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From viewings to funeral processions, from dedicating the dying to dedicating graves, Latter-day Saints have adopted a variety of practices in relation to loved ones passing away—some practices come from tradition, some arise naturally from circumstance, and others have been codified by the Church. Whatever their source, these rites and practices underscore Latter-day Saint aspirations to honor and to connect with their dead. *Winder Funeral Parade*, March 31, 1910. Courtesy Utah State Historical Society; funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

# Last Rites and the Dynamics of Mormon Liturgy

*Jonathan A. Stapley*

On May 31, 1866, Aggatha Ann Woolsey Lee lay surrounded by family. Late stage breast cancer visibly consumed her flesh, and though in great pain, she peacefully counseled her children to obey the gospel. She charged her sister and fellow wife to take care of them. Her husband recorded, “Through the Night she frequently asked me to Pray that she might go to Rest. About 2 o’clock E., by her request I anointed her all over with oil & dedicated her to the Lord.” She died three days later.<sup>1</sup> This article describes the history of Mormon rituals for the dying and the dead. The story of these rituals—dedication of the dying to the Lord,<sup>2</sup> preparation of the body for burial,<sup>3</sup> and grave dedication—elucidates important liturgical dynamics within Mormonism. Specifically, their development shows the evolution of Mormon liturgy from uncodified practices transmitted through folk channels of instruction into a formal body of specific rites, nevertheless challenged by ongoing folk innovation. Moreover, the set of rituals considered in this article each show how Latter-day Saints have interacted in unique ways with American death culture and conceptions of Providence to construct their sacred community on a cosmological scale.

A church’s liturgy is its ritualized system of church worship, the services and patterns in which believers regularly participate. While the term often refers to a specific formal ritual like the Roman Catholic Mass, events surrounding major life events—birth, coming of age, marriage, death—are often celebrated through church liturgy. Beyond the public worship ceremonies of Mormonism, there exists an extensive network of interrelated rituals with salvific, healing, and other valences. These ritual systems are essentially liturgical in nature, and their history is a path crossing two partially overlapping regions: the folk and the formal.

## Jonathan A. Stapley

Part of this paper was written in the hospital room where, for five weeks, I watched my father unconsciously battle the systematic failure of his own body. My parents were visiting to witness the baptism of my oldest son. Instead of driving to the chapel where a font was prepared, we drove to the hospital, where emergency responders had just minutes before delivered my father. I was able to work remotely and consequently spent a significant amount of time by his side.



I had started this paper before that event as a logical extension of previous collaborative research on Mormon healing rituals. I have been drawn to the history of Mormon liturgy as a fruitful space to elucidate wide swaths of lived religion, theology, and religious cosmology. At the hospital, though, as I read and re-read the source materials and the paragraphs I had committed to paper, I was intimately conscious of my own place in the story of Mormon life and death. I became my own observer as I administered to my father, sought comfort in Christ's gospel, and considered my place in the royal network of heaven and earth. In short, I prepared for my father's death. Perhaps it was providence that he did not die. He left the hospital to eventually make a full recovery, and he will witness the baptism of my next oldest son in the summer of 2011.

Those five weeks reinforced ideas that I had earlier accepted: the scholarly examination of history is an opportunity to integrate ourselves with the past. Though it should not be viewed as prescriptive, the past can contextualize the present. It opens up possibilities as we gain a greater compassion for those who went before us and a greater compassion for ourselves. My hope is that this study will enrich the field of Mormon history and provide helpful ways to view evolving Latter-day Saint belief and practice.

The earliest Latter-day Saints constructed ritual patterns from many sources. While ancient and modern scripture provided some instruction, frequently it was Church leaders who provided examples to follow. And though the open canon and prophetic hierarchs directed many ritual innovations in early Mormonism, there was also little to distinguish grassroots developments from hierarchal initiative. During Joseph Smith's life, Church hierarchy was relatively flat and was regularly replenished by fresh members with little institutional experience. Furthermore, for the better part of a century, Mormon liturgy existed dynamically and uncodified as the Church first developed it and then relied on folk transmission—oral instruction or proximate example—to train its members. Even common rituals like baptism and the sacrament of the Lord's supper, which had codified prayers, were nevertheless administered in various ways throughout the nineteenth century. Dedicatory rituals of all sorts arose without formal liturgical explanation, and healing rituals were especially diverse and not specified in the canon. Though influenced by the broader American culture, Latter-day Saints struck out in new and surprising ways, adapting ritual from their liturgy to meet their needs when various exigencies arose.

In the twentieth century, as the Church expanded and modernized along with the broader culture, younger generations were no longer served by older folk pedagogies. Church leaders then evaluated and contracted Mormon liturgy in a process of formalization and codification in order to train Church members and standardize Church practice. With the Church correlation movement, formal liturgy has been a consistent emphasis within Church bureaucracy; yet the needs of Church members sometimes exceed formal boundaries. In such cases Mormons unknowingly follow the examples of their religious progenitors and fashion folk liturgies of their own.

The persistent Latter-day Saint practice of deathbed rites and the ritualized care for the dead clearly delineate this evolutionary dynamic within Mormon liturgy. To comfort the dying as well as the bereaved, Mormon sacramentalism traversed the domains of salvation and healing to build their sacred community. After reviewing the context of the Mormon deathbed, this paper describes the creation of Latter-day Saint rituals for both the dying and the dead, as well as their history through the evolving Mormon liturgy to the present.

#### HEALING AND THE DEATHBED IN CHRISTIANITY AND EARLY MORMONISM

As Mormons ritualized death, they drew from their native culture while at once affronting it. Though they participated in the death culture of the period and invoked a type of divine providence, Mormons also adapted

these concepts in ways that dissented dramatically from their Protestant peers. In a significant departure from American culture, Mormons administered deathbed rituals, adapted from their healing rites, which were themselves adapted from salvific rituals. Mormon healing arose in a period of American history when neither healing nor deathbed rituals were countenanced by Christian churches.

The pressures at the deathbed fueled ritual innovation among the Latter-day Saints in ways that are similar to the creation of deathbed rituals in the Roman Catholic Church. The Carolingian Renaissance was a period of cultural growth during the eighth and ninth centuries CE.<sup>4</sup> Amid the burgeoning artistic, literary, and legal scholarship initiated by Charlemagne, scholars attempted to systematize Church liturgy, texts of which they imported from Rome. Through this process of liturgical reformation, an explicit ritual for the dying emerged. Administered with Viaticum—the final presentation of the Eucharist to the afflicted—priests anointed various parts of the body, including the five sense organs.<sup>5</sup> James exhorted Christians to seek anointing from the elders of the church and thereby receive healing and also a forgiveness of sins (James 5:14–15). Essentially a penitential ritual adapted from the latter of James’s promised blessings, the anointing of the dying, or extreme unction, replaced healing anointings in the Roman Church by the eleventh century.

The Reformers generally viewed extreme unction as a perversion of biblical Christianity.<sup>6</sup> The selective antisacramentalism common in early America ensured that any anointing, let alone a sacrament for the dying, was outside orthodox Protestant practice. Death was anticipated in life by the general Protestant beliefs in Providence. By the early nineteenth century, even Arminian Methodists resigned themselves to the belief that God dictates all things, including their own suffering, disease, and death.<sup>7</sup> Described by believers as “afflictive providence,” Protestants encouraged sufferers to face their maladies with stoic confidence that their affliction was God’s will and that through passive resignation to that will, divinity was manifest.<sup>8</sup>

While there was no church ritual for the dying American Protestant,<sup>9</sup> the orthodox American preparation for death was a ritualized deathbed performance. Called variously the “good death,” the “beautiful death,” or in some cases the “righteous death,” this death culture was pervasive in American society and among early Mormons, including Joseph Smith’s family.<sup>10</sup> To die a righteous death involved being surrounded by family and community and facing the doom of mortality with peace. The dying gave counsel, witnessed their assurance of salvation, and described views of their otherworldly destination. Declarative of Christ’s reception of the victim, this process allowed

the dying to comfort the bereaved and for many marked the threshold of the domestic heaven.<sup>11</sup>

While Mormons exemplified “righteous death” practices in their culture, they generally rejected the absolute providence doctrine of their Protestant peers. Joseph Smith defied American orthodoxy and led his followers to a space where death was subdued physically as well as spiritually. Smith wanted his people to have the power to heal; and yet, the scourge of his fallen world persisted. Miraculous accounts of the

sick being healed abound in Mormon history, but so too do stories where life ended. Smith variously invoked three possible reasons for failed healings: lack of faith to be healed, lack of power to heal, and God’s will.<sup>12</sup>

In February 1831, a body of elders gathered to ask the Lord to reveal the Law of the Church. Joseph Smith dictated the response, outlining the law of consecration and also declaring with regard to the sick that “he that hath faith in me to be healed, and is not appointed unto death, shall be healed.”<sup>13</sup> This revelation assured the nascent church that the sick could be healed through faith; but it is also notable that in certain cases, God apparently willed that some die. And God’s will was not to be abrogated by the intentions of his people, faithful though they may be. This dual consideration created a working tension in which Latter-day Saints could wield the power of God and yet still be checked by his will. Such Mormon providence was, however, evident only at the deathbed when the negotiation was terminated, and was generally theodicean in nature.<sup>14</sup> Latter-day Saints consequently marshaled their faith in vigorous ritual administration and botanic remedies.<sup>15</sup>

Unlike the Protestant healers of the late nineteenth century who quickly developed theological bases for their healing,<sup>16</sup> Mormons did not explicate their healings in terms of soteriology, this despite the Book of Mormon’s availability for such arguments (Alma 7:10–12). Instead, early Mormons



Mourners at the deathbed of a Catholic deacon, 1727. *Mort du Diable Paris*, eighteenth-century engraving, artist unknown. Unlike the Protestant Reformers who rejected various sacramental practices performed for the dying, Latter-day Saint rites for the dying are varied—more closely resembling early Christian and Catholic liturgy—including anointings of healing and anointings for death.



viewed healing as a pragmatic application of God's power, demonstrating that the age of miracles had not ceased. The ritual forms later employed for healing, however, were explicitly salvific. Mirroring the evolution of first-millennium Christian unction, where the rites of penance and death merged with and ultimately overcame the rites for healing, early Mormons transformed their salvific rites into ceremonies to save their physical selves. Church leaders adapted the Kirtland Temple anointing, then later baptism, the Nauvoo Temple initiatory ceremonies, and the prayer circle in order to channel healing power. These potent liturgical forms were evocative of spiritual, corporeal, and communal salvation. The temple was thus a place of both spiritual and physical healing.<sup>17</sup>

In Nauvoo, Joseph Smith expanded the temple liturgy to include both men and women and formed a temple quorum as guardians and purveyors of expanded temple rituals, which were essentially death emphatic.<sup>18</sup> The temple created bonds in an eternal network of familial and holy confraternity against the foes of death and hell. It prepared individuals for their resurrection as heirs, joining the eternal and royal priesthood network.<sup>19</sup> These functions were the ultimate aspirations of all the faithful, who naturally invoked them at the deathbed.

The temple was also the source for the practice of using consecrated oil. Modern Latter-day Saint scripture does not discuss consecrated oil, though there are references to temple anointings (D&C 109:35; 124:39). The Hebrew Bible, however, outlines its use for the consecration of priests and kings. In their temples, Mormons used consecrated oil in recapitulation of the Israelite antecedent. Furthermore, they employed it in healing rituals expanded from these temple rituals. That the apex of Joseph Smith's salvific and healing liturgies involved the act of anointing highlights the degree to which his sacred community revolved around the ritual medium of oil.<sup>20</sup>

Dedication rituals are important contexts for the Latter-day Saint deathbed, but are also important precedents for the dedication of graves. Dedicatory rituals abounded in early Mormonism, with the dedication of temples being most prominent, but also included dedications of land, objects, institutions, and other buildings.<sup>21</sup> The Kirtland Temple was the first building to be dedicated and served as an archetype for all later temple dedications.<sup>22</sup> Protestant dedications of churches were common and are an important context; however, Latter-day Saint rituals were focused on and informed by the dedication of the Israelite temples and altars. In Utah, Latter-day Saints also began dedicating homes.<sup>23</sup> Such ritual performances confer a holy character upon the object of dedication. Dedicatory language employed at the deathbed and the grave also demarcated the holiness of the dying and their final resting places.



## A MORMON RITUAL FOR THE DYING

Early as well as modern Latter-day Saints have believed that they wielded both the authority and power to heal in the name of Jesus. Not all the sick have been healed through ritual performance, however, and Mormons consequently adapted their healing and blessing rituals for the deathbed and created their own extreme unction. Administrants have variously anointed, dedicated, sealed, consecrated, and released the dying in a liturgical space that negotiates the tension between conceptions of providence and belief in faith-based miracles. And while there is no evidence that Mormon deathbed rituals are homologous with Roman Catholic extreme unction, they are analogous manifestations of liturgical innovation in response to the pressures of mortality.

As Mormons engaged in ritual healing, participants variously anointed, sealed the anointing, and offered blessings as dictated by the Holy Ghost.<sup>24</sup> The words of such blessings existed aspirantly as manifestations of two charismatic gifts: either the spiritual gift to heal, that is, the ability to command the sick to be made whole,<sup>25</sup> or prophecy, the spiritual gift to foretell the future.<sup>26</sup> The idea that God wills the death of certain individuals coupled with the prophetic mode of ritual healing resulted in the possibility of prescience that the sick remain unhealed. Through knowledge of the imminence of death, either through prophecy or repeated failed healing attempts, Mormons found solace in laying hands on the dying in a ritual not designed to heal, but to be declarative of a righteous death. While these last rites do not share the penitential function of the Roman Catholic extreme unction,<sup>27</sup> they served to comfort both the dying and those who were survived by them. The ritual simultaneously reinforced an understanding that the recipient's death complied with Mormon conceptions of divine will, assured that heaven received the dead individual, and solidified the community of the Saints through eternity.

As with all nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint rituals, there is very little formal liturgical documentation for deathbed ritual. That members viewed it as a rite of the Church, however, is documented in the early twentieth century. When B. H. Roberts annotated the "Manuscript History of the Church" for publication as the *History of the Church*, he commented on the September 7, 1844, entry, which described Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball administering unspecified rituals to an individual on his deathbed, writing, "These were doubtless the usual ordinances for the sick and dedicating him to the Lord."<sup>28</sup> Frank J. Cannon wrote of his experience with his brothers during the final hours of his father George Q. Cannon's life: "In accordance with the rites of the Church, we laid our hands on his

head, while my eldest brother said the prayer of filial blessing that ‘sealed the dying man to eternity.’<sup>29</sup>

I have located two explicit examples of deathbed ritual occurring before the Mormon arrival in the Great Basin;<sup>30</sup> both invoke anointing as preparation for burial, an act that the Bible describes Jesus receiving from an unnamed woman (Mark 14:8). While this could be an adaptation of temple-related anointing,<sup>31</sup> in both cases the administrators had not yet experienced the temple corollary.<sup>32</sup> Any ritual homology between deathbed anointing for burial and the temple liturgy likely resulted from the former’s evolution from healing rituals, which were derived from Mormon temple rituals, coupled with parallel expansions of the biblical text.

Demonstrating the prophetic mode of healing as antecedent in these early deathbed scenes, Caroline Crosby wrote of her experience ministering to a sick woman who eventually died in the first months of 1846: “I went to visit her, washed and anointed her from head to foot, with sister P’s help.” Crosby employed a healing ritual derived from the Nauvoo Temple initiatory ceremonies, in which she had recently participated herself, and spontaneously adapted it as a preparation for death. Crosby continued: “She seemed very anxious to live to receive her endowments in the temple and we also felt very sorry that she could not. I anointing her, inadvertently told her, that it was for her burial. Notwithstanding my anxiety to have her live. But the words some way pressed themselves out of my mouth.”<sup>33</sup> The dying woman had desired to go to the temple and participate in the forging of her sacred community; instead, Crosby gave her assurance of similar blessings outside of the temple.

Later that same year, Samuel W. Richards lingered in New York City before sailing to Britain as a missionary. A “Sister Lincoln who was very sick with a cancer” requested that he and several other elders visit. Finding her in good faith, but not expected to live, the men sang and prayed with her. They “administered the sacrament of bread and wine to her. Then she was anointed with oil unto the day of her burial which was sealed by the laying on of hands and prayer.”<sup>34</sup> In contrast to Crosby’s ritual, Richards’s administration was not the result of impromptu ritual expansion. It was instead a calculated ritual to prepare the participant for death, similar in delivery to the last rites of Viaticum and extreme unction.

In Utah, deathbed rituals became increasingly documented. For example, after an 1865 meeting of the First Presidency and Twelve Apostles, Wilford Woodruff wrote that several Church leaders “called upon Sister Gray who had a canser in the breast which was Eating her Vitals & rotting her flesh. Presidet Young Cannon, & myself laid hands upon her. She wished us to pray that she might spedily die as she Could not live. Presidet Young dedicated her to God for her death & burial. In about 12 hours she died.”<sup>35</sup>

These men were exceedingly familiar with the temple liturgy, and there is no indication that they viewed this deathbed scene in terms of the temple. Departing from the righteous death culture, the account militates against absolute conceptions of providence. Sister Gray welcomed death and found it. The account also introduces a dedicatory character to the ritual, something that quickly replaced the idea of anointing for burial.

As such accounts demonstrate, the evolution of deathbed rituals elucidates the tension between Mormonism and American culture. Seeking death through liturgical means shifted some control of death from God to the community. Death, in spite of healing rituals, demonstrated the limits of power bestowed by God upon the faithful; however, the ritual hastening of death showed how even these boundaries were not entirely fixed (though death was still reliant on God to effectuate the result; euthanasia would have been tantamount to murder). The practice of the dying asking to be relieved of suffering through deathbed ritual appears to have been common.<sup>36</sup> In contrast with Protestant submission to God at the deathbed, such accounts show the Mormon deathbed to be a place of negotiation between participants and God.<sup>37</sup> Susan Julia, second wife of James Henry Martineau, after a protracted and painful sickness, confessed that “she was satisfied with life, and desired to go.” Over a period of days, she gave counsel to friends and family and finally she “wished me [James Martineau] to bring the elders, and give her up, provided she could not be healed. J. E. Hyde came in, and he and I dedicated her to the Lord and gave her up—to His will. It was a hard thing for a husband to do—oh, so hard. When we had finished, she said—‘oh I am so glad; so glad.’”<sup>38</sup>

Similarly emphasizing the welcoming of death as a result of salvific assurance, Jacob Hamblin recorded in his diary of the death of his father, Isaiah. Hamblin wrote of entering his father’s home and holding his father’s hand as his father declared that though he “once dreded the grave I now hail it as a pleasyr.” Jacob responded with the hope that he might be healed; but his father replied, “What is the youse of my suffering in this old Tabernicle any longer. I comprehend Mormonism.” Isaiah then conferred the patriarchal duties of the family on his son, who in turn laid “hands on him and Praid for him asked the Lord that he mite be freed from pane and depart in pease[.]”<sup>39</sup> Isaiah died the next day. As with Susan Martineau, a righteous Mormon death brought pleasure and gladness as they both ministered to their families in their final hours. In this case, the deathbed ritual also facilitated the continuance of family organization.

As Jacob Hamblin prayed when blessing his father, sometimes these deathbed rites were intended to quench suffering while waiting for death. Patience Loader Rozsa Archer described the final moments of her father’s life on the Western Trail as part of the doomed Martin Handcart Company:

[T]he brethren came to administer to father in the afternoon they anointed him oil his [his] lips was so dry and parched they put oil on his lips and then he opened his Mouth and licked the oil from his lips and smiled but did not Speak the brethren knew he was dieing they said we will seal father Loader up to the Lord for him alone is worthy of him he has done his work been a faithful Servant in the church and we the servants of God Seal him unto God our Father : and to our surprise my dear father said so plain that we could understand him and there lay with such a sweet smile on his face that was the last word he said.<sup>40</sup>

While some of these accounts mentioned anointing for burial or sealing, generally, and more frequently with time, Latter-day Saints “dedicated” the dying to the Lord. In dedicating their dying, Mormons formalized the sacred nature of their dead in anticipation of a postmortal reunion. While the entire temple liturgy is focused on the same goal, the moment of death appears to be sufficiently poignant as to elicit general desires for ritual performance in affirmation of the same. In one example, Charles Ora Card wrote of administering daily to a young child in his stake. On the eighth day, February 22, 1898, he

returned to the Sick bed . . . administering frequently, a good spirit accompanied always accompanying our administration, but his sufferings were so great we were impressed to leave him in the Hands of the Lord and by His Father’s request at 6 A.M. being mouth myself we dedicated him to the Lord. I loved the little Bright Cherub so much It was a painful task for me to do, being an exceedingly bright child but I feel he died unto the Lord which occurred at 8:45 A.M.<sup>41</sup>

Commenting in his diary after the death of a friend, and later, the death of his wife, both of whom he had dedicated to the Lord, Wilford Woodruff wrote similarly and simply, “Blessed are the Dead who die in the Lord.”<sup>42</sup> In what has become a common reference in Christian death culture, Joseph Smith dictated a revelation that alluded to and expanded the same scripture in the book of Revelation: “Yea, and blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth, when the Lord shall come, and old things shall pass away, and all things become new, they shall rise from the dead and shall not die after, and shall receive an inheritance before the Lord, in the holy city.”<sup>43</sup> Latter-day Saints frequently invoked these words in eulogies and funeral sermons, reinforcing the persistence of the community of Saints through death. Though they died, they would yet be made alive and join their kin in the holy city of God. Dedication rituals transformed this aspiration into assurance.

Deathbed rituals remained common into the twentieth century and prominent leaders continued to perform them. In the final and painful days of First Presidency member John R. Winder, his wife asked two of his colleagues in the governing quorums to “have him consecrated to death.”<sup>44</sup>

President Joseph F. Smith requested that Anthon Lund and Heber J. Grant bless him to “be released” at his deathbed,<sup>45</sup> and Apostle Melvin J. Ballard dedicated brigadier general Richard W. Young to the Lord at the request of his wife on December 26, 1919.<sup>46</sup> In a Sunday lesson on spiritual experiences, the 1917 *Young Woman’s Journal* also included a story of Heber J. Grant dedicating his dying wife to the Lord.<sup>47</sup>

### MORMON RITUALS FOR THE DEAD

Historian James Farrell has described the transformation of American deathbed and funerary practice from 1830 to 1920.<sup>48</sup> This period encompassed a shift away from the righteous death culture to the modern professionalized system common in the United States today. Whereas families once washed the corpses of their loved ones, wrapped them in white shrouds, and guarded the bodies until burial in local graveyards, often proximate to their churches, funeral directors eventually took control of the dead, embalmed them, and managed their internment, first in park cemeteries and then later in the now common lawn-style cemeteries. This trajectory in death culture was mirrored among the Latter-day Saints. The burial locations of prominent Mormon leaders exemplify this shift: the tomb of Joseph next to the Nauvoo Temple; the picturesque Brigham Young Family Memorial Cemetery; and eventually the sprawling Salt Lake City Cemetery, nestled in the foothills of the Wasatch Mountains. However, there were some notable deviations from standard American culture and a comparative latency in the process of modernization. Throughout this period, Mormons engaged in unique ritualized care for the dead. Specifically, Mormons dressed their dead in ceremonial clothing and increasingly turned to dedicating their graves.

### Preparation of the Body

In February of 1865, Thomas Fuller, an indigent single man living in Hebron, Utah, died from apparent exposure while tending the sheep of another local. John Pulsipher and Thomas Terry found his body. Historian W. Paul Reeve described the subsequent events:

The men had no provisions for his burial, so they secured his body for the night and returned four miles to their homes. The next day, Terry and Pulsipher made a coffin, found a suit of clothing, and traveled through a foot of snow to bury Fuller. By the time they arrived, [Edward] Westover was on the scene. He began digging a grave while Terry and Pulsipher washed and dressed the body. . . . “So much scurf & dirt had accumulated on him that it was an awful job,” requiring six kettles of hot water. His hair, too, provided a challenge, as it “had not been cut or combed for so long . . . that it was matted into wads & covered with nits.”<sup>49</sup>

They could have simply dug a grave and buried the man. Instead, they cleaned his body of a copious amount of lice, washed him, and dressed him in clean clothing before interring him in their hewn coffin. This care was their self-perceived duty, grisly though it may have been. Fuller entered the earth in better outward condition than he had lived for years.

Early Mormons prepared their dead for burial in the same manner as their Protestant peers. Beyond these peers, however, Mormons viewed their communities as salvific entities, and the care of their dead was a reflection of their mutual covenants. Covenants also mandated another preparation for burial, unique to the Latter-day Saints. The endowment ceremony of the Mormon temple involved participants wearing sacred clothing. As Samuel Brown has shown,<sup>50</sup> there was a deep relationship between the temple liturgy and death, and immediately after the temple became available to the Latter-day Saints, they began burying their dead in this clothing. For example, this practice was repeatedly documented in Winter Quarters.<sup>51</sup>

The importance of this burial clothing to Mormon families is vividly illustrated by Brigham Young's sermons after the scandalous news broke in 1862 that John Baptiste, a grave digger for the Salt Lake City sexton, had robbed perhaps hundreds of bodies before their burial and stripped them of their sacred vestments.<sup>52</sup> Young discussed the principle of clothing the dead as the primary "burial rites" of the Latter-day Saints. He responded to the understandable outrage of his community by assuring that "if the dead are laid away as well as they can be, I will promise you that they will be well clothed in the resurrection." He described how bodies that were burned or buried in the sea would yet be resurrected. However, he also noted the care he would take with the dead when he counseled that people should do as they "please with regard to taking up your [buried] friends. If I should undertake to do anything of the kind, I should clothe them completely and then lay them away again. And if you are afraid of their being robbed again, put them into your gardens, where you can watch them by day and night until you are pretty sure that the clothing is rotted, and then lay them away in the burying ground," though he "would let my friends lay and sleep in peace."<sup>53</sup> Although this counsel may sound morbid to modern sensibilities, Young recognized the corporeal and salvific connections that the temple clothing evinced to his people.

In the broader American culture, caring for the dead was a duty frequently performed by women, and Susana Morrill has described this care among the Latter-day Saints.<sup>54</sup> Emmeline B. Wells remembered that when the first member of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo passed away, it was the other Relief Society women who prepared her for burial.<sup>55</sup> When Jeanetta Richards passed away in July 1845, fellow female members of the temple quorum prepared her body, dressed her, and placed her in a coffin.<sup>56</sup>

This duty persisted through the time when Relief Societies were not a part of Latter-day Saint organization. For example, when James Henry Martineau's wife was dying in 1874, he wrote to Eliza R. Snow, largely viewed as the unofficial women's leader at the time, for instructions to make proper burial clothing.<sup>57</sup> Highlighting the continued familial roles and the relatively delayed transition to professional care, Mary Lois Walker Morris wrote in 1885, "Went up to Aunt Lavinia Morris's to help about preparing Little Vinnie Vaughan for burial assisted Sister Griev to dress and put her in the coffin, she died last night yesterday about 4. p.m."<sup>58</sup>

When Relief Societies returned and then were organized with a general presidency in 1888, caring for the dead was a frequent emphasis. As described in a volume prepared in 1893 for the World's Fair, "Among the [Relief Society] sisters the sick are nursed, the dead clothed and prepared for burial."<sup>59</sup> At the end of the nineteenth and early in the twentieth century, women were frequently called and set apart to prepare the dead for burial.<sup>60</sup> However, while Relief Society archetypes like Eliza R. Snow and Zina D. H. Young were held up as examples for this labor,<sup>61</sup> it is important to note that men too were regularly asked to wash and dress the dead.

Whereas women often prepared the bodies of women and children, men frequently prepared the bodies of other men. For example, in 1880 Charles Lowell Walker wrote that on September 21 "I was awakened by Br Larson Who told me Jno O Angus was dead, and his friends wished me to prepare him for burial assisted by David Moss."<sup>62</sup> Allan Russell, a prominent patriarch, wrote frequently of participating in these activities; for example, on June 7, 1901, "Brother Ralph Nephi Rowley died about 7 o'clock and Brother Ashman and I washed and laid him out. Will Williams helping us. Brother Ashman and I put his temple clothes on ready for burial and then attended services."<sup>63</sup>

While there was some counsel regarding the dressing of the dead in the nineteenth century,<sup>64</sup> generally, the practice was learned, as other aspects of Latter-day Saint liturgy, through folk channels of instruction. The Relief Society did have an expanding institutional mandate, however. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Relief Society women were often called to sew both regular and ceremonial clothing for burial. Moreover, perhaps in response to exposés of the temple, the First Presidency asked the General Relief Society in 1912 to create the "Temple and Burial Clothing Department" to be the principal ceremonial clothing outlet for Latter-day Saints.<sup>65</sup> The general *Relief Society Bulletin* declared in 1914 that the "customs of clothing our dead," among other things, fell under the "rightful jurisdiction of this society," and the April General Relief Society Conference of that same year included short courses, one of which was "Burial of



the Dead.”<sup>66</sup> The 1915 “Circular of Instructions” for the Society also made provisions for stake and ward “Temple Clothing Committees,”<sup>67</sup> which were organized over the next several years in the various localities.<sup>68</sup> One member of the Deseret “Stake Burial Clothes Department” sewed as her primary activity.<sup>69</sup> Other stake Relief Societies created “burial committees” and worked within Relief Society to prepare the dead for their final resting places.<sup>70</sup> The General Relief Society also furnished “complete Burial Suits,” though undertakers and businesses also continued to offer the clothing with the Relief Society’s support.<sup>71</sup> Great care was often taken to procure the finest possible materials for clothing the dead.<sup>72</sup>

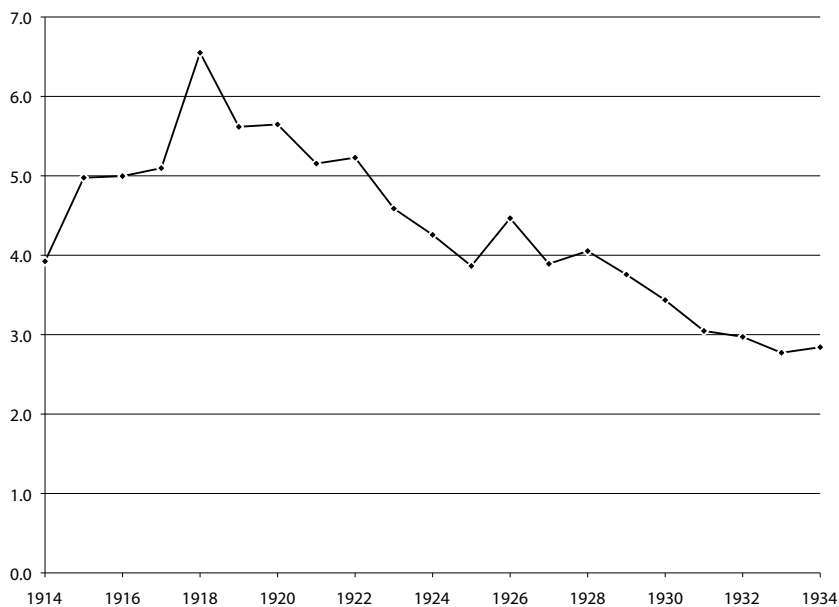
The shift in responsibility to the Relief Societies also coincided with the rise in scientific management and record keeping of Relief Society activities. In 1914 alone, Utah recorded certificates for 4,633 deaths;<sup>73</sup> that same year Relief Society members across the world prepared only “1,490 bodies . . . for burial.”<sup>74</sup> By this time, beyond families and fellow religionists, professionals took charge of an increasing percentage of the dead. Undertakers like celebrated “pioneer undertaker” Joseph E. Taylor had advertised regularly in the local papers for decades. Additionally, hospitals became increasingly common,<sup>75</sup> and, as one Salt Lake City news story wrote in 1911, “There is a very noticeable growing tendency on the part of people of means to be removed to hospitals in the case of serious illness.”<sup>76</sup> By this time, death was generally no longer a private or family affair, becoming increasingly professionalized. As historian Charles Rosenberg described this period, families came “increasingly to depend on strangers for care at times of sickness and approaching death.”<sup>77</sup> And while the organization of local burial committees did increase the number of bodies prepared for burial by the Relief Society for a few years, like other Americans, Mormons increasingly turned to strangers to care for their dead (see chart 1).

### **Mormon Burial and the Dedication of Graves**

Unlike those of the Methodists and Congregationalists, the early Latter-day Saint funerals were informal and generally included extemporaneous sermonizing. In Nauvoo, Joseph Smith delivered some of his most important and doctrinally innovative sermons at funerals or in honor of the recently deceased.<sup>78</sup> Some of these funerals were also officiated according to Masonic prescription, which included prayer.<sup>79</sup> Burials on the trail west, in Winter Quarters, and in early Utah were often hasty affairs due to the exigencies of pioneer life.<sup>80</sup> With time, however, life normalized and with it, Latter-day Saint funeral and burial practice.

Brigham Young preferred simple services, perhaps reflecting the conditions in his community. On March 6, 1877, Wilford Woodruff wrote:

**CHART 1:**  
**Bodies Prepared by the Relief Society per 100 Members, by Year**



*Source:* Data calculated from the Relief Society membership and burial preparation statistics in *Relief Society Magazine* 2 (May 1915): 264; 2 (December 1915): 528; 3 (April 1916): 271; 4 (April 1917), 276; 5 (June 1918), 310; 6 (May 1919), 353; 7 (April 1920), 289; 8 (May 1921), 363; 9 (April 1922), 287; 10 (May 1923), 264; 11 (May 1924), 266; 12 (July 1925), 376; 13 (May 1926), 271; 14 (May 1927), 257; 15 (May 1928), 287; 16 (May 1929), 285; 17 (June 1930), 341; 18 (April 1931), 290; 19 (May 1932), 275; 20 (May 1933), 304; 21 (April 1934), 316; 22 (April 1935), 302. Note that 1918 also had an abnormally high death rate resulting from the worldwide influenza epidemic.

I met at Presidet Youngs to attend to the burial of Br Tout. He was laid out in fine Clean linen robes and Apron and laid in a good but plain Coffin. Presidt Young remarked to us we are burying this man as we requested to be buried in our wills,<sup>81</sup> and when I die I want to be quietly laid away without any demonstration and then I want Evry body to go about their business. I made a Prayer at the house, but no funeral. Three Carriages of us went to the grave. Presidt Young went, made a few remarks at the Grave and we returned.<sup>82</sup>

In spite of this expressed desire for simplicity, however, large funerals with processions to the grave and thousands of observers were also common, especially for well-known Church leaders.

Not long before the Tout burial, Church members began the practice of offering formal dedicatory prayers at the graves of their dead. Though graveside prayers were likely common for decades, the first formal grave dedication that I have been able to document was that of George A. Smith in 1875. The *Deseret News* reported on the funeral and subsequent graveside service: “After the large crowd of people had dispersed save a few, Elder John L. Smith, brother of the departed, and others remaining, knelt around the grave while he offered up a heart-felt, soul moving, prayer, dedicating the ground and the remains, that they might rest undisturbed till the morning of the resurrection.”<sup>83</sup> This account does not seem improvised and relates details—particularly reference to the resurrection—that are hallmarks of later grave dedications. One can safely conclude that the dedication of George A. Smith’s grave was not the first in the history of Mormonism. However, Wilford Woodruff, who frequently mentioned details of burial services in his diaries, did not start mentioning graveside prayers and dedications until 1877.<sup>84</sup> It is therefore likely that the grave dedication ritual arose in the 1870s.

It is no surprise that grave dedications would explicitly mention the resurrection. Resurrection is the antidote to death and has been a common subject for Christian funeral sermonizing throughout history. After the Nauvoo Temple, however, Mormons viewed the resurrection as a communal event. Explicitly referencing this hopeful cosmology, Hosea Stout wrote emotively of burying his namesake son on the western trail next to the child of a fellow traveler and then “leaving the two lovely innocents to slumber in peace in this solitary wild untill we should awake them in the morn of the resurrection.”<sup>85</sup> Whereas dedicating the dying was an assurance that the dead died well, dedicating their grave assured that their bodies rested well until the community could be again reunited.<sup>86</sup>

The practice of dedicating graves likely grew out of a desire to preserve and sacralize the final resting places of loved ones and was a natural extension of other dedicatory rituals. After the 1870s, documentation for grave dedications is common, but, like other aspects of Mormon liturgy, no formal texts existed for its transmission. Mormons learned to dedicate graves by example. The 1905 periodical of the Church, however, included an account of the death and burial of James L. Peck and included this dedicatory prayer: “We dedicate, O God, this grave, as the resting place of our friend and fellow workman. May his body rest in peace; may this place be sacred to his name and memory; may he arise with the just on the resurrection day, in Jesus’ name. Amen.”<sup>87</sup> While prominent Church members—typically priesthood leaders—were frequently asked to dedicate graves, there is no evidence that grave dedication was viewed as a priesthood ritual and any member of the Church was consequently authorized to perform it.



Dedication of graves among Latter-day Saints were at first an uncodified practice, usually involving a graveside prayer. Under the administrations of Joseph F. Smith, Heber J. Grant, and George Albert Smith, many practices, including dedicating graves, were formalized as priesthood ordinances. *Ethel's Grave*, E. Lowry Reid, photographed by George Edward Anderson (ca. 1899). Courtesy Brigham Young University, Harold B. Lee Library, Digital Collections.

In September 1909, Joseph W. Booth was a missionary in the city of Aleppo, in what is now Syria. He had only a few weeks left before he was to return home, and he spent the time ministering to the local Saints. One man in particular was suffering. Booth wrote in his diary of his final Sunday in the city:

About an hour <sup>^</sup>or so<sup>^</sup> before noon several of us visited Bro Kevork Patukian and found him slowly sinking. We dedicated him to the Lord and at about 8.30 Ala Turka, he died, while a few friends were at the bed side. Preparations were made <sup>^</sup>Reba & Loza made the clothes for him<sup>^</sup> and the funeral services held in the evening between 11 & 12 Ala Turka. I spoke a short time, and Elder Newman dedicated the grave, and the last rites were done for Elder Kevork who has now gone to meet his reward.<sup>88</sup>

Though Patukian had not participated in the temple and consequently did not require priestly burial clothing, his last day shows how Mormonism's

last rites combined to comfort all witnesses of mortality's demise. Dedicating the dying, clothing them, and then dedicating their final resting place solidified the community of Saints, even in the far-flung Ottoman Empire.

### FORMALIZATION OF MORMON LITURGY

The modernization of Church bureaucracy initiated in Joseph F. Smith's administration<sup>89</sup> culminated in a complete reformation and modernization of all Church liturgy under his successor, Heber J. Grant. After his counselor Anthon Lund passed away, Grant directed a complete retooling of Mormon liturgy that successfully formalized it.<sup>90</sup> Working with George F. Richards over a period of several years, Grant approved the reformation of the temple liturgy (including the creation of the first written text of all the rituals), the removal of healers from the temple, and the end of baptism for health.<sup>91</sup> Reflecting the increased level of formalization, the General Relief Society sent circulars of instruction to all stake officers, including instructions on preparing the dead for burial.<sup>92</sup> The modern and codified liturgy that resulted from this process created an impressive level of uniformity across the growing Church and successfully trained many subsequent generations in ritual practice.

As part of their reforms, the First Presidency issued instructions against deathbed rituals. In the 1922 *Improvement Era*, Heber J. Grant, Charles W. Penrose, and Anthony W. Ivins of the First Presidency wrote:

The custom which is growing in the Church to dedicate those who appear to be beyond recovery, to the Lord, has no place among the ordinances of the Church. The Lord has instructed us, where people are sick, to call in the elders, two or more, who should pray for and lay their hands upon them in the name of the Lord; and "if they die," says the Lord, "they shall die unto me; and if they live, they shall live unto me." No possible advantage can result from dedicating faithful members of the Church to the Lord prior to their death. Their membership in the Church, their devotion to the faith which they have espoused, are sufficient guarantee, so far as their future welfare is concerned.

The administration of the ordinances of the Gospel to the sick, is for the purpose of healing them, that they may continue lives of usefulness until the Lord shall call them hence. This is as far as we should go. If we adhere strictly to that which the Lord has revealed in regard to this matter, no mistake will be made.<sup>93</sup>

As they had done just months earlier with the formal end of baptism for healing, the First Presidency appears to have broken with the common experience of many Latter-day Saints, including many in the governing quorums and Grant himself.<sup>94</sup> The letter's surprising characterization of dedicating the dying as innovative parallels the language of the letter which

formally ended baptism for health.<sup>95</sup> Unlike baptism for health, however, there are no publicly documented debates among Church leaders as to why the ritual was purged from Mormon liturgy. This relative disparity in documentation is likely due to dedication of the dying being much less common than baptism for health. Moreover, baptism for health was part of the regular temple function since Nauvoo, with records being kept on its frequency.<sup>96</sup>

Though no First Presidency letters are extant or available to historians to document it, other rituals with similar developmental origins, such as dedicating homes and graves, were formalized during this same period of liturgical reform.<sup>97</sup> Without documentation, it is impossible to determine exactly why Church leaders included certain rituals while excluding others in the formal liturgy. However, more and more of the dying were being cared for by professionals. The timing of death and the physical quality of life's last moments were increasingly mediated by scientific means. Like the healing forms that fell out of favor during this time due to being viewed as increasingly magical—drinking consecrated oil, anointing the area of affliction—perhaps the liturgical negotiation with Providence at the deathbed may have become outmoded by modern culture. Moreover, with the bodies of the dead being cared for by professionals, Church leaders likely felt that grave dedication helped families and communities to maintain connection with each other beyond death. The letter does hint that the awkward possibility of administering deathbed rituals to those who did not actually die may have also contributed to the shift. And it explicitly invokes the increasingly prominent perspective that a righteous personal life is the sole assurance that Latter-day Saints were to seek for their eternal reward.

Even though Church members were still instructed to not write down example blessing texts after this period of formalization, Church leaders felt that young missionaries needed written examples. Whereas missionaries in the nineteenth century were older men with families, by the 1920s young men who had not had the life experience requisite for traditional folk training were routinely called to serve. The missionary handbooks, first created regionally and then centralized in the 1930s, included liturgical instruction and example ritual texts. Though the regional handbooks did not include texts for grave dedication, the first general missionary handbook, printed in 1937, did. It included the following introduction: “Though one holding the Priesthood is generally chosen, any suitable person may dedicate a grave. This may be done either with or without the authority of the Priesthood.”<sup>98</sup>

The 1940 General Church Handbook of Instructions similarly stated that anyone could offer the dedication, “whether he be a bearer of the priesthood or not.” It stated that priesthood members are often asked, but in contrast to the missionary instructions, hinting at the still incomplete process of

liturgical formalization, “it is not advised, however, that one so ministering should use words to the effect that he is officiating by virtue of any power or authority pertaining to the Holy Priesthood, nor that by any such authority or power he dedicates the grave. He is acting as the leader in prayer in behalf of relatives and friends there assembled.”<sup>99</sup> The missionary handbook was reprinted in 1940 and 1944 without change. In 1946, however, a revised edition was released with different instructions: “A grave should be dedicated by one holding the Priesthood. . . . If no one holding the Priesthood is available for the dedication of a grave at the time of burial, any person may offer a graveside prayer, and if the kindred so desire the grave may be thereafter dedicated by one holding the Priesthood.”<sup>100</sup> In the Church question-and-answer section of the 1948 *Deseret News*, there was a question that asked whether someone ordained to the priesthood should dedicate graves. The editor responded: “In the new handbook issued by the General Melchizedek Priesthood Committee of the Church, with the approval of the First Presidency, instruction is given that graves are to be dedicated by the authority of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood and in the name of the Savior. Inasmuch as this is the instruction, naturally one holding the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood should perform the ordinance. Dedication of graves is considered one of the ordinances of the Church.”<sup>101</sup> Under the administration of Joseph F. Smith, priesthood firmly replaced polygamy as an organizing force within the Latter-day Saint community, and with time liturgy increasingly reflected that nexus.<sup>102</sup>

Both dedicating the dying and dedicating graves began as folk rituals after the death of Joseph Smith. When Church members faced the finality of mortality, they relied on their experience and adapted familiar rituals—healing, prayer, and dedications—to find solace and assurance of their integration within their sacred communities. Church leaders exemplified ritual practice. However, in the 1920s when the administration of Heber J. Grant reformed Church liturgy, dedicating the dying was removed from the liturgy, whereas dedicating graves became a formal part of it. In subsequent years, as priesthood became increasingly associated with Church bureaucracy and liturgy,<sup>103</sup> Church leaders determined that grave dedication was to be a “priesthood ordinance” and have affirmed that categorization since that time.<sup>104</sup>

Despite the formal injunction against the practice in 1922, the reasons that deathbed rituals originally developed remained with the Latter-day Saints, and manifestations of comparable rituals persist to the present. In spite of the scientific management of suffering and death, Mormons still seek assurance of their own and their loved one’s reception into the eternal community of the Saints and affirmation of a righteous death. And they still question “why,” engaging in a negotiation with divine providence. Levi



Peterson described the 1985 death of his mother and his brother-in-law's dedication of her to the Lord:

My brother-in-law Marion knelt beside her and dedicated her to God. Shortly the paramedics arrived and performed their grisly rite of resuscitation. Luckily my mother was beyond them. Perhaps my brother-in-law's prayer had put her there. The dedication of the dying to God is a folk ritual among the Mormons. It is often practiced but not officially defined. Probably the prayer of dedication is more important to the healthy than to the dying. A fervent ritual can domesticate even death, the ultimate terror. I for one took comfort in the fact my brother-in-law had sent forth this emigrant from mortality, our mother, with a heartfelt wish to do her good.<sup>105</sup>

Peterson is a perceptive observer and recognizes the tension that folk liturgy relieves when no formal alternative is available. Church authorities even appear susceptible to the pressures Peterson describes in mortality's final moments; Elder Boyd K. Packer blessed Bruce R. McConkie while on his deathbed in a manner such that he was "sealed . . . unto death."<sup>106</sup>

Discussion of deathbed ritual also occasionally manifests in institutional discourse, indicating the prevalence of the folk practice as well as a lack of systematic efforts to eliminate it.<sup>107</sup> In 2008, emeritus General Authority Alexander B. Morrison wrote an article for the *Ensign* about healing. In a section on the priesthood role in healing, Morrison taught that the will of God cannot be overcome in healing those destined to die. One of the anecdotes that Morrison shared involved administering to a woman who was very sick. "The husband anointed his wife's head with consecrated oil in the prescribed manner, and I proceeded to seal the anointing (see James 5:14). To my amazement, I found myself saying words I had not intended: the woman was 'appointed unto death' (D&C 42:48). She would not recover from her illness but would slip away from us peacefully, cradled in the Savior's loving arms. The woman died the next day, and I presided at her funeral, a sadder but wiser man."<sup>108</sup> Morrison's experience is almost identical to the first example of deathbed ritual described in this paper, where Caroline Crosby, while administering to a sick woman in Nauvoo, was moved to prepare the subject for death. The belief in spiritual gifts and power to bless coupled with a negotiation with divine providence that fueled early ritual innovation remain consistent in the lives of modern Mormons. And though no handbook of instruction teaches current Latter-day Saints how to administer deathbed rituals, when faced with the ultimate predicament of mortality, Mormons do have examples to follow.

An informal discussion of deathbed ritual among current Latter-day Saints yielded many comments evidencing the persistence of the practice.<sup>109</sup> One commenter noted, "Where I grew up and currently live (Northern

California) blessings releasing the spirit are still quite common. We did one for my mother, my grand-parent in-laws and various others in the ward.” Narratives of receiving inspiration that the recipient of a blessing was to die were frequent, and ritual form is apparently diffuse with commenters indicating that administrators variously “release the spirit” of the suffering person, speak words of consolation, or simply avoid mentioning healing. The language of release is very rare in earlier accounts and potentially highlights a valence of the practice that reflects modern experience as Church members are released from callings.<sup>110</sup> It may also signify the release from the bondage of attenuated existence, all the more common with modern medical life-support measures.

As with releases from callings, anointing is not an integral feature of many deathbed releases. Like their nineteenth-century coreligionists, however, dying Mormons still find comfort in the community of Saints here and beyond, and loved ones still hope that those passing may enter the rest of the Lord. One commenter described this perspective when her grandmother was dying: “My grandfather called everyone to her bedside when the nurses told him that she would not last the night. All her children and most of her grandchildren were there. My grandfather gave her a blessing with his sons, telling her that it was okay for her to go and join her parents and that she needed to go so that she could welcome the rest of us to heaven when we came.” Modern deathbed ritual among current Latter-day Saints is an excellent example of continuing folk ritual.

## CONCLUSION

Both dedicating the dying and dedicating graves began as folk rituals with no explicit revelatory beginning. In contrast, baptism for health was championed by Joseph Smith and viewed as an integral feature of the temple. As Mormon liturgy existed through folk transmission, however, until 1921 liturgical histories were not documented or well known. Dedicating the dying and baptism for health were deleted from Church liturgy through President Heber J. Grant’s reforms. In the case of healing, however, there was a formalized alternative to baptism for health: anointing with oil and the laying on of hands. There was no formal alternative for dedicating the dead. This lack of formal outlet for the pressures of the deathbed appears to have facilitated the continued folk practice of Mormon deathbed rites.

Mormon liturgy is dynamic throughout its history. After a period of ritual innovation and folk transmission, the administration of Grant evaluated this liturgy and reformed it. In doing so, they started a process of ritual formalization and codification that grew to the familiar procedures of modern Latter-day Saint practice. Despite the passage of time and the rise of

modernity, Mormons still confront death sharing many perspectives of the founders of their faith. Not all are healed by faith, and the interaction of the living and dying with divine providence as well as the broader culture results in ritual practice that constructs their holy community, helping all find comfort. Mormon deathbed ritual, whether practiced by anointing, dedication, or by release, and the ritualized care for the dead—clothing the body and dedicating the grave—demonstrates the evolution of Mormon liturgy and its formal institution as well as the persistence of folk pressures under the surface of such formalization. These rituals also acutely elucidate the poignancy of death, regardless of time period, and the unique approaches that Latter-day Saints have employed to seek consolation as their loved ones pass beyond.

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1. Robert Glass Cleland and Juanita Brooks, eds., *A Mormon Chronicle: The Diaries of John D. Lee, 1848–1876*, 2 vols. (San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 2003), 2:15–17.

2. Previous discussions of this topic include Lester E. Bush Jr., *Health and Medicine among the Latter-day Saints: Science, Sense, and Scripture* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 37; Julie Paige Hemming Savage, “‘Yet I Must Submit’: Mormon Women’s Perspectives on Death and Dying, 1847–1900” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1994), 59–61; Dennis Horne, *Faith to Heal and Faith to Be Healed* (Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, 2009), 63–65.

3. Susanna Morrill, “Relief Society Birth and Death Rituals: Women at the Gates of Mortality,” *Journal of Mormon History* 36 (Spring 2010): 128–59, is a discussion of the ritualized care of the corpse preparatory to burial.

4. A general treatment of this period is available in Marcia L. Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition, 400–1400* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 66–78.

5. The most sophisticated and accessible study of extreme unction is Frederick S. Paxton, *Christianizing Death: The Creation of a Ritual Process in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990). See also Achille M. Triacca, ed., Matthew J. O’Connel, trans., *Temple of the Holy Spirit: Sickness and Death of the Christian in the Liturgy* (New York: Pueblo Publishing, 1983); Antoine Chavasse, *Étude sur l’onction des infirmes dans l’Église latine du IIIe au XIe siècle*, vol. 1, Du IIIe siècle à la réforme carolingienne (Lyons, France: Librairie du Sacré-Cœur, 1942). Volume 2 of Chavasse’s study was never published; however, his findings are summarized in his “Prières pour les malades et onction sacramentelle,” in *L’Église en prière: Introduction à la liturgie*, ed. A. G. Martimort (Paris: Desclée, 1961), 580–94, and in Placid Murray, “The Liturgical History of Extreme Unction,” in *Studies in*

*Pastoral Liturgy*, ed. Vincent Ryan, 3 vols. (Dublin: Gill and Son for The Furrow Trust, 1963), 2:18–38. Note that there are several early extant references to anointing the bodies of the dead; however, this practice does not appear to have been part of the liturgical evolution of extreme unction. John Halliburton, “Anointing in the Early Church,” in *The Oil of Gladness: Anointing in the Christian Tradition*, ed. Martin Dudley and Geoffrey Rowell (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1990), 89.

6. Geoffrey Rowell, “The Sacramental Use of Oil in Anglicanism and the Churches of the Reformation,” in Dudley and Rowell, *Oil of Gladness*, esp. 137–40.

7. E. Brooks Holifield, *Health and Medicine in the Methodist Tradition* (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 72.

8. Heather D. Curtis, *Faith in the Great Physician: Suffering and Divine Healing in American Culture, 1860–1900* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 27–34, 40. Curtis discusses Protestant belief later in the nineteenth century; however, her descriptions are equally applicable to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. References to “afflictive providence” during the first years of Joseph Smith’s religious career are common. For example, “An Address Occasioned by the Death of Mr. Danforth Billings,” *Christian Journal and Literary Register* 8 (May 1824): 141; C. M. Watts, “Submission to Afflictive Providences,” in *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns for Christian Worship*, ed. Francis William Pitt Greenwood, 12th ed. (Boston: Carter, Hendee, 1834), 456; “Benefit of Sanctified Affliction,” *Episcopal Watchman* 3 (October 17, 1829): 245; Minutes of the Prudential Committee, February 20, 1832, in *Missionary Herald* 28 (March 1832): 92; John F. Wright, “Memoir of Mrs. Electa Cowell,” *Methodist Magazine* 10 (June 1827): 247.

9. While by the nineteenth century the Tunkers were the only Christian group to anoint the sick, there is some evidence that earlier practice involved anointing the dying. *Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the Church of the Brethren: Containing All Available Minutes from 1778 to 1909* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1909), 19, 30, 50. Donald F. Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine: A History of the Brethren, 1708–1995* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Press, 1997), 120, claims that anointing “was ordinarily limited in earlier Brethren practice to cases of mortal illness.” For an example in the Ephrata commune, see Lamech and Agrippa, *Chronicon Ephratense; A History of the Community of Seventh Day Baptists at Ephrata, Lancaster County, Penna*, trans. J. Max Hark (Lancaster, Penn.: S. H. Zahm, 1889), 142–43 n. 1; compare the deathbed blessing “with laying on of hands” of Conrad Beissel on page 284. The Tunkers were also called the “Dunkers” and are now typically known as the Old German Baptist Brethren.

10. Samuel Brown, “The ‘Beautiful Death’ in the Smith Family,” *BYU Studies* 45, no. 4 (2006): 121–50. See also chapter 1 of Samuel Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Conquest of Death* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

11. For example, Scott Stephan, *Redeeming the Southern Family: Evangelical Women and Domestic Devotion in the Antebellum South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008): 183–220. On the domestic heaven, see Colleen McDannell and Bernard Lang, *Heaven: A History*, 2d ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 228–75.

12. Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journals, Vol 1: 1832–1839*, in *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2008), 122;

Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. (New York: Russell Brothers, 1874), 325; Doctrine and Covenants 42:48. See also Jonathan A. Stapley and Kristine Wright, "The Forms and the Power: The Development of Mormon Ritual Healing to 1847," *Journal of Mormon History* 35 (Summer 2009): 42–87. Perhaps Smith's most famous invocation of providence was in describing the cholera crisis of Zion's Camp. Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 2:114 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*). See also Benjamin E. Park, "'Thou Wast Willing to Lay Down Thy Life for Thy Brethren': Zion's Blessings in the Early Church," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 29 (2009): 33. For a discussion of one denomination's grappling with failed healings in the later Divine Healing movement, see Michael S. Stephens, *Who Healeth All Thy Diseases: Health, Healing, and Holiness in the Church of God Reformation Movement* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2008), 32–33, 109–12, 160–63.

13. Doctrine and Covenants 42:48; also in Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Manuscript Revelation Books*, facsimile edition, first volume of the Revelations and Translation series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2009), 101.

14. See also Stapley and Wright, "Forms and the Power," 66–71. For an alternate reading of Mormonism and providence see Matthew Bowman, "Raising the Dead: Mormons, Evangelicals, and Miracles in America," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 27 (2007): 75.

15. For an in-depth discussion of these themes, see Stapley and Wright, "Forms and the Power." While there is evidence that Wesley may have approached this position of deathbed providence in prescribing both medicine and prayers, it appears that he was negotiating between enthusiasm and formalism, while maintaining a strict belief in universal providence. For example, Holifield, *Health and Medicine in the Methodist Tradition*, 36, states: "In explaining once how he had been healed of a painful sickness, Wesley emphasized that he had not expected the cure and did not look for such cures, because he believed that God did not intervene in accord with 'the will' of men and women."

16. Jonathan R. Baer, "Perfectly Empowered Bodies: Divine Healing in Modernizing America" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2002), 67, 86–87, 100, 112; Curtis, *Faith in the Great Physician*, 88–89, 195–98; Nancy A. Hardesty, *Faith Cure: Divine Healing in the Holiness and Pentecostal Movements* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 92–94; Stephens, *Who Healeth All Thy Diseases*, esp. 98–100.

17. Stapley and Wright, "Forms and the Power," 42–87; Jonathan A. Stapley and Kristine Wright, "'They Shall Be Made Whole': A History of Baptism for Health," *Journal of Mormon History* 34 (Fall 2008): 69–112.

18. Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth*, ch. 7.

19. Jonathan A. Stapley, "Adoptive Sealing Rituals in Mormonism," *Journal of Mormon History* 37 (Summer 2011): 56–74 (forthcoming).

20. See Kristine Wright, "Consecrating a Community: Uses and Perceptions of Holy Oil, 1834–1955," paper delivered at the 2009 Mormon History Association Conference, Springfield, Ill., copy in my possession.

21. In 1831, a revelation commanded that Sidney Rigdon dedicate the land of Zion; in 1833, Joseph Smith gathered with Church elders "in the printing office and

then proceeded to bow down before the Lord and dedicate the printing press and all that pertains thereunto to God"; Joseph Smith "dedicated the [Elders'] School in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Doctrine and Covenants 58:57, also in Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, *Manuscript Revelation Books*, 167; Bruce N. Westergren, *From Historian to Dissident: The Book of John Whitmer* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 86; Jessee, Ashurst-McGee, and Jensen, *Journals*, Vol. 1., 21, 84.

22. D&C 94 and D&C 109; Revelation, August 2, 1833–B, The Joseph Smith Papers, <http://beta.josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/revelation-2-august-1833-b-dc-94>; Jessee, Ashurst-McGee, and Jensen, *Journals*, Vol. 1, 201–11.

23. The earliest home dedication of which I am currently aware is Donald G. Godfrey and Rebecca S. Martineau-McCarty, eds., *An Uncommon Common Pioneer: The Journals of James Henry Martineau, 1828–1918* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2008), 118 (December 28, 1860). However, on April 25, 1849, Wilford Woodruff dedicated a home in the process of exorcizing it. Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898, Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983–84), 3:441.

24. The current liturgy is outlined in *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2010), 174–75, 20.6. Historically, the healing liturgy has been more diverse. Stapley and Wright, "Forms and the Power."

25. 1 Corinthians 12:9; Moroni 10:11; Article of Faith 7.

26. 1 Corinthians 12:10; Moroni 10:13; Article of Faith 7.

27. One potential exception to this characterization is described in Andrew Jensen, ed., "The Elk Mountain Mission," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 9 (October 1913): 198 (September 23, 1855).

28. *History of the Church*, 7:268 n. 2.

29. Frank J. Cannon and Harvey J. O'Higgins, *Under the Prophet in Utah: The National Menace of a Political Priestcraft* (Boston: C. M. Clark Publishing, 1911), 244–47.

30. It appears from these accounts, however, that they were not anomalous activities. One other antecedent was apparently administered by Sidney Rigdon, when he dedicated his dying daughter to the Lord in an apparent effort to heal her. According to the daughter, this ritual resulted in a near death experience. "Elder Rigdon &c.," *Times and Seasons* 3 (September 15, 1842): 922–23; Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 300.

31. Stanley B. Kimball, *On the Potter's Wheel: The Diaries of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), 56; John Pack, *Autobiography*, 10 (January 13, 1847), digital image of holograph, online, [http://www.johnpackfamily.com/gallery/v/journal/page\\_11.jpg.html](http://www.johnpackfamily.com/gallery/v/journal/page_11.jpg.html); Charles Kelly, ed., *The Journal of John D. Lee, 1846–47 and 1859* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984), 65.

32. Lisle G Brown, *Nauvoo Sealings, Adoptions, and Anointings: A Comprehensive Register of Persons Receiving LDS Temple Ordinances, 1841–1846* (Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2006), 71, 256.

33. Edward Leo Lyman, Susan Ward Payne, and S. George Ellsworth, eds., *No Place to Call Home: The 1807–1857 Life Writings of Caroline Barnes Crosby, Chronicler of Outlying Mormon Communities* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2005), 64–65. On female ritual healing, see Stapley and Wright, "Forms and the Power";



Jonathan A. Stapley and Kristine Wright, "Female Ritual Healing in Mormonism," *Journal of Mormon History* 37 (Winter 2011): 1–85.

34. Samuel W. Richards, Diary, September 11, 1846, microfilm of holograph, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

35. Woodruff, *Journal*, 6:224 (May 14, 1865).

36. See also, for example, Cleland and Brooks, *Mormon Chronicle*, 2:16; Woodruff, *Journal*, 7:10.

37. In some cases, the design of the ritual was to abdicate desire to the will of God. For example, the day before Church President John Taylor passed away, his secretary recorded: "At the request of Sisters Taylor, President Cannon called ^all^ the brethren ^and sisters^ together and explained the wishes of the Sisters' Taylor to the effect that the President be administered to. The brethren and sisters all united with Prest Joseph F. Smith, who was mouth, in prayer. Afterwhich, Prest Smith anointed Prest Taylor with oil and Prests Cannon & Smith, Elders Nuttall, Bateman, Malin, Roueche and Barrell administered to the President, and dedicating him to the Lord either to live, or to go hence as the Lord Willed, Prest Geo Q Cannon being mouth." Jedediah S. Rogers, ed., *In the President's Office: The Diaries of L. John Nuttall, 1879–1892* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2007), 217.

38. Godfrey and Martineau-McCarty, *Uncommon Common Pioneer*, 174. See also p. 308, where Martineau dedicates his daughter with his stake president and bishop.

39. Jacob Hamblin, Diaries and Reminiscences, October 6, 1856, microfilm of holograph, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I thank Todd Compton for bringing this account to my attention.

40. Sandra Ailey Petree, ed., *Recollections of Past Days: The Autobiography of Patience Loader Rozsa Archer* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2006), 71. Similarly, when a Sister Webb was dying in San Bernardino in 1857, elders anointed her and then "rebuked all her pains, and commended her to the Spirit of God, told her she should die in peace." She claimed to have found immediate relief and died a half hour later. Lyman, Payne, and Ellsworth, *No Place to Call Home*, 484.

41. Donald G. Godfrey and Brigham Y. Card, eds., *The Diaries of Charles Ora Card: The Canadian Years, 1886–1903* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), 443. For a similarly poignant account, see Charles M. Hatch and Todd M. Compton, eds., *A Widow's Tale: The 1884–1896 Diary of Helen Mar Kimball Whitney* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2003), 486.

42. Woodruff, *Journal*, 8:335, 342 (September 26 and November 10, 1885). Woodruff's diary is one of the most common sources for ritual accounts, though sometimes it is ambiguous whether the ritual is explicitly a dedicating of the dying. See, for example, 7:502 (August 18, 1879).

43. Doctrine and Covenants 63:49; also in Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, *Manuscript Revelation Books*, 187; Revelation 14:13. See also Joseph Smith, Sermon, March 20, 1842, in Woodruff, *Journal*, 2:163. In the traditional Roman Catholic ceremony, when a coffin is removed to the cemetery, the following is sung during the procession: "May the angels lead you into paradise; may the martyrs come to welcome you and take you to the holy city, the new and eternal Jerusalem." *The Rites of the Catholic Church*, 2 vols. (Collegeville Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1990), 1:984.

44. John P. Hatch, ed., *Danish Apostle: The Diaries of Anthon H. Lund, 1890–1921* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2006), 423 (March 17, 1910).

45. Hatch, *Danish Apostle*, 714 (November 18, 1918).



46. Bryant S. Hinckley, *Sermons of Melvin J. Ballard* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1949), 76.
47. Lucy Grant Cannon, "Stepping Stones to Faith: Lesson XI: A Remarkable Experience," *Young Woman's Journal* 29 (February 1917): 111.
48. James J. Farrell, *Inventing the American Way of Death, 1830–1920* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980); see also Gary Laderman, *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes toward Death, 1799–1883* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).
49. W. Paul Reeve, *Making Space on the Western Frontier: Mormons, Miners, and Southern Paiutes* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 146; line breaks removed; quoting Hebron Ward Historical Record, vol. 1, microfilm of holograph, Church History Library.
50. Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth*, ch. 7.
51. For examples in Winter Quarters, see Woodruff, *Journal*, 3:96; Kelly, *Journal of John D. Lee*, 194; Aroet Hale, *Autobiography*, September 4, 1846, Perry Special Collections; Joseph Hovey, *Autobiography*, 90–91, Perry Special Collections. This is still standard practice in the contemporary church. *Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2010), 16; *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2010), 47, 73, 148.
52. Woodruff, *Journal*, 6:13–15; A. R. Mortensen, ed., "Elias Smith, Journal of a Pioneer Editor March 6, 1859–September 23, 1863," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 21 (October, 1953): 349–50; Fred C. Collier, *The Office Journal of President Brigham Young, 1858–1863, Book D* (Hanna, Utah: Collier's Publishing, 2006), 344, 351; Church Historian's Office, *Journal*, 1844–79, August 4, 1862, available in *Selected Collections from the Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2 vols., DVD (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 1:17; John Devitry-Smith, "The Saint and the Grave Robber," *BYU Studies* 33, no. 1 (1993): 7–52.
53. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 9:192–93 (February 9, 1862). Compare Woodruff, *Journal*, 6:17.
54. Morrill, "Relief Society Birth and Death Rituals," 137–41, 148–59.
55. Emmeline B. Wells, Relief Society Conference Address, October 30, 1914, "The Mission of Saving Grain," *Relief Society Magazine* 2 (February 1915): 47.
56. Willard Richards, *Diary*, July 10, 1845, in *Selected Collections*, 1:31.
57. Godfrey and Martineau-McCarty, *Uncommon Common Pioneer*, 175–76.
58. Melissa Lambert Milewski, ed., *Before the Manifesto: The Life Writings of Mary Lois Walker Morris* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2007), 431.
59. Emmeline B. Wells, ed., *Charities and Philanthropies: Woman's Work in Utah* (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon and Sons, 1893), 14.
60. For example, Mary Wheeler Chadwick, *Biographical Sketch*, 6, ed. Thersa C. Lowder, in Jeanette S. Greenwell, comp., *Abraham and Mary Wheeler Chadwick* (N.p., n.d.), 367; "Some excerpts from the diary of Mary Anderson Jensen," in *Pearl, Baby! The Amazing Life and Chronicles of Reba Pearl Bischoff Mason* (River Ridge, Calif.: C. A. M. Christensen, 1994), 153–54.
61. "Ye Ancient and Honorable Order of Midwifery," *Relief Society Magazine* 2 (August 1915): 347; "The Mother of the Mothers in Israel: Eliza R. Snow," *Relief Society Magazine* 3 (April 1916): 186.
62. A. Karl Larson and Katherine Miles Larson, eds., *Diary of Charles Lowell Walker*, 2 vols. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1980), 2:500–501. For other examples, see 2:572, 581.

63. Kym Ney, ed., *Allen Russell Autobiography and Journal*, June 1, 1901, typescript, holograph in possession of Brandon Gull. For examples of Wilford Woodruff preparing the dead, see Woodruff, *Journal*, 5:339; 7:177; 8:335.

64. See, for example, L. John Nuttall, *Diaries*, August 24, 1877, typescript, Perry Special Collections; Godfrey and Card, *Diaries of Charles Ora Card*, 340; Wilford Woodruff to Mary Isabella Horne, circa 188[8?], copied by Zina Young Card, holograph, Relief Society Washing and Anointing File, Church History Library; Abraham H. Cannon, *Journal*, January 31, 1890, photocopy of holograph, Perry Special Collections.

65. Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: The Story of Relief Society* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 198. See *Relief Society Guide* (Salt Lake City: Relief Society, 1914), 29. This was also called simply the “Burial Clothing Department.” Clarissa S. Williams and Amy B. Lyman, “The Official Round Table,” *Relief Society Magazine* 7 (March, 1920): 227.

66. “Address,” *Relief Society Bulletin* 1 (February, 1914): 3; “Notes on the Relief Society Conference,” *Relief Society Bulletin* 1 (June, 1914): 14.

67. “Circular of Instructions: To Officers and Members of the Relief Society,” *Relief Society Magazine* 2 (February 1915): 135.

68. For example, “Notes from the Field,” *Relief Society Magazine* 7 (June, 1920): 419.

69. Kay Lundell, comp., *Triumphant Banners: Higgins, Lowry, Tuttle, Gardner* (N.p., 1987), 617.

70. Hugh Roberts: *History and Genealogy of Hugh and Mary Owens Roberts of Eglwysbach, Denbighshire, Wales: Their Family with Biographies of the Individual Members, Articles and Pictures on Family Activities*, vol. 2 (N.p.: Hugh Roberts Family Organization, 1974), 241; Bruce H. Jensen, *Grandma in the Pink House: The Life Story of Melba Melvina Penrod Jensen* (Salt Lake City: Bruce H. Jensen, 1996), 45–46.

71. Advertisement, “Burial Clothes,” *Relief Society Bulletin* 1 (March 1914): 16; advertisement, “Burial Clothes,” *Relief Society Magazine* 2 (May 1915): 25; “Burial Clothing,” *Relief Society Bulletin* 1 (February 1914): 23; advertisement, “J. S. Horne & Co.,” *Deseret News*, December 12, 1903, 89; advertisement, “C. H. Bank’s Undertaking,” *Deseret News*, December 19, 1908, 75; advertisement, “Burial Clothes,” *Box Elder News*, April 18, 1912, 4.

72. Godfrey and Martineau-McCarty, *Uncommon Common Pioneer*, 175–76; Seymour B. Young, *Diary*, July 27, 1921, typescript, Church History Library; Cleland and Brooks, *Mormon Chronicle*, 2:17.

73. Division of Archives and Records Service, Office of Vital Records and Statistics, Utah Death Certificate Index, online, <http://www.archives.state.ut.us/research/indexes/20842.htm>.

74. Amy Brown Lyman, “General Conference of the Relief Society,” *Relief Society Magazine* 2 (December 1915): 528; Amy Brown Lyman, “Notes from the Field,” *Relief Society Magazine* 4 (May 1917): 276.

75. George Rosen, *The Structure of American Medical Practice, 1875–1941*, ed. Charles E. Rosenberg (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 13–36.

76. “St. Mark’s Hospital,” *Salt Lake Herald*, November 26, 1911, 12.

77. Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Care of Strangers: The Rise of America’s Hospital System* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1987), 8.

78. William V. Smith, *Joseph Smith’s Funeral Sermons: A Textual Study* (forthcoming).

79. For example, Woodruff, *Journal*, 2:359; “Manuscript History of the Church,” August 16, 1843, on *Selected Collections*, 1:1; Juanita Brooks, ed., *On the Mormon*

*Frontier: The Diaries of Hosea Stout*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1964), 1:29–30.

80. See, for example, Jennifer Lund, “Illness, Dying, Death, and Burial at Winter Quarters, 7/21/98,” copy in my possession.

81. The 1873 School of the Prophets decided to prepare instructions for their burials. Salt Lake School of the Prophets Minutes, November 3, 1873, photocopy of typescript, Leonard J. Arrington Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan, Utah. An example of one such will was written by John Taylor. “Salt Lake City, November 17, 1873. President B. Young. Dear Brother,—Being asked to give a written account of the way I wish to be buried, I present the following: I have no desire for any particular formula; but I should wish my body to be washed clean; to be clothed in clean white linen garments and robes, with shoes, apron, cap, etc.; to be laid in a coffin sufficiently large to contain my body without pressure. Should I die here, let me be buried in my own lot in the graveyard. Let the coffin be neat and comely, but plain and strong; made of cedar, or redwood, or of our own mountain pine; if of the latter, colored or stained, and placed in an outer strong box, with a light cotton or woolen mattress or bed, and a convenient pillow for the head. The services, such as prevail at the time among the Saints. A plain slab may be placed over the body, and a stone at the head and feet; on the headstone to be given an account of my name, age and birth, as shall suit the feelings of my family. Should I die in Jackson County, Mo., let the above directions be carried out, as far as practicable. Respectfully, your brother.” Brian Stuy, ed., *Collected Discourses*, 5 vols. (Sandy: B. H. S. Publishing, 1987), 1:40–41. See also James B. Allen, *No Toil nor Labor Fear: The Story of William Clayton* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 382; “President’s Death and Burial,” *Deseret Weekly*, September 10, 1898, 399; Matthias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff: Fourth President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: History of His Life and Labors as Recorded in His Daily Journals* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909), 622.

82. Woodruff, *Journal*, 7:337–38.

83. “President Brigham Young,” *Deseret News*, September 8, 1875, 505.

84. For example, Woodruff, *Journal*, 7:244, 272, 440; 8:202, 242.

85. Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 1:171. See also George Dykes to Brigham Young, August 17, 1846, Fort Leavenworth, “Incoming Corr 1846,” typescript by Edyth Romney, Church History Library; Maurine Carr Ward, ed., *Winter Quarters: The 1846–1848 Life Writings of Mary Haskin Parker Richards* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), 105–6; Woodruff, *Journal*, 3:301, 325; 4:390; Robert Lang Campbell, *Diary*, June 20, 1847, 81, digital copy of holograph, Perry Special Collections.

86. Perhaps in bridging the two dedicatory valences, two years after Lorenzo D. Barnes died as a missionary in England, Wilford Woodruff visited his grave. He recorded the event in his diary, “While Standing upon his grave I offered up my vocal Prayer to Israels God, that I might die the death of the righteous when Called away & that my last end might be as wise & safe as his & that his sacred dust might be called forth in the morn of the first resurrection.” Woodruff, *Journal*, 2:510.

87. Edward H. Anderson, “An Incident of Every-day Life,” *Improvement Era* 8 (September 1905): 823–26.

88. Joseph W. Booth, *Diary*, 10:144–45, September 26, 1909, digital copy of holograph, Perry Special Collections.

89. Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 93–115.

90. For a more detailed analysis of this liturgical reformation, see Stapley and Wright, "Female Ritual Healing in Mormonism."

91. Dale C. Mouritsen, "A Symbol of New Directions: George F. Richards and the Mormon Church, 1861–1950" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1982), 203–10; Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 302; Stapley and Wright, "'They Shall Be Made Whole,'" 69–112. Healing in the temple was a regular feature from Nauvoo on, with male and female temple workers devoting a significant portion of their time to healing rituals. See Stapley and Wright, "'They Shall Be Made Whole,'" 69–112; Stapley and Wright, "Female Ritual Healing in Mormonism."

92. Amy Brown Lyman, "Instructions to Relief Society Presidents [1922]," microfilm of mimeograph, Church History Library.

93. First Presidency, "On Dedicating the Sick and the Suffering to the Lord," *Improvement Era* 25 (October 1922): 1122, reprinted in *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1833–1964*, comp. James R. Clark, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75), 5:219–20.

94. See Stapley and Wright, "'They Shall Be Made Whole,'" 105–11.

95. First Presidency to Temple Presidents, December 15, 1922, quoted in First Presidency to Stake Presidents, January 18, 1923, Salt Lake City, in Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 5:224. Readers should note that Clark's commentary on the letter is ahistoric.

96. Stapley and Wright, "'They Shall Be Made Whole,'" 96, 98.

97. Note, however, that it was several decades later that home dedication became formalized. The 1968 General Handbook, the first to include ritual outlines, did not include it. In the pattern of early grave dedication, a nonexclusive priesthood element was added to home dedication in the 2010 handbook. *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints General Handbook of Instructions*, no. 20 (Salt Lake City: First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1968); *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1, Stake Presidencies and Bishoprics, 2006* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006), 42; *Handbook 2* (2010), 176–77, 20.11; "Ordinances Can Foster Tranquility," *Church News*, November 12, 1994.

98. *The Missionary's Hand Book* (Independence, Mo.: Press of Zion's Printing and Publishing, 1937), 145.

99. *Handbook of Instructions for Stake Presidencies, Bishops and Counselors, Stake and Ward Clerks and Other Church Officers*, no. 16 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1940), 127–28. This was also taught in priesthood curricula: John A. Widtsoe, *Priesthood and Church Government in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1939), 360; Melchizedek Priesthood Committee of the Council of the Twelve, "Melchizedek Priesthood: Melchizedek Priesthood Outline of Study, December, 1941," *Improvement Era* 44 (November 1841): 685.

100. *The Missionary's Hand Book*, rev. ed. (Independence, Mo.: Press of Zion's Printing and Publishing, 1946), 150.

101. "I Want to Know," *Deseret News*, September 1, 1948, 24C. I thank Ardis E. Parshall for sharing this reference with me. See also General Priesthood Committee, *Melchizedek Priesthood Handbook* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1948), 86; General Priesthood Committee of the Council of the Twelve, "Melchizedek Priesthood: Ordinances and Ceremonies," *Improvement Era* 51 (November 1948): 731. At the time of this printing, the General Priesthood Committee included Harold B.

Lee, chairman; Ezra Taft Benson, Marion G. Romney, Thomas E. McKay, Clifford E. Young, Alma Sonne, Levi Edgar Young, Antoine R. Ivins, Richard L. Evans, Oscar A. Kirkham, S. Dilworth Young, Milton R. Hunter, and Bruce R. McConkie.

102. Stapley and Wright, "Female Ritual Healing in Mormonism," 40–53.

103. For a more detailed discussion of this shift, see Stapley and Wright, "Female Ritual Healing in Mormonism."

104. It should be noted that it did take several years for all materials to be updated to reflect this position. For example, *Principles of the Gospel* (N.p.: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1951), 318–19, a small book intended for military servicemen and originally distributed during World War II, included the older direction into the 1950s.

105. Levi S. Peterson, "My Mother's House," *Dialogue* 24 (Fall 1991): 87.

106. Dennis B. Horne, *Bruce R. McConkie: Highlights from His Life and Teachings* (Roy, Utah: Eborn Books, 2000), 211.

107. For example, the 1937 *Improvement Era* reprinted the story of Heber J. Grant dedicating his dying wife to the Lord. Marba C. Josephson, "Careers of Service to Young Womanhood," in *Improvement Era* 11 (December 1937): 790.

108. Alexander B. Morrison, "The Spiritual Component of Healing," *Ensign* 38 (June 2008): 48.

109. J[onathan]. Stapley, "Dedicating the Dying," online at <http://bycommonconsent.com/2009/05/05/dedicating-the-dying/> (accessed May 11, 2009). Unless otherwise noted, all quotations in the following paragraphs are from the comment section of this weblog.

110. Whereas only some nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints received callings to serve in the Church and frequently kept those callings for life, today all practicing Mormons are encouraged to have a calling that lasts from one to five years (or about ten in the case of stake presidencies). Sometimes, as in the case of full-time missionary service, callings and releases mark dramatic life transitions. Being released from responsibility is a regular and sometimes painful change for all practicing Mormons. It appears that some view modern life as metaphysically analogous to Church service with many individuals experiencing ritual release upon death.