary classrooms.⁹⁰ Simultaneously, “religious educators in the Church developed a close

⁸⁶ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 129. See also, Berrett, *A Miracle*, 68.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 101.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 99, 100

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

relationship with the School of Divinity at the University of Chicago.”⁹¹ Eleven Latter-day Saint educators went on to attend the school for advance degrees during the period.

An example of this secularism can be seen from “a presentation given at an institute director convention. The presenter, an institute teacher and director, publicly questioned the historicity of the book of Jonah and the traditional authorship of the later chapters of the book of Isaiah. He stated, we ought to be governed in our judgments in internal evidence of the books themselves, and by such external evidence as may exist, rather than by mere tradition.”⁹² Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith, who was in attendance for the presentation, later writing to Commissioner Franklin West declared that “if the views of these men become dominant in the Church, then we may just as well close up shop and say to the world that Mormonism is a failure.”⁹³ Thus we conclude that secular ideas and teachings were viewed as real threats by leading Church officers.

Clark’s “Charted Course” declared that there are guiding principles that Church Education should be governed by.

First, “the Church is the organized priesthood of God. The priesthood can exist without the Church, but the Church cannot exist without the priesthood.” Second, the Church, led by the priesthood, “is to maintain, teach, encourage, and protect, temporally and spiritually, the membership as a group in its living of the gospel. Thirdly, the Church is militantly to proclaim the truth.” This third point meant that each Church member, including seminary and institute teachers, must hold the convictions that Jesus is the Christ, that “the Father and the Son actually and in truth and very deed appeared to the Prophet Joseph in a vision in the woods,” that “the Book of Mormon is just what it professes to be,” that Church leaders

⁹¹ Casey Paul Griffiths “The Chicago Experiment: Finding the Voice and Charting the Course of Religious Education in the Church,” *BYU Studies*, vol.49, no.4 (2010), 91. See also, Scott C. Esplin, “Charting the Course: President Clark’s Charge to Religious Educators,” *The Religious Educator*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2006).

⁹² *By Study and Also By Faith*, 99.

⁹³ *Ibid.* See also, Joseph Fielding Smith letter to Franklin West, Mar. 11, 1937, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, in Richard Sherlock, “Faith and History: The Snell Controversy,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* vol. 12, no. 1 (Spring 1979), 27.

receive and will continue to receive revelation from God, and that “foundation beliefs” of the Church are found in the Articles of Faith.⁹⁴

Continuing with his clear focus Clark explained the only reason to have a seminary program, and teaching a code of ethics was not it.

May I now say a few words to you teachers? In the first place, there is neither reason nor is there excuse for our Church religious teaching and training facilities and institutions unless the youth are to be taught and trained in the principles of the gospel, embracing therein the two great elements that Jesus is the Christ and that Joseph was God’s prophet. The teaching of a system of ethics to the students is not a sufficient reason for running our seminaries and institutes. The great public school system teaches ethics. The students of seminaries and institutes should of course be taught the ordinary canons of good and righteous living, for these are part, and an essential part, of the gospel. But there are the great principles involved in eternal life, the priesthood, the Resurrection, and many like other things, that go way beyond these canons of good living. These great fundamental principles also must be taught to the youth; they are the things the youth wish first to know about.⁹⁵

Finalizing his position, Clark authoritatively declared that teaching the gospel, rather than ethics, was the only justification for Church education.

We are clear upon this point, namely, that we shall not feel justified in appropriating one further tithing dollar to the upkeep of our seminaries and institutes of religion unless they can be used to teach the gospel in the manner prescribed. The tithing represents too much toil, too much self-denial, too much sacrifice, too much faith, to be used for the colorless instruction of the youth of the Church in elementary ethics. This decision and situation must be faced when the next budget is considered. In saying this, I am speaking for the First Presidency.⁹⁶

We see in President Clark’s forceful declarations, a serious conflict with current practices in seminary at least on some level, and the vision that was desired. Secularism was put on notice and immediate steps were taken to fall in line with this clearly described course of action. In a 1938 letter to President Clark, Commissioner of Education Franklin

⁹⁴ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 101. And also, J. Reuben Clark Jr., *The Charted Course of the Church in Education*, rev. ed. (updated 2004), 1–2.

⁹⁵ Clark, *The Charted Course*, 6.

⁹⁶ Clark, *The Charted Course*, 11.

West stated that “I promise you that you will see marked and rapid improvement along the lines you have in mind. . . . I am anxious to carry forward the work as nearly as I can exactly as you would have it.”⁹⁷

While President Clark’s message would have somewhat of an instant impact in 1938, it has been observed that,

The larger national and international issues may have quickly overshadowed it. The year he delivered the address, Germany’s military occupied Austria. The front page of the same edition of the *Deseret News* that reported the talk covered fighting between Japan and Russia. In March of 1939, Germany occupied Czechoslovakia. One year after the talk’s delivery, missionaries were withdrawn from Europe shortly before Hitler’s forces invaded Poland, beginning World War II. The impact of these events on the Church generally, and on educational institutions specifically, could have pushed “The Charted Course” and educational reform to the periphery for the remainder of President Clark’s life.⁹⁸

Essentially, while it was given in a time of great secular peril, the principles in Clark’s “Charted Course” would not be fully implemented in his time. One scholar has noted that “commonly accepted today as the landmark charge in religious education, the talk has developed this central role over time.”⁹⁹

In reality, it is hard to clearly distinguish any measurable shifts in seminary curriculum during the Franklin L. West era due to President Clark’s message. While curriculum may not have changed in any perceptible way, it is not to say that this environment and these circumstances were irrelevant. Along with the Depression and World War II, this moment of confrontation with secularization would go on to define this era.

⁹⁷Franklin L. West letter to J. Reuben Clark Jr., Sept. 4, 1938, J. Reuben Clark Jr. Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, in Esplin, “Charting the Course,” 108. Also in, *By Study and Also By Faith*, 103.

⁹⁸ Esplin, “Charting the Course,” 110.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 103.

Key Figures and Education Philosophy

Franklin L. West

Prior to being named Commissioner of Education on September 10, 1935 Franklin L. West had served as assistant commissioner for two months. West was a lifelong educator coming into the commissioner's office, his most recent roll serving as the dean of the faculty at the Utah State Agriculture College.

West brought an illustrious educational background with him. It has been noted that "he had received a bachelor's degree from the Utah State Agricultural College, a master's degree from Stanford University, and a PhD in physics from the University of Chicago."¹⁰⁰ This background would prove to be beneficial to West as he navigated some problematic issues throughout his tenure.

Although West's career background dealt with college aged young people, he was actively engaged with seminary aged Latter-day Saints as he served as "second counselor in the general superintendency of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association."¹⁰¹ West was described as a brilliant, dynamic man with an excellent memory.¹⁰² While West would prove a valuable instrument during a difficult era, a pivotal decision that would greatly influence seminary curriculum would be made by West in his first month on the job.

M. Lynn Bennion

Franklin L. West made M. Lynn Bennion supervisor over seminaries in October 1935. Bennion would prove to transform curriculum in this era. Unlike West, Bennion's background

¹⁰⁰ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 94.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² See Roy A. West, interview by William G. Hartley, Mar. 26, 1974, 11, James Moyle Oral History Program, Church History Library, Salt Lake City. Also, *By Study and Also By Faith*, 94.

was rooted in Church education, in fact he was “a veteran teacher with eight years in the classroom.”¹⁰³ Bennion’s seminary classroom experience was not the only significant experience he brought to the table. Just prior to his appointment Bennion completed a doctoral program from the University of California–Berkeley. With his classroom experience and fresh ideas from Berkeley, Bennion won the job in large part due to his vision for transforming seminary curriculum. It has been observed that Bennion in his interview for supervisor over seminaries described the possibilities of new curriculum for West,

I told him that I would like to change the curriculum to what I called a ‘problematic’ approach to more directly relate the scriptures to the lives of the students and the kinds of problems, ideas, and concerns they were facing today. Second, I wanted to make the Old and New Testament courses nonsectarian in their teaching.¹⁰⁴

West was convinced of this new direction and allowed Bennion to implement a problematic approach, as will be seen hereafter. It was not only the problematic approach that Bennion championed but rather an overall “program of student center instruction.”¹⁰⁵ As far as his second objective of making nonsectarian courses for the Old and New Testaments, it is here one is able to observe the tension that Clark addresses in the Chartered Course.

It is not an understatement to say that Bennion, under West’s direction is the most influential individual in seminary curriculum during this era, an era that is marked by the strain of teaching the gospel verses teaching a system of ethics. He was the visionary behind the major changes and helped to successfully implement them in seminary classrooms.

¹⁰³ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 95. Also, Berrett, *A Miracle*, 63.

¹⁰⁴ *Recollections of a School Man: The Autobiography of M. Lynn Bennion* (1987), 95.

¹⁰⁵ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 95.

Manuals Produced

By 1938, M. Lynn Bennion's curricular vision began to bear fruit. The first two manuals were nonsectarian works on the Old and New Testament titled *The Old Testament and the Problems of Life* and *The New Testament and the Problems of Life*¹⁰⁶. These manuals were produced under the direction of Bennion with Vernon F. Larsen as Chairmen of the curriculum committee. The scope and size of these manuals necessitated a general committee to assist in their development. The committee members consisted of LeRoi Bentley, Eugene D. Bryson, Ernest Eberhard, Jr., Elijah M. Hicken, Maude Beeley Jacob, Harold S. Nelson, Antone K. Romney, Nicholas Van Alfen and Asahel D. Woodruff.¹⁰⁷

These two manuals of the Old and New Testament would last throughout the Franklin L. West era becoming fundamental and demonstrative of the direction of seminary curriculum. Of particular significance here is the scope of production for these manuals as opposed to manuals of the past. As noted above we find full committees dedicated to the creation of these curricular materials with a Chairmen directing the efforts. This is in contrast to the method of a principle author producing a manual and then seeking peer review.

While *The Old Testament and the Problems of Life* and *The New Testament and the Problems of Life* would be seminal works during this era they were not the only manuals produced. A manual titled *LDS Church History and Doctrine* was prepared by Vernon F. Larsen with the help of "a special committee of seminary men during the school year of 1939-40."¹⁰⁸

This work was utilized in the seminary course of Church History and Doctrine. While the manual

¹⁰⁶ *The Old Testament and The Problems of Life* and also, *The New Testament and The Problems of Life*, L.D.S. Department of Education, Salt Lake City, 1938. Copies of these two manuals are in the possession of the author.

¹⁰⁷ *The New Testament and The Problems of Life*, Title page.

¹⁰⁸ *L.D.S. Church History and Doctrine*, L.D.S. Department of Education, Salt Lake City, 1940. Introduction. A copy of the manual is in the possession of the author.

contained the title of *LDS Church History and Doctrine*, this manual was decidedly a doctrinal work with little Church history noticeable.

In 1948 Silas L. Cheney produced *Dramatic Pioneer Stories*, a supplementary work to the Church History and Doctrine course that focused on fictional characters facing life's dilemmas.¹⁰⁹ While not a primary resource *Dramatic Pioneer Stories* proved to be an additional tool for students and teachers. Noticeably absent from the manuals produced in this era is anything in regard to The Book of Mormon. The three officially approved courses of study were the Old Testament, New Testament, and Church History.¹¹⁰

From 1934-1953 relatively few manuals were produced for seminary curriculum. This can be understood in light of the economy and war challenges that saturated this era, but there may be an even more distinguishing reason. The prominent objectives in seminary curriculum of this era were M. Lynn Bennion's desire to produce competent Old and New Testament manuals in the 'problematic' and nonsectarian approach. It appears that Bennion was successful in this endeavor. While *LDS Church History and Doctrine* and *Dramatic Pioneer Stories* were welcomed resources, they appear to be second tier objectives in the hierarchy of seminary curriculum of this era.¹¹¹

In addition to the manuals produced, scripture based textbooks were also created and utilized in conjunction with the manuals. It has been noted that "some of the Church's most gifted and effective writers were teachers in the Church Educational System; Lowell L. Bennion,

¹⁰⁹ *Dramatic Pioneer Stories*, L.D.S. Department of Education, Salt Lake City, 1948. A copy of the manual is in the possession of the author.

¹¹⁰ Even as the author had full access to CES Archives, there was nothing found in this era in connection to Book of Mormon curriculum.

¹¹¹ See, *Dramatic Pioneer Stories*.

T. Edgar Lyon, Sidney B. Sperry, and many others wrote textbooks that proved useful for a number of years.”¹¹²

An example of how these textbooks were used in connection with curriculum manuals can be seen in the *LDS Church History and Doctrine* manual. The manual was intended to be a guide to study the course, while it is stated that “references...to other books on history and on doctrine are included in this guide. These should offer opportunity for select reading as may be needed for special reports or for individual research.”¹¹³ Thus, the manuals provided the primary curriculum and the aforementioned books fulfilled a supplementary role.

Curricular Philosophy

The greatest resources to demonstrate the curricular philosophy of this era comes from the manuals themselves. For example, *The New Testament and the Problems of Life* utilizes 43 pages introducing the philosophy of the curriculum.

Commissioner West introduced the central vision of the new curriculum in the forward to *The New Testament and the Problems of Life* (1938). West began by establishing the realities facing many young people living amidst a Great Depression. He states that “enforced leisure has come to our young people in many cases because of their inability to obtain employment.”¹¹⁴ He then goes on to describe the vices available to the youth and acknowledges that “many of the old checks on moral conduct have been greatly weakened.” West therefore states that “it is imperative that our curriculum be constructed to meet the problems of youth.”¹¹⁵

¹¹² See T. Edgar Lyon, interview by Davis Bitton, Jan. 13, 1975, 142, Church History Library, Salt Lake City. See also, *By Study and Also By Faith*, 97.

¹¹³ *L.D.S. Church History and Doctrine*, Introduction. An example of these books that were mentioned were Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, (Salt Lake City) 1919. And, James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, Salt Lake City 1899.

¹¹⁴ *The New Testament and The Problems of Life*, Foreword.

¹¹⁵ Ibid

West concludes that “the curriculum that is here presented has been developed in harmony with a sound philosophy of education which puts the child at the center and guides and controls his experience takes into account his interests and needs and guides him towards lofty religious goals.”¹¹⁶ These conclusions fit perfectly with Bennion’s vision for a problematic and student driven curriculum experience.

In the preface for *The New Testament and the Problems of Life*, Bennion describes more clearly what the curriculum was to look like in actuality. He states that each “unit of this manual have been developed out of a comprehensive study of the interests, needs, and problems of high school youth.” He goes on to describe that “each learning unit is an actual situation of life as against a lesson set out to be learned.” He states that the “curriculum becomes the religious experience of the learner under guidance.”¹¹⁷

Bennion continues his informative introduction to the curriculum with a description of the role of the teacher in the learning process. He says that “the teacher’s function is to provide the type of guidance which will help students to evaluate experience and place a premium upon those that will have high spiritual worth.”¹¹⁸ Consequently, we see curriculum designed with the student as the central figure and teachers in a guiding role.

This student centric curriculum pattern can be further understood in final remarks by Bennion where he contrasts past practices with the new,

The greatest indictment of our courses of study centered in content was that students did a passive type of thinking. They could not act on their own thinking because it was done for them in advance by the teacher or curriculum maker. The thinking was in one mind and conduct in another. Under the present curriculum students are expected to plan, work, and criticize what they do. The test is how it works. Do they act on the basis of reflective thinking. We have confidence that if we can stimulate youth to think vigorously about the gospel and weigh honestly

¹¹⁶ *The New Testament and The Problems of Life*, Preface.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

the evidence for its divinity they will ultimately receive a convincing testimony that it is true.¹¹⁹

Hence, this curricular philosophy put great trust in the premise that getting youth to think and interact meaningfully with gospel topics through problematic real life scenarios would lead to testimony. When the first of Bennion's curriculum products were introduced in 1939 he published an article detailing for members of the Church the curriculum mission he sought to accomplish.¹²⁰

Bennion stated that "the teaching of ... our seminaries and institutes, if properly done, should be reflected in the home, school, and leisure-time experiences of youth. ... There must be the right combination of discussion and doing to be effective." Describing the role of a teacher he stated simply that, "blessed is the teacher who can ... awaken and stimulate divine forces in his students." Supervisor Bennion taught that teachers would be most effective when they "provoked [students] to think for themselves."¹²¹ The idea was for teachers to guide students through a personal learning experience.

Further, Bennion emphasized the objective of helping students become something as well as the requirement to continually put the needs of the student ahead of any other consideration,

The test of our teaching ... is not what an individual has learned or the theories he has evolved for himself, but what he has become through the application of truth. ... Teachers in all of the educational activities of the Church should repeatedly ask themselves the questions: What is my objective in teaching this particular lesson? What is it that I would have my pupils do, or do differently than before? What information and what activities will best contribute toward the change I wish to make? ... Subject matter enters the teaching process not as an end in itself but as a means of furthering and enriching present individual and social life. The

¹¹⁹ *The New Testament and The Problems of Life*, Preface.

¹²⁰ M. Lynn Bennion, "The Life-Centered Approach to Religious Education," *Relief Society Magazine*, Oct. 1939, 657-58. See also, *By Study and Also By Faith*, 96.

¹²¹ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 96.

first and last concern of religious teaching is the growing life of the boy or the girl.¹²²

Another highlight of the Bennion driven curriculum was a clear list of objectives for seminaries. It is stated that “the seminaries function upon the high school level expressly for such religious instruction as will achieve the following objectives:

1. To help students develop a consciousness of the reality of God and a realization of man’s personal relation to Him.
2. To develop in the life and experience of students an appreciation an understanding of Jesus as the Savior of mankind and to lead students to uphold the teachings and the cause for which He stood.
3. To assist students in the development of a testimony of the divinity of the work of Joseph Smith and a conviction that the restored gospel is being disseminated throughout the world through the power and authority of the Priesthood of God.
4. To help students develop the ability and disposition to participate actively in the organizations of the Church.
5. To help students arrive at a sound interpretation of life and the universe, to develop the ability and disposition to see God’s purpose and plan in the universe, to understand man’s relation to it, and to assist in the formulation of a philosophy of life built upon this interpretation.
6. To foster in students a progressive and continuous development of personality and character which is harmonious within itself and adjusted to society, to the physical environment, and to God.”¹²³

Summary of Findings

The period of 1934-1953 was a period in commotion. Facing economic crisis, World War II, growing secularism within seminary, and a postwar surge of growth, Commissioner West aptly provided leadership. Within the context of seminary curriculum, it was Franklin L. West’s

¹²² Bennion, “Life-Centered Approach to Religious Education,” 658–60. See also, *By Study and Also By Faith*, 96.

¹²³ *The New Testament and The Problems of Life*, ii.

empowering of his Supervisor of seminary M. Lynn Bennion that would have the greatest influence.

Under Bennion's leadership, seminary curriculum would be transformed into a problematic, nonsectarian approach. Students would interact with curriculum in a way that brought real life situations, familiar to them, to the forefront of all that was done and facilitated a gospel learning experiences through that personal medium.

Curriculum in this era focused primarily on a nonsectarian Bible approach which can be seen in the manuals *The Old Testament and the Problems of Life* and *The New Testament and the Problems of Life*. These two manuals represent Bennion's principal objective in curriculum transformation.¹²⁴ While other manuals were produced in seminary, none were more prominent than these.

Curriculum in this era demonstrates a willingness and capability by the seminary program to adapt and strive for the most effective methodologies of reaching young people. From 1934-1953 the approach was a personalized, problematic tactic that got students engaged in the content. The problematic methodology was overshadowed in this era by the other key curriculum element that Bennion sought for, the nonsectarian approach. J. Rueben Clark and his authoritative "Chartered Course of Church Education" demonstrates the tension of rising secularization and the commission to teach the gospel that seminary faced.

¹²⁴ *Recollections of a School Man: The Autobiography of M. Lynn Bennion*, 95.

CHAPTER FOUR

FOLLOW THE BRETHERN: 1953-1970

Steady growth has defined seminary from its earliest decades with a surge of growth occurring immediately following World War II. The growth that would be accomplished from 1953-1970 would prove to be monumental. It was not the predictable growth in number of seminary students that would define this era, but rather, internal changes that would set the seminary program in a new direction.

Administrative positions would be refined and developed. A curriculum department would be established and curriculum production would increase. Most significantly, key figures would set the course for a modern program to “Follow the Brethren”. This chapter will explore the development of seminary curriculum during the post WWII growth period and the key figures, philosophies, and curriculum manuals that influenced it.

Historical Setting

It has been noted that “as early as 1938, consideration had been given to combining the Church’s colleges, schools, seminaries, and institutes under one administrator.”¹²⁵ Commissioner Franklin L. West, a proponent for such an action went as far as to prepare “a plan for the appointment of a chancellor in order to unify LDS education” during his tenure in the 1940s.¹²⁶ The vision of the Unified Church School System was to “treat all the different branches of Church education as one unified entity.”¹²⁷

¹²⁵ *By Study and Also by Faith*, 139.

¹²⁶ Ernest L. Wilkinson, ed., *Brigham Young University: The First One Hundred Years*, 4 vols. (1975), 2:569.

¹²⁷ *By Study and Also by Faith*, 140.

West's desire for unification would not take place however until his retirement in 1953 when the Unified Church School System was founded. BYU President Ernest L. Wilkinson was selected as administrator over the Unified Church School System and assigned William E. Berrett to supervise seminaries and institutes. It appears that Berrett enjoyed nearly complete independence in his post, as "Wilkinson trusted Berrett to administer the seminaries and institutes with considerable if not total freedom."¹²⁸

In his first two years Berrett would need to replace J. Karl Wood and Joy Dunyon who had supervised seminaries. Berrett would select the director of the Reno, Nevada institute named A. Theodore Tuttle to take Wood's place. Dunyon retired shortly after and Tuttle solicited Berrett to replace him with a former colleague from the Brigham City seminary named Boyd K. Packer.¹²⁹ The decision to selected Tuttle and Packer proved to be fruitful.

Tuttle and Packer would become quite the tandem in their new positions. With these new men in place, new titles came with them. William E. Berrett "became the administrator of seminaries and institutes, and Brothers Tuttle and Packer became assistant administrators, now with stewardship over not just seminaries but institutes as well."¹³⁰ Berrett recalled that the two were "a David and Jonathan in their friendship."¹³¹ Even while away on different assignments Berrett observed, they would "get together, even if they had to work extra hours on their trips. ... Theirs was the closest of associations and [it] lasted all their lives."¹³²

Tuttle and Packer would define this era in a simple, yet profound way. Seeking to solve a significant problem of parents and priesthood leaders being concerned with what teachers were

¹²⁸ *By Study and Also by Faith*, 142.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 145.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 146.

¹³¹ Lucile C. Tate, *Boyd K. Packer: A Watchman on the Tower* (1995), 120.

¹³² *By Study and Also by Faith*, 147, 148.

concentrating on in seminary classrooms, the duo desired that their teachers to be more grounded in the scriptures and doctrines of the Church.

Seeking for help they made an appointment with Elder Harold B. Lee of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Elder Lee instructed that “you must decide, to begin with, where you stand and which way you face. You must decide whether you are a delegate representing the seminary and institute men before the Brethren, or whether you will, as I think you should, represent the Brethren to the seminary and institute teachers.”¹³³ As they returned to their office Packer remembered,

We put our feet up on the desk, locked the door, and talked for half a day. We asked ourselves the question, ‘What can we do most to help [our] brethren?’ Out of that meeting that began on our knees with prayer, there came an inspiration and it was three words. We adopted it as something of a creed, and it saved us many times when decisions—rationally and academically—would have led us in other directions. The three words were simply: ‘Follow the brethren.’¹³⁴

Those three words would go on to define many aspects of seminary during this era. Tuttle recalled “there was a definite attempt on our part to bring the Brethren and the teachers closer together.”¹³⁵ This mentality would be manifested in numerous ways. In one instance, a teacher making a presentation amongst his colleagues proved to be very critical of the Church leaders and Church history. Brother Packer arose after the man’s presentation and referencing the famous Greek statue the Winged Victory made a poignant comparison. Referring to the statues cracks, scratches and missing head and limbs, he nevertheless described its worth. In what has become an iconic teaching he imparted,

Regarding the Church, I suppose if we look we can find flaws and abrasions and a chip missing here and there. I suppose we can see an aberration or an imperfection in a leader of the past or perhaps the present. Nonetheless, there is

¹³³ *Mine Errand from the Lord: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Boyd K. Packer* (2008), 455. See also, *By Study and Also by Faith*, 146.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 146, 147.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*.

still absolute, hard-rock, undeniable, irrefutable proof, because the Church is what it is and because that someone, sometime, with supreme inspired spiritual genius set to work obediently under inspiration and organized it, and so it came into being. It is best that we should enlarge ourselves to appreciate the beauty and genius of it, rather than debunk and look for the flaws.¹³⁶

He concluded with a warning, “My fellow teachers, it isn’t the Church or the gospel that is on trial. We are.”¹³⁷

Under the direction of Brother Tuttle and Brother Packer the seminary program would undergo a shift that led back to the core of what, in 1938, President Clark had discussed in the “The Charted Course of the Church in Education.” Scholar Scott C. Esplin observed,

Franklin D. Day, assistant commissioner of Church Education from 1968 to 1986, credits the increased use of the talk during this era to President Boyd K. Packer, former assistant administrator of seminaries and institutes of religion. Noting that he only remembered it being mentioned casually before this time, Day reports that Elder Packer began emphasizing it frequently when he served as an administrator and early in his call as a General Authority. Day commented, “I don’t know of anyone else that emphasized it as much as Boyd K. Packer.” Elder Packer himself later stated, “I think I have never talked to religious educators of the Church except I have quoted some verses of scripture from the document entitled The Charted Course of the Church in Education.” In addition, Elder Packer, in his second year as an Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles, quoted from the talk in his April 1963 general conference address, the first General Authority to do so since it had originally been given. A decade later, noting that “never a year goes by but that I reread it carefully,” he published it as the appendix to his book *Teach Ye Diligently*. President Packer’s special emphasis of “The Charted Course” dominates its history since the 1970s.¹³⁸

Both Brother Tuttle and Packer would leave seminary to serve as General Authorities but their legacy would continue with those that followed after them, a legacy that can be summarized in three words, “Follow the Brethren.”

¹³⁶ Boyd K. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently*, 209–10.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 211.

¹³⁸ Scott C. Esplin, “Charting the Course”, 111.

While the spirit of President Clark’s “Chartered Course” would be disseminated through the seminary and institute programs throughout this era, an administrative change would also provide significant modification. In 1958 Alma Gardiner would accept Berrett’s invitation to head up curriculum as the director of the department. It is in this era that curriculum would change from a group of committees that wrote curriculum into a full scale department in the seminary program.

Gardiner’s initial duties “involved collecting all teaching materials, textbooks, teacher manuals, and other materials for both seminaries and institutes that had been created since the program began.”¹³⁹ He also “supervised the production and distribution of curriculum courses and teaching supplies and also took care of financial matters.”¹⁴⁰

By 1962, Ernest L. Eberhard Jr., was asked by President Berrett to “direct a larger curriculum department and charged him to revise the seminary courses of study.”¹⁴¹ Both Gardiner and Eberhard marked a turning point in seminary curriculum that would be followed moving forward, a turning point that came in a suitable moment as seminary was on the brink of expansion.

By the late 1960s this expansion would include the administrative organization, curriculum, adapted programs, worldwide programs, and of course many more seminary students.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Berrett, *A Miracle* 176–77.

¹⁴⁰ *By Study and Also by Faith*, 159.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, 160.

¹⁴² For a thorough introduction to the many growing aspects of seminary in this era, see *By Study and Also by Faith*, 148-200.

Key Figures and Education Philosophy

William E. Berrett

Berrett proved to be not only the single most impactful individual in this era of seminary but one of the most important figures in any era. His tenure of overseeing seminaries from 1953-1970 was extensive, but momentous for many more reasons other than length. Berrett directed an expanding program that would spread internationally like never before.

Berrett is unique from his predecessor's that helped administer the seminary program before him in the fact that Berrett was a lifetime religious educator.¹⁴³ He graduated from the University of Utah with bachelor and law degrees, taught seminary, wrote curriculum and authored multiple textbooks for seminary and institutes.¹⁴⁴ A competent man with “a commanding presence,” he was at the same time, as one colleague noted, “the kind of man that it’s easy to be loyal to.”¹⁴⁵

Neal A. Maxwell who would serve as Commissioner of Education following Berrett’s retirement in 1970 said of him “he has presided over Seminary and Institute programs during the period of their greatest expansion and during the period of their internationalization. He is a rare combination of dedication and perception. All of us in the Church Educational System commend him for his leadership of this vital program.”¹⁴⁶ The sheer amount of time that Berrett was entrusted to supervise Church Education, as well as the momentous era of growth that he directed, make him a significant historical figure in seminary history.

¹⁴³ William E. Berrett, “My Story” (1974), 74, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 24, 30–31, 42, 50, 53.

¹⁴⁵ *By Study and Also by Faith*, 142.

¹⁴⁶ Berrett, *A Miracle*, 183.

A. Theodore Tuttle

As has been previously noted, A. Theodore Tuttle had a lasting impact on the seminary program primarily due to his orthodox approach that championed the call to “follow the Brethren.” Tuttle along with Boyd K. Packer, had relatively short careers supervising seminary but their lasting impact set the course that seminary continues even today.

It has been observed of Brother Tuttle that,

He was born in Manti, Utah, on March 2, 1919. He was influenced by his high school seminary teacher, Leland E. Anderson, and young Brother Tuttle decided in high school that seminary teaching would be his life’s work. After graduating from high school, attending Snow College, earning a bachelor’s degree from Brigham Young University, and getting married, he served as a U.S. Marine lieutenant in the Second World War. Brother Tuttle saw action during the horrific battle of Iwo Jima, and early in the battle he carried up the mountain the flag used in the iconic photograph of the U.S. Marines raising the flag on Mount Suribachi.¹⁴⁷

Following World War II, Tuttle taught seminary in Idaho, the Salt Lake Valley and Brigham City, Utah. He was later named director of the Reno, Nevada Institute before being appointed to supervise the seminary program.

Boyd K. Packer

Like Tuttle, Brother Packer’s influence in this era has already been emphasized. Although his tenure as supervisor was brief, one could argue that Packer’s influence on seminary only grew once he departed for ecclesiastical assignments which eventually led him to the highest councils of the Church.

A summary of Boyd K. Packer is as follows,

Born September 10, 1924, Boyd Kenneth Packer was the tenth child of Ira and Emma Packer. He grew up in Brigham City, Utah, and served as a bomber pilot in the Second World War. After the war he married Donna Smith, graduated from the Utah State Agricultural College, and then began his seminary career teaching

¹⁴⁷ *By Study and Also by Faith*, 143,144.

at the Brigham City seminary, where he taught with Abel S. Rich and A. Theodore Tuttle.¹⁴⁸

With less than a full decade of seminary teaching experience Brother Packer was chosen by Berrett to supervise the seminary program along with his friend A. Theodore Tuttle. As has been previously mentioned, Packer is most responsible for bringing the decade's old vision of President J. Rueben Clark Jr.'s "Charted Course" back to seminary consciousness. As will be demonstrated, this will have a direct influence on curriculum philosophy.

It should be noted that the era of 1953-1970 has many important figures who helped modernize LDS religious education. Men like Dale T. Tingey and Alma P. Burton, who replaced Tuttle and Packer, continued on a path of innovation and improvement. Men like Alma Gardiner and Ernest L. Eberhard Jr., who developed a modern curriculum department within the seminary and institute program.

Simply stated, this was an era where many individuals did many great things. But, none had the lasting impact and influence like that of William E. Berrett and his two supervisors A. Theodore Tuttle and Boyd K. Packer. In this era, these three stand preeminent.

Manuals Produced

The era from 1953-1970 was an era of curriculum expansion within Church education. This was possible in large part by the creation of the newly established curriculum department. As one might expect, the seminary seminal courses of the Old and New Testament, and Church History took center stage. But for the first time, the Book of Mormon was at elevated. This can be interpreted as evidence that Brother Tuttle and Packer's emphasis on J. Rueben Clark's "Charted Course" was beginning to bear fruit. One tenet that Clark taught in his seminal address

¹⁴⁸ *By Study and Also by Faith*, 145.

was that “the Book of Mormon is just what it professes to be,” the word of God.¹⁴⁹ For the first time we see curricular evidence that gone are the days when a nonsectarian Biblical approach takes complete precedent over the Book of Mormon.

This transition to the Book of Mormon also grew out of the desire to “emphasize, more emphatically, than ever that seminary was actually a four–year program.”¹⁵⁰ While seminary graduation was granted for three years of completion “if it were possible for young people to take the fourth–year course in seminary, every effort was to be made to see that they did.”¹⁵¹ The major opposition facing the Book of Mormon as the fourth–year seminary course, were local public school boards and high school faculties. Their concerns were rooted in the fear that an additional year of seminary would take away from high school subjects like “band, chorus, and recreation.”¹⁵² Thus, while the Book of Mormon course started to be emphasized, it was still not required and faced significant resistance.

The core seminary manuals for the Old and New Testament’s, Church History, along with the new emphasis on the Book of Mormon with its accompanying manual, were all rewritten in 1955-1956 and then rewritten again three more times throughout the era. Never before had the core manuals for the seminary courses received so much attention. A fully functioning curriculum department with its own director undoubtedly propelled such productivity.¹⁵³

One major attitudinal reason for the continual rewriting of the manuals can be seen in the 1956 Book of Mormon Manual. It instructs teachers using the manual that “as you teach this

¹⁴⁹ J. Rueben Clark, *The Charted Course*, 2.

¹⁵⁰ Berrett, *A Miracle*, 81.

¹⁵¹ Ibid

¹⁵² Ibid

¹⁵³ Berrett, *A Miracle*, 89, 90.

course of study you will have many suggestions for changes or additions in this material. By pooling the suggestions and recommendations of all teachers, these resource units can be greatly improved and will be much more valuable to teachers who use them in future years.”¹⁵⁴

Thus, the abundance of manuals produced in this era can be seen in light of the clearly stated vision where feedback was sought, received, and integrated in future versions of manuals. A curriculum department now had the resources to better use teachers and assimilate their useful insights into improved curricular materials.

Curricular Philosophy

Over the course of a seventeen year period and through the rewriting of each of the core curriculum manuals three times, curriculum was in a state of progression. Even with a near constant state of production, overall curricular philosophy remained committed to key components. Ernest Eberhard, Jr., Director of Curriculum starting in 1962, detailed three phases of curriculum development.

The first focused on bringing “courses of study into line with the concept level of the students.” This was “designed to achieve the maximum effects in building the concepts, attitudes, and traits that would ensure that students developed testimonies of the gospel and moral character and gained knowledge and understanding of the gospel.”¹⁵⁵ The second phase was motivated by getting the “involvement of the entire faculty in developing and testing curriculum materials.” The final phase “had to do with religious instruction of the student. It was felt that more growth, personal satisfaction, and loyalty to the Church and its tenets would result

¹⁵⁴ A copy of the 1956 Book of Mormon Manual is in the possession of the author. It appears that input from teachers was received and implemented into future materials, see Berrett, *A Miracle*, 90.

¹⁵⁵ Berrett, *A Miracle*, 90.

from devoted service in building the kingdom of God.”¹⁵⁶ These three phases clearly tie back to Clark’s message from the “Charted Course” that had been emphasized throughout the era.¹⁵⁷

While the content of each manual shifted and changed with each edition, the core principles of the curricular philosophy remained the same with only subtle changes. This can best be demonstrated by examples from curriculum manuals of the era.

The Book of Mormon manual first produced in 1956, approached the study of the book in a topical fashion. This approach was rooted in the doctrinal teachings found in various chapters throughout the Book of Mormon. For example, unit 6 of the manual is titled “The Fruits of Repentance”. In this unit, the primary objective is to understand the process of repentance. The curriculum focuses on the experiences of the Book of Mormon prophet Alma, a reformer who preaches repentance in several cities, with varying levels of success. While the curriculum is rooted in a section of scripture, in this case Alma chapters 1-35, it continuously draws from other portions of the Book of Mormon to accomplish the objective of teaching the repentance process. This unit does not seek to exhaustively teach the chapters or to even highlight other key teachings found in Alma 1-35, only those that are connected to “The Fruits of Repentance.”¹⁵⁸

By 1966 the Book of Mormon manual looks differently in the content outlined but applies a nearly identical curricular philosophy and approach. In the foreword of this manual it states “this approach to the Book of Mormon follows the chronological thread of the stories of the Book of Mormon, and yet pulls together some related and pertinent scriptures regardless of

¹⁵⁶ Berrett, *A Miracle*, 90.

¹⁵⁷ See the previous chapter of this work for Clark’s emphasis on a faithful, gospel centered approach where testimony was the desired outcome in seminaries.

¹⁵⁸ Book of Mormon Manual, 1956, see unit 6.

their location in the book.”¹⁵⁹ Thus mirroring the same philosophy as the Book of Mormon manual produced a decade earlier.

The Old Testament manual from 1955-56 provides another illustrative example of the doctrinal topic approach.¹⁶⁰ Unit 3 of this manual is rooted in the Book of Exodus with Moses freeing the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. Of the seventeen lessons in this section ten are dedicated to the Ten Commandments.

In other words, one entire lesson is focused on “thou shalt not steal”, covering one verse of the Old Testament and then teaching the virtues of not being a thief. With ten lessons based off of a few verses, it is clear that many other resources are introduced to supplement the teachings of the Ten Commandments. These sources primarily include other scriptures found throughout the standard works and stories that help students understand the virtues being taught.

Perhaps the Church History curriculum best illustrates the focus on teaching doctrines and principles rather than a study of scriptural text. The course objective was “to help students gain a testimony that this is the Church of Jesus Christ and that Joseph Smith was the chosen prophet, seer and revelator to establish the Church under the direction of and with the blessings of the Godhead”.¹⁶¹ This was accomplished with little scriptural help, the Doctrine and Covenants was used very little throughout this course. Instead, supplementary texts from prominent Latter-day Saint’s on church history played a significant role.¹⁶²

A subtle and yet important curricular philosophy shift that can be seen in this era is how much the curriculum was intended to be used by teachers. In the beginning of the era it was

¹⁵⁹ Seminary Book of Mormon Manual, 1966, v., Copy of the manual is in the possession of the author.

¹⁶⁰ Seminary Old Testament Manual, 1955-56, 2-9. Copy of the manual is in the possession of the author.

¹⁶¹ Seminary Church History Outline, 1955-56, 1, Copy of the manual is in the possession of the author.

¹⁶² These include William E. Berrett’s work “The Restored Church” Preston Nibley’s “The Presidents of the Church” and Milton R. Hunter’s “The Gospel Through the Ages”. In contrast to these sources, only one direct passage from the Doctrine and Covenants was referenced in the first five pages of curriculum in the first lesson. See Seminary Church History Outline, 1955-56, 1-5.

understood from the 1956 Book of Mormon manual itself that “it is not intended that any teacher will use all the suggestions provided here in. Teachers are expected to use these units as they best fit their own individual needs. Thus, these units are intended as a starting point and a reservoir of suggestions from which the teacher can draw ideas and information.”¹⁶³ A “starting point” and a “reservoir of suggestions” implied a loose connection between a teacher and the units of curriculum. Certainly a teacher was free to adapt, create, and use their own ideas for the units based off of this description.

It appears there was a more firm view of curriculum usage by the end of the era. The 1966 Seminary Book of Mormon manual similarly stated that “every teacher should feel free to add his or her techniques or methods to those suggested.”¹⁶⁴ The turning point occurs in what is described after the above statement.

The manual instructs that “all teachers should follow the objectives and the sequence of lessons as they appear in the outline.” And also, “the ‘cautions’ placed in the outline should be carefully observed. They are designed to keep the teacher from using material which can be used more effectively in later lessons and from becoming too involved in a particular area.” Furthermore, “the teacher must read the basic references in the right hand column before teaching the lesson. This reading should follow a careful study of the objective and sub-objective.”¹⁶⁵ While teachers were still encouraged to use their own ideas and creativity in the classroom, the curriculum was to be followed as an outline for the course as well as the determining factor for objectives and sub-objectives.

¹⁶³ Seminary Book of Mormon Manual, 1956, ii. Copy is in the possession of the author.

¹⁶⁴ Seminary Book of Mormon Manual, 1966, v. Copy is in the possession of the author.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. v, vi.

In conclusion, the curricular philosophy of this era was based on a topical approach of the doctrines of the gospel with scripture being the primary source of study, as had been done previously. The nonsectarian approach to the Bible was still evident with non-Latter-day Saint sources being cited, but devotion to gospel principles was occupying a greater place. The Book of Mormon burst onto the scene for the first time and curricular philosophy took a significant step in the direction of “Following the Brethren” with this new course.

Summary of Findings

This era was a transformative time in many ways. It represents the modernizing of the seminary and institute programs with shifts occurring that still hold to the present time. Evidence of this can be seen in the administrative structure of the program. The Unified Church School System was born, connecting formerly independent entities together. Seminary and Institutes were now governed by an administrator and assistant administrators. A curriculum department was fully established.

Structuring of the program was only part of the momentous changes that took place in this era. Maybe the most lasting impact from this era was the start of a push to “Follow the Brethren.” As Berrett delegated much to Brother Tuttle and Brother Packer, they would start a permanent transformation to move seminary and institutes to align with the foundational teachings of President J. Rueben Clark in the “Chartered Course”.

Curriculum would be effected by this push. The Book of Mormon course and its subsequent manuals are the greatest evidence for this. Truly, this era was a watershed time for seminary.

CHAPTER FIVE

CAMELOT: 1970-1980

Camelot has been a term used to affectionately describe this era.¹⁶⁶ It was not just the innovation, nor the overwhelming support from the Brethren that led to this sentiment but rather an overall feeling of growth, progress and optimism. This was an era of several important developments: the Church Education System, global expansion exploded, great leaders directed the work, and curriculum was enlarged. In many ways, this was an era of resurgence; a fresh period that continues to define the modern Church Education System and Seminaries and Institutes in particular.

Historical Setting

The year 1970 proved to be a time of transition in the Church as President David O. McKay passed away. Upon the passing of President McKay, Joseph Fielding Smith “became president of the Church with Harold B. Lee as his first counselor... With President Smith’s complete confidence, President Lee was the leading figure in what became a complete reexamination of the Church’s structure and programs... The Church’s educational system soon came within President Lee’s searching scrutiny.”¹⁶⁷ President Harold B. Lee would set in motion a series of administrative changes that would reverberate throughout seminaries in the era of 1970-1980.

In 1970 Neal A. Maxwell was asked to assume the position of Commissioner of Education for the Church. This was a revival of a position from the past. General Authority and

¹⁶⁶ Joe J. Christensen, interview by E. Dale LeBaron, Apr. 13, 1991, E. Dale LeBaron CES oral history interviews, 1991-2003, 21, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

¹⁶⁷ Bruce C. Hafen, *A Disciple’s Life: The Biography of Neal A. Maxwell* (2002), 330.

historian, G. Homer Durham noted at the time that “the brethren are reviving the old office held by Elder John A. Widtsoe (commissioner from 1921-1924 and 1934-1936), Joseph F. Merrill (commissioner from 1928-1933), and Franklin L. West (commissioner from 1936-1953).”¹⁶⁸

This conversion back to a commissioner would prove to be a lasting change in Church education.

Prior to becoming commissioner, Maxwell was serving as the executive vice president of the University of Utah. His new position of Church commissioner of education would entail overseeing the Church’s universities and colleges, church schools globally, as well as seminaries and institutes. Those previously filling those positions “would eventually retire that year—Chancellor Ernest L. Wilkinson as president of BYU, Harvey L. Taylor as head of the remaining Church schools, and William E. Berrett as head of seminaries and institutes—leaving Brother Maxwell to direct the entire system in the reconstituted post of commissioner.”¹⁶⁹

Commissioner Maxwell worked quickly to unite the formerly semi-independent entities under a new organization called the Church Educational System or CES.¹⁷⁰ Jeffery R. Holland stated that “Neal created this new world and new logo, new offices, and new appointments. He legitimized [CES] in a new way, and it’s been that way ever since.”¹⁷¹

Perhaps Maxwell’s greatest contribution was his eye for talent as he selected individuals for important positions within CES. These include the likes of Dallin H. Oaks (President of BYU), Henry B. Eyring (President of Ricks College), and Jeffrey R. Holland (dean of BYU’s

¹⁶⁸ Hafen, *A Disciple’s Life*, 343.

¹⁶⁹ *By Study and By Faith*, 212.

¹⁷⁰ It has been stated that “The Brethren tried to achieve some unity by appointing Ernest Wilkinson as ‘chancellor’ of a ‘Unified School System’ during the early part of Ernest’s service as president of BYU (1951-70). (See Hafen, *A Disciple’s Life*, 347.) This unity was very loose with Wilkinson completely delegating responsibilities with almost no oversight.

¹⁷¹ Hafen, *A Disciple’s Life*, 351. See also, *By Study and Also By Faith*, 214.

religion department). Joe J. Christensen, another highly skilled leader, would head up the post of associate commissioner of Seminaries and Institutes.¹⁷²

With the creation of CES under Maxwell's leadership seminaries and institutes would experience a "Camelot-like era."¹⁷³ Associate commissioner Christensen described this vividly when he said it was an "era of intense creativity and a feeling that you could plumb the depths of your imagination and your ideas would at least have a hearing."¹⁷⁴ Maxwell's biographer captured the sentiment this way, "Neal's staff kept sensing they had pretty well a blank page, and the Brethren were so supportive and accepting of their ideas that they felt great responsibility to do their homework prayerfully, because the chances were they'd approve what Neal's people would submit."¹⁷⁵ This support would continue through the Jeffrey R. Holland administration, as he replaced Maxwell as commissioner in 1976.

This unique era with its "increasing degree of confidence expressed on the part of the Brethren" would lead to many important developments within seminaries and institutes.¹⁷⁶ Global expansion of seminary throughout the world would prove to be the most far-reaching event within the program during this era. Other important events would take place as seminary graduation requirements would change and as outside forces would lead to the alteration of seminary curriculum.

Expansion had always been a characteristic of seminary. It started as a single program at Salt Lake City's Granite High School and grew throughout the western United States, wherever Latter-day Saints were found. The expansion in 1970s however proved to be a different thing

¹⁷² *By Study and Also By Faith*, 214-216.

¹⁷³ Joe J. Christensen, interview by E. Dale LeBaron, Apr. 13, 1991, E. Dale LeBaron CES oral history interviews, 1991-2003, 21, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

¹⁷⁴ Hafen, *A Disciple's Life*, 348.

¹⁷⁵ Hafen, *A Disciple's Life*, 348.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 219.

entirely. The characteristic of expansion in this era, which was like none before it, was its global nature. In fact, “under the leadership of Joe J. Christensen as an assistant commissioner and Neal A. Maxwell and Jeffrey R. Holland as commissioners, global Church education flourished in dozens of new countries in the 1970s.”¹⁷⁷

Reflecting back on this era Joe J. Christensen stated that,

It really was an explosive growth period. ... I think the Lord was behind that. I think He wanted those young people to learn the gospel and many things fell into place. It went far beyond what we would have anticipated. The cooperation of people in the field was just admirable. We went in those first few years from nothing in any international language to sixty-six countries and sixteen languages other than English. ... And it has continued to expand since then into other languages and other countries.¹⁷⁸

E. Dale LeBaron, who was instrumental in taking seminaries and institutes to South Africa recognized the rapidity of the international growth. He said “it’s interesting that it happened in such a brief window of time, such a small window of time there, four or five years, almost a blitz. It’s interesting to see that not only were certain parts of the world ready, but almost all the world was ready.”¹⁷⁹ The word’s “explosion” and “blitz” appear to be more than hyperbole when describing this remarkable happening. Truly, this was an era of unprecedented international expansion.

While international growth would be a hallmark of this era, it was not the only significant development. Prior to 1972 seminary graduation requirements only called for three years of completion with the fourth year being highly encouraged. The fourth year would change from being encouraged to being required starting in 1973 as “the Church Board of Education determined that seminary graduation would be based on completion of four rather than three

¹⁷⁷ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 308.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 309.

¹⁷⁹ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 308.

years of seminary.”¹⁸⁰ The added fourth year requirement was seen as a way to increase participation in seminary.

In connection with this change the First Presidency sent a letter stating that “it is our desire that more young people be involved in the seminary program, and thus receive additional training in gospel study to help them prepare for future assignments in church leadership, missionary service, and for temple marriage.”¹⁸¹ The greatest impact of requiring four years of attendance rather than three would be seen in the use of the Book of Mormon throughout seminaries.

The Book of Mormon had been a part of seminary curriculum as far back as the 1940s but only as an early-morning or non-credit course. In certain areas starting in 1961 it was adopted as a ninth-grade course of study.”¹⁸² Starting in 1973 with the requirement of four years of attendance for graduation, the Book of Mormon became, for the first time, a required course of study in seminary.

Associate commissioner Joe J. Christensen recalled the “overwhelming approval” the Church Board of Education gave to the Book of Mormon requirement. Christensen further detailed President Spencer W. Kimball’s response to the change as he stated “I have wondered why we hadn’t done this years ago.”¹⁸³ Reflecting back, Christensen himself noted that “from that time on, every seminary graduate has had the privilege of completing a course of study in this most important, life-changing volume of scripture—the Book of Mormon.”¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 219.

¹⁸¹ “Seminaries Set 4-Year Plan of Graduation,” *Church News*, Apr. 22, 1972, 12. See also, *By Study and Also By Faith*, 220.

¹⁸² *By Study and Also By Faith*, 220.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ Joe J. Christensen, “Abiding by Its Precepts,” in *Living the Book of Mormon: Abiding by Its Precepts*, ed. Gaye Strathearn and Charles Swift (2007), 2–3. See also, *By Study and Also By Faith*, 220.

The newly required Book of Mormon course would not be the last curriculum change of this era. In the late 1970s “Church education leaders closely followed a lawsuit initiated by the Logan, Utah, chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union regarding the legality of school boards granting released time for religious instruction and giving high school credit for Bible study classes.”¹⁸⁵ While the released time aspect of the lawsuit was ruled constitutional, the granting of credit for bible courses was not.

Not able to grant high school credit for seminary bible courses would mark a significant turning point in seminary curriculum. It is important to note that this change was received favorably within CES. Referring to this event Seminaries and Institutes internal history noted that,

The Church Board and CES administrators concluded...that Latter-day Saint students would still participate in seminary even though they would not earn high school credit and that without the worry about credit implications, Old and New Testament courses could now be strengthened using insights from the Pearl of Great Price, the Book of Mormon, and the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. The court’s decision, and the lack of an appeal, had a significant positive impact with regard to the focus and content of new curriculum materials for these courses... Teachers and students welcomed the opportunity to study the Bible using insights that came from latter-day scriptures and the words of the living prophets. Fears that students would drop out of seminary by droves proved to be unfounded, and both seminaries and institutes, as leaders predicted, attracted even more students every year.¹⁸⁶

Within a ten year period, the Church Educational System was established, new leadership was found, expansion exploded across the globe, and significant curriculum practices would be forever altered. The events of this historical setting proved to be have lasting consequences for seminaries, reaching not only throughout the world, but into the present day.

¹⁸⁵ “ACLU Intends to Sue Board,” *Herald Journal*, Mar. 16, 1977, 1–2. See also, *By Study and Also By Faith*, 280.

¹⁸⁶ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 281.

Key Figures and Education Philosophy

Neal A. Maxwell

Neal A. Maxwell brought a unique resume with him as he assumed the role of commissioner of education. He had no background in Church education but deep roots as a teacher and as an education administrator at the University of Utah prior to his move to Church education. Beginning in 1956 “he was employed as a professor of political science at the University of Utah and, starting in 1967, as the executive vice president of the university.”¹⁸⁷ His experience at the University of Utah was not his only unique facet.

Prior to his time at the University of Utah, Maxwell worked in Washington D.C. as a staff economic analyst in a government intelligence department and then on Utah Senator Wallace F. Bennett’s staff.¹⁸⁸ His bachelors and master’s degrees in political science from the University of Utah demonstrate his passion for the political realm although he did not choose to make a career there.

Maxwell’s early life was formative. He graduated from Salt Lake City’s Granite High School—the birthplace of seminary in 1944 and then almost immediately volunteered to fight in World War II.¹⁸⁹ His time fighting on the island of Okinawa shaped him for the rest of his life. He recalled an experience in a foxhole in the midst of battle where he “knelt, trembling, and spoke the deepest prayer he had ever uttered, pleading for protection and dedicating the rest of his life to the Lord’s service.”¹⁹⁰ Following his time in military service he served a mission in eastern Canada.¹⁹¹

Maxwell’s unique background shaped his education philosophy. It has been stated that “his newness to Church education enabled him to bring a fresh perspective to the problems facing the system, and he also possessed a rich intellect and a natural gift for statesmanship.”¹⁹²

¹⁸⁷ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 213.

¹⁸⁸ Hafen, *Disciple’s Life*, 205-206.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 96.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 110.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, 129.

¹⁹² *By Study and Also By Faith*, 213.

President Harold B. Lee noted that “the new commissioner was skilled at analyzing and having fresh ideas and felt free to make suggestions.”¹⁹³ Maxwell can best be seen as an innovator, builder and visionary. He created CES and propelled it down the path that it has been pursuing ever since.

Neal a. Maxwell was called as an Assistant to the Twelve in 1974 and then as a member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles in 1981.¹⁹⁴ Jeffrey R. Holland would replace Maxwell as Commissioner of CES in 1974 but Maxwell’s influence and contributions in this era are unmatched.

Joe J. Christensen

Unlike Commissioner Maxwell, Joe J. Christensen was a long time religious educator prior to his appointment as associate commissioner of seminaries and institutes. He had served in many capacities within Church education including, teaching “at the Granite, Utah, seminary...directed the Moscow, Idaho, institute, the two founding institutions of seminaries and institutes. Brother Christensen had also served as the Salt Lake Valley division coordinator and as the director of the Salt Lake Institute of Religion.”¹⁹⁵ Christensen’s Church education background brought practical understanding that worked well with Maxwell’s ever expanding agenda.

Christensen would prove to be an effective administrator overseeing the many developments of the era. These developments include, refining administrative positions in seminary and institute’s, introducing a four year seminary curriculum which included adding the Book of Mormon to mandatory courses, establishing an “Evening with a General authority” which allowed for religious educators to hear from a General Authority directly on topics

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Hafen, *Disciple’s Life* 403, 437.

¹⁹⁵ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 215.

concerning their role, increased teacher training for prospective teachers, created an annual CES symposium that increased scholarship and teaching methodology, and provided a “lands of the scripture workshop” in which teachers could travel to the Holy Land in order to understand scriptures better. All of this in addition to overseeing a global expansion of seminaries and institutes with its accompanying curriculum. Christensen was busy man.¹⁹⁶

Joe J. Christensen’s educational philosophy might be best seen in his push to teach the scriptures in seminary and institutes and make them relevant in the life of young people. He stated,

I would not want my children to be taught by a teacher who, in a very stilted, factual, and perhaps boring way, would spend all his time teaching just the subject matter, nor would I want a teacher who somehow felt it his obligation to leave the scriptures on the shelf and spend almost all the time teaching in the area of personal experience, application, testimony and mere feelings. Somewhere between these two extremes we find there are great teachers who have the ability to teach the scriptures effectively and to do it in a way that a young person leaves with an increased testimony, [as well as] a very positive feeling toward the scriptures and the Church.¹⁹⁷

Christensen proved to be a talented administrator in an era of great development. It seems that his “Camelot” description of this era was very astute. If this era was indeed Camelot, Christensen was a Lancelot figure to Maxwell’s King Arthur.

Manuals Produced

The major manuals created may not accurately detail the production of seminary curriculum of this era, at least on the surface. A seminary manual was produced for the Old Testament in 1971. Two years later in 1973 the Church History manual was also recreated. The

¹⁹⁶ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 214-308. This large section of the text covers in greater detail Christensen’s role in the expansive nature of seminary and institutes from 1970-1980.

¹⁹⁷ Joe J. Christensen, “State of the Department Address,” Coordinators’ Convention, Apr. 5–9, 1976, in Fowles, “Study Concerning the Mission of the Week-Day Religious Educational Program,” 248. And also in, *By Study and Also By Faith*, 224.

final major manual produced for mainstream seminary was finished in 1978 for the Book of Mormon course.¹⁹⁸

To compare, the Franklin L. West era that spanned eighteen years from 1935-1953 also produced only three major manuals - one manual every sixth year on average. Granted, the West era took place during the Great Depression and World War II when seminary resources were greatly reduced.¹⁹⁹ The period of 1953-1970, a seventeen year period produced twelve major manuals, an average of a new manual every 1.4 years.²⁰⁰ In contrast, the 1970-1980 period produced major manuals on average once every third year. There are some important factors to recognize when examining curriculum production of this era.

A fundamental element that must be understood is the rise of Home Study seminary curriculum in this period of globalization. While Home Study seminary was developed in the mid-1960s it became critical in this era with the increase of global expansion.²⁰¹ Most international programs utilized a hybrid seminary experience where students would study on their own, then meet either weekly or monthly depending on distance in order to discuss their learning experiences.²⁰² As the seminary program continued to expand internationally Home Study curriculum became ever more important.

Home Study manuals were produced in 1970 for the Old Testament, 1971 for the Book of Mormon, Old Testament again in 1975, New Testament in 1976, Church History in 1977, and finally a rewriting of the Book of Mormon Home Study manual in 1978. That is six manuals

¹⁹⁸ Copies of these manuals are in the possession of the author.

¹⁹⁹ See Chapter Three of this work.

²⁰⁰ See Chapter Four of this work.

²⁰¹ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 176.

²⁰² *Ibid*, 177.

from 1970-1978, an average of a new manual every 1.3 years. Added with the other three major seminary manuals and this era produced nine seminary manuals in a ten year period.²⁰³

Curricular Philosophy

Like previous curriculum era's, the conceptual approach to scripture study was employed in this time period as well. It has been observed that,

In the 1970s seminary lessons were tied to the scriptures but not necessarily to a specific chapter or chapters. Teaching in this period followed a conceptual model, with teachers building a lesson around a key concept. Ernest L. Eberhard Jr., one of the heads of curriculum during this time, counseled teachers to ask themselves, "On what one great idea will I hang my lesson today?" For example, a teacher might relate the story of David and Goliath on a day when he was focusing on faith or a related concept. Curriculum during this period was extremely comprehensive: full of games, activities, stories, and simulations.²⁰⁴

While the conceptual approach remained the same, there was a clear shift in seminary curricular philosophy that can easily be distinguished. The comprehensive nature of the curriculum led to an overwhelming size and prescriptiveness of the manuals. For example, the Book of Mormon manual produced in 1978 was almost a thousand pages long. Its accompanying student manual was split into two parts, together consisting of seven hundred and twenty eight pages. The sheer quantity of the curricular materials demonstrates a lot about its philosophy, exhaustive and prescriptive.²⁰⁵

A major factor of the increase of material was the ability to do so. In 1972 "the number of full-time seminary and institute writers and editorial assistants was increased. As the staff grew, so did the student and teacher manuals, some of which were close to a thousand pages long."²⁰⁶

An expanding curriculum staff meant an expanding volume of curriculum.

²⁰³ Copies of these manuals are in the possession of the author.

²⁰⁴ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 273.

²⁰⁵ *Seminary Book of Mormon Teacher Manual*, Department of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, 1978. Also, *Book of Mormon Student Manual*, Department of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, 1978.

²⁰⁶ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 272.

The second lesson in the Book of Mormon course is illustrative of what curriculum looked like. The course was titled “Keystone” in order to teach the Book of Mormon as the keystone of our religion. The “Objective” was clearly stated as follows, “Students will more fully realize the importance of the Book of Mormon in their lives and will understand the role of certain prophets in making this book available for us today.”²⁰⁷ Directly following the objective was a section titled “Indicator Behaviors”.

Students should be able to-

1. Explain what Joseph Smith meant when he said the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion.
2. Give evidence that much effort has gone into making the Book of Mormon available to us today.
3. List reasons why he should study the Book of Mormon.²⁰⁸

For the next ten pages, how to accomplish the “objective” and “indicator behaviors” were carefully spelled out with detailed instructions. Each question a teacher was to ask was listed, each visual aid provided, each object lesson described, every story disseminated, and each discussion planned, all in perfect sequence. These were not mere guidelines either, there was a sense that the curriculum was to be followed and the objectives accomplished. In one preface the manual states “the teacher may desire to add objectives to the list, but he is not at liberty to remove any, either mechanically or through instructional negligence.”²⁰⁹ How would a teacher add objectives on top of the rigorous curriculum is the question.

This thorough and prescriptive approach to curriculum can be seen not just in the Book of Mormon manual but also in the other two major manuals of the era, the Old Testament and

²⁰⁷ *Seminary Book of Mormon Teacher Manual*, 1978, 11.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *Church History and Doctrine Home Study Teacher Manual*, 1977, i.

Church History.²¹⁰ While the volume of major manuals was small, only three manuals, the size of each one more than made up for it.

There is a clear philosophical turning point midway through this era, and for good reason. As seminary continued global expansion with rapidity “the largest concern with globalization was translating materials.”²¹¹ The difficulty of translating a thousand page seminary manual in a multitude of foreign languages became pressing. Assistant Commissioner Christensen acknowledged that the initiative to launch the program internationally was “an easier thing to say than to do, because we literally had people that were in effect...establishing the seminary and institute program without the curricular materials.”²¹² In order for curriculum to be translated with greater ease, it had to be simplified.

Part of the simplification process also entailed what CES coordinator in Europe, James R. Christianson referred to as “trans-culturization.” He said,

We usually think of England as being a close ally of the United States, and because we both speak English we think that there ought to be no problems of communication. And yet the English have been most vocal in their rejection of our materials because of the Americanisms that are in them. ... They’re excited about Seminary and they’re excited about learning the gospel, but they just reject those things that are typically American. When we show them a filmstrip or when we present the materials that talk about American things such as a baseball game, or a football game, or a basketball game, or cheerleaders, or going to drive-in movies, they refuse to work it in because they say, ‘We can’t understand this, we don’t have anything to refer to.’ ... It’s the Americanisms as such that they tend to reject.

With these challenges as the backdrop, Assistant Commissioner asked the curriculum staff to “trim the fat and leave the muscle.”²¹³ By 1978, the First Presidency and Quorum of

²¹⁰ Copies of *Teacher Manual Old Testament*, Department of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, 1971 and *Church History and Doctrine Teacher Manual*, Department of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, 1978 are in the possession of the author.

²¹¹ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 235.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 272.

the Twelve Apostles also became involved. Due to the costs of curricular materials throughout the Church, the Brethren asked for a reduction in printed materials in every department. The mandate was unequivocal, “considerable effort must be made to simplify instruction, training, and supervision.” It became clear that “for seminaries and institutes to be extended to the ends of the earth, a serious reduction in page count was absolutely necessary.”²¹⁴ The last major seminary manual of this period was published the same year the Brethren directed changes, therefore, no alteration can be seen in the curriculum of this time. Nevertheless, this philosophical shift would permeate the following period and guide all subsequent curricular practices.

Summary of Findings

The period from 1970-1980 was a period of great innovation and growth. Some the greatest leaders to ever work in Church education came on the scene in this era with Neal A. Maxwell being preeminent amongst them. His creation of the Church Education System or CES is a lasting legacy. “Camelot” has been a word used to describe this time and indeed in many ways it was. Before this time, the seminary program never had seen such innovations and support from the Brethren as they then enjoyed.

Globalization became a defining element of all the work that was accomplished from 1970-1980. As the Church expanded, CES went right along into the nations of the earth. This growth would propel changes in seminary, most notably with the Home Study program increasing as a significant way to deliver a seminary experience. Curriculum would also be impacted moving forward. The size of curriculum would hit its zenith during this era only to realize that it was not sustainable as the Church continued to translate the materials into more

²¹⁴ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 274.

and more languages. Simplification and reduction became the call as the era ended and would proceed as the major curricular force in the subsequent period. It must also be recognized that the requirement change to four years of seminary attendance in order for credit, meant that at last, the Book of Mormon would be a required course of study.

CHAPTER SIX

MODERN ERA: 1980-2015

Perhaps the most drastic changes ever to be made in the curricular approach in seminaries would take place in the most recent decades, from 1980-2016. These changes were fostered with the care of steady and consistent leadership. Stanley A. Peterson would oversee nearly two thirds of this period and guide the direction and implementation of these significant changes. This modern era proved to be innovative and fast-paced with exponential enrollment growth taking place, resulting in improved teacher resources and transformed curriculum.

Historical Setting

The modern era of the seminary program began with a clear and direct initiative from the leading councils of the Church to reduce and simplify curriculum.²¹⁵ In order to accomplish this significant challenge, a new approach to curriculum would be adopted. Rather than teaching concept driven lessons, as had been done essentially since the beginning of the seminary program, the new approach was to teach the scriptures sequentially. Seminary defines sequential scripture teaching as teaching the chapters of scripture in sequential order as they naturally are organized in the books of scripture, rather than based on concept, theme, or topic. This would allow for the scriptures themselves to make up the majority of the curriculum. Reducing curriculum through a sequential scripture approach and then effectively implementing this change would dominate much of the ensuing decades. In fact, Stanley A. Peterson, who directed Seminaries and Institutes from 1977-2001 stated that “those two tasks took almost my whole administration.”²¹⁶

²¹⁵ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 274.

²¹⁶ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 404.

While the mandate for a reduction and simplification of curricular materials was clear, the way to accomplish it was not. In 1980 Peterson “expressed his desire that the curriculum department develop a philosophy of curriculum that would be effective, reduce page counts and costs of curriculum, and simplify translation.” Those tasked with making that happen were less than enthused. The director of curriculum at the time, David A. Christensen, “remembered that he was not happy with the changing philosophy of curriculum, nor were Jay E. Jensen, the director of seminary curriculum, or Gerald N. Lund, the head of institute curriculum. But they were not united as to the solution.”²¹⁷

In what is now considered a watershed moment in the history of seminaries, Peterson sent Christensen, Jensen and Lund off to Utah’s Heber Valley to the Homestead Resort in order to figure out how to move forward. They went fasting and faced opposition but eventually came up with the following,

They summarized their decisions in the form of five statements: (1) the curriculum would be scripture driven in-stead of concept oriented. No longer would teachers teach a single concept for the entire class period. Instead, they would teach a scripture block that usually contained several concepts. (2) Administrators would create a student manual reduced in size, but the scriptures would be students’ primary text. (3) An instructional improvement package would have to be in place to help the teachers adapt to the new curriculum. (4) Seminary courses would use the four institute manuals (Book of Mormon, Old Testament, New Testament, and Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price) as resources. (5) The curriculum development department would continue with David Christensen at the head and Gerald Lund, Jay Jensen, and Gordon Holbrook as his assistants. In addition, a new department was needed to further research and development.²¹⁸

Not only was this new approach an effective way to reduce and simplify curriculum, it also aligned more fully to what Church leaders had previously taught. Christensen, Jensen and Lund acknowledged the words of Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Quorum of the Twelve

²¹⁷ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 332.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, 333.

Apostles in connection to this change. Elder McConkie, addressing religious educators stated that, “If you want to know what it is you should be teaching when you teach the gospel, teach the scriptures; teach them in the order they were given, in the emphasis the Lord gives them and in that way the Lord will teach [the students] what he wants them to know and in the order that he wants them to know it.”²¹⁹

While the dramatic shift in the approach to seminary curriculum would be one of the single most significant events of the period, another important area of emphasis was the investment in seminary teachers and their training. Shortly after sequential scripture teaching was introduced, a series of other curricular directives came together with the intent to assist teachers to become more effective in the classroom.

An example is what Gerald Lund’s termed “RPA,” or readiness, participation and application. Lund had an experience in a sacrament meeting that led him to devise a clear and concise model on how to approach teaching the scriptures. The approach was based on the idea that a few important elements must take place throughout a lesson in order to be effective. The elements have been summarized as follows, “first, some kind of readiness (attention grabbing) tool; second, some sort of participation on the part of the student. . . ; and third,. . . some kind of relevant application.” The process known as RPA, “became a standard skill set for seminary and institute teachers.”²²⁰

This RPA approach would not be the only development that was intended to help teachers excel. A program called Professional Development Program or PDP sought to instill a set of core values or principles into the hearts of teachers. “This program was intensive, and the teachers and administrators who completed the program were given salary increases for their

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 334-336.

efforts. This training was as effective as any college course work in a United States college or university, and the salary increases were to provide the same type of financial increases given to teachers in the U.S. who completed additional course work.”²²¹ A Graduate Scripture Study program was also established with the primary focus of increasing scriptural understanding amongst teachers.²²²

Another fundamental change for teachers came as they received an annual contract of employment starting in 2004, opposed to the previous practice of “ten month letters of appointment.” Commissioner Paul V. Johnson noted the reasoning for the change “almost 20 years ago the board approved a summer employment option in order to increase teacher effectiveness, attract and retain outstanding teachers and do more for students. This move to a 12 month appointment encourages an even deeper commitment to do these things. We view religious education as a year round effort. You are professionals.”²²³

The desired outcome of these changes was for professionalism and greater effectiveness as religious educators. Whether it was a teaching technique like Readiness, Participation, Application, programs like Graduate Scripture Study or Professional Growth Program, or a full year contract, CES and later S&I, invested in their teachers in meaningful ways in this era.²²⁴

The investment of teachers and their growth was not the only type of growth seen in this period. Growth seems to be a common feature in nearly every era of seminary. The previous era was remarkable for its push into so many new international areas.²²⁵ The increase in number of

²²¹ *Ibid*, 348.

²²² *By Study and Also By Faith*, 348-349.

²²³ *Ibid*, 542

²²⁴ In order to distinguish CES, and its broad multifaceted mission from Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, Seminaries and Institutes of Religion (or S&I) became known as such. This took place, towards the end of this period. See *By Study and Also By Faith*, 496.

²²⁵ See chapter 5 of this work.

students in the previous decade of 1970-1980 was nearly 50,000.²²⁶ To put into perspective the amount of growth in this period, a period stretching more than three decades, the number of students increased by more than 200,000.²²⁷

Stanley A. Peterson marked the growth by his travels throughout the seminary world. He estimated that he travelled “over four million miles in 150 countries” and noted that “there was a period of time when I was gone from 175 to 200 days a year. Because there was so much going on and so many things that I needed to be doing.”²²⁸ The seminary program would continue its international growth throughout this era, entering more and more countries and reaching more and more students.

The final years of this period would greatly be influenced by three key developments starting in the early 2000’s. Adam Smith who has added to our understanding of these events in his scholarly work identified that “the introduction of The Current Teaching Emphasis in 2003, an updated Objective statement in 2009, and the release of the *Gospel Teaching and Learning* handbook in 2012” proved to be innovations that “increased clarity in direction received from senior Church leaders regarding elements of teaching and learning that assist an individual student in their process of conversion.”²²⁹

Indeed, senior Church leaders had been calling for greater effectiveness and greater conversion throughout the early to mid-2000’s and these three developments, Teaching Emphasis, Objective statement, and *Gospel Teaching and Learning* handbook were employed in

²²⁶ See Appendix 6: Seminary and Institute Enrollment by Year, 1912–2013 In, *By Study and Also By Faith*, 611-614.

²²⁷ Ibid. Enrollment numbers from 1980 to 2013 increased from 191,466 to 397,036.

²²⁸ “‘What a Wonderful Journey!’ An Interview with Stanley A. Peterson,” *Religious Educator* 3, no.3 (2002): 13-30, Eric Paul Rogers.

²²⁹ Adam N. Smith, *Teaching for Conversion: A History of the Current Teaching Emphasis, the Objective, and the Gospel Teaching and Learning Handbook for Seminaries and Institutes of Religion in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Dissertation BYU, 2015, 1.

response to the urging of the Brethren.²³⁰ More than anything else, curriculum in the final stage of this time period, would be driven by these developments.

The Teaching Emphasis developed from 2003 to 2012 with slight changes along the way. By 2012 when the *Gospel Teaching and Learning* handbook was released, the Teaching emphasis was changed to “The Fundamentals of Gospel Teaching and Learning” also referred to as simply “The Fundamentals.”²³¹ The Fundamentals included the following:

Teachers and students should—

- Teach and learn by the Spirit.
- Cultivate a learning environment of love, respect, and purpose.
- Study the scriptures daily, and read the text for the course.
- Understand the context and content of the scriptures and the words of the prophets.
- Identify, understand, feel the truth and importance of, and apply gospel doctrines and principles.
- Explain, share, and testify of gospel doctrines and principles.
- Master key scripture passages and the Basic Doctrines.²³²

Referring to the Fundamentals, an S&I Administrator who was an integral part of their development, Randall Hall, described them as playing “the dominant role in the teaching philosophy of S&I.”²³³ This can be seen in the refined Objective statement of S&I that grew out of the “sharpened focus” that the Fundamentals provided.²³⁴ The *Gospel Teaching and Learning* handbook was then built around the guideposts of the Fundamentals and Objective, thus empowering teachers to apply the principles of teaching for conversion

²³⁰ See Adam N. Smith, *Teaching for Conversion*, 1-16 for the development of these three elements and how the Brethren directly influenced them.

²³¹ Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, *Gospel Teaching and Learning: A Handbook for Teachers and Leaders in Seminaries and Institutes of Religion* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2012), 10.

²³² Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, *Gospel Teaching and Learning*, 10.

²³³ Smith, *Teaching for Conversion*, 9.

²³⁴ Smith, *Teaching for Conversion*, 9.

with greater clarity.²³⁵ Thus, the final curricular philosophy of the era is directly tied to these three key developments.

Key Figures and Education Philosophy

Stanley A. Peterson

Peterson had served as an associate commissioner over Seminaries and Institutes with Joe J. Christensen for much of the previous era. In 1979, Christensen was asked to serve as president of the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah, leaving Peterson as sole associate commissioner.²³⁶ Peterson was a bridge from the Camelot era into the modern period as he lead Seminaries and Institutes, first as associate commissioner, and then later with the title of administrator. His steady tenure would span from 1977–2001.²³⁷

A California native, Peterson taught in public schools in Southern California while completing graduate work at the University of Southern California. He joined Church education in 1968, first as chairman of the Brigham Young University California Center for Continuing Education. In 1970 he was appointed the associate dean of continuing education at BYU. In 1971 he became the dean of continuing education. It was in 1977 he was appointed as an associate commissioner of Church education under Commissioner Jeffrey R. Holland.²³⁸

Peterson proved to be a steady force throughout the period. While he directed a program for nearly twenty five years that continually expanded and innovated, Peterson’s view of his greatest accomplishment is very telling about his philosophy for Church education. He spoke of the “family spirit that we have been able to generate in CES.... That is one of the things I’m most pleased about. Even though we are very big, there is a family feeling in CES. I’m grateful

²³⁵ Smith, *Teaching for Conversion*, 16.

²³⁶ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 284-285.

²³⁷ *Ibid*, 596.

²³⁸ *Ibid*, 629-630.

for that because we have hung together—because we have enough common bonds and enough feelings for one another that there is a strong family feeling.”²³⁹

Henry B. Eyring

Henry B. Eyring would serve as CES Commissioner from 1980–1986 and then again from 1992–2005 with a term of service in the Presiding Bishopric in between. Eyring graduated from the University of Utah and Harvard University. He served as an associate professor of business at Stanford University from 1962 to 1971. In 1971 he became president of Church owned Ricks College in Rexburg, Idaho. Starting in 1977 he served as deputy commissioner of the Church Educational System under Commissioner Jeffrey R. Holland and worked closely with associate commissioner’s Joe J. Christensen and Stanley A. Peterson. In 1995, during his second term as Commissioner, he was called as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. In 2008 he was called to be the First Counselor in the First Presidency.²⁴⁰

Eyring’s vision was one of elevation or raising the sights of religious educators. Speaking to S&I employees he said “the world in which our students choose spiritual life or death is changing rapidly. ... Many of them are remarkable in their spiritual maturity and in their faith. But even the best of them are sorely tested. And the testing will become more severe. ...Our trust from the Lord as teachers of youth is great. And so is our opportunity.” Commissioner Eyring urged, “we can raise our sights by adding greater faith that the change promised by the Lord will come to our students. What we seek for our students is that change. We must be humble about our part in it. True conversion depends on a student seeking freely in faith, with great effort and

²³⁹ “‘What a Wonderful Journey!’ An Interview with Stanley A. Peterson,” *Religious Educator* 3, no.3 (2002): 13-30, Eric Paul Rogers.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 621.

some pain. Then it is the Lord who can grant, in His time, the miracle of cleansing and change.”²⁴¹

It should be noted that Commissioner J. Elliot Cameron served in between Eyring’s two periods from 1986–1989, Commissioner W. Rolfe Kerr served 2005–2008 and Commissioner Paul V. Johnson from 2008-2015, all able and bright servants. But, it was Eyring’s tenure as Commissioner that dominated this era for nearly two-thirds of the period and who had the greatest lasting impact.

Paul V. Johnson

Johnson wielded a unique influence in this era as he served both as Administrator of S&I and later as Commissioner of Education. He began his lifelong career in Church education as a seminary teacher in Chandler, Arizona, in 1978. By 1989 he went to the central office to work as an instructional designer, eventually serving as manager of the media team. Johnson had a myriad of responsibilities during his time in the central office including director of design and evaluation services, director of training services, and then as director of curriculum and training services.²⁴²

In 1999 he accepted an appointment to serve as a zone administrator over the central office’s Instructional Services Zone. He continued there until 2001, when he was appointed Church Educational System administrator over religious education and elementary and secondary education. In 2005 he was called as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He left his post as an administrator in 2007 to serve as a member of the Chile Area Presidency. He

²⁴¹ Henry B. Eyring, “We Must Raise Our Sights” (Church Educational System conference on the Book of Mormon, Aug. 14, 2001), 1-6.

²⁴² *By Study and Also By Faith*, 624.

returned to Church education in 2008 when he was called as Commissioner of the Church Educational System.”²⁴³

One of Commissioner Johnson’s durable teachings was about approaching change within Church education. He stated that “we can respond appropriately to change by being prayerful, humble, and teachable; by accepting new opportunities or assignments with a positive attitude; and by being willing to try new approaches or methods with a sincere desire to improve.”²⁴⁴

Johnson had experienced significant shifts in his tenure in Church Education and with clarity addressed the need for adaptability. His message was meaningful when he delivered it in 2013 but in truth, there is an element of timelessness to his message.

Other Notable Figures

While it is important to recognize that the catalyst for major changes in seminary curriculum of this era came from the leading councils of the Church and then directed by leaders such as Commissioner Eyring and Administrator Peterson, there were others who played very significant roles.

As has been noted, curriculum director David Christensen, head of seminary curriculum Jay Jensen and Gerald Lund, head of institute curriculum, made up the pivotal team that transformed seminary curriculum to a sequential approach. Their contributions in what has been termed “The Homestead Experience” cannot be understated.²⁴⁵ The directive was given to reduce and simplify curriculum and it was these good and capable men that brought such a thing to fruition.

²⁴³ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 624.

²⁴⁴ Paul V. Johnson, “Responding Appropriately to Change”, (Church Educational System Evening with a General Authority, Feb. 8, 2013) 1-3.

²⁴⁵ See *By Study and Also By Faith*, 331. The Homestead Experience was the impetus for the sequential scripture approach that has been previously discussed.

Also, S&I administrators in the latter part of the era played crucial roles in developing the Fundamentals, a refined Objective statement, and the *Gospel Teaching and Learning* handbook that would define the curricular philosophy moving forward. These individuals include Randall Hall, Chad Webb and Grant Anderson.²⁴⁶

Manuals Produced

With a fully manned curriculum department and with an initial mandate to simplify and reduce curriculum, manuals were immediately produced in the beginning of the period in order to accomplish that end. Later as curriculum circumstances evolved, additional materials were produced for the four seminary courses to best meet needs throughout the period.

In the spirit of simplification and reduction, the first materials produced were called “outlines” or in one case a “teaching guide” rather than manuals.²⁴⁷ It was in the first decade of the period that outlines were produced for the Book of Mormon in 1982, 1986, and again in 1991, the Old Testament in 1983, New Testament in 1984, and finally the Doctrine and Covenants in 1989.²⁴⁸

Following the initial push of curriculum materials, a second wave was produced under the title of “Teacher Resource Manual.” Starting in 1998 with the production of the Old Testament manual, the New Testament followed in 1999, and then the Book of Mormon in 2000, and the Doctrine and Covenants in 2001.²⁴⁹ These manuals would prove to meet curricular needs for over a decade.

²⁴⁶ Smith, *Teaching for Conversion*, 1-32.

²⁴⁷ The Book of Mormon resource in 1991 was titled a “Teaching Guide” all other materials were titled “Outlines.”

²⁴⁸ Copies of each of the named outlines are in the possession of the author.

²⁴⁹ As of 2016, these manuals are still available for teachers to utilize as a secondary resource. They can be found in the “Archived Seminary Manuals” tab, accessed at <https://www.lds.org/si/seminary/manuals/archive?lang=eng>.

The third, and final curricular production of seminary manuals was produced at the end of the period. The Book of Mormon Manual was produced in 2012 with the Doctrine and Covenants manual following in 2013, with the Old and New Testament manual's arriving in 2014, and 2016, respectively.²⁵⁰

Curricular Philosophy

As noted in the previous section, there are three clearly defined eras of curriculum within this period. The first is the simplification and reduction period that will last until 1998. From 1998 until 2012, the second phase of the period would be marked by an increased focus of curriculum for non-professional teachers. Starting in 2012 and continuing into 2016, seminary curriculum would be rewritten, once again focusing on non-professional teachers and with the intent to adapt for specific needs that would arise in the final years of the period.

By the late 1970's seminary had exploded into international territories leading to the necessity for a reduction and simplification of curriculum materials. The real transition did not come however, until the Homestead experience in which the scriptures themselves took center stage in curriculum. Sequential scripture teaching made it possible for curriculum to be trimmed in a major way. Seminaries internal history observed that "the need for more international materials led to a new emphasis on the scriptures as the basic texts of all courses taught by seminaries and institutes. The decision to teach the scriptures sequentially in seminary courses gave teachers and students new motivations to rely on the power of the word."²⁵¹ Thus, the scriptures themselves would make up the lion share of curricular material.

²⁵⁰ These manuals have been made available on lds.org under "Seminary Manuals" accessible through the following link <https://www.lds.org/si/seminary/manuals?lang=eng>.

²⁵¹ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 371-372.

This can be readily observed in the curriculum produced. The 1982 Book of Mormon Teacher Outline, consisted of just over 300 pages, about a third of the size of its predecessor. The 1986 Book of Mormon Teacher Outline similarly was just over 300 pages of curriculum. By 1991, however, the Book of Mormon Teaching Guide was reduced to a total of 50 pages.

In connection to this 50 paged manual it has been recognized that “Brother Peterson presented a copy of the new Book of Mormon Teaching Guide to each member of the Executive Committee and showed the comparison between the new Teaching Guide and the voluminous materials that had been provided prior to this time. Brother Peterson and the curriculum department were commended for the excellent job of reduction. . . especially as it related to reductions in translation costs.”²⁵²

So, what does a manual of 50 total pages consist of? The first four pages are dedicated to “Teaching the Scriptures” and are intended to orient the teacher in some basic approaches to teaching. Concise reminders are given for such basics as praying, humility, obeying the commandments and loving the students. This section also discusses choosing a scripture block, studying a scripture block and organizing a lesson. From pages 5-9 “Methods for Teaching the Scriptures” are outlined. Examples of the method’s discussed are things like, apply the scriptures, cross-reference, mark the scriptures, discuss, question, compare, list, and memorize scriptures.²⁵³

Pages 11-48 make up the bulk of the curriculum. Sections of the Book of Mormon are broken down into thirty six week segments. For example, week one, consisting of one page of material, covers the Title Page of the Book of Mormon to 1 Nephi chapter 4. Week 36 covers

²⁵²*By Study and Also By Faith*, 404.

²⁵³ Book of Mormon Teaching Guide, Table of Contents.

Moroni 1-10, this material stretching into two pages.²⁵⁴ Basically each week of material received one page of content.

This fully reduced curriculum was a concise reminder of some important principles in each chapter with a few suggestions of how to engage students in the scriptures with a question, discussion, or a cross-reference. For example, 1 Nephi chapter 18 contains four important points for a teacher to be aware of. The following is taken from the curriculum for 1 Nephi chapter 18 in its entirety,

18:1-3 Discuss how Nephi was able to build a ship.

18:9-22 Why did the round ball or compass stop working? Read Alma 37:38-40, 44-46, and discuss how we can keep the words of Christ “working” in our lives. (see “Apply the Scriptures” on page 5).

18:9-23 Ask students what they learn in 1 Nephi 18:9-23 about coming to Christ.

18:11 Compare 1 Nephi 18:11 with 1 Nephi 3:28-29; 1 Nephi 7:16-18. Why did the Lord allow Nephi to suffer? Cross-reference: D&C 122:7-9.²⁵⁵

This fifty page manual represents the most reduced and simplified curriculum of the era but evolving needs would call for a different approach. In the second phase of curriculum in this era, from 1998-2012 the call was to provide resources particularly for the non-professional teachers. These resources were intended to allow for balance between the teacher’s thoughts, ideas and approaches, while still providing meaningful assistance. Commenting on this period’s curriculum, a history of Seminaries and Institutes noted the following,

Randall C. Bird, who served as the manager of the seminary curriculum team from 1993 to 2003, noted, “Our main audience that we were hoping to help the most was the volunteer teacher, though we needed to help the full-time personnel as well. . . . There’s a larger number of volunteer teachers around the world, so we were trying to prepare curriculum that would help them the most.” Brother Bird and the curriculum team worked to provide guidance to the teachers in the field, but also allow them to be guided by their own study. “We wanted to. . . allow the Spirit to work with the teacher, and we wanted us to be a resource to the teacher.” One of the new manuals Brother Bird’s team created, called a teacher resource manual, presented several principles from a scripture block and then a set of

²⁵⁴ Book of Mormon Teaching Guide, Table of Contents.

²⁵⁵ Book of Mormon Teaching Guide, 14.

teaching ideas based on the principles presented. “Our new curriculum was more open and free for a teacher to pick and choose, rather than previous curriculums were more prescribed on what they should do”.²⁵⁶

A powerful stamp of approval for this shift was found in counsel from Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve. As Elder Scott surveyed this curriculum path “he reiterated the benefits of this approach in many of his talks in the 1990s.” The emphasis on the principles found in scripture was a particularly important point for Elder Scott. He taught, “As you seek spiritual knowledge, search for principles. . . . Principles are concentrated truth, packaged for application to a wide variety of circumstances. A true principle makes decisions clear even under the most confusing and compelling circumstances.”²⁵⁷ The four manuals of the Old and New Testament’s, The Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants and Church History reflect this direction.

These manuals continued the trend in size of previous manuals produced in the beginning of this period. The four new manuals produced during this time ranged from 235 pages to 317 pages. Each scripture block followed a pattern throughout the curriculum starting with a brief “Introduction” to the material, this was in the form of setting a contextual framework of what was to be seen in the chapter. The next step was aligned to Elder Scott’s teachings on principles. It was titled “Important Principles to Look For”. A series of principles were then outlined with their accompanying verses, most frequently there would be three to five key principles to look for. A section called “Additional Resources” concisely pointed teacher’s to other resources available, almost always in the form of a reference to an Institute manual of the same book of scripture. The final and most lengthy section was “Suggestions for Teaching” where ideas were given on how to teach the material. These suggestions came in many forms including quizzes,

²⁵⁶ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 432, 433.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

object lessons, meaningful quotes, and questions intended to help students look for and discover certain principles.²⁵⁸

This version of the curriculum was a nice balance between the overly prescriptive curriculum of the 1970's and the ultra-concise Book of Mormon Teaching Guide of 1991. The clearly highlighted principles guided a teacher on what to teach in a scripture block without overly prescribing how to do so. The “Suggestions for Teaching” section was never intended to be a lesson plan for the teacher but rather to provide some helpful methods, which it did so effectively. This curriculum proved to be very serviceable, lasting for over a decade.

The final phase of curriculum would come in the tail end of the period with manuals being produced from 2012-2016. The impetus for this curriculum came from the desire to align with the philosophy found in the Fundamentals of Teaching and Learning, the refined Objective statement and the *Gospel Teaching and Learning* handbook, all developed from 2003 to 2012. A few other key reasons played important roles and will be briefly mentioned.

One reason for new curriculum came from the desire to help the many non-professional teachers who taught seminary as their callings in non-release time programs. Thomas Valletta, director of curriculum starting in 2003, noted this point in an S&I history. It has been recorded that,

While these manuals were intended for all teachers—full-time, part-time, and called volunteers—they were especially written with the more than 40,000 called teachers in mind, realizing that their preparation time was limited and that a significant number of them had been members of the Church for only a short time. Brother Valletta commented, “The typical home-study teacher out in the field had the seminary home-study manual, had the teacher’s manual, had the institute manual for the substance, for the background or history—just too many things. . . . They even had separate media guides. . . . We were concerned about how much time it took to prepare.” The new manuals consolidated the

²⁵⁸ This pattern can be found throughout the four manuals written from 1998-2001.

information from these resources in one place to help streamline the teachers' preparation.²⁵⁹

These new manuals were intended to bring all resources into one place in order to expedite teacher's preparation. Because these manuals were intended to be the only needed resource, they increased significantly in size from previous manuals in the era, in fact, they ranged from 580 pages to nearly 600.²⁶⁰ Essentially, these manuals doubled the total page count of previous manuals in the period. The era of reduction and simplification had come to an end.

Another key issue with this latest curriculum was addressing the availability of information – with a proliferation of new perspectives that at times could be faith shaking. Elder Paul V. Johnson said to S&I teachers that “in this age our youth and young adults are bombarded with information from many sources. Good and evil are available to everyone—on demand—even on handheld devices. The remarkable advances in technology and communication have opened new possibilities and have brought new challenges. Information is at our fingertips. In most cases there is no gauge as to the accuracy or quality of the information.”²⁶¹ The new curriculum would discuss some of the more relevant issues with accurate information. It has been recognized that,

The new curriculum was designed to prepare the youth by including certain doctrinal, historical, and social questions that would allow students to discuss difficult issues in Church history and doctrine in the faith-filled environment of a seminary classroom. Lessons addressed such topics as plural marriage, race and the priesthood, and the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Scholars from the Church History Department worked together with the S&I curriculum team to ensure the latest research was used in the preparation of the new lessons.²⁶²

²⁵⁹ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 533.

²⁶⁰ The Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Seminary Teacher Manual contained 577 pages, The Book of Mormon Seminary Teacher Manual was 579 pages, The Old Testament Seminary Teacher Manual had 592 pages, and The New Testament Teacher Manual contained 592 pages.

²⁶¹ Paul V. Johnson, “A Pattern for Learning Spiritual Things” (Seminaries and Institutes of Religion satellite broadcast, Aug. 7, 2012), si.lds.org

²⁶² *By Study and Also By Faith*, 534.

Although the issues of consolidation of resources and addressing difficult subjects carried weight, they paled in comparison with the thrust that was generated by the philosophical shift of the Fundamentals, Objective and *Gospel Teaching and Learning* handbook. The principles of the Fundamentals are easily found on nearly every page of this new curriculum. While the first three Fundamentals, “Teach and learn by the Spirit”, “Cultivate a learning environment of love, respect, and, purpose” and “Study the scriptures daily and read the text for the course”, are not easily woven into lessons, they are frequently highlighted in a section titled “Teaching Helps.” This appears in a box out to the side of the lesson body and seeks to “explain principles and methods of gospel teaching.”²⁶³ Frequently, these are direct references from *Gospel Teaching and Learning* handbook.

The other Fundamentals are more explicitly integrated into the lesson. A box at the top of each new section is titled “Scripture Block Introduction” and highlights the Fundamental of “Understanding the context and content of the scriptures” by giving “a brief overview of context and content of the scripture block for each lesson.”²⁶⁴

The “Lesson Body” suggests teaching ideas, “including questions, activities, quotations, diagrams, and charts.”²⁶⁵ All of these are clearly tied to the Fundamentals driving students to “Identify, understand, feel the truth and importance of, and apply gospel doctrines and principles” and to “Explain, share, and testify of gospel doctrines and principles.” The “doctrines and principles are “emphasized in bold” to help teachers “identify and focus on them” in their discussions with students.²⁶⁶ As Scripture Mastery verses arise in a scripture block, the

²⁶³ The New Testament Seminary Teacher Manual, 2016, vii.

²⁶⁴ The New Testament Seminary Teacher Manual, 2016, vii.

²⁶⁵ The New Testament Seminary Teacher Manual, 2016, vii.

²⁶⁶ The New Testament Seminary Teacher Manual, 2016, vii.

curriculum has a separate box that “contains a teaching idea” for that verse.²⁶⁷ Each of the four manuals of this final curriculum phase follow this format.²⁶⁸

This new curriculum was intended to be dynamic by consolidating many resources into one place and providing opportunities to address some difficult issues. But, the most obvious aspects of this curriculum is the connection to the Fundamentals of Teaching and Learning, the Objective and the *Gospel Teaching and Learning* handbook. Never in the history of the seminary program has there been such clear vision and direction in curriculum.

Summary of Findings

The period that spanned from 1980-2015 started with a clear goal to reduce and simplify curriculum and then ended with the unequivocal tie to core fundamentals in order to more fully meet needs of both teachers and students. Both of these events in curriculum history have proven to be of monumental significance.

This was an era that saw the most dramatic shift in approach to curriculum in the history of seminary program. Sequential scripture teaching transformed the curricular approach as well as the needs of the teacher and student. For the first time in nearly an hundred years, the scriptures themselves made up the lion share of all curricular materials. Likewise, the importance of the Fundamentals set a clear path on how to approach the scriptures in a way that would lead to conversion.

²⁶⁷ The New Testament Seminary Teacher Manual, 2016, vii.

²⁶⁸These include, The Book of Mormon Seminary Teacher Manual, 2012, The Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Seminary Teacher Manual, 2013, The Old Testament Seminary Teacher Manual 2015, The New Testament Teacher Manual, 2016.

CONCLUSION

In 1977, President Boyd K. Packer made the following statement,

In the history of the Church there is no better illustration of the prophetic preparation of this people than the beginnings of the seminary and institute program. These programs were started when they were nice but were not critically needed. They were granted a season to flourish and to grow into a bulwark for the Church. They now become a godsend for the salvation of modern Israel in a most challenging hour. We are now encircled. Our youth are in desperate jeopardy. These are the last days, foreseen by prophets in ancient times.²⁶⁹

President Packer's sentiments seem to apply fittingly to this work dedicated to the history of seminary curriculum. The argument has been made in these pages that seminary curriculum was "granted a season to flourish" and eventually "grow into a bulwark for the Church." This growth period took place over the course of more than a hundred years.

It is fair to say that there has always been a tension in seminary curriculum, manifested in many ways throughout the years. At times the curriculum faced tension between secularization and a firmly faith based approach. In other periods the tension arose due to how prescriptive or non-prescriptive the material was. In the modern era a tension of audience has arisen, is the curriculum being produced for professional religious educators or volunteer teachers? Remarkably, seminary curriculum has by in large, navigated this tension in an efficient manner.

From this study, one of the most significant outcomes was an understanding of the balance that was achieved in seminary curriculum throughout the years. Regardless of the era, regardless of the specific historical context, the curriculum met the needs of students and teachers of the time. While it is very easy to judge the curriculum of the past harshly

²⁶⁹ *Teaching Seminary Preservice Readings Religion 370, 471, and 475*, (2004), 74–76.

based on our current standards, it is also quite unfair. While it may seem self-evident today that teaching the scriptures in a non-sectarian manner is the best way to go approach seminary curriculum it is important to remember from the aforementioned quote that “these programs were started when they were nice but were not critically needed.”

Seminary curriculum as it currently stands is at an interesting point. It is highly refined in the sense that it is extremely purposeful; everything in the curriculum is tied to core fundamentals or beliefs about the teaching and learning process. One could make the argument however, that it is too balanced. It has intentionally sought to provide sufficiently for both volunteer and professional teachers, regardless of culture or language. It is fair to assess that a volunteer teacher, teaching an early morning seminary class of 10 students in Africa has different needs than that of a professional teacher, teaching 200 students on the Wasatch Front. Yet, the curriculum has sought to balance the approach to work for both. In short, it is possible that the current curriculum is too general. This is manifested in the curriculum by generalized examples, activities, and object lessons etc. that work in both Africa and the Wasatch Front, but might not be very powerful or effective in either.

Moving forward is it possible to create multiple versions of curriculum that are culturally specific? Is it possible to create curriculum that focuses on the teacher’s needs based on their volunteer or professional status? These questions are indicative of the challenges of a worldwide program, in a worldwide Church.

This thesis was to answer the following research questions:

1. What were the major eras of curriculum in the seminary program?
2. What was the historical setting of these eras?
3. Who were the key figures of these eras and what was their education philosophy?

4. What major manuals were produced in each period?
5. What was the curricular philosophy behind the manuals and intended outcomes?

The major eras of curriculum over the course of a hundred plus years were broken down to five periods. These include the “Era of Emergence from 1912-1934,” “All Things in Commotion 1934-1953,” “Follow the Brethren 1953-1970,” “Camelot 1970-1980,” and the “Modern Era from 1980-2016.” These major eras were defined by important turning points in the historical setting and in conjunction with the transition of key figures. Now that the major eras have been defined, the rest of the research questions will be addressed within the context of each era.

“Era of Emergence from 1912-1934”

What was the historical setting of this era?

The rise of the seminary program emerges from a challenging period of pronounced transformation within the Church that significantly affected its educational practices. By the beginning of the 20th century Latter-day Saints were forced by law to abandon their previously held practice of combining secular and religious education in schools supported by public funds. While religious education would not proceed in public schools, the Church was unwilling to concede the loss of religious education of its youth.

Initially, the Church looked to a system of academies to meet the spiritual and secular educational needs of Saints. While the academies were successful in their mission to educate, they proved to be too great of an expense. By 1912 the Granite stake in the Salt Lake Valley sponsored a program that proved to meet the religious needs of their youth while allowing the public school system to educate them in secular subjects. Thus, seminary was started as an

isolated program run by a single stake. It would quickly expand throughout the Intermountain West and soon supersede the academy system.

Who were the key figures of this era and what was their education philosophy?

Joseph F. Merrill was the father of the seminary program. It was Merrill, acting in his role as a counselor in the Granite stake presidency that implemented this new method of providing religious education. Merrill was a highly educated leader who was not afraid of the secular educational world. Later in the era, Merrill would direct Church education as Commissioner of Education. Like Merrill, Adam S. Bennion received graduate degrees outside of Utah and was comfortable with secular education. Bennion, acting as Superintendent of Church Schools, played a unique role as he moved to shut down many Church operated academies in order to shift secular education to public schools and religious education to the newly formed seminary program. This move would be a financial advantage for the Church.

While Merrill and Bennion were the single most important figures in this emerging era, other individuals played important roles. Thomas Yates served as the first seminary teacher and developed the first course outline. Yates, who taught for just one year, was followed by Guy C. Wilson, a career educator who continued to develop what seminary would look like. Yates and Wilson, just as Merrill and Bennion, had studied at eastern universities and were at ease with secular education.

What major manuals were produced in this period?

Manuals in the very beginning were non-existent, it has been documented that the “only textbooks were the scriptures.”²⁷⁰ At first, Yates and Merrill developed a course outline together but unfortunately it has not been preserved. As Guy C. Wilson took over for Yates, he continued

²⁷⁰ Berrett, *A Miracle*, 30.

the same pattern of developing curriculum in an informal way. The first manuals were produced at the end of the era under the direction of Commissioner Merrill. The manuals were produced in a way that allowed for students to receive high school credit and therefore had to “be devoid of the teaching of pronounced sectarian dogmas.”²⁷¹ Thus, the most prominent formal manuals in seminary were non–sectarian works on the Old and New Testaments. Later, a manual focusing on the mission of the Church was also produced.

What was the curricular philosophy behind the manuals and intended outcomes?

The most prominent aspect of the curricular philosophy of the era was the non–sectarian approach. This allowed for students to receive high school credit for their time in seminary but put a restraint on teaching pronounced Latter–day Saint doctrines. In fact, at one point in this era “the situation required rewriting the seminary courses of study to delete any materials from the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price.”²⁷² This philosophy was embraced by the likes of Merrill and Bennion who found value in receiving high school credit and were undeterred by the secularization of the curriculum.

“All Things in Commotion 1934-1953”

What was the historical setting of this era?

This era was defined by the Great Depression, World War II and a post–war world where things would be put back together. The seminary program was effected by the Great Depression and War with multiple seminary programs being forced to shut down. Rapid growth was the hallmark at the end of the era with resources being more available and the innovation of early morning programs exploding, particularly in Southern California.

²⁷¹ History of South [High School] L.D.S. Seminary, 1931-1937, 11, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

²⁷² Berrett, *Miracle*, 44.

Secularization was also confronted during this period in an emphatic way by President J. Rueben Clark, Jr. of the First Presidency.

Who were the key figures of this era and what was their education philosophy?

Franklin L. West directed Church education during this period as Commissioner. His background was academic in nature having worked as the dean of the faculty at the Utah State Agriculture College prior to being made Commissioner. West hired M. Lynn Bennion as supervisor over seminaries. Like West, Bennion held a doctorate degree from a prestigious university. Bennion pushed for a problematic, nonsectarian curricular approach and was successful at implementing it. While successful in its aim, this approach would catch the attention of President J. Rueben Clark, Jr. of the First Presidency who was concerned about the secularization of Church education. This led Clark to deliver a talk in 1938 titled “The Chartered Course of Church Education.”²⁷³ Clark’s confrontation with the secularization of Church education demonstrates an important shift, at least in philosophy, of the course that Commissioner West allowed Bennion to direct seminary curriculum.

What major manuals were produced in this period?

The manuals of this era were indicative of Bennion’s problematic and non-sectarian curricular approach. These include the works, *The Old Testament and the Problems of Life*, *The New Testament and the Problems of Life*, *LDS Church History and Doctrine*, and *Dramatic Pioneer Stories*.²⁷⁴

²⁷³ J. Reuben Clark Jr., *The Chartered Course of the Church in Education*, rev. ed. (updated 2004).

²⁷⁴ *The Old Testament and The Problems of Life* and also, *The New Testament and The Problems of Life*, L.D.S. Department of Education, Salt Lake City, 1938, *L.D.S. Church History and Doctrine*, L.D.S. Department of Education, Salt Lake City, 1940, *Dramatic Pioneer Stories*, L.D.S. Department of Education, Salt Lake City, 1948.

What was the curricular philosophy behind the manuals and intended outcomes?

Once again, Bennion's vision of a problematic and non-sectarian curricular approach dominated the era. The two biblical manuals of the Old and New Testament's were produced the same year that Clark delivered his discontentment of such an approach. Thus, one is unable to observe Clark's influence in a curricular way.

“Follow the Brethren 1953-1970”

What was the historical setting of this era?

The historical setting of this era represents the modernizing of the seminary and institute programs with shifts occurring that still hold to the present time. This can most easily be seen in the administrative structure of the program. The Unified Church School System was born, a precursor to the Church Education System or CES, connecting formerly independent entities together. Seminary and Institutes were now governed by an administrator and assistant administrators. A curriculum department was fully established. This modernization was also coupled with the adoption of President Clark's vision found in “The Chartered Course of Church Education.” The secularization preeminent in the previous era was replaced with the mantra to “Follow the Brethren.”

Who were the key figures of this era and what was their education philosophy?

William E. Berrett would direct Church education throughout the era but for much of the period he delegated the seminary program to A.Theodore Tuttle and Boyd K. Packer. It was Tuttle and Packer who would move seminary toward President J. Rueben Clark's vision in the “Chartered Course,” and push the “Follow the Brethren” mentality. This would start a transformation to move seminary and institutes to align with the foundational teachings of the faith.

What major manuals were produced in this period?

This was a period of curriculum expansion. Tuttle and Packer's push to harmonize with Church leaders and move away from secularization can perhaps best be seen with the introduction of a Book of Mormon seminary manual for the first time. However, the Book of Mormon manual was not the only change to curriculum. The core seminary manuals for the Old and New Testament's, Church History, along with the new emphasis on the Book of Mormon with its accompanying manual, were all rewritten in 1955-1956 and then rewritten again three more times throughout the era. Never before had the core manuals for the seminary courses received so much attention.

What was the curricular philosophy behind the manuals and intended outcomes?

The curricular philosophy of this era was guided by three main principles. The first was bringing the "courses of study into line with the concept level of the students." This was "designed to achieve the maximum effects in building the concepts, attitudes, and traits that would ensure that students developed testimonies of the gospel and moral character and gained knowledge and understanding of the gospel."²⁷⁵ The second phase was motivated by getting the "involvement of the entire faculty in developing and testing curriculum materials." The final phase "had to do with religious instruction of the student. It was felt that more growth, personal satisfaction, and loyalty to the Church and its tenets would result from devoted service in building the kingdom of God."²⁷⁶ Thus, we see a clear shift in core philosophy from the previous era.

²⁷⁵ Berrett, *A Miracle*, 90.

²⁷⁶ Berrett, *A Miracle*, 90.

“Camelot 1970-1980”

What was the historical setting of this era?

This era has been affectionately describe as “Camelot.”²⁷⁷ The reasons for this inspiring title were the important innovations that took place along with the unprecedented support from the Brethren. The era is defined by feelings of growth, progress and optimism. This period saw the creation the Church Education System, an explosion of global expansion, great leaders, and improved curriculum.

Who were the key figures of this era and what was their education philosophy?

This was an era where names like Neal A Maxwell, Dallin H. Oaks, Jeffrey R. Holland, Henry B. Eyring and Joe J. Christensen were involved in Church education. Of these prominent figures, Maxwell and Christensen were the two leading figures that influenced the seminary program and seminary curriculum. Maxwell, as the Commissioner of Education set the era ablaze with advances like the Church Education System (CES), which unified all educational pursuits in the Church. He maximized global growth efforts, and set the tone for thinking differently. Joe J. Christensen was there right alongside Maxwell and was tasked to implement and direct all efforts inside the seminary and institute programs of CES. Christensen’s direct involvement in seminary and seminary curriculum made him a particularly influential figure.

What major manuals were produced in this period?

The major manuals produced in this era were the 1971 Old Testament Manual, the 1973 Church History Manual and the 1978 Book of Mormon Manual. Superficially, this may not seem to be a lot of curriculum production but the reality is quite different. First, this was three major manuals produced in a ten year period. Second, these manuals were extremely comprehensive,

²⁷⁷ Joe J. Christensen, interview by E. Dale LeBaron, Apr. 13, 1991, E. Dale LeBaron CES oral history interviews, 1991-2003, 21, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

the Book of Mormon Manual for example was nearly a thousand pages long, dwarfing anything previously produced. And finally, much of the curriculum effort in this era was directed to the Home Study program. Home Study curriculum was an adaptation of the major curriculum manuals, designed as a hybrid seminary experience for students living outside of Church strongholds who would meet with other students and a teacher infrequently.

What was the curricular philosophy behind the manuals and intended outcomes?

The curricular philosophy of this period has a couple of key elements. The first component was the conceptually driving nature of the curriculum. Ernest L. Eberhard Jr., one of the heads of curriculum during this time, counseled teachers to ask themselves, “On what one great idea will I hang my lesson today?”²⁷⁸ Thus, specific concepts were the impetus of each lesson. Another key philosophy of the era can be observed through the sheer amount of material, these manuals were nearly double in size anything before or after them. The curriculum was very prescriptive and provided teachers with an overabundance of resources. Towards the end of this era, this philosophy would begin to shift as the size of the manuals were too cumbersome to translate in the global arena seminary was embarking on.

“Modern Era from 1980-2016”

What was the historical setting of this era?

Perhaps the most drastic changes ever to be made in the curricular approach in seminaries would take place in the most recent decades, from 1980-2016. These changes were fostered with the care of steady and consistent leadership. Stanley A. Peterson would oversee nearly two thirds of this period and guide the direction and implementation of these significant changes. This

²⁷⁸ *By Study and Also By Faith*, 273.

modern era proved to be innovative and fast-paced with significant shifts occurring to meet diverse challenges.

Who were the key figures of this era and what was their education philosophy?

Henry B. Eyring as Commissioner of Education played a significant role overseeing CES and the many curricular changes of the period. Stanley A. Peterson and Paul V. Johnson would direct the seminary program as Administrator for the majority of the era. Key figures in curriculum like, David Christensen, Jay Jensen and Gerald Lund would play significant roles in fundamentally changing the approach to a sequential scripture methodology. Later in the era, Randall Hall, Chad Webb and Grant Anderson would help foster greater vision by introducing “The Fundamentals of Teaching and Learning”, an Objective statement and a new teaching handbook called *Gospel Teaching and Learning*, all of which would be consciously integrated into the curriculum.

What major manuals were produced in this period?

There were three distinct rounds of curriculum production in this modern period. The first started with what were referred to as “outlines.” They were produced for the Book of Mormon in 1982, 1986, and again in 1991, the Old Testament in 1983, New Testament in 1984, and the Doctrine and Covenants in 1989. The second stage produced a “Teacher Resource Manual.” This started in 1998 with the Old Testament, the New Testament followed in 1999, the Book of Mormon in 2000, and the Doctrine and Covenants in 2001. The final stage began in 2012 with the Book of Mormon Manual, Doctrine and Covenants manual in 2013, with the Old and New Testament manual’s arriving in 2014, and 2016.

What was the curricular philosophy behind the manuals and intended outcomes?

The three stages of curriculum production each had a clear philosophy behind them. The first stage was all about “reduction and simplification.” The manuals prior to this era were massive, very difficult to translate in the increasingly global Church and, expensive. The key to this curricular change however was the sequential scripture approach, the scriptures themselves were intended to make up the majority of the curriculum. Thus, the “outlines” accomplished the “reduce and simplify” vision as well as placing the greatest emphasis on teaching the scriptures.

The second stage of curriculum sought to specifically help non-professional teachers. With much of the growth taking place internationally, many called seminary teachers had little time in the Church and they simply needed more resources available to them. The manuals produced from 1998-2001 accomplished the goal of providing more help and also clearly defined principles in a scriptural block. This principle driven structure was propelled by the teachings of Elder Richard G. Scott.

The final stage of curriculum from 2012-2016 was propelled by the clarity of vision produced from the “Fundamentals of Teaching and Learning”, the “Objective” statement, and the handbook titled *Gospel Teaching and Learning*. These three developments dictated seminary curriculum in a way that brought purpose like never before. Seminary curriculum now had a philosophy that was explicit, and absolutely tied to core institutional values.

Conclusion

In J. Ruben Clark, Jr.’s landmark address “The Chartered Course of Church Education,” he taught that “the youth of the Church are hungry for things of the Spirit; they are eager to learn the gospel, and they want it straight, undiluted. They want to know about the fundamentals...about our beliefs; they want to gain testimonies of their truth. They are

not now doubters but inquirers, seekers after truth.” He continued, “these students crave the faith their fathers and mothers have; they want it in its simplicity and purity. There are few indeed who have not seen the manifestations of its divine power. They wish to be not only the beneficiaries of this faith, but they want to be themselves able to call it forth to work.”²⁷⁹

Seminary curriculum may not have always fully exemplified President Clark’s noble determination, but it tried to. Over the course of a hundred years, vision increased, methods grew more effective and the approaches, more purposeful. Now, with optimism one can hope that seminary and seminary curriculum has “become a godsend for the salvation of modern Israel in a most challenging hour.”²⁸⁰

Suggestions for Future Study

This work focused exclusively on seminary curriculum and the natural next step of study would be to expand to the curriculum of the Church’s Institutes of Religion. Institute curriculum emerged from the same historical context and with the same leading individuals as that of the seminary curriculum. However, there were specific needs that each program faced that required significant diversions. Much of the institute curriculum materials are available in the Seminaries and Institutes archives located in the Church Office Building. A fascinating study could be done on the institute curriculum and how it compares to that of the seminary.

Another area that would be of substance would be a broader study of curriculum practices in all youth Church programs throughout each era. It would be very helpful to view what the curricular philosophy of the Sunday School, Young Men and Young Women organizations were through each period, what were the significant factors involved, how it differed from that of seminary, and why.

²⁷⁹ J. Reuben Clark Jr., *The Charted Course of the Church in Education*, rev. ed. (updated 2004), 3.

²⁸⁰ *Teaching Seminary Preservice Readings Religion 370, 471, and 475*, (2004), 74–76.

It should be acknowledged that this work has a very specific scope and was written with the intent to provide almost an overview of each curricular period with its accompanying factors. Much can still be done in mining the depths of significant individuals introduced and their unique contributions, as well as the significant events and factors that shaped seminary curriculum. One of the most predominant lessons learned from this study was how many factors came together one by one, to shape and mold curriculum as we know it.

APPENDIX A

COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF MAJOR SEMINARY TEACHER MANUALS FOUND IN SEMINARIES AND INSTITUTES OF RELIGION ARCHIVES

The New Testament and the Problems of Life: Teacher Manual, 1938

The Old Testament and the Problems of Life: Teacher Manual, 1938

LDS Church History and Doctrine: A Teacher Guide, 1940

The Old Testament and the Problems of Life: Teacher Manual, 1942

Dramatic Pioneer Stories, 1948

Book of Mormon fourth year teacher resources units, 1955-1956

Church History Outline, LDS Seminaries, 1956-1957

Church History and Doctrine Teacher Manual, 1961

Book of Mormon Teacher Manual: Seminary Course of Study, 1963

Old Testament Teacher Manual: Seminary Course of Study, 1963

New Testament Seminary Teacher Manual, 1964

Old Testament Seminary Teacher Manual, 1964

Church History and Doctrine Seminary Teacher Manual, 1965

Book of Mormon Teacher's Manual: Seminary Course of Study, 1966

Old Testament Teacher Manual, Seminary Course of Study, 1967

Church History and Doctrine Teacher Manual, Seminary, 1969

Old Testament Teacher Manual, Seminary Course of Study, 1971

Church History Teacher Manual, Seminary, 1973

Seminary Book of Mormon Teacher Manual, 1978

Old Testament Seminary Teacher Manual, 1979

Book of Mormon Seminary Teacher Outline, 1982

Old Testament Seminary Teacher Outline, 1983

New Testament Seminary Teacher Outline, 1984

Book of Mormon Seminary Teacher Outline, 1986

New Testament Seminary Teacher Outline, 1988

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Daily Teacher Outline, 1989

Book of Mormon Teaching Guide, 1991

Old Testament Teacher Resource Manual, 1998

New Testament Teacher Resource Manual, 1999

Book of Mormon Teacher Resource Manual, 2000

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Teacher Resource Manual, 2001

APPENDIX B

EXCERPTS FROM SEMINARY MANUALS

The New Testament and the Problems of Life: Teacher Manual, 1938 pages 2, 4

Introduction to the Problem

H. G. Wells, the outstanding British historian, said that after considering all the men who had ever lived, he considered that Jesus Christ was the greatest. Jesus is greater than any of the generals, kings, presidents, explorers, scientists, and authors who ever lived.

A

1. What is this thing called greatness in men?
2. What standards can we apply to others and ourselves to determine our greatness or value in the world?
3. Why are we so often mistaken about the greatness of an individual when he is alive only to have TIME show us what real greatness is?
4. Someone has said that great ideas make great men. What teachings of Jesus lifted Him to the highest standing of any man who ever lived?
5. Greatness does not always affect us the same way. Charles Lamb said, "If Shakespeare was to come into this room, we should all rise up to meet him; but if Christ was to come into it, we should all fall upon our knees." What is the difference?
6. Does a man need to be a king, general, an author of many books, painter of pictures, philosopher, or a lawyer to be great? Jesus was none of these, yet we think that in order to be "successful" today we must attain a high position, out-ranking our fellow men and making them feel they must follow us before we think we are great. What has caused this difference in our way of thinking?

Issues Involved

1. What institutions, practices, and elements of our culture contribute to the value and joy of our lives today?

Suggestion: This would involve beginning with today in analyzing those things in our culture-- art, literature, law, organization, institutions, holidays and all practices that contribute to the value and joy of living.

The teacher may approach this issue by informally discussing the events of the past summer vacation period with the students to arrive at an evaluation of those things which they have done as being good or bad in terms of values to life as a whole.

2. What important institutions and practices that contribute to the value and joy of our lives are directly traceable to Jesus?

Suggestion: This issue can be begun by examining the list developed on the last issue. After this list has been examined, others can be added. Some of these and their possible connections might be: (1) Charity organizations which attempt to care for the poor and needy; (2) Schools which were founded by Christian churches for the benefit of the common people; (3) Hospitals to heal the sick and make them whole again so they can continue on in life; (4) Equal opportunities for all, so that all can work, play, and worship in a way that life will be a joy; (5) Democracy, or freedom of thought, which came through the great value which the Saviour placed on the individual; (6) Many of the helps of science which mean so much to us today are due indirectly to the teachings of Jesus that God is a God of law and order and that when we discover that law we can rely on its use for our good; (7) Agitation for peace in the world; (8) Justice for all as found in the better courts of the land; (9) Art, architecture, music, literature; (10) The celebration of certain special days such as Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter.

LDS Church History and Doctrine: A Teacher Guide, 1940, Table of Contents

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Essentials in Church History -- Smith

Practical Theology -- Wideman

1:4

Ten Great Industrialists

In 1923, a very important meeting was held at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago. Attending this meeting were ten of the world's most successful financiers. Those present were:

The president of the largest independent steel company,
The president of the National City Bank,
The president of the largest utility company,
The president of the largest gas company,
The greatest wheat speculator,
The president of the New York Stock Exchange,
A member of the President's Cabinet,
The greatest "bear" in Wall Street,
The head of the world's greatest monopoly,
The president of the Bank of International Settlement.

We must admit that here were gathered a group of the world's most successful business men, . . . at least men who had found the secret of making money.

But twenty-five years later, let's see where these men are.

The president of the largest independent steel company, Charles Schwab, died a bankrupt (man) and lived on borrowed money for five years before his death.

The president of the greatest utility company, Samuel Insull, died a fugitive from justice and penniless in a foreign land.

The president of the largest gas company, Howard Rapson, is now insane.

The greatest wheat speculator, Arthur Cutten, died abroad--insolvent.

The president of the New York Stock Exchange, Richard Whitney, was recently released from Sing Sing Penitentiary.

The member of the President's Cabinet, Albert B. Fall, was pardoned from prison so he could die at home.

The greatest "bear" in Wall Street, Jesse Livermore, died a suicide.

The head of the greatest monopoly, Ivor Krueger, died a suicide.

The president of the Bank of International Settlement, Leon Fraser, died a suicide.

ALL OF THESE MEN LEARNED WELL THE ART OF MAKING MONEY--
BUT NOT ONE OF THEM LEARNED [THE ART OF LIVING] !

(Note: There is no information given regarding the name, or what happened to, the tenth man, the president of the National City Bank.)

1:5

Achievement

. . . Michael J. Dowling [was] a young man who fell from a wagon in a blizzard in Michigan when he was fourteen years of age. Before his parents discovered that he had fallen from the rear of the wagon, he had been frostbitten. His right leg was amputated almost to the hip, his left leg above the knee; his right arm was amputated; his left hand was amputated. Not much future for a young lad like that, was there? Do you know what he did? He went to the board of county commissioners and he told them that if they would educate him he would pay back every penny. During World War I, Mr. Dowling, who was at that time president of one of the largest banks in St. Paul, went to Europe to visit the soldiers--to visit those who were wounded. . . . Upon one occasion he was in a large hotel in London, and he had before him the wounded soldiers in their wheel chairs. They were in the lobby, and he was up on the mezzanine floor. As he started to speak, he minimized the seriousness of their wounds, the fact that one had lost an eye, another had lost an arm, etc., were no grounds for complaint. And he got these fellows so wrought up that they started to boo him. Then he walked over to the stairway and down the stairs toward the lobby, telling them as he walked how fortunate they were, and they continued booing. Finally, he sat down on one of the steps and took off his right leg. And he kept on talking and telling them how fortunate they were. Well, they calmed down a little bit, but they still resented his remarks. Then he took off his left leg. Well, the booing stopped then. But before he arrived at the bottom of the stairs, he had taken off his right arm and flipped off his left hand, and there he sat--just the stump of a body!

Michael was the president of one of the biggest banks in St. Paul. He had married and was the father of five children. He finally died as the result of the strength he gave in encouraging the wounded soldiers of World War I. Matthew Cowley Speaks, pp. 222-223.

Book of Mormon fourth year teacher resources units, 1955-1956, 1, 2

TEACHER RESOURCE UNIT I

America's First Scripture

Text: Book of Mormon -- Mormon, Words of Mormon, interpolations.

Time to Spend: Approximately two and a half weeks.

I. Objectives

- A. To develop in students an interest and appreciation in the Book of Mormon as scripture.
- B. To look at the Book of Mormon as a unity--to see the forest before we see the trees.
- C. To acquaint students with Mormon, one of the leading characters of the Book of Mormon, and to look at the book through the eyes of this great prophet-leader himself.

II. Analysis of Content -- Mormon writes a Book.

- A. The scope: time involved, overview, peoples
- B. Mormon, the Author
 1. What do we know about Mormon?
 2. His purpose
 3. His library of records
 4. His one-volume history
 5. His great task
 6. Mormon's problem of the Small Plates
- C. Summary of the Structure of the Book of Mormon
- D. The Book of Mormon Concept of Prophecy.

III. Student-Teacher Activities

- A. The scope: time involved, overview, peoples
 1. Construct a diagram on the blackboard (see p.9) which will orient the student in terms of the scope of the Book of Mormon. Discuss with the students as the various stages of the diagram are developed.
 - a. "In order to establish the sweep of Book of Mormon history, draw a horizontal line on the blackboard. At the left extremity put 600 B. C. and at the right end write 421 A.D.; then place zero or Christ at the appropriate place along that line--about six-tenths

Seminary Book of Mormon Teacher Manual, 1978, 12-17



MATERIALS NEEDED
Book of Mormon Arch (Teacher Kit)
Visual, Keystone Statement, (B1-2-1)
LA, The Handbook for Life
Film, *For Us* (:)

SCRIPTURAL CONTENT

Selected

LESSON TYPE

Conceptual

DEVOTIONAL

Short

The Keystone

I. THE BOOK OF MORMON IS THE KEYSTONE OF OUR RELIGION

- A. Visual: Keystone Statement
- B. Object Lesson: The Arch
- C. Testimony and Challenge

II. THE BOOK OF MORMON WAS WRITTEN FOR US

- A. Mormon 8:34, 35 Muroni Sew Us
- B. LA: The Handbook for Life
- C. Discussion: Handbook for Life

III. GREAT EFFORT HAS BEEN EXPENDED TO MAKE THE BOOK OF MORMON AVAILABLE TO US

Film: *For Us*

I. The Book of Mormon Is the Keystone of Our Religion

Be sure to allow five minutes at the end of class to show the film *For Us*. Have the arch set up as students arrive. Caution them not to touch it.



The keystone statement by Joseph Smith could be made into a bulletin board and left up for some time as a reminder to students to read the Book of Mormon. (See Section 1, lesson 4.)

Summarize on chalkboard or overhead transparency.

Visual: Keystone Statement, (B1-2-1)

QUESTION

According to the Prophet Joseph Smith, what are three reasons for studying the Book of Mormon?

RESPONSE

1. It is the most correct book on earth.
2. It is the keystone of our religion.
3. It will bring us closer to God if we abide by its precepts.]

This statement by the Prophet has a great deal of meaning. Let's analyze it more closely.

PROBLEM

To say that the Book of Mormon is the most correct book on earth is a bold statement. How can such a statement be justified?

AUXILIARY QUESTIONS

- For what reasons is the Book of Mormon more correct than the Bible?
- How was the Book of Mormon translated from the golden plates?
- How did the translation of the Book of Mormon plates differ from the translation of the biblical records?
- What does the Book of Mormon contain?

CONCLUSION

The Prophet Joseph Smith translated the golden plates by the gift and power of God. The Bible has undergone several translations by uninspired men and is correct as far as it has been translated correctly. The Book of Mormon contains the words of Christ (2 Nephi 33:10); therefore, Christ is the original author. Nephi, Mormon, and other Book of Mormon prophets recorded what they were inspired to record.

Object Lesson: The Arch

1
2

Explain how an arch is constructed—the keystone being the last stone added and the one that holds the arch together.

Have a student remove the keystone. Have two or three students reconstruct the arch.

PROBLEM

What do we mean when we say that the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion?

AUXILIARY QUESTIONS

- What is a keystone?
- How are arches constructed?
- If the Book of Mormon were false, what could we conclude regarding Joseph Smith?
- If Joseph Smith were a false prophet, what about the Church he helped organize?
- If the Book of Mormon is false, how important is this seminary class?
- If the Book of Mormon is true, what could we conclude regarding Joseph Smith and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?
- If the Book of Mormon is true, how important is this seminary class?

CONCLUSION

A keystone is the part of the arch that holds everything together. If it is removed, the whole structure crumbles. Thus it is with the Book of Mormon. If the Book of Mormon is false, Joseph Smith is a false prophet, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is false, and a person would be wasting his time in seminary. However, if the Book of Mormon is true, Joseph Smith is a true prophet, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true church, and seminary is the most important class I have.

Testimony and Challenge

Bear your personal testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, and challenge your students to discover its truthfulness for themselves or to strengthen their existing testimonies.

QUESTION

According to Joseph Smith's statement about the Book of Mormon, how should you be a different person at the end of our course of study this year?

RESPONSE

[I should be closer to God.]

PROBLEM

To get closer to God as a result of our study of the Book of Mormon, what must each of us do?

Definition of *precept*: A commandment, principle, or direction meant as a rule of action or conduct.

AUXILIARY QUESTIONS

- ★ What is a precept?
- ★ What does "abide by its precepts" mean?
- ★ What must happen before you can abide by the precepts of the Book of Mormon?
- ★ How could prayer help you?
- ★ Is it possible to read the Book of Mormon and not get closer to God? Why?
- ★ How does individual responsibility fit into this process of getting close to God?

CONCLUSION

Each of us must prayerfully study and learn the precepts taught in the Book of Mormon. Then we must live these principles in our daily lives. This will cause changes in our lives and bring us closer to our Heavenly Father because we will be doing what he wants us to do.

If we just read and study the Book of Mormon and do not improve our lives, we cannot expect to be closer to God. Ultimately the responsibility is ours.

II. The Book of Mormon Was Written for Us

Mormon 8:34, 35 Moroni Saw Us

How can the Book of Mormon, which was written over a thousand years ago, help us with the modern problems and "new" temptations that exist today? Let's find out.

QUESTION

Moroni, the last Nephite prophet, made a very interesting comment regarding how the Book of Mormon differs from the average history book. What is special about the Book of Mormon?

RESPONSE

[Moroni had revealed to him the events of the latter days, and he knew our "doing." He was speaking to us directly "as if ye were present."]

This is unusual when you think about it. Moroni, who lived in A.D. 420, was actually writing for people then unborn, people who would be living on the earth in the twentieth century. It would be like you writing in 1974 for people who would live on the earth in 3528, over one thousand five hundred years from now.



I Δ: The Handbook for Life

1
2

This learning aid will help you understand how the Book of Mormon can be your handbook for living today.

Distribute the learning aid *The Handbook for Life*. You may choose to have students work individually on the learning aid, or if time is short you may want to work through it together as a class. As you complete examples A and B on the learning aid, help your students understand how passages from the Book of Mormon parallel modern life and can help us solve our problems.

Discussion: Handbook for Life

PROBLEM

How can the Book of Mormon be your handbook for living?

AUXILIARY QUESTIONS

- ★ Why would it be inaccurate to say that the Book of Mormon is strictly a history of the ancient inhabitants of America?
- ★ How can we today "liken" the scriptures to ourselves?

CONCLUSION

The writers of the Book of Mormon knew our problems, and they recorded events and talks that contain principles which, if obeyed, will bring us joy and happiness. As we study the Book of Mormon, we should watch for these helps. If we have a problem, we can refer to the Book of Mormon for principles that can help us solve our problems.

III. Great Effort Has Been Expended to Make the Book of Mormon Available to Us.



Show film so as to leave little or no time at the end of the class.

Film: *For Us* (:)

The Book of Mormon is a gold mine. It can help you gain eternal life if you will cooperate with it. Unfortunately, many members of the Church do not understand how valuable this book is, nor do they appreciate the effort that has gone into making this volume of scripture available to them. This film should help you to better appreciate the efforts of many men and to realize the burden of responsibility that is upon you.

Note: This film may not be in the course during the 1974-75 school year. If not, please make necessary adjustments.

The Handbook for Life

Unfortunately, many members of the Church read the Book of Mormon as though it were simply a history book. The major writers of the Book of Mormon did not intend it to be a history book at all. In fact, Jacob said that his brother Nephi commanded him that he "should not touch, save it were lightly, concerning the history of this people." (Jacob 1:2.) (Daniel H. Ludlow, "The Book of Mormon Was Written for Our Day," *Instructor* 101:266 [July 1966].)

These prophet-recorders, through visions and the spirit of prophecy, were shown the people and circumstances of the twentieth century. Knowing our needs, they selected from the volumes of plates those particular principles and events that would be most useful to us in meeting our present needs, and they compiled them into what we now call the Book of Mormon.

Each time we read a story or incident in the Book of Mormon, we should ask ourselves these questions: Why did Mormon (or Nephi, etc.) select this particular story or event to include in the records? What principle is contained in this account which would help us understand and solve our problems? (Ludlow, "The Book of Mormon," p. 266.)

The prophet Nephi serves as an excellent example of a person who used the scriptures to solve problems. Through great effort Nephi obtained the brass plates of Laban, which contained information similar to part of the present-day Old Testament.

Nephi loved to study the scriptures. He wrote, "My soul delighteth in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them." (2 Nephi 4:15.)

Nephi not only studied and thought about the scriptures; he taught them to others and applied their lessons to real-life situations. He said, "I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning." (1 Nephi 19:23. Italics added.)

When Nephi came up against a problem, he referred to the scriptures for a solution. In other words, he likened the scriptures unto himself by looking for a situation in the scriptures which paralleled his own problem.

Reading the Book of Mormon can be an exciting adventure if you read looking for solutions to present or future problems that may confront you. To be able to liken the scriptures unto your own life, you must first read and understand the principles and doctrines they teach. Next you must recognize parallels between your particular problem and the principles contained in the scriptures. Then it becomes a matter of applying these principles to the solution of your problem.

The following examples are presented to illustrate how the Book of Mormon can be used as a handbook for living:

LESSON 2

SEMITIC CONDITIONS AND CUSTOMS

Study Sources

Scriptures	1 Nephi 2
Student manual	Unit 1, week 2, day 2
Institute manual	Chapter 2

Scripture Concepts Students Should Know

1. It was hard for Lehi's family to leave everything and follow the prophet—their own father.
2. Some of Lehi's family rebelled because of their unbelief and the strain of the call they had received from the Lord.
3. Parents have a divine responsibility to teach and lead their children in righteousness, and children have the responsibility to follow their parents.
4. Semitic refers to peoples and languages of the Middle East.
5. The Book of Mormon is full of conditions and customs that only one who knew the Middle East, and especially the Arabian Desert, by personal experiences could describe.
6. The Book of Mormon itself evidences that it was written by prophets who knew Jerusalem, the Arabian Desert, and the conditions and customs of the people there.

Special Instructions

This lesson contains the first of the evidence lessons, a series of lessons placed throughout the course which focus on the evidences, both internal and external, that the Book of Mormon is exactly what Joseph Smith claimed—a translation of the writings of ancient prophets who lived upon the American continents about two thousand years ago.

Ideas for Motivating Students to Study 1 Nephi 2

■ Chalkboard Discussion

Every society has its own traditions. Most cultures have traditional ways of saying hello, celebrating a birth, eating, dating, courtship, solemnizing a marriage, burying their dead, and so forth. Invite your students to share what they know about the ways different cultures do some of these things. List these practices on the chalkboard, and highlight the similarities to and differences from those of your culture.

Ideas for Teaching Students 1 Nephi 2

1 Nephi 2:1-4. A Pattern for Spiritual Growth

■ Short Lecture

A pattern for spiritual growth is portrayed in 1 Nephi 1. All of us go through this process regularly.

Lehi felt a sacred responsibility for others, and so he prayed for them (see 1 Nephi 1:5).

Revelation and instruction came in answer to his prayer (see 1 Nephi 1:6).

As Lehi applied the instruction, intense opposition came (see 1 Nephi 1:19-20).

By helping him overcome or endure the opposition, the Lord helped Lehi to proceed with great strength and power.

The youth need to understand this process. It occurs again and again in the scriptures and in our lives. Have your class suggest some parallels in their lives as you list them on the chalkboard. Your list might look like the following:

Youth sense who they are and seek to fulfill their destiny.

Revelation and instruction come from such sources as scriptures, parents, leaders, and talks.

As they seek to obey the Lord, Satan opposes, tempts, and tries them.

By helping them to endure and overcome opposition, the Lord strengthens them and helps them to go forward.

Illustrate these steps with personal experiences.

1 Nephi 2:3-5. Lehi's Family Obeyed the Lord

■ Student Activity

To help your students appreciate the great sacrifices Lehi's family made when they left their home near Jerusalem and ventured into the desert, consider one of the following options:

1. Ask the students to tell how they would feel if their father told them the Lord wanted them to leave home and go into the desert with just enough equipment and food to survive. (Make the situation fit your own area: the forest, the wilderness, the moors, or whatever.) You may even want to role-play this story with yourself as father and four students as your children.

2. Have each student make a list of the things he would take with him if he were asked to go into the wilderness with his family, as was Lehi's family. Then evaluate with the class the practicality and wisdom of the things listed.

1 Nephi 2:6-14. Laman and Lemuel Rebelled against Their Father

■ Discussion

It is appropriate to consider the rebellion of Laman and Lemuel at this point in the course, since it first emerges as a problem in these verses. Ask your students to consider some struggles between parents and children. There are some remarkable examples in literature and history of harmonious relations between parents and children (such as Lehi and Nephi), but there are also many examples of conflict between parents and children. Have your students act as the parent and let them express their feelings on how they would help their children to—

Understand the importance of listening to and obeying parents.

Accept assignments to wash dishes, clean their rooms, and do other household chores.

Study the scriptures as a family.

Attend and participate in family prayer.

It is very important that students see the other side and are put in a position to defend the role of the parent. It may help them appreciate what their parents are feeling. Often we only see our own side of a relationship.

1 Nephi 2:16–20. The Qualities of Nephi

■ Scripture Search and Chalkboard Discussion

Ask your students to read verses 16–20 and pick out all the qualities they can find which describe Nephi. Make a list on the chalkboard of their suggestions. Your list could include the following:

1. He was very young.
2. He was large in stature.
3. He had great desires to know the mysteries of God.
4. He was prayerful.
5. He was sensitive to the Spirit (the Lord softened his heart).
6. He was not rebellious.
7. He cared about his brothers.
8. He communicated with the Lord.

■ Word Definition

To help your students understand the word *Semitic*, which will be used frequently in these evidence lessons, put the word on the chalkboard and ask the students what it means. If no one knows the meaning, give a brief definition. You may also want to help your students pronounce the word correctly (check the pronunciation guide given in the introductory paragraph in the student manual).

Lehi was a Hebrew by birth, and he most likely had experience as a merchant with Egyptians and Arabians—all Semitic peoples.

■ Learning Aid (Student Manual)

You may want to review with your class the chart in the student manual on conditions or customs of Semite lands. Let the students discover for themselves how exciting it is to see the way the Book of Mormon experiences of Lehi's family were typical of the people and the area through which they traveled to get to the sea and eventually sail to the Americas.

Only a few of the most interesting parallels are listed on the chart. There are many more that could be cited. For more information see Hugh Nibley's book *Lehi in the Desert and the World of the Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1952).

■ Short Lecture

It is important that you impress your students with how

significant it is that the Book of Mormon has so much in it to show it was written by those who knew Jerusalem, the Arabian Desert, and life in that part of the world. All of this would have been unfamiliar to anyone with the background and knowledge of Joseph Smith, and yet the whole Book of Mormon narrative agrees in every detail and inference with the way things were in that part of the world. Not only would one have to have been there to write such an authentic record but, as Hugh Nibley has said, "It would have been quite as impossible for the most learned man alive in 1830 to have written the book as it was for Joseph Smith. And whoever would account for the Book of Mormon by any theory suggested so far—save one—must completely rule out the first forty pages." (*Lehi in the Desert*, p. 139.)

■ Scripture Reading and Discussion

One custom among desert people in the Middle East is demonstrated so beautifully in the Book of Mormon that it needs special attention. When sheikhs (chiefs of the tribes) travel, they often become poetic and compare people in their group to physical features of the landscape. The most commonly used feature is water because it is so precious and important in their lives. These comparisons are expressed in couplets or pairs, the pair constituting a complete poem of admonition or praise. Jesus often used this kind of teaching—comparing people and human experiences to things in the environment. You may want to have your students read 1 Nephi 2:9–10 after you have explained that they are to look for a comparison of people to physical things around them, especially to water, because it is so scarce and thus treasured greatly, and for a couplet, or pair of poetic phrases. It would have been impossible for Joseph Smith to have known that! In Arabic literature, these kinds of poems even have a name; they are called *Quasids* (pronounced as if with a *Kw*).

The Book of Mormon was written by Hebrew prophets who reflected their culture. It is not something Joseph Smith could have written himself with his New England background. As you finish this first evidence lesson, bear your testimony about Joseph Smith and his prophetic calling as the translator of the Book of Mormon.

TEACHING IDEAS FOR THE BOOK OF MORMON

Following are teaching ideas to add variety to your lessons.

WEEK 1

TITLE PAGE-1 NEPHI 4

Teach the following pages of the Book of Mormon: the first page (*The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ*); the title page (*The Book of Mormon: An Account Written by the Hand of Mormon*); the Introduction; the Testimonies of the Three and Eight Witnesses; the Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith; and Names and Order of Books in the Book of Mormon. Ideas for teaching *A Brief Explanation about the Book of Mormon* are found in the Teaching Ideas for the Book of Mormon (see the teaching idea for 1 Nephi 5:10-16, for example).

The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ The Old Testament and the New Testament both testify of Jesus Christ. In 1982 Elder Boyd K. Packer, an Apostle, announced in general conference that "the Book of Mormon will henceforth bear the title 'The Book of Mormon,' with the subtitle 'Another Testament of Jesus Christ.'" Discuss how the Book of Mormon is "Another Testament of Jesus Christ" (see "Discuss" on page 7).

Title Page and Introduction The first part of the Introduction will help your students understand the title page. Study the title page and the introduction with your students. Discuss the meaning of things like the following: written by the hand of Mormon, plates, abridgment, Nephites, Lamanites, the Tower of Babel, a witness that Jesus is the Christ, translated by Joseph Smith.

Introduction Ask students to study the last part of the Introduction to find out how a person can know the Book of Mormon is true. Have them mark and memorize Moroni 10:3-5 (see "Mark the Scriptures" on page 5 and "Memorize Scriptures" on page 8).

Testimonies Have students list what the Three Witnesses, the Eight Witnesses, and Joseph Smith saw, heard, did, and knew about the Book of Mormon. Have students tell what they have seen, heard, done, and know about the Book of Mormon.

Names and Order of Books in the Book of Mormon Have students memorize the names of

Level

1:4 To learn more about King Zedekiah and Jerusalem in 600 B.C., see 2 Chronicles 36:10-16.

1:5-13 Have students list the things Lehi did and the things he saw (see "List" on page 7). Speaking about 1 Nephi 1:9, Elder Marion G. Romney, an Apostle, said, "Lehi beheld Jesus"² (see "Words of the Apostles and Prophets" on page 6).

1:18-20 Have students mark the things Lehi preached to the people. Discuss why the Jews mocked him and wanted to kill him. Cross-references: 1 Nephi 16:2-3; 2 Nephi 9:40 (see "Cross-reference" on page 5).

1 NEPHI 2

2:2-8 Have students draw a map of where Lehi's family went (see "Draw" on page 8).

2:11-13 Have students list things showing that Laman and Lemuel were stiffnecked. Ask a student to do things like pick up something off the floor or prepare to say a prayer while pretending his neck is stiff. Discuss how stiffneckedness can stop us from doing what the Lord wants us to do.

2:11-13, 16 Identify and discuss differences between Laman and Lemuel, and Nephi (see "Compare" on page 7).

2:19-24 Identify the blessings the Lord said Nephi and his descendants could have. What did they need to do to get those blessings?

2:19-24 Explain that pronouns are words such as *ye, you, thee, thou, them, they, thy, I, me, and my* that stand for people, places, things, or ideas. For example, the first *me* in 1 Nephi 2:19 stands for Nephi, and the second *me* stands for the Lord. Identify who all the pronouns in verses 19-24 refer to (see the paragraph that begins "Look for pronouns" on page 2).

2:1-24 Review 1 Nephi 2 and find things that show the Lord's "tender mercies" for Lehi's family (1 Nephi 1:20). Discuss why the Lord showed his tender mercies to Lehi's family.

1 NEPHI 3

3:1-7 Compare what Laman and Lemuel said in 1 Nephi 3:5 with what Nephi said in 1 Nephi 3:7 (see "Compare" on page 7). Discuss how the things we learn from these verses apply to us when we are asked to do things in the Church.

3:7 Help students memorize 1 Nephi 3:7 (see

3:19–20 Discuss why Nephi thought it was important to get the brass plates. Ask students to describe how their lives would be different if they did not have the scriptures.

3:31–4:1 Have students list things in 1 Nephi 3:31 that Laman and Lemuel feared, and things in 1 Nephi 4:1 that show Nephi's fearlessness and faith. Discuss the difference between being afraid and having faith. Ask the students why they think Nephi had faith when his older brothers did not.

1 NEPHI 4

4:2–3 Read Exodus 14:21–31. Ask why Nephi compared this scripture story to what he and his brothers had been asked to do. Ask how the story of Nephi and his brothers can help the students in their lives (see "Apply the Scriptures" on page 5).

1 Nephi 3–4 Ask students to look through 1 Nephi 3–4 and find all the things showing that the Lord made it possible for Nephi and his brothers to do what he had asked them to do (see 1 Nephi 3:7). Have students list things that show that 1 Nephi 3:7 is true (see "List" on page 7).

WEEK 2

1 NEPHI 5–10

1 NEPHI 5

5:2–8 Compare Sariah's feelings in 1 Nephi 5:2 with her feelings in 1 Nephi 5:8 (see "Compare" on page 7). What are some of the reasons for the change in Sariah's feelings?

5:10–16 To learn more about the plates of brass, see "A Brief Explanation about the Book of Mormon," paragraph 1, number 4 (in the first pages of the Book of Mormon).

5:4–6 Discuss what Lehi said and did when Sariah mourned and complained. How did Lehi comfort Sariah? Cross-reference: Proverbs 15:1.

5:8 Cross-references: 1 Nephi 1:20; 1 Nephi 3:7 (see "Cross-reference" on page 5).

5:10–17 List the things Lehi found as he "searched" the plates of brass. Why do you think Lehi was filled with the Spirit when he read these things? Spencer W. Kimball, twelfth President of the Church, said: "I find that when I get casual in my relationships with divinity and when it seems that no divine ear is listening and no divine voice is speaking, that I am far, far away. If I immerse myself in the scriptures the distance narrows and the spirituality returns." Ask students to tell about times when they have been "filled with the Spirit" as they have read the scriptures.

5:11–16 Explain that many of the things Lehi

Bible. The five books of Moses, a record of the Jews, and many prophecies of the holy prophets are found in the Old Testament.

5:21 Discuss why the plates of brass were "of great worth" to Lehi's family. How are the scriptures of great worth to us? Cross-reference: D&C 1:37–39.

1 NEPHI 6

6:1–6 Identify what Nephi wanted to write and what he did not want to write on the plates.

6:4 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is Jesus Christ. What purpose did Nephi have for writing this record? How does the Book of Mormon fulfill Nephi's purpose?

1 NEPHI 7

7:1–2 Ask what the Lord commanded Lehi to do and why. Discuss the importance of marriage. Cross-reference: Genesis 2:18.

7:8–12 List the things Laman and Lemuel had "forgotten." Discuss the meaning of *forgotten* in 1 Nephi 7:8–12. Why is it important to remember what the Lord has done for us and what he wants us to do?

7:14 Cross-reference: D&C 1:31–33. Discuss why the Spirit of the Lord would cease to strive with the people of Jerusalem.

7:21 Cross-references: Matthew 6:14–15; D&C 64:9–10.

7:22 Review the times Lehi offered sacrifices and gave thanks to the Lord (see 1 Nephi 2:7; 1 Nephi 5:9). Read and discuss D&C 59:7–8.

1 NEPHI 8

8:1–38 There are many symbols in Lehi's dream. A symbol is something that stands for something else. Have the students mark and draw the symbols found in 1 Nephi 8. Ask what they think each symbol stands for (many of the symbols are explained in 1 Nephi 11–12, 15; see the paragraph on page 2 that begins "Look for symbols").

8:4–35 Discuss what each family member and each group of people did in Lehi's dream, and why they did it.

8:1–38 Ask the students what they think Lehi and each person in his family might have learned from this vision. What do you learn from it?

1 NEPHI 9

9:1–5 Draw the two sets of plates Nephi made. Label them "these plates" and "the other plates" (see "Draw" on page 8). List the things Nephi said were written on each set of plates. To learn

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